

THE ROAD AHEAD

WINTER 2025

Sporting chance

RACQ partners with Queensland Academy of Sport for statewide talent search



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY
We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our business operates and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within RACQ and the communities in which we live and work.



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COVER PHOTO:
QAS ambassadors
Mac Rogers,
Ella Sabljak and
Jessica Borg.
Story pages 8-9





67 YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP

TOWNSVILLE'S GRAHAM CUMMING has been a proud RACQ member for 67 years. He joined in 1958 and recently visited our Townsville store to share his story.

"I'm not claiming to have the record, but there mustn't be many members who have been around as long as I have," Graham said.



Thank you, Graham, for being part of our journey as we celebrate 100 years of roadside assistance.

Your can read more about RACQ's history as we mark our roadside centenary on pages 12, 13 and 15, including how you can share your most memorable roadside rescue by RACQ for a chance to win a \$1,000 travel voucher.

Graham Cumming is pictured, left, behind the wheel of his first car – a 1958 Holden ute, the same year he joined RACQ. He is pictured, above, more recently with his current car. For more about the history of motoring in Australia, see page 48 of our Mobility section for a feature on the 100-year anniversary of Ford in Australia.

SUPPORT FOR E-SCOOTER INQUIRY

RACQ HAS WELCOMED the State Government's announcement of a parliamentary inquiry into e-mobility safety after years of advocating for electric scooter reforms.

A three-year research partnership between RACQ and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation, conducted by the Jamieson Trauma Institute (JTI), showed reform was needed to address the seriousness of life-changing injuries and deaths because of e-scooter crashes.

General Manager of Advocacy Joshua Cooney said the inquiry was a necessary and sensible step towards change.

"We cannot deny that e-scooters have become a popular mode of transport across the State and will continue to become increasingly important in the mobility landscape," Mr Cooney said. "Our members and the research tell us that we must find ways to co-exist and make them safer for all road users."

The Club has been calling for major changes to e-scooter rules after research revealed presentations to emergency departments are becoming more frequent and injuries more severe in Queensland.

Severe facial and head injuries have become a major concern for hospitals.

RACQ has been advocating for full-face helmets to be mandatory for people using private stand-up e-scooters and for hire scooters to transition to more stable sit-down models that have a lower centre of gravity.

Mr Cooney urged the Government to consider the results of the JTI research.

"We are looking forward to making a detailed submission to the inquiry and working with the Government to make all personal mobility devices safer," he said.

Viewpoint



THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

In the same way RACQ is evolving to better meet the needs of our members and drive a positive future for all Queenslanders, the board is also undergoing renewal.

New board appointments have been made following the retirements of long-serving director John Minz in March; Duncan Brain from the RACQ Limited and Bank boards at the end of last year (though he remains on the Insurance board until the IAG transaction is complete); and Rob Hubbard, who will leave in September.

On behalf of the board and RACQ team, I want to thank John, Rob and Duncan and wish them well in the future. They have been exemplary directors and tireless and committed advocates for our organisation.

Representing regional Queensland, John has been a valued director on RACQ boards since 2016, a former chair of the Bank board, and former chair of the Audit committee.

Rob has been a board director representing South East Queensland since 2021 and a chair of the Audit committee.

First joining the board in 2021, Duncan has also been a member of the Audit and Risk and Compliance committees and importantly, played a vital role in the IAG transaction to help set up our Club for future success.

Both John and Rob made the decision that it was the right time in their lives to retire and with Duncan's particular expertise in insurance, he decided now was the time for directors with different skills and expertise to join our board and support and accelerate our 2032 strategy.

I'm pleased to confirm that following a comprehensive recruitment process, in May the board welcomed experienced new directors Mark Rearick and Richard Umbers to fill two of the board-appointed vacancies.

Mark has had an impressive career spanning more than three decades in the automotive industry in Australia, China and the US, serving at board level in Australia and China.

He was president, CFO and VP of strategy for various affiliates of Ford Motor Company in those countries, including as executive chair and president of Ford's

electric vehicle company in China. His skills and expertise will be crucial as we help our members with their mobility needs now and into the future.

Richard is an experienced CEO and board member in the retail, e-commerce, healthcare and logistics sectors.

He has more than 25 years' experience in consumer-facing organisations and also brings significant digital transformation expertise as we look to enhance our digital offerings across the organisation.

Liz Savage will also be appointed to the board in September to fill the casual vacancy in South East Queensland created by Rob's retirement.

She will stand for election as a South East Queensland director at October's AGM.

Liz is an experienced non-executive director in ASX-listed, private, local government and not-for-profit entities in travel, tourism, hospitality, workforce and sport.

With a particular focus on customer, member and loyalty programs and strategic partnerships, Liz's expertise will be invaluable as we continue to build our Member Benefits program and help ease cost-of-living concerns for our members.

With nominations now closed for the election of directors at the October AGM, I'd like to thank everyone who expressed an interest.

The three directors join us at a special time in RACQ's history as we celebrate the 100-year anniversary of our roadside assistance business and are well placed with the board to help set us up for the next 100 years.

As part of our centenary celebrations, we are running a competition encouraging you to share your most memorable roadside assistance stories with us.

You can find details on how to enter on page 13.

We would love to hear from you and I look forward to reading your many stories. Stay safe everyone.

LEONA MURPHY
RACQ PRESIDENT



Leona on a 1937 AJS motorcycle from RACQ's historic fleet at the Mobility Centre for 100 years of roadside celebrations.

RAY'S NOTE

WHEN BRISBANE'S NIC Marchesi and Lucas Patchett launched their free mobile laundry service 11 years ago, they couldn't have foreseen how profoundly it would transform lives.

Their sense of community began developing in high school and their desire to help people doing it tough saw them offer a basic, free hygiene service – washing and drying people's clothes for free.

As Nic and Lucas share in their story on pages 20-21, they soon realised their service was about far more than clean

clothes – it was about human connection

As they explain, the service became much more about the lines of communication that were opened between Orange Sky's volunteers and its users.

The sense of community that emerged from something as simple as clean laundry – which many of us take for granted – has helped alleviate isolation and restore dignity for those using the service, whom Nic and Lucas prefer to call 'friends'.

Orange Sky nearly fell at the first hurdle as the plan to operate washing machines and dryers in vans had some early technical issues.

Nic and Lucas could have given up when faced with those initial challenges.

However those early interactions with one 'friend' in particular convinced them of the need for the service and made them more determined to see it work.

The extraordinary growth of Orange Sky stands as a testament to the dedication of Nic, Lucas, and their passionate community of volunteers and supporters who continue to make a difference in their communities.

RAY ANDERSEN
MANAGING EDITOR



YOUR SAY

GIVING MEMBERS A VOICE



RIDERS IGNORING E-BIKE RULES

Living on the Gold Coast, I've noticed that e-bikes can be a real problem. To be legal, e-bikes must be pedal-assisted, have maximum motor power of 250 watts, no throttle is allowed, and the maximum motor-assisted speed is 25km/h, among other things. Every day I see e-bike riders doing speeds well exceeding 25km/h, two and even three people on them, no helmets, using phones, running red lights, ignoring road rules etc. The police are not bothering or are unable to do anything to enforce the rules as riders are unidentifiable and just disappear up the nearest alleyway. If they are illegal, they are classed as motorcycles not e-bikes. E-bikes are a great way to get around but there are rules for a reason.

JOHN BRADLEY, BURLEIGH WATERS

See page 58 for more on e-bike rules.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT PARKING PROBLEM

With the introduction of 50-cent public transport fares, our political representatives of both parties have failed to think through the whole process and ramifications. While patronage has increased, everyone who doesn't use the public system is subsidising the service one way or another. Is that fair for everyone? I

think not. It would be fairer for patrons to be charged a fair rate and not be subsidised by the rest of the community. Another development has been with people driving to and parking anywhere and everywhere near a bus stop to catch their 50-cent ride. An issue in my area is that people are parking for free in areas designated for small complexes including patient parking at doctor surgeries. People with disabilities are forced to park at distances from the surgery causing them great inconvenience and angst and have been known to receive parking infringements. Thanks to the selfish and inconsiderate people, and our political parties who are only interested in being re-elected.

ROB MCGREGOR, CARINDALE



ISLAND IS NATURAL HABITAT FOR DINGOES

Not wanting to actually holiday on Fraser Island (K'gari) but having a curious desire to visit the highly acclaimed heritage-listed, largest sand island in the world, I embarked on an organised one-day coach tour which was absolutely wonderful. We treated the dingoes' territory with caution and respect as it is their habitat, and we were visiting where they have a right to be. It's a bit like sharks in the ocean – if you want to stay safe, why not stick to the heavily populated areas and swim between the flags. The sea is the sharks' domain and we humans are encroaching in their space. Plus, would you wittingly swim in a crocodile-infested river and risk having life and limb snapped up? Perhaps these creatures feel their safety is threatened and react accordingly when they see or sense human interlopers in their environment. Common sense should prevail, but unfortunately like so many things of the past, e.g. common courtesy, it is just not so common anymore.

JULIE BERRY, MURGON

WILD ANIMALS MUST BE RESPECTED

Having read a number of calls for dingoes to be removed from K'gari due to the danger they pose to people, I find it necessary to state my opposition to such a move. I was a lucky regular visitor to the island in the late '70s and early '80s. The dingoes were everywhere then. There were no fences and no restricted areas, just a respect for the wildlife that is there. We often had dingoes around the camp site, mainly at Waddy point, but always ensured foodstuffs and waste were stored well out of reach and in sealed containers. We never fed the dingoes or attempted having photos taken with them. We never had a problem other than paw prints around the camp. Calling for the removal of dingoes from K'gari is nothing more than highlighting the incompetence of the people going there. Therefore, in conclusion, I can only call for a total ban on people going there.

STEVE THOMPSON, CLEVELAND



TICKING OFF NEW-CAR CHECKLIST

There is now a plethora of new, foreign cars for sale in Australia. The RACQ does a good job of reviewing them in each issue of this magazine, plus the e-newsletters. These reviews give lots of important information on price and the technical details, such as battery, crash rating, power, cylinders, driving smoothness, range and an overall assessment for or against the model. However, for me, as a recent buyer, other important considerations were spare tyre (increasingly unavailable), road clearance (for country driving and even the speed bumps in shopping centres), delivery times

(when not available from the showroom), local servicing, availability of spares (especially if war breaks out), and colours (other than black or white). The demise of Australian car manufacturing, with its potential for export to New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific, is a national tragedy. Car manufacturing would revive our declining manufacturing sector.

KEN MOORE, CHAPEL HILL

SLIP ROAD RULES REMINDER

Many signal-controlled intersections incorporate slip lanes signed 'Turn left at any time with care'. Unfortunately, many drivers do not respect the rights of pedestrians when using such lanes. Queensland road rules state: "If you are turning left using a slip lane, you must also give way to any pedestrian and bicycle or personal mobility device rider on or entering the slip lane". It is very easy for drivers to think, I am in a hurry and the pedestrian can wait a few seconds. Roads are busy most of the time and pedestrians, being the most vulnerable, will not force their right of way. Do give them a go as we all have a right to reach our destination on time and safely.

FRANKLIN REDSELL, DURACK



SPACE-SAVER TYRE SUGGESTIONS

I would like to bring something to the attention of all other members who are driving around with a temporary spare wheel, aka 'space-saver tyre'. If your spare is more than 10 years old, even if never used, it should be replaced. If you have used it and accumulated more than 300km, it should also be replaced. The same goes

if you have exceeded the maximum speed rating of 80km/h for a sustained period. The problem that may be encountered when replacing the tyre is unavailability in Australia. Not many sizes are sold by the tyre retailers and if they are the cost could be \$300-\$400. I tried to get a T135/90-17R for my 2012 Kia Grand Carnival and none were available for sale anywhere. I finally sourced one from a wreckers that was 15 years old but at least it wasn't badly deteriorated like mine was. Check your spare today and start doing some research on availability so you are not left at risk. Also check the tyre pressure. It will more than likely be low as these tyres are inflated to around 60psi and don't hold for that long.

DARIO POSAVAC, BRACKEN RIDGE

BRAKE LIGHTS PART WARNING

I have just discovered what I believe is a little-known fact but could be very important. I recently observed that the brake lights on my Nissan Patrol were permanently on. Now this normally could cause a flat battery. Mine was caused by a little piece of plastic that operates the brake-light switch which had perished and fallen on the floor. If I had been towing my caravan, which was to happen a week later, this would have caused the electric van brakes to come on. This, of course, could be very dangerous. The spare-parts guys told me they sell a lot of these, so the potential is quite great for this occurrence, particularly on older vehicles

JOHN SEECK, WAMURAN

ALL VEHICLES MUST STOP AT 'STOP' SIGN

My understanding is that motorists must come to a complete stop at the white line adjacent to a stop sign. This means that if there is a queue of cars at the stop sign and the first car moves off, each following car must move forward and stop at the white line before proceeding. In the past I have seen police issuing fines for breeches of this rule. However there are two stop signs on major traffic routes I use almost daily where almost no one stops after the first car moves off (if it is clear to proceed).

My concern is that when I move forward and stop at the white line, that someone, not expecting me to stop, will collide with the rear of my vehicle. There have been a few close calls and I have seen collisions occur with other unfortunate motorists. Please clarify the requirements. I am loathe to unleash the police on poor unfortunate motorists who already have enough expenses, however a publicity campaign may be in order.

STEWART ELDRIDGE, GEEBUNG

OUR SAY: ALL vehicles must come to a complete stop at a 'stop' sign and obey give-way rules, even if they are in a line of vehicles. The rule ensures that each driver has a clear view of the intersection and can safely assess whether they can proceed.

CALL FOR TOUGH ACTION ON NOISY VEHICLES

I fully agree with calls for law reforms and expansion of hooning laws and police to enforce the laws (Autumn TRA). There is an important issue that RACQ did not mention – noise hoons who modify their exhaust system to far exceed noise-emission limits, for motorcycles, cars and trucks, as well as truckers who use engine-brakes in built-up areas. This excessive and unnecessary traffic noise is causing additional daily living stress that no one needs. Police should crack down on noise hoons by using unmarked car patrols, staking out certain locations, or using automated cameras like mobile phone cameras to detect and log noisy vehicles. The penalties for all hoons need to be increased to include permanent confiscation of vehicles for repeat offenders.

ROD MOULD, BILINGA

RACQ CLUBHOUSE:

Email roadahead@racq.com.au. Mail The Road Ahead, PO Box 4, Springwood, Qld 4127. Please include name and address. Letters will not receive an individual reply and should be no more than 120 words.

DRIVING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SPORTS STARS

STORY TORI MAYNE



QAS ambassador Mac Rogers, left, converted from gymnastics to rowing. BELOW: Young athletes are put through their paces by QAS assessors. RIGHT: Minister for Sport, Racing, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tim Mander and RACQ Managing Director and Group CEO David Carter with YouFor2032 Talent Lead Dr Alex Roberts at the launch of RACQ's partnership with QAS; Mac speaking at the launch.

Young Queenslanders who dream of competing on the world stage can now test their skills through the Queensland Academy of Sport YouFor2032 Talent Search app, driven by RACQ.

If there's one thing that unites Queenslanders, it's our love of sport.

Nothing matches the sense of pride we feel whenever our athletes achieve success on the world stage.

After helping Queenslanders for 120 years, RACQ is proud to continue the evolution of that legacy by supporting the next generation of Queensland athletes.

In April, RACQ and the Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) launched a partnership to deliver the YouFor2032 Talent Search and athlete testing app.

Providing inclusive and accessible pathways for potential elite athletes, the YouFor2032 app uses cutting-edge technology to assess athletes.

Queenslanders with sporting dreams aged between 13 and 23, or between 13

and 30 for para-sports, are invited to test their skills via the YouFor2032 app. If they measure up, athletes will be matched to their best-suited high-performance sport and connected with elite coaches, expert insights and the support they need to pursue greatness.

Managing Director and Group CEO David Carter said RACQ was proud to partner with QAS and to deliver on the Club's purpose to drive a positive future for all Queenslanders.

"Queensland is one of the country's most decentralised states and the YouFor2032 Talent Search ensures all aspiring athletes, regardless of where they live, have the opportunity to showcase their sporting abilities," Mr Carter said.

"RACQ is proud to be working with the QAS to support a program which will help enrich the lives of young Queenslanders through inclusive and accessible sporting pathways."

Mr Carter said RACQ was also honoured to be supporting the industry-leading app, which is the first of its kind to include para-sports.

"With more than 1.7 million members, our Club represents a broad cross-section of the Queensland community, and this helps promote diversity and inclusion which is important to us," he said.

"It's an honour to support the first talent search app to include para-sports and help remove barriers for our next generation of athletes."



COUNTRY ATHLETE TOOK NEW PATH TO THE TOP

As much as we love seeing our athletes achieve success, we are also drawn to their stories – whether it's the adversity they've been through or the unusual journey they've taken to reach the elite level of sport.

YouFor2032 athlete ambassador Mac Rogers is destined for success in rowing, having been identified through the QAS YouFor2032 program, but his path to get there was by no means straightforward.

Born and bred in Proserpine, Mac's love for sport started with gymnastics.

"Growing up in a small town in North Queensland, the sports you can do are few and far between," Mac said.

"I started doing gymnastics as a kid and my parents were driving me 90 minutes to and from training."

Despite admitting he was not very good at gymnastics, Mac still holds the Guinness World Record for the most ring muscle-ups in 24 hours.

"As I grew to be over six foot (183cm), I realised gymnastics wasn't for me and I thought the chapter of my life where I could pursue sport at an elite level had passed," he said.

In 2022, Mac attended a QAS YouFor2032 talent identification session in Mackay, where his endurance, speed and strength were tested.



Mac was told his 'wingspan' and height would be best suited to either rowing or pole-vault and despite his initial efforts in pole-vault, he opted for rowing.

"I came to Brisbane and did a week's worth of pole-vault training, which I enjoyed but it didn't feel like the right fit," he said.

"After that, I had a bit of a break before trying rowing and I fell in love with it.

"A lot of people in Proserpine have never rowed in their life and probably never will, so I am grateful to the QAS for giving me the opportunity to pursue my dream of being an elite athlete."

With 12 months of rowing competition



under his belt and competing at the 2025 national rowing titles, Mac has nothing but praise for the QAS YouFor2032 program and new discovery app.

"QAS do a fantastic job sourcing regional talent but there is only so many towns they can physically get to," he said.

"The new YouFor2032 app will break down a massive barrier for small communities where there may be untapped sporting talent.

"I would really encourage Queensland kids, no matter where you were born or what sport you did growing up, to give the app a go and see what happens.

"The last few years of my life took a completely different course to what I thought was possible, and it was all thanks to QAS believing in me."

This story is the first in RACQ's series, featuring QAS YouFor2032 ambassadors.

The spring and summer editions of The Road Ahead will feature profiles on Jessica Borg (boxing) and Korey Boddington (para-cycling).



Between Normanton and Croydon

An outback tourism icon

Gulflander is more than a rail journey. It's a living piece of Queensland history, a once in a lifetime experience for young and old.

Clubhouse

BUILDING CLIMATE-READY COMMUNITIES

BY TORI MAYNE

RACQ Foundation joined forces with Brisbane Sustainability Agency and Oxley Creek Catchment Association to enhance our waterways and help build resilience through nature-based solutions.

In early March, RACQ Foundation volunteers were preparing to roll up their sleeves for this year's first Community Assistance Project at Archerfield Wetlands.

As is common in Queensland, the weather had other plans, and torrential rain from ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred saw the wetlands inundated and the project delayed.

Once the water receded, 38 RACQ Foundation volunteers resumed the project, planting vegetation to enhance the wetlands environment and its crucial role within Archerfield Wetlands and the broader Oxley Creek corridor. Whilst it was devastating to see the impacts of the flooding across Queensland, it did highlight the importance of contributing to community resilience, including through RACQ's new partnership with Brisbane Sustainability Agency.

The agency is dedicated to enhancing

the natural environment and building resilience within local communities and has previously delivered notable projects, including the Flood Resilient Homes Program Pilot and Resilient Clubs Support Program for Brisbane City Council.

As part of the new partnership, RACQ Foundation will support the delivery of resilience assessments, the performing of retrofit works for non-council clubs, the promotion of sustainability awareness and education in schools and demonstrating suburban sponges, which absorb and slow stormwater runoff.

RACQ Foundation Manager Bridgette Muller said enhancing Queensland ecosystems and communities was a key focus for RACQ.

"We are proud to partner with like-minded organisations, including Brisbane

Sustainability Agency, to deliver large-scale resilience projects that make a real impact in our built and natural environments," Ms Muller said. "Tropical Cyclone Alfred and the 2022 Brisbane floods have reinforced the need for nature-based intervention in Brisbane's creek systems, so it was important for us to launch this partnership at Archerfield Wetlands."

Brisbane Sustainability Agency Chief Executive Officer Tracy Melenewycz said it was inspiring to work alongside organisations like RACQ Foundation.

"Projects like the regeneration of Archerfield Wetlands are a powerful example of how nature-based solutions can help local ecosystems withstand future floods and extreme weather," Ms Melenewycz said.

"This partnership is an important part of our long-term vision to enhance Brisbane's resilience by combining community action and environmental restoration."

Visit www.racq.com.au/about-us/community to learn more about RACQ's community initiatives.

RACQ Foundation volunteers planting vegetation to help restore the Archerfield Wetlands habitat.

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MODELS POSE FOR MAGAZINE COVER

BY RAY ANDERSEN



Jack Eagle and his model cars that recreate *The Road Ahead* autumn edition cover.
Photo Jake Ryan
BELOW: Founding member of RACQ William J. Tarrant with his wife Edith on his tri-car.

Long-time RACQ member Jack Eagle has recreated the cover of the autumn edition of *The Road Ahead* using replica model cars he built.

The original photo, featuring five vehicles from RACQ's historic fleet, was taken in front of the Club's Eight Mile Plains headquarters to commemorate 100 years of roadside assistance.

Inspired by the image, Jack meticulously replicated the scene with vehicles from his collection and submitted his version to *The Road Ahead*.

The final addition to his fleet was a replica of the 1965 Morris Mini panel van, which he completed in April.

His passion for making models of RACQ vehicles was first sparked by a Trax scale model of a 1963 EH Holden panel van patrol, produced to commemorate RACQ's centenary in 2005.

Over the years, Jack has collected and refurbished six scale models of vehicles used by RACQ, with another currently in the works.

Carefully disassembling, repainting, and rebuilding each model, he ensures they match their real-life counterparts.

For the Mini, he even replaced its solid back side panels with 'windows' to better replicate the RACQ version.

Sometimes, Jack modifies different models to recreate RACQ vehicles, like the 1938 ML Chevrolet tow truck and the 1937 AJS motorcycle.

"I had to do quite a bit of work on the tow truck, and I had to make a sidecar for the motorbike," he said.



"The hardest part is getting the signage on the vehicles right, and my wife Glenda has been very good at helping with that. It's hard to get it really accurate."

Jack, who turns 85 this year and has been an RACQ member for more than 60 years, boasts an impressive collection of over 100 model cars.

"I have quite a few fire engines and buses too," he said. "When I was younger, I used to catch the Redcliffe to Sandgate bus, so I've made one of those."



Family link to RACQ's formation

Jack's wife, Glenda, has a family connection to RACQ that dates back to its founding in 1905.

Her great uncle, William J. Tarrant, was one of the 18 foundation members of RACQ.

Mr Tarrant, who owned the Maryborough Cycle Agency, was one of eight founding members who were not doctors or dentists.

Although the Club's first committee meeting on 7 June 1905 noted he had no vehicle listed, he was known to have been running a motor tri-car in Maryborough by February that year.

The tri-car, a converted motorcycle, was the first 'motor car' on the town's streets. Mr Tarrant later became the Ford dealer in Maryborough.



MEET OUR 'ANGELS ON THE ROAD'

BY REECE DWYER



RACQ patrols Ian Provan, left, and Gino Larocca, below, have recounted stories from their time on the road for RACQ.

Heartfelt stories from RACQ Patrols as we mark 100 years of roadside assistance.

With RACQ celebrating 100 years of roadside assistance, we caught up with two patrol officers to delve into their experiences on the road.

Gino Larocca and Ian Provan have recounted some of their most memorable jobs and experiences and discussed what keeps their odometer ticking along.

With a combined 40 years' experience, these officers have done everything from rescuing children locked in cars to saving weddings.

"When you wake up, you don't know what's ahead; every job, person and problem is different, there's never a boring day," Gino explained.

Although they have both completed thousands of jobs, Gino and Ian believe their roles can't be quantified by numbers alone.

"It's not just a job, it's a person who needs help and we need to provide the solution," Ian said.

After rescuing a baby trapped inside a car, Gino said the child's mother praised him and RACQ for being "angels on the road".

"That job has always stuck with me. The mother had tears in her eyes, and I went home feeling like I'd really helped her," he said.

Ian shared his own memorable moment from his years patrolling our roads.

"I once helped a bride on the morning of her wedding; she'd locked herself out of her car after going to the gym," Ian said.

"Later that day, she called me and said, 'I made it - I'm off to get married!'"

A common theme from both patrol officers was their passion for what they do - helping Queenslanders wherever and whenever they can.

"I have pride in being an RACQ patrol and how well respected we are in the community," Ian said.

Gino added: "That's the good part of this job, you're helping people out.

"You fix their problem and see their smile when you leave".

We asked both Gino and Ian what they think the next 100 years will look like for RACQ Roadside Assistance.

"There will be more and more EVs on the road, but they still need batteries and will still have flat tyres," Gino said.

"The technology will be completely different, but patrols providing genuine member service - I can't see that changing," Ian added.



SHARE YOUR STORY TO WIN

Tell us about your most memorable roadside rescue for a chance to win a \$1,000 RACQ Travel voucher or one of 10 Roadside Assistance vouchers valued at \$100 each*.

SUBMIT YOUR STORY at racq.com/roadside-stories between 2 June and 27 July.

*T&Cs apply. Visit racq.com/roadside-stories for more information and to read the full terms and conditions.



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Stephen, VIC

After years of using expensive hearing aids from clinics, Stephen knew he needed a more affordable alternative. Frustrated with the cost and lack of improvement, he decided to try PocketAid's Jaspa 3 BTEs. His experience?

“Jaspa 3 hearing aids provided me with a relatively inexpensive alternative to clinic-supplied aids, which did not provide me with better overall results.”



Sophia, TAS

Sophia wanted to improve her hearing after a clinic diagnosed her with high-frequency hearing loss. However, the clinic's recommendation – a costly high-end hearing aid – was simply unaffordable.

“They told me I needed thousands of dollars' worth of technology. While I was eager to improve my hearing, I knew I couldn't justify that cost.” Instead of giving up, she found an alternative with PocketAid's Jaspa 3. “For me, the biggest change is the social-emotional impact – being able to be my extraverted self and engage with people freely.”



Albert, QLD

Albert noticed he was struggling to hear soft voices and constantly asking people to repeat themselves. He sought help from two separate hearing clinics but felt pressured to spend thousands.

“The clinics I visited were primarily interested in selling hearing aids, and I didn't feel I was getting good value.” Still searching for a solution, Albert gave PocketAid a chance. The results were immediate: “Straight from the box to the ear, a very noticeable immediate improvement.”

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to various settings and volume levels via a simple on-board clarity button. No digital apps or programming are required. Prices range from just \$429 to \$595 per aid.

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*Check your own health fund cover to determine your eligibility and level of cover for hearing aids.

Always read the label. Follow the directions for use.

Clubhouse

FAMILY'S ENDURING CONNECTION TO RACQ

BY RAY ANDERSEN

Robert Smith during his early days at Kings Beach Service Centre, formerly Caloundra Motors. BELOW: Horace Carter, far right, pictured beside his stepson Barry Smith and other employees; Sue Kruger with her brother Robert Smith at the RACQ Caloundra store.



A Caloundra family's history with the Club spans four generations and nine decades.

Caloundra's Sue Kruger shares a remarkable family connection with RACQ that spans nearly 90 years.

Sue has dedicated 47 years to RACQ's Caloundra agency, but her family's involvement dates to 1937 when her grandfather Horace Carter began providing roadside assistance to members via his Caloundra Motors business.

Sue first began helping at Caloundra Motors during school holidays as a 14-year-old, becoming a full-time employee in 1978 at the age of 18.

"By the time I joined, my father (Bob Smith) was managing the business as my grandfather had retired, although he still owned it," Sue said.

"I was serving petrol, taking calls from stranded motorists, serving customers in the shop, and handling all the bookkeeping as well."

Sue's brother, Robert Smith, who completed his mechanical apprenticeship at Caloundra Motors in 1967, took over the business in 1980, relocating to the Kings Beach Service Centre.

In 1986, Robert established an RACQ agency on Bulcock Street, Caloundra's main street, following a suggestion by the regional manager.

While the breakdown service remained at the Kings Beach Service Centre, the Bulcock Street agency became the hub for RACQ insurance, travel services, accommodation bookings, and vehicle inspections.



Robert sold the service centre and retired in 2018, marking the end of an 81-year family connection with the business, however the RACQ legacy lives on.

Robert still owns the RACQ Caloundra store where his son, Agency General Manager Darren, and Agency Supervisor Sue continue the family connection with the Club.

Sue reflects warmly on her family's enduring association with RACQ and its service to members over the decades.

"RACQ felt like a family – it was families running those service stations and mechanical workshops providing roadside assistance across Queensland," she said.

"Though RACQ still shares those member and community-driven values, it has grown into an even better business.

"In those early days, operations were

small and scattered, but training introduced uniform standards, making roadside assistance smoother and more efficient."

Robert agreed family ties were an important part of the relationship with the community and RACQ.

"RACQ was all about helping people and our family was a large part of the Caloundra community," he said.

"And if you were an employee and not family, you became family.

"Because so many of my family members have worked in the business over the years, RACQ is very much part of our lives."

As for her looming retirement, Sue hasn't ruled out reaching the milestone of 50 years with RACQ.

"I might, you never know. It's not too far away," she said.



PACIFIC COAST
WAY ROAD
TRIP: COASTAL
CONNECTIONS



Taking in the view from the Tamborine Rainforest Skywalk.
BELOW: Aerial view of Burleigh Heads; Brisbane's South Bank Parklands.
RIGHT: The entry to Eumundi Markets; The Mary Valley Rattler train; Illumina at Kingfisher Bay Resort; ATV tour at Tangalooma Island Resort.
Photos Tourism and Events Qld

Get ready for an epic Queensland road trip along the Pacific Coast Way, starting on the Gold Coast.

The 360km Gold Coast to Fraser Coast leg of the Pacific Coast Way serves up the best that South East Queensland has to offer with Insta-worthy coastlines, lush green hinterlands, delectable food and wine experiences and the Sunshine State's vibrant capital city.



START
Burleigh Heads, Gold Coast

SNAPSHOT: Begin your journey at the southern end of the Gold Coast at Burleigh Heads – a top destination for surfers with the waters off the main beach providing ample opportunities for veteran surfers and newbies to conquer the waves of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve. For land dwellers there is also the opportunity to walk through thousands of years of Indigenous history that can be observed around Burleigh Headland.

STAY: The brand-new Mondrian Gold Coast spans 24 floors with sprawling views across Burleigh Beach and out to the Pacific Ocean, as well as west to the leafy hinterland. This luxury hotel is the Los Angeles-based brand's first foray into Australia.

PLAY: Discover the history of the Yugambah people, one of the oldest living cultures in the world at the Jellurgal Cultural Centre at the base of Burleigh Mountain. Or learn to surf with one of the many Gold Coast surf schools such as Cheyne Horan Surf School at Burleigh Heads, with a program built on more than three decades of surf coaching experience from world champion surfer Cheyne Horan.

DINE: Nestled on the beachfront is one of the region's most iconic restaurants, Rick Shores, where you're so close to the beach you can almost feel the sea spray. This staple of the Gold Coast is renowned for its Moreton Bay bug rolls.



STOP 1
Brisbane

The drive time between Burleigh Heads and Brisbane is about an hour along the Pacific Coast Way. Take a turn west on the way for a pit stop at Tamborine Mountain to get the heart pumping with a trek through Tamborine Rainforest Skywalk.

SNAPSHOT: Queensland's capital city stands out for its laid-back culture, sub-tropical climate and urban charm. With tropical island escapes on the city's doorstep, a vibrant cultural lineup including world-class musicals and art exhibitions, and a raft of new and exciting new openings across hotels and dining, Brisbane is really having its time in the spotlight.

STAY: The Star Grand Brisbane is a five-star luxury hotel featuring 340 rooms and is at the centre of the new luxury hotel and lifestyle precinct perched adjacent to the Brisbane River at Queen's Wharf, complemented by a stellar lineup of elevated dining options.

PLAY: Just 75 minutes by ferry from Brisbane, Moreton Island, the third-largest sand island in the world, is an adventure playground with Tangalooma Island Resort boasting a magnificent portfolio of outdoor adventures and natural encounters such as ATV tours, sand tobogganing and snorkelling the Tangalooma Wrecks – a cluster of 15 deliberately sunken ships transformed into a colourful artificial harbour.

DINE: Tucked away in a Brisbane laneway is Gerard's Bistro, one of the city's most popular restaurants serving up flavour-packed Middle Eastern dishes including fresh Barbari bread to get you started. Gerard's Bistro is just one of the many restaurants that line James Street with Harveys, Hellenika, sAme sAme and new addition to the neighbourhood, ēmmē, serving up modern dining feasts.



STOP 2
Sunshine Coast

The journey from Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast is about 1.5 hours. Take a right off the Pacific Coast Way and discover the charming seaside community of Bribie Island – linked to the mainland by a road bridge. Fuel up with lunch at Sandstone Point Hotel featuring panoramic views of Pumicestone Passage and perhaps spend the evening in one of the Overwater Villas, which sit above the Sandstone Lagoon. If you're a fan of live music, you're in luck because Sandstone Point Hotel regularly hosts well-known bands and artists.

SNAPSHOT: Whether it's the sandy beaches, turquoise waters or rugged emerald hills of the hinterland, the Sunshine Coast is a colour palette for the senses. New family-friendly accommodation and eclectic markets and dining options paired with a hint of history sees the Sunshine Coast pack a punch with no shortage of memory-making opportunities. Read more about the Sunshine Coast on page 38 of our Travel section.

STAY: Adjacent to Steve Irwin's iconic Australia Zoo, where the neighbours happen to be kangaroos, emus, koalas, freshwater crocodiles and turtles lies the Crocodile Cabins. The cabins are the latest addition to the Crocodile Hunter Lodge where guests have access to the resort's existing facilities, including onsite restaurant, and entry to the zoo itself.

PLAY: Head 40 minutes north from Australia Zoo along the Pacific Coast Way to the idyllic hinterland town of Eumundi for the Eumundi Markets, one of the largest artisan

markets in Australia held every Wednesday and Saturday.

DINE: The Sunshine Coast is stamping its mark in the Queensland dining scene when it comes to Asian fusion cuisine, and it doesn't get any better than Rice Boi at The Wharf Mooloolaba. The red lanterns and neon lights lure foodies where mouth-watering dumplings, bao buns and curries leave no belly empty.



STOP 3
Fraser Coast

Travel time between the Sunshine Coast and Fraser Coast is about 2.5 hours. En route, steam train enthusiasts and history buffs can step aboard the Mary Valley Rattler at the historic Gympie Station for a rollicking railway journey through time and the Mary Valley countryside.

SNAPSHOT: Hervey Bay, on the Fraser Coast, is a great place to see some of the roughly 10,000 humpback whales on their annual journey between the Pacific and Antarctica, travelling the waters parallel to the Pacific Coast Way. Discover Maryborough's connection to Mary Poppins author P. L. Travers and keep an eye out for the quirky Mary Poppins-themed pedestrian lights in town – or get acquainted with nature on the world's largest sand island, K'gari (formerly Fraser Island).

STAY: Just a short 40-minute ferry ride from Hervey Bay is the World Heritage-listed K'gari where guests at family-friendly Kingfisher Bay Resort can celebrate the diverse ecosystem of the island on a range of tours and experiences including hiking, swimming and 4WD adventures.

At night be entertained by Queensland's first permanent light show, Illumina – a light and sound spectacle with the island's natural environment as an artistic backdrop.

PLAY: Whale watching – get up close to these majestic marine mammals from July to November with many tour operators available including Fraser Island Boat Charters and Pacific Whale Foundation from

Hervey Bay, with whale watching tours also available direct from K'gari. Hervey Bay has cemented its reputation as the whale capital of Australia, after being declared the world's first Whale Heritage Site in 2019. Back on the mainland, walk in the early footsteps of the writer behind the world's most famous Nanny, Mary Poppins. Author P. L. Travers was born in Maryborough with her story and connection to the town captured at the Story Bank museum.

DINE: Back on the mainland and located in the historic Customs House Residence of Maryborough with sweeping views of the Mary River Parklands and Wharf Street Precinct, the popular Portside Café and Restaurant prides itself on championing fresh produce.



Start planning your Queensland road trip at [Queensland.com](https://www.queensland.com).

The Road Ahead and Tourism and Events Queensland have partnered to promote the Pacific Coast Way and its many attractions. You can read more about the highway from the Gold Coast to Cairns in the next two editions of the magazine.



Go to racq.com/benefits to find out how members can save on a range of experiences, dining out and accommodation options along the Pacific Coast Way.

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Lifestyle

TOP TIPS FOR AN OUTBACK ROAD TRIP

Outback Queensland is known for its stunning landscapes, colourful characters, quirky events, iconic attractions, mineral-rich artesian waters, amazing stargazing and tiny towns where history runs deep.

Out here, you'll traverse gorges that are millions of years in the making, dig for real dinosaur bones, hunt for gemstones, explore indigenous culture, immerse yourself in rich pioneering history and discover local watering holes where welcoming faces love to share a coldie.

The best Outback road trip is a well-organised one, so be sure to plan with these top tips:

- 1. Now is the perfect time to travel**
Outback Queensland is stunning year-

round but the months of April through to October are more temperate and considered the preferred time to visit. With recent flooding through the Channel Country, travellers heading west now will see spectacular green landscapes, wildflowers and amazing wildlife on offer.

2. Book in advance

With quaint townships kilometres apart, it's always best to ensure your accommodation and experiences are locked in before arrival. Use Outback Queensland's *Outback Traveller's Guide* to plan your accommodation and preferred tours and attractions in advance.

3. Plan your fuel stops

Outback towns can be sparse, so ensure

you have enough fuel for long distances.

Outback Traveller's Guide

Outback Queensland has released its updated *Outback Traveller's Guide*, a 112-page must-have planning tool for those planning to head west.

From Outback events and attractions to top spots for Insta and recommended drive routes, the guide includes all the information that you will need to plan your next big adventure in Outback Queensland.

The 2025 *Outback Traveller's Guide* can be downloaded for free at outbackqueensland.com.au.

Long shadows are cast on stretch of Outback highway near Cloncurry.

All roads lead to adventure.

MATILDA WAY

Explore the best of the West along the Matilda Way, a fully sealed 1,812 km stretch of highway filled with local characters, iconic Outback attractions and unspoiled natural landscapes.

NATURAL SCIENCES LOOP

This drive has it all - birds, opals, fossicking, fossils, starry night skies, rivers, geology, lakes, billabongs, artesian waters, bilbies and more. An unforgettable adventure through the Channel Country!

OVERLANDERS WAY

This drive will take you past dramatic gorges and spectacular landscapes. Follow Australia's droving history, dig for dinosaurs and explore quaint Outback townships.



Explore more epic Outback road trips at outbackqueensland.com.au

FRIENDS FOR LIFE

BY RAY ANDERSEN



Born out of a simple desire to offer dignity through clean clothes, Orange Sky’s mobile laundry service quickly became a vehicle for connection, community, and compassion

After his first experience with Orange Sky’s free laundry service, Jordan thought he would never again see the two 20-year-olds with a big idea.

The dream of providing a free mobile laundry service to those in need came crashing down for Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett when the washing machines they

had installed in a Volkswagen Transporter dubbed Sudsy wouldn’t work.

That scenario was repeated for two more days, but finally Sudsy’s washing and dryer setup worked, and Jordan was rewarded for his patience with clean clothes.

Having recently spent time in jail and being estranged from his family, Jordan was

homeless and battling addiction and mental health problems.

With no questions asked, Lucas and Nic’s van offered him the chance to get his clothes washed, giving him a sense of much-needed dignity.

“Walking around the streets you are already paranoid enough about being homeless and then when you get clean clothes and a shave and a shower it makes you feel that much better,” Jordan told Nic and Lucas’s podcast *The F Word*.

“You sort of can smile; you don’t have to look at the ground and just keep walking.”

The concept of Orange Sky was formed after best friends Nic and Lucas volunteered for their school’s mobile food van that supported vulnerable people around Brisbane.

“Prior to that we did not realise that there were people in our own backyard that did not have access to things that we took for granted,” Nic said.

“Upon leaving high school we wanted to find a way to continue to help people. Through talking with different people, we discovered that something that had been overlooked was basic hygiene services.

“So, we had this crazy idea to put some washing machines in an old van and drive around and wash and dry clothes for free.”

There were plenty who thought the idea wouldn’t work, including the Brisbane washing machine company that, despite doubts, gave Nic and Lucas washing machines on the condition they didn’t break them. Unfortunately, this is exactly what happened on those first outings.

“We begged and pleaded for some more washing machines, took the van out on the third day and there was Jordan again,” Nic recalled.

“We put Jordan’s washing in the machine and the van worked perfectly.

“What we realised was that Orange Sky was something that had to work because Jordan believed in us.”

Jordan became Orange Sky’s first ‘friend’, the preferred term for people who use the service.

The realisation that they could easily find themselves in Jordan’s position was an inspiration for Orange Sky’s growth.

“It was a sliding doors moment where we thought, ‘hey this guy could be me in 10 years’ time’,” Lucas said.

“We had similar upbringings and were from similar backgrounds but were in totally different positions and that is something that stuck with both of us.”

Nic added: “We realised that morning with Jordan that Orange Sky had very little to do with the hardware, it had everything to do with the opportunity for people to connect while the washing was on.”

Over the past 11 years Orange Sky has grown from that one vehicle, Sudsy, operating in Brisbane to having a presence in more than 50 locations across Australia and New Zealand.

“We have 70 different assets that we use, predominantly vehicles, but we’ve also got semi-fixed laundry pods that are like mini shipping containers,” Lucas said.

“We do about 350 shifts a week and that is always alongside a partner which might be a food van, a health clinic, soup kitchen or community centre.”

Orange Sky is supported by about 3,500 volunteers, across all ages and walks of life.

“We’ve got retired mechanics that tinker on the vans and clean filters, we’ve got schoolkids that bake cupcakes and we’ve got friends like Jordan that trust us with their possessions,” Nic said.

“I think the beauty of Orange Sky is that it’s a group of people that all believe in this idea of human connection and having access to clean clothes.

“We are a vehicle, laundry hardware organisation but actually we are a community and I think that is something that is really important.”

Orange Sky can also be found in communities affected by natural disasters and has been extending its services into remote First Nations communities across northern Australia, where it aims to provide employment opportunities and improved health outcomes.

Demand for Orange Sky’s services has never been higher as cost-of-living pressures affect more people.

“We turned a lot of people away last year which was something that sat really heavily with Lucas and I, knowing there were a bunch of people out there that needed Orange Sky but we couldn’t help them,” Nic said.

“From a demographic perspective we are seeing people who are working multiple jobs but are living in their cars, we’re seeing people who have come to a

town for employment or university and can’t afford rent and we are seeing people whose washing machine has broken because their house was flooded and they don’t have the money to buy a new washing machine.

“We’ve never been busier and I think that is a reflection of the community needing support.”

Nic and Lucas reconnected with Jordan last year, featuring his story in an episode of their podcast.

They said he was doing well and living in a Tweed Heads apartment and had reconnected with his family.

“How he reflects on (Orange Sky) is no one judges you, no one tells you what to do and people just say ‘how are you doing’ and check in,” Nic said.

“Orange Sky looks completely different to what it was 10 years ago but essentially it is the same thing done on a bigger scale.

“We have vehicles that provide washing machines and dryers and showers with amazing volunteers that run the service, we have amazing friends that trust us with their possessions, and we have this beautiful community of people that fund and make Orange Sky possible.”

HOW YOU CAN HELP

To learn about Orange Sky services near you or how you can volunteer, donate or support Queenslanders doing it tough, go to [orangesky.org.au](https://www.orangesky.org.au).

adss Asbestos Disease Support Society

The **Asbestos Disease Support Society** was founded in 1992 and continues to provide information and much needed support to those diagnosed with an asbestos related disease.

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Orange Sky volunteers chatting with 'friends' using the service at Maningrida in the Northern Territory. TOP LEFT: Orange Sky founders Lucas Patchett and Nic Marchesi.

TAKE A LIBRARY ON THE ROAD

When travelling through regional Queensland, a Rural Libraries Queensland Tourist Membership is worth considering for avid readers.

Did you know when travelling around Queensland you can access free books, magazines, audiobooks and more from a network of libraries from Cape York to Birdsville and Cunnamulla to Longreach?

A Rural Libraries Queensland (RLQ) Tourist Membership grants you free access to Queensland public libraries, including for travellers from interstate or overseas.

You can borrow in one town and return in another or access the statewide collection of online resources from anywhere at any time.

The six-month Tourist Membership allows full access to all digital resources including eBooks, eMagazines, online courses, digital audiobooks, and plenty more to make those long drives more enjoyable.

You may also borrow up to four physical items for up to four weeks, which you can return at any RLQ library across Queensland.

Where are the participating libraries?

Rural Libraries Queensland is a dedicated network of libraries covering 64 rural towns. You can locate them via the QLDLibraries app.

Once you are registered as a 'tourist member', download the app to see the participating libraries across Queensland and locate the nearest one to you. Download the app at yourlibraryapp.com/QLDLibraries.

Join for free

Tourist membership is free and available to anyone travelling through rural Queensland.

SIGN UP AT
plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/rlq-tourist-membership or at a Rural Libraries Queensland branch.

ONLINE SCAMS WARNING FOR QUEENSLANDERS

RACQ is supporting an initiative to educate Australians about protecting their money when online.

Marketplace, remote access and investment scams were revealed as the most prevalent to impact RACQ Bank members in the past year, with investment scams causing the largest financial losses.

Queenslanders were scammed out of more than \$51 million across 46,734 reported scams in 2024, according to ScamWatch.

Head of Bank Resilience and Transformation Sarah Richardson said scams were becoming more sophisticated and anyone could fall victim.

"Scammers often exploit trust and urgency to manipulate individuals into making high-value transfers," Ms Richardson said.

"We're urging everyone to remain alert and 'stop, check and report' before responding to any message, email or phone call."

phone calls, popup windows and social media being the most common tactics reported by RACQ Bank members.

"The rise in digital communication and online marketplaces has given scammers more ways to connect with individuals, making vigilance more important than ever," Ms Richardson said.

"According to our latest survey, one in four Queenslanders have been contacted online by a suspected scammer yet, alarmingly, 86% admit they don't know where to report such incidents."

SUPPORTING ONLINE SAFETY

RACQ is committed to improving online safety and is supporting the Be Connected program, an Australian Government initiative delivered in partnership by the eSafety Commissioner, the Department of Social Services and Good Things Australia.

"We are thrilled to support the Be Connected program, as it aligns with our

mission to protect our members and the broader community," Ms Richardson said.

The Be Connected website, managed by eSafety, offers hundreds of free short online courses and learning resources to help improve the online confidence, skills and safety of older Australians.

eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant said we all had a role to play in helping to make the online world a safer, more positive place.

"It's encouraging to see businesses and organisations like RACQ throwing their support behind innovative initiatives like Be Connected, which are designed to foster digital resilience in Australians," Commissioner Inman Grant said.

"Particularly, as the digital landscape continually evolves, older Australians, who may not feel as comfortable as people who have been online their whole lives, will likely find Be Connected's vast resources help develop confidence and skills to explore and embrace their online worlds safely."

RACQ Bank encourages members to access the Be Connected program to remain informed about the latest scams and learn tips to improve online safety.

Visit the Be Connected website for resources and support at beconnected.esafety.gov.au.

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Lifestyle

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Access to clean and safe water is essential for every household. While tap water undergoes treatment, it may still contain impurities that affect its taste and smell.

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reduces the need for bottled water, cutting down on plastic waste and saving money.

• Improved skin and hair health

Whole-home filtration systems remove up to 98.5% of chlorine products from your home's water which can prevent dryness and irritation caused by chlorine and minerals, safeguarding natural oils for healthier skin and hair.

- The water is then softened with a dedicated ion-exchange sodium resin, significantly reducing limescale and hard water damage.

- The water then passes through a high-grade carbon block to absorb and reduce organic compounds, chlorine, and other chemicals that can affect the taste and odour of water.

- The process also includes a KDF 55 mixed media filter specifically for the removal of heavy metals, as these particles can sometimes remain intact after the previous filtration stages.

BENEFITS OF A HOME FILTRATION SYSTEM

• Clean water from every tap

Unlike tap filters that only purify water at a single outlet, a whole-home filtration system ensures that every tap in your house delivers clean, filtered water. This means you can enjoy safe water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and even laundry.

• Protection against contaminants

Home filtration systems remove chlorine, sediment, bacteria, and heavy metals, enhancing taste, smell, and health outcomes.

• Extended lifespan for appliances

Unfiltered water causes limescale in appliances, leading to inefficiency and costly repairs. Filtration protects and prolongs appliance life.

• Eco-friendly and cost-effective

Switching to a home filtration system

HOW A HOME FILTRATION SYSTEM DIFFERS FROM A TAP FILTER

UNLIKE A TAP filter, which is fitted to a specific water outlet, a whole-home filtration system is installed at the main water entry point, ensuring that all water entering your home is purified.

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

HOME FILTRATION SYSTEMS see all water entering the home go through multiple filtration stages. For example, the Complete Home Filtration whole-home system uses a four-stage process:

- The system begins by using a one-micron sediment filter removing larger particles such as dirt, rust, and particulates from the water. This initial step helps protect subsequent filters and improves overall water clarity.

IS A HOME FILTRATION SYSTEM WORTH IT?

WHOLE-HOME FILTRATION OFFERS several benefits, from healthier skin and hair to appliance protection.

It's an investment worth considering for Queensland households seeking quality water throughout their home.

Save 10% off the RRP on
home filtration systems
and filters*

RACQ members save on whole-home filter systems and replacement filters from Complete Home Filtration. Learn more at racq.com/home-filtration.

*Terms and conditions apply to all offers. View the individual offer for full details. Retail partners, offers and discounts may change at any time without notice.

Is your energy bill increasing?

Got solar?

Book a health check.

Solar panels are constantly exposed to harsh QLD weather, which can impact the performance of even the highest quality installations.

Book your solar health check today and make sure your investment is working as expected.



Scan the QR code to get started

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No solar?

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Installing solar and battery storage with a reputable company can help you save thousands of dollars in energy costs annually.

A home battery can help further reduce your electricity bills by storing energy you generate from solar during the day.



Solar Health Checks only available in the Greater Brisbane region. Potential energy savings are calculated on the average annual power consumption for a household of 3 in Brisbane of 6,169kWh with a cost per kWh of 30c. Other T&Cs may apply. Visit racq.com.au/solar. RACQ is the majority shareholder in GEM Energy Australia Pty Ltd (ABN 25 164 579 382, Electrical Contractor Licence 78701) trading as RACQ Solar. All goods and services are provided by GEM Energy Australia Pty Ltd.

Lifestyle

CHECK YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM FOR MAXIMUM SAVINGS



With electricity prices predicted to rise, now is the perfect time to ensure your solar system is operating efficiently.

Queensland leads the nation in rooftop solar adoption, with more than one in three households harnessing solar energy.

However, many homeowners may not realise their system isn't performing at its best. RACQ research reveals that nearly one in four Queenslanders with solar don't know how to identify potential issues with their system.

Concerningly, this comes as the Australian Energy Regulator has proposed a 5.8% increase to the Default Market Offer for South East Queensland.

This increase could add \$119 to annual electricity bills from July.

To help you maximise savings and efficiency, our RACQ Solar experts have outlined four easy steps you can take to check if your solar panels are working correctly.

1. Compare your electricity bills

IF YOUR ENERGY usage has remained consistent, the total amounts on your electricity bills should be similar from year to year.

However, if your recent bill shows

a significant increase compared to the previous, you might want to investigate potential issues with your solar panels.

2. Visually inspect your solar panels

IF IT IS safe to do so, you can visually inspect your roof and solar panels. Look for any signs of wear and tear, such as dust accumulation, damage or cracks.

While dust is typically not a significant concern since it gets washed away by rain, accumulated dust, tree sap, and bird droppings can impact the efficiency of the panels.

Additionally, examine your surroundings for any new sources of shade. Are there any nearby renovated buildings or trees that may have grown and are now causing shading issues?

3. Inspect the inverter

IT IS IMPORTANT to look at the indicator light that appears on the inverter. A red light, orange light, or warning light indicates that something is wrong with your solar panel

system and you need to take action. You can also check the inverter for loud fan noise. Depending on the setup, you could check the kWh produced or log in to your solar system online.

4. Check the age of the installation

IF IT IS older than four to five years, consider scheduling a solar health check.

This is particularly important given the typical Queensland weather – heat, storms, and other conditions can lead to various issues over time.

RACQ Solar offers solar health checks in the greater Brisbane region.

To book or find out more, visit racq.com.au/solarhealthcheck.

If you are interested in a solar health check but live outside greater Brisbane, you can register your interest at racq.com.au/forms/solar-health-check-interest.



HOW EXERCISE BOOSTS YOUR BRAIN

BY YUNHYE JEONG

Queensland researchers have found high-intensity interval training can boost brain function in older adults.

As life expectancy rises, the number of people living with various forms of dementia is expected to grow significantly. Dementia Australia says there are an estimated 433,300 Australians living with dementia and that number is expected to rise to an estimated 812,500 by 2054 without significant intervention. Emeritus Professor Perry Bartlett and Dr Daniel Blackmore, dementia specialists with The University of Queensland’s Brain Institute, led a study that discovered an exercise regimen that can enhance cognition in older adults. Emeritus Professor Bartlett and Dr

Blackmore recruited 150 volunteer seniors aged 65 to 85 for the study and divided them into three groups. One group engaged in high-intensity interval training, another in medium-intensity training, and the third group did low-intensity exercise. All groups exercised three times a week for six months and participants were closely monitored, undergoing blood tests, MRI scans of their brains and cognition testing. “Those that did a very high-intensity level of exercise were able to show not just delay of cognitive decline, but improvement in their hippocampal cognition over that six-month period,” Emeritus Professor Bartlett said. The hippocampus is the area of the brain that is responsible for memory and learning. The study found there was a significant increase in hippocampal learning in the high-intensity group and that improvement was maintained for five years after they

Emeritus Professor Perry Bartlett and Dr Daniel Blackmore found high-intensity exercise can boost cognition for the elderly.

started exercising, whereas the low-intensity and the medium-intensity groups remained stable. “This old idea that there’s nothing but a downhill slope as you get older is wrong,” Emeritus Professor Bartlett said. “Clearly, you can change the trajectory and improve cognition even in an older population of people.” Dr Blackmore said the study was conducted under the guidance of exercise physiologists and recommended that anyone wanting to take up exercise should see their health professionals first. He said further research could assess different types of exercise that could be incorporated into aged care.

EXERCISE INTENSITY LEVELS EXPLAINED

- Low intensity:** Predominantly stretching and motor function tests.
- Medium intensity:** Brisk walking on a treadmill.
- High-intensity interval training:** Four sets of intense treadmill workouts with a maximum heart rate of 85-95% for four minutes and three minutes of recovery time.



PRACTICAL SOLUTION TO BUSHFIRE RISK

BY TORI MAYNE

Wild Mountains co-founder Richard Zoomers hopes a rooftop sprinkler system will help protect the facility, below, from the threat of bushfires. Photos Dave Pattinson

An environmental education centre, surrounded by native forest, has taken steps to ease the threat of bushfire.

The spectacular Wild Mountains Environmental Education Centre rests high on the Border Ranges, surrounded by lush native forests with breathtaking views of Mount Lindesay and Mount Barney. Located in an ‘ecotone’, where two different habitats meet, the 100ha (240-acre) property is home to sub-tropical rainforest, eucalypts and a diverse selection of wildlife. If you ever wanted to fully immerse yourself in nature, this would be the ideal place to do it.



Co-Founder of Wild Mountains Richard Zoomers said the centre was established to connect adults and children with the wonders of nature. “We started in the mid-1980s offering education programs to deepen people’s understanding of how nature works so they can live their life in a way that reduces their impact on the planet,” Mr Zoomers said. Teaching students how the natural world works is a key part of the programs on offer at Wild Mountains and amidst a changing climate, these lessons have never been more important. In 2019, a bushfire came within 12km of Wild Mountains prompting volunteers to rake away shrubbery to reduce the potential impact on the centre. Mr Zoomers said while the centre escaped unharmed, the threat underscored a need for greater preparedness. “Thanks to a \$50,000 RACQ Foundation grant, we have installed a fire sprinkler system to help mitigate ember attacks from bushfires,” he said.



“The system runs for eight hours, which means we can evacuate in an emergency knowing the area around our property will be damp enough to prevent fire from impacting our timber buildings.” In October 2023, RACQ Foundation introduced resilience grants for community clubs, charities and First Nations councils to help them mitigate damage from natural disasters.

To learn more about RACQ’s community initiatives, visit racq.com.au/about-us/community.

OFF-GRID WITH CONFIDENCE

Designed for tough Australian conditions, the Redback RB3.5 and RB4.5 inverter generators combine clean, stable energy with resilient reliability—perfect for caravanners, remote workers, weekend explorers, and home emergency setups alike.

The RB3.5 offers impressive performance in a lightweight, portable form. Delivering a continuous output of 3000W (with a 3500W peak), it powers everything from **fridges and tools to sensitive electronics** without breaking a sweat. Weighing just over 21kg and running as quietly as 53dB at 7m, it’s as comfortable on a bush campsite as it is backing up a home office. Efficiency and durability are at the core of the design, allowing for **5–6 hours of dependable operation** on a single tank.

For those who need a little more kick, the Redback RB4.5 is iTechworld’s most capable generator yet. With a continuous output of 3500W (4500W peak), it handles larger loads effortlessly while maintaining the same whisper-quiet inverter performance and clean, pure sine wave output. An advanced **Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI)** system ensures reliable starts in any weather. It optimises fuel efficiency, while the **convenient remote start feature** lets you fire up the generator from the caravan or campsite – no yanking necessary. Whether running multiple **high-draw appliances in your caravan or keeping essential systems online** during a blackout, the RB4.5 delivers smooth, surge-protected power with minimal noise or fuss.

Both Redback models are built with the user in mind, featuring easy-start engines, integrated safety systems like overload and low-oil protection, and compact frames tough enough for travel. Designed, developed, and supported in Australia, our generators reflect iTechworld’s commitment to quality and innovation. With the Redback range, dependable off-grid power is no longer a luxury—it’s the new standard.

As a proudly Australian company, iTechworld offers RACQ subscribers an exclusive discount code—use code **TRA05** at checkout to score 5% off your order! Power up and save big while stocks last!

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The survey closes 5pm on 18 July 2025.

A TASTE OF TURKEY:

Sweet delights and timeless wonders

Exotic, colourful and vibrant Turkey delivered a journey filled with flavour, history and awesome experiences.

BY LEONIE JARRETT

I have never seen as much Turkish Delight as I did in Istanbul. Shop after shop, row after row, there's a kaleidoscope of the sweet treat. And, as a Turkish Delight lover, I am there for it. With a population of more than 16 million people, Istanbul is the most populous city in Turkey, and Europe. The city straddles Europe and Asia with the Bosphorus Strait being the boundary. Some two million people cross between Asia and Europe every day via ferry or car or a two-minute subway ride.

Minarets (the tall towers of a mosque from where the calls to prayer come) dot the Istanbul skyline and all seem to be blue. Never having before been to Turkey, I must confess that I expected much more of a developing world vibe. What I found in Istanbul was a bustling, modern city where soaring skyscrapers sit alongside ancient buildings. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque, built in the 17th century, holds about 10,000 worshippers. It is free to enter and wondrous to see.

Known for having six minarets (rather than the standard four) and for its many domes and semi-domes, the building became known as the Blue Mosque for the blue colour of its interior. When the nearby Hagia Sofia was completed in 537, it was the largest church in the world for hundreds of years. It has variously been a church, a mosque, a museum and, since 2020, a mosque again. People who want to pray are allowed into the lower floor of Hagia Sofia for free, but tourists pay to access the first floor; it was definitely worth paying.



Hot air balloons rising over Cappadocia at sunrise. RIGHT: The Basilica Cisterns in Istanbul; The Gallipoli war memorial; Göreme's streets at dusk; The fairy chimneys at Kaymakli which were created by volcanic ash.



For mine, the surprise packet of the attractions I visited in Istanbul was the Basilica Cisterns; they were absolutely mind-blowingly beautiful. No longer operational, the Cisterns now exist only for tourists and for film sets – you may recognise them from the 2016 movie *Inferno*, starring Tom Hanks. When the Cisterns were part of the city's water source, fish were kept there. If the fish lived, that was evidence that no enemy had poisoned the water. Nowadays, there are modern art installations and an ever-changing light show reflecting off the water. I had long wanted to visit Gallipoli, so we did a long day trip there.



I walked through some eroded trenches and through some of the rows and rows of headstones. A common and terribly poignant epitaph on many gravestones read: "Their glory shall not be blotted out."

I ached for the loss of the young Australians and Turks, and for their families.

From Istanbul, I took a short flight to Cappadocia to fly in a hot air balloon – something that I had never done. The hot air balloon experience was beyond amazing – so smooth and serene. I was in awe of the skill of the pilots, controlling the balloon so that the basket seemed to brush the tops of the 'fairy chimneys'. The next morning, I woke to a whooshing sound that was the propane gas being fired into the balloons. I had a front-row seat as the colourful balloons glided overhead.

I stayed in Göreme which is a tourist town layered with hotels, restaurants and shops. All are adorned with fairy lights, so it is very pretty at night. A tip for the unwary though – the streets in Göreme are steep. There are lots of tourist activities on offer, including hot air ballooning, camel rides, ATV rides, horse rides and cultural tours.



I chose to do two day-long guided tours, concentrating on an underground city, fairy chimneys and cave houses. The underground cities were hiding places thousands of years ago in times of religious persecution. I went to Kaymakli, which used to accommodate 3,000 people. Some underground cities housed 20,000 people.

The fairy chimneys were like nothing I had ever seen.



Created by volcanic ash, they form in all different shapes, and all have mushroom-shaped tops. People lived in them for 2,000 years but now they are for viewing only.

Cappadocia is known for its cave houses. People are no longer allowed to live in cave houses, but you can tour inside them for a fascinating slice of a former way of life. There is a whole lot more to see in Istanbul than what I had the time to do, plus many other parts of Turkey yet to visit. What I saw was exotic, colourful, vibrant, incredibly sad (Gallipoli) and captivating. Now, I've made myself hungry. Where is that last box of Turkish Delight?

Do Australians need a visa for Turkey?

Yes, Australian citizens need a visa to visit Turkey. You can apply for an e-visa online.

Is it safe to travel to Turkey?

I never felt unsafe. However, at the time of writing, the Smart Traveller advice was to "Exercise a high degree of caution overall." It is best to check before travelling.

When is the best time of year to visit?

Summer (June to August, when I went) is very hot. Unless you want a beach holiday, the best time is probably during the spring months, from March to May.

Is Turkey an expensive holiday destination?

I found restaurants, taxis and tourist attractions in Istanbul were similar to Australian prices. Public transport is dirt cheap though. Cappadocia prices were more reasonable.

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Travel

Cruising in comfort A SEAMLESS GETAWAY WITH PRINCESS CRUISES

BY MELISSA MCGRATH

Crown Princess sets a new standard for effortless cruising with a blend of modern technology and personalised service.

A two-night voyage from Brisbane to Sydney was the perfect way to recharge, indulge, and experience a taste of modern cruising at its best.

My trip was just part of a larger 28-night voyage circumnavigating Australia, giving me a glimpse of what an extended cruise aboard this remarkable ship has to offer.

A standout feature of the journey was Princess Cruises' innovative MedallionClass technology.

Instead of a traditional keycard, I wore a small medallion that handled everything from stateroom access to personalised service.

As I approached my stateroom, the door unlocked automatically – no swiping or fumbling – just effortless entry that felt surprisingly futuristic.

With space for up to 3,080 guests, *Crown Princess* is designed to feel anything but crowded.

Its thoughtful layout includes four pool areas with two reserved exclusively for adults, and a wide variety of activities throughout the ship, ensuring there's always a place to relax or join in the fun.

Over the two nights, I managed to do a little bit of everything.

A behind-the-scenes tour offered a fascinating look at the inner workings of the



ship, while a sunny afternoon by the pool, soaking up the views and enjoying lunch and drinks delivered right to my lounge chair was bliss.

MedallionClass made it all too easy – just a few taps on the Princess app and my order appeared minutes later.

I ended the afternoon with a soothing massage at the Lotus Spa, which was just what I needed to truly unwind.

That evening, I dined at Sabatini's Italian Trattoria, one of 10 dining venues on board. The food was fresh and beautifully presented, and the service was attentive without ever feeling rushed.

After dinner, I caught a show in the Princess Theatre featuring The Cover Girls, a talented vocal trio performing iconic songs from female artists across the decades.

What truly sets the *Crown Princess* experience apart is the seamless blend of innovation and hospitality. The technology enhanced the journey, but it was the people who were knowledgeable, friendly, and professional, that brought it to life.

Two nights might seem brief, but this mini getaway delivered exactly what I needed: great food, spectacular views, and a refreshing dose of relaxation.

Whether you're a seasoned cruiser or considering your first voyage, *Crown Princess* with its combination of smart tech and thoughtful service, makes the journey as enjoyable as the destination.

Save on your next Princess cruise, contact your local RACQ Travel advisor or visit racq.com/travel.



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★ Eden Killer Whale Museum

★ 2 nights Lakes Entrance

★ Wyanga Park Winery

★ Scenic flight over the Twelve Apostles, Great Ocean Road

★ Guided tour of UNESCO-listed Naracoorte Caves

★ 30 meals

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★ 1 night Cobar

★ 2 nights Broken Hill

★ 1 night Mildura

★ 2 nights Echuca

★ PS Pevensey paddle steamer cruise

★ Ned Kelly’s Last Stand’ light & sound show

★ 1 night Albury

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★ 1 night Bathurst

★ 1 night Armidale

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★ 37 meals

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★ Tamworth

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★ 1 night St Helens

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★ Guided tour of Port Arthur and harbour cruise

★ 26 meals

DEPARTS > 10 NOV 2025

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8 DAYS

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★ 3 nights in Longreach

★ Luxury Glamping Tents at Mitchell Grass Retreat (Diamond Class) or hotel rooms (Gold Class)

★ Australian Age of Dinosaurs

★ Qantas Founders Museum

★ Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame

★ Miners Heritage tour at Rubyvale

★ 1 night Emerald

★ 2 nights Town of 1770

★ LARC Paradise tour

★ 21 meals

DEPARTS > 25 SEP, 9 OCT 2025

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★ Boston Bay Wines

★ Seafood Bay Cruise

★ Coffin Bay Oyster tour

★ 1 night Ceduna Foreshore

★ ‘Big Galah’ and painted silos at Kimba

★ 1 night Barossa Valley

★ Seppeltsfield Winery tour and wine tasting

★ Barossa Valley long lunch

★ 1 night Adelaide CBD

★ 23 meals

DEPARTS > 1 NOV 2025

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8 DAYS

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★ Return flights from Brisbane to Norfolk Island

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★ 7 nights Norfolk Island

★ Convict Kingston Tour

★ Progressive dinner

★ Pitcairn Settlers Village

★ Sound and Light Show

★ Emily Bay Glass Bottom Boat cruise

★ Taste of Norfolk tour

★ Sunset Island Fish Fry dinner

★ Lavender Farm Tour

★ Bounty Folk Museum

★ Night as a Convict dinner

★ 21 meals

DEPARTS > 6 SEP 2025

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BELLINGEN VALLEY BEAUTY

6 DAYS

Return airfares included** ✈

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★ Tropical Fruit World Morning tea and plantation tractor tour

★ New Italy for lunch

★ 3 nights Bellingen Valley

★ Mary Boulton Pioneer Cottage

★ Trial Bay Gaol tour

★ The Honey Place

★ Butterfly House

★ Solitary Islands Aquarium

★ Dorriggo National Park rainforest

★ Skywalk at Dorriggo

★ Duttons Trout Hatchery

★ 2 nights Armidale

★ Petersons Armidale Winery

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★ Port Arthur Penal Settlement

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★ 1 night Orford

★ Wineglass Bay Cruise

★ 1 night St Helens

★ 2 nights Launceston

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Finding 'Nemo' at Mooloolaba's SEA LIFE oceanarium.
RIGHT: On board with Saltwater Eco Tours; An aerial view of the Sunshine Coast's beaches; A giraffe feeding at Australia Zoo. Photos Jennifer Johnston

Sunshine Coast

SHINING BRIGHTLY

BY JENNIFER JOHNSTON

Whether in the water or on land, there is no shortage of experiences for all to enjoy on a visit to the Sunshine Coast.

The Sunshine Coast region, stretching from the beaches of Caloundra in the south to Rainbow Beach in the north and into its hinterland, is one of Australia's most popular holiday destinations.

Discover some of the attractions and experiences that have earned this region its well-deserved reputation.

BELOW THE WATER

WITH MORE THAN 100km of pristine white sandy beaches, it's likely you'll choose some water-based activities on the Sunny Coast (as locals affectionately call it).

On a Sunreef tour departing from The Wharf Mooloolaba, you can snorkel

with tropical fish, eagle rays, octopuses, wobbegongs, and sea turtles at Mudjimba Island's vibrant reefs. (All equipment – wetsuit, fins, mask, and snorkel – is included.)

For those less inclined to get wet but still eager to see marine creatures, SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast at Mooloolaba is a perfect choice. This family-friendly oceanarium and wildlife sanctuary features 11 themed zones with more than 10,000 marine creatures under one roof.

SEA LIFE staff offer talks about marine animals and their natural habitats. A highlight is the presentation at Seal Island

(held undercover), where trainers interact with seals to showcase their intelligence.

The Ocean Tunnel provides 360-degree views of marine life, allowing visitors to safely observe large rays, groper fish, and sharks gliding overhead. SEA LIFE is accessible with ramps and elevators, and there is free parking with a four-hour limit.

ON THE WATER

THE BEAUTIFUL KETCH *Spray of the Coral Coast* departs the jetty at Mooloolaba Wharf for a two-hour bush-tucker cruise with Saltwater Eco Tours around the canals of the Mooloolah River.

The 100-year-old gaff-rigged boat has been restored by owners Simon Thornalley and his partner Jenna Griffith.

At the helm, Simon shared stories about the Indigenous Traditional Custodians of the region, the Kabi Kabi and Jinibara peoples, and where they foraged for food.

Cruising the waterways, we savoured delicious handmade bush-tucker-inspired canapes, prepared below deck by Skye.

Saltwater Eco Tours also offers a sunset cruise featuring live music.

NEAR THE WATER

HIRING A BIKE from EcoTekk Sunshine Coast is a fun way to explore the Sunny Coast's bike paths.

The friendly owners, Tracey and Stuart, deliver e-bikes to your accommodation and conduct a brief safety check before you set off. (They also offer guided cycling tours.)

We started cycling from our accommodation in Mooloolaba, following bike paths and connecting to the Coastal Pathway. We stopped at Bokarina for artisan ice cream at Wallace and Wood.

After our 'strenuous' bike ride, we enjoyed a 90-minute session at TANK Bathhouse in Mooloolaba.

We relaxed in six botanical-infused magnesium baths set at varying temperatures, then visited the dry sauna and wet steam room.

We left feeling utterly rejuvenated.

ABOVE THE WATER

"I HAVE THE best job in the world because my job brings everyone joy," says Karl Mayne, owner-operator of Oceanview Helicopters.

Karl's mission is to create unforgettable experiences. You can book him for a unique pub crawl, a golf outing at courses around the Sunny Coast and Gold Coast, or even a romantic picnic on a mountain peak.

During our 30-minute scenic ride from Caloundra airport, we flew near the Glasshouse Mountains, appreciating a bird's-eye view of Mt Beerwah without the effort of climbing.

There were plenty of gasps as we flew over the ocean near Point Cartwright, admiring the swirling sand patterns and vivid blue hues.



QUEENSLAND'S 'SUNSHINE PANTRY'

THE SUNNY COAST boasts more than 900 producers, offering a plethora of food, drink, and fresh produce choices.

We dined at Rice Boi at The Wharf Mooloolaba, a short stroll from our accommodation at Mirra Chana Apartments. Open for lunch and dinner, Rice Boi has a no-booking policy. Patrons happily wait in line for its popular menu.

My standout dish was the 10-hour coconut braised beef, and the Thai yellow curry chicken spring rolls were unforgettable.

Close to Mooloolaba Beach, Casa Restaurant is the second venue by the husband-and-wife team behind the popular Casita Wine Bar (next door).

Owner Kate Yates brings a keen eye for interior design.



Casa (Spanish for home), with its whitewashed walls, exudes a casual Mediterranean-meets-coastal vibe.

The menu features small plates for sharing and larger land and sea dishes.

We also dined at SOKA in Maroochydore, enjoying a unique blend of Japanese cuisine infused with smoky flavors from SOKA's hibachi grills.

WHERE TO STAY

MIRRA CHANA APARTMENTS is centrally located in Mooloolaba, within a five-minute walk of both Mooloolaba Beach and The Wharf Mooloolaba.

All apartments are self-contained, featuring fully equipped kitchens, perfect for hosting family or friends.

The property includes a small lagoon-style pool and BBQ facilities. It's conveniently close to SEA LIFE and popular restaurants.

ANIMAL ATTRACTION

LAST DECEMBER, AUSTRALIA Zoo unveiled four luxury Crocodile Cabins overlooking a billabong that is home to freshwater crocodiles and endangered Mary River turtles.

These new cabins complement the zoo's eight family-friendly cabins, four one-bedroom cabins, and a fully accessible three-bedroom cabin.

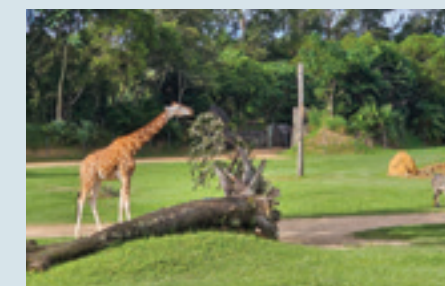
Guests at the Crocodile Hunter Lodge enjoy unlimited zoo entry for the duration of their stay.

A shuttle bus transfers visitors between the zoo and their accommodation, allowing for rest breaks before returning.

Don't miss the daily Wildlife Warriors Show, where a handler entices a saltwater crocodile from the water's edge.

On the day we visited, Robert Irwin's appearance created great excitement among the crowd.

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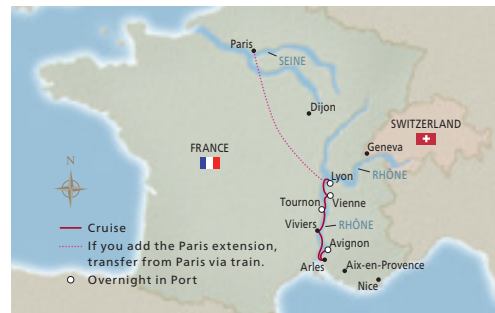
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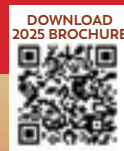
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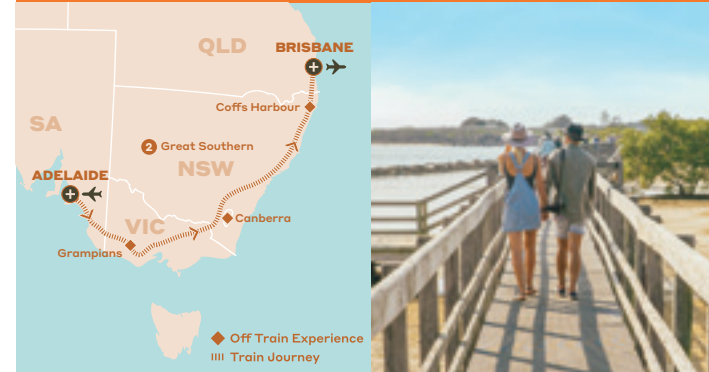
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ROCKY MOUNTAIN *highs*

STORY BRIAR JENSEN

Pack your sunglasses for this dazzling winter drive through the Canadian Rockies.

Someone has shaken our snow dome and we're driving in a whiteout.

Bitumen is buried in an icy slurry, cloud mist obliterates visibility, and our nerves are all shook up.

It's our first time driving on the opposite side of the road and first experience driving in snow.

We engage 'snow' setting on our rental 4WD, repeat the mantras 'keep right' and 'mind the ditch' and wonder what we've got ourselves into.

Then the mist swirls away, the flurry of snow settles, pockets of cobalt sky appear, and sunrays illuminate frosted peaks.

It's a Christmas card scene of snow-dusted pines, razorback ridges and icicle-draped cliffs.

The Icefields Parkway curving through coniferous forests in the Canadian Rockies, billed as one of the most scenic drives in the world, is breathtakingly beautiful, and worth every out-of-our-comfort-zone kilometre. (We soon adapt to the road conditions and chiselling ice from inside wheel arches.)

We're driving from Calgary, Alberta, to Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper, ensconced within Banff and Jasper National Parks, both part of the Canadian Rockies UNESCO World Heritage Site.

These townships, adjacent to the Canadian Pacific Railway, are famous for their chateau-like Fairmont hotels perched beside glacial lakes and rivers.

Most popular in summer, we're here at the end of winter, when crowds are less, and are blessed with late season snow.

BANFF

BANFF WAS CANADA'S first national park established in 1885.

The township, with a population of about 10,000, is the largest of these triptych alpine towns.

It bustles with snow bunnies, outdoor sports stores and Aussies calling the place home.

Hotel Canoe & Suites, the latest chic accommodation, is an easy bus ride to atmospheric eateries like Three Bears Brewery and Pizzeria Sophia.



Looking across frozen Vermillion Lakes, Banff. BELOW: A wind-whipped Icefields Parkway; Downtown Banff under snow. RIGHT: A sleigh ride through Lake Louise's winter wonderland; An elk crosses the highway at Jasper; The Johnston Canyon Icewalk. Photos Briar Jensen



Vermillion Lakes on the edge of town are prized for summer reflections of Mount Rundle, now they're a vast fluffy carpet of sparkling snow atop the frozen lakes.

Bow Falls are frozen mid-drop, water bubbling underneath like a fizzing ice confectionary.

Banff Gondola glides up Sulphur Mountain at dusk above the forest dusted icing sugar white.

At the summit Nightrise, an indoor-outdoor multimedia light and sound experience, is an invitation from the Stoney Nakoda Nation, who were 'removed' from the park when it was established, to experience nature in new ways.

Walking above sunken clouds we listen to whispering snow as rainbow lights twinkle through the treetops.

At Sunshine Meadows we try snowshoeing with White Mountain Adventures.

We take the gondola then chairlift and cross to the back of the mountain sinking to our shins in fresh snow.

It's mostly downhill as we cross the rope border into British Columbia and back into Alberta.

During a stop for hot chocolate and maple biscuits, guide Amelio measures the snow beneath us at 160cm, which is over my head.

LAKE LOUISE

IF THESE THREE towns were sisters Lake Louise would be the adorable tiny tot with loads of charisma but early bedtime.

As Canada's highest village there's just a pint-sized shopping centre, but captivating alpine vistas everywhere you look.

After checking into Lake Louise Inn, we head to Brewster Adventures for a sleigh ride.

Glossy black draft horses clop along the edge of snow-doused Lake Louise where visitors stroll hand-in-hand or swirl around on ice skates in the lowering sun.

Afterwards we settle into the Fairmont Chateau's Lakeview Lounge with a glacial green cocktail and dine overlooking the frozen lake to Victoria Glacier.

The next day we ride the Winter Sightseeing Gondola up above spruce and fir trees through a flurry of snow to bracing winds at the top.

But we score ideal conditions for Johnston Canyon Icewalk with White Mountain Adventures.



Boot cleats give added grip as we follow guide May up the horse trail cleared by tourism pioneers Walter and Marguerite Camp in 1929.

Gin-clear pools with early season salmon appear between frosted falls.

The pinnacle is the upper falls, snap frozen into a frothy wedding veil. Beside it, mammoth icicles drip off a cliff like candle wax. On the return drive via Bow Valley Parkway we stop at Moose Meadows searching in vain for their namesake animals.



JASPER

MID-SIZED JASPER NESTLES in the valley beside the Athabasca River.

Devastating bushfires in July 2024 burnt 32,000ha and many residents who lost their homes are residing in holiday accommodation like our cabin at Bear Hill Lodge.

The town is keen for visitors to return, says Nick from Jasper Food Tours, as we sample the town's multicultural food scene, including local whiskey, salmon, elk, beef, poutine and maple cheesecake.

On a SunDog Ecology of Fire tour, the monochrome landscape exudes stark beauty.

Scorched trunks spike from the snow totem-like, resembling a charcoal etching on white parchment.

Species like lodgepole pines require fire for regeneration and guide Norm says the cleared undergrowth will facilitate nutritious summer grasses, wildflowers and berries, which will attract wildlife, including bears. Jasper may become Alberta's bear-viewing capital.

Elk wander across the road, bighorn sheep feed up a hillside and we see nesting

bald eagles, but moose prove elusive, although Norm shows us antlers, along with a beaver pelt and bear-paw replicas that are astonishing in size.

On Pleckaitis Canyon Ice Walk, with Jasper Hikes & Tours, we have the place to ourselves.

With cleated gumboots we trek up the iced-over river, funnelled into the narrow glacial-gouged gorge until melting ice impedes our path.

After dinner at Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, we venture to the edge of the observable universe in their Planetarium.

Jasper is the world's second-largest Dark Sky Preserve, and we rug-up to see Mars and Jupiter through their telescopes.

On the return to Calgary a wild wind scours snow off the Columbia Icefield, whipping it across the road in rivulets of white as ethereal sunlight slivers the landscape – a surreal scene seared into our memories forever.



KEY INFORMATION

Air Canada flies from Brisbane direct to Vancouver with onward flights to Calgary.

Go to banfflakelouise.com, jasper.travel and canada.travel for more information.

The writer travelled as a guest of Destination Canada, Banff & Lake Louise Tourism and Tourism Jasper

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Nature's miracle

AT MON REPOS

Experiencing the wonder of loggerhead turtle hatchings is only part of the attraction for this Queensland destination.

BY KERRY HEANEY

The night is dark but my torch cuts a lifeline across the sand. Smaller than the palm of my hand, the hatchling's fins are flailing madly, programmed to take this turtle on a perilous journey that only one in 1,000 will survive.

This is Mon Repos Conservation Park, Australia's most critical loggerhead turtle nesting site, with 505 turtles using the beach as their nursery, laying about 265,000 eggs from November to January.

I am standing on the top of a sand dune, watching the tiny turtles emerge to be collected by a ranger and transported a little closer to the beach.

My Mon Repos Turtle Centre group scored an early hatching to observe, and after a short trek along the shoreline, it was all action for turtle viewing.

Once released from their sand nests, the hatchlings head to the water, attracted by the light of the sea and helped by my

hand-held torch painting a path. Some of them collide with my feet, a curiously feathery feeling, before they find their way.

Good luck, little ones.

In 30 years, if fortune is in their favour, some may return to this very beach to lay their own eggs.

After the encounter, I walk 10 minutes back to Turtle Sands Nature Resort, our accommodation conveniently located next door.



But convenience is where indulgence ends. This resort takes turtle conservation very seriously.

Every guest must sign a pledge before staying and during nesting season all outside lights are switched off after 7.30pm.

However, while it might be pitch black outside, tight blinds inside mean it can still be party time.

Artificial light is lethal for hatchlings. Even a porch light can tempt them inland, away from the safety of the ocean and into almost certain death.

For that reason, late resort check-ins are banned, and beach access is limited after dark. The strict rules feel right, given the stakes.

The new Turtle Sands is a far cry from the rustic campground first opened in 1974, where visitors pitched tents right on the dunes.

Today, the resort blends environmental ethics with comfort, offering a range of accommodation from traditional camping to glamping tents and villas, some with accessible options, all buffered from the beach by a protected zone.

Solar panels feed Tesla battery storage, hot water comes from hydro pumps, and True Grid pathways allow rainwater to flow naturally back into the ecosystem.

Even the buildings wear eco-conscious coats of paint, chosen for their low reflectivity to minimise disruption to nesting turtles.

Smart energy systems, such as motion-sensor air-conditioning and automated blinds, further reduce the resort's environmental footprint.

Driving through the park at night is an exercise in mindfulness.

With only parking lights allowed, reversing into the beachfront cabin's space takes some effort, but the thought of a baby turtle caught in the headlights is all the motivation you need.

By day, Bundaberg offers a vibrant mix of experiences that blend conservation, agriculture, and indulgence.

Start with a visit to Monsoon Aquatics, Australia's largest coral farm.

Their one-hour tour offers an insight into coral cultivation, showcasing a rainbow of coral species and lively reef fish in a sustainable setting.

Some are destined for aquariums; others are being bred for future reef restoration.

The region's famed red volcanic soil not only supports turtles but also nourishes Bundaberg's bountiful produce.

Follow your taste buds to Tinaberries, a local strawberry farm where the Summer Shebang sundae, real strawberries, berry

ice cream, and a dash of summer joy make up for missing pick-your-own season. Macadamias are another star crop here, and you'll pass endless orchards on your drives.

At Macadamias Australia's The Orchard Table, sample everything from roasted nut blends to creamy macadamia gelato.

When seafood calls, head straight to Grunskes by the River, where the trawler-fresh catch is served with river views and casual flair.

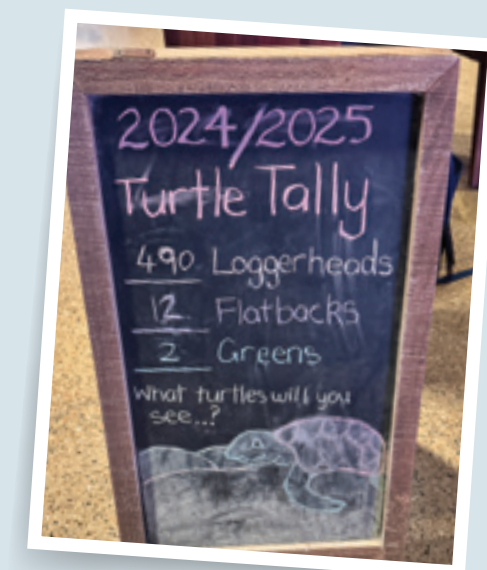
You can stock up next door at the factory outlet – cooler bags are available.

For refined dining, Water St Kitchen delivers a masterclass in modern Australian cuisine with a strong local focus.

Their cocktails alone are well worth the trip.

Elsewhere, One Little Farm and The Garden Mill offer vibrant, produce-driven menus perfect for brunch or lunch.

Wrap up your regional immersion at Kalki Moon Distilling Co., a small-batch distillery where a free tour leads into tastings of award-winning gins and rums.



Extend your visit with a cocktail in the gin yard, try your hand at blending spirits, or swing clubs at the Lunar Lounge's virtual golf course, where the bar serves only Queensland-made beer, wine, and spirits.

From hatchlings on a moonlit beach to boutique distilleries and bold regional cuisine, Bundaberg offers more than just a turtle tale.

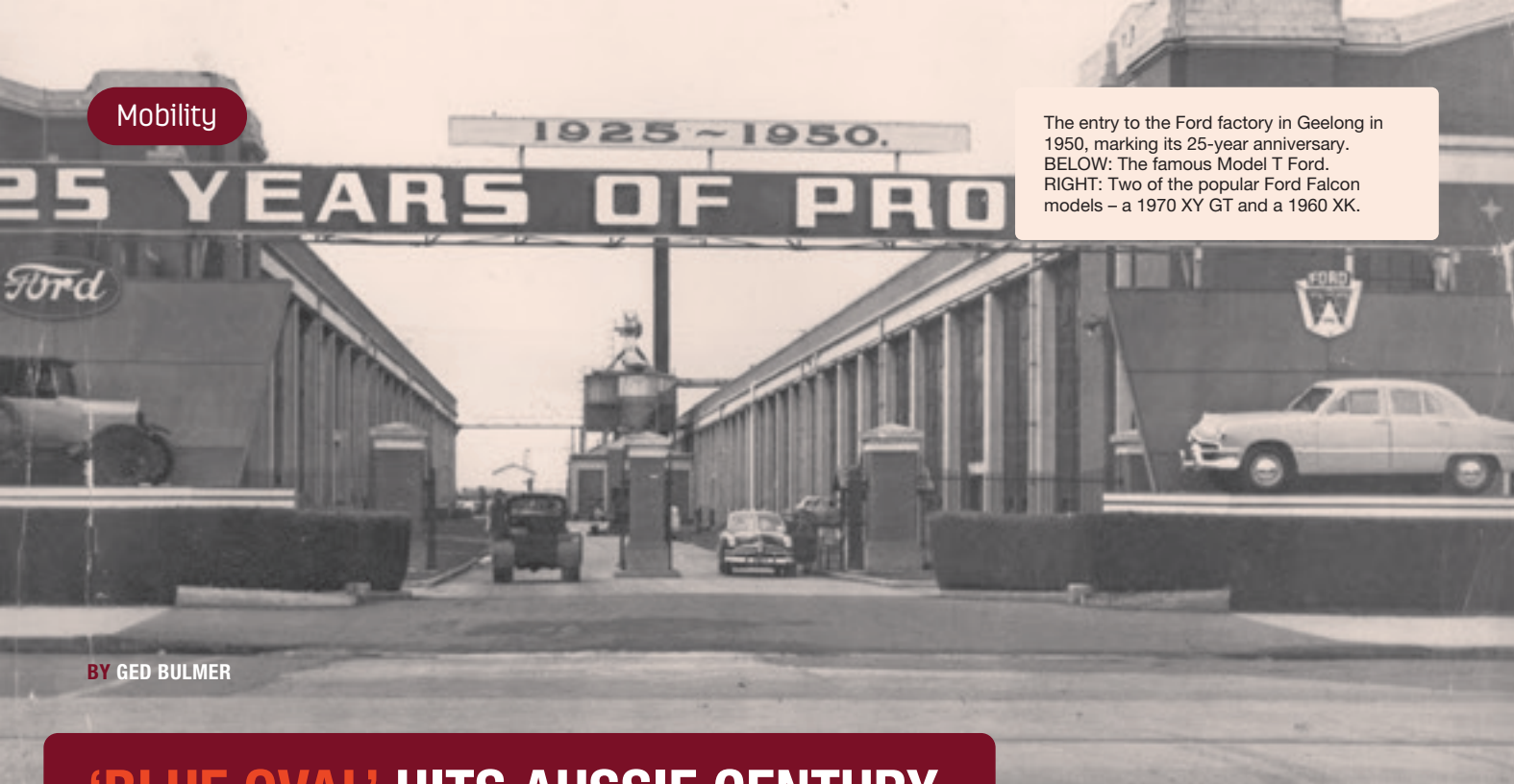
It's a place where conservation and culinary culture intersect, and where your footprint can help, not harm, one of nature's great migrations.

The writer travelled as a guest of Turtle Sands and Bundaberg Tourism Southern Great Barrier Reef.



Colourful coral at Monsoon Aquatics, Australia's largest coral farm, in Bundaberg. RIGHT: Accommodation at Turtle Sands; A turtle hatchling held by a ranger at Mon Repos; A blackboard at Mon Repos Turtle Centre logs the number of turtles seen.





The entry to the Ford factory in Geelong in 1950, marking its 25-year anniversary. BELOW: The famous Model T Ford. RIGHT: Two of the popular Ford Falcon models – a 1970 XY GT and a 1960 XK.

BY GED BULMER

‘BLUE OVAL’ HITS AUSSIE CENTURY

This year Ford Australia, like RACQ Roadside Assistance, is celebrating its 100-year anniversary.

The automobile landscape in Australia in 1925 was a far cry from the sophisticated one-million-plus vehicle market that we know today.

Australia was still very much riding on the sheep’s back as an agricultural-commodities export market and most Australians did not own a car.

Vehicle adoption in Queensland was growing rapidly, however, notably among wealthy professionals and businesses, with a record 37,185 registrations in 1925, the same year that a Citroën tourer became the first car to travel around the Great Southern Land.

Australia was not a significant car manufacturing nation, so those lucky Australians who could afford a motor

vehicle were most likely to choose imported American models from the likes of Buick, Chevrolet, Dodge, and Hudson.

Henry Ford’s Model T was capturing hearts and minds here, too, just as it had done in its US homeland, where it was first launched in 1908.

The Model T, or ‘Tin Lizzie’ as it was affectionately known, became an immediate success by offering reliable, simple motoring for a fraction of the cost of other cars at the time.

Ford began exporting the Model T soon after its introduction in 1908 and by 1909 the first examples had arrived in Australia via independent importer R.J. Durance.

By 1911 Model T production had begun in Canada and England, and in 1923 a contingent of North American Ford executives travelled to Australia in search of a base to establish local manufacturing here.

After the visit, P. W. Grandjean, then secretary of Ford of Canada, wrote to Edsel Ford, who had taken over control of the company from his father Henry Ford just a few years earlier, suggesting that “the time is ripe to carry on a business in Australia with our own organisation.”

With its deep seaport, readily available land, access to nearby railways and good labour force, the rapidly growing Victorian city of Geelong was chosen as the base for the Blue Oval’s new Australian outpost, with operations beginning there in 1925.



On 1 July of that year Ford’s first Australian-made Model T Ford rolled off the newly created assembly line.

The Australian-made Model T was quickly given the nickname ‘Dalgety’, a reference to the Dalgety Wool Store where the first vehicles were assembled.

A simple but solid vehicle, the Model T cost around 185 pounds, or about \$18,500 in today’s money.

Ford Australia’s partnership with the Geelong Football Club, one of the oldest and most enduring in Australian sport also began in 1925, the same year the Australian football club clinched its first Victorian Football League premiership.

In Queensland, as in other parts of Australia, the Model T quickly became a relatively common sight on the State’s roads, helped in no small part by the fact that Ford quickly built on its Geelong beachhead by establishing a motor vehicle assembly plant at Eagle Farm in 1926.

The site had ready access to road, railway, and shipping facilities on the river and the factory would later play an important manufacturing role during World War II, constructing a range of products and parts for the military forces of both Australia and the United States.

Ford’s diverse local war manufacturing efforts in Brisbane included the reconditioning of aero engines at Rocklea, and the assembly of Jeeps and trucks for Australian forces.

Indeed, throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, RACQ operated a fleet of ex-World War II Jeeps for roadside assistance

duties, including a 1944 Ford Jeep that remains a key part of today’s historic fleet.

After the war, Ford’s Eagle Farm plant was kept busy building English and Canadian-sourced cars, trucks and tractors, followed by the introduction of the Ford Customline in 1955 and the six-cylinder English Zephyr in 1956.

But the big change came in 1960 when the plant was upgraded to make way for the XK Falcon, the first of seven generations of Falcons that would cement Ford Australia’s position as one of the most influential brands in Australian automotive history, and the Falcon as a truly Australian car.

Ford’s Brisbane plant continued assembling Falcons up until the XC model, after which the luxury Fairlane and LTD long-wheelbase models remained in production until 1987.

The plant then manufactured Ford’s Louisville line of heavy trucks until the factory closure in 1998.

That marked the beginning of a long period of retreat from Australian manufacturing for Ford Australia,

culminating in the brand ceasing manufacturing at its Geelong engine plant and its Broadmeadows vehicle plant in 2016.

The Blue Oval’s decision to shutter its local production lines created a domino effect that resulted in Toyota and Holden following suit soon after.

But where Holden no longer exists as a brand, and Toyota’s local research and development efforts are greatly reduced, Ford Australia in its 100th year remains the largest automotive employer in Australia.

The company’s presence here remains significant, with design and development facilities in Melbourne and outside Geelong, and a sizable design and engineering workforce that, among projects, leads global development of the Ranger pickup, Australia’s best-selling vehicle in 2023 and 2024.

Ford Australia marked its centenary with a special ‘History in the Making’ event in Melbourne which showcased a selection of the company’s heritage fleet, including the first 1960 XK Falcon, the groundbreaking Lew Bandt-designed 1934 Coupe-Ute, and a selection of famous race cars including Queenslander Dick Johnson’s iconic ‘Tru-Blu’ XD Falcon.

Ford family scion and executive chair of the company Bill Ford was among the guests celebrating the occasion.

“For 100 years, Ford and Australia have grown together,” Mr Ford said.

“Australia was one of the first markets we established outside North America. It was a key moment in making Ford truly global. It has been a centre of innovation from the first truck or ute to the Falcon and Ranger, and always a pipeline of talent.”





The Evie charging network includes more than 60 stations across Queensland and northern New South Wales.

EV CHARGING TIPS

POWERING YOUR ROAD TRIP ADVENTURES

How charging networks are making road trips easy for everyone.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVs) are revolutionising the way we drive, with more models hitting the road and prices becoming more accessible.

But if you're thinking about making the switch, one of the biggest questions is: "How do I charge my EV?"

And if road trips are a big part of your lifestyle, this becomes even more important when you're away from home.

The good news? Public charging networks have grown significantly, making it easier than ever to find a reliable station along your journey.

Thanks to fast-charging options like Evie Networks, you can power up quickly and keep moving – without unnecessary detours or delays.

Reliable charging across Australia

EVIE IS A leading EV fast-charging network with over 300 locations nationwide, including more than 60 strategically placed across Queensland and northern NSW.

Whether you're in a bustling city or cruising along the highway, Evie ensures you're never far from a reliable charge – helping to make EV travel seamless and stress-free.

How does EV charging work?

IF YOU'RE NEW to EVs, charging is remarkably simple. Fast-charging stations operate similarly to petrol pumps – except instead of refuelling with petrol, you simply plug in your vehicle to recharge its battery.

And with the Evie app, finding and using a charger is even easier.

You can use the Evie app to locate your nearest charging station in seconds (Evie's app even feeds the directions straight into Google Maps or Apple Maps) and check real-time availabilities.

When selecting a charging station you'll see:

- Available plugs – instantly check how many are ready to use
- Occupied plugs – view the current driver's charge progress (e.g. 50% charged) to estimate when a plug will free up and plan accordingly.

EV CHARGING TIPS FOR ROAD TRIPS

Ease your battery concerns

BEFORE HEADING OFF on an adventure – like the scenic route between the Gold Coast and Fraser Coast featured on pages 16-17 – map key charging stops along your journey.

Smart tip: Always plan at least one backup charging location per segment in case your first choice is extra busy.

Optimise your charging time

TURN YOUR CHARGING stops into enjoyable breaks. Choose stations near cafes, shops, restrooms, and scenic spots to maximise your downtime.

Evie's charging locations are carefully placed near useful amenities, so recharging your car can be part of the adventure and not just a wait.

CHARGING NETWORKS WILL KEEP GROWING

AS EV ADOPTION accelerates, so does the infrastructure supporting it.

Evie is continuously expanding its network, ensuring more drivers can transition to EVs without worrying about accessibility.

With an increasing number of fast-charging stations nationwide, the future of EV travel is brighter than ever.

Exclusive RACQ member benefit

RACQ MEMBERS SAVE 4c/kWh at Evie locations across Queensland and northern NSW.

Find chargers near you and activate your 4c/kWh discount in the Evie app*. Head to racq.com/evie.

*Terms and conditions apply to all offers. View the individual offer for full details. Retail partners, offers and discounts may change at any time without notice.



The Performance Driving Australia instructors educate drivers how to control their own cars better in emergency situations.

TEACHING DRIVERS TO TAKE CONTROL

A driver training course aims to help drivers use their car's technology to improve road safety.

Driver can learn how to take better control of their cars to avoid emergency situations in an intensive two-hour training course at the RACQ Mobility Centre.

Despite continual advances in car safety technology, the number of road crash fatalities continues to rise. In 2024 there were 303 deaths on Queensland roads, the highest annual number in a decade, according to the Department of Main Roads and Transport.

Managing Director of course provider Performance Driving Australia Mark Butcher said despite cars never being safer, drivers were not keeping up with their advanced safety features.

"I believe there's a disconnect between drivers and their cars today," Mr Butcher said.

"I often joke that people treat their cars like appliances – like washing machines or fridges. They don't care how these machines work or what they do; they just use them for the task.

"It's easy to forget that a car, weighing two tonnes and traveling at 100km/h, can be incredibly dangerous if it gets out of control."

Mr Butcher hoped the course at the RACQ Mobility Centre, Mt Cotton, would positively impact road safety.

"We're trying to shift people's mindset when driving," Mr Butcher said.

"Most people on the road have only been taught the very basic skills.

"They don't have any understanding of what to do in an emergency situation or what strategies to apply so that they don't have an accident."

Mr Butcher said while participants often left the course with more awareness of their vehicle's capabilities, he stressed the

importance of active driving.

"Everyone who does the course comes away impressed with how good their vehicles really are and how safe they are, but there is a requirement for drivers to be drivers and not steering wheel attendants," he said.

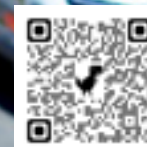
"Many drivers mistakenly think their car will handle everything for them, which isn't always the case. Drivers need to take control of their vehicles rather than passively relying on them to do the work.

"Once you've learned the correct way to react in an emergency situation, it becomes nearly impossible to revert to bad habits."



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• Suitable for All Drivers



www.925driving.au

6 OF THE BEST OFF-ROAD UTES

BY GED BULMER



FORD RANGER TREMOR

A LIMITED-EDITION VERSION of the Blue Oval’s market-leading Ranger 4x4 dual cab, the Tremor is based on a Ranger Sport but adds a raft of off-road-oriented modifications designed to ensure it can head out of the showroom and onto hardcore trails. The Ranger 4x4 is already a handy piece of kit but the Tremor adds specially developed Bilstein position-sensitive dampers with external reservoirs, heavy-duty EPAS (Electronic Power Assisted Steering) with shielding, and new springs. The uprated springs, in conjunction with chunky 265/70R17 General Grabber AT3 All-Terrain Tyres deliver 26mm of extra ground clearance which comes in handy in tough going. The Tremor also gets extended wheelarch mouldings to house a 30mm track increase and a full-time 4WD system instead of the part-time ‘shift-on-the-fly’ system that’s standard on the Sport. Other off-road-oriented additions include Trail Turn Assist; the addition of a Rock Crawl drive mode in the terrain mode system; and Trail Control which allows off-road vehicle speed to be controlled using the steering wheel-mounted cruise control switches. Tremor specific exterior styling enhancements include a honeycomb grille with auxiliary LED lamps and an enthusiast-rated front steel bash plate.

PRICE: \$69,690 (MRLP)
POWERTRAIN: 2.0-litre biturbo four-cylinder turbodiesel, (150kW/500Nm), 10-speed automatic transmission.
ANCAP CRASH RATING: Five stars (2022)
FUEL CONSUMPTION (COMBINED CYCLE): 7.6L/100km (201gCO2/km)
WARRANTY: Five years/unlimited kilometres



TOYOTA HILUX GR SPORT

ONCE DERIDED AS a maker of bland but reliable ‘cardigan cars’, Toyota flipped the script in late 2020 when it introduced the first of its performance-oriented GR Sport (Gazoo Racing) enhanced vehicles. These days the sporting badge extends from the diminutive GR Yaris to the hulking 300 Series LandCruiser and includes the brand’s work-play oriented HiLux ute. Introduced in late 2023, the range-topping GR HiLux features extensive suspension, powertrain and underbody modifications. The upgrades start with a 10% bump in power and torque for the 2.8-litre turbo-diesel (165kW/550Nm), and a recalibration of the six-speed automatic. Track width is increased by 135mm at the front and 155mm at the rear, and there is a modest 15mm increase in ride height. Perhaps most significantly, the GR Sport’s suspension features special KYB monotube shock absorbers, and the rear stabiliser bar is removed for increased suspension travel. Chunky 265/65R17 Bridgestone Dueler all-terrain tyres provide the extra purchase required in tough terrain, with extended over-fender flares to house the increased wheel track. Elsewhere, a reinforced front skid plate, steel rock rails and a pair of red-painted rear recovery points complete the external changes.

PRICE: \$74,310 (MRLP)
POWERTRAIN: 2.8-litre four-cylinder turbodiesel, (165kW/550Nm), 6-speed automatic transmission.
ANCAP CRASH RATING: Five stars (2019)
FUEL CONSUMPTION (COMBINED CYCLE): 8.1L/100km (215gCO2/km)
WARRANTY: Five years/unlimited kilometres



ISUZU D-MAX BLADE

IN A DUAL cab ute market dominated by the Ford Ranger and Toyota HiLux, Isuzu is never far behind the leaders with its versatile D-Max. Last year followed the market leaders into the enhanced off-road space with its D-Max Blade. Released in late 2024, the Blade was developed in partnership with Walkinshaw Automotive, best known for converting full-size US pickups including the RAM, Chevy Silverado and Toyota Tundra. The Blade starts life as a D-Max LS-U+ meaning it’s already equipped with a rear diff lock and effective Rough Terrain Mode system, to which the Blade adds enhancements including a 29mm suspension lift, new MTV twin-tube shock absorbers, a 32mm track increase, and larger 275/65R17 Goodyear Wrangler Duratrac RT all-terrain tyres. Underneath is a 3mm steel bash plate that’s double the thickness of the standard unit, and a load-rated dual hook, single-piece recovery point system. Other Blade-specific modifications include a revised grille design with integrated 112-Watt lightbar, new wheel-arch flares, chassis-mounted tubular side-steps and a one-piece extended sports bar. Inside, the Blade gets embossed scuff plates, embroidered headrests and floor mats, and build plates on the transmission selector and in the engine bay.

PRICE: \$76,990 (MRLP)
POWERTRAIN: 3.0-litre four-cylinder turbodiesel, (140kW/450Nm), six-speed automatic transmission.
ANCAP CRASH RATING: Not rated
FUEL CONSUMPTION (COMBINED CYCLE): 8.0L/100km (212gCO2/km)
WARRANTY: Six years/unlimited kilometres

Dual cab 4x4 utes remain one of Australia’s favourite vehicle types with many buyers investing thousands after purchase on improving off-road ability. Here’s six dual cab utes that drive out of the showroom with already enhanced capability.



NISSAN NAVARA PRO-4X WARRIOR

NISSAN ALSO LOOKED to the Aussie aftermarket to create its most off-road capable ute, the Navara PRO-4X Warrior. Melbourne-based Premcar was previously associated with developing Ford’s FPV and XR performance models but since 2019 has developed customised versions of the Nissan Navara and Patrol under its ‘Warrior by Premcar’ remanufacturing program. The PRO-4X Warrior is based on the fifth-generation D23 Navara, which is due to be replaced later this year by a new ute that shares underpinnings with the Mitsubishi Triton. The enhanced off-roader sits one tier up from the Navara PRO-4X, sharing that model’s black stainless-steel double-tube sports bar with sail plane, black wheel-arch flares, roof rails, and black-out treatment for various body parts. The PRO-4X Warrior adds a winch-compatible body-coloured Safari-style bull bar, integrated light bar, and additional underbody protection. Also added are Warrior-specific fender flares that house more 275/70R17 Cooper Discoverer All Terrain AT3 tyres on cast alloy wheels, Monroe dampers, and revised springs that raise ride height by 40mm to 260mm.

PRICE: \$71,643 (MRLP)
POWERTRAIN: 2.3-litre intercooled twin turbodiesel (140kW/450Nm), seven-speed automatic transmission.
ANCAP CRASH RATING: Not rated
FUEL CONSUMPTION (COMBINED CYCLE): 8.1L/100km (215gCO2/km)
WARRANTY: Five years/unlimited kilometres on base vehicle (Nissan); five years/unlimited kilometres on Warrior enhancements (Premcar)



JEEP JT GLADIATOR RUBICON

A STEP UP in terms of capability on its Japanese-designed rivals, the Jeep Gladiator Rubicon diverges from their use of double wishbone independent front suspension by adopting sturdy live axles at the front and rear. That’s like what Toyota employs on its more heavy-duty 79 Series ute, but where the LandCruiser is designed primarily as a workhorse with sturdy leaf springs at the rear, the coil-sprung Gladiator Rubicon is a lifestyle vehicle aimed at off-road adventurers. The Gladiator’s extra axle articulation gives it a handy advantage when the going gets rough and it comes loaded with serious off-road kit including extra-low 4.0:1 low-range gearing, front and rear electronic locking differentials, and Fox Racing shocks. Add to this a front sway-bar that can be automatically disconnected for extra wheel travel, 249mm of ground clearance and aggressive 32-inch (255/75R17) mud terrain rubber and you have a machine that’s purpose-built to tackle North America’s rugged Rubicon Trail. The Gladiator also boasts ample underbody protection including high-strength steel skid plates to protect the fuel tank and transfer case, plus full-length steel rock rails that do the same for the cab sills and cargo box.

PRICE: \$87,250 (MRLP)
POWERTRAIN: 3.6-litre petrol V6 (209kW/347Nm), eight-speed automatic transmission.
ANCAP CRASH RATING: 3-Star (2019)
FUEL CONSUMPTION (COMBINED CYCLE): 12.4L/100km (288gCO2/km)
WARRANTY: Five years or 100,000km (whichever comes first)



INEOS GRENADIER QUARTERMASTER

DESIGNED TO A similar utilitarian off-road-touring focused ethos as the Jeep Gladiator Rubicon, the Ineos Grenadier Quartermaster is likewise a more heavy-duty offering than the rival Japanese utes featured here. Available as either a body-side dual cab ute or a cab-chassis, it’s the nearest alternative to Toyota’s ubiquitous 79 Series ute. Featuring a heavy-duty box-section ladder-frame chassis and live-axle coil spring suspension front and rear, the Quartermaster also boasts a full-time four-wheel drive system, front and rear cross-axle differential locks, and versatile BF-Goodrich All-Terrain tyres. Power comes from a choice of petrol or diesel BMW six-cylinder turbo engines mated to a slick eight-speed ZF automatic transmission. An uncompromising, no-frills 4X4, the Brit off-roader comes loaded with utilitarian features that most other brands leave to the aftermarket. This includes pre-wired auxiliary ports and switchgear in the cabin for accessories; three-piece steel front and rear bumpers, designed to be easily replaced if individual segments are damaged; a load-rated L-track utility system fitted to the doors, roof rails and cargo bay; and an optional electric winch that’s fully homologated and hidden behind the front bumper.

PRICE: \$118,000 (MRLP)
POWERTRAIN: 3.0-litre inline six-cylinder turbodiesel (183kW/550Nm), eight-speed automatic transmission.
ANCAP CRASH RATING: Not rated
FUEL CONSUMPTION (COMBINED CYCLE): 10.5L/100km (278gCO2/km)
WARRANTY: Five years/unlimited kilometres

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Mobility

Car Reviews

BY GED BULMER

KIA K4 GT-LINE

EARLIER THIS YEAR Kia launched the replacement for its popular Cerato small car, renaming the all-new model K4 and debuting a new look along with a raft of technical upgrades.

Longer, wider and lower than the outgoing Cerato, the K4 looks more like a medium than a small car and is designed to go head-to-head with Toyota's category-leading Corolla.

Available in four trim lines (S, Sport, Sport+ and GT-Line) and with a choice of two petrol engines, the K4 launched initially in sedan-only form with a hatchback scheduled to join the range later this year.

Recommended retail pricing starts at \$30,590 for the K4 S, rising to \$32,690 for the same model fitted with optional safety pack, on to \$35,190 for the K4 Sport, \$37,590 for the Sport+, and tops out at \$42,990 for the K4 GT-Line.

That's competitive pricing when compared with the Corolla sedan, which is available exclusively with a petrol-hybrid powertrain these days, but it's a big jump of \$3,500 to \$6,000 over the old Cerato.

Kia is promising its own petrol-hybrid version of the K4 in the future but for now engine choices are limited to a 2.0-litre petrol four-cylinder in S, Sport and Sport+ grades, or a more powerful 1.6-litre turbocharged petrol four-cylinder in the top-grade GT-Line.

The 2.0-litre naturally aspirated four-cylinder sends 112kW/192Nm to the front wheels via a six-speed automatic transmission and is a perfectly acceptable, if largely unremarkable powertrain.

Drivers looking for a bit more verve should consider the 1.6-litre turbocharged petrol four that's exclusive to the flagship GT-Line.

This engine sends a more robust 142kW/264Nm to its front hoops via an eight-speed torque converter automatic and manages to do so while delivering superior combined cycle consumption of 6.7L/100km versus 7.4L/100km.

The GT-Line backs this up with a more upmarket fitout plus independent multilink rear suspension, where all other variants use a less-sophisticated torsion beam setup. Regardless of

variant, the K4's longer wheelbase and expanded dimensions equate to a roomier interior with more legroom than the old Cerato, as well as a cavernous 508 litres (VDA) boot.

The interior is also fashionably hi-tech, with all models bar the entry-level S variant boasting a trio of screens, comprising a 12.3-inch digital cluster, a dedicated 5.0-inch HVAC segment display and a separate 12.3-inch infotainment touchscreen display.

Safety is top-notch across the K4 range with all variants featuring seven airbags plus Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist, Smart Cruise Control with Stop & Go functionality, Lane Keep Assist, Lane Follow Assist, Multi-Collision Braking, Blind-Spot Collision-Avoidance Assist, Driver Attention Warning, Intelligent Speed Limit Assist, Rear View Monitor and High Beam Assist. Sport, Sport+ and GT-Line versions also incorporate Kia's latest Highway Driving Assist, which functions when driving on a freeway or motorway.

Wireless Apple CarPlay and wireless Android Auto are standard, too, with the GT-Line adding a Qi wireless charging pad, ambient mood lighting, leather-effect steering wheel trim, eight-speaker Harman Kardon audio, and nicely sculpted leatherette-trimmed front seats with heating and cooling. Exterior changes to the GT-Line include a sports body kit with gloss black accents, sunroof, handsome 18-inch alloy wheels clad with lower-profile Hankook tyres, wheels, and projector LED headlights.

Dynamically, the K4 GT-Line shines, thanks in large part to Kia's ongoing commitment to local ride and handling development.

It's not quite as focused as the old Cerato GT-Line but is still properly engaging on a decent stretch of tarmac, with accurate steering, good grip, disciplined body control and more forgiving ride quality than its predecessor.

The combination of the more sophisticated rear end and the superior drivetrain makes the K4 GT-Line a no-brainer choice for those buyers who can stretch to the extra dollars, noting also that its service intervals are shorter and servicing costs higher.



PRICE: \$42,990 (MRLP)

WARRANTY: Seven-year/unlimited-kilometre

POWERTRAIN:

1.6-litre turbocharged petrol four-cylinder, eight-speed automatic, front-wheel drive (142kW/264Nm)

ANCAP CRASH RATING: Not rated

FUEL CONSUMPTION (CO2): 6.7L/100km (158g/km)

FOR: Nicely styled, airy and spacious interior, excellent safety and technology package, polished dynamics, strong performance, well equipped.

AGAINST: Steep price hikes over the Cerato, excessive tyre noise on coarse surfaces, no ANCAP rating, space-saver spare wheel, no 360-degree camera.

BY GED BULMER

VOLKSWAGEN ID.4 PRO

FOR A BRAND that has rattled the sabre so vigorously about the benefits of electric vehicles in recent years, Volkswagen Australia's own journey to electrification has been a slow-train-coming.

While fellow Volkswagen Group brands Audi, Cupra and Skoda have all launched fully electric models locally, Volkswagen Australia has had to wait patiently while its parent in Germany got on with the job of electrifying its fleet in Europe and elsewhere.

It seems the floodgates have now opened, however, following the launch in December last year of the ID. Buzz and ID. Buzz Cargo, followed in March by the ID.4 Pro and ID.5 GTX mid-size SUVs.

Volkswagen is promising still more battery electric models later this year, too, including the closely related ID.4 GTX and ID.5 Pro.

Launched in Europe in 2021 and 2022 respectively, the ID.4 Pro and ID.5 GTX have been conspicuous in their absence from our market, but one upside of their delayed arrival is that Australia gets updated versions of both, with more power, better driving range, and upgraded interiors.

Both models are based on the Volkswagen Group's MEB dedicated electric vehicle platform and are essentially different variations of the same vehicle, with the ID.4 Pro a more conventional SUV body style with a single-electric motor driving the rear wheels, while the ID.5 GTX is a four-door coupe with a dual-motor all-wheel drive layout.

With the arrival of the ID.4 GTX and ID.5 Pro later this year, buyers will have the choice of either body style with single- or dual-motor drivetrains.

Right now, the ID.4 Pro stands out as the more pragmatic choice thanks to its simpler single-motor powertrain, superior range, and lower purchase price of \$59,990 (MRLP), versus \$72,990 (MRLP) for the sportier and more high-performance ID.5 GTX.

For the money, the ID.4 Pro brings an 82kWh battery with a single-motor driving the rear-wheels, and healthy-enough outputs of 210kW/545Nm.

Stepping up to the ID.5 GTX brings some extra fruit, a slightly larger 84kWh battery, dual electric motors, all-wheel drive, and punchier 250kW outputs.

Both models measure up well against key rivals in terms of performance and range, with the ID.4 Pro claiming an impressive 544km (WLTP) compared with the recently facelifted Tesla Model Y RWD which extracts 466km (WLTP) from its 63kWh battery.

Riding on 19-inch alloy wheels as standard, the ID.4 Pro boasts a Sport-oriented electronic stability control (ESC) function, Adaptive Chassis Control adaptive suspension and progressive rate electric steering. The combination delivers pleasingly disciplined handling while retaining impressively compliant ride.

Stand hard on the accelerator and the ID.4 Pro will cover the benchmark 0-100km/h sprint in a rapid 6.7 seconds, which is two-tenths of a second quicker than the Model Y RWD, but slower than the feisty 5.4-second split of the dual-motor ID.5 GTX.

Standard equipment on both models includes Matrix LED headlights with adaptive high beam, 3D LED rear lights with dynamic indicators, keyless access, power tailgate, panoramic roof with electric blind, microfleece upholstery, heated and power-adjustable front seats with memory and massage function, heated steering wheel, tri-zone climate control, 12.9-inch infotainment with App-Connect and a 360-degree camera system.

Also, standard is Volkswagen's Travel Assist system which combines Adaptive Cruise Control with active Lane Assist, Side Assist, Emergency Assist, oncoming vehicle braking and a range of other safety technologies to deliver an impressively unobtrusive driver assistance system.

Volkswagen is entering the EV space at a time of unprecedented competition from Chinese and other car makers, with more than 20 fully electric SUVs battling it out in the \$50-\$70,000 price range.

Fortunately, the German car maker has put its best foot forward with the ID.4 Pro which offers a compelling alternative from a well-established brand to the deluge of new products on offer from challenger brands.



PRICE: \$59,990 (MRLP)

WARRANTY:

Five-year/unlimited-kilometre (vehicle); eight-year/160,000-kilometre (battery)

POWERTRAIN:

Single electric motor, one-speed automatic, rear-wheel drive (210kW/545Nm)

BATTERY:

82kWh lithium-ion NMC (Nickel Manganese Cobalt)

RANGE:

544km (WLTP)

ANCAP CRASH RATING:

Five stars (2021)

ENERGY CONSUMPTION:

16.69kWh/100km

FOR:

Attractively styled, well built, well finished, roomy interior, quality dynamics, strong performance, well equipped, good range.

AGAINST:

Wired Apple Car Play and Android Auto, no Vehicle to Load (V2L), fiddly touch-sensitive switches.

BY GED BULMER

GWM Haval H6GT ULTRA PHEV

THERE'S JUST THREE numbers GWM wants you to know about its new Haval H6GT PHEV: 180km, 4.9 seconds, and \$53,990.

The Chinese car maker believes that combination is enough to convince about 250 to 300 EV-curious Aussies per month to get off the fence and step into its new mid-size plug-in hybrid (PHEV) SUV.

The reason for this optimism is that with 180km of battery-electric range the H6GT PHEV has the longest electric-only driving range of any PHEV on the market, while its 4.9-second 0-100km/h sprint time puts it in the realm of some of the quickest hot hatches.

Throw in that sharp \$53,990 driveaway pricing, which undercuts established AWD versions of PHEV rivals including the BYD Sealion 6 Premium and Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV, and it's clear that GWM's new plug-in has plenty going for it.

The H6GT has been available since last year with a 2.0-litre petrol engine and is positioned as a more dynamically-styled version of the regular H6 SUV, thanks to its distinctive fastback design.

But this is the first time a PHEV option has been available, with the new drivetrain in top-of-the line Ultra trim only, which brings a generous equipment list but costs a substantial \$9,000 more than its petrol-powered stablemate.

There's little external styling differentiation between the two, but beneath its skin the Haval H6GT PHEV packs a far more complex drivetrain that includes a 1.5-litre turbo-petrol engine, a 35.23kWh battery, and two electric motors.

The combination delivers all-wheel drive capability and bristling combined outputs of 321kW/762Nm via the turbo-petrol engine (110kW/230Nm), front electric motor (130kW/300Nm) and rear axle-mounted electric motor (135kW/232Nm).

Together, the combination fires the 2,075kg H6GT from 0-100km/h in a rapid 4.9 seconds, which is faster than Toyota's feisty GR Corolla and GR Yaris hot hatches. That the H6GT PHEV is seriously quick can't be denied, although its

weight and high-riding SUV body means it lacks the focused overall dynamic of these rivals.

The car feels heavy and the initial pedal feel of the brakes – upgraded for the PHEV's added performance and extra 395kg – is spongy.

There are no such issues with acceleration, which is attention-grabbing both from a standing start and at road speeds. The interior design is busy by modern standards, with various creases and angles that aren't especially cohesive. There's a lot of hard black plastics and trims which look durable but the overall tone is somewhat dour.

The front seats do provide a bit of colour differentiation with bold red GT stitching on the seat backs, but the seats aren't especially comfortable.

There's plenty of legroom, however, and the driving position is decent, even if rear visibility is restricted by the plunging roofline and small rear screen. A 12.3-inch central infotainment screen displaying 360-degree camera angles alleviates this to some extent.

There's a deluge of information available via the screen sub-menus, plus the ability to adjust settings including steering weight, drive modes (six in total), and regenerative braking. But its best to make any such changes before driving as the screen is fiddly and not especially intuitive.

Rear-seat accommodation is as per the ICE-version meaning decent legroom and headroom, but the rear electric motor sees the full-size spare wheel replaced by a tyre repair kit.

There's an impressive array of driver assistance (ADAS) systems but these aren't well tuned and there were numerous inconsistencies and unnecessary interventions during our test drive.

The H6GT PHEV's official combined-cycle fuel consumption is 0.8L/100km with a full battery charge, with GWM saying the petrol engine uses closer to 5.4L/100km with the battery in a low charge state.

That's enough to deliver a touring range of circa 1,000km (NEDC), which in combination with its impressive EV-only range gives this new Haval a unique point of difference in the market.



PRICE: \$53,990 (driveaway)

WARRANTY:

Seven-year/unlimited-kilometre (vehicle); Eight-year unlimited-kilometre (battery)

POWERTRAIN:

1.5-litre four-cylinder turbo-petrol, two-speed transmission, front and rear electric motors, all-wheel drive (321kW/762Nm combined).

BATTERY:

35.43kWh (Ternary lithium)

EV RANGE:

180km (NEDC)

ANCAP CRASH RATING:

Not rated

FUEL CONSUMPTION (CO2):

0.8L/100 km (18.6g per km)

FOR:

Smooth and powerful, attractively styled, class-leading EV-only range, excellent warranty.

AGAINST:

Price versus ICE variant, poorly calibrated ADAS systems, no spare tyre (repair kit), lower braked towing capacity than ICE equivalent.

E-BIKES

E-bikes are a popular transport choice for Queenslanders, for commuting and recreation. However, they do come with their own set of rules and penalties for infringements.

For more information, please visit streetsmarts.initiatives.qld.gov.au/electric-bikes or call 13 2380 to learn more.



WHAT IS AN E-BIKE?

AN E-BIKE IS a type of bicycle that has an electric motor that provides assistance to the rider. This can be helpful when riders need extra power, such as riding up a hill. You can ride an e-bike on all Queensland roads and paths, except where bicycles are not allowed.

E-bikes must comply with these requirements:

- Pedals must be the primary source of power with the motor providing assistance only.
- The speed limit for an e-bike using motor assistance is 25km/h, however the bike can be ridden faster if powered only by the rider.
- The maximum motor output is 250 watts. This can be checked on the e-bike compliance sticker.



KEY RULES TO FOLLOW

- Always wear a helmet.
- Give way to pedestrians on paths.
- Don't drink and ride.
- Leave you phone alone.
- Ring your bell to warn pedestrians you are approaching.
- Only carry passengers if the bike is designed to do so.
- Do not ride on motorways or where 'no bicycle' signs are installed.
- Speed limits apply: Watch for limits on paths and bridges.

NON-COMPLIANT DEVICES

There are an increasing number of non-compliant or illegal devices being ridden on public roads or footpaths. These devices are often capable of operating under throttle power only or have high-speed or high-powered motors that exceed legal requirements. These are considered illegal motorbikes and have one or more of these features:

- A petrol-powered or internal combustion engine.
- An electric motor that is the main source of power.
- Throttle control without pedalling (at speeds of more than 6km/h).
- The motor doesn't turn off when you travel faster than 25km/h.
- Electric motor or motors exceeding 250 watts.

E-BIKE PENALTIES

- Not wearing a helmet
More than \$160
- Disobeying 'give way' or 'stop' signs
More than \$480
- Not giving way to pedestrians on a path
More than \$160
- Using a mobile phone while riding
More than \$1,200
- Ignoring traffic lights
More than \$640
- Riding with excess passengers
More than \$160

*Check qld.gov.au/transport/safety/fines/cycling for current fines.

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