

Fair Dinkum's Mitsubishi Canter 4x4 has been racking up the miles on the Cape.



JUST TRUCKING ALONG

When Fair Dinkum Bike Tours Cairns went looking for a new support truck for their Cape York tours, they didn't hold back!

AFTER YEARS of running a Toyota Landcruiser support vehicle on his Cape York tours, Fair Dinkum Bike Tours Cairns trail boss Dave Williams decided to go big for the 2007 season. And big he did when he added a spanking new Mitsubishi Canter 4x4 rig to his fleet (which is otherwise made up of Suzuki DR-Z400 hire bikes!). The not-so-squeezy Canter is powered by a turbocharged and intercooled 3.9 litre diesel engine, tucked beneath a six-seat crew cab, which means five passengers can tag-along on Fair Dinkum's tours.

Of course tackling the wilds of remote Cape York demands a customised vehicle with a feast of specific mods, so well before the Canter ever turned a wheel on the Development Road, Dave set to work on the beast. Up front went a heavy-duty alloy bullbar with Lightforce XGT spotties to pick the wildlife from 500m away, and then came an extra diesel tank (total 180 litres onboard) for extended range, a five gallon air tank under the chassis for inflating tyres and trailside repairs, a Bogard turbo-timer for extended engine life and larger diameter tyres in an effort to cope with the Cape's notorious corrugations.

THE BODY BEAUTIFUL

After all those mods came the truck's crowning glory: a custom-made body. It has two 180 litre alloy tanks fitted to the headboard, which are baffled and double-seam welded: one is for water and the other is for unleaded fuel for the bikes. There are alloy tool boxes to carry various accessories/oils for running the bikes on extended tours, as well as spares and consumables for the truck. Tucked up

high on the body is a custom-made awning that extends out to 3.2m to keep the weather and sun out when setting up camp for the night.

Inside the body there's a 130 litre Evacool fridge/freezer plus two Escapee eskies to keep the vital supplies cool, along with shelving/storage compartments for the tucker needed to feed the troops – enough for 15 people for eight days! The rear of the truck carries camping gear for 14 riders and all the luggage of the riders on tour, plus there's a heavy-duty toolbox stocked for running repairs, a Blue Tongue air compressor, workshop vice, spare tyres and a rear ramp that folds down to allow for a spare bike to be held in place by a custom-made fork brace tucked behind one of the tool boxes. After all that, the body is fully sealed to keep out the Cape's dreaded red dust.

After its first season in anger on the Cape, the Fair Dinkum Canter has exceeded all Dave's expectations. Following the first couple of trips the front suspension was updated to feature a more progressive front spring pack and Koni shocks, which made a great improvement to the truck's ride and handling. Out back, he also swapped the stock shocks for heavy-duty items, and can proudly report passengers have commented how comfortable the ride is.

Thanks to Lightforce lights, DP power chips, Springs & Blacksmithing Cairns and Dave's ever-friendly bank manager (!), the Mitsubishi Canter has proven a worthy addition to the Fair Dinkum fleet, giving customers the ultimate in support and service on a Cape York tour. If you fancy grabbing a coldy from one of those Escapee eskies, get along on a Fair Dinkum trip to the tip!

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1. Crew cab layout allows for tag-along passengers. 2. Bright lights and alloy bullbar. 3. Custom alloy body is made to Fair Dinkum's requirements. 4. Custom water and fuel tanks.

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