

Bendethera

Trip Participants

Glen & Kim Coddington
Doug & Jeannie Bickhoff
Marion & Michelle Markova
Iainn Maxwell
Phillip Nickells
Corey Parlato & Sandie Grant-McDonell

Trip Leader-



We met at Moruya at the Hot French Bread Bakery where there was not a French person to be seen. Marion and Michelle were one of the first to arrive, with Michelle getting out of the car in socks and thongs because she forgot her shoes! We gathered our last supplies, topped up the fuel in cars and set off towards Araluen. The country side was absolutely beautiful and it wasn't long before we hit the dirt. After a little way in we entered Deua NP where we found a spot to pull over and air down. We drove through and turned off onto Dry Creek Fire trail. It wasn't long before we required low range with some massive hill climbs and descents. Corey and Sandie were being TEC for the first time and doing a great job, letting us know when people had stopped and when they were moving again. We soon turned onto our first fire trail where the fun began.

The ranger had warned us that there had been high winds the week prior to us driving the track and that she had not been through since so there may be some trees down. We only came across a couple of big branches that required moving but with all the debris on the ground it was evident that the wind had been quite strong. We continued along with some of the tracks throwing some interesting challenges our way in the range of sandy hill with ruts, steep climbs over rocks before coming to yet another steep climbs that had been chewed out if time. Big holes and loose rocks were the challenge. Glen went first in the Hilux, stopping half way to pick another line before he de-

cidied it was best to walk it. Most of the other drivers also walked it. Glen took the left hand line and got straight up with the typical Hilux wheel lift. Next was Marion, who tried the right hand side where the loose rocks were. After a few attempts he got up the left hand side with a bit of momentum. Doug was next in his short wheelbase Defender which made it look like nothing. All whilst people were having troubles going up the hill, Iainn was having trouble going down the hill and slipped over as he got to the bottom. After a couple of minutes he got up as he was next to drive the hill, and did so no problems. Phil was next to tackle the track. He tried multiple times, even tried the max trax. It came time to snatch Phil the rest of the way to the next level where he could drive out himself as there was a tree that was way too close to the back of his car to attempt reversing back down. Glen reversed down the hill and the recovery got underway. Phil was soon on the next level and started to drive up but his car kept stalling. Time after time his car was just running out of puff and not going anywhere. Stopping short of another recovery all the way to the top, Glen got in Phil's car only to find he wasn't in low range! Which explained a lot!! Phil would have made it up otherwise.

We were soon heading into Bendethera Campground. There were a few water crossings but nothing difficult although there was a call over the radio that Iainn had something dangling from the back of his car. Once he got out to check it, he found that he had snapped his rear sway bar. We pulled into camp and all found our spot to set up. There were a few people already but as the area is so big it didn't cause any problems. The drop toilet was in good condition which was good.



Phil and Corey went and got some firewood to start the fire while Iainn sat down with a bag of frozen peas on his leg! Iainn and Glen managed to remove the broken rear sway bar from the Prado with no issues. Marion went and brought back a heap more firewood to last us well into the night. We had a small happy hour and sat around the fire talking. The temperature was starting to drop so everyone rugged up. Dinner was cooked and we all slowly started disappearing to bed after a big days drive.

Sunday saw a chilly start. Beanies and gloves were essential however it didn't take long for the sun to warm things up. We had breakfast and packed up ready for a 9.30am departure. The track out was

not as difficult as the way we came in. There were a couple a really tight corners and some steep climbs but only a couple of washed out sections which everyone made with no problem. We passed a couple of motor bike riders but that was all. We drove out of Deua NP and it wasn't long before we hit the tar and aired up for the trip into Braidwood.

Thank you to everyone who came and made it a great weekend and thank you Sandie and Corey for doing a great job at tail end charlie for your first time!

