

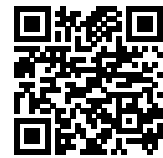
The Wheatbelt Way



We left Perth on the way to the North Eastern Wheatbelt area of WA. Booked in to the Wyalkatchem caravan park for two nights, intending to see some wild flowers, and the old sights of the area.

We came through the towns of Toodyay and onto Dowering, where there was a statue of "The Tin Dog". I expected it to be a tin cutout of a dog. However, he was a huge tin dog, about 210 cms high, and not thin, was about 40-60 cms wide. His name was rusty, and he certainly was!

The high school students designed him to bring tourists into the town and enjoy the town and facilities. A beautiful town and well worth the visit.



We then arrived at 'Wylie', had a quick tour of the town before dinner and a good nights sleep. Why not 'Wyalie' giving someone a chance to find Wyalkatchem. A Google search for 'Wylie' might land them in a Sydney suburb.

Michael's often gob-smacked at the way these towns try to promote themselves with trite sayings that aren't backed up by the experiences they offer.

Next day toured the area, looking at the surrounds and then to see wildflowers. We're a bit disappointed, as the only ones around were on the side of the road, and usually there all year round. The main industry in the area is grain growing, so most of the fields contain grain – for kilometre after kilometre. Occasionally there was a field of yellow canola, but these were mainly towards Toodyay and York area.

Travelled up to Korda to look for flowers there. No such luck. So back to the park, have dinner, then a friendly chat around the campfire with other fellow travellers.

Rain was predicted the next day, so we hitched the van up the night before so we didn't have to get too wet.

Rain was not the problem. It was very windy, 30-50kms an hour winds, gusting 55kms plus.

We went to the old CBH silo; a farm and grain machinery museum, and it was highly recommended by a couple of people in the town.

It didn't disappoint, and while we were there, wandering around recalling our years on the farm, we decided to go back to the caravan park and stay another night to be safe.



Off we went on another day trip to surrounding towns, driving through the streets, to get a feel for the area, and look into days gone by.

First off to Trayning, went looking for the Trayning Well, but didn't find it. Have a picture of it in the brochure, and on the signboard, so that had to suffice.

Next was the Gnamma Holes, and there we saw some wild flowers in small clumps.

Very pretty, but it was very windy on top of the hill, well and truly up to the full 55kms plus gusts. The water holes were there to provide water to the locals and we were surprised by the depth of some.

Then on to through Kununoppin to Nungarin. Went to the Heritage Machinery and Army Museum. What a fantastic place!

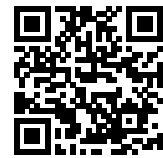
The way to appreciate it fully is to see their short film and history of the area. We were amazed to find out the size of the place during WWII, to protect Australian shores and material from potential foreign invasion.

Carefully selected, at its peak the site had over 1,200 personnel posted there.

Next on the route was Mukinbudin. We had lunch there, and as with small towns they rely on tourists. One of very few cafes in these towns open 7 days a week, 7am to 8pm.

Many of the old shops in the town still had the old wooden flooring, all crisply painted white and still serving, although trying to let visitors see a glimpse into the past.

On through Bencubbin, back through Korda, where we finally found the Nature Flora



Reserve – after Garmin and Google both gave up on us – and a few walking trails that we have to return to try.

We were impressed with all the towns visited, they had wide streets, and all spotlessly clean, no rubbish to be seen anywhere, even along the main roads.

And the shires all do a great job and planning and maintaining their main roads. Even the dirt ones were smooth and well-graded.

Wyalkatchem had won the tidy town competition, division 4 several times, and in 2003 won Australia's tidiest town competition. They was also elected to the Tidy Town Hall of Fame.

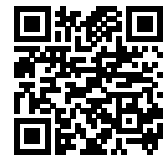
Who knew there was such a thing!

Unfortunately as with small towns with low population (less than 400), many shops and farms have been abandoned, and they are struggling to get new industries and people into the towns.

However, the roads! Wide and clean. Within the town area, well tarred, outside on the dirt roads, even better.

All well graded, no corrugations, and all well sign posted.

Not a problem finding our way, except if you use Garmin. At one stage, no twice, it had the car, stationary in a field! Not helpful. Remember when travelling, take paper maps with you.



We left Wyalkatchem and travelled via Quairading to a place we found via WikiCamps, Greenhills Inn. There is a large car park for travellers, free if you can spend some money at the pub. Done!

Went and had a drink at beer-o'clock, and now resting. Gathering our strength to wander over for dinner, – and two or a few. ?

We'll stay the night in the caravan, provided we can find our way from the car park to the caravan! Tomorrow we'll wend our way home to Perth, ready to watch the Bledisloe Cup on tele. No need, I already know who'll win!

It won't be the last time we'll be in the area, as there are many towns we'd still like to see, and the surrounding districts.

The thousands of kilometres of grain and canola look fantastic at this time of year, but next time, we'll expect to find many brown fields, lying fallow till the next season. Unless of course they let sheep free to graze on the stubble. Multi-tasking. ?

Accommodation ... Wyalkatchem Travellers or Caravan Park – first rate ... still developing, but it can accommodate for everyone's preference; powered, with or without an ensuite, or unpowered. Secure sites, fantastic owners and staff on site. We'll be back to base ourselves there for our next trip. We can highly recommend it.

Greenhills Inn was our last stop.

Free camping alongside the inn if you are self contained, and in return they'd appreciate it if you would purchase a drink or meal there. We did both. Arrived at happy hour, so had a drink, dining room was open from 6-8pm.

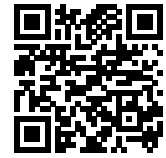
Great food, great hosts, and can highly recommend the establishment. We had spicy



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pumpkin soup, one serve of chilli con carne, and one of arancine balls, which was served with spring rolls, and of course, more drinks.

There are many free camping sites along the Wheatbelt Way and so far, we've only scratched the surface.

Ten trip is doable from Perth or from anywhere close.

Get out and explore!