

Remote Area Travel Information



Your guide to outback safety



Government
of South Australia

Department of Environment,
Water and Natural Resources

Outback safety

Please read the following travel information carefully to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable experience while visiting South Australia's Desert Parks.

Travelling in the remote outback parks and reserves of South Australia can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. It can also be very hazardous with extreme weather conditions, challenging terrain, and isolation from services. Visitors must be well-prepared and equipped to cope with unexpected delays and emergency situations.

The Simpson Desert is closed between December 1 and March 15 annually.

Planning your desert parks outback trip

For a safe journey it is essential that you are well-prepared and well-provisioned. Careful planning can help to avoid uncomfortable trips, lengthy delays, or potentially life-threatening situations.

You are responsible for your own safety.

Who to tell

- Inform a responsible person of your travel itinerary. Arrange to make scheduled calls and have emergency plans in the event you do not reach locations within designated times. Allow a reasonable time for minor delays.
- Obtain permission from landholders prior to travelling through private or Aboriginal lands.
- Travel with other vehicles or stay in contact with other travellers. In the event of a breakdown or accident, this may reduce the need to use expensive outside assistance.

What to take

Carry adequate supplies of:

- **water** – 6 litres per person per day minimum plus a 3-4 day reserve supply
- **food** – adequate supply for trip plus a 3-4 day reserve supply
- **fuel** – check maps, determine fuel needs and calculate distances between refuelling points en route. Ensure you carry enough fuel to safely get you between fuel stops that are the greatest distances apart. Frequent low gear and 4WD work uses fuel faster than high gear travel so allow for up to double normal fuel consumption.
- **spares** – at least two tyres and tubes, but if possible take two spare wheels
- **tools** – long-handled spade, tyre levers, tyre pressure gauge, air compressor, spanners, multigrips, screwdrivers, pliers, hammer, electrical tape, WD40, spare fan belt, radiator hoses, coolant, engine oil, transmission oil, spark plugs, fuses, spare fuel filter, fence wire and plastic tubing, etc
- **recovery equipment** – jack, jack plate, wheel brace, tyre levers, tube mending kit, tow rope, leather gloves, winch, winch sling, tree protector, D shackles, snatch block and straps, jumper leads (booster cables), etc
- **first aid kit** – travellers should have a well equipped first aid kit. Medical assistance can be days away, so be prepared for an emergency. St Johns Ambulance provide a range of suitable first aid kits
- **sun protection** – sunscreen, hat, sunglasses and long-sleeved loose shirts to avoid sunburn, heat stress and heat stroke
- **communications equipment** – take a satellite phone or HF radio to keep in contact or for emergencies. UHF radio can be used to communicate between vehicles in convoy. EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons) are also recommended for use in emergency situations. Ensure someone in the party has a thorough understanding of how to use these devices.
- **navigation** – maps, compass, GPS.

Weather conditions vary seasonally in the outback. Check weather forecasts and road conditions prior to travel via www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads or by phoning 1300 361 033. Alternatively call the Desert Parks Hotline on 1800 816 078.

Safe driving in the outback

The safest way to cross the desert is in a well-equipped and well-provisioned four-wheel drive (4WD) vehicle with high ground clearance and an experienced driver at the wheel. Drivers should be familiar with their vehicles, understand vehicle capabilities, and be able to execute appropriate driving techniques to suit different terrains and weather conditions.

Know your vehicle

- Be familiar with your 4WD vehicle. Ensure it is well-maintained, serviced, and roadworthy. It is recommended that your 4WD has high ground clearance if travelling through sand.
- Know how to operate your 4WD transmission before you leave. Know if your vehicle is fitted with locking hubs and how to engage them.
- Inspect your vehicle every morning before you start driving for the day. Check tyre pressures and fluid levels. Clean air filters and the windscreen. Look underneath for leaks and damage to cables and hoses and remove any dry vegetation that could catch fire.

Vehicle access

- Keep to designated public access tracks, parking areas and campgrounds. Vehicles are more likely to get damaged or stranded off-track.
- Mining and petroleum infrastructure is not to be accessed by the public.
- Do not camp in creek beds or watercourses in case of flash flooding.
- Do not camp under trees that may drop limbs.
- Do not drive on salt lakes.

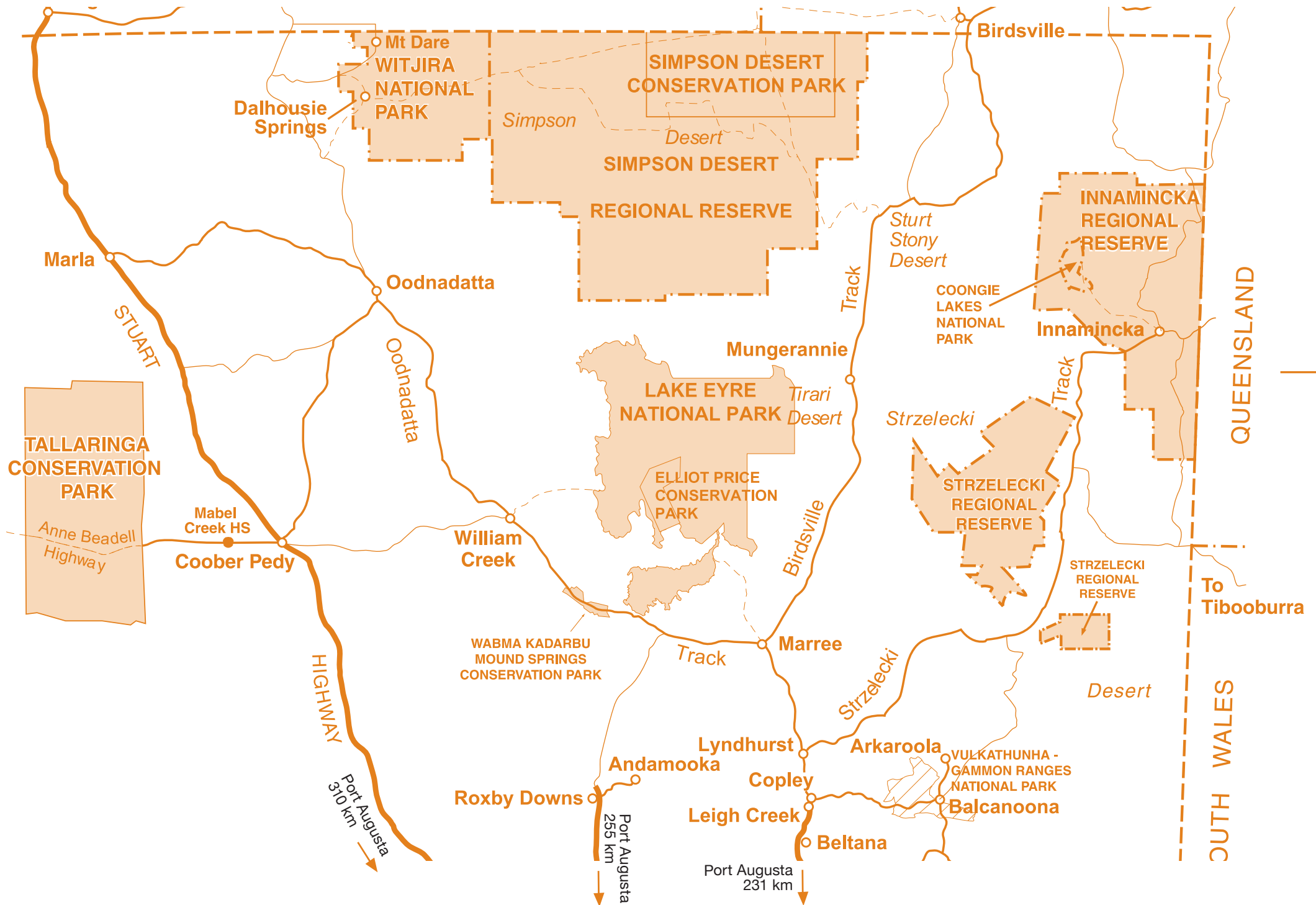
Driving on unsealed roads

- Engage 4WD and lock hubs when driving on unsealed tracks and in potentially dangerous terrain. Remember to disengage 4WD when returning to sealed roads.
- Travel at speeds appropriate to road conditions. Reduce speeds on dirt roads where potholes, corrugations and loose stones may cause vehicle damage and accidents.
- Adhere to speed limits. The speed limit in parks and reserves is 40 km per hour unless otherwise signed.
- Avoid wet-weather driving. Dirt roads can become impassable, dangerous and easily damaged.
- Take extreme care at creek crossings. Water levels can rise unexpectedly with unknown heavy rains falling upstream.
- On dirt roads, slow down and keep well left when passing oncoming vehicles to avoid possible windscreen damage from stones.
- Keep a safe distance from the vehicle travelling in front of you.
- Pull over and stop when dust limits visibility. Never overtake through a dust cloud, there may be another vehicle coming towards you.
- Look out for wildlife and stock on roads particularly at sunrise and sunset. Slow down when passing birds of prey feeding on road kill as they take some time to get airborne.

Driving through sand

- Engage 4WD and lock hubs when driving in sand and in potentially dangerous terrain. Remember to disengage 4WD when returning to sealed roads.
- Reduce tyre pressures to 18-20 psi when driving in sand. Always reduce speeds when driving with lower tyre pressures to avoid tyres coming off rims. Remember to reinflate tyres when leaving sandy areas.
- Keep as far left as track conditions permit when crossing dune crests. Lead vehicles should carry a tall flag to warn oncoming traffic of their approach to dunes.
- Maintain a constant speed when driving through sand in low range third or fourth gear or high range second or third gear. Do not apply brakes abruptly as this will bury the front wheels. Do not change direction sharply.





In emergencies

- If you become bogged in sand, do not spin the wheels. Remove sand from the front of all wheels and under the chassis. Check your tyre pressures are 18-20 psi. Jack up each wheel in turn and backfill under it. Lay tracks of sticks or brush and lower the wheels onto that bed. When driving out, release the clutch very gently, initially keeping your revs as low as possible until the vehicle starts to move forward. Maintain a constant speed once you are under way. Remove sticks or brush once out of the bog.
- If your vehicle breaks down or is immovable:
 - stay calm
 - do not leave your vehicle
 - radio or phone for assistance if possible
 - ration food and water
 - conserve energy, remain in shade
 - wait for assistance to arrive
 - collect firewood to burn with some green vegetation to produce dark smoke, or flash a mirror to attract searchers if you hear a nearby plane or vehicle.

Enjoy your trip

A trip to the outback can be the experience of a lifetime if you are well prepared, make sure a friend or family member knows where you are, and are aware of the potential risks you may face out there. Remember that these risks can quickly increase outside the peak tourist season as the temperature rises (temperature regularly exceeds 40° C) and the number of other people on the road substantially reduces.

This brochure is provided for visitors undertaking day trips or short stays in South Australia's Desert Parks.

For more extensive travels, the Desert Parks Pass is a 12-month pass which allows access and camping in South Australia's Desert Parks. The pass includes the maps necessary to visit the area, as well as extensive information on the parks and requirements for safe travel through this outback region of South Australia.

If you have any further questions before heading out, contact the **Desert Parks Pass Hotline** to find out more, Freecall **1800 816 078** or Email desertparks@sa.gov.au

For further information:

Department of Environment and Natural Resources,
SA Arid Lands Region PO Box 78 Port Augusta SA 5700

Desert Parks Pass toll-free hotline 1800 816 078

Email: desertparks@sa.gov.au

Phone Information Line (08) 8204 1910

Email: dewnrinformation@sa.gov.au

Website: www.parks.sa.gov.au

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The National Parks Code



Help protect your national parks by following these guidelines:

- Keep to designated vehicle tracks and walking trails.
- Leave gates as you find them, open or closed.
- Camp only in designated areas or within 100 metres of public access tracks in areas clear of vegetation.
- Do not camp near, interfere with, or use soaps in stock watering points or waterholes.
- Leave your pets at home.
- Take your rubbish with you. Do not bury or burn rubbish.
- Use liquid fuel or gas stoves to conserve timber. If you need a wood fire, use only a small amount of fallen timber.
- Observe fire restrictions. Wood fires are not permitted during Fire Ban Season usually 1 November to 15 April. On Total Fire Ban Days all fires (liquid, gas and wood) are not permitted. Check CFS Hotline 1300 362 361.
- Be considerate of other park users. Keep noise to a minimum to avoid disturbing other campers and wildlife, particularly early morning and evenings.
- Do not feed or disturb wildlife, or remove or damage plants, soil or rocks.
- Respect geological and heritage sites. Do not remove aboriginal artefacts or damage places of significance.

Thank you for leaving the bush in its natural state for the enjoyment of others.