

COVID Crusaders (aka Kimberley/Cape... Crusaders) – Part 3

Sept 9 - 2020 – 3,640km (2,275miles) from home

After three nights at Lochern National Park we move a few miles south west to **Noonbah**, a station which allows visitors onto their property along the Thomson River.

This River is part of Queensland's channel country. You can follow it for hundreds of miles. (Some claim, it's the '*cleanest river in QLD*' because it go no 'p' in it...)

Track to Noonbah Station near Lochern NP



After much success in trapping yabbies we finally manage to snag a few Yellowbelly in the Thomson. This was always part of our "QLD mission". Katherine adds a number of Silver Perch to the tally...



Yellowbelly caught at Noonbah



Nice Silver Perch KJ!



Silver Perch (firm flesh excellent for curries!)



Yellowbelly fillets for tea

The fish are 'on the bite': We even catch enough to feed our 'next door neighbour' fellow campers a few hundred yards away.

Incidentally they also own an AOR van: Nice to be able to share some with the 'family' 😊



**Crumbed 'Thomson River'
Yellowbelly fillets**

Diet change from...↓

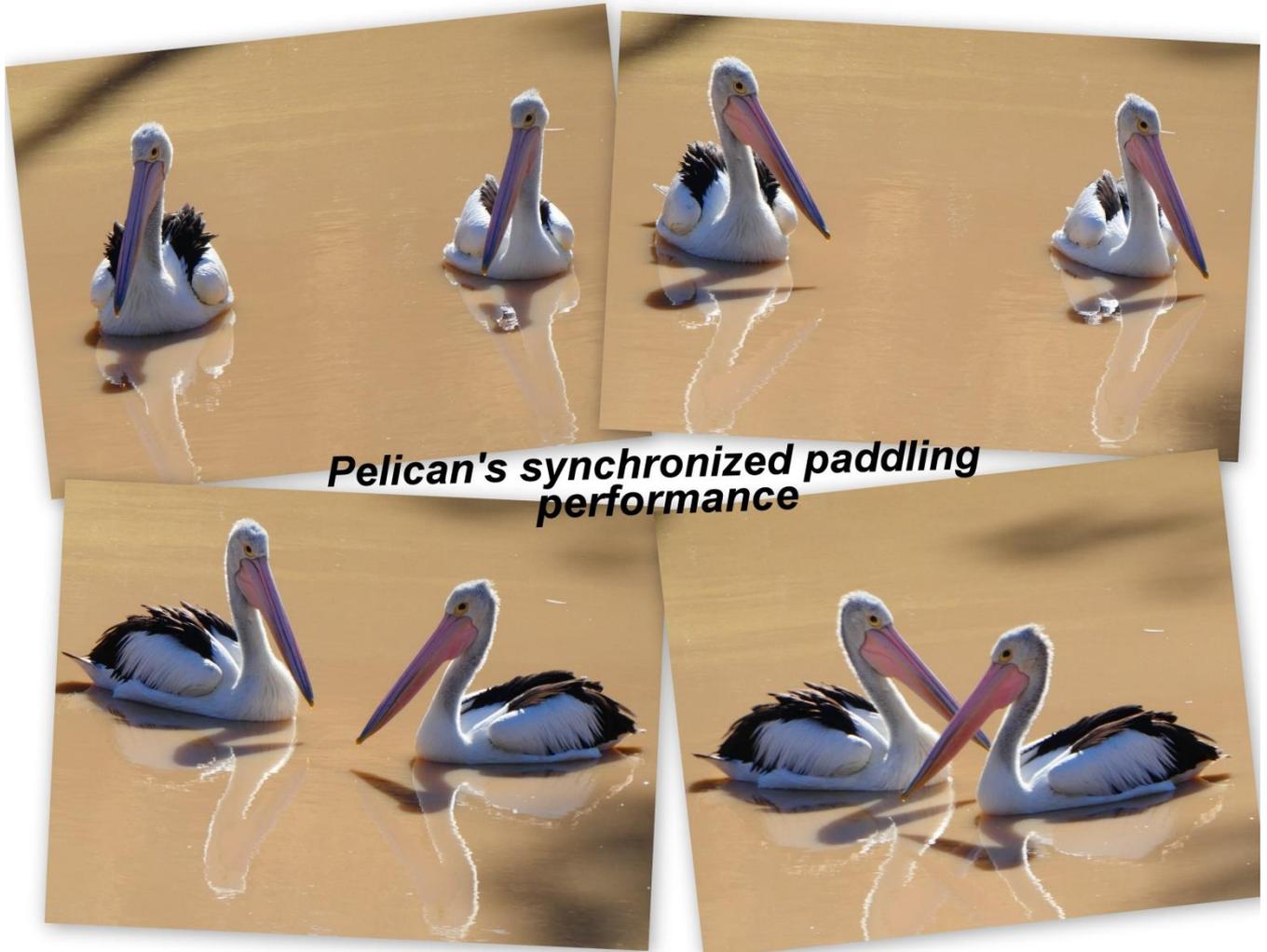


Yabby toasties



Noonbah Station

One early morning two pelicans entertain us with their 'Thomson River swim show special':

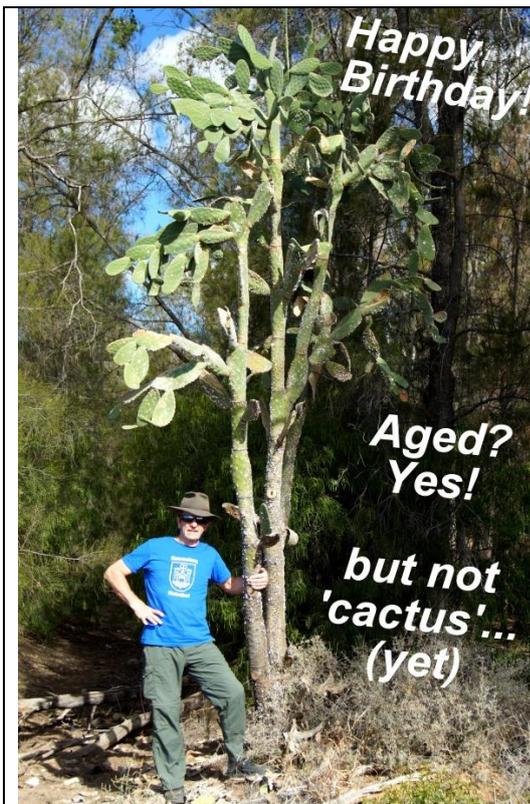


Ilfracombe Van Park is on the list where we ambush friends *Byron and Annie* unannounced. We had been trying to make our paths cross for some time but it had never worked... until now when our directional plans suddenly change and things fall into place ☺

Surprise meet with friends
Byron and Annie at Ifracombe



Ifracombe's 1st Motorhome



Happy Birthday!

Aged? Yes!

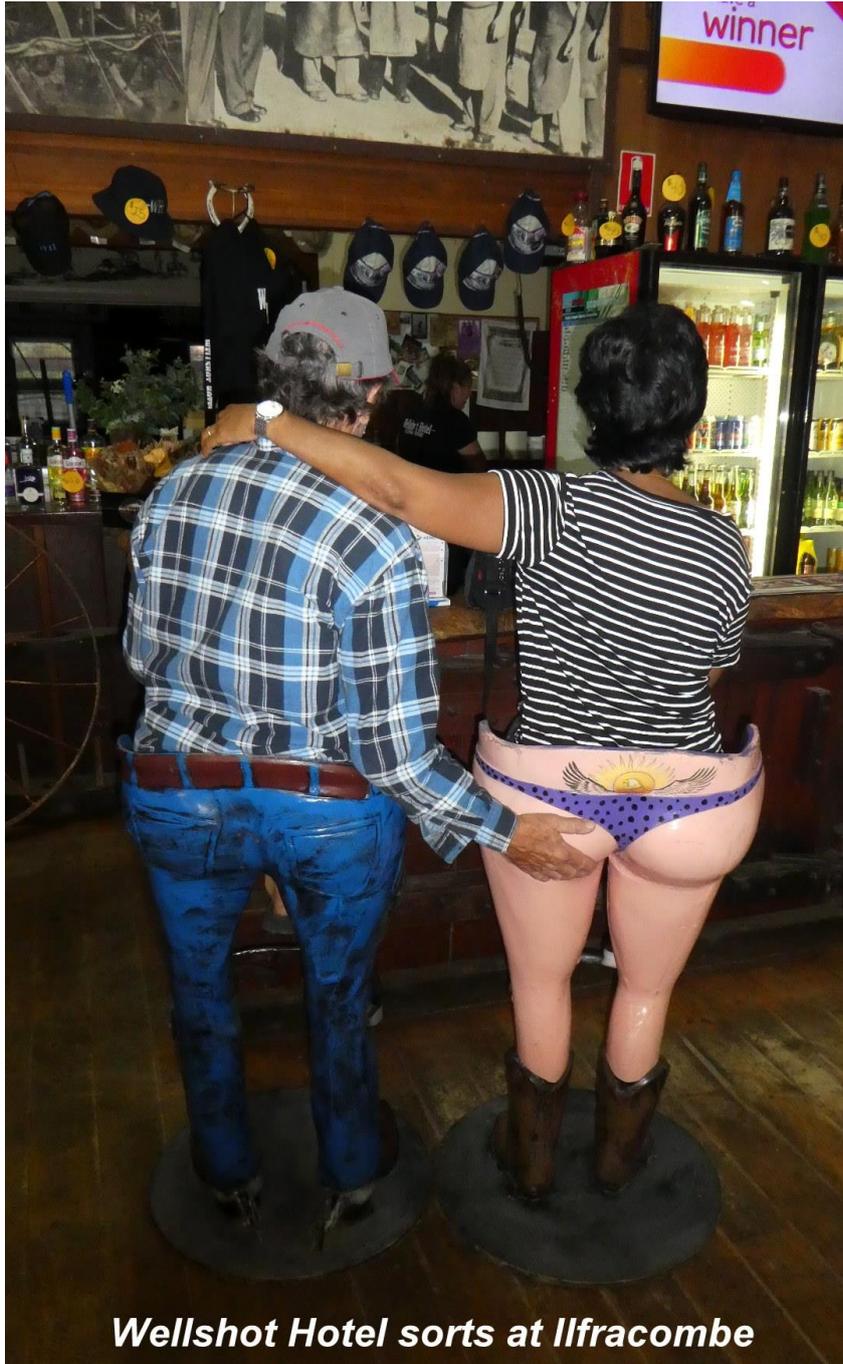
but not 'cactus'... (yet)

Somewhere out bush my 67th birthday catches up with me but I am not overly concerned as long as there's a cake of some description to be had 😊😊😊



Birthday consolidated with a mega 'brownie'

Back in civilization briefly, we make use of the opportunity to down a few celebratory cold ones at the **Wellshot Hotel** in Ilfracombe. Looks like a 'winner' indeed!!!



Wellshot Hotel sorts at Ilfracombe

The other reason why we've come to Ilfracombe is **Longreach** (27km): A must for anyone who is up for a true Outback experience!

The **Stockman's Hall of Fame**, the **Outback Tours** and **Qantas Founders Museum** are all fascinating and entertaining. The museum's 'Airpark' and 'Wing Walk' will thrill any plane enthusiast. Latest event at the **QFM** is the '**Luminescent Longreach**' show, a 20-minute night time 360° laser-light and sound spectacular that brings to life the 100 year story of Qantas in 3-D animation projected onto the resident Boeing 747 used as a canvas. The story starts with the founding days of our national airline right through to the present and tells about its impact on all Australians.



↕
**Jumbo – 'Queen of the Air':
Inside the Boeing 747 turbine**

Museum Airpark at Longreach



The **Qantas Founders Museum** now sports a massive brand-new roof structure which comes into view within five kilometres on Longreach approach from the east. An impressive skyline for an outback town to say the least!



(All illuminated 747 photos courtesy of Qantas Founders Museum)



100 years of Qantas history told in 3-D laser light show

Qantas Founders Museum: Luminescent Light & Sound experience



Photography during the show is strictly off limits for obvious reasons



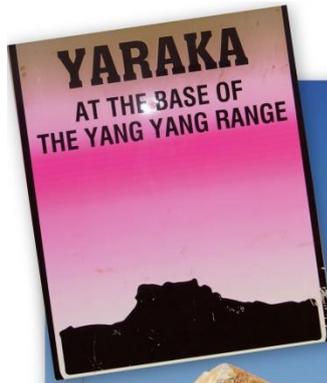
DC3 at the Airpark



Qantas Founders Museum at Longreach/QLD



Yaraka in remote southwest QLD is one of those tiny off-the-beaten-track places we thought we must visit: We heard they have some special feathered inhabitants there entertaining travellers who often venture from afar.



Hometown of naughty emus 'Kevin' and 'Carol'



Chain: No entry for emus!

On arrival, the said birds are nowhere to be seen. We join publican 'Chris' on a sunset tour up Mt Slowcombe, complimentary for guests who stay or camp at the hotel. Chris is a delight; he tells stories about outback life and challenges faced: We learn feral dogs are a massive problem here, too, as just about everywhere in country Australia. One Farmer, *Harry*, faced the choice of 'walking off the land within five years' or 'biting the bullet' and spending close to a 700 thousand dollars on a dog-detering fence. A barrier that cannot be dug under; including electrified grids where roads enter and sensor-activated sirens and LED strobes at gateways (\$800 a piece). Prior to the fence *Harry* would lose 90 percent of his lambs annually to dogs – he now saves 85% of the newborns and reckons it will be close to 100 percent when the few remaining ferals have been shot out.



Electrified grid to keep feral dogs out



Electrified grid

Feral dog deterrent
Movement Sensor
Siren and LED flashes



Farmer 'Harry' delivers salt-lick to his flock - Katherine lends a helping hand

View from Mt Slowcombe over Yaraka



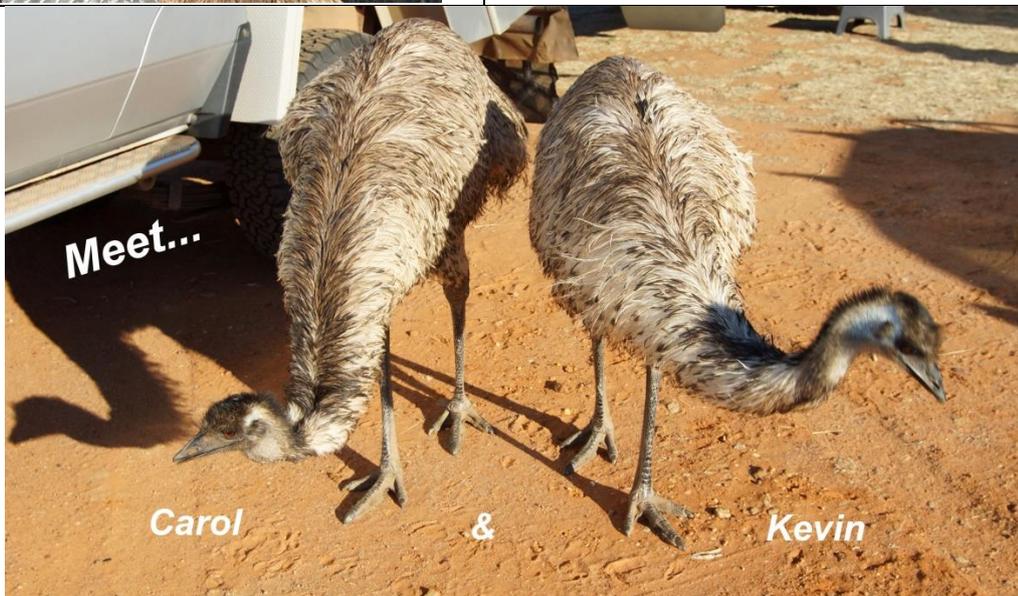
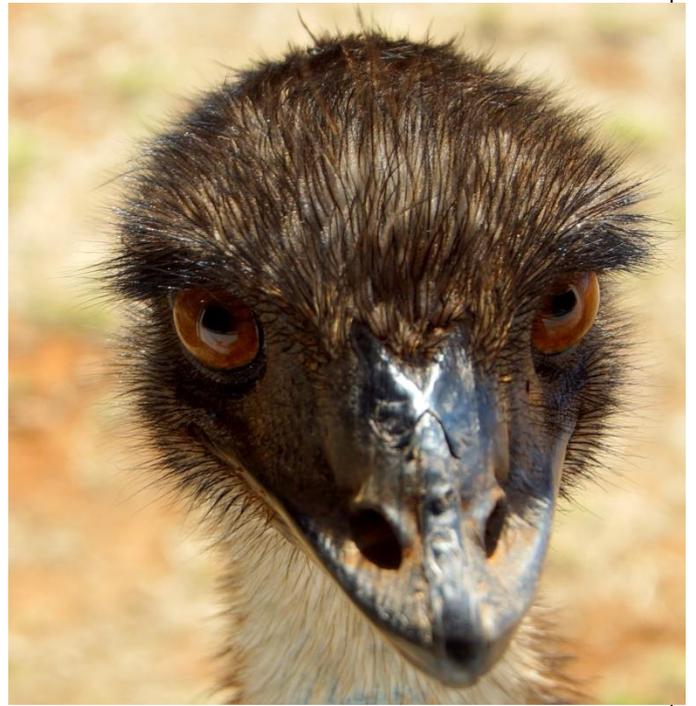
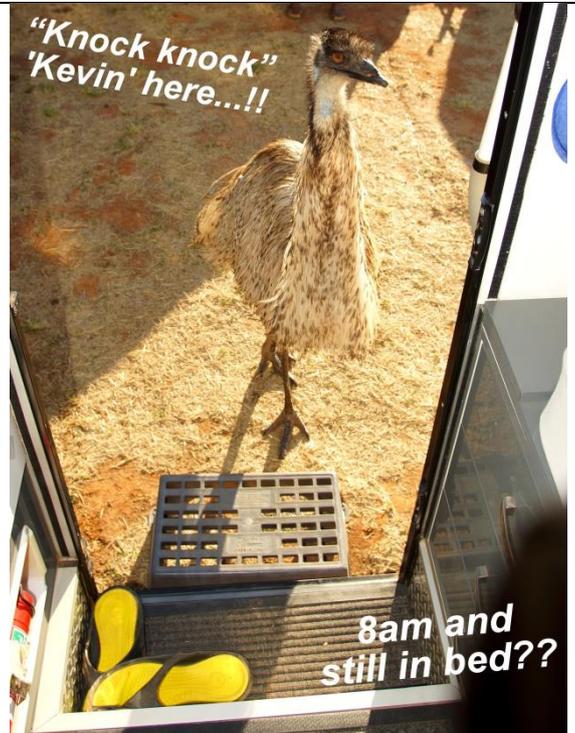
Kill of the day

Man cannot survive on gourmet food alone!



Opportunity 'Yaraka Hotel'

Then the next morning:



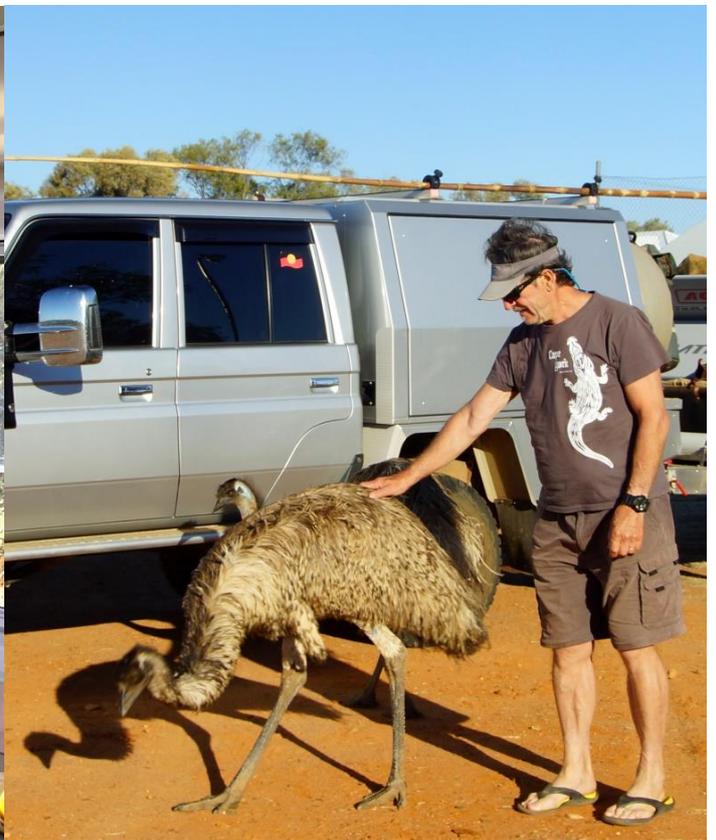
The suspects above have been making a nuisance of themselves!
Sticking beaks into van windows and apparently stealing bread out of toasters.
They also have developed a liking for shiny objects like car keys which they can make disappear.
In short, they cannot be trusted and best advice is not to tempt them by leaving valuables lying around.
I personally witness one case of brazen banana-grab (my prized breakfast piece of fruit!), snatched out of Katherine's hand in a flash when 'Kevin', incredibly, finds a sudden extra three inches of neck-stretch as he reaches into the kitchen window where unsuspecting Katherine clutches a banana.
The window sill is 1.8m above ground!!!

(I figure there is no point trying to wrestle a banana from a determined emu!)

Well... the cops are called, guilty birds summoned and interrogated. No charges were laid but ensuing reprimand includes ban from entering the pub with immediate effect.







The 'Centre of Queensland' does not elude us at Muttaborra:



Home of the Muttaborrasaurus and other prehistoric creatures:



Camp at **Dunblane Station** 8km west of Barcaldine: **Coolibah Strip Paddock**



A great variety of birds inhabit this arid zone oasis



Brolga complaining loudly about me trespassing through his territory!

Brown Falcon being harassed by two Peewees





Crested Pigeon

Dinner is served



Moving on to our next stop...



Louisa Waterhole



Louisa Waterhole near Yaraka

(Plenty of Yellowbelly here!)

We have the biggest haul of shrimp at Louisa which must sustain a healthy fish population: After two days' angling we break camp – enough tucker caught for multiple meals!



Freshwater shrimp are excellent bait!



Katherine's first Yellowbelly





Sleepy Cod - an exquisite table fish!



Full moon at Louisa Waterhole



Pancakes for brekkie

Silly me rips his foot open on a sharp wood stump that sticks half an inch out of the ground:



Station Owner *Harry* welcomes us to stay on his 100000acre (40470 hectare) cattle & sheep property. He wants to find out if we like it as he endeavours to possibly open his land to traveling nomads in the future. Many other stations have done so around Australia. Station stays offer wonderful insights into local life for us outsiders while providing some extra income stream during the peak travel season for farmers who are frequently doing it tough on the land.



We meet his son *Don* and wife *Sue* – they are delightful



Needless to say, we absolutely adore our three days out here. One never gets enough of views like these stretching from horizon to horizon under that magnificent Outback sky!

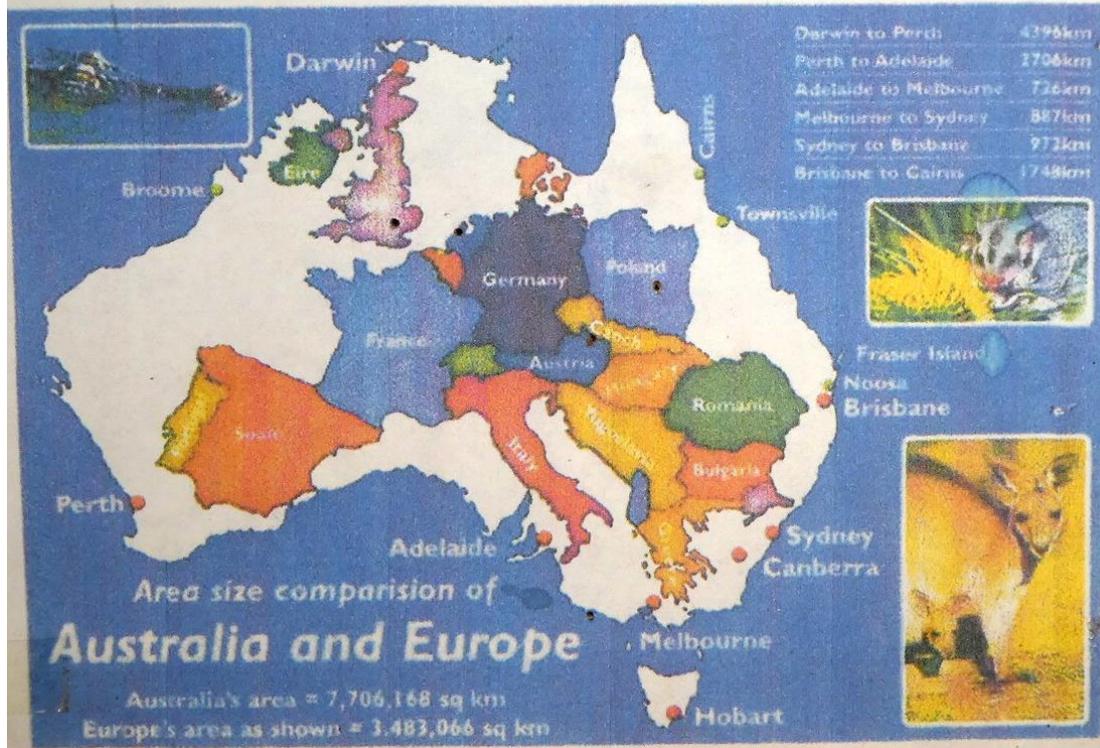
We suggest positioning a few bath tubs on this lookout that could be filled from the hot running bore below to amplify the experience. We will return to find out...!





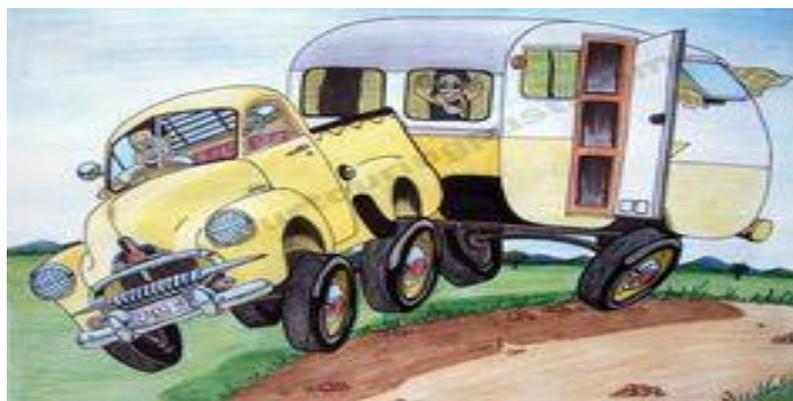
Ever wondered...???

This gives you a good idea of how big Australia actually is!



Where nomadic tribesmen roam...!

Greetings from Chris and Katherine



More soon...