

COVID Crusaders (aka Kimberley/Cape... Crusaders) – Part 1

July 18 - 2020 – 1,623km (1,014miles) from home

Hi welcome back everyone...

Many of you have expressed keen interest in receiving our travel updates (*better news for a change*)... Should there be anyone **NOT** wishing to receive these, please let us know; we will amend our mailing list!



- Enough about the pandemic,
just tell me about your trip!

It's been a rather long pit stop (13 ½ months) at home and we're chomping at the bit to hit the wide open spaces again.

Staring down a cold Aussie winter is the main reason for heading north since snow skiing has been ruled out for us this season by that darn virus.

The **Sunshine State** beckons and there is a last minute rush to cross the NSW/QLD border amid fears it might close (again).



Adding to the rush is a three-day delay, very much unplanned I might add, at first stop-over in Hawks Nest: I misplace/lose the spare key set for the Landcruiser (yes - inside the house, SOMEWHERE!).

After a day-long agonising 'nerve-nag' search I succumb defeated and forced to order replacement from Toyota. Within a couple of days they happily supply a new set (in exchange of a small fortune!). I continue to wonder whether the set '*missing in action*' will eventually turn up one day...

The new deal: **Border clearing forms** are prepared and printed for presentation before we hurry north...

After one night at **Murrurundi**/NSW and we cross into QLD at **Goondiwindi** - breathing a sigh of relief 😊



A new deal for
Australia's
domestic
adventurers



Also known as the 'SUNSHINE STATE'



Time for a calming ale!



There are a number of sites to investigate first up...



At the wrecker's



*Farm's guard dog
on the job*





20LD2CARE



On our way to **Dirranbandi**: Some inspiring silo-art as can be found in numerous places around the country:



Silo art at Thallon



Big Sky Outback



Artwork at Yelarbon (east of Goondiwindi)

At **Dirranbandi van park** we meet delightful owners **Nikki and Scott**. This park is well worth a visit for its wonderfully welcoming vibe with complementary spud nights, pizzas and dampers!
We have to tear ourselves away but not before paying the local bakery a visit...



*Most delightful host Nikki
at Dirranbandi
van Park*



*Fellow traveller, eighty year old
Terry in charge of coals*



*Damper queen Nikki
at work -
Dirranbandi van park*



*Truly...
Dirranbandi is a 'one-horse' town
but Natalia's astounding selection
of goodies would put the wind up
a few big-smoke patisseries!*



*While there, don't miss
friendly butcher Greg Stephens
across the road when re-
stocking your meat supplies*



Some rain hits over night: This means, bush camping is off limits for a couple of days until the ground dries up: We are in 'black earth' country. Add water and any off-road destination becomes an instant no-go zone!! Black mud is *'the crap from hell'* with devilish sticking power that will stop anyone and anything in its tracks!



In the interim we hang in a nice van park in **St George**...



Butcher Greg's meats undergo further processing



At St George **Stavros Margaritis'** carved emu egg collection is worth seeing at his **'Unique Egg Shop'**. Being a wood carver back in the Greek days his curiosity led him to start carving emu eggs. He discovered these eggs feature up to 11 different shade layers. Stav says he *"derives great pleasure from creating these marvellous objects and seeing others appreciate the natural beauty of nature's miracles!"*

Apparently, his display is the *"only one of its kind in the world!"*



← Some of Stavros' creations

His homemade carving tools:



After collecting the usual load of firewood we move on to our first bush camp at the **Warroo Bridge** on the **Balonne River**...





Coping with life in the wild... it doesn't take long at all to slip back into our gypsy routines!





Katherine is keen to get some fresh bread sorted for dinner:





All the while our next door neighbour, the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, is watching our every move from his third storey hollow up the old gum tree...



Greetings from Chris and Katherine



More soon...