

BUSH TELEGRAPH

August, 2002

Impacts from 11 September: When we mailed out our last Bush Telegraph last August we couldn't foresee that, within a fortnight, the world would be in such turmoil with, first, the tragic events of 11 September in New York and its sequels, then the collapse of Ansett Airlines in Australia. *GO BUSH* was significantly affected by both events.

Many people were stunned and in a state of shock and suspended making any travel plans for some time. This affected our safaris from then right up until the middle of 2002. However, bookings for safaris in the second half of 2002 have been very strong. The Tropical Rainforests and Reef and Mungo Mutawintji and More safaris are booked out and our Fraser Island Whale Watching and Shark Bay – Western Wildflowers safaris almost filled. While still some months off, our Bush Christmas in the Blue Mountains safari, though, still has many vacancies.

Thailand Laos 2003: The principal casualty of 11 September was the Thailand-Laos Safari, which had to be cancelled. There were 80 people vying for the 12 places available in 2001 but there were only two applications for the almost identical trip in 2002. This safari was advertised only days before 11 September. Despite our disappointment last time, we are planning to offer it again in 2003 for three good reasons:

1. It is such a rich and most satisfying cultural and scenic experience;
2. Thailand and Laos remain amongst the safest places for Australians travelling overseas; and
3. *GO BUSH* has a project to assist the economy of the disadvantaged hill-tribe villagers through ecotourism.

Although *GO BUSH*'s focus is Australian World Heritage sites, the culture, cuisine and attractions of Thailand and Laos compel us to keep this wonderful safari on our agenda. John Sinclair will personally lead this trip and will take a maximum of 12 or 13 people. John is eagerly

anticipating another two day trip down the exciting Mekong River. Early bookings are required (by 25 October).

Top of Australia Cruise: *GO BUSH* conducted five wonderful cruises from Cairns to Thursday Island and return between 1991 and 1994. We were forced to suspend them, though, in 1995 when we failed to attract enough safarists for this 15 day cruise because of difficulty in covering the cost of vessel charter. However, we have had an outstanding number of expressions of interest from people who would like to do the cruise.

It is *GO BUSH*'s intention, therefore, to offer another Top of Australia Cruise between 26 November and 10 December 2003. This is the time of the calmest weather in the Coral Sea. The final price is not yet known because we are still negotiating a suitable vessel which can carry about 12 safarists. This voyage of a lifetime is expected to cost about \$4,000 per person.

We are planning to follow the very well tested itinerary we have previously used during five previous voyages, which accesses parts of Cape York Peninsula rarely reached except by sea, as well as some wonderful and remote Great Barrier Reef islands which can only be reached by sea. These will include Lizard and Stanley Islands and some remote coral cays. On Cape York Peninsula we include Cooktown, Iron Range, Cape Melville, Shelburne Bay, Somerset and the Escape River.

Anyone wishing to read details of the previous safaris can have the diaries for each sent to them by E-mail so that they can have a better appreciation of what a rich and wonderful voyage of a lifetime this is. Just notify us by E-mail at john@gobush.com.au.

Lord Howe Island: While leading his annual safaris over the last few years, John has also been working on revising his Management Strategy for the Island which he finished and presented to the New South Wales and Commonwealth Governments in late May. *GO BUSH Safaris* aim to be more than just

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sustainable users of National Parks and World Heritage sites and to help ensure that they are being sustainably managed for and by all users.

Cultural Initiatives: Those people who have already travelled **with GO BUSH** can attest that that we are keen to allow more inter-cultural interaction with Aborigines. Willigan has been involved in every Kimberley trip since 1994. We have taken an initiative to encourage more Aborigines to become actively involved in ecotourism. As well as incorporating an even greater Aboriginal component into our itineraries, we have been helping interested Aborigines to gain appreciation of the needs and interests of our kind of environmental travellers, as well as the logistics. As John moves to become more active again in conservation issues, we hope that some **GO BUSH** safaris will be led by well experienced and very competent Aborigines. We have been particularly appreciative to have had Karranji (Michael Vaden) explore the Wet Tropics with our 2002 Tropical Rainforest and Reef Safari. Troy Broome, a young Butchalla man, worked with John in the Kimberley and is about to become involved in other safaris.

Team Efforts: Over many years **GO BUSH** has drawn on some wonderful people who have made our safaris such satisfying and harmonious experiences. Everyone who has met Uncle Long Nose (Ian Morris) on our Kimberley and Kakadu safaris has loved him. We have had a great team assisting us on Fraser Island, including the indomitable "Wamut" (Russell Close) and his little mate, "Smithy", Bino Bill (Kromwyk) and George Haddock (one of the few people in our team not to have a nickname). Alan Notley interprets Western Australia's complex botany. Octogenarian Eddie Smith gave us new insights of his Tasmania in 2002 while John's sister, Jennifer, again assisted with our Kimberley catering. We thank them all for their outstanding assistance.

Bush Christmas: We offered our first Bush Christmas safari to New England in 1988. We have offered one every year since (except 1996). Other destinations have been Kosciusko

(when we saw a 12 inch snow fall) and the Border Ranges. Alas, our trip back to the now World Heritage listed Blue Mountains this Christmas may be our last. It will be a great finale with a wonderful venue. If you can escape from the usual obligations of Christmas this year, why not enjoy an obligation free break within a natural wonder of the world. Despite its proximity to Sydney, few people have really appreciated the full variety of the region.

Planning for 2004 Festival: **GO BUSH** is sponsoring the planning for a huge environmental festival in southern Queensland in early August 2004. Its theme is "The Environment for Health, Wealth and Happiness". It will provide a major forum to elevate the environment up the Australian political agenda. It will also demonstrate the inspiration the environment provides for all art forms. As John is centrally involved in planning what he intends to be the biggest environmental event in Australia's history in 2004, he needs to spend more time at home now. The extra demands for the Environment Festival will reduce the number of other safaris we can offer in 2003-04. We hope these commitments, though, do not prevent us from continuing to offer as many of our inspirational safaris as is feasible.

Inspiration: We have previously published small grabs from our Diaries. Every safari we have conducted has resulted in a published diary. There are now very few diaries (all of which are now posted at our **GO BUSH** web site) which do not feature some attempts at bush poetry. These are being progressively collected and compiled into a growing anthology. This is a small extract from our very hot Kimberley with Willigan Diary held during the "build-up" to the Wet season, which started during the safari (an incredible transformation). It refers to one of our regular(ish) team who should remain nameless:

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A nameless one has admitted in a manner
sheep**ISH**
That rendezvous times are irrelevant and rather
Hell**ISH**
So when they say they'll meet you about 8.30-
ISH
You must understand it isn't a firm time; it's
merely a **wISH**,
Because they have other things that they must
first fin**ISH**
And without firm deadlines, one's cares simply
dimin**ISH**

Needless to say, the author also wished to remain nameless.

We wish you all interesting travels vicarious or in reality, in 2003

John Sinclair & Sharan Daly