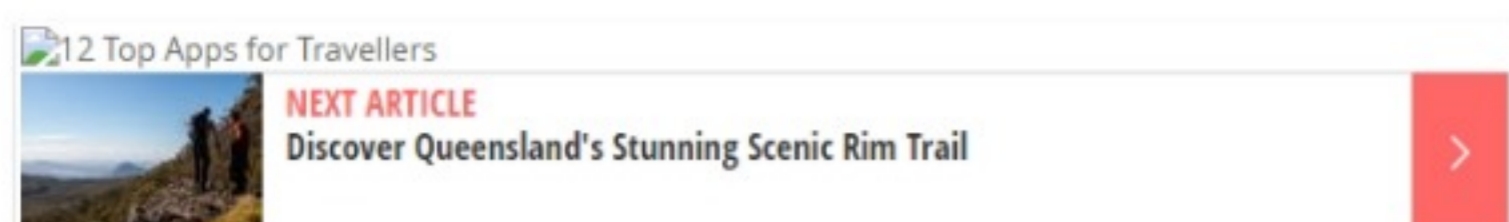




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12 Top Apps for Travellers

by **Fiona Harper**



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There are a huge range of travel apps on the market but how can you avoid downloading dud? Travel Writer Fiona Harper shares her favourites.

Apps have dramatically changed the relationship we have with our phones and laptops, which are mostly not laptops at all anymore. Rather, they're more like handtops. I know that's not a word but it more readily describes how we work with technology today. I'm pretty sure I'm not the only person in the world who takes their phone to bed either, whether I'm at home or on the road.

With snappy apps holding the key to tablets and smartphones' dazzling ability to deliver information at the swipe of a finger, here are 12 of my favourite travel apps.

1. TripIt (free)

A travel organiser that stores every itinerary detail in the one location. What I like most is that it's designed for independent travellers who have many components within a trip, often booked separately. I've been using it for years and I'm still astounded that it's free (there's a paid version if you want to remove the ads)

2. Splice (free)

For years I've resisted learning the skills required to produce video clips, thinking that it was just too time consuming. Then a colleague, who also happens to be a pro photographer, showed me how easy it is to create exciting videos using my phone camera and Splice. From filming, editing, adding sound and text to exporting the finished product to You Tube, this is all you need to create your next travel video masterpiece. Tarantino eat your heart out.

3. Skyscanner (free)

Looking for the cheapest fare between Albany and Alice Springs? Broome to Bundaberg? Skyscanner takes the angst out of finding the best airfare, enabling search results to be sorted by price, airline or number of stops. You can also book flights via the app, though I confess I never have, using it solely to determine which airline I will book with.

4. Hotels Fairy (free)

A handy accommodation locator and booker if you find your plans change midway through a trip. Easy to sort by location, price or rating, a booking engine takes users to an external booking portal offering the best rate of the day.

5. Great Barrier Reef Guide (\$3.99)

I couldn't write a guide to the best travel apps without including my own could I? A water baby based in Cairns, the Great Barrier Reef is my waterlogged home playground. A visitor guide for travellers who camp or those who vamp, from kayaking to cruising Australia's great natural wonder, you'll find it all here.

6. Viber

I've got a love-hate relationship with Viber. Sometimes I absolutely love it, like when I'm in an area with a good free wifi signal and can call loved ones back home, talk for hours (or text incessantly) and it costs me nothing. Other times I loathe it, when the signal is dodgy, and conversations are frustratingly stilted, little more than tedious repeats of 'can you hear me?'

7. XE Currency Exchanger

Converting currencies back to Aussie dollars is made super easy with XE. Download the currencies you'll need beforehand and shopping is made a whole lot easier: no data connection is required as conversions are done offline using the most recent rate.

8. Runkeeper (free plus pro version)

Not really a travel app, as it's mainly used by exercise geeks to track run, rides or paddles etc. But I've used it countless times on the road to plot a walking or running route in unfamiliar territory, or simply to work out how far it is from my hotel to the beach. Used in conjunction with the website it's easy to plan, save and upload an interesting 5km run or a morning walking route for example.

9. Flashlight (free)

No explanation required: light me up baby!

10. Google Maps (free)

The best feature is the ability to save a location, making it a handy reference for pinpointing in advance a particular restaurant, shop, hotel or other landmark. Street View images make it even easier to suss out the lay of the land before you get there.

11. Australia Best Places to Go (\$5.49)

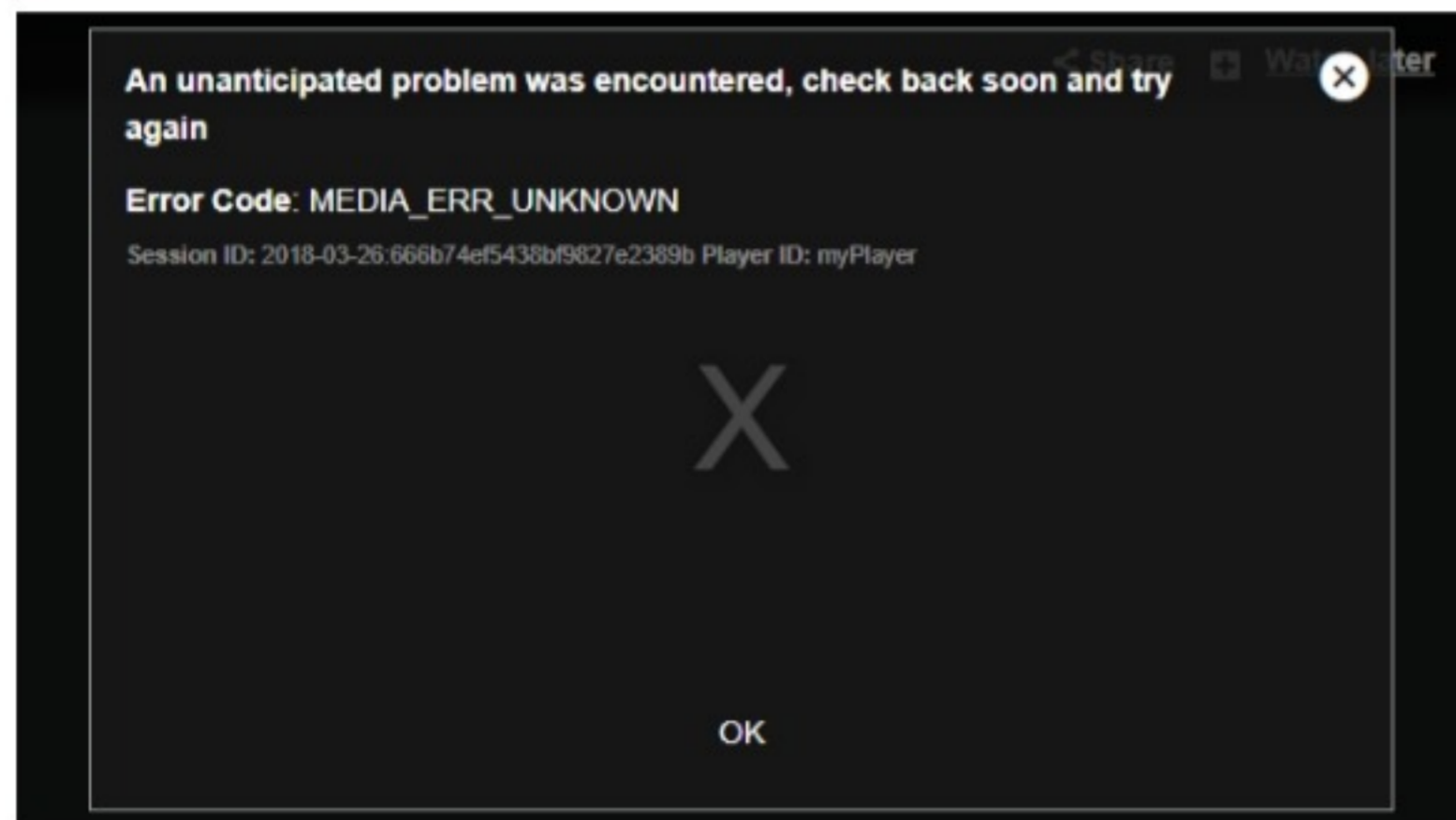
Written by award winning travel writer Sue Gough Henley, this is an epic resource profiling the most amazing places in Australia. Even the best-travelled Aussie is likely to find something here to whet a nomadic appetite.

12. Every Trail (free plus pro version)

Essential for those who take the path less travelled, hiking trails with detail on elevation, terrain, user notes and the ability to save and download a hiking route make this a standout. If, like me, you enjoy knowing which mountain you were looking at or the name of the river you waded through, spend a few dollars and get the pro version.



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