

# TRACK WATCH



**JUNE 2024**  
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**NEW HOME FOR FWDV & LROCV  
MYSTERY TOUR  
FWDV REGIONAL REPS MEETING  
DEECA AT 4X4 SHOWS  
CLEAN UP THE BUSH  
FWDV CHAINSAW COURSE**



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## FOUR WHEEL DRIVE VICTORIA

The peak representative body for all Victorian four wheel drivers since 1975

Victoria Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc.  
PO Box 6/27 Thornton Cres, Mitcham 3132

Phone 03 9874 7222

Email [office@fwdvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@fwdvictoria.org.au)

Website [www.4wdvictoria.org.au](http://www.4wdvictoria.org.au)

ABN 40 891 301 368

ASSN A0013539S

RTO 21605

Print Post PP 100005076

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

### EXECUTIVE

**President** Eric Bishop (TLCCV)

**Vice President** Fred De Gooyer (LROCV)

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(Just Mates Amarok Club of Vic 4WD Club)

**Office Administrator** Jo Somerfield (Pajero 4WD Club)

**Accounts** Di Hodgson

**Projects & Events Officer** Daniel Whitby (Just Mates 4x4 Club)

**RTO Compliance** Micah Spedding

## TRACKWATCH

**Editors** Four Wheel Drive Victoria team

**Email** [editor@fwdvictoria.org.au](mailto:editor@fwdvictoria.org.au)

**Individual Contributors** Wayne Hevey, Eric Bishop, Daniel Whitby, John Ashton and Sharyn McGregor.

### 2024 Copy Deadline next issue

9th February for March 2024 issue

10th May for June 2024 issue

9th August for September 2024 issue

7th November for December 2024 issue

**Advertising** [projects@fwdvictoria.org.au](mailto:projects@fwdvictoria.org.au)

Design and Artwork by Jaz Effect Design

Cover picture: *Regional Representatives weekend*  
- Sharyn McGregor, MJOC.

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In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to Winter. That time is now clearly upon us; snow is on the ground, and



the snow country is already proving itself attractive. Contact the FWDV office and book your proposed Mt Skene trip dates.

Albert Giorgini our Treasurer has resigned and so we are looking for a new Treasurer. Albert has travelled to Italy for a few months and won't be back in time to complete the Financial Reports in time for the AGM; we have moved the AGM to September rather than November as has been the norm over the last few years.

FWDV and the Govt 4WD Advisory Committee met during this term in Sale and travelled up to the Pinnacles, where we met at the picnic tables. This meeting augured well for the bonding of all the members on both sides. Wayne and I felt bolstered by the commitment shown to us by each of the land managers, particularly Michael Schoen, one of the representatives from Parks Victoria, who was enlightened by the day in the High Country.

Wayne succeeded in getting the new Toolangi training ground up and running as promised, only to be deterred by the weather. It rained so hard that the tracks turned to mud, sending us back to Lederderg until we could fix this issue. We are still working through some administrative matters regarding the toilet and the temporary building. Still, like all external authorities, one must march with the beat of their drum to achieve the appropriate outcome.

Our new CEO Craig Ryan starts with us on the 3rd of June. Craig has a skill set that the board believes will help FWDV move in a different direction for future growth. Wayne is still on board until July 13 and will assist Craig in getting his feet under the desk. Craig's first exposure to what we do was the regional reps meeting on the 27th of May in Mansfield; his next event will be travelling with Wayne to Adelaide for the National 4WD Conference.

So, let's make Craig welcome and help him through the first months of this journey.

To assist in Wayne's transition as CEO and Training Manager, Daniel Whitby, our Projects Officer, has been offered the RTO Management position. He has recently completed the tertiary qualifications, TAE40122 – Training and Assessment, he needs to manage the RTO effectively moving forward. The commercial details and conditions are yet to be finalised. However, we felt it was prudent to allow Craig Ryan to be part of those discussions, with a completion timeline for Daniel by August. We have the utmost confidence in Daniel's ability to conquer this role.

On April 13, our Presidents Day was conducted; the main topics were purchasing our new home in Rowville, Toolangi, The VEAC Report, and the new CEO. We advised that we had purchased a factory to convert into the offices of FWDV, which created a permanent home for us. The purchase was made in conjunction with the Land Rover Club of Victoria. FWDV and LROCV are joint owners and have formed a subcommittee to manage the administrative matters about Council Approvals. The subcommittee will oversee the final layout design and fit-out.

For those who wish to familiarise themselves with its location, the building is at Unit 2/6 Hi-Tech Place, Rowville.

We are happy to say that we now have the keys to the building, and it is now ours to do as we please. I think an open day should be organised for all the clubs to come and see it. The only constraint is that we have to wait until Fred De Goyer gets out of the hospital and recovers from his hip replacement. (sorry, Fred)

Some weeks ago, I contacted Wayne Farnham, the Minister for Narracan (where I live), to discuss the VEAC report. He knew nothing about it, but he further contacted me to understand how this report may affect all the outdoor organisations invested in the Central Highlands District. He then made a speech in Parliament about the report and the Community Consultation that was happening around the State.

On Sunday, 27th of March, I attended a VEAC Rally organised by Wayne Farham and some Liberal National Party shadow ministers. The most

impressive thing that happened during the day was that approx. One thousand people turned up from both sides of the Great Dividing Range and Victoria's East and West areas. The outcome of the Rally is that the LNP will no doubt try to stop any changes to access the high country through the upper house. I am sure our access will not be hampered; however, if some of these areas are converted into National Park, our ability to take our pet dogs and camping beside our vehicles within the National Parks will be a negative outcome.

FWDV is committed to maintaining unfettered access to the tracks and our camping requirements, irrespective of changes from State forests and State Parks to National Parks.

The Pajero Club is celebrating its 40th birthday in June. Well done, Pajero 4WD Club of Victoria!!

FWDV will be celebrating its 50th birthday next year and is looking for suggestions as to the most appropriate Venue to Celebrate this milestone. We have one suggestion, which is the Toolangi Training Ground; however, we will be seeking suggestions from the members.

On my Final Note, as your President, I have achieved all I have set out to do within FWDV and now feel it's time to step down. I will step down at the AGM in September.

Over recent years, we have achieved great outcomes with Toolangi, a new CEO, and a new building, all for our future growth. These last few months have taken a toll on me, and I feel it's time for a new direction, with a younger President having the privilege of having everything all set up to manage our future growth.

In the three stints I have had on the board over the years, and in particular the last five years, I know I have had an impact on its operation given what happened 15 years ago when we were bankrupt; we twisted Wayne's arm to take on the role of CEO which has been a resounding success. I must take my hat off to Wayne Hevey, who is FWDV to his bootstraps. The members of FWDV have been excellent with all the support they have given me, and I sincerely appreciate that.

So keep the shiny side up and keep on truckin!!

**Eric Bishop**  
**President**



# 2024 TRAINING COURSES

**BOOK  
ONLINE**

Four Wheel Drive Victoria is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO21605) offering non-accredited Proficiency 4WD training and a range of Accredited 4wd and Chainsaw courses. Open to all club members, the general public and corporate organisations. Browse courses and book online at [www.fwdvictoria.org.au/training](http://www.fwdvictoria.org.au/training) Call the office (03) 9874 7222 for further information

## PROFICIENCY COURSES

2nd July – PC240702 – Theory	6th July – PC240702 – Practical
30th July – PC240730 – Theory	3rd August – PC240730 – Practical
3rd September – PC240903 – Theory	7th September – PC240903 – Practical
1st October – PC241001 – Theory	5th October – PC241001 – Practical
26th November – PC241126 – Theory	30th November – PC241126 – 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 to 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.

**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 transferable 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.

# NATIONAL 4x4 OUTDOORS SHOW

The National 4x4 Show is set for the **23rd to the 25th of August 2024.**

FWDV have an agreement with the show organizers to provide free sites for our affiliated clubs and have now got them to an upgraded location in a prime position!

If your club is interested and wants to know more details, please email [projects@fwdvictoria.org.au](mailto:projects@fwdvictoria.org.au).

This is a massive benefit of being an affiliated club, with over 30,000 people coming through the show over the three days, the ability to recruit new members is huge!



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- x 32 LEVELS OF ADJUSTMENT
- x 30-DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE



## FROM FWDV CEO



**T**his report will be my last as your CEO as I am shortly departing on long service leave and returning in November to say goodbye and retire. I have been with the association for 15 years in July and have had a mostly enjoyable time over the journey.

We have seen some ups and downs but overall, I believe we have kicked some real goals and made some progress in all we have endeavored to do. The recent purchase of our own premises, in conjunction with the LROCV, is a milestone event which when fitted out and functioning as it is planned, will be a wonderful acquisition for all our members to enjoy and be proud of. Another excellent acquisition is of course our own training facility which is almost finalized except for some red tape around placing a building and toilet on the site, hopefully this can be sorted out before I leave. We have spent considerable time and effort in bringing this about as well as money of course, which will repay us with the RTO conducting corporate courses on a regular basis there, along with our public proficiency courses and club usage as well.

Our relationship with the various Minister's and their staff as well as the DEECA and Parks Victoria staff is strong and mutually respected, I am sure this will continue to be the case into the future. We have achieved a huge amount in this regard by working together in achieving those goals which we saw as hugely important to our association and its members' desires and wants. Respect is the key word here, being able to listen to all parties and conduct ourselves in the most professional manner to reach those outcomes. This has resulted in some exceptional funding from the respective governments over the years, I hope this continues to be the case.

Our continued work with the First Nation's People has also been hugely rewarding I believe, and this has put us in a positive position moving forward with the changing landscape as it occurs. I hope that we grasp every opportunity that arises in this space and deal with them diligently and swiftly. It is a rewarding experience to learn more about their heritage and incredible history, sadly we have been kept unaware of for so long.

The year to date has been a steady one regarding the activities from the office and training point of view. We have had several shows and events we have attended with clubs benefiting from their involvement and promoting themselves which are great to see. We engineered this action in trading with the organisers of the shows, to enable you, our clubs, the opportunity to be part of those activities, free of charge, for exactly this reason and it is pleasing to see the results coming from it.

The consultation around the proposed Central Highlands transition from State Forests into National Parks, has certainly got everyone thinking and talking, which is a good thing. It will be very interesting to see whether the Eminent Panel has any real clout in their response to the government based on what they are hearing from the masses who utilise the landscape and are speaking out on the proposal? We at FWDV certainly have put our submission in and spoken to the panel directly on behalf of you the members and understand some of our clubs have also submitted their own responses, as you should have.

I would just like to say thank you to you all for my time at FWDV. It was a great ride and I will certainly miss the camaraderie and banter that has been part of the entire journey.

**Wayne Hevey**  
CEO

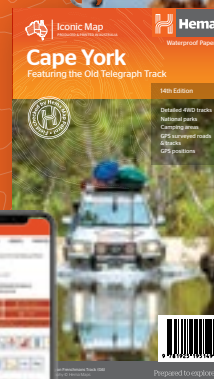
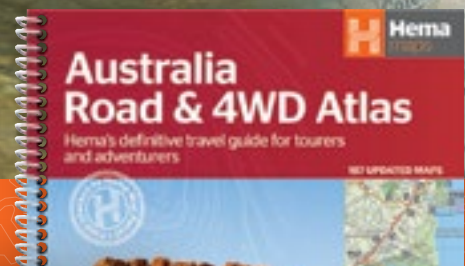


# By explorers, for explorers

For over 30 years, the Hema Map Patrol has traversed Australia to capture the most accurate cartographic information for outdoor explorers. Hema's master map-makers then produce industry-leading maps, atlases, guidebooks and digital navigation products.

Prepared to explore.

Hema products are available at leading outdoor retailers or  
[www.hemamaps.com](http://www.hemamaps.com)







# TRIP PLANNING CENTRE



## Australia's first Adventure Trip Planning Centre launches in Pakenham

Excitement is in the air as Australia's inaugural Adventure Trip Planning Centre is launched in the heart of Pakenham, Victoria.

Nestled within the newly minted Adrenalin Off-Road Centre Pakenham (the new home to Ironman 4x4 Pakenham), this newly dedicated space is tailored to crafting unforgettable journeys into regional Australia.

At the heart of the centre, is two expansive interactive screens that beckon explorers to embark on a virtual odyssey across the vast Australian landscape. The first screen showcases an immersive Hema map of Australia, empowering visitors to zoom in and out, explore intriguing Points of Interest, and chart their own course using Hema Map's innovative Trip Planner tool. Meanwhile, the second screen offers a deep dive into Australia's premier touring regions, from the rugged expanse of Cape York to the breathtaking vistas of the Kimberley, complete with invaluable insights, captivating imagery, and insider tips curated by the Adrenalin tour team.

But the Adventure Trip Planning Centre is more than just a digital hub—it's a treasure trove of resources for the intrepid traveler. Here, you'll discover Australia's most extensive selection of maps, atlases, guides, and GPS devices, including Hema's

comprehensive range spanning every corner of the country.

Yet, the true gem of the centre lies in its passionate and experienced staff at Adrenalin Off-Road, poised to guide you in crafting your ultimate adventure. Whether you dream of tackling the iconic Big Lap, embarking on a winter touring escapade, or venturing off the beaten path for a shorter off-road journey, the team at Adrenalin is there to make your vision a reality. Plus, they just might share a few coveted camping spots known only to the initiated few.

The grand opening of the Adventure Travel Planning Centre is on Saturday May 18th, from 9 am to 3 pm. On the day, the experts from Adrenalin will be available to assist you with all your mapping needs, take advantage of exclusive deals, indulge in culinary delights from food trucks, and delight the little ones with free activities like a jumping castle and face painting. Additionally, support the admirable efforts of the Pakenham Scouts as they raise funds with a sizzling sausage sizzle.

Located at 2/4 Southeast Boulevard, Pakenham, VIC, 3810, the Adrenalin Off-Road Centre and its Adventure Trip Planning Centre await to ignite your spirit of adventure.



**Adrenalin Off-Road Centre Pakenham**  
2-4 Southeast Boulevard  
(03)5940-3377  
paksales@aorc.co



# After many years the Four Wheel Drive Victoria and Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria now have a new permanent home!



By now you will have heard that Four Wheel Drive Victoria (FWDV) with the Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria (LROCV) have jointly purchased a building to use as clubrooms and offices.

The building is located at:

## Unit 2, 6 Hi-Tech Place, Rowville

It has taken some 60 years for the Club to achieve this milestone. FWDV will also make it their headquarters. The FWDV and LROCV are equal joint owners.

The plan is to fit the building out much better with a mezzanine floor with meeting rooms on two levels allowing it to be leased out to other clubs and organisations, who can use it when the owners are not using it, returning an income to help offset the running costs of the property. It is envisaged it will take until the end of the year at least to complete such renovations.

There will be a Property Management Committee (PMC) running it comprising of people from both the FWDV and LROCV.

The property is now registered as the “Victorian 4WD Centre” and will be known as that.

Some of the details are -

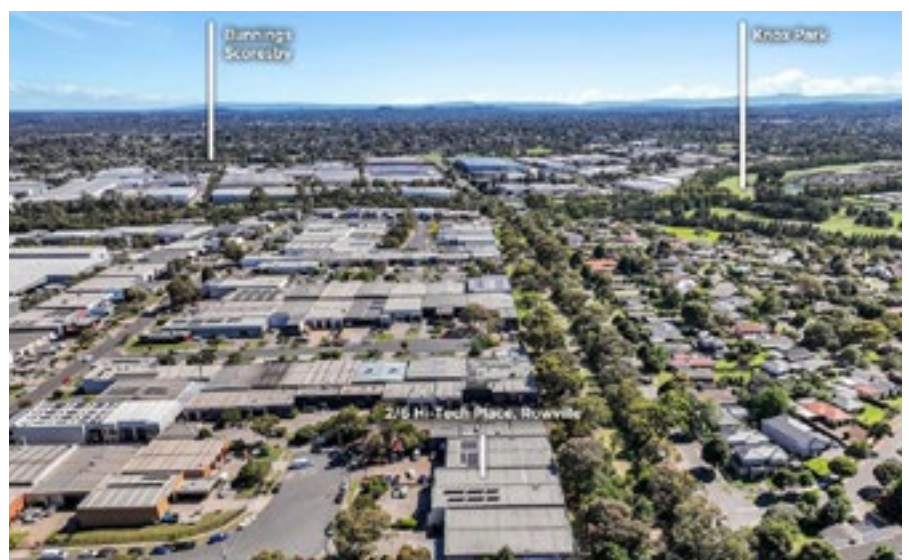
- Good sized factory and within original budget price
- Zoned Industrial 1
- Footprint 380m<sup>2</sup> (approx.).
- Can be fitted out to our requirements by removal of existing internal walls etc.
- Prime location just minutes to Eastlink and Ferntree Gully Road

- Quiet court location
- Very good street fronted access
- Close to Stud Rd and 5 minutes to Stamford Hotel for meals
- Parking - 5 on-site car parks with abundant carparking in close proximity
- Body Corporate - one of two properties of a Body Corporate, but Body Corporate is inactive, except for Common Property Public risk insurance.
- The property is still tenanted with a short-term lease in place (regarded as a going concern), so the sale does not attract GST.
- Building Detail - clear span warehouse with good natural light, approx. size 9.8m wide x 30+m deep, some fit out included, but very basic. It is ideal for refurbishment, has 3 phase power, a large entry electric roller shutter door, Personal Access entry doors, one on the LHS in office glass

front, and the other on the RHS of main front roller door, half painted exterior internal walls.

- Construction - tilt panel concrete walls, plenty of height to allow for construction of a second storey, excellent depth and width for construction of meeting rooms as well as storerooms, etc.
- Existing fit out - 2 kitchenettes, one in the office and one in the warehouse, electronic security system installed, office with heating and cooling via split system air cons, two old air conditioners elsewhere, plenty of 3 phase power, outlets and other power points.

*Member Clubs can find out more details regarding the financials in the Minutes of the Four Wheel Drive Victoria Presidents and Delegates meeting of 13th April 2024.*







# MYSTERY TOUR

BY: JOHN ASHTON

The Mystery History Tour came about after reading a book titled *The History of Wonnangatta Station* by Wallace Malcolm Mortimer. The book got me in and I wanted to learn as much as I could and to see if a trip to Wonnangatta and finishing up at Lovicks was something that could be done over a long weekend. I asked Club Secretary Ken Winn if he would join me on a planning trip where we would review the condition of the tracks and the timings for each day. It all worked out very easily and we passed the baton on to VP Nigel Smith to be the Trip Leader. Not only was I interested in the tracks, but also the history of the people that had made their mark in this part of Victoria. The key people included Jim Barclay who was the station manager until he was murdered some time between 21st Dec. 1917 and 22nd Jan. 1918. In addition, two other prominent figures arose being Angus McMillan and Alfred William Howitt, both of whom played a major role in the history of Victoria. But, that's another story.

The date was confirmed for the March long weekend and the starting location was the Dargo River Inn Camp Ground.

Most arrived at the Dargo River Inn in the Friday afternoon & evening while a few arrived in the early hours of Saturday. Nevertheless, by around 9:00am we were on our way. First stop was Grant, just off



the McMillans Road. Here we explored the many notices and land lots that would have been there many years after the gold had petered out.

The group was introduced to Alfred Howitt and Angus McMillan, both notable explorers of the 1800's. Angus McMillan was responsible for the opening up of Gippsland in the 1840's. In 1860 with the gold mining in and around Ballarat and Bendigo in decline, a Prospecting Board was established by the government of the day to search for other gold bearing locations. Angus McMillan recommended exploration of the Macalister, Mitchell, Nicholson and Dargo areas. Alfred Howitt was selected as leader for the Mitchell River expedition. Howitt's party travelled to McMillan's Bushy Park Station then up to the Dargo.

From Grant we moved on directly to Talbotville where we crossed the Crooked River, named by Alfred Howitt due to the crooked nature of the river. Howitt reported to the Minister of Mines that the Crooked River and Good Luck Creek fields were a payable proposition and as a result in 1861 there were 800 miners on these fields. With the crossing completed, we travelled along Crooked River Track to Racecourse Track where we crossed the Wongungarra River, passed Howittville Hut then turned on to Station Track for the seemingly long haul with some heart stopping steep climbs and spectacular views to where we joined the Cynthia Range Track. Here we travelled on along the Cynthia towards the junction with Eaglevale Track - that's one for the bucket list in the future.

From that junction we continued along Cynthia Range Track up to and onto the partially hidden Sugarloaf Creek Track to the helicopter landing area on Mount von Guerard. Here we found that another group had got there a little before us, and had pinched the best view and parking spot! Nigel B. took a great photo of our vehicles set opposite where the others had been.

Mount von Guerard was named by Alfred Howitt for his good friend, travelling companion and noted artist, Eugene von Guerard who had been with Howitt on a trip to the Baw Baws area and had also spent time on the diggings in the Bendigo and Ballarat areas.

This location on the tour turns out to be a good place to stop for a lunch break before continuing on to the junction of Wombat Range Track and Hernes Spur Track, the latter being only for the brave who are prepared to tackle the steep decline down on to the Wonnangatta River where it becomes the Wonnangatta Track. So for some of us, Herne Spur Track will have to remain on our bucket list. Nevertheless, one only goes a short few metres before coming to the not so steep decline down Wombat Range Track and on to where we turn onto Hart Spur Track for probably less than 100 metres to the beginning of Humffrey River Track. On this track, you only have to cross the Wonnangatta River once compared to six crossings if you went down Herne Spur.

The Humffrey River Track joins the Wonnangatta Track, and that track runs close along side the Wonnangatta River for quite a way up to Conglomerate Creek and onto Wonnangatta Station. Now at the Station some of us stretched our legs while others went in search of a suitable campsite.



Ultimately a spot was chosen right beside the Wonnangatta River that was close by the Station Hut and soon a fire wood detail was formed and before long a good collection had been made and the campsite fire was on the go.

The first non-aboriginal to enter the valley flats of the Wonnangatta was probably Angus McMillan who in 1859 occupied the original Eagle Vale Run which then included the Wonnangatta Valley. In Wallace Mortimer's book *The History of Wonnangatta Station* he tells us that an American who had been prospecting around Dargo, growing tobacco at Mathieson's Flat and also share farmed at Crooked River. On one of his "prospecting rides he came upon the Wonnangatta Valley". Oliver Smith soon set to work building an American style log cabin for his entourage which included his three sons and his de facto wife Ellen Hayes and her son Harry. Ellen and Oliver never married however Ellen soon used Smith as her surname. Sadly, in 1872 Ellen died giving birth to twins Malinda and Mary on the 5th of March, and Mary died on the 11th of March while Malinda also died the following day. Oliver, who could neither read or write crafted a slab of slate like rock he collected from the river and inscribed Ellen's name. Unfortunately he inscribed the letter N in her name in reverse and her date of death as 5th March 1873. Ellen and her babies were the first recorded deaths at Wonnangatta and were the first to be buried at Wonnangatta Station. See the trip photos for Ellen and her daughters. (NOTE: since the trip, the Friends of Wonnangatta have been successful in the creation of a new tombstone with the correct dates for Ellen, Mary and Matilda).

The other family to inhabit Wonnangatta around that time was the Bryce family, but that's another story for another time.

Fast forward to 1914 when Arthur Phillips and Geoff Ritchie, both from around Delatite, purchased Wonnangatta Station from the Bryce family. Their



first priority was to engage a manager of the property. Jim Barclay was duly employed. Jim was born on 18th Feb. 1869 to James, a Scot who had emigrated from London in 1849, and Mary Fiddler who had emigrated from London in 1852. They were married in St. Enochs Presbyterian Church, on 14th Feb. 1853 and eventually built a home named Heroville which was located on Barclay Crescent in what was then known as Tyabb, but was later renamed Hastings after some rezoning in that part of the Peninsula.

By 1917 the work on Wonnangatta Station had gotten to the stage that Jim Barclay needed another hand to assist with the workload. So, on the 14th of December that year he hired John Bamford as cook and odd-jobs man. On the 20th of December there was a Referendum and Jim and John Bamford rode in to Albert Stout's Post Office and Store in Talbotville to cast their votes. They stayed with Albert and his wife overnight and by 10 o'clock in the morning of the 21st of December, the pair rode back to Wonnangatta never to be seen again.

On the 22nd of January 1918, Harry Smith (son of Ellen Smith) rode up from his home in Eaglevale to deliver Jim's mail. There was no sight of Jim or Bamford, but there was a note on the kitchen door with the words "Home Tonight". Harry decided to stay at the homestead overnight. With no arrivals from Jim or Bamford for two days, Harry decided to return to his work at Eaglevale. Harry's next visit to the homestead was the 14th of February, and once there he found the mail from his previous visit was still where he left it and the "Home Tonight" sign still remained untouched. Harry decided to pass on the news of the disappearance of Jim and Bamford on to Jim's employer, Arthur Phillips who arrived at the Eaglevale on the 23rd. Feb. After another day of searching around the river flats they eventually came to the conclusion that Jim and Bamford must have met with foul play. On the 25th of Feb, Harry

and Phillips decided to conduct a search of the Conglomerate Creek valley where they eventually discovered the remains of Jim Barclay partially buried beside the Conglomerate Creek.

With this discovery, the Police were notified and when they arrived Harry led them to the grave which was just 425 paces from the homestead. Further search found no sign of John Bamford, consequently he was being seriously considered as a person of interest and so, a new search was to follow around the Wonnangatta Station area.

But more of this further on.....

Back to the trip....

During the afternoon new members Daren and Julie joined us with their children and before sunset we gathered for our evening meal along with some selected wines, beers, chips n cheeses we all sat back to chat and yarn. :)

Next morning after a quick breakfast we did some more exploring of the cemetery, the large Hut and some of us collected fruit from the trees beside the area marked out with stones where the homestead once stood. And soon, we were off to tackle Zeka Spur Track which in places it is quite narrow and on a number of occasions we were forced to stop, move to the left and allow the oncoming traffic to pass by. In places there are seemingly dark tunnels through the heavy canopy of the trees, in other areas we were in more open ground until finally there was the decent down to the junction with Howitt Road. Here we turned left and travelled on to Howitt Hut where we stopped for a quick lunch break.

But, what about John Bamford.....

When the Police arrived at the Station they had travelled there from Mansfield and on the way, the group included amongst others, William Hearne and Jim Fry who had been a very close friend and mentor to Jim. Both Hearne and Jim Fry were experienced stockmen who knew the country well in and around Wonnangatta. Harry Smith took them



to the shallow grave and confirmed to the Police that the body was Jim Barclay. They then returned to the Station and carried out a search in and around the house and noticed that not only two dogs, blankets, a saddle and bridle were missing as was Bamford's horse Thelma.

When the search for Bamford started there was much discussion on where he may have travelled to. He still could have been on the Station somewhere. Maybe he had gone up to Dry River and followed that up to the Howitt Plains, or disappeared up Riley Creek to escape being captured.

So the search for Bamford was started and eventually William Hearne and Jim Fry were searching on the Howitt Plain. Bamford's horse Thelma was found wondering around without a saddle or bridle.

Bamford's body was soon discovered not far from Howitt Hut under a pile of logs. Who killed John Bamford? We may never know.

The mysterious murders of Jim Barclay and John Bamford remain just that: A Mystery.

Back to the trip...

With lunch break finished we headed off again. This time back up Howitt Road, past the intersection with Zeka Spur Track, passed the Car Park which is a starting point for the hike up to the top of Mt. Howitt, and eventually onto King Billy Track. This is a very picturesque track with everything you could ask for on a 4WD Trip. A mix of open bush country, to thick trees and bushes. Along the way we passed a few Rivers of Rock, made the odd creek crossing and a number of very tight corners as we climbed up to eventually join onto Bluff Track. On the way up Bluff Track we stopped for the photo opportunity at the King Billy Tree, stopped for another photo op at Picture Point and finally stopping beside the Lovick's Hut campground, which by this time was quite crowded.



We all had to find spots to park our vehicles, then start on setting up a fireplace, collected firewood then at last settling down to a good evening meal followed by cheese and crackers all of which were taken with good measures of fine red and white wines...

Next morning we broke camp and travelled down to Bluff Hut for a look see at what is a fine "establishment". After that the next stop was on Mt. Lovick for more photo opportunities. Eventually after what always seems like a very long slow trip back down to the main road we eventually stopped to air-up the tyres then headed on to Mansfield for lunch and then home.



# FWDV REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES MEETING

BY: SHARYN MCGREGOR

**W**hen the long-awaited Four Wheel Drive Victoria regional reps meeting finally arrived on the last weekend of May 2024, it was good to see so many familiar faces arriving at the Parks Victoria and DEECA office in Mansfield.

10:00 am saw a full car park as our retiring Four Wheel Drive Victoria CEO Wayne Hevey pulled up and gathered us all together to introduce our Parks Victoria Rangers/tour guides for the day. After a brief pre trip chat, it was into our vehicles and on the road. It wasn't long before we were all parked up in a horseshoe formation at the base of Mount Stirling airing down in preparation for the tracks ahead. Our convoy was cocooned by two very capable Parks Victoria vehicles, one in the front leading the way and one at the rear. With our Parks Victoria guide leading the way and calling directional calls to the vehicles behind over the UHF tail end charlie communicating with prompt replies, we drove past Telephone Box Junction and

beyond not wanting to lose any fellow Regional Reps going up the wrong road.

The first major turn off Circuit Road was left down the King Basin Road toward the King River and as the Parks vehicle cruised around the bend and down the track the corner was called out and marked and the rest of the convoy was reminded to mark the corners for the vehicle behind them. As the last vehicles turned the corner our tail end Charlie called it through and we thanked them as we now knew how far apart the convoy had spread. After zigzagging our way down the mountain and fording about 7 river crossings and a few bog holes, we all arrived at King Hut together for morning tea. Everyone was chatting and mingling around the King Hut, taking in the scenery and enjoying their morning tea, when it was decided to grab this opportunity for a group photo in front of the hut, which we all did.

The original King Hut was a cattleman's hut, built only metres from here as a drop slab Hut by Jim Hearn. The Lovick family had

their cattle run from Mount Buller to Mount Cobbler and would travel through here from about 1900 and would camp here at the hut. By the 1950s the old hut had become dilapidated and a new larger hut was built in 1957 exactly where this one stands today. Both huts remained here for a number of years and when the area became part of a National Park the Hut was then looked after by the CFA 4x4 club and Park Victoria staff. Unfortunately in 2008, the hut was burnt down mysteriously and being such an important hut for tourism and visitors it was decided to rebuild the current Hut with support from Four Wheel Drive Victoria which was officially opened in January 2012.

Leaving King Hut we were advised by the Rangers that the track ahead was in a bad way and urgently needed repairs. It's been a couple of years since I have travelled this track and I was not expecting the deterioration that lay before us, a very deep bog hole that could easily swallow a vehicle had appeared in the centre of the track and the chicken tracks around it





were also full of holes. The track between King Hut and Speculation Rd was so much worse than I could have imagined, I know how well used this area is by 4 wheel drivers and tourists but at the moment I doubt any tourists would make it in to visit the Hut.

The remainder of our journey to Bindaree Hut was uneventful and apart from the few loud crunches as rear bars hit the rocks at the crossing of the Howqua River at Bindaree there was no other track damage to talk about. Bindaree

Hut was our destination for our lunch stop and everyone enjoyed the time to socialize a bit more. There were a few of us here that had been involved in the raising of Bindaree Hut, again supported by Four Wheel Drive Victoria, about five years ago when we replaced the six bottom logs and built the new chimney it was good to catch up, inspect our work and see how it was weathering.

With lunch finished, we all jumped into our vehicles and headed up 16 Mile Jeep Track, a

track that I enjoy as it has a little bit of everything. It winds through the mountains, passing Pikes Flat hut and camping area, crossing rivers and climbing up steep orange clay tracks (which can sometimes be very slippery) all the way up toward the bluff. Moving forward the convoy wound its way through the very scenic mountains that overlooks the beautiful valley that the Howqua River travels through. We all caught up again down at Sheeppark Flat, where we aired up and headed back to

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Mansfield in plenty of time to get settled at our accommodations before meeting up for dinner at the Mansfield hotel where we all enjoyed a great meal and just one or two drinks to accompany it. The very next morning we were all to meet up early again for the official part of our weekend, the regional reps meeting with Parks Vic, DEECA and FWDV.

It was an excellent meeting on Sunday with some great discussion about how Seasonal Closures and gate breeches have been tackled throughout the state with different methods working. Staffing and budget issues and how volunteers can assist their areas to best effect and all around good networking between reps and land managers.

The Four Wheel Drive community was well represented as it always is by it's Regional Reps who do an excellent job in their appointed roles around the state, with 26 representatives from all over Victoria from 15 different clubs plus representatives from FWDV, PARKS VIC AND DEECA.





BY: DEECA

**T**he 4WD Advisory Committee partnership was on full display recently with members coming together to connect with drivers and the 4WD community at key events.

In February, Four Wheel Drive Victoria, alongside committee members from Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and Parks Victoria, took part in the Victorian 4WD Show at Lardner Park.

Said to be the longest running 4WD show in Australia, the show attracts around 30,000 visitors annually and has a range of exhibitors and products on display. It even includes a 4WD adventure circuit where people can have a go at a variety of driving activities from mock river crossing to hills and sand.

DEECA, Victoria's Conservation Regulator and Four Wheel Drive Victoria set their exhibition marquees up side-by-side ensuring all things forest recreation and fire management could be found in one spot at the show. A Forest Fire Management Victoria G-Wagon and Unimog were also on display to help draw the crowds, as well as dirt bikes used by Conservation Regulator staff to patrol our forests.

This combined presence was an effective way to connect the public with a variety of land management experts and educators and everyone walked away with their questions answered. It was also a great opportunity to drive awareness of the free More to Explore app and show people how they can use it to plan their next forest adventure.

Following this event, Four Wheel Drive was joined once again by DEECA staff at a shared stand at the Mornington Great Outdoors and 4X4 Expo on 9 March. Local member clubs Peninsula 4X4 Club and Port Phillip 4WD Club also participated, sharing their invaluable local insights with patrons.

While hampered by the extreme weather conditions, the expo was another great opportunity to chat to the community about forest recreation and four-wheel driving in Victoria. It was fantastic to team up with the Peninsula 4X4 Club and the Port Phillip 4WD Club.

DEECA looks forward to continuing its work as part of the Advisory Committee and supporting Four Wheel Drive Victoria, member clubs and the wider community at future shows and events.

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# CLEAN UP THE BUSH

## MT DISSAPOINTMENT

**I**t was a typical freezing Saturday morning on up at 5 Ways in the Mt Disappointment State Forest as teams started rolling in for the Clean Up the Bush event held mid-May. With scouting and negotiations regarding tip fees, collection location and rubbish locations taking place over previous months, the hard work was about to begin.

There was great representation from 6 clubs with over 20 members to help and they did a terrific job over the course of the day. With Michael Rauris from DEECA's office in Broadford and his offsider there on the day to go through our inductions and help remove rubbish with DEECA running the skip truck back and forth to Seymour throughout the day. A little after 9am, teams were off!

Paperwork couldn't even be signed in time before teams were already back with trailers full of household rubbish, couches and burnt collections of anything and everything. It didn't take long before DEECA's truck was already jam packed. With mattresses on top to help hold everything down on the truck, it was strapped down tightly and on its way for its first run to the tip. Teams were still able to collect rubbish without the truck, being supplied with 2m<sup>3</sup> bags. Without blinking it was already lunch, all teams had been hard at work and there was a pile of 10 collection bags, back at 5 Ways ready to go to the tip.

For those who haven't been up through Mt Disappointment State Forest recently, there are plenty of makeshift shooting ranges. Rangers have been doing everything possible to minimize these, hopefully with the efforts of this clean up it will assist them in doing so. Many of these ranges unfortunately see shooters bring in household goods as targets, shoot them up until there are more holes than anything and leave them behind. This along with the magnitude of spent cartridges left behind and other various rubbish brought in makes an almighty mess.

By the time 3pm had arrived, the work was done. With roughly 40m<sup>3</sup> collected ready for the tip, including over 20 tyres, multiple mattress, couches, chairs and many, many yellow collection bags full of everything else, our amazing volunteers were tired but had certainly earned the right to be with all of their tremendous work.

A huge thank you to all those who helped on the day and helped to make our bush a cleaner place for all. Thank you to the Jackaroo 4wd Club, Just Mates 4x4 Club, Melbourne Jeep Owners Club, Victorian 4WD Club, Werribee 4WD Club and the Yarra Valley 4x4 Club. Without their volunteers the event couldn't take place. Thank you!





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10am - 4pm



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# FWDV CHAINSAW COURSE

BY: SHARYN MCGREGOR

I may have been the only female but I was immediately accepted as one of the team... Yes, I was certainly nervous knowing I was rocking up to a hall in the middle of nowhere to camp and participate in a chainsaw course with an all male attendance including instructors.

Arriving early to set up my swag behind the hall, I was greeted by the smiles of other participants also setting up camp and it wasn't long before everyone had arrived, and we were all seated in the hall for the start of our evening of theory. Workbooks in hand, we were guided through the slideshow by our very competent instructors.

The evening went smoothly, and my confidence improved throughout the course, realising that each of us were there for the same reason, regardless of the prior experience we had operating a chainsaw, we all wanted to learn correct procedures and safety.

After a good night sleep and breakfast, we all donned our PPE and gathered up our chainsaws for a morning of chainsaw maintenance. Learning to pull apart and identify all the important parts of our chainsaw, learning the basics of cleaning, maintaining, refuelling and then the most important part, how to put it all back together again.

Moments later we were all in our vehicles, heading off to the local property that we would be putting the practical side of this course into action at. The recent storms had left a trail of destruction in the district and there were certainly plenty of fallen trees on the large cattle farm we arrived at. Following the leader, we were guided out the back



of a paddock past the curious eyes of the resident cows, where we parked up and unpacked all our gear onto tarps on the ground ready for a day of cutting and trimming felled trees.



In teams of two we practiced the different cuts we had learnt under the watchful eyes of our instructors, making sure we followed every safety procedure as we cut. Still under instruction, we refuelled and sharpened our chains as required. As the day went on, my skills improved, but still wary of this very dangerous machine I was holding in my hands. Still noting my stance was correct, visor was down and gloves on. Continually reminding myself, brake on, brake off, brake on, brake off! Carry the bar backwards, lay it on its side, don't let anything near the kickback zone..... Believe me, it is an endless list of safety precautions that you need to remember for your own safety and for a very good reason.

As the day drew to an end, we all made our way back to the Hallora Public Hall for dinner and to kick back around a campfire under the stars where we all got to know each other a bit better with time on our hands to banter around the fire. It certainly wasn't a late one though, knowing we all had another big day ahead of us tomorrow with more chainsaw skills,

different cuts to be learnt and an assessment to be had by each of us in the skills we had learnt.

The next day was exactly that, breakfast and then right back into it with learning to do a Boring Cut and a Ripping Cut, trying to remember our C before T and keeping an eye out for people around us, possible tripping hazards, snakes and the list goes on.... But we all survived to proudly tell the tale and hopefully await that chainsaw certificate arriving in the mail.

To all my class participants, you know who you are..... Thank you so much for making me feel like part of the team.

To the instructors, you guys did an amazing job, thank you for your clarity, patience and sharing your skills with myself and the team.



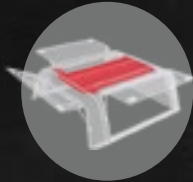
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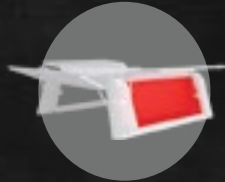
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## Top tips for towing your trailer safely

There are many factors to manage on the road in a car alone, but when you have more to move, adding a trailer on the back is another (big) thing to consider. To make sure you and your cargo stays safe, here are a few things to think about to make sure you make it to your destination safely, whether it's towing caravan for the next family holiday, a load of firewood or even taking your horse out for the day.

### Before You Hit The Road

First thing when towing, is making sure that you have actually hooked up your trailer correctly. You wouldn't be the first to drive out of the driveway and forget to hook up the tow ball, lights, or chains. Now that the trailer is connected you need to check everything is safe and ready to hit the road. Performing a safety check will give you peace of mind, not only for you the driver but for your passengers. Some key checks to make include:

- **Connections:** Tow ball is on and secured, chains are connected, and the jockey wheel is up. It is also important to ensure the light plug is correctly attached and all lights on the trailer are synced with the vehicle.
- **Load:** Is the load secured and tied down? Depending on your state it can be illegal to drive if your load is not properly restrained. This can include doors and windows on your caravan or horse float.
- **Tyres:** Are your tyres inflated to the correct pressure? When towing, the recommended PSI can change from regular driving, as the tyres are under much more stress.
- **Other Attachments:** Do you have extended mirror attachments for your side mirrors? These are required for towing if you are towing something wider than your vehicle. They can be helpful for seeing around and behind your trailer, especially when parking. You may also have a tow camera in a larger trailer.



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## Weight Limits and Distribution

A key item to check before you set off, is understanding the weights limits of your vehicle, the trailer and how the weight is distributed. The acronyms all sound similar, but they are important to understanding the loads a vehicle can take on the road.

Many drivers have made mistakes with these in the past and have either copped a large fine from the authorities or have been involved in an accident which may have been avoided. It is easy to overload your vehicle when the family, food, dogs, and luggage is loaded up.

**Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM)** of a 4WD is the manufacturer's maximum net weight of the vehicle. You can find this easily by googling your vehicle model or checking the owner's manual. This is the total weight of the empty car, the ball load of any trailer being towed, passengers, fuel, accessories, and luggage.

**Gross Trailer Mass (GTM)** is the total weight of a trailer, fully loaded when it is hitched to the tow vehicle. **Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM)** is the weight of the trailer when it is unhitched from the tow vehicle whilst sitting on its jockey wheel or stand. It's important to never exceed the rated GTM or ATM of your trailer.

**Gross Combination Mass (GCM)** is the total weight of the towed vehicle and your vehicle, plus any payload. It is important to note, that when you are towing at or near the maximum tow rating, the GCM is critical to determining how much you can carry.

## When on the road

Even after you have comfortably ticked off all the required safety checks, the next step is to actually drive and reach your destination safely. There are a few key tips to follow when on the road to ensure a safe trip for you and your passengers.

- Factor in the extra length of your trailer when taking tight turns or when overtaking other vehicles.
- Apply the accelerator, brakes and steering smoothly to avoid trailer sway.
- Maintain a longer distance than normal to the car in front, to allow for the extra stopping distance required.
- Engage lower gears if possible when descending, to avoid brake strain
- And finally, once you reach your destination, use a passenger (if possible) to assist with parking the car.

Before you hit the road you should check the laws and regulations for each state you are commuting in to ensure your towed vehicle is roadworthy, that you have followed the appropriate weight limits, and correctly displayed your registration.

While these tips only scratch the surface of what there is to know about towing safety, we hope these tips give you the inspiration to start planning your next 4WD towing adventure and ensure it's a safe one!



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For those aged 50 and above, engaging in regular blood and plasma donations can have significant health benefits. Donating blood helps reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases by promoting healthy blood flow and maintaining optimal blood viscosity. Moreover, it stimulates the production of new blood cells, which can be particularly beneficial for older individuals.

Plasma donations, in particular, can be a game-changer. Plasma is rich in antibodies and proteins, contributing to a strengthened immune system. This becomes increasingly crucial as individuals age and may experience a decline in immune function. By donating plasma, older donors actively contribute to their own well-being while saving lives.

### How to Get Involved

Jump on the website [www.lifeblood.com.au](http://www.lifeblood.com.au) or phone 131495 to book a donation.

Joining the Four Wheel Drive Lifeblood Team not only fosters a sense of community but also provides a unique opportunity to make a collective impact. The camaraderie among team members creates a supportive environment where individuals' efforts count towards something bigger. Simply mention the team at your next donation or join online.

For those who want to take it a step further, organizing a presentation or group donation activity within your club can be a rewarding experience. Reach out to Ash from Lifeblood at [ahales@redcrossblood.org.au](mailto:ahales@redcrossblood.org.au) for assistance or resources. Let's make 2024 our biggest year yet.

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