

# Monkey Gum Trail

The day started fairly early for The Gilbert Family, 5.45am and we made our way down to Nowra. Unfortunately our arrival to the Nowra visitor's centre, where everybody was waiting for us patiently, was late by half an hour as the arrival time was 8.50am. Being the latecomers we were designated the trip reporters.

The weather conditions at Nowra were Sunny conditions with a brisk chilly wind and the temp would have been 15 degrees. We all complained about the windy conditions but we knew we were up for a good trip.

The following people attended this trip were: Craig – Prado (Leader), Glenn – Nissan, Allan - Mitsubishi Challenger, Sebastian – Prado, Steve – Nissan, Nathan – Toyota, Ben – Nissan (At the end).

We started our trip at 9.00 from Nowra Visitors Centre, preceded South 13Kms and turned right at Turpentine Road heading towards Braidwood. We stopped at Dean Cape Road to air down the tyres. This was the start of the Jarrawangal National Park going left into mid bush road, the track started off powdery within a few kms into the drive, the roads started to get more technical and they are well acclaimed for being bumpy and rocky. We snaked our way into the bush areas till we came to a sign that said Morton National Park. We stopped for a look at the potential camping sites that previous campers have etched into the landscape, however it was evident these campers had no thought about taking home their rubbish.

The group made their way further down the track from the campsites and we took a left turn to investigate another campsite; meanwhile when we were starting to move forward Steve, in his 'Tonka Tough Nissan', decided he would take on a tree by moving his vehicle into it (The Greenies would be upset). After twenty minutes driving we decided we would stop for morning tea at 10.30am and let the kids can have a run while the adults discussed the next tracks to venture down.

10.45am Craig lead us down to a track that was called Wombat Flat, where we came across a huge drop into some rather uneven rutted rocks and dirt, Craig took care of us all by talking us through the correct way to get through this huge drop, the Mitsubishi Challenger took on the terrain with two wheels in the air (What a show off). Steve in his Tonka Toy chewed it up and spat it out. As we continued on, the road started to show some Grade 4 characteristics such as:

huge ridges, rocks and ruts making the drive a bit tricky and difficult to negotiate.

Before you know it the terrain on the tracks would change from a dirt, flat trail into one that had corrugations the size of small mountains etched into the land making the trip into a seesaw effect, not so great for the car or the passengers who will have to go the Chiropractor the next day? Once we got through that, we came to a massive rut in the track, it is evident that the previous vehicles have left their marks on the landscape, this track is difficult; luckily we had Craig to talk us through this tricky track so we didn't leave any car parts behind.

Just a few Kms up the track we came to the next hill climb and the terrain got steeper and rockier, it was the last leg of the Monkey Gum trail. The track proved to be more difficult as you went up and there were hidden tree branches broken into the ruts and sharp rocks were waiting to remodel your



vehicle, as we proceeded up the track Craig's Prado's sidestep was bent upwards, Nathan's Toyota's sidestep took on a new look (Oh What a feeling) and Ben's Nissan started a trend with his left side wheel guard flapping around in the breeze. We travelled approx. 43Kms on this leg of the trip.

As we licked our wounds we made our way towards Turpentine Road and took a left turn towards Tianjara falls, we stopped for lunch in the car park, had a look at our battle scars to our vehicles, Nathan already had a design planned in his head to make supa dupa sidestep, Ben had the duck tape out to put together his Nissan, the tape was the same colour as his car (how handy is that!!).

The kids just ran around the car park so they can be worn out for the next leg of the trip. We took a photo of the group at the look out a Tianjara falls.

Our next adventure took us down towards Wandanudian where we got on the Cassia track from Turpentine road. We went down the Cassia track and it was a bit easier; we



absorbed the extreme corrugations easier as our inners were already jellyorised. Everyone had a great day and on behalf of all thanks Craig for leading a good trip and well done Ben for being good at being up the rear.

Trip finished at 3.30pm

Aroha Gilbert

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