

LIVING WELL CENTRE'S CENTRAL AUSTRALIA PILGRIMAGE

Alice Springs – Kings Canyon - Uluru

Saturday 26 July – Sunday 3 August 2025



PILGRIMAGE ITINERARY

Journey from Alice Springs to Uluru through the landscapes of central Australia. Participate in daily meditation, Morning and Evening Body Prayer, a Sharing Circle and opportunities for silent reflection, as well as celebrating the Eucharist. We immerse ourselves in the natural landscape with our focus being the spirituality of the landscape, the history of the first nations people and making connections into our Christian spirituality.

Saturday 26 July 2025 – to Alice Springs (D)

Join your flight from Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne or Sydney to Alice Springs, and transfer to our accommodation for three nights. Recommended flights from Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney arrive around midday, allowing you to join our private coach at the airport to begin exploration of Alice Springs. After a short drive around the town, we will ascend Anzac Hill for an overview, before visiting the Alice Springs Desert Park for a combination of guided tour and free exploration. Late afternoon head to our hotel - accommodation is in 4 star comfort, with ensuite rooms, and the resort provides comfortable places to relax, and enjoy a refreshing swim. Tonight we join for a welcome dinner at the hotel, and then overnight Alice Springs. (**Note:** you may like to arrive one day earlier to explore more of the galleries, museum and central city sights.)



Sunday 27 July 2025 – Standley Chasm, Ormiston Gorge and Ellery Creek (B/L)

This morning we head into the West MacDonnell Ranges National Park to explore three of its natural sites. Our first stop is Standley Chasm Angkerle Atwatye, nestled in a private flora and fauna reserve managed by the local Arrernte Aboriginal people - more than just a natural wonder; it's a testament to the enduring legacy of the Arrernte Aboriginals. Angkerle Atwatye "the Gap of Water" is a striking geological formation that has significant botanical, birdwatching and wildlife photography appeal, as well as being an important cultural site for Arrernte people. Walk to the dramatic 80m sheer rockface of the chasm along a well-maintained trail (1.2km / 15 minutes each way), following the natural creek bed with seating and interpretative signage. Rejoin the coach and head to Ormiston Gorge. The Aranda people refer to the West MacDonnell Ranges as Tjoritja. In their lore and culture, the landscape was created by ancestral beings during a mythological time, the foundation of their spiritual beliefs and identity. It's home to threatened species including the central rock-rat and long-tailed dunnart as well as other species like the black-footed rock-wallaby and MacDonnell Ranges cycad. We enjoy luncheon here, as well as having time to explore. Choose from a short five minute walk to the waterhole; 40 min return walk to the Ghost Gums lookout; or a longer 90 min return walk on the Ghost Gum loop track. We return towards Alice Springs with a stop at Ellery Creek Big Hole. The spectacular waterhole is fed by the West MacDonnell Ranges and surrounded by tall red cliffs and the sandy Ellery Creek. Thousands of years of massive floods have carved out this waterhole, which is recognised as an internationally significant geological site. The Aboriginal name for Ellery Big Hole is Udepata. The permanent water made it a special meeting place for the Aranda people on the fish and honey ant dreaming trails. We will provide a simple packed lunch, and a kiosk is available at Ormiston Gorge. We return to Alice Springs for overnight and dinner at leisure.



Monday 28 July 2025 – Simpsons Gap, Hermmansburg and Alice Springs (B/D)

This morning we again head into the West MacDonnell Ranges which boasts several scenic gaps, and one of the most prominent being Simpsons Gap. Known as Rungutjirpa by the indigenous Arrernte people, the gap has been carved out of the ranges by Roe Creek, and here water flows through the small gap in the MacDonnell Ranges. With a permanent waterhole it is home to resident plants and wildlife, including the black-footed-rock wallaby. Simpsons Gap is a spiritual place for the local Arrernte aboriginal people, with many dreaming stories and trails crossing this site. Then to Hermmansburg - a mission that operated for 150 years, with a people that owned this country for millennia, and foreign colonists under resourced and struggling in the harsh Australian outback. The Hermmansburg Historic Precinct presents a history of frontier violence and sanctuary, years of drought and illness and heartbreak, enduring friendships and a community that continues to grow and evolve in response to the changes in the world around them; there are many stories to be told about Hermmansburg and some of them are recounted here from a mixture of written sources and oral histories. Adjacent to the Hermmansburg Historic Precinct is the modern township of Ntaria, in Ljirapinta Ward of the MacDonnell Shire, on the traditional lands of the Western Arrarnta people. The community is proud of its Lutheran traditions and the stories that have been passed down through the generations. Famed as the home of artist Albert Namatjira, visit the Old Church, homestead and enjoy luncheon in the Kata Anga Tea Rooms - a place where you can soak up the atmosphere of this historic site in Strehlow's House, a heritage building that is over 110 years old. Wander around the series of historic German-style whitewashed buildings that were constructed when the mission was established. The historic precinct is shaded by river red gums and old date palms. Among the low, stone buildings are a church, a school and various houses and outbuildings.

The buildings have been restored to original 19th-century condition and now house the Kata Anga Tea Rooms, a museum and the Namatjira Gallery, displaying original paintings by the artist and works by the acclaimed Hermannsburg Potters. In the afternoon return to Alice Springs, with some time to explore independently in Alice Springs. Dinner is included at our hotel and overnight Alice Springs.



Tuesday 29 July 2025 – to Kings Canyon (B/L/D)

After breakfast we board our coach and head to Kings Canyon. Stop for a morning break at Eralunda, before heading west towards Kings Canyon. We will enjoy a simple picnic luncheon enroute. Forged over 440 million years from layers of sandstone, shale and rock, the canyon soars 270 metres above sea level, then plummets to the Garden of Eden below where ancient flora and fauna thrive along a permanent line of rock pools. The palm-fringed waterholes, towering sandstone cliffs and rugged red floors of Kings Canyon / Watarrka are the traditional lands of the Arrernte and Luritja Peoples, who hold a sacred and spiritual connection with this region. A mid afternoon arrival, relax or take a stroll, before dinner at the resort. Overnight Kings Canyon.

Wednesday 30 July 2025 – Kings Canyon (B/D)

After breakfast head into the Watarrka National Park (Kings Canyon) which lies on the traditional lands of the Matutjara people. Jointly managed by the Traditional Owners and the NT Parks and Wildlife Commission, the landscape of rugged ranges, rockholes and gorges acts as a refuge for a rich diversity of plants and animals. Today you can experience a walk in the park, ranging from a short walk along the creek of 2.6km, to a more strenuous 4.8 walk or 6km loop that offers spectacular views from the canyon rim, the weathered domes of the 'Lost City' and the lush vegetation of the 'Garden of Eden.' There is time to sit and reflect in this landscape. This evening enjoy a premium dining experience - 'Under a Desert Moon Dinner.' Overnight Kings Canyon.



Thursday 31 July 2025 – to Uluru – (B/L)

A relaxed start to the day before we depart by coach to Uluru. We have just over 300kms to travel, and we will make stops for a morning break and luncheon, as well as at Mt Connor Lookout, before arrival at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. After check in at our accommodation, explore the resort facilities or enjoy a stroll, before dinner at leisure at one of the various dining locations. There is a range of dining options from simple café / pub style meals, casual restaurants, through to fine dining options.

Over the next two days we will explore the area around Uluru and Kata Tjuta - you'll be able to experience 300 million years of history, culture and natural wonder, with opportunity for exploration, cultural immersion and quiet reflection. Our resort is set amongst a number of accommodation properties, allowing you to explore and dine at the restaurants of other properties. There is a shuttle bus that operates between the resort and Uluru (own expense) to enable you to explore at leisure should you wish to do so, departing earlier or remaining longer in places. Accommodation includes premium quality rooms. Overnight at the Desert Gardens Hotel, Uluru.



Friday 1 August 2025 – Kata Tjuta – (B)



Over the next two days we explore Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park! Spanning more than 1,300 square kilometres, the park is home to both Uluru and Kata Tjuta and offers visitors endless options for exploration, cultural immersion and quiet reflection. Home to an extensive range of flora and fauna, more than 20 species of native mammals, over 200 species of birds, 73 species of reptiles and 418 species of native plants - far from sparse, despite its title as a desert. With low humidity and minimal unnatural light, the outback is also one of the best places to stargaze. Not only glimpse constellations rarely seen from any other place on earth, but also stars blazing directly above Uluru or Kata Tjuta. Today we are based around Uluru - measuring 348m height and 9.5km in circumference, it is the largest sandstone monolith in the world. There is the option (own expense) to rise early to join a morning tour that enters the park for sunrise. After breakfast join a guided Mala walk along the base of Uluru – a relaxed 2km return walk. Admire the rock art, learn of Anangu culture (of the Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara people, the Traditional Landowners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. Hear of the Tjukurpa - the religious philosophy that links Anangu to the environment and their ancestors. Circle Uluru by coach, and there is the opportunity to enjoy the easy 1km return walk to the Mutitjulu waterhole. Then visit the Cultural Centre - a free-form structure built from locally made mud bricks. Entering the Tjukurpa Tunnel transports you back to the beginning of time. Explore the foundations of Anangu culture and the important creation stories of Uluru. There are two Aboriginal-owned galleries showcasing Anangu art and crafts – Maruku Arts and Walkatjara Art. There is also the opportunity for refreshments at the Ininti Café. Spend as long or as little time as you wish exploring around Uluru, returning to the resort on either our coach, or one of the scheduled hop on – hop off buses. Before dinner we head into the park to witness sunset over Uluru, then dinner tonight is at leisure and overnight at the Desert Gardens Hotel, Uluru.

Saturday 2 August 2025 – Uluru (B/D)

Today visit Kata Tjuta - a collection of large domed rock formations, considered a sacred to the Aboriginal people. Unlike the single stone mass that makes up Uluru, there are thirty-six formations in total, with the tallest standing at just over 1000m above sea level - called Mt Olga. Kaja Tjuta was the name given to the area by the local indigenous peoples, and it translates to “many heads” in their language. The European explorer Ernest Giles christened the tallest mountain Mount Olga, in 1872, as he had received support from Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, he was “told” to name the mountain in honour of Duchess Olga of Württemberg, a member of the Russian Imperial family. The walks today offer a short simple walk, and longer more challenging options. The Walpa Gorge walk takes you into a beautiful gorge between two of the larger domes of Kata Tjuta. It is a relatively easy walk, around 2.6 kilometres, and allows you to experience the unique rock formations up close.



Only a short walk (2.2km return), the Karu Lookout is a prominent feature near the start of the Valley of the Winds trail offering breath-taking views of the surrounding landscape and the awe-inspiring rock formations. The second lookout along the Valley of Winds circuit is a 5.4km return trip. The walk out and back from Karingana Lookout takes about 2.5 hours, is challenging in parts, with many steps and steep spots. Return to our hotel and relax, before our farewell dinner tonight. Overnight at the Desert Gardens Hotel, Uluru.

Sunday 3 August 2025 – (B) Farewell Eucharist and depart Uluru

We conclude our pilgrimage with a Farewell Eucharist, breakfast, and a final morning to view the central Australian landscape, before a late morning transfer to Ayers Rock/Uluru Airport for flights back to your port.

CAPACITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PILGRIMAGE

A reasonable degree of fitness and mobility are necessary for participation in all aspects of the pilgrimage. Pilgrims must be able to manage their own luggage, and to carry/wheel it to and from coaches / hotels. It may be necessary to carry luggage up and downstairs. Accommodation in remote locations will involve walking from reception / restaurant locations to individual rooms. The tour involves exploration of some remote locations which involves walking, with ground surfaces in some locations unsealed and uneven, and natural steps maybe rocks or stone ledges. Those with reduced mobility may not be able to explore / participate in all elements of the pilgrimage. By payment of your deposit and fare you confirm that you are of a suitable level of mobility and fitness to participate in the pilgrimage and are aware of the nature of the pilgrimage. Please contact us to discuss this matter further if you consider it necessary.

FARES AND BOOKING PROCEDURES

FARES (airfares are not included, and airport transfers are provided for the flights noted)

- \$4,990 per person on a twin / double share basis.
- a supplement of \$1,990 applies for sole use of hotel rooms.

A non-refundable deposit of \$1,500 per person secures your place on the pilgrimage, with balance due by 11 April 2025. The booking form should be emailed / scanned and sent to: sjr@digitor.com.au. It can also be mailed to: SJR, PO Box N400, GROSVENOR PLACE, 1220.

The deposit should be sent by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to:

Bank: Westpac
Account Name: Scenic Journeys by Rail
BSB: 033 364
Account Number: 612826
Reference: Your name and 'Uluru'

You can also pay your deposit by cheque, payable to Scenic Journeys by Rail P/L, and sent to PO Box N400, GROSVENOR PLACE, 1220. You can also pay by credit card, with a merchant fee of 1% for MasterCard/Visa and 1.8% for American Express. Please email/call if you wish to do this and we will contact you to obtain details.

BOOKING, CANCELLATION AND TRAVEL CONDITIONS

Bookings will be accepted on the attached form. Cancellation fees apply as follows: the initial deposit is non-refundable. After further payment towards the final pilgrimage fare, costs for tickets, accommodation, sightseeing etc made on your behalf, will incur cancellation charges equal to the cancellation charges incurred by us, imposed by suppliers/operators, plus a fee to cover administrative costs – more than six months prior to departure, \$1,000 per person; between six and three months, \$2,000 per person. No refund will be made after three months prior to departure. All cancellation or administration charges imposed by the suppliers/operators of components of this tour must be borne by you, the passenger. Responsibility – Scenic Journeys by Rail P/L (SJR) trading as St James Rail, acts as the organiser of the pilgrimage. Some transportation, accommodation and other tour arrangements are made by our licensed travel agent, Sarah Manche, MTA Travel. Services in this pilgrimage are provided by a range of third parties. On acceptance of tickets and travel documents for this pilgrimage, which may be evidenced in writing by a ticket, voucher, letter, email or other document, you accept that neither St James' Rail nor representatives from any other firm supplying services in conjunction with this tour programme, shall be liable in contract or in tort (actionable wrong) for any injury, loss, damage, accident, sickness, delay or additional expense to you or your possessions arising directly or indirectly by force majeure or other events which are beyond our control, or which are not preventable by reasonable diligence on our part, including, but not limited to, civil disturbance, fire, floods, acts of God, acts of Governments or other authorities, changes in itinerary, weather, strikes, war, transportation disruption, failure of machinery or equipment, industrial action, quarantine or any other cause. Where travel is by scheduled carrier, or charter service, that carrier's responsibility is limited in accordance with their conditions of carriage. Similarly, all luggage is your responsibility, and we cannot be held liable for any loss or delay however caused. The care of your travel documents are your own responsibility. All expenses incurred by loss must be borne by you. Airline regulations and conditions are written on the airline tickets and are issued to passengers subject to their acceptance of these conditions. Changes in exchange rates, taxes and any land arrangements costs may alter the price of the tour, and St James' Rail reserves the right to change, amend or cancel this tour and/or itinerary if necessary. We reserve the right to amend the itinerary en route to account for unforeseen changes or conditions, or to improve the tour experience for the majority, as determined by the tour leader. Full details of terms and conditions: if you would like a copy of the full terms and conditions applicable to all SJR tours please contact us and we will forward a copy to you. Note that in the event the tour cannot proceed due to Government directive or issues relating to border restrictions, such as a result of COVID, infectious disease, or other constraints on movement, refunds and/or future travel credits will be in accordance with these cancellation conditions and the terms and conditions of the various providers of the services that form part of this pilgrimage. A condition of travel on the pilgrimage is that you agree to the health protocol provided to you at the time of booking.

INSURANCE AND FURTHER INFORMATION

It is strongly recommended you have a comprehensive travel insurance policy to protect yourself against cancellation fees, health and other travel risks. An insurance policy can be forwarded from our travel agent Sarah Manche at MTA Travel. Obtaining insurance cover is, however, your responsibility. Please contact us on (02) 9326 9660 or 0418 585 838, or email to sjr@digitor.com.au for any further information.

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BOOKING FORM

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Name:

Address: Suburb: Postcode:

Home tel: Work tel: Mobile:

Email:

BOOKING DETAILS (Full passenger names EXACTLY as shown in your passport:)

Passenger 1 Name:

Date of Birth:

Frequent Flyer No: Airline No:

Passenger 2 Name:

Date of Birth:

Frequent Flyer No: Airline No:

PAYMENT

I have transferred \$ as a non-refundable deposit for the pilgrimage. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) details are below. An email acknowledging receipt will be forwarded.

Bank: Westpac
Account name: Scenic Journeys by Rail (trading as St James Rail)
BSB: 033 364
Account: 612826
Reference: Uluru (and your surname)

Debit/credit card payment is available, with merchant fees of 1.00% for Visa/MasterCard and 1.8% for American Express. Please call us to make payment by debit/credit card.

Cheques can also be made payable to Scenic Journeys by Rail P/L and sent to PO Box N400, GROSVENOR PLACE, 1220

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Single rooms: Double rooms: Twin (two bedded) rooms: Triple bedded room

..... If you are a single traveller, and would be prepared to share a room with another person, please indicate and we will endeavour to assist. If we are unable to offer a shared room, a sole use supplement would be payable.

..... I would like an extra night's accommodation in Alice Springs on 25 July 2025.

DIETARY REQUESTS (we will do our best to accommodate and advise accordingly)

Please indicate any dietary request :
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.....

FLIGHTS

You are welcome to make your own flight arrangements to and from the pilgrimage. If you would like us to assist with flight bookings for you, we can do so.

The recommended flights for the pilgrimage are:

To Alice Springs on Saturday 26 July 2025

- QF1954 Adelaide at 0625hrs to Alice Springs at 0835hrs
- QF1874 Brisbane at 0930hrs to Alice Springs at 1220hrs
- QF796 Melbourne at 1025hrs to Alice Springs at 1250hrs
- QF790 Sydney at 0910hrs to Alice Springs at 1200hrs

From Ayers Rock / Uluru on Sunday 3 August 2025

- QF729 Ayers Rock (Uluru) at 1320hrs to Sydney, connecting on QF742 to Adelaide at 1930hrs
- QF729 Ayers Rock (Uluru) at 1320hrs to Sydney, connecting on QF542 to Brisbane at 1905hrs
- JQ665 Ayers Rock (Uluru) at 1215hrs to Melbourne at 1525hrs
- VA1682 Ayers Rock (Uluru) at 1615hrs to Melbourne at 1935hrs
- QF729 Ayers Rock (Uluru) at 1320hrs to Sydney, connecting on QF475 to Melbourne at 1905hrs
- QF729 Ayers Rock (Uluru) at 1320hrs to Sydney at 1645hrs

..... I / we will make our own flight arrangements (please advise of your arriving and departing flights.)

..... Please contact us to offer assistance with flights.

INSURANCE

..... Please send an insurance policy from our colleague Sarah Manche, MTA Travel.

YOUR SIGNATURE

I have read the reservation conditions outlined above and accept them on behalf of myself and my party by whom I am authorised to make this agreement.

Signature of person making reservation: Date:

Cancellation charges will apply as advised in this itinerary. An insurance policy can be forwarded from our travel agent Sarah Manche, MTA Travel.

Telephone 02 9326 9660
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Mobile 0418 585 838
Web www.stjamesrail.org