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# TRACK WATCH



**MT SKENE WEEKEND  
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NATIONAL 4X4 SHOW  
SEASONAL GATES INSPECTION  
INTERNATIONAL SCOUT  
BIG RED BASH**



**SEPTEMBER 2017**





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Design and Artwork by Brian Tanner

Cover Photo by Brian Tanner

# From the President



As I write this, it truly feels like winter with the best snowfalls this season hitting the High Country and the Alpine resorts. For those of us who enjoy the white stuff it couldn't be better. Mt Skene permits seem to be working well this year and I was there a few weeks ago, and apart from a few who didn't have permits, there was enough snow to have fun and do the odd recovery or two. In fact my group learnt a great lesson that weekend. Driving on the road and following the ruts made earlier, we came across a section of road no one had been on that weekend. You could see where the ruts were under the snow cover and as we proceeded to follow them, we started to sink into the soft deep snow. The snow between the ruts was packed hard so after doing a small winch recovery we started on the road section beside these ruts. In low range and low gears we literally crawled our way up to the summit and after 8 cars had been over the snow, the new ruts we formed were in the main only 100mm deep. Low tyre pressures (around 14psi) and slow progress without wheel spin saw us get this far. Coming up from the other direction was a convoy having all sorts of trouble as were groups behind us. This was a valuable lesson in the correct way to tackle an obstacle. Oh, and the kids loved the snow play as well making it a great day.

At the last Board meeting we received Michael Coldham's resignation. Michael lives in Yarrawonga and it has become more difficult for him to attend meetings given the distance. I'd like to personally say thanks to Michael for his contribution and he will stay on as our government liaison officer, a role in which he is very good.

Of course as the weather gets colder and wetter, a lot of our members travel north for the sun so it becomes difficult to hold meetings and have a quorum. We have had to miss one Board meeting because of this, but that hasn't slowed down our progress. This time of year also means many tracks are seasonally closed and off limits. At our last Ministerial Advisory Committee meeting with DELWP and Parks Vic, we were given the process for closing tracks from DELWP's perspective. This is a timely document as it reinforces the fact that we are consulted with all closures except those tracks where there is an emergency situation such as floods, fires etc. It incorporates the

MOU we have had and strengthens that.

If you were at the last general meeting in Balwyn I presented our Strategic Plan and the key operational activities that will support that over the next twelve months. The Association has already commenced these activities and there will be more to be done over coming months as tracks re-open and the weather gets warmer.

At the general meeting on September 2nd (to be held at Tarrawingee, the home of Wangaratta 4WD Club), we will be presenting the revised Association Rules. There have been a number of changes made in the interests of removing any anomalies. We have clarified the definition of member and have made way for different classes of Associate membership. We have also clarified the meaning of meetings and made a distinction between general meeting and special general meeting. Previously every general meeting was a special general meeting but that wasn't the case as there usually wasn't anything that we needed to specifically vote on, and a special meeting by the definition meant we could only discuss business relating to the motion which of course we don't. The plan will be to present this to the meeting and then to circulate it to all clubs. We would like to present a special resolution to accept these rules at the AGM in November so we need plenty of time for comment.

Finally, a special thanks to Wayne and the office staff. Over the last financial year the Association has been able to return a surplus meaning we are on the way to being sustainable with limited external funding, which is one of our strategic objectives. We have increased the training business, kept membership numbers at a good level and secured government funding again so the Association is certainly going from strength to strength.

See you on the tracks

**Garry Doyle**  
**President**



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## Cross Country Jeep Club 50th Anniversary Celebration, 15th October, 2017

*Dear Past and present members of the CCJC,*

Past and present members and friends are all welcome to attend this relaxed day to catch up with old friends and reminisce about the last five decades.

You and your family are invited to help us celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Cross Country Jeep Club Inc. A one day event, to be held in Narbethong on Sunday the 15th October 2017.

The event will commence at 10am with morning tea served at 10.30am, a finger food luncheon at 12-1.30pm with afternoon tea following at 2.30pm. Bar service is available, no BYO.

Cost is \$45 per adult and \$20 for children (between 6-12 years of age)

A static vehicle display is planned so if you have a much loved vehicle, bring it along to add to the display. Inside the lodge, there will be further memorabilia, if you have any please bring it along to share with others on the day.

If you wish to attend please contact the President at [president@ccjc.org.au](mailto:president@ccjc.org.au) by the 22nd September, 2017

## Victorian 4WD Show relocates to Lardner Park

Australia's longest running outdoor 4WD Show, the Victorian 4WD Show brought to you by the Land Rover Owners Club of Victoria, will be held at its new home at Lardner Park near Warragul in 2018. The traditional date of the third Sunday in February will be maintained.

Held February 18th, 2018 the Show features:

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## Update...

# Unfair Toll Practices on Victoria

As you may know, the Amarok Club of Victoria (who fairly clearly consist of a large percentage of members with dual cab utes) initiated a campaign to try to have the Victorian Government address the issue that single cab and dual cab utilities of a cab-chassis construction in Victoria are tolled at up to twice that of a regular car or wagon based 4WD. This does not happen in NSW or QLD.

So, in Victoria, any Hilux, Navara, Amarok in a single or dual-cab configuration will be charged up to twice that of a Commodore or Falcon ute, or Prado, Pajero, Patrol Landcruiser wagon, etc.

What's worse, even if the car or wagon are towing, they are still charged as much as 50% less than a dual cab.

The real frustration is the Toll Road owners are Transurban (wholly or partially) and they also own the roads in NSW and QLD where single cab and dual cab utes are tolled THE SAME as cars and 4WD wagons. Victorians are being discriminated against.

So, I approached FWDV and at the last meeting made a small presentation about this. The meeting agreed that all 4WD Clubs should get behind this campaign. The actions so far have been:

1. Letter sent via FWDV to all 4WD Clubs to distribute to Luke Donnellan MP (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) and Ryan Smith MP (Shadow Minister for same portfolio)
2. Letter sent to VACC and RACV as well.
3. Article by Robert Pepper published on Practical Motoring 4x4 Facebook page
4. Herald Sun approached and had interest but did not publish a story.
5. Response received from Luke Donnellan MP indicating the Government has no intention of engaging with Toll Operators to discuss.
6. Discussion with RACV and then RACV made a submission to a Senate enquiry into Toll Roads and tolling practices
7. Amarok Club of Victoria also made a submission to the Senate Enquiry.
8. Amarok Club of Victoria contacted Fairfax/The AGE and article was written and published referencing RACV submission (no mention of campaign by 4WD Clubs)
9. RACV Royal Auto Magazine plan an article about the Tolls and Amarok Club of Victoria in Nov/Dec issue.
10. Amarok Club have contacted and have a meeting scheduled with Jeff Bourman MLC of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party (lot of utes in that demographic)

I thank the involvement of those clubs that have participated and contacted the ACV about the issue. Recommendation now is for as many FWDV/4WD Club members as possible contact their local members ASAP so that the issue is raised early in the lead up to the 2018 State Election.

### Sam Rowe

President  
Amarok Club of Victoria Inc.



# Volunteering has a different meaning for different groups of people

At about 8.00am on 8th February 1968, I shared a moment in history with the pop singer Normie Rowe. I'm not claiming to have known him or to have become mates. It's just that at that precise moment we simultaneously arrived at the army barracks that used to exist in Batman Avenue where AAMI Stadium now stands.

Normie came by car whereas I came by train to Richmond and made the lonely walk down Batman Avenue. He arrived amidst a throng of press reporters and TV cameras. Unfortunately for me, all the screaming young ladies were also there for him. We both faced the grandmothers and middle-aged mothers protesting on behalf of the Save our Sons anti conscription- anti Vietnam War movement.

We were both ushered into the Drill Hall by well-known St Kilda Footballer Carl Ditterich, looking resplendent in his best dress uniform. He was based there and

doing a cushy number as some sort of orderly so that he could continue to play football, whereas Normie and I got sent quite a few thousand kilometres further north to get involved in the real dirty work.

So, what has that got to do with volunteering you say? Well, very soon as young Diggers, Normie, like me, no doubt learned the timeless old army rule of the ordinary soldier, i.e. you never, ever, volunteer for anything!

A wily sergeant I knew used to talk to his soldiers and drop innocuous queries into the conversation. It might have been something as simple as asking a young soldier if he played the piano. Or he sometimes asked who barracked for Collingwood, in which case at least half a dozen blokes would enthusiastically respond. The inevitable next response from the sergeant was, "right, you've just volunteered."

So far, I have been talking about

reluctant volunteers.

Then there are the community minded people living all over the state who act in voluntary capacities in their local area, driving ambulances, being members of the local Country Fire Authority Brigade or the State Emergency Service. Usually, the same people can be found cleaning up school yards, acting in various capacities at local sporting events during weekends or conducting sausage sizzles for charities.

Unsurprisingly they will also be among the first to roll up their sleeves and get stuck in following floods and fires in their region. In talking to a number of these folk, they don't even look at themselves as volunteers, but merely as good neighbours.

And now we should look at a third group of people.....the members of four wheel drive clubs.

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The data I have collected from about 44 different clubs during 2016/2107 Financial Year, paints a picture of people giving up time and effort at some personal financial cost to themselves, to help others or to help the environment, often in parts of the state quite distant from their home towns.

During 2016/2017, 1320 volunteers travelling in 914 4WD vehicles completed a total of 12,283.75 volunteer hours. Based on a 7.66 hour working day, this is the equivalent of 229 weeks of work. In performing this volunteer work, the members paid for their own fuel so they could collectively drive nearly 229,000 kilometres.

Some clubs are also finding volunteering is creating quite a good rapport with specific land managers in various areas. That surely must be a help if the same club subsequently applied for access to an MVO track.

There are certain activities which Four Wheel Drive Victoria must fulfil to qualify for government funding. The three which most readily spring to mind are track clearing, Camp Hosting and providing disaster relief aid. No doubt all of you

#### How many clubs have:

- participated in Clean Up the Bush this year?
- worked on the Aberfeldy Heritage Project?
- helped a disabled or disadvantaged community organization?
- worked on an environmental project?
- worked on a project for elderly citizens?
- been volunteers on a 4WD Club stand at a 4WD Show in Melbourne or regional Victoria?
- worked on the annual clean-up of the little cemetery at Gaffney's Creek? We know other clubs have worked on other clean-ups but unfortunately, they have not reported the details to us.
- sent a work party up to Farina to help with that outback town's restoration?
- acted as marshals or back-up transport for a community event such as a charity ride?
- packed Show Bags for 4WD shows?
- delivered Christmas trees for Oxfam last December?
- been involved in hut maintenance?

or

- asked by land managers to assist under-prepared motorists who have become stranded in the bush?



are aware of those ones but what about all the other good work that 4WD clubs do? How much

of it goes

unrecorded and unacknowledged?

We know there are other activities regularly undertaken and we estimate that we have been unable to report at least 2,000 more volunteer hours and a great deal more travel kilometres.

All the above qualify as volunteer activity on behalf of Four Wheel Drive Victoria.

Consider the list below as the tip of the iceberg" in terms of possible volunteer activities.

The point I am trying to emphasise is that volunteer activities come in many, many forms. Perhaps you or your club have been

involved in something similar and never thought to tell Four Wheel Drive Victoria about it. Perhaps you haven't told us because you considered it would be a case of "blowing your own trumpet".

At the very least, your efforts should be reported to Four Wheel Drive Victoria via email and the statistics provided so that we can show DELWP, Parks Victoria and the Minister for Environment, just how much effort is being given to the Victorian community by four wheel drive club members.

It would be great if you wrote an article for Trackwatch. These are all good news stories that deserve to be heard and acknowledged.

We can provide individuals or clubs with a form showing all the data we would like to capture for every volunteer activity undertaken during 2017 /2018 by our affiliated 4WD Clubs. For those among you who are savvy with modern forms of media, an online submission of volunteer data will shortly be available

through Survey Monkey, which can be linked via email and Facebook.

During 2017/2018, volunteer data collection will be managed by our Projects Officer, Myles



Brown and Board Member, Kat Marmara-Stewart.

**Geoff Kenafacke**  
Midweek 4WD Club



## Editorial: **THREE COMMON MISTAKES MADE WHEN BUYING SUSPENSION**

### **BUYING A BRAND, NOT A SOLUTION**

Buying a brand because you trust it is not a bad option, but buying a brand because you like the logo or the name or because they do cool advertising, means they have a good marketing consultant but not necessarily the best product. Do some research, check the warranty given, ask others who have fitted the product on the vehicle you drive, or one with the same driveline challenges – don't use your old GQ as an indication of what to pick for your new Ranger!

We see a lot of customers who got excited about a bargain purchase over the internet and on installation found it wasn't exactly what they needed. Sometimes it is missing an important part, or worse still included some expensive add-ons which were not required. More often than not the degree of difficulty in contacting the seller and organising a return means they have learned an expensive lesson and have to buy the right product to achieve what they want.

### **MISJUDGING GRAVITY & OTHER LAWS OF PHYSICS**

In order to maintain a lift large or small, your springs must have the capacity to

carry the load and maintain the height. If you guess the weight you need or don't consider the future you may be over-sprung or under-sprung. Either is not good for different reasons. You don't want your nose dragging on the ground or your rear end riding so stiffly that it wants to overtake your front-end on a down-hill run. Make sure you know the weight of the accessories you have fitted and the typical load you are carrying – if in doubt drive over a weigh bridge and take the results to a good suspension shop who will help you work out what you need.

The heavy metal parts of suspension (springs) are what gives you height, but what controls the vehicle at this new height is your choice of shock absorbers or struts. Their capacity to dampen the harshness of compression (when the full weight of the vehicle comes down hard), and rebound (when everything bounces back up in the opposite direction) is what separates a good shock from an average shock. Matching your shock absorbers to your vehicle, weight, spring choices and driving conditions is just as important as getting the spring right.

The right combination makes a surprising difference to your ride quality.

### **BUYING A KIT "OFF THE SHELF"**

Some things go together as natural partners like fish & chips, or wine & cheese – but what if you don't like fish or you prefer a beer to a glass of vino. Don't you want to customise the pairing to your pallet? Buying a kit as defined by that cool brand marketing guru is not necessarily the right solution for your car or your plans for that car.

We always recommend talking to a real person, who can actually have a look over your car, weigh it or add up the weights on the components fitted, talk about your plans for additional accessories, future trips, typical loads. Someone who can give you options at your budget, means you can make an informed choice and have a good chance of getting the right solution for your car.

*Suspension is more complicated than most people realise. Stay tuned for more discussions on suspension in future issues.*

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# CARING FOR THE HIGH COUNTRY

## **Help care for the High Country with these simple tips.**

Four-wheel driving in the high country has it all, challenging tracks, great camping, and beautiful views. To keep the magic of the High Country alive, we all need to pitch in and care for the Alpine environment. Below are a few handy tips on how you can care for the High Country on your next four-wheel drive adventure.

### **Stick to formalised, open tracks**

The High Country, in particular the Alpine environment (above the tree line), is fragile. By driving off track, a single pass by a vehicle is enough to damage sensitive grasses, flowers and shrubs

that make those views so spectacular. After a few passes, a small track becomes evident, encouraging more people to drive it without realising the damage they are doing. With rainfall, snow and frost, this track becomes more and more eroded until it becomes a giant rut. Run-off from this erosion ends up in Alpine wetlands and rivers degrading habitat for fish and other animals.

You can help care for the High Country by driving only on formalised and open tracks. Tell your mates, and always be sure to follow local regulations and adhere to signage.

### **Observe road and track closures**

Seasonal road and track closures are put in place for public safety, to help

preserve tracks and allow for maintenance works to be undertaken. A single pass from a vehicle on a closed track can be enough to cause significant erosion, disturb recent works, and damage tracks. To ensure tracks are well maintained and accessible at other times of the year, seasonal closures are essential.

You can care for the High Country by observing all road and track closures and by planning your trip accordingly. For more information on road and track closures please view the Public Access Map <https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/visiting-state-forests/forest-and-road-closures>



*Summit Track*





## | National 4x4 Outdoors Show Melbourne

The National 4x4 Outdoors Show was held at the Melbourne Showgrounds in August, and again proved to be an excellent showcase for our recreation.

Four Wheel Drive Victoria ran the 4x4 track activities, partnering with VW Amarok V6. At regular intervals across the weekend FWDV provided driving, winching and snatch strap demonstrations on the proving ground. Their efforts drew plenty of spectators that hopefully went away with a greater knowledge of safe recovery and driving techniques.

Alison and Myles, along with numerous volunteers manned the FWDV stand in Hall 3, near the Outback stage.

Alongside the Grand Pavilion, the Toyota Land Cruiser Club, Werribee & District, Pajero, Nissan, Great Western, Toyota Club and the 4x4 Adventure clubs all had interesting displays, and provided the opportunity for members of the public to learn about the benefits of joining a Club.

Despite some challenging weather conditions, this show was one of the best for a number of years, and it was great to see FWDV and various clubs having such a large presence at the Show.

**Brian Tanner**











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## Seasonal Gates Inspections with Parks Victoria

Each year there are gates in National Parks and State Forests all over Victoria shut for Seasonal Closure. If you read the sign at the gates you will see that the Four Wheel Drive Victoria or Victorian Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs logo will be at the bottom. Closures are negotiated and agreed to as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between Four Wheel Drive Victoria and Public Land Managers. The closures are designed to protect the track surface during the wetter months so that the routes are available for us to tour and enjoy for the rest of the year. It also ensures the tracks and roads will be in good condition for fire crews and other operational purposes during the summer months. Those of us who live in fire prone areas appreciate the importance of this aspect of the track network.

As Regional Representative for the Southern Alpine National Park, I have been fortunate to be invited to travel on some seasonal gate checks with Parks Victoria Rangers from the Foothills and Southern Alps Team from the Heyfield and Dargo offices. The trips give me an insight into the condition of the tracks and get updates from Parks Victoria staff on any issues they have relating to four wheel drive use. I am able to pass this up to date information onto Wayne

Hevey and the folk in the office.

Parks Victoria Area Chief Ranger for the Southern Alps Mike Dower said, "the partnership between Parks Victoria and Four Wheel Drive Victoria is first class". "When managing some of Australia's premier fourwheel drive destinations such as Wonnangatta Valley, Blue Rag Range and Billy Goat Bluff, its critical we are doing that in collaboration with Four Wheel Drive Victoria". "Having Greg Rose as the Regional Rep come out and experience what our staff are

faced with when repairing gates in remote mountain areas is a great opportunity for us to share and discuss ideas with our partner".

Checks on the gates are conducted regularly and it is rare that all the gates are found to be intact.

This year I have undertaken two days of gate checks with Ranger Wayne Foon, who has recently returned to Central Gippsland, after some time "over the other side" in the North East District.





# Seasonal Gates Inspections

Our first trip took us through the iconic four wheel drive destination of Dargo in the Victorian High Country to check on conditions at Grant and Talbotville, then climbing up to Cynthia Range on Station Track in the Alpine National Park. The gates we had to check were at the bottom of Herne Spur and Wombat Spur. On a typical July day that was chilly with bands of wind driven rain sweeping across the mountains, Wayne first negotiated the notoriously steep Herne Spur in the dual cab Land Cruiser. The gate at the base of the spur had been breached, the steel tubing cut through. A temporary repair was made using a length of chain, but a permanent repair will have to be made soon. The drive back up the spur was a little more interesting as the track surface was wetter.

The second gate to check was at the bottom of Wombat Spur. Fortunately that gate was intact enabling us to have a quick look around at some of the camping spots before travelling back up Wombat Spur onto Cynthia Range again and then down to Eaglevale, along the Crooked River Road and eventually back onto the bitumen.

Parks Victoria's safety procedures are impressive on these remote area trips with regular radio "welfare checks" and Sarah Noonan, Team Leader at Heyfield, following our progress. Site Safety Surveys are undertaken making onsite assessments to identify potential risk factors.

Two days later Wayne and I headed from Heyfield to the Howitt Road. Here the conditions were completely different. We had a beautiful blue sky but we were well above the snow line with an icy base and a cover of snow making driving conditions suitable only for



experienced four wheel drivers with snow driving experience. Travelling in a single cab Land Cruiser this time, we had a tray full of gear. A combined generator and welding unit, bags full of power tools, hand tools, lengths of pipe, welding masks and gloves; we were on a mission. The Howitt Road gate had been rammed and then cut in several places. Working in twenty-eight centimetre deep snow it took us three and a half hours of cutting, grinding, welding,

brute force with a sledge hammer and lateral thinking to make an effective repair on the gate. Add in the considerable travelling time and the repair of one gate was a full day of Ranger time.

The Seasonal Closure gates are constantly being breached or damaged. Area Chief Ranger Mike Dower and I encountered one earlier in the winter where someone, with more firepower than thought of personal safety, had fired several high calibre rounds into the





# with Parks Victoria



**There is a huge cost to Parks Victoria and the Government purse as a result of gate vandalism; to completely replace a gate costs many thousands of dollars.**

lock box. The shooter had not been able to blow the lock off but it was so damaged that it could not be unlocked. Another repair task for Parks Victoria as it is vital that emergency service personnel be able to get through the gates to assist injured people or conduct searches. Potentially a matter of life and death. There is a huge cost to Parks Victoria and the Government purse as a result of gate vandalism; to completely replace a gate costs many thousands of dollars.

There is a significant cost in staff and contractor wages, materials, fuel, etc. in repairing the gates. All money that would be better spent on other works in our Parks.

Those of us in the responsible four wheel drive community can assist Parks Victoria in a few ways. Explain to our non-club member four wheel driving friends the reason the Seasonal Closure regime is in place. If you are out and about and come across damaged gates or see suspicious behaviour near gates, report it to Parks Victoria or Victoria Police. If you can get details of vehicles, especially a registration number, that helps the authorities. Do not put yourself at risk doing this. Damaging the gates is a criminal offence and will be followed up. If a gate is open when you know it should be closed due to Seasonal

Closure don't be tempted to drive through; it is still a "closed" track or road.

Travelling and working as a volunteer with Parks Victoria Rangers continually reminds me of the wide range of skills that these folk have. Thanks to the whole Foothills and Southern Alps team for the opportunity this winter.

We are very lucky in Victoria to have access to so many fantastic tracks. During winter there are still plenty of great places to drive and camp. If you are unsure which tracks are closed refer to [parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://parkweb.vic.gov.au).

**By Greg Rose.**

Four Wheel Drive Victoria Regional Representative Southern Alpine National Park.

Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland



**Some of the damage inflicted on gates**



# BIG RED BASH

What do four club members from Victoria, a couple from the leafy Eastern suburbs, a husband and wife from Mildura, another couple from Melton, a bloke from Adelaide, a couple from Canberra and some Volkswagen company executives from Sydney have in common..?

We all own Amaroks and are heading to the Big Red Bash in Birdsville...

How did this all come together?

Volkswagen Australia had a Facebook competition asking "which of the musical artists from the 2017 Big Red Bash line up would you like to take for a drive in your Amarok", and 25 words or less later, winners are grinners.

I was asked to confirm the route and lead the convoy for Volkswagen, and having attended the Big Red Bash the year before on the inaugural Amarok convoy and travelled all over the Channel Country for many years, was happy to get that going and before you knew it, we were (nearly) all having an "Ice-Breaker" meal and a beer at the Demo Club in Broken Hill, getting to know each other before heading off Saturday morning for Tibooburra and Cameron Corner.





Story & photos by Sam Rowe - Amarok Club





Shaking the ice off swags, tents and awnings early on Saturday morning, we got all of the final trip paperwork out of the way, had a quick trip discussion, and fuelled on caffeine and anticipation, we were off. Nine vehicles underway in convoy and 175 kilometres later we pulled in to the roadhouse at Packsaddle for a comfort break, a further coffee and a stretch of the legs. After the obligatory stubby holder and touring sticker purchase and with the sun high in a clear blue sky and good spirits, the Amaroks hit the road again with lunch planned for Tibooburra. We had already had the drone up in the air, soaking in the vastness of the NSW outback and the dust of the roads, with shining Amarok windscreens happily glinting in the sun.

A quick refuel in Tibooburra and a chance for those that had not been there before, to explore and photograph the upturned boat the early explorers dragged up by bullock hoping to find the great inland sea. Tibooburra, "place of many rocks" is right and as our last two vehicles joined us here (the friendly folk from Volkswagen as part of the convoy to see how the Amaroks handled the long paddock), we had our own Rok Formation.

With the sun beginning to get lower in the North West, we followed it along to Fort Grey Rd and the dog fence at Cameron Corner, and with a final photo stop on the last sand dune into the dog fence gate, we pulled in to a great welcome from Fenn and Cheryl at the pub. After a quick camp set up, we settled in for a few beers to discuss the day, and

wait for the welcome spread of food Melissa and Cheryl had prepared for us. Due to the wet weather a few days before, we were a little unsure which road we would take in the morning, but trusting the fine weather now with us, we all turned in, confident in a good outcome.

Sunday morning and the road heading West from Cameron Corner to Merty Merty and the Strzelecki Tk was still closed to vehicles with a GCM over 3000kg. It was very disappointing to see many 4WDs still towing, clearly over weight, yet ignoring the road signs and departing Cameron Corner to Merty Merty anyway. If they had any accidents there would almost certainly be no insurance and the risk of heavy fines if caught. The errant vehicles seemed to have little regard for possible road damage, which for the locals is expensive to repair. We had seven of our eleven vehicles towing, so elected to take the fully open

North East Cameron Corner Rd to Santos, Orientos and come almost at the Dig Tree - our eventual destination anyway.

Our North East route through the far edge of the Strzelecki Desert was quite spectacular, sandy early on and tending to gibber as we progressed. Personally, having driven the Merty Merty road many times, it was a refreshing and welcome change to take the alternate route. The second half in particular was a wonderful drive and the ever changing landscape was a joy to behold.

"Relentlessly Barren" my son remarked - yet still great cattle country. The drone went up again and all was going tickety-boo until we lost the front shackle bolt from a leaf spring on a camper trailer. A search for the bolt proved fruitless, we could not locate a substitute, so a 3/8" drive extension bar was inserted, cable-tied and duct taped thoroughly into position.





With regular initial checking it proved itself an effective "bush mechanics fix". (This repair eventually lasted all the way to Birdsville and back home to Victoria when a suitable replacement bolt could not be sourced in Innamincka or Birdsville.)

When we joined Adventure Way (great name for a road), it was 46 kilometres back West to Innamincka for those that needed fuel or a short 25 kilometres on to the Dig Tree - our planned destination. We split the group here - those needing fuel to Innamincka, those not - off to the Dig Tree to set up camp.

Interestingly with the fuel, I had a 2.0L 4cyl manual Amarok, with three adults on board towing a tare weight 840kg Ultimate Camper. I was averaging about 13.4 L/100. Another Amarok with the 3.0L V6, two adults on board, towing a tare weight 1230kg Tivan, was bettering me by nearly 1 litre per 100 km. Having filled the 80L tank in the 2.0L at Cameron Corner, I eventually made it all the way to Birdsville with 90L - some 705 kms.

Back to the trip. I met Ranger Col at the Dig Tree and leaving the temporarily depleted convoy at the gate, he escorted me to suggest a couple of nice camp sites where we could fit our 11 vehicles, and I chose a great spot by the Cooper Creek that had formed a sort of Billabong. Col even had a ute load of firewood for us and as the



stragglers needing fuel arrived back, we had a great fire going on the bank of the Billabong, watching Pelicans, Eagles and other birds fishing. That night we had planned a "Onesie" night and shared plates of food from all vehicles for our meal. Great fun and some really good tucker. We had Jolly Green Giants, Tiggers, Unicorns and some dummkopf in Lederhosen, serving German beer and sausage, chicken wings, cheese platters and more.

The previous evening, we had arranged to meet Col with the whole group in the morning for a historical discussion by the Dig Tree. The Dig Tree is actually on private land owned by Nappa Merrie Station (720,000ha) and Col is also

employed by them to look after the camp site and be a sort of custodian of the Dig Tree. The talk he gave us was excellent and took about 40 mins and was very informative, with some historical aspects I had never heard before.

After farewelling Col, we headed back out to the main road and then north on the Bullo Development Rd (or Planet Arrabury Rd) to the short link road that takes you to Cordillo



Downs Rd. We paid a visit to the giant Cordillo Downs Woolshed (at one stage home to 85,000 sheep with Cadelga and Haddon Stations, and these were all sheared in one season at Cordillo) and past the ruins of Cadelga Station to eventually join the Birdsville Developmental Road, about 116 kilometres east of Birdsville.

A quick refuel in Birdsville and a faster beer as it was now 5pm, we still had to get another 35 kilometres out to Big Red to our camp for the next 4 nights. We arrived about 30mins later at Big Red and were shown through to the VIP Sponsors area down front and to the side of the stage and arena, and before too long, we were all set up, the sun was going down, the fire lit and the stars came out.

I'll leave the story here, but suffice to say that great people, excellent music and some V6 Amarok test drives in the Simpson kept us all entertained and if all goes well, looking forward to doing it all again next year.

**Sam Rowe**  
Amarok Club



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## Volunteering with Parks Victoria

# IDLERS 4WD CLUB ASSIST AT LAKE EILDON NP

Idlers 4WD Club of Victoria has once again gathered a number of its members together to assist Parks Victoria (PV) at both Lake Eildon National Park (LENP) and Cathedral Ranges State Park (CRSP). It will come as no surprise to any serious four wheel driver that financial constraints has had a marked effect on what PV state wide can now achieve by way of continued park maintenance or serious infrastructure improvements. To this end, Idlers have, over a number of years now, offered their services to PV at both of the parks referenced above.

May I digress a little.....

Idlers was established in 1995 and is a four wheel drive club catering mainly for the retired or semi-retired person. Its 250+ members live mostly in Melbourne

but the Club does have a smattering of rural and interstate memberships. The Club is able to carry out many activities during the usual working week, which has the distinct advantage of avoiding those busy weekend times. Whilst very many others of its members travel interstate to warmer climes on extended or remote area trips (especially during Victoria's colder months), there are those who prefer, for whatever reason, to 'hang around town'. For that reason, the Club created its Community Support Trips. They are generally of a week or less duration and incorporate a community benefit activity. A base camp may be involved and the activity could be bushfire or flood relief work or, in association with public land managers, activities such as track clearing, refuge

hut rebuilding and maintenance (in association with the Victorian High Country Huts Association (VHCHA), or parks restoration work.

.....now back to what I was saying: 8 members of Idlers met for morning tea at Alexandra prior to continuing on and setting up camp at Devil Cove in the LENP by mid-day of Sunday 4th June. Because the 'ethos' of Idlers is to sit around the campfire at the end of the day, prior arrangements were made for PV's management to supply a load of firewood. Although the campground gates were closed, someone had accessed the area by boat prior to our arrival and made prior good use of this 'free gift' leaving the volunteers with little alternative but to seek replenishment from PV..





Following the regulatory Job Safety Analysis (JSA) at the Rangers Office on Monday morning, the volunteers and PV staff split up into 3 teams to tackle a variety of jobs. The elimination of a walking track 'wash out' and its replacement by a rock culvert was one job, whilst fencing repairs and placement of reflectorized roadside posts were others. Tuesday entailed a 20 km trip by all volunteers and some PV staff to the Jerusalem Creek camping areas for the preparatory clean-up of the 72 camping sites there prior to their re-opening for the Melbourne Cup weekend. This pre-empted work that Idlers undertake with another scheduled working bee late every October and the Camp Hosting it undertakes on behalf of PV and Four Wheel Drive Victoria for that extra long weekend. A directional sign not able to be placed in October 2016 due to major flooding at the ford was now able to be installed, and afterwards lunch was taken at the now very docile creek crossing. After the lunch break, all vehicles undertook fallen tree removal on the Taylors Creek Tk and White Tk. A substantial clean-up was required at O'Toole Flat because of inconsiderate and disgusting occupation by campers during the previous weekend. Enough said !! Because of this last task, return to the Devil Cove camp was just prior to the setting sun.

Cathedral Ranges State Park (specifically Cooks Mill and Neds Gully camping areas) was on the agenda for Wednesday and a 50 km journey via Taggerty by volunteers and staff was the way to go. This park is a pleasure to work at because there is very little 'wear and tear' evident from one year to the next. Staff explained that the 'clientele' here is different to that of LENP. The work required was mainly bollard placement and replacement, sign placement, minor tree removal, campfires clean-up and some fencing repair.

Thursday (being a short working day to allow for the enjoyment of the PV sponsored BBQ lunch) was also the day scheduled to finish off all the projects at LENP not completed on the previous Monday. The only additional work item was the location of, and tapping into, a 50mm poly pipe water main that had been buried under the walking track some 25 years previously. Senior staff (as in 'old time') reckoned "it should be about there and probably 300mm to 600mm underground". Well he was a little off target....by about 1 metre !! When found, a new drinking tap was installed.... and not before time !! Overnight Thursday was the only time that rain was encountered. Since it was a Melbourne winter that had been a very lucky break. There was a Plan B if the weather had been too inclement; it was to repaint a lot of the park's furniture



indoors at the depot. I suspect that that work will be on the agenda for the October working bee.

Everyone broke up camp on Friday morning and nobody would have been aware that Idlers had enjoyed the work, the campfires, the companionship and the convenience of the toilets and hot showers. Won't you join us next time?

Participants: Iris & Ned Cunningham

Werribee), Tony Evans (Glen Waverley) Jean & Greg McDonald (Benalla) Bev & Ray Westwood (Narre Warren) Henry Verhoeven –Team Leader (Steels Creek)

If you would like to join Idlers as a visitor on one of its working bees, contact Henry Verhoeven on 0409 140 775 or at [henrycv1@bigpond.com](mailto:henrycv1@bigpond.com)





# TRAINING COURSES 2017

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- Saturday 21st October - PC17021 - Practical
- Tuesday 17th November - PC171118 - Theory
- Saturday 18th November - PC171118 - Practical
- Tuesday 5th December - PC171202 - Theory
- Saturday 9th December - PC171202 - Practical

### CHAINSAW COURSES



- November 17th - CS171119
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#### Training Course Refund Policy

Situations occur where for various reasons courses are cancelled by Four Wheel Drive Victoria (FWDV) or students need to cancel. Below describes the refund policy that is applicable.

**Fee refunds:** If students are unable to attend the course that they are registered for, the following refund fees below apply:

- 30 days prior - less 10% of course cost;
  - 29 days - 15 days - less 25% of course cost;
  - 14 days to 8 days - less 50% of course cost;
  - 7 days prior - no refund allowed
- Refund applications must be made in writing to FWDV.*

FWDV agree that they will allow for one transfer in a 12 month period to another course date without penalty, with a minimum of 8 days notice, (see below).

**Transfer to other courses:** Students can transfer to any other course up to 8 working days prior to commencement at no cost. Students transferring to another course 7 working days or less prior to commencement will be required to pay a transfer fee of \$50.

**Course Cancellations:** FWDV will make a full refund of all fees paid should a course be discontinued. FWDV reserves the right to cancel a course if a minimum number of participants are not achieved or for Occupational Health and Safety reasons. Should the students desire to take an alternative course with FWDV, fees will be fully transferrable to that course, for one transfer in a 12 month period. In the event of a course for which the student was enrolled being unavailable or no acceptable alternative course is available, fees are fully refundable.

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# The Gap Getaway/Mt Skene Weekend July 2017

## Friday

Our group all met at the BP service station on the highway at Little River. We had 10 vehicles in total for this weekend away. We began our journey towards the High Country, with a brief stop in Healesville to gather one of our group, and then made our way to Marysville. Here we all topped up with Alpine fuel and made Marysville our lunch break, a chance to stretch legs and let the kids have a play.

We arrived at "The Gap Getaway" around 2pm and checked into our accommodation and unpacked. No snow at this point. It was still early and Warren and I lead the group down to Woods Point. We turned onto Johnson Hill Track and weaved our way down to Gooley Creek and the little hut and had some fun with the many river crossings in that area. We returned via the many crossings and back up onto Johnshill track and back to Woods Point. Some of our group had not been to the iconic Woods Point pub so this was an opportunity for those members to take a look and have the obligatory beer.

Leaving Woods Point we followed the road just out of town where we turned right onto Tiger Spur track. The ascent from the road was quite steep and slippery and a few of our group needed to reduce tyre pressures in order to tackle the climb. With that climb behind us we continued along Tiger Spur track coming out on the Woods Point Matlock road. Tiger Spur track is a great track and a good alternative to travelling the main road to or from Woods Point.

We returned to the Getaway where we were greeted by our wonderful hosts, Brian and Heather Prothero.

After a feast of hot BBQ food, we all settled around the bar and fabulous heater for a good night of laughter, singing and socialising. The night was becoming increasingly cold and we all prayed for snow.

## Saturday

We awoke to a completely changed landscape. Overnight we got SNOW. Not a lot but enough to make the whole landscape white and have the 4bys covered with the white fluffy stuff. This was very exciting as this was what we had hoped for.

We all enjoyed a hot breakfast of bacon, eggs, snags and toast, thanks to our hosts.



Before we could begin our day, we had to help get a few of our vehicles started as with the overnight freezing temps we had vehicles with frozen lines. This did not take long and soon we were on our way towards Mt Skene.

We left the Gap, and turned onto the main road heading for Matlock. We then turned right onto the Walhalla Road. There was plenty of snow. We made a brief stop to show everyone the sad Walhalla Road (Mt Victor Hut) which is slowly disappearing down the mountain. Turning onto Mt Selma Road, we stopped at Christians Hut briefly before continuing on. We stopped about half way along Mt Selma road for a coffee and a chance for everyone to have some fun playing in the snow. We were so lucky to have snow for our entire journey.

We then continued on, turning left onto South road and then left onto the Jamieson/Licola road.

We made a detour onto Lazarini Spur Track to show everyone Crows Hut. There is very little turning room at this hut so we did it in groups of three and all met back at the Lazarini Spur/Licola intersection.

Just a few metres from this intersection we turned right onto a little unknown track which ran parallel with the main road. The track was very overgrown, rutted and rocky in places but a good track nonetheless. We did meet another group on this track and after some manoeuvring managed to get our group passed. After a few kms we popped back out onto the main road.

As we got closer to the summit of Mt Skene the snow on the road became thicker. This is what we had come for, to see snow (some for the very first time) and driving in snow. It was awesome. We then arrived at our destination, Mt Skene. Everyone was so excited and although it was cold we all had a ball. The kids made snowmen, and of course the snowball fights. The snow then began to fall heavily, it was amazing. Some of the group had seen snow but never had it falling on them, so this day everyone got their wish.

The weather soon deteriorated and it was time to move on. We had plenty of thick snow on the road for quite a distance. We needed to stay in the wheel tracks with some momentum. We continued down to Jamieson and then on to Kevington. We stopped at the iconic pub for a quick drink and stretch of legs.

Just out of Kevington we turned right onto Flourbag Track and then onto Moonlight Spur Track. This is a long track with some ruts and rocky step sections, made just a little more challenging because it was wet. As we neared the top of Moonlight Spur track we came across a very rutted section.



The ruts were about 1200 deep and off camber. Tackling this section, we also had to be aware of a tree as we climbed. With power on there wasn't much room between the rut and the tree. We did have to winch one of our group but we all conquered this section and eventually came out on Ryan's Spur Track. It was getting dark by this stage as we made our way back to "The Gap". Brian and Heather had a wonderful roast meal with lashings of thick gravy ready for us on our return, and it's fair to say we were all a bit hungry after such a big day (and a bit tired as well).

Most of the group headed to bed fairly early Saturday night, (think we wore them out).

### Sunday

We again started our day with a hearty hot breakfast of bacon, eggs, baked beans, snags and toast before packing up and saying farewell to Brian and Heather. They are wonderful hosts, very friendly. The Gap is a fabulous place to spend a weekend, warm and toasty in the bar area, great food and plenty of it and accommodation was warm and inviting as well. Massive thanks to Brian and Heather.



We left the Gap and headed up to Mt Matlock. There wasn't any snow left but no one was worried. We continued along Ryan's Spur track following the ridge line tracks. We had a stop at Ryan's Spur Hut for a morning cuppa before continuing towards Mt Terrible. A couple of the ridge line tracks proved challenging with some of our group opting for easier options. Two of our group (Dave and Tim) managed to drive up one track which always proves to be challenging. They did it while the rest of us watched and drove around.

Mt Terrible track is becoming more and more rutted with the constant traffic.

Nearing the top of Mt Terrible, Tim decided to try another little side track with a huge rock shelf. (He did get into trouble). Unable to proceed, he had to be winched back. No damage except some frayed nerves.

We parked at Mt Terrible and were blessed with a rare and clear day looking out over the Alps. We could see Mt Buller, the Bluff and Mt Skene very clearly and they did look picturesque all snow-capped.

There was still a dusting of snow at Mt Terrible as well making for a very pleasant stop.



We then headed down Newman's track coming out on the Eildon/Jamieson Road. We had lunch at Alexandra before heading home via the Hume. We had a fantastic weekend away and ticked all the boxes for our great trip. Waking up to snow, snow falling, driving in snow, some of the best scenery the

High Country has to offer, and some great tracks as well. Add in an awesome group of people, a great accommodation and you have a recipe for a truly great weekend. This is why we own 4wheel drives.

**Shez Tedford**



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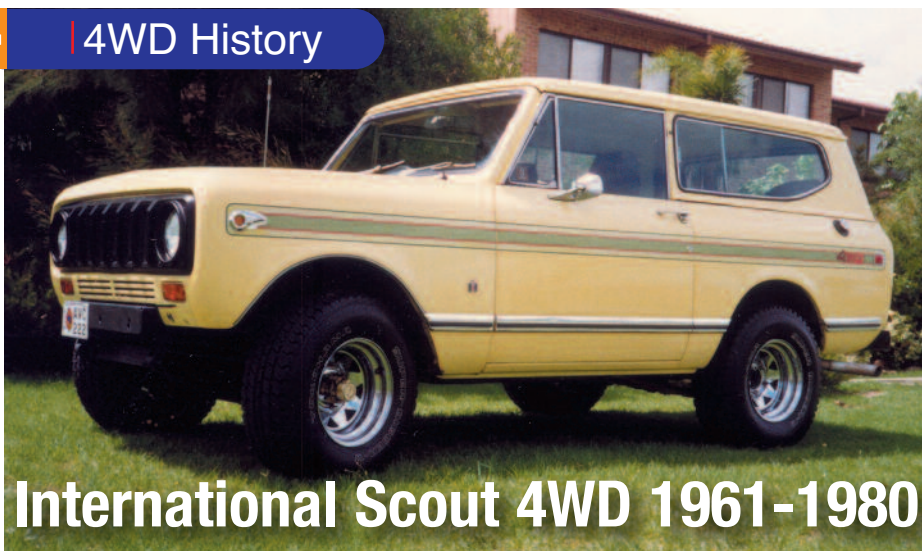
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**International Scout 4WD 1961-1980**

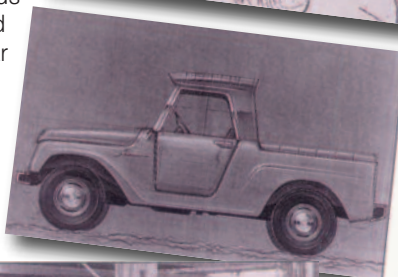
## How a doodle became a top selling 4x4!

**For a company that built its reputation on reliable and innovative farming equipment, the successful production of a modern 4WD wagon seems unlikely.**

But this is just what occurred when the popularity of four-wheel drives in the late fifties was too much for IH to ignore. They noted that existing 4x4s all had their origins due to World War II, so they set about designing a 4x4 which had the toughness of a Jeep, but introduced car-like comforts. In many regards the Scout is the first 4x4 that brought decent comfort and styling to a 4x4 and converted it from being a utilitarian workhorse to everyday drive. International had always catered for the farming community and had built up a strong line-up of trucks over several decades. So much so, that in 1951 the one millionth IH truck went on the road. IH had a successful line-up of pickup trucks, so it was logical that they should enter the 4x4 market. First came the R Series four-wheel drive light trucks,

which evolved into the more popular Travelall and Travelette models. These models provided the company with plenty of expertise in building 4x4s. The task of building a new more car-like 4x4 was given to IH design chief Ted Ornas. He had previously designed IHs postwar truck cab interiors. The design brief set down that the new

vehicle should, "replace the horse(!)", and be as flat surfaced as possible, as this had proved successful for Jeep. The design team were not happy with these directives and it was Ornas that first doodled a theme for the new vehicle at his kitchen table. He proposed that the vehicle should have fibreglass panels. The sketch he did was approved and the go ahead given for a quarter scale model. This was also approved, although fibreglass costing proved too expensive. A full size model was commissioned in November 1959 and the team were shortly after given the go ahead for production. The Scout (as it was called) was an impressive 4WD that for the first time took International away from its agricultural roots towards what was to become a large recreation market.



**Above: This unpretentious sketch by International Harvester design chief Ted Ornas was completed at his kitchen table in 1958. It was the first sketch of the yet to be designed IH 4WD sport utility. From sketch to production was a rapid affair with the first IH 4WD arriving on the market in 1961.**



**Left: A Jeep CJ and a Scout styling model are compared during the design process**



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The Scout was the first US produced 4WD that challenged the Jeep on the domestic market. It was built on International truck philosophy, being a sturdy and tough utility. The vehicle was built on a 100-inch wheelbase, compared to the 81-inch of the Jeep CJ-5. It was slab sided, with full wheel openings. A concave area housed the headlights and a rectangular mesh grille. High mounted round tail lights flanked the tailgate at the rear. It had a 5-ft cargo bed that was integrated with the three passenger cabin. Rooflines included a short pickup style cab and full length 'Travel top' that gave the Scout the look of a 2-door station wagon.

On November 30, 1960 the first Scout came off the assembly line. It officially went on sale on January 18th, 1961 at base prices of US\$1,598 for 2WD and US\$1,948 for 4WD models. It was powered by a 152 cid four cylinder engine derived from IH's 304-cid V8. The name 'Scout' was a nickname used for the project, and it stuck, becoming the official product name endorsed by the board. Demand far exceeded expectations and production schedules were increased from 50 units a day to 100 units by February 1961. For the first time in IH's history, an assembly line went to double shifts. By November 1961, Scout sales had reached 25,000 units. It was soon to become the best selling vehicle in the company's history. The fully enclosed Travel Top version was the most popular model, despite projections that the pickup would be the best seller. Similarly, 4WD was chosen by 80 percent of customers. The original Scout remained virtually unchanged, but there followed a number of ongoing updates and minor revisions.

#### 1963 Scout

By this year the Scout had gained so much in popularity that around 75% of sales were to non-business users. Other manufacturers wanted a share of this rapidly emerging recreation market, with Jeep releasing a luxury version Wagoneer, while General Motors and Ford introduced deluxe specifications to their pickup models. The 1963 Scout was offered with optional roll-down front windows as an alternative to the standard two-section, horizontal sliding units. The Scout was unchanged for 1964.

#### 1965 Scout

The Scout underwent the first significant engineering and styling changes in 1965. The latest Scout had an anodised aluminium grille with horizontal "International" lettering in its centre. The body was fitted with an "IH" emblem. The older removable wind-



**What might have been. A 1980 concept (very much like the Range Rover) that was proposed as the 1984 Scout. Production ceased in 1980 and this model never went into production.**

screen was replaced with a more substantial permanent unit. The windscreen wipers were mounted at the windscreen base instead of the top cross-bar as on previous models.

Standard equipment was improved to include a safety styled steering wheel, roll-down windows, tension adjustable sided window vents, rotary door locks that could be activated from the vehicle's interior or exterior, push button door handles with separate key locks and suspended pedals.

Externally the Scout had revised drip mouldings below the windows and a new tailgate release lever that was operable by one hand. The base Scout 800 was priced at US\$2,244.

In 1965 Ford released the 4WD Bronco in direct competition with the Scout. The Bronco was aimed at the growing leisure market. Sales of the Scout had increased every year since its inception in 1961.

#### 1966

1966 saw International expand the Scout's market potential by introducing two new upmarket Sportop models with front bucket seats with matching rear seats, and liberal use of interior coverings.

The Sportop Scout was available with soft or hard top and had a slantback design. During the year International introduced a larger version of the Scout's 4-cylinder engine and the V-266 V8 as options. The new Comanche 4-196 engine was available for all 1966 Model 800 Scouts.

#### 1967

The Scout was offered in Utility, Custom or Sportop versions. Additional safety equipment was added to all models.



#### 1968

The '4-196' engine became the standard Scout engine in 1968, and the turbocharged version was dropped. A number of minor specification changes took place during this model year. During 1968 the 200,000th Scout was produced at International's Fort Wayne facility.

#### 1969

1969 was another big year for International with significant updates to the Scout range, including a single lever transfer case and for V8 models a new 3-speed automatic transmission.

#### 1970

A Limited Edition Scout - the SR-2 - was released in 1970. Only 2,500 of the easily recognisable vehicles were released.

#### 1971

The Scout 800c, or as it was more commonly called, the Scout II went into production. The Scout II was 11 inches longer than the original S800 model, and 3 inches wider.

#### 1975

The Scout returned to the 4-cylinder 196 cu-in engine as the standard powerplant.

#### 1980

The final year of Scout production saw significant improvements in rust protection, a new Dana 300 transfer case and diesel turbocharger. Due to International Harvester's financial issues, the final Scout rolled out on 31st October, 1980 after a production run of 523,674 units. Designs for a new 1981 Scout were completed, but unfortunately never went into production.

**Brian Tanner**







## First Aid Training... be prepared

If an accident happened and someone was injured on your next trip, or even on your way to your next club day, would you know what to do? Perhaps just as importantly, would you know what not to do?

If your answer is "no" or "it depends" even "I think so", then you need to get some first aid training. As a member of an adventure based organisation, we should all consider a formal First Aid Qualification as part of our overall duty of care.

First aid training courses are designed to equip people with the tools they need in an emergency situation until trained medical responders arrive on the scene.

First aid training courses only take a few hours to complete. Think about it. By taking a few hours out of your week you could acquire the skills necessary to help someone in an emergency. First aid training courses can be found to accommodate anyone; your club could research the various types of training available and find out which one will suit you best.

I personally believe everyone should take the time to learn first aid. Take the whole family along. First aid training can be taught to anyone who is over the age of ten. Training in first aid can help you help someone else whether they have a minor incident or a life threatening condition.

I recall with some emotion, a presentation to a small remote community, they had just completed a year-long program (Certificate III in Outdoor Recreation) and in order to finalise their qualification they had to complete a first aid course. "Uncle Bob" was 6'10, a big strong man and well into his fifties; as he stood in front of the small crowd and proudly received his Certificate, tears welled in his eyes as he thanked all those that had helped him throughout the program. In particular he mentioned that he had wished he had done his first aid training before today as he recalled how on two occasions he had not been able to help his mates when they needed him the most. If he had done his first aid training, "they may well still be alive and with us today". Sobering stuff!

First aid is exactly that, it is the first response when an accident occurs and can make all the difference until professional help arrives. What are a few hours out of your day if it may help save someone's life?

Why is it always someone else's responsibility? Do your part and sign up for first aid training right away. You never know when an accident may happen. It is never too soon to be prepared.



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