



[Home](#)

[About me](#)

[Audax rides](#)

[Campsites](#)

[Cycling for Hope](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Great North Walk](#)

[Hikes](#)

[Julia Creek trip](#)

[Kenya](#)

[Micro Adventures](#)

[Nomadic packing list](#)

[Packrafting and paddling](#)

[Race results](#)

Browsing: [Home](#) [Adventure racing](#) [Geoquest – A support crew perspective](#)

2 Comments

Geoquest – A support crew perspective

Posted by [Andrew Gills](#) on [June 9, 2014](#) in [Adventure racing](#)

Acknowledgement of country

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands through which I travel during my adventures, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

Follow Transventure by email

Enter your email address to follow this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

Join 166 other followers

[Follow](#)

Follow ÒTransventureÓ

Get every new post delivered to



While I have stopped entering adventure races, my sister is still actively involved in the sport so I was excited to travel the 600km (370 miles) to Crescent Head to support her team in the Geoquest (Half) 48 hour adventure race. While I was there, I added my name to the volunteer register to help with the pre-race registration, map handout and children's race. It turned out to be an epic weekend of hard work, amazing scenery and inspiring racing.

Topics I've written about your Inbox.

Join 166 other followers

Stradbroke Island

Powered by WordPress.com

5 weeks camping at
Straddie
May 22nd, 2014

I am spending five weeks camping at
Stradbroke Island.

Central Queensland motorbike trip

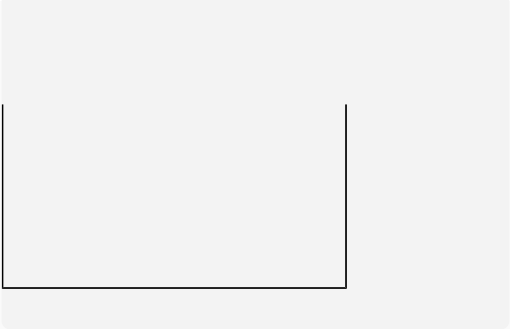
1 week visiting friends in
Central Queensland
June 30th, 2014

14

days to go.



My sister and I started Friday morning with an easy walk and geocaching outing around Crescent Head. I was desperate to get out for a walk after doing relatively little in the way of descent exercise in recent times. It wasn't a long walk but it felt so good to feel the cold earth beneath my bare feet as we explored the rabbit trails along the headland.



Australia Cycle tour

Starting in Adelaide and heading eastwards
July 8th, 2014

22

days to go.

Surf Coast Century

100km trail race
September 13th, 2014

2

months to go.

Taiwan cycle tour



The morning views and sunlight were stunning, making me hungry for more.

A month in Taiwan
December 1st, 2014

5

months to go.

Myanmar (Burma)

Cycling & visiting friends in
Myanmar
December 29th, 2014

6

months to go.

Hong Kong & Macau

Hiking and packrafting
Hong Kong & Macau (and
visiting friends)
January 20th, 2015



It was fantastic to spend quality time with my sister before the craziness of the event hit us. After this walk, we wouldn't get a chance to just chill together until we returned home tired and emotionally drained on Monday afternoon.

7
months to go.

Japan cycle tour

2 months in Japan
February 25th, 2015

8
months to go.

Holland

Time with extended family
April 20th, 2015



From 9am Friday morning, I spent about seven hours wearing a high visibility vest with “Event Official” stamped on the back. It’s a familiar experience volunteering at events and I slipped into my various roles easily. I handed out the mysterious large black paddle bags that teams would later use to transport, well, paddle gear; updated the map sets with newly printed maps; acted as a checkpoint in the children’s race; and handed out maps at the race briefing. And then, as day turned to night, I returned to the holiday house our team had rented to cook dinner as my team poured over their maps and prepared their race plan. Our support crew consisted of three members and on Friday night two of us packed the support vehicles. The team packed a lot of gear: much of which we didn’t use but at least it made them feel better to have it available.

10

months to go.

Camino de Santiago walk

The French Way route
May 10th, 2015

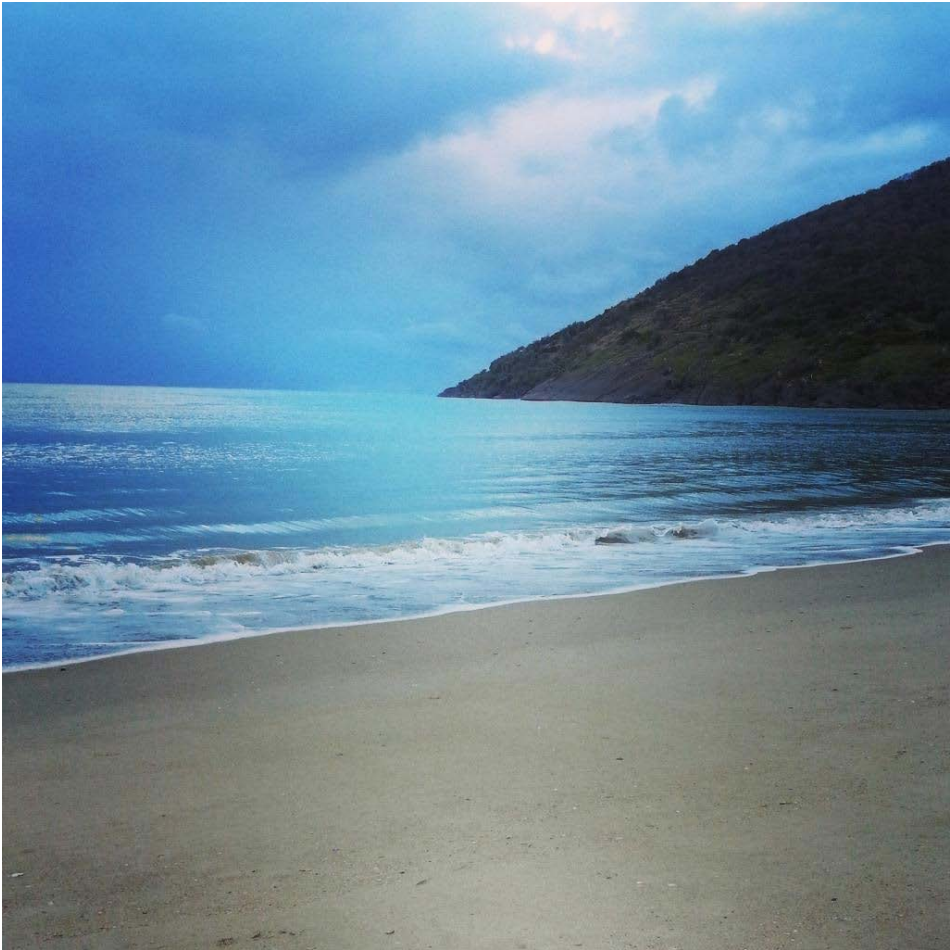
10

months to go.

My favourite companies

I like to support small businesses who provide top quality products and services in our global market. The businesses I support have all provided me with exceptional products or services over and above the standards I would expect of any company.

Alpacka Raft LLC - packrafts



On Saturday morning we were in the cars before dawn to drive to Hat Head where the Geohalf was to begin. The water was glassy and clear, and the air cool. I didn't envy the racers who were starting with a cold winter's morning swim leg.

Ayup - lights

Bike Bag Dude - bikepacking kit

Body Leadership Australia - physiotherapy

Coast Maps and Charts - map retailer

Hema Maps - map and mapping app producer





My sister and her team mates had one last opportunity to fiddle with gear and breath before ...



GPS trackers were issued to teams, a final briefing held and they were off on their ways to navigate their way around the 120km course. From here on, no one would have much rest and the rollercoaster of emotions would begin.



The course itself took in some amazing scenery including coastal headlands where mountains dropped into the sea and secluded beaches became exposed at low tide.



Long sandy beaches challenged teams who were left to run or cycle through soft sand as salt blew in on the ocean air.



Crystal clear water formed an amazing backdrop to the coasteering legs, particularly up at South West Rocks where spectators and support crews could get up close to watch teams arrive at the transition area. The team in the photo above was one of just two all-female teams who took on the challenge: one in the full-course and one in the half-course.



But it wasn't all beaches and sea. The course's return leg cleverly wound it's way south through the Macleay Valley, where any teams experienced the sun and fog rising as they paddled in the cold morning air. The reflections made of a magical visual experience for me as I drove between transition areas.



A small troupe of volunteers checked teams into transition areas, monitored course safety and cooked food that was offered for sale at various places around the course. Without them the race wouldn't be possible and their cheerful smiles created a wonderful atmosphere.



Support crews worked tirelessly to keep their teams moving forward. Their number included injured racers supporting friends, partners and parents encouraging their loved ones, and random friends roped in believing they would have a relaxed weekend at the beach.



Far from a relaxed weekend, support crews drove hundreds of kilometers between transition areas, carted heavy boxes filled with gear and food, cooked tens of meals for their four hungry athletes, and did their best to provide emotional support as teams became fatigued or fractures arose.



Being support crew is a balance of endurance, strength, coordination and patience. Your job is to reach the next transition before your team, have their gear set up, wait around until they arrive (often in cold and uncomfortable conditions), then spring to action anticipating what is needed without your team needing to ask.



It's a true team effort. And everyone has the same goal: to get their team of four athletes around the course in the fastest possible time with the fewest possible issues.



Adventure racing is a tough sport for teams too. They can't just be fit and fast in one discipline.



They have to be able to combine running with mountain biking (often in the dark).



As well as paddling and any other random activity that the race director decides to include in the event.



While also being able to navigate their own way around an unmarked course that can include off-track legs. Unlike multisport events, there are no marshals directing teams in the right direction. In fact, the course is not even released until hours before race start. All teams know is the headquarters location, anticipated course completion time and mandatory equipment. As fatigue sets in, it becomes more difficult for teams to remain on course and it is not unheard of for teams to get lost or travel many kilometres in the wrong direction.



And if that's not enough, the unexpected does sometimes happen because the course is rarely closed. During a mid-race car shuffle (part of the race – not cheating), our team came across two horses that were loose on the Pacific Highway creating a serious accident risk. The horses had bolted out of a driveway, almost causing a serious accident, and then took off down the highway for about 3km (2 miles). We managed to catch the horses and spent an hour trying to organise somewhere safe for them to be held until police could attend to find their owner (we didn't know exactly where the horses came from because we were too focused on not hitting them).



But, ultimately, the weekend belonged to the racers who were out on the course. Our team made it to the finish. They had to skip a rogaining leg due to some issues arising out on the course. It was an epic and inspiring effort.





And then, after all is said and done, the support crews load bikes and gear back into vehicles so everyone can travel home safely.

As for me: I have been inspired by the weekend so have now entered the [Surf Coast Century](#) 100km trail run in September. I'll be in the area where the race is being held so might as well give it a go. I haven't run in a year so my goal is simply to run/walk the course and get through it within the 24:30 cut off. I don't intend to "race" the event – I merely want to achieve a long-held dream to participate in a 100km trail run. I've walked Oxfam Trailwalker twice but this will be different: I'll be on my own and have a tighter cut off.

[About these ads](#)



[Like my video](#)

We opened a car showroom with a difference. T...  virool 

Share this:

Twitter 2

Facebook 5

Google

Email

Google+

 Follow 9

 **Andrew Gills**

Loading...

Related

- Rest day reflections

In "Adventure racing"
- Dawn Attack 12 hr
adventure race

In "Adventure racing"
- A swamp monster?

In "Adventure racing"

Tags: Adventure racing, Geohalf, Geoquest, Support crew, Surf Coast Century

Permalink

working traveler

2 comments on “Geoquest – A support crew perspective”



Jeannette Bysterveldt

June 15, 2014 at 9:28 am

 Reply

You should submit this to organising committee.



AndrewGills

June 15, 2014 at 9:40 am

 Reply

I did

Leave a Reply