



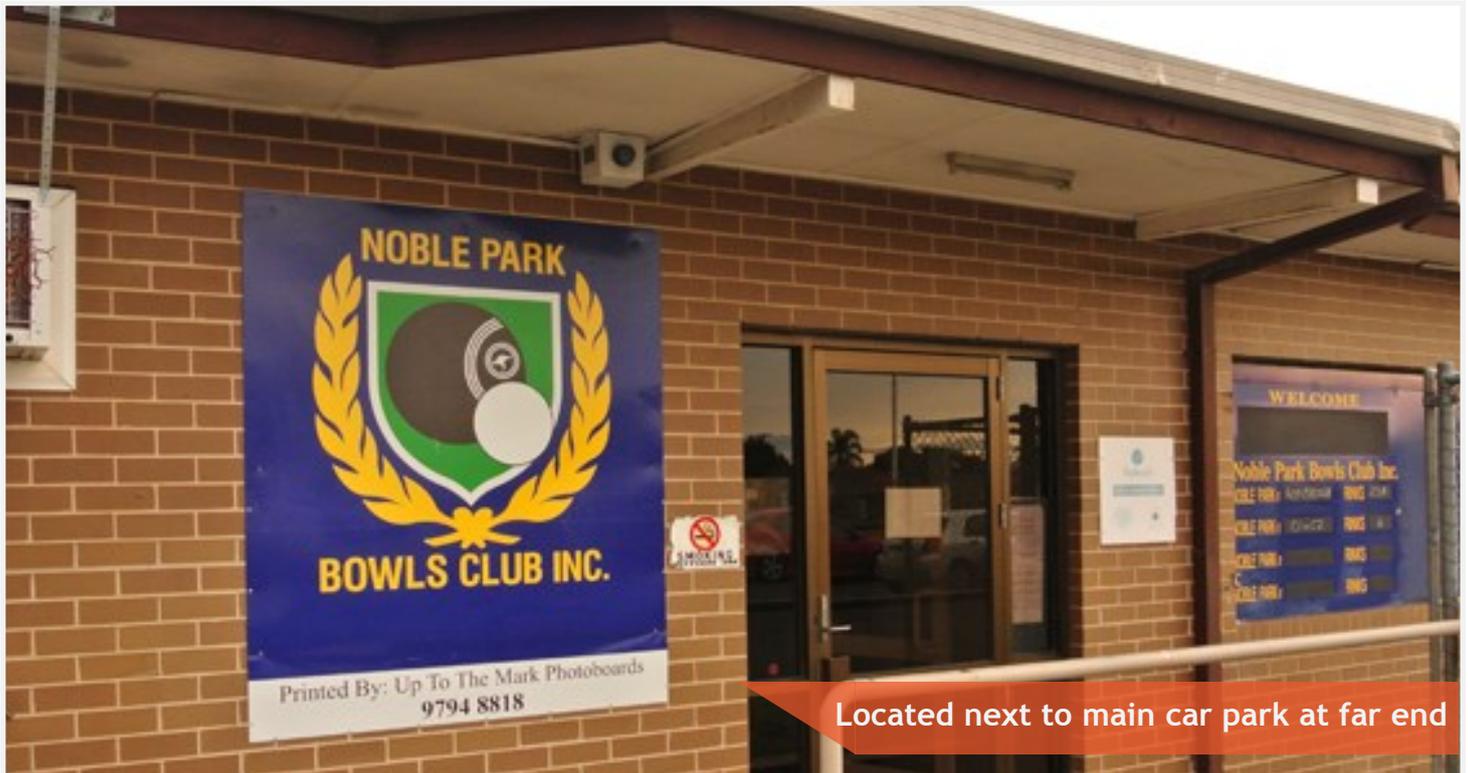
FREE WHEELING

November 2016



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Four Wheel
Drive Club Inc

Registration No
A0002184F



VFWDC General Meeting Venue

The club meets on first WEDNESDAY of each month 8:00pm. No meeting in January, and November at a selected location.

Bowling Club Rooms

Noble Park Noble Football Club
46-56 Moodemere Street
Noble Park
Melways ref: 89 D4



Members and guests are welcome to dine at the bistro before attending the meeting from 6:30pm.

Aberfeldy Track

In association with [Westland Gippsland Relic, Mining and Heritage Protection Inc](#) , the club maintains a section of the Aberfeldy Track with working bees throughout the year. View the club calendar for the next upcoming working bee.

Christmas Party 2016 – Myuna Farm

This year's Christmas party will be held at [Myuna Farm](#) on Sunday, 4th December. Starts at 10AM and there is an admission fee of \$8 or \$28 for a family. We will have be having a barbeque, so please bring some food to share and good sense of fun.

Myuna Farm is a public community farm in the south-east area of Melbourne. It is an excellent example of farming life with lots to do for the whole family. Come and visit us for a fun day out!

The farm lets everyone of all ages and abilities, experience hands on contact with a variety of animals. Alongside the Dandenong Creek, it offers a special environment of river gums, wetlands and bird life.

From education through to relaxation, Myuna Farm is preserving the agricultural history of Casey. All of Myuna Farm's attractions are presented in an educational and informative way.



Getting to Myuna Farm

Myuna Farm is located not far from Dandenong, just near the Monash Freeway.

182 Kidds Road

Doveton Vic 3177



<https://www.casey.vic.gov.au/arts-leisure/places-to-visit/myuna-farm/information>

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

2016-2017

President	Ben Whitworth	president@vfwdc.com
Vice President	Ken Beard	vicepres@vfwdc.com
Secretary	Bruce Cremonesi	secretary@vfwdc.com
Treasurer	Tony Barbera	treasurer@vfwdc.com

General Committee

Trip Co-Ordinator	Stuart Bowker	trips@vfwdc.com
Magazine Editor	Ly Ho	editor@vfwdc.com
Association Delegate	David Bruinsma	delegate@vfwdc.com
General Committee	Shane Dodman	
General Committee	(position vacant)	

Support Positions to Committee

Web manager	Ben Whitworth	web@vfwdc.com
Training officer	Phillip Griffith	
Training officer	Ashley Martin	
Merchandise	Carolyn Bruinsma	merchandise@vfwdc.com

Club Details

Registered Name	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club
Registration No	A002184F
Correspondence	PO Box 778 Dandenong VIC 3174
Email	secretary@vfwdc.com
Website	www.vfwdc.com

The Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club is an affiliated club of [Four Wheel Drive Victoria](http://www.fwdvictoria.org.au) - www.fwdvictoria.org.au

CLUB MERCHANDISE FOR SALE

Club Polo Shirts	\$28.00	Club Hoodie	\$48.00
Club Polar Fleece Full Zip Jacket	\$48.00	Club Sleeveless Reversible Vest	\$54.00
Club Caps	\$15.00	Club Bucket Hat	\$16.00
Club Wide Brim Hat	\$18.00	Club Beanie	\$12.00
Club Drivers Jacket (Coat)	\$80.00	VFWDC Windscreen stickers	
		Small	\$6.00
		Large	\$8.00

We encourage all members to purchase a Club Polo shirt.
Email your order to merchandise@vfwdc.com. Please ensure you advise size required.



Hi all,

Welcome to the VFWDC Free Wheeling magazine.

Remember that the November club meeting is being held at the Dandenong Opposite Lock on Tuesday 8th of November. Food will be served from 7pm.

Christmas is coming!

Save the date. Sunday 4th of December. The annual VFWDC Christmas Party is being held at Myuna Farm in Doveton. Arrival is from 10am which gives plenty of time for kids to visit the animals and enjoy the rides.

Bring your favourite BBQ food as we have access to all of the facilities. There is an entry fee of \$8 each or \$28 for a family. The committee will be treating the kids who attend to some rides.

Oxfam Christmas Tree delivery is happening on the weekend of the 3rd and 4th of December too. If you would like to participate please use the following link to sign up. However, please consider that our club Christmas party is on the Sunday and I would love to see as many

members there as possible.

[Sign Up for Oxfam Christmas Tree delivery](#)

Seasonal Track openings should now be well underway with Cup Weekend coming early this year. Some of the more fragile tracks may open a little later once things dry out a bit. Check out the "Seasonal road closures" web page at Parks Victoria. You will find a link to it on our club web site.

I hope to see all our members at the next general meeting and out on the tracks.

Ben Whitworth
President

CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

November

8th	Tue	Special General Meeting— Opposite Lock Dandenong South	President	
12th	Sat	Woods Point/Aberfeldy Recon	Stuart	0428539157
18th to 20th	Fri to Tue	Grampians	Bruce	0400 425 296
15th	Tue	Committee Meeting	President	
25th		Deadline for magazine articles	Editor	

December

4th	Sun	XMAS Party—Myuna Farm		
7th	Wed	General Meeting	President	
10th	Sat	Aberfeldy Surrounds	Stuart	0428539157

2016

January

26th to 29th	Thur to Sun	Dargo High Country, Blue Rag and Dogs Grave	Stuart	0428539157
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IMPORTANT



November meeting will be held at Opposite Lock Dandenong South. Please note the new date of 8th Tuesday. Arrive before 7PM for dinner, 7:30PM commence.

BYO chairs!

Address:

4/97 Monash Dr, Lyndhurst VIC 3975

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

October 2016

Members as Per Book
Visitors as Per Book
Apologies as Per book

September General Mins Accepted

Accepted: Stuart B
Seconded: Lisa B

Business from Minutes:

Nil

Correspondence in:

Emails from prospective members
Other Club Magazines.
Email Clarifying the First Aid gig from Track watch.
Email from Huts Association

Correspondence out:

Email asking for Clarification on the First Aid gig from Track watch.
Replies to prospective members.
Email reply to Huts Association.

Treasurers Report:

As per attached report in Magazine
Accept: Mick
Second: Sally

General Business:

New Magazine - Massive thanks for Ly on the new look magazine. Round of applause for Ly. Took 6 versions to get there, but it is a massive improvement

New Membership cards on the rear table

Ben mentioned the First Aid query from Trackwatch. Bruce read out the quote and the reply from 4wd Victoria

The Reply from Wayne: This is not quite correct,

it is a recommendation only - not law!
Sorry for this misquote.

Ben discussed the November Meeting at Opposite Lock. BYO Chair.
Please put names down

Xmas party - Myuna Farm 4th Dec. Sally mentioned she may have a friend that might be able to do face painting.

Collins Hut:

Discussion on the Email from Huts Association regarding Collins Hut.

Steve Pitcher gave a bit of an oversight on the hut, there was a club connection to the hut with a club member being related to the original builder. A show of hands was asked for and the club declined to take it up.

Ben had his monthly query to the members of anyone they would like to come and give a display or talk to the membership.

Dave mentioned that he would like to do some overnights with his son.

New Members

Brett Nuske Meily Effendy
Darren and Annette Hellenen
Daniel Pyle and Marylee Lo Ye

Trips Coming Up:

Aberfeldy Working Bee - Dave Brunisma
15th 16th October
BYO tools

Murray Sunset - Sally and Tristan
Bendigo Friday night
Saturday cruising

Lake William Hovell to Paradise Falls - Tony and

Shane

28th Oct- 4th November

Did a reccy Queen's Birthday weekend. Lovely area, touring around the lake

Shane has put the trip together, and he runs a great trip

November Meeting - Opposite Lock Dandenong:

18th -20th Nov

Halls Gap Lakeside Park

Xmas Party

4th December Myuna Farm

182 Kidds Road Doveton.

Entry costs

Singles \$8

Concession \$7

Family (four people) \$28

Children under 1 are FREE.

Club is looking to subsidise some kids rides

Tony was humiliated that it was his birthday with

a cake.

Coffee Break

Trips Gone:

Canning Stock Route - Simpson Section

All made it up Big Red

Lots of fun, more in the trip report in magazine.

Murray Sunset

Steve gave a spiel on the trip

First night was good until some shooters came though around 11pm

Next day weather was great and we hit along some good klms.

Made our way to Snowdrift for the night. Much mud and water was driven without options.

Sunday was more of the same with lots of sloppy clay. Much rally driving was had without trying

Great trip was had by all.



Available At Opposite Lock Stores

OL **opposite lock**
4WD & Vehicle Accessories

SMART GEAR FOR THE WORLD'S TOUGHEST ADVENTURES

FRONT RUNNER

It's back! In the past editions of the magazine, there was a "For Sale" section that's been sorely missed until now.

Members can sell or want to buy anything four wheel drive or camping related.

Just email the editor, editor@vfwdc.com, with the following:

1. Description of the item
2. Price
3. Contact details
4. Photos (highly recommended)

FOR SALE: 4 Bridgestone A/T D694 Tyres

\$200

approx. 80% tread.
LT 275/70R16

5th tyre of the same size included as spare.

Ben

0409960478



FREE: Custom bullbar for 80 series Landcruiser

Free!

Came with the car when I got it years ago. Been sitting in the garden since then as a “garden ornament”.... Not roadworthy—but good for anyone who wants to practice some welding, cutting or scrap metal.

Ly

0433 387 811

Ly.tri.ho@gmail.com



Bringing Four Wheel Drivers Together



Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
www.vfwdc.com

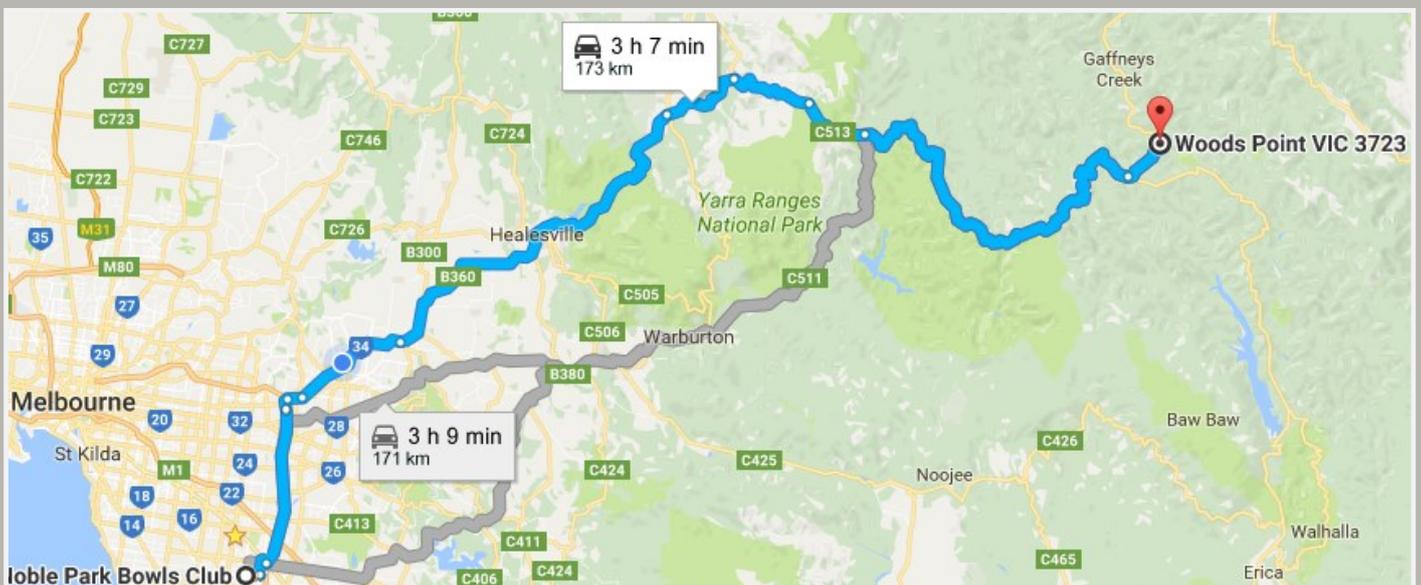
Treasurer's Report September 2016

<u>Cheque A/C`</u>	Opening Balance as at 01/09/2016		\$4,228.17
	<u>Add:</u>		
	Membership Renewals	\$220.00	
	Raffle	\$54.00	
	Total Monies In:		\$274.00
	<u>Less:</u>		
	Catering for August Meeting	\$10.00	
	Affiliation fees FWDV	\$1365.00	
	FWDV Driver Training Certificates	\$55.00	
	Stationary	\$8.94	
	Total Monies Out:		\$1,438.94
	Closing Balance as at 30/09/2016		\$3063.23
	Refund Membership overpayment	-\$320.00	
	Plus: Un presented Cheque #498		-\$320.00
30/09/2016	Actual Balance When Cheque's Presented		\$2,743.23
<u>Term Deposit</u>	Opening Balance as at 01/08/2016	\$6,250.22	
	Interest Paid	\$39.28	
	Closing Balance as at 30/09/2016		\$6,289.50
<u>Petty Cash</u>	Opening Balance as at 01/09/2016	\$150.00	
	Add: Transfer in from Monies in	\$10.00	
	Less: Catering Costs - Meetings	-\$10.00	
	Closing Balance as at 30/09/2016		<u>\$150.00</u>
	Consolidated Closing Cash Position		<u>\$9,182.73</u>

UPCOMING TRIPS

You MUST contact me if you wish to attend as departure time may change.

DESTINATION	Woods Point/Aberfeldy Recon trip to find some new tracks.
LEADER/CONTACT NO.	NAME: Stuart Bowker MOB: 0428539157
DATE	Saturday 12/11/16
MEETING PLACE / TIME	Longwarry (Eastbound) Caltex Hungry Jack's Crn Sand Rd and Princes Highway Longwarry North
GRADE	WET: Medium DRY: Easy to Medium
TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS	Through Noojee and up to Mt Matlock, Woods Point and to Aberfeldy, dinner on the way home at a pub or café.
VEHICLE LIMITS	MINIMUM: Me MAXIMUM: 4 or so
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL	PETROL: Longwarry Caltex DIESEL: Longwarry Caltex
DISTANCE BETWEEN SUPPLIES	240 km
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	Recovery gear Picnic lunch and munchies for roadside stops,
MAPS REQUIRED	Rooftop Walhalla-Noojee
RADIO CHANNEL CB / UHF	12



DESTINATION Grampians

LEADER/CONTACT NO. NAME: Bruce Cremonesi
Mobile: 0400425296

DATE 18th - 20th November 2016

MEETING PLACE / TIME TBA

GRADE WET: Easy/Med
DRY: Easy/Med

TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS Sightseeing and relaxing
Wine Tasting
Staying at Halls Gap Lakeside Tourist Park :

- \$31 / night unpowered (bit steep but for one night)
- Fire pit \$10, fire wood \$15
- Heated pool
- Activities for kids
- Last log on fire 10pm
- No noise after 11pm

VEHICLE LIMITS MINIMUM:
MAXIMUM:

APPROX KMS MEETING PLACE TO DESTINATION TBA

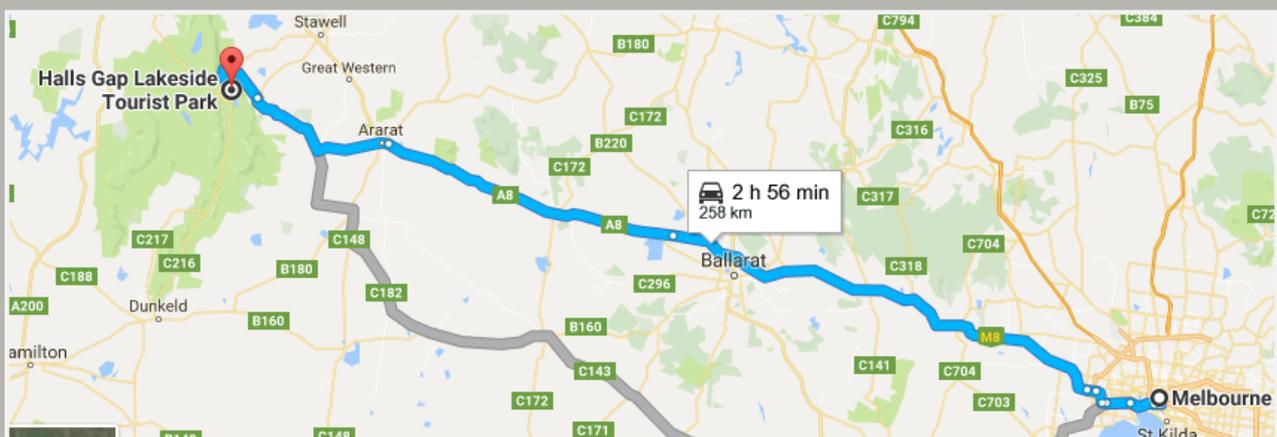
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL PETROL: NA
DIESEL: NA

DISTANCE BETWEEN SUPPLIES

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED Camping gear, Camper trailers welcome.
Camera, sense of great adventure and trust in your leader

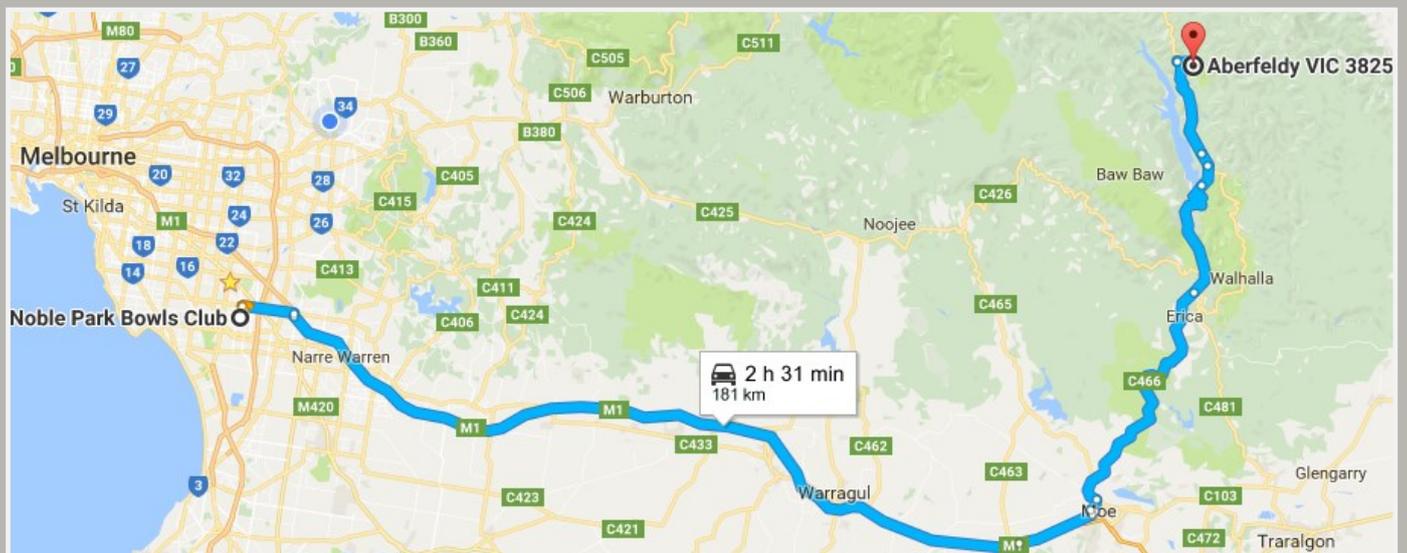
MAPS REQUIRED Meridian Victoria's Deserts 4WD Touring Map

RADIO CHANNEL CB / UHF 12



You must contact us if you intend to come along 0428539157 with your name and vehicle details.

DESTINATION	Aberfeldy and surrounds
LEADER/CONTACT NO.	NAME: Stuart & Maree Bowker MOB: Stuart 0428539157
DATE	10th December 2016
MEETING PLACE / TIME	Yarragon main street outside the bakery 8:00 am for an 8:30 am departure. Bakery should be open for Breaky allow extra time
GRADE	WET: Difficult DRY: Medium
TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS	Idea is to head up past Aberfeldy and do some four wheel driving. Bring packed lunch and munchies for roadside stops
VEHICLE LIMITS	MINIMUM: Us were going any way! MAXIMUM: N/A
APPROX KMS MEETING PLACE TO DESTINATION	300-400 klms round trip
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL	PETROL: Moe LPG: Moe DIESEL: Moe
DISTANCE BETWEEN SUPPLIES	400km
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	Own basic recovery gear, tools and any spares you may require. AT or MT tyres
MAPS REQUIRED	Rooftop maps Walhalla-Licola
RADIO CHANNEL CB / UHF	12



You MUST contact Stuart if you wish to attend as departure time may change

DESTINATION Dargo High Country, Blue Rag and Dogs grave

LEADER/CONTACT NO. NAME: Stuart
MOB: 0428539157

DATE 26th - 29th January 2017
Thursday is the public holiday, you will need Friday 27/1 off and we will have a four day weekend!

MEETING PLACE / TIME Pakenham Bypass BP/McDonalds Eastbound 7:00 am for 7:30 am departure

GRADE WET: Difficult
DRY: Medium to Difficult

TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS Travel to Dargo and do Dogs grave, Mt Hotham via Dinner Plain Tk, Blue Rag Range Tk, then travel down to Talbotville via Basalt Knob Tk and the Crooked river and up Billy Goats Bluff Tk. We may do more if time permits, it'll be up to those that attend to decide.
May change some tracks if wet!

VEHICLE LIMITS MINIMUM: 2
MAXIMUM: 8

APPROX KMS MEETING PLACE TO DESTINATION 400 kms

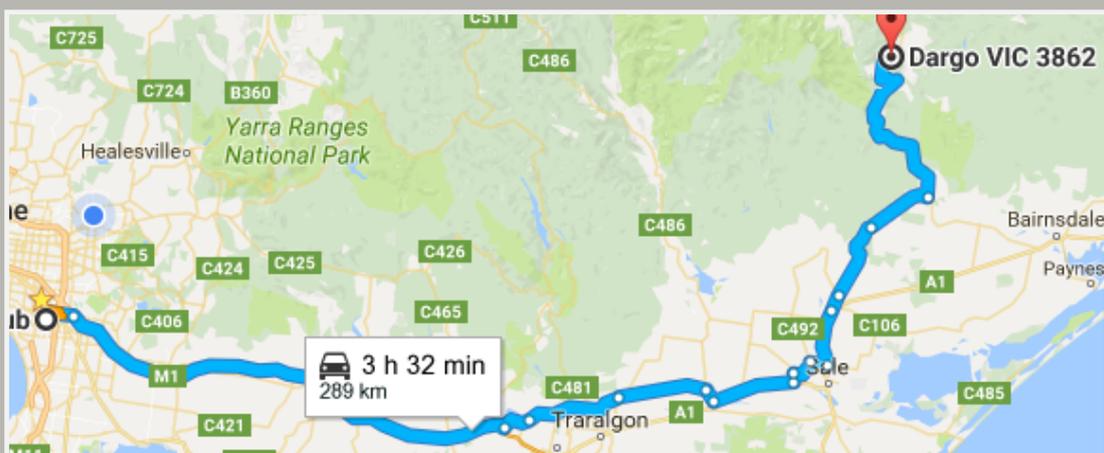
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL PETROL: Dargo
DIESEL: Dargo

DISTANCE BETWEEN SUPPLIES 200 km

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED Recovery gear, Camping gear and food for the weekend

MAPS REQUIRED Rooftop Dargo - Wonangatta Adventure Map

RADIO CHANNEL CB / UHF 12



MURRAY SUNSET AND STUFF



by Bruce Cremonesi

Another awesome trip was run n won up around Murray Sunset, the deserts and Wyperfield.

The trip was supposed to be the Border Track, but with all the bad weather they have had, apparently it was closed for 2 weeks, which takes it into the seasonal closure...

After 20+ emails it was decided to go and cruise the parks. And we were glad we did.

The drive up there was interesting with phenomenal amounts of water flowing down the gutters on the sides of the highway for klm after klm. All the side roads off the highway were blocked and underwater. All the paddocks were under, and we thought it be blocked ahead.

Bruce and Ken had an entertaining time following this brand new tip truck and dog trailer that while going down a straight section of road, was that sideways you could read the name on the side of the dog trailer.

No idea if the dude was tired, or just crap driver or. But it was fun... he went all the way to Ouyen and pulled over in the rest stop outside of town.

Anyway, Ben and Joel got to Ouyen first, after getting 1/2 way there the night before and getting a 5 star motel, with spa, champagne, Foxtel, casino etc.... well that's how I pictured it anyway.. Turns out it was a nort star dump in Wedderburn with stained walls.

So while at Ouyen Ben made some calls to find out if the Border Track was indeed closed. For all the calls he made he didn't get an answer. But it thanks for trying!

Myself and Ken made it to Ouyen round something o'clock, fuelled up and beer. Remind me next time to buy grog back home. Prices are nuts up there!

We headed down to meet Ben at Lake Crosby, when 1/2 way to Boinka (serious that's what the joint is called!); Ken remembered we were going to buy some firewood. No Chance. There is NOTHING. NO LIFE AT ALL between Ouyen and Pinnaroo!

Ken here asking his mates about firewood.



Ken at Underbool with his mates

Not even the pub at Underbool survived. It's now a lunch shop, 8am - Lunchtime! No fuel, no nuthin! So looking like a lost pair of city slickers myself and Ken slinked onto Pink Lakes Road to the Lake.

At this point, it was time for driver change; Cammo is on his L's and took the helm to the lake. I'm not a good passenger at the best of times, but he did really well - only missing one turn off which I didn't tell him to take.

Quick stop at Lake Hardy which for once had water in it and a photo, and pee pee.



Lake Hardy

From there, only few minutes later, we had hooked up with Ben, at Crosbie. The weather was magnificent as I had arranged and the pink lake was blue with water with pink lips.



Lake Crosby - The Pink Lakes

There were a few people camped at the lake, and the dunny budgies were out in force. We decided to double back down the track to track down some lumber for the night, which took an hour or more with Ben's chainsaw about as sharp as a wet sponge, would have been quicker using a donut.

From there, we headed towards Mt Crozier for a look. Then ben thought he had done a CV, so much poo was had, but it turned out to be a something else that nobody found.

The track from here was reasonably dry, and putting around in the passenger's seat was very relaxing. Arriving at Mt Crozier, we had a chat, checked the maps and made the plan.

It was decided to have a quick race to the top for a few photos, and the view was magnificent - if you liked salt bush. God its horrible looking stuff but it seems to go on forever.



The lovely Saltbush at the Crozier Lookout

We were aiming for Rocket Lake for the night, and it was puddle after puddle after splash, after in fact we could have gone fishing on the track. But it was fun splashing around.



The team at Mt Crozier

Big decision time - with time getting on, do we take the 2klm track to Mopoke Hut, or pass it. We decided to bypass it, but here's a photo of the majestic building that is.... Mopoke hut.



Mopoke hut that we didn't see
but could have

As we drove on, through 1 or 2 rivers of water, we finally came across someone coming the other way. 2 cars and a real looker in the second car!

Heading on, the scenery didn't really change much; there was saltbush, water, and not much wildlife at all. We think it was scared off by having to look at Ken's car.

Arriving at Rocket Lake, it's now changed a lot since I was there last, with a very small campground setup next to the dunnies, and another group already happily camped in the middle of the whole area.

So we drove up and down the tracks, and found out how soft it was as soon as you drove off the main track where you could disappear like a politicians promise.

Camp was setup, Ken made fire, dinner was had, much crap was discussed, and it was now around 9.30pm. At this stage there was still no sign of Steve, and no sound of him on the radio. So bedtime was decided upon. At the exact point this decision was made Steve came to life on the radio. 25 mins later, he arrived. Formalities were had, and bed time.

But the night didn't end here, few mins later there was rednecks cruising the lake shooting guns! Instantly Steve sprang into action and told Ben to turn his head torch on to warn them of the people being in the area.

That must have been terrifying for the shooters, so Ben decided his spotties may have been a better option -and it shut them up.

Day 2

Dawn broke to more sun, but a few clouds. Cars packed, we headed onwards and wetwards heading down Underbool Track, we aimed for some reason towards Mt Crozier, which was away from the big metal thing we didn't see this trip.



**Big thing that we didn't see
but could have**

Arriving at Crozier, a light snack was had, much mud was kicked off the cars, and a decision was made. Heading towards Mt Gray and planning to hit the tar around Boinka. The tracks around here are hard packed, and sandy. You can really have some fun controlled sliding around these tracks, and get some pace up heading through this area.



A hard packed drifting racing circuit

Making it to Boinka (... I love the place), we headed towards Underbool for lunch. Sadly all the once thriving towns along here are really dead - I didn't see any fuel stops. But the park at

Underbool is a good spot to stop. Underbool itself has a Pub with no beer, a servo with no fuel, a closed down grocery store, and a public BBQ that wouldn't get hot enough to warm a butterfly. But there is much fresh water to be had from the tank behind the dunnies.

Leaving here, we headed into Wyperfield where it started to rain again. Ken was out front for the first time, and headed down Underbool Patchywallow road along past O'Sullivan's Look-out where we saw packs of Emu's racing alongside us! But Ken was in awe of the Patrol, that he somehow didn't see 30 emu's running next to us... not once but 3 times that day!! It was a beautiful sight.

We continued along through the Wirrengren plains track which is really scenic towards the magic Snowdrift Picnic Area. Some of us saw more Emu's through this section.



**Not the actual emu's Ken didn't
see but they are emus**

Arriving there around 4, we decided that this was it for tonight as it was too far to head to Casuarina Campground.

The Cam and Joel slid down the dune, while Ken relived his childhood and also slid down on the toboggans that are left at the campground for an hour or so, and had a great time!



Snowdrift Sand Hill

Much firewood was collected using Ben's chainsaw that was as sharp as a cinnamon donut. Steve thought he had a spare chain in his car, but it was the wrong size which was disappointing.

But after much laughter at the chainsaw trying to burn its way through the wood, and then spotting the biggest huntsman in history we

dragged some logs to the campfire.

Fire was made, dinner was cooked, rain started. We were thankful for the small shelter that is there at the campground. So the rain stopped, and we cautiously headed back to the fire.

Chairs were grabbed, sitting down, it rained again this happened 4-9 times, and dummies were spat - with some heading off to bed at round 9.30.

Day 3

Packing up damp is never fun, so we sat round with coffee, and let the sun do some work for us. While waiting for tents to dry, Bruce tried out his new-to-him \$150 Supapeg awning. Great score but take note, better used while it's raining!

We continued along to Casuarina Campground, which was nice, and then Ken wanted to see Lake Albymangles - as after the rain it might have had water in it.



The cars Ben on his sidestep, Stripy Steve, and Cam in the GU

We managed to find water. Acres of it! And we did get some water on the cars in a big way. The tracks through this section of the area were absolutely underwater.

The tracks as far as you could see in some sections were just water and more water with chicken tracks for some people, but us patrol drivers aren't scared of water - balls and all through the center.



1km long puddle

Heading south through Eastern Lookout, we came to Wonga Campground. This is a beautiful place. Really clean and nicely setup. Showers, dunnies, oodles of wildlife, BBQ's and no dogs allowed! Doesn't get much better.

At Wonga, there is this massive - thing. It's a 'solar + water catchment' gig you can see in the picture. Very kewl. It doubles as Solar, and Water catchment - all natural campgrounds!

Sadly Wonga is where we leave the dirt... or is it. So we all aired up and cruised along towards Kens Lake Albymangles. But the tracks were that light grey clay, that as you walk on it, it just builds up under your feet, and you get taller!

It's a nightmare stuff, but when its wet, and you're driving on it, it brings out the Possum Bourne in you... But if you stopped, it was a real challenge to get moving again it was that slimy! Awesome fun until someone asked about cleaning their car when they got home, and the challenge that would be faced.



The Track to Lake Albymangles

We got there, and Ben actually looked like he was heading out onto the lake. It would have been entertaining, but alas we all stopped, turned around and spent another hour or so drifting towards the town of Rainbow.

We played lets cross the train tracks about 5 times, as the road winds its way into town as the clumps of mud fell off the cars which was quite a site to see.



Train track but not the one we crossed but we could have

We B-lined it from clay coated Lake Alby through to Dimboola where we stopped in the park for a feed and few photos on the choochoo and a burger from the burger store.



Cars and the ChooChoo

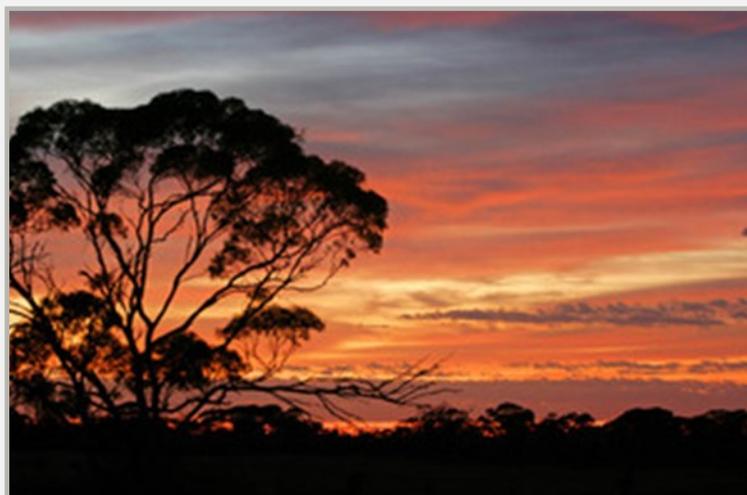
From here we all went our separate ways; along the same freeway with the hope in our eyes of much rain on the way home to clean the cars as we drove... not a drop was had.

I'd like to thank Ken for pushing that we all go anyway even with the Border Track closed...

Ben and Joel for being great on the trip, Steve for coming along and letting me watch all the crap fall off his car, Cammo for doing well driving on his first trip driving off road in extremely challenging conditions that would scare Rom

Noon, he blitzed it, and myself for running an awesome trip.

See ya next time
Birdman



The skies are red, but not where we were

COBAW STATE FOREST



27th and 28th August
by Sally Higgs

We started with 5 vehicles heading away on the weekend to Cobaw State Forrest but two days out Steve gave us a call to say it was only going to be us. We were still up for the trip so we met Steve at 8am on Western Port Highway for the 2 hour trip to Cobaw just north of Melbourne.

It was a very easy trip up to the forest where we aired down at around 10am to get ready for a day of technical tracks around the forest. We had a quick look at the start of the infamous Alkorn track and decided that we wanted to have a drive first before tackling one of the hardest tracks there.

We headed up the hill following Steve through to Pinnacle Track and this is where things started quite sedately...



And then it got very, very interesting. The tracks are extremely rutted and can be steep in places. These tracks are all about wheel placement so we were taking our time, picking our lines.

Before long I was out of the vehicle, radio in hand and had the job of spotting Steve and Tristan down the track on the safest line.

There is a lot of trust that the driver has to put in the spotter to ensure that they are tackling the right path. In one instance I asked Steve to move his wheel over by just one inch.

The difference that meant to him getting down safely was crucial. He could not see the track at all so I was directing on what was going to happen to the vehicle as he made his way down.

There was one point where I had to get Tristan into a position that would have felt terrible to him and put the vehicle at quite an angle and then I had him turn into the angle so he could safely make his way down. It was then followed by a section where there was plenty of wheels in the air as can be seen in the next two photos.



We had made our way down to nearly the bottom of this track and came across this beauty across the tracks. Let's just say that we were very thankful that Steve had his chainsaw because it would have been very, very interesting driving back up that track!



There is not a lot of track maintenance that goes on in Cobaw so you get lots of great tracks that look like river beds so considered wheel placement is mandatory.



It took about an hour to chop this up and get it so that we were able to pass through. Steve did a great job on the saw, Tristan moved the tree and I supervised to make sure it was all ok. (man I hate having a bung shoulder!)



We stopped to have lunch and then made our way up to another section of tracks that Steve had been on previously and that after rain meant a lot of winching. This time we made it through with some great driving.

There was a tricky part that had a MASSIVE rock that we had to get over. Steve got over it without any issues but had to adjust his line to get round the corner. Tristan got up the rock with a minor ding in the front and rear of the disco as it climbed the rock but with no need to change line to get round the corner.



Each of the roots in the above tree would be about knee high steps down and of course they are never evenly spaced or on the same angles.

We then went to check out some tracks across the top and eastern side of the park and they were very good tracks for beginners and easy to drive. There was one track we headed down that I swear was a motorbike track and not 4wd as can be seen in this picture. The track is tiny although we did manage to fit all the way through but I am still not convinced!



It was close to 4pm so we made the choice to head back to camp and get the fires going. We collected some wood on the way to the campsite from the plentiful supplies on the side of the road and then headed for camp.

It was a bit windy but still managed to get the fire roaring, cook dinner and whiled away the evening chatting about all sorts of things.

The next morning we had a lazy get up, cooked brekkie and then decided what we were going to do. We wanted to be back to Melbourne in the afternoon so started to make our way back through the park towards Hanging Rock.

We unfortunately came across a very ,very large tree across the road so rather than attack that we turned around and headed out the north side of the park and left via Lancefield and headed for home.

We got home in time to unpack, clean up and have a quiet evening at home.

Tracks covered in the morning:

Pinnacle
Mansfield
South Track
Ridge Road
Pole Track
Soil Pit track

Tracks covered in the afternoon:

Reillys Road
Walkers Track
Greenways
Croziers track
Riellys Track

Total distance was approximately 25Km and time taken was about 6 hours.

I highly recommend Cobaw State Forrest for technical four wheel driving, as well as beginner and easy tracks. It really has something for everyone and it is super close to Melbourne.