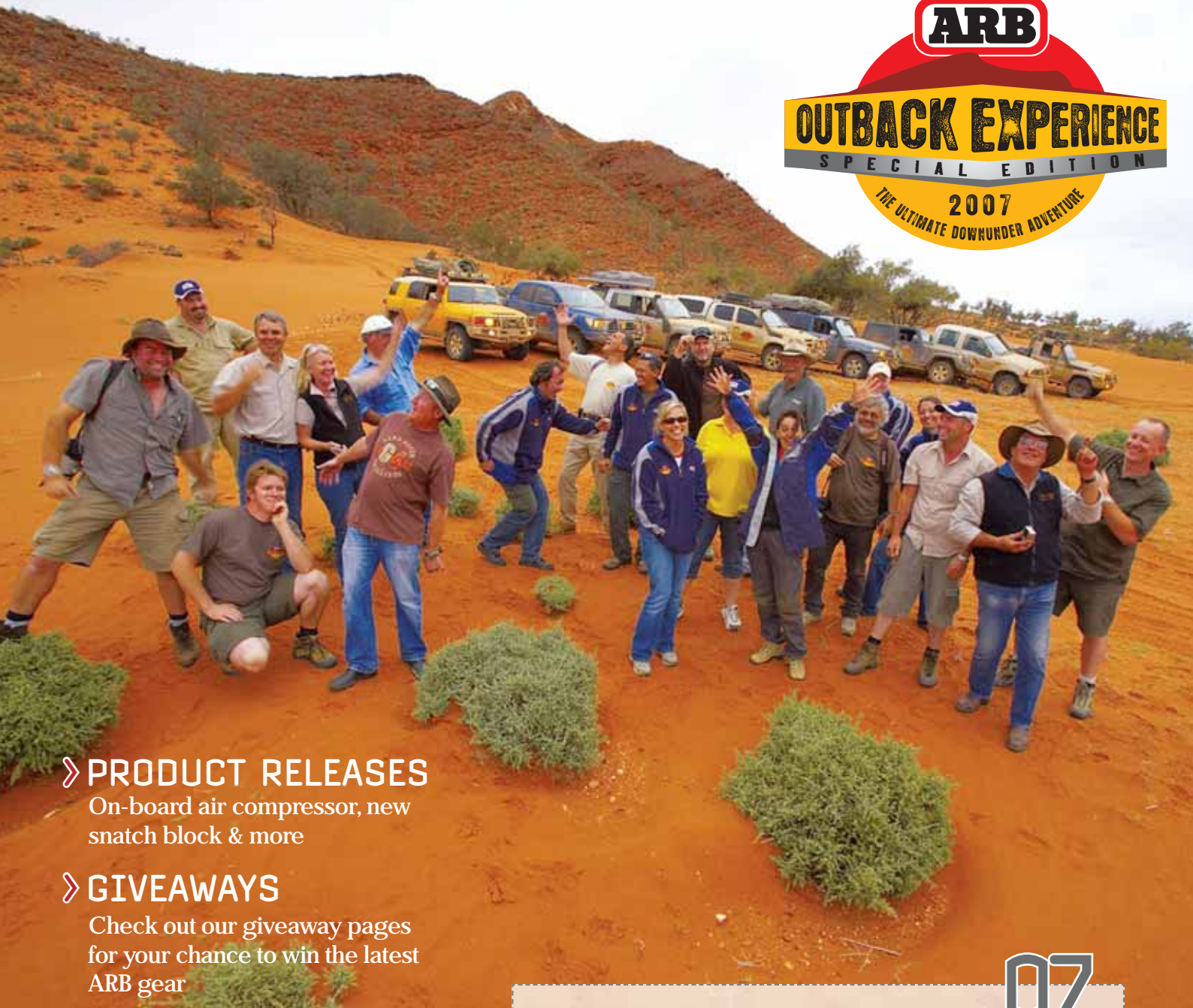


4x4action >



> PRODUCT RELEASES

On-board air compressor, new snatch block & more

> GIVEAWAYS

Check out our giveaway pages for your chance to win the latest ARB gear

> LATEST NEWS

Information and pics from the 2007 ARB Warn Outback Challenge & more

> FEATURES

Kick back and relax with all the news from the ARB Outback Experience, the next trip report from the Baile family, and plenty more to keep you amused

07

ARB Outback Experience

May 2007 – ARB invited 12 internationally renowned journalists on a two-week adventure to experience the Australian Outback first hand. And it was certainly a trip to be remembered as the team endured rain, mud, flies, camping in swags, and of course, plenty of Outback pubs. For the full article, turn to page 10. >>

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ARB Snapshot

If ever you've driven from Melbourne to Broken Hill, you'll probably agree that it's not one of the most exciting drives. I've done this run more times than I can remember, and generally find it's a great opportunity to think about the Outback trip I'm about to undertake, reflect on the trip I've just done, or start planning the next one.

It was about 100km south of Mildura, just over 12 months ago, that Lisa Wood (ARB USA's marketing manager) and I conceived the idea for the ARB Outback Experience. I've long held the belief that ARB's reputation in Australia has been forged over the years as a consequence of our products being able to withstand the harsh conditions of the Outback. Lisa and I were discussing the best way of getting this message across to four wheelers around the rest of the world. We soon figured that what we needed to do was bring together a large group of international media representatives and let them experience the Outback for themselves.

Over the next few weeks, we went about putting a list together of some of the world's top motoring journalists, who specialised in 4x4s. If we were successful in getting these individuals to Australia, we'd have the opportunity to showcase ARB and the Outback to tens of millions of 4WD enthusiasts around the globe. The invitations were sent out, and within hours, we started to receive RSVPs. The trip was full within a couple of weeks.

To ensure everything ran smoothly, we needed to find a partner to assist us with the logistics associated with a trip of this nature. This was an easy decision to make as I'd experienced the hospitality of Mick and Joanne McCulkin from Tri State Safaris before. Going on a trip with Tri State is like going away with your best mates, and taking along the chef from your favourite restaurant as well.

You can read all about the ARB Outback Experience later in this newsletter. A broad range of leading international 4x4 magazines from countries such as USA, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Russia, UK, Thailand, and South Africa will also cover the event, so keep your eyes out for local coverage.

In summary though, the trip was awesome. Many of the journalists described it as the best trip they had ever done. Despite the limited time we had, they were able to see a fair chunk of Outback NSW, QLD and SA. It was a very special time to be in this region, as due to the recent rains, there was an explosion of greenery and wildlife. I'll never forget standing on top of Big Red and seeing endless sand dunes to the west, and a vast expanse of water, filled with birdlife to the east.

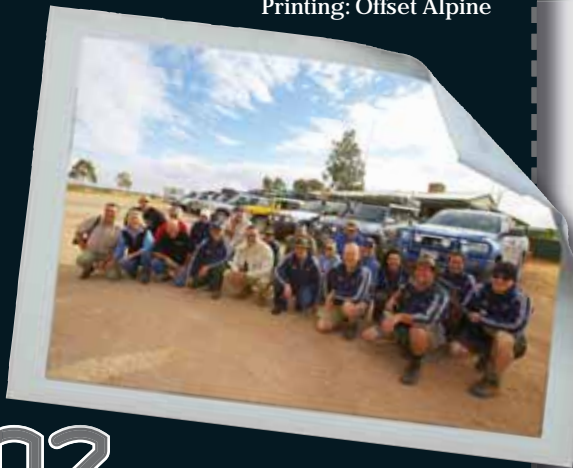
The rains also added to the adventure, with windscreen high water crossings and plenty of mud around. This, along with all the sand, bull dust and rocks, allowed our visitors to experience ARB equipped vehicles in a wide variety of conditions, and see just why it is so important to have a properly set up 4x4 in the Outback.

But for most of the guests, their fondest memories were enjoying the hospitality of people like Wal and Barb Fargher of Wirrealpa station in the Flinders Ranges, and trying to fathom just how this husband and wife team can manage a 400,000 acre sheep station on their own.

For me, the best bit is knowing that by having a well equipped 4x4, I could do the whole thing again tomorrow. Spending a couple of weeks with our international guests made the ARB staff realize just how globally diverse the sales of ARB products are, as well as how successful the products are in extreme environments outside Australia. And if you think you don't have the experience to undertake a trip of this nature, then give Mick from Tri State a call. In fact even if you are a seasoned remote area traveller, I'd still highly recommend a Tri State adventure. It's worth it just for Joanne's cooking.

See you out on the tracks... a couple of kilos heavier than last time.

- Matt Frost, Marketing Manager, ARB 4x4 Accessories





New ARB On-Board Air Compressor

» Engineered for optimum output in a compact design, ARB has recently added a new on-board air compressor to the range, providing a solution for both Air Locker activation and inflating tyres and other equipment.

ARB's on-board air compressor is designed to activate Air Lockers. However, with the addition of the optional pump up kit, it is perfectly suited for the inflation of tyres and camping gear. Despite its compact size, this 12V compressor (also available in 24V) delivers a class leading flow rate of 61.6 litres per minute (2.18 cubic feet per minute) at 200kpa (29psi). That's over double the capacity of ARB's previous model compressor. The compact design and versatile mounting of the unit also means it can fit into tight areas where many other 12V compressors cannot.

Constructed entirely of lightweight, high strength engineering grade materials, the compressor

incorporates a hard anodised cylinder bore and teflon impregnated carbon fibre piston seal for reduced friction and maximum trouble free life. A number of safety features have been engineered into the design, including a heavy duty Maxi-Fuse for professional, in-line circuit protection, an over-pressure safety valve, and internal motor protection against extreme temperature damage.

The on-board compressor utilises an anodised mounting bracket that dissipates motor heat and allows the compressor to be repositioned 180°. A relocatable splash resistant air filter assembly further assists with versatile positioning, allowing for a cleaner, cooler air supply. A full wiring loom is included for plug-in connectivity to Air Locker solenoids and simplified installation, as well as a comprehensive instruction guide.

> Part no: CKMA12

2007 ARB Warn Outback Challenge - The Drought Breaker



Amongst the rain and floods that dominated the 2007 ARB Warn Outback Challenge, history was made when, for the first time in the nine years of the event's history, an overseas team took out the winner's trophy.

The Thai team, Somthob and Banto Phuchsowansakul, drove their Suzuki home to an impressive first place overall win. This year, the event was open to both Challenge and Trophy Class vehicles, with Trophy Class catering for lesser modified rigs.

It was the hometown team of Robbie Matthieson and Simmo who took out the Trophy Class. They were positioned an impressive 11th place overall, which just goes to show what you can achieve on a budget.

During the event, the Broken Hill region received rainfall not seen for more than 15 years. Creeks that had been parched for decades were bubbling over with burgundy-coloured muddy water. Whilst this wasn't such a bad thing for competitive stages, it was transporting the competitors between special stage areas that proved difficult. There were more than 350 people scattered between the four special stage sites outside Broken Hill. The competition was able to



continue running up until Wednesday, when everyone became stranded due to road closures. Just as event organisers had put together a plan to have everyone compete on the one property for Thursday and Friday, the heavens opened up again.

Eventually, the go ahead was given to evacuate, and the stranded competitors, spectators and marshals were sent out in small groups. The more experienced vehicles and drivers assisted along the way to ensure the road received minimum damage and also that everyone got out safely.

Event organiser, Paul Vanderhorst, was communicating throughout the event with all regulatory bodies including RTA, local shires, police and SES and he commended the way all of the participants handled themselves.

“They must have been itching to get on the move but they did as they were told and sat tight,” said Paul. “In the end we were really pleased it rained for the local property owners and proud of the way the competitors, spectators and marshals handled the situation. We were readying ourselves to send supplies in by boat but the only thing they ran out of was toilet paper.”

All competitors, spectators and most of the marshals were out by Thursday night, and the presentation was held in Broken Hill with everyone in good spirits, calling the event the ‘drought breaker’.

The overall winner was determined, as per the supplementary regulations, by totalling the scores of all the completed stages. Some competitors had finished 11 of the stages, but some of the more unlucky teams who had broken down earlier in the week only ended up seeing three or four stages.

For all the participants who had been competing in the event over the past nine years, it was a welcome sight to

see water flow through the arid region, and it certainly did bring a smile to the locals who have supported the event for so many years.

The 2007 ARB Warn Outback Challenge definitely was a week to remember – when everyone left Broken Hill and headed for home, there were still marshal vehicles and equipment which needed to be rescued from the special stage areas. As for next year – it’s the 10th anniversary and competitors were filling out forms for 2008 before they left town – **it’s going to be HUGE!**

Overall Results

- 1st** Somthob & Banto Phuchsowansakul
- 2nd** Todd Robards & Ivan Vella
- 3rd** Kim Bolton & Robert Marks



New LandCruiser 70 Series Accessories



Following the release of bull bars for the latest model LandCruiser 70 Series, ARB has now designed a number of other products to suit this vehicle, including side rails and steps and dual battery systems.

To suit the LandCruiser cab chassis model, side rails and steps are now available. Incorporating a two piece design with separate front rail and step sections, they are mounted to the chassis at the gear box cross member and behind the cab to the tray mounting post

for optimum strength. The design retains maximum ground clearance while providing unparalleled protection for the sides of your vehicle. Coming in a durable black powder coat with the option to colour code, the steps are finished with aluminium chequer top tread plates.

A dual battery system is an extremely practical product for your vehicle, enabling you to run additional accessories without the risk of flattening the main battery. ARB has designed an auxiliary battery tray to suit the latest LandCruiser 70 Series models that will house a N70 size battery. Incorporating zinc plated mounting hardware and fasteners, it includes an integrated mounting plate for the smart solenoid, and is manufactured from 2mm plate steel that has been laser cut, CNC folded and MIG welded. The battery kit is supplied with all relevant battery cables and loom, and the battery can also be purchased from ARB.

Along with everything mentioned above, ARB also has a number of other products available for this vehicle, including Air Lockers, roof racks, fuel tanks and TowMaster tow bars. Old Man Emu suspension, which will provide vastly improved comfort, load carrying capability and control characteristics, is currently under development. For the latest accessory listing for your particular model, speak to one of our sales staff.

Side rails & steps: > Part no: 4412300

Dual battery kit: > Part no: 4312300

ARB TowMaster Tow Bars for Latest Model Pajero/Montero & Rodeo/D-Max

ARB has recently released new TowMaster tow bars for the latest model Mitsubishi Pajero and Isuzu Rodeo, to ensure your vehicle is equipped to tow all you need for your next 4x4 adventure.

Incorporating a removable, heavy duty ball mount, the tow bars are designed to meet industry standards and will cater for all your towing requirements, on road or off. In line with the vehicle specifications, the Pajero has a 2500kg towing capacity and 250kg ball weight and

the Rodeo has a 3000kg towing capacity and 300kg ball weight. With a lifetime product warranty, ARB TowMaster tow bars are supported by ARB's international distribution network, and are a practical and worthwhile addition to any vehicle.

Pajero: > Part no: ACL492

Rodeo (with factory step): > Part no: AHD495

Rodeo (without factory step): > Part no: AHD496

ARB Snatch Block 9000



A snatch block is an extremely useful and versatile accessory that can be used with either a vehicle mounted or portable winch. It will enable you to retrieve loads that are double a winch's capacity by reducing the load on the winch by half. Incorporating an ultra light, specialised polymer composite pulley, the new ARB Snatch Block 9000 is exceptionally strong and durable. Weighing in at just 2.4kg, the high strength, low density materials have allowed for a total weight reduction of up to 50% over other comparable rated snatch blocks. The inner pulley material is made from a highly specialised

bearing grade of self-lubricating crystalline polymer, giving the snatch block the ability to operate under high loads, completely unlubricated. Incorporating heavy gauge carbon steel press formed plates, the unique new computer optimised design actually presses these against each other under load for extra support. With a working load of 9000kg and a breaking strain of 17,500kg, the snatch block will suit plasma rope and steel cable up to 13mm in diameter.

> Part no: 10100020

New Air Locker Applications from ARB



ARB's engineering department has been busy over the past couple of months, designing new products for the latest vehicles. And recently, two new Air Locker models have been developed to further expand the range, which now exceeds 100 part numbers. ARB Air Lockers are the ultimate traction aid, and are used the world-over for a variety of applications. Manually operated from within the vehicle, an on-board compressor releases a burst of high pressure air into the differential, which in turn engages the locking mechanism. This prevents the wheels from turning independently and

allows for a more controlled driving approach in steep or unpredictable conditions.

Designed to suit the latest model Ford Ranger and Mazda BT50, the new RD143, available in September, is a rear Air Locker that will instantly improve your vehicle's traction. There is also a second new release which is a rear locker for the Jeep Wrangler JK. This one is a performance model designed and proven to withstand the static failure torque of high performance aftermarket alloy steel 35 spline axle shafts. It should be noted that this differential requires non-standard axle shafts, so please keep this in mind.

These two new Air Lockers both include all the standard features of ARB's existing range including the patented 'timed' locking mechanism that offers high strength and ultra fast un-locking, and the new, steel reinforced, elastomer bonded annular seal designed to handle the most extreme climatic temperatures on earth.

ARB has a huge range of Air Lockers available, so please speak to your local ARB store for the latest applications to suit your vehicle.

> Part no: RD147

> Part no: RD143

'Highest Altitude by Car' WORLD RECORD



On Saturday 21st April, two Chilean's beat the 'driving to the highest altitude by car' world record on the slopes of the Ojos del Salado volcano, in the Atacama desert, Chile. Gonzalo Bravo, the driver, and his spotter, Eduardo Canales, reached 21,942ft in their tiny Suzuki Samurai, beating Mathias Jeschke's record of 21,804ft.

The rig was a 1986 Suzuki Samurai, which was heavily modified by Gonzalo, adding stronger axles, lower gear ratios, Air Lockers, bigger tyres and an engine supercharger. ARB USA supplied front and rear lockers, along with a compressor to assist the duo in attaining their goal.



The team had three attempts at the record, with the first try on January 1st 2007, when a sudden and strong snow storm made it impossible to climb to any reasonable height. The second try was a month before the final attempt, and finished when the car caught on fire at 20,731ft due to a fail on a hydraulic reservoir that was melted because of high exhaust temperatures.

Besides the dizzying heights and lack of oxygen, the hardest aspect was the variety of terrain that the team encountered in the volcano; steep climbs, huge rocks, snow, glaciers and deep sand. According to Gonzalo, the most difficult section was crossing half a mile on the main glacier at 21,000ft, because the huge holes in the ice were covered by new snow, making it impossible to know what the terrain was like underneath. This meant that mistakes were simply not an option as they couldn't risk delaying or halting the attempt under any circumstances.

This record was the result of almost a year of preparation and planning. The track was analysed through maps, satellite pictures, cartography, and many conversations with people who had been there on previous car and

climbing expeditions, and knew the volcano. Their rig was tested on the same Andes Mountain range, but lower and closer to Santiago, the capital. And everyone involved had also spent months of hard work personally preparing for the trip to increase their physical strength and endurance, ensuring they were ready for the extreme altitudes ahead.

In comparison to previous expeditions, this journey was fairly low budget, with sponsorship gained from a number of companies, along with donations from friends and relatives, and the team's own money. With this limited budget, the expedition had to be developed without any additional support.

"We were absolutely alone up there," said Gonzalo Bravo.

As a reference, the previous record was set by two Jeep Wranglers with several support vehicles and a full team of people assisting. The first record was set by Volkswagen at a cost of €500,000.



ARB Outback Experience



Touring Outback Australia is the ultimate adventure and something our customers do on a regular basis. For this reason, we design our products to withstand harsh Australian Outback conditions. No environment can be a tougher testing ground. So when ARB started planning how best to get this message out to our customers all over the world, taking a group of international journalists into the dry heart of our continent where they could both see and use our products at work and play was naturally the only answer. Top that off with a few days at the ARB Warn Outback Challenge, and you had the makings of the trip of a lifetime.

THE GUESTS

USA

Fred Williams – technical editor from Peterson's 4Wheel and Off-Road. Fred came with vast amounts of off road experience, from rock crawling to racing in events like the Baja.

Chris Collard – seasoned 4wheeler and freelance photojournalist.

Denis Snow – editor of Offroad Adventures. It was his first time in Australia.

Kathrine Wakeford – flying the flag for The Enthusiast Network, a web-based magazine.

AFRICA

Patrick Cruywagen – bush editor for SA 4x4 Off-Road. He had been to the Outback before and was keen to come for an extended stay.

AUSTRALIA

Dean Mellor – editor of home grown Aussie mag 4x4 Australia.

FRANCE

Luc Cave – chief editor of French magazines Land and 4x4 Tout Terrain. He was experiencing Australia for the first time.

GERMANY

Ronald Partsch – technical writer for Off-road magazine, as well as a qualified automotive engineer. With only bitumen roads in Germany, he couldn't wait to hit the dirt in the Outback.

HOLLAND

Fred Krijgsman – from Xtreme Adventure Reports. Owning his own ARB-kitted 100 series LandCruiser, he was keen to see just how tough our products were in harsh Outback conditions.

ITALY

Milano-based **Sandro Arada** – runs off road tours through northern Africa and is a writer for Auto Fuoristrada Group.

SPAIN

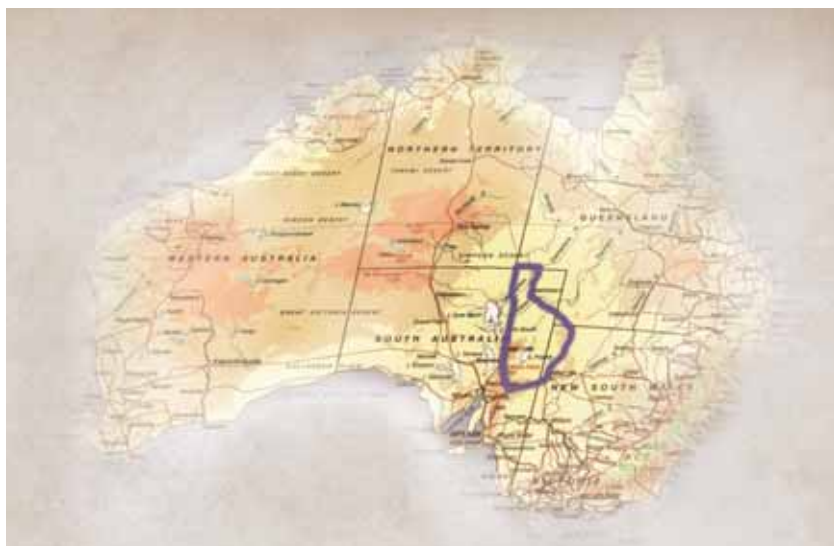
Virginia Pastor Encinas – a photojournalist with an eye for off road action working for Auto Adventura 4x4

THAILAND

Saravit 'Poom' Vanichsombat – a chief driving instructor and contributing writer for Bangkok-based 4wheels magazine.

THE ARB TEAM

With **Matt Frost** leading the ARB team, we also had Director **Andrew Stott**, US Marketing manager **Lisa Wood**, Product Development & Evaluation manager **Mark 'Lowmount' Lowry**, Victorian Sales manager **Paul Anderson** and from Offroad Images' renowned photographer **Michael Ellem**.



THE PREPARATION

Now, you need to take a lot of things into consideration when travelling with guests from all corners of the globe. Firstly, the language barrier. Whilst most of our guests spoke good English, to those that know enough English to travel, the Australian version makes little sense at all... as we were to find out.

And what about toilet etiquette? Well, with more than eight countries being represented, that was anyone's guess. So thirty six rolls of toilet paper, eighteen packs of 'Wet Ones' and a Jimmy's Thunderbox (portable toilet) were a good start!

So, what food would they eat? Would they go a meat pie with dead horse (sauce), or eat a snot block (australian pastry)? These were the questions that anyone would find hard to ask, and there was no one more qualified to do the job than the legendary 'Outback Matt' aka Matt Frost, ARB's Marketing manager.

Planning an event like the ARB Outback Experience takes both a lot of time and resources. And bringing together all those resources to make it happen takes a massive effort. Matt began planning back in 2006 when we met with Tri State Safari's Mick & Joanne McCulkin. Tri State were to be our trip leaders and caterers for the first ten days of the trip before we met up with the Outback Challenge team.

Even in Outback Australia, bookings are essential as we soon found out when booking accommodation for the Birdsville Hotel. Iconic places such as this are quite often booked months in advance and in this case six months. So we left these sorts of details up to Mick and Joanne while we prepared for the imminent arrival of twelve well-travelled international 4x4 journalists.

THE VEHICLES

So, what vehicles do you take on a trip like this? With numerous well fitted-out tourers on the ARB fleet, it was never going to be an easy decision. But with so many new vehicles on the fleet undergoing product development, we couldn't pass up the opportunity to do a little product testing for our engineering team.





Having invited four guests from the USA, it went without saying we needed to have the flagship US-built Toyota Tundra pickup as well as the popular FJ Cruiser. Also on the list was the new JK Jeep Wrangler. With only two weeks to go, all these vehicles, along with the new 79 series LandCruiser, were still sitting on hoists undergoing suspension, bar work and Air Locker development. It looked like it would be impossible to have them ready on time but with a massive effort on behalf of the engineering and workshop teams, the vehicles were prepared with a few days to spare.

Also on the list for heading for the Outback were the Toyota 100 series and Hilux dual cab, both proven performers. For carrying 16 swags, the F250 was commandeered and, of course, 'Outback Matt', revealing his british ancestry, couldn't go bush without his trusty Land Rover Series 3 Discovery.

IN TRANSIT

Arriving at ARB head office on the Monday morning, our group of journalists were treated to a tour of the extensive facilities in Kilsyth, Victoria, meeting with members of the engineering and manufacturing teams before being ferried to Melbourne Airport for a short flight to Mildura. Meanwhile, our group of drivers – having left around 9:30am – were doing the long trip by road to Mildura.

With our group of 8 vehicles, we had to make Mildura airport by 4:30pm in time to pick up the journalists, sort out which vehicles they would travel in and accelerate it to Broken Hill, where a magnificent meal was awaiting us at the Broken Earth restaurant on the Line of Load overlooking the city. It was here that we met up with Tri State, and over a meal and a few drinks got to know each other a little better.



Journalists at the ARB Kilsyth store

HITTING THE DIRT

Leaving Broken Hill at the crack of dawn, we travelled west to the old mining town of Silverton. With only 24km of bitumen between the two towns, it would be the last chance our journalists had to get a feel for the vehicles before hitting the dirt.

Silverton was proclaimed a town in 1885 after silver had been found in the area some 10 years before. In its heyday as a mining town, it had a population of around 3000 and boasted its own newspaper, the Silver Age. Today it is all but a ghost town with only 50 people living in the surrounding area.

After a quick stop for photos of camels and a few historic buildings, we continued west and dropped off the plateau and down onto the Mundi Mundi plains. From the lookout, these plains spread all the way to the horizon and gave our guests their first real glimpse of the vastness of the Outback. In recent years, this area has been a popular setting for many movies such as Mad Max2, A Town Like Alice and Razorback.



At the wild dog fence



John and his working dogs

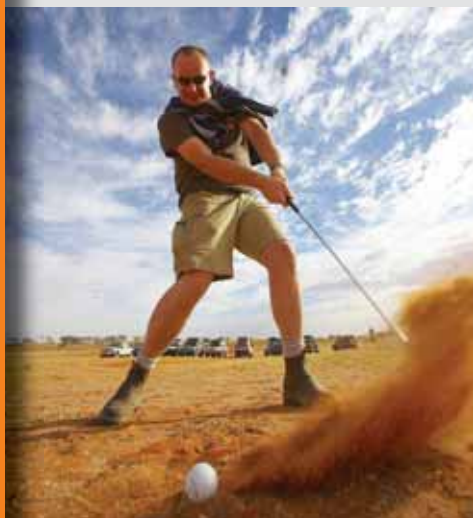
Hitting the dirt we made a quick stop at Eldee Station, where we were treated to a first-class breakfast and our last decent coffee before making tracks northward to a lunch stop just south of the Packsaddle roadhouse. The roads in this area were hard-packed gravel that had recently seen rain, causing quite a few washouts. Although the roads were dry, the washouts made for interesting driving as the journalists hit them rather quickly, keen to find out what a difference the Old Man Emu suspension made to both ride quality and control. Somehow, the words 'please slow down' seemed to get lost in translation, but the smiles on their faces showed they were impressed....and having a lot of fun at the same time. I guess it's not every day they get handed a set of keys and get to test a vehicle's capability in the middle of the Australian Outback.

Heading north, we stopped in at Packsaddle for a refuel and it was quickly becoming evident that the petrol vehicles, namely the Tundra, Jeep and FJ Cruiser were very, very uneconomical. Luckily, we were also carrying 20 fuel cans for the longer trips into the Simpson but did we have enough? Well, that would depend entirely on how hard our guests would be driving and if the morning's effort was anything to go by, we could be in trouble...

Stopping for a BBQ lunch at One Tree Station, we were entertained by station manager, John, and his unique style of bush poetry that had everyone in fits of laughter. John had his working dogs out for a display of their skills before we pushed on towards our day's final destination of the Corner Store at Cameron Corner, where a cold beer and an Indian curry meal awaited. Cameron Corner is the junction of the states of SA, NSW & QLD (three states of Australia). It was first surveyed back in 1880 and is where travellers pass through the 5614km long wild dog fence.



Plaque at Cameron Corner



'Outback Matt' practicing his golf swing

But there was still a good 220km of corrugations, bulldust and washed out roads to travel, which kept our journalists concentrating, especially as dusk approached and the kangaroos came out. Unfortunately though, the lead vehicles tended to scare the kangaroos away from the road and all the journalists wanted a glimpse and a photo so the jostling for lead position began.

Accommodation that night was to be a combination of 'Dongers' and swags. Dongers are the Outback's common term for portable cabins that usually are little more than a 2 bed air-conditioned box with a door. But they keep you dry and out of the dust, and on this occasion they kept out the thousands of small moths that had migrated out of the bush towards the glow of fluorescent lighting powered by generators. It seemed the recent rains had bought on the hatching of these creatures and nothing would stop their onslaught.

After dinner, and whilst Mark and Paul went about a little late night maintenance of the vehicles, Mike and Andrew took the group out on a spot-lighting run to show our guests the hundreds of kangaroos that could be seen along the border fence. Unfortunately, the kangaroos either heard the convoy coming or were tucked up in bed, as not a single kangaroo was to be seen. It seemed the recent rains and good grass growth had all the kangaroos sleeping with full bellies.

ACROSS THE BORDER

Up early and after a large cooked breakfast of bacon and eggs, it was time for a game of golf. Mick from Tri State had bought along the golf clubs, and had everyone trying to hit off from SA, hooking across NSW and

landing in QLD. In Mick's book, it's never too early for a laugh and the dismal efforts by most certainly provided that. Out of eighteen balls, 16 never left the state and ten never made contact with the golf club!

With the journalists changing vehicles, we once again hit the dirt with the Moomba Gas fields and Innamincka in our sights. Heading west, the track was more like a roller coaster ride as we crested sand dunes that ran at ninety degrees to the road. The road here was in top condition and good for 100kph, but many of the dune crests had fallen into disrepair after recent rain, causing wash-aways and the clay capping to crack up, leaving large sand traps just out of vision. Luckily, with all vehicles in constant radio contact, the lead vehicles were able to advise the convoy of the dangerous spots as well as any oncoming traffic.

Turning north-east up the old Strzelecki Track the terrain changed from towering red sand dunes to vast low mud flats. With many sections of bulldust and loose gravel, the drivers once again felt the benefits of improved ride and handling that the OME suspension offered. Especially in Katherine's case, when, whilst performing a cornering manoeuvre for the camera, she turned too sharply, missing the corner completely in the FJ and headed bush!

Pulling into Innamincka to once again refuel our thirsty vehicles, we stopped for lunch down on the town common along the edge of the Cooper creek. It's not far from here that the Burke and Wills Expedition of 1861 met its tragic end but there we were, cold drinks in hand and fresh seafood rolls, straight from the ARB fridge. How technology has changed the way we travel...

With the recent rains flooding the Walkers Crossing track, which cuts across from Innamincka to the Birdsville



Another amazing meal provided by Tri State Safari

Track, we were forced to take an alternative route north along the Cordillo Downs road. Once again we were on hard-packed gravel roads that had been graded recently. Staying on the pace we covered the miles quickly, heading for a bush camp along the Montkeleary Creek on Cordillo Downs Station. To the north-west, dark storm clouds were massing and we could see distant rain squalls. It's hard to judge distance when the ground is flat as far as the horizon and there are no noticeable landmarks. Within 30 kms we found ourselves passing through heavy rain showers. As is the case in many Outback regions, it only takes a small amount of rainfall to turn dusty, dry roads into a red clay quagmire. Sections of the road became greasy so quickly that our vehicles were slewing sideways. This made for great photography and our snap-happy cameramen stopped at every chance to capture the fun.

But there is a serious side to travelling on wet roads, as not only can they be very dangerous, but the damage to the road surface can take months to repair. Some Outback roads are lucky to see a grader once a year, so with the push of a button it was Air Lockers engaged for maximum traction and speeds reduced for minimum impact.

Pulling off the main track and into our camp for the night, it was comforting to see that the chuck wagon and its heavy trailer had made it up the track before the rains. This ensured there would be another magnificent Tri State meal. For many, this was to be their first night in a swag or tent. 'Outback Matt' demonstrated the correct way to assemble a dome swag whilst Dean Mellor showed how to do it in a matter of moments. However,

as the rains came down later that night, he would be the only one to get a wet bed...

And rain it did. At around 2am, Mick from Tri State lay in his swag contemplating a quick evacuation. Constant rain for more than two hours typically means road closures but the rain started to ease and by morning the skies were blue.

Back on the track and heading to Birdsville via Cordillo Downs homestead, it wasn't long before the rain returned and the roads turned to endless sections of mud holes. Stopping at the historic woolshed for some photos and a quick inspection, we were back on the road and engaging our Air Lockers before the road became impassable. Creeks had started to flow and once again our photographers were stopping to capture the moment. With water and mud spraying in all directions, we pushed on past the usually dry but now flooded Moonda and Shallow lakes before climbing out of the flat lands for an easy run into Birdsville. Camel and Emu pies were calling as our dirt-encrusted convoy approached the Birdsville bakery for a hearty lunch. The rest of our day to be filled with a tour of the working museum and endless hours trying to clean mud from under the vehicles at the local car wash, a concrete pad just out of town with steaming hot bore water straight out of the Artesian basin.

That night we dined at the legendary Birdsville Hotel and enjoyed the comfort of in house accommodation. At the bar we planned our strategies for conquering Big Red and Eyre Creek in the Simpson Desert...but you'll have to wait for the spring edition of 4x4 Action to read about that...

Mark 'Lowmount' Lowry



This issue we decided that our favourite letter was from **Mike Pavey of Mt Eliza, Victoria**, who has won himself an ARB recovery kit. Everyone else who appears on these pages will be receiving an ARB Speedy Seal puncture repair kit to reward their efforts.

Win An ARB Recovery Kit



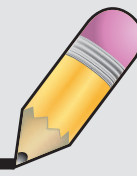
We're giving away another ARB recovery kit, so for your chance to win, write to us and ask us anything you'd like to know about ARB and our products. The letter of the month will be published in the next edition of ARB 4x4 Action, along with our reply. The winner will need to pick up the recovery kit from their nearest ARB store.

Send your letters (250 words or less) including your address and daytime phone number to:

- > **Post:** ARB 4x4 Accessories
Marketing Department
PO Box 105
Kilsyth VIC 3137
- > **Email:** marketing@arb.com.au

While we will endeavour to reply to all letters, due to the volume received, it may not always be possible. We reserve the right to edit all letters for clarity.

ASK ARB



Over the past few months, we've received heaps of great letters and questions from people all over the world, so thanks to everyone who wrote to us.

WINNER!

Giddyguy!

Love the new, sexy, high visibility colour scheme for your recovery straps. Orange, purple and lime green – very cool!

It's great that your credibility can be restored so quickly after bugging you to look from the use of such stylish recovery gear!

Can you provide some guidelines on the application of the breaking strength of the straps (eg. for the winch extension strap are you taking into consideration just the weight of your truck and anything you're towing?). Similarly, for a snatch strap, should the breaking strength factor in only the weight of your truck or include that of the vehicle extracting you? Some tips on the application of the various breaking strengths would be helpful.

Finally, what's the advantage of buying ARB recovery gear in comparison to lesser-known brands available on eBay and other online stores?

Kind regards,

Mike Pavey



Hi Mike,

When we designed our new range of recovery gear, our main focus was safety. And that starts with making sure you pick the right kind of strap for the job, not just the correct rating. Therefore, our straps are different colours for different applications and of course, highly visible like the rest of our recovery range.

Choosing the correctly rated strap for use with your vehicle does mean you need to take a few factors into consideration. Firstly, the weight of your truck. This can obviously change depending on if it is loaded, unloaded or towing a trailer.

Next, you have to look at what is stopping the forward momentum of your vehicle. For example, a lightly stuck vehicle on a slippery slope may not need much of a pull to keep moving whereas if your vehicle is stuck in a deep mud hole, you have the weight of the truck, the suction effect of the mud, the weight of that mud, as well as the force required to overcome whatever it was that stopped you moving forward.

Thirdly, you need to ensure that the recovery point on your vehicle is capable of withstanding the force you are going to place on it.

As you can see, the stresses on the vehicle can vary by a reasonably large amount, so you may in fact need a couple of differently rated straps.

When it comes to snatch straps, you need to keep in mind that for the strap to stretch and work effectively as a kinetic energy recovery device, it needs to have an appropriate load on it. So you can't go out and buy the largest rated snatch strap and expect it to work well on an unladen vehicle. It may not stretch at all and result in damage.

However, for tree trunk protectors and winch extension straps, you can buy the strongest as they are only designed for static loads. Keep in mind though that the larger, higher rated straps take up more space in your vehicle.

Knowing which strap to use will come down to assessing the situation at hand. If you are not sure that the snatch strap you have is capable of the recovery, choose to winch, as it will place less stress on vehicles and recovery gear.

And to finish, the advantage of buying ARB recovery gear: the knowledge that it is thoroughly designed and tested to meet the needs of 4wheelers around the world with quality advice and aftersales service, is something you just won't get on Ebay.

Mark 'Lowmount' Lowry
(Manager - Product Development & Evaluation)



Dear ARB,

I am trying to decide whether a Hi-Lift jack or exhaust jack will best suit my purpose. I am new to 4WDing, having recently purchased a Holden Rodeo 4x4 space cab to carry a slide-on camper for regular adventures into the Outback, coast and country. The camper weighs about 800kg loaded. Being a space cab and with tray space taken up by the camper, storage is limited. My travels could be anywhere from the Birdsville Track to Fraser Island to Woods Point, so ideally it would be adaptable to different conditions. Also, I recently had an Old Man Emu suspension kit plus air bags fitted. What sort of jack would be best and are there considerations in using either of the jacks with air bag suspension?

Thanking you in advance for answering my query.

Regards,
Clare Riddoch

Hi Clare,

Thanks for your enquiry and welcome to the wide world of 4wheeling.

When it comes to choosing an off road jack, the first thing to consider is what it will be used for and how it may be attached to your vehicle. Generally speaking, off road jacks can be quite unstable as they lift the vehicle, and for this reason you should never get under a vehicle supported by this type of jack alone. For the same reasons, the manufacturers of these jacks will also not recommend them for changing a flat tyre. So their use is mainly as a recovery tool.

Often, a vehicle can become bogged in sand so quickly that before you know it, you are down to the chassis rails with sand flying in all directions. An exhaust jack is a fantastic way of lifting a vehicle on sand due to its wide footprint. The jack won't sink and the vehicle can be lifted very quickly without effort so that the holes under each wheel can be back-filled. Lower tyre pressures are then all that's usually needed to get you on your way again.

Exhaust jacks are placed under the body of the vehicle away from any sharp protrusions. The thing to note is that with your vehicle being a cab chassis, this jack is really suitable for the front of the vehicle but may struggle on the rear as the tray body may be higher than the full extension of the jack.

Hi ARB,

I have a question which I have received many answers from various technicians, but am not confident in the replies. I have visited your ARB store in Dubai and looked at an ARB bumper for my Nissan Pathfinder.

But one thing that worries me is the weight of the bumper and if it will have an adverse impact on the suspension as the present suspension is the standard factory fitted shocks and coil springs.

I would appreciate if you can advise what type of impact this will have.

Thank you and regards,

Kishan Abeysekera

Dear Kishan,

Your question relating to the weight of an ARB bull bar would be one of the most common queries we receive from customers. ARB bars are exceptionally strong as a consequence of superb engineering combined with an all steel construction.

Our development engineers use clever design principles to obtain maximum strength, minimising additional weight wherever possible. Material thickness varies throughout an ARB bar's construction, typically ranging from 2.6mm which is used in the outer frame, through to 4mm which is used for the chassis and winch mounts. All this equates to a bull bar that offers a huge amount of protection and functionality, yet contributes a relatively small weight gain to the vehicle's front end.

A Hi-Lift jack is available in two lengths, 48 inch and 60 inch. These jacks have many uses from lifting vehicles, winching or clamping, to being used as a hoist. There are many accessories available to connect them to a bull bar, bumper, wheel hub or rim, and there is also an off road base available that helps distribute the load the jack places on the ground when being used in sand or soft soil.

A Hi-Lift jack may be more suitable to your needs as it is capable of lifting both the front and rear of your vehicle even if it is down to the chassis in mud. It will take a little more effort due to manual operation and can be a little harder to store, but with so many uses it's a handy tool to have with you no matter where you travel.

With regards to air bag assisted suspension, this should not affect your choice of jack. Remember, these jacks are primarily designed to lift the body of your vehicle which allows the suspension to 'hang'.

If you'd like a demonstration on either jack, get yourself down to one of our stores where our sales team will be more than happy to show you.

Mark 'Lowmount' Lowry
(Manager - Product Development & Evaluation)

In our experience, it is perfectly acceptable to fit an ARB bull bar to a vehicle equipped with standard shocks and springs. It's also interesting to note that in Australia, Nissan themselves offer a steel bull bar as a genuine accessory for the Pathfinder along with a Warn winch option, yet offer no upgraded suspension package. This clearly indicates that the manufacturer is confident that the vehicle's suspension is able to accommodate the increased weight of both the bar and winch without any issues.

Having said this, it's pertinent for us to point out that there are a host of benefits associated with upgrading the Pathfinder's standard suspension. ARB's suspension division, Old Man Emu, offers numerous options for the Pathfinder that enable us to finely tune the suspension to suit your individual needs. A properly selected package will deliver outstanding improvements in ride and handling under a variety of conditions, along with increased ride height both front and rear.

For more information on Old Man Emu's suspension package to suit the Pathfinder, please refer to the Spring 2006 edition of ARB 4x4 Action.

Matt Frost
(Marketing Manager)





> EXPEDITION AUSTRALIA

story by: **Steve Baile**

photos by: **Baile Family**

Tackling the Telegraph Track - June 2007

Of all of the fantastic 4WD tracks in Australia, one of the most iconic is the Old Telegraph Track in Cape York. A 4WD tour of Oz without including the OTT would be like a day at the footy without a meat pie. So it was with great anticipation that we turned off the 'highway' at Bramwell Junction and entered 4WD heaven.

As its name suggests, the Old Telegraph Track or 'OTT' follows the original path of the first telegraph line, established in the mid 1880s, that linked Brisbane with the tip of the Cape and beyond to Thursday Island via a submarine cable. The line served the far north Queensland community in one form or another until it was decommissioned in 1987 after being replaced by microwave towers.

With the Southern Bypass Road disappearing in the rear view mirror, it wasn't long before we encountered our first creek crossing and some of the 4WD action the OTT is famous for. Jen dutifully jumped out with the video camera and captured the moment as the water came up over the bonnet and the snorkel earned its keep.

While there was not much traffic on the track, we were overtaken by a couple of vehicles, including an old Jackaroo with a couple of young guys in it (and no snorkel), and a basic Mazda ute with very little ground clearance. We gave a polite wave to the retired couple driving it as they idled past and concluded that if they could get through in that little 4 banger, then we would do it easy.

Not wanting to rush the OTT, we decided to make camp after only 30km at a beautiful shady spot on the southern side of the Dulhunty River. The two young guys who had passed us earlier in the day had the same idea and came over for a chat after dinner. They were German and on their way around Oz on a shoestring. Their diesel Jackaroo had ingested some water back at the first creek crossing and, despite it coughing and spluttering in protest, they had managed to get it going again - they were lucky it was still going at all! We offered to let them go first tomorrow so that if they broke down we would eventually be there to assist.

The next day, with the track rough but no major challenge for our LandCruiser and Tambo, we arrived at the infamous Gunshot Creek, known as the most challenging crossing on the OTT. On this day, however, we found it to be in reasonable shape, with the main approach track being muddy but not dangerous or too steep. Jen and the girls jumped out while I engaged the Air Lockers and took our 4x4 through and out the other side. There was a very sharp left turn at the top of the climb which had the Tambo ploughing the ground for a while but I made it out okay.

But some of the numerous entries into the creek are so steep that you would be either falling into the creek or winching yourself down. While we were there, a red Patrol ute came down into the creek from the northern side, and we had a chat with owners Jeff and Sarah. Jeff was keen to tackle the steepest jump up on the proviso I would winch him out if (when) he got stuck. With a long stretch of mud and water before the climb, he had no



> Plenty of water crossings on the OTT



> Time for a swim at Canal Creek



> A hitchhiker on the OTT



> Stopped for lunch on the OTT



> Another picnic lunch



> Gday from the Jardine River ferry captain

serious chance of making it and we were soon pulling him back out again. Unfortunately, the water was a couple of feet deeper than the bottom of his doors, so when we had him back on dry land and opened the doors, a torrent of water came pouring out. Sorry for laughing, Jeff, but you have to admit it was pretty funny!

After lunch, we continued on to Cockatoo Creek, which is a wide rocky crossing with some savage and hard-to-spot potholes. Again, the Air Lockers made for a safe and controlled crossing, but the water was still up over the bonnet on a couple of occasions.

From here it was a fairly easy run into Eliot Falls Campground, where we set up camp and headed down to the falls for a dip. I would definitely recommend at least one night at this camp ground, as it is a perfect spot to cool off on a hot day.

We had done pretty well to get our Tambo as far as Eliot Falls without any major hurdles, but some of the creek crossings between here and the end of the OTT – 33km north at the Jardine River – were more brutal than those we had encountered. In fact, an older couple had tried to traverse the last crossing at Nolans Brook the previous day and had become stranded. It turned out to be the people in the Mazda who had passed us back at the start of the OTT. With this in mind we decided to leave the Tambo at Eliot Falls for another night and take a day trip up to the end of the OTT and back.

There is plenty of action and obstacles in the first 10-12km north of the falls. A number of crossings – Sam Creek, Mistake Creek, Cannibal Creek and Cypress Creek – are all within a few kilometres of each other, and all offer different challenges from sand to deep water, and tight climbs in and out of creek beds. The last

crossing at Cypress Creek has a very old log bridge crossing, which seems held together mostly by string and fencing wire.

By the time we came out the northern side of Cypress Creek, it was already getting late, and with a long straight stretch to the next crossing we opted to turn back to camp and tackle the crossings again in the other direction rather than continue on and double back around the bypass road. We've saved ourselves a couple more crossings at the northern part of the OTT for the next trip.

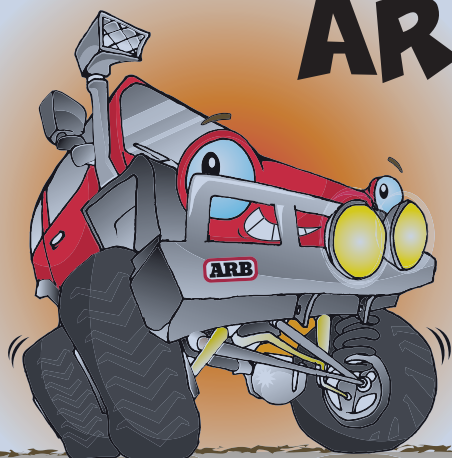
Back at camp we caught up with our German friends, who were still mobile. To compensate for their lack of a snorkel during water crossings, they were using a 3 metre length of PVC pipe. One of them sat on the front of the car with the bonnet open and pushed the pipe hard against the air inlet – not pretty and probably fairly dangerous but it worked, and now they have a great story to tell their mates back home.

Next day we packed up camp and continued north on the Northern Bypass Road, paid the \$99 ferry crossing fee and cruised into Punsand Bay. Over several cold beers at the bar that night, we were already reminiscing about the OTT, and looked forward to the next day when we would make it to the Tip and be able to check off another of our goals for our Big Lap of Australia.

Read more about our expedition on our website at www.expeditionaustralia.com.au where you can SUBSCRIBE for regular updates.

Ciao for now
Steve Baile

ARB KIDS



Hey, kids, Fourby here! Thanks to everyone who sent me their letters, drawings and photos. It was great to read about your 4WDing and camping adventures, so keep sending 'em in, and you could be featured in the next newsletter. Check out our winner below as well as a few others we thought deserved to be shown off.

OUR WINNER!

A big congratulations goes to 10 year old Rachelle and 8 year old Simone Murray who sent us a stack of emails with pictures and photos of their camping/4WDing adventures. There's a couple of Get-a-Grip t-shirts heading their way, as well as a Speedy Seal kit! Well done, guys!



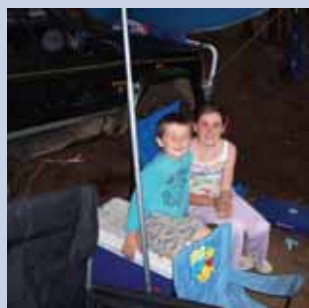
< Here is Rachelle (front) and Simone (driver's seat) at Fraser Island.



^ This picture was drawn by Rachelle, who says: "Our Toyota Prado (Brutus) on the beach with Mum and Dad sitting around watching the dolphins playing in the ocean."



< Eight year old Jesse sent us in this very colourful drawing, complete with vehicle, campfire, and even a camel!



< Hello Fourby, My name is Matthew and I'm 4 1/2 years old. I love to go camping with my sister and the rest of my family. Dad has an old Jeep and takes us 4WDing in the bush. This is a photo of Alex and me camping near Kangaroo Valley in N.S.W. Thank you Fourby, bye. Matty



< Jake from St George, Queensland, has drawn a great pic of his family's GXL LandCruiser driving on the sand down at the river, fully equipped with ARB accessories. He reports: "It tackles the sand with no problems at all."



< This is a drawing from 10 year old Aaron of the vehicle he wants to buy when he's older.

ARB SPOTTO

This is a great game for next time you're going on a long trip. The rules are simple: the first person to spot and call an item (eg. "Spotto caravan!") gets to cross it off their list (two people cannot 'spotto' the same item). The winner is the first person to 'Spotto' all the items, or the one with the most crossed off at the end of the journey.



ARB Bull Bar



ARB Canopy



ARB Nudge Bar



ARB Roof Rack



ARB Sahara Bar



ARB Sticker



ARB Store



Caravan



Driving Lights



Electric Winch



Country Pub



Rooftop Tent



Snorkel



Spare Tyre



Trailer



< 6 year old Tristan drew this picture of his first 4WD trip with his dad on the Beachport-Robe run. His silly dad got stuck in the sand at Errington Beach near Nora Creina.



< Thanks to 9 year old Drew who has drawn this picture for us. He loves going 4WDing with his dad every Friday when they go beach fishing.

Kids' Giveaway

This issue we've got a kid's Get-a-Grip t-shirt to give away, plus we'll throw in a Speedy Seal puncture repair kit for Dad!



Pssst! Don't forget to send us your t-shirt size, just in case you win!

Send your entries including your name, address & age to:

› **Post:** ARB 4x4 Accessories
Marketing Department
PO Box 105
Kilsyth VIC 3137

› **Email:** marketing@arb.com.au

If you want your letter or drawing returned, please enclose a stamped, self addressed envelope.



Bluff Hut

In the summer of 2006/2007, Victoria endured one of the longest running bushfires in its history. Fires started in early December, burnt for 2 1/2 months and consumed more than one million hectares. One of the buildings that could not survive the ferocious fires was the Bluff Hut, in Victoria's High Country. ARB has pledged a donation to help rebuild this historical hut, and we'll bring you updates on the progress over the next few issues of 4x4 Action.

A History of the Bluff Hut

(as told by Graeme Stoney to Wendy Jubb Stoney, April 2007)

The much loved and visited Bluff Hut was burnt to the ground in January 2007 by a fierce bushfire that came from the north through the Bluff Saddle like a volcanic eruption. This was part of the fires that burnt more than a million hectares in the Victorian High Country last summer.

Before the hut was built, mustering cattlemen camped under the snow gums in the Bluff Saddle. It was often wet, miserable and cold so Eadley Stoney organised various mountain cattlemen to build the Bluff Hut.

In December 1955, the galvanised iron and other materials were taken to the end of the existing jeep track between Bindaree and Pikes by the Forests' Commission. The original jeep track was only extended to the Bluff Hut from Pike's Flat in about 1960, well after the Bluff Hut was built. It was steep and rough with sections the early 4WD had to reverse up and then go forward again.

In the December school holidays 1955, Eadley's son Graeme, aged 15, and a school friend, Ron Davidson,

camped at Pike's Flat and packed the iron and building materials from the Howqua River to the Bluff with a string of packhorses, up the narrow and dangerous bridle track.

The original site selected for the hut was what is called 'The First Water', about a mile east of where the present hut stands. Young Graeme and his youthful friend dropped all the building materials there. However, when the senior cattlemen came to build the hut, they decided to bring everything back to the Bluff Saddle. This decision was based on the fact that if early snows fell, it was far easier to drop down the bridle track, out of the snow, with the horses and cattle, than from the First Water.

Eadley Stoney, together with Jack Ware, Ray Kelly, Jack Davon, Archie Cameron and others, all contributed to the building of the original Bluff Hut in the summer of 1956. That year was one of the wettest on record, and the builders of the hut were working in appalling conditions including knee deep mud - visitors commented that the conditions endured were 'sub-human'.

Eadley Stoney was the main organiser as he had the largest cattle numbers on the lease. Jack Ware brought his bush skills, and the original hut became a testimony to his talent with the adze and broad axe. It is a tragedy that this history and craftsmanship has now gone up in smoke.

The posts for the original hut, as well as the beams and the tie beams, were obtained from snow gums around the site. Two tie beams, which went across the hut holding the posts together, were cleverly sawn with a cross cut saw from one snow gum log on site. The roof timbers were local ash, shaped by Jack Ware into a work of art.



The entrance door was in two halves, like stable doors, for three reasons. One reason was that you could keep the bottom door shut against the snow but, open the top door and step out. The second reason was it was easier to pack half doors on a horse than a single door because everything in the original hut came in by packhorse – including the ex-army beds! The third reason was you could close the bottom door to keep the dogs and horses out but open the top door for extra light and air.

Graeme Stoney tells of many a time when the snows came early and the horses would stick their heads through the top of the open door looking for a feed. They had icicles six inches long hanging off their whiskers, which clanked around their noses and mouths.

In another story from the late 1960s, a very young Charlie Lovick and Graeme Stoney went up in June, looking for stragglers. It was a drought year and they camped at the Bluff Hut. Charlie rode out to the Lovick Run on King Billy and Mt. Clear (on his own and only in his mid teens), and Graeme was to sweep the Bluff Run, riding one of Lovick's very good horses, called Playboy.

Obscure cattle tracks led Graeme down the Long Spur, which runs from Barclays Old Yards towards the Jamieson River. Not finding any cattle, he was about to return when he heard the murmur of the river. Thinking, "I'll just have a look," he rode down as far as possible, tied Playboy up and walked a hundred yards to an almost vertical drop to the river. Peering through the scrub, Graeme saw a narrow little 'run' with a huge trout feeding in it. A few yards below, there was a deep pool, obviously where the fish lived. Grabbing a rock, Graeme silently blocked its only retreat into the big pool. The fish went berserk; Graeme stripped off and jumped in, wrestled the fish and got it. He claims that when he put a forked stick in the fish's mouth to carry it on his horse,

he had to keep lifting his arm or the tail dragged on the ground. Nevertheless, we all know mountain cattlemen tell tall tales around the campfire!

On return to the Bluff Hut without any cattle, Graeme hung the trophy fish from a beam in the hut so that when Charlie Lovick walked in after dark, he bumped into it. "Geez, where'd ya get that bastard? I've been out mustering and you've been out fishing!" The boys ate the fish, but not before drawing a charcoal outline of the monster on the back of the Bluff Hut door which could still be seen until it was burnt down this year.

In somewhat controversial circumstances generated by purists, the Bluff Hut was extended in 1982-1983, by High Country Adventure, a partnership of John Brewster, Jock Dyason and Graeme Stoney. A decade of remote back country skiing was provided to the public in Australia and people from all over the world. Guests included the then editor of 4x4 magazine Ron Moon and wife Viv.

When Chris Stoney took over from Graeme, the hut continued as a base for the Stoney's cattle lease and trail ride operations, and as a welcome refuge for hikers and 4WD visitors. Over the years it is known to have saved several lives.

With the cancellation of the alpine grazing leases by the Victorian State Government in 2005, Parks Victoria claimed rights over the Bluff Hut.

When the fires started in December, a group of concerned people, including the Lovick's and the Stoney's, ran the gauntlet of the fire front around the Eight Mile and had a major clean up around the hut. Despite this action, the hut could not withstand the ferocity of the fire that particular day.



The Stoney family and friends have pledged to re-build the original Bluff Hut and adjoining Refuge as a matter of principle, for the people of Victoria – this will happen next spring.

The decision has been made not to try and replicate the original hut, but to build another bush hut in true bush style. Suitable timber has already been accessed and plans are being drawn up by David Stoney, who, along with his father Graeme, is organising the project.

Some generous donations have been received including one from ARB, and this support is very much appreciated, by the Stoney's, their friends and supporters of the Bluff Hut.



OLD MAN EMU NEWS

Over the past few months, our Old Man Emu engineers have been hard at work developing complete suspension systems for a number of vehicles to improve their ride, handling, and load carrying capabilities over all terrain.

Jeep Wrangler JK 2 Door V6 Petrol

Whilst the development of an Old Man Emu suspension system for the Jeep Wrangler JK provided our engineering team with some unique challenges, the end result has produced a number of fantastic improvements.

Our engineers quickly discovered that while the original suspension was well balanced with positive handling characteristics, a noticeable deterioration in suspension performance was noticeable when the vehicle was loaded. Furthermore, some conditions both on and off road resulted in the unnecessary activation of the ESP (Electronic Stability Program) system, which had a tendency to unsettle the vehicle.

When developing the new suspension, OME engineers focussed

on creating the best possible range of spring and shock absorber combinations to increase ride height, maximise load carrying capabilities, and give the vehicle a safe and positive feel in all driving situations.

Compatibility with the Wrangler's ESP was achieved through the use of OME's Motec on board vehicle data logging system, which proved invaluable during numerous road tests by supplying our engineers with a range of critical vehicle dynamics data.

With approximately 50mm increase in ride height, significant improvements in handling and control, and greatly enhanced ride quality, JK owners will certainly enjoy the benefits associated with outfitting their vehicle with a complete Old Man Emu suspension.



OME suspension selections for the 4 Door V6 petrol and 2.8L diesel models, as well as the 2 door 2.8L diesel model, have yet to be confirmed. These JK variants are being actively sourced for OME development, and further part numbers will be added to complete the OME JK range if required.

Mazda BT50/Ford Ranger

Our evaluation of both the Mazda and Ford's original suspension revealed satisfactory ride performance on smooth roads, but some harshness over rough roads.

However, a marked deterioration became noticeable once heavy loads were added to the vehicle. Of particular concern was a considerable loss in ride height at the rear when loads in excess of 400kgs were applied.

Design limitations relating to the vehicle allow only a modest increase in ride height at the front, but considerable improvements have been achieved through the use of OME torsion bars with higher spring rates than standard. Designed to be fitted to vehicles equipped with front end loads (i.e. bull bar and winch), the new torsion bars deliver superb results when matched to the corresponding Nitrocharger shock absorbers.

Front end height limitations also affect the amount of lift that can be applied to the rear, so once again, the increase is limited to about 20mm. However, Old Man Emu leaf springs support weight in a far superior manner, allowing the vehicle to maintain a much better ride height when loaded. Furthermore, different springs are available to suit different applications. This allows us to perfectly match a suspension system to a vehicle, and the owner's needs.

Toyota LandCruiser 78 & 79 Series

Initial testing found that the OME suspension suited to the previous model 78 & 79 series LandCruisers was compatible with the new models. However, due to the V8 diesel being heavier than the previous 6 cylinder engine, coupled with changes to the vehicle's handling dynamics when heavily loaded, OME engineering believed they could make some refinements.

The development program has resulted in a range of new components being available, ensuring that the suspension system is perfectly suited to the new models. Different front springs are available to suit vehicles with or without accessories such as bull bars and winches, and these can be matched to a range of Nitrocharger shock absorbers.

Similarly, an extensive range of rear springs and shocks is available to cater for a wide variety of load carrying requirements.

A correctly selected and matched OME system will deliver outstanding improvements in ride and handling, reduced body roll, approximately 50mm increase in ride height, and superb load carrying characteristics.

OME also has a series of suspension systems soon to be available for the LandCruiser 76 Series. While many of this vehicle's suspension components are common with the 78 & 79 Series, some components like the rear leaf spring are unique to this model. OME is pleased to advise LandCruiser 76 series owners that the OME development work and selections for this model are complete, and the full suspension system will be released shortly.

> INSIDE ARB

Victoria
AUSTRALIA



Paul Anderson – Victorian State Manager

Traditionally, the Inside ARB section of the newsletter has been devoted to profiling one of our ARB stores. However, this issue we are going to change direction and look at one of our long-time employees, Paul Anderson.

Paul Anderson grew up in Mansfield, in the Victorian High Country, and developed a passion for the country and 4WDing from a young age. As soon as he was old enough, he took off on a two-year trip exploring Australia, working his way around and experiencing all that he could.

Upon his return in 1994, he happened upon an ARB store and, needing a job, he dropped in and applied. To begin with, he worked in the powder coat and warehouse departments, doing all sorts of odds and ends. Sheer persistence and determination saw him move into sales a year later and after a number of years of dedication, he became the store manager of Richmond in 1998. An opportunity presented itself the following year, and he moved into the role of Victorian Sales Manager, where he has remained ever since.

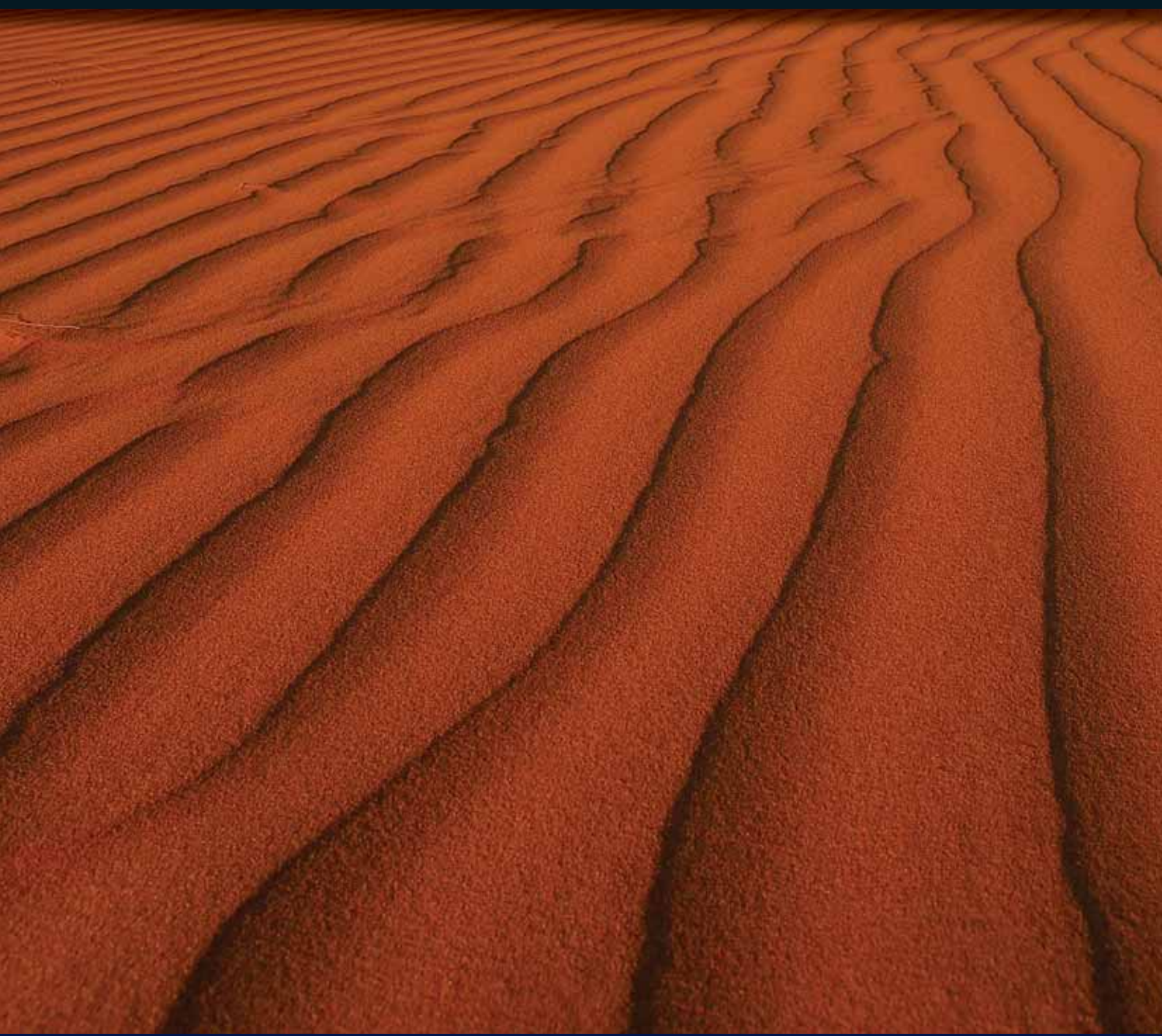
Paul has participated in many of ARB's photoshoots over the years, and this experience, coupled with his extensive background in 4WDing, saw him attend ARB's recent Outback Experience (featured in this newsletter). Although Paul has been on a number of exciting trips, he said that this was definitely one of the best, due to the vastly different personalities and variety of vehicles that participated.

On a personal note, his favourite places to visit are the Flinders Ranges and the Victorian High Country, and in his spare time he enjoys off road racing in his Holden Rodeo. It is quite obvious from speaking with him that he's very passionate about both the 4WDing industry and ARB. In fact, he even met his wife on the job, and they have now been married for eight years.

It has been a long journey for Paul, who started with the company back when there were approximately 250 employees. Now there's over 650 people and he's responsible for three Melbourne corporate stores – Kilsyth, Richmond and Brighton. His biggest challenge in the role has been the massive growth that the



company has experienced throughout his time at ARB. Paul's advice to those out there who are interested in excelling in a particular industry is: "Find something that you've got a passion for and stick at it." He has certainly successfully followed his own advice and is sure to be seen in and around ARB for many years to come.



4X4 ACCESSORIES

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