



DECEMBER 2013

Free Wheeling



Knockwood Reserve - Melbourne Cup Weekend

Notice Board

VFWDC GENERAL MEETING VENUE

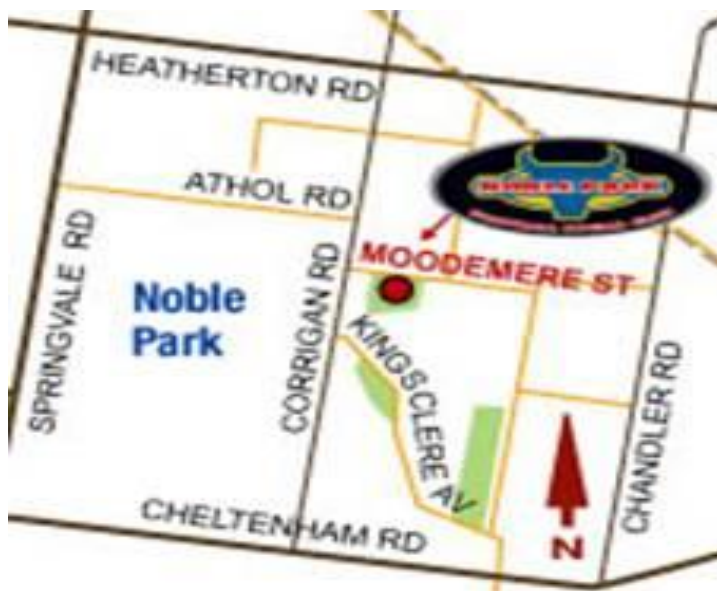
The club meets at the Bowling Club Rooms, Noble Park Football Club, 46-56 Moodemere St, Noble Park on the 1st Wednesday of every month at 8.00pm (No meeting in January and November meeting at selected location). Members and Guests are welcome to dine at the Bistro before attending the meeting.

First **WEDNESDAY** of each month 8.00PM Start

Venue:

Bowling Club Rooms (Next to Car Park, down the far end of the car park)

Noble Park Football Club
46-56 Moodemere Street
Noble Park
Melways ref: 89 D4



FREE WHEELING

Hello and welcome to the December newsletter.

The end of the year is finally here and the silly season is upon us, enjoy the festive parties and the long awaited Christmas holidays. Please see further into the newsletter for more information in relation to our clubs Christmas party, hope to see you there. Take it easy and stay safe out there on the roads and we'll see you back at the February club meeting (Please note: NO JANUARY MEETING).

Catherine

Editor@fwdc.com



COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2013-2014

President	John Partridge	president@vfwdc.com
Vice President	Sally Higgs	vicepres@vfwdc.com
Treasurer	Steve Pitcher	treasurer@vfwdc.com
Secretary	Andre Van Derwalt	secretary@vfwdc.com
GENERAL COMMITTEE		
Assistant Secretary		assist@vfwdc.com
Trip Co-ordinator	Tristan Higgs	trips@vfwdc.com
Newsletter Editor	Catherine Felton	editor@vfwdc.com
Web Manager	Ben Whitworth	web@vfwdc.com
Training Officers	Phillip Griffith	
Association Delegate	David Bruinsma	delegate@vfwdc.com
Librarian		
Merchandise	Mark Felton	
General Committee		

Club Details	
Registered Name	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
Registration No	A002184F
Correspondence	PO Box 778 Dandenong Vic 3174
Email	secretary@vfwdc.com
Website	www.vfwdc.com
Meetings	Held 8pm, first Wednesday of each month, excluding January (no meeting).
Location	Noble Park Football Club (Bowling club near car park) 46-56 Moodemere Street, Noble Park Melways ref: 89 D4
Newsletter	All articles and photographs to be submitted prior to 20 th of each month to editor@vfwdc.com
	The Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club is an affiliated club of the Victoria Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc (VAFWDC)



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Anyone wishing to advertise in the
Club Directory, please
contact the Editor at editor@vfwdc.com



CLUB CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

2013				
December	Wednesday 4th	General Meeting		
	8th	Club Christmas Party Break Up Party - Lysterfield Lake	John Partridge	president @vfwdc.com
	21st	'Last Dash' - Day Trip Marysville & Surroundings	Markncat Felton	0439 345 207
January 2014		NO GENERAL MEETING		
	24th - 27th	Murray River Trip - Long Beach (Ulupna Island)	Markncat Felton	0439 345 207
	22nd	Committee Meeting		
February	5th	General Meeting		
	22nd	Committee Meeting		
March	5th	General Meeting		
	7th - 10th	Labour Day Weekend		
	19th	Committee Meeting		
April	2nd	General Meeting		
	18th - 26th	Outback NSW	Steve Pitcher	0421 205 529
	19th - 21st	Easter Long Weekend—McKillops Bridge	Markncat Felton	0439 345 207
	25th	ANZAC Day		
	30th	Committee Meeting		
May	7th	General Meeting		
	22nd	Committee Meeting		
June	4th	General Meeting		
	6th - 9th	Queens Birthday Weekend		
	19th	Committee Meeting		
July	2nd	General Meeting		
	4th - 6th	Xmas In July		
	18th - 20th	Snow Trip - Mt Skene	Markncat Felton	0439 345 207
	22nd	Committee Meeting		

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to this month's edition of the Free Wheeling Newsletter.

We had a great meeting last month with a very good turnout at Everything 4WD. A massive thank you to Ironman 4x4 for their very generous donation to the club raffle, Brett will be very happy on his next trip with a new suspension kit fitted to his Landcruiser.

Christmas is almost upon us and for many that also means getting away in the 4by. We have our Christmas Party this Sunday. This year it is going to be held at Lysterfield Park for a BYO BBQ and get together. There is plenty to do out there including kayaking, bush walking and I'll be bring my mountain bike to hit up some of the trails. You may notice that in this newsletter we have reprinted the FWDV code of ethics. As a FWD club affiliated under the association we are obliged to adhere to these basic, mostly common sense rules. Please have a read of them. There are a few other items I would like to discuss, to make sure that we're responsible 4WD club that we're doing our part to have minimal impact whilst travelling and camping and to put 4WDing in a favourable light.

Please if you are leading a club (or even private trip), to make sure you are fully up to date with the latest track closures in the area that you are travelling in. Please make sure you keep to the tracks and if there is a tree blocking the track to make all attempts to clear the tree and not travel off track around it.

When collecting wood, please use fallen trees that are not hollow and home to native animals and when back at camp please have the wood neatly stacked away from the fire so there are no trip hazards. Please do not have long branches in the fire as they are a dangerous trip hazard. I have noticed a habit of putting glass bottles, tins and drink cans in the fire. This needs to stop as often debris has been left in the fireplace and goes against our code of ethics. If possible take cans with you and not bottles and empty and crush them and take them out with you. I have noticed an increase of people drinking alcohol whilst driving which is not only illegal but casts a poor image of 4WDing in the public eye. 4WDing can be challenging and recovery situations have lots of potential hazards and it's important that we have our full senses to be able to deal with this in a safe manor. Please no drinking during the driving parts of our trips. It is the trip leader's responsibility to ensure the people on their trip adhere to these simple guidelines and ethics.

We are not a club of many rules and we try to make it as easy and accessible for all to participate and run trips but I feel this is a timely reminder of our responsibilities leading into our busy summer months of 4WDing.

This Wednesday is our last meeting of the year, our next meeting will be in February. If you are planning on getting away and haven't had a chance to get the trip in the newsletter, please email the committee and we will do an all members email out to help you with numbers.

At this month's meeting we have a member of the CFA who will be discussing with us:

What to do if caught in a vehicle during a bushfire

Understanding Fire Danger Ratings's and how to plan a holiday around them

Where to get information while out on the road - eg downloading app, website, etc

What items to pack into the car for a bushfire

Planning for how you might get info if in remote areas with no service

Not travelling into high risk areas on bad days - rearrange your plans

Going to a Victorian Visitor Information centre for further information

Community Information Guides - download from CFA website for your destination

I hope to see you all this Wednesday at the meeting, otherwise have a great Christmas and keep it safe on the tracks.

Until we meet at the meeting, keep it safe,

John Partridge
President, VFWD Inc.



Christmas Party

8th of December 2013
Lysterfield Lake 11am onwards

It's that time of the year and the silly season is here and so is our Christmas party. There has been a date change and a location has been decided on.

The party will be at
Lysterfield Lake - <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/lysterfield-park>

There are opportunities at the park to going Kayaking, sailing, bush walking, running or mountain biking there.

Bring ball games, bikes, canoes, bring your own camp chairs and tables and/or pick-nick rugs. Don't forget your food and drinks for lunch, whatever takes your fancy there are BBQ facilities or bring a cold lunch.

There will be some games for the kids, with some prizes on offer.

Put your details on the trip data form at the December club meeting. Look out for the club banner at the Lysterfield Lake, hope to seen you there.



UPCOMING TRIPS

DESTINATION	Day Trip - Marysville & Surrounding
LEADER/CONTACT NO.	Markncat Felton 0439 345 207 or Via Email: editor@vfwdc.com
DATE	Day Trip - Saturday 21st December
MEETING PLACE / TIME	Lilydale Macca's (Back car park)—For 7am departure
GRADE	WET: Easy / Medium DRY: Easy

TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS

This will be a one last dash before Christmas or if you want to escape the silly season for one day, then please join us on this trip. It's been a while since the club has headed to this area, so we'll take in a few of the sights and tracks around the Marysville area. Who knows where we'll come out at, we'll just see how far we can get.

Please bring along a packed lunch/drinks and munchies for the trip.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us and ask us.

VEHICLE LIMITS	MINIMUM: 3 MAXIMUM: N/A
APPROX KMS	200kms, 400-500kms round trips
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL	Marysville (Sorry no gas)
DISTANCE BETWEEN SUPPLIES	500kms
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	Basic recovery equipment, self sufficient, lunch
MAPS REQUIRED	Marysville & Surrounds
RADIO UHF	12

If your personal details have changed in the last 12 months, could you please send an email through to the committee advising of your new details. This ensures all club members are kept up to date on the latest club news.



UPCOMING TRIPS

DESTINATION	Australia Day - Murray River Trip
LEADER/ CONTACT #	NAME: Markncat Felton MOB: 0439 345 207
DATES	24th—27th January 2013
MEETING PLACE & TIME	Seymour McDonalds Friday 24th at 9pm - If need be please contact us for another meeting place
GRADE	WET: Medium DRY: Easy
TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS	<p>The club is making this an annual trip for the Australia Day long weekend. We had a great weekend last year and hope to do it again this year.</p> <p>This will be a relaxing trip, camping along the Murray, camper trailers welcome. You can have a go at fishing, last time we were there, Mark caught a 'stick'. Go a for swim, water activities, go for a drive, whatever takes your fancy, were easy pleased.</p> <p>Camper trailers are welcomed, whatever type of tent you like. There are no toilets, if your prefer, please being your own utilities or use the services of the 'natural bush'.</p> <p>We will be having 'happy hour' mid afternoon on Saturday afternoon. Please bring a plate of food to share with all, your favourite food/ dishes/ cheese/dips/chips—finger food. Were also taking advantage of the long weekend and going to do a pot roast dinner.</p> <p>Please put your details down on the trip data form at the next club general meeting.</p>
VEHICLE LIMITS	MINIMUM: 2 MAXIMUM: No max, all are welcome
APPROX KMS	600 km's approx
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	Basic Recovery Equipment. Self sufficient, water, food & supplies
RADIO CHANNEL/ UHF	12

DESTINATION	McKillops Bridge - Snowy River
LEADER/ CONTACT NO.	NAME: Markncat Felton MOB: 0439 345 207
DATE	Friday 19th - 21st April
MEETING PLACE / TIME	Longwarry BP - 7pm
GRADE	Dry: EASY Wet: MEDIUM
TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS	<p>Were taking advantage of the long weekend and heading up to far East Victoria.</p> <p>We had to miss this area at Easter, so with another long weekend, we'll try again.</p> <p>We'll take a look around the local area, checking out McKillops bridge, Gelantipy, Little River & Raymond Creek Falls. Travelling over Mt Deddick & Mt Brown.</p> <p>There are some rocky roads and numerous water crossings in an isolate part of the state.</p> <p>We'll be covering a large number of kilometers. This will be a pick up and travel trip, consistently moving, no stay in camp & sorry no trailers.</p>
VEHICLE LIM- ITS	MINIMUM:2 MAXIMUM:8
APPROX KMS Meeting place to destination	1000 - 1500 kms round trip
EQUIPMENT REQUIRED	Self sufficient
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL	Orbost
MAPS REQUIRED	Rooftop Snowy Mountains
RADIO CHANNEL / UHF	UHF 12

UPCOMING TRIPS

DESTINATION	Outback NSW
LEADER/CONTACT NO.	NAME: Steve Pitcher MOB: 0421 205 529
DATE	18 (Good Friday) – 26 (Day After ANZSAC Day) April 2014
MEETING PLACE / TIME A second/later group may depart the following day but this is not assured.	North-bound Service Station near Donnybrook Road intersection, Hume Freeway (Donnybrook – just past Craigeburn) – toilets, fast food and fuel available. Meet at 6:30 am for a 7:00 am departure. It's a 2-day drive so we will be stopping on day 1 at Wodonga for a late breakfast and then at Gundagai (or thereabouts) for lunch. We'll make our way further north to a road-side motel, as the convoy permits.
GRADE	WET: D Grade (Easy) DRY: C Grade (Medium)
TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS	<p>Base Camping for 1 week at Coorongooaba Campground, Wollemi National Park, NSW. About 950 km each way.</p> <p>With children, it takes a 2 days' drive each way so an overnight stop will be required (most likely either Yass or Goulbourn on the way up and at the Fiesta in Wodonga on the return leg – you will need to book this yourselves).</p> <p>Travelling to Capertee in NSW where we will spend 1 night at the local pub. Overnight options include either camping or a hotel room at the pub where we will stay overnight. Prices and facilities are quite modest – it's a country pub.</p> <p>From there, we plan (on the Sunday morning) to make our way to the campsite (about 1 hour's drive). It is a new site (only established in 2009) with very basic facilities on the banks of the Capertee River. Consequently, there are still no drop/bush toilets but the upside of this is that there will be few other campers.</p> <p>We will spend 1-2 days exploring Gardens of Stone National Park (no camping permitted there so a day trip or two will be required to see it properly). For those that are interested, we will also head over to Louee Station at the nearby township of Lue for a day. For anyone that is into off-road riding, this outback station has 5 world-class tracks of varying degrees of difficulty (at a daily cost of \$50 per adult and \$30 per child) but it also has other facilities for those that wish just to explore the area.</p> <p>I will also conduct a couple of day tours to explore the area around Wollemi NP and to do some proper 4WDing. We will also get to see a couple of ghost towns such as Glen Davis.</p> <p>Being on the Capertee river, people can enjoy a bit of fresh water fishing. Other possible activities include kayaking or canoeing, bush-walking, bike riding (BYO push-bike – my children will be), camp cooking and bird-watching. Dogs are not permitted in the National Parks.</p> <p>This trip is purposefully designed to be more around camping, fishing and having fun rather than 4WDing per se. While there will be some 4WDing (and some excellent tracks at that), it is not the main focus of the trip. Anyone wishing to do more in terms of exploring and 4WDing around the area is more than welcome to do so – just let me know and I will build it in to the itinerary. Wollemi is the largest NP in the country so there is plenty of opportunity for those that want to be more active in a 4WD sense. I will, of course, be happy to assist anyone wanting to explore further afield.</p>

TRIP ACTIVITY DETAILS cont	<p>For those that are interested in the trip but either don't have children and/or who are not so enthused about the hotel/motel costs, I am quite happy to meet up with members either at Capertee Hotel or at the campsite itself.</p> <p>Access to the campsite is 2WD all the way unless there is severe rainfall immediately prior to the trip. Camper trailers are welcome so come along, bed down and enjoy!</p>
VEHICLE LIMITS	<p>MINIMUM: 1</p> <p>MAXIMUM: 10</p>
APPROX KMS (Meeting place to destination)	2,000 Kms (return trip)
LAST AVAILABLE FUEL	<p>PETROL: Capertee, NSW (Lidsdale is the 2nd nearest)</p> <p>DIESEL: Capertee, NSW (Lidsdale is the 2nd nearest)</p>
DISTANCE BETWEEN SUPPLIES	40 kms (approx) back to Capertee from camp
<p>EQUIPMENT REQUIRED</p> <p>In case of an emergency (eg. Traffic Accident, Bushfire, etc), completed Personal Information Forms / Visitor Forms are required for this trip.</p>	All equipment and supplies required to be self-sufficient for 7+ days and to cater for simple vehicle break-downs (eg. Basic tools and spares for your vehicle/trailer) and 4WD recoveries (front and rear but winches are not essential). Quality A/T tyres and spare/s – please remember keys for any spare tyre locks or tow hitch locks.
MAPS REQUIRED	While not essential, all participants are encouraged to have a reasonably new map of the area.
<p>RADIO CHANNEL CB / UHF</p> <p>I do have a Flying Doctor Radio but it will be for absolute emergencies only.</p>	Channel 12 UHF (given the length of the trip, we may pick a sub-channel (CTSS) if radio traffic is excessive).



**Lots of
Trips!**

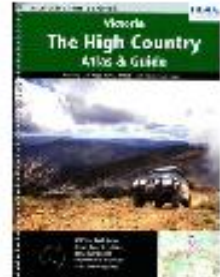
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Most of this we have in stock ready to go.



Minutes of General Meeting November 2013

The meeting was held at **Everyhting 4wd** and was opened at 8.00pm by Club President John Partridge.

Present: members present as per the attendance book

Apologies: members present as per the Apologies book

Visitors: Visitors as listed in the Visitors Book

Minutes of previous General Meeting

Accepted: David Bruinsma

Seconded: Jack

Matters arising:

NIL

Correspondence in

Land rover Review

CCJC

Overland Cruiser

Correspondence out

Club magazine

Treasurer's report

Term Deposit	\$ 7150.63
Cheque A/C opening	
balance	\$ 4533.83
Money In	\$ 1038.27
Moneys Out	\$ 29.90
Cheque A/C	
Closing balance	\$ 5542.20
Petty Cash	\$ 150
Consolidation balance	\$ 12912.22

Accepted: Mark Felton
David Bruinsma

Association Report

Nil

Trip coordinators report

Type	When	Where	Trip Leader
Oxfam tree delivery	7 & 8 December		
Toolangi State Forrest	22 November	Toolangi	Dean Pallone

Trip reports

Beach port trip. An eventful trip with a lot of fun had by all. 11 4wd's on the trip. Day trips on the beach and dunes were held on Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday Garry led an extended trip where some very soft bits were encountered and mastered with minor difficulty. Mick lost a bit of traction and ended up stuck. After a little guidance and patience everyone got through without any damage. On Monday John led a day trip with a lot of fun and a lot of sand. John even got to use his TREDs...

Knock wood trip. 8 4wd's on the trip. The campsite was very busy, but the club got a nice spot. On Saturday there was a trip up to Mount Terrible for lunch. On Sunday they headed up Army track to mount Skene. They even had a light dusting of snow! They continued on to Crows hut for lunch. On Monday the same tracks as Sunday were done with the addition of some extra water crossings. Mark had a little moment with a deep water crossing, but all ended well!

Great Otway trip. Trip was cut short because of damage caused by wind on the Saturday night.

Events Report

NIL

General business

Ironman suspension specialist came to discuss the working and function of a 4wd suspension.

Other Business

Nil

Raffle

Winner	Item
Brett & Nikki	Complete 4x4 suspension kit

Meeting Closed:
9:45 pm

Next Meeting:
Wednesday 8.00pm
4th December
at Noble Park Bowls
club.



CLUB MERCHANDISE For Sale

Club Polo Shirts	\$28.00 ea
Club Polar Fleece ½ Zip Jumper	\$38.00 ea
Club Polar Fleece Full Zip Jacket	\$48.00 ea
Club Sleeveless Reversible Vest	\$44.00 ea
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Club Beanie	\$12.00 ea
VFWDc Sticker (long)	\$ 6.00 ea

We encourage all members to purchase a Club Polo Shirt.

Email your order to committee@vfwdc.com.
Please ensure you advise size required.

Visitor for the December Club Meeting

Glen Tarrant from the CFA will attend the meeting to discuss some of the following:

- Travelling in high risk areas
- What to do if caught in a vehicle during a bushfire
- Understanding Fire Danger
- Ratings's and how to plan a holiday around them
- Where to get information while out on the road – eg downloading app, website, etc
- What items to pack into the car for a bushfire
- Planning for how you might get info if in remote areas with no service
- Not travelling into high risk areas on bad days – rearrange your plans

Trip Reports



Knock Wood Trip - Night sky - 1st of November 2013

This was the first of many freezing nights, people talked by the fire watching the stars drift by. Smoke drifted up and away in to the starry night sky. Sparks following smoke like little fairies dancing.

Late comers were in a bit of trouble setting up in pitch black; but they seemed to manage. It's already pretty busy here with families and groups we hope there was enough room for the rest of the club members. It was bedtime for all families who were in their pjs and were off to bed ready for the next



views while driving spectacular. There was no mud but there was truck loads of dust to make the clean cars dirty. Dust was every where, in the cars, outside the cars and even in the air cons.

From the top of Mt Terrible there was 360 degree views and as far as the eye could see. There were views of all kinds of things from the high country to Lake Eildon. Gum trees, pine trees, wattle ferns you name it I'm pretty sure we

got to see it all. The lake looked like crystals shining in the daylight, next to the beautiful high country.



4 days of 4wd driving a head of them.

Mt Terrible -
2nd of
November 2013

Mt Terrible track a sight to see with its steep climbs and amazing views. Rocky Mountains were the best fun, some looked like a 4 metre drive or some a 50 metre drive up a huge glorious hill.

The vegetation was green and brown from the gums and ferns. The ferns were pure green with Pointy leaves, gums brown leaves with a barky trunk. Soil on the ground was just rocks with a little bit of lush grass.

Mt Skene snow - 3rd of November 2013

'Mountain goats a gracious creature climbing mountains all-day'; well that was us climbing up and down the rocky terrain. Steep slopes with lush, green, over grown grass and crunchy trees. Rocks dusty with sharp edges

pricking every thing that gets in its way but the tyres on these great cars out lasted the prickles.

Crows hut can only be seen by 4wds wanting a nice trip with a fire place that warmed up the legs for people wearing shorts on this snowy, freezing day. The kids enjoying playing games and talking with their friends. People gathering near the old fireplace bringing everyone together, while some were cooking their lunch.



The views were not as magnificent as yesterday but the fog was no match for our eyes we could still manage to see the beauty.



From the look out all you could see was ghost gums and snow. Snow started drifting down to the ground and landed all over the filthy cars, rain cleaned most of the dust off. The ghost gums a haunting sight for who ever passes Mt Skene.

River fun - 4th of November 2013

Following the same track as yesterday and turning to the left down a windy rocky road

towards mind boggling views. The blue mountains in the distance were covered in clouds but still visible. The views today whereby far the best of this weekend. The views leading towards a campsite with a steep incline surrounding it.

Bonnet deep water the river crossing today was exactly that. Fighting the current to get to the other side of the track but what we didn't see was the road closed sign on the other side of the river.



Everyone got through safely but came out with there car soaking and engine and breaks steaming.

The pub was an amazing sight with its mouth watering food and great river viewings. The little set up for a country town was great even though not much on the menu they still managed to impress. The Kevington hotel had surely reached our expectations.

The sighting of animals is always exciting to kids. Kookaburras and lorikeets were the main animals that we saw. The kookaburra is a well

known bird in the bush but there was heaps they came back every single day looking for



food or treats. The colourful lorikeets were always on the ground near our setup. But if that wasn't the

river was amazing, the gold panning was amazing finding little specks of sparkly gold. The freezing river was not as warm as it looks but still kids managed to jump in sand swim.

Its over - 5th of November 2013

A great long weekend has come to a close. The time to pack up and go our own ways has finally come new friends leaving each other. The packing part took an hour or so but that was expected with the huge set ups we had. The views we have experienced were mind blowing and the sights were amazing. The nights were a bit brisk but that was all that was faulty about this trip.

The views:

Amazing views everywhere you can never



escape from them. The mountains in the far

distance are a navy blue colour and the up

close ones are green full with bush trees. The ghost trees make the mountains look like snow because of there crisp



grey colour. Mountains upon mountains give the view a nice texture filled with trees and bright, powerful colours.

Campsites:

Knock wood reserve is a glorious campsite with the river right along side the bank. River rocks crunching under foot digging into the dirt. The grass there was freshly cut perfect for a cup weekend. Trees surround the area like most places but the trees there give out more shade and produce great climbing trees. The set up of our caravans, tents, rooftops was a cute little circle surrounding the fire pit.

Tracks:

Dust, mud, rocks there was everything on the road. Bumps that made your wheels jump of the track, mud holes that made you slip and slide. River crossings the best thing that we went on with the bonnet deep water and the current rushing against us. The dust clouds are everywhere especially on the main dirt road.

Written by: Ruby Whitworth

Camping

Camping code

[Minimal impact camping](#)

[Bush camping](#)

[Carbased camping](#)

[Planning your trip](#)

[Vehicles and motorbikes](#)

[Campfires](#)

[Fuel stove only areas](#)

[Pack it in, pack it out](#)

[No-trace camping](#)

[Washing](#)

[How to avoid gastro](#)

[Minimal impact camping](#)

Increasing numbers of visitors to national parks, forests and other reserves can cause serious damage to the natural environment. Expansion of campsites, escapes from campfires, trampling and cutting of vegetation, outbreaks of gastroenteritis and the rapid deterioration of walking tracks have all become more common.

Fortunately many visitors are adopting a new ethic about their use of natural areas. By learning to tread lightly in the bush, we can minimise the damage to the natural environment and reduce the need for restrictions on visitor numbers and track or campsite closures. Without this ethic, we run the very real danger of 'loving our natural areas to death'.

This explains minimal impact camping techniques. Some, in particular those to do with fire, carry the weight of law. All must be used if we want to continue camping in the Australian bush.

Bush camping

- **Choosing campsites carefully.** Camps must be located in designated camping areas in most National and State parks. Check if bookings are required. In some parks, bush or dispersed camping is also permitted. In all other areas, camps must be at least 20 metres from any stream, lake or full supply level of a reservoir.
- **Ensure fires are safe** and that they are completely extinguished when you leave.
- **Take rubbish home** or place in bins if provided.
- **Where there is a toilet please use it.** In areas without toilets, bury toilet waste at least 100 metres away from campsites and watercourses. All native plants and animals are protected. Do not cut down or damage standing trees or vegetation.
- **Dogs and cats** are prohibited in National and most State Parks. In other places they must be on a lead and Under control at all times.
- **Firearms are prohibited** in most National Parks, State Parks and Reserves. Check local offices if unsure.
- If firearms are permitted, then shooters must be licensed and firearms must be registered. Take care with firearms- many people use bush areas.
- **Drive on the track.** Drive your vehicle only on roads that are open to the public, avoid using muddy tracks and remove fallen trees across tracks rather than driving around them.

Car-based camping

Camping is perhaps the most popular way of enjoying the great outdoors and car-based camping is an excellent way for people of all ages to visit parks.

Whether you camp at a designated campsite with several other groups or have found your own private camping spot, follow this code to limit the impact of your visit.

- **Drive on the track.** Drive your vehicle only on roads that are open to the public and avoid using muddy tracks where you are likely to leave wheel ruts that cause greater soil erosion. It is irresponsible and illegal to drive off formed roads and tracks.
- Remove fallen trees across tracks rather than driving around them.
- **Management tracks are closed to private vehicles** to ensure sensitive areas are not damaged and to enable other visitors to enjoy their recreation without the intrusion of vehicles.
- **Drive carefully on mountain roads** as they can be hazardous when wet if vehicles travel too fast. Slower speeds will also enable you to enjoy more of the scenery and help protect native animals which cross and use roads.
- **Take care on gravel surfaces and edges.** Remember that other vehicles such as large trucks may be sharing the road with you.
- **Think before you park and leave your vehicle.** Are you blocking a track that may be needed in an emergency or

by another visitor to the park?

- **Carry wheel chains** in winter for alpine areas.
- **Leave your pets and firearms at home.** They are not allowed in national parks.

Planning your trip

- **Keep your party small.** Large parties (of more than eight people) have more environmental impact and can adversely affect the experience of other visitors.
- **Go off peak.** Where possible avoid the peak times of the year (December to February) and the more popular areas. This way you will miss the crowds and spread the impact, giving the environment a chance to recover.
- **Protect yourself** and your family against cold, wind and rain. Take warm clothing (jumper, gloves, cap) and raincoat and wear strong shoes.
- **Sunlight burns** even on cold or cloudy days. Protect your skin and always wear a hat and sunscreen.
- **Let someone know before you go.** Tell them where you are going and when you plan to return. Remember to contact them when you get back.

Vehicles and motorbikes

- **May only be driven on formed roads and vehicle tracks.** Management tracks are closed to private vehicles to ensure sensitive area are not damaged and to enable other visitors to enjoy their recreation without the intrusion of vehicles.
- **Are prohibited off road** (including beaches) and on closed roads.
- **Must be road registered and roadworthy.** Recreation registration not permitted.
- **Driver and riders must be licensed.**

Campfires

Wood fires may be lit in fireplaces for cooking and warmth in most parks, forests and public land, but a number of restrictions apply to ensure that fires do not escape and fireplaces are safely constructed.

On days of TOTAL FIRE BAN the following are PROHIBITED: All fires in the open air (including campfires and portable gas or liquid fuelled stoves); All gas or liquid fuelled appliances in tents, tent type trailers and vehicles.

It is your responsibility to know if a total fire ban is declared. Contact local Parks Victoria, NRE or CFA offices. If in any doubt about the safety of lighting a fire, please don't light it.

- **Please don't light a fire** if you are in any doubt about the safety of lighting it. Fire restrictions apply in all national parks, forests and other reserves and open fires, barbecues and fuel stoves may not be used on days of Total Fire Ban. Do not light open fires during hot windy weather.
- **Observe the fire lighting regulations.** Regulations governing the lighting and use of fires vary from State to State. You should check local variations if you're planning to walk and use open fires.
- **Keep the fire small** (under one metre square). Don't put rocks around it- these just create another visual scar. Use a safe existing fireplace rather than make a new one.
- **Use only dead fallen wood.** Dead standing trees are a home for wildlife and are a valued part of the scenery. Leave axes and machetes at home.
- **Firewood is in short supply in many areas.** Fallen branches house and feed many small mammal, invertebrate and other species. These habitat branches may only be replaced slowly, particularly in alpine and coastal areas. Gather firewood well away from your camp and use it sparingly, or better still, bring your own.
- **Be absolutely sure the fire is out.** Before you leave, feel the ground underneath the coals. If it is still warm, the fire is not out. Put it out with water, not soil.
- **Always try to use a fuel stove when camping.** Compared with campfires, fuel stoves are cleaner, a lot easier to use in wet weather, they cook faster and don't scar the landscape. Ensure that every member of your family or friends camping with you has warm clothing and good tents, so fires won't be needed for warmth.

Fuel stove only areas

A number of places are designated as fuel stove only areas (no campfires allowed) to lessen the environmental damage associated with fires. In the Alpine National Park these are Mt Bogong, Mt Feathertop and its approaches (including the Razorback) and within one kilometre of Lake Tali Karng.

Other places at lower elevations and some coastal parks in various States are also fuel stove only areas. Fines are imposed on people who light fires. Before your visit, check with local land managers as to whether campfires are allowed.

Pack it in, pack it out

- **Pack to minimise rubbish.** Don't take potential rubbish such as bottles, cans and excess wrapping.
- **Don't burn or bury rubbish.** Rubbish is likely to be dug up and scattered by possums and other animals and may injure them. Digging disturbs the soil and encourages weeds and erosion.
- **If you've carried it in, you can carry it out.** Carry out all your rubbish, including those easy-to-forget items like silver paper, plastic wrappers and orange peel which won't easily decompose.

- **Other people's rubbish.** If you have the misfortune to come across other people's rubbish, do the bush a favour and pick that up too.
- **Don't feed animals**, especially around huts and campsites. Feeding causes unnaturally high and unbalanced animal populations dependent on walkers' food. Some animals become a nuisance and can develop diseases such as 'lumpy jaw' from eating refined foods.

How to avoid gastro

We think the increasing cases of gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and vomiting) in some high-use areas are caused by exposed human faecal waste. Giardia, a human bacterial parasite is also of concern. Giardia lives in mountain streams contaminated by faecal waste and causes chronic diarrhoea and an array of other nasties. It has been found in the USA and New Zealand and is possibly in some alpine areas of Australia. Avoid 'gastro' and help ensure that Giardia does not spread to new areas by observing these guidelines.

- When there is a toilet, please use it.
- In areas without toilets, bury your faecal waste. Choose a spot at least 100 metres away from campsites and watercourses. Dig a hole 15 cm (6 inches) deep (take a hand trowel for this purpose). Bury all faecal waste and paper, mixing it with soil to help decomposition and discourage animals. Carry out sanitary pads, tampons and condoms.
- In snow, dig down into the soil. Burying human waste is only temporary until the snow melts.
- In high-use areas, river valleys without toilets and snow areas, you should consider carrying out human wastes to a suitable sewage system.
- Flies and small animals love faecal waste and food. Cover all food. Avoid putting it on hut tables, furniture and other places used by flies and animals.
- Boil water for at least five and preferably ten minutes before drinking in high-use areas or areas with low water flow.

No-trace camping

With modern camping equipment, you can leave a campsite looking as if you had never been there.

- **Look for low impact campsites.** Sandy or hard surfaces are better than boggy or vegetated areas. Camp at an existing campsite rather than a new one and keep at least 30 metres away from watercourses and the track. Spend only one or two nights at each campsite.
- **Use modern camping equipment.** Use waterproof tents (with floors and tent poles) and foam sleeping-mats to minimise damage to camping areas. Digging trenches around tents is damaging and unnecessary if the tents are erected on a well-drained site.
- **Leave campsites better than you found them** by removing rubbish and dismantling unnecessary or unsafe fireplaces.

Washing

- Don't wash in streams and lakes. Detergents, toothpaste and soap (even biodegradable types) harm fish and water life.

Wash 50 metres away from streams and lakes and scatter the wash water here so that it filters through the soil before returning to the stream. Use gritty sand and a scourer instead of soap to clean dishes. Don't throw food scraps into streams or lake.

