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# From the President



The recent Regional Reps meeting held at Heyfield on the weekend of the 18th and 19th May provided for some wonderful scenic driving on the Saturday, followed by a very productive meeting on the Sunday. The Victorian Government's Great Outdoors election commitment granted funding of \$105m, from which \$10.5m will be derived, commencing on the 1st July, in support of four wheel driving, and includes the revitalisation of iconic tracks. This will be augmented by a focused Market Research programme, addressing market segmentation, and include focus group feedback in support of the market research, to seek detail around vehicle mix, user expectation and experience. This will be the first such market research undertaken in some time, and Four Wheel Drive Victoria is fully engaged in the process. Outcomes will provide not just for the Land Managers, but the Association as well, insight into what owners of four wheel drives are looking for and expect when they venture out into our countryside. With four wheel drives, of all ilks, sitting at the top of vehicle sales and ownership, the results will be a very powerful tool to address and understand the aspirations of all who use and venture into the magnificent environment our State has to offer.

As you can imagine the Land Managers have had a very busy and demanding summer with the level and numbers of fires we have experienced this year. In southern Alpine and Gippsland regions 164,000 acres were impacted by the fires. As a result there have been a number of early track closures due to damage and the risk of falling trees. Tracks are closed to allow for regeneration, repair and user safety. With the Queens Birthday long week-end in June the winter track closures are imminent, so time is running out for any last minute trips. However I do encourage all who are venturing out to ensure they are familiar with closures at all times, and always consider their safety and that of those accompanying them accordingly. Unfortunately we continue to see closed tracks being illegally used and damaged, including locked gates and other assets destroyed. Such anti-social behaviour is not just unacceptable, it costs the community a great deal of money. With

an expanded compliance focus by the Land Managers, which FWDV fully supports, the "dob in a hoon" programme provides an avenue to support their efforts.

Those present were provided a very informative outline of the work undertaken by the West Gippsland CMA, Catchment Management Authority, around protecting our catchment areas and the water quality in our reservoirs. Another reason we see fire effected tracks being temporarily closed.

With the Regional Forest Agreement between the State and Federal Government under review, the Association has been invited to participate and be represented on the committee. This is currently a work in progress by our CEO, representing the Association, who is also representing the Association with the Grampians Management Plan.

As part of our Four Wheel Drive Association Ministerial Advisory Committee membership, we have the opportunity to meet with the Minister, Lilly D'Ambrosio, on a regular basis. This is an opportunity for the Association to brief the Minister first hand on the activities of the Association, and update her on the Strategic Plan and KPI progress which we work on with the Land Managers. Such a meeting was held recently and it was a pleasure to be able to thank the Minister for her support of the Association and four wheel drivers.

The RTO continues to make good progress and add additional courses to its training programme. Along with the work been done in bringing new courses on scope and managing the ongoing compliance requirements, much of the registration, documentation and administrative processes have now been automated.

Please watch out for the next member update day. This is an important opportunity to be able to get all the latest information from the Association first hand, apart from networking with other Club members.

**Michael Martin,  
President**

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## News from FWDV CEO

I would like to dedicate this report to my good friend and colleague Geoff Kenafacke, who has decided to retire from the unpaid job he has performed so diligently for the past four years or so. He has worked tirelessly rounding up all the detailed information from our clubs and their members, relating to the magnificent volunteering efforts carried out across the state. I do not apologise but only thank him for his tenacity and determination in gathering the evidence required.

Geoff has performed the task of dissecting the information into the large spread sheet, separating the individual elements so we can present a most

informative report to the government and their land managers. It has been an absolute delight to have him working alongside us whilst performing this arduous task and reluctantly have taken the job back in house. Apart from the hours attributed to the task, he has never sought compensation for the telephone calls or other materials required to complete his work.

I personally can't thank him enough for his efforts and wish him and his very supportive wife Jenny, a very enjoyable future in their retirement.

**Wayne Hevey**  
CEO

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Many thanks.

**Ian Fletcher (FWDV)**

## May Regional Representatives Meeting



### May 2019 Regional Representatives Meeting Saturday Drive.

"Confronting". I was sitting beside Heyfield Parks Victoria Ranger Wayne Foon, as he guided our Regional Representatives convoy. Confronting was our summary of the scene that greeted us as we reached the summit of Mt Wellington and saw the devastation created by the recent Licola – Mt Margaret fire, part of the huge Macalister Complex fires.

Our group had started on the journey to Mt Wellington and Millers Hut after

meeting at the Parks Victoria office in Heyfield at 9 a.m. for a 9:30 start. The drive was the traditional, look around an area, as part of the May Regional Representatives meeting. We gathered in the parking area, take away coffee cups in our hands, while Wayne Foon and Vicki Jones (Parks Victoria Ranger Dargo) explained the plans for the day. The group, with quite a mix of 4x4 brands and configurations, headed north just before 9:30 with Alan Mackay and Wayne Hevey as Tail End Charlie.

After a brief "comfort" stop in Licola the drive continued on the bitumen past the

Wellington River camping areas and then onto the dusty gravel section of Tamboritha Road. Looking across from Bennison Lookout we could see burnt trees and scorched rock faces exposed by fire in the distance.

The morning tea stop was at Lost Plain. There are some basic facilities, including a toilet, at Lost Plain. After a much needed cuppa Wayne and Vicki donned their compliance duties vests. The vests are similar to those worn by VicPol members. The vests are quite impressive with capsicum spray, baton, lots of little pockets and even handcuffs.



Both Wayne and Vicki have compliance work as part of their Ranger roles. The Rangers explained the scope of the work and the various acts that form the basis of regulations and laws within the National Park. There was plenty of time to ask questions.

One important issue that was clarified was that dispersed camping in the Alpine National Park is still quite in accordance with the Park regulations. This may not be true of all Victorian National Parks, so it's best to check, before you venture into them. Another area of concern that Vicki focused on was the importance of being with your campfire. A high percentage of the bushfires in the Parks are caused by either unattended or abandoned campfires.

The Dob In A Hoon program was discussed with Wayne emphasising that any information about questionable behaviour in the Park is valuable, but we should not intervene or put ourselves in harms way trying to get details. Ring the Parks Victoria number, 13 1963 or 000 to report anything illegal you might see.

As we travelled further, we saw some signs of the fire. By the time we reached McFarlane Saddle its impact was quite noticeable. For the climb to Mt Wellington Vicki left her PV Isuzu D-Max and rode in a very flash new Ford Raptor. As an enthusiastic Hilux owner that must have been difficult for Vicki. On the climb we were greeted by a pair of wedge tailed eagles casually playing on the thermals. The track was in quite good condition so the views could be appreciated by the drivers.

We drove over the blackened summit and down to Millers Hut for a late lunch. It is incredible that the historic hut and its surrounding mature eucalypts and green grass survived the ferocity of the fire. Congratulations to the fire fighting team for preserving the important site. Following lunch Wayne gave an

excellent presentation on the extent and impact of the fires. With a large map, hanging on the side of the 70 series dual cab, Wayne was able to graphically illustrate how the several lightning strike fires had gradually merged into one large fire mass. The strain on resources must have been immense with so many fronts to contend with. It's interesting that these fires, involving so many agencies, large numbers of rotary and fixed wing aircraft, dozens of pieces of heavy machinery, hundreds of personnel on the ground, long periods of closure of sections of the Alpine National Park and state forest areas running over several weeks, attracted so little media attention.

The discussion and question time after the presentation was quite long and covered a range of fire related topics including the increased frequency of these large hot fires, climate change, the fuel reduction burning program, recovery plans and the viability of fire impacted flora and fauna species into the future.

On the way back over Mt Wellington we had time to stop and view the extent of the fires. It was a rare windless, warm and sunny afternoon on the summit. Looking north west the fragile Wellington peatlands have been significantly impacted. The peatlands take thousands of years to form and are a vital component of the catchment for the river systems. Looking south into the Avon Wilderness Area the north facing slopes seemed to have been the areas of hottest burn.

Wayne decided to return via Licola rather than complete the intended circuit down Marathon Road to Briagolong. Time had beaten us, but the long discussions had been very useful.

The increased frequency and ferocity of the fires in the Alps and other areas of South Eastern Australia will ultimately have consequences for all of us. Looking specifically at recreational four wheel drive touring, the long campaign fires may restrict the access we have to the area over the popular summer touring season. Track and road network maintenance and bridge load capacity will become more important, as their main function is firefighting access. In broader terms the fires will have short and long term consequences for biodiversity and species viability in the Alps and water quality in the catchment areas.

Our group arrived back in Heyfield at 6:30. Thanks to their knowledge, planning and obvious passion for the Alps, Wayne and Vicki had provided us all with a fascinating and educational day with some good four wheel driving as a bonus.

**Greg Rose.**  
**Four Wheel Drive Victoria Regional Representative, Southern Alpine National Park.**





# SAND DRIVING COURSE

## *Club members learn to drive sand at Portland*



About 30 kms west of Portland, on the Nelson Road, are the Swan Lake sand dunes. These are the only coastal sand dunes you can drive within Victoria, but you are still not allowed to drive on the beaches. They are managed by the Portland Dune Buggy Club, and you need to be a member to access them. A number of our members have joined the PDBC as this is a great getaway, with some different types of driving and a well set up campground.

In March this year one of our members, Hugh, who is a trainer, conducted a sand driving course there. There were 5 members from various metropolitan clubs participating, and a couple of our members tagged along. The weather was great during the day with a drop of rain overnight. The PDBC had about a dozen members out for a weekend run, but that was no problem as there are over 18 square kms of dunes.

We arrived on Friday afternoon and set up our tents or swags. We had a meet and greet around the fire, and after a meal some more time by the fire swapping travel yarns.

On the Saturday morning we hit the sand. We had aired down to about 20psi. There is a challenging hill at the entrance to the dunes, We all got up, except one vehicle, which was very

basic, with an inexperienced driver. Hugh took another few psi from the tyres and decided to travel with him for some one-on-one training. We spent the morning exploring the dunes and getting into positions where there was a bit of snatching or winning. By this time most of us had lowered our tyres to 15/16psi. Our most difficult recovery was on a soft hill, where we had 3 vehicles linked, winching and using Maxtracks to get up. We then went back to camp for lunch and a debrief and question session.

After lunch it was back to the dunes for a chance to put any new knowledge to the test. We covered a lot more of the dunes and mainly just had some fun. We still had to do some recoveries, but everyone got a good chance to put their knowledge to the test. Then it was back to camp, just on dark, for another very pleasant night around the fire. After breakfast, the next morning, we had a training session on recoveries. Hugh had a sand anchor and snatch rope, as well as the snatch straps and winches we had been using yesterday.





We had a small demonstration of how they worked and we then went onto the dunes to try them out. We intentionally bogged our vehicles, and tried the various recovery methods. First up was the snatch rope, which we all thought was much smoother than the snatch strap. Then we used the sand anchor, which worked a treat, even in the very soft, fine sand. It was a great item to have if you have the room. Then one of the guys showed us one of those plastic



ladder like items that you tie to the wheels. It took a few tries but it did work in the end.

After lunch a couple of us had to leave. The others went back out for some more practice. That evening the locals went home, and most of the others stayed another night and did the trip home on Monday. We all agreed it was a great weekend and we had learned a lot. Thanks Hugh.

If anyone is looking for a fun weekend, a bit different to anything in Victoria, you can't go past the Swan Lake sand dunes. Contact the Portland Dune Buggy Club and contact the Secretary of the Warrnambool 4WD Club, as there is often some of our members who are up for a dunes weekend.

**E Johnson**  
**Secretary, Warrnambool 4WD Club Inc.**

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you saw in a previous edition is always on hand.

Check it out at [www.fwdvictoria.org.au](http://www.fwdvictoria.org.au)

### Four Wheel Drive Victoria on Social Media

Our social media pages continue to grow with plenty of activity across Facebook and Twitter. Our public Facebook page has reached over 8500 followers and many posts have been shared hundreds of times and reached thousands of people. Our public page shares our message to the wider 4WD and recreational community.

Many club members have also joined our closed Facebook Group with over 200 members now receiving information as it comes to hand. We use this closed group to communicate directly with members sharing relevant information about tracks, activities, FWDV projects, training and news that is relevant only to our members. This is a much quicker way for us to communicate directly to members than the often slow communication through club emails. Make sure you let your fellow club members know about the Four Wheel Drive Victoria closed Facebook Group.

Four Wheel Drive Victoria is also active on Twitter, Instagram and has a YouTube channel. We encourage all our members to follow our social media pages as well as our website for all the latest information.

[www.fwdvictoria.org.au](http://www.fwdvictoria.org.au)

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## The Great Outdoors & 4x4 Expo at Mornington



The first show of this type to be held on the Mornington Peninsular, saw a strong showing of exhibitors from the recreational sector which included the fishing, boating, caravan and camper industry as well as the 4x4 and camping industries. It was held at the Mornington Racecourse which proved to be a great location.

Held over 3 days from 14th to 17th March, Four Wheel Drive Victoria set up the marquee and display at the show and invited the local 4WD clubs to get involved to promote their clubs and attract new members.

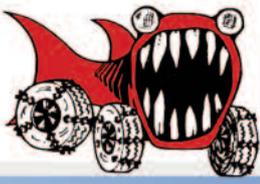
An enthusiastic bunch of members from both the Peninsular 4WD Club and Port Phillip 4WD Club attended the stand to talk to visitors about the various activities of their clubs. The Toyota 4WD Club also had a stand next to ours so the four wheel drive club community had a great presence at the show.

We also had some staff from DELWP and Parks Victoria attend as well as the team from Four Wheel Drive Victoria who also attended over the weekend, supporting the clubs and talking to visitors. The display was well received with many people visiting the stand and discussing club membership etc. with the stand full of people at numerous times over the weekend. All clubs reported new members joining from the show.

The next regional shows are Mildura 28 – 30 June and Shepparton 30th August – 1st September and you can check out the details online at

<https://greatoutdoorexpos.com.au/>





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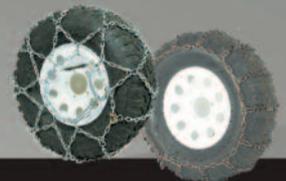
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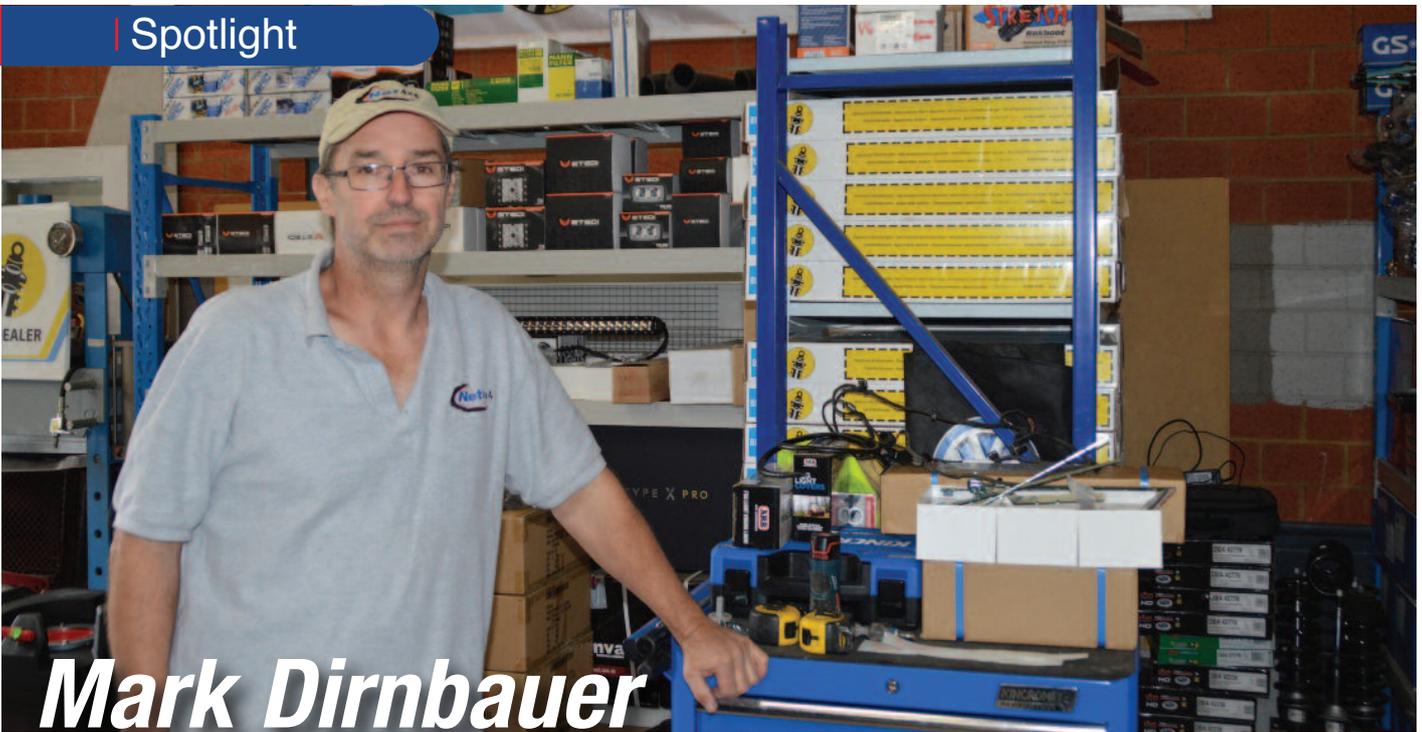
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**Mark Dirnbauer**

# The Amarok Man

Mark Dirnbauer is a perfectionist. He used to be a builder and until a few years ago he played with vehicles as a hobby. Now his hobby has become a small business with a passion for quality. His enthusiasm for the VW Amarok and his extensive technical knowledge and understanding of this vehicle flows from him with little prompting. His workshop is stacked with parts and accessories as well as bits of Amarok from various projects being worked on.

As a founding member of the Amarok club, he gets out there and enjoys driving and testing the various equipment and accessories that he specializes in. He has developed many specialized 4x4 accessories for the Amarok that simply were not available on the market just a few years ago. Items such as GVM upgrades, rated recovery hooks, tuned suspension components and electrical kits have been designed, researched and tested by Mark to the highest levels of quality. His reputation in the Amarok owner community has seen him fitting out Amaroks for all sorts of enthusiastic clients including many members of the Amarok.Club.

Mark says, "Net4x4 came about due to a lack of supply of quality custom accessories primarily for the VW Amarok when it was first released and has grown from that initial vehicle to others". As he fondles one of his recovery hooks he explains the fine machining and manufacturing process this one item goes through. He even has a special

machine to smooth and polish the item before it goes to powder coating. "We design, test and manufacture all of our branded accessories using the best quality materials and to be the best product of its type on the market. The way we see it, if you're going to put the effort into making something make it the best it can be without compromise" he says.

He has designed and engineered various components especially for the Amarok. His Net4x4 premium heavy duty recovery points have been designed, developed and manufactured by Net4x4 here in Australia and rated to 6000 kg. Other items include specially developed Bilstein Struts, H&R Coils, Net4x4 Diff Drop Kits, Net4x4Lift Block kits and Net4x4 plug in electrical adaptor kits such as twin reverse lights and headlight auxiliary connectors.

He proudly talks about the workmanship and quality of the products he offers such as his GVM upgrades and others that are in future development such as a low range transfer case kit for the automatic Amarok. You can tell he is passionate about the quality of his workmanship as he shows you how he

designs and tests his products, and is happy to discuss the different stages of manufacture that can be easily seen in his workshop.

The other side of Mark is his involvement with extensive fundraising activities for MS research and his own personal challenges with the disease. The day we were visiting was freezing cold and wet yet Mark was oblivious to the conditions in his polo shirt and



shorts. He explained that because of his MS he does not usually feel the cold and he wears shorts most of the time. As a member of the Amarok Club, Mark and his family were involved in the hugely successful MS Society Melbourne Cycle + half marathon as mentioned in the March Trackwatch. The Amarok team raising over \$22,500 to help find a cure for this debilitating disease.

He gets through each day with a determination that you have to admire for someone with such enthusiasm and passion for his endeavors.

Mark is more than happy to discuss the right fit-out of your Amarok with tried and tested gear that will not let you down. Check out his website – [www.net4x4.com.au](http://www.net4x4.com.au)

**Ian Fletcher**



# AUSTRALIAN ALPS NATIONAL PARKS Heritage Skills Workshop



The last weekend in March, 2019 turned into a snowy, white winter wonderland for Andy and I when we attended the Australian Alps Heritage Skills weekend up at Howman's Gap on the Bogong High Plains.

Between Friday afternoon and Sunday afternoon we participated in slideshows, talks, demonstrations and brainstorming groups with other passionate and skilled hut enthusiasts from Kosciusko Huts Assoc. Victorian High Country Huts Assoc. and The Mountain Huts Preservation Society of Tasmania. We were also joined by Parks Rangers from NSW, ACT, VIC and the ALPS National Park as well as experienced heritage builders with bush carpentry skills, an Archaeologist, Heritage specialists and a film and cameraman.

The focus of the weekend was to understand the principles of the Burra Charter, to be able to define the difference between preservation, restoration and reconstruction, understanding



the difference between doing as much as necessary but as little as possible, and also the importance of keeping records and taking photos of everything.

Even though the weekend had a big focus on culture and heritage, it was also about getting to know our neighbours, the Rangers who we work with on our hut projects in the parks and the other Huts Associations that share our passion for huts and our other common interests. We found it a real bonding weekend, making new friends and strengthening relationships. Best of all, the Victorian High Country put on a winter wonderland performance for all the heritage program participants by turning on the white fluffy stuff and covering us, the huts and the Bogong High Plains in snow while we travelled across the High Plains between Wallace's hut, Cope hut and Pretty Valley hut over the weekend while learning about past heritage work projects and exchanging ideas for future projects.





We celebrated the first snow of the season by participating in a smoking ceremony put on by Jida Gulpilil, the local indigenous representative who shared some of the cultural traditions, and then we all enjoyed a meal of Australian bush food that included marinated roast emu - it was absolutely delicious.

Saturday afternoon everyone watched on with great interest as the very talented James Findlay put his traditional bush timber skills to work demonstrating all the old tools and techniques making slabs and shingles from a log starting from scratch, debarking, then splitting, cutting, shaping and cleaning up the final product for use in building a hut.

Having worked on huts and projects with many of the Victorian representatives at this Heritage Skills workshop, Andy and I are very honoured to feel part of something great, and we look forward to many more friendships forged through works with the Huts Associations.

**Sharyn McGregor**





## The Elephant in the Land Rover Dealership showroom is a ...

This story begins many years ago at the first Australian ex- Army Land Rover auction in Cheltenham, at which I met Eric Shingles, a fellow LROCV member, a dedicated Gippsland Dairy farmer and exceptional collector of Land Rovers. At that first auction we ogled over the Perenties, and never for one moment contemplated bidding for anything else. Things do change. Read on.

At a recent Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland monthly meeting, at which I was a visitor, held in the showroom of Gippsland Land Rover, an extraordinary "Show and Tell" took place. This Land

Rover dealership sponsors this friendly club through the generous support of their manager Mr Charlie Calafiore.

On the night of meeting there in the dealership showroom amongst the latest impeccable Land Rovers and Range Rovers was an ex-Army 6x6 Perentie, a bevy of club member's older Land Rovers spanning 70 years of the Land Rover heritage. A veritable exhibition of new and older Land Rovers for viewing by the local Gippsland community. There too was one of the newest Mercedes G Wagons, DELWP's latest "Forest Fire Management" acquisition.

The night was a testament to Greg Rose's [LROCV President] recent article in the TrackWatch magazine focusing on the beneficial relationship between LROCV and the Dealership. Not to mention LROCV have a close relationship with this club too.

But wait there is more! **There was an elephant in the showroom.** Parked right opposite the meeting chairman and towering over seated club members was an ex-Army Mercedes Benz U1700L UNIMOG, dominating everything; this long reputed legendary off road monster vehicle.



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Yes! Eric did get one.

Awesome seeing this, I could not help thinking if Hannibal had UNIMOGs instead of elephants he would have done more than cross the Rubicon etc. If he had the showroom's impeccable

new Land Rovers he would have done the same and in comfort. If you go to Gippsland Land Rover and see Charlie you too can have a new 4x4 too.

The world's most versatile 4x4 "comfort" machine a Land Rover off course, not an elephant.

I wonder how back at the dairy farm things have changed. One thing for sure, Eric has a most understanding partner without whom this story would not have been possible. The cows too, what did they think now that they have less room in their shed? Did they welcome the MOG or think it's a lot of bull?

For me seeing this monster in the showroom dominating this exceptional club meeting was a bit like the mountain

coming to a LROCG meeting and not visa-versa and a celebration of my love affair with the MOG without upsetting my wife.

Thanks goes to David Murray as truck co-driver from farm to meeting (the MOG is not registered so Eric piggy-backed it on his semi to the meeting), David you pose a good photo too, so too does Ross Howell in front of the G wagon and Perentie, Wayne Foon for arranging the G wagons appearance

As Eric "The Mahout" demonstrated in the semi loading photo, a machine like that is a lot of work; see the heavy chains used for securing. Technical specs? - Well to my mind the MOG compared to LRs, is like an ELEPHANT to GAZELLES. I'm impressed with the MOG dominating the meeting. Also the impeccable Land Rover range of vehicles, the club and its members, a memorable meeting.

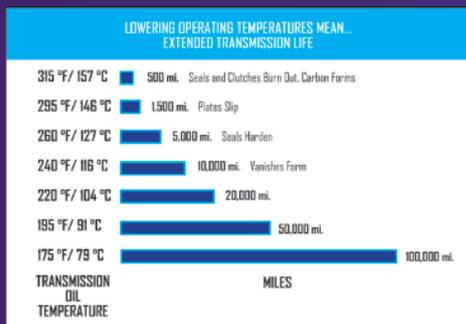
*PS Eric was awarded the club's "Best Show and Tell" of the year.*

**Words by Richard Beilharz, LROCV,**

**Photos by Greg Rose and Richard Beilharz.**

## EXEDY TRANSMISSION COOLERS SOLVE OVERHEATING PROBLEM

Hard driving, trailer pulling or hot driving conditions can cause overheating, one of the leading causes of transmission failure. When the temperatures get too high, the oil can breakdown or lose its ability to lubricate some parts. As such, excess temperature is a common cause of premature transmission failure as the chart below shows.



Operating temperatures can be lowered by installing a transmission cooler, which forces the fluid through a hose to the front of the vehicle, then through a series of coils and fins to cool it down. It will benefit the transmission by extending its life and helping it run more efficiently while preventing costly repairs.



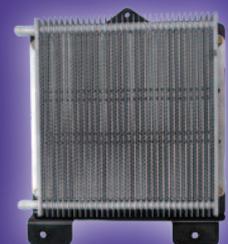
**Did you Know...** For every 10 degrees F of heat reduced, you double the life of the transmission fluid. For every 20 degrees F of heat reduced, you double the life of the transmission!

## COOLMASTER OFFROAD

BY EXEDY

When it comes to choosing between the various coolers in the market, cooler construction plays an important part in today's modern installations. Factors in deciding which style of cooler to use include oil flow capacity; low-pressure drop; available size; minimum airflow disruption and hose end fitting type and size. A low-pressure drop plate and fin type cooler is 30% more efficient than a tube and fin type cooler because the cooling circuit operates at a regulated low pressure and the larger surface area allows for more fluid to contact the cooling surface.

Plate and Fin  
Transmission Cooler



Fluid is forced through each row of smaller plates that help to cool the fluid faster and more effectively. After installation, an important tip is to always remember to top up the transmission fluid after installing an oil cooler. Normally around one litre will suffice but be sure to follow the vehicle manufactures recommended fill procedure.

**EXEDY** has a full range of coolers available, including the newly launched **Coolmaster Off Road** range for popular 4X4 applications. Visit [www.exedy.com.au](http://www.exedy.com.au), or call us on 1300 366 592 for more information.



# Tonimbuk Bushfire Recovery Group.

*Members from the Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria, Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria and the Melbourne Jeep Club have generously given of their time and resources to help those doing it hard in the wake of devastating bushfires in Eastern Victoria*



Following the major bushfire in the Bunyip State Forest two months ago there has been a concerted effort by the broader community to not only rebuild the district, but to assist the land owners recover from the devastation. The greatest effect for the fire affected people is not just rebuilding the property lost, their greatest need is to rebuild their lives and return to having an income.

The district most effected is Garfield North, Tynong North, Bunyip and Tonimbuk. These people are simply overwhelmed by the workload in front of them and are struggling to make a start. The biggest issue is the effect the fires have had on their mental health, it's because of this issue alone the Four-Wheel Drive community and Blaze-Aid have added immeasurable value. We can measure fences and wire removal by the trailer load and the tonage of firewood provided, but their mental health recovery is a difficult object to measure.

The FWD movement have managed to remove tree litter, cut down dangerous trees, remove star pickets, remove burnt wire and carted it away to skips provided by other organisations. Blaze Aid have completed the same and replaced kilometres of fencing - this work being completed by volunteers would take the farmer months to complete. The FWD volunteers providing their time and skills during the week and weekends has had an enormous impact of good will on the victims.

The LROC club in one day, by cleaning up tree litter along fence lines, took the look of gloom and tears from the face of one woman who felt the work was so overwhelming for her to contemplate as she could not fathom where to start. She has since returned to the Tonimbuk Recovery Centre highly praising the club for the work they did for her. The Melbourne Jeep Club and the Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria in a combined effort hit five farms over one weekend. This effort has been reported up through the local community and had an overwhelming impact on the land owners.

One fire effected landowner stated that since the clean-up activities the FWD Clubs completed for them he could now return to work and provide the family with an income, not only that they can have their horses returned from agistment, reducing their outgoing costs as well. One farmer stated his family can now have the Queens Birthday weekend off for a rest, something he never envisaged a month ago.

The work in the district will go on for another twelve months or more, the contribution provided by the fourbie clubs is invaluable but we still need more assistance from club volunteers. A very commendable effort thus far from TLCCV, LROC, and MJOC who have all offered to continue after Mother's Day with their commitment to the recovery activities. The more the merrier.

Cheers

*Eric Bishop.  
Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Australia (Vic Inc.)  
tlccrg@tlccv.com.au*

Tonimbuk Bushfire Recovery Group



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Open to all club members, the general public and corporate organisations.  
Browse courses online at [www.fwdvictoria.org.au](http://www.fwdvictoria.org.au) and call the office to book on (03) 9874 7222

### PROFICIENCY COURSES



■ Saturday 1st June - PC190601 - Practical

■ Tuesday 2nd July - PC190706 - Theory

■ Saturday 6th July - PC190706 - Practical

■ Tuesday 30th July - PC190803 - Theory

■ Saturday 3rd August - PC190803 - Practical

■ Tuesday 3rd September - PC190907 - Theory

■ Saturday 7th September - PC190907 - Practical

■ Tuesday 22nd October - PC191026 - Theory

■ Saturday 26th October - PC191026 - Practical

■ Tuesday 19th November - PC191123 - Theory

■ Saturday 23rd November - PC191123 - Practical

■ Tuesday 3rd December - PC191207 - Theory

■ Saturday 7th December - PC191207 - Practical

#### Training Course Refund Policy

Situations occur where for various reasons courses are cancelled by Four Wheel Drive Victoria (FWDV) or students need to cancel. Below describes the refund policy that is applicable.

**Fee refunds:** If students are unable to attend the course that they are registered for, the following refund fees below apply:

• 30 days prior - less 10% of course cost; • 29 days - 15 days - less 25% of course cost; • 14 days to 8 days - less 50% of course cost; • 7 days prior - no refund allowed

*Refund applications must be made in writing to FWDV.*

FWDV agree that they will allow for one transfer in a 12 month period to another course date without penalty, with a minimum of 8 days notice, (see below).

**Transfer to other courses:** Students can transfer to any other course up to 8 working days prior to commencement at no cost. Students transferring to another course 7 working days or less prior to commencement will be required to pay a transfer fee of \$50

**Course Cancellations:** FWDV will make a full refund of all fees paid should a course be discontinued. FWDV reserves the right to cancel a course if a minimum number of participants are not achieved or for Occupational Health and Safety reasons. Should the students desire to take an alternative course with FWDV, fees will be fully transferrable to that course, for one transfer in a 12 month period. In the event of a course for which the student was enrolled being unavailable or no acceptable alternative course is available, fees are fully refundable.

**FOR ALL BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES**

**PHONE (03) 9874 7222**

**or email: [training@fwdvictoria.org.au](mailto:training@fwdvictoria.org.au)**

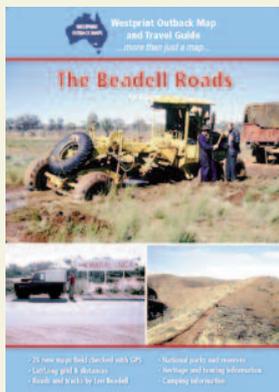


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### So you have got yourself stuck, now what do you do.

If it is safe, get out of your 4WD and check around the vehicle and understand why you are stuck. If it not safe for the driver to get out of the vehicle, ask someone else to check.

Just rushing and snatching, or winching the vehicle out without understanding why you are stuck can lead to greater damage to the vehicle.

Come up with a plan of recovery after you have found out why you are stuck.

Often the problem can be solved by removing a rock or log, or simple track maintenance, or a different driving line can be taken to allow you to drive out, and so eliminating the dangers related to winching and snatch strap recovery.

On a recent club trip we were testing the wheel travel of different vehicles. This involved driving at an angle up a slope so the vehicle had two wheels on the ground and the other two dropping to their maximum suspension travel.

I drove up the slope a little too far, so I decide to reverse a meter to the correct spot. I only moved about half a meter and the vehicle stalled and would not restart. I knew something was not right, so I secured the vehicle and got out to see what was wrong.

While I was checking I had several offers to snatch and winch me out, but before that was going to happen I wanted to assess what was wrong, and figure the best recovery plan

The first problem I found was the end of the exhaust pipe was buried in the ground. The second thing was the rear bumper and tow bar was hard on the ground. The exhaust pipe was blocked by soil and rocks, which caused the engine to stall.

The first thing to do was to clear a path around the exhaust so when the vehicle moved I would not damage it. Using a stick I could clear the soil out of the exhaust, and this meant now I could start the vehicle when needed.

The next problem was getting a little more ground clearance under the rear bumper. I decided to pump up the right rear tyre to get some clearance, so I increased the pressure from 25psi to 50psi, which raised the vehicle by about 15mm. I also pumped the right rear airbag to 20psi, which gave me an extra 20mm of clearance, which was enough to allow me to reverse out of trouble without causing any damage to the vehicle.

This method did take a little more time than a snatch or winch recovery, but was a lot safer and did not cause any damage to the vehicle. If I had just gone ahead with a snatch strap recovery, I would have done a lot of damage to the exhaust system and also damaged the rear bumper bar.

**ALWAYS PLAN A RECOVERY,  
DON'T RUSH IN, PLAY SAFE**

**Graeme Mitchell.  
Jackaroo 4WD Club**

### For FWD sake...

On the bitter cold morning,  
Of the eleventh of May...  
Our four wheeling family,  
Set out for the day!

We roared through the forest,  
The playground for trucks...  
A mighty Patrol,  
A Cruiser, A Lux.

The terrain, wet and slippery,  
The day, grey and cold...  
Down Diggers and XL,  
We chatted and LOL'd.

From the warmth of our cars,  
We climbed hills, crossed a creek...  
Pulled into Upper Chadwick,  
Patrol sprung a leak!

Snacks and drinks refilled,  
We set course for Amblers Lane...  
A leisurely drive,  
This track was too tame!

In Blackwood for lunch,  
We picked up Sir VP...  
Then returned to our playground,  
Un-named tracks, just to see.

Too steep and too risky,  
To attempt this time round...  
Winching required,  
To ensure wheels stay on ground!

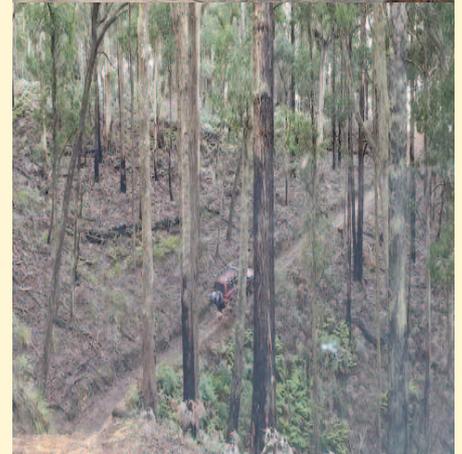
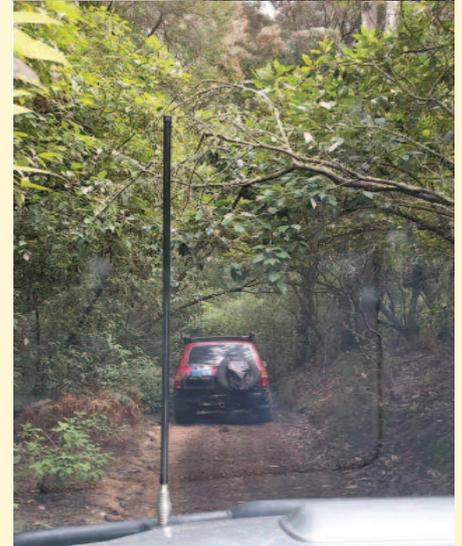
Countess then Hayden,  
We emerged out on Ruth...  
Pure magic, these tracks were,  
Epic... that's the truth!

As the day came to an end,  
We farewellled Gordy and Russ...  
But before we would leave,  
One more track left for us!

Living dangerously indeed,  
As the time was past 4...  
But together we made it,  
Through our "just one more"!

With some awesome company,  
We had a fun filled, great day...  
Be sure to come join us,  
FOR FWD SAKE!

**Ness Vergara,  
Melton & District 4wd Club**





# HUT to HUT along Donnelly Creek

*Toyota Land Cruiser Club members assist Victorian High Country Huts Association on a hut maintenance working bee*



The huts spanning 160 years of history built in the area along Donnelly Creek between Aberfeldy and Mt Useful were our mission on this fine weekend. The weather played in our favour, we bathed in the warmth of the sunshine all weekend while the expected rains were never in sight. Early on Saturday 6th April we met our crew at McDonalds in Moe, to the excitement of some as they grabbed a quick breakfast before heading off toward our first hut near Aberfeldy. All 5 vehicles aired down their tyres at the Thomson Dam just before hitting the dirt for a more comfortable drive where we set off along the tracks enjoying the views along the dam and taking note of the scorched treetops in the distance from the recent bushfires.

It wasn't long before we reached our first destination, the historic Stone hut at Codes Flat. This beautiful old hut is one of my favourites and rare due to its construction of all stone. On past visits it was looking poorly and deteriorating due to weather and time not doing it any favours. Recently this has changed though, as it became a special interest project of the new lease holder's family and friends. It is exciting to see a new roof has been put on this old hut with a slightly wider easement that will help to protect the stonework in the future and the stonework has also gained some attention with some repointing and damage now being fixed. The top of the chimney has been repaired and a new chimney top constructed in place of the old flu. Everyone enjoyed the tour

around the hut and the bit of history I could share with them. Thought to date back as far as the 1860s, it is known to have been an old telegraph station and horse and coach stop. Passengers would stay in the old iron huts nearby while the horses were resting as it was a hard journey into this part of the high country. Alterations were made to the stone hut just after WW2 by the person living in it, enclosing a doorway and making it a window, the result of this can still be seen today in the side stone wall. The wooden huts nearby were built in the 1960s when the New Dawn Mine was in operation. This stone hut is a public asset and the collection of huts around it tell a story of hard times and history in the Victorian High Country.

After passing a few old mining sites and the Toombon cemetery and old pub ruins, we reached the next hut on our journey, Junction hut. This hut is one of 3 old mining huts that were rebuilt in this area in 2015 after the fires. Still in great condition, there was very little we had to do here luckily as it was full of swags

and other camping equipment from campers who were staying in and around it over the weekend. The original Junction Huts were built in the 1930s and lived in while fossicking for gold during the depression. The lease was held by the Walshe family for a long time while they made regular visits back to the area and after the first huts became dilapidated, the next generation of the Walshe family built in 1964 the Junction hut that was more widely known known to this day but sadly burnt down in the 2013 fires.





After a few river crossings we reached our next destination, Jorgensens hut. Once again still in good condition being one of the newer rebuilds, but in need of a good clean, our crew eagerly set to work with brooms, mops, rags and elbow grease. Everyone took on a project, some cleaning the ash and debris from the inside fireplace, some using a mild degreaser and cleaning the BBQ splatter from the outside walls and then washing with soapy water, multiple brooms swept inside and out of the hut which included cobweb removal and others cleaned the windows inside and out. Rubbish was picked up from the surrounding area and then removed and a new broom and dust pan and brush were replaced in the hut. This hut was originally built in the 1950s as part of a mining lease that continued into the 1990s. The hut then became a bush shelter for different families and groups who frequented this area on camping holidays. After being lost in the 2013 fires, it was rebuilt on the same footprint and the memory of the old hut lives on in this new one. The Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria have recently taken on the caretaker roll of this hut and today's working bee is the first of many to look after it.

Our journey continued, winding our way along Donnelly Creek, in and out of a few more river crossings and into O'Tooles camping area where we checked on the previous works we had done to fix the shelter. Still standing strong it was on to Goonans hut,



another one of the newer huts that replaced an old mining hut after the fires. We already knew that we had to replace a door handle here, which we had noted on a previous trip, so the boys set to work removing the old one and refitting the new one while the rest of us chatted to the families camped in and around the hut. The campers were really appreciative of the work done and promised to make sure the hut was clean when they left the next day. The original hut here was built by Russell Hughes and his sons about 1980 as part of their mining claim and always kept stocked with food and wood for a fire for themselves or as refuge for any others needing shelter in this remote area. In 1991 the hut and claim was sold to Bill Goonan whose family then went on to use the hut for many years.

Before long we were back on the tracks and heading toward Store Point hut, passing a couple of other huts that have been built on small parcels of private land nearby, Lloyds Hut and O'Sullivan's Hotel being two of them. Just on the

other side of the river crossing we pulled up at Store Point hut and did a quick clean-up of cobwebs and swept the floor, taking note of a couple of things that need doing by Store Point huts caretakers, the Pajero 4WD club that will be forwarded on for one of their trips. This hut was also originally built on a mining lease around 1975 with a second hut slightly further up the hill that was built a couple of years before it. The height of the river between them determined which hut was used, not knowing if they could cross the river due to the small bridge regularly being swept away and having to be rebuilt. This hut was in ruin and about to be demolished when members of the Pajero 4WD club stepped forward to save the hut and with the help of DELWP Rangers and the VHCHA, it was reconstructed. The Pajero 4WD Club and the VHCHA once again went up to repair this hut after the 2013 fires skimmed this hut and it was heat affected but unfortunately the top hut was destroyed and lost forever.

We climbed out of the valley and up to our final destination. Half the convoy parted ways with us here and went home after their exciting day trip in the High Country travelling from hut to hut and the other half of the convoy decided to enjoy happy hour with Andy and myself around our campfire and pitch camp for the evening. The next morning was spent sharing the location of an old logging dugout and old powder magazine in the bush before heading home via Licola to air up and for a bite of lunch. Overall, it was a most enjoyable and relaxing weekend with a lot achieved in such a short amount of time. On behalf of Andy, the acting Huts Maintenance Officer Area 4 for the Victorian High Country Huts Association and myself, we would like to thank the Toyota Land Cruiser Club participants who joined us over the weekend and helped clean up all the huts along Donnelly Creek.

**Andy and Sharyn McGregor**  
***We give a Hut!***



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# Four wheel driving **FOR BEGINNERS**

*Bellarine 4WD Club new members day*



On 13/4/2019 the Bellarine 4WD club held a day trip for its new members who had little or no experience in 4WD.

A convoy of 8 vehicles made their way to Barwon Downs. Upon arrival at our starting point, our trip leader and training officer talked about tyre pressures, recovery points, and recovery equipment. Members were then shown the difference between using a winch in a straight line pull and then using a snatch block. We then made our way into the bush for a fun day driving. Members got to use both low and high range, drive through some mud holes, and use a snatch strap all while making our way to Anglesea Heath.



All members had a great time and the new members got to know what their vehicles are capable of and gained some more knowledge.

## **TRACKWATCH CONTRIBUTIONS**

Contributions to Trackwatch are welcomed. They should relate to a club activity, interesting destination, historic event, etc.

1. Type your story in Word with appropriate paragraphs and headings.

No fancy fonts, colours, borders or imbedded photos in a single document.

2. Photos need to be of good quality and high resolution. Do not resize, crop or embed as part of the story. Send images as separate jpeg files.

*Ed*



ARB accessories from the dealer

# ‘JUST GOTTA ASK’

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So a recent trip away in Victoria's High Country with The Victoria Police 4WD Club and The Blue Green Crew, along with the crew from Top of Down Under.

The 3 day trip saw all the members meeting and having morning tea in Yarragon before the convoy of 14 trucks headed off toward Dargo. We all stopped for lunch and coffee in Dargo before heading off to the Mitchell River camping area which would be our camping spot for a few days which we had to ourselves.

The first day saw a short 4WD trip around the area to gather some fire-wood before heading back to camp for a swim in the river and to put the spit roast on, which everyone would enjoy that night for dinner. We all sat around the fire that night having dinner and sharing some great stories and many laughs, so many laughs, we all agree the bush is beautiful, but if you don't have amazing people to enjoy it with, then its not half as much fun.

The second day saw a cloudy morning and an early breakfast with some great coffee to keep spirits high before heading off to explore the area. Climbing high quickly and getting on to the ridge line saw some spectacular views. Stopping to enjoy the view and morning



# High Country Tour

tea we would soon find a track that would soon prove to be extremely interesting and a heap of fun. After a few recoveries and some chain sawing it was a late lunch on track before heading off to explore the far east side of the High Country. Finding some great tracks in the afternoon saw the old 4 o'clock track which got us back to camp at

about 6-ish. Another swim for some of us and another great fire with the banter and laughs going well into the evening. Packing up and heading off for a group lunch on the way out in Stratford it was clear that Penny and the crew from Top of Down Under were definitely coming back.

## Victoria Police 4WDC/Blue Green Crew



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Part 3

1910 Australian built Caldwell Vale truck loaded with hay. It had a top speed of 6 miles per hour!

## Four Wheel Drive is older than we think

**Innovation automotive technology was not only found on the continent and in the USA, as was shown by a small Australian company, Caldwell Vale Motor & Tractor Construction Co of NSW.**

Founded by Felix Caldwell and Norman Caldwell of South Australia the company developed its own 4WD system in 1907.

They applied for a patent to cover 'Improvements in and connected with driving and steering a motor propelled vehicle'. The patent described four wheel drive with four wheel steering.

Drive to front and rear axles was by propeller shafts and bevel gears, with half shafts carrying the drive along live axles to open style steering knuckles. Steering was via universal joints, and drive through hollow stub axles to drive fully floating hubs and the wheels.

The Caldwells combined with Henry Vale of NSW to form the Caldwell Vale Motor and Tractor Construction Company in 1909.

Caldwell demonstrated his patent on a 30hp 4WD touring car with 4WD steering. The unique vehicle was demonstrated on Sydney's soft sand dunes near Botany Bay in 1913, with his company establishing at nearby Auburn.

A few 4WD trucks were ordered by the NSW government and a road test of the Caldwell system is published in the Shire and Municipal Record of August 1911 saying. "It is claimed that the patented four-wheel-drive system gives enormous pulling power and will revolutionise all kinds of haulage work from the lightest car to the most powerful tractors...the problems of four wheel drive remained unsolved until two young Australians, F and N.L. Caldwell, after



**1910 80hp Caldwell Vale tractor featuring four wheel steering and an additional cooling tank on the rear to supplement the front radiator**

*extensive experiments, devised the combined driving and steering axle used in this vehicle. These tractors have*

*a 6.5 inch stroke and 6.5 inch bore which gives 70hp at 1800 rpm. Only a short while ago one of these vehicles hauled 24 tons of bricks from the Auburn Brick Works to the wharf at Duck River. These vehicles are being ordered by the State Government of NSW."*

The company produced 40 massive 4WD tractors with wheels of five foot diameter, three speed gearboxes and power steering worked by chains and cone clutches. Some were used as early road trains, with one on display at the National Road Transport Hall of Fame in Alice Springs.

The company was to unfortunately fail after a lengthy lawsuit with an unhappy client! The company was taken over by Purcell Engineering in 1916.

**Brian Tanner**



**1914 Caldwell Vale tipper**



# Getting on top of things early...

We all love a good roof rack (well OK, I do). So what if they ruin the streamlined shape of your vehicle, increase fuel consumption and affect vehicle stability ... then there is the fall factor when climbing up on top to load and unload stuff: more than one good man has fallen from a roof rack.

At the end of the day the reality is, generally just before you are about to head off, whatever you can't fit inside gets chucked on top!

Roof racks range from the simple cross-bars attached to your roof rails (you do have roof rails don't you?) to complex welded basket structures that bolt directly to your roof like my ARB aluminium deluxe roof rack (which I think is awesome btw).

What you choose will depend on the type of vehicle you have and what you need the rack to do.

... but here's the thing, when loading up, it's vital you know how much is too much.

The starting point is your vehicle's roof load capacity: it's listed in most vehicle handbooks. Most 4WD vehicles have very limited roof load capacity and around 70 kg and up to 100 kg being typical. These limits are static load weights but are based on dynamic conditions – whilst driving the car. It takes into account vehicle handling, rollover risk and dynamic loading.

Dynamic loads can be significantly more than static loads. So we know that the roof of your vehicle can hold a lot more than the load rating, because that rating takes into account hitting bumps and other stressful forces that take place when driving. This does not mean there is "room to move" when loading up your roof rack, for every extra kg added you could be effectively adding 5-6 kg's of stress onto your vehicle. You should never exceed the manufacturer's roof load ratings.

It is very important to note that the roof load rating includes the weight of the rack. Some of the full-length steel racks I've seen already exceed many vehicles roof loads...without anything on them!

If you know the weight of your roof rack you simply subtract that amount from the roof load rating to get the rack payload figure you're allowed

For example, if the rack weighs 40kg and the roof load rating is 100kg, you can stow up to 60kg on it.

Racks are ideal for light stuff that won't have too much effect on your 4WD's centre of gravity. Swags and tents are bulky rather than heavy and rain and dust won't damage a well packed tent on a roof rack. If your roof rack is carrying a tent, poles, folding camping chairs and table, an unmounted spare tyre, empty jerry cans and a couple of small gas bottles, it's probably full.

## Loading

It's a good idea to streamline your load as best you can. Tapering the load profile from front to rear is beneficial. A wind deflector at the leading edge of the rack could improve the aerodynamics and a hard or soft cover will also aid streamlining as well as offer weather protection.

It's vital that anything in a roof rack is strapped down so that it can't work loose and fall off. Gas bottles are notoriously difficult to strap down. They need to sit in mounting rings or chocks, so they can't wander around on the rack floor. Non stretch ratchet straps are good for clamping down gas bottles. Things like folding chairs and tables are easier to secure if they're stowed inside canvas bags.

It is also very important that the attachment screws are checked for tension as they can work loose when driving over rough or corrugated tracks. Loose screws result in damaged threads at best and a departed roof rack at worst.

If you are considering fitting a roof rack to your 4WD or are about to load up your existing one, think carefully about what you plan to put up there. It might be best if it is the first thing you load and what you can't put up top can go inside.

Enjoy the journey!



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