

Contents

Book 4, 2014

READERS: Scroll Down To See ABM's Trailers & Towing **PREVIEWS**



Cover:
Typical of today's 'next generation' 4WDs, the 560 Trailcraft, a mid-level, all-round aluminium family sports cruiser, is towed by a V6 diesel Jeep Laredo with ease. Both reflect the trend to smaller, more easily handled and more fuel efficient products.

Forward 4
Editorial by Peter Webster

The Basic Facts 8
There are some things we just can't change – and others we shouldn't. This report details the major issues.

What ARE They Talking About? 12
GVMs and GCMS are acronyms of a VERY confusing kind - in this special, widely acclaimed 'cartoon' series, we make sense of a vitally important subject.

Safe Trailer Boating With Your Family 14



After a lifetime on the highways of Australia, including 20 years with his family of four children, not too many people have more experience, or know-how to make the whole process safe – and enjoyable.

The Art of Safe Beach Launching 42
Excellent, informative report on a complex and tricky subject from long term beach fisho Chris Wyeth. This is about the practice - not the theory - of working off ocean beaches, and getting the rig (and crew!) safely back on the hard.



Building A Beach Launching Trailer 48

It is not just big boats that can be successfully launched off the beach - this report shows how a small beach boat trailer can be developed for safe and efficient beach work.

STATE OF PLAY 28
The Debate: Skids Vs Roller Trailers 28
Alloy Trailers Come Of Age 34



Alloy Frames Spearhead Hi-Tech 52
Caution for Poly Boats 55
Regulations For Big Boats 58
AL-KO Axle System Hard To Break 64
Mechanical or Hydraulic Brakes? 67

ShuRoo - A Needed Aussie Invention 70
Not really necessary around Double Bay or Toorak, but an essential anti-collision device for trailerboat owners travelling in the country on highways and by-ways at 'roo o'clock, morning and afternoon.



Rebuilding An Old Dunbier Trailer 74

This is the definitive report on rebuilding a clapped out trailer - and by a fully qualified marine engineer too. Chris Wyeth worked his boat off the beaches and estuaries for years before acknowledging something had to be done . . . and a new one wasn't in the budget.

SSA: 4WD Suspension Alternatives! 86
It is worrying to see so many otherwise powerful and ideally suited 4WD towing vehicles struggling to handle a decent load on the drawbar without the steering becoming ominously light, the brakes become a bit strange and the headlights working up in the trees. If this matches your situation, read this special report carefully!

Planning The Great North Oz Adventure 97
Still the great challenge for most fishos, this excellent report by SA outback specialists, John and Samantha Yates, puts outback travel into a very sharp perspective.

2014/15 F-250's Back & Sorted 104
Good news for keen trailerboat owners with the rigs in the 3.5-4.5 tonne class (not to mention caravanners, Horse float owners, etc!) but the Ford F-Series is back.

Setting Up The Trailer Properly 106
Getting the boat to come up a multi-roller trailer nice and straight can be easier said than done – in this report we examine (and deal with) the factors involved.

Rhino's Superb Roof Loading System 114
We all but gave up trying to find a roof loading system that actually worked - fast, easily, and on high 4WDs - and then we discovered this Rhino system. Done deal!

Launching & Retrieval Techniques 94
You've seen 'em do it at the launch ramp, but how is it the pros are able to launch and retrieve their boats in seconds? This is an excellent primer for all trailer boat owners still a bit nervous down there at the ramp.

Bits, Tips, Techniques 124
Tyre Rating 126
Bearing Greasers 127
Wheel Rim/Axle Ratings 128
Winch Wire or Webbing? 129
Waterproof Lights 130
Wheel Chocks, Skidzz & Step-ups 131
Ratchet Pawls 132
Snap Hooks, 'D' Shackles 133
Spare Tyres/Dunbier 3rd Wheel 134
Avoid U-Bolt Dramas 136
The Towbar Coupling 136
Tie Downs 137
Dolly Wheels 138
Wheel Bearings 139
Adjustable Tongues, Hitches 139

ABM's TT&R

Readers Please Note:
ABM's office is often unattended whilst we are on the water, or travelling - or we're here, but just on another call. The phones and e-mails are monitored very carefully, so don't just hang up - use the system - please leave a message!

T,T&R ABM Web Site
www.australianboatmags.com.au

Subscription Inquiries
(07) 5564 2562

Reader or Editorial email
editor@ausboatmags.com.au

SUBSCRIPTION email
subs@ausboatmags.com.au

Reader/ADMIN Fax
(07) 5564 2563

Publisher
Australian Boat Mags Pty Ltd

Administration
(07) 5564 2562

Editor & Production:
Peter Webster

Accounts: Tracey
Subscriptions: Mary
Sub Edit/Proof Reading: Mary

T&T Contributors:
Chris Wyeth
Neil Dunstan
Di Ross & John Batty (SA)

ABM's Office Address:
24 Walter Raleigh Crescent
Hollywell QLD 4216
Australia

Foreword

- Our Ever-Changing Trailerboating World

About 35 years ago, almost to the day, a young family bloke, his wife and four kids were struggling to retrieve their 5.5m half cab trailerboat at dusk, on the banks of the Richmond River in northern NSW next to the township of Ballina.

It was easy to see what was wrong. Their V-8 HQ Holden Wagon might have had plenty of power, but its 2WD grip on the slimy ramp was all but non-existent. If anything, it looked like the weight of the boat was slowly pulling the whole rig backwards into the water!

Making matters far worse, the Richmond River was ebbing out to sea with at least 2 knots of current across the foot of the ramp. With a couple of youngsters holding on to a tail rope trying to keep the rig straight whilst Dad frantically wound up the manual winch, the situation was fast getting out of hand.

For the author, there have been many trailerboats, over many miles, countless launch ramps, caravan parks, van villages and camping grounds around Australia. Tow vehicles, boat trailers and highways are now substantially improved.



Because it was on nightfall, the kids were tired, and everybody was slipping and sliding on the ramp. It was a pretty grim situation.

At this point, about half a dozen burly Ballina fishermen from a pub just up the road from the ramp, appeared on the scene, and with well-practiced skill quickly moved in to assist the troubled family.

With a couple of big blokes taking the tail ropes off the youngsters, others securing ropes to pull the boat forward and two more putting weight (and not inconsiderable muscle) on the back of the Holden, the rig was slowly, squealingly, and with lots of blue smoke and a smelling clutch - brought back on to solid ground and control by the assembled group. Big cheers all round. The men returned to their drinks at the bar, and the somewhat shattered family sat there thanking their lucky stars that such helpful locals had been on hand "to save the day".

It's an evening I don't think any of us will ever forget, and as the father of the mob, it left scars that changed the way we thought about boating and how we went about trailerboating for evermore. It was the night we decided 4WD's were the only way to go, and we purchased our first 4WD - the old brown FJ-40 Landcruiser - to undertake the first of the towing chores we placed before that trusty vehicle.



Over the following years, we drove our FJ-40s, FJ-55 and FJ-60 'Cruisers (and 'Troopies') from one end of Australia to the other, towing everything from Novas to tinnies. We even towed our 21' SharkCat right across the Hay Plains (*in third gear, into the wind, the whole way across!*) and then across the Nullabor Plains, before turning 'right' and heading north up the West Coast to Exmouth, WA - all the way from Sydney, an 11,500km round trip. (*see pic*).

We've enjoyed a 40-year journey around Australia in countless vehicles, towing innumerable boats and staying at so many different campsites we long ago lost count.

It has not been without its successes, its failures, its frustrations, its joys and "moments". You can't go the distances we've gone without encountering all of those emotions and situations at some point in time.

The New Technology

Many things have changed though, and mostly for

Top Pic: Apart from aluminium trailers, another recent development is the advent of the "fifth wheel" or turn-table trailer for the larger trailerboats. Better for the big rigs - but not for beachwork (!) such as you'll find (Below) on Queensland's Fraser Island.

the better. Australian highways now are infinitely better than they used to be just 10 years ago, let alone 20 or 30 years ago. Between most cities today we've got almost freeway-like conditions and overtaking lanes are dotted along the highway at nearly every 5km intervals when necessary.

The vehicles we use, too, have changed forever. We no longer have just the 4WD alternative. Now we have the "all-wheel drive" (AWD) option, which is, for countless families almost the perfect compromise.

Now, most of the major manufacturers have genuine AWD vehicles in their fleets, and the stakes have changed for the trailerboat owner. Having an AWD SUV doesn't provide all the solutions for all the situations by any means - but for the vast majority of Australian boating families, 90% of whom prefer to go trailerboating with a pressed tinny, the AWD SUV from the Australian manufacturers is just about spot-on.

Already, we're seeing the use of the traditional "big" 4WD decline as families towing boats under 2 tonne move across to the SUV's increased family comfort and fuel efficiency. The older style LandCruiser, Patrol (etc) are becoming the province



The Basic FACTS

. . You NEED To Know

Probably the most important fact about boat trailers you need to know concerns the registration situation – throughout Australia, it has changed forever.

The days of getting away with a clapped out trailer hidden partly behind the barn and partly down at the local launch ramp, have just about gone. Sure, there are small waterways, beach fronts, etc, in some of the more remote regions where the old style trailers are still used, but even then, it's mostly in off-highway or off-road situations.

The incentive was there, and slowly and surely, the state ministers developed a consensus on uniform trailer regulations.

Contrary to what some unscrupulous boat dealers have told the public from time to time, the fundamentals of the states' agreement have not changed since, nor will they change in the future. A couple of measurements in particular lay down the very foundations of the entire Australian transport system, and there's no way any State Government is going to see these rules changed.

Love this shot, from far north Queensland, showing just how big our wide (green!) land is from a trailer boat perspective - and why the ability to sustain relaxed highway travel around 100 kph is so important if families are going to make decent inroads into the travel program when they come up from the Southern states.



From this premise, it then follows that something changed along the way.

It did too – from about 1997, state transport department ministers and their bureaucrats started pressing for uniform national boat trailer legislation, and whilst in truth, boat trailers were only a relatively small part of the big picture involving semi-trailers, caravans, industrial trailers, etc, a number of clear objectives were put on the table.

All the states wanted a degree of national uniformity to overcome the legal problems attached to crossing state borders with different rules in each state.

The most important regulation is the one controlling the width of all vehicles, trailers, and the loads they carry.

Throughout Australia the uniform maximum width is 2.5m wide. Beyond that, the vehicle or trailer cannot legally be driven or towed in Australia unless certain provisions are made to (essentially) warn other motorists that a wide load (or perhaps a long load) is emerging near them.

When you think about it, the whole thrust of the regulations covering boat trailers essentially deals with commonsense issues.

Can you imagine the mess it would be if the width

of the vehicles, semi-trailers, buses or boat trailers was left up to the manufacturers? There would be absolute chaos on our roads within hours. Vehicles wouldn't be able to pass on hundreds of bridges across Australia; we wouldn't be able to go through the bridge tolls; countless roads couldn't allow two vehicles to pass side by side and even in our suburbs, the results would be catastrophic if two varying width vehicles had to pass in the same street.

Imported Boats

This matter has particular relevance at the moment when so many American boats are flooding into the Australian marketplace. Unfortunately, in the majority of American states, the authorities allow a maximum trailerable beam of 2.590m (8'6") to use the imperial figure for absolute clarity).

Many states in America have a 2.438m (8'0") maximum width, but by far the majority use 2.59m, and as a result of this, the vast majority of American trailerboats in this 6.0-8.0 metre class, utilise the 2.59m width.

Big cats like F&B's 2005-2007 camera boat, the 6.8m Whim-Away, exist largely because there are many commercial situations (fishing, diving, photography, etc) where the maximum trailerable beam (2.5m) means the only way operators can get sufficient stability for their work is to utilise the catamaran configuration



In Australia, this is completely illegal. Here, as noted, our maximum beam is 2.50m (8'2").

Again, at the risk of being a pain in the wotnot, the writer would like to reiterate that as we have noted before, being just 90mm over the allowable width is like being a little bit pregnant – it doesn't change the fact that you are!

The law requires that the maximum width of any boat trailer be no more than 2.50m and even 1mm over is against the law.

Now as a society, we all have to think about this and decide just how important these rules and regulations are going to be. The writer has seen countless

examples where people are just blatantly ignoring these regulations. It is increasingly common to see people towing boats up to 9.0m LOA with a beam of 3.5m on brand new trailers, obviously thumbing their nose at the rules, regulations and finally, the law.

But it's a bit more serious than that if you think about it.

As a long term trailerboat owner and a person who has hauled many very big boats around Australia for quite a few years, I have to say it pisses me off that so many of us have had to comply with the rules over the years (at no small cost, I might add), and with a great deal of inconvenience on some occasions.

For example, I'd really like to have had a 3.0m beam on many of the power cats we've owned over the years, and/or I'd like to have been able to tow some of our bigger craft along the highway – but the rules prevented me from doing it.

To the writer, it's the same as a game of Union, Rules or League, where one team decides to make the goal posts 3' wider because they'll be able to kick more goals that way – and thus ignore the most

fundamental of all sporting rules i.e *everybody has to play on the same playing field, using the same set of rules.*

So what we have here is a highway situation where the good guys are abiding by the law and maintaining their legal obligations, containing the width to 2.50m for normal recreational boat usage, whilst a whole raft of people are now breaking the law towing boats that are up to 2.895m (9'6") wide on the trailer.

What I want to know is this: If I'm moving my boat interstate properly and I'm running an oversize, "indivisible" load (ie a big boat) on a legally registered trailer complete with flashing lights,

SAFE Trailerboating With The Family . . .

Every year thousands of families pack up their trailerboat to take off to their favourite holiday destination over Easter or the Christmas holidays or during the school holidays throughout the year. For most people, once they've made a few trips with their trailerboat, they become very confident and learn to enjoy the trailer boating process. However, it is not always like that. To other boatowners, especially those starting out, the whole notion of trailerboating on the highway is fraught with potential hassles and tension.

To help overcome this situation and explain how trailerboating on the highway can be enjoyed by the whole family, Editor Peter Webster shares some of the secrets he's gained over the past forty years on the highways of Australia.

Boat trailer design and engineering has come a long way in the last 40 years or more since the writer put a 1960s galvanised steel Boeing trailer under his family's first 'serious' trailerboat - a little 15'6" plywood Hartley-designed, half cabin runabout (pictured below left).

Back then, brakes were designed simply to make it look good, 'coz they were about as effective as opening the driver's door, and skidding your foot along the ground!

Although the 4.75 m boat was quite light, not having effective brakes was very obvious at the foot of the Clyde Mountain on the trip 'down the coast' we used to make from Canberra ACT, to Batemans Bay NSW.

Towing with various model Holdens, the writer can distinctly recall a sense of relief when Holden's front wheel drum brakes were finally replaced by disc brakes. On the long, steep descent down the mountain to the Nelligen Bridge, the distinctive smell of fading, burning drum brakes still comes back to mind all too easily.

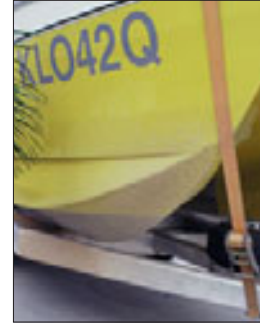
Oh yes, those were the days when we were young and foolhardy, and knew no better - indeed, there was no alternative at that time.

Fortunately, things have changed a great deal in the last few decades.

Today, boating consumers have a choice of properly engineered, well-built trailers with a multitude of facilities and technical features that make trailerboating on the highway a safe and pleasurable experience.

The highways have changed dramatically too, with virtual freeway conditions between capital cities for the most part, and even in those areas where the highways remain a single lane, there are now countless special overtaking lanes on just about every major ascent between Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane - right through to Cairns.

Take a modern trailerboat, integrate this craft with a modern galvanised steel (or more recently, an aluminium) Australian trailer, and the boating consumer can put history's horror stories back on the shelf, and look forward to enjoying trailer boating on the highway, as a precursor to a special holiday



Top left: Mud flaps are more than a good idea on the tow vehicle - they are essential for highway work, especially for a fibreglass boat. **Top Centre:** Trailer security is paramount - these popular 'lock-it' clamps are strong, cheap and effective. **Top Right:** Don't forget to tape over the face (the 'window') of your transducer when you go off the tar. **Left Above:** Taping over the water intakes takes a few seconds, but stops road grime, grit and dust lying in the intake gallery. **Above Right:** Careful, Dad! The boat and trailer is not a storage locker - and loading it up for the Big Day Out needs a bit of careful thought, to make sure it can handle the load, and the gear is all stowed ahead of the axle.

experience.

The Basic Elements

Central to any trip on the highway with the family, especially if young children are involved, is the need for sensible trip planning.

This starts with ensuring that you have a well balanced and set up trailer so that both husband and wife can drive as conditions and fatigue demand. There needs to be a comfortable environment for the kids, and a route plan that involves plenty of stops at convenient intervals along the way.

From the outset, I think we should deal with one of the furphies about highway travel, and that relates to the number of times that families stop.

For many years, it was held that to stop was to lose too much valuable time en-route. It was considered better to 'grin and bear it', and keep driving, rather than stop and take a break.

Not any more. Modern experience has shown it is far better to take frequent breaks, not only to freshen up the driver, but also to let the kids get rid of some of that pent-up energy they've been storing over the last leg of the trip.

In the writer's experience, it's rare not to encounter a major city or township every hour and a half or so from each other, and only in the more remote regions will you find stretches involving 200 kms (or several hours) of driving. Even then, there are always minor townships or road houses along the way to break up the most arduous journey.

Offsetting the loss of time (which could be as much as half an hour a stop) the highways and trailerboat combinations are so much faster today, it is still possible to put away quite substantial distances, safely and comfortably in a day - despite having stopped perhaps half a dozen times along the way.

We've proven repeatedly that keeping the kids happy and peaceful is far more conducive to long



The Art Of (Safely!) Beach Launching Your Rig . . .



The Cruise Craft Fishing team launch the 625 Outsider at Fraser Island's Waddy Point during one of their regular visits to this magic place. The experience gained by the team is put to good use, as they regularly assist Cruise Craft owners to set-up their boats properly for beachwork, or remote area fishing.

There's no doubt some of the 'hottest' fishing regions in Australia are best accessed right off the beach - and this applies to every state in Australia. Each beach has its own peculiarities and characteristics, but they all utilise common techniques for the 4WD drivers working to access the waters beyond the surf line. In this special report, Chris Wyeth shares his long experience beach-launching his Sportfish - with some excellent support pics from the Cruise Craft Fishing Team.

Living in Sydney, and fishing out of the near-by harbours and ports left me a little disappointed, and being a subscriber to the 'Grass is Greener' theory I was always looking for other alternatives.

While exploring these other alternatives, it became clear that accessing some of the better fishing grounds off the East Coast sometimes required you to launch and retrieve your boat on less than average boat ramps, or in some cases, across the beach.

Coincidentally, it is exactly this scenario that prevents most of the larger trailer boats from fishing these areas and as such, the fishing grounds see a lot less pressure. However, I will argue that with a well set up tow vehicle and trailer, launching your boat on these ramps should not be a problem and if anything, the process will only add a little extra action to the start and finish of the trip while giving you access to some of the better grounds.

In this article, I would like to go a step further and discuss launching and retrieving a reasonably large boat off the beach. I will outline my thoughts and opinions on the matter and the methods and procedures that we have developed and used over the years fairly successfully.

My theory is that if you can safely achieve this, using sub-standard, tidal or broken ramps will be no problem.

With any vehicle on the beach, the danger zone is definitely anywhere there is water moving over sand.

This wave action can very quickly erode away the sand base beneath your tyres and before you know it, you have sunk 150mm (6") with the wet sand now packed around your tyres. Breaking the resulting suction effect can be difficult. Add to this a trailer that has also sunk, and real trouble can loom very quickly indeed

So the key to successful beach launching is to minimise the time in this area. This is fairly easy with smaller boats, and the most common method among small boat owners, is to firstly beach the boat and then drag it up the beach with the tow vehicle before winching it onto the trailer. With this method, all crew and equipment are very quickly out of the danger zone and getting the boat on the trailer

becomes a lot less urgent.

However, my boat, 'Rowdy' is a 6.4m Sportfish Centre Cab and weighs in at approx 1.2 - 1.5 tonne in fishing trim and is what I would consider to be the upper end of the size range that can be safely launched and retrieved off a variety of beaches.

Unfortunately, this pretty much rules out the above mentioned method of retrieval, so this means that the boat has to be winched onto the trailer while still floating - and this means that the tow vehicle is exposed to an extended period in the danger zone.

Short of laying down wooden planks and turning the whole process into a production, the best way to minimise risk to the vehicle is to retrieve the boat asap and *get the hell out of there!* For this to happen, the setup of the trailer is crucial.

For me, and I suspect most others, my trailer spends most of its time carrying the boat along city streets or highways, so building a trailer specifically designed for beach launching is not really an option. The best thing to do here is modify your existing trailer for this task, all the while being careful to preserve its on-road manners.

Trailer Set-up

Well, how do you get a 1200 - 1500kg vessel onto a trailer quickly, without driving it on?

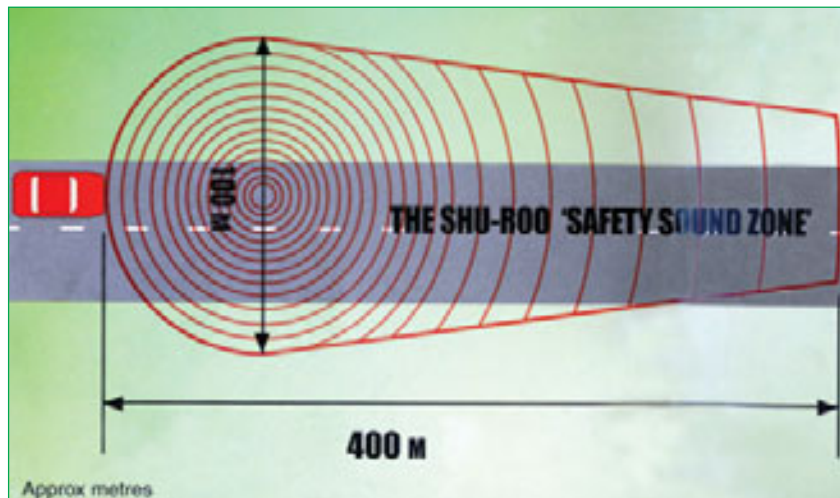
The answer is that you have no choice but to winch it on, and over the years we have tried everything from manual winches with an army of waiting winders, to dedicated electric winches - including several versions of the modified starter motor-based assemblies you see around.

I can pretty safely say that while they all worked in their own right, none were quick enough to warrant me continually risking my own vehicle. I needed a powerful electric winch that could easily pull the boat on the trailer within 30 seconds, using a single line pull, without a block / pulley arrangement.

Now, such winches are readily available for the 4WD drive market, but are obviously unsuitable for mounting on a trailer due to their physical size, electrical requirements and attraction for thieves.

However, since I had already fitted such a winch into the bullbar of my Nissan Patrol, it was decided

'Shu-Roo' Anti-Roo Collision Device Does Work (Very Effectively, Too!)



With Graham Connor singing one of my favourite tracks softly on the CD player, the darkness of the night was only broken by the IPF spotlights stabbing through the dark across the horizon, as the Suburban's V-8 diesel quietly throbbed in the background.

The tachometer was sitting on 1810 rpm, around 115kph, so progress through the night was swift. We were heading back from Hinchinbrook after a late start, and I wanted to make Proserpine that night, before getting off to a dawn start the following morning.

We were heading south for the Gold Coast. Ruth was dozing in the passenger seat and I was quite relaxed, watching out for the semis that were the only other vehicles on the highway at that hour of night, when the 1800mm kangaroo simply jumped in front of the bonnet of the Suburban. With no chance of stopping I instinctively accelerated, as we've learned you must do in this situation. The Suburban demolished the 'roo, but lifted up to about 45

degrees, as the 3 tonne vehicle rode up and over the doomed animal, which emerged out the driver's side behind the rear wheels and was re-collected by the big gal steel tandem Tinka trailer, which barely moved off line.

The 'roo hit and dented several body panels from the front all the way down the side of the vehicle (under the door sills) with a big whack into the wagon sides under the rear side window. In the process, the Suburban yanked the boat (the 7.2m, 3(+) tonne platey, *Genesis*, from one side of the road to the other, but fortunately, I'd managed to keep the Suburban pointing ahead - and the whole shebang 'landed' in a reasonably straight direction, albeit on the wrong side of the (empty!) highway.

It was all over in seconds.

As we pulled up to inspect the damage and shakily studied our smashed "bullbar", spotties and body panels, I made a mental decision that there had to be a better way of dealing with this 'roo problem. Otherwise, we were going to be forced off the road at



night time almost everywhere we went along the eastern seaboard, especially out in the bush. As it was, we were luckier than most; neither of us were injured, the airbag hadn't gone off - and we'd 'only' done about \$3,000 worth of body damage. The Tinka trailer, and its precious load, despite its rough treatment, was A-Okay.

Thus we fitted our first ShuRoo system to the Suburban and the problem was basically resolved. Well, nearly.

On another trip, again outside Bowen, but this time with the ShuRoo 'on', it was absolutely fascinating watching the ShuRoo work.

The poor, starving 'roos, in the middle of a bad drought, had come right up to the road's edge to nibble on the grass. There were *hundreds* of them. For about 60 km they were standing almost shoulder to shoulder on both sides of the road. It was quite scary and certainly raised many issues about the safety or wisdom of driving in this part of the world at night.

This is the comparatively new truck-style, 4-speaker Shu-Roo pack we installed on F&B's Ford F-250 some years ago. The idea here is to get the outer pair to send out a side sound wave as well as have the middle pair send the 'normal' pattern that works down the centre of the road (see illustration). Think of them as you would a set of rally lights, where it is often as important to 'light up' the sides as it is the road straight ahead.

Over the years, we've suffered the most serious damage (in vehicles without the Shu-Roo system) from the 'roos coming in at 90° to the vehicle, travelling like an Exorcet missile.

We wanted the 4-pack Shu Roo speaker system to discourage these furry critters from attacking the 4WD (!) and they did.

Footnote: Observe the F-250's damaged under-grill caused when we hit a big 'roo outside Mackay, before we fitted the ShuRoo system. (Grrrr!)

-PW

Setting Up The Trailer Properly

Some boatowners have a problem getting their boats to come up straight on the multi-roller trailer; others can't get the boat off the trailer without a bulldozer pushing it; some trailers sway uncontrollably. As Editor Peter Webster explains, all these issues can be resolved by getting it set-up correctly in the first place.

Boat trailers have come a long way in recent years. Today, there is no reason why a boat trailer shouldn't be a delight to handle, launching and retrieving the boat easily, quickly and without the dramas we used to have in the old days.

Back in the 1960's and 1970's, boat trailers basically consisted of 5 or 6 keel rollers and a couple of side bearers, covered with either strips of carpet or rubber.

With the side bearers sticking to the hull like glue (or rubber!) launching the boat was sometimes a nightmarish event, and actually gave rise to a very popular push-bar system invented by the Tinka people in the 1970's.

With this gadget, the winch wire was used to cleverly wrap around a pulley before attaching itself to a 600mm push-bar. As you turned the winch handle, you pulled the wire back into itself, thus pushing the bar out against the boat on the trailer.

For many people this was the only way you could launch a substantial boat and thousands of Tinka trailers were made with this device on as many Haines Hunters (in particular) sold through the 1970's and 1980's.

As most readers are aware, many of these craft are still in use today, and the push-bar system itself is commonly seen around launchramps, mainly because some of those trailers have endured right through to the new century, and are still providing valuable service to their boatowners.

But modern trailers slowly changed, especially those built in the post 1990's era when the industry generally adopted the practices established principally by Ian Mackay with their first series of up-market, multi-roller trailers.

To Mackay must go credit for popularising the

notion that people were prepared to pay an additional premium for a better quality trailer.

Mind you it didn't happen overnight, and I'm sure Ian Mackay would be the first to say that there are still pockets of resistance left in the market-place from boatowners who resent having to pay for a better quality trailer.

This brings us back full circle. Today's boat trailer is a pretty good piece of equipment. Just about everything is galvanised, including the working springs, a technique that wasn't available to us until quite recently. Trailers are generally more rust proof than they've ever been, they're fitted with infinitely

better roller systems, and there is now a definite demarcation between the type of trailer you have or need for a fibreglass boat to the sort of trailer you should have for a pressed aluminium boat.

Just to take this point a step further there is now a growing consensus, that the larger,

heavy duty plate alloy boats, especially those in the 7.0-8.0m range, don't need any rollers at all – most are now being built as "skid" trailers where the boat comes onto longitudinal bearers capped with teflon. We started using this technique with *Dusty Rover*, our 4.5 tonne sports cruiser about 8 years ago, (for 3 years, too) and right into 2009 with our 8.2m cruiser, *Far-Away*, with unqualified success.

It is easier to launch and retrieve these big trailer boats – a job that takes literally a few seconds either way – than it is to launch and retrieve many 5.9m pressed tinnies!

People at the launchramp are agog when they see Ruth Cunningham drive these huge 8.0m rigs onto the trailer and see the whole rig rise out of the



Above: Some boatowners find it hard to believe that even a big rig such as this Haines Signature 630SF, can be launched on the merest hint of a slope, without even touching, much less pushing the boat. In this case, the boat was so well adjusted to the Mackay trailer, it could only be launched by driving the boat forward on the winch post to enable the winch strap hook to be undone. Right: As a multi-roller trailer (like this beauty from Oceanic) comes from the factory, the multi-roller arms invariably need adjusting to suit the hull - and in particular, the planing strakes. Ideally, the rollers should never cross the strakes, and just run on the flats.

Below: Ocean beach launching is tough on the crew and the trailer; you've got to know what you are doing, or the consequences could be disastrous. This is a pro set-up; note extended drawbar and how the low, dropped axles keep the rig down on 'the deck' so it can be more easily driven off the trailer - and back on.



Rhino's Superb Roof Loading System



The Rhino Roof loader system is a real breakthrough for caravan owners and boat owners alike - but there are a couple of points to remember. Most important is to carefully check your vehicle's roof top load limit (it will be stated in the owner's manual) and allow a full 45 kg for the weight of the Rhino system itself. We ended up strongly reinforcing the roof of the Carry-Boy hardtop over the tray of the F-250 (see pic) for this very reason - and built a couple of security gates too.



Each year, thousands of Australian families, including a very high percentage of retirees, pensioners and workers on long service leave, take off for the Great Trip around Australia.

Along with that other Australian dream - ownership of one's own home - the other traditional Australian dream is to complete the Great Trip at some point in one's lifetime.

The majority of people plan to complete the trip towing a caravan, sometimes driving a motor home, and not uncommonly, a seriously modified 4WD or Troopie, set-up especially to live in the back of the vehicle.

Boat owners and fishing enthusiasts then face the fundamental problem - how do they transport the boat, if the car/4WD is being used to tow the caravan?

But it's not just devotees of the Great Trip syndrome that have this problem.

There are plenty of fishermen around Australia who want to carry a second boat (along with their "big boat") to provide inshore or estuary "insurance"

There are no 'trick' photographs here. On the next spread, all the pics were taken at the Paradise Point launchramp with Ruth winding the winch in a flowing sequence. What can't be seen in still photographs is how easily Ruth could wind it up or down, at will. We've now used the same system on three different dinghies and two vehicles over a five year period and countless operations. It still works like a dream.

against bad weather preventing offshore activities happening as planned - and there are people who can't be bothered with the hassles of a trailer. Why? Because very often, they have nowhere to keep it, don't want to bother with registration costs, wheel (Cont. P-118)

Bits, Tips, Techniques & Other Good Stuff

It is estimated that between new and used boat sales, well over a hundred thousand transactions take place each year as boatowners go up or down in size, or enter the world of boating for the first time - or pull out and leave.

With an estimated 600,000 active trailerboats in Australia, it's a safe bet to assume that fully 50-60% of them would fail to pass rego at any given time if fair dinkum, independent rego audits were conducted.

There are many reasons for this, not least of which is that Australia has had a "she'll be right" culture since trailerboating began in earnest in the 1960's.

This culture pervades the boating industry to this day. Only in very recent years have we seen the emergence of well engineered, quality

trailers capable of delivering the performance boatowners should expect.

However, by definition, this means there are literally hundreds of thousands of trailers in Australia in very poor condition.

This impacts on today's consumer in two ways. It means the trade-in price of the boat is destined to be reduced because the trailer might need to be replaced to meet today's tougher legislative standards.

It also means that most secondhand boats being sold privately today, could involve the incoming buyer in thousands of dollars in costs, and more often than not, this comes as something of a surprise - of the worst kind. Over the next 16 pages we're going to take a walk through the trailer park and make a

brief summary of all the matters to consider when you're purchasing a boat either secondhand or new. Either way, the trailer must comply with national legislation concerning boat trailers. New or secondhand, the rules of Registration are exactly the same.

But legislation and rules aside, it's just plain commonsense that we deal with the trailer issue up front.

The whole point of going trailerboating is to get out on the highway to discover and explore new and exciting fishing and cruising grounds. The last thing you need is to be forced off the highway either by the Police highway patrols, State Transport Dept Inspectors, or worse, mechanical failure in the middle of nowhere.

- PW, Editor

The local Registry Office, is where it all begins, and for some, ends, when the boatowner tries to register the trailer.



This is the VIN ("Vehicle Identification Number") Plate that has to be affixed to every boat trailer.



We have written many times through this publication about the change that has come over Australian trailer design and manufacturing standards - and this Mackay Trailer, made for one of our 4.40 side console trailer boats, provides hard evidence of the new standards that have been achieved. From the fold-back, extended drawbar, the excellent gal mesh walkway and forward stone guard, galvanised disc brake assembly, leaf springs and axle, bearing mates and stand-on gal steel mudguards, this trailer not only works superbly, trails like it isn't there - it will easily last the lifetime of the boat. Make no mistake - if you want a good trailer today - it IS possible! But like any other form of engineering, the better ones will cost quite a bit more.