WestWHEELS CARAVANS, CAMPING

Wind deflector cuts drag and saves fuel

Aeroplus gains tick of approval after 10 years of research

THERE is frequent discussion among caravan enthusiasts about the value of wind deflectors fitted to tow vehicles. Do they save fuel or not? It can arouse more discussion than almost any other caravan accessory, yet it is difficult to find someone who has tried a deflector and not to agree that it is beneficial.

Although not true of all past designs, testing over the years has revealed that some deflectors have done more harm than good. Aerodynamics is a very complex science and the way that people think air behaves is reflected in the various deflector designs which have been trialed.

Because of the many different caravan and tow vehicle combinations, until now there has been no readily available formula or scientific data for calculating caravan deflector dimensions and their efficiency.

However, a British caravan parts company, Purpleline, recently concluded a decade of research to develop a deflector — known as the Aeroplus — which is now available in Australia after undergoing extensive testing by the UK’s Motor Industry Research Association.

The association is recognised as Britain’s leading scientific research body and the Aeroplus deflector was amongst 175 products to be assessed by the group. The deflector was found to have the best aerodynamics of those assessed — the team concluded that the Aeroplus’ design is superior to its competitors.

The Aeroplus is a sleek, streamlined deflector, which is fitted to the vehicle height and weighs just 3.5kg. It can be fitted to most standard roof-rack bars, such as the Rela or Universal brands, and adds only 0.3m to the vehicle height and weighs just 3.5kg.

The overall width is 15cm, with the deflector height from the top of the roof-bar being 37.7cm.

The designers say the speed of the vehicle when the deflector is fitted should not exceed 90km/h. It can easily be removed when you are not using your vehicle to tow.

For counter sales visit George Day Caravans, Albany Highway, Maddington. See dealer.

The UK-designed Aeroplus deflector undergoes trials on the dirt roads of Australia.

The cost is $2150 a person (driving own vehicle) and $1100 a person (in a coach) for escorted passengers is $2750. For more information, phone Global Gypsies on 9340 6727 or visit globagypsies.com.au.

The Department of Environment and Conservation, together with adventure tour operator Global Gypsies, are offering environmentally conscious holiday makers an opportunity to assist with fauna research and monitoring projects while enjoying escorted outback tours.

These science safaris to various outback parks and reserves are arranged by Global Gypsies, with DEC co-ordinating and supervising the various tasks for participants.

The next safari will visit Lorna Glen, a proposal conservation reserve about 560km from Kuna, from April 20-27.

The tour, which follows two similar safaris last year, will run as a tag-along trip, with vehicles travelling in a convoy led by accredited eco guide Jeremy Parry.

There is a limit of 10 participants and they will need to have a robust four-wheel-drive vehicle equipped with two-way radios. They can bring off-road caravans, camper trailers or tents to use for accommodation.

Two places are already available in the escort vehicle, which is equipped with recovery gear, GPS, a satellite phone and first-aid kit.

As well as assisting the DEC with field work — which includes muiga and bibly monitoring and bird netting, fauna monitoring and repairs — there will be plenty of time for relaxing with bushwalking, off-road excursions, photography and, for budding artists, sketching and painting.

The cost is $2100 for a person (driving own vehicle), which includes catering, camping fees, scientific activities and a donation to the DEC Rangelands Restoration Project. The cost for escorted passengers is $2750.

For more information, phone Global Gypsies on 9340 6727 or visit globagypsies.com.au.

Become part of a 4WD science safari