



Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F

DECEMBER 2003



Melbourne Cup Weekend 2003
Dargo



Photographs courtesy of John Partridge and Brian Martin.



The Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc is an affiliated club of the
Victoria Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc (VAFWDC)
www.vafwdc.org.au



COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2003/2004

President	John Partridge
Vice President	Ian Warburton
Treasurer	Roger Baird
Secretary	Lesley Peters
Assistant Secretary	Stephen Boyle

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

New Member Contact	George Pledger	9547 4021
Trip Coordinator	Ashley Martin	
Social Secretary	Rosalie Hughes	
Projects Coordinator	Carl Surtees	
Insurance Officer	Gerrard Clarke	
Librarian	Barry Leitch	
Web Manager	Anthony van Buiten	
Association Delegate	John Partridge	
Club Historian	Phil Alder	
Training Officers	Mark Kochan	
	Ashley Martin	
	John Partridge	
	Peter Pink	
Newsletter Editor	Lesley Peters	lespet03@hotmail.com

Registered Name: Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc

Registration No: A002184F

All correspondence: The Secretary
VFWDC Inc
PO Box 778
Dandenong Vic 3175

Web Site: www.vfwdc.com

Meetings: Held first Tuesday of each month
excluding January (no meeting). The
November meeting is held on the 2nd
Tuesday due to Melbourne Cup.
At Dandenong Library
Stuart Street, Dandenong 3175

*The opinions given herein are those of the individual contributors and
are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Committee of
Management, or the Member body of the VFWDC Inc.*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

G'day to you all.

Well the year is almost over and there are not as many trips on as we head into Christmas. But there are still a couple of important dates to remember before we tuck into our roast turkey dinners.

First up is the Annual Christmas Party which is being held at Gilwell Park, as it has been the last couple of years. This year it promises to be bigger and better with the sub-committee going all out to make it an event we will remember. If you haven't notified Rosalie of your attendance please let her know ASAP to aid us in the catering. It's not too late to donate items for the Christmas hamper, so try to get them to Rosalie in the next couple of days.

The other event on the calendar is the Oxfam Christmas Tree Delivery on Saturday, 13th December. This is a great event that we have helped out with for many years now that not only helps raise money for Community Aid Abroad but also is a great day with the family getting into the Christmas spirit. We need to give numbers by the end of November so please get in contact with Ashley if you are able to help out.

We have the trip to the hut after Christmas where we will do a bit of work on and around the hut, but there will be plenty of opportunity to relax or go for a drive. As usual we will be having our New Year's Eve Party there as well. If you haven't been to one of these you don't know what your missing out on. We start the night with a communal roast dinner followed by some singing and dancing?!? before seeing in the new year. Speaking of which, don't forget Michael's Australia Day weekend trip into the little visited Mt Hotham area.

Anthony has started a Yahoo Groups site for our club that we can use to keep you up to date of events as they happen and for members to chat or post last minute trip details etc. You can find the site at

<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/vfwdc/>

If I don't see you at the December meeting, have a fantastic Christmas and I'll see you in the New Year.

John
(John Partridge)

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 11 NOVEMBER 2003

Meeting held at Dandenong Library and opened at 8.15pm by John Partridge.

33 members present.

APOLOGIES:

Roger Baird, Patrick Casey, Brett Gale, Liz Beaton, Barry & Yovonne Hempston, David Hughes, Glen & Jacki Hughes, Chris & Karyl McGlinn, Lisa Petrou, Judy Murray, Ashley Martin.

VISITORS: Welcome to Travis Timmerman.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Minutes of October meeting as per Newsletter.

Accepted: Annie Simpson; Seconded: Carl Surtees.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil.

CORRESPONDENCE IN:

- Membership Renewals from John Smith, & Ivan and Lucy Santurini.
- Advice from Lynnete Bond and Juanito Shilo that they will not be renewing their club membership.
- Letter from All Terrain 4WD Club re memorial dinner for Mark Donohoe to be held 15/11/03.
- Letter and promo material from Crystalair Pty Ltd re new product "Travel Buddy Reheating Oven".
- Letter from former Club member, Ian Carrington advising he has holiday property in Corowa and offering discount to Club members.
- Variety Club notification of 2004 4WD Bash which will be held in May,
- Letter from ARB seeking applicants for sales staff.
- Letter from Association requesting copies of Club brochure.
- Promo material from Flexible Drive Agencies' Datatron Coolant Level Monitor.
- Email exchange between John Partridge and the Association re ongoing problems at O'Tooles and surrounding area.
- Various Club Magazines.

CORRESPONDENCE OUT:

- Email to members advising details of Association meeting to be held in Bendigo.
- Distribution of 4 x 4 Show tickets to Club members.
- Cheque sent to VAFWDC for payment of affiliation fees.
- Letter to Mark Cray confirming band for Bush Dance.
- Letter to Ian Carrington acknowledging offer of discount accommodation at his Corowa property.
- Newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Petty Cash:	\$ 120.10
Cheque Account:	\$3,551.21
Term Deposit:	\$6,797.47

Accepted: Graeme Ralph; Seconded: Steve Boyle.

SOCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:

➤ *Christmas Party:*

Rosalie Hughes reported that we now have final numbers of visitors, ie 11 adults and 30 children.

Program will be:

- 1.00-1.25: Lunch
- 2.15-3.00: Games
- 3.30-3.45 Visit from Santa and presents.

Visitors will then disperse.

Presents: Club members to provide their own children's presents.

Additional trestle tables required. Carl said he could provide some.

Dinner: Separate area to be set up for children this year.

Helpers: Will need to be at Gilwell Park at 10.00 am.

Camping: Available at \$6.00 per head.

➤ *Bush Dance:*

John Partridge suggested a sub-committee be formed to assist Rosalie with arrangements for Bush Dance.

As there is no meeting in January, numbers will be required by December meeting to assist with organisation of function.

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:

➤ *Collins Hut:*

Carl will submit a separate report in next Newsletter re ongoing plans for the hut.

TRIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:

➤ *Forthcoming Trips:*

15/16 November: Macalister/Butcher Country

Leader: Carl Surtees.

21-23 November: Mayford Fishing Trip cancelled.

Ashley will still lead trip to alternative destination TBC.

29 November: Christmas Party (see separate report).

Contact: Rosalie Hughes.

13 December: Christmas Tree Deliveries.

Contact: Ashley Martin.

Christmas/New Year: Collins Hut.

- David Dawn reported on the Bowling Night – good night had by all.
- Anthony Van Buiten reported on Advanced Training Weekend.
- Carl Surtees reported on alternative trip taken to Toolangi after cancellation of BAT Day Trip.
- John Partridge reported on Cup Weekend trip to Dargo area, including Blue Rag Range.
- John expressly requested that members ensure they advise the trip leader of their intentions to attend a trip. It has happened in the past that members have put their names in the trip log and have not turned up at the meeting point, causing people to wait for up to 30 minutes without advice. Members should confirm their attendance with trip leaders 2 days prior to date of proposed trip.
- If mobile number available, please advise.
- Also, with regard to emergency telephone contacts these need to be the contact details of somebody who is not attending a trip and who can be contacted if trip is delayed or somebody is hurt/ injured.

ASSOCIATION REPORT:

- There is a meeting in Colac organised by the BUG (Bush Users Group) on Monday the 20th to talk about the proposed Angahook National Park which would effectively close off 80% of the 4WD tracks.
- A Regional Representatives sub committee will be formed bringing together club members who have a close working relationship with DSE and Parks Vic rangers. This will help the Association with its Management Plans by having an accurate database of information.
- A Safety Committee has been formed and is chaired by Ian McCallum who as a senior constable of the Vic. Police and club member of the Pajero Club. They will try to form an accurate database of accidents related to 4WD's to which they can use to defend the use of 4WD's as a legitimate recreation and combat some of the ridiculous claims about bull-bars etc.
- It is proposed that we use channel 10 of our radios to monitor traffic on the 4WD tracks Australia wide.
- The Association is still looking for someone to fill in the role of Public Relations Officer to educate the public about 4WD issues.
- The Trackwatch magazine is now in full colour. The news the Associations monthly newsletter will continue to be published after each committee meeting and this will contain Association information that is up to date and relevant. Clubs will be able to publish events and information through "The News" or on the web site at no charge.
- There is a new management in place at TCIS, which should improve all insurance communication. There have been discussions with the insurance companies to provide a more competitive premium.
- At the ANFWDC general meeting it was agreed to adopt the Victorian policy of track classifications.
- Adventure Activity Standards; looks like the responsibility on trips will be shifted from the trip leader to the participant.
- The DTU is looking at doing more corporate training
- The meeting was informed about the talks I have had with the DSE in Erica and the working bee that will be happening at O'Tooles in the next month. Also mentioned was what should be done in the event of witnessing destructive behaviour in the bush.
- If clubs want to have a stand at the Victorian 4WD show (Wandin) they should contact the Landover's Owners Club.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

- Damage to O'Tooles and environs. JP reported that the O'Tooles working bee has been postponed until May next year. He visited Seneni's camping ground on way home from Dargo and this area has also been severely damaged.
- John stressed the point that the appropriate authorities must be advised if anyone witnesses a person doing damage to any nominated camping area. There is a Parks Victoria hot line that can be contacted at any time to report these incidents. John is in constant contact with the Association in relation to this issue.
- Terry Johninke added that the Coopers Creek area is also now in an impossible condition for camping.

- Website: Anthony outlined plans for update of website. Plan is that cost of update will be offset by advertising. JP noted that 80% of new members came thru website and update well worthwhile. Agreed.
- VFWDC 30th Anniversary: JP asked for ideas from members re celebrations, ie family day; series of special events; combined AGM-30th Anniversary dinner; etc.
- Club Flags: Will be ready commencement of 2004.
- Ian Warburton submitted a detailed report on the issue of bush cleanliness (ie disposal of toilet waste) which is fast becoming a health issue and a reason to close off many camping areas.
- Terry raised the issue of whether it would be worthwhile leasing some Government land ("Crown Land") for Club use. Peter Petrou mentioned that problems would be encountered with public liability, legal issues etc etc.
- Advertising: Annie will provide details of Better Brakes for inclusion in newletter along with other advertisers.
- Paul Ryan asked if anybody would be attending the Malvern Valley Primary School "Transport Day".
- Terry raised the issue of cracked rims on 80S Toyota LC. Toyota have admitted there is a problem and will replace rims FOC.

TEA DUTIES: Thanks Scott and Michael.

RAFFLE:

- 1st Prize: Sue Lyne – Club T-shirt.
2nd Prize: Terry Johninke – Book "*The Port Companion*".
3rd Prize: Tommy Corrigan – Portable TV (donated by Barry Leitch).

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, 2 December 2003 at Dandenong Library Meeting Room.

Meeting closed at 10.15pm.

Reporting of Damage to Bushland Camping Areas

Due to the amount of damage incurred at camping areas such as O'Tooles Flat, Merringtons, Granny Flat etc, members are encouraged to record the details of any vehicles they encounter carrying out such unwarranted acts of destruction and vandalism.

Do not hesitate to call Parks Victoria, the DSE and/or the local Police to report such incidents.

Parks Victoria also has a reporting facility on its web site at www.parks.vic.gov.au

CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

NOVEMBER

Friday 14th- Sunday 16th Macallister River John Partridge

Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd Annual Mayford Trip Ashley Martin

**CANCELLED – TRACK NOT OPEN UNTIL 30/11/03
ALTERNATIVE TRIP TBC**

Tuesday 25th Committee Meeting Ian Warburton

Saturday 29th Christmas Party Rosalie Hughes

DECEMBER

Tuesday 2nd Club Meeting John Partridge

Tuesday 9th Committee Meeting Steve Boyle

Saturday 13th Oxfam Christmas Tree Delivery Ashley Martin

Christmas/
New Year Collins Hut John Partridge

JANUARY

Saturday 24th to Monday 26th Australia Day W/end Mt Hotham Area Michael Rodger

FEBRUARY

Tuesday 3rd Club Meeting John Partridge

Tuesday 10th Committee Meeting TBC

Saturday 28th Bush Dance Rosalie Hughes

4WD INSURANCE

The ANFWDC Insurance Program is available to all members of the VFWDC and other affiliated four wheel drive clubs.

To obtain an insurance quote, the agents – TCIS – require you to fax details regarding your vehicle one month prior to seeking insurance.

See the Club Insurance Officer, Gerrard Clarke, for relevant form and further information.

Free Wheeling is now available (in pdf format) on the VFWDC web site each month.

Just go to www.vfwdc.com



VFWDC ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

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Anyone wishing to advertise in the Club directory,
contact the editor at lespet03@hotmail.com.au

FORTHCOMING TRIP INFORMATION

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Date: Saturday 29 November 2003

Trip Leader: Rosalie Hughes

Destination: Gilwell Park, Gembrook

Time: From 1pm onwards/Dinner served at 7pm.

Equipment: Chairs, crockery, cutlery, and of course refreshments! Also camping gear if you plan to stay o/nite.

Radio Channel: Ch. 12

Trip Activities: You will have received the flyer with the October newsletter which contains details of locality, costings etc. This year, the afternoon activities will be somewhat different as we will be hosting a number of children/parents from underprivileged families. There will be games etc during the day and of course Santa will visit. We really would like to see a good turnout from members for this year's party, so let Rosalie know asap if you are coming along to celebrate.

AUSTRALIA DAY WEEKEND

Date: Saturday 24 January-Monday 26 January 2004

Trip Leader: Michael Rodger

Destination: Mt Hotham area

Meeting Time/Place: 8.00am Ford Factory, Campbellfield

Equipment: Bush camping, basic recovery.

Radio Channel: Ch. 12

Trip Activities:

Saturday: Travel to Mt Hotham and set up camp.

Sunday: Search for Dibbens Hut – situated between Mt Feathertop and Mt Hotham. Check out the area and then head back to camp. Should be an interesting long weekend with a bit of driving and walking combined.

BUSH DANCE 2004

Date: Saturday, 28 February 2004

Trip Leader: Rosalie Hughes

Destination: Glenburn

Time: From 5.30pm onwards/Dinner at 7.30pm.

Equipment: Chairs, crockery, cutlery, and of course refreshments! Also camping gear if you plan to stay o/nite.

Radio Channel: Ch. 12

Trip Activities: Details as per flyer sent with November newsletter. This night is all about having a good time with good friends. Come along and join in the fun, and enjoy the music and dancing.

REMINDER!

CHRISTMAS PARTY

SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2003



Contributions to the Christmas Hamper will be still be received on the day.

DON'T FORGET!



CHRISTMAS TREE DELIVERY



SATURDAY 13 DECEMBER 2003

Pick-up point: Scout Hall

Packenham Street, Blackburn
(Melway Map 47 H12)

Time: Before 11.00am.

Contact: Ashley

REMINDER!

BUSH DANCE

SATURDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2004

Final numbers are required by the
December General Meeting.

It is important that you advise Rosalie
whether you will be attending.

TRIP REPORTS

MELBOURNE CUP WEEKEND – DARGO

<i>Trip Leader:</i>	John Partridge	Nissan GU
<i>Participants:</i>	Ashley, Lesley & Brian	100 Series
	Steve, Jill & Katrina	80 Series
	Barry	Nissan GU Coil Cab

Saturday 1 November

The GU, 100S and the Coil Cab met at Officer Weighbridge at the nominated time – 8.30am. Jill and Steve had phoned ahead to advise they would meet us at the Hut. After some procrastination on finding a fuel outlet, we were on our way. We stopped once more at the Stratford Bakery and then headed non-stop for Dargo. Traffic was almost non-existent and we arrived in good time to find that not only was the Hut occupied but also the camping area nearby. Ouch – what now! After a quick squizzy, we decided we would have to move on and find somewhere else to set up camp for the weekend. As we were not quite sure when the Boyle's would be arriving, we left Barry at the top of the track and John led the mystery tour. After driving on the main road for about 30 minutes, John went right, we went left and we both find found good spots on the Wonnangatta. We decided to take John's option on the creek as there was less likelihood of an invasion of weekend campers. It was green and there was clear running water – what more could you want! Actually it was a really nice site – one worth keeping in mind for future trips to the area. We advised Barry (who was happy doing his crossword) to "come on down" and he left a message on a tree for the Boyle family who joined us about an or so hour later without too much trouble.

The weather which had been fine all day decided to turn, but we were lucky enough to get dinner cooked, have a few nightcaps and off to bed without getting too damp.

Lesley Peters

Sunday 2 November

Expected a few showers given the forecast for Melbourne but it was an excellent day for a drive. We got off to a lazy start around 10:30 and were up to our first river crossing by 11:00. We met a chap driving solo in a Troupy who (wisely) was not attempting the crossing on his own. It was at this point Jill threatened to divorce me if I went through; it had something to do with the perceived depth of the river but she obviously did not understand that I had to go through for one very obvious reason - it was there! Ladies you might be able to help me here,

if Jill was so sure that I should not go through the river how come she got in the car with me to go across?



Steve struts his stuff... [Brian Martin]

Anyway we made it across okay and Ashley came across next in the 100 series without any drama. Johnno was next in his near new Patrol and had no trouble apart from a moment when the car was pushed slightly sideways in the middle of the river. No major drama because he just powered through it but I am sure that for a moment John discovered the Nissan version of "Oh what a feeling". The Troupy came next and came through on a slightly different line, made it OK but I think he went pretty close to a deepish looking hole.

Around the next bend we found the second river crossing with a rather large obstacle – a drowned Jackaroo.



Every picture tells a story... [John Partridge]

These people were traveling with another vehicle but it did not do any good. No snatch strap, hopelessly inadequate tools (did not even have a spark plug

spanner to suit their vehicle). They did have a winch but unfortunately it wasn't electric so it was useless with a drowned motor. The next problem was their winch cable was hooked up to the only recovery point and prevented anything else from being hooked on. I have mentioned all this as a reminder to everyone to look at their own vehicles, check your recovery points front and rear, as well as checking basic recovery gear which means more than carrying that small shovel that you need when you have to answer a basic call of nature. Also check that you have adequate tools (in the vehicle not in the garage at home) to perform basic work to get yourself going. Anyway, back to the report. It was amusing when they opened their doors and about 500 litres of water flowed out but we lost an hour or so drying out their engine enough to get it going. Then Ashley towed them back the way they came to make sure they did not get into any more dramas.

Our plans to drive to Blue Rag Range had to be postponed due to the lost time so we headed for The Pinnacles via Billy Goat Bluff Track. For those who don't know this track it is a good, solid four wheel drive track with great views. We got up as far as the helipad when we had to stop because another group of around 8 vehicles were held up due to a mechanical failure. Barry and John might dispute this but I am fairly sure it was a late model Patrol that had dropped its tail shaft! Better revise my earlier description of this track from solid to challenging for people without a bit of experience. There were more than enough hands to help with the recovery/repair of the vehicle so we turned around and went back down to the river to have lunch. After lunch we headed up a couple of other tracks. Conways Track was interesting, followed by a couple of others, then it was back to camp for a night around the fire. Another enjoyable day over.

Steve Boyle

Monday 3 November 2003

Sun came up as usual, but brought some much appreciated and long awaited relief from the bleak weather we had experienced throughout the "Spring". Day proved to be one out of the box, and ideal for travelling in the Alpine region. As I still had the pump and gear on the roof, I bludged a lift again with John. He put me to work navigating, something I have never shown any flair for. I guessed what the numbers must have meant on his new GPS, and with those transcribed onto the maps I was able to judge accurately enough where we were heading. Luckily the route was not complicated, with little chance of me getting us lost beyond recovery.

Having been unable to complete the Blue Rag Range trip on the Sunday, we breakfasted and departed early (half past), making our way north towards Talbotville. To avoid the two river crossings which caused so much drama the previous day, we opted

for the chicken route to bypass any possible problems others may be experiencing with the bonnet high water levels. No such water dramas to be had this day.

We weren't the only vehicles in the Dargo-Talbotville area, passing a few other groups at the river crossing at Talbotville. Apart from that, and hearing a few others on the radio, we pretty much had the rest of the tracks to ourselves.

After a couple more easy river crossings, we headed up Basalt Knob Track. The initial steep incline had been newly graded with a wide sward cut for a firebreak, and although steep and straight, traction was not a problem due to there being no washouts and having a good metal base.

On a ridge higher up we passed through an area where the bush fires had left a trail of burned out undergrowth and blackened trees. This presented an eerie outlook for some distance, and it was in a clearing atop a ridge in this landscape that we chose to have lunch. Dinner Plains could be seen from there, and there was still a covering of snow on those mountains.



The last part of the climb to the trig atop Blue Rag Range was quite spectacular, with sections of burned out forest and open country with pockets of snow on some southern slopes.

With the sun having a clear path, the 'young' revellers didn't seem to feel the cold of the snowballs hitting their tee shirts.



Jill runs for cover as Katie takes aim... [LP]

The return to our campsite was via the main Dargo Rd, pulling in briefly to check if the road was open into Mayford (which it wasn't). Then on down past the old Gow's Hotel site into Dargo once more for an ice-cream break, before heading back to camp to ablute. The day was rounded off by dining back at the Dargo Hotel, before heading back to camp to say our goodnights.

Thus endeth the report for Monday. **Barry Leitch**

Tuesday 4 November

As Barry had been good enough to haul the pump and other equipment to fill the water tank at the hut, we thought we should at least do the job.

We all rose early, had breakfast, packed up and made our way to the hut which fortunately for us had been vacated and left clean and tidy. As you can see from the photo below, the grass has grown somewhat since we last visited the area and will need a good trim at Christmas.

It took some time to unravel the hose and get the water pumping through, but when finally it was on the way all we had to do was wait til the tank was filled.

John swept out the hut and we were all ready to roll by around 12.30.

We had arranged to pick up my daughter in Stratford at 3.15 so Ashley, Brian and I had time to head into Dargo for lunch before setting off in that direction. We were held up in Stratford for a while and then it was an uneventful trip home. **LP**

More Tuesday

After doing our bit down at the hut, Steve & co, Barry and myself headed off back to "civilization". The original plan was to head up Billy Goat Bluff to the Pinnacles and down Marathon Road, but as it took longer than expected to fill the water tank we decided to take the main roads back. An uneventful trip home with the non-turbo vehicles falling behind as soon as the gradient of the road changed by 5deg. With the help of the track log in the GPS we found the short cut around Sale. When we reached Moe, I said my goodbyes then headed up to the NRE offices at Parkers Corner near Rawson. There I was able to catch up with some of the rangers I have been talking to and discuss some of the problems there has been at the camping grounds. Apparently some people had witnessed some more destructive behaviour that weekend and the details had been passed on. There had been a few patrols by the rangers with the local policeman to the camping grounds where they had a chance to talk to the people camping there about the current problems and what they could do to help out. After this I went to the Senenis Camping ground to have a

look at what damage had been made the previous weekend. I haven't been to this camping ground before and it seemed to be very well laid out with numerous areas to camp, drop toilets and lots of grass and shade. However, the previous weekend trees were chopped down, pine bollards cut at the base and the grassy camping areas now just huge muddy areas fit only for wrestling! After a chat to some people having lunch there and taking a few pictures I headed back home. Thanx to everyone that came, I had a very enjoyable trip. **John**



Man at work
(?).... Steve
[JP]



An overgrown Collins Hut [JP]

The following article was provided by **Tread Lightly** and is well worth reading.

THERE IS A TIDAL WAVE HAPPENING AND YOU ARE IN THE WAY

By Ivan Scudamore

You have no doubt seen and heard many attacks on 4WD vehicles particularly in the city or, if not the vehicle, then parts of them such as bullbars. These attacks are orchestrated by a minority who have a specific barrow to push. These special interest groups have learned how to manipulate the media with sound bites, stunts, 5-second grabs, etc. The general public have no specific interest one way or the other but simply go with the media wind. While you honestly believe you are a responsible citizen who owns a 4WD vehicle for a very good reason the average citizen sees your vehicle as one of those evil things described in the media. They do not see you, the responsible person, inside it.

I have done a very rough history of the growing ownership of 4WD vehicles in the following chart.

	1920's to WW2	Post War 60's	60's - 70's	70's - 80's	80's - 90's	90's - Noughties
VEHICLES	Unreliable high maintenance	Reliability better (eg Holden's)	Reliability improving rapidly (Toyota 40 series)	Reliability still improving and some comfort (Toyota 60 series, air conditioning)	Reliability and comfort better again (Toyota 80 series et al.) A much expanded range of buyers many of whom have no contact with the bush	A huge range with considerable comfort. Wide range of buyers many of whom have a dream but who may never go to remote areas.
SERVICES	Poor or non-existent.	Getting better	Much better	Australia wide	Plenty	Higher expectations.
ROADS	Poor or non-existent	Mainly dirt but starting regular maintenance.	A lot of bitumen surfacing starting.	Lots of bitumen	Even more bitumen	Generally very good wherever tourists want to go.
ACCESS	Almost unlimited if you could get there	Still plenty of access both to public and private land	Still good	Starting to be restricted both public and private land	More restrictions both public and private. Start of legal liability problems	Many more restrictions, legal liability becoming the major issue for land managers, changes of tenure.
TOURISTS	Only the most adventurous or foolhardy.	Still not many tourists, mainly locals. Some caravans.	Vehicle based tourism starting. Very few places catering for tourists.	Tourism becoming an important part of some town's economies.	Increasing numbers of tourists who want to be entertained. Towns starting to vie for tourist dollar.	Heaps of them looking for "soft road" experiences, more prepared to pay, time poor, less tolerant of the "nothing" between attractions.
SKILLS	Extremely good, mechanical, navigational, driving, and bushcraft.	Still reasonably good.	Still reasonable.	General skill levels starting to fall	Considerable reduction in average skill levels.	Rapidly deteriorating, many depending on the generosity of others if they get into trouble.

RUBBISH	Not considered a problem.	Bash burn and bury	Starting to get a mention. Still bash burn and bury.	Schools in particular starting to teach kids to consider other methods of treating rubbish (take it in take it out). Kids teach parents of previous era.	General awakening of rubbish as a problem.	High awareness of rubbish but little knowledge of how to handle rubbish if there is not a disposal service at hand.
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As you can see from the table the 4WD scene has changed dramatically especially in the last 10 years. Unless the 4WD movement recognises this fact they will soon become irrelevant, a very small pimple on a rather large and unpredictable elephant.

Generally there are four classes of 4WD owner.

- 1) The person who uses their vehicle as the recreation, generally with some competitive element.
- 2) The adventurous 4WDriver who uses the vehicle as a means to get them to out of the way places where assistance is generally some time away.
- 3) The tourist 4Wdriver, the most rapidly expanding group, who want the extra safety of a larger, stronger vehicle to get them to places where a standard car may be more easily damaged. The vehicle is also used in many cases to tow a caravan or camper trailer.
- 4) The 'Toorak Tractor' which may be perceived as safer in traffic than a car or have more seats or as status symbol. This one rarely gets off the bitumen.

No matter which group or groups you may fall into the general public sees only the vehicle not the driver nor the reason why you bought it. Assuming that scenario next time you go out for a drive just count the number of "Brisbane Bulldozers" you see and don't forget to count your own.

So do you see that Tidal Wave now? It is called public opinion. Unless the motoring industry the 4WD movement and 4WD owners generally take action now it will be washed away.

What can be done?

Promote yourselves! Responsibly.

But first you must understand the arguments against you. Oversized, gas guzzlers, bush bashers, child killers, destroyers of the environment, the list goes on. Do your detractors have a point? Are you all or part of what they say about you? How can you refute these allegations?

What are your good points? You are members of the public just like everybody else, safer outback travel, seeing different places, driver awareness programmes, subscribing to the Tread Lightly! ethic, there are plenty of positives. All very well saying you do all these good things, you talk the talk but do you walk the walk? Simple things, do you drive with consideration for other drivers, does your publication depict 4WD vehicles doing environmentally good or bad things? Being good is a full time activity. People remember the bad things. How often have you remarked on good or appropriate behaviour lately? One bad image can destroy 100's of good images and as I have said before the public lump all 4WD's together.

All is not lost yet; there are hundreds of thousands of good responsible 4WDrivers out there. Build on that rock and the Tidal Wave may just sweep past you, but be quick, the wave is in sight.