



FREE WHEELING

July 2022



Photo: Sally Higgs
New silo art in
Lake Cargelligo

Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
Registration No: A0002184F

Meeting Details



VFWDC Meeting Details & Venue

The club meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 8.00pm with the following exceptions:

No meeting in January

November meeting held at a selected “special” location

Blue and Gold Room
Club Noble
46-56 Moodemere Street
Noble Park 3174
Melways ref: 89 D4



This month's meeting will be held on **Wednesday 6th July** at 8.00pm.

It will be held in person at Club Noble.

Club Committee

2021 - 2022

President	Callum Brown	president@vfwdc.com
Vice President	Andre Van Der Walt	vicepres@vfwdc.com
Secretary	Bruce Cremonesi	secretary@vfwdc.com
Treasurer	Ly Ho	treasurer@vfwdc.com

General Committee

Trip Coordinator	Neville Van Leeuwen	trips@vfwdc.com
Magazine Editor	Rory Hall	editor@vfwdc.com
Association Delegate	Vacant	delegate@vfwdc.com

Support Positions to Committee

Web Manager	Ben Whitworth	web@vfwdc.com
Training Officer	Phil Griffith	
Merchandise	Ann Crockett	merchandise@vfwdc.com

Club Details

Registered Name	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club
Registration Number	A002184F
Correspondence Address	PO Box 778, Dandenong, VIC 3174
Email	secretary@vfwdc.com
Website	www.vfwdc.com

The Victorian Four Wheel Club is an affiliated club of [Four Wheel Drive Victoria](#)

Hi All,

It's been a great month for Club trips. We had teams out to Wombat State Forest and also up into North West VIC to follow some of the Silo Art Trail. In addition, there is an awesome trip report from Sally and Tristan for their Darling River Run later in the magazine so don't miss that.

In July we have the annual snow trip that is being organised by Bruce (thanks Bruce!). It should be a good trip as always, especially with all the cold and wet weather we have been having recently. I hope you managed to get signed up for it ok but if not there is quite a handful of reserves who may be able to form their own group for a separate date. It would definitely be worth asking around to get sufficient interest going for a second trip.

In our upcoming July meeting, we have a guest speaker from RidePro Suspension (thanks Ly!!). I think this will be very interesting and for those looking for new suspension there might be some nice bargains to be had.

At the end of the month, we have our Christmas in July get together. The trip is now live on the trip platform and there will be a sign up sheet at the upcoming meeting. Those who wish to come, I ask that you contact Ly or Bruce via email to confirm your attendance and numbers so we can get planning with the catering.

Well that's all from me for now. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting this month.

Cheers Cal.



Club Calendar

July

Wednesday 6th	Club Meeting (Guest speaker from RidePro 4x4 Suspension)	8.00pm
Wednesday 20th	Committee Meeting (Virtual)	8.00pm
Fri 22nd - Sat 23rd	Snow Trip	Organised by Bruce (see Upcoming Trips)
Saturday 30th	Christmas in July	Social event in Jells Park (see Upcoming Trips)

August

Wednesday 3rd	Annual General Meeting	8.00pm
Wednesday 17th	Committee Meeting (Virtual)	8.00pm

Other Dates

July (tbc)	Googs Track	Organised by Gary, details to follow on trip pages.
November Long Weekend	Robe sand driving trip	Organised by Dave & Bruce, details to follow on trip pages.

Club Merchandise



Need a jacket, vest, shirt or hat for your next trip? Get ready and place your order today.

PRICES

Club SS Polo Shirt	\$30.00	Club Wide-Brim Hat	\$5.00
Club SS Shirt 40th Anniversary	\$10.00	Club Sandwich Peak Hat	\$5.00
Club Polar Fleece Jacket (Full Zip)	\$30.00	Club Woollen Pom Pom Beanie	\$20.00
Club Fleece Hoodie	\$30.00	Club Cable Knit Scarf	\$20.00
Club SS Reversible Vest—double embroidery	\$50.00	Club Neoprene Stubby Holder	\$10.00
Club Drivers Jacket	\$60.00	Club Coth Badges 120mm	\$8.00
Club Trekka Jacket	\$85.00	Windscreen Sticker Small	\$6.00
Club Bucket Hat	\$5.00	Windscreen Sticker Large	\$8.00

We encourage all members to purchase a Club Polo shirt.

Email your order or any queries to merchandise@vfwdc.com along with the size you would like.

Wed 1st June

Opened at 08.04pm

Attendees:

- As per attendance sheet

Apologies:

- David B, Rory, Callum, Ben, Stu & Maree

Minutes of previous meeting:

- Minutes from last meeting - Read
- Matters arising from previous minutes - nil
- Accepting of minutes - Anne
- Seconding of minutes - Neville

Correspondence

Mail in:

- Magazine stuff
- New member info emails
- Driver training certificates (Daryl, Nero, Neville, Ruby, Wayne, David V, Lynton, Steven C)

Mail out:

- Replies to emails

Treasurer's Report:

- Monthly Treasurer's Reports - Apr'22 as per magazine
- Acceptance of Report - Sally
- Seconding of Report - Phil
- Membership at 56 currently

Association Report:

- Position currently vacant. Andre asked if anyone was interested in taking on this position in the future. No volunteers.

Upcoming Trips:

- Wombat State Park - 4/5th Jun, camping at Firth Park, if open. Trip full.
- Tallarook - TBC, short notice trip with Callum, keep an eye on emails
- 10-12 Jun - New Member trip - High Country Huts with Bruce/Dave
- 29-30th Jul - new members, High Country Huts - Joe
- 30th Jul - Christmas in July, Jells Park BBQ
- July (Date TBC) - Googs Track - Gary. Meet at Port Augusta. Roughly 2 weeks in total.

Trip Reports:

Night Run (Andre):

Saturday night met up at Longwarry
Rather cool & wet
Few people had a few goes on a few tracks
Everyone had a great time and not too late a finish.

Wombat Recce trip (Ly):

Wombat East No.8 track
Then came to 3 x holes. Didn't know which one to take. Took it in the middle and bellied out.
Had fun on his own exploring the area and will run lots of trips in that park coming up.

General Business:

Andre talked about the upcoming AGM

Next meeting we have the RdiePro team coming to talk about winches and suspension.

Meeting closed: 09.35pm

Next Meeting: Wed 6th July

Bringing Four Wheel Drivers Together



Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
www.vfwdc.com



Treasurer's Report May 2022

<u>Cheque A/C`</u>	Opening Balance as at 01/05/2022	\$7,933.63	
	Add: Merchandise Sales	\$50.00	
	Total Monies In:		\$50.00
	Closing Balance as at 31/05/2022		\$7,983.63
<u>Term Deposit</u>	Opening Balance as at 01/05/2022	\$6,852.85	
	Closing Balance as at 31/05/2022		\$6,852.85
<u>Petty Cash</u>	Opening Balance as at 01/05/2022	\$42.55	
	Less: Catering	\$34.25	
	Total Monies Out:		\$34.25
	Closing Balance as at 31/05/2022		<u>\$8.30</u>
	Consolidated Closing Cash Position		<u>\$14,844.78</u>

This month's meeting

Next month's meeting is being held on **Wed 6th July** at Club Noble as usual. Just a reminder, if you are suffering from symptoms, or have tested positive to covid or are a close contact, then we ask that you respect the other members of the club and stay away. This probably applies to flu as well if you are unlucky enough to be suffering at the moment.

Guest Speakers

The committee has secured the team from RidePro 4x4 Suspension to attend our upcoming July meeting. Come along and listen to what they have to say about all things suspension and winches, including proper use and maintenance.



Christmas in July

The committee has now finalised the details of the previously postponed club Christmas trip. It will be a social gathering in Jells Park including a big feed and plenty of fresh air. Take a look at the Upcoming Trips section later in the magazine for more details. **Please note in order to finalise the catering, the committee asks that you RSVP ASAP if you are attending and the numbers in your party.** You can RSVP by email to Ly on treasurer@vfwdc.com or Bruce on secretary@vfwdc.com.

Membership Renewals

It's that time of year again! Not only do you need to get your business and personal tax affairs sorted out, you also need to renew your membership with the club. You should have received an email from the Treasurer already with details of how to renew. If you didn't get it then please check out our membership page here in the magazine. It would really be appreciated if you could renew in the coming days/weeks so that the Treasurer doesn't have to do loads of chasing after people. Thank you!

Club AGM

Just a reminder that the club will be holding its Annual General Meeting in August. This is where the Committee and club positions are selected for another year. If you would like to be part of the Committee and feel you have something to offer please do not hesitate to put your hand up. There are several positions currently vacant. If you are interested and would like further details please contact Bruce (secretary@vfwdc.com) or any other committee member. Please put a note in your diary for Wednesday 3rd August.

All and any contributions welcome

Please don't be shy! Help the Editor keep the magazine fun and interesting, and relevant to you, by sharing some words and/or pictures. Literally anything you have is welcome!

Please visit our website at VFWDC.com to view all our current membership forms and club policies.

For all new and renewal of memberships, please complete [the online form here](#)

If you are looking for a Temporary Membership, please complete the online form, [which can be found here](#).

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us via the Club Secretary on secretary@vfwdc.com

Payments:

Payment can be made via Bank Transfer. The details are as follows:

Account Name:	Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club Inc
BSB:	633108
Account No:	111761979

Please ensure your transfer includes your name as provided on the membership application and renewal form in the reference.

Once you have made your payment/transfer, please send your completed membership application and renewal form to treasurer@vfwdc.com or you can present it to the Treasurer at any general meeting.

Thank you for choosing the Victorian Four Wheel Drive Club

If you are interested in joining [Club Noble](#) where we hold our monthly meetings, their application form can be found [here](#).

Australia's Biggest

Continuing with the theme of Australia's "**BIG**" things, here's the Big Mallee Fowl in Patchewollock. Did you know that Mallee Fowl use heat produced from decomposing vegetation (in spring) or heated sand (in summer) to help hatch their eggs? Thanks for the photos Sally.



For anyone interested to become a collector of Australia's Big Things, [here's a link you may wish to check out](#). You may also be excited to hear (I was!!!) that Hema have just released their "[Big Things of Australia Map](#)" - obviously someone from Hema reads this magazine and is a Big Thing enthusiast!!!

Meet the Member

This month we get to meet Ben who has been on and off the committee for many a year now! He doesn't do sport, books, jokes or karaoke but he can drift a XC Falcon round a Coles car park.....



Full name and any nicknames?

Ben Whitworth

What's your vehicle?

2021 Nissan Patrol Y62

First car you ever owned?

XC Falcon

Dumbest thing you ever did in a car?

Drifting the XC around Knox City car park, before Ozone.



Favourite camp food?

Camp oven roast lamb and/or scones

Best mod you have ever done to a car?

Rear setup in the Patrol I have now. Lithium battery and management, 75L Dual Zone fridge, twin compressor, water tank and pump, and much more.

Best trip/track/park you have done?

Snow trips and Beachport trips are my favourite club trips

Top tip to any beginners?

Get great tyres! and don't buy anything from 4wd Supercentre that you need to depend upon. e.g a winch.

Best overseas trip/location?

Not interested, Australia's the best!!

Best piece of camping gear you are never without?

Head torch, river shoes.

Where in the world would you most like to visit?	Not interested, Australia's the best.
Favourite subject or activity at school?	IT
Worst upgrade or kit purchase?	Nothing really, I've got lots of surplus camping gear but generally only because I have upgraded over the years.
Dream track or trip at the top of your bucket list?	Cape York
What is your go to karaoke song?	Nope I dont sing!
What kept you sane during lockdowns?	Where I live. Beautiful bush land of Mount Dandenong.
Worst job you ever had?	None!
Roughest night's sleep on a trip?	Got stuck in the bush around Mt Skene on a peak during a lightning storm. We were in the clouds with lightning all around. Snow collapsed my awning and I woke up wet and cold inside my stretcher tent.
Dream vehicle and set up if you could afford it?	What i have now is pretty close.
Footie, football or rugby?	Nope, I dont do sport.
Can you play a musical instrument?	Nope.
Best book you have ever read and recommend to others?	Nope, I dont do books.

What are you currently watching on Netflix/Stan that you can recommend (or not) to others?

Stranger Things. (Picture below of “Eleven” for those un-educated in the ways of Stranger Things)
Currently rewatching Chuck, Atypical, The Rookie.



What motivates/inspires you?

Family

What is your go to joke?

Nope, I am not funny.

What snacks are we most likely to find in your cab?

No eating in the car!!



Trip Report

Day Trip to Wombat State Park (Saturday 4th June) (organised by Ly)

Attendees and convoy formation:

1. Ly (Trip Leader) - LX470
2. Neville - Triton
3. Steven C - Pajero
4. Steven M - BT50
5. Lynton - Wrangler
6. Dennis - Rubicon
7. Sally & Tristan - Discovery 3

We all met up at the Gisborne Café after 8AM. Some of us had breakfast, coffee and grabbed supplies at the local IGA. Rolled out after 8:35AM. Got on Carrols Lane and everyone aired down at the firewood collection point/motorbike unloading area. We had a look at everyone's vehicles to check for recovery points and winch to see how the formation will go.



First track was Wombat East No.8. We encountered the same bog hole I got stuck last time – this time I took the chicken track. Neville unfortunately got stuck in the same hole as I did. He got to test out his winch for the first time. After fumbling for the isolator switch, Tristan managed to hook the winch to the tree. Neville easily winched out with the convoy following. Every bog hole we depth tested with the stick.

This track had multiple options to progress, super hard, medium and chicken. I took mainly the chicken tracks throughout this drive but I noticed that the newer members were challenging themselves by going in the holes and taking the medium challenges as the day progressed. They saw the cars in front of them have a go and succeeded. Or some fun cases got stuck, but quickly snatched out. Not end of the world and smiles all around.





By 11AM we came out of the track hungry for lunch. I had checked online the week before and emailed DELWP who assured me their interactive map that Firth Park was open. Arrived and it was gated! Sally offered her 270 degrees awning to stand under for lunch



Next track was across the road, Firth Park Loop I think it was called. More bog holes and wasn't too hard. Next destination was Andersons Mill. Google maps showed me a 'shortcut' to it. Unfortunately, about 400m in there was a fallen tree in middle of the path. Everyone U-turn!

We made our way on the gravel road to Andersons Mill track where we overtook two keen mountain bikers. This track was very cruisey and a calm before the storm i.e next track. It was about 2PM that the group wanted to hit one more track before heading home. We headed to Diggers Track which was meant to be easy according to online reviews from 2015.

We reached a giant pool of water. Everyone took the left easy track except Sally who wanted to drive in it. Sally tried hugging the left side but the disco started rolling to the right, dipped to the right, 45 degrees angle to the right(?), pedal down and front left wheel in the air! Everyone jumped a metre back



As we progressed Steven C. called out that he had a flat tyre. There were no punctures but the bead had bent in. High lift jack came out, old tyre out and spare tyre in. We continued through until I saw a steep hill descent. Everyone jumped out the car and pondered what line best to tackle this. Tristan spotted everyone down safe and slowly on his handheld





As Lynton was crawling down, behind me I heard a revving vehicle coming up the same hill. Yikes! This group coming from the opposite direction had big tyres, lifts and noisy engines. Once our group safely came down the hill and parked away from them, we watched them attempt to tackle the hill. Safe to say that their driving techniques wasn't 'club standard approved' – there was one vehicle with a flat tyre trying to gun it up.

We shook our heads in disbelief and continued down the track. Next we encountered a convoy of eight vehicles coming in the opposite direction. Our vehicles pulled over to any available patch of free space to let them pass

Finally we reached Lerderderg Campground where everyone aired up. Steven C. noticed another tyre was not holding air properly. Tristan who was MVP for the trip, knocked out the mud and crap from bead, inflated the tyre and we all set off home

Upcoming Trips

Destination	Snow Trip - Jamieson Side - Group 1
Leader & Contact Details	Bruce Cremonsi (0400 425296 or secretary@vfwdc.com)
Date	Friday 22nd - Sun 24th July
Meeting Details	BP Mansfield Friday 7pm
Grade	Snow: Medium to Hard Wet: Oh Shit!!
Trip Activity Details	<p>Annual Snow Trip.</p> <p>Leaving from Jamieson Pub 8am to try and be first on the mountain to get the fresh snow. Build Snowman, so families are encouraged to come along.</p> <p>I'll be staying as usual at Jamieson Hotel.. Some rich latte sippers go AirBnB, but pub is nice.</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: THERE MAY BE SUFFICIENT RESERVES TO PLAN AND HAVE A SECOND GROUP FOR A DIFFERENT SET OF DATES. IT IS SUGGESTED ANYONE INTERESTED CONNECT WITH OTHERS VIA FACEBOOK AND THE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS AND SEE IF ITS VIABLE AND GET THE BALL ROLLING.</p>
Vehicle Limits	Maximum 5. (The Club is limited to 10 cars per weekend)
Approx km's meeting place to destination	50kms
Last available fuel	BP Mansfield
Distance between supplies	Not relevant
Equipment required	Warm Dry spare shoes/socks. Full Recovery Gear and Points on your car Cooking/Food/Bog Roll etc for lunch on mountain Warm Clothes, Chair, Dry Clothes and GOOD footwear
Maps required	Nil
Radio Channel CB/UHF	UHF 12 to start with and then move if its busy

Destination	Christmas in July
Leader & Contact Details	Ly Ho (0433 387811 or treasurer@vfwdc.com)
Date	Saturday 30th July
Meeting Details	<p>Jells Park, Wheelers Hill - exact location within the park TBC.</p> <p>12 pm onwards</p> <p>https://goo.gl/maps/YxTXQhpQ9B4BHea48</p>
Grade	<p>Dry: Easy</p> <p>Wet: Easy</p>
Trip Activity Details	<p>Social event to meet members, have a feed and relax. Committee will be covering the cost (or some of it) of the lunch (TBD).</p> <p>There will be no 4x4ing, just eating lunch and socialising with members of the club. Bring a camp chair, jacket, beanie, snacks, games for the kids and sit back.</p> <p>We will get there early and hold a rotunda. Cross our fingers the weather holds up.</p> <p>PLEASE RSVP WITH NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING BY EMAIL TO treasurer@vfwdc.com or secretary@vfwdc.com</p>
Vehicle Limits	Unlimited
Approx km's meeting place to destination	N/A
Last available fuel	N/A
Distance between supplies	N/A
Equipment required	Warm clothes, chair, snacks, BYO drinks.
Maps required	Nil
Radio Channel CB/UHF	N/A

Trip Report

Easter Darling River Run Tour by Sally

Tristan and Sally - Land Rover Discovery
Michael - Ford Ranger

When I worked out that it was a year where Easter and Anzac Day were close together, I thought it would be a great opportunity to take 4 days off and get 10 days holiday. This meant we could explore further than just Victoria. I thought it would be a great opportunity to travel the length of the Darling River from Northern NSW to where it joins the Murray River in Wentworth.

Day 1 - We arranged to meet Michael in Craigieburn to then make our way to our first stop at Cocoparra National Park, 20mins north of Griffith. We stopped in Tocumwal for a lunch break and checked out the giant cod. Cocoparra National Park is a tiny park that is packed with birds. The campsite was very spread out with great amenities. I will definitely go back to do some hiking and exploring in the area another time.



Day 2 - Cocoparra National Park to Brewarriner via Lake Cargelligo and Nymagee.

An early start as we wanted to get to Brewarriner to start the Darling River Run the next day. We turned out of the park and took the most direct route north. It did not take long to our first airing down so we could negotiate the track. It is definitely not a 2 wheel drive track that is for sure. It was great to have a little bit of off road driving. Scary thing is google suggests this route into the park for everyone

We made it through with no major issues and just a little bit of fun. Next Stop was Lake Cargelligo for a top up of drinks and things we had forgotten from the general store. There was a great piece of silo art that was only just being finished (see front cover). We then stopped in Nymagee for lunch and then headed up to Beds on Barwon where we were staying for the night. Beds on Barwon is on the Barwon River and has great campsites looking right over the river. The amenities are great and easily accessible from the campsites.





We found a beautiful spot on the Barwon River. They had a communal fire pit so we hung out around the fire for the evening and we got to meet the local wildlife. A gecko decided that it wanted to hide under Tristan's foot for a little bit. Michael got to meet a frog when it jumped out of the sink at him in the dark.



Day 3 - Brewarriner to Trilby Station.

First stop of the day was the historic Barwon Bridge.



And then the next stop was the 40,000 year old aboriginal fish traps in Brewarriner township. We got there and as the river was in flood we did not get to see them in operation. We had a couple of local people come and check on us to make sure we knew where they were, they said a lot of people thought the weir was the fish traps. We had a great chat about places on where we should go and have a look along the route we were taking. The weir was in full flood which was great to watch and it was interesting seeing the fish path up the side.



Next stop was finding the confluence of the Barwon and Culgoa river. This is where the Darling River starts. I had found a map that showed where the rivers were and it showed a track right to it. We went to the west side of the rivers and down Twin Rivers Track and then onto West Culgoa Road.

There was some water over the road but it was no issue travelling through it. We found the track out to the confluence so we started following it. We progressed up the track until we came across a very muddy water crossing. We checked it out and it was very squishy mud and as there was only 2 vehicles and I calculated it was only about 1.5km to the river we decided to leave the vehicles and cross the creek and hike to the river. We saw a large mob of goats on our way in.



The silty river was the River Barwon and the browner river is the Culgoa. The Darling River heads off down stream to the right. We hiked back out to the cars and made our way south. We had wondered why we had not been seeing many vehicles on our trip south and when we got to just outside of Bourke we found out why. It appeared the road had been closed at the Bourke end of the road but not the Brewarriner end of the road. It shows how easy it is to find yourself on roads that are closed no matter how





We went into Bourke for lunch and had a look around town. The historic wharf is three stories high and you could clearly see how much the river had risen with the flooding. We left Bourke just after lunch towards our final destination for the day, Trilby



Station via Toorale National Park. On our way there we saw large cotton fields looking all green in the red outback. On the way through Toorale National Park we went to the Toorale Station Homestead. This homestead used to be part of the world's largest sheep station and it is currently in the process of being restored. The homestead is a very grand building and well worth the side trip to visit it.



We arrived at Trilby Station in the late afternoon. We met the owners at their homestead where they gave us a briefing on the station and the things to see in the area. We were given a map to our designated river side campsite. Prior to arriving we had heard that you could order dinner that was cooked onsite and delivered to your campsite. We ordered a 3 course dinner for both nights for our stay so we agreed a time for our entree's to be delivered. It was a 10 min drive from the homestead to our campsite down past the runway and the billabong that had not been full for a number of years. The amazing thing is the billabong is 7km long and it was filled from the Darling River that flooded across their runway a month or two earlier. We settled into our campsite with great views over the Darling River.

The sun went down and our first course for dinner arrived, a beautiful cheese platter with crackers, fruit and a selection of fine cheeses. An hour later our main course arrived, a chicken and potato bake salad, home made rocky road, fudge and a lemon friand desert. For the second night we had lamb shanks, and a tasty dessert. If you ever stay at Trilby order the dinners, they are amazing!!

Day 4 - Trilby Station with a visit to Dunlop Station

We had a lazy get up today as we were not travelling anywhere far. The owner of Trilby suggested we head to Dunlop Station for their 11am morning tea and tour. The Dunlop Homestead and School House used to be part of the worlds largest sheep station. The property is now significantly smaller and was bought by a family about 10 years ago. They are in the process of restoring the property which is a very slow process.



Along with the homestead is the Old Store. This is where workers and travellers could purchase all the things they needed from saddles, to food. It was made with stone from the property and still is in surprisingly good condition for its age. After the store we drove down to the shearing shed. This is the first shearing shed that had mechanical shearers implemented into it.



They are well on their way to restoring it. This shed processed thousands of bales of wool for the million acre station. Lots of great history at Dunlop Station and well worth the 2 hour tour



Once back at Trilby Station we went to the billabong to have a play in the canoes and a swim. The billabong is 7 km long and was teeming with fish and the birds were having a grand time trying to catch them. We only canoed half of it and it was stunning. The canoes are free to use and enable you to explore another part of the station.



After the billabong we went up to the swimming pool at the homestead for a refreshing dip. Daytime temperatures were around 30 deg so it was very welcome. We chatted to a few other travellers who were staying at the station. This is where we learned about the obelisk in Louth. We did not have a chance to visit on this trip but it is very much on the list for the next one.

Day 5 - Trilby Station to White Cliffs via Tilpa and Wilcannia
We had intended on doing the mud map drive of Trilby Station this morning before we left to travel through to White Cliffs but after waking in the middle of the night to the smell of rain we spoke to the owner and

decided to leave early and beat the rain as the roads close. We made it to the famous Tilpa Pub at just after 9am and it was closed. This was also the location we were going to

refuel and came across our first time of not being able to get fuel due to something being closed and not having a special fuel card for after hours service



There was limited mobile phone coverage and the pub did not open for another hour. We checked all the weather, roads and it was approximately 1.5 hours from Tilpa to Wilcannia. We had seen the rain in the distance but all the radars showed it moving away from us so we decided to head off to Wilcannia.

We had a challenging drive through this road and can understand why they close the roads when it rains out here. Our 1.5 hours turned into nearly 4 as we were taking it slowly and helped out a caravan and 4wd. The road was closed as we arrived into town along with a whole lot of other people who were heading to the Mundi Mundi Bash. We helped out the caravaners after we got fuel as they had a tyre on their caravan blow out. While Tristan helped with the tyre, I called our next host in White Cliffs to see if we were going to be able to get there and if the roads were closed. The road to White Cliffs is bitumen so that was straight forward. The road to the station we were staying on was not, so had to get that checked. We got the all clear so turned for White Cliffs. This is about an hour from Wilcannia



We met our host at the General Store and she provided us with a map to the camp site at Glen Hope Station. I found this on an app called Hip Camp. We made it to camp and got set up and met some other people that were staying at the station. There was a stunning sunset while we built our fire and cooked dinner.

Day 6 - White Cliffs

Another lazy get up as we were staying in White Cliffs for the day. It was this morning that I learnt of the frogs in the toilets and showers. This is after an early morning visit where I was oblivious of it. Lets just say the next visit I lifted the seat and saw 3 frogs sitting there, one in the grate looking at me and about 3 under the rim. It made for interesting toilet visits from there on in!

We went into town and did the self drive tour around town and had a look at the first commercial solar farm and then heading out to the Opal Fields. We had found out that you could fossick out here for opals without a licence. You can scratch on the surface without a licence but if you dig you need to get a claim. I found a few interesting rocks that we found out had some potch (low grade opal). We went to a few opal shops and chatted to the locals.





Michael then headed back to camp and we went to the Red Opal mine tour. This mine tour took us into one of the mines and we got to see pineapple opals and how they went about mining for them. This 2 hour tour was phenomenal and very worthwhile if you visit. We only stayed 2 nights in White Cliffs but we definitely needed more time so we will put it on the list for the next trip to the area.



Day 7 - White Cliffs to Menindee Lakes via Broken Hill

Due to the wet weather that had passed through the area, we had to make a minor detour from White Cliffs to Wilcannia, to Broken Hill and then out to Menindee Lakes. We had lunch in Broken Hill and picked up some more groceries. Before leaving we went to have a look at the miners memorial. They are still completing the memorial construction but it is very moving and will be fantastic when it is completed.



The drive from Broken Hill to Menindee Lakes is bitumen and only takes an hour. As we arrived at the lakes we saw a lot of people parked up along the lake but I had Bourke and Wills campsite on the list. We got there and whilst it had facilities it was not on the lake so we kept going. We found an amazing spot right on Lake Parmaroo on the beach. We set up camp looking west across the lake. It was stunning.

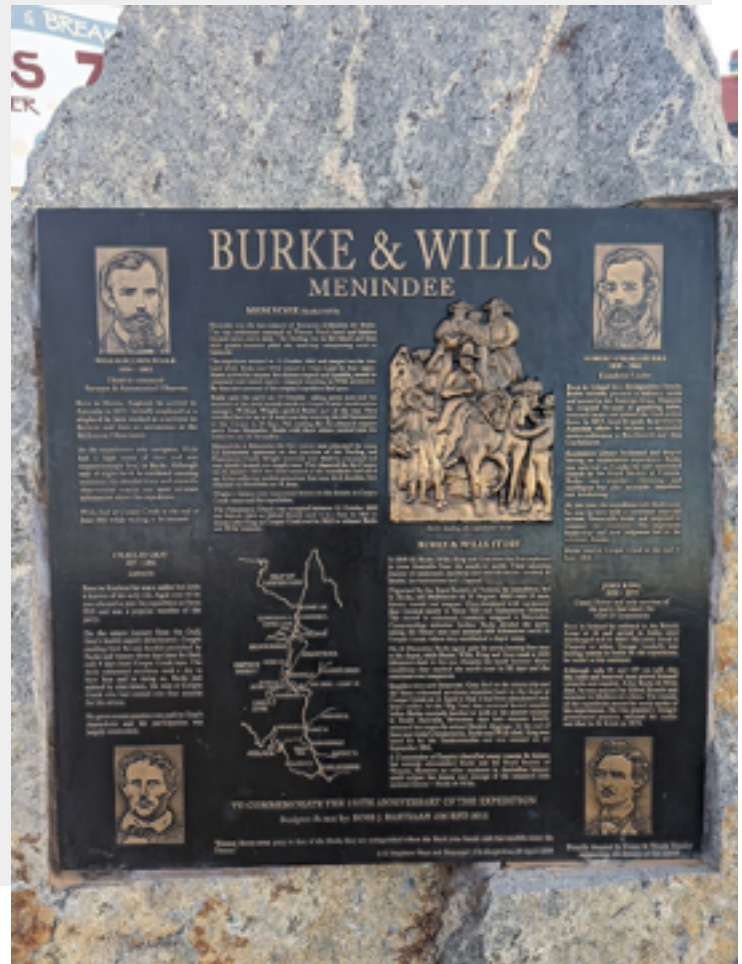


We went to the Maiden Hotel in Menindee for a pub meal for dinner as we figured the weekend was going to get busy. It was a nice relaxing meal. As we were eating dinner we wondered if there had been changes to peoples trips which meant we might be able to make it to Mungo National Park. I had been tardy in booking campsites there so we had not planned on going. I checked the website and it

looked like people had had to change their plans due to road closures so we decided to drop one night in Wentworth and stop at Mungo National Park. I booked our campsite and tickets for the wall of china walk for Sunday.

Day 8 - Relaxing on the lake

Today Tristan and I spent the day hanging out at the camp site on the lake. Michael went exploring the other lakes. There was so many fish in the lake that if you stopped swimming they would bump into you. Tristan found a net and was scooping them out. They were carp though so nothing great. There were also lots of yabbies in the water. I got my drone out for a play with a stunning sunset to watch. It was a stunning evening cooking on the fire right on the lake's edge.





Day 9 - Menindee to Mungo National Park

We packed up and headed south towards Mungo National Park. The road was in varying levels of condition from corrugated to bitumen. It was undergoing a lot of development. We got to Pooncarrie for brunch and then went to refuel. We were on a slight angle at the refuel when we noticed that there was a lot of oil pouring out the front of the disco! We moved away from the fuel pump to work out what was going on. Tristan identified that our new aftermarket transmission cooler had a weld fail and lost some oil. We spoke to our mechanic and worked out how to bypass the cooler. We then proceeded on our way to Mungo taking our time. We arrived at Mungo Information centre just before 2 pm. We checked to see if we could make it on the afternoon tour but it was full so we headed to camp to set ourselves up. Once we were set up we headed back to the information centre for a shower. That was an interesting experience coming out of the shower with all the visitors arriving at the centre. We had an early night.





Day 10 - Mungo National Park to Wentworth

Up and at 'em this morning as we had to be at the Information Centre for the Walk the Walls of China Tour at 9am. A local ranger met us and then we drove up to the car park where we commenced our tour. The ranger took us through the Walls of China walk and told us some amazing stories about Mungo Man and Mungo Woman as well as how the aboriginal people lived in the area. It is absolutely stunning and you could feel the history in the area.



After completing the tour we were on the last leg to where the Darling River meets the Murray River. We went to Junction Island in Wentworth and hiked out to where the rivers meet.

Once we completed the hike where I got to see my first ever snake while hiking after being in Australia for 10 years!!

We drove around to Junction Park which gave us a better view of the 2 rivers meeting.

The silty river is the Darling in the front and Murray River at the back. It is incredible seeing the two rivers coming together. This was the end of our 800km trip down the River Darling.





We checked out Lock 10 weir and then we went to Yankabilly Island another stay I found on HipCamp. We met the owners and they directed us to a massive paddock surrounded by a billabong and said we can stay wherever we wanted to. We found a great spot on the edge of the water. We collected some wood and got the fire going and then enjoyed a stunning sunset.





Day 11 -
Wentworth
Today we
farewelled Michael
as he headed
home and we were
going to stay
another night in
Wentworth with
some friends.
Michael left early
for the journey
home and we took
it easy packing up
and heading off to
explore Wentworth.

We went firstly to Perry Sandhills which is a great spot to go sliding down sand dunes. We then went to visit the Wentworth Gaol and explored the days of yesteryear and how they held prisoners. It also spent some of its life as a school. We also went to the local museum and learned about the floods in the early years that most of the town ended up under water. We then went to our friend's house where we relaxed on the Darling River for an evening by the fire.



Day 11 - Wentworth to home

Got up early to head home. We were taking it easy as we were unsure exactly how much oil we had lost from the transmission. We got to just outside of Ouyen and our car went into limp mode. We called RACV and less than 20 mins later we had a tow truck arrive. We spoke to the mechanic and said we just need some transmission fluid and he said I don't want to do that. I will tow it wherever you want and give you a car to get home. We unloaded everything into the car and he arranged to tow it to our mechanics in Foster. We then drove home with no issues. The Disco got to the mechanic the next day and it was ready to go 15mins later after having 6 litres of oil put into the transmission.

Overall the trip was phenomenal. We have a list of places that we want to go back and visit. We saw so many great things, met some great people and had a fantastic break away. If you get the chance I highly recommend doing this trip. It has so many different landscapes and experiences in a relatively short trip - well for Australia any way!!