

STONESTREET'S COACHES  
**The Red Centre**

6-26 May 2012



# THE RED CENTRE

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The heart of Australia beats somewhere out near Uluru—the Red Centre. Come on tour with Stonestreet's through this ancient land's big red heart. Meet some of the characters who make the outback their home, marvel how creatures survive in the harsh climate and admire the unique beauty of the most spectacular desert country in Australia.

Our journey takes in the iconic landmark of Uluru, Kata Tjuta, Kings Canyon, Alice Springs and much more. Join us for a three week tour through the Red Centre—where the sky is big, the land is vast and the adventures endless.

### Day One - Sunday 6 May 2012 (LD)

#### Toowoomba - Mitchell

It's all Warrego Highway today as we make tracks for the big South West. We'll pull up for morning tea in Chinchilla, known as the Melon Capital of Australia, which is celebrated during the biennial 'Chinchilla Melon Festival' in February. Motoring further westward, we come to 'the place of water lilies', where we'll stop for lunch at the Yuleba Hotel. Pub lunch put away, we keep going through the western Darling Downs, to Roma. We'll pause for a while at the Roma Visitor Centre. A bit further along the road brings us to Mitchell, the gateway to outback Queensland. We'll spend an hour or so here relaxing and revitalising at the Great Artesian Spa. Accommodation: **Berkeley Motor Lodge, Mitchell 07 4623 1666**

### Day Two - Monday 7 May 2012 (BLD)

#### Mitchell - Barcaldine

Today we'll head west for a while, veering north-west at Morven and head into 'meat-ant' country, stopping for smoko in Augathella. We'll continue up the Matilda Highway to Tambo, central western Queensland's oldest town. Here we pause for lunch and pay a visit to Tambo Teddies. You'll meet a colourful range of teddy bears all made from wool and they've made Tambo the 'Outback Teddy Capital of Australia'. We then head on up to Blackall, where Jackie Howe sheared a record number of sheep back in 1892. After a short tour of the town, we keep touring on up the highway toward the birthplace of the Australian Labor Party - Barcaldine. It was here that the striking shearers met under the Tree of Knowledge in 1891. We'll drop into the Visitors Centre and go see that historic tree before **checking into our motel for the night**. Accommodation: Barcaldine Landsborough Lodge Motel 07 4651 1100

### **Day Three - Tuesday 8 May 2012 (BD)**

#### **Barcaldine to Winton**

We continue our trek westward today, stopping for smoko in the town of Ilfracombe. Here we'll walk a mile - the 'Great Machinery Mile' - which shows the development of machinery used in the pastoral and transport industries over time. Further west we go, to a town situated on the 'long reach' of the Thomson River. Here we'll immerse ourselves in the rich outback heritage on display at the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame. After lunch we track north-west heading for a town once known as Pelican Waterhole and where 'Banjo' Paterson penned 'Waltzing Matilda' in 1895. So it's only fitting that we spend some time at the Waltzing Matilda Centre. Also while in Winton, admire the unique 'bricks' used in the building of 'Arno's Wall' and strike a chord with the 'Musical Fence'. Afterwards we check in to our home for the night with time to freshen up before dinner. Accommodation: Boulder Opal Motel, Winton 07 4657 1211

### **Day Four - Wednesday 9 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Winton - Mount Isa**

We continue our 'waltz' along the Matilda Highway, bound for Kynuna. Near this one pub town is Combo Waterhole, said to be THE billabong referred to in Waltzing Matilda. Trekking onwards brings us to a town from which the first flight of the Royal Flying Doctor Service took off in 1928 - Cloncurry. After a not too speedy lunch at the Road Runner Roadhouse, we head for our final stop for the day - Mount Isa. We'll spend a good part of the afternoon touring Mount Isa Mines, one of the most productive single mines in world history, producing lead, copper, silver and zinc. Accommodation: Burke & Wills Motel, Mt Isa 07 4743 2365

### **Day Five - Thursday 10 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Mount Isa - Tennant Creek**

Our trek towards the heart of this big land continues, stopping for smoko in Camooweal before crossing over into the Northern Territory. Then it's a long haul across the flat red earth heading west toward the Barkly Homestead - 'an oasis in the desert'. This place has everything - motel units, a campground, fuel, gas, ice, souvenirs, a licensed bar and restaurant and there's even an airstrip out the back and somewhere to park your plane. The afternoon is spent making tracks for the 'Golden Heart of the Northern Territory' - Tennant Creek - the site of Australia's last major gold rush in the 1930's. Accommodation: Eldorado Motor Inn, Tennant Creek 08 8962 2402

### **Day Six - Friday 11 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Tennant Creek - Alice Springs**

We spend some time at the local Culture Centre this morning before setting off to see the Rainbow Serpent's fossilised eggs - Karlukarlu or the Devils Marbles. We trek southwards across the desert toward the tiny township of Ti Tree, where we'll pull up for a roadhouse lunch. Then the afternoon is spent heading for 'The Alice' our home-away-from-home for the

next three nights. Accommodation: Alice in the Territory, Alice Springs 08 8952 6100

### **Day Seven - Saturday 12 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Alice Springs**

After breakfast on our first day in 'The Alice', we'll learn the secrets of the Central Australia deserts at Desert Park. Discover Desert Rivers, Sand Country, Woodland Habitat and see birds of prey flying free in the Nature Theatre. Then we head a bit further out of town for a scenic lunch in a red sandstone river gorge millions of years in the making - Angkerle. From Standley Chasm we head over to one of the most prominent gaps in the West MacDonnell Ranges - Simpsons Gap. Here we may be fortunate enough to encounter some of the black footed 'locals'. We spend the rest of the afternoon at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve. Operational in 1872 and part of the Overland Telegraph Line, it marks the site of the first European settlement in the area. Tonight we'll take a visual and musical journey through Australia's outback.

### **Day Eight - Sunday 13 May 2012 (BD)**

#### **Alice Springs**

After a leisurely Sunday morning breakfast, it's Todd Mall Markets Day - there goes the whole morning. After lunch we'll be 'transported' through time when we immerse ourselves in Australia's road transport heritage at the Road Transport Hall of Fame. Afterwards, we spend some time in the dreamtime when we visit Emily and Jessie Gaps, just a little way out of town. Spiritually important to the Eastern Arrernte people, they are both associated with the caterpillar dreaming trail.

### **Day Nine - Monday 14 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Alice Springs - Yulara**

Back on the road again, we farewell 'The Alice' and head on down the highway, stopping at the desert oasis of Stuarts Well for smoko. Then down to Erlunda, where the Stuart and Lasseter Highways meet. We then travel west, stopping for lunch at the curiously named Mt Ebenezer Roadhouse, considering how flat the country is around here. Make time to appreciate the local paintings and carvings in the impressive red floored art gallery. Then we trek toward our final destination of the day - Yulara. After checking in to our cabins, we head to Uluru for the always spectacular viewing of the mighty monolith at sunset. Accommodation: **Outback Pioneer Hotel, Yulara 1300 134 044**

### **Day Ten - Tuesday 15 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Yulara - Uluru - Kata Tjuta - Curtin Springs**

After hitting the Yulara Shopping Centre first thing this morning after breakfast, we're off to Uluru. On the unique Mala Walk Tour of the rock, we'll learn about the Mala (Hare Wallaby) people who lived at Uluru with their friend the Itjaritjari (Marsupial Mole). Then we'll take a spin around the 3800 metre long rock before lunching at the Cultural Centre's Ininti Cafe. Then we head for a 'place of many heads' - rather large round red ones - Kata Tjuta (The Olgas). We'll enjoy a walking tour of this spectacular natural wonder and then head back

Yulara way and onto Curtin Springs. The Curtin Springs Cattle Station and Wayside Inn is our stop for the night. Accommodation: **Curtin Springs Station, Curtin Springs 08 8956 2906**



**Day Eleven - Wednesday 16 May 2012 (BLD)**

**Curtin Springs - Kings Creek Station**

We're off up northwards, heading for Kings Creek Station - a working cattle and camel station set amongst tall desert oaks. Situated a short distance from the magnificent ochre walled Kings Canyon, it's here you can experience true outback station life. Out here area is measured in square kilometres - this station is made up of 1800 of 'em. Camel Burger anyone? Accommodation: **Kings Creek Station Campground, 08 8956 7474**

**Day Twelve - Thursday 17 May 2012 (BLD)**

**Kings Creek Station - Eralunda**

After a leisurely and late breakfast we head off for a walk about the spectacular Kings Canyon with it's towering vertical walls and lush vegetation. Following lunch we bid farewell to Kings Creek Station and head back in the direction of Mt Ebenezer Roadhouse, stopping here for afternoon tea. We then motor onwards to Eralunda. Accommodation: **The Desert Oaks Resort , Eralunda 08 8956 0984**

**Day Thirteen - Friday 18 May 2012 (BLD)**

**Eralunda - Coober Pedy**

We make track southwards, out the 'The Territory' and down into South Australia. We'll stop for lunch in Marla, before continuing on our way down to Coober Pedy via Cadney Homestead. Coober Pedy, the 'Opal Capital of the World', known for it's unique style of living - underground. The Mud Hut Motel is our resting place for the night. Accommodation: **Mud Hut Motel, Coober Pedy 08 8672 3003**

**Day Fourteen - Saturday 19 May 2012 (BLD)**

**Coober Pedy - Woomera**

Today we'll embark on an extensive tour of the town that supplies the world with the majority of gem quality opal. There are underground mines, opal shops, underground churches, underground homes, art galleries and underground museums. All this underground living is due to the harsh desert temperatures in summer that can get to well over 40 degrees Celsius. The underground dwellings remain at a constant temperature, unlike buildings on the surface that need air conditioning during summer. Back on the road, we motor down to a secret town that was once closed to the outside world - Woomera. Accommodation: **Eldo Hotel, Woomera 08 8673 7867**

### **Day Fifteen - Sunday 20 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Woomera - Port Augusta**

We leave the largest land based range in the world and head on up into the desert to 'large waterhole' - Andamooka. Here we'll have morning tea, tour the opal fields and then head on back to Roxby Downs. We'll enjoy lunch in this town, purpose built to service the Olympic Dam Mine and referred to as the outback's most modern town. Then it's up the road to the Olympic Dam Mine, the largest underground mine in the country. It's a multi-mineral ore body, with copper, gold, silver and uranium all being taken from the ground here. The rest of the afternoon is spent trundling down to a town on the quiet waterways at the head of the Spencer Gulf - Port Augusta. **Accommodation: Acacia Ridge Motor Inn, Port Augusta 08 8642 3377**

### **Day Sixteen - Monday 21 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Port Augusta - Renmark**

We leave the crossroads of Australia and head south-west across the state, bound for the only other town in the country where three railway gauges meet - Peterborough. Then it's on downwards into Megafauna country to the town of Burra, where the Diprotodon once roamed the land. We tour further along the road to a historic river port, one of the busiest inland ports back in it's heyday - Morgan - situated on the great 'Nor' West Bend' of the mighty Murray River. We'll pull up here for lunch and a bit of a tour of town before making tracks to Berri. On the banks of the Murray, it boasts a gorgeous riverfront, historic monuments, floating wharf platforms and an indigenous bridge mural. We finish the day in Renmark, a town transformed by Australia's first irrigation scheme, which came into being back in 1887. **Accommodation: Renmark Hotel, Renmark 1800 736 627**

### **Day Seventeen - Tuesday 22 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Renmark - Wentworth**

We'll head out of South Australia and across western Victoria, where we'll catch up with the Murray in the town of Mildura, in an area often referred to as the Mediterranean in the outback. After morning tea and a tour of this city, we make our way over to Redcliffs. Located at the northern end of Victoria's Mallee region, it gets its name from the 70 metre high cliffs to the east of town. After a look around town we'll trundle on up to Wentworth, at the confluence of the Murray and Darling rivers. Once the busiest inland port in NSW, it was once considered as a possible location for the Australian capital back around the time of federation. **Accommodation: Two Rivers Motel, Wentworth 03 5027 3268**

### **Day Eighteen - Wednesday 23 May 2012 (BLD)**

#### **Wentworth - West Wyalong**

We make our way over to a town on the Murrumbidgee that started life as a mere river ford and became important river port for the wool industry back in the riverboat days - Balranald. After smoko we'll keep heading eastward for a bit, stopping for lunch in Hay in the Riverina. Here, we'll spend some time at Shear Outback, a centre devoted to all things involved with

'getting the wool off'. We'll finish the day in the historic gold era town of West Wyalong.  
Accommodation: **Club Inn Resort, West Wyalong 02 6972 2000**

**Day Nineteen - Thursday 24 May 2012 (BLD)**  
**West Wyalong - Dubbo**

We start our trek northwards today, passing through Forbes, the site of Australia's biggest gold robbery and onto Parkes. An important town to the scientific community, it's here we'll pay a visit to that 'Dish' of a movie star. We'll finish up in a city that straddles the Macquarie River and whose name means 'red earth'. Here we'll embark on an extensive tour of Old Dubbo Gaol. Operational from 1859 to 1966, it's provides a unique insight into 19th Century prison life. Afterwards we should have time for a bit of shopping before checking into our motel. Accommodation: **Golden West Motor Inn, Dubbo 02 6882 2822**

**Day Twenty - Friday 25 May 2012 (BLD)**  
**Dubbo - Moree**

This morning we head on up to Gilgandra on the Castlereagh River and drop into the Cooee Heritage Centre. Here we can immerse ourselves in the history of the area, especially the famous Cooee March. After morning tea it's on to Narrabri in the north west plains region of NSW. Following lunch we sightsee our way up into the Gwydir Valley to Moree, a town famous for it's hot mineral baths. Here we'll stop and spend some time learning about all things pecan with a tour of the Pecan Nut Farm. Accommodation: **Burke & Wills Motor Inn, Moree 02 6752 3377**

**Day Twenty-one - Friday 26 May 2012 (BL)**  
**Moree - Toowoomba**

The last day of the trip sees us heading to North Star, stopping for some smoko and a garden tour. A little further up the road and we cross the border back into Queensland and pull up in Goondiwindi. Here we'll take some time to do a little shopping and have some lunch before hitting the road and heading on back to Toowoomba. After three amazing weeks you'll arrive home with plenty of wonderful memories.

## **Experience the Red Centre**

**\$4830 pp\***

twin or dbl share

**\*Stonestreet's Travel Club Member Price**

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