

Trip Report - Peake 2022

After a rainy week weatherwise, Friday 4 November saw Ian (Toyota FJ60 Landcruiser) and I (Toyota Hilux) heading up to Peake in overcast conditions with the promise of increased sunshine and definitely no rain on the radar. The uneventful 150km trip had us arriving mid-afternoon. A chat with the farmer let us know of a fox that was prone to visiting the area on dusk and raiding any food that has been left out. Onward to the campground, and unusually for us, we had to negotiate some large puddles of water that remained after the recent rains.

Ian and I set up the camper trailer in a nice shady spot between the trees, fairly close to the communal shed. We were soon joined by Phil (Nissan Patrol) and Maggsy (Toyota Prado), by now in full sunshine and because of that, we were also joined by an increasing number of flies! Phil and Maggsy proceeded to set up and then we all enjoyed sitting around and taking in the natural surrounds and chatting. Brett (Mitsubishi Triton) and visitor Derek (Ford Ranger) arrived after work, the campfire was lit and dinners were cooked. With coals now generated, Ian and I make camp cooker scones for supper before we all called it a night.

Early on Saturday, visitor Paul (Ford Everest) arrived to complete the group that would tackle the tracks and dunes of Peake for this year in plenty of sunshine and warm temperatures. With breakfast eaten, tyres aired down mostly to around 18psi, and after changing the front driver's tyre on the FJ60 which had broken the bead and gone flat, the 7 strong convoy took to the tracks for a couple of hours. Ian led the way, starting off on the less challenging dunes to gauge how compact the sand was and also the experience level of our two visitors, who were both going well. We were soon taking on the steeper dunes, with a few of us not making the crest on the first attempt and practicing our backing skills, before having another go "driving like we stole it!". Maggsy provided the first rescue of the day, but with shovels, maxx tracks, and a snatch-em strap attached to Phil's car, he was back navigating more tracks.

Lunch beckoned and having satisfied our hunger, we were back on different tracks for another couple of hours in the afternoon. Surprisingly after coming to Peake for several years now, we found new tracks to test our skills such as judging vehicle turning circles, sand driving, rock crawling, puddle splashing, dune cresting, and pin-striping our vehicles! But it was fun!

Back to the campground for happy hour where we were joined by an inquisitive shingleback. Some brightly coloured rainbow bee-eaters swooped down to the large puddle by the campsite, before perching in a tall tree. Blue wrens came down to drink at the water's edge, and the previous day Phil and I had spotted half a dozen white-browed babblers insect hunting from the water right across the whole campsite. Then there was another fire, dinner (with some cooking over the coals), a batch of scones, and some star gazing and satellite spotting, not to mention plenty of conversation. And after we all turned in, the fox visited and took a couple of nibbles left out by Maggsy and pulled our rubbish bag off the camper, leaving rubbish strewn nearby for me to pick up the following morning.

With dawn breaking on Sunday, another sunny day greeted us. After breakfast was completed, we all set off for another venture around the many tracks. Derek was given the opportunity to lead, and found more tracks that I do not recall ever being on before. Alas, it was Derek that provided the first rescue of the day, having roared up a track turning to the left and ending up on a crest of sand with two wheels in the air. As per club rules, we ensured everyone was safe, and then took photos! Again, the vehicle needed a snatch-strap and Phil's trusty Nissan, now located at the other

side of the track, to gently pull Derek's Ranger over the top. With some shovel work levelling off the top of the crest, others more game than I, sped up the dune and conquered it, but Maggsy also needed Phil's trusty Nissan to help him over the top, leaving flattened marks in the sand from his long distance fuel tanks. Even the large sand dune in the corner by the Subaru Club shed was successfully negotiated by a number of vehicles, including the oldest. It is not every year that this can be done.

Gradually, we all returned to the campsite, packed up our respective overnight accommodation, pumped up our tyres and headed off on our return journey home. I believe a good weekend was had by all and so much so that Phil booked the first weekend in November 2023 for the club to return and do it all again.

(by Vanessa R).