



Wheatbelt Way Revisited



It was almost a spur of the moment thing, but with New Years Eve looming, we decided once the inebriated from a rowdy chorus of Auld Lang Syne were off the road, we'd head bush for a few days.

It's only been a few weeks since we had our new awning put on, and we may as well test it out.

After delays at the caravan repair shop, and then COVID that affected the whole family (Kay twice in the space of a few weeks); Christmas Day was here!

It was a good job the shopping had been done before COVID hit, so spent a quiet day recovering.

Decision made. We'd go and see some of the Wheatbelt we missed last time, so late



morning on Sunday January 1, we left on another short trip to travel east.

First stop was to visit Wyalkatchem Travellers Park again for an overnight visit, met up with the lovely owners, mine hosts, Brendan and Michelle.

Always great there, always clean and tidy, and the offer of four types of lettuce, and various herbs from Michelle's garden.

For a change, we had plenty of time, with no restrictions, not having booked anywhere, just free spirits.

Up late after a restful night, we awoke to high winds (same as last trip out there), then took off further east through Trayning and on the way to Beacon.

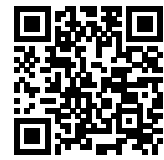
Toured through the small townships along the way, doing the usual touristy things. We were heading overnight to Billiburning Rock for the night, in one of three free camps there.

Lots of dirt roads and corrugations, but not too bad.

As they say, adjust your speed to the conditions. The wind didn't dissipate any, and we had strong winds all the way, in fact the whole time we were away, which negatively affected our fuel consumption.

Got into the rock early afternoon, ready to settle for the night. The rock is long and high, and would be a great challenge to get to the top.

The brochures said to do the climb late in the afternoon, take a couple of chairs and some wine and enjoy the sunset, and then view the stars coming out. We wish!



Opened up the van to find two light shades on the floor, thanks to the corrugated roads, but that was all the mishaps, everything good, fridge doors still closed, as were all cupboards.

We did notice a small dripping of water from a fitting on one of the water tanks (possibly from a thrown-up rock) but decided we could wait until we got home for repairs.

We had plenty of bottled water for coffee and hydration so no big deal.

The wind was still up, so didn't want to risk putting up the awning. So much for testing out the newly-installed awning .

As we learned through the brochures, the campground has three designated areas to stay, all with several fire pits, tables and benches and long drops, but unfortunately it was high summer and total fire bans were in place.

Camp area 1 was named Gecko, the second were we stayed was Echidna, And the third, further on around the base of the rock was named Kangaroo. Naturally, we didn't see any of these in the flesh.

But guess what? We were the only ones there!

Middle of Christmas and school holidays, but because it was hot, it seems everyone else was camped up in the coastal areas near the water.

Of course, we didn't mind.



We took an evening stroll, a little further around the rock (beyond the “No camper trailer or caravans” sign), and could see there were a few places to easily begin the climb, but you would have to pick your best route to the top.

Maybe next time.

As usual in the west, fantastic sunsets every afternoon, weather permitting.

We had a noisy night, with the wind blowing in strong gusts, but no damage.

Decided to just have a coffee, and instead of us cooking breakfast, we’d go into Beacon for breakfast, to support the local shops.

Wrong! Every shop was closed. We found that in all the country towns we visited, although at Beverley, the IGA and bottle shop was open, but nothing else.

Even the attractions and museums are only open for a couple of hours. If at all.

So on to Beverley, where we knew there was an RV park to stay overnight. Toured though the country towns again, and sadly as usual they were like ghost towns.

“Move along, nothing to see here.”

Pulled into Beverley’s Apex Park, and there was only one other van there. We tracked to the other side to give both of us plenty of space – we virtually had the place all to ourselves.



Staying in the park is by donation, and there is an honesty box at the entrance, where there's an envelope to put your money in, and the local newsletter to read pointing out attractions, services and features in the area.

There were a few magazines and a large container with sunscreen, for visitors use. Bins throughout, it was scrupulously clean and tidy.

So, we'd planned to go to a local pub for dinner, but being Tuesday, they were closed. Never mind, we'll have coffee in the morning and go to a local cafe or bakery for breakfast.

Best laid plans ...

Got up, had coffee, getting packed up, and realised we had a flat tyre on the van. Filled it with goo, pumped the tyre up and took off for the obligatory 10 km drive at less than 80kph to see if it would stay up.

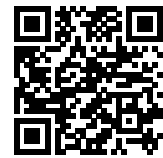
Unfortunately not.

So we were back on the road, opposite where we had stayed the night. Took off the spare wheel from the back, ready to replace the flat. No chance.

The tyre was not coming off, had been put on with a rattle gun to within an inch of it's life.

Reluctantly we had to use our RAC roadside assist. Great service, and extremely helpful.

They organised someone to be with us within 50 minutes. Not a problem.



However, after about half an hour they rang back and said that provider, had an emergency and couldn't attend, but they have another one coming out and would be there in about three hours, as he was on another job.

That's OK, we had food and drinks on board.

About half an hour later the new RAC provider turned up, Richard, and he had the wheel replaced in about 15 mins.

It's now mid-morning so we decided to head into town and support the locals, and go for now, what was to be brunch.

Nope. Everything was closed.

Out of frustration more than anything, we made the decision to cut our losses, and head for home.

Despite the lack of opportunities taken up for tourism throughout the wheatbelt, and all within a couple of hours driving from Perth, in a peak holiday time – we had a great weekend, and a relaxing time.

Back home for a few appointments, a few weeks at work, plus some running repairs and we'll be off again. After all, we have a new awning to try out.