

# Aramac (QLD) to Yowah Stage 3 - July 2023

We had a taste of the Queensland outback over the last few weeks and really enjoyed these small towns and the bush. Each day's decision as to the next destination seemed to be made on the spur of the moment but revolved around yet more small towns. This was the first time we had spent so much time relaxed in and enjoying these outback towns instead of merely travelling through them to get somewhere else.



*Lara Wetlands*

## Lara Wetlands

With Aramac, a town of culinary delights, in our rear car mirrors, we curved South East to Barcaldine, roughly an hour away. Unfortunately it had rained overnight and the road was a narrow bitumen strip. This meant each time we met an oncoming car we had to drop one set of tyres off onto the muddy and soft edge, which spattered mud all over the van and car. It made for slow travel too. But mud can be removed as it was a day or two later.

Lara wetlands is a further 30 or so kms South of Barcaldine, and is a privately owned and managed property with artesian pool, lake and camping around the lake. I do like a good artesian pool.

The lakeside spots are popular and we got there early enough to snare one, setting up on the nice green grass and putting our chairs out under the awning. It would be fair to say the place was hopping (that is, very busy). We soon had neighbours on either side

but not too close. I think the appeal of Lara is the friendly atmosphere and the pool. On this occasion I actually found the pool a bit too hot, and only had two dips during our three days here. I also like having our chairs and a fire close to the water's edge at sunset.

The phone reception (Telstra only) was patchy here so we were glad of the Cel fi Go booster which turned our 1 bar of reception into 4.

We also did a day trip back to Barcaldine to get groceries and re-visit the Rose Garden café there. Breakfast in a rose garden! Bliss.

Anyway, three days of relaxing at Lara was enough, and again we headed on, travelling due East this time.

## Tambo

Tambo is a major success story. A small town (population about 370) set on the Barcoo River, it has real appeal.

Tambo is a rural town and locality in the Blackall-Tambo Region, Queensland, Australia. Cattle and tourism are the major industries of the town. A number of heritage buildings survive from the earliest days of settlement. [Wikipedia](#)

Some 30 or so years ago a group of local women decided to put the town on the map by sewing 'Tambo Teddies'. This took hold as a quirky feature and eventually a whole industry opened up around the collectors items. They are not cheap but so well made.



How dear? It differs on the size of the teddy and its type but the Basil, a bear with a drizabone and stockwhip sells now for close to \$400. Our Tambo Teddy (his birth certificate says he is Ercildoune Eric as he was made by the woman from the station of that name) was bought back in about 2007

when we visited here. Apparently the Basil Bears no longer have the stockman's shirt which our Eric is wearing. He has travelled in the current and previous caravans for more than 200,000kms. We took him back for a visit to the Tambo Teddy Shop where he was photographed for their facebook page.

While in Tambo we camped out near the Barcoo River at Stubby Bend, just a km out of town, and had a lovely view of the river and shade trees. On our second night we went to the chicken races at the Hotel in town. The chickens are dyed different colours with food dyes to distinguish them in the races. The chickens are not harmed in any way, in fact are treated like queens. Money is raised for a children's charity and it was a very entertaining hour or so, followed by dinner at the hotel afterwards.

What a great place to visit. Coloured racing chickens and teddy bears!

## Morven

Where to next? Further to the East is a small town of Morven. We have passed through here before but not stopped here. That was rectified easily by pulling into the small campground they provide on the outskirts of town. For \$10 you can have a powered site, by donation, or a choice of heaps of spots around the oval where you are able to find a camp site.

We didn't need power so, although powered sites were available, we found a quieter site on the edge of the campground and set up there.

The town has a nice, newly constructed hotel and we went there for dinner. I can hear you ask why is the hotel new...wasn't there a hotel here before this one was built? Yes there was, but it burned down. Once the hotel was gone the little general store found it had no customers as people travelled through without stopping, and the townfolk organised for a community drive to build a new hotel. A co-operative was formed by all the locals, including mostly station property owners, who re-built the hotel.

We had dinner at the new hotel and I do wish I could say it was good, but alas this is not true. The cook had his day off (it was a Sunday) and the Irish backpackers were cooking. The Irish barmaid apologized in advance...sigh.

There are Irish backpackers EVERYWHERE out here. They are keeping the outback staffed. Staffed in a quirky way but they are keeping it all together.

## Charleville

From Morven we headed about 80kms West to Charleville. This was a spur of the moment decision. We should have gone straight down to the South back at Augathella, but only decided on Charleville at the last minute.

There is a nice CMCA campground at Charleville, managed by the Club for its travelling members. It is a huge area with few facilities other than a dump point, a water tap and a group gathering shed with fire place.

Charleville is a fair sized town with a hotel, supermarket, mechanical workshops, cafes and bakery. The pies were magic but not so the cream buns.

We booked in and paid for 3 nights but ended up staying for 6. The phone reception was wonderful and I was on call for this week so I appreciated having peace of mind about phone reception.



Each afternoon we gathered at the firepit for a Happy Hour drink with other travellers, and generally had a great week.

And we had dinner, a wonderful meal, at the Coronas Hotel. The building is just gorgeous inside, and has stained glass windows and polished wood furniture. You can do guided tours of the place.

## Quilpie

On the Sunday morning, having handed over the work phone to the next on call, we drove a further 200 kms West to Quilpie. Again, this is a small town but they have the essential facilities like a bakery, butcher, supermarket, café etc.

Last year we camped where we again chose this year's stop over, on the banks of the Bulloo River just out of town. We had a lovely peaceful and scenic site overlooking the river. This would ave been one of the nicest camp sites of the current trip, although Camooweal Billabong would rival it.



Quilpie is supplied with super hot bore water from the Artesian Basin, but so far they have not put in any warm public pools. They have however made

available a free washdown facility for washing cars or caravans with hot water. As our car was looking dreadfully dusty we gleefully took advantage of this.

Quilpie has a great Information Centre which it is wise to visit; they can advise on weather and road conditions, and have some wifi if needed to back up phones or iPads. There is a nice little bakery too which does a good morning tea.

Interestingly, the Telstra coverage was a bit patchy at the freecamp but perfect in town.

## Toompine

After two days of lounging on the banks of the river, we headed due South towards the little town of Yowah. But en-route is Toompine, the pub with no town. I guess it used to be a town once upon a time, but now it is a super modern outback hotel with a real and solid reputation for gourmet food.

This lovely hotel sits all alone on the small road down to Thargomindah (we would be peeling off to little Yowah a bit further South) but provides camping for travellers, as

well as meals for those simply passing by. They allow campers to connect to power if needed, in return for a donation to the RFDS.

The family running the hotel were super friendly, lovely people. We stayed overnight and enjoyed a great night talking to another caravanning couple, and having dinner. Val said it was the best schnitzel he has ever had.

## Yowah

This has to be one of my favourite spots to camp. It is a friendly little town, with a café, a fire fighting service, small general store and caravan park, and the campground. It is famous for its opals. There are opals for sale everywhere!

The campground is amazing. It is a nice big area with vegetation and trees, centred around an ablution block and laundry, dump point and water taps. They encourage a donation in return for staying here and why would you not be happy to pay!

There was good Telstra coverage but no Optus. Nowhere in this outback Queensland region had Optus.

But the highlight for me is the artesian pool. Ahhh, bliss. You pay into an honesty box and can visit as often as you like for \$20 a week. There is nothing nicer on a cold morning.

Yowah also has a Bluff nearby, The Bluff is reached via a 4km dirt road from town. The

180 degree views from the top are impressive. There is an uncovered picnic table and a bbq that requires you to bring your own wood

The rise is around 150 metres high and offers 180 degree views of the vast surrounds of the town.

We went up there for sunset drinks twice on this trip...once with our neighbours from the campground and once by ourselves.



The other activity we enjoyed was the community dinners they put on twice a week. I think it was \$20 a head for a meal (no choices available, you get what they cook). And the bar dispenses nice cold drinks before and after dinner. It is popular and well attended. I have no idea where all those folk came from!

But despite all this fun and frivolity it is the artesian pools which draw me to this magic little town.