

# CaravanTalk

Spring 2020

HOW'S THE  
**WELFARE**  
OF YOUR CARAVAN

WHAT'S IN A  
**SERVICE**

**SUSPENSION TALK**

**CRUISEMASTER'S  
NEW DO35**

Is Your Van  
*Leaking?*





# In This Edition



8



5



7



4



6



2



6



3

2 Storage

3 How's the Welfare of Your Caravan

4 Is Your Van Leaking?

5 Extreme Weather

Suspension Talk

6 Brake Controllers

Cruisemaster's NEW DO35

7 FAQ - What The Heck's An Anode

8 What's In A Service

**Disclaimer:**

Swift Caravan Services does not expect or invite any person to act or rely on any item, opinion, advice or advertisement contained herein and will not be liable for any loss or damage. The views expressed in this newsletter are opinion only and may vary for each person. It is your responsibility to verify any claims made.

# Need Caravan Storage?

At Swift Caravan Services, we offer two secure & affordable storage locations – Hastings & Kilsyth

Peace of mind is incredibly important when choosing to have your caravan stored with us on a long-term basis.

Our caravan storage facilities have the following security measures:

-  Bollards and heavy duty barriers around the entire property
-  A bollard gate entry system
-  24/7 monitored security, including alarm and CCTV cameras
-  Coupling locks mandatory on all caravans
-  Electric Fence

Kilsyth has a fully equipped workshop on site and Hastings has a workshop around the corner. Our business started 50 years ago servicing caravans.

**\$900.00**  
Per Year

## KILSYTH

Contact Leigh  
M: 0488 489 268  
E: [leigh@swiftcaravanservices.com.au](mailto:leigh@swiftcaravanservices.com.au)  
A: 114-142 Colchester Road, Kilsyth

Opening Hours:  
Monday to Friday: 8am – 4:15pm  
Saturday: 8am – 11.30am  
Closed Sunday and Public Holidays.

## HASTINGS

Contact Jefferson  
M: 0417 084 602  
E: [hastings@swiftcaravanservices.com.au](mailto:hastings@swiftcaravanservices.com.au)  
A: 2153 Frankston - Flinders Road, Hastings

Opening Hours:  
Monday to Friday: 9am – 5pm  
Saturday: 8am – 12pm  
Closed Sunday and Public Holidays.



# How is the welfare of your caravan?

While we have been in lockdown, so has your caravan.

Here are a few tips on how to check up on your caravans welfare while it has been sitting idle.



## Has your battery been charging



Caravan batteries should be trickle fed constantly, either from a solar panel or electrical connection if under cover. A very flat battery may not recover or would need quite some time connected to a quality charger to reach full charge.

If your battery low or flat, our auto electrician can do a battery load test to diagnose what the problem is.



## Are your tyres holding up

Unlike a car, tread depth is not a true indication of tyre life unless the tyre is worn badly on the edges due to a wheel alignment issue. Tyre Sidewalls deteriorate due to standing around all day in the sun, wind, rain and cold holding up your van.



The tyre industry quote around 6 years as the use-by-date of a tyre. Generally, on the side of quality tyres will be a date stamp like "2406". This indicates the week no and year a tyre was manufactured (eg Week 24 of 2006).



## Check your gas appliances are in good working order



Have you checked your gas bottles for being in date and connections for any leaks. Are all appliances turning on and working as expected – These include stovetop burners, oven, fridge, hot water and any inbuilt BBQ.

For ways to check for gas leaks, head to Elgas website ([www.elgas.com.au](http://www.elgas.com.au)) and search for soapy water leak test. If a leak is suspected have a licensed plumber do a proper leak test.



## Water ingress

Rot in the caravan frame can be caused by a leak in the roof either via the roof sealer or corner moulds, leaks in windows, leaks around poorly fitted satellite systems, solar, traffic lights, hatches and air-conditioners.

A few things to look out for are:

- When you first enter the caravan a simple smell test will tell you if there has been any historic water ingress in the caravan. Rotting wood has a distinctive damp musty smell.
- Whilst walking in the doorway and down the centre corridor of the caravan feel if the floor beneath your feet is bouncy or soft and springy or has highs and low points in it.
- Look around carefully at all the exposed wall boards and inside all the cupboards any under all bedboxes and floor lockers etc for any sign of discolouring or pimpiling to the decorative wall board.
- Touch all the wallboard surfaces for any signs of soft spongy feel or cold or damp felling on your hands.



Cont...





## Are your brakes operating correctly



Take your caravan for a test run at low speed, stopping several times to ensure the brakes are still in top condition. You'll also need to make sure the handbrake is in good nick and the cable hasn't worn. Sometimes the brakes can lock on if the handbrake has been on for a long time.

Additionally when test driving, can be easy to knock the setting on the brake controller also listen out for noisy wheel bearings that might need repacking, greasing or replacing.



## Are all lights and connections to vehicle operating correctly

An obvious piece of advice however it is frustrating to be hitched up ready to go and the indicators or brake lights do not come on as they should.

Many pop in to us on the way to quickly fix a problem but we may not be able to do help due to other demands or there is a more serious failure.

Before heading off you are welcome to pop into our site and do a free self test on the tow vehicle using the testing boards we have set up.



## Is your caravan leaking?

When silicone and sealer shrinks – the water leaks start.

Ever noticed that slightly damp / mouldy smell in your van?

Over time the sealer around your windows (and across your roof) degrades creating a point for water to come inside.



A number of caravan manufacturers also used foam tape as a sealant which also degrades over time.

Take a look immediately below your windows for any sign of staining on your walls – it usually looks like faint black streaks. This can also occur in overhead cupboards, sometimes without anyone noticing.

We know how and where to inspect for this pesky problem, which, providing you get to it sooner rather than later is not a hard thing to fix.

Based on our experience we ONLY use proven HIGH QUALITY sealers which, vary by location i.e. different products for the roof and for windows.

PS – When storing your van, get some Damp Rid Moisture Absorber from a supermarket and place the container in a plastic laundry tub in the centre of your van – it will do a GREAT job of keeping your van dry and smelling nice when not in use.



# Have you had extreme weather?

Been out in some wild weather and come off a bit worse for wear? Not to worry. Swift Caravan Services can help you get your caravan looking like new, even after the heaviest, most destructive storm. Our caravan hail repairs service gets rid of those pesky, ugly dents in no time, leaving you with a pristine machine that's ready for the road.

Hail damage to caravans can be quite extensive across the entire body of the vehicle even after a light hail event. Often owners tell us they didn't even know their pride and joy was damaged until days, weeks, even months later, because the dents were visible only in certain light.



The good news is, getting your caravan back up to normal is an easy process when you work with professionals like Swift Caravan Services. Need to make a claim with your insurer? Our team is adept at working with all the major companies, and can provide certified caravan insurance repairs.

Repairs generally involve the replacement of large areas of aluminium, fittings and awnings.

A Swift roof re-sheeted and sealed after it comes in for caravan hail repairs is quite distinctive. We will always have a roof in our storage yard to demonstrate the attention to detail our staff put into the seam sealing on your roof. We also ensure your roof comes out with increased camber so the water is pushed off the roof quickly!

For more information about insurance repairs, please call our office.

## Suspension Talk

### Rocker Roller Suspension Upgrade

While broadly similar to the Rocker suspension system, Rocker Roller suspension includes a big loop incorporating steel roller at the end of each spring. The benefit this system provides is that the loop ensures free play at the end of each spring, allowing smaller axle movements without affecting the second axle. More significant axle movements rock on the primary pivot arm in a way comparable to the Rocker system.

Another advantage is that this system also incorporates fewer parts, eliminating a number of bushes and pins in addition to the shackle plates. You'll get much more distance out of this system before wear becomes apparent, and the risk of spring breakage is significantly reduced.



Our team has performed conversions on many caravans over the years for owners looking to switch to this durable, reliable and easy to maintain system. This option is much better for outback touring than a conventional rocker system, which is unfortunately prone to spring breakages on unmade roads.

For the ultimate in safety and security while touring the country, speak to our staff today about upgrading your caravan.



# Electric Brake Controllers

**REDARC**

## REDARC Tow Pro Elite V3

The Tow Pro Elite has become a favourite with caravanners as its smooth, uses minimal dashboard space and very easy to use.

This is the first proportional remote head brake controller on the market, and is a great choice in all vehicles. If you have problems with your unit blocking the knee airbags, limited space under the dash, this unit is the right choice for you.

With just a rotary dial mounted through the dash, and the rest of the control unit hidden under the dash, it makes for a very neat fit, taking up very little space. Also, being proportional, it provides smooth braking.

Our auto electrician who specialise in caravan brake controller fitments. We often install brake controllers into all types of vehicles, like BMW X5, VW Toureg, Audi Q4, Land Rover Discovery plus other European vehicles.



# Cruisemaster's NEW DO35 Coupling

While the original concept for the DO35 was focused on off-road use we have found over the years that the DO35 has quickly become exceedingly popular on road vans as well; making it a great fit in all-terrains.

Building on the wildly popular DO35 platform Cruisemaster have listened to the people and incorporated the improvements we all wanted!

- Checklock Gen.2 Cap and Bumper for an easier secure seal.
- Rear webbing for added strength and support now allows the coupling to be mounted to the underside of draw bars.
- New Bumper moulding now means increased staying power for the reflector strip.

The Cruisemaster DO35 V3 & V3Plus models were designed and tested with the most popular WDH (Weight Distribution Systems) of the time. In most instances these models can be used with systems without the need for additional components, but if additional clearance is required, a range of adaptors for use with Hayman Reese systems.



**CRUISE  
MASTER**





# Frequently Asked Questions

## What the heck is a ANODE?

Well it's something that goes inside most HWS's.

Depending on where you travel it can last a short time (+/- 1 year) or longer (up to 2 years).

The quality of the water that you pass through your system makes all the difference! Water that contains a lot of minerals i.e. in Central Australia will cause them to wear fast. They are designed to keep the tank from corroding and are easy to change or we can do it for you during a service.



For the DIY – it's important to flush the tank out before installing a new one and don't forget to clean the internal thread after removing the old anode, and to place sealant tape around the anode thread before installation.

We always carry them in stock and they aren't expensive; the whole job should take about 1-hour.

## Approved Insurance Repair for

**Allianz** 

**AAMI**

**CGU**

**CIL**  
CARAVAN AND  
RV INSURANCE

**RACV**



# Repair Agent for



## What's in a Service?



All our services are performed on our specialised 'caravan hoists'.

Our experienced team and large workshop allow us to offer quality service to ensure your caravan is in perfect condition for your next adventure.

At Swift our Undercarriage Service includes a checklist of around 40 different items on your chassis and suspension system.

The key areas that we will work on while servicing your caravan are:

- Wheels, brakes and bearings stripped- these will be checked and serviced
- Tyres and wheels inspected
- Springs and shackles checked for wear, outriggers, chassis rails, cross-members and A-frames checked for damage/fatigue
- All moving components inspected
- Full inspection of body components
- Jockey wheel and jacks lubricated for ease of operation
- External traffic lights and wiring connections inspected
- Water Tank mountings and hoses inspected for integrity and protection
- Handbrake cable adjustment and effectiveness checked



For more information about servicing or you would like to book a caravan service, please call the office to book time.