



# TAGALONG TOURS OF AUSTRALIA

NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2018

*Happy Australia Day! Just before we get into full swing for the busy season ahead, we'd like to share the highlights from our 4WD safari adventures in 2017. Maybe 2018 is the year that you'll come along and join us (again!).*

## TRANSCONTINENTAL TOUR

The annual Transcontinental Tour (an awesome 29 days of 4WD adventure) went ahead like clock work and we made a memorable journey right across the country in September from Cape Byron on the Pacific Ocean to Steep Point on the Indian Ocean.

Last year the weather gods were much kinder to us. In 2016 we had wide spread rain that interrupted our tour but not in 2017.

We started our trip at Cape Byron and made our way through the historic small towns in far northern NSW.



In Tenterfield it was great to see the old saddle shop which became world famous by the Peter Allen song and in Goondiwindi we saw the statue of Gunsynd reminding us of the origins of that great racehorse.

We visited Bourke and spent some time at the Back O' Bourke information centre and we saw the old Crossley Stationary Engine on display still running after nearly 100 years of service. We also visited Fred Hollows Grave at the Bourke Cemetery.

At Cameron Corner we passed through the famous Dingo Fence which runs through three states and is over 5500 kilometres long.

We travelled up the Warburton Crossing track and crossed the Simpson Desert via the Rig Road which was an interesting option for us with little or no traffic.



## 2017 IN REVIEW

During the 2017 season we increased our tour schedule and conducted 5 tours to Cape York, 4 tours across the Simpson Desert and a Transcontinental tour from Cape Byron in NSW to Steep Point in WA.

We had the privilege of many of our customers booking a second or even third tour with us during the season.

More and more we see our customers starting out with a Cape York adventure and then building confidence to embark on the beautifully remote and scenic challenge of the Simpson.

Our Transcontinental Tour 2017 was filled with return customers who had become confident and knowledgeable 4WD experts, ready and willing to teach me a thing or two. It was a personal highlight catching up with them again and enjoying our shared passion for the bush.

One of the most rewarding features of our tagalong tours is that our groups form such strong friendships while travelling together. Many people have remained great friends, years after touring together and share their catch up photos with us from around the country.

Another highlight for me is reading the wonderful feedback we receive after each tour on trip advisor and in person.

I'd like to thank my fellow tour leader John for his great work. All in all, it was a fantastic and successful touring season and we are ready to do it all again!

See you on the track in 2018, Paul Stafford, Owner TTA.



*We visited the famous Lone Gum in the Simpson Desert and also saw the 500 year old Waddy Trees at Mac's Reserve. We were able to relax for a couple of days in Alice Springs before we ventured into the second half of our epic journey across the continent.*

## **MORE ON THE TRANSCONTINENTAL TOUR 2017**

---

One morning in the Desert we were surprised to see a large herd of about 40 camels on the track and when we approached they casually walked between the vehicles seemingly not perturbed by us interrupting their activities.

We marvelled at the beautiful and picturesque Palm Valley with its unique red cabbage palms. It was one of the camping highlights of the trip. We stayed at Kings Canyon and Yulara, also stopping at the magnificent Uluru as well as taking a walk through The Valley of The Winds at Kata Juta.

The Gunbarrell Highway certainly defies its name as a highway. It was slow going but we were privileged to be able to follow the many tracks created by that famous Australian modern day explorer, Len Beadell. His navigational plaques along the way have been carefully restored by his daughter Connie Sue, using Len's original metal stamps. Our journey took us through Docker River, Warburton, and Carnegie Station eventually arriving at Wiluna. Meekatharra in the Goldfields region was next and then it was on to Mt Gould before we met the North West Coastal Highway. Our direction changed to south after days of travelling west.

After camping at the historic Hamelin Station, we were on our way at last to our ultimate destination, Steep Point. What a thrill it was after 4 weeks of 4WD driving right across the country, to stand on the most westerly point on mainland Australia. The magnificent Zuytdorp Cliffs with the constant pounding by the wind and waves of the Indian Ocean will stay in our memories forever. Unfortunately we copped a very windy night at Steep Point but as we had worked so hard and travelled so far to get to our destination, we weren't going to let anything dampen our spirits.

## **JOIN US ON A TRANSCONTINENTAL ADVENTURE**

---

*This is the ultimate outback tour across the country, from watching a sunrise over the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean, travelling through 4 states and 1 territory, through deserts and corner country to enjoy a relaxing sunset over the waters of the Indian Ocean.*

## **TRANSCONTINENTAL EAST - WEST TOUR SCHEDULE**

---

**11th September 2018  
to  
9th October 2018**

**Bookings through**

**[www.tagalongtours.com.au](http://www.tagalongtours.com.au)**



## CAPE YORK - IT'S STILL A 4WD PARADISE

The Cape remains the most popular destination of choice for our adventurers and tours were again conducted during last June to September. Our travellers enjoyed swimming in the pristine creeks and waterfalls during the day and laughing and chatting around the campfire in the evening.

Each trip north reveals more and more of the roads getting sealed, so our message to anyone thinking about booking a Cape York adventure, is to do so sooner rather than later.

Our tour itineraries continue to be a work in progress, and we are again looking at some minor variations for 2018. The beauty of the Cape is that there is so much to see and do that we have an endless choice of options to choose from.

We make sure we include a range of interesting places and experiences in our tours including mining and pastoral history, natural beauty, and indigenous culture.



*The beauty of Cape York is that there are so many hidden treasures, we have an endless choice of experiences to add to our tours.*

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM CAPE YORK 2017

We never really know what experience our travellers will have on our Cape York tours until the monsoon breaks in May. In 2017 there was plenty of water around, which brought with it all the Cape wildlife and also we got to have loads of fun with the creek crossings.

We learnt early in the season that our old friend Charlie, the eccentric gold miner from Coen had packed up all his belongings and moved back to Malta. We will certainly miss Charlie's entertaining comments and his dry sense of humour that we experienced each time we camped at his old converted gold mine. I've have known him for over 20 years and the Cape has sadly lost one of its great characters.

After a well received trial, Musgrave Roadhouse will be added to our tour stopovers in 2018. Our travellers will be able have more time to explore the historic building there, as it's the last remaining original telegraph station on the Cape.

Merluna Station continues to be a popular camp site on our tours, mostly because of the refreshing pool to clean off the red dust and also it's wide open camp sites. The live entertainment and generous bar meals were a big hit again at Bramwell Station. Thursday Island and Horn Island ferry trips over the brilliant aqua waters of Torres Strait remain a must do activity and provide a much welcome break from the corrugations.

Tagalong "happy hour" has become an essential part of our daily tour itineraries. As people get to know each other better, "happy hour" becomes a shared feast in which we talk about high points, laugh at our driving skills and our stories get taller as the evenings roll on.

The Cape is still on many peoples' bucket list. Our bookings are quickly filling and it looks like another busy season lies ahead.

### CAPE YORK 2018 TOUR SCHEDULE

**3 June 2018 to 20 June 2018**

**1 July 2018 to 18 July 2018**

**5 Aug 2018 to 22 Aug 2018**

**2 Sept 2018 to 19 Sept 2018**

Bookings through

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



## THE SIMPSON DESERT TOURS 2017

---

The Simpson Desert tours have started to become very popular in the last couple of seasons. People now realise, what was previously seen as a very remote area of Australia is now much more accessible travelling with an experienced tagalong tour operator and a ready made group of fellow 4WD adventurers.

The tours in April and May were successfully conducted by John last year, with everyone making it through the seemingly endless dunes in great form. John managed to find fame in the Birdsville Hotel by being the first patron ever to get through the extremely hot chilli burger and was rewarded with his photo in pride of place in the bar of this iconic pub.

Another must do in this far western Queensland town, as well as the air conditioned pub and it's cold beer, is the Birdsville Bakery with its novel range of pies, including curried camel, rabbit as well as kangaroo and claret.

The Big Red Bash is held every July, so we have had to move our tours forward a few days this year to avoid the crowds that descend on Birdsville. There is a sign on the roadside coming into town, Population 110 plus or minus 7000 !!

The July tours were impacted by damage to the dunes on the French Line. This was due to the number of vehicles towing trailers that had made the crossing to Birdsville for the Bash. We opted to use the Rig Road and the WAA Line on our crossings and everyone was much happier with the result with little or no traffic on the way across.

We have a view that trailers should eventually be banned from the desert all together. The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources in South Australia has concerns as well.

In wouldn't be a Desert trip without the traditional fireside nightcap under the millions of stars each evening. It's amazing how chateau cardboard port can taste like the best Penfolds variety in this remote environment.

I am always reminded of how few people will ever get to travel through our vast and spectacular desert country. Every year the desert challenges us and it rewards our efforts with its magnificence. We hope you get to experience it with us.



### SIMPSON DESERT 2018 TOUR SCHEDULE

---

**6 Apr 2018 to 17 Apr 2018 (E/W)**

**20 Apr 2018 to 1 May 2018 (W/E)**

**13 July 2018 to 24 July 2018 (E/W)**

**27 July 2018 to 7 Aug 2018 (W/E)**

**Bookings through**

**[www.tagalongtours.com.au](http://www.tagalongtours.com.au)**

