

On the Road Again... Port Hedland to Karratha

Well only around 240 km scheduled for today-so a nice quick trip!

After sorting out a few things around the campsite while Dr Carol Stoker and Mark Gargano, looked after the public relations, by being interviewed for almost one hour by 91.7 FM (local Port Hedland FM radio station) about robotic Mars missions, human exploration and education connections to planetary science, which will be later used in a series of discussions for upcoming segments in shows, Spaceward Bound was on the move again.

Well on the move temporarily, as the morning fuel stop, located conveniently next door to a major shopping centre, provided ample distractions to our team. Although being Saturday, also high on the agenda was to pick up the local paper, in this case 'The Weekend West'. To our surprise on page 6 we discovered the article 'Mars mission blasts off in Pilbara', a decent size and almost all correct-well we know what they say about the facts!

Great press though and another tick-in-the box for outreach during Spaceward Bound, for the full online article from 16 July, please go to;

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/wa/9858382/mars-mission-blasts-off-in-pilbara/>

After sorting out our snack and cool drink requirements the convoy hit North West Coastal Highway to get out of town and get to our lunch stop, Whim Creek. A quaint oasis along the road that literally comes out of the nothingness that you have been experiencing for the last hour and a half, also as we found the home of a parrot that was very fond of saying 'Hello Harry', which was most welcoming for at least one of our expedition team!

Back on the road and then into Karratha late afternoon, actually being able to see the tents we are setting up in daylight hours-a novelty really. A nice camping spot and it allowed some recreation time, jogging and swimming time (for those so inclined) and the re-establishment of the compulsory portable expedition internet café. Before dinner a large number of the crew went to the local community centre to do a few presentations, answer questions and demonstrate some of the scientific equipment used by the science team.



(Above) Spaceward Bound 'Internet Café' open for business (again)



(Above) Dr Carol Stoker discussing the relevance of Mars research in the Pilbara, with links to the Phoenix Lander and the upcoming Mars Science Laboratory to a very interested Karratha audience.



(Above) Janine Slocombe being suited up by David Willson and Jon Rask.



(Above) Dr Rosalba Bonaccorsi discussing and demonstrating technical equipment used in mineral and soil analysis to a member of the local community.

After finishing the talks around 9 pm, it was back to the campsite to enjoy a lovely thick piece of barramundi with a chunky coleslaw to die for (well not quite, but it really did hit the spot-nice work Maureen), life is tough on expeditions!