

TRAILER REBUILD

PART THREE

Part three of Mitch's complete trailer rebuild

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY MITCH WHALE



Two of the fastest wearing parts on your trailer are the rollers and skids, which bear the brunt of the punishment from the salt and the sun's UV rays. The polyurethane starts to break down after years of harsh treatment making it difficult to self-launch and recover your boat.



You'll find many of the older trailers will have bulky timber skids. Yes these are larger than the new lightweight ARK polyurethane skids, as well as being twice the weight. They also tend to wear a lot faster, preventing them from moving freely.



To obtain the right height of the rollers, you want to have a starting point. Firstly, install all rollers, adjusting them enough that the boat will clear the wheel arches and be as level as possible.



At the rear of the trailer, the same principle applies. The centre roller has two adjustments – try to keep them even or irregular wear will occur.



Now to make those rollers work! The easiest way to do this is to load the boat back onto the trailer with the aid of a mate. Lie underneath the boat and slide the rollers up to meet the bottom of the hull – make sure you keep the rollers straight.



This is the same for the rest of the rollers and skids. To reduce your boat from thumping around on the trailer while driving, have about an inch gap between the boat and the wheel arches. If the boat needs lifting in places, the easiest way I have found is to utilise a car jack and some pieces of timber – it beats trying to lift it yourself.



« If your winch looks anything like this, please do yourself a favour and throw it into the bin. Not only is this dangerous but it could be a massive inconvenience when your boat is left stranded at the boat ramp. The replacement ARK winch is much bigger and also is geared much lower, which means less strain on the winch and much easier operation for the user.



« Over ten years of rust is caked onto this trailer and all the components. Invest in some WD-40 to help loosen the attaching hardware and fit the new high-quality ARK components



⤴ Now to line up the new winch. Mark a centre line where the winch is going to sit – hopefully the holes from the old winch line up with the new one. If only one lines up like it did for me, put the new bolt through the hole and tighten it up just enough so the winch can just move. Make it as straight as possible and mark out the new hole with the drill.



« I'm replacing the hitch as well as the old one is fairly worn. If you don't have a jockey wheel, the hardware here can be very stubborn to replace as this is where the trailer cops most of its punishment. In my case I had the grinder handy which made light work of the bolts.



⤴ Simply clean back the surface of the trailer so it sits true, then it's just a matter of putting the new bolts through and tightening them up.