

PERFECT ride from Kulpara to Lochiel Sunday 15th May 2022

The ride started at Kulpara Plantation aiming to do 63 km around the South Hummocks to Lochiel and return. Kevin D was the leader and Kevin B and myself made up the pack. In the half hour before the ride the wind began to pick up. We rode north for 5km on the bitumen with a strong cross breeze before tuning East and North East on rural roads with a nice tail wind. We rounded the end of the Hummocks Range on a delightful downhill track with plenty of scrub and glimpses out over the plain. The ride then turned interesting, an unmade sand track for 2 km. A good challenge trying to pick the best line to stay upright. I was trailing Kevin D trying in vain to avoid the soft spots where he dug into the sand.



Rounding the Hummocks



The jack track that broke the camel's back.

Discovered that the ebike is great for this type of soft riding – as soon as the front wheel digs it is easier to drive the bike forward when pushing hard on the pedals. (I would have been walking without it). This was great fun for about a kilometer until we discovered dozens of three corner jacks in every tire. Kevin B had a flat that needed repairing.

We finally made it through to the road but KevinB's tire was still going down. He decided that he would ride the 15 km or so back to the cars as he didn't think he would make the full distance. After a discussion we decided that we should not split the group and decided to cut the ride short and keep the group together.

After a couple of kms KevinB's tire was still going down so we decided that Kevin D and myself would go back to the cars and come back and pick KevinB up. (A good decision because both KevinB's tires were flat by the time he was picked up.)

Kevin & I road off into the ever increasing head wind. The hardest part was straight into the gale climbing back up the Hummocks. 4km at just under 5% gradient the whole way! The hill didn't give us any shelter from the wind which was blowing dust off the road. I tried to slow down to give Kevin a wind break but found it difficult on the ebike to match his slower speed but we made it back to the cars OK.

After picking KevinB up we went to the hotel in Port Wakefield for the necessary ride debrief. We discussed if this was a good ride or not. Our conclusion was yes, these rides are exploratory in nature so it is expected that occasionally thing will not go to plan – we derive satisfaction from overcoming the challenges that occur and getting every one home safely usually without outside help.



Assessing the damage.