

# LRC ACT

## Backroads to Eden

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Friday 20 March 2020 – Sunday 22 March 2020



<b>Member</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>
Rick Creech (Trip Leader)	Prado	Ultimate camper
Fiona Winkler & Garry Vaughan	Defender	Tent
Kaylene & Paul Koppe	BT50	Caravan
Can Ercan		Caravan?
Gemma & Bob Zeitlholfer	LC200	Caravan
Peter & Doris Gibb		Caravan?
Geoff Banbury	Troop Carrier	Vehicle camping
Ann & Tom de Jongh	Triton	Slide-on camper
Andrew & Jan Lockley	Disco	Ultimate camper

During the summer of 2019-2020 devastating bushfires ravaged south eastern New South Wales. The following trip was organised to support the people and local businesses of the region affected by these bushfires.

In late January 2020 Australia recorded its first case of COVID-19. By Monday 23 March 2020 all non-essential travel was limited. This trip had concluded prior to this date. Trip participants were asked to review their participation on the trip if they had cold/flu-like symptoms. Participants also undertook to maintain social distancing, and follow sanitation procedures in line with NSW Health recommendations.

## Friday 20 March 2020

Seven vehicles (five towing) commenced the 'Backroads to Eden' trip departing Polo Flat Road, Cooma at 3.15pm with clear skies and a brisk wind.

The group exited Cooma travelling south down Maffra Road then on to Myalla Road through dry and exposed farmland. While the country-side was tinged green there was very little growth and farmers were hand-feeding their stock. Our journey continued on the gravel via Rocklodge, Springfield and Avon Lake Roads, skirting along the Boco Rock wind farm.



There are a total of 67 turbines on the farm.

We then hit the tar for a short distance along the Snowy River Way, then turned south onto Gunningrach Road for our journey along the dirt into Bombala. As the SE Forest National Park was closed following the bushfires our first night was spent in Bombala.

Bombala, first established in the 1840s, is a small town on the banks of the Bombala River. The area is known for a large population of platypus, although the only platypus we saw was on the Platypus Reserve advertising material. The group set up camp at the Bombala Caravan Park which is located close to the Bombala River and a short walk into town.



*Bombala Caravan Park*

We collected our Group takeaway order from the local Chinese Restaurant and enjoyed the evening eating and sharing stories. We can highly recommend the restaurant with superb dishes containing crisp vegetables, and a friendly and efficient service.

## **Saturday 21 March 2020**

It was a leisurely 10.00am start to Saturday morning with participants choosing to eat breakfast where they pleased.

The Group initially headed south from Bombala along the Monaro Highway then turned east onto Imlay Road travelling through the bushfire affected environment. The evidence of the heat and ferocity of the fire was clear and absolutely heart-breaking. It is a wonder that anything could survive but leaves were beginning to sprout from the tree trunks.



*Imlay Road*



*New growth*

Our first stop was a rest area on the Princes Highway. This area was tragically also hit by the fires.



*Scrubby Creek Forest Rest Area*

We headed north along the highway to the Big 4 Eden Beachfront Caravan Park on Quarantine Bay just south of the township of Eden. The campsites in Ben Boyd National Park were closed so there no options for remote camping this weekend.



*Eden campsite*



### *Quarantine Bay and Beachfront Caravan Park*

Lunch and afternoon activities were at the choice of participants with most taking the short trip into the township of Eden for lunch.

The afternoon saw a small group venture onto the dirt tracks of Ben Boyd National Park (southern section) via Edrom and Green Cape Lighthouse Roads driving through heath and melaleuca. First stop was off Pulpit Rock Road and a short walk down wooden stairs to Pulpit Rock. Pulpit Rock is a large rock platform popular with rock fishers. Although we did not spot any whales (migration actually starts in May) from this vantage point we did see some seals. There are great views north along the coast from here.



### *The Pacific Ocean from Ben Boyd NP*



*Staircase down to Pulpit Rock*



*Pulpit Rock ledge*



*View north from Pulpit Rock*



*Geoff surveying the scenery at Pulpit Rock*

SEAL PHOTO



*On Pulpit Rock ledge*

Returning to the dirt tracks, our next stop was Green Cape Lighthouse. This was possibly the windiest place in the park that day. This is the southernmost lighthouse in New South Wales and Australia's first lighthouse built in concrete. It is 29 metres high and NSW's second tallest lighthouse. The light was electrified in 1962 but has since been replaced with an automated steel lattice skeleton tower with a solar powered light.



*Battling the wind to Green Cape Lighthouse*



*Green Cape Lighthouse*



*Green Cape Lighthouse - old and new*

Back on the trail our next stop was Disaster Bay Lookout. A very short walk ends at a lookout with expansive views south over Disaster Bay and the Nadgee-Howe Wilderness Area. Disaster Bay is named in memory of all the ships that have run aground and the many lives lost to the sea.



*Disaster Bay*

We returned to camp gathering again as a group for a fish and chips takeaway. The local takeaway certainly appreciated such a large order and we appreciated the beautifully cooked fish. Thanks also to Fi and Garry for making a salad for the group to share.

## **Sunday 22 March 2020**

It was another leisurely departure as the group headed into Eden to purchase some fresh seafood then on to Pambula for morning tea and to buy some oysters from the local growers.

This was the official end of the 'Backroads to Eden' trip as participants made their own way home or onward.

Four vehicles stopped for morning tea in Pambula then headed inland along Mt Darragh Road through Wyndham and Cathcart, turning onto Jack Lake Road and then the Monaro Highway at Bibbenluke. Once again we travelled through areas of bushfire. The environment was blackened with a few signs of regeneration and ferns beginning to regrow. To our untrained eyes the fire in this area seemed even more destructive, maybe hotter and faster, than the areas we had driven through earlier this weekend. Farmers had begun the long task of replacing fences.



*Kaylene and Paul on Mt Darragh Road*



*Typical scenery along Mt Darragh Road*



*New growth*



*Fern regrowth along Mt Darragh Road*



*Bushfire affected farmland*



*Jack Lake Road*

It was easy driving to Nimmitabel with a stop at the bakery for sustenance to keep us going on to Cooma and finally Canberra.



*Enjoying the pastries at Nimmitabel Bakery*

Thank you to Rick for organising and leading the trip. It was a most enjoyable journey which would help keep us positive over the next months of COVID-19 lockdown.