

# The Aussie dream

If you find yourself day dreaming about hitting the road, it's time you took the 'big lap' leap. To help you on your way, travel blogger **TRACY MORRIS** shares her tips for getting the (tow-)ball rolling.

## Where to start

The best foundation for a safe and successful adventure is ensuring you have a reliable, well-serviced vehicle and caravan or camper. Consider the weight of your 'van against the towing capacity of your vehicle and the load rating of the roof of your vehicle (so you don't store too much up top). If you are planning on towing a heavy caravan, you may also want to consider a weight distribution hitch for your car, which can be bought from your typical caravan/ outdoor retailer. Once you are aware of your weight limits, you can start the fun part: deciding what to take with you.

## Pack smart

Look at how you can utilise each space best. My husband and I removed the clothes hanging rods in the wardrobes and installed shelving so we could store more items. We also use large plastic tubs to pack a lot of our travel gear, that way everything is neat and tidy, sealed from dust and creepy crawlies, and, best of all, a tub can double as a bath for the kids.

## Power ready

We travel with two 20-metre power leads for our caravan and, if a longer lead is required, we connect them. We also use a dual-battery system in our truck to power our car fridge. This allows the

second battery to charge as we drive, ensuring our main car battery is always full. When stationary for a few days, we use our solar panels to top up the power.

Investing in a good solar set-up is highly recommended. A quality portable solar system will allow you to travel to unpowered and remote locations without sacrificing your car fridge, LED camp lights and mobile devices. Generators are another option, but may be restricted or banned in places such as national parks.

## Water wise

When you're travelling in remote areas, your water storage is a vital part of your planning. To fill up your 'van you will





# big lap gear guide

The Blonde Nomads' must-pack equipment for family adventures around the Australia.



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need a food-grade water hose. It's also good to carry spare hose fittings and connections. We like to store these in hose bags, which keeps them tidy and easy to transport. A pressure regulator can be added to your 'van to help with any fluctuating water pressures.

You should always have a supply of drinking water in your car. We recommend carrying two smaller containers (about 10 litres each), rather than one large container; if one gets damaged, you will always have the other one on hand. You may also want to install a water filter in your 'van to ensure your drinking water is safe. We always travel with a supply of water purifier tablets for emergencies.

A waste water hose is also needed for grey water. If you have space, consider installing a grey-water tank as some national parks require you to collect and dispose of it elsewhere.

## Be safe

If you are planning on exploring remote areas you may want to invest in a satellite phone, or at least an emergency tracking device like an EPIRB or PLB. Installing a UHF radio to your vehicle is also advised, as well as a winch and a vehicle recovery kit. Recovery tracks and an all-purpose shovel is always handy, too. Spare jerry cans for fuel may be necessary, as well as an offline GPS navigation system. A suspension upgrade on your tow vehicle is a good idea with all the extra gear you'll be carrying. We also recommend carrying two first-aid kits: a larger kit to store your must-have medical items, and a smaller kit to carry with you when day tripping, containing Band-Aids and bandages.

## Tools and gadgets

A basic tool kit, with a hammer and cordless drill, is always a good idea to

have on you. We also have a tyre repair kit, tyre gauge and an air compressor to restore correct tyre pressures after any 4WDing. Ramps and chocks are great to ensure your 'van is level and we like to use a trailer lock for peace of mind.

## Home sweet home

It's the small homely comforts that will add to your camping experience. Good-quality camp chairs are a must as you will be spending a lot of time in them; be mindful of their weight and size. Invest in a quality annex floor mat for outside and a collapsible pantry to store shoes and outdoor toys. A hand-held vacuum cleaner is useful, or a short-handled broom and dust pan brush to clean sandy feet. If weight allows, a fire pit is a must. The type and style comes down to personal preference, but be mindful of its size and how you will transport it. ●

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01 Easy-to-pack solar panels 02 Carry plenty of water with you 03 Recovery tracks are always handy 04 D-Shackles 05 You never know when you'll need a shovel 06 A snatch strap is an essential 07 Jumper leads 08 Carry a basic tool kit for on-road repairs 09 Air compressor. Images 01, 03, 05, 08 & 09 © The Blonde Nomads