

Aboard Sengo

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January 2019

Exploring locally

It is amazing what you can find near the 'burbs'.

From 3



Werribee River Trail

Researching options....

Just what does the future hold?

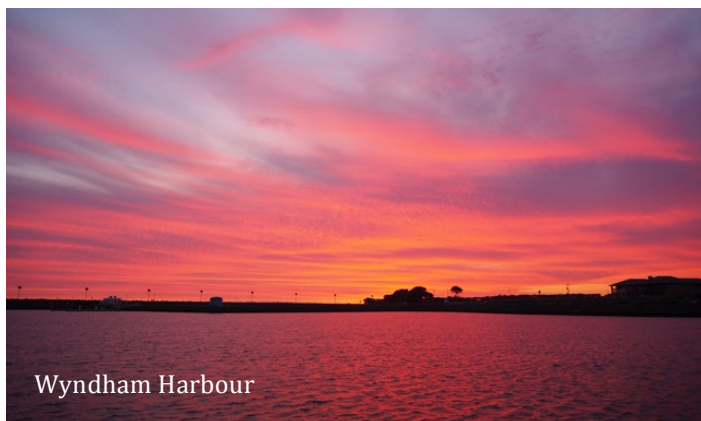
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Wetlands and Water birds

Wanderings
around Werribee



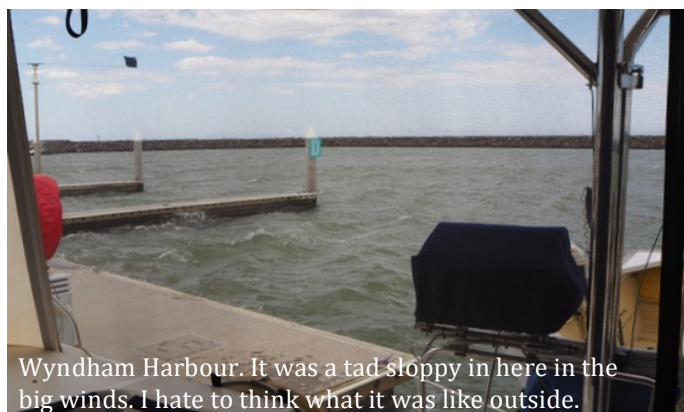
Werribee River Trail



Wyndham Harbour



Wyndham Harbour



Wyndham Harbour. It was a tad sloppy in here in the big winds. I hate to think what it was like outside.

On really hot days you want 'dark' as well as 'cool'.

Tiger found solace in the fan box



Sengo was on dock at Wyndham Harbour, South Werribee a total of five weeks – our initial 'month' extended because our sails weren't yet back from being repaired. Whilst we took the opportunity to catch up with as many people from our 'old life' as we could, we also had quite a few tasks to do and organise. The most imperative one of course we got someone else to do; the few minor repairs to our main sail. It had been a bit of an effort for the two of us to get it down off the boom, and we were grateful for the help of Col from 'Doyle's (') Sails' to get it back on again. We are also grateful to B from Wyndham Harbour for his help extracting the genoa which had got caught on the grub screws and needed bodies in three places at once to facilitate removal.

Other tasks for this month included more sealant replacement, minor indoor repairs, and a spring clean (only partially completed but did include three trolley loads of stuff taken to the op shop and a large bag of towels to a local vet).

Weather played its part in some days where nothing was done - several extremely hot and windy days had us hunkered inside with extra fans on for air flow, and we were reluctant to leave the boat despite our extra load of fenders on the outside; temperatures on these days ranged into the '40's centigrade and winds into the '40 knot range, often with changes and squalls turning from northerlies to southerlies in short violent bursts.

To keep our minds from going stir crazy however we made sure we spent some time off boat exploring new things. We took the plunge and hired a car (two as it turned out - to keep the costs down we grabbed the deals at the car hire mobs as they came up). Both cars were Holden Astra's – the latter one from *Thrifty* slightly newer, slightly cheaper and much more comfortable. It was also an extremely easy and smooth car to drive – I was almost reluctant to hand it back!

Apart from a couple of necessary long trips, we kept most of our exploring within easy range of our boat and went for several walks along the local waterways. Other exploration destinations were within an hour's drive time.



From the K Road Cliffs

This was an evening wander south along the east side of the Werribee River and was not at all where I expected to be. I had misread a map (not detailed and an awkward scale) and headed along the 'track' from the Cliff Top Lookout on K Road, a few kilometers along from Werribee Mansion. It was not unpleasant and we did see some birds but we didn't quite know if we were walking on public land or the waterfront edge of private property.



Disturbing g the Ibis



The Werribee South General Store is around 2.5 kilometers from Wyndham Harbour and around 30 minutes walk. The coffee is strong, the service is friendly and they are clearly supported by the locals for 'morning smoko'. The cafe is small and off to one side. The general store has fresh local vegies for sale (this is THE market garden area for Melbourne) and a large table of wine in the middle. They are also the local farm supply store but we didn't go out the back to check this out.

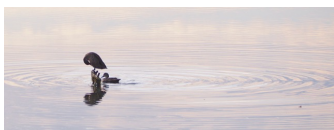




Laverton Creek

Laverton Creek and Foreshore Trail

15th January 2019. It was supposed to be a hot day but fortunately the sea breeze kept the temperature down at the dock, allowing us to do some work on the boat in morning. We rested in the afternoon and I convinced Andrew to go for a evening walk. We had several choices within a short drive and chose a stroll at the bottom end of the Laverton Creek



Laverton Creek Foreshore Trail bird list – Mudlark, Pelican, Raven (sp?), Lapwing, White-faced heron, Common sandpiper, ?duck (sp?), Teal (sp?), (Other) sandpiper (sp?), Black winged stilt, Mallard, Pacific black duck, Singing honeyeater, Superb fairy wren, Spotted turtle dove, European house sparrow, Silver gull, Crested tern, (other) tern (sp?)



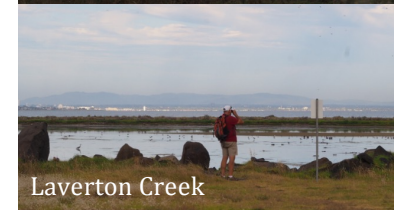
Laverton Creek



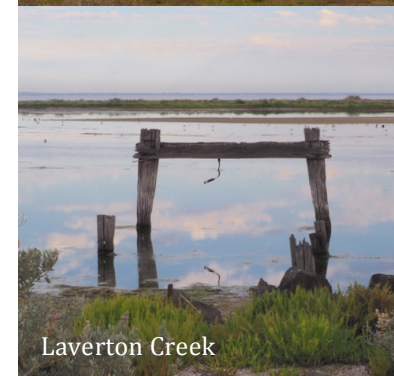
Laverton Creek



Laverton Creek



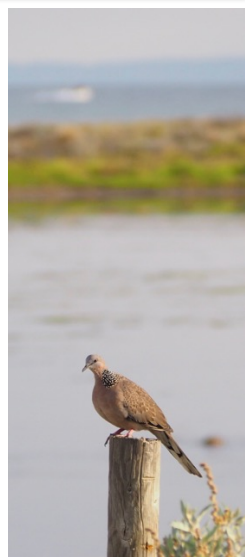
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Laverton Creek

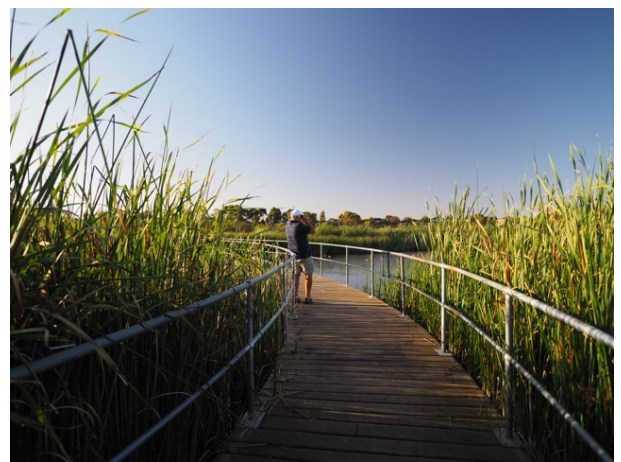
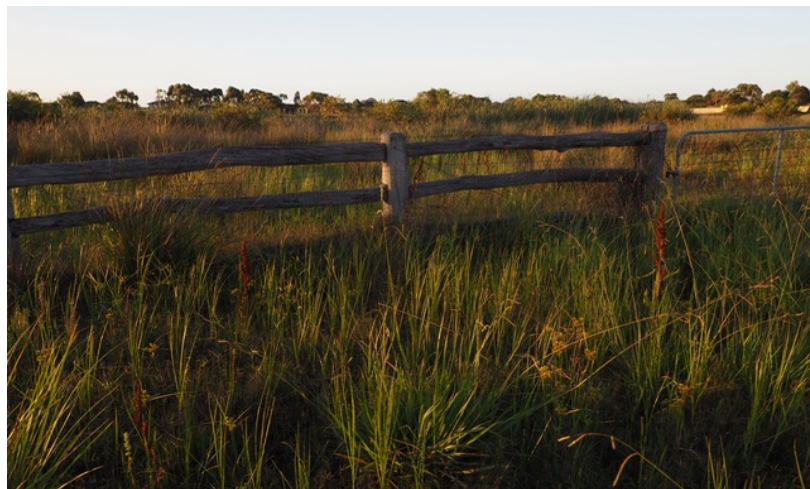


Laverton Creek



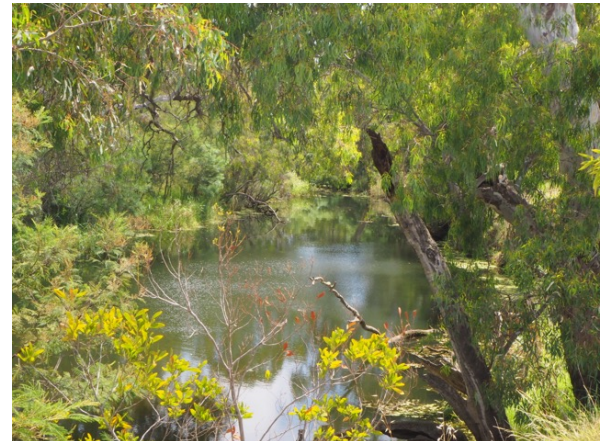


The Barry Ogden Heath Wetlands



18th January 2019. The Barry Ogden Heath Wetlands are not far from Pacific Werribee (Werribee Plaza shopping centre) nurtured in between public space, a private school and an older housing estate. The 'wetlands' are surrounded by mown park and despite noisy children and canines, still entertain several bird species. It is unfortunate that there is a fair bit of rubbish dumped in the water (including a mattress). On top of the list of 24 bird species seen (below) there were lots of calls from in amongst the thick and protective reeds – of course we saw none of the birds these noises originated from.

Mudlark, Magpie, Raven (sp?), White faced heron, Black shouldered kite, Pacific black duck, Intermediate heron, Eurasian coot, Purple swamphen, Teal (sp?), lapwings, Silver gulls, Black cormorant, Fairy Martin, European house sparrows, Indian miners, Red wattlebird, Crested pigeons, Turtle doves, Sulfur crested cockatoos, Rainbow lorikeet's, Galah, Willy wagtail.



Werribee River Trail.

20 January 2019. It's amazing what you can find in the middle of town. This delightful return stroll between the railway line and Heaths Road (part of the **Werribee River Trail**) took us two and a half hours at a leisurely pace – with the odd stop for a little bird watching. The path is made and frequented by pedestrians, cyclists and dog walkers. The riparian vegetation doesn't extend too far and is usually edged with parkland before the houses, but some homes almost backed onto the river. The 28 bird species seen on this day's wander are as follows:

White faced heron, Willy wagtail, Australian magpie, Red wattlebird, Little wattlebird ('Brush wattlebird' – separated taxonomically from 'Little' in '90's – I am just a bit slow at keeping up to date with common names!), Raven (spp?), Wood duck, Pacific black duck, Chestnut teal, Domestic duck, Indian minor, European house sparrow, Blackbird, Martin (fairy?), White plumed honeyeater, Lewin's honeyeater, New Holland honeyeater, Coot, Moorhen, Black cormorant, Little pied cormorant, Pied cormorant, Darter, Spotted turtle dove, Pigeon (bronze wing?), Crested pigeon, Corella (spp not close enough to determine), Superb fairy wren

A little bit of reasarch....

One goes through many stages in life and we are currently in the stage of 'sailing the seas' – so to speak. But in order to be prepared for the next stage in our lives we have started researching options for 'life after boat'. Whilst we expect to be sailing for some years yet, we are looking at what our next possible transition will be – and we are very likely to still be transient. We took advantage of the Geelong Outdoor Living Show – and spent all of Friday 18th January walking in and out of most of the caravans on display. According to one exhibitor however, Geelong is a typical regional event – it is not a big one. I would never get around a big one – we were exhausted enough with this one.

Of course if you have a caravan (or similar vehicle) you will need something with which to tow it, and as the Victorian State Government is cracking down on 'dubious' match-up weights of trailers and tow vehicles we realise that the long thought of standard 4WD's and utes will probably no longer be suitable. With this in mind we spent time chatting to Harrison Motor Group in Melton for possible tow vehicles. For smaller transits we have also started our exploration of e-bikes. Exploring caravans at the show was a mixed experience; knowing we weren't in the immediate market – some sales people moved on quickly, whilst others were happy to spend time extolling the virtues of their wares and if there was any possible way they could help us in the future. Outside the show, special mention should be made of Andrew at Ivanhoe Cycles in Hoppers Crossing and Kelvin at Harrison Motor Group in Melton, both of whom knew a sale was not in the near future and still spent around an hour with us anyway.

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From this...



To this...



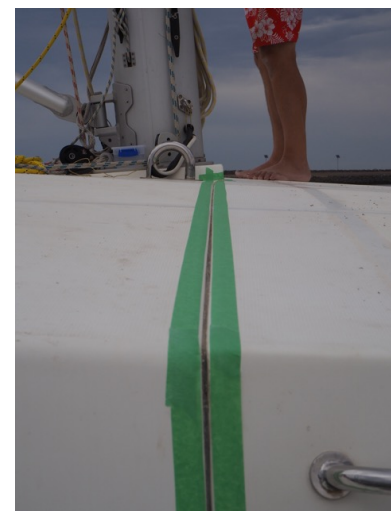
To this...



None of these vehicles will fit on our boat.... but who knows what the future may bring.....

Works!

Sail repairs and new sealant weren't the only tasks needed to be done this month; but they were the most important ones!

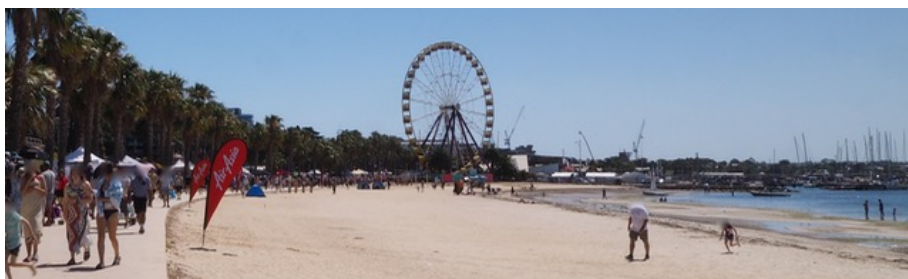


Festival of Sails

26th January 2019. Col Anderson from Doyle's Sails turned up this morning to deliver our newly repaired sails and help Andrew put the mainsail back in its place. The wind played ball for most of the exercise but then picked up enough to make the exercise a little uncomfortable with the sail loading up to the side. Fortunately the majority of the hard stuff had been done by then and we headed inside for a cuppa before farewelling Col. We would need to fix up the minor bits, and put the genoa back on the furler; in calmer winds on another day.

The original idea had been to be anchored off Geelong for the Festival of Sails but because we had to wait for our sails, our visit to the event was going to be via car. Our initial idea of a Saturday visit had been changed to Monday but due to circumstances was changed back to today. So at somewhere before 1100 we started the drive to the Bayside City. We had hoped the radio warning of 'avoid the area' near the Werribee Turn off 'was old news, but no, we took one hour to travel two kilometres on the Freeway due to an accident; seeing tow trucks, police vehicles and ambulances go by.

We finally got to Geelong, found a great little free parking spot in Ginn Street and found that 'the peoples bike race' was hogging the streets. The Cadel Evans event was scheduled this weekend but has a Sunday start. The Saturday race was for anyone to enter (we spoke to one couple who had competed in previous years – there is usually two courses), and the area where I was expecting the market to be (had been on our previous visit to this festival) was instead covered in bike related stalls and a sea of people in blue bike jerseys. The market had been moved to between the big wheel and the baths, including the music stage (the Navy Band was playing when we got there) and somewhat out of the way. We popped into the Grounds of the Royal Geelong Yacht Club, had a bite to eat and a look at a few of the boats, watched a few of the race boats come in, and managed to spy the boat Andrew used to sail on, **Next Moment**, coming in just as we were about to head home. There was a quick hello and chat before we left the party to the yachties and headed back to Werribee South.



This on-water Christmas tree at Geelong (which had been removed by the time The Festival of Sails came about) is apparently a big tourist attraction and has a light show every night and a different playlist every week over the festive season. We made several trips to Geelong, for enjoyment, to indulge in the city, and for practicality, to take advantage of the chandlery.





Serendip

27th January 2019. Serendip Sanctuary, managed by Parks Victoria, is 250 hectares of wetland and grassy plain habitat and a permanent or temporary home to 150 species of birds that breed or visit every year. Our visit was in mid summer on a hot day and subsequently the bird viewing opportunities at several purpose built bird hides were reduced and the ground so dry that cracks had formed in their floors.

The larger part of Lake Serendip had already dried up but the remaining water (the north arm) was occupied by many individuals. Raptors were hunting over the 'grass plains' area of the park and we noted Australian bustards and Cape Barron Geese in the breeding pens. The sanctuary is also part of captive breeding programs for several endangered mammals.

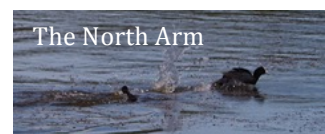
Whilst our visit to Serendip was from 1400-1600 (after morning chores on the boat and a café lunch in Lara a few minutes drive away) and during a time I would normally constitute as 'afternoon', the heat was oppressive with little wind so we were not surprised that we heard quite a lot of chatter amongst the trees, but didn't see the owners of the voices, who sensibly were staying well hidden in the shade. There are four 'themed' walking trails at Serendip, each easy and short and some of the tracks overlap other paths so it only took us a couple of hours to do three of them with plenty of stopping in between.



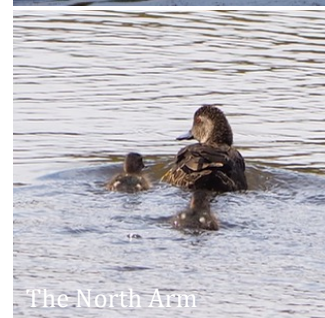
The North Arm



The North Arm



The North Arm



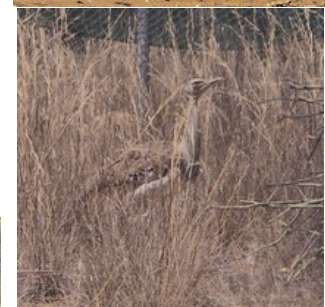
The North Arm



The North Arm



The North Arm



Most of Lake Serendip is dry

Lake View

Bird list; Magpie goose, Cape Barron goose, Australian bustard, Black swan, Eurasian coot, Dusky moorhen, Black winged stilt, Australasian grebe, White ibis, Masked lapwing, Black fronted plover, Pacific black duck, Chestnut teal, Red-rumped parrot (female), blue wrens, Whistling kite, Black kite, Australian kestrel, Raven (sp?), Mudlark, Willy wagtail, Magpie, Brown falcon, Yellow-rumped thornbill, Emu, Red wattlebird, New Holland honeyeater, Little pied cormorant, European house sparrows, Indian minor, White faced heron.

Rothwell Reserve, Little River. What a great place to have a picnic. We had lunch at Lara but had we been prepared this would have been lovely. The bridge was built in 1866 and is linked to the pastoral history of the area.

Intermediate Egret, Short-billed corella, Pacific black duck, Wood duck, Chestnut teal



Rothwell Bridge



Overlooking Little River and the You Yangs



You Yangs

Monday 28th had us picking up goods from Port Melbourne mid morning before catching up with **Halcyon** at Royal Geelong Yacht Club mid afternoon, then dinner at Arani Thai on Mallop Street, Geelong before avoiding the returning long weekend Freeway traffic chaos by taking the back roads back to Werribee. Later photos of the You Yangs would have been more dramatic but I wanted to get back to boat; we'd spent most of the day away from Tiger as it was.



You Yangs



You Yangs

On the 29th January we returned the car, did a last shop, caught up with **Next Moment** in the afternoon and prepared for a morning departure.

50-knot squalls!

Well, at least that was what was predicted!

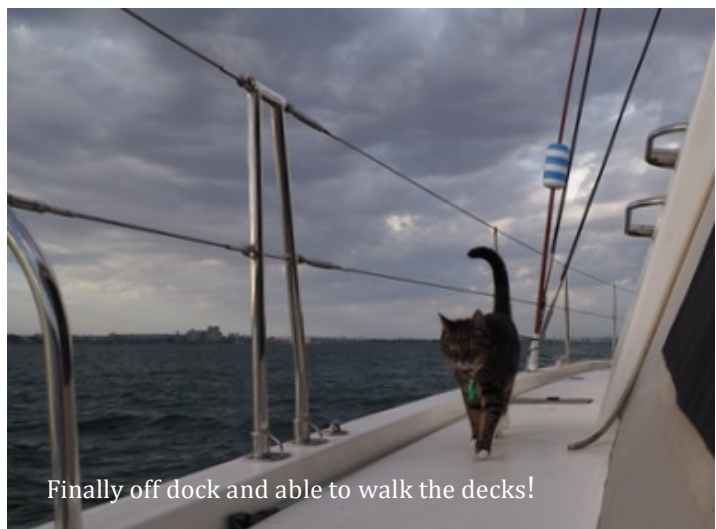
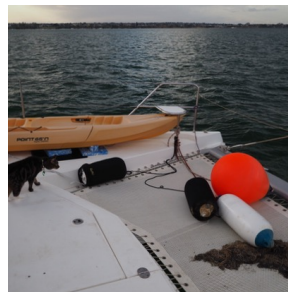
30th January 2018. There was hardly a cloud in the sky and practically no wind in the early morning; a perfect time to leave the Harbour, but we had to wait for the office to open to turn the generator on before we could fill up our diesel tanks with fuel.

Fuelled up we got away cleanly and spent the first part of the trip purely under motor working as we went; rethreading reefing lines, fixing the main halyard position, and temporarily rethreading the outhaul. While there was little wind we left the main up once we had hoisted it (for the reefing lines) and motor sailed (with around 2 knots apparent from behind which of course didn't offer much) into Geelong.

To cut a long story short it took us around three hours to get a good holding in Corio Bay (I think our previous record was two hours and that was in the Kimberley). We have anchored at Geelong before – off the public baths – and that's where we tried to anchor again. Last time we were here it also took several attempts - in the middle of strong winds and after an aborted attempt at the other side of the bay. This time I lost count of how many times we tried. The bottom is weedy close in but that didn't count for aborted attempts from tangled chain, pulling up the oyster (which was delightfully slotted onto the point of the anchor!), and untangling the anchor from the discarded fishing net. We even referred to Google Earth at one point to see if we could spot any 'non weedy' patches in the satellite photos but even with dropping the pick in more likely looking spots we weren't having much luck. In the middle of all this, we went to the rescue of an upturned sailing dingy with a couple of teenagers lounging around on top of the bottom of the hull - but they declared they didn't need help. Finally we made progress – finding a holding someway out from the baths. Of course the storm had been brewing for some time,

there was now hardly any blue left in the sky, sheets of rain were visibly approaching and thunder was burbling somewhere nearby. The anchor was down three hours after our first attempt and it had started to rain.

At around 1730 wind at Laverton gusted to 61 knots - we saw 37 knots on our gauges (there may have been more) and that strength was enough to concern us with a potentially dodgy bottom. However. It wasn't the wind strength that was the major issue at this point. The winds were northerlies – from a direction that was not expected. And this gave us a lee shore! The roller coaster ride on the waves for the next hour was a good re introduction to our boat legs after having been tied up for over a month. I thought Tiger would stay on the floor – but he chose the couch – I am not going to count the claw marks in the rubber buffer! Of course the rain now came down with a vengeance and Andrew stoically, after checking we weren't dragging, set up the bbq for dinner – in the wind, and the rain! Fortunately, looking at the rain radar on bom.gov.au, we'd missed most of the storms but lightening in the distance gave us a light show well into the evening.

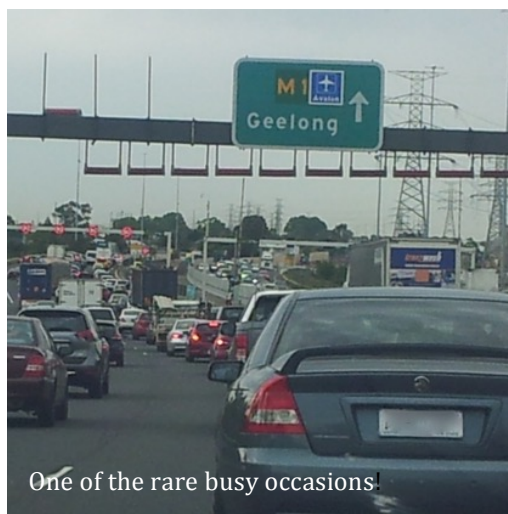


31st January 2019. The plan yesterday had been to, once we had anchored in the early afternoon, clean the lines that had tied us to the dock for the last five weeks (that were infused with rich fertilised soil) and scrub the fenders that were covered in sticky foamy plume and growth, before putting them all away. However after a longer than expected anchoring experience and some unhappy wind I decided that perhaps those tasks could be left until weather conditions were a bit more convenient and I wasn't so exhausted. So this morning I rinsed the dock lines a couple times in fresh water and scoured the foam off the fenders with a soft scouring pad. The lines were draped between the uprights of our dingy davit system (away from the prevailing wind) to dry.

Other tasks completed today to round off the month; clean up main bathroom, pay outstanding bills, organise a new mail forwarding system, clean bottom shelf of bathroom cupboard, start hemming helm station back shade and start serious research reading for Tassie.



Growth after five weeks in the water



One of the rare busy occasions!

Getting around. I never really appreciated Melbourne's Freeways and in my previous life I used to avoid them where possible, but looking back perhaps most of the potential freeway traffic I would have encountered was in 'peak hour.' Andrew on the other hand used them regularly when he was working. The freeway system in Melbourne has come a long way and we were surprised when friends only took just over an hour from Cranbourne in Melbourne's south east to Werribee South in Melbourne's west. Having hired a car, and being in Werribee, if we travelled anywhere other than local it was on the freeways. Melbourne city was only an easy 30 or so minutes away. If we didn't want the crowds, Geelong was an easy 30 or so minutes away in the other direction. From where we were staying we had the best of both worlds!

There were three exceptions to our hassle free freeway trips; being caught at the start of peak hour in the city twice and in the middle of a buildup due to an accident on the way to Geelong, but overall I am pretty impressed with the current state of these arterial roads.