

Bunya Mountains — Carnarvon Gorge

Dates: *Sunday, 13th July to Sunday, 20th July, 2008* **(8 days)**

Cost: \$1,700 **Style:** *3 nights camping – 4 nights accommodated* **Start and Finish:** *Brisbane*

Explore two outstanding Queensland icons — Carnarvon and Bunya Mountains National Parks. Carnarvon Gorge is famous for its Aboriginal rock art (stencils and engravings) and the Bunya Mountains are long overdue for World Heritage listing because of their outstanding Gondwanan Auracarian forests (Bunya and Hoop Pines) which survive there as relics. Appreciate the resource rich Darling Downs and Brigalow Belt and better understand the developments in this booming region.

John Sinclair who has been regularly visiting these destinations since the early 1960s, will lead his last GO BUSH safari to these areas taking up to 20 safarists in a Coaster bus. The group will camp for 3 nights at Carnarvon.

Draft Itinerary

Day 1, Sunday 13th July: Depart Brisbane at 7.30 am by bus. The almost 500 kilometre journey along the Warrego Highway to Roma passes through Toowoomba, The Darling Downs, Dalby and many other communities of the Western Downs. It traverses the famous Brigalow Belt, one of Australia's most productive wheat and cotton growing areas and allows an opportunity to appreciate the diversity of the agriculture and the resources boom occurring in this part of Queensland. Roma is a thriving community at the heart of a rich sheep and cattle grazing area and boasts the largest store cattle market in Australia. It is also where oil was first discovered in Australia.

Accommodation: Caravan Park cabins, Roma.

Day 2, Monday 14th July: Briefly explore Roma's heritage before heading about 250 kms north to Carnarvon National Park. Boulder-strewn Carnarvon Creek winds 35 kms through the gorge over which white sandstone cliffs up to 200 metres high tower. It also has spectacular narrow, vibrantly coloured and lush side gorges.

Camp: Takarakka, Carnarvon Gorge.

Day 3, Tuesday 15th July: During millions of years meandering Carnarvon Creek created the gorge by wearing away the soft sandstone of the plateau. Spectacular vertical white, yellow, orange and brown cliffs on both sides of the gorge reach up to 200 metres. Carry a packed lunch for the 18 kilometre return walk to Cathedral Cave. However there are a number of lesser destinations along side tracks to side gorges including the Moss Gardens, Ampitheatre, the Art Gallery and Wards Canyon. All justify the efforts of exploration. The highlight of the day include the grand scenery, diverse wildlife and the spectacular rock art in two galleries.

Camp: Takarakka, Carnarvon Gorge.



Day 4, Wednesday, 16th July: Spend a less strenuous day continuing to explore Carnarvon National Park and take the opportunity to observe its abundant wildlife and/or explore other side gorges.

Camp: Takarakka

Day 5, Thursday, 17th July: Depart Carnarvon stopping for morning tea at Rolleston and then proceeding on to Moura the site of one of the oldest and most spectacular open cut coal mines in the Bowen Basin. In 1967 the open-cut coal operation was using the largest operating dragline in the world - a huge piece of equipment capable of moving 200 tonnes of coal at a time. By 1968 the coalfields were the largest in Queensland. We plan to gain some insights into this huge operation before heading on to Theodore, a legacy of Queensland's experiment with state socialism.

Accommodation: Theodore Hotel cabins

Day 6, Friday, 18th July: After a brief diversion to view the Isla Gorge National Park we travel on to the Bunya Mountains through the Brigalow Belt via Taroom, Miles and Dalby. Our accommodation is just below Mt Mowbullan, the highest part of this section of Eastern Australia's Great Divide. Appreciate the magnificence of these once widespread auracarian forests, surviving relics of Gondwana.

Accommodation: Bunya Mountains

Day 7, Saturday, 19th July: Spend the day exploring the rainforest of this mountain top National Park which is dominated by a tall, impressive but primitive rainforest punctuated by grassy "balds". This rainforest of a type which once covered the Australian continent before it dried out in the not very distant past as a result of climate change.

Accommodation: Bunya Mountains

Day 8, Sunday, 20th July: Descend the mountains back onto the Darling Downs to visit Jondaryan Woolshed, a historic site which houses a many relics of Australia's pioneering past. After a tour of the precinct and witnessing a demonstration of sheep shearing head back to Brisbane to arrive at about 6.30 pm.

