

Tow Vehicle

Matching your tow vehicle to the caravan is crucial to safely and efficiently tow your caravan. Here's what you need to consider:

1. Towing Capacity and Braking

- ☐ Check the **maximum towing capacity** of your vehicle in the owner's manual or manufacturer specifications.
- ☐ Check the **kerb weight** (weight of the vehicle with a full tank of fuel and no passengers) is heavier than the caravan's **MTPLM** (Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass, also called the gross weight).
- ☐ Calculate the **towing ratio**, for safety aim for a towing ratio of 85% or less of the vehicle's kerb weight if you're new to towing.
- ☐ Check your vehicle's rated capacity for both braked and unbraked towing.

2. Engine Power and Torque

- ☐ Check your vehicles torque range.
 - High **torque** such as that produced from a large Diesel 4WD is essential for towing heavy caravans.
 - Lower torque such as that produced from a Petrol or hybrid vehicle is more suitable to lighter caravans or campers.

3. Transmission Type

- ☐ Select the right transmission for planned driving conditions.
 - **Automatic Transmissions** are generally easier for towing, with smoother power delivery and more suitable for touring and long-distance travelling.
 - **Manual Transmissions** can offer more control on steep inclines and declines, are great for offroad scenarios but may require more skill to avoid clutch wear.

4. Wheelbase and Stability

- ☐ Check your wheelbase
 - Longer wheelbase vehicles provide better stability when towing, reducing the risk of the caravan swaying.
 - Avoid using vehicles with a short wheelbase for heavy caravans.

5. Tow Bar and Hitch

- ☐ Check the vehicle tow bar is rated for the weight of your caravan.
- ☐ Check for compatibility with the caravan's hitch system.
- ☐ Check the height of your tow ball and ensure that it is the correct height for the Caravans tow point.

6. Suspension and Load Capacity

- ☐ Check the **Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR)** to ensure the vehicle can handle the combined weight of passengers, luggage, and caravan.
 - Vehicles with reinforced or adjustable suspension are better suited for towing, as they maintain stability under load.

7. Stability Control

- ☐ Check for Electronic Stability Control Mount (ESC)

8. Cooling Systems

- ☐ Check your vehicle's cooling system is robust enough to handle the extra strain of towing, especially in hot weather or mountainous regions.
- ☐ Check if a transmission cooling system (Auxiliary) is necessary.
 - Off road towing
 - Steep terrain
 - Transmission braking
 - High ambient temperatures

9. Fuel Capacity

- ☐ Check fuel tank size and prepare for long range trips and add a long range or dual tank system.

10. Off-Road Capability (if needed)

- ☐ Match the ground clearance requirements of your 4WD to your tow ball and Caravan hitch height.

11. Visibility and Accessories

- ☐ Check you have the correct towing mirrors for your car, they are required by law and offer better visibility of the road beside your caravan.
- ☐ Install a rearview camera or parking sensors to assist with hitching and manoeuvring.

12. Brake Controller

- ☐ A brake controller is necessary for operating the caravan's braking system. Ensure your vehicle has one installed if towing a braked caravan.

Disclaimer

This material is provided for the purposes of general information and understanding and should be used as a guide only. It should not be used as a substitute for expert guidance or specific advice as offered by a qualified professional.