



Big Lap Planning - Quick Tips



Embarking on the Big Lap from Perth is a phenomenal adventure. Starting from WA gives you a front-row seat to some of the most vast, breathtaking, and remote stretches of highway in the world.

To ensure your journey is seamless, you need to prepare the right spares, safety gear, and route logistics.

The Route: Which Way from Perth?

Most seasoned “lappers” recommend traveling anti-clockwise out of Perth, especially if you are timing it with the seasons:



- **The Direction:** Heading north from Perth up the Coral Coast (Exmouth, Broome) puts you in the Kimberley and the Northern Territory just as the dry season settles in. You'll then follow the milder winter weather across the top and down the East Coast, before crossing the Nullarbor back to Perth.
- **The Wind Advantage:** Anti-clockwise travel often means the prevailing winds across the top of Australia and down the East Coast will be at your back, saving you massive amounts of fuel over a 15,000+ kilometer journey.

Crucial Spares Checklist

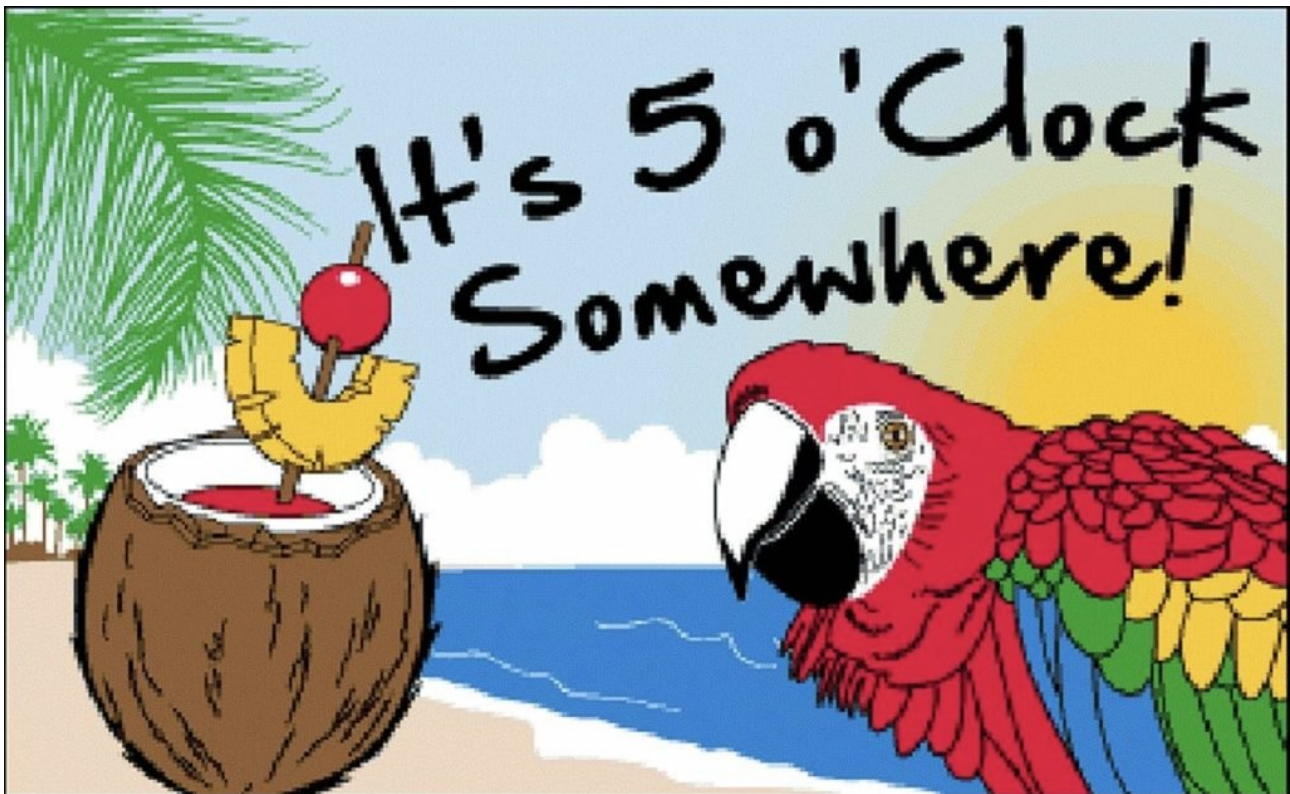
You don't need to carry an entire mechanic's workshop, but you must carry the components that are prone to failing on corrugated outback roads or are impossible to buy at a remote roadhouse.

For the Caravan / Trailer:

- **Pre-greased Wheel Bearings:** The number one killer of caravan trips is a seized bearing. Carry at least 1 or 2 complete, pre-greased bearing sets matching your caravan's axle.
 - **Spare Tyres (Plural):** Carry two spare tyres for the caravan and two for the tow vehicle, ideally all matching in size and rim if possible.
 - **Caravan Hub/Brake Spares:** Extra fuses for your caravan's break-away safety system.
 - **Duct Tape, Zip Ties, and Gasket Goo:** For securing loose trim, sealing unexpected leaks, or holding a cracked plastic shroud together until the next major town.
- For the Tow Vehicle:



- Belts and Hoses: A replacement serpentine/drive belt, plus spare upper and lower radiator hoses with matching hose clamps.
- Filters: At least one spare fuel filter (vital if you accidentally pick up dirty diesel in a remote area) and an air filter (outback dust will choke your engine quickly).
- Essential Fluids: 5L of engine oil, 2L of the correct engine coolant, and a small bottle of brake fluid.
- Electrical: A complete assortment box of automotive fuses and electrical tape.





Preparation & Prevention Gear

The cheapest repair on the road is the one you prevent before it happens. Remember the 5Ps!

- **Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS):** Do not leave Perth without one. It monitors the pressure and temperature of every tyre—including the caravan and your spares—while you drive. It will catch a slow leak or a overheating tyre before it disintegrates at 100 km/h.
- **Hub Temperature Sensors:** A sudden spike in your caravan's wheel hub temperature means a bearing is about to fail. Catching it early avoids a wheel flying off or a roadside fire. Invest in a good digital thermometer gun — point and shoot for quick hub temperatures.
- **12V Air Compressor & Deflators:** You will constantly change tyre pressures between highway bitumen, corrugated dirt roads, and soft coastal sand. Automatic deflators save your knees, and a good-quality high output 12V compressor gets you back up to highway pressure quickly.
- **Tyre Plug Repair Kit:** Essential for fixing a puncture caused by a sharp stone in the center tread without needing to swap the whole wheel out on a narrow road shoulder.

Safety & Remote Communications

Once you leave the major highways in WA, Queensland, or the NT, mobile phone reception drops to zero.



- **Satellite Comms:** A Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is a non-negotiable safety net for medical emergencies. For daily communication and navigation, a lot of modern lappers travel with a Starlink Mini or a satellite communicator (like a Garmin InReach), allowing you to look up mechanical fixes, check live weather, and call for help anywhere.
- **UHF Radio:** An in-car UHF radio is vital for communicating with the massive road trains (oversized trucks) you'll encounter. You can radio them to ask when it's safe to overtake, or they can warn you of hazards ahead.
- **First Aid & Snakes:** Carry a heavy-duty, touring-grade first aid kit. Ensure it includes multiple smart snake-bite compression bandages and that you know how to apply them.
- **Fire Safety:** Keep a 2.5kg ABE fire extinguisher in the tow vehicle and a separate one easily accessible inside the caravan, alongside a fire blanket.

Smart “Grey Nomad” Tips for the Road

- **The Two-Hour Rule:** Fatigue is a massive risk on straight outback roads. Plan to stop, stretch your legs, and swap drivers every two hours. Never drive dawn, dusk, or night when wildlife (kangaroos, emus, cows) flood the roads.
- **Water Rigidity:** Always carry more drinking water than you think you need. Keep emergency water rations in the tow vehicle completely separate from the caravan tanks, just in case you have to unhitch or the caravan tanks get damaged.
- **Talk to Locals and Fellow Lappers:** When you pull into a free camp or a caravan park, chat with the people next to you. The caravanning community in Australia is



Joining the Dots
@joiningthedots
<https://joiningthedots.click>



incredibly helpful, and someone who just came from the direction you are heading will give you the best, most up-to-date info on road conditions, roadworks, and great hidden campsites.