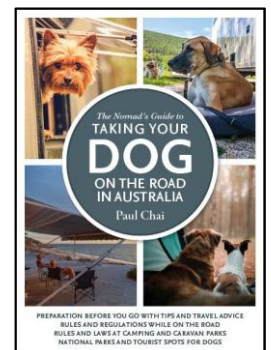
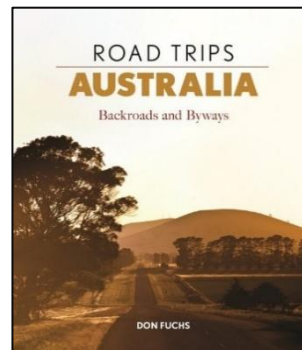
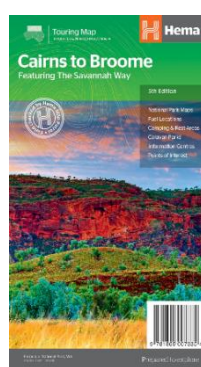
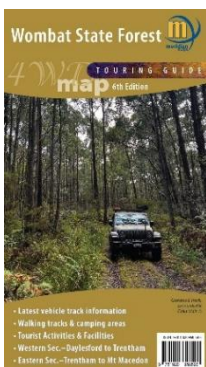


The Meridian Line - Sunday 1.03.2026

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page." — Saint Augustine



Focus on Five

Wombat State Forest Map 6th Edition – from \$15.95

This popular double-sided 1:50,000 scale map covers the entire Wombat State Forest, extending from Daylesford through to Woodend and the Macedon Ranges. Designed with four-wheel drivers in mind, it highlights the region's key attractions, including wineries, historic mines, mineral spas and picnic areas. The map also features the Great Dividing Trail and the Wombat Forest Drive. An excellent touring companion for four-wheel drivers, holidaymakers, bushwalkers and day-trippers, the latest edition has been updated to include pet-friendly campgrounds, accommodation options, local produce outlets, petrol stations, waterfalls and additional visitor information.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/wombat-state-forest-4wd-map/>

Googs Track 5th Edition – \$11.95

This Westprint map covers the full length of Googs Track, from Ceduna to Tarcoola, looping through Kingoonya and Wurrulla. Located in South Australia, Googs Track stretches for approximately 150 kilometres from Ceduna to the Tarcoola Road. Often described as a miniature blend of the Canning Stock

Route and the Simpson Desert, the track showcases a variety of landscapes, including rolling sand dunes, rocky outcrops, salt lakes and mulga scrub. Unlike those far more remote desert routes, Googs Track is easily accessed from a major regional centre, making it ideal for a rewarding two- or three-day four-wheel driving adventure. This newly released fifth edition has been comprehensively updated, providing expanded information on the track and surrounding region to help ensure a safe and enjoyable journey. It is now printed on waterproof and tear-resistant stock for added durability in rugged conditions.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/googs-track/>

Cairns to Broome Featuring the Savannah Way – from \$15.95

This comprehensive touring map covers the iconic Savannah Way between Cairns and Broome at a scale of 1:2,200,000. It clearly identifies 24-hour fuel outlets, outback fuel supplies and LPG, as well as caravan parks, camping areas and designated rest stops along the route. Major national parks are highlighted, with detailed inset maps of Judbarra/Gregory National Park, Purnululu National Park, Kakadu National Park and Boodjamulla National Park. The map also includes distance charts, contact details for accredited visitor information centres and useful summaries of facilities available within national parks, making it a practical and reliable companion for planning and travelling this legendary outback journey.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/cairns-to-broome-touring-map/>

Road Trips Australia - \$44.95

Australia is perfectly suited to adventurous road trips. An immense network of highways, unsealed tracks and back roads stretches across the vast landscape, linking remarkable national parks with character-filled country towns. From sweeping coastlines and dense forests to the wide, open reaches of the outback, much of the continent is accessible to those prepared to explore. All it takes is a reliable SUV or four-wheel drive, camping equipment, sound navigation skills, a measure of common sense — and, of course, time. Yet adventure does not always require heading into the most remote corners of the country. Many of the journeys featured in this book unfold in more settled and accessible regions, proving that discovery can be found closer to home. Often, the unexpected lies just beyond the next bend. Wherever the road leads, few experiences rival the freedom of travelling beyond the main highways. An adventurous journey along lesser-known roads offers the perfect antidote to the pace of city living and the routines of suburban life.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/road-trips-australia/>

The Nomad's Guide to Taking Your Dog on the Road in Australia – \$29.99

A comprehensive guide to travelling around Australia with your dog, covering everything you need to know before you set off. Exploring with a dog adds an extra layer of planning to every stop. It's not just about where to eat or what to see but also understanding where your dog is welcome — from dog-friendly attractions and beaches to off-leash parks, cafés and bars. This book helps you navigate your journey with confidence, whether you are planning ahead or already on the road. It is packed with practical advice from experienced travellers, along with curated lists of places to visit and dog-friendly camping grounds, caravan parks and hotels where your four-legged companion can stay by your side. You'll also find clear guidance on the rules and regulations that apply when travelling with a pet, along with helpful insights on how to work within them. With the right preparation, your holiday can be just as enjoyable and rewarding with your dog sharing the adventure.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/nomads-dog-guide-australia/>

Meridian Musings

On February 15, we once again took part in the Victorian 4WD Show at Lardner Park — and this year, the sunshine was firmly on our side. The beautiful weather helped draw a fantastic crowd, making it a great day for both exhibitors and visitors alike.

This is the third year that we have been associated with the show, it was wonderful to welcome back familiar faces to our stand, along with newsletter readers who stopped by to say hello. Each year we've worked to make our site more visible and inviting, and this time we stepped it up with a new branded gazebo and an expanded product range — ensuring we could offer visitors our best display yet.

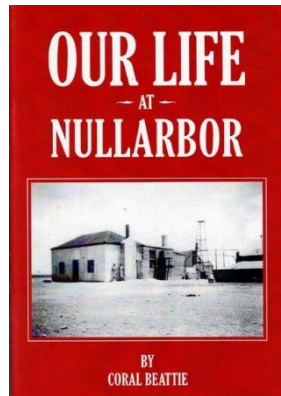
We enjoyed plenty of conversations with travellers keen to choose the right maps and guidebooks to make their journeys smooth and memorable. Judging by the conversations we had, the Victorian High Country, Western Australia and Cape York are the “go to” locations. Planning a big trip? We're always happy to share our expertise and recommend the best maps and books to help you get the most out of your next adventure.



What's New to the Website

Our Life at Nullarbor - \$25.00

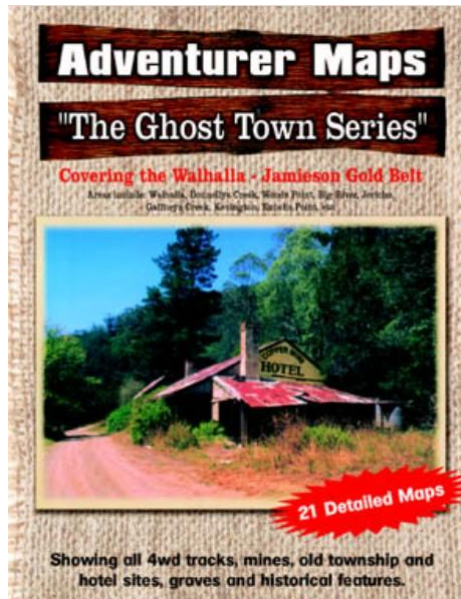
Our Life at Nullarbor is the fascinating autobiography of Coral Beattie and her late husband, Elwyn “Scoobe” Beattie, recounting their family’s years at Nullarbor Station between 1947 and 1960. Set against the vast backdrop of the Nullarbor Plain, this self-published memoir offers an honest and vivid portrayal of life on a remote pastoral property. The Beatties reflect on the many responsibilities involved in running the station, from maintaining stock and infrastructure to managing the daily demands of an isolated outback existence. Coral shares her personal perspective on station life — the challenges, the resilience required and the strong sense of community — as well as her later role as Post Mistress at Fowlers Bay Post Office. Rich in firsthand detail, this engaging account provides valuable insight into the realities of living and working in one of Australia’s most remote regions, capturing both the hardships and the rewards of life on the land.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/our-life-nullarbor/>

Adventurer Map – The Ghost Town Series - \$60.00

Rudi Paoletti's Adventurer Maps for the Victorian High Country between Walhalla and Jamieson are now available in one easy to handle A3 Spiral Bound Booklet, that brings together all 21 maps of the Walhalla to Jamieson Gold Belt. With a stain and water proof cover, smudge resistant and writable pages, it's built for durability and practical use on the move. Meticulously field surveyed and extensively researched, these maps provide accurate navigation and detailed information on the area. Conventional symbols make the maps intuitive to read, while the large scale shows tracks, mines, boundaries, and elevation points along routes and peaks. Every track is mapped, including overgrown paths, and creeks, clearings, and disused quarries are marked to aid navigation and orientation. Historical sites such as 1800s hotels, townships, and mines are highlighted, appealing to historians, gold seekers, and adventurers alike. Grid coordinates, datum references, and magnetic variation are included for GPS and orienteering accuracy. All information is up to date, including seasonal track closures, private or leased properties, government regulations, and notes on challenging conditions. Adventurer Maps offer a unique combination of detail, reliability, and practicality, making them an essential companion for exploring the Walhalla to Jamieson Gold Belt.

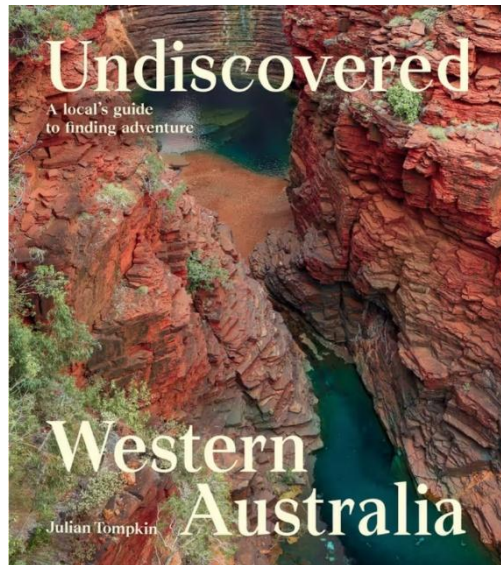


<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/ghost-town-series-maps/>

Undiscovered Western Australia - \$45.00

Undiscovered Western Australia uncovers towns and attractions brimming with character and wonder.

This guide explores Western Australia's hidden treasures, from desert adventures and unique accommodations to Indigenous-led tours. Food lovers will find vibrant wine regions, exceptional culinary experiences, and fresh seafood, while galleries and museums showcase First Nations artists and cultural heritage. The state's natural beauty is unforgettable, with secret beaches, diverse wildlife, stunning islands, and scenic driving routes. Whether you're taking a dip in the Lake Argyle Infinity Pools or snapping a selfie with a quokka, Western Australia offers something for every traveller. Featuring striking photography and comprehensive entries, this guide will inspire your next journey to one of Australia's most captivating destinations.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/undiscovered-western-australia/>

Seasonal Updates

Please be aware that road and park closures are constantly changing and it is always best to check for changes before you set out.

For more regular updates on closures, please check our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MeridianWestprintMaps> as we try to include warnings and advice as we become aware of them.

The latest Desert Parks Bulletin has been uploaded to our website. For this and other Desert Pass updates, please go to <https://meridianmaps.com.au/deserts-pass-update/>

The Department of Infrastructure and transport in South Australia have a website that details their outback unsealed roads grading program which advises on the repairing and reconstruction of unsealed roads in the Outback that are affected by traffic and weather events. To access this information, please visit their website:

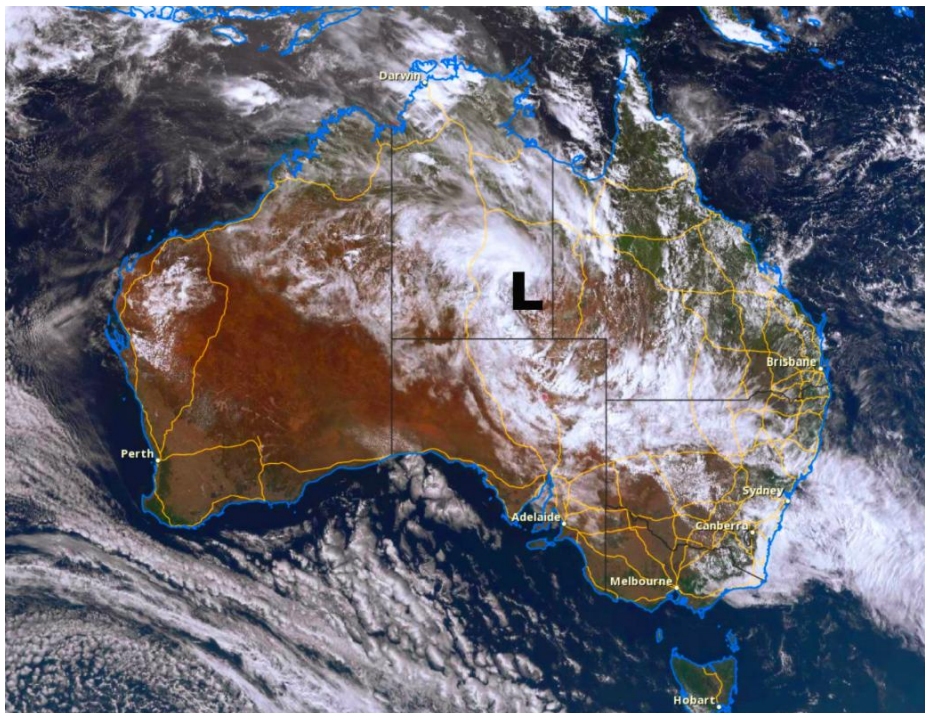
<https://www.dit.sa.gov.au/infrastructure/projects/statewide-road-improvement-and-renewal-works/outback-unsealed-roads-grading-program>.

Due to the heavy rainfall in northern South Australia most road in northern South Australia are closed. Please check <https://dit.sa.gov.au/outbackroads> for current conditions. This includes the Birdsville Track, Strzelecki Track, Oodnadatta Track and tracks around the Flinders Ranges.

North of the Gawler Ranges NP Hiltaba Road, Nonning Road and other roads are also closed.

The rain event has also affected much of South West Queensland and outback NSW. Most roads are closed or subject to flooding. Check <https://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/> and <https://www.livetraffic.com/> before travelling in these areas.

Below is a current weather chart showing the tropical low over the Simpson desert in Central Australia. The system is drawing in vast amounts of moisture from the Indian Ocean, Timor Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria and Coral Sea. Heavy rain and widespread flooding is expected now across the South East NT, South West QLD, North East SA and far Western NSW. Huge volumes of water will flow into inland lakes but there are increasing signs that some of it will also spread into the Murray Darling catchment.



Fires and Flooding in the Victorian Otway Ranges has caused significant damage to roads and infrastructure. The following roads and tracks are still closed:

Wye Rd, Wye Track, Curtis Track, Godfrey Track and Jamieson Track.

Due to other fires over January and February a number of parks are also closed until further notice:

- Heathcote-Graytown National Park
- Mount Alexander Regional Park
- Wyperfeld National Park

Further details of other Change of Conditions can be seen on the Parks Victoria website: <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/coc-listing>

In Western Australia, the Gibb River Road is currently closed due to flooding between Leonard River and Mt Barnett.

What's On

6 - 8 March – Brighter Days Festival in Victoria. Equal parts music festival, family fun and charity fundraiser, it mixes live entertainment, car and bike shows, silent discos, kids' zones and scenic rides around town — all in support of children's charities.

<https://www.brighterdays.org.au/>

6 – 8 March – Harvey Harvest Festival in Western Australia. Showcases the rich multicultural heritage and agricultural abundance of the Harvey Region, bringing locals and visitors together in a tribute to the area's history, diversity, and produce. The event features the Western Australian Grape Stomping Championships.

<https://harveyregion.com.au/harvey-harvest-festival-2026/>

7 March – Jerilderie Fun Fair in NSW. Festival serves up live music, rides, jumping castles, market stalls, food vans and creative activities for all ages — plus quirky highlights like mechanical bull riding and an outdoor cinema under the stars.

<https://www.murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au/Whats-on/Repeating-events/Jerilderie-Fun-Fair>

7 – 9 March Steamfest Tasmania. A celebration of the steam age, vintage machinery, railways, the rural way of life in north-west Tasmania and the old way of doing things.

<https://www.steamfesttasmania.org.au/>

14 – 15 March – Darling Downs Heavy Horse Festival in Queensland. A celebration of the gentle giants that helped build Australia. pays homage to their role building this great nation and but also showcases our wonderful region. Includes heritage displays, riding events, trade and food sites.

<https://heavyhorsefestival.com.au/>

15 March – Dover Seafest in Tasmania. Ultimate celebration of the sea's bounty and community spirit, designed for the entire family. Whether you're a

seafood enthusiast, a music lover, a parent seeking a fun day out, this festival has something for everyone.

<https://www.discovertasmania.com.au/things-to-do/festivals-and-events/doverseafest/>

15 March – Tasmanian Heirloom Festival. A new festival that puts the spotlight on heirloom vegetables and fruits, grown with care and bursting with flavour. Held in the heart of the Meander Valley, this community-focused festival showcases the beauty, diversity, and quality of local premium produce, bringing together growers, food lovers, families, and makers from across Tasmania.

[Tasmanian Heirloom Festival | Festival and event | Discover Tasmania](#)

20 March - Katanning Harmony Festival in Western Australia. An array of cultural dances, enchanting music, a dedicated kids' zone, youth activities, market stalls, and an international food village that promises a taste sensation from around the globe

<https://www.katanning.wa.gov.au/harmony-festival.aspx>

26 – 29 March – FabAlice – in Darwin. A unique showcase of Drag, Family and Cabaret events, celebrating the inclusivity and diversity of the Red Centre.

<https://fabalice.com/>

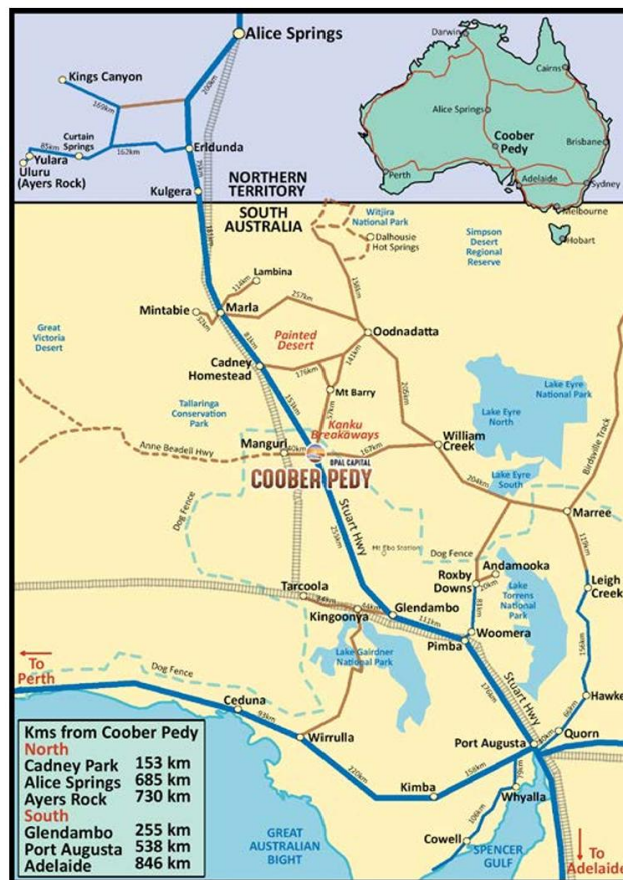
Do you have a story?

If you've got a trip or tips to share, we'd love to hear from you - rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au.

Coober Pedy: The Town That Lives Underground

In the heart of the South Australian Outback, where the red desert stretches endlessly under a blazing sun, lies a town unlike any other — Coober Pedy. Known as the “opal capital of the world,” it is both a historical treasure trove and a modern testament to human ingenuity and resilience. Its landscape, often described as moon-like, is dotted with shafts and mullock heaps from opal mining. The township offers the facilities expected of a large country town, along with numerous opal shops, and many buildings are partially or completely underground. Coober Pedy is situated on the edge of the Stuart Range in South Australia, 838 kilometres by road north of Adelaide.

South Australian Outback



In February 1915, 14-year-old Willie Hutchinson discovered opal in the Stuart Range while accompanying a group of prospectors searching for gold. His father, James Hutchinson, led the expedition for the New Colorado Prospecting Syndicate, investigating quartz reefs near Lake Phillipson. Earlier explorations in 1895 had been largely unsuccessful due to the lack of water. The expedition included James Hutchinson, P.J. Winch from Melbourne, Mel McKenzie from Port Augusta, and Willie Hutchinson. The discovery was later documented in *The Adelaide Chronicle* on April 7, 1938, and the *Naracoorte Herald* on May 31, 1938.

The town grew as miners from across Australia and overseas were drawn by the “fire of the desert” — opals that gleam with vibrant colours seemingly trapped within stone. By the 1920s, Coober Pedy had transformed from a dusty outback outpost into a bustling mining town. Life was harsh and the sun merciless, yet the potential wealth underground kept miners digging. Originally known as the Stuart Range Opal Field, named after John McDouall Stuart who explored the area in 1858, the town needed a new name to establish a post office in 1920. The miners chose Coober Pedy, an Aboriginal term meaning “white man in a hole.”

In 1917, the completion of the Trans Continental Railway brought construction workers to the opal fields, followed by soldiers returning from the First World War. Water and provisions had to be carted long distances under trying conditions. During the Great Depression, opal prices plummeted and production nearly ceased. However, in 1946, Aboriginal woman Tottie Bryant made a sensational find at the Eight Mile Field, triggering a new opal rush. The 1960s saw rapid expansion of the mining industry as many European migrants arrived seeking fortune, transforming Coober Pedy into a modern mining town.



Australia produces 95% of the world's commercial opal, with the largest share still coming from the 70 opal fields around Coober Pedy. Opal is a precious stone composed of amorphous silica and water. Around 85% of opal is potch (colourless opal) with little value, while roughly 10% displays the vivid colours that make precious opal highly prized worldwide. Coober Pedy still holds vast reserves, and mining continues to be a vibrant industry. These opals form when silica-rich water penetrates cracks and voids in the Earth's crust, creating a microstructure that diffracts light into a stunning spectrum of colours. The region produces several opal types, including white, crystal, light, and milky opals, each with unique visual and value characteristics. While some areas have been heavily mined, new fields are discovered regularly, keeping the excitement alive.



Mining is still central to Coober Pedy's identity. The town has thousands of active opal claims. Today, miners with a permit can claim either 50 × 50 m or 50 × 100 m areas. Early mining involved digging a shaft and tunnelling along levels using picks and shovels, with hand tools employed once opal traces were found. Since the 1970s, mechanised drills have been used to excavate shafts about one metre in diameter and up to 28–30 m deep. Modern mining uses tunnelling machines with revolving cutting heads and small underground loaders called bidders, while bulldozers remove overburden. Spotters follow behind, monitoring for opal seams, which are then worked with hand-picks. Mullock from shafts was originally lifted by hand windlass, later by power winches or automatic bucket tippers.



Noodling is the process of searching through heaps of discarded mullock for pieces of opal missed by the miners. Many locals make a living from this method, and it is also very popular with tourists. Noodling machines, in which mullock is passed through a darkroom on a conveyor belt beneath ultra-violet lights, are another form of mining.

One of the town's most remarkable features is its adaptation to the extreme climate. Summers can soar above 45 °C (113 °F) with minimal rainfall. To escape the heat, residents began carving homes, churches, and even hotels into soft sandstone hills. Roughly 1,700 people live in Coober Pedy full-time, most working in mining-related jobs. Underground homes, or "dugouts," maintain a constant, comfortable temperature year-round, protecting residents from the harshness of the desert. The concept is believed to have been introduced by soldiers returning from the trenches of France during the First World War.



Approximately 50% of the population now lives underground. Dugout homes are usually excavated into hillsides rather than dug from shafts, and the soil is stable enough for large ceiling spans. Some families link adjoining properties through tunnels, creating mansion-style homes spanning up to 450 m². Underground rooms maintain temperatures between 19 °C and 25 °C day and night, providing relief from both the scorching summer and cold desert nights.



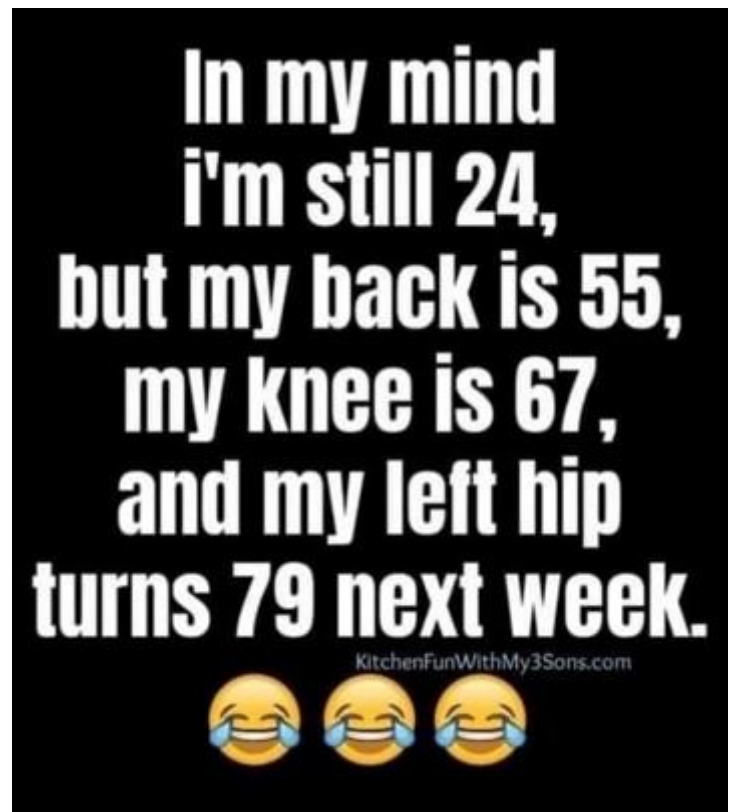
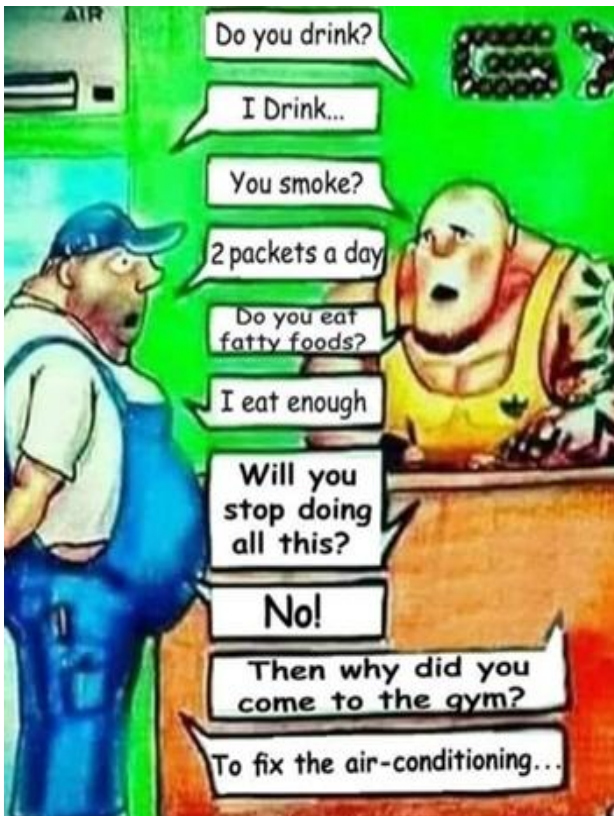
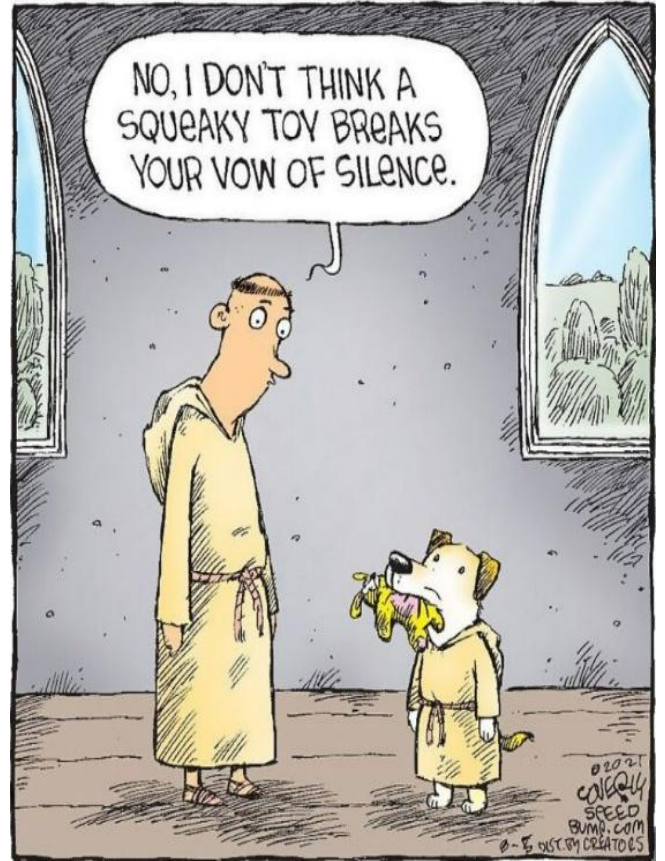
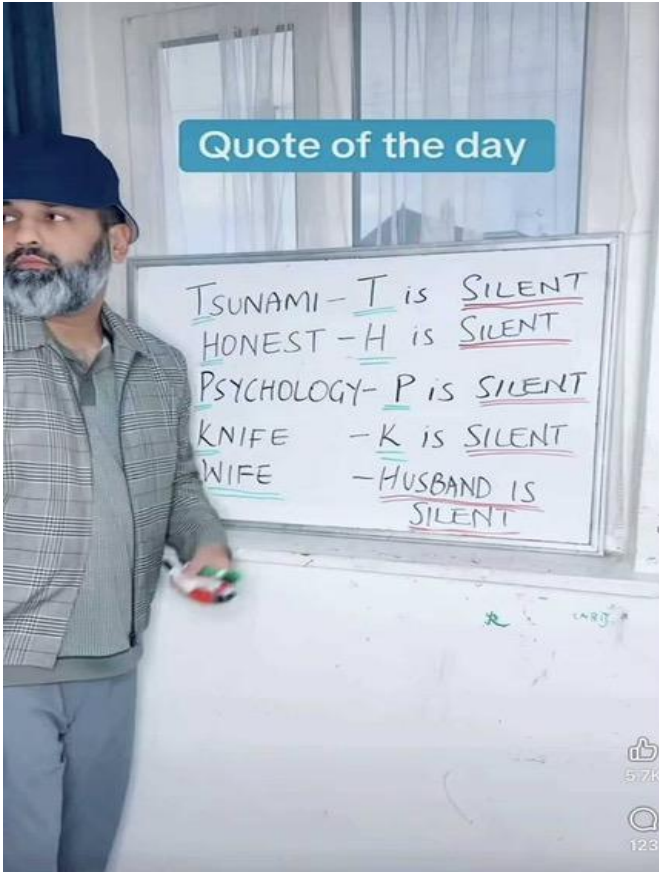
Whether it's the shimmering opals, the unique underground way of life, or the strikingly beautiful desert landscapes, Coober Pedy leaves an indelible mark on all who visit. Here, past and present coexist beneath the surface, inviting visitors to experience the extraordinary in the heart of the Australian Outback



Aerial view of Coober Pedy

Meridian Mirth

To share your jokes, please send them to rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au. Many thanks to Paul, Vince and Simon for the contributions!



An easy mistake to make



Man disappointed after ordering
34 year old escort online

BENEFITS OF A GOOD VOCABULARY!

I RECENTLY CALLED AN OLD ENGINEERING BUDDY OF MINE AND ASKED WHAT HE WAS WORKING ON THESE DAYS.

HE REPLIED THAT HE WAS WORKING ON "AQUA-THERMAL TREATMENT OF CERAMICS, ALUMINUM AND STEEL UNDER A CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENT."

I WAS IMPRESSED UNTIL, UPON FURTHER INQUIRY, I LEARNED THAT HE WAS WASHING DISHES WITH HOT WATER UNDER HIS WIFE'S SUPERVISION.

I have my very own built in alarm clock. It's called a Bladder and it does not have a snooze button.



A man was blissfully driving along the highway, when he saw the Easter Bunny hopping across the middle of the road. He swerved to avoid hitting the Bunny, but unfortunately the rabbit jumped in front of his car and was hit. The basket of eggs went flying all over the place. The driver, being a sensitive man as well as an animal lover, pulled over to the side of the road, and got out to see what had become of the Bunny carrying the basket. Much to his dismay, the colourful Bunny was dead. The driver felt guilty and began to cry. A

woman driving down the same highway saw the man crying on the side of the road and pulled over. She stepped out of her car and asked the man what was wrong.

"I feel terrible," he explained, "I accidentally hit the Easter Bunny and killed it. There may not be an Easter because of me. What should I do?"

The woman told the man not to worry. She knew exactly what to do. She went to her car trunk and pulled out a spray can. She walked over to the limp, dead Bunny, and sprayed the entire contents of the can onto the little furry animal. Miraculously the Easter Bunny came to back life, jumped up, picked up the spilled eggs and candy, waved its paw at the two humans and hopped on down the road. 50 yards away the Easter Bunny stopped, turned around, waved and hopped on down the road another 50 yards, turned, waved, hopped another 50 yards and waved again!

The man was astonished.

He said to the woman, "What in heaven's name is in your spray can? What was it that you sprayed on the Easter Bunny?"

The woman turned the can around so that the man could read the label. It said: "Hair spray. Restores life to dead hair. Adds permanent wave.

The Fine Print

At The Meridian Line

Wherever possible we try to acknowledge the source of all information contained in this newsletter. We offer no guarantees for accuracy, but we do our best.

Get the Word Out

Feel free to forward this newsletter to any family or friends who you feel might enjoy a good read. If they would like to receive this newsletter on a regular basis they can register at: <https://meridianmaps.com.au/newsletter/>

Using information from this newsletter

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