

Scootaville Qld, 2026

Scootaville Qld 2026.

Sponsors.

Once again we were fortunate to receive assistance from our very generous sponsors.

The Kedron Wavell Club contributed \$10,000 cash to help us with costs, [Orica](#),



that company that was formed way back in 1874 in Victoria and which provides blasting, digital and chemical innovations and technologies to the world's



miners, contributed \$6,000 and Metcash, through its IGA arm, contributed a considerable number of toys and items which we bundled up and gave to the kids at the schools we visited, as well as a \$300 gift card which we turned into weet-bix, milk, bread etc for the troops.

Smiths Confectionery, always very generous with their donations, provided us with two ute loads of different varieties of their chip products, which were also handed out to the schoolkids. Some of the big kids got their share too.



Arnotts were also very generous, they provided several cartons of biscuits which went into the "show-bags" that were given to the school kids. As with the chips, several were looked after by many of the big kids too.



We also have to thank the various RSL sub-Branches and social Clubs that looked after us along the way and also the Councils that allowed us to overnight in their showgrounds.

A big thank you to all.



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As we have done for a few years now, we were given the OK to spend a few nights at the Chermside Historical Precinct on Kittyhawk Drive (below). A few of us arrived on Thursday 13th August, sorted all the gear, helmets, jackets, polo-shirts, bedding etc and had it all laid out for when the troops arrived.



This year we were joined by Edwin Broomhall-Falovic and his lovely young "assistant" Mar Cort-Pedrola, (right), Ed and Mar were going to stay with us for the whole trip, video it and at the end of the day produce a "movie" of the event.

We're looking forward to seeing it.



We had decided to head for our first overnighter in Toowoomba on Sunday morning, the 16th August and prior to leaving, as we had for the past few years, we thought it only fair to have a barbecue breakfast. The Kedron Wavell RSL Sub-Branch loaned us their barbecue, John O'Brien (left) and Andrew Kelly, from the Kedron Wavell RSL got all tonged up and did an excellent job as snag rollers and before long breakfast was being served.





Dave Pedler with a hearty breakfast in hand.



We had asked the Air Force Cadets if, when we were to leave, they would give us a Guard of Honour along Kittyhawk Drive, similar to what they did for us last year. Although a Sunday morning when they would probably rather be home or doing something else, they readily accepted and began to arrive just as the snags began to start exiting the barby. After breakfasting on Andrew's snags and John's onions, they were formed up, given their instructions and then marched off to Kittyhawk Drive.



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Unfortunately, the order to move out was given to the Scootavillians waiting at the Historical Precinct well before Ed and Mar had set up their drones and cameras and most of the Honour Guard had passed before they got their cameras working.

We might not have captured all of the event but it was hugely appreciated by us and was a wonderful sight appreciated by those looking on.

Well done Air Force Cadets, thank you very much, and we must thank the Police too, they gave of their time and ensured the whole event went off safely and without a hitch.



After leaving Chermside, our first stop was the RAAF Base at Amberley. Over the years, Amberley had become a "compulsory" stop for a group photo in front of the F111. The Kedron Wavell RSL Sub-Branch had loaned us their Mitsubishi ute and we'd made it into our chuck wagon. We'd loaded it up with an urn, table, coffee, Esky, food etc and it had gone ahead, set up, boiled the billy and was ready for us when we arrived.

Unfortunately we'd mis-read the situation, as the F111 site was outside the fenced off Base area, we thought it was open public land. Seems that's not the case. Before long we were joined by several Military Police wanting to know who we were, what we were doing and why. Once we explained things everything settled down and we got on with smoko. If we intend doing this again, the MPs "suggested" we let the Base manager know beforehand. That we will!





After we'd smokoed, said our good byes to the MPs, the riders mounted their rides, everyone else climbed into Besty's bus and we headed for Laidley where we were to lunch in the Queensland National Hotel. As we'd planned the whole event to stay off busy highways as much as possible, we took the back way out to Laidley. Apart from being safer, we think the back roads are more interesting, you got to see historical little villages that had long been bypassed and the roads which weren't big wide straight highways were more suited to 85kph scooters.

If your aim was to just get to Toowoomba from Brisbane, you would of course take the Warrego Highway, but that wasn't our intention. From Amberley we travelled via Rosewood and Grandchester out to Laidley, towns which years ago had been on the old Brisbane to Toowoomba road. These days they are bypassed but if you're not in a hurry they are worth seeing.

We arrived at the Laidley hotel where the owners had set aside a large table for us and as we'd pre-ordered, we didn't have long to wait. Lunch was served, we tucked in.



After lunch we continued on the back roads and eventually joined the Warrego Hwy at Helidon, a mere 22Km from Toowoomba. As we'd enjoyed for the past few years, Army had allowed us to spend a few nights at their Milne Bay Barracks, compliments of Gary Graham who organised it for us. We arrived there mid afternoon, unpacked Kiwi's truck, selected a bunk, made a bed-site and some decided to have a brief nana-nap. We were here for two nights.

Although there were plenty available, we noticed that no one had selected the top bunk. Getting up and safely getting back down again seemed to be something no-one wanted to chance, though the bottom bunks complete with inner-spring mattresses were very welcome.





That evening Gary had also arranged for us to have dinner at Club Toowoomba, compliments of the Toowoomba RSL-Sub Branch. This was a nice surprise, about 6.00pm we all climbed aboard our trusty bus and off we went. Besty drove us to the Club but after a few drinks the keys were tossed to Kiwi. Years ago we all drove much better with a few beers on board, can't do that today!



At Club Toowoomba



Next morning, after breakfasting in the Mess area in the Barracks, we were invited to Toowoomba's Town Hall to meet with Mayor Geoff McDonald. Over the years Mayor McDonald has been very supportive of Scootaville and of our cause and he opened the Town Hall doors and invited us to a Civic Reception.



Riders headed off on their scooters, everyone else in the bus, we parked out front of the Town Hall where a spot had been cordoned off with witch's hats, Gary met us and ushered us upstairs where we met with Mayor McDonald, who had given up a couple of hours of his busy schedule to chat with us, then as he had done on previous occasions, presented us with a marvellous morning tea.

At about midday, we thanked and said our good-byes to Mayor McDonald, returned the scooters to the Army Barracks, all hopped in the bus and headed to the airport for the look through the aviation complex - [Aerotec](#).

Morning tea in Toowoomba's town hall.





Aerotec specialises in the restoration of classic aircraft from the 1930s to the present day. They will either restore an aircraft to full airworthiness (**E** service?) or just static display status (**D**). Annamaria Zuccoli, the daughter of Guido Zuccoli, the founder of the company, spent several hours giving us a thoroughly enjoyable look through the business where we found several aircraft types that some of us had worked on in our time in the Air Force.

Annamaria was obviously very proud of the business and we thank her for giving us so much of her time.



We left Aerotec and after a short drive to a different part of the airport, we arrived at [LifeFlight](#). Gary Graham had organised us a look through this life saving organisation also.

LifeFlight operates from 10 bases in Queensland, Archerfield, Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cairns, Mackay, Mt Isa, Rockhampton, Roma, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Townsville. It operates a number of fixed and rotary wing aircraft, 4 Bombardier Challenger 604 Jets and a fleet of 17 helicopters.

Established in 1979 on the Sunshine Coast as the Sunshine Coast Helicopter Rescue Service it eventually became known as CareFlight and over the years it expanded and merged with other services across the state, and in 2014 it added the first AW139 helicopter to its fleet. In 2016 it rebranded to LifeFlight.



Today, it is the largest, most advanced aero medical service in the southern hemisphere, helping more than 8,500 people a year from some of the harshest and remote environments.

We left the airport mid afternoon and returned to the Barracks, another nana nap was due, after which it was back into town to the Toowoomba Sports Club for dinner. As they had done last year, the Sports Club very generously offered to provide a complimentary dinner for us. And what a wonderful surprise it was too, we were presented with a huge steak cooked to perfection followed by a "to write home about" desert.

Thank you Sports Club - your generosity was greatly appreciated.





Next morning (Tuesday) it was time to leave. Toowoomba has become a much loved stop-over, the accommodation is perfect, the people we meet are most generous with both their time and their resources and there is always something informative and interesting to see, it just seems to be a friendly town.

The ground on which the Barracks stands is part of the Government's sell-off list of 67 ADF assets it plans to cash-in on. This "fire-sale" disposal is one of the Government's policies that have not gone down all that well, there is considerable opposition to it all and we can only hope that the Government listens to the various Veteran groups that have criticised the plan.

Established in 1991, Milne Bay Barracks is currently home to an Army Reserve and cadet training facility, hosting units such as the Australian Air Force Cadets of No. 210 Squadron and the 13 Army Cadet Unit, as well as the ADF Careers Centre and the Milne Bay Military Museum housed in the historic 1917 Drill Hall. If the ground is sold by Government finding a new home for those units will be difficult.

After we'd breakfasted in the Mess hall, it was time to panic the areas we'd used, pre-flight the vehicles, load the truck, Peter Roberts then pointed the finger at those that were to ride the first leg, we said our good byes and thanks to Gary and the ladies who had looked after us and off we went.



The first leg today was only short, we had arranged for a look over the Army Base at Oakey followed by a tour of their excellent museum which is a couple of Km out of Oakey township. The Base tour fell over at the last minute but the Museum tour was still on and as Oakey is only 28Km from Toowoomba we were there in no time.



After the tour we lined up in front of an old 9 Sqn Iroquois for a group photo, thanked the museum for the guided tour.



We returned to Oakey where the local RSL Club had very kindly offered to provide lunch for us..



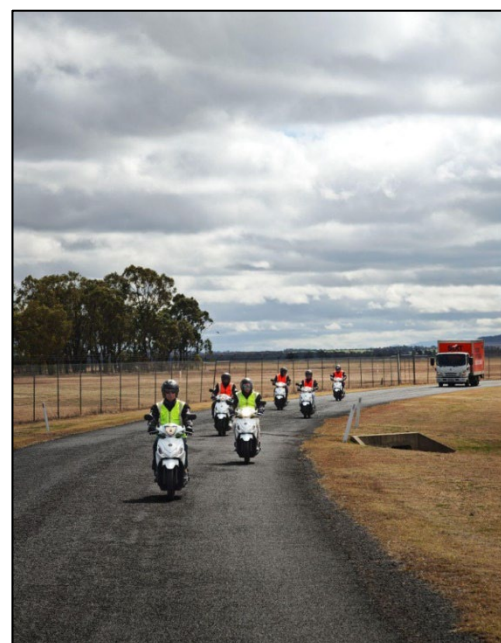


Oakey RSL Club

Once again we were treated to a very generous meal, this time provided by Oakey RSL. Over the years Scootaville has travelled many thousands of kilometres, visited many hundreds of small to medium sized towns and always found the Clubs and the people running them to be most supportive of our cause and very generous with their time and their facilities. And interestingly, we've found the smaller the Club the more supportive it is. Wonder why?

At about 2.00pm, after we had enjoyed our meal and the break, thanked Chris Markham the Secretary of the Club for his thoughtfulness and his generosity, we returned to our vehicles and set off for our next overnight stop at Dalby.

The run from Oakey to Dalby was only 58 Km, a bit more than 45 minutes and as the road was good and the traffic light we made good time. We reached Dalby, headed for the showground, set up shop and by a bit after 3.00pm we were all set for our one night stop-over.





Tomorrow, on the run from Dalby to Roma, we had a school to visit. The small Brigalow Primary y Tomorrow, on the run from Dalby to Roma, we had a school to visit. The small Brigalow Primary School was 61 km from Dalby and as usual we intended to give each pupil a "show-bag". There were a total of 25 students in various classes at the school so that afternoon, before we headed into town for dinner, we decided to get the "show-bags" ready. We set up 25 IGA bags on a table then put one of each of the items, chips, toys etc, which had been donated by our sponsors into each bag.



Once finished, we carried the bags to the truck where Kiwi was to store them, under no circumstances would any of us be allowed to enter the back of his truck, we found it was easier to get into the F-35 support hangars at Willytown than it was to get into Kiwi's truck and mess things up. School was 61 km from Dalby and as usual we intended to give each pupil a "show-bag". There were a total of 25 students in various classes at the school so that afternoon, before we headed into town for dinner, we decided to get the "show-bags" ready. We set up 25 IGA bags on a table then put one of each of the items, chips, toys etc, which had been donated by our sponsors into each bag.

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That evening, as we decided to "eat out", we boarded our trusty bus, driven by a sober Kiwi and headed for the Criterion Hotel where the Dalby RSL had kindly offered to provided us with dinner. As usual, a small RSL with a big heart, we thank them.





We enjoyed dinner with Bruce Chalmers from radio 4DDD who had the mic out and recorded an interview with us, if you wish to hear it, copy the link below and drop it into your browser:
[https://www.radschool.org.au/Interviews/4DDD%20Scootaville%20\(2\).mp3](https://www.radschool.org.au/Interviews/4DDD%20Scootaville%20(2).mp3)

Next morning it was up early, we breakfasted, loaded the truck with our bedding and gear, panicked the pavilion then after Peter Roberts pointed the finger we headed for a servo, refuelled scooters and vehicles and headed for the Warrego Hwy which would lead us to our next overnight, Roma.

Our first stop was the Brigalow Primary School, 61Km up the road from Dalby. We arrived a bit after 9.00am and were met by a bunch of excited young kids, all keen to chat with us, tell us their stories and listen to our explanation of who we were, what and why we were doing what we were doing.



Soon it was time to bring out the "showbags". You would have thought we had given them free access to toyworld, they were so appreciative, it was instantly into the red IGA bag to explore its contents and how the teachers were going to get them thinking about school work again once we'd left was anyone's guess.



We spent a bit over an hour with the kids and as we usually found with the kids from these small country schools, they were all polite, excited, full of life and happy, not with their heads buried into a smart-phone but able to hold a sensible conversation on most topics. It is a pleasure to meet with them, we enjoy it as much as they do.

We eventually and reluctantly left the school and the kids, returned to the Hwy for our next stop which was to be the RSL Club at Chinchilla, a mere 20km further up the road Murray Travis, the President of the Sub-Branch had kindly offered to provide a morning tea break for us which offer was immediately and thankfully accepted.





The morning tea provided by the Sub-Branch was amazing, obviously a lot of thought and care had gone into it and Ian "Besty" Aves didn't need to be asked twice to partake.

After we managed to extract Besty from the food, we all lined up, plated a selection, grabbed a coffee and sat down to enjoy it.

Thanks Murray, it was definitely appreciated.



Smokoing at the Chinchilla RSL.

We eventually left the Club, thanked Murray and his committee for their generosity and headed for Miles, a further 46Km where we were to stop for lunch. Sue "Mum" Trimmer and Greg Jacobsen who had been "volunteered" as our sustainers, had gone on ahead in the chuck-wagon ute to the Rest Area at Miles's Dogwood Creek to set up the food and the urn ready for our arrival.





We arrived at the Rest Area about 12.30pm, Greg had the water boiling and Mum was applying the finishing touches to the chicken and salad sandwiches. We all tucked in, had a great lunch, a walk around, a relieving trip to the toilets and before long it was 2.00pm, time to refuel the scooters and leave for the long run (140Km) out to Roma where we were to stay for 2 nights.

We arrived at the Roma PCYC gym hall about 4.00pm where thankfully the PCYC committee had allowed us to spend 2 nights. We had stayed there before and we found it to be very comfortable and within just a short walk to the town centre.





We were allocated two rooms at the PCYC, one downstairs (above) and another upstairs. Those with many summers under the belt took the downstairs room, the "kids" attacked the stairs and enjoyed a lot more room. There wasn't a lot of room in which to spread out in the downstairs area, but we had a rubber covered floor, toilets and showers were next door and there was no need to cart our 10 tonne duffle bags up to the sky. Everyone was happy.

We've recently found that mature age and steep stairs do not go together, works for us!

We had a free day in Roma and as we had things to do and things to see we breakfasted early and those with a full dirty bag headed for the laundromat. After the clothes had been washed



and dried, it was time to head for the Big Rig. The Big Rig sits on the Warrego Hwy to the east of town and is a very popular tourist stop. It also has a history.

Roma was the first place in Australia where on-shore natural gas flowed. In 1881 water-boring contractors accidentally struck a natural gas pocket while drilling for town water after which Roma became the first place in Australia to use natural gas for municipal lighting and cooking after a concrete gas holder stored the escaping flow.



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In 1927 the Roma Oil Corporation struck commercial quantities of oil and in 1969 a pipeline was built to connect Roma's gas down to Brisbane. The Big Rig has a museum in which you can read the history of oil and gas production in the Roma area.

The fit ones decided to go to the top of the 40 metre high tower to check out the view. Those with a "death wish" climb the stairs to the top, the sensible ones use the lift. We used the lift.



The view from the top of the tower.



Greg Jacobsen had been a cattle man in another life and he and his brother Jake (above) instead of checking out the Big Rig, decided to have a look over the Roma Saleyards, the largest cattle selling facility in the southern hemisphere. The facility which is owned and operated by the Maranoa Regional Council began life back in 1860. It was updated in 1969 and that year 56,251 cattle went under the hammer. In the financial year 2025/26, a total of 362,051 head were sold for a total of \$554 million.



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Auctions are held every Tuesday and the facility has become a tourist attraction offering Tuesday morning guided tours.



After the Big Rig, it was time look for somewhere for lunch, Kiwi said he'd heard that the Roma Bakery would be a good place to start, we did and it was.

That afternoon we decided to have a look at the Western Queensland Spirit distillery which is a few Km out of Roma and which make a variety of gins.





Opened in 2023, the distillery also offers a wide variety of food - and seeing as how we were there, we had to try what they had to offer. Which we did!

Next day, Friday, we had a short ride, 91km, up to Injune though we had two stops along the way. We had a leisurely breakfast, loaded up, some got the finger and jacketed up, we thanked the wonderful staff at the PCYC for putting up with us again then hit the road for Injune.

Our first stop was the small Bymount primary school, 64km from Roma. Bymount has only 9 students so last night we had filled 9 IGA bags with the toys and food supplied to us by our sponsors, Kiwi loaded them into the truck and we looked forward to seeing the kids.





We arrived at the school about 10.00am only to be disappointed. Although we had organised the visit some time ago, when we arrived we found the Principal and all students had gone somewhere and the only person left at the school was a teacher's aid. We left the made up "show-bags" for when the students returned to the school, mounted up again and left for our next stop which was the Gunnewin historic site, a further 10km up the road.



After World War One, a large area of land was resumed from the local large stations. This land was cut into blocks ranging in area from 640 to 1280 acres to form a Soldier Settlement scheme. Gunnewin was one of these settlements. Unfortunately, the soldier settler's farms were not very economical and many of the soldier settlers returned to the city.

In 2011 the Gunnewin Soldier Settlement Memorial was established to honour the ex-soldiers who worked the land. Large stones had been cemented into an upright position with a brass plate mounted on each stone. Each plate holds the names of each soldier who was allocated a settlement site.

We stayed there for about 30 minutes before heading for Injune, a very easy 17km.





We had been allocated the new Memorial Hall in Injune, a facility we found very comfortable. Unfortunately we didn't have access to any showers but that wasn't a problem, we showered at Roma before we left and as we intended to have one night only at Injune, we would shower next day when we got to Emerald.

That night Tony Harris, the owner of the Injune Hotel, knew we were in town and offered to look after us for dinner. He'd arranged for a mate to produce an Air Force themed video which was shown on a big screen. (See [HERE](#)). Earlier he had sent us his menu, we had pre-ordered so there was no wait for our meals.

We had a good night, good food, good service and the beers were cold as Darrell can confirm.

Darrell had the Legacy bucket and walked it around the hotel picking up much needed funds for our charities. And, just before we left, publican Tony gifted us 2 cartons of beers for us to enjoy at a later time.

Thanks Tony.



Enjoying a meal at the Injune hotel.



As next day was a long one, 312Km up to Emerald, it was up early, breakfast, pack everything, panic the building, load the truck, refuel the scooters then hit the road. Our first stop was Rolleston, 173km away up the Carnarvon Hwy. Once again, Sue and Greg had gone on ahead in the chuck ute, we intended to lunch in Rolleston's Beazley Park in which there is a well known coffee cart.



Established back in 2018, the cart was the idea of the Rolleston Progress and Tourism Association, initially as a driver reviver station, it is now a tourist attraction run by local volunteers with profits being used to maintain and enhance the Park. It operates from April to September each year.

The major employer in the district is Clencore's Open Cut coal mine which is 16Km from Rolleston and which employs a total of 850 people.

We arrived, once again Greg had the water boiling and Sue had the sandwiches made, we didn't need the Coffee Cart as we carried everything we wanted and the sandwiches were so good, a passerby saw them and wanted one. Sue sold one for \$10.00.





After lunch, we had a walk around to check out everything in the Park, those riders than wanted a breather were replaced, we refuelled the scooters at the local BP, then headed for Emerald, a further 138Km up the Dawson Hwy. Springsure was 71Km from Rolleston and at our speed across the ground, we knew it would take us about an hour to get there. We pulled up in front of the local Spar supermarket where we all enjoyed a Paddle Pop.

3 or 4 Km up the road from Springsure is a feature known as Virgin Rock. Lions have established a rest area in front of the rock and as we were all starving from lack of food, we decided to stop for a smoko, a photo opportunity and as the scooters had yet to travel 140km on one tank of fuel, we decided to top them all up from the carried drums to ensure we'd get to Emerald.





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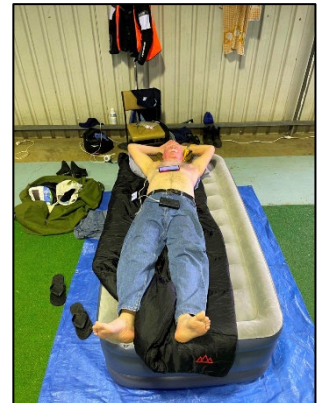


With the scooters and our bellies full, we set out for our next overnighter, Emerald.

We arrived at the Emerald Showground mid afternoon on a Saturday and unfortunately there was a problem. We couldn't raise anyone with keys who could open up the Cricket Club building in which we were to stay and being a Saturday the Council was closed and we didn't have an after hours number.



Somehow we managed to contact someone who knew someone who could get someone to come out to the showground and open the building. We eventually gained access, the truck was unloaded, beds were made up and some of us, the elderly, decided to have a quick snooze.





We shared the showground with a car show, there were some magnificent machines on the ground owned by some very proud owners. It was closing when we finally gained access to our building, so once we were set up, those that wished went to check out the cars before they all left.

The Emerald RSL Sub-Branch had invited us to their Club Rooms for dinner, and as well as providing us with a wonderful dinner, graciously made a sizeable cash donation to our cause. Once again, a small RSL Sub-Branch. Thanks heaps Emerald.



At the dinner we met Lane Buffington who works with Federal MP Colin Boyce. Lane suggested she would love to accompany us on a Scootaville, she said she loved motor bikes and just knew we were having fun. We offered to take her for a ride next day if she wished, she did, so we did.

Next morning Lane met us at the shopping centre on the eastern edge of Emerald, she hopped on the back of Bike Boss Peter Robert's scooter and off down the road they went.

Then it was time to head for Biloela, our next overnighter. Biloela is 300 km from Emerald and although practically a dead straight road, there is a bit to see.

Our first major stop was at the coal centre of Qld, [Blackwater](#), which is 75 km from Emerald - an hour's run on the scooters. Blackwater has a very good coal mining museum however it was closed when we passed through but it does have 2 of the large drag line shovels on display - we had to get a pic.





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You can just imagine the power of the machinery that drags these shovels up hill full of coal, then lifts it, dumps the coal into a ginormous truck which carts it away to be loaded onto a train. Next time we'll see if we can get a tour of a mine to see all this huge stuff working.



We had planned to stop at the Country Club for smoko but Murphy had got there first, we got the Sgt Schultz treatment, no-one knew anything about us so we stopped at the local bakery which is on the hwy and where we found their pies were pretty good.





While seated eating our pies, we could see the coal trains passing by on the tracks which were just on the other side of the hwy. Some of these trains are enormous, at least 100 wagons full of coal and 1.7 km in length, they weigh a total of 10,000 tonnes. All this coal has to leave a big hole in the ground somewhere.

All this is pulled by either 3 electric locomotives or 4 diesels, usually the electric ones are set up one out front, one in the middle and one at the end., the diesels 2 at front, 2 in the middle The coal is taken down to Gladstone where it is loaded for export.

The overhead line, which seems very small for what it does, carries 25,000 volts and it amazes us how trains can hook onto it without arcing, overheating or wearing out the line. There's a good video explaining it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsYmhQ01KjE>

After an hour or so at Blackwater, we pushed on for our next stop which was Duaringa, a further 85 Km east. We had allowed ourselves 90 mins to cover that section, which would put us in Duaringa about 11.45 am - just in time for lunch. A few years ago we had stopped at the primary school in Duaringa and we would have this time too except it was a Sunday. There isn't an awful lot in the town apart from a huge servo which sells just about everything, but we made it our lunch stop.

The servo has set up a few tables and chairs at the back of the servo, with a shade over it, we'd sent Greg and Sue on ahead when we left Blackwater and by the time we arrived at Duaringa, the billy was boiled, the sandwiches were made and the biscuits were displayed. We lunched.





After we'd all lunched, we re-packed the ute, did a quick panic of the area, climbed aboard our vehicles and set forth for Dululu, a further 81 Km away. We left Duaringa at about 12.30pm and planned to arrive Dululu about 1.45pm. Initially we travelled on the Capricorn Hwy and about 55 m from Duaringa, you turn right onto the Leichardt Hwy. The roads are flat and straight and apart from stopping to let some huge coal working vehicles pass under escort, traffic was light. If you had a vehicle that kept you inside the white lines, you could set the cruise control, hop in the back and have a snooze.



We arrived at Dululu which is always a compulsory toilet stop, got that problem out of the way then rang Nev Ferrier, the Mayor of the Banana Shire. We hoped to meet him when we got to Biloela but as it turned out, Nev lived in the Dululu area and when we told him we were at the Dululu rest area, he offered to come and meet us which was very nice.





We stayed at Dululu chatting with Mayor Nev for about 30 mins until eventually it was time to tackle the final 60Km down to Biloela. There is a major intersection at Dululu, the Leichhardt Hwy on which we had travelled from The Capricorn Hwy does a right angled turn at this intersection and heads back south west towards Banana, while the Burnett Hwy which comes in from Mt Morgan also does a right angled turn towards Biloela.

We were surprised when we saw who was at the helm of the little truck. There must have been a considerable sum of money change hands as we noticed Dave was not showing any bruising or had any cuts to face and arms and was actually smiling, there obviously hadn't been a fight. Kiwi NEVER allows anyone to drive his truck, we just wonder the size of the sum Dave had to pass over.



We finally reached the Biloela showground about 4.00pm. The showground is run by an association, not by the Council, so there was a \$380 fee we had to pay for the use of the facilities. Council very kindly advanced us \$380 to pay the fee so we weren't out of pocket in any way. Thank you Banana Shire.





That evening we decided to dine at the Biloela RSL. We had dined there on previous occasions and found the quality of food to be very good. The Club is not far from the showground so we took our bus, found a park out front of the Club, found a table at the back of the Club and got stuck in. On the way out, when we were heading back to the showground, the Club manager asked if he could top up our drinks supply - of course he could, so he did. We thank them.



Next day was only a short one, 131 Km out to Tannum Sands but we had a few stops on the way. First stop was the Mt Murchison school which is only 9 Km from Biloela. We had made up the "show-bags" the night before and as we didn't want to get there too early, we had a leisurely breakfast and got away from the showground a bit after 9.00am.



Kiwi and Besty - breakfasting.



We refuelled before we left Biloela and arrived at the school about 9.30am.





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Once again the "show-bags" were a hit, it's great to see the excited faces on the kids when they dive in, makes the whole process worthwhile. Besty then asked if any would like to have a look at our scooters, too right they would. They all took it in turns to hop on a scooter, start it, rev it, blow the horn though you can bet, being country kids, some of them would have more powerful bikes or quads at home.

We had a great hour with the kids, eventually it was time to leave, we thanked Principal Jodie Glenn for allowing us to visit her school, and we were on our way to the next stop which was Calliope, a further 90Km.



We had arranged to meet with the Calliope RSL on our way through and they suggested we meet at the Diggers Arms hotel for lunch. We thought that a good idea so we did. And which was very nice, a couple of blokes from the Tannum Sands RSL hopped on their big bikes and rode into Calliope and also joined us for lunch. After lunch they intended to lead us back into Tannum Sands. We hoped we could keep up!





Diggers Arms Hotel, Calliope.



We enjoyed a great meal and a great hour or so with the Calliope and Tannum Sands RSLers at the Diggers Arms then after lunch, we received a wonderful surprise from the Calliope RSL, only a small body but they managed to give us a donation of \$200 towards our charities. One again, small Club, big heart.

Eventually it was time to go. With the big boys out front we left for the short run down the Bruce to Tannum Sands.



We arrived at the Tannum Sands RSL hall to a very warm welcome. The RSL hall is on top of a small hill and overlooks the ocean, it's in a fabulous spot and as we intended to stay two nights here, we set up our bed sites, got comfortable and settled in. Apart from having a fabulous view, the hall has toilets and showers, everything you would want.. We had stayed with the Tannun Sands RSL on a previous occasion and found them to be extremely welcoming and generous. They hadn't changed.





As well as spoiling us with accommodation and food they also took up a collection for us too and donated to our cause, though they had a strange and very friendly way of passing the money. We're still wondering why it took Besty 30 mins to finally accept it.



For our first night we bused down the hill to the Tannum Sands Hotel for dinner after which it was back to the hall and an early night. Next day was a free day so in the morning it was off to the laundromat to refresh the bag with clean clothes.



Scootavillians laundromatting en-masse.



Later that day the Club came around with several Legacy Ladies, brought nibblies and we sat on the large balcony at the back of the Club and enjoyed a few hours sitting in the sun, admiring the view and just chatting. The men and ladies from Tannum Sands RSL are so welcoming we felt we'd known them for years. Thanks Jenny and Mike.



If they'll have us - we'll be back.



We managed to get everyone together for a group photo, it was great to see some of the Legacy Ladies.



Before we left Tannum Sands, Besty put on his overalls, got out the tools and delved into the innards of one of the scooters. This particular machine had been playing up, not delivering full power, showing its engine light every now and then and was causing a problem. Luckily for us, Besty is an ex Army RAEME and in no time at all he had that scooter running like a switch watch.



Next day, Wednesday, it was time to leave. We were getting good at packing up, having done it a few times now, we breakfasted, loaded the truck, panicked the hall and the toilet/shower block, those that had the finger pointed at them put on the coat and gloves, we said our good byes and thanks and left. Our next overnight was Bundaberg, 168Km away, which included a 40km run down the Bruce Hwy. We've done the Bruce Hwy several times, on a few occasions done the full length from Townsville to Brisbane and haven't found it as bad as many say. Obviously it isn't anywhere near as good as the Pacific Hwy (Brisbane to Melbourne) but driven sensibly there are numerous passing lanes and we've never had any trouble.



We had decided to turn off the Hwy at Miriam Vale and take the "back" road to Bundaberg via Rosedale. Miriam Vale is 51Km from Tannum Sands - about 45 min on the scooters, plenty of time for us to get hungry again, so we stopped at the big donut cafe.



We had heard that Miriam Vale is well known right throughout the world as being the municipality that contains the amazing big magpie. Just out of town, on the road to Rosedale, is the Gary Larson oval. Gary Larson was an NRL player who grew up in Miriam Vale, started playing league with the Miriam Vale Magpies after which he played 200 games with the North Sydney Bears then the Parramatta Eels. He also played 24 games in State of Origin, representing Qld.

The Miriam Vale League Club has erected a "huge" magpie on the roof of its club-house and it's believed that people come from all over the world to see it. We had to stop.



We felt very privileged, we had just visited 3 amazing features, some say the donut, the magpie and the coffee van are possibly as well known as the Egyptian pyramids or the Grand Canyon in the US. Living in Qld certainly has its advantages.





After we'd coffeed and had a yarn with Mr Ed, we mounted up again for the 10km run to Rosedale where we'd arranged to stop for lunch. Mr Ed very kindly made a donation to our cause.

Way back Rosedale was the northern terminus of the rail line, anyone wanting to travel further north was compelled to travel via coach. This caused Rosedale to become an important centre and several hotels flourished in the town. Eventually the rail-line was completed to Bundaberg and several families decided to leave.



Today there is only 1 hotel and the population of Rosedale is 452 people.



Once again we'd pre-ordered so we didn't have to wait long before lunch was served.

After lunch, we loaded up again for the final leg down to Bundaberg where we planned to spend two nights, a 62 Km run which we expected to take about 45 mins. The Bundaberg Council had allowed us to overnight in one of their pavilions at the Bundy Showground, we arrived about 2.30pm, selected a site, unpacked, made up our beds and most decided to have a short nana nap.



Col McLellan pavilion, in which we overnighted.

We had been allocated a large pavilion on the showground - plenty of room for everyone to spread out, plenty of power points for those that slept with a CPAP, and it didn't take us long to settle in.





That night we dined at the Bundy RSL where we were made most welcome by the Club manager and the Sub-Branch.



The Club made available a number of meal vouchers and allowed us to raffle them. Mum and Besty walked around with the Legacy bucket, raffle books and the ATM and sold heaps of tickets to the very generous people at the Club. The RSL Sub-Branch also made a sizeable donation, thank you Club and thank you Sub-Branch, much appreciated.

At the end, we left the Club with \$650, thank you.





Next day being a free day, we decided to do the tourist bit. Someone had told us they make a rum in Bundy so we thought we better see if we could have a look through the distillery. We booked a slot for a mid morning tour and after we'd breakfasted, be bused to the distillery for the hour long tour which we found to be very interesting.



After the tour everyone was given two tickets which entitled them to sample two drinks of their choice. The distillery makes many different varieties of rum, some white, some dark, some under proof, some over proof as well as several different liqueurs. The sample drinks were a good size and a few blokes found you could get a couple more by just asking.



After the tour, and of course as we were all starving, it was time to find a meal, and what could be better than a decent old pie. We did a bit of research, found a pie shop not too far away and pried we did.



After we'd lunched, we planned to do a tour of the Bert Hinkler Hall of Aviation which is located in the Bundaberg Botanic Gardens.



Herbert John Louis (Bert) Hinkler AFC DSM was born in Bundaberg on the 8th December 1892, the son of a sugar mill worker. He died in 1933 at the age of 40, while attempting to establish yet another record-breaking solo flight, when his aircraft crashed in the Appennine Mountains in Italy.

Hinkler captivated the world in the 1920's with record-breaking flights nationally and then stunned the international community by undertaking the first solo flight from England to Australia in his Avro Avian aircraft.

He had built a modest detached house in Southampton, England in 1926 which he named "Mon Repos" to celebrate the beachside location of the same name in his Australian hometown of Bundaberg. Following his untimely death in 1933 the home eventually became the property of the Southampton City Council and was ultimately threatened with demolition. In 1983 the Hinkler House Memorial



Museum & Research Association was formed to oversee the relocation of Bert's home from Southampton back to Bert's birthplace of Bundaberg. In May and June of 1983, back when brake pedals were a foot wide, the house was painstakingly dismantled brick-by-brick, carefully catalogued and transported to Bundaberg and rebuilt as a memorial museum to honour the deeds of Bert Hinkler.



Besty wishing he'd joined the Air Force and not the Army.



Sean "Wantok" O'Toole (left) and Paul "Nosey" Parker (Navy) spent some time looking at the pretty pink flowers.

We spent several hours in the museum, then it was time to head back to our accommodation where it was time for a few casual coldies, a few nibblies and as we still had quite a few, a couple of packets of chips. We were very happy with our accommodation, we had plenty of room, a little section in a corner with benches and cupboards which we used as our breakfast prep area and good showers and toilets, though they were a couple of minutes walk away.

Well - some of us walked.





Getting ready to leave Bundy.

Next morning, a Friday, it was time to pack up and leave Bundy for our next and last overnight, Kingaroy. Kingaroy was 256 Km away but we had a few stops to break up the trip, one of which was the small primary school at Dallarnil. Dallarnil has only 15 students so last night we made up the "show-bags" and they were stowed away in Kiwi's truck.

We set off about 8.00am for the 50 Km run to the sugar town of Childers. Once again we decided to travel via the back roads and stay off the Bruce as much as we could. We travelled via Childers Rd which joined the Bruce at the small town of Apple Tree Creek which is only 6 Km north of Childers. This meant we had only 6 Km on the Bruce.

Childers is a great little town, most of its buildings are heritage listed and you never get sick of stopping and having a look around. We parked, some of us found a coffee shop, some found the bakery, some just walked the street admiring the variety of shops but all of us checked out the toilet block in the main street.



Childers



At about 9.30am, we left Childers for the little State primary school at Dallarnil, a 32 Km run west. Dallarnil is a small town with a population of 245 people and is 15 Km east of Biggenden which has a population of 790 people. We asked the Dallarnil Rural Fire Brigade if they could join us at the school, bring a machine and squirt some water for the kids.

Of course they could, so about 10.00 am we pulled up at the school, the fireys were already there, once again it was great to see the kids, they were excited to see us, welcomed the "show-bags" then we got down to the serious stuff, the fireys cranked up the truck and as a few of us rode around, Besty, who was on the hose, tried to damp us down. He got a few of us.



Then the kids had a go - they got a lot more.



We asked the kids if they would like to hop on the scooters, they were there in a flash which was a good opportunity, so we lined everyone up for a group photo. Then it was time to go, we thanked Principal Darran Stutz-Grimmond for allowing us to stop at his school, left him with a few boxes of chips which he assured us the kids would know what to do with them and we set off for Biggenden, a mere 15 Km, and where we were expected at the Grand hotel for lunch.



About 1.30pm, after a very satisfying lunch, it was time to continue on the road to our next stop which was to be Ban Ban Springs, 37 Km further on. We had arranged to meet with Dael Giddins at Ban Ban and as it was a compulsory Paddle Pop stop, we had two reasons to get there.



Photo op at Ban Ban Springs.



Dael lives in Gayndah, 26km back up the Burnett Hwy, and as it is the orange capital of the world, she brought us a bunch of oranges and also the big orange head. The oranges were most welcome, fresh fruit hadn't regularly figured on our food diet over the past two weeks but they were juicy and they went down well, after the Paddle Pops of course.

Kiwi got the big orange head and put it on - we thought he looked a lot better, though no-one was game to say that out loud.



It was great to see Dael again, but eventually we had to leave. Kingaroy was still 120 Km away, that would take us the better part of 2 hours and we wanted to get there well before dark. Being on the road after 4.00pm can be dangerous, that's when the roos get mobile and hitting one on a scooter can be disastrous. We know - we've done it.



We arrived in Kingaroy at about 4.45pm, safe and sound, where we had been allocated the Kucks Pavilion. We did the usual, selected a bed spot, unpacked the truck, made up our beds and before long we were settled in. (By the way, that's TRUCKING!)



That night Steven Reynolds, the Secretary of the Kilcoy RSL Sub-Branch, had invited us all to the Kilcoy RSL for dinner. That was most generous, we thank him and the Sub-Branch for caring for us.

Next morning, Saturday, we packed up slowly, this was it, we'd just had our last night on the road, all we had left was a 202 Km run down to Brisbane and it was all over. We would get back to Brisbane, unpack everything, give the vehicles back, say our good-byes and everyone would go their own way. Kiwi was sad, he had only one day left at the wheel of his little truck.

But it wasn't going to be a straight run, we had a few stops planned to break it up. We cleaned up and eventually got away about 8.30 am, we did plan to stop at the peanut van on the outskirts at Kingaroy but we were early and it wasn't open, it was only 24 Km down the road to Nanango where there was a solid one, we'd stop there.





Peanut wagon - Nanango.



Peanut wagon - Nanango.

After buying up a few packets of their deliciously flavoured peanuts, we pushed on to our next stop which was the Sub-Branch at Yarraman, just 21 Km away. The Sub-Branch had offered to provide a "smoko" for us and being a small Sub-Branch, the smoko they provided was amazing. Jo Hurley, the Club's Secretary, and her fellow members made us feel very welcome, as they had on the previous occasions we'd stopped there. The ladies had gone to a lot of trouble and we really appreciated it.





We stopped at Yarraman for an hour, then lined up outside the Club for the group photo. Thanks heaps Jo and thanks to your members for your amazing generosity.

Our next stop was at the Sub-Branch at Kilcoy a further 70 Km towards Brisbane. Once again a small Branch but with a heart the size of Ayres Rock. May Wallace, the Club's Vice President, offered to provide lunch for us, as she had done previously and we really looked forward to it.



The Leopard Tank

Some years ago the RSL was granted a sum of money which enabled them to obtain a Leopard Tank which now sits outside the Club. The Australian Army operated the Leopard AS1 main battle tank from 1977 to 2007, replacing the Centurion. It was succeeded by the M1A1 Abrams. The Leopard AS1 was a German-designed main battle tank introduced into Australian service in 1977 to replace the aging British Centurion tanks, which had been in service since the 1950s

The "AS" in the model name stands for Australia, reflecting modifications made for local conditions, including tropical climate adaptations, improved turret protection and additional stowage

The Leopard AS1 served primarily with the 1st Armoured Regiment and the School of Armour, forming the backbone of Australia's armoured capability for over 30 years



After a wonderful lunch, we gathered in the RSL's bar area to say our thanks and our good byes to May and her "helpers". Greg Jacobsen (the big bloke) announced that he had just received notice from his Club, the Primac Gurus Association, that the Club had just authorised a \$1,000 donation to our cause. The Primac Gurus Association was formed in 1975 from the merger of two great Queensland Stock & Station Agency Businesses, Queensland Primary Producers Co-Operative Association Ltd and Mactaggarts Primary Producers Co-Operative Association Ltd.

We thank them very much.





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We then gathered outside near the Leopard Tank for a group photo, then it was time to go. 88 Km to Brisbane, one more stop, this was our last leg and once again we would keep off the Bruce as much as we could. Jake Jacobsen and Phil Green wished to be dropped off at the Burpengary railway station, which we did, next stop Brisbane.

We pulled in Chermside, unloaded everything, people went their way and it was over, a successful two weeks, no-one hurt, no accidents, weather was good, we raised money for our charities and everyone had a good time.



Next day, Dave Pedler and Besty came back to my place, we cleaned up and returned the vehicles, had a coffee and started talking about Scootaville Qld 2027.