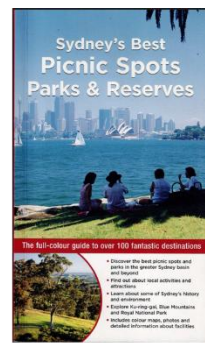
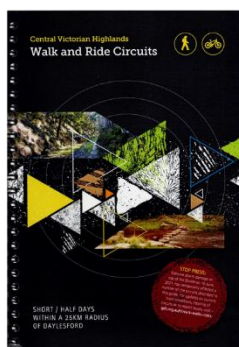
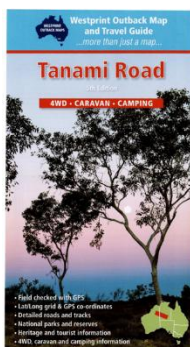


## The Meridian Line - Sunday 16.08.2026

**“Extraordinary things are always hiding in places people never think to look.” — Jodi Picoult**



### Focus on Five

#### ***Tanami Road – from \$15.95***

The Tanami Track is one of Australia's great remote routes, providing the most direct access from Alice Springs to the Kimberley. Crossing one of the country's least populated regions, the track takes travellers through vast, ever-changing desert landscapes and offers an unforgettable glimpse into the scale and beauty of the Australian outback. The track has a fascinating history, shaped by gold rushes, exploration and the stock routes that once required enormous effort to cross the Tanami. While the road continues to be improved, it remains a remote and challenging journey where careful preparation is essential. The Westprint Map combines detailed mapping with plenty of information about the region, including its history, explorers, points of interest, flora and fauna, and photographs of significant landmarks. Clear mapping includes road distances, rest areas, caravan parks and fuel outlets, while a latitude/longitude grid and GPS coordinates provide valuable assistance when navigating this remote part of Australia. Whether you're planning a Tanami adventure or simply fascinated by Australia's remote landscapes, this map is an invaluable companion for exploring one of the country's most extraordinary outback routes.

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

### ***Central Victorian Highlands Walk and Ride Circuits – \$25.00***

Discover the best of the Wombat State Forest and Upper Loddon State Forest with this handy guide to 30 walks and bike rides around Daylesford. Each route includes a clear map, elevation information and detailed description to help you plan your adventure. The spiral-bound format makes the guide easy to use while you're out exploring, whether you're walking the forest trails or discovering the region by bike.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/central-highlands-walk-and-ride/>

### ***Heritage Wine Map of the McLaren Vale – \$30.00***

With its classic heritage-style design, this beautiful map of the McLaren Vale Wine Region celebrates one of South Australia's best-known wine regions. It highlights the vineyard areas, cellar doors and grape varieties the region is renowned for, with roads, waterways and contours adding to its vintage map appeal. Printed on quality stock, this is a great addition to the home, holiday house, wine cellar or office — and would make a lovely gift for anyone who appreciates maps and the McLaren Vale region. The map is A3 size (297mm x 420mm) and is supplied in a rigid postal tube for protection.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/heritage-wine-map-of-the-mclaren-vale/>

### ***Sydney's Best Picnic Spots, Parks and Reserves – On sale \$22.00***

Discover the perfect places around Sydney for a family day out, a picnic or a relaxing afternoon in the sunshine. This handy guide features 110 of Sydney's best picnic spots, parks and reserves, along with information on local attractions, a dedicated section covering the spectacular Blue Mountains and detailed maps of the larger parks. Coverage stretches from Palm Beach and Pittwater in the north to Royal National Park in the south and Blackheath in the west, including highlights such as Blue Mountains National Park, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and Middle Head.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/sydneys-picnic-spots/>

### ***Australia Indigenous Journeys - \$15.95***

For more than 65,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples — Australia's Traditional Owners — have cared for Country, shared knowledge and travelled across the continent along ancient trade routes, cultural pathways and songlines. The Indigenous Journeys Map honours these enduring connections with Country through a detailed and comprehensive representation of Indigenous Australia. Discover the routes shaped by trade, ceremony, kinship and seasonal patterns, many following waterholes,

gathering places and significant cultural sites. The map also highlights Indigenous cultural and art centres, traditional names for significant places, traded goods and the extensive networks of cultural exchange that connected communities across the continent. More than 250 Indigenous language groups are represented, highlighting the incredible diversity and complexity of Indigenous Australia. Created through a collaboration with geologist and explorer James Allen, the map draws on extensive travel across Australia between 2020 and 2024, together with insights from Traditional Owners and the cartographic expertise of Gunditjmara man Craig Molyneux. We also acknowledge Shelley Thomas for coordinating the many stakeholders involved in the project. A fascinating and educational map, the Indigenous Journeys Map provides a unique opportunity to learn more about Australia's ancient cultural connections and the enduring relationship between First Nations Peoples and Country. We acknowledge all Traditional Owners and Elders, past and present, and is committed to best practices in protecting Indigenous cultural and intellectual property.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/australia-indigenous-journeys/>

## Meridian Musings

We're absolutely racing through the year, and somehow, it's already the end of August, with Father's Day just around the corner!

With that in mind, we've put together a selection of map packs that we think are perfect for Dad. There's something to suit all sorts of interests — whether he's a keen 4WDer, bushwalker, gold prospector, cyclist, or simply enjoys jumping in the car and heading out on the open road.

A map (or a Map & Book Pack!) makes a great gift for the adventurous Dad who is always planning the next trip. And, of course, there's nothing quite like having a good map in hand when it's time to get out there and explore!

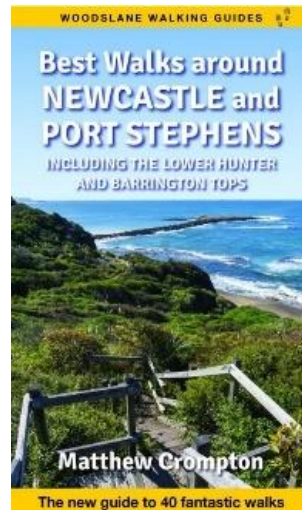
<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product-category/fathers-day-specials/>

## What's New to the Website

### ***Best Walks around Newcastle and Port Stephens - \$32.99.***

Discover the diverse landscapes around Newcastle and the Hunter region, from spectacular coastal scenery and beautiful beaches to rugged ranges and dramatic hill country. This brand-new addition to Australia's bestselling walking guide series features around 40 walks, along with plenty of suggestions for variations. There's something for everyone, from easy coastal strolls and leisurely walks to more challenging hill climbs and rugged tracks through some of the region's famous national parks. Covering the Lower

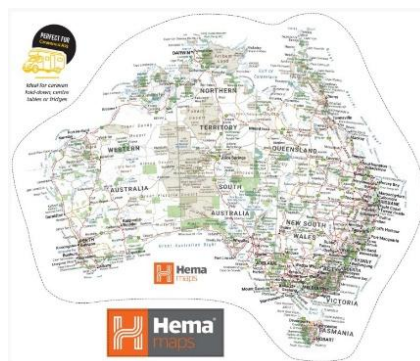
Hunter, north to Port Stephens and west to the Barrington Tops, the guide includes both well-known favourites and lesser-known hidden gems. Detailed walk descriptions and easy-to-follow maps make exploring the region a breeze, while more than 200 full-colour photographs bring the scenery and trails to life. A handy summary table provides key information such as distance, cafés and highlights, making it easy to choose the perfect walk for the day.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/best-walks-newcastle/>

### ***Map of Australia Sticker (small) - \$39.95***

A detailed road and track map of Australia, including many of the country's iconic outback tracks. Printed on heavy-duty plastic, this durable map can be easily applied to any smooth surface, making it perfect for caravans, camp tables, fridges or other outdoor spaces. It's also a fun way to keep track of your adventures — simply mark your travels on the map and see just how much of Australia you've explored! Measuring **450mm x 375mm**, it's compact enough to take anywhere while still providing plenty of detail for planning your next adventure.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/hemas-australia-sticker-map-small/>

## 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/>

Birdsville Inside track, Birdsville Track – Cooper Creek Causeways, Birdsville track – Cooper Creek to Maree, Birdsville Track – Mungaranie to Cooper Creek, Birdsville Track – SA border to Mungaranie – all closed.

Oodnadatta Track – Bopeechee to Marree, Oodnadatta Track – Oodnadatta to William Creek, Oodnadatta Track - William Creek to Bopeechee – currently closed.

Strzelecki Track - Della/Dullingari Rd junction to Moomba, Strzelecki Track - Merty Merty to Mt Hopeless, Strzelecki Track - Moomba to Merty Merty, Strzelecki Track - Mt Hopeless to Talc Mine Rd, Strzelecki Track - Talc Mine Rd to Lyndhurst – all currently closed.  
William Creek Rd - Coober Pedy to William Creek – currently closed.

Munga-Thirri–Simpson Desert National Park is now open with limited access due to recent heavy rains. Access to the park is only possible via SA and the NT. The Queensland Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert National Park is closed.

Malkumba Coongie Lakes National Park and significant parts of Innamincka Regional Reserve are closed until further notice due to a major flooding event.

## What's On

**August 29 – 30: Wentworth Show** in NSW. Celebrating rural life, with horses, sheep and wool displays, shearing and yard-dog competitions, a ute competition, pavilion exhibits and plenty of family entertainment.

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

**September 4 – 5: Birdsville Races** in Queensland. Two day carnival features country racing, highlighted by the Akubra Big Red on Friday and the Birdsville Cup on Saturday. Enjoy Fashions on the Field, live entertainment, official merchandise and trackside hospitality



<https://birdsvilleraces.com/>

**September 5: Wattle Time Festival of Lights** in NSW. Festival will feature dazzling light installations, live entertainment, market stalls, and food vendors serving up a feast of local flavours.

<https://visitwagga.com/calendar/event?productId=6861ce46f9d6656b3d1ee3a3>

**September 5: Burdekin Water Festival** in Queensland. An annual celebration of the abundance of water in the Burdekin region of Queensland. A testament to the community's appreciation for its natural resources and serves as a platform for showcasing local talent, culture, and community spirit.

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

**September 6: Dean Kite Festival** in Victoria. a fun-filled family day celebrating the simple joy of flying kites. With kite-making and plenty of kite-flying fun, the free festival is a great day out for all ages.

<https://www.visithepburnshire.com.au/ATDW/Events/Dean-Kite-Festival-5d6640990af85b1c4e6f6a77>

**September 11 – 12: Laidley Spring Festival** in Queensland. Three days of spring celebrations featuring a colourful street parade, gardening fair, markets, live entertainment, exhibitions and plenty of family activities. Highlights include the popular Show 'n' Shine, Twilight Feast & Fest and, on Sunday, Bee Happy Day at nearby Forest Hill.

<https://www.laidleyspringfestival.com/>

**September 11 – 13: D'Vine Food & Wine Festival** in NSW. The ultimate foodie and wine lover's festival, promising a weekend of flavour filled fun, fuelled by the incredible wineries, restaurants, and activity providers in the heart of the Hunter Valley's wine region.

<https://events.humanitix.com/d-vine-food-and-wine-festival-2026>

**September 11 – 13: Harvey Region Heritage Festival** in NSW. A three-day celebrating local art, culture and food that has shaped the region. Immersive experiences, unique heritage events and family-friendly activities across the region.

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

**September 12 – Blackbutt Avocado Festival** in Queensland. A rustic adventure celebrating all things avocado. Access the freshest avocados and homegrown delights at our market filled with markers, farmers and wares.

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

**September 12: Cunnamulla Fella Roundup** in Queensland. Bull riding, barrel racing and high-adrenaline motocross as competitors showcase their skill, speed and determination. With bigger bulls, heart-pounding action and jaw-dropping stunts, this is an event guaranteed to keep you on the edge of your seat.

<https://cunnamullatourism.com.au/roundup/>

## **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](mailto:rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au).

Another great adventure from Wily Wanderer.

## **OUT WEST – AGAIN**

**MAY 2017**

I'm going away again. Going for another drive. Me and my mate from Sydney. The timing is important too. Over the ranges it's too hot in Summer and too cold in Winter. Next Spring is all booked out so if we're going to go it's got to be this Autumn. And it's late May already. It's a bit of a spur of the moment decision. I ring my mate, Rod, in Sydney and he's up for it, even when I tell him that because the wife's away I'll have to take the dog with us. Taking the little hairy thing is a bit of a gamble because even though she's well behaved (fingers crossed) , there's a lot of places you can't take a dog. It's that simple.



Anyway the decision's made. Rod squirts his red SS up the expressway with his bedroll, picnic set and water containers. I have the camper trailer packed with firewood and beer. What could go wrong?

After getting all the necessities packed in and ready for the road we didn't leave Lansdowne until about 1pm. We didn't want to sit around that afternoon just to get an early start, so by leaving at that time, our plans were already compromised. The trick was to get over the range for the first camp. We're getting a bit old for this camping caper and I preferred not to camp on top of the ranges at this time of year. My estimated four hours to Bundarra would now put us there in the dark, and setting up the first night out in the dark is not a good start. So we headed for the 'van park at Walcha and a warm cabin.

We are taking the Oxley Highway which is not the best way to cross the mountains with its narrow winding road and never-ending 35kph bends. And when we hit Wauchope, at the base of the mountains, there's an abundance of motor cycles in town. Sure enough, the Ulysses Motor Cycle Club is having its annual get-together in Wauchope. There are bikes of all sizes and shapes – and hundreds of them. There's bikes with two wheels at the front and there's bikes with two wheels at the back. Lots of them are towing trailers, custom built to suit the bike, and looking fabulous. Some of these things would have cost as much as a luxury motor car. All the way up the mountains we passed dozens of bikes. And, fair dinkum, there's so many riding on the centre line and leaning into the bends, they were lucky not to have bounced their helmets off my outside mirror.

We learn that the Ulysses Motor Cycle Club meets once a year at different locations all over the country. The venue is decided three years in advance to allow time to organise accommodation etc. Last year, Tasmania, next year Gold Coast. We bumped bikers from as far away as Tasmania and Perth. We get to Walcha and the place is full of them. There's only one cabin left. We'll take it !

Now the dog becomes a problem. We can't leave her in the car, it's too cold, so we'll have to smuggle her into the cabin. If she stays down on the floor in the back like she usually does, no one will know we've got a dog and I'll bring her in after dark. It sounds like a plan. Until the woman who came to make up the cabin bed steps out after she's done and I hear her say "Hullo little doggie"! Dog-face is up at the window smiling and wagging its tail. We didn't keep her secret for long. But the woman obviously didn't tell the boss because in the morning he sprung us and was upset to find that a dog had been in the cabin. He said that the room would have to be fully scrubbed out and fumigated. Wow! Personally I thought that Rod's beer farts would have more impact on the room than the dog. But I wasn't going to argue with a bloke



who's got tattoos popping up out of his collar, and he relieved me of \$20 for the cleaning. I reckon that's a pretty cheap scrub and fumigation job!

So we are happy to leave Walcha's 3 degrees behind and continue our revised plan. We've got all day in front of us and I want to verify a couple of places for the possibility of a future pub crawl. Simply camp spots near pubs that are a comfortable half-day drive distant. I want to go to Guyra and look at the free camp site at the Mother of Ducks Ponds. There's no pub but there's a bowling club, and it's only 150 metres away. This site gets the thumbs up.

Now we're taking the back road to Bundarra, my original first destination, to have a look see. Sure enough, within 200 metres from the pub there's a council run camp site with all amenities and the fees are collected at the pub. All the sites I have selected around the State don't necessarily have shower facilities but they all have flush toilets.

After a beer at the Bundarra Commercial Hotel then out of town to lunch on the roadside (stock route), we're off to Coolatai. We hit town at just the right time for this time of year, about four o'clock. We know the pub is just up around the corner, so we set up camp by the community hall and tennis courts. We're the only ones there and the dog has a free run. With camp organised and the fire set it's just gone dark and we head for the pub. It's only about 200 metres, but as we get to the corner we are bailed up as to where we are going. To the pub of course, where else? We're told to save our legs, the pub's shut. It doesn't open on Mondays any more. Oh well, we'll just have to return to camp and deplete our stock of stubbies.



From Coolatai we make our way north through Inverell. I wanted to have a look at Boomi and we had a midday beer and a look about town, but Boomi didn't seem to tick the boxes for my future pub crawl trip, and we headed north again, crossing into Queensland where the McIntyre River forms the border

between the two States. Due north to Talwood on the Barwon Highway, then west to Nindigully. Now here's a great camp spot, though it's getting a little too well known, and whilst there is plenty of room, there were nineteen vans in residence when we pulled in. Nindigully Hotel is famous for its monster hamburgers. They are big enough to feed four people. We ate at the pub that night ourselves but stayed away from hamburgers.

Comes the morning and there's a woman supposedly walking her half grown kelpie pup, with the leash over her shoulder and her phone in her ear. The playful puppy is frolicking into everyone's camp and making a nuisance of itself, with it's tuned-out owner blissfully ignoring the commotion and camper's curses. I was happy, for once, that my Jack Russel Cross is a cranky little old bitch, when with one word from me and she raised her hackles and told the naughty puppy to go away in very severe dog language!

At this stage we're in Queensland in three days, so why not head for somewhere I've not been before? I've often wondered about the Yowah Opal Fields. Why not? In the last few years we have done an Australian Opal Tour, visiting Lightning Ridge, white Cliffs and Coober Pedy, so why not Yowah and the famous "boulder opals"?

It's a long way west of here so we head out through St George to Cunnamulla, where, unable to find a wild site, we finish up in a van park, but get a spot down in one corner, out of the way. We have our normal cook-up in our little tin fire pot and hit the sack. The morning comes and we fire it up again only to be lambasted by the park boss. Apparently individual fires are not allowed in the van park and he was quite adamant and spoke in a rather loud voice. In fact, I thought he was quite rude. So we took the low road and put out our breakfast fire (not an easy thing to do when there's bacon and eggs on offer), and we refrained from telling him what he could do with his stupid park policy, (our fire pot sits on legs and when we leave a site you wouldn't know we'd been there). So we packed up and took off leaving no more than a tyre print, and intended to have a cook-up somewhere along the road. Of course we never did, and finished up only having two meals that day.

Before leaving town, just to the south, we climbed some sand dunes. An interesting natural formation of dunes only covering an area of a few acres. One can only wonder at how they were formed and how they survived in an area where the countryside is mostly flat.

The next town west on our route is Eulo where the traveller is greeted on a corner in town with a life-size replica of a Diprotodon, the huge wombat-looking thing that roamed the countryside after the dinosaurs got knocked out. This thing could grow to two metres at the shoulder and weigh up to 3000 kg. It was the largest ever marsupial, pigeon toed and with a rear facing pouch. It

was near Eulo that a nearly fully intact skeleton was found and experts were able to replicate the original animal.



Not far out of Eulo we turn north to Yowah. Our westward trip has been on a road called The Adventurer's Way, running from Brisbane almost due west , through Thargominda to the "dig tree" on Cooper Creek where the ill-fated Burke and Wills had perished on their trek across the continent from south to north.

The road to Yowah is made with a single lane of bitumen formed on the crown of the road. To pass on-coming traffic , the trick is to slow down and drop two wheels off into the gravel. Along here I spy a vehicle on-coming towing a large caravan, so not being in a hurry, I slow right down and drop right off so as to allow him and his van to stay on the bitumen crown. But no. He's so courteous he drops off too. Unnecessarily. And as he passes he spits out a rock that looked like half a house brick just before it belted into the centre of the windscreen with the force of a hammer blow. And what a noise. Sure enough a star appeared in the glass – at least it didn't shatter and cave in. There's a job for the O'Briens men when we get back home.

We're 26km out of Yowah when on the right there's a station house near the road, there's an old boring machine set up and a new looking sign saying "caravan and camping area". We pull up and have a look and while we're reading a ute comes out the gate and pulls alongside. We meet Mac. This is the bloke who owns the place. He's about to go and check on the camping grounds because he's on his own today. His wife, Mary, has gone for three days to the Cunnamulla show. Why don't we go and have a look at what he's got to offer? Why not indeed? The Yowah Creek runs through Mac's place (he calls his place Alroy), and this creek flows into the Paroo River. It is the

westernmost river to flow into the Darling system, and then only on rare occasions. Mac has bulldozed a huge area along the creek and off into the bush for camping. The place has only been open to campers since March this year – two months ago – and we spy two vans over near the creek. We find an old farm shed – hayshed type, roof and only one wall – that’s in the process of being transformed into a camp kitchen. And lo and behold! Flush toilets. What’s more, there’s a spa!! Mac has tapped the Great Artesian Basin and his water comes up at 76 degrees and 84 psi. Perfect. There’s a cut-down plastic water tank and water delivery pipes with strategically placed holes. You jump in and turn the cock and Nature does the rest. So here we are in Outback Queensland, surrounded by red dirt and bush, galahs and corellas overhead, and we’re sitting in a hot spa. How good is that?!

We go into Yowah to have a look. Fair dinkum, except for a couple of new buildings and petrol bowzers, it’s like driving into Lightning Ridge forty years ago. The information centre doubles as a museum and library and next door there’s a nicely built bore baths structure, all tiled and with change rooms. There’s a caravan park/ post office that services the one hundred or so locals, but the free camp area had twice as many visitors as the park.

We checked out the fossicking area and really, the ground is so hard. How do they dig holes in this stuff? You’d be flat out driving a tent peg. But like all opal areas, there’s holes everywhere. We hear the rumble of a diesel engine working and go to investigate. This bloke’s got the right idea. He’s ripping away at the ground with a bloody great excavator. This is the only place in the World where these boulder opals are found and each one is unique, so it would be good to get lucky. But very few do.

Back at camp at Alroy, Mac tells us some stories. There’s one that has a few variations depending on what opal field you’re on. These four blokes have cracked open a boulder and found a beauty. The buyer gives them \$15000 and they head for the pub. But word trickles back that the buyer sold it on the World market for \$185000. The story goes that the four blokes cornered him some time later and asked for a more equitable split – and got it!

I ask Mac if he spent his boyhood years after school going around the place with a hammer cracking all the round rocks. He laughs and says he’s been here for forty years and never found an opal. He says the Yowah field is only a hundred yards wide and two hundred long and good luck to anyone who finds any colour. He’s too busy on his place. He and his wife, Mary, run the property on their own. 50 000 acres and another block up the road of 60 000. They run sheep and cattle and only get help in when they need to. I have to smile when Mac says he has five bulldozers and seven dogs! He has bulldozed this whole camp area and brought in five B-double loads of gravel from a nearby ridge to harden it up

We're about to leave Alroy when we nod a greeting to a couple of other campers. Fair dinkum, you can meet people in the strangest of places. Here we are on a property in Outback Queensland, and for only one night. The question always comes up – where do you hail from? Near Taree. Well how about that .I come from near Taree too. I'm from Lansdowne and they're from Burrell Creek. And he frequents the men's shed near the bridge in town. But Rod comes from Sydney, Penshurst to be exact. Well, he used to know a bloke in Penshurst but can't quite remember the street. I prompt him with Rod's street and he lights up, Yeah, that's the one! He knew a bloke named Whatsit. Well, as it turned out, Whatsit was Rod's neighbour, and they spent the next half an hour chatting like old school mates about Whatsit and his family. These two probably actually met years ago at one of Whatsit's barbeques! How's that for uncanny?

We wish Mac and Mary all the best for the future, 'cause they certainly deserve it. They're the salt of the Earth kind.



This is as far north and west that we're going and when we take off in the morning we see that the star in the windscreen has spread horizontally and the crack is almost right across the middle of the screen. We head back to Eulo for fuel because the coming leg through the back blocks of NSW is about 550km to the next fill-up. There is Wanaaring, but we've been caught before and had to pay \$2 / litre. We'd rather avoid that.



So south it is to cross the border at Hungerford. We're sailing along nicely on good gravel road at about 80 kph when BANG! The rear window shatters. Why would it do that? There's a spare tyre for the trailer sitting on the draw-bar. I guess a rock came off the tyre and went forward as fast as it was going back. Anyway it did the job. We carefully dropped out the shattered glass and bagged it. Then folded a tarp and shut it in the doorway. Away we went. We got covered in dust. So did everything else. What we didn't realise was that the tarp had slipped in at the bottom and the dust was freely pouring in. Later, after a rough clean out, we were able to adjust the tarp better and it worked satisfactorily.

We were able to wash away some dust at the Royal Mail Hotel at Hungerford, but because the car was such a mess we decided to make it to Wanaaring and use the hotel facilities there. Well we get there and here we go! No dogs! So we had dinner and breakfast at the pub and Rod had a room for the night with an ensuite (pretty rough) and me and the dog camped out the back of the pub, much to the delight of all the road workers who had to leave early in the morning. Rod needed a proper bed because, to his chagrin, his air bed had deflated and refused to hold air again. At one stage I heard him muttering something about not another bloody one. So he'd gone from sleeping rough to sleeping rougher.

We had a cheer and a laugh as we passed our new-found road worker mates next morning on our way to Louth. This time the jokes on them 'cause they're working and we're not. Shindy's Inn at Louth is our destination for the day and it's a great country pub. It's Saturday today and we go to the pub and line up that we'll be back tonight to watch the football. Rod's a Cronulla man and they're playing tonight. Also my grand daughter is going to be one of the hundreds of children doing a show on the paddock at half time. So we camp by the Darling down near the bridge not too far from the pub. We've cleaned a lot of the dust out and repacked, set the camp up and had a feed. Now it's back to the pub for the footy.

So we sat at the bar at Shindy's Inn and watched Cronulla play the Bulldogs at Shark Park. It was a tough game but we cheered our heroes on. And they won. I wonder if we helped. And when the kids went onto the field at half time we cheered them on too!

It was a cold night down by the Darling and we were happy to get in the car and be on our way again. Cobar's our next stop for fuel and then we do a long run on bitumen through Dubbo to a little known township of Ballimore. Ballimore is one of those quaint little places off the highway that used to be a thriving town, but not any more. But the pub survives, and there's an area for free camping across the road and there's public flush toilets in the park next door. What more could a traveller ask for?



On this night we're actually setting up on green grass, something there's not much of where we've been. We set up and watch as the pub's cat wanders out onto the road and stretches itself (you'd think it owned the place), then heads over our way to see what we're about. My poor little mutt didn't know what to do and was looking askance at me. As much as we didn't want the cat in camp, we didn't want to get off side with the refreshment suppliers either. But the cat came too close. I give my dog the nod and there's an immediate stand-off. This cat can look after itself and treats the dog with indifference. Then it sits in a tree and the dog sits and watches it. We might as well go to the pub.

So after a couple of beers, a bit of TV and a bit of a yarn, it's Sunday night and the pub empties out. We're the only ones left. The young bloke and lass behind the bar are just looking after the place for the day. There's only two overnights in the rooms, and they've got keys. These two want to get home. By the time we wander across the road they're into their cars and off.

Rod's making the most of it on the rubber ground mats. This is the main reason we're doing long drives to get home. We're too old to be sleeping on the ground. So instead of over nighting at Dungowan, one of our favourite camp spots (and pub), we're going to carry straight on from Ballimore and make it home to Lansdowne tonight. It's 520 km and over the ranges again. But we've got all day. So it's a relatively uneventful drive – except for the tarp on the back window and the constant road noise – and after our mandatory stop at the Nowendoc shop we traverse the dirt track down the mountains. Stopping for a break at Rocks Crossing Flat I notice that the trailer is on a slightly different angle. What else can go wrong? Sure enough, it's broken a spring. It's the main leaf and still holding up, only a bit droopy. But I figure if it's handled the last patch of rough dirt, it can handle the rest of the trip home. And it did.

We got to Lansdowne and Rod was happy to crawl into a proper bed. The next day, after the SS was fired up and took off again back to the Big Smoke, I counted the costs. One air bed, one trailer spring, one rear window, one windscreen and a car full of dust. And that red stuff takes some getting out too. I fear there are some places where it has become permanent.

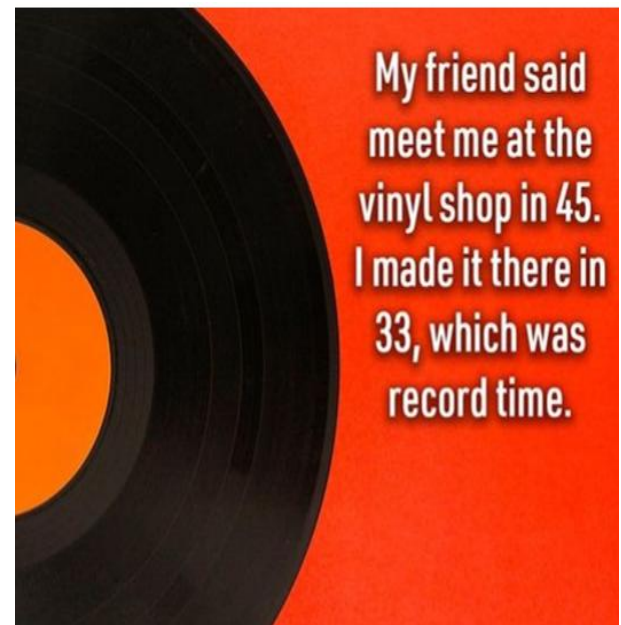
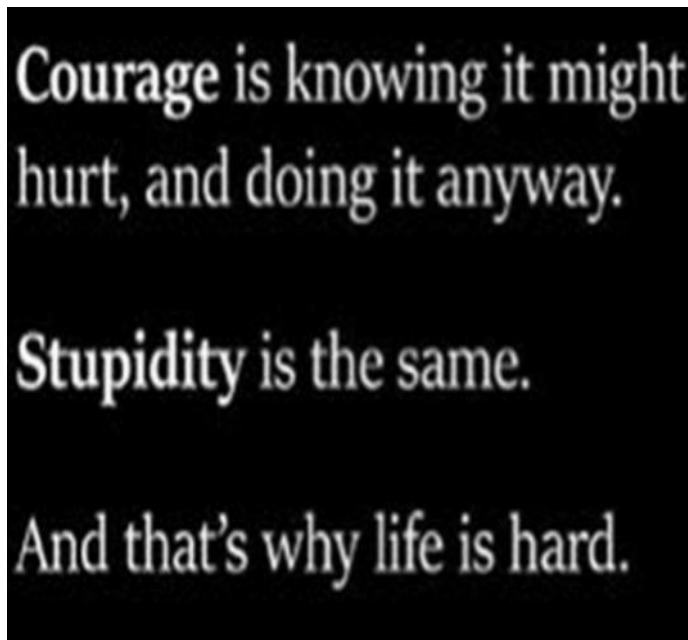
I spent the week and a whole bunch of dollars repairing the damage. But I had to get everything back into shape in case we ever want to do it again.

And is that likely?

You bet!

## Meridian Mirth

To share your jokes, please send them to [rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au](mailto:rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au).  
Many thanks to Rob and Paul for their contributions!



Still trying to get my head around the fact that "Take Out" can mean food dating or murder!

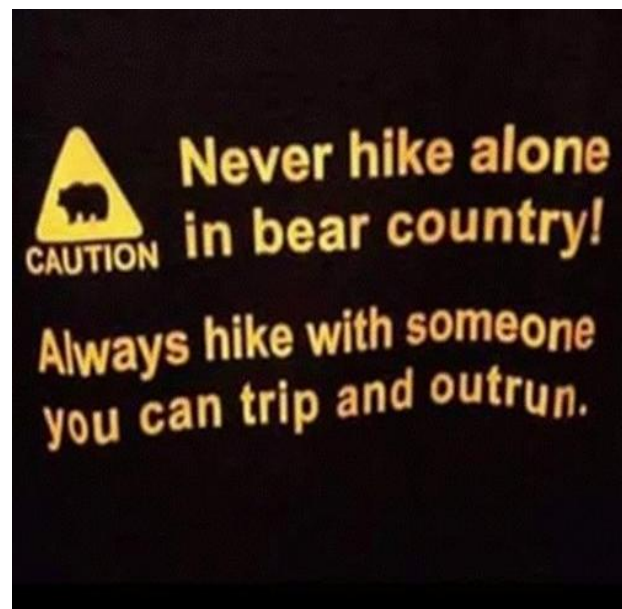
We all know that mirrors don't lie....I am just grateful hey don't laugh.

I get most of my exercise these days from shaking my head in disbelief.

My plumber asked me what time it was. I answered: "Between 10am and 4pm"

**How come there is  
enough asphalt for speed  
bumps  
But not enough to fill pot  
holes**

**I'm proud of myself.  
I finished a jigsaw  
puzzle in 6 months,  
and the box said 2-4  
years!**



If the person who named walkie talkies named everything:

Stamps = Licky Sticky

Defibrillators = Hearty Starty

Bumble Bees = Fuzzy Buzzy

Pregnancy Test = Maybe Baby

Bra = Breasty Nesty

Fork = Stabby Grabby

Socks – Feety Heaty

Nightmare = Screamy Dreamy

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