

TRACK WATCH



SEPTEMBER 2024

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MACALISTER 4WD - HIGH COUNTRY
PAJERO 4WD - 40TH ANNIVERSARY
BAIRNSDALE 4WD - CLEAN UP**



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TRACKWATCH

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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 FWDV CEO



I would like to introduce myself as the new CEO of Four Wheel Drive Victoria. And also update you on paving the way for a

new direction for 4wding. I also wish to acknowledge the fantastic work Wayne Hevey has done for the association for the past 15 years as CEO, including the milestones and achievements as a collective.

I also wish to recognize the abundant work the volunteers and clubs continue to do with activities such as the Clean up the Bush program, upcoming track clearing days, and the assistance in promoting 4WDing at the National 4x4 Outdoors Show recently in August.

Later this year, FWDV will commence consulting with clubs, members, and stakeholders on what objectives they see as important in shaping a new three-year strategic roadmap with clear deliverables. These pillars may include digital and video engagement, technology/platforms, a new website, partnerships/TV/media, track/area access, growth, and educating/attracting younger demographics.

FWDV is also in trial stage 1 of a new cloud-based and nationally-integrated management platform, stage 2 will be an opportunity for clubs to adopt the platform, features will include; enhanced communication tools, digital touchpoints, finance models, memberships/online payments, governance tools, data reporting mechanisms for the industry and more.

The Association continues to strengthen the agency and government partnerships we have, such as with Parks Victoria, DECCA, and Land Managers and we continue to voice our submission on the Central Highlands Assessment. FWDV is committed to supporting the recreational interests of our member clubs and the greater four-wheel drive community by maintaining the sustainable current track and area access here in Victoria.

Having already visited several affiliated clubs recently, and over the next 12 months, if invited or accepted by clubs, staff and I would like to schedule a visit to clubs/meetings or events, to engage with the members, understand what support you require from FWDV and our team, ideas to increase member benefits or understand the current challenges/wins you are dealing with.

I am excited for the possibilities and direction for the future for 4wding, and ensuring Victoria sets the benchmark for innovation and leadership in this space.

Craig Ryan
CEO

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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 Call the office (03) 9874 7222 for further information

PROFICIENCY COURSES

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

BY: JO SOMERFIELD

Four Wheel Drive Victoria were once again an important part of the National 4x4 Show - Melbourne. Holding a stand to promote our affiliated 4wd clubs, educate the public whilst encouraging training to those are interested and of course be there to answer any other questions that the punters had regarding 4wd in Victoria, our affiliated clubs along with how to join one and how to look after the environment when 4wding. With the stand set up in Hall 3 on Thursday, the team were there early on Friday ready and rearing to go for the 3 days.

FWDV had amazing volunteers from various clubs assisting on the stand along with some of our affiliated clubs having their own stands such as Everest 4wd Club of Victoria, Ineos 4x4 Club Victoria, Nissan Four Wheel Drive Club of Victoria and Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria along with Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria, Wanderin 4 Wheelers and Pajero 4wd Club of Victoria sharing our stand. We also had Ashley Hales from Red Cross Lifeblood join FWDV, who had plenty of signups to donate blood.

The show had something for everyone, obviously loads of stalls which were selling all the accessories you could possibly require through to the ginormous offroad vehicles that looked like they were on steroids. Your camping needs were also covered, with loads of roof top tents through to campers and vans of all shapes and sizes.

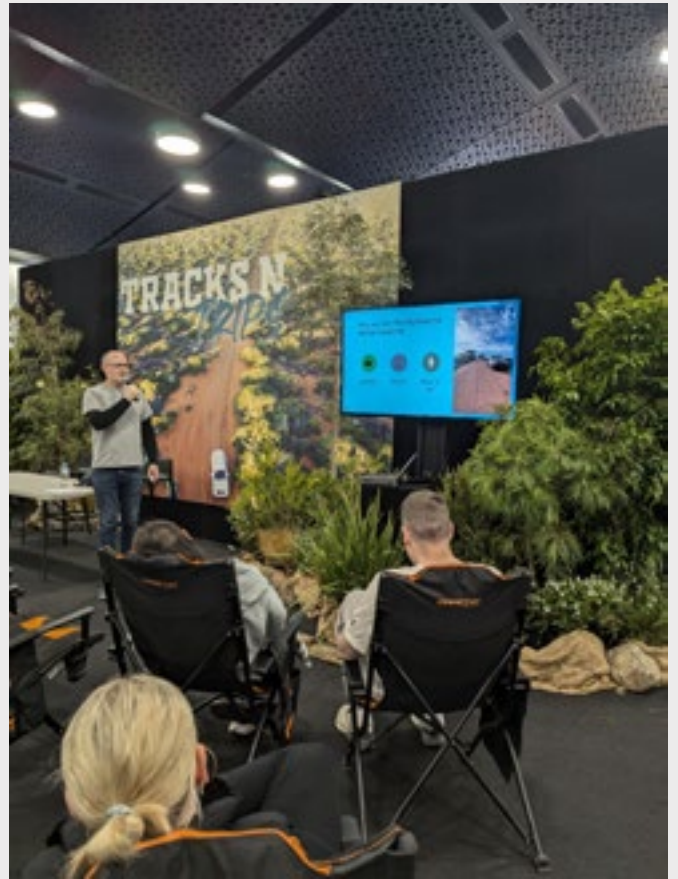
Apart from all of the stalls selling their goods, there were driving demos taking place on Mount Maxxis, guest speakers at The Outback Stage, BMX stunt shows, music, wildlife shows and various workshops. A big thank you to Zach Wilson from LROCV who was the host on the Tracks N Trips Stage. Some great talks were held on the stage by some affiliated clubs including the Everest 4WD

Club of Victoria, Ineos 4x4 Club Victoria and the Peninsula 4x4 Club.

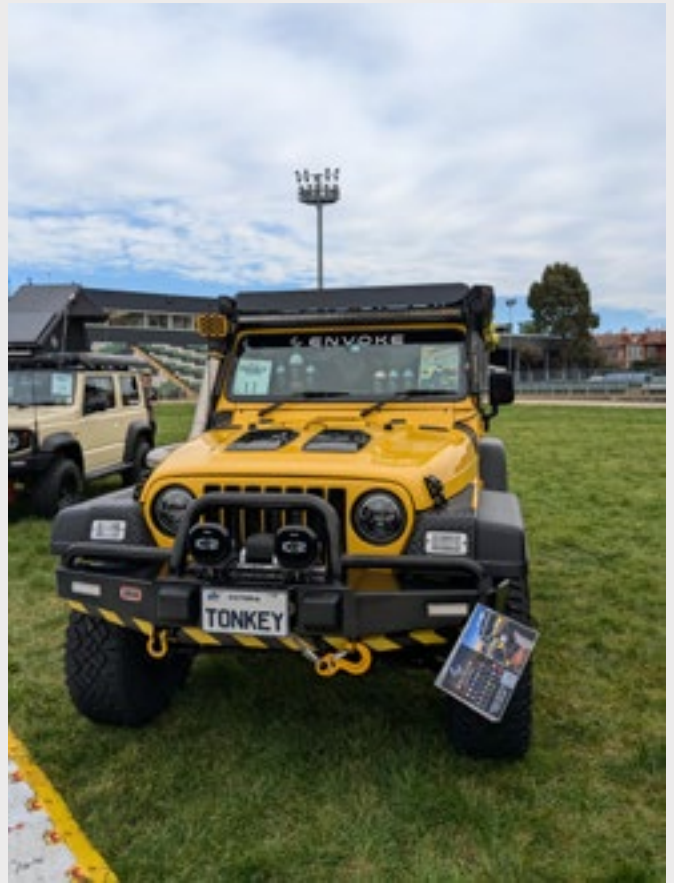
The judging of the Show N Shine was once again left in FWDV's hands. Saturday's category was Terrific Tourer, both pre and post 2004 with many amazing rigs that would take you off grid for a long time on memorable adventures. Sunday's category was Rough and Tumble with pre and post 2004. These rigs would be able to take you into many fantastic locations away from the crowds. As you can image, the Show n Shine finalists were very enthusiastic about their vehicles and loved showing them off to both the judges and the public. It was exciting to see how many young adults had purchased their vehicles prior to obtaining their licences and had proceeded to work on them themselves often with the assistance of family and friends. It shows how much working on our 4wd vehicles brings people together, having the same interests and being able to help each other and learning lots in the process.

Thank you so much from the FWDV Board and Staff to the volunteers that assisted on the stand, the large number of members from LROCV meant there wasn't a minute the show was on without a volunteer from the club manning the stand. Along with the excellent volunteers always ready to put their hand up from clubs including, Pajero 4WD Club of Victoria, Toyota Four Wheel Drive Club and the Wanderin 4 Wheelers.

With storms bringing a close to the show on the Sunday afternoon and with some excellent luck and planning, everything from FWDV was bumped out without even getting wet. Plans have already begun for 2025, FWDV will make sure to update clubs on plans and dates as they are announced in the future.

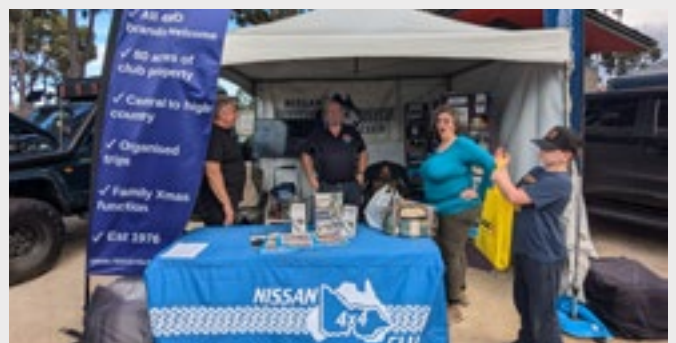


NATIONAL 4x4 OUTDOORS SHOW





NATIONAL 4x4 OUTDOORS SHOW



NATIONAL 4x4 OUTDOORS SHOW



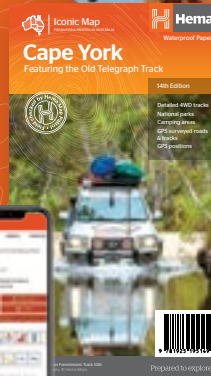
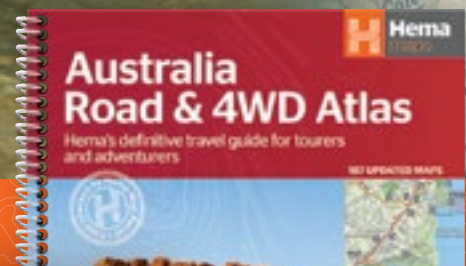


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A group of four 4WD vehicles, including a silver pickup truck, a black SUV, and two white SUVs, are parked on a dirt track in a forest. Several people are standing near the vehicles, and the scene is set among tall, thin trees with green foliage.

HIGH COUNTRY DAY TRIP

BY: JENNIFER WRIGLEY

Billy Goat Bluff is one of the High Country tracks that 4 wheel drivers just have to conquer at least once. A convoy of 7 vehicles from the Macalister 4 Wheel Drive Touring and Social Club left Sale at 8 o'clock on a beautiful Saturday morning in February with "Billy Goat" in our sights.

An easy drive took us through Stratford, Stockdale and Dargo then onto the High Plains Rd where we turned off to the historic site of Grant township. A welcome smoko break and airing down before continuing on to Talbotville which is another historic town site. Looking at the landscape now its hard to believe there were actually towns up here. The early pioneers really were pretty amazing. No 4 wheel drives with a lift kit and diff locks to tackle the rugged terrain back then. After a quick lunch break in Talbotville we continued driving before regrouping at Randalls Track. Our group leader suggesting those driving manual vehicles practice some hill starts at this point as we were about to embark on some very steep terrain. It is quite daunting looking at the tracks from the bottom but not half as bad when actually on them. From Randalls Track we went onto Conway

and Collingwood Spur Tracks. The view from some places on these tracks are stunning as is the Wongungarra River at Kingswell Bridge where we again stopped for a break and to regroup. Two of the convey decided to head home while the rest headed up Billy Goat. Two of our group had been on the track several years before and were quite shocked at how the track has deteriorated. There were 3 other vehicles on the helipad which is on the track but thankfully we did not meet anyone coming the opposite direction when we were negotiating the track. It is not for the fainthearted but well worth the effort. Very gnarly with huge rocks and at times choosing the best line to take is nearly impossible. Pleased to report there were no casualties.

The whole group conquered one of the most iconic and steepest tracks in the state and it felt good!

After catching our breath at the top and comparing "notes" about the drive we took off for home down Marathon Rd, through Briagalong and Stratford to Sale. It was a huge day clocking up 270kms in just over 12 hours. Everyone was exhausted but feeling very accomplished after a fantastic day in the beautiful High Country.




 50TH
 YEARS
 ANNIVERSARY


Let's celebrate! The Victorian Four-wheel Drive Club (VFWDC) is hitting the big 5-0, and we're ready to party! It's been half a century of adventure and camaraderie, and we're gearing up for some serious fun. We've rolled out the birthday cake - it's got so many candles on it that you'd think we were sitting 'round a campfire! Grab yourself a cold bevvy, settle in and join us as we raise a toast to our rich history and the amazing memories we've made along the way.

From our humble beginnings back in '74 when founding members Rob McKay and Dennis Cousins dreamt up trips (think Simpson Desert type stuff!) at a church hall in Dandenong to being one of the driving forces and a foundational member club of Four Wheel Drive Victoria, it's been quite the ride...

Here at VFWDC, we've seen it all! From the days of waitlists and maxed-out memberships to our first trips to Bells Flat (it's so secret that you won't find it now that Thompson Dam sits over it) and beyond. We're a very proud, diverse and all-inclusive club that promotes and values our 'everyone is welcome' philosophy.

Safety and education have always been at our core, with proficiency courses led by our very capable team of volunteer instructors, and a strong focus on responsible off-roading. You'd be amazed at how much additional confidence our members have after completing their driver training, often passing with flying colours.

Our fleet has evolved over the years too, from classic 'Cruisers and Patrols to more modern rigs like Rangers and Discos (that's also 'bush speak' for the folks at Parks Vic attending a bush dance!). From first having fourbies with no seat belts, no air-conditioning

and no air bags, we now carry in our rigs all the mod-cons like 12V fridges, high-tech winches and LED lighting.

Looking back over the years, we've run many trips to places such as the High Country, Cape York, Simpson Desert and Tassie. We've even covered some of the lesser traveled routes such as following the Tropic of Capricorn, the Anne Bedell Highway, Canning Stock Route and the Gibb River Road.

Many of our longer term members have enjoyed watching their kids grow up with the club, starting out as backseat passengers to eventually wheeling it on their own. But even after our kiddy members have all but grown up, they just love busting out the marshmallows when we're around a campfire.

In the spirit of volunteering, we have on many occasions been involved with things like the annual Oxfam Christmas tree deliveries, clean up the bush and track clearing exercises, supporting Blaze Aid after bush fires and providing other forms of community and event based support.

As we look back on the past 50 years, we can't help but wonder what the future holds. Will we stick to the same old rutted tracks or start to blaze new trails in our plug in EVs and hybrids? Whatever comes next, we know we'll face it together, with the same spirit of adventure that's kept us going all these years.

So if you're up for it, come join us for a month-long celebration, including a camping weekend away at Aberfeldy (the closest that we could get to our club's first bush camp down at Bells Flat) and a special dinner at Club Noble. Here's to 50 years of friendship, community, and unforgettable adventures. Hip hip hooray and a very happy 50th birthday VFWDC!





40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

BY: ROBYN BURKE

Looking back over 40 years of the Club there have been many changes in and around the Club, but one thing that has remained consistent is the adhering to the underlying Club purpose of promoting, representing, encouraging and supporting the recreation and sport of 4WD in a safe and responsible way.

Our motto Every Event an Adventure was an adaptation from an early Mitsubishi marketing campaign but rings true to this day through the foundations established by Arch Grant, our Club Founder and original members 40 years ago, we embrace what comes our way and continue to thrive.

So, to that end the Club started 2024 with plans to enjoy and celebrate our 40th Anniversary.

A sub-committee was formed, and ideas were thrown around, big and small, weird and wonderful.

Our first event was held at the Loch Reserve. A lot of planning, booking and organisation went into running this event. Members rushed to secure a place and the end number was 150 attending, caravans and tents circling the reserve with the Management Committee only too happy to accommodate the Club.

Trips were run to various parts, namely Phillip Island, Tarrawarra NP, Mt Worth and to the local shops for coffee and cake to name a few. The people of Loch were very receptive to our Club and organised for shops to stay open over the Easter period.

A dinner and trivia night were organised, both well attended with lots of fun and gaiety.

Next event was the 40th Luncheon held at GWBC, our meeting place. To say the GWBC Committee were accommodating was not short of fantastic.

Lunch was very popular, being a traditional Kiwi Hangi, organised by our Vice President Bella.

Twelve out of the 18 Past Presidents attended. Unfortunately, our inaugural President, Arch Grant was not able to attend, as was his family due to illness.

I am sure our more recent members learnt a lot through the speeches made by older members talking about what and how the Club ran in the early days.

Our final event was held at the July Members Meeting.

Wayne Hevey, Outgoing CEO of Four Wheel Drive Victoria, presented a plaque congratulating the Club's 40 year longevity.



Three of the 1984 original members, Bernie Kolbe, John Simonton and Barry Collins were called upon to cut the cake.

Eric Bishop, President of Four Wheel Drive Victoria, spoke on the remarkable journey the Club has been on since Arch Grant set it up in 1984. He congratulated the Club on its reputation and spoke on some of the associated history. Eric mentioned how the Pajero Challenge was a standout navigation event and that the Driver Trainer Unit, which is backed by and receives content from Four Wheel Drive Victoria's RTO, is able to train many club members safely and helps to teach and promote sustainable 4wd driving techniques. He congratulated the Club on our profound commitment to the Community, the Club's groundbreaking initiatives in environmental endeavours, our volunteer membership and promoting best 4WD practices.

The meeting then became a very social evening for catchup amongst members.

It has been a very educational time for all members, especially our more recent members who have discovered the Club activities in earlier days.





CLEAN UP THE BUSH

BAIRNSDALE 4 WHEEL DRIVE CLUB

BY: DAVE ROGERS

The call went out that the bush needed help, so on the 16th of June the Bairnsdale 4 Wheel Drive club rallied to help out. Wayne Hevey from Four Wheel Drive Victoria turned up to help out and Mal and Harry from Forest Fire Management Victoria came to hand out maps with the positions of dumped rubbish in the forest around Lakes Entrance.

Twenty-eight dump sites were identified. By 10am we all had jobs allocated and travelled to the points to collect the dumped rubbish. Most had little trouble, even though conditions were boggy and slippery on the tracks, however one of the members soon became bogged and needed assistance from another member with a winch to get him out.

We all did at least one big trailer load to the tip. Who kindly accepted all rubbish at no charge to help

out, almost one large hopper was filled by midday.

We met back at the Lakes Entrance Bowls Club for a very nice lunch provided by Forest Fire Management Victoria all in all a very successful day.

If people did the right thing and didn't dump their rubbish in our bush, these days would not be necessary. We collected couches, mattresses, beds, car wheels and lots of other household waste.

The problem seems to be very bad around Lakes Entrance area however we were assured more action would be taken to prosecute those people who are guilty of this crime, heavy penalties apply for dumping waste in the bush.

Thanks to everyone who attended and worked hard to clean up our bush environment, and thanks to Dave Rogers for his planning and organising this event.







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FWDV have been digging deep and have pulled this article from the Summer 2003 issue of Trackwatch. A few of our members might still have a few of the following cars out on tracks.

With the kind permission of RACV we publish below the article which appeared in Royal Auto in August 2003.

We have approached two very experienced four wheel driver specialists to provide comment in relation to these vehicles to give the four wheel driver more knowledge about these vehicles and their four wheel drivability.

Our first expert is Mr. Jim Kennedy, Past President and Life Member Range Rover Club Victoria, Vice President of Four Wheel Drive Victoria and Director of Safetrek 4WD Services. Jim specialises in driver training and vehicle inspections and is well known to many in the four wheel drive movement.

Our second expert is the legendary Ron Moon. Ron's creds are endless and he clearly has the best four wheel drive job in the world today. You can read about Ron's exploits in 4X4 Australia.

We here at Trackwatch hope you enjoy their contribution to this article and find the information valuable for your needs.

OUT IN THE OPEN

Don't ask this set of six to give you a cushy ride around town. But find a rough track, or even head off with a van tacked on the back, and they've got most situations covered. Ernest Litera leads RoyalAuto's annual 4WD megatest

The mid-size off-roader is now the most popular 4WD choice for those looking for one vehicle to suit a wide variety of applications. These vehicles are increasingly viewed as the new family wagon, adapting easily to the rough and tumble of a busy family life or facilitating the desire to spend more time on recreational activities. They offer a variety of clever design features such as additional seating and load versatility. Their heavy-duty construction, tough suspension and large wheels equip them well for the rigours of outback roads, towing a boat or caravan and visiting otherwise inaccessible locations. With the high expectations of the average buyer in mind, they also need to be comfortable, accommodating and car-like in their finish and presentation.

But they are a compromise. It is fair to say that, used as a daily commuter, none of our test vehicles could sufficiently disguise their imposing bulk, or the associated vision and parking difficulties which make them feel like lumbering giants around town. Prospective owners also need to examine the additional operating and maintenance costs that come with such a large and heavy vehicle. Yet for many, their combination of attributes cannot be found in any regular 2WD wagon, and once you're out on those long corrugated dirt roads, well, they just seem to make a lot more sense.

In keeping with the predominant buyer preference, we selected the petrol engine and automatic transmission version of each model, and as it turns out this meant all V6 engine models. While our test cars vary a little in specification, the

price range given in the table (see page 10) starts with the entry level model for a V6. With automatic transmission fitted, this ranges from \$37,950 for the Kia to \$48,790 for the Mitsubishi. These vehicles are often chosen for their towing abilities, so we spent our first week testing their composure while hauling a regular caravan around, and then we headed in search of some dirt.

We found it at Lake Mungo, an ancient Aboriginal campsite in NSW, about 100km north-east of Mildura. Along the way we sampled all sorts of road conditions, from the Calder Fwy and the Mallee Hwy to the sand tracks in Murray Sunset National Park, and finally the wide, occasionally rough and corrugated but certainly not difficult road into Mungo.

So, how did the vehicles handle this variety of 4WD touring conditions? We'll do them one-by-one.

Kia Sorento

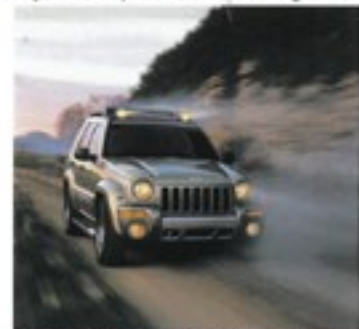
The attractively priced 3.5-litre Sorento offers a modern body design which somewhat disguises the competent underlying off-road equipment. With a full chassis, dual-range transmission, independent front suspension and five-link live rear axle, it has the specification to tackle the rough stuff, although underneath there is only basic light-gauge protection.

Cabin access is very good thanks to an effective door and sill design, and inside there is good use of storage spaces. Drivers sit somewhat upright in a relatively short, firm seat with flat seat backs and basic travel and squab angle adjustments only. Travel adjustment is insufficient for taller people. Headroom is also marginal. The dash is simple and functional if a little glitzy, and while instrumentation and switchgear is easy to use, it lacks the precision of fine graduations or crisp operation.

The rear offers good access and acceptable leg and headroom for adults. There is a 2/3-splitfold function and the seats fold flat to create a sizeable, practical luggage area. Thought has gone into the

load area with a cargo blind, power socket, four tie-down hooks, a washable mat and the full-size spare mounted under the floor. Three child-seat anchorage points are in the floor directly behind the seat. In this company, the Kia lines up with Cherokee and Pathfinder with modest overall dimensions plus marginal seating and load space. On the road, Sorento is a mixed bag. While the engine performance is strong, the auto chases up and down the gears more frequently in demanding driving conditions, with a subsequent detrimental effect on fuel economy. The steering is exceptionally light with less road feel, while the brakes feel quite heavy. A soft suspension and ride set-up works well on the bitumen but looms as a concern on corrugated dirt roads where less control means it is more likely to jiggle and skip.

Chrysler Jeep Cherokee Renegade



Jeep Cherokee Renegade, courtesy Jeep Motors.

February 2003 saw the launch of the updated Jeep Cherokee in Sport, Renegade and Limited variants. Sitting on one of the shortest wheelbases, the Jeep body is visually one of the smallest and is certainly the lightest of the group. Equipped with a revised 3.7 litre V6 engine, the Cherokee is still a po-tent performer and despite apparently punitive dimensions is a solid and capable tow vehicle.

The stocky-looking cabin has short doors but access is easy. Headroom is

marginal, but the foot and leg space for drivers is a disaster. The transmission case and floor are offset to the right, which in right-hand drive markets destroys left foot space and precludes a footrest. The seat is short and there's only basic adjustment. Instrumentation and switches are clear and easy to use, although there's no cruise control or steering wheel switches, the window controls are unfamiliar on the centre console and the radio is confusing. There's a notably small glovebox and generally limited storage space.

Even shorter rear doors pose some entry or exit difficulties. There's a 2/3-splitfold rear seat and cushion tilts to provide a hard flat floor. The three child-seat anchorage points are well positioned on the seat back so as not to impede load space. And there are four good tie-down hooks. The full-size spare is mounted on the tailgate via a difficult and unsecured two-bolt arrangement, and the small boot has no extra storage space. Jeep appears to have opted for the funky but flimsy roof rack box incorporating high spotlights.

On the road, Cherokee revels in its performance flexibility, although at some expense to economy, but it's also well sorted in the suspension and despite its size is very well controlled on poor roads. It has serious heavy-duty shielding underneath and gives the feeling it will go almost anywhere. While commendably equipped with items such as side airbags, Cherokee suffers from a lack of storage space and its cheap trim.



Nissan Pathfinder

Pathfinder was last upgraded in October 2002. While its attributes of car-like driving dynamics and simple dial-up 4WD remain, its cabin is showing its age, its 3.3 litre V6 is the least powerful of this group and it struggles under load.

The most obvious feature of Pathfinder is the low roofline and shallow (floor to roof) design of the cabin, which significantly limits headroom, particularly if you option a sunroof. The advantage is a hip-high seat and notably easy access. In addition to the basic travel and rake adjustment, the driver's seat has a front or rear height tilt which aids comfort and legroom but struggles to overcome a knees-up attitude caused by the seat's close mounting to the floor. The effective function of crystal-clear instruments and logical switches, along with wheel-mounted cruise control, a top sound system and a single 4WD dial help overcome the age of the presentation. Rear entry is reasonable if impeded by an intrusive wheel arch, while rear seating has few saving graces. Headroom is poor, the seat is low so knees are again well off the seat cushion and there's no room for feet under the front

seat. Pathfinder's rear compartment is similar to a typical 2WD wagon. The 2/3-splitfold seat and cushion tilt so the squat folds almost flat but there's nothing extra or unusual about the modest load area. There are three rear lap/sash seatbelts, three floor-mounted child-seat anchorages, a small storage tray and a full-size spare mounted under the floor.

Pathfinder has always shown good capability on serious 4WD tracks and this run reaffirmed its stability and control over sand and corrugated roads. Poor headlights were disconcerting, however. Pathfinder is the most car-like of the group to drive; it sits slightly lower and suffers less body roll in corners. Undereath there is a substantial transmission cross-membering, but scarcely anything else in terms of shielding apart from a plastic engine undertray.

Mitsubishi Pajero

The NP model Pajero hit the roads last November, bringing with it a range of safety and mechanical upgrades over the NM model and continuing with the excellent five-speed automatic. The option of tiptronic-style manual gear-shifting makes an enormous difference to the responsiveness and smoothness of Mitsubishi's V6, which would otherwise struggle somewhat with modest power and torque outputs.

With a high seating position, you step up to the driver's seat, although with large doors and grab handles this is rarely a problem. The seat is large and comfortable with front and rear tilt control in addi-



Fri 18 to Sun 20 OCTOBER, 2024

CRUISERKHANA is an exciting technical challenge made up of competition (scored) events and optional events.

Each event is carefully designed to test your skill without using speed and damage to your 4WD. Each vehicle requires a driver and a navigator, with each person in the 4WD having their own responsibilities to ensure you earn high points for each event.

CruiserKhana is open to all 4WDers, so don't miss this great annual event

It all starts on the Friday evening with a BBQ run by the Yarck CFA - all proceeds going to YARCK CFA

Friday Night Drive - Optional fun event for all ages - You never know what you'll see around our Yarck Property.

Saturday - 6 events - Happy Hour at the end of the day (BYO Drink) - Raffles - Saturday Night Dinner.

Sunday - 3 Events - Rock Climb is Optional - Overall winners announced

This is a fun event so come along as a team, dress up, enjoy a laugh. Give aways throughout the day for people just having a go and enjoying this great event.

Register here: www.cruiserkhana.com.au

Please email enquiries@cruiserkhana.com.au, if you have any questions.



tion to the standard travel and rake adjustment. There's plenty of legroom and a good footrest, while headroom is best in class. Pajero's dash is not as sharp and modern as Prado, the instrumentation is not as easy to see and the controls, although logical and simple to use, look dated. Useful storage compartments are in abundance.

Pajeros have always suffered from wheel arch intrusion into the rear door area, compromising entry. This aside, the adaptability of the rear seat and load area is commendable. The rear seat squab reclines, all seats fold flat, and a double fold of the rear seat provides a flat floor and a huge floor-to-roof measurement. A seven-seat option is available with two rear child seats that disappear into the floor. All seats have lap/sash belts, and child-seat anchorages are in the floor behind the second seat row. A full-size spare is locked to the rear door, which is large, heavy and somewhat difficult to prop open.

Pajero always feels capable with its considerable abilities on any type of road or track. It remains as useable and practical as ever, with no glaring limitations in its composure, stability and competence. While its engine is adequate but not leading, it remains a safe bet for all-round work and for interior space and practicality. Yet apart from the unique five-speed auto, there's no advancement in clever technology.

Hyundai Terracan

Since its launch in 2001, Hyundai's 3.5-litre V6 Terracan has proved to be competent and real value for money.

The cabin is tall and square, and generally it's accommodating in terms of space. You step easily up and into the high seating position, where there is good head and legroom and enough space for a decent footrest. Regrettably, despite height/tilt control, seat comfort is not as good as some others, being firmer and with less basic shaping. Simple instrumentation and user-friendly column stalks



are a treat, but secondary dash switches are all over the place and the quality of many components is questionable. The radio is also confusing. Rear seating is accommodating, with more than sufficient head and legroom as well as plenty of foot space under the front seat. The rear squab reclines for additional comfort, it has a 2/3 splitfold for load variations and will double-fold to make available the full floor-to-roof load space. Child-seat anchorages are in the floor behind the seat. Terracan is a seven-seater, but the two side-mounted rearmost child seats rob space and do not lock into the floor when in use, causing safety concerns. The tailgate is poorly damped, but a full-size spare sits neatly under the floor.

Over a variety of adverse conditions, Terracan acquitted itself surprisingly well, with good engine performance, a less-fussy transmission than the similar Sorento, and a stable and predictable manner on bad roads or when towing. On tracks, the substantial chassis and solid transmission cross-member have good clearances, but there is little other protection. The weakest aspect of Terracan in this market is its utilitarian cabin and body presentation. On the positive side, it is a serious, capable 4WD, and at a budget price.

Toyota Prado

With its new powerful 4.0 litre V6 engine and silky, precise automatic, the clear focus on consumer needs and the remarkably controlled ride and handling package, the new Prado is now the benchmark in this class.

Prado is a sizeable vehicle but the door is large and access is easy. The driver's seat is well shaped, supportive and instantly comfortable, despite having only basic travel and recline adjustments. There is plenty of head, leg and foot space, nicely positioned steering with a lot of tilt adjustment and excellent steering column stalks, cruise controls and indeed all switchgear. There are also several massive storage compartments. This is a driver's environment with sharp instrumentation, well-placed controls and an overall sense of logic and function.

A good cabin design means less wheel arch intrusion into the rear doors, and for adults the second seat space and comfort is equal to the best. Prado is an eight-seater, all with lap/sash belts, and with child-seat anchorages on the back of the second row. The full floor-to-roof load space is available with the centre seats folded and the three-child rear seats tucked flat beneath the floor. The load space is big and well thought-out, with steps to access the third row seats, luggage tie-down hooks and a tool kit. The full-size spare is mounted on the large rear door. Good clearances and a rugged chassis with extensive shielding guard against scraping damage. Good dust sealing is also evident.

On the road, Prado delivers the most complete package. It can feel cumbersome around town but as a working vehicle it's all there: engine performance and transmission refinement, handling stability and ride control with constant 4WD. The 180litre fuel tank provides a 1000km touring range.

Ernest Llitera is RACV's product testing supervisor. The road test team included Greg Hill, Michael Case, Julian Del Beato, Kathryn Hannan and Peter Daly

Photos:

Opposite: Nissan Pathfinder, approaching Woods Point. Sharyn Vanderhorst. Above: Hyundai Terracan. Photo courtesy Hyundai.

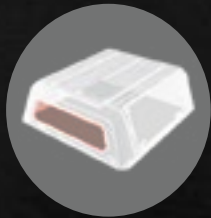
RATINGS

	PAJERO	PRADO	TERRACAN	SORENTO	CHEROKEE	PATHFINDER
OVERALL RATINGS	****	*****	****	***	****	***
Cabin access	***	***	***	****	****	****
Presentation/Features	***	****	**	***	**	***
Comfort & space	*****	*****	****	***	**	**
Performance	****	*****	***	***	*****	**
Economy	***	****	***	***	**	***
Ride & Handling	****	****	****	**	****	****
Towing	****	*****	****	***	****	***
SCALE	***** Excellent	**** Good	*** Acceptable	** Fair	* Poor	

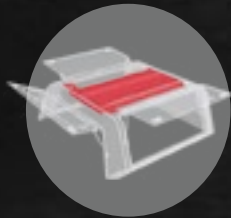


NEW STAINLESS STEEL CANOPY

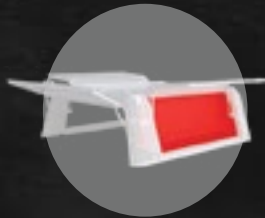
NEW LOOK. SAME TOUGH BUILD.



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Safety Screen



Roof Mounted
Table



Side Door
Storage Box

FEATURES

- Stainless Steel Construction
- Raptor Coated – Black Finish
- Dynamic Load Rating – 250Kg
- Integrated Positive Air Pressure System



4WD Wildlife and First Aid

Australia's wildlife is a unique and fascinating aspect of our country's natural heritage. When we immerse ourselves in Australia's natural habitat, it is an awe-inspiring experience that connects you to the land. However, it's important to remember that this is still the great outdoors, and we must always exercise caution when around wildlife. The saying "look but don't touch" is one to always follow closely. Cold-blooded predators, venomous snakes, and poisonous plants are just a few of the lurking threats that can be found in the bush. In this article, we'll explore ways to reduce your risk if you get into trouble while out on the road.

Wildlife

While we may want to maximise our exposure to wildlife during our planning stage, we need to remember that things don't always go to plan. It is estimated that 10 million animals die on Australian

roads due to collisions with motor vehicles each year. No driver plans to get into an accident but statistically the more we drive the higher the chances something will happen. If you happen to hit a wild animal such as a Kangaroo, it's important to do the right thing. Firstly, pull over when safe to do so. If the Kangaroo is alive or if you have identified a Joey in the Kangaroos pouch you will want to contact 000, WIRES (1300 094 737) or local police. Don't attempt to move a live Kangaroo off the road. The WIRES emergency response team will be able to instruct you on whether it is safe to transport the animal to the local vet or wait for assistance. If your vehicle is insured, it is important to take photos of the damage so that you can disclose the incident at a later time. Reduce your risk of hitting a kangaroo by avoiding any travel on country roads around dawn or dusk when Kangaroos and Wallabies are most active.



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Snakes and Spiders

Before we even hit the road, we need to make sure we have done some preparation for what we might encounter on our road ahead, packing essential survival gear, first aid kits and a snake bite kit. While most of the time snakes and spiders are more afraid of us than we are of them, they will still defend themselves if they are surprised or feel threatened. 4WD vehicles, tents and chairs make for a great temporary home to a snake or spider, as they provide great methods of regulating their temperature. If you have taken your 4WD out on the road on a cool Australian night, the warm engine bay can make for a nice bed. It's important to always be mindful when you are conducting your morning checks, especially around the tent, the bonnet and shoes.

First Aid

As highlighted above, wildlife out in the country can spring a surprise when we least expect it. Therefore, it's crucial for all adventurers to be well prepared for any emergency with adequate equipment and knowledge. A first aid kit is a must have and it should be regularly maintained throughout the year. A good first aid kit should be able to handle everything from minor injuries (scrapes, scratches, rashes and burns) to major injuries (bites, broken bones and heavy bleeding).

Key items to have in every camping first aid kit, include burn gels, burn dressings, gloves, bandages, gauze, wound dressings, medical tape, iodine swabs, insect bite sprays, antihistamines, pain relief drugs and EpiPens. For snake or spider bites, it's important to include pressure immobilisation bandages, permanent markers and conforming heavyweight bandages.

The second component of quality first aid is the knowledge. While the equipment can certainly help with most incidents, having the first aid training to deal with the major incidents might be the difference in saving a life, especially in the remote parts of the country. There are many online tools and guides that can assist with first aid training online. If you're looking for something a bit more formal, many organisations such as St John's Ambulance provide certified first aid training courses across all states and territories.

We hope these tips were beneficial and contribute to a safer trip next time. Stay safe out there.

Every drop counts

Get Ready to Rev Up for the 2024 Blood DRIVE!
1 October – 31 December 2024

It's almost time to put the pedal to the metal for a cause that should be close to all our hearts: the 2024 Blood DRIVE! In true four-wheel drive spirit, we're hitting the road to save lives, one donation at a time. This year, we have set a goal of 80 donations. Last year's drive resulted in 65 donations, helping 195 people. Let's surpass that!

To ensure your donations count towards the Blood DRIVE, make sure to join our Four Wheel Drive Victoria Lifeblood Team. You can update your 'team' preferences online at www.lifeblood.com.au, through the 'Donate Blood' App, or by calling 13 14 95. Alternatively, mention the Team when you're at the donation centre, and the staff can help.

Individual Clubs wanting community service initiatives or Team-bonding activities listen up. If your club would like to have a Lifeblood representative visit and speak at a meeting, please contact Ash at ahales@redcrossblood.org.au. This could be a great way to spark interest and engage members in a meaningful activity and learn more about what's involved. Additionally, why not make it a group effort? Ash can help organise a group donation tailored for your club. Whether it's 3 donors with their 4WDs in the car park or 30, a collective donation effort can be both motivating and rewarding.

We don't have to look far to find someone in our community who is very active in the donor space. Dave Roberts recently celebrated his 775th donation at the Ringwood Donor Centre. He is clearly very passionate about donating, recognising the real-life, life-saving impact donations have. In fact, he is striving to set a record by squeezing in 27 plasma donations in a single year. With calculated appointment scheduling and the leap year, he's on track to meet his goal. Good luck Dave!

Not sure if you're eligible to donate? Many people who think they can't donate, can. Check your eligibility at 13 14 95 or on Lifeblood's website.

We'll be sharing Blood Drive updates in the monthly e-newsletters, but if you or your club would like further support, touch base with Ash. Let's drive this cause forward and make the 2024 Blood DRIVE the best one yet.

Ready, set, donate!

AMAROK

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