

Thargomindah(QLD) to Brisbane

June 2017

In this second stage of the trip we travel on from Thargomindah to back home. We also experience some very annoying technical issues which caused real headaches. And there were consequences....



Yowah's artesian pools

This stage started on 1 June.

Thargomindah Rest Stop

S27 46 55 E143 21 43

This lovely place is one we first saw a few years ago, sited at the top of a hill overlooking the Grey range, and 55 kms to the West of Thargomindah. It is most likely where a roads crew once was based, but it is a pleasant and peaceful spot to pull up for a night or two. We needed to spend time catching up on a couple of chores and this was the ideal place to do it. Equally important, there was phone and internet here, due to the elevation. It was only limited but we had two bars of reception and that was perfect. So we spent two nights here under that clear sky with blazing stars.

Alas on our second night the dratted diesel heater, my beloved diesel heater, played up. It gave a whump noise and stopped working. I can tell you it got cold the next morning without it. Val checked the fuses, scrabbling around on the floor (we had to check the internet to find them) but that was not the issue.

Later, at our next camp site, he got under the van and stripped the heater out and cleared the line and filters, wiping them clean with Windex. Apparently, it was pretty dusty under there! That worked, thank goodness. I suspect it will play up again

So the next day we moved on, passing through Thargomindah, where we stocked up on groceries at the little general store, had morning tea at the coffee shop near the Information Centre, re-fuelled and washed the rig down at the truck wash.

Then we pressed on, driving on the single lane road with numerous kangaroos and emus trying to commit suicide by jumping in front of the car. We arrived at the small town of Eulo at lunch time, and pulled into the campsite next to the river. It was fairly quiet when we arrived.

Eulo Waterhole

S28 9 40 E145 2 13

It was busy here, very busy. The camp site is along a river and with trees dotted around quite a large site. Fortunately we got there early enough and nabbed quite a nice spot near some bushes and trees, and had enough sun for our solar panels. The town of Eulo has a hotel, a small general store and some opal and rock shops as well as a Police Station. There is also a mud bath establishment where for \$65 a person you can have a mud bath experience. This includes nibbles and bubbles. Maybe next time. We went to the hotel for dinner and enjoyed the special Eulo sausage and salad, and can recommend it highly.

While at Eulo we heard about the little town of Yowah, 85 kms to the North West, and which has artesian pools! Oh boy. So up there we headed, as one of those spur of the moment decisions

Yowah Reserve

S27 58 0 E144 37 59

What a great find this town proved to be! It is a small town, but by providing a free/donation camp site, they have attracted travelers who go out of their way to stop here and visit the newly installed artesian pools. A grant from a casino (of all places) enabled the town to build the pools, fed by a natural hot artesian bore. For a small fee you can visit the pools for as long as you like. Then you can go across the road to the coffee shop (which also does takeaways) and buy groceries at the little general store run by the caravan park. We got a couple of geocaches here, including one up at the Bluff, a great spot high on a hill overlooking the town.

Our camp site was quite nice, nestled into and against a peppertree. If we come this way again I will definitely visit Yowah again. On this occasion, we only stayed the two nights. I would love to have stayed longer, but we did need to press on.



Bollon/Wallam Creek

S28 1 36 E147 28 39

On we headed to our next camp site, driving through some good pastured country, which was green after the recent rains. As a result, there was a huge amount of road kill and we found we needed to constantly stop and avoid kangaroos or emus on the road. Once or twice there were cattle too, and you certainly would not want to meet one of those head on.

When we arrived at the small community of Bollon and pulled into the camp on Wallam Creek, it was pretty busy. But it got a lot busier as the afternoon wore on. Luckily, we chose a spot on grass over near the fence and had a nice quiet camp, but there were four abreast in the middle of the campsite - worse than a caravan park. It was not even remotely tempting to stay for longer. I remember now my previous decision to not stay here again.

During the afternoon our fridge developed a problem and eventually stopped working altogether. This was not good news. We put all the frozen foods in the car fridge turned to freezer mode and made plans as best we could to have the fridge looked at in nearby Goondiwindi. In the meantime we put a bag of ice in the freezer compartment to keep everything cool in the fridge below.

Goondiwindi Rest Stop

S28 33 2 E150 19 11

We had read about this nice friendly RVFT town which provides a free rest stop (for a maximum of 48 hours) right on the edge of the town, so we headed there. Our appointment with the refrigeration repair people was at 8am the next day so this was very convenient. It was a delightful spot to stay for the night, with green grass, toilets and covered tables. It was completely full of vans and motorhomes by about 3pm but we had a great spot and were quite happy. We put our chairs out on the grass and sat in the sunlight with our coffee.

Now, in the meantime, our satellite TV had been playing up and Val was happy to see the town had a technical shop which was able to help. I think it was the tuner which had been playing up and so that was fixed.

Next morning, the technician was able to make a determination that the fridge's controller was kaput, and accordingly we ordered a new one (at vast expense, you understand) which would not arrive until the end of the following week.

Yelarbon Recreation Grounds

S28 34 35 E150 45 25

The next morning we moved on 40 kms to the small town of Yelarbon, which has a community run and managed caravan park. It is one of the best caravan parks I have ever stayed at. It had a toilet and shower block, a small laundry, powered and water sites on gravel and grass and a solid herb garden! All this for \$15 a night for a powered site. As there were about 15 vans there the first night the town is earning serious money. The facilities are cleaned by volunteers on a roster.

The idea was to wait here until our fridge part arrived and then go back to Goondiwindi for the repairs to be effected.

We spent several days waiting, and on the Tuesday we had a call to say the part had arrived. We had the van packed up and moving within half an hour! It is a 40km trip back to Goondiwindi but we were there within the hour, and the part was quickly installed. It didn't work. The fridge's compressor still was not cutting in, and the fridge was not cooling. \$500 and no result. The mechanic said it would cool down by morning, but of course it hadn't. As a result, we made a fairly easy decision to head back home much more quickly than intended, and change over the fridge to the spare one we had bought not long before leaving home. Hindsight is a wonderful thing and yes, we wished we had put it in before this trip - but we hadn't. The compressor, which was the obvious culprit, would cost in the order of \$800 to \$1000 to fix and with no guarantees of being the solution. So, a trip home was in order.

Hickeys Falls

S31 25 51 E149 4 1

The next morning we headed out from Yelarbon, headed back to Goondiwindi then South at a fair clip, stopping for morning tea and arriving at our night's camp site mid afternoon. This proved to be an absolutely lovely little camp site near some (presently dry) water falls. It was a parking area on gravel, surrounded by trees and a picnic shelter, with a path to the falls - all of 30 metres away. Several other motorhomes pulled in before long and we chatted with them all around a fire at happy hour time. But it was a particularly cold night and we were pretty tired, so we retreated to the van for dinner and an early bed.

Forbes Wheogo Reserve

S33 23 16 E148 0 5

The next morning was very nippy indeed, as the Falls were in a hollow and it is probably shaded for much of the day. After breakfast of toast and coffee we were off again.



The road South was smooth and busy with trucks and other traffic at a quick pace. The Newell Highway has certainly improved since last we travelled on it, three years ago. Our target was the town of Forbes which has a great freecamp on the outskirts of town and on the banks of the Lachlan River. It is provided to encourage people to stay and thus spend money in the town. It is popular and was quite busy with various recreational vehicles along the river. But it was not too crowded, and we enjoyed two nights here.

Sandy Point Reserve, Hay
S34 30 54 E144 50 6

Again the plan was to head South at a steady clip and make for Hay, on the Mid Western Highway. Initially we were on the Newell which although busy was better than in previous years, as it has adequate passing lanes. Then we turned onto the Mid Western Highway, a lesser used route and more relaxing for travel.

We had a decadent breakfast at the little town of Weenthalle, about 250 kms North of Hay, at the Road Kill Grill, of all places. It was morning tea at the time but who cares! It is a small town but the residents tendered for an artist to paint a mural on their silos and the work was underway at the time we visited. The art work is amazing; how can anyone do something on this scale?



But this was only morning tea time and we wanted to be at our next camp site at Hay fairly early, as it is a popular spot. It was mid afternoon when we arrived at Hay and the camp there, which is on the Murrumbidgee, was busy but not crowded. We found a spot a little away from everyone else

and pulled up for the night. On reflection we could have found an even quieter spot further over but it was quiet enough. After dark, Val went outside for something from the car, and reported someone at another camp was playing a blessed didgeridoo. Not quite what you want to listen to...some folk imagine we will all be enthralled with their skill on such an instrument.

Fortunately for the food in our (not working) fridge, the nights were freezing and the days were cool, so the cheese, butter, milk etc stayed quite fresh.

There was internet and phone reception here, as you would expect, being on the edge of town.

Bottle Bend, near Mildura

S34 18 11 E142 17 59

Our next camp was on the Murray near Mildura. This was a really lovely spot, on the banks of the Murray River. We had an outlook over the river, with a direct view of pelicans, ducks, waterbirds and were visited by a tribe of apostle birds. I just loved this spot, and its peaceful setting. We



had no one camped close by, unlike the last several nights. I could have stayed here but we needed to get home and have the dratted fridge fixed.

Dinner was an easy tinned pasta sauce and some pasta, and after watching the news on TV we were in bed and hunkered down under the doona pretty early.

There was internet and phone reception here, and we were able to download emails and phone home to alert Kathryn we were almost on her doorstep.

Let me list the things which we had mechanical problems with on this trip, since leaving home.

- Broken door handle
- Satellite TV not working
- DC-DC charger between van and car not working
- Television set's tuner stopped working
- Hinges on a cupboard broke
- Fridge.

Except for the fridge, Val was able to fix every single one of these things. He even had a spare door handle with him, so that was fine too. He got parts for the satellite dish in Goondiwindi, and fiddled with everything else or had parts which enabled him to effect fixes. But alas, not the fridge. That defeated us.

