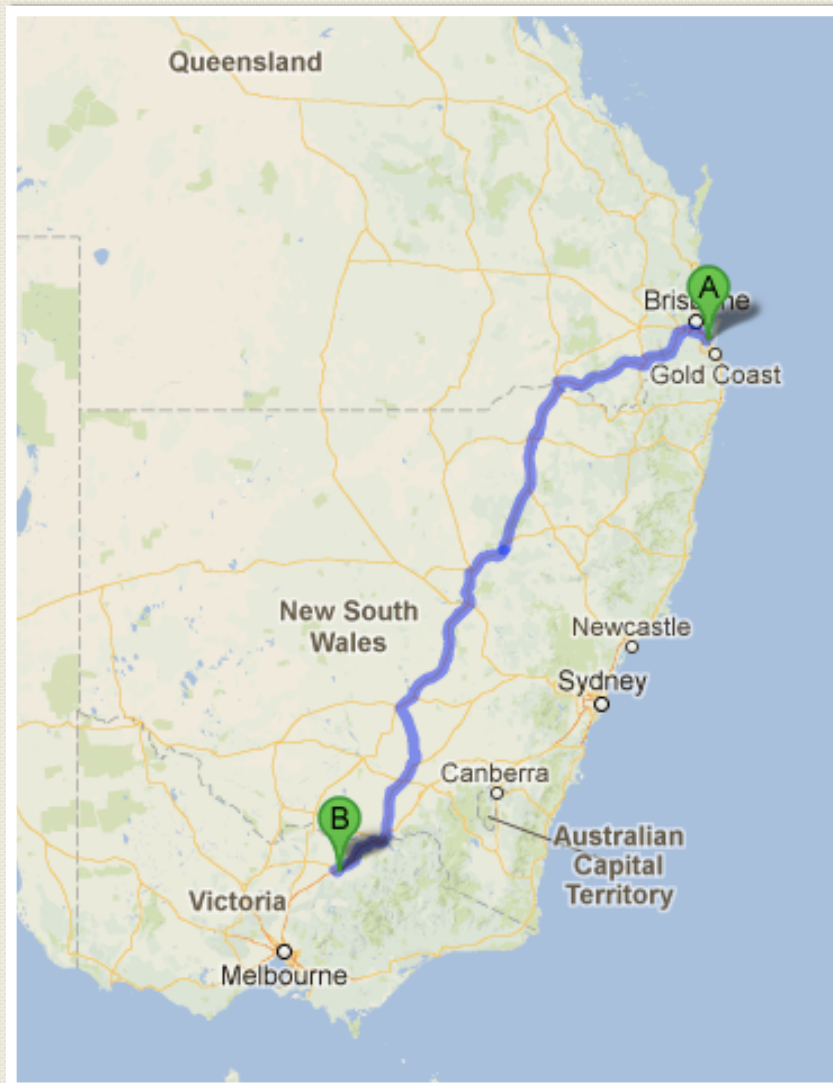




51ST AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS

BENALLA
6-18 JAN 2013



Total distance travelled 3100kms

2013 NATIONAL GLIDER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Day 1

Tasks proved quite challenging due to very strong westerly winds. Most pilots made it around, though there were 13 outlandings and a couple who returned home early. Graham Garlick's weather forecast was almost perfect (though the weather wasn't) and those who did finish were quite pleased to be home.

Day 2

Day 2's forecast brought promise of a classic post-frontal Benalla day - low convection and windy but reliable and with an early cut-off as the southerlies funnelled up through the Nilahcootie gap. CUs were popping even before briefing so the fleet was marshalled for first launch at 12.15 and a straightforward speed task to give the pilots a bit of reprieve after yesterday's challenging day. The Open and 18m classes launched first for a 330km task, but the Standard and 15m fleets were held back waiting for the launch zone to clear and then finally cancelled when the winds failed to abate as much as expected. There were 3 engine starts and one outlanding at Wangaratta but most pilots had a solid day.

Day 3

Day 3 promised light winds and 5000ft convection lasting well into the evening. Since the 15m and Standard classes did not fly on Day 2, they were put at the front of the grid and sent on a 340km fixed task, with the 18m and Open classes launched second on a slightly shorter task. The low convection heights meant tasking into the same northern region as the first two days, so for a bit of variety the fleet were sent the opposite way around - out to the northeast first, then west. The longer task for the 15m and Standard classes took them out over the irrigation to the west, which proved challenging - with eight pilots failing to finish the task. All of the 18m and Open class pilots made it home.

Day 4

Day 4 saw somewhat unpredictable conditions, again low and windy, that and a desire for a little bit of variety led to an AAT task being set after three days of fixed tasks. The early start and no early cutoff led to the 18m class being put out in front of the grid with a 4 hour task, and the other classes assigned 3.5 hours. All classes were tasked to the southwest first and then as far north as they could go in the time available, with the task setter promising to extend the northern sector if any could beat the 750km maximum task length! The task seeing ended up being quite successful, with only one outlanding and one pilot turning back early. The AAT shook up the leaderboard a little with a few new names at the top.

Day 5

The task setters attempted to set a task in fairly marginal conditions today, planning for a close-in area task to Euroa, Dookie and Peechelba. Unfortunately the forecast deteriorated even as the task sheets were being photocopied and the day was called off at briefing. With Sunday's weather looking completely

unflyable, the fleet was given a weekend off and competition will resume on Monday.

Day 6

Day 6 brought yet another 5-7000ft blue day, with all classes being sent on a 3 hour area task to the northeast and then west. The western half of the third circle over Katamatite covered a lot of irrigation country so most pilots were expected to push north into the first circle and then stay easy off Katamatite, so a small second circle was added over Berrigan to push pilots west and separate the inbound and outbound traffic. The soaring evidently improved as the day went on, with only Open at the back of the grid exceeding 100km/hr. Once more the AAT brought a few new names to the top of the scoreboard.

Day 7

Day 7 heralded the beginning of better weather; still blue but promising 7000ft climbs, and with an early start and a late finish. Even coverage of lift across the task area prompted the task-setting committee to start to explore more of the south-western region of the task area. The Open and 18m classes were sent on a 380km fixed task and the 15m and Standard classes a 300km task. The task setter felt that the task was under-set for the day and he proved to be right, as nobody outlanded. Lots of time pre-start due to the short task and big gaggles saw close finishes today, with less than 1km/hr separating the top three places in Standard class.

Day 8

Big weather was predicted for Day 8. The forecast 7000ft+ climbs and a desire for a change in scenery prompted the task setter to suggest a waypoint in the foothills to the south east, since all the flying so far had been in the flat lands north and west. The fleet was sent north east first then tracked around to the west of Benalla, and then finally into the hills to the south. Once again the weather was 1000ft or so lower at the peak than predicted, which made it a little more challenging than expected. Those pilots who knew to avoid the irrigation in the west made good time around the first few legs. Things became very soft over the hills, but pilots banded together to help each other find the few thousand feet needed to make it out of the valley, and only one outlanded in that area. Another day of very close finishes with three 18m pilots achieving the same speed down to the first decimal place.