

the Grey Nomad Times

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- In this issue: • Good plain fun • Is a toll in store? • All washed up

On the road to a good relationship?

The Big Lap can bring you closer ... if you share the same dreams

Grey nomads are being warned that the stresses of life on the road can strain their relationships to the limit.

However, psychologists also say a long-term trip can satisfy a need to engage in activities that deliver enjoyment as well as a sense of achievement ... and give recent retirees a renewed sense of purpose.

“Even though travel can certainly be stressful, stress is part of life and it can be good for you,” clinical and health psychologist, Dr Bob Montgomery, told the GNT. “People want to be stimulated and to achieve, but not to be overwhelmed.”

The key to grey nomad contentment then is not to take on more than can be happily accomplished ... whether it be in terms of the size of rig you drive, the distances you travel, the time you go for, or the types of places you camp at. Dr Montgomery says when long-term partners know just about everything there is to know about each other, visiting new places together as grey nomads, sharing new experi-



Travelling together can be a relationship tonic

ences and making new friends can deliver a relationship tonic. Nonetheless, Dr Montgomery strongly recommends couples discuss in detail their trip expectations.

“In any relationship there is a sense that you have to accommodate the other person’s wishes but you shouldn’t agree to things you can’t deal with,” says Dr Montgomery. “If you do, there can be a point where it all blows up and someone might say ‘I never wanted to travel Australia in a caravan in the first place.’”

The sudden loss of valuable ‘private time’ also means it is a great idea for grey nomads to pursue hobbies they always wanted to try such as reading painting or photography. Most importantly though, Dr

Montgomery recommends wannabe grey nomads give life on the road a number of trial runs before committing to the lifestyle.

“There are an awful lot of yachts up for sale in Cairns because people from Melbourne and Sydney have decided their dream lifestyle is not the dream after all,” he said. “The open road or the open sea can start to look very familiar after a while and it is not for everybody.” And if a trip simply doesn’t work out for whatever reason it shouldn’t be viewed as a failure, rather as the acquisition of useful information that can help in the setting of new goals.

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Readers give free camps the thumbs-up

Free camping is alive and well and living in Australia ... despite the odd high-profile security scare.

In our last issue, we reported on the armed hold-up of an Aussie couple while free camping in New Zealand. We asked whether you still felt 100% safe camping in the bush. An overwhelming 66% did, while 34% were less sure.

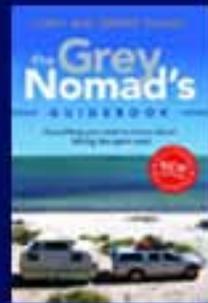
“As long as one takes all the usual preventative measures I think one is far safer in the bush than in most towns,” writes Annie, a solo female traveller.

It seems an active free camping network quickly alerts grey nomads to the suitable and unsuitable spots to stay. Most say they have never had a moment’s worry, often after years of free camping. While some felt there was safety in numbers, others preferred solitude.

“Our pet hate is to be in 10 acres of space when another van pulls up and parks 20 metres away,” writes Karol. “We figure they must be city folks and frightened of the dark or something.”

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The ultimate guide to the ‘Big Lap’
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the Grey Nomad Times



Characters of the Road

Going it alone ... and loving life on the road

Travelling solo full time suits Lynda down to the ground

What do you travel in?

A Jayco Conquest motorhome and I carry a 150cc motor scooter on a rack at the back. The rig has a bathroom so I don't have to venture outside in the middle of the night. I can also walk right through from the bed to the driver's seat - this makes me feel secure. I don't have to hitch and unhitch it - very important to me - and it's easier to manoeuvre than a caravan.

Where do you like to camp?

I love free camps because I like the lack of regimentation and I do feel that the people there are much friendlier. I like national parks for all the obvious reasons - away from the hustle and bustle, lots of good walks etc. But, every now and then, I check into a caravan park because they have washing machines and stuff like that - very convenient.

Best thing about lifestyle?

The ability to move on easily. I love being able to wake up in different, beautiful places all the time. And then there's the people I meet - most of whom are amazing and have wonderful stories to tell.



Lynda enjoys the security and the ease of her motorhome

What don't you like?

The lack of a national registration and licensing facility are annoying. I also can't for the life of me understand why in 2011 in a first world country I can't just go to a doctor anywhere and have them plug in my Medicare number to bring up my medical history. It is very frustrating.

On the-road hobbies?

I knit a lot and read a lot. I also walk a lot which is a great way to see the places that I visit.

Favourite camping spots?

Some of the really good ones, in no particular order, have been Morven, Qld; Surat, Qld; Berry Showground, NSW; Standown Park, Qld, and my favourite caravan park is Ilfracombe near Longreach - they have the most amazing happy hours.

combe near Longreach - they have the most amazing happy hours.

Scariest experience?

So far I've been very lucky and haven't had too many but I do find the road trains in the outback very scary - especially when they are unloaded and the bad end is all over the road.

Best tips?

I could write a book on this. Using vinegar instead of toilet chemicals is a particularly good one, as is using two buckets to wash clothes when away from a water connection. My telescopic ladder is one of the best things I have bought, and hose bags for my fresh water and grey water hoses have also saved my sanity.

Nomads in Brief

No kids allowed

A network of adult-only campsites in Britain has proved a hit. The Chain Bridge campsite on the Scottish-English border is the 26th member of the Tranquil Touring Parks association, a no-go zone for kids.

It's all mine

The Discovery Holiday group has bought the Argylla Caravan Park on the Barkly Highway in Queensland. The company is expanding into the lucrative miners' accommodation sector but insists Argylla will remain primarily a tourist operation.

Roll-over death in the NT

A female Belgian tourist has been killed and another seriously injured in a car roll-over 170km from Kings Canyon in Central Australia. Police say a lack of familiarity with local conditions may have caused the accident. The injured woman suffered head and spinal injuries.

Luring grey nomads

A Tourism Opportunity Plan has been released and it aims to lure more grey nomads to north-west Queensland. Among the proposed 'catalyst' projects are the extension of the Karumba Barramundi Discovery Centre, the establishment of a Birdsville Big Red Sand Dune Walk, and the development of a regional Indigenous 'story'.

QUIZ CORNER

We're ALL doing it!



GRAB A CUPPA AND TEST YOUR GREY MATTA

DO YOU KNOW

1. What is a hop, skip and a jump away from the mainland?
2. What is a guitarist's favorite Australian expanse of water?
3. Which city is closely associated with the theory of evolution?
4. How many centimetres is a baby kangaroo at birth?
A) 5 B) 2 C) 10
5. Which two Australian states had a right, royal start in life?

(Answers on page 4)



Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts
with fellow nomads

Dear Editor,

Re: Doreen's letter about travelling with an old dog (GNT: Issue 7). Our much-loved Red Kelpie, Effie, is 16 and is happily travelling with us - with bad eyesight, bad hearing, bad teeth, and arthritis! We've been on the road for seven months. When we are in a pet-friendly park, we have our annexe set up and she sleeps inside and we attach pet fencing to the back door so she can go out to do her 'business'. When we're free-camping she sleeps in a two-person tent that we bought. The national parks will still be there once our old girl has gone to Doggie Heaven. Just do it, Doreen!

Jules

Dear Editor,

We have travelled for five years with our pooch. We have found four van parks that offer to mind dogs if you're out for the day and these parks are priceless. Most parks that take dogs are friendlier and travellers will help look after each other's dogs. Some vets provide doggy day care or can be persuaded it's a good idea. We go to all the national parks but it just takes more effort. Take your old dogs with you. You'll be heartbroken if you don't.

Karol

Dear Editor,

I loved Heidi's reply (GNT: Issue 7) to Marion re. traveling 35,000kms in less than four months at Jim's instigation. I would like to comment on this, but there is no option for comments in this segment. Can we have an option added for replies as there are in other segments of the GNT, please?

Myra

(Done deal, Myra - Ed).

Dear Editor.

Re: camel cull article (GNT: Issue 7). While I quite understand the need to reduce the numbers it should, as with any cull, be done in an organised and humane way. If the meat is usable even if it's only for pet food it should not be wasted and left to create more problems this way. Perhaps Animals Australia needs to get involved.

Brenda



Concerns raised over news of a big camel cull

Dear Editor,

Cull them yes, kill only what we can eat.

Ben

Dear Editor,

We Australians ignore or waste the resources at hand. I'd be happy to eat camel meat, and I'm quite sure that the older animals could be butchered for pet meat - an enormous potential market!

Andrea

Dear Editor,

I would have thought that mustering the camels and slaughtering them for pet food etc might have been a better option than shooting them and leave them to rot.

Allan

Dear Editor,

Re: Google maps article (GNT: Issue 7). We maintain a log book which details address

(ideally GPS coordinates), contact phone numbers for caravan parks, cost and the site number that we had. Also details of any site that is better than ours. And we also include a running total of kilometres travelled with the van (handy for service times) and running totals for cost of accommodation and fuel.

Bruce

Dear Editor,

Re: national rego article (GNT: Issue 5). All those people thinking they are hard done by, just spare a thought for the caravanners in ACT. We have just paid over \$1,000 to register our van ... this is what it will cost us each year. A bit rich really when we don't spend much time driving on ACT roads!

Julia

Dear Editor,

Thanks, we really enjoy reading all the info. We only go away odd weekends depending on how my roster works. Looking forward to travelling more in the future. Thanks for the great newsletter. Keep it up.

Natalie & John

Dear Editor,

Thanks heaps for another great read which provides terrific info and reports of value to the Grey Nomad Brigade.

David & Chris

Dear Editor,

Re: bush camping safety article (GNT: Issue 7). It depends on the circumstances. If alone, be very cautious but most times when you stop others soon follow. They are only waiting for some company.

Barry & Rae

Dear Editor,

There are some places where it would be unwise to camp alone in the bush - generally though, fellow travellers will have already passed that information on. We like to pick about two or three alternative sites, all around the 3pm stop time. Usually you have met fellow travellers and there is safety in numbers ... or we try to reserve a contingency alternative, the nearest caravan park. We have never yet felt uncomfortable at any bush (free) campsite - hopefully that will continue.

Tim & Colleen

Dear Editor,

I feel very safe free camping. Keep up the brilliant work. I love the newsletter.

Fredo

Dear Editor,

Re: Broome survey (GNT: Issue 7). Not only Broome but a lot of parks now put the caravans where non-powered sites were 25 years ago. They use the prime area for 'houses'. Seeking out more free good spots is the way to go.

Mallee

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the Grey Nomad Times



Brilliant Prints
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Getting a charge out of the latest multi-tasking device



Gadgets of the Road

with Jezza

Is the Swiss Army Knife's long reign as the ultimate travel gadget about to be ended by a high-tech 21st century inter-lop-er?

Well, Singapore-based company Third Wave Power certainly believes it's the turn of the mPowerpad to shine ... literally.

The multi-function, portable device can power up digital equipment as well as doubling, tripling, quadrupling and quintupling as a radio, reading light, torch ... and as an ultra-sonic insect repellent. Wow! The mPowerpad is said to be compact, rugged and lightweight, and it takes less than six hours to fully charge in direct sunlight. The device has two USB ports enabling it to charge gadgets such as mobile phones, smartphones, tablets and cameras. With a 2500mAh battery capacity, it can fully charge up an iPhone



The mPowerpad ... what can't it do?

– as quickly and efficiently as from an AC/DC outlet – while simultaneously providing reading light, radio and insect repellent for 4-5 hours.

A mozzie-free evening listening to the radio while reading a good book in a good light. I like it!

Boasting simple tilting gestures to switch between functionalities, the device has no buttons, selector knobs or dials. It means that with no moving mechanical parts to break down from manual wear and tear, and being water, dust- and drop-resistant, mPowerpad is one tough unit able to withstand extremely harsh conditions.

“Other solar chargers in the market do not have more than one or two functions, or they lack durability and reliability,” said VS Hariharan, co-founder of Third Wave Power. “The mPowerpad is designed for people who travel to remote places and need to keep their equipment up and running.”

Testing of the device is currently taking place in various locations and conditions.

Export of the mPowerpad will get under way in January. It is expected to retail at \$80.

Would you buy the mPowerpad? What is the ultimate grey nomad travel gadget? What is the worst ever gadget?

[Tell us here.](#)

Website highlights

Security Score

This week our website www.thegreynomads.com.au reported there were concerns not enough had been done to improve safety at Dales Gorge in WA's Karijini National Park after a man plunged to his death there last month. However, the state's Dept. of Environment and Conservation says it is virtually impossible to 'sanitise' nature reserves. It says millions of people visit national parks each year, and these are often inherently dangerous places.

[Read more here](#)

SURVEY

Should national parks erect more warning signs and safety barriers?

Yes No

Other website must-reads:

- **Weekly Mailbag**
Taking pole position
 - **Free for all**
Highway camping go ahead
 - **Bully for you**
Bull bars take centre stage
 - **Jobs for Nomads**
Hi ho! Let's work as we go!
- [Click to comment](#)

The Great Ocean 'Toll' Road?

Despite fierce criticism, a controversial proposal to introduce a toll on Victoria's Great Ocean Road looks set to be pursued in a feasibility study. Undeterred by widespread condemnation of his proposal to impose a \$10 or \$20 fee for driving the iconic route, Corangamite mayor Matt Makin remains defiant and says he is glad he put the idea out there. And he received support in the shire's latest council meeting. Cr Ruth Gstrein said that, despite the controversy, the concept was worth pursuing with a feasibility study. For his part, Cr Chris



Are entry fees a compromise?

O'Connor said an entry fee at the Loch Ard Gorge or the 12 Apostles might be preferable to a toll.

“It would just be a small amount like we would pay to go to the football on a Saturday or to the movies,” he said. Mayor Makin is adamant that extra funding is needed

to provide new facilities and maintain the existing ones.

“An additional \$10 to \$20 is going to be inconsequential, particularly to overseas visitors who are simply not that price-sensitive,” he said. “With my own experience in North America, a \$25 national park entry fee was not a deterrent and actually funded excellent facilities in the form of campsites with running water, toilet facilities and firewood.”

Road tolls were in place along the Great Ocean Road from 1922 until 1936 to recoup the cost of its construction.

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QUIZ CORNER SOLVED

Pic puzzle: Spending the kids' inheritance

Do you know answers:

1. Kangaroo Island
2. Bass Strait
3. Darwin
4. B) 2
5. Queensland and Victoria

the Grey Nomad Times



A 'straight' forward trip across a vast plain

'Great Drives' highlights a Grey Nomad rite of passage ... taking on the Nullarbor



Crossing the Nullarbor is a defining moment in any grey nomad's life on the road. It is something that simply has to be done if you are serious about The Big Lap. The Eyre Highway was fully sealed in 1976 but the magnitude of this adventure should still not be underestimated. In 1841, Edward Eyre became the first European to cross it, famously describing the plain as "a hideous anomaly, a blot on the face of nature". Don't let that put you off though! It is 1209 kilometres from Ceduna in South Australia to Norseman in Western Australia. There are roadhouses

scattered approximately every 200 kilometres along the route but be warned ... fuel is not cheap. Roadhouse camping is an option but many prefer to spend the night at rest areas. There are many spots where you can get cover and get off the road. Travelling from the east, the real adventure begins after you leave Ceduna, and pass through the windmill-filled town of Penong and the eerie Fowlers Bay. Between the Nullarbor and Border Village roadhouses there are a number of spectacular coastal lookouts over the Great Australian Bight. To watch the majestic lime-



The Great Australian Bight is an incredible sight

stone Bunda Cliffs relentlessly pounded by the might of the ocean is to see nature at its most raw and most awe-inspiring. You may also get to see the Southern Right Whale. If the Nullarbor's natural wonders aren't enough, there is now the 18-hole, 1,365 kilometre Nullarbor golf course to keep nomads entertained. Crossing into WA, travellers will need to declare plants, honey, fruit and vegetables. Beyond the telegraph station ruins at Eucla and the UFO-sighting hotspot of Mun-

drabilla lies Cocklebidy, The Cocklebidy Cave, a short dirt track's drive off the highway, is one of the most famous of the Nullarbor's many limestone caves. Near here also there is a signposted 4WD track to the renowned Eyre Bird Observatory. After cruising down some 146 kilometres of the longest straight section of sealed road in the country, travellers will come across the ruins of old Balladonia Telegraph Station. The nearby roadhouse has an interesting museum which includes a display of debris from the Skylab space station which disintegrated in 1979. From here it's only a couple of hundred kilometres into Norseman ... and 'civilisation'. One giant drive for you, one giant leap for your grey nomad credentials.

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ASK JACLYN and Heidi



Our experts solve your grey nomad etiquette dilemmas

It comes out in the wash

Dear Jaclyn and Heidi,
My husband and I mostly free camp and stay at a van park every week or so to do our laundry and enjoy life's little luxuries ... like a warm shower. I don't mind waiting my turn to use the park's washing machine but what happens when the person before me's washing finishes and they are not there to take it out. It goes against my nature to take some stranger's washing out to put it in a pile somewhere ... but I also don't want to wait around for hours. The one time I wasn't there the second my own washing finished, somebody just dumped it loosely on another machine and various 'delicate' items fell on the floor. I was mortified. What do I do?

Denise

What a thoughtful person you are, Denise and I do sympathise. I think this goes to the essence of who we are as grey nomads and as people. I feel another person's laundry really should be sacrosanct. Yes, there are sadly some thoughtless people out there who leave others waiting ... but two wrongs don't make a right. I suggest you either go back to the laundry when it's less busy, or wait half an hour or so before informing the park's management. It should be they who take action, not you.

Jaclyn

You are obviously new to the grey nomad lifestyle Denise but you need to learn it's a jungle out there. If long-term nomads so much as smell weakness they will have you

for breakfast. They'll always be sitting under your awning drinking your coffee and your wine, or they'll be in your car using your petrol as you go 'together' to look at a nearby beauty spot, or they'll leave you caring for their pet while they disappear for the day. The van park laundry room is the place where you put down your marker. As soon as someone's laundry is finished, it's out and down on the nearest available surface. Similarly, if someone leaves their laundry on the park's washing line while they go out for the day, you know what to do. If it's dry or nearly dry, then it's down on the grass with it. Show them who's boss early on, Denise, and you'll be fine.

Heidi

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