

# **Lucky Bay (WA) to Lincoln NP (SA)**

## **Stage 1 1 February 2019**

We started this period of travel on 21 February 2019.

In this trip report, we leave the WA coast behind (oh so reluctantly) and headed directly North up the road to Norseman, then East on the Nullarbor. It was a warm trip over the Nullarbor as we expected, and we coped by twice running a generator in the late afternoon, in order to cool the van with the airconditioning. Before leaving home we had debated whether or not to take the large generator, as it is heavy and weight is always an issue. We have now realised if there is likely to be any hot weather, then a generator and airconditioning is important.



*Dunes coastline near Eucla*

### **Salmon Gums**

We left Cape Le Grand's Lucky Bay campground in the morning, bright and early. It seems it is just as well we did leave as a fire had broken out there, and campers were being evacuated. As we left in the morning we saw a small fire on the horizon near Hellfire Bay and I alerted Val to it, saying that I thought it would be problematic... I was going to ring it in as an alert but thought by that time others would have seen it. They had.

Thank goodness we had left. Later that morning the park's campers were evacuated from Cape Le Grand campground and new campers were prevented from arriving at Lucky Bay. And this is at campgrounds which had been booked out solidly for two or three weeks into the future.

Anyway, after leaving we went into Esperance to visit the dump point (a necessary if evil chore)

then parked outside the Info Centre and enjoyed morning tea at one of the heritage precinct cafes and sat on the verandah in the last of the day's cooling breezes. By the time we left Esperance at 10.30am it was already over 30 degrees and with 41 expected. I don't like anything over 30 so we planned a stay at a little community caravan park at the small town of Salmon Gums to access power for airconditioning. The caravan park was small but can probably accommodate about 10 vans on power, I am guessing. A site with power and water was \$15 which is remarkable.



### ***Salmon Gums is aptly named***

Our stay at Salmon Gums was a day or two longer than expected. This was due to the fires in the area blocking off the road to the North. There were bushfires all around us! The highway was blocked at both Salmon Gums and at the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie ends.

Back at Cape Le Grand the national park we had just left was closed to campers and day visitors, and to the North of us was blocked off. There were also fires to the East and West. We are familiar with bushfires and do not underestimate their ability to wreak havoc. At least we were in a safe place and in a town with an active fire brigade, so we felt reasonably secure.

The park was full of fellow travellers also trapped by the fires and it was a slightly festive air of socialising and relaxing over coffees and cold drinks.

On the Sunday morning we headed out, not all that early as we only planned a shortish day. Our destination was Newman Rocks, a nice spot near a permanent waterhole in a rock pool. This is such a favourite spot we have often stayed there for days. But on this occasion, it was not to be.

As we pulled in, over on the horizon we could see a small bushfire, about 5 kms away. As there is mobile phone reception there we rang 000 and reported it, then scampered. I was pretty keen to get as far away as possible from those dratted bushfires.

### **Baxter Rest Stop**

S32 21 26 E124 47 17

There is very little about this rest stop which is remarkable, but it allowed us to follow a track down the back of an official rest area, and to a gravel pit, where there were endless opportunities to be all by ourselves among some trees and shrubs. It was a nice and peaceful spot, and although the day had been hot, it cooled down about 6pm and allowed us to have a nice night's sleep. We put the generator on for a few hours to keep us cool until the cool wind came up. I think it was about

38 when we pulled in, and with a hot wind.

By this time we were trying to use up as many fruit and vegetables as possible as they would not be allowed through the quarantine inspection point near Ceduna. I hate throwing away good food and as fruit and vegetables (with a couple of exceptions) have to be disposed of before the quarantine checking station, we had to try to eat as much as possible beforehand. Interestingly, carrots, onions and garlic are exempt, as is honey. Alas, I believed the official handbook (dated as at two months earlier) which is wrong, and threw those items out. Not happy Jan.

### **Moodini Bluff**

S31 54 35 E127 17 18

We only travelled about 200 odd kms this next day, aiming to have an early set up and relaxing afternoon. It wouldn't do to over stretch ourselves 😊

Again, Moodini Bluff is a pleasant spot and one we have stayed at before. There is a toilet here as well as a disabled dump point, and the camping area is a large general area with little tracks all winding around into various spots to pull into and camp. This time it was somewhat dry and dusty (but then so is the whole of the Nullarbor) but we had a nice site where we could pull into and put the awning out into a shaded pocket of vegetation. A nice and relaxed happy hour was spent there.

Why choose this spot? It does have a new drop toilet, and has nice vegetation and trees around, which makes it visually appealing.

As this spot is not too far from Moodini Roadhouse, there was mobile phone reception although it was very patchy.

### **Eucla Cliff Tops**

S31 38 52 E1296 1

This is one of our favourites! Just to the East of Eucla is an official rest area, and by following a track out to the coast a nice camp can be had on the cliffs overlooking the ocean. There are many spots to camp here and you could possibly have a dozen rigs all along the coast without being on top of each other too much.

The view is of course magnificent and is the main reason for staying here. But the wind is a downside. It always seems to be windy, although we were fortunate to wake up in the morning to a calm day. We also woke to mist from the ocean, which was quite atmospheric. This image is the view of the van overlooking the coast....



The phone reception was decidedly patchy here but we managed OK with the external aerial.

### **Yalata Rest Stop**

S31 31 43 E131 53 36

The next day's drive was straightforward but by now the weather was decidedly hot. I think it again got to 40 plus degrees!

Again, there is nothing really special about this spot, but it ticks a number of boxes. It is peaceful and quiet, allowing for parking down a small track to the rear of the camping area; and it is nice and clean, being on gravel. We put the awning into the trees and bushes nearby and as soon as we camped, started up the generator for airconditioning. Again, about 4pm (SA time zone now) a cooler breeze came up and we turned off the generator. There was no one nearby to be bothered by the sound of the unit running. Actually, there was someone a couple of hundred metres away but they too had a generator running!

It was here we tossed out the last of the fruit and vegetables and the honey (oh how I wish we had known that honey could remain!) and cleaned out the fridge. We were now ready for the quarantine inspectors at Ceduna. As it happens, the officer there seemed to be on all by himself, and the quarantine officer gave us a very cursory inspection before telling us to get on our way. So we scampered over the road to the Ceduna dump point and potable water tap to get rid of one load and take on another.

We had lunch at the nearby Roadhouse which was nothing to write home about, but damned busy!

### **Streaky Bay**

And then we continued on our way. We had booked a site ahead at Streaky Bay at **Islands Caravan Park**. Usually we stay at the Foreshore park but this time our favoured site on the foreshore was not available so we thought we would try the newer park out of town a bit. I am glad we did, as it was lovely. Huge sites were spaced apart with vegetation and each site was on nice clean gravel. The toilet and showers were the best I have ever seen anywhere in a caravan park. Sparkling new, each shower cubicle has a toilet and vanity basin all enclosed in one unit.

And most sites had a nice view of the water which was about 100 metres walk away. All this and it was cheaper as well.

We did the usual things in Streaky Bay, like doing a day's trip out around Cape Bauert and another loop around the district. We had dinner at the local pub not once but twice, the food was so good! And we replenished the fruit and vegetables, necessary as we had cleaned out the fridge back at Ceduna.

After four days (in which we washed sheets and towels etc) we were ready to leave again.

## Walkers Rock

S33 33 34 E134 51 20

The trip Eastwards on the Flinders Highway was through unremarkable countryside. We passed agricultural land, with wheat and sheep, those staples which have sustained Australia for so many years.

Walkers Rock is a pleasant campground about ten kms from the coastal town of Elliston. Located on a beach, it has always been a spot we enjoy camping at for not only the relative peacefulness of the site but also the beach which is right near the campground. This time it was hopping busy. Luckily, we arrived early and got a fairly good spot, but there were three other camp groups nearby, all of whom were quiet and nice people.

Interestingly, although the camp is in a Conservation Park, you are able to have dogs here. Each dog we saw was beautifully behaved and a credit to their owners. So often we find that owners

ignore the signed rules requiring the dog to be on a lead. Time and again we have been attacked or barked at by dogs with negligent owners.



The weather underwent a sudden and welcome change here. After leaving Streaky Bay we enjoyed lovely cool weather, and realised that we were in fact into the start of Autumn! Wow, that time went quickly.

Elliston was a diverting place to visit for a day, and allowed us to top up the water tanks and empty our

cassette at the dump point. The little supermarket was a top destination too, and we bought those items we had forgotten to get back in Streaky Bay. And lo and behold, there is a bakery next door to the supermarket! Yay.

After three nice, relaxing days (are there any other sort?) we packed up and headed on.

The Flinders Highway now was rolling through more wheatfields and canola fields, with trees only populating the road verges; all fields were well and truly cleared of anything but the crops. How do I know the crops were canola in some instances? Because on a previous trip I captured lovely glowing pictures of canola in the fields. At this time of year it was only a short stubble and only a memory of the glory it used to be. It was dry, very dry.

## Coffin Bay NP Little Yangie Bay

Our next destination was Little Yangie Bay, out in the Coffin bay National Park. We had stayed here quite a few times over the years, and always enjoy camping there. This time, we had to book online before arriving, a system which I dislike usually, and the parks authorities had changed the campground considerably, by installing a different outlay of sites. Generally the changes were for the good. No, credit is due - the changes were wonderful.

As we were required to nominate a specific site in advance of arrival, we were a little anxious that it would be suitable. As it happened, the site was one of the best for us. Site 5 was quite large, and had nice vegetation on both sides, as well as allowing for good sunlight all day on the solar panels. The phone reception was marginal but seemed to work OK.

Interestingly, the overwhelming majority of other camping groups were young people with small children. But the children were all well behaved and we had no cause to complain about noise or disturbance. As it was a long weekend we guessed many would be locals out enjoying the outdoors.

Val was pleased to see a golden whistler, and even got a shaky photo of it too. Apparently they have been absent from this area for a while, according to a local, so we felt lucky to have seen it.

After the four nights booked were past, we hitched up and moved over to nearby Lincoln National Park, near Port Lincoln. On Boston Bay, this is a drop dead gorgeous national park and one of our firm favourite campgrounds.



(Yes, I KNOW that I keep saying yet another spot is one of my firm favourites - but this one is in my top 10 at least).

(I would think the majority of my favourite campgrounds would be national parks, and they are indeed the jewels in the crown of our nation's campgrounds).

There are at least six or seven different campgrounds and each of them are is unique or special. Of those which we can fit into with our van, we find we prefer Engine Point and Surfleet Cove. Both are very different.

Surfleet is set on a sloping hillside with tiered sites overlooking the harbour, and each site is on clean, level gravel. The sites are all around a road which has a toilet in the centre. There is nice vegetation and sites are well spaced apart.

Engine Point has no identified sites so you park where you wish, and it has sites right on the edge of the beach. But in Summer it can be very dry and dusty there. That was the case this trip; it was very dry indeed and the grass had withered away. Anyway, there was another van there already and it had the prime position.



So we chose to stay at Surfleet Cove (on site 11. Next time we decided we will choose site 13, an even nicer spot with better views). We had good views of the bay below from our van, and the weather was kind. Each day was cool and most days delivered good sunlight all day.

Equally welcome was the phone reception being reasonable here!

I celebrated a birthday from this camp and we drove into Port Lincoln and had lunch at a fantastic new restaurant at Peter Teakle's Winery. What a superb meal and lovely setting for the winery. I can't recommend this winery too highly - the food was outstanding, as was the setting.

In all, we had ten nights here at Lincoln NP as the weather was so good and our camp site was appealing. It seems that with the ability to travel as quickly or slowly as we wish, we can stay as long as we like in spots with pleasant outlooks or comfortable and scenic surroundings. Our stays seem to be getting longer and longer!

But we were getting closer to home now and the trip was into its last stages.

