

# The Ultimate Guide to Planning your Road Trip

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by **Indefinite Leave**  
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# Introduction

How exciting!!

You have made the decision to hit the open road and explore our amazing Country.

In January 2015 we made that decision and on February 1 the next year we left on our adventure around Australia to experience the open road, beautiful beaches, wildlife and make new friends and we now have no plans to stop. You are in for an adventure of a lifetime.

Before you set off though there's an extraordinary amount of things to do and organise and you must have so many questions about how to make it all work.

That's where our Ultimate Guide to Preparing your Road Trip is here to help you.

This is an extensive guide that will take you through everything you need to know about packing up and planning your trip.

Some of the most common questions when contemplating doing "The Big Lap" are:

- How much will it cost?
- How long will you need?
- Which direction should you go?
- Should you take your pets?
- Will I have phone coverage?
- What should I pack?
- Is it safe to Free Camp?
- Should I sell my house or Rent it?
- Will I be safe?

We will answer these questions here and much more.

This is written primarily for those planning to Travel all or most of Australia. Most people doing the full lap have planned their trip for 12 months or more, a few for a bit less and therefore it is aimed at those adventurers.

***Thank you for downloading our Ultimate Guide to Preparing for your Road Trip, we hope it provides you the answers you need.***



## About us

When Kevin and Adele first met in 1987 Adele had already booked 3 months of travelling around Europe with 3 Contiki Tours and a Greek Island Cruise. We were together for only 9 weeks before she departed. Adele had already travelled to New Zealand, America, Tasmania, Hong Kong and more before we met so travelling was already in her blood.

When we married just over a year later we bought a 4wd and began camping, firstly at Stradbroke Island and then off to Moreton Island, Fraser Island and Double Island Point. Then we did a road trip along the East Coast with friends in the very early 1990's. Travel and Adventure has always been a part of us and we love it.

Our preference is the beach, we love the ocean. The sound of the waves, the sand between our toes, the sunrises over the water and swimming at the beach is natural to us. We also love the outback, the beauty of the stars in the sky at night, sunsets over the horizon, breakfast cooked over an open fire and a river to swim and fish. Australia offers so many incredible places to enjoy them both.

In early 2015 we decided to go on a Road Trip around Australia and we began to prepare for our trip, making all the big decisions required for it to be possible.

It was fantastic when our eldest son Matthew asked if he could come too. This meant we needed a bigger vehicle than we planned but we found the perfect option for us. Our Golden Retriever MACKS also was part of the family and she came too.

Read all about how we chose our Vehicle of choice to travel here -  
<https://indefiniteleave.com.au/buying-our-motorhome/>

We left on our two and a half year adventure on Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 and travelled to every State and Territory in the Country, experiencing incredible moments and learning so much along the way. We made extraordinary friends and loved every minute.



We spent 4 months from December 2017 until April 2018 exploring our own backyard of South East Queensland before heading off again. By now MACKS had gone over the Rainbow and Matt was now living with his brother back home in Brisbane, so it is now just Kevin & Adele. We began our travel Blog, Indefinite Leave, in 2015 before we left originally and it is here we share all our knowledge and information of how to travel and enjoy our magnificent country.

This Guide is written to assist you and is based on all our experience over many years travelling, camping and discovering. You can adapt it regardless if you are leaving for a few months, a year or longer.

Thank you again and always feel welcome to contact us if you have any further questions.

### ***Safe Travels***

Kevin & Adele Hockey

Indefinite Leave

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## 1. More than Adventures

Before we start getting into it let's talk about this adventure. What should you expect from a trip around this magnificent country?

No doubt before you leave you are thinking about all the magical places you will go, the incredible things you will do and the amazing sights you will see. But this trip is going to do much more than that.

Without doubt an extended time on the road in your Caravan, Motorhome or your preferred method of travel is going to change you. There will be moments, challenges, events and people that will open your heart, mind and soul to an amazing experience.

As a couple or a family you will bond together. Living together in such close proximity to each other you will learn to rely on those around you. You will enjoy incredible moments and face challenges together. Read more about the lessons you'll learn here - <http://indefiniteleave.com.au/travelling-australia-far-just-adventures/>

When you embark on a journey such as this you have to expect that some days things just go wrong. We blew a tyre just outside Snowtown of all places. When I limped into town and pulled over I realised exactly where I had pulled up. We had indifferent thoughts about spending the night there, luckily NRMA came to the rescue.

We had our air conditioner catch fire, we ran out of fuel on a single lane Highway with no shoulder off the road to work with when the gauge said we had a

quarter tank remaining and we had a system failure in Cairns that turned out to be a coolant sensor. The courier then lost the part and we were stuck in expensive Cairns for an extra 2 weeks during school holidays.

In Perth I woke up one Sunday to excruciating pain. A mad rush to the local hospital and it turned out I had kidney stones. We have so many stories of things that went wrong but they are all far outweighed by the good times and now just stories as part of our trip.

Don't expect every day to be rosy because that is simply unrealistic. Just know that the great moments easily make up for the bad ones. Get through those bad days or bad times and you will come out the other side wiser for the experience.

Take with you a passion for adventure, a desire for excitement, a spirit to explore and a soul full of dreams.

Let the Ocean relax you, the Outback excite you, the Mountains challenge you and allow Nature to find it's way to your heart.

Take as many photos and videos as you can, you will enjoy those captured moments for the rest of your life.

Leave your stresses and worries behind, there's no place for that out here.

Most of all, remember other travellers are friends you just haven't met yet!!



## 2. How much will I need?

The Biggest question you will likely have is How much will you need?

***The cost of getting ready and travelling will be varied for each person depending on:***

- How you plan to travel;
- Where you plan to travel;
- How long you plan to travel for and;
- What you plan to do as you go.

Let's look at your expenses before you even leave!!

The longer you give yourself in planning the cheaper it can be for you. By looking for bargains you can find lots of the things you need online and you can buy them at far less than it would have cost otherwise. We also waited for Aldi to bring out things we needed and were able to get a lot of items a lot cheaper than places like Camping stores.

With Facebook Marketplace and Gumtree you can buy so much stuff, in great condition and so cheap, that it's almost not worth buying new any more. Camping gear, equipment, Cameras, almost everything you'll need for your trip you can buy online for a fraction of the cost new.

I've recently bought lots of new Camera gear including Lenses on Gumtree and my new Mavic Pro Drone. I saved so much money just on those items alone. Do your research, know what you are after, know their value and what you are willing to pay for the risk of buying second hand. Then go for it and negotiate a great deal.

***Once you are on the road, your main travelling costs are going to be:  
Accommodation, Fuel, Tours, Food, Vehicle repairs and maintenance***

For us these were our most costly items during our trip but there's ways to reduce those costs.

How to reduce your expenses while travelling!!

- Free camping
- Use Fuel apps to find cheapest fuel
- Remain in one place longer
- Plan your grocery shopping for major city centres and towns where possible.  
Small townships tend to be more expensive
- Cook your own meals and enjoy drinks around a campfire for happy hour. Eating out and drinking at Pubs and Restaurants cost a lot more.

Your options for accommodation are varied but mostly come down to the following:

Caravan Parks are great for providing designated sites, power, water, toilets, laundries, often a pool and easy access to the basics like Bread, Milk and some groceries from their shop. All of this naturally comes at a cost and that varies significantly depending mostly on it's location.

Campgrounds are mostly Council operated with a Caretaker on site. They are generally cheaper and provide toilets, water and usually some powered sites. The facilities are usually more basic but acceptable.

Free camps are available around the Country although not usually in major tourist areas. Facilities vary but usually there's not too much available. The key here is it is Free and can heavily reduce your accommodation costs if you are set up to Free Camp.

Please do not litter or use the bushes as a toilet. This just puts more pressure on these towns to keep the facilities open.

Other options include RV Stops, Pub Stays and Station Stays. RV Stops can be like Campgrounds or Free Camps. Pub Stays vary but are mostly free if you patron the Pub. Station Stays are often set up with basic facilities and are like a Campground.

You can see videos of all the Caravan Parks, Campgrounds, Free Camps and other places we stayed on our website at [www.indefiniteleave.com.au](http://www.indefiniteleave.com.au) or our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/c/indefiniteleave](http://www.youtube.com/c/indefiniteleave)

Being "*Self Contained*", whereby you have your own water supply, your own power, cooking and washing facilities and most importantly, the ability to capture your \*Grey Water and \*Black Water will open up a lot more locations for you to stay at a lower cost.

\*Grey Water = the dirty water after showering, doing dishes etc | \*Black Water = the waste from your toilet



### **The cheaper you can travel the more fun you can enjoy.**

Most travellers doing the Big Lap, not those that permanently live on the road, budget for approx \$1000pw. This should allow you to do some tours and have fun as well as cover costs for fuel, accommodation, food and other necessities. Of course, some people do it for less and others spend more, but this seems to be the budget for the majority.

### 3. Working while you Travel

#### **Will you work as you travel?**

There are lots of options for work when travelling. You can use your skills in many places around the country.

We have met people who make clothes, jewelry or various items and sell them at Caravan Parks and Campgrounds where they stay and go to local markets. Hairdressers put up signs outside their caravan and cut hair for other travellers.

We met others who did truck driving, operated backhoes and diggers, set up a mobile caravan repair business and others that followed the Harvest trail.

Working in Pubs as a kitchen hand or bar staff is popular, many Nurses find work in towns across the country. Working in or Managing Caravan Parks is another popular option.

We wanted to go to the V8's Supercars racing in Darwin and rather than buy tickets Adele applied for a job and we all ended up working there. Adele worked at the entrance doing ticketing while Matt and I worked the car parks. We spent time right behind the pits in the thick of the action and were paid \$25 an hour each over 3 days.

We met people who used their Cameras and Drones to do video shoots for Businesses as they travelled and lived a fantastic Nomadic lifestyle.

The opportunities are limitless. Utilise your skills and speak to people in the industry you want to be in.

There are also a number of websites for travellers looking for work.

[www.workaboutaustralia.com.au](http://www.workaboutaustralia.com.au)

[www.goworkabout.com](http://www.goworkabout.com)

[www.taw.com.au](http://www.taw.com.au)

[www.harvesttrail.gov.au](http://www.harvesttrail.gov.au)

[www.globalgypsies.com.au](http://www.globalgypsies.com.au)

You can stay on the road indefinitely by fitting in a few months work each year. There is a lot of work available around the country labouring or doing skill based jobs.

Another option is to work Online.

You can use the Internet to generate an income while you travel.

Become a Blogger and be the latest YouTube or Instagram sensation.

Sounds like the perfect option and an easy way to do it but be assured whilst many people talk about how they are doing it, not a lot make any serious income online. If it was easy everyone would be doing it!!

The reality is, it is very hard work, the dollar per hour can be very low and it is a big distraction from what you are wanting to do, travel and enjoy the fun. Very few Bloggers make any serious money. If you can find a niche however, be very good at it and generate media attention you may make it worthwhile.

You may find or be able to start an online based Business working within your skill sets you already have. There are so many ways and options and if you can do it in a market that you know and is less competitive you have a greater opportunity for it to be successful.

The downsides can be:-

- It can take a long time to get established
- Online is highly competitive
- Having enough data whilst travelling
- The Cost of mobile data
- Getting your Google ranking high enough to attract customers
- Internet and phone coverage outside Cities and Towns can be a serious challenge.

Dropshipping is to have an online business where you sell goods and products through your Website and Social Media. Orders are completed and sent directly from the Manufacturer or Supplier directly to your customer. You are simply a middle man within the transaction. Setting up a Dropshipping website may work for you too.

There are so many ways to make money whilst travelling, the hardest part is taking the time away from all the fun and adventures.



## 4. What about our Home?

If you own your own home one of your first questions will be do I sell or should I rent it out.

Selling or Renting are the two most common options, however there's also Housesitting and leaving it vacant as options. These two would only be likely for someone on a short trip and for most people, a Lap of Oz is probably a minimum 12 month plan so I'm going to exclude those options from this report. The only thing I would say in those two scenarios is:

***Check with your house insurance. Some policies can be considered void if the house is empty for more than 60 days.***

Property is actually my area of specialty. I began as a Real Estate Salesman in 1997, opened my own Agency in 2000 and sold it in 2005. From there, 2 partners and myself bought a Real Estate Franchise Group which I had for a further 3 years. Since 2008 I've been a Business Broker to the Real Estate industry, so it's probably fair to say I have some experience in property, how the industry operates and the emotions that happen in owning and then selling or renting your home.

We also have our home rented whilst we travel.

***There are so many variables in this scenario that it's impossible to advise you to do anything specific.***

- Will you want to live back in the same area?
- How much equity do you have in your property?
- How much of the Mortgage would the Rent cover?

### **My thoughts are:**

1. Try not to sell. If you can afford the repayments and you have equity then my advice is to keep the property. It's so hard getting back into the property market.
2. If you are going to rent it make sure you allow for extra costs such as the property being vacant if tenant leaves plus repairs and maintenance, Agent fees, home loan increased rates now it's an Investment Property, Landlord Insurance costs as well as your normal rates and other bills. The tenant should pay for excess water charges and of course electricity, gas and other normal living costs.
3. If selling is best for you, take some professional advice on what to do with any funds left from the sale. If you can safely invest all or some of it so you have a home deposit if you need one when you finish your trip then that's probably the ideal scenario from selling.

By having more than 20% deposit you will save on very expensive Lenders Mortgage Insurance when you take out your next loan.

We chose to rent our property. We have had the same tenants now since we left over 2 years ago and they have been fantastic. We continually monitor the tenants, the property and the Agent. We ensure inspections are completed, we are provided photos of the property, we drive by occasionally when back in town and speak to our neighbours. We organise any maintenance to happen quickly. We provide the tenants with an occasional gift and so far, everyone is happy.

Our Accountant advised us we had 6 years before we would need to move back into our property before Capital Gains Tax became applicable. Of course, Tax Laws change and therefore you should seek your own advice in all matters.

Take ownership of ensuring the Management of your Home is completed. Don't give total responsibility of the care and good management of your asset, worth so much money, to someone else. Make sure all promises are met and basic duties by the Agent are being carried out. Diarise matters such as Agent inspections and renewal of the Lease for example and follow up the Agent if you haven't heard from them in relation to these.

The cheapest agent is rarely the best but identifying who is the best can be a real challenge for those that don't understand the signs to look for.

Whether Selling or Renting, remember, the cheapest priced agent quickly becomes expensive if the property doesn't sell, sits vacant for weeks or poor tenant selection creates bigger issues. Know what you want from your Agent, ask the right questions and select the Best Agent to do the job.



## 5. What should we do with all our belongings?

We tend to keep a lot of crap don't we?

Our homes become this storage place of all this stuff we used once or bought because we might need it one day and never did. Over the years our garages and sheds become full of items we had forgotten we even had a long time ago.

Living in a Caravan or Motorhome provides a whole new perspective on what we really need to make us happy. It simplifies our belongings and focuses us on the minimum amount we need to make us truly happy.

Everyone's planned trip around Oz is different. Different lengths of time, some more permanent than others, others returning to their homes while others plan to relocate when they get back. Therefore some of us will need to store our items whereby others will want to downsize entirely.

Our original plan was for 2 and a half years and then go home so we rented a storage shed for while we were away and kept a lot of our belongings. Over the first 2 years it cost us \$7100, a ridiculous waste of money. And that was after leaving items behind at the house for tenants to use, garage sales and giving some stuff away.

Tough decisions had to be made and we needed to reduce everything down to fit in our old office under our house that the tenants weren't using and offered to us. We culled and we culled. We gave away to Lifeline and sold what we could. Our sons received some generous donations of things for their place that we couldn't give away.

***Our lesson: It's just stuff!! We can replace it easily and probably cheaper than by storing it.***

But of course this depends how long you are away for.

If you want to keep your furniture then your options are:

Rent the House furnished. Most tenants have their own gear so the market for furnished properties is less and therefore it may sit vacant for periods of time.

Storage Shed. Expensive in the cities. It might be possible to get one cheap an hour away further from the city and be worthwhile. Friends from the Gold Coast stored theirs in a Storage Shed in Toowoomba and it was much cheaper.

Friends. Great option if you have friends whereby this is an option for you. Be aware of rodents, bugs and insects that may be an issue if storing at someone's property.

Hire a container. A good option worth researching.

Buy a container. A good option also as long as you have somewhere to store it. Ensure it is ventilated to stop mildew and the vents are meshed to stop rodents from accessing.

Store it in a room within the house. This can be fraught with danger, tenants may make unreasonable claims against it, tenant may break into the room, current tenants may move and you find it harder to rent costing you whilst it remains vacant and a lower rental rate. We got lucky, we have fantastic tenants and it's just a young couple so they don't use any downstairs space and they have no plan to move.

## *b. Can our Pets come too?*



Many of us have our beloved canine with us as we drive around the country. People also travel with cats, birds and other animals but I'll focus on dogs as they are the primary pet that most of us travel with.

It's fair to say your adventure becomes theirs too as they meet lots of people, other dogs and play at many of the beaches all around our country.

But does travelling with a dog limit you?

The easy answer is Yes.

***You won't be able to enter any National Parks within Australia with "Fido".***

I often hear people say "If our dog can't go there then we just don't go". This is of course everyone's choice to make however to miss places like Kakadu National Park, Litchfield National Park, Karijini National Park, Fraser Island, Cradle Mountain, Uluru, Ningaloo and so many other iconic and truly majestic places would be such a tragedy.

***You don't want to just exist out there, you want to experience it!!***

During Holiday times such as School Holidays, Christmas and Easter there can be places where it is very difficult to find accommodation with a dog. Darwin, Broome and especially Kalbarri immediately come to mind.

One of the most common questions we were asked was "What do you do with MACKS when you go to National Parks or on a trip"?

We had several options we used when planning time in National Parks and a lot depends on how long we intended on being there. Another question you will need to ask yourself is what type of vehicle you have and what effect that has on your options. For example, if you are in a 4wd you can't leave them in the car, if you have your Caravan with you or are in a Motorhome they might be safe in there with water and windows open. Sometimes this may be possible, other times it's not.

For short term stays of a few hours MACKS would stay in the Motorhome. She has never been out of our vehicle inside a National Park, not ever, not once. If it was practical and an option she would stay inside and the windows of the Motorhome were open and she had plenty of water available. But MACKS was old, very well trained and was happy just going to sleep, so for us it was never an issue.

At The Pinnacles in Western Australia, the local Ranger Station at Cervantes had a free kennel service which we utilised. We have also had other travellers staying next to us who asked to look after her and Caravan Park Managers have looked after her but these aren't reliable options, more good luck when it happens.

For longer stays, generally overnight, our preference was always to use [www.madpaws.com.au](http://www.madpaws.com.au), a dog sitting service with representatives all around Australia. MACKS was looked after at their home and sometimes we received SMS updates throughout the day. Each time we used Mad Paws it was a very positive experience.

We hadn't used this option but Vet surgeries will sometimes have short term accommodation for looking after pets or be able to guide you on your options.

You can look up local Buy Sell Swap pages on Facebook and someone there may be a great option for minding your dog or know someone who is.

Worse case scenario is a dog kennel but we didn't use these unless every other option had been exhausted.

The other issue we found with having MACKS was the cost.

Dogs pick up viruses more easily on the road. A Vet explained to us when MACKS had a vomiting bug that they can get them from puddles and off the ground, generally from places they walk. There's a higher risk of them getting sick when travelling.

MACKS decided to go for a walk in Darwin while we were staying with friends and ended up being found by the local Council. That cost \$140.

Then there was the Pet sitting and Kennels to allow us to see the places we had dreamt about visiting. Taking your dog comes at extra cost, will that put more pressure on your budget?

Always:

- Clean up their mess
- Have them suitably under control at all times.
- Keep your dog restrained when necessary. This includes Caravan Parks, Campgrounds, when walking your dog and in other public places.
- Don't leave them in a vehicle. If you leave them in your Motorhome or Caravan ensure they have lots of ventilation and heaps of water to easily access and located where it won't spill over and leave your dog without water. Ensure they won't bark while you are away, young pups and small dogs can be more prone to not liking being left alone.

It's a Personal choice whether you should take your dog with you. They are such wonderful company and may enjoy travelling as much as you do. We can only suggest to you, now MACKS is no longer with us, it really is a lot simpler and cheaper travelling without pets but we also wouldn't have changed a thing. MACKS had the time of her life travelling with us.

More about travelling with your dog here - <https://indefiniteleave.com.au/travelling-australia-dog-macks/>

Our tribute to MACKS - <https://indefiniteleave.com.au/tribute-best-dog-ever-known/>

## 7. Caravan or Motorhome or Camper or....

Let's look at all the transport options there are for you. Before we do though, here's a few questions you might want to answer before making the decision of what vehicle to travel with:

- Will you be using it for short holidays or long adventures?
- Do you want to go offroad?
- Do you want something that will get you out of trouble or something that won't allow you to get into trouble in the first place?
- Do you want a separate vehicle you can get around in once you have set up your site?
- How much storage space will you need?
- How much water will you need to carry?
- How much grey water storage will you need?
- How much power will you need?

Working out what you want to achieve from your trip should go a long way to settling on your mode of transport.

Most people only think of Caravans or Motorhomes as options for their extended road trip but there are at least 7 options to choose from.

### They are:

Tent	Camper Trailer
Caravans	5 <sup>th</sup> Wheeler
Campervan	Motorhome
Bus	

Let's take a look at the Pros and Cons for each of these.



### Tent

Tents have changed a lot over the years and can now be set up and dismantled fairly quickly. They are generally cheap and affordable.

They don't however provide much security and whilst great for a long weekend or school holidays with the family, they are not ideal for doing a full lap over an extended period of time.

Rooftop tents are where the biggest changes are and these are very popular with many young travellers. They are fitted to the roof of a trailer or 4wd, are compact and fast to pack away. At around \$2500 they are a cheap, popular and possibly a suitable option when on a tight budget or wanting to access remote areas.

### Camper Trailer

There are lots of travellers doing the lap of Oz in a Camper Trailer. They fold up very easily and provide some security and space without the costs associated to a caravan.

A Camper Trailer however won't normally provide you your own internal toilet and shower, limiting you in lots of great places to stay. On the other hand, it's compact size will open the door for you to access places bigger rigs can't get to.

### Caravans

The Caravans is the most popular of all the options for Aussies doing the Big Lap. Caravans come in a huge range of sizes and options so you will no doubt be able to find something to suit you and your budget.

When travelling with a Caravan it's very important to get your weight distribution and load rating correct. Do your research thoroughly, ensure your tow vehicle suits and you can simply unhitch, set up and begin to explore your surroundings.

A Caravans with some bells and whistles can require a high budget plus there's the cost of your 4wd.

It's incredible the amount of caravans on the highways in the Top End of Australia over winter. There's a good reason they are so popular and that's the ability to simply set up the Caravans and then go shopping and touring in your vehicle.

They can be as simple or as luxurious as your budget can afford.

### **Fifth Wheeler**

Like a caravan, a Fifth Wheeler is towed behind a vehicle, except instead of being hitched to a tow-ball it is connected via a gooseneck and hitch in front of the rear axle. This means there's very little or no sway and its turning circle is surprisingly much smaller than you may think.

Also smaller than most people may think can be the cost to purchase one. There are many Fifth Wheelers that have been imported to Australia and are used in our market. Some only cost between \$50,000 to \$80,000.

Fifth Wheelers need to go through a process to be legally compliant when imported from America including wiring and in most cases the doors need to be swapped to open on the opposite side.

Size can be a challenge for some travellers including the height which can be over 4m. We travelled with friends for months through WA and SA who had a 30 foot Wildcat behind an Iveco and it was a fantastic setup. The places they could get in to and the cost for the luxury would really surprise you, but it did have its limitations.

We called it a Travelling apartment.

Australian made Fifth Wheelers come with higher price tags but are made to suit Australian conditions. There's a wide range of choice and they are becoming more popular all the time.

Most people we met with a Fifth Wheeler loved it. They are a great option for long term travelling and living on the road.

### **Campervan**

I distinguish Campervans as different to Motorhomes. To me a Campervan is a van with a sliding door on the side and a door at the back which opens up for easy access from the rear of the vehicle.

Australians like to call them Whizz Bangs. The side door whizzes along the rail as it's being closed and goes bang.

We travelled part of Tasmania, the Great Ocean Road and the Limestone Coast of South Australia with my cousin and his wife and they had a Nissan Urvan 4wd which included a fridge, stove and bed. There's was just a 6 month trip however.

A friend and her hubby travelled Oz for 16 months in their Campervan with a ute in tow and she was over it long before they finished.

Of course, international travellers often hire Campervans to road trip Australia in purpose built vehicles.

Campervans can fit most budgets, provide good security, can tow trailers or boats and are a popular method to travel. Fuel costs would be lower and they are easy to park and maneuver.

Personally I think they are best suited to shorter time frames and might be challenging on space and facilities to do a full lap. Unlike a Motorhome they usually don't have a toilet and shower or have a grey water holding tank.

### **Motorhome**

This has been our preferred mode of transport and you can read all about it here -

<https://indefiniteleave.com.au/buying-our-motor-home/>

Motorhomes (also known by the American term RV's), like Caravans, do come in many sizes and layouts and can be easy on the wallet or as ostentatious as your bank balance or lending capacity will allow.



\*Winnebago, \*Avida and Jayco are the most popular but there are also lots of other models including Sunliner, Paradise, Talvor and more. These are built on to a front end vehicle such as Iveco, Fiat or Mercedes.

This provides a lot to choose from and many variables.

A Motorhome provides you safety and security and if it is your only mode of transport it also means wherever you go you have your kitchen, bathroom and clothes with you. We save a lot by not eating out and if we come across a great place to swim our gear is always with us.

A turnoff from a Motorhome for many is that you have to take your Motorhome with you wherever you go, to the shops, exploring or visiting.

It also limits you in where you can go such as rough corrugated roads and driving on beaches however many choose to flat tow a smaller vehicle, usually a Suzuki, or tow a purpose-built car trailer with a car and sometimes a small boat on top. This allows them the same or similar benefits of towing a Caravan.

A Motorhome will most times provide you with the facilities you need to stay in Campgrounds, Caravan Parks, Free Camps and Pubs such as a toilet, shower and holding tanks for grey and black water.

*\*Winnebago in Australia changed their name to Avida in February 2013 and now Winnebago trade in Australia under license from the US to another company.*

## Bus

More and more people are converting old buses into Big Rig Motorhomes.

Of course, they have their limitations due to size but they provide lots of space and are built to work. Buses are suited to a long-term life on the road, especially if you want to be off the grid a little bit.

There is no perfect option and no right or wrong. Everyone has different plans and different requirements and any of the above options are perfectly suitable.

***Our Tip - The only thing that is important is to get out there and start living.***

## 8. What Tools do I need to take?

Depending on the space you have and weight restraints, your list of tools to take may vary but let's look at the necessities.

Cordless drill  
Screwdriver set  
Extra hose fittings  
Sponge  
Swiss Army knife  
Battery Jumper Cables

Axe or Chainsaw  
Hex keys  
Buckets  
Chamois  
WD 40 Silicone spray  
Shovel

Spanner set  
Hammer  
Car wash  
Gaffa tape  
Torches

Also you might take:

Leaf Blower

Drill set

Portable Vehicle Jump start battery

If you are a tradesperson or even just pretty handy you may have some other tools you are keen to take.



## 9. Should I Free Camp or is it safer in Caravan Parks?

To Free camp or not to Free Camp, that is the question!!

Your set up will determine your capacity to stay outside Caravan Parks and Campgrounds with full facilities.

Caravan Parks provide all the facilities you will need. Power, Water, Toilets, Showers, Laundry and a Dump Point are available from every Caravan Park. You can simply hook up and relax knowing you have everything covered. Most parks also have a pool and playground facilities for children.

Our first 6 months travelling Australia was almost exclusively staying in Caravan Parks. We were 3 adults as our son Matthew was with us and our average cost for accommodation was \$42 per night. The average extra cost for Matt would have been approx. \$8-10.

With some research you will also find Free Camps where you can stay at no cost. To stay at many of these locations you will often need certain features as part of your setup.

Solar power – to generate electricity

Grey Water tank – to hold the water from showers and kitchen sink

Black Water tank – to hold your toilet matter

Water holding tank – to store and keep fresh water



## 10. Will I have phone coverage as we travel?

Phone coverage is a very popular topic of conversation online for those looking to travel Australia. Like everything there are lots of opinions but the overwhelming majority are clear, if you rely on phone coverage then Telstra is the only option.

During our 2 years around Oz we had 4 mobile phones between the 3 of us. Kevin had 2 iPhones, one with Telstra and another with Vodafone. Adele had a new Samsung phone with Telstra whilst Matt had a Samsung 5 with Optus. We had each service covered and the 2 most popular phone brands in the market. We have a very good understanding of what network works best.

Don't be hoodwinked by the phone carriers with their claims they cover 96-99% of the population. That doesn't mean they cover that much of Australia. 85% of our population live on the coastline. There are vast areas of the Country that have no coverage whatsoever.

### **There are 3 phone carriers in Australia:**

Telstra                  Optus                  Vodafone

### **From there you can choose other Mobile phone network subsidiaries such as:**

Virgin. Uses the Optus network.  
Boost Mobile. Uses the Telstra network.  
Aldi Mobile. Uses Telstra network.  
Kogan Mobile. Uses Vodafone network.  
Amaysim Plans. Uses Optus network

Boost and Aldi are options used by some travelers and may be good value options for many people as they drive around the Country.

If you rely on good internet coverage then the best Mobile network will be Telstra. It has the maximum coverage but is the most expensive.

A Satellite Phone can be purchased and is the only way to have full coverage at all times, however they cost more. If you plan to spend long periods of time away from towns and populated areas this may be your best method of maintaining communication.

Before choosing your phone carrier consider how essential it is to you.

A great article about phone coverage in Australia worth reading is by our friends at yTravel Blog. They travelled Oz for 18 months in 2014 and 2015 and their exasperation was perfectly captured in this blog. As you read through you can feel the frustration building. Check it out here -

<https://www.ytravelblog.com/pathetic-internet-in-australia/>

In many towns and places around Australia you will find Optus and Vodafone piggy back off each other. My Vodafone phone would sometimes show up as with Optus and Matt's Optus phone would sometimes read as with Vodafone. This helps each other cover larger areas to compete with Telstra.

The majority of towns have Telstra coverage.

On the East Coast along the coastline, towns and cities are not very far apart. When you lose phone coverage it shouldn't be too long before you are back online again.



On the West Coast you will drive long distances to make it to the next town and there can be very limited or no coverage for much of the journey.

Around the country, when you are inland, you really are limited most of the time to when you are in country towns.

If you search for it you can usually find Free Wi-fi in lots of places. McDonalds, Cafes, Information Centres, Shopping Centres, Bunnings, Telstra Air and many more. Don't expect much at all from Free Wifi in Caravan Parks, most have very little download and are very slow.

As we go to print, the major networks are announcing new plans including unlimited data. It does come with a catch, once you reach a certain limit your data speed will be slowed down for the remainder of the month. At the moment it appears you will receive 40gig of data before this happens. It's not perfect and doesn't match many other countries however it appears to be a lot better deal than the current data rip off we experience.

## 11. Should we Go to Tasmania?

The often 'forgotten' state when maps of Australia are drawn but if you ever visit, you'll never forget it. Tasmania is a truly magical part of our country with spectacular beauty, amazing scenery and fantastic wildlife.

The Island is relatively small, you can drive from one side to another by leaving after breakfast and arriving by lunch time. You never would however as there is so much to see wherever you go.

Read all about our trip to Tasmania here - <http://indefiniteleave.com.au/very-best-tasmania/>

### How do you get there?

The Spirit of Tasmania is a 194m long vehicular Ferry weighing over 29,000 tonne which can carry 1000 cars and 1,400 passengers from the Port of Melbourne to Devonport in Tasmania.

There are 2 Ferries, Spirit of Tasmania 1 and Spirit of Tasmania 2. These are modern ships with full facilities of dining, bars, movies, cabins and more. It takes between 9-11 hours to complete the crossing of Bass Strait.

Watch the video of our 6 weeks in Tasmania here - <https://youtu.be/sWDhpoK7U3A>

### How much does it cost?

The cost will vary depending on when you choose to sail, if you do a day or night crossing, the length of your vehicle, number of passengers and if you elect to take a cabin or just a deck chair.

Therefore it is best to utilise the website to organise your trip and the cost.

<https://www.spiritoftasmania.com.au/sailing-fares>

As a guide, in 2017 when we travelled to Tasmania in our 8 metre Motorhome with 3 adults, our dog on a night sail with a cabin included, the cost was \$1435 return. I've heard of costs for a 4wd and caravan to be anywhere between approx. \$1800 - \$2400.

You can choose between having a Cabin, somewhere to sleep during the 9 hour plus crossing and security for your items or have a deck chair looking out the windows over the ocean. At night time I don't imagine you will see much.

You will need to book well ahead especially if you are crossing in peak season. We booked in August to go over mid January and back at the end of February. It can be booked out a long way ahead.

Also ensure you book your return trip when you make your original booking to go over. We have heard of people not booking to come back and being "stuck" there for weeks and weeks.

### When is the best time to go?

The most popular time and considered best weather is January and February but anytime between November and April can be fantastic. If you love it cold and want to see snow, mid-year would be the best time to be there.

Tasmania is truly exceptional with so much to see and do, so much history and diversity.

## 12. What are some of the places I really must see

Sights to see in Australia. We couldn't possibly refer to every interesting place to see in Australia however we thought we would mention some genuine highlights of touring the country.

### **Queensland**

Gold Coast	Springbrook National Park	Australia Zoo
Coolum Beach	Fraser Island	1770 and Agnes Water
Yeppoon	Paronella Park	Mission Beach
Kuranda Rail, Cairns	Cobbold Gorge	Longreach
Carnarvon Gorge	Lara Wetlands	Lawn Hill National Park
Bundaberg - Rum Factory and Mon Repos		Airlie Beach & the Whitsundays

### **NT**

Kakadu	Litchfield	West MacDonnell Ranges
Uluru	Kings Canyon	Katherine Gorge
Mataranka	Berry Springs	Dundee Beach
Darwin in winter – V8 Supercars, Territory Day, Beer Can Regatta		

### **WA**

Broome	Lake Argyle	Horizontal Falls
Ningaloo Reef	Spider Walk, Karijini National Park	Principality of Hutt River
The Pinnacles	Quobba	Perth
Margaret River	Lucky Bay, Cape Le Grand National Park	Great Ocean Drive, Esperance
Super Mine Pit, Kalgoorlie	Natures Window, Kalbarri National Park	



## **SA**

Great Australian Bight  
Kangaroo Island  
Limestone Coast  
Flinders Ranges

Barossa Valley  
Rapid Bay Campground  
Eyre Peninsula

Hahndorf  
Mt Gambier  
Coober Pedy

## **Tasmania**

Cradle Mountain  
Freycinet National Park  
Mount Wellington and Cascade Brewery, Hobart  
Take the Pennicott Wilderness Cruise  
Cataract Gorge, Launceston

Bruny Island  
Port Arthur

Bay of Fires campground  
Lake St Clair  
The Wall  
Burnie, see Penguins  
The Nut, Stanley

## **Victoria**

Great Ocean Road  
Phillip Island  
Echuca  
Cape Bridgewater

Grampians National Park  
Lakes Entrance  
Sorrento  
Camp on the Murray River at Quicks Beach

Wilsons Promontory  
MCG  
Geelong

## **NSW**

Jervis Bay  
The Entrance  
Blue Mountains  
Tenterfield  
Tamworth Country Music Festival

Batemans Bay  
Nelson Bay  
Dubbo Zoo  
Bradman Museum Bowral

Manly Beach  
Byron Bay  
Bathurst Race Track  
Hunter Valley  
Valla beach

Also check out our Blog about all the Big things to see in Oz.

<http://indefiniteleave.com.au/big-things-oz/>



### 13. Who should we use to insure our Motorhome or Caravan?

There are numerous options for your insurance however during online discussions 3 companies seem to come up the most.

CIL

Ken Tame

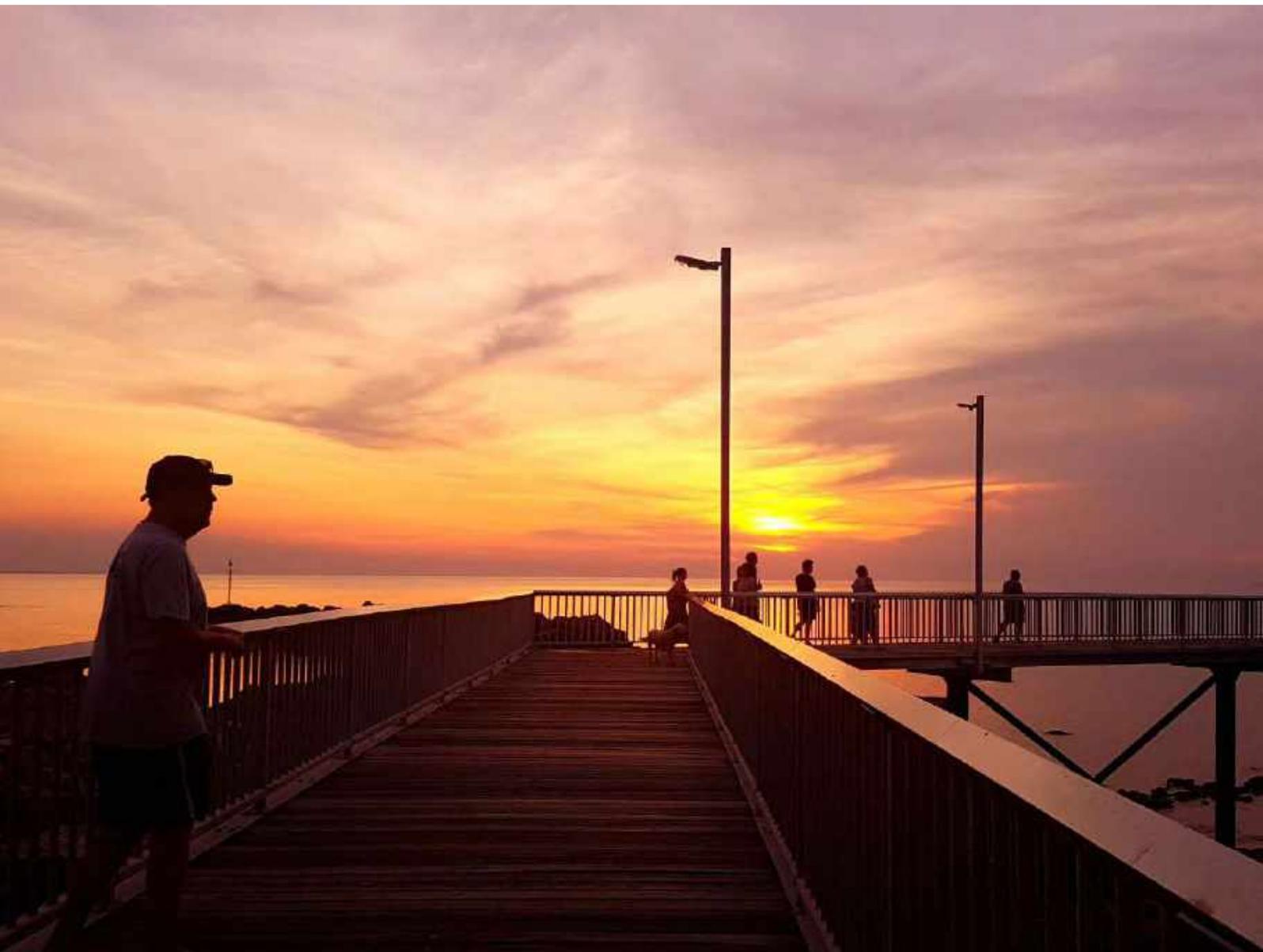
Arthur J Gallagher - CGU

When we began looking CIL seemed to be mentioned the most and good reports were common. We spoke to them and elected to insure with them. They were fantastic to deal with and were superb with all our claims.

When it came time to renew after 2 years the costs had soared and we were recommended to talk to Arthur J Gallagher and we have been with them ever since.

To sign up with Ken Tame there are certain conditions. We chose not to be forced by affiliation to join specific clubs and therefore Ken Tame was not an option however we do hear positive reviews from those that are with them. We did speak to them however Arthur J Gallagher had the best all round package.

You can read all about our insurance renewal including all comparative costings here - <https://indefiniteleave.com.au/caravan-motorhome-insurance/>



## 14. What Apps should I use?

No doubt you will have phone apps you are constantly using on your phone. Social Media means you are probably using Facebook, Messenger, Instagram and Twitter.

We use a variety of apps on our phones on almost a daily basis whilst travelling. These guide us to Camping spots, Weather information, Fishing information, Photography and some fun options.

Here is a list of the apps we use.



Wikicamps. It's the Travellers Bible. So much information and easy to use. Cost is approx. \$8



Fuel Map Australia. This will tell you where the closest petrol stations are and compare their fuel prices. Cost is Free



Camper Mate. Like Wikicamps, Camper Mate provides details of camping locations and other details around Australia & NZ. Cost is Free



AUS Rain Radar. It works off the BOM radar and allows you to see and monitor any rain in your area. Cost is Free



Flashlight. A strong flashlight for your phone for all those times you will be walking in the dark. Cost is Free



Tides Near Me. Check the tides for fishing, beach driving, Ferry crossings and more. Cost is Free



Willy Weather. My favourite app for checking wind conditions. Also provides weather details, Tides, Swell conditions, Rainfall, Moon phases and more. Cost is Free



Dropbox. iCloud storage and you can access it from your phone. The app is Free, check online for costs to store in Dropbox.



SkyView. Turn on the app and point it to the sky and it will show you all the constellations. I have the Free version, there is also an upgrade you can purchase for \$2.99



Flight Radar 24. Ever seen a plane in the sky and wondered where it was from or where it was going? This app reveals the model of the plane, the Carrier, time it left and length of flight and the flight number. Cost is Free.



Can I fly there. If you are travelling with a Drone you will want this app. It provides information about flying your drone from where you are. Cost is Free.



Telstra Air. If you are a Telstra customer, Telstra air will provide you access to Free Wi-fi when there's a Wi-fi zone near you. Check the app to find out where the closest one is. Cost is Free



Boomerang. A fun way to take a mini video that moves back and forth. Cost is Free



Snapseed. A great photo editing app for your phone.



Gas Finder - Gas Bottle Refills & Swaps. If you are looking to refill or swap your gas bottle around Australia. Cost if Free

We also use the website <http://gasbottlerefills.com/> for finding cheapest and closest place to refill our gas bottle. It's very easy to use and always accurate.

## 15. What to do with your mail?

Before you leave you will need to organise what will happen to your mail. Ideally you could arrange for it all to be emailed to you however reality is for some businesses it's not an option and there will always be some mail.

The best and most cost effective option is to organise a trusted Relative or Friend who it could be diverted to and will scan and forward important mail to you or take a photo and text after sifting through all the junk. The only issue may be if there is personal stuff such as bank records or tax details which you may not want to be seen. Our mail is diverted to my Mum and we arranged our address to be changed to my Mum's place. Anything important they will contact us, take a photo and text us.

Our friends we met while travelling organised a PO Box and had the mail redirected from their house. They paid for prepaid express post satchels with the Post Office and would ring once a week or monthly, whenever it was suitable, and the Post Office would bundle their mail into the prepaid satchel and forward to them wherever they were. It was sent to the local Post Office or Caravan Park where they were staying, fully sealed and no compromise of their private information. You could talk to your local Post office about similar arrangements and the cost.

Trail Mail is a Business set up specifically as a service for travellers here in Australia. Have your Post Office forward your email to them and they will arrange to send it on to you or open and scan and email it to you. For more information go to <http://www.trailmail.com.au/>

Whilst travelling, if we bought something online or needed something sent to us we would arrange for the parcel to be sent to the closest Post Office and we would collect it from there.



Another option for parcels is 24/7 Parcel Lockers, a service provided by Australian Post whereby your parcels can be sent to parcel lockers all around the country at Railway Stations, Shopping Centres, Fuel Station and Post Offices.

For all your mail, you will need to organise a new address for it to be sent to. There's 3 ways of contacting them to do this.

1. Email
2. Phone
3. Online through their website

We found even after doing all this, there were some we missed and some who didn't make the change. Some of the banks we changed the details with only did it for their department and we had to contact each section of the bank to make all the changes.

Our tenants were kind enough to redirect our mail to our Property Manager or our new address and each time we would then contact the company to ensure change of details.

Here is a list of all the people you may need to contact to change your address.

Accountant	Hairdresser	School
Acupuncture Clinic	Health Specialist	Skin Check Clinic
Airline Rewards Points	Insurance - Car	Solicitor
ASIC	Insurance - Contents	Storage Facility
Bank/s	Insurance - Funeral Plan	Subscriptions - Magazines
BAS	Insurance - House	Subscriptions - Pay TV
Bookkeeper	Insurance - Life	Subscriptions - Movies
Bowel Screen	Insurance - Pet	Superannuation
Breast Screen	Internet Provider	Supermarket Rewards
Centrelink - Pension/Family	Kindergarten	TAFE College
Centrelink - Unemployment	Library	Tax Office
Centrelink - Carer	Licence - Boat	Toll Tags
Childcare	Licence - Driver's	Tradespeople
Chiropractor	Licence - Truck	Union Membership
Council Dog Rego	Licence - Trade or Workforce	University
Council Rates	Medicare	Utilities - Water
Credit Card Provider	Membership - Clubs	Valuer - House & Land
Day Care/Vacation Care	Membership - Gym	Vet
Dentist	My Gov	
Dietician	Naturopath	
Doctor	Newsagent - Newspaper	
Electoral Roll	Optometrist	
Electricity	Physiotherapist	
Family & Friends	Pool Cleaning Company	
Financial Planner	Private Health Fund	
Flybuys	Real Estate Office	
Foxtel	Registration - Pet	
Frequent Flyers	Registration - Vehicle	
Gas	Roadside Assist	

## 16. How long do we need to do the Full Lap?

There's no right or wrong length of time to travel Australia. It's obvious that the longer you have the more you will likely see. You can ask people that have been travelling for 5 years and they will tell you they haven't seen it all so expecting to see it all in a year or two is highly unlikely. We have finished 2 years so far and we keep saying, we could do it again via the exact same route and see entirely different things. This was born true when we went back to Darwin. The first time we spent 3 weeks in Darwin and had such a great time and experienced so much however the following winter found us back again and this time we stayed for 6 weeks. In that time, we discovered entirely different things and the only one we did that was the same was Litchfield National Park. We loved Darwin and found it very difficult to leave.

**The real question isn't "How long do you need" but "How can we fit as much as possible into the time we have".**

When you accept you won't see it all then it's just a matter of working out what you want to see in the time you have. This is where I believe having a plan outweighs "winging it". Most of the guys without any plans are those who are now living on the road full time with no pressure of time. Not everyone has that luxury.

For some people winging it is the perfect vacation, not knowing and not caring where they are going and where they'll be when their head hits the pillow at night. Sounds dreamy but it's not practical if you have a time frame to do your Lap.

**Fail to plan you plan to fail.**

That was drummed into me many years ago and I've lived with it since. For me, planning is important. It ensures I don't miss things I want to see and issues like school holidays, Easter and Christmas are all planned and marked in our itinerary spreadsheet. This way we have a lot less issues when the hordes of holiday makers and families make their way to Caravan Parks and Campgrounds all around the country.

By planning we can either book in advance to ensure we have a place or look to avoid areas that will be especially busy.

**Research, Plan, Make your list.**

Research where you want to go. You can do this online, in Facebook Groups, by visiting local Camping shows and talking to Friends, Family and other travellers. Have a plan by keeping a record of all the places you learn about, that you want to visit, and this will help guide you along the way. It will also help you know which direction you want to take and save you time from back tracking or missing places you wished you had seen.

Every plan is always flexible, it can change and will need to. You may have hold ups due to weather or maintenance and repairs for example or you may arrive somewhere and it's not what you expected and you choose to continue and be ahead of time.

Your list of places to go and things to see will keep growing as you travel so changes will always be happening but this will help guide you as you go.

By having a good idea of where you are going and what you want to do you'll know how long you can afford to stay in each location. This will help ensure you see as much as possible throughout your trip.

The most common time frame is 12 months. The fastest I've seen is 48 days,

<https://www.facebook.com/Our-Fifty-Day-Lap-915072475299651/>

not that you'd recommend it but they saw a lot more in those 48 days than the millions who spent that time living at home, so I say good on them.

Regardless whether it's 6 months, 12 months, 2 years or longer, the most important thing is to simply get out and do it. It's life changing and incredibly rewarding.

Just be prepared, you may never want to go home again.

## 17. Our children are young, should we wait until they are older?

We had our son travelling with us but he's an adult. If we have one regret it's that we didn't do it when our boys were young.

Matthew was 23yo when we started out so we didn't have the same issues most families do with much younger children. We did spend many months travelling with other families who did have younger children and whilst we became part of the "family" during those times it's obviously not the same as the challenges of parenting them at that age.

We're not going to pretend to be experts on this subject because obviously it's not something we experienced. It is something we have read a lot about, watched from a close distance and spoken to many parents about, but we haven't done it ourselves and therefore we will just provide a general overview.

The first step is to know, lots and lots of families travel every month of every year around Australia with children of all ages. Small families, big families, they hitch up a Caravan and set off for an adventure no school text book can teach.

**If they can do it, so can you. If it's possible for them - it's possible for you, it's just a matter of how.**

What we have noticed is children who are travelling appear more relaxed, calmer, happier and better behaved. In most circumstances the relationship between parents and their children is closer as they now have so much more time together.

Even for us with Matthew, the bond between us is so much greater. Our trip has made a great difference between us and he is a different person to when he left, much more confident and happy.

I asked our great friends we met on our adventure, Jason & Denise from West Aussie Nomads about the benefits and differences they have experienced after 14 months travelling with little Millie. She was just 3 when they left and has just turned 5.

Denise told us that the major changes she had noticed was when they were at home they just didn't have the time to raise Millie to be who they expected her to be. Kind, respectful and having manners are important to them and as parents they didn't have the chance to mould them and have the influence they would have liked.

Instead, going to Day Care and Kindergarten meant at such a young age she was already being influenced by other adults and children. Millie's behaviour wasn't as they expected it to be. Now they not only have the time for Millie but for themselves too. Her behaviour is significantly better and she represents all those attributes they expect from her.

Denise said she never imagined Home Schooling Millie however travelling has shown her the benefits of home schooling and it is now their plan to do so when they are travelling in the future. For now, Millie attends Pre School on the Sunshine Coast as they are enjoying some time with family and housesitting.

For schooling on the road you have 2 choices, Home Schooling or Distance Education. There are pro's and cons to both so it's important to do your research, speak with your current teachers and school if applicable and design the right plan for you and your family.

With Home Schooling you will require a fixed address. Each State may have their own "rules" around education on the road, some more strict than others. Home schooling can be more flexible, allowing you to chose when "school is in" and you won't need internet coverage to work with a teacher.

Distance education means your children's work is sent to them, they talk online with their teacher and their work and results are monitored to ensure they are up to date. This way all the work is prepared making it easier and there's accountability to ensure it is done.



Our friends at yTravelblog completed their Lap of Oz and their eldest daughter Kalyra was Home Schooled by Distance Education as they travelled. You can read all about their experience here -

<https://www.ytravelblog.com/homeschooling-distance-education/>

<https://www.ytravelblog.com/tips-for-distance-education-homeschooling-on-the-road/>

Lots of families have their children keep a journal of their adventure. This can be a great way for them to learn, remember their favourite parts of the day, be educational and what an amazing resource for them to look back on in the future someday.

One of the really great benefits of travelling we have noticed and experienced by talking to parents we have travelled with is the kids get to meet and play with so many other children as they travel. They learn to mix together, play together and have fun away from computers and electronic toys.

The outdoors will become their toys, you'll find you don't need to carry as much as you may have when at home.

We envy those parents travelling with their kids, looking back I now wish I had done this when our boys were young.

## 18. Staying Healthy on tour

Before we left we made sure we checked in on all matters of health. During stages of the trip you may be a little isolated or in regional areas with limited facilities.

Happy Hours can become a regular gig and keeping fit might become more challenging. Here are a few tips on preparing for your trip away and maintaining good health.

**Dentist** – you don't want to be a few weeks into your trip or be in the middle of an amazing Wilderness Outback Station or Fraser Island and a murderous toothache begins to develop. Have them checked before you leave.

**Health Check** – have a thorough health check completed for peace of mind, it may be awhile before you can again.

**Prescriptions** – check you have all the prescriptions you will need and any medical supplies necessary.

**Plan to exercise** - Do 30 minutes of vigorous exercise a day. Go for a light jog or run, walk up a mountain or gorge, do laps of the pool or sprints at the beach. Exercises such as push ups, sit ups, burpees and squats will all work different muscles and help keep you strong and fit.

Since leaving Brisbane and our home almost 2 and a half years ago neither of us has been sick with the flu or a cold. Away from crowded places, Shopping Malls, Workplaces, Air conditioned venues and other places germs are spread we have had no issues with illnesses.



## 19. What to pack?

The quandary of what to leave behind.

When you finally decide what you're taking, reduce it another 20%.

In our first 10 months we sent stuff back 4 times. We had wayyyyyy toooooo much. In our first week we threw heaps out, gave a few things away and then bundled 4 boxes or more up when we arrived in Hervey Bay just weeks after leaving and organised a Courier to take it to my brother's place.

### **Space and Weight are your two greatest enemies.**

You won't need anywhere near the amount of "stuff" you originally think you do. I still remember thinking I can't do without all of these things I insisted I had to take. Specific clothes, shoes, books and so much more we thought we might need one day on the trip because that's our thinking at home. You learn quickly though, there's no place for stuff you don't use often when living in a Caravan or Motorhome.

Pack light.

Choose practical clothes. Some light coloured clothes for the heat, dark clothes for hiking, fishing and when you might get dirty. Dark clothes are great because you can get a few wears out of them before they need washing.

For the most part you will live in thongs. You might need one good pair of shoes to go out to the Club for dinner and a pair of joggers for exploring the Gorges. Also there are some tours where 'closed in' shoes are compulsory.

There's no fashion parades where you're going so just keep your winter gear to the least you can. We knew it would be almost 12 months before we got to cool weather so we hardly took any winter gear and found some great stuff cheap in Tassie when we were there that we bought to get us through.

Limit your cutlery and crockery to the minimum keeping in mind you might only wash up once a day at times to save water.

For a Full List of what to take on your trip check out our Blog here - <https://www.indefiniteleave.com.au/detailed-item-list>

Have a good First Aid kit. We had a collection of First Aid products we took with us plus we bought a kit before we left. Lots of people also have a snake bite kit. What you need to take and how much will depend on your own individual circumstances but be as prepared as possible, scrapes, bumps and bruises are probably inevitable. Remember, Hope for the best but be prepared for the worst.

**We definitely recommend at least one person in the family complete a First Aid course prior to setting off on the trip.**

You may need this knowledge not just for someone in your family but to assist someone else you may meet along the way.

Also ensure you have a fully functional Foam Fire Extinguisher and you know how to use it.

## 20. What Camera should I take?

Selecting the right camera for you will depend on several things.

- Your photography skills
- What images you want to capture
- What you want to do with the images
- Your budget

You will no doubt want to take photos of all sorts of scenarios whether it be general daily use, action photos, underwater or maybe aerial.

If you are well versed with cameras and photography then you already know what you're doing and what works well for you so I'm going to target this Chapter to the average person who knows a little bit but is not necessarily highly skilled and knowledgeable about all matters of professional photos. I'll assume you mostly want your photos for Social Media to keep on your phone and computer. If you want photos to enlarge and print for the wall back home you will want to consider the image size and quality you need for this which may mean you will need a DSLR camera such as a Canon or Nikon.

We use a fairly broad range of cameras for all sorts of different reasons. If it is general use we may mostly use our phone but if I'm looking to zoom in, get a wide angle shot or the location is particularly special I might use my Canon.

For underwater photography and video we use a Go Pro and a Fujifilm underwater camera.

For Drone footage we couldn't go past the capability yet compact design of the Mavic Pro. This Drone has so many features and safety precautions that it is perfect for a beginner like me or a professional. The photos you can access and the quality of the images and video are fantastic.



I've had to give in with regards to my phone, I stuck it out with iPhone as long as I could but I've just given in to Samsung and we both got the new Samsung S9+. The image quality in this phone is so superb and you can adjust camera settings within the phone depending on the circumstances. It is also a Blue Tick phone with Telstra whereas the iPhone X is not. Adele had been using a Samsung 7, then 8 before this one and we knew the photo quality with them was very good but the new 9+ is another level again.

My recommendation is if you are heading off soon and you have a different phone, trade it in for one of these. It is much more complex to use than the iPhone but you will get used to it and be glad you did..... eventually.

We use a Canon 600d DSLR Camera. The important thing to know if you are going to go down this path is that the camera is just part of the photo quality, there are many other factors to take into account. Firstly, the lenses that come with the camera are likely to be very basic and not conducive to high quality images. Research some better lenses for your camera and spend some more money to get better shots.

You will want a good general everyday lens which gives you basic zoom option, a wide angle lens and a zoom lens. I bought my lenses second hand and paid much less than brand new.

There are also plenty of awesome Point and shoot cameras available on the market with a great zoom lens.

Next thing is to learn to use a tripod. Now this is where I get caught out because quite simply I'm a bit too lazy to cart tripods all around the place. For dusk and night photography a tripod is essential.

Finally, every camera regardless of how much it cost is only as good as the person using it. Learn the art of taking great photos if it doesn't come naturally to you. There are so many Facebook pages and YouTube channels dedicated to helping you improve your photography or do a Photography course like we did to improve your skills.

For videos we mostly use our phones. I'm not a fan of the fisheye look with the Go Pro and I still haven't found a way to turn it off despite my research. It also doesn't pick up the sound as well as our phones. Therefore mostly the Go Pro is used underwater where it really gives great value. You can also attach it to your car, bike, helmet, surfboard or even your dog.

If we are stationary and I don't want background sound we will use the Canon on a tripod with the directional mic. This is mostly when we are producing a video for blogging purposes or interviews.

Once you are on the road and you have lots of photos you will need to consider how to store them. The cloud is a great option but it costs money, although Dropbox and iDrive do have some great storage options, but the other thing is it needs fast Wifi and takes up data.

We have ours stored on Hard Drives and a Computer. We will look to upload them to cloud when we arrive back home. Work out what will work best for you given how many photos you think you will take and the best option to safely and securely store them.

This video further explains all our equipment prior to our recent purchase of the Samsung phones - <https://youtu.be/CgiqOZfWGBE>

## *21. What about all the dangerous animals?*

Staying safe from Crocs, Snakes, Stingers and Sharks.

Let's be clear, driving the highways around the country pose more danger than the likelihood of an attack by an Australian animal. Use common sense and apply basic principles of safety and you will be ok.

Crocodiles live in the Top End of Australia. Do not swim in rivers or creeks and follow all sign warnings. Only swim in known safe locations, swimming pools and waterparks.

Snakes are all over Australia and are especially active in Summer. Not all species of snakes are deadly but I recommend not hanging around long enough to try and work it out. If you come across a snake, stop and back up slowly. Most snakes are just as afraid of you as you may be of it and will leave the area once it is aware you are there.

Stingers can be very dangerous in northern waters of Australia during the hotter months. Many beaches provide vinegar to pour on any stings if you are stung. Wetsuits provide excellent safety for the majority of your body when swimming in known Stinger waters.

All ocean waters around the world have sharks and Australia is no different. Some beaches have shark nets and other methods of reducing the likelihood of a shark attack. Shark attacks in Australia are few and those that occur are often surfers. Always swim between the flags and you will generally be quite safe.

Throughout all of Australia you will generally be safe. Our country is renowned as being friendly and any perceived risk or danger is probably no more than when you are at home.



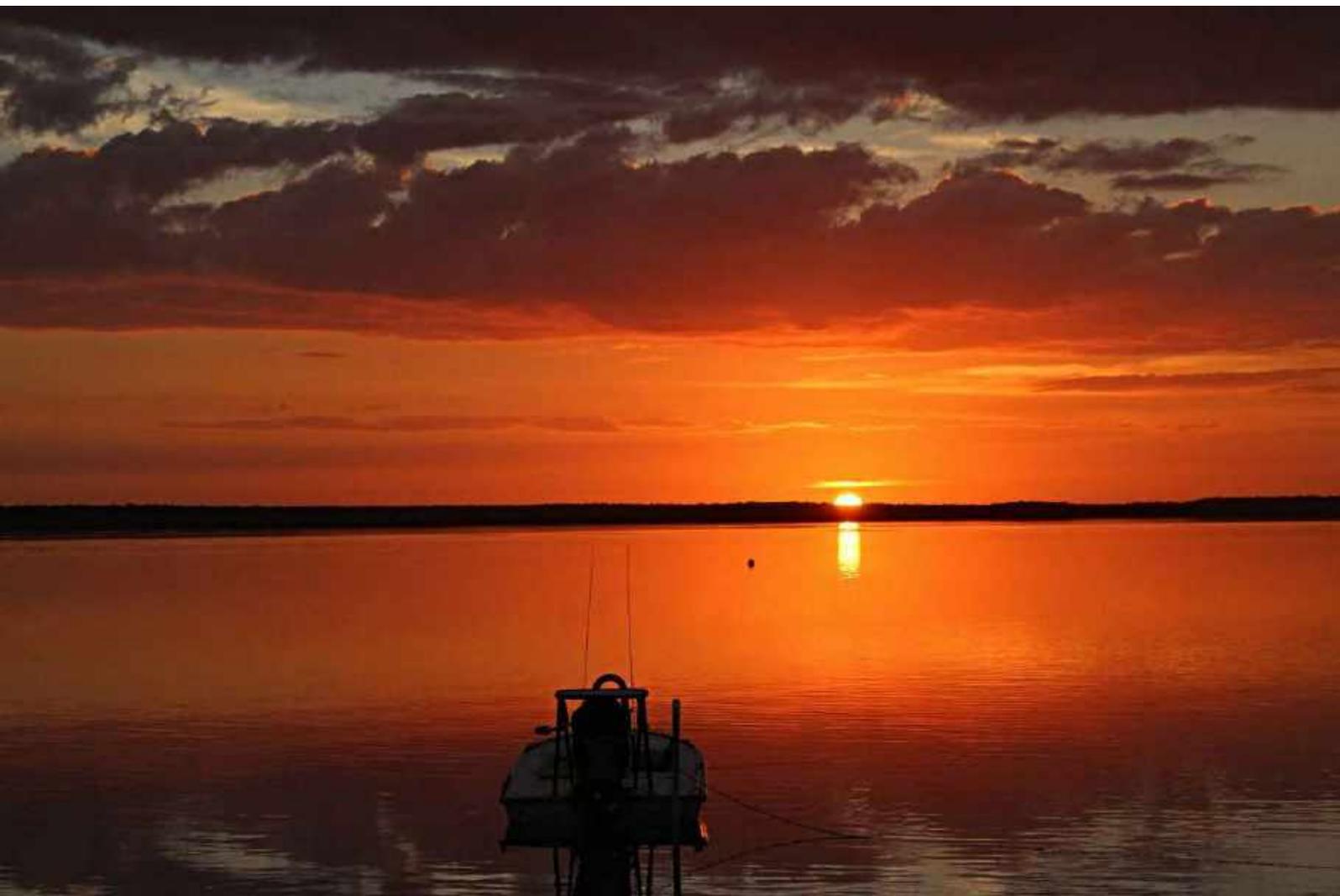
## 22. Which direction should we travel

This will depend on the time of year you leave, where you leave from and where you want to go. Clockwise or anti clockwise, I'm not sure it really matters even if some say it's shorter to go anti clockwise, except for Western Australia.

There's a good reason they say WA stands for Windy Always. Some days I thought I could actually watch the fuel gauge go down as we drove into strong winds heading south along the WA coastline. Next time we do Western Australia I do plan to travel from the South heading North and see what the difference is like.

Apart from that it's really just a matter of planning where you want to be and when you want to be there and try to fit it all in without crossing over too much or any of the same path.

The most important thing is to do it and enjoy the experience regardless which direction you go.



## 23. Saying "See you later" to family and friends

This is the hard part. Leaving behind those you love the most. I made sure I never used the word goodbye, that sounds too permanent. See you soon seemed much more appropriate.

I remember though, sometimes the hardest part was saying See you Later without a massive smile because I was so excited to leave and get started on the trip of a lifetime. It was a bit awkward when they're looking at you saying we're going to miss you and you're grinning from ear to ear lol.

Having a party could be a great send off. One final Big Bash with all your friends and relatives. The biggest issue with it might be your house is being Sold or Rented and you're in the middle of packing everything so a party at your place might just be the last thing you need.

For us, time got away so fast and we just chose to have lunch, dinners and nights out with different friends and we had a "session" at my brothers place the night before we left with all the family.

Enjoy the last weeks with them but remember, you're about to gain a whole lot of magnificent new friends.

***Stop wishing and start Planning.***



You can Contact us anytime, we would love to hear from you. Message us through our Facebook page and if you have any questions please feel free to ask.

Good luck with your adventures and we look forward to seeing you somewhere on the road.

***Safe Travels***

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