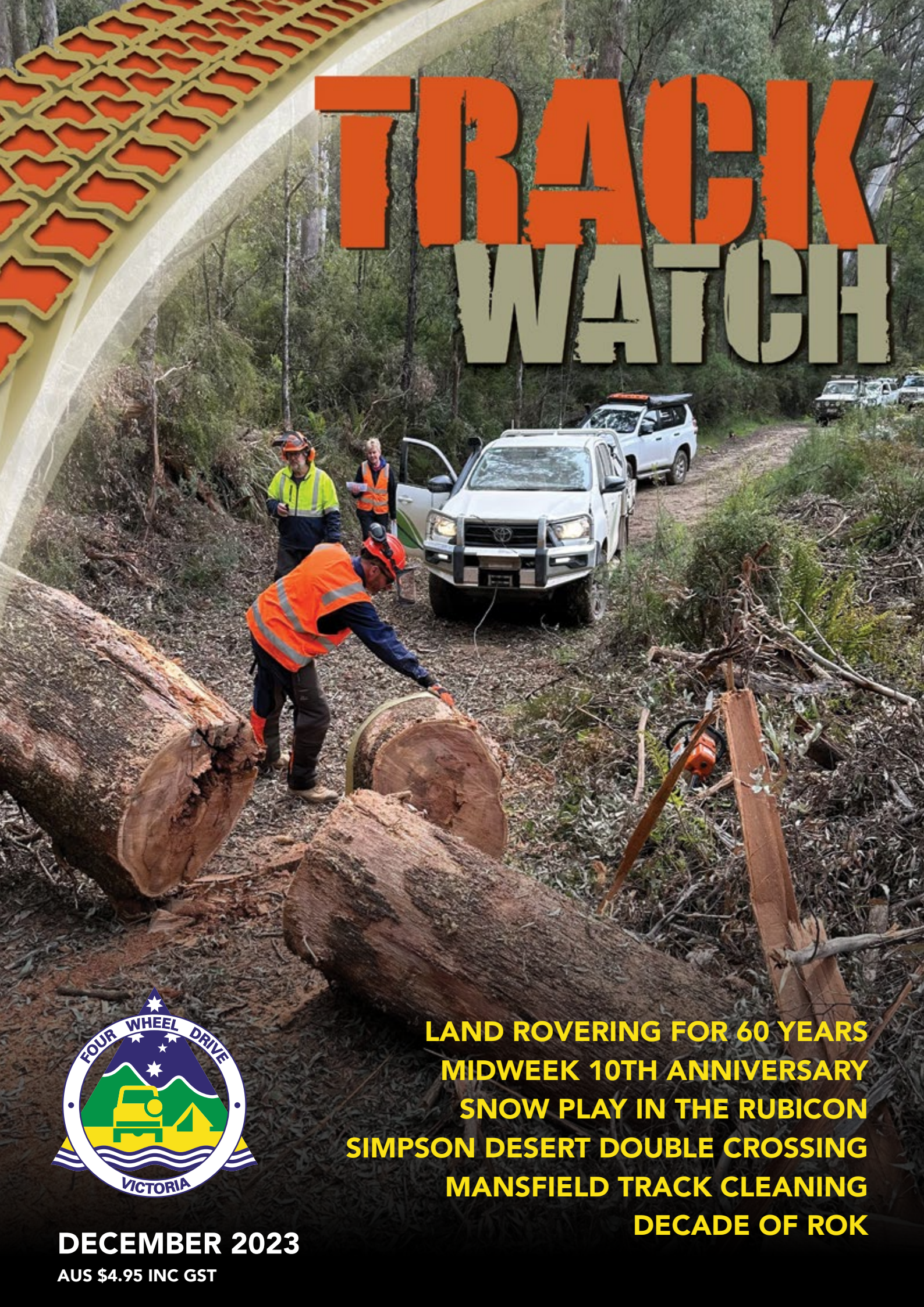


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MIDWEEK 10TH ANNIVERSARY
SNOW PLAY IN THE RUBICON
SIMPSON DESERT DOUBLE CROSSING
MANSFIELD TRACK CLEANING
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TRACKWATCH

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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



Another year has passed by and what a year it has been around the world with wars, global warming, and electric cars being the focus of many discussions around the campfires. In spite of these external factors, our association is in really good shape.

I am extremely proud to have served with our board members this year and of course our fabulous office team with Wayne Hevey, Alison McLaughlin, Daniel Whitby, and Di Hodgson. One can only feel blessed to be a member of the board with such a professional group in our office. Alison has retired and has effectively trained her replacement and is available for assistance for her replacement when the need arises.

I take this opportunity to thank the extremely talented members of the FWDV Staff and welcome Alison McLaughlin's replacement Jo Somerfield. The board is warmed by the fact that the office staff have welcomed her whole heartedly. Jo is from the Pajero Club and impressively fits the role. I also take this opportunity to thank Wayne Hevey who, as always, is 100% FWDV down to his bootstraps. Wayne is retiring next year, so the Board is looking for a replacement to move the organisation into the next phase of its existence. Daniel Whitby balances the team with his youth and initiative regularly backing up Wayne and managing the projects the Association develops. Di Hodgson is extremely diligent in managing the financial matters of the office.

The financial position is showing positive trends for the future. Income from training, which was expected to slow, but has performed extremely well Govt grant once again will help the budget move towards being balanced. All in all, we are trending towards a good year ahead.

The Board has focussed on providing service to our members through judicious financial management and cost-efficient operation provided by our CEO. We are very thankful for the astute efforts of our CEO to keep costs under tight control to maximize income-generating activities. The board



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is satisfied with the feedback from the President's meetings regarding our efforts to find a permanent home for FWDV and as such are moving forward with some serious reviews of Value for Money properties available in the marketplace.

At the President's meeting in June this year, the Board offered clubs to come on board with the purchase of a property, thus far the Land Rover Club has taken the initiative and offered to join with FWDV in the purchase of a building. Negotiations between the two are ongoing but positive.

For FWDV this year it has been a positive one in my opinion, the Association continues to enjoy an exceptional relationship with our partners in DEECA and Parks Victoria and continues to meet regularly through the FWD Advisory Committee to the Minister of Environment.

Moving forward from a political sense, this year we have developed an enduring relationship with our First Nation's people from the Taungurung Land & Waters Council and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation as another string in the bow to ensure our tracks stay open when a Treaty between the Govt of Victoria and the Koori Community is finalised. Both these groups have a direct connection with the high country and its environs and will have an influence on how it is to be managed in the future. Gordon Porter is working

with the Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board in the Shepparton district which will no doubt augur well for our relationships with the Indigenous people across the board.

The new training ground at Toolangi is firmly within our grasp, however, navigating through the Govt Red Tape is causing some delay to get started. We are extremely confident there will be a positive outcome in the coming year. This will allow the RTO to expand without any encumbrance of land ownership.

President's meetings were well attended and positive discussions from the clubs ensued and have been successful along with the Regional Reps' meetings we are moving forward with the communication to the clubs through these forums and will continue with them in 2024.

I wish you all the best for the coming Christmas Holiday Season. The summer season this year is being reported as one which has the earmarks of a disastrous bushfire season, so stay safe and have well planned escape routes if you travel through the bush tracks. I hope all maintain the shiny side up and follow our Tread Lightly motto whilst traveling in some of our most difficult areas.

Merry Christmas to you all.
Eric Bishop, President



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FROM FWDV CEO



Another year has come and gone with a quickness of time which seems to get faster and faster! It seems like only a short time ago that we were planning what we would like to achieve this year and whack, it is gone! What

we have achieved I am pleased to say is another year of government funding, which was honestly unexpected, from the then newly appointed Minister for the Environment, Minister Stitt. As I write this report, I can inform you that we now have another new Environment Minister as the portfolios have been changed due to the recent retirement of our then Premier. The Minister now responsible for our pursuits is the Hon. Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for Environment, Tourism, Sport and Major Events and Outdoor Recreation. We are looking to try to set up a meeting with him to discuss our position and outline who we are and what we represent as we have done with those before him.

We move on and try to keep things rolling, certainly it has been a very busy year regarding our RTO and the training we have been conducting. Once again, we are only hampered by the lack of qualified accredited instructors and training facilities that stops us from providing a more positive outcome in the delivery of our specified units we deliver. It is very pleasing to report that the quality of the training being delivered brings about more and more clientele, which is testament to those performing the tasks. We are proud of this fact and will strive to make sure it continues into the distant future. We have conducted 54 training sessions throughout the last calendar year made up of 25 proficiency courses and 26 accredited courses, 2 first aid courses (outsourced) and 1 chainsaw course. With so much training occurring throughout the year, it has been difficult to find time to conduct other functions such as update days. We apologize for this and look to rectify this soon.

As you should all be aware by now, Alison McLaughlin, our office Manager for the last almost 8 years has decided to retire and look after family matters and to do things with her husband that they have planned for some time. I can't thank her enough for her unwavering support and

commitment with the utmost professionalism to our cause, with the running of the office and every other thing we do and undertake. She will be sorely missed by all of us, and her knowledge of all things related to the association will take some time to replicate. We wish her well in her newfound freedom and trust that we will still see her in and around the place from time to time.

As was mentioned earlier, we are looking to acquire permanent premises for ourselves and in conjunction with the Land Rover Club of Victoria, a joint venture is being pursued at present to try to bring this about. The goal of course is to alleviate any borrowings which was not looked at favorably by your board and we are moving closer to the point of finding the right location and premise presently with the aim to bring this about as soon as possible. Many meetings and discussions have and are taking place to accommodate this desired plan and hopefully it will conclude shortly.

Your association would not be in as good a position as it is without the dedication of the staff employed by you and I once again would like to pay my respects and thanks to those who work alongside me on a day to day basis. Apart from Alison who I have previously mentioned, Daniel Whitby our project officer has made my life easier with his social media and computer knowledge, ensuring our communication efforts have been sent to the correct channels and who also looks after the production of our Trackwatch magazine. He has also been an important player with the shows and events we have been involved in this year, taking control of managing the sites and construction of the displays for those events, assisting clubs taking part in these also. Di Hodgson has also played her part in this team of ours with regards to looking after the bookkeeping and accounting duties involved in the running of the business, paying the wages and all the respective accounts as and when required. I can't thank them enough for making the association keep moving forward in the most professional way. Glenn Arkell has quietly been looking after our website for many years now and I should also thank him for his dedication to this task and the many changes he has made over the journey. I would also like to thank Dave Roberts who has been on our board for 6 years now and has been an enormous help in all things we do as a volunteer to the association. He has taken on any task I have asked him to do and we are certainly better for his efforts.

Wayne Hevey, CEO



BOOK ONLINE

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

PROFICIENCY COURSES

Tuesday 30th January – PC240130 – Theory	9th April – PC240409 – Theory
3rd February – PC240130 – Practical	13th April – PC240409 – Practical
20th February – PC240220 – Theory	28th May – PC240528 – Theory
20th February – PC240220 – Practical	1st June – PC240528 – Practical
19th March – PC240319 – Theory	2nd July – PC240702 – Theory
23rd March – PC240319 – Practical	6th July – PC240702 – 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.



2023 Victorian 4WD Show - 4WD Adventure Circuit. Photo by Gerry Mak

PUT THE DATE IN YOUR CALENDAR NOW



The Land Rover Club of Victoria is holding the 44th Victorian 4WD Show at Lardner Park on **Sunday 18th February 2024**.

Come and explore a wide range of exhibitors offering products such as 4WD accessories, vehicle modifications, camping gear, off-road camper trailers, fishing equipment, navigation, communication and much more.

Take a ride in a 4WD vehicle on the 4WD Adventure Circuit and experience a variety of four wheel driving activities such as river crossings, hills, sand and general tough going in a realistic setting.

See continuous live 4WD equipment and vehicle recovery demonstrations of various vehicle driving scenarios, 4WD equipment and camping and cooking skills. Free entertainment for children and numerous food vendors on site to keep you going throughout the day.

4WD Victoria will have a stand and can explain its role and operation as the peak umbrella motoring body for four wheel drivers. Numerous 4WD clubs are attending to explain what their club can offer members and how best to modify those vehicle types as well as other special interest displays.

Entry price is \$18 per adult and children under 16 free. Tickets and information are available at: www.vic4wdshow.com.au

44th
Victorian4WD SHOW

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Sunday 18th February 2024
9am to 3pm - LARDNER PARK

LOCATION: Entry gate 155 Burnt Store Rd, Lardner Victoria

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

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- 4WD Adventure Circuit
- 4WD Equipment, Parts, Accessories
- Demonstrations of 4WD techniques
- 4WD Club and Association displays
- Camping Gear
- Off-Road Camper Trailers and Caravanning
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Air intake systems play the critical role of providing clean air to your engine. Sub-standard air filtration systems can result in increased fuel consumption, loss of power, excessive oil burn and premature engine damage.

Engineered specifically for diesel powered 200 Series Toyota® LandCruiser® vehicles, the robust XLC200K replacement air housing + filter kit incorporates the latest in air filtration technology and provides industry leading performance and engine protection.

Featuring genuine PowerCore® construction with Ultra-Web® media, Donaldson offers you the ultimate harsh environment air filter housing. The compact XLC200K air housing + filter kit includes a high efficiency element that does not compromise on dust holding capacity or negatively impact air flow through your vehicle's cold air intake system.



XLC200K Technology

PowerCore® filters feature a unique corrugated design which creates a straight-through air-flow path to trap dust in the flutes on the dirty side of the filter. This innovative design pushes air through to the adjacent flutes on the clean side, delivering clean air to your engine. Ultra-Web® fine fibres are sub-micron in diameter overlaid on a cellulose substrate. The small inter-fibre spaces provide a high initial efficiency, loading engine damaging contaminants on the media surface.

With 3x more effective filtration area than the OEM panel filter, PowerCore® 4x4 delivers more than 30% lower initial restriction at the same airflows, allowing your engine to breathe easy while keeping contaminants out. Using ISO5011 test standard, Donaldson PowerCore® 4x4 filters also delivered 99.99% efficiency, compared to 99.87% efficiency for OEM panel filters resulting in significantly more engine protection. The science is complicated but the benefits to your vehicle are simple: low initial and on-going restriction, long element life and maximum engine protection.

Originally designed for Toyota® LandCruiser® 200 Series diesel engines, XLC200K also suits ULP variants with minimal modification as well as Lexus LX570 & LX450 engines.

Whether your 200 Series is used for the hardest work or the most adventurous play, the Australian designed quality, high performance filtration included in Donaldson's XLC200K kit provides the protection you have always demanded. XLC200K is a complete kit which contains a PowerCore® 4x4 Air Cleaner Housing, PowerCore® 4x4 Air Filter, Fastener Kit and Mounting Brackets.





LAND ROVERING FOR 60 YEARS!

ARTICLE & PHOTOS: GRAEME WALSH



Sixty years ago the very first four wheel drive Club in Australia was formed. At the time it was only one of a few of its kind in the World - the others were mostly in England. That club is the Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria, and is currently celebrating its 60th Anniversary this year. Back then, to start a club about Land Rovers you were required to first get approval from the Land Rover organisation in the UK. Nowadays clubs just start up without seeking anyone's approval but things were different back then apparently.

The LROCV, like all other 4WD clubs, conducts monthly meetings, one-day and longer 4WD trips, social events, performs various community work, has a website, and a bi-monthly magazine. Currently membership numbers average around 700 members.

Recently the Club had a vehicle Show & Shine day where members displayed their vehicles for all to see. In addition, the LROCV held a Celebratory dinner with nearly one hundred members in attendance. It was well catered for with music and prizes during the night. Wayne Hevey, Alison McLaughlin, Eric Bishop and their partners attended from Four Wheel Drive Victoria.

For around 52 years the Club has conducted the yearly Victorian 4WD Show (now held at Lardner Park near Warragul) where some 5,000 people attend this one day event to see trade displays, recovery demonstrations, and a drive on the Adventure Circuit amongst other things.

The Club is a well organised and respected club and continues to grow all the time without having to chase members.





Wayne Hevey, Alison McLaughlin, Eric Bishop from Four Wheel Drive Victoria and their partners



The current LROCV President Fred de Gooyer helping the lowest member number Graeme Walsh (#3) cut the cake



George Walker - 93 years old, (left) is the last of the Founding Members of the LROCV, being presented by President Fred de Gooyer with a Certificate recognising 60 years of Continuous Membership of the LROCV.





MIDWEEK 10TH ANNIVERSARY

In October 2023 the Midweek 4WD Club celebrated their 10th anniversary as a club at the Tende Beck Scout Hall and invited along Wayne Hevey, Alison McLaughlin and myself along for the occasion. As soon as we walked into the room, it was clear there was a good turnout with the beautifully presented room packed full. With banksia branches on every table and the makeshift fireplace set up in the room it was sure to be a great time.

As rain and hail started to fall outside the scout hall it was clear the right decision was made to hold the lunch inside rather than out. Club President, Ross Carr kickstarted the event, with thanks to all members, past and current in attendance. There was also an apology for Leon and Liz Savage, the clubs membership secretary who were unfortunately unable to make the occasion. A few recent trip reports were given to plenty

of laughs, a recent washout up at Eildon was retold by members and planning for future trips by the club trip coordinator. Ross soon had centre stage again and the main event began. Ross pulled back a black sheet on the stage to reveal a big number of mementos for all members to have of and remember the event. However, there was a condition to these mementos, they were not to be opened until the end. It was later rumoured they may self-destruct and explode if opened sooner.

Founding member Geoff Kenafacke had put together a magnificent PowerPoint to take a trip down memory lane. Geoff and fellow founding member Paul Cole took us through the PowerPoint, reciting stories from trips throughout the years whilst presenting the mementos to members as the slides got to the years they had joined the club.

Not too soon after it was time

for lunch to begin. Everyone was spoilt for choice, with roast chicken, beef and pork on offer and with all the sides too, going hungry simply wasn't an option. Especially after dessert rolled out, pav, chocolate cake and sticky date pudding that definitely didn't last long.

With happy faces and full stomachs, the official photos took place. I can't be sure if it was the excellent food or the good times being had by all but it was smiles all around and some beautiful photos to mark the occasion. A big thank you to the Midweek 4WD Club for not only inviting us to their celebration with you all but also for all the hard work and high number of volunteer hours that have been contributed over the years! Four Wheel Drive Victoria certainly appreciates the clubs efforts!



SNOW PLAY IN THE RUBICON

BY: SHARYN MCGREGOR





For those of us who arrived at the TLCCV club property the night before, the morning started around a nice warm fire in the Hilton before heading up to the Yarck Hotel Saturday morning to meet all the other trip participants who had already visited the local establishments for hot beverages and morning tea.

With a comfortable 10am start we all headed off in convoy toward Alexandra and then down toward the Cathedral Ranges. Where we aired down and started slowly climbing Chitty Ridge and the top half of Cathedral Lane which has suffered a good lot of erosion with a steady flow of rain water zigzagging its way down the

track. Picking our line and riding the ruts with a bit of articulation while attempting to avoid the deep crevices in the slippery mud was quite an enjoyable way to start the day and get the hearts pumping. Everyone succeeded in reaching the top without any difficulty and even better, without having to do any recoveries.

The drive through the Rubicon Forest is an enjoyable one at any time of the year with its tall trees and lush rainforest ferns. Most of the tracks north of Lake Mountain are between 1000m and 1300m above sea level and with a good cold winter at this time of year, you will find them covered in snow. But alas, it has not been cold enough. Even the ski resorts were having to

generate man made snow this year to keep their patrons happy. The lack of finding snow though did not phase us, we just went onto plan B.

We headed off the main track, winding down into the valley to an old hut beside the Taponga River. This was the perfect spot for lunch and it gave me a good chance to do a bit a recce for a working bee I have at this same hut the following weekend with my other club (Melbourne Jeep Owners Club) who are the caretakers of 15 Mile Hut. We found the hut very neglected and needing quite a bit of work. The floods in the past year have eroded some of the embankments along the tracks and unfortunately, a lot of this mud has washed down the track and


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into the hut. There was also a lot of empty cans and bottles stacked around the walls of the hut and lots of broken camp chairs which we will remove next weekend during the cleanup. Everyone enjoys the experience of visiting an old high country hut in the remote mountains and even though this hut was not shown in its best light, its history and its value of being an emergency shelter in the middle of nowhere was very much appreciated and valued.

The afternoon was not short of excitement with a few tracks less travelled and a bit more track clearing with all the convoy getting out of their vehicles and lending a hand to move branches, logs and debris out of the way before the

main large logs could be carved up by both our trip leader and this time also our tail end Charlie. Today's travels have certainly given us our fair share of trees across tracks and a few more volunteer hours logged with Four Wheel Drive Vic. One more river crossing and then it was back up onto the main track heading homeward bound, but not before one last stop at the majestic Snobs Creek Falls where we all aired up, admired the falls and said our goodbyes to those heading back to Melbourne while the rest of the convoy headed for the nice warm fire of the Hilton back at the club property. A great day had by all, even if there was no snow!





BY: CLUB MEMBERS
PHOTOS BY: JEFF CAVANAGH

SIMPSON DESERT DOUBLE CROSSING PART 1

The adventure began at Birdsville following the arrival of six vehicles from our club.

Birdsville to Mt Dare

Day 1: Following a hearty breakfast at the bakery, we headed off to Big Red. We reduced tyre pressures and climbed Big Red without difficulty. The next dune, appropriately named “Nemesis” presented some difficulty for some of the convoy, but after some adjustment of tyre pressures we were on our way once again on the QAA Line.

Many of the dunes on this section were badly scalloped with deep holes and moguls, resulting in

some interesting bouncing about, not just up and down but side to side as well. We soon perfected the art of “walking” the vehicle over the dunes where the sand was packed, or using a bit of right foot when the sand was soft and loose.

Arriving at the Eyre Creek “normal” crossing, which was still impassable we headed north on the bypass track to the upstream crossing. The crossing at this point was about 600mm deep and over 50 meters wide, but all vehicles negotiated it without any problems.

We continued on the bypass track until we reached the QAA Line again and continued until we made camp about 8 km into the Munga Thirri National Park.

Day 2: Continued along the QAA Line until we crossed momentarily into Northern Territory and turned south toward Poeppel Corner. The drive south was mainly easy going along the edge of a dry salt

lake. Traffic on the track so far had been reasonably light. We had been following a group of two vehicles with a strange way of announcing their position. **“Coming to a dune near you” and “Cresting in 15, 10, 5”.**

After Poeppel Cnr we turned on to the French Line we continued for another 25k and found a spot to set up camp.

Day 3: Set off toward the Knolls Track junction, turning south to the Approddinna Attora Knolls. These are two flat topped gypsum hills, which hold great significance for the Aboriginal People.

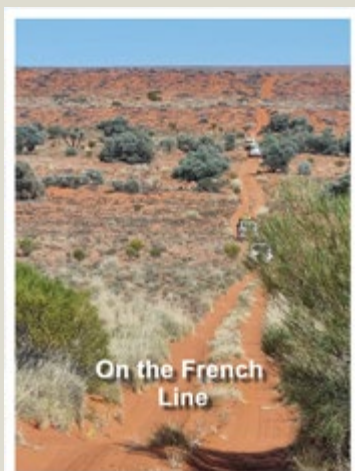
After morning tea at the Knolls car park, we headed back to the French Line and continued our westward journey. Up until now, the dunes hadn't been too bad, but as we went further west the dunes became more cut up and presented more of a challenge. In most cases there was more than one track over the dunes.

By taking the harder option each time, we put our driving skills and our vehicle's ability to the test. The two Prados with their less powerful 96kw engines were equal to the task, while the V8 Cruiser ate the dunes for breakfast. The Patrol, Colorado and HiLux also tackled the rough and steep dunes successfully.

We camped that evening 9km east of Colson Junction, and all agreed that it had been the best day's driving yet.

Day 4: We headed into more of the challenging dunes. On one particular dune, we noticed the Toyota V8 struggle at the top, throwing giant rooster tails in the soft sand. There was no way the other vehicles were going to make it so we did the wise thing and took the easier track.

Stopped for lunch at Wonga Junction, where the easier Rig Road commences. A group of Mini Mokes arrived heading East, and stalled on the first dune of the French line. They turned further south to take the easier tracks of the Rig Road and WAA Line. After Wonga Junction the dunes were much smaller and presented no challenge at all. It was in this section that one of the Prado drivers reported loud banging under her Prado. She swapped vehicles with



another driver who had a listen, and it was evident that something was seriously amiss. An inspection underneath revealed a broken left hand rear shock absorber. After some roadside surgery, the broken shock was removed and we continued on our way to camp at Purnie Bore.

A call was made to Mt Dare but as it was Sunday it wasn't possible to arrange a replacement.

Day 5: The road across the Spring Creek Delta was badly corrugated and very rough. Due to the dusty conditions and varied speeds over the corrugations the convoy spread out considerably. We eventually regrouped for the run into Dalhousie Springs, where most of the group enjoyed a dip in the warm waters of Dalhousie. After airing up our tyres we drove to Mt Dare, unsure of how long it would be before the Prado could be repaired.

Day 5 (P.M.) Mt Dare. We arrived at Mt Dare around 1.00pm and booked into the campground. Enquiries were made about repairs to the Prado, only to find that the mechanic was on a day off and no parts could be ordered as it was a public holiday in Alice Springs.

We filled in the afternoon refueling and checking our vehicles and generally relaxing until dinner in the evening.

Day 6: Mt Dare. Today was scheduled in the trip plan as a rest day. Tony, the mechanic, checked the Prado and ordered replacement shock absorbers from Alice Springs.

We were told that the parts required for the Prado would be sent overnight to Finke with the weekly supply run, and one of the Mt Dare staff would go to Finke in the morning to collect the supplies.

We had an early dinner and spent a pleasant evening around the campfire.

Day 7: Mt Dare to Old Andado. After breakfast it was a waiting game until the truck arrived back from Finke. The supplies were unloaded and Tony started to work on Prado.

The repairs were completed and after lunch we were ready to be on our way. The service provided at this tiny isolated outback pub/store/garage is absolutely outstanding. Shaynee and her excellent staff are so friendly and helpful. 10 out of 10 Mt Dare!

Mt. Dare to Birdsville via the Madigan Line.

With full stomachs and fuel tanks we started out on our first leg toward the Madigan Line for our return trip to Birdsville. We made good time on the Binns Track to Old Andado and arrived in plenty of time to set up camp and inspect the old homestead, which has been preserved in the same condition as Shen Molly Clarke left years ago to a nursing home in Alice Springs.

After another stunning sunset and dinner in the “camp kitchen” we settled into another pleasant evening around the campfire.

To be continued.....



28 & 29 OCTOBER 2023

BY: ALISON MCLAUGHLIN

TRACK CLEANING

Saturday:

Track clearing in the high country – one of the best volunteering gigs in my book!

8:30am – Members of the Mansfield Alpine 4wd club, in 4 vehicles, met with Whitfield Parks Victoria Ranger Alex Jennings at the BP Servo in Mansfield for a briefing. Our team consisted of three with chainsaw quals and the rest of us as picker-ruper-rers. We got away from there at 9:15am and proceeded through Sheeppark Flat and the Howqua Hills Historic area into Alpine National Park travelling Brocks Road.

10:45am – Bluff Link Road, Eight Mile Gap, then past the Seasonal Closure sign and through the gate. That ‘through the gate’ thing is such a special privilege at this time of year! The mission that we accepted was to clear BLR through to the junction at Bindaree. And we did – arriving at Bindaree at 4:15pm. Plenty of chainsaw work and clearing took place. We leap-frogged in two groups ... until we

encountered one giant tree, a Peppermint Gum, a showstopper, impossible to drive past until it could be cleared. The tree spanned the entire track, up the embankment and its branches, thick with foliage, lay smashed and tangled all around. Ranger Alex was an absolute master with his chainsaw, explaining his assessments, method, and cuts through the girth as he proceeded to dissect the huge trunk into rollable logs. Our entire team were kept busy chainsawing as well and clearing the fallen mess. It was a bloomin’ big job and a great team effort!

Our convoy eventually moved on and, with further clearing, finally came to Bindaree. From there it was up to Circuit Road, a turn on to Speculation Road and down to King Basin Track to King River Hut. Whitfield PV Ranger Thomas Grounds with 2 volunteers from Wang Club had been clearing from the north and joined us to camp the night. Tents and swags were set up as dusk descended, and a fire was soon crackling in



readiness for a barbecue. Meat and salads were generously provided by PV. Add to that roast spuds in foil and we had ourselves a feast. It was so nice to be in the glow of a campfire and under the stars with friends!

Track Note: The track that leads into hut is in a bad state with severe and deep rocky washouts across the flats due to recent flooding. The Rangers explained that, repair works to the track are on hold at present as the area is considered a 'cultural living landscape' and a permit needs to be obtained from Taungurung. Application has been made however not finalised to date.

Sunday:

In the clear and chilly morning the fire was stoked into action to boil the billies. After a leisurely breakfast and pack up we circled for a briefing before taking off to track clear along King Basin Road. Our lot from Mansfield amalgamated with the Wang group for the day so clearing was quicker as we snaked our way down the track and through the river crossings, pulling in at Pineapple Flat

about 11:00am. Though the river crossings were all passable, there was plenty of evidence of the recent high levels and the water force that shifted debris and small but hefty boulders across the flats. After morning tea we continued on and cleared Burnt Top Track to the junction of Wild Horse Gap Track where we stopped for lunch.

It was agreed that we would all travel out on Wild Horse Gap track to the gate at the junction of Lake Cobbler Road. Only minimal clearing was required. Just as well! The track had plenty of long steep up and down hills, some with scrabbly, rocky step sections and deep ruts. All vehicles came through unscathed and we enjoyed the real four wheel driving. We were at the gate at 4:00pm.

We all stopped briefly at the end of the dirt road, exchanging thanks and farewells before heading homeward via Cheshunt and Whitfield. So, there you have it ... a great weekend and certainly a successful 'win-win' trip for Parks Victoria, our clubs and the four wheel driving fraternity in the open season ahead.

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AMAROK CLUB OF VICTORIA TURNS 10

BY: MAT MASON



Early in 2013, a group of five Amarok enthusiasts who met on the AusAmarok forum, decided to form a club for Volkswagen Amarok drivers, to create opportunities to explore, promote safe, environmental sound 4WD practices and to provide opportunities for families to meet and develop new friendships. Sam Rowe, Brendan McKee, Trevor Karlhuber, Scott Tymkin and Mark Dirnbauer had done a trip or two together and wanted to share their combined knowledge and experience. So on May 21, 2013, they incorporated the Amarok Club of Victoria and became an affiliated member of Four Wheel Drive Victoria.

About 80 people have joined the club over the past ten years and have been on trips all over the country, participated in training, workshops, factory tours and events, heard from guest speakers, benefited from discounts, met monthly and created life-long friendships all as a result of those five blokes who made it all possible.

Members were keen to mark the ten-year anniversary this year, so over the weekend of May 19-21, The Amarok Club celebrated with some great food, wine, entertainment and of course, Amaroks. The event was named "Decade of Rok" and was held at Sheeppark Flat in the Howqua Hills Historical Area. Around 50 people came including current and some

former members, stakeholders and FWDV staff Wayne Hevey, Alison McLaughlin and their partners.

A few of us arrived on Thursday afternoon to ensure we were able to snag the area we had arranged with Parks Victoria Events. Luckily it was clear and we were able to rope off a large enough area to accommodate everybody comfortably. A marquee and banner was set up to ensure the few that filtered in after dark were able to find their way to camp easily.

As is often the way in the High Country, on Friday, a lovely blue-sky was preceded by a frigid morning which froze the water in our taps and made for crispy tread under foot. The temperature climbed rapidly as the sun rose over the tree line however and we quickly shed our winter wear.

It was to be the last time such a vista would be seen at the Flat for the weekend as a procession of cars began to roll in. By Friday evening, camping spaces were at a premium elsewhere throughout the area, well and truly vindicating our decision to arrive on Thursday.

It was lovely to be able to sit back and enjoy mates in the bush before the need to prepare for the events of the following day. Australian King Parrots, native ducks, magpies and kookaburras entertained us as we soaked up the serenity.

Unfortunately by Friday evening, the clear weather



It was lovely to be able to sit back and enjoy mates in the bush...

was replaced with clouds which stayed with us for the weekend. Mercifully however, when it did rain, it never really fell long enough or heavy enough to dampen spirits and for the most part, the activities were able to proceed without the need to accommodate for wet weather.

A few late arrivals joined us and the festivities began in earnest on Saturday morning. Chris Tesoriero and Lutz Lorenz, Area Sales Managers from Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles brought along a couple of brand-new Amaroks, straight off the boat, for members to put through their paces on High Country tracks, as well as via a driver skill competition in the camp. All attendees were offered an opportunity to test drive these new models in conditions not usually offered for test drives, with Chris and Lutz there to explain all the new features.

Andrew Kavanagh, owner of 'The Que Club' in Brunswick is also a member and supplied ample Baby Back Ribs and grain-fed, Black Angus scotch fillet steaks from 36° South cattle farm in Coonawarra. The steak and ribs were smoked over coals using Que Club rubs and sauces and served with some of their signature Brazilian brisket rice and camp oven roasted spuds. Everybody was well and truly bursting and

blown away by the quality of food that can be cooked over wood and served up in the bush.

Meanwhile, Ash Wood from Giant Steps winery, also a member, regaled everybody with tales of vineyards, viticulture history and wine varietals as they tasted the Giant Steps stable of wines. Attendees were then treated to one of their flagship reds, Harry's Monster to enjoy with their steak dinner.

After the sun dropped below the horizon, Chloe Booth, a local pop artist, sang a set of original numbers as well as a cover or two while everybody enjoyed a tittle and sweet nibbles around the campfire. Some glow sticks helped give it a festival atmosphere.

Between sets, on behalf of FWDV, Wayne Hevey presented the club with an anniversary plaque which concluded the evening's formalities.

A few members headed up toward Craigs Hut on Sunday morning but were unfortunately turned around by closed tracks due to snow fall. The rest of us headed for home after a great weekend. A huge thanks to Volkswagen, The Que Club, Giant Steps, all the hard working Amarok Club members who helped make the weekend the rip-roaring success that it was and, of course, those five blokes.

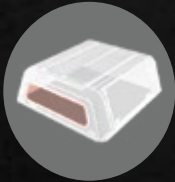




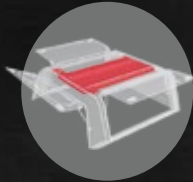
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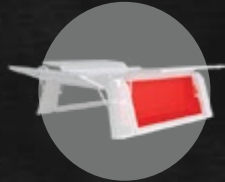
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4WD Wildlife and First Aid

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

Wildlife

While we may want to maximise our exposure to wildlife during our planning stage, we need to remember that things don't always go to plan. It is estimated that 10 million animals die on Australian roads due to collisions with motor vehicles each year. No driver plans to get into an accident but

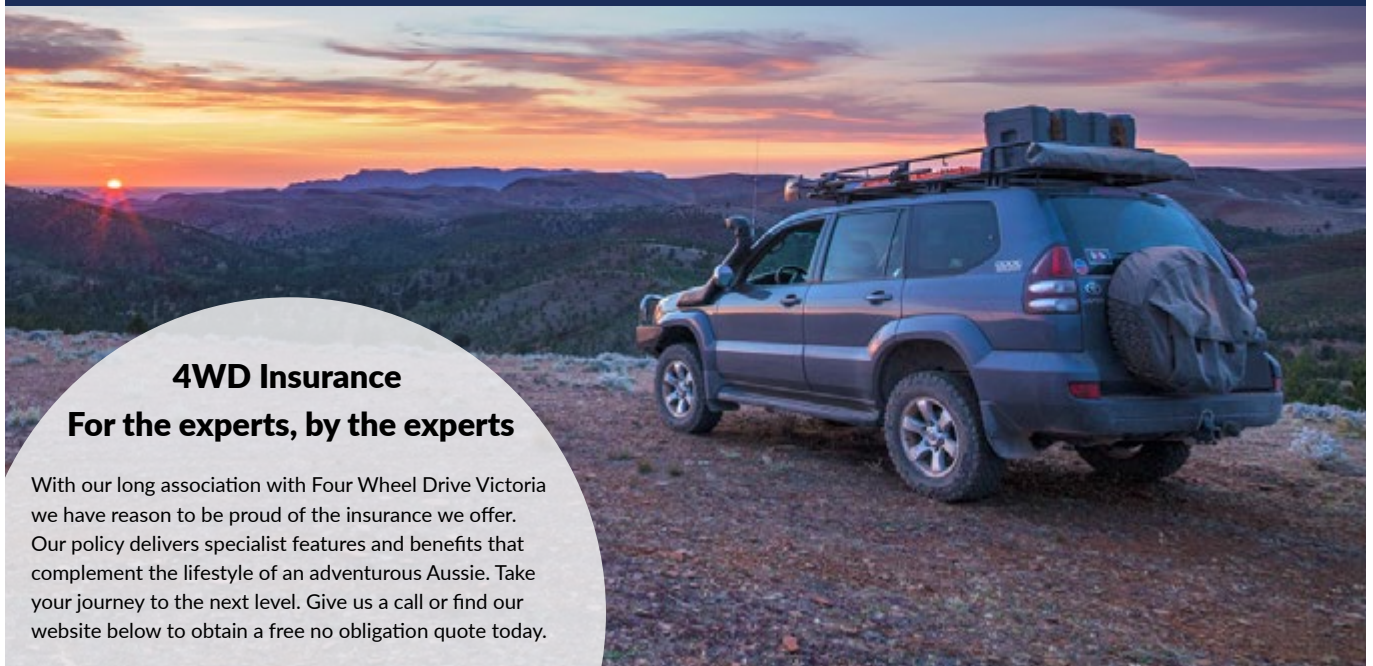
statistically the more we drive the higher the chances something will happen. If you happen to hit a wild animal such as a Kangaroo, it's important to do the right thing. Firstly, pull over when safe to do so. If the Kangaroo is alive or if you have identified a Joey in the Kangaroos pouch you will want to contact 000, WIRES (1300 094 737) or local police. Don't attempt to move a live Kangaroo off the road. The WIRES emergency response team will be able to instruct you on whether it is safe to transport the animal to the local vet or wait for assistance. If your vehicle is insured, it is important to take photos of the damage so that you can disclose the incident at a later time. Reduce your risk of hitting a kangaroo by avoiding any travel on country roads around dawn or dusk when Kangaroos and Wallabies are most active.

Snakes and Spiders

Before we even hit the road, we need to make sure we have done some preparation for what we might



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

First Aid

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

rashes and burns) to major injuries (bites, broken bones and heavy bleeding).

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

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

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

Four Wheel Drive Victoria Blood Drive

Saving Lives, Spreading Holiday Cheer, and Building a Strong Team

The Four Wheel Drive Victoria Blood Drive is in full swing, running from October 1st to December 31st. This remarkable initiative has already made a significant impact, with 22 donations from 14 generous donors. These contributions include 17 plasma donations, 4 whole blood donations, and 1 platelet donation, showcasing the 4WD's community's dedication to coming together and giving back.

Blood donation isn't just about saving lives—it offers essential mental and physical health benefits to donors. If you're looking for a reason to become a regular donor, here's why you should consider it:

Physical Health Benefits: Donating blood helps maintain healthy iron levels, which can reduce the risk of heart disease. It promotes the production of fresh, new blood cells, enhancing overall cardiovascular health. Additionally, each donation comes with a free health check-up, ensuring you're in good health.

Mental Health Benefits: Donating blood is a selfless act that brings fulfillment and happiness. The knowledge that you've made a positive



impact on someone's life can boost your mental well-being.

November brings an exciting partnership with Movember, a global charity promoting awareness of men's health issues. To show support for this essential cause, donors will receive a limited edition Movember bandage designed by Movember founder, Travis Garone.

Furthermore, the timing of this blood drive aligns perfectly with the holiday season. Lifeblood's upcoming "Gift of Life" holiday campaign emphasizes the importance of giving during the festive season. There's no greater gift than the gift of life, and by donating blood, you play a vital role in making the holidays special for those in need. So, before you set off for your summer trips, consider adding donating to your to-do list.

But what truly makes the Four Wheel Drive Victoria Blood Drive special is the opportunity to build a strong and inclusive team. Anyone can join the team. Empower yourself and encourage your family and friends to do the same. Remember, it takes all of us, and every drop counts. To join, head to www.lifeblood.com.au or call 131495.

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