

CHANNEL CHATTER

Published each April - August - December

Austravel Safety Net

VMD750

Radio Network



The HF Radio Communications Network for Remote Area
Travelling by Land or Sea

DISCLAIMER

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**News & Information
For Austravel Members**

April 2024 EDITION



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Austravel SafetyNet Inc. Committee

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|------|
| Kim Rhodes | President | 7880 |
| Brad Kark | Vice President | 2261 |
| Rick Shea | Secretary | 3097 |
| Ken Fischer | Treasurer | 9618 |
| Neil Burton | Committee IT Manager | 1386 |
| Russell Ashdown | Committee 1 | 4333 |
| Ray Archibald | Committee 2 | 1923 |

Committee Support Roles

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------|--------------------------------|-------------|------|
| Channel Chatter Editor | John Hall | 6014 | Social Media | Pim Cahill | 7255 |
| Sked Coordinator (east) | Ken Fischer | 9618 | Sked Coordinator (west) | Roy Watkins | 6001 |

PRESIDENTS Report

Penong is one of the locations chosen for the next AGM. I'm hoping to be there after visiting Kununurra and then help out with the Variety Bash WA event communications. Rick Shea is intending to be there I believe, along with a bunch of other Austravel members. There should be two other locations near Perth and in the East yet to be selected that will hold a zoom copy of the meeting.

We are seeing our first members with Star Link for Internet as well as HF for back up. I would be interested in an article from someone with Star Link and perhaps reporting on the noise it generates on HF and the power it requires for solar stand alone camping.

I mentioned I am going to Kununurra as part of the works program to future proof Austravel SafetyNet. I am changing old equipment for new before it fails. We have already changed the items of equipment at Perth, Casino and Alice Springs.

We have some preliminary works nearly complete for the construction of Busso base. This makes provision for the moving of Perth base when needed. There have been several working bees with many WA members showing up to do the hard unpaid work. We are nearly ready to activate the base from Busselton when required. The towers are up, solar is in place, equipment hut, batteries coax cables etc all in place. Roy (6001) has the final say on this move but it allows him to decide on his personal living requirements, without the responsibility of hosting the base hanging over his head. We are ready to go with a move if and when required. The work required to get to the ready phase is considerable and needed to start well ahead of a base move.

Telcos are our weak link. In recent times we have seen outages in Penong for over a week, Shepparton for a number of days and Mareeba for nearly a week. Our Bases are still working if you Beacon them but in that time they have no access to the outside world. Other options for internet access are being discussed but ongoing costs are prohibitive. You can check and see the status of bases by logging in to your member area of the web page or on Out-n-About. Yes android only still and a report on this further down the pages.

Remember as members you are welcome to become involved in Austravel activities. We need technical people, marketing, sked operators, event organisers, committee members and not to mention a president this year. So if you have skills from a past life and would like to keep your brain active please step up. In line with this we are also looking for a good location to host the East Coast SDR receiver station. It would need to be near Brisbane on some acreage, have 4g or other internet available, and room for an antenna. If you have a place that may be suitable, please give me a ring.

Kim Rhodes (7880)

President

Austravel SafetyNet Inc.



Secretary's Report

It has been relatively quiet for the club over the Christmas and New Year Period,

The new committee has settled in with monthly meetings to keep them busy, we have moved from using zoom for our meetings to teams which is a Microsoft product.

Brad Kark has taken on the roll of Vice President and is chairing our meetings, Russel Ashdown is organising our AGM to be held at Penong if we have sufficient numbers, we will also have a satellite meeting in other parts of the country for those that can't attend Penong.

Some good news for those who still don't have Out n About operating, Joe Rubio has come back to help us out, thanks Joe, and I have seen and played with the web version of Out n About and I am excited it works on any mobile phone, tablet or computer, it is very user friendly and it should be launched about the time Channel Chatter is published, if not before.

Weather wise around the country has been horrendous, with floods, fires, and heatwaves, take care and stay safe.

Welcome New Members,

1317 Michael Abbott

0135 Wayne Feestra

2622 Frank Moriabito

6193 Phillip Simpson

2830 Zayne Aicher

1015 Richard Billson

0195 Keith Collins

0168 Terry Stone

TREASURER'S Report

From the Treasurer

Thank you for the renewal of your membership for a period of 15 months spanning 1st December 2023 to 28th February 2025. I know for a number of members that having a 15-month membership period was quite confusing.

Additionally, the 15-month membership cost of \$125 - \$100 for 12 months plus \$25 for the additional 3 months, was challenging given it was just prior to Christmas. The positive outcome is that renewals from now on will always be in February.

On behalf of the Committee, thank you for your continued support of Austravel. All memberships are greatly appreciated and a thank you is also extended to our social members for your support of the club.

The major expense this month is the renewal of our radio licenses at our bases. Base licence costs are dependent on the number of licensed frequencies at each base. You may have noted on the front page of the channel list and scheduled nets that no base has all of the ten frequencies which are licensed to Austravel.

The reason is twofold. Bases in close proximity in HF terms would overlap in their transmissions, particularly with selcalls and general usage. This would reduce the opportunity for members to operate simultaneously via neighbouring bases. Secondly, there would be a significant annual increase in licence fees for Austravel.

Our licence renewal payable to the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) at the end of March is \$10 138. Licence fees at each base are as follows: -
2199 Casino \$1644, 3199 Shepparton \$1644, 4199 Mareeba \$1370, 5199 Penong \$1096, 6199 Perth \$1918, 6299 Kununurra \$1096, 8199 Alice Springs \$1370.

On the second Saturday of each month, I present a financial report to the committee and this report can be viewed in the Member's Documents section of the Member's Area on the website. You have access to these reports and I encourage you to read them. Should you be experiencing any difficulty accessing the Member's area of the website, let me know and I will assist you with your access.

Until next Channel Chatter, safe travels and once again thanks for your financial support of the Austravel network.

Best Wishes
Ken 9618

FROM THE SKED OPERATOR'S DESK



The Summer months have now ended and whilst a total of 98 members were on the road and called into the scheduled nets in the East and West, it doesn't mean your volunteer sked operators had an overly quiet time in the December to February months.

Hats off to the 25 volunteers in the East and West who regularly get behind the microphone to take calls from not only our travelling members but also another 53 members who called in from home.

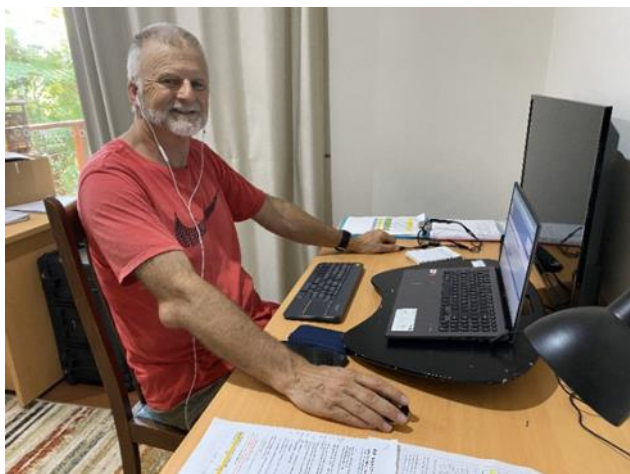
The sked dashboard tells us that in the Summer months: -

Austravel had 98 travelling members calling into skeds, 44 in the East and 54 in the West who made a total of 856 calls. 53 members (E 23/W 30) in the 'home paddock' or on the driveway made an amazing 3754 calls (East 2153/West 1601) into the sked operators out of the total 4610 calls answered by the operators.

The travelling season will commence in earnest shortly and to ensure that travelling members have priority, you will hear our operators call for travelling members to call in first as a matter of safety.

Many of us have had limited experience with HF radios and it can be challenging and somewhat daunting for a novice to know when to call in. ***If in doubt, when the operator says he is standing by, just say your selcall number firmly with plenty of gusto and the operator will do the rest.*** When overlapping occurs, the operator can hear several selcall numbers at once and still get it sorted, albeit with the help of other members who may be listening in.

Now if your radio is GPS enabled, make sure you transmit your location to a base station at least once a day, but in a remote area (no mobile phone coverage), every time you stop for a break or a meal and especially before you call into a sked. By doing this prior to a sked, the operator knows exactly where you are. If your transmission is difficult to hear because of solar flares, ionospheric radiation or extreme weather events, the operator can accurately record your position to support you, should an issue arise during your stay.



In this issue of Channel Chatter, I'm featuring Garry Germon, Selcall 4951 from Bellingen NSW. Garry is in his 5th year as an Austravel member and volunteered to be an operator in May 2022. He did his first skeds, both morning and afternoon on the weekend 23 & 24 July 2022. Garry is an integral part of the team in the East and has recently completed four days straight from 26 to 29 February. Garry does his skeds from home base and fits in this volunteer work in between his travels when he and Linda hit the road. He does a great job as 'one of the voices of Austravel in the East'.

Until the next Channel Chatter, use your radio as often as possible to develop, ensure and maintain your confidence and competence in the event of an urgent situation requiring radio communication.

Cheers

Ken 9618

Sked Coordinator East

Solar Cycles and HF Radio

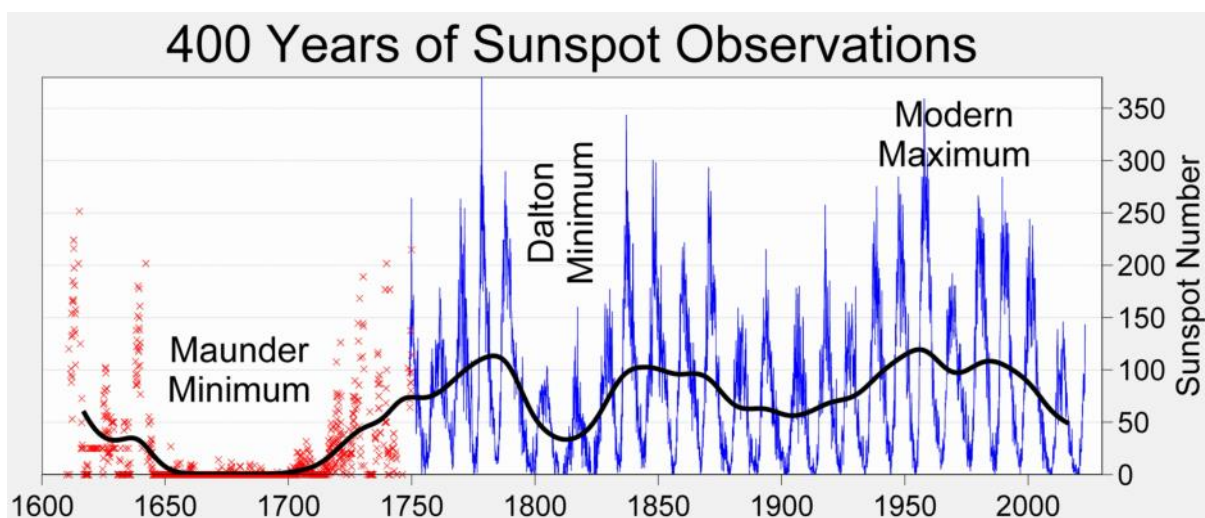
Neil Burton

Solar cycles play a crucial role in shaping space weather, influencing everything from satellite operations to electrical grids on Earth. The phenomena associated with these cycles, including solar flares and coronal mass ejections, can disrupt communication systems, pose hazards to astronauts, and even affect climate patterns. This makes understanding and predicting solar cycles not just a matter of scientific curiosity but a necessity for modern technological society.

Advancements in satellite technology and solar observation are at the forefront of efforts to monitor and understand the Sun's activity. The launch of NOAA's Space Weather Follow-On L-1 observatory and the GOES-U satellite represents a significant leap forward in our ability to track solar phenomena. These instruments will provide critical data to forecast space weather events, helping to mitigate their potential impact on Earth's technological infrastructure.



Understanding the nuances of the solar maximum begins with grasping the broader concept of solar cycles. The Sun, our celestial powerhouse, operates on an 11-year cycle of activity. This cycle is punctuated by periods of heightened activity during solar maximums and phases of relative calm called solar minimums. These fluctuations stem from the Sun's dynamic magnetic field, which influences everything from sunspot formation to the density of the Earth's ionosphere and solar wind. Graphical records of sunspot numbers across millennia confirm the cyclic nature of the Sun's behaviour.

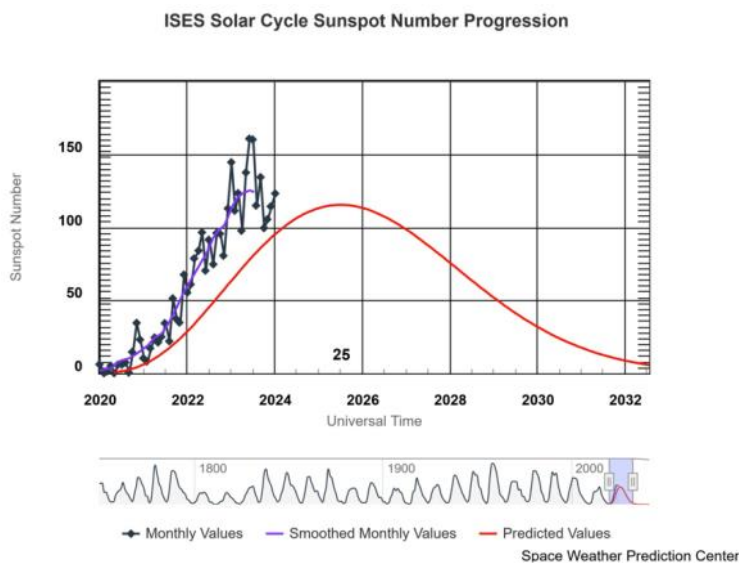


Solar maximums typically result in the following for HF radio:

- Elevated ionisation levels in the ionosphere that improves reflection and reduces absorption of HF radio signals.
- Increases the range of frequencies that can be used for HF communication.

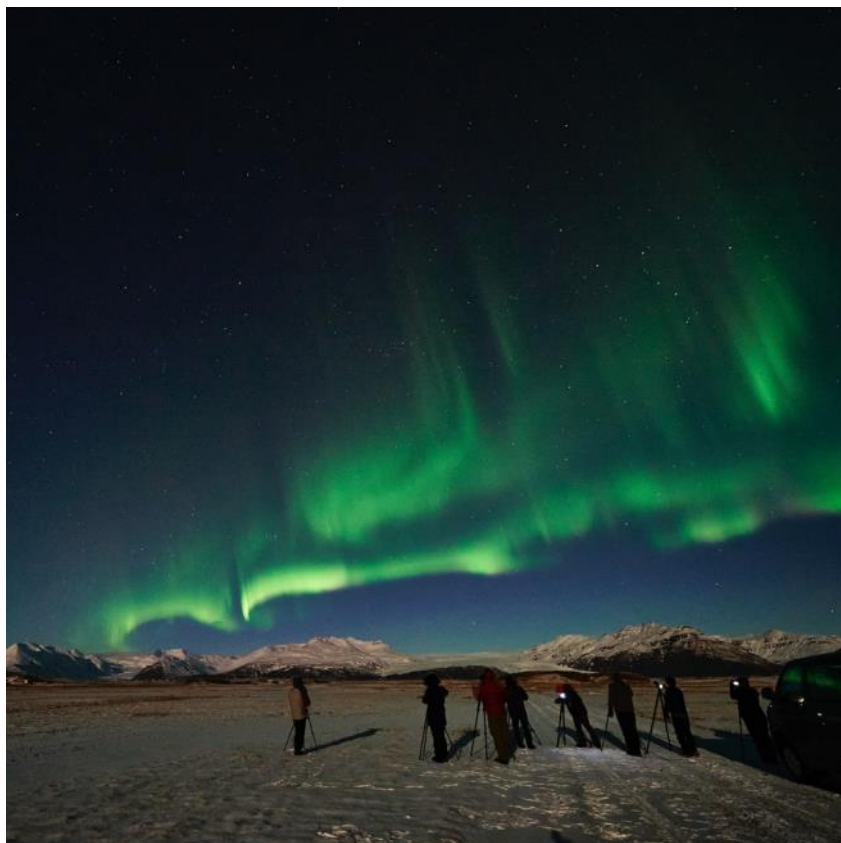
- Improves radio communication at high latitudes towards the poles.
- Improves signal to noise ratio (SNR) of transmissions.
- Improves the overall reliability of communications.

As we delve into the heart of Solar Cycle 25, our current cycle, the solar system's dynamo presents a fascinating spectacle of nature's power and unpredictability. This cycle, which commenced in December 2019, has quickly distinguished itself with a flurry of solar activity, challenging initial forecasts with its vibrant display of X-class flares. Such early signs point to a cycle that could equal or even exceed the intensity of its predecessor, Solar Cycle 24, with peak activity anticipated between 2024 and 2026.



Austravel Safety Net sked operators have noticed great improvements in the clarity and strength of member transmissions lately. We are also able to achieve significantly greater range than barely two years ago. As the above graph shows, sunspot numbers are significantly ahead of predictions for this solar cycle. With strengthening solar activity this cycle our HF radio experience will improve.

There are other phenomena from solar maximums like auroras. Peer-reviewed papers document correlation between increased solar activity, and earthquakes, meteorological phenomena, and even human health. Correlation doesn't prove causation, but it raises potential questions about how the complexity of the sun influences our everyday lives in ways we don't even fully understand. Enjoy your next couple of years of solar maximum!



Roamin' To The Channel Country

In June last year we set off toward Queensland's Channel Country, with the intention of turning left at Innamincka, SA to travel down the Strzelecki Track, then on to Birdsville via the Birdsville Track. However, the flooding rains put a stop to driving the desert tracks and we only got as far as Innamincka before the tracks closed.

On our way to Innamincka we stopped at The Dig Tree Reserve, situated on Nappa Merrie Station, just inside the Queensland border. We truly did not know what to expect, having heard and read many different stories. Firstly, the 14km of track in was...challenging (filling loosening in fact!), but we must say that on the way back out it didn't seem quite so bad, maybe because the return trek was at the beginning of our travel day when we felt a bit fresher. But yes, this track is Cape York worthy!



We absolutely loved this location and stayed for two nights with our campsite right on the bank of Cooper Creek. The bird life was plentiful, and so enjoyable to watch as we enjoyed an early morning coffee or late afternoon bevy (or two). And of course, some amazing outback sunrises and sunsets to enjoy.

There was a lot of very well presented and informative Burke and Wills stories located at the entrance to the Reserve. The campsites and tree blazes are located further in. We do some content creation on YouTube, our channel link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/@RoaminWithTheRubes>

where you'll find a couple of videos on The Dig Tree and Burke's Grave (apologies in advance they're very early attempts - you've been warned) if you'd like to see the locations.

Our recommendation would be to not just quickly stop in on your travels but try to plan to stay for night or two. It would have to have been our favourite campsite in 2023 and is well worth a visit.

We then enjoyed Cooper Creek some more after we crossed the border into South Australia and visited the site of Burke's original grave (his body was later moved to Melbourne). We would certainly recommend a visit here as well. Unfortunately, we could not get to the site of Will's grave as a number of the tracks surrounding Innamincka were closed.

On this trip it was great to travel with our trusty Codan NGT, we signed into the east coast Austravel skeds most mornings and afternoons but the most brilliant advantage of being on the Austravel network was the ability to call family and friends on the base's telephone interconnects. I recall one morning whilst we were at The Dig Tree Reserve making several calls via Alice Springs and Penong bases.



Whilst I wouldn't compare the call quality to a 5G phone it was more than acceptable and impressed everyone we called, most getting a kick out of saying over at the end of each round. The GPS location sharing was also a hit with family and friends.

Travel safe, best wishes Joe and Lea Rubio 5759



Human Remains Detection Dogs WA Inc.

HRDDWA Inc. 2 Sandalwood Street, Maddington WA

6109 Tel: 0419 901 840

Email: trackerdog @iinet.net.au

Dear Friend,

HRDD WA is an incorporated, fully insured, volunteer-based and not for profit organisation that was founded in 2016 that provides specially trained HR search and rescue canines to fill the current gap in Western Australia. In the past any human remains dogs used for a historical missing person search in Western Australia were brought in from the eastern states. HRRD WA is a small group of dedicated volunteers with considerable experience in dog training, Search & Rescue, SES activities and urban and area tracking. We provide these services and complimentary search techniques primarily to the Western Australia Police, to ensure these services are available when needed. Public requests are also considered separately based on various factors and searches are carried out at a subsidised cost wherever possible.

Training and equipping our dogs and handlers is currently done through our low member fees, fundraising, grant applications but mostly out of our handlers' own pockets.

Any support you can offer would be much appreciated as it allows us to ensure we equip our teams with the appropriate tools and equipment. This can help to ensure the best chance of success when we are called on.

If you have any questions please contact Michael at mfmargot@iinet.net.a. A tax deductible donation may be made to:

HRDDWA Inc.

BSB: 126 -565

Account Number: 22684606

Please send us an e-mail with your contact details for a receipt.

Yours sincerely

Michael Margot
President





BOXES ON THE REAR OF YOUR CARAVAN CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS AND OFTEN ILLEGAL....

WHO IS LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE?

WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN YOU DON'T FOLLOW THE CORRECT ADVICE?

We often see large storage boxes and other items mounted on the rear of caravans and motorhomes as we travel around Australia.

These boxes and items are often in breach of the Australian Design Rule overhang laws for your caravan and will, in many cases badly affect the stability of your caravan.

Any pig trailer / caravan (one axle trailer) should have a rear load carrying area that is no longer than the front load carrying area. The maximum rear overhang from the centre of the axles is 3.7m.

The centre of the axle group or the single axle in the case of a single axle trailer is classed as the measuring centre point.

The caravan load carrying area does not include the caravan A frame unless it has a storage box etc mounted on it.

Rear overhang includes any boxes, spare tyres etc mounted on the rear.

While some vans with the axles mounted further to the rear may be able to have boxes fitted, those with more central axles may not. This would be the majority of vans on the roads today.

These boxes can make your caravan or motorhome unroadworthy and therefore your insurance may be voided. You may only find out when you make a claim.

See diagram of maximum overhang rules from the Department of Infrastructure, and courtesy of CIAA - RVMAP Code of Practice (Version 3)

Weigh your caravan fully loaded to see if it is within the caravans rated ATM.

Just because others do it, DOES NOT make it right, legal nor safe. The blind leading the blind scenario.

Truck Friendly would like to remind all those contemplating mounting a heavy box on the rear to think again and do your homework first.

I have a question for all those businesses advertising and mounting these boxes on the rear of caravans and motorhomes, others giving advice, and social media that posts the advice to do it.

WHO WILL THE LAWYERS FIND RESPONSIBLE WHEN, BY ADDING THESE BOXES TO THE VAN OR MOTORHOME IS FOUND TO BE A FACTOR IN A FATAL ACCIDENT OR THE VEHICLE WAS MADE UNROADWORTHY?

The 'industry experts' who installed it, 'driver' or the 'social media admin' or 'people who gave the dangerous advice'?

Only time will tell, But we will see it one day.

Does your insurance cover it?

These heavy items on the rear will make the caravan much more prone to dangerous caravan sway.

"My van does not sway", I hear you say.

However, I have not yet heard of anyone who has had their caravan sway and roll over, say that it often does that, or it was doing it before the accident.

Maybe you just have not found the 'perfect storm' where a few factors come together and set off the sway when you are least expecting it.

When it happens, you may only have as little as 5 seconds to identify what is happening, and correct it before it is uncontrollable, and you are just there for the ride of your life.

In those 5 seconds, you will need to identify that you have a problem, remember what to do about it, stay calm, and find and press the trailer override brakes to reduce trailer speed.

What can be 'the perfect storm' –

LET'S LOOK AT WHAT CAN BE MAJOR CAUSES OF CARAVAN SWAY.

1. BAD LOADING WITH TOO MUCH WEIGHT ON THE REAR OF THE CARAVAN.

In the case of my previous caravan, a 2019 New Age 20' Oz Classic, and two other vans I have had, the tow ball weight will vary by 2 kg depending on whether the door is closed or latched back open. This highlights the impact a small weight shift can have on the caravan's balance. The door is still attached to the caravan, but weight shift makes a big difference. A fact that many may not realise when loading a van. The leverage effect can severely impact on stability.

If that little shift in weight has such a big effect on the tow ball weight, can you imagine how much a large storage box, generator or 80kgs of fuel or water further back on the rear bumper will lighten the tow ball. Each van varies but it can reduce tow ball weight by 150% of the box weight.

I have had many say that they compensate by putting more heavy items on the 'A' Frame.

Having heavy items at the extreme front, or extreme rear of any 'Pig Trailer' is never a good idea and will increase the effect of any swaying motion.

Why does a grandfather clock have a large weight on the end of the pendulum? Answer. To maintain sway.

Play a game with bottles of wine at 4 o'clock drinks. Hold your arms out and spin around then stop.

Now, do the same thing with a full bottle of wine in each hand and you will note how much harder it is to stop spinning with the weights at the extremities. It is the same for your caravan. (It is also the same when you have consumed the two bottles of wine, but that is another matter entirely)

If loading a car trailer, for example, you drive the car onto the trailer, not reverse it on. That way the heavy motor will be forward of the trailer axles helping prevent trailer sway.

Two women were killed in north Qld when a ute towing a car backed onto on a car trailer got out of control with trailer sway, and the trailer sway pushed the light ute into the oncoming lane of 100kph traffic killing two ladies who were innocently just going for a drive.

2. SPEED.

Caravan sway is proportional to speed. the faster you drive the more chance of, and the faster and more dangerous the caravan sway will be.

You have less reaction time. There are worse consequences and sway is more likely to happen over 100kph.

Please do not tow a caravan over 100kph, no matter how stable you believe the van is or the posted speed limit. It may just take a small cross wind, air from a passing truck, undulation in the road, incorrect tyre pressures or other factors to come together to bring on unexpected sway.

I call it - "the perfect storm."

It is also illegal to tow a caravan over 100kph in WA, and also in NSW if your tow vehicles plated GVM or GCM when towing is over 4.5t, which includes almost every caravan and tow vehicle on the roads.

The faster you are going the least reaction time you have and the bigger the severity and impact.

3. TYRE PRESSURES.

Please ensure you check and maintain correct tyre pressures to help minimize under steer and oversteer in your caravan and tow vehicle.

NO- the max pressure indicated on the side wall of the caravan tyre is NOT the pressure to inflate them to.

Yes, I did have to say that, as some foolishly recommend that on social media unfortunately.

Your vehicle should have a tyre placard with recommended tyres and tyre pressures for certain conditions.

The Truck Friendly web site has a section on TYRES under CARAVAN SAFETY. It also shows how to tell the age of your tyres.

4. CORRECT TOWING PRACTICES.

Please ensure your caravan and tow vehicle are set up correctly and both vehicle and caravan are relatively level when towing the caravan on the road. This will help ensure good braking, steering and improve stability.

5. MAKE SURE YOUR TOW VEHICLE IS HEAVIER THAN YOUR CARAVAN.

You don't see a skinny hammer thrower at the Olympics for a reason.

Sumo wrestlers are heavy for a reason.

If a heavy car hits a lighter cyclist, who keeps going straight and who is flung off the road?

It is basic physics. Read Sir Issac Newton's laws of motion we were taught in school.

Just because your friend said that they haven't had a problem towing a heavy van with a lighter car in 20 years, does not mean they won't have a serious problem one day.

A HEAVY CARAVAN WILL ALWAYS PUSH A LIGHTER TOWING VEHICLE AROUND. THIS IS NOT DESIRABLE.

Just because your glossy brochure said that the 3,200 kg GVM car, even when unladen at 2,300kgs can legally tow a 3,500 kg ATM caravan does not mean it should for safe towing practices. This is no matter what after-market accessories you have installed to try and stop sway.

Towing companies still recover rollover tow vehicles and caravans with anti-sway technology fitted.

Go back to basic safe towing practices.

We do not want a heavy caravan throwing around a lighter tow vehicle at 100 kph in any emergency situation.

There are other factors that affect caravan stability and sway that are covered in an excellent "10 causes of caravan sway" video by Robert Pepper – Automotive Journalist published recently on this Facebook page.

Above all, a little common sense may help keep us all safe.

Ken Wilson

Truck Friendly caravan road safety program

#truckfriendly



Rear Overhang

The RVMAP Technical Team has identified a small number of Recreational Vehicles in recent times with a Rear Overhang which exceeds the regulatory requirements.

Towable Product

In reference to a towable product such as a Caravan, ADR 43/04 – Vehicle Configuration and Dimensions explains that:

6.2. 'Rear Overhang' (including any 'Equipment')

6.2.1. For a trailer (other than a 'Semi-trailer') having a single 'Axle Group' the 'Rear Overhang' must not exceed the length of the load space forward of the line at the rear of the vehicle from which 'Rear Overhang' is measured, or 3.7 metres whichever is the lesser.

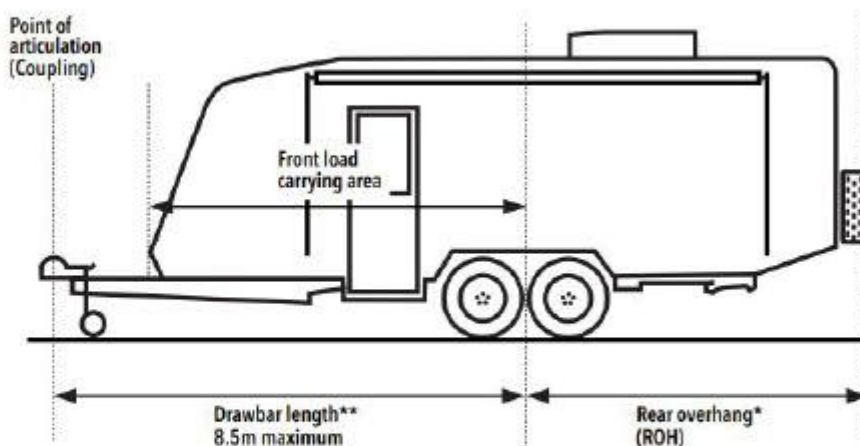
6.2.2. For a 'Semi-trailer' the 'Rear Overhang' must not exceed 60 percent of the distance between the centreline of the 'Fifth Wheel' king pin and the line from which 'Rear Overhang' of the 'Semi-trailer' is measured, or 3.7 metres whichever is the lesser.

Note that the 'Rear Overhang' includes any 'Equipment' fitted to the rear. "Equipment" is defined as any equipment fitted to a vehicle for a special purpose and not fitted by the original vehicle 'Manufacturer' as either standard equipment or as a regular production option (e.g. a crane mounted on a vehicle or a chute on a cement mixer, fitted by a second 'Manufacturer').

In the case of a Recreational Vehicle, this also includes any options which are fitted to the rear bar including (but not limited to) spare tyres, tool boxes or generator carriers etc. Pages 47 and 48 of the RVMAP Code of Practice (Version 3) contain some helpful diagrams explaining this regulation in reference to Towable Products, as per below:

A1.2 Rear Overhangs

A1.2.1 Towable Recreational Vehicles



* Rear overhang (ROH): Shall be no more than the length of the front load carrying area or body, ahead of the rear overhang line, or 3.7 metres, whichever is the lesser.

** Drawbar length (DBL): Is measured from the centre of the axle/axle group to the centre of the drawbar coupling pivot point with the drawbar level and must not be more than 8.5metres.

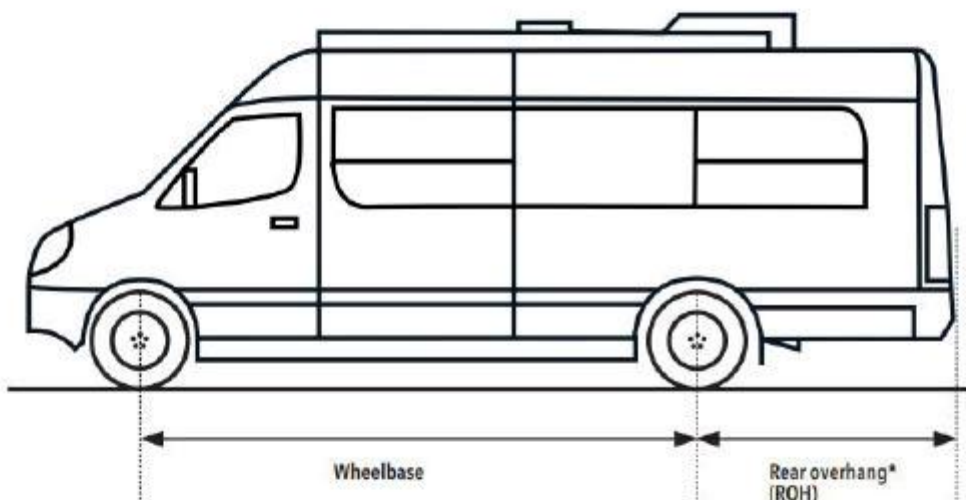
Rear Overhang Cont.

Motorised Product

For Motorised Products such as Campervans and Motorhomes, clause 6.2.3 of ADR 43 states that *“for all other motor vehicles and trailers (other than ‘Semi-trailers’) the ‘Rear Overhang’ must not exceed 60 percent of the distance from the centreline of the front ‘Axle’ (or the front ‘Axle’ of a ‘Twin Steer Axle Group’) to the line from which ‘Rear Overhang’ is measured, or 3.7 metres whichever is the lesser.”*

As mentioned previously, Pages 47 and 48 of the RVMAP Code of Practice (Version 3) contain some helpful diagrams explaining this regulation in reference to Motorised Products, as per below:

A1.2.3 Motorised Recreational Vehicles



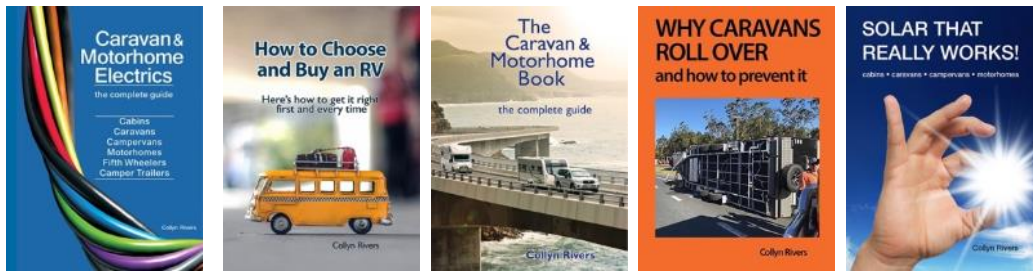
*Rear overhang (ROH): Shall be 60% of the wheelbase or 3.7 metres, whichever is the lesser., measured from the rear overhang line.

Note: Any object permanently fitted to a Recreational Vehicle, (eg. bullbar, winch, or equipment/tool box) is considered part of the Recreational Vehicle and must be included within the applicable dimension limit (except for those specific items excluded when measuring width).

Version 3 of the RVMAP Code of Practice is now available via the [RVMAP Portal](#) and is further explained on page 10 of this Technical Update.

• Know Your RV •

• Save Money • Stay Safe •



Get the information you need from Collyn River's books and website.

Collyn River's books cover virtually every RV topic you are going to need to know. Whether you are thinking about purchasing your first camper trailer or have years of experience travelling outback tracks you will find information in Collyn's writing that you will find invaluable.

Collyn's books are widely available on-line in either electronic or paperback form. Find them by visiting the **RVBooks** website. On the website you'll also find more than 150 additional articles – all

Visit <https://rvbooks.com.au>

Or use the QR code



For more than 20 years Collyn River's books and website have been the go-to source for reliable information about caravans, motorhomes and camper trailers. Collyn is an engineer with an extensive knowledge of how and why things work. He has travelled all over the world in an impressive range of vehicles. And he really is a writer – he was the technology editor of the Bulletin for 8 years and has written for many journals since the 1980s. His website and his books are essential sources of detailed and dependable information for anyone who wants to explore Australia and beyond.

Up & Coming Events 2024

Kim Rhodes 7880

On Going Working Bee WA

Dates TBA

We are in the process of future proofing Austravel with a number of equipment upgrades all around Australia.

However the working bees in W.A. are for an eventual move of Perth Base when required.

Base Station infrastructure requires a lot of ground work before an equipment move can occur.

Self contained camping available on site



If interested please contact Kim (7880) president@austravelsafetynet.org.au and you'll be put on the email list.

PINDATHUNA COTTAGE RESTORATION

WHEN: 13/05/2024 - 19/05/2024

This project is the first stage of restoration works to Pindathuna Cottage by Track Care.

The project will involve:

- Repairs to floors, doors, windows and other timbers to safe lock up standard, and in keeping with the historical nature of the building.
- Removal of concrete render from the exterior of the building and replace with bush mix tuckpointing.
- Repaint exterior timbers and interior walls.
- General tidy-up and minor repairs as required to the cottage and surrounds.



Works will commence on the morning of Monday 13 May 2024 and conclude on the afternoon of Sunday 19 May 2024. If you can't make the whole week, you are welcome to come for part of the time there. All help is greatly appreciated. As well as working on Pindathuna Cottage, we will take some time out to explore some of the sights at Gabyon Station.

If possible, please plan to arrive on Sunday 12 May 2024 in the afternoon/evening. The works briefing will be at 8am on Monday 13 May 24. As with other rangelands projects, if you would like to stay on for a few days to tidy up and complete any outstanding tasks you are more than welcome to do so, and it would be very much appreciated.

[Download project details here](#)

Meeting Details

Where: Pindathuna Cottage. Gabyon Station. Sunday afternoon/evening 12 May 24.

Bring: Work clothes and suitable PPE. Personal tools. Food. Water.

There is no sleeping accommodation available. BYO tent/swag/camper/caravan.

One toilet, shower and potable water will be available.

Please contact Joe Metcalf (0403 903 864) or tcwa2@trackcare.com.au for further details.



Blackbutt Qld 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th May
Blackbutt Showgrounds, Bowman Road

Powered Caravan and camping sites, toilets, and showers. \$8 per person per night unpowered, and \$10 per person with power. Dump point at entrance to the grounds.

Pay caretaker on arrival.

Welcome sausage sizzle on Friday Night – Gold coin

BYO morning tea Saturday and Sunday around 10am

BYO BBQ Saturday night - the Showgrounds BBQ is available for our use (relax we will find a couple of Cooks) and raffle draw.

WHAT'S ORGANISED

The weekend is all about a social gathering where you can catch up with fellow club members and enjoy a chat and a cold one.

We will group together over morning tea on Saturday morning (10am)

Contact Bob Carne 0407 936 289 E:bobandcarmel@gmail.com



Christmas in July at Harrisville 26th, 27th, 28th July, 2024.

Attention all, **Date** is the same but the **Venue** has had to be changed.

We visited the Royal Hotel at Harrisville and decided this would be a great alternative to Sandy Creek. There is plenty of room for our rigs on the creek bank behind the pub. There are toilets but NO showers, water or power. The dining room is amazing and the menu as good as any we have seen.

Please advise me ASAP if you are interested in attending. This will help us with costing the meal for Friday night. Numbers will be confirmed at the beginning of July.

Trusting this change will suit everyone and that we will see you there to enjoy the gathering.

Regards,
Janette Parkin (0116)
0473 115 990
janette.ian@bigpond.com



The Royal Hotel, Harrisville.

Austravel SafetyNet is hosting
Christmas in July
 At the Harrisville Pub
 On Friday 26th July, 2024.



This small town south of Ipswich is holding its own Christmas in July over the week-end 27th & 28th July and would love to have us join them.

Free Camping is available on the river bank at the back of the pub and they will put on our own dinner on the Friday night.

Saturday we can join the locals with their stalls and celebrations. The local area (Scenic Rim) will be holding their "Open Gate" festival during this time, so there is much to do.



Camping area at the back of the Pub

As far as our Members are concerned we will arrive Thursday or Friday, set up camp, enjoy Christmas Dinner Friday night, join the town on Saturday & Sunday for their celebrations, pack up and leave Saturday, Sunday or Monday.

The Pub has a singer booked for the Saturday night and you might decide to have dinner again at the pub and join in.

Those interested in joining us please notify Janette (0116) on
 0473 115 990 or janette.ian@bigpond.com



YOU MUST HAVE AN AUTHORITY TO TRANSMIT AND HAVE A TYPE APPROVED RADIO TO USE THESE FREQUENCIES

(Network range is restricted by license to calls within Australia and Australian commercial waters zone.)

Amateur radios generally are ARE NOT TYPE APPROVED.

Operating protocol

- Always use your selcall ID upon initial contact.
- Using the network callsign is not essential as the base operators will announce at the statutory intervals.
- If your radio does not have a roger beep, please use OVER at the end of your turn. (The base operators may sometimes find it difficult to determine if you have finished without the roger beep or an OVER.)
- Take your time when talking, HF conditions can make conversations difficult to follow if you speak too quickly or too far away from the microphone. Project your voice and enunciate clearly, however there is no need to shout! Hold the microphone near your mouth tilted at an angle, imagine talking across the face of the microphone in a slightly elevated, normal speaking voice. Phonetics are useful if the conditions are poor, we strongly recommend learning them but it is not essential. You may be asked to "say again" by the base operators, take your time there's no rush.
- There is a slight delay through the phone network and release time for a base to return to receive after the operator is speaking. Allow about 1 second before replying to the operator.

Note that our or base operators and emergency responders are unpaid volunteers.

Members Taking Brochures

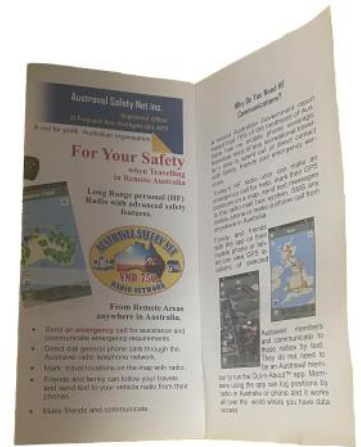
Have you ever found yourself chatting to a fellow traveller about the antenna on your car and what you can do with the HF radio, but then have nothing to give them as a take away from the conversation? If you talk about Austravel now and then, to others and would like to see a new member or two evolve from your conversation, we do have brochures you can give out.

This helps people remember your conversation and gives contact information for follow up.

How do you get some? Simple, just send me an email with your postal address, a bit of a note about this and I will post a few to you.

Remember if you help get new members it helps keep your fees lower, not to mention that you are helping someone get a lifeline from the bush.

Kim Rhodes Email:- president@austravelsafetynet.org.au



How to Contact Me

Three simple methods to contact a travelling Austravel member who has a HF radio switched on.

Leave your name and seccall number for your friends

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

There are three (3) methods of message delivery available to any Austravel member travelling in rural and remote areas, or mariner members sailing in coastal waters:-

- 1. Voice Mail**
 - Family and friends can dial Austravel's 24/7 office number - 07 2101 3457 and leave a voice mail message for the Austravel member to be passed on via seccall contact, or morning and afternoon scheduled net.
 - Ensure the message contains the name and seccall number of the targeted travelling member. Please write it in the box above.
- 2. Call a specialist Austravel member for assistance.**
 - Family and friends can call one of the listed Austravel members (in the list below) and detail their needs person-to-person. The specialist Austravel member will attempt to contact and pass on your message as requested.

| Seccall | Location | Name | Phone |
|---------|----------|--------------|--------------|
| 0951 | QLD | Geoff Peck | 0403 309 020 |
| 1750 | QLD | Bash Carver | 0407 936 289 |
| 9618 | QLD | Kim Fischer | 0439 749 449 |
| 7880 | WA | Kim Rhodes | 0427 983 329 |
| 6355 | WA | Colin Ingham | 0417 097 043 |

- 3. Out-n-About MAILBOX**
 - Alternatively, family and friends can run the Out-n-About app on their mobile phones or tablets and send messages to your radio as well as monitor your travel's. However, Out-n-About MAILBOX direct messages are not infallible so if it is **very urgent** it's advisable to "double up" on message delivery by initially contacting us via method 1 or 2 (or both if you wish).

Travelling members - to make the contact with you as above possible, please note!

For members **travelling with a radio installed GPS** like Hamel & Girel, leave an electronic breadcrumb trail by frequently logging your GPS position and/or log in via the morning and afternoon sked. For members **travelling without a radio installed GPS**, log your position daily via either the morning or afternoon sked (or both).

This will provide H.E.L.P. (4357) operators with key information from which to assist in track and trace scenarios.

For seccall contact from a base - leave your radio on and scanning, particularly while driving!



DON'T FORGET.....a copy of the "How To Contact Me" sheet is included in this newsletter (last page) and all future new editions. Tell people where you are going and show them you can be contacted in a hurry if the situation arises. If it's an urgent message that needs to find you, double down on the urgent message delivery:-

- 1** family & friends can send an urgent message via the Out-n-About app MAILBOX.
- 2** and also...family & friends can request an urgent message be passed on via a morning or afternoon sked . To have an urgent message passed on, call Austravel's 24/7 VOICEMAIL service or phone an Austravel responder PERSON to PERSON .

(details found within the "How To Contact Me" sheet)



FOLLOW WHAT WE'RE UP TO ON SOCIAL MEDIA
PIM CAHILL (7255) SOCIAL MEDIA OFFICER
 Email: socialmedia@austravel.org.au



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Codan Envoy X2 Base Transceiver



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- 2019 Auto tune HF antenna with internal GPS receiver
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Ph.: 07 3118 5265

Designed and built in Australia for the world's harshest conditions, Barrett HF equipment thrives in the outback and has the track record to Prove it. The Barrett "Outback Traveller Pack" should be considered as standard equipment for anyone travelling in remote areas.

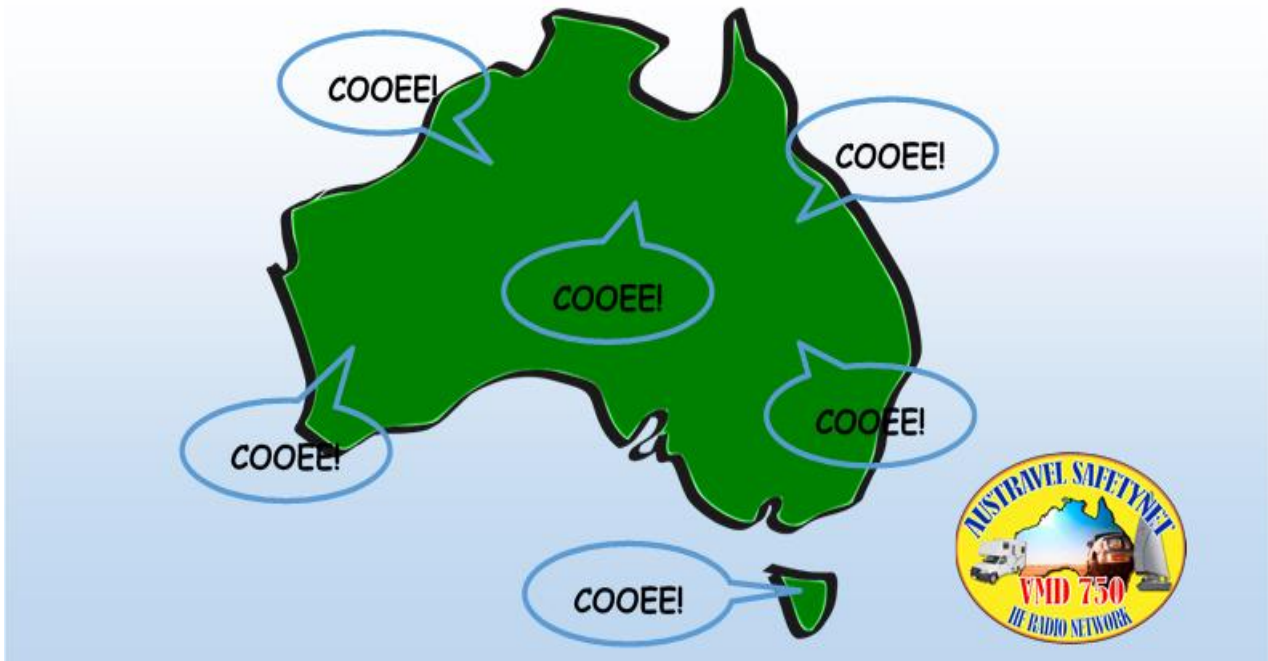
Utilising the "free to air" nature of HF communications, the "Outback Traveller Pack" provides access to essential safety and emergency services with no ongoing call charges.



The Barrett 4050 D handset app supports iOS, Android and Windows devices for wireless voice and radio control.



4050 D



The COOEE! call

Many members have enquired about a way they could informally talk to each other outside of sked times. We have come up with the idea of the **Cooee Call**.

Cooee! is a shout originated in Australia to attract attention, find missing people, or indicate one's own location. It is also known as a call of help, distinct amongst the natural sounds of the bush.

The word "cooee" originates from the Dharug language of Aboriginal Australians in the Sydney area. It means "come here" and has now become widely used in Australia as a call over distances.

We think this is a fitting name for the call Austravel SafteyNet members can use to call each other across this fantastic country of ours.

How does it work?

- Cooee calls are made on **channel 5** (on the hour for 15 minutes) or **channel 9** (for digital radios at 30 minutes past the hour for 15 minutes).
- Cooee calls should not be made during sked times (8:00am—8:45am or 4:30pm—5:15pm).

To comply with ACMA regulations we need to use the full club callsign on the initial call of each operator eg:

This is VMD750 Mobile 6789 calling Cooee! The response would be ***6789 this is VMD750 Mobile 2345 over.*** Once the initial call is finalised only Selcall numbers need to be identified on each over.

- Members should allow a short pause between overs to allow any other member to join in the conversation.
- Members should pause communication if they hear a Selcall being transmitted in case it is an emergency call.

We hope you enjoy calling Cooee to your fellow members and we hope to hear you on the air.



Netwest's Electronic & Repair Center

Services

- Transceiver's, Auto Tuner Repairs, Power Supplies & Codan Autotuner Antenna Repairs
- Commerical Electronic Devices Can Be Quoted.

Contact **Bruce or Colin Ingham**

Ph: 08 9225 5522
Mobile: 0418 376 541

41 Kensington St
East Perth WA 6004



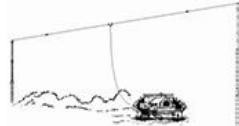
Online Store
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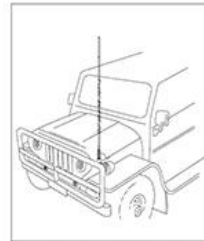
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TET-EMTRON

HF Radio Antenna Parts and Supplies

- Cable & Connectors
 - Mobile
 - Wire Antennas
 - Feed Systems & Baluns
 - Parts
 - CB Antennas
- Contact: Mark Rawlings
Austravel Member :
Selcall 6622
Lot 25 Brand Hwy. Dongara
W.A.
Ph: 0455 463 452

Shortwave Band Chart

| BAND | MEGAHERTZ (MHz) | KILOHERTZ (KHz) |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 120 m | 2.300-2.500 MHz | 2300- 2500 KHz |
| 90 m | 3.20-3.40 MHz | 3200- 3400 KHz |
| 75 m | 3.90-4.00 MHz | 3900- 4000 KHz |
| 60 m | 4.750-5.060 MHz | 4750- 5060 KHz |
| 49 m | 5.950-6.20 MHz | 5950- 6200 KHz |
| 41 m | 7.10-7.60 MHz | 7100- 7600 KHz |
| 31 m | 9.20-9.90 MHz | 9500- 9900 KHz |
| 25 m | 11.600-12.200 MHz | 11600-12100 KHz |
| 22 m | 13.570-13.870 MHz | 13570-13870 KHz |
| 19 m | 15.10-15.80 MHz | 15100-15800 KHz |
| 16 m | 17.480-17.90 MHz | 17480-17900 KHz |
| 13 m | 21.450-21.850 MHz | 21450-21850 KHz |
| 11 m | 25.60-26.10 MHz | 25600-26100 KHz |



DON'T FORGET TO DOWNLOAD THE LATEST
SKED TIMETABLE
FROM THE
AUSTRAVEL WEBSITE





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|---|---------|
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| | |

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| Selcall | Location | Name | Phone |
|---------|----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1928 | WA | Roy Watkins | 0427 000 995 |
| 1750 | QLD | Bob Carne | 0407 936 289 |
| 9618 | QLD | Ken Fischer | 0439 749 449 |
| 7880 | WA | Kim Rhodes | 0427 983 329 |
| 6355 | WA | Colin Ingham | 0417 097 043 |

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