



# *The* **OUTBACK** *Way*

## **BUSH CAMPING GUIDELINES**

Camping in the great Australian outback is a privilege! By learning to 'tread lightly' in the bush, we can minimize damage to a very fragile natural environment and reduce the need for area closures or access restrictions. All travellers must do their part to ensure that we don't 'love the outback to death' but rather learn to respect and understand its opportunities and constraints. These guidelines are to help travellers who might be 'camping out' in the wilderness along the Outback Way or camping in recognised areas such as overnight rest bays or camp grounds.

### **Minimal impact camping**

- Camp in small groups as fewer feet have less impact on campsites. If possible, disperse larger groups into smaller nodes rather than using a single large camp.
- Camp only in designated sites or with permission of station owners or traditional owners. In some areas bush camping is permitted.
- Use established sites rather than creating new ones.
- Use sites that don't require trenching or disturbance to the landform or soil.

### **Fire**

- Use gas barbecues and fuel stoves whenever possible – they are more efficient, cleaner, faster and easier to use in all weather conditions.
- Be aware of total fire ban days. Check before leaving roadhouses and Shire offices. It is your responsibility to know.
- On days of total fire ban the following are prohibited: All fires in the open air (including campfires and portable gas or liquid fired stoves). All gas or liquid fuelled appliances in tents, camper trailers and vehicles. If in doubt, don't light it.
- Use wood sparingly – wildlife rely on standing trees and fallen branches, even dead ones, for shelter and food.
- Burn only fallen dead wood that can be collected away from your campsite.
- Keep the fire small.
- Be sure your fire is extinguished before departure – dead out – use water! Check it several times – to be absolutely sure. If a fireplace is still warm, it is NOT out. Don't just cover it – douse it with water!!.

### **Rubbish**

- Take all rubbish with you or place it in bins if provided. If you carry it in – carry it out! Bring plenty of rubbish bags for the purpose.
- Do not bury rubbish as animals will dig it up.
- Recycle where possible. Many roadhouses have collection bins.
- Do the bush a favour and pick up other peoples rubbish if you find it. Thank you.

### **Toilets**

- Use toilets where provided.
- In areas without toilets, bury waste at least 100m from campsites or watercourses.
- Dig a hole at least 15cm (6 inches) deep and bury waste including paper under soil to encourage decomposition and to discourage animals.

### **Bush camping etiquette**

- Leave your camp cleaner than when you arrived.
- Check your vehicle for exotic plants, seeds or animals and never carry them from region to region.
- Be considerate of others sharing your camp – radios, CD players, mobile phones and generators can be out of place in the natural environment.
- Avoid activities that may endanger you or others.
- Enjoy the bush without damaging it and leave no evidence that you were there.
- Respect the rights of landowners. Don't enter private property without permission.
- Travelling with pets on the Outback Way is discouraged as they have a detrimental impact on wildlife patterns and behaviour. However, if it is unavoidable, pets must be on a lead and under control at all times.

### **Plants and wildlife**

- All plants and animals are protected. Living in the outback is tough enough – please don't damage or destroy their environment.
- Don't feed animals as they can become a nuisance or develop diseases from 'human' food.
- Be aware of animal safety at all times. Avoid driving at night when many species are most active.

### **Driving off-road**

- Only use defined roads and tracks as off-road driving will damage the fragile ecology and perhaps lead to tyre punctures, getting lost, bogged or stranded.
- During wet periods, avoid muddy or wet roads and tracks completely. It is illegal to drive on roads that have been closed by local authorities (e.g. during floods, at flooded rivers/creeks).
- Be aware that some roads to Aboriginal communities and mine sites are restricted – observe the signs. In other instances special permits are required to travel on local roads.