

Gawler Ranges & Eyre Peninsula Trip October 2025

Group 1: Leaders Vladimir and Denise Malcik

Participants: Malen Rumbelow and Jan Muegel, Graeme and Helen Brettig, Peter and Sue Bradley, Brian and Sue Stone, Trevor Duggan, Carola Sanders.

Group 2: Leaders Neville and Dianne Stone

Participants: Ian Frost, Heather and Gordon Combeer, Mike and Cheryl Carrington, Andrew Strain and Leah Andison, Buzz and Colleen Meakes.

All adventurers (except Malen and Jan) arrived at Mambray Creek campground at various times on Sunday, 19/10/25. It was a hot day, reaching 38°C, with the Aussie wave highly visible. We hope the flies disperse at night. A briefing was held to outline the trip format, covering emergency procedures, fire risk management, communication, and convoy protocols.

The large group was split into two, with one to depart 15 minutes ahead of the other in the morning.

Day 1: Monday, 20/10/25 - Helen Brettig

Expected high of 32C, a mild day. Three members left early for Port Augusta for various reasons: refuelling, repairing a leaking water tank, and purchasing a new cable for the Waeco fridge, leaving Vladimir with a smaller convoy. Just the typical camping challenges!



After resolving these issues, we regrouped at 10:20 am in Port Augusta enroute to our first stop, Kimba. The ride was smooth, transitioning from the reddish saltbush country near Iron Knob to the agricultural landscape of Kimba. We arrived at noon, where some enjoyed a late morning tea (or early lunch) before capturing a photo with the refurbished Pink Galah and heading to Wudinna. Both vehicles and appetites were replenished—don't miss the bakery there!

We took the dirt road to Wagannay campground in the Gawler Range where Malen and Jan awaited us arriving after their epic journey around Australia. The roads were mostly good, though a few sections showed signs of recent wet weather, with some shallow ruts.

Once everyone settled into their spots, we enjoyed a communal happy hour. The temperature was cooler, and the flies were fewer, though a few feral bees buzzed around Buzz and Colleen's van, drawn to some muscat that had spilled on the floor!



Day 2: 21/10/25 - Tuesday (Dianne Stone)

The weather overnight was ominous, featuring rain, thunder, and lightning. The group intended to set off for our first adventure at 9:30 am, but heavy rain forced us to delay until 1 pm. After a relaxing morning listening to the rain, we finally hit the road with Neville leading and Ian as Tail End Charlie (TEC).

Our route took us along the Old Paney Scenic Route, stopping first at Policeman's Point and then at Old Paney. We backtracked slightly to take the Mattera Track to Mirica Falls for a brief visit, as rain threatened again. A drive around the Kolay Hut Campground led us to Paney Homestead and its well-preserved shearing shed, complete with informative signage. With internet access available, many took the opportunity to catch up on messages or share photos of the new Malcik grandchild.

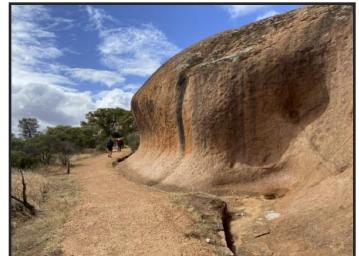


Some very dirty, muddy vehicles were headed for home. The drive today was somewhat challenging due to the wet conditions, but everyone managed well. Happy hour buzzed with tales of the day's adventures.

Day 3: 22/10/25 - Wednesday (Sue Bradley)

We woke to a calm, clear morning, with expected temperatures ranging from 11-18°C. All roads were declared open. A convoy of seven vehicles departed camp at 9 am, heading toward Pildappa Rock. After passing a flock of sheep along the road, it was noted we had crossed the Goyder Line.

At Pildappa Rock, a light rain greeted us as we enjoyed morning tea. We completed an easy walk around the rock's base, with some climbing to the top for panoramic views.





The site offered very good facilities, including BBQs, shelters, and toilets. Information boards are planned to highlight water collection and storage methods.

Next, we travelled via Minnipa to Wudinna, where we enjoyed lunch at the bakery and fuelled up our vehicles. With phone reception, many reached out to others. After lunch, we navigated muddy roads with large puddles to Sturt's Lake. Here, a Landcruiser faced a 4WD locking problem, but manual hub locking allowed it to continue safely.

We returned home by 4 pm, thanks to Vladimir, Denise, Neville, and Dianne for guiding our adventures that day.



Day 4 - 23/10/25 (Thursday) Sue Stone

Travel day from Gawler Ranges to Yangie Bay Campground in Coffin Bay National Park. Enjoyed more bakery stops along the way at Cummins.

Day 5 - 24/10/25 (Friday) Sue Stone

With rain and possible storms predicted, our wonderful leader, Vladimir, shifted our trip to Point Sir Isaac to today while the sun shone. With Vlad leading and Neville TEC we departed early at 8 am with eight vehicles navigating rocky, sandy, and wet tracks without much trouble. After passing Lake Jessie, we took a quick break at Black Springs Campground—a peaceful spot—before heading onto the firm beach. We made a brief stop to see a whale jawbone, perhaps a remnant from the Coffin Bay Whaling site of the early 1800s.



We carefully navigated the "pinch spot," the narrowest section of the beach that we needed to return through before high tide, and continued into the scrub until we reached Point Sir Isaac, named by Matthew Flinders after British Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin. The journey took about three hours. After a 30-minute exploration and photo op, we headed back to avoid the tide. We had lunch by the whale bone, with some nearly legal-sized whiting caught by Trevor. Leah showcased her artistic skills by coordinating colour-themed group photos for both the ladies and gentlemen. The convoy returned safely after a great day out.



Day 6 - 25/10/25 - Saturday - Colleen Meakes

Some members relaxed in Coffin Bay National Park while others strolled the scenic Oyster Trail, highly recommended, with a visit to the oyster sheds also a good idea. Lunch options included local fish and chips, coffee shops, and the Coffin Bay Hotel, while some ventured to Port Lincoln for dining along the Esplanade.

A determined group sought oyster pies at the local bakery but found none available. They then visited the library which was closed for renovations and tried to get seafood chowder at Oyster HQ, only to be disappointed again. Undeterred, they eventually satisfied their cravings with plates of tapas.

****Happenings:****

* Peter Bradley is our new Chief Fire Officer.

* Mike Carrington was attacked by a tick that was expertly removed by our nurses, Cheryl and Denise. He was a very brave patient*

*James and Linley Edwards treated us to a delicious seafood paella in celebration of James's 60th birthday. They travelled from Whyalla especially.



On the way back to the campground, we spotted an emu enjoying a bath in a large puddle—he looked like he was wearing a shower cap!

Day 7: 26/10/25 - Sunday, Carola Sanders



Today, several of us ventured to Oyster HQ for the Oyster Farm Wading Tour and Tasting. Attendees included Denise M, Heather and Gordon, Brian and Sue, Neville and Dianne, Mike and Cheryl, Leah and Andrew, and myself, Carola. A good time was had by all, with another item ticked off our bucket list. Meanwhile, Linley, James, Sue, and Peter waited for our return. Vladimir and Ian enjoyed a round of golf, Trev tried fishing unsuccessfully, Buzz worked on his vehicle, while Malen and Jan relaxed. Helen and Graeme took a walk on the Yangi Bay loop.

Day 8: 27/10/25 - Monday, Andrew Strain

Today marked our travel from Yangie Bay to September Beach Campground in Port Lincoln NP, about 100 km away. We were left to our own means on when and how to move sites. Some first-timers seized the chance to explore Port Lincoln, while others filled their water tanks at Windsor Avenue, which has potable water and a dump point. Keep that address in mind. A few took advantage of the local laundromat.

As everyone arrived and set up camp, some shared larger sites which could accommodate two or three caravans. We gathered for drinks at 5 PM at Vlad and Denise's site, braving the cold and wind without a fire. Sue Stone's brother, Doug, confirmed that the road to Wanna had been graded, which would help us on our all day journey to Memory Cove tomorrow; however, we were cautioned about a snake sighting, so need to be vigilant.

Day 9: 28/10/25 – Michael and Cheryl Carrington

****Weather:**** SE wind at 15 km/hr, 13°C, partly cloudy.

****Distance:**** September Beach to Memory Cove – 54 km (2 hours)

At 0930, the group of 8 cars, led by Vladimir and Denise with Neville and Dianne as TEC, set off. Unfortunately Buzz and Colleen were unable to join due to car issues. By 11:00, we paused at Curata Rock Lookout for morning tea, enjoying beautiful views of Sleaford Bay and the surrounding islands. By 11:30, we were back on the road. The well-maintained dirt road showcased green vegetation, regrowing since the 2023 fires, along with wildlife sightings of blue-tongue lizards, emus, and kangaroos. Notably, a long pipeline ran alongside the road, supplying water to the Port Lincoln municipality from remote pump stations that access the Artesian Basin bore holes.



At 11:55, we arrived at the spectacular Memory Cove, featuring white sandy beaches and turquoise waters framed by lush coastal vegetation. A bronze plaque memorialized HMS Investigator, noting the unfortunate drowning of crew members in 1802. The plaque marks the start of a scenic bushwalking trail to the cove's end, with five camping sites for small

caravans, trailers, or tents, and a new ablution block under construction. Neville caught a small fish, and we were fortunate to spot a pod of dolphins breaching in the bay. Peter and Sue Bradley created beach art displaying the TLCCSA logo for a group photo. Despite the persistent flies, it was a beautiful excursion.

At 14:15, we left Memory Cove for September Beach. Ian Frost, along with Andrew and Leah, were most hospitable hosts at site No. 3, also organizing a mini boules tournament, won by Graeme Brettig. We enjoyed a great sundowner gathering to wrap up another enjoyable TLCCSA day on the Eyre Peninsula.



Day 10: 29/10/25 – Wednesday – Heather Combeer

Today being a rest day, we all rested!

Day 11 - 30/10/25 - Thursday - Gordon Combeer

Drove to Wanna Bay, enjoying stunning coastal views. The perfect sea and wind conditions kicked off our 4WD trip to Sleaford Bay. Within five minutes on the sand, yours truly, Gordon, got bogged. Using knowledge gained from our fantastic trainers, I dropped the tyre pressures further, cleared sand from the back of the wheels, and self-recovered in ten minutes. Over the radio, I could hear others deciding to drop tyre pressures further as well.

The terrain varied between rock and sand so driving and navigating was tricky. While red-tipped markers guided us through the dunes, some had fallen over, adding to the adventure. This required some vehicles to fan out and locate the rest of the track.



After lunch, we traversed another dune which required following a lazy S-bend. I got stuck again! With some sand removal and alternating between forward and backward driving, I managed to self-recover. The other vehicles took different lines and got through without incident. Neville even aired the front of his car over the dune, a la Robert Irwin.

Eventually, we reached a challenging track over a dune that was too difficult. After three attempts and filling in holes, we found a rocky bypass. From there, it was smooth sailing. The day was full of surprises and adventure, with some enormous dunes which thankfully we didn't have to negotiate. These dunes make for an exciting warm-up for Namibia in Africa. We missed Buzz (Light Year) and

Colleen not travelling with us due to mechanical issues.

Day 12 - 31/10/25 - Friday

After a spectacular thunder and lightning storm last night the trip officially wrapped up today. Everyone packed up their vans and went their separate ways. Some headed to Mambray Creek, while others returned home. It was a lovely day for a leisurely drive, with stops in charming towns to sample the best baked goods.

Big thanks to Vladimir and Denise for organizing and leading the trip, and to Neville and Dianne for stepping up as co-leaders to enable more participants to join in the fun.

Edited By Helen Brettig

Tyre Changing & Pre-Departure Training

Another great training day put on by our dedicated trainers. Lots of usual information shared.

There were a few examples today that highlighted why it is so important to practice at home some of the essential Know-How activities when it comes of preparation and some of the basics like correctly replacing a tyre.

