



Saturday 5th August
Karratha

It is time to do more work on the journal and to get everything up to date again. I have inserted a map so everyone will get a better idea of where I am and how far it is from the point that I started this odyssey. I was talking to a person who had lived in Newcastle and she was telling me that if you put a pin in the map over Newcastle. Stretch a string to Karratha then move the string in an arc the outer end of the arc will mostly be over water. This means that I am about as far away from Newcastle as I can be without getting wet. The weather here is nothing short of fantastic considering that it is winter. The daytime maximum is generally between 30 and 35 degrees and overnight it drops down to about 20 degrees. This is also one of the driest places that I have experienced so far. There has been no rain here since the last cyclone in April and that was a very late cyclone in any case.

And the really big news is that I will be calling Karratha home for a few months as I started work on Wednesday, driving concrete agitator trucks. It is so easy to get a job here and the rates of pay are very attractive. Now I have no previous experience but they are training me with the expectation that I will stay with them for at least 4 months and be prepared to work between 50 and 60 hours a week. This will give you some idea of the desperation of employers for willing workers up here. The one downside of this situation is the lack of accommodation and one of the major jobs we do here is delivering concrete to caravan parks that are expanding at an incredible rate. When you can find permanent accommodation it is very costly and not all that attractive so I am developing a plan to take care of my own needs in that regard. I have jumped forward a little in the telling of this story so I will go back to when I first arrived here and give you some idea of the conditions through the photos that I took.

I spent a couple of day amongst the wildflowers out at Maitland river then moved to a small caravan park in the township of Dampier. Dampier is a port where they load

iron ore for export to those countries that still make steel and there is also a large salt industry there with their own ship loading facility.



Because of the shortage of accommodation around here there is a 3-day limit in the caravan park so they can cater for the tourists. The town is only very small, about 200 homes, and it is not all that attractive. It is built on a field of stones and everything gets covered in red iron ore dust.



It is also very close to the Northwest Shelf Gas Project and their processing plant and another wharf for shipping liquid natural gas to other countries. It seems that we don't keep anything for ourselves if we can make a dollar selling it overseas.



It also seems that emission rules don't count up here.



My 3 days were up at Dampier and things were looking good on the job front so I moved to a place called Cleaverville about 40 minutes travel north of Karratha. Now when you hear a place name like Cleaverville you get the impression that there would be a township as in Knoxville etc, but don't you believe it. It is simply a camping locality with no services whatsoever. There is not even any water there, you have to bring your own in or get very thirsty and very smelly after a couple of days.



Cleaverville is really a very pleasant place and it is far enough away from Dampier in the south and Port Lambert in the north not to be affected by the industrial pollution that occurs around here. The tides are also getting more dramatic as I travel north and the tidal range here is about 4 metres (13 feet)

Low tide



High tide



There is no shortage of beachfront sites here so I take advantage of it.



And the wildflowers are an added bonus. Who needs a garden when these flowers surround you?



So to bring this section to a close and ease my conscience a little I will try to get this sent off in the next day or so. I do have an extension of my tenancy in the caravan park in Karratha if I want it but I may move out to Cleaverville and put up with the travelling to and from work each day. The trade off is that what I save in accommodation, I spend in fuel. The big factor will be lifestyle and that is something that has become very important to me. The next section of the journal will probably be all about work and once I am established and have my own truck then the camera will travel with me. I realised that this week I haven't taken one photo so I will have to rectify that very soon.