



the pilbara
road safety
survival guide



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May 2006

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PHOTO INDEX/COL ROBERTS
COVER PHOTOGRAPH: PHOTO INDEX/RICHARD WOLDENDORP

Road Safety: It's your responsibility

The Pilbara is one of the most beautiful and wondrous places to visit. From the rugged coastline to the majesty of the gorges at Karajini National Park, you will be astounded by the rare beauty of the region.

The people of the Pilbara want you to enjoy your visit and to this end have developed this important guide for road safety survival in the region.

Road Safety is your responsibility. This booklet will provide you with basic information on how to reduce your road risks whilst travelling throughout the Pilbara.

It is important if you do not understand the information contained in the guide or require further information and advice that you contact the emergency numbers located at the back of this book.

Remember, it is better to be safe than sorry, so if you are unsure of any circumstance – find out all the details about the situation first, don't take a risk.

Road Safety Survival Tips

The Pilbara experiences a range of weather conditions ranging from cyclones to extreme dry periods, and off-road remote areas to developed townsites. You can check road conditions prior to your journey by phoning 138 138. The following information is important and should be applied during your travels.

Floodways/ Water across Roadway

Some roads in the Pilbara are prone to flash flooding. Before crossing always check:

- The depth of the water by getting out of the vehicle and physically walking the intended crossing. The water should be no higher than the bottom of the door on conventional 2WD vehicles and no higher than the average adult's knee (when standing) on higher 4WD vehicles
- Look for submerged objects
- Test strength of the flow of water
- Determine if the water level is rising or falling

IF IN ANY DOUBT DO NOT CROSS UNTIL YOU ARE SURE IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.

Salt Flats/Mud Flats

Salt flats, whilst they look stable are actually tidal. Do not take 4 wheel drives or other vehicles onto salt/mud flats as you may get bogged.

What to do if you get bogged

Even the most experienced drivers can get bogged. Should this happen try the following actions:

- Let some of the air out of your tyres and then try to drive out. Do not use all your energy trying to dig the vehicle out of soft sand if the vehicle continues to sink. Conserve as much energy as possible. If you are unable to free the vehicle yourself, use whatever communication means are available to you to contact others for assistance. Give accurate position details and advise of what equipment you have with you to use (eg. snatch strap etc). **Wait with your vehicle.**

Tyres

Some of the unsealed roads in the area have very sharp rocks which can easily puncture tyres. If you intend to travel on unsealed roads ensure you have extra tyres, tubes and tyre repair kits. It is recommended that 2 spare tyres be taken.

Unsealed Roads

Many of the roads in the region are unsealed and consist of gravel, rock and sand. **THESE SURFACES ARE UNPREDICTABLE AND CAUTION MUST BE OBSERVED AT ALL TIMES WHEN DRIVING ON THESE ROADS.**

- Drive and brake with care
- Road surfaces can become very soft, especially after it has been raining and soil has been compacted.
- The 'keep left' rule still applies. Use extreme care when approaching crests of hills or curves in the road.
- Drive to the conditions.
- Drive with headlights on low beam during the day.

Straying Animals/ Wildlife on Roads

Straying livestock and wildlife are often found on roads in the region. Keep alert for animals on or near the road, especially at dusk and dawn and where possible avoid travelling at night. If travelling at night – reduce your speed and only drive within the range of your headlights.

If an animal appears on the road in front of you, brake firmly in a straight line and sound your horn. **DO NOT SWERVE BUT ENDEAVOUR TO PASS BEHIND THE ANIMAL.**

If you hit a large animal and it is killed on impact try to remove the carcass from the roadway for the safety of other motorists. **INJURED ANIMALS CAN BECOME UNPREDICTABLE AND MAY TRY TO SCRATCH/BITE. USE CARE WHEN HANDLING THEM. USE TOWELS, RUGS ETC FOR SMALLER ANIMALS. BE WARY OF THE REAR LEGS AND TAIL OF KANGAROOS. THESE CAN CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY IF YOU ARE KICKED OR HIT.**

What to do if you have a crash

Assist any injured. Make the scene safe (i.e. warn approaching drivers). Contact (or have someone contact) Ambulance, Police etc if required. If the total damage to all vehicles or property exceeds \$1,000 (and police don't attend the scene) the crash must be reported to the nearest police station without delay.



PHOTO INDEX/RICHARD WOLDENDORP

Road Trains/ Heavy Vehicles

Road Trains can be up to 53.5 metres long. These vehicles use both sealed and unsealed roads in the Pilbara. To overtake or pass these vehicles keep in mind the following:

- Only overtake when the road is clear, it may take up to 2.5kms to overtake a road train.
- Ensure the driver of the heavy vehicle is aware of your presence prior to attempting to overtake.
- Proceed with extreme caution at night time.
- Allow for slight tail swing from the rear trailer(s) whilst overtaking.
- You cannot exceed the speed limit.
- Be prepared for the wind buffet as you pass.
- Always allow the heavy vehicle sufficient braking distance.

Other important information in sharing the roads with heavy vehicles includes:

- Do not attempt to overtake a heavy vehicle at an intersection. These vehicles often require two (or more) lanes to turn a corner.

- Do not attempt to overtake a heavy vehicle just because they indicate to the right – they may be turning off the road.
- Do not pull out onto the roadway in front of a vehicle when you see them approaching – heavy vehicles require longer stopping and braking distances – it may take more than a kilometre to stop and you must allow enough distance to avoid a crash.
- Avoid overtaking road trains and heavy vehicles when towing trailers or caravans if possible.
- Maintain a safe following distance behind large vehicles prior to overtaking. A safe following distance can be measured by keeping at least 2 seconds behind the vehicle in front in dry conditions, and at least 4 seconds in wet or adverse conditions.

Be patient when following oversize vehicles which may be under the control of Police or private escort. Do not attempt to overtake these vehicles unless directed to do so by the driver of the rear escort vehicle. When overtaking, do so with care and overtake both the rear escort vehicle and the oversize load as swiftly as possible.

What to do if you break down

In the event that your vehicle breaks down, the following actions are strongly recommended:

- If possible, get your vehicle off the road and onto the verge. If your vehicle obstructs the roadway, place reflectorised markers on the road preceding the vehicle to advise approaching motorists. If no reflectorised markers are available, use the 'hazard warning lights' fitted to the vehicle as well as the park/tail lights.
- If you are in a remote area – **STAY WITH THE VEHICLE UNTIL HELP ARRIVES** – do not walk to get help. It is easier to find a vehicle rather than a person.
- If in mobile phone range ring the appropriate emergency contact.
- To identify your location use the map in this guide, or if on a major road use the Straight Line Markers (SLK) to ascertain location. These markers are white posts located on the road verge.

Communication

Mobile phones have a limited range outside many populated centres. Check with your service provider as to what areas your phone will operate. It is worth noting that many hills in the Pilbara region have a high concentration of metal ore. This may affect reception and range even if you are well within the service area.

In Western Australia it is illegal to use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving.

Some organisations (such as RFDS) hire satellite phones for travellers going to remote areas.

Remote Trip Planning

Before you begin your journey in remote areas, check road conditions. **ALWAYS INFORM A RESPONSIBLE PERSON OF YOUR PLANNED JOURNEY AND ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL.** When you have safely arrived, remember to let that person know. Do this for every leg of your trip.

- Know the limitations of the vehicle you are driving and your own capabilities. A 4WD cannot go everywhere. Don't get yourself into a situation that you or your vehicle cannot handle.
- 4WD vehicles have a higher centre of gravity than conventional vehicles. This can lead to the vehicle rolling over easier than you may realise. Use extreme care when negotiating steep inclines or uneven ground.
- Do not take 2WD vehicles on tracks signposted or mapped for 4WD's only.
- Most 4WD tracks are not suitable for caravans and trailers due to sand hills etc. Check with the local Tourist Bureau before leaving town.
- Fuel (especially unleaded/lead replacement and LPG) is not always available in some remote areas. Check with local fuel distributors or the tourist information service before departure. Allow for a safe reserve supply when planning your trip.
- Obtain a current and accurate map for the area you intend to travel and know how to read it.
- Allow for approximately 9 litres of water per adult per day. Take enough extra to last 2-3 days past your intended travel time.

Have your vehicle thoroughly checked before leaving and ensure that you have:

- Sufficient fuel
- Oil
- Water
- Emergency equipment
- First Aid Kit & Fire Extinguisher

If you plan on travelling into remote parts of the Pilbara, it may be worth considering obtaining an Electronic Position Indicator Radio Beacon (EPIRB).

These devices will provide a rapid and direct response by authorities to your location in the event of an emergency or if you become lost or stranded. If you decide to carry an EPIRB with you, there are some important points to note.

- Make sure the device cannot be accidentally activated by either rolling around within the vehicle or by children – **STOW IT SAFELY AND SECURELY.**
- An EPIRB must only be used when there is no other form of communication available to advise of your situation. There are penalties in place for misuse. If the situation requires the use of the EPIRB remember the golden rule of survival in the outback: **STAY WITH YOUR VEHICLE UNTIL HELP ARRIVES.**

Towing

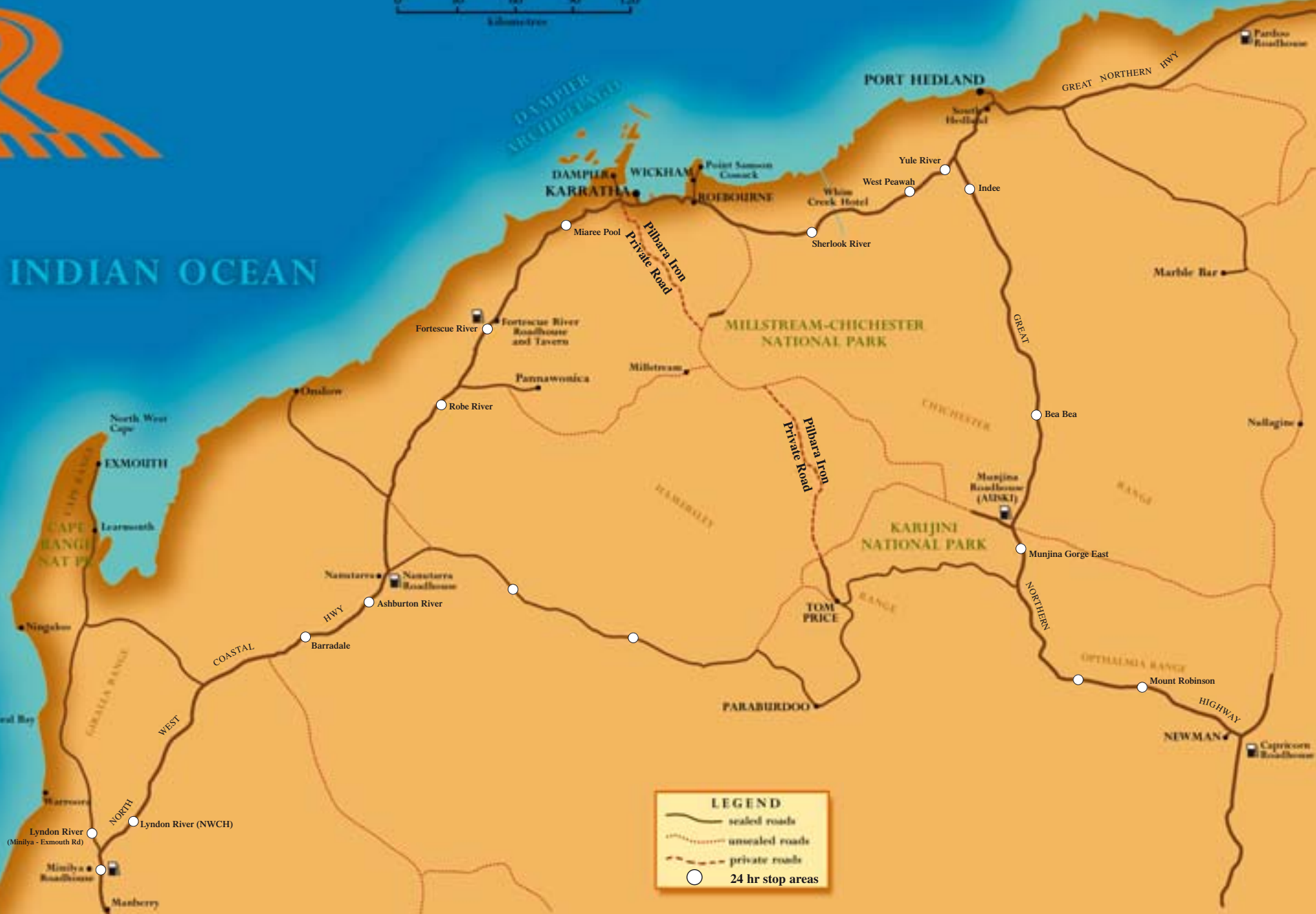
- The weight of the trailer/caravan should be within the safety limits of the car. Add 200kg to the weight shown on the vehicle license paper to allow for bedding, travelling gear, stores and equipment.
- The legal speed limit outside a built up area (unless otherwise sign-posted) for a vehicle with a trailer or caravan attached is 100km/h.
- If your car and caravan is more than 7.5 metres in length, you are required to keep at least 200 metres behind any similar car/caravan or long vehicle on all roads outside built up areas unless you are overtaking.
- Pull over at regular intervals to allow other vehicles to pass safely.



INDIAN OCEAN



- Karratha – Port Hedland
235km
- Karratha – Dampier
20km
- Karratha – Pannawonica
198km
- Karratha – Roebourne
40km
- Roebourne – Port Hedland
202km
- South Hedland – Port Hedland
13km
- Port Hedland – Marble Bar
(via Route 138)
219km
- Port Hedland – Newman
(via Great Northern H'way)
456km
- Karratha – Tom Price
(via Nanutarra Roadhouse)
528km
- Paraburdoo – Tom Price
89km
- Tom Price – Newman
276km
- Marble Bar – Nullagine
112km



This map is intended to be used as a guide only.
 If you intend to travel into remote areas or on unsealed roads, it is strongly recommended that you obtain a current, detailed map of the region (such as the Pilbara Street Smart® Touring Map).
 There are numerous floodways and water crossings in the Pilbara. These can be encountered on major roads as well as secondary and unsealed ones. Always check the road condition reports for the area in which you plan to travel before you leave.

In addition to the phone numbers listed in the back of this booklet, the numbers listed below may be helpful to you:
National Parks – Pilbara Regional Headquarters (08) 9143 1488 **National Park Rangers** Karijini (08) 9189 8157 Millstream (08) 9184 5144



PHOTO INDEX/BILL BACHMAN

Cyclones

Cyclones are severe tropical low-pressure systems that form off the coast then, at times, cross over land. The Pilbara experiences on average 3-4 cyclones each season – usually between the months of November to April. These storms can bring with them extremely high winds and heavy rain.

Widespread damage can result if proper precautions are not followed. If you are travelling within this region during the cyclone season you must be aware of the following:

- If you are staying at a caravan park check to see if they have suitable ‘tie-downs’ to anchor your caravan securely throughout the cyclone.
- What equipment (if any) they may be able to supply (eg. rope, ratchet devices, etc).
- Always carry a battery-powered portable radio to monitor warnings.

- **FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS OF POLICE, STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE PERSONNEL, MAIN ROADS WA STAFF, THE PARK OPERATOR/MOTEL STAFF OR OTHER AUTHORISED PERSONS UNTIL THE SITUATION IS DECLARED SAFE.**

Warning system
(stages of the approaching cyclone)

Blue Alert – a cyclone has formed and may affect the area within 48 hours.

Yellow Alert – the cyclone is moving closer to the area and you should take action.

Red Alert – a cyclone is imminent. You should seek shelter.

If you wish to obtain further information regarding cyclones please contact the local State Emergency Service office on the number shown at the back of this booklet.

Aboriginal Land/ Private Property

- Always respect private property
- Get permission to travel on roads which belong to mining companies and station owners
- A permit is required to travel on roads over Aboriginal land. Contact the Department of Indigenous Affairs or local Tourist Centre for further information.

Mining Company Roads

A permit is required to travel on the Pilbara Iron Access Road between Karratha and Tom Price. This road has speed restrictions and other requirements which will be explained on obtaining the permit.

To arrange the issue of a permit contact the Karratha or Tom Price Tourist Bureau on the phone numbers listed in the back of this booklet.

Do not travel on any road clearly displaying “No Entry” signs without first contacting the Mining Company concerned.

Road Rules

KEEP LEFT

All traffic on two lane roads within Western Australia travels on the left of the carriageway.

SPEED LIMITS

Outside towns and cities, unless otherwise sign posted, the maximum speed limit allowed in Western Australia is 110km/h. Penalties range from \$50 to \$350 for speeding offences. It is worth noting that at 110km/h it takes on average 95 metres to stop if you are driving a normal family sedan.

Your speed must be reduced when travelling on unsealed roads or in adverse weather conditions. Drive to the conditions at **ALL** times.

DRIVER'S LICENCE

If you are an interstate or overseas visitor you must carry your home state/country driver's licence with you at all times when driving.

NIGHT DRIVING

You are required to travel with headlights illuminated (not park lights) between the hours of sunset and sunrise the following day. You are required to dip your headlights from high beam to low beam under the following circumstances:

- A vehicle is approaching and is within 200 metres
- The approaching vehicle dips their headlights (regardless of distance)
- You are following a vehicle and are within 200 metres

It is recommended that you use headlights even when travelling during daylight hours to make yourself more visible to other traffic.

ROAD CLOSURES

Motorists must not use the road beyond a road closure sign. Your vehicle will not be covered by insurance if you put in a claim for damage that occurred on a closed section of road. You can also be fined up to \$200 under the Main Roads Act and local Shire bylaws for driving on roads that are signed closed.

SEAT BELTS

All drivers and passengers travelling on Western Australian roads are required to wear seat belts unless in possession of a medical exemption. Ensure all vehicle occupants are wearing seat belts even when travelling on remote bush tracks for their own safety. Infants under 12 months of age must be placed in an approved child restraint – the normal vehicle seat belt is not acceptable. It is also illegal to travel in the open load space of a ute or panel van.

ALCOHOL

If you plan on drinking – don't drive! A driver must not have a blood alcohol level concentration (BAC) equal to or exceeding 0.05% if they are the holder of a full (unconditional) licence. If you are going to drink and drive, there are some laws that you need to know. A probationary licence holder must not equal or exceed 0.02%. Police conduct regular patrols throughout this region and can test a driver at random for alcohol consumption BAC anywhere and anytime. BAC is the amount of alcohol present in the blood, measured in grams per 100 millilitres of blood.

FATIGUE

One of the most common causes of crashes throughout the Pilbara is also the most avoidable – fatigue. Plan your trip to include regular rest stops (at least every 2 hours) and take water to drink along the way. Dehydration is a common cause of fatigue. Try to avoid driving at night and especially when you would normally be sleeping. Swap drivers if possible but most importantly, if you are feeling tired get off the road safely and rest. Areas along main roads suitable for 24 hour camping stop-overs are shown on the map in the centre of this guide

Road signs used throughout Western Australia

REGULATORY SIGNS

These signs are usually black/red on white background with parking signs shown in green.

The signs **MUST BE COMPLIED WITH**, as they are requirements under the law.



WARNING/ADVISORY SIGNS

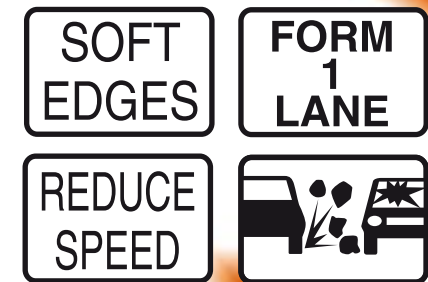
These signs are usually black on a yellow background. They indicate hazards ahead. You should adjust your driving (speed etc) accordingly and be prepared for what is ahead.

When these signs indicate a suggested speed, the speed is set for **DRY** conditions — lower your approach speed slightly more if the road surface is wet.



ROAD WORK TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SIGNS

Authorities working on or near the road use these signs. They are in place for the safety of the workers and passing traffic. Some of these signs are **REGULATORY** and others are to advise of hazards in the area. **ALL** speed signs in the work zone **MUST** be complied with.



Important Phone Numbers

DAMPIER

-  **POLICE** 08 9183 1144
- SEA RESCUE** 08 9183 1248
- SMALL BOAT WEATHER FORECAST** 08 9159 6567
-  **SERVICE STATIONS**
Shell 08 9183 1146

KARRATHA

-  **TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**
Karratha Road 08 9144 4600
www.pilbara.com
-  **POLICE** 08 9144 2233
- AMBULANCE** 08 9185 1222
-  **STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE**
08 9144 1848
- HOSPITALS**
Nickol Bay Hospital 08 9143 2333
- FOR POLICE-FIRE-AMBULANCE EMERGENCY** only 000
-  **SERVICE STATIONS**
Caltex 08 9144 2100
BP Karratha 08 9185 1833
Shell Service Station 08 9144 1064
- SHIRE OFFICE** 08 9186 8555
- DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
08 9185 6100

MARBLE BAR

-  **TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**
Halse Road 08 9176 1166
-  **POLICE** 08 9176 1005
- AMBULANCE** 08 9176 1001
-  **HOSPITAL**
Nursing Post 08 9176 1001
Royal Flying Doctor
Service (Emergency Only) 1800 625 800
- FOR POLICE-FIRE-AMBULANCE EMERGENCY** only 000
-  **SERVICE STATIONS**
Caltex 08 9176 1166
Marble Bar Garage 08 9176 1041
- SHIRE OFFICE** 08 9175 1924

NEWMAN

-  **TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**
Cnr Fortescue Ave & Newman Drive 08 9175 2888
-  **POLICE** 08 9175 4000
- AMBULANCE** 08 9175 1111
- STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE**
08 9175 1686
-  **HOSPITALS**
Newman Hospital 08 9175 1501
- FOR POLICE-FIRE-AMBULANCE EMERGENCY** only 000
-  **SERVICE STATIONS**
Capricorn Roadhouse 08 9175 1535
Unparalleled Service Station 08 9175 1570
BP Whaleback 08 9177 8023
BP Newman 08 9175 1521
- SHIRE OFFICE** 08 9175 1924


PARABURDOO

-  **TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**
Caravan Park Camp Road 08 9189 5374
-  **POLICE** 08 9189 5044
- AMBULANCE**
Hamersley Iron 08 9143 4223
-  **STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE**
(Tom Price) 08 9189 1712
-  **HOSPITALS**
Paraburdoo District Hospital 08 9159 8222
- FOR POLICE-FIRE-AMBULANCE EMERGENCY** only 000
-  **SERVICE STATION**
Shell Roadhouse 08 9189 5382
- SHIRE OFFICE** 08 9189 1029

PORT HEDLAND

-  **TOURIST BUREAU**
Wedge Street 08 9173 1711
-  **POLICE STATIONS**
South Hedland 08 9172 1444
- AMBULANCE** 08 9172 1333
-  **STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE**
08 9173 1720
- FIRE**
Port Hedland 08 9173 1118
South Hedland 08 9172 3176
-  **HOSPITAL** 08 9158 1666
- FOR POLICE-FIRE-AMBULANCE EMERGENCY** only 000
- SEA RESCUE** 08 9173 1444

PORT HEDLAND (CONT)

-  **SERVICE STATIONS**
Caltex Roadhouse South Hedland 08 9172 1068
BP Service Station Port Hedland 08 9173 1081
BP Service Station South Hedland 08 9172 1680
BP Depot Wedgefield 08 9140 1244
Shell Roadhouse South Hedland 08 9172 3239
Shell Service Station Port Hedland 08 9173 1146
BP Truckstop Airport 08 9140 1233
- SHIRE OFFICE** 08 9158 9300

ROEBOURNE

-  **TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**
Old Gaol Queen Street 08 9182 1060
-  **POLICE** 08 9182 1133
- AMBULANCE** 08 9182 1004
- FOR POLICE-FIRE-AMBULANCE EMERGENCY** only 000
-  **SERVICE STATIONS**
BP Roebourne 08 9182 1234
- SHIRE OFFICE** 08 9186 8555
- SES (WICKHAM)** 08 9187 1800

“Slow down and enjoy the trip”

“Always wear seat belts”

Important Phone Numbers (cont)

TOM PRICE

-  **TOURIST BUREAU**
Central Road 08 9188 1112
-  **POLICE** 08 9189 1344
- AMBULANCE**
Hamersley Iron Security Gate 000
-  **HOSPITALS**
Tom Price 08 9159 5222
- FOR POLICE-FIRE-AMBULANCE EMERGENCY only** 000
-  **SERVICE STATIONS**
Shell Roadhouse 08 9189 1301
Caravan Park 08 9189 1515
- SHIRE OFFICE** 08 9189 1029

WICKHAM

-  **TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**
Old Gaol Queen Street
ROEBOURNE 08 9182 1060
-  **POLICE** 08 9187 1444
- AMBULANCE** 08 9187 1405
-  **HOSPITALS**
Wickham Health Centre 08 9187 3200
- FOR POLICE-FIRE-AMBULANCE EMERGENCY only** 000
-  **SERVICE STATION**
BP Wickham 08 9187 1340
- SHIRE OFFICE** 08 9186 8555
- SES** 08 9187 1800

PANNAWONICA

- POLICE** 08 9184 1222
- AMBULANCE** 000
- SERVICE STATION** 08 9184 1017

OTHER ROADHOUSES

-  Minilya Roadhouse 08 9942 5922
- Fortescue Roadhouse 08 9184 5126
- Pardoo Roadhouse 08 9176 4916
- Sandfire Roadhouse 08 9176 5944
- Nanutarra Roadhouse 08 9943 0521
- Nullagine Roadhouse 08 9176 2012
- Auski Tourist Village
Munjina 08 9176 6988

ON SLOW

- POLICE** 08 9184 6000
-  **AMBULANCE** 000
- FIRE ENQUIRIES** 08 9184 6624/000

NULLAGINE

- POLICE** 08 9176 2011
-  **AMBULANCE** 000
- NURSING POST** 08 9176 2010

ROADWISE

ROADWISE www.roadwise.asn.au

MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- PILBARA** 08 9172 8877
-  **ROAD CONDITION REPORT (STATEWIDE)** 138 138

www.mainroads.gov.au

For local authority road conditions contact the local shire office

TO REPORT ROAD HAZARDS
1800 800 009

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES

- www.rac.com
- www.westernaustralia.com
- www.officeofroadsafety.wa.gov.au

* Please Note: Emergency Call number from a mobile phone is 112

“Beat fatigue - take a rest stop”

Feedback Form

RETURN THIS FORM NOW AND RECIEVE A FREE GIFT!

Please help us improve this guide for future years. We would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete this short questionnaire, tear off and return to us upon the completion of your trip.

1. How did you obtain a copy of this guide? (tick one)

- Tourist Bureau/information
- Police Station
- Tourist brochure
- Website
- Service Station
- Shire Office
- Hire car
- Other: _____

2. How useful was this guide? (tick one)

- Very useful
- Useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful

3. Tick the sections you have found useful.

- Road Safety Survival**
 - Floodways
 - Mud Flats
 - What to do if you get bogged
 - Tyres
 - Unsealed roads
 - Straying Animals
- Road Trains
- Speed
- Overtaking
- Towing
- Road Rules
- Contact Numbers
- Road Signs

4. Do you have any suggestions or comments about this guide?

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please return your completed questionnaire to:

RoadWise Officer
C/- Town of Port Hedland
PO Box 41
Port Hedland WA 6722

Please fill in your name and address below to receive your free gift:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE: _____

