

Trip Report - Victoria, NSW, QLD and Northern Territory 2021 Eumungerie NSW to Kilkivan QLD

In this stage of the trip we stayed at more outback NSW and QLD campgrounds and enjoyed more chats around campfires.

Special points of interest:

- **Mouse Plagues**
- **Crossing into QLD**
- **Inland towns**



Yelarbon

Eumungerie, NSW

After moving on from Bogan Weir, we travelled further North up the Newell Highway, aiming for the wee town of Eumungerie. There is not much in this town except for a hotel, a small post office cum general store and a school. And they have a camping ground at a reserve and showground. The town seems to want folk to stay and so they entice travellers with a camping fee of \$10 a night for power and water. It was a generous offer and so we gratefully accepted their hospitality and stayed for three nights.

They also provided free wood for a campfire at night, and people took advantage of this to sit around a fire each night yarning and sharing travel stories.

There were still mice around here but they were not too bad. One did get into the engine bay of the car, and they can do real damage, so Val bought baits at a BCF store and managed to trap the little bugger.

The Telstra and mobile reception was OK and this was helpful as I was on call for several days of this period.

It was while at Eumungerie we became aware there were some COVID issues in Victoria. The state was shutting down first Melbourne then the whole state for a few days. This was designed to give the contact tracers time to find the source of the infection...not that they ever did find "Person No 1, just as NSW never did find the source of their most recent breakouts either).

I had visions of QLD reacting and locking down their border, so we decided to make a run for the Queensland border in one day. This was not quite as bad as it sounds, it was all of 5 or 6 hours drive. We left Eumungerie at 8.30 and were in Yelarbon QLD by 3.00pm, with several breaks to stretch our legs.

The Newell Highway is much better than it used to be so it was a smooth drive, and we were so happy to be across that border! Yelarbon was a further 50 kms on from Goondiwindi.

Yelarbon

A small town (population approximately 500) South West of Brisbane by about 350kms, Yelarbon is a spot we have stayed at before. In fact it's a firm favourite now.

But when we arrived it was pelting with rain and we backed in quickly then set up the van and made a cup of coffee. I discovered at this point that it has next to no Optus coverage and so had to arrange for my work phone to be transferred to the Telstra phone.

Yelarbon is a very small town (a population of about 400 on a good day). The recreation reserve where we always camp is a pleasant spot with room for about a dozen vans on power/water, but a central oval can accommodate any number of rigs.

They have a nice hotel which does good meals and of course we had dinner there one night.

We drive over to Goondiwindi on the Friday, and one of our stops on the day was at Macdonalds for coffee. This proved to be a bit of a worry a few days later....I will come back to this later.

On a day trip over to nearby Inglewood we discovered a lovely, truly lovely, campsite at Lake Coolmunda. This was a place we had visited briefly some years ago but not thought about staying at. We checked the booking arrangements and made plans to move on to here after we finished at Yelarbon.

Meanwhile, back at the corral (as they say) in Victoria and NSW there were disturbing accounts of the virus breaking out again. A couple from Melbourne, relocating to QLD, decided to dispense with the formalities of COVID restrictions, and simply drove through Victoria and NSW all the way to the Queensland Sunshine Coast. Of course they turned out to both be positive to the virus which caused quite the upheaval.

Readers will recall how I had opined earlier about the lack of QR code checking-in by people in NSW. In fact the very towns I had noticed folk simply ignoring the code readers were the towns this couple visited. So, unless a person read about a hot spot and voluntarily got tested and quarantined, they had no way of knowing they were at risk. I did send an email to the NSW Minister for Health about this non-compliance but of course got no reply. (In light of the further developments perhaps he may take notice of such correspondence in future but I doubt it. He was boasting on the TV news how well people were using the QR codes. I sighed.

Remember the Macdonalds back at Goondiwindi? Well, the infected couple called in there too and it became a notified hotspot. I nearly choked on my morning coffee when I saw that...and quickly checked the date we had been there. Thank the Lord, we were there exactly 24 hours before them. Whew!

Coolmunda Dam

So, back to the original plan and over to Coolmunda we went. It wasn't a long trip, all of about 70kms. We paid our camping fees and set up camp right at the water's edge. The lake was brimming full after a good year of rains and the floods of last March.



While we were here another Kedron, almost brand new from the factory, called in and camped right behind us. Really nice people.

We spent three days here and thoroughly enjoyed the views and the nice green grass.



We also went over to the nearby olive farm and had a delightful lunch there. Part of our lunch was native and locally grown warrigal greens which made a really nice salad.

We knew we could not stay here forever and needed to move on. Our original plan had been to visit Texas but with poor weather coming in we decided to head for a campsite with power and water. The Showgrounds at Stanthorpe were perfect. Lots of nice big well spaced sites and nice green grass; just perfect.

While we were there (five days) Stanthorpe had some frigid conditions. Most days didn't manage to get above 14 and one day had a high of nine degrees. Together with heavy frosts, it made the local "snowflake" theme pretty apt. (There were "snowflakes" decorating trees and buildings all over the town).

Stanthorpe is a gourmet's delight. There are wineries, fruit farms, cheese outlets, chocolate shops and lovely cafes. We enjoyed all of them.



We also visited the famous Ugg boot shop and bought a sheepskin rug for the caravan and some new ugg boots for Kathryn. This is a regular stop for us when we are in the region.

Still, on we had to go. We were to visit old friends David and Jane at Warwick and arranged to stay at their property for a couple of days. We had a gorgeous camp site overlooking a small creek, at the bottom of the paddock.

We ordered a Cel-fi booster device from David, designed to boost the van's phone and internet reception markedly. It wasn't cheap but we got a great price from David and when it duly arrived it was installed by Val over the course of a morning. At the time of writing it only works on the 3G network as it seems our aerial is not 4G. So we will look for a new unit in Brisbane and Val will have to reinstall the whole kit and caboodle. (Update: Val has bought a new aerial and installed it. It now works but we think with a betterimproved aerial it will work even better).



So, onwards again and we travelled on to the small community of Linville. Linville has a population of about 100 on a good day, but has a great campground for travellers. It is sited on a grassy paddock overlooking a mountain range, and with a hotel just across the road and a small general store. The hotel does great meals and is popular with weekend visitors.

The advantage of Linville is its only about an hour North West of Brisbane. That is also its greatest disadvantage on a weekend as we found 😊

As its sited on a well used trail for bike riders and cyclists, it lent itself beautifully to the event we found ourselves in the middle of on the Saturday we were there. But it was actually really nice to see so many people out enjoying the lovely weather.

Brisbane

In Brisbane we always try to stay at the Showgrounds at Lawnton, a suburb to the North of the city. It has the advantage of being close to a railway line and also much less crowded than caravan parks. It has nice green grass sites and usually well spaced out. We pulled in about 11.00am, nice and early after an easy run down the D'Aguilar Highway and onto the Bruce Highway.

There was nothing special about our stay near the city other than the total surprise of seeing two long-term friends who called in to say hello, and catching up with dear friends Kay and Bruce. When Faye and Neville pulled in I could not believe it...we last saw them on the Gary Junction Road back in about 2016.

Anyways, we stayed five nights, and caught up with washing, etc. as we were on power and water here.

Linville (again).

We returned to Linville for another three nights as it is so pleasant up there in the mountains and usually we don't have a crowd of other vehicles. This time it was busier than previous stays as (a) it was a weekend during the school holidays and (b) there were rail trail runners and cyclists out and about again. But it is still very pleasant indeed.

Our last morning was a cold one (two degrees) and we woke to a heavy frost. Brrr. Thank goodness for the diesel heater.

After an early morning packup we were on the road again, first back on the D'Aguilar Highway and then the Burnett Highway and going through Blackbutt (another mountain town in temperate rainforest, and famous for the Blackbutt Bakery). Yes, there was an obligatory stop to get a blackbutt pie for lunch! My friends Stephen J and the Bro would be disappointed if we did not visit this establishment.

Goomeri Caravan and Bushcamp

The destination was a spot we have never been to before but know the Kedron caravan group have gatherings here. We had booked ahead given it was school holidays and made arrangements for friends Rick and Lea to meet up and stay together there.

It is a true bush setting, with an open 'common' area as well as more private sites along the creek. We chose the Creekside sites. And we got lucky as there was a tap next to our site which we connected to (with a double headed tap fixture Val carries) so we could put a load or two in the washing machine, and have a nice, longer than usual shower each night.

It was lovely to catch up with Rick and Lea who we have not seen since 2018 in Tasmania.

And then Neville and Penny arrived, and joined our group. They were names that we had heard for quite some time but not met previously. How lovely it was to finally put faces to the names.

The highlight of the area (apart from catching up with friends) was the Goomeri Bakery. We had morning tea at the Goomeri Bakery each day. I have now ferreted out the information that the owner who is in her early 80's gets up every morning at 4am to get the pastry and bread in the oven. When she was 73 she went to France to learn her trade, and brought back with her this knowledge as well as a source of French flour. (For those who don't know, the French flour is different to ours, harder cell wall which allows for different baking). See, I take this stuff seriously. And no, there were no cream buns.



While we were here it rained. And it rained, and then rained some more just for good measure. By the time we left we were in a field of mud, where previously it had been a nice green grassed area. I was glad to be finally leaving, although it is a lovely campground.

I haven't mentioned the wineries we visited while here, but it's a given that we found some and visited them.

Kilkivan

Now this pretty little town is set in the hills and Kilkivan is 158m above sea level and is located 218 km north of Brisbane via the Bruce and Wide Bay Highways. It is 50 km north-west from Gympie on the Wide Bay Highway. Its only small, with a population of about 700. Its main claim to fame for our purposes is that friends have a cattle property there and invited us to camp on the property. They live elsewhere, so only the cattle and kangaroos kept us company. But we had a view to die for.

We had a fire each night and a glass of wine to toast the end of the day.

As we are into geocaching ([what is geocaching?](#)) we were delighted to see that there was an event planned right in Kilkivan while we were here. So we lodged a "Will attend" and got ready to be at the event, to be held at the nearby Showgrounds on the weekend. And good friends from back home (Theresa and AJ) were going to be there too. This promised well.



Our camp site on the ridge at Kilkivan