

THE ROAD AHEAD

AUTUMN 2023

OUTBACK
explorer

RACQ

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COVER PHOTO: Taking in Uluru by camel.
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Photo:
Tourism NT, Henry Brydon

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY
We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our business operates and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within RACQ and the communities in which we live and work.



VIEWPOINT

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

MY FIRST COLUMN in *The Road Ahead* as your Club's President coincides with a feature on a topic close to my heart – road safety.

Last year, 299 people died on Queensland roads, the highest annual number since 2009.

This is shocking in an age when cars have never been safer to drive, and when road safety should be front of mind for all road users.

Sadly, this is not the case as the Fatal Five – speeding, distraction, seatbelts, fatigue and drink driving – continue to be the primary reasons for road deaths.

There would be few Queenslanders who have not been affected by road trauma in some way, myself included.

As a teenager, two friends of mine were

killed in a single vehicle accident. This accident permanently changed us, our lives never really being the same again. Watching their loving families grapple with the devastation of their loss and their grief, is something that remains with me today.

Every road fatality has a far-reaching impact on families, friends and communities, and we should do all we can to help avoid anyone having to deal with such devastation.

My commitment to helping solve this social issue is clearly a personal one and I will do all I can in my leadership position to assist in the goal of achieving zero deaths on Queensland roads.

Road safety has been part of RACQ's DNA going back to 1905 when the club

was formed to advocate for Queensland motorists.

This is why we were a willing participant at the State Government's road safety roundtable earlier this year, called in response to last year's road toll.

Group CEO David Carter presented 12 recommendations which could be delivered over one, five and 10-year timeframes.

Education and its importance for reshaping our road safety culture was a vital component of that submission.

As you can read on page 8, better education of road users was a common theme among other contributors at the roundtable too.

Education is an essential short-term goal in ensuring all drivers, and future drivers, are fully aware of the potential impact of their behaviour when behind the wheel.

It's a simple message, but road safety is in our own hands.

LEONA MURPHY
RACQ PRESIDENT

EVENT CINEMAS DOUBLE PASS

THE ROAD AHEAD and Event Cinemas are giving readers the chance to win one of 10 Event Cinemas double passes. The prize includes one Event Cinemas double pass per winner, valued at \$40. Visit racq.com/date-night to enter the competition which closes at 5pm on 30 April.

WIN!

ROAD AHEAD is giving readers the chance to win a \$250 EFTPOS gift card. To enter, tell us what you think about this edition of the magazine at racq.com/TRAsurvey.



For general enquiries visit racq.com or call RACQ on **13 1905**.



TTY (Impaired hearing) – SMS **0428 131111** (Brisbane, Gold Coast, Cairns, Townsville) **0427 131111** (all other areas).



To request Roadside Assistance log a job via our **Roadside Assistance App** (downloadable from Google Play or the App Store), or call **13 1111**.

RACQ Patron: Dr Jeannette Young PSM, Governor of Queensland

President and Chair: Leona Murphy
Directors: Annabel Dolphin, Will Fellowes, Rob Hubbard, John Minz, Andrew Moore, Prof. Sarah Pearson, Andrew Kearnan

Group Chief Executive Officer: David Carter



MANAGING EDITOR

Deb Eccleston

PUBLISHING AND EVENTS MANAGER

Tamara Van Der Walt

EDITOR

Ray Andersen

SENIOR CREATIVE DESIGNER

Brad Ferguson

MOTORING EDITOR

Ged Bulmer

PUBLISHING ENQUIRIES

E: roadahead@racq.com.au

DISPLAY & DIGITAL ADVERTISING

E: TRAdvertising@racq.com.au

ADDRESS

PO Box 4, Springwood, Queensland 4127

PUBLISHER

RACQ Operations Pty Ltd

(ABN 80 009 663 414)

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IS THAT REFUND MESSAGE REALLY FROM RACQ?

IN THE COMING months current and former RACQ members may receive correspondence from the Club regarding a refund as part of the pricing promises review.

This review identified members who did not receive the full benefit of discounts and members who had insurance policies with Product Disclosure Statement wording that inadequately described how premiums were calculated for optional benefits. The Club is in the process of issuing refunds and to ensure we have the correct details, some members may be contacted via letter, email or text message before refunds are processed.

If you're eligible for a refund we will contact you. Any correspondence from RACQ about the pricing promises review will always direct members to **racq.com/pricingpromises** where they can access the refund form. Details provided in the online refund form will be sent to us securely. We will never ask you for

personal or financial information through an email or text message.

If you're unsure whether an email, letter, text or phone call is from RACQ, please do not provide your bank account details or click on any links or attachments. Instead, contact us immediately on 1800 637 013 between 8am–6pm, Monday to Friday or visit your nearest RACQ store. ■

HOW TO RECEIVE YOUR REFUND

- Type '**racq.com/pricingpromises**' into your browser. Never click a link in a message.
- Have your '**Refund ID**' ready. You will find this on the letter attached to the email you received or on the letter you received in the post.
- Click on the '**Refund form**' button.
- Follow the prompts to supply your bank account details.

RACQ TAKING NEXT STEPS ON RAP JOURNEY

RACQ HAS CONTINUED its commitment to strengthening relationships with First Nations people by launching the second phase of its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The Innovate RAP was launched at RACQ's Eight Mile Plains site on 16 February by Group CEO David Carter.

It follows the Reflect RAP, launched in 2020, and provides the Club with a blueprint to make further meaningful contributions to Queensland reconciliation and drive First Nations people's inclusion at RACQ over the next two years.

Since 2006, RAPs have enabled organisations to advance reconciliation with meaningful actions under the guidance of Reconciliation Australia.

RACQ's RAP can be viewed at **racq.com/diversity-and-inclusion**.



HELP IDENTIFY CLOGGED ROADS

MEMBERS CAN NOMINATE roads, intersections and railway crossings they consider to be congested and the cause of annoying delays in the 2023 Red Spot Congestion Survey.

The Red Spot Congestion Survey

asks members to supply information on locations where delays are frustrating but could be alleviated to some extent.

Survey responses are collated and sent to road authorities who can use them to identify and prioritise improvements on their road networks.

For more details and to complete the survey go to **racq.com/redspot**. The survey closes on Wednesday 5 April 2023.

Ed's note

IF YOU HAVE been considering switching from print to digital, now is a great time!

For the next three months anyone switching their preference for receiving *The Road Ahead* from print to digital will automatically go into a draw to win one of 15 Apple iPads (see page 12 for more details).

We know that many of our readers love to receive the print edition every quarter, but there are increasing

numbers who prefer to get the magazine in a digital format, delivered straight to their inbox every month.

Digital subscribers have access to an online version of the print magazine with additional features and the added benefit of bonus content, including extra stories and competitions not seen in the print version.

RACQ is committed to helping members transition to a more sustainable future and is taking steps to reduce our organisation's environmental impact. You can read more about RACQ's sustainability goals at **racq.com/**

sustainability. As individuals, we can all do our part to preserve the planet by adopting more sustainable practices.

One of those small steps you can take is switching to the digital Road Ahead.

The process is simple and comes with the knowledge that you are contributing to a better future.

RAY ANDERSEN,
EDITOR



YOUR SAY

GIVING MEMBERS A VOICE



RACQ CLUBHOUSE: EMAIL ROADAHHEAD@RACQ.COM.AU. **MAIL** THE ROAD AHEAD, P.O. BOX 4, SPRINGWOOD, QLD 4127.

PLEASE INCLUDE NAME AND ADDRESS. **LETTERS WILL NOT RECEIVE AN INDIVIDUAL REPLY AND SHOULD BE NO MORE THAN 120 WORDS.**

GORDON RIVER DELIGHT

WE HAVE JUST come home from a road trip, travelling around Tasmania, and everything in the Apple Isle exceeded our expectations. The scenery made us feel like we were in a movie; absolutely stunning. When planning the trip, I made sure we took advantage of discounts

offered through our RACQ membership. A special mention must go to World Heritage Cruises, the local family-owned company who run a cruise on the Gordon River. We purchased the tickets through RACQ Club Connect and received a 10 percent discount. The Gordon River cruise was the highlight of

our time in Tasmania. Their brand new \$9 million vessel is first-class luxury. The friendly and professional crew and the delicious meal were 10 out of 10. I would encourage other RACQ members to support this business when planning a trip.

DARREN MCKINNON, HELENSVALE

FORWARD THINKING ON CARPARKS

WHO DECREED THAT reversing into a supermarket parking space is quicker and safer? I dispute this because most reverse-park drivers take far longer to park, juggling back and forth, blocking the flow of other vehicles. These reverse-parked vehicles come out at me without warning. In my experience, a front-first (nose-in) vehicle reversing out of a parking space is safer because I immediately see the red rear taillights and stop to give way.

GRETCHEN WARD, KENMORE





CHEAPER ELECTRIC CARS

REGARDING THE EXCESSIVELY high price of electric vehicles (EVs) in Australia (Summer TRA 2022/23), may I offer the following observations. If we look at traditionally powered vehicles, petrol/diesel engines have many large moving parts and hundreds of smaller parts. Most of these larger parts require casting or forging, then extensive, high-precision machining and then assembly by hand. Thus, these units are the most-costly part of a car to make, as much as two-thirds. Plus, there are many peripheral components such as the transmission, fuel and exhaust system, cooling and pollution control system and myriad sensors. This makes the entire power unit large, heavy, complex and expensive to produce. However, when it comes to EVs, they have no petrol/diesel engine drive-

train – which is the major point here. Pure EVs only have an electric motor which has only one major moving part, so is much less expensive to produce. Lithium battery packs should not be expensive either due to economies of scale associated with high-volume manufacturing which should improve even further over time. The automakers have set the selling price of EVs above the reach of most Australians, which is why the uptake is so small, and that is only due to profit taking. If EVs were priced the same as their petrol/diesel cousins, they would sell in huge quantities. I call on the automakers to encourage the uptake of EVs by passing on the savings of manufacturing costs and setting the retail price at, or even below, existing petrol/diesel models.

STAN POLLOCK, PELICAN WATERS

ELDERLY DON'T NEED RE-TESTING

RE THE ARTICLE regarding the re-testing suggestion for elderly drivers (Summer TRA 2022/23). I also agree with an annual driving test for some motorists but not based on age as I consider that to be discrimination. Any annual driving test

should have to be undertaken based on a person's driving record as determined by how many times they get a speeding ticket or go through red lights or don't stop at traffic lights. I have never seen an elderly driver hooning or spinning and smoking car wheels etc. All these things are done deliberately without any consideration to other motorists or pedestrians or a thought for the danger of these activities. Statistics show that the age groups at most risk of motor vehicle crashes are those from teens to late 20s. These are the drivers that need to take an annual driving test not the elderly drivers who have years of driving experience.

ROB TISBURY, MARYBOROUGH



DIM VIEW OF BRIGHT LIGHTS

I STRONGLY AGREE with Angie (Summer TRA 2022/23) on distracting blue headlights, but the problem is that vehicle manufacturers are constantly trying to outdo the competition with no attention to driver safety. They now have cars decked out like Christmas trees with lights plastered all over. The almost total use of LED lights is now common. The trouble is they have to be super powerful to adequately light the required distance ahead. This is causing additional tiredness and potential accidents for drivers facing these super-bright lights. What is now considered old and not up with the times actually did the job extremely well without blinding drivers facing them. In addition, a blinking turn indicator lamp is an important signal and not at all a distraction. The lengthy strips of orange/yellow sliding sideways now taking the place of conventional turn indicators (fortunately not many yet) is severely distracting. It is about time manufacturers were made to seek safety ahead of creating frivolous redundant junk just to be different to the opposition.

RON OWEN, SUNNYBANK



FRESH VIEW ON DRIVER FATIGUE

SOME TIME AGO I watched a TV documentary about air quality inside cars and trucks that was performed by a driver and second person with gauges and meters. After about 30 minutes with the air-conditioner on recycle, the air quality dropped to a level that would create fatigue. The air-con was then put on refresh and the air quality improved. Maybe this explains the reason for some accidents occurring within an hour of home? With fatigue accounting for about 30 percent of fatalities, I am staggered we have not educated about, or engineered out, this problem.

DARYL CUPITT, BILOELA

RACQ Group CEO David Carter at the road safety roundtable. Photo: DTMR.

STORY TRISTAN VORIAS

SEEKING A PATH TO SAFER ROADS

AFTER A DEVASTATING year, in which 299 lives were lost on Queensland roads, the State Government called an urgent meeting of road safety stakeholders, looking for answers.

The roundtable brought together road safety experts and representatives of road-user groups who presented their ideas for reducing the number of fatalities.

As the state's peak motoring body, RACQ was a key stakeholder at the

roundtable and Group CEO David Carter presented a submission with 12 recommendations.

RACQ Manager Road Safety and Technical Joel Tucker said the Club's recommendations were evidence-based and backed by members.

"We need to act fast and get back to basics to address Queensland's horror road toll which reached 299 in 2022, a 13-year high," Mr Tucker said.

"Increasing on-road police presence, rethinking education and targeting high-

RACQ WAS AMONG THE GROUPS REPRESENTED AT A ROAD SAFETY ROUNDTABLE CALLED AFTER 2022'S INCREASE IN ROAD DEATHS.

risk regional areas were our three main recommendations.

"We know heavily marked police vehicles significantly deter poor driver behaviour and according to our 2022 Road Safety Survey, 82 percent of Queenslanders agree we need more on-road police patrols.

"Both the higher police visibility and education campaigns must target regional areas like central and far north Queensland, which saw shocking increases in road fatalities last year."

RACQ RECOMMENDATIONS

WITHIN 12 MONTHS:

1. Regional peer-to-peer road safety education campaigns.
2. Targeted increase in police presence on roads.
3. Research into licensing, education and training for motorcycle riders.
4. Increased funding for regional high school programs.
5. More detailed and timely road crash data.

WITHIN FIVE YEARS:

1. Fix, finish and extend existing road infrastructure in high crash zones.
2. Build resilient roads to minimise future flood and storm damage.
3. Investigate ways to improve emergency response to regional crashes.

WITHIN 10 YEARS:

1. Increase investment to projects that improve regional road safety.
2. Prioritise high benefit-to-cost ratio projects.
3. Introduce incentives to increase the uptake of newer and safer vehicles.
4. Improve communication between vehicles, roads and emergency responders by developing the 5G network across regional Queensland.

IN THEIR WORDS

The Road Ahead sought the views of some of the other groups represented at the roundtable:



SAL PETROCCITTO, CEO OF NATIONAL HEAVY VEHICLE REGULATOR

Everyone deserves to get home safely to their loved ones after travelling on our roads.

Research shows that almost 70 percent of fatal crashes involving cars and trucks are caused by the car driver.

The NHVR's 'Don't #uck With A Truck' campaign is purposely provocative to grab the attention of L and P-platers, aged 16–25. Our goal is to save lives by reaching young drivers as they establish their long-term driving behaviours so they have a strong understanding of how to drive safely when trucks are turning and stopping, and how to overtake a truck safely.



JASON PLANT, CEO OF CARAVAN TRADE & INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

Road safety is a shared responsibility. To effectively co-exist on our roads, we need to change behaviour and educate drivers on how all vehicle types use the road.

Road users must also be educated on how modern safety technology works within their vehicles and trailers. We need to build a better understanding and trust in technology. We all know that driving under the influence and speeding are potentially deadly. Tougher penalties and a change in messaging are required to brand this behaviour as completely unsafe and socially unacceptable.



GRAHAM KEYS, PRESIDENT OF QUEENSLAND MOTORCYCLE COUNCIL

The Queensland Motorcycle Council wants the Department of Transport and Main Roads' education blueprint implemented as quickly as possible to improve our road safety culture in Queensland. That educational journey must start at early school age.

We want to see the graduated licence system reviewed and a mandatory five-year licence renewal test on road rules and hazard perceptions considered.

We would also like Queensland to adopt a 'Making Roads More Motorcycle Friendly' framework, similar to Victoria and Western Australia.



PETER FRAZER OAM, PRESIDENT OF SAFER AUSTRALIAN ROADS AND HIGHWAYS (SARAH)

Choosing to speed or be distracted is a selfish act that puts your wants above the safety needs of others.

SARAH advocates for strategies that change behaviour; for example, average speed and mobile phone detection systems coupled with timely police enforcement.

Secondly, with so many poor-quality roads, default speed limits are often set far too high for a road's condition. Given this, it's the authority's responsibility to review its infrastructure and set speed limits according to that specific road's condition.



ANNA CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF QUEENSLAND WALKS

Remember that wonderful feeling of walking to school? Our children deserve the same and we must ensure that our urban streets are safe for kids to walk and cross. One way to achieve this is with 'wombats', also known as raised crossings. 'Wombat' crossings improve road safety, especially for kids, and benefit parents with prams, older people and people with a disability. Queensland Walks calls for a target investment of 200 'wombats' near Queensland schools.



REBECCA RANDAZZO, CEO OF BICYCLE QUEENSLAND

Bicycle Queensland calls for reducing speed limits, targeted education campaigns and increasing active transport infrastructure.

The State Government assessments of its bikeway projects showed a benefit-cost ratio of up to five. So, on average, every dollar invested in bike infrastructure will return nearly \$5 in economic benefit to Queensland with improved health outcomes, reduced traffic congestion and lower transport costs.



New RACQ President Leona Murphy at RACQ House, Brisbane. Photo: Jake Ryan.

PRESIDENT FOCUSED ON 2030 VISION

NEW PRESIDENT LEONA MURPHY HAS A LONG AND PROUD ASSOCIATION WITH RACQ.

LEONA MURPHY'S PATH to President and Chair of RACQ began in 1989 at the Club's headquarters in Eight Mile Plains.

"I would sit at the front desk and put cheques in envelopes and help the members as they came in," Leona said.

"I quickly moved into the claims department – that was my entry into the insurance industry."

Fast forward to November 2022 and Leona was elected to the top role of Queensland's largest club after serving as its Vice-President and Deputy Chair since 2020.

Leona brings more than 25 years' experience in insurance and financial services to the role, having worked for large, top-20 ASX-listed companies.

She also sits on several boards and has been Co-Chair of the United Nations Environmental Programmes Principles for Sustainable Insurance initiative and was recognised as one of Australia's Top 100 Women of Influence.

"It was always my intention to come back to RACQ," Leona said.

"For me it was about giving back to the organisation that gave me so much and provided strong foundations to my career.

"RACQ is the most trusted brand in Queensland and one of the most globally respected brands.

"It's just such a wonderful organisation that genuinely cares about members and our great state. There's no Queensland without RACQ."

Leona said one of her key priorities would be delivering RACQ's 2030 strategy.

"We want to help members live and move safely, securely and sustainably – that's really exciting," she said.

"If we really are going to make a

essential services like fuel, electricity, insurance and home loans – all areas that RACQ is focused on.

"There's much work to do and I'm excited to be working with my fellow board members and Group CEO David Carter as we begin our multi-year transformation to become a better, stronger, future-focused, member-centric organisation that delivers meaningful products and services."

Leona said with the greatest transition of the century underway (decarbonisation of transport and energy), RACQ was working to ensure that no one gets left behind.

"As we move towards our 2030 strategy, we are being guided by the actions we need to take to help our members and communities, drive positive change and build resilience," she said.

"RACQ Solar, the partnerships we have established with EV charging networks across the state and the resources and advice we provide on sustainable mobility sources provide a strong foundation to help our members transition to a more sustainable future."

Leona said ultimately, at the end of her tenure, she would be judged on whether she made a positive difference to the lives of members and the community. ■

LEONA SAID WITH THE GREATEST TRANSITION OF THE CENTURY UNDERWAY (DECARBONISATION OF TRANSPORT AND ENERGY), RACQ WAS WORKING TO ENSURE THAT NO ONE GETS LEFT BEHIND.

difference, then we need to lean into the issues that our members face every day.

"The increasing impacts of natural disasters, the horrific road toll and pressure on household budgets are all top of mind for our members.

"These are challenging times with inflation impacting the affordability of

Countless long-time hearing aid wearers astonished to find new \$429 hearing aid outperforms their “thousands-of-dollars” devices. Delivered direct to you, with no appointments or hearing tests required, the Jaspa 3 is ready-to-use right away with the simple press of a button.

MOST RECENT REVIEWS

“Having trialled four different sets of hearing aids from two audiology centres without complete satisfaction, I ordered two Jaspa 3 hearing aids. I could hardly believe how much more natural sounding the Jaspa aids were in comparison to the very expensive aids I had trialled. I’m now wearing them each day as required and find them very good.” – AARON, NSW

“Very happy with the aids. 3 previous sets of aids at about 10 times the price of Jaspa did not perform despite expert advice and assistance. Had endless problems with feedback and fitting. Jaspa 3 are the only aids I have been able to wear daily without any feedback or discomfort.” – BRUCE, WA

“I have been trying to get my husband to wear his hearing aids that we paid a lot of money for, however he never wore them after the first month stating that he didn’t get enough benefit. Since I bought him the Jaspa 3 aids he has been wearing them at least every few days and for watching the news etc, and I have noticed a big difference in not having to repeat myself. Regards, Bess.” – BESSIE, NSW

“I only have difficulty on occasions and although hearing aids were recommended by a specialist I haven’t been able to justify them until now. These work very well to serve my needs and the clarity of TV is very good in particular (I can turn the volume down to 10 now).” – DORIS, WA

“I was not happy with the sound quality of 2 different hearing aids I had purchased from a well-known company. I intended to try a different company, when I read your advertisement, and the comments from users. I decided that the price was affordable so rang the next morning. I am happy with the sound and the operation of my hearing aid, the hearing aid is more comfortable than the others I’d used and my family will tell you I can hear better with this one! Thank you!” – MARY, NSW

“Simply put the JASPA3 gives me better hearing for TV and for conversations than my \$9000 dollar pair.” – AL, NSW

“Hi-I have had my Jaspa 3 for a few months - It was reasonably priced, easy to maintain and clean and adjust. Fits snugly. You don’t know that it is there. Can now hear the car blinker plus lots of other forgotten noises. Very satisfied. Great stuff!!!” – PAT, VIC

“I have no problems so far, and am enjoying better hearing in your mode 4 (boost high frequencies) than I had with my \$6,000 hearing aids.” – COLIN, NSW

“These aids are so simple yet effective. In comparison to my government supplied aids, I cannot speak more highly of the comfort and sound quality of the Jaspa 3 hearing aids. The size is also very small in comparison to my other aids, and as a result I feel much more comfortable wearing them. Best of all I can hear very well!” – HENRY, QLD

“I purchased my Jaspa hearing aids as a stand by, having over the years obtained 3 sets from a well known supplier, which seem to have a return for service every three to four months. I now use my Jaspa full time. Many thanks, Doug.” – DOUGLAS, QLD

“Much better than ones I spent \$7000 on. Much easier to use and maintain and I can adjust them myself without having to see a technician, my wife is very grateful, the TV volume has gone down from 70 to 35 and she doesn’t have to repeat things constantly. I have found them comfortable to wear and the quality of sound and available settings to achieve this very good. Excellent value, have already recommended them to my hard of hearing friends.” – DANNY, QLD

HEALTH FUND REBATES NOW AVAILABLE

Those with eligible health fund extras cover often have no out-of-pocket costs when purchasing 2 x Jaspa 3 hearing aids, as health fund covers average between \$600 and \$1,200 rebate.*

Those who have previously spent thousands of dollars on hearing aids and have worn hearing aids for many years have been stunned to find the \$429 Jaspa 3 hearing aid is often outperforming their previous set of hearing aids. Many Jaspa 3 wearers are reporting better results for speech clarity, better speech understanding in noisy settings, and improved comfort in comparison to their set of expensive devices.

The *Found Hearing* representative said,

“We have now had many Jaspa 3 customers report significant improvement in their hearing in comparison to the benefit they received from their previous set of hearing aids. In many instances these customers have spent upwards of \$8,000 on hearing aids.”

Designed as a broad-prescription hearing aid suitable to various levels of hearing loss, the Jaspa 3 is ready to use straight out-of-the-box, without a hearing test. Wearers are able to easily adjust the volume and program options via the on board push button.

The Jaspa 3 design and technology was originally developed not only as a direct-to-customer hearing aid, but to overcome common difficulties audiology clientele experience with hearing aids, such as tinniness, echo and background noise. The Jaspa 3 hearing aid works off a fully digital microchip, and incorporates wide dynamic range compression to give volume to soft sounds while not increasing the volume of louder sounds in the environment. Additional features such as automatic noise reduction and automatic speech enhancement technology means the Jaspa 3 can be used in difficult listening environments such as in a restaurant and in noisier social settings.

The style is a discreet behind-the-ear ‘open-fit’ design. No blockage of the ear canal allows users to fully utilise the benefits of their natural hearing in addition to the benefits of the hearing aid. It takes a standard 312 hearing aid battery. Always read the label. Follow the instructions for use.

The Jaspa 3 hearing aid can be ordered online at www.foundhearing.com.au or over the phone on **1300 240 114**.

The Jaspa 3 is \$429 per aid, and includes Free Delivery anywhere in Australia. No hearing test or appointments are required and it comes with a 30-day money back guarantee.



Want to use your Private Health Fund Rebates with Jaspa 3?

Step 1: Check your policy cover and conditions.

Step 2: Email a copy of your hearing test results to

info@foundhearing.com.au

*Check your own health fund cover to determine your eligibility and level of cover for hearing aids.

MAKE THE SWITCH FOR A CHANCE TO WIN AN IPAD

MEMBERS WHO SWITCH THEIR PREFERENCE FOR RECEIVING *THE ROAD AHEAD* FROM PRINT TO DIGITAL WILL GO INTO THE DRAW TO WIN AN APPLE IPAD.



THE *ROAD AHEAD* readers can switch to the digital magazine for bonus content and other features not available in the print version.

The digital *Road Ahead* is an online replica of Queensland's largest circulating and Australia's 10th most-read magazine but with exclusive additional features.

Members who switch by changing their preference on racq.com will receive emails directly to their inbox monthly with bonus content and links to the current edition of *The Road Ahead*.

As an added bonus, members who make the switch between 1 March and 31 May will automatically go into the draw to win one of 15 Apple iPads (64GB Wi-Fi 10th generation) worth more than \$700 each.

With its all-screen design and 10.9-inch Liquid Retina display, the iPad delivers a powerful way to create, stay connected and get things done.

It's the perfect way to enjoy your digital edition of *The Road Ahead*!

See more details on page 30.

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THE DRIVERS OF RISING INSURANCE COSTS

TRENT SAYERS, RACQ CHIEF EXECUTIVE INSURANCE



OVER THE PAST few years, rising cost-of-living expenses have had an undeniable impact on many Queensland families.

At RACQ, we are very aware of these pressures and are always looking for ways to support our 1.8 million members.

This includes being open and transparent about the decisions we make about the price of premiums.

There is no denying the insurance industry is facing a perfect storm of challenges – the increasing severity and frequency of extreme weather events on top of supply chain pressures have significantly increased the cost of doing business and forcing us to make tough decisions when it comes to the price of premiums.

WHY ARE PREMIUMS GOING UP?

There are a couple of key drivers. The unfortunate reality is the price of insurance premiums is going up because the climate risks we all face are increasing.

Natural disasters are becoming more frequent, destructive and expensive.

And to exacerbate the issue, in Australia, there has been limited investment in disaster mitigation over the years which would have helped to reduce the risk and bring down the cost of providing insurance.

Global reinsurance companies – which provide insurance for insurers – assess, adjust and price for these risks, leading to insurers like RACQ paying more for their reinsurance.

We know more needs to be done to address the impacts of climate risk.

VOICE FOR RESILIENCE

RACQ will continue to be a leading voice for greater investment in natural disaster mitigation and resilience initiatives.

These will make our communities safer and help ensure insurance solutions remain affordable and accessible.

At the same time, the insurance industry is experiencing record levels of annual inflation – more than 10 percent – which is impacting the cost of repair for both our home and motor claims.

RACQ's panel of builders describe the current cost of materials as 'dramatic', particularly here in Queensland where we have experienced significant price increases.

Adding to the issue, a shortage of qualified trades in both the automotive and building industries, and the increasing complexity of car repairs as vehicles become more sophisticated and technology-enabled, means we will continue to see an impact on our claims costs.

I want to assure all our members, that every pricing decision we make

is with you in mind. As a member-based organisation, we're doing everything possible to minimise premium increases for our members, while ensuring the Club continues to be financially strong to serve you.

We understand this is a challenging environment and the last thing we want is to put more pressure on our members.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you are concerned about your financial position and how an increase in your premium will impact you, please get in touch with us. There are some things we can do to help:

- Increase your excess.
- Review your sum insured to make sure it would cover the cost of your assets, or the cost to rebuild your home.
- Review whether you should shift your Comprehensive Car Insurance policy to market value from agreed value.
- Look at the optional benefits you have on your policy.

At the same time, we're continuing to expand our Member Benefits platform (racq.com/benefits) with new partner discounts on items we know are putting the biggest pressure on households.

Our goal is to help our members save money every day – whether that's at the grocery store, petrol station or paying for general household expenses.

Financial hardship support is also available to all RACQ members and we urge anyone feeling overwhelmed or concerned to please reach out. ■



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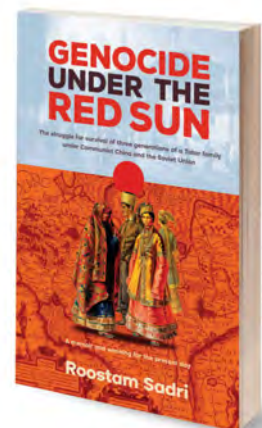
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Roostam Sadri ISBN: 978-1-922958-08-2 Sid Harta Publishers
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This book is about the struggles for survival of three generations of a Tatar family who lived through the most turbulent periods of Russian, as well as Chinese, history.

Tatars were subjected to assimilation policies by both the Tsarist and the Soviet regimes, causing them to resist such policies for many generations. The most turbulent periods of the 20th century have been briefly depicted in this book as the background of the struggle for survival by the family, who eventually succeeded not only to survive the genocidal policies of the communist regimes of Russia as well as China, but to also come to Australia to live prosperous and happy lives.



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OH MG! MOTORFEST IS BACK

STORY GED BULMER



FAMILIES, MOTORING ENTHUSIASTS, FUTURISTS AND MG LOVERS WILL BE OUT IN FORCE WHEN MOTORFEST RETURNS TO THE BRISBANE SHOWGROUNDS IN JUNE.

KING CHARLES III drove one through the streets of London during the 'swinging '60s' when still a dapper young Prince.

Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman looked the epitome of cool, staring down the barrel of the camera lens and sitting astride the bonnet of his.

Even the king of rock 'n' roll himself, Elvis Presley, took a turn at the wheel in the 1961 surfing rom-com *Blue Hawaii*.

The distinctive octagon-shaped badge of MG is the common theme linking these and many other celebrities through the decades.

The famous automotive marque celebrates its 100th anniversary this year with a rich history of trend-setting models that makes it a natural choice to be this year's RACQ MotorFest feature marque.

While MG's roots are steeped in similar traditions to other famous British car makers, its unique back story began when William Morris of The Morris Garages, in Oxford, UK, approved the production of six sporting two-seater models based on the more demure four-seat Morris Cowley.

That seminal moment, which occurred 100 years ago this year, came about

thanks to the effort of Morris's employee Cecil Kimber, whose passion for racing led him to steer his 'hotted up' Morris to line honours in the 1923 London to Land's End Trial.

It was Kimber who first affixed the MG name to the nose of a modified Morris, creating the sporting persona that became synonymous with MG and beginning the brand's impressive legacy.

EVEN THE KING OF ROCK 'N' ROLL HIMSELF, ELVIS PRESLEY, TOOK A TURN AT THE WHEEL IN THE 1961 SURFING ROM-COM *BLUE HAWAII*.

These days owned by Chinese state-owned automaker SAIC Motor Corporation, modern MGs are vastly different propositions to the spritely two-door, two-seat sports cars upon which the brand built its reputation.

But while the electric motors and lithium-ion battery packs of contemporary models like the MG ZS EV are a far cry from the rorty, twin-carburettor 1.8-litre

four-cylinder engines that powered the iconic MGB Roadster, the passion for the MG brand connects old and new.

MG gatherings today are a fusion of the very latest Chinese-made battery electric and combustion models with their historic British-manufactured forebears.

Hence why visitors to MotorFest 2023 can expect to see dozens of gleaming examples of classic MGs like the MG C Type Midget (1931-32), the MG TD Midget (1949-53) and MGA 1600 (1955-62), alongside current models including the MG3 and all-electric MG ZS EV.

Naturally, there will also be multiple examples of what for many people remains the archetypal sports car, the classic MGB Roadster.

With more than 500,000 MGBs built between 1962 and 1980 there are still many examples of these instantly recognisable roadsters out on the road; usually with the soft top folded back and their owners enjoying the charm of a small, fast and fun-to-drive machine.

Brisbane's Malcolm Spiden uses his 1973 MG Roadster on a near-daily basis, citing the car's relative affordability, its open top and ease of mechanical repairs as being among its many attractions.

As honorary secretary of the MG Car Club of Queensland, Malcolm is one of the key people charged with rounding up as many of the club's 550-plus members and getting them to fly the brand's colours at this year's MotorFest.

Asked how owners of classic British-built MGs viewed the new generation of Chinese-made vehicles, Malcolm said he simply saw it as an opportunity to attract new club members.

"I think we see it as the future for members," Malcolm said.

"We want to try to attract as many members as we can. People are starting to buy the modern MGs and their market share is increasing.

"The MG3 is very good value and talking to a couple of specialist MG repairers, they say that the build seems to be very good."

This year's MotorFest will also include a larger Future Zone with new mobility and technology displays and an expanded focus on sustainable living solutions.

There will be cars to suit all tastes, as well, from the latest in electric vehicles to specialty displays from prestige

Queensland automobile clubs including BMW Queensland, Morris Minor Car Club of Queensland, Commodore Owners Club and Veteran Car Club Aust (Qld).

The Kids Zone returns with free rides, face painting and craft activities along with food trucks, coffee and roving entertainment.

There will also be a selection of trade stalls featuring product giveaways and great offers on different goods and services, while RACQ Gold 50 members will have their own VIP area.

"This year MotorFest will again be staged at Brisbane Showgrounds which offers a large and fit-for-purpose space in a central location that's perfect for our classic cars and other exhibitors," RACQ spokesperson Tamara Van Der Walt said.

"Importantly, it gives our thousands of visitors a safe and well-organised area where they can wander at leisure while enjoying the exhibits, rides, food and displays that are an integral part of MotorFest."

MotorFest judge John Ewing said few other events encouraged classic car exhibitors out in force like MotorFest.

"This year we're hoping for an even stronger line-up of amazing vehicles at the event and, of course, many more entered into the online judging component," John said.

"Our newly revised categories include American, Asian, Australian, British, Hot Rod, Electric, European, Motorcycle/Scooter, Veteran and Vintage categories." ■

NEED TO KNOW

- WHAT:** RACQ MotorFest 2023
- WHERE:** Brisbane Showgrounds, 600 Gregory Terrace, Bowen Hills
- WHEN:** Sunday 18 June
- HOURS:** 10am-3pm
- ENTRY COST:** \$2 per person, contributed to the RACQ Foundation.

For more information and display vehicle registration visit racq.com/motorfest. Registrations open on 6 March.

Vehicles on display at MotorFest 2022.



A classic MGB Roadster.



The MG ZS electric vehicle.





CAMPING WITH KIDS SURVIVAL GUIDE

HAVING YOUNG CHILDREN DOES NOT MEAN FAMILY CAMPING TRIPS SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

STORY SAM MARSH

IT TOOK US a year and a half to build the courage to camp overnight with our three-month-old daughter Libby and 17-month-old son Harry.

My husband Zach and I camped for years before having children and regularly spoke about taking them on our adventures – but saying it and doing it were very different.

Our first camp with the cherubs was a complete impulse decision made late on a Friday night after discussing how badly we needed a weekend away.

While the kids were asleep that night, we frantically packed everything we could think of to make the weekend away run smoothly, to the point our Ford Ranger canopy was bursting at the seams.

We then realised we needed to book a campsite online.

Having been out of the game for a year and a half during COVID-19, we discovered good campsites were now hard to come by – especially over a long weekend.

We were lucky to find a site at the Borumba Deer Park at Imbil.

The drive from Brisbane to Imbil was estimated to be about two hours, so we planned to set off mid-morning when the kids were due for their first nap.

I can vividly remember my anxiety building when a truckie announced on our UHF radio that there was an accident near the Caloundra exit and the kids were yet to fall asleep.

After three and a half hours of traffic, the song *Baby Shark* played on repeat, endless amounts of snacks eaten, books read, toys thrown, dummies dropped and nappies changed, we

arrived at our destination.

While the thought of throwing in the towel came to mind, we were determined to push on and make the most of the trip.

Any parent who has camped with kids would know that one of the hardest parts is setting up camp because one parent needs to supervise while the other unpacks.

We now call it the ‘divide and conquer’.

So, while I was chasing Harry through

AFTER THREE AND A HALF HOURS OF TRAFFIC, BABY SHARK PLAYED ON REPEAT, ENDLESS AMOUNTS OF SNACKS EATEN, BOOKS READ, TOYS THROWN, DUMMIES DROPPED AND NAPPIES CHANGED, WE ARRIVED AT OUR DESTINATION.

our neighbours’ campsites with young Libby strapped to my chest, Zach was in charge of setting up a 10-person family tent, outdoor gazebo with a camp kitchen, toilet tent and campfire all by himself.

It took us most of the afternoon to unpack and we realised the day was quickly getting away from us and soon we wouldn’t have much light left to do the night routine.

We bathed both of them in a plastic

baby bath on the floor of our kitchen camp.

Being rookies, it took us about an hour to heat the bath water as we only had a small camp kettle.

After they were fed and cleaned, we sat around the campfire to try to wind them down and get ready for bed.

I honestly thought to myself, how on Earth will this work?

Then Harry pointed to the sky and said, “Look, star mummy”.

He started to sing *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* to us.

It hit me like a bus.

This was the first time Harry had spent the night outside camping under the stars and at that very moment all the stress of keeping to their routine and ensuring we packed everything went away.

While I was so consumed by making the trip perfect, the kids were having the time of their lives. This is what started it all.

Now, all we do is camp, and I can guarantee we are still learning a lot along the way.

Camping with kids is hard, but it’s worth it.

The experiences and memories made are priceless.

And let’s face it, what kid wants to sit inside a hotel room for a holiday? ■

TOP TIPS FOR CAMPING WITH KIDS

1. Plan the drive. Kids get bored and hungry in the car.
2. Check what facilities are available at the campground before arriving.
3. Make your setup quick and easy.
4. Bring entertainment – bikes, torches, balls and games.
5. Pack extra clothes as they will get filthy.
6. Be ready for wet weather (raincoats and gumboots).
7. Glow sticks are great for keeping an eye on them at night.
8. Zip your tent doors to the top if you have an escape artist.
9. Always carry a first-aid kit with children’s medication.
10. Pack a charging dock and extra batteries.



'HIDDEN' NATURAL BEAUTIES

WITH MORE THAN 1,000 PROTECTED AREAS ACROSS THE STATE, QUEENSLAND IS BURSTING WITH STUNNING NATIONAL PARKS. HERE ARE FIVE UNDER-THE-RADAR LOCATIONS WAITING FOR YOU TO DISCOVER.



1
BLACKDOWN TABLELAND NATIONAL PARK, CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

A relatively undiscovered sanctuary tucked among the sprawling plains of central Queensland, Blackdown Tableland National Park has some seriously Instagrammable scenery – sloping sandstone escarpments, echoing gorges, rockpools and walking trails. Visitors to the national park will also find First Nations rock art on the Mimosa Creek Cultural Trail, sharing stories of the Ghungalu people.



2
ST HELENA ISLAND NATIONAL PARK, BRISBANE

From 1867 until 1932, St Helena Island was a high-security prison and farm, where inmates planted crops, took on trades and constructed buildings, the ruins of which can still be seen today. Fast forward to 2023 and the island, now a national park, can be explored by day trippers from Brisbane on a River to Bay 'Best of Moreton Bay' cruise or a St Helena Island 'Prison Life' experience, led by St Helena Theatre Troupe performers.



3
MOUNT WALSH NATIONAL PARK, BUNDEBERG

Mount Walsh National Park, an 80-minute drive south west of Bundaberg and Hervey Bay, is a beacon for seasoned bushwalkers and adventurers. The park features imposing granite rock formations and creeks that drop into rockpools. For experienced hikers, the 4,622m Mount Walsh summit takes four hours to ascend and offers great views. The Grade 4 Rockpool Walk winds through hoop pine forest before following the creek and its rockpools.



4
PALUMA RANGE NATIONAL PARK, TOWNSVILLE

Paluma Range National Park, north of Townsville, is the southern entrance to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Traditional Owners of the Paluma Ranges are the Nywaigi people and the Indigenous name for the area is Munan Gumburu, meaning 'misty mountain'. Walkers and hikers can hit various trails to streams and waterfalls. Cyclists can try the Paluma Push, combining the thrill of mountain bike racing with a vibrant festival atmosphere.



5
EUNGELLA NATIONAL PARK, MACKAY

Eungella National Park is one of Australia's most ecologically diverse pockets of rainforest with both tropical and sub-tropical species flourishing. Check out Araluen Waterfall and the Wheel of Fire Cascades in the Finch Hatton Gorge section of the national park – both are popular with locals.

Source: *Tourism and Events Queensland*



DISCOVER MORE 'HIDDEN' NATIONAL PARKS IN APRIL'S DIGITAL ROAD AHEAD.
SWITCH YOUR PREFERENCE TO DIGITAL FOR THE CHANCE TO WIN AN IPAD, PAGE 30



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STORY KATE LEONARD-JONES

AFTER THE FLOODS REFLECTION AND RESILIENCE

ONE YEAR ON FROM SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND'S SEVERE FLOODING EVENT, SOME HOMEOWNERS ARE TAKING STEPS TO BE BETTER PREPARED FOR FUTURE EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS.

A LITTLE MORE than 12 months ago, RACQ Insurance specialist Chris Brock and his team were meeting with members who were devastated by unprecedented flooding.

The extreme weather event which hit south east Queensland and northern New South Wales in February–March last year broke several rainfall records and caused what the Insurance Council of Australia has deemed the country's costliest natural disaster on record.

"It was the largest event I've ever seen; the destruction was so severe and so widespread, from Gympie to northern NSW," Mr Brock said.

"I was working as a tradesman during the 2011 (Brisbane) floods, helping with the repairs, but this event felt almost four times the size.

"It was very confronting to see the entire contents of peoples' homes destroyed and piled up on the footpaths.

"I remember myself and other RACQ assessors arriving at one street in north Brisbane; out of the 20 homes in the street, about 18 were RACQ members.

"We were among the first on the ground and you could see the members' relief that we were there to help them in their darkest time."

RACQ Chief Executive Insurance Trent Sayers said the Club had finalised more than 80 percent of home claims and materially finalised all motor claims

WE RECEIVED ALMOST 16,000 CLAIMS FOR DAMAGE TO HOMES AND VEHICLES FROM THE EVENT AND HAVE SO FAR PAID OUT MORE THAN \$230 MILLION IN CLAIMS...

received from the flooding disaster.

"We received almost 16,000 claims for damage to homes and vehicles from the event and have so far paid out more than \$230 million in claims," Mr Sayers said.

"While our claims progress is tracking ahead of industry, it often takes up to 18 months to recover from events of this scale and magnitude.

"At the same time, insurers have faced delays in the repair and rebuilding process due to a shortage of qualified tradespeople and the increasing costs and availability of materials.

"Large, complicated repairs, maintenance issues and late claim lodgements have also impacted our recovery time.

"We know any delay can cause stress and be an inconvenience for our members and we're committed to finalising outstanding claims as quickly as possible.

Mr Sayers said the insurer has been in regular contact with members who have outstanding claims.

“Our claims managers, assessors, contractors, and builders continue to work tirelessly to complete the remaining repairs as soon as safely possible, with priority given to complex cases and vulnerable members,” he said.

“We will be there for our members until every claim is finalised, every repair job is finished and everyone is safely back in their homes.”

In the wake of the floods, the Queensland and Federal governments launched a first-of-its-kind household resilience program in Australia, the Resilient Homes Fund (RHF).

The program offers funding to assist eligible flood-impacted homeowners to repair or retrofit their homes to a more resilient standard, raise their homes or voluntarily sell them to the Government.

Brisbane couple Elizabeth and Kevin Kriesch were among the first participants of the RHF program, signing up for flood-resilient upgrades with the help of RACQ.

“We have lived in our north Brisbane home for 50 years and it’s never flooded

before, so to see a metre of water through our ground floor last February was really distressing,” Ms Kriesch said.

“We want this home to hold its value and be an asset for our children and grandchildren which is why we are incorporating flood-resilient changes to the lower level, including raising electrical circuits and using waterproof walling, skirting, cupboards, doors and flooring.

“Hopefully we won’t have another natural disaster, but if we do, the clean-up will be much easier and quicker because the home is much more resilient.”

Mr Sayers said the Club was delivering the scheme’s resilience retrofit work to eligible members through the insurance claims process.

“We live in Australia’s most disaster-prone state and unfortunately, we know we’ll face more severe and frequent weather events,” he said.

“That’s why we’re helping our members impacted by last year’s devastating floods upgrade their homes with more resilient building designs and materials to help minimise damage and the time it takes to repair and clean their property and return home.” ■

STATE FUNDING TO STRENGTHEN HOMES

HOMEOWNERS IN CYCLONE-prone regions of Queensland are encouraged to apply for funding to help protect their homes from extreme weather through the State Government’s Household Resilience Program.

Minister for Energy and Public Works Mick de Brenni said the program was in its third round and provided financial assistance for low-income households to strengthen their homes.

“We can’t control Mother Nature, but we can control how resilient our homes are and that is why the Palaszczuk Government is investing an additional \$20 million to help ensure Queensland homes are stronger and better able to withstand storms and cyclones,” Mr de Brenni said.

“So far, this program has helped 3,525 low-income households replace roofs and doors, reinforce windows and tie down external structures.”

The program funds 75 percent of eligible improvements at up to \$15,000 total project value, with the homeowner paying the remaining 25 percent.

To be eligible, homeowners must meet an income test and live in a home built before 1984 within 50km of the coastline, from Bundaberg north to Cape York and west to the Northern Territory border.



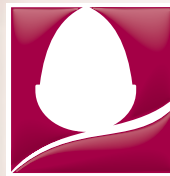
Floodwaters inundated the home of Elizabeth and Kevin Kriesch.



Workers repairing the Kriesch's home.

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HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE ‘MORTGAGE CLIFF’

WITH INTEREST RATES RISING AND MORE EXPECTED, QUEENSLANDERS WITH FIXED-RATE LOANS SHOULD TALK TO THEIR BANK IF THEY HAVE CONCERNS.

STORY EMMA GREEN

RESERVE BANK OF Australia data revealed more than a third of Australian home loans are on fixed-rate terms, with two-thirds of those expiring by the end of 2023.

RACQ Head of Lending Product and Operations Medina Cicak said while there had been a lot of talk about a ‘mortgage cliff’ in 2023, homeowners should be alert, not alarmed.

“As part of the loan application process, lenders assess a borrower’s capacity to manage a higher rate to ensure they can afford to cover their repayments in the

event of a rate rise,” Ms Cicak said.

“We acknowledge, however, that circumstances can change, and some people may be finding themselves in a situation where they feel overwhelmed or concerned about how they will manage the upcoming increases.

“Now is the time to be proactive by talking to your bank about your options and looking at how you may need to reprioritise or cut back on your expenses.”

Ms Cicak said there were many ways Queenslanders could prepare for higher rates:

- Find out the variable interest rate available when the fixed-rate period ends and speak with your bank to see if they will give you a better deal.
- Examine your finances and write up a budget to see exactly where your money is going and where you can cut back.
- If you can, make higher repayments before your fixed rate ends to help bring down your loan. You can also put money into a savings account or pay down more of your variable rate if your loan is split.
- Look at refinancing options. Some banks offer better rates if your loan-to-value ratio (LVR) is lower, so you could

be rewarded if you have more equity in your home.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, a record number of borrowers switched lenders in November 2022, with the value of owner-occupier refinancing increasing 9.1 percent to reach a new high of \$13.4 billion.

Ms Cicak said refinancing could come with fees and if the equity in your property was less than 20 percent, you may have to pay lender’s mortgage insurance.

“Rising rates and cost-of-living pressures are challenging for many Queenslanders and I want to reassure members that RACQ Bank is here to help,” Ms Cicak said.

“Our team is contacting members coming off a fixed interest rate home loan to discuss their options.

“We’ve also removed fees for our members to change from one RACQ Bank loan to another to ensure they have a home loan that best suits their needs.

“If you are experiencing financial stress, please give our team a call.

“They can look at your situation and find the best solution for you, whether that is fast-tracking financial hardship requests or providing flexibility with payment options.” ■

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The Bruce Highway has been rated our most 'unroadworthy road'.

BRUCE HIGHWAY OUR MOST 'UNROADWORTHY ROAD'

IF YOU'VE DRIVEN north on the Bruce Highway recently, you may not be surprised to hear motorists have voted it the state's most 'unroadworthy road'.

We asked drivers to name and shame the worst stretches of roads in their communities and will use the results to lobby road authorities for vital safety and infrastructure improvements.

More than 1,500 nominations were received from motorists in response to the Club's 2022 survey, highlighting problems on 556 different roads across the sunshine state.

Votes for the Bruce Highway came in thick and fast and it has returned to the top of RACQ's Unroadworthy Roads list after being overtaken by Kin Kin

Road in 2020.

The Club's Traffic and Safety Engineering Manager Gregory Miskowycz said respondents pointed out a range of issues with the Bruce Highway.

"Our members have called out the

Bruce Highway in a big way and their criticism stretches from south east Queensland to far north Queensland," Mr Miskowycz said.

"Even with significant amounts of funding being directed to the Bruce Highway over many years, rain and flooding, combined with heavy traffic, has resulted in sections with potholes and other surface damage.

"The main concerns about the highway are that the surface is rough, some sections are too narrow, riddled with potholes, lack safe overtaking opportunities and easily flood.

"There were some parts of the highway that received more nominations than others, especially around Rockhampton,

WE NEED TARGETED INVESTMENT TO ENSURE ROAD UPGRADES BEING DELIVERED ARE DEDICATED TO SAFETY, MAINTENANCE, REHABILITATION AND RESILIENCE...



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the stretch from Mackay to Bowen and Ingham to Innisfail.

“We know there’s a lot of work being done on the Bruce Highway but RACQ is calling for these upgrades to be delivered faster, especially with the most recent flooding which caused significant disruptions up north earlier this year.”

Kin Kin Road, in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, received the second highest number of nominations, followed by Old Maroochydore Road, also on the Sunshine Coast. Mount Mee Road, at D’Aguilar, came in fourth and the Cunningham Highway, in the Darling Downs, took fifth spot.

Mr Miskowycz said the most common problem highlighted by drivers was rough road surface, making up 78 percent of all responses.

“It’s safe to say that the roads that made it into the top 10 list have many things in common: rough surfaces, poor shoulders, narrow lanes, flooding issues and a lack of safe overtaking lanes,” Mr Miskowycz said.

“We had plenty of wet weather in 2022 leading to more potholes and road damage which is really frustrating drivers.

“We need targeted investment to ensure road upgrades that are being delivered are dedicated to safety, maintenance, rehabilitation and resilience, especially with traffic increasing and more frequent and extreme weather events expected in years to come.”



Potholed sections of the Bruce Highway.



RACQ has provided the survey results to the Department of Transport and Main Roads and relevant councils in a bid to identify and fast-track upgrades to roads. ■

VISIT [RACQ.COM/BADROADS](https://www.racq.com/badroads) TO READ THE FULL REPORT AND VIEW THE INTERACTIVE MAP OF THE STATE’S ‘UNROADWORTHY ROADS’.



THE TOP 10

1. Bruce Highway
2. Kin Kin Road
3. Old Maroochydore Road
4. Mount Mee Road
5. Cunningham Highway
6. Warrego Highway
7. Tamborine Mountain Road
8. New England Highway
- =9. Brisbane Valley Highway
- =9. D’Aguilar Highway

adss Asbestos Disease Support Society

Silicosis
Support Network

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Members who switch by changing their preference in their online My RACQ profile will receive emails directly

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By switching between 1 March and 31 May, members will automatically go into the draw to win one of 15 Apple iPads (64GB Wi-Fi 10th generation in either blue or yellow) valued at \$749.

With its all-screen design and 10.9-

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It is the perfect way to enjoy reading your digital edition of *The Road Ahead!*

The prize includes one Apple iPad (64GB Wi-Fi 10th generation in either blue or yellow) per winner.

Good luck!

COMPETITION ENDS AT 11:59PM WEDNESDAY 31 MAY 2023. TO ENTER, VISIT [RACQ.COM/SWITCH-TO-DIGITAL](https://racq.com/switch-to-digital).



SCORE A COPY OF *THIS OLD VAN*

THE ROAD AHEAD AND HARDIE GRANT BOOKS ARE GIVING READERS THE CHANCE TO WIN ONE OF 10 COPIES OF THIS OLD VAN.

FOR MANY, A van (or RV) is much more than just a holiday home – it's a vehicle for freedom and adventure or might even be your permanent home. In Australia, the popularity of caravanning continues to boom.

Carlene and Michael Duffy are a husband-and-wife team who side-doored their way into the design and renovation space after their 2014 appearance on renovation reality show (*The Block: Glasshouse, Channel 9*). They have compiled the tips, tricks and wisdom they have learned on their own van renovation projects and distilled it into one helpful and beautiful book, *This Old Van*.

Learn what to look for when purchasing a second-hand van, follow detailed information on planning and construction, and discover plenty of design and styling tips.

The book is valued at \$42.99.

To enter, visit racq.com/this-old-van.

COMPETITION CLOSES AT 5PM ON 31 MAY 2023.

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THE BONELK USB-C 3in1 Multiport Hub is a great solution to add 4K HDMI, USB-C PD 100W charging and USB-A 3.0 input to your laptop, smart device or desktop computer.



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COMPETITION CLOSES AT 5PM ON 31 MAY 2023.

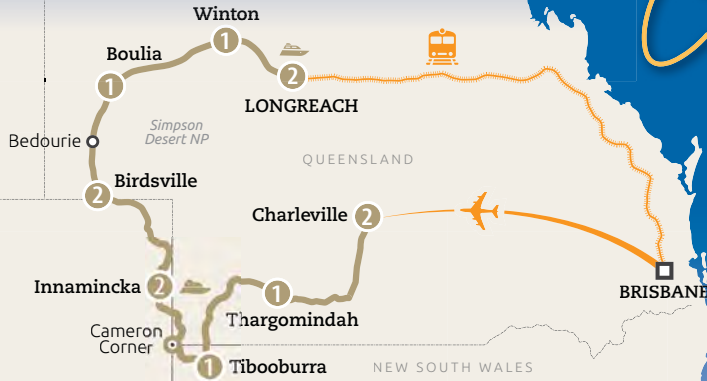
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OUR BEATING 'RED HEART'

THE NATION'S 'RED HEART' IS SOMETHING ALL AUSTRALIANS SHOULD EXPERIENCE AT LEAST ONCE.

STORY AND PHOTOS JIM MATHERS

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA IS a remarkable part of our country, providing a rich experience of culture and landscape.

The World Heritage-listed Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (Anangu land) is one of the few places on Earth listed by UNESCO for outstanding natural and cultural values.

Readily accessible by air from major Australian cities, Uluru is one of those stunning examples of nature that can take your breath away at first sight.

Rising 348m and measuring 9.4km around its base, Uluru, it is said, started forming 550 million years ago.

Made from arkose sandstone rich in mineral feldspar, the unweathered areas of the rock are typically grey, while sections weathered by rain and air are more red, like rusting iron.

You start to appreciate this incredible natural formation when you do the 10.6km, 3.5-hour walk around its base.

There are a couple of short side hikes which add a bit of time but further enrich the experience, so take in Kantju Gorge and Mutitjulu Waterhole (home of Wanampi, an ancestral watersnake) too.

If you're doing the full base walk, start

YOU WILL ENCOUNTER WILDFLOWERS, NATIVE GRASSES, MULGA TREES, BLOODWOODS AND RIVER RED GUMS. THERE'S A LOT OF ANIMAL AND BIRDLIFE TOO.

early so you finish before the hottest part of the day. There are a couple of water stations along the way but carry plenty of water anyway. A fly net will be handy too.

The walk takes you through varied landscapes, from open, grassed claypans to acacia woodlands.

You will encounter wildflowers, native grasses, mulga trees, bloodwoods and river red gums. There's a lot of animal and birdlife too.

The 'rock' itself is like an intense landscape painting in progress, transforming as you walk, tossing up surface and colour variations, craggy overhangs, areas darkened by rain-induced waterfalls, caves and eroded formations.

Due to cultural sensitivities, some sections of Uluru can't be photographed. These are signed. Some rock art can be viewed and photographed on the walk to Kantju Gorge.

Interpretive signs help flesh out stories important to the Anangu. Take time to absorb them, as well as the natural beauty. You can join free ranger-guided walks for a more in-depth experience.

If you don't want to pound the shoe leather, you can hire bikes from the Cultural Centre, near the base of Uluru.

The Cultural Centre provides a good introduction to Anangu beliefs and traditional law (Tjukurpa).

The centre's mud-brick structure represents two ancestral snakes: Kuniya, the python woman, and Liru, the venomous snake man.

Open daily from 7am, entry is free and free presentations introduce the park and Anangu culture.

Walkatjara Arts, the Mutitjulu-owned art centre, is here too. Watch artists work, learn about their stories and consider buying some of their incredible creations.

Nearby, Maraku Arts displays art and traditional woodwork and sells



View on the Uluru base walk.



Wildflowers around Uluru.



Afternoon view of Uluru and the *Field of Light*.

various items, including jewellery and pottery. Maraku represents more than 20 Indigenous communities.

Other cultural activities within the national park include dot-painting workshops, cave art tours and tailor-made experiences featuring dance ceremonies, bush medicine, bush food and wood carving.

It's about a 45-minute drive from here to Kata Tjuta (meaning 'many heads'), an Anangu men's sacred site.

Rising 546m and comprising 36 steep domes spread over several kilometres, Kata Tjuta is a beautiful place with captivating walks.

Stop at the dune viewing area en route from Uluru. Aside from providing a good overview of the dome formation, the views across the landscape are stunning.

The 7.4km Valley of the Winds circuit takes about four hours. It's pretty hard going in places and includes some steep climbs and rocky surfaces that challenge your footing.

Alternatively, you can walk the first stage to Karu lookout (one hour return) or as far as the Karingana lookout (2.5 hours return). The trek up to Karingana requires care.

The track closes at Kara Lookout at 11am if the temperature is forecast to reach 36C. At any time, it's important to have sun protection and carry plenty of water. There are two water stations on the circuit and one near the start. Good walking shoes are strongly advised. Avoid hiking in the heat of the day.

The Valley of the Winds is a culturally sensitive area and the Anangu ask that you don't capture images of most of the rock formations throughout the walk.

For a different view of this incredible landscape, the 2.6km, one hour return Walpa Gorge walk is less challenging.

Hikers at Kata Tjuta should stay on marked tracks. The only toilets are at the Kata Tjuta sunset viewing area so visit them before heading off on your trek. There's no phone service here either.

Back at Yulara, the town centre servicing the park, there are plenty of facilities.

Accommodation options range from camping to five-star.

To get to Uluru and Kata Tjuta from here, you'll need to have your own transport or join a tour. There are dedicated areas near Uluru and Kata Tjuta to view the dramatic sunrise and sunset. ■

GOOD TO KNOW

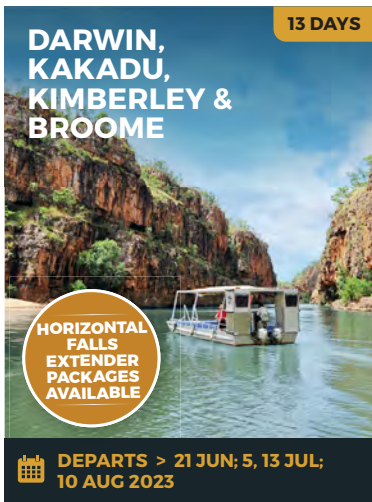
- ▶ You can fly directly from Brisbane to Uluru with Jetstar. A complimentary shuttle runs between the airport and resort.
- ▶ Car hire is available at Yulara. Having your own transport is very convenient.
- ▶ Visiting the *Field of Light* art installation is a good way to spend an evening.
- ▶ The Sounds of Silence and Tali Wiru outdoor dinner experiences must be booked in advance.
- ▶ Other experiences on offer include camel treks, Segway tours, bike tours, helicopter flights and sunset and sunrise tours.



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Mutitjulu waterhole.



DARWIN, KAKADU, KIMBERLEY & BROOME

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DEPARTS > 21 JUN; 5, 13 JUL; 10 AUG 2023

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Per person twin share

FROM **\$9,375***



ULURU & ALICE SPRINGS SPRITZER

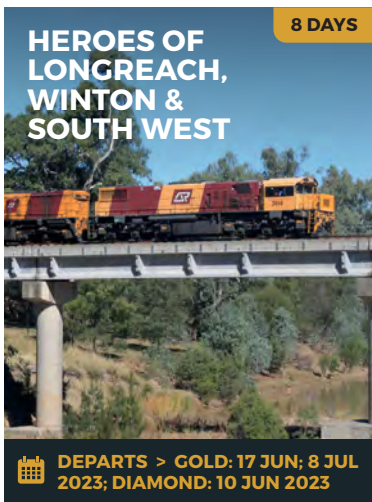
7 DAYS

DEPARTS > 7 JUN; 16 JUL 2023

★ Economy class **Carbon Neutral** flights to Ayers Rock (Uluru) and from Alice Springs ex Brisbane* ★ Escorted by Fun Over 50 Holidays host ★ 3 nights 5 star Sails in the Desert (Yulara) ★ Olgas at sunset with drinks ★ Field of Light experience ★ Uluru Sunrise and Mala Walk ★ Uluru camel trek adventure ★ Maruku Arts dot painting workshop ★ Sounds of Silence dinner ★ Kings Creek Station Aboriginal cultural experience ★ West MacDonnell Ranges ★ 3 nights Alice Springs ★ Anzac Hill ★ Outback bush BBQ dinner ★ Women's Museum of Australia; RFDS; Outback Telegraph Station ★ Ormiston Gorge; Simpsons Gap ★ 16 meals

Per person twin share

FROM **\$5,645***



HEROES OF LONGREACH, WINTON & SOUTH WEST

8 DAYS

DEPARTS > GOLD: 17 JUN; 8 JUL 2023; DIAMOND: 10 JUN 2023

★ Overnight journey in a sleeper cabin on the Spirit of the Outback from Brisbane to Longreach ★ Travel **Carbon Neutral** on our opulent 'Diamond Class' OR luxury 'Gold Class' coach ★ 3 nights in Longreach ★ Qantas Founders Museum ★ Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame ★ Thomson River Sunset Cruise plus outback dinner ★ Camden Park Station tour with champagne breakfast ★ Desert Dreaming Culture tour ★ Overnight stays in Barcaldine, Charleville & Roma ★ Big Sky Cosmos Observatory ★ Bilby encounter ★ Charleville WWII secrets tour ★ 21 meals

Per person twin share

FROM **\$3,935***
GOLD CLASS - QLD PENSION CARD



OUTBACK QUEENSLAND, GULF & SAVANNAH SAFARI

13 DAYS

DEPARTS > GOLD: 18 APR; 30 MAY; 11 JUL 2023; DIAMOND: 4 APR; 25 JUL 2023

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Per person twin share

FROM **\$7,675***
GOLD CLASS



TASMANIA GRAND TOUR

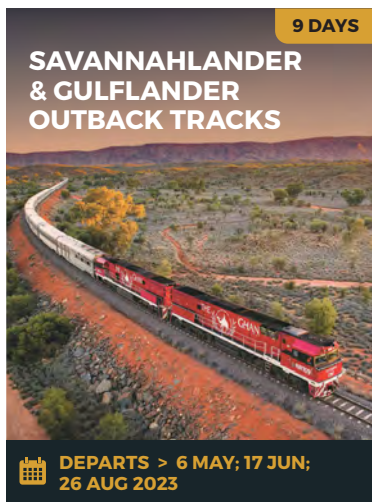
11 DAYS

DEPARTS > 17, 24 OCT 2023

★ Return economy class **Carbon Neutral** flights to Hobart ex Brisbane* ★ 4 nights Hobart ★ Port Arthur Penal Settlement ★ The Wall in the Wilderness; Nelson Waterfalls ★ Iron Blow lookout; Queenstown ★ 2 nights Strahan Village ★ Gordon River cruise in reserved premium seating ★ West Coast Wilderness Railway tour in premium Wilderness Carriage ★ Overnight stays in Cradle Mountain, Smithton, Launceston & St Helens ★ After dark Tassie Devil feeding tour ★ Gustav Weindorfer's Chalet; Dove Lake ★ Freycinet Peninsula and Wineglass Bay scenic flight ★ 28 meals

Per person twin share

FROM **\$6,015***



SAVANNAHLANDER & GULFLANDER OUTBACK TRACKS

9 DAYS

DEPARTS > 6 MAY; 17 JUN; 26 AUG 2023

★ Return economy class **Carbon Neutral** flights to Cairns from Brisbane* ★ Travel **Carbon Neutral** on our 100% offset luxury 'Gold Class' coach ★ 2 nights 5 star Cairns ★ Kuranda Scenic Rail journey from Kuranda to Cairns ★ Atherton Tablelands ★ 1 night Georgetown ★ Gulflander rail journey ★ 2 nights Karumba ★ Barramundi Discovery Centre ★ Sand Island sunset dinner cruise ★ 2 nights Cobbold Gorge ★ Cobbold Gorge cruise with Savannah guide ★ Scenic Helicopter flight ★ Guided tour of Robin Hood station ★ Savannahlander rail journey from Forsyth to Mount Surprise ★ 1 night Undara Lava Tubes and Savannah guided tour ★ 23 meals

Per person twin share

FROM **\$5,775***

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FULLY INCLUSIVE TOURS

TOP END ENCOUNTER 7 DAYS

DEPARTS > 25 MAY; 27 JUN 2023

★ Return economy class **Carbon Neutral** flights to Darwin ex Brisbane[^] ★ 4 nights Darwin in 5 star accommodation
★ Mindil Beach Sunset Markets ★ Tiwi Island day tour ★ Darwin Military Museum ★ Darwin Aviation Museum
★ Cullen Bay specialty seafood buffet dinner ★ Litchfield National Park day tour visiting the termite mounds, Florence Falls and Wangi Falls ★ Kakadu National Park ★ (Nourlangie) rock art site ★ 2 nights Kakadu ★ Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre ★ Yellow Water wetlands cruise ★ 30-minute scenic flight of Kakadu and Arnhem Land ★ Bowali Information Centre ★ 16 meals

Per person twin share

FROM \$5,295*

SOUTH WEST QUEENSLAND & LIGHTNING RIDGE ROVER 8 DAYS

DEPARTS > 28 JUN 2023

★ Travel **Carbon Neutral** on our 100% offset luxury 'Gold Class' coach ★ 1 night Roma ★ On coach tour of Roma, the sale yards and interpretive centre ★ 1 night Charleville; Guided tour of Charleville & Coronas heritage hotel ★ Endangered Bilby experience ★ Big Sky Twilight tour at the Cosmos Centre ★ 2 nights St George with guided tour ★ Riversands Wines tour, wine-tasting & three-course lunch ★ Australian Opal Centre ★ 2 nights Lightning Ridge & locally guided tour ★ Fred Bodell's hut ★ Amigo's Castle; Cactus Gardens ★ 'Chambers of the Black Hand'; thermal baths ★ 1 night Goondiwindi with town & cotton farm tour ★ Albert River Wines finale long lunch ★ 22 meals

Per person twin share

FROM \$3,675*

GHAN EXPEDITION EXPLORER 7 DAYS

DEPARTS > 25 MAY; 24 AUG 2023

★ Economy class **Carbon Neutral** flights to Darwin and from Adelaide ex Brisbane[^] ★ 2 nights 5 star Darwin & city tour ★ Litchfield National Park day tour ★ Darwin sunset seafood and BBQ banquet ★ 4 days/3 nights aboard The Ghan in Gold Service from Darwin to Adelaide including all on-board meals & beverages ★ Off train experiences in Katherine, Alice Springs, and Coober Pedy ★ Explore Nitmiluk Gorge ★ Evening off train experience at the historic Telegraph Station, Alice Springs ★ Coober Pedy ★ Mount Lofty ★ 1 night 5 star Adelaide CBD & city tour ★ 17 meals

Per person twin share

FROM \$7,024*

DARWIN, KAKADU & KATHERINE GORGE 8 DAYS

DEPARTS > 10 JUN; 6 AUG 2023

★ Return economy class **Carbon Neutral** flights to Darwin ex Brisbane[^] ★ 4 nights 4 star Darwin ★ Mindil Beach Sunset Markets ★ Jumping Crocodile cruise ★ Litchfield National Park day tour ★ Kakadu National Park; Burreungkuy rock art site; Cahills Crossing ★ Yellow Water wetlands cruise ★ 1 night Kakadu ★ 30-minute scenic flight of Kakadu and Arnhem Land, over The Archway and Arnhem Land Escarpments ★ Edith Falls ★ 2 nights 5 star Katherine ★ Tom Curtin's Katherine Outback Experience ★ Katherine Gorge sunset dinner cruise ★ Seafood specialty dinner overlooking Darwin sunset ★ 20 meals

Per person twin share

FROM \$6,015*

NORFOLK ISLAND INDULGENCE 8 DAYS

DEPARTS > 19 SEP 2023

★ Return economy class **Carbon Neutral** flights to Norfolk Island ex Brisbane ★ 7 nights Norfolk Island ★ Private meet and greet ★ Hosted from Brisbane with an experienced Fun Over 50 Holidays Tour Host ★ Half day island orientation tour ★ Kingston ★ Emily Bay; Melanesian Chapel ★ 4WD island adventure tour ★ Progressive dinner ★ Convict Settlement tour ★ Night as a Convict dinner ★ Emily Bay glass bottom boat cruise ★ Sunset fish fry dinner ★ Clifftop breakfast bushwalk ★ Hilli Goat Tour ★ Island culture tour ★ Wonderland by Night ★ Cyclorama ★ Pitcairn Settlers Village tour ★ 20 meals

Per person twin share

FROM \$4,925*

KATI THANDA-LAKE EYRE, COOBER PEDY & FLINDERS RANGES 8 DAYS

DEPARTS > 26 MAY; 22 JUN 2023

★ Return **Carbon Neutral** economy flights ex Brisbane[^] ★ 2 nights Adelaide ★ Overnight stays in Port Augusta, Coober Pedy & William Creek ★ Incredible 45-minute scenic flight from Coober Pedy over Painted Hills then land at Anna Creek Station for ground tour of Painted Hills with drinks and canapés, then flight to William Creek ★ 1.5 hour scenic flight over Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre, Halligan Bay, Silcrite Island, Belt Bay, Jackboot Bay, Lake Eyre south & Maree Man ★ 2 nights Wilpena Pound with 30-minute scenic flight ★ Adelaide city sights tour ★ 20 meals

Per person twin share

FROM \$5,525*

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COASTING ALONG

Croatia

STORY PHIL HAWKES

IT'S NOT A HUGE COUNTRY, BUT CROATIA IS BLESSED WITH ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST SPECTACULAR COASTLINES.

Dubrovnik Harbour night scene.

CROATIA IS DEFINITELY bucket list territory.

With its jagged coastline, tiny islands and harbours spread along the northern end of the Adriatic Sea, Croatia has a chequered history that deserves some understanding.

There have been tribal settlements, different ethnicities and religions, varying cultural practices and conflicts over these lands for thousands of years.

Most recently, in 1987 the country previously called Yugoslavia reverted to five separate Balkan countries, of which Croatia is the third largest – but it's only a 10th of the size of France.

For tourists, it's mainly about the coastal cities and the islands. If you're planning a short trip, the best way to see

them is undoubtedly on a cruise.

Cruising in Croatia is extremely popular but be warned – summer is hot, crowded and expensive.

It's less of a problem if you're staying on a ship, but onshore excursions will test your stamina and temper.

I advise choosing the shoulder months of May/early June or September.

Going ashore means you can still enjoy the beach, swim in the Mediterranean, take tours to national parks and historic sites, visit local villages to try their food and wines, or stroll around the seaports and the bars. And the coffee is excellent.

Here are some highlights you will take away in your memory bank with a full camera.

The first port of call is Opatija, which is quite different from other places you will visit.

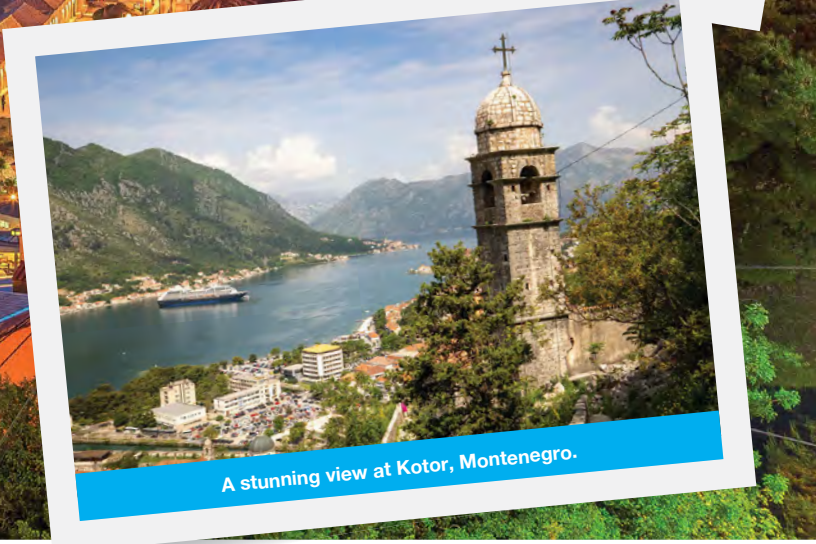
It's a 19th-century health resort with a Monaco feel. Here oiled and tanned tourists in skimpies and budgie smugglers enjoy a dip in the clear blue Adriatic and sun themselves like lazy red lobsters or sport designer shades on their terraced rooms with a view.

Next is Zadar, which is different again.

Our ship cosied right up to the wharf, so we walked past the famous 'sea organ' into a busy market town with remnants of its 3,000-year-old settlement and Roman history on display. If you wander around the town, there's lots of history to explore; some cruisers highly recommended



Welcome aboard Azamara Onward.



A stunning view at Kotor, Montenegro.

or find time to take the cable car to the mountaintop overlooking the town which is spectacular.

Our ship departed at 9pm, so there was time to enjoy a bit of onshore bar hopping.

Tip: try Mirakul for the best pizzas outside Italy.

The last stop was Sibenik – a small, pretty medieval town to walk around and your last chance to tour Krka National Park if you have enough stamina.

I enjoyed a shorter visit to a winery and tasting hosted by a retired priest. Need I say more?

The most important decision you'll need to make is the choice of ship.

My choice was Azamara Onward, one of the smaller options which can host about 600 cruisers rather than the really big ships you see anchored offshore. Small ones can generally dock wharfside.

The cabins (specify one with a balcony where you can have room service if you wish) are generously sized, with a king-size bed, desk and sofa, flat-screen TV and a bathroom featuring sustainable toiletries and a shower you

...MONTENEGRO BECKONED WITH AN EARLY-MORNING ARRIVAL IN KOTOR AFTER THE TRICKIEST OF MARITIME MANOEUVRES THROUGH THE NARROW HARBOUR ENTRANCE...

the optional day tour to Krka National Park or a bicycle tour for the fittest specimens.

Onward we go to the pretty island of Korcula and the Old Town history walk with beautiful architecture and limestone buildings, a beach buggy tour and more options for the lycra mob.

My choice was an ice-cold frothy beer overlooking the azure Adriatic.

Then Montenegro beckoned with an early-morning arrival in Kotor after the trickiest of maritime manoeuvres through the narrow harbour entrance (thanks, Captain G), which was great fun to watch.

This is a different country to Croatia and the contrast is palpable.

It's something you feel in the vibe of

the place as you step off the ship onto the wharf.

Perhaps it's the influence of the Orthodox Church and medieval history making Kotor a UNESCO World Heritage site.

There's a mouth-watering choice of tours here, making it hard to choose. It's a beautiful place and the gelato is cheaper here too!

The penultimate stop is Croatia's star attraction, Dubrovnik.

Much has been written about this city (it's also a World Heritage site) and its importance.

The walls surrounding the Old Town are the dominant feature and there's a challenging 2km walk for the bravest.

There's also a choice of onshore tours

can turn around in.

Best of all are the cabin attendants who pamper you mercilessly, even to the extent of taking your washing to the onboard laundry.

For food and beverages, it's five-star all the way with a number of restaurants, cafes and bars.

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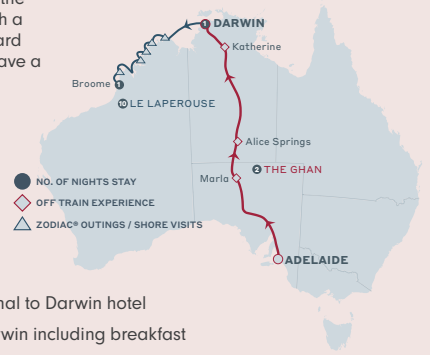
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PUTTING THE TENT IN TENTERFIELD

STORY CATH JOHNSEN

TENTERFIELD IS A COUNTRY TOWN THAT IS CERTAIN OF ITS PLACE IN HISTORY, BUT IT'S WORTH DOESN'T BELONG EXCLUSIVELY IN THE PAST.

A STROLL DOWN the main street of Tenterfield in NSW, one of the New England region's oldest towns, reveals nods to its colourful history everywhere you look.

Even the local lodgings are aptly named – the Jumbuck Motor Inn, the Henry Parkes Motel and the Peter Allen Motor Inn all point to events and people that have influenced not only the township, but indeed the whole country.

On a recent visit, our family picked up a map at the well-resourced information centre and began a self-guided heritage tour of the historic buildings punctuating the picturesque town.

The first stop was the Sir Henry Parkes Memorial School of Arts, built in 1876 and still welcoming visitors today.

Stepping inside, there is a meticulously restored library, banquet hall, museum and cinema, originally showing silent films but now screening all the latest flicks.

Looking around the hallowed rooms, it's easy to imagine Sir Henry, a former premier of New South Wales, delivering his impassioned Federation speech here in 1889.

The courtyard cafe, located within the facility, is a great place to enjoy a coffee in the sunshine and reflect on Tenterfield's claim as the birthplace of our modern nation and Sir Henry's pivotal role as the 'Father of Federation'.

Just up the road and around the corner is the Tenterfield Saddler, immortalised by Peter Allen's song of the same name.

Built from blue granite in 1860, the building was where you could find Allen's grandfather, George Woolnough, hard at work.

As the song goes, "for 52 years he sat on his verandah and made his saddles".

Today, passionate volunteers love to regale tourists with stories of Tenterfield-born Allen and his family. They even display a pair of his sparkly red dance shoes.

History buffs will also enjoy the tales of

old that are shared, with guides pointing out the tough working conditions of the time, the aged floors patched with scraps of leather and the worn ceiling stained with more than 100 years of tobacco smoke.

The saddlery was a meeting place of sorts for locals and travellers alike, including the celebrated poet Banjo Paterson, to discuss the hot topics of the time.

After many more worthy stops on the town's historic trail, including the Centenary Cottage Museum and the Tenterfield Railway Museum, we were ready to step even further back in time.

Tenterfield boasts six surrounding national parks, with Boonoo Boonoo one of the most impressive and easily accessible.

The park, as old as time itself, has long been appreciated by the local First Nations people.

It was also here that Paterson proposed to his sweetheart, against the backdrop of the Boonoo Boonoo River cascading over granite rock before it rushes into a spectacular waterfall, plunging 210m into the gorge below.

Visitors can enjoy the park's many bushwalks, waterholes for swimming, picnic locations and scenery that is ever-changing with the seasons.

But not everything about Tenterfield is steeped in history.

The region is now home to one of the world's newest and most sought-after accommodation trends – bubbletents.

At Mirumiru Bubbletents, just a five-minute drive from town, you can

Mirumiru sunset. Photo: Sera J. Wright.



fall asleep while gazing at a starry constellation and wake up to a glorious sunrise without even having to leave the tent, or your bed.

Host Cathryn Van Der Walt has installed two French-made bubbletents on her granite-studded property, complete with queen beds, luxury linen and a translucent ceiling to create a private observatory.

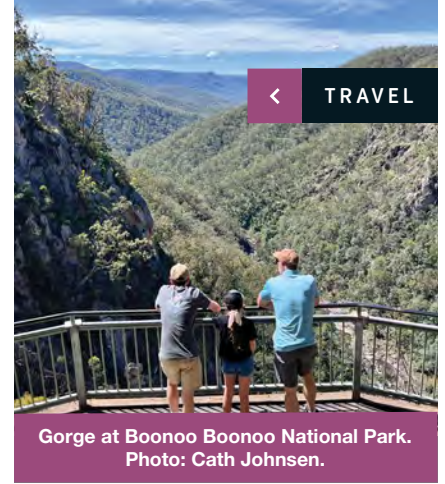
A rustic outdoor bath, camp kitchen and a suspended tent in the trees to house the kids complete the 'just turn up' glamping experience.

Although only three and a half hours from Brisbane, Tenterfield has a temperate climate, with four distinct seasons.

In winter, Cathryn said it was not uncommon to see snow at the back of the farm or frost on the tents.

In summer, the place is awash with wildflowers. Spring and autumn are perfect for exploring the town's charming boutiques, galleries, cafes, wineries and

THE SADDLERY WAS A MEETING PLACE OF SORTS FOR LOCALS AND TRAVELLERS ALIKE, INCLUDING THE CELEBRATED POET BANJO PATERSON...



Gorge at Boonoo Boonoo National Park. Photo: Cath Johnsen.

farm gates. But my fondest memories involved sitting around the campfire at Mirumiru, with a glass of local red in hand, and our bubbletent behind us, emitting a warm glowing light.

In the west, the sun was setting in spectacular fashion, lighting up the hills with golden hues, before deepening to shades of purple and finally dissolving into an inky night.

We sat for hours, mesmerised, as the black canvas above gradually lit up with glittering constellations that can't be seen in the city. Later, tucked up in bed with the electric blanket on, I lay awake spotting shooting stars.

Tenterfield's charm, both old and new, had worked its magic on me. ■

The writer travelled as a guest of Mirumiru Bubbletents.



Kids camping at Mirumiru. Photo: Krista Eppelstun.



The Tenterfield Saddler. Photo: Cath Johnsen.



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New England Highway

FOODIE FORAY

STORY JULIE IHLE



WEND YOUR WAY DOWN THE HIGHWAY, TAKING DELICIOUS DETOURS AS YOU GO.

Bistro Molines in the Hunter Valley. Photo: Julie Ihle.

A ROAD TRIP along the New England Highway is the ultimate foodie adventure.

It's the alternative, lesser-travelled route from Queensland to New South Wales.

With its four distinct seasons, it's known for its lamb and beef, stone fruit, berries, delicious baked goods and cool-climate wines.

On a leisurely foodie trip, you'll find tasty treats to last the journey, so pack a cooler bag for farmgate finds and hit the road.

Start your gourmet adventure in Stanthorpe, Queensland's cool-climate wine region and fruit bowl.

There are about 50 wineries dotted around the region and its restaurants have a genuine farm-to-table ethos.

For a bespoke dining experience, Essen, a modern Austrian restaurant, offers a hyper-seasonal menu that changes weekly.

It's a short hop over the border to

Tenterfield, a charming colonial town.

Once best known for Peter Allen's *Tenterfield Saddler*, nowadays there's a slew of new eateries, such as Stonefruit Bar, the name a nod to local produce.

Don't miss the Commercial Boutique Hotel, a country gastropub that has been renovated in art-deco style. It is the perfect place in the cooler months to tuck into wintry fare and warm up by the fire.

Head south through grazing country to Celtic Glen Innes, home to Australia's only standing stones and the place to stop for traditional tea and scones.

Wine buffs should make a scenic detour to Topper's Mountain Wines (by appointment).

They use the region's deep volcanic soil and high elevation to experiment with rare varieties, such as tinta roriz, and their local produce platters are extraordinarily good.

Otherwise, make a beeline to Armidale via Guyra where, in January, the Guyra Lamb and Potato Festival is a lot of fun.

Stately Armidale comes alive during autumn when the deciduous trees are blazing with colour.

After a cheeky craft brew at The Welder's Dog, dine at Tattersalls Hotel, which re-opened in 2018 after a stunning renovation.

Its elegant art deco dining room is winning accolades for its high-country cuisine with a French twist; think Bourguignon-style beef cheek with gorgonzola polenta – perfect cool-weather fodder.

Back on the road again, it's a short drive to cute little Uralla.

The air is cooler here and the English influence is obvious, not just because of the temperature.

There are plenty of cafes, but for a road trip snack done right, you can't go past The Pie Mechanic.

This slot-in-the-wall bakehouse churns out creatively flavoured pies like The Deer Hunter – venison, lentils and red wine.

From Uralla, steer south to dot-on-the-

map Kentucky, an unlikely foodie hub and home to Dobson's Distillery.

Run by the Dobson family, this grain-to-glass distillery makes small-batch gins, whiskeys and liqueurs.

They offer tastings (try their Sweet Pea Gin made of 27 botanicals) and their restaurant is open on weekends.

There's atmosphere in spades with the sensational Belle Epoque interior, speakeasy and the prohibition vibe.

Trundle down the highway and you'll arrive at Tamworth, Australia's 'country music capital'.

These days, there's a surprising number of good eateries.

Standouts are Camp Grounds for loaded toasties or award-winning The Workshop Kitchen for all-day dining.

A 20-minute drive south, another delight awaits.

Once you drive past the majestic gates and down the avenue of trees, you know you are in for something special.

Goonoo Goonoo Station (pronounced Gunna Gunnoo) is a colonial sheep station renovated and reimagined as classy country luxe accommodation with a sophisticated restaurant, Glasshouse.

As you continue south, the region is dotted with colonial hotels, a reminder of Australia's gold rush heyday.

One such hotel is Willow Tree Inn, an hour south of Tamworth, which has been lovingly restored and turned into a foodie destination with an acclaimed restaurant, Graze.

Their tender Colly Creek meat comes from pastures just 2km away and is aged in-house with a window into the dry-ageing room.

As you drive from Willow Tree to the Upper Hunter Valley, grazing country gives way to grapes. Before long you will arrive in Pokolbin, the heart of the Hunter Valley.

Boasting big names, such as Tyrrell's, and boutique wineries, the Hunter Valley specialises in semillon, chardonnay and shiraz and new wave wines such as vermentino and sangiovese.

Being wine country, there's good eating on offer from hatted restaurants to charcuterie bars.

High on the hill overlooking vineyards at Bistro Molines, you'll think you've been transported to France's Provence.

If you feel like splurging, treat yourself to Sebastian, the new restaurant at Spicers Tower Lodge, which pays homage to the flavours of Spain's Basque region.

There are plenty of other fantastic foodie activities, such as a hands-on cooking class, artisan cheese making and chocolate tasting.

Luckily, there is a bike trail to work it all off.

After soaking up the epicurean experiences, finish on top with a sunrise hot air balloon ride, a fitting finale to your New England foodie adventure. ■

WITH ITS FOUR DISTINCT SEASONS, IT'S KNOWN FOR ITS LAMB AND BEEF, STONE FRUIT, BERRIES, DELICIOUS BAKED GOODS AND COOL-CLIMATE WINES.



Goonoo Goonoo Station, renovated as luxe accomodation with a restaurant. Photo: Destination NSW.



The Willow Tree Inn. Photo: Julie Ihle.



Driving amid trees changing colour during autumn. Photo: Destination NSW.



Tattersalls Hotel, Armidale. Photo: Destination NSW.

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STORY EMMA GREEN

2023 IS THE year of international travel for many Queenslanders, with data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) revealing that December 2022 travel activity was back to pre-COVID levels.

RACQ Head of Commercial Analysis and Travel Quintin Dyer said travellers should be aware some countries not only require travel insurance for entry but also stipulate the type of insurance you need.

“The requirements for travel insurance differ from country to country and may have changed since the last time you travelled,” Mr Dyer said.

“Not all travel insurance policies are the same so it’s important that you check the entry conditions of your destination on the Smart Traveller website (smartraveller.gov.au).

“In some countries, for example, all foreign passport holders must have medical travel insurance with

...TRAVELLERS SHOULD BE AWARE SOME COUNTRIES NOT ONLY REQUIRE TRAVEL INSURANCE FOR ENTRY BUT ALSO STIPULATE THE TYPE OF INSURANCE YOU NEED.

international coverage that covers COVID-19 before travelling.

“It’s also important to read the travel insurance policy’s Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) which provides information on what is covered to ensure you have the correct coverage.”

Mr Dyer said even if there was no requirement for travel insurance, it should still be considered an essential.

“No matter how experienced a traveller you are or how fit you are,

unforeseen events still happen,” he said.

“Travel insurance covers you from the moment you buy it and can provide protection for things like theft, accidents, or medical issues and can help provide coverage for unexpected expenses.”

Mr Dyer said there were a number of other things to consider.

“When choosing your cover think about how long you’re travelling, the mode of transport you’re travelling by (e.g. cruise ship), what you’re planning on doing there (as some activities may not be covered), what valuables you’re taking with you and if you have any pre-existing medical conditions,” he said. ■

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PICKUP JOINT

AUSSIES UPSIZE TO AMERICAN UTES

AUSSIES CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF UTES AND WE'VE NOW DEVELOPED A TASTE FOR THE FULL-SIZE AMERICAN VERSION.

STORY GED BULMER

AUSTRALIANS HAVE LONG been in the thrall of the USA when it comes to cultural influences.

We love American movies, celebrities, music, fast food and more. But until recently, our automotive tastes tended more towards Japanese, Korean and European offerings.

Full-size pickups, as exemplified by the Ford F-150 – America's best-selling vehicle for 40-plus years – have never really been a big thing here, where more compact utes such as the Toyota HiLux hold sway.

That has started to change in recent times, leading to an unexpected boom in

the remanufacturing and reengineering of these burly US-built models to right-hand drive.

While popular dual-cab 4x4 utes such as the HiLux and Ford Ranger remain the mainstay of the Australian new vehicle market, a growing number of ute buyers are being wooed by the performance, payload, towing ability and panache of bigger full-size pickups from the US of A.

There's so much interest, in fact, that last year both Ford and Toyota announced they would be following their established RAM and Chevrolet rivals with locally reengineered right-hand drive versions of the US-market F-150 and

Tundra respectively. When these new models come online, they will bring the total number of US pickups being mass-market remanufactured here to four, making this one of the great Australian automotive engineering success stories of recent years.

While there's long been small businesses dotted around the country engaged in the import, conversion and sale of US-made performance cars, pickups and SUVs, it was the entry of the Walkinshaw Group to the segment in 2013 that laid the groundwork for the boom we see today.

Well-known as the architect of the



With 6,149 sales, RAM leads the category.



The Walkinshaw Group produces more than 8,000 RAM and Chevrolet pickups per year.

successful Holden Special Vehicles brand, Walkinshaw looked for new ways to use its production, manufacturing and engineering skills, following Holden’s announcement that it would end local manufacturing by 2017.

Among the opportunities identified was converting US-market full-size RAM pickups from left to right-hand drive.

Unlike smaller operators, Walkinshaw’s engineering and production expertise meant it could do so at scale and with factory assistance and approval unavailable to smaller operators.

The first examples of these reengineered right-hand drive Hemi V8-powered RAMs landed in showrooms in late 2015 and by 2018 Walkinshaw had seen enough green shoots to add the RAM’s US-market rival, the Chevrolet Silverado, to its line-up.

As production volumes grew, the company struck deals to hand over RAM sales, marketing and distribution to RAM Trucks Australia (RTA), and the Silverado to the newly formed General Motors-backed GMSV, allowing Walkinshaw to focus exclusively on reengineering and remanufacturing.

The partnership that exists today sees Walkinshaw take a back seat when major brand announcements are made, such as last year when RTA and GMSV both announced enhancements to their local production capabilities.

Behind the scenes it’s Walkinshaw’s highly regarded reengineering processes driving production capacity and growth.

Last September, RTA announced it was growing its manufacturing facility with a third line being added to increase capacity to 20,000 units per year.

Head of RAM International Bob

...A GROWING NUMBER OF UTE BUYERS ARE BEING WOODED BY THE PERFORMANCE, PAYLOAD, TOWING ABILITY AND PANACHE OF BIGGER FULL-SIZE PICKUPS FROM THE US OF A.

Graczyk visited Melbourne to see the newly expanded plant, which boasts two dedicated lines for RAM DS and DT models, and a separate line for heavy-duty models.

He described Australia as “a super-important market for (RAM) outside of North America” and said the brand’s growth here over the last few years had been “phenomenal”.

“When we first looked into the business opportunity seven years ago and asked how big the market could be, no one really knew what to expect, maybe 3,000, 4,000, perhaps 5,000 units,” Mr Graczyk said. “It has completely exceeded our expectations and 10,000 vehicles is now realistic – who knows, we could go up to 15,000 or 20,000 units.

“The acceptance of full-size pickup trucks by Australians is just phenomenal.”

Meanwhile, in early November, two years after GMSV launched in Australia and just months after the opening of its brand-new dedicated remanufacturing facility at Dandenong, the 5,000th locally reengineered Chevrolet Silverado rolled off its Melbourne assembly line.

GMSV Director Joanne Stogiannis said it was a remarkable achievement for a

new brand in Australia and New Zealand.

“It goes to show there is considerable desire amongst enthusiasts for the latest in a V8-powered full-size pickup truck with impressive towing ability and passenger comfort,” Ms Stogiannis said,

The buzz around full-size pickups has been so great that even usually conservative Toyota has announced a program to reengineer its US-market Tundra for RHD, with its manufacturing partner once again the Walkinshaw Automotive Group.

A statement from Toyota said the company’s “extensive Australian development program for the Tundra would enable local development and evaluation experts to reengineer Tundra in a RHD format while evaluating the vehicle against Australia’s severe local conditions and tough customer use”.

Prototype testing of the Tundras, which are powered by a 325kW/790Nm 3.5-litre V6 petrol-hybrid and share platform and some components with the LandCruiser 300 Series, started on public roads in September 2022.

In March 2022, Ford Australia announced its own factory-sanctioned remanufacturing deal for the F-150, confirming engineering specialist RMA Automotive as its conversion partner ahead of a scheduled mid-2023 right-hand drive launch.

While Ford and Toyota will have their work cut out in pegging back the lead established by market leader RTA, which last year sold 6,149 RAM pickups – and to a lesser extent GMSV, which shifted 2,614 Silverados – these two heavyweights will only serve to spur on the extraordinary growth this segment has enjoyed in recent years. ■

Silverado sales grew by 23 percent in 2022.



FROM BLACKTOP TO GOLDEN BEACHES

STORY BARRY GREEN

Aerial view of Double Island Point. Photo: Tourism and Events Queensland.

NOOSA'S NORTH SHORE CAN BE ACCESSED BY ANY 4X4 WITH HIGH AND LOW RANGE, DECENT CLEARANCE AND A DRIVER WITH A SENSE OF ADVENTURE.

THERE IS A bit to do when planning a 4x4 trip along the 80-plus kilometres of open, inviting golden beaches that comprise Noosa's North Shore.

The first step should be organising the required Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service vehicle access permit.

After that, check the tide times and plan accordingly because beach driving is best done two hours on either side of low tide to minimise the risk of your vehicle being inundated by incoming water.

Remember to allow enough time in your schedule for the queues that often form waiting for the sole vehicle ferry crossing of the Noosa River.

The Brisbane-based team at Isuzu Ute Australia know this neck of the woods intimately and had all such matters well in hand when we gathered to experience their new 2023 model year Isuzu M-UX wagon and D-MAX ute.

The adventure began with the far-from-adventurous run up the M1 north from Brisbane, with its seemingly endless line

of roadworks. Our wheels for this leg, the range-topping MU-X LS-T 4x4, conveyed us in very comfortable and effortless style.

We were four-up in the roomy seven-seater and appreciated its high-grade creature comforts and absence of noise and vibration, which allowed for easy conversation in the cabin.

Leaving the M1, we passed Australia Zoo at Beerwah, one of the area's most popular tourist destinations, although

...CHECK THE TIDE TIMES AND PLAN ACCORDINGLY BECAUSE BEACH DRIVING IS BEST DONE TWO HOURS ON EITHER SIDE OF LOW TIDE TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF YOUR VEHICLE BEING INUNDATED BY INCOMING WATER.

we did not have time to cuddle a koala or feed a croc. The quieter, scenic back roads between Landsborough and Montville provided a good test of the MU-X's ride comfort and driveability.

The torquey 3.0-litre turbo-diesel pulled effortlessly up hills while the ride and handling were agreeably compliant and competent.

Switching into the range-topping 2023 D-MAX X-Terrain 4x4 ute after Montville, we were again impressed by the gutsy 140kW/450Nm four-cylinder turbo-diesel and six-speed automatic.

It's the same combination found in the MU-X but feels arguably more impressive in this more utilitarian configuration, reinforcing the fact that modern dual cab utes such as this offer impressive levels of driveability, comfort, safety and functionality.

Isuzu had booked ahead, so the only queues we encountered at the Noosa River ferry were our own sizeable fleet.

Soon enough, we were parked on the North Shore, busily dropping tyre pressures to the recommended 25psi

WHAT'S NEW FROM ISUZU UTE

ISUZU OWNERS ARE often passionate about their vehicles and ever-ready to provide feedback and opinion, which the Japanese car maker claims it channelled into the 2023 model year (MY23) upgrades to its local D-Max and MU-X product range.

Changes to both the Isuzu SUV and ute ranges include interior and exterior styling enhancements, new wheels and lights, a tyre pressure monitoring system, a hands-free tailgate for the wagon and changes to the blind-spot monitoring and auto-off towing feature.

The versatile, family-focused seven-seat MU-X comes in three model grades – LS-M, LS-U and LS-T – with each offering the choice of 4x2 or selectable, dual-range 4x4 drivetrains and impressive 3.5-tonne braked towing capacity.

The entry-level LS-M 4x2 starts from \$48,900 (MRLP), rising through six variants to the range-topping 3.0-litre LS-T 4x4 priced at \$65,990 drive-away.

The ute range has also been expanded with the smaller 1.9-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel engine now available across a wider range of body styles in the SX grade. The rest of the range retains the proven 3.0-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel.

The new engine expands the range to 27 variants, making Isuzu one of the broadest selections of body styles, tray configurations and powertrain options in the local one-tonne ute segment.

Prices start at \$31,990 (drive-away) for the SX Single Cab chassis 4x2 with 1.9-litre turbo-diesel and manual transmission, rising to the 3.0-litre turbo-diesel LS-U Crew Cab Ute 4x2 with six-speed auto costing \$53,000 (MRLP). The 4x4 range starts at \$50,200 for the new 1.9-litre turbo-diesel SX Crew Cab, walking through nine variants to the top-of-the-range X-Terrain with 3.0-litre turbo-diesel and six-speed auto at \$64,990 drive-away.

Isuzu D-MAX LS-U ute on the beach.

Entering and exiting the beach requires care.

(172kPa), making sand driving easier.

The theory here is that as pressure drops, the tyre 'bags out' at the sides, creating a wider footprint that prevents the tyre from cutting too deeply into the sand.

Think of it as a snowshoe for the beach and you'll get the picture.

Before heading out onto the beach proper, the MU-X was switched from rear-wheel drive to high-range 4x4 with a simple twist of the console-mounted dial.

It's a lot easier than the old days when the driver had to hop out end engage the free-wheeling hubs on the front wheels before selecting 4x4.

Entering and exiting any beach is one of the times you're most at risk of getting bogged, mainly due to the volume of traffic using such entry and exit points and the tendency for the sand to be chopped up.

The trick here is to maintain a nice, constant speed and to steer as straight as possible.

Whenever you turn the steering on sand, you're effectively pushing a wave ahead of the front wheels, slowing progress.

Once on the beach, our convoy of

utes and wagons made good progress. We cruised along the harder damp sand while carefully observing the speed limit, ranging from 50–80km/h and occasionally lower.

Lunch was taken on the beach at the amazing Double Island Point before swapping back into the D-MAX and returning to Noosa.

Thick clouds were building ominously and by the time we crossed the river, a wild electrical storm hit.

It was a dramatic end to our day of off-road adventuring.

Heading back toward Brisbane that afternoon on the M1, I was reminded of how incredibly fortunate we are to be living in a part of Australia where you can leave one of the country's biggest and busiest capital cities and within a couple of hours be driving along beautiful and remote stretches of beach, with the thundering surf of the Coral Sea as your companion. ■

VISIT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND SCIENCE WEBSITE FOR MORE DRIVING ON SAND ADVICE.

6

OF THE BEST

NEW VEHICLES FOR 2023



GWM
Tank 300 Hybrid

CHINESE CAR MAKER GWM has beaten hybrid heavyweight Toyota to the draw by launching Australia's first hybrid-electric 4x4. Claiming high levels of 'toughness and sophistication', the Tank 300 is being pitched as a rugged and fuel-efficient alternative for off-road adventurers. Built on GWM's global body-on-frame off-road architecture, it features 224mm of ground clearance along with approach and departure angles of 33° and 34°. Beneath its Jeep-like exterior styling, the Tank 300 is powered by a 2.0-litre turbo four-cylinder petrol engine that's good for 180kW/380Nm, and an electric motor that serves up an additional 78kW/268Nm. Drive is via a nine-speed automatic transmission and a torque-on-demand 4WD system said to enable strong off-road traction. Towing capacity is a respectable but not class-leading 2,500kg. Available in two well-appointed trim levels, the Lux Hybrid is priced at \$55,990 drive-away and the Ultra Hybrid at \$60,990 drive-away. Like other GWM products, the new model is backed by a seven-year/unlimited-kilometre warranty, five years roadside assistance and five years capped price servicing. ■

Price: \$55,990 to \$60,990 drive-away

Engine: 2.0-litre turbo four-cylinder petrol + electric motor

Power/torque: 180kW/380Nm (ICE) + 78kW/268Nm (HEV)

Warranty: Seven years/unlimited kilometres

Fuel consumption: TBC

Safety rating: ★★★★★ (2022)



Honda
CR-V

THE ALL-NEW sixth-generation version of Honda's evergreen CR-V medium SUV is due in late 2023, featuring expanded dimensions and the addition of a hybrid powertrain. Sharing many similarities, including a near identical dash design, with the current Honda Civic sedan, the new CR-V is longer and wider and boasts a significantly broader stance, all of which add up to a roomier interior. Honda promises more cargo space than previous models, with improved dynamics, more torque and a stronger bodyshell. Safety features include the latest version of Honda Sensing driver-assist technology, a new wide-view camera and radar, next-gen front airbags, and new rear side-impact and knee airbags. Under the bonnet is a carry-over version of the current 1.5-litre turbocharged petrol, or an all-new direct-injection 2.0-litre four-cylinder, bolstered by twin electric motors. The latter puts out a muscular 152kW/334Nm and drives all four wheels via a standard CVT transmission. The new powertrain is positioned as the premium offering in the new line-up, offering sporty performance and economical fuel consumption. ■

Price: To be confirmed by manufacturer

Engine: 2.0-litre four-cylinder hybrid + twin electric motors

Power/torque: 152kW/334Nm

Warranty: Five years/unlimited kilometres

Fuel consumption: 5.8L/100 (estimate)

Safety rating: Unrated



Mazda
CX-60

ARRIVING IN JUNE, the Mazda CX-60 is part of a new family of premium SUVs designed to take the Japanese brand into more upmarket, aspirational territory. The range will eventually also include the five-seat CX-50 and CX-70, and the seven-seat CX-80 and CX-90. Positioned above the existing Mazda CX-5, the five-seat CX-60 has a starting price of \$59,800, climbing through nine variants to a lofty \$85,675. Featuring a new rear-biased all-wheel drive system, the CX-60 comes in Evolve, GT or Azami model grades with the choice of three hybridised powertrains. The line-up includes a pair of turbocharged inline six-cylinder petrol and diesel engines, both with 3.3-litre capacity and 48V M Hybrid Boost technology, plus Mazda's first-ever plug-in hybrid, the e-Skyactiv PHEV. The latter combines a 2.5-litre direct-injection petrol four-cylinder with a 100kW electric motor to deliver combined outputs of 241kW/500Nm. The PHEV has an impressive electric range of 76km and combined-cycle fuel consumption of just 2.1L/100km. ■

Price: \$72,300 to \$85,675

Engine: 2.5-litre direct-injection petrol four-cylinder + electric motor

Power/torque: 241kW/500Nm

Warranty: Five years/unlimited kilometres

Fuel consumption: 2.1L/100km

Safety rating: ★★★★★

(Euro NCAP 2022)

QUEENSLANDERS LOVE A NEW CAR ALMOST AS MUCH AS A DAY AT THE BEACH. HERE'S A SNAPSHOT OF SOME OF THE MORE INTERESTING NEW MODELS ARRIVING THIS YEAR.



Subaru
Crosstrek

THE ARTIST FORMERLY known as the Subaru XV has left the building, re-emerging as the rebranded and reimagined Subaru Crosstrek, due to arrive in April. While the name and styling are new, the Crosstrek features the same 2.0-litre four-cylinder 'Boxer' petrol and petrol hybrid engines as before, across a five-variant, three-grade model range. CVT remains the only transmission option, although non-hybrid models get an upgraded unit featuring an eight-speed manual mode with paddle shifts. The bolder exterior design is more suggestive of a crossover SUV, while the raised ride height and standard all-wheel drive system should ensure a decent level of off-tarmac ability. Inside, the updated cockpit features wireless smartphone charging, 11.6-inch infotainment touchscreen, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity, among other features. While the changes are likely to be well received, what may not be are prices rising over the XV by between \$1,800 and \$3,000, depending on model grade. ■



Toyota
bZ4X

TOYOTA PIONEERED THE development and deployment of hybrid-electric vehicles, but it's been more tentative regarding full battery-electric models. That's set to change in the fourth quarter, when the brand's fully electric bZ4X arrives two years after debuting as a concept at the Shanghai auto show. Based on the brand's E-TNGA architecture, the new mid-size SUV features a 71.4kWh battery and single or twin electric motors, the latter affording AWD and outputs of 160kW/337Nm. In Europe, where the Toyota EV is already on sale, the AWD bZ4X claims a respectable 470km range, while the FWD variant is good for 516km, according to the European testing standard. Expect to see a lot more of the bZ (beyond zero) brand, with Toyota stating there will be seven models launched globally under the moniker by 2025, at least three of which will be here by 2027. The Toyota EV utilises a new all-wheel drive system jointly developed with Subaru, which will launch its own version, the Solterra, later in 2023. Similar in size to a RAV4, the electric Toyota will be priced above its top-of-the-range hybrid all-wheel drive stablemate. ■



Volkswagen
Amarok

IF THE FORD Ranger was the 'it' car of 2022, then its German-speaking sibling, the Volkswagen Amarok, may well take the chocolates in 2023. The second-generation Amarok is based on the same platform as the Australian-designed and engineered Ford, but VW assures us its ute will look, feel and drive like a bespoke model thanks to unique interior and exterior styling, and specific tuning of its engines, transmission and suspension. A team of more than 20 VW designers and engineers have been in Australia for more than three years to ensure the new ute is sufficiently differentiated from its stablemate. Available with a choice of 2.0-litre single and bi-turbo diesel engines, the Amarok will also offer the same gutsy 184kW/600Nm 3.0-litre turbo-diesel V6 as the Ranger, with 10-speed auto and 3,500kg towing capacity. However, the VW diverges from Ford's local powertrain line-up by offering a 2.3-litre EcoBoost turbo-petrol four-cylinder. The Amarok will initially be available in higher-grade Style, PanAmericana and Adventura trims, followed mid-year by the entry-level Amarok and Life variants. ■

Price: \$34,990 to \$45,090
Engine: 2.0-litre direct injection Boxer four-cylinder
Power/torque: 115kW/196Nm
Warranty: Five years/unlimited kilometres
Fuel consumption: 7.2L/100km (non-hybrid)
Safety rating: Unrated

Price: \$60,000 to \$80,000 (estimate)
Motor: Dual permanent magnet, 71.4kWh battery
Power/torque: 160kW/337Nm (estimate)
Warranty: Five years/unlimited kilometres
Energy consumption: 191Wh/km (estimate)
Safety rating: Unrated

Price: \$70,990
Engine: 3.0-litre turbo-diesel V6
Power/torque: 184kW/600Nm
Warranty: Five years/unlimited kilometres
Fuel consumption: 8.4L/100km (222g/km/ km estimate)
Safety rating: Unrated

Nissan Pathfinder Ti 4WD MY23

AFTER A HIATUS of more than 18 months, Nissan finally has a new Pathfinder to offer Aussie consumers with the launch in late 2022 of the all-new, fifth-generation model.

Pricing starts at \$54,190 for the ST 2WD, rising through five variants to \$80,227 for the luxuriously appointed Ti-L 4WD.

Large SUV rivals include the Mazda CX-9 and the Toyota Kluger which offer starting prices several thousand dollars lower.

For buyers wanting the space and towing ability but not needing a 4x4 drivetrain, the entry-level Pathfinder ST 2WD gets the same engine, transmission and comprehensive safety kit as other models – including nine airbags, and full Nissan Intelligent Mobility safety suite.

However, you need to step up a level to the 4x4-only Pathfinder ST-L to get Nissan's ProPilot semi-autonomous driving assistance system and digital around-view monitor with moving object detection.

The Ti tested here sits one grade below the top-spec Ti-L and is the only variant to offer both 2WD and 4WD variants, the latter for a \$4,129 premium.

On 4WD models the Pathfinder's new intelligent AWD system features seven selectable drive modes, spanning Standard, Sport, Eco, Snow, Sand, Mud/Rut and Tow.

It's not a serious off-roader in the mould of the Patrol or LandCruiser, but the extra traction systems and reasonable ground clearance should ensure a decent level off off-tarmac ability.

The 3.5-litre direct injection petrol V6 engine develops a gutsy 202kW/340Nm and in combination with a new shift-by-wire nine-speed auto delivers smooth and assertive acceleration.

Braked tow rating has been increased with this update to a solid 2.7 tonnes and trailer stability and tow modes are standard inclusions.

If there is a disappointment it's that there's no hybrid, plug-in hybrid or even fuel-efficient diesel in the line-up.

The last model Pathfinder offered a hybrid option but Nissan said it was never a very popular choice.

Combined cycle fuel consumption for 4WD versions is 10.5L/100km, although potential purchasers should realistically factor another two or three litres per 100km into their calculations.

At just over 5m long the Pathfinder is a big beast but outside of tight car parks it doesn't feel tank-like or unwieldy to drive.

Changes to the front and rear suspension and the steering, and fitment of 20mm wider tyres has aided ride and handling, with the Pathfinder feeling confident and sure-footed.

It's also quieter than its predecessor, thanks to thicker carpet backing, better door insulation and fewer through-holes in the floor.

Nissan's new Pathfinder is a stylish and impressive offering in the large SUV space. It delivers plenty of space and versatility for growing families in an attractive package that is also notable for its strong performance, safety and technology, along with enhanced towing ability. ■

▶ KEY STATS



PRICE: \$70,030 (MRLP)

ENGINE: 3.5-litre direct-injection V6 petrol, nine-speed automatic (202kW/340Nm)

ANCAP SAFETY RATING:

★★★★★ (2022)

BODY STYLE: Large SUV

FUEL CONSUMPTION: (Combined) 10.5L/100km (245g/km CO₂)

FOR: Eight-seat capacity; handsome design; premium look and feel in up-spec models; strong safety package; good technology and connectivity; roomy and versatile interior.

AGAINST: More expensive than some rivals; no hybrid, diesel or PHEV option; no-full size spare (space-saver); manual front passenger seat adjustment; firm ride on 20-inch wheel variants.

REVIEW GED BULMER





REVIEW JOHN EWING

➔ GWM Haval Jolion 1.5 Hybrid Ultra

CHINESE VEHICLE MAKER GWM and its SUV offshoot Haval are rapidly climbing the sales rankings, courtesy of the growing consumer appetite for more affordable vehicles.

The new Jolion Hybrid is one of 50 'New Energy Vehicles' GWM plans to launch by 2025 and expands the Jolion small SUV range to five.

The Ultra tested here is the only variant to feature a hybrid powertrain.

It's also the most expensive variant, with a drive-away price of \$40,990. Despite being \$7,000 more expensive than the equivalent petrol model, it compares favourably on price with other hybrid rivals in its class.

The Jolion is well equipped for the money, sharing interior, safety, driver assistance and connectivity features with the equivalent petrol model. Minor exterior cosmetic changes include new 18-inch alloy wheels which provide some subtle differentiation.

Infotainment features include a 12.3-inch colour touchscreen, Bluetooth, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, six speakers, AM/FM radio (there's no DAB+), USB ports front and rear, wireless phone charging and a head-up display for the driver.

Annoyingly, the central screen menu houses the controls for climate settings, heated front seats, drive modes, regenerative braking, and safety systems.

It's a fussy interface and the driver distraction alert – its sensor attached to the right side 'A' pillar like an afterthought – quickly chides the driver if searching while on the move.

Steering adjustment is reach-only and there's no height adjustment for the front seat belt upper anchors, but the 360-degree multi-view camera

system is a welcome addition. Elsewhere, there's a healthy list of active safety and driver assistance features plus seven airbags as standard, helping petrol Jolions to a five-star ANCAP crash rating. The hybrid version isn't yet rated.

The interior is respectably spacious and feels more generous, especially for rear seat passengers, than its small SUV classification might suggest.

Cargo space is less generous than the petrol models, however, at 390L and 1,069L with the rear seat folded.

Hybrid buyers also get short-changed for a spare wheel, having to make do with a mobility kit where petrol versions get a space-saver spare.

The powertrain combines a 1.5L petrol engine with two electric motors, producing combined outputs of 139kW and 375Nm.

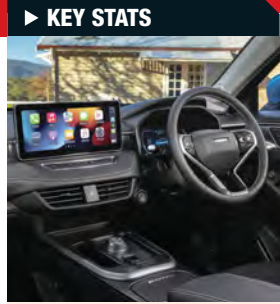
Drive is delivered to the front wheels via GWM's Dedicated Hybrid Transmission, which features two ratios.

The power and torque figures place the hybrid well ahead of the standard turbo-petrol models, even bettering the high output Jolion S turbo-petrol.

Running on regular unleaded, the hybrid returns official combined cycle fuel consumption of 5.0L/100km, which is just over 3.0L/100km better than the standard petrol variants.

The Jolion hybrid's ride is reasonably comfortable with handling that's secure and competent, although it falls short of the dynamic polish of class rivals like the Mazda CX-30 and Hyundai Kona.

Some of the Jolion's interior trims also lack the quality look and feel of its mainly Japanese and Korean rivals, although overall styling and levels of finish will likely satisfy most buyers, particularly given the price. ■



▶ KEY STATS

PRICE: \$40,990 drive-away

ENGINE: 1.5-litre petrol/ two electric motors

ANCAP SAFETY RATING: Not rated

Fuel consumption: (combined cycle, litres/100km): 5.0 (115g/km CO₂)

FOR: Decent value; good performance and fuel economy; spacious for a small SUV; long warranty; safety equipment.

AGAINST: Higher price; no steering reach adjustment; key controls buried in screen menus; less-polished road manners than competitors.

Jeep Grand Cherokee L Summit Reserve

WITH ITS STRETCHED wheelbase, third row of seats and premium fitout, Jeep's new Grand Cherokee L is making a dedicated play for the family 4x4 wagon market.

Available in three-variants, all with the same 3.6-litre petrol V6 and eight-speed automatic powertrain, the range starts with the \$82,750 Night Eagle, rising to the \$88,750 Limited, and on to the top-of-the-range Summit Reserve tested here, costing \$115,950.

The imposing exterior styling is marked by Jeep's trademark seven-slot grille, automatic LED headlights and taillights and big 21-inch wheels.

Inside, the generously proportioned interior features quilted Palermo leather, open-pore waxed walnut wood and a 19-speaker, 760W McIntosh sound system.

A power-operated tailgate provides access to rear switchgear which folds the second and third rows.

Boot space is a generous 487L with the third row in use, expanding to 1,328L with the third row folded, or a yawning 2,395L when using the maximum cargo capacity.

The 'Pentastar' petrol V6 is carried over from the previous-generation Grand Cherokee and is the weakest link in this otherwise impressive new model. It lacks the effortless oomph of a V8 (available in the US) or modern turbocharged V6 and gets a bit rowdy under a medium to heavy throttle.

Power goes to all four wheels via the quality eight-speed automatic with low range and a traction management system offering various driving modes to suit different road and track conditions.

The vehicle specs reveal approach, departure, ground clearance and wading depth numbers that suggest a high level of off-road capability.

The Summit Reserve is the only variant to get a two-speed transfer case and its height-adjustable air suspension increases ground clearance to an impressive maximum of 276mm. The long 3,092mm wheelbase contributes to a less-than-stellar ramp over angle, however, and large 11.7m turning circle.

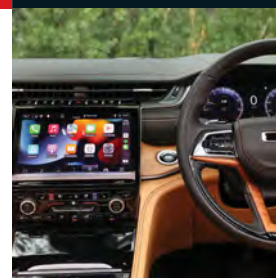
The Jeep's 2,268kg braked towing capacity is also shy of the 3,500kg rating of the benchmark LandCruiser 300 Series and the previous-generation five-seat Grand Cherokee. A generous 104-litre fuel tank capacity endows it with an excellent 980km touring range when achieving its claimed combined cycle average of 10.6L/100km. We returned a thirstier 13.7L/100km during our test.

Under the skin there's an all-new vehicle architecture boasting unibody construction, independent front and rear suspension, Quadra-Lift air suspension and electronic adaptive dampers at each corner. The setup does an impressive job of ironing out the bumps, even despite the 21-inch wheels.

Launched mid last year, the seven-seat Grand Cherokee has recently been joined by five-seat variants, which later this year will add a hybrid electric to the line-up.

With its generous interior accommodation and quality fitout, the Grand Cherokee L Summit Reserve should prove a hit with well-heeled families looking for a Range Rover-like combo of luxury, space and off-road ability. ■

▶ KEY STATS



PRICE: \$115,950 (MRLP)

ENGINE: 3.6-litre naturally aspirated petrol V6 (210kW @ 6400rpm and 344Nm @ 4000rpm)

ANCAP SAFETY RATING: Not yet rated

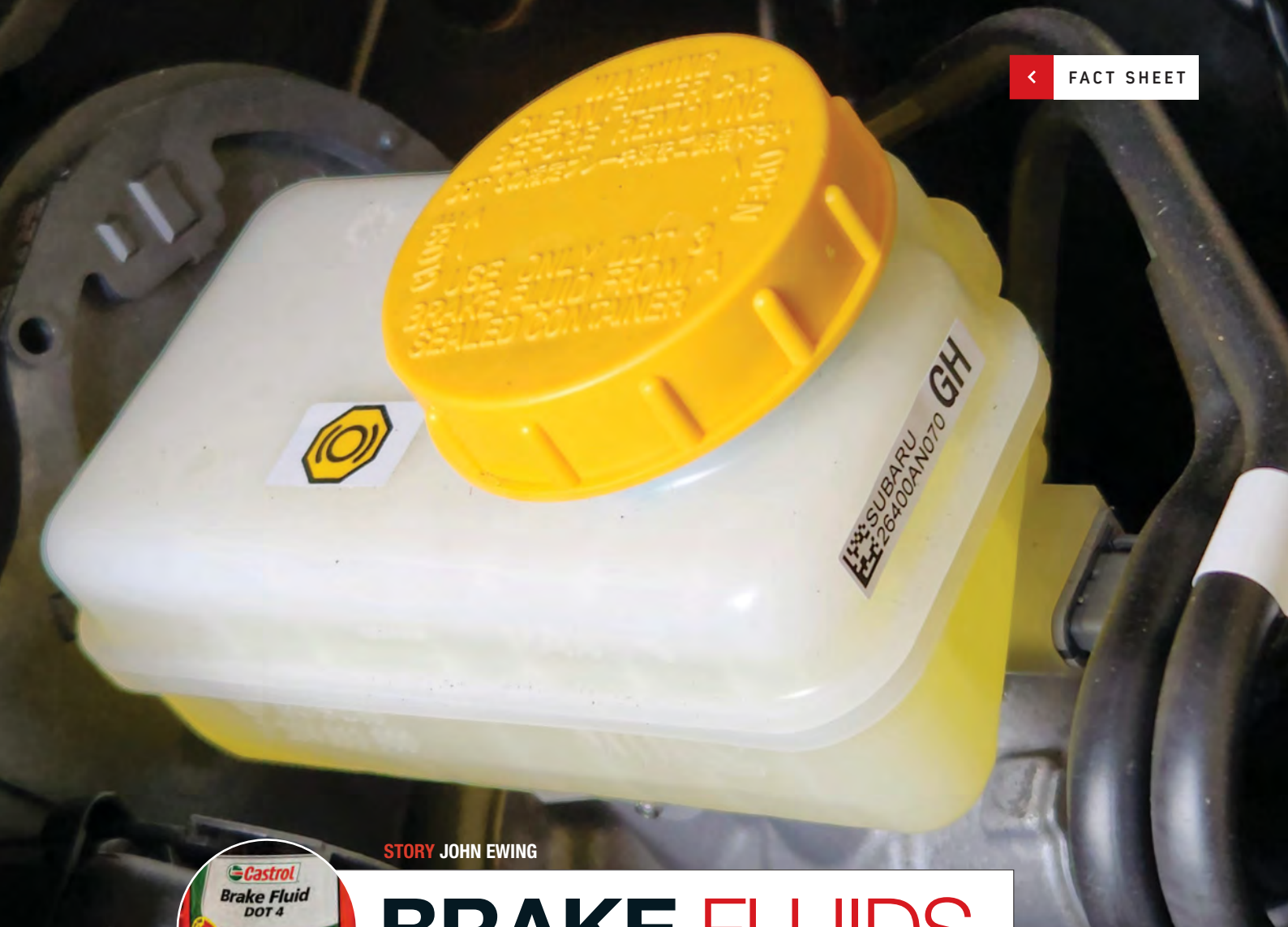
FUEL CONSUMPTION: (combined cycle, litres/100km): 10.6L/100km (243g CO₂/km)

FOR: Attractive design, generous equipment list, plush ride, roomy interior, off-road ability.

AGAINST: Price, engine performance, fuel consumption, towing capacity.

REVIEW JOHN EWING





STORY JOHN EWING



BRAKE FLUIDS

MOST DRIVERS RARELY give much thought to their car's brake fluid, but it's vitally important for the safety of the vehicle and its occupants.

Brake fluid does the work of transferring the force applied by the driver's foot on the brake pedal to the brake components at the wheels, which then slow and stop the vehicle.

In modern vehicles, with ABS and ESC incorporated into the braking system, it also allows these safety systems to function.

Vehicle makers specify a service interval for changing the brake fluid, generally about two years irrespective of distance travelled, although it could be as short as 12 months.

Brake fluid is hygroscopic, meaning it absorbs moisture from the atmosphere over time, lowering the fluid's boiling point. The heat generated by the brakes

can cause water-logged fluid to boil and the brakes to fail suddenly.

Moisture can also cause expensive brake components to corrode. Servicing as specified, an operation best left to your dealer or trusted mechanic, is vital.

Due to that moisture affinity, don't use fluid stored for lengthy periods after opening. Use fluid from a factory-sealed, unopened container.

It's normal for the vehicle's fluid reservoir to require an occasional small top-up. Frequent refilling or a need for large quantities of fluid requires professional checking as the system likely has a leak. Any spills must immediately be flushed off with plenty of clean water. Brake fluid damages paintwork, so never mop up, rub or wipe away any spilt fluid.

Though it may look like oil, brake fluid is vastly different and incompatible with oil, even in minute quantities.

Even a slightly oily finger dipped into

the reservoir will cause contamination, potentially leading to brake failure.

A few Rolls Royce and Citroen models use a special mineral-oil-based brake fluid; conventional fluid will damage these systems.

It's vital that only a brake fluid of the DOT (Department of Transportation) specification (e.g. DOT 3, DOT 4, DOT 5.1) stipulated by the vehicle manufacturer is used as this defines the fluid's properties, including boiling point.

The fluid specification will be found in the vehicle owner's handbook and generally on the fluid reservoir cap.

Different DOT-rated fluids will have different boiling points and won't necessarily be compatible with each other, or suited to the brake system and possibly materials such as rubber seals and hoses.

Always seek professional advice if unsure. ■

RACQ receives many enquiries about the rules for 'keeping left unless overtaking' in Queensland, with failure to adhere to the rules being a potential source of frustration. For more information about the Queensland Road Rules please contact the Department of Transport and Main Roads at tmr.qld.gov.au or phone 13 2380.

[1]



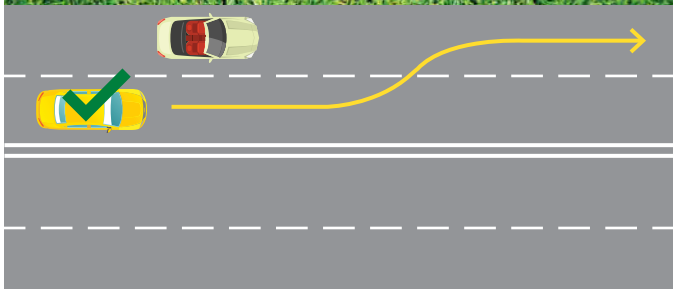
On multi-lane roads with a 'Keep Left Unless Overtaking' sign, you must not drive in the right-hand lane unless you are overtaking.

[2]



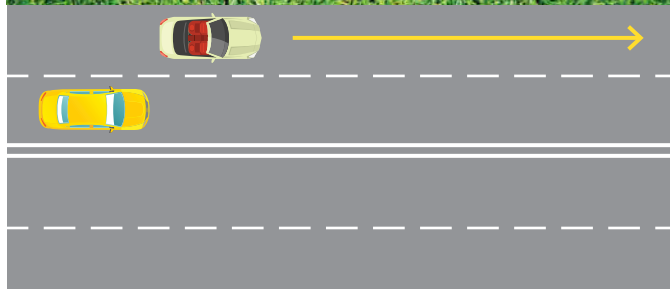
This rule also applies to all multi-lane roads with a speed limit of more than 80km/h (90km/h or higher) – even if they don't have a 'Keep Left Unless Overtaking' sign.

[3]



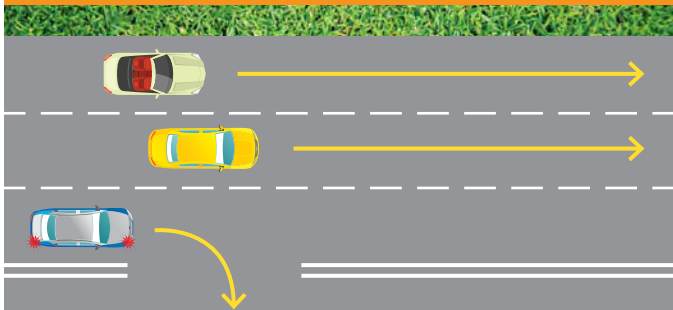
In these situations you can only drive in the right-hand lane if you are overtaking, turning right, making a U-turn, avoiding an obstruction on the road, driving in congested traffic or using a special purpose lane you're allowed to use.

[4]



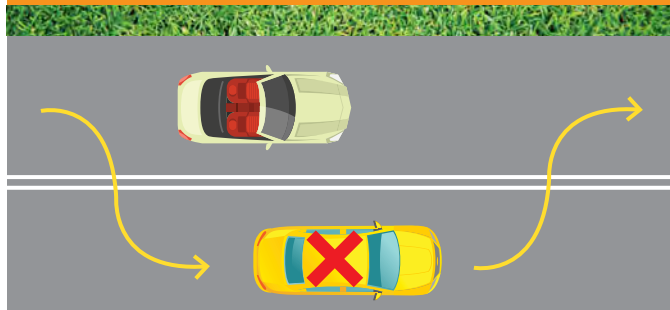
On multi-lane roads, drivers are allowed to overtake to the left in marked lanes.

[5]



You can also overtake other vehicles to the left if they are turning right or making a U-turn from the centre of the road and indicating right, or the vehicle is stationary.

[6]



Remember you can only overtake another vehicle if signs and road markings permit it, you have a clear view of all approaching traffic and you can overtake safely.

A different kind of insurer

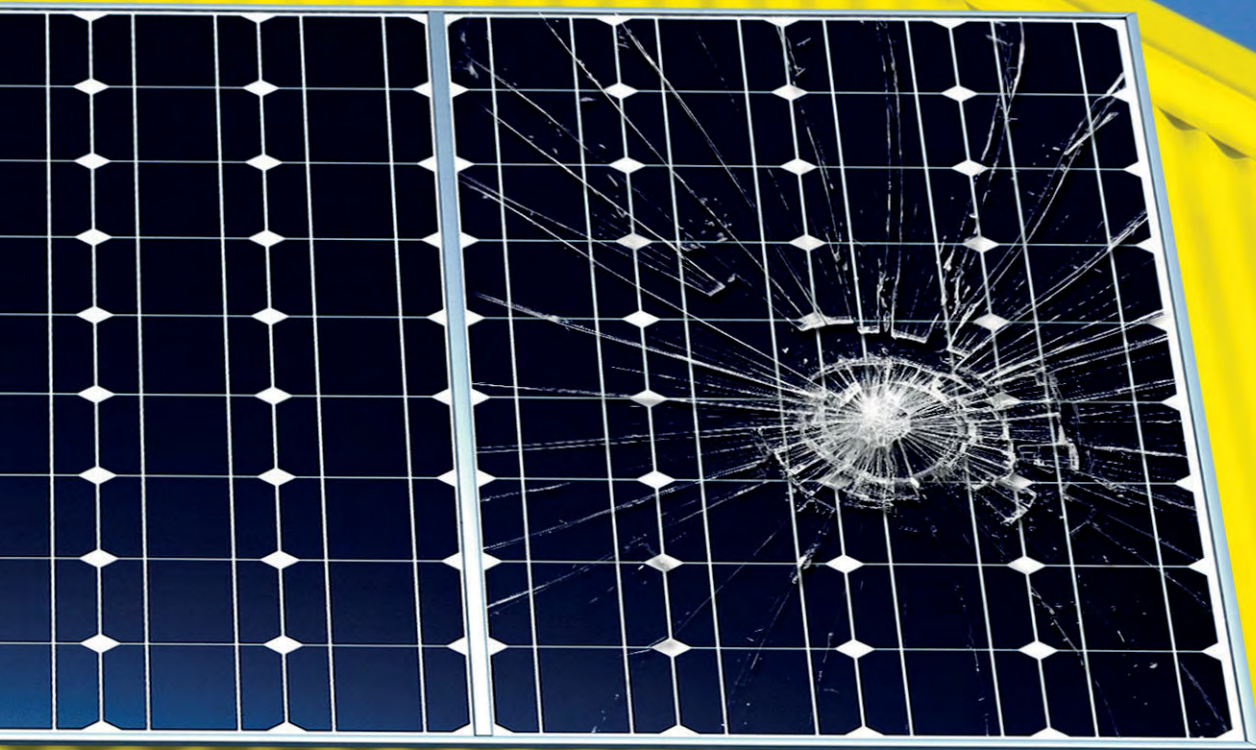
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