

ARB

4X4 ACTION

FEATURE ARTICLE ON

2012 FORD RANGER GEAR

FEATURES > NEW UNDER VEHICLE PROTECTION FOR JEEP, TOYOTA AND VOLKSWAGEN MODELS
> ADVICE FOR YOUR NEXT BIG OFF ROAD ADVENTURE
> HEAD TO CAPE YORK AND WILPENA POUND

MOTORSPORT > RESULTS FROM THE EPIC US KING OF THE HAMMERS AND RAINFOREST CHALLENGE IN MALAYSIA

WIN
A 60L
FRIDGE
FREEZER

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ARB SNAPSHOT

Growing up in the UK in the 1970s, one of my favourite TV shows was the long-running BBC series, *Tomorrow's World*. I believe there was something similar in Australia called *Beyond 2000*. The show used to speculate as to what the future would be like and, based on their reckoning, we should all be wearing silver jumpsuits, driving flying cars and eating food capsules by about now.

In reality, many things haven't changed that much over the years. Whilst some of our more spirited customers may have tried to get their fourbies airborne at some stage, the basic form and function of the 4WD hasn't changed that much... and flying cars don't appear to be on the horizon anytime soon. Just look at the Series 1 Land Rover, conceived in 1947, and then check out a 2012 model Defender and you shouldn't have too much trouble spotting a few similarities.

What has accelerated beyond everyone's imagination is communication. Individuals and companies have a vast array of tools available to them to instantly spread their message to thousands and, in some cases, millions of people using a device that fits into the palm of your hand.

Here at ARB, we are very keen to take advantage of any opportunity which facilitates better communication with our customers, which is why in this edition of *ARB 4x4 Action*, we are delighted to announce three new initiatives.

Firstly, this magazine you're reading is now available as a free download for the Apple iPad. Not only can you hop onto the App store and download this latest issue, you will automatically be invited to download all future issues at absolutely no charge. If that wasn't enough reason to go and buy an iPad, HEMA has just released their on and off road map collection as an App, which works beautifully on the device.



Many of our customers and staff have been hanging out for an ARB Facebook page, and we've recently launched this as well. We didn't just want to create a Facebook page for the sake of it, but instead wanted to make it a really useful resource. Consequently, we've recruited Sam to manage it. He's one of those 4WD tragics who spends his weekends 4WDing, evenings surfing 4WD forums, and daytime trying to finance his next 4WD accessory purchase. Ask us a question or share some of your experiences, and between Sam and Bec (our other Social Media nut), you can expect a response within minutes.

ARB is also now on Twitter. I am still not convinced about the merits of this one, but hey, if it's good enough for the likes of Lady Gaga, Barack Obama and Pat Callinan, we should probably be there.

For those who would still prefer to walk into a store and speak to a 4x4 accessories specialist, we have never been in a better position to assist our customers with preparing for their off road adventures, particularly with several new ARB stores opening in 2011/12 and an ever-increasing number of open days.

Finally, many of the staff at ARB often discuss building the ultimate 4WD. Well, the marketing team has done exactly this and they are in store now (see page 61). It might not be quite what some of our more technically-orientated staff had in mind, but this new product is proving to be hugely popular with some of the younger folks out there. And rest assured, like any ARB product, this item has undergone an extensive durability testing program, albeit a little unconventional.

**Matt Frost, Marketing Manager,
ARB 4x4 Accessories**



**FOR ARB'S ENGINEERS,
THE JK WRANGLER AND
AMAROK IN PARTICULAR
PRESENTED SOME UNIQUE
CHALLENGES**

UNDER GUARD

ARB'S UNDER VEHICLE PROTECTION RANGE HAS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE PRODUCTS FOR THE TOYOTA PRADO 120 & 150 SERIES, TOYOTA FJ CRUISER, JEEP JK WRANGLER AND VOLKSWAGEN AMAROK.

Providing an unrivalled safeguard for the underside of your vehicle, ARB's under vehicle protection plates keep vital components, including steering, engine sump, transmission and transfer case, safe from damage caused by off road debris.

The new additions to the range – for JK Wrangler (3.8L petrol variant), Prado 120 and 150 Series, FJ Cruiser and Amarok – employ a vehicle specific design to ensure optimal fit and functionality.

For ARB's engineers, designing the plates for each vehicle model presented some unique challenges. This included limited mounting points on the Amarok, which required a special mounting bracket system, and a vulnerable

charcoal canister as part of the JK Wrangler's fuel system that meant the development of a separate protection panel specifically for this component.

The comprehensive design process provides not only a perfect fit for each vehicle but ensures the under body plates are fully compatible with all ARB products, including bull bars, roof racks, Air Lockers and OME suspension.

When designing the under vehicle protection range, ARB's engineers analysed the benefits of steel over alloy and discovered that even at 5mm thickness, the alloy plates immediately fatigued when folded and also gouged more easily in rocky terrain. The steel prototypes, however, could be folded to 90°

without fatiguing and did not gouge easily, allowing the plates to 'slide' over rocks and other terrain.

Manufactured from laser cut, pressed and folded 3mm steel, the plates are stronger than folded steel alone, allowing for an optimum strength-to-weight ratio. With all steel components zinc plated and powder coated, the plates are securely bolted to the vehicle's chassis to provide outstanding structural integrity.

Coming with a two year warranty and finished in a silver textured powder coat, the protection plates are available now from your local ARB store or stockist.

// Contact ARB for part numbers and pricing

TRAVEL

CAPE YORK, OLD

FISHING FOR ADVENTURE

Words & photography by Dick Eussen



IT'S TIME TO HEAD TO THE LOWER WEST COAST OF CAPE YORK PENINSULA FOR THE ULTIMATE FISHING TRIP.



The Western Peninsula Loop from Mareeba to Kowanyama – Pormpuraaw – Musgrave (or reverse) is largely ignored by the general run of Cape York Peninsula visitors. Even grey nomads with plenty of time on their hands disregard this route. But fishers well know its attractions and even though the cold winter months are deemed poor fishing by southern-based fishing writers, there is good reason why the area has high visitation from local anglers in the dry season.

PORMPURAAW

You must be totally self sufficient when travelling, fishing and camping in the Cape's lower west coast, although the remote Indigenous communities of Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw have fuel, medical centre, police station, ranger station, post office and a store with basic food supplies.

My normal route to Pormpuraaw is via the Musgrave Roadhouse, 345km from my hometown of Mareeba. There is often a bunch of us who head out together on fishing trips, with up to a dozen vehicles towing boats. We leave at about lunchtime and arrive at the Musgrave Roadhouse by late afternoon. While we carry fuel for outboards and generators, we fill the vehicles there. In my own Toyota LandCruiser wagon, I have enough fuel to get me to the various

Western Peninsula Loop campsites and back to Lakelands, where \$50 gets me home depending on how much driving I do from camp.

On our first night we usually camp or stay in the motel-style units at the roadhouse, which also serves top meals and has cold beer, which has to do until we return from the trip. No alcohol of any kind is allowed to be taken into Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama. Police will (and do) put up roadblocks and check vehicles and trailers for grog. Pormpuraaw has a Brothers Football Club, which opens for a couple of hours in the evening during weekdays. You may consume six cans of mid-strength beer on the grounds, providing you have been signed in by a club member. As the locals are helpful and friendly, that is rarely a problem.

It is 216km from Musgrave to Pormpuraaw on a well-maintained road. It's been like that ever since the local ALP State Member rolled his 4WD near the Lukin River.

After climbing up on the ramparts of the Great Dividing Range just west of the roadhouse, the country flattens out and consists of monsoonal woodlands before patches of scrub and magnetic termite country dominate all the way to the coast.

Unless you have received your permit by mail, drive into Pormpuraaw and pick it up at the Wild Rivers Ranger Station.

Be careful while driving in the community, as the streets are narrow, dusty and full of people (mostly children) and dogs. Drive too fast and you will be asked to leave in no uncertain terms.

The community has three campground sites – one on the Chapman River 3km to the south, another 8km north at the Mungkan River, and the last at the Coleman River campsites, which are 60km south by road.

The Chapman and Mungkan campsites have showers, toilets and barbeque areas, with firewood supplied by the rangers. As there is no commercial fishing allowed in the two small estuaries, they have good fishing with barramundi, threadfin and blue salmon, cod, queenfish, trevally, grunter, archer, mangrove jack and catfish all on tap.

Further north is Breakfast Creek, which is a similar-sized system as the Mungkan River. It is reached by boat but be careful you don't get trapped by the tide, as the entrances are very shallow.

People also travel to the Coleman and Mitchell Rivers by boat from the two campsites, as the popular Coleman River campsites are often booked out. You can reach the Coleman River by taking the Kowanyama Track about 3km out of Pormpuraaw and heading south to where it junctions about 25km south at the Coleman River Track.



The Coleman River has a ranger station on the billabong en route. There is a water pump here for washing and showering, so bring containers. Don't swim in the billabong, however, as a big croc calls it home.

The tracks hereabout zigzag across tidal flats, parts of which are inundated by monthly spring tides – the reason that anglers mostly pick tides that don't flood the flats. Extreme high tides do flood some campsites.

Camping here is no fun, as you are totally exposed to blustery winds and under continuous attack by sandflies and mosquitoes. So bring plenty of insect repellent – wipe-on gel is best. Burning mosquito coils is also helpful. In case you run out, there is plenty of bovine dung on the flats to burn and thwart the biting nuisances. Also bring an awning for shade, as there is none here.

As there are no boat ramps, you must launch off the slippery banks into a crocodile-infested tidal stream... so make sure the handbrake works! It is best to launch and retrieve the boat on the top of the tide. If you don't have a boat, forget about fishing here unless you want to catch pesky catfish. The nights can be bitterly cold with temperatures plummeting down to 5°C and lower with the wind chill factor. I said this place is fun!

So why do people subject themselves to this torture instead of the comfortable and generally shady camps back at the community? For the fishing, old mate!

The Coleman is part of the Mitchell River delta, arguably the largest delta in Australia. It's an amazing system – large tidal reaches, narrow creeks and rock bars that attract the previously mentioned fish and then some. The Coleman has a 15km tidal reach and a few navigable creeks. There are several small islands upstream with more fishable water beyond them. But work the tide when fishing beyond the islands, as the water is very shallow at low tide hereabouts.

From the Coleman River campsites you can boat into the Mitchell River for some 40km and fish the Mitchell's north arm, the main Mitchell River and a myriad of tidal creeks en route. No fishing is allowed in the south arm of the river as it is set aside for Indigenous use only.

KOWANYAMA AND THE EASTERN LINK

Most people who visit the remote Indigenous community of Kowanyama do so for the fishing. You can continue on south from the Coleman River Track to this community.

The Coleman and Mitchell River crossings are dicey early in the dry season due to sand and mud. There

are four campsites at Kowanyama; three on the Mitchell and one on Topsy Creek to the southwest. All require permits.

The Wonya Creek campground on Surprise Creek is favoured by visiting anglers to fish the Mitchell River delta via Surprise Creek. The Bull Crossing campsite is 2km upstream. Shady and bright, it is rated as the best natural campsite in the Mitchell River country. Used as an overflow when Wonya is brimming, Bull Crossing is also popular with travellers and people visiting the nearby Mitchell-Alice River NP. Shelfo Camp is a trendy overnight spot for travellers, being on the Mitchell Crossing on the Pormpuraaw Track.

The Topsy Creek campsites are on the creek's sandy estuary and very popular, with sites generally booked out. The large creek has excellent fishing and access to the shallow shores of the Gulf. Some keen boaties even travel south to the Nassau River if the weather is kind.

THE BOAT

You truly need a boat to fish the west coast. The most popular are estuary rigs like my own Quintrex 420 Dory, which is powered by a 30hp Evinrude ETEC outboard. This trailer-drawn outfit is very typical of estuary-friendly boats used across the tropics. Large outfits up to 5.5m are also towed off road, but a purpose-built trailer is a must for the job. Car toppers



AS THERE ARE NO BOAT RAMPS, YOU MUST LAUNCH OFF THE SLIPPERY BANKS INTO A CROCODILE-INFESTED TIDAL STREAM... SO MAKE SURE THE HANDBRAKE WORKS!

reign supreme and they are used extensively by anglers across the north due to their low cost, mobility and ease of carrying.

Pub talk has it that crocodiles attack small tinnies but they have been known to attack much larger boats also. In all reported cases, the reptiles were harassed by anglers. Many southern travellers, especially grey nomads, never drop their tinnies in the water after hearing horrid and lurid tales of crocodile attacks from local pub 'experts' and the local press who get their information from the same pub yobbos.

My advice is to take the tales with a grain of salt, as attacks are rare and generally caused by the victim, either from a lack of caution and commonsense or from alcohol-related stupidity.

Canoes and kayaks are a different matter. Never canoe in crocodile waters if you value your life. Yes, many people do, and I did it when I was much younger, but after having had three bad turns with crocodiles while canoeing in Kakadu, I got rid of it. For the record, several people have been badly injured or killed while canoeing in both Kakadu and Lakefield NPs and elsewhere. It's your call...

TIDES

In winter, the Gulf of Carpentaria tides rise at night and run out in the morning, so you need to be

in deep water in the afternoon to make it back to camp. Only one high and one low tide occurs in a 24 hour period, unlike elsewhere where there are 12 hour tides.

However, there are also periods where the tide comes in for two hours, runs out for four and then returns. This pattern occurs over a four day period several times a year. These tides are favoured by anglers because they don't have extreme highs and lows or big runs, thus the water stays clearer. There are also times when no tide comes in at all. This happens when the southeast winds are full-on and keep the floodtide from flooding across the shallow Gulf flats and into the estuaries. Locals know this and put up with it.

Not all days are good days for fishing, but on a normal five-day stay we all catch our bag limit of five barramundi per person to take home and always eat fish in the camp. There are also plenty of other fish beside barra to catch and take home. That's why we keep coming back – dry season after dry season.

The West Peninsula Loop is an isolated area that may not see traffic for days, especially the section between the two Indigenous communities. But it is a road to high adventure that will take you to what remains a largely unspoiled part of the Cape.



CAMPING

Both Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw have campsites set aside for casual travellers and visiting anglers and these sites cost \$50AUD per night per vehicle at time of writing. Sites must be pre-booked with a deposit required to secure a site. Few facilities are available but improvements are ongoing when funds allow.

PERMITS

Camping permits are obtainable from the Pormpuraaw Wild Rivers Rangers. Contact Ranger Robbie Morris during working hours. Tel: 0419 028 267

For Mitchell River camping, contact the Kowanyama Land and Sea Centre. Tel: (07) 4060 4155. No permits are required for day visits to QLD's Aboriginal communities.

PREPARATION

You need a good reliable 4WD, fitted with reliable accessories – bull bar, driving lights, radio and more... and don't forget the portable fridge to cool the fish and the rest of the food.

Boat trailers have special needs like a strong chassis coupled to at least 13" or larger wheels.

Carry a toolkit, two spare tyres for both the trailer and the vehicle, repair kits and spare parts – bearings, seals, hoses, belts and shock rubber kit. Also take plenty of drinking water and an HF radio or sat-phone, especially when travelling alone.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Pormpuraaw Wild Rivers Rangers:

www.pormpuraaw.qld.gov.au

Kowanyama Land and Sea Centre:

www.kowanyama.qld.gov.au

Tide Tables: www.msq.qld.gov.au

Fishing: www.fisheries.qld.gov.au

Weather: www.bom.gov.au

LETTERS TO ARB



CONGRATULATIONS TO ANNE, WHO IS OUR PORTABLE AIR COMPRESSOR KIT WINNER FOR THIS ISSUE.

EVERYONE ELSE WHO APPEARS ON THESE PAGES WILL RECEIVE AN ARB SPEEDY SEAL PUNCTURE REPAIR KIT TO REWARD THEIR EFFORTS.

Hi ARB,

I have recently started working as a Remote Area Nurse in central Australia. My new job involves a fair bit of night driving on dirt roads. I'd love some advice on what type of driving lights to get as everyone seems to have a different opinion!

I own a Toyota HiLux, which is great, but I'd feel a lot safer with some brighter lights on these remote and unpredictable roads.

Thanks,

- Anne

Dear Anne,

Night driving on remote dirt roads in Australia, eh? This is certainly an environment where you need everything going for you and, yes, like a lot of subject matter in the accessory area, you are right that everyone seems to have a different opinion.

I've done hundreds of thousands of kilometres at night on all surfaces and have been evaluating and using auxiliary lighting since 1974. Here is what I would recommend.

Let's start with the factory headlights. Driving lights that punch a great deal of light up the road are all very well and necessary, but unless your low beam is improved over standard, when you have to dip the high beams

and driving lights for oncoming traffic, you momentarily lack visibility while your eyes adjust. This is an important factor in rural and remote areas without street lighting.

Your HiLux standard headlights will benefit from an upgrade to the IPF FatBoy H4 Bulbs. The FatBoy energy consumption is only slightly higher than the stock factory bulbs but is biased toward the low beam.

Factory high beam and FatBoy high beam are both the same at 60W, but the low beam on the FatBoy is 80W compared to the factory bulb's 55W. In addition, these clever bulbs use an exotic internal gas at a very high pressure and, as a result, the light they output is at a higher colour temperature – the equivalent to a much higher wattage bulb.

The name FatBoy comes from the fact that the quartz tube in which the filament is lit on these bulbs is quite a lot larger than normal and hence can contain a higher volume of the special gas. These Japanese made, quality replacement bulbs are also specially designed for vehicles operating in harsh conditions and incorporate filament stabilisation posts to support the filament and help it survive vibrations. They will work reliably in modern vehicles with plastic headlight bodies and standard factory wiring looms but the addition of our ARB modular

headlight loom, which channels power through large section wire direct to the bulb from the battery, will maximise their performance.

Moving onto the driving lights, I have to say I'm a great believer in strong steel bodies and mounting systems, along with hardened glass lenses for this country. The IPF 800 and 900 Series ranges have proven themselves over a 30 year period to be more than capable of standing up to the rigours of our Outback roads. 800 is a rectangular light, whereas the 900 is round. Both have almost identical performance and the choice is more about space available and style preference.

If you were doing regular river crossings, I would be recommending the XS Series of either the 800 or 900 as they have a sealed bulb and breather system that allows temporary submersion. However, assuming that's not a concern, the regular 800 or 900 Series with their 130W H3 bulbs will not disappoint you.

Finally, there's the controversial choice of spot or driving beam. These lights are available with either. Kits come with two spots, two drivers or one of each. This is where most of the arguments start.

As a man, I think I am qualified to comment that a lot of this argument comes down to 'mine's bigger than yours' and that is why a lot of spot

PRIZE FOR LETTER OF THE MONTH

This issue, we're giving away another portable air compressor kit, so here's your chance to win one! Simply 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 compressor from their nearest ARB store.

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

› Email: marketing@arb.com.au

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

While we will endeavour to reply to all letters, due to the volume received, it may not always be possible. Please note that all entries for this section are only reviewed on a quarterly basis. Should you have a question that requires a more immediate response, please direct it to sales@arb.com.au. We reserve the right to edit all letters for clarity.



lights with incredibly narrow long throw beams are sold every year. Sorry, guys, it's true – blokes judge things on size, so the guy whose lights penetrate the furthest always thinks he is the winner.

With my first spot light, the recommended dipping range was an impressive 2,500 metres. Now, unless you are travelling at 200km/h, you simply do not need that length of beam. Even at that speed, objects illuminated at the end of that beam will not be under your vehicle for 45 seconds.

Such a focussed beam is also a pain when you approach reflective surfaces like signs, as the bright spot of light gets thrown back at you. What I believe is important is the spread of light, and that means a driving beam. The wider driving beam allows you to see around the bends and out into the roadside edges to pick up approaching hazards like wildlife and stray livestock. Spot beams should also be dipped sooner than driving beams as the oncoming traffic is dazzled a lot earlier.

If you want to have the best of both worlds, by all means go with one spot on the driver's side and a driving beam on the passenger side, otherwise two driving beams is my advice.

I hope this has helped clear up the question for you, Anne.

**- Greg Milton, Manager
National Products & Services**



Hi ARB,

I've just purchased a 2009 King Cab D40 Navara. I'm very happy with it and am in the process of preparing it for a bit of 4WDing and camping. Firstly, I need to get her belly out of the sand and am a little overwhelmed with the choices. I have been told that lifting more than a couple of inches will void my insurance and get me into more trouble than it's worth. What do you recommend to give me more clearance whilst keeping or enhancing the factory ride, without the worry that I won't be covered in the event of a bingle? I'll carry about 300kg of gear and will usually take on just light to moderate trail difficulty.

- Ryan

Hello Ryan,

Glad to hear your D40 Navara is going well and you are finding the time to get off the beaten track.

A suspension upgrade will certainly help you get the belly out of the sand and will also increase your approach and departure angles. Other benefits you will get out of fitting an Old Man Emu suspension system is an improvement in ride quality, control and load carrying capabilities, and all supported by the largest network of over 125 outlets in Australia.

The amount of lift or ride height increase is always an interesting debate topic and not one to be taken lightly. Not only for insurance reasons but you also need to understand what your...

Answer continued on page 10

local road traffic and registration authority will allow in regards to ride height increase as they do vary from state to state.

Old Man Emu suspension systems are developed to maximise the amount of lift that the vehicle will allow without costly modifications but also ensures it is in line with the National Code of Practice for vehicle modifications that is currently being implemented by each state. I would recommend you contact both your insurance company and road traffic authority to ascertain what restrictions you may encounter.

As we have several suspension options for the Navara D40, it is important to think about your vehicle and factors that can affect your suspension, especially regarding what accessories are fitted and what accessories you are planning to have. For example, fitting a bull bar can really determine which front spring option is most suitable. The same criteria is applied to the rear spring selection, in which a canopy or drawer system or even a rear step helps determine the recommended components. How much weight is carried in the back and whether it is a constant or occasional load also helps to determine spring selection.

When all the information is known then the correct spring can be selected with the matching shock absorber. The correct selection will ensure you receive the ride height increase, plus improved ride and handling and the comfort that an Old Man Emu suspension system has been engineered for.

**- Mark de Prinse, Manager
Old Man Emu**



Hi ARB,

I gotta tell you that you've got me worried, or at least you've got my wife worried! I've just been down to your Wangara stockist in WA and have developed a very long wish list for my 2010 2 Door JK Wrangler! First up will be a 2" OME lift and ARB diff covers, followed by front and rear bar work and lights, snorkel, rear Air Lockers, 33" tyres and the list goes on. Gotta stop salivating and start saving! I'm fairly new to the 4WDing scene and pretty impressed with the Jeep so far – can't wait to see and drive it fully kitted out.

Keep up the good work. Just don't tell the wife!

Cheers,
- Steve

Hi Steve,

Sounds like you have some big plans to go with the big shopping list!

Many 4WD aftermarket accessories are promoted as vital for safe Outback travel and you're clearly eyeing off plenty of them. But the most vital requirement for any 4WD adventure is to be prepared.

As Mark Lowry, our Product Development and Evaluation honcho, says, "The point of fitting accessories to your vehicle is to make it as safe as possible for your next adventure." This means figuring out where you

plan to go and what you want to do. This naturally has a big affect on what gets put on your wish list and what reaches the top of the list. If you're planning weekend trips to your local national park, for example, then your list would read something like: bull bar, driving lights, suspension, lockers, snorkel, mud tyres and maybe a portable fridge or esky to keep the food and drinks cold. A big Australian tour, however, asks for additional 'must have' gear, including heavy duty suspension, roof rack/bars, sat phone or radio, comprehensive tool and first aid kits, all terrain tyres, auxiliary batteries and so on. Figuring out what you're going to be using your Jeep for is the key.

Join a local 4WDing club, too. Not only will you meet like-minded folk with a passion for 4WDing, there will also be opportunities to improve your off road skills through courses where you learn to drive and camp responsibly. 4WD clubs are also great ways to get advice on the 'must-do' 4WDing adventures both in your local area and across Australia.

The JK Wrangler is a very capable off road vehicle and certainly looks impressive when fully kitted out. If you really want to start salivating, hop onto the video page of the ARB website and check out the ARB catalogue photoshoot – it shows off ARB's JK Wrangler with pretty much all of the gear on your wish list. Enjoy!

- Kelly Teitzel, Editor



Hey ARB,

I'm 17 years old and have just purchased a 1998 Toyota HiLux Extra Cab. It has some handy accessories like a 2" OME suspension lift, Safari Snorkel, dual batteries and bull bar. I do a fair bit of off roading and would like to improve my vehicle to help me find further adventures.

My question is basically what do you recommend I purchase next? I know of all the great ARB products but am unsure on what I need first. I'm tossing up between things like a Warn winch and ARB Air Lockers or even a canopy or long range fuel tank. Being only young, I don't have a huge budget or experience actually driving but I plan on equipping my vehicle with all the useful accessories in the long run because I love the outdoors and 4WDing. If it was you that owned my car, what would be next on your list and why?

So, please ARB, give me some recommendations on what I should aim to get next to improve

my vehicle and help me find some greater adventures.

- Ben

G'day Ben,

It's great to see you getting into 4WDing at such a young age. It's a lifestyle that'll allow you to see some of the magical and remote places this country has to offer!

It sounds like you managed to pick up a great first vehicle with a lot of the necessary accessories already fitted. That'll certainly save you some money and allow you to start exploring some tracks straight away.

As you're pretty new to 4WDing, I would recommend holding off on the winch and Air Lockers for a little while. This will force you to concentrate more on practicing the 4WDing basics and picking the right line, while allowing you to get to know your vehicle and its limitations without getting yourself into too much trouble. As your 4WD experience grows, you can then start looking at things like winches and

Air Lockers to enable you to explore some more difficult tracks.

In the meantime, I'd recommend getting yourself a canopy. The addition of a canopy will allow you to safely and securely pack all of your camping gear in the tray, away from the elements and reduce the risk of loose items being thrown around in the cabin when off road. Down the track, you could look at mounting a roof rack to the canopy to further extend your load space or for securing an awning for additional weather protection.

For your vehicle, you can select either a standard roof height canopy, which is the same height as the roof of the cab, or a raised height canopy which will give you increased head room and load space. Both canopies are made from lightweight but strong ABS materials, are fully lockable and can be colour coded to your vehicle.

Good luck with it.

- Sam Boden, Marketing

OPEN RANGE

THE NEW FORD RANGER GETS THE FULL WORKOUT WITH GEAR FROM ARB.



Released in October 2011, the all-new Ford Ranger touts a host of features and driver safety aids that promise to make this new model an extremely capable off road vehicle.

ARB's engineers rapidly set to work on developing a sizeable range of products, from bull bars and canopies to Old Man Emu suspension and Air Lockers.

The powerful turbo inter-cooled engines of the new Ranger require a deluxe bull bar design with optimum airflow in mind, and so large 70mm apertures were built into the bull bar's central under bar protection panel for enhanced airflow. The split pan further facilitates airflow while also delivering exceptional structural strength to the bar.

Suitable for winch and non-winch applications, the deluxe bar features steel construction for maximum protection and

a superbly engineered, air bag compatible mounting system. Additional features such as robust under bar protection panels, twin Hi-Lift jacking points, retention of the original equipment tow point, and provision for IPF lights and aerials make the bar even more versatile for off road travel.

For Ranger owners seeking all of the functionality of the deluxe winch bar but are willing to forgo some of the aesthetic features, ARB has also engineered a commercial bar. Manufactured from durable steel, the commercial bar features ARB's renowned multi fold, upswept and tapered wing design for excellent strength and approach angle. Extensive under bar protection panels give the under body of the Ranger added protection from off road debris such as rocks and fallen branches.

ARB's engineers also designed standard roof canopies to suit the dual cab XLT 4x4 and 4x2 Hi Rider



variants of the Ranger. In keeping with a vehicle-specific style, the engineers focussed on producing canopies with maximum door and window entry into the cargo area for easy access, as well as a low roof line to keep in line with the height of the cabin roof. Offering a secure place for valuables and equipment such as tools and camping gear, the canopies feature lockable rear and side windows and tinted 'safety' glass. Owners of the new Ford Ranger also have the option of selecting between a textured finish or the stronger, smooth variant of the canopy.

Other products for the Ranger include Old Man Emu suspension, which required an extensive development program, roof racks and ARB Air Lockers. For the full range of products available now, visit the ARB website.

// Contact ARB for part numbers and pricing



DEVELOPING THE RANGE

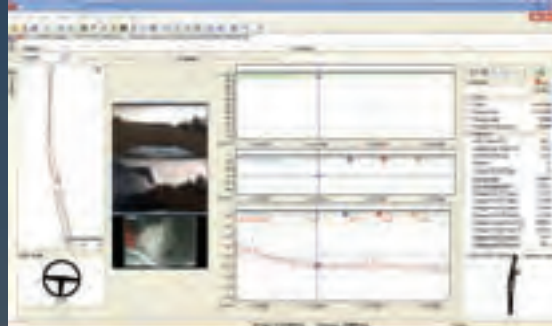


OLD MAN EMU'S
STUART FOOKS AND
MICHAEL DRAKE SHARE
THE DEVELOPMENT
PROCESS BEHIND
SUSPENSION SYSTEMS
FOR THE FORD RANGER
AND MAZDA BT-50.

Old Man Emu has been at the forefront of aftermarket 4WD suspension for over 25 years, developing new suspension systems customised for specific vehicles. Each new suspension system is the result of an extensive development program involving laboratory, diagnostic and on and off road testing to ensure it responds brilliantly in any terrain.

For the Ford Ranger and Mazda BT-50, OME launched a new program which not only produced suspension systems with 50mm lift but also resulted in an Australian GVM upgrade to 3330kg (for local legislation abroad, contact your ARB dealer).

We asked OME engineers Stuart Fooks and Michael Drake for the inside story.



How did you start the development program for the Ford Ranger?

Fooks: Even though the new Ranger utilises a rear suspension system similar to the older model, we started from a clean sheet. This meant developing prototype shocks for both the front and rear of the vehicle.

This involved CADs and valving work. The Nitrocharger Sport range of shock absorbers use a complex set of deflective discs that can be altered in size and thickness, giving us infinite tuning options. Getting the right valve code for the Ranger took some time.

You achieved 50mm lift with this suspension. This is above the norm, isn't it?

Drake: The existing geometry of the Ranger allowed a 50mm lift on both the front and rear of the vehicle. Many new vehicles only allow between 20-30mm due to the location of the vehicle's underbody components – excessive lengthening of the shocks interfere with these components, causing metal on metal contact and interference with the vehicle's down travel and wheel alignment.

This, however, wasn't the case with the Ranger and BT-50, and, through lab work and various test drives, we were satisfied that a 50mm lift was both achievable and safe.

You've released a GVM upgrade as well.

Fooks: It's the first time we have released both suspension systems and a GVM upgrade at the same time. Normally, we focus on GVM upgrades after the suspension systems have been released, but we've increasingly seen fleet and mining companies load their vehicles toward the limits of their GVM. This has meant growing demand for GVM upgrades in order to ensure these vehicles are legal and safe to drive.

Drake: Once the shock absorber prototypes were approved, we moved on to formalising the GVM upgrade. The prototypes were sent to a consultant engineer who does independent brake testing in order to meet ADR requirements for safe load carrying.

What testing did you undertake?

Fooks: The suspension systems underwent a development and testing program typical of OME – meaning it involved numerous spring rates and heights, plus extensive valve work, to cater for the full range of aftermarket accessories.

We undertook multiple city, regional and off road test drives with various load bearing scenarios. This included carrying sandbags and having bull bars fitted and removed to simulate various loads.

Drake: It's very time consuming. But a key goal of aftermarket suspension is to produce spring and shock combinations that feel safe; if control is reduced in any way, we return to the development stage and start again.

You did ESC (Electronic Stability Control) testing too.

Fooks: Yes, we did this in order to prove that the ESC works with OME suspension. For the Ranger, we set up a series of witches hats on a designated area of bitumen and tested the factory-fitted suspension by swerving between the hats at various speeds. This naturally activated the Ranger's ESC system. We then fitted OME suspension to the vehicle and repeated the tests multiple times – again, the ESC activated and we could find no adverse effects to the system.

Electronic Stability Control is a complicated system but the concept is not so different from the driving force behind OME suspension – that improvements in vehicle control are achieved in all terrain. Because of this, we haven't had to make large-scale adjustments to our development program in order to cater for vehicles fitted with ESC.

We are always looking for ways to improve Old Man Emu, and ensuring our suspension systems are compatible with ESC is just one of these.



TRIP PREPARATION

HEADING BUSH OR OUTBACK SOON? RESIST THE URGE TO THROW CAUTION TO THE WIND AND ENSURE YOU CONSIDER THESE ESSENTIAL PREPARATION TIPS.

As 4WDers, challenge is part of the adventure – man and machine against the elements, testing the limits of our vehicles to find that magic spot in the middle of nowhere.

That's all well and good, but no one wants to be stuck on the side of an isolated track, out of range and out of luck, contemplating an expensive rescue or worse when you should be wetting a line in a beautiful river or relaxing with a cold one at an epic campsite.

RESEARCH

Before you head off, research your intended area of travel. Check the local road conditions, purchase or download the latest maps and roughly plan each day's travel. And if you have a GPS, make sure you know how to use it.

VEHICLE PREP

Take some time to get to know your vehicle. Speak with your mechanic,

get them to perform a pre-trip inspection and show you how to rectify some of the common issues specific to your vehicle. Key areas to pay attention to are suspension, cooling, steering components and wheel bearings.

You should also ask yourself if your insurance and roadside assistance are up to date, and whether you are covered for the areas you're intending to travel. Make sure you can answer yes to both before hitting the track.

PACKING

Pack only the gear you really need. Camping and touring is about escaping the rat race, not taking it with you. A good rule to follow when trying to reduce your amount of gear is 'if it doesn't have at least two uses, leave it at home'.

Aside from the obvious items like clothing, food, water and shelter, other non-negotiables for remote

area travel include a well-stocked first aid kit (and the knowledge to use it), basic tools, common vehicle spares and reliable communication equipment.

COMMUNICATION

The ability to contact the outside world when travelling in remote areas is paramount. Most Outback locations don't have reliable mobile reception, so consider taking a satellite phone and EPIRB for emergencies and have a good quality UHF and HF radio fitted to your vehicle for short and medium range communication.

With this knowledge on board, get out there and explore the amazing places this country has to offer.

For a more detailed list of recommended spares and tools to carry, driving techniques and recovery procedures, visit www.arb.com.au/getting-started.

KEEPING IT SOCIAL

IF YOU CAN LIKE IT, SHARE IT, POKE IT, TWEET IT, WATCH IT OR FAVOURITE IT, WE HAVE IT COVERED!



That's right, ARB has now jumped on the social media bandwagon and we want you to get on board as well and join in the conversation.

Our official Facebook Fan Page (www.facebook.com/ARB4x4) has been up and running for a couple of months now and has received a great response. Our initial competition, Finish My Fourby, has just wrapped up and proved to be extremely popular, with the winner having the opportunity to pick any accessory they wanted from our catalogue as well as star in their




own photo shoot with Mike Ellem from Offroad Images.

Log on and become a fan today to make sure you don't miss our next big competition! You'll also be able to keep up to date with new products, 4WDing advice, trip photos, videos and plenty of good-humoured banter.

We've also launched an official Twitter account (www.twitter.com/ARB4x4), where we'll be staging regular giveaways and posting plenty of interesting ARB news. Follow us to stay up to date.

Last but not least, we've given our YouTube Channel (www.youtube.com/ARB4wd) a bit of a makeover. We'll be adding plenty of fresh new videos in the coming months, too. More than enough to keep you entertained for hours.

So next time you've got a bit of spare time up your sleeve, jump online and have a look at all things ARB.

-  www.facebook.com/ARB4x4
-  www.twitter.com/ARB4x4
-  www.youtube.com/ARB4wd

ONLINE WITH ARB

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

ARB'S OFFICIAL MAGAZINE IS NOW AVAILABLE AS A FREE IPAD AND ANDROID APP.



To meet growing customer demand, ARB 4x4 Action is now available on iPad and android tablets as a free app.

Launched in early 2012, the app features the Summer 2012 edition of ARB 4x4 Action, with this edition of the magazine to be available late April.

Showcasing all of the trips, tips, features and advice from the printed and online versions of the magazine, the apps also allow you to view exceptional imagery close up and in stunning detail.

The magazine required a complete redesign in order to suit the app format, and incorporates text scrolling, active hyperlinks and drop-away layers so that readers

can view photos from Offroad Images without any text sitting over the top.

ARB Marketing Manager, Matt Frost, has this to say about the magazine app: "This is the next step for ARB 4x4 Action and serves to highlight that our customers are always seeking the best in technology, whether it involves the manufacturing processes behind ARB's products or the quarterly magazine that reaches over 300,000 four wheelers throughout the world."

To download the apps, visit the 'What's Hot Right Now' section of www.arb.com.au or alternatively, visit the Apple or Google Apps stores and search for 'ARB 4x4'.

WIN!

To celebrate the release of the ARB and Hema apps, we're giving away an iPad 3 and a Hema 4WD Australia app. Simply write 25 words or less about how you would use the iPad 3 and Hema app on your next 4WDing trip for your chance to win. Entries will be judged by ARB's marketing department, with extra points awarded for creativity and humour.

To enter, email your 25 words plus your name and state to marketing@arb.com.au with 'Win iPad 3' in the subject line. Competition closes 31st May 2012.

HEMA 4WD AUSTRALIA APP

Turn your iPhone and iPad into a digital 4WD atlas with Hema's 4WD Australia app. Featuring over 70 of Hema's award winning 4WD maps, including Cape York, the Kimberley, and Victorian High Country, the app also features a seamless TOPO 250K Australia map and Hema's new state and Australia maps.

Giving you national coverage of tracks and terrain as well as campsites, roadhouses and caravan parks, the Hema 4WD Australia map is available for download from iTunes now. Search for 'Hema 4WD' on the Apple store for more details.



CALENDAR

For the latest up to date information, head to the Calendar of Events link on the ARB website.



APRIL

Kapunda Farm Fair

April 20-21

Kapunda SA

www.kapundafarmfair.com/2012

NSW Caravan, Camping, 4WD & Holiday Supershow

April 21-29

Rosehill Racecourse, Rosehill

www.caravan-camping.com.au

Commercial Vehicle Show

April 24-26

Stand 1B60, Birmingham UK

www.cvshow.com

MAY

AgFest Tasmania

May 3-5

Quercus Rural Youth Park, Bracknell

www.agfest.com.au

LandCruiser Mountain Park Expo

May 5-7

LandCruiser Mountain Park, Jimna

www.landcruisermountainpark.com.au

ARB Morphett Vale Open Day

May 19

181 Main South Road,

Morphett Vale

Ph: (08) 8186 6101

Automechanika Middle East

May 22-24

Booth 8AM506, Dubai UAE

www.automechanikame.com

Hunter Valley Caravan, Camping, 4WD, Fish & Boat Show

May 25-27

Maitland Showground, Maitland

www.campingshow.com.au/RS2012/2012hunterValley.php

JUNE

Cairns Home Show & Caravan,

Camping & Boating Expo

June 1-3

Cairns Showgrounds, Cairns

www.homeshowinfo.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=64&Itemid=152

Queensland Caravan, Camping

& Touring Holiday Show

June 6-12

RNA Showgrounds, Bowen Hills

www.caravanqld.com.au

Eurostory Exhibition

June 11-15

Paris, France

www.eurostory.com

Coffs Coast 4WD, Caravan, Camping & Boat Show

June 16-17

Coffs Harbour Racing Club,

Coffs Harbour

www.grimmopromotions.com.au/4wd/index.htm

JULY

Farm Fantastic

July 20-22

530 Rutters Road, Caboolture

www.farmfantastic.com

IN THE HOOD

Have your kids looking their best in the new Fourby zip-up hoodie! Made from 100% cotton brushed fleece, this adorable hoodie has a double felt appliqué 'FOURBY' logo across the chest and a woven badge featuring ARB's lovable kids' mascot. Coming in bright green, the hoodie has a

printed Fourby text lining within the hood and YKK zip designed to stand up to general wear and tear. Available in sizes 3 to 12, the Fourby zip-up hoodie is available now from ARB stores and stockists.

// Part no: 217403-217410





YOU'RE BARRED

Words & photography by Mark Allen



IT'S A BIG DECISION ADDING A BULL BAR AND REAR WHEEL CARRIER TO YOUR 4WD... OR IS IT? MARK ALLEN ASSESSES THE ARB BULL BAR AND REAR BAR WITH WHEEL CARRIER ON HIS 100 SERIES.

There are some huge advantages to fitting a steel bull bar and rear bumper come wheel carrier... provided you use your 4WD for what it was intended for and not just picking up the kids from school.

IN FRONT

A bull bar doesn't just provide a spot to mount your electric winch, driving lights, antennas and sand flags; it also gives you and your mates something solid to lean on while perusing all those maps of Outback Australia that are often laid out on the bonnet... you wouldn't want to lean on the duco and scratch it, would you?

In all seriousness, that same bull bar will also provide your 4WD with unparalleled protection from an animal strike as well as minor driving incidents (no, not touch parking at the school pickup area), which is the number one reason for fitting it.

While upgrading our electric winch to a Warn XDC 9500, we installed a commercial ARB bull bar to protect

the front of the Cruiser. With today's modern vehicle design and high tech inclusions of air bags and the like, it's extremely important to ensure your chosen bull bar has been specifically designed and developed to suit your vehicle. If you choose a bull bar that is not air bag compatible, you're basically kissing your insurance goodbye – yep, it'll be totally void once the inspectors find your bar contributed to the lack of air bag activation, which of course added to the occupant's injuries.

The commercial bar is not only air bag compatible, it is also designed to fit the 100 Series LandCruiser to allow for maximum approach angles, has Hi-Lift jacking points, two aerial tabs and two driving light tabs – and of course it provides that all important bar to perch on while chin-wagging over the maps. The only thing we do miss out on as compared to the deluxe ARB bar is fog lights and a few cosmetic extras which do provide a superior finish.



FROM BEHIND

While out 4WDing, those standard weak plastic bumper bars at the back end of your 4WD always seem to hook up on terra firma and end up costing a bomb to fix (even though they're only plastic). But they can easily be replaced with a steel version. A well-engineered, sturdy steel bar can be a very useful accessory, especially when it comes with a few extra swing-out carriers to take on either one or two spare wheels or even a jerry can.

To rid the Cruiser's plastic bumper, we chose to fit the ARB rear bar with twin wheel carriers. Neatly shaped, it doesn't look like a hunk of rail track tacked onto the rear end. It utilises gas struts to help open and hold each wheel, although when parked on steeper angles there are locking pins to help hold them in place – a good security measure to prevent the wheels from slamming closed while you're unloading gear. One wheel carrier also incorporates the number plate and a reversing light... one much more usable than the pathetic original reversing candles.

Opening the wheel carriers is simply done by pulling a lever, while shutting is akin to slamming the car door – no other latches, hooks or levers to contend with and it can all be done single-handedly.

This bar has allowed us to move the low-mounted, gravel-rash-provoking, underslung spare wheel up to a safer and more easily accessible position, plus of course now we have two spares (33" tyres which each fit easily) instead of one. With the underslung spare removed, we can also opt for an extra fuel tank or even a water tank to fill the void.

The rear bar also incorporates a heavy duty 3,500kg rated tow bar, which means we scrapped the factory tow bar to save some weight. There are two laminated (double layered) towing points, plus there's provision for an optional antenna bracket and camp light, although we didn't opt for these.

We've given the rear bar a good workout over about twelve months, including towing our camper trailer from Sydney to Fraser Island and return via a few coastal destinations, plus a truckload of work-related towing jobs with camper trailers and caravans – all without fault.

The only blemish is on one of the side wings where some clown nudged it in a car park and slightly scuffed the powder coating – better than having a dented or creased plastic bumper! A bit of polish and elbow grease (if I get around to it) would almost certainly remove the mark. At least if that damaged wing was severe, it could be removed and replaced independently.

THANKS... AND A LITTLE IMPROV



We had our ARB bar work fitted at ARB Wentworthville in Sydney, which can be found at 355 Great Western Highway, South Wentworthville or call (02) 9631 7889.

It must be noted that the ARB staff did advise us that their rear bar with swing away carriers was designed specifically for the GXL model with upper and lower tailgates, not the standard HZJ105R with barn doors that we have. We insisted it be fitted with the necessary modifications carried out to 'make' it fit, which involved removing the rear plastic cowl off the door handle and not having the barn doors opening as far as the OE design – we were happy with that.

THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BITE

Words by Mike Pavey. Photography by Anita Pavey & Shane Langley

WHETHER IT'S A REMOTE FISHING SAFARI OR SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE FAMILY ORIENTED, THE SOUTH EAST COASTLINE OF WA IS A BITE-SIZED DELIGHT!



The Topaz lurched to one side as we crested another uneven mound of dirt, courtesy of the local road works gang. With little traffic foraging down these remote tracks, the road crew had left quite a mess. Piles of dirt littered the road surface like a 4x4 obstacle course. Anita's body language said it all – her white-knuckled grip on the grab rails and that steely glare indicating a fast declining threshold of pain. Probably not the best time to request a snapshot of that enviable Patrol flex!

The Balladonia Track in Western Australia's south east is 4x4 only, stretching 200km or so south to the coastline at Cape Arid and linking up with remote coastal tracks to Israelite Bay and further east into the Nuytsland Nature Reserve. It's rugged and remote yet offers a rare glimpse of pioneering history and some of the best beaches and fishing opportunities in the area.

A three tonne road limit sign greets you on entry to Balladonia Road, south of the roadhouse bearing the same name; a good place to top up on fuel and grab any last minute supplies. According to the ranger, the three tonne sign is to deter large trucks using the adjoining Parmango Road as a shortcut to Condingup and Esperance. While you may safely guide a trailer down to Cape Arid, beyond Israelite Bay is best explored unencumbered due to the inhospitable conditions – tight bush tracks (expect scratching), boggy ground and limestone outcropping.

Heading south, the track passes through the Cundelee Aboriginal Reserve, an unsealed road littered with potholes. Conditions improve as the track crosses into the Esperance Shire; the track opens up onto a firebreak which is much wider and smoother... at least for a while. At around 70km from the highway, proceed past the junction to Parmango Road (32 58.086'S

IT'S RUGGED AND REMOTE YET OFFERS A RARE GLIMPSE OF PIONEERING HISTORY AND SOME OF THE BEST BEACHES AND FISHING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AREA



123 28.921'E), which heads west to the blacktop at Fisheries Road, Condingup and Esperance. From here the road narrows to a bush track with plenty of surrounding scrub encroaching on the track and eager to play a tune on your duco. The park rangers in these parts punt around in Ford Rangers, so anything the width of a Patrol or 'Cruiser is bound to cause some level of bush pinstripe anxiety.

There's plenty of pioneering ruins along this route – the substantial Balbinya ruin (33 05.301'S 123 34.032'E), the graves at Pine Hill (33 18.235'S 123 22.738'E), and the Old Telegraph Station at Israelite Bay that operated between 1877-1917 and provided direct communication with the Eastern States. The history of the ruins between Balladonia and Israelite Bay are revealed in the book *Challenge in Isolation* by John Bridges, which tells the hardship of the early pioneers who struggled in such an isolated location.

There are numerous clearings along the track to prop a swag, tent or camper. We spent our first night at the Juranda Rockhole (33 13.060'S 123 27.148'E), a further 30km from the Parmango junction. It's outside the Cape Arid National Park and offers little more than a clearing with a number of surrounding rock holes, which may or may not be holding water.

A better place to camp is Mt Ragged (33 27.932'S 123 27.692'E), 130km from the roadhouse and only a few kilometres off the main track. The campsite offers basic facilities including a picnic table, pit toilet (no water) and a walking track to admire views of the surrounding landscape. Then there's Point Malcolm about 25km south of Israelite Bay but again no facilities.

The junction of the Balladonia and Gora Tracks (33 27.218'S 123 26.281'E) serves as the main touring hub from the north. The

left fork follows the Gora Track on a south-easterly bearing to Israelite Bay (49km), home to the ruins of the Telegraph Station. This is a narrow, slow, sandy and corrugated track with encroaching scrub on either side. Bilbunya Dunes are a further 76km east.

The track continues over sand ridges varying in height from 4-12m to the Baxter Cliffs and beyond with options to exit via Caiguna or Cocklebiddy. The Eyre Bird Observatory, south of Cocklebiddy, is managed by volunteers and marks a worthy point of interest. Formerly the Eyre Telegraph Station, the building now hosts a library and small museum, information and displays on the coastal environments and offers limited accommodation for staff and visitors. Visitors are encouraged to participate in ornithological studies conducted at the observatory, including bird banding and a weekly count of shorebirds and seabirds along a



13km track. Day visits are possible, but the caretakers appreciate a phone call in advance. A return journey from the Eyre Highway takes about three hours.

The beaches beyond Israelite Bay should be avoided during winter, where seaweed masks sand blowholes. The inland Old Telegraph Track is the safer option, with poles, insulators and wire still found along the route. Salt lakes parallel the coast all the way to Bilbunya Dunes, making passage slippery when wet. With precious little to winch off, a second vehicle with ARB snatch straps or a pair of Maxtrax should be considered essential recovery equipment.

On some maps, a private camp is shown at Israelite Bay. This is nothing more than a big tin shed used by professional salmon fisherman in season. There are plenty of places to make camp, with plentiful shade and, best of all, camping is free. However, like any of the 4x4 destinations around here, you will need to be self-sufficient as there are no facilities.

Fishing-wise, salmon are the mainstay species all year around, although herring, garfish, snook, flathead and whiting will succumb to a tasty bait of squid or typical species lures. Further west at Point

Malcolm, mulloway, skippy and bronze whaler sharks are available off the beach.

From the west, the Fisheries and the Old Telegraph tracks link Esperance to Israelite. The sandy Old Telegraph Track begins off Poison Creek Road, north of Thomas Fishery and runs east. It only gets a bit sticky around the salt lake at the eastern end after rain. The Fisheries Track was closed when we visited due to boggy ground, but caution is advised for any tracks in the area, which are all subject to boggy ground after rain, Dieback quarantine or wildfire. Best to check with Dundas Shire

PASSAGE CAN BE A CHALLENGE IN PARTS WITH **SOFT SAND, GREY CLAY, BOG HOLES, CORRUGATIONS AND LIMESTONE OUTCROPS** PROVIDING A SMORGASBORD OF TERRAIN CHALLENGES

Roads and the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) at Esperance or the Cape Arid Ranger before you travel.

For something a little less remote and more family oriented, take the right fork at the Gora Track junction, maintaining a south-westerly bearing along the Balladonia Track to Cape Arid. Passage is still a challenge in parts with soft sand,

grey clay, bog holes, corrugations and limestone outcrops providing a smorgasbord of terrain challenges. Keep an eye on the track surface as there are a number of sinkholes that could easily swallow a wheel where the ground has just given way. Most are marked with sticks and it serves well to slow trip times. It's not too much of a challenge for experienced 4WDers and we made it through okay with a fully loaded touring vehicle and the Topaz in tow.

One of the last straight stretches runs between two rows of banksias in soft sand. The slim passage was evident by the regular thud of banksia bows against the scrub bars and doors, with the occasional

screach along the duco. Still, with a reasonable level of momentum, progress was good. We did get momentarily bogged after stopping to remove a banksia limb from the track. The tyres furrowed holes on the first gear change, not helped by our heavy load. With a couple of pairs of Maxtrax on board, an unassisted recovery was delightfully easy. With a few



less pounds of air in all six tyres, we were once again maintaining steady forward progress.

Cape Arid NP has plenty of excellent family camping options, covering everything from the bigger and better serviced sites at Thomas River to the smaller sites capable of hosting a couple of tents. We opted to camp at the newer campground on the hill at Thomas River overlooking Cape Arid and Yokinup Bay. Central facilities are modern and attractive, courtesy of the fire that swept through a few years ago. The camp kitchen offers a 5-star view across the bay with gas BBQs, picnic tables, sink and water, while compost pit toilets and gravelled level sites take care of other requirements. The only detracting factor is the sea breeze that bellows up in the afternoon across the hillside.

A Shire campground is located down at beach level, behind the dunes, offering a more sheltered option. Facilities are similar but without the attractive ambience or view. Smaller campgrounds are located at Jorndee Creek, Seal Creek and Thomas Fishery. We found Seal Creek the best of the smaller campsites for bigger rigs, with more open sites, while Jorndee Creek is for compact

camper trailers with its sites cutting into the scrub. Thomas Fishery is for die-hard fishos, with the goat track dropping down the mountain to the beach over a number of rock steps. Needless to say, tents and swags only.

Beach access is available at Thomas River by crossing the mouth of the river. At low tide, you can drive up the beach as far as Cape Arid, crossing over the headlands to reach the next section of beach. The sheltered beaches of Jorndee beach are quite spectacular for swimming and fishing; the crystal clear water makes it exceptionally inviting.

If all this adventuring sounds a little beyond your comfort level, rest assured you can always access the Cape Arid area via Norseman and Esperance. Coming from the east, that imposes an additional 400km of ... yawn ... blacktop, without the added adventure of discovering pioneer ruins and exploring parts of the Great Australian Bight where few others go.

With so many options, you can either base camp at a central location and take a couple of day trips to explore the area, or go the whole hog and explore the area end to end.

FAST FACTS

ROAD CONDITIONS

Get details from:

Dundas Shire:

<http://www.dundas.wa.gov.au/roadconditions/roadconditions>

Cape Arid Senior Ranger:

Tel: (08) 9075 0055

DEC Esperance: (08) 9083 2100

MAPS

Hema iPad 4WD Australia

PERMITS

Park entry is a one-off \$11AUD per vehicle. Camping costs \$7AUD per adult and \$2AUD per child per night. No camping fees are payable at the 4WD accessible camps such as Israelite Bay, Mt Ragged and in the Nuytsland Nature Reserve.

OTHER

Eyre Bird Observatory:

Tel: (08) 9039 3450



NEW TRAILER CAMERA KIT & AUXILIARY INFRARED CAMERA



CHECK OUT THE LATEST ADDITIONS TO ARB'S POPULAR REVERSING CAMERA RANGE.

Improved visibility at the rear of your vehicle and trailer is paramount when reversing in tight urban locations, residential driveways and if you regularly travel with a trailer, camper or caravan. Having a reversing camera system fitted to your vehicle increases safety and will help take the stress out of reversing.

To add to the existing range – which includes a reversing camera and monitor system, plus auxiliary camera – ARB has just released a trailer camera kit and auxiliary infrared camera.

The perfect solution for tourers who tow a camper, boat or caravan, the trailer camera kit is designed to work in conjunction with ARB's reversing camera and

monitor system and provides users with rear vision from the trailer.

Designed for easy installation, the kit incorporates plug-n-play connections and heavy duty sockets, plugs and flexible cord. The kit is designed to integrate seamlessly with the reversing camera and monitor system and will automatically activate whenever reverse gear is selected. With an IP68 water resistant rating, the kit also features 15m of cable extension to cater for a vast array of camper trailers, caravans and boats.

The camera included in the trailer camera kit is also available separately as an auxiliary camera, providing additional viewing coverage to an existing reversing system or as a spare part for the kit. Fully compatible with ARB's

**THE KIT IS
DESIGNED TO
INTEGRATE
SEAMLESSLY WITH
THE REVERSING
CAMERA AND
MONITOR SYSTEM
AND WILL
AUTOMATICALLY
ACTIVATE
WHENEVER
REVERSE GEAR IS
SELECTED**



reversing camera and monitor system, the high quality camera incorporates a Sony CCD imager with an inbuilt microphone – perfect for anyone directing the driver from outside the vehicle.

The camera also features infrared capabilities for night time vision up to 10m and an adjustable aluminium visor to reduce sun glare. Featuring silver powder coated aluminium housing and IP68 immersion protection, the camera has a 135° wide angle lens. The mounting bracket ensures flexible fitment location on the trailer and allows 120° camera adjustment range. Operating on 12/24V DC, the camera includes 6.5m of cable and has an operating temperature range of -10°C to 80°C, making it suitable for use in extreme off road conditions.

Both the trailer camera kit and auxiliary infrared camera are available now from your local ARB store or stockist.

Trailer Camera Kit

// Part no: 10600030

Auxiliary Infrared Camera

// Part no: 10600021

THE COMPLETE RANGE



Released in early 2011, ARB's reverse camera and monitor system incorporates a replacement rear view mirror with an inbuilt 3.5" OLED monitor and a licence plate mounted CMOS wide angle camera. Both the new trailer camera kit and auxiliary infrared camera are designed to work cohesively with this system.

The reverse camera and monitor system is designed

to specifically complement the vehicle interior, reduce dashboard clutter, utilise current mounting points and work with people's existing driving habits. The system incorporates two camera inputs, allowing an auxiliary camera, such as the new infrared model, to be mounted as a second camera.

Visit ARB for more details on the complete range.

A photograph of two off-road vehicles, a pickup truck and a SUV, driving away on a dirt road. They are kicking up a large cloud of dust, creating a hazy, golden atmosphere. The vehicles are equipped with roof racks and other gear. The background shows a flat, open landscape under a clear sky.

LOADED ADVICE

WITH MANY FOLK GEARING UP FOR THAT GREAT OUTBACK TRIP, IT'S TIME TO LOAD UP ON SOME HANDY ADVICE REGARDING YOUR SUSPENSION.



There's a reason why so many people throughout the world load up the 4WD and disappear for a few weeks on the tracks – it's great fun. But over the years, ARB stalwarts like Andrew 'Stretch' McBride from ARB Darwin and Mike Elliott from ARB Rockhampton have collected a myriad of stories regarding keen 4WDers who've had a rough time because of poor suspension set ups.

From adventurers who have been fined for exceeding their GVM to four wheelers who limp into the workshop with sagging springs and aching spines, the biggest factor to consider with regard to 4WD suspension performance is load carrying ability.

AFTERMARKET SUSPENSION

Everyone knows that 4WD suspension is complex. Old Man Emu has four full time engineers who focus solely on developing fully integrated suspension systems that deliver the maximum benefit in ride quality, handling and load carrying ability. Lab testing, scientific data logging and extensive real world testing, encompassing multiple load scenarios, are undertaken to ensure optimal suspension performance in any terrain.

SPRING SELECTION

When travelling in remote areas, the need to carry sufficient fuel, water, vehicle spares, safety equipment and general supplies invariably means that your 4WD will be fully loaded, placing significant strain on suspension components.

With multiple kit options available for most vehicles, it's extremely important that the appropriate springs are chosen to match your individual load carrying requirements, as even the best aftermarket springs will produce a poor ride if loaded above (or too far below) their designed rating.

Incorrectly selected springs that are not rated to carry heavier loads will typically exhibit problems experienced every time you drive, including poor ride height, reduced vehicle stability and spring sag over time.

An overloaded vehicle often has to be driven at a much slower speed in order to prevent 'bottoming out' on the bump stops. This occurs when the suspension system cannot adjust rapidly enough to handle both the excessive weight and the terrain. Bottoming out makes for an uncomfortable and unpleasant drive and places extra load on other suspension and structural components of the vehicle, which increases the

A TOP-HEAVY VEHICLE BECOMES DANGEROUSLY DESTABILISED, PARTICULARLY AT HIGH SPEEDS



chances of a breakdown further down the road.

Too much weight will also make the shock absorbers work harder than necessary, resulting in fatigue and reduced comfort, handling and control. Continued overworking of the shocks also reduces their working life, resulting in increased costs through the need for more regular replacements.

Loss of ride height is another consequence of an overladen vehicle. Off road travel regularly requires good approach and departure angles in order to successfully overcome obstacles, and the reduction of ride height can mean the difference between climbing a steep rise and turning back the way you came.

EVEN THE BEST AFTERMARKET SPRINGS WILL PRODUCE A POOR RIDE IF LOADED ABOVE (OR TOO FAR BELOW) THEIR DESIGNED RATING

If you rarely travel off road but are now planning a big adventure, consider upgrading your springs to those with a heavier rating. Having the right springs fitted to your vehicle will ensure your suspension system exhibits better towing and load carrying characteristics, improved wheel articulation and increased ride height. It will simply ride and handle better over any road surface.

CORRECT LOADING OF YOUR VEHICLE

Roof racks are great for carrying light and bulky items such as swags, firewood, camping equipment and gear that has started to get on the nose, like last week's socks and jocks. Still, it's important to spread the load evenly across the roof rack and to secure all items tightly, as a shifting load can cause your vehicle to suddenly veer out of control.

Heavy items should be avoided on roof racks. A top-heavy vehicle becomes dangerously destabilised, particularly at high speeds, and typically takes on a disconcerting swaying motion that makes driving along corrugations and even the blacktop a hairy experience.

Aim to keep heavy items down low, either in a trailer or, if you're transporting them within your vehicle, over the axle, towards the centre of the vehicle or evenly distributed on both sides wherever possible. Avoid heavy loading toward the front of the vehicle, as this will cause the vehicle to 'dive' every time you hit the brakes. Likewise, concentrating too much

weight in the rear of your vehicle will make the steering feel light and vague and can also result in misaligned headlights. So, keep the centre of gravity within your vehicle as low and as wide as possible to ensure a safe drive in any terrain.

GROSS VEHICLE MASS (GVM) UPGRADES

Your GVM is the total weight of your vehicle plus any accessories you have fitted and the load your vehicle is carrying (including passengers and fuel). Keeping within the GVM limit ensures you can safely and legally carry all the gear needed for your off road adventures without voiding your insurance in the event of an accident. Knowing the GVM of your vehicle and how much weight you have both on and in your vehicle is paramount.

Fitment of accessories such as bull bars, winches, canopies, roof racks and auxiliary tanks permanently affect a vehicle's gross mass, and when you head off road, additional items such as camping equipment, sufficient food and water and passengers all increase the chances of exceeding your GVM.

A GVM upgrade allows you to legally carry extra load and usually requires modification of the vehicle by means of a



suspension upgrade. Contact your local ARB or road transport authority for information on the legality of GVM upgrades in your country. In Australia, vehicles are required to meet Australian Design Rules (ADR) for vehicle safety, GVM upgrades are applicable to unregistered new vehicles, or registered vehicles where engineering certification to prove roadworthiness after the upgrade has been obtained.

GVM UPGRADES AND GROSS COMBINED MASS (GCM)

Your vehicle's Gross Combined Mass is calculated by combining the GVM with the vehicle's maximum towing capacity – in other words, the total mass of your vehicle, the load it's carrying and the weight it's towing.

When a vehicle is modified with a GVM upgrade, it's common to assume the GCM also increases. This, however, is not the case. Regardless of a GVM upgrade, your GCM does not change. And so the question must be asked – if your gross vehicle mass has increased but your combined vehicle/towing capacity has not, how is the load capacity dispersed?

An increase in your gross vehicle mass means an equivalent decrease in your maximum

allowable towing capacity. This means that while you can carry an increased load both on and in your vehicle, your towing capacity is reduced. While for many 4WDers the benefits of a GVM upgrade outweigh the reduced towing capacity, four wheelers who tow a trailer at close to the vehicle's maximum towing capacity may find themselves exceeding the GCM, which is not only illegal but dangerous as well.

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

Travelling with a camper trailer gives you the convenience of a comfy bed, ready-made kitchen and a place to stow some gear, but ensuring the load is balanced both in the trailer and on the towing vehicle is critical to ensure you stay safe on the road.

When a trailer is coupled to a vehicle, the trailer's total ball weight is concentrated directly onto the rear section of the vehicle. This naturally lifts the weight away from the front of your 4WD and reduces the effectiveness of your front suspension. This weight imbalance noticeably reduces steering and braking responsiveness and creates lost grip on the road as well as that highly disconcerting trailer sway.

A suitably selected weight distribution system restores your suspension and steering geometry, providing positive towing control by spreading the weight evenly over the vehicle chassis to all four wheels. Weight distribution systems are for on-road use only, which really is no big deal as the weight displacement issues caused by towing are most prevalent at highway speeds. Many 4WDers utilise a weight distribution system for travelling safely upon the blacktop and then disconnect the system when they hit the dirt.

Knowing how to safely tow the trailer will also make your trip much more enjoyable. Leave the trailer at a campsite if you're heading into rougher territory, as towing can turn into a major hindrance on many tracks. Also remember to drive more slowly and be aware of speed restrictions, as state and territory road rules can differ according to your trailer's weight and length.

The key to any great off road trip is to be prepared. Don't wait until you've already hit the road to start thinking about your load carrying requirements. An appropriately selected, integrated suspension system delivers tremendous improvements in ride, comfort, handling and load carrying ability that are felt every time you drive.

HIGH COUNTRY HUTS

Words by Sam Boden. Photography by Sam Boden & Adam Hennessy

WANT TO VISIT
TEN VIC HIGH
COUNTRY HUTS
IN A SINGLE
WEEKEND? SAM
BODEN SHOWS
HOW IT'S DONE.





**THE TREAD ON
EVEN THE MOST
AGGRESSIVE MUD
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FILLED VERY
QUICKLY WITH
MUD, MAKING
NEGOTIATING
THE WINDING
TRACK QUITE
CHALLENGING.
WERE WE HAVING
FUN? YOU BET!**

It was late in 2011 when the call to action was first published on MySwag.org, Australia's largest off road camper trailer forum. A weekend High Country trip for the uninitiated. A chance to explore some of the best tracks and locations that the area has to offer, including 10 of the majestic High Country huts.

Ironically, given the nature of the forum, this would be a tents and swags only trip in order to take full advantage of the area without the added challenge of managing a fleet of camper trailers along the steep, narrow and winding tracks that are synonymous with this part of Victoria.

Interest in the trip was strong from the outset, and by the time the official weekend rolled around in mid February, there were 15 confirmed vehicles, including a few ring-ins from our northern neighbours in NSW. A great result, considering the forecast for the area warned of heavy rain, wind and thunderstorms over the entire weekend.

Those lucky enough to sneak out early from work on the Friday arrived at the designated meeting point (Buttercup Camp Area 3) in the early hours of the afternoon. Nestled in the foothills of the High Country and only 20 minutes from the busy and well-stocked town of Mansfield, the Buttercup camping areas are easily accessed via a good quality gravel road and provide an excellent base for exploring the Mansfield State Forest and Alpine National Park. Over the remainder of the afternoon and evening, a constant trickle of vehicles arrived at camp, concluding with the last remaining forum members who rolled in after dark to the welcome sight of a roaring campfire and plenty of banter amongst the troops discussing the adventures that lay ahead. The trip had officially begun.

Saturday morning brought with it clearing skies and mild temperatures – perfect for 4WDing. The heavy rain of the previous few days had done a great job of settling the dust without creating a quagmire, and after a quick

breakfast and an overview of the day's travel, the group left camp in good spirits.

With a large number of vehicles in attendance, the decision was made to split into two groups separated by around 20 minutes and using different UHF channels to minimise confusion. Not only did this mean that vehicles coming in the opposite direction had fewer vehicles to negotiate their way past, it also reduced the risk of losing someone down the wrong track.

The short drive from camp down to Tomahawk Hut, originally built in the 1960s by the Forest Commission as a road building base, provided a good chance to warm up the vehicles before heading on to some of the more challenging tracks. As luck would have it, one fellow in our group had a long family and working history in the area and after everyone had assembled outside the hut, he proceeded to tell one of many interesting and insightful stories about the history of the huts and



the characters who'd lived and worked in the area over the years.

A short backtrack and a left hand turn saw the two groups climbing skywards along No 3 Track amid the magnificent High Country Snow Gums. A quick stop near the summit, with the morning sun now gently washing over the rugged landscape, provided a great opportunity to capture the endless views of the surrounding area and take in the awe inspiring scenery.

Not long afterwards, we arrived at the recently rebuilt Refuge Hut. This hut was originally built to provide protection for skiers during winter, and with a long drop toilet, Coonara heater and a purpose-built stretcher, it's a great place to spend a night or two.

About 7km further along No 3 Track, just past the intersection with the main Circuit Road, lies



the turnoff to Razorback Hut. Razorback is actually made up of two buildings, one containing a lounge and kitchen area complete with lighting, running water, oven and an open fire. The other building contains sleeping facilities for up to 46 people. Being close to a few of the local cross country ski trails and riding tracks, the hut is well-used by skiers and horse riding groups alike. It's certainly not hard to see why.

The High Country is not all about tall mountains and breathtaking views. Some of the best areas lie low in the valleys where crystal clear rivers run through scenic camping areas like arteries providing life to the harsh wilderness. King Basin Road, which is accessed via Circuit Road at its western end, winds its way down to one of the most popular of these areas, Pineapple Flat.

King Basin Track had recently been graded, which in most cases would make for easy driving. Given the amount of rain that had fallen during the preceding days, however, and the fact that we were the first group through after the grading, we were presented with a very muddy and slippery drive down to Pineapple Flat. The tread on even the most aggressive mud terrain tyres filled very quickly with mud, making negotiating the winding track quite challenging. Were we having fun? You bet!

To access Pineapple Flat, you need to cross the King River. On most occasions this is an easy crossing, with most vehicles able to cross without wetting the bottom of their doors. It can get deep after periods of heavy rain, though, so if you're unsure it's always a good idea to get out and walk the crossing first before ploughing

in. Pay particular attention to the placement of rocks on the bottom that have the potential to cause damage to lower-slung vehicles.

If you're not overly comfortable with river crossings, then King Basin Road is probably not for you. After leaving Pineapple Flat, there are a further five water crossings required before arriving at King Hut, some with steep entries and exits. This is definitely low range, high clearance country.

King Hut provided the perfect opportunity to stretch the legs and fuel up with food and drink after the long morning in the driver's seat. There is plenty of space around the hut to accommodate large groups of campers, but, like Pineapple Flat, it's a very popular spot during peak periods.

With the hours slipping away, and with the notoriously slippery (in



the wet) 16 Mile Jeep Track still on the agenda for the afternoon, we made our way along Speculation Track and up to Craig's Hut, made famous by the Man From Snowy River movie. The views from Craig's Hut are simply spectacular and it really is hard to take a bad photo of the place. The track up can sometimes be slippery and rutted and although we found it to be in very good condition on the day, we were surprised to see a couple in a small Subaru hatchback at the top of Clear Hills Track admiring the view. A sure sign of the times...



From Craig's Hut, the convoy made its way down Clear Hills Track towards Mt Stirling and then onto The Monument Track for our first challenging section of the weekend. The Monument Track has some steep downhill sections and would be particularly slippery in the wet as most of the tough parts consist of smooth rock. With low range, first gear selected, we wound our way down without issue and continued on to Bindaree Road, stopping at the spectacular Bindaree Falls for a few photos on our way to Bindaree Hut and the beginning of 16 Mile Jeep Track.

Bindaree Hut is located on the banks of the Howqua River and



WE WERE SURPRISED TO SEE A COUPLE IN A SMALL SUBARU HATCHBACK AT THE TOP OF CLEAR HILLS TRACK. A SURE SIGN OF THE TIMES...

is relatively small compared to some of the other huts – watch your head on the way in. It was originally built in the 1930s by Jim Warne for cattle grazing.

16 Mile Jeep Track is known for its slippery clay base and can be impassable in the wet. From Bindaree Hut, it's a long steep uphill drive incorporating numerous switchbacks to the start of Bluff Track.

As we cautiously made our way to the top, several menacing cracks of thunder echoed around us and the first few drops of rain began to fall. Once both groups had ascended to Bluff Track, we continued on, racing the impending storm past Bluff Hut and on to Lovick's Hut which would be our base for the night. We arrived at Lovick's hut to find a crisp layer of hail covering the grassy camping area. With black clouds and thunder still rolling overhead, a mad hustle to set up camp ensued.

Ironically, once we settled into the campsite and had the fire roaring, the clouds parted and we enjoyed a very entertaining night

around the campfire, reliving the day's adventures. Many stories were told that night including the infamous story of Barclay's ghost and the unsolved Wonnangatta murders of 1917. If you haven't heard the story, I suggest you find someone to fill you in next time you're in the High Country. You'll never listen to the howl of a dingo the same way again.

After a solid nine hours in the saddle (so to speak) on Saturday, the mood was far more relaxed on Sunday morning as we awoke to perfectly clear skies. Following the obligatory fry up over the campfire for breakfast, the groups headed further up the increasingly difficult track to Picture Point. Views from Picture Point stretch uninterrupted across to Mt Buller, Mt Sterling and Craig's Hut and were unmatched over the course of the weekend.

As the saying goes, 'it's all downhill from here', so from Picture Point, we made our way back past Bluff Hut and eventually onto Brock's Road, heading down towards Sheeppark Flat. We made a quick pit stop to check out Tunnel

Bend, where a 200m long tunnel, originally constructed to divert the river during the gold mining boom, pierces through a section of rock face on a delightful bend of the Goulburn River. The tunnel itself is large enough to walk through if you're game and you don't mind getting your feet wet. The river itself at Tunnel Bend is also a great spot to take a dip, so make sure you take a towel with you.

A few km further down the track and we arrived at our final meeting place, Fry's Hut, which is just over the hill from the ever-popular Sheeppark Flat camping area. The end to a wonderful weekend in the High Country had fallen upon us. Over the course of the two days, many old friends had been reacquainted and just as many new friendships had been formed.

If you're a member of an online enthusiast forum, I'd encourage you to tag along on one of the many trips they organise. Not only do you get the opportunity to meet like-minded people in stunning surroundings, but you do so with a sense of security that is acquired through travelling in a group, under the watchful eye of experienced trip leaders who've been there and done that before.

KEN DUNCAN COMPETITION WINNERS

WITH HUNDREDS OF ENTRIES AND MANY AMAZING PHOTOS, IT WAS A DIFFICULT TASK SELECTING THE TOP 20 IMAGES IN OUR KEN DUNCAN COMPETITION.

All entries you see on the following pages have won a copy of Ken Duncan's new book, *Australia – Our Island Paradise*. Big congratulations go to **William Richardson**, whose image was selected by Michael Ellem from Offroad Images to also win the 47L ARB Fridge Freezer.

Michael explains how he came to choose this epic shot:

The leading lines of the desert track do well to guide you into the light of the setting sun. This in turn has provided great contrast in the sand dune's ripples as the sun builds heavy highlights and shadows in the beautiful dunes.

This image takes me on a journey and I feel like I am part of the photographer's travels. This kind of photography is difficult to achieve, as the sun can be harsh on the front lens element, causing all sorts of refractions. I love it!

There are some fabulous entries here, and congratulations to all involved for sharing their awesome work.

- Michael Ellem



WILLIAM RICHARDSON, SA



ANDY HURCOMBE, NSW



DAVE CHARLTON, VIC



TOM CORRA, ACT



ALEX MEI, NSW



MATTHEW WATKINS, VIC



SANDIE HARTLEY, WA



SUSAN VERNON, NSW



STEVE COX, NSW



KIRI SCHULTZ, NSW



DAVID POWLES, VIC



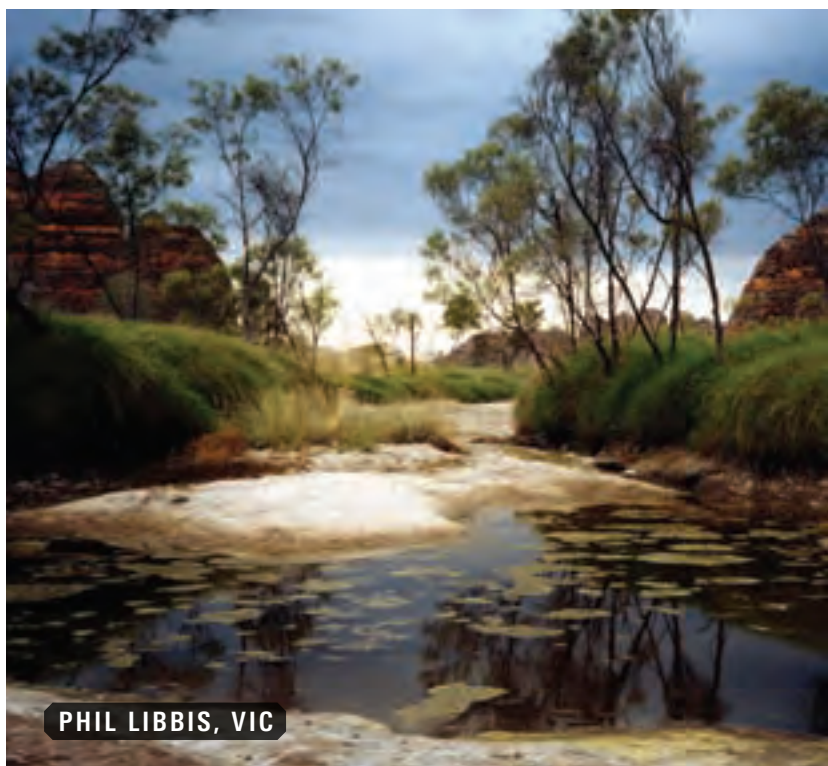
LISA CRAFT, NSW



ANDREW HISCOCK, SA



PAUL FARRELLY, SA



PHIL LIBBIS, VIC



CHRIS FOWLER, QLD



KELLY PEACOCK, NSW



STEVEN MERRIFIELD, VIC



STEPHEN LASHLY, NSW



ROBERT ANDREWS, VIC



PROTECTING YOUR CAMERA

Words & photography by Michael Ellem

**TAKING THAT EPIC OFF ROAD
IMAGE CAN BE A BLAST, BUT WHAT
HAPPENS WHEN THE ELEMENTS
MAKE A MESS OF YOUR CAMERA?**



Some 4x4s are allowed to get a little dirty on the track and some just have to be covered in that 'trophy-mud' look from the big trip to display to the mates back home.

But what about your camera gear?

If you want your gear to serve you well for a number of years, you will need to look after it. So here are a few tips to help you get the most out of your gear.

Off road 4WD photography will bring your camera gear in contact with dust, sand, water and even mud. You could simply leave the gear in a well designed camera bag or protect it whilst you shoot, and there are some fantastic camera covers available for your gear which will do a great job, but for this discussion, we will ignore them and focus on the more economical versions.

My camera kit will always include the following:

- Good quality camera bag. This is a soft version like Lowerpro or hard case like a Pelican case
- Three or four microfibre cloths (the same ones that you will find with automotive car cleaning products)
- A good quality lens cleaning cloth
- Lens cleaning solution or a bottle of clean water

- A blower or puffer. This needs to be a big one as the smaller versions are pretty much useless. If you have a DSLR, carry two of these – one for the outside components of the lenses and the other for the internals of the camera (i.e. the image sensor)
- A shower cap or a spare hat

PHOTOGRAPHY ON A DUSTY TRAIL

The way I see it, most people will assume that their camera gear will only get damaged when they are using it. So the scenario goes something like this...

You're on a dusty track and hit some bulldust; your vehicle slows but you keep the pedal down as the dust churns around the cabin, slipping through the gaps in the bonnet panels and sticking to the outside of the windows. Naturally, you think, 'Wow, we had better get some shots of that!'

Your camera comes out and you have someone drive through the same spot, capturing the action and, as they drive past you on the track, you place your camera in your shirt away from the dust to protect it.

You have a smile on your face from the excitement of it all, thinking, 'How great was that...' Everyone will enjoy seeing what you have captured. You then

place your camera into its bag, hop back into the 4WD and drive on down the road to the next great photo location.

The problem is, even though you were careful, the dust always seems to attach itself to the camera. So when you place the camera into the bag, the dust is now in there too, travelling over the corrugations, working its way behind buttons and switches and, like sand paper, gradually scratching the quality finish which looked so good in the store during purchase.

After you take your shots, drag out a microfibre cloth and gently wipe the dust from your gear prior to placing it back into its protective covering. The best way to see if this cloth does the job is to observe that it is actually removing the dust straight away and not simply smearing it. The good ones tend to stick or grab at dry skin on your hands and will do the same to any dust on your camera.

Just one other thing to keep in mind – once dusty, these cloths can be slightly abrasive to lenses, so after you have given the camera a clean with the microfibre cloth, avoiding the lens, get your lens blower and blow away the dust off your lens or filter, and then place the clean lens cap back onto the lens. You are now ready for the next shot down the track.



Once you get yourself organised, you will find that this doesn't actually take that long and it will definitely pay off by ensuring additional years from your investment.

PHOTOGRAPHING IN THE RAIN

I was on a photo shoot recently and, as usual, woke before dawn to get out there and create some magical images of a 4WD looking pretty at sunrise, only to find it raining. In the end, I decided to photograph the scenery anyway. After all, sleep's overrated.

So I set out to shoot some old boats at the local fish co-op in the rain over a long exposure.

Now, you could ruin a camera in the process of shooting during rain. Alternatively, you could follow these basic steps and capture the image without any dramas of getting your camera wet.

Using a tripod for long exposures is obviously necessary and you will need to keep everything clear of movement. An umbrella is ideal to assist you in keeping the camera dry, and if there is no wind, you might think to attach it to the tripod so that you have two hands free to set up the camera.

I prefer to use a hat – you simply place the hat over the camera body

with the brim facing out over the lens and the cap part covering the camera body. Sure, the hat will get wet, but the camera is safe under the hat's cover.

Another way is to use a shower cap from the motel bathroom. Nobody really uses these anyway, and personally, I'm sure that this is what they were actually made for. The benefit of the shower cap is that the elastic will lock around the camera body and you will be able to look straight through the plastic to compose your image. This same method works really well in the snow also, as the snow might be dry when it lands on your camera gear, but when it melts, of course, it's wet as!

Importantly, after you shoot in any damp situation, you will need to dry the camera. You could simply wipe the camera dry, but to ensure that there is no moisture attached to the camera, get the engine running on your 4x4 and turn the air conditioning to cool with heaps of airflow. Ensure that the air is not flowing directly on the camera body. The air conditioner evaporates moisture quite quickly from your camera and the rest of the vehicle's cabin. Now you can place it back in its camera bag or pelican case.

SHOOTING IN MUDDY CONDITIONS

Mud would have to be considered a camera's worst enemy. I have a saying, 'mud is for millionaires', and I think this is true with both 4WDs and cameras.

Have you ever noticed that most of the damage or wear and tear to a 4WD is caused after playing in the mud? I am sure that everyone has had a play in that bog hole or muddy track and ended up with some sort of drama either straight away or shortly after. That sight of the alternator light coming on or the grinding brakes which makes you cringe.

So you are on the track and, as a dedicated photographer, you position yourself near the exit of the bog hole to capture the action of your mates trying their best to break through the suction and weight of the mud.

This will always make for great Facebook photos and we all love seeing these shots, but one guy usually has a bigger right foot and you end up covered in a muddy spray. Now you have a problem as you look at your mud-covered camera trying to work out what to do.

Most point and shoots, even the waterproof cameras, will be ruined by this mud as it gets in behind the



buttons and dials and, like sand paper, will eventually cut away at the waterproof seals. If your camera is a waterproof model, you would do well to wash the camera under slow running fresh water to remove any grit from the mud. Most DSLRs will share the same drama and most will be ruined by the mud contact.

The very high-end cameras, like the Canon 1D series, have awesome seals that allow you to shoot in the rain, but if you let mud dry on the camera, it will affect the workings and will gradually break down the seals, allowing moisture and dust to get in.

My tip for shooting in muddy conditions – keep away from the stuff!

You either need to use a longer lens or zoom in on the action. Your shots can take on a whole new look, as you will find that the longer lens will naturally shorten the depth of field, encouraging people to look at the subject rather than the complete scene. And when your mate with the big foot gives it that little bit extra, you can keep shooting instead of running.

One thing is for certain... mud is for millionaires.





THE OLD MAN EMU ENGINEERS GET BUSY WITH NEW PRODUCTS FOR LANDCRUISER 200 SERIES.

With the goal of continuous improvement and meeting customer demands, the Old Man Emu engineers have been busy in their lab and off road in order to get new products and suspension systems on the market for 4WDers across the world.

NEW NITROCHARGER SPORT FOR TOYOTA LANDCRUISER 200 SERIES

Designed by a dedicated team of OME ride control engineers through an exhaustive vehicle specific development program, the Nitrocharger Sport range for the LandCruiser 200 Series has undergone a series of refinements for light to medium load applications.

Because Nitrocharger Sport allows for precise tuning, the OME team have been able to upgrade existing applications to suit lighter load requirements and owners who prefer a shock absorber tuned with comfort in mind.

Fully compatible with OME's extensive range of springs,

bushes and hardware, the new Nitrocharger Sport shock absorbers for the 200 Series are backed by a 3 year, 60,000km warranty and after sales support from more than 120 authorised outlets Australia wide.

// Contact ARB for part numbers and pricing



OME INTENSITY TEE

Made from 100% cotton, this shirt offers a casual yet comfortable fit for fans of Old Man Emu suspension. Available in sizes small to 3XL, the dark green shirt features a 'grunge' graphic across the chest, with the vehicle designed to sit up on the shoulder for a different look. It can be found now, along with a range of other OME apparel items, in ARB stores and stockists nationwide.

// Part no: 217417-217422

X MARKS THE SPOT



Versatile and designed to be easily fitted to any vehicle, the X-Bar range from Bushranger offers a sturdy platform for 4WDers seeking to mount Bushranger's Night Hawk lights and an aerial to their vehicle.

Manufactured from 3.2mm polished, anodised aluminium alloy

tube, the X-Bar is designed with easy installation in mind and will mount via existing license plate mounts on your vehicle. Suitable for all license plate sizes, the X-Bar is air bag compatible and comes with a five year warranty.

// Contact ARB for part numbers and pricing

ACCESSORIES FOR YOUR AIR COMPRESSOR

AIR TANKS AND MANIFOLD KITS ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO MAKE YOUR ARB ON-BOARD COMPRESSOR EVEN MORE VERSATILE.

The award winning range of air compressors by ARB has been given an extra boost with two new accessories that increase the number of applications both on road and off.

4L ALUMINIUM AIR TANK

Rated to a maximum working pressure of 150PSI (1030kPa), the 4L aluminium air tank delivers high volume air output suitable for rapid tyre inflation and most air powered tools.

Ideal for use with ARB's twin motor and high output on-board compressors, the tank also comes standard in the portable twin motor version. The tank incorporates two 1/4NPT ports with JIC-4 male fittings and comes with mounting hardware for easy installation. 50% lighter than equivalent steel tanks, the aluminium air tank is available now from your ARB outlet.

// Part no: 171501



AIR LOCKER MANIFOLD KIT

Designed to work seamlessly with ARB's twin motor on-board compressors, the Air Locker manifold kit enables easy installation of Air Locker solenoids to an air source such as a compressor or regulated gas bottle.

With a working pressure



of 150PSI, the manifold kit incorporates multiple ports to also allow the use of ARB's pump up air kit. Incorporating mounting brackets and a Teflon stainless steel braided hose designed to cool air supply for tyre inflation, the manifold kit can be found at your local ARB distributor now.

// Part no: 171503



DOUBLE PUNCH



Words by Mike & Anita Pavey. Photography by Mike & Anita Pavey & Offroad Images

THE PAVEYS PUT ARB'S NEW TWIN MOTOR AIR COMPRESSOR TO THE TEST.

In the 4x4 12V compressor world where bigger is better, the ARB twin motor air compressor is king, punching out 174.4LPM at 0kPa or 131.8LPM at 200kPa (29psi).

Released to the market in mid 2011, the compressor owes its existence to a US military development program which demanded a high performance compressor able to withstand the environmental challenges of military use. Available as an on-board or portable unit, the latter is packaged in a hard carry case, complete with a 4L air tank, 6 metre durable high temp air hose, inflation accessory kit and

an air blow gun – all tucked neatly into the lid. Full technical details were detailed in the Winter 2011 magazine, so visit www.arb.com.au for the full specs.

On paper, the twin motor compressor features the same class-leading build as the majority of the ARB compressor range, with lightweight, engineering-grade materials complemented with an over-pressure safety valve, thermal protection and heavy duty circuit protection, ensuring your investment won't pop itself under serious load.

The compressor is sealed for moisture and dust resistance, making it suitable for external mounting. Splash resistant air filters with washable high-flow filter cartridges, tested for bulldust, keep even the finest dust particles at bay, ensuring a long service life in the Aussie Outback.

A key feature of this compressor is that it offers a 100% duty cycle, courtesy of twin cooling fans, that will have you inflating

your tyres and that of your mates continuously, improving your popularity come reinflation time off road. Most other compressors require a time-out period. Current draw is also respectable for its output, drawing a maximum of 68.6 amps at 150psi or 50.4 amps at 29psi – well below most alternator outputs.

As far as tyre inflation duties go, the portable compressor can be used immediately without filling the air tank, which simply acts as an online reservoir. However when full, it gives a higher burst of air for faster inflation and the necessary volume for some air tools. We tested the portable compressor with the air gun supplied to blow out the hot water service on our Topaz off road van. With or without priming the small tank, the compressor had plenty of pressure to clear out the dust.

Side by side testing of the ARB twin motor compressor against our existing ARB compressor yielded unsurprising results, with the twin

WHEN FULL, THE PORTABLE UNIT'S AIR TANK GIVES A HIGHER BURST OF AIR FOR FASTER INFLATION AND THE NECESSARY VOLUME FOR SOME AIR TOOLS



motor unit halving the inflation time on our Cooper STT tyres. We like to run up to 48psi on the blacktop, courtesy of our full touring load, so it was a joy to be using the twin motor compressor which made light work of any inflation requirements.

With the addition of the second compressor motor, dimensions are up accordingly, with the on-board unit measuring 278L x 190W x 105mmH, so finding a suitable mounting location might pose a bit of a challenge. At least if all else fails, you can buy the equally capable portable compressor.

Designed and manufactured in Australia to suit local and international conditions, each unit has been individually leak tested, current draw tested and flow tested under load at the factory before packaging. A two year warranty is offered with full replacement parts available.

Thanks to Mark Lowry from ARB's Product Development and Evaluation department for his input.



RIGHT ON TIME

We were on an Outback trip for ARB to obtain new images of three vehicles – the HiLux, Disco and the Toyota Tacoma, which is sold in the US. The Tacoma was a very important vehicle as these new images would feature heavily in ARB's international advertising campaigns.

We had photographed everything on the brief but were still looking for that iconic image that said 'ARB'. I suggested we arrive early at the nearby sand dunes to ensure plenty of time to plan the shot, carefully working out the angle of the dune, the wind direction and the bearing of the sun at that time of the year. These shots don't just happen like people probably think.

We had spent time walking the dunes to work out the shots when, almost out of nowhere, a wind storm came moving towards us at incredible speed. We sought refuge inside the vehicles and sat low as wind and blasting sand rocked the vehicles.

As it eased a little, ARB's marketing manager, Matt Frost, suggested that we just get out of there and retreat to a location for a quiet coffee. But I could see a small window of opportunity on the horizon for the sun to poke through and light up this scene. If the wind

was still working for me, I was sure we could create some magic.

I jumped out of the HiLux while Matt and Mark Lowry prepared to drive like rally drivers through the scene I was trying to create, turning exactly where I had requested as the sun pierced through that small gap on the horizon, lighting up the vehicle against the deep colour of the storm in the background.

When you create a good shot under these crazy conditions, you do get a real sense of achievement. This image was one of a small sequence resulting from the only run we managed with the Toyota Tacoma, as it ripped a tyre off the bead a couple of seconds later. Mark then drove the HiLux and Matt drove the Disco through the scene. Our shooting time would have been a total of two minutes as that's how small that gap on the horizon actually was.

Sometimes, things in photography require the right timing and you have to be patient with what is provided to you by the elements. I think that this shot was worth waiting for.

- Michael Ellem

PHOTOGRAPH SPECIFICATIONS

Camera: Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II
Lens: Canon EF 70-200mm IS USM at 165mm
Exposure: 1/200 second at f 2.8
ISO: 200



2012
Griffin
King of the
Hammers
the ultimate desert race

AMERICA'S **WILDEST**
OFF ROAD **RACE**



KING OF THE HAMMERS

In the world of motorsports, there are but a dozen events that have risen to the apex of their genre. Narrow that query to off road competitions and the field drops to a handful; the Dakar Rally and the Baja 1000 come to mind, both of which have had decades to attain the esteemed status of 'Top of the Class'.

Back in the mid 1990s, America planted the seed of extreme rock racing by hosting a first-of-its-kind rock crawling event in the now-famous town of Farmington, New Mexico. After fifteen years, the sport has moved solidly into maturity and has had numerous contenders for Class Valedictorian – many of which have lost traction and been permanently benched.

Six years ago, we witnessed a new contender stepping onto the arena – and this one appeared to carry the DNA, the genetic code, of a champion. The first event was small, with just a few teams, sponsors, and a handful of spectators.

But over the past five years, it has gained an impressive following, tripling the number of competitors and sending attendance through the roof.

As February 2012 approached, Hammerking Productions, the sanctioning body, has taken the event to new levels. What started as a one-day get-together of hardcore 4x4 enthusiasts has evolved into a weeklong slugfest of the country's, and the world's, most competitive racers. As for spectator attendance, this number has climbed to 25,000.

Enter the 2012 Griffin King of the Hammers (KOH).

We joined ARB's Engineering Supervisor Daniel Bongard and ARB USA Marketing Manager Lisa Wood in Johnson Valley, California, for this wildest and newest craze in dirt sports. Historically, more than half of KOH competitors have trusted ARB for their traction needs, and 2012 was no exception.

In the past, ARB has had a vendor tent set up as a shop for any ARB-related issues. This year Lisa and Daniel brought their expertise to the pit area with personal tech support visits to any team running ARB Air Lockers.

KOH SUCCESS STORY

One of the keys to KOH's explosive growth is that it combines the best of high speed Dakar-style racing with extreme rock crawling. It is a combination that no other event offers, and it has drawn some of the best competitors from both genres. In past years, several very successful desert racers have placed their names in the hat for the chequered flag. However, they had no idea how difficult the rocky sections would be for man and machine; many experienced game-ending mechanical failures in the first few miles. The result has been the creation of 'dual-sport' race cars – fast in the desert and nimble and tough as nails in the rocks.

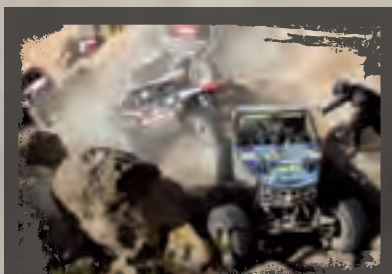
SEVEN DAYS OF RACING

As the event gained popularity, it added a UTV competition and two days of 'Last Chance Qualifiers' (LCQ). For 2012, two new races were added – 'King of the Motos' running the same brutal route combination but for motorcycles, and the Smittybilt 'Every Man's Challenge' for modified stock vehicles.

KOH has also come to the limelight in the world of competitive international auto sports. This year, teams from ten countries and five continents were on hand to make their move to be crowned 'King'. Among the nations represented were Italy, Iceland, Japan, Australia, Mexico and Belgium. While Griffin Radiators has been the leading corporate sponsor from the beginning, other companies such as Raceline and ATX Wheels, 4Wheel Parts, Goodyear and Falken Tire, King Shocks, Warn, Master Pull and Lucas Oil have all become major supporters.



When the eighth vehicle through Chocolate Thunder rolled over in the middle of the track, utter chaos broke out. Drivers began to take any line available, including where the photographers were standing and over the top of other vehicles.



With the Sledgehammer Trail eliminated from the 2011 roster, Chocolate Thunder became the funnel, or equaliser, where the slower cars caught up to the leaders. When the first vehicle broke, everyone took the bypass. When the second rig went down, a frantic sense of urgency among the waiting drivers could not be contained, resulting in a three-hour dog pile and winch fest.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

KOH has a full book of regulations the vehicles must pass for technical inspection, but the main event rules are very simple – go fast and stay on course. There are 110 teams in the main event and eighty spaces are reserved for pre-qualified drivers and international teams. The other spots are determined in a Last Chance Qualifier, a type of Wild West Shootout where 'anyone' can enter.

Of the 85 LCQ teams vying for a spot in the main event, only 30 qualified. This year, in an effort to raise money to keep Johnson Valley open to the public, 26 additional LCQ teams were added to the roster, and all registration fees were donated to support land-use issues.

RACE TRACK

This year's track consisted of two laps on a 125km loop. The first 90km was mostly high-speed desert two-tracks, followed by a zigzag route through the earthquake prone, boulder-strewn canyons of Johnson Valley. Teams were given 14 hours to reach the chequered flag (less than 20km/h average), but to be competitive you needed be able to finish in less than seven. When the green flag dropped, teams were allowed to assist each other on the track but their pit crews were restricted to designated pit areas.

HAMMERTOWN, USA

As the event gained popularity, the organiser stepped up its game exponentially. Hammertown now has city streets complete with street signage, a full power grid and stadium lighting illuminating the entire area. Two massive circus-style tents house indoor displays, a separate tent is dedicated for meetings, seminars and workshops, and both are flanked by almost a hundred manufacturers. Beyond Hammertown City limits, thousands of toy haulers, motorhomes and fifth wheelers stretched across miles of desert.

RACE DAY, CARNAGE AND THE PODIUM

King of the Hammers is truly one of the craziest races on the planet and ranks right up there with Dakar... only shorter. It is a world where ninety percent of your time is spent on ten percent of the course – the rocks! Start with a 150km/h adrenaline rush of wild whoop-de-doods and haul-butt desert two-tracks. Then you are tossed into an endless barrage of a dozen of the gnarliest boulder-strewn sluices with a dozen other vehicles. Run clean and you're living the dream; have a bad day and you'll find yourself in a perpetual nightmare.

The key is to get in front of the pack in the desert sections. If not, you'll find yourself in a snarled traffic jam in the rocky and narrow Hammer trails. To give you an idea of just how tough this race is, look at the technical level of these rigs, then consider the fact that only 49 of the original 136 teams made it to the chequered flag. Yep, sixty-four percent crashed, broke, or did not finish within the 14-hour time limit.

When the dust settled, America's Erik Miller, Rick Mooneyham, and two-time champion Shannon Campbell were standing on the podium. If you don't mind us tooting our own horn, four of the six winning differentials were equipped with ARB Air Lockers.

Australians Ben Napier and Nick Finch ranked 15th and 25th, Italian Fabio Manno finished 37th, and Canadians Mat Noualy, Robb Kaufman and Curtis Warner landed 33rd, 41st and 44th respectively.

One thing we really like about this wildest of desert races is the LCQ rule that anyone with a 4WD can enter. If you have the guts and the car and don't mind trashing your equipment, bring it on!

Put it on your bucket list. The King of the Hammers will be waiting.

MEET THE RACERS

To get the inside scoop on what it is like to compete in one of the most brutal off road competitions in the world, we interviewed a professional racer, 4WD shop owner/enthusiast, and an old school technology first-timer.

SHANNON CAMPBELL THE PRO



When did you first implement ARB lockers into your race cars?

I started using ARB Air Lockers in the first 4WD I built. I realised there were several advantages and have never felt the need to change.

You've been crowned King of the Hammers twice and placed 3rd this year. How has your relationship with ARB and their Air Lockers played a part in this?

The relationship I have with ARB is very important. Their product and support plays a huge role in my success.

Your racing program has been very successful and you've become one of the most well known names in the off road scene. What is your secret?

No secrets here! It's all about getting to the finish line, hard work, staying humble and remembering where you come from.

What is in the future for Campbell Racing and will ARB be part of it?

I always like to try new things. This year we will be doing some short course racing in the Lucas Oil Series in my new Ford Pro Lite truck, and both the east and west coast Ultra4 Series. No matter what, ARB will always be a part of my race program.

BRANDON AND STEPHEN WATSON THE MID-FIELD CONTENDERS



We came to Ultra4 racing from the recreational 4WD world but from a different track – we own a shop, Offroad Designs, which specialises in full-size trucks and drivetrain applications.

We had always run Air Lockers in front because you can retain turning performance at slow

speeds and in the rocks, which is a huge advantage. Once the Air Locker became available for our beloved 14-bolt, we added it to the rear and things have been great! The first thing we noticed was the consistency in high-speed tracking. Couple this with the known durability of the system and that they don't require a lot of prep work, and it is a big confidence builder on the track. If an axle shaft breaks, the other side is still going to keep us moving.

All these little advantages add up over the course of a race in 'time to the finish line'. We posted a solid qualifying time that put us in

36th starting position. Working our way through the crowd and a few mechanical issues, which is normal for KOH, we managed to get toward the front of the pack. This was our 4th KOH, and our 4th and best finish, at 12th place overall.

It's definitely a testament to the quality of the parts we use and people around us; everything from the meticulous prep detail from the Offroad Design team to the late night tech help from the crew at ARB. The ARB stickers on our car are there because we're proud to be part of ARB's dedication to doing the job right.

CODY ADDINGTON THE RUN-WHAT-YA-BRUNG ROOKIE



The race went really well for us. We tried to keep the truck together

and within its limits so we could finish the 165-mile race. About forty miles into the race, we lost all use of our power steering.

The front ARB locker really saved our butts because we could engage and disengage it at our discretion. It is nearly impossible to steer with it on (without power steering), so we had to turn it on and off a lot!

If we didn't have a selectable locker, our day would have ended there. The locker worked flawlessly. Other than that, about 140 miles into the race we had a small fire in the engine compartment that we quickly extinguished. Luckily nothing was damaged and we made our way to the finish line. The whole experience was a dream come true.



What began as a one-day event with a few competitors and a small number of spectators has evolved into a weeklong racing extravaganza with over 25,000 spectators. The schedule begins on Sunday with Every Man's Challenge (modified-stock rigs), pre-running on Monday; Tuesday and Wednesday is the 4Wheel Parts Last Chance Qualifier; Thursday is a UTV and King of the Motos race, and Friday is the main event. In the process, Hammertown has become a literal city in the desert.



Extreme 4x4 and Mythbuster host Jessie Combs not only works on 4x4s, she races them, too. Jessie joined Kristin Carter to make the only 'all girls' team in the race.



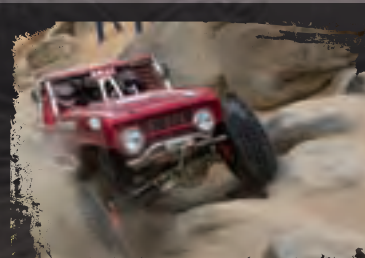
More than 25,000 spectators lined the 125km track to watch teams jockey for position over VW-sized boulders.



KOH draws competitors from around the globe. Fabio Manno, from Roma, Italy, was very popular for television interviews. With very little seat time he managed to finish in a respectable 37th position.



This year's course was set up with 150km of full-on desert racing before hitting the insane rock trails of Johnson Valley. The key to winning was to get ahead of the pack before the rocks, and avoid the traffic jams in the Hammer Trails.



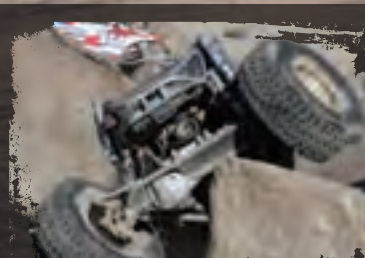
Dustin Sexton ran the only vintage Ford Bronco on the track. Unfortunately the old pony did not make it to the finish line.



The combination of Johnson Valley's boulderous mountain ranges, and that it sits squarely in the middle of an active seismic zone, has rendered its numerous arroyos and canyons a rock crawler's playground.



Lance Clifford of Pirate 4x4 fame was Robby Gordon's navigator. Clifford spent several days helping Gordon with the technical aspect of driving on rocks.



King of the Hammers can be brutal on equipment. Less than half the competitors in any year will finish the race.



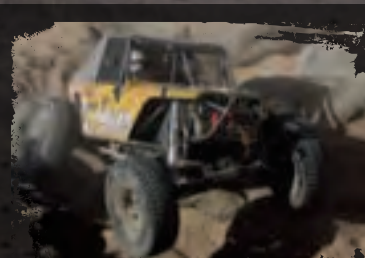
Master Pull is a big sponsor of KOH and provided recovery vehicles and staff for the entire week. With dozens of rollovers each day, the Master Pull crew had a big job.



Mike Klensin was a strong contender, running in the top 10 for most of the race. After successfully navigating 250km of the most extreme terrain available, he wanted to put on a show at the finish line (where he ran out of talent). Klensin hit the jump a little too fast and performed a nose-over triple snap roll. Ultimately landing on four wheels, and with everything intact, Klensin drove the final 100m to victory row.



Contingency day is where the fans get to schmooze with the racers and racers get to schmooze with the manufacturers.



Eric Miller makes his second pass through Chocolate Thunder on his way to victory.



KOH rules state that vehicles must remain within 16 metres of the centreline of the track. But other than that, all bets are off. If someone breaks down in the front, their vehicles may be used for traction for the next guy.



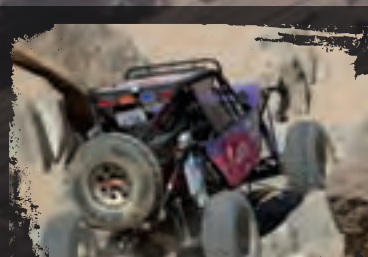
Australian Ben Napier arrived for his third KOH. He left with his first finish, at 15th position. He said, "This doesn't compare to anything we have in Australia... it's an amazing race and we had a really good time." Being an Aussie mate, he naturally runs ARB lockers.



KOH is a true-grit desert race and uses the winning race cars as the 'podium'. When the dust settled, Eric Miller, Rick Mooneyham and Shannon Campbell took 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place respectively. ARB is proud to know that four of the six axles on the podium vehicles were fitted with ARB Air Lockers.



Most teams are out pre-running the course the week before the race. When they are not on the track, they are in the pits fixing or fine-tuning their cars.



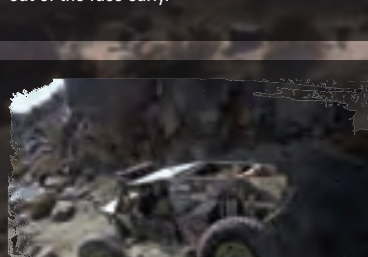
Kristen Carter and Jessi Combs, the only all-girl team in the race, also ran an ARB locker and showed the boys how to drive with a clean run through Chocolate Thunder. Unfortunately, mechanical issues put them out of the race early.



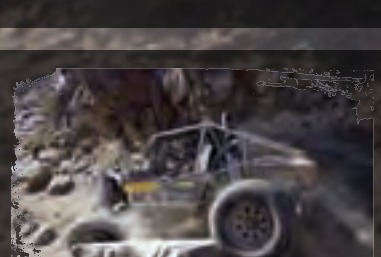
Eric Miller, who qualified in the 4th starting position, was one of the younger drivers in the event. When the dust settled he was crowned 'King' of the Hammers.



The obstacle at the bottom of the Chocolate Thunder Trail became a nemesis for many drivers. If they rolled over and could not self-right themselves and needed assistance from the recovery team, their race was over. With the help of locking differentials, this team was able to back out of their predicament and make another attempt.



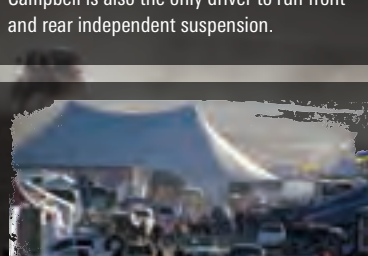
If teams survived the first 125km loop, they faced one of the most difficult obstacles in the race, the 'Outer Limits Trail'. Monster Energy's hard-driving Shannon Campbell worked his way from 50th position to 8th (after five flats and a broken control arm). Campbell is also the only driver to run front and rear independent suspension.



Not to toot our own horns...okay, here we go. When guys like GenRight owner Tony Pellegrino and 4Wheel Parts CEO Greg Adler (who could choose any locker available), select an ARB Air Locker for their traction management, it is an honour and vote of confidence in the quality of our product.



Robby Gordon is one of America's biggest names in auto racing. From NASCAR to the Baja 1000, Gordon's motto is, "It doesn't matter what kind of car it is... get behind the wheel and drive it to the ragged edge." With zero experience in rocks, Gordon qualified 5th in the LCQ. Unfortunately his motor's 'ragged edge' was shorter than his throttle cable and threw a rod at the 25km mark.



Hammertown included a massive vendor tent, a media tent, driver's lounge, and full-length semi trucks from several dozen manufacturers. It was a carnival-like atmosphere in the middle of the desert.



ARB's Engineering Supervisor Daniel Bongard and ARB USA Marketing Manager Lisa Wood visited with competitors and assisted with any ARB related questions. Bongard is the mastermind behind many of ARB's products and was the lead engineer on the Air Locker redesign to the two-piece system.



A WEIGHTY ISSUE

UNEVEN WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION WHILST TOWING IS A COMMON AND UNNERVING PROBLEM, BUT HAYMAN REESE HAS THE SOLUTION.



Taking a camper trailer on your next big trip offers convenience and a comfy place to sleep for the night, but it also presents 4WDers with some challenges. When a trailer is coupled to a vehicle, the trailer's total ball weight is applied directly onto the rear section of the vehicle and, like a seesaw, it lifts your front suspension and transfers weight away from the front of your 4WD. When driving, this creates unsettling trailer sway, reduced steering and braking responsiveness, decreased traction and misaligned headlamps.

A suitably selected weight distribution system restores your suspension and steering geometry, providing positive towing control. The Hayman Reese range of weight distribution systems is designed to spread the added weight evenly through the vehicle's chassis to all four wheels, alleviating imbalanced weight dispersion caused by towing.

Assisting in load stability, the Hayman Reese range restores your vehicle's original braking efficiency and headlight alignment whilst reducing excessive tyre

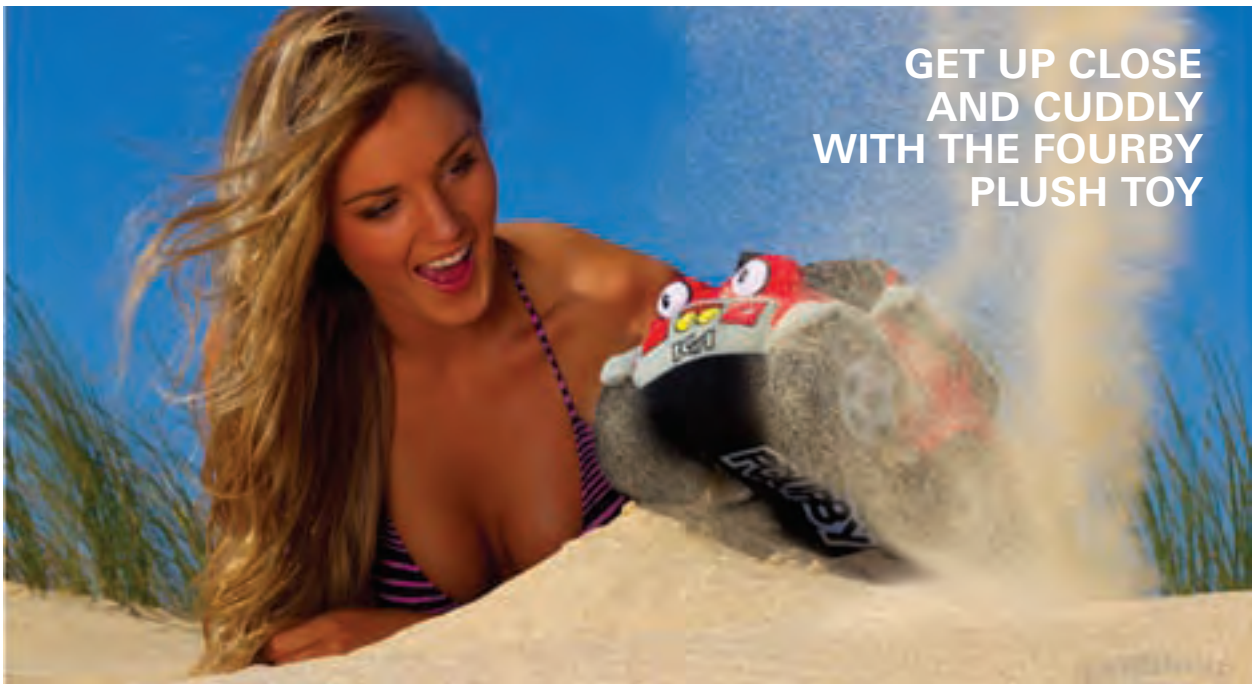
wear and the amount of sway you encounter whilst towing.

Backed by a lifetime warranty, the Hayman Reese range of weight distribution systems is extensive enough to suit any towing scenario – from the mini weight distribution system suitable for lighter ball weights between 0-80kg, to the super heavy weight system capable of towing trailers with a ball weight up to 545kg. All systems are designed to be easily set up and removed and are backed by the Hayman Reese lifetime warranty.

Many Hayman Reese weight distribution systems also offer the option of further sway control through the use of either friction or dual cam sway control systems. Additional sway control offers greater safety and a more pleasant towing experience to make your travels more enjoyable.

A number of weight distribution accessories are also available from Hayman Reese, including drop shanks, hitch parks, safety chain extenders and boat trailer adaptors.

// Contact ARB for part numbers and pricing



GET UP CLOSE
AND CUDDLY
WITH THE FOURBY
PLUSH TOY

TOYING AROUND

ARB's much-loved kids mascot, Fourby, is now available as a soft plush toy. Measuring 35cm wide x 20cm high, the large plush toy comes in Fourby's distinctive red, black and grey colours and features plenty of gear needed for off road travel, including bull bar, winch, auxiliary lights, snorkel, side rails and steps,

rear bar, and even a removable rear tyre.

Detailed stitching shows off Fourby's trademark grin and large eyes whilst highlighting other details such as door handles, winch and windows. Reflective mirrors, ARB logos and a Fourby signature on the underside complete the super soft toy.

Manufactured from 100% polyester, the Fourby plush is fully machine washable and suitable for all ages.

Fourby is available now from ARB stores and stockists nationwide.

// Part no: 217423

WIN A 60L FRIDGE FREEZER!

HE'S SOFT AND CUDDLY AND A GREAT TRAVELLING MATE, AND NOW FOURBY CAN HELP YOU GET YOUR HANDS ON A PORTABLE FRIDGE!



To win your very own 60L ARB Fridge Freezer, simply grab a Fourby plush toy and photograph him on your next off road adventure.

Entries will be judged by ARB marketing on their cleverness, humour and originality. So get creative with your camera and

send in your best off road Fourby image. We'll print a selection of our favourites in the next issue of 4x4 Action and on ARB's facebook page, and the winner will be contacted directly. Entries close 30th June 2012.

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

Email: marketing@arb.com.au
(with 'Fourby plush' in the subject line)

Please include your full name, address and email address or telephone number with your entry. Include an SSAE if you want your photos returned.

HEY, KIDS, FOURBY HERE



I've just come back from a great trip in the Flinders Ranges where I got to cook my favourite recipe – damper! I hope you've had a great few months and enjoyed Easter as well! And take a look at all of the cool drawings on these pages. Aren't they fantastic? Keep up the awesome work, everyone!



* G'day Fourby, my name is **Shane**. I am 11. This is a picture of a 1996 Toyota 80 Series LandCruiser.



* This is my dad's red Toyota LandCruiser. We like to go on long drives around Australia. **Guilia** (age 9)



* 12 year old **Jaiden** sent in this drawing of an F100 climbing up a hill.



* 11 year old **Ky** sent in this very bright drawing of a 4WD out in the desert.

* I love my dad's Toyota. From **Joshua** (age 6)



* 10 year old **Lachlan** drew this great drawing of him 'living the dream' with a huge 4WD.



* My name is **Joel** and I am 5 years old. I have done a drawing of an Army 4WD out in the bush. I love to go 4WDing with my family in the bush or on the beach and spotting different animals along the way.



* This drawing is about the time when our family went fishing and it was so fun. Our car is not that cool but I wished it was! **Riley** (age 13)

WINNER!



Austyn sent in this great drawing, and we think it looks a bit like Ariell! Great work, Austyn!

▶ Hello ARB, my name is Austyn. This is a picture of a 4x4 ute going over the mountains and playing in the mud! From Austyn (age 5)

You could WIN an awesome ARB Kids' Pack



Every issue we'll give our favourite entry a Toys R Us voucher and Speedy Seal Tyre Repair Kit, and all other entries that are printed will receive an ARB Kids' Pack.

Please include your details on the back, or attached to your drawing or letter, as sometimes the envelopes go missing! If you want your letter or drawing returned, please enclose a stamped, self addressed envelope.

Send your letters, drawings and photos, including name, age, address, telephone number and t-shirt size to:

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

Email: fourby@arb.com.au



* Hello, my name is Cameron and I am 9 years old. My drawing is of my grandpa's 4WD. I have been to Deep Creek Conservation National Park in Grandpa's 4WD.



* Hi, my name is Zach and I am 8 years old. I have done a drawing of a 4x4 Top Fuel Army Dragster speeding along the highway. When I go 4WDing I love to collect all sorts of rocks from all the different places we visit.

* My name is Finn and I am 7 years old. I drew this picture of a Toyota LandCruiser 70 Series because they are my favourite 4x4.





COOKING WITH FOURBY AND ARIEL

FOURBY AND ARIEL COOK PLENTY OF AWESOME MEALS WHEN THEY GO CAMPING. HERE IS ONE OF FOURBY'S FAVOURITE RECIPES!



FOURBY'S DAMPER RECIPE

BANANA & SULTANA DAMPER

Ingredients

2 cups self raising flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
Pinch salt
Banana
Sultanas
Milk

1. Combine flour, baking powder, salt, chopped banana and sultanas in a bowl. Mix enough milk to make a soft dough. Form into a round shape.
2. Grease a camp oven and dust it with flour. Add the dough and cover. Place camp oven in the campfire and cover with hot ashes and coal.
3. Cook for 30 minutes. Enjoy!

Note: to test if the damper is ready, tap on the loaf – it will sound hollow when it's ready.

WIN FOURBY!

GET CREATIVE WITH YOUR BEST FOURBY DRAWING TO WIN A SOFT FOURBY TOY!



We already know there are some very talented kids out there, and here's an opportunity for them to get really artistic! Send in your drawing of Fourby out on the tracks to win your very own Fourby plush toy! The more creative and colourful your drawing, the better! The five best entries, as selected by ARB Marketing, will each win a super soft Fourby toy. So get your colouring pencils and pens out and have fun! Entries close 30th June 2012.

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

Email: fourby@arb.com.au
(with 'Draw Fourby' in the subject line)

Please include your full name, address and email address or telephone number with your entry. Include an SSAE if you want your drawings returned.

INLAND IN SIGHT PART 2

Words & photography by Jess Bailey

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES AS ARB'S VICTORIAN STOCKIST REP, JESS BAILEY, EXPLORES WILPENA POUND AND BEYOND.

Driving into Wilpena, you can't help but stop and admire the pound walls. The force that created this beautiful, natural amphitheatre of mountains is unimaginable.

Aside from the scenery, one of the more noticeable attributes of this area is the wildlife. There are kangaroos, wallabies and emus everywhere you turn. The wildlife have no real fear of humans and it was disappointing to see some tourists attempting to feed them, clearly not realising the damage they were actually doing. They might think twice if the ferocious Aussie 'drop bears' existed in the area!

You need to register on the tourist board and pay a park fee when you pull into the Wilpena Pound area. Within the pound, you have

the option of unpowered sites, powered sites or the permanent tents. At \$21 per double per night, the unpowered sites have everything you need, including fire pits, barbecues and very clean amenities blocks.

The campground is quite large and it's very easy to find a secluded area. We were in the pound during fire ban season but they do allow gas barbecues. As the afternoon came to a close and we found a suitable area, the snags came out, the ARB fridge got a workout and the camping chairs were comfortably ready for us to enjoy a beautiful sunset lighting up the pound walls.

The next day promised to be an adventurous one, and as I talked about all the great hikes and



walking trails within the pound, I could see Adam sinking lower into his chair... excited and looking forward to it all, no doubt.

My hot tip when staying in the campground is to not leave a single thing within 'roo' reach. One of us had carelessly left the leftover snags wrapped in foil on a plate up on the table. After waking to the sounds of chaos at 3am, we found ourselves looking straight at a local roo, who was chewing contentedly with a lamb and rosemary snag held tightly between its front paws. It feels very wrong to watch a kangaroo eat lamb – so much for not feeding the wildlife!

With sunrise on the horizon, the bacon and eggs consumed and all reachable items securely put away, we headed down to the tourist

information centre, which is just a short walk from the campground. This building fits in beautifully with the environment and is a great place for a glass of wine or a light snack.

Inside the information section you can find all the wonderful details of your surroundings and pick up one of the brochures about bushwalking in the Flinders Ranges National Park. This brochure gives you the details, time, distances and difficulty of the walks within the pound and surrounding areas. You can also venture into the gift store where you'll find all your basic grocery requirements, R.M. Williams clothing, local art, artefacts and gifts.

We decided to start the day off with an easy walk to the Hills Family homestead. To reach the homestead, you need to





pass through The Gap, the only entrance into the pound, and follow the path originally built by the Hills family. The path once had bullock and drays carrying timber and equipment for the Hills family and required constant upkeep. As we started walking, we could see we weren't the only occupants on the path, with Miss Emu having taken her pupils out for a daily lesson. In total, we counted twenty striped emu chicks all wandering along and exploring with the lack of fear and curiosity of small children. They weren't too worried about us trailing behind but I guarantee she didn't let us out of her sight the entire time.

Arriving at the homestead, our attention was immediately drawn to the information boards titled 'If only these walls could talk'. The Hills' family story is told by daughter Jessie, the youngest of four girls and five boys, who had moved to the pound to tend to the house for her father and brothers at the tender age of twelve.

The Gap was discovered around 1851 and within a very short period of time, pastoralists began running sheep and sowing



crops within the pound. As was common in those days, they overstocked the virgin area due to the government charging rent on what they believed should be run in a set area.

I couldn't imagine what life must have been like farming this land, let alone for a twelve year old girl. Looking around the restored homestead and once kempt garden and yards, everything you read from young Jessie Hill comes to life.

We continued up the Wangara Trail to the first lookout and then onto the second. The view up here is amazing, and although you can see just how big the pound is, you can also see how small it was for the amount of stock and crops the pastoralists had crammed into the area. It's a steep climb up here and we passed several tourists who hadn't quite made it to the top lookout.

Wilpena Pound contains some of the most amazing geological formations in Australia, and as we were standing looking out over them, we found it difficult to continue any conversation whilst taking it all in.

We headed on to the Malloga Falls Trail before returning via St Mary's Peak. Both trails are described as hard hikes, so good footwear is a must and plenty of water must be taken with you. We found that the 20km walk went fairly quickly, with Adam and I chatting about all we were seeing and the circumstances with which they came about. Arriving back into camp that night, we managed to rustle together some crackers and dip for dinner before we hit our swag for some well-deserved sleep.

Unfortunately, we had to move on. As we pulled out of the pound the next day, we paused at the old Wilpena Station for a look around. We both knew we could spend months here just exploring. The details of the homestead, how it was discovered and the dealings back and forth between the gentlemen involved are all interesting details you can discover at the station. The craftsmanship used to construct these buildings is like nothing you will see in anything built today.

We doubled back and made our way down into Sacred Canyon; here you can view some of the best Aboriginal art in the Flinders

Ranges. Sacred Canyon continues to be an important location for the Adnyamathanha people, who don't know the age of the engravings at the site but believe they were created by ancestral beings during the Dreamtime. The gum-lined creek has smooth sandstone walls lining various sections. It's a short 200m light hike up the creek bed and over various dry waterfalls to view the engravings.

As we walked along the creek bed, we almost didn't notice the circles and lines on the walls around us – when we did finally take note, we stopped in amazement. At various heights and on many surfaces, there are circles, kangaroo paws, windbreaks and several other distinctive markings.

It's an amazing feeling to be standing at the site. Who were the messages meant for? And what was the inspiration for the circles in the first place? The best time to take photographs of the art is in low sunlight, preferably morning or late afternoon, but visitors are asked not to touch the artwork as it is both damaging to the site and highly offensive to the Adnyamathanha people.



AS I TALKED ABOUT ALL THE GREAT HIKES AND WALKING TRAILS WITHIN THE POUND, I COULD SEE ADAM SINKING LOWER INTO HIS CHAIR... EXCITED AND LOOKING FORWARD TO IT ALL, NO DOUBT!

We left Sacred Canyon and headed north, eyeing off the option of turning right and heading through Oraparinna or turning left and going through the Bunyeroo and Brachina gorges. Along this road, you pass Hucks Lookout – the view back over the pound is worth stopping for. We decided to go left and continue through Bunyeroo Gorge before following the Brachina Creek and continuing on to the town of Blinman.

Blinman was a mining town that came into existence soon after the discovery of copper in 1859. Between 1862 and 1907, over 10,000 tonnes of metal were produced at the mine. Today, the mine is a great tourist attraction, with underground tours occurring twice daily. Make sure you check with the local general store to confirm tour times. Unfortunately,

we missed the tour but vowed we'd make it next time.

At its peak, this tiny town had a population of around 1,500. Today, 22 people reside here permanently along with the surrounding property owners and employees. Despite its size, Blinman hosts a number of services including the Blinman Post Office, general store, Wild Lime Café and Gallery, the Rural Centre with internet access and the North Blinman Hotel, with accommodation and meals available.

The last few times I've been to Blinman, I've taken an unwanted liking to a little white dog that resides at the hotel. I've decided we have a love-hate relationship, as twice now he has terrified me with ferocious barking and snarling, and twice he has smooched up to me like we were old mates.

We called into the hotel, where I managed a friendly pat this time before the dog ran off, barking madly at me. Inside the hotel are various business cards from visitors; I found several of mine tucked high up on the walls as reminders of past ventures this way. We had a laugh as we found many friends and acquaintances having also been here. After a friendly chat to the barman, we made a move for the Wild Lime Café to grab a bite to eat. The café has a magnificent menu to tantalise any visitor's taste buds and is filled with many beautiful gifts, art and relics from the area.

We explored the town for a few hours, chatting to locals and taking in the sights, knowing that we wanted to travel a short 30km to Parachilna for the night. Once we'd spent enough time strolling around in the sun, we jumped back in the ute to head east through the Parachilna Gorge.

The gorge was carved by Parachilna Creek over many hundreds of thousands of



years. Although it's only a short distance from the township of Parachilna, we spent much of the afternoon exploring the creek bed, where you can find several large waterholes and beautiful cliff faces. Exploration complete, we continued into Parachilna.

I'd mentioned rather excitedly to Adam that the Prairie Hotel in Parachilna is well known for its fantastic menu which includes emu, kangaroo, camel and goat. Adam gave me a look that resembled 'happy wife, happy life', so I knew I'd get to really enjoy this one. With the temperature still quite warm, we parked at the hotel and took the time to take a look around.

Staking a claim on an outside table, we found ourselves chatting away to a lovely lady called Gladys. She was particularly fond of the new Camps 6 book and was now travelling after the passing of her husband. We also invited to our table Kiwis Sam and Trish, who were travelling and working across

Australia. 'Bro', 'fush' and 'chups' just had to be brought into the conversation – yes, it was simple entertainment for two Aussie tourists.

As the sun set over the railway line, the last train from the north headed south with its load of coal. The galahs set into the trees, making more noise than Collingwood supporters after a loss, and we grabbed the menus and set about ordering dinner. I love kangaroo and Adam wasn't too keen, but the lovely lady serving us did a wonderful job of gently persuading him to step outside his comfort zone. What we didn't know yet was that this lovely lady was to soon become our tour guide and good friend.

Our great inland journey continues in the Winter 2012 edition of ARB 4x4 Action.



2011 MALAYSIAN RAINFOREST CHALLENGE

FLOODS, TOPPLED VEHICLES AND EVACUATIONS – THE 2011 RAINFOREST CHALLENGE IN MALAYSIA HIGHLIGHTS WHY THE ANNUAL 4X4 EVENT IS ONE OF THE TOUGHEST AND MOST UNPREDICTABLE IN THE WORLD.

Since 1997, the Malaysian Rainforest Challenge has epitomised the extremes of off road 4x4 racing. The dense Malaysian jungle, a combination of deep mud, thick foliage and often flooding rivers, has tested even the most experienced 4x4 competitors but has built a level of camaraderie amongst competitors that is hard to match at any off road event.

December 2011 saw thirty-five teams from across the globe arrive in Kuala Terengganu for the 14th edition of the Rainforest Challenge (RFC). The first wave of monsoonal activity had struck the region only a week before, with extensive flooding in many areas north of the competition zone. The teams, including competitors from Australia, Russia, the Philippines, China, Austria and the US, were to take a route towards the highlands to avoid the chance of floods

cutting off all escape tracks – as had occurred in 2007 whereby competitors, crew and media had to abandon their vehicles and be evacuated by boat.

Opening with a three-day carnival weekend involving twelve special stages at a local sports complex, the competition soon began in earnest on December 4 as the convoy moved into the jungle at Hulu Sg (river) Berang. The rains were quick to set in, however, and the next day revealed brutal tracks that tested man and machine.

The many obstacles of Day Six included manoeuvring through narrow tracks leading down to a stream before winching over huge rocks and ascending steep slopes. Other locations demanded absolute precision, with a 180 degree turn on a 55 degree slope needing to be negotiated before competitors descended onto wet clay and

traversed down to a fast flowing and deep river. The end of the day promised a well-earned rest at a meticulously organised campsite.

The following day focused on travel to the second base camp, with the main route through the jungle not used for competition. But the track from Felda Mengkawang to Hulu Sg Loh still demanded skilled driving and teamwork, with a river crossing, V-shaped gullies, muddy streams and recovery exercises requiring winches and snatch straps.

Special stages during the day necessitated strategy rather than the power and speed of the winch. Even local teams with hard-earned experience discovered how a super fast winch could be counter-productive, as it created uncontrollable momentum which tipped over even the leading vehicles. Where to drive, when to



THE TRACK FROM FELDA MENGKAWANG TO HULU SG LOH DEMANDED SKILLED DRIVING AND TEAMWORK, WITH A RIVER CROSSING, V-SHAPED GULLIES, MUDDY STREAMS AND RECOVERY EXERCISES

press on the accelerator and co-driver alertness to guide the driver proved more important. As Luis J.A. Wee, founder of the RFC points out, "In the RFC, it's prudent to not push man and machine to the maximum in all special stages." Those who did not follow these rules of engagement paid the ultimate price of a DNF (Did Not Finish), losing points to their competitors.

Day Eight dawned with the start of the renowned and incredibly difficult Twilight Zone. Presenting three days of extreme terrain via 50km of disused logging tracks, only vehicles with fully working engines and winches were allowed to progress. Split into five groups, competitors, officials and medics moved in close convoy through the affectionately termed 'dark side', which consists of rich forest, dense tree canopies and extremely tough topography. Combined with a fresh downpour that continued until dawn of the second day, competitors faced steep and long hill climbs measuring over 300 metres and equally difficult descents, plus slipping, sliding and winching over

a hundred times to reach the final base camp on day three.

The base camp faced its own problems, with the second monsoon wave hitting the site with heavy rain and wind. Flooding had begun and the Sg Nipah river, where the campsite was located, had risen furiously with some areas along its banks rising by a metre within thirty minutes. With torrents of rushing water everywhere, the campsite had turned soggy, muddy and watery.

By midday on the 10th, the first group of competitors emerged from the Twilight Zone amid cheers and jubilation, while the final group came out by 5pm under heavy rainfall. Celebrations for having survived the Twilight Zone were confined to the competitors' respective tents as the torrential downpour continued unabated until dawn.

So severe was the rain and impending flooding that an emergency meeting between the event's HQ and the Fire and Rescue Department based

in Chukai town was held the following morning, resulting in an evacuation order for everyone at the base camp. The final special stages were cancelled and teams instead concentrated on exiting the soaked jungle.

Forced to finish a day early, the results of the 2011 Rainforest Challenge were the closest in the event's history, with a mere 16 points separating first and second place. Despite the early finish, the competition stands as one of the best ever.

Luis J.A. Wee says, "Everyone is a winner – for completing the event, for living out their 4x4 dreams, for facing their fears and sharing camaraderie with their peers from around the 4x4 off road world."

Visit www.rainforest-challenge.com for further details of the 2011 Rainforest Challenge and information on the 2012 event.

1st Place:

(Malaysia) Mervin Lim Wei Shiong/
Hamizan Abdul Hamid (2,353 points)

2nd Place:

(Australia) Markus Oszwald/Matt
Macnamara (2,337 points)

3rd Place:

(the Philippines) Larry Hilario
Mendiola/Hiryan Mendiola (2,302)

MURPHY'S LAW

Words by Mark Allen. Photography by Mark Allen & Offroad Images

BEING PREPARED WHILE TRAVELLING IN REMOTE AREAS IS ALL GOOD AND WELL... BUT WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BE PREPARED FOR?

Almost everyone has heard of Murphy's Law. For those that haven't, it's pretty simple – if anything can go wrong, it will.

To make it worse, things generally go wrong at the most inopportune time and place, and if there is more than one thing that could go wrong, they will. While that may sound a little pessimistic, that's how it seems to pan out most of the time.

That's not to say that things will go wrong, but the more remote we 4WDers travel, the better the backup plan should be for when something goes sour. Our problem, however, is that the more precautions we take, and the more spares and tools we carry, the more weight our 4WD carries, which in itself causes many problems for intrepid tourers. The more weight we lug about, the more likely that we'll need those spare parts we are carrying. Catch 22 if ever there was one!

That doesn't mean we should stray off into the bush with no tools,

no spares and no way of getting ourselves mobile if Murphy's Law should strike – that's just plain old stupid. But at what stage do we say enough is enough with the heavy tools, spare parts and recovery gear?

No definitive answer from me, I'm afraid – it's dependent on your type of vehicle, its condition, where you're travelling and your ability to do makeshift repairs with minimal equipment. Not everyone can wrangle a piece of fencing wire to hold an engine mount together or whittle a gumtree branch to help support a suspension component... but it sure helps to be creative and resourceful with what is at hand.

Have I ever been caught out miles away from anyone? Yep, you bet I have. Regardless of how much I may have preached to others about being prepared and how much I've tried to do the right thing – too much preparation (at times) is never enough!

Way back in 1992, we'd left Longreach and were heading for

Birdsville via Stonehenge, Windorah and Betoota. The sun was blasting its usual savage rays down on our gutless 2.4 litre diesel HiLux, which was towing our well-loaded camper-come-home-on-wheels for our two year trip around the block. We soon noticed the skies darkening – big trouble around that area for sure, as the Diamantina River and its millions of tributaries swell to become impassable if it starts bucketing down.

Having planned to be on the road fulltime for about two years (give or take a year or so), I was pretty confident about getting through pretty much any incident. I'd done a diesel mechanics course, worked as a remote area and city surveyor for many years, grew up and lived in the scrub for yonks and had watched my old man repair all manner of breakages with nothing more than a pair of pliers, wire, hammer and shovel. What could go wrong?

Remember the bit earlier about if something terrible does go wrong, it'll always happen in the

NOT EVERYONE CAN WRANGLE A PIECE OF FENCING WIRE TO HOLD AN ENGINE MOUNT TOGETHER... BUT IT SURE HELPS TO BE CREATIVE AND RESOURCEFUL



worst possible place at the most inconvenient time? Well, I could have thrown a shifter at Murphy and buried him six foot under.

Of course, all my cursing and kicking the ground was to no avail. No sooner had the sky appeared a little dark that it soon morphed into a deadly black sky complete with bolts of lightning and huge, deafening raindrops that threatened to dent my poor HiLux's roof and bonnet. In hindsight, I wish that was all we suffered!

Having ploughed through hundreds of metres of water that seemed to instantly appear on the tracks, I hit something submerged that sent not just the HiLux and trailer skywards, but my head into the HiLux's roof. My dear female companion also suffered the indignant and downright painful experience of having all body parts thrust upwards, sideways and belted around a few times on the roof and door only to return to rest once I'd recaptured the steering wheel and stomped on the brakes. Yes, we had our seatbelts on, but that didn't

prevent the savage leaf-sprung-HiLux-beating our bodies took.

After having stared at each other for what seemed like an age, I fumbled a few words out to ask if she was okay, followed by, "I wonder what we've broken on the truck."

While I was extremely concerned for my partner's wellbeing, my mind immediately started searching for telltale signs of what may have happened to our touring rig. Was our trusty HiLux leaning to one side, was its nose pointing down, was the rear end dragging itself along like a lame dog and was the steering wheel still turning the road wheels? Was the trailer still hitched up, the boat on the rack, the heavy tool boxes in place, the fridge still working, the radio and antennae still transmitting? Did we have enough food and water to last by ourselves should something severe have happened, had I double checked the contents of the first aid kit lately...

The questions that ran through my mind just didn't stop. And I hadn't even got out of the cabin yet!

We sat, held our heads and thanked our lucky stars we were not belly-up in the mud and water; we were faced with some awful answers to our questions. If we could only coax ourselves out of the ute to inspect the scene.

We were used to long stints without seeing another soul. I knew we were well prepared with tools, food and water, plus fencing wire to fix most things, but I must admit I was more than a little worried about the damage I might find under the 'unbreakable' HiLux.

I couldn't believe our luck; after spending over an hour in the middle of the muddy waterway that was once a dusty dirt track, laying in the mud inspecting everything from bull bar to rear of trailer, I couldn't find anything wrong nor any reason not to keep ploughing our way to Birdsville – I was a happy and very relieved camper... until you-know-what hit the fan a few hours later – how did Murphy know which way we were travelling?

With the sun now shining, our nerves rekindled and singing out



ONLY ONE WHEEL WAS IN PLACE AND BRAKE LINES DANGLED IN THE DIRT... BUGGER!



loud to a few groovy tunes, the rear end of the HiLux suddenly tugged to one side and then the other, fishtailing along the track with me hanging off the steering wheel trying to settle the wild swaying. Our trailer seemed to have a mind of its own and on the wrong side of the track, trying to overtake its prime mover.

Then it was out in the field on the other side, followed by another savage jerk to which the mighty, gutless HiLux was pinned back with a one tonne anchor that was my broken trailer. That huge hit we all took a couple of hundred kilometres back had seemingly damaged the trailer's stub axle, with the later smaller potholes and corrugations sealing its fate and shearing it and the brakes clean off the trailer.

We had at least driven clear of the rain and back into sunny conditions, but now we were faced with a huge snaking furrow that ploughed up the track, ending at the busted trailer. Its axle now pointed ninety degrees to where it should have been, only

one wheel was in place, brake lines dangled in the dirt and there were now a few dented panels on the trailer – bugger!

Now, this is where we get back to talking about being prepared and what tools and spares you should take on an Outback trip. No, I didn't carry a spare trailer axle. Although I've seen other 4WDers who do, I think that's just too much weight to be burdened with. What I did have, though, were replacement bearings, tools to do the job and the food and water to camp on the side of the road for ages if needed. What I didn't have was the means to weld the stub axle back on – so, should I have carried welding equipment? There's no right or wrong answer, but gee it would have been great to have it out there at the time.

Always knowing where you are is pretty important in my books. We knew we had a couple of hundred kilometres to Birdsville, where I knew there was a mechanic that could (at worst) temporarily fix the





axle and I knew I had the means and ability to disassemble and refit the whole show by myself. The one huge problem we were faced with was how the bloody hell do we suspend the trailer while I remove the axle, spring and brakes?

Looking around revealed not a single, and I mean not one, tree or stump to rest the trailer on, not even a twig to start a camp fire – we were in gibber country! So, after hours of searching for large enough rocks, I used the Hi-Lift jack to lower the trailer body onto the four non-OH&S-certified rock columns that stood proud in the dish-drain alongside the remote gravel road. The trailer's underbody could now be stripped of parts.

Safety to all concerned should be the first consideration at all times. Although I was faced with a long and difficult job, I took my time. I thought about the whole process and made sure I wouldn't become a casualty during the repair. I was fully aware my piles of rocks may tumble, I was abundantly mindful of how dangerous a Hi-Lift jack can be, and so took as many precautions as I could to ensure not just my safety, but the safe return

of both myself and my partner. The jockey wheel, both trailer wheels, the standard HiLux jack and other rocks were all used to ensure the trailer didn't come crashing down on me while underneath.

Having removed the axle and tied it to the bull bar, we transferred as much gear as possible from the trailer to the HiLux and stuck a 'DO NOT SHOOT' sign on the trailer. After driving in and out of Birdsville for the welding job, we replaced the axle and springs, camped on the side of the road for two nights and spent the best part of two days on the tools before setting back off to Birdsville to continue our relaxing trip.

In hindsight, do I think I was adequately prepared?

Well, yes and no. Yes, because I survived the whole ordeal with the tools, food and water and mechanical know-how to complete the job, but no because... if only I had the gear to weld by the side of the road. That would have saved me about a day in the dirt, but then again ol' mate Murphy probably would have found something else to go wrong – you can never be totally prepared!



2013 VARIETY 4WD EXPLORER

WANT TO BE PART OF AN EXCITING CAPE YORK ADVENTURE WHILST RAISING MONEY FOR DISADVANTAGED KIDS? THEN READ ON.

Variety Queensland provides children in need with opportunities to increase their quality of life via three core programs – Freedom, Future Kids and Caring for Kids. Through these worthy programs, Variety Queensland delivers a unique range of goods and services to support the specific needs of individual children across a diverse spectrum of physical, emotional and financial needs.

For 4WDers who crave an adventure while also helping disadvantaged children of Queensland, the 2013 'To the Top' Variety 4WD Explorer is a must-do trip.

This classic 10 day 4WDing journey, slated for June 2013, will have you travelling along

the Old Telegraph Track, where you will get to experience the breathtaking beauty of the Bloomfield Waterfalls, stand on the northernmost tip of Australia and embrace the quaint seaside locale of Cooktown with the Cooktown Discovery Festival in full swing.

Entry costs \$550AUD for participants and every vehicle is required to raise a donation of at least \$5000AUD prior to the event. An additional provisions levy, usually between \$1500-\$2000AUD per person, covers meals, accommodation and special events.

A driver training weekend has been scheduled on the 6th and 7th October 2012 for anyone who wants to hone their 4WDing skills prior to the Cape York trip.



Visit www.variety.org.au/QLD/Events/Motoring-Events/2013-Variety-4WD-Explorer for more details and updates on the 2013 event.

ARB PRODUCTS FOR MAZDA BT-50

ARB's engineers have had a hectic couple of months with the development of a number of products for the new Mazda BT-50. Products available now include a range of bull bars, canopies/truck tops, Old Man Emu suspension and Hayman Reese tow bars, with Air Lockers, side rails and steps and roof racks currently under development. Visit ARB's website (www.arb.com.au) to keep up to date with the latest releases for this vehicle.



DONATE FOR A CAUSE

DRIVE FOR LIFE



THE 2012 VICTORIAN HIGH COUNTRY TOUR KICKS OFF ON SUNDAY, 22ND APRIL.

Drive 4 Life, a not for profit organisation, is back for 2012 to raise funds for the Northcott Equipment Loan Pool via a great new tour of the Victorian High Country.

Running from the 22nd to 27th April 2012, the tour starts in Harrietville and covers 450-550km of travel and exploration through the High Country. Each group of up to 10 vehicles will have experienced 4WDers in

leading and tail-end support vehicles to provide assistance. Although some off road experience is recommended for drivers, the tour is aimed at people who either have not had the opportunity to be expertly guided when driving off road or who do not have the experience to navigate the Victorian High Country on their own.

Participants of the 2012 Victorian High Country tour are asked to

make a \$1000AUD donation per vehicle to the Northcott organisation, with every cent of the donation going to the Equipment Loan Pool. The Northcott Equipment Loan Pool helps increase independence and opportunities for individuals with a disability by supplying wheelchairs and other mobility equipment.

Check out www.drive4life.com.au for full details on the Victorian High Country tour.

HAYMAN REESE CARGO BARRIER

Hayman Reese has just released a new cargo barrier for the Toyota LandCruiser 76 Series wagon. Designed for non side curtain air bag models, the cargo barrier allows installation either behind the first or second row of seats for affordable peace of mind and safety for vehicle occupants. The cargo barrier joins a growing range of Hayman Reese products available at ARB stores, including tow bars and weight distribution systems.

// Part no: T41252



IN RECOVERY

WITH HUNDREDS OF ENTRIES TO THIS COMPETITION, IT'S OBVIOUS SOME FOLK ARE IN DESPERATE NEED OF AN ARB RECOVERY KIT! THE WINNING ENTRY COMES FROM **DAVE CHARLTON**, WHO FLOATED HIS NEW NISSAN GU PATROL DOWN THE MITCHELL RIVER BEFORE IT BECAME TRAPPED ON THE RIVERBANK. THIRTY-SIX HOURS LATER, THE VEHICLE WAS RECOVERED... AND SUBSEQUENTLY WRITTEN OFF.

WINNER!



DAVE CHARLTON, VIC



GILBERT RANDALL, NSW



AARON ROUSE, NT



KEN WOOD, QLD



SIMON GENTLE, VIC

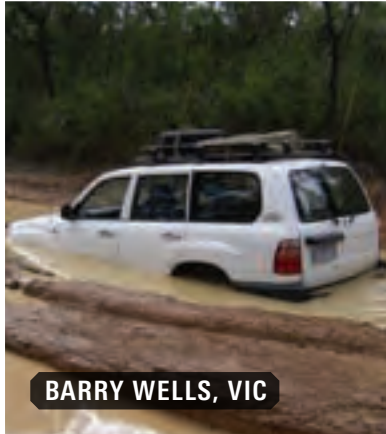


TIM HELM, WA

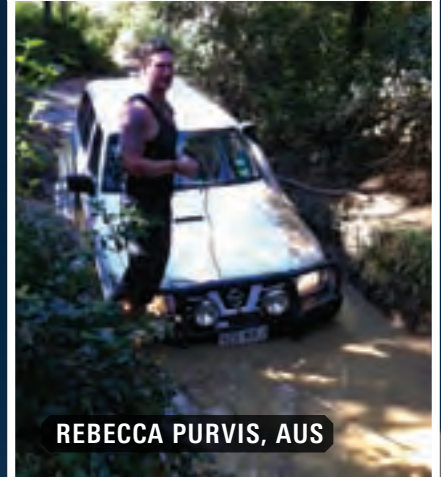


MARK CRAVEN, QLD

IN RECOVERY CONTINUED...



BARRY WELLS, VIC



REBECCA PURVIS, AUS



BEN WESTPHAL, WA



GARY JENNINGS, SA



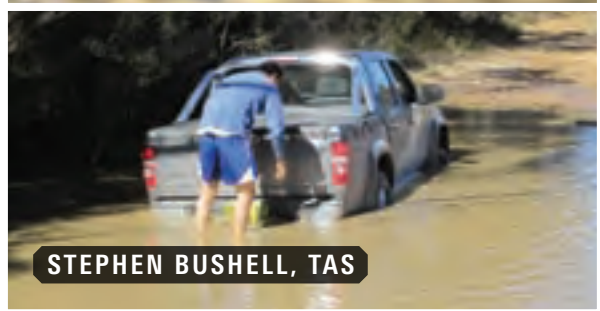
KLAUS WEISS, QLD



LEN MCCREATH, QLD



NORBERTO BAMBOZZI DA SILVEIRA, BRAZIL



STEPHEN BUSHELL, TAS



MICHAEL WOODWARD, SA



MAX FEDCESEN, VIC



COLIN TRIFFITT, TAS



NICOLE VINALL, QLD





OPEN SEASON

ARB OPEN DAYS ARE A GREAT WAY TO GET ADVICE, BARGAINS AND FREEBIES. VICTORIAN STOCKIST REP, JESS BAILEY, SHARES THE GOSS ON THE RECENT ARB BALLARAT EVENT.

Throughout Australia, ARB open days give 4WDers the opportunity to meet industry experts, take advantage of special deals and enjoy a day of entertainment, advice and giveaways.

For a number of years now, Tony Hendy from ARB Ballarat has held his annual Open Day on the first weekend in February. The Open Day Weekend has historically been a hit and 2012 proved to be no different.

Both Jason Fear and I from ARB Kilsyth attended to give Tony and his crew a hand at his Humffray Street location, and it was great to see so many locals turn out to get involved and ask us questions about everything 4WD.

With experienced staff from RedArc and Rhino Rack on hand, the wonderful team from local radio station Power FM broadcasting live, the ARB Traction Travel Bed in action

and the Ballarat 4WD Club serving up great-tasting snags, the weekend turned out to be another great event. Hourly door prizes, ARB trivia questions and lots of radio interviews added to the fun of the weekend.

One of ARB Ballarat's regular events on the weekend is the Dirtiest 4WD Competition. I've been lucky enough to be present for this competition for a number of years now and this year's turnout was dirtier than ever.

With men and women of all ages attending in dusty, muddy, wet and very dirty vehicles, judging really proved to be a task for Jason and myself. After working our way through the vehicles and hearing where they had been put through their paces, we settled on the 2nd place winner being Chris Donnelly and his 1996 single cab HiLux. Chris had been out four wheeling that morning and knew he had to be a shoe-in for a Dirtiest 4WD prize.

I noted in the crowd that 2011's 2nd place winner, Richard Wilson, had returned in his 1994 dual cab HiLux. I didn't think it could have been covered in any more muck but was proved wrong by the amount of mud and dirt he had managed to get on his 4WD this year. Richard had proved his point and it was clear to us that we had found our 1st place winner. Richard happily received his ARB air compressor and talked us through his pride and joy.

As Sunday came to a close and the heavens over Ballarat opened up, the last helium balloon was popped and ARB Ballarat's open day weekend for 2012 was finished.

With 43 stores around Australia, we know it won't be long before the next ARB store open day ramps up. To get in on the fun of an ARB open day, visit the Calendar of Events page on the ARB website for details of the store open day nearest you.

BRAGGING RIGHTS - YOUR 4X4

READER VEHICLE OWNER:

Chris Fowler

VEHICLE MAKE: Toyota

VEHICLE MODEL:

120 Series Prado

VEHICLE YEAR: 2004

ENGINE: 4 litre V6 petrol

ACCESSORIES FITTED: ARB Sahara bar, Warn winch, 6 x IPF 900XS spot lights, engine and transmission protection, Uniden UHF, Safari snorkel, dual battery system, electronic rust protection, Old Man Emu suspension, full headlight and insect screen, Waeco inverter, full roof rack, side canvas awning, Hi-Lift jack and shovel, high mount reverse/work light, Kicker

and Alpine amplifiers with Kenwood speakers, touch screen DVD head unit, ARB front and rear Air Lockers, ARB air compressor, rear cargo barrier, rear fold down camping table, reverse camera, Cooper AT3 rubber and a full recovery kit.

FAVOURITE ARB ACCESSORY: Front and rear lockers!

FAVOURITE 4WD SPOT: Western beach on Fraser Island – clear water and hardly anyone around!

WHY I LOVE 4WDING: It gives you the opportunity to see places that few get to experience. There is nothing better than having

the camp chairs out next to a roaring fire and just unwinding.

MEMORABLE 4WDING MOMENT: Getting recovered by a Hyundai Terracan. I don't think I will ever live it down or forget it! But in my defence, it was before I had my lockers in, it had been raining heavily and I was driving on slippery black soil at Janowen Hills.

ADVICE FOR 4WDERS: Know your recovery gear. Get it out and practice with it! Know how a Hi-Lift jack works, inspect all snatch straps and if you have a winch, read the manual twice!

WINNER!



OFF ROAD WITH ARB

VEHICLE OWNER: Rob Puts, ARB Canopy and Fridge Freezer Product Manager

VEHICLE MAKE: Nissan

VEHICLE MODEL: Patrol Wagon

VEHICLE YEAR: Late 2003

ENGINE: Notorious 3.0 litre diesel. 160,000 km's later, it has performed admirably without any modifications and very little towing.

ACCESSORIES FITTED: ARB deluxe bull bar, IPF 900 Series driving lights, Bushranger 12,000lb winch, Long Ranger fuel tank, ARB on-board air compressor, OME suspension with Nitrocharger sports shocks, RedArc electric brake controller, HEMA HN5i navigator, Black Widow cargo barrier and tourer drawers, Uniden UHF radio, ARB reverse camera and monitor, 60L ARB Fridge Freezer, ARB fridge slide, ARB side and rear awnings, ARB aluminium roof rack and ARB recovery point.

FAVOURITE ARB ACCESSORY: This is a tough question as I use the reverse camera every day

whilst other accessories are more for touring time. With a family of four, I could not head away without the ARB roof rack for the additional storage it provides.

FAVOURITE 4WD SPOT: Davies Plain in the Victorian High Country.

WHY I LOVE 4WDING: It enables the whole family to experience a natural and remote environment where the night sky houses thousands more visible stars than the city or 'burbs. And there's nothing better than drinking a clean crisp beer around a warm fire whilst solving the problems of the world and deciding on the next fantastic destination to visit and explore.

MEMORABLE 4WDING MOMENT: The most bizarre moment occurred when we were camping at the Poplars (Victoria) in a small clearing at the end of the track near the creek. The sun was hot that afternoon and whilst we were enjoying time around camp preparing the damper, a stranger walked up through the creek and into camp with very little



protection from the elements and no supplies. A hit of sugar in the form of 'snakes' confectionery and a can of Coke and she continued walking on her way – a fact which astounded us as we pleaded for her to stay for safety precautions.

ADVICE FOR 4WDERS: When heading into remote countryside, you need to be prepared for a change in conditions. This is particularly evident in mountainous regions where inclement weather is only the next valley away. Keeping dry and warm with sufficient food supplies creates a more comfortable environment. Understand your vehicle and your driving ability and especially do not exceed either's capabilities. Most of all, have fun enjoying this great land of ours.

Readers, send us in your own vehicle profiles and you could be featured in an upcoming magazine and win an ARB Adventure Light. Email: marketing@arb.com.au



SAM EU

THIS ISSUE WE MEET SAM EU, MANAGER OF ARB'S EXPORT DEPARTMENT AND REGULAR OVERSEAS TRAVELLER.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH ARB?

It's been 19 years. I started as a salesperson when ARB's head office was located in Croydon, Melbourne, and really enjoyed selling products and working with customers.

After around four years, Roger Brown asked me to join him in our international dealings, and so the export department was born. We now have seven people in the department and will be expanding again very soon in order to handle our ever-increasing workload.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE EXPORT DEPARTMENT?

Basically, our aim is to establish distribution networks in foreign markets and replicate ARB's Australian successes in those countries.

It involves many hours of research, speaking to customers and figuring out their requirements, risk analysis, understanding foreign banking systems and exchange rates, and a significant amount of travel because there is only so much you can learn about a country from Google.

ARB HAS DISTRIBUTORS IN OVER 100 COUNTRIES... YOU MUST HAVE TRAVELLED A LOT.

When the department was smaller, I used to spend around five months of the year out of the country. This involved visiting our established distributors, preparing others to become ARB distributors and researching new markets.

I've travelled throughout Asia, the Middle East, Europe, former Soviet countries, Africa and the US for ARB.

Because the department is now bigger, the travel workload is more spread out – I don't travel quite as much but there is a team member overseas pretty much every month or so.

YOU DRIVE A 2010 TOYOTA PRADO. HOW OFTEN DO YOU GO 4WDING?

As often as work allows! My last memorable trip was a few months ago when I spent some really great days fly fishing at Kosciuszko National Park. The fishing in that region is a definite highlight.

I'd love to head into desert country one day, too, but I haven't quite managed to get that into action. Not yet, anyway.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO 4WDING?

My older brother, Ben, had a Toyota LandCruiser Bundera and we would go off roading whenever we could. It had ARB products fitted to it (even back then I knew all about ARB).

My first 4WDing trip was with Neil Cocks and we went out to Mungo Station. I was young and had never driven off the bitumen before but I got to drive on the dirt roads and thought 'This is pretty great!' After that, I was hooked.

FAVOURITE 4WDING LOCATION?

Probably the Victorian High Country. Beautiful scenery and a great mix of easy to challenging tracks. Plus it's relatively close to Melbourne, so it's hugely convenient as well.

ANY ADVICE FOR 4WDERS?

Whether it's for your vehicle, your equipment or yourself, preparation for any trip is vital. Always have a plan and contingencies if anything goes awry.



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4X4 ACCESSORIES