

REAL Torque

March 2022

Contact maintenance for any questions on 0800 80 80 69

Heavy Vehicle Repair Industry Pressure

The topic for this month's Real Torque is the heavy vehicle repair industry itself. With Covid-19 having a huge impact around New Zealand, we wanted to explain some of the existing pressures the industry is facing which are being compounded greatly by the Omicron outbreak.



The trucking industry is one where the expectation from most people is that you can get your truck fixed quickly. Service providers have traditionally always been accommodating and could squeeze in many jobs without too much notice. This has gradually changed over recent years. However, in the past 12 to 24 months, various factors have caused this to be worse than ever.

What we are seeing now is that for even basic vehicle services (A Services) we are often being told that it will be a week before a service provider can fit the vehicle in. If the service is a major service (C service), then this could be up to two weeks or, in some cases, even three weeks. The same goes for repairs. Smaller repairs can take a couple of days to begin, and larger repairs are taking longer than ever to complete.

We are also seeing the time for servicing increasing, due to the volumes in the shops on the day. In the past, you could expect to drop in at 8am for a two-hour job and be back to work before lunch. But now we are seeing workshops having to juggle things, so some jobs might not even be started until lunchtime and may only be ready by the end of the day.

Of course, the Omicron outbreak has started taking this already under pressure industry to breaking point.

So how has this happened?

- There is a huge shortage of mechanics. A lot of workshops rely on overseas skilled migrants to fill these roles, and with our borders closed due to Covid, workshops have not been able to get these people at all. There are 100s of vacancies available for heavy vehicle technicians throughout New Zealand.
- Callout staff working nights need to stand down and take time off the next day to refresh. In the past, they would often just come to work. A big night of callouts can hugely affect the number of staff workshops have available for work during the day.
- There is far more demand for goods and services (almost all transported by trucks), which means at the same time more trucks are needed than ever.
- We are having to keep older gear working as there are significant delays on new chassis supply and long lead times with bodybuilders. The older gear requires more maintenance, causing more reliance on the industry.
- The Omicron outbreak has caused vast amounts of sickness and isolation of workshop staff. Workshops simply have not got the people to carry out the jobs.



What is TR doing about this?

We have been seeing this problem grow over a number of years and have been adapting our approach to accommodate and ease the load as much as possible.

- TR has greatly increased our swing componentry programme to assist with getting our trucks repaired quicker. This reduces the amount of labour time required by workshops to repair the failed part, allowing them to swap it out while we will fix it later at a more convenient time.
- We provide servicing planning info to customers to help them book in services in advance. This is easily accessed via our online MyTR portal. Now more than ever, planning well is needed to ensure the workshops have staff capacity and the parts, and are able to meet the customer's needs.
- We spend a lot of time with our workshops and ensure we have high performing relationships with them. We work with them as much as we can, we use our foresight and experience and our values-driven repair methods to intervene where needed, and help them get the best outcomes.



REAL Torque

March 2022



What can you do to help?

- As we mentioned before, planning servicing and CoFs in advance is the biggest thing you can do to ensure your gear gets in when needed. You can use MyTR to keep on top of your services, certs and CoFs.
- If something does go wrong, such as you struggle to get a booking, or you can't get into your normal supplier throughout the Omicron outbreak, please let us know so we can help. We have options and contingencies that may help, and our maintenance team are excellent problem solvers – it's in our DNA!
- The old cliché of "be kind". There are people in the workshops working extremely hard, trying to satisfy everyone's requirements and keep New Zealand's transport fleet moving. This is a high-pressure industry that demands a lot of the people in it. One of the best things we can all do is look after each other.

**Contact maintenance for any questions
on 0800 80 80 69**

TR TRUCKS & TRAILERS
RENTAL & LEASE
TR GROUP LTD

**Making heavy vehicle fleet
management easy for you**