

# The

# Student's Desk

**ON LOCATION**

The Student's Desk has been moved back into the Hotel Royal (almost), and I'm ready to go – this time to Central Australia.

It's been an anxious few weeks trying to get the Hotel Royal renovated, dreading the task of packing, having several "what the heck am I doing!?" moments, and getting setup with a GPS and mapping software.

Thanks to Marks efforts, the Hotel Royal is a lot more camper friendly. Packing wasn't the chore I dreaded as I'm starting to learn where things go, plus I took 4 days to pack doing a little each day. I reckoned once I was packed, I'd feel happier and less anxious, and this has proven true. I've haven't ventured far from the coast before, so this will be a new experience, and I have little idea of what to expect.

I have also been able to gain what I wanted in a GPS, though it's taken considerable more money than expected. However, I now have a unit that displays topographical maps, and interfaces with my laptop. So, in advance, I've been able to enter possible camping spots, and points of interest along the way. Hopefully, that will end hours of "let's find the campsite". Perhaps the biggest frustration has been I've always had my hand in my pocket for something. I've been told to think of it as an investment for future trips – its not working! I'm sure I'll be grateful come the next trip.

Apart from this, I have been researching Aboriginal culture and history with the guidance of Mark and Cathy. I've read 2 books, one tracing a person's journey from "black-fella ways" to "white-fella ways" around 1940-1950 and beyond, and the other offering, shall we say, a very politically incorrect interpretation of the history of Cape York (though not without substance!). I have also seen 2 movies "Ten Canoes" and "Yolngu [Aboriginal for "Aboriginal"] Boy", both offering insights into the traditions, and the later exploring issues Indigenous Australians currently struggle with. So it will be interesting to see what I find myself after reading these books and seeing these movies.

JASON