



FREE WHEELING

May 2023



Photo: Sally
Silo art at Nullawill en route
back to Melbourne

Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
Registration No: A0002184F

NULLAWILL, SIDE A



VFWDC Meeting Details & Venue

The club meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 8.00pm with the following exceptions:

No meeting in January
November meeting held at a selected "special" location

Blue and Gold Room
Club Noble
46-56 Moodemere Street
Noble Park 3174
Melways ref: 89 D4



This month's meeting will be held on **Wednesday 3rd May** at 8.00pm.

2022 - 2023

President	Callum Brown	president@vfwdc.com
Vice President	Andre Van Der Walt	vicepres@vfwdc.com
Secretary	Bruce Cremonesi	secretary@vfwdc.com
Treasurer	Ly Ho	treasurer@vfwdc.com

General Committee

Trip Coordinator	Neville Van Leeuwen	trips@vfwdc.com
Magazine Editor	Rory Hall	editor@vfwdc.com
Association Delegate	Matt Marino	delegate@vfwdc.com

Support Positions to Committee

Web Manager	Ben Whitworth	web@vfwdc.com
Training Officer	Phil Griffith	
Merchandise	Daisy Quinn	merchandise@vfwdc.com

Club Details

Registered Name	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club
Registration Number	A002184F
Correspondence Address	PO Box 778, Dandenong, VIC 3174
Email	secretary@vfwdc.com
Website	www.vfwdc.com

The Victorian Four Wheel Club is an affiliated club of [Four Wheel Drive Victoria](#)

Hi Everyone,

It's that time of the month again for the new edition of our very excellent magazine. I hope everyone is doing well and getting out before the winter sets in for a few months.

The Ranger is back on the road and the transmission is looking good so I am looking forward to getting out and about myself. I have a couple of plans so will keep you posted as they develop.

As you may be aware the club turns 50 next year which is a pretty major achievement. The club needs a few volunteers from amongst the members to help plan how we are going to celebrate this massive milestone. The committee has decided to form a sub-committee to make sure this is done in style. We have two volunteers from the committee, and are looking for an additional 3 members to join to make it up to 5. Please come and see me or any of the committee members at the next meeting so we can put your name down and get started.

Lastly, I would like to make a big shout out to all those members that run trips and those that help run the Club. Every month trips are run and the committee does their thing to keep this club up and running. Its all done by volunteers and in their own time. Big thanks to all.

Have a great week and see you all at the next meeting.

Cheers, Cal.



Club Calendar

May

Wednesday 3rd	Club Meeting	8.00pm at Club Noble
Wednesday 17th	Committee Meeting (Virtual)	8.00pm
Sunday 21st	Noojee Pub Trip	Organised by Daisy (See Upcoming Trips)
Fri 19th - Sun 21st	Blue Rag Trip	Organised by Dennis (awaiting final confirmation & details)

June

Wednesday 7th	Club Meeting	8.00pm at Club Noble
Sun 18th June	Shrine of Remembrance Tour	Organised by Bruce Dunlop (meeting at 11am)
Wednesday 21st	Committee Meeting (Virtual)	8.00pm

July

Wednesday 5th	Club Meeting	8.00pm at Club Noble
Sunday 16th	Christmas in July get together	Details TBC by committee in coming weeks
Wednesday 19th	Committee Meeting (Virtual)	8.00pm

Other Dates

Club Merchandise



Need a jacket, vest, shirt or hat for your next trip? Get ready and place your order today.

PRICES

Club SS Polo Shirt	\$30.00	Club Wide-Brim Hat	\$5.00
Club SS Shirt 40th Anniversary	\$10.00	Club Sandwich Peak Hat	\$5.00
Club Polar Fleece Jacket (Full Zip)	\$30.00	Club Woollen Pom Pom Beanie	\$20.00
Club Fleece Hoodie	\$30.00	Club Cable Knit Scarf	\$20.00
Club SS Reversible Vest—double embroidery	\$50.00	Club Neoprene Stubby Holder	\$10.00
Club Drivers Jacket	\$60.00	Club Cloth Badges 120mm	\$8.00
Club Trekka Jacket	\$85.00	Windscreen Sticker Small	\$6.00
Club Bucket Hat	\$5.00	Windscreen Sticker Large	\$8.00

We encourage all members to purchase a Club Polo shirt.

Email your order or any queries to merchandise@vfwdc.com along with the size you would like.

Wed 5th April
Opened at 08.10pm

Attendees:

- As per attendance sheet

Apologies:

- Sally, Tristan, Daisy, Bruce, Andre, Ben, Brett & Nikki

Minutes of previous meeting:

- Minutes from last meeting - Read
- Matters arising from previous minutes - nil
- Accepting of minutes - Stuart
- Seconding of minutes - New

Guests:

- Nil

Correspondence In:

- Matt still having problems with his delegate email address.

Correspondence Out:

- Nil

Trip Reports:

Driving Training - Dennis reported that it was very good and fun. A few arrived on Friday, rest came on Sat, started immediately on hills, up and down, good fun, night tracks, Merrington's Camp, long drops were being cleaned when they arrived, late start Sunday, did some questions, then more tracks and out by 12 via Thomson's Dam. Everyone learnt something. Certificates on the way.

Bindaree Trip by Ken - Last minute trip, forced into it by Matt, but he didnt come in the end! Ken arrived Friday with Andy & Suzy joining on Saturday, visited Bindaree Falls, Monument Track and Craig's Hut, took wrong turn out of the hut, two times up Monument Track, across to Mt Stirling, back to camp where it was busier. Sunday left tent flap open, everything got wet, Lovicks Hut, Bluff Hut, helped someone out, he had no idea or kit. Excellent trip!

Treasurer's Report:

- Monthly Treasurer's Report - as per the magazine
- Accepted: Steve
- Second: Joe
- Membership renewals: Nil
- New members: Nil

Association Report:

- Nil

Upcoming Trips:

- Bruce C in a few weeks time, Mt Terrible, Bruce not here but 6 cars already signed up
- Dennis - Blue Rag, 3rd weekend of May (TBC), Fri-Sun, cold camping likely!
- 18th June - Bruce D - Shrine of Remembrance tour - lots signed up but no restrictions on numbers
- Bruce D suggested 3 x New Years eve in a row @ Cameron's Corner, TBC
- Trip Classifications now in the magazine to help guide leaders, will keep it there for now.

General Business:

- Mark - question about website, heard there were some changes coming, any updates? - Cal responded, nothing yet, happening but slowly due to doing it in spare time.
- Nev announced new T Shirt pre-order on behalf of Daisy. Showed picture of design and asked to fill out form - good pitch by Nev!
- Magazine nominations:
- Rig Rundown - Anne
- Meet the Member - Sean nominated by Matt
- Raffle run with 5 prizes. The Spiderman cricket stumps were the highlight and were snapped up first!

Next meeting Wed 3rd May
Meeting closed at 9.15pm

Bringing Four Wheel Drivers Together



Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
www.vfwdc.com

Treasurer's Report March 2023

<u>Cheque A/C`</u> Opening Balance as at 01/03/2023	\$8,251.30	
Add: Membership Fees	\$10.00	
Raffle	\$75.00	
Merchandise	\$89.00	
Less: Catering Costs	-\$37.30	
FWDV Association Fees	-\$26.00	
Closing Balance as at 31/03/2023		\$8,362.00
<u>Term Deposit</u> Opening Balance as at 01/03/2023	\$6,888.87	
Closing Balance as at 31/03/2023		\$6,888.87
<u>Petty Cash</u> Opening Balance as at 01/03/2023	\$38.30	
Closing Balance as at 31/03/2023		\$38.30
Consolidated Closing Cash Position		<u>\$15,289.17</u>

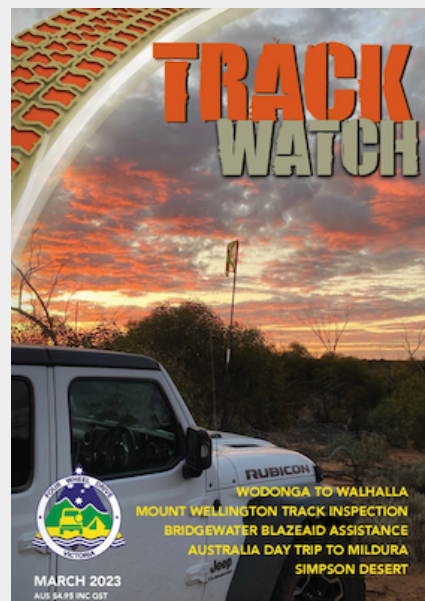
This month's meeting

Our next meeting is Wednesday 3rd May at Club Noble. Don't forget those tasty treats and general interesting chit chat and story telling which makes the meeting unmissable!!

Trackwatch

[Trackwatch](#) is a quarterly publication produced by Four Wheel Drive Victoria. The content includes 4WD Victoria news, Parks Victoria news, club activities, technical tips, products and events. In excess of 6,000 copies are distributed to members of affiliated four wheel drive clubs. Copies are also distributed to Victorian Parliamentary members, staff at Parks Victoria, DELWP, commercial outlets and interested members of the public, FWDV training courses and four wheel drivers at public events (eg. National 4X4 Show Melbourne, Victorian 4WD Show and other regional outdoor and specialty shows). It is also available for download as a pdf and for viewing as a flip book on their website and the latest edition is here:

<https://www.4wdvictoria.org.au/images/trackwatch/202303/flipbook/?page=1>



Trip Leaders

The club is keen to encourage more members to lead trips, whilst also recognising that some members are still new and/or worried about the requirements to be a leader. The committee is happy to help and hand hold as required any budding leaders and if there was sufficient interest, may consider running a Trip Leader training event. If you are interested to be a Leader please make contact with Neville as Trips Coordinator or any committee member. It's not as hard or difficult as you may think!

Attracting New Members

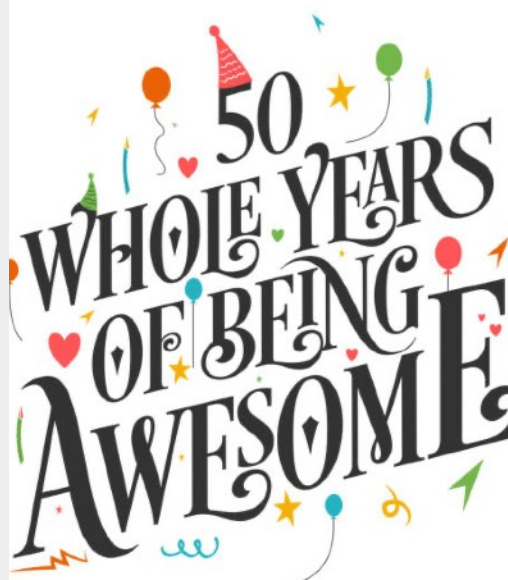
As an active and thriving club, we need to keep attracting new members to join us. The committee is currently considering several ideas to try to attract new members and will be discussing these at a future meeting. If you have ideas that you think might be worth considering then please do make contact with a committee member and share.

Club's 50th Birthday

Next year is the club's 50th birthday. The Committee have agreed to form a working group to organise an amazing event(s) and are looking for volunteers to join the team. So anyone who has any amazing ideas or would like to be involved, please get in contact with any committee members. We are looking to make it an incredible event so all ideas, no matter how crazy are welcomed.

All and any contributions welcome

Please don't be shy! Help the Editor keep the magazine fun and interesting, and relevant to you, by sharing some words and/or pictures. Literally anything you have is welcome! And big big shout out to the regular contributors - you know who you are and it is very much appreciated - thank you!



Please visit our website at VFWDC.com to view all our current membership forms and club policies.

For all new and renewal of memberships, please complete [the online form here](#)

If you are looking for a Temporary Membership, please complete the online form, [which can be found here](#).

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us via the Club Secretary on secretary@vfwdc.com

Payments:

Payment can be made via Bank Transfer. The details are as follows:

Account Name:	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
BSB:	633108
Account No:	111761979

Please ensure your transfer includes your name as provided on the membership application and renewal form in the reference.

Once you have made your payment/transfer, please send your completed membership application and renewal form to treasurer@vfwdc.com or you can present it to the Treasurer at any general meeting.

Thank you for choosing the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

If you are interested in joining [Club Noble](#) where we hold our monthly meetings, their application form can be found [here](#).

Meet the Members

Sean is the latest volunteer (victim) of our Meet the Member section. He's been near to the "Arse end of Nowhere", wears pyjamas to drink in, and is partial to a Goon Bag every now and then. Read on to find out more.....



Full name and any nicknames?

Sean Graydon

When did you join the club?

2021

What's your vehicle?

2014 Toyota FJ Cruiser, 4 litre, V6, 5 speed auto.

Favourite camp food?

2 minute noodles (bacon flavour)

Top tip to any beginners?

Buy a Toyota (LOL!!)

Best piece of camping gear you are never without?

Leatherman Knife and ZIP Jet Boil Stove

Footie, football or rugby?

Footie - Richmond and Ice Hockey - Vancouver Canucks.
(Ed: Had no idea what a Canuck was, so googled it - "Canuck" is a nickname for a Canadian — sometimes bearing a negative implication, more often wielded with pride. And the animal represented below is an Orca, not related to the word Canuck)



What is your favourite tipple?

Maker's Mark & a Goon Bag (Ed: Again i had no idea what a Goon Bag is, so thanks google - "noun. Australian informal. the plastic bladder inside a box of (usually cheap) wine" And here's more interesting trivia about Goon Bags .<https://www.atlasobscura.com/foods/goon-sack-australia>

Dream track or trip at the top of your bucket list?

4x4 in the North West Territories of Canada

Dumbest thing you ever did in a car?

Rolled a Landrover Defender

Craziest haircut you ever had?

No 1 all over. (Ed: So there's Matt from last month trying desperately to grow hair but stuck with a No 1, and then Sean with a healthy head of hair, shaving it all off!!)

Best mod you ever did to a car?

Rock sliders and 3mm stainless steel bash plates

What snacks are we most likely to find in your cab?

Mars, Snickers and Salt & Vinegar (Chips) Crisps



Any wildlife encounters on any of your trips?

Kiwi on the South Island of New Zealand

First car you ever owned?

ZB Fairlane



Best book you have ever read?

The Book of Five Rings by Miyamoto Musashi

Best overseas trip/location?

Vancouver, Canada

Favourite subject at school?

Politics

Worst job you ever had?

Baker

Roughest night's sleep?

Flooded out in the Cathedral Ranges after 100mm+ of rain

Most remote place you have ever been to?

Wyndham, Northern Territory - its not the butthole of the world but you can smell it from there!!



What is your go to joke?

"Well remember we volunteered for this"

You're driving from Melbourne to Perth, anyone in the world, dead or alive, can be your co-driver, who would it be?

Robert McNamara,
Former US Secretary of Defence

Where in the world would you most like to visit?

Texas

What kept you sane during lockdowns?

Netflix binges and 7 O'clock Covid pyjama drinks





\$79

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30 JUNE 2023







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Track Classifications

Four Wheel Drive Victoria have a track grading classification scale which has been developed to assist in advising Trip Leaders and participants on 4WD trips of the type of tracks that they can expect to encounter. On most trips participants can expect that a variety of tracks will be traversed each with an appropriate rating. Trip Leaders should advise participants of the range of track ratings expected to be encountered on the planned route. The following classifications will assist in determining an overall Trip Rating:

Considerations	Easy	Medium	Difficult	Very Difficult
Overall Description	All Wheel Drive and High Range 4WD. Novice Drivers	Mainly High range 4WD but Low range required. Some 4WD experience recommended.	Significant Low range 4WD with standard 4WD ground clearance. Should have 4WD driver training.	Low range 4WD with High ground clearance. Experienced Drivers
Advisory Sign				
Expected terrain and track conditions	Mostly unsealed roads with no obstacles and minor gradients.	Tracks with some steep and/or rocky/slippy/sandy sections. May have shallow water crossings.	Tracks with frequent steep and/or rocky/slippy/sandy sections. Possible water crossings.	Tracks with frequent very steep and/or rocky/slippy/sandy sections. May have difficult river crossings.
Vehicle suitability	All wheel Drive and High Range 4WD. Can be low clearance with single range and road tyres.	Suitable for medium clearance vehicles with dual range and all terrain or road tyres.	Suitable for medium to high clearance vehicles with dual range and all terrain tyres.	Suitable for high clearance vehicles with dual range and tyres suitable for the terrain. (Mud Terrain tyres).
Recovery equipment			Recovery equipment required.	Winch / Recovery equipment required.
Driver Training / Experience	Suitable for novice drivers.	Recommended that drivers have experience or 4WD training. Recommended to be done in groups of vehicles.	Recommended for drivers with reasonable experience or 4WD training. To be done in groups of vehicles.	Drivers with extensive experience and advanced training should only attempt as there are several technical challenges. Recommended to be done in groups of four or more vehicles.
Weather	May be difficult in wet conditions.	Will be more difficult in wet conditions.	Will be more difficult in wet conditions.	Will be more difficult in wet conditions.

Upcoming Trips

Destination	Noojee Pub
Leader & Contact Details	Daisy Mobile: 0447 557100
Date	Sunday 21st May
Meeting Details	12pm
Grade	Dry: Wet:
Trip Activity Details	Meeting at the Noojee Pub for lunch and live music
Vehicle Limits	Minimum 3, Maximum 20
Approx km's meeting place to destination	
Last available fuel	
Distance between supplies	
Equipment required	
Maps required	
Radio Channel CB/UHF	UHF 12 to start with and then move if its busy

Upcoming Trips

Destination	Shrine of Remembrance
Leader & Contact Details	Bruce Dunlop (Mobile: 0448 318467)
Date	Sun 18th June
Meeting Details	Meet at 11am at Birdwood Avenue entrance.
Grade	N/A
Trip Activity Details	<p>This is a guided tour of the Shrine of Remembrance by Bruce who was custodian there for many years. It coincides with a wreath laying at 1130 for a Royal Australian Navy group of ships.</p> <p>Possibly book a lunch at a nearby pub or RSL if enough are confirmed 2 weeks prior.</p> <p>Allow approx 1-2 hrs for the tour.</p>
Vehicle Limits	Minimum 2, Maximum Unlimited (within reason)
Approx km's meeting place to destination	N/A
Last available fuel	N/A
Distance between supplies	N/A
Equipment required	N/A
Maps required	N/A
Radio Channel CB/UHF	N/A

Are you one of those people who always forgets birthdays and leaves Christmas shopping until the last minute?? Never know what to buy people who seemingly have everything they ever wanted?? If this is you, then read on.....

Daisy has been putting a lot of effort into revamping our club merchandise and this includes moving on some of the old stock. So here's your chance to kit out your whole family, friends, work colleagues, neighbours and random people you meet in the street with club merch! And if you're clever, you'll tick off Christmas and birthdays at the same time, and at a bargain price. I am pretty sure if you make Daisy a good offer, she will be up for some haggling and further discounts too.

The following are discounted items, with sizes available:

- **40th Anniversary Shirt** (L x 2) - Only \$10
- **T Shirt** (S x 1, 5XL x 1) - Down from \$30 to an amazing \$10.
(Buy all 3 for family members to use as night shirts! - ask Daisy for \$17 for both)
- **Reversible Vests** (quite a few sizes left) - Was \$50, now an incredible \$30.
(Winter is coming, help friends keep their heating bills down, buy them a reversible vest to wear around the house - get 3 and ask Daisy for more discount)
- **Hoodie** (S x 4, XL x 1) - Was \$30, now \$20.
Teenage child's christmas present sorted in a second!
- **Zip up Jumper** (S x 1, XL x 1, 2XL x 1) - Down from \$30 to \$20.
Who doesn't love an over-sized zip up jumper on Christmas morning???
- **Driver's Jacket** (S x 1, M x 4, XL x 4) - Originally \$60, down to \$40.
Apparently these make you a better driver and also more handsome/beautiful*
(* delete where appropriate)
- **Stubbie Holder** (loads of these) - 20% discount, down from \$10, to \$8
Also doubles as a baby bottle warmer, so don't buy that new nephew some kind of baby toy they will never use, get them a unique baby bottle warmer instead.

New T Shirts:

You should be aware by now that Daisy has designed a new T shirt for us all which will become the T shirt we pass to new members. Its a cool design with our logo on the front chest (small) and on the back the picture here. T shirts will be a grey colour and will be the envy of the fashion world!

We need to get the numbers up a bit to bring down the unit price from \$42 to \$30. So if you haven't ordered one for yourself or extended family members, then please contact Daisy asap. Sizes are from S through to 5XL and are also in a woman/man version. If you are a new member who has never received a T shirt when you joined the club, then again please contact Daisy to let her know.



Trip Report

Driver Training 24-26th March by Andrea



The 4wd training trip was a thrilling experience that lasted for two nights. The trip involved exploring different tracks in the area, setting up a beautiful fire each night, and camping at Meringtons Campground. The group consisted of eight people, each driving a different 4wd vehicle, and four fearless leaders guiding the team. This report will provide a detailed account of the tracks explored, the vehicles used, and the experiences of the group during the 4wd training trip.





Track Exploration: On the first day, the team explored the S Track, Spur, and Flats Track in the area. These tracks were challenging but offered beautiful views of the surrounding landscape. On the second day, the tracks were progressively harder to build on the confidence gained from the previous day. The group explored the S Track, Spur, Present Track, and finally Beardmores. Over the weekend we did several river crossings including: Aberfeldy and Thompson's rivers.



Vehicles: The group consisted of eight people, each driving a different 4wd vehicle. Ken drove the Mitsubishi MR Triton, Dennis drove the Jeep Wrangler, Jacqui drove 'Ripley' the Toyota 80 series, Suzy and Andy drove the Mitsubishi Challenger, Steven drove the Mazda BT50, and Andrea drove 'her' near new Ford Ranger. The fearless leaders, John, Ashley, Bruce, and Phill, drove the GQ, Ford Ranger, Patrol, and Ford Everest, respectively. Each vehicle was well equipped for the challenging tracks and performed exceptionally well.



Camping: The team camped at Meringtons Campground for two nights. The campground offered a serene environment, with beautiful scenery and wildlife. The team enjoyed a beautiful fire each night, which provided warmth and light in the chilly evenings.



Experiences: The 4wd training trip provided a thrilling experience for the group. The challenging tracks tested the team's driving skills, and everyone had an opportunity to learn and improve their 4wd driving skills. The camping experience was equally enjoyable, providing a chance for the team to relax and bond. Andrea getting stuck first provided a funny and memorable moment for the group.





Conclusion: In conclusion, the 4wd training trip was an enjoyable and memorable experience for the group. The tracks explored were challenging but provided beautiful views of the surrounding landscape. The vehicles used were well equipped for the challenging terrain, and the camping experience provided a chance for the team to relax and bond. The trip was a great success, and everyone had an opportunity to improve their 4wd driving skills.

Big shout out to the instructors for sharing their experience and knowledge and making it such an enjoyable and worthwhile weekend.



Labour Day Weekend - Big Desert Wanderings

Attendees:

Sally & Tristan - Land Rover Discovery 3 & camper trailer

Daisy - Land Cruiser & camper trailer

Michael - Ford Ranger

Lynton - Jeep Wrangler TJ

Dennis - Jeep Wrangler Rubicon

Steve C - Mitsubishi Pajero

Jacqui - Land Cruiser 80 series

Stu & Maree - Land Cruiser 79 series

Friday - Melbourne to Blue Gum Camp in the Big Desert

We had a big day of driving to get from home into camp so an early start for everyone meeting at BP Calder Park outbound for an 8:30am departure. Once we had filled up the vehicles and ourselves we got on the road. Jacqui was leaving a bit later and was going to catch up with us further up the road. I had found some silo art that I had not seen before so as is usual for us we travelled roads that we had not before and headed to St Arnaud to look at the Silo Art that was there and it was a fabulous black and white composition. They also had a lot of art around the town but we did not account for that in the trip planning so will have to head back there another time to check it out.





Next stop was the famous Birchip Bakery for one of the best vanilla slices ever. Once we got into town we took a bit to find the bakery but soon enough we were filled up with vanilla slice and yummy food sitting in the middle of the street watching the world go by and meeting the Birchip Mallee Bull



Jacqui was keeping us updated on her travel as well but she was still not within easy distance so we kept traveling north and called into the silo art at Lascelles as some of our traveling party had not seen it before.





We then followed this site up with a view of the silo at Patchewollock and the big Mallee Fowl sculptures. Driving from Patchewollock through to Underbool we saw petrol pumps in Walpeup and thought it was good to know they are there. I had already called ahead to a garage in Underbool to check they would be open so we could top up with fuel before we headed into the desert.

Once we were filled up with fuel we were into our final stages of getting into the beautiful blue gum campsite. We just had 5km of sand dunes to traverse but as is typical with any track you hit after 4pm the fun was just about to begin. We had our camper trailer on and the sand was dry and deep so we had to have a couple of goes to get up and with the use of our trusty max tracks we got up. Everyone had to take a bit of a run up to get up to the top and Daisy had a good go with her camper trailer but ended up needing some help to get up so Tristan drove her car up a bit like he stole it but got it up to the top.

We got into camp and chose our spot which we got the pick of as there was no one there yet. We then headed out to our meeting point with Jacqui that we had organised earlier. We met Jacqui and got her aired down to head down the firebreak track into camp. I spoke to Stu and Maree as they had ended up in Rainbow for the weekend so we arranged to meet them the following morning for our trip through the desert to Rainbow where we were planning to meet Callum and have lunch. We collected wood and had a great night around the fire.



Saturday - Milmed Rock track to meet Callum in Rainbow for lunch and then back through Chinamens Well Track to camp - Plan, reality something quite different!

We woke to a beautiful day and got on the road to start our trip down to Rainbow around 9am. No sooner had we left camp that I got a message from Callum saying that they had left Melbourne as planned at 7am, not much longer after that I got a second message to say he won't be making it. We found out later that his transmission had blown which was a real shame that he could not come. I then chatted to Stu and Maree to organise our meeting point at the start of Milmed Rock Track. We drove down through Firebreak track through the Murray-Nhill Road and went to the day visitor area at Big Billy Bore to see the bore from the early 1900's. We then went across to the camping area at Big Billy Bore and it was decided that our camp site was the better pick even without facilities.



We then proceeded down Murry-Nhill Road to the start of Milmed Rock Track to meet Stu and Maree. We waited for them to come and I realised that I had not planned it that well as I was not 100% sure on arrival. We waited awhile and then decided to proceed down the track. I said as we left that we will get a call from them and in less than 10mins the first radio call came through.

We carried on as it was in and out of coverage with the ups and downs of the dunes in the desert. They eventually got within good range and caught us up and took over Tail End Charlie responsibilities. Our first stop on Milmed Rock Track was the famous Milmed Rock, the Uluru of Big Desert. We pulled up to a rock that took us ages to climb.

There was a guest book that people had left all sorts of things in if they were needed.

Hills Track is very narrow and there was a fair bit of shuffling to getting past the oncoming traffic. Arrived at the top of Mt Stirling, little bit of a breeze and cool enough to need a jacket now. We walked to the two Peaks for some awesome views & the great photo opportunity.

We proceeded on down the track still with a plan of getting to Rainbow for a slightly late lunch but the track is deceptive with some fun dunes to cross so it was slow going. We came across a road detour sign and road closed sign that was pushed to the side. We thought it was due to a huge bog that had dried out so we carried on our way. We were still on target for lunch... that is until we came across a road closed sign due to an event.. 2 km from the end of the track. I was like WTF, I checked everything and now we have this. We soon worked out why the track was closed, it was due to the Rainbow Enduro buggy racing so everyone walked down to the track to



have a look at all the buggy's zipping past while I was on the phone to Parks Vic to work out a route out. We had a number of vehicles that were getting light on fuel and a trip back out the 68km very sandy track was not ideal. Parks had no idea that the road was closed.

We had lunch while trying to work out a plan. Tristan had spotted another track that was an option for us to get out. Maree found a sign that had Forest Fire Management number on it so I called him and asked how we get out of the park. He was like how did we get to where we were... and I was like we just went down Milmed Rock track for 68km and no sign at the start of the track and no decent detour signs in place. He confirmed the route Tristan had spotted and we went out through a management vehicle track.

I had found another silo art which we were close to so off to Lake Albacutya to see this art that was only finished last year.



We finally got into Rainbow at close to 4pm so a little late for lunch!!

We filled up with fuel and then left Stu and Maree in Rainbow as that is where they were camping... along with lots of people from the Enduro racing. We headed through the Nhill to do another fuel top up and to grab some food for a snack. Then it was back up Murrayville-Nhill Road with some sunset four wheel driving and a little night drive back to camp. A nice short day of driving 🚗



Sunday - Explore the top end of Big Desert and conquer Big Dune

We awoke to another great day with the plan of having a good look around all the tracks at the top end of Big Desert. We headed off towards Border track for the start of the morning and then came across another group of about 6 vehicles. They let us past and we carried on our way, we Saw a couple of other campsites, met some horses on our travels that were being ridden into the area to meet the rest of the family for a picnic.

We then came up to our first challenge of the day. Thompsons Lookout. A nice twisty sand climb that took Tristan and I a few goes to get up. I jumped out and took a spot on the hill and called everyone through one at a time after Tristan had a final go to get up and there was sand flying everywhere! As it was Jacqui's first time doing this kind of driving I jumped in with her to coach her up the hill and the theme of the day was "GO GO GO GO" "Dont Slow Down" "Turn Turn Turn" With a couple of tries we were soon up the top and what a beautiful view!



Michael had a battery issue while we were getting everyone up the hill but Daisy sorted it out with her jump start kit. We then carried along the ridge line up to another great lookout that had a decent climb to get up. We got everyone up with no issues.

Carrying along the track we found Cactus bore, a bore for watering the stock that used to pass through the area.



We started to make our way toward the afternoon fun “Big Dune” through some amazing plains.

We stopped for lunch at the start of Big Dune track with lots of discussion on what Big Dune was going to deliver us. We had all watched the videos but still not sure on what it was like. We finished lunch and headed down the track. We said each vehicle had 3 goes up the dune as we were likely to get others waiting to try it as well





As we went round a corner the Dune suddenly was towering above us at the end of the track. Michael thought we were insane in even looking to try it. We just waited till we got closer to find out more! We found a couple of cars at the bottom of the track. One had got up but the other did not.

The right hand track was the chosen one and we went to the left at the top.

Tristan had a go from the bottom of the track but it soon became apparent we were going to need a longer run up so we backed further up the track to get a good run into the dune. It was about 300m long into a hard left hand turn then 100m into an easy right turn up the dune. Tristan got to the top the second time with some help of Max tracks to get over the last few metres.

Next up was Lynton and his Dune Buggy Jeep that sounded more like V8 than straight 6 and he just flew over the sand. Dennis and his red jeep sprayed a lot of sand and weaved some great trails to get up. Steve in the mighty Pajero got up as well. Air was being dropped out of tyres down to lows of 10-12psi. Michael had been tossing up with not going but then decided to have a go and got up without any issues.



Jacqui and Daisy were a bit unsure but Jacqui put into practice what she learned from the morning session and after a couple of run ups found the speed and tyre pressure combination to get up to the top. So now it was just Daisy and I at the bottom and she decided that she would give it a go and I was like, well I am not walking up the dune so I am going to catch a lift.

The first go we only got about 1/3rd the way up the hill so we reversed back up to have another crack at it. With a bit of yelling from me "GO GO GO" "Turn Turn" Don't Slow down we got further up but still did not make it. So back we went again and this time we dropped more air out of the tyres and I said to Daisy third time is a charm! In between a couple of other vehicles had a go while we were dropping air but they did not make it the first go. So on the next try Well did we move, she was foot flat and with more rubber on the sand we literally took off and flew around the first corner, we hit a bump and got some air time before we turned for the dune and SUCCESS we made it to the top. We all CONQUERED BIG DUNE!!



Now we were all up the top we carried on up another good climb and then a steep descent along a great track back around to the base of the Dune.

It was getting late again so we headed straight back to camp for a relaxing evening talking about conquering Big Dune

Monday - Blue Gum camp to home

We had a big trip back to Melbourne so we were up and ready to head off by 9am after a yummy cooked brekkie. Lynton was running pretty low on fuel and I was like we have fuel in Ouyen so should be ok. Well his fuel light came on and we had about 75km to run. It was going to be touch and go. We thought we would have a fuel stop in Waleup as we had seen fuel bowzers on our way through. We called in to find that they were closed. Lynton had not stopped driving and we waved him through as we pulled out. Next fuel Ouyen, it was a tense time getting back to Ouyen but we made it! When heading out to remote areas it always pays to know fuel stops and utilisation and plan for fuel stations to not be open. I even phone them in remote towns to check opening hours before heading away.

Once we fueled up Michael headed off as we were going to be stopping at some silos and he needed to get back to Melbourne.



Great art as usual. We then headed to Wycheproof Bakery for lunch and debrief before making our way back to reality into Melbourne.

A great trip away with people learning new skills, and having fun in the Desert. One thing is for sure there is way more to explore out there and we will definitely be running more trips out there to explore it all!



Photo: Sally
Silo art at Sea Lake en route
back to Melbourne

