

April 2021



# Southern Trails

Next Meeting:

The Next Club Meeting and AGM will be held at the Canberra Deakin Football Club at 7:30pm on Tuesday 13th April.

(Please see the Club Meetings COVID-19 Safety Plan on pg. 4)

**You wanna Go'anna?**

(Victorian High Country)



# Directory

**President:**

Andy Squire  
(president@st4wdc.com.au)

**Vice President:**

Neil Coffee  
(vpresident@st4wdc.com.au)

**Secretary:**

Lisa Tatem  
(secretary@st4wdc.com.au)

**Treasurer:**

Jim Anderson  
(treasurer@st4wdc.com.au)

**Membership Secretary:**

Lynne Donaldson  
(membership@st4wdc.com.au)

**Events and Trips Coordinator:**

Michael Patrick  
(trips@st4wdc.com.au)

**Publications Coordinator:**

Matt Warmington  
(publications@st4wdc.com.au)

**Education Coordinator:**

Bronwyn Squire  
(education@st4wdc.com.au)

**Property Coordinator:**

Rob Donaldson  
(property@st4wdc.com.au)

**Public Relations Coordinator:**

TBA  
(public@st4wdc.com.au)

**Information Coordinator:**

Matthew Maddigan  
(information@st4wdc.com.au)

**General Committee Members:**

Francoise Zaalen-Arbaut  
(general1@st4wdc.com.au)

Michael Kerr  
(general2@st4wdc.com.au)

Scott Grogan  
(general3@st4wdc.com.au)

Michael Loberger  
(general4@st4wdc.com.au)

## General Meetings are held at the Canberra Deakin Football Club, Grose St, Deakin at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of each month.

General meetings are where Club members and visitors can meet and get information on past and future Club activities in an informal atmosphere. Meetings regularly feature talks from experts on topics of interest, and reports on past trips. Visitors can introduce themselves, there is a raffle with generous prizes and a coffee break for catching up with other members.

Ideas for guest speakers are welcome, please don't hesitate to contact the Committee if you know of someone who could make an interesting and topical presentation.

Many members gather before the meeting to enjoy a meal or a drink at the club.

## Publications

**Website:** Information regarding the Club, our activities, sponsors, and membership is available on our website at [www.st4wdc.com.au](http://www.st4wdc.com.au).

**Facebook:** the ST4WDC page includes posts regarding Club activities and sponsors and can be found at [www.facebook.com/st4wdc/](http://www.facebook.com/st4wdc/).

**Southern Trails:** is the ST4WDC monthly newsletter. Trip reports, member profiles, relevant articles, and classified advertisements are welcome, as are photographs and illustrations. Closing date for contributions is the first Tuesday of the month. Send contributions to [publications@st4wdc.com.au](mailto:publications@st4wdc.com.au).

## Trips and Events

An important element, some may say the lifeblood, of the Club is our trips and events calendar. Any member can run a trip or event once approved by the Committee, it's a very rewarding experience.

If you've been thinking of booking a trip or event, head to the [How to Book for a Trip](#) section of the website where you will find step by step instructions. You can propose your trip or event using the [Online Form](#) and there is a wealth of material in the [Information for Trip Leaders page](#) and also from experienced trip leaders who are always keen to help you run your trip or event successfully.

## Club Bank Account

Membership fees are paid through the Club's website. For other financial transactions, the Club's bank account details are:

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Bank:</b>           | <b>Bank Australia</b> |
| <b>Account Name:</b>   | <b>ST4WDC</b>         |
| <b>BSB Number:</b>     | <b>313 140</b>        |
| <b>Account Number:</b> | <b>1213 0617</b>      |

When transferring payments please include your name and the reason for the transfer, e.g. "J Smith clothing", "J Smith renew 2021", etc.



## Code of Ethics



# Four Wheel Drive Australia Code Of Ethics

ST4WDC is affiliated with Four Wheel Drive Australia and we promote responsible four wheel driving. We should all observe and support this Code of Ethics. Remember, image is difficult to change.

- Obey the laws and regulations for Recreational Vehicles that apply to public lands.
- Respect the cultural, heritage and environmental values of public/private land, by obeying restrictions that may apply.
- Respect our flora and fauna. Stop and look, but never disturb.
- Keep to formed vehicle tracks.
- Keep the environment clean. Carry your own, and any other, rubbish out.
- Keep your vehicle mechanically sound and clean to reduce the environmental impact.
- Adopt minimal impact camping and driving practices.
- Seek permission before driving on private land. Do not disturb livestock or watering points, leave gates as found.
- Take adequate water, food, fuel, basic spares and a first aid kit on trips. In remote areas travel with another vehicle and have Royal Flying Doctor Service, or equivalent emergency contact by radio or satellite.
- Plan ahead and lodge trip details with a responsible person.
- Enjoy your recreation and respect the rights of others.
- Support four-wheel drive touring as a legitimate family activity.
- Consider joining an affiliated four-wheel drive Club.

This Code supports the National Recreational Four Wheel Drive Vehicle Policy.

Produced by [Four Wheel Drive Australia](#) in the interest of promoting responsible vehicle use.

For advice and assistance in meeting the requirements of this Code of Conduct contact the [Secretary](#)

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# President's Report

## Andy Squire

Well. It seems like you just can't get rid of me. Here for another year. Thanks to the outgoing Committee Members for their help and support for 2020, and welcome to the new members. A full list is somewhere later in the newsletter [*in the Directory at the front*], so you can see who they are. I look forward to working with the new Committee, and there are still a number of challenging tasks ahead of us. Hopefully we can get these sorted early in the term.

Bron and I recently went on the Vic High Country trip and had a blast. But it was wet. And a few people on our convoy bailed. Including fearless leader. But it wasn't a bad decision given the weather and the condition of the planned tracks.

A lot of planning went into the original trip, and I don't think some people realise how much effort and responsibility falls to the Trip Leaders. When things go wrong, or plans need to be changed we need to recognise that they are volunteers and that they shouldn't be held responsible for everything as there are some things that are just beyond their control. Adapt and flow with them, help them out, and accept the new circumstances. Above all, recognise their efforts and respect their decisions. Sure, we might have taken a week off work and having the trip cancelled or abandoned at short notice is a bummer, but I'd rather lose a week holiday than wind up with damaged tracks and vehicles or worse. And who really cares if we don't see this hut or that lookout or that old building? We can always come back again, and undoubtedly you'll see something else just as cool if the trip is re-routed. And you still get to have a drink round the campfire or head to the pub if it's bucketing down.

It made me think too how fortunate we all are to be part of such a great Club. Even though the official trip was over, a few of us that remained decided to make the rest of the week an informal trip, while the majority of the other group stuck closer to the original plan. Making it up as we went along, planning only a day ahead as we watched the weather, and accepting that things changed hour by hour (thanks Jake and Dim) sent us on some interesting tracks with spectacular views, into some areas, finding something new for everyone. Something that is harder to do on your own (and sometimes less enjoyable anyway). The knowledge and experience of the group meant that we could still find a range of tracks to drive with spectacular views, steep climbs and descents, and when we hit the challenging parts (read greasy clay not a hope in hell of steering) the combined efforts, training and experience ensured that everyone made it through safely (ok, some may have needed a change of underpants, but there were no real injuries).

It all comes back to that one thing. Working together with experienced and well trained people. And being able to get that training, and find those people in our Club is

## *President's Report*

### *Andy Squire*

wonderful. Joining the Club 8 years ago and getting involved was one of the best decisions Bron and I made, and even our involvement on the Committee has been fun (most of the time). So get out there, run some trips, join the trips, get involved. Don't wait.

And remember.... The road to happiness is always under construction, but you have a 4 wheel drive.



## Letter from the Editor

Club members have been travelling far and wide at the time I write this with Easter just drawing to a close and another month of 2021 passing by. Destinations include Lightning Ridge, Fraser Island, the Victorian High Country, Two Thumbs Wildlife Refuge, and others.

We had two slightly moist trips running at once to the Victorian High Country, a very educational trip to Monkey Gum Fire Trail at Yalwal, and a couple of Brindabella Rambles. The trip reports are in this month's edition.

Coming up for the Driver Training Unit is the Sand and Water course which has been on the back burner for a while and is so well subscribed that we will have to run three convoys (pew!) We have also added a second Basic Driver Training course in May in an attempt to cope with demand (it's been a busy year so far with many new members joining).

The 4WD Spectacular Committee is continuing to organise the event and has locked down the showground layout for next year with a focus on 4WDing and some great spaces for demonstrations and seminars including an expanded test track.

The new Committee is getting straight to work after the AGM at last month's Club meeting with the April meeting welcoming new Committee members and bringing them up to speed on the various management tasks.

There is a Talooge Muster happening this month over the weekend of the 15th April. This is an opportunity for you to come out and participate in the management of our property.

Golden Axze round 2 is happening soon and the Bubbles and Brushes event was such a smash hit that its happening again in May.

Remember if you want to be a star and have your name up in lights, well maybe just the recognition of contributing to the magazine, don't hesitate to get your articles or content in to me by the Thursday before the Club meeting.

Happy Trails,

Matt W

Southern Trails April 2021





# Club Meetings COVID-19 Safety Plan

## Overview

This plan has been prepared in cooperation with the Canberra Deakin Football Club to communicate the approach to COVID-19 safety and minimise the risk of members and guests contracting COVID-19 whilst participating in Club Meetings.

This plan applies to all ST4WDC members and guests, and only to Meetings at Canberra Deakin Football Club. Separate plans have been developed for Trips, Talooge, and Training.

The plan has been prepared to comply with our interpretation of ACT restrictions at the date of the plan. The plan will be updated as the situation changes and in accordance with ACT and NSW restrictions.

## Pre-Meeting

- Please ensure that you sign in at the front desk when you arrive at Canberra Deakin Football Club. This is necessary for contact tracing purposes.
- Use the hand sanitisers/sprays which will be available at locations around the club.
- Head straight to the main meeting room and take a seat. If you are ordering drinks, please return to the main room once you have ordered. Please do not congregate in the bar area.
- If you are not ordering drinks, please head straight to the main meeting room after signing in.
- You must always be seated in the main room, please do not congregate.
- Please ensure you follow the social distancing requirements of 1.5m

## Dinner Arrangements

- If you would like to eat dinner before the meeting, you can order as usual in the bistro, however you will need to eat your meal in the main meeting room due to restricted space in the Bistro.
- Ten tables, each seating 8 will be available in the main room and each table will have a table number.
- Make sure you note your table number before heading to the bistro to order.
- Your food order will be brought into you in the main meeting room
- Staff will remove your plates and clean the tables once you have eaten.

## During the Meeting

- The meeting cannot go ahead unless everyone is seated, max 8 persons per table. You must always be seated whilst in the club unless you are using the rest rooms or ordering drinks/food.
- There will be two microphones and hand wipes available for use.
- Unfortunately, coffee and tea will not be available and there will be no raffle.
- The meeting will be running straight through without a break and is expected to last about an hour.

## After the Meeting

- If members wish to have a drink in the bar after the meeting, you will always be expected to be seated except when ordering drinks and follow social distancing restrictions.

Please note, Canberra Deakin Football Club Staff will be monitoring the bar and bistro areas, ST4WDC Committee members will be monitoring the main meeting room. This is to ensure everyone is complying with the COVID-19 restrictions. It is your responsibility to ensure you comply with the restrictions. The September meeting (and future meetings) could be cancelled if members do not comply.

The main meeting room is allowed a maximum of 100 people. We will therefore be monitoring the number of attendees to ensure we do not exceed this number.

## *Trip Report*

### *Brindabella Ramble 1st Convoy*



*This trip was run by Pelican in late February. [Ed]*

Early Morning start from Goulburn to the meeting spot on Uriarra Road which had the usual crazy cyclists. Coming along for the trip was work colleague Mark to show what a ST4WDC trip is all about. Heading into the Brindabella's via Blue Range Road to up Mt Coree. Fun descent down to McIntyre's Hut for lunch, even more fun on way back up.

Great day out meeting familiar faces and new.

#### **Jon Case**

The trip started by playing dodgem with cyclists on the way to the meeting point. Once arriving, there was the usual greetings and checking out the vehicles before heading off in convoy. A few easy tracks later we encountered fog threatening to spoil the view from Mt Coree. Luckily, it cleared to magnificent clear skies as we reached the trig. I had forgotten the spectacular views to be seen from the top. A photo or two then we shuffled our way from the car park and headed off to McIntyre's hut for lunch. After that we went to Flea creek. In all my years here I had never visited so was amazed at this beautiful spot in my backyard.

The journey out saw a few breakdowns. An over heated tranny, a few limp modes from Pelicans and a flat added to the interest of the trip. The most amusing was Pelican being towed up from Flea creek. Overall, a very enjoyable day. Thanks to Pelican for organising the trip. I look forward to the next trip.

**Cheers, Jerry**

## Our Club Sponsors

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ARB make and offer some of the most rugged and well-designed accessories available for your four wheel drive and have become the benchmark for strength and reliability. We recommend you talk with them about equipping your vehicle for all your adventures. Glen and the team at ARB Fyshwick will look after all your 4WDing needs!

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### Gold Sponsor

The folks at Monaro Off Road Centre have been long time supporters and members of our club, and look after the vehicles of many of our members. Michael and Rod can look after you with all vehicle servicing, repairs, pre-purchase inspections, trip preparation, new car warranty servicing, and a free courtesy car on request. They can supply

## Our Club Sponsors



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The logo for Tyres &amp; More features the words "TYRES &amp; MORE" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font, with a stylized ampersand. The logo is set against a blue rectangular background.

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Tyres & More is a national network of family-friendly tyre stores, offering you and your family safety on the road through Quality, Service & Value. Safety and performance on the road encompasses everything from good tyres to mechanical repairs and services. Our aim is to offer Australians the most complete car care possible, from tyre needs to safety examinations and accessories such as child restraints.

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Watts Communications is a family owned & operated business established in Canberra for over 25 years. They are your one stop shop for all of your two-way radio, UHF CB radio, GPS navigation & GPS vehicle tracking needs. They have an extensive show room and a fully equipped workshop to undertake installations into all types of vehicles from sedans, 4x4 drives, trucks - commercial and domestic, commercial loaders and dozers. Installations can also be undertaken on site.

**Members should note that many of our fantastic sponsors offer Club members a discount on goods purchased from them. Please ask at time of purchase and make sure to mention that you're a ST4WDC member.**

## Trip Report

### Brindabella Ramble 2nd Convoy



*This trip was run by Rob Stevenson in late February. [Ed]*

I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend to give the ute a run and to consolidate the learnings from the weekend. My last Brindy trip was 10 years ago so it was nice to get back. It was surprising to see the activity both on foot and in the car. I look forward to doing more of those trips and meeting more of the Club members. Thanks to Rob for taking care of us. Once again I have come away with a list of things to buy \$\$\$.

#### **Chris Collins**

Had a great time at the ramble last Sunday. Was cool to be able to put what I learnt on the 4WD course into action.

#### **Matty Miller**

We met the group at Uriarra homestead as usual and the first destination was Mount Coree. As the group was too big we had to do the trip in two groups. The conditions were perfect and clear views from the top was amazing. The last time I did Mount Coree was with a couple of friends when I had my Pathfinder and got stuck very badly in a big mud puddle but the track looked very different to from 5 years ago. Both groups regrouped after Mount Coree and headed down to McIntyre's Hut. The track down to the hut was very dusty and we were met with lots of friendly traffic also there was



## Trip Report

### Brindabella Ramble 2nd Convoy



bit of bull dust because I felt vehicle slipping a bit but was not bad. McIntyre's Hut camping ground was very green after the rains and was good spot have lunch away from the dusty tracks. Back on the track after lunch to Flea Creek and home from there. The main reason for us to do the Ramble was because we haven't been on a 4WD track for more than two years and was preparing the vehicle for the Victoria High Country trip.



Although the trip to Brindabella is a quick one it gives a variety of tracks which is a good 4WD skill refresher. That's what I like about the Brindabella Ramble. Thanks Rob for giving us this opportunity and hope to meet everybody on another trip.

#### **Thanks & regards Senerath**

Progressing from easy dirt road driving to the more challenging ascent of Mt Coree then the longer and more complex descent into McIntyre's Hut I built some confidence in myself and my vehicle. It was also good to practice travelling in convoy - things can get really confusing and very dusty with twelve vehicles. Fantastic views from the summit of Mt. Coree, interesting and informative chats with other members and a lunch break on the banks of (and quick dip in) the Goodradigbee river combined with plenty of driving practice to make for a great day out - a fantastic way to



## Trip Report

### Brindabella Ramble 2nd Convoy

explore the nearby hills and make the most of such a lovely sunny day. Thanks to everyone for a great Sunday drive in the Brindabellas!

#### Kind regards, Tim

I really enjoyed the Brindabella Ramble. It was a great opportunity to meet some other Club members and check out some new tracks in the Brindabella's. McIntyre's Hut (which I'd never been to) was a real highlight with a great track down to the River. Thanks Rob for organising this event and running it so well.

#### Gerard O'Neill

The weather must have heard we were coming on Sunday as it was a glorious day! It was a great day exploring our backyard. A shout out to Rob for leading the trip and all the other members who attended for helping make it a very enjoyable day indeed! My first trip back in awhile definitely reminded me why being part of the club is so beneficial.

#### Thanks, Zac Hayward



# Trip Report

## Brindabella Ramble 2nd Convoy



I enjoyed the drive through the Brindabella's. I have not previously visit Mt Coree or the Hut. I was able to revise driving techniques that I had been previously taught and experienced. The different levels of driver experience and vehicles allowed me to witness how people would approach the driving of the tracks and obstacles. I enjoyed talking to all about their different vehicles.



The day was great time and place to meet people and talk about driving. I look forward to more club activities.

The lesson that was learnt was regardless of training and experience, you will always learn something new when off road driving with other drivers.

**Regards, Shea O Jost**



## *Trips and Events*

### *Michael Patrick*

Note that COVID-19 and other circumstances may affect this list. Please check [www.st4wdc.com.au](http://www.st4wdc.com.au) and consult with the Trip Leader to confirm details before attending.

Members please note that the Club's UHF channel is Channel 28.

| Start     | End       | Activity   | Type           | Grade        | Leader           |
|-----------|-----------|--|----------------|--------------|------------------|
| 15/Apr/21 | 18/Apr/21 | Talooge Muster   | Talooge Muster | Not Required | Rob Donaldson    |
| 28/Apr/21 | 02/May/21 | Safe One Basic Driver Training Course                                | Training       | Not Required | Bronwyn Squire   |
| 30/Apr/21 | 02/May/21 | Basic Winching and Recovery Course                                   | Training       | Grade 3      | Bronwyn Squire   |
| 01/May/21 | 02/May/21 | Yalwal   | Trip           | Grade 5      | Andy Wall        |
| 07/May/21 | 09/May/21 | Weekend Getaway  | Trip           | Grade 1      | Debbie Davidson  |
| 07/May/21 | 07/May/21 | The Golden Axze Round 2  | Social Event   | Not Required | Darren Miller    |
| 09/May/21 | 09/May/21 | Brindabella Ramble   | Trip           | Grade 3      | Matt Warmington  |
| 15/May/21 | 15/May/21 | Bubbles and Brushes Take 2   | Social Event   | Not Required | Lynne Donaldson  |
| 21/May/21 | 23/May/21 | Safe One Basic Driver Training Course                                | Training       | Not Required | Bronwyn Squire   |
| 29/May/21 | 29/May/21 | Walk from Carillion via Jerrabomberra Wetlands and back to Carillion | Social Event   | Not Required | Andrea Szabo     |
| 30/May/21 | 30/May/21 | Brindabella Ramble   | Trip           | Grade 3      | Michael Patrick  |
| 05/Jun/21 | 06/Jun/21 | Trip Leader Workshop   | Training       | Grade 3      | Michael Patrick  |
| 10/Jul/21 | 11/Jul/21 | Bredbo Christmas Barn and Bredbo Hotel                               | Trip           | Grade 2      | Sue Phillips     |
| 31/Jul/21 | 01/Aug/21 | Snow Camping Gungarlin River   | Trip           | Grade 4      | Matthew Maddigan |
| 14/Aug/21 | 15/Aug/21 | Basic First Aid Training HLTAID003                                   | Training       | Not Required | Michael Patrick  |
| 18/Aug/21 | 18/Aug/21 | Basic Driver Training 4WD Vehicle Evaluation                         | Training       | Not Required | Bronwyn Squire   |
| 21/Aug/21 | 22/Aug/21 | Remote First Aid Training HLRAID005                                  | Training       | Not Required | Michael Patrick  |
| 28/Aug/21 | 28/Aug/21 | OziExplorer, Hema Explorer Navigational Workshop                     | Training       | Grade 3      | Michael Patrick  |
| 08/Sep/21 | 12/Sep/21 | Safe One Basic Driver Training Course                                | Training       | Not Required | Bronwyn Squire   |
| 19/Sep/21 | 19/Sep/21 | Brindabella Ramble   | Trip           | Grade 3      | Stuart Wallace   |

## *Trips and Events*

### *Michael Patrick*

| <b>Start</b> | <b>End</b> | <b>Activity</b>                                       | <b>Type</b>    | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Leader</b>   |
|--------------|------------|---|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 25/Sep/21    | 26/Sep/21  | Explore the Tracks of Abercrombie River National Park | Trip           | Grade 3      | Michael Patrick |
| 02/Oct/21    | 04/Oct/21  | Running of the Sheep - October Long Weekend           | Trip           | Grade 1      | Stuart Wallace  |
| 06/Oct/21    | 06/Oct/21  | Basic Driver Training 4WD Vehicle Evaluation          | Training       | Not Required | Bronwyn Squire  |
| 15/Oct/21    | 17/Oct/21  | Off Road Camper Trailer Workshop                      | Training       | Grade 3      | Glen Watts      |
| 15/Oct/21    | 17/Oct/21  | Chain Saw Awareness Training                          | Training       | Not Required | Michael Patrick |
| 15/Oct/21    | 17/Oct/21  | Talooge Muster  | Talooge Muster | Grade 3      | Rob Donaldson   |
| 27/Oct/21    | 31/Oct/21  | Safe One Basic Driver Training Course                 | Training       | Not Required | Bronwyn Squire  |
| 07/Nov/21    | 07/Nov/21  | Brindabella Ramble                                    | Trip           | Grade 3      | Michael Patrick |
| 27/Nov/21    | 04/Dec/21  | Vic High Country Ramble                               | Trip           | Grade 4      | Michael Patrick |

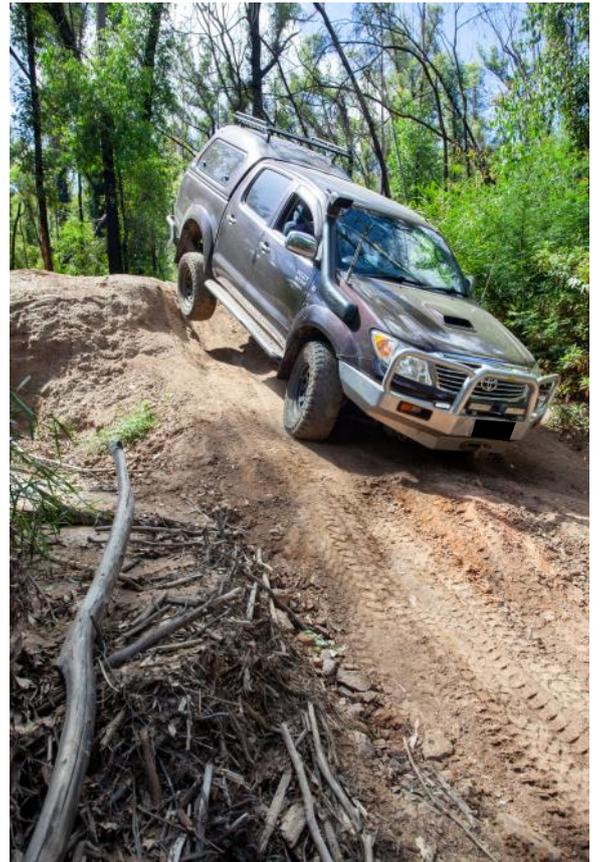
## Trip Report - Monkey Gum Fire Trail



A day full of apprehension and anxiety awaited, Would my ute overhear again? Would I break it? Would it break if it's own accord?

After last weeks overheating up Gentle Annie in the Brindabellas and horrible service from the dealer diagnosis of "we don't know" I was unsure myself.

Well we hit the tracks at 9:30 and onto Mint Bush Track and the obstacles started. On a seemingly straight forward winching obstacle, 11 trucks (5 not from our club) winched up. But the LDV winched halfway up and the winch exploded. A shotgun like bang and parts flying out of the bull bar. In the words of Elon musk, a rapid unplanned disassembly occurred. I was just saying to Andy via the UHF should we switch to a double line pull but he replied no the winch was still pulling when BANG! I thought the rope had snapped but no it was still under tension. Hmmmm. Well a dead winch meant a car shuffle and with Brett's jeep anchored to Andy's challenger a double line pull commenced but I didn't budge an inch yet my winch was pulling before it failed. Ok, re-rig and anchor Brett's jeep to a big tree, and a triple line pull was setup and up the ute came we put this down to the angle of the triple vs my single line reaching 2m up the tree to provide more lift.

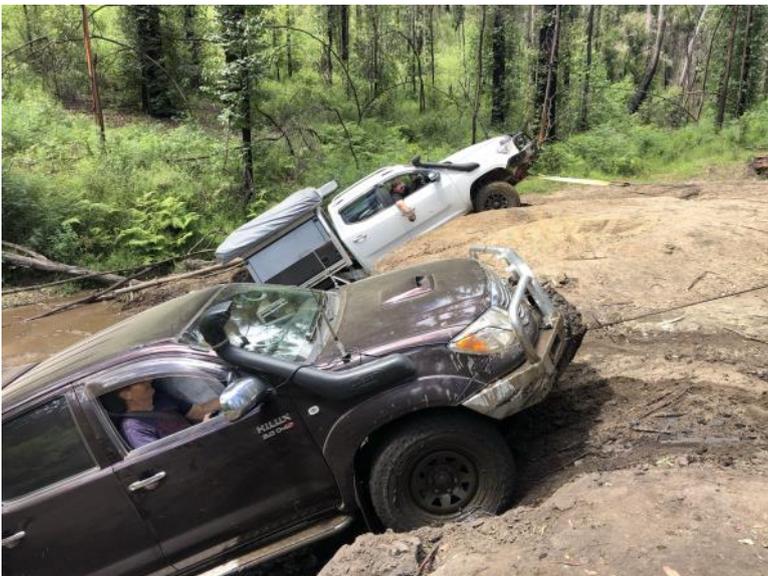


An inspection after revealed more damage than expected the bull bar mounts had failed and the winch had ripped itself out of its mounting plate too. Very unsettling for the first time real time use of a bull bar and winch fitted 6 weeks ago.

## Trip Report - Monkey Gum Fire Trail



Further on down the tracks we made our way along driving through the V of the ruts, straddling here and there. Till we come to the big rock, famed over YouTube 4WD influencers. I've tackled this before in my 80 series but now it's vastly different due to rain and weather and fires.



A line was selected to suit my ute and under guidance we went. All going well until the wheel fell into the hole it shouldn't have and crunch my drivers rear door copped it bad. Bugger £>\*\*, but now the mission was extract the car, some rock packing and more right hand down and out we drove. That's gonna cost me but let's move on we were still not finished.



Another seemingly minor obstacle proved too much and left me hung up on my side step brackets with all 4 wheels spinning and having to be dragged off the rocks by Brett's jeep and up the hill. Sidesteps are sacrificial as they were on the cards to be replaced so not to worry.

Overall it was a great day and thanks to Andy for organising the trip! "But Michael" you shout! You damaged your ute! Well I bought my ute to use and drive where I want. I've done that. Looking back and reflecting.

I didn't build my long wheel base ute to be a rock crawler or comp truck, I built it to get me to the remote long

## Trip Report - Monkey Gum Fire Trail



distance camp sites with a scenic view on a beach or in forest or the desert. I took it into rough country to see it's capability and I've discovered it does many rock crawler things well and some not so well.

But now I've done it I can cross it off and stick to the easier tracks.

### **Pelican & Emma**

The trip got off to a good start with all six vehicles on time outside the Loaded Dog at 8am. An interesting line up showing varying levels of 'stockness' and 'mods'.

We had a trouble free run to Deans Gap Rd, where we aired down. After just a few kms we turned into Mint Bush Trail, engaged low range and the fun began. There was



## Trip Report - Monkey Gum Fire Trail



seriously hard driving before we even got to Monkey Gum. A steep sided creek crossing took us two hours to cross. From there almost endless rocks, ruts, off camber turns and more. The scenery was nice, but I think the drivers didn't have much chance to look at it. It took a good team effort to get everyone to the

top. What a relief to get there and relax a little. I enjoyed it and look forward to more. Thanks to all that helped.

### Andy Wall

Who would have thought that a day trip doing Monkey Gum from Canberra and back would take over 12 hours. 6 vehicles departed and 6 survived the track. This is the third time I have completed it and it was probably the hardest.

Track conditions change all the time and this time required winching by all vehicles out of a creek bed, even the dual locked Jeep.



Last time I remember there was a log bridge over the crossing but not anymore. After Andy winched out, Michael tried and had a winch and bull bar failure, this resulted in a difficult and time consuming recovery.

Not to be deterred, as we had little option, I tackled the dip.

## Trip Report - Monkey Gum Fire Trail



All OK but I had about 5kg of damp dirt completely filling up behind and all over the winch to be removed at home,

The real Monkey Gum climb was challenging and required some track building and careful wheel placement.

In all, slow driving, dual lockers and an unbreakable Hilux resulted in a successful ascent without damage.

Can highly recommend this track to suitable vehicles. My son Matt was my passenger, I suggested that he could drive next time, (in his own Everest, No Way !!)

Thanks to Andy for the lead, perhaps my turn next time!

### **Jake**

A very long but extremely enjoyable day fighting our way along the challenging "fire trail"... not sure there would be much chance of any fire appliance accessing anything but trouble using this route. The fire devastation in the area still ever present, but the regrowth has put plenty of greenery back into the scenery. The track? What an awesome place to test driver and vehicle. Plenty of washouts,



## Trip Report - Monkey Gum Fire Trail



deep ruts and rocks...and rocks...and some more rocks. I joined the trip to not only test myself and my vehicle, but to broaden my experience with challenges, recoveries and driving skills you simply can't get (safely) without travelling with an experienced bunch of drivers. Thank you to all for welcoming me along and the invaluable experiences the day provided. Can't wait for the next one!

### **Brett**

When this trip went up in the website I nominated without even thinking as I have driven the track a number of times and it is always a fun and challenging track to drive.

The weather we had on the day was perfect we all met in Tarago and drove down to Yalwal together turning off at Deans Flat Road and airing down. Our first mishap for the day didn't take long with one of our members dropping a wheel in a hole on the side of the track. It was an easy recovery with me pulling the Patrol backwards out with my winch.

As we drove in along Mintbush and then Wombat Flats the crossings became increasingly difficult until we made it to the Wombat Flats Campground crossings where the only way up the far bank was to winch. We had two vehicles made it over and the third had his winch fail. So the LDV was recovered by the other Jeep in the group with a three line pull from his winch whilst anchored to a tree. As there was two lines at the crossing the rest of us winched up the other line whilst this was happening. After lunch we headed off again and weren't far

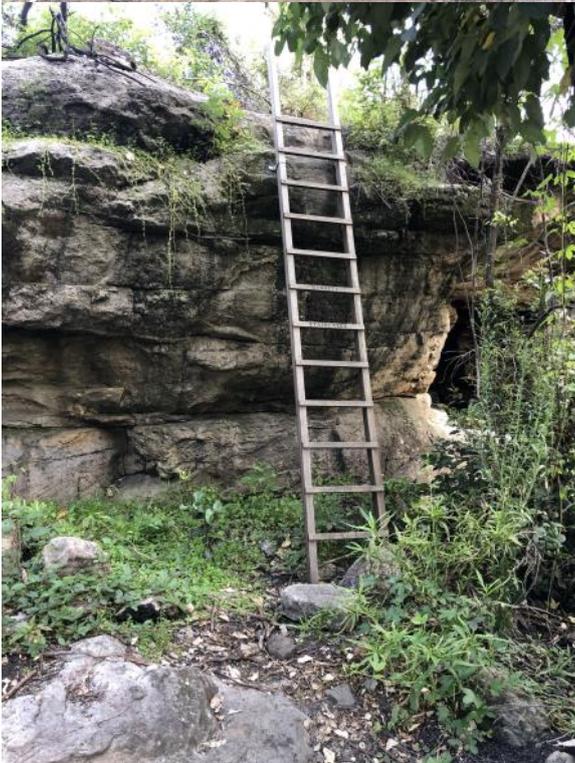
## Trip Report - Monkey Gum Fire Trail



along Monkey Gum when we had a vehicle bend a rim so needed to change it. The track becomes increasingly difficult and rocky as you head up with spots that need walking before driving and careful line selection. Some of these spots weren't without mishaps. We were nearly at the top when we had a vehicle hung up on a large rock which I eventually managed to get off by gently snatching the LDV backwards with the help of a set of traction aids under the front wheels. It wasn't long from here to the lookout where we all stopped and appreciated the views before heading out and airing up.

Thanks to Andy Wall for putting the trip up I once again enjoyed driving some of the tracks of Yalwal and believe there are more down that area we should visit.

**Rob Stevenson**



# Trip Report

## Victorian High Country (reverse)



We were looking forward to this day since we completed the Cape York trip nearly two years ago and had not done any 4WD'ing for a while because of the COVID lockdown. But we had our fingers crossed because it was going to be a wet week.

The trip was broken into two groups and we managed to get into the group that did the trip in reverse led by Matt rather than the group led by Michael.



Both groups met at the near the Dinosaur museum. Various discussions about new mods, new technology used, mapping software, tyres and some of the tracks (Butcher Country, Dingo Hill and Caledonia River) we were going drive can be nasty.

I choose not to listen to the commentary about the tracks because I get really nervous over these things. The tracks can change over the time, it could be graded and be smooth as a highway. In my opinion it depends on each individual. My only concerns were steep descents and losing control of the vehicles. I was saying to myself to focus and that's what I did.



We got a head start from the carpark, with the first stop at Holbrook for tea, and then lunch at Lake Hume. Matt had to attend to some running repairs on one vehicle and figured out that there was too much oil in differentials. Rob demonstrated that one can dry out water bottles using a leaf blower.

## Trip Report

### Victorian High Country (reverse)



Next stop, Omeo. It was a fairly long drive and not much sightseeing because we had to travel about 460 km. We reached Omeo in the evening and setup camp. In a couple of hours the campfire was ready and Matt gave a bit of a briefing about the next day and that we had to be packed up by 9.00am.

While in bed towards the morning hours I could hear the rain coming down on the tent which is always soothing to listen to, but not on this day. The only thing that was on my mind was slippery tracks. We felt very lazy to get out of bed but hearing the noises of vehicles opening and closing doors, sound of kettles warming up for coffee. We just had to flick the switch and fall into the trance of packing up.

After fuelling up and bakery visits we were ready to explore the tracks and take up the challenges. And so we had our first turnaround, maybe not it was a U-Turn. Jim and Jack track had been closed. Matt had a chat with the owner of the property next to the track and plotted the alternate route which added a fair bit of kilometres to our next stop which was Dargo.

Back on the track we drove various fire trails to get to Dargo. There was one particular track that caught my attention on that day because it was a very steep straight descent. Not rocky but just smooth gravel. I was just wondering what it could have been if it rained. We got lucky - no rain, good traction and smooth descent. I was telling myself, no brakes please *[to avoid wheel lockup]*.

We arrived at Dargo and setup camp next to the Dargo River. A quick dip in the river washed away the sourness in the muscles and left us feeling very relaxed.



## Trip Report

### Victorian High Country (reverse)



One of the main features of the third day was tackling Billy Goat Bluff Track, one of the iconic tracks and one of the most challenging in my books (everything is a challenge for me). In 2016, we drove this track from top to bottom and I was so focused and tensed that I barely remember the ruggedness of the track. The only thing I remember was constant slipping and rolling over big rocks. But this time I was bit more relaxed and less tensed. I was telling my wife that I should observe that track properly this time, and tackle it as it appears in front of me. That's what I did and it was much more fun [*going up*] than coming down.

We spent some time at the summit of Billy Goat taking photos and absorbing the beauty of the Alpines. After visiting Pinnacles for some fantastic views our

next destination was Howitt hut. The rain got heavier by this time and we were tackling the McDonald Fire Trail which was very slippery and very slow moving.

Michael suggested that we take the easy way out as the track situation was getting trickier and getting late. Matt agreed and we headed to our destination. We had to put up our tents in the rain and we enjoyed it too.



## Trip Report

### Victorian High Country (reverse)



We had so much rain overnight that Matt decided to call the next day a rest day at Licola. We all agreed very happily because we were bit exhausted at this stage. Also we supposed to meet the other group at Licola.



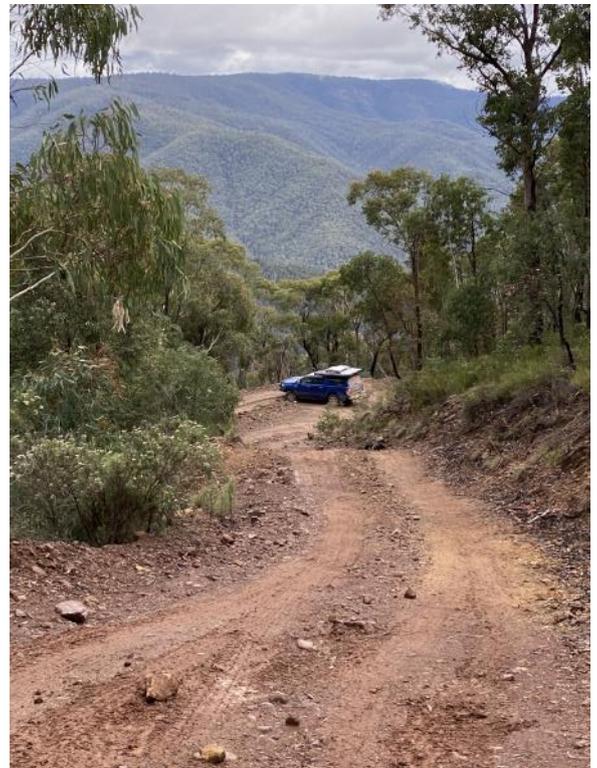
Next day was easy drive to Licola. We reached Licola by noon and had ample time to dry our tents and have hot water showers. There was no sight of the other group. Rob had prepared a big feast for the two groups but at the end we had to enjoy the roast meat with something [*Rosemary*] infused with mint sauce [*picked up in Dargo*] and lots of nibbles and also Matt's Marshmallow infused damper bread.



Another invention was brought to our attention that a leaf blower can be used [*to encourage the fire*] as with a blacksmiths forge. Some of the members had a go at using the blower but didn't have the required training and ended up blowing ash on the

# Trip Report

## Victorian High Country (reverse)



audience but didn't help with fire.

The next 3 days we drove Dingo Hill, Caledonia River and Zeka Spur Track. Dingo Hill was the hardest because of the steep descents and rock boulders. We were lucky again that we didn't have any rain when we approached the track and were able to complete the track without any issues.

Caledonia track had so many river crossing and was a very spectacular track with lots of bog holes and trees hugging the vehicles.

Our last stop was Sandy flats but only four vehicles were left because the others had commitments to attend *[and left in a separate convoy after Wonongatta Stn]*.

# Trip Report

## Victorian High Country (reverse)



## Trip Report

### Victorian High Country (reverse)



Sandy flats was another beautiful camping spot on the banks of the King River. Another chance to have a cold dip and refresh before heading back to Canberra. After crossing the King River the last four vehicles re-grouped on the banks of Lake William Hovel, aired up, and farewelled each other and took our own time to get back to Canberra.



It was such a pleasure traveling with a friendly group that have the same interests. Listening to funny stories around the camp fire and having singalongs. Most of all it was luxury to listen to Kevin playing his guitar in the background while people were taking around the campfire. It was just like watching a movie.

Thank you Matt for your executive decision making and making the right choices and also all the guidance given over the radio. Thank you all the friends for making this trip so thrilling and full of enjoyment. Looking forward to travelling with you all again.

#### Waruni & Sen

Brilliant trip with fantastic company. Our adventure took in some challenging tracks in the wet, including Burgoyne and



# Trip Report

## Victorian High Country (reverse)



Billy Goat's Bluff Track which we have always wanted to tackle.

Highlights of the trip included Kevin's guitar, Matt's campfire ghost stories, Rob's lamb roast (helped along by a fire fuelled by a leaf blower), and free wine from the Lion's Youth Camp.

We parted ways with the rest of the crew on Friday and Chris stepped in as the pseudo trip leader for us, Luke and Michael. Chris did a great job leading us up the steepest tracks of the trip, and eventually managing to navigate us out of the bush. This was better than the hikers we encountered who were "lost" on a 40km hike (surely they must have been lost because who does that voluntarily?) All the time Matt was listening in to keep tabs on us and make sure we got home safely!

Thanks to Matt for the great leadership under some very difficult circumstances. However next time we would like him to have better control over the weather. Raining inside of the tent was not one of the highlights!

### Suzanne and Paul Finch

Great trip. Thanks so much Matt for your great leadership, advice and help to those with tech issues. It kept us



# Trip Report

## Victorian High Country (reverse)



rolling with little / no delay.

Your axe and chainsaw kept us warm and cheerful on cool nights.

Likewise with Kevin's guitar and songs.

Everyone negotiated the challenging sections with experience and aplomb. Well, ok; a bit of luck for me at times.

**Keep rolling folks,**

**Rob Wilson**





# Classified Advertisements



## Rated recovery points.

RP-PAT04, rated to 5,000kgs.  
Suitable for:

- Patrol GU II-V;
- Landcruiser 10/100/105 series

Brand new in box, never fitted.

**\$70.00**

## Pair of after market side steps for GU Patrol.

More robust than standard, but not sliders or jacking points.

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**Contact: Matt Warmington • 0407 562 656 • mattwarmo@gmail.com**

# Classified Advertisements

## 2008 TOYOTA LANDCRUISER CAB CHASSIS (DLS 05Y) & TRAYON CAMPER



### Extras on vehicle include:

Bull bar, winch and side rails.  
 Weather shields left & right.  
 ARB compressor in toolbox.  
 80 Channel Icom CB roof mounted  
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 Full width tyre box, 2 tyres & tools.  
 Daytime LED running lights.  
**5 Mag Rim Highway tyres (continental)**  
**6 Steel Rim 4WD Cooper Discovery ST**

Bespoke steel tray, rubber tray mat.  
 Air conditioning & dual battery system.  
 Full length shelf under tray & ladder rack.  
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### TRAYON extras:

Extra power points & 12-volt outlets.  
 Corner bolsters & 2 ARB LED lights.  
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High density foam double mattress.  
 Extra new house batteries.  
 TRAYON Number 541.

**Contact: David Campbell • 0431 574 303 • dcam77@netspeed.com.au**

One owner since new. Cost over \$125,000 to assemble. Low Km (under 122,000Km). NSW rego to 12/4/20.

**Price Reduced!! - complete: \$72,000 ONO (will consider selling the TRAYON separately)**

# Classified Advertisements

## 2014 Johnno's Deluxe Off-Road camper.

Sold and serviced by TJM Canberra. Interested buyers can ring Rod at TJM on 02 62809468 for references.

### Trailer

- Coupling is an Alko off road 50mm
- Axle is a 45mm square solid axle
- Tyres are 15x7 Good Year Wranglers with spare never used.
- Suspension is Off road 9 leaf shackle with rebound spring
- Brakes are 10" Alko Off road electric brakes with handbrake
- Upgraded Swing mounted ARK XO 500 Jockey wheel
- Lockable toolbox on front drawbar
- 2 x 4.5 kg gas bottles and holders.
- 2 x jerry can holders, one on drawbar and one on side.
- Mounted Hi lift jack
- Dry weight of 740kg

### Canvas

- Canvas is 15oz dyna proofed on roof and 12oz on walls.
- 2.2 x 2.7 m living area.
- 2.4 x 6.5 m awning with fully enclosable canvas annex (never used).

### Bed

- Queen bed innerspring mattress.

### Extras

- Kings shower tent
- Fake grass for under annex

ACT rego through to June 2021.

**Contact Pat on 0418657945**



### Kitchen area

- Swing out kitchen at rear includes a Thetford 4 burner stainless steel stove with grill, integrated stainless sink with hand operated pump.
- Slide out drawer which holds an Evacool RFE 60 fridge/ freezer (included) which runs on 12 or 240V.
- Power supply is via 2 x 80ah batteries supported by a Redarc BCDC1225 LV power system.
- Comes with 60w Redarc solar panel and 20w trickle charge panel.
- Custom built Drifta pantry box
- Integrated 60l freshwater tank



# Classified Advertisements

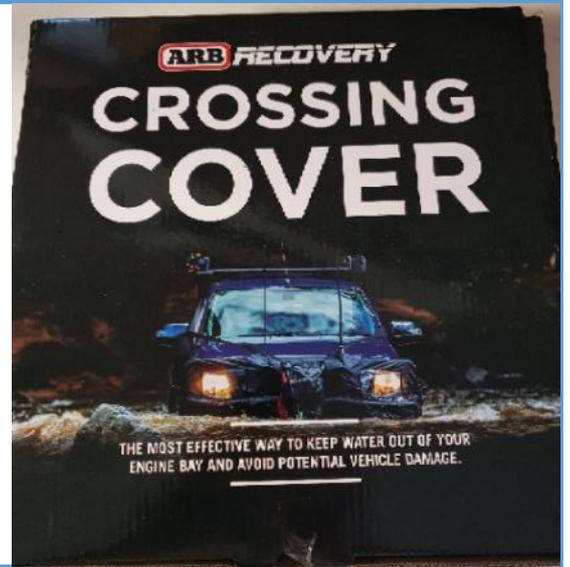
## **ARB Crossing Cover - a water crossing bra**

Suitable for all 4x4's.

Not used as already have one.

\$100.00

**Rob Davidson 0428 223379**



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