



THE 2025 OZSKY "CLASSIC" STAR SAFARI

COONABARABRAN, NSW, AUSTRALIA

MARCH 23 – 30, 2025

www.OzSky.org

11. LAST-MINUTE REMINDERS BEFORE OZSKY

With only two weeks to go until your upcoming trip to Australia and The OzSky Star Safari, you've undoubtedly got everything booked, confirmed, and planned by now, however the following brief list offers some last-minute checkpoints which might be useful in ensuring you're fully prepared for your trip. This list is by no means exhaustive but is merely intended to be a helpful guide.

TICKETS, PASSPORT & VISA/ETA

- Have you booked/confirmed your airline tickets?
- **Important: Is your passport packed, and valid for at least 6 months after your return date?**
- Have you taken a photocopy or scan of your passport, credit cards etc, packed them separately from your passport and cards, and/or left a copy with someone at home?
- **Important: Have you obtained your Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) or Australian Tourist Visa? If you haven't, or don't know what this is, visit: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au> ASAP.**
- When completing your visa application, feel free to use the following details:
Warrumbungles Mountain Motel
882 Timor Road, Coonabarabran NSW 2357
Phone: 02 6842 1832
- Have you booked/confirmed your **Train or Air Tickets** for the journey between Sydney and Dubbo enroute to Coonabarabran?
- Have you booked/confirmed your **Rental Car**?
- **Important: Have you contacted your car rental agency recently to confirm availability of your preferred pick-up date, time and specific location (i.e. Dubbo Train Station / Airport) – and drop-off?**
- Have you considered optional or additional car **insurance** for your rental car?
- Have you packed your **driver's licence**? You will need to carry it with you whenever driving.
- If you're car-pooling with other OzSky folks, have you confirmed details with those people?
- During your time in Sydney, if you do not have a contactless (PayWave-enabled) Debit/Credit Card or payment-enabled smart phone, **pick up an "Opal Card"** from any train station or newsagent as soon as you arrive and load some money onto it. This will get you onto all public transport in Sydney, including Trains, Buses, Trams, Ferries and TARDISes – all using the one card.
- Using either a PayWave-enabled debit/credit card or smart-phone or an Opal card means you can hop on and off whenever you like without needing to buy separate tickets each time.



COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- **Important: there is no cell phone coverage at the OzSky observing site**, but there is coverage in town and in nearby areas for most cell providers.
- If you're bringing a cell-phone or 4G/5G device, have you considered activating global roaming on your account? While you may not intend using it here in Oz, it could be useful in the case of emergencies, and in most cases does not cost anything to activate if you don't actually use it.
- Once you've arrived in Oz, consider purchasing a local SIM card for your cell phone which you can use while in Oz, at local call rates! Make sure your cell phone is not locked to your home carrier though. We normally suggest opting for Telstra as it has the greatest coverage in the remote areas you are most likely to be during your trip.
- If you don't already have global access to your emails via webmail, smart-device or other methods, have you considered setting up a free worldwide email account that you can access while travelling, for example with Gmail, Hotmail or Yahoo (*just to name a few*).
- **Important: If you have security settings on your webmail account, be sure to check that your security settings will allow you to log in from other countries!** For example, you may need to remove your cell phone number from those existing security options if you're not using global roaming, as this is often how they will send you a security message to confirm your identity, and if you don't have roaming activated, you may not even receive that message or confirmation code.
- **Limited WiFi** is available on-site at OzSky (*not sufficient for streaming*) however a number of internet cafes are available in Coonabarabran. Please expect connectivity to be intermittent and/or out of service during peak times and at other times. Please do not rely on consistent connectivity on-site.

MEDICAL AND TRAVEL INSURANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- Have you considered combined medical/health and travel insurance?
- Have you packed all your pills / medications?
- Remember to organize any prescriptions or medications you will need during the trip and add these to your carry-on luggage. The prescription bottles should have the same name as your passport.
- There are pharmacies (drug stores) and limited medical services available at Coonabarabran, however the nearest major hospital is at Dubbo (approx. 2-hours' drive from OzSky).
- Have you packed your glasses/spectacles, contact lenses, hearing aids or other medical equipment?
- Have you packed any spare or special batteries? (for hearing aids etc).

QUARANTINE & IMPORTATION OF GOODS

- Customs and Quarantine in Australia are very strict with regards to what you can, and cannot, bring into Australia.
- Review the Prohibited and Restricted Imports
- Quarantine's advice is: "If in doubt, declare it!"
- **Important: Laser Pointers are on the prohibited imports list.** Don't risk it - don't bring one! Besides, they're not permitted at OzSky in any case.

VOLTAGE CONSIDERATIONS

- Australia uses 240-volt 50Hz mains electricity. Make sure any devices and battery chargers you bring are capable of operating at up to 240/250V 50Hz.
- While most modern devices are capable of operating at voltages ranging between 100 - 250V, there are some which may not operate reliably at those voltages, so be sure to check first.
- Australian power points are different to US / Canadian power points (*see image below*). You will need an adapter to plug in your devices and chargers.




Typical Australian Power Outlet (240-volt / 50Hz)


ACCOMMODATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Have you booked your accommodation in Sydney (or elsewhere) before and after OzSky?
- On-Site accommodation during OzSky – No need to confirm, just check-in upon arrival and settle your room and meals accounts with the motel during the week, prior to your departure.
- Off-Site accommodation during OzSky – We strongly recommend confirming your booking with your accommodation provider ASAP.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Have you considered registering and activating a PIN number on your credit or debit card? 
- An easy way to get money in Australia is simply to use the ATM machines or get cash out with purchases in major supermarkets, etc. Many folks agree that you'll probably get the best exchange rates doing this.
- **Important: Check with your bank before you depart to make sure your card will work for such withdrawals and that you have registered and activated a PIN number for your cash withdrawal card.**
- **Important: Have you also notified your bank that you will be in Australia and that you might be using your card(s) in Australia?** The last thing you want is for your credit card to be blocked because your bank's security teams detect purchases coming from a remote country town in Australia.
- Make sure you've got a few AUD \$\$\$ in emergency cash for taxi / van / train ride from the airport (*there are Automatic Teller Machines at the airport*).

LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

- Make sure your airline ticket has a sufficient baggage allowance for each leg of your journey to, from and within Australia. 
- Remember when travelling by air, there are a whole host of restrictions around what you can and cannot carry on or put in carry-on (and checked) luggage these days. Triple-check your luggage before arriving at the airport!
- If you are travelling on the train between Sydney and Dubbo, be sure to check the size and weight of your luggage conforms to their strict luggage restrictions. If your luggage is over the restrictions, contact NSW Train Link to ascertain their level of flexibility in your circumstances. Email HOLIDAYS@transport.nsw.gov.au for enquiries.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS ON ITEMS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO BRING

- Favourite Eyepieces and Filters (*optional*). Each OzSky telescope includes a limited set of eyepieces available however many folks often like to bring their own preferred eyepieces and/or filters
- **DIM Red** Flashlight (but NO "head lights", please!)
- Binoculars, cameras/tripods, Star Charts, etc
- Chargers for your camera, phone, computer, etc
- Travel Scope, Sky Tracking camera mount, etc
- Warm clothes and extra layers for cold weather, as well as clothes for hot weather
- Reusable or disposable Hand Warmers – Extremely handy for cold nights, or when you want to keep your eyepieces warm!
- Swimsuit (yes, there is a swimming pool at OzSky!)
- Hiking boots/shoes (numerous great hikes nearby)
- Sun hat (or buy an Aussie hat when you arrive)

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS

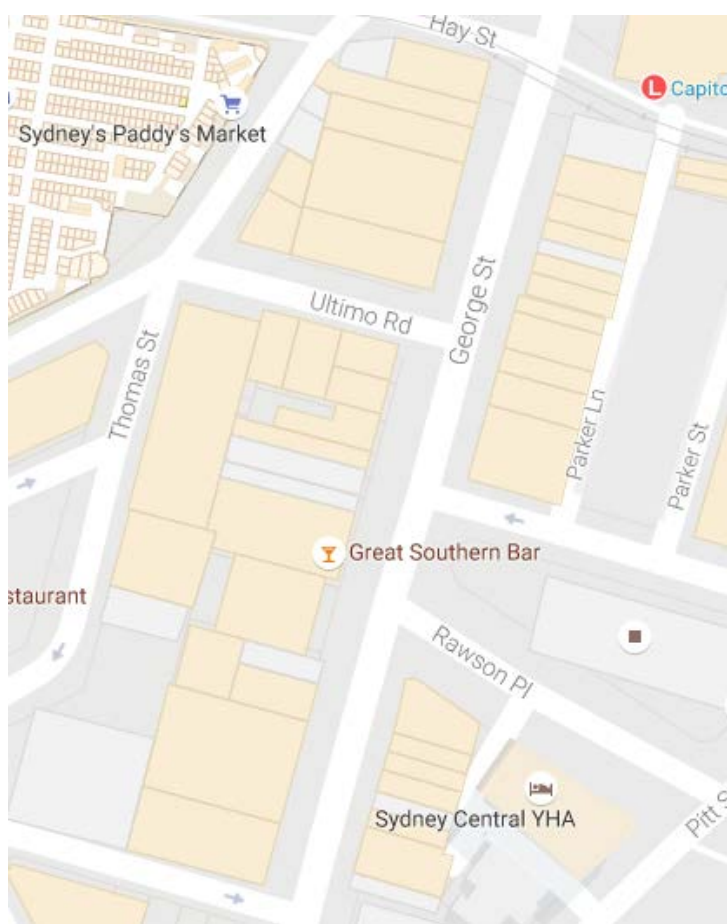
- You can buy warm, woollen Ugg Boots in Dubbo at an outlet store for a good price. You can also buy a great Aussie Akubra-style hat, along with a variety of other sun hats at many local stores.
- There are laundry facilities at the motel (detergent is available at the local supermarket), so pack lightly knowing that you can wash your clothes.
- Sunset is just after 7:00pm, and Astronomical Twilight ends around 8:30pm.
- **Important: Official "Dark Out" provisions will apply from 8:00pm each night at OzSky.** Absolutely no lights will be permitted after 8:00pm, and all room curtains are to be fully drawn closed.
- Black plastic sheeting for light shielding and a limited quantity of red-light globes are available for loan, upon request, for some on-site rooms to ensure minimal light pollution on the observing field after dark. Note: some rooms do not have compatible lamps, however efforts will be made to assist wherever practical.
- **On the final night, Saturday 29th March, all telescopes are shut down at midnight for safety reasons,** to ensure all guests and volunteers are well rested for the long, arduous drive home on Sunday morning.

PRE-OZSKY GATHERING IN SYDNEY

The pre-OzSky gathering in Sydney is scheduled for Friday 21st March. This gathering usually attracts almost everyone in the group, so it will be a great opportunity to meet and greet each other before the big journey out to Coona. At least two of the OzSky volunteers will also be there to meet you.

As a reminder of the details:

- Date: **Friday 21st March 2025**
- Time: **From 5:00pm** (*feel free to stay as long or as short as you like!*)
- Location: **Great Southern Hotel Bar**
- Address: **717 George Street, Sydney**
Enter from George Street (opposite Rawson Place) and proceed left past the bar, through to the function area out the back. Don't forget to grab a delicious icy cold Aussie beer, cider or wine on your way through!



If you get lost or can't find your way, feel free to contact Lachlan on cell phone number **04 0011 6655 (+614 0011 6655)**.

Otherwise, wishing you all safe travels, and we look forward to seeing you all very soon!