



Seeing Earth need not cost it

FOR many newly-minted retirees a campervan trip around Australia is a must-do.

But campervans are a big expense.

One way to enjoy the experience without a huge capital outlay is by renting a campervan from Mighty Cars & Campers. With branches around Australia at major tourist hubs, and a selection of models and sizes, it's a sensible way to test whether this form of holidaying is for you.

The Mighty Campers website is also a great place to start when planning your trip, with an online route planner where you can build your itinerary.

Suggestions include a four-day Sydney- Brisbane adventure, including overnight stays or visits to places such as Newcastle, Nelson Bay, Port Macquarie, Yamba, Ballina, Byron Bay and Kingscliff.

There's also plenty of helpful information on what to pack and what to look out for on your trip.

There are six campervan vehicle categories to choose from, and extras that can be hired such as a satellite phone, a GPS and picnic tables and chairs.

■ Mighty Cars & Campers, Central West Business Park Bldg, 2/9 Ashley St, Braybrook, 1800-670-232.



A VAN, A PLAN – Renting a vehicle is a better option for many.

CMCA RALLY WHO ARE YOU

1. What's your name?

Eleanor Scully.

2. Tell us about your family and friends.

Married – Husband is Paul. two daughters– Susan and Christine. Friends: I say we have two families – one is our blood family and the second is our CMCA family. At least every six months we are able to catch up with our second family and all the news that we have. We also have some wonderful friends in Brisbane.

3. What are your hobbies and interests?

My main interest is the CMCA. This club is the heart of a wonderful group of people and Paul and I always enjoy the camaraderie and laughs that go with this club. I do not have any hobbies that I follow closely. However, I crochet and knit and most of the articles that I make are donated to the CMCA for distribution to aged care facilities and hospitals in the area where we have our rally. When I have some spare time, I do play the odd game of golf.

4. How did you get involved with the CMCA?

We were advised to join this club many years ago when we purchased our first motorhome. We started to go to rallies to learn more

about motorhoming and then eventually we started volunteering at these rallies.

5. Had you heard of Robinvale /Euston before coming here?

No – at this point, Paul and I have not done a lot of travelling due to the fact that Paul has been working. However, we are looking forward to exploring our wonderful country in the near future.

6. What are your impressions of Robinvale thus far?

This is small but very close-knit community and they have all been very friendly and helpful to us at all times. We have found it to be a very rich pastoral area with many different nationalities living here.

7. What do you think of the facilities available around town?

From what I have seen so far, the facilities are some of the best I have seen in a rural community.

8. What are you most impressed with in Robinvale?

The Murray River and all the activities that are held on the water.

9. Which activities are you most looking forward to taking part in while in Robinvale?

Some of the day tours that are available. I have already done one tour to

the Mungo National Park and it was fantastic. Some of the local businesses are also opening up their workplaces for us to have a look at which is great.

10. What do you look forward to most at the rallies?

Visiting a new community to see what is there and catching up with our second family.

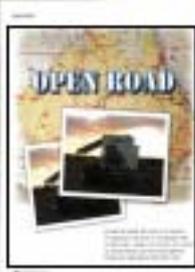
11. What stays with you after a rally?

Many wonderful memories.

12. What makes you return to a place that you 'rallied' at?

To visit new friends that we make and also to see some of the tourist items that we missed the first time.





50 something, National

01 May 2014, by David Woodrow

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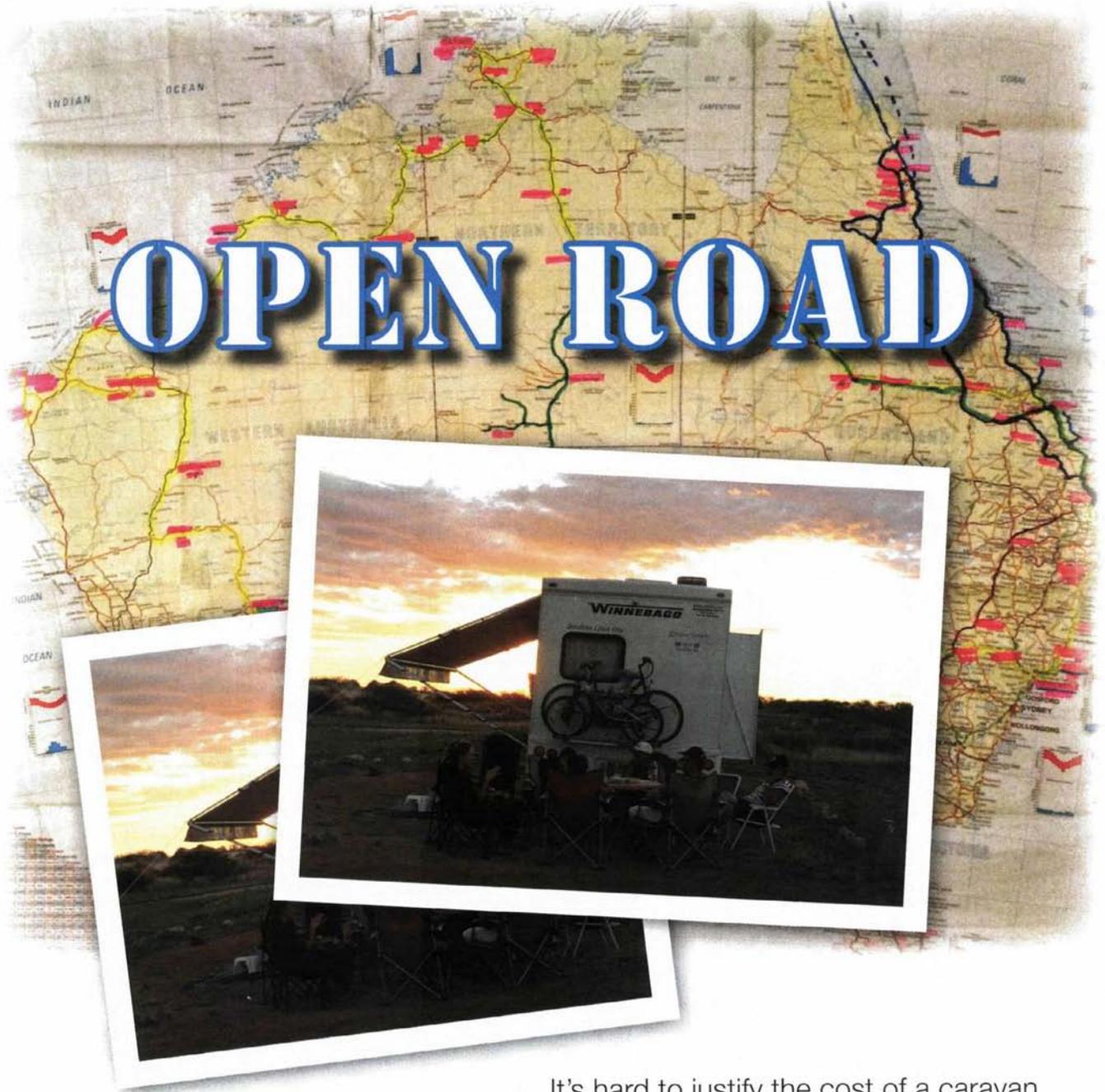


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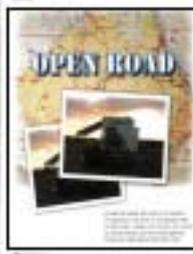
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It's hard to justify the cost of a caravan if it spends more time in the garage than on the road – unless, of course, you round up some friends and buy one together. That's just what David Woodrow did.



Over the years, when our kids were young, we went camping, campervanning and caravanning but after retirement, we hired motorhomes for a week each year (five times) to travel around Australia and New Zealand. This cost us about \$240 a day (with a \$2000 insurance excess) and we considered buying our own motorhome but could not afford the capital outlay or ongoing expense.

I decided to enquire if there were others in the same position and wrote a letter to a magazine to see if there was someone who would be interested in a joint purchase. Many motorhomes are used for one long trip or several short trips and then sit in storage for up to 10 months of the year.

The response to my letter was good and we subsequently purchased a Winnebago Leisure Seeker in 2011 with a number of owners who have two or three months each a year (and called it RVShare). We predict that it will cost under \$60 a day (with only \$200 insurance excess) if we get a reasonable trade when we have had enough.

How it works

Scheduling has worked out well with some owners taking their time in separate months or choosing to have none in one year and extra months the following year. The system is set up legally with one of the owners acting as volunteer manager with a common fund (like a body corporate) to cover registration, insurance, maintenance, service, tyre replacement, cleaning.

We have meetings twice a year to discuss the timetable, improvements etc and to set the common fund contribution. The timetable is on Google Calendar, accessible to all owners. Our meetings are more social dinners and we have all become friends – most were originally from the Sunshine Coast but now two from New Zealand spend some time in Australia each year.

The pick of time is in the order in which owners enter the agreement for the first year and then reversed the

second year. We are flexible and have little trouble in satisfying requests. The last three days of any usage is reserved for servicing, maintenance, cleaning etc. We do not have a requirement for storage as the motorhome is on the road most of the time. Four owners would be ideal as six are a little difficult to coordinate (but we manage).

We also try to organise remote changeovers to prevent having to bring the

the motorhome is on the road most of the time



motorhome back to the Sunshine Coast thus reducing kilometres on the road and time away. So far we have had remote changeovers in Cairns, Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide and Newcastle and hoping for Perth next year.

meetings are more social dinners and we have all become friends

The ownership has changed over the years with shares being transferred with restrictions (like smoking or dogs) set out in the legal agreement. Everyone looks after our motorhome – it is always immaculate and everything works (not like

some hired machines). Every time it comes back it has something extra – carpet, floor matting, kettle, toaster, fan etc.

On the road

My travelling companion and I personally love “freedom camping” but about one day in five we book into a caravan

park to do the washing, refill the water tank and dump. Most of our shopping is done in advertised RV Friendly Towns. When we’ve stayed for a week or more, we’ve left the motorhome set up in a caravan park and hired a car to get around and explore the region. At around \$38 a day it’s certainly better than towing.

Our Leisure Seeker is the 23 ft (7m) model: self-contained with the slide-out and shower and toilet. It is on the IVECO 3L auto turbo-diesel platform and we have added many extras such as BBQ, generator, tables and chairs, security door, windscreen solar reflectors, LED lighting, Saturn TV antenna, CB radio, inflatable kayak. It has been a magnificent unit and the odometer is already up to 120,000km over the three years.

Plans

We intend to either sell it in early 2015 or upgrade to a new motorhome if there is sufficient interest from the current owners or from others who may wish to join us. Joint-purchase (proportional ownership) is a great concept for those who cannot justify sole-purchase but it does take a bit of time and effort to set up the scheme and manage it.



With my travelling companion, we have done the three-months around Australia trip (and played golf across the Nullarbor); spent two months in Tasmania; two months up to the tropical Daintree and to the tip of Cape York (with the northern bit on a plane from Cairns and return on the Coastal Trader); two months up the Centre of Australia (via the Great Ocean Road) and several local excursions around the Sunshine Coast and Northern NSW. Next year we hope to explore southern WA – the area we missed on our rather rushed 90 days around-Australia trip. ■



LEAD IN WEEK TO THE CMCA RALLY

The CMCA rally volunteers are hard at work setting up the grounds for the impending arrival of the remaining motorhome rally participants. Close to three hundred volunteers are responsible for maintenance, events co-ordination, catering, and cleaning duties (to name a few) to get ready for the opening days.



A Rally member hard at work.

The maintenance crew is busy unpacking supplies needed to get the site ready. Already they are painting walls in the footy change rooms and have converted the men's showers into showers suitable for up to eight ladies. Items left on the maintenance list include painting the cricket building and the netball building. A representative from the rally spoke of their dedication to leaving the sites they visit better than they found them. All the repairs speak to their dedication to this ideal.

The rally organisation has brought its own portable power in the form of generators. One generator can supply 250 sites with portable power. There will be six generators running using anywhere from 34kva to 100kva. This all requires up to 700 litres of diesel per day to run. Including power, the maintenance crew also lay out in excess of 5 kilometres of water lines to supply everybody with fresh water.

To feed all the volunteers, many wonderful ladies volunteer their time to provide morning tea and lunch. Lunch on the day included sandwiches, rolls, and salads. Not only do they provide food, they deliver these meals to the volunteers that cannot make it back to the food tents.

The volunteers will be hard at it all week as they get ready for the first intake of rally participants on Saturday 29th March. The first group will consist of first-time rally attendees, lifetime members, and founding members. Another group will arrive on Sunday with the final group arriving on Monday.



Simply the best *Sunshine Coast offers it all*

Hit the ultimate camping trail

THE Sunshine Coast is one of Australia's most popular caravan and camping spots, with caravan parks and resorts in every major town, numerous picturesque bush locations and major expos and shows to boot.

Little wonder so many southern state caravanners descend on our region as the colder months arrive, and why holiday dates, no matter the time of year, see the caravan parks awash with visitors from near and far.

It is not uncommon for Sunshine Coast locals to pack up their caravans and camper trailers and take a long holiday, short break, or even a weekend away at one of the local sites. Not every trip needs to be an interstate affair, especially when there's so much to explore right on your doorstep.

Recreation vehicle holidaymakers come to the Sunshine Coast for the variety. There are few kilometres between some of Australia's most picturesque beaches – which you can set up camp right beside – and lush, undulating bushland where you can bed down among the trees, by a creek or on the banks of expansive lakes.

There are seemingly countless spots to choose from.

Prime caravan real estate on the Coast has to be one of the 24 absolute waterfront powered sites at the Cotton Tree Holiday Park. These understandably are booked years in advance at prime times. Prices are hefty during holidays for these prime sites, but people will always be willing to pay for the privilege.

You are a few steps away from a beautiful sandy beach and then the calm, sheltered waters of the Maroochy River mouth. Just beyond is the open ocean to attract surfers, while a rock wall is great fun for the kids at high tide when the waves break over them.

If peace and quiet is more your thing, the likes of the Borumba Deer Park in Imbil is a world away from the beach-side buzz of the coast. It is set in 6 ha of landscaped rural bush, and you're situated along the banks of the beautiful Yabba Creek. Wild deer roam through the park, while the river offers the chance to swim, kayak and rope-swing.

If that's still not wild enough, those with off-road vehicles and off-road camper trailers can head further inland to the awesome Landcruiser Mountain Park, a couple of hours' drive from the Coast at Jimna.

This is true Aussie wilderness stuff, with 10,000-acres of private park to explore and basic camp sites to base yourself. With so much variety on offer, it's time to get out exploring. The caravan and camping show season for 2014 is about to go into full swing, so get along to an event and pick up the latest gear.



Not every trip needs to be an interstate affair, especially when there's so much to explore right on your doorstep.

OUT IN THE WILDS

Noosa North Shore Beach
Camp Ground
Landcruiser Mountain Park,
Jimna

BUSH BREAKS

Glasshouse Mountains Tourist Park
Borumba Deer Park Camping Grounds, Imbil
Yandina Caravan Park
Boreen Point Campground
Sandy Creek Camping Ground
Lake Somerset Holiday Park

ON THE BEACH

Cotton Tree Holiday Park
Mooloolaba Beach Holiday Park
Maroochydore Beach Holiday Park
Coolum Beach Holiday Park
Rainbow Beach Holiday Village
Golden Beach Holiday Park
Bribie Island Caravan Park



TOP SPOT:
Right on the beach at the Mooloolaba esplanade caravan park.



The caravan park at northern end of Mooloolaba Beach.

PHOTO: BRETT WOR TMAN



Gloria and Brian Smith set up camp at Mooloolaba Beach Holiday Park.

PHOTO: IAIN CURRY



Settle in to the Coolum Beach Holiday Park.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



Brisbane's Mel Foxwell and her daughter Carlee, with neighbouring campers George Gillan, left, and Jacob Kidd in Mooloolaba.

PHOTO: RETT WORTMAN