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**ISUZU'S QUIET ACHIEVER: NQR STILL ON TOP AS NEW MODEL ROLL-OUT GATHERS PACE**

Finding the right model mix to answer market demand has long been a challenge for any transport Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM).

As traditional industry continues to evolve alongside new enterprises taking shape, supplying the right capital equipment for the task at hand requires engagement and industry insight, but perhaps most importantly, it requires deep knowledge of customer need.

For nearly three decades, Isuzu’s NQR has been a masterclass in meeting this challenge.

Slotting seamlessly between the light N Series and medium-duty F Series, this versatile workhorse has quietly become an indispensable tool for countless Australian businesses.

**Answering demand**

Officially launched without fanfare back in 1998, the NQR was released to fill market demand for a cross-over model, offering customers more grunt and payload while maintaining the light truck platform.

Specifically designed for urban distribution work, early incarnations of the NQR had the same 8,500 kg Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) as the now fabled Isuzu SBR 422 of the early 80s, only with more power and torque.

Powered by Isuzu’s long departed 4.8 litre, turbocharged overhead camshaft, four-cylinder 4HE1-T engine, the inaugural NQR produced 104 kilowatts of power at 2,900 rpm and 382Nm torque at 1,800 rpm.

Wheelbase variations were limited in ‘98, with one option available back then at 4,175 mm, although this, along with new wide frame chassis rails, made the NQR the perfect choice for speedier performance in urban, van body applications as well as specific, relatively short-haul intrastate distribution that required a tray or low van body.

**Quiet achiever**

Fast forward nearly three decades and this unassuming model has notched up 7,834 sales since 2011, equating to an average of 607 units sold every year and amounting to approximately 10 per cent of total N Series sales.

Its enduring popularity stems from its versatility within the upper N Series GVM range, finding critical roles in cold-chain logistics, utilities, local government, and countless other sectors.

In 2025, and perhaps fittingly, the NQR is the vanguard model of Isuzu all new 2025 line-up and the first N Series variant to go on sale across the country.

**New & improved**

Powering the 2025 NQR is Isuzu’s advanced 4HK1-TCC engine, delivering an enthusiastic 140 kW (190 metric horsepower) and supporting a GVM range of 8,000 kg and 8,800 kg. The proven Isuzu MZZ6F six-speed Automated Manual Transmission (AMT) carries over, with a six-speed manual transmission also available as an option.

The heart of the 2025 Isuzu N Series and applying to the NQR, is a significantly enhanced, industry-leading safety suite. Enabled by a second-generation stereo camera system – a key part of Isuzu’s Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) – this comprehensive suite integrates both active and passive safety technology, fitted as standard to all 4x2 N Series models across the range.

Specifically, the 2025 NQR gains no fewer than seven new active safety features. These additions mean the vehicle's suite now boasts a grand total of 15 distinct functions, positioning it among the safest vehicles Isuzu Trucks has ever developed for the Australian market.

Alongside this vastly improved safety, the 2025 N Series benefits from a raft of other enhancements. These include an entirely redesigned cabin exterior and interior, while an all-new exhaust control system has been added to reduce tailpipe emissions.

With a healthy split between private business and government fleet customers and one of the most popular body builds being a van (or ‘pantech’) configuration, the recurring theme for the NQR in recent times has centred around food, glorious food.

Be it a food truck shuffling between events in and around Sydney or the movement of award-winning blue cheese down in Tassie, the NQR is on hand to answer the call and get the job done.

**Shorty’s Food Truck | Sydney**

Nick Khouri's thriving Shorty's Food Truck fleet, based in Sydney, is a prime example of Australia's dynamic food truck revolution in action.

Offering diverse, high-quality cuisine at events across the city, Nick's three-truck operation stands out through professionalism and quality. To achieve this, he recently expanded his fleet with an Isuzu NQR 87-190 long wheelbase AMT.

Crucially, the Isuzu's size and robust 8,700 kg GVM provided the essential platform for Shorty's significant custom-built mobile kitchen, which houses heavy equipment like fridges, cooktops, and a generator.

Nick chose the NQR for its vital reliability, knowing minimal downtime is key to his livelihood, additionally, the truck's 190 horsepower engine power, efficient AMT gearbox for city driving, comprehensive safety (including ADAS and a reverse camera), and driver comfort for longer trips, make it the perfect operational backbone.

So impressed is Nick with the Isuzu's performance and Suttons' support that he plans to acquire another one soon.

**Ashgrove Cheese | Launceston**

Ashgrove Cheese, a family-run Tasmanian dairy institution for over 30 years, delivers fresh milk and dairy products from its Elizabeth Town farm to supermarkets, hospitals, cafes, and businesses statewide.

To maintain the quality and reliability of its six-day-a-week refrigerated delivery operation, the Bennett family’s fleet recently added an Isuzu NQR 87-190 AMT medium-wheelbase through Webster Trucks.

Ashgrove chose the NQR for its optimal 3.365-metre wheelbase, perfectly accommodating the refrigerated body, while its 8,700 kg GVM ensures ample payload capacity for a manner of dairy produce.

Crucially, the NQR’s fuel-efficient 4HK1-TCC engine, its compact 12.4-metre turning circle for navigating Tasmanian streets and driver-focused features met Ashgrove’s core needs for cost-effectiveness, safety, and driver comfort.

Logistics Manager, Corey Harris, praised Webster Trucks’ exceptional service and preventative maintenance support, underscoring a decades-long partnership built on reliability.

So impressed is Ashgrove with the Isuzu’s performance and Webster’s backing that the company is standardising its entire fleet to Isuzu by 2026.

**Go Troppo | Canberra**

Go Troppo Fruit Market, a Canberra institution for over 30 years, delivers top-quality fresh fruit and vegetables to 300+ pubs, clubs, cafes, restaurants, and IGAs daily.

Founded by Frank and Christine Commisso and now run by their sons Marcus and Joel, the family business relies on a 14-strong Isuzu N Series fleet to ensure prompt, reliable service from their warehouse.

Key to handling larger volumes is their four NQR 87-190 AMT curtainsiders, part of a fleet including 10 NNR 45-150 refrigerated pantechs.

Marcus emphasised that the robust NQRs provide vital capacity for bulkier orders, while the entire Isuzu fleet's legendary reliability ensures drivers complete up to 100 daily deliveries without issues.

Crucial features for Marcus and the team include the driver-friendly AMT transmissions reducing fatigue and excellent cab accessibility for frequent stops.

**The next chapter**

From its focused launch in 1998 to its latest role leading the 2025 N Series charge, the Isuzu NQR has consistently delivered.

Bridging the gap between the light and medium-duty market segments, its versatility, and flexibility continue to strengthen its appeal, presenting a compelling proposition for operators large and small.

Now boasting a swag of additional features and benefits, the NQR hits the market once again in 2025 as the consummate industry all-rounder.

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