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THE OUTBACK CAR TREK

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TREK TRIPE

21st April 2023

Hello to all 2023 Trek Participants, there is not long to go now before we spend 12 glorious days & nights in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, travelling from Geraldton to Darwin via Broome.

VALE:

Before we get on to the business of Trek 2023, I have some sad news to share with the Trek community, namely the passing of three of our cohort in recent weeks. Our deepest sympathies are extended to the families and friends of Evan Summerfield (10 Treks), Grant Hodgetts (18 Treks), and Brett Garstang (9 Treks). Details of the funerals of Grant & Brett (to be held next week) are contained at the end of this newsletter. Evan's funeral was held in Hong Kong last month.

I know the families of each of these gentlemen would appreciate the support of the Trek Family at this sad time.

TREK MATTERS:

During COVID, WA spent most of its time with closed borders, and that had a huge negative impact on their local economies. Then, just as everybody was starting to get back on their feet, at the end of 2022 they were hit by the most severe Wet Season in many years. We have all seen the news reports about bridges washed away, roads closed, and communities isolated for weeks (sometimes months) on end. To give an example of the enormity of the damage, whilst work has already started on the replacement bridge and roadworks at Fitzroy Crossing, it is expected to take until 2025 to complete, at a cost in excess of \$200 million.

And then, just as they were dusting themselves off and getting back on their feet along came Tropical Cyclone Ilsa which crossed the coast between Port Hedland and Broome with unbridled ferocity, laying waste to many of the buildings in its path. We will get some idea of the size of the calamity when we drive past what is left of the Pardoo Roadhouse on our way to Broome.

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Hopefully whilst on Trek we will bring a smile to the local business people's faces we visit. The majority of nights on the event this year are totally new towns to the Trek and for the first nine nights we are on the coast and will be sure to see some sensational sunsets over the Indian Ocean. The Gibb River Road will be interesting after all of the Wet Season and Cyclone weather; however the locals are telling me it should be perfect, newly graded and in top condition. I'm sure they will be right!

DONATIONS:

Whilst it's about fun, scenery, and community, let's not forget the primary outcome of the Outback Car Trek is the amount of funds we raise for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. A few Trek cars are lagging with their donations, and I would appreciate you working hard on getting up to date in the next few days/weeks. Or a phone call.

BLUES POINT RESERVE

Is the place to be (with your Trek Car if it's not on CEVA) on Friday 12th May at 7:30 am. The RFDS have engaged a media relations company to heighten the profile of the Trek, and that company is in the process of inviting Channel's 7, 9 and 10, Yahoo News, the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Mail and the Sydney Morning Herald, along with a myriad of affiliated publications and lifestyle magazines, for a film/photo shoot and media interviews with Trekkers.

Please let me know if you are able to attend (and if you can bring your Trek car) on the day ASAP, and we will confirm details 1 week prior.

BROKEN HILL and SUNRISE:

The Channel 7 Sunrise program have also been approached to perform their weather cross on either of Monday 22nd or Tuesday 23rd May from the RFDS Base at Broken Hill. These dates have been picked so that we can include not only some Trek cars, but also some of the cast of the Flying Doctors TV Show, who are filming in Broken Hill on those dates. Given the success of our experience with the Sunrise show at Bondi Beach a few years ago, we are hopeful of gaining their support, but typically we will only get about a week's notice if it does come off. I am keen to hear from Trekkers who are able to include Broken Hill in their travels to Geraldton on one of these dates, and again, as soon as I get some feedback, I will let you know.

JUST CUTS CUT-A-RAMA:

The boys and girls from Just Cuts are jumping out of their skin, and can hardly wait to cut and colour your hair on Tuesday 30th May at the Murchison Tavern in Chapman St Geraldton. The evening commences with Trek registrations from 4:30 to 6:00 pm, and then CUT-A-RAMA!

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OFFICIALS BRIEFING IN GERALDTON:

As previously advised, officials should be in Geraldton by 2 pm on the Tuesday for the all-important briefing to be held at the Gerald Apartment Hotel – which is where we are all staying.

BUSES IN DARWIN:

To make sure we get everybody to dinner at the Casino in plenty of time for the sunset, please let me know ASAP where you are staying so I can schedule buses efficiently. (ASAP means let me know this week please 😊)

KATHERINE DINNER LOCATION:

Knotts Crossing Resort was the only venue in Katherine that could host our dinner or breakfast, and we advised you in the entry form that you should book there for either of your motel or camping needs. Katherine is one of those towns that can book out in a matter of days, so we also organised for any overflow to be taken up at their sister resort. To facilitate your booking, we provided a web link with a booking code on the Trek entry form. On checking with the resort, they don't have a large number of bookings against that booking code, meaning people have either used one of the web booking agencies to reserve their rooms at Knotts Crossing, or you have booked elsewhere. The resort is 2.5 km from the heart of the main street, which is probably a little more than most Trekkers would like to walk late at night. If you have booked elsewhere, let me know where and the number of people and I will see if I can arrange a bus to get you to and from the dinner.

PORT HEDLAND MINING CAMP FOR DINNER, BREAKFAST AND LUNCH:

The vast majority of people have taken advantage of the mining camp accommodation in Port Hedland, and this is where your dinner, breakfast, and takeaway lunch will be provided. There are still (only a couple) of rooms available, so if you want to book at the camp please let me know ASAP.

BROOME AUCTION:

The night we arrive in Broome is **AUCTION NIGHT**. We will arrive in town in plenty of time (unless you go salmon fishing at 80 Mile Beach) for you to be at the auction venue bright-eyed and bushy tailed, ready to spend your hard earned \$\$, in aid of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The venue is the Roebuck Bay Hotel in the main street, and buses will be put on to get you there and back. If you are flying into Broome to join the Trek – we will see you at the Roey where you will pick up your trusty Road Book and name badge.

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BROOME AUCTION

WE NEED PLENTY OF AUCTION ITEMS

PLEASE LET ME KNOW ASAP WHAT YOU ARE ABLE TO DONATE

BROOME – THE STAIRCASE TO THE MOON:

The Staircase to the Moon is a natural phenomenon which occurs when a full moon rises over the exposed tidal flats of Roebuck Bay. The Staircase to the Moon happens on only 2 or 3 days a month between March and October and it is happening on Tuesday 6th June at 7:31 pm. The night we are in town.

It's all about location, and the visitbroome.com.au website blurb tells us:

“The Town beach precinct is a great vantage spot to view the Staircase to the Moon. Another popular spot is The Mangrove Hotel Resort, who often have live entertainment on Staircase night. Other local spots include the golf club, the Roebuck Bay lookout or take a short walk across the road from Matso's Broome.

Staircase to the Moon Markets at Town Beach (Hamersley Street) are held from 4pm to 8pm on selected dates. Here you can sample local produce, buy hand made products, a variety of international food, and enjoy the sounds of local entertainers.”

So the old town (not Cable Beach) is the place to be at 7:31 pm on Tuesday 6th June. But be warned, the best locations book out early so I suggest you book now.

TUESDAY IS A FREE DAY IN BROOME:

Nothing has been arranged for you, you are free to play the tourist.

VHF RADIOS:

Have you upgraded your UHF to an 80 Channel system? The older 40 channel systems are becoming less effective each year.

BIG DOG'S GOLF DAY:

All of you budding Sultans of Swing – the Big Dog golf day is on at Dunheved Golf Club on Tuesday 2nd May. Commencing with a healthy breakfast (onions on top) at 7:00 am and a shotgun start at 8:00 am, you can book by phoning Rob Lanham 0413 857 412, Gregg Lemmon 0407 011 085 or John Gorman 0418 296 262.

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FUNERAL DETAILS FOR GRANT (GRUNTA) HODGETTS:

The service for Grant (it's hard not to call him Grunta) will be held at Ormand Hall, 17 Moubray St Melbourne on Wednesday 26th April at 2:00 pm for 2:30 pm.

Guests are invited to stay afterwards for refreshments.

FUNERAL SERVICE DETAILS FOR BRETT GARSTANG:

There will be a service to celebrate Brett's life, at 11:00 am on Thursday 27th April in the Magnolia Chapel at Macquarie Park Cemetery and Crematorium.

Light refreshments will follow at North Ryde RSL.

(The family would love to see some Trek cars pay their respects - space is tight at the Cemetery and Crematorium, but there is plenty of parking at the RSL.)

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