The Hills, Are Alive



Today was another one of those “light out over the hills” days. We’d been back in Gingin, chasing up medicos with reviews due and medications to update — the unglamorous but necessary side of life on the road.

The last appointment was this morning, so we hit the road into Joondalup early: saw the ophthalmic guru, grabbed more pills at the apothecary, fuelled up, then turned around and headed straight back to Gingin to hitch up and hit the road again.

Where to? Brookton. Why? Why not.

We’re due back for MRIs next week, so we didn’t want to stray too far — but we did want to escape the madding crowd, seeing as school holidays kicked off today.

There’s a farmstay down this way where we spent a week or so a while back, when Kay’s hip decided a replacement was the way to go. It’s not far out of town and never crowded — exactly what we were after.

The trip itself was something else. Brookton Highway is just that — no “Great” attached to it, and for most of its length it feels like they’ve simply tarred over the old tracks the timber jinkers used back in 1911. Lovely.

Add that to what we’ve now dubbed the **Roger Cook Memorial Roadway** — our pet name for any piece of dodgy blacktop — and the crosswind all the way through kept things entertaining, to say the least. A few genuine heart-in-mouth moments as the rig threatened to make a break for it on its own.

The upside: 12.2 L/100km for the whole trip. With diesel at 287.9 cents a litre this morning, we’ll happily take those numbers, thank you very much.

Right now it’s 15°C outside, the wind is still threatening to chuck us into a paddock (any paddock will do, apparently), the diesel heater is cranking, and there’s soup on the stove.

Snug as two bugs in a rug.

We’ll probably surface again sometime next week — after the AFL Grand Final tomorrow and the Wallabies v Springboks on Sunday, of course. Probably.

Oh. A Bit About Brookton

For those wondering where on earth (or at least where in the west) we’ve landed:

Brookton sits roughly 135 km south-east of Perth, at the crossroads of the Brookton and Great Southern Highways — a quiet, typical small Wheatbelt town that's easy to miss and worth a second look.

A name with a bit of a story. The district's first settler was John Seabrook, who moved to the area in 1846 and named his property "Brookton House." When the Great Southern Railway arrived in June 1889, the government gazetted the townsite in 1895 and initially named it "Seabrook" — but confusion with another Seabrook over near York saw it renamed Brookton in 1899. By 1903 the settlement had grown to a school, hotel, bank and a handful of shops.

Highlights if you're passing through:

- **Old Railway Station & Pioneer Park** — right in the centre of town, the old station (built in 1899) still stands, with Pioneer Park a pleasant spot to stretch your legs.
- **Brookton Museum & Heritage Centre** — housed in the town's old Police Station, with a solid collection of local memorabilia and archives — open by appointment, so ring ahead.
- **Town Lookout** — just a couple of kilometres out on the road to Perth, with excellent views over the town and surrounding farmland.
- **Boyagin Rock Nature Reserve** — about 24 km south-west, a striking granite outcrop of real cultural significance to the Nyoongar people, who know it as Boogin — local lore holds that if you walk to the top without stopping, you'll live a long life. Keep an eye out for numbats, goannas, echidnas and Tammar wallabies along the way.
- **Boyagarra Pool** — a natural pool on the Avon River that holds water year-round,

fed by winter river flow and a few springs through summer.

And if you’ve got Wave Rock on the itinerary, you’re in luck — Brookton sits on the quickest route there via the Brookton Highway.