





# Beggs Bulk

Reflecting on 16 years as an owner-operator, Ken Beggs of Beggs Bulk, credits fuel efficiency upgrades for cutting costs and staying productive in the competitive long-haul sector.

Company	Fleet	Application	Opportunity
			
Mildura, VIC	6 x road trains (AB-triples)	Long-haul (18 trips per month)	Efficiency upgrades

By the time Ken Beggs sold his long-haul bulk transport business in March 2024, his road trains were clocking up over 22,000 kilometres a month. Together with his subcontractor's vehicles, the fleet moved stock feed and other bulk commodities between regional Victoria, South Australia, and South-East Queensland.

Carting up to 70 tonnes of payload halfway across the country, fuel is always the biggest cost for Beggs Bulk. *"Owner drivers are price-takers not price makers"* says Beggs, *"costs are all we can control."* From early on, the company decided to prioritise efficiency at every stage of their operations, from vehicle selection to efficiency upgrades, and right through to how the trucks were driven day-to-day.

## Choosing the right truck

Replacing a vehicle is always a huge outlay. **'Right-sizing' the truck to match its most common task** is key to making a wise investment. On the other hand, making the wrong choice can lock in higher fuel bills into your bottom line for the truck's entire lifetime.

For Beggs Bulk, "right-sizing" meant choosing prime mover models to handle their interstate mileage demands (with a minimum of 700 horsepower) while minimising the company's fuel bill. Beggs prioritised **high-tech, high-efficiency cabovers**. While this choice turned some heads (particularly in AB-triple configuration), the proof was in the fuel bill. Beggs Bulk found they were **up to \$40,000 better off every year** by using the most fuel-efficient models available at the time.

After-sales support was also a deciding factor for Beggs Bulk. Tapping into the full range of the vehicles' fuel efficiency technologies required good relationships with the dealers and Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) themselves. Ken Beggs needed to **shop around to find the right partners**, on one occasion even passing over local dealers to buy from an interstate supplier offering better support. The company also took full advantage of free training offered from OEMs at the time of purchase. Beggs Bulk also ran its preventive maintenance program through its dealer, making the choice of truck (and truck-maker) even more important.

## Bells and whistles

The focus on efficiency didn't end with vehicle choice. Kitting out Beggs Bulk's trucks with the latest fuel-saving accessories was key to driving down costs, not to mention emissions.

Part of this was about what the company didn't put on their trucks. Whatever the vehicle, and whatever the task, the company was careful **to minimise external 'clutter' that increases aerodynamic drag** burning through more fuel on the highway. While other fleets were adding bespoke lights, aerals, and customised fittings to make their trucks look impressive, Beggs Bulk deliberately stripped back all unnecessary components, with bull-bars the only exception (given the high frequency of animal strikes enroute).



Access all the resources here

In its place, Beggs Bulk added different ‘bells and whistles’ to their truck fleet to proactively reduce diesel consumption, such as:

- **Aero kits** – scoops/spoilers on the cab as standard for all trucks, to cut down on wind resistance.
- **Low rolling-resistance tyres** – the improved fuel efficiency easily offset the \$100-\$150 cost premium.
- **Tyre inflation system** – automatically adjusted pressure to keep tyres in optimum condition based on load/terrain, all without leaving the driver’s seat.

Thanks to these after-market efficiency upgrades the Beggs Bulk fleet regularly achieved a fuel economy around 1.5 kilometres per litre and as high as 1.9 km/L. Ken Beggs reckons he could have increased this efficiency even further had suitable skirts and aero tail devices been available for the tipper trailers he used.

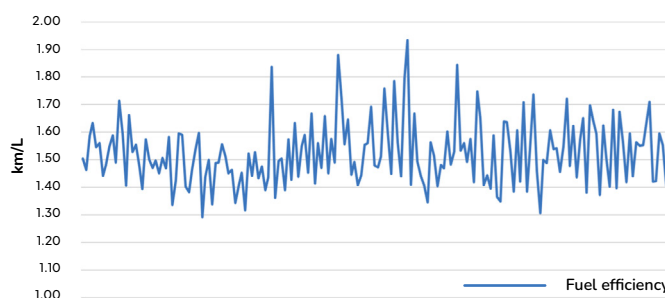
Beggs Bulk even looked beyond on-road efficiencies to invest in **lightweight aluminium trailers** to increase payload and **innovative unloading systems** to cut down cleaning time. While this did not directly contribute to fuel reduction, it still delivered bottom line benefits, reduced downtime, and aligned with Beggs’ end-to-end focus on efficiency.

## Driving down costs

Kitting out vehicles with the latest smart systems also led to lower fuel bills by improving driving performance. By opting for **real-time driver feedback systems**, Ken and his staff were able to adapt their driving style to their vehicles and specific load configuration. One of the most useful features of the system is it provides an efficiency score for the driver’s performance, based on a few critical eco-driving skills, which can be used to improve performance over time.

*“It’s absolutely essential to have the real-time driver feedback, says Ken. “You can see it in the truck immediately. To get those driver scores high, you need to drive very efficiently – not necessarily slow –*

Fuel efficiency of one Beggs Bulk road train (2023-24)



*but more efficiently, and it takes off all the strain on the engine. It makes the whole team drive more efficiently.”*

As a result, Beggs Bulk steadily improved their overall driving score to consistently achieve 94-95% across the entire fleet – a “good” score is typically 85%. Ken’s son was even offered a job off the back of his exceptionally fuel-efficient driving rating!

Ken is quick to point to other operational bonuses, besides a reduced fuel bill – longer-lived vehicles, less tyre wear, brake pads that last 1.2 million kilometres. We can also add emissions reduction to this list – on average, the fuel efficiency improvements made at Beggs Bulk have saved an estimated 7.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.

## Find out more

The **automated tyre inflation system** used by Beggs Bulk added 50,000 more kilometres per tyre. The manufacturer’s website is here:

<https://www.trtaustralia.com.au/traction-air-cti-system/>

Beggs Bulk relied on **innovative trailer designs** to maximise payload as well as **an efficient unloading system** to accelerate turnaround times during deliveries.

**Driver performance feedback** was an optimal inclusion for all Beggs’ truck purchases over the years, including the systems offered by **Scania** and **Volvo**.

**Get Fleet Fit** has been designed by NatRoad to guide truck operators towards improved fuel efficiency and reduced emissions in alignment with future government regulations and customer expectations. We’ve developed a 5-step roadmap to help create a clear, actionable plan for your business, plus more detailed information on important topics to help you along your unique journey.

