

## Cape Crusaders – Part 9

Frid Nov 3/2017 – 16,579km (10,361 miles) on the road

After Carnarvon Gorge we find another rather large hole in the ground, a man-made one this time: The 45km long Moura open-cut coalmine. **Moura** is a small town in the locality of *Banana Shire* in Central Queensland. Coal has been mined here since 1961; annual production averages around seven million tons of coking and thermal coal which is exported to Japan.

Watching their monster trucks from the mine's special viewing platform is a big boy's pleasure. In 1 ½ minute rhythm the massive six-million-dollar behemoths roll by – and there is a feel of mutual recognition: Without fail, every passing driver waves and honks horns.

**We get the impression it must be their code of conduct to connect with the tourists.**





Big boys' toys



Heavy duty coal hauler

When we arrive back in town we find a helicopter landed outside local shop *Moura Electrical*. A mechanic busies himself with servicing the chopper – he just asks me to “stand back a bit” as the rotors begin swinging into action, the unsecured tail end sticking well into space beyond the shop’s car park and over the road. Can’t help a smirk – isn’t country life so refreshingly uncomplicated!



Chopper check up

*Occupational Health & Safety...  
“Eat your heart out!”*



## ***Outback carpark chopper maintenance (note running blades!)***



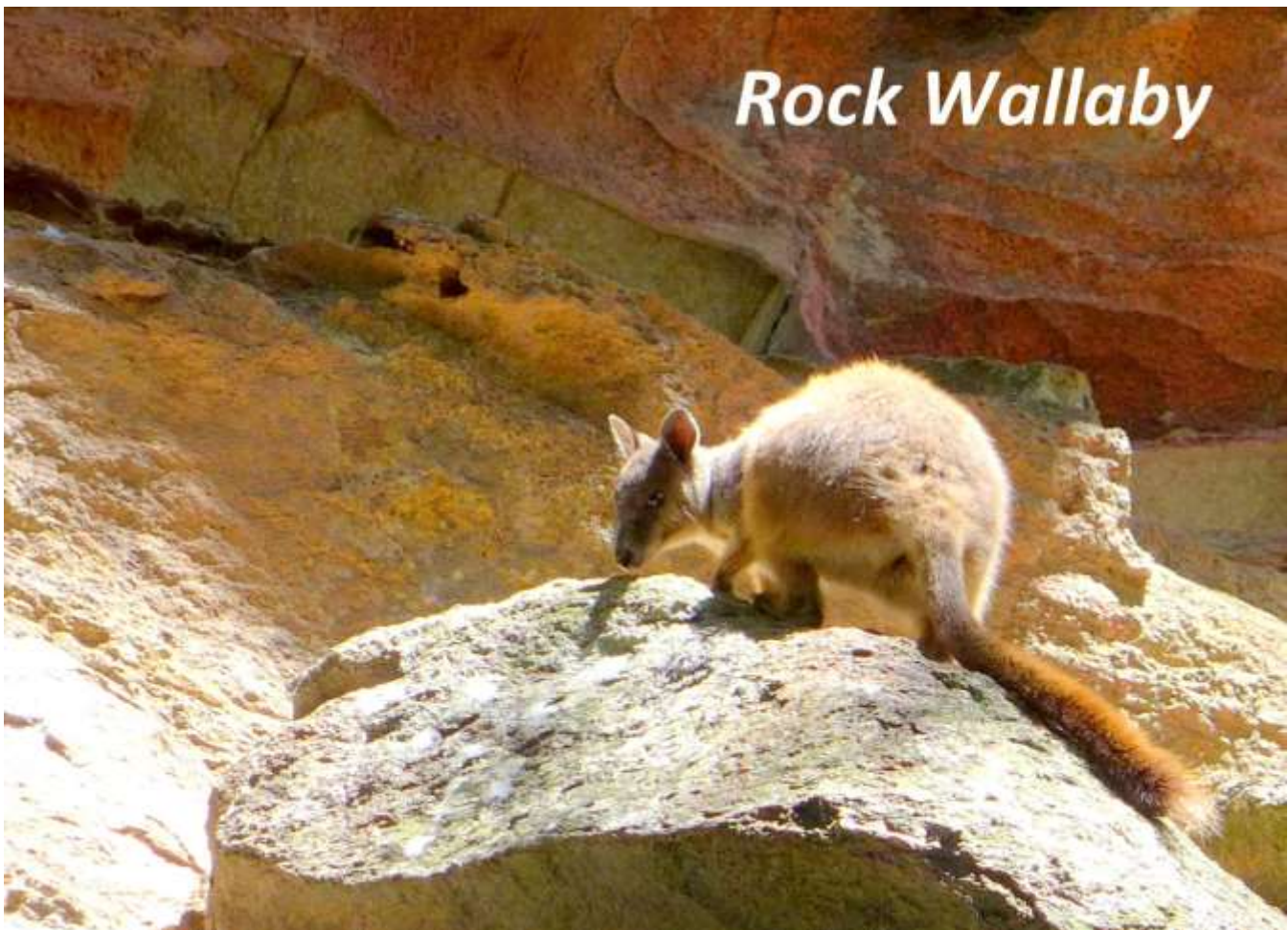
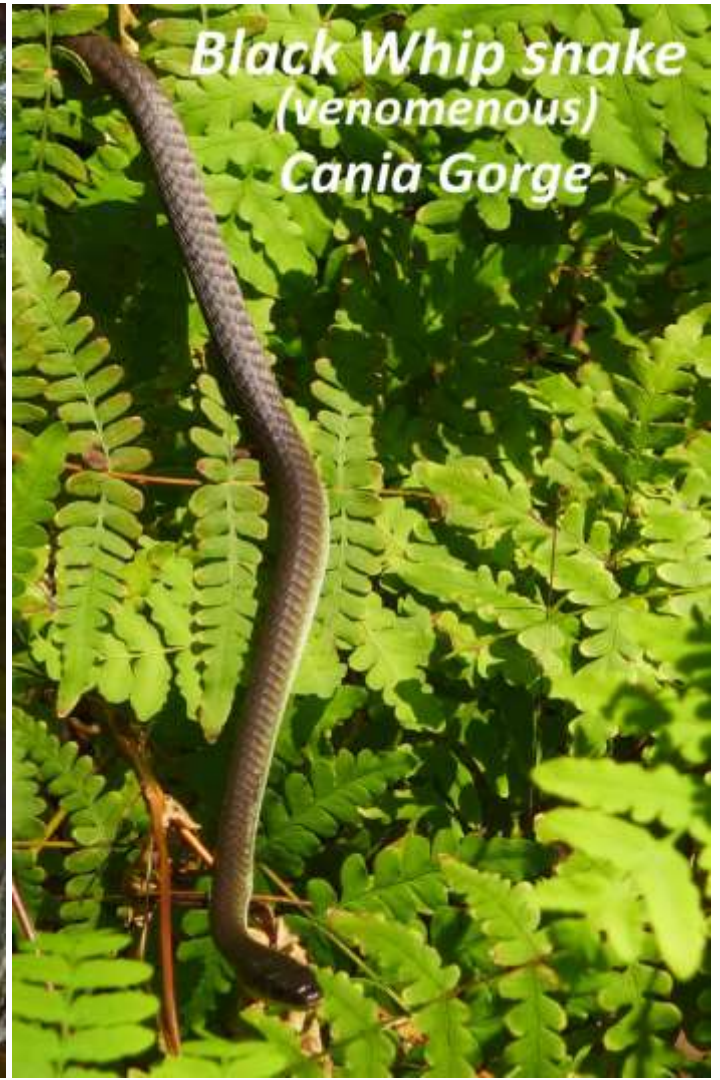
Near Monto we hang a left at the **Cania Gorge** signpost on a spur of the moment. One of our many “gypsies’ unplanned” moves and so glad we took the turn: One of the best van parks we’ve touched down so far! There are a nearby dam for swimming and some nice walks around the place. Although we remember best the various animal encounters. One night under the stars on their outdoor screen they play the film ‘Max’ (story about a dog). Its BYO chairs, nibbles and drinks... the movie is free ☺



***Cania Gorge***



***Cania Gorge/QLD***





***Someone's clever 'emu etch' on this eucalypt sparks Katherine's creativity***

A pair of stunning King Parrots single us out, paying daily routine visits to our camp. One is not supposed to feed wildlife but we can't help handing them a few sunflower seeds from Katherine's bread-making supplies for their friendliness (*bright red stands for 'male' – take note of "beautiful me"*).



I am always up for an animal encounter. Receiving such trust from a wild creature makes me feel honoured. Katherine does not quite appreciate the experience of getting up close with wild life in the same way.





*Whiptail Wallabies grow up to 1.2m in height and are most common in the tropical North of Australia*

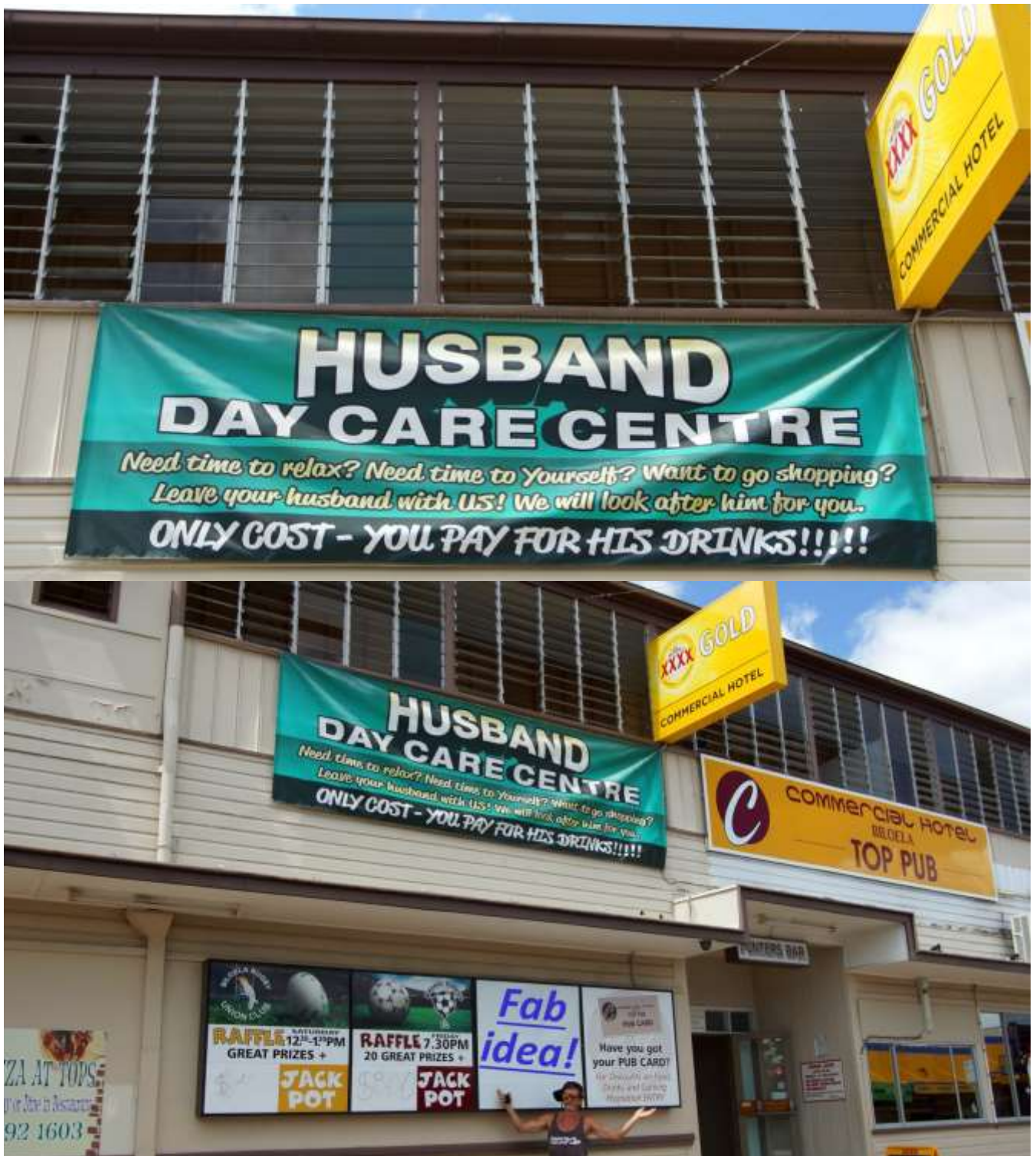


On the way to our next destination I spot this pub at Biloela: **Husband Day Care Centre...**

*"What wonderful hospitality"*— Overwhelmed, I approve of the idea without delay:

*"A schooner of XXXX Gold, please!"*





At **Lake Boondooma** our incredible run of 'permanent sunshine' gets the second dent. We realize the end of the tropical dry season as the wet's first thunderstorms threaten. There's a big one passing us to the West. We only get a sprinkle of rain this time but it is a foreboding on what's in stall. Enter the deluge soak of a south-easterly low that should last for a non-stop two weeks.





*Lake Boondooma - start of the wet season*



*Calm after the storm*



*This one fortunately bypassed us*

Our hopes of a week's *sun and surf by the seaside* at Mudjimba on the Sunshine Coast are dashed - the sun has run out of shine as a low pressure system rages, madly churning the sea unto mountains of sea foam also known as 'spume'. We are grounded in the wet!



Our Matrix van gets a service/general check-over at the manufacturer's Caloundra factory and passes with flying colours. Nothing amiss – nuts, bolts and bits confirmed in place after our Cape York test run. We had heard a number of 'failing van' stories along the way – someone said *"Take a caravan up the Cape and you'll return with a jigsaw puzzle"*. Thankfully that's not us – trust AOR ☺

Van-less for a couple of days we thankfully accept an invitation by dear friend Gordon and his lassie, lovely Wendy, to crash out at their romantic Queenslander home at the Sunshine Coast hinterland village of Montville. Three days we enjoy their welcoming hospitality over scrumptious meals, sharing laughs and stories, daily "wee dram sensations" (Scotch aperitifs) and "tasty baits" (sweet treats). A number of local bush hikes are thrown in attempting to keep the kilos at bay. As part of their red-carpet treatment true Scot Gordon treats us to a farewell bag-pipe serenade.

Unbeknown to us it occurs, serious pipers' custom commands carrying a concealed lethal weapon in a sock. **Never mess with a piper!**



*Friends Wendy and Gordon at their romantic Queenslander at Montville*



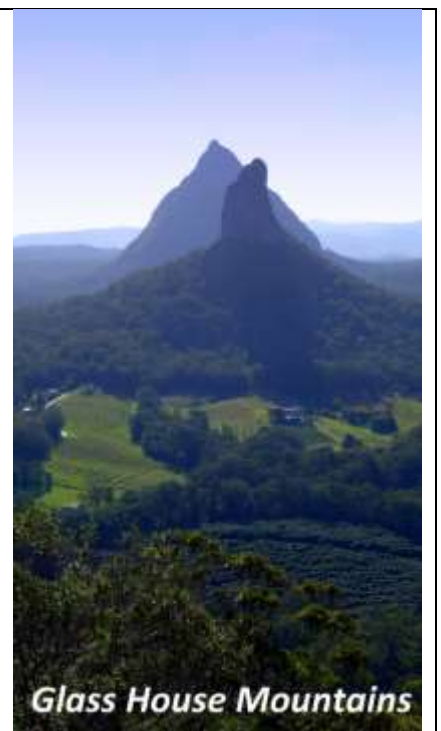
*Hiking with Wendy and Gordon*



***Sunshine Coast hinterland***



***Katherine and Glass House Mountains***  
***Mount Ngungun - All of 253m above sea level***



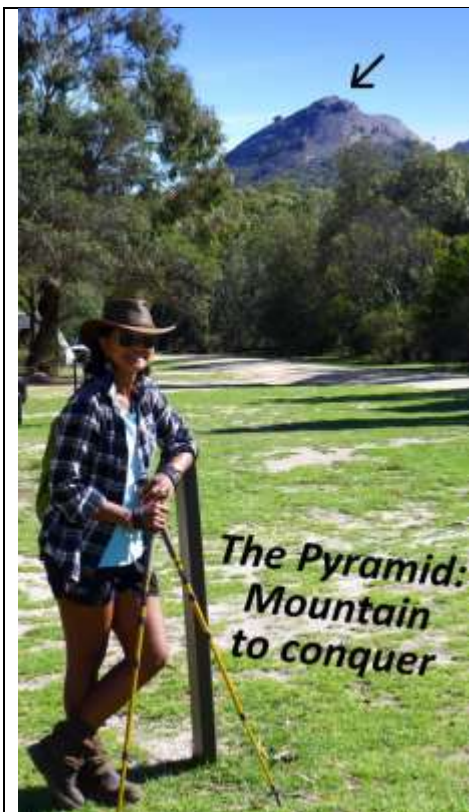
***Glass House Mountains***



☺ Welcome sign at Wendy and Gordon's abode ☺

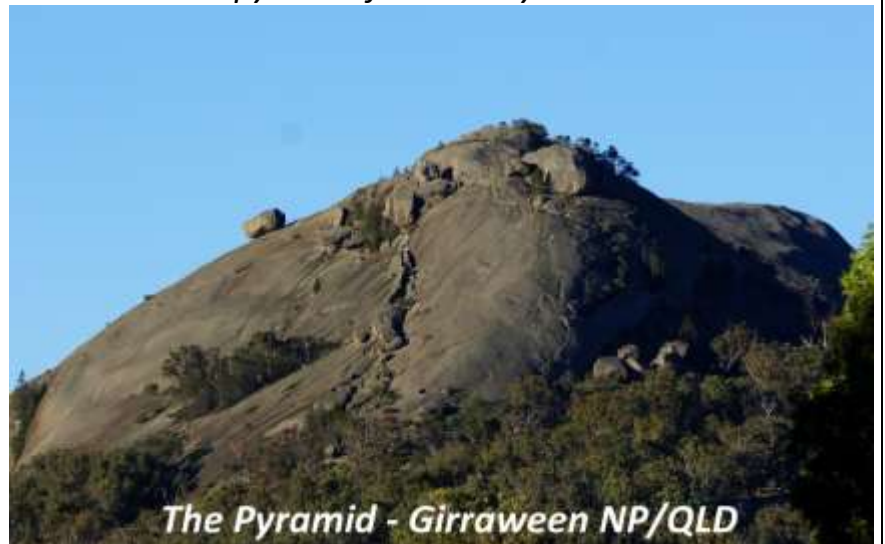


Too soon we are on the road again heading for **Girraween National Park** on the QLD/NSW border just south of Stanthorpe also known as **The Land Of Giants**. We are at the western watershed of the Great Dividing Range with massive boulders strewn everywhere. Dominating the landscape are so-called 'inselbergs', shaped by extensive weathering with domed or rounded summits, steep sides and mainly bare surfaces: Reminders of the turbulent geological processes that have shaped Girraween! The park's largest bald-rock inselbergs are the (two) *Pyramids*. The second is hidden from valley views behind the first and surprise revealed only upon the final yards of reaching the latter's summit.



**The Pyramid:  
Mountain  
to conquer**

*Largest 'inselberg' in the park – concealing the second pyramid from valley views!*



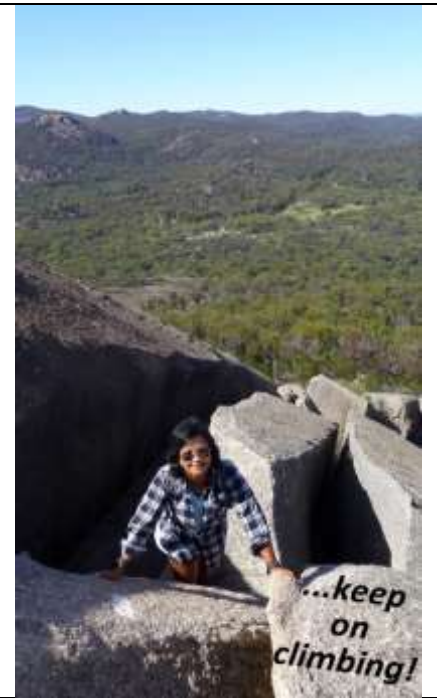
**The Pyramid - Girraween NP/QLD**



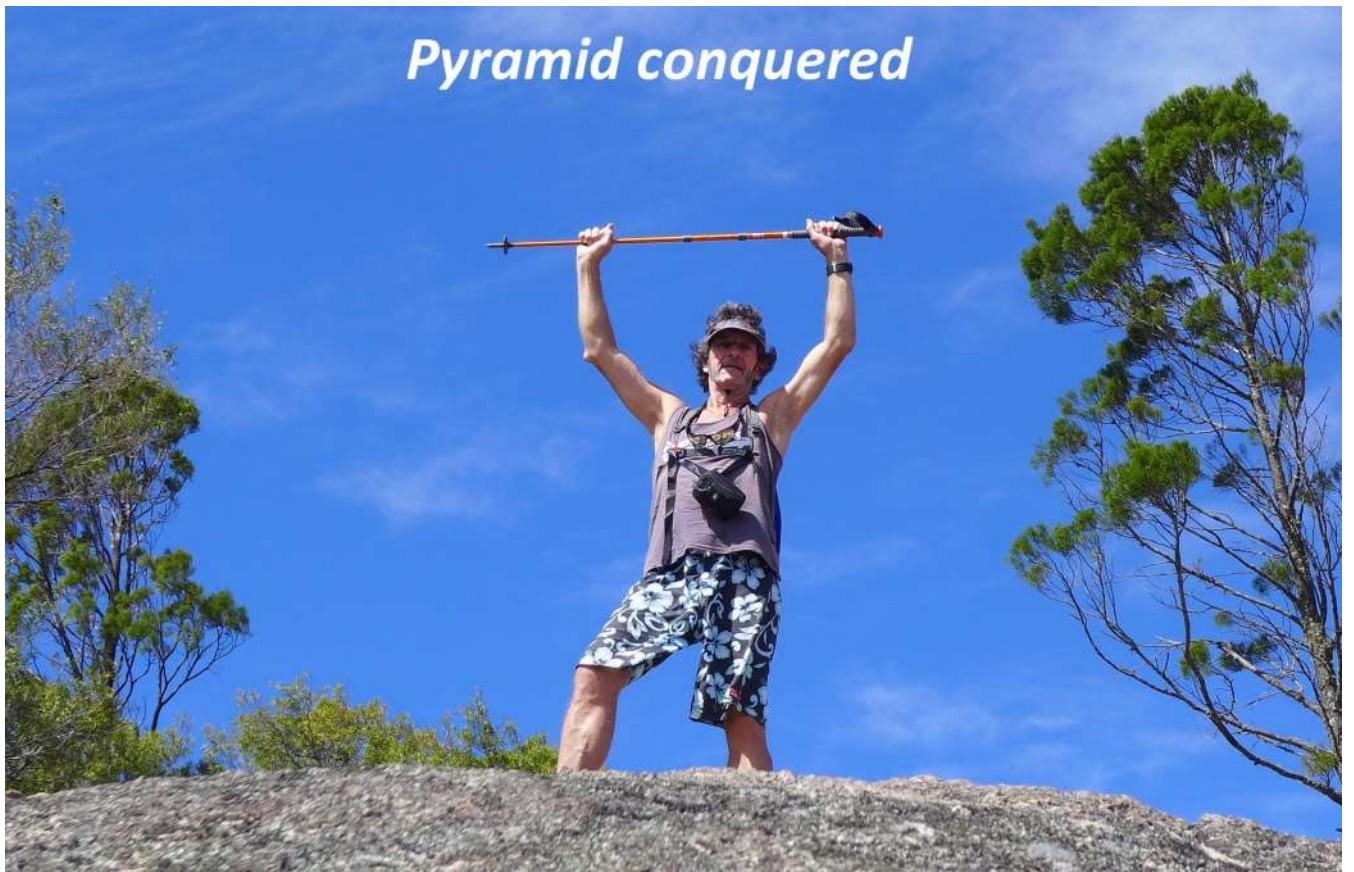
*Pyramid attack*



*Steep it is...*



*...keep on climbing!*



*Pyramid conquered*

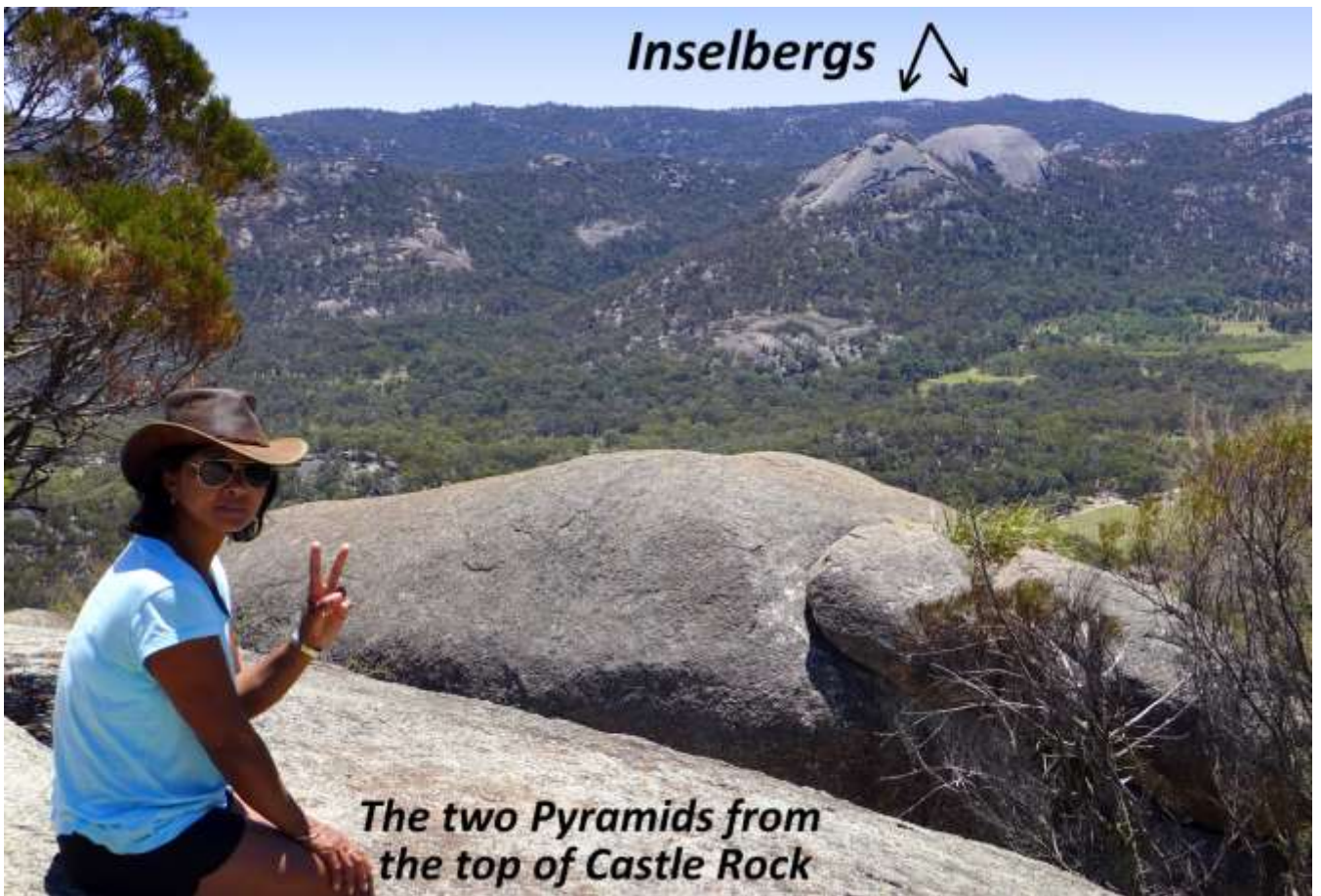


*'Pyramid's' view South*





*The second 'Pyramid' revealed - View North from the (first) 'Pyramid'*



**Inselbergs** ↙ ↘

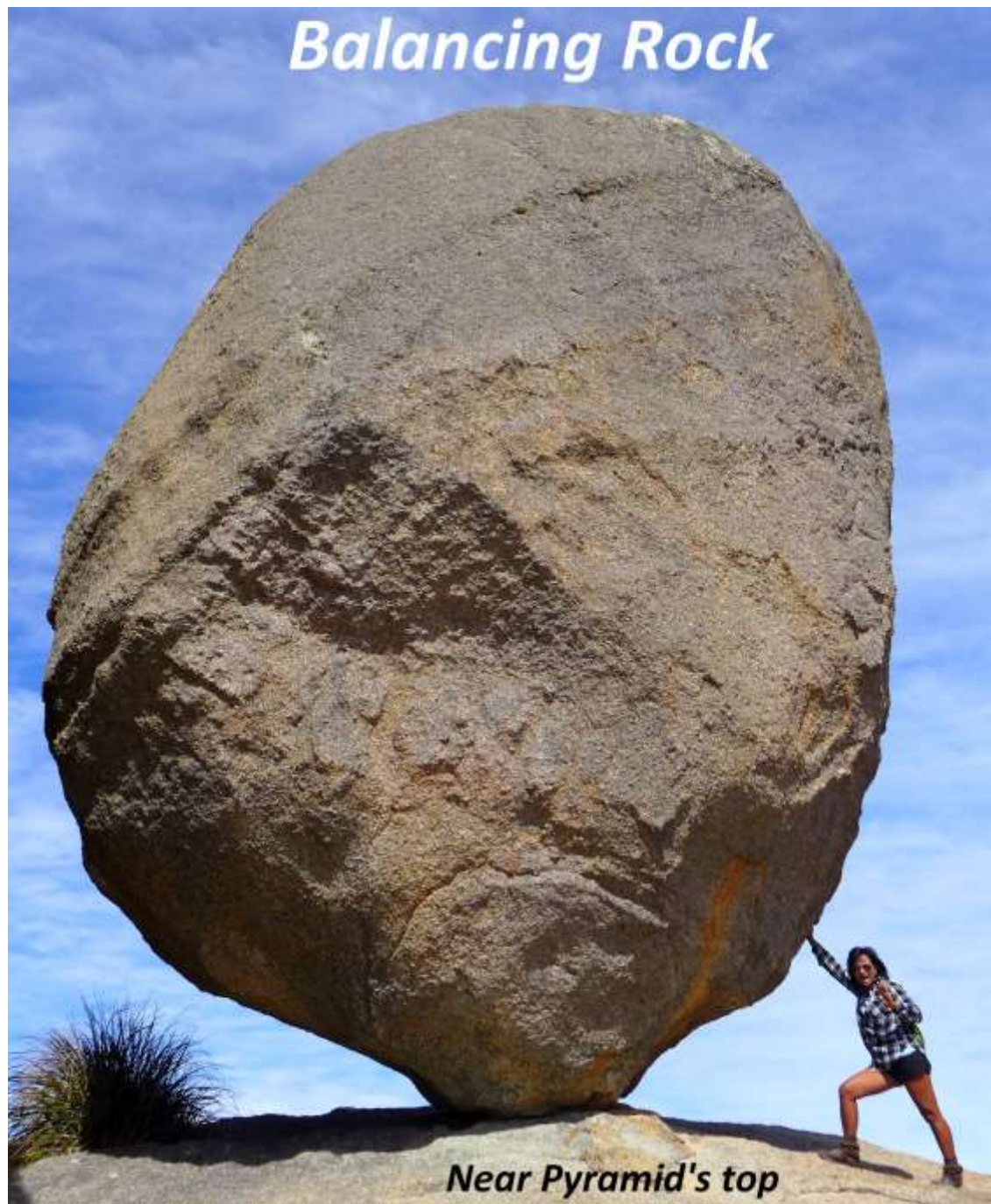
*The two Pyramids from the top of Castle Rock*



*Fellow hiker at Girraween:  
**Talaurinus beetle** with its  
distinctive ornamentation  
adapted to life in the dry  
regions of QLD.*

*Their exoskeletal armour is  
one of the hardest of any  
beetle. It is so tough it often  
remains for yars after the  
beetle has died.*

Another feature are the countless 'balancing rocks' found all over the park. They look like they may tip over at any moment: Once square blocks, rounded by the elements and positioned on fragments of weathered granite.



*“The finest workers in stone are not chisel or steel tools,  
But the gentle touches of air and water  
Working at their leisure  
With a liberal allowance of time”*

David Henry Thoreau



One would think there isn't any room for a gap at the rock's fitting surface, yet there is ample space to make a skink's comfy home - seen here soaking up rays on his sunny front porch



These two creeks continue west from here toward the Murray-Darling River system

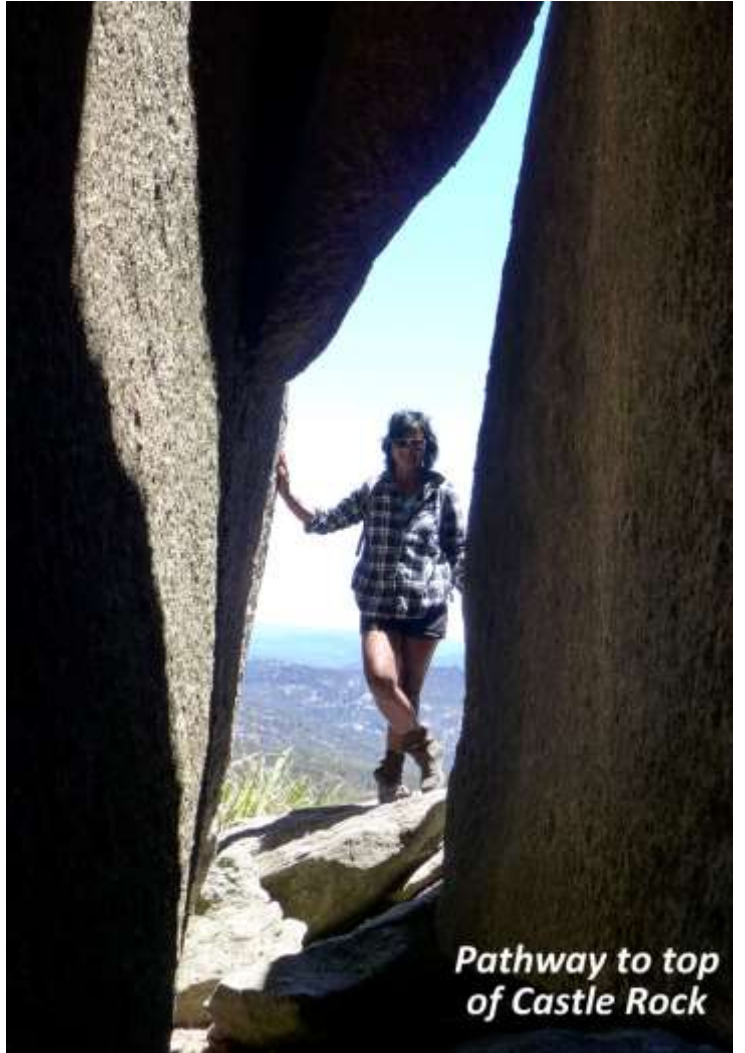
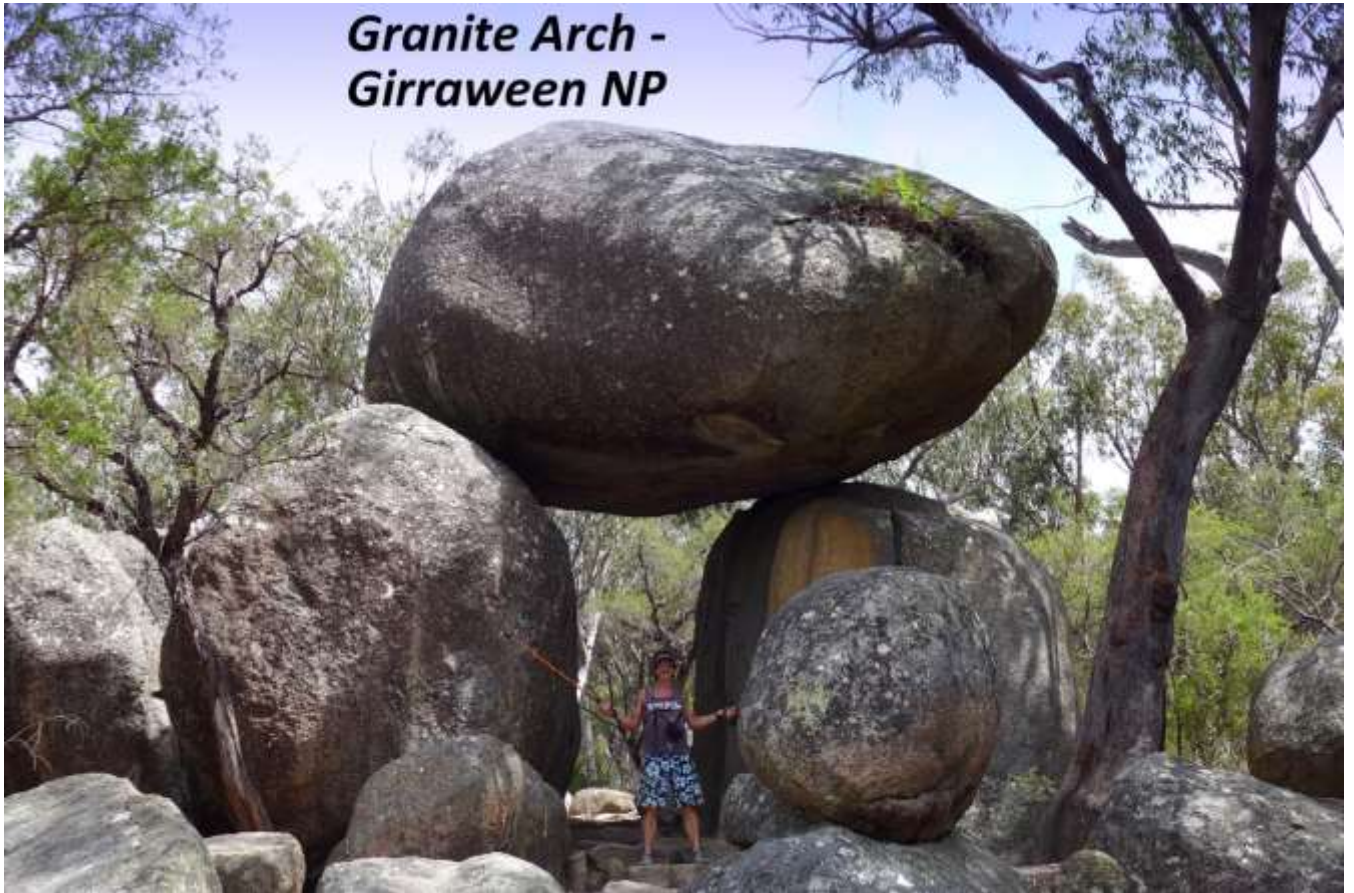


***Girraween  
National  
Park  
The Land Of Giants***

*Massive boulders  
are strewn  
everywhere*

**← *The Sphinx***

**Granite Arch -  
Girraween NP**



**Pathway to top  
of Castle Rock**



**"TheNotSoGrey Go-Mads"**

***Greetings from  
Chris and Katherine***