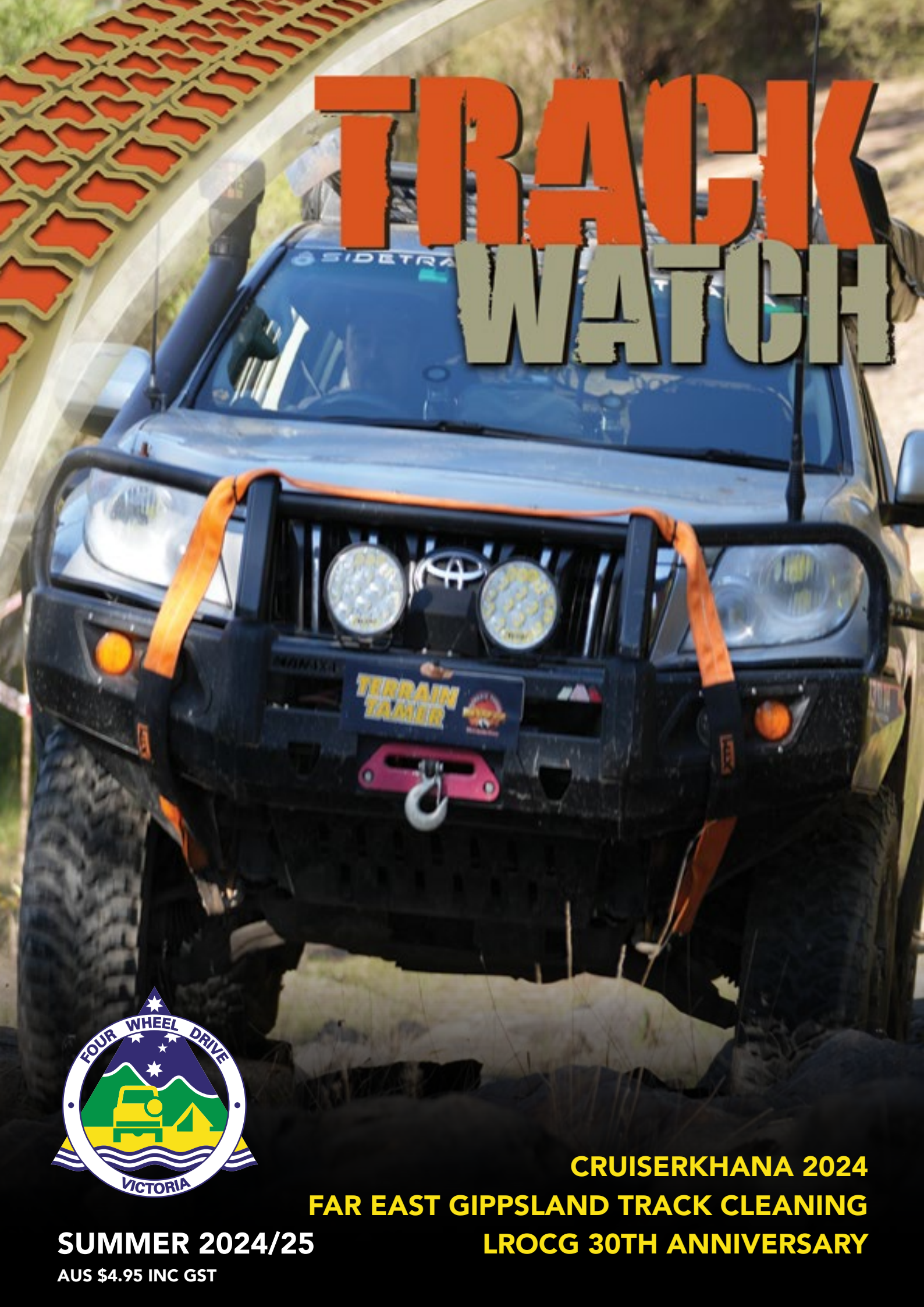


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Print Post PP 100005076

TRACKWATCH

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2025 Copy Deadline next issue

15th February for Summer 2025 issue

15th May for Winter 2025 issue

15th August for August 2025 issue

15th November for Spring 2025 issue

Advertising operations@fwdvictoria.org.au

Design and Artwork by Jaz Effect Design

Cover picture: Toyota Land Cruiser Club Victoria

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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



Since the AGM it's been a busy time for the Board, and I would like to welcome our two newest members to the board Robyn and Gareth.

In October Craig and I had a face-to-face meeting with Steve Dimopoulos MP who holds several ministerial portfolios being Minister for Environment, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events and Minister for Outdoor Recreation. The meeting was very productive, and we discussed many of the activities that clubs are involved in such as track clearing, clean up the bush, invasive species removal, camp hosting, volunteer training and other programs. For the 2024 financial year period clubs contributed to more than 15,000 volunteer hours. This would be the equivalent of eight full time employees if employed at DEECA or Parks Victoria needed to complete these tasks. I am also aware that not all volunteer hours are reported back and would like to encourage clubs too report back no matter how small the work or time

Following on, in November we were invited to participate in a Recreation and Tourism Stakeholder Workshop in Shaping the Future of Victoria's State Forests with the Great Outdoors Taskforce. The workshop was a great opportunity to meet with other community and interest groups, all who expressed similar interest in a caring for our forests and parks. We know that accessing our forests for 4WDing, recreation and tourism and improving our biodiversity and conservation efforts can go hand in hand. We are hopeful that an outcome of the workshop is to create and develop opportunities where we can find new ways of working together and prioritising projects based on each stakeholder's knowledge and experience. If you haven't done so we invite you to complete the Great Outdoor Taskforce survey by 12 Jan 2025. There is both a written and a map survey where you can provide feedback on specific areas which can

Simon van den Berg
President

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PROFICIENCY COURSES

18th February 2025 – PC250218 – Theory	1st July 2025 – PC250701 – Theory
22nd February 2025 – PC250218 – Practical	5th July 2025 – PC250701 – Practical
18th March 2025 – PC250318 – Theory	5th August 2025 – PC250805 – Theory
22nd March 2025 – PC250318 – Practical	9th August 2025 – PC250805 – Practical
8th April 2025 – PC250408 – Theory	2nd September 2025 – PC250902 – Theory
12th April 2025 – PC250408 – Practical	6th September 2025 – PC250902 – Practical
6th May 2025 – PC250506 – Theory	30th September 2025 – PC250930 – Theory
10th May 2025 – PC250506 – Practical	4th October 2025 – PC250930 – Practical
27th May 2025 – PC250527 – Theory	21st October 2025 – PC251021 – Theory
31st May 2025 – PC250527 – Practical	25th October 2025 – PC251021 – Practical
10th June 2025 – PC250610 – Theory	25th November 2025 – PC251125 – Theory
14th June – PC250610 – Practical	29th November 2025 – PC251125 – 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.



Majority of seasonal tracks have reopened. Make sure you are aware what tracks have extended closures and what tracks are open. Be aware of conditions and check for closures on More to Explore on both mobile and web.

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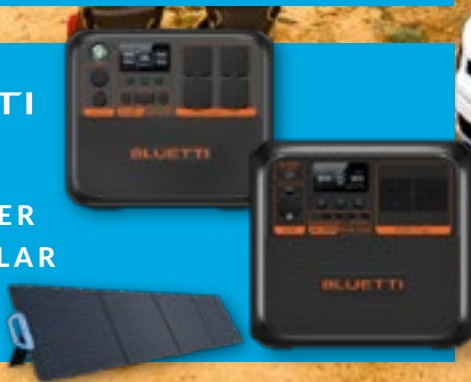
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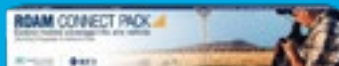
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CHECK FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RELEASES WHEN PLANNING YOUR RIVER CROSSINGS THIS SUMMER

We all know to watch for rivers rising when it rains ... but have you ever considered that water releases from dams and storages can also unexpectedly change the river height?

These releases from storages may be due to irrigation orders, environmental water deliveries, or storage height management. Checking weather conditions alone won't always tell you enough about river heights and how to plan a safe crossing. For river height changes related to environmental water deliveries you can check the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA) webpage for dates of planned releases or subscribe to the email or text notification system.

Water for the environment is water that is set aside in major reservoirs and carefully released down the river to support the health of West Gippsland's waterways. It can also be diverted from the river into the lower Latrobe wetlands. It is occasionally released into the Thomson and Macalister rivers from dams upstream. This is to help plants and animals feed, breed, move and grow but can also provide a range of benefits for kayakers and fishers. These water releases are designed to 'mimic' the natural seasonal rise and fall of the river, which has been interrupted by dams and water extraction for farming, urban and residential uses.

Sometimes small volumes of water are released over a long period of time to top up the waterway when it's getting low. This helps fish, eels and platypus move between deeper pools, giving them better access to food and habitat.

Other times larger volumes are released over a shorter time frame as a small 'pulse' across several days, which tells fish when to breed and move as it mimics natural seasonal flow patterns. Pulses like this can also be helpful to flush out poor quality water and harmful algae during the summer or over significant dry periods.

West Gippsland CMA is responsible for managing water for the environment in the Carran Carran (Thomson), Wirn Wirndook Yeerung (Macalister), and Durt'Yowan (Latrobe) rivers as well as the Lower Latrobe Wetlands, on behalf of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder.

Up to 85 GL of water for the environment is available to be delivered to these waterways this year – that's 85 billion litres or 34,000 Olympic swimming pools. All to help maintain healthy rivers and wetlands, for the animals and communities that rely on them.

West Gippsland CMA works with advisory groups to help plan and time water releases. We value their local knowledge and feedback. These groups meet twice a year and include recreational fishing representatives, landholders, community groups and water corporations. If you'd like to learn more about these advisory groups, you can email us at eflows@wgcm.vic.gov.au.

To keep up to date with when and why water for the environment is being delivered you can sign up to receive email or SMS notifications at <https://wgcm.vic.gov.au/explore-the-catchment/water-for-the-environment/current-water-releases/>

Check before you cross the river



Water for the environment deliveries
Thomson & Macalister



You may see changes in river height.
More information.
wgcm.vic.gov.au



New 4WD Victoria offices and LROCV club-rooms update

BY: ROGER BERESFORD
VICTORIAN 4WD CENTRE
- LROCV & PMC CHAIRPERSON

Earlier this year, the Victorian Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs (FWDV) entered into a joint agreement the Land Rover Owners' Club of Victoria, (LROCV) to buy and refit an established building. A suitable property was found at Unit 2 / 6 Hi-Tech Place in Rowville and was quickly purchased.

Following the purchase, a joint Property Management Committee (PMC) was formed, and it has been working to develop plans and obtain permits from City of Knox Council as well as the necessary building permits prior to build commencing. Our joint goal is to commence build in early 2025 and we have set an ambitious target of initial occupancy in June 2025.

In order to better manage and administer the property and eventually to advertise and sell access to the meeting rooms, the PMC has registered a new business name "**Victorian 4WD Centre**". The new entity will manage funds injected by the two parent entities to pay for the refit of the property as well as its ongoing management, providing fully transparent reporting to the Board of FWDV and Committee of the LROCV.

In the meantime, the LROCV has arranged two working bees, together with other activities to remove the existing office environment with the building, filling rubbish skips and trailers with both green and hard waste. The grounds outside the property have been cleared of overgrowth and rubbish and look substantially more inviting. Inside, we have cleared nearly all of the existing build, recovering timbers, cables, electrical switches and more for re-use when the build commences.

A big thank you to all those who have contributed their time and efforts to date - every hour our volunteers contribute helps enormously and directly offsets costs we would incur if we were to source outside help. We expect to be able to complete significant portions of the refit through volunteer labour, supplemented by professional assistance where required. These photographs show some of the journey to date.

All feedback is welcome – please send any queries or suggestions to pmc.vic4wdcentre@gmail.com

We will continue to update progress so watch this space for more information.





From left to right: Colin Cook (LROCV); Fred de Gooyer (past President LROCV); Gary Hickingbotham (current Vice President LROCV); Eric Bishop (past President of 4WD Victoria). Both Fred and Eric are the driving forces in seeing this property come to fruition.



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ENTRY: Adult \$18 - Children under 16 free (payment online via website)

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- Demonstrations of 4WD techniques
- 4WD Club and Association displays
- Camping Gear
- Off-Road Camper Trailers and Caravanning
- Concours D'irt 4WD Show & Shine
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- Annual 4WD Club Challenge
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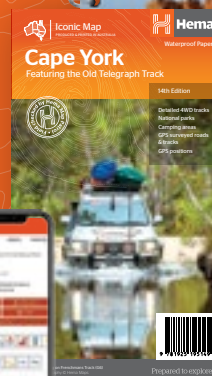


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CRUISERKHANA 2024

A WEEKEND OF FUN, CHALLENGE, AND CAMARADERIE

BY: MANDA GLADSTONE & GARETH MILLOY

Cruiserkhana 2024 kicked off on a rather damp and rainy Friday morning, but that didn't put a dampener on the excitement of the competitors and volunteers who arrived at the Toyota Landcruiser Club of Victoria's (TLCCV) Yarck property. As the cars rolled in for check-in and camp allocations, spirits were high and anticipation was building for the weekend ahead.

A Night Drive Adventure

Friday evening saw the start of the first optional event: the Night Drive. Competitors were divided into two convoys, ready to explore some of the club's most iconic four-wheel drive tracks under the cover of night. The challenge? Keep an eye out for hidden toy animals cleverly placed along the route. To add some humour to the event, the event sponsor and volunteer coordinator, made a memorable appearance, dressed as a kangaroo chasing the Chief Marshall, who was decked out as a dragon. The night was filled with laughter, good-natured competition, and, of course, plenty of mud!

Saturday: The Real Action Begins

Saturday morning dawned with the promise of a fun-filled day. Competitors gathered at the bus stop, bacon and egg roll in hand, for the daily briefing. Team Toyota was there with the all-new Toyota Prado on display, a great way to kick off the day. Once the

formalities were done, the real action began with the first three events: Flag Slalom, Wet Lap, and the Timber Challenge. Each test pushed the drivers to the limits of their abilities as they navigated through a series of tight turns, slippery tracks, and timber obstacles.

After a well-deserved lunch break, the competition ramped up with the Cross Country, Mud Lap, and Water Crossing events. The water crossing was a special highlight this year, making its return to the competition after a 10-year hiatus. This skill-testing challenge required competitors to recreate the classic "crossing a river" scenario: setting the vehicle up correctly to create a perfect bow wave to knock off the first of three floating balls. Easier said than done, but the competitors gave it their all, with many showcasing impressive technical skills.

Cheese, Wine, and Camaraderie

Once the events were complete for the day, the competitors convoyed back to the Hilton camp area, where they were treated to a Cheese and Wine Hour, hosted by the Cruiserkhana committee. This was a great opportunity for everyone to unwind, mingle, and discuss the day's events. The evening continued with the much-anticipated raffle and a delicious dinner. The camaraderie and friendly competition were palpable as everyone enjoyed the evening's festivities.



Sunday: The Final Push

As the sun rose on Sunday, the competitors gathered once again for the last day of the competition. The final three events — Sand Trap, Rock Climb, and the Balance Beam — proved to be as challenging as they were fun. The Balance Beam, in particular, required competitors to keep their vehicles level while driving across a narrow beam, testing not only their driving skills but also their knowledge of their vehicles' handling capabilities.

With the final events wrapped up, everyone gathered at the bus stop one last time to celebrate the winners of each event, the Best Team, the covered TLCCV Bob Hollows award and the overall winners. The competition was fierce, but everyone took home great memories and a sense of accomplishment.

A Grateful Closing

As the awards ceremony concluded, Harrison from Toyotas marketing department and any also one of the competitors in this years event, took the stage to express their gratitude to all the participants, volunteers, and sponsors. They presented TLCCV with a beautiful canvas print of the new Prado at the top of Latimers Track — a stunning piece of artwork that captured the essence of the weekend's spirit.

With that, Cruiserkhana 2024 came to a close, but not without a heartfelt thank you from event coordinators and Chief Marshalls, Manda Gladstone and Gareth Milloy. "From the bottom of our hearts, we'd like to thank all of our competitors, sponsors, and volunteers," said Manda. "Without each of you, this event wouldn't be possible. We hope to see you all again next year for an even bigger and better

Cruiserkhana 2025 as we celebrate 50 years of Cruiserkhana!"

As the competitors packed up and began their journeys home, there was a shared sense of excitement for the future of this iconic event. Here's to Cruiserkhana 2025 — may it be even bigger, bolder, and more unforgettable than ever before!

Cruiserkhana 2024 Co-ordinator & Chief Marshall Manda Gladstone & Gareth Milloy







18TH ANNUAL FAR EAST GIPPSLAND PARKS VICTORIA TRACK CLEARING

SUBMITTED BY: PRUE HASLER – FWDV REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR FAR EAST GIPPSLAND

A marvellous long term collaboration of 3 Melbourne based 4WD clubs and Parks Victoria Rangers in the Errinundra National Park, Snowy River National Park and the Alpine National Park. We enjoy liaising with and working with the Parks Victoria Rangers who are always enthusiastic and enjoy sharing their knowledge about these National Parks with us.

Thank you to the club members who volunteer, drive the 450kms to the Bendoc Parks Victoria office, bring their chainsaws and equipment, work hard and then travel back to Melbourne.

By Andrew Mortlock - Pajero 4WD Club

What can I say? The annual Far East Gippsland Track Clearing expedition was another epic event, underlined by big timber. And I mean BIG TIMBER!

The seasonal closure of tracks in the Snowy River and Errinundra National Parks had seen months of storm force wind, torrential rain and snow. We subsequently expected plenty of track erosion, trees down and raging rivers and we were well equipped with the big chainsaws, drag chains, winches and crow bars. The equipment was all required.

An advance party from the Pajero 4WD Club took on some specific tasks from Parks Victoria, including repairing the water heater at the Deddick PV depot house, clearing of the iconic Deddick Trail, assessing the Mt Joan Staircase and clearing Waratah Flat Rd.

My group attacked the southern section of the Deddick Trail from Yalmy Rd up to the Mt Joan

Staircase. We got about 10km in where we were confronted by a monster tree across the track, measuring over a metre in diameter. We set to work using every tool and technique we could muster and 3 hours and plenty of 2-stroke later we had removed a few tons of timber and cleared a vehicle width through the tree.

The convoy moved through but came up against another tree a couple of kms later. We were out of time and had to back track south and back to camp. We made new plans to reconvene at the Bendoc Parks office the next morning and have another crack at the Deddick and Waratah Flat.

The next morning we woke to bleak and miserable conditions. It was not looking good for another tilt at the Deddick Trail so we instead turned our focus to Waratah Flat, a relatively easy and safer track. Alas on arrival at Waratah Flat the weather had improved considerably and we subsequently decided to split into two groups and tackle both tracks.

Once again I took the Deddick group and this time we were able to clear our way to Mt Joan. The other group worked on a huge tree on Waratah Flat Rd, not far past the Waratah Flat campground.

My group lunched at the Mt Joan Helipad before going down on foot to assess the Staircase. It was a mess. Vehicle swallowing ruts caused by constant water erosion were accompanied by a large tree



across a 25° slope section of the track. The tree was above our pay scale to clear, the root ball perched precariously on the edge of the embankment and the trunk well above shoulder height. It was dangerous and the decision was made there and then by Parks Victoria to close that section of the Deddick Trail until the tree and the track surface could be made safe by professional contractors.

The forecast was for weather to set in towards the end of the day and the forecast was accurate. We arrived back at camp to increasing rain and wind and we battened down the hatches for the night. It was a night of deafening torrential rain and wind and when we stuck our heads out of the tent the following morning we were surrounded by a lake of water.

We all arrived at the Bendoc Parks Victoria office on Saturday morning meeting up with the 4 Parks Victoria Rangers and main volunteer group, again expecting a significant change of brief with the conditions the way they were. Sure enough the original plans to clear multiple tracks through the Snowy River and Alpine National Parks had to be abandoned. Instead we divided into 4 groups to all clear various sections of Errinundra National Park. The tracks in Errinundra are a lot easier but the trees are no smaller. Well OK, they are a lot BIGGER.

The weather gradually improved through the morning from driving rain to incessant drizzle but the teams all worked together to do some amazing work. My team worked our way south down Hensleigh Creek Rd and past the picturesque Queensborough Campground before coming up against yet another monster tree. It was considered unsafe to work on in the conditions so we marked it



and turned around.

We drove back through the towering forests, tree ferns and flowering Waratahs that make Errinundra such a special place.

It was a weekend of challenging weather conditions and huge trees, but it did not deter us. I'm already looking forward to next year.

By Mark Bown – Range Rover Club of Victoria

This weekend was a joint meeting of the Range Rover Club, the Land Rover Club, and the Pajero Club to join Parks Victoria in Far East Gippsland to open some of the seasonally closed tracks in preparation for the opening on Melbourne Cup weekend in two weeks time. The weather wasn't predicted to be as good as it might have been.

We met in Bendoc at the pub on Friday evening- the staff had apparently been expecting four people for dinner, we were closer to forty. The dealt with the situation splendidly! The Chicken Parma is something to behold! Most of us camped at Wilson's Hut a few km away. The night was a bit aquatic with about 60mm of rain falling.

We met at the Depot on Saturday morning at 8:30 - the plans had to be revised to accommodate the track conditions- we divided into four groups and headed for the more level tracks in Errinundra. We managed to find useful things to do, opening up a few tracks clearing a number of trees from the tracks in the mist and light rain.

Saturday evening saw us all assembled at the Bendoc Hall for a BBQ put on by Parks Victoria. Retired PV Ranger Wing who was the very first Ranger for track clearing showed up - great to catch

up with him. The BBQ was followed by a talk by one of the Rangers, Peta, who had been involved in the recent freeing of a whale entangled in fishing "line" off of Mallacoota - Peta was a little out of her element being more at home on the water- qualified as a Skipper, able to repair a marine diesel engine at sea. The \$30 million boat she got to "play with" was quite a bonus (it was the first time she'd steered a ship with a mouse rather than a wheel). This was followed by a viewing of a video on the training of wildlife Rangers in South Africa - a collection was taken for supporting their widows and \$211.00 was raised.

Sunday saw a smaller group comprised of 4 Rangers and about 8 club volunteers assemble to have a stab at one of the larger trees obstructing a track- about 1.5m in diameter - very educational! Job done we headed back to the camp ground at about 1pm.

A great weekend out yet again.

By Roland Hollingsworth – Range Rover Club of Victoria

It was the first time I had attended a track clearing so I didn't really know what to expect. The way the work was conducted and supervised by Parks Victoria made it very safe and fun for all participants.

Graeme Bartle-Smith certainly should be crowned the "leech king" for the weekend. They just loved him! Despite the weather's best attempts to rain us out, it was lots of fun and the scenery was just breathtaking. The Rangers did an excellent job arranging the crews and tracks to be cleared with safety in mind.

Friday night at the Bendoc Hotel and camping at Wilson's Hut with old and new friends was a treat. It was good to give back in some small way to make our High Country accessible for the 2024/25 season. Saturday night was simply wonderful with Parks going to so much trouble. With their BBQ, talk, and a movie, it was a sensational night enjoyed by all.

By Jennifer Bartle-Smith – Range Rover Club of Victoria

So much more than the task at hand

Well, what a ride! We enjoyed a nostalgic walk down memory lane, a trip into an alternate universe, mind-blowing drives through old growth forest, fabulous and not so fabulous encounters with nature, rain, fog, new faces, familiar faces and more.



And despite the weather being less than ordinary, and me feeling as useful as legs on a snake, all in all it was a terrific weekend.

As campers moved into Wilson's Hut near Bendoc from three clubs on Friday afternoon – ours (RRCV), the Pajero 4WD Club and Landrover Owners' Club (mind you they don't all own one) – we soaked up our bush camping haven. Healthy bush, plenty of open space for campers, fire pits and tables. What more could one ask for? Oh yes, it was a free camp. But enough 'soaking', first stop – the pub.

They sure don't do pubs like the Bendoc Hotel in the city, (or maybe they do and I just need to get out more). Felt like we had stepped back in time. Picture small yellow, smoke and time aged rooms that had heard many a story shared over the beer on tap. That, and meals the size of small children. And I mean chubby small children. Hot tip - if you ever go there to eat, order the half-sized meal and then share it with a friend.

Stuffed to the gills, we headed off to our first 'double-doona' night (that's code for VERY cold) and a night of heavy rain. So much rain. Next morning, some woke to water-front camping, while others to indoor water features. But undeterred we loaded up with raincoats, winter woollies and a packed lunch with a thermos before heading to the Parks Victoria office where Graeme and I enjoyed a trip down memory lane.

Remember those mostly defunct café bars with red clickers to dish out your instant coffee and sugar? Defunct for a good reason I reckon. Probably not that any of you will give a toss, but Graeme and I met over one of those café bars 45 years ago. Oh, the memories and flashbacks of a time when we were young, naive and could eat and drink whatever we liked without consequence.

Then came the necessary but preaching-to-the-converted safety procedures that Parks Victoria have to deliver, before the also mandatory group photo by Pajero Club photographer Frank Amato who was the chief photographer for the event. Nothing like putting on a happy face while standing in bitter wind with the rain coming at us sideways.

Finished with the formalities and realising the weather wasn't going to improve, we headed out filled with anticipation to get the job done. I think we had a top of 10 degrees, drizzly rain plus wind chill that day. Are we having fun yet?

We headed down single lane well-formed, yet muddy tracks, past trees that would make a logger salivate, masses of wildflowers and huge tree ferns. The Errinundra National Park is truly breathtaking and worth visiting in any weather. The low cloud / fog gave it an eerie yet peaceful feel.

With 25 cars in all, divided into four groups, our (still) somewhat large group meant that only the quick and very enthusiastic helpers up the front of the convoy did most of the clearing work. Call me a princess, but I quickly figured that I could sit in the warmth of the car and enjoy the stunning old growth rainforest without anyone noticing I wasn't doing much. While I did pop out occasionally to take a photo and say 'good job everyone' that soon turned to 'only get out when I really had to' because we had entered leech city! So much blood drawn, the blood bank would have been envious.

At the end of the day, we slipped into our party clothes (not really) for a fabulous BBQ and fresh food spread put on by Parks Victoria. The evening provided an opportunity to mingle with the other clubs and get to know a bit about some of the terrific Parks Victoria crew. Peta (Mallacoota turf) shared some of her amazing personal journey. From delivering multi-million-dollar luxury boats up and down the coast as a skipper, to an incredible whale rescue.

A humpback was caught in tonnes (yes tonnes) of rope and other fishing paraphernalia that it had dragged across the globe from the Antarctic on a South American ship. By the time it was found,

it was incredibly weak and a white pointer was circling, ready for the kill. The good news is that most of the rope was cut off, the whale appeared to say thank you with a slap of its tail and off it went never to be seen again.

Next was a short film about the good yet dangerous work of rangers. In Africa around 150 rangers lose their lives each year in the line of duty, protecting animals against poachers. Club members all chipped in to the Thin Green Line Foundation to support the rangers, their families and communities. \$211.00 raised for the Thin Green Line.

As day two dawned, many packed up and headed home. Understandable given it's about a six-hour trip back to Melbourne. The rest of us were off to clear the track of the mother of all trees. Really not a 14-person job, but nevertheless interesting to watch the mammoth undertaking from the side-lines. We were fortunate to have a dry although cold day (7 to 10 degrees...brrrrr) and only one leech that I know of after it had had a good feed (eeewwww). It was also a good opportunity for a bit of a walk.

Around four hours of chain sawing, chopping, crowbar-ing and carefully rolling of the tonnes of wood off the track later, Parks Victoria called it almost done. Wow! I have renewed respect for the work they do. It's massive. They only have a small crew and a small and ever-diminishing budget. And they had an even bigger monster tree to clear on another critical fire track. Don't know how they do it all. I can certainly appreciate how important our Club's participation is to Parks Victoria efforts in keeping the tracks open.

And so the weekend adventure at Errinundra NP came to a close. Graeme and I headed down the mountain to Orbost then on to Cape Conran where we enjoyed sun, surf, sand, a fabulous coastal walk and more wildlife encounters. A huge tiger snake and red belly black snake plus a monitor casually moved through our site. Crikey!

The trip left me wanting more. More bush, more wilderness and more feeling like I was part of something bigger than myself.

Trip Participants

Range Rover Club of Victoria	9
Pajero 4WD Club	38
Land Rover Owners Club of Vic	4



30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

ARTICLE BY: SUE MARKHAMS
PHOTOS BY: VIVIAN LEE

In August 1994, Frank O'Neill liaised with Ray Massaro, Dealer Principal of Massaro Motors, who, at that time were the Land Rover dealers in Morwell, with a view to forming a club. Ray Massaro ran a social evening at the Morwell Italian Australian Club for his existing Land Rover customers. This was followed up by an intensive driver training day in September, at the Anglesea driver training facility with Adrian DeJardin expert four-wheel drive driver trainer and Owen Peake from Land Rover instructing. Ray Massaro generously paid for the day. From these two events, the Land Rover Owner's Club of Gippsland was formed with Frank O'Neill being elected as the first president. The first meeting of the Club was held in the Massaro Motors showroom on the 3rd of October 1994.

The Club made an application to join and was accepted to the peak body for recreational four-wheel driving, the Victorian Association of Four-Wheel Drive Clubs. That organisation is now known as Four Wheel Drive Victoria and the Club is still affiliated.

The Club's focus from its inception has been that of a four wheel drive touring group with an emphasis on family participation and enjoying each

other's company and vehicles.

A monthly Club newsletter keeps members up to date with Club activities as well as articles relating to the Land Rover world; history, new products and technical items.

Although a Land Rover focused Club enjoying "The Best 4x4 By Far", as the Land Rover advertising slogan says - with members owning just about every model of Land Rover product, from early Series 1's to the latest machinery - non-Land Rover owning people have always been welcome to join and participate in Club activities. Within the membership there is a wealth of experience and knowledge about Land Rovers, four-wheel driving techniques, camping, communication, navigation, towing, outback touring and vehicle setups.

For many years the Club has had a close relationship with the Parks Victoria Foothills and Southern Alps Team and engages in volunteer work in the Alpine National Park. Club members also volunteer their time as Camp Hosts at various locations throughout the state.

The Club is unique in the level of support it receives from the local Land Rover dealer, Gippsland



Jaguar Land Rover in Traralgon, we even hold our Club meetings in their showrooms. Contacting the Club is through Charlie Calafiore at Gippsland Jaguar Land Rover on 03 51721100 or visit our Club website lrocg.jimdo.com

The very first Club trip – on which nearly all of the Club members attended - was led by Greg and Lois Rose, and was held in the Avon River area in the foothills north of Maffra, with the lunch spot being at Huggetts Crossing on the Avon River. To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Land Rover Owner's Club of Gippsland, a trip was organized to retrace the Club's very first trip. What follows is Sue Markham's report of the trip, with photos by Vivian Lee.

LROCG 30th Anniversary Trip to Huggett's Crossing October 12th 2024

All participating members gathered at the Macalister River Reserve in Maffra at 9.30am, for what would be a lovely outing. The weather was favourable. Once housekeeping and the mandatory briefings were done the convoy headed north through the township, leaving the bitumen at Kentucky Road. The dust began to rise, with the convoy spreading out a little to aid comfort and vision. A steady pace was set with all adhering to convoy etiquette and waiting at each corner for the next vehicle to arrive. This would be important on the homeward phase as many turns and unmarked roads could lead the driver astray.



A few stops were taken at lookouts, Green Hill lookout and Huggett's lookout provided us with magnificent views across the ranges and the Avon Valley below.

Our caterer was spotted on the track pulling his food van into the crossing in anticipation of setting up before we arrived, diminishing any thoughts this was a difficult 4WD track, bumpy but not difficult. The van did scrape its tail on the journey reminding travellers it's not for larger caravans to venture further.

We all arrived drama free and ready for lunch at Huggett's crossing campground. Whilst the caterers did the last-minute preparation, many of us wandered off to survey the changes in the campgrounds since our last anniversary adventure 10 years ago. The river crossing access has changed and the authorities have placed large boulders in the river crossing to guide vehicles across the river, preventing river and foreshore degradation by off track escapades.



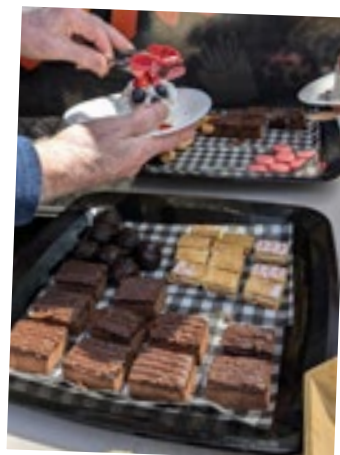
Darren Gee and his team from Heyfield Pizza's presented an exceptional celebratory lunch, comprising of beef and lamb roast meats and four lovely fresh salads. This was followed by a sweet platter that was not to be refused. Little finger delights to be washed down by an individual's preferred beverage. A very big thankyou goes to Darren and his team for such a lovely meal that would be the envy of many stationary eateries across Gippsland. The meat melted in your mouth and the sweets were diet breakers. Well done.

With full and satisfied bellies, the customary Land Rover line-up photos were taken. Defenders lined up according to age and the Discos followed - the Amarok sneaked in as well. A group photo will be added to our treasure trove of trip memorabilia.

After saying goodbye and thanks to the caterer, the afternoon drive began with the customary river crossing with a low water level in the Avon River at this location. We then began the climb out of the valley. All vehicles into low range and rock and dust were traversed, travelling along Huggett's - Mt Angus track. We had a stop at Mount Angus lookout for views across North Gippsland and the valley below. There was speculation as to what the large building in the distance was, but we believed it to be the Maffra Milk Co-op. Many other 4wd adventurers were also enjoying the view. With 4wd fully engaged the driving was straight forward with good weather and road conditions.

Some parts were recently bulldozed as the tell-tale corrugations were still everdent. After the bumpy ride we stopped at Wombats Crossing to enjoy our LROCG 30th Anniversary celebratory jam and cream filled sponge cake. The cake had survived intact seat-belted in the rear of our car. Officially cut by our oldest Club member present, Terry Heskey. The 30th anniversary emblem was displayed on the cake to remind us of our milestone achievement and was enjoyed by all.

The afternoon was complete with the convoy returning to Maffra for those who wished, whilst others travelled home via known back roads, informing the convoy of their individual turn off points via radio. The weather, the road conditions and the company of friends made the day both enjoyable and memorable.







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REGIONAL REPS – HALLS GAP 2024 NOVEMBER

On a hot 35 degree Melbourne Friday the FWDV Regional Reps hit the road down to Halls Gap for the 2nd Regional Reps meeting this year. Whilst Melbourne was due to swelter on a hot Saturday, Halls Gap was forecast for a much cooler day for the day drive with the official meeting set for the Sunday in humid conditions.

By 10am all reps had rolled into the carpark at the Brambuk Discovery Centre. With Reps from all across the state accounted for we took off into the Grampians National Park with Ash MacDonald from the Hamilton 4WD Club as trip leader and Brain Moar from the Wimmera 4WD Club, the local reps for the area. With a whole day of 4wding planned, we took off. Shooting up Mt Victory Rd and onto the dirt at Glenelg River Rd. It didn't take long for the dust to appear and boy did it appear. With conditions so dusty my backseat must have collected 10kg of dust by the time we reached our first lookout, (turns out, windows up, is a great idea).

Having the locals as trip leader certainly paid off as Ash and Brian time and time again knew the exact place to stop. It didn't matter if it was halfway up a climb, on a switchback or anywhere they knew the best spots and made sure we didn't miss out. Shooting past the now unused airfield, we jumped onto Goat Track and begun our journey along the

western ridge of the Grampians National Park, away from all the crowds. This was a great part of the trip with some good rocky tracks to navigate through.

Before long we were at our lunch spot of Strachan's Hut. A campground that is ready to undergo works to become a vehicle based campground rather than walk in. Shortly, a 'wild' dog appeared, Ash jumped up, confused as to where it came from, before the answer revealed itself. A couple of locals had walked up looking for help as they had discovered why a 4wd on 4wd tracks is necessary. They had taken their Barina out for a spin in the park before bottoming out and doing some damage in the process. As we left lunch the Barina was found to be stuck in a puddle of its own oil. Members from both Hamilton and Wimmera 4wd Clubs helped them go get help and made sure the dog was out of the park and that the car was dealt with as needed.

After helping the Barina, we finished lunch and Ash took the group to Germaine Graves. A site maintained by both clubs. It is the old home site of the Germaine family and the graves of two of their children. The father was a shingle splitter in the area who was born in England and his wife hailed from Prussia. The family had many children with some descendants still in the local areas today.



Shortly after we were back on the road for the final leg of our journey. Driving along a few MVO tracks, providing a magnificent view of the park. The clouds were starting to darken just as we arrived at Mirranatwa. Tyres were pumped up as the skys opened upon us leaving everyone soaking wet. Perfect for a shower before a pub feed as a group at the Halls Gap Hotel that night.

Come Sunday for the official meeting a few more reps had arrived in town. The meeting was opened at 11am at the Brambuk Centre. Guests at the meeting included Michael Scheon from Parks Victoria and Marc Sleeman from Grampians, Wimmera and Malee Tourism, Simon van den Berg,

FWDV President and Gordon Porter, FWDV Vice President. There was excellent discussion between the group from what their local rangers had been up to and had planned upcoming, to track closures and issues faced and what can be done. What FWDV are doing to help in the sector and the relationship with FWDV and PV. MVO closures and access was also a major talking point with more info to come on this in the future. There was also conversation for possible group works such as Clean Up the Bush events and where they may be suitable for 2025. It was another successful meeting for FWDV Regional Reps with the next meeting set for early May 2025.







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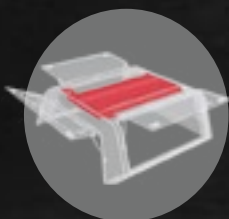


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Towing - Remember the basics

Your 4WD is a versatile vehicle and towing a camper trailer or caravan can open up new horizons for you and your family and friends but many people are not fully aware of the dangers that follow.

Do your Homework

Before you head out and hook up your trailer or caravan, read your vehicle's owner's manual to determine the maximum load limit and to find out if the manufacturer has included any special notes associated with towing.

It is a good idea to learn about different types of trailer hitches to ensure your hitch is appropriate for where and what you want to tow.

The key safety tips when preparing to tow a trailer or caravan are to check your tyre pressure on the tow vehicle and the trailer, make sure you check all the lights and indicators are working properly, the safety chains are connected (with rated shackles), that your brakes are in good working order and your mirrors have been adjusted properly.

Loading a Trailer

The way a trailer or caravan is loaded is very important.

Put too much weight at the front or too much at the back of the trailer or caravan and it will negatively affect the handling. Balance weight from side to side and along the length of the trailer and secure any loose items to keep them from shifting.

If your loaded trailer isn't level with the ground, then you are going to compromise your steering and stopping ability.

Pulling a Trailer

Connecting a trailer or caravan to your 4WD changes just about everything about the way the vehicle will drive. It takes a harder push on the accelerator to get moving, a greater distance to get it up to speed, and an extended distance to stop.

Drive changes mean you have to be more prepared than ever to avoid cars that pull out in front of



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you or a ball rolling into the street, possibly with a child not far behind. But since quick braking can cause jack-knifing, and abrupt steering changes can make the trailer sway, it's important to train yourself to look as far ahead as possible so that you can anticipate what might be in your path, and make slow and steady movements to handle the problem.

- Slow it down in built up areas or in traffic.
- Put more space between you and the vehicle ahead of you than you normally would.
- Watch what is happening several vehicles ahead.
- Pass only on straightaways. Allow more distance between you and potential oncoming traffic and make sure there's enough room to pull back into your lane after you pass.

Make Wider Turns

When you are pulling a trailer, remember that as you go around curves and corners the trailer's wheels may not track the same as the tow vehicle. They will generally track tighter. So if you are making a curve to the right, and the tow vehicle's right wheels are just left of the centre line, the trailer's right wheel will be on or past the line, putting the trailer in the path of oncoming traffic. Make wider turns to compensate for the tracking difference.

Towing Uphill and Downhill

- Downshifting provides more uphill power and helps slow the vehicle on a downhill grade.
- Brakes will overheat if you keep your foot on the brake pedal when going down long and steep hills.

Backing Up

Move slowly and don't over-steer when backing up -- slight movements of the wheel are all it takes.

Practise, Practise, Practise

Read everything you can find before you head out, but safe towing takes practise. Get out there and practise your curves and back-ups in empty parking lots and take some trial towing runs on roads that aren't packed with traffic. Ask a friend who is experienced in towing to go with you for a drive, there is always more to learn when towing!

ENJOY THE JOURNEY.



Give the Gift of Life on Your Summer Adventures

As summer approaches, many in the Four Wheel Drive Victoria community are preparing for road trips and off-road adventures. But while you're out exploring, remember that the holiday season brings a spike in demand for blood donations, and with many people traveling, the supply can drop.

This is where you can help. Blood donation is a simple yet vital way to support your community during the busy summer period. Most donor centres operate throughout the holidays, ensuring that blood is available when it's needed most. To find out when your blood type is in high demand or where the nearest donor centre is, simply search "Blood Supply" or the www.lifeblood.com.au website.

When you donate, you're not just refuelling with snacks and enjoying the air-conditioning – you're giving the gift of life to those relying on blood during the summer. Even small acts, like donating, can have an enormous impact, especially when the demand for blood products is critical.

As part of the 4WD Victoria Lifeblood Team, we're running our annual blood drive with a revised goal of saving 150 lives. Thanks to the success of the first two months, we're well on our way. To ensure your donation counts towards this goal, make sure to check that you're listed under the Four Wheel Drive Victoria Lifeblood Team when donating.

So, while you're out on the road this summer, why not stop by a donor centre and help us show what true community spirit looks like? Let's come together to make a lasting impact – because the adventure isn't just about the journey; it's about making a difference along the way.

Safe travels and happy donating!



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