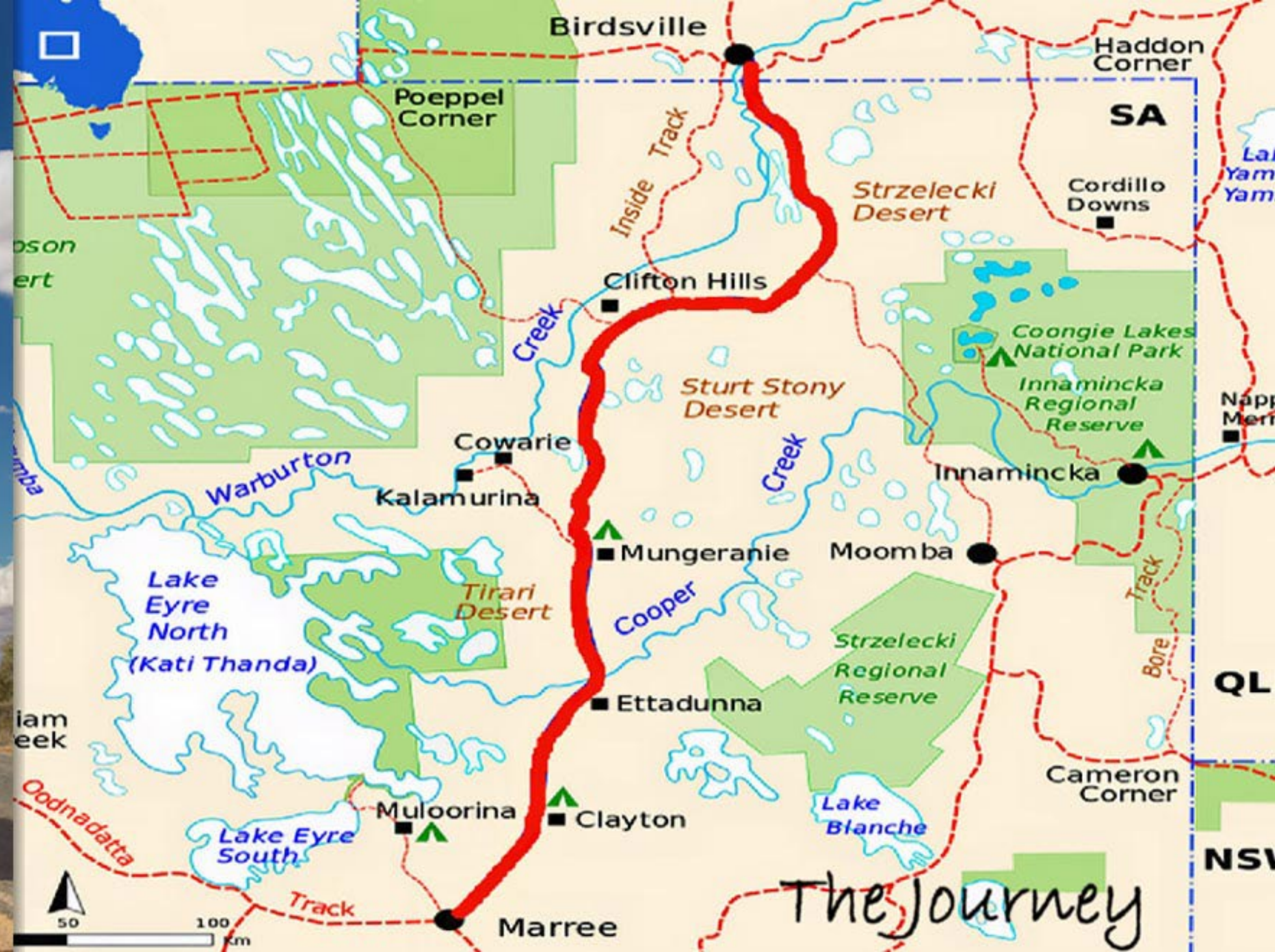


The Birdsville Track



The Birdsville Track.

The Birdsville Track is a outback track in Australia. The 517 kilometres track runs between Marree, a small town in the north eastern part of South Australia to Birdsville in South Western Queensland and it goes through three deserts the Strzelecki Desert, Sturt Stony Desert and Tirari Desert.

The track has many types of surfaces from sand dunes to gibber plains. There is often water over the road from the bores and after heavy rains.

When the railway reached Marree in 1884 cattle and sheep were to be driven from Queensland, Northern Territory and New South Wales to Marree and transported to Port Augusta by train. There was a lack of surface water along the entire route so the South Australian government sank artesian bores at intervals of about 50 kilometres.

Twice a year the traffic on the Birdsville Track gets busy when the Birdsville Races are on in September and the Big Red Bash music concert in July.

The only fuel, supplies on the track are at the Mungeranie Station, 204 km from Marree and 313 km from Birdsville, no problem for me as I have dual fuel tanks with a capacity of 180 litres and range of approx 1300 km.

The Equipment.

My vehicle is a Toyota pop top camper with dual 90 litre fuel tanks, a 50 litre water tank.

The vehicle can sleep four people with the roof extended, it has a cooker, sink, fridge, storage cupboards for food utensils and clothing.

The vehicle has a 150 watt solar panel and a 2000 watt inverter for 240 volt power, it also has dual batteries so as to keep the fridge going day and night.

I have recovery equipment consisting of a snatch strap, high lift jack, Max trax, long handled shovel and an exhaust air jack.

Safety equipment is a first aid kit, fire blanket, 2 fire extinguishers one at the front and one at the back, a satellite phone and UHF radio.





Lake Harry

The Lake Harry Ruins are about 40km north of Marree on the Birdsville Track.

The owners of Lake Harry homestead tried to grow date palms here. After sinking a bore for water trees were planted, the trees grew but there were no one to pollinate the trees, so they tried pollinating by hand, it turned out to be unsuccessful and was abandoned.

Left; Start of the Birdsville Track road conditions sign.



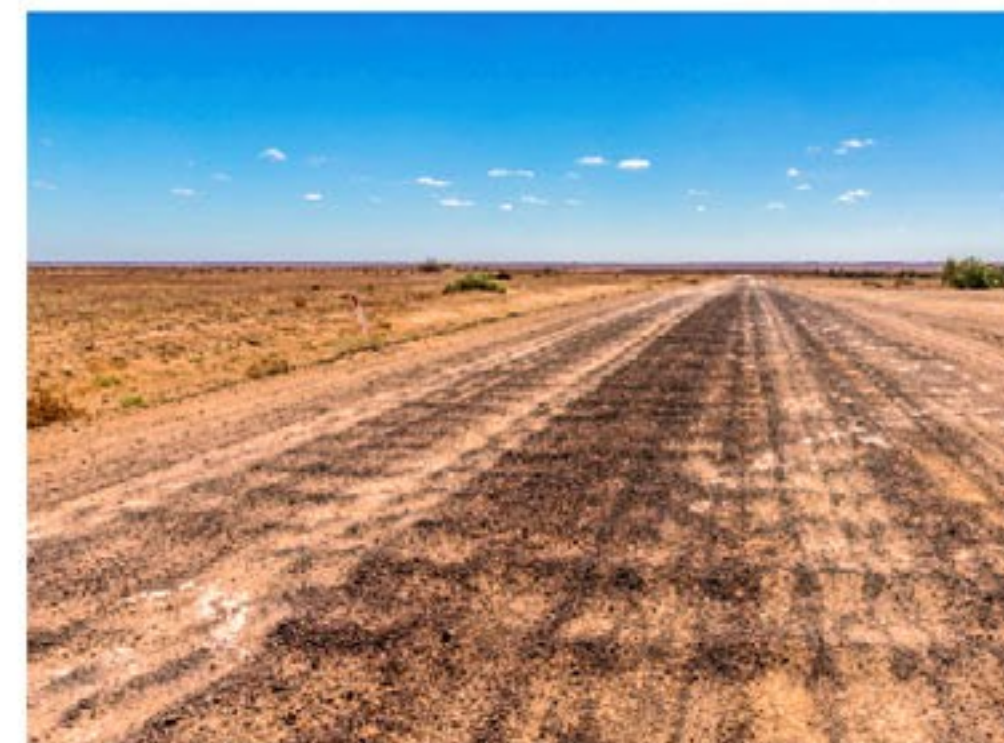


Birdsville Track

The Birdsville Track is approx 517km long, it goes from Marree in South Australia to Birdsville in Queensland.

The track passes through three deserts and has many different road surfaces as you can see the pictures on these two pages.

When it rains the surface can change and care must be taken.





Mulloorina Station

Mulloorina Station is 54km north west of Marree. Mulloorina owned by the Price family and is nearly 800 square kilometres of saltbush country in the arid outback.

In 1938 Elliot Price and his brother sank bores all over the property and diverted water into the dry bed of the Frome River where it flowed along for 25 kms supplying the homestead and forming billabongs. The pressure of the water coming up from the bore powers a 240v power plant for the station.

The Camping grounds on the Frome Creek which are 2km from the homestead which includes toilets and picnic tables. The Mulloorina waterhole and wetland are visited by many birds.

A 25km drive will take you to Lake Eyre, from Mulloorina, the track takes you to the shores of Lake Eyre South, alongside the Goyder Channel that links this with the main Lake Eyre, and finally to Level Post Bay, at the end of the track.

On 17 July 1964, at his second attempt (1963 was a wet year), Donald Campbell set the land speed record on the dry salt pan of lake Eyre in his famous Bluebird car.



Muloorina

Lake Eyre is officially known as Lake Eyre / Kati Thanda, it is the lowest natural point in Australia, at approximately 15 meters below sea level. This massive salt lake is 144km long and 77km wide and receives water via the Diamantina approximately once in ten years.

Top left: Lake Eyre / Kati Thanda National Park.

Top right: The Neck.

Bottom right: Lake Eyre South.





Clayton Wetlands

Clayton Wetlands are on Clayton cattle station.

Page right; Turnoff for Clayton Wetlands.

Page left;

Top left; Bore fed spa.

Bottom left; Clayton Wetlands.

Top right; Shower and toilet at camping grounds.





Sunrise on the Birdsville Track



Dulkaninna

Dulkaninna Station is a fully organic accredited cattle station which breed Poll Hereford crossed with Black Angus cattle. The station also breeds Australian Stock horses and Quarter horses, as well as Kelpie Dogs. Coolibah Camp is 1km from the homestead and has hot water showers, toilets and a basic camp kitchen.

Top left: Plane sitting on a bush runway.



Top right: Fuel drums.



Bottom right: Coolibah campgrounds.



Bore Water

All the water on the Birdsville Track comes from underground (the Great Artesian Basin) the South Australian government gave licences for 50 bores to be drilled back in early days for the cattle to be watered on their way to Marree.

Water also bursts up through the ground naturally when the pressure gets too great, I have asked the station owners is this not wasteful as the water evaporates out here due to the heat, their answer was if they capped it it would burst through somewhere else along the track.



Dunkaninna Wetlands



Etadunna Wetlands



Etadunna Station

Etadunna (pronounced "Eta-dinna") is a large cattle station along the Cooper Creek.

There was German mission who set up the Bethesda Missionary Station nearby at Lake Killalpaninna to try and convert the local Dieri aborigines to the Lutheran religion.

At times the Cooper is in flood, the main Birdsville Track becomes impassable where the Cooper Creek crosses, so Etadunna Station has a bypss track to the Cooper Creek ferry.

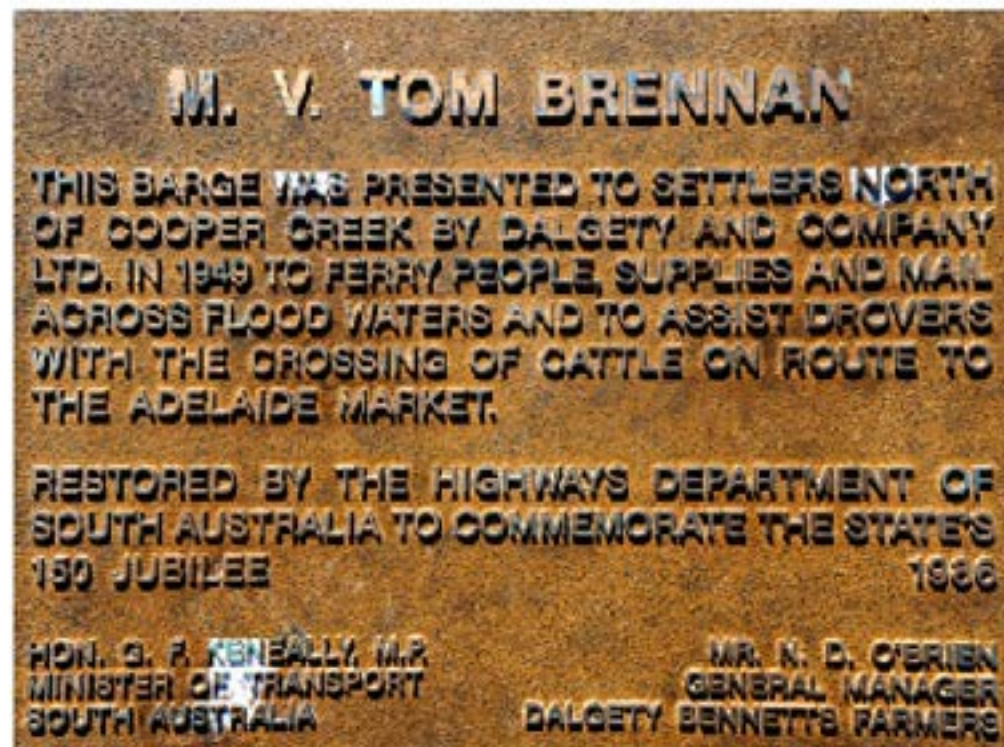
Page right; Bethesda Missionary.

Page left;

Top left; old cars and trucks.

Bottom Left; A bore proving water and electricity to the Etadunna homestead.





Coopers Creek Ferry

Waters from Queensland to the Thompson and the Barcoo combine to create the Coopers Creek which then flows to Lake Eyre across the Birdsville Track. When this occurs there is a bypass track at Ettadunna which goes to a ferry to cross the Coopers Creek.

Top right; Plaque that remembers Tom Brennan.

Top left; Tom Brennan's punt which was used to take mail and supplies across the flooded Coopers Creek.

Bottom left; the swollen Coopers Creek.





Mulka Store

In 1923 the lease for the Mulka store was purchased by George and Mabel Aiston who set up a store for supplies for the Birdsville Track.

George died in 1943 and his wife Mabel ran the store until 1952.

The store was in the Tirari Desert some 300km south of Birdsville and 210km north of Marree only a few bits of rubble now remain.





Mungerannie

Mungerannie is 206km from Marree and 315km from Birdsville on the Birdsville Track.

The name Mungerannie is Aboriginal for big ugly face.

This the only settlement along the track, you will find an outback pub, meals, snacks and a cold drink are available.

Fuel, tyre repairs and basic mechanical repairs are available.

There is bunkhouse accommodation and bush camping with showers and toilets all surrounded by permanent wetlands fed by a controlled bore, around sunrise and sunset birds come to the waterhole.

Mungerannie seems to have dust storms when the wind comes from the north.



Mungerannie

Page right; Mungerannie pub.

Top left; Mungerannie bar.

Bottom Left; Mungerannie bar.

Bottom right; Mungerannie bar.



A dust storm



After the dust storm





Mungerannie

Page left; Dust storm at the bowser at Mungerannie.

Top right; Bus shelter.

Bottom Left; Chevrolet four wheel drive truck.

Bottom right; Four wheel drive truck.



Mungerannie Wetlands



Mungerannie Wetlands





Mungerannie Gap

North of Mungerannie is the Murellie Hill and the Uwinya Hill which create the gap for the Birdsville Track to pass through.

Top left; Dust blowing across the Birdsville Track.

Top right; Hills on the Birdsville Track.

Bottom right; Coloured hills passing through Mungerannie Gap.



Warburton Crossing

Top left; Push bike riders riding the Birdsville Track from Marre to Birdsville.

Top right; Thought I found a push bike at Warburton Crossing. The road closed sign has fallen off the mounting.

Bottom left; Someone in a hurry on the Birdsville Track.



Birdsville Track Signs

Page Left; Sign for the Birdsville Bakery.

Page right;

Top left; Crest warning sign.

Top right; Caution bull dust sign.

Bottom right; Rubbish sign.





Warburton Crossing

About 90km north of Munglerannie is the turnoff for the Simpson Desert, it is a 8km track to the Warburton River Crossing, depending on the amount of water flowing in the Warburton River the water level at the crossing can be as high as 5 metres which makes it impassable. The track is often closed as the track to the crossing becomes flooded.

Top left; Start of the Warburton Crossing.

Top right; Gibbers on the Track.

Bottom left; Track flooded.



Sunrise at Warburton Crossing



Sunrise at Warburton Crossing





Clifton Hills Station

Clifton Hills Station is approx 1,500 square kilometres consisting of gibber plains with creeks, and soft sandhill country. It is often flooded from the Diamantina River.

Left; Sunrise.

Top left; Clifton Hills Station entrance.

Bottom left; Bore head and valves.

Top Right; Drilling a new bore.

Walkers Crossing

Walkers Crossing is an unmaintained track and often impassable due to rain or floods, it is strictly dry weather only. It takes around 6 hours and passes through private property and Santos gas and oil field operations..

Top left; Travelling through Walkers Crossing floodplain.

Bottom right; 44 gallon drum at the turn off to Walkers Crossing.

Bottom left; Warning sign for Walkers Crossing.



Warning sign for Walkers Crossing



Brumby horses



Mob of camels



Cattle at the waterhole



Dingo hunting





Birdsville Track Creatures

Top right; Mulga snake.

Top left; Witchetty grub being eaten by ants.

Bottom left; Dead camel.



A diversion due to water

FloodWater



FloodWater



Brolga's



Egret





Pandie Pandie

Pandie Pandie Station is 6625 square kilometres in size and can hold up to 21000 cattle. Pandie Pandie Station about 26 kilometres south of Birdsville along the banks of the Diamantina River in the channel country of South Australia.

Top left; Lake Uloowaranie.

Bottom left; Button grass growing in the dunes

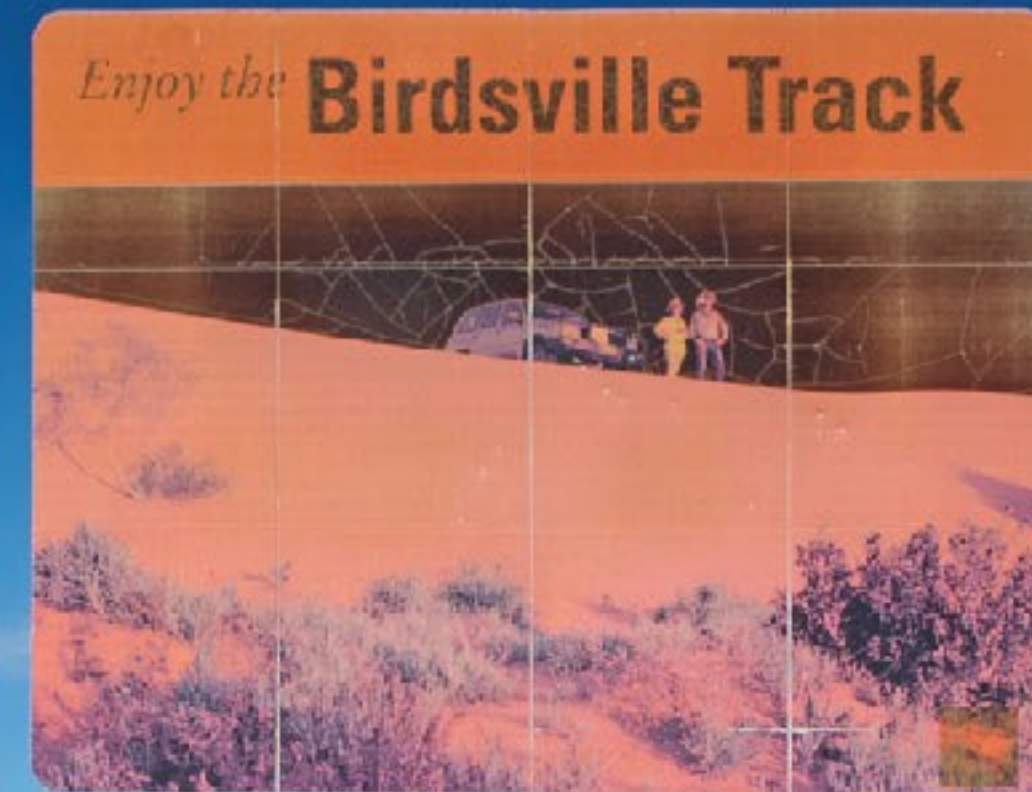
Top Right; Gibbers (small stones that cover the surface to prevent erosion).



Pandie Pandie Station



Entering Queensland



Welcome to

BIRDSVILLE

POPULATION: 115 (+/- 7000)

ELEVATION: 46 metres



SUSTAINABLY DEVELOPING THE OUTBACK



Birdsville Bedourie Betoota
Where the Desert meets the Channel Country

Birdsville

Birdsville is situated between the eastern edge of the Simpson Desert, the vast gibber plains of Sturt's Stony Desert to the south and rich Channel Country to the north. Birdsville is traditionally owned by the Wongkanguru people.

Birdsville was known as the Diamantina Crossing until 1881 when Robert Frew the owner of Pandie Pandie Station renamed the town of Diamantina Crossing to its present name of Birdsville after being amazed at the amount of birdlife found around the area.

Birdsville is an isolated town in Queensland where the temperature can be over 45 degrees Celsius for days on end. Its main tourist attraction, is the annual race meeting attended by many thousands who come by car, bus or plane. We now have another annual attraction the big Red Bash where bands come and play.

Birdsville gets its water supply from an artesian bore (water temperature is 100 centigrade) it is then cooled and stored for the towns consumption.

Birdsville gets its power from geothermal power, the water coming from the bore is passed over a heat exchanger, the steam coming from the heat exchanger turns the shaft of an 80kw generator which is backed up by diesel generators.



Birdsville Bore Water

Birdsville gets its water supply from an artesian bore (water temperature is 100 centigrade) it is then cooled and stored for the towns consumption. The hot water is also used to produce power for the community.

Top left; Bore and cooling ponds.

Bottom right; Hot water coming from the bore.

Top Right; Water storage towers.

Page Right; The iconic Birdsville Bakery



Frontier Services Australia Inland Mission Clinic Formerly the Royal Hotel



Australian Inland Mission Hospital - Photo No. 1324502

The Royal Hotel was built in 1883. Along with the Birdsville Hotel and Courthouse, it was constructed from dehydrated gypsum mixed with sand and water to create a bonding agent for the stonework. This style of masonry construction spread throughout central Australia as a way of controlling extreme temperatures and compensating for the lack of locally available timber.

At the time, the Royal Hotel was the second of three hotels in Birdsville and operated as such for the next 40 years. The Australian Inland Mission leased the building for use as the hospital from 1923 to 1937, after which it was leased as a private residence for many

years. Materials for the conversion, from hotel to hospital, were brought to Birdsville on a string of 75 camels.

The first Traeger Pedal Radio Transmission from Birdsville took place here in 1922.

Since 1978 the property has been listed for preservation and restoration with the Register of National Estate.

Mrs E. Morton had the first baby born in Birdsville's new hospital on 21 May 1924. The Morton family continue to reside in the Diamantina Shire.



The Royal Hotel

The Royal Hotel changed in 1923 when it was taken over by a Presbyterian Mission and converted into a bush nursing home. The Australian Inland Mission used the building for five years, offering its services to people in need.

Left; The story of the mission.

Top Right; Photo of the staff at the mission.

Page right; The ruins of the Royal Hotel.



The Birdsville Hotel





Diamantina River

The Diamantina River gets its water from upstream.

Top left; Bore and cooling ponds.

Bottom right; Hot water coming from the bore.

Top Right; Water storage towers.

Page Right; The iconic Birdsville Bakery



Birds of Birdsville

Birdsville was renamed from the Diamantina Crossing because the owner Robert Frew of nearby Pandie Pandie Station was amazed by the amount of birdlife attracted to the area when the river was in flood. The following pages show some of the birds around Birdsville

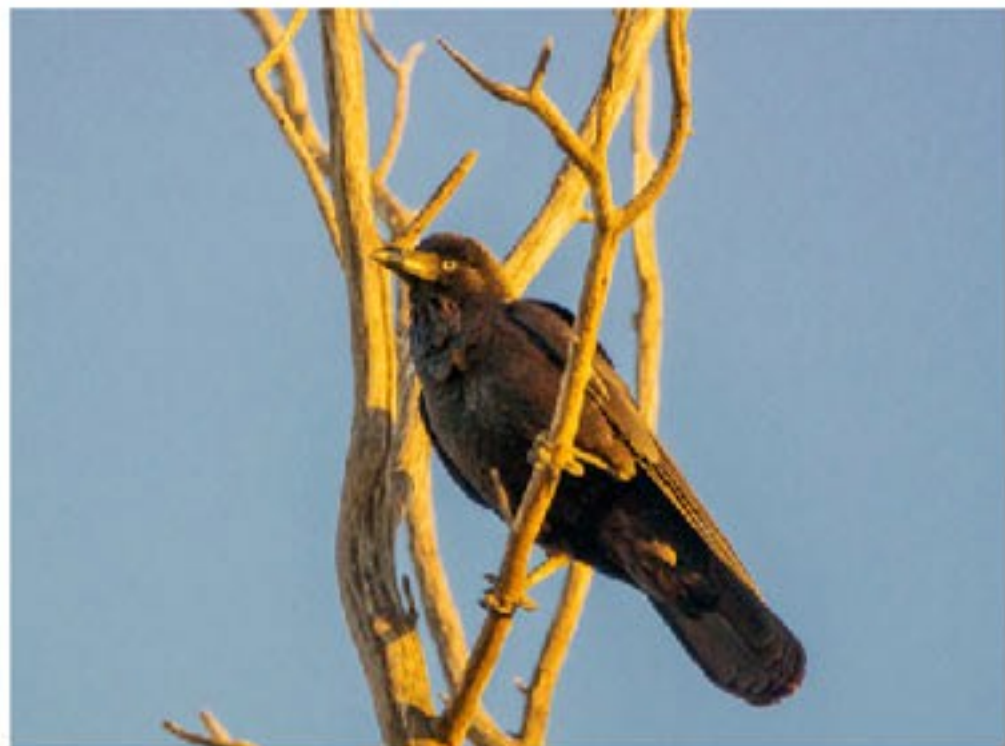
Bottom left; White necked heron.



Page Right; Flock bronzewings

Bottom right; Tern.





Birds of Birdsville

Page left;

Top right; A Currawong.

Top left; Pigeon.

Bottom left; Woodswallows.

Page right; Raptors.

Bottom left; Wedgetail Eagle.



Pelicans on the Diamantina River.



Spoonbills





Birds of Birdsville

Page left; Night Heron.

Top Left; A pair of Woodswallows.

Top Left; Woodswallows.

Top right; A Woodswallow.

Bottom left; Brolgas.



Birds of Birdsville

Left; A Kite

Top Left; Correlas drinking..

Top right; Budgerigars .

Bottom right; Gallahs.





Birds of Birdsville

Right; A pair of Brolgas with their chick.

Top Left; A Black Swan.

Top right; A Spoonbill.

Bottom left; An Egret.





Birds of Birdsville

Left; A White Necked Heron.

Top Left; A white necked Heron.

Top right; Royal Spoonbills.

Bottom right; Jabaru or Black Necked Stork.



Thutirla Pula

The Two Boys Dreamtime story

In the beginning, the two boys were long-lived. Their names were Thutirla and Waram. They lived on the western side of the desert. Their grandfather was the caretaker of the sacred waters and held the secret knowledge of rain and water.

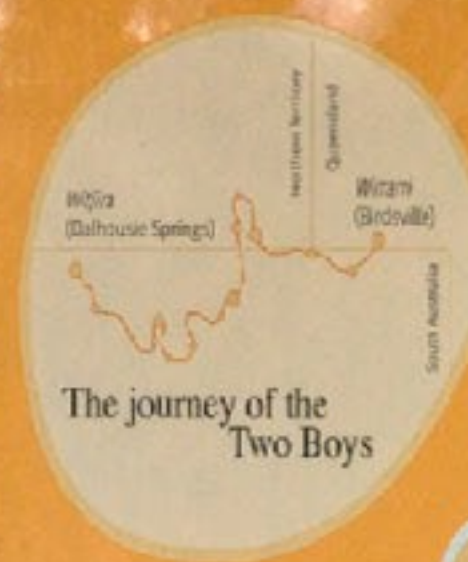
One day, the two boys went to the waterholes. The local people would use the decorative feathers of many colourful birds. They decided to share these unique skills and customs with their people on the other side of the desert. However, to do so, they would need to cross the great desert of Arrows. This was the big land hill country.

The two long-lived would make the epic journey. Their grandfather shared his secret water knowledge to prepare them for the long voyage ahead. And, along the way, the two long-lived were transformed into Thutirla Pula—the Two Boys.

However, when across the desert, the Two Boys stopped and identified a lookout in the middle of the desert. It was a place where the two boys could see the other side of the desert. It was a place where the two boys could see the other side of the desert. It was a place where the two boys could see the other side of the desert.

Along the way, the Two Boys also collected the colourful feathers of the many birds they encountered—such as Orange Chats, Bulberrys, and Black Gulls. These feathers would be highly prized for ceremonial decoration by their people on the other side of the desert—and this time, they had used only ash and ash.

Upon the arrival of the Two Boys here at Waram, a great ceremony was held. This very site was marked as a sacred ceremonial ground, with the two rocky outcrops providing separate preparation sites for the men and women.



The journey of the Two Boys

Once dressed and decorated, and carrying the sticks, the men and women fled into the central ceremonial grounds, and sat with their backs to the fire in the middle, waiting in anticipation. The Two Boys shared the knowledge from their journey. And, in the process, new songs and laws were created for the country.

At the height of the ceremony, the Two Boys finally revealed the colourful gift of feathers they had gathered across the desert. A wonderful climax to a great journey ceremony and story.

And so this special place was called Thutirla Pula, in recognition of the journey made by the Two Boys—a journey which enabled future generations of Aboriginal people to travel from one side of the desert to the other.

Just as you followed a map to find your way to Birdsville, the Thutirla Pula Dreamtime story provided a "story map" by which Aboriginal people survived and lived sustainably in one of the harshest environments for tens of thousands of years.

No doubt the preparation you've had to make just to drive through this country will give you an appreciation of the unique survival skills of the original occupants of this land.

Arroo!

That's Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi talk for 'g'day'!

Before you enter these ceremonial grounds, please let the spirits know that you're here and you'd like to visit. Just say arroo and the spirits will welcome you. And see you safely on your way.

The following walk takes a leisurely 20 minutes to complete. Please feel free to take your time and enjoy the natural beauty of this special story place.

Please respect this site and leave everything as you find it.



The Thutirla Pula ceremonial grounds



The men's site



The lookout

Thutirla Pula

This series of interpretive signs at a significant Aboriginal ceremonial site in the Queensland Outback town of Birdsville that tells the story of the two boys.

Top Left; The Mens meeting place.

Top right; The lookout.

Bottom right; The Womens meeting place.



The women's site

Burke & Wills



On 20 August 1860 Robert Burke and William Wills set out from Melbourne to chart a route to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The first successful crossing of Australia was made up of 18 teams, 200 men and 100 horses and pack animals. Though successful in their quest, both Burke and Wills perished on their return journey. Burke found a Wallaby in the diary of William Wills, verifying their passage through this region.

The disappearance of the Burke & Wills expedition stimulated exploration of the Channel Country as pastures from all over Australia set out in scattered sandhills.

The Burke River and Wills Creek are the marks of their journey and their journey.



Burke and Wills

The Burke and Wills Tree is located approximately three kilometres from Birdsville on the banks of the Diamantina River.

The Burke and Wills Tree at Birdsville was marked as part of the Burke and Wills expedition in the 1800s.

Local history records that this Coolibah Tree, on the banks of the Diamantina River bears the marking BW-C76 1860.



Big Red Sand Dune

Big Red / Nappanerica is the name given to the last sand dune coming from west to east in the Simpson Desert.

It is approximately 35 kms west of Birdsville, Big Red stands well over 30 metres tall and is part of a series of around 1,140 parallel sand dunes stretching across the Simpson Desert.

Top Left: The track conditions.

Right: Warning signs for the Simpson Desert.





Coming up Big Red sand dune



On the top of Big Red sand dune



Having dinner on Big Red sand dune



After sunset on Big Red sand dune





Birdsville Races

The Birdsville Races are a horse race held each year since 1882 in the first weekend in September in Queensland, Australia.

Funds are raised in aid of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia.

The population goes from about 100 to around 7,000 people for the two day event.

There will be no race meeting for 2020 due to the Chinese Covid19 infection going around the world.

This book covers the Birdsville Track.

The Birdsville Track is 517km track that goes from Marree in South Australia to Birdsville in Queensland.

The only fuel available is at Mungerannie.

The track can be closed so best to check with the South Australian government website before setting off, it is a \$1000.00 per wheel fine for travelling on a closed road in South Australia.

