

In this issue:

• Indian summer

• Fun for forumites

• Risky business

## Growing alarm over 'highway camels'

**More than 500 culled next to the Lasseter as population booms**

Thousands of camels in Central Australia have been killed by Government contractors shooting them from helicopters.

The cull comes as concern grows over the danger the feral beasts pose to motorists on remote roads ... particularly grey nomads. More than 500 of the estimated 5,200 culled camels were shot near the Lasseter Highway, the main road into Uluru.

"We knew there were a lot around," said the owner of the Curtin Springs Station, Lyndee Severin. "But to be able to find 500 in a two-day period right on the main road, or very close to the main road ... that just was mind-blowing."

A few months ago a man was badly injured when his vehicle ran into a herd of camels on the Lasseter. After that incident, police warned grey nomads again of the very real danger of hitting wandering stock or large animals, especially at night. There are an average 2.17 camel-related crashes annually in the North-



Over one million camels roam the Australian Outback

ern Territory alone ... many of them serious.

Camels also create another major hazard for vehicles by taking dust baths on the road, piling heaps of soft sand on an otherwise smooth surface. Despite a general consensus that action needs to be taken to reduce camel numbers ... which are estimated to be growing at 10% a year ... the way the cull has been carried out has been questioned. Ian Conway from Kings Creek Station says camel carcasses have been left to rot.

"We've been along and seen where camels have kicked for 20 minutes, half an hour, a couple of hours in some instances, still alive," he said.

"All that did was increase the population of dingoes around Docker River and blowflies ... and the stench around the country was unbelievable." If the camels had been taken to an abattoir for meat rather than left on the ground, it is estimated they could have generated more than \$1 million in sales.

There are thought to be about one million feral camels in Australia ... and recent rains have caused another huge spike in numbers. They cause massive damage to waterholes and native plants. The creatures were brought here between 1840 and 1907 to help develop arid areas.

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## 90% believe Broome is Paradise lost

It seems like Broome's days in the grey nomad sun could be numbered.

Last week we asked whether the old pearling town was still paradise. Some 90% of survey respondents thought its crown as the ultimate grey nomad destination had slipped. High costs, poor attitudes, inaccessibility and over-crowding were blamed. With a van park near Cable Beach about to be bulldozed in favour of luxury apartments there was also a sense that the town no longer welcomes sun-seeking caravaners and motorhomers with the enthusiasm it used to. It is a charge that is vehemently denied.

"Broome welcomes all travellers, including caravan users, to the area to experience the unique environment, culture and history," a Shire spokesperson told the GNT. "The Shire has made an effort to support as many tourists as possible through overflow caravan parks." Broome currently has 12 caravan parks and three overflow parks. It has also identified a piece of land near Cable Beach for a future van park.

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# the Grey Nomad Times



## Characters of the Road

# Couple plan to continue criss-crossing the country

**Jim, 64, and Leonie, 66, from Kempsey, NSW are true veterans of the road**

### What do you travel in?

A Toyota LandCruiser troop carrier that has been doing a great job for the past 25 years. We tow a 20ft Regent Parklane caravan for the highway trips and a home-built off-road camper trailer when we go outback. The caravan is easy and comfortable for touring this great land, while the off-road camper allows us to access the more remote and rough conditions without worrying about doing any damage to the unit. We also carry a boat on the appropriate trips

### How long travelling?

We started our 4WD trips bush camping about 30 years ago, moving into the long distance trips 10 years later. After retiring six years ago there are now no barriers, so we can come and go as we please.

### Where do you camp?

Bush camping is choice as we love the freedom and atmosphere. However we do use caravan parks when visiting a town.

### Best thing about the lifestyle?

The freedom to come and go as you please and meeting



**Jim and Leonie have clocked up a lot of kilometres (and adventures) in their trusty troop carrier**

other nomads with the same interests.

### Future plans?

Our plans are to do more of the same for as long as possible. More is better!

### On the-road hobbies?

Leonie's hobbies are crochetering and reading, I love to meet fellow travellers for a chat. We both love country music.

### Do you work as you travel?

We do not work along the way as we both have worked hard all of our lives and now it's our turn to enjoy the fruits of our labour.

### Scariest experience?

This would have to be the 2010

Cyclone Paul that came across the Northern Territory while we were on our fishing trip. As we were in an isolated area with about another 10 camps we were completely cut off by flood waters with only about a half metre of higher ground left.

### Would you change anything?

We wouldn't change the way we do our travels. We have the choice to go when we wish, for as long or as little as we wish, and to return home if and when the need arises. This makes for a flexible lifestyle.

### Advice for wannabe nomads?

Do it as soon as possible. So many leave it too late.

## Nomads in Brief

### Karijini tragedy

A man died last month after falling down a cliff face in WA's Karijini National Park. Christopher Mark Majewski, 31, had been trying to rescue his son who had taken a tumble near Fortescue Falls in Dales Gorge. The seven-year-old boy is recovering from his injuries.

### Back to basics

British caravan owners have been told to take more care when reversing following a surge in accidents. UK specialist caravan insurance company, Caravan Guard, said there had been a 24% increase in reversing-related claims in the past year.

### Toad of the road

Another cane toad has been found in Perth. The second cane toad caught in the suburb of Bayswater in a year is believed to have hitchhiked on a vehicle. The poisonous amphibians crossed from the NT into WA's Kimberley region last year, leaving devastation in their wake.

### Parks privatised

The US state of New Jersey is to partially privatise state parks. The plan is intended to keep parks open, despite a \$31 million operating deficit. Opponents fear it is part of a wider scheme to make parks corporate assets, and may see things like restaurants opening in pristine areas.

## QUIZ CORNER

## GRAB A CUPPA AND TEST YOUR GREY MATTA

Keep your HANDS ON THE WHEEL IF THIS HAPPENS



DO YOU KNOW

1. Place where you would have two martinis?
2. A statue of this stormy bushranger surveys Uralla's main street?
3. What was flown for the first time on Bakery Hill?
4. How much of Australia is classified as desert?  
A) 13% B) 25% C) 35% D) 48%
5. What burst in 1929 killing fourteen people in Tasmania?

(Answers on page 4)

# the Grey Nomad Times



## Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with fellow nomads

Dear Editor,  
 Re: coastal erosion story (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 6). No doubt people near the sea can have problems with erosion but the idea that climate change may make it worse is a prediction not something that is yet fact. Sea level at any point on our coast is affected by many factors ... it may be going up or down. Satellites measure the overall rise and find it to be about 1.2 to 1.7mm per annum which is about what is considered normal. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) thinks about a metre in 100 years – that is 10mm a year – is normal and as yet it is nowhere near that. Australia, that is the whole continent, moves north about 10mm per annum. But if money can be dug out of the government, go for it!

**Mike**

Dear Editor,  
 Re: online van park booking story (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 6). As we have pre-paid mobile phone plans, we often attempt to book caravan park sites online, but many times we aren't successful. Either we never hear back from the park, so end up ringing them anyway, or else part way through the booking we find out that our credit card will be charged for the entire stay up front, not just a night's tariff as will happen if you book over the phone. You should get the same service online as you do in person, but sadly this is rarely the case.

**John & Wendy (Nicholstones)**

Dear Editor,  
 Another great GNT. Re: Jaclyn and Heidi column (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 6). Terri

needs to get a copy of Mail-Washer Pro 6.5.4 which allows her to pick and choose which emails she wants to accept on her computer (the important ones). The other stuff can be left on the server until she gets to a caravan park that gives free internet or is able to go to a library to download all of the grandkids' stuff. She can then enjoy what they have sent and no hit on her access limit.

**Ron**

Dear Editor,  
 Re: national registration story (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 5). We live in Albury and own a caravan. We pay \$238 every year to have it registered and also \$18 to have an annual inspection. Only 10kms away, in Victoria, the registration is \$200 cheaper at \$38 and no annual inspection (our 6x4 trailer costs \$58 in NSW however in Victoria it's the same as their caravan ie \$38, because in Vic they are all classed as trailers). Time for some real action I say. Don't we all live in the same country, don't we all use the same roads?

**Monica**

Dear Editor,  
 I am retired and a traveller but I'm limiting my times away because of rising costs. Avoiding caravan parks and parking in free spots is one option. However, I do see signs now saying 'no overnight parking.' Do inspectors come through the night to wake you up? If you have a couple of alcoholic drinks before bed can they force you to drive? Have there been test cases in court and, if not, why not? If you are legally parked how can they make you move?

**David**

Dear Editor,  
 Give all RVs a 48-hour stay.

**Richard**

Dear Editor,  
 We are planning a trip to Darwin, Alice Springs, Lawn Hill, the Rock etc next May and June. We have a small old dog which will be travelling with us. We are worried we will be limited to free camps because of him. He is deaf, has few teeth and is nearly blind. We can't go without him as there is no one to care for him. Any suggestions would be appreciated as this is our first trip away, and we don't want to be restricted as to where we go.

**Doreen**



**Will Doreen face too many restrictions on her trip?**

Dear Editor,  
 Re: Broome van park closure (Grey Nomad Times: Issue 6). Palm Grove Caravan Park was earmarked for development as early as 2006. The council had approved the redevelopment of the site for a three-storey resort, not quite beachfront, but close. It's believed the Civil Aviation Safety Authority intervened and ordered the buildings be reduced to two storey. The developers had done their costings on the three-storey project, so plans went on hold, and the caravan park activity was resumed. The Palm Grove Park was only opened in about 1997/98. Another site has been allocated for van park development near Cable Beach, but it's not known when construction will start ... if ever.

**Chris**

**OUR SURVEY (last edition) Is Broome still the ultimate grey nomad paradise?**



**Broome ... most readers were not impressed**

Dear Editor,  
 No. It's getting far too expensive! 40 Mile Beach south of Karratha is much better.

**Fredo**

Dear Editor,  
 No. Too far away and too costly when you get there.

**Karol**

Dear Editor,  
 NO! Broome would have to be one of the most over-rated places in Australia. No great loss.

**Lea and Rick**

Dear Editor,  
 No, the caravan parks are pricing themselves out of the market. We stayed for two weeks and did all the flights, tours etc, never to return.

**Baz and Michelle**

Dear Editor,  
 No. The price and the travel time to get there is making it hard. Also you have to book so far ahead to get a site, and when you are travelling you decide as you go where you are stopping.

**Des and Lynley**

Dear Editor,  
 I wouldn't bother staying there again, they have little interest in looking after the grey nomad.

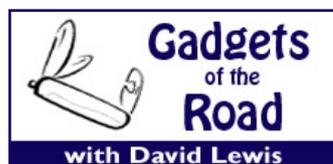
**Sally**

# the Grey Nomad Times



**Brilliant Prints**  
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## Noteworthy camps can be stored and located online



One of the great things about being a nomad, is meeting lots of new like-minded friends. When sitting around the camp fire, the conversation invariably turns to favourite camping spots. And we all know, that the BEST camping areas or caravan parks are the ones that people recommend personally. But how can you keep track of them all? Some people write them down in a notebook – but we think that we might have found a better way. If you're familiar with Google Maps you will already know that you can search for locations, and many people also search for directions. However, did you know that you can save your own personal map to be accessed online? Google Maps allows you to create 'locations,' such as that new and little known free camp that you've just heard



Keep notes about great camping spots on Google Maps

about. You can save the physical location onto a map and also add notes about the location so that you don't forget. You can also customise an icon (the little picture that appears on the map to show a location that you've already saved) allowing you to categorise it if you wish. For example, different coloured icons could signify whether a site is free or not. What's really handy about this service is that you can use it anywhere you can access the internet. You can also elect to make the map public, which allows other internet users

to find your map. Or you can make your map private, which means that it can only be viewed by you or people that you supply a secret link to. The most important feature however is that it's FREE. A word of warning – while using a personal map on Google Maps is reasonably easy, the interface can take a bit of getting used to so allow yourself a bit of time. It's definitely worth it. How do you keep track of all of those amazing overnight stops that you've heard about?

[Tell us here](#)

### Website highlights

#### Security Score

This week our website [www.thegreynomads.com.au](http://www.thegreynomads.com.au) revealed that an Aussie couple were apparently robbed at gunpoint while free camping in New Zealand. The frightening tale once again brings into spotlight the issue of grey nomad security. Compared to our counterparts in the US and Britain, we are incredibly lucky and are right to feel relatively safe ... but are we becoming too complacent about security?

[Read more here.](#)

#### SURVEY

Do you feel 100% secure camping in the bush?

Yes  No

#### Other website must-reads:

- **Weekly Mailbag**  
Get off yer bike
- **People power to the rescue**  
Boost for 'rundown' park
- **Managing your Affairs**  
Staying in control on the road
- **Water Filtration**  
Drinking to your health

[Click here to comment](#)



Grey nomads gather at Greens Lake, Victoria

## Happy campers fly the flag

A healthy number of grey nomad members had a high old time at a gathering in Greens Lake, Victoria, recently. Faces were finally put to familiar names, travel stories exchanged, and laughs shared as happy hour was given a serious extension by fun-loving forumites.

It is always great to hear of forum members – and *Grey Nomad Times* readers – meeting up on the road, whether it be by chance or design. And, of course, here at Grey Nomad Central, we are always delighted to receive news and photos of any get togethers. Please keep 'em coming.

## Older travellers taking more risks

The over-50s are growing old dangerously with a survey showing that 13% of mature-aged travellers take part in extreme sports while on a trip. The UK study said 'holiday brain' kicked in when older funseekers became less inhibited away from home. Water-skiing and parasailing are the most popular activities, with scuba diving, windsurfing, rock climbing, bungee jumping and caving close behind. Gnu Insurance, which carried out the study, said over-50s were taking part in activities they'd never normally dream of.

**A place to park the van and a great investment too**  
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### QUIZ CORNER SOLVED

Pic puzzle: Blowout

Do you know answers:

1. Gin Gin
2. Captain Thunderbolt
3. the Eureka Flag
4. D) 35%
5. Briseis Dam

# the Grey Nomad Times



## Startling landscape and turquoise waters

**'Great Drives' charts a course through the incredible scenery of the west coast**



The magnificent Indian Ocean Drive which links Perth and Geraldton is certainly one of the highlights of a western adventure.

The stars of the show are the inviting turquoise waters and the pristine coastal landscape. If you travel in the right season and on the right days, this truly is a trip through a perfect paradise. Nonetheless, the near horizontal lean of the trees lining the route prove just how relentless the southerly winds are and how volatile a master Mother Nature can be.

The final section of the now fully sealed Indian Ocean Drive – a 65 km sealed stretch

from Lancelin to Cervantes – was opened last year at a cost of \$95 million. Anyone who has taken the drive will tell you it was money well spent.

The completed road stretches 268 scenic kilometres, making the trip from Perth to Geraldton a good 30 minutes shorter and an awful lot more attractive than the inland Brand Highway. The Indian Ocean Drive is limited to light vehicles and tourist buses leaving the Brand to continue to service heavy traffic.

Attractions such as the wonderfully interesting Wedge Island, 30km north of Lancelin, are now easily accessible whereas once they could only



**The Pinnacles baffled early explorers**

be reached by 4WD along the beach.

The highlight of this trip comes soon after you pass through the coastal town of Cervantes and reach one of Australia's most unique landscapes ... the Pinnacles Desert. The Pinnacles are in the 17,000 hectare Nambung National Park. Thousands of spectacular limestone pillars, some 3.5m tall, rise mysteriously from the sand. When passing Dutch sailors saw them in 1658, they apparently believed they had seen the ruins of an ancient city.

Nearby at Lake Thetis, visitors can take a walk above some of the earth's oldest living fossils ... the stromatolites and strombalites.

Grey nomads heading north will no doubt be unhurried enough to stop and enjoy the sensational views from the numerous roadside stops including Molah Hill Lookout and Grigson's Lookout. Beyond the interesting little coastal towns of Jurien Bay and Dongara are the restored pioneer buildings of the Greenough Central Historic Settlement.

And then it's on to the delights of Geraldton ... and beyond. When you throw in some beautiful camping spots, great fishing, and – if you time it right – dazzling wildflowers, you would have to say this route has got the lot.



**ASK JACLYN and Heidi**



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

### No pace like home

**Dear Jaclyn and Heidi,**  
*I think my husband thinks doing the Big Lap is actually a race. We have been travelling for less than four months and we have clocked up something like 35,000 kilometres. Jim always thinks there is a great camping spot 'just a little bit further on' and always says he wants to get a 'few more kilometres under his belt' before we stop for the night. We have yet to spend more than two nights in one camp and I am getting dizzy. Jim had quite a stressful, high-powered job and I don't think he has worked out how to relax yet. The crazy thing is we are not on a tight budget and we are travelling indefinitely. There is no need to rush. Help!*

**Marion**

Your problem isn't as unusual as you might think, Marion. It does take time for people to adjust to the pace of the grey nomad lifestyle. I bet Jim has only recently retired and so he is probably over-compensating for his perceived loss of 'life purpose'. You should try to tell him how you feel but, ultimately, you need to show understanding. As you mentioned he has worked hard all his life in a stressful job and is just a bit slower than most at learning how to relax. Count your blessings, Marion. You are getting to see the country, you are travelling in a luxury motorhome and you don't have to worry about the budget. Look for the positives rather than the negatives.

**Jaclyn**

Did you say 35,000 kilometres in four months! Marion that is crazy. Forget his foolish man pride and put the brakes on this madness NOW! He may want to take his own sweet time to adapt to retirement but you shouldn't have to glug bottles of motion sickness tablets while he does it. His self-indulgent 'crisis' is basically ruining your trip of a lifetime. There is clearly no getting through to Mr-I-don't-feel-as-important-as-I-did-when-I-worked-so-I'm-having-a-meltdown, so I strongly suggest you should toss the motorhome keys down the drop toilet or take a cricket bat to the engine. It's time to end this turbo-charged endurance tour and to start enjoying the leisurely life.

**Heidi**

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