She’s Got the Whole Rig Under Control



Let me paint you a picture. It’s a beautiful Western Australian morning, albeit bloody cold at 0600, the kind that makes you think caravanning is the greatest idea anyone has ever had. A couple of hours later, somewhere in suburbia, Kay is gearing herself up to back a pseudo-caravan into a tight space with the calm, focused precision of a neurosurgeon. I know a bit about neurosurgeons now. Meanwhile, I’m watching and spilling cheap coffee on myself.

Proud husband moment? Absolutely. Slightly humbling? Also yes.

She’s just completed another towing refresher course through the RAC — and honestly, it shows. Not that she was bad before. But there’s a difference between *“pretty sure I’ve got this”* and *“I actually know what I’m doing and now I can explain why.”* The second one is far more reassuring when you’re the passenger watching a roundabout approach with 2.7

tonnes of caravan in tow.

Why Bother With a Course When It’s Not Required

Here’s the thing that surprises a lot of people: towing a caravan in Australia is not a particularly complicated licensing matter. If your combined vehicle and van weight sits within your licence class, you’re technically legal to just… go. Hook up and hoon off into the sunset (maybe please don’t hoon).

There’s no mandatory towing qualification. No test. No endorsement. No sign-off.

Which is a little terrifying when you think about it.

A caravan setup can easily push 5,500+ kg combined. It behaves completely differently to your everyday car. It sways. It has a longer stopping distance. It requires a completely different approach to reversing — one where your instincts are, at first, spectacularly wrong. (“Turn left to go right” is a sentence that breaks the brain until it suddenly doesn’t.)

People are generally taught to drive (well these days maybe taught more to master a steering wheel and brakes then pass a test rather than seriously drive) with your hands at the top of the top of the steering wheel — think 10 to 2 mantra. When they two something, whether it’s a box trailer, boat, horse float or any kind of RV, they can’t easily escape that mental positioning.

So while nobody is *legally* requiring you to know what you’re doing, the laws of physics very much are.

Enter the RAC — Actually Helpful, Not Just Bureaucratic

The RAC in Western Australia runs some genuinely excellent training programs for towing, and the refresher course Kay completed is a great example. Practical, hands-on, real-world skills delivered through Driver Risk Management (we've done courses with Mike Sandilands but I guess he slept in). Not a lecture about the Road Traffic Act delivered by someone who appears to be asleep standing up.



We're also eyeing off the advanced course coming up — because if the refresher sharpened things up this much, the advanced version sounds like it could turn her into an

outright caravan whisperer.

The kind of skills these courses cover — situational awareness, weight distribution, managing sway, safe reversing, understanding your rig's limits — are exactly the things that don't get taught when you buy a van and someone just hands you the keys with a "she'll be right."

She won't always be right, it turns out.

The Free Part (Yes, Really)

Now here's the bit that should get more attention: **it was free.** Free. No charge. Gratis. On the house. You just need to be an RAC member.

At a time when you can apparently spend four figures on a "wellness retreat" involving bamboo mats and someone whispering at you, a genuinely useful, potentially life-saving practical skills course being offered at no cost feels like a minor miracle.

If you're towing — or thinking about towing — and you're in WA, there is genuinely no good reason not to look into what the these courses have on offer (she's previously done a low cost course though CAMEC). The investment is your time. The return is competence, confidence, and the knowledge that you're not a hazard to yourself or anyone else on the road.

The Broader Point (Delivered Without Excessive Lecturing)

I'll keep this bit short, because nobody likes being preached at in what is supposed to be a lighthearted blog post.

Caravanning is wonderful. The freedom, the scenery, the ability to wake up somewhere spectacular and have your own kitchen — it's genuinely one of life's great pleasures. But the rigs are big, the roads are shared, and overconfidence is the enemy of a good trip.

Taking a course — especially a free one — isn't admitting you don't know what you're doing. It's what people who *actually* know what they're doing tend to do. The best drivers, pilots, surgeons, and yes, caravanners, are the ones who keep learning.

Kay gets that. Which is probably why she's the better half in more ways than one.

Interested in towing training? Check out what the RAC offers in Western Australia — the refresher and advanced courses are well worth your time, and the price for members (free!) is hard to argue with.