

ADVENTURE FOR ALL

With fantastic camping and facilities, Levuka 4WD Park is the perfect place to take your 4WD off its leash

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF MARTIN





Relaxing in camp in the idyllic surrounds of Levuka

Just a few hours south from Brisbane or Toowoomba is the scenic rim world heritage area, and right on the edge of this fabulous region is the Levuka 4WD Park. Levuka has been described as one of area's best kept secrets – with its incredible 4WDing, camping, and other activities it won't remain a secret for too much longer so put Levuka on your list of 'must-see' destinations!

To get to Levuka from Brisbane take the Mt Lindsay Highway south through Beaudesert and then all the way down to Woodenborg. From Woodenborg there are two different options – the first option is to continue along the Mt Lindsay Highway for another 6km then then left into Beaury Creek Road, then follow Beaury Creek for 8km to the signposted turn right into the Levuka property. The second option is via Urbenville – take the Clarence Way south for 12km to the picturesque town of Urbenville,

then turn right into Beaury Creek Road through farmland and past Coutts Crown Mountain, continuing to the right following the signs to the Levuka Main Gate. Urbenville and Woodenborg are nestled amongst picturesque mountain peaks and valleys and surrounded by world heritage rainforests and state forest's. Everywhere you look there are breathtaking views and scenery. Some of the nearby parks include the Border Ranges National Park, Koreelah National Park, Toonumbar National Park and Mount Warning National Park in NSW. Also close by are the Lamington National Park, Mount Barney National Park and Springbrook National Park in Queensland.

The surrounding World Heritage rainforests are the home to many species of birds and fauna and are reputed to be the home of the Yowie, although sightings of these creatures are rare numerous sightings have been reported over the years. Even though the hairy Ape-like creature is

WHERE

Levuka is right in the centre of the scenic rim world heritage area with several national parks adjoining the property. The scenery is just spectacular with dense rainforest, waterfalls, and majestic mountains seemingly at every turn.

CAMPING

Levuka 4WD Park has two main camping areas with hot showers and flush toilets. The park is also dog-friendly, so man's best friend can also come along. Cost is \$30 per night per family group. Firewood is available for purchase at \$10 per 35kg bag.

WHAT TO TAKE

Take sufficient food and drinks for the planned duration of your trip. Water is available at the campgrounds, but as this is untreated it is prudent to have your own drinking water. Basic equipment spares and recovery equipment should also be carried.

SUPPLIES AND FACILITIES

The nearby towns of Woodenborg and Urbenville have fuel outlets and general stores for any last minute supplies, along with hotels for those 'other' essential supplies.



LEVUKA 4WD PARK IS A SENSATIONAL PLACE TO TEST OUT YOUR VEHICLE



considered mythological, it may be prudent to close your tent up at night so as to not get a visit from one!

Upon arrival at Levuka, call in at the homestead to see Robert and Rosemary to pay your fees and get up-to-date information about the 4WD tracks and camping. Ensure you grab a map of the area which will prove invaluable as it has the gradings of each track, as well as various warnings and points of interest.

Robert and Rosemary Clark run Levuka as a working cattle farm, and have opened up the property to nature based tourism since 1995 using the old logging tracks and showcasing the natural beauty of the area. The property has been in the Clark family since 1908. Old growth rainforest and open

hardwood forests have been preserved on the property. In fact one third of the property has been preserved and has a low impact, sustainable farming policy.

From the Levuka homestead it's time to head to the camping area and select a suitable site. There are a number of camping options suitable for a range of group sizes. Camping areas A and B are very large with abundant shade trees, mown lawns and facilities such as hot showers, flush toilets, shed with fireplace and rainwater tanks. There are stone fireplaces dotted throughout, and firewood available for purchase at a nominal fee. For smaller groups the Cedars camping area is another option located on a creek amongst cedar trees with a pit toilet and room for half a dozen tents, and Sally

Wattle camping area is perfect if looking for a secluded spot but still only a few minutes' walk from the facilities at Campsite B.

After setting up camp, it's time to partake in some of the park's activities. If a bit of fishing is what you're after, then there's the possibility of catching a nice sized fish from the stocked dams. There are some fantastic walks emanating directly from the main campsites through old growth forests with creeks and waterfalls. However this is a 4WD park so perhaps some 4WDing is in order!

Before tackling the tracks, sit down with the supplied maps and plan an itinerary. The property's tracks are split into northern and southern sections, with track names and gradings provided. Another terrific thing about Levuka is that all the tracks are



One of the many fun mudholes at Levuka

Plenty of gates to open/close on the property, please leave them as you found them



TRIP STANDARD

Trip rating A through to E grade, with E meaning a 2WD could do the trip, and A requiring a lift, lockers, a winch and aggressive tyres to complete. Levuka has tracks rated from mild to absolutely wild, with the supplied map providing gradings for all tracks.

MAPS AND GUIDES

Northern NSW by Hema Map

reasonably close to camp so you can spend a few hours on your chosen tracks and call back to camp for refreshments.

The best way to start is to try out the southern tracks that emanate straight out the bottom of the camping area. The first track is Track 1 which is quickly surrounded by dense rainforest turning daylight into semi-

darkness. It's not long until the first boghole is encountered – there will be plenty more to follow we guarantee you!

Continuing down Track 1 there is an option on the left to take Track 4 which is a steep and difficult grade 4 option, alternatively you can continue down track 1 as we did. After a steep downhill section you will arrive at a junction where Track 4 re-joins the main track and Tracks 2 and 3 backtrack up the hill. Track 1 continues downhill to a small parking area and walking track to some pretty waterfalls a short distance off the track. A little further on there is an option on the left to 'Rock & Roll Gully' which is a rocky grade 3 track with the expected slow rocky sections to really get your vehicle rocking and rolling! Further along Track 1 is a turnoff to the left to the Bullant series of tracks, and then Track 1 finishes at a gate.

Passing through the gate the countryside opens up to rolling farmland with the picturesque Lake Levuka appearing on the

left. The lake McKeys Track starts with a deep mudhole and then climbs uphill to the intersection with Bullockys Road. It's worth heading up Bullockys Road to Apple Tree Lookout as the views from here are just spectacular with rolling farmland leading into forested areas with dramatic mountain peaks in the distance.

Head back down to McKeys Track, through the gate and then choose your next series of tracks. McKeys Track heads eastwards past Grames Track and loops around pass some interesting tracks such as 'Ian's Ditch' (grade 2) and 'Bumbuster Climb' (grade 3) before return-

CONTACTS & INFORMATION

LEVUKA 4WD PARK
W: www.levuka.com.au
PH:(02) 6634 1338

RESTRICTIONS AND PERMITS

The cost for entry to Levuka 4WD Park is \$30 per night per family group. Extra adults \$5 pp/pn.

ing. Rufus Run continues northwards up the hill before heading east and then north again, with yet another series of tracks on the right (Rockheads Charge). Continue along Rufus Run and then take the turn-off into the Playground.

The Playground is a series of short tracks that lead down and up out of a depression, with ample area for spectators to watch the action. It is a fantastic place to test out the capabilities of your vehicle in a fairly safe environment, since if you don't make it up a particular section you can simply reverse a short distance and take an easier option out. Get your camera out as there will be plenty of chances to get some fantastic wheel-lifting action shots here.

The northern tracks of Levuka feature some of the most difficult tracks on the property, and some sections are off-limits without permission. The best place to start is Rosemary's Road which enters the rainforest with a steep drop down to Oakley Creek followed by a steep grade-3 exit. With the lack of sunlight, the rocky road is extremely slippery and a real challenge, and we had to winch up the first section out of the creek. There are more steep sections to follow before the road joins Norm's Loop. Rosemary's Road is a dry weather only road – it must not be driven in wet conditions.

BUDGET ATTRACTIONS

Levuka has a range of activities available including fishing in the stocked dam, bushwalking on marked tracks, bird watching, photography, canoeing on Lake Levuka (BYO own canoe), or just taking in the surroundings at the fabulous campgrounds. Of course there are the awesome 4WD tracks to tackle as well!

TIME OF TRIP: September

From Norm's Loop you join Dingo's Run and head pass the notorious Monkey's Puzzle track which you need permission to enter. The tracks here are grade-4 and -5, so be prepared for a serious challenge if tackling these! Continuing along Dingo's Run the track leads to the North-Eastern section of the property with a host of tracks to explore including Koolbabe, King Wally's, Patches Run, Bee Sting, Little Dipper, Spangles Straight, Havoc Crossing, Possum Run, Rusty's Road, and the Homestead Pass. There is a terrific lookout at the Knob which overlooks many of the tracks.

Levuka 4WD Park is a fantastic place to test out your vehicle on some terrific tracks but there is a lot more on offer than just the sensational 4WDing. Make the effort to come out to Levuka for a weekend or longer, you are sure to have a fantastic time! ■



Plenty of steep tight sections to test out your vehicle



Geoff's cruiser tackling the mudhole at the base of Lake Levuka

The views from Apple Tree Lookout are spectacular



The tight, steep and challenging Rosemary's Road

