



*LG - Life's good!*

**Sir John Gorge – hired for a full day – noone else is allowed in!**



*A whole gorge for just us!*



*Sir John Gorge*





**Sir John Range  
& Fitzroy River**



**Sunset at Cadjeput/Fitzroy River**



**Fitzroy Bluff near Mornington Wilderness Camp**





*Australian Bustard wandering the savanna*



*Fitzroy Bluff sunset/Mornington Wilderness Camp*

One night at the Wilderness Lodge camp we hear an **almighty ‘thuddd’** in the middle of the night: A white ghost gum had decided to shed one of its massive branches. Several tons of wood crash to the ground missing a tent camper *“by the skin of his teeth”* – he escapes, with a minor scrape to his left elbow, an incident that could have easily killed him!

His guardian angel must have worked overtime – we suggest he might **buy a lottery ticket...**

Ghost gum, a type of eucalypt, are in the habit of dropping limbs *with no prior warning!* Little wonder, folklore calls them ‘widow makers’...

***Never set up camp within striking distance of one of these!***





**"Widow maker"  
Ghost Gum**

**Snap off point** →



**Near fatal tree crash**



**Branch's rotten core**





***Tent camper's lucky escape***



***Leaving Mornington Wilderness Camp***

One might fear, snakes and crocodiles lurk around but apart from falling trees different dangers abound: The ever present **Kimberley tyre shredders** – the Gibb River Road is well known for these!



***Typical Kimberley tyre shredders ready to rip...***





Luckily we cop only one flat tyre. Albeit the puncture is fatal – repair impossible!



**See 'Neville' here - he'll fix you up!**

**Never mind, any tyre or mechanical trouble... Neville 'Over The Range' is your man!**

**He has been mending rubber and bent metal for decades on the Gibb.**

**His workshop is in the *middle of nowhere* but he surely is "flat out" during the winter season.**

Countless travellers meet demise on route. Numerous 'Towies' recovery vehicles sit in wait at either end of the Gibb ready to pounce on the unlucky.

Make no mistake, it ain't cheap breaking down along here! The first question asked will be your credit card number – make sure you are well funded. A tow out will set you back about 4K!

Yes... and that's just for the recovery!

Make sure your rig is in top notch condition before venturing into the Kimberley...





*Boab in summer outfit*



*Boab in winter mode*

Talking trees, Boabs might be hollow inside but ever so fascinating – our favourite trees up here!



**Ring-tailed Dragon**

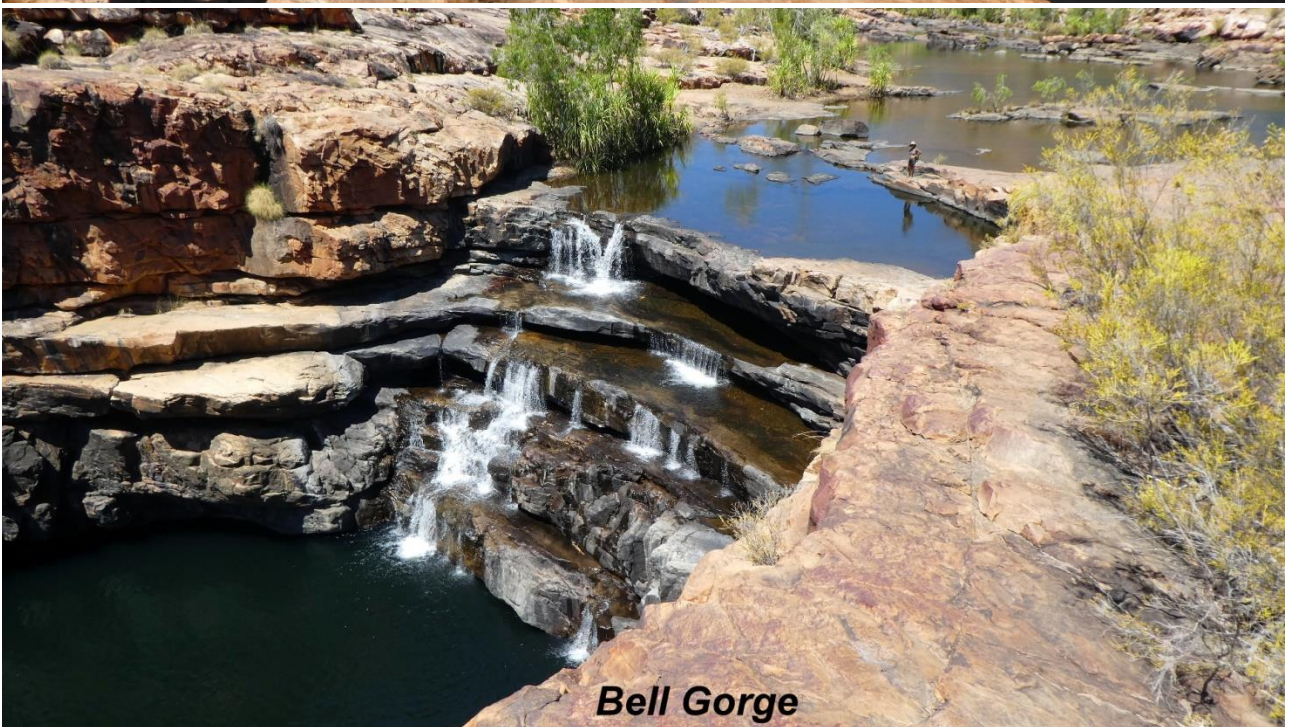
**Discovered:** *Tiny dragons that race along on their back legs when in a hurry!*

Despite the numerous gorges we don't "overgorge" – We check them all out, Calvern G., Adcock G. but **Bell Gorge** ranks best for us as there is plenty of swimming to be had through a series of holes.



**Bell Gorge**





**Bell Gorge**



Birds found a Silent Grove camp...



*Crimson Finch at Silent Grove/Bell Gorge*



*Double-barred Finch*



*Double-barred Finch maintaining his flying gear*



**Spinifex  
Termite  
Mound**

A **Spinifex Termite** colony consists of a queen, a king and up to one million of their offspring. The queen lays up to 3000 eggs per day in her chamber deep inside the mound. Despite her exhausting sounding role, a she may live for as long as one hundred years – **“Long Live The Queen!”**

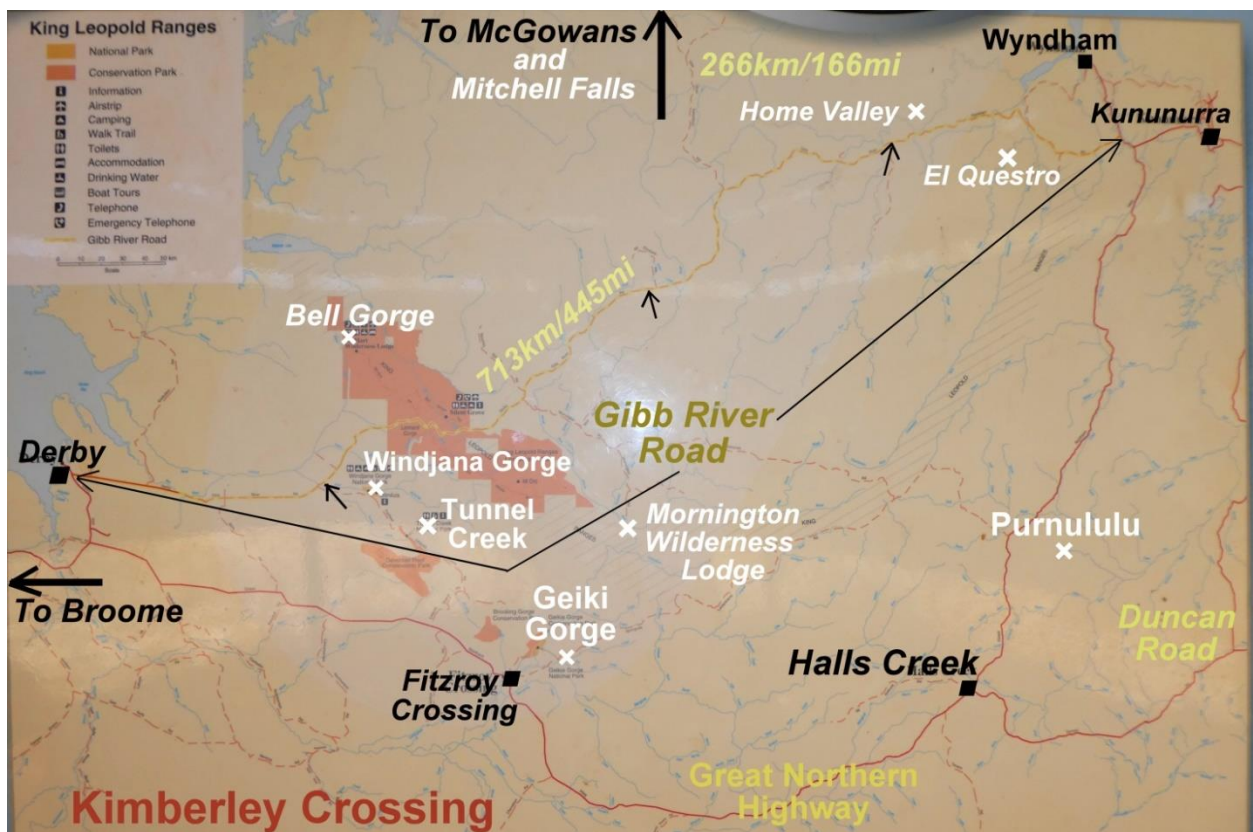


## *(Sadly) leaving the Gibb River Road*

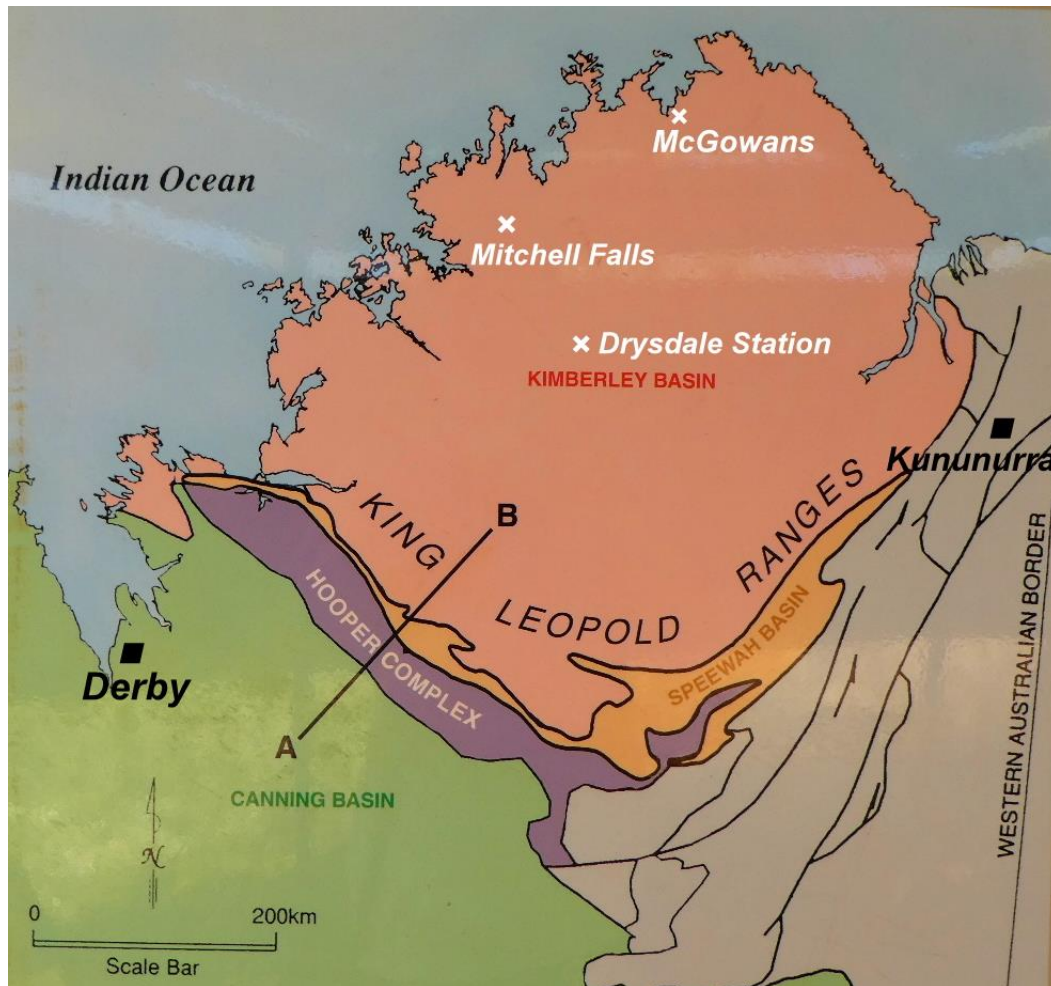


By the time we leave the Gibb we have travelled almost **2100km** (1300mi) criss crossing the Kimberley Basin from El Questro to Kununurra to Mornington Wilderness Lodge to the Windjana turn off. Almost four weeks in constant four-wheel-drive, towing the Matrix in every direction; entirely off the grid surviving on solar electricity alone for lights and powering two fridges. Our rig has performed very well along some of the most gruelling road conditions we have ever encountered. Corrugations from hell they seemed at times; though we got lucky on numerous stretches where the grader had been through before us, taking out much of the sting we would have had to rattle through otherwise.

We leave the Gibb with a crying eye because we had so much fun on our day-to-day explorations. “Calibrated” by corrugations, riding the ‘black-top’ just doesn’t have that same feel of adventure ☺







**Windjana Gorge** is sensational at sunset. Walk into the entrance for about a kilometre, turn around and soak up the day's final rays pouring through the opening...



The billabong at the base is teeming with **freshwater crocs** – the waters are still receding, each croc competes for territory even as the breeding season kicks in: **This makes the lizards rather irritated and snappy!** Swimming is definitely discouraged. Even a 'freshie' is capable of causing very nasty injuries when provoked...





**Ranger's advice: "Do not get between a crocodile and the water"**

As so often in many places, we go 'croc spotting' late at night with our torches but the path into the gorge is blocked by crocodiles which have climbed out of the billabong digging hollows in the sandy track and resting in them: Apparently the females are testing the ground temperature in order to optimize timing for laying lay their eggs:



'Freshies' can grow up to three or four metres in length and live up to fifty years.

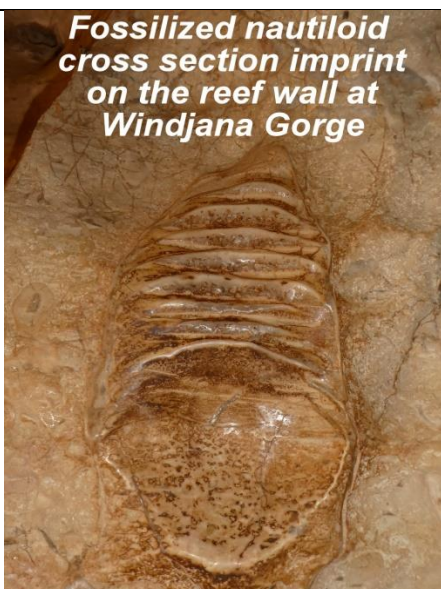
If cornered or touched while they are in the water, or on land, they WILL bite!

They will shake their head violently from side to side, the teeth ripping and tearing skin, muscle and tendons.





*Katherine one Windjana morning*



*Fossilized nautiloid cross section imprint on the reef wall at Windjana Gorge*

Windjana Gorge is a narrow 3.5km long canyon eroded by the Lennard River that cut through the lime stone of the Napier Range, an ancient barrier reef from the Devonian times 360 million years ago.

During the Devonian period a shallow sea covered a large area southeast of present day Derby. A series of barrier reefs formed along the edge of this sea and extended up to 1000 kilometres.

The Lennart River flows for only short periods of the year during the wet season. Many fossil remains of extinct nautical creatures can be found here.





*Tunnel Creek*

35km down the road from Windjana we find Tunnel Creek. This creek runs through a water-worn tunnel beneath the limestone of the Napier Range.

The tunnel runs underground for 750m, much of it in total darkness.

A strong torch light is needed to navigate from one end to the other, at times wading through thigh-deep water that is inhabited by small eels and cherabun freshwater prawns.

Bats hang off the ceiling in the darkest cavernous part – you smell them long before you spot them!

Tunnel Creek also has historical significance as it served aboriginal freedom fighter *Jandamarra* as a hideout for nearly three years as he evaded Lillimooloora Outpost police.

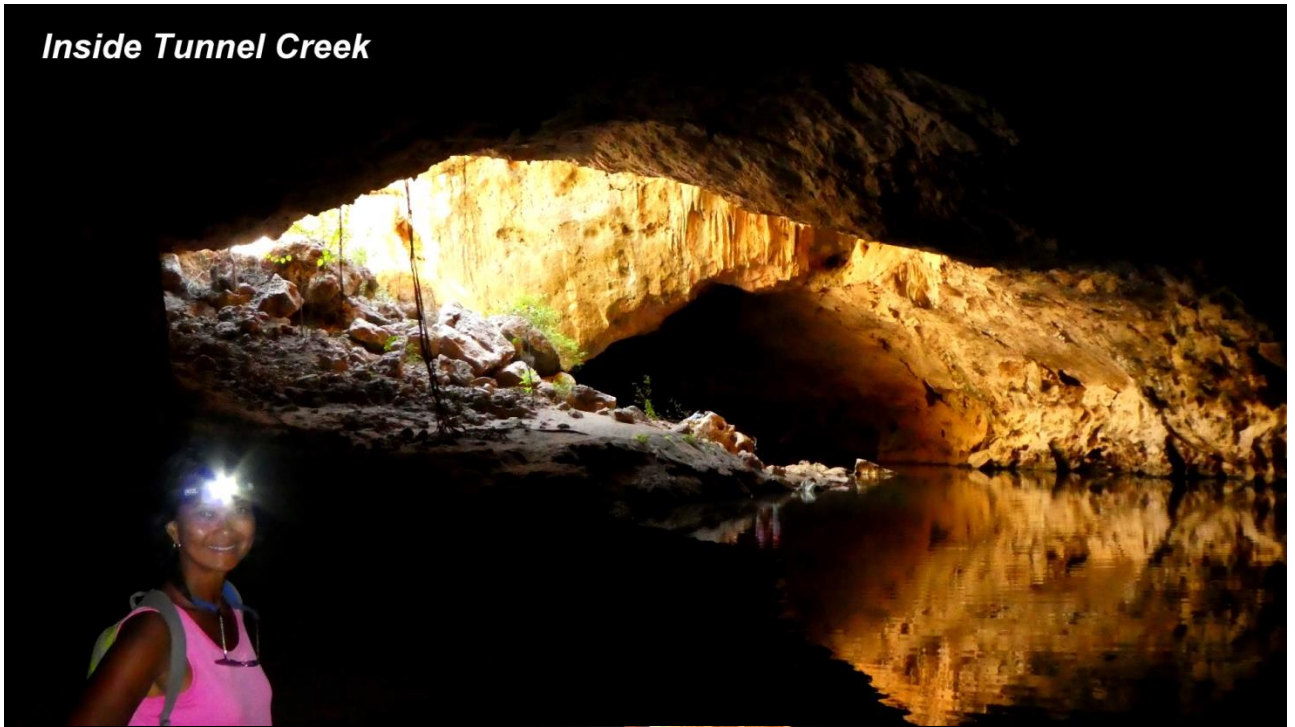
At Windjana Jandamarra lead his Bunuba tribe people in an ambush when he was killed on April 1 – 1897 by an aboriginal police tracker during an eight-hour armed combat with police forces from Derby.



*Exploring Tunnel Creek*



*Inside Tunnel Creek*



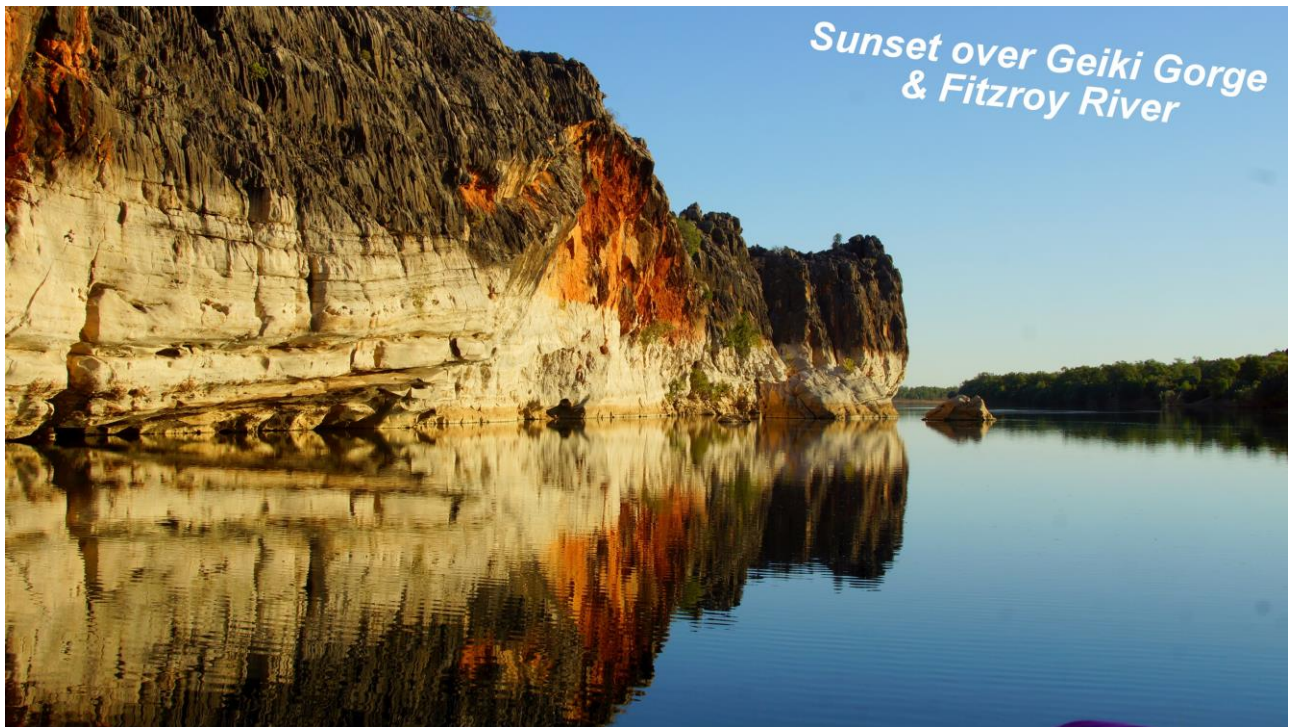
*Tunnel Creek  
entrance*

Last stop is **Geiki Gorge** at **Fitzroy Crossing**. Best time to see this marvel is during 'golden hour' at day's end on a sunset cruise! If you think thereafter, Fitzroy Crossing hasn't got much else to offer in addition, go for the **duck dinner** at the **Old Fitzroy Crossing Inn/Restaurant**; followed by **brekkie** the next day at the **Jalangurru Mayi** (means 'good food') **Café** – *you will qickly change your mind!!!*



*Geiki Gorge*





The **Fitzroy River** is one of the largest in the world when it comes to sheer water volume output: During summer's monsoon season the water level rises by over 20metres. Imagine the water volume of Sydney Harbour including the entire Paramatta River system... This staggering amount of water pours out of the Fitzroy into the Indian Ocean **every 2 ½ minutes** when **in full flow** during the wet!

From F. Crossing we hike down the 400km run to **Broome** in one hit – scraping in with just **ONE can of beer** left in the fridge 😊😊 - **Civilization at long last!**

Time to service our gear, dust off the rig, plug into 240V/power and restock supplies...

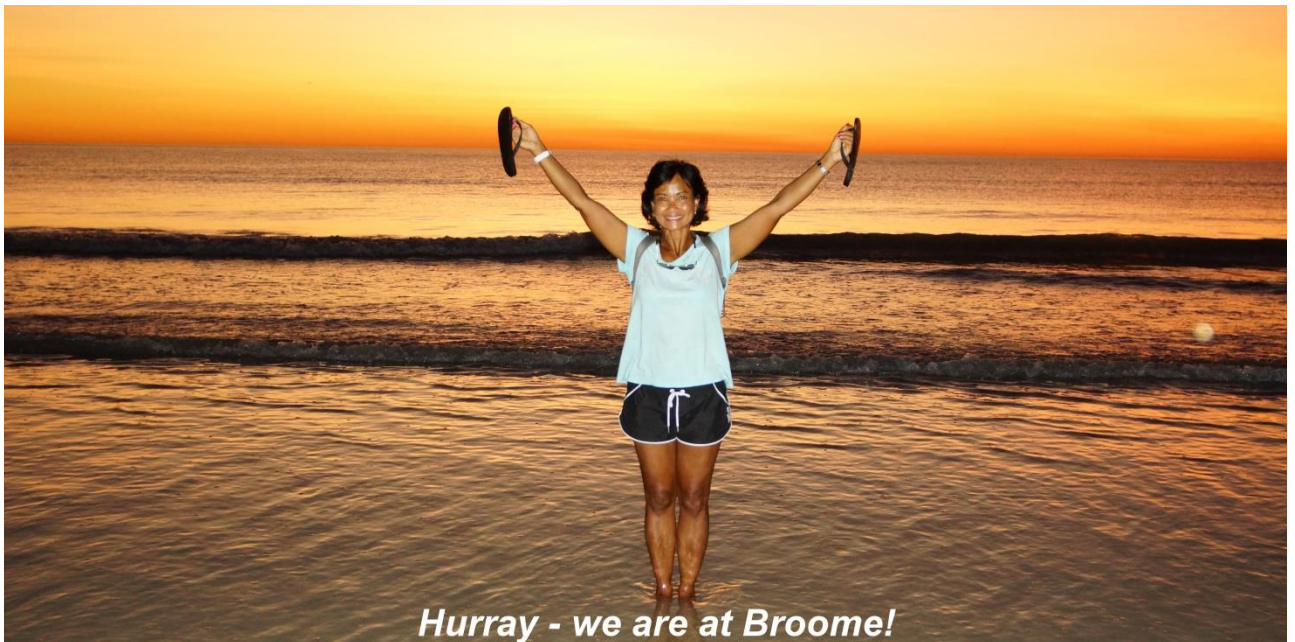
Naturally we check out the popular **Broome camel tours** along much adored **Cable Beach**. Guess, that's pretty much all that camels are useful for these days after the introduction of semi-trailers for ways of transport (*when they are not converting them into burgers* 😊)!





Some say *“making the Gibb deserves a badge of honour”* - whatever the case, an iconic destination it is.

Yes, challenging at times, but maybe some of you are now inspired to trace our tracks!



*Hurray - we are at Broome!*

**Next episode: Cape Leveque... more soon!**

*Greetings from Chris and Katherine*



PS: Some useful tips for those thinking of travelling the Kimberley (scroll down↓)



- 1) Do your best to avoid mechanical breakdown
- 2) Carry three spare tyres
- 3) Do not run out of beer (we were told \$169/case at El Questro)
- 4) Cask wine unavailable in the Kimberley/period\*\*

**\*\*apparently some of the local residents have a drinking problem – thus the powers to be have decided to dish out corporate punishment for all i.e. completely ban cask wine sales in the entire Kimberley region!**

Stock up at **Katherine in the north** or **south of Port Hedland** – travelling with cases of bottled wine [weight!] in a van over corrugations and shaky off-road terrain would be ludicrous!

Bear in mind when stocking up, even at Katherine you will have to show ID: **Only 1 cask of wine per person per day is allowed!**