

# OUTBACK ADVENTURE

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## Katherine to Camooweal

The “great grey nomad trek” has begun in earnest. During the last 2 days we have been on the road between Katherine and Camooweal -- a total of 1300kms. During that time we have seen increasing numbers of caravans and motorhomes “going north”. We were warned by travelers we met during the last 5 weeks that the population of key NT towns swell considerably. Admittedly the size of, and number of caravan parks in places like Katherine (5) and Kununurra (7), was interesting to us. However it is only now that we are seeing the numbers of travelers, that the reality is setting in. Heavens knows how many people are now in Darwin, Litchfield, Kakadu, Katherine and Kununurra.

Interestingly, we are also noting that the price of petrol has increased dramatically. Where it was once in the range of \$1.70 per litre it is now nearly \$2!

We are keen to get to Lawn Hill National Park. It is off the highway a bit on an unmade road (on the way north to Bourketown) so maybe it will not attract so many people. We hope.



Note the the helicopter on the roof of the servo.

## Outback Towns

We dropped into Daly Waters for a lunch break. We had heard that there had been a rodeo in town the days before. Daly Waters is a reasonable sized dot on our map. That “dot” was in fact a pub, a tin shed across the road that sold petrol and a caravan park with an adjoining rodeo ring. There were more caravans in town than buildings.

The pub was one of the most interesting I have ever seen. Lots of people quietly imbibing outside in the shade. The walls inside were adorned in bras, driver’s licences, money and number plates. The petrol was sold on the honour system -- “just go and fill up and tell us how much you took”.



**TOURISTS?** Places like Daly Waters must love the grey nomads. Here are travelers with time on their hands willing to cool down with a beer or lemonade and watch the world pass by.



**BORDER CROSSING** There are two signs facing each other at the border of NT and Qld. Like all new travelers we too stopped to take a photo for posterity.

## HISTORY LESSON



Like London place-names in the game of Monopoly (such as Piccadilly, The Strand, Paddington Station etc) so many of the towns and places we have seen up north seem very familiar. Much of what we know about them has been very superficial - gleaned from history books, TV documentaries or news items. No more.

This trip has enabled us to get to know places such as Darwin, Kununurra, Katherine, Kadadu, the Ord River and the Argyle Dam. We have loved the isolated places like the gorge country and passing through the very small country towns.

Take Camooweal for example: on the Qld/NT border. 330kms south of Bourketown, 188kms from Mt Isa and 440kms from the Stuart Highway in the NT. It's hot, dusty and quite austere with lots of aborigines sitting in the shade next to "Tojo's Highway" (built by USA during WWII to stop the Japs). But it has real character. Here, you also pay for fuel on an honor system. Payment for a camp site is at the pub. Everything is lay back - outback style.

## The Tyranny of Distance



We thought that this was an interesting sign that really typifies the vastness of the distances. It doesn't bother to tell us where the next town is -- there are actually very few of them -- it just tells us where we can stop to rest!

The rather uninspiring road has been made quite bearable by listening to pod casts of "Conversations" from ABC radio and an audio book of "Kings in Grass Castles". The latter part of the book describes the settlement of the East Kimberly -- places that we have just been. It is really very interesting.



