

# Setting up for towing your Caravan

Providing you follow a few simple guidelines, towing your caravan or campertrailer affords a great holiday escape. Most modern vehicles are suitable for towing some form of trailer and when you buy a new vehicle, tow bars are an extra that can be quickly and easily fitted.

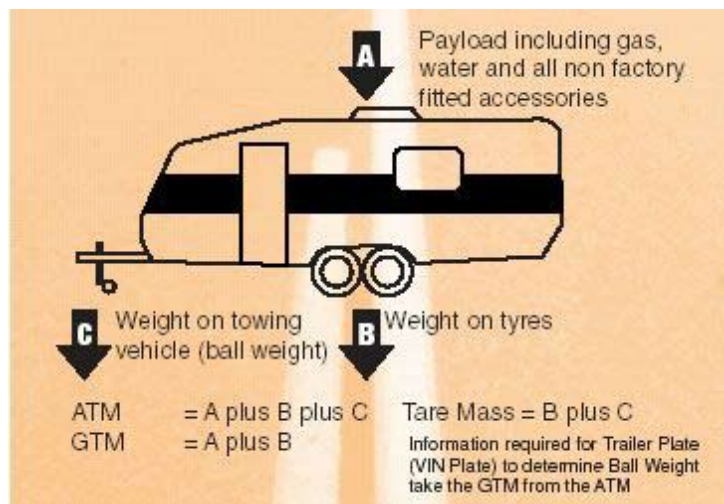
Before you tow, there are some things you should consider:

## Your Vehicle's Towing Rating

Before purchasing a new vehicle, you should check its towing rating. This rating is set by the manufacturer and can usually be found in the vehicle's owner handbook. In some instances, the rating may be a recommendation that the vehicle is not suitable for towing at all. This can be the case with some smaller cars.

Here are two components to the towing rating:

1. The overall loaded trailer weight permitted to be towed by the vehicle; and
2. The ball weight or coupling weight of the trailer. This refers to the downward force exerted on the vehicle's tow ball by the loaded trailer.



## Compliance Plates

A compliance plate will be attached to the towbar to advise you of the maximum permissible loading for that particular towbar. A towing rating can vary from a few hundred kilos to 3,500 kilograms. So when you purchase a vehicle, make sure the towing rating will suit your needs both currently and in the foreseeable future. It is usually recommended that the ball weight should be between 10 to 15 per cent of the total loaded weight of the trailer.

For example, if the total loaded weight of your caravan is 1,500kgs, the ball weight should be 150kgs. Also, ensure you have a 3,500kg-rated 50mm towball with the manufacturer's stamping, as this is a vital part of the connection.

## Hitches

To help accommodate the ball weight load on the rear of the vehicle, it is advisable to use an appropriately sized weight distributing hitch. This system is scientifically designed to help distribute the weight of the trailer evenly to all four wheels of your vehicle for safer towing. To further enhance the performance of your towing system, a sway control device can also be incorporated. This device helps to control sway, especially when it is caused by turbulence from passing trucks, cross winds etc. You should seek advice from an authorised towing specialist to determine the most appropriate system for your towing needs.

## Legal Towing Limits

The laws governing tow vehicle ratings, towing trailers and speed limits are now uniform throughout Australia. Essentially, you must adhere to the vehicle's towing rating as stated in the owner's handbook. This means you no longer have to be concerned about different regulations when you travel interstate. If you need clarification on this matter, please check with your State Transport Authority.

## Towing Information

For more towing information, order the [National Caravan & Recreational Vehicle Towing Guide](#).

