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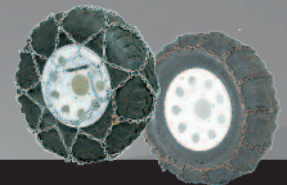
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TRAINING COURSES 2019

BOOK ONLINE

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

PROFICIENCY COURSES



- Tuesday 22nd October - PC191026 - Theory
- Saturday 26th October - PC191026 - Practical
- Tuesday 19th November - PC191123 - Theory
- Saturday 23rd November - PC191123 - Practical
- Tuesday 3rd December - PC191207 - Theory
- Saturday 7th December - PC191207 - Practical

Training Bookings Go Online

Four Wheel Drive Victoria have recently updated the booking system for our training courses and they can now be booked entirely online.
Being a Registered Training Organisation (RTO 21605), all bookings can now be done via our website link. Both accredited and non-accredited courses can now be booked online and online payments will also soon be available.
Four Wheel Drive Victoria offer non-accredited Proficiency 4WD training and a range of Accredited 4WD and Chainsaw Courses. Check out all the details at fwdvictoria.org.au/training

NEW DATES FOR 2020 COMING SOON

Training Course Refund Policy

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

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

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

Refund applications must be made in writing to FWDV.

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

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

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

FOR ALL BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES
PHONE (03) 9874 7222
or email: training@fwdvictoria.org.au



Four Wheel Drive Victoria Discount Chainsaw Offer 20% DISCOUNT ON HUSQVARNA CHAINSAWS

The Red Shed have been supporting the Four Wheel Drive Victoria Chainsaw Training program with Husqvarna chainsaws for a number of years now and as part of our new arrangement with them we are now able to offer a 20% discount to our members.

If you are in the market for a new chainsaw we can now offer you a 20% discount on any new Husqvarna chainsaw.

All you need to do is work out which model you want, contact the FWDV office with the details and we will then confirm the price and model and make the purchase for you. Payment will need to be made to us at time of order. The discount is only applicable if purchased through the FWDV office and the full discount is passed on to our members. Just contact the office at office@fwdvictoria.org.au or call 9874 7222.

This offer is only available to current financial members of FWDV affiliated 4WD clubs hence the requirement to make the purchase via the office. Offer expires 31st December 2019

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The National 4x4 and Outdoors Show again provided a terrific opportunity to meet with four wheel drivers and other outdoor participants.

Four Wheel Drive Victoria had a large presence, with many questions fielded at the FWDV stand about the benefits of Clubs and other issues. FWDV personnel also MC'd the stage presentations and also provided a leading hand at the Amarok 4WD Track.

Along with FWDV, the Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria, Pajero 4WD Club of Victoria, Nissan FWD Club, and the Werribee and District 4WD Club also had their own stands and were able to reinforce the 'Club message' to new owners of 4WDs and those that had not previously considered the benefits of joining a Club.





THE BORDER TRACK

Citywest 4x4 Club members travelled the remote Border Track along Victoria and South Australia's State border





Day 1

The journey began bright and early for Jamie and I, fuelling up at 5am.

We caught up with Lloyd & Co at Melton a little after 5, then set off down the Western Freeway. Picking up a few people along the way, we were 7 cars in total with 3 more set to meet at Rainbow.

Once the group had assembled at Rainbow for a pre trip rundown, we set off as scheduled at 10.30 with Lloyd as trip leader and Karl & Yvette as TEC (Tail End Charlie). First stop was nearby Pella to check out the Lutheran church. Lloyd had arranged for a local bloke Mal to open up the church and serenade us with some tunes from the incredible 498 pipe organ built in 1855. We also had a browse around the small museum and left our gold coin donations.

Back on the road, it was soon time to pull over and air down before heading up Milmed Rock Track. Sand flags were also added for safety on the dunes.

We enjoyed cruising along for a while through the sand and scrub, stopping off at Round Swamp for lunch. There were a few other groups of 4x4s in the area and a couple of bikers. All in all though pretty quiet.

Conditions were variable, soft rutted sand in some places, firmly packed in others. There were even a couple of muddy bog holes to be found.

At one stage our convoy was up to 16 cars as we picked up an extra 6 cars for a bit, 3 in the middle and 3 at the end. Before long they dropped off again.

We had a quick stop at Arnold Springs to stretch our legs. While there we found some strange fruit like things on vines. Pretty sure they are "bitter apples" (otherwise known as bitter cucumbers or desert gourd) native to the Mediterranean Basin and Asia. There was a similar fruit (but bigger) at our lunch stop the next day.

So far the weather had been glorious and we were looking forward to clear, starry skies at night.

Milmed Rock is made of fossilised sandstone and is touted as Victoria's version of Uluru. I think I remember Lloyd saying we might be able to climb it if we had time. Gotta say it was pretty underwhelming. We didn't get out of the cars at all but from the photo you'll see that most people probably would have been taller than this monolith.

Camp for the night was at Big Billy Bore. This was an excellent camp site with clean long drop toilets, bore water and cooking shelter with BBQ's. We each set up in our own private little corners of the scrub and came together around a communal campfire. Lots of laughs were to be had and by 10 or so pretty much everyone was in bed.

We did notice LOTS of holes in the ground from critters. Some looked like ant hills but others were huge – the size of 10c coins and bigger. We thought maybe spiders but didn't want to think about it too hard.

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Day 2

Jamie woke me at 6.30 so I could take photos of the sunrise. Feeling well rested after a comfortable night in the swag, it was time to start the day. The sunrise itself was a bit dull so I did some yoga to greet the rising sun instead. Yoga in the desert – what a fantastic feeling! We were all packed up and on the road by 9.30. Paul moved to TEC today as part of his training.

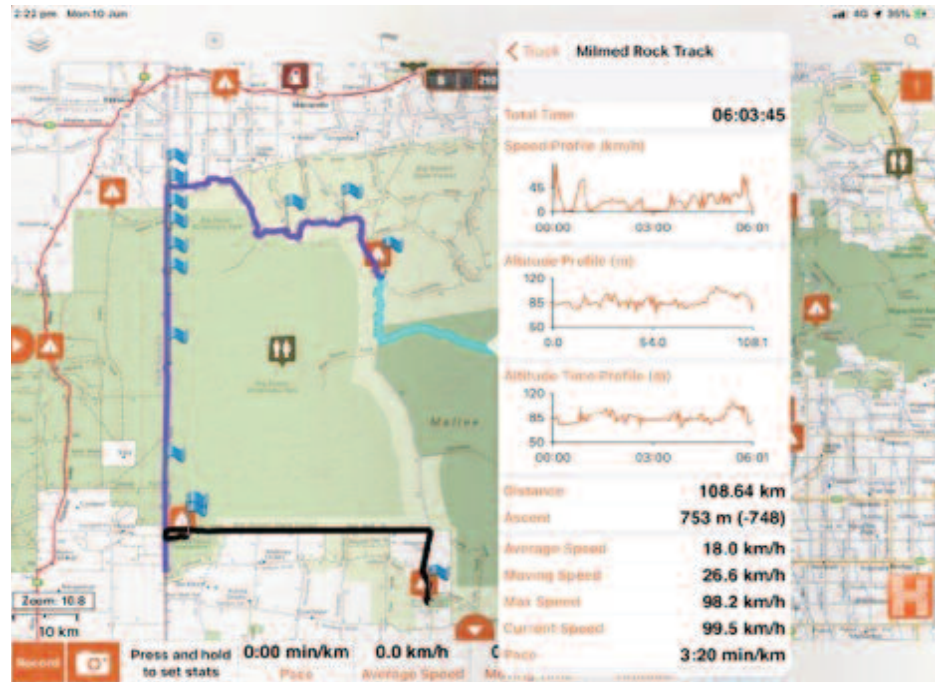
Back into the dunes Jamie made the comment that he half expected to go over the next dune and see the beach. It's that kind of really nice, soft sand and scraggly vegetation you do associate with the coast and other people agreed they'd had the same thought.

Not far into Bore track, Larry was kind enough to get stuck in some soft sand. Even though he could probably have backed up and tackled the hill again, the group took it as a good opportunity to do some recovery. Under Mick's guidance we analysed the situation and talked through strategies and risks. It was Paul's turn to be in charge and his first tactic was for Larry to change into 4x4 low, back up a little and see if he could move forward slowly. Great idea and it worked a treat.

A short way along the Border Track we stopped for lunch next to Scorpion Park – apparently home to a 26km endurance bike track and made for ATV's. Love the street sign – Shagga St. Clouds had been darkening all day and it started to rain at this point so we were quickly on our way again and into Ngarkat Nature Reserve which we had all bought day passes for.

Of course we had to stop to check out the trig point along the way.

Chicken track went to the right, to the left the hill had at least 4 tracks leading up – all of which looked pretty challenging. Most of us opted to take the right. It was about here that our esteemed TL got snagged. This provided Karl with the perfect chance to practise his recovery skills. John Fleming was the only one who took on the tougher track



and said it was probably a good thing we didn't all go up there or we may have been out all night.

A short time later, Suhan put a call out that he had to stop to check something with his car. Turned out to be a badly punctured tyre which Paul as TEC stopped to help him out with. Mick and Tim waited nearby in case any more help was needed and the rest of the group pushed on with Mr French as TEC.

It was pretty slow going down Border Track and the rain stayed with us on and off. We ended up getting to Red Hill Campground after dark. John and Alison had pushed on ahead and secured a spot big enough for all 10 cars. No mean feat as the camp ground was pretty full.

After a long day I thought everyone would be off to bed early but once again we all sat around the fire and enjoyed a talk and a laugh. We even had 2 fires as we had to stretch out in a long oval due to limited space.

Day 3

After a good night's sleep we were packed up and ready to tackle the last

leg of the trip.

Red Bluff Track runs directly west from Border Track and is pretty much straight.

Only a few hills on this leg and we were treated with a spectacular view when we crested this one. We all took it in turns to stop for a photo, then continued west. The photo really doesn't do it justice.

About 50k's later we reached the Nhill-Murrayville Road and were soon airing up at Broken Bucket Campground. Not a bad little spot, with a loo and water tanks – plus a very photogenic windmill.

It was here that Lloyd called the trip, as we were now back to the black top. From there people could either head straight home or get together in Nhill for lunch. Jamie and I grabbed a pie at the bakery and said our goodbyes.

Thanks to Lloyd for another fantastic trip. Jamie and I hadn't been up through this area before and thoroughly enjoyed it. Thanks also to everyone else who came along and made it a fun weekend. Some stats of each day are above – courtesy of the Hema app.





Midweek 4WD Club

Winter snow trip

On Monday 19th August six club vehicles met at Healesville Bakery at the start of a two day trip visiting the area around Jamieson and Woods Point with a few detours along the way. Our focus was on gaining or improving our winter driving skills, particularly in the snow. Of particular interest was the Jamieson to Licola Road over Mt Skene. Our leader for the trip was Ross Carr, who had arranged permits for our vehicles to travel on this road through Ian Fletcher at FWDVic.

Heading off through the Black Spur it was quickly apparent that many trees had fallen over the recent few weeks. At Dom Dom Saddle, we took our first detour down Dom Dom Creek Road and through to Fishers Creek Road and then onto the Acheron Way. The first part of the descent was particularly slippery after the recent heavy rain and snow. Care was needed and we all got through without incident.

We travelled via Buxton and Thornton over to Jamieson with snow visible on the higher ground from the Mt Torbreck area all the way to Jamieson.

When we arrived at Jamieson late afternoon, we headed to the local garage to fill up with Alpine diesel. The owner of the garage asked us about our travel plan. His first question was about whether we had a permit to travel up to Mt Skene. He then informed us that there were currently two vehicles stuck in meter deep snow in between Licola and Mt Skene, with nobody being able to reach them so far. They were facing their second night out on the range, with an unclear outlook for rescue.

He also informed us that there were eight vehicles stranded on Mt Terrible and while the occupants were safe, their

vehicles would not be retrieved till some of the snow had melted. Apparently the vehicles belonged to individual drivers that had attempted to enter the area without much equipment and/or experience.

Following this we all moved to the Courthouse Hotel in Jamieson, which was to be our accommodation for the night. After settling in, we headed to the bar area with a very warm fire happening followed later by excellent meals in the dining area.

In conversation with the Publican after dinner about our travel plans, he

informed us that there had been a number of vehicles without permits intercepted on the Jamieson - Licola road in the closed section over the past weekend. Each of the drivers had been given a \$862 fine.

On Tuesday morning we headed up the Licola Road with the aim of reaching Mt Skene. The conditions were very cold with low cloud, but fortunately no snow or sleet falling.





At around 800 meters we struck snow on the roadside. Again there was a lot of evidence of trees falling next to or over the road. As we progressed we passed the signpost indicating the road was closed to vehicles unless they had a permit.

As we climbed towards the ridge line near Mt Skene the snow on the track was getting deeper. We eventually stopped in a cleared area around 4kms short of Mt Skene. It was agreed that this was the appropriate point to turn around.

After travelling back to the Mt Sunday Creek Road turnoff, we stopped for morning tea before heading back down to Jamieson.

After a quick lunch in Jamieson, we headed south through Kevington and on to Woods Point. After a brief stop we headed south over the range and again hit snow on the roadside fairly quickly.

We stopped at Matlock on the top of the range to take a group photo. While we were stopped a number of vehicles passed by, with some travelling at what seemed excessive speed in the conditions. Not unexpectedly, about 5kms down the road we came across one of the vehicles that had just passed us now embedded in a snow drift on the side of the road.

We immediately stopped to assist and found a lone male driver wondering what to do. The driver wanted to try and back out unaided. After much revving he got nowhere. One of our members checked the front hubs on the Ford Courier 4X4 only to find they were not engaged. At this point the driver accepted our offer of a winch extraction backwards onto the road. This was successful and after a quick discussion the driver asked to tag along behind our convoy until we reached the bitumen. We agreed to this and he followed us until we were below the snow line.



As we travelled along the mainly snow covered road where there was one set of wheel tracks, we were surprised by a couple of instances of vehicles travelling way too fast towards us. In both cases our lead vehicle managed to avoid these vehicles and warn the following convoy, but it was close.

These and a couple of other examples highlighted to us just how underprepared some drivers are in these conditions, or driving vehicles unsuitable for the conditions.

After Cambarville we headed back through Marysville. At the end of the trip the general consensus was that the trip had been far more interesting than we originally expected, and we had all gained more practical experience driving in far different conditions than we normally would expect.

The dry, still snow covered scenery really was excellent and a completely different experience to a summer trip through the same area. I am sure there will be more of these trips in future. A special thanks to our Trip leader for his efforts through all this.

So what did we learn from this trip?

Be prepared, travel according to the conditions, get the appropriate permits and listen to the locals.....all the stuff we should do on any trip anyway!!!!!!

**Ross Hancock,
Midweek 4WD Club.**

News

Volunteer Hours

Our volunteer work that you do is vital for Four Wheel Drive Victoria to meet its KPI's with the Government. It is really important that any volunteer work that is performed by your club is recorded and sent in to our office to be included. Volunteer work includes any show or display you may have, any track clearing work including removing/cutting of fallen trees, Camp Host weekends, bush cleanups, charity work, hut maintenance and volunteer projects that your club is involved in. The forms are available from our website and our Closed Facebook Group page. Every hour counts however trivial. Please make sure your club records all of your valuable volunteer work and sends it in to the office.

CAMP HOST - Long Weekends Coming Up Soon

Has your club been considering doing a Camp Host event?

The 4WD Camp Host Program was developed by the Four Wheel Drive Advisory Committee, comprised of members of Four Wheel Drive Victoria, Parks Victoria (PV) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP).

Camp Host supports the principle that 4WD Clubs are a lot better at educating and policing not only their own members, but the general public also pursuing their recreation. The 4WD Camp Host program places volunteers from 4WD clubs at selected camp sites in parks across Victoria to provide visitors with local information on four wheel driving as well as park based information.

The presence of a Camp Host ensures that travellers have a point of contact for information and assistance. This presence is also aimed at reducing incidents of damage and anti-social behavior by other park visitors, through 4WD Camp Hosts reporting such incidents to PV or DELWP.

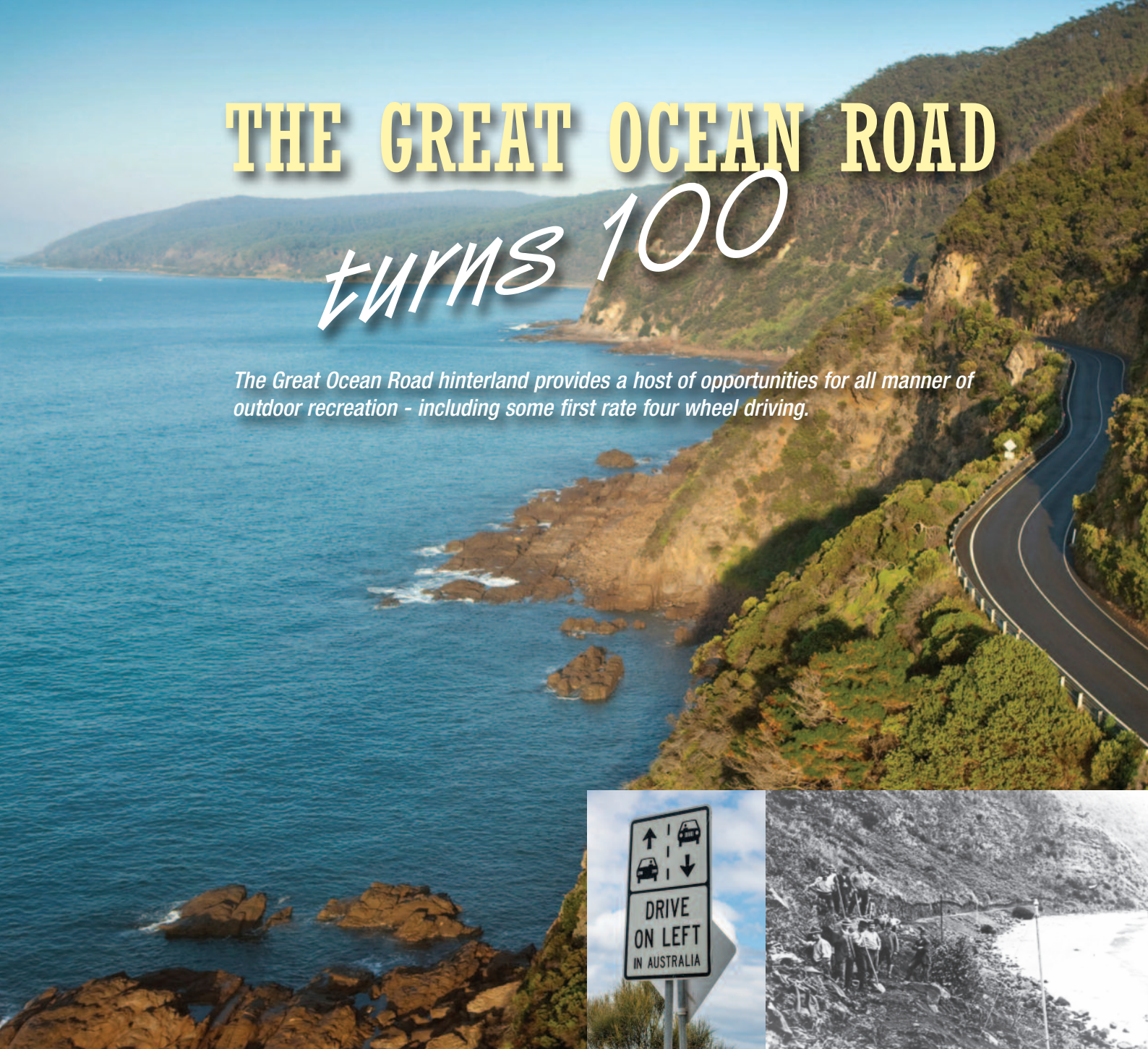
Camp Host volunteer hours are also recorded and contribute to FWDVIC volunteer KPI's. If you think your club could be keen to run a Camp Host over a coming long weekend please contact the office on 978747222 or projects@fwdvictoria.org.au



THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD

turns 100

The Great Ocean Road hinterland provides a host of opportunities for all manner of outdoor recreation - including some first rate four wheel driving.



2019 marks 100 years since construction began on the iconic Great Ocean Road. Today marketed as Victoria's major tourist attraction, the road winds southwest from Anglesea to Lorne, Apollo Bay and Port Campbell.

In the early 1800s transportation of goods along this coast was mainly by sea, with the coastline surveyed in 1846 and the decision made to erect a lighthouse at Cape Otway, with Governor La Trobe travelling around the coast on foot to inspect the site. Later as settlements were established along the south west coast, numerous rough tracks and coach roads were formed, but prior to the First World War little was done to link them together to form one main connecting road.

Early in 1916, the Chairman of the CRB (Country Roads Board), Mr. W. Calder contacted the State War Council with the proposal that funds could be



provided for the repatriation and re-employment of returned soldiers on roads in sparsely populated areas and soon after submitted a plan for a road commencing at Barwon Heads, following the coast west around the Otway Peninsula, and terminating at Nirranda near Warrnambool.

The public heard about the scheme on December 4, 1917, when the *Argus* ran a piece on the Proposed Memorial



Road. It would be built by returned soldiers as a memorial to those that had fallen. The idea received much positive press coverage and a poster was printed outlining the scheme under the heading – Great Ocean Road.

Cr. H. Hitchcock, Mayor of Geelong founded the Great Ocean Road Trust, and was the champion of constructing the road. The principle objective was always as a memorial, and although



Cape Patton, a distance of 18 miles. The government approved the CRB doing survey work on behalf of the Great Ocean Road Trust and the project started straight away.

Work commenced simultaneously at several points. Work was slow and often dangerous with much of

On November 26, 1932, the route was opened officially by the Lieutenant Governor, Sir William Hill Irvine. The party traveled as far as Wye River with 40 cars.

In April 1922, 140 were employed on the project, whilst in 1933, 325 men were employed on the road, and a toll charged at the rate of 2/6 for a car and driver, plus 1/6 per passenger. An archway erected at the tollgate near Fairhaven was destroyed soon after and the present memorial Arch was completed in August, 1939. A total of 3,000 ex-soldiers worked on the Great Ocean road.

On October 2, 1936 the tollgate was unlocked, thus making the road public property. The tollgate stood on the Lorne side of Cathedral Rock at Shelley Beach. Officially, control of the road passed to the Country Roads Board in September, 1936 and the road became 'free'. From 1936 to 1946 a great deal of work was done to improve the alignment and width. Timber bridges and floodways were replaced with concrete bridges. By Christmas 1964 only 2 miles of road between Lorne and Apollo Bay were unsealed. This gap was closed in 1965. It was proclaimed a Tourist Road on 2/12/36, and re-gazetted as the 'Great Ocean Road' on 16/2/1972.

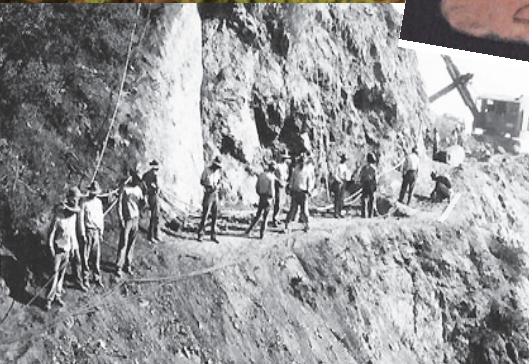
The Great Ocean Road trends its way from Geelong through some spectacular scenery to the 12 Apostles at Port Campbell.

Touring

For four wheel drivers the hinterland of the Great Ocean Road offers a host of opportunities to explore. The Otway Ranges were extensively logged and served by a network of tramways and bush tracks. Many of these remain as designated 4WD tracks and occasionally offer an insight into a long forgotten logging site. For history buffs, it is possible to visit former logging sites and with available historic photos, see where plant and buildings were situated.



it carved out of cliff faces with pick and shovels, and rudimentary equipment. The section from Spout Creek to Big Hill includes the Big Hill itself, and the Devil's Elbow, not to mention Clarke's Slip, which all involved heavy work. Moderately heavy work was also involved from Big Hill to Reedy Creek, a section that takes in Cathedral Rock. The linking of Lorne with Eastern View was marked ceremoniously on Saturday, March 18, 1922, with the Governor, Lord Stradbroke, accompanied by the Premier, performing the necessary formalities. Over the next decade work continued, linking Lorne with Angelsea and with Cape Patton, whilst the Country Roads Board built the Cape Patton to Apollo Bay link.



it was not the first time such a proposal had been mooted, it was the first time that 100 miles length of road had been proposed at a cost of 150,000 pounds. As with projects today, funding was a hurdle to be overcome and the Trust proposed public fund raising along with government and shire contributions. It was decided that the first section of road to be built would be from Lorne to

Whilst many tracks actually run to the Ocean Road, most are no longer accessible to the coast, running through private property or closed. I count myself fortunate to have travelled some of these tracks in the late seventies, whereby you could sit high above the Ocean Road and enjoy some privileged views.

There are several hundred kilometres of track in the Otway Forest, with parts included in State and National Parks. Some great areas at Cape Otway have unfortunately been locked up with some interesting tracks now off limits. Inland however, there are tracks of all standard, with the 'infamous Otway clay' always a challenging drive, with certain areas remaining wet all year round. There is a detailed map of the Otways available from DELWP showing tracks, camping areas and attractions. Remember an extensive number of seasonal track closures apply in the area.

Track networks can be accessed along the coast at areas including Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Allenvale (Lorne), Wye River and Kennett River. Benwerrin – Mt Sabine Road runs along the spine of the Otway Ranges and numerous tracks run north west inland and south west towards the coast. Popular starting points are at Forrest, Gellibrand or



Beech Forest townships.

This area of our State offers unmatched coastal scenery, vast areas of spectacular forest, rain forest and attractive townships and unexpected



attractions – both natural and introduced! As a four wheel drive destination offering numerous opportunities it is unrivalled.

Brian Tanner



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Suzuki's to THE CAPE



Story and photos by David and Libby Raeburn

On the 7th of July, some of the Bairnsdale crew comprising of David and Libby Raeburn and Dave and Jill Burke left for the trip of a lifetime to Cape York. The trip up to Mt Carbine - between Cairns and Cooktown - was largely just a leisurley, nice road trip. Dave and Jill towed their Suzuki Sierra ute behind their 76 series Landcruiser ute, David and Libby had a small camper trailer behind their Nissan Patrol. Brad Toohey caught up to us in Yass towing David and Libby's 1978 Suzuki LJ80 ute. It is 40 years old next year and had been recently rebuilt; with his Nissan Patrol, he was to be the support car for our group.

Steve Raeburn left Bairnsdale on the 11th with his Suzuki Sierra on the back of his small truck, but it developed a big oil leak at the back of the motor and he had to return to Bairnsdale to get his trailer and his ever faithful GQ Nissan TD42 diesel Patrol to transport his Suzi. The Melbourne crew were Alan and Barb Johnson driving a 1992 Suzuki long wheelbase series 1 Vitara, Fedia and Laura Sleusereff - Suzuki Vitara wagon, Michael and Elizabeth Vaughn and daughter Sarah - Suzuki Vitara long wheel base series 2 V6 (they left on the 12th of July). Steve joined the Melbourne group in Cairns to pick up his partner Ruth and Alan's wife Barb from the airport. Steve and Ruth then travelled to Mt Carbine to meet up with David and Libby and Dave and Jill Burke and Kevin Britton and partner Carrie. Kevin and Carrie are from Bairnsdale and are working in the

Northern Territory. They drove their Suzuki Sierra across to meet up with the group - they had the red dust look before starting the Cape trip.

Steve and Ruth amazed us all by fitting everything they needed for the trip into the back of the tiny space of the little car even including an Engle fridge earning the Suzi Sierra the nickname Tardis. Mt Carbine caravan park is a great place to leave your caravan or transport vehicles whilst you do the trip to 'The Tip'. The owners are very nice and really helpful. There is no charge to leave your vehicle there if you stay with them at least one night.

On arrival, David Raeburn discovered the trailer had broken the draw bar off except for a strip of metal about 20mm wide. It could have caused a major disaster if it had broken off completely. The park owners lent us a welder and the necessary tools, and with Kev's help (he is a boilermaker/welder) we soon had it fixed.

The Melbourne group stayed in Cairns

one night with the the two groups meeting up in Mossman to start the trip up to Bloomfield Road to the historic Lions Den Hotel for the first night. It is a great place to stay and have a meal. We had hoped to travel the Creb Track, but it was closed. Bloomfield Road is an easy drive with some great scenery and a few steep climbs.

We arrived in Cooktown at 9.30am and had a look around the town. Steve played some music on the musical ship, we then headed out to Isabella Falls and visited the Old Laura Homestead then on to Musgrave Roadhouse where we stayed overnight. Steve got out his guitar and with John on harmonica, we had a great nights entertainment.

Wednesday the 19th, passed lots of roadtrains, the corrugations and red dust were really bad, Michael Johnson's snorkel came apart and had to be fixed; he also got a flat tyre and a broken windscreen. Fed's exhaust fell off and had to be fixed later.

We travelled to Coen where petrol was



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\$2.17 per litre and from there to Archer River Roadhouse then to Weipa - a big day travelling on the dirt roads! Libby and David earned the best colour and hairdo travelling with the windows down in the red dust all day.

Thursday the 20th we found that the shackles were totally worn on the rear springs of the LJ80, even though they were new at the start of the trip, we had to adapt others to fit. Shackle bushes in Weipa were \$133 plus 4 bushes to fit inside, about half hours work to make the spacers, \$274 but out there there is no choice, they call it Weipa tax, Steve and Kev soon had them fitted. We did a tour of the Bauxite Mine which is a huge operation and is expected to continue for another fifty years.

Friday 21st we left Weipa, travelled to the Development road and discovered that Steve's fuel pump was leaking fuel, the spare from the LJ80 didn't fit so we crimped the parts together and continued on to the Morton Telegraph Station whilst Kev and Carrie returned to Weipa and got an electric pump and the necessary parts to make it fit. We backed it up onto a log and fitted the new parts, bypassing the failed pump.

Refueled on arrival at Bramwell Junction, very good price petrol \$1.45 per litre. From there we started the Old Telegraph Track where there are still some of the original telegraph poles standing. At Palm Creek, David Burke's Suzuki got jammed in neutral. We pulled the shifter out and used a screwdriver to put it into low range. Steve had trouble with his gear shift becoming sloppy and hard to find gear. That night we pulled the gear shift out to find the top bush had broken up. There was talk of making one out of wood, but Libby appeared with a re-sealable champagne stopper. After some modification, it fitted beautifully and is still working well; Steve named it his sparkling champagne shifter. We crossed the Delahunty River and several others with no problem. Barb and Sarah walked the water crossings to pick the best way for the Suzies. Sarah is 6 feet tall so we threatened to paint water levels on her legs.

Gunshot was really boggy on the exit and all vehicles including the Suzukis



had to be winched or towed through, At most of the hard crossings there were lots of people who had taken the easy road in to watch the fun and take picture, whenever somebody got through they all cheered. We camped at Elliot Falls for the night and enjoyed a swim in the falls to wash off the red dust. It is a really great place to swim with crystal clear, fresh, warm water.

Next morning whilst crossing Sams Creek, Dave Burke misjudged the angle and tipped his ute onto its side. After getting him and Jill out, Brad's winch was hooked up and the little truck was put the right way up again. Very little damage apart from a dent in the guard where the snorkel goes through. It started up easily and we continued on our way.

We arrived at the Jardine Ferry at mid-day and it had stopped for lunch until 1pm so we had a bit of a wait. We paid our hundred dollars per vehicle to cross, then continued on to the old DC3 crash site, then to the Bamaga airfield to look at the wrecked Beaufort bomber. These were important airfields for the defence of Australia during the Second World War. We set up camp at Punsand Bay and booked the ferry to Thursday Island.

Monday the 24th the group travelled to the 'Tip of Australia' via the harder 4WD track. It proved to be good fun with lots of water crossings. Fedia and Laura turned back with the Vitara 'pinging' badly. Dave and Jill went with them to rejoin us at the tip. After the usual mandatory photos at the tip, we stopped to look at the old Ansett Resort.



This had been a huge operation but was just left when Ansett stopped operating. It is now being taken over by the jungle with many of the houses being destroyed by white ants, but it's still well worth a walk around the ruins as many buildings are still standing. It almost reminds you of Jurassic Park. From there to Somerset Ruins and the Five Beaches Drive. The strong east trade wind blows nonstop here for 7 or 8 months of the year, but it keeps it cooler than the west coast. We arrived back at camp early in the afternoon in time to do washing and check the cars.

Tuesday the 25th we took the ferry departing from Seisia to Thursday Island, It was fairly interesting looking around the old fort built during the 1st World War and learning about the Aboriginal Culture and local history of the island we had lunch at the furthest north pub in Australia before returning to the ferry.

Wednesday 26th we returned to Bamaga then to the Jardine ferry, (the return trip was included in the crossing price). We had a look at the old, now closed Jardine ford crossing and were glad there was a ferry as it was a long and deep crossing with a big risk of crocodiles. We travelled to Nolans Brook, the water was over the bonnet of the Suzies but with a water bra installed we all crossed successfully, some needed assistance on the exit as it was very steep and slippery. We called into Fruitbat Falls for a quick swim, another lovely spot to wash off the red dust. We then continued to Bramwell Station to stay the night.



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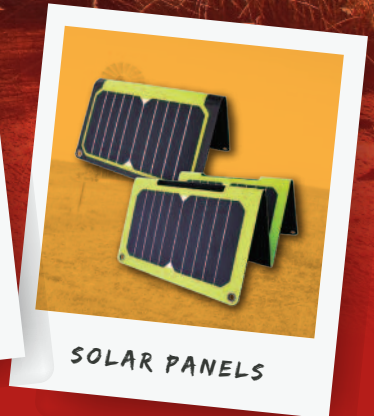
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David had to replace another worn shackle bush, Steve adjusted his clutch and David Burke changed the oil in his transfer case as it was full of water.

The next morning we headed on and David Burke went missing after the Morton Telegraph Station. Brad was tail end Charlie and radioed that Dave had car troubles so Kev went back to find he had fuel transfer problems from his second tank, however Kev didn't take long to get him going again. The worst part of the trip was the road between Coen and Musgrave with massive corrugations, rock ledges, rough stony creek crossings and monster 'bulldust holes' big enough to swallow a Suzuki. Under 60km the corrugations made the LJ80 Suzi flood. We arrived at Laura and stayed at the Peninsula Hotel Caravan Park. The next morning we decided to do the Old Coach Road. Fedia and Laura and David Burke and Jill elected not to do this section due to vehicle worries. It was just as well as this turned out to be the hardest part of the trip. The first section of the Old Coach Road was fairly easy but the last forty-five kms was really challenging with steep off camber sections, guaranteed to have you worried if you were driving a big 4WD let alone a Suzuki. There were lots of loose shale sections and also steep rock ascents and descents with big rock steps and some loose sand. It was a lot of fun but really challenging and technical driving. Kev tried to do one really steep, rocky section and had a serious gravity problem, nearly tipping his vehicle over backwards and breaking a rear control arm on the diff. letting one side of the diff move around.

On reaching the top of the hill, it was all hands on deck to do the repair. Micheal Johnson had a 24 volt MIG welder on board which I think is a great tool to take on any really hard trip. Piranha Offroad is the importer of these. Michael also had an angle grinder. Libby walked off the road and found a steel post, it must have been the only one for miles. The post was cut off and welded to the broken piece. This temporary repair got all the way to Cairns on the way home before a replacement control arm was found. The little vehicles did an amazing job. I would recommend that if anyone is considering this trip they have a well prepared vehicle, winch equipped and a very experienced driver at the wheel and do not travel on your own.

The trip into Maytown on the Palmer River Goldfields was accomplished without any further problems. We spent some time (not enough) looking at all the deserted mining relics, steam engines, batteries and lots of machinery parts as well as the old town site. It is very interesting. If you go there, allow a full day to look around at least.



Some of the group had to be back at work, so we travelled out on the main road, which was like a huge rollercoaster. Some of the hills had the Suzi back to high first gear it was so steep but it is a good surface all the way to Palmer River Roadhouse. We set up camp at 6.30pm beside the road, before the roadhouse. After dinner, we sat around our campfire telling stories. Libby made an apple damper for Kev's 50th birthday. The Melbourne group left at 6am to return home and the rest called into the Palmer River Roadhouse for fuel then on to Mt Carbine to change over vehicles and pick up transport cars. Libby and David hired a cabin for the night to spoil themselves a little after a couple of weeks camping in jet tents. We cannot recommend the caravan park and owners enough as they were very nice and helpful.

Steve and Ruth left with their Suzi on the trailer to meet friends in Cairns. Kev and Carrie, Brad, Dave and Libby and Dave and Jill left for Cooktown to meet David Raeburn's nephew from Townsville to do a four day fishing charter on the charter boat, 'Mr Bill'; this had been arranged before we left home. Mr Bill is a 60 foot glass boat, powered by two M.A.N. 750 horsepower turbo diesel engines. The captain, Andy, was very experienced and a real character. The deck hand, Evan, was really helpful also. The excitement started soon after leaving port when David hooked a large Mackerel. We had no idea how amazing the fishing would be over the next four days.

All fishing gear and meals were supplied, you only had to supply your own drinks. The fish we caught were filleted and frozen, ready for transport home. The fishing was incredible, we brought in 215 filleted fish and threw as many or more back. We caught Coral Trout, Red Emperor, several species of Mackerel, Chinaman Fish, Sharks, G.T.s and several other species of Trevally,

Spotted Cod, Barracouta and lots of others that I don't remember. If you ever get a chance to fish off Cooktown, I would recommend a trip on Mr Bill to anyone. We had eight fishing on the boat and there was plenty of room for us all. No fishing show I have ever watched could come near the fishing on this trip!

Several miles out to sea we came to a reef with a big 180 foot steel boat wrecked on top of the reef. The story is that it was the sister ship to the Greenpeace ship. The captain had been kicked out of England and as he was running low on fuel he hoped to refuel in Cooktown, but the Australian government would not allow him into Australian waters so he put the ship on full throttle and drove it onto the reef at high tide. He then lived on the ship for several years. It is now a bird sanctuary with hundreds of birds living on it.

We left Cooktown with great memories of the trip, and we continued home visiting family and friends on the way. It was a wonderful trip and we are already planning another one for next year. We are having reef fish for tea tomorrow night again "YUM."

The total distance travelled on the trip by the Bairnsdale group was 10,000 km and it would have been approximately the same for the Melbourne group.

Social Media News

Have you joined our Closed Facebook Group yet?

Keep up to date with the latest information for club members on our members only group. You can easily request to join via Facebook.

Our Public Facebook Page has now reached over 10,600 followers and over 10,000 likes and is steadily growing as we communicate the Tread Lightly and responsible 4WD and camping messages.



The journey...or the destination?

Heading out to the bush on your next four wheel drive trip, you are looking forward to a fun and enjoyable day. On this trip, you have decided to take a couple of friends along in your vehicle with you to introduce your friends to the comradery of your 4WD Club. You begin packing the essentials; recovery gear, first aid kit, the fridge and the food and finally everyone starts adding their "little bit" until there is barely enough room for anyone to sit.

Remember most vehicles will drive differently when you have a number of people and their gear, so you will need to drive accordingly.

Some thought should be given as to how you will pack each of the above items in or on your vehicle, because overloading your vehicle can be just as dangerous as not taking along the right gear in the first place.

The extra weight can cause poor balance and unnecessary stress on your vehicle, so try to pack accordingly, being careful not to overload your vehicle. Ultimately, which tools, equipment and spare parts you take along will depend on where you are going and for how long.

It is extremely important to keep all of the items you've loaded in your vehicle securely strapped down or safely stowed away, because loose items could become projectiles when you make a sudden stop or take off a bit too quickly. You should use heavy-duty straps (not bungee cords) to secure items in your vehicle.

Contain and strap down anything that will hurt if it hits you. Remember that all supplies inside your vehicle should be contained in some way that will prevent bodily injury especially if you are driving through rough terrain or hill country.

If you invite non-members along on your club trip, remember to take out a Temporary Membership for your guests to ensure compliance with your club's rules as well as ensuring they will have all the insurance coverage of a full member in the event of any incident. This not only protects you and your club, it protects your guests too!

Plan to enjoy the day, allow extra time so you don't have to rush, and remember what it is like as a passenger in the back seat especially on winding roads and hills.

Is the purpose of your trip simply to get to a destination or is it to enjoy the journey and the friends you are spending time with?

Safe travels

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