

Walkers Directory

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PRACTICALITIES

- To get a few more walking ideas, or just to feel part of the scene, pick up a copy of *Wild* or *Outdoor Australia* magazines.
- Videos you might buy or watch will be based on the PAL system, also used in New Zealand and most of Europe.
- Use a three-pin adaptor (different from British three-pin adaptors) to plug into the electricity supply (240V AC, 50Hz).
- Australia uses the metric system: you will buy your milk and petrol in litres, and you will walk kilometres.

ACCOMMODATION

It's easy to get a good night's sleep in Australia, which offers everything from the tent-pegged confines of camping grounds and the communal space of hostels to gourmet breakfasts in guesthouses, chaperoned farmstays and all-inclusive resorts, plus the full gamut of hotel and motel lodgings.

In most areas you will find seasonal price variations. During the high season over summer (December to February) and

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider low-down on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

at other peak times, particularly school and public holidays, prices are usually at their highest, whereas outside these times you will find useful discounts and lower walk-in rates. One exception is the Top End, where the Wet season (roughly October to March) is the low season, and prices can drop substantially.

The weekend escape is a notion that figures prominently in the Australian psyche, meaning accommodation from Friday night through to Sunday can be in greater demand (and pricier) in major holiday areas.

Camping & Caravan Parks

Caravan parks are thick on the ground in Australia – you will find one in just about every town (or roadhouse) that imagines itself to have a tourist attraction or three. Camping is the cheapest option you will find in the country, with the nightly cost for two people usually between \$15 and \$25, or slightly more for a powered site. Almost all caravan parks are equipped with hot showers, flush toilets and laundry facilities, and frequently a pool and barbecues. Many have old on-site caravans for rent, though it is more likely they will have on-site cabins. Cabin sizes and facilities vary, but expect to pay \$60 to \$120 for two people in a cabin with a kitchenette. If you intend doing a lot of caravanning or camping, consider joining one of the major chains such as **Big 4** (www.big4.com.au), which offers 10% discounts at member parks.

Walkers will usually find themselves with the option of staying at designated camp sites in national parks. These normally cost between \$4 and \$10 per person. It is rare for them to have showers, and most toilets

are the great Aussie long-drop – part of the bush experience, if nothing else. Running water is a rarity but there is almost always a water tank. National park camping grounds invariably also have better locations than caravan parks.

CAMPING ON THE WALK

Now *this* is camping. You have walked all day and there is a flat piece of earth, grass or sand contoured to fit your back. On most walks in this book you will need to camp, and camp sites are as variable as the walking terrain you will encounter. They might be relatively plush, park-cleared areas, furnished with water tanks, pit toilets and picnic tables, or they might be as simple as a patch of dirt polished clear by previous tents. Whatever the facilities, camp sites are almost universally positioned near a water source – it is wise practice to check ahead with park authorities about water levels, especially in summer or autumn. For some suggestions about minimising your impact while camping, see the boxed text p24.

Guesthouses & B&Bs

B&Bs in Australia might be restored miners' cottages, converted barns, rambling old houses, upmarket country manors, beachside bungalows or a simple bedroom in a family home (though invariably they will be more floral than the Chelsea Flower Show). Prices are typically around \$80 to \$150 (per double), though in cutesy weekend destinations such as the Blue Mountains and Mornington Peninsula this might just be your deposit.

B&Bs are mostly going to be places you snuggle into before or after you have walked, but if you are on a trail such as the Surf Coast Walk (p140) there is the option to get comfy by staying in B&Bs during your walk.

Local tourist offices can usually provide a list of places. For places listed online, try www.babs.com.au.

Hostels

Hostels are a highly social but low-cost fixture of the Australian accommodation scene. Not all dorms are same-sex rooms –

double-check if you are after a single-sex dorm. Dorm rates are usually around \$20 to \$30, with doubles typically around \$50 to \$65 (without bathroom). The website www.hostelaustralia.com lists hostels throughout the country.

Most hostels are aligned to different organisations, and membership of each entitles you to discounts on your stay and usually also for transport, tours and activities. There are around 140 hostel franchisees of **VIP Backpackers** (☎ 1800 724 833, 07-3395 6111; www.vipbackpackers.com; annual membership \$39) in Australia, while **Nomads Backpackers** (☎ 02-9232 7788; www.nomadsworld.com; annual membership \$34) has several dozen franchisees across Australia.

However, the most prominent hostel organisation is the **Youth Hostels Association** (YHA; ☎ 02-9261 1111; www.yha.com.au; annual membership \$52), which has around 130 hostels across the country. Nightly charges are between \$10 and \$30 for members, while most hostels also take non-YHA members for an additional \$3.50. YHA hostels provide varying levels of accommodation, from the austere simplicity of wilderness hostels to city-centre buildings with a café-bar and some en suite rooms. Most of the accommodation is in small dormitories (bunk rooms), although many hostels also provide twin rooms and even doubles. They have 24-hour access, cooking facilities, a communal area with a TV, laundry facilities and, in larger hostels, travel booking offices. There is often a maximum-stay period (usually five to seven days). Bed linen is provided (sleeping bags are not welcomed due to hygiene concerns) in all hostels except those in wilderness areas, where you will need your own sleeping sheet.

Australia also has numerous independent hostels, with fierce competition for the backpacker dollar prompting high standards and plenty of enticements, such as free breakfasts, courtesy buses and discount meal vouchers. They range from run-down hotels trying to fill empty rooms, to converted motels, to purpose-built hostels, often with the best facilities but sometimes too big and impersonal – avoid 'we love to party' places if you are in an introspective mood. The best places tend to be the smaller, more intimate hostels where the owner is also the manager.

Some hostels will only admit overseas backpackers; this mainly applies to city hostels that have had problems with locals sleeping over and bothering the backpackers. Hostels that discourage or ban Aussies say it is only a rowdy minority that makes trouble, and will often just ask for identification in order to deter potential troublemakers, but it can be annoying and discriminatory for people trying to genuinely travel in their own country.

Hotels & Motels

Except for pubs, the hotels that exist in cities or well-touristed places are generally of the business or luxury variety (insert the name of your favourite chain here), where you get a comfortable, anonymous and mod con-filled room. Typically, they have a pool, restaurant/café, room service and various other facilities. For these hotels this book generally quotes 'rack rates' (official advertised rates), though significant discounts can be offered when business is quiet, or by booking online.

Motels offer comfortable midrange accommodation and can be found all over Australia. Most motels are modern and generic – you will find tea- and coffee-making facilities, fridge, TV, air-con and bathroom. Some might contain a microwave, while a small number have a full kitchen. You will generally pay between \$80 and \$140 for a room.

To book ahead, you could try a service such as **Australian Accommodation Agency** (☎ 1800 626 822; www.hotel-reservation-australia.com), which offers rooms at around 250 capital-city hotels.

Huts

Australia is not the European Alps, where you can wander between mountain refuges with just a sleeping bag in your pack and the knowledge that somebody else is waiting to cook your meal at night. Australian tracks with huts are the exception not the norm: the Bibbulmun Track (p293) has an exceptional set-up, with three-sided shelters spaced a day's walk apart; there are simple timber huts in the High Country; and the Overland Track (p214) can – in principle – be walked staying each night in a hut, though places are not guaranteed so you should never set out under this assumption.

WALKING CLUBS

To add a social flavour to your walking, you might consider joining a walking club. Typically, a walking club will organise regular day walks and an occasional multiday walk, with club meetings around once a month. Many clubs also organise other activities, such as cycling and kayaking. There are numerous walking clubs around Australia, most of which are covered by statewide umbrella organisations: clubs in the Australian Capital Territory are covered by the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW, and in the Northern Territory by the Walking Federation of South Australia, while a peak national body, **Bushwalking Australia** (www.bushwalkingaustralia.org.au) was created in 2003.

The websites of the state federations can be an excellent resource for finding the right club for you, though if it's pure trail information you are after it is usually best to begin with national park authorities or tourist centres.

- **Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW** (☎ 02-9290 2060; www.bushwalking.org.au) Represents around 60 clubs; website addresses for many can be found on the confederation's site.
- **Federation of Tasmania Bushwalking Clubs** (www.bushwalkingaustralia.org/html/taspage.html) Represents nine clubs.
- **Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs** (☎ 03-9455 1876; <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~vicwalk>) Represents more than 70 clubs.
- **Federation of Western Australian Bushwalkers** (☎ 08-9362 1614; www.bushwalkingaustralia.org/html/wapage.html) Six member clubs.
- **Queensland Federation of Bushwalking Clubs** (www.geocities.com/qfbwc) Twenty-five affiliated clubs.
- **Walking Federation of South Australia** (☎ 08-8361 2491; www.walkinga.org.au) Around 40 member clubs.

Pubs

For the budget traveller, hotels in Australia are the ones that serve beer, and are commonly known as pubs (from the term 'public house'). In country towns, pubs are invariably found in the town centre. Many pubs were built during boom times, so they are often among the largest, most extravagant buildings in town. In tourist areas some of these pubs have been restored as heritage buildings, but generally the rooms remain small, old fashioned and weathered, with a long amble down the hall to the bathroom.

You can sometimes rent a single room at a country pub for not too much more than a hostel dorm, and you will also be in the social heart of the town. But if you are a light sleeper, avoid booking a room right above the bar and check whether a band is playing downstairs that night (especially on Friday and Saturday nights).

Standard pubs have singles/doubles with shared facilities starting at around \$35/55, or more if you want a private bathroom. Few have a separate reception area – make inquiries in the bar.

BUSINESS HOURS

Hours vary a little from state to state, but most shops and businesses open about 9am and close at 5pm Monday to Friday, with Saturday hours usually from 9am to either noon or 5pm. Sunday trading is becoming increasingly common, but is currently limited to major cities and, to a lesser extent, regional Victoria. In most towns there are usually one or two late shopping nights a week, normally Thursday and/or Friday, when doors stay open until about 9pm. Most supermarkets are open till at least 8pm and are sometimes open 24 hours in larger centres. Milk bars (general stores) and convenience stores often open until late.

Banks are normally open from 9.30am to 4pm Monday to Thursday and until 5pm on Friday. Some large city branches are open from 8am to 6pm weekdays, and a few are also open until 9pm on Friday. Post offices are open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, but you can also buy stamps on Saturday morning at post office agencies (operated from newsagencies) and from Australia Post shops in all the major cities.

Restaurants typically open at noon for lunch, and 6pm to 7pm for dinner. They

normally dish out food until at least 9pm (later on Friday and Saturday), while the main restaurant strips in large cities usually open longer hours throughout the week. Cafés tend to be all-day affairs that either close around 5pm or continue into the night. Pubs usually serve food from noon to 2pm and 6pm to 8pm. Pubs and bars often open for drinking at lunchtime and continue well into the evening, particularly from Thursday to Saturday.

CHILDREN

Walking with your kids is very different from walking as you knew it BC (Before Children). Fortunately if you can adjust happily to living with children, you will probably also enjoy walking with them.

You will be well aware of the assertion that kids slow you down, and that is never truer than when you set out on a walk. There is an age when children go at exactly your pace because you have carried them all the way (a good backpack built for the purpose is worth its weight in chocolate), but their increasing weight, and a growing determination to get down and do everything for themselves, means that phase soon passes. Once your first child is too big or too independent for the backpack, you simply have to scale down your expectations of distance and speed.

This is when the fun really starts. No longer another item to be carried – at least, not all the time – a walking child must be factored into your planning. Rather than get part-way into a walk and ask yourself in desperation, 'Why are we doing this?', make this the first question you ask. While walking driven by stats (kilometres covered, peaks bagged) is not likely to work with kids, other important goals can surface: fun and a sense of something accomplished together; and joy in the wonders of the natural world.

Easy and small is a good way to start. Too hard, and what should be fun can become an ordeal for all, especially the child. Don't overlook time for play. A game of hide and seek during lunch might be the highlight of your child's day on the track. A few simple toys or a favourite book brought along can make a huge difference. Play can also transform the walking itself: a simple stroll in the bush becomes a bear hunt in an enchanted forest.

Walks in this book that are particularly suitable for children include Bouddi Coast (p55), Wentworth Falls & Valley of Waters (p66), Werribee Gorge (p130), Surf Coast Walk (p140) and Nancy Peak & Devil's Slide (p296). For a longer outing with older children you might consider the Bibbulmun Karri & Coast (p290) walk, the Thorsborne Trail (p349) or the Coast Track (p58).

CLIMATE

Australia's climate typically errs on the hot side, but as should be expected from the sixth-largest country on the planet, there is tremendous variation. The southern third of the country has cold (though generally not freezing) winters (June to August). Tasmania and the High Country in Victoria and New South Wales (NSW) get particularly chilly (at Crackenback, above Thredbo, the average July maximum temperature is 0.1°C). Summers (December to February) in the south are pleasant and warm, though sequences of days above 36°C are quite common. Spring (September to November) and autumn (March to May) are transition months, offering comfortable conditions throughout the south.

As you head north the climate changes dramatically – 40% of the continent lies north of the Tropic of Capricorn. Seasonal variations become fewer until, in the far north around Darwin and Cairns, you are in the monsoon belt where there are basically just two seasons: hot and wet, and hot and dry. The Dry roughly lasts from April to September, and the Wet from October to March; the build-up to the Wet (from early October) is often when the humidity is at its highest. The centre of the continent is arid – hot and dry during the day, but often bitterly cold at night.

Outside of Antarctica, Australia is the driest continent; more than half the country receives less than 300mm of rain annually. The wettest place in the country is Mt Belenden Ker, near Mt Bartle Frere (p353), with an average of around 8m a year. Rainfall decreases steadily away from the coast; a large part of the interior receives less than 100mm annually.

See When to Walk (p20) for details on how the seasons might influence your walking plans. Also see Climate charts (pp362-3) for destination-specific information.

Weather Information

The best source of weather information is the website of the **Bureau of Meteorology** (BoM; www.bom.gov.au), which includes detailed regional forecasts and all kinds of warnings. Some national park offices also post daily local forecasts to help you keep a watch on the heat or approaching rain.

A weather factor of principal importance to walkers is that of Total Fire Ban days (see p25). These are publicised widely in the media, with fire weather warnings also listed on the BoM website.

For a good overview of climate averages for destinations throughout Australia, take a look at www.weatherbase.com.

CUSTOMS

When entering Australia you can bring most articles in free of duty provided that customs is satisfied they are for personal use and that you will be taking them with you when you leave. There is a duty-free quota per person of 2.25L of alcohol, 250 cigarettes and dutiable goods up to the value of \$900.

There are duty-free shops at international airports and in their associated cities, though many goods are not really much (if at all) cheaper duty-free. Alcohol and cigarettes are certainly cheaper duty-free, though, as they are heavily taxed in Australia.

For further information on customs regulations, contact the **Australian Customs Service** (☎ 1300 363 263; www.customs.gov.au).

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Australian Embassies & Consulates

The website of the **Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade** (www.dfat.gov.au) provides a full listing of all Australian diplomatic missions overseas.

Canada Ottawa (☎ 613-236 0841; www.ahc-ottawa.org; suite 710, 50 O'Connor St, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2) Also in Vancouver and Toronto.

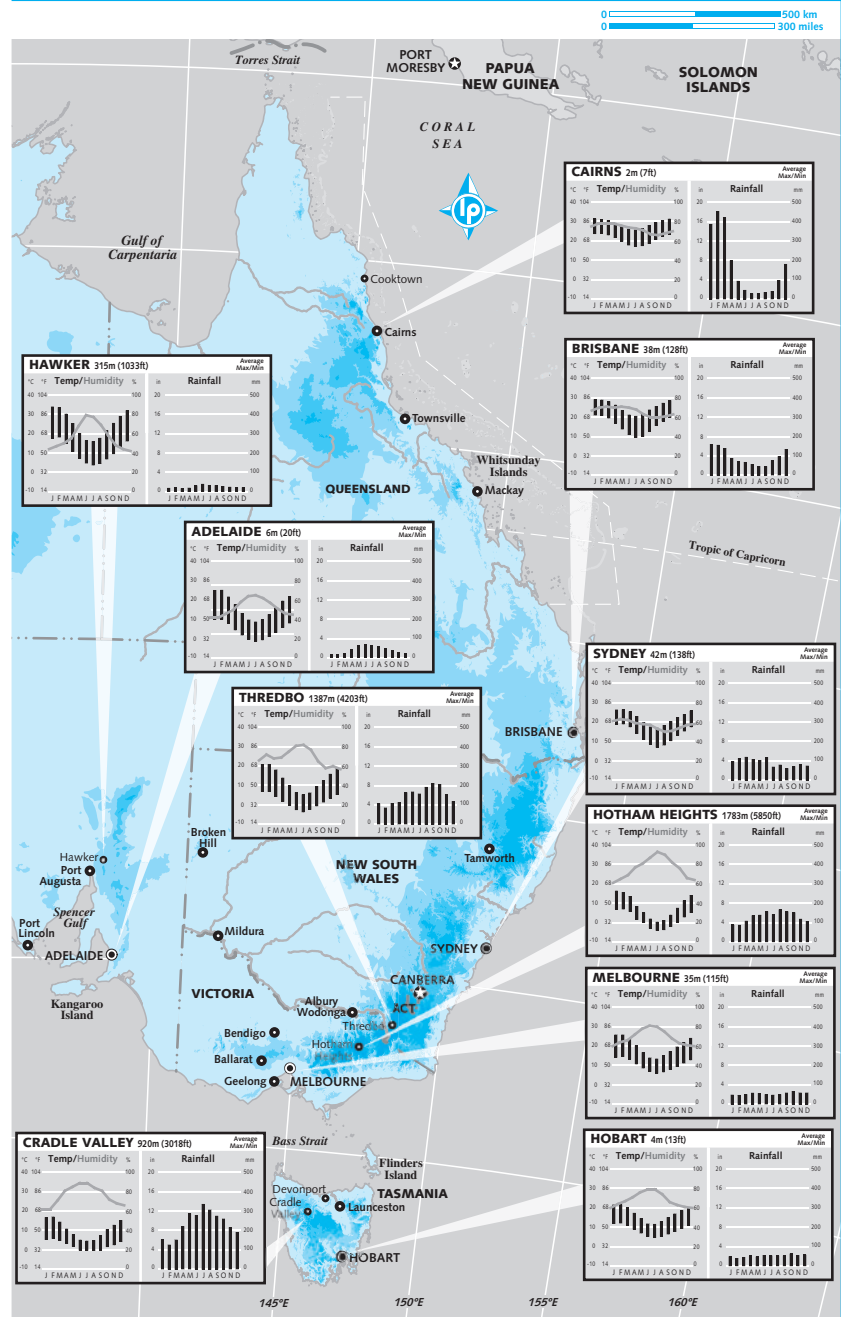
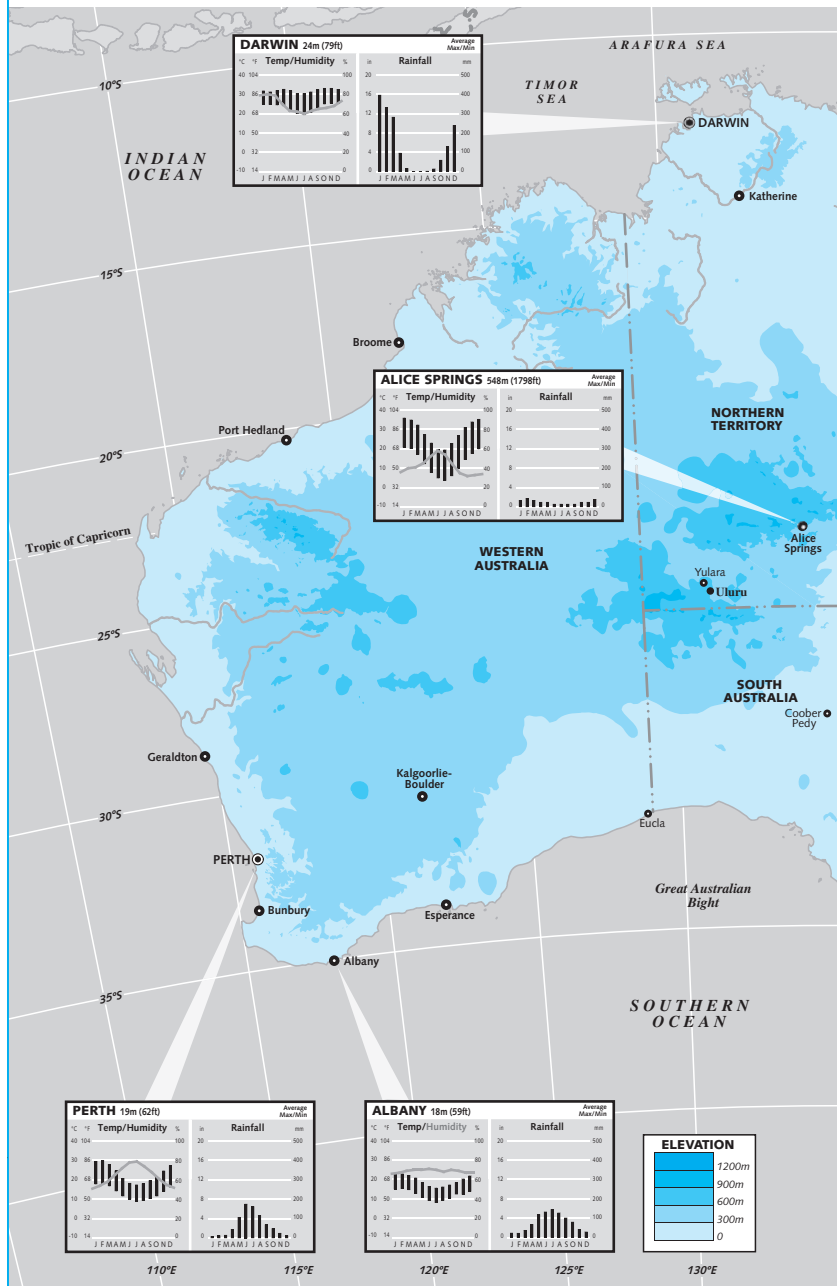
France Paris (☎ 01 40 59 33 00; www.france.embassy.gov.au; 4 Rue Jean Rey, Paris 75724 Cedex 15)

Germany Berlin (☎ 030-880 08 80; www.australian-embassy.de; Wallstrasse 76-79, Berlin 10179) Also in Frankfurt.

Indonesia Jakarta (☎ 0212-550 5555; www.austembjak.or.id; Jalan HR Rasuna Said Kav C15-16, Jakarta Selatan 12940) Also in Medan (Sumatra) and Denpasar (Bali).

Ireland Dublin (☎ 01-664 5300; www.australianembassy.ie; 7th fl, Fitzwilton House, Wilton Tce, Dublin 2)

Climate



Japan Tokyo (☎ 0352-324 111; www.australia.or.jp; 2-1-14 Mita, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 108-8361) Also in Osaka, Nagoya, Sendai, Sapporo and Fukuoka City.

Malaysia Kuala Lumpur (☎ 032-146 5555; www.australia.org.my; 6 Jalan Yap Kwan Seng, Kuala Lumpur 50450) Also in Penang, Kuching (Sarawak) and Kota Kinabalu (Sabah).

Netherlands The Hague (☎ 0703-10 82 00; www.australian-embassy.nl; Carnegieplein 4, The Hague 2517 KH)

New Zealand Wellington (☎ 04-473 6411; www.australia.org.nz; 72-76 Hobson St, Thorndon, Wellington); Auckland (☎ 09-921 8800; level 7, Price Waterhouse Coopers Tower, 186-194 Quay St, Auckland)

Singapore (☎ 6836 4100; www.singapore.embassy.gov.au; 25 Napier Rd, Singapore 258507)

Thailand Bangkok (☎ 0 2344 6300; www.austembassy.or.th; 37 South Sathorn Rd, Bangkok 10120)

UK London (☎ 020-7379 4334; www.australia.org.uk; Australia House, the Strand, London WC2B 4LA) Also in Edinburgh.

USA Washington DC (☎ 202-797 3000; www.austemb.org; 1601 Massachusetts Ave, Washington DC NW 20036-2273) Also in Los Angeles, New York and other major cities.

Embassies & Consulates in Australia

Canada Canberra (☎ 02-6270 4000; www.dfaif-maeci.gc.ca/australia; Commonwealth Ave, Canberra, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-9364 3000; level 5, 111 Harrington St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

France Canberra (☎ 02-6216 0100; www.ambafrance-au.org; 6 Perth Ave, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-9261 5779; level 26, St Martins Tower, 31 Market St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Germany Canberra (☎ 02-6270 1911; www.german.embassy.org.au; 119 Empire Circuit, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-9328 7733; 13 Trelawney St, Woollahra, NSW 2025); Melbourne (☎ 03-9864 6888; 480 Punt Rd, South Yarra, Vic 3141)

Ireland Canberra (☎ 02-6273 3022; irishemb@cyberone.com.au; 20 Arkana St, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-9231 6999; level 30, 400 George St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Japan Canberra (☎ 02-6273 3244; www.japan.org.au; 112 Empire Circuit, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-9231 3455; level 34, Colonial Centre, 52 Martin Pl, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Malaysia Sydney (☎ 02-9327 7596; 67 Victoria Rd, Bellevue Hill, NSW 2023)

Netherlands Canberra (☎ 02-6220 9400; www.netherlands.org.au; 120 Empire Circuit, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-9387 6644; level 23, tower 2, Westfield Bondi Junction, 101 Grafton St, Bondi Junction, NSW 2022)

New Zealand Canberra (☎ 02-6270 4211; www.nzembassy.com/australia; Commonwealth Ave, Canberra, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-8256 2000; level 10, 55 Hunter St, Sydney, NSW 2001)

Singapore Canberra (☎ 02-6273 3944; 17 Forster Cres, Yarralumla, ACT 2600)

Thailand Canberra (☎ 02-6273 1149; rtecanberra@mfa.go.th; 111 Empire Circuit, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-9241 2542; http://thaisydney.idx.com.au; level 8, 131 Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

UK Canberra (☎ 02-6270 6666; http://bhc.britaus.net/default.asp; Commonwealth Ave, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-9247 7521; 16th fl, 1 Macquarie Pl, Sydney, NSW 2000); Melbourne (☎ 03-9652 1600; 17th fl, 90 Collins St, Melbourne, Vic 3000)

USA Canberra (☎ 02-6214 5600; http://usembassy-australia.state.gov/index.html; 21 Moonah Pl, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney (☎ 02-9373 9200; level 10, 19-29 Martin Pl, Sydney, NSW 2000); Melbourne (☎ 03-9526 5900; 553 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne, Vic 3004)

FOOD & DRINK Local Food & Drink

Australia is not known for having a unique cuisine, but many people are surprised by the range and quality of food available in restaurants, markets, delicatessens and cafés, especially in the major cities but often in less populated places as well. Australians have coined their own phrase, Modern Australian (Mod Oz), to describe their cuisine. If it's a melange of East and West, it's Mod Oz. If it's not authentically French or Italian, it's Mod Oz – the term is an attempt to classify the unclassifiable. It doesn't really alter from one region to another, but some influences are obvious, such as the Italian migration to Melbourne and the Southeast Asian migration to Darwin.

Vegetarian eateries and vegetarian selections in nonvegie places (including menu choices for vegans and coeliac sufferers) are becoming more common in large cities and are forging a stronger presence in the smaller towns visited by tourists, though rural Australia – as exemplified by pub grub – mostly continues its stolid dedication to meat. Those who enjoy a pre- or postdigestive cigarette will need to go outside, as smoking has been made illegal in most enclosed public places in all Australian states and territories, including indoor cafés, restaurants, clubs and (sometimes only at meal times) pub dining areas.

Not many actual dishes can lay claim to being uniquely Australian. Even the humble 'pav' (pavlova), the meringue dessert with cream and passionfruit, may be from New Zealand. Ditto for lamingtons, large cubes

RECIPE ON THE RUN *Andrew Bain*

Gourmets, look away now. One of my favourite meals on the track is the sort of thing your mum might have called 'surprise soup': a bit of this, a bit of that. But it is light, filling and actually tastes pretty good (for camp food anyway). The following recipe is for two people:

- 250g couscous
- a handful of pistachio nuts or cashews
- two sachets of tomato paste
- a half packet of dried peas and carrots
- mixed herbs
- stock cube

Stir the tomato paste and stock cube into water, add the dried vegetables and bring to the boil. After a few minutes, add mixed herbs and couscous. Boil for about one minute, then remove from heat and let the couscous sit in the hot water. Add the nuts, stir and eat.

Chocolate-chip-cookie chaser optional but welcome.

of cake dipped in chocolate and rolled in desiccated coconut. The nearest thing you will find to a truly local experience is to eat some of the wildlife – kangaroo, emu or crocodile – that you have been admiring as you walk.

On the Walk

You will almost certainly be self-catering as you walk, meaning you will need to carry your food and, in most places, a stove (p393). For a walk of two or three days you will be able to carry some fresh food, but beyond this you will need to fall back on dried walking staples such as pasta, rice, legumes, flat breads and muesli. If you carry commercially produced, freeze-dried meals you will be relieved of much of the menu planning but often also much of the taste. Scroggin – a trail mix of nuts, dried fruit and often chocolate – is almost de rigeur for snacking as you walk, though chocolate always seems a great idea in the supermarket but less so by the time the Aussie heat has melted it to a paste.

It makes good sense to compartmentalise your food packing, keeping it all together or at least in some easily found order. The temptation when packing is to fill those small and awkward gaps in your pack with muesli bars and that squeeze pack of Vegemite, but you might rue your decision when you are pulling everything from your pack just to find a snack or spread.

For a bit of inspiration beyond pasta a la bland, pick up a copy of *The Outdoor Gourmet* by Michael Hampton.

BUYING FOOD

You'll find some sort of grocery store in most Australian towns, though not all are sufficiently stocked to satisfy walkers' specific needs. In this book, supermarkets and other self-catering options are listed in the town descriptions. Where possible, we have noted where you will need to shop elsewhere in order to find a decent range of goods.

WILD FOOD

Nibbling on bush tucker is a great idea in principle, but distinguishing edible fruits

WATER

Australia has some of the finest drinking water in the world (you might disagree if you have only tasted it from Adelaide's taps), though drinking from streams on your walks without treating the water is not advised. Rarely can you be certain that another person or animal hasn't contaminated it upstream. Some treatments, especially iodine, can leave an unpalatable flavour in the water – if this is a concern, think about carrying powdered flavour sachets such as Tang. For information on treating water, see the boxed text p385.

from inedible is difficult to the untrained eye. Some foods also require multiple forms of preparation just to make them edible, so pick cautiously as you wander. For more on bush tucker and a selection of guidebooks about identifying it, see the boxed text (p31).

HOLIDAYS

Public Holidays

The following is a list of the main national public holidays. Each state and territory also has its own public holidays, such as bank holidays and Labour Day, and (this being Australia) major horse races. For precise dates check locally.

New Year's Day 1 January

Australia Day 26 January

Easter (Good Friday to Easter Monday inclusive) March/April

Anzac Day 25 April

Queen's Birthday (except WA) Second Monday in June

Queen's Birthday (WA) Last Monday in September

Christmas Day 25 December

Boxing Day 26 December

School Holidays

The Christmas holiday season, from about mid-December to late January, is the main school break – it is the time you are most likely to find transport and accommodation booked out, and crowds on the popular walking tracks. There are three shorter school holiday periods during the year. Dates vary by a week or two from state to state, but they fall roughly from early to mid-April, late June to mid-July and late September to early October.

INSURANCE

Don't underestimate the importance of a good travel insurance policy that covers theft, loss and medical problems – nothing is guaranteed to ruin your walking plans quicker than an accident on the trail or having that brand-new digital camera stolen. Most policies offer lower and higher medical-expense options; the higher ones are chiefly for countries that have extremely high medical costs, such as the USA. Australia is usually at the lower end of the price chain. There is a wide variety of policies available, so compare the small print.

Some policies specifically exclude designated 'dangerous activities'. For some insurance companies this can mean bush-

walking, so check the small type to make sure the policy you choose fully covers you for your walking plans.

You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly rather than requiring you to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later make sure you keep all documentation. Check that the policy covers ambulances and emergency medical evacuations by air – an airlift from a remote walking track can also disable your savings.

Worldwide cover to travellers from over 44 countries is available online at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services. For information on health insurance, see p381. For information on vehicle insurance, see p378.

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafés have become so ubiquitous throughout Australia it is easy to imagine that bytes and not bites are now a menu item. Connection speeds and prices vary significantly, but they all offer straightforward Internet access. Most public libraries also have Internet access, though this is provided primarily for research needs, not for travellers to check their email, so head for an Internet café. You will find them in cities, sizable towns and pretty much anywhere else that travellers congregate. The cost ranges from \$3 per hour in cut-throat places such as Sydney's King's Cross to \$10 per hour in more remote locations. The average is about \$6 per hour, usually with a minimum of 10 minutes' access. Most youth hostels and backpacker places can hook you up, as can many hotels and caravan parks. Telecentres (community centres providing web access and other hi-tech facilities to locals and visitors) provide Internet access in remote areas of Western Australia (WA), South Australia (SA) and NSW, while Tasmania has set up access centres in numerous local libraries and schools.

Free web-based email services include **Yahoo** (www.yahoo.com), **MSN Hotmail** (www.hotmail.com) and **Excite** (www.excite.com). See p23 for some useful sites when planning your trip.

MAPS

When packing for a walk, a good map is as essential as your sleeping bag and boots – we do not recommend setting out on any bushwalk without a map. Learn to read its features and how it translates the land. That

way, you will not only be more likely to navigate yourself out of any difficulty, but your enjoyment will also be enhanced by the ability to use the map to identify everything you are seeing and passing.

In the Planning section of each walk in this book you will find details of the best maps to carry.

MAPS IN THIS BOOK

Our maps are based on the best available references, sometimes combined with GPS data collected in the field. They are intended to show the general route of the walk and should always be used in conjunction with the maps suggested in the walk description. For information on symbols used on our maps, see the legend on the back page.

Buying Maps

It is a good idea to stock up on all the walking maps you will need in capital cities. Each capital has at least one decent map shop – you will find them listed under Information in each chapter's Gateway section – but there are few outside these cities. Small-scale maps showing the entire country or state or a region are plentiful and can also be purchased at map shops, visitor information centres, some newsagents and even petrol stations. If you want to get a head start, the **Melbourne Map Centre** (☎ 03-9569 5472; www.melbmap.com.au) has online purchasing, and stocks topographic maps and road maps from around the country.

Large-Scale Maps

The most common map scale used for walking is 1:50,000 (2cm on the map equalling 1km), providing enough detail to make navigation generally straightforward. For some popular and short walks you will even find dedicated 1:25,000 topographic maps. Maps at 1:50,000 are available for most walks.

Geoscience Australia (www.ga.gov.au), Australia's national mapping division, produces a 1:100,000 NATMAP colour topographical series that covers the entire coast and hinterland, but not a lot of the outback. It lacks the detail for reliable route finding so is generally useful only for orientation and identification of landscape features.

Most states have an official mapping agency that produces large-scale colour topographical maps suitable for walking. There are also dedicated national parks maps to some of the most popular parks.

Small-Scale Maps

Good-quality road maps are plentiful. The various state motoring organisations are a dependable source of road maps, while local tourist offices usually supply free maps, though the quality varies.

Lonely Planet publishes handy fold-out city maps of Sydney and Melbourne. City street guides, such as those produced by Ausway (publishers of *Melway* and *Sydway*), Gregorys and UBD, are useful for in-depth urban navigation but they are expensive, bulky and only worth getting if you intend to do a lot of city driving.

If you are planning on plenty of touring between walks, a car touring atlas such as *Explore Australia* will be useful, with maps that cover the entire country and blurbs on most towns along the way.

MONEY

Australia's currency is the Australian dollar, comprising 100 cents. Although the smallest coin in circulation is 5c, prices are marked in single cents, and the total price rounded to the nearest 5c when you pay. The Australian dollar has stabilised in recent times, after slipping to around US\$0.50 in 2003 – see the inside front cover for exchange rates at the time of writing. For an idea of local costs, see p20.

Unless otherwise stated, all prices in this book are given in Australian dollars.

ATMs

ATMs are plentiful throughout Australia, though don't expect to find them too far off the beaten track or in very small towns. Most ATMs accept cards issued by other banks and are linked to international networks.

Credit & Debit Cards

Arguably the best way to carry most of your money around is in the form of a plastic card. Australia is well and truly a card-carrying society, and credit cards such as Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted for everything from a hostel bed to a restaurant meal, and are pretty much essential (in lieu of a

large deposit) for hiring a car. They can also be used to get cash advances over the counter at banks and from many ATMs, depending on the card, though these transactions incur immediate interest. Charge cards such as Diners Club and American Express (Amex) are not as widely accepted.

The obvious danger with credit cards is maxing out your limit and racking up a steaming pile of debt and interest charges. A safer option is a debit card from which you can draw money directly from your bank account using ATMs, banks or Eftpos devices. Any card connected to the international banking network (Cirrus, Maestro, Plus and Eurocard) should work, provided you know your PIN. The most flexible option is to carry both a credit and a debit card.

Exchanging Money

Changing foreign currency or travellers cheques is usually no problem at banks throughout Australia, or at licensed money-changers such as Travelex or Amex in cities and major towns. Black-market exchange is almost unheard of.

On the Walk

If you are going to be incurring costs as you walk, such as camping fees or snacks, cash is going to be your only real option – rangers who come around to collect your \$5 don't carry credit-card swipers. As you leave the last town before your walk, replenish your cash supply.

Taxes & Refunds

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a flat 10% tax on all goods and services – accommodation, eating out, transport, electrical goods, books, clothing etc. There are exceptions, however, such as basic foods (milk, bread, fruits and vegetables). By law the tax is included in the quoted or shelf prices, so all prices in this book are GST-inclusive. International air and sea travel to/from Australia is GST-free, as is domestic air travel when purchased outside Australia by non-residents.

If you are an overseas resident and purchase new or second-hand goods with a total minimum value of \$300 from any one supplier no more than 30 days before you leave Australia, you are entitled under the

Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) to a refund of any GST paid. The scheme doesn't apply to all goods but mainly to those taken with you as hand luggage or worn onto the plane or ship. Also note that the refund is valid for goods bought from more than one supplier, but only if at least \$300 is spent in each. For more details, contact the **Australian Customs Service** (☎ 1300 363 263; www.customs.gov.au).

Tipping

Tipping is the exception rather than the norm in Australia, though by some law of the jungle it is expected in more expensive restaurants – 10% of the bill is the usual amount if you think the food and service has warranted it. Nobody is going to be offended if you tip, but some people will happily think they have taken you for a ride (in more than their taxi) if you are extravagant about it.

Travellers Cheques

The ubiquity and convenience of internationally linked credit- and debit-card facilities in Australia means that travellers cheques are not heavily relied upon. Nevertheless, Amex, Thomas Cook and other well-known international brands of travellers cheques are easily exchanged. Transactions at their bureaux are commission-free if you use their cheques, while local banks charge hefty fees (often in excess of \$7 per transaction) for the same service. You need to present your passport for identification when cashing travellers cheques. There are no notable restrictions on importing or exporting travellers cheques.

PERMITS & FEES National Park Fees

It is becoming more commonplace to be charged an entry fee on arrival at a national park – this can range from a bit of chump change to \$16 a day at Kosciuszko National Park. Only Queensland allows free access to all of its national parks.

Increasingly you can also buy park passes that allow you entry into all, or a selection of, national parks in each state. Each state has its own system and pricing – for details see the Information sections at the start of each regional chapter. Individual park entry fees are detailed in the relevant sections inside the regional chapters.

PUBLIC & PRIVATE PROPERTY

If you have travelled to Australia from the UK, toss away the notion of 'right to roam' – there is no legal public right of way across private land in Australia. Private property here is a possession as cherished as the three family cars, so treat with respect those signs that declare 'Trespassers Prosecuted' (and especially the few that suggest 'Trespassers will be Shot').

Most walks in this book are on public land; ie land owned by the government. A couple of the Northern Territory walks are also in national parks to which Aboriginal people hold title and for which it is essential to obtain an entry permit. Some short sections of walks in this book do cross private land, the access to which has been granted by the owner. When walking these sections, respect any conditions, close gates (if they are closed when you get to them) and avoid spooking any livestock.

Walking Permits

As some tracks in Australia grappled with their increasing popularity, it became inevitable that permit systems would be implemented. What used to be a free-and-easy walk on the Overland Track (p214) is now regulated by a permit system (at least between November and April), as is the Thorsborne Trail (p349), Prom Southern Circuit (p176), Croajingolong Coast Walk (p182) and Jatbula Trail (p315). For permit details see the Planning sections for each of these walks.

If walking any of these tracks be sure to plan well ahead – permits on the Thorsborne Trail in holiday periods will need to be booked up to a year in advance.

TELEPHONE

Local calls from private phones cost 18c to 30c, while local calls from public phones cost 50c; both allow unlimited talk time. Calls to mobile phones attract higher rates and are timed. Long-distance calls are cheaper during off-peak hours – generally between 7pm and 7am.

International calls from Australia are cheap and subject to specials that reduce the rates even more, so it is worth shopping around. When calling overseas you will need to dial the international access code from Australia (☎ 0011 or ☎ 0018), the country code and then the area code (without the initial 0). In addition, certain operators will have you dial a special code to access their service.

If dialling Australia from overseas, the country code is ☎ 61 and you need to drop the 0 in state/territory area codes.

Numbers starting with ☎ 190 are usually recorded information services, charged at

anything from 35c to \$5 or more per minute (more from mobiles and payphones). To make a reverse-charge (collect) call from any public or private phone, dial ☎ 1800-REVERSE (738 3773) or ☎ 12 550. Toll-free numbers (prefix ☎ 1800) can be called free of charge from almost anywhere in Australia, although they may not be accessible from certain areas or from mobile phones. Calls to numbers starting with ☎ 13 or ☎ 1300 are charged at the rate of a local call – the numbers can usually be dialled Australia-wide, but may be applicable only to a specific state or district. Telephone numbers beginning with ☎ 1800, ☎ 13 or ☎ 1300 cannot be dialled from outside Australia.

Mobile Phones

Local numbers with the prefixes ☎ 04xx or ☎ 04xxx belong to mobile phones. Australia's two mobile networks, digital GSM and digital CDMA, service more than 90% of the population but leave vast tracts of the country uncovered. The east coast, southeast and southwest have good reception, but elsewhere (apart from major towns) it is haphazard or nonexistent.

Australia's digital network is compatible with GSM 900 and 1800 (used in Europe), but generally not with the systems used in the USA or Japan. It is easy and cheap enough to get connected short term as the main service providers have prepaid mobile systems. Buy a starter kit, which may include a phone or, if you have your own phone, a SIM card (around \$15) and a prepaid charge card. The calls tend to be dearer than with standard contracts, but there are no connection fees or line-rental charges and you can buy the recharge cards at convenience stores and newsagents.

TAKING PHOTOS OUTDOORS *Gareth McCormack & Grant Dixon*

For walkers, photography can be a vexed issue – all that magnificent scenery, but such weight and space restrictions on what photographic equipment you can carry. With a little care and planning it is possible to maximise your chance of taking great photos on the trail.

Light & Filters In fine weather, the best light is early and late in the day. In strong sunlight and in mountain, desert and coastal areas where the light is often intense, a polarising filter can improve colour saturation and reduce haze. On overcast days the soft light can be great for shooting wildflowers, forest interiors and running water, and an 81A warming filter can be useful. If you use slide film, a graduated filter will help to balance unevenly lit landscapes.

Equipment There is a plethora of film and digital-camera models now available, but the best results are still obtained using single-lens reflex (SLR) models. If you need to travel light carry a zoom lens in the 28mm to 70mm range (or the digital equivalent), and if your sole purpose is landscapes consider carrying just a single wide-angle lens (24mm). A tripod is essential for really good images and there are some excellent lightweight models available. Otherwise you can improvise with a trekking pole, pack or even a pile of rocks.

Camera Care Keep your gear dry and protect it from humidity – a few zip-lock freezer bags can be used to double wrap camera gear. Sturdy cameras will normally work fine in freezing conditions. Take care when bringing a camera from one temperature extreme to another; if moisture condenses on the camera parts make sure it dries thoroughly before going back into the cold. Standard camera batteries have a much shorter life in the cold. In hot areas, keep film as cool as possible, especially after it has been exposed.

For a thorough grounding on outdoor and on-the-road photography, read Lonely Planet's *Landscape Photography* by Peter Eastway or *Travel Photography* by Richard I'Anson. Also highly recommended is the outdoor photography classic *Mountain Light* by Galen Rowell.

Phone Codes

For long-distance calls, Australia uses four STD (Subscriber Trunk Dialling) area codes. Area-code boundaries don't necessarily coincide with state borders – NSW, for example, uses each of the four neighbouring codes – but the main area codes are as follows:

State/Territory	Area code
ACT	☎ 02
NSW	☎ 02
NT	☎ 08
QLD	☎ 07
SA	☎ 08
TAS	☎ 03
VIC	☎ 03
WA	☎ 08

Phonecards

A variety of phonecards can be bought at newsagents, hostels and post offices for a fixed dollar value (usually \$10, \$20 etc) and

can be used with any public or private phone by dialling a toll-free access number and then the PIN number on the card. Some public phones also accept credit cards.

TIME

Australia is divided into three time zones: the Western Standard Time zone (GMT/UTC plus eight hours) covers WA; Central Standard Time (plus 9½ hours) covers the Northern Territory (NT) and SA; and Eastern Standard Time (plus 10 hours) covers Tasmania, Victoria, NSW, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland. So when it is noon in WA, it's 1.30pm in the NT and SA, and 2pm in the rest of the country.

'Daylight saving' here is as complex as calculus. Clocks are put forward an hour in most states during the warmer months (October to March), but WA, the NT and Qld stay on standard time, while in Tasmania daylight saving starts a month earlier than in SA, Victoria, the ACT and NSW. Also see the World Time Zones map (p411).

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourism Australia (☎ 02-9360 1111; www.australia.com) is the peak national tourist organisation. The website (which comes in 10 languages) is a good planning resource, though not heavy on walking information. That said, run a search for 'bushwalk' and you will uncover a good thumbnail selection of options.

Within Australia, tourist information is disseminated by various regional and local offices. In this book, the main state and territory tourism authorities are listed in the introductory Information Sources section of each chapter. Almost every major town in Australia seems to maintain a tourist office of some type, providing local info not readily available from the state offices. Invariably, local offices have better knowledge of walking tracks than state offices or Tourism Australia, and even at this micro-level you will usually find it better to chat with park authorities than the all-encompassing visitor information centres. Details of local tourism offices are given in the relevant city and town sections throughout this book.

Tourist Offices Abroad

Tourism Australia agents can supply various publications on Australia, including a number of handy fact sheets on topics such as camping, fishing, skiing and national parks, plus a handy map for a small fee. This literature is only distributed overseas, but local travellers can download and print the information from the Tourism Australia website.

Some countries with Tourism Australia offices:

Germany (☎ 069-2740 0622; Neue Mainzer Strasse 22, Frankfurt D 60311)

Japan (☎ 0352-140 720; New Otani Garden Court Bldg 28F, 4-1 Kioi-cho Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0094)

New Zealand (☎ 09-915 2826; level 3, 125 the Strand, Parnell, Auckland)

Singapore (☎ 6255 4555; 101 Thomson Rd, United Sq 08-03, Singapore 307591)

Thailand (☎ 0 2670 0640; unit 1614, 16th fl, River Wing East, Empire Tower, 195 South Sathorn Rd, Yannawa, Sathorn, Bangkok 10120)

UK (☎ 020-7438 4601; 6th fl, Australia House, Melbourne Place/Strand, London WC2B 4LG)

USA (☎ 310-695 3200; 6100 Center Dr, Los Angeles CA 90045)

VISAS

All visitors to Australia need a visa – only New Zealand nationals are exempt, and even they receive a 'special category' visa on arrival. Application forms for the several types of visa are available from Australian diplomatic missions overseas (p361), travel agents or the website of the **Department of Immigration & Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs** (Dimia; ☎ 13 18 81; www.immi.gov.au).

However, most visitors get their visa in the form of an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) through any travel agent or overseas airline registered with the International Air Transport Association (IATA). They make the application directly when you buy a ticket and issue the ETA, which replaces the usual visa stamped in your passport. It is common practice for travel agents to charge a fee of around US\$15 for issuing an ETA. This system is available to passport holders of 32 countries, including the UK, the USA and Canada, most European and Scandinavian countries, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan and South Korea.

You can also apply for the ETA online (www.eta.immi.gov.au), which attracts a nonrefundable service charge of \$20.

If you are a passport holder from outside the 32 ETA nations, or you want to stay longer than three months, you will need to apply for a visa through an embassy or consulate. Standard visas (which cost \$65) allow one (in some cases multiple) entry for a stay of up to three months, and are valid for use within 12 months of issue. A long-stay tourist visa (also \$65) can allow a visit of up to a year.

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Arrival in Australia is a straightforward affair, with only the usual customs declarations (p361) to endure. However, as an island nation, Australia has strict quarantine requirements. If you are bringing in equipment such as boots and a tent, they will need to be clean or you might find them getting a spit and polish from quarantine officers.

There are no restrictions on citizens of foreign countries entering Australia – if you have a visa (p371), you should be fine.

AIR

There are myriad airlines and air fares to choose from if you are flying from Asia, Europe or North America. If you plan to fly at a particularly popular time (Christmas is notoriously difficult for Sydney and Melbourne) or on a particularly popular route (such as Hong Kong, Bangkok or Singapore to Sydney or Melbourne), make your arrangements well in advance of your trip.

The high season for flights into Australia is roughly over summer (December to February), with the shoulder months being around October/November and March/April. The low season is basically winter (June to August), a bonus if you are thinking of walking in the Northern Territory or Queensland.

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and to be aware of the increasingly stringent security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

Airports & Airlines

Australia has several international gateways, with Sydney and Melbourne being the busiest. International airports of use to walkers:

Adelaide (code ADL; ☎ 08-8308 9211; www.aal.com.au)

Brisbane (code BNE; ☎ 07-3406 3088; www.brisbaneairport.com.au)

Cairns (code CNS; ☎ 07-4052 9703; www.cairnsport.com.au/airport)

Darwin (code DRW; ☎ 08-8920 1811; www.ntapl.com.au)

Melbourne (Tullamarine; code MEL; ☎ 03-9297 1600; www.melbourne-airport.com.au)

Perth (code PER; ☎ 08-9478 8888; www.perthairport.net.au)

Sydney (Kingsford Smith; code SYD; ☎ 02-9667 9111; www.sydneyairport.com.au)

Australia's overseas carrier is **Qantas** (airline code QF; ☎ 13 13 13; www.qantas.com.au; hub Kingsford Smith Airport, Sydney), which – as anybody who has seen the movie *Rainman* can testify – is regarded as one of the world's safest airlines. It flies chiefly to destinations across Europe, North America, Asia and the Pacific.

A subsidiary of Qantas, **Australian Airlines** (airline code AO; ☎ 1300 799 798; www.australianairlines.com.au; hub Kingsford Smith Airport, Sydney) flies between Cairns (with connections to the Gold Coast) and Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore. It also flies between Bali and Perth, Sydney and Melbourne.

Airlines that service Australia include the following (all phone numbers listed are for dialling from within Australia):

Air Canada (airline code AC; ☎ 1300 655 767; www.aircanada.ca; hub Pearson International Airport, Toronto)

Air New Zealand (airline code NZ; ☎ 13 24 76; www.airnz.com.au; hub Auckland International Airport)

British Airways (airline code BA; ☎ 1300 767 177; www.britishairways.com; hub Heathrow Airport, London)

Cathay Pacific (airline code CX; ☎ 13 17 47; www.cathaypacific.com; hub Hong Kong International Airport)

China Airlines (airline code CI; ☎ 02-9231 3336; www.china-airlines.com; hub Chiang Kai Shek Airport, Taipei)

Emirates (airline code EK; ☎ 1300 303 777; www.emirates.com; hub Dubai International Airport)

Freedom Air (airline code SJ; ☎ 1800 122 000; www.freedomair.com; hub Auckland International Airport)

Garuda Indonesia (airline code GA; ☎ 1300 365 330; www.garuda-indonesia.com; hub Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Jakarta)

Gulf Air (airline code GF; ☎ 1300 366 337; www.gulfairco.com; hub Abu Dhabi International Airport)

Hawaiian Airlines (airline code HA; ☎ 02-9244 2377; www.hawaiianairlines.com.au; hub Honolulu International Airport, Hawaii)

Japan Airlines (airline code JL; ☎ 02-9272 1111; www.jal.com; hub Narita Airport, Tokyo)

KLM (airline code KL; ☎ 1300 303 747; www.klm.com; hub Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam)

Lufthansa (airline code LH; ☎ 1300 655 727; www.lufthansa.com; hub Frankfurt Airport)

Malaysia Airlines (airline code MH; ☎ 13 26 27; www.malaysiaairlines.com; hub Kuala Lumpur International Airport)

Pacific Blue (airline code DJ; ☎ 13 16 45; www.flypacificblue.com; hub Brisbane Airport)

Royal Brunei Airlines (airline code BI; ☎ 1300 721 271; www.bruneiair.com; hub Bandar Seri Begawan Airport)

Singapore Airlines (airline code SQ; ☎ 13 10 11; www.singaporeair.com.au; hub Changi International Airport, Singapore)

South African Airways (airline code SA; ☎ 1800 221 699; www4.flysaa.com; hub Johannesburg International Airport)

Thai Airways International (airline code TG; ☎ 1300 651 960; www.thaiairways.com; hub Bangkok International Airport)

United Airlines (airline code UA; ☎ 13 17 77; www.united.com; hub Los Angeles International Airport)

DEPARTURE TAX

Travellers leaving Australia are slugged a departure tax of \$38, but this is incorporated into the price of your air ticket.

Tickets

Automated online ticket sales work well if you are doing a simple one-way or return

BAGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

Airlines impose tight restrictions on carry-on baggage. No sharp implements of any kind are allowed onto the plane, so pack items such as pocket knives, camping cutlery and first-aid kits into your checked luggage or they'll be confiscated.

If you are carrying a camping stove you should remember that airlines ban liquid fuels and gas cartridges from all baggage, both check-through and carry-on. Empty all fuel bottles, wash them to be rid of the scent of fuel and buy what you need at your destination.

trip on specified dates, but are no substitute for a travel agent with the low-down on special deals, strategies for avoiding stopovers and other useful advice.

If you are flying to Australia from the other side of the globe, round-the-world (RTW) tickets can be a real bargain. They are generally put together by the three biggest airline alliances – **Star Alliance** (www.staralliance.com), **Oneworld** (www.oneworldalliance.com) and **Skyteam** (www.skyteam.com). An alternative type of RTW ticket can be put together by a travel agent. These are usually more expensive than airline RTW fares but allow you to create your own itinerary.

For online ticket bookings, start with the following websites:

Air Brokers (www.airbrokers.com) US site specialising in cheap tickets.

Cheap Flights (www.cheapflights.com) Informative site with specials, airline information and flight searches.

Cheapest Flights (www.cheapestflights.co.uk) Worldwide flights from the UK.

Expedia (www.expedia.msn.com) Microsoft's travel site; mainly USA related.

Flight Centre (www.flightcentre.com) Respected operator. Site links to Australia, New Zealand, UK, USA, Canada and South Africa sites.

Flights.com (www.flights.com) International site; offers cheap fares and an easy-to-search database.

Roundtheworldflights.com (www.roundtheworldflights.com) Allows you to build your own trips from the UK with up to six stops.

STA Travel (www.statravel.com) Prominent in international student travel but you don't have to be a student; site linked to worldwide STA sites.

Travel Online (www.travelonline.co.nz) Good place to check worldwide flights from New Zealand.

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com) US site that allows you to search fares (in US dollars) to/from practically anywhere.

Asia

Most Asian countries offer competitive airfare deals, with Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong the best cities in which to find discount tickets.

Flights between Hong Kong and Australia are notoriously heavily booked. Flights to/from Bangkok and Singapore are often part of the longer Europe-to-Australia route so are also in demand. Plan your preferred itinerary well in advance.

You can get cheap short-hop flights between Darwin and Indonesia. Royal Brunei Airlines flies between Darwin and Bandar Seri Begawan, while Malaysia Airlines flies from Kuala Lumpur.

A couple of Asian agents:

Phoenix Services (☎ 2722 7378) Based in Hong Kong.
STA Travel Bangkok (☎ 02-236 0262; www.statravel.co.th); Singapore (☎ 6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg); Tokyo (☎ 03-5391-2922; www.statravel.co.jp)

Canada

Most flights from Toronto and Vancouver stop at one US city such as Los Angeles or Honolulu before heading on to Australia. Air fares from Canadian discount ticket sellers (consolidators) tend to be about 10% higher than those sold in the USA. **Travel CUTS** (☎ 866-246-9762; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency and has offices in all major cities.

Qantas, Air Canada, Air New Zealand, Japan Airlines and United all fly from Canada to Australia.

Continental Europe

From major European destinations, most flights travel to Australia via one of the Asian cities. Some flights are also routed through London before arriving in Australia via Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong or Kuala Lumpur.

In Germany good travel agencies include **STA Travel** (☎ 069-7430 3292; www.statravel.de). A good place to check out in the Netherlands is **Holland International** (☎ 0900-8858; www.hollandinternational.nl).

In France try **OTU Voyages** (☎ 01 40 29 12 22; www.otu.fr), a student/youth specialist with offices in many French cities. Other recommendations include **Voyageurs du Monde** (www

.vdm.com/vdm) and **Nouvelles Frontières** (☎ 08 25 00 07 47; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr/nf) – again, both companies have branches around France.

New Zealand

Air New Zealand and Qantas operate a network of flights linking key New Zealand cities with most major Australian cities, while quite a few other international airlines include New Zealand and Australia on their Asia-Pacific routes. Emirates flies to Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane from Auckland, and to Sydney only from Christchurch.

Another trans-Tasman option is the no-frills budget airline Freedom Air, an Air New Zealand subsidiary that offers direct flights between destinations on Australia's east coast and six New Zealand cities.

Pacific Blue, a subsidiary of budget airline Virgin Blue, flies from Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland to a number of Australian cities.

There is usually not a significant difference in price between seasons, as this is a popular route year-round. Agents with numerous branches and reasonably priced fares:

House of Travel (www.houseoftravel.co.nz)

STA Travel (☎ 0508 782 872; www.statravel.co.nz)

UK & Ireland

There are two routes from the UK: the western route via the USA and the Pacific; and the eastern route via the Middle East and Asia. Flights are usually cheaper and more frequent on the latter. Some of the best deals are with Emirates, Gulf Air, Malaysia Airlines, Japan Airlines and Thai Airways International. British Airways, Singapore Airlines and Qantas generally have higher fares but may offer a more direct route.

Discount air travel is big business in London. Advertisements for travel agencies appear in the travel pages of the weekend broadsheet newspapers, as well as in *Time Out*, in the *Evening Standard* and in the free magazine *TNT*.

Popular agencies in the UK:

Flight Centre (☎ 0870-499 0040; www.flightcentre.co.uk)

STA Travel (☎ 0870-160 0599; www.statravel.co.uk)

Trailfinders (☎ 0845-058 5858; www.trailfinders.co.uk)

USA

Most flights between the USA and Australia travel to/from the west coast, with the bulk routed through Los Angeles but some

coming through San Francisco. Numerous airlines offer flights via Asia or various Pacific islands.

San Francisco is the USA's ticket consolidator capital, although good deals can be found in Los Angeles, New York and other big cities. **STA Travel** (☎ 800-781 4040; www.statravel.com) has offices all over the USA.

GETTING AROUND

AIR

Airlines in Australia

Qantas (p372) is the country's chief domestic airline, and is represented at the so-called 'budget' end of the national air-travel market by its subsidiary **Jetstar** (☎ 13 15 38; www.jetstar.com.au), which flies to 15 east-coast destinations from Cairns to Hobart, and also to Adelaide. Another highly competitive carrier that flies all over Australia is **Virgin Blue** (☎ 13 67 89; www.virginblue.com.au).

Australia has many smaller operators flying regional routes, including the following: **Australian Airlines** (☎ 13 13 13; www.australianairlines.com.au) Qantas subsidiary flying between Cairns and both the Gold Coast and Sydney.

Regional Express (Rex; ☎ 13 17 13; www.regional.express.com.au) Flies to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and regional centres in NSW, Victoria, SA and Tasmania, including Cooma, Devonport and Kangaroo Island.

Skywest (☎ 1300 660 088; www.skywest.com.au) Flies from Perth to many West Australian towns, including Albany, plus Darwin.

Air Passes

With discounting now the norm, air passes are no longer great value. Qantas' Boomerang Pass can only be purchased overseas and involves buying coupons for either short-haul flights (up to 1200km), or multizone sectors (including New Zealand and the Pacific). You must purchase a minimum of two coupons before you arrive in Australia, and once here you can buy more.

Regional Express has the Rex Backpacker scheme, where international travellers with a VIP, YHA, ISIC or IYTC card can buy one/two months of unlimited travel on the airline; it applies to standby fares only.

BOAT

Australia might be an island nation but there are few opportunities to practically

use the ocean as a means of transport. Ferries likely to be of use to walkers:

Sealink (☎ 13 13 01; www.sealink.com.au) Vehicle ferries between Cape Jervis (out of Adelaide) and Kangaroo Island.

Spirit of Tasmania (☎ 1800 634 906; www.spiritof.tasmania.com.au) High-speed vehicle ferries between Devonport (Tasmania) and both Sydney and Melbourne.

Ferries or shuttles also serve Hinchinbrook Island (p349) and Fraser Island (p344).

BUS

Australia's extensive bus network makes a relatively cheap and reliable way to get around, though it can be a tedious means of travel. Most buses are equipped with air-con, toilets and videos, and all are smoke-free. Small towns eschew formal bus terminals for a single drop-off/pick-up point, usually outside a post office, newsagent or shop.

A national bus network is provided by **Greyhound Australia** (☎ 13 14 99; www.greyhound.com.au). Fares purchased online are roughly 5% cheaper than over-the-counter tickets; fares purchased by phone incur a \$4 booking fee.

Due to convoluted licensing arrangements involving some regional bus operators, there are some states and areas in Australia – namely SA, Victoria and parts of NSW and northern Queensland – where you cannot buy a Greyhound ticket to travel between destinations within that state/area. Instead, your ticket needs to take you out of the region or across a state/territory border. For example, you cannot get on a Greyhound bus in Melbourne and get off in Ballarat, but you can travel from Melbourne to Bordertown just across the border in SA. This situation does not apply to bus passes, which can be used freely.

Other operators running key routes: **Firefly Express** (☎ 1300 730 740; www.fireflyexpress.com.au) Runs between Sydney and Adelaide through Melbourne. **Premier Motor Service** (☎ 13 34 10; www.premierms.com.au) Covers the east coast between Cairns and Melbourne. **Premier Stataliner** (☎ 08-8415 5555; www.premierstataliner.com.au) Services towns around SA, including Port Augusta and Port Germein.

Redline Coaches (☎ 1300 360 000; www.tasredline.com.au) Services Hobart, Launceston and Tasmania's north and east coasts.

Tassielink (☎ 1300 300 520; www.tassielink.com.au) Covers Tasmania extensively, with dedicated walker services in summer.

Transwa (☎ 1300 662 205; www.transwa.wa.gov.au) Destinations include Albany, Walpole, Dunsborough and Augusta out of Perth.

VLine (☎ 13 61 96; www.vline.com.au) Services to most major Victorian towns and cities.

Bus Passes

The following Greyhound passes are subject to a 10% discount for members of YHA, VIP, Nomads and other approved organisations, as well as seniors/pensioners.

The popular range of Aussie Explorer Passes gives you from one month to a year to cover a set route – there are 24 routes in all and the time of validity depends on the distance of the route. You can't backtrack, but if you find a route that suits you it generally works out cheaper than other passes. The Aussie Highlights pass (\$1430), for instance, allows you one year to loop around Australia's eastern half from Sydney, through Melbourne, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Darwin, Cairns, Townsville and Brisbane, taking in many of the walks in this book. Or there are one-way passes such as the Outback and Reef Explorer Pass (\$800), giving you six months to travel from Sydney through Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Katherine and Darwin.

The Aussie Kilometre Pass is the simplest pass and gives you a specified amount of travel, starting at 2000km and going up in increments of 1000km to a maximum of 20,000km. The pass is valid for 12 months and you can travel where and in what direction you like, and stop as many times as you like. For example, a 2000km pass (\$300) will get you from Cairns to Brisbane, 4000km (\$540) from Cairns to Melbourne, and 12,000km (\$1370) will cover a loop from Sydney through Melbourne, Adelaide, central Australia, Darwin, Cairns and back to Sydney. Side trips or destinations off the main route (such as Kakadu) may be calculated at double the actual kilometres travelled. Phone at least a day ahead to reserve a seat if you are using this pass.

Hop-on Hop-off Buses

Many of the backpacker-style buses that are so ubiquitous around Australia operate only set tours, making them impractical for walkers, but some do offer hop-on hop-off services that can be a cost-effective alternative to the big bus companies. The buses are

usually smaller, you will meet lots of other travellers and the drivers sometimes double as tour guides. Conversely, some travellers find the tour-group mentality and inherent limitations don't suit them. Discounts for students and members of hostel organisations are usually available.

Easyrider Backpacker Tours (☎ 1300 308 477; www.easyrider.tours.com.au) Runs tours with hop-on hop-off options through WA. Of most use to walkers is the Southern Curl tour, passing through Dunsborough, Augusta, Walpole and Albany.

Oz Experience (☎ 1300 300 287; www.ozexperience.com) Highly social buses – for better or worse – that cover central, northern and eastern Australia. Travel is one-directional and passes are valid for up to 12 months with unlimited stops.

Wayward Bus (☎ 1300 653 510; www.waywardbus.com.au) Most trips with this reputable company allow you to get on or off where you like. The Classic Coast route runs between Adelaide and Melbourne along the Great Ocean Road. Trips also run to Alice Springs, Kangaroo Island and Flinders Ranges, Kosciuszko, Nitmiluk and Kakadu National Parks.

Reservations

Over summer, school holidays and public holidays, book well ahead on the more popular routes such as intercity and east-coast services.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Many of Australia's best walking tracks are a long way from the reach of public transport, so having your own vehicle is not only an asset but also often a necessity.

Automobile Associations

Each state (and the NT) has its own automobile association, providing emergency breakdown services, excellent touring maps and detailed guides to accommodation and camping grounds. They all have reciprocal arrangements with each other (and overseas), so if you're a member of the NRMA in NSW, for example, you can use RACV facilities in Victoria. Similarly, if you are a member of the AAA in the USA, you can use any of the Australian organisations' facilities. Bring proof of your membership.

Association details for each state:

Automobile Association of the Northern Territory (AANT; ☎ 08-8981 3837; www.aant.com.au)

National Roads & Motorists Association (NRMA; ☎ 13 11 22; www.mynrma.com.au) In NSW and the ACT.

Royal Automobile Association of South Australia (RAA; ☎ 08-8202 4600; www.raa.net)

Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ; ☎ 13 19 05; www.racq.com.au)

Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania (RACT; ☎ 13 27 22; www.ract.com.au)

Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV; ☎ 13 19 55; www.racv.com.au)

Royal Automobile Club of Western Australia (RACWA; ☎ 13 17 03; www.rac.com.au)

Driving Licence

You can generally use your home country's driving licence in Australia, as long as it is in English (otherwise you will need a certified translation) and carries your photograph for identification. You can also use an International Driving Permit (IDP), which must be supported by your home licence. It is easy enough to get an IDP – just go to your home country's automobile association and it should issue it on the spot. The permits are valid for 12 months.

Fuel & Spare Parts

Fuel (predominantly unleaded and diesel) is available from service stations sporting well-known international brand names. LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) is not always stocked at more remote roadhouses; if you are on gas it is safer to have dual-fuel capacity.

Prices vary from place to place but basically fuel is heavily taxed and continues to rise in price, much to the disgust of local motorists, though it is still relatively cheap compared with Europe. Once in the bush, prices soar – in outback NT and Queensland, or along the Nullarbor, prices can be up to 50% higher than in the cities.

Distances between roadhouses can be long in the outback, but not so long that you need worry about running out of fuel. The greatest distance between fuel stops along Highway One is around 300km along the west coast, which is outside the area of any walks in this book. While many roadhouses on are open 24 hours, this does not apply to every fuel stop and you can't always rely on them to be open in the dead of night.

The further you get from the cities, the better it is to be in a Holden or Ford. Spare parts are easy to find for these vehicles, but less so for some other makes.

Hire

For cheaper alternatives to the big-name international car-hire firms, try one of the

many local outfits. Remember, though, that if you want to travel a significant distance you will want unlimited kilometres, and that cheap car hire often comes with serious restrictions.

You must be at least 21 years old to hire from most firms – if you are under 25 you may have to pay a surcharge. It is cheaper if you rent for a week or more and there are often low-season and weekend discounts. Credit cards are the usual payment method.

Large firms sometimes offer one-way rentals (eg pick up a car in Adelaide and leave it in Sydney) but there are many limitations, including a substantial drop-off fee.

Major companies offer a choice: either unlimited kilometres, or 100km or so a day free plus so many cents per kilometre over this.

Daily rates in cities or on the east coast are typically about \$55 to \$60 daily for a small car (Holden Barina, Ford Festiva, Hyundai Excel), about \$65 to \$80 daily for a medium car (Mitsubishi Magna, Toyota Camry) and \$85 to \$100 daily for a big car (Holden Commodore, Ford Falcon), all including insurance. A small 4WD (Suzuki Vitara, Toyota Rav4) is about \$85 to \$100 a day, while a large 4WD such as a Toyota Landcruiser is at least \$150, which should include insurance and some free kilometres (100km to 200km a day, or sometimes unlimited). You can compare prices between companies at www.carhire.com.au.

Rental companies with offices in the capital cities include the following:

Airport Rent-A-Car (☎ 1800 331 033; www.airportrentacar.com.au)

Apex (☎ 1800 777 779; www.apexrentacar.com.au)

Avis (☎ 13 63 33; www.avis.com.au)

Budget (☎ 1300 794 344; www.budget.com.au)

Europcar (☎ 1300 131 390; www.deltaeuropcar.com.au)

Hertz (☎ 13 30 39; www.hertz.com.au)

Rent-a-Bomb (☎ 13 15 53; www.rentabomb.com.au)

Offices in NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

Thrifty (☎ 1300 367 227; www.thrifty.com.au)

If you prefer a campervan with a bad paint job, join the backpacker scene with **Wicked Campers** (☎ 1800 246 869; www.wickedcampers.com.au).

For a less orthodox form of car rental check out **Ezi-Ride** (☎ 07-5559 5938; www.ezi-ride.com), an organised car-pooling scheme that brings together travellers who are prepared

to pay for lifts and drivers looking for cash-paying passengers. Also check out the possibilities for long-distance lifts on the virtual notice board www.needaride.com.au.

Insurance

In Australia, third-party personal injury insurance is included in the vehicle registration fee, ensuring that every registered vehicle carries at least minimum insurance. We recommend extending that minimum to at least third-party property insurance, which covers damage to other vehicles (and property) in an accident – minor collisions can be amazingly expensive.

When it comes to hire cars, understand your liability in the event of an accident. Rather than risk paying out thousands of dollars, you can pay an additional daily amount to the rental company to reduce the excess you pay in the event of an accident. If travelling on dirt roads in a rental vehicle you will not be covered by insurance unless you have a 4WD. Also, most companies' insurance won't cover the cost of damage to glass (including the windscreen) or tyres.

Note that some companies won't cover you for accidents that occur between dusk and dawn while driving in the outback, so be prepared to confine your driving to daylight hours.

Road Conditions

Multilane highways are relatively uncommon in Australia, but all major routes are sealed and have two lanes. The starting points of several walks are on unsealed roads – some gravel-road driving is inevitable if you want to access areas such as the Victorian Alps. Always carry spare parts, such as fan belts and radiator hoses, if you are heading into the bush on dirt roads.

Road Hazards

Kangaroos are common hazards on country roads and can cause a lot of damage if you hit one. They are most active at dawn and dusk, and often travel in groups. If one hops across the road in front of you, slow right down – its mates may be close behind. Many Australians avoid travelling after dark because of the risk posed by animals. Cattle join kangaroos as hazards in the outback,

If you are travelling at night and a large animal does appear in front of you, hit the

INTERSTATE QUARANTINE

Restrictions on the movement of fruit, vegetables, plants and flowers between states apply in Australia in an attempt to prevent the spread of pests and diseases such as fruit fly and grape phylloxera. There are quarantine inspection posts at some state borders and dump bins at airports. Some inspection posts are manned, with quarantine officers entitled to search your vehicle for undeclared items, so save your fruit and veg shopping until you are across the border. For a list of restrictions between each state, see the **Travellers' Guide to Interstate Quarantine** (www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/4699).

brakes, dip your lights (so you don't continue to dazzle and confuse it) and avoid swerving if you can – people have been killed in accidents caused by swerving to miss animals.

Away from the cities you may also meet road trains. These are huge trucks (a prime mover plus two or three trailers) that can be more than 50m long in the Top End and west, so you need about 1km to overtake one. When a road train approaches on a narrow sealed road, slow down and pull over – if it has to put its wheels off the road to pass, the shower of stones it tosses up could shatter your windscreen.

Another hazard is driver fatigue. Driving long distances (particularly in hot weather) can be so tiring you might fall asleep at the wheel. It is not uncommon and the consequences can be unthinkable. On a long haul, stop and rest about every two hours – do some exercise, change drivers or have a coffee.

Road Rules

Australians drive on the left-hand side of the road and all cars are right-hand drive. An important road rule is 'give way to the right' – if an intersection is unmarked, you must give way to vehicles coming from your right.

The general speed limit in built-up areas is 60km/h, but this has been reduced to 50km/h (and in some cases 40km/h) on residential streets in most states – keep an eye out for signs. Near schools, the limit is

40km/h in the morning and afternoon, and is often stringently policed. On the open highway it is usually 100km/h or 110km/h. In the NT there is no speed limit outside built-up areas (except along the Lasseter Hwy to Uluru, where the limit is 110km/h). Police have speed radar guns and cameras, and are fond of using them.

Oncoming drivers who flash their lights at you may be giving you a friendly warning of a speed camera ahead, or they may be telling you that your headlights are not on. Try not to get caught doing it yourself, since it is illegal.

All new cars in Australia have seat belts back and front, and it is the law to wear them; you are likely to get a fine if you don't. Small children must be belted into an approved safety seat. Talking on a mobile phone when driving is also illegal.

Drink-driving remains a real problem. Serious attempts to reduce the resulting road toll are ongoing and random breath-tests are not uncommon in built-up areas. If you are caught with a blood-alcohol level of more than 0.05%, expect a hefty fine and the loss of your licence.

HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go. In Australia, the hitching signal can be a thumbs up or a downward-pointed finger.

TRAIN

Long-distance rail travel in Australia is something you do because you really want to – because it is neither cheaper nor more

convenient, and it certainly isn't fast. Trains are likely to be of little practical use to walkers, as stations are rarely near trailheads. Exceptions include the Coast Track (p58), Red Hands Cave (p64) and the Yurrebilla Trail (p253).

Rail services within each state are run by that state's rail body. The three major interstate services in Australia are operated by **Great Southern Railway** ([☎ 13 21 47](http://www.gsr.com.au); www.gsr.com.au), namely the *Indian Pacific* between Sydney and Perth, the *Overland* between Melbourne and Adelaide, and the *Ghan* between Adelaide and Darwin via Alice Springs and Katherine.

CountryLink ([☎ 13 22 32](http://www.countrylink.info); www.countrylink.info) is a rail and coach operation that visits destinations in NSW, the ACT, Queensland and Victoria.

Reservations

As the railway-booking system is computerised, any station (other than those on suburban lines) can make a booking for any journey throughout the country. For telephone reservations call [☎ 13 22 32](http://www.countrylink.info); this will connect you to the nearest main-line station.

Discounted tickets work on a first-come, first-served quota basis, so it helps to book in advance.

Train Passes

The Great Southern Railway Pass (\$590), available only to non-Australian residents, allows unlimited travel on the rail network for a period of six months. With the pass you will be travelling in a 'Daynighter' reclining seat and not a cabin. You need to book all seats at least 24 hours in advance.

CountryLink offers two passes. The East Coast Discovery Pass (\$400) allows one-way economy travel between Melbourne

LOCAL TRANSPORT TO/FROM WALKS

In a country with as much land and as few major roads as Australia, it's inevitable that public transport is going to be of limited use to most walkers. In response to this, an industry of shuttle services has developed around the most popular trails, so that there are private operators – often accommodation owners – throughout the country that whisk walkers to and from trailheads. In one case (Walpole in Western Australia) the town's taxi service even grew from its origin as a walkers' shuttle.

Around 14 of the walking regions in this book have dedicated shuttle services. For service details, see the relevant sections in the regional chapters.

and Cairns (in either direction) with unlimited stopovers, and is valid for six months. It is available to Australian residents and overseas visitors. Shorter sections, such as Sydney to Cairns, are also available. The Backtracker Rail Pass is available only to non-Australian residents, and allows for travel on the entire CountryLink network.

There are four versions: 14 days (\$220), one month (\$260), three months (\$280) and six months (\$390).

The Austrail Flexi-Pass allows you to travel on any Great Southern Railway, CountryLink and Queensland Rail routes for either 15 days (\$870) or 22 days (\$1210) over a six-month period.

Health & Safety

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Australia's greatest hazards are more topographical than infectious – you are more likely to twist an ankle on the trail than you are to be felled by disease. Some tropical maladies such as malaria and yellow fever are unheard of, as are diseases of insanitation such as cholera and typhoid. By taking care to treat the water you drink along the tracks, covering yourself against the sun and walking with basic caution, you are likely only to carry this chapter as ballast.

BEFORE YOU GO

Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they are given, visit a physician four to eight weeks before departure. Ask your doctor for an International Certificate of Vaccination (known as 'the yellow booklet'), which will list all the vaccinations you have received. This is mandatory for countries that require proof of yellow fever vaccination upon entry (sometimes required in Australia; see right).

Bring medications in their original labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your doctor describing your medical conditions and medications, including

generic names, is a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles be sure to have a doctor's letter stating their medical necessity.

Some walks in this book are physically demanding and most require a reasonable level of fitness. Even if you are tackling the easiest walks, it pays to be relatively fit, rather than launch straight into them after months of sedentary living. If you are aiming for the demanding walks, good fitness is essential.

Unless you are a regular walker, start your get-fit campaign at least a month before your visit. Take a vigorous walk of about an hour, two or three times per week and gradually extend the duration of your outings as the departure date nears. If you plan to carry a full backpack on walks, take a loaded pack on some of your training jaunts.

INSURANCE

If your health insurance doesn't cover you for medical expenses abroad, consider getting extra insurance. Make sure this covers you for walking and remote-area rescue.

Medicare doesn't cover ambulance costs, though ambulance service is free for Queensland and Tasmanian residents. Residents of other states (and Queenslanders and Tasmanians walking outside of their home states) should check their health insurance covers them for remote-area ambulance rescue services. Some health insurers offer ambulance-only cover for around \$30 a year, and in Victoria, SA and country WA you can take out ambulance cover direct with the ambulance service.

REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

If you are entering Australia within six days of having stayed overnight or longer in a yellow fever-infected country, you will need proof of yellow fever vaccination. For a full list of these countries visit the **World Health Organization** (WHO; www.who.int/wer/) website or the **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention** (www.cdc.gov/travel/yb/outline.htm#2) website.

If you are really worried about health when travelling, there are a few vaccinations you could consider for Australia. The WHO recommends that all travellers

should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox and polio, as well as hepatitis B, regardless of their destination. While Australia has high levels of childhood vaccination coverage, outbreaks of these diseases do occur.

MEDICAL CHECK LIST

- Acetaminophen (paracetamol) or aspirin
- Adhesive or paper tape
- Antibacterial ointment for cuts and abrasions
- Antibiotics
- Antidiarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- Antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- Anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- Bandages, gauze swabs, gauze rolls
- Elasticised support bandage
- Iodine tablets or water filter (for water purification)
- Nonadhesive dressing
- Oral rehydration salts
- Paper stitches
- Permethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents and bed nets
- Scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- Sterile alcohol wipes
- Steroid cream or cortisone (for allergic rashes)
- Sticking plasters (Band-Aids, blister plasters)
- Sutures
- Syringes and needles – ask your doctor for a note explaining why you have them
- Thermometer

Also see the equipment check list, p392.

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice to be found on the Internet. The **WHO** (www.who.int/ith) publishes a superb book called *International Travel and Health*, which is revised annually and is available online at no cost. Another website of general interest is **MD Travel Health** (www.mdtravelhealth.com), which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country and is updated daily.

It is usually a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure, if one is available:

Canada (www.travelhealth.gc.ca)

UK (www.doh.gov.uk)

USA (www.cdc.gov/travel)

FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's *Healthy Travel Australia, NZ & the Pacific* is a handy, pocket-sized guide packed with useful information, including pre-trip planning, emergency first aid, immunisation and disease information and what to do if you get sick on the road.

Australian First Aid, published by St John Ambulance, is a good general reference, while *Remote Area First Aid*, also from St John Ambulance, is one for the backpack, offering quick reference on the injuries you might encounter on the trail. Both books can be purchased from **St John Ambulance** (www.ambulance.net.au).

IN AUSTRALIA

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Australia has an excellent health-care system. It is a mixture of privately run medical clinics and hospitals alongside a system of public hospitals funded by the Australian government. The Medicare system covers Australian residents for some health-care costs. Visitors from countries with which Australia has a reciprocal health-care agreement are eligible for benefits specified under the Medicare program. Agreements are currently in place with New Zealand, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Italy, Malta and Ireland – check the details before departing these countries. In general the agreements provide for any episode of ill-health that requires prompt medical attention. For further details, visit www.health.gov.au/pubs/mbs/mbs3/medicare.htm.

Preparing for a Walk

On many of Australia's walking tracks, there is likely to be a significant delay in emergency services reaching you in the event of serious accident or illness, which makes an increased level of self-reliance and preparation essential. Consider taking a wilderness first-aid course, such as those offered at the **Wilderness Medicine Institute** (www.wmi.net.au). Take a comprehensive first-aid kit that's appropriate for your activities, and ensure that you have adequate means of communication. Australia has extensive mobile phone coverage but additional radio communication is important in remote areas.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES Dengue Fever

Dengue fever occurs in northern Queensland – particularly from October to March – during the wet season. Also known as 'breakbone fever', because of the severe muscular pains that accompany it, this viral disease is spread by a species of mosquito that feeds primarily during the day. Most people will recover in just a few days; however, more severe forms of this disease can occur, particularly in residents or visitors who are exposed to another strain of the virus (there are four types) in a subsequent season.

Giardiasis

Giardiasis is widespread in waterways around Australia. Drinking untreated water from streams and lakes is not recommended. Use water filters and boil or treat water with iodine to help prevent the disease. Symptoms consist of intermittent foul-smelling diarrhoea, abdominal bloating and wind. Effective treatment is available (tinidazole or metronidazole).

Meningococcal Disease

This disease occurs worldwide and is a risk if you have prolonged stays in dormitory-style accommodation. A vaccine exists for some types of this disease, namely meningococcal A, C, Y and W. No vaccine is presently available for the viral type of meningitis.

Ross River Fever

The Ross River virus occurs throughout Australia and is spread by mosquitoes living in marshy areas. As well as fever, it causes headache, joint and muscular pains and a rash, and resolves after five to seven days.

Tick Typhus

Cases of tick typhus have been reported throughout Australia, but are predominantly found in Queensland and New South Wales. A week or so after being bitten, a dark area forms around the bite, followed by a rash and possible fever, headache and inflamed lymph nodes. The disease is treatable with antibiotics (doxycycline), so see a doctor if you suspect you have been bitten. Seek local advice on areas where ticks pose

COMMON AILMENTS

Blisters

To avoid blisters make sure your boots are well worn in before you hit the trail. Your boots should fit comfortably with enough room to move your toes; boots that are too big or too small will cause blisters. Make sure socks fit properly and are specifically made for walkers; even then, check to make sure there are no seams across the widest part of your foot. Wet and muddy socks can also cause blisters, so even on a day walk pack a spare pair of socks. Keep your toenails clipped but not too short. If you do feel a blister coming on, treat it sooner rather than later. Apply a simple sticking plaster, or preferably a special blister plaster that acts as a second skin.

Fatigue

More injuries happen towards the end of the day rather than earlier, when you are fresher. Although tiredness can simply be a nuisance on an easy walk, it can be life-threatening on narrow, exposed ridges or in bad weather. You should never set out on a walk that is beyond your capabilities on the day. If you feel below par, have a day off. To reduce the risk, don't push yourself too hard – take a rest every hour or two and build in a good-length lunch break. Towards the end of the day, reduce the pace and increase your concentration. You should also eat properly throughout the day; nuts, dried fruit and chocolate are all good energy-giving snack foods.

Knee Strain

Many walkers feel the judder on long, steep descents. Although you can't eliminate strain on the knee joints when dropping steeply, you can reduce it by taking shorter steps that leave your legs slightly bent and ensure that your heel hits the ground before the rest of your foot. Some walkers find that tubular bandages help, while others use hi-tech, strap-on supports. Walking poles are very effective in taking some of the weight off the knees.

a danger and always check your skin carefully for ticks after walking in a danger area such as a tropical forest. An insect repellent can help, and walkers in tick-infested areas should consider having their boots and trousers impregnated with benzyl benzoate and dibutylphthalate (see Ticks, right, for advice on removal).

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Bites & Stings

LEECHES

Often present in damp rainforest conditions, leeches attach themselves to your skin to suck your blood. Trekkers often get them on their legs or in their boots. Salt or a lighted cigarette end will make them fall off. Do not pull them off, as the bite is then more likely to become infected. Clean and apply pressure if the point of attachment is bleeding. An insect repellent may keep them away.

SNAKES

Australian snakes have a fearful reputation that is justified in terms of the potency of their venom, but unjustified in terms of the actual risk to walkers. Snakes are usually quite timid and, in most instances, will move away if disturbed. They have only small fangs, making it easy to prevent bites to the lower limbs (where 80% of bites occur) by wearing protective clothing (such as gaiters) when walking.

In all cases of confirmed or suspected bites, preventing the spread of toxic venom can be achieved by applying pressure to the wound and immobilising the area with a splint or sling before seeking medical attention. Firmly wrap an elastic bandage (you can improvise with a T-shirt) around the entire limb, but not so tight as to cut off the circulation. Along with immobilisation, this is a life-saving first-aid measure.

SPIDERS

Australia has a number of poisonous spiders. The Sydney funnel-web spider causes severe local pain, as well as generalised symptoms (vomiting, abdominal pain and sweating). An antivenin exists, so apply pressure to the wound and immobilise the area before transferring to a hospital.

Redback spiders are found throughout the country. Bites cause increasing pain at

the site, followed by profuse sweating and generalised symptoms (including muscular weakness, sweating at the site of the bite and nausea). First aid includes application of ice or cold packs to the bite, then transfer to hospital.

White-tailed spider bites may cause an ulcer that is very slow and difficult to heal. Clean the wound thoroughly and seek medical assistance.

TICKS

Always check all over your body if you have been walking through a potentially tick-infested area as ticks can cause skin infections and other more serious diseases. Ticks are most active from spring to autumn, especially where there are plenty of sheep or deer. They usually lurk in overhanging vegetation, so avoid bush-bashing if possible.

If a tick is found attached to the skin, press down around the tick's head with tweezers, grab the head and gently pull upwards. Avoid pulling the rear of the body as this may squeeze the tick's gut contents through its mouth into your skin, increasing the risk of infection and disease. Smearing chemicals on the tick will not make it let go and is not recommended.

Heat Exhaustion & Heatstroke

Very hot weather occurs year-round in northern Australia and during summer for most of the country. When arriving from a temperate or cold climate, remember that it takes two weeks for acclimatisation to occur. Before the body is acclimatised, an excessive amount of salt is lost in perspiration, so increasing the salt in your diet is vital.

Heat exhaustion occurs when fluid intake does not keep up with fluid loss. Symptoms include dizziness, fainting, fatigue, not sweating very much (or at all) nausea or vomiting. The skin is usually pale, cool and clammy. Treatment consists of rest in a cool, shady place and fluid replacement with water or diluted sports drinks.

Heatstroke is a severe form of heat illness that occurs after fluid depletion or extreme heat challenge from heavy exercise. This is a true medical emergency, with heating of the brain leading to disorientation, hallucinations and seizures. Prevent heatstroke by maintaining an adequate fluid intake to

ensure the continued passage of clear and copious urine, especially during physical exertion.

Dehydration is also a risk. The first symptoms are weakness, thirst and passing small amounts of very concentrated urine. This may progress to drowsiness, dizziness or fainting on standing up, and finally, coma. It is easy to forget how much fluid you are losing via perspiration while you are walking, particularly if a strong breeze is drying your skin quickly. You should always maintain a good fluid intake – a minimum of 3L a day is recommended.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a significant risk, especially during winter in southern parts of Australia. Strong winds produce a high chill factor that can result in hypothermia even in moderately cool temperatures. Early signs include the inability to perform fine movements (such as doing up buttons), shivering and a bad case of the 'umbles' (fumbles, mumbles, grumbles, stumbles). The key elements of treatment include moving out of the cold, changing out of any wet clothing into dry clothes with windproof and waterproof layers, adding insulation and providing fuel (water and carbohydrate) to allow shivering, which builds the internal temperature. In severe hypothermia, shivering actually stops – this is a medical emergency requiring rapid medical attention in addition to the above measures.

Insect-Borne Illnesses

Various insects can be a source of irritation and, in Australia, may be the source of specific diseases (such as dengue fever and Ross River fever). Protection from mosquitoes, sandflies, ticks and leeches can be achieved by a combination of the following strategies:

- Cover up by wearing loose-fitting, long-sleeved clothing.
- Applying 30% DEET to all exposed skin and repeating every three to four hours.
- Impregnating clothing with permethrin (an insecticide that kills insects but is believed to be safe for humans).

Ultraviolet (UV) Light Exposure

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Monitor your exposure

WATER

Tap water is universally safe in Australia, but all other water should be treated. This can be done by boiling it for around five minutes, filtering it or chemically disinfecting it (with iodine tablets, available from outdoor-equipment suppliers and pharmacies) to prevent travellers diarrhoea and giardia. Too much iodine (prolonged use for several weeks) can be harmful – for longer walking trips buy a filter instead.

to direct sunlight closely. Slap on the sunscreen and a barrier cream for your nose and lips, wear a broad-brimmed hat and protect your eyes with good quality sunglasses with UV lenses, particularly when walking near water, sand or snow. Ultraviolet exposure is greatest between 10am and 4pm, so be particularly vigilant about skin exposure during these times. Always use 30+ sunscreen, apply it 30 minutes before going into the sun and repeat regularly to minimise damage.

TRAUMATIC INJURIES

Detailed first-aid instruction is outside the scope of this book, but here are some basic points. You should consider taking a first-aid course (see p382) before hitting the trail to ensure you know what to do in the event of an injury.

Major Accidents

Falling or having something fall on you, resulting in head injuries or fractures, is always possible when walking, especially if you are crossing steep slopes or unstable terrain. Following is some basic advice on what to do in the event of a major accident.

If a person suffers a major fall:

- Make sure you and other people with you are not in danger.
- Assess the injured person's condition.
- Stabilise any injuries, such as bleeding wounds or broken bones.
- Seek medical attention (see p388).

If the person is unconscious, immediately check whether they are breathing (clear their airway if it is blocked) and check whether they have a pulse – feel the side of the neck rather than the wrist. If they are

not breathing but have a pulse, you should start mouth-to-mouth resuscitation immediately. In these circumstances it is best to move the person as little as possible in case their neck or back is broken.

Check for wounds and broken bones – ask the person where they have pain if they are conscious, otherwise gently inspect them all over (including their back and the back of the head), moving them as little as possible. Control any bleeding by applying firm pressure to the wound. Bleeding from the nose or ear may indicate a fractured skull. Do not give the person anything by mouth, especially if they are unconscious.

You will have to manage the person for shock. Raise their legs above heart level (unless their legs are fractured); dress any wounds and immobilise any fractures; loosen tight clothing; keep the person warm by covering them with a blanket or other dry clothing; and insulate them from the ground if possible, but do not heat them.

Some general points to bear in mind:

- Simple fractures take several weeks to heal, so they do not need fixing straight away, but they should be immobilised to protect them from further injury. Compound fractures (those associated with open wounds) need urgent treatment.
- If you do have to splint a broken bone, remember to check regularly that the splint is not cutting off the circulation to the hand or foot.
- Most cases of brief unconsciousness are not associated with any serious internal injury to the brain but, as a general rule of thumb, any person who has been knocked unconscious should be watched for deterioration. If they do deteriorate, seek medical attention straight away.

Sprains

Ankle and knee sprains are common injuries among walkers. To help prevent ankle sprains, be sure to wear boots that provide adequate ankle support. If you do suffer a sprain, immobilise the joint with a firm bandage, and, if feasible, immerse the foot in cold water. Once you reach shelter, relieve pain and swelling by keeping the joint elevated for the first 24 hours and, where possible, by putting ice on the swollen joint. For more severe sprains, seek medical attention.

SAFETY ON THE WALK

You can significantly reduce the chance of getting into difficulties by taking a few simple precautions. These are listed in the boxed text on opposite. A list of the clothes and equipment you should carry is on p392.

CROSSING RIVERS

Sudden downpours can speedily turn a gentle stream into a raging torrent. If you are in any doubt about the safety of a crossing, look for a safer passage upstream or wait. If the rain is short-lived, it should subside quickly.

If you decide it is essential to cross (late in the day, for example), look for a wide, relatively shallow stretch of the stream rather than a bend. Take off your trousers and socks, but keep your boots on to prevent injury. Put dry, warm clothes and a towel in a plastic bag near the top of your pack. Before stepping out from the bank, unclip your chest strap and belt buckle. This makes it easier to slip out of your backpack and swim to safety if you lose your balance and are swept downstream. Use a walking pole or stick, grasped in both hands, on the upstream side as a third leg, or go arm in arm with a companion, clasping at the wrist, and cross side-on to the flow, taking short steps.

BUSHFIRE

Bushfires occur every summer in Australian national parks, bushland areas and even cities. The chances of getting caught in one while walking are slight but it is wise to be familiar with the precautions.

Before leaving on a walk in summer, check the weather report. Fire danger warnings are usually publicised by national park agencies and visitor centres. Remember that on days of Total Fire Ban even the use of a fuel stove is banned.

If you are caught in a fire, don't start running unless there is a clear escape route, and remember that fire travels faster uphill than downhill. Seek shelter in a creek, wet gully, drain, under a concrete bridge, in a rocky outcrop, an open area with little or no vegetation or a recently burnt area. Don't enter still water as there's a chance of being boiled alive. Clear the area around your shelter of

WALK SAFETY – BASIC RULES

- Allow plenty of time to accomplish a walk before dark, particularly when daylight hours are shorter.
- Study the route carefully before setting out, noting the possible escape routes and the point of no return (where it is quicker to continue than to turn back). Monitor your progress during the day against the time estimated for the walk, and keep an eye on the weather.
- It is wise not to walk alone. Always leave details of your intended route, number of people in your group, and expected return time with someone responsible before you set off; let that person know when you return.
- Before setting off, make sure you have a relevant map, compass and whistle, and that you know the weather forecast for the area for the next 24 hours.

leaves, twigs or flammable material. Cover exposed skin with clothing (preferably woollen), soft earth or anything that will give protection from the heat. Keep low and breathe air close to the ground where it's cooler and there's less smoke. Don't leave your shelter until the fire has passed.

If you're in a vehicle, don't drive along a road obscured by fire and smoke, and don't leave your vehicle. Park as far as possible from any flammable material. Close all windows and vents and turn on the headlights. Lie on the floor and cover yourself with a blanket or any cloth that will shield you from the heat. If you must continue driving, do so slowly with headlights on and watch out for fallen trees, firefighting vehicles and firefighters.

LIGHTNING

If a storm brews, avoid exposed areas. Lightning has a penchant for crests, lone trees, small depressions, gullies and caves, as well as wet ground. If you are caught out in the open, try to curl up as tightly as possible with your feet together and keep a layer of insulation between you and the ground. Place metal objects such as metal-frame backpacks and walking poles away from you.

RESCUE & EVACUATION

If someone in your group is injured or falls ill and can't move, leave somebody with them while another person goes for help. They should take clear written details of the location and condition of the victim, and of helicopter landing conditions. If there are only two of you, leave the injured person with as much warm clothing, food and water as it is sensible to spare, plus the

whistle and torch. Mark the position with something conspicuous – an orange bivvy bag, or perhaps a large stone cross on the ground. Remember, the rescue effort might be slow, perhaps taking days to remove the injured person.

Emergency Communications & Equipment

Communications equipment has brought the entire world into speaking range. Adventurers are calling home from the Poles and the summit of Mt Everest, so it is not surprising that the scope for emergency communications on a bushwalk has also grown tremendously in recent years. Mobile phones and Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRB) could be of use if you are in need of emergency treatment or help. A Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver (p390) may help you avoid some emergency situations, though there is no substitute for good old bush sense and map and compass skills.

When you ring an emergency service, be ready to give information on where an accident occurred, how many people are injured and the injuries sustained. If a helicopter needs to come in, explain also the terrain and the weather conditions at the place of the accident.

TELEPHONE

Australia's GSM and CDMA mobile-phone networks currently cover around 98% of the country's population but this translates to less than 14% of the land area. That said, most of the walks in this book are in the areas of general coverage. You should not expect uninterrupted reception as you are

walking – and you may not get reception anywhere on some walks – but you will often find points along a walk (usually mountain peaks or hilltops) where your phone will work. This makes your mobile phone a useful emergency tool, though be sure to carry it in something waterproof.

From a mobile phone you should ring the standard emergency number (☎ 000). If you don't have mobile-phone reception, and you have a GSM phone, you can dial ☎ 112; this will connect you to an emergency call service if another carrier has network coverage in the area. Check with your mobile service provider if you are not certain which network you are on.

EPIRB

EPIRBs transmit a signal when activated that is picked up by a satellite, which then transmits the beacon's position to an emergency service. EPIRBs are becoming more commonplace among walkers, and Service Tasmania (p193) and the Snowy Region Visitor Centre (p86) now hire out beacons to walkers.

Traditionally, walkers have used analogue 121.5MHz beacons, but from February 2009 these will no longer be detected by satellites, leaving the digital 406MHz system as the only option. These beacons are available and usable now, though they are bigger, more expensive and require registration (in order that authorities know whose beacon has been set off). For further information on the frequency change, check out the **Australian Maritime Safety Authority** (<http://beacons.amsa.gov.au/>) website.

DISTRESS SIGNALS

If you need to call for help, use these internationally recognised emergency signals. Give six short signals, such as a whistle, a

yell or the flash of a light, at 10-second intervals, followed by a minute of rest. Repeat the sequence until you get a response. If the responder knows the signals, this will be three signals at 20-second intervals, followed by a minute's pause and a repetition of the sequence.

Search & Rescue Organisations

Search and rescue operations in Australia are the responsibility of the police force in each state, with the assistance of various professional and voluntary organisations. The latter usually include experienced and trained bushwalkers. In an emergency, call ☎ 000 (on a GSM mobile phone you can also call ☎ 112 – see p387).

In NSW only, you can contact the **Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad** (☎ 13 22 22 pager 6277321), a volunteer service provided by the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs. It is a pager service so somebody will ring you back.

Helicopter Rescue & Evacuation

If a helicopter arrives on the scene, there are a couple of conventions you should be familiar with. Standing face on to the chopper:

- Arms up in the shape of a letter 'V' means 'I/We need help'.
- Arms in a straight diagonal line (like one line of a letter X) means 'All OK'.

For the helicopter to land, there must be a cleared space of 25m x 25m, with a flat landing pad area of 6m x 6m. The helicopter will fly into the wind when landing. In cases of extreme emergency, where no landing area is available, a person or harness might be lowered. Take extreme care to avoid the rotors when approaching a landed helicopter.

Clothing & Equipment

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You don't need to spend a fortune on gear to enjoy walking, but you do need to think carefully about what you pack to ensure you are comfortable and prepared for an emergency. Taking the right clothing and equipment can make the difference between an enjoyable day out or a cold and miserable one; in extreme situations, it can even mean the difference between life and death.

The gear you need will depend on the type of walking you plan to do. For day walks, clothing, footwear and a backpack are the major items; in some parts of the country you might get away with very little of the first mentioned. For longer walks or those in the mountains, especially if you are camping, the list becomes longer.

We recommend spending as much as you can afford on good walking boots, a rain jacket and a sweater or fleece jacket. These are likely to be among your most expensive

items but are a sound investment, as they should last for years.

As for non-essentials – such as that Tolstoy tome you might be considering for the long evenings – think about applying the bushwalkers' two-use principle: each item should have at least two uses before you pack it. Your shoulders will thank you.

The following section is not exhaustive; for more advice visit outdoor stores, talk to fellow walkers and read product reviews in outdoor magazines.

CLOTHING

For clothing considerations specific to the mountains, see the boxed text p39.

Layering

A secret of comfortable walking is to wear several layers of light clothing, which you can easily take off or put on as you warm up or cool down. Most walkers use three main layers: a base layer next to the skin; an insulating layer; and an outer, shell layer for protection from wind, rain and snow.

For the upper body, the base layer is typically a shirt of synthetic material such as polypropylene, with its ability to wick moisture away from the body and reduce chilling. The insulating layer retains heat

PIONEER PADDY

Australia's thriving walking gear industry was born in 1930 in a Sydney suburban bedroom belonging to Frank 'Paddy' Pallin, who had migrated to Australia from Yorkshire four years earlier. A keen walker, he soon began exploring the bushland on the fringes of Sydney and in the still largely unexplored Blue Mountains.

Losing his hated office job at the start of the Great Depression, he seized the chance to turn his recreation into income, setting about designing and making lightweight walking gear in his home. He moved the business to a small city premises in 1934.

After a disastrous fire in his shop and factory in the early 1950s the business went from strength to strength, with its own city shop in the 1970s and expansion state-wide and interstate during the 1980s. 'Paddymade' gear in those days covered the full range: backpacks, sleeping bags, tents, clothing and camping equipment. Many innovative items were developed – double sleeping bags, H-frame packs, self-standing lightweight water buckets and even highly prized pink wool socks, known as 'Paddy's Pinkies'.

Paddy remained active throughout his life, learning to cross-country ski in his 50s and trekking in Nepal in his 70th year; he died aged 91 in 1991. Paddy Pallin is still a family business, although the range of Paddymade gear has narrowed and other reputable brands are sold in its many shops located throughout the country.

next to your body, and is often a windproof synthetic fleece or down jacket. The outer shell consists of a waterproof jacket that also protects against cold wind.

For the lower body, the layers generally consist of either shorts or loose-fitting trousers, polypropylene 'long-john' underwear and waterproof overtrousers.

Waterproof Shells

Australia may be mostly arid but many of its walks are in the wettest parts of the country – Mt Bartle Frere is about *the* wettest place – so you are going to need good rain protection. Traditionally, this has been a rain jacket and overtrousers, though a relatively new arrival on the market is the 'soft

shell' jacket, offering protection from cold, wind and light rain. It can be used in place of the insulating layer and waterproof layer, ie one jacket instead of two, but should only be considered for areas unlikely to receive heavy rains.

The ideal specifications for a rain jacket are a breathable, waterproof fabric, a hood that is roomy enough to cover headwear but still allows peripheral vision, capacious map pocket and a heavy-gauge zip protected by a storm flap.

Overtrowsers can be restrictive – and the only thing you might hear while walking is your legs rubbing together – but can be a godsend in really wet conditions. As the name suggests, they are worn over your

trousers, offering waterproofing for your legs. Choose a model with slits for pocket access and long leg zips so that you can pull them on and off over your boots.

Footwear

Your footwear will be your friend or your enemy, so choose carefully. The first decision you will make is between boots and shoes. Runners or walking shoes are fine over easy terrain, but for more difficult trails – and across rocks and scree – the ankle support offered by boots is invaluable. Nonslip soles (such as Vibram) provide the best grip. Buy boots in warm conditions or go for a walk before trying them on, so that your feet can expand slightly, as they would on a walk.

Most walkers carry either a pair of thongs (flip-flops) or sandals. These will relieve your feet from the heavy boots at night or during rest stops, and sandals are also useful for fording waterways that are above the height of your boots.

GAITERS

If you are going to be walking through snow, deep mud or scratchy vegetation, or you are worried about snakes, consider using gaiters to protect your legs and keep your socks dry. If you are heading across buttongrass plains in Tasmania, you will think gaiters the best thing since internal-frame backpacks, and they will also help prevent spinifex stabs if you are walking

NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT

Maps & Compass

You should always carry a good map of the area in which you are walking (see p366), and know how to read it. Before setting off on your walk, ensure that you understand the contours and the map symbols, plus the main ridge and river systems in the area. Also familiarise yourself with the true north–south directions and the general direction in which you are heading. On the trail, try to identify major landforms such as mountain ranges and gorges, and locate them on your map. This will give you a better understanding of the region's geography.

Buy a compass and learn how to use it. The attraction of magnetic north varies in different parts of the world, so compasses need to be balanced accordingly. Compass manufacturers have divided the world into five zones. Make sure your compass is balanced for your destination zone. There are also 'universal' compasses on the market that can be used anywhere in the world.

How to Use a Compass

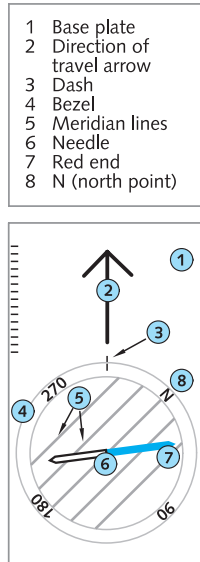
This is a very basic introduction to using a compass and will only be of assistance if you are proficient in map reading. For simplicity, it doesn't take magnetic variation into account. Before using a compass we recommend you obtain further instruction.

Reading a Compass

Hold the compass flat in the palm of your hand. Rotate the bezel (4) so the red end (7) of the needle (6) points to the N (north point; 8) on the bezel. The bearing is read from the dash (3) under the bezel.

Orienting the Map

To orient the map so that it aligns with the ground, place the compass flat on the map. Rotate the map until the needle is parallel with the map's north/south grid lines and the red end is pointing to north on the map. You can now identify features around you by aligning them with labelled features on the map.



Taking a Bearing from the Map

Draw a line on the map between your starting point and your destination. Place the edge of the compass on this line with the direction of travel arrow (2) pointing towards your destination. Rotate the bezel until the meridian lines (5) are parallel with the north/south grid lines on the map and the N points to north on the map. Read the bearing from the dash.

Following a Bearing

Rotate the bezel so that the intended bearing is in line with the dash. Place the compass flat in the palm of your hand and rotate the base plate (1) until the red end points to N on the bezel. The direction of travel arrow will now point in the direction you need to walk.

Determining Your Bearing

Rotate the bezel so the red end points to the N. Place the compass flat in the palm of your hand and rotate the base plate until the direction of travel arrow points in the direction in which you have been walking/hiking/trekking. Read your bearing from the dash.

GPS

Originally developed by the US Department of Defense, the Global Positioning System (GPS) is a network of more than 20 earth-orbiting satellites that continually beam encoded signals back to earth. Small, computer-driven devices (GPS receivers) can decode these signals to give users an extremely accurate reading of their location – to within a few metres, anywhere on the planet, at any time of day, in almost any weather. The cheapest hand-held GPS receivers now cost around \$250 (although these may not have a built-in averaging system that minimises signal errors). Other important factors to consider when buying a GPS receiver are its weight and battery life.

Remember that a GPS receiver is of little use to walkers unless used with an accurate topographical map. The receiver simply gives your position, which you must then locate on the local map. GPS receivers will only work properly in the open. The signals from a crucial satellite may be blocked (or bounce off rock or water) directly below high cliffs, near large bodies of water or in dense tree cover and give inaccurate readings. GPS receivers are more vulnerable to breakdowns (including dead batteries) than the humble magnetic compass – a low-tech device that has served navigators faithfully for centuries – so don't rely on them entirely.

For a complete rundown on GPS use, consider picking up a copy of a book such as *GPS Made Easy* by Lawrence Latham.

EQUIPMENT CHECK LIST

This list is a general guide to the things you might take on a walk. Your list will vary depending on the kind of walking you are doing, whether you are camping or planning to stay in huts or B&Bs, and on the terrain, weather conditions and time of year.

Clothing

- boots and spare laces
- down jacket
- gaiters
- hat (warm), scarf and gloves
- overtrousers (waterproof)
- rain jacket
- runners (training shoes), sandals or thongs (flip flops)
- shorts and trousers or skirt
- socks and underwear
- sunhat
- sweater or fleece jacket
- thermal underwear
- T-shirt and long-sleeved shirt with collar

Equipment

- backpack with waterproof liner
- first-aid kit*
- food and snacks (high energy) and one day's emergency supplies
- insect repellent
- map, compass and guidebook
- map case or clip-seal plastic bags
- plastic bags (for carrying rubbish)
- pocket knife
- sunglasses
- sunscreen and lip balm
- survival bag or blanket
- toilet paper and trowel
- torch (flashlight) or headlamp, spare batteries and globe (bulb)
- water container
- whistle

Overnight Walks

- cooking, eating and drinking utensils
- dishwashing items
- matches and lighter
- sewing/repair kit
- sleeping bag and bag liner/inner sheet
- sleeping mat
- spare cord
- stove and fuel
- tent, pegs, poles and guy ropes
- toiletries
- towel
- water purification tablets, iodine or filter

Optional Items

- altimeter
- backpack cover (waterproof, slip-on)
- binoculars
- camera, film and batteries
- candle
- emergency distress beacon
- GPS receiver
- groundsheet
- mobile phone**
- mosquito net
- notebook and pen
- swimming costume
- walking poles
- watch

* see the First-Aid Check List (p382)

** see Mobile Phones (p369)

free of ridged seams in the toes and heels. Spare socks are equally valuable, especially in wet conditions.

EQUIPMENT Backpack

For day walks, a day-pack (30L to 40L) will usually suffice, but for multiday walks you will need a backpack of between 45L and 90L capacity. A good backpack should be made of strong fabric such as canvas or Cordura, contain a lightweight internal or external frame and an adjustable, well-padded harness that evenly distributes weight. Even if the manufacturer claims your pack is waterproof, use heavy-duty liners.

Sleeping Bag & Mat

Down fillings are warmer than synthetic for the same weight and bulk, but unlike synthetic fillings do not retain warmth when wet. Mummy bags are the best shape for weight and warmth. The rating (eg -5°C) is the coldest temperature at which you should feel comfortable in the bag (though the ratings are notoriously unreliable).

An inner sheet helps keep your sleeping bag clean, as well as adding an insulating layer. Silk inners are lightest, but they also come in cotton or polypropylene.

Self-inflating sleeping mats work like a thin air cushion between you and the ground; they also insulate from the cold. Foam mats are a low-cost, but less comfortable, alternative.

Stoves

Fuel stoves fall roughly into three categories: multifuel, methylated spirits (ethyl alcohol) and butane gas. Multifuel stoves are small, efficient and ideal for places where a reliable fuel supply is difficult to find. However, they tend to be sooty (prime them with methylated spirits to avoid this) and can require frequent maintenance. Stoves running on methylated spirits are slower

STOVE FUEL

Super-refined petrol for stoves, known in Australia as Shellite, is available from outdoor stores and hardware stores, usually in 1L bottles. Most such stoves will also take unleaded petrol, which can be easily obtained at any service station.

Methylated spirits in Australia is not colour-dyed as in some countries, and is widely available in supermarkets, and hardware and outdoor shops. Gas canisters also can be purchased at outdoor shops.

and less efficient, but are safe, clean and easy to use. Butane gas stoves are clean and reliable but can be slow, and the gas canisters can be awkward to carry and a potential litter problem.

Tent

A three-season tent will fulfil the requirements of most walkers. The floor and the outer shell, or fly, should have taped or sealed seams and covered zips to stop leaks. Most walkers find tents of around 2kg to 3kg a comfortable carrying weight. Dome- and tunnel-shaped tents handle windy conditions better than flat-sided tents.

BUYING & HIRING LOCALLY

Australia is no bargain basement for outdoor clothing and equipment, but prices are reasonable. In each state capital you will find the following major outdoor chains:

Kathmandu (www.kathmandu.com.au)

Mountain Designs (www.mountaindesigns.com.au)

Paddy Pallin (www.paddypallin.com.au)

Snowgum (www.snowgum.com.au) Not in Brisbane or Adelaide.

For addresses in each city, see the appropriate regional chapters.

Hiring of equipment and clothing is not common.

something like the Larapinta Trail. Elsewhere, builder-style gaiters that cover just the tops of your boots to keep out stones and dirt can be useful.

SOCKS

Socks with a high proportion of wool are more comfortable when worn for successive days without washing. They should be

Glossary

Visitors from abroad who think Australian is simply a weird variation of English/American may quickly find themselves lost in a strange collection of Australian words. The meaning of some words in Australia completely differs from those in other English-speaking countries, while others are derived from Aboriginal languages, or from the slang used by early convict settlers. This includes many words pertaining to the landscape, flora and fauna that are relevant to the walker. The list that follows focuses primarily on words that walkers may come across. Lonely Planet also publishes an *Australian Phrasebook*, which is an introduction to both Australian English and some Aboriginal languages.

arête – narrow ridge, particularly between glacial valleys
anticline – arch-shaped fold in rock in which rock layers are upwardly convex
arid – having little or no rain; arid regions are usually defined as those receiving less than 250mm of rain

bezel – the rotating dial on a compass
billabong – ox-bow bend in a river cut off by receding waters
billy – small cooking pot
bivouac or **bivvy** – makeshift shelter used in the open; large waterproof sleeping sack used for this purpose
boardwalk – walkway made of timber planks
bore – artesian well
brumby – wild horse
bush, the – undeveloped areas away from the city
bush-bash – to force your way through pathless bush
bushfire – fire in bushland
bush tucker – indigenous foods, found naturally in the *bush*
bushwalking – hiking, tramping, trekking or walking; walking for pleasure in the *bush*
buttress – pillar-like rock formation protruding from a hillside

cairn – pile of stones marking a walking route, a summit or a prominent geographical feature
CALM – Department of Conservation & Land Management in Western Australia
camp site – area suitable for camping, often without facilities
camping ground – designated camping area with facilities
canyon – *gorge* or ravine, usually formed by a river
cascade – small waterfall
Centre, the – the arid region in Australia's centre
circuit – walk that starts and ends at the same point

contour – line on a *topographic* map connecting points of the same altitude; to move across a slope along the same level
cooe – call used to locate people over long distances; within shouting distance, close ('to be within cooe of...')
creek – small watercourse or stream
cuesta – long low ridge with a steep *escarpment* and a gentle back slope
cyclone – violent tropical storm, confined to northern Australia

damper – bread traditionally made of flour and water and cooked in the ashes of a campfire
DEH – Department for Environment & Heritage in South Australia
dieback – microscopic fungus called *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, which attacks, and usually kills, some species of native plants
dolerite – coarse-grained volcanic rock
Dreaming – the ancient period for Aboriginal people when totemic ancestors formed the landscape, made the laws and created the people who would inherit the landscape
Dry, the – dry season in northern Australia (April to September)
duckboards – see *boardwalk*

ECD – Emergency Call Device; solar powered phones installed along walking trails
EPIRB – Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon
erratic – boulder carried by a glacier and deposited some distance from its origin
escarpment – line of cliffs along the edge of a ridge

fire trail – 4WD track, usually in national parks, built for fire-fighting vehicles
ford – to cross a river by wading
fork – point where a path splits into two
fresbie – freshwater crocodile (usually harmless)
fuel stove – cooker, usually portable, using liquid fuel or gas canisters
fuel-stove-only area – area where campfires are banned

gap – *saddle* or pass; low point on a ridge or between peaks
Gondwana – ancient supercontinent that included modern Australia, Africa, Antarctica, South America and the Indian subcontinent
gorge – large, steep-sided valley, usually surrounded by cliffs
GPS – Global Positioning System; an electronic means of accurately fixing location using microwave satellite signals
granite – light-coloured, coarse-grained volcanic rock

grid reference – method of fixing location by using the numbered horizontal and vertical lines (grid) on *topographical* maps
GST – Goods and Services Tax
gully – small valley
gum tree – eucalyptus tree

hut – simple building used for accommodation, mainly in national parks, generally unsupervised and without facilities

inlet – indentation in the coast, usually with a narrow opening to the sea
isthmus – narrow stretch of land connecting two larger landmasses

jumper – sweater or pullover

limestone – sedimentary rock composed mainly of calcium carbonate
logbook – book or register at the start and finish of a walk to record walkers' movements; also in huts as a visitors' book
loop – see *circuit*

mallee – a group of eucalyptuses with multiple stems; the northwest of Victoria
management track – 4WD track in national park used by park rangers
mangrove – coastal tree that grows in salt water
midden – mound of discarded shells and bone fragments

outback – remote, sparsely inhabited interior areas of Australia
outlet – of a lake, an opening that permits water to flow away

pad – indistinct informal track, usually made by animals, also by walkers
Parks Victoria – Victoria's state-based national park agency
plateau – elevated area of land that is almost level
pound – broad-basin valley created by the uplifting and sinking of land

QPWS – Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service

ranger – on-site park management official
ridgeline – crest of a ridge, often used for travel through alpine areas
runoff – rainfall running into creeks and rivers as surface water

saddle – pass or gap; low point on a ridge or between summits
saltie – saltwater crocodile (dangerous); properly known as an estuarine crocodile

sandbar – ridge of sand in the sea or a river, often uncovered at low tide
sandblow – large, unstable dune of sand that is slowly driven forward by a prevailing wind
sandstone – sedimentary rock comprised of sand grains
scre – weathered rock fragments at the foot of a cliff or on a hillside
scrub – low dense vegetation
semiarid – characterised by low rainfall and scrubby vegetation
Shellite – liquid fuel derived from petroleum and used in camp stoves
side – to *contour*
sinkhole – depression in limestone through which surface streams sometimes disappear
snow line – level below which snow seldom falls or lies on the ground
snow plain – open grassed area in alpine country, usually surrounded by snow gums
snow poles – route markers used in alpine areas
spot height – altitude of minor features, marked on *topographical* maps
spur – small ridge that leads up from a valley to a main ridge
station – large sheep or cattle farm
swale – sandy depression between sand dunes
swimming hole – large pool on a creek or river, safe for swimming
switchback – route that follows a zigzag course up or down a steep incline
syncline – basin-shaped fold in rock in which rock layers are downwardly convex

tarn – small alpine lake
Top End – northern part of the Northern Territory
topographic – showing the surface configuration of a region; with contours
torch – flashlight
Total Fire Ban – prohibition of all open flames on days of extreme fire danger
tor – high, bare, rocky hill
track – formed route for use by walkers (walking track) or vehicles (4WD track)
tree line – highest natural level of tree growth
trig point – triangulation point; point used in triangulation as a basis for mapping
tucker – food
true left/true right bank – side of a riverbank as you face downstream

waterhole – small pool or lake
Wet, the – rainy season in the north (October to March)
wildfire – bushfire out of control
World Heritage Area (WHA) – area included on a list of places deemed by Unesco to be of world significance

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