



**Roustabouts RV Club Inc.**

# **Track to Track and Back Long Paddock Drive**

***The ultimate caravan adventure***

**Diamantina Development Road,**

**Birdsville Track,**

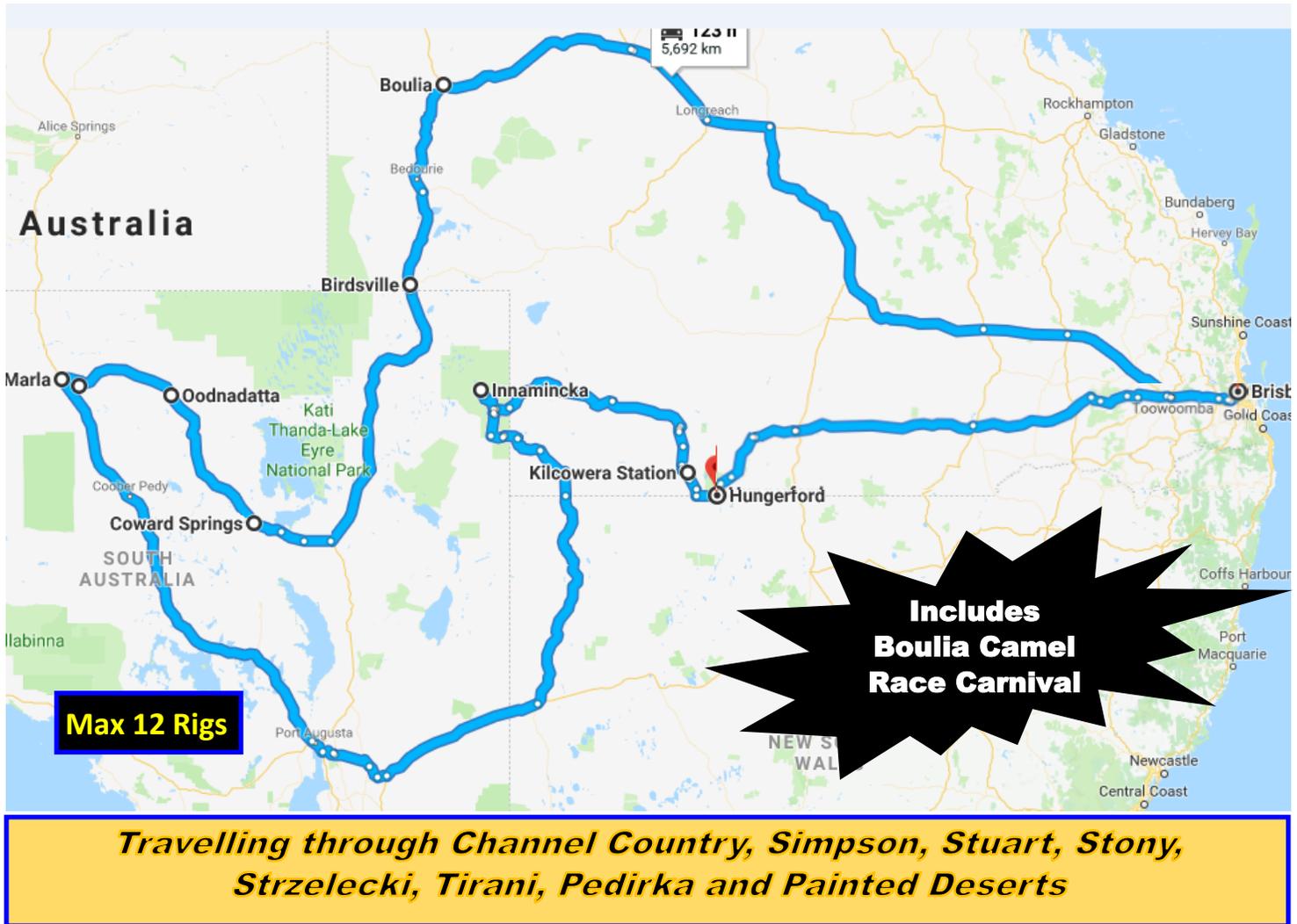
**Oodnadatta Track**

**Strzelecki Track**

**Dowling Track**

**16 June To 13 August 2020**

**Includes Contingency Days**



**Please note**

- **This trip is only suitable for well maintained, self contained, high clearance semi-off road or off-road rigs.**
- **Remote night stops determined by days progress and assessed every few hours**
- **Free camping, no water, no power and no amenities are the norm.**
- **Limited accommodation being booked.**
- **No formal tours or Drive Meals organised.**
- **Mainly bore water**
- **Over 2,500 kms corrugated, bulldust dirt road**
- **Maximum 12 rig attendance**

**Overview**

The LPD travels a distance of approximately 4,000 kms, with 2800 kms of dirt road travel.

This LPD travels in the most remote and isolated areas of Australia and when you finish you will have achieved taking on Australia's iconic desert tracks and seen areas of our country few have seen.

Driving hours will be determined by road and track conditions. There maybe afternoons where we arrive early so games will be organised as well as happy hours.

For those who wish, the DVD and Book library will be available.

**Additional Wheels - Mandatory**

It is a mandatory condition of attendance. You must have at least 2 spare wheels for both your vehicle and caravan/rig.

'All terrain tyres' (ATR) or 'Light Truck Tyres' are recommended and you need at least 50% of tread on existing tyres.

## EPIRB

It is strongly recommended, those attending have a personal EPIRB in the vehicle

## Additional Fuel - *Mandatory*

ALL participants must take additional fuel when we travel in remote areas. Additional fuel will need to be carried from Winton until Eulo.

You will use the fuel on the dirt tracks so check the itinerary and work out how much additional fuel you will need and include a 50% safety margin.

If you run out of fuel it is your responsibility and others will not be in a position to give away their additional fuel.

Jerry cans will need protection from friction caused by roads, recommend foam surrounds (Clark Rubber foam offcuts)

## Additional Water - *Mandatory*

ALL participants must take additional water when we travel in remote areas. It is recommended you purchase a packs of bottled water from Aldi, Coles or Woolworths.

*The RFDS recommends 10 litres per person per day.*

Suggest tank water be used for domestic purposes and carried water used for drinking

Additional Water should be located in the van but also in the vehicle.

## Groceries

Groceries and drinks need to be purchased for up to three weeks at a time. There are roadhouses and shops but no guarantee of supply.

You must be self sufficient and take into account the possibility of extended layovers..



## Rain

In the event of rain in the Outback, roustabouts must be prepared for an extended stay that can in extreme circumstances last a month.

In the event of rain, the Head Drover will consult with authorities and work in accordance with their instructions.

If we hear rain is coming we take the nearest 'off ramp' to bitumen. If there is no feasible escape route available, we stop at the nearest roadhouse or town and wait out the weather event. This could mean a three week layover so you need to factor in this eventuality.

*If dirt track activity is discontinued earlier than planned, the group will decide on heading home or continuing the trip to alternate locations.*

## Medications

Make sure you have enough medications and food to last for up to an additional month.

You need to take into account all eventualities when organising your medication.

Do not rely on having a prescription filled at a remote or town location as they may not hold your needs.

## Mobile Phones

Forget them, where we are going there is little to no reception between major towns.

## Support Vehicles

At least two support vehicles will be attending with UHF radio, HF radio, EPIRB, defib, oxygen equipment, first aid equipment and IT capability in major areas.

Support vehicle personnel are NOT in a position to assist with breakdown repairs, their priority is your safety.

## Roadside Repairs

Totally your responsibility.

RACQ Optimum insurance is excellent; providing transport for your vehicle and caravan if a breakdown occurs.

If not insured, roadside assistance in remote areas can be exceptionally expensive (\$5000 +) and repairers ask for your credit card details before they leave to collect you.

## Dirt Road Travel

Grids. These are not like bitumen road grids, you need to basically slow to walking pace because they tend to drop away on the edges.

Corrugations and bull dust. Travel will be greatly reduced and the condition of the roads will depend on when the graders went through.

There is no rush, enjoy the view. Distances have been calculated so you can have coffee along the way and still get to the nights destination in good time.

## Breakdown - On Your Own

- **Don't leave the vehicle for any reason.**
- Call for assistance on your UHF radio.
- If no response, don't worry, support crew do a role call every day and will organise a search if you are not there.
- Always advise the Drover of any side trips you are undertaking, the location and time duration to rejoin the LPD.

## Daily Driving

On dirt roads the average speed will be considerably reduced so distances will be short between nightly stopovers.

## Reserve (Contingency) Days

Reserve Days have been included on the itinerary, allowing for

- Daily distances on dirt roads too far
- Unplanned breakdowns
- Additional sightseeing, or
- Unforeseen environmental conditions,

These days may or may not be used.

## Radio Comms

It is imperative everyone uses Ch40 on this trip to ensure Support Crew advisory messages are received and acted upon.

If you are unsure of how to set Ch40, contact a support crew member and they will adjust your set for you.

## UHF Radio - *Mandatory*

ALL participants must have a working UHF radio in

their vehicle with a *high range* flexible aerial.

A high range flexible aerial is needed to ensure the aerial does not break away from the vehicle from vibrations. Recommended **UHF Antenna is 'High Gain' 477MHz, 6.6 dBi mounted on a spring and base.** This antenna provides optimal range and the spring not only provides flexibility on rough surface but diminishes static transmission on rough roads.

*Our Sponsor ARB at Harbourtown, (Beau Dillon) provide expert advice on your specific needs, product and installation at trade price upon presentation of your RRVC membership*

Hand held UHF radios will be of limited use in the environment we are travelling except for talk between the vehicle in front or behind you.

Every rig will be handed a sheet with everyone's call sign so you are able to talk to fellow travellers or the Support Crew.

## Desert Flag (*known as Simpson Desert Flag*)



A vehicles must have the regulation desert flag on the pole for additional safety **if anticipating doing 4x4 driving in deserts.**

Flag Specifications: Minimum 300 mm wide by 290 mm high. Made of Fluorescent materials, Red-Orange or Lime-Yellow in colour. Vehicles with Front Bullbar - Flag pole attached to the bullbar, with top of the flag a minimum 3.5 metres from the ground.

Without Front Bullbar - Flag pole attached via bracket at the front of the vehicle, with top of the flag a minimum 3.5 metres from the ground; alternatively flag pole attached to the front of the roof rack, with top of the flag a minimum 2 metres from the roof of vehicle

## Tyre Repairs

Towns have been identified on the Itinerary where you can get your tyres repaired. At some of these locations you are able to get mechanical repairs.

## Dump Points

Locations are indicated on the itinerary.

Dump points are not normally found on the Tracks, therefore, a communal pit will need to be dug daily in the cool of the evening by rotated members. Once everyone has done 'the walk of shame' the daily team will fill it in.

## Budgeting Payments

The 'First Payment' will cover Rig Fees and site fees for caravan parks requesting early payment.

There will be one other payment later in the year, this being Boulia Camel Races.

Members will be responsible for all other expenses along the route.

## Insurance

Check your rig insurance, make sure the company allows you to take your caravan/rig off road.

## Boulia Camel Races

The LPD is attending this iconic event and rigs will be located at the racecourse. The three day event fee includes site fees and organisers are expecting to pay for LPD attendance prior to arrival. Fee payment will be called around February 2020. Fees are expected to be approximately \$200 per rig (4 day site fees, 3 day full attendance at all events)

## Maps

Recommend purchase of Hema 'Great Desert Tracks' waterproof maps and *Camps Australia Wide 9*

## 'Had Enough'

If you decide you have had sufficient red dirt you can leave at any time. The itinerary has 'escape routes' planned for this eventuality. There is no expectation you will do the entire trip.

## 'Convoy' Driving

When on dirt roads, the group will be split into two groups with 6 vehicles in each group.

A support vehicle with HF radio will accompany each group and remain in constant contact with the other group.

## Registration & Fee

So you want to go?

Please complete the Registration Form on the 2020 Long Paddock webpage and pay your 'non refundable Rig Fee' to the Club Bank account.

**Unfortunately, your registrations cannot be accepted without the Non-refundable Rig Fee of \$65 paid into our bank account.**

**Please use payment reference: Surname/TRACK**

## Rig & Trip Preparations

### What type of caravan or trailer do I need

Caravans/rigs need to be built to withstand dirt, gravel, rocks and water crossings; they should be medium to high clearance, preferably have a six inch (15.5 cm) steel main chassis and checker plate.

Ensure all tubing and wiring is on the far side of the steel frame, brake cables are protected, water tanks protected and most important, your waste pipes are protected

If you have an outside tap on the frame, cover it up because a stone will destroy it and your water will 'evaporate' while you drive along.

Check internal cupboards/shelves to ensure they are screwed to wall, not tacked.

### Desert Travel

We will be travelling at a speed that reduces the risk of damage to rigs or ourselves. In theory, slower travel also means less bulldust & damage.

If we have a head wind you will double your fuel consumption. Head winds may cause a layover.

### Dust / Rock Damage Prevention

Purchase 'Grappa' tape from hardware. Consider -

- Covering all ground and mid height vents, door and refrigerator vents
- Covering refrigerator vent only when you start on the dirt road, making sure you turn off the refrigerator
- Covering door vent only when you start on the dirt road.

When you arrive at a location, remove tape, open door and let any gases out of rig before lighting any gas. (Allow 5 minutes) Don't forget to turn fridge back on. Sink, shower and basin outlets. Close / block them as dust will billow out of these

### Stone Stomper Protection

This is excellent protection. It is a heavy duty protection sheet that goes from the hitch to the front wall of the van. It saves you from all rock damage to the front of the van and some underneath damage as well. It costs around \$600 but worth it.

### Important - Caravan Battery

The normal 'heavy duty' battery or batteries powering a caravan or rig may not survive the rigours of driving on the limestone and corrugated dirt road. The internal cells may collapse with the vibration. It is strongly recommended you purchase *AGM Deep Cycle Heavy Duty batteries* for this and subsequent off road trips you do. They are not

cheap and you will be looking at \$350 per battery but they do have a minimum 5 year warranty.

## Gas Bottles & equipment located on front of rig.

It is best to have protection for these as limestone rocks can perforate the gas bottles (and did in 2013) Consider purchase of 'rock protectors' or 'Stone Guard' or heavy duty rubber placed in front of bottles etc.

Recommend foam to absorb constant vibration against metal.

## Underneath Van or trailer

Waste Pipes can be destroyed by rocks thrown up. Consider installing some form of protection to the waste pipes. Heavy duty rubber (mud flap material) in front of the pipes the entire width of the caravan is a good way of protecting the pipes.

Likewise it has been known for brake cables and electrical to be destroyed by limestone rocks. Consider protecting them.

## Minimum Daily Checks

- Radiator water
- Tyres and rims
- Tighten wheel nuts, especially on caravan/trailer
- Connection cables and wiring

## Clothing

- Full length clothing
- Hat and sunscreen
- Enclosed shoes
- Whistle
- Pocket knife
- Personal EPIRB

## Other Items

- Tool kit
- Axe
- Shovel
- Matches
- Vehicle replacement parts
- Air Jack (consider)

## Road Trains

A Road Train is an articulated truck with multiple trailers attached. They are up to 54 metres (170 feet) long. It has 64 wheels all spitting out rocks so just stop and get off the road as far as possible and close windows and vents!

- Always give a Road Train plenty of room, as the buffeting from displaced air as you pass in opposite directions can be quite severe.
- Buffeting WILL occur when a large vehicle or truck passes you and your caravan. You must be ready to adjust to the feeling of being pushed off the road as the vehicles passes.
- Allow at least 1 kilometre (3000 feet) of clear road before overtaking a road train.
- Dust from Road Trains will obscure your vision so , slow down or stop at the side of the road until it settles.
- Monitor your rear view mirror and contact the driver on UHF Ch 40 and work together to achieve a safe pass by the Road Train.

## Highway Air Field

In outback Australia, main roads are used as runways for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and private plane emergency landings. These sections of roads are well sign posted at each end of the runway and the road actually looks like an airport runway.

- Never park or stop within the sign posted airfield area
- Police vehicles or ambulance may or may not be present when a medical aircraft is approaching
- Be aware aircraft may be attempting to land so maintain a visual search of the sky
- If an aircraft is on the ground, STOP, do not travel further until directed by emergency personnel or the pilot.
- Assist with turning the aircraft for take-off if requested by emergency personnel or pilot.