## 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/loose the spare key set for the Landcruiser (yes - <u>inside</u> 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...

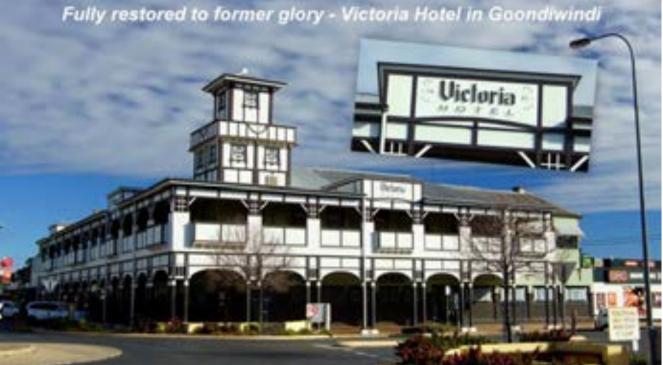
<u>The new deal</u>: **Border clearing forms** are prepared and printed for presentation before we hurry north... After one night at **Murrurundi**/NSW and we cross into QLD at **Goondiwindi** - breathing a sigh of relief O



Also known as the 'SUNSHINE STATE'



Time for a calming ale!



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















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







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...









While there, don't miss friendly butcher Greg Stephens across the road when restocking your meat supplies





<u>Some rain hits over night</u>: 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...









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!"* 



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





ty morning at Waroo 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...