



For city folk like me, it's easy to take for granted the services that come into our homes seamlessly every day. Water, sewerage, electricity and garbage collection are all things that we expect and can get pretty upset if they fail.

However, many of us love getting out of the big smoke to hit the roads and tracks to find quieter places that give us a sense of the great outdoors.

I was prompted to write this piece after a recent trip through areas of outback Queensland, and in particular, after hearing negative comments from fellow travellers and reading negative reviews on sites like Trip Advisor and [WikiCamps](#).

We travel to these places because they are different to our everyday environment. This requires understanding that the services we take for granted cannot always be delivered in the same seamless way we expect. So, before complaining please consider the following.



*Water is through bores in many outback towns in Australia.*

## Water

For many outback towns, the only source of water is through bores. Some places are lucky and the water is beautiful. But in others, it can be slightly brackish and have a sulphurous smell.

It's good water, great for washing yourselves and clothes but may need boiling to drink. This is what the locals live with all the time. There's nothing wrong with it - it's just different. In towns like Coober Pedy in South Australia, the only source of water is from a bore about 30km out of town.

It's too salty to use and every drop has to be treated by reverse osmosis to make it useable. A process that's very energy intensive and expensive.

So please don't complain when you have to spend 20 cents for 40 litres or pay a few cents for a shower in the caravan park. This is what the locals have to pay all the time.



*It's vital to take all your waste with you when visiting remote areas of Australia.*

## Waste

Ever pulled into a roadside rest area only to find bins overflowing and garbage was strewn everywhere? Imagine the logistics and cost of emptying these regularly, many of which are hundreds of kilometres from the nearest town.

There is a simple solution to this - take your garbage with you and dispose of it in the next town. It's great to see many 4WDs with garbage bags hanging on their spare wheel, which is a simple and easy solution.

## The W.C.

Very few small outback towns have proper sewerage systems with many relying on septic tanks or similar eco solutions. In some places, especially campgrounds, a long-drop is the



solution to this everyday problem.

Sure, sometimes there is a smell, often made worse by travellers emptying chemical toilet tanks into these systems, instantly killing the bacteria whose job it is to break down waste and reduce the smell. Only ever empty chemical toilets into designated dump points. Or, if there is no other option, bury it in a very deep hole dug well away from any trees, water sources, creeks or stock watering points.

Keep in mind when these systems break down there is usually not a plumber on call. This often results in considerable delays before repairs are carried out.

The other major problem can be seen at any roadside rest area or camping spot – toilet paper and human waste scattered around the area. No wonder we are seeing more and more areas being closed to campers.



## What YOU can do about it!

The solution is easy – dig a hole (a small miners spade or collapsible spade is a useful piece of equipment to carry in the vehicle), do your job, fill it in and place toilet paper in a ziplock bag and dispose of it when you next come to a proper garbage disposal site.

Carry a container of these bags in your vehicle and RV. You only need the cheap ones! An alternative, assuming all bushfire precautions can be taken, is to burn the paper in the hole before filling in.



*Take plenty of bags in the back of your vehicle for waste and rubbish.*

Take all your rubbish out with you on your next trip. And before telling all your friends how bad a place is, or rushing to social media or review sites, have a long hard think about what is causing the problem.

Talk to the local people about the situation so that any comments you do make are informed and measured. Remember, once it's on the internet, it's there forever, whether good bad or ugly.

Uninformed and sometimes completely wrong comments may well have a detrimental effect on other people's livelihood – so think twice before you take action next time.

***We are interested in your thoughts, what can we do to minimise the impact of these things on our environment?***