

2025 Raid 100 Race Report

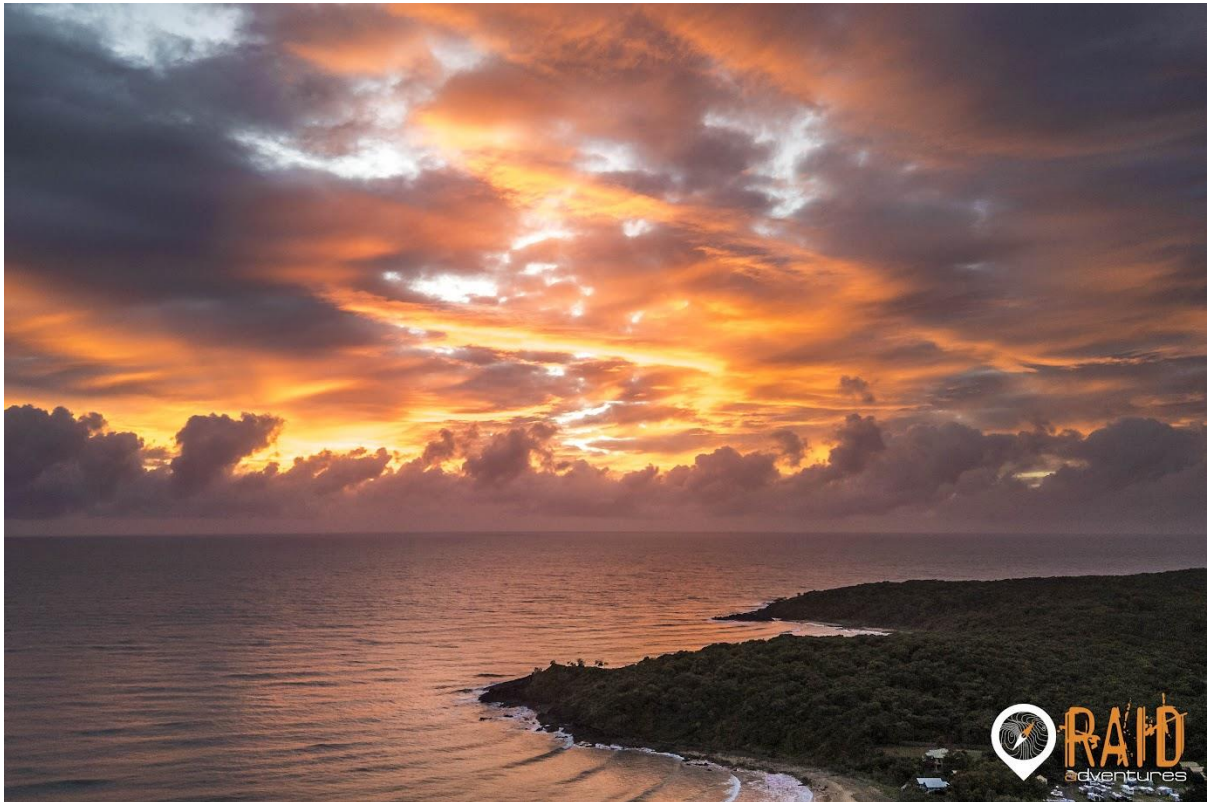
Team Bingo (Melody de Laat)



Chapter one: Monty Python

We loved the first stage because of how often we saw other teams. After sharing jokes with Trent and Etienne, we trekked and chatted with Dani and Shane. At one point Dani asked me about sleep monsters. Being infrequent adventure racers, we hadn't seen one, so she told us about the polar bear she had met. More trekking and paddling later, we were finally on the seemingly endless stretch of beach to Agnes Waters. Al, in a rash move of disgust, had binned his socks after we emerged from the water at 1770, only to find trail runners with no socks tough going in the soft sand. The blisters gained here were to plague him for the rest of the race. I on the other hand was already in blister management mode so discarded the shoes and did the beach in my socks. Eventually, we found TA-1 already full of bivy bags. Finding a spot under the nearby visitor centre balcony we tried to sleep, only to be woken a short time later by a loud Monty Python reel on repeat. An auditory sleep monster perhaps? Nope, a distressed cleaner trying to rid the visitor centre garden bed of the weird, orange, homeless people. I admit it was strangely effective and had us up and assembling bikes in no time.

Chapter two: Sleep Monsters



Stage two was a three-part adventure. The first 80 km was pretty good except for the bit where I skewed my bike into a muddy rut, coming to an abrupt, messy halt nearly taking out a team close behind followed by a sharp reprimand from another team – ‘get out of my way’! Note to self, only fall off when alone, which I managed to achieve two other times slithering chainless down muddy Mt Bulburin. After bike gymnastics under the bridge (and a bit of swearing at Liam) we were into the next stage, the oh so painful slog through Bulburin NP in the pouring rain. Al spent most of the uphill portion with his forehead planted on his bike seat with mud up to his knees. A picture of abject misery.

Eventually, we made it to the track junction that had been our target for hours. Here, I saw my first sleep monster. A sign “Bruce Highway 33km”. Seemingly this is a perfectly sensible driving route. From here we decided to push onto Builyan for water. On arrival we found a ‘campground’ for rail trail cyclists and collapsed in the wet grass for a few hours of cold, broken sleep. We awoke to find a concerned lady peering over us mumbling that we hadn’t been there when she went to bed. “We are doing an adventure race” Al announced sitting up to reveal his mud caked clothes and face. “I see” she said and hurried away. I sat up, pulled a leach off my neck, and used my filthy shirt to get most of the blood off my face just in time for her to reappear with two mugs of coffee. Thought you could do with these, and this dollar coin for the showers. Saint! This kindness gave us enough energy to tackle the last part, the slow uphill slog to Kalpowar.

Chapter three: If you've come this far....



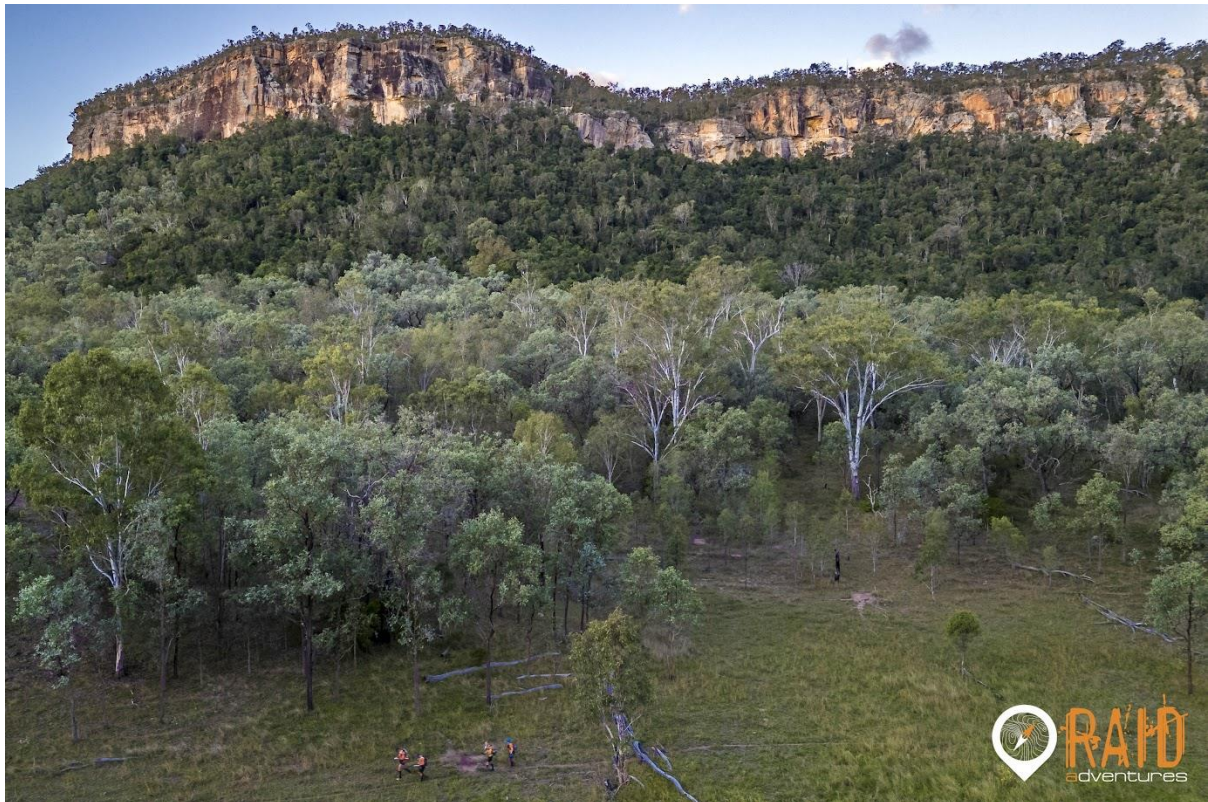
We never anticipated that we would have only completed two stages by midday Wednesday. Some strategizing was necessary. It was an obvious choice to ditch stage 3. However, this left us with the prospect of getting straight back on the bikes. Poor bums. Our most debated issue was whether to short course. We are by no means fast and were aiming simply to finish the race. Thankfully, Liam met our questions about the short course with the rational response, “you have made it this far, it would be a shame not to see Cania Gorge”. Indeed, it would.

Chapter four: Dry Socks

So, off we went and I am very excited to report stage 4 as the only stage I have ever completed in one of Liam's races with dry socks. Wonders never cease.

Chapter five: The Dragon Cave

Still up against the clock (old people that don't take No Doz need sleep) we reduced our Cania trek to a tour of the caves. This included a quick tour of the Dragon Cave, which Liam had neglected to put on the itinerary. As we turned onto the track a team of 4 helpfully pointed out that there was no CP there. “Just having a quick look at it” we told them. “For fun?” one of them asked incredulously. “Yes” we responded as they shook their heads.



Chapter six: Zero Coke

An early morning start to get the final bike slog done. We were dreaming of an ice-cold coke as we came into Nagoorin. Unfortunately, there were no signs of civilisation here, just team H&E with their cheery story about finding an unopened bottle of coke on the track down from Kroombit tops. A gift from heaven. Helen one, Bingo nil.

Chapter seven: The Flying Mullet

We never really had a plan to do this stage justice. We figured by now we would be in survival mode, so we were aiming for a fairly direct paddle to the final transition. While hunting for an elusive CP a mullet jumped into the kayak and flapped around on Al's legs for a while. We both just stared at it passively, until it leapt out. Confirmation we were too tired to continue, so we picked a random light just visible at the far end of the lake and paddled. This was our least favourite part of the race. The swell was sizable, and coming broadside, it was midnight, and we had left all visible teams in the Southern part of the lake. The rudder was wedged turning us to the right and couldn't be encouraged straight from inside the boat and we were miles from the banks. That light seemed to take forever to get closer. By some miracle the light turned out to be at the TA, and we were pretty bloody grateful to get there.



Chapter eight: The Sprinkler

It had escaped our attention that the TA wouldn't open until 5am, so reluctantly into the emergency thermals and bivy we went once again. Al made a fire in the BBQ (smoking out a few other teams - sorry), which enabled us to warm up slightly while eating a muesli bar for dinner. Shame that mullet hadn't stayed put so we could add him to the BBQ. Grateful for a solid roof over our heads for the first time, we fell asleep only to be woken by a complete drenching an hour later. Who installs an irrigation system that waters underneath a picnic shelter? Sigh, even wriggling under the picnic table couldn't save us so up we got up and readied for the final stage. Tired but happy to be headed for comfort we made it through that last stage easily enough, except for the moment Al mistook a dolphin in the Boyne River for a crocodile and lunged for the SOS button. Thankfully, the spot tracker was wedged safely between my feet and our racing status did not change to unranked just short of the finish.

Thanks, Liam and volunteers, for epic course setting, pushing us to the limits at times and getting us to explore an amazing part of the country. Our survival recipe: 0% drugs, 10% muesli bars, 30% training, 60% perseverance.