

THE ROAD AHEAD

SPRING 2023

Bear there,
DONE THAT



RACQ MEMBERS TO RETRACE EPIC LONDON-MELBOURNE
ROAD TRIP IN REPLICA VINTAGE CAR

RACQ

Laubman & Pank

WE CARE FOR EYES



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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.



OUR COVER: A replica Bean 14 car which will be driven from London to Melbourne. Story page 48
Photo: Jake Ryan



Leona and son, Jed.

VIEWPOINT

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

QUEENSLAND'S ROAD TOLL continues to be alarmingly high.

A week rarely goes by when we don't learn of another tragedy on our roads, reminding us of the potential dangers we face every time we get into our cars.

Road safety has always been a core priority for RACQ; we continually look for ways to raise awareness among motorists and advocate for safer cars and roads.

As part of Queensland Road Safety Week in August, RACQ launched a thought-provoking campaign targeting men – our most at-risk drivers.

The fact is more men are killed in road crashes than women.

Our husbands, fathers, brothers and sons are disproportionately over-

represented in the road toll.

The Blooms for Blokes campaign was the culmination of some 'out-of-the-box' thinking.

Far too often, the first time men receive flowers is at their funerals. RACQ decided to flip that script.

The campaign started in Brisbane's Queen Street Mall with a vintage RACQ patrol car filled with 995 flowers; one for every male killed on Queensland roads over the past five years.

Members of the public were invited to collect a flower, sign a Blooms for Blokes card and gift it to a man in their life to remind them why it's important they stay safe behind the wheel.

As the mother of a 19-year-old boy, or should I say man, I am well aware of the

terrible statistics plaguing this cohort of drivers. This campaign certainly hit home for me as I simply could not bear the thought of losing him.

I have previously mentioned that I experienced a similar loss as a teenager, when two of my friends were killed in a single-vehicle crash. They were a similar age to my son. The devastation and loss their families endured is something I will never forget and wish upon no one.

While the messaging around Blooms for Blokes is confronting, it provides an opportunity for all of us, particularly men, to think about road safety and consider how their loved ones would live without them.

The greater the number of responsible motorists on our roads, the less our families, friends and communities have to suffer.

You can read more about the campaign on page 22.

Stay safe.

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 \$42. Visit racq.com/popcorn to enter the competition which closes at 5pm on 30 November.

WIN!

THE 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**.

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SPECIAL AGENT CELEBRATES 45 YEARS

CONGRATULATIONS TO SUE Krüger who celebrated 45 years working at the RACQ Caloundra Agency in August.

Sue (pictured) has a long family connection with RACQ, starting in the mid-1930s when her grandfather Horace Carter opened Caloundra Motors and handled Roadside Assistance calls for the Club.

Sue's father, Robert Smith Snr, worked for his father after serving in World War II and took over management of the business when Horace retired.

Her brother, Robert Smith Jnr, completed his mechanical apprenticeship at Caloundra Motors when he finished school in 1967.

Sue also started working in the business on school holidays at the age of 14 and joined full-time in 1978, aged 18.

In 1980 Sue's brother took over the business and moved to Kings Beach Service Centre.

In 1986, RACQ Regional Manager Leigh Tunney urged the Smiths to open a store in Caloundra's main street, Bulcock Street, which they did with Sue being a co-manager. Sue said she had seen a lot of change in the years since, but one thing had stayed the same.

"Our core values around looking after our members are still at the heart of everything we do and that's something we can all be extremely proud of," she said.

Congratulations Sue on such a long and successful career – your hard work, passion and dedication is appreciated.

NICKY EDWARDS

SAFETY MESSAGE SPREADS

RACQ'S STREETS AHEAD program continues to expand its reach into Queensland schools.

In July, two members of our Education Team travelled to Mission Beach and Tully for the first time to teach over 900 primary students.

Streets Ahead teaches pedestrian, bike, scooter, passenger, bus and motorbike safety to primary school students across the State.

Over the past five years RACQ's education programs have reached areas as far north as the Torres Strait Islands, as far south as Texas and as far west as Camooweal.

RACQ Education Specialist Janelle Baker said the Mission Beach/Tully tour was a chance to ensure valuable life skills remained a priority in regional communities.

"These tours ensure we teach important safety lessons in all communities and that no student gets left behind," Janelle said.

TORI MAYNE

BADGE OF HONOUR

SUNSHINE COAST HINTERLAND

resident Clive Plater marked his 50 years of membership with RACQ by attaching his commemorative badge to a special vehicle.

Clive, who lives at Eudlo, wrote to let us know that he had attached his 50-year RACQ badge to the same vehicle he owned when he joined the Club.

"I purchased my first car, a 1958 Willys Jeep (pictured), in 1970 shortly after getting my driver licence," Clive wrote.

"It was my daily driver and obviously used for off-road adventures on weekends.

"It's gone through a few transformations over the years but since the late 1980s when it received its current paint scheme it has mainly been used for parade and display duties."



Ray's note

IN THIS EDITION we admire the adventurous spirit of two RACQ members.

Lang and Bev Kidby have lived lives full of exciting adventures most of us would never dream of attempting.

And the Brisbane couple is not letting up. They are planning the recreation of a road trip from London to Melbourne, following in the wheel

tracks of Australian motoring pioneer and adventurer Francis Birtles.

Lang explains in our story on page 48 that he was inspired by Birtles from a young age to bring to life the past glories of Australian adventurers by emulating their achievements.

The couple will be driving a replica of the Bean 14 originally driven by Birtles on the London to Melbourne trip.

Birtles' car had the nickname Sundowner, reportedly because during his exploits he had a habit of arriving at

outback homesteads just in time for dinner!

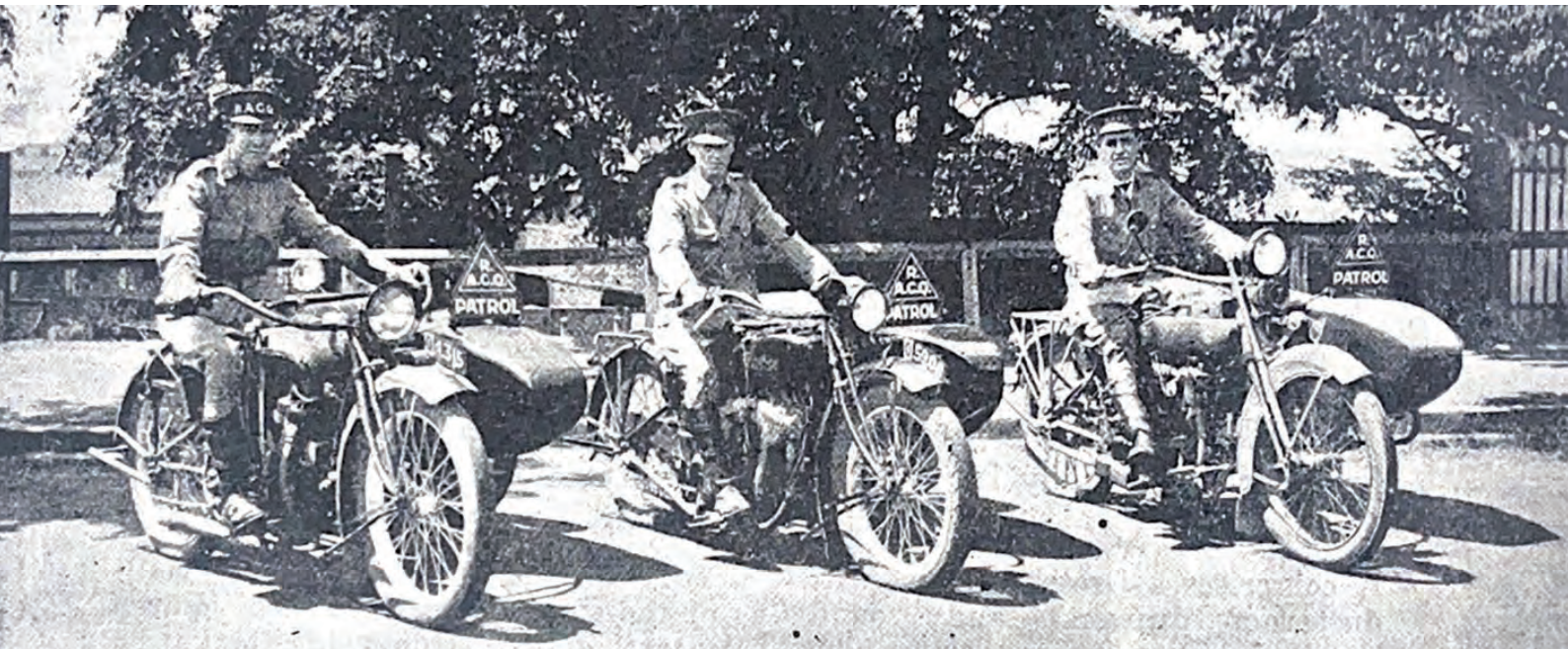
Birtles' name may be unfamiliar to most Australians now, but his achievements nearly 100 years ago are legendary and deserving of the recognition he is receiving courtesy of Lang and Bev.

RAY ANDERSEN,
MANAGING EDITOR



YOUR SAY

GIVING MEMBERS A VOICE



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

RACQ SIGNAGE QUERY

IT WAS INTERESTING to read and reminisce about the early days of RACQ as featured in your Rear View column in the winter edition. As a young boy living on Gympie Road, Kedron, in the late '40s/early '50s, when it was merely two narrow strips of bitumen separated by a gully, I often used to see the RACQ Patrol Corps with the motorcycles and sidecars in our area. However, there was one intriguing

service that I did not understand. At a few points around Brisbane there were signs on a square, yellow wooden post about 10-feet (3m) high with black writing which stated: "Meet RACQ pilot here". I think one of my uncles told me that if you were a country member and unfamiliar with city streets and apprehensive about driving across the city, an RACQ pilot would meet you and guide you.

K J MURR, SPRINGWOOD

OUR SAY: RACQ pilots, or drivers, met interstate and country drivers at certain points around Brisbane and drove their cars into the city. There was also the option for the visiting drivers to follow the RACQ drivers. The service was particularly popular during the Ekka when country visitors dreaded driving in "the big smoke".

**The Road Well Travelled – RACQ's First 100 Years*

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD

DESPITE ALL YOUR safe driving articles, you have overlooked one very serious car driver habit. I call them 'swivel heads' – one who talks a lot and turns to look at passengers beside them or in the rear. This constant swivelling means not seeing the road for up to four to five seconds. I feel this could be the cause of many 'unexplained' accidents, or worse.

KATHERINA HUNTER, MOSSMAN



EV CHARGING ISSUES IN THE UK

I HAVE READ your recent article on EVs and I wanted to tell you of our experience in the UK with charging our rental EV while on holiday. We were given a Polestar, which was a lovely car to drive, but while driving from Edinburgh to Plymouth, via Wales, we had a lot of difficulty with charging the car. Our sat-nav was able to tell us where the charging stations were but it wasn't always easy to find them. When we did find them, they didn't always work. The charging stations were owned by different companies and had their own apps which you had to download. The apps were required to make payment. Sometimes you could pay by swiping your card but not always. The charging facilities had three types of chargers – rapid, medium and slow – and you paid accordingly. Not all charging stations had all types. Sometimes they didn't work and sometimes they would begin charging and then stop. When you are on holidays, you don't want to be spending time charging and this could take anywhere between one hour and up to several hours, depending on the type of charger available and whether it would stop during charging. A few times we had to remain with the car to make sure it continued charging. I do hope that here in Australia we can get it right with charging stations as we progress to more EVs on the road.

ROY ROGERS, SALISBURY



PUBLICISE ACCIDENT CAUSES

I AM WRITING the day after a terrible multi-vehicle crash south of Rockhampton. So often the public quickly hears of such crashes via the media, but authorities remain tight-lipped about what caused the incident. Official inquiries seem to take years and their results are poorly reported. If we are to have fewer such road crashes, surely a well-publicised early analysis

of the causes could play a part in safety education. Obviously, there could be legal considerations – unfounded accusations of particular people for causing a crash must be avoided. However, an early and educational media release could go something like this: “Early analysis of the crash suggests that a 4WD ute may have crossed double white lines to overtake and collided with an oncoming sedan. Inquiries are continuing”. Focusing the minds of road users on dangerous behaviours will have more impact soon after the events.

LLEWELYN DAVIES, ROCKHAMPTON

BIKE MIRRORS NOT PRACTICAL

THE ANSWER to the question, ‘Why aren't cyclists required to have a rear-view mirror’ (Summer TRA 2022/23), is because on many bikes with drop handlebars, it is impractical. Brake/gear levers occupy the space where a mirror could be attached. Regarding cyclists causing congestion, the Queensland Traffic Act treats bicycles as vehicles and therefore are permitted to occupy a road lane unless signed prohibited. It is often dangerous to ride on the road verge because of pot holes, broken edges, gravel and glass. We all have to share the road. Please be courteous and patient. Cyclists are doing their bit for the environment.

ANTHONY COOK, GORDON PARK

SHAKEN BY ROUGH ROAD

WE HAVE RECENTLY travelled the Leichhardt Highway from Goondiwindi to Miles and found the road to be one of the worst we have driven in recent years while towing a caravan. We arrived at Miles to find the back wheel cover on our newish caravan had smashed off due to the roughness of the road and the interior looked like it had been ransacked. We were horrified at the thought of anyone travelling behind us when it disintegrated and the damage the wheel cover could have caused if it had hit them. We thought the Bruce Highway was bad but some of these western roads take the cake.

BEV HARRIS, ALLINGHAM

ROUNDBABOUT RULES IGNORED

FOLLOWING ON FROM a letter in the last edition about roundabout

rules being ignored, there are lots of faults from people at roundabouts. Some people think they have the right to just barge through. The number of vehicles approaching at a high speed is astounding. Maybe they have forgotten that the roundabout sign is a give-way sign as well? How about actually having the sign with ‘Give way’ written on it and another sign to say, “Use left indicator when exiting”? You still need the roundabout sign as well. The number of people entering with their right indicator going and then going straight ahead shows a lack of knowledge.

GRAHAME WEST, GOLDEN BEACH



ROAD RULES FRUSTRATION

AS A MOTORIST for 45 years I've just about seen it all. Apart from decreasing road rule compliance and commonsense, I get frustrated in seemingly being a voice in the wilderness when it comes to a lack of action in simple areas. Take these two as examples: continually poor roadwork signage and extended wing mirrors on massive 4WDs blocking vision for road users. If our Transport Department won't act, who do we turn to? I've tried for years to raise awareness with those who can make the decisions about failures in commonsense road issues, but it falls on deaf ears. I must be just a grumpy old guy who doesn't know better.

STEVEN MISKIN, MOOLOOLAH VALLEY

OUR SAY: *The only dimensional requirement for external mirrors is that they must not project more than 250mm beyond the overall width of the vehicle measured without mirrors. When towing, extended mirrors are required to be fitted if you cannot see along the full length of the trailer at its widest point and a further 20m behind it. Extended mirrors must be removed or retracted when not towing so as not to exceed this 250mm requirement.*

STORY GED BULMER



'HEART TRUCKS' SAVING LIVES

MOBILE HEALTH SERVICE HEART OF AUSTRALIA PROVIDES ACCESS TO SPECIALIST HEALTHCARE AND DIAGNOSTICS IN RURAL QUEENSLAND.

MUCH HAS BEEN said and written about the 'American dream', but Dr Rolf Gomes is proof that the 'Australian dream' is as alive and well as the bigger, brasher American version.

Dr Gomes is the founder and director of Heart of Australia, a mobile medical service that provides access to specialist healthcare and diagnostics to rural and remote communities throughout Queensland.

The engineer-turned-cardiologist came to Australia at the age of nine from India with his parents, who were determined to settle in a country that could offer their children a brighter future.

"I remember my dad saying that he stepped off a plane with \$200, four suitcases and four kids, to come to Australia because it was such a fantastic country," Dr Gomes said.

"A place where you could apply yourself, work hard, get an education."

In Dr Gomes' case, that first included an electrical engineering degree from Melbourne University which he followed up some years later with a degree in advanced cardiology from the University of Queensland.

While working as a junior doctor in western Queensland, he saw firsthand the disparity in access to healthcare and services between regional and urban-dwelling Australians.

"When I was a junior doctor out in

places like Blackall, Biggenden, Roma, and having just come from a major metropolitan emergency department, the disparity in access to care was obvious," he said.

"Just really finding firsthand, compared to people who live in the cities, how lacking in services these places are."

This realisation, accompanied by his

RATHER THAN FIND MYSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE WITH JUST MY STETHOSCOPE, IT'D BE GOOD TO HAVE MY WHOLE TOOLKIT, WHICH FOR A CARDIOLOGIST IS A TREADMILL, AN ULTRASOUND MACHINE, LUNG FUNCTION TESTING MACHINES.

sense of gratitude for having come to Australia and attained two university degrees, led Dr Gomes to think about ways to give back.

"I was coming to the end of my training and feeling very, very grateful for where my life had ended up," Dr Gomes said.

"Having once used a rickshaw to go to school in the monsoon rain in Kolkata,

to 'I'm about to finish my cardiology training'. And rather than just practise as a specialist for the rest of my life, I wanted to find something where I could give back to the country."

Dr Gomes admitted he didn't know what that would look like initially but having seen the obvious gap in rural medical services and with his experience working as an electrical engineer for a petrochemical company, he began to formulate an idea.

"I thought, 'Well, if I wanted to provide a service out here to country people, what would that look like?'," he said.

"Rather than find myself in the middle of nowhere with just my stethoscope, it'd be good to have my whole toolkit, which for a cardiologist is a treadmill, an ultrasound machine, lung function testing machines."

The solution Dr Gomes hit on was a custom-designed truck that could serve as a mobile medical health unit, or clinic on wheels, to deliver specialist healthcare to rural and remote communities across Queensland.

He sought sponsors and in 2013 approached PACCAR Australia, the local subsidiary of the multinational company that designs and manufactures DAF, Kenworth and Peterbilt trucks.

The pitch resonated and in 2014 PACCAR offered Heart of Australia complimentary use of a K200



Inside a Heart of Australia truck.

prime mover. Heart of Australia still has that first truck, along with a fleet of four others including a second K200 and two DAF XFs, also supplied by PACCAR, who provide complimentary insurance, maintenance and parts backup.

Today, these custom-designed 'heart trucks' deliver specialist healthcare to more than 30 rural and remote communities across the State and Heart of Australia has grown from three cardiologists to 28 specialists across a range of disciplines, including endocrinology, neurology, gastroenterology and more.

"It's really grown into a multi-specialist service," Dr Gomes said.

"The GPs love it. The country patients absolutely adore it. The Indigenous patients who we work with, the Indigenous health organisations, they love it."

Dr Gomes estimated the service had seen close to 16,000 patients, saved "perhaps 600 to 700 lives", and more than

34 million kilometres of patient travel, at an average of 700km per journey.

"The other day, I had a fellow say, 'This is fantastic, I just live 170km down the road'," Dr Gomes said. "That's not a comment you hear in your city practice.

"He's driven all that way in to have a service that he wouldn't have been able to get otherwise. It means he can be home the same day."

The mobile clinics are spread around rural Queensland, covering specific routes seven days a week, but Dr Gomes said he was "pushing very hard with government to see if we can find some support to take it Australia-wide".

"It's very tangible work, which is what I like," he said.

"It's very easy to tell the story, to join the dots, to understand that you're doing something which is really filling a gap and providing a very direct benefit." ■

For more information visit heartofaustralia.com.au



Dr Rolph Gomes.



Heart of Australia gives regional Queenslanders access to much-needed specialist healthcare and diagnostics.



SCAN THE CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HEART OF AUSTRALIA.

WE WILL CONTACT YOU OVER THE COMING MONTHS IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE FOR A REFUND



RACQ PRICING PROMISES REFUNDS

RACQ HAS MADE errors when calculating discounts for some insurance policies. We have now begun issuing motor insurance refunds to some current and former eligible members to make things right.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU RECEIVE A REFUND

If you've received a refund directly into your bank account, you don't need to do anything. Genuine refunds will show the description 'RACQ Ins Refund'. Once the refund is deposited to your account, we will confirm the successful payment with an email or letter to you.

WHAT TO DO IF WE REQUEST BANK DETAILS TO PAY YOUR REFUND

If we send you a letter or email requesting your bank details, please submit them using the secure refund form available on

racq.com/pricingpromises. Your refund will be paid to the bank account you nominate within 15 days. This can be any Australian bank account. We may also contact you to ask for more information so we can determine your eligibility for a further refund.

MAKING THINGS RIGHT

It will take some time to complete the entire remediation program. We are proceeding carefully to ensure we get this right for our members.



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

STAYING SECURE WHEN PROVIDING BANK DETAILS

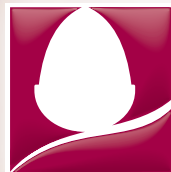
If RACQ asks you to provide a bank account to receive your refund:

- 1 Use our secure **Refund form** on racq.com/pricingpromises.*
- 2 To keep your details secure, use the unique **Refund ID** (in your letter or email from RACQ), and we will send you a **One-Time Passcode**.
- 3 **Still unsure?** Call us on 1800 637 013 or visit your local RACQ store and we will help.

*RACQ will never ask you to click a link to supply your personal or financial information to obtain your pricing promises refund.

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RACQ WITHDRAWS FROM CTP SCHEME

AFTER 20 YEARS of helping people injured on our roads, RACQ made the difficult but necessary decision to withdraw from Queensland's Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance scheme from 1 October 2023.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

This decision only affects RACQ CTP insurance policies which are designed and regulated by the Queensland Government. CTP is paid with your vehicle registration to cover the driver's liability to people injured in a motor vehicle accident.

It doesn't cover the damage to another vehicle or property caused by the motorist's vehicle; that damage is covered under RACQ Insurance's suite of motor insurance products which remain unchanged.

WHY DID RACQ MAKE THIS DECISION?

RACQ would have liked nothing more than to stay in the scheme and support the 1.2 million Queensland motorists who chose RACQ as their preferred CTP insurance provider. However, the reality is, despite the extensive steps we have taken over many years to restore fairness, it is no longer viable for us to continue in the scheme.

The scheme's design allows for all

participating insurers to be profitable.

However, this assumes an equitable distribution of risk, which is not the case.

Through no fault of our own, RACQ carries more risk than other insurers, resulting in significant financial losses for the Club.

In FY22, for every \$100 of premium RACQ received, we paid \$123 in claims and expenses, which meant the money we were allocated from the CTP scheme was not enough to cover the frequency and cost of claims we received.

RACQ's CTP losses result from how the scheme operates and do not relate to our high standard of claims management performance. After several years of taking every action possible to improve our position and discussing our concerns with the Queensland Government and Motor Accident Insurance Commission (MAIC), we have been left with no choice but to withdraw.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR RACQ CTP POLICYHOLDERS?

RACQ will cease offering RACQ CTP insurance cover from 30 September 2023, which means from 1 October, motorists will no longer be able to nominate RACQ as their CTP insurer.

All existing RACQ CTP policies remain in place until their next vehicle registration renewal, when motorists will be required

to select a new CTP insurer. You don't have to wait for your renewal to switch insurers; you can do this online any time before your vehicle registration is due. Scan the QR code for more information.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR RACQ MEMBERS?

RACQ CTP insurance is not a membership product, so this will not impact your membership or any multi-policy discounts you may have. Our commitment to providing Queenslanders with motor and home insurance now and in the future remains unchanged.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE A CTP CLAIM?

This decision will not compromise or cause any disruption to RACQ CTP claimants with a claims process underway or who may have a claim in the future. We will continue to provide the same high standard of service to injured claimants that we are known for. For more information, visit racq.com/ctp-scheme.



SCAN THE CODE TO CHANGE YOUR CTP INSURANCE DETAILS

The information in this article has been prepared for general information purposes only and not as specific advice to any particular person. Any advice contained in the document is general advice and does not take into account any person's particular investment objectives, financial situation or needs. Before acting on anything based on this advice you should consider its appropriateness to you, having regard to your objectives, financial situations and needs.



An adult male satin bowerbird courts a green female-plumaged bird in Topaz, North Queensland.

NATURAL ATTRACTION

A NEW BOOK CHRONICLES THE LIFE'S WORK OF GLOBETROTTING WILDLIFE RESEARCHERS AND RACQ MEMBERS CLIFFORD FRITH AND HIS WIFE DAWN.

STORY RAY ANDERSEN

A **CLAIMED ZOOLOGIST, AUTHOR** and photographer Clifford Frith reflects on the “fortunate life” he has shared with his wife and co-author Dawn in his newly self-published memoir.

Cliff dedicated *A Wild Romance* to Dawn, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease eight years ago and has spent more than two years in full-time care.

In the book’s preface, Cliff explains the pain he felt watching Dawn succumb to the disease.

“We have enjoyed a deeply rich romance and life as partners in field, study, and museum biology, and in all other things,” he wrote.

“As I write I am, however, seeing my dear Dawn slip away into the mysterious and foggy, truly terrible, mists of Alzheimer’s disease.

“It is a terrifying and desperate experience for us, and is a tragic end to our magnificent and exciting, rewarding, and productive, lives together.”

English-born Cliff and Dawn met 50 years ago while undertaking year-long

research projects on remote Aldabra Atoll, 400km north-west of Madagascar.

Cliff was studying birds and Dawn insects, both for The Royal Society of London.

“Since then, we have had a very exciting and very fortunate life, always living in the wilderness,” Cliff said.

“We had some amazing experiences, as you can imagine – hilarious and dangerous.”

After their time on Aldabra Atoll, they spent a year in England before living on Phuket Island, Thailand, for four years.

Dawn was a senior marine biologist at a research centre and Cliff studied snakes and birds and worked as a natural history photographer.

They then moved to Australia and settled at Paluma, north of Townsville, where they spent 13 years studying the region’s birds.



Asbestos Disease Support Society



Silicosis
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They then moved farther north and built a haven in World Heritage rainforest on the southern Atherton Tablelands.

Cliff and Dawn have published several academic books on their research and wrote successfully for the tourist market. These popular books helped fund their biological research and photography expeditions worldwide.

While all wildlife attracted their attention, their primary love was always birds – particularly the bowerbirds and birds of paradise of northern Australia and Papua New Guinea.

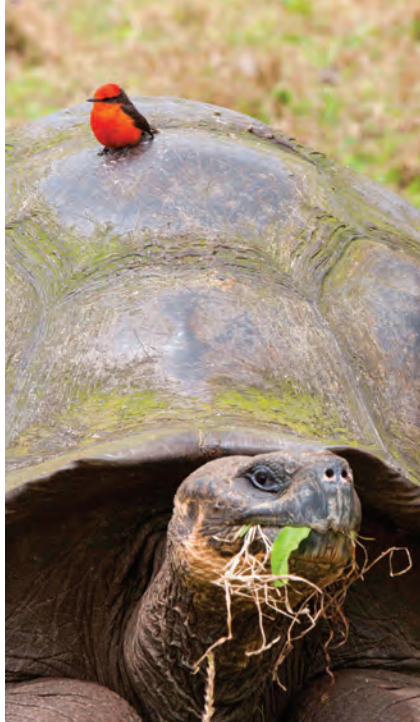
“As a younger teenager, I came across a book called *The Wonders of Life On Earth* and in that book were chapters dealing with birds of paradise and bowerbirds and one dealing with an American guy who explored New Guinea studying both those groups of birds,” Cliff said.

“It just blew me away and so that’s what I wanted to do with my life and fortunately that’s what I did with my life.”

The couple’s travels saw them make important biological discoveries and experience many adventures, including facing active volcanoes, venomous snakes, lions, crocodiles and other dangerous animals, and evading the occasional tribal conflict.

Cliff and Dawn’s expertise also led to their involvement in producing ABC and BBC television nature documentaries, allowing them to work with the legendary Sir David Attenborough.

“We made some exciting discoveries,



A male vermilion flycatcher and giant tortoise on Santa Cruz, Galapagos Islands, Ecuador.

both photographically and biologically, particularly with bowerbirds and birds of paradise,” Cliff said.

“Studying and photographing any type of wildlife, but mainly birds, requires a lot of patience. There is a lot of downtime that is very, very boring. But when things happen, it’s very, very exciting.”

An RACQ member for 40 years, Cliff now lives a more sedate life, making the daily trip to spend time with Dawn and writing.

He still lives in the home they built near Malanda, surrounded by his 22ha of rainforest immediately adjacent to

Wooroonooran National Park.

“We have cassowaries, the occasional tree kangaroo, six species of possum and four species of bowerbirds, which is why we bought the place, and one bird of paradise on the property,” Cliff said.

“There’s a 60-foot (18.2m) waterfall in the middle of the place and it’s absolute paradise.

“It’s a beautiful place, but unfortunately I’m now rattling around in it on my own.” ■



Cliff and Dawn Frith with Sir David Attenborough in North Queensland.



Signed copies of this limited-edition 400-page hardback, with more than 200 colour photographs, an endpaper map and a dust cover, will be available post-free from mid-October at [stevennowakowski.com](http://www.stevennowakowski.com).



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SOLAR REBATE GUIDE

TO HELP QUEENSLANDERS BETTER UNDERSTAND THE TRANSITION TO SOLAR ENERGY, WE SHED LIGHT ON THE SOLAR REBATE SCHEME.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING solar to save money on your home energy bills and utilise more sustainable energy sources?

Earning its title as the Sunshine State, Queensland has the highest rate of household rooftop solar installations in Australia, with one in three homes using solar*.

In Australia, the Federal Government offers solar incentives to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and encourage the additional generation of electricity from sustainable and renewable sources.

The clean energy generated from small-scale rooftop solar plays a key role in helping Australia reach its Renewable Energy Target.

However, according to RACQ research, almost half of Queenslanders surveyed said the key concern when considering solar was the cost (49 percent) and the process was too confusing (11 percent)^.

WHAT IS THE SOLAR REBATE?

The Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES), known as the solar rebate, operates within the Australian Government Renewable Energy Target and applies to small technology installations like rooftop solar.

Under the scheme, Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs) are created for every projected megawatt

hour of power generated by a small-scale solar system (under 100kW).

Generally, householders who purchase these systems assign the right to create their STCs to an agent, typically a registered solar retailer, in return for a reduction in the upfront cost of the solar system.

HOW ARE THE STCS CALCULATED?

STCs are given based on the size of the system installed and how much energy it's estimated to produce up to the year 2030.

Essentially, the more renewable energy a system was expected to generate in that time, the more STCs it would receive.

Location is another factor, with the scheme being broken into four zones

across Australia depending on the level of solar energy.

WHAT COULD I SAVE?

When you arrange a solar system quote, you can request the value of your STC discount.

For example, currently for a 6.6kW solar system on a single-storey, tin roof in Greater Brisbane, your STC point of sale discount could be about \$2,664.

However, the scheme reduces in value at the start of each calendar year and will end in 2030.

Therefore, if you are considering installing solar on your home, it might make sense to do so sooner rather than later so you can take advantage of the financial benefits.

Your system needs to be installed by the end of December to receive that year's STC pricing and installers tend to be very busy at that time.

For this reason, and because the STC value can fluctuate with demand, it can be a good idea to avoid the summer rush and get your solar installed earlier in the year.

Following installation, you could also receive ongoing rebates on your energy bill via a feed-in tariff for the solar energy you exported to the grid. ■

...THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFERS SOLAR INCENTIVES TO REDUCE EMISSIONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES AND ENCOURAGE THE ADDITIONAL GENERATION OF ELECTRICITY FROM SUSTAINABLE AND RENEWABLE SOURCES.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR SOLAR OPTIONS, VISIT [RACQ.COM/SOLAR](https://racq.com/solar).

*Queensland Government Department of Energy and Public Works, 5 May 2023

^RACQ Quarterly Consumer Omnibus - FY23 Q3. Total n=499



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RACQ



MEET THE GIANTS OF EROMANGA

A SMALL TOWN IN OUTBACK QUEENSLAND IS HOME TO AN AWARD-WINNING MUSEUM THAT SHOWCASES THE MASSIVE DINOSAURS THAT ONCE ROAMED THE REGION.

STORY LIZ BOND



An outdoor exhibit at the Eromanga Natural History Museum. Photo Tourism and Events Queensland.

THE FOSSILISED REMAINS of Australia's most gigantic dinosaur, *Australotitan cooperensis* ('Cooper'), were uncovered in one of outback Queensland's smallest towns.

And while this 92-million-year-old titanosaur waits for a forever home, an even bigger cousin has been unearthed from the Cooper Basin's dusty plains.

Grazier and now Quilpie Shire Mayor Stuart Mackenzie always believed 'they' were out there. But it wasn't until Stuart and wife Robyn's 14-year-old son Sandy discovered a fist-sized bone while mustering on their property in 2004 that they finally had proof.

The Mackenzies soon met with Queensland Museum's Senior Fossil Preparator and Conservator Jo Wilkinson in Brisbane.

"Jo immediately recognised the nondescript bone as a partial ulna of a mega dinosaur and then began bouncing around the room," Robyn said.

"We began looking at more potential sites and in 2007 the Queensland Museum commenced a systematic excavation about an hour's drive from our home."

The Mackenzie family's lives changed forever.

Next, after more fossicking, the family found a 60m dinosaur trackway.

Astonishingly, a smaller, complete titanosaur nicknamed 'Sid' was preserved among the enormous footprints.

Palaeontologists believe Sid was trampled in a stampede; however, his teeth and bones are all still discernible.

Uniquely, this site is one of only two places worldwide where a fossilised dinosaur's remains are submerged in a trackway.

MANY VISITORS RETURN TO LEARN MORE OVER A FEW DAYS OR WEEKS, PREPPING FOSSILS OR DIGGING FOR MEGAFUNA AND DINOSAURS.

The Mackenzies' desire to keep Cooper and his many long-necked herbivore cousins within the region led to the establishment of a world-class museum. Preserving ancient fossils in far south west Queensland's arid conditions has proven infinitely more manageable than in cities on the coast.

Opening in 2016, the multi-award-winning Eromanga Natural History Museum is not merely home to Cretaceous-period fossils. It is a tribute to the incredible work of citizen scientists and fundraisers, employing 11 locals. Robyn quipped with a grin: "Visitors from Queensland, interstate and overseas travel here and, much to their surprise, find we also serve great food and coffee."

The museum features more than 3,000 fossils and bones and life-sized dinosaur replicas. The newest addition, a reception gallery, features an interpretative corridor and multi-media theatre experience *The Age of Life*, which is expanding to include the evolution of humans and an Indigenous timeline.

Taking the Australian Dinosaur Giants Tour to view the workshop, laboratory and collection centre is a chance to witness up close the detailed processes to unearth and ultimately identify the most enormous creatures that ever

walked the planet. On the drawing board, the extensions will allow visitors to speak with preparators and, for the first time, view the museum's entire collection.

Equally well represented are the megafauna that roamed here, co-existing with the local Boonthamurra, Wangkumara and Mardigan people for tens of thousands of years.

Then, wombats, kangaroos, birds and reptiles were at least 30 percent larger than their cuddly and not-so-cuddly modern-day cousins. They were the next stage in the evolutionary puzzle and died in a massive extinction event about 46,000 years ago.

Many visitors return to learn more over a few days or weeks, prepping fossils or digging for megafauna and dinosaurs.

Enthusiastic volunteers can combine this work with a stay at the nearby and aptly named Cooper's Country Lodge – a comfortable, eight-room, four-star hotel.

The Living History Centre allows road trippers to learn more about settler history, the region and the gas and mining industries. Just pop your head into the Old Royal Hotel next door and ask for the key.

Fundraising continues for construction of a gallery to display the digitally re-created Cooper in his entirety – all 30m of him. The 3D-printed model was meticulously hand-painted to highlight every detail and texture.

'Zac', another titanosaur discovered on Anzac Day 2006, is considered a new species. His fossil is the only known articulated skeleton (all in one piece with all the bones in correct order) of a Cretaceous Australian sauropod. Meanwhile, he remains in the dusty plains surrounding Eromanga. Hopefully, he will join the other titanosaurs at the museum soon.

Junior dinosaur enthusiasts can get hands-on, touching and hugging baby dinosaurs in the latest addition to the museum – a 2.5m bronze dinosaur nest sculpture.

Brisbane's Elizabeth Kodela still regularly volunteers at the museum preparation lab and generously donated the recently unveiled artwork.

Heading to the Eromanga Natural History Museum makes for a spectacular road trip. It opens up the ancient side of Queensland that's so new it's still being discovered. ■

Learn more at enhm.com.au.

Entry to Eromanga Natural History Museum.



A hands-on experience at the museum.



STORY MELISSA MCGRATH

DAY IN THE LIFE OF BRIAN

THE ROAD AHEAD SPENT A DAY WITH LONG-TERM RACQ PATROL OFFICER BRIAN BLACKWELL TO LEARN ABOUT HIM AND HIS WORK.



WITH AN IMPRESSIVE tenure of 32 years as an RACQ Patrol Officer, Brian Blackwell goes to work every day knowing he will help Queenslanders in need.

Throughout his career, Brian estimates he has been called to more than 130,000 jobs for Roadside Assistance, ranging from flat tyres and battery-related issues to more complex mechanical problems.

But no matter the call, his favourite part of the job is meeting people and helping them in their time of need.

“There isn’t just one memorable moment that comes to mind, I log about 15 jobs every day, so there are hundreds

of moments,” Brian said.

“Every breakdown is memorable for the person you’re helping.

“I’ve been called to premiers, prime ministers, people on their way to job interviews, even bridal parties on their way to the wedding.

“One of the more interesting jobs was when I found a snake wrapped around the driveshaft; it was just looking for a warm place to rest.”

By lunchtime on the ride-along, we had completed nine different jobs.

The first was a flat tyre in South Brisbane for a woman who was on her way to work.

“I called my brother first and he said, ‘I can’t come all the way into the city’, so I’m really glad I have Roadside Assistance,” she said.

The next job was a flat battery due to an internal light being left on and while we were there, Brian fixed up a loose fan belt that likely impacted the battery recovery time.

After more than 50 years of being a mechanic, Brian is an expert at his craft and can even tell a car’s country of origin simply by looking at the headlights.

When we asked Brian what has changed the most over the past 50 years he has spent working on vehicles, his



Patrol Officer Brian Blackwell and writer Melissa McGrath preparing to hit the road. Photos Dave Pattinson.

answer was easy – technology.

“The presence of EV and hybrid cars, engine management systems, fuel injection, electronic ignition, and back in my day we used a Refidex for maps,” Brian said.

“At RACQ, we undergo training at least twice a year to keep up with the latest technology and mechanics in vehicles.”

In his spare time, Brian takes a well-earned break from motor vehicles to go mountain trekking across the world.

He has trekked to Mount Everest Base Camp 14 times and has also reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa’s highest mountain.

“It was actually a member who encouraged me to climb Mount Kilimanjaro,” he said.

“On a job, the member asked me what was left on my bucket list and after that conversation, I booked the trip.

“If you’ve got something on your bucket list, it will stay there unless you do something about it.

“That’s what I like about this job; you never know what the next call is going to be or who you’ll meet.” ■

Learn more about RACQ Roadside Assistance by visiting racq.com/roadside.



Brian has 32 years as a Patrol Officer.

RACQ ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE STATS FOR FY23

755,086

Total Roadside Assistance events.

87

Average number of jobs responded to per hour.

269,719

Callouts for battery-related issues.

2,057

Towed caravans or trailers.

950

Emergency responses for children locked in cars.

862

Callouts for animals locked in cars.



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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.

Help for Queensland communities

When disaster strikes as it often does in Queensland, our community groups can be hit hardest. RACQ Foundation is here to help Queenslanders get back on their feet.

If you're a community group, charity or sporting club that's been impacted by a natural disaster, apply for a grant today.



Applications close Monday, 2 October.
racq.com/foundation

RACQ
Foundation



FLOWER POWER

TOO OFTEN, THE first time men receive flowers is at their funeral. That's the heartbreaking reality driving RACQ's latest road safety campaign.

Blooms for Blokes focuses on the males in our lives who are dying on Queensland roads at a disproportionate rate.

Three times more males than females were killed in crashes on Queensland roads over the past five years.

During Queensland Road Safety Week in August, RACQ encouraged people to spark a conversation about road safety by gifting a male in their life a flower, telling them why staying safe on the roads was important.

It was an opportunity to give the men in our lives a flower while they were still alive and not at their funerals.

Males were told how much they'd be missed if they didn't make it home from their drive, reminding them what was at risk if they did not drive safely and

A NEW RACQ ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN USES A SIMPLE GESTURE TO DELIVER A POWERFUL MESSAGE.

STORY LAUREN COONEY

motivating them to be safer drivers.

Transport and Main Roads data shows 995 males died on Queensland roads in the past five years, compared with 317 females*.

RACQ General Manager Advocacy Joshua Cooney said a range of factors



were behind the statistics.

"Generally, males are more likely to engage in risky behaviour which, of course, significantly increases the chance of a serious crash," Mr Cooney said.

"When you look at the breakdown of the data, for some road user groups almost all fatalities were male.

"For example, over the five-year period, a staggering 261 male motorcycle riders died, compared to nine female motorcycle riders.

"We know males are much more likely to be riding a motorcycle and these are the people we're trying to target.

"Any life lost on Queensland roads is one too many. We hope the Blooms for Blokes campaign sparks a different way of looking at the road toll by having everyday Queenslanders remind their loved ones why it's important they're safe on the road.

"We'd like this sentiment to resonate with 'the bloke' and they take all care and precaution whenever they are on the road."

Mr Cooney said the Fatal Five continued to account for the majority of road deaths – speeding, driving fatigued, drink and drug driving, distracted driving and not wearing a seatbelt.

"If we could just get all road users to make a commitment to stick to the most basic road rules, we would go a very long way in reducing our heartbreaking road toll," he said. ■

racq.com/bloomsforblokes

*Department of Transport and Main Roads data from 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2022



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THE WORKSHOPS RAIL MUSEUM



Breaking down isn't worth a breakdown

Whether you travel locally or enjoy road-tripping around the country, RACQ has a product to suit you.



Our new range of roadside assistance products now covers everything from e-Bikes to RVs and everything in between. In FY23, RACQ got over 92% of drivers back on the road. With over 700 state-wide rescue vehicles, enjoy the peace of mind that no matter where you are or how you move, RACQ will be there.

Join or upgrade at racq.com/roadside

RACQ

Stats based on FY23. Roadside Assistance products issued by RACQ Operations Pty Ltd ABN 80 009 663 414. Conditions, limits and exclusions apply. Visit racq.com/roadside



RACQ AUTO OPEN FOR BUSINESS

RACQ HAS OPENED ITS FIRST RACQ AUTO STORE.

RACQ CHIEF EXECUTIVE Assistance Glenn Toms said a new RACQ Auto store in Brisbane was an extension of the Club's successful Auto Glass outlets, which offered windscreen replacements, chip repairs, window tinting and Advance Driver Assistance System (ADAS) recalibration.

"Our Geebung concept store will continue to offer the same Auto Glass services but expand to include our other automotive offerings," Mr Toms said.

"This includes battery services,

vehicle inspections, more complex ADAS recalibration, some common auto electrical repairs and misfuel repatriation."

Mr Toms said RACQ Auto will integrate with Roadside Assistance patrols to get members back on the road quickly and efficiently.

"If a member's battery needs replacing, we can supply and fit that directly from the patrol vehicle," Mr Toms said.

"However, if the underlying solution is the replacement of the starter motor

or alternator, or if a member has put the wrong fuel in their vehicle, this is where RACQ Auto comes into play.

"We can transport the vehicle to the new store from the breakdown, during which time the necessary parts have been delivered, and then fit it for the member so they can get back on the road quickly."

The new Geebung outlet also provides services for electric vehicles and a full range of vehicle inspection services for members. The Club is looking to expand RACQ Auto to other locations. ■

MEMBER BENEFITS FOR YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE

Whether you're hitting the road on your next adventure, or working on your DIY project, you'll find everything you need at **Repco**.

As an **RACQ member**, you have access to offers at Repco, with better promotional discounts and more frequent sales on your favourite products. You can also enjoy member competitions and exclusive promotions, as well as an **everyday 5% discount on almost everything***.

Plus, we are driving your dollar further with lower prices on over 20,000 products we stock including oil filters, brake pads, oil and car care.



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Birds of the Bush Handbag

Showcases the acclaimed artistry of Joy Scherger, Australia's premier wildlife artist

Heart charm features a gleaming engraved Fairy Wren



Actual size of bag is approx. 23cm wide at the top x 33cm wide at the bottom

Generous, Stylish & Versatile:

Zippered main compartment

2 interior slip pockets

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Like a rainbow filled with pure joy, the birds of the Australian bush bring colour, life and jewelled elegance to any place they call home. Now, our winged treasures inspire a gorgeous fashion exclusive set to enhance your own fashion wardrobe with their colourful splendour!

The front of the handbag showcases the cherished art of Joy Scherger who introduces Rosellas, Lorikeets, Kookaburras and Fairy Wrens set amidst a bush haven filled with whisper-soft wattle and delicate gum blossoms. It's a vision of pure Australian delight you'll enjoy coordinating with your favourite ensemble! The on-trend design offers a chic colour block of pebble-textured faux leather embellished with golden hardware to let your fashion style take flight! Double faux leather handles as well as a removable, adjustable cross-body strap create an accessory that is as functional as it is fashionable. A zippered main compartment, interior accessory pockets and metal feet complete the design.

This Bradford Exchange Exclusive Design is available for a limited time only and strong demand is expected. Don't risk disappointment. Act now to acquire the "Birds of the Bush Handbag" for just 5 easy instalments of \$39.99 or \$199.95, plus \$19.99 postage and handling. Your acquisition is backed by our 30-day guarantee. Send no money now. Return the coupon or go online today at www.bradford.com.au/birds



Back View

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RACQ PATROLS TURN CRIME FIGHTERS

STORY LAUREN COONEY

REAR VIEW LOOKS BACK AT THE HISTORY OF MOTORING IN QUEENSLAND THROUGH THE PAGES OF THE QUEENSLAND MOTORIST, THE RACQ JOURNAL AND THE ROAD AHEAD.

MEDIA REPORTS ON car thefts are commonplace these days but you may be surprised to learn that in 1928 they were making news too.

Although 95 years ago intercepting a stolen car was seemingly something RACQ patrol crews could assist with.

In April 1928, *The Queensland Motorist* detailed a member's "exciting experience, following the removal of his car from outside his house in Vulture Street".

The story explained that after his car was stolen, the Brisbane man joined a friend for a leisurely Sunday drive to Redcliffe and on the drive "a car passed, travelling at a fast pace".

"The member recognised the car as his own, and his friend turned round and chased the speeding vehicle," the report said.

A dramatic chase ensued and the stolen car's owner "jumped from the pursuing car onto the running board and grappled with the driver".

Two RACQ patrols happened to be in the right place at the right time and according to the story, performed a citizen's arrest and "detained two of the occupants while the owner sent for police".

For the record, crime fighting is not a service provided by RACQ's modern-day Roadside Assistance patrols!

CRUISING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Cruising is making a solid comeback post-Covid but in the 1950s it was a relatively new way of travelling and curiosity was rife.

A 1950 article in *The Road Ahead* had first-time cruisers covered.

Travellers were advised to pack a soft warm rug and one of those "neat travelling pillows in a leather case".

They were told "a wardrobe trunk that will stand up in the cabin without monopolising all the space" would be the best way to carry their clothing and told not to forget a separate shoe box.

Well before the age of the selfie,

cameras were also considered a travel essential.

"You will make so many friends aboard ship that you will want to snap them all and you'll want to take pictures of the enchanting places to which the ships take you," the story said.

And thankfully even 73 years ago cameras were considered "so simple and so good without being a very serious expense".

EARLY ELECTRIC CAR FAILED TO INSPIRE

Nearly 50 years ago, RACQ explored whether electric vehicles could offset the global oil crisis of the early 1970s.

In 1974, research was well underway with an article in *The Road Ahead*

...95 YEARS AGO INTERCEPTING A STOLEN CAR WAS SEEMINGLY SOMETHING RACQ PATROL CREWS COULD ASSIST WITH.

explaining: "The renewal of research into electric car economics and performance potential is a natural reaction to the world oil shortage".

The RACQ investigation included road testing of an electric panel van, with the Club describing its performance as "unimpressive".

The panel van was a slow climber. It reached a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour (32km/h) going uphill and 35 miles per hour (56km/h) on flat ground. It had a range of 40 miles (64km). The research concluded that EVs had a long way to go and "the electric vehicle's present main role is in the commercial field, the short haul, multi-stop type operation".

It has taken some time, but EVs have gained a solid foothold in the Australian new car market with rapid recent sales growth forecast to continue. ■



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COMPETITION >

WIN!

A NAVMAN MIVUE 870 SAFETY DASH CAM



THE ROAD AHEAD and Navman are giving readers the chance to win one of 10 Navman MiVue 870 Safety Dash Cam devices.

Safety is at the heart of what dash cams can do for drivers and the MiVue 870 Safety is the latest version that offers premium safety alerts.

These alerts cover speed and safety cameras as well as school zones and can be updated over-the-air as often as

every month (for free).

They also include driver fatigue and ADAS (advanced driver assistance systems) alerts which pop up if you're travelling too close to the car ahead or drifting across the lines.

The camera films in 1440P Quad HD 2.5K recording which can be viewed on the 2.7" LCD screen or on your phone via WiFi on the EZYSHARE app.

Footage is all GPS tagged and comes

with precise information showing the direction of any impact and current speed, which can be helpful with insurance claims.

Designed, built and tested for Australian conditions, the MiVue 870 Safety is a high-quality dash cam packed with great features to help keep you and your vehicle safe on the road.

The Navman MiVue 870 Safety Dash Cam is valued at \$229 (RRP).

VISIT RACQ.COM/NAVMAN-MIVUE TO ENTER THE COMPETITION WHICH CLOSSES ON 30 NOVEMBER 2023.

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Wild

ABOUT ALASKA

A SEVEN-NIGHT CRUISE THROUGH ALASKA'S INSIDE PASSAGE REVEALED NATURAL WONDERS THAT WOULD DELIGHT EVEN THE MOST EXPERIENCED TRAVELLER.

STORY CATH JOHNSEN

AS THE CITY skyline of Seattle faded into the distance, the slowly sinking sun radiated a late springtime heat that left the Salish Sea sparkling.

The calm waters and the warmth of the day brought our sail-away party to life, and I sipped a cocktail on the deck while watching the trail of white bubbles left in the ship's wake.

It felt like I could be in Queensland except for the snow-capped Mount Rainier, that stood tall in the distance, reminding me I was on the other side of the world.

I'm aboard *Discovery Princess*, the newest ship in the Princess Cruises fleet.

It's one of many vessels cruising Alaskan waters during the Northern Hemisphere summer, such is the demand for these journeys to the 'last frontier'.

Later, I turned in for a peaceful night's sleep and awoke to a sumptuous champagne breakfast on my cabin's balcony, which was again bathed in sunshine.

As I munched on croissants, fresh fruits and locally smoked salmon, I planned my day at sea as we glided towards our first stop, Ketchikan.

There was a comprehensive schedule of activities, but I chose a tour of

Discovery Princess. Our guide revealed that its length of 330m and 19 decks made it the biggest in the fleet, catering for up to 3,660 guests and 1,350 crew.

A visit to one of the ship's 16 galleys revealed an efficient ecosystem allowing thousands to be fed seamlessly.

Impressively, all the pasta, bread and

THE CALM WATERS AND THE WARMTH OF THE DAY BROUGHT OUR SAIL-AWAY PARTY TO LIFE, AND I SIPPED A COCKTAIL ON THE DECK WHILE WATCHING THE TRAIL OF WHITE BUBBLES LEFT IN THE SHIP'S WAKE.

pastries were made daily from scratch. Even the ice cream was 'home-made', and I sampled it later that evening in one of the ship's many all-inclusive restaurants.

The following morning, I opened the curtains to see that our ship was in port, dwarfing the quaint township of Ketchikan.

The town is known for only enjoying an average of 77 days per year without rain,

but we are blessed with an uncommonly sunny day.

I disembarked and wandered through the town towards the Great Alaskan Lumberjack Show.

If you thought the Aussie woodchop was an impressive sport, think again because these Alaskan lumberjacks surprised me with their athleticism.

They threw axes with precision and accuracy, speedily sawed timber by hand (and sometimes with souped-up power tools), clambered up and free-fell down towering trees and ran atop logs tumbling in the water.

The crowd went wild for it and generous tips were left for the 'jacks' collective lager fund.

Next, I boarded a bus bound for the historic George Inlet Lodge, set on the water, where we were served a feast of fresh Dungeness crab.

It was a messy but satisfying lunch and I learned about two of the region's biggest industries – timber and seafood – in the most entertaining and delicious way possible.

The other big industry in town is, of course, tourism.

Once the thousands of fellow tourists and I were again aboard *Discovery Princess*, we departed for our next port of call, Juneau.

Early the following day, we passed through the narrow fjord of Endicott Arm, possibly the most scenic part of our trip.

We anchored and a catamaran whisked us away on an exhilarating ride past forested mountains that were still iced with snow, gushing waterfalls that sprung from melting glaciers and floating chunks of ice that looked as though they had been purposely sculpted into recognisable shapes.

But it's the sighting of Dawes Glacier, looming in all its shimmering glory, that sent everyone into reverent silence.

To add to the majesty, the glacier spontaneously expelled an enormous chunk of ice, known as calving, dramatically breaking the stillness.

On the way back, a herd of gregarious sea lions were spotted tumbling in the icy waters, vocalising noisily to each other. Shore excursions don't get much better than this.

But we had to press on to our next port, Skagway, a gold-rush town near the US/Canada border.

The most popular activity here is the White Pass Scenic Railway, and for good reason.

The historic line, which is not connected to any other rail network, retraces the passage that the stampede of gold rushers took through treacherous country and inhospitable conditions to reach the goldfields.

The train wound its way up the mountain, beginning in a sub-alpine rocky forest broken up by crystal-clear waterfalls before reaching White Pass, which is blanketed in snow all year.

I'm continually plastered to the window, except when the train crosses the border, and I must pause my ogling to show the Canadian immigration officials my passport.

After another sea day, we entered

Canadian territory again the following evening, with a stop at Victoria on Vancouver Island.

I take a walking tour showcasing the city's architecture, from beautifully preserved heritage homes to the Romanesque-style parliamentary building completed in 1898.

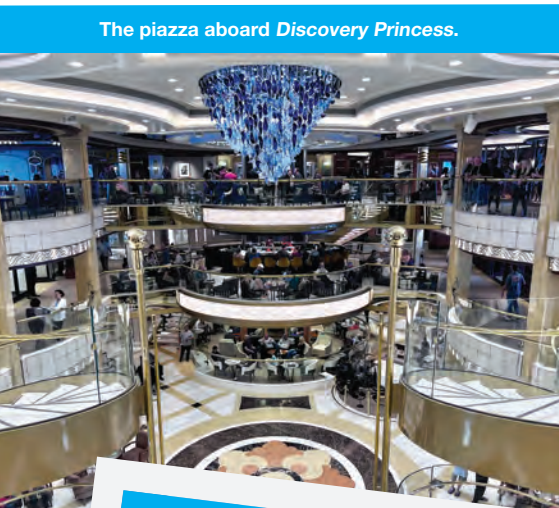
It's lit with 3,333 LED lights, casting a magical glow over the harbour.

Following the trail of lights, I went back to *Discovery Princess*, which was also lit up merrily.

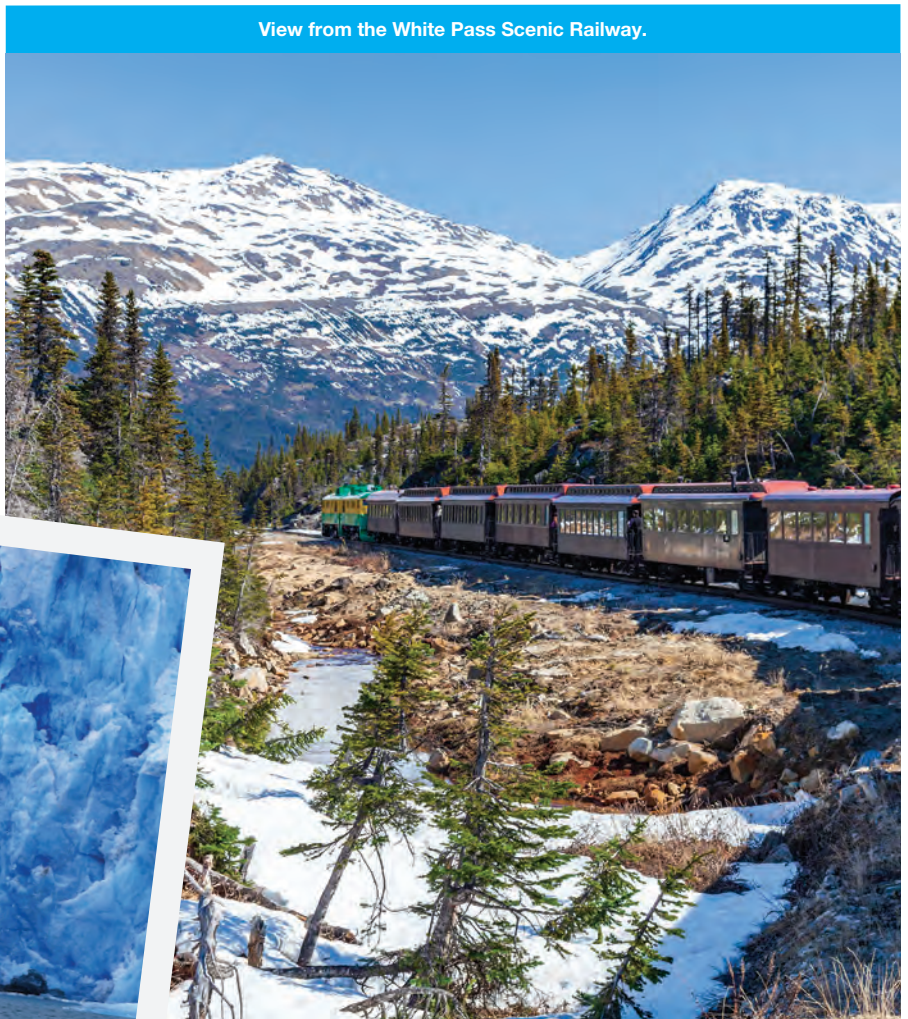
I slowed my steps. Tomorrow I would wake up in Seattle and be at my journey's end, but right now, I was soaking up every last minute of this spectacular holiday.

The writer travelled courtesy of Princess Cruises. ■

Visit [racq.com/travel](https://www.racq.com/travel) to plan your next holiday.



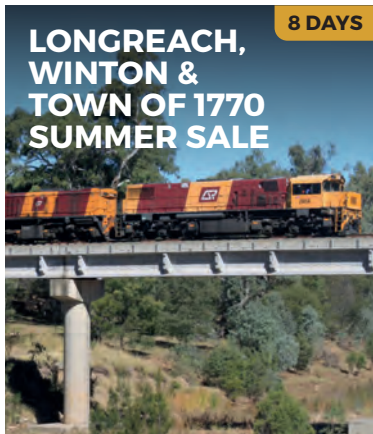
The piazza aboard *Discovery Princess*.



View from the White Pass Scenic Railway.



Dawes Glacier calving.



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3 Nights Barossa Valley | 1 Night Victor Harbour | 2 Nights Kangaroo Island | 1 Night Adelaide | 20 meals

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1 Night Barossa Valley, Streaky Bay & Adelaide | 2 Nights Port Augusta | 2 Nights Port Lincoln | 23 meals

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11 DAYS

See icons of the Apple Isle on this in-depth tour of Tasmania. Fly into **Hobart** and enjoy an epic Gordon River Cruise travelling to **Strahan** and **Queenstown**. Then discover **Cradle Mountain**, before arriving in **Launceston**. Enjoy a fabulous scenic flight over the **Wineglass Bay**. Travel back to **Hobart** and explore the history of **Port Arthur**. (*Bruny Island extender option available*).

4 Nights Hobart | 2 Nights Strahan | 1 Night Cradle Mountain, Smithton, Launceston & St Helens | 28 meals

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1 Night Port Macquarie | 2 Nights Hunter Valley | 2 Nights Cowra | 1 Night Dubbo | 1 Night Goondiwindi | 21 meals

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4 Nights Hobart | 2 Nights Strahan Village | 1 Night Cradle Mountain | 3 Nights Launceston | 29 meals

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2 Nights Lake Maggiore | 3 Nights Cison vi Valmarino | 4 Nights Tuscany | 1 Night Siena | 1 Night Assisi | 3 Nights Amalfi Coast | 2 Nights Rome | 39 meals

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6 DAYS

TAMWORTH COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL

DEPARTS > 25 JAN 2024

Enjoy the toe-tapping, boot-scooting hype along with tickets to 2 shows, as **Tamworth** plays host to one of the world's largest country music festivals. Enjoy stops either side of the festival at Heritage Estate Winery, **Glen Innes' Standing Stones, DAG Sheep Station and Sea Acres Rainforest Centre.**

1 Night Armidale | 3 Nights Tamworth | 1 Night Coffs Harbour | 11 meals

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7 DAYS

PARKES ELVIS™ FESTIVAL

DEPARTS > DIAMOND: 10 JAN 2024; GOLD: 11 JAN 2024

Recognised as one of the top 3 Festivals and Events in Australia, the **2024 Parkes Elvis™ Festival** is themed 'Jailhouse Rock' and will celebrate its 31st year. Dress to theme as we celebrate all things Elvis! Also enjoy a guided tour of Wellington Caves and a finale lunch at Heritage Estate Winery.

1 Night Goondiwindi | 1 Night Coonabarabran | 3 Nights Orange | 1 Night Armidale | 17 meals

DEPARTS > DIAMOND: 10 JAN 2024; GOLD: 11 JAN 2024

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One-way airfare to Melbourne ✈️

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There is no better time to visit Corryong than during **The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival**, where the alpine region comes to life and unveils the history of unique bush traditions. Discover the country lifestyle and watch as horsemen and women chase wild horses down the mountainside.

1 Night Albury | 2 Nights Tumbarumba | 2 Nights Thredbo | 2 Nights Canberra | 1 Night Newcastle | 1 Night Grafton | 22 meals

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DEPARTS > 16 MAR 2024

Melbourne is a vibrant city with cafés, eclectic art displays and cultural experiences at every turn. The **Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show** is set to inspire with breathtaking floral displays and spectacular show gardens. Visit Werribee Open Range Zoo, ride Puffing Billy in the Dandenong Ranges and enjoy lunch on Australia's premier rail restaurant the Q Train.

5 Nights Melbourne | 13 meals

DEPARTS > 16 MAR 2024

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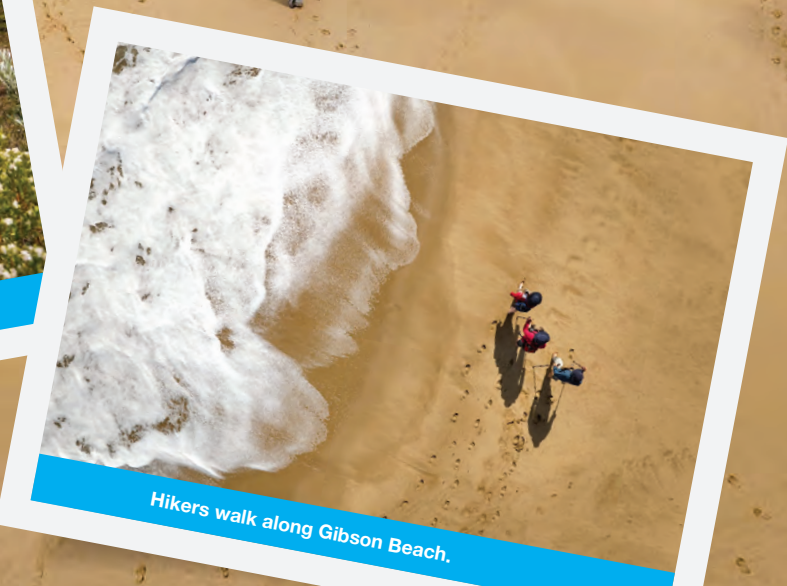
FROM \$4,320*

GREAT *Ocean hike*

STORY TORI MAYNE



Hikers heading down to the beach. Photos Visit Victoria.



Hikers walk along Gibson Beach.

WALKING THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD IS A GREAT WAY TO ENJOY ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST STUNNING GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES AT A SLOWER PACE.

IT IS ARGUABLY Australia's most scenic drive, yet hiking the Great Ocean Road is equally stunning and perhaps more rewarding.

If you want to explore the Great Ocean Road but don't want to commit to hours cooped up inside a car, this walk is a must for your bucket list.

For those who are not experienced hikers or want to avoid the extra hassle of planning a hike, a guided tour with the Australian Walking Company is a good option.

Even though it may cost more to do the walk as part of a tour, the benefits far outweigh the costs with lodge-style accommodation, wet weather hiking gear, meals and even a hard-earned wine at the end of the day provided. You can also leave your luggage at a hosted lodge for the duration of your stay, meaning you

only have to carry water and snacks daily.

While not the most challenging of walks, the 30km trek over three days shows off every high and low view of the beautiful stretch of Victoria's coastline.

Starting from Blanket Bay, the route traverses Cape Otway, Moonlight Head,

AS THE WALK RISES AND FALLS THROUGH DENSE BUSH, YOU MAY LOSE SIGHT OF THE OCEAN IN PLACES, BUT THE SOUND OF CRASHING WAVES IS WITH YOU EVERY STEP.

Wreck Beach and Princetown before finishing at the Twelve Apostles. As the walk rises and falls through dense bush, you may lose sight of the ocean in places, but the sound of crashing waves is with you every step.

With stable topography for most of the walk, including some sections along the

beach, this hike is more about appreciating the location than navigating challenging terrain.

Walkers are encouraged to stop frequently and take advantage of the multiple photo opportunities at several lookouts along the trail. The cherry on top, though, is finishing at the Twelve Apostles.

On the last day of my hike, the rural hillside landscape felt like a great way to end the journey but was quickly overshadowed as the sea-carved Apostles emerged in the distance. Even on a cloudy day, the spectacular nature of these famous limestone formations was not diminished.

This walk had everything, from dense bushland to spectacular 180-degree clifftop scenery and views of Bass Strait from the beach below towering cliffs. The hike produced little physical challenge but delivered the opportunity to admire amazing sights that won't be forgotten. ■



SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GREAT OCEAN WALK.

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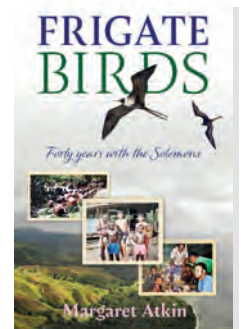


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Museum of Old and New Art entrance.



Historic Richmond Bridge.



Food and wine at Puddleduck Vineyard.



Tasmania

LOVE AFFAIR

AUSTRALIA'S ISLAND STATE IS THE IDEAL DESTINATION FOR EVERYTHING FROM A LENGTHY HOLIDAY TO A SHORT GETAWAY.



Aerial view of Cape Hauy. Photos Tourism Tasmania, Tourism Australia.

DELECTABLE FOOD, DELICIOUS wine, handmade crafts, thought-provoking art and breathtaking scenery; if you love any of these things, a trip to Tasmania won't disappoint.

Tassie is my favourite holiday destination in Australia.

Whether visiting for a long weekend or a couple of weeks, your itinerary will overflow with memories waiting to be made.

On an earlier trip to Tassie, my partner Lexi and I took a two-week road trip up the west coast and down the east.

We only had four days and three nights this time, so we based ourselves in and around Hobart.

I took the reins in planning this escape, because little did Lexi know there was a tad more to this trip than a travel story. I was about to ask her the most important question of my life: "Will you marry me?"

We landed in Hobart on a Saturday morning, picked up our rental car and hit the road.

IT WAS AN IDEAL AUTUMN DAY AND A PERFECT MOMENT TO GET DOWN ON ONE KNEE AND REVEAL THE RING BURNING A HOLE IN MY POCKET.

Our first stop was RACV Hobart Hotel, right in the heart of the CBD.

RACQ members receive a discount on accommodation here and free parking.

We left our luggage in the car to check in later and began exploring with a stroll to Salamanca Market, with a slight detour through St David's Park.

The grass was green, the paths covered in burnt orange leaves and the sky a stunning blue.

It was an ideal autumn day and a perfect moment to get down on one knee and reveal the ring burning a hole in my pocket.

She said yes! Thankfully.

With smiles from ear to ear, we continued on our way.

The Salamanca Market is world-famous and you will understand why once you visit. Smells of seared teriyaki scallops filled our nostrils as we shuffled down rows of stalls and people.

After trying the scallops and watching a street performer swallow knives, we found a man shucking oysters seconds before serving. With a pinch of salt and a squeeze of lemon, they made the perfect brunch. With bellies full of delicious local seafood, it was time to head to Hobart's weird and wonderful Museum of Old and New Art (MONA).

The fastest and most scenic way to get to MONA is via its special ferry service.

The funky vessels depart the CBD every hour or so, winding up the River Derwent to MONA and back. It took us four hours to get through MONA, including a drink on the lawns after art gazing. It's best to pre-book entry and ferry tickets online.

Once we returned to the city, we went for dinner at ALØFT, one of Hobart's most esteemed restaurants. The menu is set and changes with the seasons, so you don't have to think; just eat the exquisite food. We booked seats at the kitchen bar where we watched in awe as the chefs prepared our meal and explained the local ingredients.

The next morning we drove to Richmond, a quaint town with a famous bridge nestled in the Coal River Valley wine region, about 30 minutes north-east of Hobart. We parked the car at Aquila Glamping – our accommodation for the next two nights.

This place is perfect for couples, boasting modern converted shipping containers and a glamping tent built into

a hillside overlooking Richmond and surrounding vineyards.

It wasn't long before we were picked up by Aging Barrel Wine Tours and whisked away for a day of cheese, Pinot Noir and Syrah (cool-climate Shiraz).

You don't have to stay in the region to jump on a wine tour; many of them (like this one) depart from Hobart.

The next morning, we headed to the Port Arthur Historic Site, about a 1.5-hour drive south-east of Hobart. You can guide yourself around or book a tour.

We went on the Escape from Port Arthur tour which focused on the convicts who escaped (or at least tried).

The entry fee included a 20-minute boat tour around the Isle of the Dead which was a highlight. On the way home we stopped for a scallop pie at a servo and it was almost as good as the ones they sell at the Salamanca Market.

Tasmania has to be one of the only places in Australia where seafood at a petrol station is a fantastic idea.

Our detours were frequent as we followed handwritten signs down sideroads to buy leatherwood honey and handmade chocolates.

That's another big Tassie tip; if someone is selling something on the side of the road, follow the signs and buy it. These are often a local farmer's version of a cellar door.

On our final day, we had about six hours before heading to the airport, so we decided to whip out the activewear and tackle the Cape Huay Walk.

It's about a 1.5-hour drive from Hobart to the track's starting point at Fortescue Bay. When you arrive, buy a Parks Pass from one of the ticket machines and display it on your dash (you can buy them online too). You need a pass to visit national parks in Tasmania.

The hike is about 3.5 hours return and tough, with steep stair climbs and descents.

The view on top of Cape Huay is worth every groan and calf cramp. It's hard to describe the feeling of standing on top of the tallest sea cliffs in the southern hemisphere, 300m above the crashing ocean, with nothing but blue between you and Antarctica, while breathing in some of the cleanest air in the world.

'Pure elation' is the best I can do.

Our four-day Tassie adventure truly started and ended on a high (although we could have done without the trek back to the car). ■



She said yes! Author Tristan and Lexi.



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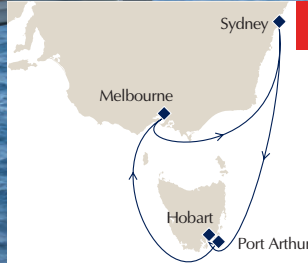
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Dreaming of Arnhem Land

Imagine a tapestry of landscapes and breathtaking natural beauty, bounded by untamed wilderness. Now give it a name: Arnhem Land.

Bordered by the Arafura Sea in the north-east of the Northern Territory, Arnhem Land is vast. It's rugged. It's awe-inspiring. And it's that little bit intimidating - but not with Outback Spirit.

Arnhem Land is one of those secret gems where few venture and more should and Outback Spirit can take you into its wild heart to admire terracotta-hued escarpments, craggy rockpools, savannah woodlands, and sweeping floodplains. There's an abundance of wildlife, too. Banteng. Crocodiles. Bilbies. Timorese ponies. Rainbow Bee-eaters. And more.

Travelling through Miwatj, as Arnhem Land is known by the Yolgnu people, also provides the

opportunity to learn about the world's oldest continuous living culture in human history. Aboriginal people have lived here for over 60,000 years.

Touring with Outback Spirit, authentic cultural activities and insights from Aboriginal guides provide an understanding of the connection to country held by Indigenous Australians.

Arnhem Land may be rugged, but the accommodation is not. Outback Spirit owns a network of stunning safari camps and wilderness lodges. Whether at Seven Spirit Bay on the Cobourg Peninsula, Barramundi Lodge near Maningrida, or Murwangi Safari Camp on the banks of the Arafura Swamp, you'll be laying your head somewhere spectacular, ready to dream of your next day in Arnhem Land.



Top: Explore the expansive landscapes, bursting with wildlife. Below: Experience the oldest continuous living culture in human history.



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Arnhem Land

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Mount Isa Golf Club hosted a leg of the Outback Queensland Masters this year. Photo supplied.

TEE OFF *in the Isa*

MOUNT ISA'S FASCINATING 100 YEARS OF HISTORY IS WAITING TO BE EXPLORED, AND DON'T FORGET YOUR GOLF CLUBS.

STORY **KERRY HEANEY**

IMAGINE STUMBLING UPON one of the world's most significant mineral deposits of silver, lead, zinc and copper just by lifting a hefty rock.

That's the incredible story of Mount Isa's birth 100 years ago in the heart of outback Queensland.

When roving prospector John Campbell Miles found a heavy rock with a lead content of up to 78 percent in 1923, he marked the birth of a mining field.

Mount Isa Mines (MIM) Ltd was founded the following year and a thriving town began to emerge.

But Mount Isa is not just about its underground wealth; it's a city teeming with a vibrant history and a tight-knit local community that revels in the outback lifestyle.

One of their greatest passions? Golf!

In fact, this year, the Outback Queensland Masters golf series culminated in Mount Isa.

If you want to explore this fascinating city like a local, hop on the Best of

Mount Isa Tour by North West Tours.

With affable driver Phillip McLeod as your guide, you will uncover the city's secrets, including the best places to indulge in scrumptious pastries and succulent beef.

Mining is a vital part of the local way of life. While visitors can't participate in

THIS HOSPITAL WAS BUILT OUT OF FEAR THAT THE CITY'S MINERAL RICHES WOULD MAKE IT A TARGET FOR INVASION.

underground mining directly, they can experience it through the immersive Hard Times Mine Tour at Outback at Isa.

Former miners lead the way, taking you 15m below the surface through a maze of tunnels.

You will ride a shuttle train, simulate drilling holes for fake explosives and

experience the adrenaline of hearing them 'explode' while enjoying a well-deserved smoko in the crib room.

If you're feeling daring, try sitting in an emergency refuge bay (ERB) unit, which provides safety for miners during mine disasters. But don't worry, the doors won't be shut!

Beyond mining adventures, Outback at Isa invites you to uncover the wonders of the Riversleigh Fossil Discovery Centre.

Here you will marvel at fossils from the nearby Riversleigh fossil site, one of Australia's richest fossil deposits, and get a behind-the-scenes tour of the laboratory where dedicated researchers work tirelessly to reveal the hidden stories within those ancient rocks.

For a taste of Indigenous culture, the absorbing Bush Tucker Tour awaits.

Led by the knowledgeable Kalkatungu (Kalkadoon) guide Matthew Neb, you will embark on a fascinating one-and-a-half-hour trail exploring the garden surrounding Outback at Isa.

Here you will discover endemic



ERB unit featured on the Hard Times Mine tour. Photos Kerry Heaney.



Fossils and bones at Riversleigh Fossil Discovery Centre.



Golfing friends Robyne Clayton and Sally Jones.

plant species First Nations people use for food, shelter, dyes, medicine and clothing. But that's not all; Mount Isa also holds some curious and mysterious sites that beg to be explored.

Journey into the Mount Isa Underground Hospital and Museum where you will be transported back in time.

This hospital was built out of fear that the city's mineral riches would make it a target for invasion. Volunteers dug deep beneath a hill to create timbered tunnels and you can explore them on a guided tour with a twist!

Another intriguing spot is the Tent House, the last survivor of 179 similar structures constructed between 1932 and 1959 during a mining boom and housing shortage. Its authentic early 20th-century decor will transport you to a bygone era.

For golf enthusiasts, the Mount Isa Golf Club is just 7km from the city centre.

This year the club hosted the final stage of the Queensland Outback

Masters, offering participants a shot at a \$1 million hole-in-one prize.

But the Masters series is not just about winning; it's also about embracing the experience, discovering new places, meeting new people and having fun.

Just ask the 2023 series winners Robyne Clayton, from Queensland, and Peter Skeers, from New South Wales, who had a blast throughout the journey.

Robyne, an RACQ member from Charleville, had a unique and heartwarming experience during her Outback Masters journey.

RACQ came to the rescue when her car broke down in St George.

For a while, it seemed like Robyne's plans were dashed. However, with the help of fellow golfer Sally Jones, from Red Cliffs, Victoria, she got back on track.

Sally offered Robyne a spot in her van and they became firm friends during the rest of the tour, bonding over their shared passion for golf.

Next year's Outback Queensland

Masters, from June 2024, will cover an exciting horseshoe route, starting from the iconic Birdsville Dunes Golf Club, passing through Boulia, Winton, Barcardine and Charleville, culminating in Quilpie where the \$1 million hole-in-one prize will again be up for grabs.

This all-bitumen route offers plenty of dinosaur moments to explore, with many fascinating centres to visit along the way.

So, are you ready to pack your golf clubs and join this incredible adventure?

The Outback Queensland Masters beckons, promising a unique blend of golf, history, natural wonders and a vibrant community that will leave you with unforgettable memories and maybe even some new friends.

outbackqldmasters.com

The writer travelled with the support of Outback Queensland Masters.

VISIT [RACQ.COM/ROADSIDE](https://racq.com/roadside) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RACQ ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE.

STORY LAUREN COONEY

CAPE KEPPEL ESCAPE

AN ISLAND OFF THE CAPRICORN COAST OFFERS AN OFF-THE-GRID GETAWAY.

THE VIEW FROM Flinders Villa overlooking the valley down to Cape Keppel Beach is as good as it gets.

You're surrounded by stretches of pristine beaches and sparkling blue ocean.

But as you absorb the outlook, the best is yet to come. It's the overwhelming sense of seclusion that makes this place so special.

Cape Keppel Beach is tucked away at the northern tip of Curtis Island off the Capricorn Coast.

Accessible by plane (a 15-minute private flight from Rockhampton) or a short boat trip from Yeppoon, North

Curtis Island has opened to visitors.

For Rockhampton locals and property developers Patrick O'Driscoll and John Morris it was all about sharing their slice of paradise with the rest of the world.

"It's such a unique part of the world, it's unknown, it's untapped, and it's on our doorstep," Pat said.

"We both used to come here in the '90s with our children and now we want others to experience it.

"My children have since travelled the world, but they still regard their holidays at North Curtis Island as some of the best memories as far as holidays go."

Cape Keppel Beach is for the family seeking adventure, for groups in search of unforgettable fishing, or for those looking to escape and unwind.

Here, there's an opportunity to get off

the grid – but with the option of luxury.

"It's all about our points of difference, it's the bush, at the beach, on the reef – it's extraordinary," John added.

"You're on 1,200 acres (485ha) and there's only ever a maximum of 22 people there. You have three miles (4.8km) of white sand beaches all to yourself, you can catch dolphins jumping, see the most amazing birds and all sorts of wildlife."

Avid bird watchers are told to keep their eyes peeled for the yellow-breasted chat, a rare sight in Australia.

"Twitchers will just go crazy having the opportunity to see one," John said.

"There are 376 different species of birds that visit the island, so you will always see something very special."

The fishing is also a major drawcard, locals guarantee it rivals some of the best spots in the country.

"In the mangroves and off the beaches you're catching 90cm to 1m barramundi and, of course, there's the mud crabs," Pat said. "And the best part about it is you can set your pots or catch your fish and then you can bring it back, prepare it and share it."

Cape Keppel Beach offers four cottages for two to six guests and a luxury villa, which sleeps six people.

The writer was a guest of Cape Keppel Beach. ■

capekeppelbeach.com



View from the luxury villa that sleeps six.



A secluded beach on Curtis Island.

Book 2024 now to experience the unforgettable

Outback Queensland

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Discover The Tip and Torres Strait



Image Source: TEQ

- Bucket list region of Cape York
- Daintree Rainforest & Discovery Centre
- Cooktown's Grassy Hill Lookout, Botanical Gardens & James Cook Museum
- Split Rock ancient art site and Quinkan Centre
- Moreton Telegraph Station, Weipa Bauxite Mine Tour, Gulf Eco Cruise
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Price includes: One way Economy flight from Horn Island to Cairns. Flights subject to availability. All ensuite accommodation, meals, entries and activities. Savannah Guides Operator driver-guide.

Journey of the Gulf Savannah

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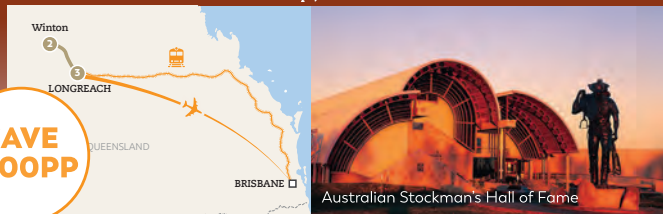
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Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame

- Longreach School of the Air
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- Qantas Founders Museum
- Drover's Sunset Dinner Cruise
- Stockman's Hall of Fame
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- Camden Station Woolshed Dinner
- Winton's Waltzing Matilda Centre
- Australian Age of Dinosaurs & deluxe sunset barbecue
- Gondwana Observatory Experience.

Price includes: One way first class sleeper rail on Spirit of the Outback from Brisbane to Longreach. One way economy flight from Longreach to Brisbane. Rail and flights subject to availability. All ensuite accommodation, meals, entries and activities.



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Big Red Sand Dune

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- Eromanga Dinosaur Museum
- Retrace Burke and Wills, the historic Dig Tree & much more
- Hall of Fame & QANTAS Museum
- Historic Ilfracombe Rail Motor Run
- Indulge in multiple mesmerising, iconic Outback sunsets at Thargomindah, Big Red, and the Longreach Thomson River.

Price includes: One way REX flight from Brisbane to Charleville. One way first class sleeper rail from Longreach to Brisbane. Rail and flights subject to availability. All ensuite accommodation, meals, entries and activities.

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STORY JENNIFER JOHNSTON

Road trip

REDISCOVERY

TRY THIS DOG-FRIENDLY NEW SOUTH WALES ROAD TRIP, TAKING IN THE TWEED AND COFFS COASTS BEFORE HEADING INLAND.

DO YOU REMEMBER taking road trips as a child? I do.

My parents would load up the family car (in our case a station wagon) with every imaginable item they thought we'd need for the next few weeks.

My family didn't own a caravan or a tent. We'd head to accommodation and stay in motels en route to whatever destination my folks had chosen.

Road trippin' in 2023 is a little different.

My kids have all grown up. I'm now a solo traveller with my four-legged companion (a young puppy) and have plenty of destinations to choose from.

During the cooler months, when the nights are chilly, but the days are balmy and warm, I like visiting beaches – not for swimming, but for long ocean-side walks.

So, I booked some overnight stays in New South Wales and set my GPS.

My first day was an easy drive from Brisbane to Brunswick Heads Ferry Reserve Reflections Holiday Park (142km). There's plenty to do in this small coastal village at the mouth of the Brunswick River – including fishing, kayaking tours and whale watching (in season).

From here you can explore Byron Bay's

hinterland, including the Crystal Castle and Shambhala Gardens, and the Byron Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (formerly known as the Macadamia Castle) which has many varieties of Australian wildlife.

For art lovers, consider the Tweed Valley Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Centre.

FROM MOONEE BEACH, I DROVE INLAND TO THE SLEEPY TOWN OF NANA GLEN. KEEPING AN EYE OUT FOR LOCAL CELEBRITY RUSSELL CROWE, I STOPPED FOR COFFEE AND CAKE AT THE IDLE IN CAFE.

Five kilometres from Brunswick Heads are the beaches at Ocean Shores.

Not all beach access allows dogs – some are protected for the migratory shorebirds – but farther up there's a path leading to a dog off-lead area, where long strolls on stretches of white sand are the order of the day.



Gunnedah Maize Mill with Dorothea McKellar's poem.

En route to Moonee Beach Reflections Holiday Park (227km from Brunswick Heads) you can stop at the coastal towns of Ballina, Evans Head and Yamba.

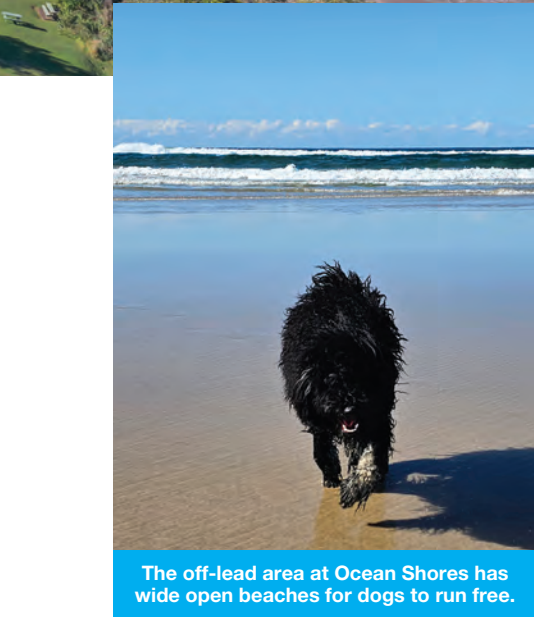
On the mouth of the Clarence River, the small seaside town of Yamba is a popular holiday destination. It has been declared by scientists as having the best climate system in the world.

Between Yamba and Coffs Harbour is Yuraygir National Park – one of the most diverse bioregions in Australia.

Inside this protected area, are walking tracks with scenic coastal outlooks, rainforests, woodlands, wetlands, rivers, lakes and estuaries.



Aerial view of Bonny Hills Holiday Park overlooking Rainbow Beach.



The off-lead area at Ocean Shores has wide open beaches for dogs to run free.

There's plenty to see and do around Moonee Beach.

Flopping at the Moonee Beach Reflections Holiday Park isn't a bad option, but if you can drag yourself away, one of Australia's iconic 'big' attractions is at nearby Coffs Harbour.

The 13m Big Banana is also a fun park, with an indoor giant water slide, a laser tag arena, ice-skating rink and 36-hole mini golf course.

A little farther up, on the opposite side of the Pacific Highway, is The Clog Barn.

Walk through the shop, (literally) packed to the rafters with everything Dutch, then outside into the garden to discover a



The Clog Barn at Coffs Harbour.

miniature village with replicas of buildings and cultural attractions from Holland.

Each piece was lovingly handmade by retired builder, 91-year-old Thomas Hartsuyker.

Thomas' son John demonstrates the unique art of clog-making in the store daily at 10am and 2pm.

From Moonee Beach, I drove inland to the sleepy town of Nana Glen. Keeping an eye out for local celebrity Russell Crowe, I had coffee and cake at the Idle In Cafe.

Returning to the coastal road, I popped into the quaint town of Bellingen.

The vibe was friendly at The Old Butter Factory Cafe and I couldn't resist stocking up on sweets at Sweet Bellingen on the main street.

New South Wales' second largest estuarine salt marsh, Lake Cathie (pronounced 'cat-eye'), is 12km south of Port Macquarie, but it was getting dark so there was no time for stopping.

I checked into my luxe premium cabin at Bonny Hills Reflections Holiday Park after dark (winter means early sunsets).

The following morning I was gobsmacked to see stunning ocean vistas from my cabin's front deck.

A path on the ocean side led to a secluded, dog-friendly beach.

From Port Macquarie, I drove inland to Tamworth via the B56 Oxley Highway.

A local in a coffee shop at Kew informed me the highway has 78 bends.

The GPS blue line remained squiggly for some time, but it was an epic scenic

drive. From Wauchope to Mount Seaview, and Yarrowitch to Walcha East, the landscapes morphed from open farmland, to rolling hills, to mountain vistas.

Lake Keepit is 56km west of Tamworth and six hours north-west of Sydney.

This large reserve is popular with water sports and fishing enthusiasts, nature lovers and bushwalkers.

The dam's water surface is 4,370ha and its capacity is 425,000 megalitres and supplies water to the Namoi Valley.

Upon checking in, the Lake Keepit Reflections Holiday Park Manager Lauren Hockley informed me the storage capacity in the lake was equivalent to Sydney Harbour!

The regional town of Gunnedah is 39km north-east of Lake Keepit.

Pick up directions at the Visitor Information Centre (181 Chandos Street) to the town's highlights, including the art silo – a 29m sepia mural on the Gunnedah Maize Mill featuring the famous poem, *My Country*, penned by Dorothea Mackellar.

Nearby is the Water Tower Museum with murals depicting scenes from the Vietnam War on its circular walls.

Return to Lake Keepit in time for sunset and set the alarm to catch a multi-hued sunrise over the water.

There are so many incredible destinations out there, so pack your vehicle and get on the road. ■

The writer was a guest of Reflections Holiday Parks (reflectionsholidayparks).

ON THE ROAD TO

Adventure

STORY TORI MAYNE

CARS ARE IN the DNA of RACQ member Lang Kidby.

With his father a former owner of the Holden dealership in Southport, Lang's interest in cars started from a young age, as did his intrigue with the world's motoring pioneers.

But a presentation to his Year 10 high school class in 1962 cemented Lang's idea to recreate historic overland expeditions.

"We had to do a speech on an Australian pioneer in Year 10, but my

teacher had never heard of (Australian adventurer) Francis Birtles which made me think, I've got to bring this pioneer's story back to life," Mr Kidby said.

"These transport pioneers were unbelievable in their efforts, so I think it's important to bring those who have been forgotten back into the history books for the next generation."

Lang and his wife Bev have completed more than 20 global adventures – from driving 'around the world' in a 1969 Fiat 500 to re-enacting Bert Hinkler's 1928 first solo flight from England to Australia in a restored 1927 Avro Avian plane.

However, Lang's long-standing passion

BRISBANE'S LANG KIDBY AND HIS WIFE BEV WILL DRIVE FROM LONDON TO MELBOURNE NEXT YEAR, REPLICATING THE FEAT OF A FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN MORE THAN 90 YEARS AGO.

for Birtles makes their next adventure more special.

In April 2024, Lang and Bev will embark on a four-month expedition to recreate the more than 26,000km journey Birtles took to become the first person to drive a motor car from London to Melbourne, between 1927 and 1928.

Lang and Bev will recreate the trip in a replica of the 1923 Bean 14 used by Birtles.

"I knew this replica car was in the Gilberts Motor Museum in Strathalbyn, South Australia, and I had my eye on it ever since it was made 35 years ago," he said.

"The body was built exactly to the millimetre of the original car and it is mechanically identical.

"Unfortunately, the collector who owned the car passed away, so I



Lang and Bev Kidby with their replica Bean 14. Photos Jake Ryan.



Birtles' original Bean 14. Photo courtesy National Museum of Australia.



The replica Bean 14.

contacted the family and convinced them to sell it to me.”

Birtles' original Bean 14 is part of the National Museum of Australia's National Historical Collection in Canberra.

Although Lang and Bev will pass through some potentially dangerous countries, Lang said the road conditions, shipping the car across international borders and keeping it going would be their main challenges.

“One of the most challenging parts will be navigating one of the windiest roads over the hills between India and Burma where we may get stuck and have to shift plans,” he said. “Also, we'll be shipping the car out to the UK in late January and on the way back, when we hit Singapore, we will have to ship it over to Darwin as a part of a weekly shipping service between the two countries.

“Since we can't really plan ahead and book a ship in advance, we may have to wait a week in Singapore if we miss one.

“Apart from that though, it's just a matter of keeping the car going.”

Lang said the support they received from car clubs and organisations worldwide was fantastic, but the enthusiasm from people they met along the way, who had next to nothing, inspired them to keep going.

“There is a global organisation called FIVA (The International Federation for Historic Vehicles) based in Paris, which looks after classic, vintage and veteran cars, and they have arranged a whole team of representatives in each country we will travel through,” Lang said.

“Aside from that, we really do meet some great people on these trips, especially in small villages.”

It was an experience on a trip through Syria where Lang said this sentiment really rang true.

“We were nearly driven off the road because people were taking photos and yelling out ‘stop, stop we'll buy you lunch,

come to our place and visit’,” Lang said.

“In these small towns, everyone wanted to talk to us, which shows that sometimes the people who haven't got much are the ones who would give the shirt off their back to help you.”

Lang said they were still open to more sponsors and hoped the support continued to the finish line on 10 July 2024.

“We will finish in Melbourne, just like Birtles did and we hope to see the same level of support as him when around 10,000 people lined the streets of Melbourne upon his return in 1928,”

Lang said. ■

Learn more at next-horizon.org/the-greatest-drive/



SCAN THE CODE TO SEE MORE ABOUT FRANCIS BIRTLES.



The route to be followed by Lang and Bev.

BIRTLES-MANIA



- Francis Birtles (pictured) used bicycles and motor cars to pioneer overland routes and set records in the early 20th century.

- In 1926 he drove from Darwin to Melbourne in a record-breaking eight-and-a-half days.
- In 1927 Birtles left London in his Bean 14 car for his 26,000km trip to Melbourne, which he completed in nine months – a feat not surpassed until 1955.
- Birtles' Bean 14 is part of the National Museum of Australia collection in Canberra.



A BruderX off-road camper trailer.

BRIGHT IDEAS UP FOR AWARDS

LEARN ABOUT SOME OF THE INNOVATIONS IN CONTENTION FOR THE PRESTIGIOUS AUSTRALIAN GOOD DESIGN AWARDS.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOOD Design Awards are one of the world's longest-standing and most prestigious design awards, attracting innovative entries from Australia, New Zealand and further afield.

RACQ Motoring Editor Ged Bulmer was among the field of design experts invited to judge this year's entries.

Here is a small selection of the entries in the Automotive and Transport category.

CAMPER BUILT FOR RUGGED RIDE

Can we experience the vast natural beauty of Australia and beyond without compromising on style, quality and comfort?

That's the question the team at Moorooka's BruderX caravans posed when setting out to design a camper trailer with the quality, functionality, durability and capability to take on the world's toughest terrains.

Their solution was to take an 'overkill' approach to the design by pushing boundaries in materials and engineering while ensuring the product adhered to all Australian standards.

The compact EXP-4 features BruderX's

state-of-the-art suspension system which offers an impressive 55cm of ride height adjustment using airbags, dual shocks and patented design swing arms, while also providing enhanced manoeuvrability to turn on the tightest tracks.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOOD DESIGN AWARDS IS ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE DESIGN AWARD PROGRAMS IN THE INDUSTRY, SPANNING 11 OVERARCHING DESIGN DISCIPLINES AND MORE THAN 30 SUB-CATEGORIES.

A solid A-frame chassis, with internal subframes at stress points, sits under a lightweight, yet strong composite body.

Intelligent mounting systems allow the pod and frame to bend and vibrate independent of each other, minimising the stresses to both components.

With a strong aesthetic identity, the EXP-4 pod is framed in aluminium and

surfaced in distinctive Raptor bedliner.

The camper is designed to allow full off-grid capabilities, including custom-designed Jerry can holders, Garmin and Victron electronic systems, rechargeable lithium batteries and solar panels.

VEHICLE STORAGE SOLUTION

The Australian-designed and assembled KUFU Drawer System addresses the need for a versatile vehicle storage solution that its designers claim is modular, adaptable, secure and weather-resistant.

While utes are an obvious target market, the versatile vehicle storage solution is designed for a wide range of applications including recreation, trades, defence, medical and fleet industries, and can be installed in a variety of different vehicle types.

Featuring a universal 'Catch-and-Click' mounting design, the robust all-weather system accommodates heavy equipment and tools, with a one-tonne load rating across twin drawers and a 150kg load rating per drawer.

Built-in retaining tracks with sliding eye bolts provide tie-down points to enable secure cargo transportation, while a combination of gaskets, seals and venting

ensures durability and resilience in harsh conditions. The KUFU Drawer System meets ADR42/05 and ADR69/00 safety and reliability requirements and can be swiftly installed or removed.

TOURING BIKE GOES 'GREEN'

Hailed as the world's first 'green touring' motorcycle, the Italian-designed Energica Experia is also claimed to be the first electric bike built specifically for the fast-growing adventure riding category.

Boasting an urban riding range of 420km and an extra-urban range of 256km, the manufacturer says it is the longest-range electric motorcycle on the market and the first to offer mileage on par with the 300–400km that ICE bike's offer.

Featuring an in-house developed 22.5kWh battery and mechanicals inspired by the brand's MotoE racing experience, the Experia is capable of high-power DC fast charging and features a Permanent Magnets Assisted

Synchronous Reluctance Motor with a peak power output of 75kW.

That's enough to propel the 260kg electric bike from 0–100km/h in 3.5 seconds with sufficient power and torque for overtaking and maintaining safe highway speeds.

In addition to the need for a long riding range, the manufacturer says the Experia's design has been optimised by positioning the electric motor and other components low in the frame to enhance technical control in mixed terrains.

The bike is optimised for long-range performance via its aerodynamic sport-touring fairing, precision-manufactured electric powertrain and advanced battery technology which enables users to travel further and recharge faster.

SEAT SMOOTHS ROUGH SEAS

Designed in New Zealand by Blender Design, the Jolt Rider Shock-Mitigating Marine Seat provides a smoother, safer



The Jolt Rider Shock-Mitigating Marine Seat.



The Italian-designed Energica Experia.



The KUFU Drawer System fitted to a ute.

and more comfortable boating experience by mitigating wave impacts in moderate to heavy seas by up to 60 percent.

Such seats are not new, but the design team has taken a fresh engineering approach to the shock-absorbing system, with the goal of improving both performance and functionality, while reducing weight, complexity and cost.

By redeveloping the shock-mitigation system for a range of user weights and sea states, and eliminating the need for user-specific weight adjustments, the team was able to optimise the mechanical system and arrangement of components to eliminate unnecessary complexities.

This includes the adoption of an internal and progressive multi-spring system which reduces product weight by 20 percent and the addition of a simple lever-operated height mechanism which simplifies adjustment for multiple users.

The design team said Jolt Rider was engineered for both commercial and recreational use.

LEARN MORE

This is a small selection of the 24 entries in the Automotive and Transport category of the Australian Good Design Awards which span 11 overarching design disciplines and more than 30 sub-categories. ■

To learn more visit good-design.org/good-design-awards.



Dual-cab utes, like the Toyota HiLux, dominate new car sales alongside SUVs.

CHANGING GEARS

LONG-TIME CONTRIBUTOR TO *THE ROAD AHEAD* JOHN EWING LOOKS BACK AT THE EVOLUTION OF MOTORING DURING HIS TIME REVIEWING CARS.

BY THE TIME you consume these words this humble scribe will be enjoying three months of well-earned leave.

And by October's end, with a few days shy of 33 years clocked up at RACQ, I will be hitting the road to enjoy retirement alongside my dear wife, Trich.

I have been a regular contributor to *The Road Ahead* since the late '90s and had the pleasure, privilege and envied position of being a full-time member of RACQ's new vehicle road testing team since 2005.

In that time, my back-of-an-envelope tally suggests I have had a steer of somewhere north of 2,000 cars and utes from most manufacturers and market segments. Big ones, little ones, sporty ones, not-so-sporty ones, off-roaders and soft-roaders, cheapies, and expensive exotic ones.

So, it was suggested for my last regular mag column I take a look in my rear-view mirror and reflect on the mind-boggling changes to cars over that time and in the market too.

Long gone are

the days when big six-cylinder and V8 cars dominated. Our local car industry is also now sadly gone taking significant manufacturing capability with it.

Even small and medium cars, once the popular alternative to thirsty large cars, have fallen from grace with buyers.

Now it's SUVs and dual-cab utes that hold sway, capturing about 80 percent of the market, with a dual-cab ute the biggest-selling light vehicle overall for nearly eight years.

Electrification of powertrains has also taken off, slowly at first with hybrids, then plug-in hybrids and now full EVs.

And the last couple of years, especially, have seen EVs become the 'new black' with a surge in sales, though still a relatively small percentage of the market.

With greater affordability, more choice, expanding infrastructure and

improving battery/charging technologies, the age of the EV is well and truly upon us.

Internal combustion engines still dominate, but it seems the sun is setting on petrol and diesel-powered vehicles.

We have even seen a couple of production hydrogen-powered fuel-cell passenger cars hit our roads recently, albeit in tiny numbers.

Through that period too, Korean car makers and their products have gone from strength to strength, with Chinese car brands now set to challenge traditional brands for dominance.

The level of technology in cars has positively burgeoned during my years with RACQ.

It's hard to think of a part of the modern motor vehicle that the unprecedented advances in electronics and technology haven't touched in some way or transformed.

The level of electronic control over mechanical components such as steering, suspension, brakes, body systems, transmissions, fuel systems and engines has expanded and become increasingly sophisticated with growing onboard computing power.

Stricter emissions standards, the



John Ewing.

closely related imperative to improve fuel efficiency, the drive for safer vehicles, changing vehicle regulatory standards and meeting consumer wants and needs have been major drivers for these changes.

High-output, small-capacity engines, typically with forced induction courtesy of a turbo, have become commonplace even at the budget end of the new car market.

Transmissions have become more sophisticated and moved from three, four or five ratios to six, eight or more, even going as far as 10 forward ratios.

The CVT transmission which Nissan adopted in the first and unimpressive Micra looked like it would never catch on. But CVTs have been refined and now several makers including Audi, Toyota, Mitsubishi, Nissan and Subaru all use them successfully.

And the slick-shifting dual-clutch auto, essentially a manual gearbox with dual input shafts and an electronic brain to control the shifts, has become widely used.

Advanced safety systems and

IT'S UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN AN ERA OF INCREDIBLE CHANGE AND I HAVE LOVED THE TRIP, LIVING AND BREATHING CARS.

a plethora of driver assistance technologies (sometimes referred to as ADAS) are keeping drivers and passengers safer, making the driving task easier, and helping compensate for driver error.

Rather than being confined to high-end luxury cars as once was the case, these technologies have increased in sophistication and have cascaded down into most models, including what were once tool-of-trade vehicles, the now ubiquitous ute.

Modern vehicles can even send an SOS message if the vehicle crashes.

Adoption of these systems is part of the push for safer vehicles, but it's also a part of manufacturers encouraging consumer acceptance of

these technologies on the way toward eventually having autonomous vehicles on our roads.

Back in the day AM/FM radio-cassette players and perhaps a CD player was about as fancy as things got.

Now, cassettes are like the dinosaurs, CD players are almost a technological relic and we have what's referred to as 'infotainment' systems in most vehicles with increasingly larger touchscreens, sat nav, digital radio, Bluetooth and smartphone mirroring connectivity.

Some vehicles are now web-connected and receive live data updates.

There are smartphone apps to allow drivers to stay remotely connected to their car and over-the-air updating of vehicle systems among increasingly connected capabilities.

It's undoubtedly been an era of incredible change and I have loved the trip, living and breathing cars.

I have enjoyed penning car reviews and technical articles that I hope *The Road Ahead* readers have found informative and enjoyed reading.

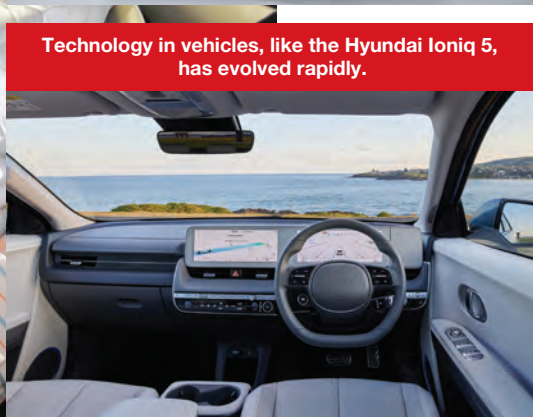
Yours in motoring! ■



Safety systems have undergone vast improvements.



EVs like the MG ZS are growing in popularity.



Technology in vehicles, like the Hyundai Ioniq 5, has evolved rapidly.

6

OF THE BEST

NEW CHINESE VEHICLES



Tesla
Model Y Rear-Wheel Drive



GWM
Ora Ultra



MG4
Essence 64

CHINA MIGHT NOT be the first country that springs to mind when thinking of Australia's best-selling electric vehicle (EV), the Tesla Model Y and its sedan equivalent, the Model 3, but both are built in Tesla's Gigafactory in Shanghai. In June, the Model Y was not only the nation's biggest-selling EV but its 5,560 sales made it the second highest-selling vehicle overall, behind the Toyota HiLux. Available in three variants, Performance AWD, Long-Range AWD and Rear-Wheel Drive, it is the latter that offers the most affordable entry point into this electric medium SUV. With a single motor driving its rear wheels, the entry-level Tesla lacks the searing acceleration of its dual-motor AWD stablemates, but still covers the 0–100km/h sprint in 6.9 seconds, which is quick enough to give many hot hatches a hurry-up. The practical and roomy five-seat interior offers excellent storage via front and rear trunks, while the minimalist and hi-tech interior is centred around a distinctive tablet-sized screen that houses many of the vehicle controls. At the heart of the Model Y is a 60kWh battery from which the Tesla manages to extract an impressive 455km of range. ■

CHINESE CAR MAKERS including GWM are at the forefront of a new battle for the hearts, minds and wallets of Australian EV buyers. GWM recently announced a price cut for its small hatchback the Ora EV, citing reduced costs of battery technology due to lower raw material prices. The GWM Ora EV range now starts from just \$39,990 plus on-road costs, with drive-away pricing in Queensland of \$41,550. The entry-level GWM Ora features a 126kW/250Nm front-mounted electric motor and the smaller of two available battery packs, a 48kWh unit, delivering a claimed range of 310km (WLTP). Stepping up to the Ora Extended Range brings a larger 63kWh battery which increases range to 420km, with the price bumping up to \$45,990 plus on-road costs, or \$47,670 drive-away in Queensland. The line-up also includes the range-topping Ora GT, which costs \$51,990 plus on-road costs, or \$53,790 drive-away, and a new Ultra grade which is positioned between the Extended Range and the GT. We like the look of the Ultra which features the larger 63kWh battery and claimed 420km range, plus additional comfort and convenience features over the Extended Range. ■

DESPITE STILL BEING a relatively young brand in this Chinese-owned incarnation, MG can rightly claim to have been at the forefront of EV affordability courtesy of its well-established MG ZS EV. The title of Australia's most affordable EV has since been wrested from the ZS SUV but MG isn't giving up the fight and will soon welcome an all-new and even more affordable model in the form of the MG4 electric hatchback. The entry-level Excite 51 will offer a 125kW motor, 51kWh battery and 350km of range for a sticker price of \$38,990 plus on-road costs. Other models in the MG4 range include the Excite 64 and better-equipped Essence 64 equipped with a larger 64kWh battery, 150kW motor, and circa 450km range, which will cost \$44,990 and \$47,990 respectively. For buyers with deeper pockets who want more range, there will also be the option of a top-of-the-line MG4 Long Range 77 with larger 77kWh battery, more-powerful 180kW motor and a long-legged 530km of range for \$55,990 (MRLP). ■

Price: \$65,400 (MRLP)

Battery: 60kWh lithium-ion

Motor: Synchronous electric 239kW/430Nm

Range/energy consumption: 455km (WLTP)/13.2kWh/100km

Safety rating: ★★★★★ (2022)

Warranty: Four years/80,000km vehicle, battery and drive unit eight years/160,000km.

Price: \$50,730 (drive-away)

Battery: 63kWh lithium-ion

Motor: Synchronous electric 126kW/250Nm

Range/energy consumption: 420km (WLTP)/15kWh/100km

Safety rating: ★★★★★ (2022)

Warranty: Seven years/unlimited km vehicle, eight years battery.

Price: \$50,377 (drive-away)

Battery: 64kWh lithium-ion

Motor: Synchronous electric 150kW/250Nm

Range/energy consumption: 450km (WLTP)/14.2kWh/100km

Safety rating: Not yet ANCAP rated

Warranty: Seven years/unlimited km vehicle, seven years/unlimited km battery.

CHINA IS NOW THE THIRD LARGEST SOURCE OF NEW VEHICLE IMPORTS TO AUSTRALIA WITH GROWING INFLUENCE IN BOTH COMBUSTION AND ELECTRIC-POWERED VEHICLES.



BYD
Dolphin Premium

ANOTHER NEW BRAND vying for the attention of value-focused EV buyers is BYD (Build Your Dreams), which recently announced its own cut-price model the BYD Dolphin. The Dolphin is now positioned as the price leader in the BYD range with a starting price of \$38,890 plus on-road costs for the entry-level Dynamic, or \$44,890 for the more-powerful and better-specified Premium which boasts more range. Both these versions are available to order now with a third variant, the BYD Dolphin Sport, due in 2024. The base Dolphin Dynamic features a 70kW/180Nm motor, 44.9kWh battery, and a claimed driving range of 340km (WLTP). Stepping up to the Premium brings a more-powerful 150kW/310Nm motor, a 60.48kWh battery, 0–100km/h acceleration of seven seconds, and an estimated 427km of range (WLTP). Standard features of both variants include BYD’s Blade Battery technology, 360-degree camera, a suite of safety features including seven airbags and a range of intelligent driver aids, wireless phone charging and electrically adjusted front seats. ■

- Price:** \$44,890 (MRLP)
- Battery:** 60.48kWh lithium-iron phosphate
- Motor:** Permanent magnet synchronous electric 150kW/310Nm
- Range/energy consumption:** 427km (WLTP)/14.2kWh/100km
- Safety rating:** Not yet ANCAP rated
- Warranty:** Six years/150,000km vehicle, eight years/160,000km battery.



GWM
Cannon XSR

IF THERE'S ONE category that says a brand has truly arrived on the contemporary Australian new vehicle market it's the booming dual-cab 4x4 ute segment. Here, the offerings from GWM and LDV are finding it harder to prise loose the grip of industry giants like Toyota, Ford and Isuzu, but it appears only a matter of time before we're buying and driving more Chinese utes. As of June 2023, GWM's Cannon ute had chalked up a respectable 5,291 sales, still a long way behind the Ford Ranger's market-leading 23,620, but enough to secure sixth place ahead of established rivals like Nissan's Navara and Volkswagen's Amarok. Keenly priced from a low \$35,990, the seven-variant Cannon range now steps all the way up to the generously equipped XSR. Powered by a category-competitive 2.0-litre turbo-diesel driving through a ZF eight-speed automatic and a Borg Warner-engineered part-time 4x4 system, the GWM's 3000kg braked towing capacity falls short of the best in category. Nevertheless, with its affordable price tag and standard features, it's likely GWM influence will only continue to grow in this all-important segment. ■

- Price:** \$52,990 (drive-away)
- Engine:** 2.0 litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel (120kW/400Nm)
- Fuel consumption:** 9.4L/100km
- Fuel tank capacity:** 78 Litres
- Safety rating:** ★★★★★ ANCAP (2021)
- Warranty:** Seven years/unlimited km.



BYD
Atto 3

ARGUABLY THE GREATEST recent disruptor to arrive in the disruptive electric vehicle segment, the BYD Atto 3 SUV came from the clouds in 2022/23 to briefly usurp the MG ZS EV as Australia's most affordable electric vehicle. It has reaped the benefits of its keen pricing, with June year-to-date sales of 6,196 units meaning it trails only the best-selling Tesla Model 3 and Model Y twins in the EV segment. Available in a single Superior trim level in Standard and Extended range configurations, the entry-level Atto 3 boasts a 50kWh battery and 345km (WLTP) range for an advertised drive-away price of \$48,011, or there's a 60kWh model with 420km (WLTP) of range that costs \$51,011. Boasting a roomy concept-car-like interior with an unusual 12.8-inch rotating touchscreen display, the well-appointed Atto 3 comes standard with Bluetooth, DAB digital radio, wireless phone charger, heated side mirrors and an electric tailgate. Safety features include seven airbags, rear cross-traffic alert, lane departure warning and adaptive cruise control, adding up to an impressively equipped offering at a price that undercuts most other electric SUV rivals. ■

- Price:** \$51,011 (MRLP)
- Battery:** 60.48kWh lithium-ion phosphate
- Motor:** Permanent magnet synchronous electric 150kW/310Nm
- Range/energy consumption:** 420km (WLTP)/14.4kWh/100km
- Safety rating:** ★★★★★ ANCAP (2022)
- Warranty:** Six years/150,000km vehicle, eight years/160,000km battery.



REVIEW JOHN EWING

Kia Seltos GT-Line AWD MY23

LAUNCHED IN 2019, Kia's Seltos has established itself as one of Australia's most popular small SUVs, holding fourth place in its category behind the Haval Jolion, Mazda CX-30 and best-selling MG ZS.

Model year '23 enhancements to the Seltos' powertrain, design and technology, plus additional safety, comfort and convenience features, add to the appeal of this capable and well-equipped small SUV.

The updated Seltos is available in four trim levels – S, Sport, Sport+ and GT-Line – with two powertrains, giving buyers a choice of six variants.

Available in all trim levels is a carryover Atkinson-cycle 2.0-litre MPI engine and CVT auto combination, with the other engine being an updated Smartstream 1.6-litre T-GDI, fitted exclusively with AWD to the Sport+ and GT-Line models.

Pricing starts at \$29,500 for the entry-level 2.0-litre S FWD, rising to \$44,900 for the turbocharged AWD GT-Line tested here.

When writing, Kia was offering drive-away deals on the Seltos, with the GT-Line 1.6 turbo AWD available for \$47,690.

MY23 prices are up across the range by between \$2,010 and \$2,710, partially justified by refreshed trim and more generous standard equipment.

New additions to the GT-Line include a powered driver's seat with two-position memory, power tailgate and a sporty D-cut steering wheel.

As it stands, the GT-Line pushes perilously close to the price of Hyundai's feisty 206kW/392Nm 2.0-litre turbo Hyundai Kona N (\$49,200) and is undercut by the drive-away pricing of the fully electric MG ZS EV.

Kia's stylists have given the MY23 exterior design

some tweaks, including a new front bumper and prominent skid plate garnish, subtly redesigned rear bumper, and in the case of GT-Line models, new vertically arranged front foglamps, plus new LED taillights with connecting LED strip.

The revised turbo engine boasts a 12 percent power bump to 146kW@6,000 rpm, but maximum torque is unchanged at 265Nm between 1,600–4,500rpm.

The engine is tuned to accept standard ULP and returns official combined cycle fuel consumption of 7.4L/100km.

Arguably bigger news is that the turbo engine now mates to a slick eight-speed torque converter automatic instead of the previous seven-speed DCT.

Interior technology updates include new digital displays replacing analogue gauges, with dual 10.25-inch screens making for an impressively up-to-the-minute looking dash.

The GT-Line also gets heated and ventilated front seats, a heated steering wheel, sunroof, wireless device charging, eight-speaker Bose premium audio, interior mood lighting and a head-up display.

The Seltos offers more interior occupant space than some rivals, with 433 litres of load space expanding to 1,393 litres with the 60:40 split rear seats flat-folded.

On the road, the Seltos delivers an easy and pleasing drive experience.

The turbo engine and eight-speed auto combination feels notably more committed, responsive and refined than the 2.0-litre and CVT combo.

Kia's seven-year/unlimited-kilometre warranty and a capped price servicing program add to the appealing Seltos package. ■

▶ KEY STATS



PRICE: \$44,900 (MLP)

ENGINE: 1.6-litre four-cylinder turbo-petrol (146kW/265Nm)

ANCAP SAFETY RATING: ★★★★★ (2019)

FUEL CONSUMPTION:
Combined cycle:
7.4L/100km
(175 g/km CO₂)

FOR: Spacious for a small SUV, additional oomph of updated turbo engine, long warranty, generous standard features, full-size spare wheel, new connected car technology.

AGAINST: More expensive than some key competitors, hard interior plastic trims, no multi-view camera available.

🔄 Mazda CX-60 D50e Evolve

MAZDA DESCRIBES ITS new CX-60 SUV as a “step change” since it represents the beginning of a new line of luxury models and the first time in decades the Hiroshima-based car maker has offered a prestige vehicle.

There have been various top-of-the-range Mazda models but the CX-60 is the spearhead of a new wave of luxury models designed to take on the likes of Lexus and Genesis, even Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz.

The CX-60 introduces Mazda’s first all-hybrid model range, two new inline six-cylinder engines and the brand’s first plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV).

Positioned above Mazda’s mid-size CX-5 and CX-8 SUVs and boasting more power, stronger performance, higher pricing and a longer list of luxury features, the CX-60 is longer and wider than the CX-5 and offers both more cargo volume and more front and rear shoulder room.

There are three different model grades, starting with the Evolve, rising to the mid-range GT and on to the range-topping Azami, and three all-new powertrains available on each of the variants.

Pricing starts at \$59,800 for the CX-60 Evolve 3.3-litre petrol six-cylinder and rises through nine variants to the range-topping Azami PHEV at \$85,500, making it the most expensive model in Mazda’s current range.

Of the three powertrains, we spent most time at the wheel of the new inline six-cylinder turbodiesel, which offers an ideal combination of performance, drivability and efficiency.

The 3.3-litre turbocharged inline six-cylinder diesel designated ‘e-Skyactiv D’ is a larger cubic

capacity than typically offered in Mazda’s range and benefits from turbocharging and a 48V MHEV (mild hybrid electric vehicle) system to aid its performance and efficiency.

With outputs of 187kW/550Nm and peak torque available between 1,500 and 2,400rpm, the engine musters plenty of low and mid-range power and shows a willingness to rev to redline, while sipping fuel at an impressively thrifty 4.9L/100 km.

Alongside the diesel is a new 3.3 litre in-line six-cylinder petrol turbo, also with 48V MHEV technology, dubbed ‘e-Skyactiv G’.

This engine offers more power but less torque than the diesel with outputs of 209kW/450Nm and fuel consumption of 7.4L/100km.

In addition to the two new inline six-cylinder engines, the CX-60 also introduces Mazda’s first plug-in hybrid powertrain, dubbed e-Skyactiv PHEV.

It combines a modified version of the 2.5-litre four-cylinder direct injection petrol engine found in the Mazda CX-5 with a 100kW electric motor and a 17.8kWh electric battery.

The electric motor and battery combination offer a claimed electric range of 76km at speeds up to 100km/h with the high-voltage battery able to be fully recharged from empty in 2.5 hours using a 7.2kW AC charger. All three engines are paired with a new eight-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission with a choice of four drive modes, plus an EV mode for the CX-60 PHEV.

We sampled a representative range of powertrains and trim levels and found they each delivered strong acceleration, disciplined handling and a level of driving engagement that is a step above standard Mazda fare. ■

▶ KEY STATS



PRICE: \$61,800 (MRLP)

DRIVETRAIN: 3.3-litre inline six-cylinder turbodiesel with 48V MHEV (Mild Hybrid Electric Vehicle) system

ANCAP SAFETY RATING: ★★★★★ (2023)

FUEL CONSUMPTION: 4.9L/100 km (128g/km CO₂)

FOR: Smooth, responsive and impressively frugal engine, nicely styled and finished, roomy five-seat interior, crisp handling and decent ride on 18-inch wheels.

AGAINST: Ride quality and road noise on 20-inch wheel variants, some hesitancy in PHEV versions when shifting between drive systems, need to step up to high-grade variants and/or add options to get full luxury experience.

REVIEW GED BULMER





Image 4

EMERGENCY VEHICLES

The sound of an emergency vehicle's siren can spark fear in even the most experienced driver. If an emergency vehicle is coming towards you and is sounding an alarm or showing flashing lights, you must give way to it. If you are in the way you must move out of its path as soon as you can do so safely. For more information about Queensland road rules please contact the Department of Transport and Main Roads at tmr.qld.gov.au or by calling 13 2380.

TAKE ACTION

Move left to give the emergency vehicle a clear run down the middle of the road. If you can't move left safely, stay where you are and let the emergency vehicle overtake you. Do not move your vehicle suddenly or drive into the path of the emergency vehicle. **See image 1.**

GIVE WAY

Giving way to emergency vehicles should always be done with the utmost care and with the safety of yourself and all other road users as a priority. The road rules allow for drivers to do things like enter an intersection on a red light to get out of the way of an emergency vehicle if it is safe to do so and it is required under the circumstances. **See image 2.**

INTERSECTIONS

Emergency vehicles often stop or slow down when they enter intersections to check if they can pass through safely. You must give way to an emergency vehicle that is sounding an alarm or showing flashing red or blue lights. This applies even if you are facing a green traffic light or arrow and the emergency vehicle appears to have stopped or slowed down. **See image 3.**

MOVE OVER, SLOW DOWN

If you're passing or approaching an emergency response vehicle on a multi-lane road you must move to another lane when you can do so safely. On roads that are not multi-lane, or if it is not possible to move over, you must slow down and pass at a speed and distance that does not put people at risk. **See image 4.**

Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Penalties apply if you don't give way to emergency vehicles or move over or slow down for parked emergency response vehicles.

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A close-up photograph of a yellow car door handle and a cracked bumper. The car is yellow, and the bumper is black with a significant crack. The background is a bright yellow color.

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