



In this issue:

• Trouble for a resting cop

• Who's the snob?

• An all-encompassing rig

## Hectic holiday season puts safety in spotlight

### Scooters and skateboards banned in some van parks

With the school holidays drawing to a close, relative peace and quiet will soon reign once again at our caravan parks and camping areas.

For many grey nomads used to having campsites largely to themselves, the school bell can't come soon enough. Noisy parties, crowded facilities, speeding skateboard riders, and child's cycles left outside amenities blocks are common complaints.

Most nomads though remember that they were young once and survive the 'seasonal inconvenience' in good spirits. "There may be some older people who become aggrieved with noisy children but most are pretty understanding," said Caravanning Queensland CEO, Ron Chapman. "They know it's just for a certain time of year and that it goes with the territory."

However, there are also serious safety issues involved with the increased number of children. On New Year's Eve, a cycle-riding five-year-old was killed after a collision with a car at a van park at Inverloch in Victoria. Anecdotal evidence suggests numerous similar ac-



Safety first ... bikes are in, skateboards and scooters may be out

cidents take place, albeit with less tragic outcomes. Many of these – as well as the 'close shaves' – are not reported. The nine caravan parks run by Queensland's Sunshine Coast Regional Council are now enforcing a strict 'no-skateboard, no-scooter' policy. Bikes are still allowed as long as children are supervised and road rules are obeyed.

Greg Howard manages the council's Coolum Beach Holiday Park and says he has received far more support than opposition since the crack-down began.

"People understand that skateboards and scooters are a major safety problem and not just for the people riding them," he told the GNT. "Others park

users can easily get knocked down by them and they can be a serious tripping hazard when not in use."

Clearly, grey nomads and holidaying families are an uneasy mix at times and, perhaps for that reason, a number of 'adult-only' or 'no-children's-facilities' van parks have sprung up. These are, however, likely to remain a tiny proportion of the market.

"A few smaller parks might be able to go 'adults-only' all year round," said Caravanning Queensland's Ron Chapman. "However, for bigger places it would simply be financial suicide ... it is the family market that is the one that is really growing."

[Click to comment](#)

### Bring your own beacon if you are going bush

It's a big, scary country out there and an overwhelming majority of you feel that those drawn to Australia's remotest regions should be compelled to carry an emergency communication device.

In the last GNT, we reported on the 56-year-old solo grey nomad who became stranded in the Victorian bush and then hiked 30 kilometres in searing heat to find a mobile phone signal.

We asked whether she, and similar travellers, should be required to carry an effective communication device when undertaking journeys into the wilds. While 97% of you said they should, just 3% believed it should be a matter of individual choice. Many pointed out that rescue teams sometimes had to put themselves in harm's way, and the authorities go to great expense, in order to mount searches.

For others, it was simply a matter of commonsense. "It is comforting to know we are only a phone (via HF) or radio call away from help ... no matter where we are," said Lea and Rick.

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# the Grey Nomad Times

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## Characters of the Road

# Camping is in our blood, say inveterate travellers

**John & Chris from WA are about to cross the Nullarbor for the 16th time!**

### What do you travel in?

A100 series LandCruiser and an off-road 'Roadstar' solar-powered, self-contained caravan. It is a go anywhere set-up, without the need for caravan parks. Our first caravan, a \$200 12ft 'Baravan,' took us on an 11-month trip around Australia with our three young daughters. It was back when the Nullarbor road was a dirt, corrugated track, air-conditioning was not standard and fuel stations were few and far between. The 'Baravan' never made it back to WA after being wrecked during the wet season in Darwin.

### Did that end the family travels?

No. A number of larger and better caravans followed with various trips north, south and east on the usual-for-the-times dirt corrugated roads, with caravans generally falling apart. We did Ayers Rock when there were no resorts, no fences, no white lines, no rules and very few people. You could travel for days without seeing another person or vehicle. We have done the Nullarbor, the Great Central Road a number of times as well as the Old Gunbarrel Highway. Most



John and Chris have travelled in many rigs over the years

roads are a piece of cake to travel on these days compared to what they used to be.

### How much do you travel now?

We are on the road 4-5 months per year. We are of the free camping brigade, which is what prompted us to make our farm available for self-contained units (toilet, shower and own power) while we are here from June-November.

### Likes and dislikes of the lifestyle?

We love the free and easy lifestyle and meeting like-minded people. We don't like rangers that move us on because we are not allowed to be there, even though nobody would ever know we had stopped. We always leave without a trace and clear up other people's rubbish, too. We don't even leave grey water these days.

### On-the-road hobbies?

Photography, bird watching, animal watching.

### Scariest nomad experience?

Travelling up a very steep hill on a single-track dirt road in wet slippery conditions in the fog and dark, towing a three-tonne caravan, all four wheels spinning and slipping, thinking that if we dare stop we would slide backwards off the road. Will not do that again.

### Do your children still travel?

Our three girls and their families all have camper trailers and 4x4's and do their own thing, and come with us from time to time. All of our grandchildren were experienced in camping before they had their first birthdays. Camping is in the blood.

[Click to comment](#)

## Nomads in Brief

### Van park assault

A man has been assaulted at a Victorian caravan park after asking a group of drunken campers to keep the noise down. The holidaymaker was hit on the back of the head with a stubbie while his two young children watched on. He suffered head lacerations and was taken to hospital. Police are hunting three men over the incident.

### Camper blowout

Several people were injured when a campervan had a blowout and crashed off a highway on New Zealand's north island. The two most serious casualties were airlifted to hospital. A small dog in the van also survived.

### Babe it ain't

The feral pig population in Namadgi National Park south of Canberra is being brought under control. The Territory and Municipal Services says the annual poisoning program has significantly cut numbers. The pigs rip up plants and spread disease.

### More for Moor

Britain's Dartmoor national park is to introduce parking charges following government budget cuts. Austerity measures will see the UK's parks have their cash slashed from £55 million to £46.5 million by 2015. Some are considering raising revenue by charging more for visitor centres or even toilets.

## QUIZ CORNER

## GRAB A CUPPA AND TEST YOUR GREY MATTA

### THIS WA ICON NEVER 'BREAKS'



### DO YOU KNOW

1. Where in NSW does a small mountain need fixing?
2. What is the longest highway in Australia?
3. Where in Victoria does a rat go after a ball?
4. What's the shortest road distance between Broome and Townsville?  
A) 2684km B) 3258km C) 3,744km
5. Which Australian capital city has the lowest 'highest ever' temperature?

(Answers on page 4)





## Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts  
with fellow nomads

Dear Editor,

Re: The Heat is On story (GNT: Issue 11). We have just stayed at the Yuraygir National Park near Brooms Head in New South Wales and my beef is commonsense. The park supplies firewood for their open fireplaces and is surrounded by bushland. The nor'easter has been howling up to 40 knots and some stupid campers want to have a raging fire to sit by. I think there should be a total fire ban when the wind gets up. I slept with one eye open for a couple of nights. It is definitely an accident waiting to happen.

**MJS**

Dear Editor,

I am yet to see a bush fire survival plan for those who live and travel in their home on wheels. Would it be possible to get some advice from the Fire Brigade and publish a plan applicable to those on the road?

**Gavan**

*(Great idea! Watch this space, Gavan - Ed.)*

Dear Editor,

We live in our van in Townsville and are preparing to be grey nomads. Every Sept/Oct, the grey nomads migrate back down south in their droves. We get an almost constant 32-34 degrees in the day but never in the 40s like Melbourne and Adelaide. I guess Tasmania is the place to be this time of year!

**Vicky**

Dear Editor,

Re: Jaclyn and Heidi column (GNT: Issue 11). I feel so sorry for Heidi. Judging all the people she has not met yet in such a harsh way. I have often found that the people who do not

enjoy other people's company are quite uninspiring and I feel lead a very boring existence. One should always be prepared to meet others before jumping to such negative conclusions.

**Terry**

Dear Editor,

Happy hour for us has been terrific. We have met lots of people to enjoy a drink and a chat with, discover new places to visit, get all the fishing news, and just enjoy the company of others without any pressure placed upon anyone. Hope we don't meet up with Heidi though. She sounds like a bore!

**Max & Judy**

Dear Editor,

My husband and I have purchased a Coromal Corvair and we hope to start to leave WA for at least three months at a time. We are thinking of locking up, leaving the house secure and heading off. Does anyone have any comments or feedback on this? I have spoken to the insurance company and, providing my son checks the house weekly, there is no problem with the time spent away. I am also very interested in the comments regarding happy hour. As a non-drinker but not a wowser, I reckon some people stay too long and keep drinking. If it is at our caravan, is it polite to sort of excuse yourself or make movements so people get the message to leave and things don't drag on?

**Mary**

Dear Editor,

Re: Brenda's 'what makes a nomad' letter (GNT: Issue 11). Well. Yes, nomads are a funny lot, and NO we don't have to go around the country

to qualify. For the past seven years, we have spent about 30 days a year on the road, and we still say: "When we have seen more of this side, we will venture around." We have just upgraded to a 40ft bus from 7-metre Hino, and look forward to more short travels in some great places.

**Suzanne (EmmyBak)**

Dear Editor,

Re: Sue's beading storage letter (GNT: Issue 11). Most of my beads I keep in a compartment container which has an extra lock on the top to keep the beads in their right spot. The beads which might be useful for a specific project, I separate into a weekly pill keeper. When I am working, I either use an egg cup or a small meat tray or plate with a piece of damp paper towel on. This stops the beads from rolling around and I can spread them out to see what I am doing.

**Robyn**

Dear Editor,

I am also a jewellery maker, and have managed to condense my supplies down to two main containers. One is a 'Roll-n-Store' which I bought online for my smaller beads and findings, and the other is a nappy bag found in an Op Shop for \$2, which has lots of pockets and larger sections on either side for storing all my bits and pieces, including bead trays. I find recycled honey tubs (the ones with the yellow lid and handle) are great as they stack on each other in the bag.

**Jules**

Dear Editor,

Like Sue, I'd like to ask how other people store the sewing machine and beading supplies?

I would go crazy if I couldn't take my crafts. Maybe you could pose the question and see what clever answers we get.

**Vicky**

*(Any more clever craft supply storage ideas anyone? - Ed)*

Dear Editor,

I think a lot of caravan park owners see grey nomads as the great milking cow. They say that price reflects demand for sites but demand can outweigh available sites when they are consistently being reduced through the installation of cabins. Even a cow has a limit to the amount of milk it can produce.

**Jan**

Dear Editor,

Re: Mozzie pest article (GNT: Issue 11). My recipe for a mozzie repellent is to mix Dettol with baby oil and rub all over. It's cheap and works a wonder.

**Suzanne (Kiwi traveler)**

Dear Editor,

I always have Straight Citronella Oil, both at home and in the van. Put a bit on your pillow at night. No problems. Also you can dab it on your skin, clothes, sheets etc. It really works. I also have it mixed in a white vinegar and spray when they are really bad.

**Natalie**

Dear Editor,

We had our Ford Transit fitted with security screens on the sliding windows, backed with fine midgie mesh. When ready for bed, a quick spray of insect spray eliminates any bugs that may have got in, then we can have our windows open to enjoy the night breezes without fear of invasion.

**Wayne & Pat**

# the Grey Nomad Times



## You can take it with you...if you've got this motorhome



**Gadgets of the Road**

with Jezza

It's been several years now since German manufacturer Volkner Mobil unveiled its incredibly luxurious car-swallowing motorhome range ... so it's about time we saw a few more of them pulled up at the Devil's Marbles and elsewhere. As any large motorhome aficionado knows, the downside to all that space, comfort and van-free driving joy can be the relative lack of mobility once you have set up camp. Towing a small car is one solution but it also means the rig becomes all the more unwieldy. Enter the ever-ingenuous Germans who have solved the problem with a patented central garage concept that allows smaller cars to be ingested into a motorhome's belly. When it's time to strike camp, the grey nomad who has it all can now activate an electro-hydraulically extendable car draft to lift his runaround back



"Did you remember to pack the car, dear?"

into the luxury motorhome. Volkner Mobil motorhomes range from 'petite' 10.5m models to the top-of-the-range 12.3m 'Performance'. Each rig is, unsurprisingly, built to the customer's exact specifications. No expense has been spared inside. The kitchen, for example, may be made of granite or marble and boasts large work surfaces, a microwave, an oven, a dishwasher and a washing machine. The bathroom can also be designed to suit individual tastes and may include heated towel racks, an integrated music system, underfloor heating and a 'massage shower'.

If all of this isn't enough, the motorhome's size can also be increased by the addition of no less than three slideouts. The Volkner Mobil can be fitted out to be fully self-contained and able to stay in remote locations for extended periods. It has the capability to carry 1,000 litres of fresh water. Right then, grey nomads of Australia, let's get out and snap up a few of these wonder vehicles, shall we? And the cost? Well, you'll need a fair bit more than a cool million to get you cruising the Stuart Highway in this sort of style ... and the car is extra!

[Click to comment.](#)

### Website highlights

#### Shower stealers

Last fortnight our website [www.thegreynomads.com.au](http://www.thegreynomads.com.au) reported on the increasing spotlight being thrown on 'shower stealers', those free campers who sneak into caravan parks to use the amenities without paying for the privilege. But is it really a victimless 'crime'?

[Read more here](#)

#### SURVEY

Would you 'steal a shower' from a van park while free camping?

Yes

No

#### Other website must-reads:

##### Back on Track

Birdsville road to re-open

##### Pacific solution?

More deaths on east coast 'horror' highway

##### Weekly Mailbag

What a load of rubbish!

##### The big decision

Should we sell the house?

##### It's not easy being green

Protect the planet as you go

[Click to comment](#)

## Camping cop caught

A 'grey nomad wannabe' policeman could be in hot water after apparently being caught using an official vehicle for a camping trip in South Africa. The uniformed officer was caught on camera as he loaded camp gear at a holiday resort in the Eastern Free State. "I couldn't believe my eyes and decided I should take photos of the whole business," said a witness. "We always hear about the shortage of vehicles when we need the police ... what if there had been a murder, and the police are driving campers around the place?" Free State provincial police



"You have the right to remain in the tent."

spokesperson Brigadier Billy Jones said the matter is being investigated. "The policy is that government vehicles may only be used for official purposes," he said.

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## Last chance to win luxury campchairs

Time is fast running out to enter our **Coleman** campchair competition. To be in the running to win a pair of luxury campchairs, you need to **email us** by midnight (AEST), Jan 22 and tell us, in 70 words or less, about your favourite happy hour moment. A selection of entries (including the winner as judged by the Editor) will be published in the next edition of the GNT. Coleman's king-size Cooler Arm Chair comes with extra wide arms for superior comfort and features a large cooler bag with in-built cup holder.

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### QUIZ CORNER SOLVED

#### Pic puzzle:

Wave Rock  
Do you know answers:

1. Broken Hill
2. WA's Great Northern Highway (3,204km)
3. Ballarat
4. C) 3,744km
5. Darwin 40.5°C on Oct 17, 1892



# the Grey Nomad Times



**Brilliant Prints**  
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## Fish, flowers and fantastic coastal views

### The Yorke Peninsula boasts picturesque scenery at every turn



The spectacular Yorke Peninsula on Adelaide's doorstep has long been a grey nomad magnet.

Its 700-kilometre coastline offers sensational scenery, fantastic beaches, fascinating history, excellent fishing ... and some truly epic camping opportunities.

The boot-shaped peninsula is a little over an hour's drive from the South Australian capital but might as well be a million miles away. As travellers head down the peninsula's east coast, the Gulf St Vincent is never far away ... and the views are very special.

The area around Androssan is just one of the many where

magnificent clifftop lookouts allow visitors to enjoy the stunning vistas. Like many other towns in the region, Androssan boasts an impressive jetty which always lures grey nomad anglers dreaming of stocking the freezer.

There is history aplenty on the drive around the coastline. The discovery of copper ore back in the 1860s drew miners from all over the world, especially Cornwall in England. Evidence of this rich mining heritage is everywhere and the many museums offer a more detailed insight into the region's past. They are also the obvious place to learn about the multitude of ships that sank along the



**Yorke Peninsula's coastline is spectacularly beautiful**

treacherous coast at the turn of the 20th century.

As travellers meander their way southward, there are numerous picturesque coastal communities that are worth a visit. Black Point is just one, and the relaxed town of Cooberowie, which is famed for its fresh shellfish, is another. Marion Bay is on the doorstep of the peninsula's pièce de résistance, the truly magnificent Innes National Park. Here on the peninsula's southern tip visitors will find rugged Australian coastal landscape at

its finest, and the park's many bushwalks offer endless panoramic views.

In addition to the prolific wildflowers it produces in the spring, Innes is also home to a rich variety of wildlife, and grey kangaroos or emus commonly visit the park's campsites. Birdwatching grey nomads will also be in their element here.

The road north along the western side cuts further inland away from the Spencer Gulf but is no less fascinating for it. The town of Minlaton is known as the 'barley capital of the world' while back on the coast, Moonta Bay's old stone buildings are magnificent. The Yorke Peninsula has got something for everybody and richly deserves a place high up on every Big Lap itinerary.

[Click to comment](#)



**ASK JACLYN and Heidi**



**Our experts solve your grey nomad etiquette dilemmas**

### Short shrift for snobs

Dear Jaclyn and Heidi,  
*Before we started travelling full-time we were forever hearing about the camaraderie of the road but now I'm beginning to think there's more snobbery of the road about than anything else. I admit we don't cut the most glamorous of figures rattling along in our '60 series Cruiser and old Millard van but at least we're out here. I've noticed that at some van parks other nomads won't even pass the time of day with us at the amenities block. Motorhomers are the worst, and sometimes they even move sites if we park next to them. We may not be the wealthiest travellers but we are interesting, cheerful, and excited people. We don't deserve to be treated like lepers.*

*How should we deal with these snobs?*

**Darlene**

You have been unlucky, Darlene! I know from experience that the vast majority of grey nomads are super friendly and eager to exchange stories, experiences and advice ... whatever your rig! Like anywhere, however, you can get good or bad neighbours. It sounds like you may have run into a couple of 'rig snobs' but don't let this scar you. Treat each campsite as a new beginning. Don't imagine people are looking down on you when they may not be ... you could be missing out on some great friendships. Remember the views are just as good from your campchair as they are from anybody else's.

**Jaclyn**

I am not surprised that your all-too-transparent reverse snobbery is winning you no friends, Darlene. No doubt, you are one of those 'budgeteers' who just can't wait to ask people how much their expensive-looking motorhome cost and to tell them how little you spent on your rusty tin box. Or you can't wait to snidely inquire how they managed to manoeuvre such a big rig into a small site or to tell them how much more fuel they are using on the highways. The green-eyed monster is an ugly creature, Darlene. You've got no-one but yourself to blame for the fact that you can't afford to travel in a decent rig. You should have just worked harder and saved more.

**Heidi**

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