

TRACK WATCH



**WALKINSHAW AUTOMOTIVE'S VISIT
ALBURY WODONGA 35TH ANNIVERSARY
GEELONG 50TH ANNIVERSARY
COME AND TRY DAY
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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 THE PRESIDENT



Winter is upon us and the snow country is already proving itself to be attractive. Don't forget to contact the office at FWDV and book your dates for your proposed Mt Skene Trips.

Recently the Ballarat Club joined us in a Four-Wheel Drive Day promotion. This initiative is about attracting those in your district that would like to learn about the four-wheel drive activity without the formality of joining clubs first up. As it turned out a large group turned up which led the day to be highly successful. The Ballarat club gained 6 new members on the day without the expense of attracting members at shows. This initiative is something that FWDV are keen to push further with the clubs.

Recently Wayne and I met with the Minister for Environment the Hon. Ingrid Stitt and discussed our organisation and what we all do as an investment to Victoria. This meeting led to a second meeting with the Land Managers from DEECA (previously DELWP) to discuss the future format of activities and promotional events that enhance the Land Managers and Environment Victoria's mission. The end result is the Govt is intent on a continuance of the funding of FWDV albeit under a new format.

Our reputation with the Govt of Victoria is first rate. We are seen by the Land Managers as an investment to their overall mission, which no doubt we will continue to promote on behalf of the clubs.

Toolangi Training Ground is ongoing; however, we are 'chomping at the bit' to get in there and start training operations as soon as is practicably possible. All that is holding us up is Govt red tape, whilst in some cases can be frustrating but, in this case, it is positive and we are confident the training ground will be up and running this year.

Alison McLaughlin our most treasured and champion administrator is retiring before the end of this year after many years of outstanding service promoting the clubs and the vocation we enjoy so much. We are now looking for a replacement prior to her leaving to train up the right person to take this position further.

I am very pleased at the enduring and positive relationship we enjoy with our partners DEECA and Parks Victoria when discussing our future relationship and funding from these Govt depts especially as the Govt has announced that 'Not for Profit' organisations will have funding withdrawn. This position has come about because of the hard-working volunteers this organisation brings to the fore when we are asked to clean up the bush and various other activities that assist them with their ongoing responsibilities we have always responded accordingly.

By the time this edition of Trackwatch lands on your doorstep we will have had a President's and Delegate's meeting. Keep an eye on eNews and club communications for an update.

Our next Presidents meeting will be on June 3rd where we will provide more detail into the activities we are working through.

I wish you all a Happy Winter and keep the shiny side up!

Eric Bishop
President

Our best wishes to Jo, Graeme, Bev and John as the iconic business of Westprint is handed over to Meridian Maps on Friday 2nd June, 2023.



For 39 years Westprint has been outback Australiana at it's best!

Mapping, researching, producing and selling an amazing range of outback maps. The weekly fabulous Friday Five newsletter that arrived to the 'Inbox' sharing vital road, track and tourist information, book reviews, the funnies and readers own experiences and knowledge. Never boring.

And books ... so many books. An Australian feast for all ages of new, secondhand, fact and fiction. No title too tricky to track down.

From Westprint's base in Nhill, to seeing the team at a shows and field days or phone calls, emails and social media, the vibe was always friendly and positive.

Thank you to Westprint for their generosity and support of Four Wheel Drive Victoria, our clubs and members over the years. We've enjoyed the journey.



2023

TRAINING COURSES



**BOOK
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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

Tuesday 1st August – PC230801 – Theory	Tuesday 3rd October – PC231003 – Theory
Saturday 5th August – PC230801 – Practical	Saturday 7th October – PC231003 – Practical
Tuesday 5th September – PC230905 – Theory	Tuesday 28th November – PC231128 – Theory
Saturday 9th September – PC230905 – Practical	Saturday 2nd December – PC231128 – 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.

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FROM FWDV CEO



It is hard to believe we are almost halfway through the year already and there is still so much to do.

We have recently had an online meeting with Minister Stitt, the new environment minister, which we believe was very encouraging as the

content of the meeting was well received. The resulting conversation was around what we can commit to providing as ongoing and future KPI's, determining what funding value may result from it.

The Toolangi training centre has stalled due to certain criteria we need to meet, although we are hoping this will soon be resolved and we can commence shaping the landscape to our desired format. We have some eager bulldozer exponents who are willing to assist us on this project. The amenity buildings have been chosen and submitted to the relevant authorities and once ok'd, will be purchased and installed. We are attempting to have this facility operational as soon as possible, hopefully in the third quarter of this year.

Our training continues to progress in a forward motion which is very pleasing as this greatly assists our financial position. The hunt for a permanent home/building still goes on, albeit at a much slower pace than I would prefer, nevertheless we are being very prudent regarding putting this into action. With the market trends changing driven by the constant rate changes, we hope to find the ideal opportunity to lock into shortly.

The Regional Representatives meeting in Bairnsdale on the 27th + 28th May will be over by the time this magazine comes out and I predict that all in attendance would have had a memorable experience not only with Saturday's drive taking us to a very special hidden location on the Mitchell River, but also from the official meeting on Sunday featuring our guest speaker Wayne Thorpe. These meetings, I emphasize repeatedly are so important in our continuing to build the relationships between ourselves and the land managers, given that personal are constantly changing across the landscape for one reason or another. It also gives all of us a chance to learn what everyone is doing in their patch and suggest how we might improve our own standing within current processes and procedures.

Unfortunately, we are going to lose Alison McLaughlin in the very near future as she has decided to retire and spend more time with her family. Alison has been with us for over seven years now and will be greatly missed by us all, especially as having played a huge part in our team at the office. I can't thank her enough for her contribution to everything she has done for me personally, as well as the association over her time with us. Her eye for detail and her beautiful way with words will surely leave a massive void in the way we function for some time to follow. We wish her well in all she endeavors to do into the future.

Four Wheel Drive Victoria are constantly on the lookout for locations to run accredited chainsaw courses. If you or anyone you know has property with plenty of felled trees to be able to fill two days of chainsaw work, please let us know in the office. This will give us the opportunity to schedule and conduct more chainsaw courses.

Wayne Hevey
CEO



The Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club are celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2024. They are looking to track down founding members from the early years of the club to come on the night and retell some history from the beginning. Please contact Daisy if you are able to help out.

daisyellen@hotmail.com

VISIT TO WALKINSHAW AUTOMOTIVE'S HORSEPOWER FACTORY

Peninsula 4x4 Club Visit to Walkinshaw Automotive's Horsepower Factory

The entire Peninsula 4x4 club recently had the exciting opportunity to visit Walkinshaw Automotive's Horsepower Factory, and for those that don't know who this amazing company is, they are the magicians that convert every single RAM truck sold in Australia to be compliant with Australian standards.

As you'd expect we had maximum attendance, so after the initial safety brief and throwing on a Hi Vis vest, the club was split into 2 groups for the guided tour.

The tour guides, conducted by one of Walkinshaw's amazing shift managers Gavin and the club's very own Shane, took Peninsula 4x4 around the factory floor, showcasing the production process of converting RAM trucks from left-hand drive to right-hand drive vehicles.

Now, I'm going to throw myself under the bus here and openly admit, I am an IT professional, I am not a car guy. BUT I love jumping in my

4x4, getting out into regional Victoria (and beyond) and exploring tracks all day, rolling into a camp site in an afternoon and relaxing around a fire with a group of likeminded people.

This tour blew my mind.

The tour began with a comprehensive brief on the RAM trucks and the process of converting them. The tour then moved onto the factory floor itself, where the team from Peninsula 4x4 were able to witness the entire conversion process from start to finish. From the initial stripping of the vehicle to the installation of new parts, reassembly and finally the testing and quality control ensuring the vehicles are road-legal and compliant with Australian standards.

Walkinshaw operate an amazingly efficient, clean and professional operation that everyone at the Peninsula 4x4 Club were impressed with. We'd like to thank Shane W and the management team for giving us this rare and insightful opportunity to visit the factory and see how the magic is made.



This tour blew my mind

BY: BEN H



MT BULLER AND SURROUNDS

25-26th February, 2023

BY: MARK



For a Sat-Sun trip only a couple hours out of Melbourne, it was great to see nine of out ten vehicles head up on the Friday night to squeeze in some extra time together.

On the Saturday Morning, we met the final participant at Buttercup Road and aired down, ready for a scenic day of high country huts and vistas.

First stop was Tomahawk Hut which had been rebuilt in 2007 and is one of the oldest hut sites for the Forestry Commission in the Alpine Area. At 1115m above

sea level, this hut could be a destination for a winter snow trip on a good day with no seasonal road closures however with our bluebird mid 20 degree day; the only thing on the track was dust!

From here, we engaged low range, dodged some grazing cattle, and headed up Number 3 Trk to Number 3 Refuge Hut for a snack. The climb was slow going and provided amazing views to the west, back towards Mansfield. The hut was in excellent condition other than a couple of pieces of graffiti inside which was

a shame to see. A quick bite to eat and we were back on track for an easy run to Craig's Hut via Circuit Rd and Clear Hills Trk.

With Craig's Hut being one of the most famous High Country destinations and photographed spots, it was fairly busy with lots of other groups enjoying the views to the North West. The hut was originally constructed as a set for the 1982 film, 'Man from Snowy River'. Just as we were about to move off after lunch, we paused to watch the horse trail riders from McCormack's come



up out of the bush and stop for a break.

We headed down the steep Monument Trk back to Circuit Rd. Slow and steady was key here, giving the vehicle ahead plenty of space in front of you. Shelly was on the edge of her seat as Alex bumbled his way down in the Troopy.

The short walk to Bindaree Falls was a highlight for most and a must see for anyone visiting the area. The viewing platform is positioned behind the curtain of the waterfall which provides a very unique experience.

With one hut left to see for the day, we used Circuit Rd and Speculation Rd to access King Hut. Last time Alex was here, the hut was inaccessible due to large ruts and bog holes just prior to the hut however in the dry it



was all fairly straightforward. Whilst this hut was originally built in the early 1900s, it has been destroyed and rebuilt several times in the vicinity and the current hut build was a collaborative effort by the Huts Association, Parks Victoria, local council and Four Wheel Drive Victoria associated clubs and is built on the exact footprint of the original hut from about a century ago!

Following Basin Rd, the convoy forded the King River a few times on their way to Pineapple Flat for a quick look

around before tackling the steep and rutted Black Landing Rd back up to Circuit Rd. In the wet, this track could be rated as difficult however in the dry and with some careful wheel placement it was rather straightforward.

We headed to Fry's Flat to camp for the evening, picking up some firewood along the way once out of the National Park. With the Howqua River trickling to the side of us, and Fry's Hut as our backdrop we enjoyed dinner (with some of Besty's famous camp oven bread for dessert) and a campfire as light drizzle



settled in for the evening. Always looking for the silver lining – we were glad the drizzle would keep the dust down on the tracks the following day!

On Sunday, there were a few people that needed to head home early and others were interested in a lazy morning at camp. At 0830, four vehicles headed off for a shorter drive; Mark, Sally, Colin and Geoff.

We followed Brocks Rd up to Bluff Link Rd with plenty of radio chatter about the things we saw along the way including Tunnel Bend and a very keen cyclist pushing up the hill! We reached

Bluff Hut (our highest hut at 1499 meters above sea level), and went for a short walk to a vantage point which provided amazing views over the Howqua valley and out to Mt Buller. The group quickly came to consensus to continue on to Lovicks Hutt – a ripper, easy, 40 minute, and low range drive east along Bluff Trk through stands of snow gums. Bluff and Lovicks hut were built by Stoney and Lovicks families respectively, both well-known names in the area and heavily involved today with the Mountain Cattleman’s Association of

Victoria representing families and predecessors who grazed cattle and maintained the High Country since the early 1800s. Both huts were new destinations for Geoff and Colin while Sally enjoyed revisiting the area after she was last here as a child on family holidays.

Due to the top of Brocks Rd and Cairn Creek Rd being closed for maintenance at the time, we headed back the way we came to Fry’s Flat for a late lunch, pack up and then head home.

The trip was a great start to the year!



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35TH ANNIVERSARY

ARTICLE: JAN DOYLE

PHOTOS: DOUG ROSE & NEIL GALLOWAY

The Albury Wodonga 4WD Club recently held its 35th Birthday Celebration with a camp and dinner at the Wymah Recreation Reserve near Albury. A day drive was also held on Saturday, 15th April, 2023.

Background:

The Club's inaugural meeting was held on the 13th April, 1988 at the Lavington Sports Club, with approx. 90 people attending and 50 people paying membership fees on the night.

Over the 35 years of the club, our members have been involved in a large number of community activities, from Pioneer Cemetery Clean ups, Clean Up Australia Days, Camp Quality events, Family Link (taking intellectually impaired teenagers four wheel driving in

the bush), Bravehearts and the local Nail Can Hill Run. We have also worked with Parks Victoria on track clearing and maintenance at the Green Creek Battery site within the Alpine National Park. We have also been involved for 25 years with the promoter of the Albury Wodonga Caravan, Camping, 4WD and Boat Show.

We are particularly proud of our efforts during the bushfires in early 2009 when we sponsored and paid for the fuel for a full semi load of hay to be delivered from Mudgee to Mudgegonga, where the fires had been particularly devastating taking both human life and a large number of livestock.

Woomargama State Park Trip:

Ten vehicles left the camp on Saturday morning and travelled via

the Tunnel Road to travel through private property into the park.

The views from the top of this property were amazing.

The group enjoyed morning tea at the newly constructed raised board walk and facilities – Wambariga “Yambla View” Lookout.

We then proceeded on to stop at North's Lookout and then onto our lunch spot at the Tin Mines Camp.

Following a leisurely lunch, we continued to Beaver Hut, a hut that we had visited on a number of occasions previously.

Unfortunately the track in was very wet, with deep wheel ruts carved into the track from previous visitors.

We reached the hut and spent some time taking in the area, and



then turned to drive out on the same track. This time we had not gone very far at all before our Trip Leader in a Ford Everest was bogged.

We were able to extract his vehicle and proceeded to drive out. We then received another rescue call. A Jeep in our convoy was also bogged.

The Jeep was also successfully extracted and we left the area returning to Wymah for our Birthday Dinner.

The next morning saw bacon and egg rolls cooked for all and the trip ended with some members visiting the Wymah Museum.



50TH ANNIVERSARY



Clubmen and Clubwomen of the year L to R - Wayne Clayton, Carmel Heather, John Bell, Brian Tanner, Yvonne Clayton, Alex Huybens, Jan Napper, Daryl Napper, Warren Tedford, Juanita Mountjoy, Mick Riley, Geoff Davey, Shez Tedford, Dave Hamann, Allie Hamann

ARTICLE: DANNY SPARKS-COUSINS | PHOTOS: SHEZ TEDFORD

Saturday May 6th 2023 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Geelong Four Wheel Drive Club. After a huge amount of planning by many people the night had arrived for everyone to celebrate this remarkable milestone.

The Yot, located at the Geelong Yacht Club, was as our venue for the night. It was selected for its central location and ability to cater for everyone in comfort and style. We were thrilled to have 110 past and present members join us from far and wide with some members traveling from Queensland, New South Wales and even Western Australia to be part of this auspicious occasion.

The room was arranged with a selection of memorabilia, clothing, and club magazines from across the years. A slideshow featuring photos from various trips and events dating back from the very early days of the club was also played on the big screen. The club clothing from different years was an interesting look back in time ... and not all of it was green! An array of 50th Anniversary Commemorative Memorabilia was available for purchase including belt buckles, stubby holders, cups & mugs, and hat pins. These items will still be available for purchase throughout the remainder of the year through the committee.

The evening commenced at 5:30pm with guests arriving and making themselves comfortable with a beverage and a chat. We even had a couple of very stylish arrivals make their way to the party by stretch Hummer limousines – can't get much better than that to kick off the party!

As the room filled and became louder with laughter and chatting the food and beverages began to flow. The Yot supplied a delicious selection of finger foods throughout the night along with plenty of beverage options. Everyone was well-fed and in high spirits which contributed to the joyous and animated atmosphere.

It was great to see many members enjoying the photo slideshow, stirring up memories of past trips, bringing on a few laughs and giggles and getting people talking about times they've shared in the club. Did you know that on the night we had 9 past Presidents attend (spanning a collective 19 years of presidency), 11 Life members, 17 Clubmen and Clubwomen and 11 "Dunny Seat" award members.

Wayne Hevey from Four Wheel Drive Victoria was in attendance and congratulated the club on reaching the 50-year milestone. He presented the club with a commemorative plaque. The Geelong Four Wheel Drive



From L to R - Werner Brocks, Pam Crowe, Les Crowe



Wayne Hevey - CEO, Four Wheel Drive Victoria, presenting the 50th plaque to Geoff Davey, President of the Geelong 4WD Club

Club played a significant role in the establishment of the Association and maintains a strong bond and relationship with Four Wheel Drive Victoria still today.

Two separate panels were held through the night to have a very relaxed and informal chat about anything and everything that has happened within the club since its inception. Our first panel discussion for the night, 'A Chat with the Boys' (or maybe 'The Kangaroo Bar') consisted of the following participants:

- Founding member and inaugural President, Life Member, previous Clubman of the Year and 2 time Dunny Seat award winner – Werner Brocks.
- Founding member and the club's second President – Les Crowe.
- Founding member – Pam Crowe.
- Life Member, previous Clubman of the Year – Brian Tanner, and
- Life Member and previous Clubman of the Year – Alex Huybens.

Some of the many and various topics covered by the panel included how the club came about, the early years' trips, vehicles and accessories, the State Emergency Service (SES) and the origins of the club logo. Roving reporter Trevor Brocks made sure everyone in the audience could participate by asking questions for the panel or sharing their own historical anecdotes, memorable moments from trips, events and social nights within the club.

How the club started really is a story within itself and covered by Werner in his story 'How the club came to be' page 12 of the magazine. In the very early days we were one of the very first four wheel drive clubs in Victoria. At the time our club was formed there were only four other clubs: the Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria, the Cross Country Jeep Club, Dandenong Ranges 4WD Club and the Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria.

The early trips were predominantly local with the first one being an easy exploration of the Brisbane Ranges before venturing further afield to Apollo Bay, Forrest, and deeper into the Otways. In those early years the most popular vehicles were Land Rovers, Land Cruisers, Patrols and a few Jeeps. They

lacked power steering, had 3 or 4-speed manuals and no electronic assistance. Driving those vehicles required skill and control. Lowering tyre pressures wasn't common as the tyres couldn't accommodate it and wheel chains were a common necessity when tackling challenging terrain. Bull bars were typically simple, agricultural items made from welded pipes or whatever materials were available, and accessories – there weren't any!

Our relationship with the SES started very early on – members of the Club basically were the first SES group in Geelong. They were given a generator and a couple of lights and asked to assist in setting up lighting etc to help at traffic accidents and other emergencies.

The club's first ever meeting was held in Les Crowe's garage! Since then we have held meetings at the DW Hope Centre in Norlane, various schools that were available, the Wood Street Reserve in South Geelong, the Seaview Club and now in our current clubrooms at the Abe Wood Reserve.

One particularly memorable adventure – the 'Whitfield Episode' – included quite a large convoy, multiple boggings, changing weather and a very steep hill. Going downhill while the weather was fine was great – but trying to come back up in the rain not so much. At least the radio could pick up the footy for a little amusement.

Our club has always been willing to lend a hand throughout the Otways region – helping out in the early days with the removal of Boneseed weed. We have also helped out with removal of car bodies and general rubbish, track classifications and track clearing and opening which we continue to do annually.

During the second panel discussion we had the pleasure of hosting some of the prominent women who have been part of the club throughout the years: Julie Brocks, Jan Napper and Ornella Di Rocco along with past President Adam Cameron. A great discussion was held on the history of the larger annual club events starting off at Apollo Bay and spanning the Boho Bounce, Gippsland Go Down, Quarry Capers, Forrest Frolics, Otway Antics and Sokil Scramble right up to the current Moonambel Muster – which this year we are celebrating

12 years continuous running of this event.

We heard fond memories of how the club and its members have always been up for some competition whether it was between members and other clubs and with many varied games and contests at the events. We've held dress up events, annual Christmas parties for the kids to play and enjoy a visit from Santa, presentation nights, trivia nights and plenty more.

Beachport and Robe have become an annual staple for the club with many families attending over the years and forming strong bonds. The extended club families have always been a feature of the club no matter what age the children (or adults), everyone looks after each other's like their own.

The annual Snow Trip up around Woods Point is another annual event looked forward to by so many within the club. The snow trips are so popular that we usually run two!

The Mud Chicks group was originally formed to assist families going through difficult times with an illness of a main family member or even the arrival of a newborn baby. The Mud Chicks would work out meals to be made and delivered to the family to ease the burden. They used to meet one Wednesday a month, usually at the old Pancake Parlour late evening and the women were able to get out and catch up whilst the men stayed home with young kids. They'd plan fundraisers, social night events and other club activities.

Do you know how the Napper's Jokers Hat came to be? Well thanks to Zach and Jan we now know that Jan 'borrowed' it from Zach to take on one of their early trips with the intention of creating a reason to gather together at the end of each day. If the group wasn't able to have a campfire there was still a reason to gather together and share stories of the day. On the first night of the trip Jan nominated someone to wear the hat for the entire next day. It didn't matter if you were in the middle of the outback or in the middle of a supermarket – the whole next day you had to wear that damn hat. Subsequent nights around the campfire (or just around the hat) the hat would be passed onto whoever had done the funniest, silliest, craziest, or maybe even dumbest thing from the day. Although not everyone may have enjoyed wearing the hat at the time, it was a great source of fun and laughter for the entire convoy and is still talked about to this day.

Ornella recalled some of the more memorable

pranks played on trips by herself and Marg Gill. Marg was always up for a laugh! The first was while everyone else was out driving they decided to catch bugs and flies and fill Dave Purdie's mesh "fly proof" marquee tent. He came back wondering how they got in. Ornella and Marg watched Dave meticulously looking over the tent for holes before eventually letting Dave know they spent the afternoon using the kids bug catcher. The second prank involved a little bush tucker. They made small rum balls from moist sawdust found in a tree, rolled them in sugar and then used left over Ferrero Rocher wrappers to serve them in. When the fellas came back from their drive the tasty morsels were offered along with other treats. Most were very polite until they caught on although Nigel Lloyd didn't hold back, spiting them out saying they were bloody awful. Nigel was known to be a joker and prankster himself adding to the light-hearted atmosphere. No deaths, just a few giggles had.

Adam was able to fill us in a little on the more recent history of different vehicles that we've had within the club – improvements in tyres, technology and various accessories. We even heard all about the transition of driving lights on members cars – from halogen, to HID, to LEDs and the prevalence of light bars.

We did manage to get a group photo towards the tail end of the night – but only squeezed in about half of the total who attended. Thanks to Shez Tedford for taking photos throughout the night, with past and present members enjoying a chat, laughing at good times shared together and thinking about the next trip and getting back on the tracks.

The party continued until close to midnight (I'm sure there were a few who kept going 'til the wee hours of the morning). It was an exceptional celebration befitting our remarkable club and its 50th year of being.

Congratulations to the Geelong Four Wheel Drive Club, Werner Brocks, Les Crowe and other founding members and everyone who has been a member or helped the club in so many different ways over the years. I doubt anyone would have thought they'd be celebrating 50 continuous years in 2023. The event was made possible thanks to the efforts of Geoff Davey, the committee and the special working group who dedicated themselves to organizing a night to remember.



Life Members L to R - Trevor Brocks, Brian Tanner, Werner Brocks, David Dixon, Alex Huybens, Adrian Ellis, Dave Purdie, Shez Tedford, Warren Tedford, Allie Hamann, Dave Hamann



Presidents L to R - John Bell, Geoff Davey, George Heather, Dave Hamman, Adam Cameron, Werner Brocks, Mick Riley, Byron Willey

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COME AND TRY DAY

BY: DANIEL WHITBY

On Saturday, 6th of May the Ballarat Four Wheel Drive Club's training ground in Smythesdale was filled up with eager participants from all over the state itching to get on the track for Four Wheel Drive Victoria's Come and Try Day. The event was proudly announced through Four Wheel Drive Victoria's website and social media which resulted in a strong turnout with 52 participants in 35 cars.

Nate Perry from the DEECA Beaufort office was in attendance to give a talk and presentation on environmental issues, campfire safety and to help reinforce the message and importance of Tread Lightly. Wayne Hevey also spoke to the excited crowd giving them a rundown on who Four Wheel Drive Victoria are, the benefit of joining

a 4WD club and encouraging those in attendance to get on a training course and learn more about how to look after the bush and safe four wheel driving.

Once the talks were completed and everyone had signed on it was time to jump in the cars and hit the training track. The Ballarat Four Wheel Drive Club had kindly allowed us to hold the event at their sensational facility, a purpose built training ground that the club has put hours and hours into building and is a great asset to their members. The club had also organised members to come out and assist guiding the public through the course to help make sure everyone went the right way and that all made it safely to the finish gate. Instructors were also present to jump in participants



cars to provide extra guidance and to make sure those in need got the help they were after.

A few nervous faces soon turned into big, excited smiles as those attending would finish the course and quickly line back up ready to go through it all again and again. The smell of snags on the barbeque had everyone changing from lining up on the track to lining up for a sausage. Thank you to Sinclair Meats and Stewart's Bakery for supplying food for the day.

With the sun now out and full stomachs everyone was ready to jump back into their car and get going around the track again. A few more people had rocked up by this time, so it was an important job being at the gate and making sure everyone was safely spaced out and there wasn't too many on track at once. The side slope, the simulated river crossing and log crossing along with up hills, down hills and varied terrain was tackled by now confident drivers with big grins across their faces.

By the time 3pm had come the rain returning in typical Ballarat fashion. The gates to the course were closed and everyone was ready to head home. It was a great day and the messages about environmental awareness while four wheel driving, benefits of joining a club and having training will hopefully bring an influx of new members to not only the Ballarat Four Wheel Drive Club but to other clubs in the association. A big thank you is required for the Ballarat Four Wheel Drive Club for hosting the event and helping to promote it across the local area in recent weeks and for providing so many excellent volunteers as well as a big thank you to the Four Wheel Drive Victoria accredited trainers who helped out on the day. Stay tuned for the next come and try day happening in a few months time.



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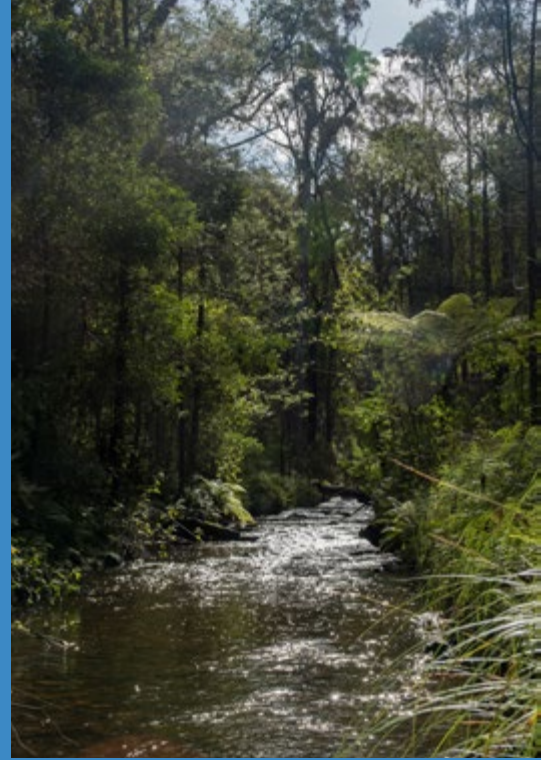
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HAUNTED STREAM

well worth it if you dare!

ARTICLE: GORDON PORTER | PHOTOS: MARK CURIE



Heading off to do the Haunted Stream, of course it was a Friday. CEO of 4WD Vic Wayne Hevey, Everest 4WD Club member and photographer Mark Curie and I decided to prepare for the Regional Representatives Meeting held on the last weekend in May 2023. First, we needed to get a breath of the Victorian High Country before all the hot air.

Haunted Stream track was selected. Decision was to head up the Great Alpine Way and take the Haunted Stream Track off to the left. (A bit after Tambo Crossing) Then head West to Dawson.

The track starts not far north of the Bridge over the Tambo River. There is a farmhouse with space for a convoy of 4WD vehicles on the West side of the Great Alpine road, with the track climbing up to a gate about 40 metres from the road. As always leave farm gates as you find them. This is where having a photographer comes in handy as they double as gate opener / closers. We headed off through the farm until the next gate then onto into the forest.

Haunted Stream track heading West starts off very easy with great vistas North of the river and ridge lines.



As the track progresses one of the great features of the track presents itself, river crossings. There is of course the traditional area for the Gunaikurnai mob. I recommend acquainting yourself with some knowledge before setting off. <https://batalukculturaltrail.com.au>

Stirling along the track is one site where those who have come since were stirred to seek out gold in the 1800's. Take a break here and wander the old town site if only to ponder the life of those who lived here in the past and the colourful way one was despatched from this life. (The back of the sign will tell you the story, but you'll have to get there to read it!)

There are many river crossings to be had. They are not at present particularly challenging but there have been great works done by DEECA to fix major problems to make this a pleasant trip. Some of the bush vistas are just breath



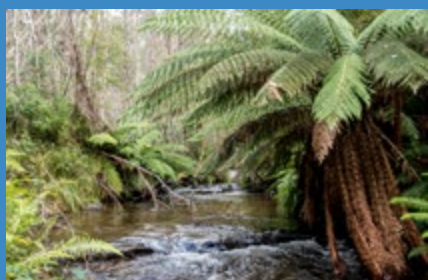
taking whilst it is hard to go past the combination of magnificent tree ferns and a glistening river all in one view.

Of course, with the proximity of magnificent timber and a steep track there is the ever present danger of falling trees. There was one along the track on this day and many small logs and branches

as we progressed. Always ensure you have the right gear; in this case it includes having a chainsaw. Know how to use it safely, if not I recommend doing the accredited chainsaw course through 4WD Vic. (www.fwdvictoria.org.au/training)

If you were on the trip, please point to who forgot their chainsaw!

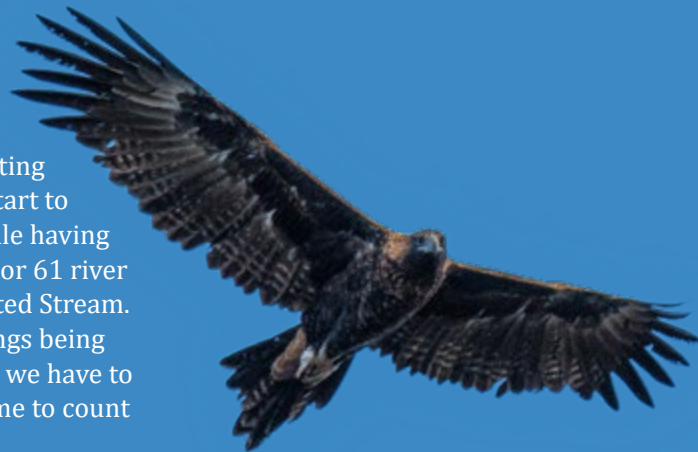
Eventually we got to Dawson. Here is a lovely spot for a small group to bushcamp. The ongoing westward route gets a bit more challenging with river crossing but that was not to be our path today. Whilst having a late lunch here the stream lived up to its name. One of the bracken started to waive violently at us from down near the stream. This went on for about 10-20 seconds then stopped. When we went to investigate no sign of a snake or wombat or other potential reason for making this flora wave at us. The plant was too high on the bank to be touched by anything



floating downstream and there was no wind at the time. We had to leave this haunting mystery behind and start to head back to Bairnsdale having had driven though 59 or 61 river crossings of the Haunted Stream. The number of crossings being in dispute only means we have to come back another time to count them properly!

Headed up Northwards on Dawson City Track to Angora Range Road which is a dirt road suitable for logging trucks. Dawson City track through a few small trees across our route which we soon cleared. Then later on the Angora Range Road there were 2 larger trees across the road and rocks later in the decent, which we cleared also by dragging them using both mechanical and manpower. Angora takes you back East to the Great Alpine Road at Wattle Creek. This is just North of where we started. Heading home turn left for Bruthen and for us on back to Bairnsdale.

Don't forget to look up while you travel this country because above you may just catch a glimpse of an Wedge Tailed Eagle looking



over you! We saw 3.

The vistas from Angora Range Track are worth taking your time for also.

We also encountered Rosellas, wombats, wallabies to name a few. For those not sure if they could tackle this track my Everest is the UA1 with 5 years of covering the ranges still on its standard suspension. Only lift is 20mm from slightly taller tyres.

Always check the weather as wet weather and faster flowing water will affect the viability of travelling the Haunted Stream track. Take your time, take a friend and enjoy one of the great tracks we have the privilege of being open thanks to the great efforts of 4WD Victoria and its past members.



REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES MEETING BAIRNSDALE

May 2023



The Regional Representatives program serves to provide clear contact points in land management agencies (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and Parks Victoria) and Four Wheel Drive Victoria to facilitate discussion and information sharing on 4WD issues of mutual interest. It aims to provide a point of contact so that those with local on-ground knowledge can deal with issues directly. Meetings move around the State to showcase different regions. This time it was Bairnsdale's turn.

Around 20 people arrived in town on Saturday for a tour into Mitchelldale, a property with restricted access managed by Parks Victoria. Andrew Johnson (AJ), President Bairnsdale 4WD Social Club, led the way and together with members from the club and Ollie from Parks Victoria, gave informative commentary over the UHF along the way. We left the DEECA offices around 10am, our convoy snaking past Lindenow, Glenaladale on the Bairnsdale Dargo Road. It wasn't long before we turned onto the dirt and started dropping down into the valley of the Mitchell River National Park. Our destination came into view as we descended the final part of the track. We parked on the grassy flats near the hut. Everyone was excited to get out and look around. AJ held our attention first with his incredible knowledge of the area and its history, the hut was used and lived in until the early

2000's when the landowner passed away on site, the land and adjoining areas were purchased by Parks Victoria in the years after and added to the Mitchell River National Park. Wayne Hevey thanked AJ and the Bairnsdale 4wd Social club for arranging this special access for us today through Parks Victoria.

We all agreed it was such a beautiful, tranquil spot. The non-native trees around the homestead glowed in the Autumn sun and the river with its own beachy bend was ever so inviting. After a look around and some lunch, cars were packed and we back tracked to a turn off and drove up to a lookout of breathtaking views to the north and west. A few more stories were told about the local area before everyone headed back to Bairnsdale for a well earned dinner at the Bairnsdale Club. A fabulous day!

Sunday's formal meeting saw 46 people attending. FWDV Regional Representatives from across the state, staff from both DEECA and Parks Victoria and Gunnai man Wayne Thorpe, who was invited to speak after lunch.

Gail Wright of Parks Victoria opened the meeting and gave the Welcome to Country. First up, Gail and Wayne Hevey led a lively discussion regarding ParkConnect and how it will be utilised in the future for MVO access applications, Annual Volunteer Activity Plans as well as the volunteer registration and projects that it was originally created for. There was plenty of



feedback on difficulties experienced in the past and suggestions for improvement. We appreciate those who expressed their views on ParkConnect in its current form and look forward to seeing how it will evolve. There was also discussion and confirmation about the mandatory requirements for JSA's, site safety plans and Working with Children Checks on Volunteer projects.

It was announced that Seasonal Closure lists for both DEECA and PV will be on the one DEECA mapping system. Gail Wright then broached the subject of how and when Regional Rep meetings take place and questioned whether the format should change; 1 onsite and 1 online meeting each year or remain at 2 onsite meetings with extra online meetings if necessary. At the conclusion of the conversation a proposal for the latter was put forward. A strong majority were all in favour. That brought a round of applause and confirmed the value and support of the Regional Rep meetings. The meeting continued with information from Regional Reps and Rangers providing updates on the happenings in their areas, any issues they were having and works going on.

Harrie Fletcher from DEECA briefed us on the upgrades to the 22 trails of the 2 Back Road Tours. Maps of both tours are a great resource to use in conjunction with the More to Explore app. He also spoke about fire recovery works and reopening of the

Haunted Stream track.

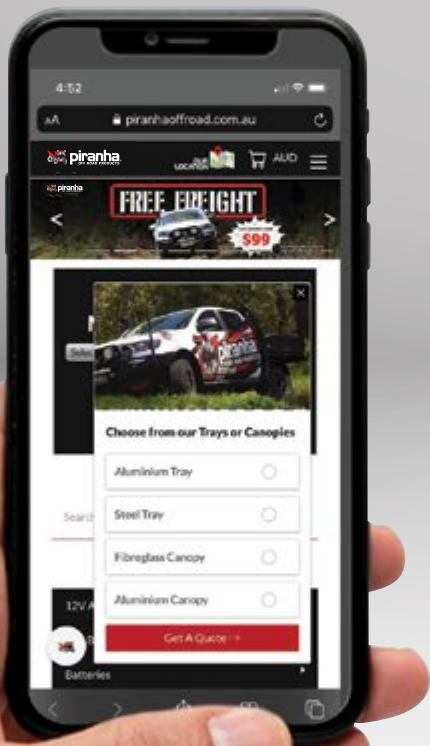
After lunch guest speaker Wayne Thorpe was invited to address the group. Wayne is a descendant of the Gunnai people and has family connections to Yorta Yorta. He spoke on the history of the Gunnai people and Gippsland. Detailing how life was before European settlement and how it changed once Captain Cook sailed along the eastern shoreline all those years ago. The formation of Missions forced his ancestors to endure restrictions on their cultural lifestyle, language, and beliefs. Wayne has spent much of his own lifetime promoting cultural awareness and sharing knowledge of indigenous language and song lines, spiritual connection to nature and our need to care for country. He also spoke on the current issue of the Voice to Parliament and his personal view on the matter. Suffice to say, the 'Voice' is a contentious topic and one for us all to consider in our own time.

Having Wayne Thorpe attend our meeting was a special honour and we were all appreciative of his talk.

The meeting closed at 3pm and most had a long journey back to Melbourne and beyond to start the working week again. Thanks to the Bairnsdale Club for Saturday, the Parks and DEECA staff who attended Sunday and our Regional Reps for their time liaising with Rangers in their patch. These meetings are vital in the partnership between the Association and Victoria's land managers.



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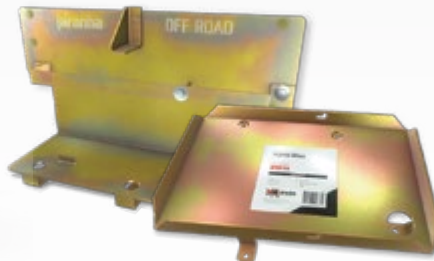
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CAMPING IN COMFORT FROM YOUR 4WD

For some people, the word 'camping' is not one they want to hear. There seems to be a common perception that in order to go camping you must rough it, and be uncomfortable.

Today, this couldn't be further from the truth; with people regularly camping in comfort all throughout the year. If you have a 4WD, you have every opportunity to camp comfortably. It all comes down to how you are set up, and how you go about the adventure.

Whilst you might not have access to every luxury at your fingertips that you would at home, you can easily have a comfortable camping trip.

Comfortable Camping

If you have a 4WD, you are in a great position to go camping in comfort. It's not to say you can't camp comfortably out of a different style of vehicle, but a 4WD offers the most flexibility in many different ways.

12V Convenience

Perhaps the biggest change in recent years relates to the power you have access to when camping. With a dual battery system, a solar panel and some basic wiring, you can have a power setup from your 4WD that will keep you and your family very happy.

You'll probably laugh, but there's no reason why you can't run a fridge/freezer, phone chargers, laptops, cameras, ample lighting, water pumps for running water and many other accessories from a basic electrical system in a 4WD.



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For the bigger and more complicated setups, people even run coffee machines, microwaves, TV's and 12V ovens! Once you've purchased the gear, it's free to run and makes your camping life so much easier.

Plenty of Room

If you've ever tried to go camping with a family in a small vehicle, you'll know it's virtually impossible. A 4WD allows you to take more gear, and without so much consideration into conserving space. Of course, ensure your vehicle is not over weight!

Roof racks are the perfect storage spot for light weight gear, like swags, tents, chairs, fishing gear and solar panels, and on a 4WD they are big enough to take everything you need.

Easy Storage

You don't have to look far to see the impressive storage and kitchen setups in the back of 4WDs. Drawer systems along with a fridge slide are very common, with table setups. Gone are the days of searching through endless tubs and bags to find what you want; drawers make it very easy to get everything quickly and easily.

Access to Quiet Locations

Camping is great, except when you are next to a

whole heap of other random people. A 4WD allows you to get to locations where a large majority of people can't; instead of being packed in like sardines to 3 x 3 metre camp sites

4WD Accessory Options

The 4WD accessory market is bigger than ever today. There are more accessories on the market to make your travel and camping more comfortable than most people know what to do with.

Awnings on the side of your car allow for shade and weather protection in under a few minutes, anywhere. Roof top tents mean you can set up camp for the night extremely quickly, and you are off the ground.

Ability to Safely Tow

4WDs are used often for towing boats, caravans or camper trailers. They are able to do so safely, and once you've taken a boat, caravan or camper trailer camping you won't look back; it's more luxury and comfort!

We've got so many beautiful places to explore in Australia; and our trusty FWD is the perfect way to us get there!



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