

# The CIX VFR Club

## Christmas Caper – 2019

### Day 3 - Gurney to Vivigani via Esa'Ala & Salamo



“There is a shred of truth in every legend told,” or that is how the old saying goes.

For the most part, I agree with that saying. I also believe that it holds true for modern legends; especially when it comes to those hard to verify legends.

Such is the case with Andrew Wright’s *Sanctum*, a tale of cave divers trapped underground. The script was written by Andrew Wright, who was in a similar situation in 1988. The movie was woven together with a series of truths and partial truths, which created a buzz around the mysterious Esa’ala Cave located in Papua New Guinea.

Propelling the movie into legendary status was the fact that Andrew Wright was killed nearly a year to the day after the movie was released, making it very difficult to determine what elements of the movie were based on truth, and which were pure fiction.

Unfortunately for fans of the movie, the tagline “inspired by true events” is somewhat misleading. Meaning the only facts in common between the movie and Wright’s endeavour is the fact that a group of cave divers were trapped in a cave in the southern hemisphere. That’s it.

Wright’s group was *not* diving in the Esa’ala Cave when they became trapped. They were actually in a cave below the Nullarbor Plain in southern Australia.

Furthermore, the survivors did *not* navigate the caves to find a way out, they were dug out by local rescue and emergency teams. Another interesting fact is that when Wright’s group was trapped, his wife was one of the people trapped as well, and she was one of the three survivors. However, this detail never makes it into the movie either.

However, divers will be happy to learn that the Esa’ala Cave really does exist.

For more information about the caves & film, please see this link:  
<https://www.topsecretwriters.com/2012/05/the-movie-sanctum-and-the-legend-of-the-esa-ala-cave/>

### **The Route**

Leg 1	Gurney to Esa'Ala	45 nms
Leg 2	Esa'Ala to Salamo	16 nms
Leg 3	Salamo to Vivigani	36 nms

This days flying is 97 nms and can be comfortably undertaken in a Cessna 172. Even with the turn arounds at Esa'Ala and Salamo, the trip should not take much more than 1hour 30 minutes.