

PREPARING  
FOR YOUR  
**WANDER OUTBACK**  
IN THE *Upper Gascoyne*



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

The Shire of Upper Gascoyne is situated within a relatively isolated area of the beautiful state of Western Australia. Covering an area of 57,809km<sup>2</sup>, there are around 2,000km of roads to explore, taking you to the 2023 National Tidy Town Award winning town of Gascoyne Junction, the ancient landscapes of Kennedy Range National Park and the world's biggest rock at Mount Augustus National Park, all whilst traversing the 80,000km<sup>2</sup> Gascoyne River catchment. The locals look forward to welcoming you; however, to help ensure your journey is memorable for all the right reasons enjoy these travel preparation tips, and some care and courtesy information as you explore their backyard.

Of the 2,000kms of road just over 100km are sealed. It is possible to explore the region with a 4WD or 2WD vehicle with a little preparation. The works team take pride in their roads and work tirelessly throughout the year to keep the roads well maintained for locals and visitors. During the planning stage of your wander outback it is safe to assume that the Upper Gascoyne roads will be all good for your adventure. It is strongly recommend to watch the weather in the Upper Gascoyne region in the week leading up to your visit as rainfall can have an impact on access to roads, and also checking the road condition report on the Shire of Upper Gascoyne website. You can subscribe to the road report and receive instant updates via email when there is a change to road conditions: [www.uppergascoyne.wa.gov.au/roadreport](http://www.uppergascoyne.wa.gov.au/roadreport) This is the first thing that is updated when a change is made to the road network. If the report indicates it hasn't been updated in a while it simply means that there has been no change since that date.

The Shire website has lots of great information to help plan your journey but if you still have questions the team at the Gascoyne Junction Community Resource and Visitor Information Centre are more than happy to answer your questions. [www.uppergascoyne.wa.gov.au/tourism.aspx](http://www.uppergascoyne.wa.gov.au/tourism.aspx)

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### Vehicle Preparation

Prior to heading off, make absolutely sure that your vehicle is well prepared for the journey.

- Give your vehicle a check up. Schedule a service before leaving home.
- Ensure that the cooling system on the vehicle is operating effectively and keep water in the vehicle to top up if necessary.
- Ensure that the tyres on your vehicle are in good condition. It is strongly recommend to have your standard highway tyres replaced with all terrain tyres for any off bitumen driving no matter where you are in Western Australia.
- It is recommended that two spare tyres be taken for your vehicle and if pulling a trailer or caravan, ensure that there are enough spare tyres and spare parts for them as well.
- Lowering your tyre pressure to the following psi's can help improve your vehicle's ride quality, tyre flexibility, reduce the risk of punctures and improve overall safety.
  - General gravel roads: 35psi.
  - Rough gravel: 26psi to 32psi.
  - Jagged rocks: 16psi to 24psi. (Source: Total 4 x 4)
- If you are a bit handy, pack an emergency tyre repair plug kit and a good quality 12V air compressor to plug flat tyres and reinflate them - it might get you out of a pinch.
- Ensure you have plenty of fuel. Keep your tank full and carry a jerry can if possible in case of emergencies.

- It is recommended that you have either a UHF/VHF radio, personal EPIRB Device or satellite phone system installed. It is to be remembered that there is no mobile telephone coverage except within an approximate 10km radius of both Gascoyne Junction and the Mount Augustus Tourist Park. Gascoyne Junction has Telstra service and Mt Augustus both Telstra and Optus.
- Carry a good set of tools and some spare parts, in case some immediate repairs are necessary.
- Do not carry too much weight on roof racks as this can make the vehicle unstable.
- Carry a fire extinguisher in your vehicle
- ALWAYS Drive to conditions, look out for animals and stock. Slow down and enjoy the ride.
- **IF YOU DO BREAK DOWN STAY WITH YOUR VEHICLE.**

### Personal Preparation

- Make sure you have good quality maps and plan your route. The Gascoyne Junction Community Resource and Information Centre has current maps for the Shire and also a range of Hema maps of the wider region.
- Store water in small containers instead of one large tank and check for leaks. In warm conditions it is recommended to carry 10 litres of water per person per day.
- If you are undertaking hikes in our national parks it is recommended that you consume one litre of water for every hour of being active. Remember do not wait to feel thirsty before taking a drink.
- Do not use waterholes, dams, bores, mills, tanks or troughs as a water source
- Do not use soap or detergents in any natural water courses or stock watering points
- Carry enough food to feed each traveller in your party for two days
- Pack a packet of matches or a lighter
- Remember to take all your medications and repeat scripts with you. The nearest pharmacies to Gascoyne Junction are located in Carnarvon and Meekatharra.
- Carry with you a summary of your medical history or make sure your medical app on your phone has this information.
- Enter an ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact in your phone.
- Enter the RFDS emergency number in your phone 1300 669 569.
- Pack a first aid kit and make sure all members of your travel party know where to find it and are familiar with its contents.
- Be sun smart and make sure you have a hat, sunscreen
- Insect repellent and/or a fly net may be helpful. These are on sale at the Gascoyne Junction Community Resource and Visitor Information Centre if you forget or run out.
- It is said there is no such thing as bad weather, just poor wardrobe choices. Make sure you wear clothing suitable for the climate and good walking shoes. Pack warmer clothes for the evenings (the nights can get chilly in the winter months)
- Try to avoid travelling in the hottest part of the year which is between October and March.
- It is strongly advised that prior to departure you notify friends/family, and also notify someone at your destination of the expected time of your arrival and the route you are taking. It is important that once you arrive or your schedule changes that you advise the people you notified.

## Driving on our roads

When heading out to explore the Upper Gascoyne the most important thing to remember is to drive to the road conditions. Here are some tips for driving safely and to use good driver etiquette.

- The Shire of Upper Gascoyne is part of the larger Gascoyne River catchment with more river, creek and gully crossings than any other local government area in Australia. Rainfall anywhere in the catchment can cause road closures at different times throughout the year so always check the weather forecast in the lead up to your visit and check out the shire webpage for the latest road condition report [www.uppergascoyne.wa.gov.au/roadreport](http://www.uppergascoyne.wa.gov.au/roadreport)
- If the roads are wet they are closed. Please observe signs and gates. Fines may be issued for driving on closed roads.
- The decision to close roads is based on rainfall, river levels and flash flooding which can cause washouts on roads. Roads are reopened when it is safe for road users to use the network again. Given the circumstances this can be between hours and several days for major damage as emergency repairs are made.
- Often the Shire needs to close roads in areas where there hasn't been rain to prevent drivers travelling into affected areas or downstream flooded rivers. This is done for your safety. Please leave the guess work to the Shire!
- If you are caught at a flooded crossing never attempt to cross flooded bridges or causeways.
- Driving on unsealed roads can lead to dust. Dust can impact on visibility for drivers. If you see a vehicle oncoming, slow down which will reduce the amount of dust trailing you making it safer for not only yourself but fellow road users.
- As you enter Gascoyne Junction from an unsealed road you will see signs to Drop Your Dust. This is to stop vehicles bringing dust and debris that is accumulated in your wheels and undercarriage into town. Simply stopping, tapping your tyres with a heavy implement and driving forwards and backwards a few times for any dust that has accumulated in your tyre treads and rims to fall away before entering town and leaving dust over the bitumen. The community of Gascoyne Junction is proud to be the 2023 Australia's Tidiest Town and appreciate you making the effort to help us maintain our beautiful town.
- Avoid driving at sunrise and sunset to minimise the sun impacting your line of sight. This is also the time of day that wildlife and livestock are most active on the road.
- Road trains are frequent across our Shire. Always give trucks and road trains (which can be up to 54 metres in length) plenty of room; if overtaking, allow at least 1km of clear road ahead. Most heavy vehicles use channel 40 on the UHF radio. Give them a call before overtaking.
- Ensure that the driver takes a rest stop every two hours as fatigue mixed with gravel roads is a recipe for disaster. Make sure you take a look at the Kingsford Smith Mail Run and the Wool Wagon Pathway which are part of the Outback Pathways. There are regular stops along the pathways to enjoy a break as you explore the Upper Gascoyne.
- In summer check with DFES to see if there are any fires burning in the district as bushfire and associated smoke can cause unforeseen problems. Follow their social media or visit their website for updates.
- Never park in truck parking bays which are provided exclusively for the use of trucks and road trains. These rigs need room to manoeuvre their trailers and often need to run throughout the night to keep their refrigeration units cool.
- Rest areas are provided for regular fatigue breaks and there are camping and caravan park facilities in Gascoyne Junction, Kennedy Range National Park and at Mount Augustus Tourist Park. Free camping is not permitted within 16km of Gascoyne Junction.

## Stray Animals

Please be aware that there are cattle, sheep, goats, camels, kangaroos and emus that have the potential to walk or run out onto the road at any time. If you hit one of these animals at speed they can damage your vehicle. Be aware that stray animals are generally more prevalent especially at dawn and dusk. The vehicles headlights can attract animals or blind them which can make them freeze on the road in front of you.

If you are driving and an animal does come out on the road here are some handy tips:

- Apply the brakes firmly on your vehicle but not to the point where the wheels lock up and you lose control of vehicle.
- Do not swerve violently to miss the animal as this could cause your vehicle to roll over leading to injury and possible death.

## Pastoral Stations

Within the entire area of the Shire of Upper Gascoyne, except designated town sites, there are pastoral leases. This means that the lease holder has the right to run a variety of livestock. To this end the pastoralists have installed fences, gates and watering points to assist them in their endeavours.

In general terms travellers are not permitted to enter these pastoral stations unless they have prior approval from the lease holders.

If you are given permission to be on a Pastoral Property here are some basic guidelines:

- All gates should be left as they are found
- Lighting of fires is strictly prohibited
- The dumping of rubbish is strictly prohibited
- Fences should not be cut, removed or driven over
- Do not camp near windmills and watering facilities. Livestock will stand off, not drink and die of thirst.
- Do not interfere with livestock as station stock are easily frightened.
- It is against the law to discharge a firearm on a Station property unless you have permission from the pastoralist.
- **It is to be noted that many of the pastoral properties use 1080 dog baits in an attempt to control the wild dog population. If your animal eats one of these baits they will die a very horrible death, as such please keep your pet on a leash at all times.**

## Mining Leases

Many of the areas within the Shire of Upper Gascoyne regardless of whether the area is covered by a Pastoral Lease have Mining Leases sitting over them. Generally speaking unless you have permission from the Lease holder you are not permitted to fossick. Information can be found from the TENGGRAPH online mapping system about who owns what tenement and where they are located. It is to be remembered that Lease Holders pay the State lease payments and they also pay Shire Rates.

## Travelling on Country

The Shire of Upper Gascoyne sits on five indigenous countries. There are a number of places and objects that hold special significance to the local Aboriginal people. Visitors are welcome but please show respect at these sites and heed signage.

**IMPORTANTLY ENJOY YOUR VISIT TO OUR SHIRE, BE SAFE SO WE CAN SEE YOU AGAIN IN THE FUTURE**

