

# You could die laughing

Snakes, spiders and mozzies are all in this hilarious guide that will help you survive Australia

HEATHER ZUBEK

**Y**ou want to go camping? Watch out for those spiders and snakes. What about a day at the beach? If a shark doesn't get you, a box jellyfish will. Well, what about just sitting in the sun reading a book? Not under the hole in the Ozone Layer you won't. Luckily for us, Australian author George Ivanoff, has written a book that will help us survive living in our "lucky" country.

Bruce the drop bear was looking very hungry. He has been accompanying children's author George Ivanoff on his tour promoting the new book, *The Australia Survival Guide* (Penguin, RRP: \$25). He has also appeared in one of George's clips about the book on YouTube. The *Australia Survival Guide* states that the only way to protect oneself from being eaten by a drop bear is to dab Vegemite behind the ears. Luckily, drop bears are mythical creatures but Bruce looks terrifyingly real.

The cover of *The Australia Survival Guide* clearly states: "Australia is trying to kill you". Wouldn't that scare off any tourist wanting to come to Australia?

"My secret ambition for this book is to scare as many tourists as possible," laughs George as he sits with Bruce in an office in Melbourne.

"Visitors to Australia are always so worried about things, aren't they? Those of us who live here are rather blasé about our snakes and spiders but tourists are like 'aarrggghh! I'm going to die if I step outside!'"

The *Australia Survival Guide* is an informative and fascinating snapshot of all things lethal in Australia. There are fun facts about our top 10 deadliest snakes, the top four diseases spread by mosquitoes and the ultimate killer, the sun.

"In all seriousness though, I hope people take the book in the spirit that it is intended to be, and that is to be amusing."

And amusing it is. Readers meet a rather nervous avatar in the book's introduction. The character is about to embark on a family holiday around Australia and is terrified of what may befall him.

"I've done the research. I've been to the library . . . I've browsed online . . . I've read the newspapers . . . I know just how



**ED! reporter, Heather Zubek trying to help author George Ivanoff as he gets attacked by Bruce, the Drop Bear.**  
Picture: Kate Sheahan

DANGEROUS Australia really is."

Each danger is recorded on a spectacular DEAD-O-METER, calculating whether the danger could make you NOT DEAD right through to VERY, VERY DEAD.

"That avatar is really me," confesses George. "I was a scared kid. I was scared of everything. I didn't like going outside. I certainly didn't like going into the bush as there might be spiders. But I overcame all that."

These days George loves to travel and he has travelled all over Australia, even camping with his family on a road trip from Melbourne to Uluru and back.

"I pretty much did what my character did and realised that I've been missing out on all this cool stuff because I was scared, and that's a stupid reason to miss out on cool stuff."

For those of us living side by side with these dangerous creepy crawlies, *The Australia Survival Guide* contains important information on what not to do in our backyard, whether that's our very own garden or Australia's outdoors.



"It all comes down to just being sensible," George says.

"Most of the dangers come from people doing stupid things, from sticking their fingers into a web-encrusted hole or swimming in a river where there's a sign saying 'NO SWIMMING'."

Or perhaps from ignoring Bruce, the drop bear. Drop bears are mythical. Aren't they?

In our serial on page 7, Harry, Deepika and their mums might be wishing they had a copy of *The Australia Survival Guide*!

**WIN**

For a chance to win one of three copies of George Ivanoff's new book, email your name, age, address and phone number\* to [ed@wanews.com.au](mailto:ed@wanews.com.au) by Friday, with *Australia Survival* in the subject line. \*See competition conditions on page 8.

**NEWS FLASH**

**LAST WEEK'S STORIES INCLUDED:**



**Eliud Kipchoge runs on his way to break the two-hour barrier for a marathon distance in Vienna on October 12.** Picture: AP



## WORLD RUN RECORD

Kenyan runner Eliud Kipchoge became the first man to break the magical two-hour mark for a marathon. Kipchoge, an Olympic record holder, completed the 42km journey in one hour, 59 minutes and 40 seconds but it will not count as a record because it was not an official race. Kipchoge had 41 pacemaker runners to help him break the barrier.



## WA WOMAN WINS SCIENCE PRIZE

UWA professor Cheryl Praeger was awarded the Prime Minister's Prize for Science in recognition of her 40-plus years of research that has left its mark

on everything from banking to computer cryptography. In 1983, as a 35-year-old mother-of-two, she became only the second woman in Australian history to become a professor of mathematics. Professor Praeger is also the second woman and the first West Australian to be awarded the nation's most prestigious science accolade. Today, Professor Praeger continues to work collaboratively with her PhD students at UWA.



## AIRPORT TOURIST DOMES

Three giant bio-domes that will allow visitors to experience WA's climates and landscapes could be built next to Perth Airport. Although land near Crown

Towers was suggested previously, the Australian Biome Project is now proposed for the Airport West precinct, with Perth Airport last week signing a memorandum of understanding that will set aside a 15ha site near the Direct Factory Outlet and the Airport Observation Deck. The project consists of three domes, each about 50m high, that showcase WA's savannah, tropical and desert regions. They are expected to cost \$510 million.

Explore these stories further with online activities at [mediaeducation.com.au/schools](http://mediaeducation.com.au/schools).

**WHAT'S ON**

## FOR TEACHERS

### FREE STEM EXCURSION

For two days in November the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre will showcase world-class robotics, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, autonomous vehicles, remote operations centres, a gas platform helicopter and a fully equipped medical plane through interactive displays.

Students will get up close to and interact with some of the world's smartest mining machines and experience a behind-the-scenes look at the technology transforming the resources sector. More details and to book: [rtsperth.com/schools](http://rtsperth.com/schools).



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