

## SARCC PERFECT ride Sunday 19/1/2020 – Palmer/Mannum loop

This ride was initially scheduled for December 2019 however it was cancelled due to a forecast temperature of 39C so it was good to finally get out for our first PERFECT ride for 2020 in a much more comfortable 25C.

Five of us met in the parking bay off the western entrance to Palmer. My accomplices in this rural adventure were Jilden, Steve, Kevin and Justin.

I stressed the exploratory nature of PERFECT rides in my pre-ride briefing as I was unsure if the abandoned Monarto-Sedan railway maintenance track would be navigable and also whether a shortcut on the way into Mannum was open.

We set off to the south in perfect riding weather however we had one eye on the dark clouds gathering menacingly over the hills to the west.

At the railway crossing on New Wachtels Road the maintenance track appeared to be reasonably well defined so we entered and followed the track south. The rails were still in place on this part of the track whereas further north apparently a lot were removed for use on the Pichi Richi railway. The surface was quite sandy in places, so not very pleasant for those with skinny tyres. This was similar to our previous experience with this same line further south at Monarto, however that section had much longer and deeper sand drifts that not even my wide tyres could handle!



*Reedy Creek Bridge*

The stunning heritage listed five arch concrete railway bridge at Reedy Creek was our signal to turn east and head towards the mighty Murray.

Picturesque views across the river and wetlands between Caloote and Mannum greeted us as we neared our lunch stop. The previously mentioned shortcut was blocked by a gate however there was no fence next to the gate so we took that as an invitation to continue and set off down another sandy track through

the wetlands to link up to the bitumen road into Mannum. We marvelled at the huge houseboats moored in the marina and wondered at the value of some of the larger examples.

Lunch was taken on the Murray bank in a gazebo we had to to ourselves, which was lucky as it rained. Unluckily the seats around the gazebo were on the windward side so the rain blew in!

After lunch the rain stopped and we braved the traffic through Mannum to Long Gully Road for the steady climb back towards Palmer.



*Gazebo lunch*



A steep ascent up Gap Road saw us into the hills north of Palmer, riding through some fabulous scenery and the prominent gap the road is named for. As just reward for our uphill efforts we undertook the exhilarating descent into Palmer to complete a satisfying days ride.

The pub at Palmer was quite busy compared to our previous visits and we adjourned to the beer garden to toast Peter, wish him a speedy recovery and discuss our next PERFECT ride on Sunday February 16<sup>th</sup>.

*The Gap*