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September 2009

Don't sell your home, advise round-Australia travellers

'Recruit neighbours and friends to keep an eye on it'

THE Aussie dream of selling up, hooking up the trusty caravan and disappearing on a round-Australia sojourn continues to be realised by thousands of intrepid grey nomads.

But one experienced couple has an important piece of advice for newcomers wanting to hit the road ... keep your home.

"Everyone that has done the round-Australia trip told us not to sell the house," adventurers Gary and Mary Ayres, who have already conquered the 'round the block' trip, told *Caravanning News*.

"We think it's best to lock down your home and recruit some kindly neighbours and friends to keep an eye on it."



Gary and Mary Ayres in outback Australia

The travellers have put together a comprehensive website offering a mine of information and advice for would-be caravanners wanting to take off on extended trips. "We thought people could benefit from our experiences," they said.

Here are a few excerpts from their site.

"With our new found wisdom, we simply left some strategic low wattage lights on and set the clock radio (with battery backup) to turn on and off periodically. The security system was serviced with a new back up battery etc and smoke alarms wired in.

"We made a list of what to do with appliances:

The electric boost to the hot water is turned off.

All electric appliances (TVs, microwave, washing machine etc) are turned off at the power point.

The water taps to the washing machine are turned off at the wall.

Water taps to the dishwasher are turned off at the wall.

Fridges are emptied and turned off at the power point, being careful to leave the doors just slightly ajar.

Turn the water supply at the main down to a trickle and advise anyone that is visiting the house that you have done it and want it maintained as such.

"Next we visited our local post office and organised for a mail redirection whereby all our mail was sent to our daughter who would open it and forward it to us by email after scanning it. Most people have a scanner/printer at home or work now so this is easily effected.

"An alternative to this is to get a friend to bundle it all together and forward it to you c/- Poste Restante at whatever post office you advise them to, being careful to allow an appropriate time for its arrival.

"It is also important to attach "No Junk Mail or Newspapers" notices on your mail box some weeks before you leave so you can monitor for problem polluters.

"Our electricity bill and our phone bills were organised to be accessible on the internet to make this easier for us.

"Next we asked our now very experienced son-in-law-to-be to check on our pool for us on a weekly basis, and by heavily dosing it this worked very well. There are also pool services available to do this for you if you don't have a friend or neighbour that will do it for you.

"We organised for a neighbour to be available to call if we were worried after a storm etc.

"Lastly we had friends dropping around if they were passing just to check things out.

"This all worked so very well that it is now what we do for and on all our trips, with it saving money on utility

accounts and having our home ready for our return at any time.

"Cautionary note: It may be wise to check with your household insurer in case you need to pay an excess with a prolonged absence of occupation taking place or you may need to have a friend stay the occasional night in your home to satisfy a condition of the policy."

To visit Gary and Mary's website, [click here](#).

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