

“Responsible Four Wheel Driving And Family Touring”



SEPTEMBER 2020

Newsletter



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www.wangaratta4x4club.org.au



WANGARATTA 4X4 CLUB

Wangaratta Four Wheel Drive Club

Committee Members

Executive-

President	Neville Sonogo
Vice President	Mick Maher
Secretary	Sue Abotomey
Treasurer	Bruce Gooday

Other Committee Members-

Newsletter editor	Bev Maher
Property Officer	Neville French
Publicity Officer	Bev Maher
Trip Coordinator	Damian O'Connor

Graham Abotomey
Neville French
Manfred Wagner

Non-Committee Positions-

Training Coordinator	Dave van Zanten
FWDV Representative	Dave Van Zanten
Web Master	Andrew Ammendola

WEBSITE:

www.wangaratta4x4club.org.au

The Wangaratta 4WD Club has evolved from a few members in 1983, to our current membership of over 30 families. The Club is made up of individuals and families who are interested in responsible Four-Wheel Driving.

There is no restriction on the make or type of four-wheel drive vehicle, and there is always plenty of variety and camaraderie amongst members.

Where we live: Members live all over the North East and beyond, including from Benalla, Beechworth, Corowa, Howlong Glenrowan, Milawa, Albury, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Goorambat, Tatong, Langwarrin, Molyullah, Myrtleford, Mount Beauty, Mulwala, Yarrawonga, Stanhope, Violet Town, Melbourne, Rosebud and Overseas (England).



Wangaratta Four Wheel Drive Club is affiliated with Four Wheel Drive Victoria.

Members of our club are proud to be part of the Adopt a Hut Program and work with Parks Victoria to look after Top Crossing and Lake Cobbler huts.

Membership: Single or family \$100.00 p.a. **Temporary Membership:** \$15.00 (Three trips)

General Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, generally at the North East Car Club Rooms, Tarrawingee Recreation Reserve, commencing 8.00pm. There is no meeting in January. Please refer to the club calendar. **Visitors are always most welcome.**

TRACK TORQUE: Newsletter Contributions may be forwarded to ...

Editor: Bev Maher - editor@wangaratta4x4club.org.au

This is your newsletter so be part of it and send in any articles of interest, comments, trips, birthdays etc.

Editorial Deadline: - 1st of the month

Advertising: \$100/yr. Please contact the editor for further details.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in the articles in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or of Wangaratta Four Wheel Drive Club Inc. The editor reserves the right to delete any section of any article, or reject any article, which has been sent in for publication in the Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2020

Trips this year - ? We can be hopeful.

At this time I would like to thank the members of the committee for their work during the last few months. Secretary Sue has kept us all informed by passing on relevant information and organising Zoom meetings. Thanks to Bruce for his past services as treasurer. His contributions were appreciated. Mike has indicated that he will accept the responsibilities of treasurer on a temporary basis and has kept in touch with our advertisers. Bev continues to produce the Track Torque on a monthly basis and thanks members for their contributions. Damo continues to update Facebook to keep members in the loop as well as plan trips which, of course, are now on hold. Neville and Monica also had trips planned that are now sitting there waiting for the green light. Graeme has been in contact with Parks Vic. re track clearing which is still to be confirmed and may not happen this year. Manfred has kept in contact with new members and prospective members to keep them informed and made welcome. Thank you for keeping the club ready to kick back into operation, when possible, and for making my position so much easier and enjoyable.

President.

Neville Sonego.

Club Contact Details

Name and Position Held	Mobile Number	Email Address
Neville Sonego (President)	0427 251 576	nsonego1@yahoo.com
Sue Abotomey (Secretary)	0424914200	susieabotomey@hotmail.com
Mick Maher (Treasurer)	0419 533 898	mick@maher.net.au
Damian O'Connor (Trip Coordinator)	0417 526 175	damnkez@people.net.au
Bev Maher (Editor Track Torque)	0419 533 898	editor@wangeratta4x4club.org.au



**WANGARATTA FOUR WHEEL DRIVE CLUB Inc.
GENERAL MEETING**

DUE TO COVID-19 CURRENT SITUATION THE WANGARATTA 4X4 CLUB WILL NOT BE HOLDING GENERAL MEETINGS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

The Bulletin will continue to be published each month.

If anyone has a report of an older trip or an article of interest, please send through to Editor

We are however encouraging members to think about planning some trips- particularly day trips for when we can get back on the road again. These will need to be under the strict COVID-19 guidelines as per Government regulations for our region at that particular time.



COVID PROTOCOLS

***Everyone has a role to play
in slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19)***

Before you attend any Trips or Attendance Meetings:

- If you are feeling unwell you should stay at home. If you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), however mild, you should get tested.*

While you are out with the Wangaratta Four Wheel Drive Club Inc.:

- NO Mask NO Participation!*
- Provide your contact details to the Club and Venue to assist should contact tracing be required.*
- In shared spaces and when moving about be aware of maintaining your physical distance.*
- Wash/ Sanitise your hands regularly*
- Don't share cutlery, plates or glasses*
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.*

When you get home:

- *Dispose of Masks correctly and Wash your hands*

Please Note:

Activities with the Wangaratta Four Wheel Drive Club Inc. will only go ahead in strict accordance with the Victorian Government's COVID regulations at that time and as such may be cancelled or changed at short notice.



PRE - TRIP REPORTS

1. ELDORADO DAY TRIP - POSTPONED AS OF AUGUST 2nd

This trip will be available again when restrictions are eased and members will be notified by email/phone of new dates etc.

TRIP LEADER: Damian O'Connor

CONTACT DETAILS: 0417 526 175 or email damnkez@people.net.au if interested in this trip

START DATE: Saturday 22nd AUGUST 2020

MEETING PLACE AND TIME: APEX PARK SHELTER Wangaratta at 10am
Return roughly mid to late afternoon

TRIP RATING: Easy/medium

TYPE OF TREADS: Good all- terrains or Mud terrains, NO ROAD TREADS as they won't be suitable for the terrain

FUEL REQUIREMENTS: Full tank ex Wangaratta

RECOVERY GEAR: Your usual recovery gear, both front and rear recovery points on your vehicle

PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS: bring your lunch, snacks, drinks for the day

MAXIMUM VEHICLES: No more than 10 people to attend.

IT IS IMPERITIVE THAT IF YOU INTEND TO GO ON THE TRIP YOU ADVISE DAMO, SO HE CAN ARRANGE NUMBERS. IF MORE THAN 10 INTERESTED 2 TRIPS WILL BE ORGANISED WITH 2 TRIP LEADERS.

2. GAPSTEAD MURMUNGEE TRIP

Forward notice of an up and coming Trip. Put in your Calendar.
More details to come.

Date: Sunday 20th September
Trip leader: Neville French 0448277851

This trip has also been put on hold at present. When and if restrictions allow, this will again be offered. Members will be notified of new dates etc as soon as they come to hand.



TRIP REPORTS

MEMORIES-

THE CHANNEL COUNTRY

by Ron Grant (from a few years ago).

One of my recent trips I had decided to go to Birdsville and the Birdsville Track. I found out that the Diamantina river and the Birdsville Track were both flooded, so I thought I would do the Strzelecki Track.

I headed off from Benalla for Broken Hill and stayed a couple of days then drove north towards Tibooburra. About 150 klms out of Broken Hill a guy parked on the side of the road and pointed to my caravan. I pulled over and found I had threaded a tyre and was running on the rim. I was just near Packsaddle and where no tyres or rims to be had. So I changed the wheel and continued on.

When I got to Tibooburra I checked and started to ask around for a wheel. I had to wait 4 days to get a spare as the truck only comes once a week. Therefore, I have plenty of time to go to Cameron's Corner and Stuart National park while I waited.

On that drive I did another tyre -2nd on the car so far, for the trip. The general store gives away 2nd hand ones fitted for \$30 so still had 2 car spares .The truck arrived on the 4th day and now I was right again.

I headed north through Warri Warri Gate into Queensland and shortly after turned north-west on a track into Santos cattle station. After a couple of hours on a gravel track my GPS was telling me one way and a rough hand- made rusty tin sign was saying another. I took the GPS one , part of which was along a creek bed of gravel and river pebbles. That's where I did my 3rd tyre. While under the wagon putting the jack into position, I saw a Land cruiser stop so I crawled out to talk and was greeted by a girl going south. She offered to help and she saw the gliding club sticker and I found out she was from Violet town.

I changed the wheel and took off along the creek track, arriving at Innamincka about 3-4pm to a queue of 20 cars wanting for fuel. All with fillers on the opposite side to mine so I had a word with the guy filling who was the owner and he let me in along with another Prado after 2 or 3 cars. I went to pay and asked for the Caravan Park. They were foreign back packers- NO ENGLISH. One of the other 4WDs told me to go down the hill to Coopers creek and onto the Innamincka commons. That's all there is and it was dry. It was Saturday night and a local band was playing so I walked up and listened for a while.

Next morning I left about 7am as by now I only had one car spare left, and the nearest tyres were at Copley, about 400klm south. I could not do any sight - seeing and wanted to get in the front so if I needed help it would come from behind me. As the day went on a lot of 4X4s passed.

There are some beautiful lakes on the Strzelecki Track to the south. I stopped at them for lunch. About 90 klms from Lyndhurst, on the Marree Track I did my last tyre. I'm 110klm from Copley with no more tyres. Many guys stopped to help but the only one that could help was a Prado but he only had one spare left he was overnighing at Lyndhurst so I said if I don't get in by dark tell the police to come out in the morning and help me. I did make it.

Next morning off to Copley for some tyres., I had rung them last night, and I got a mixed set at bank shattering cost. There is a bakery there, so I went to get a coffee and wait for my tyres. When I walked back they were ready to go – he greeted me with the knowledge that I was lucky to make it with no spares as one tyre had a large wood screw in it.

The trip to Port Augusta was uneventful. I changed tyre brands after that event. I am still trying to get to Birdsville which has now been flooded two years running but this year along with Diamantina River so is Cooper Creek resulting in Birdsville and Innamincka both cut off along with the borders being closed for who knows how long.

My caravan is full of tin and dry food. My new Prado has got lots of new equipment and no were to go until the borders open.

BUT ITS A GREAT COUNTRY -----

OUR CANNING ADVENTURE

by Chris & Neville Sonego

The trip was going well. The Isuzu bouncing up those Canning sandhills, not exactly with ease, but usually making it ok. Not long after we bottomed out particularly hard, I remarked presciently, "This can't be doing the ute any good." Nev's confident reply? "Nah, this is what it's made for". Famous last words!

About 5 km's later, on a patch of severe corrugations, there was a fearful bang and a sudden stop. The rear passenger wheel, the one we bottomed out on, was leaning in at a nasty angle, pushing up into the tub. On close inspection it was obvious that not only had the axle snapped but the diff housing as well. At this stage I could hear my father saying, (" if you are going to do a job , do it properly"). Mission accomplished, Dad.

The leaders were just ahead at the aptly named Lake Disappointment when they got my message.

"Trip's over. Come back." After a thorough inspection by all the blokes we faced the inevitable. "We'd better pull off and make camp". As luck would have it, we were in the perfect spot. Flat, sandhill behind us, room for other travellers to drive around the party poopers, and plenty of firewood. A better than average place to spend a few days.

Time to ring the rescue company. All praise to the Sat phone. It took a bit of being passed around between companies, but Nev finally had it organised. It was about 10.00 am on Tuesday. Mike said he'd be there by Saturday lunchtime. We had plenty of supplies, so told the others to keep going. "No way, we were told. We go in together; we go out together." We had picked the perfect breakdown companions.

We settled in. Dave rigged up a shower and toilet, so we were able to use up our water. Out came the books and the hunt for that ever- moving shade. So we hunkered down. There were walks (and an interesting camel confrontation), a candlelit camp roast – Sue magically produced real candlesticks, makeshift tablecloths were found, and a vase for the flowers- and we dined in style. Another highlight was to climb the sandhill behind to have sunset drinks. The firewood was a bonus and the evenings were passed around the fire in the time - honoured outback style.

The wind started to pick up on Friday after 3 perfect days, and we were a bit over it by then. Saturday at last. It was a windy sandy camp striking. We waited, backs to the wind, for Mike the rescue man. When he appeared on the dot of 12 MD as promised, I knew we were in the hands of a true professional. So we met Mike and Crow, with 2 older landcruisers and a tandem trailer. "Can't get anything bigger down this track". After a good crawl around in the dirt they pronounced we had done an excellent job of breaking down – they had never seen this sort of damage to a wheel in all their years of rescue.

There was much debate about how to load it without further damage. In the end Graham cut some wood, they chocked it up with bits and pieces, crawling around underneath with a cavalier disregard for OHS. Bev was beside herself. "Look where he's got his head!" "Oh no!" Shudder after shudder, then "I can't watch". She knew who the first aid would fall to. Nev drove the winch and was able to steer up the "ramps". They inched forward, moved the chocks But these boys were pros, the difficult loading was effected at last and we were under way.

The others headed off first, making running repairs to the track head. Crow and I followed in one vehicle. Nev and Mike in the other, towing the Isuzu laden trailer. I was doubtful until I heard the full-throated roar of the engine when Crow opened it up. Maybe, just maybe, this would work.

It did. It was slow, but we only had to snatch Mike once. We finally pulled into camp and set up in the dark. Thanks for the help folks. Up early to strike camp, again in the dark. Grateful for help again. Hugs and goodbyes – we didn't meet again till home.

Mike was impressed by what a great, supportive group we had. Apparently, many breakdown people get abandoned and are left to await rescue alone. We were luckier than that. He said it again later, along with some amusing tales of the scrapes some people get into. He put ours down to bad luck as we were pretty well prepared. It is hard to believe anyone would abandon friends in that country.

Crow was a character. I asked him how he got his name. He said he was always bringing home bits and pieces from the tip when he was a kid, and the name stuck. I offered him some peanuts at one stage. His reply? "No thanks love, I only eat sausages and bananas on these trips. I leave me teeth at home. The corrugations do me head in."





We spent the night in a motel in Newman, then on to Port Headland, where we spent a very long and boring week before we flew home.

There was much arguing with the RACV about getting the ute home. The girl in Perth insisted these “very experienced” companies would be able to load it. The man on the spot said it would need a crane, and he didn’t have one. The girl disagreed. Stalemate. In the end they agreed to give us the money and organize it ourselves. Mike to the rescue again. He agreed to truck it home, picking up the van in Alice on the way. Said he loves driving, hadn’t been this way before and would treat it as a holiday.

He had a good trip but was most uncomplimentary about the state of Victorian roads. Prefers the outback. It was a welcome sight to see him coming up the drive at Tarra.



Thanks again to the group,
Neville and Chris.

P.S. Mike owns and runs the Pilbara Towing business from Port Hedland. He operates mainly in Western Australia but also gets calls from the N.T. At his yard I sat in his pride and joy – a tri axle tow truck he designed and had made at a cost of \$500,000. It is capable of towing a fully laden road train. When I enquired about the hire costs his reply was, “ It will cost you \$50,000 for me to turn the key and then I charge mileage on top of that and it does not sit idle in the yard for long.”

BORDER CONTROL- NT style.



SOMETHING TO BRING ON A LAUGH!!!!!! (for those with caravans or campervans)

BACKING IN THE VAN

I was propped up in my deck chair, beneath the awning shade.
 I'd knocked the top off of a stubby, it was about that time of day.
 Just then around the corner a car and van appeared.
 They had the look of newbies, it was the worst I feared.
 They pulled up right adjacent to their allotted spot.
 They got out and perused the site, to work out what was what.
 Then I knew the fun was starting and I cracked the biggest grin.
 He said.....'Help me will you honey ,I'm gonna back her in'.
 "Now remember dear I told you, the opposite applies.
 Right hand down to push her left...left to push her right."
 Right then the lady was confused about which hand to wave I could see this turning ugly, the consequences grave.
 The first attempt did not go well, he jack-knifed right away "Hon", he said..." I told you....it goes the other way."
 "Darls I know it's awkward, you just do your best"
 Then the van jack knifed the other way, it was gonna be a test.
 He got out of the driver's seat, he said "I didn't see your sign"
 She said...."well I was waving dear...both hands...all the time."
 He said...."I couldn't see you, you were right behind the van.
 So stand out to the side a bit....do you think you can?"
 "Surely you can see from there, which way I gotta go.
 Surely you can make a sign to let me bloody know?"
 She said "I'm trying, honestly, to get my signals right"
 He said....."well try a little harder or we'll be here all bloody night."
 She didn't like his tone of voice...and she told him so.
 "Well," he said, "you know so much...jump in and have a go."
 She slid into the driver's seat....it was really getting tense. Her foot slipped off the pedal, and she backed into the fence.
 He had a look of horror ...tho the damage wasn't great.
 She had hit the panic button, she was really in a state "You know you made me do that, you waved that hand not the other "
 Then through gritted teeth he hissed those fatal words....."geez you're like your mother!"
 WELL!!!! you could have heard a pin drop, he knew he'd gone too far.
 Her eyes were shooting daggers as she stepped slowly from the car.
 She'd spat the dummy properly, thrown the toys out of the cot. And he knew beyond the slightest doubt, he was gonna cop the lot.
 She had her pointed index finger.... almost on his nose. She made sure he knew how mad she was with the next words that she chose.
 "Listen here you senile twatt , I've had about enough. Your superior he-man bullshit and all that other stuff".
 "Get into the car old man. Let me see you back the van. Mr. Super bloody stud can do it if anybody can.
 I'm going to the coffee shop I don't need this kind of stress. If you were nice to me and patient we wouldn't end up in this mess."
 After trying for an hour and not having any luck. He asked me if I'd back it in for him....he'd give me fifty bucks.
 I placed the van in perfectly...he was organised at last. He handed me the fifty bucks just as my wife walked past.
 That sparked a new debate, she called me miserable and cheap. That was fifty dollars I would never get to keep. She took the money from me....and caused a whole new round of strife. She strutted up to their van and gave the money to the wife.
 No amount of talking was going to save his skin. She had him on the back foot ...and geez.... didn't she rip in!!
 A savage verbal payout ...he had to cop it like a man. All because he couldn't back a bloody' caravan.

Written by DAVID DUNGAY "THE CRAZY MAN IN A CARAVAN"

2020 – Trip & Event Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2020

TUESDAY September 1st	Committee Meeting	via ZOOM	N/A	Sec: Sue Abotomey E: susieabotomey@hotmail.com	6.00pm
TUESDAY September 8th	General Meeting	CANCELLED	N/A	Sec: Sue Abotomey E: susieabotomey@hotmail.com	7.30pm for 8.00pm start
SUNDAY September 20th	GAPSTEAD/ MURMINGEE TRIP	TO BE CONFIRMED		Neville French 0448277851	

OCTOBER 2020

TUESDAY October 6th	Committee Meeting	TO BE CONFIRMED	N/A	Sec: Sue Abotomey E: susieabotomey@hotmail.com	6.00pm
TUESDAY October 13th	General Meeting	TO BE CONFIRMED	N/A	Sec: Sue Abotomey E: susieabotomey@hotmail.com	7.30pm for 8.00pm start
SATURDAY October 17 TH - SUNDAY October 18th	TRACK CLEARING	TO BE CONFIRMED		Graham Abotomey	

NOVEMBER 2020

TUESDAY November 2nd	Committee Meeting	TO BE CONFIRMED			
TUESDAY November 9th	General Meeting	TO BE CONFIRMED			

DECEMBER 2020

TUESDAY December 1st	Committee Meeting	TO BE CONFIRMED			
TUESDAY November 9th	General Meeting	TO BE CONFIRMED			

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TRACK TORQUE



SEPTEMBER 2020



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