

Making of the list

Curious how we ARRIVED at our 100 Best Aussie Towns? Read on for the voting process, meet our *PANEL* and find out which *DESTINATIONS* took out the top spots.

AUSTRALIAN TRAVELLER'S 100 BEST AUSSIE TOWNS were selected by a voting panel of much-loved Australians, industry experts and category authorities from across the country. Following a far-reaching nomination process and guided by professional instinct and personal judgement, our panel rated the shortlist on a scale of 1–10 based on how strongly they believe Australians should visit nominated towns. They didn't vote on places they did not feel they had sufficient knowledge of. The overall ranking reflects the towns that received the highest average score, ranging from tiny localities to buzzing regional hubs with community at heart.

MEET OUR PANELLISTS



Adrian Williams

Accor's chief operating officer across the Pacific region – which spans nearly 400 hotels and ancillary businesses – Adrian Williams brings more than 30 years of experience in hotel operations to the table. He is a board member of the Australian Accommodation Association, Visit Victoria and the Melbourne Convention Bureau.



Anna Polyviou

Powerhouse pastry chef, television personality and cookbook author Anna Polyviou is known for her quirky urban style. From 7.5 years as creative director of pastry at Shangri-La Hotel Sydney to serving as a repeat guest judge on *MasterChef Australia*, her experience has seen her zigzag all over Australia to tick off its top foodie spots.



Ben Hall

CEO of AAT Kings Group, one of Australia's most trusted guided tour operators, Ben Hall has worked in more than 90 countries. For 10 years, he was a travel director for Contiki, Insight and Trafalgar across EMEA and Grand Circle in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. A long-time advocate for exploring closer to home, Ben has a deep appreciation for Australia's diverse landscapes and the unique stories found across its regions.



Brad Farmer AM

Often described as having 'the best job in the world', Brad Farmer's office is always at the beach. After spearheading multiple coastal conservation not-for-profits, he is now Australia's official Beach Ambassador – heading the annual study of Best Australian Beaches with Tourism Australia and clocking up extensive travel researching fresh destinations. He has written bestselling books and pioneered award-winning campaigns.



Brett Godfrey

Brett Godfrey co-founded Virgin Australia, launching it from scratch in 2000 and growing it into Australia's second largest carrier. In 2013, he traded airplane runways for hiking trails with the purchase of the Tasmanian Walking Company, a leader in environmental tourism that specialises in luxury guided hikes.



Catriona Rowntree

Author and television presenter Catriona Rowntree has been dubbed 'Australia's Most Travelled Woman', hosting our longest-running travel program, *Getaway*, for 30 years – while also becoming one of the country's longest-running presenters for a single program. She lives with her husband and two sons on a historic homestead atop a sheep station in rural Victoria.



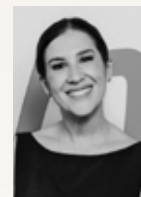
Ernie Dingo AM

Born on Bullardoo Station in Western Australia, Ernie Dingo is a Wadjjarri/Yamatji actor, comedian and TV host – and one of Australia's most iconic television personas. In 1990, Ernie was awarded the Order of Australia and in 1997 was voted a National Living Treasure in a poll conducted by The National Trust in conjunction with respected media bodies. The seventh season of his television show *Going Places with Ernie Dingo* premiered on both SBS and NITV in February. Hear more from Ernie on page 154.



Imogen Eveson

Print editor Imogen Eveson has been part of the *Australian Traveller* team for almost a decade. In that time, she has been lucky enough to travel to all corners of the country, across every state and territory. From Bellingen and the Barossa to Kununurra and Castlemaine, she enjoys understanding the pulse of the places she visits.



Irene Jones

Irene Jones is an Australian TV presenter, entrepreneur and founder of Travelglobe Group – a growing travel business and media platform. She is particularly known for her work on *Travel Oz* by Grainger TV, one of Australia's longest-running travel series. Irene is also the co-creator and host of *The Hungry Passport*, an all-female travel series blending culture, connection and cuisine.



Katie Carlin

Katie Carlin is head of content at Australian Traveller Media, leading the editorial team across print, digital and video. In the past seven years she's seen more of Australia than she could have dreamed – from swimming with whale sharks near Exmouth and dining under the Milky Way at Uluru to seeing the sun rise over Waubs Beach in Bicheno. Crafting compelling stories about Australia's vast and varied places, people and experiences is what she loves to do most.



Paul Ab Chee

Paul Ah Chee is a widely respected Aboriginal leader, Arrernte Traditional Owner and Elder from Mparntwe (Alice Springs), recognised for his enduring contribution to culture, community leadership and Indigenous-led engagement across the Northern Territory. Paul plays a central role in Parrtjima – A Festival In Light, serving as cultural advisor to ensure the festival remains grounded in culture and Country. Paul is also chair of Tourism and Events NT, and a musician and storyteller.



Paul Hamra

Starting his career in journalism and public relations, Paul Hamra is the founder and managing director of Australian publishing company Solstice Media, responsible for numerous Australian news and lifestyle publications including *The New Daily*, *7AM* podcast, *The Weekend Edition*, *Australian Traveller* and *International Traveller*. He served as deputy chair of the Australian Film Commission (now Screen Australia) for six years and is currently the chair of Adelaide Fringe.



Quentin Long

Quentin Long is the co-founder of Australian Traveller Media. Today a sought-after travel media commentator, Quentin first conceived of the idea for *Australian Traveller* as he flew over Broome/Rubibi's Roebuck Bay more than 20 years ago and wondered why people weren't talking about how amazing it is to explore our own backyards.



Rae Johnston

Rae Johnston has spent years travelling every corner of this country as a TV host on *Going Places with Ernie Dingo*, *Back Roads* and *The Secret DNA of Us*. Born and raised in the Blue Mountains, she's also the voice keeping NSW company every Saturday morning on ABC Radio, as well as Radio National's *Download This Show*.



Sally Cope

Sally Cope leads the Tourism Australia Industry & Business Events teams, responsible for driving strategic initiatives that foster growth, innovation and competitiveness within Australian tourism. Boasting a 35-year-long career, Sally was previously executive officer of Ultimate Winery Experiences of Australia, part of Tourism Australia's Signature Experiences collection. She has also held leadership positions at Anthology, Voyages Hotels and Resorts, and Qantas Holidays.