



# Tour Guide Manual



Department of **Environment** and **Resource Management**

Developed by Dean Nulty & Jacqui Conway, Industry Accreditation 2010 for; the Laura Rangers in conjunction with South Cape York Catchments.

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## **Why we do what we do**

Aboriginal people read the land the way white people read a book. The land has always played an important and vital role in Aboriginal life for food, water, shelter, cultural and spiritual beliefs.

The rock art and engravings of the Quinkan Country is an essential part of the story between our people and our cultural heritage, our laws, customs and codes of conduct.

People from around the world are interested in our heritage. Many people plan for years to visit our rock art. This is something to be very proud of.

We can share our stories, our beliefs. We can create new memories and understanding of our culture to many people and be proud to do so.

This manual will help us to guide our guests through our land and explain the rock art and engravings.

## **Guiding Tips**

Smile

Be friendly

Take pride in your presentation

Make eye contact with your guests

Introduce yourself

Ask their name

Keep your guests safe

Be on time

Keep your tour to the time allocated

Share your stories

Allow your guests to participate

Have fun

## Meet and Greet

### Smile



This makes your guests feel comfortable and welcomed.

### Introduce yourself and meet your guests

Ask each of them their name and try to use it through the tour.

Ask them where they are from.

Welcome your guests to the tour.



### Tell them where you are going



Tell your guests what is going to happen on the tour – that you will walk through the bush to visit the rock art sites. Tell them you will stop along the way to look at the country.

Tell them how long the tour will take.



Tell your guests there are no toilets, unless they use a big tree !

Before you leave on the tour

## Safety Brief



Tell your customers that before you leave for the tour, it is important that they should have:

- Enclosed shoes
- Water
- Hat
- Sunscreen



Above all it is important that they all **stay together as a group**, with you, as it is easy to become lost.

## First Aid Kit

Carry a small first aid kit with you. Just in case someone is injured.

Check it over before you leave to make sure everything is in there that is supposed to be.



## Going to the art sites in a car

Going to the first art site and then on to the other art sites, it is important that you make sure everyone is wearing a seatbelt.



- Talk about the land that you are driving through.
- Tell them what it means to you.
- Talk about hunters and gatherers – who did what.
- Talk about our traditional owners and their lifestyle.
- Talk about how the land has changed such as how the springs are now dried up.



Point out trees and plants which are used traditionally. Like the Grass Tree. Talk about how:

- It was used to make spear shafts.
- How the flowers were soaked to make a sweet drink.
- The base of the leaves were chewed to quench thirst.
- The resin was used as glue.
- The trunk was used as an insect repellent when burnt.

## Walking to Mushroom Rock Art Site

Talk as you walk.

Sometimes you need to walk backwards. Make sure everyone can hear you, so stop occasionally and make sure everyone is together when you are talking.



Tell your guests about the country they are walking through.

## Blackcurrent Tree



Show particular plants and what their uses are.

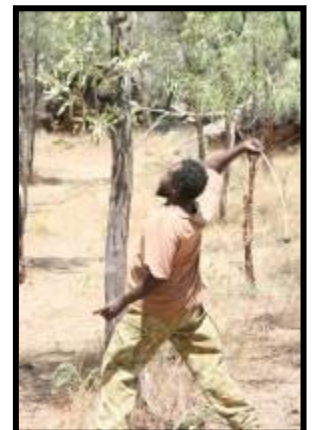
Begin with the black currant tree, which is just 20 metres past the gate.

If you can taste any plants, offer to your guests to try.

## Bushman Clothes Peg Tree

Tell your guests about some of the hunting techniques. Show them the plants which were used to make spears.

As you pass the Bushman Clothes Peg tree, tell them that the seeds were used for hunting and demonstrate how they were thrown with a stick at birds flying overhead.



If you have time, let your guests have a go. Keep a stock pile of the clothes pegs and sticks at the bottom of the tree for next time.



## Fallen Iron Wood Tree

As you come to the fallen tree, stop for a talk. This will interest your guests as the marks of an old stone axe can still be clearly seen on the trunk— show it to them.

Tell them how the axes were made and what they were used for.



## Sugar Bag

Once you have shown your guests the axe marks on the trunk. **Look up!**



Back towards the gate, you will see the bush bees and their hive, high in the tree.

Tell them how the sugar bag would be taken from the tree and how sweet it is to eat. Explain it was a favoured food for older people.



## Sandpaper Fig

Also in this area is the Sandpaper Fig. Tell your guests what it was used for. Show them how the leaves can be used for sanding. Let your guests rub their hands with a leaf. (Ladies can do their nails).

Tell them the fruit of the Sandpaper Fig was eaten.

## On to Mushroom Rock



Gather your group and lead them towards the art site. Make sure they stay together.

Welcome your group to the art site.

Tell your guests that they cannot go past the rope.

Explain that the ground mat is there to stop dust from being stirred up and settling on the art, which it would damage.



Your guests cannot touch the art. The oils from our skin contain acid and this would eat into the art and damage it.

Tell your guests the whole site has recently been fenced off to stop cattle and feral pigs from getting in and rubbing against the walls, destroying the art.

## How the Paint was Made

Tell your guests how ochre was used to make the paint by rubbing a block of ochre on sandstone to get the fine dust that was mixed with water or the sap from a tree. Or it was made by hitting the ochre with a hammer stone, which gives you a rougher powder to mix with water or tree sap. Tell your guests that it took a long time to make the paint, and sometimes it took a long time to find the right colour of ochre to use. We think that



ochre was traded with other people. Most of the colours here are red, yellow and white. Mixing the paint gives lots of shades of a colour. Sometimes the ochre was rubbed directly on to the walls.

A certain grass, bound to a stick was used to put the paint onto the walls. Show your guests this.

## Mushroom Rock

Tell your guests how the site was used to record the life of the traditional owners and how it was used for shelter during the wet season.

In recent times this was a dig site and they went down to 3 metres and there was still art on the wall – 3 metres down. This must have been a magnificent structure which has been dated at around 13,000 years. The date was established by carbon dating the charcoal that was used for fire in the shelter.

This was an occupation site, which means the traditional owners stayed here at certain times of the year, usually in the wet season.

There was water close by to this site so that made this a good camp site.

## The Art at Mushroom Rock

Tell your guests if it is ok to take photographs.



Point out the crocodile. Talk about how it could have represented a food source or a totem, representing the people of this area. The lines marked are the skin patterns of the crocodile.

As you can see much of the art is painted over the top of each other. This is called superimposing.



Here we can see an emu in the centre, a flying fox behind it and a dilly bag to the right. Explain that the flying fox and emu were a food source and tell your guests what a dilly bag is made of and used for.

A Timara can be seen in the background – If you are going to Quinkan Gallery on your tour, wait to talk about Timara then. If you are only visiting this site on your tour, then tell your guests who Timara is.

Timara is one of the Quinkan spirits and he was an ancestral hero. In the dreaming, Timara provided the bush tucker and sugar bag. Timara lives in the sandstone, in the cracks and gaps. Timara comes out at night. Timara is the big boss for all people, not just the traditional owners.



Along the top edge of the wall is the Rainbow Serpent, the creator of the landscape. Explain how the Rainbow Serpent is represented all around Australia by most language groups.

Tell your guests that hand stencils are like a signature.

Explain the tall figures on the ceiling. Tell your story.

Point out this stencil. Ask your guests what they think it is.



Perhaps it is a miner's pick showing post European contact. The miner's pick would have been a valuable tool to use. Who knows how they came into possession of it?



The white man figure represents sorcery. He is painted upside down so that his spirit cannot leave his body. Perhaps he has been killed and buried nearby. Notice the hat on his head.

Bottom left corner are long tailed eel figures. These would have been caught in the Laura River.



On the rock shelf there are some tools found at the site. These were used in everyday life. Tell your guests the type of uses they had. Let your guests hold them.



The string is made from the Pandanus plant and had many uses. Tell your guests what it was used for and how it was made.

## The back of Mushroom Rock Art Site



Walk your guests around to the back of Mushroom Rock.

Show them the dead tree and the axe marks where sugar bag was gathered.



Make sure your guests are in the shade.  
Invite them to sit down.



Explain the red lady and what she represents to you. Talk about what the lines on the light coloured figure means to you.

On the ceiling there is a large forked tailed cat fish, this could be found in the Laura River as a tucker.



There are plants here. Talk about what these are and perhaps allow your guests to taste.



## **The end of the Mushroom Rock Art tour**

If this is the end of the art site tour, tell your guests that it has been a pleasure to show them a part of your culture and heritage and that you hope these memories stay with them forever.

Remind your guests to drink some water.

Walk them back to their car. Make sure they all stay together and you have checked that you have everybody with you before leaving the site.

If you are going on to another art site, then tell your guests that it will be another half an hour journey by car to the Quinkan Gallery or 40 minutes to Giant Horse.

Let your guests know that if they need the toilet, then choose a big tree !

Again, remind your guests to drink some water and walk them back to their car. Make sure they all stay together and you have checked that you have everybody with you before leaving the site.

## Quinkan Group of Galleries



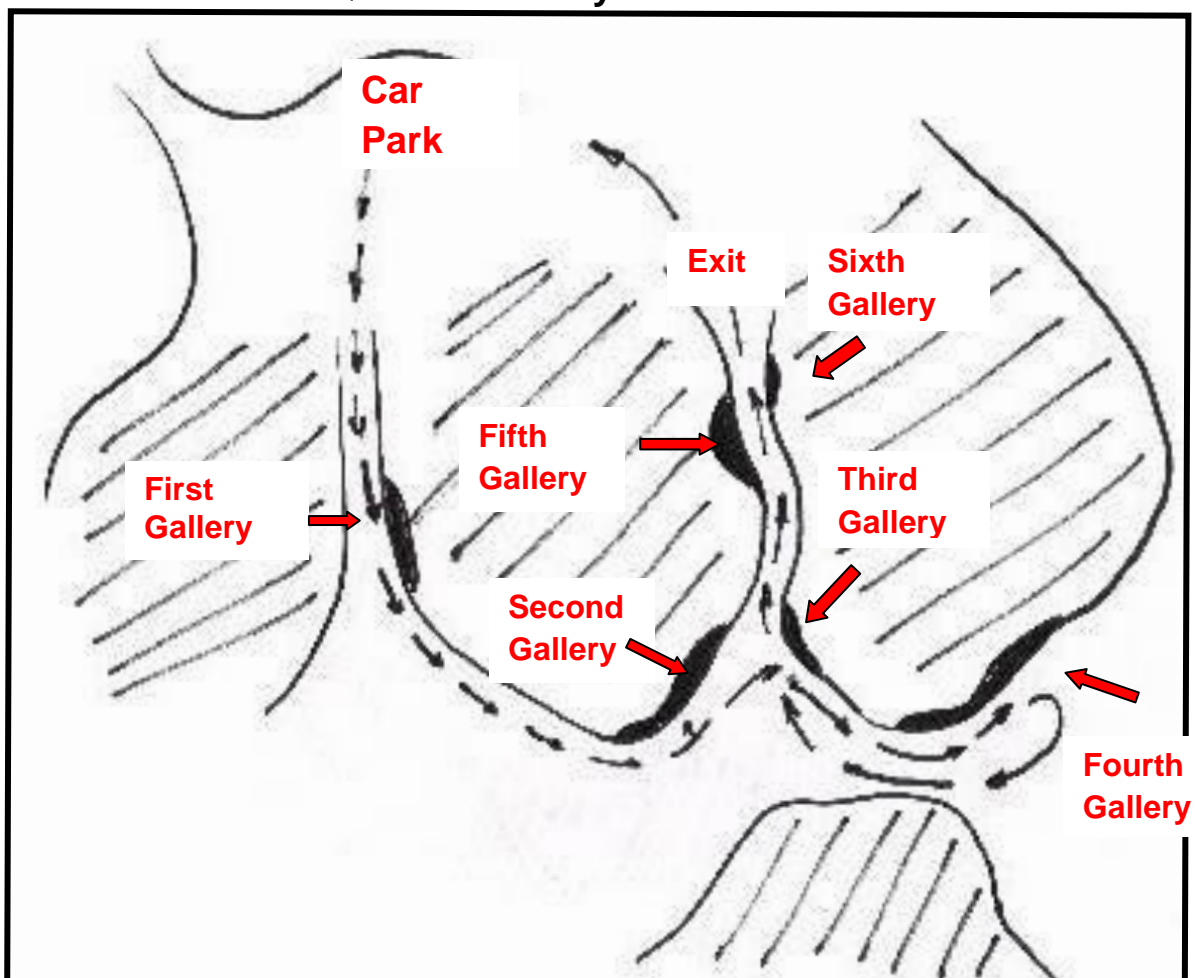
On arriving at the Quinkan Galleries, it is important that you stop, gather your group, and remind your guests to drink some water and to stay together.

Before you take your guests to this site, explain that the track goes downwards into the site and that the track between the rocks can be slippery with leaves.

As you lead your guests down the track, call to the spirits to let them know that everything is ok. You might need to explain to your guests why you are doing this.

It is suggested you take your guests through the Quinkan Gallery following the route below:

### Quinkan Gallery Route Guide



## First Gallery – Large Head Dress Figure

When you arrive at the first site, remind your guests to stay behind the ropes and not to touch the art.

As an introduction, explain why this site is named the Quinkan Gallery. Tell them who the Quinkans are and how important they are to your culture. This is a very sacred place.



Do not tell your guests at this point about the Quinkan figure art. Save that for the WOW factor, when they see it for the first time in the main Quinkan Gallery.

Tell your guests about the kangaroos, wallabies, dingoes and the yams. You can see the yam behind the yellow wallaby's tail. The waistband around the middle of the yellow wallaby tells us that this painting is totemic from our ancestors.



Maybe these figures represent what was available in this area as a food source or perhaps they were totems.

This large male figure is wearing a head dress. Perhaps he is a Rain Spirit. You will notice this figure has 6 fingers.

To the right of him is a dingo. Dingoes are always painted with their tail up.

On the right hand side of the main wall there is a hand stencil and two sugar bags.



Move to the next Gallery, Keep everyone together, and make sure no one has been left behind.

## Second Gallery – White Ibis



This gallery shows a very large Rainbow Serpent going right through the panel. Below the serpent to the left there is a large yam and an emu's foot. There is a dilly bag, small white bird and turtle outline. There is also a large white bird, an Ibis, which has given its name to the site.



On the far left hand side of this gallery there is a small fresh water prawn which is circled above. This is rare to see in art work. There is also a blackcurrant bush visible and next to that, a fish, possibly black bream.

The small white circles below are engravings which are dated older than the art itself.

### Third Gallery - Flying Foxes

These are Flying fox. These were and still are a favoured food source. Women were not allowed to hunt these as they roosted near springs where women were not allowed to go due to cultural beliefs.



Pass these on your way to the Fourth Gallery of the large crocodile.

Do not tell your guests that the flying fox guard the entrance to the Timara Quinkan cave until after you have seen the crocodile. This will add to the excitement for your guests.

### Fourth Gallery – Large Yellow Crocodile

Invite your guests to sit down in the shade. Remind your guests not to touch the art as there is no rope to keep them back.

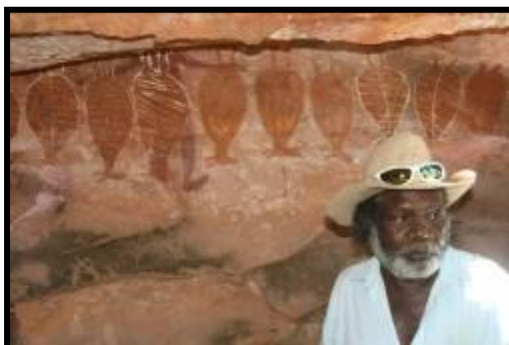


The main art here is of a large yellow crocodile.

Once again this was possibly a totem, maybe a warning or a food source.

On the far right hand side of site there are engravings of emu feet. Ask your guests to see how many they can find.

There is no mat on the ground here as it is a solid rock floor which means that dirt and dust will not destroy the art.



**Remember**, when you leave the fourth gallery on your way to the Timara Quinkans, stop and tell your guests that the flying foxes are guarding the entrance and protecting the Timara's.

## Fifth Gallery – Timara Quinkans

When you arrive at the gallery, allow your guests time to sit and absorb the feeling in the gallery before you begin talking.



Tell your guests that this is the Quinkan Timara, with his wife in the background and his three sons.

Timara is one of the Quinkan spirits and he was an ancestral hero. In the dreaming, Timara provided the bush tucker and sugar bag.

This is a very special sacred place and it is thought that the initiations of young boys happened here.

It is a very dark place except in the middle of the day when a small amount of light shines through the chasm that is walked through to get here. Tell your guests that Timara prefers the dark and so this would be a perfect place for him to live. His big round eyes help him to see better in the dark.



Timara lives in the sandstone, in the cracks and gaps. Timara comes out at night. Timara is the big boss for all people, not just the traditional owners.

Tell your guests how you know the difference between a spirit figure and a person. Notice there is no mouth.

## Sixth Gallery



Stop briefly at the sixth gallery on your way out of the Quinkan Galleries.

Ask your guests to guess what this rock art is. Maybe it's a platypus? It will be something they will think about after the tour.



## The end of the Quinkan Gallery tour

If this is the end of the art site tour, tell your guests that it has been a pleasure to show them a part of your culture and heritage and that you hope these memories stay with them forever.

Remind your guests to drink some water.

Walk them back to their car. Make sure they all stay together and you have checked that you have everybody with you before leaving the site.

If you are going on to Giant Horse Galleries, then tell your guests that it will be 15 minutes journey.

Let your guests know that if they need the toilet, then choose a big tree!

Again, remind your guests to drink some water and walk them back to their car. Make sure they all stay together and you have checked that you have everybody with you before leaving the site.

## Walking to the Giant Horse Gallery

Make sure your guests are wearing hats and comfortable walking shoes. Keep all of them together and keep checking to make sure no one has wandered off and that you offer help to people who need help. Remind them to drink water.



Remember to stop and turn around so that everyone can hear you.



Stop at the tree where the wild pigs rub their tusks.



Before you enter the gallery, stop and gather all of your guests. Call to the spirits to let them know everything is ok. Tell your guests why you do this.

Tell your guests that they must be very careful in the gallery – you don't want anyone falling off the edge! Remember to help those guests that need it.

Take your guests to the main gallery first. Go past the other two galleries, keep those until last.



## Main Gallery - Giant Horse

Remind your guests not to go past the rope and that they cannot touch the art.

Tell them to stay away from the edge.

Give your guests a moment to just look at the art before you begin talking.



Tell your guests that we think this horse was painted on the rock when a British man called Edmund Kennedy and his men came through the area in September 1848 trying to make it to Cape York.

This is called post European contact art. The horse would have been a new animal never seen before which is why it is probably painted so big.

This is one of the last paintings done here.

The horse has been painted over a tortoise, fish, echidna and a dilly bag.

To the right of the horse's head is a Timara figure. Show your guests his large eyes and long ears. Next to him is a large figure. Ask your guests if they can guess what it is – a stingray.

You can see a woman wearing a pendant lying down at the bottom of the horse. Ask your guests what they think the pendant means. The pendant means this is a love magic painting.



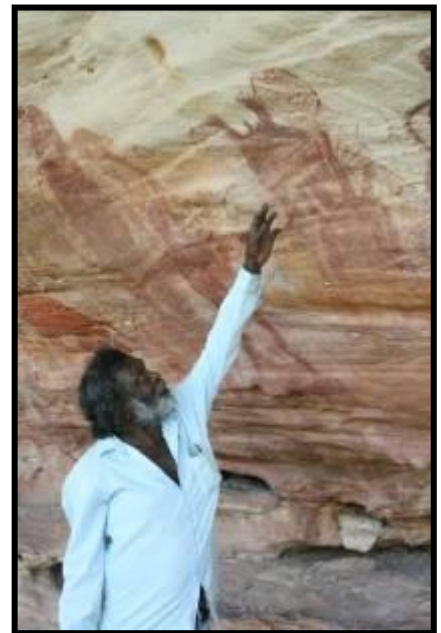


Tell your stories so that your guests can see how much you love the art and your job.

Remember to involve your guests. Ask them what they can see – before you tell them your stories.

Point out the two figures shown here to the right. Ask your guests if they can guess what they are. If not, show them the lower turtle and the echidna behind and above, point out the claws and beak of the echidna.

The solid red figure is one of the Quinkin spirits called Imjim. Tell your guests how you know that he is Imjim; point out the axe heads on elbows and knees and large knobbed penis. Tell your story of Imjim, and how he is a bad spirit.



Talk of the yellow outlined figure lying down above him.

There are lots of figures in the main gallery. Allow time for your guests to look at them.

Tell your story of as many as you have time to, such as the lotus lily and how this was used as tucker, the bush turkey with eggs and the kangaroo tracks. Tell the guests why you

think the animal tracks were painted.



## Leaving the Main Gallery

Before you leave the main gallery to look at the other sites, take the opportunity to show your guests the land.

The view from here looks down onto the dance festival grounds which were the original Bora ground, a meeting place for the peoples of this area.

You can also see across to the escarpment country that led into the Palmer River gold fields. From this point the traditional owners would have seen many Europeans invading their country. Explain how their lifestyle from that point on was never the same.



Explain how down below the main gallery there is a spring which is one of the main reasons the ancestors occupied this site at any given time.

Tell your guests as this site is so high up it always remains cool, a bit like nature's air conditioner.

Be careful not to allow your guests to go too close to the edge.

From here move back around to the way you came in, and just around the corner from the main gallery is the horse and thrown rider, this will be your next stop.



## Second Gallery - Thrown Rider



This shows a horse with a fallen rider. You can see the man still holding the reins. The rider has a gun or club and is wearing boots. We don't know if this actually happened, or if the artist wanted to make it happen. Tell your guests about purri purri or black magic.

Opposite this second gallery, gather your guests and walk them down through the gully. Remember to check that you have everyone with you.

## Third Gallery - Children's Site



The far left hand side of this panel has art showing child birth. Perhaps this site was a birthing site?

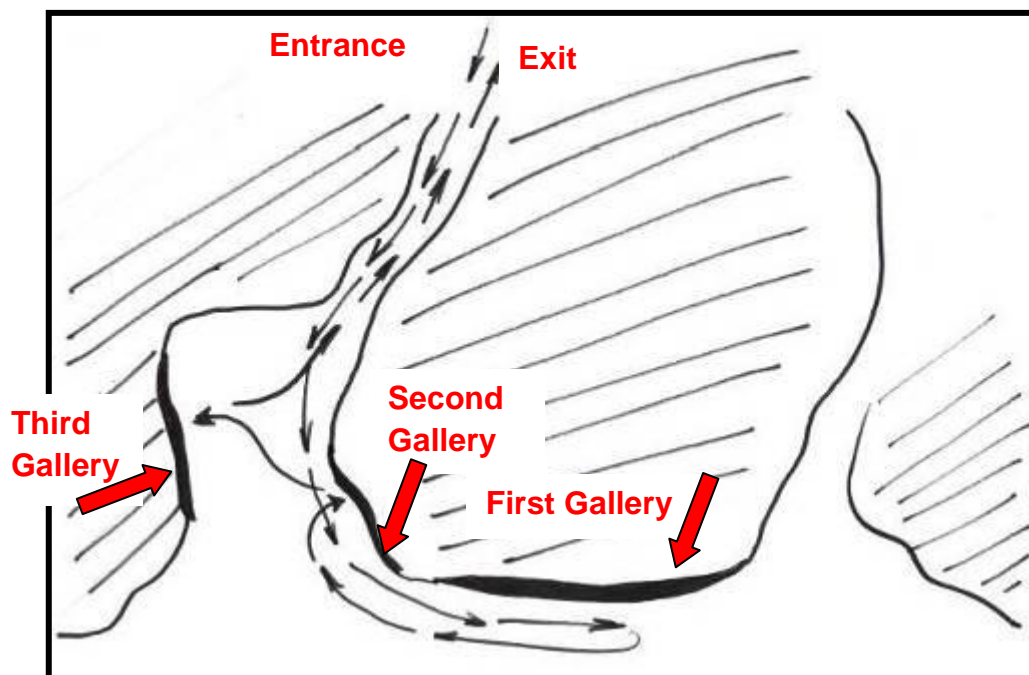
It is also thought that this area in the main panel was perhaps where children were sent to practise their art and play. Child like painting can be seen on various areas of the wall.



There is also a large horse here. Talk to your guests about this period in time being of great change to the traditional lifestyle.

It is suggested you take your guests through the Giant Horse Gallery following the route below:

### Giant Horse Gallery Route Guide



### The end of the Giant Horse Gallery tour

This is the end of the art site tour, tell your guests that it has been a pleasure to show them a part of your culture and heritage and that you hope these memories stay with them forever.

Remind your guests to drink some water.

Walk them back to their car. Make sure they all stay together and you have checked that you have everybody with you before leaving the site.

## Important Phone Numbers

Laura Rangers	40602161
Quinkan Centre	07 4060 3457
RACQ	1300 130 595
Lakeland First Responders	40602189
Emergency	000
Emergency with a mobile phone	112