Day 1 – Brisbane to Mitchell

Head Outback, beyond the Black Stump, to the land where explorers, drovers and bushrangers roamed. A place where cattle stations larger than some European countries share space with huge coal mines but the outback hospitality is as intimate and friendly as ever. Follow the footsteps of explorers Mitchell and Leichhardt to the birthplaces of the Australian Labor Party and QANTAS. Marvel at how modern technology is changing education in the bush. See more stars than you can imagine as you sit beside a roaring campfire and try your luck at striking it rich on the gemfields.

**Journey:**
- Brisbane to Toowoomba: approx 135 km / 1 ¾ hours
- Toowoomba to Miles: approx 125 km / 1 ½ hours
- Miles to Roma: approx 140 km / 1 ¾ hours
- Roma to Mitchell: approx 100 km / 1 ¼ hours

**Highlights:**
- Toowoomba

**Morning:**
- We depart Brisbane early this morning and climb the Toowoomba Range to Picnic Point for morning tea. We then continue into the Darling Downs where we will see Cotton farming and Coal mining.

**Afternoon:**
- We will stop in Miles to have our lunch before continuing to Roma, the home of the Big Rig Oil and Gas Museum. We continue on to our overnight stay at the historic sheep and cattle station, Bonus Downs, southwest of Mitchell.

**Evening:**
- Bunk down tonight in a shearing shed on a 33,000 acre working cattle and sheep station. We will arrive in time to explore the beautifully restored historic buildings and see a modern working station in operation before dinner. Enjoy a campfire under the stars with damper after dinner.

**Accommodation:** Bonus Downs, Bollon Rd, Mitchell. www.bonusdowns.webls.net
- Ph: (07) 4623 1573
- (Included Meals: Dinner)

Students need to bring their morning tea and a packed lunch with their own water bottle for the first day.

Day 2 – Mitchell to Barcaldine

**Journey:**
- Mitchell to Blackall: approx 400 km / 4 ½ hours
- Blackall to Barcaldine: approx 107 km / 1 ¼ hours

**Highlights:**
- The Black Stump
- Tree of Knowledge
- Australian Workers Heritage Museum

**Morning:**
- This morning we will bid farewell to our station hosts and continue northwest to Augathella, the old stamping ground of the notorious Bushrangers, the Kenniff Brothers. We then continue on to Blackall for lunch, the home of the legendary shearer Jackie Howe and the original Black Stump. From here we are travelling “beyond the Black Stump” to Barcaldine.

**Afternoon:**
- Experience: Australian Workers Heritage Centre and Tree of Knowledge Memorial, 94 Ash St, Barcaldine. Ph: (07) 4651 2422
- This afternoon we will arrive in Barcaldine where we will visit the Australian Workers Heritage Centre where we learn about the ordinary workers and their contribution to building the modern nation of Australia. We will also get the opportunity to get our photo taken under the Tree Of Knowledge Memorial, built to commemorate the birthplace of the Australian Labor Party.
Evening: We will then settle in to our accommodation for the next two nights at the Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre.

Accommodation: Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre, Ash St, Barcaldine.
Ph: (07) 4651 2530
(Included Meals: Breakfast; Morning Tea; Lunch; Dinner)

Day 3 – Barcaldine and a day trip to Longreach

Journey: Barcaldine to Longreach ................................................................................................approx 107km / 1 ¼ hours
Longreach to Barcaldine ................................................................................................approx 107km / 1 ¼ hours

Highlights:
- Stockman’s Hall of Fame
- Qantas Founders Museum
- School of the Air

Morning: After a hearty breakfast we make our way to the outback town of Longreach.

Experience: Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame, Landsborough Highway, Longreach.
Ph: (07) 4658 2166

The Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame was developed to celebrate the pioneering men and women – such as the Aborigines, explorers, stockmen and others responsible for opening up the outback. Hear their stories and learn about how Australia’s unique bush character and resilience was created.

We can enjoy our morning tea on the front lawn of the Centre.

Experience: Longreach School of Distance Education, Sir James Walker Drive, Longreach.
Ph: (07) 4658 4215

We will visit the Longreach School of Distance Education, where we will get an insight into the challenges that students face in remote areas of Australia. We will also see how technology has changed over the years and how important telecommunications are in the outback.

We will have lunch at Anzac Park in Longreach.

Afternoon: Experience: Qantas Founders Museum, Longreach Airport, Sir Hudson Fysh Drive, Longreach.
Ph: (07) 4658 3737

This afternoon we visit the Qantas museum. We have the opportunity to explore inside an actual decommissioned Qantas 747 aircraft. We will also visit the museum and learn about the history of our National Carrier and admire the changing fashions of the air hostesses.

We return to Barcaldine to Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre for dinner and a well-earned rest.

Evening: Accommodation: Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre, Ash St, Barcaldine.
Ph: (07) 4651 2530
(Included Meals: Breakfast; Morning Tea; Lunch; Dinner)
Day 4 – Barcaldine to Lake Maraboon (near Emerald)

Journey:
- Barcaldine to Alpha ......................................................................................................... approx 140km / 1 ¾ hours
- Alpha to Sapphire ............................................................................................................ approx 145km / 1 ¾ hours
- Sapphire to Emerald .......................................................................................................... approx 60 km / 1 hour

Highlights:
- Fossicking for precious Gemstones
- Underground Mine Tour

Morning:
After breakfast we leave Barcaldine and travel east toward Alpha, where we will have morning tea. Alpha has recently been announced as the site of a new enormous Coal Mine. We will then continue to the gemfields area of Sapphire and Rubyvale.

Experience: Miners Heritage, 97 Heritage Rd, Rubyvale. Ph: (07) 4985 4444
At Miners Heritage we will go underground to experience Australia’s largest underground sapphire walk-in mine. We will learn how the professional miners find their precious treasures before trying our luck at fossicking for sapphires. We even get to keep any sapphires that we find!

We have our lunch here at Rubyvale.

Afternoon:
We will travel east through the Central Highlands to Emerald, home of the largest Van Gogh canvas painting of Sunflowers in the world! We have the opportunity to learn about the history of Emerald in the nearby unique heritage walk. From here we head out to Lake Maraboon on the mighty Fairbairn Dam and our accommodation.

Evening: Accommodation: Lake Maraboon Discovery Holiday Park. Ph: (07) 4982 3677

(Included Meals: Breakfast; Morning Tea; Lunch; Dinner)

Day 5 – Lake Maraboon to Brisbane

Journey:
- Lake Maraboon to Roma ............................................................................................................ approx 390km / 4 ½ hours
- Roma to Chinchilla ............................................................................................................. approx 187km / 2 hours
- Chinchilla to Toowoomba ................................................................................................. approx 166 km / 2 hours
- Toowoomba to Brisbane ..................................................................................................... approx 135km / 1 ¾ hours

Highlights:
- Travel over the Great Dividing Range
- View Bottle trees

Morning:
We depart early this morning after breakfast and head south through Springsure and Rolleston. We then travel over the Great Dividing Range to Roma where we will enjoy a picnic lunch in the park.

Afternoon:
We make our way east to Chinchilla then on to Dalby.

Evening:
We will arrive in time for dinner in Toowoomba. We arrive home to Brisbane this evening at around 9.00pm.

(Included Meals: Breakfast; Morning Tea; Lunch; Dinner)
Tour Inclusions:
- All coach travel in an air-conditioned, seat-belted 53 seat luxury tour coach with TV, DVD, radio, PA, CD player and iPod dock. Two accredited drivers on tour for safety at all times.
- Dormitory style accommodation and shearing shed (sleeping mats provided*).
- Full catering for all meals as specified.
- Entrance fees to all attractions as specified.

Items not included:
- Crockery, cutlery and tea towel
- Sleeping bag and pillow
- Personal items
- Travel Insurance

*This tour may also be done as a full camping safari with all camping equipment supplied. This would reduce the cost per student. Contact us for a quote.

Tour Highlights:
- Toowoomba
- The Black Stump
- Tree of Knowledge
- Australian Workers Heritage Museum
- Stockman’s Hall of Fame
- QANTAS Museum
- School of the Air
- Fossicking for precious Gemstones
- Underground Mine Tour
- Travel over the Great Dividing Range
- View Bottle trees

Relevant Factsheets:
1-4, 7, 8, 13-15, 17

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BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRIES
Blue Bus
Phone: (07) 3820 7815
Email: info@bluebus.com.au
www.bluebus.com.au

Conditions: Price may vary depending on the size of the group. Contact us for a quote that is specific to your group’s needs. Other itineraries are available on request.