



Part two of this series on the Oodnatta Track covers the journey from Lyndhurst to William Creek. If you missed out on part one, you can read it [here](#).

Lyndhurst - William Creek (284km)

What will you see

The sealed road is now behind you and for some, the real adventure begins. Moving into the heart of the South Australian outback, there is no shortage of things to see along the way, and there are some terrific places to stay overnight.

Both aboriginal and rail history feature in this section and you are now travelling along the path of the famous explorer John McDouall Stuart who, in 1862, made the first successful south to north and return crossing of our continent.

The route he pioneered was later used for the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line in 1872 and inspired the start of the construction of a south to north railway in 1878. He and his team have left a great legacy to Australia and the Stuart Highway is named after him.

During this section of the trip, you will see evidence of both of these engineering masterpieces. After arriving in Marree our trek takes us west along the Oodnadatta Track, however, Marree is also the gateway to the Birdsville Track and Lake Eyre.

Condition of this part of the track and hazards

Generally, this section of track is in pretty good condition but expect some stony and corrugated sections. Keep your eye out for kangaroos, emus and wandering stock and watch out for wedge-tailed eagles soaring above looking for their next feed.

Eagles feasting on road-kill can be a real hazard as they are reluctant to leave a feed and are slow to take off when a vehicle approaches. Slow down and sound your horn to avoid a collision.

Always travel with lights on to ensure maximum visibility. Dust often hangs and drivers often travel on the wrong side of the track to avoid hazards.

The Towns

Farina

Just 24km north of Lyndhurst the turn-off to Farina appears. Apart from the owners and staff of the nearby Farina Station, no one lives in this town. However, do not miss out on spending some time here and, if possible, stay overnight at the campground.

This town is a testament to what can be achieved when a group of civic-minded people get together to ensure an important part of our history does not just disintegrate into the desert. You can easily spend a couple of nights here and use the day to explore the town - it is like a walk back in time.





Marree

Once a major railhead for moving stock from the surrounding sheep and cattle stations, Marree is now home to an aboriginal community and the descendants of the Afghan cameleers who moved freight around large areas of the outback.

Being the start of perhaps Australia's most famous outback stock route, the Birdsville Track, the town is now well visited by tourists wanting to travel this route, undertake the trek to Oodnadatta or visit the shores of Lake Eyre.

A few of the old Ghan diesel locomotives can be seen in the town centre and the old Afghan mosque is just opposite the roadhouse.

Coward Springs

Not really a town, this campground situated 114km from Marree is a pretty good place to stop overnight. Established around one of the Old Ghan Rail sidings, with a couple of the original buildings being restored, this is a good place to get a good feel for the history of the area.

A museum in one of the restored buildings is well worth a look. There is even a natural artesian "hot tub" where you can soak away any aches and pains.

William Creek

Originally another rail siding, William Creek now houses a well-known pub, campground, airfield and not much else. The pub is certainly the centre of activity and a drink at the bar or meal in the dining room is something to be remembered.

Across the road from the pub is a collection of rail artefacts and space junk as this area is well within the Woomera Rocket Range.

Accommodation

Farina has a beautiful campground with very reasonable fees and provides flushing toilets and a hot shower (if you light the "donkey"). There is plenty of room and campfires are allowed with wood available from the nearby station.

Marree provides a good range of accommodation with caravan parks and a hotel providing everything from camping to well-appointed cabins.

Coward Springs has a well-established campground with good toilets, hot wood-fired showers, and spacious sites. Campfires are allowed and most sites have fire pits. This campground is not open in the summer months.

William Creek provides hotel and motel rooms at the Pub and cabin, caravan and camping sites at the caravan park.





Side Trips

A few kilometres past Marree is a turnoff heading north-west to Muloorina and Lake Eyre. This is a great side trip if you have the time. A reasonable dirt track will take you the 54km to Muloorina Station. Here you will find a top little campground right on the edge of a permanent waterhole.

A further 45km along a sandy track will see you arrive at Madigan Gulf on the southern shore of Lake Eyre. A vista of shimmering salt extends to the horizon. You are only seeing a tiny fraction of this massive lake. This is the site of Donald Campbell's famous attempts at the world land speed record.

On rare occasions after several years of heavy rain in outback Queensland, you may be lucky to see water in the lake. When the lake is full it becomes a mecca for birds and tourists alike. Another opportunity to see Lake Eyre can be found 7km south of William Creek. Here you will find the 64km track to Halligan Bay on the western shores of Lake Eyre.

This is a most desolate area and the track can be quite rough, so don't venture here unless well prepared and self-reliant.

Along The Way

The Ochre Pits

Your first stop is just 5km north of Lyndhurst. A short diversion to the west will see you overlooking the stark red, yellow and white colours of the ochre that has been of great value to aboriginal peoples for millennia. Detailed signs explain the significance of this area. It is interesting that this deposit is still used today to provide ochre needed for ceremonial purposes. Please respect this area by not venturing into the pits.

Farina

Even if you are unable to stay overnight at the campground, don't miss the opportunity to take the short track into the old Farina township. This is only 24km north of Lyndhurst. It's an area where you can spend at least an hour wandering around.

John McDouall Stuart Memorial

Not long before arriving at Marree, what appears to be a large cross will appear on the horizon. This is located just to the east of the road. Pull in and have a look at this memorial to John McDouall Stuart. He travelled this route on his epic trek to travel from the south to the north of the continent.

Lake Eyre South

About 88km after leaving Marree you will see the shimmering white salt of Lake Eyre South. Pull in to the lookout and information shelter to get a feel for where you are – the lowest point



in Australia. You are actually below sea level.

Old Ghan Rail Sidings

There are many sidings along this section but the ones particularly worth a stop are (distances are from Marree):

- **Alberrie Creek (53km)** – the home of some of the most bizarre sculptures you are likely to see. See it to believe it.
- **Curdimurka (104km)** – site of the Curdimurka Outback Balls of the past. Follow the track along the line past the water softener tower to see a significant bridge over the creek, the second longest on the track.
- **Coward Springs (130km)** – campground and museum
- **Beresford (154km)** – a large dam remains, built to provide water for steam trains.

Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs

Just a few kilometres before arriving at Coward Springs you come to the turn-off to the mound springs. Drive in a few kilometres to be amazed by The Bubbler and Blanches Cup as water from the Great Artesian Basin bubbles to the surface.

Strangways Springs Ruins

Not long after passing Beresford siding (about 10km), a turnoff to the west will take you a few kilometres into the settlement of Strangways Springs. There is a sign at this intersection, so you shouldn't miss it.

A very important part of the development of the Overland Telegraph Line, the ruins and the springs can easily occupy an hour or two wandering around and trying to imagine life here in the late 1800's.

The area has plenty of information boards to provide a good feel for what it might have been like.



Ways Home From Here

Heading back south is the shortest, but not necessarily the quickest way home from here. Travelling 69km past Marree will find you at the intersection of the Oodnadatta Track and the Borefield Road.

This quite good dirt road will take you the 113km to Roxby Downs. From here it is sealed road all the way to Adelaide, passing through Woomera and Port Augusta.

Just a 5km north of William Creek is a turnoff to the west. This 168km section of track leads to Coober Pedy on the Stuart Highway. From there sealed road will return you all the way to Adelaide.



Distances and Services

Fuel: U = unleaded D = diesel L = LPG

Accommodation: CP = caravan park H = hotel/motel C = cabin

	Distance from Lyndhurst	Fuel	Accommodation	Public Toilets
Marree	80km	U,D	CP,H,C	Y
Coward Springs	210km		CP	N
William Creek	284km	U,D	CP,H,C	Y

NB. - there is no LPG fuel available beyond Lyndhurst. [Download the Oodnadatta Track Distances and Services PDF here.](#)

Maps

- Hema Maps Great Desert Treks-South East
- Royal Automobile Association of S.A. - Flinders Ranges and Outback

Part 3 of this series takes us to Oodnadatta and provides a number of options for the remainder of your journey.