bu̲l'madji[1]

Driving a BYD Shark 6 from Kangaroo Valley to Arnhem Land and back

"An Exercise in Range Anxiety"

Peter Botsman



[1] Bu̲l'madji – dangerous white shark. For my adopted Gälpu family the ancestral shark is as big as a whale and is respected and revered. It lives in the depths of the ocean and when it is seen is an unforgettable sight.

Overview of the Journey



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The lookout near Conway Station on the Central Arnhem Road at dusk, 25 September 2026.

Introduction

The BYD Shark 6 has captured the imagination of the Australian motoring community. More and more we see the vehicle on our streets. It is for good reason. I have never owned such a luxuriously appointed vehicle and at a price that is far less than the current Toyota LandCruiser or Ford it seems to be a no-brainer. Its seats, fittings and interior are on par with that of a far more expensive Range Rover or something equivalent and its IT settings and capabilities are better.

The desire to drive the car long distances is appealing. We now see online many YouTube videos about its functionality on the beach, across deserts, across waterways.

This article is about how the vehicle performs in the ubiquitous trip north. I have made the trip to Arnhem land on many occasions. Taking visitors there is better when there is a slow build up via road. The costs of regional plane travel are beyond affordability these days. Sensible travel by road is the way to go.

The question is: Does the BYD Shark 6 make the trip more enjoyable, more affordable, more efficient? Without spoiling what is to follow, the trip I made this year was in many ways very enjoyable. Hitting the Territory's 130km/h speeds across the Barkly Plains was something else. I passed many caravans, Toyotas and trucks with ease and grace. I thought back to other journeys driving up cars for communities in those fantastic reliable 60, 70 and 80 series Toyotas and it made the trip all the more pleasurable.

However, the many cars I passed often caught up with me as I stopped for fuel and charging. As for the affordability and efficiency of the trip, the costs speak for themselves.

As an around town vehicle it is hard to beat the Shark, but on the classic long distance Australian drives there is a lot more that Chairman Xi and the BYD team have to do before they will be a real match for Toyota and Ford. But make no mistake that day is coming and what is pleasing is that a number of Australian/New Zealand companies such as Utemaster, Marrickville's own Prestige Tyre and Auto, Kinetiq 4X4, Raxaar, Opposite Lock and other companies are really ensuring that the Shark's performance is enhanced.[2] These small Australian companies are whom BYD should be consulting with about the new models and innovations in their future vehicles.

Comments are always welcome to: peter@peterbotsman.com

Peter Botsman
17 November 2026

[2] Please note I paid for all improvements on the Shark with no discounts or sponsorship.

Fuel and Travel Costs at a Glance

The round trip was about 9,855 km (Kangaroo Valley odometer approximately 12,289 km to final return reading 22,144 km).

Category	Outbound KV → Nhulunbuy (18 Sep–11 Oct)	Return leg Nhulunbuy → KV (12–19 Oct)	Whole trip
Fuel	$2,177.00	$1,786.74	**$3,963.74**
Charging	$147.97	$68.36	**$216.33**
Accommodation	$230.00	$180.50	**$410.50**
Food	$238.24	$18.00	**$256.24**
Shop	$450.41	$251.00	**$701.41**
Other	$13.44	$0.00	**$13.44**
Grand total	**$3,257.06**	**$2,304.60**	**$5,561.66**

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Preparing for the Bush/Fitting Out the Shark

The Shark absolutely and unquestionably works in a city or regional town work environment. I have saved hundreds of dollars in diesel and petrol making daily commutes of 75-100 kilometres. For the first month of owning the car I spent nothing on fuel. It was a revelation. But the bush and long distances would be another story.

Based on past experience on the rough roads of Arnhem Land and living outside the major settlements the Shark was fitted out as follows. I was encouraged to make these investments because I knew that the cost of the car was probably 50k cheaper than buying a comparable Ford or Toyota. That was my excuse anyway. Maybe also I am just getting old and not up to the thousands of kilometres travelling in old reliable Toyotas with no air con etc..

The Costs, Suppliers and Total Fit Out of Bu̲l’madji

Date	Supplier	Item	Cost (AUD)
18 Mar 2026	BYD Nowra	BYD Shark 6 Premium, Great White, drive-away	$66,077.00
18 Mar 2026	BYD Nowra	BF Goodrich 117/114S All Terrain KO3 tyres, set of 4	$1,880.00 (in drive-away)
18 Mar 2026	BYD Nowra	Bull Bar (Deluxe)	$3,892.00 (in drive-away)
18 Mar 2026	BYD Nowra	Roof Racks (RAID)	$1,913.00 (in drive-away)
18 Mar 2026	BYD Nowra	Floor Mats Moulded (Deep Dish)	$252.00 (in drive-away)
About 24 Apr 2026	Prestige Tyre and Auto	Top Rhino adjustable 2-inch lift kit, installed	$2,999.00
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Utemaster Mk4 Centurion aluminium canopy, black, central locking	$9,561.20
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Mk4 cantilever rack, black	$2,196.70
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Removable awning brackets (3)	$302.50
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Centurion canopy door spacer for dog ventilation, both side doors	$385.00
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Removable outriggers (2)	$550.00
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Cantilever rack roller	$522.50

28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Shelving unit to suit internal tracks, passenger side, two shelves, 60 kg per side	$570.90
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Internal roof tracks to suit BYD Shark 6 2025+ Centurion canopy	$249.70
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Canopy interior light kit, 2 independently switched amber/white LEDs	$366.30
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Fitting of canopy	$594.00
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Fitting of canopy / load-lid central locking	$209.00
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Fitting of cantilever rack to suit canopy	$198.00
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Canopy shelf installation, per side	$99.00
28 Apr 2026	Utemaster Australia	Fitting of internal shelving roof tracks	$99.00
21 May 2026	Shoalhaven Signs, South Nowra	Bul'madji decals, front and back (two, 70 mm, gloss black vinyl)	$363.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	RAXAR Rooftop Tent Side Entry	$2,660.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	RAXAR freestanding 270 degree awning	$1,140.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Fitting: rearrange and modify roof rack to suit awning and tent (3 hours at $165.00)	$495.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: 25A Pro Battery Charger 6V/12V/24V Genius Pro	$1,000.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: 2 x REMCO 120Ah lithium batteries	$2,000.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system, fitting: dual battery BCDC system	$850.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Carbon 12K 12,000 lb winch V3X with MegaPro Hook, fitted to the BYD deluxe bull bar	$1,099.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Fitting: electric winch to standard winch-mount bull bar (4 hours at $165.00)	$660.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: O B&S cabling, 10 metres, qty 14	$350.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: Anderson connectors, qty 3	$150.00

31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Workshop consumables	$100.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Fitting: miscellaneous fitting charge, 2 hours at $165.00	$330.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Uniden UHF CB radio (X76)	$329.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Heavy duty fibreglass raydome antenna, black, 6.6 dBi gain	$315.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	ATX 970 small antenna	$75.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Fitting: UHF radio and antennas	$330.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Nitro 80 Maxx 4500K driving lights (pair)	$988.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Fitting: driving lights per pair, including wiring	$330.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	MAXTRAX FJ Red (pair)	$300.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	Accessories recovery wing	$175.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	MAXTRAX mounting pin set (100% discount, no charge)	$0.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	RAXAR recovery kit complete, 8-piece, 8,000 kg	$500.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: 180W solar panel, monocrystalline black frame, 1430 x 670 x 35 mm	$378.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: solar panel universal mounting kit	$30.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: solar charger / regulator, BlueSolar PWM DUO-LCD and USB 12/24V 20A	$160.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system, fitting: solar panel and MAXTRAX	$165.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: run wiring to battery system	$350.00

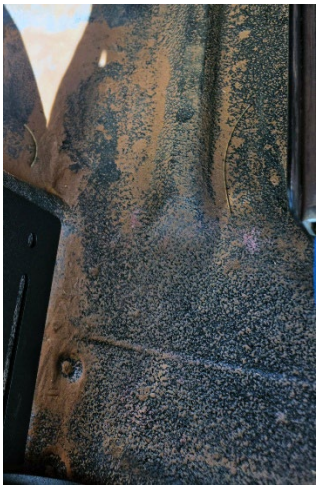
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: MC4 premade cable 2 m male	$20.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: MC4 premade cable 2 m female	$20.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: MC4 connector extension lead 1 m, qty 2	$40.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system: 12V mini power box	$150.00
31 Jul 2026	Opposite Lock South Sydney	12V system, fitting: mount and wire power box	$161.00
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	Kings Escape 90 Fridge/Freezer + Fridge/Freezer Cover	$369.00
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	100L Fridge Slide	$126.75
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	700mm Standard Drawer + Drawer Tie Down Kit	$144.00
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	Kings 700mm Slim Drawer + Clear Top Canvas Bag	$128.95
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	700mm Kitchen Drawer + Clear Top Canvas Bag	$227.67
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	Portable Induction Cooker + Induction Cooker Bag	$49.90
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	80L extra-large PVC duffle bag + 2 x clear top bag, qty 2 at $34.85 each	$69.70
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	2x Adventure Kings Throne camping chair	$69.90
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	2x 12V electric blanket	$49.90
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	Recovery folding shovel	$14.96
10 Aug 2026	4WD Supacentre	2x RID 10-pack mosquito coils, with tray	$14.92
21 Oct 2026	BYD Nowra	Long-range fuel tank	Enquiry, no cost

11 Nov 2026	Kinetiq 4x4	BYD Shark 6 Tailgate Dust Seal Kit (pre-order)	$199.00
11 Nov 2026	Prestige Tyre and Auto	Labour to fit the Kinetiq tailgate dust seal kit (order #1461)	$0
	Enhancements subtotal (after purchase)		$36,380.45
	Total invested in the Shark		$102,457.45

Hitches and Snags

Dust

Some say that preventing dust in a ute tub is impossible on outback roads. But that makes the design flaw in the Shark tailgate even more unforgiveable. It is not just a gap it is a chasm. Even with heavy gaffer tape, a great amount of dust was able to enter the tub. This was a known problem. Unfortunately Kinetiq 4X4's dust kit came too late for the Arnhem trip. This is a major design fault for an outback ute. All camera gear had to be stored in the cabin which was dust free.

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The deep stains of Arnhem bauxite dust etched into the tub floor and sides no amount of gaffering stopped the problem

King Drawers

I won't say anything against the 4WD Supacentres because they have revolutionised life on the road with low cost innovations. But the drawers did not survive the rough roads and rattled loose from one another.

Rooftop Tent Arm

One of the arms of the Raxaar rooftop tent buckled and broke because of a faulty catch. It was easily mended with gaffer tape and a three inch bolt. The arm is being replaced.

Canopy Faults

After 1400 kilometres of the Central Arnhem road and bush tracks one of the lights of the canopy failed, it was that critical light above the tailgate which was annoying. At a critical juncture, with range anxiety high, the canopy had to be manually opened with a key. That took some figuring out. Utemaster quickly fixed the problems back in Sydney.

Apart from these problems

- The winch was not tested but was well worth the install on the sandy tracks.
- It was a very dry dry season so the Shark was not really tested in the river crossings.

Best investments

- The 2 inch adjustable lift by Prestige Tyre and Auto was worthwhile. With a full load of film and camera gear and camping supplies the heave on the Western Queensland highways was sorted by clicking back the rhino suspension dials. This made for a much better ride.[3]
- Rooftop tents are a very worthwhile addition especially in rough camps and roads.

[3] "Lots of small dips and swells, not corrugations, but heave: the bitumen rises and sinks as the ground underneath expands and contracts with the heat. Combined with the load, it makes the car pitch and rock. Softening the Top Rhino suspension dials a few clicks toward the minus end helps smooth it out.

The Daily Log, 18 September to 19 October 2026

Date (2026)	Where	Odometer km	Comments
Fri 18 Sep	Kangaroo Valley to Bathurst	about 12,289 (worked back, not read off the car)	Left Kangaroo Valley loaded up and heading for Mata Mata. First leg about 290 km, roughly four hours: Moss Vale Road, Hume Highway to Goulburn, then the Taralga, Abercrombie and O'Connell roads.
Sat 19 Sep	Bathurst	not recorded	First charge at the NRMA charger on Stanley Street, $16 to fill the battery, then 44.15 L of premium at $2.49 at Astron, William St. Hot shower at the aquatic centre, $7, great value.
Sun 20 Sep	Bathurst to Orange to Nyngan	not recorded	Breakfast in Orange. The NRMA fast charger listed at Orange didn't exist and the Tesla charger wouldn't take my card. Bunnings gaffer tape and tent anchor after the rooftop tent arm broke. Nyngan Riverside Resort, $52, overnight charge off a normal plug to 91%. Powered sites with the rooftop tent became the model for the trip.
Mon 21 Sep	Nyngan to Bourke to Hungerford to Eulo to Cunnamulla to Charleville	not recorded	NRMA DC charger on Mitchell St, Bourke worked fine; bought an extension lead, jug and toothpaste. Took a wrong turn to Hungerford (no fuel), dingo fence, then about 120 km of dirt toward Eulo; range dropped to zero 10 to 20 km short. Rob at Springvale Station had 20 L of unleaded, $70 saved the day, owe him a postcard. Eulo only sells diesel. Cunnamulla 86.83 L for tank and two jerry cans, $263.72, huge fuel bill, lots of emus. About 643 km for the day (183 km detour). Hungerford dust got into the tub. Evening Star Tourist Park, Charleville, $50, 100% overnight charge.
Tue 22 Sep	Charleville to Augathella to Tambo to Blackall	14,124 (Charleville fill); 14,418 (EV to HEV); 14,427 (Blackall)	Full tank at United Charleville North, 41 L. V2L ran the blender this morning. 67 km pure EV, then HEV at 14:15. Passed Augathella, where the 60 Series broke down last trip. Landsborough Highway heave between Tambo and Blackall made the loaded car pitch and rock, so I softened the Top Rhino dials. Dash said 401 km past Tambo, then 365, 360, then 189 at Blackall. Blackall ChargeFox out of order, so 43.15 L of petrol and the dash claimed 740 km; real petrol range about

Date (2026)	Where	Odometer km	Comments
			236 km, 18.3 L/100km. Swim at the Blackall Aquatic Centre.
Wed 23 Sep	Longreach to Winton to Kynuna to Cloncurry	14,661 (Longreach); 14,845 (Winton); 15,005 (Kynuna); 15,188 (Cloncurry)	Left Longreach with a full tank and 100% battery and the dash claimed 783 km. Ampol on the Duck St highway extension, 36.5 L. Topped up at Winton, 23.5 L. Winton to Cloncurry 343 km, arrived on fumes with 42 km showing and 59% battery. Best real run on a full tank on sealed road.
Thu 24 Sep	Mount Isa to Camooweal to Barkly Homestead to Threeways to Elliott	15,316 (Solo, Mount Isa); 15,512 (Camooweal); 15,768 (Barkly); 15,954 (Threeways); 16,180 (Elliott)	Fuel at Solo, Mount Isa, 22.43 L, and bought a jerry can. Breakfast and coffee at Camooweal, tracker hat for Soraya. Camooweal to Barkly Homestead 256 km, the Shark showed empty with 42 to 45 km of battery range left; 55.96 L at $2.78. Iced coffee at Threeways. At Elliott filled the tank, charged to 100% and stayed at the Midland Caravan Park, $30.
Fri 25 Sep	Elliott to Larrimah to Mataranka to Katherine to Conway Station	16,182 (Elliott); 16,419 (Larrimah); 16,495 (Mataranka); 16,786 (Conway Station)	HEV mode test on the Stuart Highway. Larrimah, no fuel, 17% battery and 90 km showing, dropping about a kilometre every ten seconds; in went a 20 L jerry can. Elliott to Mataranka 313 km on 68.12 L, 21.8 L/100km. Mataranka 50 kW NRMA charger, 29 kWh, spent $215.97 in the shop to thank them. Katherine NRMA on Lindsay St, 180 kW under a shade tree, first attempt failed on the wrong station number, then 100% in about 35 minutes. Woolworths and the butcher; Ampol 53.68 L including two jerry cans. Did not stay at Mataranka; overnight at Conway Station.
Sat 26 Sep	Conway Station to Mainoru to Gulun Gulun to Gapuwiyak to Mata Mata turn-off to Nhulunbuy	16,913 (Gulun Gulun); 17,159 (Gapuwiyak); 17,314 (Mata Mata turn-off); 17,381 (Nhulunbuy)	Central Arnhem Road. Mainoru Store about 31 L for $90 and groceries (odometer not recorded). Gulun Gulun Store 9.9 L. Gapuwiyak 32.37 L at $3.64. Gapuwiyak to the Mata Mata turn-off at 20.9 L/100km; dirt costs about 40% more fuel. Arrived Nhulunbuy at night with 58% battery, missed the petrol station.
Sun 27 Sep	Nhulunbuy, heading to Mata Mata	17,384 (Nhulunbuy fill)	Filled up this morning, 44.72 L at $3.60. Breakfast and coffee, Woolworths groceries for the family. Last readings before Mata Mata: battery 97%, filled up last night, 791 km on the dash. Planned a laptop session to go through the records.

Date (2026)	Where	Odometer km	Comments
28 Sep to 11 Oct	Mata Mata, Yirrkala and Nhulunbuy	17,384 to 17,676 (Yirrkala) to 17,695 (Nhulunbuy fill)	No day-by-day comments in the log for this stay. About 292 km of local driving to Yirrkala and 19 km back to Nhulunbuy (dates not logged). Dated photos below.
Fri 2 Oct	Mata Mata		Photos: morning camp from under the awning, and camp at Mata Mata with the awnings out and the fire going.
Tue 6 Oct	Mata Mata		Photo: Peter at Mata Mata.
Wed 7 Oct	Arnhem Land		Photo: a rusted-out ute in front of houses and bush.
Sun 11 Oct	Mata Mata		Photo: camp under the trees at Mata Mata.
Mon 12 Oct	Nhulunbuy	17,695 (Nhulunbuy fill)	Filled at Nhulunbuy, 41.12 L, $142.93. The dash said 745 km at 59% battery.
Tue 13 Oct	Nhulunbuy to Gapuwiyak turn-off to Mainoru to Bulman	17,899 (Gapuwiyak road); 17,910 (past the Gapuwiyak turn-off)	Past the Gapuwiyak turn-off put in 20 L from a jerry can and the Shark said 696 km. "We'll believe it when we see it." Another 20 L jerry can near Yapunyah. Nhulunbuy to Mainoru in about six hours, a personal best even with canopy trouble. Bulman 37.45 L, $100, odometer not recorded.
Wed 14 Oct	Mataranka to Elliott to Threeways to Barkly Homestead	18,767 (Elliott); 19,176 (Barkly Homestead)	Strong wind on the Stuart Highway. Zero on the dash about 5 km out of Threeways and the last 3 km or so on zero. "There is nothing worse than going from having two or three hundred kilometres up your sleeve to suddenly having zero kilometres, ten kilometres away from a petrol station..." Threeways fuel about $226 including 60 L into jerry cans, lunch about $18, NRMA charge $21.37. Left Threeways 3:04 pm with 100% battery and 795 km showing. Barkly Homestead 42.26 L, powered site $50.
Thu 15 Oct	Barkly Homestead to Camooweal to Mount Isa to Cloncurry to McKinlay	19,435 (Camooweal); 19,626 (Mount Isa); 19,747 (Cloncurry); 19,854 (McKinlay)	About 10 km out of Camooweal the range dropped from 55 km to 0 in about two seconds. Camooweal 55.14 L, about 21.3 L/100km at 120 to 130 km/h. Mount Isa NRMA, 34 Miles St, app wouldn't start the charge, operator started it remotely, about 15 minutes lost; used it as a rest break and walk after a poor night's sleep. Cloncurry 12.06 L and NRMA charge at

Date (2026)	Where	Odometer km	Comments
			the Roadhouse. Walkabout Creek Hotel, McKinlay, powered site $38.50; a storm was building behind, back towards Mount Isa.
Fri 16 Oct	McKinlay to Kynuna to Winton to Longreach to Blackall to Tambo	20,093 (Winton); 20,272 (Longreach charge); 20,274 (Longreach fuel); 20,487 (Blackall)	Left McKinlay fully charged, topped up from the jerry can. Kynuna is a good place to stop. Winton 40.48 L. Longreach charge (Chargefox invoice 15.03 kWh, $8.27) and 33.12 L. Blackall 32.76 L at 3:39 pm and a swim; 633 km for the day. Tambo Mill Motel and Caravan Park, $50 powered site with overnight charge.
Sat 17 Oct	Tambo to Morven to St George to Moree	about 20,632 (HEV switch, as heard); 20,799 (Morven); 21,096 (St George); 21,335 (Moree)	Battery nearly 100% at 6:21 am after the slow overnight charge. BYD trip report showed about 16 L/100km recently, no charge since Longreach. EV start, switched to HEV about 20,632. Morven 31.94 L, St George 51.01 L, Moree 38.9 L. Gwydir Thermal Pools Caravan Park, Moree, $42 powered site, thermal pools included.
Sun 18 Oct	Moree to Gunnedah to Willow Tree to Singleton to Pheasants Nest	21,340 (left Moree park); 21,639 (Willow Tree); 21,773 (Singleton)	Gwydir Thermal Pools was the first park on the trip to forbid overnight EV charging, so the battery wasn't full. NRMA charger, 28 Auburn St, Moree, about 9:30 am, same software glitch as at every NRMA charger since the NT, NRMA phone team got it going, about 21 minutes to 100%. The 240V outlet only works with the car switched on. Gunnedah Harvey Norman, Starlink Mini mount and DC cable, $251. Willow Tree 42.3 L, Singleton 15.09 L. Ampol AmpCharge at Pheasants Nest, $10.87 (receipt dated 18 Oct).
Mon 19 Oct	Home, Kangaroo Valley	22,135 (on arrival, notes); 22,144 (Kangaroo Valley fill)	Arrived home. Final fill at Kangaroo Valley, 45.96 L, $119.73.

Odometer readings are as logged; "not recorded" means no reading was taken that day. The 28 September to 11 October stay at Mata Mata has no daily comments in the log. Filming of the documentary "Tongue of Fire" took place during this fortnight.

Tips for Long Distance Driving

I have only a couple of tips for long distance driving but they are tried and tested over several years.

1. Don't drive at night in the bush unless it is absolutely necessary. Buffalos, cattle, kangaroos and wildlife will test even the best driver with the best driving lights. Start at sunrise and knock off at sunset is my usual rule.
2. Map the Thermal Pools, Swimming pools and Aquatic Centres on your journey. Stop and have a swim, make a donation. Often these places are near charging stations and many of them including at Lightning Ridge, Eulo, Blackall, Mitchell, Moree are full of interesting characters and families.

The wonderful Mataranka pools were first created by Australian sappers during WWII and there are many secret pools at places like Mainouru where it pays to stop and buy a meal and help keep the place going.

Swimming and showers are the drivers friend on a long distance driving trip.

> Here are some useful references:
> Great Artesian Drive: Moree's own promotion, a route linking eight hot artesian pools in north-west NSW, Moree among them.
> NSW Water: Great Artesian Basin: the official map of the basin, which lies under about 22% of Australia.
> Wikivoyage: Great Artesian Basin: a map of bore baths and hot springs in NSW, Queensland, the NT and SA, including Eulo, Julia Creek and Mitchell.

Follow Our Travels: Artesian Bore Baths: a state-by-state map of bore baths and mineral springs.

> If you want to get into the culture of spas and pools have a read of Thomas Mann's Magic Mountain[4] and you will understand why there are always so many older and healthy looking Europeans hanging out there. I don't know the Chinese equivalent but there must certainly be one as well, judging by the numbers and the odd tai chi practitioner.

[4] Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1924). English editions are *The Magic Mountain*, translated by H.T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Knopf, 1927), and the newer translation by John E. Woods (New York: Knopf, 1995).
Abstract: Young Hans Castorp goes up to the Berghof sanatorium at Davos to visit his sick cousin for three weeks, and stays seven years. The novel captures the rituals of the European "cure": the mountain air, rest on the balconies wrapped in blankets, five huge meals a day, taking your temperature, and the doctors' authority. Mann shows its pull, as time stretches and the guests turn inward to ideas, love and death. He also shows its cost, because the sanatorium becomes a comfortable escape from life below. It ends with Castorp leaving for the trenches of the First World War. Mann based it on his wife Katia's stay in a Davos sanatorium in 1912.

Digital v Analogue

In the city there is nothing better than being able to listen to Spotify, podcasts or local radio stations through the very high quality Shark sound system. But of course all of this is made possible because you have a phone or a local wifi system nearby. In the old 60 series with no air conditioning and a noisy cabin I spent many hours listening to recorded books. They made the miles and any discomfort fly by.

The disconcerting thing about the Shark in the bush is that as you go in and out of mobile range, you go from listening to concert quality sound to silence. It makes for a long trip and much fussing about on the computer screen. I am sure there is a solution. Perhaps by plugging in an older recorder or player into the usb port in the cabin or by downloading a day or two's entertainment before you leave. I did not come up with a good solution and so at times I cursed the digital world.

All this and much more was solved by Starlink. On the return trip home I purchased a Starlink magnetic holder and it fits quite readily onto the cabin roof. However I have yet to really try it on the road in real tough conditions. It makes you crave those old analogue AM radio stations and the local news and weather readers. Of course in Arnhem land Yolngu radio was the main listening when the signal was strong.

On AFL Grand Final day I just make it to the Walkabout Hotel in Nhulunbuy to see the last heart breaking minutes for the Dockers and the triumph of the mighty Brisbane Lions. There is something great about a crackly old radio as you are driving. I am sure someone somewhere is preparing a digital recording of what it was like just to help



The Queensland border gate on the wild dog fence at Hungerford, on the dirt road run from Bourke, 21 September 2026.



Central Arnhem Road distances sign from Mataranka Roadhouse, 26 September 2026.

"Dashboard Lies": The Shark's Major Flaw

"There is nothing worse than going from having two or three hundred kilometres up your sleeve to suddenly having zero kilometres on your fuel gauge, ten to twenty kilometres away from a petrol station, and that is what happens all the time with the Shark 6. It was my experience on the Stuart Highway but also coming off the more rugged bush tracks like the Central Arnhem Highway. There is a lot of wind around today, so that might be affecting the performance of the Shark, but, whatever the reason the sudden drop on the fuel and battery gauge is super anxiety making."

— Log, 14 October 2026, near Threeways, Stuart Highway, NT

If I had to sum up the Shark in the bush in two words, they would be "range anxiety". It is not that the ute cannot go the distance between fuel stops. It is that the dashboard will not tell you the truth about how far it can go. On a full tank and a full charge the dash has promised me 700 to 790 kilometres. Loaded, the most I have actually driven is about 343. And the number does not fall gently. It holds high, then drops off a cliff.

Five times on this trip it left me sweating:

- Eulo dirt run, 21 September: range dropped to zero 10–20 km short of Eulo. Rescued by 20 litres from Rob at Springvale Station.
- Cloncurry, 23 September: arrived on fumes with 42 km showing, after the dash had claimed 783 at Longreach.
- Barkly Homestead, 24 September: the Shark showed empty after 256 km from Camooweal, with only 42–45 km of battery range left.
- Larrimah, 25 September: 90 km showing at 17 per cent, falling about a kilometre every ten seconds, and no fuel for sale. A 20 litre jerry can got me to Mataranka.
- Threeways, 14 October: zero on the dash about 5 km out in strong wind, and the last 3 km or so driven on zero.

I left Kangaroo Valley on 18 September 2026 in the Shark, the BYD plug-in hybrid ute, loaded up and heading for Mata Mata. A plug-in hybrid might be the perfect bush vehicle: an electric battery for the towns and the chargers, and a petrol tank for the long empty stretches. I kept a log the whole way. Every fill, every charge and every odometer reading I could manage went into it. What it shows is a good ute with a dashboard that tells fibs about range, and every fib turns into anxiety.

Real Range versus Dash Estimate

Map distances confirm the odometer readings on sealed sections to a high degree of accuracy.

Leg	Date	Start odo	End odo	km driven	Dash at full	Outcome
Charleville→Blackall	22 Sep	14,124	14,427	303 (67 EV)	700+	~236 petrol km; dash 189 on arrival, 740 after fill
Winton→Cloncurry	23 Sep	14,845	15,188	343	783	Arrived on fumes, 42 km showing, 59% battery
Camooweal→Barkly	24 Sep	15,512	15,768	256	700+	Empty; 42–45 km battery range left
Elliott→Larrimah	25 Sep	16,182	16,419	237	700+	90 km showing, 17% battery; 20 L jerry can
Bourke dirt run	21 Sep	—	—	240–290	700+	Full tank + 100% charge; dirt ~40% more fuel
Elliott→Threeways	14 Oct	18,767	~18,990	~223	700+	Dash hit 0 ~5 km out in strong wind

Outbound Leg Distances

Outbound odometer readings with map-confirmed distances. Early stretch longer due to Hungerford/Eulo detour.

From	To	km	Notes
Kangaroo Valley (~12,289)	Bathurst (~12,579)	~290	Confirmed by road
Bathurst	Charleville 14,124	~1,545	Inland route + detour
Charleville 14,124	Blackall 14,427	303	Exact map match
Blackall 14,427	Longreach 14,661	234	Map ~213–214
Longreach 14,661	Winton 14,845	184	Map ~179–180
Winton 14,845	Cloncurry 15,188	343	Exact map match (~348)
Cloncurry 15,188	Mount Isa 15,316	128	Map ~121
Mount Isa 15,316	Camooweal 15,512	196	Map ~190
Camooweal 15,512	Barkly 15,768	256	Map ~260
Barkly 15,768	Threeways 15,954	186	Exact map match
Threeways 15,954	Elliott 16,182	228	Map ~226
Elliott 16,182	Mataranka 16,495	313	Exact (via Larrimah 16,419)
Mataranka 16,495	Conway 16,786	291	Via Katherine
Conway 16,786	Gulun Gulun 16,913	127	
Gulun Gulun 16,913	Gapuwiyak 17,159	246	
Gapuwiyak 17,159	Mata Mata t/o 17,314	155	
Mata Mata t/o 17,314	Nhulunbuy 17,381	67	



Morning camp from under the awning, 2 October 2026.



Camp at Mata Mata, awnings out and the fire going, 2 October 2026.



Peter at Mata Mata, 6 October 2026.



The classic car skeleton Arnhem Land, 7 October 2026.



Camp under the trees at Mata Mata, 11 October 2026.

Return Leg (12–19 October)

Key confirmed readings: Nhulunbuy fill 17,695; Elliott 18,767; Barkly 19,176; Camooweal 19,435; Mt Isa 19,626; Cloncurry 19,747; McKinlay 19,854; Winton 20,093; Longreach 20,272/274; Blackall 20,487; Morven 20,799; St George 21,096; Moree 21,335; Willow Tree 21,639; Singleton 21,773; Kangaroo Valley final 22,144. Intermediate points chained from map distances where odometer was not recorded.

From	To	km	Notes
Nhulunbuy 17,695	Gapuwiyak t/o 17,910	215	Both logged; 17,695 includes local Arnhem Land driving after outbound arrival at 17,381
Gapuwiyak t/o 17,910	Gulun Gulun (~18,156)	~246	Not logged; chained from outbound leg
Gulun Gulun (~18,156)	Mataranka (~18,454)	~298	Not logged; via Bulman and Mainoru; balancing figure
Mataranka (~18,454)	Elliott 18,767	~313	Not logged; chained from outbound leg
Elliott 18,767	Threeways (~18,990)	~223	Not logged; chained from map
Threeways (~18,990)	Barkly 19,176	~186	Chained from map (outbound 186)
Barkly 19,176	Camooweal 19,435	259	Odometer difference
Camooweal 19,435	Mount Isa 19,626	191	Odometer difference; NRMA charge
Mount Isa 19,626	Cloncurry 19,747	121	Odometer difference; NRMA charge
Cloncurry 19,747	McKinlay 19,854	107	Odometer difference; overnight powered site
McKinlay 19,854	Winton 20,093	239	Odometer difference
Winton 20,093	Longreach 20,272	179	Odometer difference (charge 20,272, fuel 20,274)
Longreach 20,272	Blackall 20,487	215	Odometer difference
Blackall 20,487	Tambo (~20,590)	~103	Tambo not logged; map distance
Tambo (~20,590)	Morven 20,799	~209	Chained; Blackall to Morven is 312

From	To	km	Notes
Morven 20,799	St George 21,096	297	Odometer difference
St George 21,096	Moree 21,335	239	Odometer difference
Moree 21,335	Willow Tree 21,639	304	Odometer difference; via Gunnedah
Willow Tree 21,639	Singleton 21,773	134	Odometer difference
Singleton 21,773	Kangaroo Valley 22,144	371	Final fill; notes give 22,135 on arrival
Total: Nhulunbuy 17,695	Kangaroo Valley 22,144	4,449	Matches odometer difference; ~ = estimate



The Shark on red dirt among the gums, 13 October 2026.



Pauls Iced Coffee on the dash, Barkly Tablelands, 15 October 2026.



The Shark charging at the NRMA charger in Mount Isa on the way home, 15 October 2026.



Outback country under a stormy sky on the way home, 15 October 2026.

What the Trip Shows

The economy figure is close to honest. The range figure is not. On a full tank and full charge my real runs have been about 237 to 343 kilometres on bitumen and 240 to 290 on dirt, while the dash has promised 700 to 790. Trust the odometer and the pump, carry jerry cans, and pair your charging stops with a swim wherever you can. And when the dash says you have two or three hundred kilometres up your sleeve, do not believe it. That gap between the promise and the road is where the range anxiety lives.

The Shark's battery, V2L and chargers are real strengths. The range anxiety comes from a gauge you cannot plan around. On a 60 litre tank that error shows up exactly when the next pump is 200 kilometres away.

On this trip the Shark's real spend (fuel plus charging) came out in the middle of the pack — about the same as a LandCruiser 70 at remote-NT diesel prices, and roughly $400–$600 more than HiLux and Ranger Bi-Turbo estimates. The money is not the problem. The diesels (and even a 1980s 60 Series) would have done it on 90–130 litre tanks with gauges you can plan around. The Shark did it on a 60 litre tank with a dash that kept promising 700-plus kilometres and kept delivering 240 to 340.

A note to Chairman Xi and Chinese EV manufacturers: Australian drivers have long trusted Toyota because its claims have been conservative and its vehicles have delivered what was promised. The old "Oh What a Feeling" ads captured something real — the affection many Australians still have for their Toyotas, built on reliability in mining, pastoral and remote work. For a time the Toyota dealership in Gove (Nhulunbuy) was among the biggest in Australia precisely because those vehicles could be depended on for mining and general operations in hard conditions. Over-promising on range and then delivering far less creates anxiety and erodes trust. Be conservative about what the Shark (and future Chinese EVs) can actually achieve in real Australian conditions — load, heat, wind, dirt roads and long distances between pumps — and you will win the trust of Australian drivers. Under-promise and over-deliver. That is the path to lasting market share.

The small 60-litre tank and the need to manage both fuel and charge meant more frequent stops than would be required in a conventional diesel ute with a 90–130 litre tank. (NB I have ordered a long range tank through Prestige Tyres and Auto). On long remote legs the Shark had no meaningful fuel-cost advantage over non-hybrid vehicles; real consumption under load brought it into the same range as a LandCruiser 70 or similar. The longer-range tank upgrade addresses the core practical limitation — fewer stops and less anxiety on the open road.

Charging observations from the trip: Tesla Superchargers (where available) were fast and reliable, but the network is still thin in inland Queensland and the Northern Territory. BYD's own DC chargers and third-party sites worked, yet range anxiety was driven far more by the optimistic dashboard estimates than by any shortage of plugs. Pairing a charge with a swim or a meal made the stops worthwhile. The real limitation remains the gap between what the dash promises and what the vehicle delivers under load on Australian roads.



The Shark recharging at Longreach on the way home, 16 October 2026.



A wet, straight outback road on the way home, 17 October 2026.

Chargers Used

Every charge session logged on the trip, outbound and return. Blank cells were not logged.

Date	Place	Charger / network	Type	kWh	Cost	Notes
19 Sep	Bathurst, Stanley St	NRMA	DC fast		$16.00	May duplicate the $16.68 row
19 Sep	Location not logged	NRMA	DC fast	18	$16.68	Uncertain: location unconfirmed
20 Sep	Orange	NRMA / Tesla				No charge: NRMA charger listed did not exist; Tesla charger would not take card
20 Sep	Nyngan, Riverside Resort	Caravan park AC	AC overnight		$52.00	Normal plug, to 91%
20 Sep	Location not logged	NRMA	DC fast	15.2	$10.66	Uncertain: labelled Winton, not reached until 23 Sep
21 Sep	Bourke, 15 Mitchell St	NRMA	DC fast			Worked; cost not logged separately
21 Sep	Labelled Winton	NRMA	DC fast	18.8	$15.85	Uncertain: date and location
21–22 Sep	Charleville, Evening Star Tourist Park	Caravan park AC	AC overnight			To 100%; in $50 site fee
22 Sep	Blackall, 146A Shamrock St	Chargefox	DC fast			Out of order; no charge, filled with petrol
22 Sep	Ilfracombe Caravan Park	Caravan park AC	AC overnight			Planned in log; no cost logged
25 Sep	Mataranka	NRMA	DC fast	29	$24.37	

Date	Place	Charger / network	Type	kWh	Cost	Notes
25 Sep	Katherine, Lindsay St	NRMA	DC fast	14.774	$12.41	First attempt failed (wrong station number)
14 Oct	Threeways, Stuart Hwy	NRMA	DC fast		$21.37	
15 Oct	Mount Isa, 34 Miles St	NRMA	DC fast		$18.23	Odo 19,626; app fault, started remotely by operator
15 Oct	Cloncurry Roadhouse	NRMA	DC fast		$9.62	Odo 19,747
15–16 Oct	McKinlay, Walkabout Creek Hotel	Caravan park AC	AC overnight			Left fully charged; in $38.50 site fee
16 Oct	Longreach, 118 Emu St	Yurika (Qld Electric Super Highway), billed by Chargefox	DC fast	15.03	$8.27	Odo 20,272; Chargefox invoice 5905823
16–17 Oct	Tambo Mill Motel & Caravan Park	Caravan park AC	AC overnight			Battery nearly 100%; in $50 site fee
17–18 Oct	Moree, Gwydir Thermal Pools Caravan Park	Caravan park				Park forbade overnight EV charging, the first on the trip; battery not full on leaving
18 Oct	Moree, 28 Auburn St	NRMA	DC fast			About 21 min to 100%; software glitch, NRMA phone team started it; cost not logged
18 Oct	Pheasants Nest	Ampol AmpCharge	DC fast		$10.87	kWh not logged; receipt 18 Oct
Total				110.8	$216.33	Logged figures only (kWh from 6 sessions)

Note: the $216.33 cost total matches Charging in Costs at a Glance. It includes the two uncertain NRMA rows and the Bathurst $16.00 that may duplicate the $16.68 row. The Moree NRMA top-up has no amount logged, and overnight caravan park charging was included in site fees.

Battery Chemistry and Degradation

LFP vs NMC

The Shark 6 uses a 29.58 kWh BYD Blade LFP (lithium iron phosphate) battery. Compared with the NMC chemistry used in many other EVs:

Aspect	LFP (Shark Blade)	NMC
Energy density	Lower	Higher
Cycle life	Excellent (2,500–5,000+)	Good (1,000–2,500)
Thermal stability / safety	Superior	Good but more sensitive
High SOC tolerance	Excellent (regular 100% OK)	More sensitive
Cold weather	Noticeable range drop	Better
Cost / materials	Lower (no nickel/cobalt)	Higher

Main Degradation Factors

For most owners calendar aging (what happens while the battery sits) is larger than cycle aging.

- High temperature — the single biggest accelerator of chemical side reactions.
- Prolonged high state of charge — sitting full for weeks in heat is the worst combination. LFP is far more tolerant than NMC.
- Very low state of charge for long periods.
- Frequent high-power DC fast charging, especially in hot weather.
- Deep cycles — LFP handles these very well.

The Blade LFP chemistry already mitigates the biggest risks. Under normal Australian use the Shark pack should show only modest capacity loss over the warranty period (8 years / 160,000 km). The light V2L loads used on this trip are negligible for degradation.

Upgrades and the Aftermarket

Prestige Tyre & Auto in Marrickville fitted the 1-inch Top Rhino lift and have provided outstanding service and follow-up. A dust kit has been ordered through them. I have also ordered a long-range fuel tank. I suspect many other Shark owners who have their utes in remote regions will be doing the same.



The rooftop tent leg after it sheared, held together with a bolt in the hollow and gaffer tape, 2 November 2026.

Australian and New Zealand innovators are rapidly developing Shark-specific add-ons. Two 120 L replacement tanks stand out for owners who want to reduce the range anxiety shown on this trip:

- **Brown Davis** (Victoria, established 1978): 120 L aluminium-coated steel replacement tank (BS24R1). Retains factory filler, 3-year warranty, long track record.
- **4WD Systems** (Adelaide, South Australia): 120 L tank designed and built in their Adelaide factory. Bolt-in, retains factory bash plate and ground clearance, CNC laser-cut 2 mm steel, ADR-compliant, magnetic drain plug, 3-year warranty. Better choice if underbody protection and clearance matter on rough tracks.

Either roughly doubles usable petrol range once the battery is depleted and would have removed most of the "zero on the dash, short of the pump" moments logged here. Prestige can fit either.

Postscript: Buḻ'madji Saves the Wedding

I had to hurry home from Arnhem Land for a very important event: the wedding of my eldest son on our farm. After unloading the ute it was all hands on deck preparing the grounds and gardens. During the ceremony Buḻ'madji played an important, unexpected role which certainly earned the admiration and awe of all on that day.

On 7 November 2026, just as my son and his wife Hannah had finished exchanging their vows in a memorable ceremony, big rain drops started to fall. I thought great we have made it, the storm will hit and we will all be happily under the marquee. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed a flash which I thought was simply the passion and love generated by the handsome couple. Unfortunately that was not it, a lightning strike hit the local Barrengarry area. The power went out. The kitchen, that was about to serve meals to fifty guests, along with the lighting, water, sound and all the appliances, was suddenly dead.

The Shark was backed up to the house. Three extension leads ran from its V2L outlet and supported the kitchen, the wedding marquee lighting and the appliances. It supplied power for three hours. The battery dropped from 90 per cent to 70 per cent. None of the guests were the wiser, only the relieved kitchen and catering staff knew the full extent of the save!

The Shark saved the wedding and redeemed itself. It also pointed to a new future in which vehicle batteries will enhance the solar storage and battery capacity in our houses.



The wedding marquee was lit at night by the Shark's V2L on 7 November.

About 5.9 kWh was used at an average of roughly 2 kW. The Shark's V2L is rated up to 6.6 kW combined. At the same light load the remaining charge (down to the typical 15% cutoff) would have lasted another eight hours or so; from a full battery it could run a similar load for twelve to thirteen hours.

It was an unexpected but perfect demonstration of what the Shark can do when the grid fails. The same vehicle that had created range anxiety on the long remote legs of the Arnhem Land trip became the quiet, reliable power source that kept a wedding running. That is certainly another practical reason for owning it.