

Buying a New Caravan

Buying a new caravan is an exciting investment, but it requires careful consideration to ensure you choose the right one for your needs. Here's what you need to know:

Supplementary Documents required

- VSB1 Revision 6 Road Vehicle Standards (Available on the Caravan Help website).

1. Define Your Needs and Lifestyle

- ☐ **Travel Goals:** Will you use the caravan for short weekend trips, long vacations, or full-time living?
- ☐ **Family Size:** Ensure the caravan has enough sleeping spaces and seating for everyone.
- ☐ **Destinations:** Consider whether you'll travel on highways, explore off-road locations, or stay in caravan parks.
- ☐ **Frequency of Use:** Determine how often you'll use the caravan to balance cost with features.

2. Supplier Warranties and Guarantees

- ☐ What are the supplier Warranties and guarantees?
- ☐ What are the manufacturer Warranties?
- ☐ Have any of the brands had a compulsory recall?
- ☐ What are the common defects from the manufacturer?

3. Set Your Budget

- ☐ Factor in:
 - The cost of the caravan.
 - Towing equipment (e.g., tow bar, brake controller).
 - Insurance.
 - Maintenance costs.
 - Caravan storage costs.
 - Compliance and certificates.
 - Gas and electrical certificates.
- ☐ Don't forget to budget for additional items like an awning, solar panels, or safety accessories.

4. Check the Layout

- ☐ Visit dealerships to walk through different layouts.
- ☐ Assess:
 - Sleeping arrangements (fixed beds, bunk beds, convertible seating).
 - Kitchen facilities (stove, fridge, workspace).
 - Bathroom (shower and toilet) – decide if you want one or will use campsite facilities.
 - Storage for clothes, gear, and food.
 - Comfort and ease of movement inside.

5. Consider Weight and Towing

- ☐ Check the caravan's **MTPLM** (Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass).
- ☐ Lightweight caravans are easier to tow but may lack features compared to larger models.

6. Features and Technology

- ☐ Look for modern features that enhance comfort and usability:
 - Climate control (air conditioning or heating).
 - Solar panels and battery systems for off-grid camping.
 - Entertainment systems (TV, sound systems).
 - Smart controls (lighting, water tank monitoring).

7. Build Quality and Materials

- ☐ Examine the quality of materials and craftsmanship:
 - Durable chassis and suspension.
 - Weatherproofing (roof and seams).
 - Sturdy interior fittings.
- ☐ Check for a manufacturer's warranty.

8. Safety Features

- ☐ Ensure the caravan has essential safety features:
 - Stabiliser hitch or anti-sway control.
 - Fire extinguisher and smoke alarms.
 - Robust braking system.

9. Compliance and Certifications

- ☐ Confirm the caravan meets legal and safety standards in your country:
 - Roadworthiness certification.
 - Towing regulations.

10. Dealer Reputation

- ☐ Purchase from a reputable dealer who offers good after-sales support.
- ☐ Read reviews and ask for recommendations from other caravan owners.

11. Test Tow

- ☐ Request a test tow to see how the caravan handles with your vehicle.
- ☐ Check for stability, especially at higher speeds and during braking.

12. After-Sales Service and Support

- ☐ Understand the warranty coverage:
 - What does it include (e.g., leaks, chassis)
 - How long does it last?
- ☐ Check the availability of spare parts and service centres.

Note: One of the major defects with Caravans is water ingress. Make sure you are covered for water leaks from rain and hosing down your van.

13. Insurance and Registration

- ☐ Get a quote for caravan insurance to cover theft, damage, and liability.
- ☐ Verify registration requirements for your area.

14. Future Proofing

- Consider your long-term needs:
 - Will your family grow?
 - Will your towing vehicle change?
 - Will you travel to different types of terrain?

15. Take Your Time

- Avoid rushing the purchase. Compare models, read reviews, and visit multiple dealerships if possible.

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.