

Trip Report: Beachport 28<sup>th</sup> November – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Trip Leader: Steve & Mel

Attendees: , Paul & Linda, Marc & Sandy, Obee & Dee, Les & Lyn, Janet, Ken & Karla, Steve & Mel

Originally 9 names were on the list but Mike & Jan & Chris & Linda had to withdraw.

Pre-trip meeting was held at Steve & Mel's and a suggested itinerary discussed and agreed. Meeting time was set for 10am at Wellington Ferry. Les & Lyn were to meet us at Beachport.

We stopped at Kingston SE for lunch and there we met up with Les & Lyn so from there we travelled together to Beachport arriving around 2pm. Once everyone was set up, we decided not to leave the caravan park but sit and relax.

Day 2 – Monday: The plan was to head to Robe along the beach & dunes via Nora Criena. Well that was the plan – the first problem arose when even though we had been told by National Parks that dogs were allowed up as far as Nora Creina, the first sign we came to before hitting the beach was a No Dogs Allowed. This meant Les & Lyn had to turn back. The rest of us headed to 5mile drift. Over the first sand dune and onto the beach. The first 3 cars went over but there was no way to get along the beach as there were rocks on either side. The beach was very soft and whilst we tried to turn back Ken & Karla became bogged in the soft sand. The other 3 vehicles had waited for us to come back. The next entry to the beach was even softer and there were no visible tyre tracks at all. It was decided that it was unsafe to go onto the beach at this point. New plan needed quickly. We followed the track inland hoping to drive parallel to the beach and still reach Nora Criena but that didn't happen. Instead we took a scenic drive around Lake George – one problem was it was a dead end but a very scenic dead end. 9-metre-high sand hills on the left and in front and water (Lake) to the right. The area was framed by trees and a very nice place to stop for lunch – for those who brought lunch with them – the rest of us had planned to buy lunch at Robe. We were back at the camp by 2pm and while Ken & Karla tried their hand at jetty fishing, 2 small squid were not really worth the very long walk along the jetty. Four vehicles headed out on the one and a half hour Beachport Scenic drive which was very scenic.

Day 3 – Tuesday: Sightseeing day around Mt Gambier. The Blue Lake was very blue and we were told it had changed only a week previously. Paul & Linda did the full walk around the lake but the rest of us drove. We visited the Cave Garden, Art Gallery, Umpherston sinkhole and had a stroll around the town.

Day 3 – Wednesday: Beach driving from Beachport to Southend. On Monday night Steve & I met a couple at the caravan park who were planning to do the Beachport to Nora Criena run along the beach on Tuesday, by themselves. We advised them it wasn't safe and invited them to come along with us on Wednesday. Therefore 8 vehicles headed off to the beach. Tyres down to between 15 – 20psi. We had no sooner got on the beach when it became very soft. Steve & I were first and managed to get through with some stops where we had to go forward then reverse a few times to compact the sand. Paul & Linda and Graham & Lorraine (visitors) followed in our tracks. We had to keep going 200m up the beach before we could stop and wait for the others. Ken & Karla's Hilux did some beach excavating and got stuck. Les & Lyn tried to get in front of them to pull them out but they also got stuck. Steve & I headed back to assist. Les tried to winch himself out with his sand anchor but the sand was so soft it just pulled the anchor back towards the car, so we abandoned that idea and instead Les attached his winch cable to our patrol and pulled the car out. Meanwhile with the aid of a couple of sets of Max Trax and a lot of digging Ken & Karla made it out in reverse back to the other 3 waiting vehicles who had not yet got into the soft sand. The 4 vehicles at the back decided not to continue and instead would head back to the bitumen and meet us in Southend. The front 4 vehicles

made it along the beach to Southend. The sand was much better once we got through the very soft part.

Day 4: - Thursday; Sightseeing day around Millicent, Penola, Naracoorte & Robe. Ken & Karla along with Marc and Sandy headed to Robe for some beach fishing, Janet had a friend coming to visit in Beachport and Les & Lyn went to Mt Gambier again to spend time with relatives. So, 3 vehicles headed off on a drive through the countryside. We had a lovely walk around Lake McIntyre, wine tasting in Penola, lunch in Naracoorte then onto Robe in the hope of meeting up with the fishermen and seeing what they had caught for dinner. They hadn't caught anything worth keeping and were already back at the caravan park by the time we got to Robe. We had a look around Robe then headed back to camp via Woakwine Cutting – a man-made cutting that took 2 men just 2 weeks shy of 3 years to excavate. Once back at the caravan park, Karla suggested a game of Yahtzee - Ken produced the biggest dice I have seen, which he had made from an old table leg, and the fun began. Marc & Sandy are the current champions having rolled 2 yahtzees in the one game. There were some very impressive dice rolling preparation dance moves to be seen as well.

Day 5: Friday – It was intended to do Southend to Carpenters Rocks but with the beach being so soft and it being a National Park where dogs aren't allowed, we decided to do the Beachport to Southend run again but starting at the 2<sup>nd</sup> entry which avoided the really soft section.

Thankfully we all got through and once at the end decided to do the return run back along the sand. Dee decided she would like a drive and she therefore drove their car back along the sand. We had to be fairly close to the water's edge on several stretches so once we left the beach, we all headed to Millicent where there was a car wash available.

Back at the caravan park it was time for Boys v's Girls Bocce – the boys won 2 out of 3 games so are the current champions.

Our final dinner was at the Beachport Hotel and all of us enjoyed our meals.

Day 6 - Saturday; Pack up and head back home. We all went our separate ways as some wanted to stop off to see friends etc.

As trip leaders both Steve & I have learnt that nothing ever goes to plan and you need a flexible approach to be able to quickly come up with a backup for when things go pear shaped.

We hope all participants enjoyed the trip even though we didn't get in much 4WD driving in the dunes. Thanks to all who attended and we had a great week and enjoyed the company.

Mel & Steve