

# PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A HOLIDAY OF FUN AND ADVENTURE THAT IS... **TAGALONGTOURS** OF AUSTRALIA

December 2016



Hello Everyone,

We are having a well earned rest over the festive season after a very busy year here at TTA. Our tours in 2016 included four tours to Cape York in June, July, August & September as well as four Simpson Desert tours in April, May & July plus a Transcontinental Tour in September.

We were privileged to be able to guide dozens of people driving their own 4WDs, to see the diverse landscapes & breathtaking scenery around this country of ours.

The weather played a major role in our tour planning & execution this year. Our clients who came on the May Simpson Desert tour will never forget their 5 days stranded in Innamincka in South Australia when the Cooper Creek rose to 5.8 metres over the causeway. Thank goodness the town had a pub. Our July clients who braved the wet conditions in Cape York remained cheery & positive in spite of their experience with camping in the continual rain showers up there. Our Transcontinental Tour was also severely affected when the corner country in south west Queensland was flooded in late August. Nevertheless the section from Alice Springs across to the Indian Ocean was completed in fine conditions.

Happy 2017, hope to see you on the dirt somewhere. Paul and the team at TTA.

## CAPE YORK 2016

Our tours to the Cape continue to be the most popular on the calendar and again this year our clients well and truly enjoyed their experience in this unspoiled wilderness. Vrilya Point remained closed for the whole year, but the Cape offers such diverse beauty and spectacular landscapes, nobody was left disappointed. The rich history of indigenous culture, pioneers in the cattle industry, as well as exploration and mining, along with the many memorable characters in the Cape make the place unforgettable. Camper trailers are starting to become more popular with our Cape York travellers now and as long as they are a genuine heavy duty version with suitable suspension for the corrugations they are most welcome.

We added Merluna Cattle Station into the itinerary this year and many of our clients enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of the spacious grassy campground there as well as a refreshing swim in the pool. The tracks in the Cape were as challenging as ever and there were many opportunities to use the recovery gear. There were lower water levels in most of the crossings this year due to the poor wet season and the Jardine River was so shallow the ferry could only take a couple of vehicles across at a time in order to stay off the bottom.



# Transcontinental Tour 2016



**This tour had to be shortened due to the significant flooding around the corner country in late August in south west Queensland and north east South Australia. The Transcontinental Tour group met in Alice Springs and travelled via Hermannsburg to the spectacular Palm Valley and then on to Kings Canyon and Uluru.**

**The walk through the Valley of the Winds at Kata Tjuta was definitely one of the highlights of the tour. We travelled in a westerly direction from Kata Tjuta through Docker River into WA. We visited the Giles Weather Station which was another highlight, with the original old Caterpillar grader from Len Beadell's Gunbarrell Road Construction Party on display. Our route took us along the Great Central Road, the Gunbarrell Highway, the Goldfields Highway, eventually arriving at Hamelin Pool. Here we were amazed to see the most diverse range of stromatolites which are the direct descendants of the oldest form of photosynthetic life on earth. These stromatolites are similar to 3,500 million year old stromatolite fossils found in many places around the world. Stromatolites are an example of the earliest record of life on earth. The next day we finally arrived at the spectacular Steep Point, the most western point on the Australian mainland where we camped overnight. We explored the blow holes at Thunder Bay and finally reached Denham on the magnificent Shark Bay.**

**The scenery on this tour was absolutely stunning in its diversity. Our group ventured through magnificent landscapes from desert mulga, through red sandy flood plains, to the pure white western beaches and the rocky Zuytorp cliffs towering over the relentless crashing waves of the Indian Ocean. A great deal of birdlife was spotted on the tour including brolgas, emus, and thousands of finches. We also saw many dingoes and large groups of wild camels along the way.**

# Simpson Desert 2016



We conducted four crossings of the Desert this year with 12 Day tours from Cunnamulla to Alice Springs and back again. The flies were horrendous in April and May and spending all of the daylight hours in a fly net was standard procedure. It's still a mystery what they live on out there, apart from tagalong travellers!! A definite skill was required to eat meals with a hurried bite and then drop the net back down. The winter rain across the outback in the Simpson Desert provided a magnificent cover of wild flowers and our July travellers were treated to a special privilege of pink, white, yellow, purple, and red blooms everywhere. A good deal of time was spent photographing this once in a lifetime event.

Our groups managed to survive some very cold conditions on the July trips, with a morning temperature at Purnie Bore one day getting down to -3 degrees. At least there were no flies that month. There was a surprise conversation on the UHF radio at one stage with Dick Smith near Lake Poepfel. He was flying east towards Birdsville with Macca from the ABC's Australia All Over radio program. He was 5000 ft directly above the convoy and was looking for information about a landing strip not far from there. On that same trip we met the modern day explorer, Andrew Harper. He has been walking and exploring the Australian deserts since 1995 and has journeyed over 15000 kilometres across all of Australia's nine major deserts either as a solo explorer or as leader of commercial camel expeditions. He was driving a Toyota however when we met him.

No trip across the Simpson Desert would be complete without the challenge of driving up Big Red, a large sand dune about 40 kms west of Birdsville.

We had success with all of our Desert travellers getting up Big Red this year. The most memorable moment by far was when a Range Rover Sports on our July tour managed to get up the most difficult track with stacks of power in reserve. It was certainly a good day for the Land Rover fans.



# Desert Wild Flowers

Thanks to the generous winter rains, these magnificent wild flowers were waiting for us in the central desert country.

## 2017 Tour Dates

### Cape York

18 Day Part Catered

04/06/17 - 21/06/17

02/07/17 - 19/07/17

06/08/17 - 23/08/17

03/09/17 - 20/09/17

### Simpson Desert

12 Day Part Catered

07/04/17 - 18/04/17

28/04/17 - 09/05/17

07/07/17 - 18/07/17

28/07/17 - 08/08/17

### Transcontinental

29 Day Part Catered

05/09/17 - 03/10/17

### Gulf Savannah

10 Day Part Catered

21/10/17 - 30/10/17

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