



# North Stradbroke Island

## Participants

Ben Gis Connor Zoe Sweetnam – Patrol  
Glen Kim Monica Coddington & Naomi – Hilux  
John Karina Liam Ashley Groth – Navara  
Peter & Shelley Fitzsimmons – Triton  
Roger & Jill Sheath – Patrol  
Stan & Noelene Kynoch – Defender

## Friday 24 September

The day had finally come. Up bright and early only to wait for an hour around home as we had to go to Amanda's graduation. We sat in the school hall listening to the principal yabber on about 'life choices'. Clearly our life choice at the time was to be on North Stradbroke Island. Graduation done and we hit the road, up to Port Macquarie for the night to pick up Naomi.

## Saturday 25 September

We left Port Macquarie and started making our way to Tenterfield. We went through Wauchope, Walcha, Long Flat, Armidale, Armidale Maccas, Uralla the then Tenterfield. The cabins were basic but the cap kitchen had a TV big enough to watch the footy. Ben, Gis, Stand and Noelene arrived and we all settled in. We ordered pizza and took over the camp kitchen with pizzas and paper aeroplanes. Not much to say about the football at this stage except Go Roosters (sorry Stan). We all went off to bed as we had a big day ahead of us.

## Sunday 26 September

Woke up to find the natives had been helping themselves to things. They went through Glen's esky and took Bens Cobb. Don't think we lost anything else. The police were a great help. "Can you call back after 3.30pm because we are busy". We decided to just leave Tenterfield and go to North Stradbroke for our much needed holiday. We did our first water crossing in the middle of Stanthorpe town. The place was flooded

(things you do for a pie). Driving through Warwick we saw a Nissan Patrol being put on a tilt tray – funny that. At 12.30pm we finally made the ferry. We heard over the radio that the ferry was having throttle problems. I think the captain was stalling in fear of the pirates about to board! It was a 45 minute ride on the ferry and we were all getting excited. The throttle problem seemed to be fixed although we did offer to push a few Nissans off to make the load lighter! We finally arrived on the island at 2.15pm, stopped in town to get our beach permits and fruit and veg. Off to Dunwich to let our tyres down before hitting the beach. John asked Ben what he should air down to. Ben's answer was 'well I don't think we are going to have Stockton sand on Stradbroke'- Really??? With that answer John proceeded to air down. Unbeknown to anyone, John was a virgin deflator and blew his valve. Thankfully it was easily fixed! We soon hit the beach, found a perfect camping area big enough for us all, set up camp, had happy hour, dinner, relax and bed.

## Monday 27 September

Woke to a beautiful morning. Most of us went for a swim although happy hour the night before caused a few late risers. We headed south down the beach to Point Lookout where we saw whales, turtles, sting rays and the odd school of fish. We spent about an hour walking around the headland before having lunch in the park. Even though it was only day 2 of the holiday with everyone, we were starting to learn some little secrets about people. Ben, Glen and Roger decided to wait outside the toilets while Poopologist Peter went for his second visit of the day. John was trying to sleep in the park and Noelene cleaned up everyone's left over chips! The kids were having fun in the park so we decided to head back to camp for a swim and set plans in place for tomorrow. When we got back to camp we found that the ranger had issued us a naughty note for having our tags tied to our tent. With that, we all tied our cardboard tags onto our tent ropes, had happy





hour and planned our next day around the high tide. We had dinner and came back to the communal tent at Jill & Roger had bought, where happy hour continued into the night. Apparently, the boys are going fishing in the morning.

### **Tuesday 28 September**

Glen and Ben were up early enough. They took off to feed the fish and sea eagle. Ben's head was hurting a little from the night before. They were soon joined by John for some more fish feeding. Back to camp for a swim as there was obviously no chance of being bitten by a shark, let alone a fish! We waited for our trip leader to give us the thumbs up to leave as there is no driving on the beach 1 hour either side of high tide. Packed for lunch we headed off and onto the beach where it was noticed that something was not quite right. We were smack bang on high tide. Who knows what Ben was reading!! We managed to get off the beach in the drizzling rain where we went to Amity Point for lunch. Glen and Stan did some more fish feeding and John went for a snorkel. The weather was looking a bit gloomy so we decided to pack up. No sooner had we done that the rain started. Back at camp we added extra tarps to our sites and it continued to rain. We had happy hour, dinner and lots of laughs at Pete the toilet connoisseur who has studied Poopology, Cyclone Shelley because she has been in 3, Colonel John (as in Colonel Sanders). With so much toilet talk going around, Gis explained that 'Poopalassin' meant passing wind in German – Fitzzy now has a new radio name!! Still laughing at that, Monica came racing back to the happy hour tent trying to speak but nothing was coming out through the laughing. Apparently when she had gone to use the toilet a field mouse had found its way in! Luckily for the mouse, it was 2 bundys faster than Glen.

### **Wednesday 29 September**

Armed now with the correct tide, we decided today was going to include the Keyholes and maybe some other things. We left camp at 8.30am and were not returning until 2pm because of the tide. Poopalassin opened the account bright and early while Shelley packed for the day out. We headed off to the Keyholes where we had biscuits and beer for morning tea. The track in was awesome with lots of puddles and bog holes. After morning tea we hit the Keyholes track again and stopped at a beautiful picnic area. The kids played on the playground equipment. Zoe fell off the swing and got hit on her head front and back. We had lunch and wine, followed by a swim in Brown Lake – a beautiful fresh water lake. Naomi found a dead guppy which she tormented Monica with, then followed up with chasing Liam into the water. We stopped at Dunwich for supplies as dinner tonight was going to be Kimmys Homies in the Cobb. The pizzas were a great success, all cooked in the Cobbs. We had Hawaiian, supreme, meat lovers, curry beef, satay



chicken – just about every pizza imaginable. We were all so full and lots of fun making them. By the end of the night, the Çobberý'had been born. After such a big day we were all in bed by 8.30pm.

#### **Thursday 30 September**

After a very windy night we finally got up to an overcast morning. We changed our snorkelling and swimming day to 4wding and beach cricket day. We started up the cars after Kim pointed out to Ben that he was reading the wrong tide AGAIN and we headed off. We stopped at Myora Springs for a quick look and went off to find a lookout. The lookout track apparently had a locked gate in the middle of it so once we reached the lookout, we turned around and went out the same way we came in, looking for another adventure. We went to Dunwich for morning tea, checked out some aboriginal paintings in a little gallery and got ready for our next leg of the trip. Noelene found a 2<sup>nd</sup> had shop where she bought some mags on Defenders. We could hear the shop keeper cheering from a block away that he finally sold them (only marked 1988!!) We found a sand hill but the Nissan only made it about 10m's so Ben said there was no point in anyone else trying (wouldn't want the Nissan to be outdone) Again, on another 4wd track where we got a great view of the sand mining that takes place on the island. Zoe hit her head on the window as they went over a little bump and said to Gis that she would like to go home so she could rest her brain – it's hard being a kid these days! We eventually ended up at the lookout we were at earlier – no locked gate! We backtracked anyway and headed back towards the Keyholes where we stopped for lunch before continuing on the track, through the creek bed and onto the beach to take us back to camp. The time had come for the Bundy Rumba Hula Hoop Championships (this is not for the faint hearted!) Glen and Ben started showing off their skill of hoops on their necks and arms and even on the arms whilst drinking beer! Then along came Stan "the man". What a surprise pack Stan is with the hula hoop. He was a definite winner for the men. Connor and Naomi were experts managing 2 and 3 hoops at a time. The ladies event was just as hilarious with Gis a clear winner. By this stage everyone was laughing so hard they could barely talk. The photos say it all. We had an early happy hour where we were joined by Jim and Judy – some people Glen befriended over the radio. Jim drew us a mud map of some tracks to go on to find the second highest point on the island. The plan for tomorrow was set. The laughing and noise went well into the night as did Rogers generator. A few more secrets had emerged about people and as usual they included a particular guys wearing g-strings but for this trip he restricted himself to undies with monkeys on the front of them. Shelley broke her chair and the kids fashion paraded their glow stick outfits. Liam's was a definite winner with glowing eyes!

#### **Friday 1 October**

We had an early start today for our adventure. Ben told Jill and Roger and John and Karina that we were leaving at 8am. This was to ensure that our actual departure time of 8.30am was kept. The mud map lead us to the best look out. It was like we were on top of the world. Roger nearly made it up the hill. He could not understand why he couldn't get the Patrol through the boggy sand section. After about 5 attempts Ben radioed Roger to check he was actually in 4wd. Roger replied "yes of course... oh s^&t" (that will teach him for boxing in the mighty Hilux he he he) We continued to cross the island by 4wd. Back to the pony club where we started and we all aired up before hitting the tar. Whilst driving down the road we saw a white 4wd stuck behind a locked gate with no where to go. He obviously didn't have the same contacts as we did! With the snorkelling being put off day after day it was decided this was our last chance. So the kids, Kim and Karina braved the freezing cold water for a snorkel in the shark net area. It was time to get out when Naomi's fingers started to go purple and the kids couldn't talk!! However it is never too cold for icecream! Back to camp to start packing up for our departure tomorrow.

#### **Saturday 2 October**

Packing up in the rain is not fun. We had all packed up and left, campers in tow discussing how no-one had been stuck all week. Up until now.....Poopalassin got stuck getting off the beach. Apparently it was Johns fault (even though Fitzzy was driving?!?) Shelley hit warped anger mode, thankfully she was unarmed but soon recovered at the bakery! We got on the ferry where we ran into Jim and Judy again before heading off in different directions. Thank you Ben for a great week away – full of fun, adventure and laughs as always.

