

Travel from Adelaide to Canberra

28 December 2021 – 1 January 2022

Tuesday 28 December 2021

After spending 16 days in the McLaren Vale Caravan Park over Christmas visiting family and friends, it was time to pack up and take the slow trip home to Canberra.

We started off around 09:00 and headed off to Kingston SE, via Wellington, where we plan to spend two nights free camping on the Kingston SE foreshore. Our first brief stop was at Wellington while we waited to catch the ferry to cross the Murray River. The wait is only a short one as the ferry runs continually back and forth across the river. It provides for pleasant views up and down the river and allows you the alternative travel route bypassing Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend. A good option when travelling from the Fleurieu Peninsula to join the Princes Highway south of Tailem Bend.

After crossing the river, we turned right onto the Princes Highway and headed towards Meningie. Meningie is where we usually stop to enjoy a well-deserved coffee. There is a great bakery located just off the main highway behind the NAB. Well recommended.

After our break we continued our travel down to Kingston SE. The country was looking quite dry as we drove on which is not surprising with South Australia being known for being the driest state in Australia.

We arrived in Kingston SE around 14:30 and setup camp for the next two nights. The free camp area is run by the Lion's Club, and they look after the area well. There are no powered sites but there are ablution blocks nearby which are kept very clean and serviced daily. There is a cold shower option available. You can stay a max of 72 hours for a fee of \$15 which is very reasonable. There is plenty of parking for vans of all sizes.

After setting up we walked across to the Lacepede Seafood shop and restaurant. We wanted to order a large crayfish for dinner for tomorrow evening. We stay in Kingston SE once a year as we travel through, and we always order a crayfish. The one we have ordered is approximately 1.5kg. They cook and clean them for you and at \$90 per kg, not a bad deal at all.



Views of the drive on beach in Kingston SE

After taking a walk around the town and along the long jetty we returned to the van for dinner.



View of the camping area on the Kingston SE foreshore as seen from the jetty

Wednesday 29 December 2021

Today is a lazy day. We started off with a coffee at the local coffee shop and then went and did some food shopping; we wanted to make a nice salad to go with the crayfish that we pick up this afternoon.

Well, it is time to collect the crayfish. This one was close to the 1.5kg mark and was \$133. You can see from the images how nice and large it is. We have placed it in the fridge to devour later with our salad and a nice white wine.



Our dinner for the evening to be washed down with a very nice bottle of Pinot Grigio

We spent the remainder of the afternoon walking along the beach and then returned to the van to relax until dinner time.

Well, we have just devoured our crayfish and as usual it was scrumptious. After dinner it was a time for relaxing before retiring for the evening. Tomorrow, we leave Kingston SE and head

to Quambatook in Victoria, via Nullawil, to check out the silo artwork that we were unable to visit during our previous silo art trail trip through Victoria.

Thursday 30 December 2021

We headed off around 08:30 this morning so we could take a leisurely drive to Quambatook. The distance from Kingston SE is just over 420 kms.

We headed away from Kingston SE and decided to use the back roads to Bordertown. We like to use the back roads where we can as the journey has less traffic on the roads and you can drive at lower speeds and take in the scenery. As we always say, “we are not in a hurry anyway to get to our destination for the day”.

On reaching Bordertown we decided to stop for a coffee and an egg and bacon roll. When passing through Bordertown we usually stop at the Bordertown Coffee and Cake Shop. A delightful place with very friendly staff and lovely food. The setting is in Tolmer Park, just behind the bakery.

Tolmer Park is named after Police Commissioner Alexander Tolmer who instigated the gold escort route between Mt Alexander (near Castlemaine in Victoria) and Adelaide. The Dukes and Western Highways run close to this original route.

In the early 1850s South Australia was on the verge of bankruptcy as so many men headed for the goldfields in Ballarat. Police Commissioner Tolmer instigated a series of escorts to bring the gold safely back to Adelaide to replenish the States' coffers (there being bushrangers around at the time). A total of 18 escorts were conducted between February 1852, and December 1853 – none of the gold was lost and the economy of the State was saved.

When surveying the route, Commissioner Tolmer was advised by the local Aboriginals that the area had a reliable source of water, so it was at this site that the police depot was built, and Bordertown now stands. The town was surveyed, and the first blocks of land sold in 1852.

The site was originally called The Half-Way Point and then renamed the Border Town until it was finally changed to Bordertown. The South Australian/Victorian border was not officially designated until the early 1900s.

After a walk around the park taking in the sights, we continued our drive onto Dimboola where we had a quick stop before continuing our drive onto Nullawil.

We arrived at Nullawil around 15:00 and proceeded straight to the grain silos to view the artwork. You can see from the images that this is quite an impressive painting. Nullawil is a small country town in the Wimmera – Mallee region of Victoria with a population of approximately 300 people, on a good day. The name of the town is derived from two Aboriginal words, ‘Nulla’ which means killing stick, and “Wil’ derived from the term “willock” meaning Galah.



The artwork on the grain silo in the small Victorian town of Nullawil

The following provides information about this artwork.

THE ARTWORK

The artwork took 14 days to complete (5/07/2019 – 18/07/2019) On the first two days, he covered most of the eastern aspect of the 80-year-old concrete silo with sections of brown, charcoal, grey and flesh coloured tones. The paint used as a base was a "house paint" to seal the aged silo wall and provide a base for the spray paints to be used over the top of them.

Artist Sam Batés had his challenges with the weather conditions over the two weeks. Rainy days with cold gusty winds, hard to endure at ground level, were considerably worse at height in a "cherry picker" up on the side of a silo! Those wild winds no doubt played havoc with the intended destination of the fine spray paint particles at times.

Smug is known for his artistic mastery using aerosol spray cans, but given the sheer scale of the silo wall project, he also did some mixing of his own paints. He used a larger paint "sprayer" with a wider spraying diameter of cover to paint the large silo surfaces. The enduring farmer fashion item, the checked flannelette shirt gradually emerged, taking pride of place on the silo wall. With photo-like realism, he captured the texture of the flannelette shirt, the classic check pattern with material folds as it drapes down over the farmers body, the raised button placket, the chest pocket, and folded-up sleeves with open neckline revealing the farmers weather-beaten "V-neckline" and greying chest hairs. Details of the kelpie sheepdog were the last to appear, with its upturned ears and attentive eyes indicating that this working dog was ready for work. The soft-coated black and tan Kelpie while looking contented beside his master, also looked ready to respond to any given command. The artist cleverly created a sheen on his coat, a shiny black nose, a spark in his brown toned eyes and fine grey whiskers above his semi drooped mouth. The dog collar with silver buckle and registration tag were completed on the final afternoon.

The following gives you some background information on Australia's regional silos.

HISTORY OF SILOS

There are hundreds of large concrete silos etched into the rural landscape across regional Australia, ranging in age from 60-100 years old. Before the advent of silos, bagged wheat was loaded directly into rail wagons. When wagons were unable to keep up with grain production, bags were stacked and stored in the railway yards, but there were large losses of grain due to wet weather, rodents and insect infestation. The losses prompted a silo building program along existing railway lines. With changes in agriculture, improved storage methods and closure of railway lines, many of the concrete silos have now been decommissioned.

The Nullawil silos were built in the early 1940's, and Eddie Ryan, Jim White and Jim Hogan were some of the locals who worked on construction of the silos in this area. The Nullawil silos are still operational, as is the train line passing by them. With improved farming practices, larger quantities of grain are being grown and harvested and the majority of grain is now stored in large grain sites with bunkers covered by weighted down tarps. Some grain is also stored in lower steel silos, convenient for out-loading by rail.

The 30-metre high cylindrical concrete silos, have become the perfect blank canvas for artists to paint their large-scale works of art. Artists from Australia and around the world have ventured in to small rural communities, transforming the face of the silos while giving viewers insight into the region's heritage, culture and people. Not only do the large-scale murals tell a story of rural communities, but they bring in much needed tourism, invigorating the small regional towns.

After viewing the area, we headed off to Quambatook, our destination for today. The road we travelled to Quambatook is one of the typically made Victorian country roads that are less travelled. The road is wide enough for two vehicles to pass but is only sealed down the middle. So, if you do meet oncoming traffic you need to head onto the dirt/gravel part to allow each other to pass. Towing the van on these roads isn't an issue; you just need to slow right down and take it easily on the dirt/gravel part. In our case today, we did not encounter any traffic heading towards us.

The town of Quambatook is in northern Victoria and is located on the Avoca River in the Shire of Gannawarra, 302 kilometres from Melbourne. Quambatook was settled following the end of the Victorian gold rush of the 1850s. Resumption of large squatter's land holdings for closer settlement in the 1870s led to Quambatook becoming one of Victoria's leading wheat and sheep producing areas. Quambatook has been recognised as the tractor pulling capital of Australia with an annual competition, the Australian Tractor Pulling Championships, held each Easter since 1976. The town is also where country music performer John Williamson grew up.



Our overnight stay in the small Victorian town of Quambatook

Quambatook is a tiny town but has a great caravan park. The park is run by the town committee and is only \$25 a night for a powered site. We were the ones staying the park this evening so it was very peaceful and the night sky so clear you could see all the stars clearly. We will stay here again. Tomorrow, we head off to the small town of Urana in NSW.

Friday 31 December 2021

Before we left Quambatook, we stopped in at a small coffee shop. There was only one or two people in town but so safe that the people told us it was ok to leave the car engine running while we had some breakfast and a coffee inside. I wanted to leave the engine running to keep the fridge cold as it was already about 30 degrees outside in the sun.

After breakfast and a chat with the locals we headed northwest to the small town of Urana. We travelled through Deniliquin and Jerilderie on the way and decided to stop in Deniliquin for an early lunch. We have stayed in both towns on previous trips so after finishing our lunch we headed on to Urana.

Urana is a small town in the Riverina region of NSW and located in the Federation Council local government area. Urana is located between Lockhart and Jerilderie. To the west lies Lake Urana and the Lake Urana Nature Reserve. To the east lies a smaller lake, Lake Uranagong. Urana was the major town and headquarters of the former Urana Shire. The Urana district is used for raising sheep and for growing wheat and other grain crops. In the 2016 census, there were 298 people in Urana.

History

Urana was first settled by Europeans during the 1850s. In May 1859 a design for the "Town of Urana" by Surveyor Hayes was approved by the New South Wales Executive Council. The name Urana comes from the Aboriginal word 'airana', meaning a temporary shelter (usually consisting of a simple frame of branches covered with bark, leaves, or grass).

In August 1863 near Urana the notorious bushranger, Dan 'Mad Dog' Morgan, and his accomplice Clarke held up the Police Magistrate, Henry Baylis, based at Wagga Wagga. A few

days after this incident Baylis led a party of policemen to the bushrangers' camp where shots were exchanged and both Baylis and the bushranger Clarke were wounded. Morgan and Clarke both escaped.

Urana Shire Council was proclaimed in 1906 and dissolved in 2016, to become part of the Federation Council.

The Urana CP, where we spent New Years Eve, is also quite small and a little rundown. However, its saving grace is that it is on the shores of the Urana Aquatic Centre on Urangeline Creek. A very picturesque location and there were a few boats on the water towing skiers and in one case, towing an inflatable lounge suite with three people seated. An interesting site. Urana.



Urangeline Creek Caravan Park where we spent New Year's Eve

Saturday 1 January 2022

After departing Urana on the morning of New Year's Day, we headed for the small town of Lockhart. The population of the town is around 800 people.

We thought we would have a look around the town as it is part of the silo and water tower art trail. In this town there is a water tower, and we try and see as many of the silos and water towers that have been revived to encourage tourists to travel to see these icons in the small and not so small towns around Australia.

We also wanted to stop here as it is the place where Maree's grandmother lived for a time. So, there is a family history connection to the town on Maree's side.

We drove down the main street looking for a coffee shop but with it being New Year's Day, nothing was open. As the tower is set close to the historic main street, we parked the car and van and headed off to view the water tower and the sculptures in the park. The tower depicts a cascading waterfall surrounded by many of the unique native fauna and flora found

in the local landscape and has rapidly become one of the most incredible pieces of public art in the Riverina.

A rosella, willy wag tails, a watchful kookaburra and magnificent magpies are just some of the birds which feature on the main part of the tower, while soaring brolgas can be seen across the skyline. A cheeky possum, shy echidna and kangaroos lazing under a shady tree are also depicted in their natural habitats.



Lockhart water tower artwork showing the eastern rosella and galahs.



Lockhart water tower artwork showing the waterfall with a eastern rosella, galahs and a brolga flying at the top of the tower.



Lockhart water tower artwork showing the waterfall with a kookaburra perched on a branch above three kangaroos.



Lockhart water tower artwork showing the base of the waterfall with three kangaroos in the foreground.

Undertaken by talented Blue Mountain artists, Scott Nagy, and Janne Birkner (Kirmsone), who are well known artists in the public mural sphere, the artwork reflects the importance of one of the region's most vital assets – water.

The artwork, covering a surface of more than 600 square metres, was created freehand using spray cans in natural hues to complement the Lockhart streetscape and to harmonize with the natural environment.

After taking in the sights of the town we headed towards Wagga Wagga where we stopped for a coffee and a muffin. From here we refuelled and then made our way home to Canberra. The drive from Wagga to home is only 236 kms so it only took us around three hours towing the van for this leg of the trip.

We hope you enjoyed journeying with us on this trip.

Steve and Maree