Duel of the dual cabs
We compare four utes under $30k

HITCHING A TRAILER?
What to know before you tow

Explore your own backyard
TAKE A TRIP TO ULURU
You can trust an AANT Approved Repairer

Complying with our high standard of service and facilities, our Approved Repairers are:

- Experienced automotive technicians
- Performing general repairs to specialist repairs

Specialising in:

- Crash
- Mechanical
- Speciality repairs

WWW.AANT.COM.AU/APPROVEDREPAIRERS
September 2019
ntmotor is printed on environmentally responsible paper, manufactured under the environmental Management System ISO 14001 using elemental chlorine-free (ECF) pulp sourced from sustainable, well-managed forests. ntmotor is printed using vegetable-based inks from renewable sources and low-energy perfecting print processes. ntmotor is mailed in totally degradable plastic (TDPATM). TDPATM technology enables products made from polyethylene (PE), to degrade when discarded. Don’t forget to recycle this magazine.

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Fuel for thought – p6

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Cover Image
Purple skies over Kata Tjuta.
Image © Tourism NT

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This edition we spent a few days exploring Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (p20). You’ll be blown away by the location’s stunning landscape, its history and what it has to offer. If you haven’t already, I implore you to make the journey to this beautiful and spiritual landmark.

Flying to Uluru isn’t always the most convenient method of transport though. If you decide to drive, you’ll need to fill up at the petrol station before you make the trip. Fuel for thought (p6) will give you the lowdown on everything fuel related. We explain the fuel excise, the impact of electric vehicles and how to save a few dollars at the bowser.

If you’re in the market for a new or used vehicle to help you get around the NT or beyond, we’ve got you covered. In this edition we pit four second-hand dual-cab utes under $30k against each other (p12).

As we enter the wet season in the Top End, we’re likely to see a cyclone forming off the coast at some point. That’s why we’ve outlined on page 16 a few things you need to do before a weather event hits, whether you’re going to stay or evacuate.

Stay safe on the roads, and happy reading.

Jeremy Rochow
Editor

BY JEREMY ROCHOW
EDITOR

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Jeremy Rochow
Editor

MEMBERS’ POSITIVE FEEDBACK

The majority of AANT members have rated the organisation 9.5/10, a recent membership survey has revealed.

AANT president David Loy said the survey results and member response rate were pleasing.

“Thank you to our members for participating in our member survey earlier this year,” Mr Loy said.

“AANT strives to meet the expectations of its members and keep our products and services in line with member expectations.”

The survey found 70 per cent of respondents had used AANT’s roadside service. Most members were also aware of other membership benefits such as fuel discounts, motor and home insurance, Thrifty car rental and online shopping discounts.

Members highlighted a few areas AANT could improve on, including communicating membership benefits and roadside assistance wait times.

AANT SWEEPS AWARDS

At AANT we take pride in providing the best possible insurance services. Taking home three prestigious accolades at the QBE Awards Night proves we’re doing just that. The awards recognise our commitment to providing quality insurance solutions to our members and the wider community.

AANT received the following awards:

- Domestic Insurance Achiever of the Year – Kerrin Knight (pictured right)
- Insurance Department of the Year
- Outstanding Improvement from Branch and Individual of Team

The calibre of entrants from across Australia was high, however the small, hard-working and dedicated AANT team achieved amazing results.

We thank you for trusting us with your insurance needs. We will continue striving to offer you the best possible service.

The AANT insurance team is available to discuss insurance and membership on 8295 590 from 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday, and 9am – 12pm on Saturday.

COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to the following AANT competition winners from ntmotor dry season 2019:

Camping pack: Timothy David Knight, Howard Springs
Outdoor pack: Monica Lam, Leanyer
Travel accessories pack: Rebekah Tierney, Katherine
Welcome to the wet season edition of 
ntmotor. As we head into this exquisite but volatile season, road safety needs to be at the forefront of our minds. I encourage you to make sure your vehicle’s roadworthy and able to handle the extreme conditions the NT faces over the wet season.

Having your vehicle checked by a professional is an excellent start. AANT approved repairers will give you peace of mind that your vehicle is safe to drive. A full list of approved repairers is available on page 10 and on the AANT website.

Did you know you can’t take out or upgrade insurance once a cyclone has been declared? Yes, that’s right. Now is the time to make sure you’ve got the correct insurance before the next cyclone hits. The AANT team can answer all your insurance questions. Call them today or head to our website for all the details.

AANT will hold its Annual General Meeting on 29 October 2019. I encourage all members to attend the meeting. You’ll be able to ask members of the board and senior managers questions about issues important to you.

In our last edition of ntmotor, I told you about our federal election campaign, which was co-ordinated in conjunction with the Australian Automotive Association and auto clubs from across the country. We found NT members’ main concern is road safety. Over the next 12 months AANT will continue advocating for safer roads. Our priorities will be safer road conditions, speeding, drink and drug driving, and distracted drivers.

I thank you for your continued support of AANT and I wish you safe and happy road travels.

This ultimate travel pack, full of goodies, will help you get organised for your next holiday. It’s filled to the brim with a Pacsafe Wallet, a My Bag Tag, luggage cover and Cabeau Fold-N-Go Blanket.

To enter login to AANT’s member portal at aant.com.au

Conditions: The competition commences 12 September, 2019 and ends with last mail on 12 December, 2019. Total prize pool is valued at $123.85. Entry is open to all AANT Members. The first entry drawn that fulfils the competition criteria will win the prize. The draw will take place at AANT, 2/14 Knuckey Street, Darwin, 2pm on 17 December 2019. The winner will be notified by mail or phone within 14 days of the draw date. The winner will be published in the March 2020 issue of ntmotor, published 9 March 2020. Prizes cannot be exchanged or redeemed for cash. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or discount. The promoter is the Automobile Association of the Northern Territory Inc., 2/14 Knuckey Street, Darwin, NT 0800 ABN 13 431 478 529.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Notice is hereby given that the 56th Annual General Meeting of The Automobile Association of Northern Territory Inc. will be held at the Vibe Hotel, Darwin on Tuesday 29 October 2019 at 6pm.

Business:
(i) to declare any conflicts of interest
(ii) to confirm the minutes of the Annual General meeting held on the 29 October 2018
(iii) to elect members to the Council in accordance with Rule 6 of the AANT Constitution
(iv) to receive the Annual Report and Audited Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2019
(v) to appoint an auditor of the Association
(vi) to deal with any other business requiring consideration by the Association.

FINANCIAL REPORTS
In accordance with the Northern Territory of Australia Associations Act, the audited statement of accounts of the AANT Inc. will be available to members upon request or on the AANT website. A member is not eligible for election to the Council unless the Public Officer or Chief Executive Officer receives a written nomination for that member no later than 28 days before the date of the next Annual General Meeting. The nominee must otherwise be eligible for appointment under the terms of the AANT Constitution.

ELECTION TO COUNCIL
Nominations for election to Council must be completed in a form prescribed by the Association. Forms are available to members upon request or on the AANT website. A member is not eligible for election to the Council unless the Public Officer or Chief Executive Officer receives a written nomination for that member no later than 28 days before the date of the next Annual General Meeting. The nominee must otherwise be eligible for appointment under the terms of the AANT Constitution.

By David Loy
AANT President

WIN
A TRAVEL PACK

David Loy
AANT President

aant.com.au 5
FUEL FOR THOUGHT
your petrol questions answered
Most of us rely on petrol to power our vehicles, but do we really understand what we’re paying for at the bowser?

Words: Jeremy Rochow

Like electricity, gas and running water, petrol is a part of everyday life. But for a commodity that costs Northern Territory motorists an average of $76.06 a week (according to the AAA Affordability Index Report), many of us know very little about what goes on beyond the bowser.

From excise tax to price fluctuation, we answer some common fuel-related questions to help you find out what you’re really paying for at the pump.

What drives unleaded petrol prices?

Did you know that you pay close to 40 per cent in taxes when you fill your car with unleaded petrol?

The biggest tax is the fuel excise, which is currently 41.6 cents per litre – we’ll explain a little bit more about that later. On top of that, you pay a 10 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Taxes aside, the largest component of the retail price of petrol, accounting for almost 50 per cent, is the international price of refined petrol known as Singapore Mogas 95. The cost of Mogas 95 varies depending on a range of factors, including the price of crude oil and the strength of the Australian dollar.

The combined cost of Mogas 95 and taxes makes up about 84 per cent of the retail price of petrol. The rest goes to refiners, wholesalers and retailers to cover their costs and make a profit.

What is the fuel excise?

With the exception of registration and heavy vehicle charges, motorists don’t directly pay to use the roads. Instead, we pay a fuel excise tax whenever we buy petrol or diesel. The tax is currently 41.6 cents per litre.

According to the Australian Automobile Association (AAA), four out of five motorists are unaware they pay more than 40 per cent in tax each time they fill up. Most of us have paid the tax for our entire lives, with the fuel excise introduced in Australia in 1929 when oil refineries were first established. Fuel excise is now one of the federal government’s largest sources of transport-related revenue. It also fluctuates, with the rate indexed twice a year to align with the consumer price index (CPI).

Where does the revenue go?

Each year the average NT motorist pays $1760 in fuel excise, however, the federal government only sets aside a fraction of this revenue for repairing our roads. The rest goes towards general revenue.

While motorists make a significant contribution to government revenue through the fuel excise, only some of it is used to improve transport infrastructure.

Australian motorists agree money raised from the fuel excise should be used to maintain the nation’s roads, with an AAA survey finding a third of road users believe 100 per cent of the tax should be spent on land transport projects.

DID YOU KNOW?

Australian motorists pay a total of $12 billion in fuel excise every year.

How will the rise of electric vehicles impact the fuel excise?

The federal government might not be able to rely on the fuel excise in the future. Each year, more fuel-efficient vehicles enter the market, with electric and hybrid vehicles becoming increasingly popular. Many of these vehicles require little-to-no petrol, decreasing the amount of revenue raised at the pump.

Motorists already pay different prices to use the same roads, depending on the type of car they drive. Older petrol-guzzling vehicles cost far more to fill up – and are taxed more – than newer, more economical cars.
The increase in people purchasing electric vehicles will only further the price divide, as road users who no longer purchase petrol won't be paying the excise at all. Car companies are moving towards selling more electric vehicles as well. Volvo predicts that 50 per cent of its sales will be electric by 2025, while other manufacturers aim to sell one million electric vehicles by the same year.

If in a few years, there is a big take up on electric vehicles, a significant hole may form in the federal government’s budget.

How can I save on fuel?

In 2017 the Northern Territory Government introduced a mandatory real-time fuel pricing program called MyFuel NT. The legislation stipulates that all fuel retailers must provide real-time prices for their fuel, which can then be published on websites and apps.

MyFuel NT has helped with petrol price transparency and competition in the Northern Territory’s retail fuel market. This allows motorists to readily compare petrol prices and find the cheapest fuel, whether it’s in their local area or any region across the NT.

Here are a few other ways to save a few dollars on fuel.

• **Don’t be a rev head:** avoid over-revving if you’re driving a manual. In an automatic, ease back slightly on the accelerator once the car gathers momentum.

• **Avoid speeding:** if you travel at a faster speed, you’ll use more petrol. If you can, ease of the accelerator a little bit and save a few dollars.

• **Maintain your vehicle:** service your vehicle regularly and check your tyre pressure at least once a month.

• **Leave it on:** don’t turn your engine off when you’re stopped at the traffic lights, unless your car is programmed to do so.

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**FUEL BREAKDOWN**

Here’s what you’re paying for when you buy unleaded – if the price of unleaded is 145.8c/pL

- **10%**
  - **GST**

- **16.8%**
  - **Other**

- **28.6%**
  - **Fuel Excise Tax**

- **44.6%**
  - **Singapore Mogas**

*1 barrel = 10 per cent*
**22 AUG – 3 NOVEMBER**

**TERRITORY QUILTS**

Darwin

In 2019, the Territory Quilts exhibition is being held in the NT capital and will be hosted by Darwin Patchworkers and Quilters Inc. More than 100 quilts, made by members, will be on display and Bemina Australia will be conducting quilting demonstrations.

darwinquilters.com.au

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**15 SEPTEMBER**

**A CAPPELLA IN THE GORGE**

Ormiston Gorge, Tjoritja National Park

Set against the iconic backdrop of the Ormiston Gorge, A Capella in the Gorge features the sounds of Asante Sana and the Central Australian Aboriginal Women’s Choir.

northernterritory.com/alice-springs-and-surrounds

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**28 SEP – 5 OCTOBER**

**KAKADU BIRD WEEK**

Kakadu National Park

Are you a bird lover? Or do you just want to know a bit more about our beaked buddies?

Join traditional owners, and local experts to celebrate our birdlife during Kakadu Bird Week.

parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu

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**12 OCTOBER**

**HEROIC BEETHOVEN**

Darwin Convention Centre

Join the Darwin Symphony Orchestra and witness Beethoven’s revolutionary Heroic Symphony – a triumphant celebration of love, loss and the human spirit. Australian classical guitarist Craig Ogden will join the orchestra to wow audiences.

dso.org.au/event/heroic-beethoven

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**1 NOV – 30 APRIL 2020**

**BRUCE MUNRO: TROPICAL LIGHT**

Darwin

Bruce Munro will light up Darwin as part of an outdoor exhibition featuring eight illuminated sculptures. The collection of works created by the world-famous artist reflect his personal experiences in Darwin. Additional works by local artists will also be on display.

tropicallight.com.au

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**18 NOVEMBER**

**DR COSMOS**

Darwin Entertainment Centre

Irish comedian Dylan Moran – best known for the television sitcom *Black Books* – is returning with a brand-new stand-up show, *Dr Cosmos*. Moran will bring his unique take on love, politics, misery and the everyday absurdities of life to the Darwin Entertainment Centre.

yourcentre.com.au

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**6 DECEMBER**

**CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL 2019**

Alice Springs

Todd Mall, Todd St and the council lawns will come alive for the 2019 Christmas Carnival. Buskers and roaming performers will entertain, while you peruse the abundance of market stalls. Don’t forget to feast on the delectable global Christmas fare.

alicesprings.nt.gov.au

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**20 DECEMBER**

**BIG BASH LEAGUE**

Traeger Park

Get ready to see sixes, fours and Zing bails flying as the Big Bash League makes its annual appearance in the red centre. This year, the Hobart Hurricanes will take on the Sydney Sixers.

bigbash.com.au/fixtures

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**WIN**

**A BABY ACCESSORIES PACK**

Are you or a family member expecting a new baby? We want to shower you with a couple of gifts to make life a little bit easier. This prize pack includes a stylish Baby Love Rockababy Rocker which will provide your bub a safe place to play and sleep. We’ve also chucked in a Britax Ultimate Vehicle Seat Protector to keep those stains off the fabric in your car.

**For your chance to win, enter via the AANT member portal at aant.com.au**

Conditions: The competition commences 12 September, 2019 and ends with last mail on 12 December, 2019. Total prize pool is valued at $72.90.

Entry is open to all AANT Members. The first entry drawn that fulfils the competition criteria will win the prize. The draw will take place at AANT, 2/14 Knuckey Street, Darwin, 2pm on 17 December 2019. The winner will be notified by mail or phone within 14 days of the draw date. The winner will be published in the March 2020 issue of *ntmotor*, published 9 March 2020. Prizes cannot be exchanged or redeemed for cash. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or discount. The promoter is the Automobile Association of the Northern Territory Inc., 2/14 Knuckey Street, Darwin, NT 0800 ABN 13 431 478 529.
Have a burning question related to cars or motoring? Have a chat to AANT’s Technical Advisory Service on 1300 661 466.

Whether you’re hitting the highway with your caravan in tow or loading up the trailer for a trip to the tip, there are a few things you need to know before you head out on the road. First, you’ll need a towbar. These days, towbar fitters will do all the work for you, installing the maximum-rated bar to your car, compliant with Australian Design Rules, vehicle standards and regulations.

Keep in mind though, the weight of your loaded trailer or caravan has to be within your car’s towing capacity – you can find this in your car’s owner’s manual. Some manufacturers place a recommended towing speed in their owner’s manual, so make sure to check for this too. You can usually find your trailer’s weight on a plaque on the towbar. If you’re carting a load around, it can’t protrude more than 15cm from the side of your trailer and can’t exceed a total width of 2.5m. Lengthways, your car and attachment can’t measure more than 19m. If anything sticks out more than 1.2m from the back of your trailer, you’ll need to fasten a brightly coloured flag to it. No matter what you’re towing, safety chains are vital. Anything weighing less than 2.5 tonnes requires one safety chain, while trailers weighing between 2.5 and 3.5 tonnes must have at least two chains. Finally, make sure that whatever you’re towing has operational tail-lights, brake lights and indicators, and that all tyres are suitably inflated. 

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HOW TO: detail your car like a pro

Sometimes a wash just isn’t enough. Show your car you care with an automotive makeover.

1 Wash and dry
You probably wouldn’t wash your hair with a bar of soap, nor would you lather your body in dishwashing liquid. Apply the same logic when cleaning your car – not all suds are created equal. Use a car wash that contains a cleaning agent, conditioner and wax. The cleaning agent cuts through dust and dirt, the conditioner brings out your paint’s colour and the wax protects against the elements. Lather on, hose down, dry off.

2 Polish
Give your paint a deep, warm shine with carnauba wax polish – a natural product derived from palm leaves. Just squeeze a small amount onto a foam applicator pad, then massage into your paintwork in a circular motion. Wait a minute or two for the polish to dry, then wipe off with a microfibre cloth.

3 Detail
Refresh your cracked or faded plastic bumpers and mouldings with plastic trim detailer, which comes in both gel and spray form. Simply spray or rub on, then buff off with a microfibre cloth.

4 Treat your interior
Give your seats and carpets the once-over with a car vacuum cleaner. These are great for reaching pesky nooks and crannies and can be run from your car’s cigarette lighter or USB port.

If your upholstery is leather, use a spray-on cleaner followed by a leather conditioner. If your seats are cloth, spray a cleaning foam on any marks or dirty areas, then wipe off with a cloth or sponge.

5 Touch up
Make minor scratches disappear with touch-up paint. First, find your car’s paint code; this can be found on the firewall of your engine bay, next to your compliance plate or in your door jamb.

Next, head to your nearest auto store – they’ll use your code to mix up a perfect match. Shake the applicator bottle, then lightly brush over the affected area. If you’re applying multiple coats, wait 15 minutes between each. After 24 hours, your paint should be dry.
Our car comparison series pits some of the most popular vehicles on the used-car market against one another to help find the perfect fit for you. This time around, we’re weighing up four 4x4 dual cabs under $30,000.

Originally only for the tradies, dual cab utes have crept off the building site and into the family driveway. A lot has changed over the past decade for that to happen though. Wind-up windows, noisy gearboxes, rock hard suspension and plastic seats have been replaced by modern features, primarily aimed at comfort. These mod-cons often place the starting price beyond the realm of family budgets, but five years into their lifespan they usually come down to the land of punter affordability. Essentially, the dual cab is now more accessible than ever, appealing to adventurous couples, small families and tradies alike. The trick is to find one that hasn’t had too hard of a life.
The competitors
Ford Ranger XL 3.2 (4x4) diesel turbo 2013: The home-grown Ranger is the biggest and the most powerful of the bunch, with a towing capacity to boot.
Mazda BT-50 XTR (4x4) diesel turbo 2013: A little softer than the Ranger but with all the same attributes, the BT-50 is a solid all-rounder.
Holden Colorado LTZ (4x4) crew cab diesel turbo 2013: Spacious and comfortable, the Colorado’s suspension makes for a smooth ride whether the tray’s loaded or not.
Mitsubishi Triton GLX-R (4x4) diesel turbo 2013: This workhorse of a vehicle is tough, durable and great value for money.

What’s hot
For the task of carting the family around, the Ford Ranger and the Mazda BT-50 are similar, having the best cabin and tray space. As they share a lot of their components, it’s no surprise that they also have similar strengths. They are the most powerful of the four, and with the greatest towing capacity, they handle South Australian roads well and thrive in off-road conditions. The BT-50’s stiffer suspension is not as comfortable as the Australian-developed suspension of the Ranger, especially over bumpy roads.
That said, the BT-50 has the highest ground clearance of the four, helping it get over the really rough stuff with ease. Holden has had a long relationship with Isuzu in building and developing the Rodeo and Colorado utes. Of the two, the Colorado is our top pick, having been designed with comfort in mind, giving it a softer ride both on and off road. When new, the Triton had a five-year warranty, which means that half a decade on, most major repairs would have been covered. Safety levels are relatively high across the board, with each ute getting a five-star ANCAP rating except the Mitsubishi Triton, which scored a four.

What’s not
Big cars mean big bills, whether it’s the fuel bill (our four contenders are equally thirsty) or running and repair costs. The Holden Colorado and the Mazda BT-50 are slightly more expensive than the others to run, with the latter needing a service every six months or 10,000km. Wresting any of these utes into a tight shopping centre car park will be a task, so if you haven’t lived with a ute before, make sure you have some ‘test parks’ at your local shopping centre before you commit to buying.
The Triton has the tightest turning circle of the four at 11.8m, and is narrower and shorter than the other four. Practically-wise, it’s our top pick.
All four utes have been subject to recalls, so make sure any vehicle you’re looking at buying has all necessary work carried out, especially the Takata airbag recall. To check, just go to ismyairbagsafe.com.au and enter either the rego or VIN number of the car you’re thinking of buying. Our mates on the spanners tell us that none of our contenders have major common faults, but the Triton can get carbon build-up in the manifold which could cause injector issues.

No matter which ute you’re interested in buying, make sure it has been serviced on time and by an experienced mechanic. This is especially important with the Ranger and the BT-50, as both can develop engine problems if the correct oil draining process isn’t followed.
Finally, take a look underneath the car for signs of stone and scraping damage. This will tell you how hard a life the ute has had.

The value package
The Triton has depreciated the most, which is bad news for its first owner, but great news for you. The Triton, along with the Colorado and BT-50, comes with 17-inch alloy wheels, auto climate-controlled air-conditioning, a leather steering wheel, fog lights and side steps. All four have cruise control, power windows and dual front and head airbags.

The Holden Colorado has the shortest list of standard features of the four. As the Mazda BT-50 shares a lot of the same mechanical components as the Ranger, you would expect the two to have similar features, but this isn’t the case.

The BT-50 is better-equipped, with rear child-seat anchor points, a differential lock, hill descent control, hill holder, emergency stop signals, halogen head lights, sat-nav, a trailer stability system and height-adjustable front seats. Overall, the Triton is our good-value pick. It was the cheapest new and is even cheaper used, with a substantial list of features.

The drive
The Ford Ranger and the Mazda BT-50 are the most powerful contenders with their 3.2L engines. The Triton has the smallest engine and may struggle with a full load in some conditions. With all utes, handling is dependent on load weight.

Their firm suspension means all can be a little jittery over bumps when unladen, but the Colorado is the softest of the bunch.

The final word
Buying a dual cab ute is a lifestyle choice. Owners have the freedom to travel off-road with bulky goods, but running costs and overall comfort are often compromised. Of the four utes we tested, the Ranger is the best all-rounder, followed closely by the Mazda BT-50. The Colorado is the big comfortable cruiser while the Triton is the best value for money.
Surviving a cyclone

Between November and April, tropical cyclones build over the warmer oceans north of Australia. The cyclones pick up power and move towards land, bringing with them torrential rain, tidal surges and destructive winds that can reach up to 280km/h. While cyclones can be deadly and cause extensive property damage, meteorologists are able to identify when systems are forming off the coast, giving residents valuable time to prepare for the weather event.

How do I prepare my property?
There are a few measures you can take to prepare your property. Firstly, if you live in a cyclone-prone area, ask your local council if your house has been constructed according to the cyclone rating building code.
You'll also want to maintain your property. The State Emergency Service (SES) suggests you do the following to minimise damage to your home during a cyclone:
- Keep your gutters clear of debris and leaves;
- Repair loose tiles and ensure roofing sheets are firmly fastened;
- Trim trees and branches close to your home;
- Fit shutters or metal screens to all external glass areas;
- Secure large items such as garden sheds, boats, trailers and rainwater tanks.
You should also check if your insurance policy covers damage, power surges, flooding, tidal surges, and debris removal. Make sure your car and other vehicles, such as caravans, are adequately covered by insurance.

Do I stay or go?
You should have a plan for when there's a cyclone approaching. Make sure your family recognises the standard emergency warning signal, which is broadcast via television and radio when a cyclone is less than 12 hours away.
Consider whether you'll stay at home or go to a local cyclone emergency shelter. There are also community buildings capable of providing protection from winds up to 300km/h.

What should I keep in my cyclone emergency kit?
It's a good idea to put an emergency kit together, ready to go in the case of a cyclone.
It should include the following items:
- a battery-operated radio and spare batteries;
- a torch, candles and waterproof matches;
- a first-aid kit and any essential medicines;
- a change of clothes;
- blankets and sleeping bags;
- essential toiletries, including sunscreen;
- money, including change for phone calls;
- documents like birth and marriage certificates, driver’s licence, passport and insurance policies;
- strong and sealable plastic bags;
- non-perishable foods;
- 10 litres of bottled water per person;
- a portable cooker and cooking equipment.

For information about AANT insurance, speak to a consultant on 8925 5901 or visit aant.com.au/aant-insurance

This article was originally published by QBE Insurance Australia. This article is intended as a general guide only. You should consult the Northern Territory emergency services for further information.
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Explore your own backyard
There were three things I brought home from central Australia: a greater knowledge of Indigenous culture, spectacular scenery imprinted on my mind, and a lot of red dirt stuck to my shoes.

Words: Jeremy Rochow

There’s nothing like exploring your own backyard. It gives you a greater appreciation of what you’ve got so close to home.

I’ll never forget my first trip to Uluru. As the plane descended, I caught a glimpse of the giant red behemoth, rising above the surrounding landscape.

The traditional custodians of Uluru and surrounding areas, the Anangu people, have a spiritual connection to this land and believe it was created by their ancestors.

The 348m-high rock is the centrepiece of some of these beliefs, but you’ll quickly find there are plenty of other places in the region to explore as well.

**Walk to the Valley of the Winds**

The ancient dome-like rock formations of Kata Tjuta rise above the dunes, towering over the speckle of green native trees which are scattered around the boulders like an Aboriginal dot painting.

Picturesque views are the norm at Kata Tjuta, but the Karingana lookout is the most spectacular of the lot.

Orange and red hues of cascading rock – created by the oxidation of minerals in the dirt – frame a spectacular image of gigantic boulders and green tree tops contrasted by the blue sky.

The best time to take the 8km hike through Kata Tjuta is in the early morning as the sun begins to rise, before the crowds of people arrive.

This will give you a chance to absorb the breathtaking views and watch the shadows slowly disappear, creating the illusion that the rocks are changing from a deep rouge to a light orange colour.

**Try your hand at dot painting**

Following the hike, it’s time to take a load off and relax a little. In front of me lies a small black canvas, some paints and a couple of brushes.

My task is to tell my own story through dot painting – not an easy feat for somebody who can only draw stick figures.

My teacher, local Anangu artist Valerie, has shown me a few traditional Aboriginal symbols to work with, and now sits underneath a tree working on her own piece of artwork. I tentatively begin painting, first a few Indigenous symbols, then the dots.

For thousands of years, the Anangu people have passed their stories down from generation to generation.

The Maruku Indigenous Dot Painting Workshop gives you a chance to learn more about Aboriginal painting, culture and the symbols they’ve used to tell their stories for thousands of years.

During the workshop you’ll also learn a few introductory Pitjantjatjara words – the local language spoken by the Anangu.

**Eat bush tucker under the stars at Tali Wiru**

The term bush tucker should be used lightly here, because Tali Wiru is a four-hour fine dining experience combining Indigenous flavours with modern cooking techniques.

Before sitting down for dinner under the stars, I’m offered a spectacular view of Uluru in the fading light, backed by the sounds of a didgeridoo.

Canapés of compressed cucumber with gulguk (green ant) gin and tonic, and kangaroo and quandong pie are presented to guests as they enjoy the picturesque view.

The Tali Wiru chef then appears with a bowl bursting with the colourful ingredients they’ll be cooking. Finger limes, wattle seed, lemon myrtle, bush tomatoes, desert quandongs and pigface succulents are all on the menu.

These traditional Indigenous ingredients truly shine over the next few hours, in a range of dishes inspired by the surrounding landscape.

Beetroot is baked with foraged spinifex and desert oak, and freeze-dried finger limes and crocodile skin accompany a Spencer Gulf prawn.

Following the main course, the lights go out and everyone’s attention turns to the stars in the night sky. A storyteller shares Indigenous tales as we gaze to the heavens. Without any city lights obstructing the view, the stars shine bright and the Milky Way appears resplendent.

From one spectacle to another, dessert is a performance in itself. A wave of waiters descend upon our tables with a dish of Davidson plum, lemon myrtle, quandong and a small chocolate disc.

The theatre isn’t over yet, with the waiter pouring hot chocolate over the disc, melting it into the dish.

The night draws to a close in true Northern Territory fashion with tea and a yarn by the fire.

**Visit the Field of Light**

Like the desert after a splash of rain, thousands of lights begin to flicker and come to life as darkness encroaches and Uluru fades into the background.

The lights – all 50,000 of them – are part of an art installation by British artist Bruce Munro and represent the convergence of...
Uluru is one of the most impressive landmarks in Australia, and there are a few ways to explore it. Walking around the rock is probably the cheapest way to discover every nook and cranny open to the public. It can take about four hours to circumnavigate though, so plenty of time is needed.

The Mala Walk is one of the more spectacular walks at Uluru, finishing at Kantju Gorge and waterhole at the base of the rock.

Here, you’ll be confronted with the sheer scale of the rock face – which resembles red slate – rising up at a right angle from the ground.

If you’re looking for an alternative to walking, you can hire a bike from the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre. This can cut the travel time around Uluru to about two hours.

However, if you want a truly unique experience, an Uluru Segway Tour might be the perfect way to get around.

A fully trained guide will tell you Tjukurpa stories – tales about how Uluru was created, which provide ancestors with important life lessons – as you cruise around the rock on a Segway.

Following my Uluru experience, I’m back at the Ayers Rock Airport.

As the plane taxis down the runway and takes off, passengers are given one final look at Uluru and Kata Tjuta in the distance. Palya (goodbye) Uluru.

**DARWIN LIGHTS UP**

Don’t worry if you live in Darwin and can’t make it to Uluru to see Bruce Munro’s Field of Light installation. The world-renowned artist is currently working on an exhibition in the heart of Darwin which will feature eight immersive large-scale light installations through the CBD and waterfront precinct.

Bruce Munro: Tropical light is the artist’s only city wide exhibition and will feature work from local artists to create a 2.5km self-guided art trail. Each of the eight illuminated sculptures will reflect Munro’s experiences in Australia and the NT, including Darwin’s natural beauty, unique wildlife, welcoming locals and glorious sunsets. Bruce Munro: Tropical Light will open at the beginning of November and run until the end of April.

**Explore Uluru… without climbing it**

It’s my last night in central Australia, and I want one final look at Uluru while the sun sets.

A 15-minute walk from the resort at Yulara is the uncrowded Uluru lookout, which affords a stunning view of the formidable chunk of sandstone towering over the rest of the landscape.

As the sun begins to set, a white and pink haze forms on the horizon, and the last bit of light splashes across Uluru.
01 Watch the Penguin Parade
Victoria
Take a waddle on the wild side with Phillip Island Nature Parks. Each night, hundreds of penguins emerge from the ocean onto the island, scuttling across the beach back to their burrows.

02 Embrace Aboriginal culture
Northern Territory
World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park is a natural haven, brimming with wetlands, rivers, rainforest and towering sandstone escarpments. Kakadu is rich in Indigenous culture and history, with Aboriginal rock art dating back 20,000 years.

03 Reef adventure
Queensland
Famous for its kaleidoscopic coral and marine life, the jaw-dropping Great Barrier Reef is home to a vast range of endangered species, but is under extreme threat from pollution, climate change and fishing. Thankfully, a range of companies offer sustainable snorkelling and diving tours, immersing visitors in incredible experiences.

04 Trek across Tassie
Tasmania
What better way to experience Tasmania’s ever-changing landscape than on foot? See some of the country’s most beautiful scenery on the Overland Track. From snowy wilderness to glacially carved valleys and rainforests, the track snakes 65km from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Clair.

05 An island paradise
Western Australia
Rottnest Island is renowned for its conservation, with major efforts going into preserving and protecting its diverse flora and fauna. The island is home to the quokka – a small (adorable) marsupial, famous for appearing in visitors’ Instagram selfies. Immerse yourself in marine life, breathtaking scenery, beautiful beaches and Aboriginal culture.

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