



Night Drive through the Brindies

Peter Henderson

16 April 2016

Attendees:

Lynne, Rob, Gemma and Dan Donaldson
Brenden Taylor
Victoria Jewett
Michael and Chris Pratt
Craig and Mandy Nelson
Neil and Jennifer Ellison
Peter and Gwen Henderson
Stephen O'Connor
Jon Case
Kathy, Derek, Maddie and Daniel

Landcruiser 100 (trip leaders)
Nissan Patrol
Toyota Hilux
FJ Cruiser
Prado
Nissan Patrol
Landcruiser 80
Mazda BT50
Mitsubishi Challenger
Pajero

Things certainly look different in the bush in the dark! You need to concentrate harder, the lighting is obviously different – in some ways better, as it is easier to pick contours in the track ahead. And it gets interesting too when it's raining while it is very easy to miss critical turns as they look different in the dark

But, we did make it to the top of Mt Coree, and we did make it to McIntyre's Hut via a couple of turn arounds (more on those later). All in the dark and the rain.

The meeting place was Uriarra Homestead at 4.00pm, the plan being to go to Mt Coree for the sunset. Getting there was no problem, but the sunset hid behind the clouds and it was cold up there at 1400 meters! We successfully turned the limited space into a carpark for 10 hefty four wheel drives. No mishaps though and we stayed up there for a while before the cold and clouds got the better of us.

So, off to McIntyres – will we or won't we? There was apparently 100% chance of rain (more like a certainty when you consider the percentage). Down from Mt Coree, along Two Sticks – in the dust. About as bad as driving in heavy fog – the conditions were quite still, so the dust from the car in front lingered a while. Things improved once it started to rain – no more dust yay! And vastly improved visibility.

Continued along Two Sticks, but the Powerline Track looked different in the dark, so we initially didn't go down that way. But, after about 10 minutes further along Two Sticks, the request came from Rob and Lynne to backtrack and indeed go down Powerline. Seems like the first time they looked at Powerline, they took the straight down track, rather than the civilised trail. Things look different in the dark! McIntyres and dinner beckoned, so time to get moving.

Good to see that the track down to McIntyres is starting to get a bit gnarly, bit more interesting. Also quite a few of the steeper parts of the track had a bit of bull dust on them, so a traction issue if it rained.

Objective achieved – McIntyres for dinner. But wait – it's now starting to rain quite heavily. And we started thinking about the bull dustish sections, and what rain would do to those steep bits. Off we went, with barely a pause to get breath. Up the hill, through the sticky bits. It was a good

decision, as it continued to rain reasonably heavily for the next hour or so, and meant we didn't have to spend the night at McIntyres.

Dinner was had (in the rain) on Waterfall Track on a nice flat bit. Much huddling under awnings, fuelled ourselves up, and let's head home. Victoria recommended Dingi Ridge Track to get back to Two Sticks, and then down past Blue Range Hut to the black top.

That worked well, bit slippery on the clay bits, but everyone made it safely. Forestry tracks are very confusing, and we proved the old adage that the longest distance between two points is not a straight line, but East West Road led back to the black top, and once we found that – home and hosed! Home by about 11.00pm, safe and sound, tired and happy!

Many thanks to Lynn and Rob for their tireless enthusiasm and good humour, and especially for organising and leading a great trip to McIntyres in the dark.