

## Australia 2008

## Perth - Steep Point - Perth

## Leg details

Date January 21 - February 10, 2008

Leg Perth - Moondyne Nature Reserve - Brandt Highway - Dongara - Ellendale Pool - North West Coastal Highway - Shark Bay - Useless Loop Road - Tamala Station - Zuytdorp Cliffs - the most westerly point of mainland Australia - Steep Point - Thunder Bay - False Entrance - Murchison River - Geraldine Lead Mines - Kalbarri - Lucky Bay - Hutt Lagoon - Horrocks - Northampton - Coronation Beach - Geraldton - Dongara - Carsons Beach - Lake Indoon - Leeman - Greanhead - Sandy Point Nature Reserve - Jurien Bay - Hill River Mouth - Cervantes - Pinnacles - Grey - Wedge - Lancelin - Ledge Point - Seabird - Guilderton - Perth

Leg map (click to enlarge in separate window)



We leave Perth in northerly direction on Monday, January 21, 2008, and drive to the **Walyunga National Park** where we would like to stay for the night.

But the camp is closed due to tick infestation.

This is a bit of a shame as the swimming-hole looks very inviting, especially with the outside temperature of 32°C.

But the ranger recommends driving to the Moondyne National Park via the Chittering Valley, which sounds good to us.

The **Chittering Valley** is very pretty. Large groups of grass trees line the road.

In spring this drive must be very beautiful with all the wildflowers.

We also spot a few emu families with their young ones.

Then we leave the bitumen.

The track is not very wide and in some sections is very badly corrugated.

We drive into **Moondyne Nature Reserve** and shortly after **Joes Cage** we find a gate.

We wonder what this is all about but soon find out: the track down to the river is quite steep and definitely 4WD-only!



Susi jumps out of the OKA and takes pictures.

This is usually a sign that the track is too rough for her comfort ...

In the last section she slips and skids down the track ... it seems that she always finds the spots where she can hurt herself!

All at the bottom of the track we find the camp site as described by the ranger at Walyunga NP.

There is still water in the water hole but it does not really look too inviting so we skip the swim for today.

But the water attracts a lot of birds.

We enjoy dinner at one of the provided tables listening to the birds singing.

Then an almost full moon appears, the crickets chirp, the bats chase mosquitoes .... it's quite peaceful .... if you don't mind noisy trains passing every so often (the Perth - Kalgoorlie Railway passes through there).

On Tuesday morning after a comfortable night with 19°C we are ready to tackle the steep ascent.



In the steep sections the OKA makes funny noises, like metal rubbing against metal, but we cannot figure out what it is.

Ruedi and Peter agree that it is nothing serious.

Probably something that only takes effect when the OKA has to climb steep tracks.

Otherwise the OKA performs very well and Ruedi is pleased with its performance, one more thing tested and happy with!



During the photo-shooting-session Susi slips again, but this time she falls into a thorn-bush.

At least 30 - 40 thorns are stuck in her hands and arms ... the sort that break off as soon as they are touched ....

She will be busy with the tweezers later on ...



Then we reach the main track again and travel north on dirt tracks.

Again we can see many emus with their young.

We drive a short part on the **Great Northern Highway** through a pretty valley.

Shortly before Bindoon we leave the bitumen again and turn into Teatree Rd.

The sign "Steep decent" does not exaggerate, the road is a bit like a roller-coaster-ride ...

Then we reach the bitumen again, drive through **Gingin** and cross over to the **Brandt Highway** and head north.

As we drive north the temperature raises gradually.

After **Eneaba** the outside temperature reaches 39°C.

Then we reach the coast in **Dongara** and the temperature drops to 30.5°C ...

Amazing!

At the **Greenough River** we leave the Brant Highway and drive towards the Ellendale Pool.



On the way to t we pass the **Alinta Wind Farm**.  
For more details on the wind farm [click here](#).

We reach **Ellendale Pool**, a camp with a very pretty pool with fresh water and stay for the night.



As soon as it gets dark there we are attacked by guess what .... no, not mosquitos .... blasted cockroaches!  
As they fly around they crawl all over you, you have them everywhere!  
Before going to bed we spray all hatches and the interior of the camper.  
The last thing you need in the camper is a cockroach family!

On Wednesday, January 23, we head back to the Brandt Highway on small roads.



We are surprised about the many springs and abundance of water they have in this area.  
The springs look like green islands in the otherwise yellow ocean of stubble fields.

We head north on the **North West Coastal Highway**.  
At the **Galena Bridge Restarea** we stop for lunch and ... nock, nock, nock, 2 Swiss Ladies, Natalie and Riana knock on the door.  
They have spotted Peter and Heidi's car with the Zurich number plates and come over for a chat.

We stop at the **Billabong Roadhouse** to get some fuel (the next one is the Overlander Roadhouse and is too expensive) and who do we find ...?  
Riana and Natalie again!

We leave the highway at the **Overlander Roadhouse** and turn into **Shark Bay Road**.  
Compared with our trip in August 2007 it is barren, just some dried flowers left.  
For details on how it looked on the 2007 trip [click here](#).

After **Hamelin Pool** we turn into **Useless Loop Road**.  
Luckily the road has been graded since Heidi and Peter had been here in November 2007!



We stop at **Tamala Station** to fetch the key, then head out to the camp at beach.



The camp is deserted and we find ourselves a beautiful spot with a nice strip of beach, the water has a temperature of 29°C ...



Susi goes on a discovery trip and is impressed about nature and how it adapts to the never-stopping wind and the harsh environment.  
In the evening a full moon rises and it looks just too good!

On Thursday morning we continue on towards Steep Point.



Right outside of Tamala Station emus have their breakfast ...



We passed Carrarang Station and continue on via Bidy Giddy Outcamp.



At the causeway we are please to see that the expected 3,5 t restriction sign has been removed so we can drive over it without any second thoughts. It is such a pretty place.



Goats are farmed out here. Under these harsh conditions not many other kinds of cattle would survive.



We pass bay after bay, one prettier than the previous one.



Up to here the road is maintained because of the traffic of the salt plant. But this ends abruptly: the corrugation increases and in certain areas it is so bad that we slow down to 20 kmh.



The sand is rather soft but with the pressure reduced to 40 PSI (front) and 45 PSI (back) the OKA wanders through it with ease.



At the second high ridge Ruedi almost gets into trouble in second low gear but manages to change to first gear without stopping and with a bit of wiggling of the steering wheel he gets the OKA to the top.



The descent on the other side of the dune is quite steep. Susi decides to get out and take pictures ... her usual excuse when it gets to steep for her ... [Click here](#) for a movie of the descent (file type: .wmv, size: 1'748 KB).



We continue on passed beautiful beaches with almost white sand and turquoise waters. We decide to stay for two days and find ourselves a nice camp site at the Steep Point Camp.



Friday, January 25, is a beautiful day with lots of sunshine and temperatures around 30°C. A strong sea breeze keeps us cool. We spend the day working on the photos and the diaries.

In the afternoon we go swimming and have a bit of a snorkel on the "house reef", a small bommie with a few soft corals that is populated with moray eels, squids and lots of different fishes.



When walking along the beach we find lots of pretty shells.



In the evening we watch the crabs as they work on their burrows. They remind us of the large earth-moving equipment used in development sites or mines as they drag the sand out of the hole with their hind legs, throw it away from the burrow and then flatten the area with their front claws.

[Click here](#) for a short movie on their activities (file type: .wmv, size: 967 KB).

On Saturday it's Australia Day. We get the Australia flags out and mount them on the antennas.

Today we are leaving the OKA on the camp site and venture out towards Steep Point in Heidi and Peter's Toyota camper "Kokopelli" to explore the various attractions.



We reach the **Zuytdorp Cliffs** and climb down a bit to get a better view of the many blow holes and also the animals swimming past.



The waves are pounding the rock faces of the cliffs. Looking at the salt and shells washed up on to the cliffs it must be pretty rough here at times. There are even hooks mounted, either for fishermen ... or maybe for photographers that want to take pictures of the waves when it is stormy and the waves come over the cliffs ...? Anyway, we are very careful in approaching the cliffs as it goes down a fair bit into the white and foaming waters.



We are also surprised to see that even under these inhospitable conditions plants thrive out here.



There are various blowholes. We are lucky that we approach them in the right sequence, more or less from the smallest one to the largest one. So, when the chip in the camera is full we can just go delete ... delete ... delete ... without any regrets, as the new blowholes are even more impressive than the ones we have already taken pictures off!

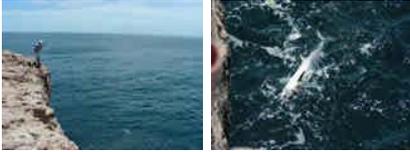


We also reach **the most westerly point of mainland Australia** and the obligatory touristy picture is taken to prove it ....



It is also amazing to see how nature transforms the cliffs over time.

Then we reach **Steep Point** and see some balloons floating around in the air. They are filled with Helium and are used by fishermen to get their lure further out into the open and deeper water. It's like deep-sea fishing but from the land.



As we approach one fisherman it is obvious even to us that he is fighting with a large fish. The fishing rod is bent and the fisherman looks like he's going to fall into the water any minute.



Quickly we run to his aid. Ruedi follows the fisherman's instructions and gets his multi-tool out. A rope is cut off and Peter gets to hold the helium-filled balloon while Ruedi is asked to fetch a triple hook on a strong rope. The fisherman lowers that hook down to the large fish but misses its head. He curses a bit because, as we find out later, a shark is lurking down there just waiting to get his chance to bite off the fish.



The second time it works and Ruedi gets to hold the fishing rod, while the fisherman drags up the fish. It is a large Spanish Mackerel, a very good catch. The fisherman is so pleased with his catch that he offers some fish to us.



To watch him filleting the fish is quite fascinating for us tourists.



And the seagulls love the scraps! Slightly sunburned we return to the camp and go for an extensive swim. Again we can see many fishes. The water at the "house reef" is just right in height. One can stand and watch the constant coming and going through the goggles without stress, just breathing through the snorkel. It's just great.

The wind picks up more and more and we have to dismantle the tent so it doesn't get blown to peaces. Again we are pleased with the comfort of the OKA that allows 4 people to sit and eat in peace while outside the wind sandblasts all.



On Sunday we leave and head out towards Thunder Bay. The sand gets really soft and Ruedi reduces the tyre pressure to 27 / 34 PSI.



Almost at the end of the track we just can't get any further. The soft sand has been blown over the track and we don't feel like risking too much and getting stuck in some shovelling work ...



... so we walk to **Thunder Bay** and enjoy the views.



It is interesting to see the tracks of what lives out here. Some of the plants just barely survive in the sand.



The sand dunes are very pretty. We never expected to see sand dunes like this in Australia, this is more like one expects the north of Africa to be.



We continue on to **False Entrance** where we watch the two blowholes which are about 30 m above sea level. They are not really active, just some spray comes out of them every so often. But when you get closer to have a look into the hole and then suddenly this grisly howling sets in, you just instinctively jump away. It gives you the creeps!



We venture on into the dunes and try to find a way down to the beach. The ranger happens to come through and shows us the passage to a perfect beach.



The small waves are just right for some boogie-boarding. We decide to stay here for the night and enjoy a great afternoon at the beach.



On Monday, January 28, we return to the bitumen and head south. Shortly before the **Murchison River** we head west onto a small track that should lead to the abandoned Geraldine Lead Mines. But there is a "No access" sign ...



We head a bit back and try our luck at the river bed. Even though there is no water in this section of the river bed it is obviously the Murchison River can get nasty and cause "boat casualties" ... But the track we follow just ends in the very soft sand and no passage or ford can be found to cross the river. So we pick the route described in the "Priceless Campsites & Rest Areas" guide and drive down to the old **Geraldine Lead Mines** town-site. We don't dare to cross the river as it looks very boggy. We find ourselves a campsite with nice views onto the river.



Even though it is hot a cool breeze blows keeping the flies away ... and there are many of them! The Murchison River has so little water that only Ruedi goes for a "swim" ... the rest prefers showers ... On Tuesday after a comfortable night with 20°C the sun soon warms up the air to close to 30°C and the flies get active again. They are the "sticky" ones, the ones that are not chased away easily, the real pain-in-the-bum ones. We go for a bit of a walk around the ruins but soon give up as there isn't really that much to be seen. We continue on to the **Warribano Chimney**, then get back the bitumen and head into **Kalbarri**.



We head south toward Port Gregory where we leave the bitumen and drive down to the beach. After passing a small settlement of squatters we follow the track, or at least we try to! At time there are so many tracks leading through sand that we have to find our way on our own. At one time after a bit of "reconnaissance" we lose Heidi and Peter in their "Kokopelli" so badly that the only way to get together again is to pass the current position to each other on the UHF radio, enter the position into the GPS and track them down that way!

Then we reach **Lucky Bay**, a stretch of beach sheltered by a small reef that creating a little lagoon. It is very windy but we decide to stay for the night and enjoy a good swim in the safe lagoon. We like the place and decide to stay for two days.



On Wednesday and Thursday we take it easy with a bit of PC-work and some swimming. The lagoon offers some interesting snorkelling in the shallow section. We see many stingrays and lots of different reef fishes.



We are also visited by different animals ... and the sunsets are pretty too!

The wind is really strong and one gets sand-blasted when walking along the beach in the afternoon. But luckily during the night the wind quietens down a bit. We don't mind the wind that much, as the OKA is so heavy that it takes a lot of wind to get it rocking and rolling. But Peter and Heidi's Kokopelli has a pop-up roof with tent sidewalls that flap.

On Friday morning, after a sticky night with almost no wind, Peter and Susi go for one last snorkel in the lagoon. Again they see lots of fishes including a flounder. Also three different slugs are spotted. There is still no wind when they come back to the cars and it is going to be a hot day ...



We head off in northerly direction into the dunes. We progress well but in certain areas there are so many tracks that it is hard to know which one to take. So Susi walks ahead and checks out if they are ok for the OKA. This all goes well until we hit a large area of sand with no vegetation.



Peter and Heidi drive ahead with their Toyota and already have trouble in a specific spot, but get through. Then we follow with the OKA and sure enough get into trouble in that spot.



Ruedi tries to force the OKA through but all that he achieves is that that the OKA is buried in the sand down to the axles. Peter and Heidi come back and almost get bogged too, the sand is so soft.



We start digging and try to get it afloat again ... no such luck. It is hot, just after lunch time and the sun burns down on us ... we should really not be out here in the sun doing this ... We get scorched slowly but surely ... but we agree on trying one last time.



Peter turns around his Kokopelli, gets the winch out and hooks up to the recovery hook on the OKA's back. The OKA's wheels are freed of sand and the sand-mats put in place. Peter starts pulling and the OKA starts moving ... slowly ... but it is moving. Peter keeps pulling and the sand-mats get placed under the wheels as they are freed up. Then after a bit more than an hour we reach safe ground.

Everybody is close to a heat stroke.

We all get into the OKA and just drink and drink and drink ... then we have a well deserved lunch.

For a short movie on parts of the recovery [click here](#) (file type: .wmv, size: 810 KB).

This exercise has shown us how good the sand-mats are in the sand ... and that we have to pick up the two mats we have in the shed to have a total of 6 not just 4.



As we cannot get through this sand patch and the way along the beach is no option we decide to head back a bit and find another passage over the sand dunes.

We follow some tracks and get on top of the ridges.

We venture out in different directions to explore the area and find a passage down into the valley and the road behind it.

It is only a few hundred meters to the safety of the dirt track ...



Peter and Heidi volunteer to go and look how the track continues ... but don't get far ... they get bogged so badly that we collect our sand-mats and the shovels and walk down to give them a hand.

Down there it is incredibly hot and there is no wind at all.

No wonder the sand is so soft in this dry heat!

While Ruedi, Peter and Heidi work on getting Kokopelli out of the sand Susi is sent out to find a way down from the dunes back onto the road.

But she is not successful and returns to the group to lend a hand.

Four shovelling-sessions and three hours later Kokopelli is out of the soft sand in the valley and back on the ridge of the dune.

We head back to the coast, find ourselves a place for the night and go for a well deserved dip in the ocean.

On Saturday, February 2, we head back towards Lucky Bay in search of a passage over the dunes.

Again it is hot and extremely dry.

The sand is as soft as soft sand can be.



At a critical section Ruedi unsuccessfully tries to get over a sand ridge. It does not matter which way he tries the soft sand just will not allow the OKA to get to the top.

So we prepare a sidetrack through the greens for the OKA and also place twigs on top of it.

Ruedi gets into position, accelerates ... all looks good ... but then he is stuck in the sand ... the infamous not-released handbrake could have played a role in this bog but we are not sure.

Discussing the "ifs and buts" does not help so we start getting the gear out again.



Ruedi wants to use Kokopelli as a tree-replacement to winch the OKA over the small sand ridge, so Peter places it in position.

But the resistance of the OKA in the sand is too strong; its winch just pulls Kokopelli towards the OKA into the soft sand.

Then we hear another vehicle coming.

A ute approaches and takes the route that Ruedi had unsuccessfully tried with the OKA previously ... and gets stuck in the sand right in front of the OKA.

Ok, change of plans, we have to free the ute first.

We get the sand-mats out and all four of us push the ute at the same time as the driver accelerates.

After a few tries the ute finally manages to make its way over the ridge.

The man in the ute, a local fisherman, offers to help by attaching his ute in front of Kokopelli thus making it close to impossible for the OKA to drag the cars towards itself instead of pulling itself out of the sand.

With this setup and the sand-mats it works, the OKA finally makes it to the top and over the soft sand.

[Click here](#) for some footage of the recovery (file type: .wmv, size: 2'600 KB).

The fisherman tells us that he has never experienced the sand to be so soft and that he might risk to get bogged a bit further down on the next ridge.

No worries, we will be there and help with the sand-mats again if required.

So he takes off.

We watch him as he tries ... and does not succeed.

He tries a second time, with lots of extra momentum and just makes it over the ridge.

Hmmmmmm ... that could be a problem for us too if he already has such problems ... but Kokopelli makes it up the ridge in its first try.

The OKA almost makes it but because the track width is a bit wider than the one from Kokopelli at the end the resistance of the sand being pushed ahead of the tires in the track is too big and Ruedi has to try again.

This time the track-width fits the widths of the OKA's track the OKA basically walks over the soft sand.

So it seems that not the weight of the OKA is the big issue but more the extra width, that forces one tire to plough through the sand requiring so much more extra power.

Then we are back in Lucky Bay and Peter and Heidi take their vehicle up the large dunes.

As they go they tell us on the radio how the conditions are.

The conditions are actually much better than expected and only one soft patch will have to be negotiated.

When it is the OKA's turn it just drives over the sand and up the dunes as if it was any sandy track.

We are very impressed.

Then we reach the dirt track on the other side of the dune and head back to the bitumen road.



As we head south we pass **Hutt Lagoon**, beautifully red today, then proceed to **Horrocks** on the White Cliffs Road.

We find Horrocks to be a pretty little place, with a swimming-beach with a float and excellent amenities right by the beach.

Then we discover this sign and once again are amused about the humour of Australian people:

[Attention Dog Guardians](#)

Pick up after your dogs.  
Thankyou.

[Attention Dogs](#)



Grrrr, bark, woof.  
Good dog.

We leave Horrocks towards the fishing bay and find a spot for the night.

On Sunday morning, after a warm (23.5°C) and muggy night, we head into **Northampton** for some Internetting and then head south on the North West Coastal Highway.

Some 20 km south we leave the Highway and drive down to **Coronation Beach**.

But we are disappointed.

Lots of seaweed has been washed ashore and it stinks a fair bit.

So we decide to drive into **Geraldton**, where we meet Sybille, the daughter of Peter's sister and have lunch with her.

Geraldton is a pretty place with lots of shops and a nice beach area in the middle of the city (it has 33 000 inhabitants!).

Then we drive further south and shortly after **Dongara** head towards Carsons Beach as described in the "Priceless Campsites & Rest Areas" book.

After a bad stretch of corrugation along the railroad track the dirt track crosses over the rails and leads into the bush.

The track is a bit sandy in some sections and it has one soft and sloping bit, but we get through without much hassle.



The road ends just before the last dune at **Carsons Beach**.

We find a strange kind of "housing" ... it looks like this fisherman has set up permanent camp here ...

The bush is actually woven to a more or less waterproof shelter.



We find ourselves a little spot a bit further down the road and set up camp.

We find some interesting grasshoppers and also some flowers bloom here .... amazing!



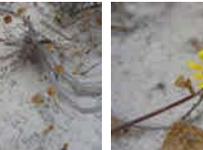
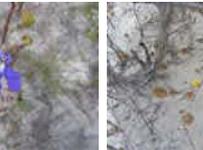
As we go down to the ocean to check out the water temperature we see a strange "thing" out in the ocean ... looks a bit like a small cyclone.

Worried about a freak of nature we fetch the binoculars and check out this unusual shaped thing ... only to find out that it is a drilling platform.

After a good laugh we go for a swim in ocean.

On Monday, February 4, we head back to the bitumen and continue in southerly direction.

When driving through the **Beekeepers Nature Reserve** we head down a small track towards the ocean looking for a place to camp.



While Ruedi explores the track by foot Susi looks out the window and on an apparently arid patch of sand she discovers small blue flowers.

When checking them out she finds even smaller yellow flowers.

Again and again we are surprised by nature ...



Later on we find another interesting patch.

Beside a pretty hibiscus we find a bush with two different types of leaves.

It is a mistletoe, which has grafted itself onto its host plant: the spot where it "plugged" into its provider can clearly be seen.

Heidi later on finds some details on mistletoe propagation in a book.

Apparently the seeds are very sticky and are transported by birds.

As the birds find themselves a spot where they can scrape the seeds off, usually a fork of a branch, the seed of the mistletoe is spread around and can propagate.

Clever set-up!

The day soon warms up.

We deviate to Lake Indoon and have lunch there.

We turn away from the coast and within 5 km the temperature rises from 29°C to 34.5°C, just because we have reached air masses that are not cooled by the ocean anymore.



On the way to Lake Indoon we pass some salt lakes.

They are covered with large chunks of salt.

This must happen, when the water evaporates the salt crystallizes.

The lake looks like a lake in a glacier ....



We also pass some very pretty flowering Eucalyptus trees.  
We also find some snails displaying a funny behaviour.

We find **Lake Indoon** to be completely dry.  
The signs giving instructions to water skiers looks a bit out of place ....  
As it is not really a pretty sight we head back to the coast and go shopping in **Leeman**.

We have reached an area, where there are many tourists and also there used to be squatters.  
To prevent any new illegal houses being set up all councils along this coast have prohibited any camping outside of the official camp grounds.  
This makes our life rather difficult as we have to comply with those laws to avoid hefty fines.  
It also gives the coast a bit of a hostile touch ... not very much to our liking.

In **Greenhead** we look for a small 4WD-track that should lead along the coast but it has been closed.  
So we continue on and look for a track described in the "Priceless Campsites & Rest Areas" book that should take us to Sandy Cape.  
We find the entry point into the track but after a while we find ourselves in front of a large sand dune, the track just disappearing under the sand .....  
Heidi and Peter explore a side-track and check out if they can find a new access to the beach around the sand dune but have no luck.  
So we head back to the main track.  
Shortly after we find a sign pointing to the new access to Sandy Point.  
We follow the sign on a heavily corrugated dirt road and find ourselves in the **Sandy Point Nature Reserve**.



The set-up of the campsites matches the description in our book, so we have found the right place by coincidence.  
The place is so pretty that we decide to stay for two days.



We set up camp, go for a swim in the clear warm water, Ruedi starts recording some guitar ideas .... it is a great spot.  
Later in the afternoon the wind changes its direction and starts blowing from the land.  
Within minutes the temperature rises to 35.5°C; it feels like sitting in an oven.



But in exchange we are rewarded with a fabulous sunset.  
Over night the temperature stays at 25.5°C and it is muggy ...

On Tuesday the wind blows from the land all day keeping the temperature close to 36°C.  
It is very dry and the bees go nuts on everything that has a bit of water on it.

This turns into a small problem when Ruedi swims into the tentacles of a jellyfish.  
The First aid instruction is it to wash the affected area with fresh water and then apply vinegar to it.  
Because of the bees hovering around us we cannot just hose him down outside of the OKA as this would instantly attract bees.  
There are definitely more attractive things in life than to become a water fountain for a swarm of bees .....  
So we just head into the OKA as quickly as we can and hose Ruedi down inside the OKA in the entry section.  
With no time to set up the shower curtain it all gets a bit messy and some of the fresh water is splashed onto the mozzie door.  
Instantly the bees approach and start sapping off the water.  
Also under the OKA, where the water from the shower tray has run into the sand, bees arrive and start sucking water.  
We just know one thing: we will have to be very cautious when exiting the OKA for the next few hours ....  
Then we apply vinegar to Ruedi's stings and afterwards sunburn-lotion, but it takes a while until the burning pain stops.

Peter goes for a snorkel to check out what kind of jellyfish has stung Ruedi.  
He finds a rather small almost transparent jellyfish in that area that is shaped a bit like a tulip with tentacles that are close to 2 m long.  
Now at least we know it is not a dangerous jellyfish, just a painful one.  
(Note: even a few days later, when Ruedi scratches on the marks they still itch and burn.  
The venom capsules stay in the surface of the skin and on contact break open releasing their content.)

Over night some rain sets in and we have a cool and relaxing sleep.

On Wednesday, February 6, it is our 10th wedding anniversary.  
Ruedi checks the Satellite-phone if any mails have arrived and finds an SMS from Susi's brother on it.  
Surprised he starts reading aloud "Hi, Dad has just died ..."  
The message of the death of her father reaches Susi a bit unexpectedly ...  
After a while she gets on the Satellite-Phone and calls her brothers in Queensland to find out details.  
The funeral service will be held in a week's time so we have a bit of time to organise the flights and all.  
We inform Heidi and Peter and tell them that we will head into **Jurien Bay** on the bitumen to have internet access and organise all.  
Heidi and Peter decide to travel to Jurien Bay on dirt tracks and we will meet there later on.

After a bit of shopping we continue on south and look for the access to the Hill River Mouth.  
As a new development has been set up the roads have changed completely.  
After a while we find the correct track and head north along the coast towards the **Hill River Mouth**.  
The sand gets softer and deeper.

As we don't fancy using the shovels again we decide to find ourselves a place in the dunes to stay for the night.  
After a warm day with temperatures just over 30°C we don't mind a bit of clouds and wind.  
Later on heavy rain sets in and a thunderstorm passes over us.  
Once again we are glad to have a metal cabin ... so we can just snuggle up and go back to sleep without having to worry about getting injured when being struck by lightning.

On Thursday, February 7, because of the night's rain the sand has become quite firm and it is easy to drive on it.  
So we decide to stay on the track and head south along the coast.



The track gets narrower and narrower but because the shrubs and trees on both sides are green they just scratch and squeak along the OKA. Once again the OKA collects "firewood" ... it looks like it has eyebrows!

There are a lot of kangaroo ticks in the scrub and Susi is busy picking them off her legs. As she is allergic to them she tries spraying her legs with insect repellent.

Yes, success!  
The ticks don't like it and now leave her alone.

We follow that track and eventually reach **Cervantes**.  
As the weather still is not too good we decide to check in at the local campground and do the washing.

On Friday we visit the **Pinnacles**.



Even though we have been here already a few times we always find something new.



But of course we also have to take the obligatory touristy pictures ....



The Pinnacles are located in a desert and it is very dry. At the toilets they have placed warning signs because of the bees. We have experienced that even after having had the water on for a bit, suddenly a bee gets washed out of the tap and more than once the bee has landed in our hands while we were washing them. Funny enough the bees don't seem to be in stinging mood in that very moment. It is just a bit of a scare when you realise that you are actually washing a bee between your hands!

Then we pick the track along the coast from Cervantes to Lancelin. As we are lowering the tire pressure a rental camper comes from the track and stops. They are Swiss too and have recognised our small flags on the car and also Peter & Heidi's Swiss license plate. They inform us that the first part of the track is quite rough and also narrow at places, after Wedge it will be very nice ... ok, let's go and find out! They did not exaggerate!  
The beginning is really not funny, very narrow and lots of ticks again!  
But after the small village of **Grey** the track gets better.



The track follows the coast and at some sections we have to drive on the beach. This is a first for us and we are a bit worried as many cars have been lost on the beach because they got bogged and people were not able to dig them out of the sand before the high tide.

But all goes well.  
Shortly before **Wedge Island** we find a good camping spot behind some dunes and stay for the night.



On Saturday, February 9, we continue on along the beach.



The white sand is blown around by the wind and forms very pretty formations.



Then we reach **Wedge**, a place where the government has entered into a contract with the squatters and has given them a temporary approval to stay there.



All is very organised and clean.  
There is also a notice board where lost things are placed ....



It is a very popular place and one can see the big boys with the big toys ....  
Fishing is very popular too.



The track now leads over some white sand dunes.  
It is interesting to watch how the dune covers the track and people have to drive around it more and more.



Then we reach a valley with lots of black boys (grass trees) in it.  
We remember that in our trip in 1995 we had been to a valley, similar to this one.  
We start looking around and suddenly actually even find the spot, where we took some pictures in 1995!  
Not much has changed since and of course we have to take a picture of it!  
[Click here](#) for the 1995-trip diary (sorry, only in German).



At one spot the road is sloping so badly to one side that we decide not to drive through it and take the detour.  
The risk of placing the OKA on his side mirror is too big!



Close to **Narrow Neck** we try to cross the dunes to reach **Dide Bay**.  
Peter and Heidi's Kokopelli manages the soft and very steep track but for the OKA it is too much.  
So we decide to drive around it and look for an alternative route, which we find.



We get to the beach and obviously have found another of the favourite fishing spots in this region ...



We finish driving the track to **Lancelin** and there head to the large sand dunes to watch the activities.  
We see the tour-operators enter the soft sand with their heavy vehicles and decide to do the same.  
Ruedi misjudges a ridge and the OKA jumps over it only to get a bit stuck on the other side.



Luckily we do not get bogged.  
It would have been a bit embarrassing with all the tourists around to get stuck here ...



It is amazing what people do for fun.  
This place is renowned for its sand dunes.  
Not only tour-operators come here to sand board, also quad and motorcycle enthusiasts use it as their playground.  
We must admit, it is quite fascinating to watch a quad speed up a rump and then fly over a sand dune!  
We have seen that with motorcycles, but with quads?  
That is new.

We check in at the Lancelin Caravan Park for the night and then enjoy the warm waters of the nearby beach.

On Sunday, February 10, we are awakened by the people leaving the caravan park early.

But we take our time and enjoy the fresh bread Heidi has baked for us.

Then we hit the sand and travel on a small side track along the coast to **Ledge Point**.

Ledge Point seems to be a rather expensive place to live, lots of nice and new houses, very pretty place.

We also find a brand new Big4 Caravan Park.

So next time we will not stop at the rather run down Lancelin Caravan Park but stay at Ledge Point.

As we cannot find any tracks along the coast we pump up the tyres and continue on to **Seabird** on bitumen.

Seabird is a small town, but also here there are some very expensive looking houses.

Seabird seems to be the weekend escape of people from Perth ...



Then we find the entry point into Trip 2 "Wilbinga to Seabird" described in the booklet "4WD days out of Perth".

The sand is dark brown, very hot and soft at times.

The track is rather rough and has stony sections.

But the views of the coast are splendid.

Then we have to find our way around a border line of a private property; the track must have been moved.



At one point four different tracks lead away, one steeper than the other one.

Peter and Heidi choose one, we the other one and but both of us encounter our challenges ... but we manage.



The last part of the track is very soft and Peter and Heidi have a bit of a struggle to get Kokopelli through.

Funny enough the OKA just walks through, possibly because of the wider track-width, which keeps one wheel on the greens growing beside the track.

Then we reach **Guilderton**, a little town with a very pretty beach.

Here the **Moore River** reaches the ocean and is a popular place for swimming, canoeing, etc.

We try to find a small track that leads over the river, but it has been blocked off.

The next track also only leads to a private property, no way though.

So we decide to pump up the tires and drive to **Perth** on the bitumen.

No liability for timeliness, integrity and correctness of this document is taken.  
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