Nine Grasswren
12-day birding tour
8-21 July 2019

This is one of Australia’s epic birding adventures, where we search for nine of Australia’s 13 Grasswren species: Striated, Short-tailed, Western, Thick-billed, Eyrean, Grey, Kalkadoon, Carpentarian and Rusty Grasswren. From the vast expanses of ‘mallee’ scrub in the Vic-SA border region to the Flinders Ranges, we travel up the Birdsville track through the outback, visit the stark country around Boulia-Winton and finish in the ranges around Mt Isa. This trip is a real adventure (yet fully accommodated), taking us through the heart of the outback during the late Australian winter season, generally a great time to go birding. During these 12 days we expect to see over 200 species, and besides the Grasswrens we have a good chance of sought-after birds as Red-lored Whistler, Banded Whiteface, Chestnut, Cinnamon & Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, Gibberbird, Yellow Chat, Inland Dotterel, Flock Bronzewing, Spinifex Pigeon, Painted Finch and even the enigmatic Grey Falcon. We’ll drive around 4000 km and there will also be lots of walking, with early departures and late finishes each day. While we may encounter frosty mornings, during this time of year the weather is generally quite pleasant. Some of the accommodation is in basic rooms without private facilities. However the rewards are some of Australia’s hardest to find, yet most sought-after outback species!

Tour starts: Adelaide, SA
Finishes: Mt Isa, Qld

Scheduled departure & return dates:
• 8-21 July 2019

Price: AU$6,999 all-inclusive (discounts available).
Leader: Peter Waanders and Helga Kieskamp
Trip reports and photos of previous tours:
http://www.bellbirdtours.com/reports

READ ON FOR:
• Further tour details
• Daily itinerary
• Booking information

This tour links seamlessly with our Savannah to Tropics tour 21-28 July, details below
Tour details

Tour starts: Adelaide, SA & Finishes: Mount Isa, Qld

Scheduled departure and return dates:
Tour commences with dinner on 8 July 2019. Please arrive on or before 8 July. Tour finishes with breakfast on 21 July 2019. Please depart on or after 21 July. Itinerary contains further details.

Leader: Peter Waanders and Helga Kieskamp.

Difficulty: Low/Medium/High/Excellent level of fitness required. This is a reasonably fast-paced trip with lots of walking in sometimes difficult terrain, early departures and late finishes each day, while driving around 4000 km (a lot on unsealed roads). We may encounter harsh outback conditions such as heat, frosty mornings, torrential rain or dust-storms. You can opt out of any challenging activities if you like.

What to bring: Please travel light. Binoculars, camera, mobile phone, chargers, if you’re an international guest, insect repellent, sunscreen, personal medications, sun hat, water bottle, hand sanitizer. Sturdy footwear recommended. Scopes, super-telephoto lenses with tripods, and heavy suitcases discouraged.

Clothing: Lightweight long pants, t-shirt and long-sleeved shirt, over the top of which you can wear layers that can be taken off as necessary, including a warm jumper and a rain-proof jacket. Neat casual attire for dinners. Be prepared for some coldish mornings but gloriously sunny days.

Group size: Minimum 4, maximum 9 participants.

Cost: AU$6,999 per person including accommodation and all meals, based on double or twin-share occupancy. Single occupancy surcharge of $690. Not included: drinks, tips, personal expenses. Earlybird discount of $99 for bookings received up to 6 months before departure date. Return-client discount may apply.

Bookings: Online at http://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings or please complete the booking form in the back of this brochure.
Nine Grasswren 12-day birding tour 2019

This tour links seamlessly with our Savannah to Tropics (Mt Isa to Cairns) tour: receive an immediate return-client discount! Please see below.

ITINERARY

Day 0: Mon 8 July ’19. Make your own way to Adelaide and take a taxi from the airport (own arrangements) to our hotel (included) for dinner and introductions. Accommodation: hotel in Adelaide (private en-suite rooms; meals included: D).

Day 1: Tue 9 July ’19. After an early breakfast we head to the coastal scrub north of Adelaide for the range-restricted Slender-billed Thornbill. We also stand a good chance of seeing Banded Stilts and then it’s off to our first taste of “mallee” habitat, scubby multi-stemmed Eucalypt trees, where we look for Chestnut Quail-thrush, Southern Scrubrobin, Gilbert’s Whistler, Crested Bellbird, Redthroat and Regent Parrot. We’ll have lunch on the banks of the Murray river and then head into one of Australia’s largest wilderness areas, over 1,000,000 ha of “mallee” eucalypt scrub of the Bookmark Biosphere - a conglomeration of nature reserves and pastoral properties. Here we have a chance of Red-lored Whistler and the endemic and endangered Black-eared Miner. At the end of the day we arrive at our comfortable lodgings in Berri, on the banks of the Murray river. Accommodation: Berri Hotel, Berri (private en-suite rooms; meals: B, L, D).

Day 2: Wed 10 July ’19. Today we’ll visit one of the many mallee-spinifex habitats in the wider vicinity of Berri. Target species include the dimunitive Mallee Emu-wren; the elusive Striated Grasswren; the majestic Major Mitchell’s Cockatoo; the regal Regent Parrot; and the reclusive Red-lored Whistler. There’s always a chance that we come across a lone Malleefowl crossing the road. Accommodation: Berri Hotel, Berri (private en-suite rooms; meals included: D).

Day 3: Thur 11 July ’19. A pre-breakfast stroll in the bush to look for Shy Heathwren, Striped Honeyeater, Splendid Fairy-wren, Southern Scrubrobin and White-browed Treecreeper. After breakfast we pack up, check out and traverse the vast mallee wilderness by vehicle, where Western Grey and Red Kangaroos hop around in the very few clearings. As we head north the landscape changes to prairie-like bluebush plains and we visit a small reserve where we have our first chance of Thick-billed Grasswren. We spend the afternoon searching for this bird with also a good chance of Rufous Fieldwren, Redthroat, White-winged Fairy-wren and chats, before moving on to our final destination for today: Nutt Bush Retreat, an outback station (farm) near Port Augusta, with its resident turquoise-race Splendid Fairy-wrens. Accommodation: Nutt Bush Retreat, Port Augusta (private rooms with bathroom facilities shared between 2-4 people; meals: B, L, D).
Day 4: Fri 12 July ’19. First thing after breakfast will be the search for Western Grasswren in the surrounding bluebush plains. Other birds we hope to come across are the turquoise race of Splendid Fairy-wren, Black-eared Cuckoo, Chirruping Wedgebill and Rufous Fieldwren. Banded Stilts are often in likely a nearby coastal lake. We’ll then travel to the Gawler Ranges, an impressive range of soaring rock formations on the edge of the outback. We search the spinifex-grass covered slopes for the elusive Short-tailed Grasswren. There’ll be plenty of Red, Western Grey and Euro Kangaroos. Our comfy accommodation is centrally located within the Gawler Ranges, nestled in a scenic valley and surrounded by Grasswren habitat! Accommodation: Mt Ive Station (private rooms with shared bathroom facilities; meals: B, L, D).

Day 5: Sat 13 July ’19. We have another chance this morning for Short-tailed Grasswren which we can search for not far from our rooms. Later in the day we travel into the Flinders Ranges, where braided river beds and narrow gorges cut deeply into geological layers dating back 800 million years. Here, we look for Elegant Parrot, Grey fronted Honeyeater and the rare Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby. We’ll end up in Lyndhurst with chance of Chirruping Wedgebill, Budgerigar and Rufous Fieldwren. After sunset we may check for Inland Dotterel. Accommodation: Lyndhurst Pub (a typical outback pub with new, private en-suite cabins; meals: B, L, D).

Day 6: Sun 14 July ’19. The morning will be spent at nearby Mt Lyndhurst Station or Witchelina Station, to search for any species still needed. There are further chances of Thick-billed Grasswren here and if we’re lucky, the very range-restricted Chestnut-breasted Whiteface. Afterwards we continue up the Birdsville track, which traverses endless open stony plains interspersed with mostly dry watercourses. We look for Cinnamon Quail-thrush, Budgerigar, Red-backed Kingfisher, and have a good chance of Inland Dotterel. Near Mungerannie, the long, white sand dunes provide us with a chance of Eyrean Grasswren. An artesian bore overflow has created a nice wetland which usually holds Brolga and a raft of waterbirds, including crakes – in amidst desert-like scenery. Accommodation: Mungerannie Pub (a typical outback pub with basic rooms and shared bathroom facilities; meals: B, L, D).

Day 7: Mon 15 July ’19. We’ll check for Grey Falcon at first light and may see Flock Bronzewings heading for their early morning drink. Neighbouring Cowarie Station has resident Eyrean Grasswrens in the scenic sand dunes while along the Warburton River we often come across Red-browed Pardalote and Banded Whiteface. Crimson and Orange Chats and Black Honeyeaters usually present too and on the gibber-strewn plains we look for Gibberbird. At the end of the day we check for Grey Falcon again. Accommodation: Mungerannie Pub (a typical outback pub with basic rooms and shared bathroom facilities; meals: B, L, D).
Day 8: Tue 16 July ‘19. We set off early to check for Grey Falcon again, then travel to a (usually dry) swamp some time in the morning. The constant chatter of bird calls provides a background chorus to our search for Grey Grasswren which prefers the dense lignum shrubs in the foreground. Other species we’ve encountered here are Australian Pratincole and Flock Bronzewing. Later we move on to another bore drain where the target is the very rare and localised Yellow Chat. We check a Letter-winged Kite colonial nesting site (they don’t nest each year) and have another chance of Grey Falcon and Eyrean Grasswren. Accommodation: Birdsville Caravan Park (private en-suite cabins; meals: B, L, D).

Day 9: Wed 17 July ‘19. We bird around Birdsville, checking local wetlands and sand dunes for species such as Budgerigar, Brown and Rufous Songlark, Brolga, Black-tailed Native-hen, Plumed Whistling-duck and Red-browed Pardalote. We’ll head north to Boulia, along the way checking for Flock Bronzewing, Letter-winged Kite (depending on preceding seasonal conditions), Inland Dotterel and another chance of Grey Grasswren. Brolgas are often seen wandering in town here! Accommodation: Desert Sands Motel, Boulia (private en-suite motel rooms; meals: B, L, D).

Day 10: Thur 18 July ‘19. Traversing the area where Night Parrot has been recorded recently, travelling on dark red gravel roads we notice more and more spinifex around us (with chances of Spinifexbird) until we arrive in the spinifex-covered plains around Opalton. Here we search for Rusty Grasswren (was rowleyi ssp of Striated). Other species we may come across include Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, Spinifexbird, White-browed, Dusky and Masked Woodswallow, Spinifex Pigeon and Grey-fronted Honeyeater. We then travel to the township of Winton, Australia’s dinosaur capital. Accommodation: Winton Motel (private en-suite motel rooms; meals: B, L, D).

Day 11: Fri 19 July. A back-up morning for Rusty Grasswren. If we’ve succeeded the day before, we’ll be birding / exploring nearby Bladensberg National Park, with good chances of Halls Babbler and Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush as well as Budgerigar, Spotted Bowerbird and with luck, Cockatiel and Crimson Chat. Towards the end of the morning we commence the long drive to Mount Isa; we’ll break for lunch somewhere scenic and birdy, and keep an eye out for Cloncurry Ringneck (MacGillivrayi ssp of Australian Ringneck). Before arriving in Mt Isa we check the first location for Kalkadoon Grasswren. Accommodation: Ibis Styles Hotel Mt Isa (private en-suite rooms; meals: B, L, D).
Nine Grasswren 12-day birding tour 2019

**Day 12: Sat 20 July ‘19.** A full day around Mt Isa looking for the two main targets here: Carpentarian and Kalkadoon Grasswren. There are many other good bird species, including Spinifexbird, Spinifex Pigeon, Little Woodswallow, Black-throated Treecreeper, Varied Lorikeet and many more. Another drawcard here is Painted Finch sunning on the rocks early in the morning. We’ll also visit the sewage pond, with chance of Plumed Whistling Ducks and other waterfowl. Nearby at Lake Moondarra we have a good chance of Paper-bark Flycatcher, Spotted Bowerbird, Plumed Whistling-duck, Painted Finch, Purple-necked Rock-wallaby and Freshwater Crocodile. Accommodation: **Ibis Styles Hotel Mt Isa** (private en-suite rooms; meals: B, L, D).

**Day 13: Sun 21 July.** Today has been set aside as your departure day so please book flights out of Mt Isa departing any time today. We’ll arrange for you to be taken to the airport (included) at any time for your flight home (own arrangement). Tour ends. (meals: B). Or, why not continue birding with us to Cairns?

This tour links seamlessly with our Queensland Savannah to Tropics: Mt Isa to Cairns tour, see below.

**Post-tour options:**
Commencing Sunday 21 July we’ll be running our 7-day **Queensland Savannah to Tropics tour** from Mount Isa to Cairns. We’ll visit Lawn Hill, Normanton and inland Queensland birding sites on our way to Cairns where we’ll spend the last day searching for the Wet Tropics endemics. You will have crossed Australia from coast to coast, South to North! You’ll be eligible to receive an immediate return-client discount on the 2nd tour. We’ll look for mouth-watering species such as White-breasted Whistler, Red-headed, Yellow-tinted and Rufous-throated Honeyeater, finches including Star Finch, Crimson and Black-throated, Purple-crowned Fairy-wren and Buff-sided Robin, Northern Rosella, Sandstone Shrike-thrush.... Plus all the Cairns endemics! Beautiful Lawn Hill, the dawn chorus at Cumberland Dam, the mangrove birds at Karumba, the spectacular sunsets at the Sunset Tavern in Karumba.... Don’t wait, please contact us!

You can link the Nine Grasswren tour seamlessly with our Savannah to Tropics tour, and receive an immediate return-client discount on the 2nd tour (no other discounts apply).

If you wish to stay in Mt Isa for one or more days after the tour finishes, in the same hotel that we’ve been using there, please tick the relevant box on the booking form. We can book this for you and add the cost to your tour price – this way you can stay in the same room and don’t have to check out on the last day. We can also book your domestic or international flights and arrange travel insurance for you.

**Price inclusions and exclusions:**

**Included:** All meals commencing with Dinner on Day 0 and finishing with Breakfast on Day 13, morning tea/coffee, some snacks, some fruit, some drinks, unlimited drinking water refills. Accommodation in private en-suite rooms, although on some nights only basic rooms with shared facilities are available. Transport using comfortable and reliable 4WD vehicle, Expert guiding, any entry fees, taxes.

**Excluded:** Travel to & from departure and finish points, Pre- & post trip accommodation, any meals before Dinner on Day 0, any meals after breakfast on Day 13, drinks except where provided, personal expenses, tips, insurance.

**Bookings:** Please book online: [http://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings](http://www.bellbirdtours.com/bookings) or complete the booking form in the back of this brochure. We can also arrange your flights, accommodation and insurance through our partnership with TravelManagers – please contact us for details.

**Reports of previous tours:** 9 Grasswren tours can be found on: [http://www.bellbirdtours.com/reports/](http://www.bellbirdtours.com/reports/)
Nine Grasswren 12-day birding tour 2019
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<td>Hardhead</td>
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<td>Australasian Grebe</td>
<td>Australian Spotted Crane</td>
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<td>Hoary-headed Grebe</td>
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<td>Great Crested Grebe</td>
<td>Buff-banded Rail</td>
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<td>Spotted Dove</td>
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<td>Crested Pigeon</td>
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<td>Peaceful Dove</td>
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<td>Little Pied Cormorant</td>
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<td>Great Cormorant</td>
<td>Masked Lapwing</td>
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<td>Little Black Cormorant</td>
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<td>Pied Cormorant</td>
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<td>Australian Pelican</td>
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<td>Great Egret</td>
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<td>Cattle Egret</td>
<td>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</td>
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<td>White-necked Heron</td>
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<td>White-faced Heron</td>
<td>Little Button-quail</td>
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<td>Little Egret</td>
<td>Australian Pratincole</td>
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<td>Nankeen Night-Heron</td>
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<td>Major Mitchell’s Cockatoo</td>
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<td>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</td>
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<td>Cockatiel</td>
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<td>Rainbow Lorikeet</td>
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<td>Purple-crowned Lorikeet</td>
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<td>Regent Parrot</td>
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<td>Eastern Rosella</td>
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<td>Crimson Rosella</td>
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<td>Aust. Ringneck (Pt Lincoln, Mallee, Cloncurry)</td>
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<td>Blue Bonnet (yellow-vented, pale)</td>
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<td>Mulga Parrot</td>
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<td>Budgerigar</td>
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<td>Bourke’s Parrot</td>
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<td>Blue-winged Parrot</td>
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<td>Elegant Parrot</td>
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<td>Scarlet-chested Parrot</td>
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<td>Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo</td>
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<td>Pallid Cuckoo</td>
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<td>Fan-tailed Cuckoo</td>
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<td>Southern Boobook</td>
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<td>Eastern Barn Owl</td>
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*Note: This list is not exhaustive and may vary depending on the specific tour and location.*
Nine Grasswren 10-day birding tour 2019
Possible species list

Laughing Kookaburra
Red-backed Kingfisher
Sacred Kingfisher
Rainbow Bee-eater
Western Bowerbird
White-browed
Treecreeper
Brown Treecreeper
Superb Fairy-wren
Splendid Fairy-wren
White-winged Fairy-wren
Variegated Fairy-wren
Rufous-crowned Emu-wren
Striated Grasswren
Short-tailed Grasswren
Carpentarian Grasswren
Thick-billed Grasswren
Western Grasswren
Rusty Grasswren
Kalkadoon Grasswren
Eyeaen Grasswren
Grey Grasswren
White-browed Scrubwren
Shy Heathwren
Rufous Fieldwren
Redthroat
Weebill
Western Gerygone
Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Slaty-backed Thornbill
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
Slender-billed Thrush
Buff-rumped Thornbill
Inland Thornbill
Southern Whiteface
Chestnut-breasted Whiteface
Banded Whiteface
Spotted Pardalote
Red-browed Pardalote
Striated Pardalote
Pied Honeyeater
Singing Honeyeater
Grey-headed Honeyeater
Grey-fronted Honeyeater
White-eared Honeyeater
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater
White-plumed Honeyeater
White-fronted Honeyeater
Blue-faced Honeyeater
Little Friarbird
Noisy Miner
Yellow-throated Miner
Black-eared Miner
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Red Wattlebird
Little Wattlebird
Striped Honeyeater
Crimson Chat
Orange Chat
White-fronted Chat
Gibberbird
Yellow Chat
Black Honeyeater
Brown Honeyeater
Black-chinned Honeyeater
New Holland Honeyeater
Brown-headed Honeyeater
White-browed Babbler
Chestnut-crowned Babbler
Hall’s Babbler
Cinnamon Quail-thrush
Chestnut-breasted Qu-thrush
Chestnut Quail-thrush
Chiming Wedgebill
Chirruping Wedgebill
Varied Sittella
Ground Cuckoo-shrike
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
White-winged Triller
Crested Shrike-tit
Gilbert’s Whistler
Red-lored Whistler
Rufous Whistler
Golden Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush
Crested Bellbird
White-breasted Woodswallow
Masked Woodswallow
White-browed Woodswallow
Black-faced Woodswallow
Little Woodswallow
Dusky Woodswallow
Grey Butcherbird
Pied Butcherbird
Australian Magpie
Grey Currawong
Grey Fantail
Willie Wagtail
Australian Raven
Little Raven
Little Crow
Torresian Crow
Restless Flycatcher
Maggpie-lark
White-winged Chough
Apostlebird
Jacky Winter
Red-capped Robin
Hooded Robin
Southern Scrub-robin
Horsfield’s Bushlark
Eurasian Skylark
Australian Reed-warbler
Little Grassbird
Rufous Songlark
Brown Songlark
Spinifexbird
Silvereye
White-backed Swallow
Welcome Swallow
Fairy Martin
Tree Martin
Common Blackbird
Common Starling
Mistletoebird
Zebra Finch
Painted Finch
Red-browed Finch
Pictorella Mannikin
House Sparrow
Australasian Pipit
European Goldfinch
Tour Booking Form

This form contains 3 pages. Please print out and complete each page, and sign where indicated. Scan and email, or send by postal mail, with payment (see last page) to the address above.

Tour details:

Name of tour  ____________________________________________________________

Starting and Ending dates __________________________________________________

Your details:

Name and address of the registrant(s) (only 1 form is needed for people residing at the same address)

Name(s)_____________________________________________________

Date of birth __________________________________________________________________

Address _________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Identification document and number (passport for international visitors) ________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Telephone (Home)_______________________________________________________________

(Work)___________________________________________(Mobile)________________________

Email ________________________________________________

☐ tick if you do not want to receive future updates, news and special offers from Bellbird Tours by email

Emergency Contact Name, relationship and telephone number (required field)

______________________________________________________________________________

(continued on next page)
Accommodation requirements (please tick):

☐ Single Room (surcharge applies)

☐ Double Room (2 people, 1 bed, usually queen-size, but this cannot always be guaranteed)

☐ Twin Share (2 people, 2 beds) (If you are a solo traveller and want to share a room: we will try to team you up with another solo traveller, however this cannot be guaranteed. Single surcharge applies for single occupancy)

Medical conditions and dietary requirements:

Do you have any medical conditions (eg. disabilities, illnesses or allergies) that might restrict your full involvement in any aspect of the tour?

No / Yes

If Yes, please provide details: ______________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

If you have other special requirements (eg dietary requirements), please advise. While we cannot guarantee to accommodate them, we will make every attempt to do so.

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Optional extras:

Please indicate if you would like us to arrange any of the following (we’ll contact you to discuss):

☐ Domestic flights
☐ International flights
☐ Travel insurance
☐ Pre and/or post tour hotel bookings

(continued on next page)
Terms and Conditions:
Please read the terms and conditions and the release of liability waiver (both can be found on http://www.bellbirdtours.com/terms-and-conditions), then sign below.

I/we agree to book this tour. I/we have read and understood, and accept the terms and conditions. I/we accept the release and waiver from liability.

Signature 1: ________________________________ Signature 2: ________________________________

Print Name 1: ______________________________  Name 2: ________________________________

Date:______________________________________Date: _______________________________

To secure a seat, a deposit of 20% of the tour price is required at the time of booking. Full payment is due 60 days prior to the departure date. Until full payment has been received, Bellbird Tours reserves the right to change the tour price (eg due to changing fuel prices).

Please tick which of the following payment options you will be using to pay the deposit:

☐ Domestic electronic funds transfer: please send funds to the following bank account:
  • bank: Australia & New Zealand Bank (ANZ), 112 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000
  • account name: Bellbird Tours Pty Ltd
  • Branch No. (BSB) 015-140   Account No. 206136528
    - Please use your surname as the booking reference.

☐ Visa, Mastercard & Amex: through Pin Payments (an easy, secure online payment system). They charge us a fee of 2.95%, which unfortunately we have to pass on to you. Please contact us if you want to use this option, and we’ll email you a link to a secure payment page.

☐ PayPal & other credit cards through PayPal: They charge us a fee of between 2.6-3.6% to receive your money, which unfortunately we have to pass on to you. Please contact us if you want to use this option, and we’ll email you a secure PayPal invoice.

☐ International electronic funds transfer: please send funds in Australian Dollars (+ bank charges or AU$20 bank transaction fee, see notes below) to the following bank account:
  • international swift code: anzbau3m (no IBAN codes are used in Australia)
  • bank: Australia & New Zealand Bank (ANZ), 112 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000
  • account name: Bellbird Tours Pty Ltd
  • Branch No. (BSB) 015-140   Account No. 206136528
    - If possible, please use your surname as the booking reference.
    - If you are asked to provide our physical address, this is: 101 Chilton Road, Berri, SA 5343, Australia.
    - Please specify AU$ as the recipient’s currency, and the correct amount. Select the option for you to incur any charges at both ends; if no such option exists, please add AU$20 to cover the bank fee at the recipient’s end.

Any discrepancy between the amount payable and amount received will be added to the final balance, or payable in cash at the start of the tour. Prices and fees are not negotiable.