

## **Yelarbon to Bundaberg QLD**

### **Stage 4 July 2017**

In this fourth stage of the trip we continue the trip, and although we were in more Northern parts it continued to be cold; that is, VERY cold. And then, suddenly, at Bundaberg, it was warm!

This stage started on 9 July 2017.



*Girraween NP*

### **Texas, QLD**

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The camp site at Texas is just out of town, literally right on the QLD and NSW border, and on the banks of the Dumaresqu River. It is a pretty camp, with green grass and our chosen spot had a nice view of the river below. It is popular and many different vehicles arrive each day (and a corresponding number seem to go as well). The town of Texas is small, but has two general stores and a butcher, and a small hospital I think.

We have stayed here a few times before and found it to be a nice base for looking around the region and just relaxing. It is a pleasantly social place with people stopping and talking and going for walks along the river. We stayed three days, and on our second day another van came in and parked nearby. When they came over to talk (as you do) the bloke asked where we come from. We told him the Barossa Valley, and he asked, "Do you come from Springton?". It was the strangest thing; our town is the only place he knows in the Barossa, and he only knows it as he has a few friends who live there. Anyway, they were great company.

The other attraction in this town was the freshly baked bread and buns each day. A major bonus! While we were here I had a major hassle with my email system being compromised. I was bombarded for several days with multiple emails all claiming to be from the Postmaster re undelivered email messages. There were forty or fifty a day. So I started systematically blocking

each one on the server, and notifying them to the internet provider as spam. So then Telstra/Bigpond identified that activity as my system being compromised, and promptly deactivated my account. Oh woe! Serious business. It took me two attempts with the Bigpond technical support before it was all fixed.

After three days (or was it longer?) we headed North again. It had occurred to us just how slowly we were travelling, as after a few weeks of travel we were still in the cold climes and wearing jumpers each day. And the diesel heater was certainly getting a workout each day. But we were looking forward to being at Girraween NP, near Stanthorpe, and that is where we headed next.

### **Girraween NP**

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Castle Rock Campground is one of two camping areas in the national park, and can fit 14 caravans or camper trailers, and numerous tents. Certainly numerous tents were in full deployment when we arrived, as a teenage boys' cycling group was in residence. My heart sank when I saw them. But



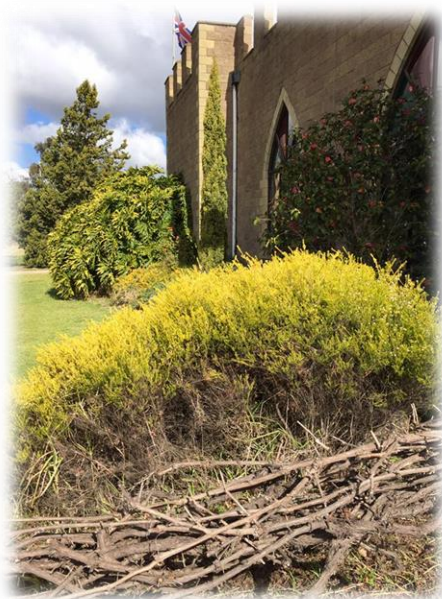
amazingly they were well behaved and remarkably quiet. Maybe the group leaders had put diazepam (Valium) in their cocoa... Anyway, we found a great spot for the van, and enjoyed reasonable levels of sun on the solar panels each day. By lunchtime the batteries were full, and that is as remarkable as a quiet cycling group of teenage boys.

The lithium battery system was proving nothing short of magic. We could boil the electric jug, put the toaster on and make coffee in our Nespresso machine. All this barely made a ripple

on the battery system. Although lithium is a great innovation I know there are new technologies being set up even as we speak. Mind you, it is a whole new way of looking at our battery usage and charging and we have not yet got our heads around it all.

Stanthorpe is also host to many caches and we spent a little time

getting out and geocaching in the country. But we barely made a dent on the numbers. Perhaps more time spent caching and less in coffee shops might do the trick...? A bit drastic a solution though.



Castle Glen Distillery

The major attraction of the Stanthorpe region for me is the wineries, fruit liqueur distillery, cheesery and cafes. It is a beautiful area and full of things to do and see. Indeed, we love the Castle Glen fruit liqueur place so much we visited twice. The place has literally thousands of bottles of all different fruit liqueurs, all distilled from local fruit and by one bloke and his son. He is talking of retiring and handing over to the son completely. The result of his labours is so fresh and clean tasting with the fruit shining through in every mouthful.

After a few days of all this giddy excitement we knew it was time to again head North. I was actually getting over all the cold weather by now, and knew that it would be much warmer back closer to sea level. So off we set, and this time travelled up to Wivenhoe Dam near Ipswich.

### **Wivenhoe Dam**

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The dam was originally built as a water storage facility and flood mitigation device, but allows for powered camping at the Lumley Hill campground, and camper trailers and tents unpowered over at an adjacent facility at Logan's campground. It is a lovely spot and the view from the awning is



Wivenhoe Camp site

especially lovely at sunset, with the water going down over the hills behind the water. Over the years we have been here quite a few times and I reckon it would be my overall favourite powered camp site. The price has increased hugely in recent years but then so has everything else...except for our superannuation payments, that is.

This time we stayed for a full week, as I needed to be in one place for work, and there is phone and internet reception here. On the weekend it was very busy with just about every site taken and that included kids and families. But it was incredibly peaceful and quiet, and there was no yelling

or screaming from kids and the only sound was happy people relaxing in the fresh air.

On the Saturday night we went over to nearby Coominya Tavern for dinner. This is a wee town, with a tavern (as mentioned) and a general store and not much else. But the tavern is warm and friendly and served great meals.

Although it was warmer here at Wivenhoe by a good deal compared with our recent travels, we did experience a fierce wind storm. One of those tree limbs, which are quite a distance away, came down and cracked a solar panel on top of the van. Val was onto dealing with it swiftly. He took photos of the offending panel, and emailed it to the insurer promptly, and rang the Kedron factory to organise a replacement unit.

On a happier note, we met up with my cousin Colin and his wife Edna, who came over to the dam, and brought lunch with them from the famous nearby Fernvale pie shop. What great people! We spent the entire afternoon talking and swapping family stories, and it was so good to have this quality

time with family.

## Linville

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Our next stop was up North at little Linville, only about 90 kms from Wivenhoe. This small town is right on the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, a horse, cyclist and walker trail, and has minimal facilities really. There is a toilet block, and nice mown grass to camp on, and is only a short distance across the road to the local Hotel and the general store. The rest area recognises the value of visitors and has provided two power outlets for lucky first arrivals. We didn't need power (the lithium system is just that good!) so although we were first to arrive, we left the powered sites for others and camped up on the hill overlooking the valley. This is such a lovely warm and welcoming town and we have enjoyed staying before.



There was internet with the external aerial but no phone reception.

The weather was absolutely perfect while we were here, with cold nights and sunny crisp days. We could sit outside in shirts and shorts - as long as the sun was up! There were frosts each morning though.



We arrived on a Monday, which is the one night of the week the general store makes pizzas...guess what we had for dinner!

On the third night we had dinner at the pub. I had read about the resident ghost at the Hotel and fortunately the owner of the place was in the bar having a drink when we went over for dinner. Sitting in front of the bar fireplace he told us the story of the ghost. As stories go it was a bit mundane; a local resident died on the

back verandah and has been seen fairly regularly walking through the rooms of the place. Many people have reported the sightings, and as his old residence was also plagued by various events such as the walls shaking and chairs moving, and so it was felt he was a nuisance. The publican (his name is Bernie) said all he does when he sees the ghost is firmly state "Geoff, just bugger off!" and the ghost disappears. But when a visiting barmaid said she could exorcise ghosts they gave her a freehand at the house, to see how it went, given the manifestations there were worrisome. Apparently she caused mayhem and chaos with burnt chicken feathers and rice scattered all

through the house, so they asked her to leave the ghost alone from then on. And the ghost is still there to this day.

After three days here we had an appointment at the Kedron factory to replace the broken solar panel from back at Wivenhoe, and to pick up new tyres in Brisbane. So very early on the Thursday morning we packed up quietly and rolled out of Linville at six am. We were down at the factory by 7.30am and ready to organise everything which needed organising. It was a long day by the time we headed back up the Bruce Highway and back out the D'Aguilar Highway to the even smaller than Linville town of Benarkin.

### **Benarkin First Settlers Rest Area**

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This small town has nothing but a general store and a rest area which has good quality toilets and a children's playground. The rest area has started to become popular and there were three or four vans there with us overnight. We were all comfortably settled on mown green grass, on a flat area overlooking the town. We camped up one end and away from the others and enjoyed a peaceful night. You could hear traffic from the highway which is about half a km away but it wasn't an issue. And there was good phone and internet reception here! We had a hamburger for dinner from the little general store, which we walked over to at dusk.

### **Ban Ban Springs**

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The next morning we didn't really need to do any packing up as we had not unpacked much the night before. Off we set, stopping at Nanango for a range of flavoured peanuts at the Peanut Truck, handily located at the rest stop on the edge of town. They have a dump point which we used too, and noted how busy this rest stop was. Our destination was Ban Ban Springs, which we have stopped at in previous years. We managed to find a nice enough spot, but not without a major argument between us about the backing in of the van. It was a peaceful enough spot (after the argument) although the sound of trucks moving up and down the nearby highway was clear and present. But we had a nice chat with our neighbours, and then headed inside for dinner and a spot of TV, watching the news etc. We had good TV reception here and marginal internet. The phones didn't work although there was a bar of reception...



Early the next morning we headed due East at the crossroads across from our camp, and travelled the hour and a half to Bundaberg. This leg of the trip was through lovely rolling country and we passed some significant ranges. This is very pretty country and clearly good, fertile soil.

## Bundaberg.

Cane Village, Avoca, Bundaberg

Ah well, a caravan park! All crammed in as tight as sardines, on a sparse piece of grass, and paying \$36 a night for the privilege. The merit of this park was our good friend Peter stays there for Winter each year, and we wanted to catch up with him. Also, our friends Potta and Jane live nearby at Bargara, although we hadn't expected them to be back from their recent travels.

The Big 4 caravan park was situated wonderfully though, being within walking distance of the Brothers Club, Woolies and Coles, Harvey Norman and a host of other good places. The Brothers Club is a huge place with fantastic meals, and alas a gambling presence.... We had dinner on the Sunday night, paying \$6.95 for a huge roast meal. And Peter bought a bottle of Barossa red so we were set!

The Palm Resort residential village which Jane and Potta live in is truly magnificent. They had three pools, one of which is heated, a restaurant, a truckwash, bowling greens, and a cinema which has free meals. Adjacent to the restaurant, the cinema allows you to buy your food and wine and take it into the cinema to watch the free screened movies. I think they get so many free meals too... In a recent move, the resort has introduced a nursing village in the concept so when you need nursing care you just go into that facility. Your partner can then walk in to visit you! There is a new section with the usual huge caravan garage adjacent to the house, but those houses cost serious money.

Although the caravan park was not a pleasant place to be, it was a means to an end and we caught up with friends and did a little geocaching, so that was worthwhile. And this was the first time on the whole trip that we experienced warm weather and wore shorts and t-shirts!

But after four days we were ready to go again. At this stage we dithered a bit about where to head next. But we decided to head North up to Biloela and stay at a new caravan park at the site of Callide Dam. And that was in the direction we needed to head, as we needed to be in Winton by about 24 August. So we packed up again and headed off, leaving a bit late for us, at 8am.



Jane and Potta at Bargara