

TRACK WATCH



SPRING 2025
AUS \$4.95 INC GST

**DEECA PARTNERSHIP
NATIONAL 4X4 SHOW
FWDV 50TH ANNIVERSARY – EST 1975
ANTARCTIC – TRACK WORK**



ALL SHOW, ALL-GO.

SOME TYRES ARE MADE ALL FOR THE SHOW. THEN THERE ARE THOSE THAT GO THE DISTANCE TOO. EMPOWER YOU TO EXPLORE; FROM DAWN TO DUSK, OR TAKE YOU FROM THE WEEKDAY GRIND TO A WEEKEND ADVENTURE - **ALL DAY, EVERY DAY.**

ALL AMONGST IT OR GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL. BECAUSE WHEN IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE, WE BELIEVE YOUR ALL-TERRAIN TYRES SHOULD BE AS VERSATILE AS YOU ARE AND **DELIVER ANYWHERE, EVERY TIME.**

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FOUR WHEEL DRIVE VICTORIA

The peak representative body for all Victorian four wheel drivers since 1975

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TRACKWATCH

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In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

FROM FWDV CEO



The Four Wheel Drive Victoria 50th Anniversary is shaping up to be a fantastic event, taking place from 17 to 19 October. The event team has also been out visiting clubs to promote this significant milestone. Ticket sales and camping spots are filling fast.

The National 4x4 Outdoors show was delivered from 22-24 August with over 32,000 people attending. FWDV partnered with Saber Offroad and presented a new activation for live recovery demonstrations across the three days.

FWDV has boosted its partnership with DEECA to support visitation data in State Forests. This data is important as DEECA uses it to plan how resources are allocated for maintenance, upgrades to facilities (including 4WD tracks), patrolling and compliance, and other key activities. By supporting DEECA to collect better visitation information, we will be contributing to valuable insights that help highlight the importance of recreation in state forests and strengthen the case for further investment.

The association also recently secured government funding for the next 12 months. This strategy will ensure funds can be allocated to special projects and volunteering opportunities across the state for 4WD clubs, members, and the broader community. Advocating for and presenting a long-term funding agreement will be the next step in this strategy.

FWDV in July met with the new Parks Victoria (PV) CEO, Lee Miezi, for a positive meeting to continue the joint partnership the association and clubs have with PV across the state.

The association is trialing a new digital link process for the next 12 months to better capture 4WD volunteering, special projects, and events that members and clubs conduct in the community and broader Australia. Capturing information on a rolling basis more often will ensure that specific metrics, such as the number of hours, economic

CEO Continued...

contribution from activities, and the type of activity, can be reported on more easily.

Within the next six-nine months, two special projects for Clean Up the Bush will occur, with priority sites identified within the following districts, Murrindindi, Midlands, and Latrobe. Further details will be released in the coming months on how to get involved.

Track clearing planning conducted by clubs and the community, of the seasonal closures will also commence across the state in ready for the opening.

As always, the team continues to be across any changes, updates, and support needed for track and area access across the state and Australia-wide.

Craig Ryan and Team
CEO



Four Wheel Drive Victoria and DEECA partnership update - State Forest Visitation data

4WD Victoria has a partnership agreement with DEECA to support collecting information around visitors to state forests.

Visitation data is gathered from traffic counters placed at recreation sites, tracks and trails in state forest sites managed by DEECA all across Victoria from now until 30 June 2026.

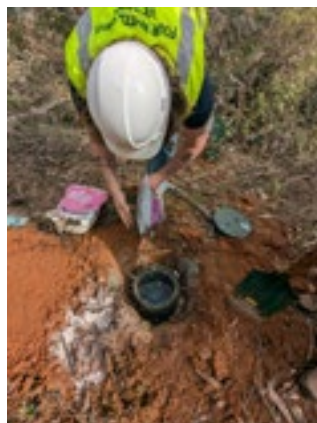
This data is important as DEECA uses it to plan how resources are allocated for maintenance, upgrades to facilities (including 4WD tracks), patrolling and compliance, and other key activities.

There are currently gaps in information about how people use state forests, where they go, what they do, and how satisfied they are with the available facilities. By supporting DEECA to

collect better visitation information, we will be contributing to valuable insights that help highlight the importance of recreation in state forests and strengthen the case for further investment.

Even if a site is not directly related to 4WDing, the data collected still provides insights into recreational use of forests. It strengthens the case for recreation investment in state forests and is part of the funding with DEECA.

4WDV will collect counter data from a range of recreation sites such as campgrounds and picnic areas, and tracks and trails across DEECA's regions in northern and eastern Victoria and on the eastern outskirts of Melbourne.



Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action



2025 TRAINING COURSES

 **BOOK
ONLINE**



Four Wheel Drive Victoria is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO21605) offering non-accredited Proficiency 4WD training and a range of Accredited 4wd and Chainsaw courses. Open to all club members, the general public and corporate organisations.

Browse courses and book online at www.fwdvictoria.org.au/training

Call the office (03) 8872 7300 for further information

PROFICIENCY COURSES

30th September 2025 – PC250930 – Theory	4th October 2025 – PC250930 – Practical
21st October 2025 – PC251021 – Theory	25th October 2025 – PC251021 – Practical
22nd October 2025 – LADIES ONLY COURSE – Theory	26th October 2025 – LADIES ONLY COURSE – Practical
25th November 2025 – PC251125 – Theory	29th November 2025 – PC251125 – Practical

Training Course Refund Policy

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

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

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

Refund applications must be made in writing to FWDV.

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

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

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



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

<https://www.exploreoutdoors.vic.gov.au/where-to-start/more-to-explore>



Celebrating Community and Commitment at the NATIONAL 4X4 SHOW MELBOURNE

The National 4x4 Show in Melbourne once again proved to be a vibrant celebration of Australia's off-road culture, bringing together 4wd enthusiasts, industry leaders, and passionate volunteers from across Victoria and beyond. Among the many highlights of the event was the incredible support and dedication shown by our volunteer community, whose tireless efforts helped make the show a resounding success. We were also very lucky to have great weather over the weekend when the original forecast wasn't looking so great.

We extend our thanks to the wonderful volunteers from the following clubs who joined the FWDV staff on our stand along with Board members including Robyn Burke (FWDV Secretary), Gordon Porter (Vice President) and Gareth Milloy (Board Member):

- Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria
- Midweek 4WD Club
- Nissan Four Wheel Drive Club of Victoria
- Pajero 4WD Club of Victoria
- Range Rover Club of Victoria
- Subaru Four Wheel Drive Club of Victoria
- Toyota Four Wheel Drive Club of Victoria
- Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Your enthusiasm, professionalism, and generosity of time and spirit were on full display throughout the event. Whether assisting with logistics, engaging with attendees, or representing the values of the 4WD community, you played an essential role in creating a welcoming and informative experience for all.

We also want to give a special shout-out to the clubs that hosted their own stands at the show. Your



displays were a fantastic showcase of club spirit, knowledge, and the adventurous lifestyle we all share. Well done to:

- Amarok Club of Victoria
- Club 4x4 Inc
- Everest 4WD Club of Victoria
- Greater Western 4x4 Club
- Ineos
- Nissan Four Wheel Drive Club of Victoria
- Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria (TLCCV)

Your presence added a dynamic and engaging element to the show floor, offering attendees a chance to connect directly with club members, learn about upcoming trips, and discover the benefits of joining a 4WD club.

A special highlight this year was the live winching demonstrations led by our very own RTO, Compliance and Operations Manager, Daniel Whitby, in collaboration with Saber Offroad and Hema Maps. These sessions were not only informative but also a great opportunity for attendees to learn safe and effective recovery techniques from experienced professionals.

The Show N Shine was another crowd favourite, showcasing a stunning array of vehicles across categories including Rough and Tumble, Touring, and Classics. Each entry reflected the passion and personality of its owner, and the diversity of builds was a true testament to the creativity and dedication within our community. A number of our team assisted with the judging of the Show N Shine and it's always a privilege to hear the owners stories and enthusiasm around their 4wd's.

The National 4x4 Show is more than just an exhibition, it's a reflection of the strength and unity of our community. It's about sharing knowledge, inspiring adventure, and fostering connections that extend far beyond the tracks. This year's show was

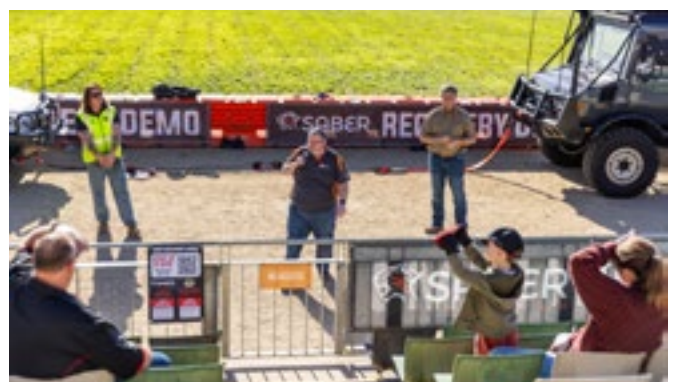
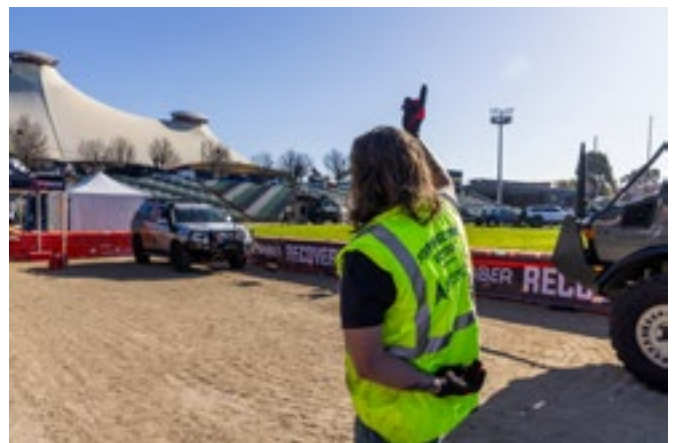


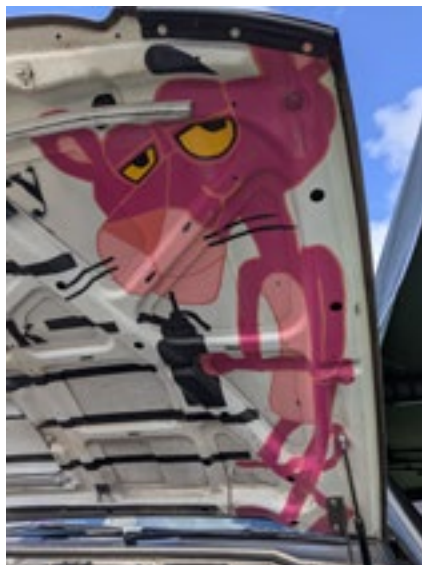
a testament to that spirit, and it wouldn't have been possible without you.

Thank you once again for your outstanding contribution. We would also like to thank the organisers of the National 4x4 Show as it is a huge event to look after.

We look forward to seeing you on the tracks and at future events!

The next big gathering will be the Four Wheel Drive Victoria AGM being held on Monday 6th October 2025 closely followed by our 50th Anniversary celebrations taking place at Merrijig 17th -19th October 2025 which is a very exciting event for all of us. See you there!









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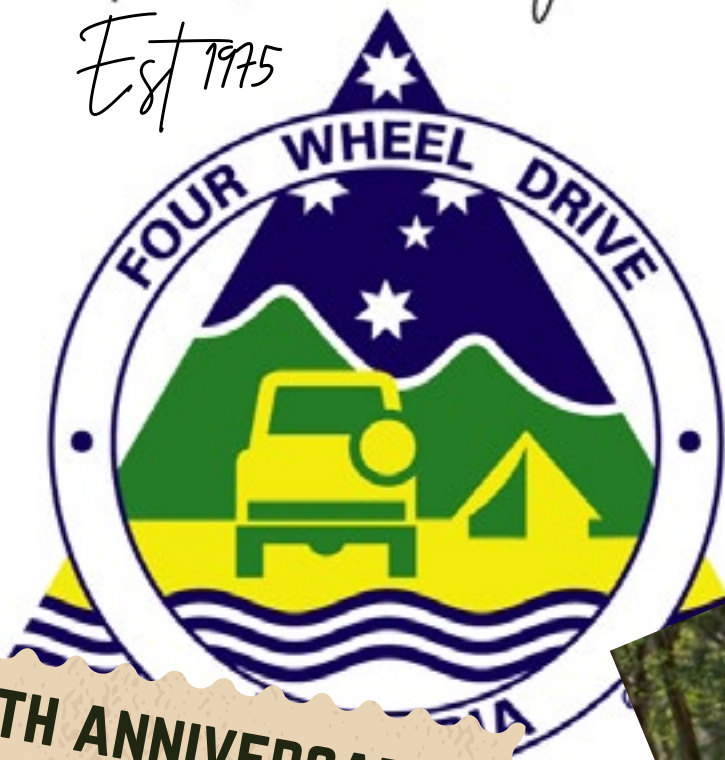
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50th Anniversary 2025
Est 1975



**50TH ANNIVERSARY
EVENT**

**DAY PASS \$25
WEEKEND PASS \$100**



**17-19 OCTOBER 2025
McCORMACK PARK,
MERRIJIG**

Live music, food trucks, pop
up bar, entertainment,
industry exhibits, camping
available, kids free and lots
more on.

ROAD REMEDIATION PROJECT IN THE ANTARCTIC

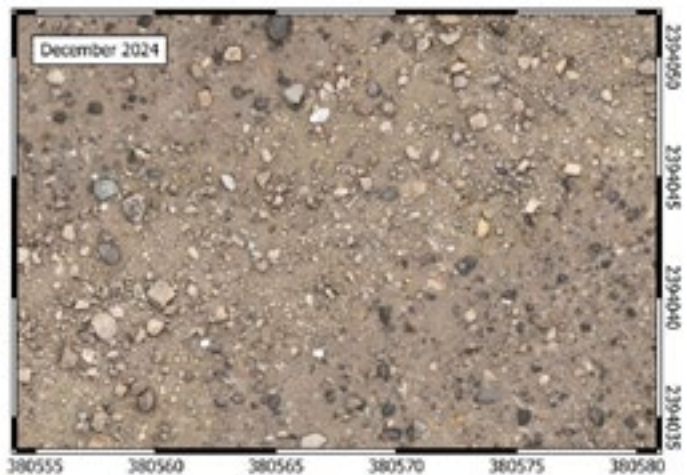
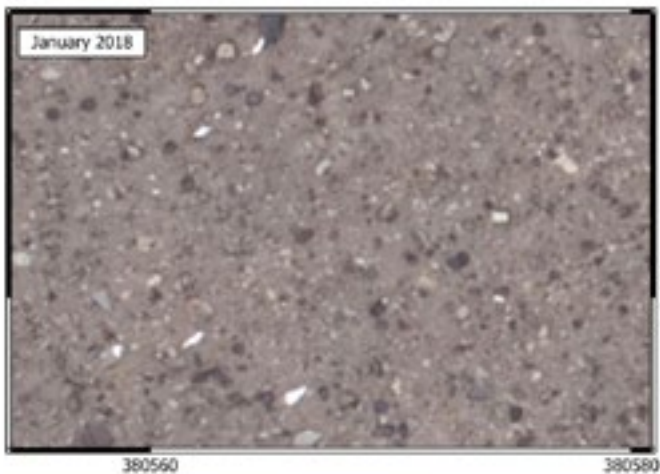
PAUL MCDONALD & WORK COLLEAGUE SCIENTIST HELEN

Paul is a member of the Warrnambool 4wd Club and also a Regional Representative. Paul has a very different place of work to most of us, working on the road remediation project in The Antarctic. Paul will be going back to complete the work and will have many more photos and stories to tell.

THIS WEEK AT DAVIS: 3 JANUARY 2025 Road Restoration at the bottom of the world

Although it has been a very short summer at Davis this year, a team of two (plus some helpful volunteers) have been progressing road remediation works in the Vestfold Hills to the north of station. Sometimes referred to as the most southerly Landcare project, tracks previously established to access sites for geotechnical and environmental investigations are slowly, but surely, being restored to resemble the surrounding landscape again. With a 30-ton excavator, rakes and hands the team has been making a dent in the remaining 7 km of road still needing restoration.

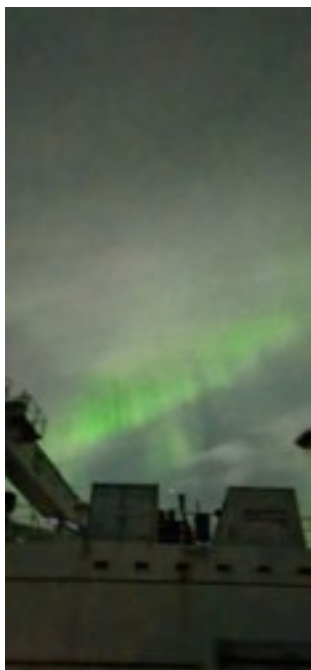




So why are we restoring a perfectly good track?

The tracks were originally put through the area in 2018-2020 to enable access to areas where geotechnical investigations were undertaken to provide data to enable an assessment of the area's suitability for the establishment of a paved runway. Once the decision was made not to proceed with the runway in this area, the tracks were no longer

required for their intended purpose. The installed infrastructure and tracks have progressively been removed and sites remediated as part of the Australian Antarctic Divisions' commitment to projects environmental authorisation conditions regarding the restoration of previously disturbed landscapes. This season's efforts add to restoration works undertaken in previous seasons and works are likely to be completed after one more season.





Can I? Can't I?

Vehicle use
on Victorian
public land

CONSERVATION
REGULATOR VICTORIA

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Environment and Climate Action 2023



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DEECA Customer Service Centre on 136 186,
or email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au
or via the National Relay Service on
133 677, www.relayservice.com.au. This
document is also available on the internet
at www.deeca.vic.gov.au.

CS809FE23

If you see something,
say something.

Please call 136 186
to report suspected
illegal activity.

FOREST FIRE
MANAGEMENT VICTORIA

Parks
VICTORIA



Help protect our forests and parks.

Riding or driving off-road or on closed
roads and tracks can:

- disturb wildlife habitat and plants
- damage seasonal roads and tracks
- risks the safety of you and others

Penalties apply for breaking the rules.

Things to remember:

- drivers and riders must be licensed
and vehicles registered
- registration plates must be fixed
and visible on trail bikes at all times
- only use open roads and tracks
- do not ride on single tracks
- reduce speed and noise when around
others or in high visitation areas
(i.e. picnic areas and campgrounds)



Who can ride or drive on public land?

The same road rules apply on public land roads
and tracks as on all other public roads in Victoria.
Make sure you have a licence and your vehicle
is registered.

Mount registration plates on trail bikes so they
are clearly visible. You must carry your licence
with you while riding.

Can children ride trail bikes on public land?

No. Riding anywhere on public land in Victoria
requires a motorcycle licence or learner permit.

To apply for a licence or permit, you must
be a Victorian resident over the age of 18.

Can I ride an e-bike on public land?

Yes. Higher-powered e-bikes with an output greater
than 250 watts are classified as motorcycles so the
same motor vehicle rules apply.

This means you must be licensed and your
e-bike registered. Higher-powered e-bikes must
stay on open roads and tracks on public land.

Where can I ride or drive?

You can head out on any of the 40,000km
of public roads and tracks through our forests,
parks and reserves.

Stay on formed roads and vehicle tracks that
are open to the public. Do not ride on informal
single tracks, natural terrain or in streams.

It is your responsibility to look on the FFMVic
or Parks Victoria websites if you're unsure if
you can legally travel on a certain road or track.

Why?

Driving or riding off-road can cause erosion,
damage native vegetation, spread disease and
weeds, and destroy wildlife habitat. Illegal off-road
use also risks your safety as riders and drivers
as well as other bush users.

When can I ride or drive?

Some roads are temporarily closed from
autumn to spring but also at other times if
necessary to prevent serious road damage.
It is an offence to travel on them once they
are closed. You can check the FFMVic or
Parks Victoria websites for seasonal and
permanent road closures.

Why?

Some sections of Victoria's road network
would rapidly deteriorate if they were used
during the wetter months. If these tracks are
damaged, it could result in longer closures for
repair works and limit important access for
emergency service vehicles during bushfires
or other emergencies.

What do I do if I find a track unsafe for use?

Land managers monitor tracks throughout the
year to ensure they are fit for use. If you find a
track that is unsafe, we encourage you to notify
DEECA on 136 186 or Parks Victoria on 131 963.

Why?

It is important to assess the conditions yourself
while riding as roads can quickly become unsafe
due to changing weather conditions.

Can a person be fined for not following the rules?

Authorised Officers from the Conservation Regulator,
FFMVic and Parks Victoria will issue infringement
notices if they identify illegal vehicle use.

Authorised Officers conduct frequent patrols
on public land and in some areas utilise
surveillance technology.

How can I report illegal vehicle use on public land?

Your assistance helps us to better protect
our forests, parks and reserves.

If you witness illegal vehicle use on public land,
report it by phone: 136 186.

Some key tools to help you locate open, public roads throughout the year:

- More to Explore App
- Vic Traffic App
- Department of Energy, Environment
and Climate Action: deeca.vic.gov.au
- Conservation Regulator:
conservationregulator.vic.gov.au
- Parks Victoria: parks.vic.gov.au
- Forest Fire Management Victoria: ffm.vic.gov.au
- MapshareVic: mapshare.vic.gov.au/mapsharevic/





ADVENTURING TOGETHER - 300 CLUB TRIPS FOR 3 CLUBS

BY: PRUE HASLER



What do you do if you have interests in industrial archaeology, early Australian explorers, botany, Australian bush and deserts, Australian history, the great outdoors, 4WDing, the night sky, adventures and want to share these interests with other people? You lead 4WD club trips.

John Hasler's lightbulb moment was seeing the Leyland Brothers film of their 1966 West East Crossing of Australia in 2 Land Rovers. Yes, Land Rovers could be used to explore Australia. However, the seeds of his desire to explore the Australian and the bush were set in 1959 when an outback family trip in their Consul saw them camping in dry riverbeds and in station woolsheds with a family background interest in natural history.

First joining the Land Rover Club of Sydney in 1974 and then the Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria (LROCV) in 1976 when he moved to Melbourne, John led his first trip in 1981 to the closed Moe Walhalla Railway in his Series 3 LWB Land Rover. After buying a Range Rover in 1982 John joined the Range Rover Club of Victoria (RRCV) in 1983 and commenced running joint club trips. When Graeme Walsh was President of the newly formed Pajero 4WD Club, he asked John if he could run some trips for the Pajero Club so joint club trips were run for the 3 clubs from 1989.

Starting out slowly John worked up to his busiest year in 2002 when he ran 18 joint club weekend trips. Safety is key foundation to his trips and so

he became an accredited driver trainer for many years. When Four Wheel Drive Victoria reviewed the Adventure Activity Standards for their Trip Leader Guidelines, John was part of the FWDV group that developed the Guidelines. An important aspect of running trips for John is sharing his historic, botanical and local knowledge with participants, and for many years he produced an A4 bound book for each participant on each trip.

So where has John run trips? Many trips featured the High Country to the Simpson Desert, the Flinders Rangers and the Grampians, the Victorian Deserts to trips featuring the Victorian Volcanoes, trips featuring old gold mining areas, old bush sawmills and railways, snow trips, Far East Gippsland, a West East trip across Australia with 18 vehicles and featuring guests Mike and Margie Leyland (a highlight). A multi convoy trip into Wonnangatta was also a highlight with around 65 vehicles taking part. Day trips included the Central Highlands right up to Mt Cobbler & Mt Stirling.

Keeping a 4WD vehicle in trip worthy condition for that many years can be a challenge, and it is important to John to be able to carry everything that might be required for emergencies. So, a well serviced heavy duty 4WD is important. These have included a couple of Series Land Rovers, the Range Rover, a 60 Series Toyota, a 4.2l GU Patrol cab (carrying our trusty Trayon slide on camper – still going strong after 20 years) and now a 79 Series Land Cruiser.



But the key to all these adventures is the people. Sharing adventures on trips with new and longer term trip participants and families, inviting all to contribute and share information, whether it was historic information, track navigation or a recovery or mechanical situation. A special Anzac Day Dawn Service near King River Hut was organised by James Lawson and everyone contributed with a marvellous Gunfire Breakfast afterwards. Malcolm Mullis reciting A Man from Snowy River around the campfire near Dimmocks Lookout. Plotting the way ahead with Mike Leyland at Carnegie Station WA. Just three of the countless special times in the bush over the years.

Jim Parker (LROCV) offered a seat to John when he didn't have a 4WD then driving for John when they swapped their vehicles depending on the trip. Jim drove for John until 2002 when Prue joined the LROCV and they started travelling together. Jim then became Tail End Charlie until recent times.

Families are particularly welcome, although having a 6 week old baby on a weekend High Country trip was a little daunting. It is marvellous to welcome generations of club members on their first trip with us or their 20th.



John's trips:

Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria (Life Member) 243 trips/events
Range Rover Club of Victoria (Life Member) 187 trips/events
Pajero 4WD Club of Victoria 153 trips/events



SIMPSON DESERT

WAA LINE 2021

TRIP LEADER ROBIN PURCHASE

Day 1, 21 May, Mildura to Waukaringa

John, Kel, Lynette & myself met at the Arumpo Road truck parking Bay to set off. We headed off towards Wentworth then Lake Victoria via the Rufus River Road. Our first views of Lake Victoria were less than impressive. A never-ending earthen dam wall towering above us.

Leaving Lake Victoria, we continued on the Rufus River Road until we hit the Old Wentworth Road and then headed for SA and the Todd Obelisk to meet up with Dr Phil from Riverland. The last section of the Old Wentworth Road passes through private property and the landowner had erected no trespassing signs everywhere to discourage the public from travelling along this gazetted public road.

We proceeded along various tracks through Chowilla Regional Reserve and Danggali Conservation Park to Yunta, stopping for lunch and a bit of firewood collection along the way. We

refuelled at Yunta as the next available fuel would be at Innamincka.

From Yunta we drove ~35km along Tea Tree Road to Waukaringa Ruins where we had intended to camp for the night. We explored the ruins and took lots of pickies - the Pub and Post Office are the only two buildings remaining.

The wagons were circled and everyone setup camp for the night. As most participants were trialling new camping arrangements this first setup took a little longer than expected. With the windbreak erected and fire lit everyone kicked back for happy hour and some nibbles before cooking dinner and settling down for a comfortable evening by the campfire.

Day 2, 22 May, Waukaringa to Montecollina Bore

On the way down from our camp at the mine we stopped at the covered underground water storage. Some sheets of the roofing iron were missing but the tank was full and seemed in good condition.



We continued along Tea Tree Road, heading north and parallel to the Flinders Ranges. As expected, the road was quite dusty but otherwise in good condition, allowing speeds of around 80km/hr.

The tourist trail for this side of the Flinders stops at the Gammon Ranges National Park (Northern Flinders). The road from there to Moolawatana and the Strzelecki Track was largely single lane and ordinary, varying from OK to ordinary. The Strzelecki Track whilst wider, was topped with a mixture of limestone and clay, making it quite rough with extensive corrugations in spots.

We continued on to Montecollina Bore where we camped for the night. After just one day everyone had sorted out their camping arrangements and our camp was quickly set up. This is quite a large free camping area well off the road. It originally contained a free-flowing bore piping hot water into an adjacent dam, suitable for swimming. The bore has since been capped.

Day 3, 23 May, Montecollina Bore to Burke & Wills Dig Tree

My rear tyre was flat so was pumped up, with the car jacked up, and water poured on the tyre looking for the leak so it could be plugged. Nobody could hear or see the leak, so the spare tyre was fitted. We then headed towards Innamincka.

The Strzelecki did not improve much as we travelled north - rough but OK. We turned right onto the Merty Merty-Cameron Corner Road and travelled for about 10km before turning left onto the Old Strzelecki Track. And the first thing we see is the "Bone Man" – a Statue of sorts made on old cow bones and various bric-a-brac added by locals and tourists

The old Strzelecki is an older style road graded below the surrounding land. It had suffered significant flooding and damage in the recent rains. There were numerous chicken tracks around the worst damage but largely there had been sufficient traffic to wear a one lane smooth surface. The other/



second lane was still wheel ruts. We stopped at one of flooded and very muddy borrow pits to dunk the tyre and find the leak. A 50mm piece of a flat blade screwdriver was removed and the tyre plugged.

Arrived at Innamincka around lunch time. Time for a little wander, pie and drink for lunch and diesel the cars – next fuel would be Birdsville. In front of the Innamincka pub and store was a bank of 4 showers - \$2 for 3 minutes and everyone indulged.

We headed for the Dig Tree, having lost 1½ to 2 hours with the flat tyre and showers we bypassed the Burke & Wills Memorial, formerly known as their graves site. It is where Burke was originally buried, but in 1862, they were disinterred and reburied in the Melbourne general cemetery.

We continued to the Burke and Wills Dig Tree Reserve set aside by Nappa Merrie Station and setup camp for the night.

Day 4, 24 May, Burke & Wills Dig Tree to Haddon Corner and Birdsville

We left the Dig Tree and headed North along the Araby Road. Road was rough/stony and dusty. After a few kilometres, the road dipped down into a very wide and picturesque plain. The road was sealed for the climbs into and out of the valley. Once out of the valley the road was more sandy and easier to travel.

All the way from the Dig Tree we were following the tracks of two bicycles. Two males from Tasmania who had ridden from Melbourne via Mildura and were heading for Birdsville and beyond. We stopped for a chat and topped up their water plus a cold drink from the fridge.



We continued on our way towards Haddon Corner. As usual stopping at a treed dry creek bed for fallen timber to cut up for our fires. My ExplorOz maps showed a second, angled route to the corner. This track was much more scenic and better than the main Haddon Corner Road which we used on the way out.

We took the main Haddon Corner Road, over two sand dunes back to the Araby Road. This section of this road past the dunes has been totally rebuilt within the last 4 years, transforming it from a narrow dry weather track to a well-formed wide road. We continued along the Araby Road to the Birdsville Developmental Road and turned west.

Despite our early start, we seemed to be running a bit late. Fortunately, the developmental Road was in excellent conditions allowing speeds of up to 90kph.

Given the general flatness of the surrounding



lands we were pleasantly surprised by the panoramic view from Deon's Lookout. Our last stop before Birdsville was the relatively new Serpent Artwork Rest Area – Long Drop toilets have been constructed at the lookout, the Serpent and a couple of other rest areas along the road.



At Birdsville we stopped at the racecourse for a photo ops and the "Welcome to Birdsville" signage. We arrived at the Windmill Free camp (~2.5 km from Birdsville meeting up with Glen and Di. Some setup camp while others rushed off for a quick look at Birdsville setting up their camp later.

Day 5, 25 May, Rest Day at Birdsville

Day 5 was a scheduled rest day to restock, relax and for those who had not been to Birdsville before, to go for a wander and explore the town.

Our journey will continue in the next edition of Trackwatch.





COBBLER HUT CHIMNEY REBUILD AND CLEAN UP

11 – 13 APRIL 2025

BY: GRAHAM ABOTOMEY

On 11-12-13th April our members in conjunction with Parks Vic Whitfield Office, had a working bee at the Lake Cobbler Hut. We replaced the old metal fire box with a new fabricated one, concreted the floor, lined the internal walls with board, removed graffiti and had a general cleanup.

Below is a bit of history re our clubs association with the Lake Cobbler Hut.

A short history of the Lake Cobbler Hut

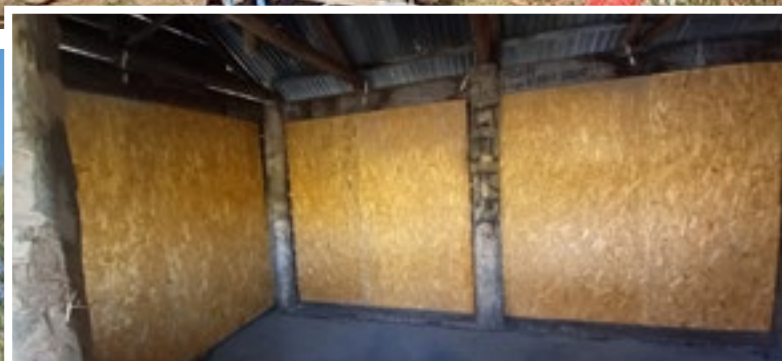
The present Lake Cobbler Hut was built by the Wangaratta 4X4 Club in conjunction with Parks Victoria after fire burnt down the previous hut in 1986. The Wangaratta 4x4 Club's association with Parks Vic and the iconic Cobbler Hut go back to the early 1980's.

The original hut was thought to be built in the 1920s as part of the Lovick's grazing licence followed by another built by Sam Christopher and Frank Gorman who held the Cobbler grazing licence from 1929 to the 1940s. There have been various other huts built and other operations carried out over the years following the expiration of the grazing leases. The Lake itself was created in the 1960s by damming the swamp area around the Dandongadale River near Mt. Cobbler. This was thought to have happened when the Cobbler area



was logged for timber.

Over the years the Wangaratta 4X4 Club has made many trips to Cobbler to maintain the hut. Maintenance over the years has included the cleaning out of the fire place, removal of rubbish left behind by others, removing Graffiti, re concreting the stone work and parts of the fire place, replacing the roofing nails with Tek screws, replacing wall timber slabs torn down and burnt by vandals and our latest and current project of replacing the rusted-out fire chimney, concreted the floor, the removal of graffiti and the placement of wall boards inside the hut as well as a cleanup around the area.



MT SKENE



SATURDAY 2 AUGUST 2025

BY: BY BECKIE MAIWALD

A crisp winter morning greeted MJOC members as we gathered at the Jamieson General Store at 8:30am. With steaming coffees and bacon & egg rolls in hand, the excitement was building for our snowy adventure ahead. The temperature sat at a brisk -1°C , but the clear blue skies promised a perfect day.

Two convoys, totalling nine Jeeps each and around 30 enthusiastic members, departed in search of snow along the scenic Jamieson-Licola Road. With the UHF buzzing, a friendly guessing game kicked off — who could predict the exact altitude we'd first spot snow? Guesses ranged from 900m to 1400m, keeping spirits high as we climbed.

Sure enough, just past 1400m, we caught sight of snow on the roadside. The radios lit up with excited chatter, talk of snowball fights, and plans for the Junior Jeepers to build snowmen. The anticipation turned into pure joy.

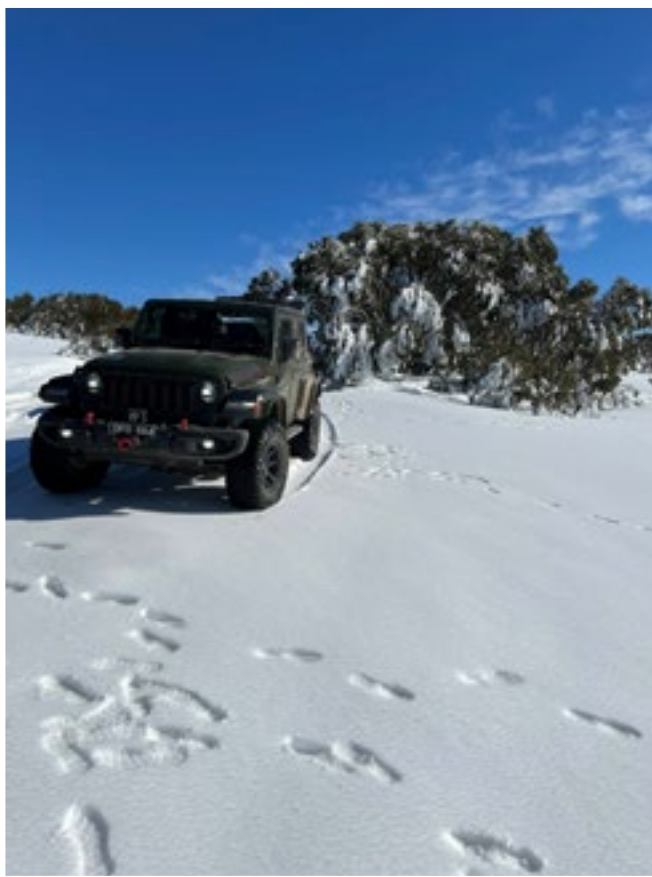
After about 90 minutes on the road, we reached the summit of Mt Skene at 1570m. Both convoys parked up, and members spilled out to soak in the views and snap plenty of photos — Jeeps in the snow, scenic mountain selfies, and lots of happy faces. Even Hank, our four-legged friend who'd



never seen snow before, joined the fun, bounding through the snow with the kids. That said, after 20 minutes of play, he wisely opted for the warmth of the Jeep again.

Snowball fights and snowman building followed, filling the air with laughter and cheer. After some time enjoying the summit, the group made the call to head down to Licola for lunch.

By 1pm we arrived in Licola, parking near the CFA building by the river. The Licola General Store was soon filled with hungry Jeepers, as Leanne



served up hot pies, sausage rolls, and plenty of coffee. With full stomachs and warm drinks in hand, we relaxed by the river and chatted about the morning's fun.

Around 2pm, we hopped back into our Jeeps and began the return trip to Jamieson. As we climbed Mt Skene once again, there was hopeful talk of catching snowfall — though the clouds teased, no snowflakes appeared. Still, the spectacular views and second snowy drive kept the mood high.

This time, we didn't stop at the top, keen to make it to the Jamieson Service Station before closing. We rolled into town right at 4:30pm, where the friendly staff kindly stayed open a little longer so we could all refuel. From there, we made our way to the Courthouse Hotel to wind down with a drink and reflect on what had been a truly memorable day.

With perfect weather — clear skies, no wind, and no rain — the Mt Skene trip was a winter highlight, filled with fun, friendship, and fantastic scenery.





Life members L to R:
Glenys and Geoff Chambers, Geoff Pontin, Pat Doyle, Bill Waters,
Maree Wells, Jean McDonald, Alan Marshall, Jude Marshall (seated)



IDLERS 4WD CLUB – 30 YEARS YOUNG

BY: ALASTAIR GRIGG – PRESIDENT IDLERS 4WD CLUB OF VICTORIA

The Idlers 4WD Club of Victoria was founded in July 1995, by a group of like-minded individuals, primarily to cater for 'four-wheel drivers who wanted to meet and tour when other people were 'at work'.

From that humble, early beginning, with 18 memberships signed up by the end of the year, the Club has now grown to be the largest non-vehicle aligned 4WD Club in Victoria, with more than 150 memberships, comprising over 280 members.

This year marks the Club's 30th anniversary, and to appropriately commemorate the occasion, the Club recently held a special luncheon at the Mulgrave Country Club. Over 160 Idlers (and former Idlers) attended, making the lunch a great success.

Having a lunch rather than a camp was decided upon, as this would allow those longer-serving members to attend who were no longer actively touring and camping. This worked out very well, as we had a sizable cohort of 'older' members attending

who had chalked up over 20 years of membership.

This cohort of 'senior' members included the Club's very first Life Member, Pat Doyle, who with her late husband Joe, were instrumental in getting the Club off the ground. At 97 years young, Pat was in fine form, relating many stories from those early days. Pat is pictured below cutting the 30th Anniversary cake.

The occasion was a great opportunity to acknowledge our life members who have contributed so selflessly to the club and, through whose example and service, a great sharing and learning culture endures at the club.

The Club also welcomed Craig Ryan (FWDV CEO) to the lunch, and he spoke about the success of the club. Craig presented Club President Alastair Grigg with a fine 30-Year plaque to mark the occasion.

The club continues to thrive and looks forward to enjoying four-wheel driving and companionship with like-minded people long into the future.



Australia's Biggest Charity Camp

Legends for Charity is a group of mates coming together to camp and raise funds for charity. A family and dog friendly event made up of everyday people like yourself. We all have at least two things in common. We love the outdoors, and we love helping others.

The next Big Camp will be held at the Mansfield Lakeside Caravan Park. Raising money for the Mansfield RSL and Starting Over Dog Rescue. Both small registered charities in need of big money.

The Big Camp is a great way to meet new people, make new friends, and help others. We are preparing for more than 300 people travelling from all over Australia and we hope to surpass the \$31k raised at our last event in Queensland.

Mansfield Lakeside Holiday Park - 27th/28th/29th March, 2026.



**Check out Legends for Charity on
Facebook and YouTube.**



Sponsor / Supporter Packages Available

For more information, contact Nas.

Phone 0412 266 638 or Email legendsforcharity@gmail.com

Preparation is Your Most Powerful Tool

Australia's vast and varied landscapes – from red desert tracks to rainforest trails and alpine passes – offer thrilling opportunities for four-wheel driving. But with adventure comes responsibility. Terrain-specific risk planning is essential for ensuring safety, preserving the environment, and making the most of every off-road journey.

Know Your Terrain, Know Your Risks

- Desert and Outback: Risks include extreme heat, long distances between services, and soft sand. Carry extra water, fuel, and a satellite communication device.
- Rainforest and Wet Tracks: Slippery surfaces, flash flooding, and limited visibility are common. Equip your vehicle with mud tyres and ensure your winch is operational. Mud can also get trapped in hidden areas like chassis rails, which can accelerate rust.

- Mountain and Alpine Regions: Steep inclines, snow, and rapidly changing weather demand low-range gearing, snow chains, and thermal gear.

Pre-Trip Planning Essentials

According to the Victorian Adventure Activity Standards (AAS), risk planning should begin well before your turn the key. This includes:

- Route Planning: Use topographic maps and GPS tools to understand elevation changes, water crossings, and escape routes, should you need one.
- Vehicle Readiness: Perform a full mechanical check, adjust tyre pressure to suit terrain, and pack recovery gear like snatch straps and traction boards.
- Communication: Inform someone of your itinerary and expected return. In remote areas, consider a PLB (Personal Locator Beacon).



AFFINITY
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE INSURANCE



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For the experts, by the experts

With our long association with Four Wheel Drive Victoria we have reason to be proud of the insurance we offer. Our policy delivers specialist features and benefits that complement the lifestyle of an adventurous Aussie. Take your journey to the next level. Give us a call or find our website below to obtain a free no obligation quote today.



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Training and Skills

Formal 4WD training is highly recommended. We would recommend courses offered by Australian providers such as Four Wheel Drive Victoria covering terrain-specific driving techniques, recovery procedures and water crossings. RTO 21605

Group Safety and Leadership

When travelling in groups, designate a trip leader responsible for coordinating stops, monitoring

vehicle spacing, and managing emergencies. The AAS guidelines stress the importance of leadership and group dynamics in risk mitigation.

Terrain-specific risk planning isn't just about avoiding trouble—it's about empowering 4WD enthusiasts to explore Australia's wild beauty with confidence and care. Whether you're tackling the Simpson Desert or the Victorian High Country, preparation is your most powerful tool.

Melbourne man reaches 800 blood and plasma donations

Blood donor and Four Wheel Drive enthusiast Dafydd (Dave) Roberts has notched up a remarkable milestone of 800 blood, plasma and platelet donations.

Dave became only the 16th person in Australia to donate 800 or more times, showing remarkable dedication to this lifesaving act.

The 68-year-old, who has been donating for more than 50 years, is part of the Four Wheel Drive Victoria Lifeblood team and encourages other to join him by signing up to the team via the Lifeblood website.

"Donating blood and plasma is a positive way to give back to the community," Dave said.

"It is a simple act that can make a life-changing difference.

"One in three people will need blood or blood products in their lifetime. You never know when that may be someone you know or love."

The members of the Four Wheel Drive Victoria team have collectively made more than 150 donations so far this year.

When you consider every donation saves up to three lives, the team has saved around 450 lives together in 2025.

There are Lifeblood Donor Centres all around Australia and Dave encourages people to add a donation pitstop on the next adventure.

"I have donated in every donor centre in Victoria except for Mildura and I've donated in many other locations including Townsville, Dubbo, Maitland, Albury, Canberra and Sydney.

"I love meeting the friendly staff in different areas. They make the process enjoyable and rewarding."

Lifeblood spokesperson Genevieve Dobson said not only is this a great way to see the country, Dave's donations have gone to people of all ages and from all walks of life who rely on blood.

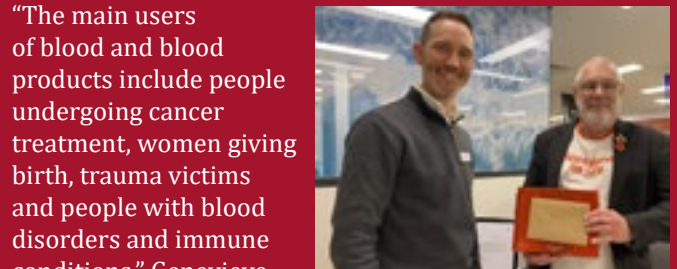


"The main users of blood and blood products include people undergoing cancer treatment, women giving birth, trauma victims and people with blood disorders and immune conditions," Genevieve said.

"There are plenty of appointments at Lifeblood donor centres around the country. If you've never donated before, this is a great time to follow Dave's lead and give it a go."

People can donate for the first time between 18 and 75 years and can continue donating beyond 75 if they feel healthy and well and continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

A whole blood donation appointment takes one hour, with the donation itself only lasting up to 10 minutes and can be made every three months. A plasma donation takes an hour and a half, with 40 minutes in the donor chair, and can be made every fortnight.



Visit www.lifeblood.com.au, call 13 14 95 or use the Donate Blood app.



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