



Hi to all Driver Reviver volunteers many of you will be self-isolating, others still working in essential services for which we thank you. Cancelling our Easter operations was a difficult thing to do but certainly the right thing. It is very likely that the next period which some Sites will be able to operate may be the September school holidays-October Public Holiday (not all States). For many the next operating period may be over Summer 2020 – 2021.

Our inaugural Driver Reviver Digital Highway newsletter will hopefully provide an opportunity for all our volunteers to get to know more about each other's location and operation. We can't go on road trips in our vehicles, but we can use our imaginations to travel on the digital highways.

Each newsletter will feature a section of road or highway which links two or more Driver Reviver Sites. The issue covers a section of Queensland's Warrego Way taking in Sites Miles, Charleville and Windorah. Victoria's Lodden Valley Highway takes in Bears Lagoon and Kerang.

We know there is a wealth of creative talent in every village, town and city in Australia, so I'm asking Driver Reviver volunteers to send in information on their Sites, it can be about the Site itself and things the volunteers do or an outline of the areas attractions. Maybe interesting geographical or historic facts; are there any Bushranger burial sites or stories of ancient Aboriginal Sites, great fishing tales or maybe a Yowie sighting?

There are also talented artists and photographers among our volunteers, some may wish to send through images of their region which can brighten up our newsletter, be sure to include permission for the image to be published.

We hope to be able to build a map of Australia showing links to all Driver Reviver Sites we can later use to encourage people to plan their trips.

Thanks to Federal Government funding and ongoing support from our State Governments, when we re-open we will have a range of new communication programs in place. These will be far more effective if Driver Reviver volunteers share their experiences.



FX



Good Old Aussie Road Trips, any memories?

Being confined to our homes brings on a natural human emotion of wanting to get out and about. Common sense takes over and we start to combine memories of past trips with plans for hitting the road when health regulations permit.

Australians are great travellers and over the past couple of decades there has been an increasing number flying overseas for their holidays or adventures. As Driver Reviver volunteers we are fortunate to be able to meet families on the best holidays, a good old Aussie road trip.

I recall as a kid in South Australia in the early 1950's heading off with Mum, Dad and younger brother and sister in our FX Holden, French grey with burgundy upholstery for one adventure after another. A good percentage of the roads in those days were dirt which meant with the quarter vents open on the front windows the car and people were constantly covered in a fine dust.

Funny the things that stick in your mind, one day driving along an isolated dirt road near Mallala, Dad saw a hen on the side of the road, he said "there's a chook grab it" us three kids thought he said there's a chookrabbit. For many years he let us believe there was such a creature as a 'Chookrabbit' and it became a task for the kids every car trip for years after to remain on the lookout for this mysterious creature.

(left) For those of you who think the Chookrabbit isn't real, where do you think the Easter bunnies get their eggs from?

Warrego Highway Queensland

We clear the huge suburban footprint of Brisbane and start our journey just after Toowoomba. Our destination is Windorah. Off we go past Dalby, Chinchilla and then a locality named Baking Board. Can't see any explanation how it got that name, there's a railway crossing off to the right and that's about it.

First stop is the Driver Reviver Site at Miles. This is in the Western Downs region about 340 km North West of Brisbane. Formerly known as Dogwood Crossing, a great name given to it by a great explorer Ludwig Leichhardt in 1844. As often happened the town was renamed Miles after the then Colonial Secretary.

Miles is an agricultural region producing wheat, sorghum, cotton and barley. Of course, cattle and sheep grazing is widespread and mining is also prominent.

The obligatory Historical Museum is out of the ordinary with more historical buildings and structures than you are likely to find anywhere in Australia.



Driver Reviver Star Gazing

The Miles Driver Reviver Site is located on the Warrego Highway at Anzac Park to the West of the town. Obviously, the best biscuits, coffee and tea are free too.

Refreshed after our rest break in Miles we are back on the Warrego heading to Charleville, we pass Dulacca, through the Yuleba State Forest then through the lovely town of Roma there was once a Driver Reviver Site here but no longer so we play Mario Lanza singing Arrivederci Roma. Now we pass through Mount Abundance, Muckadilla then Mitchell, home to the Great Artesian Spa where we could have a quick dip if we remembered our cossies. Our old friend Warrego welcomes us, we pass Mungallala and the Tregole National Park.

Arriving in Charleville we start to think of stars not movie types but stars in the sky. Charleville has the Cosmos Centre and Observatory and the type of magnificent night sky only outback Australia can deliver. Guess where the Driver Reviver Site is located? Yup, on the Warrego Highway at the Railway Station Building King St.

If you prefer trees to stars, you'll be excited by the Outback Timber Walk which showcases local native trees around a pond, birds visit too. You can also learn about the Cobb & Co Coaches and their amazing history.

Now let's think which direction did the Driver Reviver volunteer tell us to go. Oh yes, no more Warrego, it's now onto State Route 14, the first part of which is only 457 km to Windorah. Not far out of Charleville we pass the Bush Caravan Park, we stick to Route 14 as the road changes



*Driver Reviver Charleville Qld,
Old Railway Station iCentre*

names, most of it has the delightful name Diamantina Development Road, so we know we are way out West. Past Quilpie the road chucks a right and we are on the home stretch.

Windorah population around 100 is in the heart of the channel country, look at an overhead pic on Google and you'll see why. Two rivers the Thomson and the Barco form the famous Cooper Creek, who would have thought, bird watching, fishing, water sports only 10 km from town.

A visit to the Whitula Gate Museum at the visitor information centre is a must, that's where the Driver Reviver Site is located, Yeah! more great local knowledgeable volunteers to talk to.

Last drinks?

The Plantagenet RoadWise Committee along with volunteers from the St John Ambulance and Mt Barker Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service ran a very successful Driver Reviver operation on 28 February this year, this could have been the last able to operate in Australia before travel bans.

Mt Barker now renowned for the regions quality vineyards and wines was first linked by a rough bush track to Perth via Albany in 1835. Sounds like further exploration of this area is needed for our Digital Highway.

Lodden Valley Highway Victoria

Road trips in Victoria are a delight, so many interesting towns and villages packed into a smaller space compared to the eye watering distances in the bigger States. This doesn't mean you can't travel for kilometre after kilometre of open countryside and beautiful farmland but, in Victoria you always seem to end up somewhere interesting.

This trip we've chosen the Lodden Valley Highway from Bendigo to Kerang. We leave Bendigo heading to the beginning of the Lodden Valley Highway near Long Gully there are some hills around the Eaglehawk region. However, its gullies that grab our attention. Way off to our left on the Calder Highway is Maiden Gully, we pass California Gully, as we drive on Peg Leg Road near Sailors Gully we finally reach Lodden Valley Highway. But wait, there's more! Over to the north west is Jackass Flat. What has been going on here? Did a peg-leg sailor from California become a Jackass over a maiden? The lovely green and brown patchwork countryside takes our minds off the mystery as we sail along (pun intended). We reach the crossroads with River St and the Echuca Serpentine Road, as we drive through the village of Serpentine, we notice the Highway is renamed Peppercorn Way but only for a short distance.

Our Highway takes us to our first Driver Reviver Site at Bears Lagoon located in a truck stop, rest

area at the corner of the Highway and Borung Prairie Road. Looking around the Site we can imagine how comforting it would be for travellers on a cool night to see the East Loddon Lions Club members cooking up some sausages on the BBQ with the help of mates from the Pyramid Hill Lions Club. The East Lodden Lions Club van was destroyed when a large gum tree fell on it a few years back so, Pyramid Hill Lions stepped in to help with their excellent food serving van. It's perfect for serving the Bushells Coffee and Tea and Arnott's biscuits. Heading north now towards the end of our Highway at Kerang where its name changes to, the Murray Valley Highway. This is where the Kerang Lions Club along with the SES operates a very active Site at Atkinson Park. The Driver Reviver volunteers have provided some great fish and coleslaw rolls, and sausages and onion sandwiches for special fund raising over many years and have contributed thousands of dollars to the Children's Hospital Appeal and support many causes such as



Waiting in line for the best cuppa and biscuit ever. (above)

*(below)
Ready to serve at Kerang*



Black Dog Trial and Christmas Toy run. There's a Caravan and Tourist Park almost next door if you want to stay longer, and a kid's Adventure Park too.

Kerang has an Airport, ample accommodation, cafés, restaurants the Lodden Valley River and a swamp which is so big if the creature from the black lagoon swallowed the town there would still be space left over. This is a popular place for motorists travelling to holiday and weekend break destinations along the Murray; maybe that's a trip for another day.



Fred, I don't think this outdoor shower was a good idea

Do we really want things to return to normal?

Those dedicated people working in road safety including Federal and State employees or Driver Reviver volunteers, must be hoping the current recognition by Australians that we can by working together stop the spread of a virus, makes them realise what's possible.

Across Australia road crashes kill around 1200 and seriously injure 35 000 – 40 000 people every year. Around 90% are caused by human error or anti-social behaviour.

Road crash statistics are mostly treated as just a number. If all Australians recognised those are not numbers but family, friends, colleagues or neighbours and by following simple road safety rules may save 1000 deaths of people just like them.

Knowing this, must be a good enough reason never to get back to what was normal behaviour.



(Above) Kiama NSW January 2020.

Visitors enjoyed free mini-pavlova sponsored by NRMA Insurance to help promote Driver Reviver NSW Transport also provided support at the Site to alert motorists to road closures caused by bush fires. The next day the fires caused the Highway to be closed.



Thanks for 20 years

The outstanding generosity of The Arnott's Foundation, Bushells Coffee and Bushells Tea in sponsoring Driver Reviver volunteers nationally for twenty years was recognised at Parliament House Canberra on 12 February 2020.

The presentation was made by The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister and, the Hon Scott Buchholz MP, Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport shown here with Karen de Leeuw, Business Director Bushells Coffee (2nd left) , Renée McCarthy, Director Corporate Affairs Campbell Arnott's (3rd left) Gabby O'Neill, General Manager Office of Road Safety Surface Transport Policy Division and Allan McCormac OAM, Driver Reviver National Director, accepting on behalf of Bushells Tea.

This was an outstanding achievement by these sponsors and displays a true commitment to assisting Driver Reviver volunteers save lives across Australia. It also demonstrates the high regard in which Driver Reviver is held, thanks to our dedicated volunteers.

This Newsletter Driver Reviver Digital Highway® is written and edited by Allan McCormac OAM, National Director of Driver Reviver Australia Ltd, a Not For Profit entity supporting Volunteer organisations throughout Australia. Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of any Federal, State or Territory Government, Volunteer organisation or sponsors.

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