



Scoutaville Vic, 2025

The Victorian event was planned to get away from the Pines Scout Camp at Altona on Sunday morning the 16th November - but Murphy had other ideas, he had his swag with him, he was coming with us.



6 or 8 months prior we had negotiated with the Scout Camp for us to move in on Thursday 12th Nov when a few of us would arrive to sort all the gear ready for the general arrival on either the Friday or Saturday but when we rang a few weeks out to check where we were to pick up the key to the building we got a shock. We were told there was a "booking" mix up and as we hadn't confirmed our booking after our initial contact many months prior, it was assumed we weren't coming so the building was "let" to another group.

This of course was a problem, not just a problem but a major problem. That was not the sort of news we wanted to hear, living in Brisbane we couldn't just hop in the car and drive around looking for alternative accommodation, so it was onto the phones. We had a bunch of people all expecting to come to Altona where accommodation was to be provided and from where we would all head off on Scoutaville Vic so something had to be done and done quickly to let everyone know the amended plans.



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After many calls resulting in no result, we got in touch with the Geelong showground, where we had booked a couple of nights after our ferry trip from Port Lonsdale, and asked if we could move in a week or so earlier. We explained our problem and we must say the admin people at Geelong Showground were magnificent, nothing was a problem for them, and although the showground was already booked for a major event, we were allocated a pavilion in which to stay. We then let everyone know the amended plans, which solved problem number one. (Our building arrowed)



As we'd originally planned to overnight in one of Melbourne's inner western suburbs, we had arranged to pick up the scooters from a firm called ScooterY in West Melbourne, not far from Vic Markets. But! - Geelong is about 75km west of Melbourne so in order to get to West Melbourne at 10.00am on a Saturday morning, we planned to get away from Geelong about 8.30am as we weren't sure of the traffic situation and as our navigator was still in Toowoomba, we had to find the place ourselves.

We all climbed into our trusty little bus and got there in plenty of time only to be told ScooterY couldn't give us the scooters (we'd arranged this months earlier) but they had arranged for us to (perhaps) get them from another firm in North Melbourne. So here we were again, first up we had an event with no accommodation, now we had an event with no scooters. What else could go wrong? So it was back into the bus and off to North Melbourne to see YourGo scooters to see if we had a deal. We were in luck again. YourGo were very helpful, we filled out some paper work, arranged a very competitive price, selected 8 white scooters and promised to bring them all back again in a few weeks.

So now everything seemed to be back on track, accommodation was sorted, scooters were sorted, Scootaville Vic was underway. We had arranged for a tour of the RAAF Museum at Point Cook that afternoon and as we were a bit early and as we had no digs in Melbourne in which to while away the time, we did what

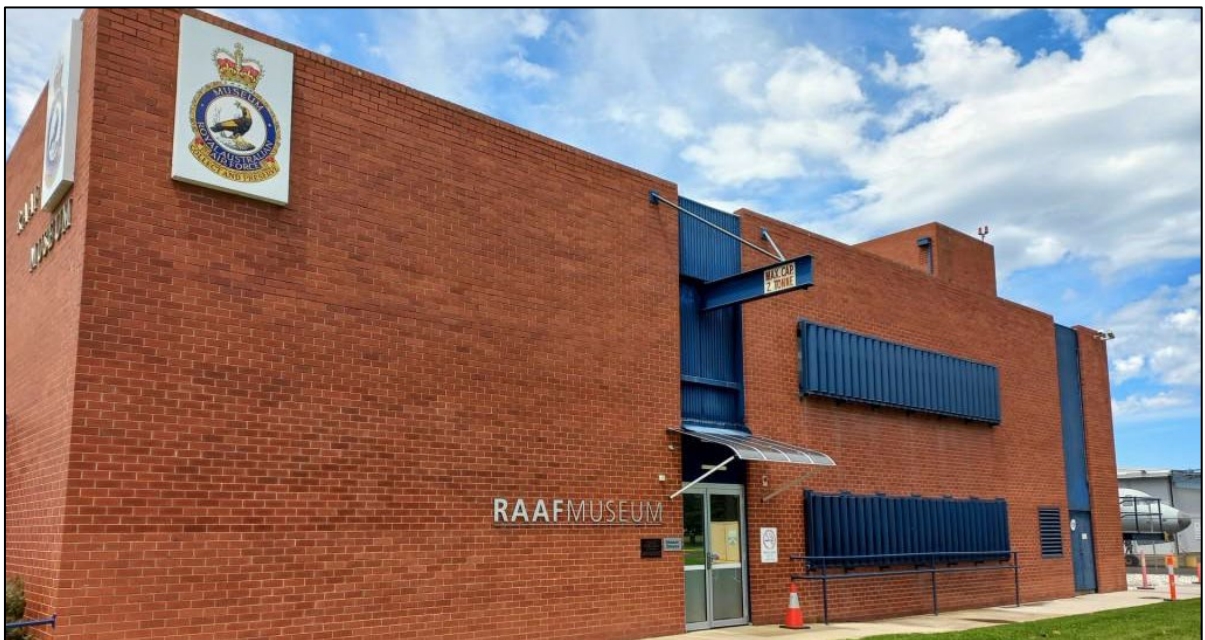




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most people do when they have too much time on their hands, we went to the shops. Those riding hopped on their scooters, the rest in the bus and off we went back along Geelong Rd to the Sanctuary Lakes Shopping Centre on Pt Cook Rd where we could lunch.

The RAAF Museum at Pt Cook does not normally open on Saturdays but WGCDR Michelle McPhail, the CO of the Museum, had agreed to give up her Saturday afternoon and show us around. That was a lovely gesture and we thank her very much





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We left the museum after a fantastic tour and headed back to our digs in Geelong but Murphy was still hanging around. We'd only travelled about a km up Pt Cook Rd when one of the scooters had had enough, it just stopped and refused to go any further. We tried all ways to coach it back to life but it wasn't having any of it. In the end we rang YourGo Scooters who told us to park it off the road and they would replace it. Which they did. We left one rider with the bung scooter and the rest headed back to Geelong. It took YourGo about an hour to arrive with the replacement, we swapped and eventually we were all together again at Geelong.

That was the 3rd time Murphy had appeared and we hoped it was the last. We were wrong!



Geelong has a good RSL Club, which as luck has it, wasn't too far from our digs so we decided to dine there most nights.





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Some months earlier when we were doing the Vic recce trip we had a meeting with management at the RSL and we were promised the Club would look after us and provide a meal for us all one night. Although we dined there multiple times that offer never occurred.

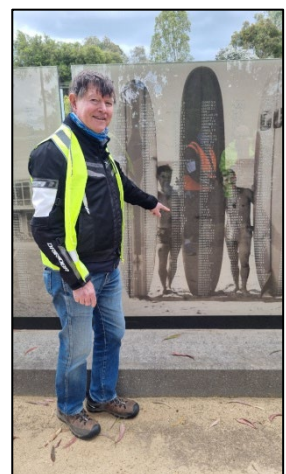
On Sunday morning, 16th Nov, it was up early, beds let down, breakfast, shower, load all the gear into Kiwi's truck and we headed off for our first overnighter which was to be in Benalla. By this time we were getting to know Geelong Rd very well and eventually we'd skirted Melbourne and were on the Hume Hwy heading north. Our first smoko stop was Seymour which is about 125km from Melbourne, just off the Hume Hwy. Now bypassed, Seymour is home to the Vietnam Vets Wall, something we all were looking forward to see.



Located along High Street, the Vietnam Memorial Wall, Memorial Grove and Commemorative Walk, proudly commemorates the service of all personnel, serving during the Vietnam conflict on behalf of Australia, from 1962 – 1975.

Chuck Connors pointing out his name on the wall.

Seymour was chosen as the site for the walk due to its history as a site for military training. As early as the Boer War, troops from Australia who served in that conflict trained in camps in the hills nearby. Some 12kms to the west of Seymour is the well-known Puckapunyal Military Area – first used as a mobilisation and training base during World War 1.





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The commemorative project, which started in earnest in 2012, was undertaken in a series of stages. The panels list over 60,000 names of every serviceman and servicewoman who served in Vietnam. The names are displayed in alphabetical order on 106 glass panels. Homage is also paid to several tracker dogs, vital to Australia's service during the Vietnam campaign.

After a good look around, we left Seymour for the 105km run north to Benalla where we were to spend one night at the showground. As we normally stop every 50km or so, hop off the scooters and walk around a bit to get the brain working again, we decided instead of doing that we would stop off at the Violet Town RSL which was 75km away. Joe Martin, the President of the RSL Sub-Branch had invited us to stop for smoko which we did and we're glad we did. Joe had a wonderful smoko prepared for us after which he showed us over the Club's remarkable Woman in War Memorial Wall.



Joe Martin and the remarkable Woman in War Memorial.

Finished in February 2024, the Wall is located on the RHS of the Club grounds, along the fence line. It symbolically represents all those Australian women who served in the military or supported Australia's and allied military forces. Designed and constructed by the Violet Town RSL Sub-branch members, the mostly black and white mural is big - 17 metres long and covers the period from the Anglo-Boer War to the present. It allows the Violet Town RSL to commemorate the 20 or so local women who have done their bit but in a wider (and longer!) context.



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There are portraits and pictures including women working in factories, nurses treating patients, entertainers in Vietnam, women in combat uniforms, senior officers with their ribbons, women flying planes, and more.

We lined up for the compulsory photo.



We had a great stop over with the Violet Town RSL, was great meeting Joe and his fellow Sub-Branchers and we'll definitely call in again if/when we're in the vicinity in the future. Although only a small Club, Violet Town RSL Sub-Branch donated \$200 to our cause, once again it was plainly obvious that it's the small Clubs that "really" care, big Clubs seem to lose their personalisation. Thanks Violet Town - we really appreciated your consideration.



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We left Violet Town for the short 30km run up to Benalla. Unfortunately Murphy was still with us. Some months previously, when we did the recce trip, we arranged with the showground for access to one of their pavilions however when we got there we found that Murphy had beaten us as everything was locked and we couldn't find anyone who knew anything about us. Being a Sunday there was no-one at work so we had no-one to ring to try and sort things, but luckily we found a groundsman who was doing a bit of work - we spoke with him, told him who we were, what we were doing and why we were there. He had a phone and had access to the A/H phone numbers of people that matter and in about 30 mins a lovely lady arrived with keys to the building below and we moved in.



That evening, with nothing planned, we decided to dine at the Benalla Bowls Club which wasn't far from the Showground. Our little bus was fired up, we climbed aboard and a-Clubbing we went.



Benalla Bowls Club.



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The BBC is a great Club - it caters for everyone's wants. No-one knew Sean was so talented, he did a wonderful job with his sheet while waiting for his meal.



Next morning we breakfasted early, packed and set off about 8.30am. We had a 165km trip to our next overnighiter which was Beechworth but we had a few stops along the way, one was Glenrowan, then Wangaratta RSL then the one to which we were really looking forward was the Gaza Ridge Army Base at Bandiana near Wodonga where we were to have lunch in the Soldier's Mess.

Glenrowan is only 25km up the road from Benalla so we made it a bit after 9.00am. We parked truck, bus and scooters and did the tourist bit.

Glenrowan was named after farmers James and George Rowan who ran farms in the area between 1846 and 1858. The township was settled in the late 1860s, the Post Office opening on 22 February 1870. It is famous for the bushranger Ned Kelly, who made his last stand and was eventually captured there.

Sean O'Toole with his mate, Ned Kelly.

Ned Kelly was born in Victoria in 1854. In 1880 he was shot and arrested after a 12 hour shoot-out with Police at Glenrowan. He was transferred down to Melbourne where he was hanged on the 11th Nov 1880, he was aged 25.





Scootaville Vic 2025.

After we'd bought a few items that we definitely couldn't do without from the overpriced souvenir shops, coffeed, pied, and walked the streets, it was time to head north to Wangaratta where we were to have smoko at the Wangaratta RSL. Wangaratta is only 15km from Glenrowan so we got there in no time but once again, Murphy did too. Our little Isuzu truck, which had operated perfectly for hundreds of klms, decided to play up. The dashboard looked like a Christmas tree, every warning light was lit up and it started to run rough. We rang Avis, from where we had hired it, and their "cure" was to have it towed to Wodonga where someone would fix it. They suggested it could take a day or two before it would be serviceable again. We asked why couldn't they just replace it with another but that couldn't happen either as Avis didn't have an outlet that hired trucks within a million miles of Wangaratta.

That didn't suit us, their "fix" could mean we'd have to spend a few nights in Wodonga waiting for our truck to be fixed which would throw out our plans for the rest of the event. Wangaratta is a big town, 30,000 people, we felt sure there would be a firm in town somewhere that could "fix" our truck. While everyone else waited at the RSL, we went looking and eventually found an Isuzu dealer, which only sold and serviced SUVs and utes and they suggested we see Robinson's Truck and Coach Maintenance - which we did. We told Robinson's who we were and what we were doing and they agreed to have a look at the truck for us. Kiwi got it to them and Ben Robinson, the owner, had a look, plugged in his magic computer and told us it was a Diesel Particulate Filter problem and he could fix it and it would take about 20 mins.



At Robinson's Truck and Coach, with Ben at the back in the work gear.

Ben did his magic and sure to his word, in about 20 mins our little mate was perfect again. Ben then told us he wouldn't charge us which was magnificent as he'd spent some time on it. We took the truck back to the RSL then we all went back to Robinson's to thank Ben again.

You meet some really nice people Scootavilling.



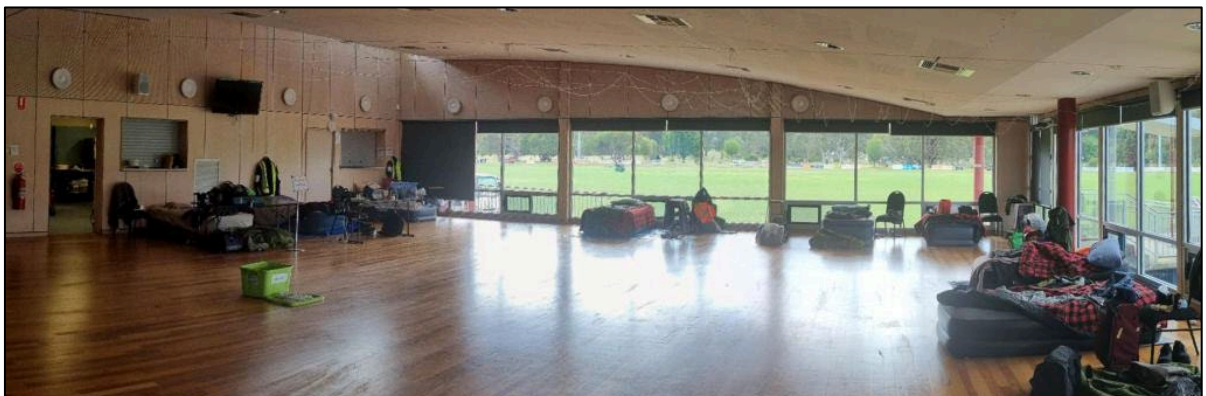
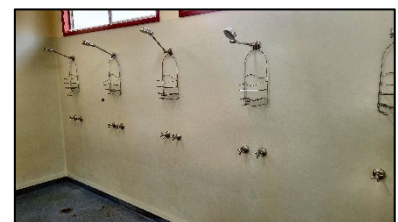
Scootaville Vic 2025.

With everything serviceable again, we set off from Wangaratta but unfortunately we'd lost several hours, thanks to Murphy, which meant we'd missed the opportunity of lunching at the Gaza Ridge Base so we decided to take the short cut across to Beechworth instead of going via Wodonga/Bandiana. The way we had planned was 110km in length, the shortcut was only 38km, this would put us back on time.

We arrived Beechworth and unfortunately so did Murphy as we couldn't raise the man who was to let us into the building. Luckily the Golf Club used the ground floor of the building and there was a Golf Clubber in the Club rooms. We had a word with him, he had a word with a few people via phone and before long the man arrived, the doors were open and we started to unpack our little truck. Kiwi had driven the truck onto the cricket ground which meant we had to tackle only 6 stairs instead of the million or so at the front of the building.



Once inside there was plenty of room, we spread out, found a spot, made up our little homes as we intended to spend 2 nights in Beechworth. Facilities were excellent, though we were a bit surprised to see the showers.





Scootaville Vic 2025.

Beechworth is a wonderful town. In 1852 gold was found in the area which attracted thousands of people from all over the world. The area quickly grew from shanties and camp sites into a thriving town. It quickly became a major Government and economic hub with Gov't investing in major infrastructure like the jail and hospital.



Old Beechworth Jail.



Old homes in the Main St.



Current Main St.



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Hotel Nicholas.

The Hotel Nicholas, which started life as the Miners Rest in 1953 during the gold years, has held a continuous licence since then to this day.. The original hotel building (and adjoining shop) was constructed of weatherboard and in the early 1870s, both buildings were 'bricked' and shared a common wall. With the arrival of the railway in 1876, the name was changed to the Railway Hotel. It was during this period that the hotel played a prominent part in the life and times of Ned Kelly and his associates.

In August 1931, Walter John Nicholas purchased the single-story Railway Hotel and the adjoining shop. (The owners of the shop lived in the cellar beneath where the stage and dance floor are located). Mr. Nicholas replaced the shop front with the Kookaburra windows (as well as in the main bar), and with the addition of the pressed tin ceiling, created a larger dining room. The Hotel became renowned in the district for its fine dining with an extensive silver service, every piece of which was engraved with the hotel's name.

Mr. Nicholas added a second story in 1935 and changed the name to the Hotel Nicholas. Unfortunately, in the late 1970s, the Camp Street wing of the Hotel, the coach house, stables, horse yards and Blacksmith's forge, were demolished to make way for a 'drive through' bottle shop and motel.

Ross and Lorraine Lucas purchased the hotel in 2001 and have overseen its restoration. We had dinner there and can thoroughly recommend it.

Our accommodation building, apart from having plenty of room for us to spread out, also offered a large and well kitted out kitchen. Great for breakfasts.



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Sue Trimmer, our foodie, preparing a hearty breakfast, with a bit of help from Wal Shakoff.

We spent two nights in Beechworth and on the Wednesday morning it was time to leave. This day we had a hard ride, 200km of windy road through Victoria's high country all the way to Omeo. We left early at 8.00am with our first stop being Myrtleford, 25km away.



Tobacco curing kiln.



Scootaville Vic 2025.

Back in the 1870s, with gold rush starting to wane, a number of Chinese settlers, who had come for the gold, began to grow tobacco as well as hops for beer making. After WW2, a large number of Italian migrants moved into the area and brought with them knowledge on how to grow and cure tobacco leaf in a far more economical method. Many log and corrugated iron kilns sprang up and tobacco growing became a major industry in the Myrtleford area. Back in the mid to late 1900s smoking was considered a cool thing to do, most people smoked but gradually people began to realise smoking wasn't as smart as everyone thought and more and more people tossed the habit.

The number of farmers gradually decreased and in 2006 commercial tobacco farming ceased..

There are still a number of the old kilns dotted around the area, the one above was moved to this spot by The Lions Club of Myrtleford.

We left Myrtleford and headed for Bright, a further 32km away. Bright began life in the 1850s during the gold rush and was originally known as Morse's Creek. In 1866 it was renamed as Bright. Today it has a population of 2,620 people and is a very popular tourist stop. We were headed for the RSL Sub-Branch, another small but a very active club, where Phil Keeghan, the President of the Club, had invited us to spend an hour or so and enjoy some of their hospitality.

When we arrived in Bright, where we found the temp to be quite a bit south of what we were used to north of the Tweed, we discovered a couple of RSL members on the road, acting as traffic coppers, holding up traffic allowing us to turn right into the street which held the Club. We immediately thought we're going to like it here. We pulled into the Club, parked the scooters and our bus and went into the Club.



Bright RSL



Scootaville Vic 2025.

President Phil and his team had prepared a wonderful morning tea, with the hot coffee most welcome as a warm-up tonic. Thanks Phil and crew, it was greatly appreciated.



Morning smoko at Bright RSL

We had a chat with Mayor Sarah Nicholas, who is a great supporter of the RSL and also a bike rider and she said she would have loved to have been able to join us. We offered to take her for a ride around the block on the back of a scooter and she jumped at it. So we did.



Sarah made us promise to let her know when Scotoaville Vic 2026 was happening as she'd love to come along. We certainly will.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



As always happens, when you're enjoying yourself time speeds up, although we'd been there for an hour or more, it seemed we'd only been there for 10 mins. It was time to go. We lined up in front of the Club's memorial for the group photo, mounted up and headed for our next stop which was to be Mt Beauty, 32km away. And once again, a couple of the Clubbers went back to the main road, held up the traffic and let us go.

Thanks heaps Bright RSL, you were marvellous.

The road from Bright to Mt Beauty is hilly, bendy and slow but there was no rush so we took it easy. We stopped at Sullivans Lookout where you get a wonderful look at the valley and the small township of Mt Beauty. We then continued down the hill to the Mt Beauty township where we'd planned a stop at the local bakery.





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We arrived at Mt Beauty, found the bakery but Murphy had beaten us once again. Today was Wednesday and it was closed. Didn't matter, after the wonderful smoko at Bright no-one needed food, so it was into the IGA next door for a cold drink, we sat around for 15-20 mins, then refuelled the scooters and headed for our next stop which was Falls Creek.

As we travelled further into the high country, the temp continued to fall, so riders rugged up with whatever warm clothes they had and off we went.



Mt Beauty Bakery.

After a drink, a refuel, a walk around, it was time to head up to Falls Creek. Mt Beauty sits at 366 metres (1,200ft) AMSL while Falls Creek is 1,500 metres (5,000ft), it was all uphill from here. We set off to cover the 31km, once again, there was no rush, we took it easy, enjoying the ride through Victoria's high country.

It took us about 45 mins to cover the 31km, we pulled up in the ginormous car park, parked everything and decided to have a look around. Although there was a little bit of snow on the surrounding mountains there wasn't any where we were. It was the 19th November but it felt like the 19th July, it was motherly cold, we can just imagine what it would be like mid year. Not for us. Being its off season, there wasn't a lot open, just an IGA which probably wouldn't make enough to cover rent and wages, but it was open.



Falls Creek.



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After we'd had a good look around, took selfies to prove we had been there, it was time to cover the final 77km down to Omeo. Omeo is 685 metres (2,250ft) AMSL and it's a great ride around the lake and through the snow plateau to get there. Being 1,600metres (5,250 ft) AMSL, the lake is the highest significant body of water in Australia.

At this time of year (summer?) the water temp can be as low as 100 C, (it gets a lot colder) yet some people brave it and swim in it. It is well stocked with brown and rainbow trout and is considered the best alpine fishing body of water in the country. (We dispute that - the [Great Lake](#) in Tassie has a surface area of 176sq km, and is a great fishing lake).



Rocky Valley Lake.

We left Falls Creek and after an hour and a bit arrived at the Omeo Recreation Reserve where we had been allowed a very comfortable building.



Omeo accommodation building.

We were spending only 1 night in Omeo, so once the truck was unloaded, spots were selected, beds blown up, gear stowed, we went touring. Back in the 1850s Omeo was included in the gold rush which lasted until 1901. Several wonderful historic buildings were built, such as the Courthouse and jail building below. This building is now part of the Historic Park & Museum precinct.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



Historical Museum.

Omeo has two pubs, the Hilltop Hotel which was next to where we were staying and the Golden Age which is in the middle of town. The Golden Age seemed to attract people on motor bikes as there were heaps in the hotel's car park - so we thought if it's good enough for them it will be good enough for us.



The Golden Age Hotel/Motel.

Originally built back in 1854, the Golden Age, named after a gold mine, has had more lives than Felix the cat. It has been burnt to the ground 5 times with the current building being built in 1940 after the town was devastated by the disastrous 1939 bush fires. We had dinner there then returned to our digs and turned in early.

Next morning we weren't in a hurry. Although Victoria's weather is considered a national joke by the rest of Australia, it's said you get the whole 4 seasons in one day but when you're down there it is no longer a joke. It's true.



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We woke to temps in the low single digits with occasional showers. This was the 20th November - it should have been a lot warmer. John Barber must have read the book because he came prepared, he had a heap of long plastic gloves, the kind Vets use to check the insides of a cow, he passed them out to the riders who found they were excellent in keeping hands and arms dry and warm.



John Barber and Dave Pedler with the gloves.

Our next overnighter was Sale, only 188km away via a flat and good road with a few stops planned to break it up into manageable hops. Our first stop was Bairnsdale where we'd arranged to smoko at the Bairnsdale RSL. Thanks to the Sub-Branch who really looked after us.





Scootaville Vic 2025.

We left the RSL and set sail for the final 65km down to Sale. We had been allocated a pavilion in the Sale Showground but on arrival we were told there had been a change and instead of putting us in the "horse" pavilion, we were now in the Susan French pavilion. Didn't worry us, it had everything we wanted, plenty of room, a kitchen area, a new toilet and shower block just over the road and heaps of parking. We were here for two nights.



We unloaded the truck, set up our bed sites, then as it was still early afternoon, Mike Gahan had arranged a tour of the Air Traffic Control and Air Mission School at RAAF East Sale for us. We climbed aboard our trusty little bus and off to East Sale we went.



After being checked in at the Pass Office, it was into our bus and follow our chaperones who were to show us over the school. The school has an old AN-FPN-36 antenna system from the Ground Control Approach (GCA) precision radar situated in pride of place out the front of the school. The Air Force had GCA at several airports in Australia, primarily to assist Sabre, Mirage and Macchi aircraft which did not have accurate modern nav equipment. It was phased out in 1990. Of course the groundies all went weak at the knees when they saw it and insisted on us all being photographed with it. The real (Air) Techs weren't all that impressed, they were used to working on very delicate equipment with very delicate tools. Using a Stillson as a tuning tool to adjust a choke's impedance wasn't their thing.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



A dedicated Groundie.





Scootaville Vic 2025.

After the groundies had finished hugging and kissing the old antenna system, we managed to drag them away and we were then shown over the school - which is amazing. The amount and the quality of the teaching aids is second to none, students can be "transported" to an airport anywhere, can experience different traffic volumes, different aircraft types, emergencies, weather patterns, time of day, all done digitally.

The school also has a very good photographic record of previous courses and school COs. We noticed one very familiar face, John Bushell, the current State President of the Qld Air Force Association - and also a Scootavillian.

Things would have changed hugely since John was the chief.



In the "mock-up" tower at the RAAF's ATC School.

We left the school late in the afternoon and returned to our digs. That night we had arranged with the Star Hotel in Sale to attend their Trivia Night as they promised we would receive a donation from the event.



Scootaville Vic 2025.

The Star was the watering hole of choice for a lot of blokes and blokettes who were stationed at East Sale way back, so with the promise of some nostalgia and a financial gain, we did. Murphy again? - we went, we stayed for their trivia but we don't know what happened to the financial gain as there wasn't one.



Next day, being a free day, we planned to visit the small Bundalaguah Primary School which is about 10km out of Sale. Bundalaguah has a total of 25 students, with classes ranging from Prep to 6th Grade.





Scootaville Vic 2025.

We had a truck load of chips we were just dying to give away - so we did.



Never ceases to amaze us how polite and well-behaved these small-school kids are. Over the years we've been to quite a lot of small country schools and they are all the same, great little kids, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, self-disciplined and happy. It's great to be around them. Mike Gahan had all the kids seated on the ground while he told them who we were, what Legacy is, what it does and why we do what we do.

Then he gave out some "show-bags" which had some toys and chips after which the kids proudly showed us around their school.



Some of the kids lined up for a photo with our scooters.



Scootaville Vic 2025.

We eventually left the school and travelled further away from Sale to the small township of Maffra where we were to have a look over the Vehicle Collection.



The massive building of around 2200 square metres was built during WW2 as a vegetable de-hydrating plant to provide rations to the troops. It has been used as several different types of factories and warehouses since then, finally falling into disuse around 15 years ago. The building has now been fully restored with a blend of both old and new facilities.

The vehicles in the Motor Museum are changed two to three times a year to keep a constantly interesting display. The items on display reflect motoring and transport from horse drawn carriages up to modern racers.



Some of the magnificent vehicles on display.



Scootaville Vic 2025.

That afternoon we did the tourist bit around Sale and met up with the Defence Force recruiting bus which was recruiting. This bus has everything and tours the country topping up our Services.



Next day (Saturday) we had a long way (245km) to go to our next overnighter in Tootgarook, but we had a few stops planned to break it into small and manageable hops. Tootgarook is on the Morning Peninsula, We left Sale at about 8.00am for our first stop which was the RSL at Moe, about 100km away. .



We had arranged with the Club for them to provide a morning tea break for our crew and after travelling 100km we were looking forward to it. But, when we got there, there was a bit of a hic cup, no-one knew anything about us. Perhaps it was because it was a Saturday, whatever, but after a few phone calls everything was sorted and we enjoyed a wonderful morning smoko.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



After the wonderful break we lined up the scooters in front of the great mural on the wall at the rear of the Club, then refuelled everything and set sail for Koo Wee Rup where we were to meet members of the Koo Wee Rup Motor Cycle Club for lunch at the Royal Hotel.- a further 85km down the road.



The Royal Hotel, Koo Wee Rup.

The name Koo Wee Rup is derived from the Bunurong Aboriginal language, specifically from the term “*ku-wirup*”. It translates to “plenty of blackfish” or “blackfish swimming,” referring to the native blackfish that were abundant in the area’s former massive swamp.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



At the Royal Hotel, Koo Wee Rup with members of the Koo Wee Rup Motor Cycle Club.

After we left the Royal and the Koo Wee Rup MC, we refuelled again for the final 60km run down to Tootgarook. We arrived there about 3.30pm, settled in to the Memorial Hall which had been allocated to us, then after a brief nana nap, we dined at the Rye RSL. We were here for one night.



We were very lucky to get this accommodation, our initial accommodation fell over and we had a last minute scramble to find a suitable property - the local Council were very helpful, they suggested and offered this memorial hall at Tootgarook which had plenty of room, toilets, a kitchen area and off street parking. It didn't have a shower but we reckoned one day without a shower wouldn't hurt anyone.

Thank you Morning Peninsula Shire.





Scootaville Vic 2025.

Next morning it was up early, quick breakfast, pack up all our gear, load the truck, panic the hall then head for Sorrento, just down the road, to catch the ferry across the Heads to Queenscliff.



On the Ferry, Helen Boyd telling John Barber and Wal Shakoff where to get a life jacket if we were torpedoed.



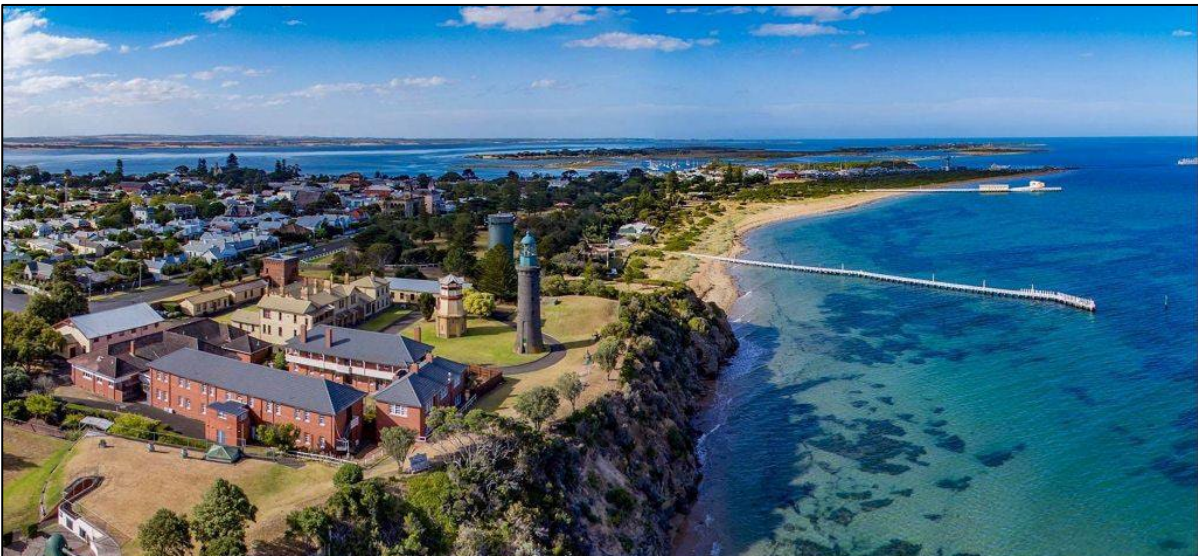
Wal Shakoff, Kiwi Campbell and Chuck Connors fighting sea sickness.



Scootaville Vic 2025.

After an enjoyable 45 min very smooth crossing of the Heads, we arrived at Queenscliff where we had a tour booked at the Fort. Built way back in 1980 when a canon was set up to defend the entrance to Port Philip, it was expanded in the 1870s and 1880s and was manned as a coastal defence installation continuously until 1946.

By 1946, with the huge advances in Defence equipment, it was realised the Fort was no longer a coastal defence establishment, it then became the home of Army's Staff College until the 3 Service Staff Colleges were combined and set up in the ACT after which it became the base for Army's Personnel Division which it is today.



As it is still an operational Army Base, it is not an open museum, you need to present full ID to enter then must be shown around by a guide. We had a bit of trouble with the ID bit but eventually we got it sorted then were shown around this remarkable 6.7 hectares.



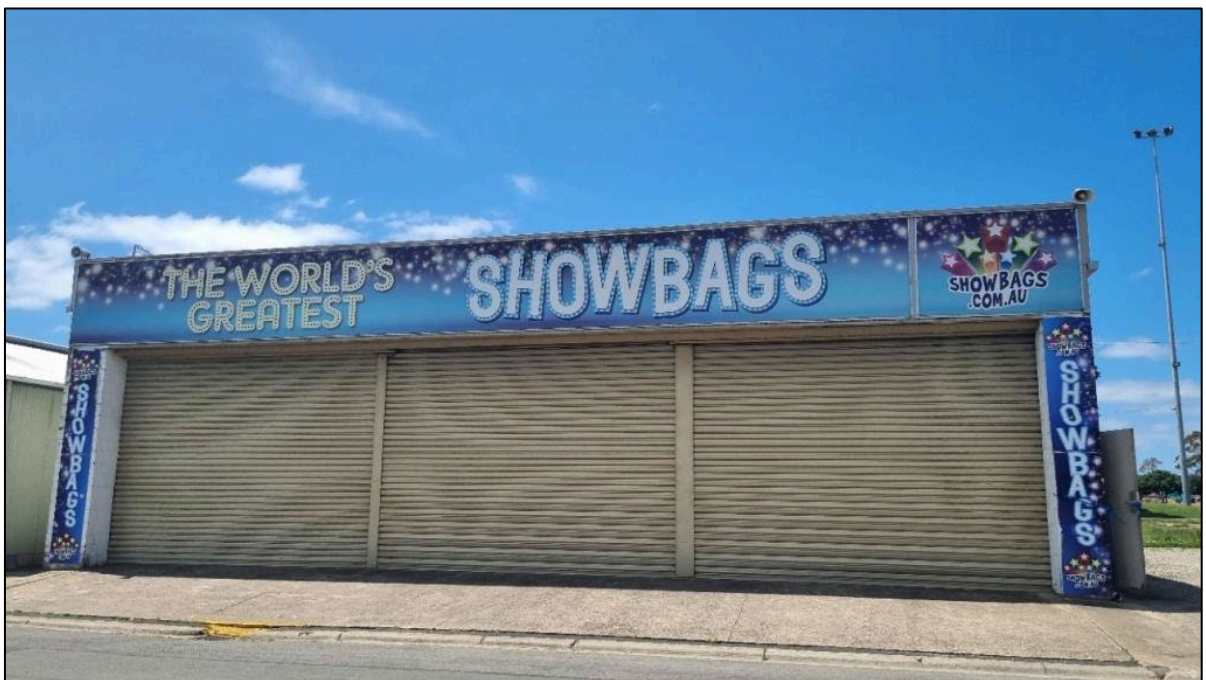
Our guide showing us around and telling us the history of the Fort.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



After the tour, we drove around a bit until we found a coffee shop overlooking the Bay, stopped, coffeed then when sufficiently caffeined we loaded up again and headed for Geelong where we intended to stop for 2 nights.



The very helpful Showground Society allocated us the show-bag pavilion which was perfect for our requirements, plenty of room, big roller doors which allowed us to back the truck in for easier loading/unloading, plenty of power points for the ResMeders, toilets just around the back of the building and a shower block within a 2 min walk. Perfect.



Scootaville Vic 2025.

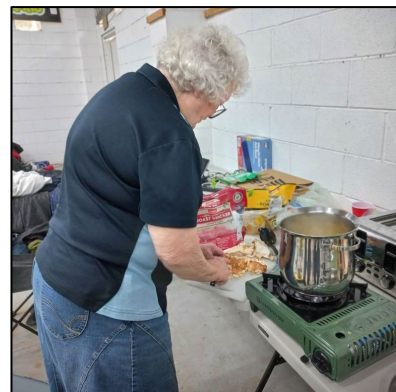


We must thank the Showground Society for their generosity, without their help we would have been up there without a paddle. This was our second stay at the showground and it looked like there might have to be a third but the Scouts came good - more on that later.



Geelong water front.

While we stayed in Geelong, if we weren't eating at the RSL, our Foodie, Sue Trimmer, looked after us, as she did for the whole trip.





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We got to know the staff at the RSL quite well, we were immediately recognised as we walked in and although the promised "treat" never eventuated, we were given a \$50 voucher which instantly became several cans of Bundy and Coke.

Tuesday morning came and we had to pack up once again, this time we were headed for Ballarat, just a short 100km trip. We didn't get away too early as this was our shortest leg and we'd planned a few stops to break up the trip otherwise we could have got to Ballarat mid morning.

Our first stop was the primary school at Lal Lal, 70km from Geelong. Lal Lal is a few km off the main hwy, and the little school, which today has 42 students, began life back in the 1860s.



Originally started in a private house student numbers quickly grew to 33 so a bigger and purpose built building was urgently required. Government help was sought.

In November 1875, a new school building was opened, built from local bricks sought from the Lal Lal brickworks. During the school's history, attendance has ranged from 8 - 80 students with peak numbers from 1870-1883 because of the workings of the iron ore and coal mines.





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We had a few chips which we gave to the kids, which seemed to go down quite well, then Mike Gahan had them all in a class-room and showed them where we've been and where we're going. He explained what Legacy is, why it's needed and why we do what we do. Once again the kids were marvelous, attentive, polite, interested and a few shot questions back at Mike wanting to know more about Scootaville.

We went outside as the kids wanted to check out our little scooters. They all lined up patiently, hopped on, started, revved them, blasted the horn with little imaginations in top gear.



Then unfortunately it was time to go, we all lined up for a group photo, thanked the wonderful and dedicated teachers for allowing us to spend time with these great little kids, then it was off to Ballarat.



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We left the school about midday for the easy 30km run up to Ballarat where we were to stay for 2 nights at the new showground. Ballarat is in the process of getting a new showground and we were given the opportunity of trying out one of their new pavilions.



We had the use of a pavilion that was more like a hangar, it could have housed two jumbos no trouble, we spread out as much as we could yet took up no room at all.



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We'd found a good Club - the North Ballarat Football Club - not far from our accommodation so it off to the Club that night for dinner. It was so good we made a habit of it.



Next day we had a tour of the old Ballarat RAAF Base organised. Ballarat was where the RAAF's School of Radio originated so it was high on the list of must sees. Most of the buildings are still there, the old HQ building is used by the local chapter of the Air Force Association, others being used by Men's Clubs, Motor Car Clubs etc.

We were given a lengthy tour of the old HQ building.



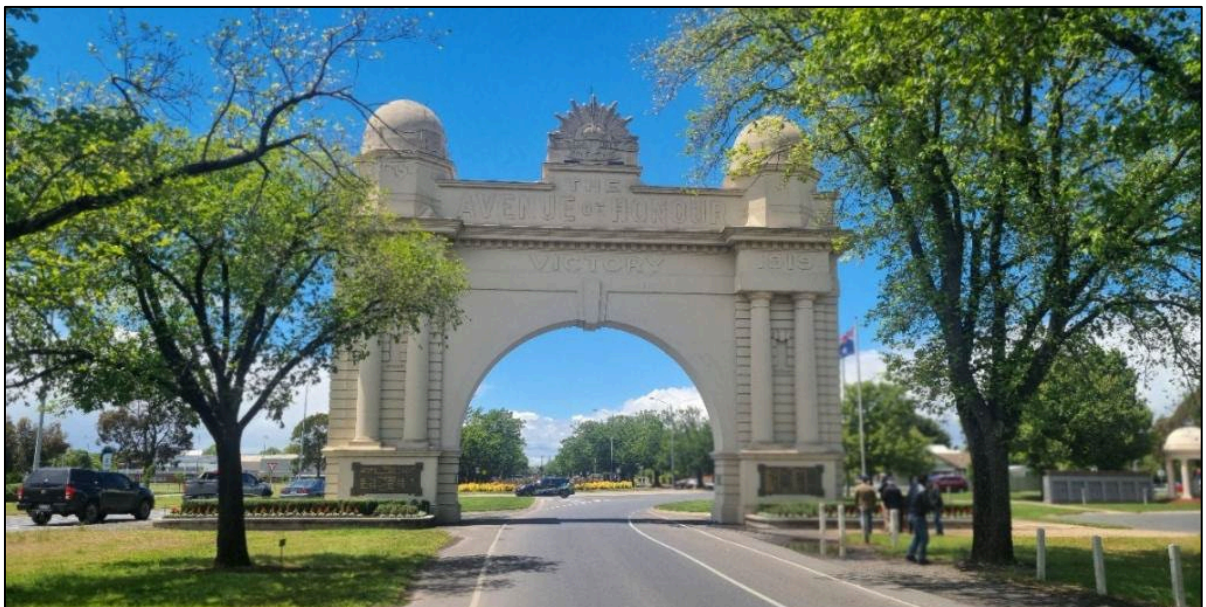


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L-R: John Barber, Chuck Connors, Trev Benneworth, Dave Pedler, Wal Shakoff, Mike Gahan.

After we left the old RAAF Base, we did the tourist bit, Ballarat is a large City with a population of more than 120,000 and has a lot to see. It was heavily involved in WW2 which is evident from some of the major memorial buildings and structures that dot the City.



The Memorial Arch.

Unfortunately our only lady rider had a mishap that afternoon. She, the scooter and a heap of gravel got all mixed up and poor Helen came a bad second with some serious damage to a leg. This earned her a trip to the local hospital in an ambulance where she was kept for about a week before being transported down to home town Geelong. We're pleased to hear she's definitely on the mend now.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



Helen Boyd being made a fuss of in Ballarat Hospital.

Next morning, Thursday, we were off to Bendigo, another short trip, this time 121km. As usual we breakfasted, showered, downed the beds, loaded the truck, panicked the building, thanked the Council for the wonderful use of their showground and headed off about 9.00am.

We had a stop planned at the Newlyn Primary School, just a short 30km from Ballarat.





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Newlyn Primary School was established in 1858 and is one of Victoria's oldest still operating schools. Originally built from timber, the current brick building was built in 1887. Today the school has 21 students.

We had a wonderful time with the kids who showed us their vegey garden and guinea pigs after which we handed out some very well accepted bags of chips.

The kids had to show us their guinea pig which gets fussed over like royalty.



Then it was time to say good-bye, we lined up for the group photo, thanked Principal Samantha Vella for the opportunity of meeting the kids, then headed off towards Bendigo.



We had originally planned lunch at the Castlemaine RSL but that too fell over at the last minute so we parked the scooters, truck and bus, found a very good bakery in the main street and lunched.

We'd heard there was an old Woolen Mill in Castlemaine that we should check out while there - so we did.



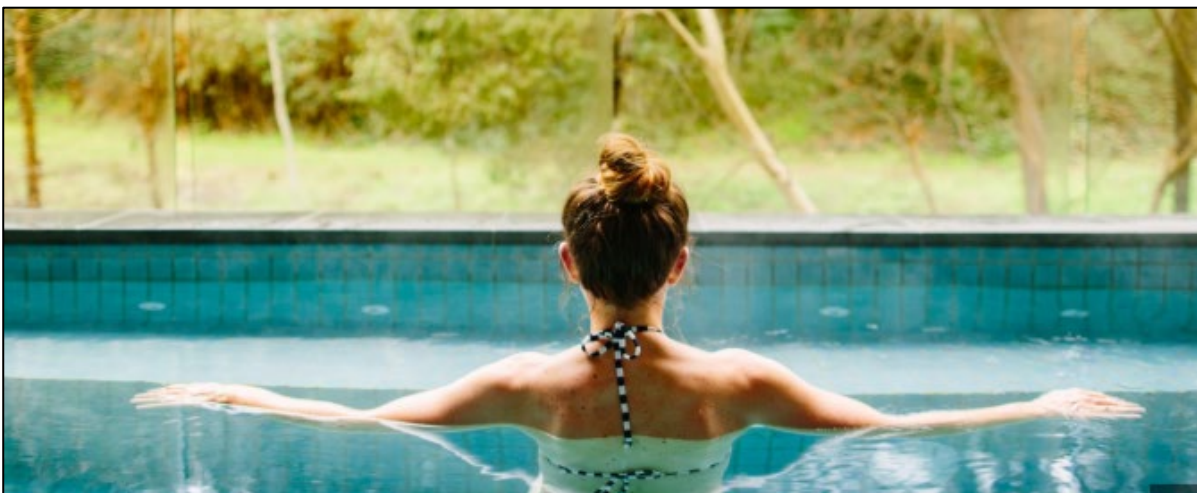
Scootaville Vic 2025.



The mill opened in 1875 as the Castlemaine Woollen Company. Years back it was the major employer in the town, manufacturing woollen products, especially blankets and tartans. During the Second World War the Mill began making blankets for army horses. There was a certain amount of secrecy about what they were making and employees weren't allowed to talk about their work.

In 1993 Victoria Carpets purchased the assets and operated the mill until 2013 when it was closed. In 2014 it was sold to its current owners who transferred the buildings into a market place. Today it is a tourist attraction where tourists and locals alike come to gather, shop, dine, work out, learn a new skill, dance, paint, listen to music, get married, dream and be inspired.

Our next stop was Hepburn Springs which is a resort town about 50km from Ballarat. People have been flocking to Hepburn Springs since the mid 1860s to bath in and drink its mineralised water which bubbles up through layers of ancient rock some 450 million years old. The water pushes to the surface naturally enriched with minerals and contains the signature taste of the Daylesford and Hepburn highlands.



With approximately 2.5 grams of dissolved mineral salts in every litre of water—on par with some of Europe's most venerated mineral springs, the result is an elegant and gentle tasting water. These minerals include sodium chloride (salt) and potassium



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chloride from rain clouds forming over the sea, as well as calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium and iron from the rocks on which it falls.

It also has a nice coffee shop. We stopped and tried both coffee and water. Coffee was good. To a few of us the water didn't taste all that different to the water that comes out of every tap in outback Qld, around Longreach and Winton.



The Springs Coffee shop.

John Barber seemed keen on the water and bottled some for later.



We had a good look around then mounted our vehicles again and set off for the final leg to Bendigo where we had been allowed a pavilion at the Bendigo showground and where we were to stay for 2 nights. It was the 27th November.



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Ian Furz, the CEO of the Showground and the Mayor of Bendigo, Cr Thomas Prince came down to the pavilion and welcomed us to Bendigo. Very nice.

Mayor of Bendigo, Thomas Prince with Trev Benneworth, being presented with a Scootaville challenge coin.



A highlight of our stay in Bendigo was the tour of Thales, the huge firm that makes the Bushmaster and Hawkai vehicles for our Army. Mike Gahan knew someone who knew someone who knew someone and it was organised.

The factory is huge and it was an eye opener to see how they made those very important vehicles.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



Another "must see" business we had in mind was the famous Bendigo Pottery. Bendigo Pottery is Australia's oldest working pottery business, being established in the 1850s when Scottish migrant George Duncan Guthrie stumbled upon a local clay deposit and created a successful pottery business. Soon, it would rival the great Staffordshire potteries of 19th century England.

It is now a major tourist destination with heritage kilns, workshops, and new artistic ventures. We did the tourist bit and bought one or two items that will not be used but probably sit in a cupboard for years.





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Our accommodation was within walking distance of the Bendigo RSL - so we dined there each night. We also approached the management and asked if we could pass the bucket around and raise some money for our charities. Management was very helpful, even made an announcement over the Club's PA telling patrons who we were and what we were doing. Mark Dunn set forth with the little white bucket and raised considerable funds.



The 28th November happened to be the anniversary of John Barber's 73rd year on this earth, we bought a cake to celebrate the event.

Chuck Connors, John Barber.

Although the cake was delicious, we were surprised that it was more that John could handle. A definite first.



Next day was going home day, we only had to get back to Melbourne and our event was all over. We were very fortunate that the Pines Altona Scout Camp had taken pity on us and had rung around and found us alternative accommodation in Melbourne, which meant we did not have to go back to Geelong. That was very good of them, they didn't have to do that, we thank them very much for looking after us.

As the run back to Melbourne was 165km in length, we weren't going to do it in one go, we planned a few stops, the scooters would need fuel and we'd need a break. We planned our first stop at Lancefield, 80km down the road.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



Didn't take us long to find a bakery which sold both warm pies and hot coffee.

Victoria opened the freezer door for our run down to Melbourne, Sean O'Toole was forced to rug up to the extreme to keep mobile.



The 1st Altona Scout Group very kindly allowed us to spend a few nights in their club-rooms at Altona, saving us the long haul down to Geelong.

We would spend Saturday and Sunday nights here then return the scooters to North Melbourne Monday morning after which everyone would disperse.



Scootaville Vic 2025.



The Altona accommodation was perfect for what we wanted, plenty of room, a good kitchen area, tables and chairs, toilet and shower block and off street parking. Perfect.

It was also next to the Altona Bowls Club which served up some very good meals. What more could we want?





Scootaville Vic 2025.

Monday morning came, we returned the scooters to the North Melbourne depot, and the small bus to Budget in Airport West, some caught a train home, some were picked up by friends or family, others Ubered to Tullamarine for a late afternoon flight home.

It was over for another year - and even though it was the coldest 2 weeks a lot of us had spent for many a year, it was fun and we'd do it again.

