

## **Australian Consumer Law Submission regarding RVs, caravans and Trailer Boats.**

### **Overview**

We purchased a new Elite Balistic 2210 RZ Caravan in 2016 for \$125,000 that “was not fit for purpose”, although I was not aware of that at the time.

We have had to have a GTM upgrade to 3400kg and ATM upgrade to 3700kg on the caravan as well as a Brake Towing Capacity Upgrade of our Toyota Landcruiser to 4000kg in order to be legal and covered by insurance.

The cost for these upgrades was a minimum of \$6774 (BTC upgrade \$2750.00; Caravan GTM upgrade \$ 3994.00).

Of course, the actual cost to complete these actions was significantly greater as several trips from Sydney to Newcastle were required for initial quotations and then for the work to be completed. On top of all that there is the emotional strain of knowing that if you have an accident then your insurance company may deem that your insurance is invalid as well as knowing that the Police could pull you over at any stage and weigh you then prohibit you from further travel.

### **Background**

I am a retired Mineral Exploration Geologist and have worked throughout Australia and many overseas countries in the past 50 years. My wife and I purchased a caravan in 2016 to travel extensively throughout Australia. I wanted something to handle unsealed corrugated roads and dust. Every manufacturer said I needed an off-road caravan. Dust and corrugations does not mean off-road but it does mean sturdy. I also requested the same size and brand wheels on the caravan as my Toyota Landcruiser 200.

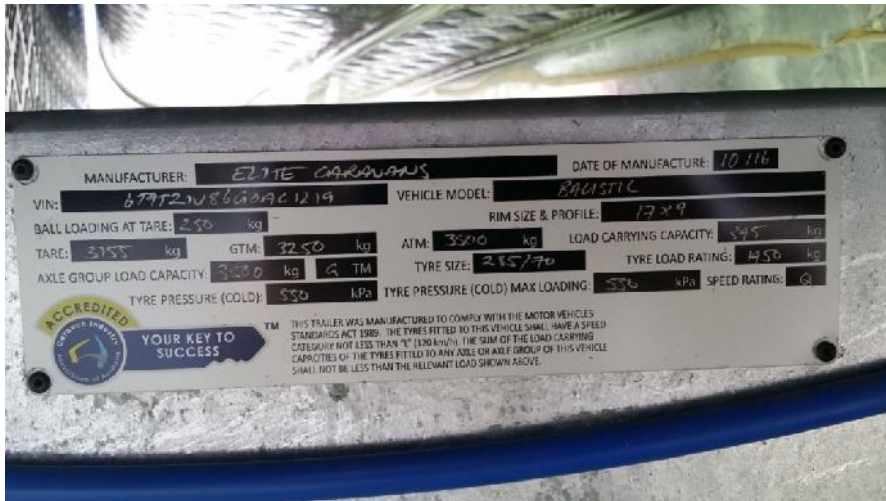
At no stage was it suggested by any manufacturers that we spoke to that the car or caravan I was seeking would exceed 3500 kg when fully laden or that our vehicle could also be overweight when connected.

### **Caravan as Delivered**

We ended up settling on an Elite Balistic 2210 caravan which was delivered within the timeframe provided and at an acceptable price. There were some issues with some of the build components and an ongoing issue with an electrical item but essentially Elite Caravans were quite accommodating with correcting everything we raised.

However, we soon discovered that the caravan was significantly overweight when loaded with water, gas, food, clothing and basic items such as water hose, electrical cable, grey water hose, chocks, ramps.

The images below are the compliance plates on the caravan as delivered.



The load capacity of 345 kg was too low given that the caravan has 3 water tanks (2 x 90 litre washing and 1 x 60 litre drinking; total of 240kg) and 18 kg of gas. That leaves only 87 kgs for all other items listed above.

As such, we have had to spend significant funds to increase the GVM and the towing capacity of our car and the GTM of our caravan to comply with State regulations and Insurance requirements.

**Essentially, the caravan “was not fit for purpose” and had I known what I now know, I would not have accepted delivery. We wanted a caravan that we could legally tow with our standard Toyota. The only way to correct this was to spend an additional \$7000 plus.**

**Yet the RV, Caravan and Trailer Boating Industry seems to think that they provide products that comply with Laws and Regulations and are adequate protection for consumers. In our case, that is clearly not the case. Simple compliance by the Manufacturer would have saved me lots of money and have made it safer for other road users.**