

BEATING THE BOWSER BLUES!



Packaging . . . purchasing boats around an engine size will become more critical in the future - this Signature 542 / Yamaha 115hp combo is a beautiful example of getting the 'package' right with mid-30 knot performance, a 20 lph cruise - on a single axle trailer.

As boatowners around Australia share the gloomy news at the fuel bowser, we're all having to deal with the reality that it is now most unlikely that fuel prices will ever go down . . . in fact, it seems almost certain they could rise as much as 25%-30% more in the very near future. However, with a commonsense approach to fuel management, genuine savings can be made to the fuel cost of running your boat without changing anything other than the way you drive it.

When fuel hit \$1.25 a litre around the marinas, there was a collective gasp from boatowners with both diesel and petrol engines, but as the price continued through to \$1.30, then \$1.40 (and in many parts of Australia \$1.50 was kissed goodbye) boatowners everywhere were forced to sit up and rethink their approach to boating and its fuel management.

For Australia's 650,000 strong fleet of trailerboats, it is a double edged whammy – not only do we get to pay more fuel to tow our boats to the water, but when we get there, the fuel has increased in cost as much as 30%-40%. Big trips from (say) Melbourne to Borroloola, even runs to Bermagui from the southern capital have suddenly taken on a new perspective. Sydney's massive fleet of trailerboat owners have been hard hit like everyone else, with the trips south to the Far South Coast of NSW or north to Coffs and beyond now starting to cost a fair bit extra in the price of fuel alone.

But there are no exceptions – this is an impost affecting everybody from every part of Australia, and more so those boatowners with trailerboats who travel long

distances to enjoy their sport.

Obviously, trailerboat owners will have to think carefully about how they can work their rigs more fuel efficiently, and it's actually harder to do this on the highway than it is on the water.

There are many ways of saving fuel on the water, but it's much harder to do that on the highway.

Highway Fuel Savings

Clearly, in the next few years, every committed trailerboat owner will be reconsidering his fuel and power options. LPG has never looked so good and now the government is offering substantial subsidies to install LPG systems in existing vehicles, there's no doubt this is going to become an even more attractive alternative in the future.

Even diesel / gas conversions are now becoming a serious alternative for many trailerboat owners with big rigs, and as the use of LPG continues to be promoted by everyone from the government down, no doubt we'll see a big shift to the use of this cheaper fuel in the next 3-5 years.

Whether it's worth converting an existing rig, or waiting till it wears



Fuel management for the top rigs - especially the twins - is going to assume new significance in the wake of the new cost of fuel. Four strokes will be a mandatory investment.

