

## **Trip report**

### **South coast of New South Wales 15 to 25 February 2026**

Welcome to the readers of this report. It has been put together by all of us on this trip with a different author each day.

#### **Day 1, 15 February 2026**

Due to the different home locations, we decided to meet at Sherlock on the way to our first overnight spot being Tooleybuc. Linda & Paul (D-Max & Trip Leaders), Sandy & Mark (Everest), Penny (Patrol), Janette (Prado) and Ian & Vanessa (Hilux). Between us we were towing a range of accommodation that traffic didn't recognise as a convoy! We met at Sherlock at 11.00am, lunch at Pinnaroo making good time to Tooleybuc Sports Club. A free camp - with encouragement to have a meal. As it started to rain, we all spent the night having dinner together in the restaurant where the inaugural SEFWDC Tooleybuc Eight Ball Championship was created. Ian potted 8 balls, Linda 7 including the 8 ball. Well done Linda! A great free camp site. Secure and well away from the main road traffic.

The maggot release story, during lunch, at Pinnaroo? Well that's for another paragraph a bit later ...

#### **Day 2, 16 February 2026**

After a good nights sleep at the Tooleybuc sporting complex RV camping area, we headed off for Tumut just after 9am. We stopped along the way at Hay South to fuel up, rest stop and get a bite to eat.

We continued on to Tumut arriving at the Reflections Tumut river holiday park at 4:45pm or thereabouts. We set up camp in a lovely area by the river. After a rest and dinner we gathered for a short time for some socialising and debriefing of the day's long drive.

#### **Day 3, 17 February 2026**

We left Tumut at 9.30am and headed along the Brindabella Road towards the ACT. To complicate matters, the pine forests were being logged and maintaining communication with logging trucks was crucial. We stopped at Brindabella for pics and a break and made the decision to go on a side trip to the summit of Mt Coree. Although the drive was quite short, it included some switchbacks and a steep ascent closer to the summit. This was where we came to a fallen tree across the track which took about 40 mins to clear. Then onward to the summit for lunch and spectacular views of the Namadgi National Park.

Time was running short so we decided against detouring to the Cotter Dam and went directly to Wee Jasper along winding country roads. After a break at Wee Jasper we headed back to Tumut via the forest roads. Sign posting was almost non existent and we had an unexpected tour of the eastern forests before finding the road back to Tumut. We arrived back at around 6pm.

## **Day 4, 18 February 2026**

### The Unexpected

The plan was to get ready to leave Tumut by 9am, then stop at the coffee van for a quick caffeine fix before we headed off. This done, we had one more stop before leaving Tumut. In convoy we followed Paul and Linda to see some topiary! It made us all laugh - it was a large round bush with a mean looking face and a mohawk. Ian took a fantastic photo of himself and it.

Off we headed again, taking the highway to Gundagai and then ... what a day!

The dog on the tuckerbox has been moved, car vs truck rollover (not us), highway closed, detour required, roadworks, pleasant country scenery, roadworks, 32°C, more scenery, roadworks with stop light, Cootamundra, queued at railway crossing for freight train, odd noise emanating from Penny's car, stopped to check it out but nothing found, roadworks, ABS warning light on Penny's car but car running no differently, carried on, roadworks, stopped in park at Wallenbeen, plugged in OBDII reader to Penny's car, cleared errors, back on detour, turned right, no, left back on highway to Yass, lunch, headed for Bungendore, roadworks, scenery, passed through Bungendore without stopping, scenery, roadworks, turn left, no RIGHT, RIGHT, and stopped in Braidwood for the conveniences and to stretch our legs, 30°C, 24°C, back on the road, steep descent down the Clyde Mountain, 18°C, mist, roadworks with stop light, very slow descent, 22° C, and finally into the Caravan Park!

A journey that was predicted to take approx 3.5 hours had taken us 7.5 hours! Needless to say we were all a bit weary. So much so that six of us ventured into Batemans Bay and enjoyed some beautiful Thai food at one of the three Thai restaurants rather than cooking and doing dishes. Janet and Penny, travelling together, missed the turn to Nelligen and were taken around several blocks by Google before finding us waiting for them on the highway back to the caravan park. Many giggles were heard on Channel 13!

## **Day 5, 19 February 2026**

We were worn out from our driving schedule so we all decided to have a free day to ourselves. Most of us headed to Batemans Bay and the surrounding areas for some sightseeing and lunch in town.

Batemans Bay has lots of beautiful beaches and coastline, has a high influx of tourists but doesn't feel overcrowded as there are lots of places to visit.

Back at camp we gathered once again for some banter and nibbles, anticipating the next day's adventure on the tracks.

## **Day 6, 20 February 2026**

After another good night at Nelligen, we headed back inland for about 500m and turned right onto River Road. This road runs beside the Clyde River right into the hinterland, and beyond. The forests we travel through all day today were burnt in the 2019/20 bushfires – right to the coast. From a layman's perspective, it seems that rejuvenation of the forest is well on its way. Alas no botanists were seen frolicking in the area to confirm our thoughts. We arrived at Shallow Crossing wondering what we would encounter. Depth posts are up to 4m in height! We learnt that the river height lags Batemans Bay tides by 3hrs. At 11.00am the tide height at Batemans Bay was ~1.4 m and falling for an hour. The height at Shallow Crossing was 0.15m with water

flowing upstream but tasted fresh. Any wind blowing along the river would change this calculation. We all enjoyed the crossing. Onward to the Berry Farm for the advertised pancakes and coffee. Unfortunately the last sign at the car park gate indicated the site was only open 1 day per week after 1st Feb – no berries for us.

We continued through the forest finding a bridge over the Clyde River. Water flowing downstream here. We were able to spot small black fish, assumed young ones, swimming against the water flow. We arrived at Pigeon House Mountain car park for lunch. Named by Captain Cook as it looked like the pigeon houses he remembered from England – very politely avoiding all other names given to the mountain by the local indigenous and Linda's 14 year old son (at the time)!

We decided to head east to the coast and visited Kioloa Beach before driving south 38 km back to the campsite. Off to the pub, opposite the campsite, for a meal and great conversation.

### **Day 7, 21 February 2026**

We moved camp to Moruya so that we had a base closer to the tracks further south. We left Nelligen and headed to Moruya, less than 40kms away. As it was still early when we arrived, we visited the Moruya Saturday Markets for coffee and some morning tea.

After setting up at the van park, we got together to plan the following day's activities and solve the problems of the world.

### **Day 8, 22 February 2026**

The drive to Bendethra. We drove out of Moruya onto Sugarloaf Road. 60km of dirt up hill and down dale. We took the side road to Hanging Mountain Lookout, and took in the wonderful views to the south. Then we continued to traverse the mountains to Bendethra camp grounds, located in a little valley between mountains 850m and 1200m tall. The Deua River which runs through the valley is at about 300m elevation at the camp grounds. The road is simple: get up the mountain with erosion humps up, then down the mountain with erosion humps down. Lots of 1<sup>st</sup> gear driving. The Deua River was crossed twice at a depth of about 30 to 40cm to enter the campgrounds. A quick lunch at Bendethra in the grassy and picturesque campgrounds and a toilet break was encouraged.

We left Bendethra via the Dampier Mountain Fire Trail. It was similar to the road in except we had to climb to the 1200m elevation to exit. Then up and down, several hairy switchbacks until we reached the Cooma Road. Much fun had!

Drove the Cooma Road to Braidwood, skipping the Big Hole and Waterwheel due to bad weather and the fact that everyone needed a coffee after the ascent from the valley floor. The toilet break was welcome as were the coffee and pastries.

Mark and Sandy opted to drive back to Moruya via the highway, while the rest of us took the longer, "scenic route" via Araluen. After a 500m drop off the escarpment into Araluen, we followed the Deua River (which became the Moruya River) back to Moruya.

A pub diner at the Adelaide Hotel, followed by welcome rest. A long 250+km forest mountain drive day.

### **Day 9, 23 February 2026**

Monday, our third day in Moruya. The trip to Wadbilliga Drive was cancelled in favour of a free day to do our own thing. We met together at Moruya Heads for a sausage sizzle which Ian and Vanessa put on for us all. A free afternoon where most of us went sightseeing. 4pm scones in the camp kitchen cooked by Vanessa. A day enjoyed by all!

### **Day 10, 24 February 2026**

Our first stop today was in Bodalla where we stopped at the Dairy Shed to caffeinate some group members and to sample the cheeses. From there we continued down the highway to the picturesque towns of Dalmeny and then Narooma. Both have lovely coastal outlooks and we enjoyed walking on the boardwalks and watching the local wildlife.

From Narooma we headed inland to Central Tilba which is set in beautiful green countryside and has a main street of charming historic buildings. We strolled through interesting shops and ate a nice lunch at the Dromedary Hotel. We then made a bee-line to the dairy store for ice cream and to add to our day's collection of dairy souvenirs.

Before leaving Central Tilba we went to the town lookout to take in the lovely views then headed back to Moruya via the old highway, Corunna and the Wagonga Inlet Scenic Drive.

It being the last day of our travels together, we rounded out the day with a generously proportioned Chinese meal at the very friendly Moruya Golf Club.

### **Day 11, 25 February**

Today was the official end of the trip. We packed up and said our farewells. Three members made their way directly back to Adelaide, while the others stayed in the area a little longer or went on to other destinations. In all, it was a very enjoyable, if tiring week sampling what the south coast of New South Wales had to offer.