

In this issue:

• Survey stunner

• Apple's appeal

• Watery woes

Eroding confidence in coastal van parks

Can the grey nomad lifestyle keep its head above water?

It is no secret that some of our prime coastal caravan parks are being picked off by developers eager to cash in on what are perceived to be more lucrative tourism markets.

For example, it has just been announced that the Palm Grove van park on the doorstep of Broome's iconic Cable Beach in Western Australia is to be bulldozed and luxury apartments built on the site. In the long term though, it seems our magnificent beach-front parks could be facing an even more sinister threat ... Mother Nature herself.

The desperate efforts to stop huge erosion problems at the caravan park at Kingscliff in northern New South Wales are a dramatic illustration of the effects of climate change. Over the past year or more, huge chunks of the park have simply fallen into the ocean and the town's beach has all but disappeared. Sandbags can only help so much

It is not an isolated problem, and the Federal Government has announced it is to spend some \$150,000 to investigate



The view from the van?

whether many more coastal caravan parks could soon be struggling to keep their heads above water ... literally. Victoria's Western Coastal Board will use the funding to examine the possible economic effects of climate change on caravan parks and their surrounding areas. As part of the study, researchers will survey nearly 2000 caravan park patrons and locals in areas such as Port Fairy, Lorne, Barwon Heads, Portarlington, War-ranbool and Port Campbell. Over this last winter, large waves caused significant coastal erosion between Apollo Bay and Skenes Creek and sand around infrastructure like the Great Ocean Road and storm-water outlets was washed away.

The Otway Coast Committee was so concerned it asked the Victorian Government to fund an engineered solution to the ongoing problems. Western Coastal Board's Steve Blackley says coastal caravan parks often border estuaries and beaches, which are particularly at risk from climate change. "Those environments are susceptible to flooding, erosion and winds," he said. "We're not really looking at the physical impacts but more at what effects climate change might have economically and how that can be managed." The final report on the issue is due out in June.

[Click to comment](#)

Current rego policy a road to nowhere

There has been an avalanche of support for a national driving licence and national vehicle registration system. Hundreds of you responded to our front page story in the last edition of 'the Times', and the backing for full integration was overwhelming. From former truckies and full-time travellers to international visitors and casual workers, the message was the same: "We are one country. Let's slice through this unnecessary, confusing and chaotic bureaucratic tangle."

The handful of respondents who opposed a national system appear to have done so because they come from 'cheap registration states' and fear a change might cost them more.

Many of you wrote to share your tales of woe, frustration and inconvenience due to the current state-by-state system, and there were even calls for direct action. Some of the comments, as well as the survey results, can be seen on a 'bonus' page 6 of this newsletter.

The Grey Nomad Times will forward our findings to all levels of government, and ask for action to be taken.

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the Grey Nomad Times



Characters of the Road

Kiwi couple takes to life on the road in Australia

Peter, 60, and wife Maria from Tuakau, near Auckland, NZ, spent three years travelling Australia

What did you travel in?

Our rig was a 20ft self-contained semi off-road Concept caravan hauled by a V8 petrol LandCruiser. We could take it almost anywhere. After having air suspension, I would have nothing else.

NZ and Australia differences?

We found people in both countries helpful and friendly. The unusual native fauna is what makes Australia stand out for us. NZ on the plus side, has nothing very dangerous - no snakes - no crocs - no stingers!

Where do you like to camp?

Definitely 'self-contained' free camping but caravan parks were necessary for catching up on washing! National parks were mostly (but not always) good as well. We were so grateful to Australia for free camping that we started cleaning up all the rubbish wherever we camped - burning what we could and taking the rest with us. At times we were thoroughly ashamed at the way we humans treat our natural environment and eventually (but sadly) reduced our efforts



Peter and Maria had many an adventure near Kununurra

due to the immense quantities of 'stuff'.

Best thing about the lifestyle?

Life - There are lots of amazing stories out there and hearing about them over a campfire is the reward.

Worst thing about the lifestyle?

Missing grandchildren and family but this was helped by 'Skype'.

Did your plans change?

We intended one year's travel and took three! We also now respect and think about water conservation a lot more.

Favourite work experience?

Cattle mustering and, with it, knocking wild cattle over and tying them up.

Favourite camping spot?

The camping ground on top of the hill in Sapphire.

Scariest nomad experience?

It was dark and we were parked above Ivanhoe Crossing near Kununurra when there was a knock on the door. It was a well-built indigineous gentleman who said his vehicle, which was three kilometers away with young children in, wouldn't start. He asked if I could come and tow him. I wondered if there were more men out there in the dark just waiting for me to step out, but I ended up driving him back to his car and jump started it. It was all genuine. In hindsight, it was maybe not so smart but sometimes you just have to help your fellow man.

Nomads in Brief

Drop bears on Fraser

A tabloid report of crocodiles on Fraser Island has been ridiculed. Britain's *Daily Telegraph* claimed the island was full of dingoes, sharks, jellyfish, deadly spiders and salties. However, Queensland Tourism Minister Jan Jarratt says crocs are rarely seen south of Gladstone. "I think along with the crocodile would be the 'drop bears' on Fraser Island," she said.

South of the border

Farmers are using infrared cameras to monitor dingoes which are now breeding well south of the 2225 kilometre dog fence. Graziers have seen dingoes just outside Port Augusta. The dogs are now pests under South Australian law.

Lightning strike

A Lightning Ridge visitor has pulled out an eight carat opal from the public fossicking heap near the town's Visitor Information Centre. The lucky Victorian man had his find cut, and now owns a beautiful green stone worth an estimated \$4000.

Camping Online

According to British research, campsite owners who don't offer the option of booking online are losing out on business. A survey for VisitEngland found that while 79% of hotels allow visitors to book online, less than a third of campsites have the facility.

QUIZ CORNER

GRAB A CUPPA AND TEST YOUR GREY MATTA

YOU'LL NEED THIS IN YOUR STABLE IF YOU ARE TOWING



DO YOU KNOW

1. Which landmark was discovered in 1983 by 'mistake mistake'?
2. Which 2225 km barrier do cats like to keep on the right side of?
3. On which road will you never run short?
4. Which Cape York creek crossing goes off with a bang?
5. In which two states can you find towns like nowhere else?

(Answers on page 4)

the Grey Nomad Times



Letters to the Editor **Share your thoughts with fellow nomads**

Dear Editor,
Re: Walmart story (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 5). They should have it in our Woolworths stores in Australia.

Alex and Rose

Dear Editor,
How does this 'No Overnight Parking' in the US relate to Australia? Well, look no further than the growing number of towns that have been stupid enough to tell grey nomads they are not welcome. Contrast this to enlightened communities – usually free from the rabid self-interest of the local caravan park owner – who actively encourage travellers to stop and spend a day or two. If a town doesn't want a share of my substantial living and fuel budget, all they need to do is make it obvious I'm not welcome

Tony

Dear Editor,
As a caravanner I don't have a lot of sympathy for motorhomers. I have just spent two months in South Australia, mainly on the Eyre Peninsula, and a lot of places actually had notices saying motorhomes could park with a permit (approx cost \$5 per night), while vans would be welcome to use caravans parks (approx \$30 per night). We didn't stay at the van parks, we didn't spend any money in that town, and we did move on. Maybe they should do a rethink.

Karol

Dear Editor,
Free camping is under threat in Tasmania with councils being taken to court by caravan parks associations to close them down. Many say that,

taking into account the cost of getting there, Tassie will be too expensive if free camping is no longer available.

Lorraine

Dear Editor,
I firmly believe that all people towing a caravan should have to attend a towing course and have a specially endorsed licence. My husband and I completed a one-day course before we picked up our first caravan in 2008 and hate to think what we would have been like towing the caravan without the knowledge and skills we learnt that day.

Julie

Dear Editor,
Re: Space age campervan (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 5). With all that front window, the heat here in Oz may cause a few to get a little hot, don't you think? Also, looking at the design on the picture, it appears not to be too well equipped for our roo or road trains on impact. I'm sure this will get sorted out but these are my initial thoughts. However, the concept looks the part.

Ky

Dear Editor,
Let's wait until 2015 before commenting on whether this makes any sense. For one thing, running a solar-powered vehicle in winter in Switzerland might prove to be a challenging design problem and the alternative to being in Switzerland in winter is to be in Morocco with half of the rest of Europe's population (and the occasional Australian as well) and that is a long way to pedal.

Betty and Tony

Dear Editor,
Re: Tracy's letter (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 5). Might I point out that she works in a service industry. If she and her husband are not happy to provide the service of helping older drivers to back onto the sites, then perhaps they should not be working in the industry. I do not have trouble backing my van but, after a long day's driving, the offer of aid is appreciated. It demonstrates that park management's welcome is genuine and their client is not viewed merely as a mobile wallet container as so often seems to be the case.

Dan



Wallet empty? Reverse the van yourself!

Dear Editor,
Re: GPS article (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 5). I use a Garmin GPS Map 76 to track where we have been and then download it onto the laptop. We use the Garmin Map source software to view where we have been and the advantage of this is you can overlay Google earth on top so you can actually see the terrain. We also have a Garmin Nuvi 250 for using in and around cities. I haven't used any other products besides Garmin but it works for me and I find it simple. I would be interested in what other people use.

Steve

Dear Editor,
We have ASIC Tom Tom 1 and it has now died for no apparent reason. It is only useful in urban areas and, for serious nomads, the only unit is the Hema Navigator which I will now save up to buy.

Matt

Dear Editor,
Re: Ask Jaelyn and Heidi column (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 5). To Heidi. Get a life and not a dog. You are definitely NOT a dog lover.

Glen

Dear Editor,
Heidi, it is clear that you have never really got close to a loving dog – or cat for that matter. What is the MOST important to a treasured pet is your attention. Even food is secondary. However, Shelley, keep in mind that if 'Toby' already knows the family then he may well be okay with you leaving. Sure, he won't like to see you go but it won't damage him if he is happy with those around him. He will certainly be more comfortable than being in a caravan that is hot when you have to leave him behind. I take mine with me, and yes, it does mean limitation ... but not as much as you think.

Beams



Dog dilemma ... should he stay or should he go?

the Grey Nomad Times



Brilliant Prints
The Canvas Printing People

Weighing up the cost and appeal of Apple's iPhone 4S



If you've seen the news over the past few weeks, you would have seen coverage of long lines outside of Apple stores as people queued to get their hands on the latest Apple creation, the iPhone 4S. So we decided to have a look at some of the new features to help people decide whether it's worth the expense to upgrade their iPhone.

Eight Megapixel Camera – the camera in the 4S is great, and certainly one of the best found in a smartphone. The quality of these cameras will never be as good as a real, dedicated camera – but it's certainly more than capable of taking snaps on the go.



The latest iPhone ... is it worth upgrading?

Processor – The 'brains' of the iPhone 4S have been upgraded – speed and performance is improved as a result.

Call quality – Reports from users are telling us that the call quality in the new iPhone is improved, along with reception quality. It seems that Apple may have fixed the "grip of death" fault with their previous model, which meant that if you held the phone the wrong way you would lose reception altogether.

Siri – Definitely the most fun new feature, Siri is a personal virtual assistant – sort of like a secretary in your iPhone. You can ask her questions ('what will the weather be like tomorrow?'), test her general knowledge ('what is 12 x 12?'), and she even has answers for some of those bigger questions ('what is the meaning of life?'). You can literally have hours of fun playing with Siri – how truly useful she is though is yet to be seen.

In short, while many of the Apple fans will tell you to upgrade straight away, we suggest that you take into account all of the new features and decide whether these are important to you before handing over your hard earned dollars.

Any gadget you'd like covered in future? Please [email us here](#).

[Click here to comment](#)

Website highlights

No room for the van

This week our website www.thegreynomads.com.au broke the news that Broome's Palm Grove Caravan Park has a date with the bulldozer. It left many who love to spend the winter in WA's fabled grey nomad mecca deeply upset. With luxury apartments slated to be built on the site, some are questioning whether campers are being de-prioritised in the town's quest for the upmarket tourism dollar.

[Read more here.](#)

SURVEY

Is Broome still the ultimate grey nomad destination?

Yes No

Other website must-reads:

- **Weekly Mailbag (click)**
Readers write wrongs
- **Shark hunt continues (click)**
Predators become prey
- **Tyres for the trip (click)**
A nomad's guide
- **Moreton Island (click)**
'Built' for grey nomads

[Click here to comment](#)

KAYAK COMPETITION

Watery woes a splash hit

Sydney's Alex Brown wins our kayaking book competition ... thanks to this soggy story

I moved to Manly a few years back and, seeing all capable people skilfully sailing, surfing and kayaking, decided to join the happy throng. However, turns out I was neither capable nor skilful, much as I had suspected. I had been kayaking twice before - on the kayaks you sit on top of - which I found quite easy and relaxing. But seeing other people effortlessly glide past on their sit-in kayaks, which are much sleeker, decided to follow suit and play

these graceful speed merchants at their own game.

Getting in was fine – the boat was steadied for me as I clambered in.

All went reasonably smoothly until I stopped at a nearby beach. Not a good idea. The problem with sit-in kayaks is that you need great balance otherwise it will tip. And tip it did as I tried with as much elegance as an elephant on ice to climb back in.

I wouldn't have minded but I had my phone, wallet and numerous other bits and pieces stuffed in my pockets. Needless to say, the phone sizzled and virtually disintegrated as the seawater ate its electronics.

Notes drifted away, coins sank and old receipts went to mush. But worse than that was the crowd of onlookers. As I rolled time and again into the sea, more and more dog-walkers, runners, couples and families stopped what they were doing and gathered to watch my embarrassment unfold.

Just as I was on the verge of picking up the kayak and walking back to Manly, I succeeded in staying in the kayak - to cheers from the rubber neckers. I always did prefer the sit-on kayaks.

• **Alex wins a copy of 'Paddling Around NSW' by Scott Rawstone & Geoff Greenwood, courtesy of sponsors Global Paddler**



QUIZ CORNER SOLVED

Pic puzzle: Jockey Wheel

Do you know answers:

1. Bungle Bungles
2. The Dog Fence
3. The Plenty Highway
4. Gunshot
5. Nowhere Else, Tas
Nowhere Else, SA

the Grey Nomad Times



The coast is clear for an iconic journey

'Great Drives' navigates the spectacular twists and turns of the Great Ocean Road



The Great Ocean Road is quite simply a must-drive for grey nomads serious about doing the Big Lap. As well as taking in some of the most spectacular coastal scenery in the world, the Great Ocean Road – which was built between 1919 and 1932 by returning soldiers – is a lasting memorial to the casualties of World War I. Also known less glamorously as the B100, the road begins at the tourist town of Torquay, south-east of Melbourne, and ends 243 breathtaking kilometres later near Warrnambool. Although there is just one lane in each direction and it twists

and turns dramatically, the road is certainly suitable – with care – for big motorhomes and caravans.

The first stop for westward-bound travellers is normally the world famous surfing mecca of Bells Beach. From here the road surprisingly swoops inland slightly through hills and valleys before passing through the charming town of Anglesea. The road now hugs the coast offering stunning views out across the Southern Ocean. A bronze statue of two Diggers has been erected at Eastern View to commemorate the road's construction.



Dramatic coastal scenery

Towns like Lorne and Apollo Bay are fantastic places to stop and perhaps spend the night at a van park – but it is the rock-hugging road that is the star of this adventure.

Beyond Apollo Bay, the Great Ocean Road heads inland again through the heart of Otway National Park which is another top place to camp. The park is home to sensational waterfalls, gorges and rain-forest, and a side trip to the lighthouse at Cape Otway will

certainly not disappoint.

As the road returns to the coast and then heads towards Port Campbell, things get really interesting. Watching the ocean pound relentlessly away at the limestone pillars of The Twelve Apostles – some of them nearly 50 metres tall – it is impossible not to feel humbled by the power of Mother Nature. There is a reason this part of the world is also known as the Shipwreck Coast! After passing through Port Campbell, there are more coastal wonders including the Arch and London Bridge. The road heads briefly inland again before re-emerging on the coast at Warrnambool. It's the end of the road for an eye-opening, jaw-dropping drive that will live long in the memory.



ASK JACLYN and Heidi



Our experts solve your grey nomad etiquette dilemmas

Pictures imperfect

Dear Jaclyn and Heidi,
I feel awful writing this and am not sure whether doing so makes me a terrible person. We have been on the road for six weeks and love bush camping. Like most grey nomads we enjoy checking the internet now and again to keep in touch with home. However, we have one daughter who sends us emails every day and often includes huge picture files of her children and even Jpegs of their artwork. I love my grandchildren to bits but they are chewing through my download quota at a rate of knots, and the files take ages to open. Help! I don't know how to stop the email deluge without offending her.

Terri

Heavens, Terri. What a delicate situation. First of all, no this

doesn't make you a terrible person. It is understandable that you want to minimise your 'excess' emails while travelling ... but without putting your daughter 'offside'. Can I suggest you simply allocate more time to email correspondence. Why not bust the budget occasionally and stay an extra night in a town so you can go the local library and download all those lovely grandkid pics to your heart's content? Enjoying the Big Lap your way is of course important ... but not as important as family.

Jaclyn

What is it with parents today? Just because their world revolves around their spoilt little darlings, it doesn't mean everybody else's has to as well. Come on, Terri. Let's be honest

here. You've seen one kid's 'artistic' squiggle, and you've seen them all. If you haven't got the stomach to tell your daughter the truth, why not just set up a different free 'dummy' email address and have her send all of the 'family news' to that one. If you never open it, you'll never have to waste time looking at the latest budding van Gogh paint 'splashfest' or at pics of little Johnny one millimetre taller than the last photo you saw of him. Yawn! It all means you'll have more time for the good things in life. Pour yourself a drink Terri and be glad that all that family hassle is a world away. When are these people going to realise that getting away from them was what made hitting the road so attractive in the first place?

Heidi

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'Cut the red tape!'

Is a national driving licence and a national vehicle registration scheme a good idea? Your response was overwhelming.

Yes!!! Yes!!! A thousand times yes!!! **- Pamela**

Not only a uniform system for licences and registration, but a universal mandatory Caravan Information course including towing and reversing. **- Alan**

It would really assist. I can renew in Queensland once, then the next time our licences are renewed we have to get our pics taken ... which can only be done in Queensland. **- Karol**

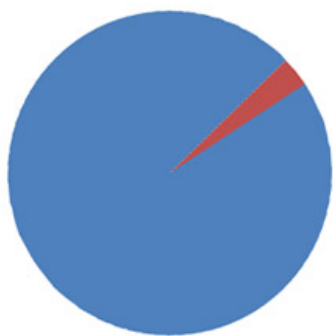
It is a priority. In WA we don't have renewal stickers for wind-screen display. **- Bruce & Mary**

As New Zealand visitors, we had the 'Cruiser registered in Queensland and the van in Victoria. The 'Cruiser was due for renewal while we were in the NT and the authorities didn't want to know about re-registration. We thought we would wait 'til we were back in Queensland. When we were 40km out of Darwin we were pulled up for a breath test. That was no problem, but the nine-day overdue registration was! "\$600 fine," the policeman said ... until I told him the trouble we had trying to register the vehicle. There should be national rego but, crikey, there is a big price variation between states! **- Peter**

National licence and rego the way to go. **- J and J**

The thought of being way out of your state of registration and having to deal with other states to get re-registered sounds like a nightmare. **- Robyn**

SURVEY RESULTS



We asked *Times* readers: Would you like to see a national driver licence and a uniform system for vehicle registration?

Hundreds responded. The official results were:

Yes 97%
No 3%

For many years I was in the Army and, being posted every three years from state to state, we had to renew the licence and change rego after being in that state for three months ... what a pain that was. **- Lindsay**

Victoria at the moment enjoys a lower rego rate than most states ... can't imagine others dropping in line. **- Irvine**

A very sensible idea. **- Gayle**

A national licence would be a good outcome. **- Jeremy**

I am a retired interstate truck driver and even back in the '70s and '80s we had interstate plates. A national system like the federal rego system for transport would go a long way to address the problem. The various states still collect the money and I don't think they would be prepared to give up the revenue. **- Don**

It's time we had a national system. After all, we are one country. **- Allan and Maureen**

As full-time travellers we NEED a national system. Our van is registered in Qld where it was built (cousin's address), the Mazda in WA (son's address); my husband's licence is SA (friend's address), while mine is WA (son's address). Crazy!! **- Andrea & John**

We live in England, but recently completed a year-long Big Trip around Australia. We bought a motorhome in NSW and, when it required re-registration, had to return to NSW. Luckily we were in southern Queensland then but, had we been elsewhere, it could have been tricky. **- Lesley**

A big thumbs up from us! **- Minnette**

Too bloody right. And let us not forget those of us who pick up casual work and need all sorts of tickets e.g. forklift and safety cards! **- R & C**

As a retired heavy vehicle driver I used to have an Australian Licence (Purple). Why did that go? **- Kevin**

It is commonsense the way people travel around nowadays but we all know it's too hard for the poor polities to think outside the square. **- Mr Red**

A brilliant idea. As a 'grey motorcyclist' (Ulyssian) we also see this problem all the time on extended trips. **- Craig**

We are from WA, have been on the road nearly three years. We have no problems in renewing registration or driver's licence. We do it all via internet and it takes five minutes. It could not be easier. **- Bob and Irene**

I would like to see a standard on everything throughout our great country. Lowest in the cost area though! **- Glen**

I am sure it would make life easier for all concerned, especially for full-time grey nomads. **- Frank & Shirley**

Yes please! It doesn't seem reasonable to have such variations across a single country. **- Joe**

That there is such disparity across the Commonwealth indicates the general immaturity of Australia's legislation and the political and bureaucratic anachronism that bedevils the country. They are all so damnably puerile. **- Nigel**

We vote yes to uniform licences and vehicle registrations. In fact, make that twice yes. **- Rolf and Penelope**

The current system is pure bureaucratic theft on a national scale. **- Matt**

What a silly system you have over there! Look, if those 'pencil pushers' don't take notice, simply get a few hundred of you together and do a 'go slow' in some major cities (all on the same day) and invite the Press, the TV and anybody else that wants to listen. Block some inner city roads with hundreds of camping vans and they will soon listen! Good luck ... and greetings from New Zealand **- Ingolf**

A national registration and licence scheme is the logical way to go, but the states will not approve because of the loss of revenue. Same old story money, money, money. **- Neville**

Should have been set up many years ago. **- Marion**