



# Free Wheeling

Official Newsletter of the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

Registration No A0002184F

JULY 2004

30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year  
1974-2004



Lake Cobbler – June 2004



Merringtons – May 2004



The Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc is an affiliated club of the Victoria Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc (VAFWDC) [www.vafwdc.org.au](http://www.vafwdc.org.au), and a member of Tread Lightly! Australia [www.treadlightlyaustralia.com.au](http://www.treadlightlyaustralia.com.au)

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## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2003/2004

President	John Partridge	0428 331211
Vice President	Ian Warburton	9754 2341
Treasurer	Roger Baird	9704 9045
Secretary	Lesley Peters	9540 0007

## GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Assistant Secretary	Stephen Boyle	9754 4412
New Member Contact	George Pledger	9547 4021
Trip Coordinator	Ashley Martin	0438 600904
Social Secretary	Rosalie Hughes	9706 2966
Projects Coordinator	Carl Surtees	9706 2692
Insurance Officer	Gerrard Clarke	9707 3013
Librarian	Barry Leitch	5996 6662
Web Manager	Anthony Van Buiten	0413 784074
Association Delegate	John Partridge	0428 331211
Club Historian	Phil Alder	9754 8487
Training Officers	Mark Kochan	9763 2052
	Ashley Martin	0438 600904
	John Partridge	0428 331211
Newsletter Editor	Lesley Peters	9540 0007
	lespet03@hotmail.com	

**Registered Name:** Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc

Registration No: A002184F

**All correspondence:** *The Secretary*

VFWDC Inc  
PO Box 778  
Dandenong Vic 3175

Web Site: [www.vfwdc.com](http://www.vfwdc.com)

Meetings: Held first Tuesday of each month excluding January (no meeting). The November meeting is held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday due to Melbourne Cup.

Location: Library Meeting Room  
Stuart Street  
Dandenong Vic 3175

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT July 2004

Hello and welcome to another month's *Free Wheeling*.

Wow time flies! Already it's nearly time for our Annual General Meeting and time for people to have a think whether they would like to help out with the running of our club. It is likely that there will be a couple positions vacant and it would be great to see a few new faces on the committee of management. What is involved? We have a meeting on the last Tuesday of each month, which runs for 2-3 hours. It can be a very rewarding experience for those who want to put that little extra effort in. Have a think about it, but remember, nominations need to be submitted by the July general meeting.

Unfortunately, there has been a bit of damage at the Merringtons camping ground caused by some irresponsible motor bikers. Around 30 of the trees we planted were destroyed, as well as grass ripped up. The DSE and Rawson police have the culprits licence numbers and are determined to teach them a lesson. It is important that we don't let episodes like this make us despondent and think 'why bother'. I have had numerous contact from other clubs and club members who have congratulated us on our efforts and are keen to help out with future working bees. Also the association for motorbikes, AMTRA, has expressed their disappointment about the damage caused by these individuals and would also like to help out with any future works.

By the time you read this, George and his group of modern day explorers would have started on their trip to the northern most point of Australia, the Cape York Peninsula. This would have to be one of the best four-wheel drive destinations in our great country. We wish them well and look forward to reading about their experiences.

Don't forget our AGM Dinner coming up on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August. It will be held in the McArthur function room at the Stamford Hotel. There is room for 100 people and we have our own bar at our disposal. This is shaping up to be a great night, so make sure you get your deposits in at the July meeting to ensure you don't miss out.



# MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

## 1 JUNE 2004

Meeting held at Dandenong Library and opened at 8.10pm by John Partridge.

**ATTENDANCE:** 31 members present.

### **APOLOGIES:**

Roger Baird, Tom & Sheila Corrigan, Aline Van Buiten, Yvonne Hempston, Judy Murray, Karyl McGlinn, Terry Johninke, Steve & Jill Boyle, David & Rosalie Hughes, Ray & Dawn Brown.

### **VISITORS:**

Welcome to Paul Gillis, Peter Pink, Leanne Young, Roy Salter, and Les Beer.

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Minutes of May meeting as per Newsletter.  
Accepted: Sue Lyne. Seconded: Tania Utting.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:**  
Nil.

### **CORRESPONDENCE IN:**

- Letter from Four Wheel Drive Victoria advising that they have joined a new scheme to improve the range of Public Liability Insurance for affiliated clubs. The Association has become a member of Life Planning Association of Victoria – a non-profit community body in operation for 33 years and the umbrella body for 27 Life Activities Clubs throughout Victoria.
- Letter from Oxfam expressing their thanks for the "tremendous support" of VFWDV in their annual fundraising delivery of Christmas trees. Our contribution of approx \$3150 helped to boost their profit by 44%, a record breaking increase.
- Insurance Renewal Notice from TCIS. Follow-up letter stressing that serious consideration be given to moving to an alternative provider.
- Promotional material from Auswide 4WD Services, Moorabbin.
- Letter of introduction and promotional material from Fourby Fitouts & Equipment Hire, a newly-formed business located in Upper Beaconsfield who carry out installation of storage systems for 4wds etc. (Brochures available.)
- Letter and flyer from property "Twin River Cabins" located in Jamieson, offering 10% discount on accommodation to the club. (Need copy of correspondence to receive discount.)
- Correspondence from Four Wheel Drive Victoria enclosing Instructor Resource documentation and CD for use by Driver Training Unit Instructors.
- Also received from Four Wheel Drive Victoria:
  - Minutes of March General Meeting.

- Notice of May General Meeting.
- Notice of Regional General Meeting to be held 26 June in Warragul.
- Notes of April Presidents' Meeting.
- Proficiency Driver Training Certificates from FWDVic for following members: Steve Boyle, Jill Boyle, Barry Leitch, Verville Rodger, Michael Rodger, David Dawn, Ian Webber. Congratulations to all.
- Letter from Tread Lightly! Australia acknowledging renewal of our membership, together with Membership Certificate for Year 2005. Also copies of their newsletter, *Footpaths*.
- Copy of Reference Manual from VKW-737 Radio Network.
- Copy of Network News – newsletter of the Australian National 4WD Network.
- Various club magazines.

### **CORRESPONDENCE OUT:**

- Email from Ashley to FWDVic requesting Driver Training Certificates (as above).
- Letters to Marylands Country House and Whitecrest Oceanside Resort (Apollo Bay) requesting assistance with this year's AGM Raffle prize.
- Newsletter.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

In the absence of the Treasurer, Ian Warburton reported:

Petty Cash:	\$ 38.05
Cheque Account:	\$1,690.25
Term Deposit:	\$6,797.47

Accepted: Ian Webber. Seconded: Chris McGlinn.

### **TRIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:**

#### **➤ Forthcoming Trips/Events:**

Ashley reviewed trips as listed in the Club Calendar. In addition, JP listed the following trips which were included after distribution of newsletter:

*25-26 September:* Advanced Training – AM.

*16-17 October:* Proficiency Training – AM.

*30 Oct-2 Nov (Cup W'end):* Wonnangatta Roast – JP.

*27-28 November:* Annual Mayford Fishing Trip – AM.

*4 December:* Christmas Party – JP.

JP pointed out that members submitting proposed trip data should adhere to the new Trip Classifications (as circulated with previous newsletter and again this month).

JP also reiterated the importance of members ensuring they include their name/info in Trip Log. Otherwise, make contact with the trip leader within a reasonable time to advise intention of attending a trip.

#### **➤ Trip Reports:**

*Merringtons Tree Planting:* JP reported on a very successful day which involved the planting of approx 130 trees at Merringtons Flat. Latrobe Valley 4WD Club was also involved and DSE put on a bbq lunch. John thanked those members who attended for their input.

*O'Tooles Night Run:* Michael Rodger provided a brief overview of the night drive – read in detail in the *Trip Report* section.

JP reported that a further working bee in the area has been planned for later in the year – probably December – with other Association clubs involved. More details when info available.

#### **GUEST SPEAKER:**

Past President, Peter Pink, was invited to speak on his past experiences with the VFWDC which he joined some 25 years ago. The newer members were extremely interested to hear of Peter's adventures, and he has agreed to submit an article for the August newsletter. Thanks Pete.

**TEA DUTIES:** Thanks Mark and Steve (Utting).

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS:**

- *AGM Dinner:* To be held on Saturday, 28 August at the Stamford Hotel. Cost will be \$40 per head. Deposit of \$10 p/head will be required by July meeting and full payment by August meeting. Ashley stated that if a member has agreed to attend, paid their deposit, but does not turn up on the night, they will still be charged the full amount.
- *Newsletter:* JP once again mentioned the need for trip reports to be submitted to the editor within a week after the trip has run. Also, that those members kind enough to submit articles should do so by the middle of the month to ensure the newsletter is able to be circulated well before the general meeting. Mark asked what was happening with regard to purchase of printer. Anthony investigating this and decision should be made at next Committee Meeting. Ashley requested assistance with printing of August edition (he will be on Cape York trip). Several members offered their services. Anthony will assist.
- *Club Website:* The new web site is up and running. Thanks to Anthony for an excellent job on revitalising the old web site.
- *O'Tooles Working Bee:* JP has been in further discussion with local DSE and there will be a working bee at O'Tooles Flat later this year which will include tree planting, installation of bollards etc.
- *Insurance:* New public liability insurance scheme nominated by FWDVic – same cost, additional benefits. Club has agreed to change to new provider.
- *Otway NP:* JP read correspondence regarding this issue and asked that everyone ensure they sign the "Petition Against the Formation of an Expanded National Park in the Otways" which will be submitted to the Association.
- *Wombat State Forest:* Ian Warburton reported that this matter is ongoing. Milton Oliver advised IW that the Government is trying to take it over. Also, cost of mail out for ballot was too expensive, so alternative voting method to be considered.

- *Outback Drawers for sale:* For GQ @ \$500. Several members interested. Contact Steve Young or John Partridge.

**RAFFLE:** Tickets sold by Derek and Chris.

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Fridge Thermometer  
(donated by Anthony VB)  
Won by Peter Pink.

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Cheese Platter/Knife  
Won by Les Beer – visitor (again!)

#### **PRESENTATION:**

Ian Warburton, who is also a member of the Belgrave CFA, gave an overview on fire extinguishers and ran a CFA video on the subject. Thanks to Ian for organising this presentation.

**MEETING CLOSED** at 10.15pm.

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, 6 July 2004 at Dandenong Library.

### **VFWDC MERCHANDISE for Sale**

30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Travel Mugs	\$15.00 ea
New Club Polo Shirts	\$25.00 ea
Caps	\$10.00 ea
Stubbie Holders	\$ 6.00 ea
Flags	\$15.00 ea

Contact Barry Leitch on 5996 6662  
if you wish to place an order.

### **"A WELL PLANNED LIFE"**

Two women met for the first time since graduating from high school.

One asked the other, "You were always so organized in school, did you manage to live a well planned life?"

"Yes," said her friend. "My first marriage was to a millionaire; my second marriage was to an actor; my third marriage was to a preacher; and now I'm married to an undertaker."

Her friend asked, "What do those marriages have to do with a well planned life?"

"One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go!"



Welcome to

## The Corner

This month's recipe is "Cowboy Casserole"

### Ingredients

2 medium onions, thinly sliced  
350g/12oz can lean corned beef or ham  
450g/1lb spuds  
14oz can baked beans  
2 tblspns worcestershire sauce  
large pinch mixed herbs  
1 beef stock cube  
black pepper

### Method:

Preheat camp oven, spread onions over the base, cut corned beef/ham into 8 slices and lay 4 slices on top of onions. Add half the spuds, drain the baked beans [reserving the sauce] and pour half the beans over the spuds. Add remaining onions, then the meat, then the remaining spuds, so that you have layers of each. Add the worcestershire sauce to the bean sauce, stir in the herbs, the stock cube, and a few twists of black pepper. Make up 200 ml of boiling water and pour over the lot. Bake for about 45 minutes, making sure you turn your camp oven. Spuds on top should turn out brown and crispy.

Great for a weekend away!!

☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞



### Aromatherapy

For a relaxing foot bath, add a few drops of lavender oil to a large bowl and soak your feet for about 30 minutes... wonderful. Or, in the shower, put four drops of your favourite essential oil into a 100ml bottle, add warm water to the bottle and rub over your skin with your face washer.

Hope those going north have a safe and pleasant trip.  
See you all at the meeting. *Annie*



## TRADING POST

### For Sale

**DOUBLE SWAG**, Jolly brand, only used about 3 times, comes complete with foam mattress and self inflating mattress. **\$650 value for only \$400.**

**TRAILER**, 8' x 5' steel with c/plate floor. Comes regd and with mounted spare. In very good condition, garaged most of its life. **\$700.**

**BATTERY** Isolator Solenoid. **\$25.**

**CB RADIO**, 27meg SSB, Uniden PC122. **\$50.**

**AERIALS**, 27 meg **\$10 each.**

Contact Barry Leitch on (03) 9794 3172 work  
(if that's what they call what I do), or  
(03) 5996 6662 home (sometimes).

**Set of "MONGREL" TYRES, \$500.**  
Contact Carl Surtees on 9706 2692.

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Contact Steve Young on 9880 5227.

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## CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

### JUNE

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> Warburton Day Trip Carl Surtees

### JULY

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> Club Meeting John Partridge

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> Cape York  
August 8<sup>th</sup> **TRIP FULL** George Pledger

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Toolangi Day Trip John Partridge  
**Extreme**

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting John Partridge

### AUGUST

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Club Meeting John Partridge  
*Incorporating Annual General Meeting*

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Snow Trip Carl Surtees  
to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> Licola

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> AGM Dinner John Partridge

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> Committee Meeting TBA

### SEPTEMBER

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> Mystery Pub-to-Pub David Hughes  
to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> Club Meeting TBA

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Car Rally James Holden

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> Advanced Training Ashley Martin  
to Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting TBA

### OCTOBER

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> Club Meeting TBA

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> Proficiency Training Ashley Martin  
Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting TBA

### Melbourne Cup Weekend

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> Wonnangatta Roast John Partridge  
Monday 1<sup>st</sup> Nov

How do crazy people go through the forest?  
They take the psycho path...  
What's the difference between Roast Beef and  
Pea Soup? Anyone can Roast Beef...



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## FORTHCOMING TRIPS INFO

### **WARBURTON DAY TRIP**

**Date:** Sunday 27 June 2004  
**Trip Leader:** Carl Surtees  
**Contact Nos:** Mob: 0403 024490 AH: 9706 2692  
**Destination:** Warburton-Mt Donna Buang  
**Meeting Time/Place:** TBC  
**Approximate Kms:** 30  
**Grade:** *Wet:* Extreme, *Dry:* Medium-Hard  
**Vehicle Limit:** Min: 3, Max: 10  
**Equipment:** Relevant recovery (as per new classifications). Warm gear.  
**Radio Channel:** Channel 12  
**Trip Activities:** Try a few new tracks. Have a play and explore an area that the Club does not visit very often.

### **TOOLANGI DAY TRIP**

**Date:** Sunday 18 July 2004  
**Trip Leader:** John Partridge  
**Contact Nos:** Mob: 0428 331 211 AH: 9789 6985  
**Destination:** Toolangi  
**Meeting Time/Place:** 8.30am, Lilydale McDonalds  
**Approximate Kms:** 25 kms  
**Grade:** *Wet:* Extreme (A Grade), *Dry:* Hard-Extreme  
**Vehicle Limit:** Min: 2, Max: 6  
**Equipment:** Front and rear recovery points (rated), full recovery gear (snatch strap, rated shackles, tree trunk protector, winch extension, drag chain and gloves), Advanced Driver Training certificate. Winching will be expected and a hand, electric or motorised winch is compulsory on all vehicles. Mud terrain or swamper style tyres essential. Warning: Vehicle damage may occur. Expected track classification to be encountered – Black & Red.  
**Maps:** Rooftop Toolangi Map  
**Radio Channel:** Channel 12  
**Trip Activities:** We will be looking at the more difficult tracks around the Toolangi area, many of which have not been tackled before. Most of these were in the recent Pajero Challenge. This will be a very challenging trip only for those with the vehicle and experience to suit. There should be some empty seats available for those who would like to come along as passenger.

### **ANNUAL SNOW TRIP**

**Date:** Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>-Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2004  
**Trip Leader:** Carl Surtees  
**Contact Nos:** Mob: 0403 024490 AH: 9706 2692  
**Destination:** Licola  
**Meeting Time/Place:** Time TBA. Officer Weighbridge.  
**Vehicle Limit:** *Min:* 3, *Max:* 10.  
**Grade:** *Wet:* Medium or as Hard as we want to make it on the day, *Dry:* Medium.  
**Equipment:** Standard recovery gear, including shovel and warm clothing.  
**Maps:** N/A  
**Radio Channel:** Channel 12

### **Trip Activities:**

Camp on Saturday night with a big fire (hopefully). After breakfast drive up past Arbuckle Junction and look for some snow to have a play in. For the more adventurous, we may try some side tracks along the way.

### **ANNUAL CAR RALLY**

**Date:** Sunday, 12 September 2004  
**Trip Leader:** James Holden – 9755 5790  
**Destination:** Unknown  
**Meeting Place:** TBC.  
**Time:** 8.30-9.00am  
**Grade:** Scenic/Social  
**Vehicle Limit:** Min: 4, No Max  
**Radio Channel:** Ch. 12  
**Trip Activities:** James won the privilege to lead this year's rally by winning last year's event! Come along and support his first effort as trip leader. Enjoy a fun day out, and don't forget to pack those weird and wonderful bits and pieces that always appear on the "things you need to you have?" list.

## 2004 AGM DINNER

**When:** 7.00pm til Midnight  
Saturday, 28 August

**Where:** McArthur Room  
Stamford Hotel  
Cnr Wellington & Stud  
Roads, Rowville

**Cost:** \$40.00 per head  
\$10.00 deposit required  
at July General  
Meeting

**Contact:** John Partridge  
0428 331 211

We look forward to seeing as many  
of our members as possible at this  
year's AGM dinner to celebrate the  
Club's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary –



## TRIP REPORTS

### ***TREE PLANTING at MERRINGTONS and O'TOOLES NIGHT RUN – 21-23 May 2004***

*Trip Leader:* John Partridge  
*Participants:* Michael Rodger  
 Ashley Martin  
 Anthony Van Buiten  
 Steve & Jill Boyle  
 Paul Ryan  
 Leigh Pettigrew  
*Visitors:* Brian Martin  
 Leanne Young

Late arrivals – after the work was done:  
 Carl & Bethany  
 Pat, Billy, & Pierre

Friday night we left the weighbridge at Officer and headed along the Princes Freeway towards Moe. At Moe we headed north towards Rawson where we met up with Pat, Billy and Pierre at the pub who had clearly been holding up the bar for a few hours.

We had a very enjoyable dinner, and those of us who were not driving indulged in a pot or three. We drove Pat and Co back to Billy's place where we all went in on the promise of a port. After a short time it was clear that the cupboard was bare so we headed off in search of Merringtons. Leigh had his portable hotel with him so he went across the dam wall while the rest of us decided it would be fun to do a river crossing at night. The water level was very low so there was no challenge, but it was a nice appetizer to the weekend.

We arrived at camp at about 10:30pm and proceeded to set up for the weekend. Everyone was ready for bed soon after arrival and as we didn't have a fire going, bed seemed the obvious choice.

After a cold night, it was a leisurely start before getting down to work.



Noel Lees from the DSE arrived at about 10:00am with a ute full of trees and tree

protectors and another ute with a BBQ and some refreshments. Members of the La Trobe Valley FWDC turned up and about 140 trees were planted before lunch – DSE put on a great BBQ.



After lunch we headed over to O'Tooles to have a look at the camp ground and provide a little input to planning for some work to be done there later in the year. We headed back to camp for a restful afternoon and met up with Carl and Bethany before dinner and heading out at 7:30pm for a night drive.

We headed back to O'Tooles via Flats Track as a warm up. We then headed up S track, which caused a few vehicles to buck a little bit, but everyone got up without any real difficulties, along Pheasant Track to Merrington's Track, along the main road to Dream Creek Track which lead onto Williamson's Spur Track and then back to camp. Everyone got up all the tracks without difficulties, but Carl thought he might have been in trouble at one point when all his lights went out for a second. Leigh had the fire going back at camp which was appreciated as the night air was starting to get cold.

Sunday morning we got off to an early start before heading off for the day. Leigh decided to head back rather than drag the trailer up and down the tracks. The rest of us headed along White Star Track to Tombstar Track and then along Eaton Track. We stopped for lunch and walked to Hanging Rock where we came across some old mines and what would be a great swimming hole in summer (it was a bit cold that day). We then made our way along Donnelly Creek Road where Carl's car overheated. Anthony, Paul, John and Michael kept going while the others stopped to help Carl. We headed north along the main road to Pluto Track and then up Spud Track to the main road again. Spud Track was very steep and proved a bit loose for Paul and Anthony. We met up with the rest of the group back at the dam wall where pressures were adjusted and everyone prepared for the trip home. It was a great trip and good to mix a bit of driving and a bit of work. Thanks for arranging it John.

**Michael Rodger**

[Photos – John Partridge]



## **BUFFALO RIVER QUEENS BIRTHDAY WEEKEND 2004**

*Participants:* Anthony, Aline, Riley & Connor TX Prado  
Joe, Carissa, Shani, Lachlan GU Patrol  
& Ebony (dog)

By the time we were ready to leave Fri night it was after 6.00pm. After battling through the traffic we didn't get to Myrtleford until about 11.00pm. After a quick coffee, courtesy of the SES, we headed south towards Abbeyard. We were looking forward to getting to camp and glad of the fact that Carissa and Joe would already have a fire waiting for us. After about 20mins we started encountering patches of thick fog which reduced our speed to about 40km/h. Just before we crossed the dam wall at Lake Buffalo we came across a fallen tree blocking the road. We stopped and cleared away loose stuff from the road and we were able to drive over the rest of it. Once we got to Dandongadale, the fog was even thicker and more persistent. I was wishing I still had my fog lights fitted as speed was again reduced to under 30km/h. Between peering through the fog we also managed to get Carissa and Joe on the radio to find they were camped at Abbeyard Picnic Ground. We eventually located the entrance to the campsite and set up our hired camper trailer.

Things were set up rather quickly and then when the boys were in bed, we enjoyed the warmth of the awaiting fire. Aline and Carissa went to bed after about 45mins and I left Joe sitting by the fire soon after. Later that night (or early morning) when I got up to answer the call of nature I discovered Joe still sitting by the fire. "Why don't you go to bed?" I questioned him, to which I got no response. I said it again and thought I heard a grunt in reply so rather than freeze outside I went back to bed. The following morning we discovered that Joe had fallen asleep in front of the fire. He woke up in the early hours of the morning and then decided to sleep in the car. After he froze in the car for a little while he then saw the wisdom of going to bed in the tent.

Saturday was a slow start, mainly because of Connor. He woke fairly early and then after he had his breakfast went back to sleep. He didn't wake up again until 12 noon so we decided to have lunch before heading off for the day. At least Joe and I managed to gather some firewood while we were waiting so we put the time to good use. It was a nice sunny day and occasionally was quite hot in the car.

From Abbeyard Track we then followed East Buffalo Road until we found the East West Divide Track for a diversion. This was a good track with some steep sections but was very easy. From our slight diversion we again headed south along East Buffalo Road until we got to Riley's Creek Hut. This hut was reconstructed in 2002 after the bushfires and although well constructed it lacked any charm. We made our way to Wonnangatta Track and followed this to

Wonnangatta Station. This area was quite busy with many people camping here. We stopped at the hut to take some pics and found there were people camped in and around it. We weaved our way through their tents and managed to take a few photos close up without too much of their crap in the pics.

It was about 4pm by now so we headed back to our camp. Earlier that day we had passed a fallen tree that had been cut up ready to be split at a nearby campsite. We called past on the way back to find three different groups set up camp there. We asked the nearest camp if they minded us getting some wood. They said there was more wood than they all needed and were nice enough to lend us their splitter (good thing Ashley wasn't there).

Back at camp we saw that we had some new neighbours. We got the fire going fed the kids and put them to bed before cooking dinner for ourselves. After dinner Carissa and I went to say hello to our neighbours – a couple of guys with one of their sons who were travelling through the area. We went to bed fairly early with Joe deciding to sleep in the tent this night.

Sunday morning we were cooking our breakfast when one of our neighbours came running up saying "Look what I've caught!" He had managed to catch a large rainbow trout just in front of where we were camped. It was at least 60cm long and he definitely had a reason to be proud of it. Today we set off as early as we could because we had a big day planned. We called in to Myrtleford to top up on supplies and then headed back to Dandongadale. We turned west at Rose River Road and then south towards Lake Cobbler Rd. It was rather wet with plenty of rain and fog in the higher parts. We took Little Cobbler Track up between Little Cobbler and Mt Cobbler where it was very foggy. From here we went to Kings Hut via Speculation Rd where we stopped and had lunch. This was another hut where someone had pitched their tent under the veranda of the hut.



*Kings Hut [photo AVB]*

It was raining so we all crowded under the remaining space to cook a warm lunch. A few guys from the Suzuki 4wd club were also there so things soon became more crowded under the veranda. These guys were discussing King Basin Rd, describing it as 'interesting',



so my ears pricked up. It would have been a fairly long trip to Craig's Hut if we had of gone that way so we decided to take our original route along Speculation Rd to Circuit Rd. It was very foggy again when we got to Craig's Hut and not having been here before, circled the car park searching for it. We couldn't locate it through the fog and drizzle so Joe and I decided to pick the most likely direction and run for it. Soon we saw the outline of a fence appear through the fog and thought we must have picked the right direction. When we got to the fence, we climbed over and realised we had found the back of the hut. We ran around the front and inside seeking respite from the cold. There was nobody around the hut and there was even fog inside it.

After taking a few photos we braced ourselves for the run back to the car. This time we found the small gate for the surrounding fence rather than having to climb it again. Once we were through the gate we both wondered how we were going to find the cars. After we took a few strides in the guessed direction, we saw the light of the cars and were happy that we had left them switched on.

From Craig's Hut we returned the way we had come back to Speculation Track, but this time going up 'The Staircase'. We then followed Cobbler Lake Track up to the lake itself. We were following the track through the fog and Aline said that we must be able to see the lake soon. We stopped the car and wound down the window and sure enough when we peered through the fog we could make out the lake right next to us.



*"If this is the lake, where's the water...? [ photo AVB ]*

The only way we could tell between the water and the fog was when we saw branches sticking out of the water. We got to the Hut and decided not to go looking for Dandongadale Falls. We headed back to camp following Abbeyard Lake Cobbler Track. This was another good track but seemed to drag on forever. With the constant rain we had all day, parts of it were a bit slippery but again an easy run. When we got back to camp Carissa and Joe discovered that their tent hadn't coped too well with the constant rain. Most of their bedding was wet and Carissa got the fire going again to dry things out. Our plans for a roast meal were cancelled and we cooked up what we had left under the

shelter of the camper trailer. Carissa had a good fire going and was able to dry out her sleeping bag. While she was drying things and cooking dinner her torch that she had purchased that morning had been misplaced. Carissa had brought her 6 month old Border Collie pup along and remarked on how she probably took it. *"Go and bring it back"* she said to the dog. After the kids were in bed and we were warming ourselves by the fire, the dog strutted up to the fire with the torch in her mouth. It was a bit late but she had done what was asked. After a long day we were looking forward to getting some sleep so we went to bed shortly after 11pm.

The rain continued overnight and when Riley woke up in the early hours of the morning we discovered we had a leak in the floor of the camper trailer. Luckily Riley and his bedding were dry, but my feet got wet when I picked him up to sleep with us. We had a quick breakfast and packed up enduring a few showers. Just before 11am we left camp amid more rain showers. We decided to go home via Whitfield for the main purpose of calling in to Station Creek Winery to pick up a few bottles of their Cab Sav. By the time we got there we were ready for lunch. It was fortunate for us that they were celebrating the release of a couple of new wines and so they had food available. We wanted something quick and easy (or so we thought) so we ordered sausages in bread. I think they should just stick to making wine, because an hour and a half later we finally got out of there. We followed the Mansfield-Whitfield road to Mansfield and soon after we passed Powers Lookout the rain and the wind intensified. It was difficult driving conditions as the wipers could barely cope with the sleet that followed. We rounded a bend in the road and discovered a fallen tree barring our way. We slowed in time and were able to driver over the trunk at the smaller end as it was too big to move without cutting into smaller sections. About 1km later we again had to stop for a fallen tree. This one had shattered when it hit the road and there were three cars from the opposite direction already stopped and clearing the debris. I broke the bad news to them that there was another tree waiting for them that they probably wouldn't be able to get past. They continued on anyway, so perhaps someone would be kind enough to cut it for them if they waited long enough.

The rest of the trip was uneventful as we joined the traffic heading home.

**Anthony Van Buiten**



*Three little munchkins having fun in the cold...*

## Our Cape York Trip

Liz Beaton and Ian Warburton

*Continued....*

Our first stop in Kakadu was at Gunlom falls which is famous for the crocodile scene with Linda of Crocodile Dundee fame. This is one of the paid areas of Kakadu which cost \$10.80 for the night. Considering this gives you a hot shower, toilets that flush, and hot washing up water it isn't too bad a deal. The plunge pool is a delight to swim in. The fish nip you on the legs, however, which I can assure you gives you quite a fright the first time it happens. There are slide shows at various camp sites and we were lucky to catch the bush tucker talk. You can walk up the side of the falls to the rock pools at the top of Gunlom for more enjoyable swimming activities which we did. From here we have headed back out to the entry gate to collect the key and our permit for the Koolpin gorge area. This is to be our camp site for the next 3 days (free area with basic toilet, BBQ and picnic table). What another delightful place to stay. The swimming area just near the camp site was a bit murky so we walked 5mins upstream to clear water for a lovely dip. From here a 40min walk away is what is known as the black pool and it is absolutely superb. We spent a number of hours relaxing and swimming here before heading off another 40mins upstream to explore some more. The scenery as you are traversing the river bed is a delight. On heading back to the black pool we spent a few more hours just relaxing and swimming. The Koolpin area has a reputation of being the best in Kakadu and we could not agree more.

After our enjoyable 3 days we dragged ourselves away from Koolpin Gorge and headed to the Barramundie Falls area for a swim, lunch and a look see. From here we headed into Cooina to set up camp. We were able to catch the sunset cruise which is another great activity. The amount and variety of birds and crocodiles in these wetlands was great. The sunset was spectacular. From here we continued along to Jim Jim Falls, our next camp site for a few days. This area has had a major overhaul with \$1.5 million being spent to set up a new camp area 10klms before the original dusty camp site therefore it is now a pay area. Still only \$10.80 mind you, cheap as. Twin Falls was closed for which political reason we do not know. Was it a crocodile or is the way in too dangerous?

The other locations that we visited whilst in Kakadu over the next few days were the township of Jabiru, the Bowali visitor centre, Nourlangie Rock, Gunwarden-warrde Lookout, Anbangbang Billabong and the Nanaguluwur rock art site. We have had a fabulous week here in Kakadu but once again could easily have stayed longer. We are heading for our next objective which is Cobourg Peninsula where we will be for a week. Our first impressions of Cobourg were very disappointing but we did warm to the place. We are still wondering though where the pristine beaches are. We visited all the places that there are to see at Cobourg Peninsula and also did some serious relaxing. We did

not see any of the banteng cattle that inhabit this area but we did make good use of their dry cow pats to smoulder each night to keep the mossies at bay. There's nothing like smoking some grass.

One of the most unique historical areas of Cobourg is Victoria Settlement. These are the remains of early settlement by the British from 1838 to 1849. There are boat tours to this area if you have 6 people. (\$95) As there were no others wishing to book, after much discussion with the ranger we hired a dinghy. We had come all this way and did not want to miss seeing the historic settlement. With mud map in hand we set off and considering we are not nautical people I was quite proud of our accomplishment of getting there and back. In our dinghy the boat trip took 1 hour 20mins to get there. Quite a distance it was. It was fascinating walking around this settlement especially seeing the Cornish chimneys of the fireplaces. These were the only remains of the married quarters. It really made you wonder about the efforts and accomplishments of the British in those early days. Our boat journey back took remarkably longer as we did some fishing on the way back with a wonderful reward. We were fishing at Record Point and Ian caught a huge mackerel.



*Ian looking weary after catching this beauty...*

A prize fish indeed. It fed us for nearly a week and it was delicious. Our journey now will take us out of here and back to Kakadu...

### ***You're not Australian until...***

You have argued whether Fords are better than Holdens.

You kind of know the first verse of the national anthem, but buggered if you know what 'girt' means.





## NEW TRIP CLASSIFICATIONS FOR VFWDC

The VFWDC has changed its trip classifications to bring the Club into line with the Adventure Activity Standards and the new Trip Leader Guidelines set down by Four Wheel Drive Victoria. The classifications are much easier to understand than the old "A B C" that we have used in the past.

Please keep a copy handy and use these classifications when submitting a Proposed Trip Data Form.

**Scenic/Social:** Sealed roads and some good unsealed roads or tracks. No four wheel driving experience required. Road tyres are acceptable.

**Easy:** Little or no Four Wheel Driving experience required. Road tyres are acceptable. Front and rear recovery points at Trip Leader's discretion.  
Expected track classification to be encountered = **GREEN**.

**Medium:** Low range may be needed with a snatch strap recovery possible. All-terrain tyres preferred. Front and rear recovery points (rated), basic recovery gear (snatch strap, 2 rated shackles and gloves), Driver Training Certificate for new members.  
Expected track classification to be encountered = **GREEN** and **BLUE**.

**Hard:** Steep terrain or rutted tracks. Snatch strap and/or winching recovery may be required. All-terrain tyres acceptable, mud terrain tyres preferred, road tyres are NOT acceptable. Front and rear recovery points (rated), basic recovery gear (snatch strap, 2 rated shackles and gloves), Driver Training Certificate. Winch and full recovery gear an advantage.  
Expected track classification to be encountered = mostly **BLUE** or **BLACK**.

**Extreme:** Very steep, deeply rutted tracks or rock hopping will be