

Queensland Road Trip 2023

1. Friday 28/04/2023 - Drive to Hume Weir

After a hiccup last night when we discovered that the Mondeo battery was flat due to an intermittent software problem, we were on the road by 10am heading north. This was the first holiday northward bound where we weren't heading off via Mansfield for quite a long time. The weather was fine and sunny as we left.

Lunch was at Euroa at a nice picnic ground in town we have stopped at before next to the river. We continued onwards to Lake Hume Resort, arriving after rain clouds had passed by as there were lots of puddles on the ground.

Our room was in a building with a number of other motel style rooms in it. It was busy as there was some sort of family reunion taking place. After having a look around Albury, we had tea in Thurgoona at the Kinross Woolshed (Kinross burger and beetroot halloumi and mushroom burger).

The weather had really turned now and it was pretty cool and occasionally drizzly rain.

Lake Hume Resort \$131 1 night

Temperature 14.

Start speedo: 707101 End speedo: 71071 Today: 387

2. Saturday 29/04/2023 - Drive to Junee

Despite a busy evening in the resort, we had a quiet night and got a good sleep. We headed off at about 9am towards Junee. The towns between Albury and Junee are all very well maintained and the main streets have a real old world country feel to them, with large verandahs over the footpath. We diverted off the highway at Henty and The Rock to drive down the main street of these towns.

Wagga Wagga was very busy this Saturday morning. We fuelled up and had a quick look at the railway station before continuing on towards Junee. It was quite cool - around 12° and overcast now. Junee is not far north of Wagga and we had lunch in a park in town. After lunch, we visited the Junee Roundhouse Museum. There is an interesting collection of railway heritage items including rolling stock, locomotives and other interesting displays.

The other main attraction in Junee is the Licorice and Chocolate factory which is located in an old flour mill. Of course we bought some chocolate and it is very good. After booking

into our room at the Junee Motor Inn, we took a walk around town - which once again - is very well maintained and full of lovely old buildings.

For dinner we walked to the Commercial Hotel for tea. It was a busy Saturday night with plenty of the town's younger people drinking and eating here. Apricot chicken filo for me and beetroot, salt and pepper calamari for Anna.

Junee Motor Inn \$120 1 night

Overcast day and cool. 14 degrees.

Start Speedo: 71071 End speedo: 71287 Today: 184

3. Sunday 30/04/2023 - Drive to Dubbo

It rained just about all night and continued into the morning as we left Junee on our way to Dubbo. The route takes us along the Olympic Way which parallels the main Sydney to Melbourne railway. We took a little side trip at Bethungra to look at the rail spiral where one track of the line does a loop around a hill and passes over itself to climb a steep grade.

We were impressed with every town we passed through today - they were clean, well maintained and just about everytown had a beautiful garden or park near its centre, perfect for a coffee or picnic lunch. We had a look around Cootamundra and Young before stopping for lunch in Young. It was pretty cold (12 degrees) so we didn't hang around for long and continued our way via Orange towards Dubbo.

Orange is quite a large town which in places looks like Bendigo or Ballarat. Once again, well maintained with many heritage buildings.

After passing through Molong and Wellington, we arrived in Dubbo a little before the 4 o'clock book in time for our lodgings so we took a quick shopping stop at Orana Mall to get some food for tonight and we each got a track suit as it was a bit colder than we expected.

Our accommodation is Bowerbird, an AirBnB with half of a beautiful newish home in the Dubbo suburbs. It is a very nice area here and the facilities are excellent.

Chicken and salad for tea.

Cold and overcast. Temp 14.

Start speedo: 71287 End speedo: 71721 Today: 435

4. Monday 1/05/2023 - Day 2 Dubbo

We had a very nice sleep last night. It sounded like it rained a fair bit too. A cold and breezy day was spent at Dubbo Taronga Western Plains Zoo. We were very impressed. The zoo is well laid out with generous areas for each species of animal. It was a drive and park

arrangement. We spent most of the day there. Our favourite animals were meerkats (both of us), cheetahs (Brad), and Indian elephants (Anna).

Back to our beautiful AirBnB for dinner.

Bowerbird Airbnb \$302 2 nights

5. Tuesday 2/05/2023 - Drive to Goondiwindi

Time to say goodbye to our lovely lodgings in Dubbo. It was another cool night, but no rain. Refuelled the car and after missing the turnoff to the Newell Highway, did a little bit of a detour via the Golden Highway and got back on track. Travelled through Gilgandra and Coonabarabran having lunch at Narrabri. In my memory, Narrabri was a pretty ordinary town. Either my memory is wrong or they have done a great job in developing the town, it is actually quite an attractive place. Similarly, Moree in my memory was ordinary. We took a detour off the highway and drove through town. It has a good shopping centre, and the main street of town is very attractive - nothing like how I imagined it.

By now the weather was improving with the daily temperature warming up. It got up to 21 today.

We arrived in Goondiwindi at 4:30, staying at the Country Roads Motor Inn. We had dinner at Victoria Hotel - salt and pepper squid for Anna and slow cooked beef brisket for Brad. Not too bad.

A cool but sunny morning and scattered clouds. Got to 23 degrees.

Country Road Motor Inn \$164 1 night

Start speedo: 71744 End speedo: 72277 Today: 533

6. Wednesday 3/05/2023 - Drive to Nanango

We woke up to a nice sunny day after a good sleep despite the motel being next to the main highway. We had a look around town in Goondiwindi and after buying fuel we were on the road heading north on the Leichhardt Hwy and then Moonie Road to Moonie.

The road quality degraded rapidly as this area is dead flat and would have been under water in the floods last year. Moonie is just a cross road junction where we turned right onto Moonie Highway which took us to Dalby. Dalby is a pretty big town. We cruised through onto the Bunya Hwy which eventually brought us into Kingaroy, the peanut capital of Australia. As you approach Kingaroy you can see the peanut works silos from many kilometres away.

We had lunch in a park then visited the tourist centre which had a museum and art gallery in the same building. After a peruse of local art and museum pieces, we did a self guided tour

of town and surroundings. We visited a peanut van to buy some local produce then headed to Nanango and checked into our little farm stay shack. A quirky but comfortable place with friendly hosts Hal and June, along with their dogs and horses. We cooked tea in our accommodation - chicken and rice stir fry.

We had a little mechanical issue in Dalby. A squealing noise coming from the back left wheel. Turned out to be a stone caught between the stone-guard and brake disc.

Start speedo: 72284 End speedo: 72657 Today: 373 Temp: 25

7. Thursday 4/05/2023 - Day 2 at Nanango

Another fine sunny day. We had a quiet day resting and reading. Explored town in the morning and had a coffee at the local bakery.

June/Hal Airbnb \$219 2 nights

Fine and sunny 26.

8. Friday 5/05/2023 - Drive to Agnes Water

It has been a nice break having a relaxing time on the farm. Today's drive is through parts of Queensland that are off the main tourist trail. In fact, we haven't seen a Victorian number plate since we left Goondiwindi. The country is fairly flat with some rolling sections with some larger hills in the distance. We head north along the Burnett Highway and pass some peanut farms along with other unidentified crops. There are some cattle farms and large undeveloped natural bush areas. The road is undulating and we have to stop a few times for lengthy waits at road works areas.

At Ban Ban Springs we turn right onto the Isla Highway and take a shortcut missing Childers to get onto the Bruce Highway at Booyal. We stopped for lunch at Gin Gin in the central median strip park which has been recently refurbished.

It is sugar cane country around here and we have seen a few cane train tracks that aren't in use. The cane season starts soon and continues to September apparently.

From Gin Gin we turn off the Bruce Highway to head towards Agnes Water. There is only one road in and it's pretty quiet until we reach Agnes Water and check in to our apartment. It is magnificent. The top floor is all ours and we have a large deck with views towards the north east and the ocean in the distance.

After settling in we drove to the beach for a walk along the sand and also did some shopping.

Temperature 26 - fine and sunny

Start speedo: 72686 End speedo: 73072 Today: 385

9. 6/05/2023 - Day 2 at Agnes Water

We spent the morning looking around town and had a look at the beach. Lunch in our apartment then a swim at the beach in the afternoon. On the recommendation of Noel, the brother of the owner of this place, we drove to Seventeen Seventy to watch the sunset. It was a great suggestion as the sunset was stunning.

Fish and chips for tea.

10. Sunday 7/05/2023 - Day 3 at Agnes Water

In the morning I rented a bike and rode to 1770. When I stopped at the Marina and saw how pretty it was, I rang Anna for her to drive here and meet me for a coffee. I continued my ride around 1770 and returned to Agnes Water on a route that included a couple of km on the hard sand on the beach back to Agnes Water.

In the afternoon we headed to the beach for a swim but the wind had sprung up and brought some clouds and it was a little too cool so we sat and read our books for a while.

We returned to 1770 to watch another sunset but the clouds that moved in earlier today had hung around and there was no sunset today.

Agnes Water Ocean View Airbnb \$372 3 nights

BBQ wraps for tea.

11. Monday 8/05/2023 - Drive to Yeppoon

We were on the road by 9:15 saying goodbye to Agnes Water and 1770. There is only one road into Agnes Water so we had to head south a bit before turning west to rejoin the Bruce Highway at Miriam Vale. We skirted around Gladstone. We may have a look there when we are on our way back from further north. Before too long we were in Rockhampton and turned off to go to Yeppoon via Emu Park.

After lunch at Emu Park we headed to our accommodation in Lammermoor - Beaches on Lammermoor with a lovely 2 bedroom apartment on the second floor overlooking the rear pool area.

We finished the day with a shopping trip into Yeppoon, then had an evening walk along Lammermoor Beach.

Prawns and salad for tea. Temp 19 - 23°

Start speedo: 73153 End speedo: 73451 Today: 397

12. Tuesday 9/05/2023 - Day 2 Yeppoon

We spent the day looking around Yeppoon. Firstly we walked along Yeppoon foreshore then the main street and did some shopping. After lunch we drove to Rosslyn Bay Marina and climbed the lookout for a great view of the coastline. Finally, we walked along the Lammermoor Beach.

Barbequed hamburgers for tea.

Beaches On Lammermoor \$372 2 nights

Temp - cool for this latitude 19°

13. Wednesday 10/05/2023 - Drive to Airlie Beach

We were on the road before 9am saying goodbye to Lammermoor. We had a fairly long drive in front of us. The weather was mainly fine with a few clouds here and there. The route took us back to Rockhampton and then north along the Bruce Highway. The vegetation has changed a bit, even though the main tree type along the way is eucalyptus, they are different to the types we have down south. The grass is long and luxurious.

There is a long expanse of highway between Rockhampton and Mackay with virtually no towns in between - except for the occasional cross road with a service station and a hotel/motel. To the east is the huge army training area of Shoalhaven Bay. As we got closer to Sarina and Mackay, sugar plantations became more frequent and soon there were cane train tracks running parallel to and criss-crossing the highway.

While most drivers on the highway so far have been good, today we were overtaken by a driver in a hurry to get past us and a caravan over double lines on a blind curve. Luckily nothing was coming the other way as we would have been caught up in the resulting crash.

Mackay is a very large town and more like a city. We intended to stop for lunch here but couldn't find a suitable park next to the main road so we headed on until we came to a nice wayside stop near Kuttabul.

Before long we got to Proserpine for the turn off to Airlie Beach. Traffic became heavier in this section as it was school pickup time. We found our private apartment in Whitsunday Vista Resort on the 4th floor. It's small but well appointed and recently refurbished.

After our obligatory walk around town, we found a nicer route to walk back to our lodgings rather than the narrow footpath right next to the busy road.

Temp: 24°, slightly overcast. Takeaway noodles and rice for tea as we were both very tired.

Start speedo: 73490 End speedo: 73996 Today: 506

14. Thursday 11/05/2023 - Day 2 at Airlie Beach

Started the day with a morning walk to a beach facing cafe for coffee and booked in for a cruise to Whitesands tomorrow. Walked back to our apartment and then drove to Shute Harbour for a look around.

Lunch back at our accommodation and then I went for a 28 km ride around the local beaches and suburbs while Anna did some shopping and reading.

We had tea at a bar and grill in the main shopping strip. Mixed Australian grill for me - kangaroo, crocodile, prawns and wild boar with chips and salad. Anna had an eggplant parma. It was a bit overdone (burnt) and the waitress who took our plates away noticed and didn't charge for it.

Temp: about 22° Overcast and windy. Rained in the evening.

15. Friday 12/05/2023 - Day 3 Airlie Beach

We were up early at 6:00 am to be at the Airlie Beach Port by 6:45 for our ferry ride to Whitehaven Beach. The weather was cool and windy with clouds threatening rain. The ferry goes via Daydream Island and Hamilton Island to pick up and drop off passengers. From Hamilton Island, the ferry travels around the ocean side of Whitsunday Island to get to Whitehaven Beach.

Today there were 30 knot winds coming from the south east with a 2 metre swell. Luckily we had taken some Kwell's this morning! It was a rough trip for about 30 minutes as we rocked and rolled smashing through waves.

Soon enough we rounded the headland back into sheltered waters and anchored at Whitehaven Beach. It lives up to its name with stunningly white sand that is soothing to walk on in bare feet. Apparently it is fine silica with few other components which makes it much finer than other beach sand made of broken sea shells and rocks.

We hiked up to a lookout to take in the view before returning to the beach. We didn't swim as it was just a little too cool and windy for that.

After a couple of hours we were on the tender about to board the ferry when a very heavy downpour of rain occurred. We got a little wet.

The ride back to Hamilton Island was still pretty rough but not as bad as the trip here earlier. We had to change boats at Hamilton Island. After about 20 minutes we were on our way again with stops at the airport jetty and Daydream Island. It really started raining now.

By the time we got back to Airlie Beach the rain had stopped and we were able to walk back to our apartment without getting wet.

Later we walked into town and had McDonalds for tea and sat and listened to a band outside a pub.

Temp: 22°, overcast with some rain.

16. Saturday 13/05/2023 - Day 4 Airlie Beach

We walked into town in the morning for a coffee and brunch and a little bit of shopping.

After lunch we drove to Jubilee Pocket and then to Cannondale.

Tea in our apartment - roast chicken and salad.

Windy at times 22 with scattered clouds.

17. Sunday 14/05/2023 - Day 5 Airlie Beach

A morning walk to town again. Lunch at our apartment then a swim at the marina beach.

Out for dinner at Paradiso (the 3rd time we've been here - excellent coffee and good food) for Mother's Day.

Airlie Beach Ocean View Airbnb \$666 5 nights

Windy and scattered clouds. Warm when the sun came out. 25°

18. Monday 15/05/2023 - Drive to Mackay

I had a pretty bad night. I had a sore throat when I went to bed and things went downhill from there. A heavy fever and weird dreams. We headed off towards Mackay. We stopped for a look around Proserpine. Lots of cane train tracks and a sugar mill that was just gearing up for the harvest season. We went to the Whitsunday Coffee Company as I had been impressed with it in Airlie Beach and bought some coffee.

Anna drove all the way to Mackay to let me rest. We had lunch in a nice park then went shopping at a mall before driving to Mackay Harbour and beach.

Later we checked into our accommodation at the Shakespeare Motel where I did a COVID test. It was positive. Damn!

Shakespeare Motor Inn Mackay \$119 1 night

Chicken and salad for tea.

Fine sunny day. 28°

Start speedo: 74050 End speedo: 74230 Today: 180

19. Tuesday 16/05/2023 - Drive to Rockhampton

I slept well but did not feel any better in the morning. We packed our things and were on the road by 9:00am. Anna drove straight down the Bruce highway to Rockhampton today. There are not many towns on the way. The only one of significance is Sarina which has a large sugar mill and associated cane train tracks.

We got to Rockhampton for lunch and found a place to stop in Kershaw Gardens (we later found out there was a much nicer spot in the gardens around the corner). Despite me having tested positive for COVID, Mary-Jane insisted we come and stay at her place in Mount Archer. She has a separate living area downstairs and we could spend most of our time outside on her large verandah. The drive is up a large hill / small mountain, probably similar in height to Mount Dandenong. Her rear verandah looks over a stunning view towards Yeppoon, with rolling hills and ancient volcano plugs pockmarking the landscape.

I was feeling pretty ordinary and had a 2 hour snooze in the afternoon - drugged up with panadol and decongestant. Anna and Mary-Jane took Kevin the labrador for a walk to the National Park up the road. More spectacular views over Rockhampton city and the sunset.

We caught up on 14 years of gossip and had delicious red emperor fish caught by them last week with an interesting salad with apples, nuts and strawberries.

Sunny weather - 27°

Start speedo: 74230 End speedo: 74571 Today: 341

20. Wednesday 17/05/2023 - Drive to Agnes Water

Despite Mary-Jane advising us we could stay at her place longer, we decided to reduce her exposure to COVID and move on. Anna found that the place we stayed at before in Agnes Water was vacant for the next 2 nights so we booked back in there again. It's about a 220 km drive so it's not too far.

We said goodbye to Mary-Jane and her lovely black labrador Kevin (Glen was staying at their beach house in Keppel Sands probably to avoid contact with us).

We stopped to do some shopping in Rockhampton and later had a look at the train line that goes down the middle of the street - and as luck would have, there was a freight train rumbling down the street when we got there. Very unusual.

Onwards to Miriam Vale for lunch (a pie for me and a wrap for Anna) then down the side road towards Agnes Water.

On arrival we met our hosts Leanne and Paul at our AirBnB house who were not here last time. We soon settled in and had a restful afternoon.

BBQ for tea.

Temp 27°, clear and sunny with a slight breeze.

Start speedo: 74571 End speedo: 74810 Today: 239

21. Thursday 18/05/2023 - Day 2 at Agnes Water

Anna had a bad night. She tested positive for COVID this morning which was not a surprise. I had a swim at the beach while she rested. We both just relaxed in the apartment for most of the day, but I did go back to the beach to read a book in the afternoon as it was a bit too cool for a swim.

BBQ leftovers for tea

Agnes Water Ocean View \$370 2 nights

Temp 24° with a S/E breeze.

22. Friday 19/05/2023 - Drive to Bargara

Anna is still feeling pretty bad so I drove. We toured around Agnes Water looking at places I'd seen while Anna was resting. We then headed towards Bundaberg which was only about 130 km away passing many sugar cane farms and macadamia orchards.

Bundaberg is a big town with distinctive Queensland style - houses on stilts and huge verandahs on pubs. We had lunch in a park at Burnett Head just out of Bundaberg before looking around Bargara shops and had a coffee and vanilla slice. Bargara is a nice surprise - very tropical looking, but quiet and very relaxed.

We booked into our accommodation at Kelly's Beach Resort. The buildings are a little run down, but the gardens and facilities are well maintained and spotlessly clean.

We had a short walk to the beach. Fish and chips for tea.

Temp 24° with a very light breeze.

Start speedo: 74839 End speedo: 75018 Today: 178 km

23. Saturday 20/05/2023 - Day 2 at Bargara

Slept well overnight. Had a leisurely start to the day having coffee on our deck. I walked into town and Anna drove to do some shopping. We met in town for a coffee and snack before I walked back to Kelly's Beach Resort. We are both feeling a bit fatigued - still getting over COVID. Anna cooked chicken and pasta for tea.

Sunny 23° with a fresh breeze.

24. Sunday 21/05/2023 - Day 3 at Bargara

Quite cool last night. We both slept well. We went to the Bundaberg Barrel for a soft drink tasting session. This is where they make Bundaberg ginger beer and sarsaparilla among other flavours. We got to pick out a mixed ½ dozen each. We had a look around Bundaberg shopping district and the industrial area near the sugar mill and the Bundaberg Rum factory. Bundaberg is surrounded by very fertile red soil which is planted with sugar cane and various vegetables such as water melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, etc.

On the way back to Bagara we drove up to The Hummock which is an old volcano plug and had a good view of the patchwork quilt farmland towards Bundaberg township in one direction and towards the sea in the other.

In the afternoon we walked to the patrolled surf beach for a coffee and had a chat with a friendly local who had settled here from Perth. Watched the Fijian workers on their day off playing rugby on the sand.

Kelly Beach Resort \$463 3 nights

Sunny 23° with a fresh breeze.

25. Monday 22/05/2023 - Drive to Hervey Bay

It's time to leave Bargara and head south towards Hervey Bay. It's not a long drive so we took our time after driving through pretty Childers to Maryborough. Maryborough is quite a substantial town. We spent some time looking for the Ululah Lake and then found the house in Ann Street we travelled to a couple of times back in the 70's for family holidays. We were going to drive to Rainbow Beach until we realised it is 90km down a dead-end road which would add 180 km to the day - and my memory of it was not that spectacular.

We had lunch in a well maintained park in Maryborough and then it was only about 30 km to Hervey Bay.

We found our accommodation in Torquay (a suburb of Hervey Bay) at La Mer Beachfront Luxury Apartments, in a very comfortable ground floor apartment directly opposite the beach. We spent the afternoon walking up and down the main street and beach getting our bearings.

Dinner was at a Thai restaurant around the corner.

Sunny 23° with a fresh breeze.

Start speedo: 75072 End speedo: 75278 Today: 206 km

26. Tuesday 23/05/2023 - Day 2 at Hervey Bay

We have amended our booking to stay here for a week instead of 3 days as initially planned. Drove to Urangan to walk along the very long pier, then coffee and cheesecake for morning tea. Drove to Hervey Bay to do some shopping. Lunch at the apartment then I walked to where I thought the bike shop was but was going the wrong way. Returned the 5km distance by renting a Beam scooter. \$17 for 5km! Dinner in our unit - pie, mash and peas.

Sunny 23° with a fresh breeze.

27. Wednesday 24/05/2023 - Day 3 at Hervey Bay

I rented a bike in the morning and rode to Urangan on the beach path, then the rail trail which eventually will get to Maryborough on the old rail formation. Then headed to Point Vernon and back towards Hervey Bay for lunch and then home. 32 km. Anna did some shopping. Had another sunset walk along the beach. Tea at the apartment.

Sunny 24° and a S/E breeze.

28. Thursday 25/05/2021 - Day 4 at Hervey Bay

We took a cruise in the morning leaving Urangan Boat Club at 9am to head across Sandy Channel to Fraser Island - the largest sand island in the world. We cruised up and down deserted beaches with the odd campsite seen on the creek bank. We were back in time for lunch at the apartment. Had a lazy afternoon. Anna found a pathology outlet to get more blood tests.

29. Friday 26/05/2023 - Day 5 at Hervey Bay

Our laziest day so far - having some post COVID fatigue. Rested all day while Anna went for a walk in the afternoon. Had pizza for tea.

30. Saturday 27/05/2023 - Day 6 at Hervey Bay

We went to the Torquay weekend market which was mainly hippy style trinkets. Anna bought a scarf and we found some nice cookies. Afterwards we drove to Point Vernon then to River Heads where the Mary River enters the sea. Lunch at the apartment. Brad went for a swim and a lie in the sun at the beach. Prawns for tea in the apartment.

31. Sunday 28/05/290023 - Day 7 at Hervey Bay

Visited the Botanic gardens which are really well done. There is an orchid house, Japanese garden, Chinese garden and a lake with lots of tortoises swimming around. Had another walk

on the pier and saw a guy catch a decent sized flathead. Lunch at our apartment. In the late afternoon we went to have a sunset drink at a beachside bar but it was closed, so we just sat and watched from the steps next to the pier. Fish and chips for tea.

La Mer Airbnb \$904 7 nights

32. Monday 29/05/2023 - Drive to Mooloolaba

Time to hit the road again. Headed back to Maryborough then took the back way to Noosa via the road towards Tin Can Bay before turning off that to go via Wolvi and Ringtail Creek - well off the beaten track.

We intended to have lunch at Noosa, but after driving around for about 30 minutes without seeing a single parking spot anywhere, let alone anywhere near a park, we gave up and headed south to Peregian Beach. Noosa was unbelievably busy for a Monday during a non-school holiday period. The coast along here is fantastic. Before long we arrived in Mooloolaba and picked up the keys to our apartment (Maui 6, 93 Parkyn Street). It's on the third floor with a view towards the river not far from Underwater World.

We walked into town to do some shopping and orienting ourselves. Fish tacos for tea.

20° fine and sunny with a slight cool breeze.

Start speedo: 75417 End speedo: 75650 Today: 232 km

33. Tuesday 30/05/2023 - Day 2 at Mooloolaba

Another beautiful day! We walked to the river mouth then to the main beach and shopping area. Coffee and cake and back to the apartment for lunch.

In the afternoon we drove to Cotton Tree and Maroochydore. It sure has changed a bit since our honeymoon and our last visit with the kids. Lots of residential development and the roads are very busy. We visited Cotton Tree beach via the caravan park. We decided to extend our stay at Mooloolaba but this required a change of accommodation. Booked an apartment for four more days.

Back to Mooloolaba for dinner at the Surf Life Saving Club.

Fine and sunny 21° - walked 10.5 km

34. Wednesday 31/05/2023 - Day 3 at Mooloolaba

Beautiful one day, perfect the next... and so it goes on. A morning walk to Coles then morning tea at a cafe. Lunch at the apartment, then lying on the beach. The breeze was a bit too cool for a swim. We walked to the end of the spit to watch another beautiful sunset.

Dinner in our apartment.

Fine and sunny 21° - walked 8.5 km

35. Thursday 1/06/2023 - Day 4 at Mooloolaba

Today was a change of accommodation day, so we had a few hours to kill after moving out of Maui Unit 6 Parkyn Avenue (would definitely stay here again). We drove around to the other river head at Buddina and walked to the lighthouse and river head. Afterwards we headed to the hinterland and drove through Nambour and up the mountain to the lookout at Dulon. Great view! Continuing on to Mapleton we enjoyed the magnificent views and lovely little villages. It reminded us of the Dandenongs. We did a bit of a hike at Kondalilla National Park to a lovely rock pool on the river and later had lunch at a picnic ground at Baroon Pocket Reservoir past Montville.

By the time we got back to Mooloolaba, it was time to check into our new accommodation at Beach Club in First Avenue. A bit smaller than our last place but has all the essentials.

Tea in our apartment, roast chicken and salad. 25° - walked 10 km.

36. Friday 2/06/2023 - Day 5 at Mooloolaba

Woke to another fine sunny day with a few clouds. I hired a bike and rode to Buddina then backtracked to head to Mooroochydore. Had lunch at Cotton Tree then went back to Mooloolaba - 42 km. Anna walked around Mooloolaba and later to Alexandra Headland.

Had a nice spa which was what I needed after a longish ride.

Leftover wraps and chicken for tea.

25° with a slight breeze.

37. Saturday 3/06/2023 - Day 6 at Mooloolaba

Swam at the surf beach and then into the spa before lunch. Later we drove to Cotton Tree to watch the sunset.

Dinner at the food truck market in Mooloolaba.

25° with a slight breeze.

38. Sunday 4/06/2023 - Day 7 at Mooloolaba

We had some rain overnight. We took a morning walk to The Spit then coffee in Mooloolaba. Lunch in our apartment then walked towards Alexandra Headland. We had to shelter from the rain for a while.

Tea at Mooms - an Asian fusion restaurant.

Maui 6 Booking.com \$471 3 nights

Airbnb Beach Resort \$629 4 nights

Overcast with some rain - 22°

39. Monday 5/06/2023 - Drive to Broadbeach

Checkout time was 9 am so we were on the road by then. Did a lap of Mooloolaba to say goodbye. We would like to come here again, but not staying at the Mooloolaba Beach Resort. The room just felt pokey and a bit run down. Maybe if we had a better view from the balcony instead of the school building site next door...

We took the scenic route via Kings Point and Caloundra. Lots of holiday apartments and houses and an interesting coastline. We had lunch at a nice park in Caboolture after a quick side trip to look at Bribie Island.

The route from Caboolture to the Gold Coast is freeway the whole way. We arrived at our accommodation at San Mateo Holiday Apartments on Second Avenue, Broadbeach. Our unit is on the 6th floor and has a nice beach view. Prawns and salad for tea.

Weather 21° overcast with some drizzle.

Start speedo: 75650 End speedo: 76066 Today: 254

40. Tuesday 6/06/2023 - Day 2 Broadbeach

Morning walk to Surfers Paradise. Lazy afternoon as it became quite drizzly.

Light dinner in our apartment.

21° unsettled weather

41. Wednesday 7/06/2023 - Day 3 Broadbeach

Morning walk to Pacific Fair.

Lunch at the apartment. Afternoon stroll on the beach.

Tea at Kurrawa Surf Living Club - very disappointing. Anna's fish was crumbed fish from a packet and the salad was pathetic.

42. Thursday 8/06/2023 - Day 4 Broadbeach

Morning Lime E-bike ride to Gold Coast Seaway, then south to Burleigh Heads for lunch. Returned to Broadbeach (42km using a 3 hour pass of which there are 45 minutes left @ \$12/hr) Anna walked to Oasis and did some shopping.

Tea was pre-prepared meals from the local deli shop. Very good.

San Mateo Apartments \$608 4 nights

Weather 21° with a cool breeze.

43. Friday 9/06/2023 - Day 5 Broadbeach

Time to move south to Coolangatta. Took the scenic route via Nerang and the canal suburban area to Tugan. Our AirBnB host advised us our accommodation at Kirra was ready so we headed there for lunch. The apartment is on the first floor overlooking a little park towards the beach just north of Kirra Life Saving Club. It is freshly renovated and is very nice.

We walked to Coolangatta to discover a huge crowd at Cooly Rocks, a rock and roll festival with bands playing, stalls selling rock and roll clothing and paraphernalia as well as a large number of restored vintage cars mainly from the 50's and 60's.

We had tea at Kirra SLSC and it was much nicer and cheaper than Kurrawa a few nights ago.

Weather 23° fine and sunny

44. Saturday 10/06/2023 - Day 1 Kirra

Woke early to the sounds of workmen at the building site next door. Another perfect day. Our front window has a view towards the surf and it looks perfect with the sun shining on the turquoise swell.

The traffic - both foot and road - towards Coolangatta is very heavy. The Cooly Rock festival certainly draws the crowds.

We headed across to the beach for a swim - our first since Mooloolaba. Water temperature 20°. We decided to extend our stay here by a couple of days so we don't move out until Wednesday.

Lunch in the apartment. In the afternoon we drove to Currumbin to have a look at Elephant Rock and walk the beach at Currumbin alley - a famous surfing beach on the point at the river head. Fish and chips for tea.

24° and sunny

45. Sunday 11/06/2023 - Day 2 Kirra

Warm and sunny morning so off for a swim. Walked to Coolangatta Beach as the one at Kirra doesn't have much sand and no surf due to a sandbar in front of the swimming beach.

Afternoon walk to Bilinga Beach. BBQ for tea.

24° and sunny

46. Monday 12/06/2023 - Day 3 Kirra

Woke to an overcast morning. Dark clouds to the north. BOM showed the rain fizzling out before arriving at Coolangatta, so we headed off for a walk to Rainbow Bay and Point Danger. We found out that while it was King's Birthday holiday in NSW and VIC, it's not in QLD. Back to the unit for lunch. Already have 10,000 steps for the day. Had a quiet afternoon with a quick walk to Coolangatta via the old railway cutting to pick up a script at the chemist. Chicken and coleslaw for tea.

Overcast 22°

47. Tuesday 13/06/2023 - Day 4 Kirra

In the morning I rented a Lime E-bike again. Rode south to Point Danger then north to Burleigh Heads again where I had another bahn-mi for lunch. Back to Kirra with 9 minutes left on the bike pass. Anna walked to Coolangatta to do some shopping. After lunch I had a swim at Kirra Beach - the last in Queensland for a while. We decided to revisit the Kirra SLSC for dinner, and it did not disappoint!

Bens Airbnb \$849 5 nights

Sunny with some clouds - 22°

48. Wednesday 14/06/2023 - Drive to Sawtell

Sadly it is time to leave Queensland and head back into New South Wales. Stopped for morning tea in Kingscliff and took the scenic route to Pottsville. It is a new development nearly all the way.

Detoured again later to check out Byron Bay (which is much nicer than we remembered it), Lennox Head and stopped for lunch in Ballina, which is quite a big town. From there it was on the freeway all the way to Coffs Harbour. They have done a lot of work on the Pacific Highway since our last time up this way.

Arrived at our AirBnB, the 19th Hole at 28 Tindara Drive, Sawtell. It's a downstairs unit of a private house and it is very cosy, clean and well equipped.

Chicken and salad for tea.

Fine and sunny 22°

Start speedo: 76147 End speedo: 76474 Today: 327 km

49. Thursday 15/06/2023 - Coffs Harbour Day 2

Checked out Sawtell, a lovely town with huge old fig trees in the main street. Walked around the Boambee lookout. Another couple said they saw some whales but we missed them. Drove to Coffs Harbour and walked along the breakwater then up to Mutton Island. This time we saw some whales. Had lunch at the yacht club. In the afternoon we checked out the beach near the Big 4 beach caravan park, then poked around Korora.

Tea in our accommodation.

19th Hole Airbnb \$311 2 nights

Fine and clear 20°

50. Friday 16/06/2023 - Drive to Forster

Our time at Sawtell is over so quickly. We were on the road shortly after 9am. We didn't have too far to go today so we had time to look around some places on the way. We took the Pacific Motorway for a while before turning off to look at Southwest Rocks. A couple of people had mentioned it as being a nice place to stay. Well, they were right. A very pretty town with a great view of the coastline to the north. There is a real holiday feel in this town and we must put it on the list of places to stay in the future. We had a coffee before heading off south again.

Lunch was at Port Macquarie, which has a completely different feel to South West Rocks. It's much bigger for a start, but the coastal outlook is very good. We did see a couple of spouts from migrating whales way out to sea.

Back on the road again towards Forster-Tuncurry. Ever since leaving Queensland, it has been getting cooler (particularly overnight) the further we head south. This area is called the northern rivers area of New South Wales and it is well named - the rivers are huge.

We arrived in Forster at about 3pm and booked into our accommodation which is a private apartment at 7/40 North St, called Chill-Out (<https://www.chill-out.com.au>) (\$484 for 3 nights) Our unit is on the top 3rd floor opposite a forest park on Second Head. We can see the beach from our bedroom window and the end of the balcony.

It is starting to get quite cool in the late afternoon and quite chilly when the sun goes down. Today is the first day I've worn my jacket for a full day since we were in Goondiwindi.

Tea in our apartment.

Start speedo: 76567 End speedo: 76868 Today: 322 km

Fine and clear 20°

52. Saturday 17/06/2023 - Day 2 Forster

Another fantastic day. Quite a cool morning but not a cloud in the sky. We walked through Forster and over the (longish) bridge to Tuncurry. There was a nice coffee shop next to the river near the entrance so we stopped there and enjoyed the view. We walked back via Tuncurry shops and back over the bridge back to our accommodation for lunch.

The afternoon was spent driving around the coastal area. We saw a 4x4 vehicle get hopelessly bogged on the beach access track. The coast here is interesting with nice sandy beaches in between rugged rocky areas. There is a cliff-top track with lookouts.

Fish and chips in.

Fine and clear 20°

53. Sunday 18/06/2023 - Day 3 Forster

The sunshine just keeps coming, but with very cool nights. Our morning walk took us around Second Head to Pebbly Beach, the next beach to the east of the main beach. We had leftovers for lunch. We spent the afternoon sitting on Forster beach near the sea baths and reading our books.

Tea in our unit - sausage rolls and salad.

Chill Out Booking.com \$484 3 nights

Fine and clear with a cool breeze 20°

54. 19/06/2023 - Drive to The Entrance

Another very cool morning. We were on the road by 9 am and headed south towards Charlotte Bay and Buladelah where we rejoined the Pacific Highway. Soon afterwards we turned off to have morning tea in Tea Gardens. We visited this place on our way home from our first trip to Queensland and we both had been impressed. It lived up to our memories, but like most places on this coast, it has grown considerably. It still seems like a nice, quiet holiday town.

We continued on our journey and toured through Newcastle. Instead of driving down the main street - Hunter Street - we drove through the old wharf area a couple of streets north which is now made up of new apartment buildings and restored warehouses. We continued around the coast past the sea baths, and drove up the hill to a lookout. There was an incredible number of cars parked in the car parks which surprised us being a cool, off season

Monday. We did find out why some of them were there, which was to watch for whales. We saw a dozen or so spouts and a couple of breaches! We continued wending our way through the southern suburbs of Dudley, Merewether and Redhead. Redhead too has grown in the twenty or so years since we've been here before.

Before too long we arrived in The Entrance. We found our accommodation at Oaks Waterfront where we had an ocean facing unit on the 5th floor. \$370 for 3 nights plus \$15 per day for car parking.

We did our obligatory walk to the nearest supermarket before having tea at The Entrance Hotel.

Fine but cool with a strong breeze - 16°

Start speedo: 76896 End speedo: 77152 Today: 255 km.

55. 20/06/2023 - Day 2 The Entrance

Another lovely but cool morning. We walked around the path to the surf beach then back streets to the lake path. We got to Long Jetty then walked back to The Entrance for lunch. In the afternoon we drove to The Entrance North, then to Lake Haven to do some shopping.

Dinner in the apartment - pasta.

Fine and sunny but a cold breeze 14°

56. Wednesday 21/06/2023 - Day 3 The Entrance

Once again, the sun is shining. We walked along the beach to Toowong Bay and back. It's a little warmer today and we actually had to take our jackets off. Lunch in the apartment.

Took a drive in the afternoon to the Long Jetty area of the lake, then on to Tuggerah to do some shopping. This is a nicer area than the other side of the lake.

The Entrance is a difficult place to categorise. It has some nice aspects, but in other places it seems run down and derelict (particularly the El Lago Waters Caravan Park and Motel) with a lot of vacant business premises near the lake and in the main street. While we are glad we visited this area, we have no burning desire to return.

Dinner in our apartment - one pan dinner chicken and rice.

Oaks The Entrance \$373 3 nights

Fine and sunny 15°

57. Thursday 22/06/2023 - Drive to Yass

Cool and overcast morning. We were on the road by 9 and heading south towards Gosford. It is pretty much suburbs the whole way. We got onto the M1 Pacific Freeway to head south towards Sydney. We took a little detour to Brooklyn on the Hawkesbury River. We intended to have morning tea there, but it was only really a little village and railway station car park, so we continued our journey on the freeway.

This part of the freeway is pretty spectacular with very deep rock cuttings and bridges across deep valleys and some climbing and rolling over big hills. We continued on the Northern Connex, a long tunnel under the northern suburbs, then continued onto the M2, the M7 and finally onto the M31 Hume Freeway. Much better than before where you had to drive through the suburban main roads such as Pennant Hills Road.

Before too long we arrived in Mittagong (which reminded us of a big version of Creswick near Ballarat in Victoria). We drove up Mount Gibraltar to get a view over Mittagong and Bowral while we had lunch.

After a driver change, we headed south again through the chain of towns ending at Moss Vale and got back onto the freeway. We detoured off the freeway to have a look at Goulburn and the police academy, arriving at Yass at about 3 pm. We stayed at the Hamilton Hume Motel which is a bit old but clean and comfortable for \$135. Bought frozen meals at Aldi for tea.

Dull overcast day. 14°

Hamilton Hume Motel \$135 1 night

Start speedo: 77229 End speedo: 77625 Today: 395 km

58. Friday 23/06/2023 - Drive to Tallangatta

The wintery cold weather has now begun. It was threatening rain as we left Yass just after 9 am. We turned off the freeway at Gundagai to check out this quaint old town with its main street lined with shops and pubs with verandahs over the footpath. It looks like the footpath got a makeover fairly recently so the place looks very attractive. We had a coffee at a cafe after checking out the old railway and road bridge/viaducts which crossed the Murrumbidgee flood plain.

Onwards to Holbrook for lunch next to the submarine. It was only 9° and breezy so we didn't linger. After a driver change we headed south in the rain towards Albury. We drove past the Hume Weir which was our first stop on this trip 8 weeks ago and soon arrived in Tallangatta at our AirBnB at 545 Murray Valley Highway hosted by Andrea. Property is named Jalandra. We stayed here in 2019 just before the big bushfires and Covid. It's just as we remembered. Very comfortable and well appointed.

Tea at the Victoria Hotel.

Cold and wet 10°

Start speedo: 77625 End speedo: 77965 Today: 331 km

59. Saturday 24/06/2023 - Day 2 Tallangatta

After a good night's sleep we walked into town and had a coffee at a nice little cafe. In the afternoon we explored more of Tallangatta township, then drove along the lake shore to Old Tallangatta then along the opposite side of the lake to opposite Tallangatta for some nice views across to the water. The last time we were in here, the lake was nearly empty. This time the lake is full.

We had frozen meals for tea. They were quite good.

Airbnb with Andrea "Jalandra" \$300 2 nights

Cold with sunny breaks 12°

60. Sunday 25/06/2023 - Drive home to Bentleigh

It rained quite a bit overnight, but it had eased off by the morning and there were sunny breaks again. Sadly it was time to drive home and finish off our fantastic road trip. We drove via Beechworth for morning tea, then Euroa for a picnic lunch. It was a cold 10° and breezy and we were happy to get back into the warm car.

Got home safely.

Start speedo: 78015 End speedo: 78385 Today: 370 km

Total trip distance driven: 7672 km

Highlights

Ticked off the following bucket list items:

1. Visited Bethungra rail spiral
2. Visited Junee roundhouse rail museum
3. Visited Dubbo Open Plain Zoo
4. Visited Agnes Water and Seventeen Seventy
5. Got as far north as Airlie Beach
6. Visited Mary-Jane in Rockhampton
7. Stayed at Mooloolaba
8. Stayed at Forster-Tuncurry

Stats

- Sixty days away
- Twenty-one different places stayed at
- Six weeks in Queensland
- \$735 dollars on fuel
- \$8467 dollars on accommodation (average daily \$143 dollars)