



## On the road, sparky Jesse Azzopardi has everything he needs right there in his work van – and that’s just the way he likes it!

Jesse Azzopardi has worked in electrical trades for six years, getting his ticket two years ago. The 25-year-old sparky, from Melbourne’s north-eastern suburbs, originally studied nutrition at university, but he packed that in after 12 months to pursue a different career and pivoted to the electrical trades.

“I have always been technically minded, I built a few PCs back in the day, so the electrical trade was the way to go,” Jesse, who completed two years of his apprenticeship under the expert guidance of AIF Electrical director Andrew Fisher, says. “I have friends and family who are electricians, and I like it because it’s one of the more technical trades. You’re the first on site and the last one to leave – it’s a good way of connecting with almost every trade.”

One the daily, you’ll find Jesse still working with Andrew on commercial and residential properties out of AIF Electrical’s kitted out Toyota HiAce van.

“We got two new HiAces about a year ago, and I was lucky enough to get one of those,” Jesse says.

“We went for the optional rear barn door opening over the liftgate because it better suits our needs.”

After experiencing working out of both a van and a ute, what would Jesse go for if he had a choice?

“Vans, 100 per cent,” he says. “You can carry more stuff in them. They’re more secure and you can do a better fit-out with the shelving and drawers.”

“We only need to open one rear door to get to items quickly. We can also open the doors in a tighter space and reverse up to things a lot closer than if we had a liftgate. For example, we can park near a bollard and still open both doors.”

Filling up the van can squeeze the wallet, but that’s a given, says Jesse. “Fuel consumption [in the 2.8-litre four-cylinder diesel] is around 12 to 15 litres per 100km, which is a bit thirstier than normal, but we are carrying a lot of weight. We fill these vans with everything we need – about 800kg in tools, equipment and electrical components – so we have it on hand when we pull up to a job.”

Here, Jesse takes us through his van set-up.



“The shelves and inside the drawers are just a timber finish, but everything outside of the drawers is carpeted to stop materials rattling and sliding around.”

### TRADE TIPS

“Behind the driver’s side sliding door is all our stock: switchboard gear, power points, switches and lights. Basically, that whole side of the van is just for the stock because we can get out of the driver’s door, open it up, and it’s the first door we’re at. We need to get into it easily.”

“We carry a lot of weight in our vans, plus all the shelving inside is timber, then there is the roof rack, extension ladders and tools... it all adds up.”

“I clock up about 30,000km a year in the van. It’s your office basically, so it’s good to have everything well organised.”

“We got the shelving installed by Van Fitouts Melbourne in Dandenong. They have a heap of options, so we could design it to suit our needs. Their fit-out is so tight; it’s perfect. The tolerances are great, too. You can’t even slip a piece of paper between the gaps, it’s such a good fit.”

“Behind the passenger side sliding door is the drawer with all of our DeWalt power tools, batteries and chargers, angle grinders, hammer drills, impacts, cable clips, soldering irons and leaf blowers – we use this to blow dust off the apprentices after they’ve been crawling through a ceiling or under a house.”

“We have a series of large drawers or organisers underneath the flat surface area which takes up most of the space in the back of the van. We need [the top space] to bring equipment to a job or take old equipment away from a job, such as ovens and other kitchen appliances.”

PHOTOGRAPHY JULIAN KINGMA