

## **The Great Queensland National Park Disaster of 2012.**

Its not all fun and games out here on the road, gypsyng (new word) all over the country side. Sure the country is great, the views spectacular and the people mostly friendly but you do miss a few things. The routines go out the window and the comfort zone although still there, is modified a bit. Everything is so much smaller inside the "wheely house" so you have to be so much more organized or shuffle around stuff. A person of my organizational habits obviously does a fair bit more shuffling than most.

The small size does however have its positive benefits, for example, from where I'm sitting I can reach nearly everything I could want. I can reach the fridge, the sink, the cook top, my clothes and with a bit of practice I reckon I could hit the toilet maybe eight times out of ten. This last activity has been banned by a higher power so it will remain a guess ... I guess.

### **Lakefield National Park.**

In Brisbane in a little room filled with computers and monitors sit tiny pale creatures that haven't seen the light of day since their inbred parents let them out of the cupboard and sent them straight off to the sheltered workshop that is Queensland National Parks. At the biggest desk sits the head pale little creature. This organizational Einstein has introduced an internet based "e" booking system for camping in what is arguably the least internet friendly National Park in Australia. Not only are you expected to book and pay for the exact dates and campsites you want before you arrive, you are expected to know how long it is going to take to get there and how long you intend to sight see along the way. Now I admit that I am not "accountant" accurate when it comes to dates and times but I'm pretty organized. It seems to me (and everyone else I have spoken to) that the person who knows the answers to the booking questions has already been there and therefore has no need to book. Either that or they are clairvoyant. Or perhaps they work in the "little room".

To compound the problem we have four different maps of the park. When I say different I mean all the features are there but in different relative locations. It's like they move each time someone draws a new map.

Now so as to not penalize those without computers, you can ring the toll free number and book your site or sites. This is a great idea except

1. There are no public phones in the park.
2. Some areas have Telstra coverage but then it ceases to be toll free.
3. When you finally get transferred to the correct department you find that Simon, or John or Wally doesn't have a clue where the sites are or what facilities they have. That's because they are a thousand kilometers away in Brisbane in the "little room".
4. So when you manage to book your specific site after your twenty minute "toll free" phone call you are now free to use the site. But when you turn up its full because someone else booked it on the internet 2 weeks ago.

So basically we now have a system where the park is full of people wandering around scratching their heads and pretty much camping wherever they end up.

What was wrong with the old system of self registration. You turn up, if there's a space you fill out the envelope and leave five bucks per person in the honesty box. The ranger picks up the envelopes and money, has a chat, tells you the highlights of the area and all is good.

By the way for your five bucks you get absolutely nothing not even a toilet. So you ask what's it like at the end of the tourist season .... not good.

The official line will no doubt be that "it's the first year, there are bound to be a few teething problems and our staff are actively pursuing a rational solution to your concerns".

I'm sorry. I have ranted too long. But it's Telsta all over again. By next year we will be booking through Robert (real name Raj) in the New Delhi office of Queensland National Parks.

Robert: "I'm so sorry that you are displeased with the usually most excellent accommodations in the park which is just outside my home town of Queensland but I can assure you sir that it will be alright in the end..... and if it is not alright it is not yet the end"

Me: "The End"

Where's the pictures?



The original motley crew.



So many Lakes, so little time.

And for "Aunty Kerry"... some Aboriginal art.



Large breasted woman with dog



Road kill Echidna