

OUTBACK ADVENTURE

NOWAK TRAVELOGUE | APRIL, MAY | 2012

Hello Isa Again

We didn't think that finding accommodation in Mt Isa would be a problem. But a mining expo is currently in town. No cabins, no motel rooms, a bit of a problem. Today was our wedding anniversary and we found ourselves in Mt Isa without a car and without our van. We did though have our bikes and we had each other. Let's start at the beginning.

On our way to Lawn Hill a few days ago a warning light came on in the car, telling us that the soot filter in our diesel engine was playing up. We enjoyed our time at Lawn Hill

and then had to deal with the car. No phone coverage, so the only thing we could do was to drive to the Burke and Wills roadhouse - some 220kms from Lawn Hill. By the time we got there we also had a few more warning lights on the blink. We found the closest Subaru service centre in Mt Isa, 300 km away. They advised us not to pull the van. But, today's story ends well. The car was fixed and because of a late cancellation, we secured a bed for the night -- even if we did have to pay \$220! We get a nice comfy bed for the night, in house movies and maybe even some soccer replays! A bonus.



ROAD KILL Every couple of kilometers we come across roadkill. Mostly it is kangaroo, but there are cattle and an occasional black kite or even a large wedge tailed eagle. This morning's early drive showed us how easily it is to run into a kangaroo.



BURKE & WILLS ROADHOUSE This is the epitome of the true Outback roadhouse. A rough and ready pitstop. A place where truckies stop to eat and quench their thirst, and a paddock where we could leave our van.



AMAZING We came across this sign yesterday. It is probably used by the flying doctors. We kept our eyes skyward as we drove along.

DUSTY ROADS



It is possible to experience northern Australia and still stay on bitumen roads. Most fellow travelers we meet, especially those with big rigs, never leave the bitumen. We have chosen to drive on a few gravel roads in order to camp in more remote bush settings. It has meant we have had to deal with dust and some issues, but it's a decision we took realising the possible consequences. Having said that, we are through with unmade roads for this trip.



CURRENT TALLY FROM DRIVING ON GRAVEL ROADS

- one flat tyre
- van side hatch lock broken off
- wooden foot of van stabiliser lost
- van back window ripped off (repaired)
- van top tie down plus lock broken off/lost
- jar of honey, minced ginger, pasta sauce, 8 eggs smashed
- diesel engine particulate filter maintenance
- plastic hatch/cover protecting oil plug lost
- invaluable experience in fording rivers
- many hours detailing our filthy car/van

There are three more trailers lost in the dust





Dork on a bike



Our shady camping spot at Adel's Grove