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#### **ON MY MIND**

#### **Future Vision**

ast issue I wrote about a virtual reality (VR)

experience at the National Museum of Australia; one that fully immerses you in Antarctica, from exploring a penguin breeding colony to boating amongst the icebergs and helicoptering over towering ice cliffs. It was a fabulous experience and I can't wait for VR to become the norm for home entertainment.

At the 2019 Caravan Salon Dusseldorf, Mrs iM and I had a second VR experience, this time courtesy of the Erwin Hymer Group. Called The Future Is Now, its surprisingly low-key stand was tucked away in a corner and we nearly missed it. Fortunately we didn't, because the presentation – what Hymer envisages RV travel to be like in 2030 – was amazing. And if it's in any way accurate, I can't wait to be 72.

Firstly, Hymer's vision is for an all-electric, fully-autonomous and artificial-intelligence-assisted future; one in which you truly become just a passenger – albeit a pampered one. Secondly, it's a modular future: RV bodies are interchangeable and ride on a self-contained flat chassis (they call it a skateboard), so you tailor the living space to suit different holidays. Finally, ownership is just one option, along with leasing and sharing.

Hymer says, "Autonomous driving creates a first class living space. Along with modern assistance systems and first class sleeper seats, your holiday starts from the first kilometre".

Immersed in our VR experience we found ourselves inside a space-age Concept Galileo RV (essentially a studio apartment on wheels), zipping down a freeway at 120 km/h, into the evening. There were no controls, just some information displayed on the giant windscreen/front window and updates in a calm female voice, including commentary on passing places of interest. When we 'awoke' the next morning our Galileo was parked at the beach. One whole side had opened and a deck that included the kitchen had extended, providing the perfect place to kick back, relax and start our holiday. We could almost smell the salt air and taste the margaritas!

Fun experience aside, perhaps the most interesting thing/s about Hymer's not-too-distant vision is it being totally autonomous. I know many people distrust technology and to be sure there will be teething problems, but all I can say is bring on the day when it's reality.

For me to drive from home, near Mittagong, NSW, to a address in outer suburban Melbourne takes about an hour longer than flying from Sydney. That's factoring in getting to Sydney Airport, parking, checking in, a short flight delay, arriving in Melbourne, collecting luggage, finding the rental car and getting to the destination. Imagine getting into a fully autonomous Concept Galileo at home after dinner, telling it where to be and at what time, and then relaxing for a while before heading to bed and awaking outside the destination? Time for breakfast, a shower and off to work, play or both!

Also imagine how such a vehicle would revolutionise the lives of people with mobility issues, medical issues that prevent them from driving and/or those who simply don't drive? Would? I mean, will. This stuff is the future and while 2030 might be stretching it for a totally brave new world, it's coming. And as I've said, I can't wait. How about you?



Richard

### iMotorhome+Caravan

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**TESTED** 

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#### **STREET VIEW**

#### Haere Mai!

'm a bit RV showed out at the moment. I'd don't usually do motorhome and caravan shows back-to-back, but in this case the Caravan Camping and Outdoor Lifestyle Expo happening at Olympic Park, Sydney, was on the same weekend as the Motorhome Caravan & Leisure Show at Mystery Creek, Hamilton, in New Zealand. I needed to get to both and so had a day at the Olympic Park show, a flight to Auckland for an overnighter and then a day or so at the Hamilton Show. I'd like to thank Wilderness Motorhomes for its part in this process: They were kind enough to lend me a motorhome for a few days and had it at the starting gate when I walked in the door early Saturday morning.

Apart from anything else, it was an opportunity to compare the respective shows and there were some interesting differences. On the day I was at the Sydney show it was quieter than I expected and that wasn't only from the show goers, there were some surprising exhibitor names absent – Jayco, New Age, Sunliner and Trakka for instance – which was a little disappointing. Like any Australian RV show, the majority of the exhibitors, apart from Chinese-origin camper trailers, were Australian manufacturers, the exception being the likes of Swift, Adria and Caravelair.

boosting numbers was the very large contingent of NZMCA members attending the concurrent rally in their motorhomes, caravans and fifth-wheelers. That included yours truly, and whilst there I spent a bit of time wandering around the rally, chatting to some of the attendees. I also managed to score for myself an invite to Smart RV's Oktober Fest evening. Not only was there an opportunity to talk to Bürstner/Carador/Hymer owners, but the oompah band was really good!

I reckon It's a great idea having an RV rally at the same time as a show, something that seems beneficial to exhibitors and attendees alike. In the case of Mystery Creek, there's nothing wrong with the location either, especially when the sun shone as it did for the three days.

Unfortunately that was something that did not happen in the following week, when it was a case of having all four seasons before lunch – and hence the use of supplied pics in this issue's Bürstner Lyseo IT745 review. However, I reckon the sun is still shining on the NZ RV industry. There is certainly plenty of product available and from a variety of countries, making it a winner for potential buyers, that's for sure.





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#### **LETTERS**

#### Back Up!

I noticed in the July edition of iMotorhome that there is a brief discussion on reverse-in versus drive-in for RVers. There are several reasons why one should always reverse into a space, for all vehicles, but especially with a caravan. Reverse-in really means park with the drawbar facing the access lane. These reasons include:

- 1. There are less likely to be people, children and pets in your allocated space than there are on the access lane hence less risk of an incident when accessing your space.
- 2. The field of view is much narrower when reversing than in a forward direction and closely matches the space between your new neighbours.
- 3. The wider angle of view when departing better suits situations where children, pedestrians and pets are on the access lane to avoid any incident. The resolution (number of pixels) of your field of view is better travelling forwards you can fit over 100 screens from a reversing camera into a windscreen.
- 4. Living areas/annexes of adjacent vans less likely to intrude into your neighbours personal space if everyone parks the same way. In the event of an

- emergency such as fire (think the adjacent van, tent or annex) your van can be readily towed out of harms way by others in your absence.
- 5. Lastly, many parks have rules that make it mandatory to park with the drawbar facing the access lane so avoid any potential breaches by always doing this. (I have never seen a contrary park rule).

Happy and safe motorhoming and caravanning, Tom.

Thanks Tom, you raise some sensible and valid points there, especially around caravan park safety. I guess if a 'park offers drive-through sites you might end up 'top-and-tailed', but in that case all vehicles would still be driving forward. I remember being made to reverse into a spot by the river at a caravan park down the NSW South Coast some years back, even though that ruined the view through the windscreen. Apparently it was in case of evacuation due to flooding, which I could understand as a rule, but given it was hot and dry I did think some policy flexibility could have been applied (although maybe their insurance company might have though otherwise).



#### **LETTERS**

#### **Electric Dreams**

G'day iMotorhome Team, I hope things are settling down and you're embracing "The Dark Side" as you put it without too many troubles. I was interested in your report from Dusseldorf and look forward to your driving impressions of the electric Iridium motorhome. It seems electric is the way we will all have to go eventually, but prices are really going to have to come down a lot before people can afford them. In the mean time I like the range extended idea and wonder when we'll see that in Australia? Do you know if Ford is looking to import the little hybrid Transit at all?

Thanks, Lewis.

Thanks for your email Lewis; I can tell you we are settling into the Dark Side, although 'embracing' it might be stretching things a bit! Apologies for the lack of promised Iridium impressions, I completely forgot - next issue for sure. Regarding Ford's Transit Custom PHEV appearing Down Under, all I can say is don't hold your breath. Ford Australia appears to have little or no interest in a range of vehicles I think would sell well here - like the 4x4 Transit – and word is it's similarly dis-interested in the Transit Custom PHEV. What might appear here is AL-KO's Hybrid Power Chassis on the Fiat Ducato, and I think it has a lot of promise even though its range is modest for Australian conditions. Being able to run short distances with no startup wear on the engine, plus no fuel cost, would be a boon for local sightseeing, while having on-demand all-wheel drive would be greatly appreciated.



#### Still Paying?

It's great the magazine is free again (for readers at least!), but I've been charged for a year's subscription even so. Why?

Thanks, Kevin.

Apologies Kevin, even though the app was set to 'Free' on 1 July, that wasn't enough for Apple or Google. I've now

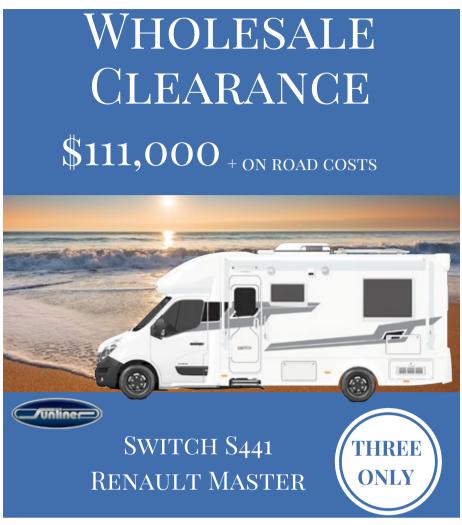
managed to cancel subscriptions within Apple's App Store, but Google won't let me do that for Goggle Play subscribers. Readers need to cancel their subscription from within the app, otherwise it automatically renews. Talk about a nightmare! The problem with app-purchase refunds is we don't collect the money in the first place and so they have to be done via the App Store or Google Play. If anyone else is having troubles please email me at <a href="mailto:richard@imotorhome.com.au">richard@imotorhome.com.au</a> and I'll do my best to help sort it out.

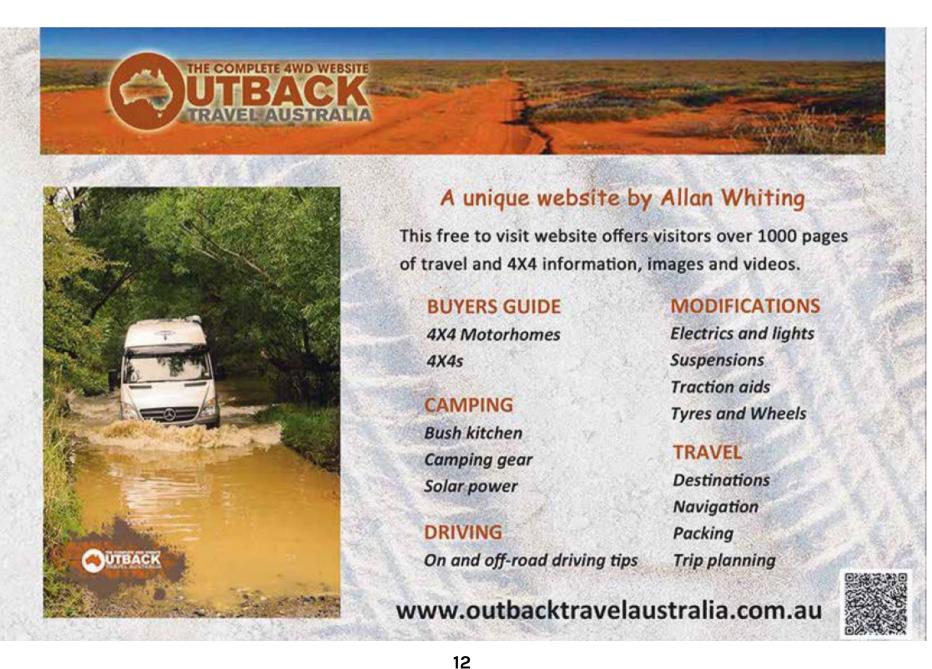
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#### **Rail Trails Rated**

Apair of Antipodean rail trails have gained international attention by being added to a list of seven bucket-list rides around the world. Rail trail cycling, walking and horse riding is gaining enormous popularity world-wide and while Australia lags behind, many other nations have or are fully embracing the health and economic benefits. Here's what the article had to say about our two most desirable rail trail experiences:

"New Zealand's first rail-trail, the Otago Central Rail Trail, offers a series of gorgeous backdrops: wind-swept vistas, jagged mountains, lush green farm fields and jaw-dropping river gorges. The well-kept gravel pathway spans more than 150 kilometres and is named after the railway line built here in the early 20th century to transport produce from the agricultural heartland. Before the railway, gold fever swept the area in the 1860s. Many relics of this gold-mining era can be found along the pathway, but perhaps none as unusual as the Platypus, New Zealand's

first submarine — built in 1874 to dredge the river beds for gold — and now on display at the Strath Taieri Museum in Middlemarch, the trail's eastern terminus. Queenstown, known as a hub for skiing, whitewater rafting and other extreme sports, is not far from the rail-trail's western end at the town of Clyde."

"Stretching 134 kilometres, the Great Victorian Rail Trail is one of Australia's longest rail-trails and is surfaced largely with compacted gravel. Located in the southeastern corner of the island nation and about a 2-hours' drive from Melbourne, the rail-trail traverses the alpine beauty of Victoria's High Country with breathtaking views of the countryside, the Goulburn River valley and eucalyptus forests. Highlights include passage through the Cheviot Tunnel — which was completed in 1889 and spans just over 198 metres — and access to Lake Eildon, a hotspot for boating and watersports of all kinds. With the gentle grade typical of rail-trails and a handful of charming historical towns along the way to visit, this one makes for a standout long-distance ride. For other swoon-worthy adventures in the country, check out Rail Trails Australia."





#### Fraud Charges

n Western Australia a man has been charged over an alleged theft of over \$500,000 from people he had contracts with to sell 25 caravans on consignment. It is alleged that instead of the funds from sales being transferred into trust accounts, as required under the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act (1973), he deposited them in his main trading account instead of the relevant trust account. It will be further alleged he failed to compensate the sellers of the caravans as per their contractual agreement.

A police statement said the caravans sold for more than \$650,000, of which approximately \$550,000 should have been deposited into the trust accounts and subsequently paid to the original owners. Some owners were able to recoup part of their lost funds by taking ownership of other caravans held by the accused, but most did not receive any compensation at all, it is alleged. A 69-year-old man has been charged with 25 counts of 'Stealing by Agents - Money Received by Direction' and is due to appear in the Midland Magistrates Court on October 18

#### **Apollo's Challenging Year**

Apollo Tourism and Leisure has survived what it says was a challenging year of subdued RV sales, the global company reports. The Brisbane-based rental giant and manufacturer has revealed its financial results for the last financial year ending on June 30, which show an underlying net after-tax profit of \$14.7 million. This was achieved on the back of a record revenue of \$365 million over the previous financial year. Chief Executive Luke Trouchet described the results as disappointing, but stressed the health of his company remains strong.

"Subdued retail sales conditions in the second half of the year presented the company with a number of challenges globally, which contributed to the decline in earnings year on year," he said.

Acquiring the Windsor and Coromal caravan brands had been an important addition to Apollo's retail offering.

"This action brings consolidation to a fragmented Australian caravan industry and increases the



product mix and market reach of the company's retail sales network," Mr Trouchet said.

He went on to say the that Apollo had made a solid start to the new financial year, with RV sales and rentals remaining strong. This was despite ongoing headwinds from issues like Brexit, China-USA trade tensions and the unrest in Hong Kong.



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#### S.A. Tow Weights Increased

South Australia has joined New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania in allowing motorists to carry and tow more weight. According to Lovells Automotive Systems, the South Australian Government has accepted a new testing regime that proves the safety and integrity of towing upgrades and Gross Combination Mass (GCM) revisions. This reverses a 12 month ban, while Western Australia is set to make a decision on the same testing regime later this year. The State and Territory jurisdictions cover in-service vehicles – those that have left the showroom floor.

In line with the current Australian Design Rules, GCM revision and towing upgrades can be done on preregistered vehicles by second stage manufacturers with applicable evidence packages.

Only Queensland and the Northern Territory motorists are now being disadvantaged compared to their counterparts across the rest of Australia.

In a media statement, Lovells said the company was able to prove to Transport SA that its rigorous regime of engineering tests, based on current Australian Design Rules and international standards, delivered a safe product. General Manager Mike Davison said the new SA regulations required vehicle modifications for the towing upgrades and GCM revision be undertaken by a second stage manufacturer such as Lovells and then inspected by a qualified automotive engineer. The majority of Australian motorists could now have their vehicles legally upgraded and be confident they were not breaking road rules or voiding their insurance by towing too much, he said.

"The usable payload and factory GCM of most 4X4 vehicles today is minimal. The addition of basic optional accessories and equipment, plus two or three adult occupants, will bring the vehicle close to its legal maximum weight capacities. Add long range fuel tanks, bull bars, a winch, side steps, roof racks, recovery gear, a payload of camping equipment,

tool boxes or an industrial style custom body and the vehicle may exceed its legal capacities, which include axle assemblies, GVM and GCM."

Ball weights and towing capacities could easily be exceeded before the caravan or trailer were added, Mr Davison said.

"Without an increase in legal towing capacities, many people towing caravans or trailers have been unknowingly breaking the law and voiding their insurance. We know that the community needs greater towing capacities and revised GCM on vehicles which have the capabilities, and we have fought for 12 months to reinstate these upgrades in SA. We hope the WA Government accepts that towing and GCM upgrades can be done safely, and that the WA caravanning and towing public can once again drive safely and legally on the roads of Western Australia."

Mr Davison said Lovells had always rigorously tested every vehicle it modified in accordance with Australian and International Standards to increase the GCM of vehicles. This included critical component analysis and testing of brakes, suspension, chassis, engine, transmission, driveshaft, differentials, cooling systems, tow bars, tow points and tow hitches both individually and as a combination.



#### **NEWS**

## AL-KO's New Enduro X Suspension

AL-KO says it is pleased to announce the release of AL-KO Enduro X – the next generation in independent suspension technology for Australian caravans and camper trailers. The company says that with the release of Enduro X it has set out to bring automotive level suspension design and engineering to off-road caravans.

Lightweight construction is said to be front and centre, through the introduction of a new clamshell suspension arm. This innovative concept exclusive to AL-KO reduces weight whilst maintaining the strength needed for harsh Australian conditions. The lower unsprung weight delivers handling and performance benefits, whilst automotive grade black eCoat helps ensure rust and chip resistance.

Another new feature exclusive to AL-KO is a forged bolt-on stub, providing further strength and the ability to adjust the caravan's ride height to suit the towing conditions. And the first time the Enduro range will include an air suspension option for further enhanced performance.

"Enduro X is the kind of breakthrough you'd expect from AL-KO as a market leader," said AL-KO Australia & New Zealand managing director Peter Mannfolk." "Since we first launched the Enduro range four years ago, AL-KO's Australian engineers have spent hundreds of hours refining the concept to deliver an engineered suspension system a level above what has been seen in the market to date."

Extending the AL-KO philosophy of 'Quality for Life' to Enduro, an extreme off-road testing program was conducted at the Anglesea Automotive Research Centre prior to release, with tests simulating more than 150,000km of real world towing. Consistent with the Enduro range, Enduro X includes the integration of high performance AL-KO shock absorbers, now with the addition with an upgraded metal casing. Other features include Australian-made 4x4 coil springs, maintenance-free bushes and integrated tow and camber adjustment.

"Our end goal with the Enduro range continues to be providing a better level of comfort and a better experience for caravanners travelling in wide range of conditions," said Mannfolk. "The extremely positive initial feedback we are receiving from caravan manufacturers gives us a strong level of confidence that we have succeeded in delivering on this with Enduro X".

AL-KO Enduro X is will be available for caravan manufacturers to integrate into their models from early 2020. For more information or to register your interest for news updates visit www.alko.com.au.





## TOW ASSIST

ABS & SWAY MITIGATION SYSTEM

## TOW WITH CONFIDENCE.







#### **Dexter Tow Assist**

A L-KO, Dexter and Bosch have collaborated to develop an innovative platform that offers the next generation of technologically-oriented towing products. Dexter Tow Assist provides Anti-lock Braking (ABS) and an odometer function as well as automotive-compatible sway mitigation. The system is installation-friendly for OEMs, providing a platform for the future of towing safety. This exciting new product will be launched at Melbourne Leisurefest Oct 3-6, 2019 and available to manufacturers to fit to their product line-up in 2020.

Revolutionising the towing experience with Electric ABS Brakes, Dexter Tow Assist provides trailer antilock braking, utilising the most performance out of each trailer brake while reducing the risk of tyre skid or lockup and improving manoeuvrability to avoid obstacles.

"Bringing ABS technology to caravans and trailers in Australia is long overdue and has been eagerly awaited by both the public and manufacturers," said Peter Mannfolk AL-KO managing director Australia & New Zealand.

"AL-KO is proud to be able to deliver this to the market in conjunction with Bosch, and we look forward to being able to offer a new level of safety and a more enjoyable towing experience to consumers."

Dexter Tow Assist also provides valuable mileage tracking via a built-in odometer function. Continually monitoring your trailer, the sway mitigation feature keeps the trailer in-line without any driver input. The system intuitively knows when to apply braking, maintaining trailer stability, without significantly reducing speed or skidding the tyres.

AL-KO is excited to offer the Dexter Tow Assist system for electric brakes in mid-2020. Initial sales efforts will focus on OEM implementation, with aftermarket upgrade kits to follow.

For more information on the new Dexter Tow Assist powered by Bosch, visit Site 21 & 22 at Melbourne Leisurefest from Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October – Sun 6<sup>th</sup> October 2019 – with product demonstrations running on the race track every hour. For further information visit www.alko.com.au





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Trakka has two large van conversion model ranges: Torino and Jabiru – with the first using Fiat's popular Ducato and the latter, Mercedes-Benz's impressive Sprinter. While Jabiru might be seen as Torino's Jabiru is rear-wheel drive, has the option of four-wheel drive and of course carries the prestige of the three-pointed star. This latest Jabiru celebrates the release of the all-new Sprinter and Trakka has been keen to make its conversion as cutting edge as the Mercedes-Benz it's built on. On that score, I'm happy to report, they have admirably succeeded...



#### **Around the Benz**

The latest Sprinter is only the third generation of this highly successful light commercial vehicle (LCV). Generation one ran from 1995 to 2006 and Gen II from 2006 to 2019, so you can see an all-new Sprinter is something to get excited about.

Showcasing the latest in safety and technology, new Sprinter is a technological tour-de-force. For both its Jabiru 2S (two-seat/two-berth) and 4S (four-seat/two-berth) models, Trakka uses the 7.13-metre (23' 5") extra-long wheelbase 419 CDI Sprinter powered by the top-spec 3.0-litre V6 turbo-diesel, which produces 140 kW and 440 Nm. It's a proven engine/transmission package that doesn't increase power or torque over its predecessor, but does offer turbine-like smoothness and seamless power delivery. It's also quiet, but has a nice exhaust note when pushed and doesn't feel stressed.

Drive is to single rear wheels via a 7-speed automatic, which will be the same on the eagerly anticipated four-wheel drive version due out soon. Those single rear wheels reduce the 419 Sprinter's gross vehicle mass (GVM) to 4100 kg (dual-wheel models are 4490 kg), but with a tare weight of just 3170 kg that still leaves a healthy 847 kg maximum payload. Maximum braked towing capacity is 2000 kg.

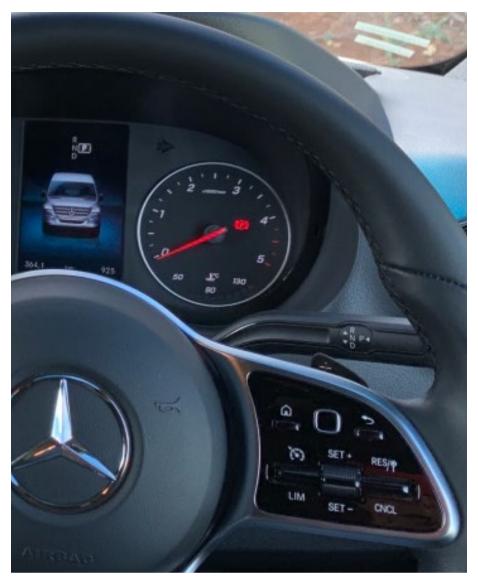
Mercedes-Benz has always been about safety and technology, and the new Sprinter continues to lead on both fronts. In fact it fairly bristles with technology and sets new standards in LCV safety, both active and passive.



Knowing which features are standard and which have been added by Trakka is a bit tricky, but here's what's on the new Jabiru: Front, side and window airbags for both cab occupants, Attention Assist that monitors you for fatigue and Active Brake Assist, which monitors vehicles in front of you. It lets you know if you're too close and will even engage emergency braking if necessary. Blind Spot Assist lets you know when a vehicle is coming up along side on multi-lane roads, or overtaking; Crosswind Assist helps keep things stable in gusty winds or when big trucks pass and Lane Keeping Assist tells you when you're straying close to lane markings. Of course traction control and anti-lock brakes are included, while the humble reversing camera is now part of a 360-degree Parking Pack. It shows you the big picture all 'round in reverse and at up to 15 km/h going forward, after selecting drive from reverse. Automatic headlights, rain-sensing wipers and tyre pressure monitoring are part of the package too. And I've probably missed some...

Inside, push button start is standard. Gear selection is via what could easily be mistaken for the indicator stalk, on the right. In reality it's simple and intuitive to use: Drive is down, Reverse is up, Neutral's in the middle and Park is selected by pressing-in the end, which automatically applies the handbrake. And no, you can't accidentally select reverse while driving, although you can get Neutral.

Jabiru 4S features Mercedes' new bells-and-whistles MBUX multimedia system with 10.25-inch touch screen, although the test vehicle had the smaller 7.5-inch unit. It's super high resolution and features everything from radio and music to vehicle systems and navigation, plus it works with Apple Car Play and Android Auto. It also works in concert (literally) with the superb, leather-wrapped Multifunction Steering Wheel, which is festooned with controls that require some study but are actually easy to use. It's also worth noting both cab seats feature electric lumbar adjustment and have a small under-thigh extension piece for the longer legged.





#### **Driving Ambition**

t has been my ambition to spend a few days behind the wheel of a new Sprinter and so I was keen to hit the road. The previous model was impressive and I was expecting big things, but in reality new Sprinter is more evolutionary than revolutionary. After all, it has the same engine and gearbox as its predecessor, so nothing has really changed there.

What has changed is the cab, which now feels much more like a luxury European car. That's largely due to the beautiful new steering wheel, plus the impressive MBUX multimedia system. Incidentally, MBUX stands for Mercedes-Benz User Xperience and the company claims it uses artificial intelligence to learn your preferences. MBUX is also voice activated by saying "Hey Mercedes", but we didn't have much luck with 'her' on the few times we tried. Some study of commands and practice is recommended! On a lighter note, Mrs iM and I discovered that just saying Mercedes activated the system and so we called it, "The M Word" when discussing the brand, vehicle or whatever as we travelled.

On the road the new Sprinter continues to be a delight, with panoramic visibility, great stability and genuine driving ease. Interestingly, the overly light steering I noted on another new Sprinter and

which I've read about in other reviews was absent on the Jabiru. That leads me to think that a wrongly calibrated power steering pump could be the culprit, if not poor vehicle weight distribution.

The combination of the big V6 and its perfectly matched seven-speed auto provided relaxed cruising at posted speed limits. The cruise control/speed limiter worked a treat, especially as it operated downhill as well. Dialling down the speed via the thumb button quickly slowed the vehicle and this was all that was needed coming into towns, aided by the digital readout of the selected speed setting on the dash. Ditto accelerating when the speed limit increased. Disappointingly, adaptive cruise control – MB calls it Distrionic Plus – is extra, but it would be the first option I'd tick.

The test Sprinter also had Continental's excellent ContiVanContact tyres, the same as fitted to Project Polly. It was my first experience with them in truly wet conditions – including crossing the Blue Mountains in heavy rain and with snow on the ground from Katoomba to Lithgow – and they didn't miss a beat. The Jabiru felt totally stable and secure in atrocious conditions and I believe the tyres significanlty contributed to that, and our safety.





#### **Back to the Future**

A new Sprinter was an excellent reason for Trakka to sit back and reimagine the big van's future. Mrs iM summed it by saying it's like stepping aboard the Enterprise, and she wasn't talking about the aircraft carrier...

Gone is any woodgrain trim, lino flooring, heavy tables and conventional light fittings. In their place is a contemporary decor finished in 'lime wash concrete', removable woven vinyl flooring, a new super-light, thin and strong laminate for the tables and kitchen bench top and touch operated and dimmable LED strip lights seemingly everywhere. Combined with Trakka's signature silver/grey roller shutter doors, stepping inside is like stepping into the future – minus the Klingons – and that's apart from Jabiru's special new features.

The most conventional thing about it is the floorplan, which has a front lounge/dinette, mid kitchen and bathroom, and a rear bedroom.



Externally, Jabiru has pods on the rear side windows to increase internal width to accomodate an eastwest bed. The big sliding side door is (optionally) electrically operated and works in conjunction with the step, which automatically extends and retracts when the door is opened and closed. At the press of a button you can open the door as much or little as you like, which is great in wet or windy weather, and when fully open a screen door can be slid across to keep bugs outside. There's another sliding insect screen at the rear for when you have the barn doors open. It insect-proofs the bedroom but leaves the substantial under-bed boot open, making access easy.

The awning is also electric and can now be operated with the side door open. It's a new design that has a full length LED strip light underneath and comes with fold-out stays that replace the middle strut, for added rigidity.

Windows are flush-fitting and now there are openable units in the rear doors. However, the kitchen window needs to be shut so the side door can open. I've seen a sliding window in this position on other vehicles and think it would be a better solution, but perhaps it's not available in a size or style to suit.

Externally, storage is limited to the big rear boot, plus there are connections for 240-volt power in and out, tank and mains water, and a hatch for toilet cassette access. There's no gas cylinder locker as the Jabiru is LPG-free. Instead, the cooker, hot water and internal heating are diesel-fired from the 92-litre fuel tank. Speaking of capacities, fresh water is 140-litres, grey water is 80-litres, hot water is 10-litres and the cassette loo 16-litres. On the roof a 200-watt solar panel feeds into the 200 amp-hour lithium house battery, which is also charged from the vehicle and via mains power when connected.



In the boot, the lithium battery pack (left) and diesel-fired hotwater/cooker/space heating unit are housed in slightly see-through boxes, making visual checks easy as well as providing good access.





The test Jabiru had the optional Alfresco pack, which comprises the indoor/outdoor pivot fridge (more on that later), external work bench with collapsible hand basin, hot/cold wash-up and outdoor shower facility, and an additional 100-watt solar panel. It's a A\$5000 addition likely to prove popular at this price point – the Jabiru 4S' standard on-road cost is \$185,000 – as it rounds out the vehicle's capabilities and versatility.

Also on the test vehicle were metallic paint (\$2600), colour matched bumpers (\$800), the electric side door (\$1800), 2000-watt inverter and induction cooktop (\$2900), alloy wheels (\$1700) and a cellular antenna and iPad holder in place of a conventional TV (no charge). That priced the test vehicle at \$199,800 drive-away. Distronic Plus adaptive cruise control adds\$1350 in case you're wondering, while roof-top airconditioning is another \$3250. I think I'd swap the metallic paint, bumpers and alloys for Distronic Plus and airconditioning, and pocket the change.

The optional induction cooker can be used inside or out and works perfectly with the Alfresco Pack. The outdoor shower can be positioned almost anywhere via a strong magnetic base, providing extra versatility.



#### **Creature Features**

Creature comforts are what the new Jabiru is all about and here are the highlights, starting at the front.

The indoor/outdoor pivot fridge – part of the Alfresco Pack – is an ingenious little drawer-style drinks fridge that sits just above floor height at the forward end of the kitchen cupboard unit. Its party trick is a mechanism that, when unlocked, lets the fridge (and drawer above) pivot to face one of three positions: Forwards, Outside or Inside. Forwards is ideal if your seated in the swivelled cab seats; Outside is the go if you're, well, outside, where it's at just the right height, and Inside it works as a small secondary fridge for the chef. Very clever...

Equally clever is the slim 90-litre Dometic 12-volt compressor fridge/freezer, which has a door you can open from left or right. That means from the dinette you would open it to the right, while from the kitchen opening it to the left is easiest. Impressive stuff.











Both the dining and flip-up coffee tables are made of a new ultra-thin laminate that is super light yet very strong and rigid. It allows the dining table to be stored in a wafer-thin slot between the dinette seat and wall, while its leg clips neatly beneath the lift-up seat. What's in the bag? The magnetic blinds for the cab, that's what...

Still in the kitchen, the benchtop and as mentioned, the main dining table and flip-up coffee table, are made from a new, very lightweight and very thin material called VittEr.

Finished in jet black and looking quite like slate, it's a compact laminate its manufacturer claims is fully water resistant, highly scratch and damage resistant, formaldehyde-free – making it more environmentally friendly and safe for food preparation – and requires no edging. Despite being just a few millimetres thick it's remarkably strong and the large dining table showed no flex or instability in use.

Trakka's patented Switch Mode Bathroom, with its



electrically retractable cassette toilet that hides away beneath the vanity when not needed, has been redesigned. The cubicle is longer and provides more space when seated, while the wall is now flat, giving more room in the aisle. The doorway is bigger and there's only the roller shutter door track to step over, making access easier. Gone is the shower curtain, but there's a truly waterproof toilet roll holder, although you now have to leave your towel out on the edge of the bed until required. The wooden duckboard has been replaced by one made of VittEr laminate, and Trakka has retained its signature water-activated bilge pump underneath to actively suck water out rather than leave it to gravity. Speaking of water, the tanks are now internal, which not only keeps them warmer during cold weather adventures, it keeps them out of harms way beneath the vehicle. I also love the electric dump valve for the grey water tank; no more fiddling around underneath for a dirty handle – just connect the hose, press a button and away it goes.











end (on the driver's side) that ratchets up sunbedstyle so you can find a comfy position to read, watch TV or your iDevice, or enjoy a morning cup of tea. The only downside is the bed is best suited to those less than six feet tall.

Finally, you can choose between a conventional TV and aerial or a cellular aerial and iDevice holder. The latter works with a Telstra modem that becomes a Wi-Fi hotspot so you can stream Netflix, Spotify or

Bed with a view! Not only do the bed backs tilt, sunbed-style, there's a pull-down screen to keep the bedroom insect free. Note the winding handle, in case the awning's electric motor fails.

FaceTime family and friends. Of course, data usage isn't included, but the iDevice holder can be mounted in the bedroom or dinette area, and I'm sure you can buy a second one so you could watch personal favourites at the same time at opposite ends of the vehicle.

#### Living the Life

iving with the new Jabiru 4S is easy and will give new owners quite a travelling life. We had just a couple of days and so did our favourite loop over the Blue Mountains to the Carcoar Dam Freecamp for our first overnight, and then home via Cowra, Boorowa and Goulburn. A great feature when pulling up for the night was the inbuilt pitch and roll monitor in the main electrical control panel, just above the kitchen bench.

Given the Sprinter's considerable 7.13-metre length there's quite a bit of room inside the new Jabiru 4S. Although it can seat four it's strictly a two-berth motorhome, but given the extra passenger seats have ISOFIX child seat anchor points, if you want to take the grandkids away they'll need a tent under the awning. For two people, the Jabiru 4S divides neatly into three parts: front living, middle cooking/bathing and rear relaxing/sleeping. When Mrs iM is in the kitchen I'm 'Editor-non-gratis' and so am confined to the dinette to work and/or just keep out of her way. Mrs iM also retires first, so having the dinette and bed quite a ways apart is a good thing too, as is a wide choice of dimmable LED strip lights.

The optional inverter meant we could have Nespresso coffee on demand, while Mrs iM prefers the instant and controllable heat of the induction cooker – which can be used inside or out – over the diesel-fired cooker.

The kitchen bench is huge, with plenty of space every Road Chef will appreciate. Note how the optional induction cooker can be used in its storage drawer – even while seated! Also note the Telstra hot-spot modem and all system controls, neatly grouped in an over-bench cupboard.









#### What I Think

Do you need to ask? Again I'll likley be accused of Trakka bias, but it's difficult not to be impressed by the new Jabiru 4S. The new Sprinter is a beauty while the new interior raises the bar for Australian RV design.

Despite the tragedy of loosing founders Sally and Dave Berry so young and just a few years apart, Trakka is in good hands and remains at the top of its game. Backed by a solid team of family and long-term employees, the vision and innovation that has been the company's hallmark for more than 40 years is continuing and the Jabiru 4S is a tribute to them all. It's also a damn good motorhome and one worthy of investigation if you're after a van conversion with bells, whistles and a good dose of Star quality...

#### **SPECS**

	0, 200
GENERAL	
Make	Trakka
Model	Jaburi 4S
Туре	Van Conversion
Berths	2
Approved Seating	4
Licence	Car
VEHICLE	
Make/Model	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 419CDI
Engine	3.0-litre V6 turbo-diesel
Power	140 kW @ 3800
Torque	440 Nm @ 1400-2400 rpm
Transmission	7-speed automatic/rear-wheel drive
Safety	ABS, ESP, 6 air bags & more
Fuel	93 L
WEIGHTS	
Tare Weight	3170 kg
Gross Vehicle Mass	4100 kg
Braked Towing Capacity	2000 kg
DIMENSIONS	
Overall Length	7.13 m (23' 5")
Overall Width	2.10 m (6' 11")
Overall Height	2.75 m (9') (2.9 m with opt aircon)
Internal Height	1.92 m (6′ 4″)
Bed	1.90 m x 1.45 m (6' 3" x 4' 9")
EQUIPMENT	
Slide-Out	No
Awning	Eletctric
Entry Steps	Electric
Cooker	Webasto diesel-fired
Rangehood	No
Sink	Round stainless steel w folding tap
Fridge	90 L Dometic compressor
Microwave	Yes
Lighting	12 V LED
12 V Sockets/USB Outlets	Yes/Yes
Air Conditioner	Optional
Space Heater	Webasto diesel-fired
Hot Water System	Webasto diesel-fired
Toilet	Thetford cassette
Shower	Switch Mode Bathroom (wet)
CAPACITIES	(1.2-7)
Batteries	1 x 200 Ah Lithium
Solar	2 x 100 W (exat 1000 W with Alfresco Pack)
LPG	N/A
Fresh Water	140 L
Grey Water	80 L
Hot Water	10 L
Toilet	16 L (cassette)
PRICE - Australia drive-away	
New - from	A\$185,000
As Tested	A\$199,800
Warranty – Vehicle	3 years/Umlimited km
Warranty – Trakka	3 years/ Umlimited km
. ,	36

#### Pros...

Innovation
Liveability
Quality
New Sprinter
Economy
Enjoyment
Warranty

#### Cons...

Bed short for some Fiddly cab curtains Wet bathroom Pricey

#### Contact

#### Trakka

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# Jabiru

"Mrs iM (said) it's like stepping aboard the Enterprise, and she wasn't talking about the aircraft carrier..."



# TESTED: BÜRSTNER LYSEO IT745



# on the cake.

Malcolm Street discovers clever design gives two living areas in one compact package...

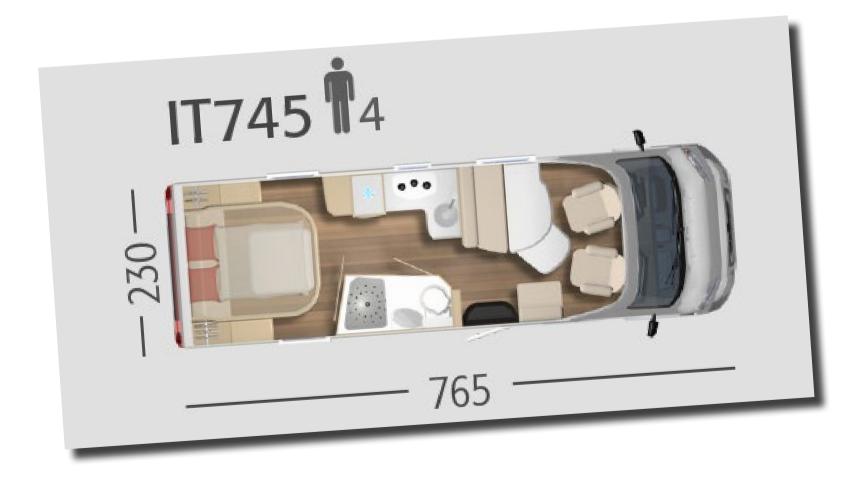
Particularly in European built motorhomes, a design feature that has become quite common over the last five years or so is the drop-down bed. That is, a bed that can be lifted up to the ceiling when not being used and lowered into position at nighttime. It's something of a space saver and can be used in a number of layouts to either create more space or build a shorter motorhome.

German manufacturer Bürstner uses drop-down beds in some of its layouts, including a recent design, the Lyseo IT745, which has not one but two. Auckland-based Smart RV sells various Lyseo models in its mid-range motorhome line-up, where its sits neatly between the budget Carados and more expensive Bürstner Ixeos.

The subject of this review – the Bürstner Lyseo IT745 – has an external length of 7.65 m (25' 1") and a GVM of 3850kg. This gives the designer a fair bit of latitude, especially if the aforementioned drop-down beds are

used. What results is a spacious layout with a front lounge/dining area, mid-positioned kerbside kitchen and driver's-side bathroom, and another lounge at the rear. Cleverly, drop-down beds are fitted above both lounge areas. While there's a reduction of the normal 2.05 m (6' 9") headroom under the beds, it's not that bad – 1.81 m (5' 11") under the rear one and 1.84 m (6') under the front.

Like many a Bürstner motorhome, the general décor and interior finish is done very well. A fairly neutral colour scheme of brown, cream and beige keeps things light and bright, aided by large windows and roof hatches. In addition the overall scheme of reading lights and LED strip lights, just about everywhere is bright enough to be seen by day and certainly very effective by night. At night, some of the lights also provide multiple choices of lighting level, which not only saves battery power but also adds to the mood.





# Rear Lounge or Bedroom?

Probably the most surprising feature about the IT745 is at the rear. By day it features a rear wall lounge with side cabinets and cupboards. For drinkies and nibbles, a small table sits in the middle of the floor. Roman blinds are fitted to both windows and there is a handy, multi-shelf cupboard against the fridge cabinet.

Come the evening, transforming the lounge into a bedroom is quite simple: Remove the rear wall cushions, lower the table, push a button by the light switches and the 1.9 m x 1.5 m (6'3" x 4' 11") bed smoothly lowers into position. The bed can actually be lowered so far that apart from the mechanism strap, it looks almost like a conventional fixed bed. In all it certainly makes for a very multi-functional area.



# Kitchen Fit-Out

There are some things that always look familiar in a Bürstner motorhome and the kitchen is one of them: Picture an L-shaped bench to improve both the general storage and bench top areas, fitted with a three burner hob, grill and a round stainless steel sink.

As with many a European motorhome, there is no microwave oven, but there is the all-essential fridge: a Dometic 151-litre 3-way unit that butts up against the hob end of the bench. Three drawers are fitted in the under-bench area and the overhead locker includes a shelf.





# Wet or Dry?

stylishly appointed one it is. Complete with a separate shower cubicle with room to turn around in, plus a Thetford cassette toilet, it also has a decent sort of vanity cabinet; one with upper and lower cupboards, a wall mirror and a large-enough wash basin. I also really liked the waterfall effect hot and cold water tap! Additionally, there's a handy shelf under the wall mirrors.

Interestingly, instead of a toilet roll holder the loo paper sits inside the lower cupboard – thus staying dry at all times – and is dispensed via a letter box style slot. Bürstner toilet light switches are a little hard to find – like this one – which is under the wall cabinet! Oh, and given the shower cubicle location, it's a dry bathroom.



# **Control Panel**

Lyseo model I came to appreciate the panel work by the entry door. Lower down are a couple of small shelves and a grab handle, while above the handle is an impressive array of switches for just about every light in the front area, plus the outside lights. Also located in this area is a flat screen TV that can easily be seen from the front seats. I suspect if I was a keen TV watcher I might be considering a second TV in the rear, however. Finally, at the top of the panel are the main electrical and hot water/space heater controls. I particularly like the Truma iNet panel: Once having figured out how it works, it is very easy to use!

Certainly, the Lyseo IT745 is well appointed, electrically speaking. In addition to the overall lighting there are plenty of mains power points, but all are single outlet fittings and there are no USB charging points in the rear area. Strange. A pair of 95 Ah house batteries, a 150 W solar panel and the previously mentioned 1000 W inverter all come standard.



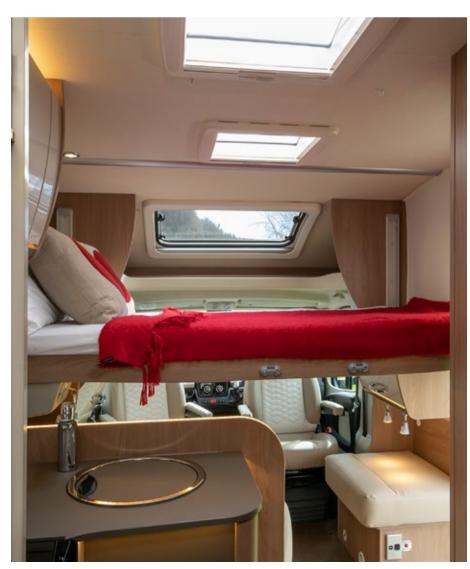


# **Up Front**

ven though there is a rear lounge, there is still plenty of seating up front in this motorhome thanks to the usual swivelling cab seats, forward-facing dinette seat and sideways-facing lounge.

The table has a swivelling extension leaf that means four or five people can use it without too much trouble. Under the main dinette seat is where the house batteries are to be found, which is also why the inverter supplied power point is to be found in the seat base. It's a slightly awkward location in terms of trailing leads, but being close to the batteries does minimise voltage drop issues.

Above the lounge area the second 2.0m x 1.35/1.25m (6'7" x 4'5'/4'1") bed lowers into position quite easily, although it does not drop down as far as the rear bed. It does of course come supplied with a ladder and given the bed can be reach from both sides, it's not too difficult to make up.





# **Motive Power**

Inderpinning the Lyseo IT745 is the ubiquitous Fiat Ducato cab-chassis. In this instance it's the Multijet 150, which means the 2.3-litre, 109 kW turbodiesel and the ageing 6-speed automated manual transmission (AMT). We know the new Fiat ninespeed fully automatic gearbox has been announced and await with interest to see when it arrives on NZ's shores. Even with the slightly hesitant gearbox, the Ducato is still an easy driver and I know some people get paranoid about the front wheel drive, but I am not one of them.

Bürstner always seem to design a streamlined looking motorhome, as this one is, and the decal scheme and front Skyview hatch make it look even better. Being German, the entry door is on the driver's side and it comes with an electric step, plus there's a Thule Omnistor awning. Across the rear the storage area isn't quite garage size, but I reckon it's large enough for all the usual camping gear and a bit more besides.



# **What I Think**

Certainly, some of Bürstner's Lyseo layouts have familiar features about them, but the IT745 is a very interesting variation on a theme and demonstrates well the practicalities of drop down beds. Having two is an innovative idea that provides added living space without the need for a bigger motorhome body. It's a bit like having your cake and eating it too – icing and all – it seems to me...

### **SPECS**

Make	Bürstner	
Model	Lyseo IT745	
Туре	B-Class	
Berths	2	
Approved Seating	4	
Licence/Certification	Car/COF	
VEHICLE	Carreor	
Make/Model	Fiat Ducato Multijet 150	
	•	
Engine	2.3-litre 4-cylinder turbo-diesel	
Power	109 kW @ 3600 rpm	
Torque	350 Nm @ 1800 rpm	
Gearbox	6-speed automated manual (AMT)	
Safety	ABS, ESP, driver and passenger air bags	
Fuel	90 L	
WEIGHTS		
Tare Weight	3140 kg	
Gross Vehicle Mass	3850 kg	
Max Payload	Subject to accessories fitted	
Braked Towing Capacity	2000 kg	
DIMENSIONS		
Overall Length	7.65 m (25' 1")	
Overall Width	2.30 m (7' 7")	
Overall Height	2.99 m (9' 10")	
Internal Height	1.81m - 2.05 m (5′11″ to 6′9″)	
Front Bed	2.00 m x 1.35 m-1.25 m (6' 7" x 4' 5"-4' 1")	
	,	
Rear Bed	1.90 m x 1.50 m (6′ 3″ x 4′ 11″)	
EQUIPMENT	<b>A.</b>	
Slide-Out	No	
Awning	Thule Omnistor	
Entry Steps	Electrci	
Hob	3-burner	
Rangehood	Yes	
Sink	Round stainless steel w folding tap	
Fridge	151 L Dometic RM89435 3-way	
Microwave	No	
Lighting	12 V LED	
12 V Sockets/USB Outlets	Cab only	
Air Conditioner	Cab only	
Space Heater Hot Water System	Truma Combi 4E (LPG/electric)  Truma Combi 4E (LPG/electric)	
Toilet	Thetford cassette	
Shower	Separate Cubicle	
CAPACITIES	Separate Cubicie	
Batteries	2 x 95 Ah AGM deep-cycle	
Solar	150 W	
LPG	2 x 9.0 kg	
Fresh Water	120 L	
Grey Water	90 L	
Hot Water	10 L	
Toilet	19 L	
PRICE - NZ		
As Tested	NZ\$169,900	
	1127107,700	
Warranty – Chassis & Habitation	2 years	

# Pros...

Two living areas
Two drop-down beds
Internal storage
Swivelling table
Dry bathroom

# Cons...

No USB chargers in rear Limited external storage Single outlet powerpoints

# **Contact**

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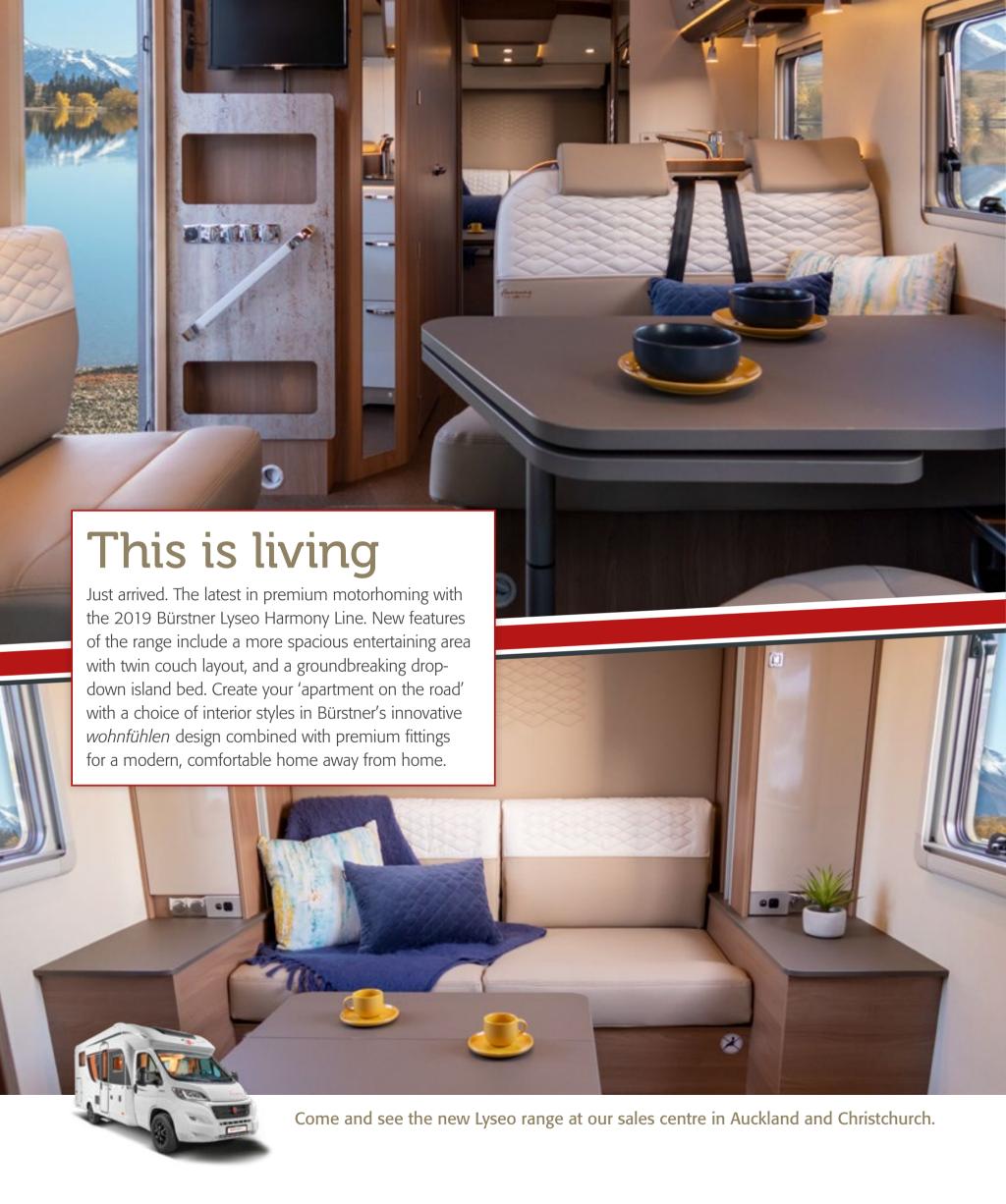
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"Like many a Bürstner motorhome, the general décor and interior finish is done very well."











While many caravaners only have eyes for a Prado, HiLux or the like, there are other options, especially if you want something refined and stylish for your daily driver.

Volkswagen's Touareg launchd in 2002 and is now in its third generation. An instant success, Touareg has an interesting background because it was a joint venture between VW, Audi and Porsche. Their goal, Wikipedia states, was to create an off-road vehicle that could handle like a sports car and the result was not only the Touareg, but also the Audi Q7 and Porsche Cayenne.

Touareg – pronounced Twa-regg – is an alternate spelling of Tuareg, a tribe that's part of the larger Berber ethnic group from North Africa. Nomadic pastoralists, the Tuareg are famous for their blue lips caused by indigo dye in the fabric wrapped across their faces to protect from the desert sun and sand. Germans are fascinated by the thought of driving to North Africa and exploring its vast wildernesses, so

the name's connection isn't as obscure as it might seem.

Downunder, this popular German SUV has established a solid niche in the local market. Unlike BMW's X5 or Mercedes-Benz M-Class, Touareg has always seemed less 'precious' and more legitimate in the off-road stakes. Like most SUVs, Touareg has softened and there's no longer a full-size spare wheel option, just a space saver that's basically useless in a tow-car application. A solution is to buy an extra wheel and carry it in your caravan, but it's far from ideal.

The idea behind this test was to tie it in with a caravan review, but the requested tow bar was absent. On the plus side, I had a couple of trips planned and we put good miles on it as both a daily driver and county tourer. What a shame, then, about the tow bar, especially considering the 3500 kg max braked towing capacity and 280 kg ball weight rating with both front seats occupied.

# **Down to Business**

The new Touareg rides on VW Group's MLB platform, which also still underpins the Q7 and Cayenne. That should give you an idea of how capable and well engineered it is despite 'only' wearing the VW badge. It also makes it something of a bargain, being close to \$50,000 less than a similarly equipped Audi (although only 5 seats versus 7) and waaaaaaay less than a Porsche.

New Touareg is now backed by a new five year/unlimited kilometre warranty, unlike its siblings. Servicing is required every 15,000 km or 12 months and while there's no capped-price system, you can pre-purchase a 3 or 5 year Volkswagen Care Plan. Priced at \$1400 for 3 years/45,000 km or \$2500 for 5 years/75,000, it's a genuine bargain by luxury car standards. Impressively, the body is fully galvanised and comes with a separate, 12-year anti-perforation warranty.

Power comes from a 3.0-litre V6 turbo-diesel producing 190 kW/600 Nm. It provides a 0-100 km/h time of 6.5 seconds and a combined fuel figure of

Volkswagen Group's MLB platform, which also underpins the Audi Q7 and Prosche Cayenne, is a modular system with fixed and variable sections tailored to produce specific vehicles.

7.4 L/100 km (38.2 mpg), which was surprisingly accurate over some 1500 km. Drive to two or four wheels via VW's signature 4MOTION system, with selectable modes for Comfort, Normal, Sport, Eco, Offroad and Snow, or you can set your own combination saved in a personal profile. Additionally, air suspension with adaptive dampening control provides a level of ride comfort steel springs simply can't match.

As befits the latest in luxury European motoring, new Touareg comes with an almost bewildering array of active and passive safety features. Aside from wall-to-wall airbags, anti-lock brakes, traction control, stability control, front and rear parking sensors, reversing camera and so on, there's more: Adaptive Cruise Control, Driver Fatigue Detection, Front Assist with City EB and Predictive Pedestrian Monitoring, Lane Assist with Adaptive Lane Guidance, Park Assist, Traffic Jam Assist, Emergency Assist, Side Assist with Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Front and Rear Cross Traffic Assist and Find Great Coffee Assist (I'm sure I saw that somewhere in the handbook).



# **Launch Edition**

To celebrate the launch of the all-new Touareg, Volkswagen Australia has released the cleverly named Touareg Launch Edition. Priced at \$89,900, some \$900 below the previous generation Touareg 180TDI equipped with the Driver Assistance pack, it's keenly priced for the segment.

Outside, new Touareg rides on 20-inch Braga black alloys shod with massive 285/45 R20 Goodyear Eagles. Front brakes are equally huge 6-piston discs with 350 mm rotors, with single pistons on 330 mm rotors at the back. Incidentally, front suspension is a five-link McPherson Strut set-up, while down the back is a five-link rear axle.

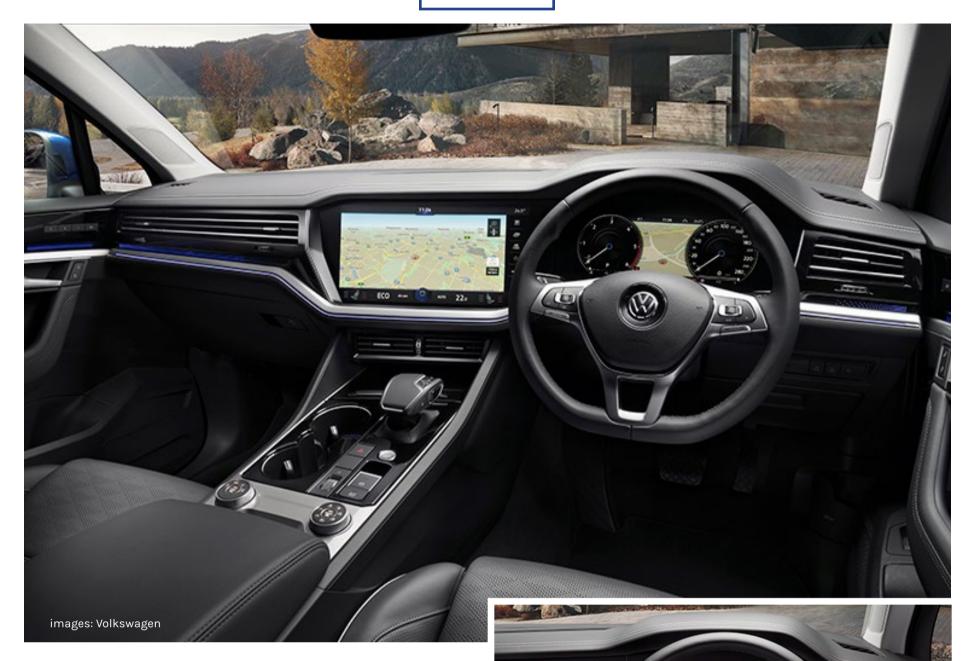
Daytime LED running lights are standard, as is the new I.Q. Light matrix LED headlight system that feature 128 individually controllable LEDs. Remarkably, it changes the beam pattern to suit the driving situation. In practice it's impressive as it adjusts beam intensity and distribution in response to things like ambient lighting, road sign reflections and traffic.

Being a five seater in a body otherwise built for seven means the boot is cavernous, with access aided by an electric tailgate. Keyless entry is standard of course and makes life so much easier when juggling shopping or whatever. However, it's inside the luxury truly begins, so let's take a look...









The \$8000 Innovision Package delivers a visual feast that includes a massive 15" touchscreen infotainment system and curved, digital 12.3" dashboard. Both are highly configurable and provide a wealth of information and display options.

# Life of Luxury

Black Savona leather is standard, with the front seats the best in the house because of 18-way power adjustment, 8 massage functions and temperature-adjustable heating and cooling. OMG! Rear seat passengers are well looked after thanks to their own aircon controls, armrest and plenty of legroom even for a tall guy like me, but up-front is the place to be, especially if you're the driver...

A multifunction leather steering wheel provides the perfectly sized, tactile connection with this machine. Standard instrumentation is digital via a 7-inch colour multifunction display for speedo and tacho, fuel, temp, navigation, phone, vehicle status, etc, plus a central 9.2-inch colour touch screen for the multimedia system. However, opt

for the \$8000 Innovision Package as fitted to the test car and things get even better: try a 12.3" curved main instrument panel and a whopping 15" Discover Premium infotainment system! But wait, there's more – a head-up display of speed and other functions on the windscreen, plus a range of 30 colours for the interior LED lighting system. Awesome!

While VW's proprietary satnav system is included, both Apple Car Play and Android Auto connect and display beautifully through the massive central screen. The range of technology built into both the infotainment and instrument displays is impressive, and you'd need to study long and hard to discover ever system and feature.

# **Driving**

Press the start button and the engine and dash come to life. Depending on the outside temperature the four-zone climate control will heat or cool your seat automatically and when settled in it's time to go, once you've selected the ride mode. Normal or Comfort is fine and the air suspension coped admirably with both our rustic rural driveway and the rigidity of the 45-series tyres.

An iron fist in a velvet glove, the new Touareg has the power and ability to go hard and fast or laid back and relaxed as you like. This car eats distance, hills and load, yet sips remarkably little fuel. It's whisper quiet in operation and the first car I've driven that's totally devoid of wind noise at freeway speeds. It's also remarkably steady in strong winds, something really appreciated on a fast trip to Canberra in blustery winter weather.

Initially I found the lane-keeping assistance intrusive – it literally steers you back into the middle of the lane/road on well marked surfaces – but soon came to realise its value. While not touted as semi-autonomous, with the adaptive cruise control engaged new Touareg will keep you following a well marked road at the correct speed and the right distance behind the vehicle in front, even to the point of bringing itself to a halt if required.

Traffic Jam Assist will maintain the lane, speed, acceleration and braking in sub-30 km/h traffic on its own, which in real world conditions removes a lot of stress and fatigue from the driver. To say it's a revelation is an understatement and although no self-driving Tesla, it's an impressive intermediate step. Two trips along Sydney's M5, M7 & and Pennant Hills Rd in peak hours produced very little frustration or fatigue, and on that score alone I'd have this car.





# What I Think

Priced at close to \$110,000 on the road with the (essential) Innovision Package, plus metallic paint, the Touareg Launch Edition is a serious purchase. However, its breadth and depth of capabilities; its cosseting passenger experience and sheer delightfulness to drive build a compelling case.

You can easily spend that money on a LandCruiser, but do you really need or want one? If the answer's yes then off you go, but if the answer's no or maybe not, head to your Volkswagen dealer for a test drive. And ask about the factory towbar (\$2132) and an extra alloy wheel. Okay, it's not ideal, but after a week in this car it suddenly seems like a small compromise...

# SPECS

	L	SPECS	
GENERAL			
Make	Volkswagen		
Model	Touareg Launch Edition		
	SUV		
Type			
Approved Seating	5		
Licence	Car		
VEHICLE			
Engine	3.0-litre V6 turbo-diesel		
Power	190 kW @ 4000 rpm		
Torque	600 Nm @ 2250 rpm		
Gearbox/Drive	8-speed Auto/4MOTION AWD		
Safety Rating	ANCAP 5-star		
Fuel	Diesel - 75 L		
Fuel Consumption	7.4 L/100 km (38.2 mpg) Combined		
Front Suspension	5 Link McPherson Strut w air suspension		
Rear Suspension	5 Link Axle w air suspension		
Wheels	20" Alloy		
Spare Wheel	Space saver		
Brakes	350/330 mm discs front/rear		
WEIGHTS	350/350 mm dises mone/re		
Tare Weight	2040 kg		
Gross Vehicle Mass			
	2810 kg		
Gross Combination Mass	6310 kg		
Max Payload	770 kg		
Max Braked Towing Capacity	3500 kg		
Ball Weight	280 kg with 2 front seat passengers		
DIMENSIONS			
Length	4.88 m (15' 9")		
Width	1.98 m (6' 6")		
Height	1.69 m (5' 7")		
Wheelbase	2.99 m (9′10″)		
STANDARD EQUIPMENT			
Upholstery	Savona Leather		
Air Conditioning	4-Zone Climate Control		
Remote Central Locking	Keyless/Push Button Start		
Electric Windows	One-touch		
Electric Mirrors	Automatic folding		
Auto Stop/Start	No		
Cruise Control	Adaptive		
Day Running Lights	LED		
Tailgate	Electric		
Parking Sensors	Front and Rear		
Reversing Camera	Yes, with guide lines		
12 V Sockets/USB Outlets	Yes		
Multi-Function Display	7 & 9.2" (12.3" & 15" optional)		
Steering Wheel	Leather multifunction		
Apple Car Play/Android Auto	Yes		
PRICE	¢00,000 + OBC		
From As Tostad	\$89,990 + ORC		
As Tested Warranty	\$99,990 + ORC 5 years/Unlimited Km		
vvarrancy	years/orinninted Kill	 58	

# Pros...

Quality
Safety
Economy
Comfort
Features
Warranty
Service

# Cons...

Price Spacesaver spare No full-size spare option

### **Contact**

Volkswagen Australia

24 Muir Rd

Chullora. NSW. 2190

T: 1800 607 822

W: volkswagen.com.au









According to the dictionary, Allegro means "At brisk speed", while in Italian it means "Cheerful". Well, if you have ever driven a Tiffin you would agree that both interpretations are appropriate. The speed is 'brisk' with a rear-mounted Cummins V8 diesel engine, and the mood is 'cheerful' when you drive it. The diesel pusher is the jewel in the crown of our motorhome and it is the most luxurious of the three motorhomes I have owned.

People say, "Why a Tiffin?" After you look through a Tiffin motorhome you can see the difference. For us, it was the quality that sold us on our purchase, and the rear V8 motor. The floor plan in our Longreach was very similar and we enjoyed it for 10 years, but when you walk into a Tiffin you can visually see the difference in quality. Everything feels sturdier,

including custom-built hardwood cupboards throughout. The sofa is very comfortable and it also folds out to a queen size air bed mattress, which makes for a very relaxing night's sleep.

I have been asked, "Aren't you worried about getting parts, considering it's made in America?". I tell them there is nothing to worry about, the Cummins motor and Alison gearbox are serviced Australia wide and a mechanic will welcome you with open arms. Most of the appliances – the hot water service, fridge, awnings and air conditioners – are Dometic, the same as the external electric awnings. There is nothing in a Tiffin you don't see in an Australian made RV. Let's face it, 95% of the items in a caravan or motorhome come from overseas anyway.



# Born in the USA

The Allegro Breeze is an A-Class motorhome built in America from the ground up. It has a specially designed chassis, also built by Tiffin, that they call a power-glide chassis and it beautifully accommodates the rear-mounted Cummins V8 diesel engine. The towing capacity is a whopping 3500 kg, but our 5 door Suzuki Grand Vitara is only 2500 kg once we load it up with all the things, 'we might need', if you know what I mean.

The Tiffin has an overall length of 10.1 metres, which is only 0.6 metres longer than our old Longreach. The Cummins engine has plenty of power and when pulling the tow car up a hill it just smoothly changes gear as required, thanks to the perfectly matched Alison auto gearbox. What I have noticed is when you put your foot down on the accelerator to take off, there is a lag (it takes about 3 seconds to respond) and then the motorhome gradually pulls away. At first this annoyed me a little until I realised it is a good thing, a good thing in the sense that there is no

shunting on the tow car tow hitch that I am using to flat tow. It is a gradual departure from a stationary position, unlike our other motorhome where there was that slight shunt on take-off most of the time.

When I drive the Breeze, it feels like I am gliding over the road. With the airbag suspension rough roads just seem to smooth out. Full air suspension gives a ride quality with comfort and control that owners of motorhomes on a truck body can only dream of.

As I said, Tiffins are made in America. But what you may not know is that from 2017 Tiffin America has been making the Breeze with right-hand drive for Australia. When they land here, Tiffin Australia in Queensland completes the internal finish, while all the PC items, like the stove, oven, fridge, inverter, batteries, solar, gas bottles, etc, are purchased in Australia. The products they install are high end and complement the already impressive finishes within the motorhome.



# On the Level

When we arrive at our destination, levelling the Breeze is as easy as pushing a button, as the air bags automatically do the job. During our stay the computerised levelling panel monitors things and if it happens to get out of level, the extra front compressor tops it up and brings it back to level.

Sitting in the driver's seat is like sitting in the cockpit of a small plane, with everything within reach. While driving, the huge one-piece windscreen provides panoramic views and it takes up more than half of the slightly angled top front of the Breeze. If the sun is too low and beaming in, just push the button and lower the daytime screen to reduce the heat and glare while driving. If I want to completely

block the sun I just lower the night-time shade, which is the best sun visor I've ever had. When we reach our destination these blinds can be fully lowered for day and/or night-time privacy.

We like to get away from crowds and prefer camping at farm stays and other spots, free or paid, as well as showgrounds, where there is more room. We ordered extra solar and batteries, and had the solar controller upgraded to accommodate it. We now have 1200 w of solar and over 800 Ah of battery power. The 4,000-watt inverter can run anything we plug into the power points, just like a house, and we always seem to have more than enough power. Just to make sure, there is an Onan 5 kVa diesel generator to top up the batteries if we happen to get more than a few overcast days.

# Walk Right In!

When you walk into the Tiffin there is a great feeling of spaciousness. It has a 'wow' factor, especially when both front slide-outs are fully extended. The Breeze is also equipped with an exclusive Tiffin innovation: it has seamless slides, which means no joins that can eventually allow water ingress. The ceiling height of nearly 2 metres helps with that spacious open feeling and when you are a short fella like me, it looks even bigger. When we pull over for a cuppa we don't have to open the slide-outs to get through, because there is enough room to get to the kitchen and bathroom.

The leather driver and passenger seats both swivel around to face the living area. On the wall near the fridge is a 40-inch TV and the two seats are perfect to sit back and watch the big screen. We had lambswool covers made for both seats and sitting in them is so plush and satisfying. The internal colour we have is the lighter-coloured timbers in the cabinetry and the lighter leather so it doesn't feel crowded in and that's exactly what we have achieved: that open airy feeling.





The kitchen has a three-burner gas stove and one electric hot plate and griller. There is an extraction fan above the stove, but it is too far back to be of any use and needs to be 300 mm further forward. The ceiling hatch open and the fan going is far more useful than the extractor fan. When not in use, the stove cover is a glass hinged top that is tempered glass, while for baking there is a convection microwave oven.

The fridge is a 216-litre, 2-door Dometic compressor type that works well at keeping everything cold. We have also installed an extra 18-litre drinks fridge and a 32-litre Engel fridge freezer, which is always set to minus 18 degrees in freezer mode, and both are on slides in the lockers below. Now you know why we had all those extra solar and batteries installed. The sink is double-bowl stainless-steel just like the

ones at home. To create extra bench space there are matching covers the same as the bench tops, which go over the sink bowls when not in use. We leave one covered most of the time and it works well for us. The splash backs are sheet tiles that look and feel like the real thing.

### **Sweet Dreams**

A timber cavity sliding door separates the bedroom, which has a real queen-size bed that runs eastwest, with storage underneath. The bed is very comfortable with a memory foam mattress and we can also lay back and watch a 32-inch TV that is wall mounted at the foot of the bed, just to the right of the window. There is also a massive wardrobe across the back with twin mirrored sliding doors and sensor activated lights. Above the bed is more storage space, while under the window at the foot of the bed are more drawers for storage.

In the bathroom we have a shower that is as large as you would find in a villa and it has a domed skylight that takes up 80% of the ceiling and would suit the tallest people. There is also a flush toilet which goes into a 125-litre holding tank. The vanity basin has under-basin storage and the shaving cabinet above has two mirrored doors. All this is housed opposite the kitchen and is closed off by a timber cavity slider the same as the bedroom.

A 32-inch exterior TV is mounted on the passenger's side slide-out for watching the most important things while outdoors, such as the cricket and the football. We have a roof mounted digital TV antenna and a satellite, so my wife will never need to miss There's a small electric awning Home & Away! that covers the door entry and a larger one that runs about two-thirds of the left-hand side of the motorhome, and both are operated from just inside the door. The only thing that concerns me with the large awning is it goes over the small slide-out and when you pull the arms down to anchor it, the awning rubs on the top of the extended slide out. It's only a matter of time before the awning wears a hole from the constant rubbing. I can't understand why they haven't come up with an awning that goes from the front of the motorhome down as far as the large awning goes now, this would be a much better option than having the smaller one above the door. Maybe one day.







# Finally

Due to the chassis design there is a huge amount of storage space below the living area. The underfloor areas are spacious enough to carry the extra fridge, freezer and BBQ, and even a fire pit and chainsaw to cut the timber, and any other large items we are likely to want to take along. The load capacity is 2000 kg, so there's no need to weigh everything before we pack it in. A front loader Dometic 3 kg washing machine has been installed underfloor and there is no guessing when it's doing the spin-dry cycle: the motorhome vibrates the whole time and when it stops you know it's time to hang the washing out. What a brilliant feature, I like it.

The lockable storage compartments have selfclosing doors with gas struts and if I am looking for something at night, sensor lights turn on to help. All systems, with associated wiring and plumbing, are readily accessed from the under-floor compartments for ease of maintenance.

Both the inside and outside of the Breeze provide a great combination of luxury and practicality. If you are looking for luxury and quality in a motorhome, you need look no further than a **Tiffin Breeze**.



# Nut Cracker, Sweet...

by Allan Whiting of OutbackTravelAustralia.com.au

The Ufixit mob is best know for their excellent windscreen repair kit that we wouldn't leave home without. However, another Ufixit product is a wheel nut spanner that takes the effort and risk out of loosening wheel nuts.

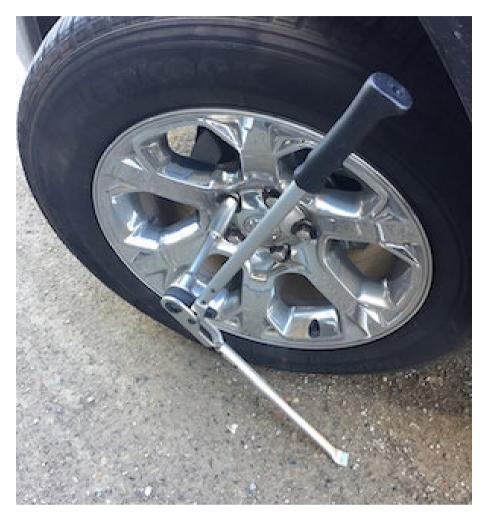
Tyre fitters and 4WD service outlets often use rattle guns to tighten wheel nuts and often they're overtightened. That amount of tension risks elongating and breaking studs, but also makes it very difficult to undo wheel nuts, should you get a flat tyre. Even if you have sufficient strength to break the nut's grip, it's tricky to keep a wheel brace or socket correctly aligned while applying that force, particularly in the case of dished wheels.

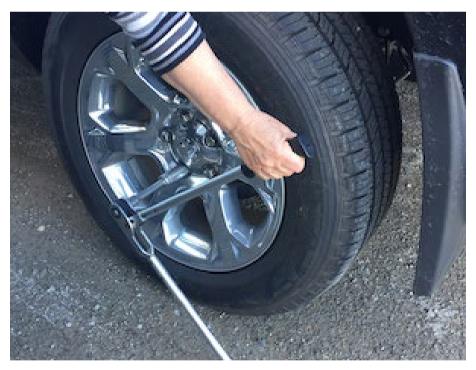
The **Ufixit Tyre Ratchet** is a twin-bar and ratchet assembly that comes in a case with three nut sockets –19 mm, 21 mm and 22 mm – and an extension bar. The technique involves seating the correct socket on the wheel nut and resting a foot on the stabiliser bar, where it touches the ground. Taller, light truck wheels may require a wooden block under the stabiliser bar. The rubber-grip handle is lowered until the ratchet engages and the handle can then be pulled upwards several times, until the nut loosens.

The Ufixit Tyre Ratchet can also be used to tighten wheel nuts by simply reversing the direction of handle movement. Tightening doesn't require stabiliser bar action, because there's a risk of overtightening the nuts.

We used to carry a breaker bar to undo tight nuts, but now we use the Ufixit tool for general breaker-bar duties, as well as its intended wheel-nut task.

We've found yet another use for the Ufixit tool: to loosen towball nuts that have been over-torqued. We tow-test different vehicles and often have to swap





between 50 mm, 70 mm, Treg and DO35 couplings, and invariably, the nuts have been done up with a rattle gun. Our cure is simple: We remove the tow tongue and insert it back, temporarily sideways, into the square towbar socket. Using a 33mm socket on the Ufixit Tyre Ratchet we can undo the most stubborn towball nut.

This handy tool isn't cheap, at around \$130, but takes all the physical effort out of tight-nut situations.



# Great FINKING!

A unique ATV experience along the ancient Finke River bed...

by Allan Whiting of OutbackTravelAustralia.com.au

# **TRAVEL**



This unique travel experience is a drive-yourself, or passenger trip from Hermannsburg, down the ancient Finke River Gorge to Palm Valley and return. Doing the trip in an ATV is a much more fresh-air excursion than in a 4WD.

The Finke River bed is the oldest continuouslyoperating river bed on earth, which fact alone makes
it worth visiting. On top of that, the Finke Gorge
contains Palm Valley, a palm-tree-lined oasis in this
arid landscape. We've visited Palm Valley many times
and it never fails to impress. However, in recent years
it's become yet another 4WD-crowded site. Camping
there is more squeezed-in than the front seat of a
Fuso Canter and the corrugated track into the Valley
is almost bumper to bumper at school holiday times.

Fortunately, there's an escape from the bottleneck: an ATV visit to Palm Valley, via the actual riverbed, not the trafficked gravel road.

**Finke River Adventures** is the brainchild of local resident Brenton Schild, who has lived and worked in Central Australia for many years. We've summarised his latest business initiative in our Tours section of our website.

So there we were, stepping out of Brenton's 'Benz Vito luxury minibus, at his FRA HQ in Hermannsburg, some 130 km from Alice Springs. While we sipped his barista-quality flat whites, he rolled out three Can-Am ATVs, or 'side-by-sides' as they're also known.

These vehicles aren't simple quads, but have roll cages, seat belts and seating for four in individual bucket seats.

After a briefing on the day's planned excursion and a run-through on vehicle operation it was helmet-fitting time. Then everyone mounted up and obeyed the CB radio call to 'start your engines'. The Rotax engines burst into life with plenty of appropriate noise and it was simply a matter of selecting forward gear and away we went: no clutch or ratio changes to worry about. Even novices to driving these left hand drive agricultural machines adapted quickly and it was a case of smiles all around.

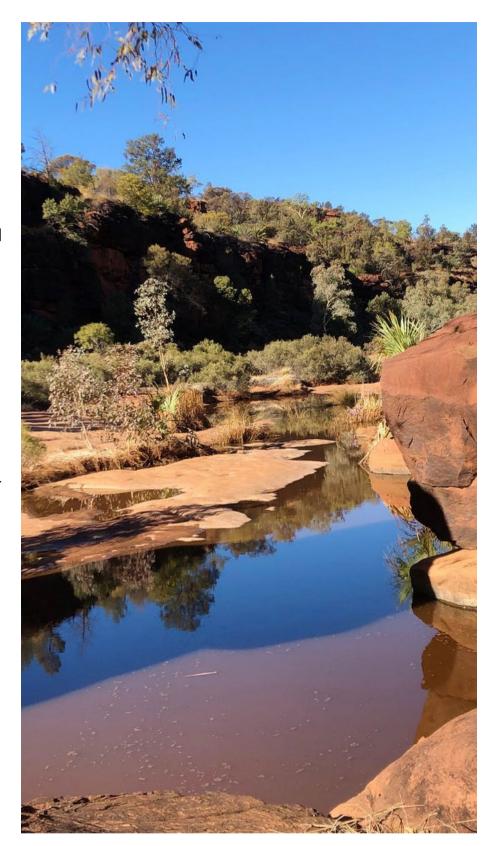
The three-Can-Am convoy roared out of Hermannsburg, crossed Larapinta Drive and headed straight for the sandy and rocky riverbed of the Finke. We were immediately impressed with the dynamic safety of these little beasts, as their four-wheel independent suspension and low-pressure off-road tyres coped happily with undulations and tight turns. Fresh air blew around our helmeted heads and it was wonderful to be able to look around at the red rock and spinifex scenery as we bounced along, unconcerned by traffic.

Brenton chimed in on the CB whenever there was a hazard and puled up several times for a chat about the country and its Aboriginal cultural heritage. His intimate knowledge of Finke Gorge geology and history is a significant reason in why he has been entrusted with this exclusive tour route through Aboriginal land.

After a morning tea stop we entered Finke Gorge National Park and shared the entry track to Palm Valley with conventional 4WD vehicles. The nimbleness and rock climbing capability of the Can-Ams drew envious looks from bystanders and kids waved enthusiastically.

Our convoy crew included two sub-teen boys, who rated the drive at, "100 out of 10!".

Brenton hosted a one-hour informative walk through the flatter sections of Palm Valley, before heading to a picnic hut for a slap-up lunch of sangers, rolls and cake. The return drive to Hermannsburg was quicker, as Brenton encouraged some slightly 'lead-foot' behaviour through the soft sand.



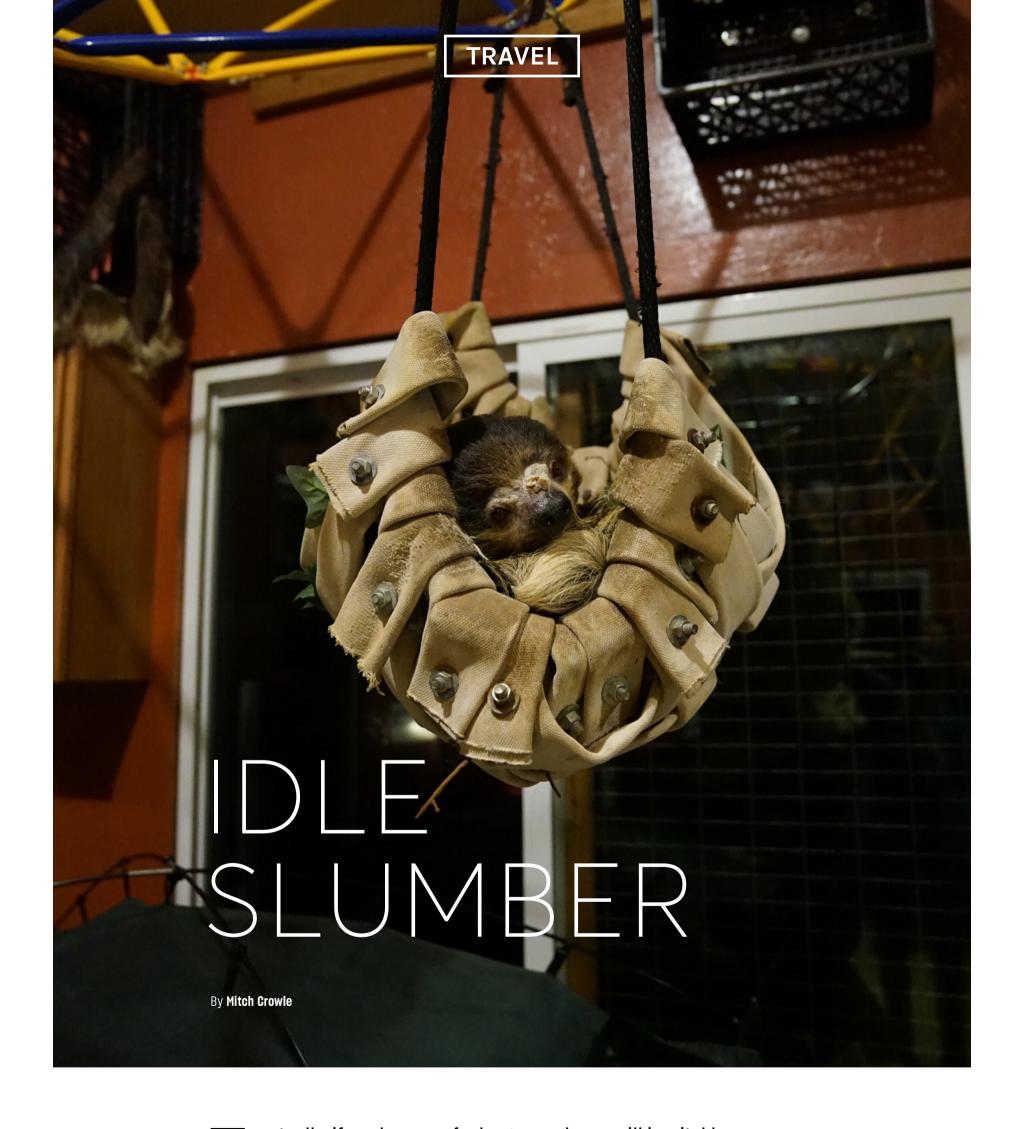




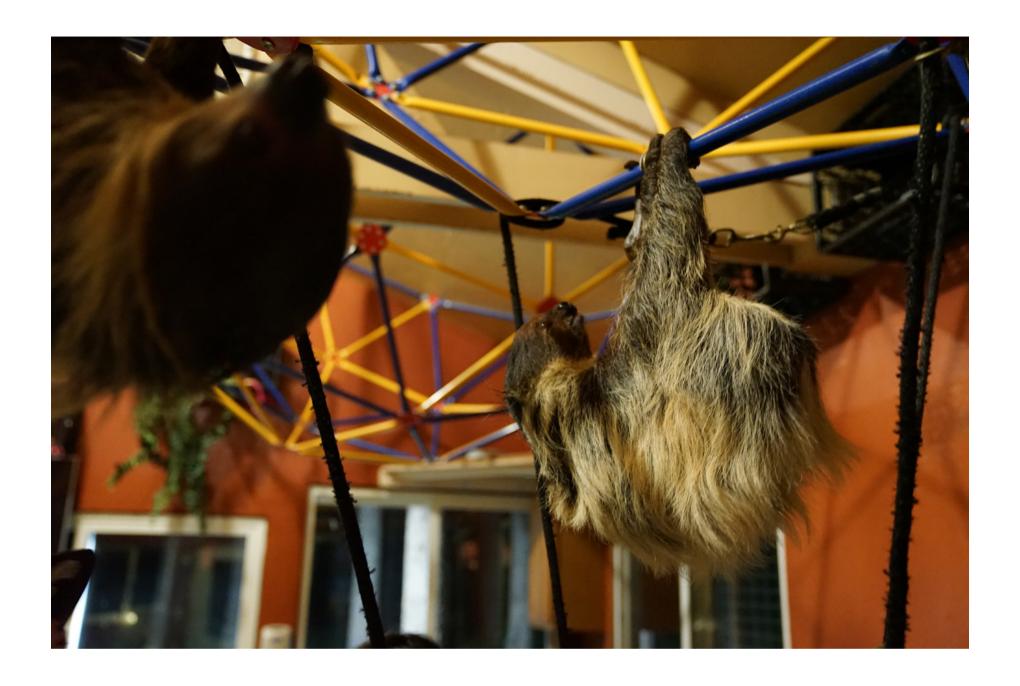
Back at Hermannsburg, all participants shared their exploits and praised Fink River Adventures' initiative. Would they do it again? You bet. Would we? Absolutely.

Somehow, Kezzie managed to hold the video camera tight enough to get some great footage. Click the image below for an in-depth look at this excellent adventure, or the image above for a quick peek.



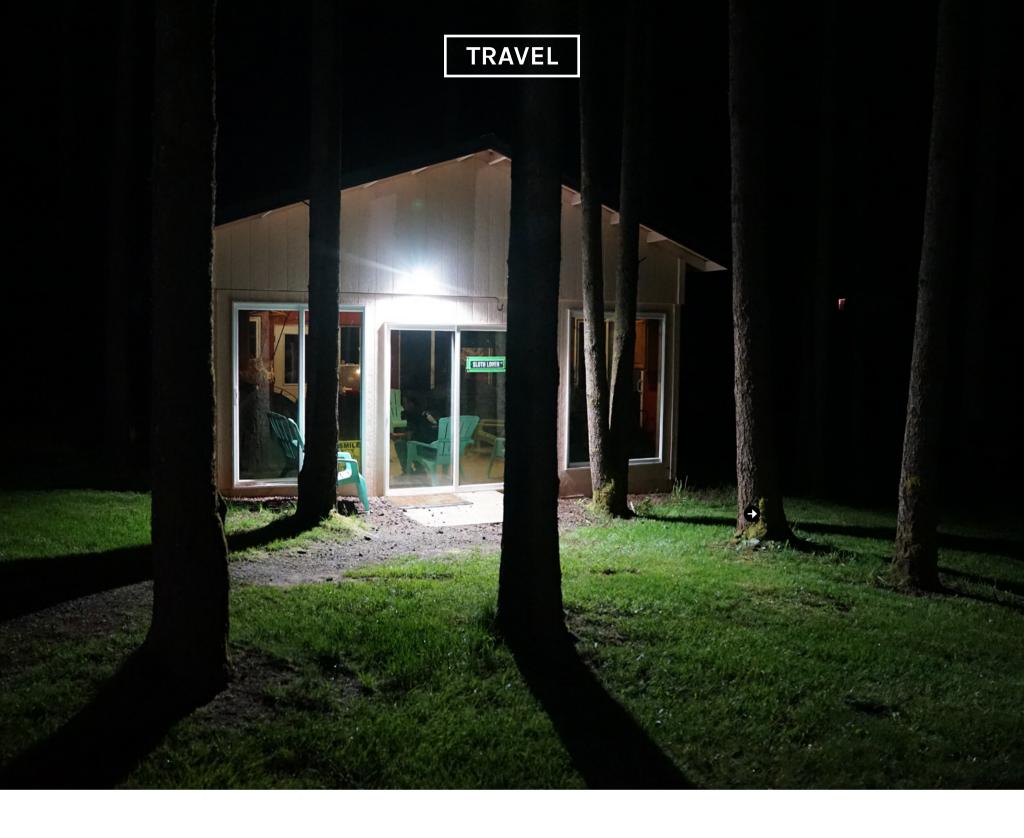


ventually, if you know me for long enough, you will inevitably compare me to a sloth. It's ok. I'm used to it. Not in a cruel way – it's always more a light hearted observation. The amount of messages I received after the movie Zootopia came out, you would have thought I was integral to the production. But no, there was just a helpful and very slow sloth in amongst all the other characters, that apparently I share some traits with.



I get it. I'm aware of my sleepy smile and heavy lids. A tendency to react (outwardly at least) slowly to most events that occur within my vicinity, be they positive or negative. A preference for warm environments and constant dozing. The two hour long process of waking each morning in order to become only mildly coherent (without coffee, I am essentially a newborn until roughly 11 am despite now being in my early 30s).

The funny part about this to me is I actually do adore them, and have for many years. So while researching the route to take from the Avenue of the Giants up the west coast towards Vancouver, I unexpectedly found a Zoological Conservation Center tucked away in Northern Oregon that houses, among other animals, an assortment of two-toed sloths. This was enough to immediately make it a must-do while on the road through the Pacific North West. The kicker to this was they offer a small group sleepover, where you spend a night with these gorgeously glacial creatures.



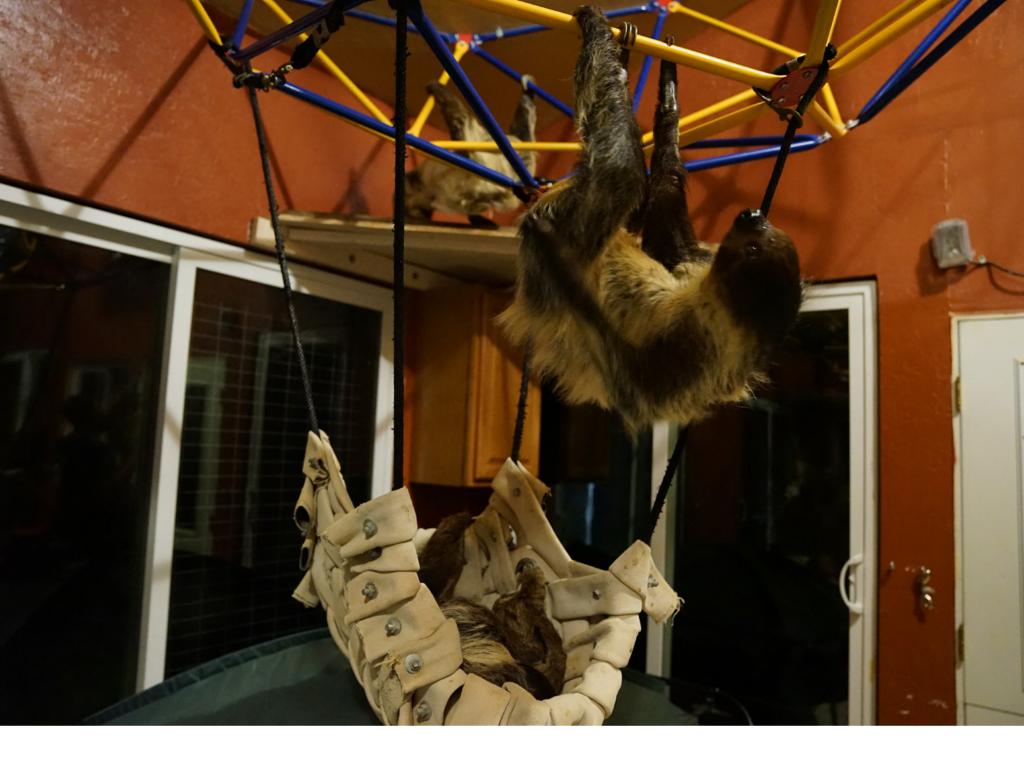
The name of the center is Chasing Tail. It is a family run operation that works internationally with a small network of facilities through Central and South America. Collectively they are responsible for the care and treatment of displaced sloth populations; increasing each year due to vested logging interests and the encroachment of 'civilisation'.

Specifically in Suriname and Guyana, sloths are rescued from soon-to-be logged forests before their natural habitats are destroyed, and placed into research programs. The sloths in residence at the Rainier center have been retired from within this network and now number more than 100.

#### DOUBLE EDGED SWORD

The influx of interest of late (although operating for more than 20 years it has only opened to the public for the last 4) has swung both ways: A considerable increase in people wanting to attend, experience and learn more about the sloth population contrasts a wave of online petitions and bloggers calling for the centre's licenses to be removed and it shut down due to perceived slights against the animals in their care.

Unfortunately, the majority of the negative attention is centred around baseless conjecture, cherry-picked opinions and remanufactured accusations concerning the methods, intentions and facility itself. After concerted research I discovered them to be not much more than fear mongering and fake news (how very 2018). It's a shame, but then not too surprising – I guess people really feel the need to get those page hits...

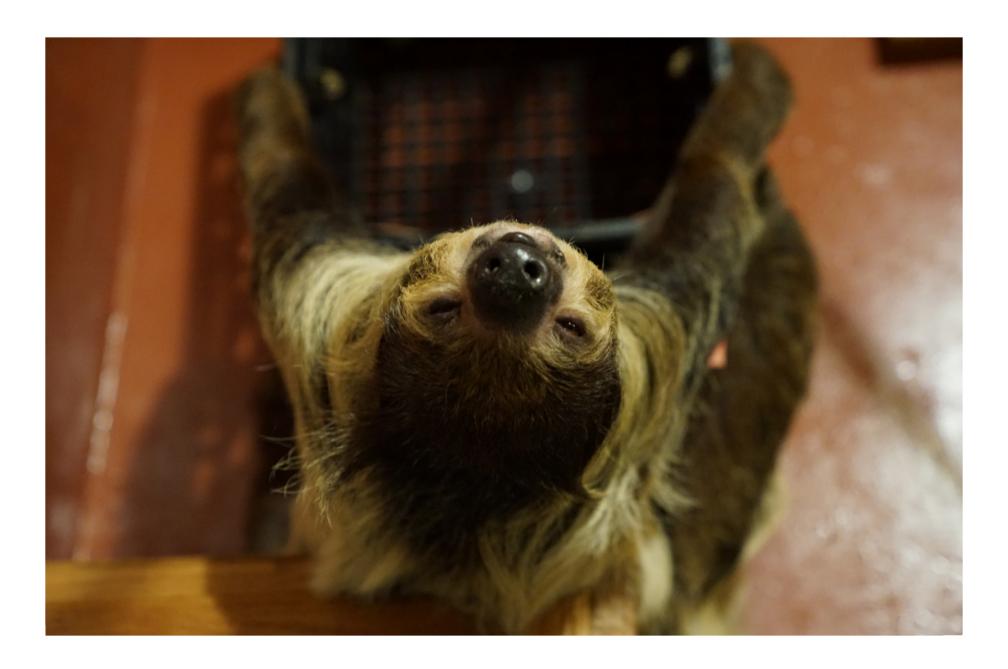


#### SURREAL BELIEVER

Walking into the habitat is surreal in itself. From the cool Oregon weather of mid-April, the temperature inside is a humid 80° F, which keep the sloths from developing pneumonia and is designed to facilitate their nocturnal activity. Around the room, jungle gyms are fixed to the ceiling with covered stretcher cots underneath each; there are some soft leather swings plus numerous shelves and crates affixed high to the walls.

For someone who has a fascination with sloths, this experience proves overwhelming. The first 20 minutes inside I don't do anything but grin and slowly wander around, unintentionally mirroring the exact animals I was there to see.

Over the course of the night our small group of six have a open and warm handler available at all times providing the opportunity to learn more about the habits. We gained insight into how their natural environment needs to be externally replicated as it continually disappears, and how the facility's network is undertaking research on how sloths can be moved and housed with care to different areas of the world, due to the devastation they face. We discovered how difficult it is to nurture breeding programs in-sanctuary and what their habits are. All this while continuously feeding sloths small slices of cucumber for hours, which in itself is both rewarding and relaxing.



Sloths can only focus roughly four inches in front of their face and (some would say like me) sleep for almost 20 hours each day. They rely heavily on smell and sound, so much so that by an hour into the sleepover, they are following a couple of us around the room from on high, anticipating the next bite of food.

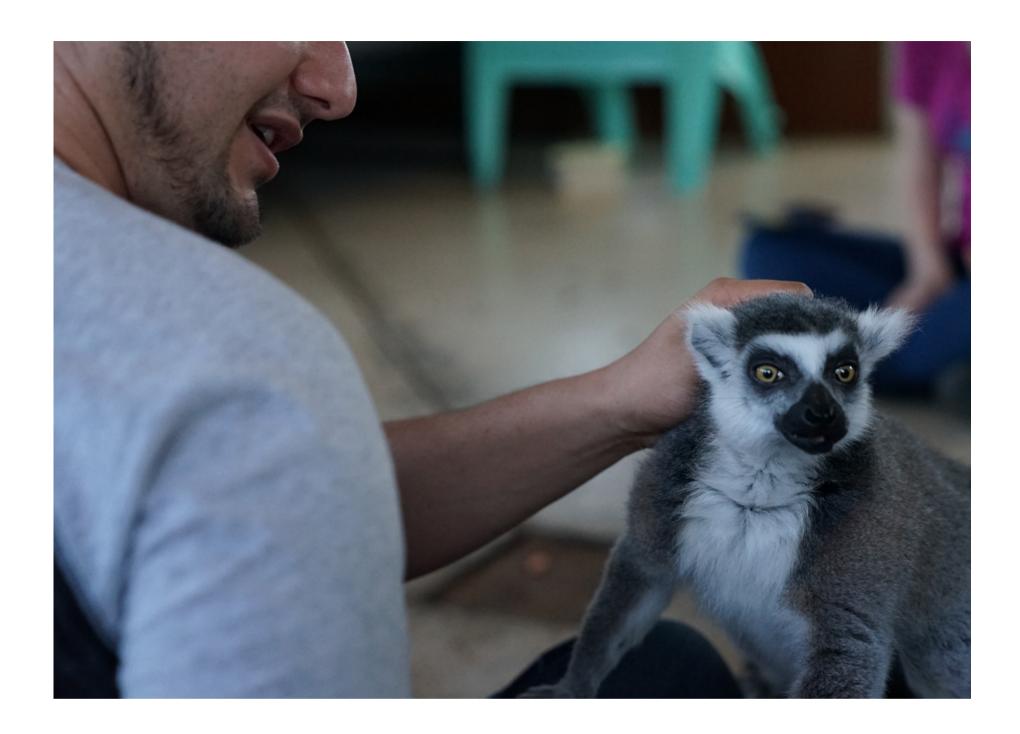
Watching them move and interact is hypnotic. They can be slow; so incredibly slow that your eyes feel wrong somehow, as if you are focusing on the wrong element in your vision and you need to shake your head and readjust. In person they can be surprisingly quick – especially if you are distracted while feeding. Suddenly they are moving with agile grace, balancing upside down on curved bony toes, arm extended as if to say, "Hey buddy, I'm still here, let's keep this going". With their shaggy hair and laid back attitude they are the Dudes of the rainforest; small South American zen masters that seem to have reached a level of contentment we may never know.



When the heater occasionally kicks in through the night to flow the steamy air through their space, there are a few moments when in the midst of crossing the ceiling, a sloth will hit a sweet spot of warmth, and immediately stop regardless of position or angle. It then falls asleep in that exact position for hours. This commitment to comfort is inspiring.

I watch one lazily amble into a crate and within five minutes he is joined by another, jostling for position in maybe the most meek fashion possible. Later in the evening, a third sloth wanders over and for 20 minutes above our heads some kind of Sloth Tetris takes place: the original two not giving an inch while the third persists with its furry war of attrition. Eventually, all three are locked together and the one face that is visible amongst the fur looks ridiculously serene as it falls asleep.

Then, before I know it, the clock is pushing 2 am and my own drowsiness becomes overwhelming. I find myself crawling into my own warm corner of the room, immediately drifting off once I too find a sweet spot to call my own.

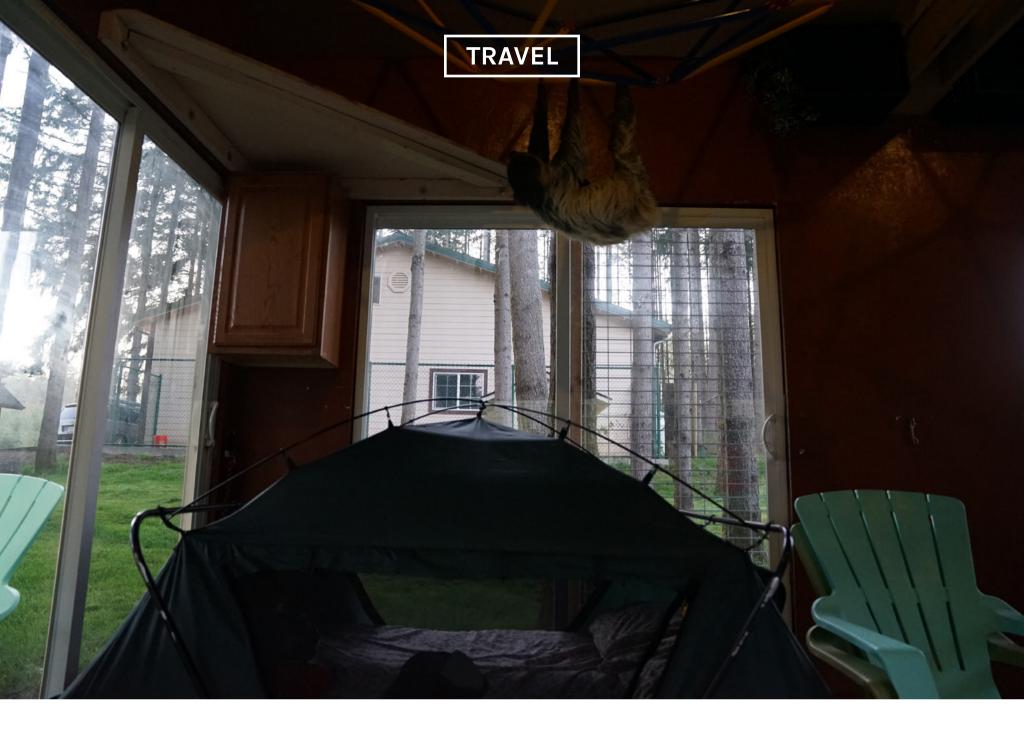


### LEMUR L'MERRIER

Morning light breaks through and I'm the last of our group awake, sleepily rolling out of the cot. Several sloths are already getting another cucumber feed from the fridge.

As a little bonus while visiting the center, we sit in a circle and are greeted by a ring tailed lemur brought in by the handler. This is the second lemur experience I've had on the road this year, the first happening at Sharkarosa Ranch in Texas, and they are incredible fun.

It is early morning and as I struggle to focus on what is happening through one half-open eye, this little fellow is bounding around, completely happy to wander in his own world. Lemurs are almost the opposite of sloths – bright eyed, bouncing, inquisitive and cheeky, with a real sweet spot for under-the-arm scratches and no attention span whatsoever. His little hands look like the most detailed miniature leather gloves you will ever see.



It's not an easy conversation to have when it comes to species whose habitats and communities are constantly and viciously threatened by what to some is human progress. I understand there are people who don't see a Center such as Chasing Tail in a positive light.

However, the Center is upfront about what they do and what they provide. It is not a zoo. The staff sustains the largest captive population of actively reproducing adult sloths throughout the Americas, along with the other species on hand.

#### IDLE THOUGHTS

There is an argument to be made that rehousing sloths in neighbouring environments that will also be destroyed within months is redundant and stressful. Alternatives should absolutely be explored, in a careful and attentive manner, which is exactly what they are doing.

What I found at Chasing Tail was a dedicated team of professionals who have nothing but the best interests of all the animals under their care at heart. They provide a fascinating opportunity for anyone to visit and learn from a true conservation center that has taken a different, but no less important, route. Perhaps their work can not only help saves sloths, it can help rescue the misinformed from malicious intent so they too can enjoy the serenity of truly blissful idle slumber...

CHASING TAIL ZOOLOGICAL CONSERVATION CENTER

**74320 LARSON ROAD, RAINIER, OR 97048**(1HR NORTH
OF PORTLAND)

E:

SLOTH.CENTER@GMAIL.COM

W:

WWW.CHASING-TAIL.COM



The RV Friendly program is a Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Limited (CMCA) initiative aimed at assisting RV travellers as they journey throughout this wonderful country.

An RV Friendly Town (RVFT) is one that provides a certain number of amenities and a certain level of services for these travellers.

When RV travellers enter a town displaying the RVFT sign they know they will be welcome. Certain services

will be provided for them that may not be available in other centres, and they will have access to a safe place to stay overnight and possibly for a longer period.

On the following pages are this issue's featured RV Friendly towns. If possible please include them in your travels and support the communities going out of their way to welcome those of us fortunate enough to be travelling. Enjoy!

### **RV FRIENDLY TOWNS**

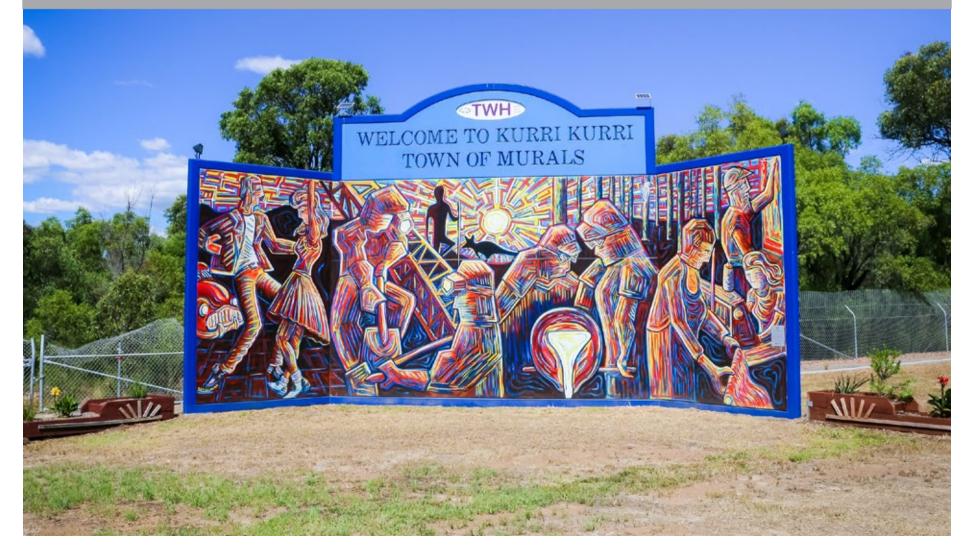
### Kurri Kurri, NSW

region of New South Wales, approximately 120 km north-west of Sydney. The town is renowned for its murals, with more than on 60 display. These magnificent public artworks tell the story of the people, events and places that shaped the area's unique culture and heritage.

When visiting, experience an array of attractions including a day trip to the surrounding wine region of the Hunter Valley, the Big Kookaburra in Rotary Park,

a visit to the steam railway, or watch a movie at the local drive-in cinema. Kurri Kurri is a great place to visit, especially for RVers. Travellers passing through the town can find low cost accommodation at Kurri Kurri Central Oval, located in Allworth Street. Sites are available for 72 hours, at a cost of \$5.50 pervehicle per-night. Vehicles must be self-contained; however, bins and water are provided. Pets on a lead are permitted.

Tourist/Visitor Information Centre	Kurri Kurri Visitor Information Centre 199 Lang St Kurri Kurri Ph (02) 4936 1909 W: visitkurrikurri.com
Casual Parking (near retail centre)	Barton St, southern side of Rotary Park
Short Term Parking	Kurri Kurri Central Oval, Allworth St, between Hopetoun & Coronation Sts.
	Self-contained only, 72 hrs max, \$5.50 pvpn, mobile coverage, bins, water, pets on leads permitted
Dump Point	Kurri Kurri Central Oval, Allworth St, between Hopetoun & Coronation Sts.
Potable Water	Kurri Kurri Central Oval, near dump point site



## **RV FRIENDLY TOWNS**

# Cleve, SA

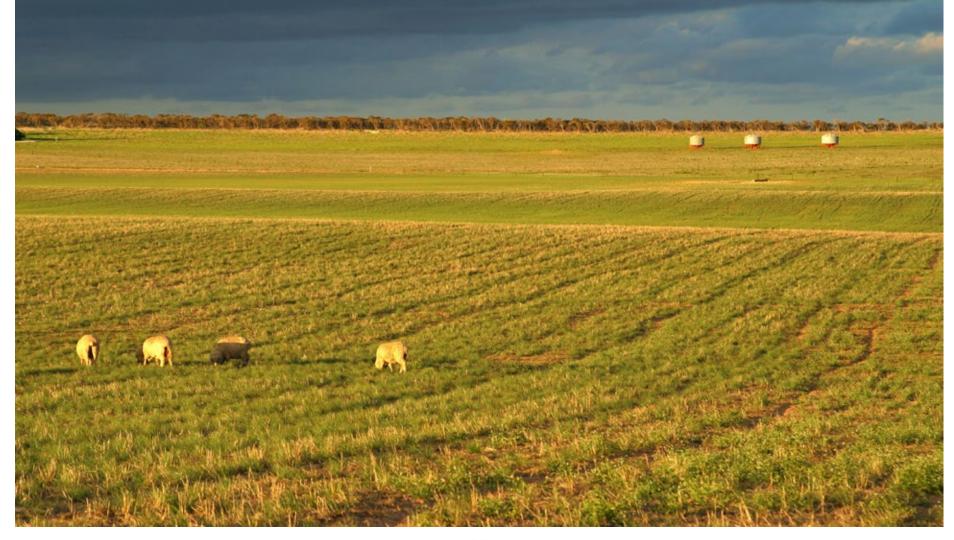
Cleve is on the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia, south of Whyalla. This small township is the 'Rural Heart of Eyre Peninsula', with its major industries being agriculture and retail.

Cleve has a good range of shops, accommodation and sporting facilities, including a gym and even an 18-hole golf course along a creek bed in the centre of town. The town itself and its surrounding district has everything from the magnificent scenery of the

plains and hills to the seaside beauty of Arno Bay. Go sailing or fishing on the coast and enjoy spectacular views of the hills and Spencer Gulf.

Travellers visiting town will find short and long-term parking at Cleve Showground. Sites are available for \$15 per-vehicle per-night and visitors are asked to use the honesty box that is available on-site. Potable water is accessible at the showgrounds; however, the dump point is located at Centenary Park.

Tourist/Visitor Information Centre	Cleve Newsagency Fourth St Cleve. S.A. Ph (08) 8628 2183
Casual Parking (near retail centre)	Main St
Short Term Parking	Cleve Showground
	Birdseye Highway
	Honesty box
	\$15 pvpn
Dump Point	Centenary Park
Potable Water	Cleve Showground, Birdseye Highway



### **RV FRIENDLY TOWNS**

### Narrandera, NSW

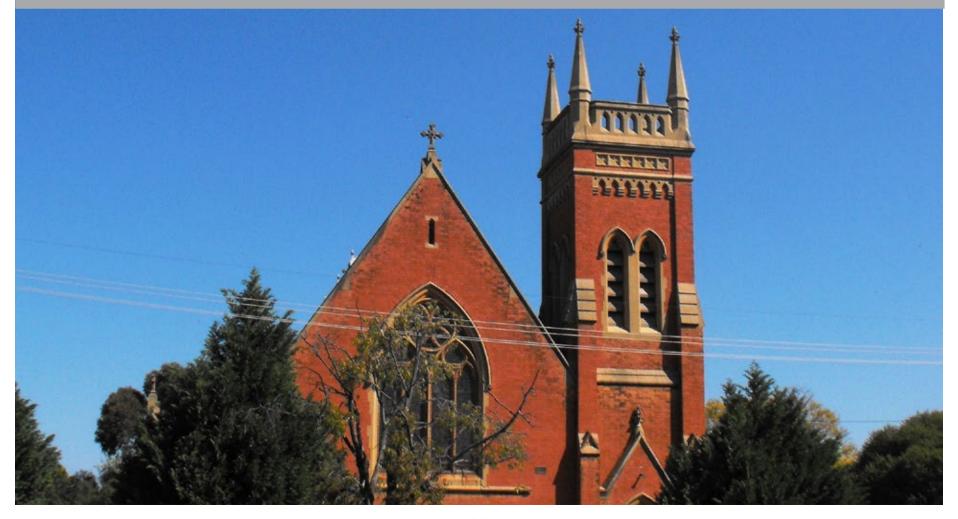
Arrandera is nestled on the Murrumbidgee River at the intersection of the Newell and Sturt Highways. Its picturesque natural treasures, including the Murrumbidgee River, Lake Talbot, Bundidgerry Creek and Wetlands, are a photographer's delight and offer an abundance of wildlife and bird watching opportunities.

Surrounded by historic buildings and tree-lined streetscapes, Narrandera offers an excellent range

of eateries and boutique shopping, together with an abundance of interesting activities and attractions.

Visitors will find short-term parking at Narrandera Showground. Non-powered sites are available for up to 96 hours at a rate of \$15 per-vehicle per-night. Alternatively, parking is also available at Five Mile Reserve for up to 96 hours. A dump point is available on site at Narrandera Showground and potable water can be sourced at both Narrandera Park and Brewery Flat.

Tourist/Visitor Information Centre	Narrandera Visitor Information Centre 26 Cadell St (Newell Highway) Ph (02) 6959 1766 E: tourist.centre@narrandera.nsw.gov.au W: narrandera.com.au
Casual Parking (near retail centre)	Elwin St, cnr of East St
Short Term Parking	Narrandera Showground Elizabeth St Max 96 hrs \$15 pvpn Non-powered Pay caretaker
Dump Point	Narrandera Showground Elizabeth St
Potable Water	Narrandera Park and Brewery Flat





Australian Venomous Creatures...

by Emily Barker



There is no doubt Australia is a highly diverse and unique place, one we love to get out and explore! But, as a country home to more dangerous creatures than any other, so they say, we also have a not-unwarranted formidable and somewhat fearsome reputation. It's one that ultimately must be respected and considered as we traverse this vast land. Any seasoned Australian traveller will tell you it's wise to be wary when outdoors, be it in the water, on land – or even indoors in some situations!

Sharks, crocodiles, spiders and snakes receive the lion's share of bad press, but overall there's an impressive collection of venomous critters responsible for our legendary reputation. Knowing how to recognise the dangers and – importantly – respond appropriately to bites, stings or allergic reactions is the ultimate key to being prepared and safely enjoying your travels.

Available for both Android and iOS devices,
Australian Bites and Stings is unique and underpraised little app developed by a company called
Seqirus, with the expert assistance of the Australian
Venom Research Unit (AVRU). Seqirus is one of
the few companies in the world to manufacture
antivenins for Australia. According to its website,
this free smartphone app is part of the company's

commitment to providing education to the community about the unique venomous creatures that might be encountered throughout Australia.

Hosting up-to-date first aid information specific to Australian fauna and based on local resuscitation and envenoming first aid guidelines, the app aims to prepare and assist you for any potentially deadly venomous creature-related situations.

The app itself is well presented, with a clear interface and concise categories. It's easy to navigate and has multiple 'immediate' 000 action buttons throughout. While there's not a vast volume of information provided, what's there is an excellent and valuable immediate-response resource; sufficient to identify and respond appropriately in emergency situations.

In addition to identification and first aid treatment options for specific bites and stings, the app also covers allergic reactions including anaphylaxis. This is incredibly important considering the second most deadly creature in Australia is the European honey bee – not because of its venom, but for the potentially deadly allergic reaction that up to two percent of the population suffers.

Despite its small size the app has many useful features: In addition to a clear and detailed step-

#### **APPS**



by-step first aid guide there is also an audio resuscitation guide and a first aid guide specific to Australian venomous creatures divided into individual categories (snakes, spiders, aquatic stings, jellyfish and 'creepy crawly and insect bites').

Naturally, it describes in detail the Pressure Immobilisation Technique (PIT) used for snake and spider bites, and blue-ringed octopus stings – complete with area-specific diagrams. There's a 'Be Prepared' checklist to equip you with the essentials before you venture out and instructions on what to do if you're bitten and/or stung.

There's also a guide to venomous snake species and their distribution in Australia, plus information on spiders, aquatic creatures, jellyfish, insects and other creepy crawlies. While not designed to substitute professional first aid training and techniques, this app is an excellent immediate response first aid and identification resource. One that could very well save a life – possibly your own!



