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SUMMER 2023/24

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RACQ

CONTENTS

SUMMER EDITION 2023/24

Bungle Bungle Range
in Western Australia.
Photo Tourism WA

38



MEMBERS	QLD LIFESTYLE	TRAVEL	MOBILITY
---------	---------------	--------	----------

04

Clubhouse

RACQ news, Ray's note
President's Viewpoint, Your say

08

Scams awareness

Remote access scam advice

09

Fuel panel video

Your fuel questions answered

10

Koala care

RACQ Foundation volunteers
plant trees for Australia Zoo

11

Community support

Cherbourg receives
a helping hand

12

New RACQ service

Car buying made easier

14

Pricing promises

Refunds update

16

Our oldest road trips

How First Australians travelled
vast distances on foot

18

Cape crusader

Cairns to Cape York rally a dream
come true for driver

20

Cobb & Co. milestone

Celebrate 100 years since the
famous coach service finished

22

Storm season

Why you need to prepare

24

Remote rescuers

Volunteers play vital role

25

Going digital

Queensland gets digital licences

26

Rear view

A look back at motoring

30

Bloomfield Track

Take a road trip from Cairns to
Cooktown

34

Essence of Peregrin

A new resort offers the best of
Peregrin Beach

38

Gem of the west

The Kununurra region delivers a
feast for the senses

42

Cooks tour

Local's guide to the Cook Islands

44

Swiss train trip

All aboard for a journey through
stunning Switzerland

46

New cars for 2024

Check out some of the most
exciting vehicles on the way

50

Motorcycle safety

Tips from a world champ

51

EV chargers expand

Regional towns are benefiting
from having EV chargers

52

Caravan etiquette

Tips for an enjoyable holiday

54

Six of the Best

Vehicle Operating Costs survey's
top performers

56

Road test

BYD Atto 3, Ford Mach-E

58

Road rules

E-scooters



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 vehicle on the Bloomfield Track, part of a Cairns to Cooktown road trip. Photo Tourism and Events Queensland. **Story page 30**

RACQ

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Governor of Queensland

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PUBLISHER

RACQ Operations Pty Ltd
(ABN 80 009 663 414)

CIRCULATION

CAB: 679,045 NOV 2022 Digital: 698,010 OCT 2023

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CHEQUES TO BE PHASED OUT AS BANKING EVOLVES

OVER THE PAST two decades, the banking landscape in Australia has changed as banking technology advances and members shift towards digital transactions.

In response to this trend, in late 2022 the Federal Government announced it would be closing down Australia's cheque system by 2030 and will phase out government usage of cheques by the end of 2028.

As a result, we reviewed the operations of RACQ Bank to consider our members' changing needs.

After careful analysis of cheque-usage data, which showed a significant decrease, we have decided to stop issuing cheque books, bank cheques and accepting foreign international drafts or cheques on new and existing accounts. This comes into effect on 2 January 2024.

If you currently have an RACQ Bank

cheque book, you can continue to issue cheques as a payment method until 27 May 2024. However, your account will no longer have cheque access once you have exhausted your current allocation.

All cheques should be presented for payment by 27 May 2024. Cheques presented after this date will be dishonoured.

We understand this may be challenging for some of our members and we want to make the transition away from cheques as seamless as possible. This is why we offer a range of secure, efficient and simple-to-use options for your banking needs, including digital banking, debit cards, Bank@Post and international telegraphic transfers.

If you have any concerns about these changes, our dedicated customer service team can support and guide you in-store or by calling 13 1905.

While this article relates specifically to members of RACQ Bank, we encourage all our members to check with their financial institution regarding any proposed changes to cheque issuance and to be aware of other ways to bank before the closure of the cheque system.



Ray's note

IT IS UNLIKELY that anyone reading this column would not have come into contact with an attempted scam.

I know I am constantly bombarded with random phone calls from scammers trying to catch me out with a believable scenario.

It could relate to a 'package I was expecting' or my 'faulty' internet connection and demanding that I take action that will fix the problem.

Despite a heightened sense of awareness of these scams, people continue to be caught out.

It does not take much to drop your guard a little and that is enough for these very devious scammers to get

the information they need to rip you off.

RACQ is committed to raising awareness of scams among our members. From this edition *The Road Ahead* will publish a series of articles on common scams and what you can do to protect yourself.

This edition focuses on remote access scammers, which often start with phone calls like those I mentioned.

Find out how they work and what you can do to protect yourself on page 8 and check out future editions for more helpful advice.

RAY ANDERSEN,
MANAGING EDITOR



VIEWPOINT THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

IN MY FINAL column for 2023, I would like to reflect on RACQ's unwavering support of Queensland's communities which was so clearly demonstrated throughout the year.

The RACQ Foundation and its volunteers, mostly dedicated staff, were on the ground completing more than 5,000 work hours supporting communities that are the heartbeat of our great State.

It is gratifying to share with you that 21 community groups from Yarrabah to Texas have benefited from the selfless efforts of our volunteers.

Their tireless work reflected the true Queensland spirit – always ready to roll up our sleeves and lend a helping hand in times of need.

This spirit aligns perfectly with RACQ's values and its dedication to our more than 1.7 million members and their communities.

The RACQ Foundation, borne out of the compassion that emerged from the 2011 Brisbane floods, continues to support Queenslanders in need.

Since its inception, it has distributed more than \$14 million in recovery grants and projects to communities affected by natural disasters across the State.

This year I had the privilege of witnessing this spirit firsthand in Blackall, where we supported drought and flood-impacted farmers, and in Beerwah, where we supported an Australia Zoo Wildlife Warriors project.

Our team of 32 volunteers cleared debris from a eucalypt plantation near the zoo, which was impacted by the 2022 floods, and planted more than 1,000 seedlings.

These new trees will provide a much-needed additional food source for the koalas at the hospital and zoo in future years.

This collaboration strengthened our bond with Australia Zoo, adding another chapter to our ongoing support which began in 2014 with the provision of specialty wildlife rescue vehicles.

RACQ's commitment to building resilience and protecting our environment saw the Foundation undertake important projects in Gympie and Cherbourg.



RACQ President Leona Murphy after planting a eucalypt seedling in Beerwah.

In Gympie, 3,000 trees and shrubs were planted along the River to Rail Trail, on the banks of the Mary River, to enhance flood resilience and protect against erosion.

In October/November, the RACQ Board joined Foundation volunteers in Cherbourg to assist in several projects to aid the local community, from helping the local Youth Advisory Group build a new nursery to generate income, to upgrading Cherbourg Hornets rugby league club facilities.

You can read more about RACQ's community assistance projects during 2023 on pages 10–11.

As we face changing climate and increasingly severe weather events across the State, there's no doubt the RACQ Foundation will be called upon

again in the years ahead. While we can't predict when and where these will be, what remains certain is that RACQ will be ready to provide support whenever and wherever it's needed.

In closing, I would like to wish all our readers a happy festive season.

Our road toll remains a major concern and the holiday period is traditionally a very dangerous time for road users.

We encourage you to take your time and be extra vigilant on the roads.

Stay safe.

LEONA MURPHY,
RACQ PRESIDENT

YOUR SAY

GIVING MEMBERS A VOICE



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

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

MORE SKILLS NEEDED

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND why the Queensland Government is not serious about the road toll and want to solve it. It's not rocket science but common sense.

Simply, it is too easy to get a driver

licence. They give licences to people who are not skilled or confident enough to handle a motor vehicle.

These are usually young people in the start/prime of their life. They are putting them and people they encounter on the roads in danger by giving them licences

too easily. The instructors have to show cause if their fail rate is too high – what a joke. If the drivers are not confident enough, they should not be allowed to drive a motor vehicle. It puts yours and my life in danger.

MARK SMITH, SPRINGWOOD

HI-VIS SUGGESTION

IT AMAZES ME that it is not mandatory for our motorbike, bicycle and scooter riders to wear fluoro vests. These most vulnerable people are, at times, so very hard to be seen on our roads. The vests would save so many lives, many injuries and a lot of heartache. It could also be law for the bicycle and scooter riders to carry ID on them while riding.

GAYE HODGES, HENDRA



CALL FOR BIKE MIRRORS

AS A LONG-TIME cyclist I agree with Anthony Cook (Spring TRA 2023) that mirrors are impractical on bikes with drop handlebars. There are no mirrors available that fit into the end of the handlebars – the only site available for their location. However, as a car driver also, I have never been comfortable on or in any vehicle where you couldn't see what was approaching from behind. On a bike, where you are constantly being overtaken, it's critical to see behind you, especially when pulling out around parked cars. So I modified a mirror to fit into the handlebar end and I instantly felt much safer. I know there is a degree of form over function involved with riding road (drop-handlebar) bikes but it's time accessory manufacturers considered safety and provided cyclists with an appropriate mirror.

JIM TASNEY, NORTH LAKES

PLATES HARD TO READ

WHY DO SOME motorists insist on 'disguising' their registration plates so that they are very difficult and sometimes almost impossible to read from even a car's length away? How seldom now do we see a plain white plate with green numbers that is readable from a reasonable distance? How about a car painted deep red with a black plate and red numbers? There are so many combinations and it is reasonable to assume that the owner/s of that vehicle (a) wanted to make it difficult for cameras placed by the authorities to detect traffic infringements or (b) just for decoration. Does a 'pretty' plate add to the value or performance of the vehicle? Not really. Now I am not talking about plain personalised plates using owner's initials etc, but those who go over the top primarily to avoid detection in the case of traffic infringements. And how about the number plates which are faded or damaged or non-existent? I will leave the answers to you.

ALAN BAIN, WISHART

CITY EYE-OPENER

REGARDING THE RECENT articles on RACQ pilots (Spring TRA 2023), on our way to the Gold Coast from Rockhampton

in December 1966, my husband and I used the 'meet RACQ pilot here' service for the first time. For first-time bushies, driving in the city was certainly an eye-opener.

GAIL WALKER, WEST ROCKHAMPTON



TRAPPED IN WRONG LANE

RECENTLY WE WERE on the Pacific Motorway heading north towards Brisbane on a section of road with some four or more lanes in moderate traffic. Being from North Queensland we were not familiar with the road and were proceeding in the third lane from the left looking for a road sign indicating where to exit. At the critical moment, the left-hand lane was occupied by several large trucks and their high sides blocked our view of the road sign indicating our intended exit lane to the left. We noticed the sign at the last minute but were unable to change lanes to reach the exit and were then forced in an unintended direction. Road signs like in the above picture are not of sufficient height or positioned to prevent this from happening. Likely I was not the first and will not be the last to be trapped like this.

FRANK TULLEMANS, CAIRNS

REVEAL CRASH CAUSES

I AGREE WITH Llewellyn Davies (Spring TRA 2023) regarding the publicising of accident causes. As an experienced investigator in the mining industry for 30 years, the findings and causal effects of all incidents and accidents was of paramount importance. So was the relaying of the cause and effect of the event to all mine workers so as to control or eliminate the cause of the event with a view to eliminating a repeat incident. There is no reason (legal or otherwise) not to publish the cause and effect of road accidents to try to eliminate repeat events. This is a strategy that has not

been made public but could have a significant role in preventing future events.
JOHN SIMPSON, ROCKHAMPTON

EV CONCERNS

WITH ELECTRIC VEHICLES increasingly in the news, I was interested to read the letter "EV charging issues in the UK" in the spring edition. It highlighted the need for downloaded apps for payment and the option of the fast/medium/slow charging rates. If a compact, heavily populated country like the UK has EV charging and payment problems, it does not auger well for Australia's vast distances. I think that I will stick with my reliable, silent, cheap-to-run hybrid that can be filled up rapidly at the petrol station; at least until all those stations close down.

KEN MOORE, CHAPEL HILL



ROAD DATA QUERIED

I HAVE READ with interest the constant messages regarding road death statistics in Queensland. I believe that the latest statistics, as posted in Viewpoint in the spring edition, include 902 male deaths in the past five years. No doubt this is an appalling figure but considering the general poor state of most of our highways and the ever-increasing number of vehicles registered in Queensland, I have often wondered what the ratio of deaths to number of vehicles registered would be for the past 10 years. I believe that it is likely that road deaths are actually decreasing when the number of vehicles is factored into the equation.

MERV ALLAN, EMU CREEK

OUR SAY: Road fatality trends are measured per 100,000 population. In 1970 that figure was about 30 per 100,000 and trended down over the decades to about five in 2014. However, despite dips in 2014 and 2019, the trend in recent years has been upward.

REMOTE ACCESS SCAMMERS

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO AVOID BEING CAUGHT OUT BY A REMOTE ACCESS SCAM.

HAVE YOU EVER answered a call from an unknown number that didn't feel quite right?

You could have been the target of a remote access scam.

RACQ Head of Bank Resilience Sarah Richardson said remote access scams were very common and victims often paid a high price.

"The most prevalent and impactful scams we see are remote access scams, often starting with a phone call," Ms Richardson said.

In 2022, Australians lost more than \$21 million to remote access scams, according to data from the National Anti-Scam Centre (Scamwatch).

These scams target trustworthy people by tricking them into providing access to their devices where internet banking passwords are stored.

Their goal is to access your bank account and swiftly transfer your money into their own accounts.

Ms Richardson said anyone could fall victim to scammers masquerading as a legitimate business trying to help you.

"Scammers are opportunistic and try to catch you during a moment where you might be time-poor or just happen to have all the stars align where the scam scenario fits your current circumstance," she said.

"There is often a feeling of embarrassment felt by scam victims but victims shouldn't be embarrassed. Anyone can be scammed. Scammers are sophisticated and professional in their dealings and all it takes is for the right scenario to fit for you."

WARNING SIGNS

Remote access scammers will typically:

- Call randomly from a number you don't recognise;
- Pretend to be from a well-known bank, company or tech support service;
- Sound professional and knowledgeable;
- Claim something is wrong with your broadband internet connection, phone line or computer (e.g. virus or performance issues);

- Request remote access to your device to find out what the problem is and fix it;
- Persuade you to sign up for a service or download specific software;
- Ask for your personal information, banking or credit card details;
- Be very persistent and pushy over the phone.

TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR ACCOUNT

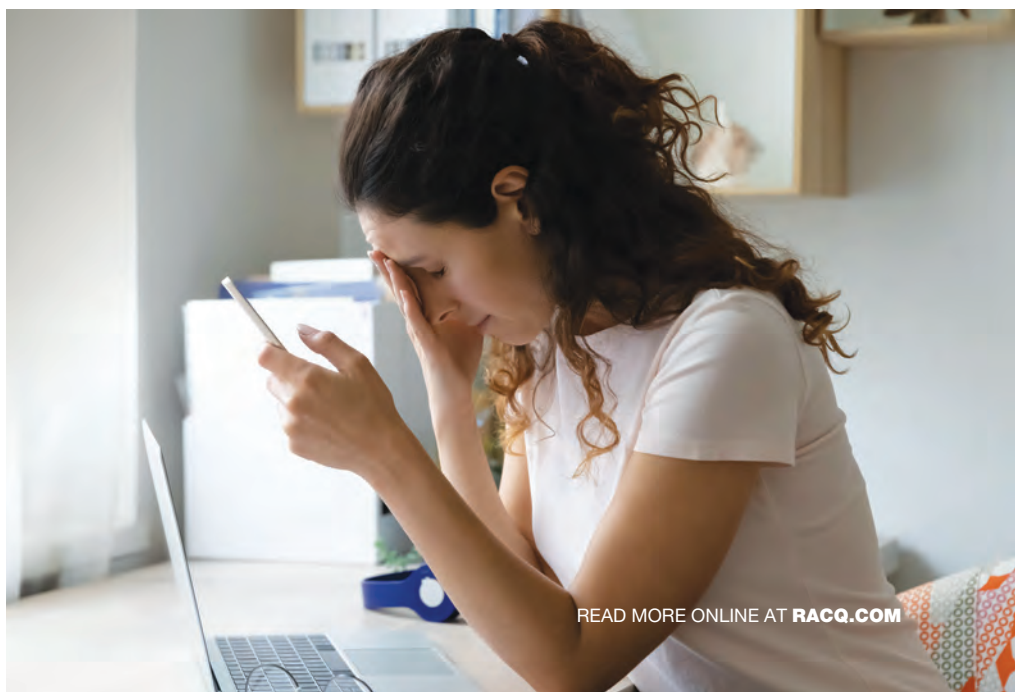
- If you're unsure of the caller, hang up and call the company back. Don't call

back on a number the caller has given you. Locate the company's number on their website.

- Never give anyone remote access to your computer or provide your personal, banking or card details over the phone, unless you're sure the person on the other end can be trusted. Make sure you ask questions or simply hang up if they request remote access.
- To help protect your bank account, many banks will send you a one-time passcode (OTP) for certain transactions. This is a random security code sent to your preferred phone number or email address for you to authorise a transaction or service. Don't share your OTP with anyone, including your bank.
- Keep your computer protected with up-to-date anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software from a trusted source.
- If you receive excessive calls and emails from suspected scammers, talk to your telephone or internet service provider to see how they can help you reduce these.

Visit scamwatch.gov.au for more information on protecting yourself from scammers. ■

NEVER GIVE ANYONE REMOTE ACCESS TO YOUR COMPUTER OR PROVIDE YOUR PERSONAL, BANKING OR CARD DETAILS OVER THE PHONE, UNLESS YOU'RE SURE THE PERSON ON THE OTHER END CAN BE TRUSTED. MAKE SURE YOU ASK QUESTIONS OR SIMPLY HANG UP IF THEY REQUEST REMOTE ACCESS.





RACQ PANEL ANSWERS YOUR FUEL QUESTIONS

A NEW VIDEO SERIES SHEDS LIGHT ON MEMBERS' FUEL CONCERNS.

HAVE YOU EVER wondered why fuel prices fluctuate so wildly? Or why some servos charge 30 cents per litre more than another across the road?

These are just some of the questions members and Queenslanders asked RACQ's latest panel of experts in the Club's new three-part video series on fuel.

With record fuel prices and inflationary pressures, fuel has been front of mind for many Queensland motorists.

To help make sense of the fuel industry,

the Club put the call out to its members to see if they had any questions and received more than 1,500 responses.

To answer the most common questions, RACQ enlisted the knowledge

WITH RECORD FUEL PRICES AND INFLATIONARY PRESSURES, FUEL HAS BEEN FRONT OF MIND FOR MANY QUEENSLAND MOTORISTS.

of policy, mechanical, economic, resource and fuel experts including Dr Michael Kane, Dr Ian Jeffreys and Andrew Kirk from RACQ, Professor Robert Perrons from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and Dr Dia Adhikari Smith from The University of Queensland (UQ).

If you want to know what's behind high prices, why we pay excise on fuel or if algae could power the cars of tomorrow, watch RACQ's Expert Panel Series on fuel at racq.com/fuelpanel from late November. ■



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VOLUNTEERS DIG IN FOR AUSTRALIA ZOO KOALAS

**RACQ FOUNDATION
VOLUNTEERS HELPED
PLANT EUCALYPT
TREES WHICH ONE DAY
WILL FEED KOALAS
IN AUSTRALIA ZOO'S
WILDLIFE HOSPITAL.**

RACQ EMPLOYEES JOINED forces with Wildlife Warriors to plant 1,040 eucalypt seedlings near Australia Zoo in Beerwah.

The habitat had been impacted by severe weather events in recent years and, when mature, the newly planted trees will be a food source for koalas in Australia Zoo and its Wildlife Hospital.

RACQ President and Chair Leona Murphy, who was among the 32 volunteers, said it was great to see the Club's ongoing support to drive positive change through community work.

"Last financial year, RACQ employees dedicated 6,697 volunteer hours through community initiatives, which shows our commitment to making a difference in Queensland communities is as strong as ever," Ms Murphy said.

"I'm very passionate about our partnership with Australia Zoo and Wildlife Warriors and it was wonderful to be a part of the inaugural volunteering event."

RACQ Manager Foundation Bridgette Muller said the project was part of RACQ's commitment to helping build resilience in Queensland communities.

"At RACQ, we aim to be there for all Queenslanders, no matter if they are creatures great or small, so this project is at the core of what we do," Ms Muller said.

"It is our long-term goal to keep improving Queensland's community resilience and ability to withstand climate-related weather events.

"It's been a pleasure to partner with Wildlife Warriors on this project.

"We proudly donated more than 1,000



CRIKEY! WHAT A great pic of the Australia Zoo crew on their annual crocodile research trip in August.

Every year, the Irwin family along with Australia Zoo's experienced reptile team embark on a one-month research trip to study crocodiles in the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve on Cape York Peninsula, learning the important

role these apex predators play in the ecosystem.

RACQ supports this research program with the loan of a tow truck, which has the perfect flatbed for transporting equipment.

Congratulations to the Australia Zoo team on reaching an exciting milestone of tagging their 250th crocodile!

seedlings to the initiative and it's great for our RACQ Foundation volunteers to see the impact their work is having in building resilience."

Wildlife conservationist Terri Irwin thanked RACQ for its support of the seedlings project that will help feed the koalas at Australia Zoo.

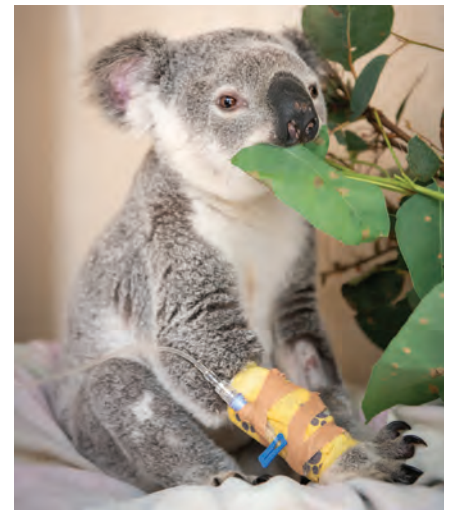
"Through incredible initiatives such as RACQ's volunteer program, we are able to further contribute to the conservation of this endangered species," Ms Irwin said.

"Together, we are helping create a vital and positive impact on the well-being and survival of these beautiful animals."

Established in 2002, Wildlife Warriors have made it their mission to protect injured, threatened or endangered species, including koalas. ■

RACQ members enjoy 10 percent off entry to Australia Zoo with a Wildlife Hospital sneak peek included when pre-purchasing tickets online at racq.com/australiazoo.

**...RACQ EMPLOYEES DEDICATED
6,697 VOLUNTEER HOURS
THROUGH COMMUNITY
INITIATIVES, WHICH SHOWS
OUR COMMITMENT TO MAKING
A DIFFERENCE IN QUEENSLAND
COMMUNITIES...**





RACQ Foundation volunteers in Cherbourg included Chief Purpose Officer MJ Bellotti, above, and Naia Soares and Mitchell Severns, right. Photos Dave Pattinson.

RACQ FOUNDATION OFFERS HELPING HAND TO CHERBOURG COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY GROUPS ACROSS THE STATE CONTINUE TO BENEFIT FROM RACQ FOUNDATION SUPPORT.

STORY COURTNEY SMITH

RACQ FOUNDATION VOLUNTEERS travelled to the South Burnett region in late October to assist with community work in the Aboriginal community of Cherbourg.

Volunteers, including RACQ Board members and executives, helped with community projects over two weeks, beginning with assisting the local Youth Advisory Group (YAG) to plant a new native nursery and restore the grounds of the Bert Button Lookout.

The nursery will provide another source of income for the community and enable it to create native arrangements for events. The work on the lookout will aid the rehabilitation of the natural ecosystem and make the area more resilient to potential natural disasters.

RACQ Manager Foundation Bridgette Muller said the Cherbourg project was an opportunity to connect with the local community and restore important gathering sites.

“It was inspiring to see the collective efforts of volunteers and local groups to renew the Bert Button Lookout, which will be used as a space for workshops, community gatherings and truth-telling,” Ms Muller said.

“In the second week, volunteers



An aerial view of Bert Button Lookout with Bjelke-Petersen Dam in the background.

assisted the Cherbourg Hornets rugby league club in repairing the oval facilities, helping it to recover from previous flooding events and complete upgrades to ensure the oval is more resilient.

“The volunteers also supported the Ration Shed Museum to digitise and catalogue their inventory to ensure important artefacts are preserved.”

The RACQ Foundation Community Assistance Projects were established to give practical support to Queenslanders impacted by natural disasters.

“The importance of the work we do in regional Queensland extends beyond the gardens we plant, the buildings we repair or farm equipment we fix,” Ms Muller said.

“It’s a core part of strengthening our connection to communities and making a difference.”

The RACQ Foundation has delivered 21 Community Assistance Projects across Queensland to aid in recovery after severe weather events and build natural disaster resilience for the future. ■

Visit racq.com/foundation.

CAR BUYING MADE EASIER

RACQ IS OFFERING
A NEW SERVICE FOR
MEMBERS THAT WILL
HELP EASE THE STRESS
OF BUYING A CAR.

RACQ MEMBERS NOW have access to a service that can take the hassle out of the car-buying process.

The RACQ Car Buying Service is being offered in partnership with Eagers Automotive whose consultants will provide expert advice on the best vehicle options including information on new technologies and electric vehicles (EVs).

RACQ General Manager Member Loyalty and Benefits Karen Wynn said the free, no-obligation service would do all the legwork for members to make the car-buying process as easy as possible.

“Not everyone has a friend or mate they can speak to about cars and our members have told us these big purchases often come with lots of research, dealer visits, administration and stress negotiating prices and terms,” Ms Wynn said.

“With this new member benefit, RACQ is providing the confidence members need when purchasing their next car.

“Eagers will do everything in the car-buying process from helping you choose the most suitable vehicle to arranging test drives and trade-ins if required.

“They will also coordinate contracts of sale and ensure a smooth handover of your car.”

Members who buy a car with the

**THE SERVICE IS AIMED AT
MEMBERS WHO WANT A MORE
CONVENIENT WAY TO PURCHASE
THEIR NEXT CAR WHILE GETTING
ACCESS TO THE RIGHT ADVICE
BEFORE MAKING A DECISION.**

service will receive a \$250 credit on multiple transactions across selected eGift card partners, attractions and experiences purchased through RACQ's Member Benefits platform.

“This service is aimed at members who want a more convenient way to purchase their next car while getting access to the right advice before making a decision,” Ms Wynn said.

“RACQ, through its Member Benefits like the Car Buying Service, is committed to helping make life easier and more affordable for our members.

“By using the Car Buying Service we hope members will feel more at ease with what is a big purchase decision at a time when we are all affected by cost-of-living pressures and time constraints.”

The RACQ Car Buying Service is only available for the purchase of light

HOW IT WORKS

- ▶ Members can engage the Car Buying Service by completing an expression of interest on racq.com/car-buying. They can also call the Eagers team directly on **1300 749 506** or email racqcarbuying@eagersautomotive.com.au
 - ▶ A member of the Eagers team will contact the member to discuss options and take care of test drives and trade-ins (if needed). If the member decides to proceed with a purchase, Eagers will arrange the paperwork to complete the sale.
 - ▶ Within six weeks of receiving their chosen vehicle, the member will receive a \$250 credit to use on a select range of offers on the RACQ Member Benefits platform.
- Find out more at racq.com/car-buying.

commercial and private passenger vehicles. The service is not available for the purchase of boats, caravans, trailers or motorcycles. ■

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.

**Over 99% of
comprehensive
car claims
paid**

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Comprehensive Car Insurance**

RACQ

Based on RACQ data during the assessment period 1 January to 31 December 2022, 99.18% of comprehensive car insurance claims closed (excluding withdrawn and duplicate claims) were not partially or fully rejected. Insurance products issued by RACQ Insurance Limited ABN 50 009 704 152. Conditions, limits and exclusions apply. This is general advice only and may not be right for you. Consider the PDS, SPDS and TMD available at racq.com

PRICING PROMISES REFUNDS UPDATE

MORE THAN
\$32 MILLION*
REFUNDED TO
MEMBERS SO FAR.

RACQ HAS MADE errors when calculating discounts for some insurance policies.

We have now issued more than 128,000[^] refunds to current and former eligible members to make things right.



Motor insurance refunds are well underway with many members already contacted. Most members who are eligible for a motor insurance refund will be contacted by February 2024.



Pet insurance refunds have begun and most members eligible for a refund on their pet insurance will be contacted by the end of November 2023.



We will start home and contents insurance refunds in December 2023 with most eligible members contacted by the end of March 2024.

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 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 – and this can be any Australian bank account.

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? Visit your local RACQ store or call us on **1800 637 013** and we will help.

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

We may contact you to ask for more information so we can determine your eligibility for a refund.

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

For more information please visit racq.com/pricingpromises.

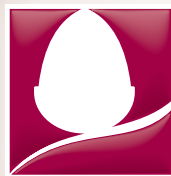
WE WILL CONTACT YOU OVER THE COMING MONTHS IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE FOR A REFUND.

**Figures based on refunds paid as at 31/10/23.*

^At time of publication.

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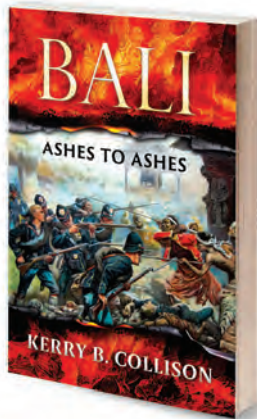
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*SuperRatings Fund Crediting Rate Survey, SuperRatings SR50 MySuper Index for the 12 months to 30 June 2023. Refer to superratings.com.au for further information about these results, including how it calculates investment returns. The information is current as at the date of the SuperRatings Survey. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance.

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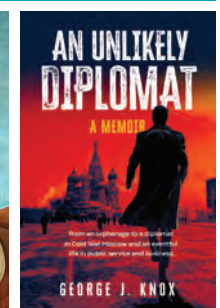
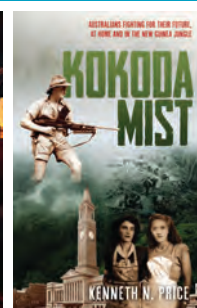
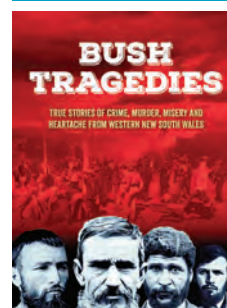
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WORLD'S OLDEST 'ROAD TRIPS'

WHEN TRAVELLING ALONG OUR REGIONAL HIGHWAYS, YOU COULD BE ON A ROUTE THAT IS MANY TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD.



STORY UNCLE GHILLAR MICHAEL ANDERSON & DR ROBERT FULLER

The outback night sky. Photo Tourism and Events Queensland.

MANY OF AUSTRALIA'S modern roads follow traditional Aboriginal travel or trading routes.

Given the importance of water, the benefits of avoiding mountains and ridges, and the role of Aboriginal guides, many traditional trading routes were followed by Europeans for travel and stock movement.

First Nations Peoples travelled these routes mainly for ceremonies and the trade of commodities such as bunya nuts, pituri (a nicotine-based narcotic), stone axes, ochre and wooden implements.

These very well-established and extensive travel and trade routes were aligned with songlines and Dreaming stories, many of which covered vast distances across Australia.

The ceremonies often took place at special sites, such as bora grounds, that had been used for long periods of time.

They usually marked a story or event of spiritual significance that took place at that location during the Dreaming.

Early European ethnographers who documented these ceremonies found that they were attended by Aboriginal

people of different language groups coming from far afield; people who had taken a long 'road' trip.

A songline could change from one end of a track to the other, but still had the same basic theme.

The language of the story would also change as it moved through different

IN EARLY WINTER, YOUNG EUAHLAYI PEOPLE WOULD BE TAUGHT HOW TO REACH DESTINATIONS USING THE SONGLINES OR DREAMING TRACKS DESCRIBED BY THE STAR MAPS.

language groups along the track, but as the story was sung, the 'melody' remained the same and only the language changed.

From the melody, a person could recognise the story without understanding the language.

To navigate their way to specific destinations that were sometimes

hundreds of kilometres away, First Australians looked to the night sky.

Many Aboriginal cultural groups have a rich knowledge of the night sky, including for predicting when resources would be available.

Songlines often had their equivalents in the night sky and the connection between the songlines on the ground and in the night sky can be understood as a star map in which the patterns of stars represented routes of travel on land.

Knowledge in Aboriginal culture is transmitted orally, so this star map technique could be considered a memory aid to assist in learning travel routes.

The Euahlayi people of north-central New South Wales and south-central Queensland used known patterns of stars in the night sky to teach and remember a number of waypoints on their travel routes, often to a ceremonial gathering place.

In early winter, young Euahlayi people would be taught how to reach destinations using the songlines or Dreaming tracks described by the star maps.

The knowledge holder would use a clear night and point out the directions for travel, using the patterns of stars to

guide the intended travellers from place to place on the ground.

The Euahlayi people's star map from Goodooga in NSW to Queensland's Carnarvon Gorge, a known ceremonial centre, is a trip of more than 600km.

This education would start in the winter camp in Euahlayi country in the late evening of mid-May, with the travellers looking at the south-east sky, represented as an area in the constellation Sagittarius bounded by the stars Epsilon Sagittarii, Beta Sagittarii, W Sagittarii, Delta Sagittarii and the star cluster M7.

The star map to Carnarvon Gorge would proceed from the winter camp to the stars Gamma Scorpii (representing Dirranbandi), Kappa Scorpii (St. George), Theta Scorpii (Surat), Eta Scorpii (Roma) and Zeta Scorpii (Carnarvon Gorge).

This route followed what is now the Carnarvon Highway.

Another journey to the Bunya Mountains (which was the source of the prized bunya nuts), would see travellers turn at Theta Scorpii (Surat), to Sigma Arae (Chinchilla), Alpha Arae (Dalby) and Beta and Gamma Arae (Bunya Mountains).

When you next look at the night sky, think about the many people who have come before you and marvel at the way our First Australians travelled vast distances on foot, finding their way using stars and their memories.

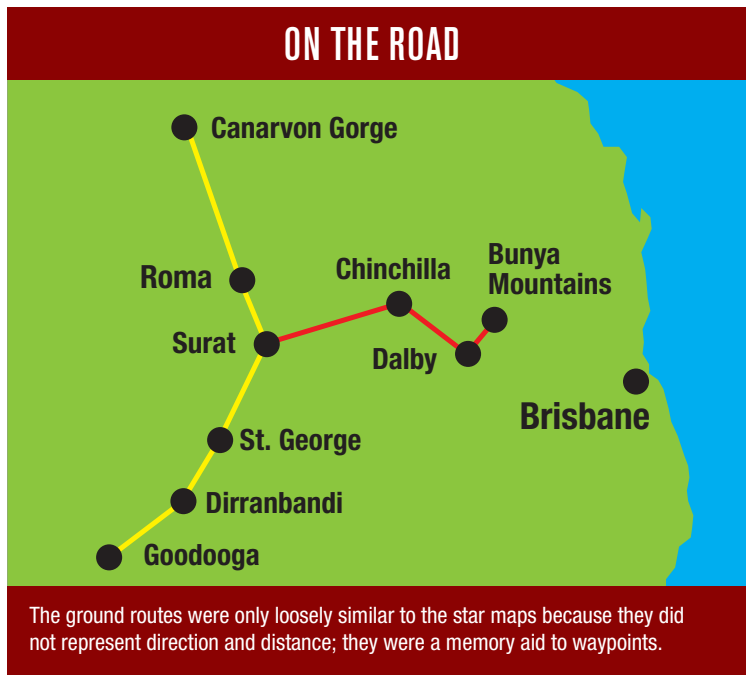
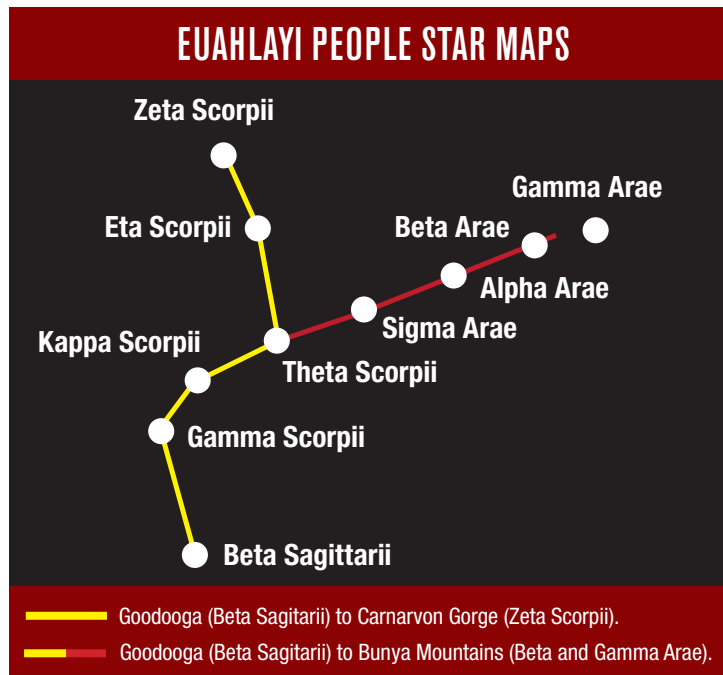
Euahlayi Elder Uncle Ghillar Michael Anderson is an expert in Aboriginal astronomy and Dr Robert Fuller has been learning from him. ■

Learn more at aboriginalastronomy.com.au.

The road leading into Carnarvon Gorge National Park. Photo Tourism and Events Queensland.



Goodooga in New South Wales.



The ground routes were only loosely similar to the star maps because they did not represent direction and distance; they were a memory aid to waypoints.

STORY TORI MAYNE

CAPE CRUSADER

WITH THE HELP OF THE ENDEAVOUR FOUNDATION, MATT CRESWICK ACHIEVED HIS DREAM OF DRIVING IN THE 2023 GREAT ENDEAVOUR RALLY FROM CAIRNS TO CAPE YORK.

THE GREAT ENDEAVOUR Rally has been raising dust, dollars and disability awareness for 35 years.

In early September, 52 teams and 165 entrants travelled from Cairns to Cape York.

This year's event raised more than \$760,000 for the Endeavour Foundation, smashing previous fundraising efforts and helping to support people living with a disability.

Social enterprise employee Matt Creswick had been on a previous rally, with two other Endeavour Foundation clients, as a passenger but wanted, more than anything, to take it on as a driver.

"In my first rally, I was blown away by how exciting it was," Matt said.

"I mentioned how amazing it would be if I could drive in a rally one day and the community came together to make it happen."

Ahead of the 2023 event, the rally community raised \$80,000 to purchase a car and install all relevant safety equipment so Matt's dream could become possible.

With a co-driver and support worker alongside him, Matt said driving from Cairns to Cape York was challenging but coming up with the team's name was easy.

"We decided to call ourselves Team Possible because, in the end, it was possible for people living with a disability to drive in this year's rally," he said.

"Some of the best moments were driving through creek crossings and over corrugations, as well as experiencing so many different landscapes in North Queensland."

To prepare for the event, Matt undertook training at RACQ's Mobility Centre.

"The defensive driver training course at the Mobility Centre was a great opportunity to sharpen my driving skills as well as learn some new ones before the rally," Matt said.

The Team Possible car is now here to stay and the vehicle will enable more dreams to be realised for years to come.

"It was a huge honour to play a part in kickstarting this dream for people with a disability like me," he said.

"I'm really grateful for the Endeavour Foundation who helped me achieve my dream." ■

Learn more about the RACQ Mobility Centre courses at racq.com/mobilitycentre.

Matt gives the thumbs up after reaching the tip of Cape York.

Matt Creswick crosses a creek on the way to Cape York.



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THE NORTHERNMOST POINT
OF THE AUSTRALIAN
CONTINENT



The Jewelled Nativity

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Rich jewel-toned
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Capturing the classic Fabergé elegance and style, the *Jewelled Nativity* dazzles the eye with sparkling, hand-set crystals and Fabergé-style gold- and silver-tone highlights. Its classic jewel-tone colours are created through the use of specially formulated glazes, applied by hand by skilled master craftspeople, mirroring the silky sheen of true porcelain. Intricate swirls and fleur-de-lis patterns spread about each figure's flowing robes, giving them the appearance of fine brocaded fabrics, which gleam with iridescent highlights. Then the multitudes of genuine, sparkling Crystals complete the Fabergé style of this truly one-of-a-kind Nativity collection.

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Visitors check out carriages at The Cobb+Co Museum in Toowoomba.

STORY STEVE COOPER & AMY GOLDSTONE

COBB & CO. CELEBRATION

A SERIES OF COMMUNITY EVENTS ARE PLANNED TO MARK 100 YEARS SINCE QUEENSLAND'S FINAL COBB & CO. COACH RUN.

ON 14 AUGUST 1924, a Cobb and Co. coachman sounded his bugle for the final time as his horse-drawn coach clattered into Surat, marking the end of the famous passenger and mail service in Queensland.

The historic journey, a mail run between Yuleba and Surat in South West Queensland, marked the end of an era as the relentless march of modern technologies, such as motor vehicles, fledgling air mail services and the ever-expanding railway network, outpaced the trusty horse-drawn coaches.

Though that final bugle call signalled the close of Cobb & Co.'s coaching chapter, the legacy and nostalgia surrounding the company and the dedicated individuals who steered its success live on.

Cobb & Co. emerged amidst the tumult of the Victorian gold rush in 1853 and would go on to etch its name as the most renowned coaching company in Australian history.

When it expanded its operations to Queensland in January 1866, the company already boasted a reputation

for speed and reliability across the southern Australian states.

Queensland welcomed Cobb & Co. with open arms and the company wasted no time in its expansion, weaving its way into rural landscapes and effectively opening the doors for colonial settlers.

THE INTERACTIONS WITH FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES, COUPLED WITH THE RECOGNITION THAT MANY COBB & CO. ROUTES FOLLOWED WELL-WORN TRACKS OF INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS, SHED LIGHT ON A RICH AND COMPLEX HISTORY.

The contributions of Cobb & Co. and its dedicated employees to the settlement of rural and outback Queensland are immeasurable.

Beyond serving as a vital link for communication and transportation, the

company's ability to navigate the rugged terrain of Queensland paved the way for settlements in the most remote corners of the State.

TOOWOOMBA'S VITAL ROLE

In the late 1800s, as Cobb & Co.'s Queensland expansion gathered momentum, Toowoomba stood as a central transportation hub.

Once travellers reached Toowoomba, whether by coach or the nascent railways beginning to crisscross the State, Cobb & Co. was their steadfast partner for venturing into the outback.

With strategically placed change stations allowing for horse swaps every 20km, Cobb & Co. pushed deeper into regional Queensland, forging crucial connections between urban and rural areas.

In many ways, Toowoomba served as the launching point for countless journeys, transporting people, mail and goods, opening the city to the countryside.

The original coach, Coach 112, takes centre stage in the exhibition at the National Carriage Gallery within the



A coach outside Cobb & Co's factory in Charleville, c. 1901.



The entry to the Cobb+Co Museum.

Cobb+Co Museum in Toowoomba. The centenary of Cobb & Co.'s closure holds profound significance in the tapestry of the nation's development and transport history.

It's a unique opportunity to reflect on the social and cultural evolution of the communities that Cobb & Co. nurtured throughout the region.

The interactions with First Nations Peoples, coupled with the recognition that many Cobb & Co. routes followed well-worn tracks of Indigenous populations, shed light on a rich and complex history.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

In commemoration of the final run, the communities of Yuleba and Surat are joining forces to host a Centenary Festival celebration, culminating in a suite of special centenary events from 16-25 August 2024.

Celebrations at Cobb+Co Museum will feature a musical and spoken word

performance inspired by the collection in the National Carriage Gallery.

Additionally, as part of the Cobb 100 Program, an in-depth Conversation Series with a focus on Transport Through The Ages will highlight ancient pathways traversed by First Nations Peoples and the evolution of carriages to modern electric vehicles.

Throughout the four-day celebration, Cobb+Co Museum will offer a range of public activities that will shine a light on the artisans and heritage trades associated with the museum's collection.

Programming will include workshops, exhibits and guided tours, providing an opportunity for the public to actively participate and learn more about these aspects of Cobb & Co.'s heritage.

The events in Toowoomba, Yuleba and Surat will not only allow visitors to retrace the trails of Cobb & Co., but also offer a nostalgic journey into a bygone era.

Engaging with welcoming locals and fostering regional tourism, these

celebrations promise to provide a boost to communities from Ipswich to Queensland's Darling Downs and South West.

VISIT THE COBB+CO MUSEUM

Visitors stepping into Cobb+Co Museum enter the heart of the National Carriage Gallery and Factory.

They will see priceless pieces of Australian history and immerse themselves in the era's heritage through hands-on participation in workshops where trade skills like blacksmithing and wheelwrighting are passed down.

The museum is also home to Cobb's Coffee Shop, renowned for its scones and a variety of delectable offerings, making it a perfect destination for the whole family. ■

Steve Cooper is Head of the Cobb+Co Museum in Toowoomba and Amy Goldstone is the Curator.

Learn more at cobbandco.qm.qld.gov.au.

BE PREPARED FOR BUSHFIRES AND STORMS

STORY MELISSA MCGRATH

QUEENSLAND'S SEVERE WEATHER season has arrived and residents are being warned of a warm and dry summer following the declaration of an El Niño weather event.

With new RACQ research revealing 85 percent of Queenslanders were concerned about being impacted by severe weather this summer, residents should take steps now to prepare.

The Bureau of Meteorology's long-range weather forecast has predicted a potentially damaging season including bushfires, heatwaves, severe storms and flash flooding.

RACQ Chief Executive Insurance Trent Sayers urged residents to prepare their homes for bushfires by taking simple precautions to reduce the risk.

"The weather forecasts currently show that we are facing our first dry summer in three years, placing Queensland at an increased risk for bushfires," Mr Sayers said.

"Being prepared for bushfires not only makes your home easier to defend, but also lowers the danger for your neighbours and surrounding properties.

"Some of the precautions you can take include clearing your gutters and

yard of debris and cutting back trees and vegetation around your home. This is particularly important as the past few years of La Niña have resulted in high levels of growth."

Despite predictions that the weather will be drier than usual, there remains a risk of severe thunderstorms that can form rapidly and hit hard.

...RESIDENTS ARE BEING WARNED OF A WARM AND DRY SUMMER FOLLOWING THE DECLARATION OF AN EL NIÑO WEATHER EVENT.

"Severe thunderstorms are common in the warmer months and often you don't have time to prepare your home before they hit," Mr Sayers said.

"RACQ research revealed the most common behaviours undertaken by Queenslanders when preparing for storms were moving vehicles to a safe area or securing outdoor furniture.

"While these are important measures,

it's tasks like cleaning your gutters and checking your roof for loose sheets, cracked tiles, deteriorated seals or rust that have the biggest impact on protecting your property from severe storms."

Mr Sayers advised Queenslanders to check their insurance policy was up to date as well as their level of coverage for a severe weather event.

"It's important to understand what you're covered for in your insurance policy," he said.

"RACQ Home Insurance includes bushfire, flood, storm and hail as standard", but other insurers may be different. If you're in the unfortunate situation of being affected by a severe weather event, you can lodge your claim online, as the earlier we receive it the sooner we can assist." ■

Find out more at racq.com/beprepared.

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CUT OUT THIS checklist for your fridge and make sure your home is ready for bushfire and storm season.

STORM AND BUSHFIRE CHECKLIST

- Clear your yard of debris.
- Cut back trees and vegetation around your home.
- Clear your gutters and downpipes.
- Check your roof for loose sheets, cracked tiles, deteriorated seals or rust.
- Plan how you will secure or remove loose items around your property.
- Prepare an emergency kit.
- Discuss a bushfire survival plan with your family.
- Check your insurance policy is up-to-date.

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ON THE RIGHT TRACK

STORY TORI MAYNE

QRAT team members listen intently during a briefing.

A SELF-FUNDED VOLUNTEER GROUP IS PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE SUPPORTING EMERGENCY SERVICES OPERATING IN QUEENSLAND'S MOST CHALLENGING TERRAIN.

IT IS SAID to understand someone else's experience, you must walk a mile in their shoes.

However, walking up to 10km while carrying 40kg of equipment in some of the most inhospitable parts of Queensland, are 'shoes' most of us would not be comfortable wearing.

This is the reality for volunteer group Queensland Remote Area Tracking (QRAT) which assists emergency services across the country to find missing persons, provide on-the-ground support during bushfires and assist police with other matters.

An idea that started among five ex-State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers aims to not only help the community, but also give Australian Defence Force veterans a chance to use their combat training in a meaningful way as civilians.

QRAT co-founder Nathan Gelhaar said the group had been called to more than 100 activations since 2017.

"There's no typical activation for us, but a large part of what we do is missing persons activations," Mr Gelhaar said.

"Queensland police will call us as a first response to establish signs of a missing person at the last known point and then we track them using visual tracking techniques.

"In all of our activations there have only been three people not found in places we have searched and unfortunately those three people were never found."

Mr Gelhaar said it was the team members' unique skillset, stamina and equipment that made them such a valuable resource for emergency services.

WE CAN STAY OUT FOR THREE DAYS GUARANTEED WITHOUT RESUPPLY OF GEAR AND THERE'S NO SEASON, WEATHER OR TERRAIN WE WON'T GO INTO.

"If we can't find the tracks at a location, our skillset allows us to go along a fence line, creek or road and establish where that person hasn't been, meaning we can direct the search," he said.

"We can stay out for three days guaranteed without resupply of gear and there's no season, weather or terrain we won't go into."

Mr Gelhaar also said there had been many occasions where QRAT had provided assistance to the RACQ

Choppers and Rescue Network.

"There was a recent scenario near Mackay where our team was able to isolate a lady in a 60-acre paddock, so we informed the police who coordinated with the RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter to go low and slow in the area and consequently she was found," Mr Gelhaar said.

"We work closely with the RACQ CQ Rescue service and all organisations involved in search and rescue."

Even though the activations could be mentally and physically draining, Mr Gelhaar said the importance of providing closure was what motivated the team.

"We're really proud of the work we do, even when it's tough," he said.

"For a family who has lost someone, we understand how important closure is, so we do carry that weight on our shoulders during a search.

"We love not only helping the Queensland community but also helping a community of Defence Force veterans find purpose in their life." ■

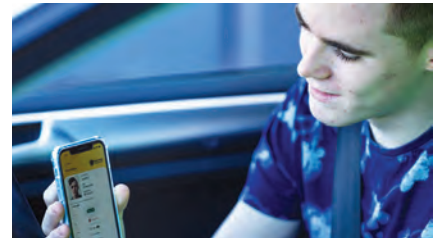


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LEARN MORE
ABOUT QRAT

STORY RAY ANDERSEN

DRIVER LICENCES GO DIGITAL

QUEENSLANDERS CAN NOW CHOOSE TO HAVE A DIGITAL LICENCE STORED IN THEIR PHONE.



QUEENSLANDERS HAVE BEEN assured their personal information will be kept secure if they switch to the new Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) digital licence.

TMR Deputy Director General, Customer Services, Safety and Regulation Geoff Magoffin said Queenslanders could now carry their driver licence, marine licence or photo identification on a mobile device.

“This will provide convenience for the thousands of Queenslanders who already have everything else in their phone, including their loyalty cards, bank and credit cards,” Mr Magoffin said

“Queenslanders can leave their wallet at home and enjoy the benefits of carrying their digital licence on their phone, safe in the knowledge their personal information is secure and private.”

He said the Queensland digital licence met international standards for verifying, authenticating and keeping personal information safe, secure and private.

ADDITIONALLY, THE APP INCORPORATES ROBUST SECURITY PROTOCOLS WHICH HAVE BEEN RIGOROUSLY TESTED.

“You can choose how much information you share and with whom you share it,” Mr Magoffin said.

“This means your private data remains safe and secure while sharing only the necessary information to meet specific requirements.

“Additionally, the app incorporates robust security protocols which have been rigorously tested.

“These security measures safeguard your private information from identity theft and fraud.”

The digital licence is optional and all Queenslanders will still receive their physical cards in the mail, even if they choose to go digital.

“TMR recognises people have different preferences and not everyone may be ready to embrace the digital licence,” Mr Magoffin said.

“So physical driver licences and other photo cards will continue to be issued.”

The digital licence is free and accessible by downloading the Queensland Digital Licence app from your app store.

“You don’t need to wait for your physical licence to expire before getting the digital licence,” Mr Magoffin said.

“One of the big advantages of the digital licence is that information updates instantly.

“So, if you change your address or upgrade your licence class, you will see that information straight away.” ■



SCAN THE CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DIGITAL LICENCES



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STORY LAUREN COONEY

HANDY ADVICE FOR MOTORISTS

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.

BEFORE INDICATORS, BRAKE lights, road signs and traffic lights, motorists depended on an array of hand signals to alert fellow drivers of plans to stop, slow down or change directions.

But in 1950, interpretation of these hand signals was described as 'strange', similar to the interpretation some drivers have of many road rules today.

That year's February edition of *The Road Ahead* sought to clarify the gestures and ensure the use of hand signals was "correct, prompt and smart".

The story said "guesswork, confusion, and lack of decision have no useful place in safe driving, and bad hand signalling of intention to stop or change direction is a cause of all three".

The writer urged drivers to study the printed diagrams of the various hand signals which they were now required to give under the new Traffic Regulations, which became effective on 1 February 1950, explaining "slovenly signals are the mark of the slovenly driver".

"Safe drivers will give hand signals or automatic signals for that matter, in plenty of time before a halt is made

or direction is changed: they will give signals always in a methodical manner."

Drivers were reminded the hand signals must be given at least 100 feet (30m) before arriving at the point at which they intended to stop, slow down, or change direction.

FUEL PRICES LIVING IN THE '70S

A February 1974 article in *The Road Ahead* set out how much fuel prices had changed from 1945 to 1973.

While we hit record high fuel prices in Queensland of \$2.38 a litre this year, in December 1973 motorists were paying 56.4 cents per imperial gallon – equivalent to about four and a half litres.

The story explained how in 1973 the Federal Government's budget imposed the biggest increase in petrol tax for nearly 30 years; up 5 cents a gallon to 22.3 cents. This meant about an extra \$20 to the petrol bill annually for an owner of a medium-sized car covering 10,000 miles (16,100km) a year.

US DOMINATED CAR SALES

A 1927 edition of *The Queensland Motorist* gave a snapshot of how car sales were tracking globally.

At the end of 1926, 27.5 million cars were registered across the world and the United States was home to more than 22 million of them. ■



Petrol prices in Brisbane area
 Details of petrol prices in Brisbane from 1945 to December, 1973, set out below, were compiled by the Petroleum Information Bureau (Australia).

Prices shown in the column headed "Wholesale, Less Customs-Excise Duty" take into account the differences prior to August 1961, between the rate of customs consumption met from year to year, by imports and local refinery production.

Price control on petrol, imposed by the Commonwealth Government in 1940 as a wartime measure, was maintained from 1945 to 1954 (at first by the Commonwealth and later by State Governments), with uniform prices and margins in all State capital cities.

In December, 1954 price control on petrol was lifted in all States except South Australia and Queensland, after which prices varied from State to State.

In May, 1959 price control at the retail level was reimposed in New South Wales and now applies to the reseller margin in that State.

Price control on petrol was lifted in Queensland in February 1967. (It was imposed, at both wholesale and retail levels, in the Australian Capital Territory in August 1973.) In States where prices are not controlled, resellers' margins are recommended by State reseller associations.

Prices in shillings and pence are shown up to February, 1966, when decimal currency was introduced. The 1973 Australian Government's Budget imposed the biggest increase in petrol tax for nearly 30 years – extra \$20 to the petrol bill of the owner of a medium-sized car covering 10,000 miles a year.

As the petrol tax rises there is a diminished use of it for the original purpose for which it was originally introduced – grants to the States for improving their road networks.

Before the 5 cents a gallon petrol excise rise, road users were paying close to \$1000 million a year in taxes.

SUPER . . . per imp. gallon

DATE	WHOLESALE, LESS CUSTOMS-EXCISE DUTY	WHOLESALE PRICE	RESELLERS' MARGIN	RETAIL PRICE
1955 December	22.1c (2-3½d)			
1956 March	22.8c (2-4½d)			
August	24.4c (2-5½d)			
1957 February	25.6c (2-6½d)	31.9c (3-2½d)		
April	26.0c (2-7½d)	34.4c (3-5½d)	3.1c (3½d)	35.0c (3-6d)
May		35.8c (3-6½d)		37.5c (3-8d)
December		36.8c (3-7½d)		38.8c (3-10½d)
1958 June	35.4c (2-6½d)			
1959 September	34.6c (2-5½d)	35.2c (3-6½d)	2.7c (3½d)	38.3c (3-8d)
1960 October	32.9c (2-4½d)	34.4c (3-5½d)	3.1c (3½d)	39.5c (3-11d)
1961 May	29.9c (2-1d)	33.5c (3-4½d)		39.3c (3-10d)
1963 August	22.3c (2-3½d)	23.1c (3-3½d)	3.5c (4½d)	36.3c (3-9d)
1964 June	21.9c (2-2½d)	22.7c (3-3½d)	4.0c (4½d)	37.8c (3-9½d)
1965 May	21.5c (2-1½d)	22.1c (3-2½d)	4.4c (5½d)	37.5c (3-9d)
August	21.0c (2-1½d)	31.7c (3-2d)	4.6c (5½d)	37.1c (3-8½d)
December	20.6c (2-0½d)	31.3c (3-1½d)		36.7c (3-8d)
1966 February	20.8c (2-1d)	30.8c (3-1d)		36.3c (3-7½d)
July	21.0c (2-1½d)	30.4c (3-0½d)		35.3c (3-7d)
1967 April	21.8c	32.9c (3-3½d)	5.0c (6d)	37.9c (3-9½d)
May	21.7c	33.3c (3-4d)		38.3c (3-10d)
August		33.0c		38.2c
June	22.1c	34.0c	5.0c	39.1c
August	23.3c	34.4c	5.1c	39.1c
December	24.3c	33.6c	6.4c	40.4c
1971 April		26.6c		38.8c
August	22.8c	29.6c	6.9c	42.0c
1973 August	24.3c	38.1c		43.5c
December		39.6c		46.5c
		41.6c		48.9c
		46.6c	7.9c	54.5c
				57.5c

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*Retail partners, offers and discount may change at any time without notice. eVouchers must be pre-purchased through RACQ. Visit racq.com/benefits for the conditions, limits and exclusions for each offer.



SCORE AN ESSENCE PEREGIAN BEACH GETAWAY

READERS HAVE THE chance to win a two-night* stay at Essence Peregian Beach.

The new Sunshine Coast resort features a 32-room boutique hotel and a collection of 20 beach homes nestled on the edge of the Noosa National Park and just a short stroll to Peregian Beach.

Salty air and sandy toes are what a holiday at Essence is all about, without missing out on any of the indulgent details you would expect from a world-class property.

The Road Ahead and Essence are giving readers the chance to win a two-night stay* in a Superior Studio Biosphere View room, including a welcome gift on arrival of two luxurious Essence beach towels and a bottle of sparkling wine.

The total value of the prize is \$1,100. Visit racq.com/essence to enter. Read more about Essence on page 34 or visit essenceperegianbeach.com.au.

*Terms and conditions apply (racq.com/essence).



THE COMPETITION CLOSES 5PM 29 FEBRUARY 2024.



EVENT CINEMAS DOUBLE PASS

THE ROAD AHEAD and Event Cinemas are giving readers the chance to win one of 10 Event Cinemas double passes. The prize includes one Event Cinemas double pass per winner, valued at \$40. Visit racq.com/movietix to enter.

THE COMPETITION CLOSES 5PM 29 FEBRUARY 2024.



\$250 GIFT CARD

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.

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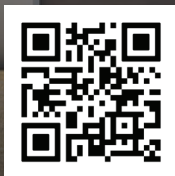
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Bloomin' LOVELY

A ROAD TRIP FROM CAIRNS TO COOKTOWN REVEALED THE REGION'S MULTI-LAYERED HISTORY.

STORY DENISE CULLEN

EGRETS STALKED ACROSS the low-tide mudflats beside Cairns Esplanade in Far North Queensland as we loaded our luggage into a rented 4WD and prepared to hit the coastal route to Cooktown.

It's a 253km journey which traverses both sealed and unsealed roads beside picturesque palm-fringed beaches and through the ancient Daintree Rainforest to small seaside towns.

The first leg consisted of the Great Barrier Reef Drive – a 140km stretch leading north.

As the holiday towers of Cairns disappeared into the rear-vision mirror, city suburbs gave way to cane fields and roadside stalls selling bananas and other tropical fruits.

From Buchan Point, the road hugged the coastline, with waves so close you could almost dip a toe.

Further on, after a steep and winding climb, we pulled in at Rex Lookout.

The arc of sandy white coastline lapped by aquamarine waters was postcard perfect.

"What a view," said my travelling companion, who was, like me, otherwise lost for words.

We got back on the highway and

followed the signs to Port Douglas, established in 1877 to support the region's gold rush, but now better known for its lavish resorts.

Flanked by rolling golf fairways, we followed a long, curving driveway into the Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort, to pull up seats in Feast restaurant, overlooking some of the 2ha of swimmable, saltwater pools.

Sated after a lunch of coconut-crusting prawns and fresh sashimi, we got back behind the wheel and cruised for another 45 minutes before reaching the Daintree River Ferry.

We kept our eyes peeled for crocodiles during the 10-minute crossing but failed to spot a single one.

Our next stop, Cape Tribulation, marked the start of the next leg, along the unsealed Bloomfield Track.

Described as one of the State's most scenic short road trips, the Bloomfield

Track stretches for between 32km and 34km (estimates vary) as it cuts a path through the World Heritage-listed Daintree National Park, with rainforest on one side and ocean glimpses on the other.

There are occasional murmurs about sealing the mostly gravel road, but for now, it's open only to four-wheel-drive traffic, due to several creek crossings and steep ascents and descents.

Seasonal flooding, slips, potholes and fallen trees are common, but we were at the tail-end of the dry season, which made for a bumpy but doable journey.

There are many beaches, lookouts and waterfalls along the route.

We first pulled up at Kulki, the name given to Cape Tribulation by the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people.

The Kulki boardwalk led up to a beach lookout where the rainforest meets the reef; we watched flocks of Australian pied imperial pigeons soar against a backdrop of jungle-clad mountains.

Six kilometres further down the Bloomfield Track, we crunched over the smooth boulders and crystal-clear waters of Emmagen Creek – but not before taking a quick dip.

Towards the end of the track, the

**THE ARC OF SANDY WHITE
COASTLINE LAPPED BY AQUAMARINE
WATERS WAS POSTCARD PERFECT.**

The Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort in Port Douglas. Photos Tourism Tropical North Queensland.

A vehicle on a dusty section of the Bloomfield Track.

A creek in the Daintree Rainforest.

The Great Barrier Reef Drive.

The Bloomfield River.

Bloomfield River curves gracefully towards the Wujal Wujal (meaning ‘many falls’) Aboriginal community.

We pressed on to Bloomfield Cabins and Camping where, over a campfire and a cold beer, a Hervey Bay couple confessed they kept coming back here for the fishing and the tranquillity – in that order.

After a relaxed BBQ dinner cooked by the new owners, we retire to the two-bedroom cottage onsite, waking only when kookaburras started laughing the next morning.

From here, it was an easy drive to our final destination, Cooktown, which has a rich, complex history, but is often overlooked in the scramble to reach Cape York.

It was here that Captain James Cook and his crew came ashore after his ship, Endeavour, ran aground on the reefs off the coast of Cape Tribulation.

They stayed for 48 days, during which time natural history draughtsman Sydney Parkinson recorded 150 words and phrases of the local Guugu Yimithirr language, while botanists Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander collected 325 species of plants, most previously unknown.

Traces of this interwoven Indigenous and European history linger in the Cooktown Museum, where Guugu Yimithirr artefacts stand alongside the

Endeavour’s original anchor and cannon, and in the Cooktown Botanic Gardens where bush tucker grows adjacent to the Banks and Solander Garden.

Also worth visiting are the Cooktown History Centre and the new Waalmbal Birri Heritage and Culture Centre.

During our stay, we also stepped aboard the Riverbend Tours’ boat, Nautilus.

Skipper Nick Davidson has lived here for 12 years and regaled us with tales of sailors, crocodiles and the culture of the town.

“I’m not sure when you become a local – I’m told after three cyclones,” he quipped.

The sea wind whipped our hair into knots as we viewed the redeveloped foreshore which contains everything from the historic Powder Magazine hut to new fishing platforms.

That night, we bedded down in one of the freshly renovated rooms at the Seaview Cooktown.

The decades-old motel overlooking the harbour has been recast as a stylish modern retreat, with a sparkling baby blue pool and ample outdoor seating under retro umbrellas.

It’s a seamless mix of old and new – much like Cooktown itself. ■

The writer travelled courtesy of Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Cook Shire Council.

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DISCOVER THE *Essence of Peregian*

STORY RAY ANDERSEN

SUNSHINE COAST RESORT
Essence Peregian Beach is the perfect choice for anyone wanting to enjoy all that the strip of world-famous beaches and its hinterland offer.

However, there is no need to wander too far from Essence if you want a more relaxed holiday, everything you could want for the perfect getaway is on your doorstep.

The mixture of boutique hotel rooms and beach homes sits unobtrusively behind the Peregian Village Market and boasts the Noosa National Park's UNESCO-listed Biosphere Reserve as its backdrop.

The hotel has 32 rooms and if you need more space, you can choose from 20 architecturally designed beach homes, from three to five bedrooms.

A feature of Essence is its proximity to the patrolled Peregian Beach (a leisurely five-minute stroll away) and its beachfront shopping and dining precinct.

Adjacent to Essence is Outer Square – offering a tempting all-day brunch menu and serving its own superb blend of coffee created in conjunction with Noosa company Clandestino's.

If you are after something harder, Outer Square has an extensive drinks menu, including a wide selection of craft beers, cocktails and wines.

You also get to count the Peregian Beach Hotel as your local pub while staying at Essence.

Relaxing on its verandah with a glass of something cold is a great way to blend in with the many locals who frequent the popular watering hole.

EVERYTHING YOU COULD WANT FOR THE PERFECT HOLIDAY IS ON YOUR DOORSTEP.

Across the road (David Low Way), at The Village Peregian Beach, there are more dining choices – including acclaimed restaurants such as Periwinkle and Pitchfork – and some of the Sunshine Coast's best lifestyle boutiques offering homewares and fashion with a coastal influence.

Anything else you might need can be picked up at the Peregian Village Market, which has a supermarket, pharmacy and bottle shop.

General Manager of Essence Damien Larkin said the resort, which opened in July 2023, would set the bar for luxury accommodation in Peregian Beach.

"Essence is set to make a huge mark on the Sunshine Coast tourism scene, not only for providing a first-of-its-kind resort to the area, but also for championing local arts and craftspeople and providing dozens of new job opportunities and experiences for locals," Mr Larkin said.

The dream of Essence developer and owner Tony Scanlon was to allow visitors to experience the coastal village charm of Peregian Beach while staying in a luxurious, contemporary resort.

"Our vision is to enhance the area by producing an exceptional resort that compliments the village feel and culture and to enhance that by collaborating with like-minded creative businesses to bring the best of what's on offer in this local area to everyone who visits Essence," he said.

Mission accomplished! ■

Win two nights at Essence
Peregian Beach: Details page 28



LONGREACH, WINTON & TOWN OF 1770 SUMMER SALE **8 DAYS**

DEPARTS > 2 MAR 2024

- ★ Overnight in a sleeper cabin on the Spirit of the Outback
- ★ Luxury 'Gold Class' coach travel
- ★ 3 nights Longreach, Qantas Founders Museum and Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame
- ★ Winton day tour with Australian Age of Dinosaurs
- ★ Barcardine Tree of Knowledge, Alpha murals
- ★ 1 night in Emerald and Heritage Park Silo tour
- ★ 2 nights in Town of 1770, including a LARC Paradise tour
- ★ Discover historic Childers
- ★ 21 meals

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- ★ Visit Corryong for Snowy River heritage
- ★ Explore Bright
- ★ 2 nights in Lakes Entrance with a cruise to Wyanga Park Winery
- ★ 2 nights in Foster with Wilsons Prom cruise
- ★ 1 night Phillip Island, penguin parade & wildlife cruise
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- ★ 3 nights Bowral
- ★ Highland Gathering of the Clans Festival at Bundanoon
- ★ Three Sisters lookout at Katoomba
- ★ Hydro Majestic high tea and tour
- ★ Bathurst and Mount Panorama
- ★ 2 nights Mudgee
- ★ Gooree Park winery and thoroughbred stud tour
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- ★ 1 night Goondiwindi and town tour
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- ★ 18 meals

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May date book by 31 Dec

One-way airfare from Melbourne ✈**

DEPARTS > 1 MAY 2024

- ★ Flight to Melbourne ex Brisbane
- ★ Luxury 'Gold Class' coach travel
- ★ 4 nights Albury
- ★ Glenrowan, High Country, Mount Beauty, Wallace's Hut, Bogong High Plains, Falls Creek
- ★ Beechworth Bakery, Red Stag Deer Farm
- ★ Bright's Gala Day at the Autumn Festival
- ★ Holbrook, Gundagai, 'Dog on the Tucker Box'
- ★ Goulburn Historic Waterworks Museum
- ★ 1 night Burradoo, Newcastle and Coffs Harbour
- ★ Broken Bay Pearl Farm Cruise
- ★ Port Macquarie
- ★ 21 meals

Per person twin share

FROM \$4,015*

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW **6 DAYS**

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Mar dates book by 31 Dec

Return airfares included ✈**

DEPARTS > GOLD: 16 MAR 2024; DIAMOND: 17 MAR 2024

- ★ Flights to/from Melbourne ex Brisbane
- ★ Opulent 'Diamond Class' or luxury 'Gold Class' coach travel
- ★ Unpack once
- ★ 5 nights in Melbourne's CBD
- ★ Off-road safari at Werribee Open Range Zoo
- ★ Werribee Park Mansion and Rose Garden
- ★ Dandenong Ranges: Puffing Billy rail journey
- ★ Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip Bay
- ★ Q Train - Australia's premier rail restaurant
- ★ Full day at Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show
- ★ 13 meals

Per person twin share

FROM \$4,320*
GOLD DEPARTURE

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9 DAYS

SILO ART TRAIL, MUNGO NATIONAL PARK & OUT OF AFRICA ZOOFARI

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$150PP*
Apr date book by 31 Dec

One-way airfare from Melbourne ✈️

DEPARTS > GOLD: 3 APR 2024; DIAMOND: 19 MAY 2024

★ Opulent 'Diamond Class' or luxury 'Gold Class' coach travel
★ 1 night Armidale ★ Zoofari at Taronga Western Plains Zoo & overnight stay in Animal View OR Bushland View rooms ★ 'The Dish' in Parkes ★ 2 nights Griffith with guided tour of Hermits Cave and working fruit farm ★ 2 nights Mildura ★ Full-day guided tour in Mungo National Park, visiting 'The Walls of China' ★ Silo Art Trail ★ 1 night The Grampians ★ 1 night Melbourne ★ Flight ex Melbourne to Brisbane ★ 23 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$5,405***
GOLD DEPARTURE

11 DAYS

INLAND EXPLORER

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$100PP*
Apr date book by 31 Dec

One-way airfare from Melbourne ✈️

DEPARTS > GOLD: 19 APR; DIAMOND: 20 AUG 2024

★ Opulent 'Diamond Class' or luxury 'Gold Class' coach travel
★ 1 night St George ★ 2 nights Lightning Ridge, guided tour and opal visit ★ 'Chambers of the Black Hand' ★ Guided wildlife zoofari tour at Taronga Western Plains Zoo ★ 1 night Dubbo; 1 night Cobar ★ 2 nights Broken Hill visiting Silverton, Pro Hart Gallery & 'Living Desert Sculptures' ★ 1 night Mildura ★ 1 night Echuca with paddle steamer cruise ★ 1 night Melbourne ★ Flight ex Melbourne to Brisbane ★ 30 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$5,285***
GOLD DEPARTURE

12 DAYS

THE GHAN & RED CENTRE SENSATION

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$150PP*
Apr dates book by 31 Dec

Return airfares included ✈️

DEPARTS > 30 APR; 14 MAY; 2 JUL 2024

★ Flights to Adelaide, from Darwin ex Brisbane ★ 1 night Adelaide ★ Gold service on The Ghan from Adelaide to Alice Springs & from Alice Springs to Darwin ★ 3 nights Alice Springs ★ 3 nights Yulara taking in Field of Light, Kata Tjuta at sunset ★ Sounds of Silence dinner ★ Uluru helicopter flight & camel trek ★ 1 night Kings Canyon with rim walk ★ Full day tour in Alice Springs & MacDonnell Ranges ★ 1 night Darwin ★ 31 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$11,875***

11 DAYS

TASMANIA GRAND TOUR

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$100PP*
Feb dates book by 31 Dec

Return airfares included ✈️

DEPARTS > 10, 24 FEB 2024

★ Return flights from Brisbane to Hobart ★ Opulent 'Diamond Class' coach travel ★ 4 nights in Hobart with specialty seafood dinner ★ Wall in the Wilderness ★ 2 nights in Strahan Village with Gordon River cruise & West Coast Wilderness Railway ★ 2 nights West Coast visiting Cradle Mountain & see the Tassie Devil ★ Chairlift ride at Cataract Gorge, 1 night Launceston ★ 1 night St Helens with a scenic flight ★ Guided tour of Port Arthur and harbour cruise ★ 28 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$6,525***

13 DAYS

OUTBACK QUEENSLAND, GULF & SAVANNAH SAFARI

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$300PP*
May dates book by 31 Dec

One-way airfare from Cairns ✈️

DEPARTS > GOLD: 14 MAY 2024; DIAMOND: 7 MAY; 4 JUN 2024

★ Opulent 'Diamond Class' or luxury 'Gold Class' coach travel ★ 1 night Roma & Barcaldine ★ 2 nights Longreach visiting Camden Park Station, Qantas Founders Museum, Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame ★ Australian Age of Dinosaurs at Winton ★ 2 nights Cloncurry ★ 2 nights Karumba with sunset dinner cruise ★ Iconic Gulflander rail journey ★ 2 nights Cobbold Gorge: cruise & helicopter flight ★ Savannahlander rail journey ★ 1 night Undara Lava Tubes ★ 1 night Cairns ★ Flight Cairns to Brisbane ★ 36 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$7,925***
GOLD DEPARTURE

13 DAYS

DARWIN, KAKADU, KIMBERLEY & BROOME

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$150PP*
May dates book by 31 Dec

Return airfares included ✈️

DEPARTS > 17 MAY; 2, 21 JUN; 5 JUL 2024

★ Flights to Darwin & from Broome ex Brisbane ★ Luxury 'Gold Class' coach travel ★ 2 nights Darwin ★ Litchfield National Park day tour ★ 2 nights Kakadu with 30-minute scenic flight, Yellow Water wetlands cruise ★ 1 night Katherine with sunset dinner gorge cruise ★ 3 nights Kununurra with Ord River cruise, Bungle Bungles flight ★ 1 night Halls Creek ★ 1 night Fitzroy Crossing ★ 2 nights Broome with Willie Creek Pearl Farm tour & sunset Camel ride ★ 35 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$9,915***

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WEST COAST WANDERER 14 DAYS

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$200PP*
Jun dates book by 31 Dec

Return airfares included™ ✈️

DEPARTS > 5, 16 JUN;
24 JUL 2024

★ Flights to Broome & from Perth ex Brisbane ★ 2 nights Broome with Willie Creek Pearl Farm tour, sunset camel ride ★ 2 nights Port Hedland ★ 1 night Karratha, 2 nights Exmouth ★ Guided Ningaloo Reef tour in glass bottom boat ★ 2 nights Monkey Mia with eco cruise ★ Kalbarri National Park and Skywalk lookout ★ 1 night Kalbarri ★ 1 night Geraldton with town tour ★ Cervantes & Pinnacles Desert ★ 2 nights Perth ★ Rottnest Island guided day tour ★ 36 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$9,375***

BELLINGEN VALLEY BEAUTY 6 DAYS

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$100PP*
Apr date book by 31 Dec

DEPARTS > 4 APR 2024

★ Luxury 'Gold Class' coach travel ★ View the splendour of Autumn colours ★ 3 nights in Bellingen Valley ★ Mary Boulton Pioneer Cottage ★ Guided tour of Trial Bay Gaol ★ Guided tour at the Solitary Islands Aquarium ★ Guided walking tour in World Heritage listed Dorrigo National Park rainforest ★ Visit the Skywalk at Dorrigo ★ Guided tour at Duttons Trout Hatchery ★ 2 nights in Armidale with locally guided town tour ★ Join a guided tour of Saumarez House ★ 16 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$2,624***

MURRAY RIVER PRINCESS CRUISE, FLINDERS RANGES & ARKAROOLA WILDERNESS 9 DAYS

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$100PP*
Jun date book by 31 Dec

Return airfares included™ ✈️

DEPARTS > 13 JUN 2024

★ Return flights to Adelaide from Brisbane ★ 2 nights in Adelaide; Mount Lofty ★ 3 nights aboard PS Murray River Princess, offshore guided tours & wildlife cruises ★ Monarto Safari Park ★ Visit the Jeff Morgan Gallery & Panorama in Hawker ★ Flinders Ranges ★ 1 night Wilpena Pound Resort ★ Scenic flight over Wilpena Pound ★ 2 nights at Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary with 4WD ridge top tour ★ Spectacular sunset with canapés overlooking Arkaroola ★ 22 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$6,175***

SAVANNAHLANDER & GULFLANDER OUTBACK TRACKS 9 DAYS

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$250PP*
Apr date book by 31 Dec

Return airfares included™ ✈️

DEPARTS > GOLD: 6 APR 2024; DIAMOND: 13 JUL 2024

★ Return flights from Brisbane to Cairns ★ Opulent 'Diamond Class' or luxury 'Gold Class' coach travel ★ 2 nights staying 5 star in Cairns ★ Kuranda Scenic Rail journey in Gold Class ★ Woodleigh Cattle Station tour ★ 1 night Georgetown, 2 nights Karumba with sunset cruise & sand island dinner ★ Gulflander & Savannahlander rail journey's ★ 2 nights Cobbold Gorge with cruise & scenic flight ★ 1 night Undara Resort and Lava Tubes tour ★ 23 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$5,825***
GOLD DEPARTURE

SOUTH WEST QUEENSLAND & LIGHTNING RIDGE ROVER 8 DAYS

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$250PP*
Apr date book by 31 Dec

DEPARTS > 22 APR;
16 JUL 2024

★ Opulent 'Diamond Class' coach travel ★ 1 night Roma, Roma Cattle Saleyards ★ 1 night Charleville; endangered Bilby experience ★ Artesian Time Tunnel at Cunnamulla ★ 2 nights St George with guided winery tour & tasting ★ Thallon Silo Trail, Australian Opal Centre ★ 2 nights Lightning Ridge with locally guided town tour ★ 1 night Goondiwindi with town & cotton farm tour ★ 'Chambers of the Black Hand' ★ Albert River Wines finale long lunch ★ 22 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$4,195***

SAPPHIRE COAST, GIPPSLAND, WILSONS PROMONTORY & PHILLIP ISLAND 10 DAYS

EARLY BIRD DEAL!
SAVE UP TO \$150PP*
Apr date book by 31 Dec

One-way airfare from Melbourne™ ✈️

DEPARTS > 27 APR 2024

★ Opulent 'Diamond Class' coach travel ★ 1 night Port Macquarie ★ 1 night Kangaroo Valley ★ Visit Bega Cheese Heritage Centre ★ 1 night in seaside town of Merimbula ★ Eden Killer Whale Museum visit ★ 1 night Lakes Entrance ★ 2 nights Foster ★ Wilsons Promontory cruise ★ 1 night Phillip Island ★ Coastal wildlife cruise and penguin parade ★ Q Train - Australia's premier rail restaurant ★ 2 nights 5 star Melbourne ★ 26 meals

Per person twin share **FROM \$6,205***



Diamond IN THE WEST

YOUR GUIDE TO ENJOYING THE BEST OF KUNUNURRA'S LEISURELY LIFESTYLE – MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT.

STORY NANNETTE HOLLIDAY

LIKE THE SPARKLING diamonds discovered in a dry riverbed nearby, Kununurra is a unique, beautiful gem among the wild and rugged Kimberley region of north-west Western Australia.

Kununurra is young, unlike the surrounding million-year-old landscapes and mineral wealth.

Meaning 'big water' in the local Miriwung Gajerrong language, Kununurra was established to service the Ord River dam construction workers in 1959.

The damming created Lake Argyle, which provides water for the Ord River Irrigation Project and the region's hydroelectricity. A staggering 20 times larger than Sydney Harbour, Lake Argyle is Australia's largest man-made freshwater reservoir.

A diamond in the dust, Kununurra has many hidden treasures waiting to be unearthed. Fortunately, they can be discovered in the same laid-back, relaxed way of the local, leisurely lifestyle over a few days while creating memories that will last a lifetime.

MORNING

Kelly's Knob is a peaceful place to begin

your day. At 191m, it is Kununurra's highest point and provides 360-degree panoramic views of the town, Elephant Rock, Lake Kununurra and the vibrant richness of the Ord River farming lands.

The surrounding rich-rust rock and Cockburn Ranges burn brightest at sunrise (and sunset).

The bitumen road access and ensuing 1.2km round walk are quietest at dawn. If mobility is an issue, the car park offers outstanding views.

Visiting the world-renowned Bungle Bungle is a must on most people's lists.

Situated 300km south of Kununurra in the World Heritage-listed Purnululu National Park, the 360-billion-year-old sandstone massif is almost 99 times larger in area than Uluru.

One of the best ways to see these striped, orange domes is by an Aviair scenic flight, allowing you to also grasp the vastness of Lake Argyle and the now-closed Argyle Diamond Mine.

Flights depart from 6am and options include a two-hour flight only; landing at Bellburn Airstrip and helicopter flight over the domes; a four-hour walk into Cathedral Gorge with lunch before flying back to Kununurra; or add an overnight stay at Savannah Lodge to the walk and

lunch, flying back the next morning.

Cafe culture is alive and well in Kununurra, with one on almost every corner.

Wild Mango Cafe is renowned for its mango smoothies, Cornerside Cafe for its unique boab root dishes, and Ivanhoe Cafe offers relaxed views of Kelly's Knob.

For something a little different, head to Spilled the Beans, operating from a converted shipping container at Kimberleyland Waterfront Holiday Park.

Afterwards, stroll the jewellery shops searching for your own 'pink' diamond. Kimberley Fine Diamonds also has a range of locally produced artworks and homewares.

Then check out the famous names at Celebrity Tree Park alongside Lily Creek Lagoon.

NOON

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts is the first wholly owned Indigenous art centre in Western Australia and the oldest in Australia.

Established in the heart of Miriwong country in the 1980s, emerging artist Cathy Ward conducts tours of the studios and galleries alongside her father Ben Ward and grandmother Peggy Griffiths.

Bungle Bungle's Cathedral Gorge.
Photo Nannette Holliday.



Triple J Tours on the Ord River.
Photo Tourism Western Australia.



between massive ochre cliffs, savannah forests, peaceful waterlily and reed-laden backwaters along the Ord River to Lake Kununurra.

Various stops allow you to understand more about each diverse environment and its inhabitants. A delicious home-baked afternoon tea is served at a pre-set riverside camp, allowing you to stretch your legs.

NIGHT

Situated in an Ord River Irrigation Scheme historic building where the inside dining tables surround the original machinery, PumpHouse Kununurra is the perfect spot for sunset drinks and delicious local fare.

Overlooking Lake Kununurra, the outside deck is a popular space to chill with a refreshing beverage and delightful culinary share plates while watching the golden sun reflect in the inky waters before sinking behind the Cockburn Ranges.

If you want to make a grand entrance (like me), disembark your Triple J Ord River cruise on the PumpHouse jetty.

Another leisurely way to while away the afternoon is aboard MV *Jabiru* on a Lake Kununurra Sunset Dinner Cruise. From 3.15pm–6.15pm, mid-May to the end of August, enjoy the serenity of nature as the flat-bottomed boat glides through picturesque Lily Creek to Lake Kununurra, passing Sleeping Buddha, the Diversion Dam and other iconic landmarks.

The tasty Kimberley-inspired BBQ dinner is served at tranquil Packsaddle Lagoon as the sun slowly paints the sky in kaleidoscopic tones.

For those who prefer to get even closer to nature, Gourmet Camp Oven Experience is no ordinary outside dinner affair.

Held in a secret, picturesque bush location minutes from Kununurra, here candles, chandeliers and the starry night illuminate the dozen guests around the linen-clothed table. Partake in a mouth-watering three-course epicurean meal with BYO beverages.

Besides being the chef, Josh also sings while Tamsyn ensures everything runs like clockwork.

Operating mid-April to mid-September 4–7.30pm, it's a unique and memorable evening and the consummate way to round off your Kununurra stay. ■

LIKE THE SPARKLING DIAMONDS DISCOVERED IN A DRY RIVERBED NEARBY, KUNUNURRA IS A UNIQUE, BEAUTIFUL GEM AMONG THE WILD AND RUGGED KIMBERLEY REGION OF NORTH-WEST WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

The painters, carvers, sculptors, boab engravers, printmakers and textile artists happily discuss the stories and meanings behind their work.

Tours operate on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between 11am and 12.30pm.

All proceeds remain within the community, supporting their up-and-coming artists and ongoing projects.

Sandalwood is widely grown around Kununurra. Don't miss the opportunity to stop at The Sandalwood Shop on Weaber Road. The beautiful sandalwood aromas will calm your soul and mind while shopping for locally produced oils and skincare products.

A little further up Weaber Road, enjoy lunch and sample the iconic Ord River Rum at Hoochery Distillery, Western Australia's oldest continuously operated legal still.

The rum is meticulously handcrafted from pure, local rainwater and sugarcane,

just as founder Spike Dessert did 25 years earlier.

Today, their range of gins, whiskey and liqueurs is worth sampling too. Sit back and relax in the rustic old shed, savouring a lunch of homemade wild barramundi tacos and their famous rum cake before taking a tour of the property and learning about the unique production methods.

Another great way to spend a half-day is aboard the Triple J Ord River Discoverer with Sunset tour. From 11.30am–5.30pm, this provides an excellent overview of the area's pastoral history, natural landscapes and wildlife.

It begins with a comfortable air-conditioned bus ride to Lake Argyle via the Argyle Downs Homestead Museum (the 1895-built Durack family home) before crossing the dam wall to board the purpose-built shallow-bottom jet boat opposite the hydroelectric station.

The thrilling 55km cruise snakes

NORFOLK ISLAND

7 Night Getaway

twin share from

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 - 1 Bedroom Cabin with Balcony
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- Breakfast daily
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- History in the Making Coach Tour
- Island Life Coach Tour with Lunch
- Wars of Change Coach Tour
- The Natural Wonders Coach Tour
- Norf'k Laengwij Class
- The World of Norfolk Exhibit
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- All accommodation, meals and beverages for the duration of the tour
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- Take a dip in the crystal-clear waters of Fruit Bat Falls
- Explore the Torres Strait including Thursday Island and Horn Island

\$500 DEPOSIT* - Limited Time Only

13 days from \$10,765*pp

SAVE UP TO **\$2,630***pc

Leichhardt's Savannah Expedition



☀️ 15 Days 📍 Cairns - Darwin & v.v. 📅 Apr - Sep 2024 👥 Small group (22)

Highlights & Inclusions

- All accommodation, meals and beverages for the duration of the tour
- Travel aboard a custom 4WD Mercedes-Benz with a 2-person touring crew
- Experience the Southern 'Lost City' in Limmen National Park by heli-flight and guided ground tour
- Take a guided tour through the lava tubes at Undara Volcanic National Park
- Cruise along the Gulf of Carpentaria at sunset while enjoying dinner
- Travel through the Atherton Tablelands and visit Millaa Millaa Falls

\$500 DEPOSIT* - Limited Time Only

15 days from \$11,410*pp

SAVE UP TO **\$1,890***pc

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Swimming with turtles in the reef off Rarotonga. Photos Cook Islands Tourism

LOCAL'S GUIDE TO THE *Cook Islands*

A LOCAL SHARES HIS BEST COOK ISLANDS SECRETS FOR THE ULTIMATE HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE.

STORY CRAIG TANSLEY

THE COOK ISLANDS are still the South Pacific's best-kept secret. While you might have heard of their picture-postcard lagoons, there's a whole lot more to the Cook Islands waiting to be discovered.

EXPLORE THE BACK ROADS OF RAROTONGA

Rarotonga may be only 67sq. km in size and you can drive around it in 40 minutes (at 50km/h), but that doesn't mean it's not full of secret spots.

Hire a scooter (this is one of the best and safest islands in the South Pacific for it), a 4WD or even a bicycle and take the inland Ara Tapu road – the oldest road in the South Pacific.

Travel just a few hundred metres from the coast road (you can be assured that barely anyone drives this route) and you will get to see the real Rarotonga.

Here you will see locals tending to their taro plantations and keeping their pigs and goats.

You will also see turn-offs to 12 dirt roads leading to the island's water catchment areas; drive or walk and you will find tracks through some of Rarotonga's wildest wilderness, below huge mountains.

ENJOY RAROTONGA'S SUNSET COAST

The South Pacific isn't known for its bustling bar and restaurant scene; in most island destinations, like Fiji or Samoa, you will have few options outside resorts.

That's not the case in Rarotonga. Think of it as one giant resort, but one where the local people are just as big a part of it as the tourists.

Nowhere epitomises this more than Rarotonga's Sunset Coast, around Aorangi.

Here you will find an offering of some of the world's best sunset bars and restaurants, all within a few kilometres of each other.

You can sit with your toes in the sand, in open-air establishments facing out across the lagoon, where the sun sets into the sea.

Order a meal and cocktails at restaurants like Waterline Restaurant & Beach Bar, Shipwreck Bar and Wilsons Bar.

GET TO AITUTAKI

Anything you might have heard about Aitutaki is true! This is one of the best destinations on the planet.

Beautiful Aitutaki.



Waterline Restaurant & Beach Bar.

You will want to go for its lagoon – it's the Pacific's best. It is almost five times the size of Aitutaki, at 74sq. km, and is shaped like an equilateral triangle with 12km sides.

There are 14 tiny islands (motu) in it with dreamy white sand beaches ringed by coconut trees and all but one is entirely uninhabited.

You can easily get around with lagoon cruises available.

And yet, the lagoon is only one part of the charm of Aitutaki.

Locals live in picturesque villages by the roadside – they’ll wave and smile as you pass by.

You can eat local delicacies with the residents at Avatea Cafe or experience the South Pacific’s most awarded resort, Pacific Resort.



A local child on Atiu.



GO FURTHER AFIELD

The Cook Islands have much more to offer travellers than just Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

You only need to take a 45-minute flight on a light plane with Air Rarotonga to islands that receive fewer than 500 visitors a year but offer the ultimate escape.

There are 15 Cook Islands, but it’s the Southern Group (of nine) that are most accessible.

Travel to islands such as Mitiaro, Mangaia and Mauke and you can stay with local families for a real immersion into their culture, while the island of Atiu has more infrastructure, offering villas and lodges.

These islands are also home to a network of underground caves, including ancient burial caves you can tour with a guide. You can also go deep-sea fishing, take bird-watching expeditions and more.

GET ADVENTUROUS

While it’s the swimming options of the Cook Islands that will get your attention, don’t forget there are many other land-based adventures too.

You can hike across Rarotonga’s rugged, steep interior or take a guided tour with Maunga Tours.

At the centre of the island, mountains dramatically impose themselves on the landscape, more than 500m above sea level. There are chains set across rocky ledges, allowing hikers to climb for sweeping views over the island.

There are also 4WD expeditions, mountain-bike tours and off-road buggy rides to be experienced.

Amazing Cook Islands food.



LET’S EAT

Polynesian food is amazing! As well as being home to more than 100 restaurants and cafes, there are other ways to discover the cuisine.

Book a progressive dinner with Cook Islands Tours and you will have food prepared by Rarotonga locals in their homes, including taro, fish, pork and local spinach cooked in an umu (underground oven).

You will also get to sample local treats like ika mata (fish cured in lime, mixed with coconut milk) at the four-times-weekly Muri Night Markets. Or eat fish sandwiches in a shipping container, whose co-owner has just filleted his catch from that day’s fishing trip.

Try the crumbed mahi mahi with lime mayo at The Mooring Fish Cafe.

GO BELOW

The Cook Islands are volcanic islands that drop straight into 4,500m-deep ocean, offering divers some of the steepest ocean drop-offs in the world.

There are more than 30 dive sites across Rarotonga and Aitutaki which suit everyone from beginners to experts, and most sites are less than 10 minutes away by boat. You will see humpback whales, hundreds of fish species and more than 70 types of coral. And that’s just the start of the water attractions here; swim with humpbacks and turtles or try kiteboarding in one of the best places in the world for it – Aitutaki Lagoon. ■



Rarotonga’s mountainous hinterland.



TAKE A QUICK TOUR OF THE COOK ISLANDS

SWISS TRAINING DAYS

A RAIL TOUR THROUGH SWITZERLAND DELIVERED WONDERFUL SCENERY AND MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES.

STORY JIM MATHERS



The view from Matterhorn Glacier Paradise.



The medieval town of Lucerne.

WHEN IT COMES to scenery, Switzerland is among the best places on the planet. But the country also has a reputation for being expensive, so a holiday there requires thought and planning.

Tours aren't normally our thing but when we started researching a trip to Switzerland, a Cosmos train tour piqued our interest.

The Cosmos '9-Day Scenic Switzerland by Train' tour was pretty well priced, all the travel was by train (which we love) and the destinations ticked a lot of boxes; so we signed up.

On Day 1 you check into your Zurich hotel and the official start is a tour briefing over dinner. Day 9 finishes after breakfast in your Zurich hotel, so it's more of a seven-day tour. But a lot of good stuff is packed into those seven full days.

A good tour experience relies heavily on two things: the tour manager and the

crowd you're with. We scored on both fronts.

Our tour manager, Tunde, was brilliant. She was friendly, well organised, spoke four languages and had a good sense of humour.

She genuinely cared about the group, answered relentless questions with a smile and guided us expertly.

Our tour group was a mix of Australians and Americans, ranging in age from 30 to late 70s, and they were a fun lot.

The 'scenic Switzerland' locations were exceptional but there were other good aspects of the tour too.

All train travel is first class. While second class on Swiss trains is absolutely fine, one big benefit of first class is space – fewer people, more comfy seating and more luggage room.

Another tour feature I loved was the luggage service.

Your large cases are transported

separately each day, so you only need to carry a day bag. When you get to your hotel later in the day, your luggage is waiting for you.

The tour circumnavigated Switzerland, starting and finishing in Zurich, and visiting Lucerne, Montreux, Lausanne, Zermatt and St Moritz.

The itinerary featured side trips from Zermatt to Gornergrat and St Moritz to Tirano (Italy) and both were highlights.

The trip also included travel on three classy panorama trains: the Interlaken GoldenPass, Glacier Express and Bernina Express.

All were great.

To be honest, I preferred the journey from Zermatt to Tirano on the regional train over the return journey on the Bernina, because you could pull down the windows to take photos without reflections.

The tour included four optional excursions. We chose to do two of them,



The view from Harder Kulm, overlooking Interlaken and Lake Thun. Photos Jim Mathers.

including the trip to Harder Kulm from Interlaken, which was excellent.

You also get some free time, especially if you don't do every excursion, and we enjoyed just wandering through the streets of medieval Lucerne and along the Lake Geneva shoreline in Montreux.

For me, the highlight was Zermatt.

We went up the mountain on the cog railway to Gornergrat for a bird's eye view of the Matterhorn.

That was great.

After that, on our tour manager's suggestion (at our own expense, using the half-fare card), most of us took the alpine cable car up to Matterhorn Glacier Paradise (elevation 3,883m).

This provided a different view of the Matterhorn and an impressive vista across the alps into Italy.

The tour's pace is good. There was only one day when we had a very early start because we had to make the departure time of the Glacier Express, which takes almost eight hours to travel from Zermatt to St Moritz.

WHEN IT COMES TO SCENERY, SWITZERLAND IS AMONG THE BEST PLACES ON THE PLANET.

It's a spectacular eight hours though. Throughout the tour, the outstanding scenery never stopped.

There was either a craggy mountain, sweeping green meadow, spectacular waterfall or alpine town around every corner.

Some of the tour hotels, like the Alpha Palmiers, in Lausanne, and Novotel Zurich City West were a cut above the rest, but all the hotels we stayed in were of a good standard, with helpful staff and decent breakfasts.

Bathrooms were usually small and some hotels didn't have air-conditioning, but they tended to be in the cooler areas and you could open your windows.

Some hotels were a little removed from the train stations and were more challenging to get to on foot.

In those cases, transport was arranged to get you there if you needed it.

To help tourists, Cosmos has an app that covers all destinations. It's a useful tool and includes a wealth of information.

Overall, the only negative for me was that we didn't find out until Day 1 on the tour that our tickets included Swiss half-fare cards.

As we were staying in Switzerland after the tour, we bought half-fare cards online before we left home. Had we been made aware of this pre-tour, we could have saved \$400.

All things considered, for two people who had previously sworn to not do tours, this Cosmos train tour was a revelation to us.

It was a great trip and we thoroughly enjoyed it. ■

The author did the Cosmos tour with his wife as part of a self-funded holiday in September 2023.



Travelling on a Swiss train.

CONTACT RACQ TRAVEL ON 1300 888 449 OR RACQ.COM/TRAVEL FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS TRIP OR OTHER EUROPEAN HOLIDAYS.

HOT NEW MODELS

FOR
2024

WE TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE HOTTEST NEW MODELS CAR BUYERS CAN LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2024.

AFTER A HECTIC 2023 that saw carmakers get back to something approaching normality when it comes to supply, and the Australian new car market set record monthly highs, consumers can expect a veritable flood of new models in 2024.

Here's a look at some of the most keenly anticipated new arrivals.

TOYOTA bZ4X

Price: \$70,000 – \$80,000 (estimate)

Due: February 2024

We included Toyota's first electric vehicle (EV) in this roundup last year as it was originally due on sale in 2023, but ongoing production delays mean the RAV4-sized electric SUV now won't arrive in showrooms until February 2024, some 18 months after initially expected.

Based on the brand's E-TNGA architecture, the bZ4X features a 71.4kWh battery and single or twin electric motors, the latter affording AWD,

and outputs of 160kW/337Nm.

Its arrival will finally give Australia's biggest-selling new car brand the ammunition it needs to do battle with the likes of the Tesla Model Y and BYD Atto 3, which have enjoyed strong sales in the absence of a rival from the 'Big T'.

The Toyota EV utilises a new all-wheel (AWD) system jointly developed with Subaru, which will soon launch its own version, the Solterra.

In Europe, where the Toyota EV is already on sale, the AWD bZ4X claims a respectable 470km range while the FWD variant is good for 516km, according to the European testing standard.



Toyota bZ4X.

TOYOTA LANDCRUISER PRADO

Price: \$67,000 – \$95,000 (estimate)

Due: Mid-2024

Another hotly anticipated new Toyota due in mid-2024 is the all-new LandCruiser Prado which will step out in a bold new skin with mild-hybrid engine technology and underpinnings closely related to its big brother, the 300 Series.

Featuring a radical new look, allegedly inspired by LandCruisers of yesteryear, the rugged 4x4 wagon will no doubt be a must-have accessory for adventurous families.

Under that chunky new body is the same TNGA-F ladder-frame chassis developed for the 300 Series, which promises significant increases in rigidity and refinement.

Toyota is also promising more wheel articulation for better off-road capability, better handling and ride comfort on-road and improved performance courtesy of a 2.8-litre turbo-diesel four-cylinder engine, enhanced with 48-volt mild-hybrid technology.

Producing an identical 150kW/500Nm



to the current engine, the new powertrain incorporates an eight-speed automatic transmission in place of the old six-speed, which along with the move to mild hybrid should help improve performance and fuel consumption.

Longer, taller and wider than the current Prado, the new version's wheelbase matches that of the 300 Series which should help ensure roomier five and seven-seat interior accommodation.

FORD RANGER PHEV

Price: \$80,000 – \$90,000 (estimate, Wildtrak)

Due: Late 2024/early 2025

It's still too early to say whether Ford's new Ranger PHEV (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle) will make landfall in Australia in late 2024 or early 2025 but given the 'Blue Oval' has already revealed some details of the model and promotional billboards

are starting to appear, we're betting on the former. Ford is hoping to be an early mover in the emerging electrified ute category with the Ranger PHEV combining a 2.3-litre Ecoboost four-cylinder petrol with an electric motor and a rechargeable battery system to enable a claimed 45km of pure electric range.

Crucially, the PHEV's maximum braked towing capacity will be identical to the rest of the Ranger line-up at 3,500kg. Power and torque figures have not yet

been released but Ford says the PHEV will have more torque than any current Ranger, which means it will need to exceed the gutsy 600Nm of the 3.0-litre twin turbo-diesel V6.

Equipped with a new Pro Power Onboard function, Ford is promoting the fact that tradies and campers will be able to leave the generator at home and plug their power tools or recreational equipment into power outlets in the Ranger's cargo bed and cabin.





Hyundai Ioniq 7 Concept.

HYUNDAI IONIQ 7

Price: \$100,000 (estimate)

Due: TBC 2024

Arriving hard on the heels of its closely related stablemate the Kia EV9, Hyundai's Ioniq 7 maintains the frenetic

pace of the Korean brands' EV assault and introduces Hyundai's first family-sized all-electric seven-seat SUV.

Before you get too excited about the sci-fi look of this new Hyundai, note that our images are of the 'Seven Concept' and the production vehicle may not look quite as slick, although it will be close.

What is known is that the Ioniq 7 will ride on the versatile E-GMP electric car platform that has so far spawned the Ioniq 5 and 6 and be based on a generous 3,100mm wheelbase. That, along with the tall roof seen in spy photographs and expected flat floor, should contribute to a superbly roomy interior.

Hyundai Australia has largely kept its powder dry and released only limited information on its big, new electric SUV to date, possibly in deference to the Kia EV9, which was launched here in early November.

As such, we have scant information about the powertrain, range and so forth, but it's likely these will broadly mirror the EV9, which offers Standard, Long Range and Dual Motor variants.

The Standard range drives its rear wheels only, develops outputs of 160kW/350Nm and uses a 76.1kWh battery.

The other models feature a larger 99.8kWh battery with the top-shelf AWD model punching out a muscular 283kW/600Nm and the mid-tier RWD Long Range covering up to 541km (WLTP) on a single charge.

MITSUBISHI TRITON

Price: \$33,000 – \$62,000 (estimate)

Due: February 2024

The advertising jingle says "Nothing frightens a Triton", but Mitsubishi's rivals may well be perceiving an enhanced threat from this all-new sixth-generation ute, which is based on ladder-frame underpinnings shared with the forthcoming Nissan Navara.

Featuring new body styling and expanded dimensions, the Triton will be powered by a 2.4-litre bi-turbo four-cylinder diesel engine producing 150kW/470Nm and driving through six-speed manual and automatic transmissions.

Those outputs are competitive with leading rivals the Ford Ranger's 2.0-litre bi-turbo diesel four-cylinder and the Toyota HiLux's 2.8-litre unit.

While the Triton's performance may not represent a step change over these utes, Mitsubishi's best-in-class 10-year warranty with 10 years of capped-price

servicing certainly is. Importantly, the new Triton will also now have a 3,500kg tow rating, up from the old model's 3,100kg, placing it on a more competitive footing in the load-lugging stakes. The

new Triton will be available in cab-chassis, club-cab and dual-cab body styles in GLX, GLX+, GLS and flagship GSR variants, although not all trim grades will be offered on all styles.



Mitsubishi Triton.

More savings to keep you moving



Car batteries

Members get \$25 off the RRP*. If you hold an RACQ Roadside Assistance product, car battery delivery and installation are included in your cover^.



Window tinting

Members get \$25 off RRP*



Chip repairs

Members get \$80 in store chip repairs*



Windscreens

Members get \$25 off windscreen replacements*



Vehicle inspections

Members save up to \$25*

Visit racq.com/maintainyourcar for details



^Refer to our battery terms and conditions at racq.com/batteries for full product information. *Member discount is off the recommended retail price. No further discounts apply. Offer is available until further notice, subject to change without notice and may be withdrawn at any time. Discounts for windscreen repair and replacement available for each piece of glass repaired or replaced. In-store chip repairs are \$80 for RACQ members and \$105 for non-members. Mobile chip repairs are \$130 for RACQ members and \$155 for non-members. All prices are inclusive of GST.

SAFETY ADVICE FROM A CHAMPION

QUEENSLAND MOTORCYCLE RIDERS HAVE BEEN URGED TO IMPROVE THEIR RIDING SKILLS AS THEY CONTINUE TO BE OVER-REPRESENTED IN SERIOUS ROAD CRASHES.

STORY RAY ANDERSEN

THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT launched a new motorcycle safety campaign in 2023 following a massive spike in the number of rider and passenger deaths.

The 'How's your Ride Craft?' campaign, featuring two-time MotoGP world champion Casey Stoner, encourages motorcycle riders to follow safe riding practices and calls on other road users to share the road safely.

Up to 30 October 2023, 66 motorcycle riders and passengers were killed on Queensland roads.

This was a 39.8 percent increase on the previous five-year average and represented nearly 30 percent of lives lost on Queensland roads for that period; this is despite motorcycles accounting for only 5 percent of registered vehicles in Queensland.

Through a series of short videos,

Mr Stoner suggests Queensland riders should check their 'ride craft' by tuning their skills and making smart decisions on and before hitting the road.

"The best thing we can do as riders is to keep our ride craft in check," Mr Stoner said.

"It's things like working on perfecting a corner and being ready for the unexpected.

"It's always being mindful of our surroundings and conditions which can change in a millisecond.

"When we stay on top of our skills, we stay on top of our bikes."

Topics such as cornering, safety checks, group riding, fatigue and weather conditions are covered.

Department of Transport and Main Roads General Manager, Land Transport Safety and Regulation, Joanna Robinson, said in the past few years a large portion of riders were killed in crashes that did not involve other vehicles.

"In saying this, we're also asking motorists to slow down and look out for riders," Ms Robinson said.

"I urge riders to always stay focused and not let complacency put you at risk; if you're not feeling fully focused or if the weather or conditions aren't ideal, stay off the bike and save it for another time so you can continue to enjoy riding.

"It doesn't matter if you're an experienced rider, just starting out or even returning to riding after a number of years, it is essential you keep your wits about you and trust your instincts on the road.

"If you haven't ridden for some time, you can be at a greater risk of crashing due to a reduction in your riding skills."

Visit streetsmarts.initiatives.qld.gov.au/motorcycles for more on motorcycle safety. ■



WATCH
CASEY
STONER'S
TIPS ON
CORNERING

Casey Stoner
is the face of
a road safety
campaign.



STORY NICKY HAYDON

EV SUPERHIGHWAY DRIVES TOURISM

THE ROLLOUT OF EV CHARGING STATIONS IS GIVING A BOOST TO REGIONAL QUEENSLAND TOWNS, LIKE ESK.

IT'S THE PERFECT excuse to recharge the batteries.

A gourmet lunch stop at The Esk Grand Hotel, while the Tesla Y we hired through SIXT got its battery top-up at the town's first EV charging station just across the road.

The Esk EV charger is one of the latest to join the ever-expanding Queensland Electric Super Highway (QESH).

Sponsored by the Queensland Government, Yurika and RACQ, the QESH now stretches across much of the State – from Coolangatta to Port Douglas, Brisbane to Longreach, and Townsville to Mt Isa – with fast chargers about every 50–80km in the south-east.

For our trip to Esk in October, we were joined by the team at Channel 7's *Weekender* program, who were examining the tourism benefits EV chargers are bringing to small regional towns, just like Esk.

Somerset Regional Council Mayor Graeme Lehmann is thrilled to be experiencing it.

"Somerset has great cafes, pubs, gift stores, Saturday markets, country races, cultural events and more, and I am delighted that EV owners will now have further means to explore our beautiful region," Cr Lehmann said.

RACQ's Head of Public Policy Dr Michael Kane said the Club was getting plenty of interest from councils, accommodation and tourism providers wanting an EV charger at their destination.

"With electric cars, the battery is more like a phone where you just top it up," Dr Kane said.

"Sometimes you fill it up overnight, but you might grab a few percent here and

there while you stop for a coffee or grab lunch at a great pub like here in Esk.

"Then you might get to the hotel or caravan park where you're staying and charge it fully overnight. So in many ways, it's maybe more convenient than a petrol car."

Long-distance travel is about to become even more convenient for EV enthusiasts with the Queensland Government partnering with organisations like RACQ to add another 46 chargers to regional towns.

If you're keen to experience an EV road trip, don't forget RACQ members get 20 percent off* EV rentals at select locations with SIXT for a limited time and free charging across the Chargefox network. ■

*Visit racq.com/sixt for terms and conditions.



SCAN THE CODE TO WATCH THE WEEKENDER SEGMENT

Weekender presenter Lee Carseldine charges a Tesla Model Y from SIXT at the new Esk charging station.





FRIENDLY ADVICE ON CARAVAN ETIQUETTE

MAKING FRIENDS AND AVOIDING ROAD AND CAMPSITE RAGE IS THE KEY TO A RELAXED CARAVANNING HOLIDAY.

US SOCIALITE AND author Emily Post never went caravanning (at least not as far as we know) but if she had she would surely have reserved a chapter in her famous book on etiquette, *The Blue Book of Social Usage*, for the dos-and-don'ts of maintaining good relations on the road.

That has become more important than ever, given the boom in caravanning in recent years, largely due to Covid restrictions that prevented Australians from travelling overseas, prompting many of us to explore our own back yard.

The Caravan Industry Association of Australia (CIAA) released its latest holiday and accommodation data in June that showed a surge in travel numbers, taking the annual rolling figure for trips taken to 15.5 million, with 62.3 million nights spent caravanning and camping.

These numbers far surpass the 2019

pre-Covid figures with the CIAA saying caravan and camping holidays remained Australians' first choice for value-for-money holidays.

"Australians are travellers and with the continued high costs associated with overseas travel and flailing international tourist figures, we continue to be the industry of choice for people wanting a getaway from their every day," CIAA CEO Stuart Lamont said.

With another Aussie summer approaching and so many newcomers to the caravanning lifestyle, it's timely to

look at the topic of caravan etiquette, to ensure we're all doing our bit to maintain good relations with fellow travellers.

Caravan World Editor at Large John Ford said some caravanners could be more aware of their behaviour on the road and in camp.

"The biggest gripe I hear from other road users is of a slow van not pulling over to let faster traffic past," Mr Ford said. "Even if a driver is sitting close to the speed limit, the rig will inevitably slow on hills and in twisty sections, which in turn will slow following traffic."

Remember your manners when camping close to others.



Caravanners slowing traffic can frustrate other road users.



The popularity of caravanning in Queensland continues to boom.

...DATA IN JUNE [THAT] SHOWED A SURGE IN TRAVEL NUMBERS, TAKING THE ANNUAL ROLLING FIGURE FOR TRIPS TAKEN TO 15.5 MILLION, WITH 62.3 MILLION NIGHTS SPENT CARAVANNING AND CAMPING.

“That’s inevitable to some extent but moving over when it’s possible won’t spoil your trip and might even save lives by preventing other drivers becoming frustrated and attempting a dangerous overtaking manoeuvre.

Mr Ford said caravanners who sped up or maintained speed in passing lanes, making it difficult for following traffic to overtake safely without breaking the speed limit, could be a particular source of frustration for other motorists.

“So, think about slowing down in these situations to let traffic past,” he said.

Other tips for safe and courteous travel include leaving enough room for other vehicles to pass one van at a time when travelling in convoy and regularly checking your rear-vision mirrors for following traffic.

If there is a buildup of traffic behind, pull over when safe to do so and allow space for traffic to pass.

The law requires caravans and other large vehicles travelling outside built-up areas to leave at least 60m between each other, with the distance increasing to 200m in road train areas.

Ensuring your vehicle is equipped with a UHF radio can also be helpful to

let trucks know your intentions, such as when you’re planning to let them pass.

Channel 18 is widely recognised in Australia as the caravan or travellers’ channel.

Being properly prepared is another good idea.

Essential caravanning items include a hydraulic jack and handle suitable for lifting the caravan to change a flat tyre, a spare wheel and tyre and a sturdy wheel brace. Grease for the tow-ball coupling is a handy inclusion.

Likewise, a suitable set of flat timbers for placing under van jacks or wheels when levelling the van.

Other handy items include a hammer for annex pegs, a tyre gauge to check tyre pressures, a fire extinguisher, wheel chocks, sullage bucket and hose, a water supply hose and a 240v/15amp power supply lead.

Mr Ford also recommended fitting tyre pressure monitors to the van, to be instantly alerted when a tyre goes flat, possibly preventing the tyre being ruined altogether.

“Another good idea is to have a small sign or note on the dash displaying the height of your van,” he said.

“You will meet a low-level bridge one day and be thankful to know your height limit.”

The growing popularity of camping and caravanning means idyllic beach or riverside campsites without a neighbour in sight are becoming harder to find, but Mr Ford said it was important to remember your manners when camping in proximity to strangers.

“When selecting a site in free camps where there’s plenty of room, find a quiet spot away from other vans,” he said.

“Not everyone wants a neighbour a few feet away from them.”

Caravanning Queensland CEO Jason Plant adds that it was fine to have fun at a caravan park or busy camp area, but polite to remember that others nearby may be having an early night.

“When you’re at a caravan park there are some basic tips for good park etiquette,” Mr Plant said.

“These include being friendly and respectful to your neighbours by avoiding bright lights and loud music after hours; being as quiet as possible if packing up your campsite in the early hours; sticking to footpaths and avoiding the temptation to cut across other people’s sites; and doing your bit to maintain the cleanliness of shared amenities.

“If you’re staying at a pet-friendly site, make sure Fido is well-behaved and not barking at everything that moves, and be sure to pick up your pet’s waste.

“Likewise, only dispose of your own toilet waste at designated dump stations and wash down the station afterwards so that it’s tidy for the next person.” ■

Visit racq.com/mobilitycentre to learn about RACQ’s caravan towing course.

6

OF THE BEST

VEHICLE OPERATING COSTS 2023



SMALL CAR

Hyundai i30

Base 2.0 six-speed auto hatch



SMALL SUV

Hyundai Venue

Base 1.6-litre six-speed auto FWD



MEDIUM SUV

Honda CRV

Vi FWD CVT

THE PRICE SPREAD in this competitive category, where 12 separate models were analysed, ranges from the Hyundai i30's \$29,623 sticker to the Honda Civic e:HEV LX Auto Hatch's \$55,000 ask. But purchase price is just one of the metrics considered in our annual VOC survey and a low sticker price doesn't always mean the lowest overall operating costs. For instance, at \$29,801 the i30's closely related cousin, the Kia Cerato S 2.0 auto hatch, is the second most affordably priced model reviewed but falls to fourth in our operating costs analysis behind the second-placed Toyota Corolla Ascent Sport 2.0 CVT hatch and the GWM Ora Standard Range hatch. The Ora is a full battery-electric and its appearance here is significant in that it marks one of the first occasions where an EV has beaten most of the ICE field on overall operating costs. With a purchase price of \$35,540, the Ora is the sixth most expensive on purchase price, but comes back into contention thanks to the lowest monthly fuel and servicing costs. Last year's winner, the Toyota Corolla Ascent Sport, has risen in price by \$2,864.50 in 12 months. ■

HYUNDAI FINDS ITSELF back on the top step of the podium in the Small SUV category, where we analysed 15 different makes and models ranging in price from the winning Hyundai Venue base model at \$27,460 to the Kia Niro pure electric at \$64,566. It's a repeat of the Venue's victory in this category last year, despite its purchase price creeping up by a modest \$665 over the ensuing 12 months. Worth noting, too, in the context of still strong used-car prices is that the Venue's calculated residual has improved over that same period by a healthy \$2,300. The second-placed Mazda CX-3 Neo Sport packs a larger capacity 2.0-litre engine which is more fuel-efficient than the 1.6-litre Hyundai engine, helping to pull back some of the \$1,850 price gap between the two rivals. Continuing the emerging trend for affordably priced EVs to beat their ICE equivalents, the MG ZS Excite RWD Standard Range finished a credible fifth, despite being the fourth most expensive model reviewed. EV affordability is not the case across the board, however, with the Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross ES PHEV (\$51,058), and the Kia Niro S pure electric (\$64,567) finishing 14th and 15th respectively, largely due to their high purchase price. ■

HONDA HAS COPPED plenty of flak in automotive media for its new fixed-price model and the rationalisation of its range down to a few core vehicles, but that hasn't prevented its popular and practical CR-V from claiming gold in this fiercely competitive medium SUV segment. Our data was collated using the recently superseded model and not the all-new and more expensive sixth-generation CR-V, only released in September and starting from a considerably higher \$44,500 driveaway. You may still find run-out versions of the winning fifth-generation CR-V Vi on dealer forecourts, or via Honda's website, but if not we're equally comfortable recommending the second-placed Toyota RAV4 GX 2.0 FWD, which is the more affordable version of the RAV4 GXL that won this category last year. It's worth noting the Toyota's calculated residual, which at \$25,200 is \$7,700 higher than the Honda's despite its purchase price being only \$4,470 higher. A notable mention is the BYD Atto 3 Standard Range EV which takes bronze. ■

Specification: 2.0-litre, six-speed auto, hatch
Price: \$29,623 (estimated on-road)
Monthly: \$963.22 (category average \$1,115.53)
Annual: \$11,558.62 (category average \$13,386.42)
Five-year total: \$57,793.09
Residual: \$13,700

Specification: 1.6-litre four-cylinder, 6-speed automatic, front-wheel drive
Price: \$27,460 (estimated on-road)
Monthly: \$917.32 (category average \$1065.96)
Annual: \$11,007.83 (category average \$12,791.56)
Five-year total: \$55,039.16
Residual: \$11,800

Specification: 2.0-litre four-cylinder, CVT, front-wheel drive
Price: \$35,900 (estimated on-road)
Monthly: \$1,123.93 (category average \$1,199.64)
Annual: \$13,487.16 (category average \$14,395.70)
Five-year total: \$67,435.80
Residual: \$17,500



THE FINE PRINT: RACQ's annual Vehicle Operating Costs survey analyses a range of data to provide a guide to the average costs of the outgoings required to own and operate a selection of popular models across 11 different categories on a monthly, annual, and five-year basis.

RACQ'S ANNUAL VEHICLE OPERATING COSTS SURVEY TAKES THE EMOTION OUT OF THE NEW CAR BUYING PROCESS TO PROVIDE THE HARD COST-OF-OWNERSHIP DATA ON 83 INDIVIDUAL VEHICLES IN 11 CATEGORIES. HERE'S THE LIST OF TOP PERFORMERS FROM SIX OF THE BIGGEST-SELLING CATEGORIES.



LARGE SUV

Subaru Outback
CVT AWD



LIGHT COMMERCIAL 4X4

GWM
Cannon L Dual Cab 2.0T



ALL TERRAIN

Mitsubishi Pajero
Sport GLX 2.4T

FOOTY TEAMS ARE lauded for achieving the rare 'three-peat' in sporting premierships, so it stands to reason that Subaru be similarly praised for having its versatile Outback wagon again prevail as the most affordable vehicle to operate of the 11 large SUVs surveyed this year. The Subaru Outback's third category victory in a row is due in large part to its impressively low purchase price, which at \$47,193 is one of only two sub-\$50,000 contenders in a category where \$50,000-plus is the norm, and where four contenders boast \$70,000-plus pricing. The Outback remains something of an anomaly with its high-riding station wagon body style and five-seat capacity, whereas most rivals are bigger-bodied SUVs with the option of seven seats. Compared with last year, the Outback's price has crept up \$1,000 but its monthly ownership costs of \$1,387.47 are \$723.47 less than the most expensive vehicle in the category, the larger Nissan Pathfinder Ti V6 AWD. Mitsubishi's Pajero Sport GLX RWD wagon snared silver with the Hyundai Santa Fe Base Diesel AWD claiming bronze. ■

ANYONE LOOKING FOR evidence of how much Chinese automotive brands undercut the price of rivals from Japan and elsewhere need look no further than the dual cab 4x4 ute category, where GWM's Cannon enjoys a hefty \$6,405 price advantage over its nearest rival, the Mitsubishi Triton GLX. This is the Cannon's second year atop the podium and its dominance is underscored by the fact that of the nine utes surveyed, only it and the Mitsubishi land with a sub-\$50,000 price tag. The variance between the Cannon and the most expensive ute, the Toyota HiLux SR, is a hefty \$15,942 with the difference in annual running costs equating to \$2,509. On the flip side, Toyota's historically strong residual values ensure the HiLux wins back all its purchase price penalty, with a \$17,700 difference in residual value in its favour. Other noteworthy match-ups in this category are the twins-under-the-skin Mazda BT-50 XS and Isuzu D-Max SX, both with the smaller 1.9-litre turbodiesel engine, which are separated by just \$63 on monthly running costs in favour of the Isuzu, which claims category bronze for the second year in a row. ■

FOR ANYONE WHO has ever grappled with the question of whether to purchase a large SUV or a more capable all-terrain model, then it's worth considering the average annual cost difference between the two categories of \$3,323.51 in favour of the SUV. Of course, you can't necessarily take your Hyundai Palisade or Mazda CX-9 across the Simpson or to Cape York, which is something you can do in the category-winning Mitsubishi Pajero Sport GLX. The Pajero's \$54,262 purchase price is well below that of the most expensive 4x4 here, the \$95,235 Toyota LandCruiser 300 Series GX, although most will recognise that's not necessarily comparing apples with apples. The common thread here is all-terrain capability which mixes lighter-duty models like the second- and third-placed Isuzu MU-X LS-M and Ford Everest Ambiente 2.0 Twin Turbo AWD, with heavier-duty models like the fifth-placed LandCruiser and sixth-placed Nissan Patrol. Nevertheless, choosing the Pajero Sport over the Nissan Patrol will save you \$11,087 per annum, which is a handy downpayment on that camper trailer or dirt bike you've always wanted. ■

Specification: 2.5-litre four-cylinder, CVT, AWD

Price: \$47,193 (estimated on-road)

Monthly: \$1,378.47 (category average \$1617.88)

Annual: \$16,541.65 (category average \$19,414.58)

Five-year total: \$82,708.27

Residual: \$24,000

Specification: 2.0-litre, four-cylinder turbo-diesel, eight-speed automatic

Price: \$42,490 (estimated on-road)

Monthly: \$1,388.98 (category average \$1,520.78)

Annual: \$16,667.73 (category average \$18,352.45)

Five-year total: \$83,338.67

Residual: \$19,100

Specification: 2.4-litre, four-cylinder turbo-diesel, eight-speed automatic

Price: \$54,262 (estimated on-road)

Monthly: \$1,524.99 (category average \$1,894.84)

Annual: \$18,299.92 (category average \$22,738.09)

Five-year total: \$91,499.60

Residual: \$28,500

The survey looks at purchase price, loan repayments, registration and insurance, fuel, servicing and even tyres. Calculations are based on privately owned new vehicles, operating for five years, and travelling 15,000km per year. For full details of methodology, category winners and comparative cost breakdowns, visit racq.com/voc.

**TESTED**

REVIEW GED BULMER

BYD Atto 3 Extended Range

THE BYD ATTO 3 SUV has quickly established itself as one of Australia's most popular EVs.

Launched in late 2022, the Atto 3 briefly usurped the MG ZS EV as Australia's most affordable electric vehicle and as at August had notched up just over 8,000 year-to-date sales, meaning it trailed only the best-selling Tesla Model 3 and Model Y twins in the EV segment.

While still relatively unknown here, BYD is a powerhouse in its Chinese home market where it has been building cars since 2003 and is now that country's biggest automaker.

There are two Atto 3 versions available, both identically specified aside from battery size.

The 50kWh, or Standard Range car, costs \$48,011 (MRLP) and has a claimed range of 345km (WLTP). The Extended Range model reviewed here has a larger 60kWh battery, costs \$51,011 (MRLP) and can travel 420km (WLTP).

At this price, both BYD models are also eligible for the Queensland State Government's Zero Emissions Vehicle Rebate Scheme which at the time of writing shaves either \$3,000 or \$6,000 off the price, depending on household income.

The Atto 3's exterior is well-proportioned with some interesting design touches.

Things are more interesting inside, where the interior designers seem to have been given free rein. A textured, soft-touch wetsuit-like material on the dash and doors and curved and scalloped dash sections create a soft and inviting look.

Rear-seat accommodation is among the roomier offerings in the medium SUV segment with amenities including a fold-down centre armrest with cupholders, air vents, USB-A and USB-C points and ISOFIX child seat anchorage points.

The boot opens electrically to reveal 400 litres of storage with the seats in position or 1,340 litres when folded.

Supplied charging plugs include a three-pin AC trickle charger with a Type 2 plug for connecting to the car's charging port. There's also a four-plug power board which can be plugged into the charging port to utilise the Atto 3's vehicle-to-load capacity. BYD claims the 60kWh battery will charge from flat to full in about 50 minutes on a 70kW DC fast charger. For drivers charging at home, an AC trickle charge from a household power point will take about 33 hours, while a 7kW home wall box charger will take about 12 hours.

The single electric motor driving the front wheels delivers 150kW/310Nm and compares favourably with ICE-powered rivals such as the Mazda CX-5 2.5-litre four-cylinder petrol, which produces 140kW/252Nm.

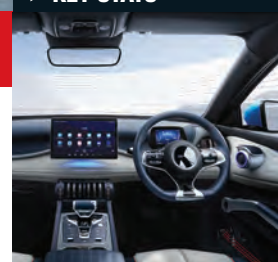
BYD doesn't yet have the extensive brick-and-mortar dealerships you'll find with other brands in Australia, but its vehicles are also available via an online sales model. Servicing is carried out at dedicated BYD Service Centres or via BYD's official Australian service partner MyCar, with eight service centres in Queensland at the time of writing.

The standard manufacturer's warranty is a competitive six years or 150,000km on the vehicle and eight years or 160,000km on the battery. ■



WATCH GED BULMER'S BYD ATTO 3 VIDEO REVIEW

▶ KEY STATS



PRICE: \$51,011

POWERTRAIN:

60.48kWh lithium iron phosphate battery, front-mounted electric motor (150kW/310Nm), single-speed reduction gear.

RANGE: 420km (WLTP)

ANCAP CRASH RATING:

★★★★★ (2022)

ENERGY CONSUMPTION:

16kWh/100km (WLTP)

FOR: Roomy, affordably priced, generously equipped, excellent technology, strong safety rating.

AGAINST: Dynamics favour ride over handling, and lack of servicing outlets may not suit all buyers.

➦ Mustang Mach-E Electric SUV

LOOKING AT FORD'S new Mustang Mach-E mid-size electric SUV alongside its established sports coupe namesake, there are plenty of styling cues that reference the famous internal combustion-powered Pony Car.

There's the fastback roof line, the short rear deck, the wide hips, the flared wheel arches and that distinctive vertical taillight array, plus the iconic galloping pony emblem.

But despite this, there are some pundits who say this can never be regarded as a real Mustang, because real Mustangs have had rumbling internal combustion engines since the original debuted back in 1964.

Ford's decision to co-opt the name and the styling of what is arguably its most iconic model and apply them to an all-new electric-powered Tesla rival was a bold move. But it also appears to have been an inspired one because since its launch in the US in 2020, the Mustang Mach-E has been a runaway sales success.

Now, almost three years after its US debut, the Mustang Mach-E has arrived Down Under.

The three-variant range kicks off with the entry-level Select, costing \$79,990 (MRLP), and boasting a 71kWh lithium-ion phosphate battery and a range of 470km (WLTP). A single rear electric motor sends 198kW/430Nm to its rear wheels, enabling a 0–100km/h sprint time of 6.6 seconds.

Standard features of the Mustang Mach-E Select include active grille shutters that open and close to maintain thermal efficiency, 19-inch alloy wheels with aero covers, a power tailgate, 360-degree camera and active park assist.

Stepping up to the mid-spec Premium brings

a larger 91kWh NMC (nickel cobalt manganese) battery, up to 600km of range, and a more powerful rear motor producing 216kW/430Nm, which lowers the 0–100km/h time to 6.2 seconds.

The Mach-E Premium costs \$91,665 (MRLP) and features gloss black wheel arch trims, glare-free LED projector headlamps with auto high beam functionality and sleek daytime running lights.

The top-spec Mach-E GT costs a hefty \$107,665 and gets the same 91kWh NMC battery as the Premium, but twin motors for all-wheel drive capability and combined outputs of 358kW/860Nm.

The combination delivers a blistering 0–100km/h sprint of just 3.7 seconds, but a lower 490km range. The sports-oriented GT also boasts 20-inch alloys wrapped in Pirelli rubber, high-performance Brembo brakes and MagneRide adaptive suspension system.

Charging speeds across the range are 10.5kW AC, or up to 150kW DC, with the latter being lower than some contemporary EVs, including the Tesla Model Y which charges at 250kW DC and the Genesis GV60 which can charge up to 350kW DC.

Depending on the conditions, you can expect the Mach-E to recharge from 10 percent to 80 percent on a 150kW DC charger in about 45 minutes.

On the road the Mach-E is an enjoyable driving experience. The ride is firm but not too firm, the steering responsive and well-weighted and the single motor variants provide plenty of power and torque for comfortable everyday driving.

There are three selectable drive modes on the Select and Premium – Active, Whisper and Untame – with the GT offering a fourth Untame Plus mode, designed for track use. ■

▶ KEY STATS



PRICE: \$79,990–
\$107,665 (MSRP)

BATTERY: 71kWh–
91kWh

MOTORS: Single
198kW/430Nm, Single
216kW/430Nm, Dual
358kW/860Nm

RANGE: 470km–600km
(WLTP)

SAFETY: ★★★★★
ANCAP rating (2021),
GT untested

PROS: Quiet and refined,
high-quality finish,
blistering performance of
GT, good range.

CONS: More expensive
than key competitors,
potential panel damage
due to absence of door
handles.

REVIEW ANDREW KIRK



Personal mobility devices, such as e-scooters, are gaining popularity. Like other types of vehicles, they need to be operated safely. You need to be at least 16 years old to ride one, or at least 12 years if supervised by an adult. Doubling is not allowed. For more information about Queensland Road Rules contact the Department of Transport and Main Roads at tmr.qld.gov.au or 13 2380.

[1] GIVE WAY TO PEDESTRIANS



On a footpath there is a 12km/h maximum speed limit. Personal mobility devices or rideables must keep left and give way to all pedestrians. You must also use the bicycle side of a shared path.

[2] WEAR A SECURED HELMET



A properly secured, approved helmet is required to be worn at all times when riding a personal mobility device.

[3] KEEP A SAFE SPEED AND DISTANCE



A maximum speed of 25km/h is allowed on some roads, paths and bike lanes. Travel at a safe speed and leave a safe distance to avoid colliding with pedestrians, vehicles and objects.

[4] KEEP ON THE RIGHT PATH



You must not use your personal mobility device on roads with a dividing line or median strip, roads with a speed limit of more than 50km/h or one-way roads with more than one marked lane, unless you are crossing the road or riding on the road for up to 50m to avoid an obstruction on a path.

[5] BE ATTENTIVE



If you are using headphones and/or a mobile phone, this will reduce your awareness. Keep your attention on your surroundings. It is an offence to use a hand-held mobile phone while riding.

[6] DON'T BLOCK THE PATHWAY



Keep pathways clear for other pedestrians. If you need to stop and have a conversation or use your mobile phone, move off the pathway to a safe place. When parking leave the e-scooter towards the curb or on the grass verge.

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