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*“The good old days!” - Remembering
four wheel drive touring pre-Covid-19!*



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Victoria Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc.

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From the President



Our world is not the same as it used to be. We seem to be coping with more change in recent times. Yet, we are still 4WDers and we know how to be flexible and adaptable and still come away with a smile on our face, a beer in our hand and ready to enjoy another campfire yarn.

Many of us will be receiving the two "jabs" and our certificate and be planning where we can go when the right time arrives. We were reminded at our recent Board meeting that having no plan is planning to fail. That's not where we want to go at Four Wheel Drive Victoria.

The Strategic Plan presented to our association by the Board at our last AGM, is going through its annual review process. Unfortunately, because COVID is impacting everything, our plans have been interrupted but not stopped. So, the review process is not as far advanced as we had hoped. There is however, action taking place, related to our Association's theme of continuous improvement, which we have had for some time now. The Board has considered carefully and decided to engage professional expertise to provide an audit of our HR situation – what we have and what we need going forward. At the same time, we are commencing a review of our Association's policies and procedures, also with the assistance of professional expertise. Your Board is acutely aware that the world's expectations of Boards today are greater now, in the light of Royal Commissions into governance failures. Instances of such failures show the need for governance to be accountable, transparent and effective with no tolerance for excuses. We look forward to keeping you informed of progress on these actions.

You will have noticed in our June Trackwatch the story from our CEO about our FWDV Training Centre at Toolangi. This is a venture which the Board fully supports and desires to see our training centre be of benefit to

all our clubs and all their members.

Please watch and listen as there could be some calls for assistance as development progresses.

It was the Board's pleasure to welcome our new Board member, Gordon Porter to our August Board meeting. Gordon is a member of the Everest 4WD Club of Victoria and thoroughly enjoys a tough 4WD challenge out there on the tracks. Currently in the legal profession after being in the Victoria police, Gordon also brings with him strong relationship building experience with Traditional Owners. Many will be aware that Four Wheel Drive Victoria, on our Mind Map presented at the last AGM, recognises Traditional Owners as one of our Strategic Partners. We now have appropriate expertise at the Board level to support the good work our CEO is doing to build relationships with Traditional Owners. When respect and trust is built Traditional Owners say – "Let's do things together". Our Association is taking positive steps to do things together with Traditional Owners in Victoria.

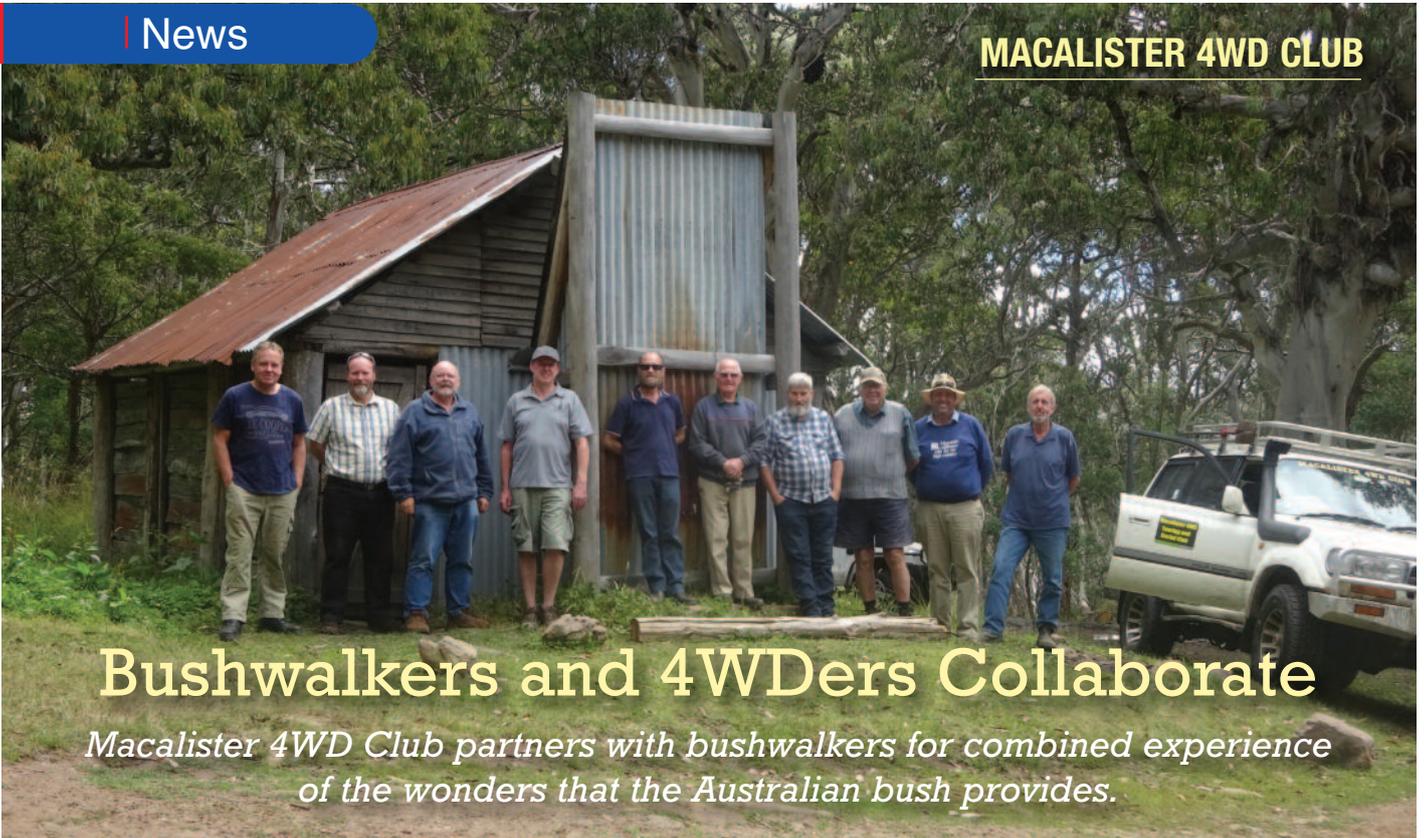
Working with the Ministerially appointed 4WD Advisory Committee is a responsibility and privilege for our Association. This is where discussions with our strategic partners, DELWP and PV take place at government level, for that two-way benefit process to be strategically planned and implemented. Four Wheel Drive Victoria's President and CEO are your representatives on this advisory committee. Four Wheel Drive Victoria is very grateful for the ongoing strategic support from the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Lili D'Ambrosio. It is our intention to continue promoting four wheel driving as a responsible recreation with an active interest in conservation and protection of the environment.

All the best,

Colin Oates
President

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Bushwalkers and 4WDers Collaborate

Macalister 4WD Club partners with bushwalkers for combined experience of the wonders that the Australian bush provides.

The Ben Cruachan Walking Club along with other Gippsland based bushwalking clubs are hosting the Federation Walks Weekend on behalf of Bushwalking Victoria from Friday 12 to Monday 15 November 2021.

The Federation Walks Weekend is an annual event but hosted by different clubs in different parts of Victoria each year. This year's event, postponed from last November because of Covid, is branded FedWalks2021 and is being

held in the Gippsland Foothills and Southern Alps region. 250 bushwalkers from affiliated clubs throughout Victoria will be accommodated at the Licola Wilderness Village (LWV) and from there depart on their choice of bushwalks on Saturday and Sunday mornings. There is a choice of 22 different walks, each lead by experienced walkers, ranging from an easy stroll to a demanding walk over several mountain tops.



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As a departure from tradition FedWalks2021 is introducing overnight walks. One such walk is to introduce beginners to overnight backpacking. What better location than Bryces Gorge. The other two overnight walks allow intrepid walkers to experience special locations not easily experienced on a day walk; Tali Karng and the Wonnangatta Valley.

To allow bushwalkers to experience these gems of the Southern Alps and Foot Hills without the need to carry heavy overnight packs the organising committee asked the Macalister 4WD Club to be part of the experience for these two walks. The Macalister 4WD Club have embraced this request which will involve them bringing camping gear and food supplies for a combined overnight camp and then transporting walkers and gear back to their cars. Each of these walks are Sunday into Monday and limited to 12 walkers but will require 5 or 6 4WD vehicles.

For the Tali Karng walk the bushwalkers, lead by BCWC President, Helmut Tracksdorf, will drive to McFarlane Saddle on Sunday morning and then commence their 19km walk to lake Tali Karng and back up to Millers Hut. In the meantime the Macalister 4WD Club members will collect the walkers camping gear from



the Licola Wilderness Village and proceed to Millers Hut where they will set up camp for the night. The Macalister 4WD Club will provide the means for cooking and the food of their choice for dinner, breakfast and a light lunch for the next day. The walkers and 4WDers will enjoy the camaraderie of a bush camp. Next morning members may wish to explore the area and visit the likes of the Sentinels and Gable End before the walkers take a ride over Mt Wellington to their cars at McFarlane Saddle.

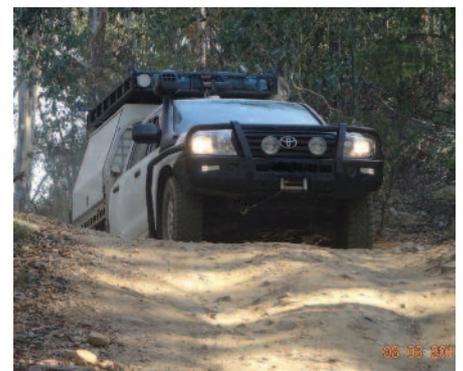
Similarly for the walk into the Wonnangatta Valley walkers will drive to Bryces Gorge car park and commence their 16km walk via Guys Hut and the Dry River. The Macalister 4WD Club members, lead by Club President Russell Dent, will collect the walkers gear from LWV and proceed to the Wonnangatta Valley via the Zeka Spur Track to collect the walkers at the junction of Dry River Track and Wonnangatta Track. The Macalister

4WD Club will select a campsite where they will enjoy a meal and get to know each other. On Monday morning the Macalister 4WD Club members will show the walkers features of the Valley including the homestead site and cemetery before the walkers are driven back to their cars at Bryces Gorge.

Joe van Beek, Convener of the FedWalks2021 Organising Committee stated, "We trust this experience will build an ongoing relationship between Macalister 4WD Club and BCWC and more widely between 4WD enthusiasts and bushwalkers."

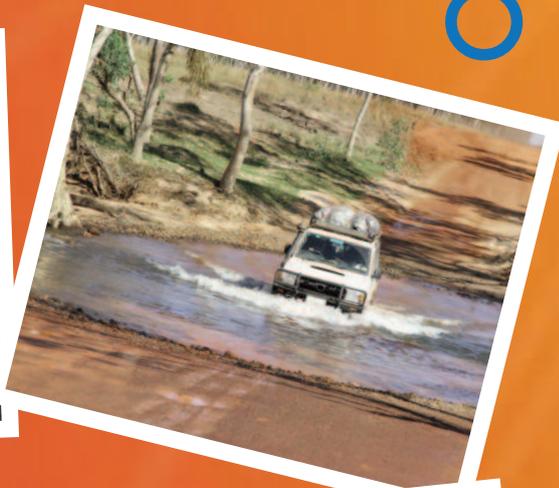
In Preparation for FedWalks2021 Ben Cruachan Walking Club collaborated with Parks Victoria, the Bushwalking Victoria Bushwalking Track and Conservation (BTAC) group and the National Trail Association to clear the track from Guys Hut down to the Dry River. Where BTAC provided volunteers and equipment and the National Trail Association provided pack horses to take gear to a camp site on the Dry River. This was a very successful collaboration with win-win outcomes.

Contributed by Joe van Beek, Convener of the Organising Committee for FedWalks2021



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To all our valued members,

I hope you are all well and coping with these trying times. As we have indicated previously, we the Association, are certainly here for you if you need to talk or ask questions in any way that may help your situation. Please do not hesitate to contact the office if you require help in any way. We are constantly trying to improve our communication with our member base with the website being updated regularly along with our social media platforms also assisting in this regard. It is up to you to let us know whether you can access these mediums as we see that there are still nowhere enough members getting into the members section of our website. Please contact the office to let us help you with any problems you may be having with this endeavour or just send us an email so we can put you on the database. We are also looking to develop a FWDV app for our communication purposes and ask if there is anyone out there in our clubs who has the skills to assist in this challenge, we would love to hear from you.

Due to the Covid19 situation there will be meetings held in the very near future, unfortunately via Zoom, to enable Presidents and/or Delegates to have a chance to ask questions and learn what we are doing in the interests of the Association and you the members. Please look out for these plans and try to become part of the

meeting to help us communicate with you and subsequently we hope, your club members.

The Covid situation has nullified any plans for activities that we would have liked to be doing for some time now, including the volunteering programs such as Camp Host etc. Rest assured as soon as we can get back out there, the call will be given for all sorts of things to be tackled including track clearing and generally assisting the land managers to open the great outdoors that we yearn to be traversing in. We know that presently there are regions such as the Wombat state forest which are closed due to the recent storm activity with trees being down all through the area. The land managers are trying to clear the region at present and are keeping in touch with us as it happens. Obviously, we have offered our assistance and are waiting for a chance to ask our teams to get amongst the effort. We are also very thankful to those volunteers who have contributed their time to assisting storm impacted regions and cleaning up fallen trees in these areas.

Unfortunately we cannot give any more information on the Toolangi Quarry as our attempts to visit the region have been postponed due to the various lockdowns. As soon as we are able we shall head for the hills and get started on all those things we need to do to move forward on this project.



Toolangi Quarry



Strzelecki Track sealing commenced



Another Outback icon is about to change forever, with the sealing of the first 50 kilometres of the famed Strzelecki Track in South Australia.

The trek many four wheelers have made to Innamincka, Coogie Lakes and onwards to Birdsville and beyond along the dusty dirt track is about to become considerably easier, and likely to entice many less prepared travellers as the bitumen reaches into the Outback.

Stage 1 of the project, immediately north of Lyndhurst, has been allocated \$10 million by the SA government, with another \$125 million coming from the Federal government for Stage 2.

All 472 kilometres of the track will eventually be sealed. With the first 50 kilometres of sealed nearing completion, pre construction activities for the next two sections, a 10km section south of Innamincke and a 93km section south of Moomba to the Strzelecki Creek crossing are now under way.

In total 74 kilometres of sealed road is now open to traffic along the iconic track.





Overland Expeditions Mt Skene Snow Adventure



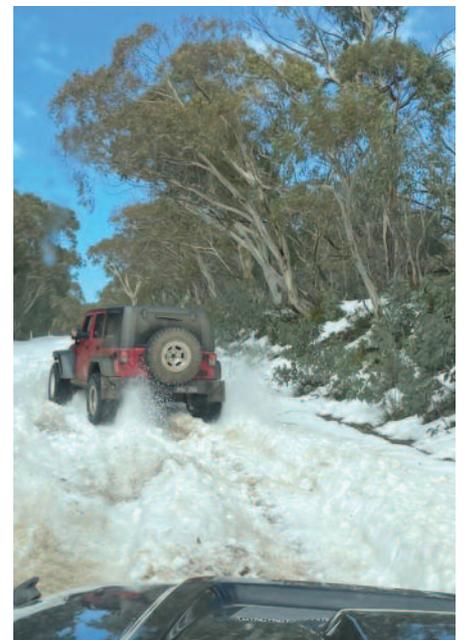
As winter rolls around each year most hardened Victorian 4WD enthusiasts will seek out snow driving adventures with Mt Skene being a popular choice.

Our group is no exception with all members of the Overland Expeditions Club eagerly anticipating the 2021 trip, however, like everything in these Covid times, planning ahead was the definition of optimism. As we approached our chosen departure date, Victoria was in lockdown and like many people trying to plan any recreational activity, we stayed hopeful that our plans could be realized and fortunately not more than 4 days before the trip, lockdown was lifted and the trip was on.

Our group of 10 cars headed off on a

sunny Friday morning with our base being the township of Jamieson. 8 Jeeps, 1 Amarak and 1 Ford Ranger made the trip and arrived in Jamieson after lunch. We promptly set up camp and checked in to accommodation at the Black Sparrow Resort with our group spread between camping and rooms to comply with Covid restrictions whilst still wanting to support the fantastic local businesses in the town.

Friday afternoon and evening was spent preparing an outdoor feast by the open fire with a few drinks and plenty of plans about the day ahead tackling the Mt Skene tracks. The last to bed probably regretted enjoying the night too much as we were up and on the road early to grab a quick coffee from the Jamieson General Store and take advantage of big





U turns to get the cars safely headed downhill before we set up for a mountain view lunch. Whilst not the long day of driving we had experienced in the past, we had an enjoyable 2 hour lunch with plenty of videos and selfies being taken before heading carefully back down the track to Jamieson. It isn't always about the mud or mega hill climbs, sometimes a day to get out there in the bush with friends is equally as satisfying.

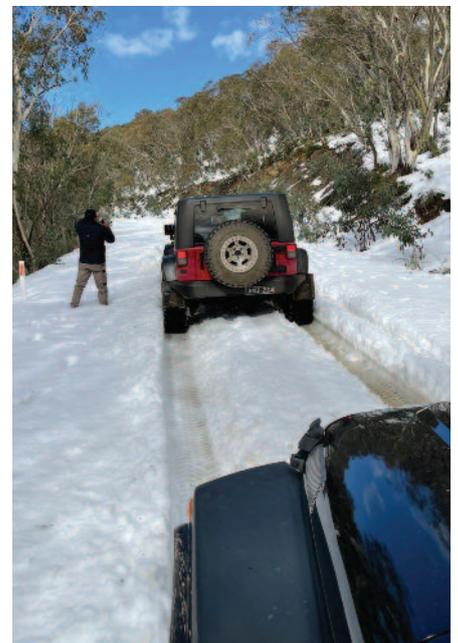
We made dinner just in time at the Jamieson Brewery where we were treated to beautiful meals, an open fire and warming drinks to talk about the challenges and stories from the day.

The group retired to the campfire again with music and dancing around the fire until late at night.

A few blurry eyes and a sore head or

two headed straight for coffee again on Sunday morning before we checked out and made our way back through Mansfield before heading home to Melbourne enjoying a rare weekend away in the beautiful Victorian High Country with the discussions already beginning for the 2022 Mt Skene trip.

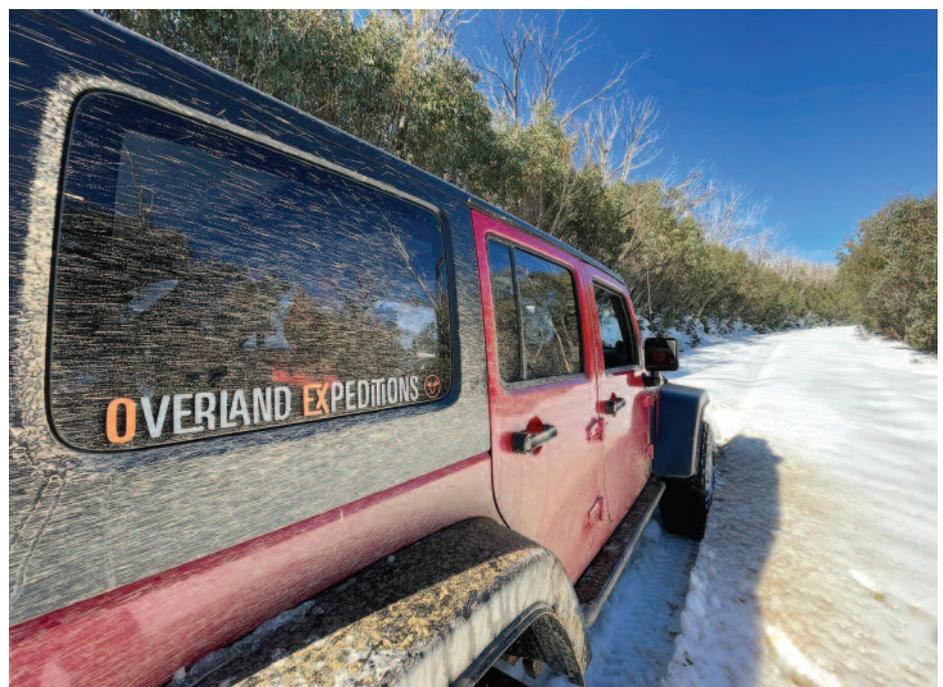
Angela Shergill
Overland Expeditions



snowfalls earlier in the week, and clear skies for a magic day of driving and scenery.

We reached Mt Skene via Jamieson-Licola Rd and began the approach onto the mountain tracks with the snow level similar to previous years but noticeably deeper snow than we had encountered in past trips.

2 hours into the drive we came across 2 clubs who had turned around and were heading back down the track. We stopped to talk and they shared how challenging the track was given the volume of snow they encountered. We thanked them for the information and we all proceeded to carefully maneuver around 20 cars to ensure the other clubs could pass by and we could continue on as far as we could beginning a delicate process of doing





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Mt Skene snow trip

FROM THE VAFWDC ARCHIVES: MAY 1986

As reported in Trackwatch, May 1986.

Alpine Park Planning Begins

Planning for an Alpine Park has commenced, with opportunities available for four-wheel drivers to contribute their ideas. Four wheel drive access will continue in the Alps according to Conservation, Forests and Lands Planning Officer, Ray Borschann. Mr Borschmann, a member of the Conservation, Forests and Lands Alpine Planning Group recently addressed the VAFWDC. Key aspects of the Planning for the management of the Alps will be public liaison and comment, and adherence to the final recommendations of the Land Conservation Council for the Alpine Area. Under the 1983 Land Conservation Council recommendations: "Because

of its network of roads, the Region has particular value for recreation. The Council considers that the park system should continue to contain a series of linked roads, mainly of four-wheel drive standard, available for use by licensed vehicles in order that extended touring throughout the area is possible. However, as well as this system of linked roads, other subsidiary tracks should be maintained for community use. ..."dispersed camping occurs throughout the area in association with many outdoor recreational activities. The Council considers that large areas should remain available for dispersed or bush camping within the park system. That is, in these areas users should be allowed to camp where they choose rather than be restricted to camping sites delineated by the managing authority".

VAFWDC Future Strategy

Following many hours work the Association Executive have accepted a blueprint for the next few years for the Association. A marketing strategy has been prepared by the President which aims to set the future direction of the Association over the next few years. The Marketing Strategy is accompanied by an Implementation plan. The plan identifies specific aims and objectives, target audiences and strategies to achieve specific results. The Plan will set the Association on a guided course which can be monitored against performance. Following acceptance of the implementation plan, the Executive is now preparing a series of Action Plans addressing the needs as defined by the plan.



Sandhurst 4WD Club

Nug Nug to Buckland Valley



Once again, our “not the official snow trip” had more snow than any trip we have organised. We are calling this trip a “Winter Wonderland” as we had snow down as low as 800m.

We had 2 convoys of 6 vehicles on this trip and members got to enjoy the snow covered tracks up through the Buckland Valley State Forest. We headed up on the Friday night with Paul and Fiona getting into Nug Nug Camping Reserve in the afternoon, finding a campsite for all of us. Thanks to Shannon for supplying the firewood and lighting the fire so when the rest of us got up there, we were welcomed to a warm fire.

Most of the group arrived about 9.30pm. We had rain all the way up and Paul and Fiona told us that they’d had fairly heavy rain as well. We made sure that we filled up with Alpine diesel in Myrtleford before getting to camp. We set up camp and stood around the fire for a bit and then the rain really started to come down, so we all headed for bed. It rained all night.

Saturday

Waking up to a wet morning I looked up to the near mountains to see if we had snow on those hills, but none was to be seen. We all had breakfast and packed up camp and then had a quick briefing on the day’s events and

what tracks we were taking and their possible conditions.

We headed out of Nug Nug Camping Reserve and went left along Buffalo River Road and over the Lake Buffalo dam wall. Then at Dandongadale we kept on going straight on the





Abbeyard Road. After about 5kms we aired down, shifted into low range, and headed up Dandongadale-Buffalo Divide. The first bit of the track was actually quite slippery and steep, and the track kept on climbing until we got to the top of the Spur.



We reached heights of 1050m hoping for snow, but were disappointed. This track goes for about 20kms and by the time we made it to the end we stopped for a break for about 20mins and it just started to snow a little, with flakes of snow floating through the tree tops.

It was getting colder, so we jumped back in the vehicles and started to head along Abbeyard Lake Cobbler Track. Then the fun started and thank goodness we were going downhill and not climbing this track as it turned into a rutted slippery red clay bit of fun. You just had to let the ruts do the talking and go for that free ride, going down in 1st Low Range with the rear diff lock in just to try and keep your vehicle in some sort of a straight line. At the bottom we pulled up at Mclver picnic area and waited for everyone to get down as it took a while to get

our convoys safely down that section of track.

It was just after 12.00pm and we kept on going back onto Abbeyard Road and back into 2wd. We drove through the valley of Abbeyard which is private property, but you can access it via cattle grids. Then we turned left onto East Buffalo Road, veering to the left again onto West Humphrey Track. When we reached the Canyon Road around 1.00pm, we stopped for lunch for about 30mins, and it started to snow very lightly again.

Canyon Road is the last little section of track up to Mt Selwyn, and it has a couple of steep sections which were rocky with plenty of traction. As we got a little bit higher (about 800m) it started to look like a Winter Wonderland with just enough snow to change the landscape by decorating





the leaves on the trees and covering the bracken and ferns with this white dusting.

As we drove along the phones were out taking lots of photos and videos. We reached the top and turned right onto Mt Selwyn Road at an elevation of 1225m. We then got up to near 1424m and found the gate was closed to the summit of Mt Selwyn. Travelling along Mt Selwyn Road we had a bit of snow and I set the drone up and filmed the convoy travelling along.

We made it to Tea Tree Track and made a sharp left. The track had a slight covering of snow. By the time we'd dropped down to an elevation of 1120m the snow had started to disappear. It's all downhill from there, so we shifted back into 2wd and followed Selwyn Creek Road into the Buckland Valley. We pulled into Beveridges Station and found a great campsite straight away. It was very quiet in there with only a few other campers. I went and cut wood for the fire while everyone picked a spot and set up camp. We lit and built the fire right up to keep us warm as we had showers coming through. We realised the rain meant one thing. If it's raining down here it's snowing up there in those hills. We kept warm all evening by the fire having a few drinks.

Sunday

I woke early around 6.30am and got the fire going again, as there was a fair bit of wood left from the night before. I got the fire roaring so that when people woke they could warm up at the fire. We had breakfast and packed up camp, and as the sun started to come up over those mountains and through the valley, you could see the snow just sitting on top of the trees. It must have snowed down as low as 700m that night. When everyone saw this we were very excited, so we had a quick briefing and left camp before 9.00am.

We headed down through Beveridges Station towards Pheasant Creek

Track. When we got to the river crossing we found it wasn't too deep at all, but was probably flowing a bit harder than usual. We crossed the creek and then started the climb up Pheasant Creek Track. The track is not too steep, but it is a nice climb. I could start to see snow on the mountains ahead up on the left towards Demon Ridge, and was thinking "why haven't we got the snow yet" as we looked to be at the same level. Then, just below 800m according to Hema maps, it was there. Pheasant Creek Track turned into a Winter Wonderland, and a very pleasant drive with snow falling out of the trees and landing on our windscreens.



At the end of Pheasant Creek Track there is a very steep climb and as it was covered in snow and ice, I thought we might have a bit of trouble. With a bit of momentum though, we all made it easily. At the top we turned right onto Gunns Track, and this was where the snow started to get thicker.

Driving on fresh untouched snow does become exciting as you don't know exactly where the track is. Going on memory and Hema maps we made it through. It was lucky going over the Helipad sections I knew the track went around to the right and headed towards Mt Buckland as you couldn't see the track at all.

The section just before Mt Buckland has a steep descent then a very steep ascent, and as I started to go downhill the Toyota started to slide sideways off the track so I managed to pull up and stop, and I thought this could be a bad idea taking both convoys down through here. I tried to reverse up and the rear diff lock disengaged, and I kept on slipping sideways in the snow, so I called up Andrew to get the winch out and he had to winch me back up the hill. We had to use a snatch block off a tree and winch on a 45 degree angle a couple of times to stop me getting closer to that edge. After about 20mins I was back up and we turned around and headed back to the Helipad where we had a quick break before heading off towards Harrierville.

We went back along Gunns Track and then turned right onto Paddys Track. Still driving through untouched snow for 2kms we turned right onto Gunns Track again and headed down into the valley. The snow started to fade out as we got lower down, but then



we started to climb, and the snow started to look amazing again. As we got up to West Ovens Track (the turn off to Harrierville) it was only 11.30am so I asked everyone if they wanted to do a few more tracks as it was so early. I got a yes from everyone, so we turned left up Albion Track.

As we reached 1240m at Albion Point the snow was really thick again and made the drive fantastic. We drove through untouched snow for the next 6kms and then got onto Wet Gully Track where we had a lunch break. It was pretty cold so some of us ate our hot pies straight out of the ovens and then we were all back into the warm vehicles and off again along Wet Gully Track. This track can usually be done in 2wd but add snow and ice it turned into a Low Range rear diff lock fun track. Mt Ebenezer is at 1192m and does have sharp turns which were covered in snow, so I was trying to navigate the track and get us through. After this section, the track heads straight down, and once again

as we started to get lower and lower, the snow petered out.

We turned left down Hillsborough Track towards Wandiligong, which is a very pleasant drive winding its way down through the ferns growing up on the side of the hills. We went through the two river crossings and then stopped and aired up. We finished the trip and I thanked everyone for a great weekend, and we all made our own way home via Wandiligong and Bright.

Participants

Russell.	105 LandCruiser
Andrew.	Triton
Paul and Fiona.	80 LandCruiser
Brett C.	Hilux
Allan.	Triton
Frank and Grace.	Nissan Patrol
Shannon and Tom.	76 LandCruiser
Ben and Kim.	Colorado
Phil.	BT 50
Jake.	Prado
Glen.	Nissan Patrol
Zac and Sarah.	Ranger





The Good Old Days? *Perhaps not!*

Greg Rose remembers the Golden Age of four wheel driving... the “Good old days!”

When I was quite young, in the 1950s, my father joined the Commonwealth Peace Officer Guards, that became the Commonwealth Police and is now the Australian Federal Police. We were in Bendigo where there were some government facilities and my father used to patrol in a Series I Land Rover. As a small boy I was fascinated by the vehicle and its multiple levers sticking up from the floor. Time went by and I ended up living in Maffra in Central Gippsland. I had the opportunity to buy a rather tired Series III short wheelbase Land Rover. I had owned a short wheelbase Land Cruiser earlier but sold it when I moved to Melbourne for a short time. The Land Rover opened up all the travel opportunities the central Gippsland foothills and southern fall of the alps had to offer .

The first day I had the vehicle, driving it home after purchase, revealed some significant issues. Driving across



the bridge at Rosedale was unnerving as the steering was so terrible that keeping on my side of the road was difficult. The rear differential howled, the engine misfired and everything seemed to rattle or squeak. Many hours, days, weeks, were spent in the workshop at Central Four Wheel Drives in Maffra, owned by my friend Mal Trull. We just about rebuilt the tired Land Rover and completed the task by repainting it.

What followed the rebuild was a fantastic period of exploring everything to our north. Every weekend we would head bush in our two Land Rovers, mine with Holden 186 power and Mal's with a Valiant engine. Occasionally we would be joined by other locals with Land Rovers in varying degrees of unreliability.

Our adventures were in the late seventies. The hills and mountains were very different back then. There were no seasonal closures, the Alpine National Park did not exist and



there were very few other four wheel drive users venturing onto the tracks. As there were no seasonal closures, we often ventured above the snow line and got into all sorts of difficulty on freezing winter days. I recall one occasion when we had been cross country skiing at Connors Plain north of

resorting to winching with either a Dawn hand winch on one vehicle and a Tirfor carried in the other. The always terrifying HiLift jack was used reluctantly as were ladder pattern snow chains.

Licola and one of the Land Rovers had a front axle issue. We all piled in one vehicle, drove home, picked up spares and welding equipment, drove back in the dark and did the major repair on the side of the road. We made it back with both vehicles in time to go to work, a long night. It seemed at one very eventful period that we would go exploring on the weekends, spend every weeknight in the workshop repairing one or sometimes both, of the vehicles, and then go and do it all again the next weekend. You may think the mechanical issues were due to our rough driving, in fact we were very careful with our Land Rovers, they were just older vehicles that were prone to mechanical issues.



The short wheelbase was fitted with a flip top camper, a tent that unfolded as the whole roof was tilted over the bonnet. That proved to be almost more trouble than it was worth, and I sold the shorty and bought an ex mining company Land Rover Series III long wheelbase hardtop. The vehicle had a four cylinder engine that was massively underpowered. At first, we turbo charged the little petrol engine.

Tracks and roads were managed differently in those days. They were almost never closed due to flood damage, fire, deep snow or bad erosion. We just carried on, often

Although we had more power the fuel consumption was horrendous, about 6 miles per gallon in the bush, even with a Fairey overdrive fitted.

A V8 engine from a crashed Range Rover was purchased and fitted into the vehicle. That was quite a good conversion except in the summer when, even with electric fans fitted, it was inclined to overheat. Tracks like Collingwood Spur or Billy Goat Bluff had to be driven in stages with little "cool down" stops.



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Our explorations continued and we built up some very good knowledge of the tracks in the area. We visited old gold mining sites, pushed through overgrown logging tracks and camped at places like Talbotville with no other people about for days at a time. Our vehicles, miraculously, started to give less trouble. Perhaps we had replaced everything that could fail.

And now to the present day. Someone asked me at the last Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland meeting if I missed the old Land Rovers and the days before seasonal closures and tighter land management. They even suggested that, "those old Land Rovers were great machines". Well, the truth is that they were not. No vehicle of that era can match the on road manners and off road capability of almost any modern four wheel drive. With open differentials, no power steering, temperamental gearboxes and fairly stiff suspension, they were quite difficult to drive. Perhaps all four wheel drivers should have experience in the old school vehicles as it did teach us to think more about taking the correct line on tracks. As for the seasonal closures. With the number of four wheel drive vehicles that are on the road now, the pressure and damage on fragile tracks would be enormous if there were not closures to protect them.



As a testament to the reliability of modern vehicles, my original Whitworth (BSW) spanners and sockets are quite worn and my metric ones are hardly used. The good old days? Perhaps not!

Greg Rose.

FWDV Regional Representative, Southern Alpine National Park.

Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland.

Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria.





Sandhurst 4WD Club

Covering the country, a section at a time



Sandhurst 4wd club has hit the tracks at least once a month this year making up for the trips that were missed out on last year. January and February we traversed the Victorian High Country. March saw us travelling over the border to return to the Beachport area in South Australia to tackle the beach sand. Then in April the club travelled through yet another section of the High Country and finished down at Lake Tyers near Lakes Entrance.

Some club members waited in anticipation to try beach driving for the first time, while other members couldn't wait to get back and do it all again. The day (Friday 5th March)

finally rolled around, and we all made our way across to Beachport Caravan Park. We all rocked up at different times and got our camps set up. Not much else occurred this night as it was windy and most headed off to bed early.

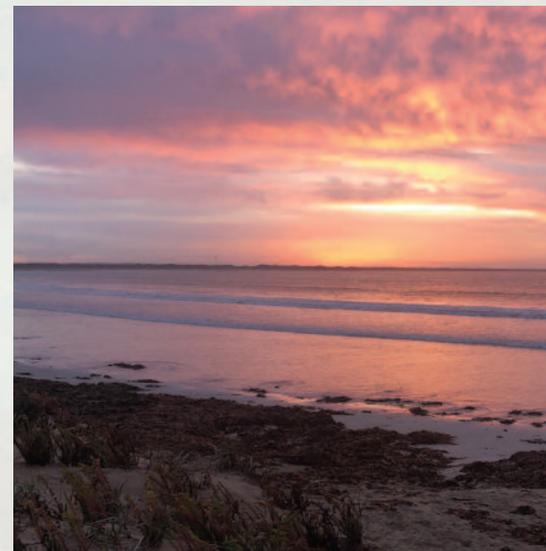
In the morning we all met up and by 9am we departed the caravan park and headed along Bowman Scenic drive to the end car park where we aired down and then hit the sand. We travelled along multiple sand tracks, some near the beach and some inland tracks to avoid obstacles, soft sand or the tide.

These tracks took us from Beachport to Robe via Nora Creina.

The afternoon saw us arriving at Robe where we all aired up and made our own way back to Beachport. The wind was pretty bad again, so this resulted in another quiet night at camp.

Sunday morning some nerves were about the group as today we were traveling from Beachport to Carpenter Rocks via Southend and as we have seen on previous trips, we knew there would be some extremely soft sand.

We once again departed camp at 9am and within seconds of leaving the caravan park we were turning right onto the sand. The drive from camp to Southend was a dream drive as the tide was out. On arrival at Southport we had morning smoko.





We then headed into Canunda National Park, where we traversed through checking out the rugged coastline and then made our way back out onto the beach for some more sand driving.

We saw an exit to Carpenter Rocks, so we took this as the sand was starting to get soft. This exit brought us out at Geltwood beach camp area. We travelled in 2wd for a little while and then got back onto another inland track where we shifted back into 4wd and headed to Little Rock where we enjoyed the ocean views and some lunch.

After lunch we decided to head up the beach further, but this resulted in

multiple boggings with some not even getting a hundred metres from their lunch spot. An hour and half later all vehicles were safely recovered, and we headed back inland to Lake Bonney and then on to Carpenter Rocks where we aired up and headed back to camp.

That night around camp the wind had eased slightly but there were showers of rain which resulted in some turning in early once again while a small group of us gathered under Andrew's awning and enjoyed some well-earned drinks.

On Monday we packed up camp and made our own journeys back home.

Easter saw another club trip called 'Bush to Beach' organised. It was split up into two parts. The first part over Easter was from Corryong to Omeo via bush tracks, and part two was Omeo to Lake Tyers again via bush tracks. 2 convoys of 8 four-wheel drives participated in part 1 and 6 four-wheel drives enjoyed part 2.

Thursday before Good Friday saw members depart Bendigo and head to Nariel creek campground. Good Friday saw the convoy heading along bush tracks to Mt Pinnibar, then onto Mt Anderson where camp was made watching the awesome sunset. Saturday the 3rd another high peak was tackled, this being Mt Gibbo (1750m).



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We then travelled along multiple tracks, some in Low Range, to reach the next campsite at the Poplars on the Murray river.

The next day (Sunday) saw us on the tracks by 9am heading along the Limestone track then traverse the tracks to end up at Taylor's crossing, stopping in to check out Kennedy's hut. Leaving here we took on JP track which has three steep sections, and some winching was required along this track. Everyone got through safely and arrived at Wombat Post Office hut and set up camp.

In the early hours of Monday morning some members woke to a medical emergency and had to take a member to Omeo hospital (1 hour 15min drive) for medical treatment (The member was then transferred to Bairnsdale, and all was good). The two members that transported the member to hospital returned to camp and rested up, and by 9:30am everyone was ready to hit the tracks. Later on near Kelly's track we aired up then drove into Omeo where 11 vehicles headed for home.

Andrew met us here taking the convoy up to 6 vehicles to do part 2 of the trip. After a pub meal and restocking, we went to Washington winch, then on to Moscow Villa. After taking a good look around, we continued on to Bentley plain hut where we found a nice camp for the night and headed off to bed early after a big day.

The sun rose on another beautiful day (Tuesday 6th) and saw us hitting the tracks by 9am. We made our way on mostly 2 wheel drive tracks to Mt Stewart, stopping there for a break. McKillop's Bridge was our next point of interest, and we stopped there for lunch and Russell took the opportunity to get some drone footage of the convoy. From here we tackled the Deddick trail, stopping at the campsite that is situated half way along the track on Mountain creek.

Wednesday saw us waking to a bit of dampness from the night before. After packing up and a morning briefing, we continued along the Deddick trail. We were supposed to be



greeted by a steep track with rock steps, but it had been completely graded and didn't present a challenge at all. We pushed on to Jackson's Crossing on the Snowy River and found a nice spot there for lunch. Noticing a few tracks on the map, we headed down an overgrown track following the river. As we came to the end of the track it dropped onto the most amazing campsite with a

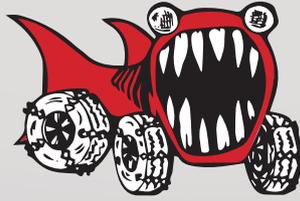
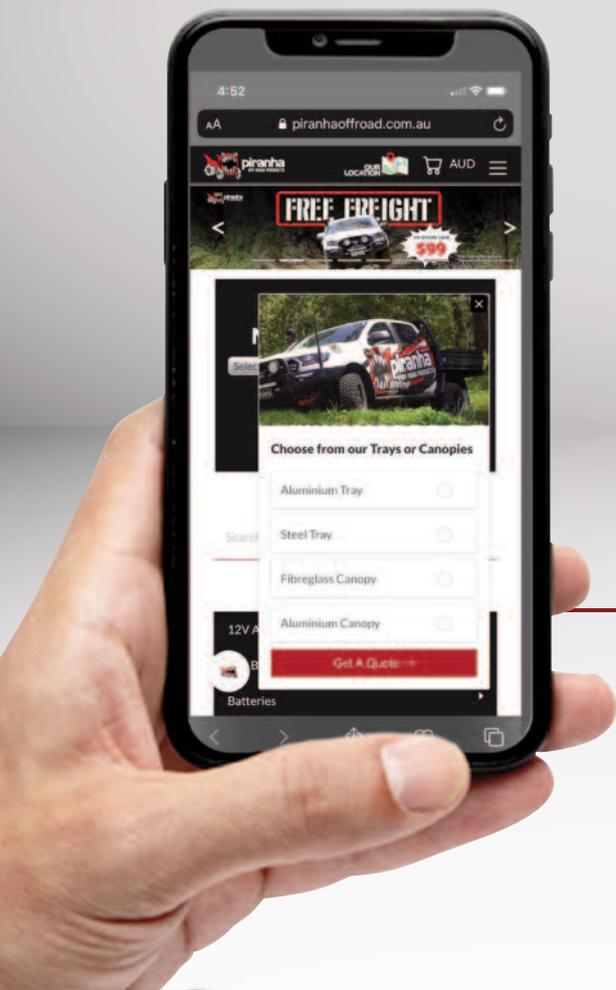
sandbar about 100m long, right on the Snowy river. We actually couldn't believe what we were looking at and Russell said, "well this will be camp for the next 2 days". We collected firewood and set up camp and relaxed.

Thursday a well-earned sleep in was had and we all enjoyed a full day relaxing around camp.

Friday, the last day of the trip, saw us up early and we packed up and left camp by 8:15am. We drove out of camp and headed back along the overgrown track to Jackson Crossing where we found the river was flowing way too fast and deep, so we gave the crossing a miss and just headed back up Varney's track, through the water crossing and up to Yalmy Road where we shifted back into 2wd. We got to Jarrahmond road and aired up, then made our way into Orbost and then on to The Glasshouse campground at Lake Tyers, where we pulled up and went for a walk down to the waterfront. We officially ended the Bush to Beach trip at Lake Tyers and everyone headed home.

Russell Thorsen and Fiona Hendry





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The Chevrolet Blitz truck was a popular 4x4 post-war in Australia



Four Wheel Drive is older than we think

One of the positives to come out of the Second World War, was the innovation and adaptation of commercial vehicles to a military purpose by Australia and our Allies.

1945 Chevy Blitz

Prior to WWII Australia possessed few military vehicles, with most adapted from existing Ford and General Motors (Chevrolet, Bedford, GMC) models, while others originated in Britain.

During the war our armed forces used a large variety of vehicles - some part Chevrolet manufactured, others built on imported chassis, while others were actually 'lend leased'

from the USA.

After 1945 many of the vehicles remained in Australia, many for service use, while many others entered civilian service. Even today you will find many examples preserved in military museums and private collections.

Chevrolet Blitz - Australia

One of the most popular and plentiful trucks was the Chevrolet Blitz, or Ford Blitz, a multi-purpose infantry

truck that originated in Canada. These were an unusual looking truck that were built to British standards, with a blunt snub nose in order to fit more on each ship.

The Blitz was built by both Chevrolet and Ford and were crucial troop movers in the Philippines, the Russian Front, the invasion of Italy and Germany, in Burma and Australia. Rugged and dependable, many were auctioned off after the War and

found new roles in forestry, farming and all manner of agricultural and construction roles. One was even driven by the legendary Tom Cruise on his outback mail run from Oodnadatta to Birdsville.

The Blitz was officially the Chevrolet CMP C15, a 15-cwt 4x2 truck, powered by a 216ci 6-cylinder overhead valve liquid cooled petrol engine. Maximum output was 63.4kW (85bhp) at 3400 rpm. In standard form it was rear-wheel drive, via a 4-speed gearbox. It had leaf suspension and hydraulic brakes. A 101-inch wheelbase and overall dimensions of 170x85x95-inches and an approximate weight of 7,300 lbs. Tyre size was 9.00-16.

During WWII General Motors-Holden imported large numbers of chassis and other components from Canada for local assembly. Cabs were made in Australia and while resembling the Canadian Pattern, had a few distinguishing features. These included differently shaped vent doors in the sides of the scuttle, and initially canvas tops over steel frames were used. There were numerous body configurations, most locally designed and manufactured. The Chevrolet C15A was a four-wheel drive version, with single speed transfer box with front axle disconnect. 6.5:1 axle gear ratio, rigid axles, semi-elliptic leaf springs, 6-volt electrics and 25 gallon fuel capacity.

Chevrolet Blitz - Canadian

The Second World War put Canada on the map as a major supplier of military vehicles of many types. Up until September 1, 1945, no fewer than 857,970 vehicles were produced, including



4x2 commercial, 4x4, 4x6, 6x4, armoured vehicles wheeled and tracked and some 19,000 trailers. All of these vehicles were supplied to the Canadian armed services and the allies.

Australia was one of the main customers, with many vehicles shipped in CKD (knocked down form) for local assembly and part manufacture, along with the fitting of indigenous bodywork. The Canadians themselves used vehicles from other countries, including Jeeps and Diamond Ts from the USA, and Bedfords and Leylands from Britain. The CMP (Canadian Military Pattern) truck was built to British Army specifications, generally with North American automotive engineering. The program of Canadian CMP production of military vehicles commenced in 1937 when Ford Motor Company and General Motors of Canada were each invited by the Canadian Department of National

Defence to produce a localised prototype of a 15-hundredweight light infantry truck that had been adopted by the British War Office. These trucks were initially designated DND

(Department of National Defence Pattern), but when it was decided that the vehicles would be used widely in other countries, the class of trucks was redesignated CMP (Canadian Military Pattern).

Most CMP trucks were manufactured by the Chevrolet division of General Motors and also by the Ford Motor Company of Canada. There was a degree of inter-company collaboration, which included the use of interchangeable parts as both companies ramped up production.

A number of CMP trucks were assembled from Canadian made chassis and parts in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, India and Egypt. The British insisted that the CMP trucks had right-hand drive. More than 400,000 CMP trucks were built in Canada. The Chevrolet built CMP Blitz had a 215ci (3.5-litre), straight six overhead valve engine, while the Ford built CMP trucks had a 239ci (3.9-litre), 71kW V8 engine. Both the brands trucks shared a standard cab design, which evolved over time, with main differences being the evolution of a two part radiator, and a two flat pane windscreen angled slightly downward to minimise sun glare.

All of the CMP cab designs had a short pug nose profile, specified by the British for more efficient transport by ship. Panels were flat with hard edges, and the cabin was relatively cramped to accommodate the larger American engines.

Today you don't have to travel far to still find a 'Blitz' at work in Australia with numerous still on the job, and in private collectors hands.

Brian Tanner



Citywest 4x4 Club

KARA KARA NATIONAL PARK



We were scheduled to meet at Windfarm Viewing area just past Waubra at 9am.

There were 4 vehicles, doing the trip today, and we had all arrived in good time. As this was my first gig as Trip Leader I was followed by Lloyd & Linda (mentor) then Larry & Monica with Karl & Yvette bringing up the rear as TEC for the day.

After a bit of a chat and a brief pre trip discussion, vehicle check etc. we headed off towards Avoca where we were stopping to top up on caffeine, eats, and fuel as required. After commenting that no rain was forecast for the day, we then drove through light rain in the run up to our morning tea stop. Did not see any for the rest of the day after this.

Hitting the road again heading up the Sunraysia Highway, we drove to Redbank where we had a brief stop to air down prior to heading into the bush.

A short distance out of town, we turned left up Dead Mans track and headed up into the hills. The plan was to meet up with Centre Road heading north, but this did not quite happen so the scenic route seemed a better option and still ended up where we wanted to.

Wildlife was spotted at various times being combination of wallabies, kangaroos and wild goats and much birdlife.

We encountered a tree across the track on Centre Road and whilst driving around it was an option, we decided it was our civic duty to clear the track, and besides we needed wood for that night's fire! Chainsaw at the ready this job was done pretty quickly and Larry's ute proved more than alright for storing the wood. We all commented after on the amount of fuel lying in the bush and the deadly

impact this would have should a fire get going in this National Park. We continued up Centre Road where some nice scenery was there for all to see.

Stopped at West of England Fire Tower for lunch and were quite impressed with the views. Some pictures were taken and then we were on the road again to explore Lookout Track a hut further North up Centre Road.

Long story short, we could not find a track on the map to correspond and with the maps (my story and I'm sticking to it!) and after a short detour got back on Centre Road and continued on this time heading South.

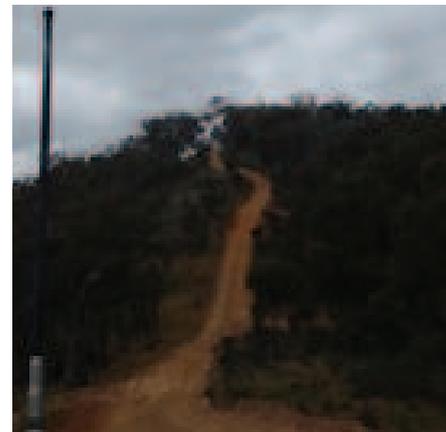
We then linked up with Teddington Road and drove past the Teddington

Picnic Camping area (where most of the group would be camping for the night). The stopped briefly to look inside Teddington Hut before continuing on and turning down Mt Desperation Road then on to Blue Gum track and then back to the Teddington Picnic Area.

Preparations were then in force to set up camp. The night's firewood was placed around the campfire area. Once everyone was setup for the night a good feed was had by all and much discussion around what became a very good campfire.

Being Trip Leader meant we had no dust to deal with, which was great. Many thanks to Ann for navigating well for the day, and Lloyd & Linda for mentoring me very well and Karl & Yvette (TED), Larry & Monica for being part of the day. Look forward to the next trip.

John & Ann





Easter Trip 2021

Garry: GU Nissan Patrol
The Worland's: Land Cruiser Prado
John: GU Nissan Patrol
Glen: GU Nissan Patrol

Peter: GU Nissan Patrol
Anthony: Mitsubishi Triton
Ingo: Mitsubishi Triton

Easter, 4 days to get out, enjoy the high country, and do one big loop around through Wonnangatta, Crooked River and up Billy Goat Bluff Track.

We met up with everyone in Mansfield at 10am for last minute fuel up and coffee stop. We were very fortunate the weather was nice and sunny and expected to be for most of Easter.

With Garry as our leader, Anthony, Peter, Ken, Katelyn, Jarred, Ingo, John and Glen following, we headed to Mt Buller. Once up the top it was time to air down and we pushed on to the start of Clear Hills track. As we started on the track there were a lot of four wheel drives doing the same thing as us, so we knew it was going to be a busy weekend.

About 30 minutes after starting on the climb up somebody in our convoy said they could smell burning rubber. We stopped and inspected all vehicles and discovered that Ken had put a rock through the side wall of his tyre and it needed to be changed. As there were cars coming down the track as well, it wasn't long before there was a bit of grid lock going on. We quickly changed the tyre and the views from on top of the mountain were really special as it was so clear. We went on to the turnoff so we could go

down Monument Track and on to Bindaree Hut for some lunch.

After lunch it was up 16-mile Jeep Track to Bluff Hut. We aimed to stay at Lovicks Hut for the night if the weather was good, but it was so busy that we found a spot amongst the snow gums complete with spectacular views of Mt Buller lights and a feeling of being on top of the world. The evening was calm and warm, and all of us slept soundly. Next morning, we headed off along Bluff Track to have a look at Lovicks Hut and take some pictures.

King Billy Track was the next track. This is always a great drive and we met a lot of people coming our way with the same thought. Great views all along the track. When we hit the Howitt's High Plains road, we made a beeline to Howitt's Hut and had morning tea and a look around.

Next stop was Wonangatta and try to find a good camp for the night. As we worked our way down Zeka Spur Track and into Wonangatta Vally it was a surprise that it wasn't busier than it was. We managed to get a camp spot on the river. Seeing we had the afternoon free some of us decided to look around the area. Friends of Wonangatta were doing an info tour of the cemetery and surrounding area. It was a case of bring yourself and a torch, and be ready for an 8.00pm start. FOW covered a brief history during the evening tour, which was quite informative. In the morning it was quite cold and tents and swags were damp until the sun came up to dry everything out. We all packed up and on our way again. After crossing the river we stopped at the FOW tent, thanked them and had a look at the membabilia and purchased some FOW stubby holders. As some of us hadn't done the lower river track before, it was the best choice to head to Humferay River Track. It was wet and rutted out and pretty rough in spots, as a bloke with a camper trailer with a broken axle found out. The climb up Wombat Spur Track was ahead of us and lots of dust as well. The weather had turned it on again for some epic views and photos along Cynthia Range. At this stage it was getting pretty warm, and we found a spot on the river at Eaglevale. Camp was set up and we had a look around at the tressle bridge and the river. After lunch found us all having early drinks and nibblys. Some of our members later in the afternoon even managed a quiet nap.

Next morning we all packed up early as we were keen to head off and start Billy Goat Bluff Track, and hopefully not come across too many 4x4s ahead of us, or coming down. On the climb up through the clouds we realised how many people had used the track lately, as it was nearly all rock and rough on the second half. When we got to the top, there was a thick blanket of cloud we had come out of and the surrounding valleys were full of cloud or mist. It felt like we were driving through the rooftop to the top of the world. We didn't think we would have any view at all as the morning was so foggy. Sun out, and us above the clouds it was like being in a plane. Next stop was the Pinnacles for a walk up to the fire tower, pictures taken and phone calls made whilst we had the opportunity. Soon we were on our way down to Horseyard Flat for lunch before heading home. Thank you to all that came and drove some good tracks, got a lot of photos and took in some spectacular views. It was good to get out as a club, with a good turnout.

Thanks

Garry and Anthony.

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BAIRNSDALE 4WD CLUB Victoria's Deserts Trip

On the 30th of April, members of the Bairnsdale 4WD Club left for a trip to Victoria's Deserts. Attendees were... Trip Leader, David Raeburn - Ford Maverick with passenger Joe Crisp, Dave Bourke - Toyota Ute, Ross Boreham - Toyota Ute, Andrew and Jack Johnson - GQ Nissan Patrol, Nick Burch and passenger Mark Rykers - Nissan Patrol.

The group travelled to David Raeburns family property near Beaufort for the first night. Monday we headed north through St Arnaud, Wycheproof and to Ouyen. After refuelling and stocking up on supplies, we headed towards Pinaroo turning off to the Pink Lakes at Linga. We camped the night at Lake Crosby, which was a nice tidy campground.

Tuesday dawned clear and cold and the campfire was enjoyed by all. After breakfast we headed north, stopping to look at some of the machinery left behind by the salt mining operations in the area. From there we travelled the Honeymoon Hut Track and the Mopoke Track to the Mopoke Hut. This hut is maintained by the Mildura 4WD Club and is neat and tidy.

It was originally built by the Henske Family who leased a huge area before it was taken back as National Park. The tracks were very dry and some had patches of boggy sand. We turned right into the Nowingi Track which was originally the railway line from Rocket Lake to Nowingi, built to carry Gypsum from the Brunswick plaster works and salt from the Raak Plains to the railhead at Nowingi. One of the huge hoppers used to fill the carriages is still there and in fair order. It looks like something from War of the Worlds sitting there.

After looking around, we headed north to Raak Plains mining area. This is a large area that has been mined for various minerals, including limestone for roads and lime and gypsum. On one of the hills we drove into a big



hole of lime dust. It is like white bull dust about half a metre deep. It exploded all over the Maverick covering the car completely and blotting out all vision. The wipers cleared it enough to see and we were far enough in front to warn the others to slow down, but we all had a big cleaning job that night.

We turned left toward Renmark to Meringur where there is a great pioneer museum put together by the local people depicting the early life in the Mallee and Millewa areas. We spent several hours looking around and set up camp in the museum grounds for the night. There are very good facilities available. One of the local ladies even bought us some wood for a fire.

Wednesday, we headed to the border for fuel and then down the Border Track. The Northern end of the track is a fairly easy drive, but there are quite a few interesting things to see, including an old eucalyptus distillery and house with lots of interesting buildings and relics left behind.

We arrived at Murrayville on the Ouyen-Adelaide Highway mid afternoon. The caravan park is neat and tidy and a bargain at \$15 per night with hot showers and a camp kitchen. Some of us went to the pub for a good meal and others chose to cook at the camp. One of the locals said there was fuel available at a depot between 4.30 and 5pm, so we went and waited, filling in time looking at the old army tanks at the depot. The local policeman turned up and asked us what we were doing. He told us the fuel was only available Tuesday and Wednesday nights so we rang the

owner and he came down to fill us up which was much appreciated.

The next morning we headed to Kow Plains Homestead. It is a lovely old homestead with surrounding buildings restored by the Mildura Shire. Next door is a huge limestone pit with many interesting and home made devices for mining limestone.

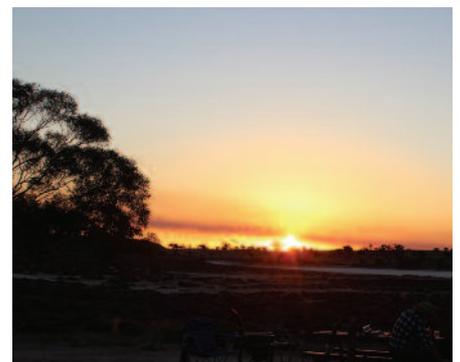
The mine operated from 1962 to 1985. After looking around, we headed back to the Border Track and down to Scorpion Park where the big, difficult dunes start. The sand was super dry and soft so it was quite a challenge to get over them. It was great fun with most of us having a couple of tries before ascending the bigger ones.

We spent the last night in the desert at Red Bluff camp ground. It is maintained by the Wimmera 4WD Club and is as good as you'd find anywhere. We had a visit from a tiny native mouse as soon as we pulled up. He continued collecting crumbs around our camp and even got into Dave Bourke's swag during the night. He was obviously used to people and saw us as a good food source.

Before dark, a Nissan Patrol pulled in and asked us if we were from Bairnsdale as they were as well. They had recently moved to Bairnsdale and are interested in joining the 4WD Club. The last day in the desert, we travelled over the last dunes and then on to Serviceton on the South Australian border. The railway station there is a huge structure that was built as a customs station on the border in 1889 and closed in 1986. On arrival, a local came over and gave us a complete tour of the entire complex.

From there we travelled back through Horsham and Stawell to our place near Beaufort to spend a lovely warm night by the fire before heading home the next day. It was a great trip with good friends and lots of adventures. We look forward to the next trip before too long.

David Raeburn





WHAT MAKES YOU SO SPECIAL?

The importance of working together ...

No man is an island (John Donne); Life is easier (and can be a lot more fun) when you are part of a network of friends and family, a community.

In these days of looking out for number one, community isn't always what it is supposed to be. We'd all like to think we live in a place where people care about others -- where people pitch in to help, especially when things get rough. But this isn't always what we experience.

It seems that we are often reminded when things get tough to "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps, my grandfather did". That may be true, but many of those "bootstraps" are no longer available today. A major contributor to this issue is that the supportive community of our grandparent's day, the community where people looked out for each other and supported each other, in many places is no more. It has gone the way of the gaslight, the horse, and the buggy. And we're paying a really big price for that loss.

One of the main attributes of your 4WD

Club (& 4WD Victoria) is our sense of community, helping others, working with others, enabling others. Being a part of the 4WD community while working within the broader community.

The ancient African proverb states; it takes a village, to work with the family, to raise a child and weather the storms of life. If we want that kind of support, the place to begin is with ourselves. Community, like charity, begins at home. You start building a good neighbourhood when you yourself decide that you will be a good neighbour.

Many of us feel like we are judged on our disabilities rather than on our abilities. There is no doubt, sometimes this is true, but often we give people little choice as we are slow to acknowledge our weaknesses and quick to focus on our own agenda and selling our self assessed strengths. Working with others takes serious effort on everyone's part. What can be achieved when we get it right ... you can judge that for yourselves.

Here are a few tips that might help:

- Acknowledge and understand your

own strengths and weaknesses.

- Acknowledge and use the skill strengths, ideas and opinions of others.
- Let others know when they are doing a good job.
- Respect the feelings, views and values of others.
- Support and encourage others by helping those who need assistance.
- Accept assistance from others willingly.
- Do not avoid conflict. Respectfully address issues or problems when they happen, not ignore them.

How do you think you can help build a better community?

... and what are you prepared to do about it?



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