10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING ANY RV
I have been in the industry for over a decade and during that time I’ve had roles at various dealerships including customer service, marketing, sales, sales management and now I own my own dealership.

I have worked in both new and pre-owned sales and have seen all aspects of the RV purchasing process. I’ve seen how people inspect vehicles, how they test drive them, what questions they ask (or don’t ask) and I’ve heard about 100 different sales spiels from various sales representatives.

Over my time in the industry I have learnt that there are some key pieces of information you MUST know before buying any RV. By following these bullet points you’ll be sure to find the right vehicle for you without finding any un-wanted surprises.
THIS IS ONE WE ARE SEEING FAR TOO FREQUENTLY AND NOW WITH THE INTERNET BEING THE NUMBER ONE SOURCE OF INFORMATION IT IS BECOMING COMMON PLACE.

SCAMS ARE RIFE, THEY ARE FOUND ALL OVER THE INTERNET AND SCAMMERS ARE SUPER CLEVER. I HAVE MET PEOPLE THAT HAVE LOST THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS TO PEOPLE CLAIMING TO 'SELL THEIR RV' BUT THEY DO NOT EXIST! USE THE OLD ADAGE, ‘IF IT’S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, CHANCES ARE THAT’S EXACTLY THE CASE.’

**Case Study WRONG WAY:**
John found his perfect RV online, so he sent an email enquiry via the classified site. He received a response saying, “Thanks John, I’m currently away on work, I can have the RV delivered to you but I need you to pay a deposit into the following account or pay in full as I’ve got heaps of people that want to buy your RV.”… John gets excited to buy it and pays the seller. A few days go by and John gets nervous as he’s had no more contact from the seller. Unfortunately, John has been scammed.

**Case Study RIGHT WAY:**
Dylan and Jess have found an RV online that is super cheap and too good to be true. They do a little further investigation and find out that the vehicle is under value by $50,000. They make a call to the classified site to clarify and sure enough, they agree, it’s a scam and delete the ad. Dylan and Jess have just saved themselves a lot of money. They decided to buy from a registered, reputable dealer.
This is an interesting topic indeed! Buying an RV often involves some form of negotiation. However, when you meet a seller, whether that is a dealer or a private seller, be cautious when they drop their price dramatically early on in the conversation. Why? There are a few main reasons for this... It may be a problem vehicle for them that they need to clear, it could be a scam (if dealing on the phone or internet), financial troubles within the dealership business, (if they go bust how will they deal with warranty) and the major one I’ve seen many times before is over inflating a price to then reduce it to make it look like you’ve got a great deal. So, be sure to research the market value first.

**Case Study WRONG WAY:**
Bob and Jan are new to the idea of buying an RV. They walk into a dealership and show interest in a vehicle priced at $79,990. Before they have a decent conversation with the salesperson the rep says, “If you buy it today it’s yours for $70,000”. Bob and Jan see this as a good deal, so they give a deposit and sign the paperwork. When they get home and look up what they have bought they find several on the market for $65,000. They have actually paid more than market value, but it looked like a great deal at the time.

**Case Study RIGHT WAY:**
Martin and Michelle are eager to do a deal and want a bargain. They find a vehicle and they make a low offer to the seller. The seller counters and they eventually reach an outcome that suits all parties. They are given professional service and guarantees, and they are confident with their new purchase.
Over the years it’s amazed me at how many people buy an RV without asking about the PPSR report (Personal Properties Securities Register). A dealer is required by law to do these checks and should have a report available for viewing. The report will provide details on whether the vehicle has been written off, stolen or has any finances owing. Anyone selling a vehicle, whether it be via a dealer or privately should be able to present this document easily.

**Case Study WRONG WAY:**
Lorraine found her perfect vehicle online and went to meet the private seller. The vehicle was immaculate and a great price. She took the vehicle and travelled in it for 3 years. She then decided it’s time to upgrade so she took it to a dealer for a trade price. The dealer ran a PPSR check and found it was a repairable write off, and so told Lorraine they didn’t want trade a vehicle with this history. Lorraine is now stuck with a vehicle she has to sell for far less than market value or can’t sell at all.

**Case Study RIGHT WAY:**
Lorraine’s friend Sam also bought a motorhome at the same time. Luckily, she checked the PPSR report prior to purchase and she got a fair trade when it was time to upgrade.
Many buyers will ask about the vehicle’s service records which is great. But what about the back end? What about all the seals, cabinets and appliances? I’ve met many people in the past that have bought vehicles that have been serviced every 10,000kms but the motorhome part has been left untouched resulting in dodgy seals, broken appliances, water leaks and dead batteries.

The best thing to do here is ask for any documentation from the seller that gives evidence of upkeep or make sure there is some kind of guarantee in place before you buy.

**Case Study WRONG WAY:**
George is a Mr. Fix it. He decided as long as the mechanical side of things are good, he’ll buy it and fix all the damaged bits inside the RV. However, a couple of months in George’s back gets crook and he has to sell his vehicle. The Motorhome is in pieces and he can’t get anywhere near what he paid for it, even though at the time it seemed like a decent deal.

**Case Study RIGHT WAY:**
Simon and his wife Jackie have bought their first motorhome after checking through all the service and maintenance records and inspecting the vehicle thoroughly. They were given a warranty by the seller and are thrilled with their purchase.
This point is pretty black and white. If you’re buying privately the chances are you will get zero after sales service which most people understand. From a dealer however, there are varying levels of after sales service.

A few questions to ask before committing to a vehicle from a dealer are, Do they have a service department? What is the warranty? Who’s there to take my call if I have questions? Will I get a proper demonstration before I take collection? These are questions you need answers to before you commit to buy.

**Case Study WRONG WAY:**
Peter and Mary bought their first RV privately. They were told the vehicle is better than new! The seller was very convincing. All seemed well but after a couple of weeks the power went out. They tried to call the previous owners to answer some questions but they couldn’t get through. They ended up needing to replace all the batteries and solar charging system at a considerable cost to them.

**Case Study RIGHT WAY:**
Scott bought a campervan from a dealer. When he got it home, he was tinkering with it and all of a sudden, the fridge stopped working. He called up the dealership and the dealer explained that there is a master switch. Scott realised that he must have bumped it when he was loading in his golf clubs. Although Scott had a demonstration on the camper there was a lot of info to take in at the time. His question was answered quickly and he was on his way!
This is super important. Sometimes you really just have no idea what you want but you know you want to travel. The best way to get a feel for the various layouts is to ‘physically’ see them. Go to a dealer. Take time to walk in and out of them. Imagine you are on holidays putting items in cupboards, laying on the bed, walking in and out of the shower.

Without trying these things out how will you ever know what works for you? If you’re at a dealership, make sure that the sales staff really ‘hears’ what you’re looking for, rather than them barking demands at you. Find out what your what you really need to to enjoy your travels and communicate this to the sales person.

Case Study WRONG WAY:
Kevin and Bev have walked into a dealership. Bev has just recently had a knee operation. They are being shown a late model vehicle by the dealer which is immaculate and suits their budget. The dealer explains how great the seating area is and that it’s perfect for them. They buy it. Weeks later they have buyers regret as the bedding situation is configured in a way that does suit them due to Bev’s knee problems. Their salesperson didn’t address what they actually ‘needed’.

Case Study RIGHT WAY:
Paul and Sarah head into a dealership. They have a budget in mind and are eager to get travelling. They clearly explain to the dealer what various features they want. The salesperson identifies and clarifies with them and shows them a couple of models that will specifically suit their needs. They settle on one and away they go... Very happy campers.
A lot of people get bogged down in the debate about which brand is better than another and the choice between front or rear wheel drive. Well, in my experience it comes down to what you’re comfortable with, what your intentions are and what is built on the back of it (different layouts are often built on different chassis).

The reality nowadays is that all servicing costs are very similar regardless of the brand. As far as reliability no one wants to be stranded when on holiday because of a reliability issue but this goes back to the seller. Is there a warranty and has it been maintained?

You can read as many online blogs and reviews as you like but sometimes all this does is puts the fear of god into you that something ‘might’ go wrong when you could be out there enjoying yourself.

**Case Study WRONG WAY:**
Cameron is the ultimate outdoor enthusiast. He wants to tow a trailer with a car and a boat on top. He ends up buying a vehicle that is a couple of years older than he’d like to save a few thousand dollars. He buys a smaller motorhome. After he hooks the trailer up and loads all his gear his rig is overweight, along with it being too sluggish to drive. Cameron then panics. He decides to sell it to upgrade, costing even more money.

**Case Study RIGHT WAY:**
Nicholas and Barbara have just sold their caravan and are now looking for a motorhome so they can tow their boat. They have told the seller the boat’s overall weight and the seller has shown them various chassis that best suits the towing weight. They find a vehicle that gives ample payload and the correct towing capacity and away they go.
Before committing to buy you may want to test drive you may not. That choice is totally up to you. BUT, make sure you ask the seller if it is possible for you to test drive if you want to.

The seller may want to accompany you on the test drive, but if they don’t allow test drives that’s when you need to walk away. This is a huge red flag and could mean they are trying to hide something.

**Case Study WRONG WAY:**
Jim and Sandra went to a seller’s house and requested a test drive. The seller told them the battery is being replaced so it can’t start. They took the sellers word for it and bought it anyway. A couple of weeks later the clutch needed replacing. A cost that was not factored into this purchase.

**Case Study RIGHT WAY:**
Jack and Val went to view a motorhome they were interested in. A test drive was requested. They noticed a particular noise. The seller agreed to get it checked for them. It turns out the vehicle needed ball joints so the seller replaced them with new parts. Jack and Val came back to test it and it drove beautifully.
Same, same right? Wrong. I’ve seen this dozens of times where a buyer purchases an RV purely based on the ‘price’ only to discover later it actually ‘costs’ them a small fortune in upkeep. They come back and say we should have taken your advice. An example of this would be two vehicles that are identical, one is in mint condition all serviced and ready to go, on the market for $80,000. The second is average with no evidence of servicing and it’s $75,000. Six months into owning the second vehicle the turbo or fridge fails. You now are paying more than the mint vehicle!

**Case Study WRONG WAY:**
Louise and Pam are going halves in a motorhome. They have a budget in mind. They found a vehicle online that is $5000 cheaper than one they have looked at and they saw this as a great opportunity. They bought the vehicle and then discovered that it needed a new A/C unit, a service, new tyres, new door locks and a new oven! A total bill of over $5,400.

**Case Study RIGHT WAY:**
Robert and Celia decided motorhoming is for them! They have looked at the market and viewed several motorhomes. They settled for a vehicle that wasn’t the dearest nor the cheapest. But they are well researched and are buying from a reputable seller knowing there is no immediate work to do on it. They settled on the RV and away they go.
This is the final point and most important. Make sure that you really trust who you’re buying from, whether that be private or at a dealership. If they seem dodgy the chances are, they are. Put it this way, you wouldn’t order at a restaurant where you don't trust the chef would you? I wouldn’t!

Case Study WRONG WAY:
James and Jill have agreed to meet a seller regarding a particular vehicle they like. The seller is dodging questions and seems wishy washy on information. The seller gives them a price but wants payment in cash. They agree to buy it as the price is good. Several weeks later they find out the vehicle has been bought by the previous owner through an auction and has had many owners. They are unsettled about this purchase.

Case Study RIGHT WAY:
Steve and Wendy have been shopping for a motorhome for a while and have met various sellers along the way. When they meet the right seller that is totally transparent and offers the help they desire, they have confidence that they will be treated well. They end up settling on a vehicle and the seller agrees to assist with any future questions they have. They also recommend this seller to others.