

CHECKLIST:

SURELY the manufacturer has produced a SAFE and FUNCTIONAL product!

After all isn't there a law. Well there is! and you should find out more by checking out these sites.
www.consumerlaw.gov.au www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au

WHY!.... Because this particular industry has some BAD habits!

By carefully reading through this list you can learn to avoid those who either by way of choice or ignorance have on offer to you, the unsuspecting consumer, Camper Trailers that in some cases are just down right wrong!

Many manufacturers will use the cheapest component or sizes that are designed for the Brochure rather than the actual Camper.

Australian Made?

Why should this matter, aren't all campers the same?

While there will always be a place for cheap imports you need to understand that for a Camper trailer to be priced at \$3800. when most quality rigs are going to be around \$12000. clearly there will be some pretty big differences.

You need to be aware that most of these cheap manufacturers will actually tell you that you don't need to pay any more because they have kept their prices down by using bulk buying power or high volume turn over.

They won't admit it but their price is that low because almost every component is the cheapest and poorest quality possible and mostly have come in from China.

In some cases they are using the actual "Australian Made Logo" to deceive you into believing that you are purchasing a quality product. This is against the law but I don't think they care really.

Second hand tyres that can blow out at any time, no brakes, no weather seals and poor suspensions are very common on the budget range. If you want to take your family camping will they be safe and comfortable!

The old story applies here so Be very aware that you will get what you pay for in this industry.

Jump for joy...NOT frustration!

When you look at a camper trailer, make sure that the manufacturer puts it up (and takes it down again) IN FRONT OF YOU!

Easy assembly should be a standard feature of every camper. But you'd be surprised how many manufacturers don't

think it's important that you can easily set up and dismantle your camp!

At the tradeshows, we've seen some of our fellow vendors using four salesman taking nearly an hour just to put the Annexe up and then after the show literally jumping on their camper trailers to get them to pack up. That's definitely not something you want to be doing out on the road!

Always get the salesman or manufacturer to put the camper up in front of you. We always do!

You'll see how quickly a Vacation Camper goes up, and that it can be done with just ONE person.

(For example, Pauline has put it up alone many times!)

2. Ease of breeze

Make sure there are plenty of windows for great airflow (and check whether ALL windows are included in the overall price!)

Even the nicest campers get hot. Imagine how uncomfortable it'll be trying to get a good night's sleep in a humid and

completely airless tent!

That's why there needs to be plenty of windows throughout the camper—so they'll catch breezes from any direction.

Most importantly, make sure that any windows you see on a display model are included in the price.

Some manufacturers will actually charge you EXTRA if you want more than their standard number of windows.

At Vacation Campers we think that you have the right to a cool tent. And you shouldn't have to pay extra for it! That's

why we make sure all our campers maximise window space, with windows strategically positioned to catch every breeze possible. And they come as part of our complete package! Beware though manufacturers who use gimmicks such as sky lights which can cause problems later as the tent ages or oversized windows that don't leave enough canvas on the tent wall for strength in windy conditions. Think about the rain splashing up the side. Some of these features are more for the Brochure rather than actually being practical.

3. Beat the day's heat...

Always think carefully about what the conditions will be like INSIDE the tent or annexe...and whether you will be comfortable!

It's where you'll eat your meals, relax out of the sun, invite friends, play cards, sleep and much more—so you don't want to be living in an oven.

So first of all, check the annexe. If it's all made out of canvas, you and your family will boil. Canvas can't deflect any heat!

That's why a Vacation Camper annexe has air flow "breeze walls" from floor to ceiling (with very effective mozzie screens, of course!). Airflow is at a maximum, while you are also protected from the glaring sun with a gable on the annexe roof and by additional roll-out awnings which deploy up as a veranda. All standard inclusions too!

Plus, if you wish, Vacation Campers can fit an optional sun-reflectant tarp on the roof. It stays on at all times, so you

don't have to wrestle with it every time you take the camper down.

This optional silver tarp is attached with fibreglass bows and leaves a big (but still protected) air flow gap between itself and your tent—providing maximum insulation from the sun. Avoid choosing canvas or saggy constructions which won't give you a good result.

4. Floor you...

When the camper is set up, examine the tent floor thoroughly to make sure it's practical and durable.

At Vacation Campers, we actually sew the floors of our campers in. And there's a very good reason for it! Some of our clients say that, before they had a Vacation Camper, the floor of their past trailer was the bane of their lives!

If YOU'VE ever had a camper trailer with a VELCRO floor, you'll know exactly what they're talking about! Take it off just once, and you'll never want to do it again. Velcro is VERY hard to square up and set in EXACTLY the right position to ensure that the floor actually does its job of sealing against water and ants! If the floor is ZIPPED on, you have to consider how practical that will be for YOUR holidays. Even though some have raised the join up the wall there will inevitably be times when uneven sites will place this join on the ground!

If you and your family like to camp on the beach, the zips will have to sit in the sand—bad news for you! With sand, dirt, grit or gravel stuck all through the teeth of floor zips, the life of the zip will be considerably shortened.

You'll have a hard time with stuck zippers, and you'll struggle to get the floor on or off; wouldn't it be frustrating if that happened on your first holiday in a new camper!

Our sewn on floors are an all-in-one sealed part of the tent that does not allow in any water or bugs and ensures you can easily set up and pack up. A simple shade sail material under the floor can help keep the floor protected. It is light and easy to clean.

5. All zipped up

Check that zips and sliders are SMART—safe and accessible

Zips are SO important when you're camping out. They create your doors, your windows—they can even be very useful to erect the camper. Walls and roofs should always connect using zips. They are easier and line up much better.

Avoid campers with external zips around the windows; they're constantly exposed to the elements and therefore have more chance of rusting or wearing down quickly. Plus, they're also annoying for you because if it starts to rain while you're cosy in bed, you have to go OUTSIDE to close the window!

The practicality of double sliders (where the zips open and close going either up OR down) can't be denied. If you have young children, closing the zip UP means you can feel sure they can't exit the tent at night. Closing it DOWN during the day means they can reach and open the zip to move around freely. A Vacation Camper is designed with this smart access in mind. Not only are our zips INTERNAL, they are also double sliders. This allows you to control the position of the cover at any height. And they're even colour coded! It's something that no one else in the industry does, but we think it's really important! It makes it even easier to connect and put up your Vacation Camper—you'll know that the white zips need to sit next to the white zips and the black next to the black.

6. Let there be light

Check that the camper is practically equipped to help you access light.

When you are talking to the salesperson, make sure that you ask about the openings in the tent, because that will determine just HOW easy it is for you and your family to access light. For example, a Vacation Camper is made with cable access zips at either end of the bed, as well as a convenient hook above the bed to hang your light source from. No matter where a light outlet is, you can attach your lead to it and bring light into your camper without the bugs.

7. Watch the weight!

Make sure you know the TOTAL weight of the camper.

The weight of a camper trailer is REALLY important—too much uncontrolled weight will overload your car or truck. Even more important is knowing the Actual Towing Weight of the camper all packed up and ready to go! While some companies will tell you that their trailer is only a certain weight and doesn't need brakes, they don't let you factor in the addition of your own possessions or the typical options you will need. This means whilst their bare bones trailer has an empty weight under 750 kg, thus not requiring brakes, once you pack in your gear, including water and food (Of which the industry standard is 300 kg!) plus all the options you had to buy to get it to a usable standard, spreaders and poles, water tank or kitchen box, maybe a ladder! Walls and windows even. Now that will defiantly take you PAST the safe and legal weight limit. Unless the whole usable package is **below** 400 kg, always make sure there are brakes on it. Like our Vacationer, and Tourer, all vehicles should automatically have brakes.

8. Time to tow and ready to reverse...

Think about how easy it will be to tow and reverse.

Getting your trailer around is a big consideration. Whether it's reversing the trailer into your camping spot or towing it around sharp corners, you need to make sure that you and your car can do it. A Vacation Camper has one of the longest drawbar on the market at 2.1m, which gives you more control over the trailer and makes towing and reversing easier. Plus, our camper chassis is all in one, roll-formed. It doesn't require additional steel for reinforcement. Result? It's at the lowest weight and highest strength with increased ground clearance. Check the ball weight. Have they got the axle in the right position? So it won't put unnecessary stress on your car. As a general rule this should not exceed 10% of the overall weight of the whole camper. Also of the greatest importance is will their jockey wheel cope! or is it going to be left up to you and your spine! This is one component that invariably fails.

9. Bigger isn't always better...

Measure and record how tall AND how wide the tent is when it's completely assembled.

Did you know that caravan parks have cut down on the size of their camping spaces? If your camper is too big, you might end up having to pay for TWO spots! The camper should be big enough for you and your family to fit comfortably, but compact enough that it fits with your

plans for towing it around and putting it up in camping grounds. If you plan to free camp in remote areas, what if there isn't going to be large flat areas to choose from. Most campers don't like to be set up on uneven ground which can cause the canvas to sag in the roof leading to ponding when the rain comes. At Vacation Campers, we never build campers past 9ft, so they are perfectly suited to campsites. If you need more space, a spare room can sit alongside the draw bar; giving you an extra 2m x 2.7m of bedroom, living room, whatever you need—without increasing the overall space your camper occupies. (The foot print)

A big tent looks great at the show room and on level ground but think really hard about all that extra weight. Somebody has to pack it all up time after time!

10. Thorough-thread

Always ask about the thread that has been used in a camper. It might seem like a small detail, but it's essential to your comfort.

If the manufacturer uses a cheaper thread, it won't swell in the holes of the camper. That's what leads to leaks in your

living areas! A quality thread has two components, nylon for strength and cotton for the sealing action.

At Vacation Campers, we ONLY use "Terko Satin", a special thread that actually swells in the holes to prevent any

leaks. Does the sales person understand why this is so important? Chinese tents use a very poor quality thread. Imagine what's going to happen in a few years' time.

11. A little bit extra in your tent

When the camper is assembled, make sure the tent canvas is generous—so you know there is enough give to allow for the normal shrinkage that always occurs!

If there's not enough "give" in the overall size of the canvas, you'll eventually find that natural shrinkage will make the tent stretch over the bows and around the base; that puts stress on the canvas which makes it harder to put up and can cause leaking through the seams (it's like trying to fit into a button up shirt that's too tight!)

When you see a set-up Vacation Camper, you'll notice that the tent almost looks "over size". And it's no mistake! Keeping the tent generous caters for that shrinkage and ensures your camper will last for so many more years to come.

12. Touching tents

Always have a good feel of the canvas of the tent.

Like almost any industry, camper manufacturers face this choice: they can spend that little bit extra on high quality

canvas for their campers—or they can go for cheaper imported material.

Unfortunately, choosing a cheaper canvas has a frustrating long-term effect on you, the customer, because the cheap

stuff just CAN'T stand up to our harsh Australian climate—so you'll be left with a camper that just won't perform like you need it to!

That's why it's important for you to have a really good feel of the canvas to determine which choice the manufacturer

has made. Here's some tips on telling the difference between quality and questionable...

When you're touching the "cheaper" canvas it, it will feel:

- thin;
- like it's got no "guts";
- almost plastic!

And when you compare that to feeling a quality piece of canvas, you'll REALLY understand the difference.

It's like feeling a jumper that's made of polyester...and then feeling one that's made of cashmere! You KNOW which one you'd prefer.

Still in doubt? Ask the salesperson about the preparation process the canvas has gone through to be 'tent-ready

Any camper manufacturer worth their salt WILL use Australian-made Dynaproofed canvas—and it won't surprise you that at Vacation Campers, that's the one we use.

A Dynaproofed canvas is FULLY IMMERSSED in a chemical formulation that penetrates deep into the yarn of the base

fabric.

Most importantly though, a Dynaproofed canvas is still completely BREATHABLE because the chemical is squeezed

INTO the fibres rather than being scraped OVER the canvas like inferior manufacturers will do!

Like almost any of the details of a Vacation Camper, you have to see (and FEEL!) our canvas for yourself to really

appreciate the difference.

We guarantee that, when you feel OUR canvas, you'll understand why we're cashmere, and some others are polyester!

13. Suspension

Why should you be concerned! They must know what they are doing!

This one is defiantly an area that so many get so wrong. I once asked a manufacturer why he was using so many leafs in his springs? And he replied "that way when she gets up on one wheel it can take all the weight, most people use seven leafs, we use NINE, that way its extra heavy duty!" This is a good example of doing things for the Brochure rather than what's good for the Camper. The more leafs you use the stiffer the spring to the point that you are now bouncing on your tires! Hence his camper becoming airborne. Not good!.

It is very important that your camper has quality flexible suspension that is rated for the task at hand. Whilst slipper springs and short economy springs are adequate for garden trailers they are not designed for high mileage under heavy loads. The length of the Leaf should be at least 830 mm in length and should be shackled at both ends with grease points. Let's face it there will be times when you will be travelling at high speed fully loaded and the last thing anyone needs is a serious situation.

Talk to us if you're not sure what to look out for.

A flawless follow-up

Ask the manufacturer what kind of after-sales service they have.

To give your trailer the maximum lifespan, it's important that it has regular check-ups and maintenance. After all, you

don't want to find out that there's a problem once you're on the road.

Vacation Campers offers an after sales package that keeps a proper eye on your camper.

6 to 8 months after you've purchased your Vacation Camper, we invite you to come back for a full check and service— and it's still part of the whole package price!