

PERFECT ride from Tailem Bend on Sunday September 20<sup>th</sup>.

Driving into Tailem Bend we were on the wrong end of a radar gun designed to catch the hordes of petrol-heads descending on the nearby car racing circuit...hopefully no-one received the dreaded letter in the mail!

Thirteen riders braved the warm and windy conditions as we cycled out of the Tailem Bend railway station carpark and headed for the mighty Murray. The ferry was sitting empty on the far bank when we arrived but fortunately a vehicle drove onto the ferry initiating the journey over to our side. There didn't seem to be any way of summoning the ferry if you were a walker or rider however I am sure our bright multicoloured clothing would have got us noticed eventually. A smooth crossing ensued and we bade farewell to the ferryman (having not paid him) before riding onto the levee bank path on the west side of the river.



*West bank levee path*

The track is part of the River Bend Heritage trail and down this we were blown at a speedy rate into the Murrundi Wetlands reserve where Paul gave us a masterclass on the efficient use of gates!



*Wellington river cruise*

Hurting into Wellington we made it onto a half full ferry with moments to spare for the journey back across to the east bank.

A short piece of bitumen later we passed by "The Hall" cafe (well nearly ... the allure of a quick caffeine hit was too much so we stopped!) and on to the Mowantjie Willauwar conservation park entrance. Signage here was for the Murray Coorong Trail which according to the Interweb will eventually stretch from Cadell to Meningie! The trail was sometimes ill-defined, sandy in places, but a lovely ride paralleling the Princes Highway back to the outskirts of Tailem Bend where we carefully crossed the

Dukes Highway and headed inland.

We soon experienced our one and only puncture which necessitated a sidewall repair (thanks Jilden), before riding past "The Bend" raceway where there was a round of the Australian Supercar Championship in progress. Having travelled a sufficient distance past the raceway to not be able to hear the roar of engines we stopped on the side of the road for lunch, attracting the attention of the locals keen to see the crazy cyclists.

Loins girded and bellies filled we turned north to tackle the closest thing to a hill in the locality and battled into a stiff headwind to the top.



*Lunch, far from the madding crowd*



*The chain train*

A brief search uncovered the disused Tailem Bend to Karoonda railway and the inevitable maintenance track to ride. Unfortunately this maintenance track was badly in need of some maintenance itself so a few riders elected to surf the bitumen back to town while the intrepid remnants of the group enjoyed a gradually smoother downhill ride along the railway line dodging the gaping, hissing sleepy/shingleback lizards that infested this part of the track.

The Tailem Bend Hotel was not very busy, despite the motor racing nearby, so we ducked inside for a quick debrief or two.