



Hello Folks,

Please take the time to read this letter regarding our 2021 touring schedule... A lot has occurred since Covid19 arrived on our Australian shores 12 months ago and while the impacts globally have been disastrous, we've managed to handle things quite well here in Australia. The "Lucky country" we are in many ways and I've felt that more than ever in recent times. As lucky as we are; unsurprisingly, the virus didn't "just disappear one day... like a miracle."

I remember well cancelling the 2020 season and rescheduling trips for 2021. The feeling was this virus would be well past us, at least as far as the way it impacts our lives. It's now evident that this damn virus will be very much be part our lives during 2021.

This being case it's with great disappointment that the discission has been made to cancel our 2021 mainland touring season. This includes all trips in SA, NT, WA and QLD. In a big part this outcome is based the irregularity and inconsistency that comes with state border enforcements when outbreaks occur. The approach we have seen is not conducive to the way in which Aussie Overlander's operates it mainland touring season. Being owner operated, operating over a wide area and crossing state borders regularly as part of our mainland program you could imagine the occurrence of significant disruptions and last-minute cancellations being quite possible or even probable. Our guest's anxiety around travel plans is also something I'm very aware of. A number of you have already expressed concern about the risks they foresee in travelling to and from a trip's departure point. With numerous cases of state borders closing or quarantining arrivals without prior notice this is a very real consideration.

There is also undoubtably an increased health risk that comes with exposure to people from many different regions whilst travelling in a group. The current health advise dictates that anyone who develops (cold like) symptoms is required to isolate and be tested. It's hard to imagine how this will be possible on a group trip whilst in a remote region. Further consider If someone in our group required medical assistance due to onset of virus symptoms. Our trips also increase the risk of unknowingly introducing the virus to remote communities and this is something I'm very conscious of.

In recent weeks we have seen positive news with vaccines on the way for Australia but with rollout time frames, two stage vaccination process and complexities with distribution it's a good 6-month process. The advice is that travel without the risk of outbreaks and consequently border restrictions will still be some time away.

I am aware that many of you are looking forward to your trip immensely, especially considering the changes to our lives in the last 12 months. Consequently, this decision has been very difficult to make and not one I made without considerable thought. Personally, I'd love to be out there traveling with you all, but the reality of situation is that the risks simply outweigh the benefits. I really feel in some ways it would be unethical to go ahead with our previously planned mainland trips for 2021 based on the advice and knowledge gained over the last 12 months living with Covid19.

Moving forward I am well aware that Covid19 and its continued impacts will change the way many people look at travel in the future. From a business perspective I've had to look deeper into this and answer some very real questions about how this effects Aussie Overlander.

Now, I don't plan on closing down, far from it actually, but it's only natural there will be some changes in the way in which Aussie Overlander operates in the future.

Delivering unforgettable trips for smaller more intimate sized groups will be the focus going forward for Aussie Overlander. Our itineraries will be similar to our existing trips with the addition of more exploratory style trips (less itinerary, more adventure) on offer with a maximum group size of 7 guests. Given the unease many have with joining a group of unfamiliar people the Initial focus will be on offering trips to private groups of friends or family. Given the nature of a small private group these trips will be quite customisable to a particular interest or intention.

One great aspect of our trips in the past is that many of you have met others with similar interests and made great friendships. I can foresee these friendships evolve into small travelling groups going forward. In time I plan on developing a private Facebook page where a community of our past guests can communicate in private, form groups or share available spots on trips etc. There will also be trips with places available advertised in the usual way on our website.

For those of you who are still keen to get away over the coming months I'll continue to offer trips in Tasmania for the duration of 2021. They will be available in a flexible nature to allow changes due to Covid19 restrictions as they arise. If you're interested please get in touch, I'd be very happy to offer a trip to suit. Camping, basic hiking huts, or accommodated options are all possible.

Being adaptable; and flexible has been a distinct advantage for Aussie Overlander in the past. Like many an Australian story, Aussie Overlander has adapted to overcome bushfires & floods impacting our season along with the odd breakdown (think bush welding, ratchet straps and fencing wire) ... I'd personally love it if you'd help add a pandemic to the list and continue to support Aussie Overlander as we adapt and grow. It's been a wonderful journey with you all and one I'm very keen to continue. So, THANKYOU!

As far as cancellations and credits, these will continue to be offered in line with our booking conditions on our website. With the addition that we will continue to offer credits for trip fees paid to be used on any future trip, anytime.

If you would like to discuss this or provide feedback you can get in touch either via phone on 0428202536 or email [carl@aussieoverlander.com.au](mailto:carl@aussieoverlander.com.au)

Yours in Aussie touring,

Carl Burden

Tour Guide & Owner  
Aussie Overlander  
[www.aussieoverlander.com.au](http://www.aussieoverlander.com.au)