

Overnight trip to Gemtree: Another enjoyable Camp

Following the second successful annual Matt Deer Camp in May, several consumers expressed interest in attending another camp later in the year ... and so a second mini-camp was held on 14-15 September at Gemtree Caravan Park. Tim MacDonald reports ...

ELEVEN PEOPLE attended our mini-camp at Gemtree—eight consumers and three staff—and it was the first time many of us went fossicking ... and even managed to find some rough gems (at least I think they were gems!).

Gemtree, located close to the Harts Ranges, is two hours north from Alice Springs and so the scenery on the morning drive out there was very picturesque. When we got out there, we booked our accommodation and then visited the gem shop to work out what we were going to be looking for the following day!

On our first afternoon, we did lots of things—we kicked the footy around, listened to Ted sing and play on his guitar and generally had a good look around the campsite. It is quite a rustic spot and there weren't too many other campers, so we had a lot of room to ourselves.

Later that evening, Steve and Esther Kent had some friends (who lived a few hours away) come and visit, to share dinner with us. They had a new 4WD ... which Clayton was very excited about. We had a tasty BBQ for dinner followed by even tastier marshmallows around the campfire ...



Ted serenading us at the campsite



Relaxing by the morning fire



Could this be?? Looking for the elusive gems



Clayton all geared up for some fossicking

The night was quite cold and, for some of us who weren't prepared, it was a long and cold night. I didn't pack any sheets, blankets or even a pillow (!) so it was a good lesson. We kept the fire burning all night and in the morning there were four swags very near to the fire as we kept moving closer to keep ourselves warm.

Come morning, while some of us were a bit tired, we were still enthusiastic to go fossicking. We went out in two trips as we could only take the 4WD out there. Fossicking was hard work (no wonder Chris was sitting on the bull-bar of the Hilux just taking it all in!). I actually found more pretty gems by going over the mullock heaps left by other fossickers rather than digging my own pits.

Coming back from the fields, we saw two wedge-tailed eagles sitting on top of a dead kangaroo. Unfortunately, they flew away before we could get photos. We had a great lunch of chicken wraps before heading back to Alice mid-afternoon.

The camp was a mixed group, some of whom had been on MHACA camps before and others for whom this was the first time. Everyone got on well together and, once again, one of the main benefits of the camp was the socialising and friendship building that occurred ... this, and of course listening to Ted sing :). Thanks everyone for making it another enjoyable camp. ✖

Tim MacDonald



No better way to start the day than round a campfire



Darren and Ted panning around