

Lake Towerrinning – Lakeside Camping At Its Finest.

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I have started the long slide into retirement by going part-time at work so I now only work Mon – Thurs with every Friday off. Woo hoo, 52 long weekends a year. So what do you do with the extra day off? – go camping off course and I plan to do at least one camping trip a month.

I have had my eye on a private camp ground down south near Darkin / Kojonup called Lake Towerrinning. I had heard about this place a while ago but I was under impression that it was mainly for water skiers so it slipped from my mind but that was until I was having a conversation with my mechanic and he told me about the place.

I did a quick Google (www.lakesidecamping.com.au) and I liked what I saw but then I just had to wait for a good opportunity to get there and that came around in April when Wendy had a day off owed so we decided to go down and check it out.

Lake Towerinning is located on the Darkin South Rd almost half way between Darkin and Kojonup. Access to it is very easy with many different options including coming west from Collie or south from Perth via the Albany Hwy turning off the highway at Arthur River onto the Boyup Brook – Arthur Rd.

We decided that we wanted to do a bit of a scenic drive and explore some country that we hadn't been to before so we came in from Dwellingup along the Pinjarra – Williams Rd and then turned into Lower Hotham Rd and eventually onto the Quindanning – Darkin Rd to Darkin and finally the Darkin South Rd to Lake Towerrinning. Besides wanting to see the countryside there was an ulterior motive for taking this route and I will explain shortly.

We left Rockingham just before 9am on Friday morning and slowly made our way towards the Lake. Most of the route is on good bitumen roads and very easy to navigate; however, there is one long section of road on the Quindanning - Darkin Rd that is gravel and even though it is a well maintained road care does need to be taken especially if it has been raining.

Our plan was to have a morning tea break along the way and as it looked like rain I wanted somewhere with a bit of cover and flat ground so we could park safely with the Campertrailer. I had a place in mind but I wasn't exactly sure where it was and all I knew was that it was located 'six miles from Darkin' which isn't much to go on.

As we made our way along the gravel road section of the Quindanning – Darkin Rd I saw ahead that the bitumen resumed so I slowed down and I am glad I did because I passed the point that I was looking for. Literally right where the bitumen starts / ends was the old 'Six Mile Cottage' – named because it is six miles from Darkin.



I had seen some lovely photos of this old cottage so I thought while we were down this way I would take the opportunity to have a look and get some of my own photos and I am glad that I did.

Six Mile Cottage was built in the very early 1900s by a man named Dick Strange. It has been built from slabs of local timber (Jarrah I think) with a corrugated tin

roof and has two rooms – a bed room and a dining / kitchen. The cottage has been restored and is looked after by the West Arthur Tourist Committee and they have a wonderful job.

You can enter the grounds and go inside the cottage and have a good look around and it gives a fantastic insight into how our early pioneers lived.



One word of warning, the cottage is located right where the bitumen ends / begins and if you are towing you will have to park on the road edge which when we were there was very muddy following heavy rains and whilst it isn't a busy road just make sure that you do keep to the left as much as possible in case other traffic needs to pass by.

After 20 mins or so at the cottage, we headed into Darkin and found a nice park and toilets and had morning tea. Once we were suitably refreshed we headed off for the final run to the Lake which took less than 30 min from Darkin.

When you enter the camp grounds off of the Darkin South Rd follow the road in until you hit the lakes edge and take the left hand road and follow that into the camp ground. As you enter the camp ground you will see camping bays on the waters edge on your right and then a number of buildings and the Caretakers house is on your left. You need to report into the caretaker who will advise you where your allocated site is, pay your money and then head on in and set up.

I had booked a non powered site for two adults for two nights and the cost was \$40 which I thought was reasonable. There were a few people there, lots of water skiers as well as other campers but it didn't feel crowded.



Our site was 'Bayview' which was the further most water's edge site on the western end and it was nice and flat and very spacious and you could easily have fitted at least two Campertrailers onto it (I believe that you can do group bookings for sites).

After we had finished setting up we decided to do a run into Boyup Brook for a look and to get some lunch so we headed off and it took about 40 mins to get there. Once in Boyup Brook we found a nice little Café and had a great lunch and then a walk around the small main street.

We then headed back to the Lake and to relax. As mentioned this place is popular with the water skiers and once we were back at the camp ground I sat on the waters edge and watch them do their thing and it was rather pleasant and entertaining.



Unfortunately there was a bit of rain about so we had to contend with that but overall for our first day we had enjoyed it.

Saturday morning I rose early hoping to catch the sun rise but alas the weather wasn't much better and it was all clouded over. After breakfast we decided to set off back towards Darkin as there was a store there that Wendy wanted to see but when we got there it was closed on the weekend so we went to the little hardware store and got a few important items (fire lighters) and headed off to Kojonup via Arthur River.

If you haven't been to Arthur River before there are a few wonderful old buildings that have been restored and are worth the time and effort to stop and have a look.

On arrival in Kojonup we went to the old 'Military Barracks' museum. This building was built in the mid 1800s and housed the soldiers that were there to protect the early settlers. Entry is by a gold coin donation and there is usually a volunteer there to provide commentary and answer any questions you may have.



We thoroughly enjoyed our time in this little museum but soon our stomachs started to rumble so we went off in search of food. We had seen a great place on the internet that we thought would be great for lunch but when we turned up it was closed so we had to fall back on Plan B which was to find somewhere else to eat!

As we drove down the main street it soon became obvious which was the most popular place for a feed as all cars and pedestrians lead to the Kojonup Bakery where I happily made a pig of myself (there are no diets when camping!!).

Following on from lunch we checked out a few of the local businesses including the Aura Gallery before we headed back to the Lake.

As the sun fell I lit the fire in the provided fire pit and then we prepared our dinner for the evening and by now it appeared that the cloud was clearing and the next day was looking good. That evening we sat around the fire enjoy each other's company and watching the bush TV.

About 3am Sunday morning the rain started and it rained and rained so that once we finished breakfast we decided that we would pack up and headed off early than we had hoped. Luckily for us the rain did stop long enough for us to pack up but it continued on and off for the drive home.

Once we were home I went to set up the Campertrailer on the front lawn so it could dry and the minute I un-hitched it from the Navara it started to rain and continued until about 10 minutes after I had finished. It then rained on and off for the next day or so, so that I didn't get it packed away until the Wednesday afternoon after work.

Overall it was a great weekend and I can highly recommend Lake Towerrining if you are looking for somewhere to stay. Yes it is popular with the water skiers and their boats can be noisy so if you are looking for somewhere peaceful and tranquil then maybe this isn't the place for you but as we were out most days we didn't really worry about them.

There are toilets and showers and a small shop that is open during certain hours. Dogs are allowed and you can have fires in the rings provided and you can purchase fire wood there.

We plan to head back later in the year as there are a few photographic opportunities that I have sussed out and want to visit and this will be a great base for that trip.