



Big Desert & SA Border Track

Dates	29 October – 2 November 2004
Event Organiser	Daryl Owen

Attendances	Daryl, Veronica & Rachel Owen Andy Kass
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Camping at Lake Albucutya on Friday night have gave us time to have a look around the dry lake. Our first taste of sand came early on Saturday morning along the northern end of Lake Albucutya, where we dropped our tyre pressures to traverse a sand dune.

Stopping at the Weeping Gum tree, Rachel was more interested in playing in the sand to even notice the leaves were facing downwards compared to many of the other trees around.



Weeping Willow (North end of Lake Albucutya)

Travelling around the lake and across the centre, there were quite a few Kangaroos hiding in the centre grasses of the lake.

From here it was into the Big Desert along the Pella Track and onto Chinamans Track.

Looking around Chinamans Well, it was evident that there has been quite a bit of rain, by the dried mud ruts. Mud has been sprayed by vehicles all over the notice board and map.

Following a 'short cut' along an old fence line brought us back onto the Chinamans Track.

From on top of Big Bill Trig point (1530hrs Temperature of 32°C, Winds N 6Km/Hr), we could hear another group people of UHF channel 14. As it turns out, it was Sid, Cheryl, Craig, Brian, Helen, and Chris making their way into the Big Desert from the Wyperfield end. After a brief conversation over the radio, we decided to head in their direction and meet up.

We found them on Deliso Track, just north of Brushcutters Tk in a bush camp amongst the trees and grass.

The next day (Sunday) they headed off West along Delisio Track and we headed off East, with the plan of catching up later.



The views from on top of the high dunes spectacular, although unless you wanted to lower tyre pressures to below 12psi, we had to walk the remaining 50-80m to the top. Much of the park is still recovering from the effects of the 2002/2003 fires. Most area's are regenerating well, but the area's burnt are quite clear from the vantage points on top of the dunes. The burnt out area's have also left an abundance of dead timber suitable for camp fires.

At Ross Springs the vegetation opened to a green grassy plateau. A large sand drift is hidden behind a couple of dunes.



Ross Springs



Sand Drift at Ross Springs

After a quick run into Murrayville for Fuel, which we obtained from "Grandpa Simpson's" Garage. We had lunch in the shady park.

From here it was back into the Big Desert and along the Northern boundary fence to the South Australian Boarder. We headed for Cooks Mill where the others were camped.

A few minutes after the kids had washed their hands, the water on the sand seemed to attract the Bee's. Within 10minutes the area on the ground was swarming like a bee hive.

Thanks to one club member, who carries "everything", Craig provided some fly spray to disperse the bee hive in the middle of the camp. Daryl then tried dispersing the bee's around Rachel's tent, but with just enough fly spray left to make them angry, thankfully Andy also had another can of spray.

On Monday, whilst the other group headed off along the SA/Vic boarder track, we went for the 400m walk to the "Fish Ponds" not expecting much, but wanting to see what was there we were not surprised. There was evidence of dried 'ponds' but nothing with fish.

From here it was onto the Boarder Track.

Quite an amount of work has gone into this track, particularly with the fires, the construction of fire breaks are still regenerating. Many area's are under "Re-habilitation" with small detours from the actual boarder. It wasn't long before we caught up with Sid's group trying to get over a large sand dune. After listening on the radio for a few minutes and hearing the difficulties they were having, we didn't even attempt it, simply drove around on one of the Fire Break access tracks.

For a long weekend, it was surprising to only have seen one other vehicle (excluding the other CFA 4WD group) on the track.



SA/Vic Boarder Track (SA LHS, Vic RHS)



Top of one of the Sand dunes on the SA/Vic Boarder Track

Since we had not been to the "Red Bluff" we thought we would go and check it out. And sure enough a bright red bluff stands out amongst the pale sand dunes. A large camp ground and facilities, with a few other campers.



Red Bluff

We then traveled along the Fire Break Track at the southern end of the Big Desert, to the Murrayville-Nhill Rd, and up to Milmed Rock Track. We then met up with the other group at Milmed Springs for our final night.

Tuesday morning we headed off just after 9am, stopping at the edge of Pella Tk and the Rainbow Rd to pump up our tyres. This was the first sign of clouds and rain in 4 Days. From here it rained all the way back to Melbourne.

We stopped at Waracknabeal for fuel, and decided to head home via the Western highway, to avoid the northern end of the city on Melbourne Cup day at about 4pm.

Total distance from Dimboola to Waracknabeal was 700Km and Daryl used 116Lts in a 2.8Lt Diesel Hilux.