



## **Scootaville 2022.** **01 Sept – 16 Sept.**

Scootaville was an event run by the Radschool Association with a three fold purpose.

1. To raise funds for legacy.
2. To visit and to showcase small towns in outback Queensland.
3. To allow a group of elderly ADF people to get together and enjoy each other's company while enjoying an organised tour of outback Queensland.

After a 2 year delay, Covid induced, on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, under the supervision of the Event's WOD, Ros Curran, a small group of people got together at the showground pavilion at Rosewood to sort all the equipment and have it ready for the troops when they arrived. Everyone began arriving on the 2nd, got to know their bedding, their riding gear, each other, the food situation and sorted each other out.



Initially the Association planned to make available a number of 50cc Mopeds for the group to ride from RAAF Amberley to RAAF Townsville. That was part of the initial plan which was formulated some 2 years prior but as time progressed, the plan had to be amended many times.

First up the RAAF weren't interested.

Initially it was planned to leave from one of the Squadron hangars on the base but that was knocked back, then the car park in front of the F111 was selected but that wasn't allowed either,



seems that's Commonwealth property and you need a permit to do things like that, all of which left us with a slight problem – from where would we leave!

We had been talking with Ipswich City Council (ICC) and when they got to hear of our predicament, they offered their Corporate Centre at the football ground across the river. This was perfect, large area, plenty of showers, heaps of power points, a kitchen, a secure area in which to park the scooters, we modified our plans.



The Ipswich Corporate Centre.



Interior of the Ipswich Corporate Centre.



Prior to all this, we'd had several meetings with Qld Police. We had to provide a street/road by street/road description of the route in order to obtain the required permits and with the departure point being different to originally planned, we submitted our change of details.

A couple of months before set off, ICC got in touch and told us that as we planned to leave in the first week in Sept we would clash with the Qld Rugby League finals – which meant, the Corporate Centre wouldn't be available after all, but the new Corporate Building at the Rosewood Showgrounds would. We drove out with a lovely lady from ICC to inspect it and found it ideal, so plans were amended again.



Rosewood centre.

We submitted a new set to Qld Police which must have stirred up a nest as they came back and told us there were now a few road changes, one of which was the section of the Capricorn Hwy between Biloela and Emerald. It was now out of bounds to us on Mopeds and we would have to go via the Dawson Hwy, via Banana, Rolleston to Emerald. We had submitted the Capricorn Hwy plans to them 2 years previously, but now they were not acceptable.

This caused a problem. We'd made plans with RSL Sub-Branched, Primary Schools, Councils etc to interact with them on our way along the Capricorn – we had to cancel all that and as we'd never driven the new route and had to submit it, road by road, street by street to Qld Police, about a month before our planned departure, we set off to drive and map it. We got about half-way between Kingaroy and Gayndah when we got a phone call from the Moped supplier telling us the Mopeds would not be available. We knew there was a hold up, Covid had held up their supply, they were in bond in Sydney but we were confident they would arrive Brisbane in time, but this phone call told us they would not be available at all. The supplier told us they were worried about reliability – they didn't want to have to do rescue 8s somewhere in outback Qld, so sorry, but it's a no go. We had booked and paid for overnight accommodation on the new route, but with this new news, we turned around and headed back to Brisbane with our tail between our legs,



So now we had a new route on which we'd never driven and a scoota event with no scootas. This was very close to pulling the pin time and if we were to salvage anything out of this "mess" first thing to do was find some scooters.

We came back to Brisbane and hit the phones. There are a number of firms on the Gold Coast that hire 50cc mopeds, but not to silly people who want to ride them from Brisbane to Townsville. We hit a brick wall there but found a firm in Brisbane (Nibble bikes) that had a couple but not the number we wanted. What they did have though was 10 Honda 125cc motor bikes of various ages which they would hire to us. With no other option – we took them.



So now Scootaville was Bikeville, but as the conveyances were 125cc and not 50cc, all riders would need to be licenced. So, what do we do with the people who wanted to come along but who were not allowed to ride. We had a couple of 12 seat buses which had been loaned to us by Kedron Wavell RSL Sub-Branch, but when we did the maths 24 seats were not enough. We dropped one and hired a 25 seater from Andy's Auto Rentals, near Brisbane airport, paid a deposit only to be told 2 days later the bus wasn't available. They returned our deposit but we weren't happy. With only a couple of weeks to go, we didn't have a bus but at least we had bikes. We eventually found another from Sixt, a firm which we found very good to deal with – we'll go back there.



With the bikes and bus ticked we notified the Police of our change in scooters to bikes, from non-licenced riders to licenced riders and they told us because of that there were



now no requirements, we could come and go as we pleased. Back on the phone, we notified all those that we had cancelled that everything was now uncanceled.

Things seemed to be running smoothly, everyone arrived at the Rosewood showgrounds, made their beds, picked a sleeping spot, tried on their gear, those riding selected a bike and the decision was made to hit the local pub for dinner.



L-R: Chuck Connors, John Sambrooks, Jock Young, John McDougall.

We had planned some events at Rosewood to see us off in style – but Murphy had other ideas, it poured rain. The Army, Fire and Rescue, Police, some Harley boys and the local RSL all turned up, for which we are eternally grateful, but the weather cruelled everything.





The local RSL people braved the elements and put on a bar-b-q breakfast for us, which was gratefully accepted.



26 Transport Sqn, based at Amberley, turned up with their heavy bits and their mascot as did the local Fire and Rescue people.





Our departure had been well publicised and we did expect families to come and see us off, the machinery was for the benefit of the kids, but the rain cruelled all that.



Ipswich Mayor Teresa Harding, was also good enough to brave the elements and come and see us off





On the Saturday morning, someone must have said a bunch of Hail Marys, as the rain stopped about 10.00am and we had a dry departure. John McDougall's trailer, on loan from the Kedron Wavell Services Club, was loaded with all the gear, then wrapped in blue taps to keep out the rain.



We were given a "Hose down" departure by the Fireys, then with the Police leading, followed by a bunch of great Harley blokes, we set forth.





Our first overnighter was to be Kilcoy. From Rosewood we travelled via Marburg, Fernvale, Somerset Dam, and Hazeldean to Kilcoy and as we'd originally planned the route to accommodate slow moving 50cc Mopeds, the bigger and much faster bikes meant we had less time on the road and more time to stop and look around. In the end it was very fortunate that the Mopeds were unavailable, the 125s performed admirably and helped make the journey enjoyable. With a bit of time on our hands, in order to defer a mutiny amongst the ranks, we had to stop at Fernvale for a pie-in.



It is noted far and wide that the best pies in the whole world are made and sold at the Old Fernvale Bakery and after everyone had had their fill, we headed for Kilcoy.

As we had planned the journey on Mopeds, we had allowed for a stop and rider change at Somerset Dam. Normally it would have taken us 90 mins to cover the windy and hilly Fernvale to Somerset section but the Hondas handled it with ease.

We stopped anyway, rolled out the biscuit tin and cold drinks esky and began to realise that this was going to be a fun trip.



May Wallace, the Vice President of the Kilcoy RSL Sub-branch had offered us their Memorial Hall in which to overnight. As was the case all up the line to Townsville, the local RSL Sub-Branched were magnificent, they got right behind the event, organised meals, helped with accommodation and raised funds which we passed onto Legacy.



At Kilcoy, May had ensured the Memorial Hall was open and available and made certain everything that was required was available.



Floyd Wilson, one of the experienced riders, wasted no time in setting up his site. Everyone was provided with an air bed, sleeping bag, pillow as well as riding jacket and helmet, all of which was carried in a duffle bag.

May and her committee had organised a wonderful evening meal after which it was compulsory to attend the bar for a debrief. WOD Ros Curran and her 2IC, Chris Dietzel, were taking notes while Marie Henson was just pleased to be there.



**L-R, other side of the bench:** Neil Snudden, Marie Henson, Ros Curran, Chris Dietzel, Ken Hey, Neil Barradeen, Kev Collins, Shane “Kiwi” Campbell, Allan O’Connor.  
**L-R, this side:** Sandie Downes, Stu Welden.



In the morning, those that could, the “healthy” ones, fronted the dining area where May and her committee provided a healthy breakfast, then it was load up and head for Kingaroy.



No-one can leave Kilcoy without having their pic taken at the Yowie Park, at the bottom of town.

The trip, Kilcoy to Kingaroy, was only 107km, which would have taken at least 2½ hours on the Mopeds, now with the 125s, we expected it to take only 70 - 80 mins which was good as we had a few stops on the way.



First stop was Blackbutt, at the top of the range and about 40 kms from Kilcoy. We had planned a morning smoko at the hotel and even though that didn't eventuate, it didn't stop "Johnno" (John Saunders) from bailing up a few blokes with his magic bucket and soliciting some hard-earned.



From Blackbutt it was an easy 15km ride to Yarraman. We'd had several meetings with Prue Lewis, the Secretary of the Yarraman RSL Sub-Branch who had suggested we call into the Club Rooms for lunch. That seemed like an excellent idea to us.

Prue and her committee excelled themselves. They had planted Legacy collection tins all over town and apart from providing us with a wonderful lunch, presented us with a considerable sum of money which we were able to pass onto legacy.



Prue had also passed the word about town that a bunch of silly old buggers would be passing through, riding small motor bikes from Brisbane to Townsville and if you didn't believe her, just come to the RSL Hall about lunch time and see for yourself.



A lot did!

Prue (third from left) and her very capable ladies, provided a wonderful lunch (see [HERE](#)), and people started to wonder, if the next two weeks were to be like this, perhaps we should rename this event Chubbyville, the quantity and quality of food being offered to us was amazing.



To thank Prue for the RSL's contribution, Jillian O'Toole offered to take her for a wild lap of the main street on the back of the 125. Prue readily accepted and not knowing what she was in for, hopped on and hung on tightly. (Click the pic below)





A blonde dyes her hair brown. She then goes for a drive in the country and sees a shepherd herding his sheep across the road. "Hey, shepherd, if I guess how many sheep you've got here, can I keep one?" The shepherd is puzzled but agrees. She blurts out "352!" He is stunned but keeps his word and allows her to pick a sheep. "I'll take this one," she says proudly. "It's the cutest!" "Hey lady," says the shepherd, "If I guess your real hair colour, can I have my dog back?"

After reluctantly leaving Yarraman, we headed for the next stop which was to be Nanango, a mere 15km up the road. Chris Eddy and his mates from the Nanango RSL Sub-Branch had arranged afternoon smoko for us and once again we were met with an amazing display of food. All these stop-overs, from Rosewood to Townsville, didn't just happen, they were organised by the caring local committees, a lot of planning and thought went into them – for which we are eternally grateful.



Next stop, and our second overnighter was Kingaroy, peanut capital of the world and just 25km from Nanango. The amazing Craig Lucas, manager of the Kingaroy Show Society had offered us the use of two pavilions in which to bunk down and a third, which contained a kitchen, in which to prepare our meals.



Kingaroy is 1,450 feet AMSL and a few of the softies in our group found it a bit cold.





In no time at all, everyone had found their spot, blown up the bed, unwrapped the sleeping bag and had the bed ready to go. Then it was time to get some ice, chill down a few of Castlemaine's finest and enjoy a refreshing ale while watching the sun go down.

While some of the troops were enjoying the break, Cathy Yang and a small group of volunteers got busy in the kitchen and prepared the evening meal – a most appreciated curry. (see [HERE](#)).

Seen tucking in to Cathy's curry were (L-R:) Ros Curran, Neil Snudden, then patiently waiting, Geoff Spackman, Selwyn Hill, Marie Henson and Stu Weldon.





After dinner, John Broughton brought out the keyboard and entertained the troops until the WOD called "lights out".



L-R: Andy McCann, Dave Pedler (partly hidden), John Broughton, Allan O'Connor (standing), John "Sambo" Sambrooks (back to us).

In the morning, Crow FM from Wondai had their Rocket Rover call in to see us before we left. He arranged an interview with us with Shaz Birkett, Crow FM's delightful brekky announcer ([HERE](#)).



L-R: Damo Martoo (Crow FM), Trev Benneworth, Ros Curran (WOD), Ted McEvoy (Adjutant).



We got away from Kingaroy a bit later than originally planned and headed up the road towards our first stop for the day, Wondai – a short 30km trip. Dave Scrimgoer and the Wondai RSL Sub-Branch welcomed us warmly. A large number of members had gathered at the Sub-Branch to meet and greet us and the ladies had prepared a most welcomed morning tea. It was also great to see ladies from the local Legacy chapter and club members with “proper” bikes, who rode with us for a few Km when we left.



Some of the riders then gave some of the Legacy ladies a short ride through town.



Lead rider Marie Henson, with one of the ladies.



Andy McCann with Crow FM's lovely Shaz Birkett.

After an enjoyable hour or so, it was time to head off (see [HERE](#)).

A month or so back, Qld Police had also banned us from a large section of the Bunya Hwy north of Wondai. We had replanned the route to travel via back roads west of the highway and this new route took us through Wheatlands. As Wheatlands had a small primary school and as Metcash (IGA), the AWM, RAAF, Coca Cola and Smiths Confectionery had given us a huge amount of "give aways" we decided to keep this "detour" in the route. We then arranged to call into the school, meet the kids and give each of them a "show-bag" of goodies.



We'd planned school visits for two reasons, firstly to give the kids a bit of a thrill, give them a short break from school work, of seeing a bunch of small motor bikes, of being able to get up close and personal with the machines and for them to be given a 'show-bag". It was also to be a soother for a bunch of crusty old ex-Service men and women – and it seemed to have worked. Mixing with those great young and so well behaved kids, of seeing the genuine joy on their young faces immediately relieved any tension in the group. Everyone became involved instantly, adopted one or more kids, had them on the bikes, got the kids to start them, rev them – it was difficult to see who had the biggest smile, the kids or the oldies.



A great morning – enjoyed by all, though how the teachers were going to keep the kids out of the “show-bags” and get them concentrating on school-work again was a problem we’re glad we didn’t have.

We eventually waved good bye to the kids and their dedicated teachers and headed for our next stop which was at Ban Ban Springs, a 75km run. This was where we planned to have lunch which was prepared last night by Cathy and her willing helpers.

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