



Trakkadu? Trakka does

FISHING wagons come in all shapes and sizes. I've had a bunch, from a Series two Land Rover up to my present battered old Tojo Troopy. We use 'em to get to the fish, and camping comfort generally took second place (usually a foam mat and a sleeping bag, or simply a swag). But these days you can combine fishing transport with a little bit of luxury.

I recently had the opportunity to take a Trakka Trakkadu up to Laurieton, on the NSW mid-north coast, for a couple of days' fishing. This was around an 800km round

trip, mostly on dual carriageway roads, with a bit of dirt thrown in. And I don't mind telling you, it was way more comfortable than any of my old fishing bombs.

On the road

Driving the Trakkadu was quite a pleasure for me, especially after getting out of my somewhat agricultural old Troopy.

I have to admit that Vee Dubs have come a long way. Compared to the Kombi I drove occasionally in the army, which had a ten-

dency to wander a bit in a crosswind, this Trakka camper was very nice on the road, with plenty of poke when required, excellent vision and good stability.

The Trakkadu is based on the reliable VW Transporter van. Power is supplied by a bi-turbo, 2.0-litre, four-cylinder diesel engine producing 132kW, with 400Nm of torque at 1500 to 2000rpm. This presented quite spritely performance, yet it was quite miserly on fuel. I used 7.9L per 100km on the trip, though admittedly that was pretty much all highway running. Still, it has good long legs.

The gearbox was also interesting – an automatic seven-speed DSG box. I've never been an auto fan, but this unit surprised me. The speed of the shift was impressive, and in many cases the upshift was barely discernable. Cresting a hill just out of Coolongolook I was in fifth, and as I started down the other side I just happened to glance at the gear indicator on the dash. Quick as a flash it up shifted to sixth, then seventh, and the only way I could tell was the indicator. I just didn't feel it!

The driving position was comfortable,

quite high to allow good vision, with all the controls within easy reach. The steering wheel held a duplicate set of controls for the radio and the fuel consumption, speed and other dashboard telemetry. The captain's chairs were extremely comfy.

The Trakkadu runs 17-inch wheels with oversized 340mm disc brakes that pull her up quickly and safely if necessary. She's rated to tow 2000kg braked, so that puts towing a boat along on serious fishing trips right into the equation.

With safety factors such as driver and

passenger airbags, ESP, rain sensing wipers, automatic headlights and cornering fog lights, the Trakkadu really is designed for safe and comfortable driving.

Living space

Inside, the Trakkadu is stylish and practical, with plenty of storage space, a practical and versatile layout for a relatively small vehicle, and some genuinely cool accessories. At the rear is an external shower, with an annex and floor "tub". A fire extinguisher ►



Captain's chairs swivel easily at the touch of two levers and opens up the interior.

▶ and smoke detector is also fitted. Mains power inlet and lead are provided for caravan park stopovers, but in my camp everything ran off the house battery. There is LED lighting throughout, including on the inside of the awning – neat.

Along the driver's side is a kitchen bench with a recessed sink and taps, with the water supply turned on at the press of a button on the control panel alongside. A grey water tank is installed, with a pump-out hose supplied.

The cooker was a Webasto diesel unit. I was impressed by the practicality of eliminating the need for an additional fuel supply (gas). Instead, all the fuel the camper needs comes out of the main fuel tank. I was a little surprised at the length of time it took to heat up to operating temperature, but then I guess I was comparing that with a gas cooker. Having said that, the cooker performed nicely and the good thing is it exhausts outside by the rear wheel. There is no diesel smell inside whatsoever.

With the rear seat folded into the bed position, there's still ample space.



Rear seat set up for travel.

fold it down into bed mode and plonk the sleeping bag on top. Elapsed time? Maybe 10 minutes, max.

As it turned out, some folks pulled up with a camper trailer just as I selected my campsite, obviously fishos, judging by the fact that they also unloaded their rods first. Like me, they also wanted to set up camp and get into the fish. They were still fiddling about with canvas and stuff when I wandered off to check out the beach gutters.

And that's one of the really good things about this latest model Trakkadu. Ease of operation. There is nothing complicated about operating the equipment or configuring the camper. They've made everything easy – lights, water pump and cooktop are all push-button operation. Simple levers allow a quick reposition of the rear bench seat to make your bed. The captain's chairs also just spin around via a couple of levers. The Trakka crew has made things delightfully simple.

I had planned to use the shower at the rear – but I got sucked in. This was a national

Rear console holds external shower.



"Trakkadu, eh? These humans know how to camp in the bush."

parks camping area, with an amenities block and camp kitchen/barbecue area. While I was rustling up some tucker that evening I noticed folks wandering off to the amenities with towels over the shoulder. Fine, I thought. Rather than go through the exercise of setting up the rear annexe and having a tub there, I'd use the facilities available. Early next morning I sauntered on down to the amenities. Oops! The shower cubicles had just one tap – the cold one! Brrrr!

With the beach not firing I struck camp

early in the morning, heading for a session on the banks of the Camden Haven River. And that move also proved the benefit of a quick camp set up and equally quick take down. The Trakkadu takedown was quick and painless, making moving between fishing spots a snack.

Just as I got a line in on the river, with pelicans and dolphins out feeding, a mongrel westerly sprang up, punching through clothing like an icy needle and freezing me to the bone. I flashed up the cooker, made a



It's a real no-fuss set-up.

cup of coffee and decided to take the Trakka back to Sydney.

The Trakkadu really is a versatile campervan, ideal for a fisho who likes a bit of genuine comfort (such as old buggers like me). With the capability of towing a boat, and with light roof racks available to pop some beach rods on top, it's a pretty good rig.

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