

Hail Storm Fury

In the early hours of Monday the 1st of December 2003 a furious storm ravaged the suburbs of Melbourne. 100mm of rain was recorded within a few hours in the north as a spectacular lightning show displayed natures might. Further east across selected pockets of Ringwood, Lilydale, Chirnside and Mooroolbark up to 75 mm diameter hail stones rained down on anything exposed.

Millions of dollars of damage was sustained particularly by motor cars and of course caravans too. Imagine a rock hitting the aluminium panelling of a van. It leaves a big dent. Fortunately your insurance cover will generally pick up the cost of the repair.

Accordingly we have been flat out replacing damaged panelling on any customers vans unlucky enough to be in the storm's path. We still have a number to do and are grateful for the cooperative approach and understanding by many people who will have waited six months for their repair to be completed. Whilst more common in other places it is more than ten years since the last significant hail storm in metropolitan Melbourne, so we don't expect another one too soon.

One thing we did learn over the last few months is that **you should check the sum insured on your caravan.** Unfortunately we witnessed a few disappointed customers who were caught out by the \$ cover on their van not truly reflecting a fair market value of their asset. Some insurance companies

automatically depreciate the market value of your caravan yearly even though this may not be appropriate. They treat them like motor vehicles, when in fact the value of good second hand caravans is actually increasing, or at a minimum holding steady. Please discuss this important matter with your insurer. You may need to visit a dealers yard or consult The Trading Post to ensure your sum insured is realistic. If you think you are underinsured then a photograph of your van along with some advertisement clippings of similar vans showing their market price might be a good way to persuade your insurer of this fact. But don't forget of course that when your sum insured increases so does your annual premium!



Nilton, David, Steve and Graeme take a break from hail damage repairs.

Get to Know Your Caravan Seminars

Hosted by Tom Harding, these informative three hour Saturday afternoon sessions are ideal for the new or intending caravanner. In an interactive small group format we discuss and demonstrate the things you need to know for a safe and enjoyable caravanning holiday. Topics include: Electric Brakes, Towbars and Levelling, Car and Caravan Combinations, Batteries, Solar and 12 volts, Maintenance, Loading, Critical Purchase Decision Items, Important Accessories, Awnings Handling and Maintenance and much much more. For only \$25 per head you can **"find out what you don't know"** and take all the worry out of buying a van or getting it on the road. Refer to the diary dates for scheduled sessions. Then call us right away for an application.

Diary Dates

- **Get To Know Your Caravan Seminars**, Hardings Caravan Services Bayswater 2.00pm to 5.00pm. Saturday 26th June, Saturday 31st July and Saturday 18th September.
- **Leisurefest at Sandown** October 1st – 3rd
Our Spring Caravan Show

Farewell Tina

We are saddened at the passing of our good friend and colleague Tina, from cancer on the 11th June 2004. She was only 50. Tina was diagnosed late last year and has suffered steady decline since. She was a loyal employee for 9 years and will be truly missed. We send our sincere condolences to Husband Rudi, and her teenage children Scott, Shelley and Tania.

Congratulations Tom Harding

On receiving your life membership of the Caravan Industry Australia (Victorian Division) at the 50th Anniversary Caravan Show Dinner held in May. This high honour reflects some fifteen years of service to The Association as a Councillor, Show Committee person and ultimately as President. Over that time Tom was instrumental in driving a number of caravan shows, oversaw the move to The Melbourne Exhibition Centre and played a key role in the Association's purchase of freehold premises, a move that shored up the financial stability of our trade representative body. Tom sacrificed countless hours for the benefit of the wider caravanning industry and this award is a testament to his achievements. *Doreen would have been immensely proud!*

Save on a Winter Undercarriage Service

Our undercarriage service price will increase from 1st September 2004. The cost for a single axle caravan will increase from \$140 to \$165 with a tandem up from \$165 to \$190. This will be the first price increase for these jobs in more than 2 years.

So book in now and beat the price rise.

We will repack your wheel bearings, lube and adjust the brakes, check and grease all suspension linkages and components, examine external plumbing and electrical fittings, assess wheels and tyres and more. Plus we provide a report for future maintenance requirements.

Workshop news & Information

Matching your car and caravan

Hardings checklist when choosing a suitable car and caravan combination.

1 Know what your caravan weighs

Below is our rule of thumb for a fully loaded and well-equipped van but this is best ascertained by weighing your van at a Weighbridge.

(Refer to the index of your Melways for one near you.)

Single Axle		Tandem Axle	
Length	Weight	Length	Weight
12'	1200kg	17'	1900kg
13'	1300kg	18'	2000kg
14'	1400kg	19'	Exceeding 2000kg
15'	1500kg		
16'	1600kg		



2 Choose a Tow Vehicle that has an adequate tow rating for your van. Try to keep out of the last 10% of the limit. This will help to give you an engine power margin for pulling up those big hills! For example a Nissan Pathfinder has a rating of 2000kg, making an 1800kg caravan more manageable.

3 Choose a Tow Vehicle with adequate Tow Ball Weight Capacity. The 10% rule of thumb is just that. A guideline. For some caravan models with front kitchens, external front boots and/or wheels set well back the ball weight may approach 15%. You cannot safely assume that the 10% figure will always apply to caravan or vehicle ratings. You **must** do your homework on this one! Talk to Hardings if you are unsure.

4 Endeavour to choose a Tow Vehicle with a Kerb Weight as close as possible to, or greater than your loaded caravan. For on road stability the heavier the car the better.

5 Be aware that the longer the Wheel Base and wider the Wheel Track of your Tow Vehicle the greater will be its relative stability.

6 Other matters to consider are the Turning Circle and Fuel Carrying Capacity, but these are less relevant to Towing Stability.

7 Most Important choose a Tow Vehicle that you are happy to drive!

Frequently Asked Questions

How often should I service the Van?

We recommend an undercarriage service every 10 -15,000 kilometres or every two years.

How long do electric brake magnets last?

Depending upon your usage pattern and relative size of caravan you can expect to get at least 25,000 kilometres out of the current style oval magnets.

How do you know when electric brake magnets are worn out?

Magnets all have a wear indicator on the face. Recesses above screws or surface grooves will disappear as the magnet wears down.

Why can't I run my caravan fridge on gas whilst driving?

The naked flame is dangerous around service stations or in the event of an accident.

Does the wear in my Hayman Reese Ballmount Head mean something is wrong?

It is normal for the Trunnions (the bits on the end of the level ride bars that fits into the ballmount) to wear into and slightly distort the head. Especially when they are new, because the trunnions take some time to settle into a wear pattern. Don't forget to oil this area to help stop the groaning noise as you turn corners. As a rule you can expect 75,000 of caravanning kilometres before the head will need replacement. We may adjust the angle of the head and replace the trunnions at around half this distance.

Where Can I Learn to Tow?

METEC in Kilsyth. As an accredited training authority, The Metropolitan Traffic Education Centre has designed a towing course just for caravanners. Phone 9725 4758 for a brochure.

What is the best sort of electric brake controller to install into my car?

On the basis of value for money The Hayes Lemmerz stacks up very well. Good performance at a sensible price. (\$275 fitted to most cars). There are other options however and we hope to have a comparison schedule posted on the website within the next couple of months. In the meantime feel free to call us to discuss this important matter.

Sway controls

You must be sick of us ear bashing you about the benefits of The Friction Sway Control! Sorry but we won't apologise!! (Now there's an oxymoron). We are continuously buoyed by the positive feedback of happy users. Accordingly where others may fit them after a sway we want you to install one before any sway occurs. So:

- **If your caravan is as heavy or heavier than your car, fit a sway control**
- **If you are new to the game, fit a sway control**
- **If you have a tandem caravan behind a passenger vehicle, fit a sway control**



The Hayman Reese Friction Sway Control

- **If you put bikes on your back bumper, fit a sway control**
- **Don't accept sideways movement when a truck you overtakes as normal, fit a sway control**
- **If it doesn't feel quite right, fit a sway control**

The Hayman Reese Friction Sway Control \$395 fitted (when a weight distributing hitch is already in use).

Under Body Spray

If the timber underside of your caravan floor shows signs of opening up or chassis rust is a problem let us seal both surfaces with a bitumen coating. We use a body deadener compound similar to the underside of your motor vehicle. It forms a rubber like coating which acts as a paint, a glue, and a sealer all in one!

Priced somewhere between \$300 and \$500 depending upon the size of the van and amount of preparation involved. If protecting the under floor and chassis of your van is of interest to you drop in and look at our treatment samples or, phone us and an information pack to be mailed to you.

Prepare for outback

We have been busy preparing caravans for their trips into the desert. A number of customers are accompanying Tom along The Darling and up The Oodnadatta and Birdsville Tracks on a series of trips over the next few months. In anticipation of the prevailing conditions we review caravan ground clearance, stone protection, towing equipment, general equipment and spares required.

Most vans need some modifications to allow them to travel in a trouble free manner through this spectacular country. Stay tuned for trip reviews in the next newsletter.

A-Frame Mains Pressure Taps

The one thing better than a handy tap is one at a user friendly height. Let us weld a plate onto the gas bottle cradle or a post onto the A-Frame and relocate the tap to reduce bending when you fill your bucket. Allow \$100 to move it or at least \$200 to install it from scratch.

Pricing

It is not a dirty word, just a reality that we all have to deal with. We see it as essential to keep our customers in touch with increase wherever we can:

- \$ – Hayman Reese (Again) Yep! Due to increasing world steel prices Towbar prices will be up another 6% from June. Weight Distributing Hitches and Sway Controls prices remain constant for the moment.
- \$ – Hardings hourly rate will be \$70 per hour from 1st July 2004.
- \$ – Minimum Work Shop Charge is \$40 plus any materials used.
- \$ – Don't ever, ever, hesitate to query the bill. This is your right and we will not take offence. If we can't justify it we can't charge for it.

Picking Up Your van?

The following list shows the sequence of events that should take place when you collect your van from Hardings.

1. **Check Over Work Done**
2. **Discuss Work Done with Tradesman**
3. **Hitch Up**
4. **Check Lights**
5. **Ensure Hand Brake Off**
6. **Account Discussed and Questions Answered.**
7. **Pay The Bill!**
8. **Collect Caravan Key**
9. **Road Test**
10. **Enjoy Your Trip**

Following this sequence will help us to ensure that the outcome is spot on!

Shop Talk

Gas Bottle Covers

A padded vinyl cover which serves many purposes: Prevents stones from chipping the enamel off the bottle, keeps water out of the regulator and might absorb a stone impact preventing ricochet onto the \$700 rear window of your wagon or 4 wheel drive.

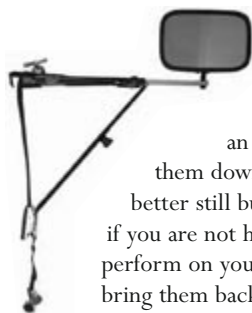


Hema Atlas

Find your way with the 5th edition Hema Atlas. The spiral bound version allows easy flip over page making it easy for the navigator. A clear and user-friendly format means you will never get lost! A4 size \$24.95

Towing Mirrors

Don't forget Hardings stock at least six different types of towing mirrors including the famous Aussie Truck Mirror (pictured)



Bring your car in and try them on. Good mirrors are as important as your brakes. We understand that it is sometimes not an easy choice to make. Take them down the road for a test, and better still buy in the knowledge that if you are not happy with the way they perform on your first trip you can always bring them back!

Jockey Stands

If you get caught out in a dip and can't fit your jockey wheel in the clamp we can offer two alternatives. Firstly add one of these stands to your kit. The flat plate allows the stand to be clamped where a conventional jockey wheel sometimes can't. **A quick fix for only \$60.** Alternatively we will weld a raised clamp inside the A-Frame which will increase the height range of your existing wheel and ensure you can use the jockey to help take the strain out of hitching up your level rides. **Around \$100 fitted.**



Vanguard Polish

Keep your van looking brand new with Vanguard Polish. It adds a protective coating to the aluminium which leaves a real shine and makes cleaning a breeze. Furthermore it revives old aluminium surfaces to give a real shine. As you can see Eddy is drowning in surplus vanguard bottles so he has knocked the price down from **\$15 to just \$10 a bottle** for winter only.



Hitch Pin Locks

This essential accessory makes sure your ball mount stays right where you left it. In the towbar. **Cheap Insurance at \$28.00**

Sidewind Jacks

We regret, due to a critical component shortage jacks will not be available for sometime. We are hopeful of resuming supply by summer.

Driving Tips

The Overtaking Decision.

It is easy to feel pressured by a vehicle behind you when towing your van. You can convince yourself that they are desperate to overtake, in fact you can hear them muttering and cursing and gnashing their teeth. You may be inclined to slow down, pull half off the road or flash your lights as a signal to overtake. Well...don't. It is not appropriate for you to make an overtaking decision on their behalf. It may be that they can't overtake, are waiting for a suitable spot to overtake or plain simple don't want to overtake. Remember your primary responsibility is to maintain absolute control over your rig. By that you are doing the driver behind you the biggest favour of all. Let them come past when they are ready in a location they deem suitable for their vehicle. Of course do pullover if an appropriate stopping area presents itself in the meantime. You wouldn't want the driver in front of you to decide when you can and cannot overtake them so don't do the same to one behind you!

If you are behind a vehicle travelling slower than your ideal speed but fast enough that you cannot easily overtake, we say: Stay at least 100 metres back to allow faster vehicles to "hop" firstly past you and then past the other vehicle. Two slower vehicles bunched together can create a barrier that only a Ferrari can get past!

The Four Mirror System.

Adequate Towing Mirrors are an on road control item, just as important as your towing equipment and brakes. By making sure your extension mirrors are wide enough to see the rear clearance lights on your van you can be sure that they are adequate for the job. But don't waste your car mirrors. Angle them down onto the road adjacent to the front corners of the caravan. This will allow you to see when the lane widens and narrows and make you aware if the bitumen edge is a bit rough or jagged. The four mirror system gives you a healthy perspective of what other vehicles are around you and where you are in relation to the road.

Try it! You will be surprised.

Resealing

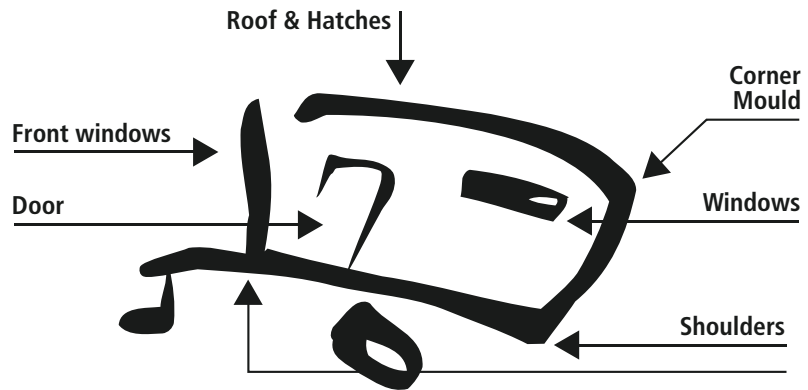
to Protect your Caravan Investment

It may have been a dry season in many parts of Australia, however we continue to repair leaking and water-damaged caravans.

It is a distressing sight for the owner to see their van with aluminium removed and rot revealed beneath. Often just small symptoms can be clues to significant damage behind the cladding. Dark stains in corners, around windows and hatches or moisture sitting on window sills and ledges should be a catalyst for investigation. Sometimes water entry points may be obvious: cracked or missing sealant under moulds, flaking silicon on the roof or missing screws or rivets. But leaks are usually not specific and more likely result from the sealant being at the end of its life and no longer effective.

Nilton says:

“It is our job to advise you to reseal before it absolutely needs doing, otherwise our recommendation is too late!”



Prevention is better (and cheaper) than cure!

By ten years of age every caravan must be inspected for sealant deterioration. Unfortunately some material becomes vulnerable as early as 6 to 8 years. Sealants used in the last 5 years are proving generally more durable; nevertheless inspect that stored or unused van regularly.

About the reseal process:

To perform a full reseal we remove every window, all vertical corner moulds, all surface sealant on the roof, body top or pop top the caravan door and all vent fittings and access door etc. All these items need to be cleaned up and replaced with new sealant between them and the body. Sometimes we need to scour the old sealant off and then repaint portions

of the caravan. It is a laborious, time consuming and costly process but one absolutely critical to its future!

What sealant is used?

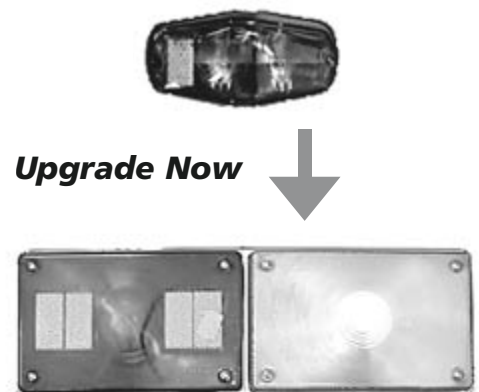
A silicone made by Rhodia, called V4 or 5CLM Neutral cure with a high joint movement capacity. If you would like to purchase the material from us to do the job yourself it sells for \$12.50 per tube.

How much does it cost?

For a 16' caravan or pop top expect a full reseal to price up towards \$2,500. However whenever we make a sealant recommendation we always prioritise the critical areas so that you can attend to the job in stages if you choose to. Maybe the corner moulds this year and the windows next year etc.

Body rejuvenation

- **Front Matting:** Nothing smartens up the front of your van like a new vinyl stone guard. Generally fitted in conjunction with a reseal, they protect and beautify your caravan. From \$250 (assuming the front corner moulds are off for reseal).
- **Upgrade your tail lights (see diagram):** Be seen, be safe! These larger tail lights make the older style one look like a thumbnail! And with quality bayonet globes you can forget the traditional pre trip “tap, tap, bugger” on the lense cover to make them work. Around \$200 fully installed.
- **Fit a new door.** The Camec Door has a full flyscreen security door and a three point locking mechanism. More fresh air and more safety. We fit a whole new door and frame for around \$950.



Odd Spot

- Sand Fly Repellant. Here is Vera Anderson's home brew! Mix a bottle of "Rid" into half a container of sorbolene. Add a splash of dettol, apply liberally to exposed limbs and you are an instant leper to sand flies.
- Light your stove and run your caravan fridge for a couple of days four weeks before you go away. If there is a problem, finding out the day before you leave will induce ulcers and delay your departure.
- Do you find it an effort to lift your caravan pop-top roof up? If you have a roll out awning make sure you unroll it about a half a metre or so before you push up the roof. Otherwise you are wasting energy working against the awning roller spring.
- At the conclusion of a recent road test, Greg said to a customer "Now we go back to the workshop, so you can pay the account and collect your wife." The Customer's response? "Well I guess the bill has to be paid....."
- "NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS" to us following your job. But please, if you are not comfortable with any aspect of your repair or service PLEASE let us know, because if you are not happy we may have some more work to do.
- Do This Soon: Go forth and check the wheel nuts on your caravan and trailer. Make sure they are not too tight or too loose. While you are at it, check the air pressure in your spare tyre.
- More on Wheel Nuts: You will notice the following request on your service invoice:
 - * *For your safety please check wheel nuts for tightness after approximately 50 kilometres. We have tightened the nuts during service but sometimes wheels can settle into the drum face after travelling. Thank You.*
 - * *This is an important job for you to do after service and also after changing a wheel on route.*
- Don't forget to lubricate the threaded bolt on your Friction Sway Control tensioning handle. This can dry and seize without a periodic drop of oil. Furthermore the Sway Control Body should be stored in a dry location when not in use. If you leave it in the front boot of the van we suggest putting it in a hessian or canvas bag to prevent rust building up on the slide bar.
- Whilst you are in maintenance mode spray a mist of silicon onto the tensioning knobs on the inside of your roll out awning hardware. These black knobs lock the outer arm in the horizontal expanded position and can seize dry. Also lube the ratchet mechanism through the right hand end cap to keep it "clicking" nicely. Use Selleys Easy Glide fore this purpose (\$15 per can).

Social and Community Notes

At Hardings we do our best to be a good corporate citizen. We have now split our waste disposal into refuse and recyclable materials. This was an initiative by Eddy. Good one Ed!

Hardings support The Kilsyth Ballroom Dancing Group. They meet every second Saturday of the month at the Kilsyth Community Hall, (cnr Colchester and Mount Dandenong Road) For a modest \$10 ticket you can enjoy a live two-piece band and a great night. All proceeds go to the Anti-Cancer Council. Ring Noel on 9886 6775 or Mal (a fellow caravanner of course!) on 5967 2441 for more information.

Recently we donated some goods to the Lilydale State Emergency Service for use on a vehicle of theirs. This was a small gesture given the wonderful work The SES does for our community.

Your Favourite Places:

Here is a small selection of destinations that customers have raved about on return from their trips. If you are travelling through these areas they could be worth checking out!

- Lake Charm, Victoria. Between Kerang and Swan Hill.
- Tumby Bay, South Australia near Whyalla on the Eyre Peninsula.
- Cape Hillsborough National Park, Queensland, North West of Mackay.

New Website additions:

Our aim is to provide a Website with Useful Information for Caravanners, not just marketing. Have a look at the latest additions. There is sure to be something of interest for you.

- Getting the best out of your Caravan Fridge.
- The Ultimate Caravan Equipment and Accessory Checklist.
- Reversing Techniques and Tips.
- Don't forget that through our links you can check out the full Hayman Reese Towbar range, Camec's on line product & accessory catalogue and find a Caravan park anywhere in Victoria from the Victorian Parks Association.

www.hardingscaravans.com.au

"Safe and enjoyable caravanning"

Raising your van

Special Winter Offer ...to raise your caravan

And finally put an end to the horrible grinding noises from the:

- Rear jacks
- Level rides
- Ball mount
- Step
- Rear door

Call us to discuss*



Hardings add a 50mm rail to your chassis and refit the suspension to achieve:

- improved ground clearance at all the critical points
- additional chassis strength
- easier removal of wheels
- negligible difference to the van's appearance.

* May not be possible on vans with an independant suspension

**PHONE NOW
9729 8477**

Interested?

Ask us to send you more information on any of the following:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery Options in Caravans | <input type="checkbox"/> Underbody Coating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Level Rides | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Brakes Controllers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sway Controls | <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing my Caravan for Outback Touring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Raising your Caravan | <input type="checkbox"/> Camec Security Doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resealing | |

Important accessories for your caravan: Check the list.

✓	Outdoor Matting	Tough, non slip and endorsed by Caravan Parks. It keeps you off the dirt, dust gravel or concrete and is an absolutely essential item. The matting is 2.5 metres wide.	\$40 per metre
✓	Sullage Hose	If you are still using a bucket then it's time to upgrade. This 25mm corrugated hose is tough yet flexible, smooth on the inside and comes with quick release screw fittings for convenient attachment to the van.	\$5 per metre
✓	Mains Pressure Hose	Special hose which is absolutely guaranteed not to taste! Copes with high water pressure, is kink resistant and doesn't set like concrete when the temperature falls below 10 degrees.	\$3 per metre or \$55 for a 20 metre coil
✓	Level Wedge	Lightweight, durable wedge which allows infinite adjustment up to 90 mm high. Allows you get the fridge absolutely level on a sloping site.	\$35 (single axle) \$65 pair (tandems)
✓	Anti Theft Lock	A visible and simple security device which prevents others from hooking onto your caravan. It is well designed with a "shield" to prevent the use of bolt cutters. Padlock not supplied.	\$32.50
✓	Wheel Chocks	Light weight and strong blocks for positive & safe parking on a hill.	\$9.50 each
✓	Two Way Level	An accurate and easy to use level indicator. Screw it to your a-Frame.	\$15 each
✓	Coupling Mates	Save your bumper and your marriage! Guide the coupling over the towball without damage or expletives. Two models: Couple Mate universal model and Backing Guide to suit a 2 bar level ride system.	\$35 to \$55
✓	Hitch Pin Lock	Lockable pin to secure your trailer ballmount or level ride ballmount. Especially handy when you are on tour, saving daily handling of the heavy, greasy piece.	\$28 each
✓	Vanguard Polish	Puts a protective shine on aluminium that beautifies and protects. Especially good for revitalising old surfaces and making them shine!	\$15 per 350ml bottle
✓	Hema Road Atlas	A convenient A4 size national map book fully updated and easy to read. It comes spiral bound for easy flip over pages to keep the navigator happy.	\$24.95 each

Hardings provide you with all the necessary products and services for your caravan.

- Accessories and spare parts
- Towbars, level rides and sway controls
- Electric brake controls
- Caravan repairs
- Trailer Parts
- Camper trailer windup service and repairs
- Resealing
- Lift up Beds
- Caravanners education programs
- Brakes and undercarriage servicing
- Chassis upgrades and repairs
- Aerolite chassis strengthening
- Sway problems corrected
- Improved Lighting
- Bumper Bars
- Outback Preparation
- Caravanners advice
- Insurance repairs
- Solar equipment & installations
- Jacking systems
- Raise your Van
- New pop top vinyls



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