



# FREE WHEELING

March 2025



Official Newsletter of the  
Victorian Four Wheel  
Drive Club Inc

Registration No  
A0002184F

Photo taken by Sally Higgs

## Meeting Details



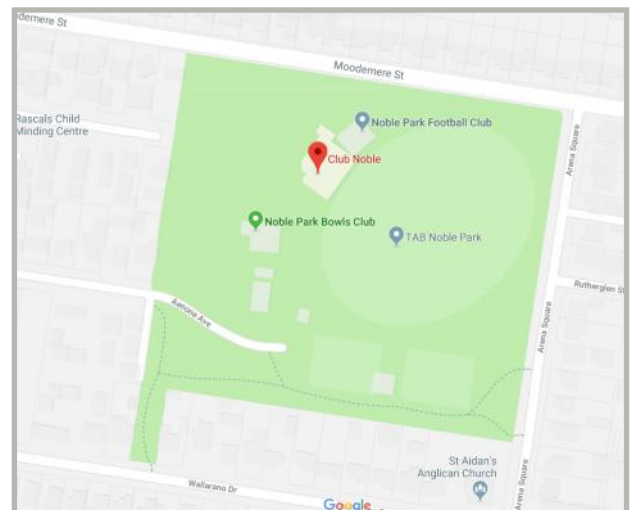
### VFWDC General Meeting Details & Venue

The club meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30PM with the following exceptions:

No meeting at Club Noble in January.

#### Club Noble Address

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



This month's meeting will be held on Wednesday 5th March at 7.30pm.

# Club Committee

## 2024-2025

President	Neville Van Leeuwen	<a href="mailto:president@vfwdc.com">president@vfwdc.com</a>
Vice President	Ken Kilby	<a href="mailto:vicepres@vfwdc.com">vicepres@vfwdc.com</a>
Secretary	Steve Miller	<a href="mailto:secretary@vfwdc.com">secretary@vfwdc.com</a>
Treasurer	Ly Ho	<a href="mailto:treasurer@vfwdc.com">treasurer@vfwdc.com</a>

## General Committee

Trip Coordinator	Andy McCarthy	<a href="mailto:trips@vfwdc.com">trips@vfwdc.com</a>
Magazine Editor	Sushant Aggarwal	<a href="mailto:editor@vfwdc.com">editor@vfwdc.com</a>
Association Delegate	Dennis Alphonsus	<a href="mailto:delegate@vfwdc.com">delegate@vfwdc.com</a>

## Support Positions to Committee

Web Manager	Ben Whitworth	<a href="mailto:web@vfwdc.com">web@vfwdc.com</a>
Training officer	Phillip Griffith	
Merchandise	Suzy Whitford	<a href="mailto:merchandise@vfwdc.com">merchandise@vfwdc.com</a>

## Club Details

Registered Name	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club
Registration Number	A002184F
Correspondence Address	PO Box 778 Dandenong VIC 3174
Email	<a href="mailto:secretary@vfwdc.com">secretary@vfwdc.com</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.vfwdc.com">www.vfwdc.com</a>

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

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi All

This report will be on the small side as we have been quiet on the 4wd front.

I have been very busy moving house and getting settled in. I am really looking forward to getting away on the long weekend to unwind a bit.

Over the weekend just gone Sally ran the 2<sup>nd</sup> Trip Leader Training so looking forward to hearing about that.

Later this month we also have our Driver training which is another valuable skill to obtain.

At our next meeting (05/03) Sally is running a map reading training course through the meeting. Please bring along a paper map with topographical lines.

I have also seen regular courses from FWDV for First Aid as well as Chainsaw courses if you want to sign up to these please follow up on the emails you receive or speak to a committee member.

It is great the club promotes and runs these valuable training courses. A big thanks to those running these courses. These are great skills that can help us enjoy and experience the great outdoors further as well as safely.

In May we have Trevor from Autophix coming along with his range of ODB scanners. He will speak about his range of products and the value of having one on board in today's modern cars.

The Committee has been looking into the program that FWDV are utilizing and offering to affiliated clubs, "Revolutionise Sport". We have forwarded some information about this to members. "Revolutionise Sport" is a complete platform for us to store our member database with potentially many other features.

As a relatively small club we are currently doing a lot of this manually.

Our main area that we recognise needs improvement is centralisation and storage of our information.

We will be discussing this in General Business at the next meeting.

Well that didn't end up that small a report...

**Neville Van Leeuwen**

VFWDC President

president@vfwdc.com

M: 0472 680 482

# Club Calendar

## March

Wednesday 5th	General Meeting – Map Reading with Sally	
Friday 7th	Big Desert Wanderings Part 3	Sally
Monday 10th	Labour Day	
Wednesday 12th	Proficiency Training—Theory	Phil
Saturday 15th	Proficiency Training—Practical	Phil
Wednesday 19th	Committee Meeting	

## April

Wednesday 2nd	General Meeting	7:30pm Club Noble
Friday 4th	Bruthen loop	Bruce Dunlop
Wednesday 16th	Committee Meeting	
Thursday 17th	Eyre Peninsula	Sally
Friday 18th	Good Friday	
Monday 21st	Easter Monday	
Friday 25th	Anzac Day	

## May

Wednesday 7th	General Meeting – Guest Speaker: Trevor (Autophix – ODB Scanners)	7:30pm Club Noble
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## VFWDC General Meeting Minutes

Date: 5 Feb 2025  
 Time: 7:30pm – 8:36pm  
 Location: Club Noble  
 Next Meeting: 7:30pm Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Topic	Discussion and Outcomes	Speaker
Open Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome to the 1<sup>st</sup> Club meeting of 2025</li> <li>• Apologies: Andre, Sally and Tristan, Sushant, Jason, David B, Brett and Nicky, Michael Schople</li> <li>• Absent: None noted</li> </ul>	Neville
Minutes from previous months club meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters arising from previous minutes for meeting on the 04/12/2024: Nil</li> <li>• Minutes from previous meeting accepted:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Accepted: Anne</li> <li>– Seconded: Stuart</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Neville
General Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nil</li> </ul>	Neville
Guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vernon, Lexus 470</li> <li>• Con, Ford Ranger</li> <li>• Con, 200 Series Landcruiser</li> </ul>	Neville
Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nil</li> </ul>	Neville
Tonight's Guest Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nil</li> </ul>	
Treasurer's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per written report from Ly Ho – Written report will be in next issue of the club's magazine.</li> <li>• November 2024 Report                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Closing cash position                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Nov 2024: \$4,358.98</li> <li>□ Closing consolidated position \$10,785.42</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Motion to accept December 2024 Treasurer's Report:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Accepted: Daisy, Andy</li> <li>□ Seconded: Neville, Stuart</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• December 2024 Report                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Closing cash position                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Dec 2024: \$4263.98</li> <li>□ Closing consolidated position: \$10,690.42</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Motion to accept December 2024 Treasurer's Report:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Accepted: Andy</li> <li>□ Seconded: Stuart</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Ly

Topic	Discussion and Outcomes	Speaker
Association News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on any Association news –</li> <li>FWDV are seeking feedback on their strategic plan</li> <li>FWDV are now partnership with Tred</li> </ul>	Dennis
Upcoming Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01/03/2025 Trip Leader Training - Looking for Expression of Interest</li> </ul>	Sally and Tristan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15/03/2025 Driver Training Course – Course is now fully subscribed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some club members expressed interest in doing refresher course for those who have previously done training.</li> <li>Theory night on the Wednesday 12/03/2025.</li> <li>Camping overnight, basic recovery stuff.</li> <li>Phil is going up Saturday morning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Phil
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>07-10/03/2025 Labour Weekend – Desert Wanderings Trip – Trip Leaders are Sally and Tristan</li> </ul>	Sally
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eyre Peninsular trip – Fully subscribed</li> </ul>	Sally
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Googs track returning Oonadata Trip</li> </ul>	Bruce
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cape York leaving King’s birthday, returning August 2025</li> </ul>	Bruce
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reminder to have an up-to-date Personal Information Form in our vehicle</li> <li>Reminder to submit trip forms. If a trip form is not submitted, the trip is NOT a sanctioned trip (ie no insurance etc)</li> </ul>	Carried Forward
Intermission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intermission</li> </ul>	7:45pm – 8:10pm
Trip Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noojee trip. Trip Report by Sushant, to be in March magazine</li> </ul>	Neville
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22-29/12/2024 - Orphans Christmas Trip – Trip Leader: Sally &amp; Tristan – Talbotsville, Blue Rag, 28/12-Billy Goats, Azieka Spur, Report in Feb Magazine</li> </ul>	Andy (Sally)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fishing trip at Woodside Beach, near Sea Spray– Trip Leader: Steven Card - Daisy nearly bitten by tiger snake. Sally and Tristan got bogged</li> </ul>	Daisy (Steve Card)
General Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Club needs a magazine editor. Apparently Sushant might take on the position.</li> <li>Club needs content for magazine ... tales, tips, rig run down.</li> <li>Next month Sally is going to run a map reading skills workshop during club meeting. Everyone to bring a map, preferably with contour lines.</li> <li>Committee to put together a schedule of club activities for the year.</li> <li>Suggestion for recovery training to be conducted.</li> <li>Recommend everyone to do 1<sup>st</sup> aid course at FWDV</li> <li>Stargazing on hold pending further updates.</li> <li>Enquires about chainsaw course – Advised it is usually run by FWDV for approx. \$495</li> </ol>	General Business

Topic	Discussion and Outcomes	Speaker
Merchandise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary polo shirts and jackets have arrived and available for those who have not yet collected their shirt and or jacket.</li> <li>• Old merchandise to be cleared. Everyone is welcome to take advantage of discounted prices.</li> </ul> <p>There are 2025 VFWDC calendars still available.</p>	Suzy
Raffle	<p>Prizes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rear recovery hitch</li> <li>• Moisturiser Set (Passed in and given away)</li> <li>• Caps</li> </ul>	
Next General Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesday 05/03/2025, 7:30pm at Club Noble (Upper floor meeting room)</li> </ul>	
Meeting Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:36pm</li> </ul>	Neville
Minutes taken by:		Steven Miller



Bringing Four Wheel Drivers Together



Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc  
www.vfwdc.com



## Treasurer's Report January 2025

<u>Cheque A/C</u> Opening Balance as at 01/01/2025	\$4,263.98	
Add: Merchandise Sales	\$25.00	
Raffle	\$166.00	
Closing Balance as at 31/01/2025		\$4,454.98
<u>Term Deposit</u> Opening Balance as at 01/01/2025	\$6,388.14	
Closing Balance as at 31/01/2025		\$6,388.14
<u>Petty Cash</u> Opening Balance as at 01/01/2025	\$38.30	
Closing Balance as at 31/01/2025		\$38.30
Consolidated Closing Cash Position		<u>\$10,881.42</u>

## **NEW General Meeting start time**

Starting this year, the general meeting's start time will commence at 7:30PM at Club Noble.

## **Merchandise**

See the Merchandise section for *updated prices and gear*.

We currently have a range of merchandise in stock, and the list of available items can be found on the pages below. If you are interested, please feel free to speak to one of the committee members during the general meeting or email us at [committee@vfwdc.com](mailto:committee@vfwdc.com).

## **2025 Calendars for sale**

Our very first club calendars will be for sale at the upcoming meeting. \$20 each with limited stock

**Discount Offer:** The club is offering a discount of \$5 off your membership for each trip you have organized and run since March 1st, 2024, up to a maximum of \$20 per couple. Please mention any trips you have led when you reply.

# Merchandise

## 50th Anniversary Jacket

Cost - \$70.00

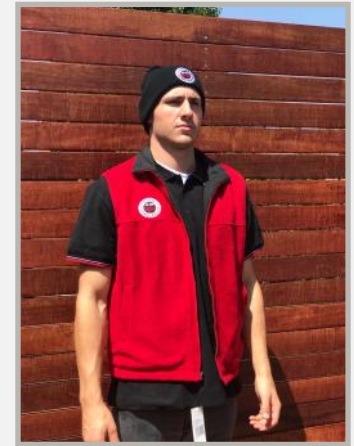
Sizes - XL, 3XL



## Reversible Vest

Cost - \$20.00

Sizes - S, M, L, 2XL, 5XL



## Drivers Jacket

Cost - \$40.00

Sizes - S, M, L, XL, 3XL



## Zip up Hoodie

Cost - \$20.00

Sizes - S, M, L



# Merchandise

Scarf / Beanie / Cap / Stubbie

Holder

Cost - \$5.00 each



Please visit our website at [VFWDC.com](http://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](mailto:secretary@vfwdc.com)

## Payments:

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

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<b>Account Name:</b>	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
<b>BSB:</b>	633108
<b>Account No:</b>	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](mailto: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](#).

# 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
<b>Overall Description</b>	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
<b>Advisory Sign</b>				
<b>Expected terrain and track conditions</b>	Mostly unsealed roads with no obstacles and minor gradients.	Tracks with some steep and/or rocky/slippery/sandy sections. May have shallow water crossings.	Tracks with frequent steep and/or rocky/slippery/sandy sections. Possible water crossings.	Tracks with frequent very steep and/or rocky/slippery/sandy sections. May have difficult river crossings.
<b>Vehicle suitability</b>	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).
<b>Recovery equipment</b>			Recovery equipment required.	Winch / Recovery equipment required.
<b>Driver Training / Experience</b>	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.
<b>Weather</b>	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.



## PROPOSED CLUB TRIP DATA FORM

DESTINATION	<b>Proficiency Training</b>
LEADER/CONTACT NO.	Phil Griffith – 0419 865 472 Ashley Martin -0428 134 999 John Partridge – 0405 058 079
DATE	Theory – Wed 12th March – 7.30pm start Practical – Friday 14th March– Sunday 16th March
MEETING PLACE / TIME	Theory – Noble Park Football Club, Blue and Gold Room Practical – Service Centre Officer (Princess Hwy) Friday @5pm / Saturday @7.30am
GRADE	WET: Easy / Medium DRY: Easy Medium
Please adhere to new trip classifications	
TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS	<p>The Club encourages all members to participate in a proficiency course to ensure the basic fundamentals of 4-wheel driving are gained.</p> <p>Theory provides an overview of the tread lightly principles, vehicles dynamics and functions, tackling various terrains along with other subjects. This provides the background for the practical weekend.</p> <p>Practical we run through individual vehicles and differences, basic recovery equipment and recap some of the theory (including homework). We then begin the practical side running through several techniques to ensure safe vehicle recovery when in difficult situations. Once all participants are confident with these, we hit the tracks to put all the theory into practice.</p> <p>Sunday will be a leisurely start then we will traverse a number of tracks which allow you to become familiar with your vehicles' capabilities and gain further confidence. We should be finished by 2 o'clock arriving back to Melbourne around 4.</p> <p>As with past participants the weekend provides confidence to safely 4WD either with the club or friends</p>
VEHICLE LIMITS	MINIMUM: 4 MAXIMUM: 8
APPROX KMS Meeting place to destination	300 kms (approx.)
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL	PETROL: Moe
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	Theory - pen and concentration  Practical - You will need to be self-sufficient for camping and have your brain switched on!
MAPS REQUIRED	<a href="https://goo.gl/maps/GTrQDz5RLHS2">https://goo.gl/maps/GTrQDz5RLHS2</a>
RADIO CHANNEL CB / UHF	UHF 12 to start with and then move if its busy



## PROPOSED CLUB TRIP DATA FORM

DESTINATION	<b>Big Desert Wanderings Part 3</b>
LEADER/CONTACT NO.	NAME: Sally and Tristan Sally 0435 782 207 Tristan 0468 958 444
DATE	Friday 7th – Monday 10th March
MEETING PLACE / TIME	BP Calder Park outbound 8am for 8:30am departure
GRADE Please adhere to new trip classifications	WET: Medium DRY: Easy
TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS	We still have more tracks to explore so we will head to Blue Gum campsite (no facilities) on Friday 7th to base camp for the weekend. Camper Trailers are able to get into the site with a couple of dunes to climb to get into it.  Friday and Saturday will be exploring Big Desert and also having a go at Big Dune again.  We will head into Pinaroo for a fuel top up at some stage.  Head home on Monday
VEHICLE LIMITS	MINIMUM: 3 MAXIMUM: 10
APPROX KMS Meeting place to destination	611KM
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL	PETROL: Ouyen DIESEL: Ouyen
DISTANCE BETWEEN SUPPLIES	250km
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	Recovery Gear  Camping equipment that makes you self-sufficient for 4 days.  Food and Drinks  You may need additional fuel depending on fuel tank
MAPS REQUIRED	VIC Desert Maps  Hema Maps
RADIO CHANNEL CB / UHF	Channel 12





## PROPOSED CLUB TRIP DATA FORM

DESTINATION	<b>Bruthen loop inc. Haunted Stream &amp; Mystery loop (TBC)</b>
LEADER/CONTACT NO.	NAME: Bruce DUNLOP TEL: MOB: 0448 318 467
DATE	Friday 4 APR -Sunday 6 APR
MEETING PLACE / TIME	Café in Bruthen at 0800 for 0830 Most Likely at Maccas
GRADE Please adhere to new trip classifications	WET: Hard + DRY: Medium Multiple Creek Crossings 40+
TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RV in Bruthen,</li> <li>2. Planned route, Engineers Track, Deptford, Dawson City, Dog Town and Stirling. (BYO lunch enroute.)</li> <li>3. RTN to Bruthen for O/N and debrief, confirming if Brewery is still open,</li> <li>4. Sat 5 APR A local has given up a FWD loop nearby, visiting a Trestle Bridge a possibility. They have not yet confirmed. If not a trip to Moscow Hut may occur.</li> <li>5. RTH Bruthen O/N</li> </ol> <p>Sun 6 APR wake and go and or visit Lakes via back roads TBC.</p>
VEHICLE LIMITS	MINIMUM: 4 MAXIMUM: 8
APPROX KMS Meeting place to destination	Both Loops 250-300km
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL	PETROL: Bruthen,Lakes,Bairsdale DIESEL:
DISTANCE BETWEEN SUPPLIES	150km
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	Camping gear, Camper trailer off road Van, full noise recovery equipment, maxtracks, water,lunch both days,happy camper face!
MAPS REQUIRED	Aust 4WD atlas
RADIO CHANNEL CB / UHF	12



## PROPOSED CLUB TRIP DATA FORM

DESTINATION	<b>Eyre Peninsula</b>
LEADER/CONTACT NO.	NAME: Sally and Tristan Sally: 0435782207 Tristan: 0468958444
DATE	Thursday April 17th to Sunday April 27th
MEETING PLACE / TIME	BP Calder Park Outbound 8am
GRADE	WET: Easy/ Medium DRY: Easy/ Medium
Please adhere to new trip classifications	
TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS	A quick Tour of the Eyre Peninsula to explore and see what we can find. Day 1: Transit day - Melbourne to Renmark Area Day 2: Transit day - Renmark Area to Kimba/ Darke Peak Day 3: 4 Wheel Drive Darke Peak and then head to Pildappa Rock and across to Streaky Bay Day 4: Streaky Bay, Cape Bauer, Murphy's Haystacks and look along the coast until we reach Coodlie Park Eco Resort Day 5: Stay at Coodlie Park Eco Resort and day trip out to Talia Caves, the Tub and woolshed caves Day 6: travel to Coffin Bay national park Day 7: Check out Coffin Bay National Park and area and may-be find some oysters and do a tour Day 8: Lincoln National Park Day 9: Sleaford – Wanna track through to Port Lincoln and find some more seafood Day 10: Transit Day - Start to travel home so head through to Adelaide Day 11: Transit Day - Head home from Adelaide.
VEHICLE LIMITS	MINIMUM: 3 MAXIMUM: 6
APPROX KMS	1500km from starting point to furthest destination. Total trip is around 3500km
Meeting place to destination	
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL	Petrol and Diesel will be available along the way. We are stopping in or travelling through a lot of towns and furthest fuel is about 100km from where we are staying.
DISTANCE BETWEEN SUPPLIES	Maximum distance between supplies is around 300km.
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	Touring set up with 4-wheel drive capability. I have managed to find some good four-wheel drive tracks that range from steep and rocky to sandy beach and dune tracks so full recovery gear is a must. Camper trailers are welcome but there will be some off-road travel with them on.
MAPS REQUIRED	Eyre Peninsula. Trip leader will have all the maps for the area.
RADIO CHANNEL CB / UHF	12

## Trip Report: Orphan's Christmas at Talbotville (first 4 days)

**Date:** 23rd December 2024

**Trip By:** Sally and Tristan

**Report:** Sushant Aggarwal

### Participants:

1. Sally and Tristan - Nissan Patrol Y62 (Trip Leader)
2. Lynton - Jeep Wrangler
3. Sushant Aggarwal - Hilux
4. Michael—Ford Ranger

### Note: This is Sushant's take on Orphan's Christmas at Talbotville for the first four days (22-25 Dec)

**Day 1 (22—Dec):** The adventure began for me on December 22nd. Tristan and Sally had already set up base camp at Talbotville the day before, but Lynton and I were starting our journey on Monday morning of Christmas week. Our usual plan was in place—meet up at the BP Officer, convoy up together, and stay in touch via UHF 12.

When I met Lynton, the excitement was palpable—this was going to be my first trip to Vic High Country!

With Lynton leading, we set off towards Stratford to fuel up before heading to Talbotville. Sally's tip to fuel up there instead of Dargo saved us quite a few dollars, given the significantly higher fuel prices in Dargo.

Our route from Officer to Stratford followed Google Maps, which took us through long, empty roads cutting across picturesque farmlands. At Stratford, we fueled up, but Lynton also made a pit stop at the local IGA to stock up on liquor to last the entire week!

With supplies sorted, we hit the road towards Talbotville, taking the scenic and winding Bairnsdale-Dargo Road, which led us to the iconic Dargo Pub. We stopped for a quick look around, and Lynton took the opportunity to top up his fuel tank and fill a couple of jerry cans.



*On our way to Talbotville*



*At the famous Dargo Hotel, enroute Talbotville camping area*

From Dargo, we continued north for about 20 minutes before leaving the bitumen and turning onto McMillans Road. While generally considered a 2WD-accessible road, the conditions were far from ideal, so we aired down for a smoother ride. Before long, we had to switch to 4H/4L for better control. Though a 2WD vehicle could technically make it, certain sections would have been a real struggle.



*Lynton and me airing down on McMillans Rd*

Along the way, we spotted a black snake lying lifeless on the road—most likely a black tiger snake rather than a red-bellied black snake. Carefully maneuvering through the narrow patches, we finally arrived at the Talbotville camping area.

Tristan and Sally had secured the best camping spot—right beside the river, offering both privacy and easy water access. Lynton and I quickly set up our camps and, with the evening settling in, it was time for some good food.



*An amazing camping spot in the Talbotville campground*



*Our camping spot was right next to Crooked River*

My previous trip with Tristan and Sally in the Big Desert had inspired me to learn how to cook over an open fire. This trip was my chance to put those skills to the test—I whipped up a spicy curry, and we enjoyed a fantastic meal by the fire. With a chill in the air, a warm campfire, and great company, the evening couldn't have been better.



*Spicing it up with some curry over campfire*

**Day 2 (23 Dec):** This was the day for some serious 4WD action! After a morning coffee and breakfast, we were ready to roll. Tristan and Sally took the lead, with Lynton as our tail-end charlie. Our first challenge was Crooked River Tk, which starts right from the campground.

Just as we were getting warmed up, we encountered our first set of deep ruts. Tristan navigated them effortlessly. I followed, nearly making it through—until my rear right tyre slipped in. Thinking a simple reverse and extra throttle would do the trick, I attempted to power through, only to have my front tire drop into the rut as well! At that point, my rear right tyre was the only one still on the ground—what a way to kick off Crooked River Tk!



*Stuck in deep ruts, and all four wheels spinning freely*





*Another angle. You can see how the bumper is popping out*

I tried every trick—rear locker, traction control on and off—but the Hilux wouldn't budge. It was time for a recovery. Sally took charge on the radio while Tristan prepared the snatch strap. After some digging to improve clearance, we attempted a light pull, but nothing. A second try—still no movement. By the third attempt, even Tristan's wheels were spinning. It was looking like a winch job.



*Getting ready to be snatched out of the ruts. Also, Tristan was very happy since a Nissan was pulling out a Toyota :)*

On our final snatch attempt, Tristan engaged his rear locker, reversed, and gave it one last go. Success! I was out of the ruts, feeling relieved and grateful for the teamwork!

With adrenaline pumping, we pushed ahead through steep ascents and descents, navigating 25 river crossings along the way. Thanks to Sally's guidance and Tristan's expertise in picking the right lines, it was an incredible learning experience.



*There were some steep steps throughout the tk requiring good line selection and spotting*



*Lynton disconnected his front sway bar in the morning which helped driving the tk look easy*



*After completing Crooked River Tk, and before starting Bulltown Spur Tk*

Our next challenge was Bulltown Spur Track—my first double black diamond track. With Crooked River Track already proving intense, I was a bit nervous, but I knew that picking the right lines would be key. The ascent was steep, but keeping the front wheels grounded and using steady throttle allowed Hilux's traction control to shine. Concentrating on the track rather than the intimidating drop-offs helped me reach the top—where we were greeted by stunning views of the iconic Billy Goat Bluff Track. Too bad I wouldn't be staying long enough to tackle it this time!



*At the hilltop after driving through Bulltown Spur Tk*



*Lynton doing a recce of Billy Goat Bluff from distance*



*We could see Billy Goat Bluff from the hilltop*

Back at camp, we cooled off with a swim in the river. Tristan made full use of a crocodile floaty designed for 45kg max weight—somehow making it work for him! As the sun set, we gathered around the fire, shared stories, and enjoyed the starry sky.



*Tristan somehow made the “max-weight-45-kg floaty” work*



*Lynton trying hard to catch a fish. Surprisingly these are a few pics of Lynton without a beer can beside him :)*



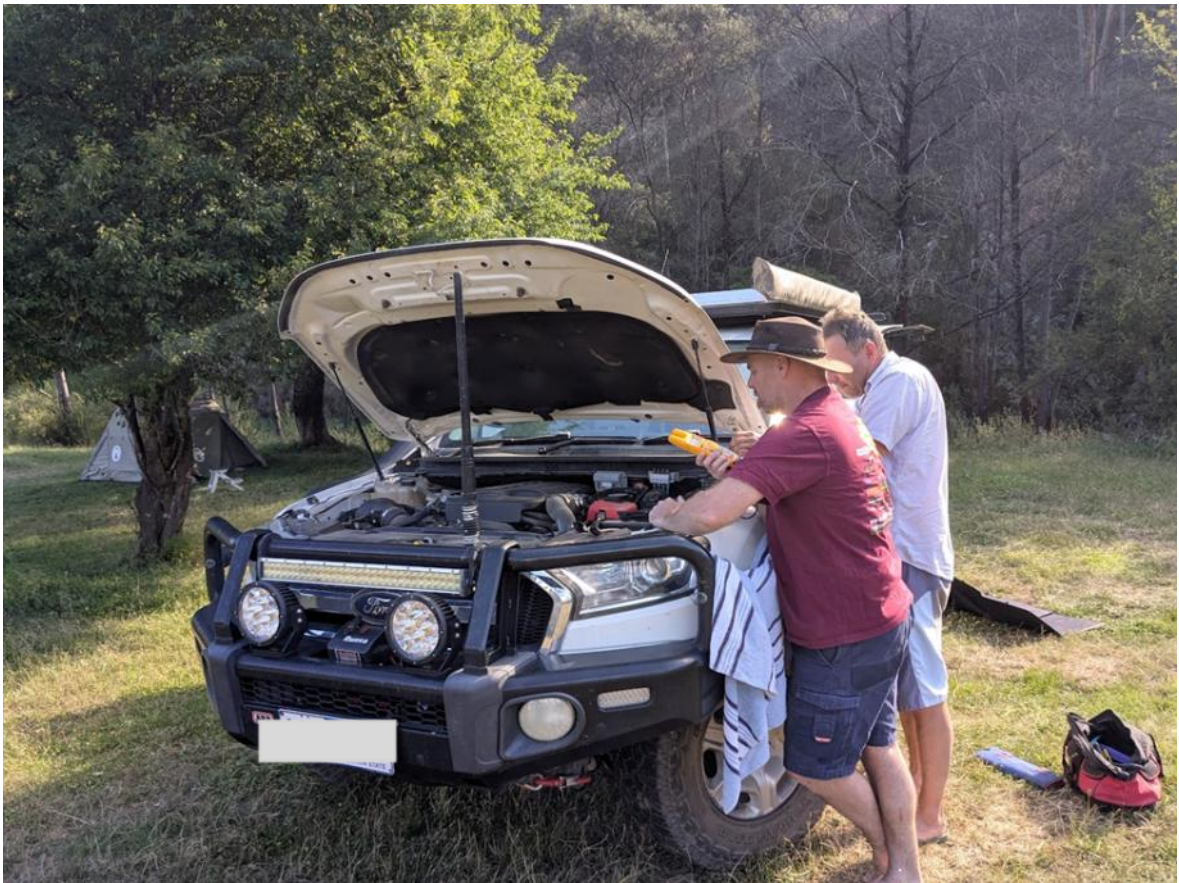
*A cozy end to a great day of 4wding*

**Day 3 (25 Dec):** Christmas Day! After an epic lead-up, we planned a relaxed day at camp. Sally, Tristan, and Lynton slow-roasted a chicken to perfection in the camp oven, taking about 90 minutes. Michael joined us just before lunch, having braved the heat with no A/C, driving with his windows down!



*It was very hot on Christmas day, but it worked well for Lynton to charge his fridge batteries*





*Checking the fuse box of Michael's Ranger in our attempt to fix the air conditioner*

With the day heating up, we hit the river for another refreshing swim before prepping for a Christmas feast under the stars.

**Day 4 (26 Dec):** Sadly, my trip had come to an end. But before heading home, we had one last bit of 4WDing left. We made our way to Dargo Pub to meet Andy for lunch before I departed for Melbourne.



*At Harrisons Cut*

On our way, we tackled Matheson's Track—marked as “easy” by Hema maps, but it turned out to be a proper single black diamond track with steep drop-offs, making for an exhilarating drive. After a stop at the picturesque Harrison's Cut, where the Dargo River splits into two streams, we reached the pub, caught up with Andy, and enjoyed a great meal.



*Matheson's Tk, wrongly marked as Easy on Hema maps*



*At Dargo pub, meeting up with Andy, as I prepare to leave*

As I aired up and prepared for the drive home, I reflected on an incredible few days. Huge thanks to Sally and Tristan for organizing yet another amazing adventure! What a perfect way to wrap up 2024—I can't wait for more 4WD and camping adventures in 2025!

## Trip Report: Woodside Fishing Trip

**Date:** Jan 2025

**Trip By:** Steven Card,

**Report:** Steven Card

### Participants:

1. Steven Card - Mitsubishi Pajero (Trip Leader)
2. Sally and Tristan - Nissan Patrol Y62 (Trip Leader)
3. Lynton - Jeep Wrangler
4. Adam Delta – Patrol
5. Alec – Mitsubishi Triton
6. Daisy
7. Glen & Sandy
8. Allan & Anne

Friday morning, we headed off for our beachside weekend adventure.

First stop and meeting point was bp officer outbound at 10am.

Gathering the troops (Sally & Tristan) we continued on collecting recruits (Adam) along the way.

Quick pitstop for some bait and then before we knew it, we had reached the dirt road heading into our camping spot.

The track in had been recently graded, so hasta la vista potholes.

Needing a little track excitement, a late call and a strategic stop ensured we got to play in the soft sand about 50m from camp (winching and all the bells & whistles came out).

Getting into camp we set up and found an alternate entry for those wishing to bypass the sand on the journey in.

Between Friday afternoon and Saturday morning the remaining crew arrived being Lynton, Alec, Daisy, Glen & Sandy and Allan & Anne.

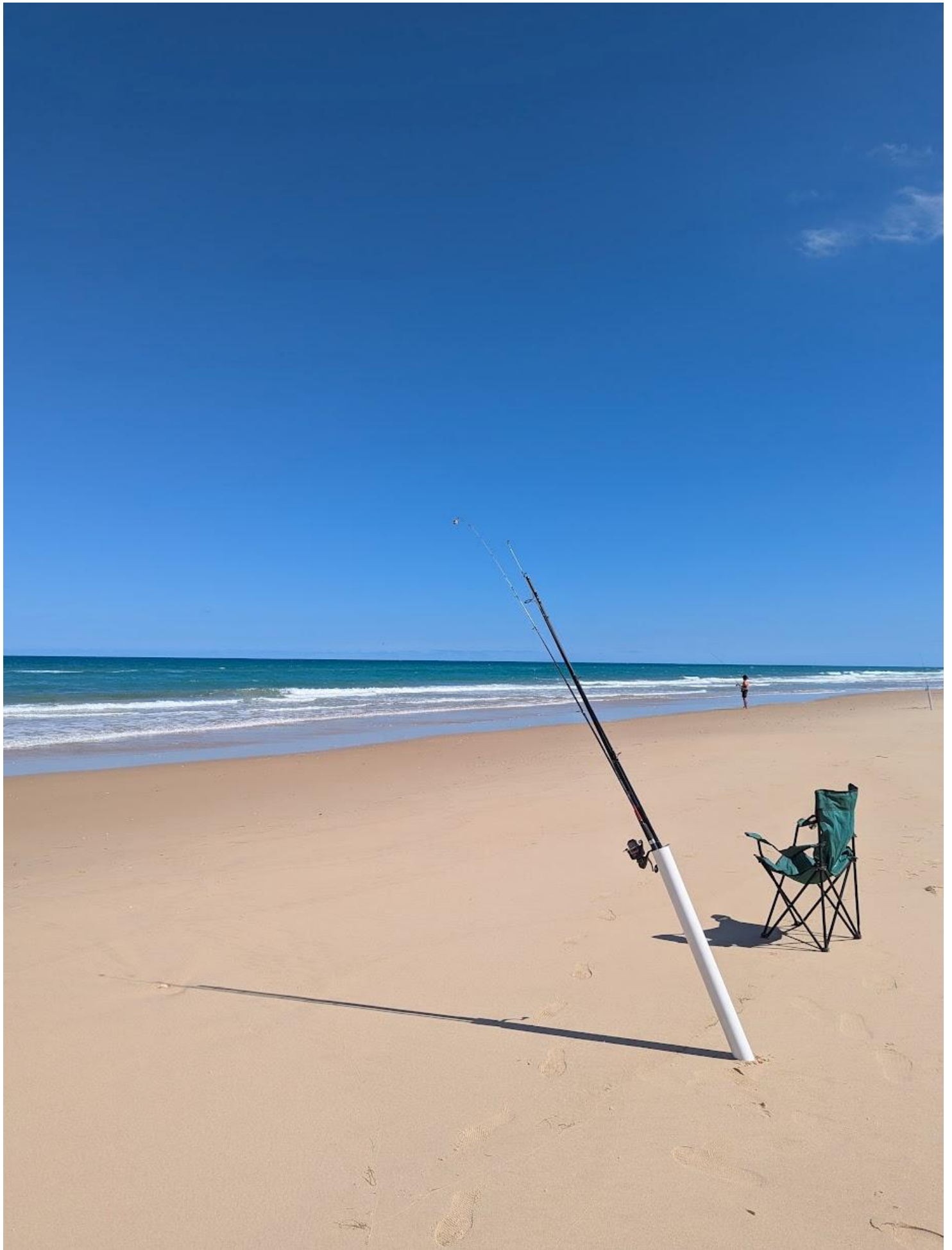
The weekend was a relaxing getaway with nice weather, fishing (also with a drone, awesome), laughs, a few beverages, visiting wildlife, dolphins, and of course some entertaining stories.

Sunday was heating up so we all packed and made our escape mid-morning stopping off at a cafe along the way and a side of the road cool down for an overheating pajero.

An enjoyable VFWDC weekend away.

Stay tuned for the next adventure; fishing in the high country!





## Trip Report: Noojee Day Trip

**Date: 15 Dec 2024**

**Trip By: Neville Van Leeuwen**

**Report: Sushant Aggarwal**

### **Participants:**

1. Neville (with Aalia, Ramos, Riley) - Mitsubishi Triton (Trip Leader)
2. Adam Delta (with Kelly) - Nissan Patrol
3. Sushant Aggarwal - Hilux

This was an adventurous recce day trip to explore the rugged tracks around Noojee. Earlier this year, back in April, I had joined another thrilling expedition led by Neville, which threw some tricky situations our way. So naturally, I was excited to be part of yet another trip led by Neville!

The journey kicked off at the iconic Noojee Pub. Over a quick briefing, Neville outlined the plans for the day, and soon we were ready to roll. Our mini convoy was led by Neville, with Adam taking up the rear as our tail-end charlie.



*In our search for tracks around Noojee*

Our first mission was to locate a track mysteriously named the ‘Level 1’ track—a fittingly named starter for the day. But, as luck would have it, this track seemed to have vanished into thin air. We scouted multiple paths, only to come up empty-handed. Determined not to let this minor hiccup dampen our spirits, we pressed on and eventually stumbled upon another promising track that hinted at some fun ahead.

After airing down, Neville ventured ahead to scout the trail. A reassuring call over UHF 12 confirmed the track was good to go, and we eagerly followed. I started off in 4-Hi, but within 100 meters, the terrain turned into a moderate climb with undulations. Sensing the challenge ahead, I shifted to 4-Lo and continued without any trouble. About 500 meters in, we unexpectedly crossed paths with the elusive Level 1 track. Success at last!



*Onto Level 1 Tk where we encountered a bog hole and had to take a U-turn*

With maps in hand, we decided to switch routes and explore Level 1 track. It didn't take long before we encountered some serious puddles, deep enough to leave my Hilux diffed out in a couple of spots. Progressing further, we ran into a formidable bog hole that looked too deep and risky to tackle. After some quick deliberation, we made the call to turn around and retrace our steps back to the intersection.

From there, we hopped onto Ridge Rd and then veered off onto Level 3 track. Initially, Level 3 track was a breeze, offering smooth 4-Lo driving. But just as we were getting comfortable, we hit another massive bog hole. With no chicken track to bypass it, we decided to play it safe and turned back once again.



Our quest for more excitement took us to Mundic Rd in search of a river crossing. However, we were met with a well-built bridge instead. Not ones to be easily discouraged, we circled back to the highway, passed the Noojee Pub, and picked up Reference track.

Reference track started off easy, but as it merged into Tolley's track, things got interesting. Tolley's offered some moderately steep sections, especially on the descent, turning out to be the most exhilarating drive of the day. It left us all thinking how much more thrilling it would be to tackle it uphill next time!



*On Tolley's Tk which had some moderately steep inclines which were really din driving on*

With our adrenaline fix satisfied, we eventually hit bitumen and wrapped up the day with quick goodbyes. Huge thanks to Neville for organizing yet another fantastic adventure. I can't wait to see where the next trip takes us!

# **We need your help on and off the tracks**



**If you have some spare time  
please consider joining the committee.  
Your club needs you— do it for your club!**

**Contact your Committee...**

