

Broader scope

Whatever the case, the new Defender will not only need to retain the go-anywhere capability expected by traditionalists and hard-core off-road enthusiasts, and to compete with fresh competitors like the new Jeep Wrangler and Mercedes-Benz G-Class — both of which go on sale here next year. It will also need to offer more refinement and versatility to broaden its audience and appeal to everyday drivers. Land Rover is reportedly targeting up to 100,000 annual sales to make the Defender profitable, which would make it the most popular version ever. The last Defender topped out at about 20,000 annual sales, but SUV sales are booming and this time it will be sold in the US and Canada, where the current model has failed to meet crash safety regulations since 1997.

Big model range

Helping profitability will be more 'premium' pricing and the continuation of a broad model range — once again including two different wheelbases (90- and 110-inch) and two distinct body styles — hard-top and soft-top, with pick-up and cab-chassis ute versions to follow. Therefore the famous Defender 90 and Defender 110 names will continue, on a variety of variants covering everything from rugged, hose-out models to upmarket and performance versions. One thing they should have in common is capability, however, with Land Rover expected to compliment the latest Disco's new Terrain Response II system with class-leading ground clearance and approach, departure and break-over angles, making it the most high-tech Defender ever.

Styling will be controversial, not retro

While Land Rover design chief Gerry McGovern has said the exterior of the new Defender will look nothing like the poorly-welcomed DC100 concept, last month he told us it will remain "polarising". Ruling out a retro-styled reinterpretation of previous Defenders in the vein of the born-again MINI, Fiat 500 and VW Beetle, McGovern has described the exterior design theme, which is expected to follow the rugged Discovery SVX in terms of overall execution, as "premium durability".

So it seems the new Defender will be a radical departure from tradition not just in terms of price, positioning and design, but powertrain technology too.

THIS LAND ROVER DISCOVERY HAS CRACKED A MILLION KILOMETRES

By SAM PURCELL

A million kilometres. It's the holy grail of diesel longevity, the ultimate in pub bragging rights. Many talk about it, but few engines properly get there without major work in the meantime. Some might find it surprising, but one of the first that has come across our desk is not a GQ Patrol or 80 Series LandCruiser, but rather the butt of many reliability-centric jokes, Land Rover. It's a 2004 Land Rover Discovery II, which uses the 2.5 litre, five-cylinder turbodiesel TD5. It makes 101kW @ 4,200rpm and 300Nm @ 1,950rpm. The Td5 is not common rail, nor is it a straight mechanical setup. It uses 'unit' injectors, which integrate an injector pump and high-pressure fuel reservoir into the injector itself, which is controlled by both camshaft and computer.

This means it's a good candidate for chip or remap tuning, but the injectors are also horridly expensive (a quick google found them for \$1,600). Thank the heavens they aren't problematic ...

In that million kilometres, which is equivalent to driving to the moon and back 1.3 times, the Disco has been through two gearboxes (automatic) and I'm sure plenty of other little bits and bobs, but the head and block haven't been touched.

The majority of the keys have been racked up between the Southern Highlands and Sydney, for Harry the owner's commute, which is around 115km per leg. But that's not all: an old Qantas pilot who did plenty of domestic legs, he used the Disco to travel down memory lane.

"I used to fly around in the bush, so when I got the Discovery I went back to see all the old places I used to fly. It's like a comfy slipper or a well-worn boot. It's been around Australia three or four times too... up to Darwin, around the Kimberley, down through Alice Springs." What's the key? Regular servicing by someone to really knows what they're working on. And that doesn't just mean a dealership, either. Look for somewhere with experience and specialisation in your make and model. In this case, it's a workshop called Roving Mechanical in Peakhurst, Sydney. And the million-kilometre question: What happens when you get to 999,999 on the odometer? Does it go back around to zero? Nope, it just stops. You've only got the trip meter to keep measuring after that point.

This is particularly interesting for myself, because I've got the same motor under the bonnet of my Defender. It's up to 260,000 kilometres, but has had a pretty hard life as long as I have known it. Fingers crossed, I get a bit closer to that holy grail figure myself.



It's a LOCO-MOTOR!

Frank Rothwell, 67, gutted a 50-year-old Land Rover and replaced the original engine with a steam engine. He wasn't content to indulge his passion for 18th century technology by riding on a rickety heritage railway or browsing in a museum. Instead he set about building his very own transport back to the Steam Age. After dedicating more than 400 hours to the project, the traction engine enthusiast and former contestant on Bear Grylls' *The Island* proudly took his new motor out for a spin. The custom-built car works like a steam train, with the boiler being fired by coal, which then heats the water up to steam pressure to run the small engine.

Mr Rothwell, from Oldham, Greater Manchester, said: 'We all need a hobby and I like doing things that are difficult. I'd already built a 1910 steam wagon and got a real kick out of that so just thought what else can I do? I wanted it to be something unique and recognisable and something which no-one had ever done before.' He



© Jacob King/Mercury Press



uses the car - which can travel at a maximum speed of 15mph - from his home in Oldham to his offices in Chadderton, Greater Manchester.

Mr Rothwell bought the mildew-ridden Land Rover from a manufacturing company but didn't reveal his plans to the sellers.

He said: 'The original owners of the Land Rover called the car Mildred because of all the mildew - that's the type of state the car used to be in. I decided not to tell them what I was doing as think if you have any ideas, then the best idea is not to tell anyone.'

The grandfather-of-three said he encountered a couple of mechanical hiccups along the way but was confident he could pull it off. Mr Rothwell said: 'In the back of my mind I knew it could be done because of my skills, it's just second nature to me to get things done. It was a case of having the money and obviously the time to do it.'

He said his wife of 50 years is less enthusiastic about the project: 'My wife Judith thinks I'm crazy and hasn't even had a ride in it yet - but at least it keeps me out of the pub. My grandchildren absolutely love it, they find it so exciting to have a ride on it and chug along. I think it's really good for children of this era to do things like lighting fires and using coal because they have little access to using things like that these days.' The donor car cost Mr Rothwell £4,000 while the steam engine and ancillary parts were a further £20,000

Now, the businessman wants the opportunity to show off his unusual car. He added: 'I have a plea to Chris Evans and his North West Car Fest event - I would love to bring the car along so the people of the north finally know what a proper motor looks like.'



The Land Rover, pictured before the conversion, had a traditional 2.25 litre four cylinder engine under the bonnet



© Mercury Press & Media



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The ultimate barn find? First production Land Rover goes on display ahead of restoration

The vehicle that has just gone on display at the Royal Automobile Club is one that bears every hallmark of having endured a very long and arduous existence. It is also one of a historical importance, on a par with the original Mini or Model T, for while HUE 166 is famously the world's oldest Land-Rover, this is the first production model.

The original custodian of JUE 477, chassis number 86001, in July of 1948 was a member of the works' development team and it spent its first two years at the Solihull factory. By February 1950 it has been sold to Professor Mcewen of Newcastle University, at which point it gained a registration number. The next owner was David Fairless, who originally intended to buy a tractor rather than a second-hand Series 1 Land-Rover, and JUE 477 was initially used for agricultural work.

As is often the case with venerable vehicles, it was eventually parked up and when a small group of LR enthusiasts came across it in 1995 its condition was not exactly pristine. Three years later JUE 477 made a brief but highly memorable appearance at the Land-Rover's 50th birthday celebrations at Shugborough Hall and this inevitably attracted considerable interest.

According to the Royal Automobile Club's website the Land-Rover "then moved out of the public eye into a barn on the family farm until the decision was taken in 2017 to seek a new owner and guarantee its long-term future".

The Series 1 will be subject to "a carefully considered restorative process that retains the remarkable history, original components and unique details". And, as the photographs illustrate, anyone taking on JUE 477 will have a task that may be easily described as "quite formidable".

To mark its 70th anniversary this year, Land Rover is restoring one of the three pre-production Land Rovers that had been shown at the model's launch at the 1948 Amsterdam motor show – a car that had been missing for 63 years before being rediscovered recently.

Today, the fascination with the priceless first production example is not just in experiencing the Land-Rover in its first incarnation but seeing a machine that literally shaped automotive and social history. "A Maid of All Work for The Farmer" thought Commercial Motor in April 1948 before going on to rave "Four-wheel Drive, Power Available at Three Auxiliary Points, and an Engine of Unusual Design, Form Outstanding Features of a New Rover Product".

If JUE 477 and its stablemates had not appealed to their intended market L-R might have been an intriguing footnote in the story of Rover's Viking badge but as early as 1950 Solihull had already built more than 24,000 Land-Rovers and earned £5 million in foreign currency.

Today the many and various heirs to this Land-Rover on show at the RAC in Pall Mall may be seen across the globe and all of them owe a debt to a small 4x4 utility vehicle that left the production lines at a time of smog, Woodbines and "Export or Die". It is to be fervently hoped that JUE 477 remains in the UK, for it is both a rare example of a design that genuinely merits the term "iconic" and one of the most important vehicles to be made in this country. Quite simply, it altered the face of transport - on and off the road.



Morwell Swap Meet

Toners Lane Morwell, Sunday 25th March 2018

Hosted by LATROBE VALLEY BRANCH of GIPPSLAND HISTORICAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB

Car and Bike Parts; Tools and Equipment; Collectables; Antiques

Fully Catered – Hot Food available 7am

Sites Free, No Bookings Required

Gates Open 7:00am for Stall holders & Public

Admission: \$5.00 per person, Children under 16 Free

General Enquiries: BILL 0407 839 039

Food and Drink Sales by Club only – Unless by prior arrangement.

Overnight Camping by Appointment Only

After asking around LROC club members if they had a clue where a 1954 LR starter motor could be found, within a day I had received about one dozen leads and one S/H 1954 LR starter motor. I feel this demonstrated the marvellous comradeship within the LROC of Gippsland and thank all who assisted – Cooma here we come! Terry Heskey

Land Rover Owners' Club of Gippsland, Minutes of Meeting Held On Monday the 5th of February 2018.

Meeting started at Gippsland Land Rover Showrooms at 8.05pm

Ian Blake chaired the meeting in Greg's absence, and opened the meeting by welcoming back Mick Hammett.

Attending: David Murray, Eric Shingles, Shaun Johnson, Rod Catchpole, Loris Catchpole, Ted Allchin, Shirley Allchin, John Jennings, Terry Heskey, Susan Markham, Ken Markham, John Kerr, Heather Kerr, Mal Trull, Alan Harlow, Tonee Harlow, Mick Hammett, Peter Johnson, Colette Parniak, Paul Whitehead, Les Warburton, Ron Prince, Dorothy Prince, Don Little, Shirley Little, Brian Johnson, Ross Howell, Sue Howell, Helen MacRae, Alan MacRae, Annette Fleming, Bob McKee, Jan Parniak, Charlie Calafiore, Ian Blake

Visitors: Sharyn Anderton, Alan Anderton

Apologies: Lois Rose, Greg Rose, Wayne Foon, Sharna Cole (now Foon?), Siobahn Walker, Jim Hood, Jill Beck, Barb Heskey, Ian Webb

News from travellers: Lois, Greg, Wayne and Sharna are in Bright for Wayne and Sharna's wedding.

Greg reports that Wayne and Sharna were married in Bright on Saturday afternoon; a beautiful ceremony, in glorious summer weather, in lovely surroundings.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Moved: Alan Harlow, Seconded: Bob McKee

Business Arising: Nil

Correspondence: Charlie Calafiore

In: Obession (SA), Review (LROCV)

Out: Nil

Emails In: FWDV Office re 2018 Meeting Dates, FWDV CEO

Wayne Hevey re Centenary of the Wonnangatta Murders.

Out: Nil

Treasurer's Report

Moved: Alan MacRae, Seconded: Jan Parniak

Publicity Officer's Report

37 members, with high meeting attendance. Members needing name badges please advise Charlie so he can order them in for you (cost covered in the membership fee).

Land Rover brand is strong. The Velar is enjoying success.

Shaun advised, in support of this, that Land Rover Experience are currently catering to 66 guest per month at the free drive day, and 1,683 test drove at the recent promotion at Geelong.

RACV magazine Royalauto had a write up in on the Discovery in the Feb 18 issue.

Editor's Report

Eric hopes we enjoyed the newsletter and he is always looking for more stuff.

Webmaster's Report

Site is up to date. Some members had seen the quiz but no correct answers were forthcoming. There is a cryptic clue included and Alan will leave it up for another month if others would like a chance to win the prize.

Technical Report

Terry Heskey is looking for a starter motor for a series 1 if anyone can help out, please contact Terry directly.

Charlie is hoping to locate a drivers seat and steering wheel for a series 1 Disco.

Events Co-coordinator's report.

Past Events:

Christmas Meeting. Thanks to Wayne Foon for finding the venue and arranging the post meeting trip back to Walhalla.

Coming events;

FEBRUARY.

Saturday the 17th. Victorian 4x4 Show Set Up Day. Lardner Park.

Sunday the 18th. Victorian 4x4 Show. Lardner Park.

Alan MacRae.

Who has club tent, banner, star pickets, etc? Stored at VSL

Club display board. Howells

Entry tickets for people helping with our display. Still coming...

Finalise vehicles from Gippsland Land Rover. AM; under control

Confirm club members' vehicles for display. AM; under control

Meeting time Morwell Saturday to pick up vehicles and head to Lardner Park.

2pm departure from VSL.

Approval for club to pay for Saturday evening meals for those staying onsite.

\$20 per person.

Mal, Ian, Greg and Lois to sleep over.

Moved John Kerr; Seconded Bob McKee

That the club pay \$20pp to cover Saturday evening meal for those staying onsite.

CARRIED.



It's certainly been hot



Ian Blake learning new skills at Cooma 2008

MARCH.

Monday the 5th. LROCG Meeting will be at ARB Traralgon, 8:00p.m. ARB Traralgon is on the highway, left hand side, heading towards Sale, past the Traralgon Heyfield Maffra Road.

Friday 9th, Saturday the 10th and Sunday the 11th.

Centenary of the Wonnangatta Murders. Major gathering at Wonnangatta Valley hosted by the Friends of Wonnangatta. Greg attended a planning meeting at Mansfield on Monday the 22nd of January. The event is being organized by the Friends of Wonnangatta with major support from Parks Victoria. Other supporting organisations are Four Wheel Drive Victoria, the Victorian High Country Huts Association, the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria, Victoria Police, Bushwalking Victoria and the Australian Deer Association. There will be forums on the history of Wonnangatta, static and active displays and other activities over the Labour Day weekend.

Also over the Long Weekend in March, Craig Murray is organizing a working bee in the Aberfeldy area. More details to come, or contact Craig directly. Details in this newsletter.

Friday 16th - Sunday 18th.

Charlie Calafiore's Dinner Plain Trip. Drive two of the most iconic tracks in the Alpine National Park - Mayford and Blue Rag Range. Attendance confirmation and payment due at the meeting. Interest is good. Regional rep from LR is among those participating in this year's event.

MARCH/APRIL

Easter Friday the 30th of March to Monday the 2nd of April.

Land Rover's 70th Birthday Celebrations and Get Together at Cooma.

NB: Craig Murray is leading a trip to Cooma from 26th, arriving on 29th, and also a trip home after the event. Inquiries direct to Craig.

Rod Catchpole. Gala Dinner table? If not already done so, please get in touch with Rod to be included, as time is running out. Those at the meeting should have seen Rod on the night as requested.

Note this is a club sanctioned event but does not require a trip leader etc. We should have a list of folk intending to go. List supplied at the meeting to be filled in.

PARKS VICTORIA DATES FOR 2018.

Saturday the 5th and Sunday 6th of May.

Venue Kelly Lane fencing and site works at Kelly Hut. Already a good number of members booked in. Attendees sheet at the meeting completed by those interested.

July Sunday the 22nd.

Bar-b-que lunch along the Wellington River campsites north of Licola and general tidy up of the 14 campsites.

November. Monday the 19th, Tuesday the 20th and Wednesday the 21st. Talbotville revisited? Location and work to be finalized by Parks Victoria in the next month or two.

Four Wheel Drive Victoria Delegate's Report

Many positive responses to the December Trackwatch magazine and its emphasis on the large amount of volunteer work undertaken by 4x4 clubs, including Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland.

General Business.

Members wanting LROCG badged clothing for Cooma should order from Charlie as soon as possible.

Land Rover 70th apparel and souvenir items are available for order online and will be delivered at registration point at Cooma. Google Land Rover 70th and go to online shop.

March Meeting is at ARB Traralgon. It was decided, via general discussion to not specifically select a dinner venue for the evening pre meeting get together, as based on last time, there is so much food provided by ARB.

Rod thanked all those who wrote reports on the trip to Port McDonnell for the cup weekend, and Tonee Harlow for collating them.

Shaun offered to demonstrate "Add Blue" factor relevant to the new diesel vehicles. Charlie and Shaun explained that the vehicles hold around 17 ltrs, and this lasts for 10 to 15 thousand kilometers. With 12,000ks on the clock of Shaun's LRE vehicle, the warning light has come on. Once it is empty, if running the vehicle will continue to run, however if the engine is stopped it will not start again until the DEF (Add Blue) has been topped up.

Alan MacRae has 5 Defender tyres for sale. One has never been used.

Alan has bought along a DVD of the Birdsville Track 1954 to play after the meeting for those interested in watching it.

Ian Blake shared information on Tank Adventures, Grand Ridge Road. The proprietor is also a Land Rover enthusiast, and a past member of LROCV. A pamphlet was made available for those interested. He has 14 ex military tanks on site. A 4 hour tour is \$60pp, and for an additional \$25.00 you can take a ride in a tank. Ian Blake is looking for participants interested in a trip to South Australia leaving March 13th. Please get in touch with Ian if you would like more information.

39th annual Corowa Swim-In & Military Vehicle Gathering from 12th to 18th March 2018, will feature 'Year of the Land Rover' in recognition of their 70th anniversary.

Meeting Closed at: 8.49pm



The Murray family of Drouin celebrated Australia Day together (back) David with (from left) Krystal, Melinda, Janice and Harley.

The Centenary of the Wonnangatta Murders

in the Wonnangatta Valley

Labour Day Weekend

Friday 9th - Monday 12th March 2018

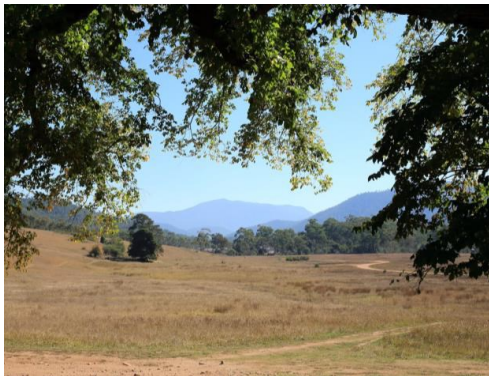
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The Mountain Cattleman's Association of Victoria
Victorian High Country Huts Association
Four Wheel Drive Victoria



Cooma Land Rover's 70th Anniversary Easter 2018.

Cooma events and accommodation are apparently booking out quickly. The text below is from the Cooma Committee. A celebration of 70 years of Land Rover Vehicles. Enthusiasts will flock to Cooma NSW to enjoy 4 full days of everything Land Rover whilst savouring the delights of the Snowy Mountains Region. Day trips through the beautiful region, camping, BBQ's and entertainment plus a formal Gala Dinner & Land Rover vehicle exhibitions and terrapod displays are just a few of the highlights on offer.

To attend any of the events in the Land Rover 70th program you must be registered - \$40 pp
Bookings for camping at the event site and for the official functions are limited and will book out quickly.
For all the information about the event go to www.landrover70thcooma.com

Parks Victoria / LROCG Joint Project.

Following the cancellation of the intended work at Horseyard Flat earlier this year there has been a re-think of the joint projects work for this year. The following points outline what is proposed plus a brief background for new members.

History.

LROCG members have worked as volunteers with Parks Victoria staff from Heyfield and Dargo for a number of years. We have an ongoing club commitment to two multi day events each year. One in Autumn and one in Spring. We have just completed a two year project at Talbotville. Previously we have worked at Wonnangatta Valley, Wellington River campsites, Howitt Hut, Moroka Hut, Horseyard Flat, Kelly Lane, Kellys Hut, McMichaels Hut, Guys Hut carpark and Snowy Range airstrip.

Tasks.

Initially the club did basic clean-up work; collecting rubbish, digging out fire pits, grass cutting, etc. We now concentrate more on building permanent assets and improving major remote camping areas to benefit all users of the Alpine National Park.

On Site Inspection June 2017.

On the 15th of June Greg Rose (LROCG President and Four Wheel Drive Victoria Regional Representative, Southern Alpine National Park) and Mike Dower (Parks Victoria Area Chief Ranger, Foothills and Southern Alps) met a contractor at Horseyard Flat. The plan for rehabilitating some of the camping areas and access tracks was formalised. From this meeting we were able to decide on work the club volunteers could undertake.

Parks Victoria Volunteer Dates for 2018.

Over the past few years a feature of our club has been the volunteer work we undertake with Parks Victoria. We made a commitment to work with PV on two multi day activities per year. These ventures have been very successful. We have accomplished some great things and made lasting improvements to the Alpine National Park while having a fantastic time in the bush. On behalf of the club I recently met with Parks Victoria Team Leader Sarah Noonan in Heyfield. These events have to be planned well in advance so that PV staff and budgets can be put in place.

The dates set for 2018 are:

Saturday the 5th and Sunday the 6th of May. The fall back dates would be the 19th and 20th of May so that we do not have a complete cancellation situation like this year. Location to be decided in early 2018.

Monday the 19th, Tuesday the 20th and Wednesday the 21st of November. These days will most likely be back at Talbotville to do stage three of the project there.

Sunday the 22nd of July. We have added this single day event as a fun day to get out of the house in mid winter. The plan is to do a quick tidy up of the fourteen campgrounds along the Wellington River and have a bar-b-que or picnic lunch and some socialising.

A new feature of the volunteer work from now on will be the gradual implementation of ParkConnect so that our records are kept digitally rather than on paper as we have been doing.

For further information on our work with Parks Victoria talk to Wayne Foon or myself at a club meeting. I would also like to have another club member or two who are able to attend some of the planning sessions and get to know how the system works. The downside is that the meetings take place on weekdays. Give it some thought.

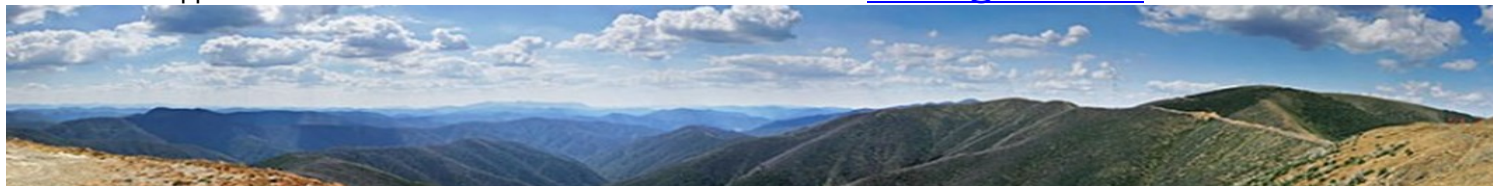
Greg Rose.

Dinner Plain Weekend 2018

Friday March 16th to Sunday March 18th

Package includes meals and 2 nights accommodation at High Plains Lodge @ Dinner Plain Resort.

We will be exploring two of the most spectacular tracks in Victoria over the weekend and enjoying the Dinner Plain Surrounds. The package is very reasonably priced at \$650 per couple, For bookings or enquiries please contact the trip Organizer Charlie Calafiore at Gippsland Land Rover on 03 5134 1422 or 0418 395 120 or charlie.c@vslm.com.au



Aberfeldy Track working bee

Saturday 10th March

The plan for this weekend to do some maintenance on the Toombon mine site. The work involved will be cleaning of signs, brush cutting of walking tracks and mine sites. We have also been requested to widen the walking track to the haunted house site, so mattocks, picks and shovels will be needed.

Meeting Time: 8:30

Meeting Place: Rawson recreation reserve

Trip Standard: Easy

Equipment: Suitable protective clothing, equipment for clearing signs and walking tracks. The Aberfeldy track team have two brush cutters that we can borrow, but if we have more it would be better. Pick, Mattocks, crowbars would also be good for widening the track. Given how far most of the work will be from where we can park the vehicles, it would be good if you could carry lunch with you.

Contact: Craig Murray 0438 109 063

Trip To Cooma

Week before the Easter long weekend (March 26 - 29)

The plan is to spend a night in Wonnangatta. The next day, head over Mount Sarah and into the head of the Buckland Valley, where we will spend the second night. The next day, head to Omeo via Twins Jeep track, then up to the Davies High Plains, to spend our final night in the bush. On the Thursday, we will head to Cooma via Tom Groggin, fording the Murray river.

Meeting Time: Ready to leave at 1pm.

Meeting Place: Licola General Store

Standard: Medium, Hard if wet.

Trip Limit: Eight Vehicles.

Food: Bring food and water for four days.

Pets: As we will be heading into the Alpine National Park, no pets.

Equipment: Snatch Strap, tow points front and rear, camping equipment, usual recovery gear, aggressive All terrain tyres minimum, Mud terrain if wet.

Fuel: The longest stretch without fuel will be between Licola and Omeo, so please ensure you have enough to cover roughly 250km off road..

Contact: Craig Murray 0438 109 063

Trip From Cooma

Week after the Easter long weekend (April 3 - 6)

The plan is to head down the Monaro highway and pop in to have a look at Neville falls, which are a bit north of Cann River, we will then head back up to Bombala and head into McKillops bridge via Delegate to spend the night. The next day we will drive the Deddick trail, hopefully spending the night at Jackson's Crossing. Depending on how people feel, I may extend this trip into the weekend, and visit the Haunted Stream.

Meeting Time: Ready to leave at 9am.

Meeting Place: Snowtels Caravan park in Cooma

Standard: Medium, Hard if wet.

Trip Limit: Eight Vehicles.

Food: Bring food and water for four days.

Pets: As we will be heading into the Alpine National Park, no pets.

Equipment: Snatch Strap, tow points front and rear, camping equipment, usual recovery gear, aggressive All terrain tyres minimum, Mud terrain if wet.

Contact: Craig Murray 0438 109 063



December 2017

With another year almost behind us the Association board, management and staff would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members the very best for the New Year. 2017 saw many achievements that will hopefully improve FWDV's ability to support and promote Victoria's 4X4 community. This is also the time of the year when many of us pack up the 4X4 and head for the hills and we urge everyone to stay safe over the aptly named Silly Season - and, as someone famously said, "Keep the shiny side up!". See you in 2018

FWDV RELEASES 4 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

In conjunction with DELWP and Parks Victoria, the Association has released a four year Victorian 4WD Strategy setting out target outcomes and how these will be achieved and funded. The document outlines benefits brought to the State by the 4X4 community – such as Victoria becoming a premier destination for interstate 4X4 users who contribute to the local economy. Other outcomes in the plan include FWDV becoming financially sustainable, 4X4 activities being respected by the public as a legitimate recreational pastime and ensuring the 4X4 community demonstrates increased respect for the cultural, environmental and other values in their use of public land. As part of the strategic plan the Association has received funding to commission a comprehensive external study on the magnitude of the 4X4 market, the accessibility of appropriate 4X4 experiences on public land and the social benefits that flow from those activities. DELWP formally launched the strategic plan earlier this month and a copy can be downloaded from a link on the Association's website.

ANOTHER GREAT RESULT FOR VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Government grants underpin the viability of the Association and in return the Association undertakes that its members will provide a prescribed amount of volunteer work such as track clearing and associated programs like Clean Up the Bush.

For the five months to the end of November 2017 volunteer work has been costed at \$214,500. While this is the a very solid result and the Association is grateful to the members who have volunteered their time, it is apparent that most of the support comes from a small number of clubs while the majority (including some of the larger clubs) are noticeable by their absence.

CLEAN UP THE BUSH

Early in 2018 member clubs will be asked to support another Clean Up the Bush activity to be based out of Smythesdale near Ballarat covering an area from Ballan to Lake Burrumbeet. Areas of state forest have been identified where household rubbish, car bodies and old tyres have been dumped and while a precise date is yet to be determined, this activity has been pencilled in for April 2018.

NEW SAFETY STANDARDS FOR SNATCH STRAPS

In response to the all too common death and injury resulting from the (improper) use of snatch straps, a new safety standard has been issued by the Australian government. New vehicle recovery straps must now detail the minimum braking strength of the strap and include a warning that this must be between two and three times the GVM of the vehicle it is used with.

For their own safety and that of others, anyone purchasing a new strap should ensure that it complies with the new standards.

WONNANGATTA MURDER RE-ENACTMENT

On the March Labour Day weekend Friends of Wonnangatta in conjunction with Parks Victoria are organising a re-enactment of the famous unsolved murders that took place at the Wonnangatta Station in the early 1900s. Complete with the period costume this event could be a bit of fun for anyone thinking of heading into the Wonnangatta Valley that weekend.

OMEO 2018

Once again the Wangaratta Four Wheel Drive Club is organising a get-together at Omeo on the March Labour Day weekend. Open to any club member this event is well worth attending. With numerous day and overnight trips on offer Omeo 2018 will no doubt be as enjoyable as previous years. A small dedicated group of volunteers put in a huge effort on behalf of the Club to make this event based out of the Omeo campground a success. With its tall poplars and grassy powered camp sites situated on the banks of the Livingstone Creek, the Omeo campground has to be one of the most pleasant in the High Country. Who knows - perhaps the organisers will run a trip into the Wonnangatta re-enactment mentioned above?

HIGH COUNTRY RANGER VISIBILITY TO INCREASE

Any regular visitor to the High Country will understand that one of the greatest challenges faced is the damage caused by vandals. Not only do these thoughtless individuals reflect badly on 4X4 community generally, the offenders rarely get caught.

Funding has been made available for DELWP to put more rangers and enforcement officers on the ground. However, one of the greatest problems they face is the need to actually catch people in the act to be able to prosecute. The way the law stands circumstantial evidence is insufficient to convict these idiots (there is no other printable word that adequately describes the mindset of these individuals). If members see anyone behaving badly don't approach them, Take a photograph of their registration and activity, record the time and provide that information to DELWP or the Police.

FWDV WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS GROUPS TO PROTECT HERITAGE

While evidence of previous aboriginal habitation in Victoria is largely invisible to the average person, it does exist - despite centuries of agricultural and logging pursuits not to mention regular bushfires,. To someone who knows what they're looking for evidence of aboriginal occupation is not hard to find. The Association takes the view that it is better to work with the indigenous groups to protect important heritage sites while retaining access than it is to find large areas being declared culturally significant and public access denied. To that end FWDV has engaged with the Gunaikurnai people who hold aboriginal title through large swathes of Gippsland. Roger Fenwick (x-Parks Victoria) holds the position of CEO for the representative group of the Gunaikurnai people. As Roger is well known to the Association's management discussions have been opened with the