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# NZ4WD

NOVEMBER 2024



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**OPENING SHOT**



Snow on the hills, stunning blue skies. Regular contributor Richard Soult headed up the Wilberforce Valley recently with a few mates in superb weather, enjoying a break away in the South Island's majestic interior.



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# FROM THE EDITOR

## THINGS ARE LOOKING UP FINE WEATHER, FUN TIMES AHEAD

This is a great time of year. Busy, but great.

Christmas is just weeks away, springtime has carpeted the outdoors with green, and 4WDers can feel summer adventure in the air.

The national trials series kicks off this month, and there are heaps of safari events to take us into places we'd never see otherwise.

The beach beckons, for day trips or week-long camping; the bush and mountains too.

So many ways to enjoy 4WDing, alone or with mates.

Recent new vehicle sales paint a rosy picture for 4WDers too, now that the EV-ICE playing field has been levelled.

Ford's Ranger was the top model in September after selling 928 units, a 53.4 percent jump from 605 in the same month a year ago.

In second spot was the Toyota Hilux on 624 registrations, a year-on-year increase of 15.8 percent from 539 units, and Mitsubishi's Triton was third with 270 after a 36.4 percent increase from 198 sales in the previous September.

Ford was top brand in September too, with 1,061 total new vehicle registrations. So the Ranger makes up most of Ford's sales.

The Ranger also leads the way on the year-to-date ladder with 8,729 registrations and a 27.2 percent share of the market.

The overall top seller in September was the king of AWD SUVs, Toyota's RAV4.

New Zealand remains a 4WD nation, and long may it continue that way.

A year ago, I made some bold/easy predictions for 2024, and can tick them all:

- The new vehicle market will rebound (took a while)
- Double cab utes and SUVs will continue to dominate (well obviously)
- The booming accessory market will continue to boom (and it sure has)
- The first hybrid electric utes will make their debut (yep, and we've driven them)
- Any full EV ute will remain a distant prospect (indeed. Even EV brand BYD is going with a hybrid for its first real 4WD ute).



*Mark Baker*

Editor, NZ4WD

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# ISUZU MU-X RUNOUT



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**MU-X  
TOUGH**



## Ford launches Ranger PHEV hybrid

*Limited-run Stormtrak model highlights the range*

Plug-in hybrid pickups take a step forward with Ford confirming its new Ranger PHEV.

The PHEV drivetrain will be available in Wildtrak, Sport and XLT Rangers, and Ford is introducing a PHEV-exclusive Stormtrak launch edition. The limited-run vehicle features a new Chill Grey paint colour, the practical Flexible Rack System5 and a luxurious cabin with unique finishes.

The new model offers the same towing, payload and off-road performance as other Rangers along with electric-only driving ability, strengthening Ford's leadership of the pickup market in Australia and New Zealand.

Ranger PHEV combines a 2.3-litre turbocharged four-cylinder EcoBoost petrol engine with a 75kW electric motor (e-motor) and 11.8kWh (usable) battery boosting the off-road and towing capability that Ranger owners need for work and play.

The ability to provide smooth, electric-only driving for a targeted range of more than 45km enhances the on-road appeal of the latest Ranger model.

Ranger PHEV also introduces Pro Power Onboard2 to the Ranger line-up, enabling customers to power up to a maximum of 6.9kW of tools directly from the onboard battery rather than needing a generator.

"The Ranger PHEV delivers the benefits of electrification together with the hard-working performance that has built



Above: Ranger's tow rating unaffected by new drivetrain.  
Below left: power tools and accessories. Below right: new version gets its own badge.



Ranger a loyal customer base in Australia and New Zealand. We ensured our first PHEV pickup in Australia and New Zealand would be a hugely capable tool for work and off-roading, as well as a smart vehicle with the tech, connectivity



and EV-only capability for family life," said Andrew Birkic, President and CEO, Ford Australia and New Zealand.

The Ranger PHEV will be produced in Silverton, South Africa, with initial customer deliveries expected in 2025.



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## Nissan reveals next Patrol

*Farewelling the mighty V8*

The long-awaited new-generation Nissan Patrol has been shown in Abu Dhabi, but there's a long wait for a right-hand drive version.

The new Y63 Patrol is the first new version in 14 years. The 5.6-litre four-cam V8 engine used in the current Y62 will be replaced by a choice of V6 engines.

A 3.5-litre 317kW/700Nm turbocharged petrol V6 is confirmed as the engine fitted to versions of the Y63 coming to Australasian markets.

There will also be a naturally aspirated 3.8-litre V6 producing 236kW and 386Nm of torque for some markets.

The Y63 Patrol will use a Jatco-sourced nine-speed torque converter auto paired with the familiar full-time 4WD system.

The Patrol will ride on a new platform underpinning a 35mm longer (5202mm) and 35mm wider (2030mm) vehicle riding on the same wheelbase (3075mm) as the

Y62. Its all-new customisable adaptive air suspension uses e-damper technology, which automatically adjusts damper settings, to provide a comfortable and seamless transitions between on and off-road driving. Its suspension is capable of providing 70mm of ride height adjustment.

The transmission features six drive modes – standard, sand, rock, mud, eco and sport – as well as a 4WD transfer mode interlock system. In addition, the Patrol has Vehicle Dynamic Control, traction control and a tyre pressure monitoring system.

Inside, the higher grades get dual 14.3-inch digital displays and dual 12.3-inch media screens for row-two occupants. Other key interior features include a combined nine litres of storage across the glove and console box; Biometric Cooling tech, that can detect body temperatures and adjust settings



Armada/Patrol gets a fresh new look.

accordingly; clever 'EZ flex' seats, which allows access to the third row without removing a child seat; a third-row power-fold function, which can fold and return the third-row seats via a touchscreen control; USB Type-C ports in every row; a wireless phone charger pad in the front centre console; and a panoramic sunroof is standard across the range.

The Y63 Patrol is equipped with seven airbags including a driver's knee airbag; a 3D

around view monitor; smart rear view mirror; rear zoom view; automatic emergency braking with pedestrian detection, predictive forward collision warning; and rear automatic emergency braking.

The Y63 will make its showroom debut in the Middle East this year. While Australia and thus New Zealand will become the first right-hand-drive markets to offer the Y63 Patrol, production of RHD versions is only scheduled for 2026.



Expect the next Patrol to go as well offroad as always.

4WD

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## Big steel for Aussie

Toyota confirms its first-ever RHD Tundra



Toyota's full-size Tundra pickup will officially go on sale in Australia in November 2024 following final approval of the project by Toyota Motor Corporation in Japan.

Toyota Australia has partnered with Walkinshaw Automotive Group to re-engineer the US-built Tundra from left-hand drive to right-hand drive, with the vehicle to be produced at Walkinshaw's manufacturing facility in Melbourne.

The new Tundra will launch in Limited grade with a new Australian top-of-the-range premium version to join it in the second quarter of 2025.

Both versions use the TNGA-F

platform that underpins the LandCruiser 300 Series and are powered by a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 engine that generates 326kW of power and 790Nm of torque, driving through a 10-speed automatic transmission.

The Tundra's engine is mated to a part-time 4WD system with a dual-range transfer case and offers a 4.5-tonne braked towing capacity.

In Limited guise, the Tundra will feature 20-inch alloy wheels, LED lights, leather-accented seats with power adjustment, heating and ventilation for the driver and front passenger, 14-inch multimedia touchscreen with a 12-speaker JBL audio system and wireless Apple CarPlay and

wired Android Auto compatibility, 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster, dual-zone climate control, and trailer brake controller.

The new premium grade is distinguished on the outside by its unique grille, black painted alloy wheels, black-accented tailgate, a panoramic moonroof and other cosmetic changes.

Inside, it takes the luxury to a new level with standard equipment including leather-accented seats that offer a massage function for the front and heating and ventilation for the rear outboard positions, power adjustable steering column and heated steering wheel, and 10.9-inch head up display.

## Outlander updated

Best-selling PHEV gets increased range

Mitsubishi Motors Corporation has launched an updated plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) model of its Outlander crossover SUV, and premiered it in Europe. An update for the petrol-only model is planned to follow in 2025, and both PHEV and gasoline models will then be refreshed in markets including North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Mitsubishi Motors says the Outlander PHEV brings together the best of the brand's electrification and all-wheel control technologies. The model is a three-row seven-seater.

The PHEV has a bigger battery to boost EV range to more than

80 kilometres.

It features optimised S-AWC, updated suspension and new tyres. Interior convenience and comfort have been improved with the introduction of a navigation system featuring a large

12.3-inch display, enhanced connectivity features, and seat ventilation. There is a new audio system developed in collaboration with Yamaha Corporation.

Three of the six-model range in New Zealand are 4WD.



The first-generation Outlander PHEV was launched in 2013 in Japan as the world's first plug-in hybrid 4WD SUV.

A fully redesigned model was released in December 2021, and a total of more than 370,000 Outlanders have been sold across the two generations. Today, the Outlander PHEV is the world's best-selling plug-in hybrid 4WD SUV.

## BMW first to go hydrogen

*Mapping out a diverse fuel future*

BMW will launch its first mass-market hydrogen-powered car in 2028, followed by multiple other fuel-cell variants of existing models, making it the first manufacturer to do so in what it has called "a milestone in automotive history".

It is likely the first model to benefit will be the X5 SUV.

BMW was the first to create a hydrogen powered vehicle when it built a 7 Series that burned hydrogen in its internal combustion engine 20 years ago. That project was a demonstration of the practicality of the fuel. More recently, BMW also produced an X5 that burns hydrogen in its internal combustion engine, again as a proof of concept.

The new fuel cell cars being developed for sale will use powertrains co-developed with Toyota with the announcement coming as part of a strengthening of the two car firms' partnership to develop the technology.

Meanwhile, Volvo is the latest brand to backpedal on its EV plans. The auto-



maker had earlier planned to sell only electric vehicles by 2030, but will now

continue to offer a range of drivetrains for the foreseeable future.

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## A new swamp buggy

*Atrina gets out into the muck*

The mad world of swamp buggy all-terrain vehicles is getting popular. Joining the Atlas, profiled recently by *NZ4WD*, and the Sherp, apparently available in New Zealand, is Atrina.

It's a completely new all-terrain vehicle that runs – like others in the global 'swampy' market – on ultra low-pressure tires. It can be used to transport goods, equipment, people, and is also being used for recreation, hunting, fishing and mining.

Atrina's design consists of two independent and absolutely sealed

hydraulically driven 'boat' frames that rotate about their axis and can fold almost in half.

Two hydraulic cylinders, which are used for folding and roll, can be adjusted flexibly. It is possible to set any elasticity due to the variability of oil pressure. The unit is also powered by road wheel rotation.

In the process of overcoming obstacles, the volume of air can move between the rear and front wheels, thus ensuring the passage of areas with difficult terrain. It is powered by a four-cylinder, 1.5 litre petrol

engine with a capacity of 52kW runs through five-speed manual gearbox. Maximum speed is 50km/h; fuel consumption four litres per hour. There are two 60 litre fuel tanks.

In the cab, an on-board computer displays the status of all the all-terrain vehicle's systems. There is a built-in roll cage.

Atrina's forward section carries two people; the rear section holds eight.

The low-pressure tires are 1.6 metres tall and 600mm wide, ground clearance is 600mm.

Atrina joins the growing throng of all-terrain swamp buggies on the market.



## Tweaked Prado

*Aftermarket suppliers get busy ahead of launch*

The 2025 Toyota Land Cruiser Prado is due by the end of 2024, but the aftermarket accessory sector is already busy.

The Prado has already been beefed up by Japanese car customiser Wald International, creating a wildly modified Prado.

While the factory version has bold, confident styling, Wald has taken the Prado to another level with almost every panel tweaked.

There are custom lights, front grille and a wild front bumper along with a bold new bonnet featuring a large air intake flanked by bulges on either side.

Off-road tyres and six-spoke alloy wheels are also offered.

Wald body kits and alloy wheels range in price, with details yet to be shared on the Prado upgrades. Expect an invoice between \$1,000 and \$5,000.



## Kia's ute draws slowly closer

*Desert testing video reveals more details of the new 4WD*



It may be the longest vehicle launch announcement ever, but Kia's 4WD ute appears to be set for a proper unveiling

in early 2025.

The company has posted official video of the truck being tested in the desert at Al Qudra in the United Arab Emirates, which reveals a little more of its layout, including a live, multilink rear diff and coil spring rear end.

Media overseas reckon the engine will be a version of Kia's 2.2-litre turbodiesel engine.

The flat-fronted truck still wears its arty camo wrap, concealing any styling

of the body except the unusual wheelarch 'eyebrows' seen in all official photography to date.

Kia said the Tasman will have a global launch, but it specifically mentioned Korea, Australia, Africa, and the Middle East as target markets to start. We have to presume New Zealand will get the truck about the same time as Australia.

View the desert test here: <https://youtu.be/V2wB7jwwxFY>





## Wrangling over Wrangler

*Mahindra rocks a bigger Thar*

Three years ago, Indian auto maker Mahindra launched the Thar. It appeared to 'quite similar' to Jeep's Wrangler.

That sparked a bit of a stoush between Jeep and Mahindra.

Now, Mahindra has created a new variant of their go-anywhere 4WD with two extra doors and a longer body.

Say hello to the Mahindra Thar Roxx. Perhaps this one also bears a resemblance to another 4WD.

Mahindra used to make the Jeep under license, and some of those vehicles –

loosely based on the Jeep CJ4 – even came to New Zealand.

They may have also borrowed some styling cues from those vehicles over the years.

But back to the Thar Roxx itself. The boxy SUV gets a six-slat grille that's divided into two tiers. It has LED daytime running lights around the round LED headlights.

Those rear doors have handles built into the window frames, giving the SUV a two-door look. There's optional two-tone

paint and a choice of 18 or 19-inch alloy wheels wrapped in 255/60 tires.

The Thar Roxx is longer by 443mm than the standard Thar. It has 650mm of water-wading capability.

The interior largely remains the same as the three-door version of the Mahindra Thar. There are two 10.25-inch displays; one is a digital instrument panel while the other is the touchscreen infotainment system. Other features include a panoramic sunroof, ventilated front seats, a nine-speaker Harman & Kardon sound system, a wireless charging pad, and a cooler glovebox.

Mahindra says the Thar Roxx rides on a new ladder frame that "delivers better road manners while still retaining its rugged ability to cover uneven terrain". The front suspension has double wishbones with coil springs while the rear suspension has a live axle with a Watts link for improved handling.

Engines are either a 2.0-litre turbo-petrol or Mahindra's familiar 2.2L mHawk inline-four turbo-diesel engine. Transmissions are six-speed manual or six-speed automatic made by Aisin.

The 4WD system comes with electronic locking differentials, multiple terrain modes, and a crawl smart assist system.





## Isuzu will electrify the D-Max

*Stock-looking EV version goes on sale next year*

Isuzu has followed Toyota's lead in showing a near-production battery-electric version of its best-selling ute, the D-MAX.

The BEV version was confirmed at the time of its announcement as being developed for the Australian market. First, a production model will be ready for the Norwegian market next year, based on a prototype that features a 130kW/325Nm dual-motor powertrain and 66.9kWh lithium-ion battery.

Crucially, the D-MAX EV can still tow 3500kg and maintains the diesel's circa-1000kg payload.

Isuzu has been developing the EV version since 2023, and is also said to be working on hybrid and plug-in hybrid versions of the Isuzu D-MAX for markets where charging infrastructure lags behind the EV transition.



## Everrati boosts the G-Wagen

*Another electric 4WD from leading auto modifier*

Everrati's Arcade Sojourn is a completely restored and updated luxury 4WD based on the Mercedes GE 230.

The company's 'reimagination' of the Mercedes-Benz G Class, one of the world's most renowned off-roaders, creates a fully zero-emission electric 4WD.

Available with a 55kWh battery, combined with an electric motor offering 112kW and 300Nm of torque, the Sojourn has a 240km range.

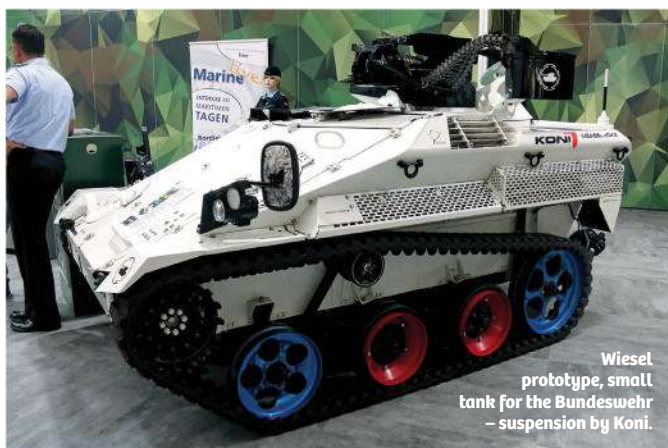
The GE 230 has served in military, civilian, and expeditionary roles and become synonymous with adventure, reliability, and luxury.

The two-door, six or eight-seater, soft top Arcade Sojourn is completely customisable to the owner's individual specifications. All donor vehicles are sourced from the Swiss Military and the Sojourn blends G Class toughness with cutting-edge technology. Modern conveniences range from the finest interior materials to the very latest entertainment systems and advanced vehicle control and safety features, bridging the gap between tradition and innovation.





Not often you get to see the Carlos Saing, Mini John Cooper Works Buggy, 2020 Dakar winner in the flesh.



Wiesel prototype, small tank for the Bundeswehr – suspension by Koni.



Eagle V 4x4 MRAP of the Bundeswehr.

## Automechanika

### 4WD highlights at mega-show

The bi-annual Automechanika show in Frankfurt is the world's largest expo focussing on automotive repair, parts and accessories.

The editor of our sister publication, *Motor Equipment News*, attended this year's event and found lots of interest in the 4WD area – starting with some

interesting vehicles plus some accessories and repair equipment.

We always think the pictures tell the story at events like this!



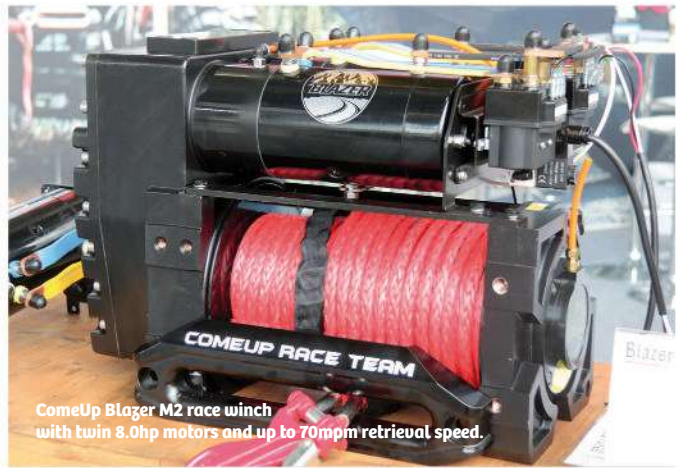
Terrain Tamer were flying the ANZAC flag at Automechanika.



As were Raptor – UPOL who had a stand and this 4x4 camper on display.



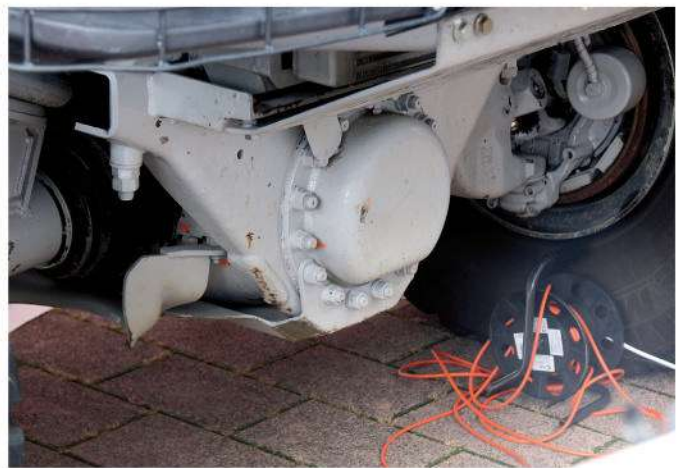
Dana had a Wrangler on display with a beefy Dana 60 axle.



ComeUp Blazer M2 race winch with twin 8.0hp motors and up to 70mpm retrieval speed.



Ford off-road truck with massively braced front diff (right).



Mercedes Unimog adventure truck taking on a very steep ramp.



A full rebuild on a Series 3 – original chassis but body is a fibreglass replica.



**Above and below:  
tough 4WDs – and a Mini-Me – in the sun.**



## Sun, springtime and 4WDs

### Excitement at the Christchurch 4x4 Outdoor Expo

*Words by Scott Fellers, images by Kristen Fellers*

The 4x4 Outdoor Expo in Christchurch kicked off on a warm spring Saturday. The two day event at the Wolfbrook Arena was full of eye popping 4WDs and all the cool gear you could ever want. So with shorts and sunnies on, our family jumped in the 4WD and headed down.

Upon arrival it was impossible not to go straight to the show and shine lot. The place was absolutely packed with amazing rigs. There were so many trucks that it was almost hard to take them all in, though each one separately would have turned my head on any other day.

We all picked out our

favourites with mine being an older white SAS Hilux Surf with some retro Toyota yellow, orange and red stripes down the side, it even had a model truck sitting on the dash with the same decals. Kristen and my son Jack both got a kick out of a dented matte black Surf with a sky-high lift, but for different reasons. My son Jack enjoyed being able to stand straight upright beneath it and Kristen was entertained by the licence plate "4 YMAK." The Waimakariri River is known for its truck-swallowing mud holes, so the funny custom plate seemed appropriate for such a huge rig!

Once inside the arena we grabbed our 4x4 Expo tote bag

hoping that was an indication of things to come. Covering the arena floor there were a multitude of vendors with every 4WD accessory or accoutrement you could dream of. Many booths also had a jaw-dropping 4WD decked out with their latest gear. There were a number of perfect GQ Safaris scattered around that had come from the North Island and the most extreme Ranger I've seen was sitting in the Maxxis booth.

In addition to all of the amazing trucks there were all sorts of amazing deals. It seemed like every booth had a special on something from t-shirts to roofents. The

vendors also had small freebies in the form of stickers, air fresheners, candy and the like. Jack treated the venue like Halloween, filling his tote bag further at each stop. Everyone was happy to get the little guy fired up.

The one thing that seemed to permeate through the event was the sense that everyone was enjoying themselves. There were smiling faces across the event. It was hard not to get excited with so many like minded people all in one spot. For those who missed it this year, I'd highly recommend shining up that old 4WD and getting down to the event next year.



A lovely 40-Series pickup.



The show featured a few crazy offroaders.



Advocacy stands were also a feature.



Well named Toyota.



Outdoor accommodation done right.



A classic Kiwi Landie.



Everybody loves a modified 40-Series. Check out that tail-chop.



Lift kits were super-popular.



Tough truck, inside and out.



Everyone wants to show off their undersides.



Underbody protection for everyone.



Big mods were on display, including mega-articulation.



Serious rubber for all conditions.





Image by Daniel Howat.



## Where to go, what to see and do – and when

### 2 NOVEMBER

#### **NZFWDA National 4x4 Trial – Round 1**

Hosted by Hawke's Bay 4WD Club, the first round of the 2024/2025 season kicks off in sunny Hawke's Bay. 1383 Argyll Road Otane.

More info: [www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar](http://www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar)

### 30 NOVEMBER

#### **NZFWDA National 4x4 Trial – Round 2**

Hosted by Thames Valley 4WD Club. 1051 Tahuna Road, Waiterimu.

More info: [www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar](http://www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar)

### 18 JANUARY 2025

#### **NZFWDA National 4x4 Trial – Round 3**

Hosted by Levin 4WD Club. 2247 Rangiwahia Road, Rangiwahia.

More info: [www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar](http://www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar)

### 25-27 JANUARY 2025

#### **Matiere Cosy Club Safari**

Hosted by King Country 4WD Club. Matiere is a historic settlement on the Forgotten World Highway in the heart of the King Country with panoramic views of river, railway, bush and farmland. Camping at the Matiere Rugby Club, the safari will travel over hilltops and through valleys with local guides. Open to all 4WDs with good M/T tyres.

This three-day event costs \$480.00 for driver and passenger with all meals supplied.

Register at [www.kc4wd.co.nz](http://www.kc4wd.co.nz)

### 8 FEBRUARY 2025

#### **High county 4WD Camping Adventure**

Hosted by the Taranaki Family 4x4 Club. 570 Te Marama Road, Waikawau. Camping available both Friday night from 5.00pm and Saturday night. Bring your own food, refreshments, tents, and camping gear.

Bring your bush truck or road going shiny, but beware you may scratch it.

This is a follow the leader event, 4WD experience required, low range, high clearance, towing, and winching and UHF radio required.

Please bring shovel, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and recovery gear.

Phone: 0274 473 184

### 22/23 FEBRUARY 2025

#### **NZFWDA National 4x4 Trial – Round 4**

Hosted by Manawatu 4WD Club. 89 Pollock Road, Colyton.

Date may change from Saturday to Sunday to be confirmed.

More info: [www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar](http://www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar)

### 23 MARCH 2025

#### **NZFWDA National 4x4 Trial – Round 5**

Hosted by Bay of Plenty 4WD Club. 1201 Rangiuuru Road, Te Puke.

More info: [www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar](http://www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar)

### 12 APRIL 2025

#### **NZFWDA National 4x4 Trial – Round 6**

Hosted by Counties 4WD Club. 3/30 Omaiko Road, Kaiatea, Whangarei.

More info: [www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar](http://www.nz4x4trials.co.nz/calendar)

### 15-20 APRIL 2025

#### **Land Rover Rally**

To be held in Wanaka with three days of safaris followed by two days of vehicle displays at Wheels in Wanaka. All models of Land Rovers and Range Rovers from 1948 to 2025 are invited to join in for an action-packed Land Rover-only rally with exclusive off-road safaris exploring seldom accessed high-country stations.

The trustees and organising committee for Wheels '25 are delighted with the number of vehicle display registrations received so far, with next Easter's event destined to be the biggest, best and last. Participants must be members of the NZFWD Association, either as a member of an affiliated club, or as a United Club member: To attend the wheels at Wanaka check out their website to buy exhibiting enthusiast and supporter tickets for yourself, friends and family now: [www.wheelsatwanaka.co.nz/exhibit/exhibitors](http://www.wheelsatwanaka.co.nz/exhibit/exhibitors)

As previous events, all Landies attending will have their own dedicated parking & display area at the Wheels venue.

More info: Colin Brown 0274 333 033

[cdabrown52@gmail.com](mailto:cdabrown52@gmail.com)

If you, your club or anyone you know are planning any events, please get in contact with our Event Manager Ashley Lucas. We can assist in promotion of the event and may be able to offer some assistance in other areas. Email [Ashley@nz4wd.co.nz](mailto:Ashley@nz4wd.co.nz)

# WIN A SEIKO SUZUKI JIMNY WATCH



**CLOSING  
SOON**



*To celebrate Suzuki's great finance offer of no deposit and low finance, Suzuki are giving away a limited edition Seiko Suzuki Jimny watch valued at \$1,000 USD*

*To enter the draw email your details to [competition@nz4wd.co.nz](mailto:competition@nz4wd.co.nz)*

*Seiko Suzuki Jimny is stainless steel, camo-painted dial with Jimny's rhino logo, wrapped by army green-hued bezel and silicone strap. Rated as a divers watch water resistant up to 200m.*

CONDITIONS: ONE ENTRY PER PERSON, DRAW CLOSING NOVEMBER 1ST, 2024



# Loaded to the hilt

Work hard, play hard in Mitsubishi's do-it-all 4WD

It's not often *NZ4WD* gets a fully loaded 4WD to test. Canopies, racks and storage systems are usually left to the aftermarket which means magazines seldom get to try out this important gear.

But this second drive of the new Mitsubishi Triton in popular GLX-R trim also comes with a serving of accessories that many 4WD users will envy.

About the truck: the Triton complies with Mitsubishi's policy of longer model life, punctuated by regular model refreshes. This means owners of a particular version get excellent residual value, while the arrival of an all-new Triton means a significant step forward.

Combine that with Mitsubishi's policy of loading

the Triton's standard spec sheet to the hilt and the popularity of this 4WD ute is clear. Now in its sixth generation, the Triton – or L200 as it's known elsewhere – is marketed in nearly 150 countries and has sold a cumulative 5.6 million units worldwide since the original launched in 1978.

Mitsubishi has gone hard on capability and technology for this latest iteration, with notable gains in size, practicality, towing capacity, performance, and of course safety. A new ladder chassis has a 65 percent greater cross-sectional area than previous models, 40 percent improved bending rigidity and 60 percent improved torsional rigidity.

Which brings us to the GLX-R, our second run in the

new Triton. We put the top-of-the-line VXR up against the Ford Ranger XLT at the start of the year and came away well impressed. Now, we're looking at an accessory-loaded mainstream model that offers buyers a ute that works hard all week at building sites or on the farm, yet scrubs up nicely for weekend duties with the family.

As we found when we drove the VXR version, this new Triton is much more 'planted' on the road, and it takes rough, muddy stuff in its stride. This is partly thanks to a boost in width (wider track front and rear) and a longer wheelbase.

The new Triton platform's 130mm-longer wheelbase creates a more balanced design with less rear overhang and a much more coherent profile.

Staying underneath, the whole Triton 4WD range now gets its Super Select II transmission system, allowing use of 4-hi on sealed roads. Mitsubishi was first to offer a ute 4WD system suitable for high-speed on-road use. Rivals also offer transmissions with on road 4WD capability, but not across their whole ute range.

When the rear diff lock is combined with 4-lo lock, things get serious. It's the most aggressive transmission lock we've experienced in a long time and enables the truck to chew its way through the rough with minimal input from the driver.

There's also hill descent control for dodgy downhills.

The 4WD models have seven software-controlled drive







**SPECIFICATION**

**2024 Mitsubishi Triton GLX-R**

Price **\$53,990**

**Engine:** 2.4-litre turbodiesel four cylinder

**Transmission:** 6-speed automatic, part time 4WD, rear diff lock

**Power:** 150kW at 3,500rpm

**Torque:** 470Nm at 1,599-2,750rpm

**Fuel economy:** 8.8l/100km

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:** 233gm/km

**Wheels/tyres:** 18x7.5-inch aluminium alloy wheels, 265/60x18 Maxxis Bravo A/T

**Ground clearance:** 222mm

**Approach angle:** 30.4 degrees

**Ramp-over angle:** 23.4 degrees

**Departure angle:** 22.8 degrees

**Turning circle:** 12.4m

**Kerb weight:** 2,111kg

**ANCAP safety rating:** five-star, 2024

form to please old-school owners.

The main drive selector is a meaty rotary dial that falls easily to hand and features RWD, 4-hi, 4-lo and 'lock' options for when things get challenging.

The surround camera system standard from the GLX+ grade came in handy when navigating tighter sections or driving over crests, as the

Triton's wide and bluff bonnet could limit forward visibility in these scenarios. It was just as handy reversing out of the driveway at home base.

We did toggle through various terrain modes which team with the 4WD modes to tailor the drivetrain response and electric assists to optimise the Triton for the terrain – choose from Normal, Eco, Gravel, Snow, Mud, Sand and Rock.

The GLX-R arrived with an accessory package that would be a dream set-up for tradies, on-site service companies and rural contractors. A Crown canopy with asymmetric side windows 'bar' rack on top, side racking inside and dual roll-out locking drawers running the full length on the wellside. There was also a towbar to maximise the utility of this utility.

The package does make its presence felt in acceleration, braking and cornering, but for those who need the gear, it's well worth it.

The old Triton has always driven well, but the new one must prove itself against some advanced segment leaders.

We took the Triton through trails that ranged from mild to more challenging dips and climbs featuring dirt, sand and

some pretty rocky beach sections as well. We also ran it through our favourite mud and hole track down beside the Waikato River.

We tested out the high-spec Triton's Super Select II 4WD system with various modes, and just general grip, clearance and articulation.

A word about the tyres. When we tested the VRX we were slightly surprised at the offroad performance of its Maxxis tyres. Once again, the GLX-R arrived on Maxxis treads, and once again it impressed. They are called an A/T but in tread design they tend toward the urban end of the A/T spectrum. So on-road, they are quiet and grippy. On dirt, they grip and go. We did clog up the tread in our favourite Waikato muddy bits but the tyres self-cleaned as they went, maintaining forward progress.

Touring on tarmac was restful. We are finally surrendering to active/adaptive cruise control, which is now advanced enough to be a real boon on longer drives. It's standard across the Triton range and is self-cancelling below 25km/h.

Perhaps not so much fun is the driver awareness system. A

small camera mounted on the steering wheel column monitors the driver's head position and chimes an alert if it detects the driver's head is not pointed straight ahead. Thanks to ANCAP and other safety authorities, these systems default in the 'on' position. If the driver so much as scratches their nose: bong, flash! The driver distraction system kicks off.

That's fine on the motorway, but it went off on the Greenlane roundabout during one drive and was chiming constantly on a couple of twisty gravel roads where we were looking across a tight corner to see where we were going. Even when it was temporarily deleted using the main menu for a particularly gnarly track, we had to dive into the menu again each time we stopped and reset it to the 'off' position before driving away.

That's progress, they reckon.

Lane departure warnings and other safety assists were less intrusive, with visual warnings and gentle pressure on the steering to centre the truck in its lane.

In summary, buyers looking for a ute that arrives fitted out with cargo/tool storage gear to suit weekday tradie work



should be taking a close look at the kitted-out Triton – even more so because it makes the fit-out a one-stop, box ticking process at the time of purchase. Canopy, lock-boxes, bar rack and full cab roof rack – or any

mix and match combo to suit the intended use.

Mitsubishi also has a ‘freebie’ offer on Triton at the moment, \$2,600 worth of gear to spice up the ride. The ‘Beast Pack’ includes a fitted tow bar, a deck

liner and floor mats.

At the current retail price, that makes the Triton a very persuasive purchase argument, with or without the extra-cost cargo and tool storage accessories.

1. Sliding drawers offer secure storage.
2. Bar-type roof rack maximises rooftop storage.
3. Right side of canopy features a bug-screened sliding window.
4. Triton GLX-R, ready for anything.

ESTABLISHED 1995

PREMIUM VEHICLE ACCESSORIES

# CROWN // CANOPIES

BUILT TOUGH, BUILT TO LAST & BUILT IN NEW ZEALAND FOR OVER 30 YEARS



**CROWN** // **FULLY EQUIPPED**



# Light, agile, and **GREAT FUN**

Suzuki offers an automatic for all reasons

In Aussie, they call it the 'XL'. Realistically, it's more of an 'L'.

At the beginning of 2024, Suzuki's Jimny 4WD became a more practical compact 4x4 off-roader with the arrival of the five-door, which opens up a whole new market for the wee SUV.

The Suzuki Jimny is a mechanical anachronism in every sense, harking back to a time when 'SUV' was not really a thing and 4WDs rarely even had interior trim.

It has everything it needs: live axles, hi-lo transfer case

4WD, a wheel at each corner.

What it doesn't get loaded with is electronic fruit.

Stuff that nags the driver if it thinks they are not paying attention to the road.

Stuff the grabs the wheel if the car thinks it's veering out of its lane.

Stuff that few if any Jimny buyers are likely to miss.

Its redeeming features are simple: the Jimny is somehow still completely and utterly lovable, has an iconic design, huge off-road capability and excellent recommended retail

price. To this recipe the 'XL' offers a stretched wheelbase, two extra doors, more cargo space and a slightly larger and better-equipped cabin.

So then the five-door, and specifically the auto version. NZ4WD had a brief drive of the five-door auto at launch and found it quite interesting. Even though it has only four speeds, the automatic transmission is well matched to the Jimny, on or off the road. All Jimny models use Suzuki's Allgrip Pro part time hi-lo ratio 4WD systems. This

is old-school 'proper' 4WDing. When in 4WD, the system directly connects the front and rear wheels, making it possible to distribute engine power to all four tyres evenly and without loss.

This compact 4WD off-road SUV has no direct – or even indirect! – rival. There are only ersatz SUVs like Hyundai's Venue or the Toyota Yaris Cross – road-going runabouts lacking off-road credibility or capability.

The Jimny, on the other hand, is a bona fide rock-





crushing superstar, with hardly a care for nicety or subtlety.

Perhaps the only rival is the three-door Jimny.

Three or five door, the Jimny cannot be beaten in its resale values. A quick check of pre-owned Jimny models on Trade Me revealed vehicles starting at their original retail prices.

The five-door auto shares a lot of equipment with three-door models, such as LED headlights and 15-inch alloy wheels with Bridgestone Dueler highway-terrain tyres,

complete with a full-size spare wheel on the tailgate.

As well as the bigger body and extra doors, the five door has wireless Apple CarPlay displayed on a larger and much prettier 9.0-inch central touch-screen (up from 7.0 inches).

The two-speaker stereo is upgraded to four speakers and there's a digital radio tuner.

Other standard equipment includes single-zone automatic climate control, a leather-covered steering wheel, a USB-A port and two

12-volt power sockets (one in the front and another in the boot), plus cloth upholstery with four-way manual front seat adjustment.

There are two rear seats which come with dual Isofix and top-tether child seat anchorage points, and the two extra doors make access much easier too.

Jimny five door also gets a new stereo camera system and auto models get adaptive cruise control and night-time pedestrian recognition.

On road at low speed, the

Jimny is fun. Small, agile, easily placed in tight spaces thanks to that wheel at each corner design. Highway driving is a tad busy – the 1.5-litre engine is revving at 3,000rpm at 100km/h.

Off the road, the auto is a slightly smoother drive and the relatively low gearing is an advantage. Though the transmission ratios are taller, they run through 4.3:1 diffs where the manual has 4.09:1 diffs; the auto's transfer case also runs reduction gearing. And when 4-lo first gear isn't



1



2



3



4

enough, there's an 'electronic' slip limiter, hill hold and hill descent functions.

Wheel articulation from the solid axles is decent, but it's the vehicle's tiny footprint, good approach, departure and ramp-over angles (36, 47, 24 degrees respectively) that give it such excellent off-road capability.

The five-door's ultra-light weight means it can tackle most ascents, descents and

tricky obstacles without much forethought – it just grips and goes.

Ground clearance is 210mm.

But whack it into low-range (4-lo) and it climbs up ludicrously demanding inclines and navigates treacherous passes and washed-out trails.

The lack of a proper locking diff doesn't seem to hinder it because it's light on its feet, negotiating bush tracks and



5

1. Jimny five door expands the appeal of the unique 4WD.
2. The driver and front passenger get cloth seats, an infotainment screen and more.
3. Five door has real cargo area, a big step up from the three door.
4. That front end— unbeatable approach angle.
5. Cheeky charm and real 4WD ability.
6. Longer chassis, more legroom, cargo space



6

clay trails with an effortlessness that's breathtaking.

It does all this with incredible self-assurance, despite riding on skinny Bridgestone highway-terrain (H/T) tyres. We can only imagine how capable it would be with a set of serious all-terrain (A/T) rubber, but we do know a set of A/Ts is high on the list for many owners.

Fuel economy? The

Japanese car-maker reckons the 2024 Suzuki Jimny auto averages 6.9L/100km (6.4L/100km in the manual); we managed 7.1L/100km during the national media launch last year. Aussie media must have big heavy boots – we've seen reviews where they only got 11.0L/100km. Strewth, cobber.

It's light. When everything NZ4WD reviews is 2,000kg and more, it's quite unusual to

be strapping around in something that weighs 1,200kg.

So the Jimny five-door is as always real fun to drive, lighter than anything out there with real off-road capability that belies its appearance. Add in an auto transmission and it becomes an easy-peasy drive proposition on and off the road.

The most fun – and most affordable fun – in the dirt.

## SPECIFICATION

### 2024 Suzuki Jimny five-door auto

Price: \$44,990

Engine: 1.5-litre four cylinder  
Transmission: 4-speed automatic, on demand 4WD, electronic rear differential  
LSD

Power: 75kW at 6,000rpm

Torque: 130Nm at 4,000rpm

Fuel economy: 6.9L/100km

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 161g/km

Suspension: three link live axle front and rear, coil springs

Brakes: ventilated disc front/drum rear

Wheels/tyres: 15" aluminium alloy wheels, 195/80R15 Bridgestone Dueler H/T

Ground clearance: 210mm

Approach angle: 36 degrees

Ramp-over angle: 24 degrees

Departure angle: 47 degrees

Turning circle: 5.7m

Kerb weight: 1,215kg

ANCAP safety rating: -

# Carry that gear in style

Fully Equipped enhances 4WD customisation in New Zealand



Fully Equipped has established itself as a prominent supplier of aftermarket automotive accessories for utes and 4WDs in New Zealand and around the world. With over 30 years of experience, the company has earned a reputation for its flagship products, including the renowned Crown canopies and Tuf Dek liner. These products are meticulously designed to withstand New Zealand's diverse and often harsh conditions.

Beyond its in-house offerings, Fully Equipped sources high-quality accessories from globally recognised brands such as EGR, ECB, TJM, Bott, Realtruck, Narva, Projecta, BedSlide, Rola, Warn and more. This diverse portfolio enables Fully Equipped to provide a wide range of products for 4WDs.

### Expertise in customisation

A commitment to vehicle customisation is at the core of Fully Equipped's operations. The company takes pride in its extensive collaboration with leading motor companies, ensuring that every vehicle is expertly fitted out between port and dealer with products approved by these esteemed manufacturers. This collaboration enhances the vehicles' functionality and aligns with industry standards, providing customers with peace of mind regarding their investments.

### Decades of industry experience

With a history spanning over three decades, Fully Equipped has solidified its position as a national distributor and importer of a comprehensive range of products. This longstanding presence in the industry underscores the company's unwavering commitment to quality and reliability. Clients can trust that they are partnering with a business that has not only weathered market fluctuations but also continually adapted to meet evolving customer needs.

### Pioneers in canopy development

One of Fully Equipped's standout offerings is the Crown canopy range, a product designed and manufactured in New Zealand specifically for the local market. These canopies are engineered to endure some of the most challenging conditions globally. Each canopy undergoes rigorous testing to ensure it meets high roof rack loads and integration standards, providing seamless functionality and long-lasting durability. This dedication to quality makes the Crown canopy a popular choice among customers looking for reliable protection for their cargo.

### Comprehensive solutions

Fully Equipped's extensive product range caters to various needs for customisation. Key offerings include:

- Canopies: robust and versatile canopies are designed to provide optimal

protection while enhancing the functionality of utes.

- Lighting: Narva's high-quality lighting systems improve visibility and safety, crucial for operations in low-light conditions.
- Drawers and shelving: customisable storage solutions keep gear organised and accessible, maximising efficiency.
- TJM bull bars and Warn winches: durable equipment protects vehicles from damage while enhancing their off-road and rugged use capability.
- Device management: cutting-edge technology facilitates seamless integration and management of various devices, ensuring that all systems operate smoothly.
- Power management: Projecta's advanced solutions ensure efficient and reliable power distribution throughout vehicles, crucial for supporting various accessories and equipment.
- Camping: for rugged overland adventures, look no further than a Thule soft shell or hard shell rooftop tent.
- Roof Racks: Rola Cross Bars, Titan trays with Ridgemounts developed in conjunction with Rola plus a wide range of Rhino Rack and Thule products.

For more information visit

[www.fullyequipped.co.nz](http://www.fullyequipped.co.nz)



# Make the most of that 4WD

Do the sums to stay safe while adventuring

Vehicles like the Ford Ranger, Mitsubishi Triton, Toyota Hilux and even a wagon like Pajero Sport, Land Cruiser or Patrol are designed with margins of capability and safety typically well above the ordinary road car.

They tow more, carry more, go more places than sedans and ersatz SUVs that have the look but not the mechanisms.

Learning how to exploit this in-built potential will improve a driver's skillset on road and in the bush.

It's a mistake, though, to assume that 4WD is simply invulnerable to incidents on road trips or out there in the rough stuff.

In particular, pay attention to the vehicle's rated payload and other numbers.

The Aussies are better at this than most Kiwis. They look at the GVM (gross vehicle mass) and GCM (gross combination mass), as well as the ATM (aggregate trailer mass), and the kerb weight of the vehicle.

All these numbers are in the vehicle's manual.

As an example, consider a 3.2-litre Ford Ranger, a popular mid-life 4WD. It has a 6,000kg combination mass. Add a trailer with a laden weight of – say – 3,000kg. Well within the Ranger's 3,500 braked towing rating. The trailer weight gets subtracted from the Ranger's 6,000kg.

That means the Ranger in its fully



loaded condition cannot exceed 3000kg, for a total of 6000g. Dead empty (except with a full tank of fuel), the Ranger weighs 2278kg. That's in the ballpark of 2.3 tonnes and allows 700kg of payload.

The payload of this Ranger, not towing anything, is 922kg.

A three tonne trailer will mean 300kg of towball download, which the Ranger is carrying; it's part of the GVM. Take the 300kg download off the Ranger's payload, that's leaving you 622kg.

That might seem a lot but you add four people, their luggage, food, a towbar, the bullbar, a roof rack, fuel and water – it adds up very quickly.

The sums are important for safety, and more importantly for insurance in the event of a crash. An overweight vehicle is not likely to receive cover.

There's another good reason in Aussie – their police often target 4WDs with big towed loads and run them over the weighbridge.





# The rooftop ADVANTAGE

Adventure camping season is here

The summer season is here and many 4WD enthusiasts will be planning getaways into the outdoors to enjoy the beauty of the country. Rooftop tents are a great solution for both touring and extended camping trips.

Rooftop camping comes with a range of benefits including an elevated abode away from animals, away from running surface water in heavy rain, and away from uneven ground and rocks.

They also offer a simplified set-up and pack-up to ensure there's more time for adventuring.

Even better, there is a tent to suit every need.

## **Soft shell rooftop tent**

Provides the ultimate in ease and convenience when traveling. Unfolding in minutes, a rooftop tent provides sleeping quarters off the ground, protected from the elements. Spacious and comfortable, all bedding can remain inside the tent during the journey, freeing up vital storage space in the vehicle, enabling the tent to be quickly and easily packed away.

## **The hard shell advantage**

The hard shell rooftop tent really comes into its own at set-up or pack-up time. The hard-shell cover is a



functional part of the tent. Set up becomes a breeze with little to no structural poles to place;

simply pop it open, roll out the ladder and a good night's sleep is ready.



Orion 1400 aluminium hard shell rooftop tent.

# IRONMAN 4x4's new rooftop tent range

Quality gear ready for year-round adventures and touring

Welcome to the all-new IRONMAN 4x4 rooftop tent collection. Named after famous star constellations, the tents are compact, functional designs that enhance off-road adventure and touring camping.

### **Orion 1400 aluminium hardshell rooftop tent**

The Orion features complete blackout fabric in modern grey and black to keep the sleeping environment dark for late risers.

The tent is raised in a single action and packs away with bedding in place. Integrated roof plates support up to 50kg. There is also integrated LED lighting. Roof plates and side tracks make it easy to mount a wide range of accessories, like solar panels and bikes. When the Orion is open, keep up to 30kg of gear on the roof.

Weight is 92kg (including ladder and molle plates).

### **Ursa 1300 ABS hard shell rooftop tent**

A quick fold-out solution with a small rooftop footprint, suitable for a wide range

of vehicles. Ursa features integrated star-gazing sky windows built into the roof.

Fabrics are 320gsm ripstop polycotton, for temperature and light control.

There's ventilation to keep air fresh and reduce condensation, side window awnings for weather protection and added ventilation; a heater and air conditioner hose inlet for winter warming and summer cooling (appliances sold separately).

Included in the Ursa is a thick high-density mattress with a 3D anti-condensation mat.

Weight is 73kg (includes ladder).

### **Cross 1200 soft shell rooftop tent**

A quick fold-out solution with a small rooftop footprint, suitable for a large range of vehicles, the Cross has an extra-large living space.

It has a compact on-roof design, suitable for most utes, canopies and wagons.

There's a large, high density foam mattress with removable cover.



Ursa 1300 ABS hard shell rooftop tent.



Cross 1200 soft shell rooftop tent.

Lightweight design at 56kg, with 320GSM and a simple fold-out set-up.

Like the Ursa, the Cross has integrated star-gazing sky windows built into the roof

– simply roll back the protective fly and enjoy.

More information is at [www.ironman4x4.co.nz/products/camping/rooftop-tent](http://www.ironman4x4.co.nz/products/camping/rooftop-tent)

# Create the ultimate mobile base camp

Yakima's tough and comfortable Skyrise rooftop tent

For adventure seekers and outdoor enthusiasts alike, having a reliable base camp is essential.

Yakima's SkyRise HD rooftop tent offers comfort, convenience, and durability.

Constructed from 600 D Ripstop polyester with a 3000 mm waterproof PU coating, the SkyRise HD is engineered to withstand the elements, keeping occupants dry and comfortable with four-season weather protection. The included rainfly, crafted from durable 210 D Ripstop polyester, enhances this protection. There are extra-large windows and doors that provide excellent ventilation.

The bed is a thick, wall-to-wall 64 mm foam mattress designed for maximum comfort and ease of cleaning with a removable cover.

Weighing just 52kg, the SkyRise HD fits seamlessly within the load limits of most vehicles, making it a versatile companion for any road trip or camping excursion. The tent's tool-free and lockable mounts make it easy to put on and quick to take off.

The design accommodates up to three campers, and the frame geometry maximises usable space.

Yakima says the SkyRise HD is equipped to handle everything from sunny summer nights to brisk autumn winds. Additional guy lines keep it secure when the weather gets bad.

Owners can take their base camp to the next level with Yakima's array of accessories. Add a SkyRise Annex to expand the living area, SkyHooks for convenient storage, the SideKick to keep dirty boots at bay, or the SunBelt LED light strip for illuminating your tent after sundown. Each accessory is designed to enhance the outdoor experience, making the mobile base camp not just functional, but also a true home away from home.

The Yakima SkyRise HD Rooftop Tent is more than just a tent; it's an invitation to explore the great outdoors with comfort and style. Heading to a remote campsite or a mate's property? The SkyRise HD is



ready for anything nature throws out.

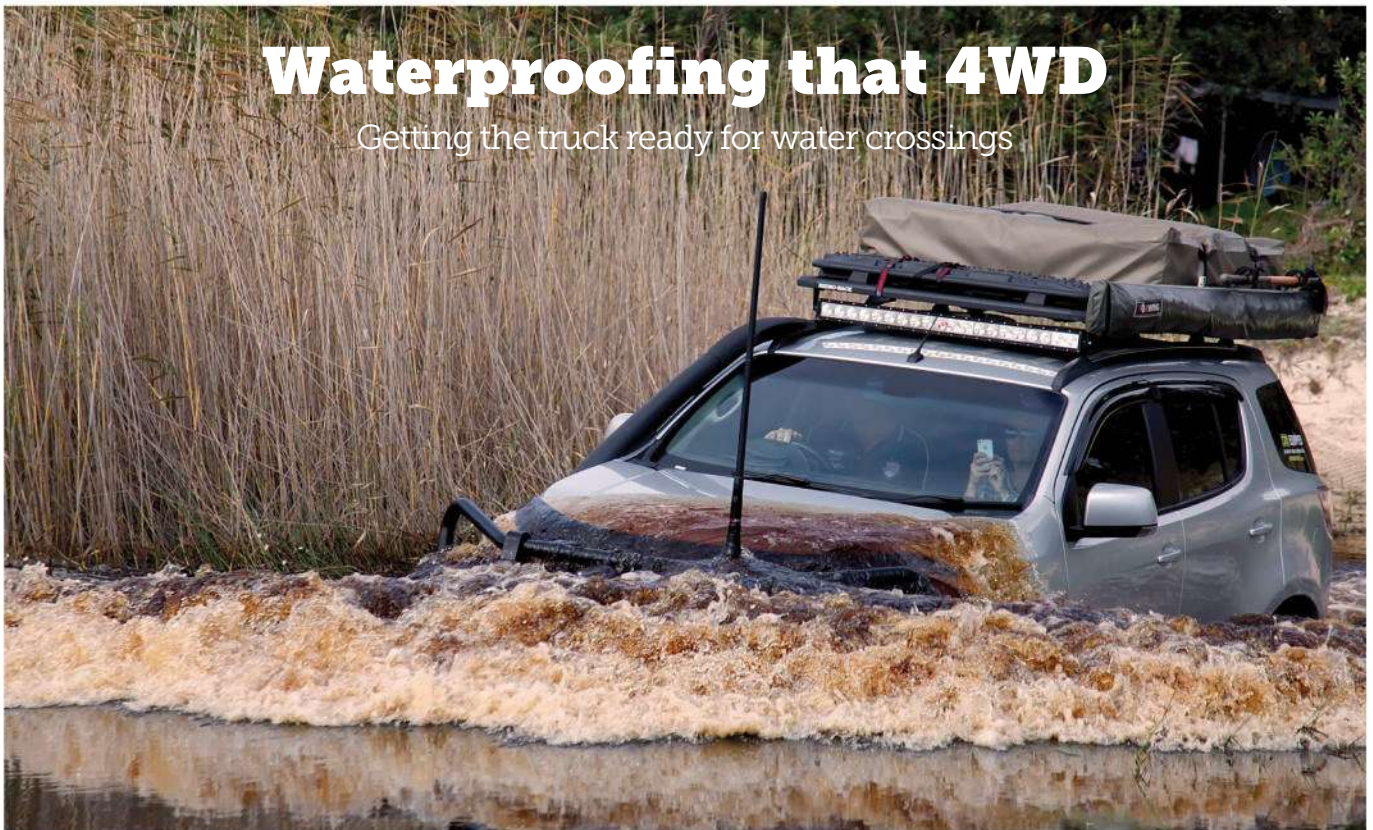
Yakima urges owners to be aware of their vehicle's roof rack load limits. The Skyrise is not suitable for clamp mounted roof racks.

For more information, go to [www.yakima.co.nz](http://www.yakima.co.nz)



# Waterproofing that 4WD

Getting the truck ready for water crossings



Winter's gone, no real need to be thinking about water intrusion, right?

Nope.

Many parts of the 4WD need protection from the elements year-round, particularly when there are water crossings to complete.

There are plenty of components that do not like water: fuse boxes, breathers, intakes, engine computers, the alternator, batteries, and lots more electrical items.

Here are a few ways to protect a 4WD from water and the elements.

## **Breathe air, not water**

Water entering a four-wheel drive's air intake can cause damage to components, causing permanent damage that will require a rebuild of the engine.

Small amounts of moisture in the air intake can also cause an engine to stall. The last thing you want happening when you are guards deep in a river.

To avoid the consumption of water by the engine's, fit a quality snorkel to the airbox, ensure one-way drain plugs are working correctly, and that the air inlet system is sealed correctly.

## **Fuel burns, water does not**

Protect the fuel system. Water in fuel lines and the fuel tank can find its way into the engine and cause damage as well

as corrosion.

This can lead to engine stalls, poor performance and permanent damage.

Fitting a water separator and secondary fuel filter system can help keep the fuel water-free.

## **Water and oil should not mix**

Crossing a river or hitting a large puddle means the underside of the four-wheel drive is exposed to a lot of water, and in some cases, is fully submerged.



Four-wheel drive differentials have breathers mounted on them, but these can allow water to enter the diff, contaminating the oil and grease.

This can cause premature wear and even failure of the diff.

To avoid this happening, fit an extended diff breather kit with hoses to run from the original diff breather points to a filtered airbox that can be mounted higher up in the vehicle.

Extended breather kits can also be fitted

to the gearbox and transfer case breathers.

## **Be prepared**

Being ready is better than fixing the problem later.

A 4WD is not designed to be submerged and there are many entry points for water.

A petrol engine requires its distributor cap and coil leads protected.

Use a small film of silicon around the cap and coils to seal things up and plumb any distributor breathers into the airbox.

An electric winch on the front of the vehicle is also vulnerable. Use a water dispersant spray on the terminals and check the breathers on the winch motor.

## **Water dispersant**

Carrying a can of water dispersant can be useful in protecting 12v electricals.

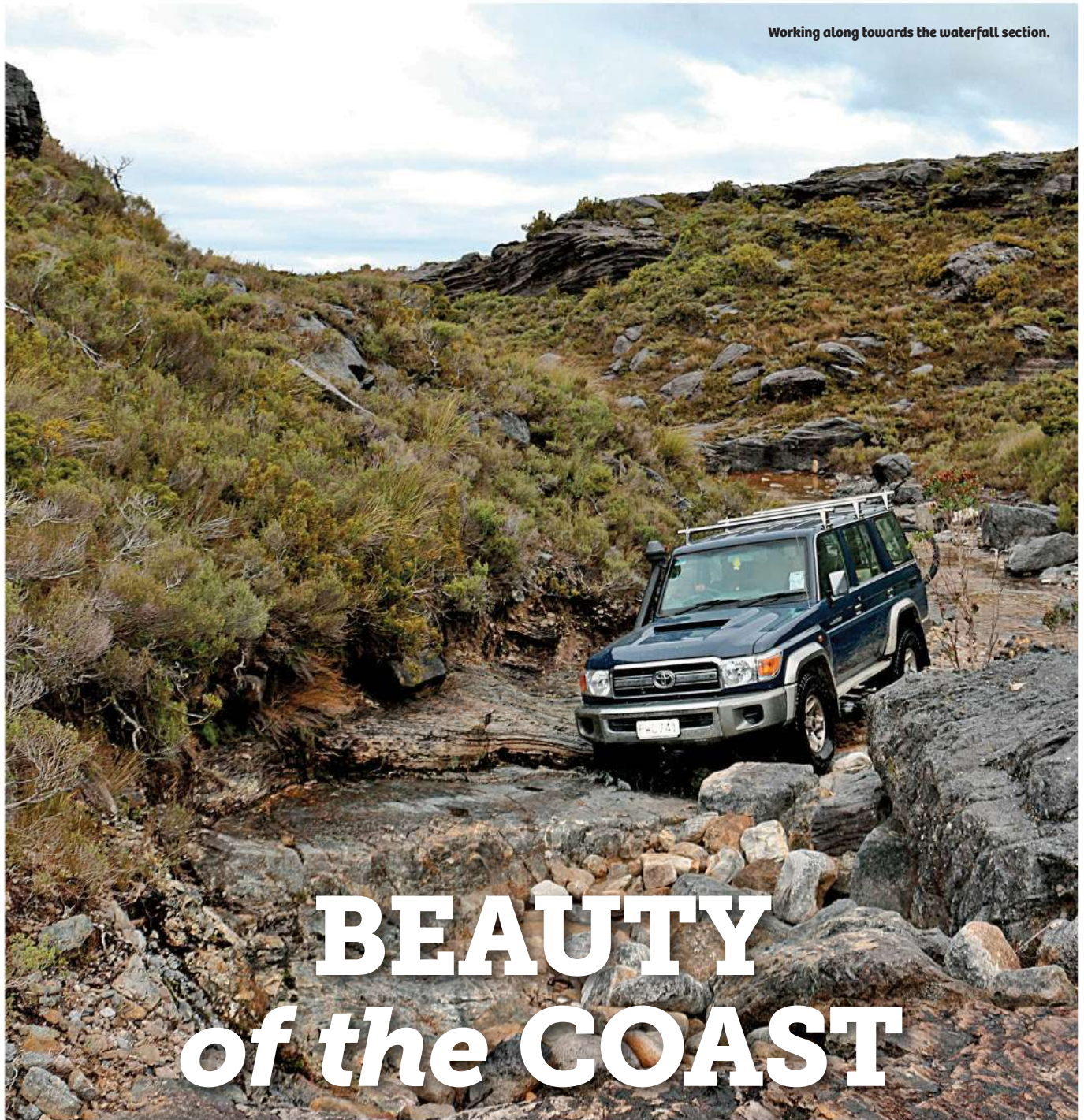
Regularly clean electrical components and give them a light spray. Having this spray can also be helpful if the engine stalls or has problems after the crossing.

## **Cooling down**

Spending time checking the water crossing will also give the vehicle time to cool down.

Components like brakes and the cooling fan can be damaged if suddenly entering a cold flood of water.

Working along towards the waterfall section.



# BEAUTY of the COAST

## A hard drive up the Denniston

*Words and images by Scott Fellers.*

Some of my fondest memories as a kid are of camping in the mountains of Northern California with my family. Dad making campfires, going hiking, canoeing, falling overboard, and generally exploring the outdoors. Since then, my passion for the outdoors has carried on growing.

So, eight years ago I bought a

4WD to allow me to explore the farther reaches of my new South Island home, the 4WD lifestyle fitting like a glove. Despite being a conservationist, my Dad was one of the biggest supporters of my newly-found passion. This ended up being emotionally and monetarily when the motor died on my 4WD near the beginning of my 4WD experience. But that

shouldn't come as a surprise as Dad was an old timey closet 4WDer, getting paid to drive an old OJ Simpson style Bronco around tracks like the Rubicon while he looked for endangered frogs in the California mountains.

When Dad passed away a number of years ago, one of the things we inherited was his fancy Sony DSLR camera and a

rather nice assortment of lenses. I have always enjoyed a nice photo but don't have any background with photography. So initially the camera didn't get a lot of use with my wife getting it out occasionally to shoot 4WD trips. But recently it felt like time to put in the effort to get acquainted with Dad's old gear and try my own hand at photography.



Stew making the Mäckley River look good.



What a spot to take a new rig!



When my mate Jamie from Motueka said he had a little crew coming down to do one of my favorite 4WD tracks to one of my favorite camp spots it seemed like a no-brainer to take the camera along. Just the sort of thing Dad would have enjoyed.

With gear loaded up I headed through Reefton to meet the crew at the Iron Bridge. Yep, we were headed through the Mackley River and up to the Denniston Plateau where we would tackle the challenging

Mount Fredrick track.

After kicking rocks for a few minutes, a combo of blue Toyotas showed up. Jamie and his family in his early 90s Prado and Stew in a late model 76 serries Cruiser (double diff locked of course). Stew had recently purchased the vehicle, and this was to be his second real 4WD trip. What a way to start out (both truck and track).

Some friendly radio banter between old mates (Jamie) and new (Stew) kept us going

through the bush toward the Mackley River. Now I've been through the river several times but its beauty never ceases to amaze me. It was the perfect place to get the camera out and start firing away as the trucks cut bow waves across the river. Despite my lack of photography experience, it felt like with the scenery and cool trucks I was bound to get some good photos.

Past the river the track starts getting steeper as you climb up and down through valleys

and over ridges as you head up to the Denniston Plateau. One of my favorite bits of track is a section of road where you drive along parallel with an old coal seam as it slopes down at the same gradient as the road. It makes for such a unique driving experience.

Eventually we made it up to the turn off to Mount Fredrick. It's an unmarked intersection, so if you know you know. Near the beginning of the track is the most tranquil little stream and from then it's all



on. I led the convoy and found myself hung up on a steep step over a log before we were even out of sight of the stream. A hole and the log were just at the perfect distance to trap me. I couldn't even get my door open, Jamie and Stew had to come to the rescue. They threw a few rocks in the hole letting me give the truck a bump, popping me over the log. Jamie and Stew took advantage of their handy work and cruised up after me with no problems.

After that little hiccup we

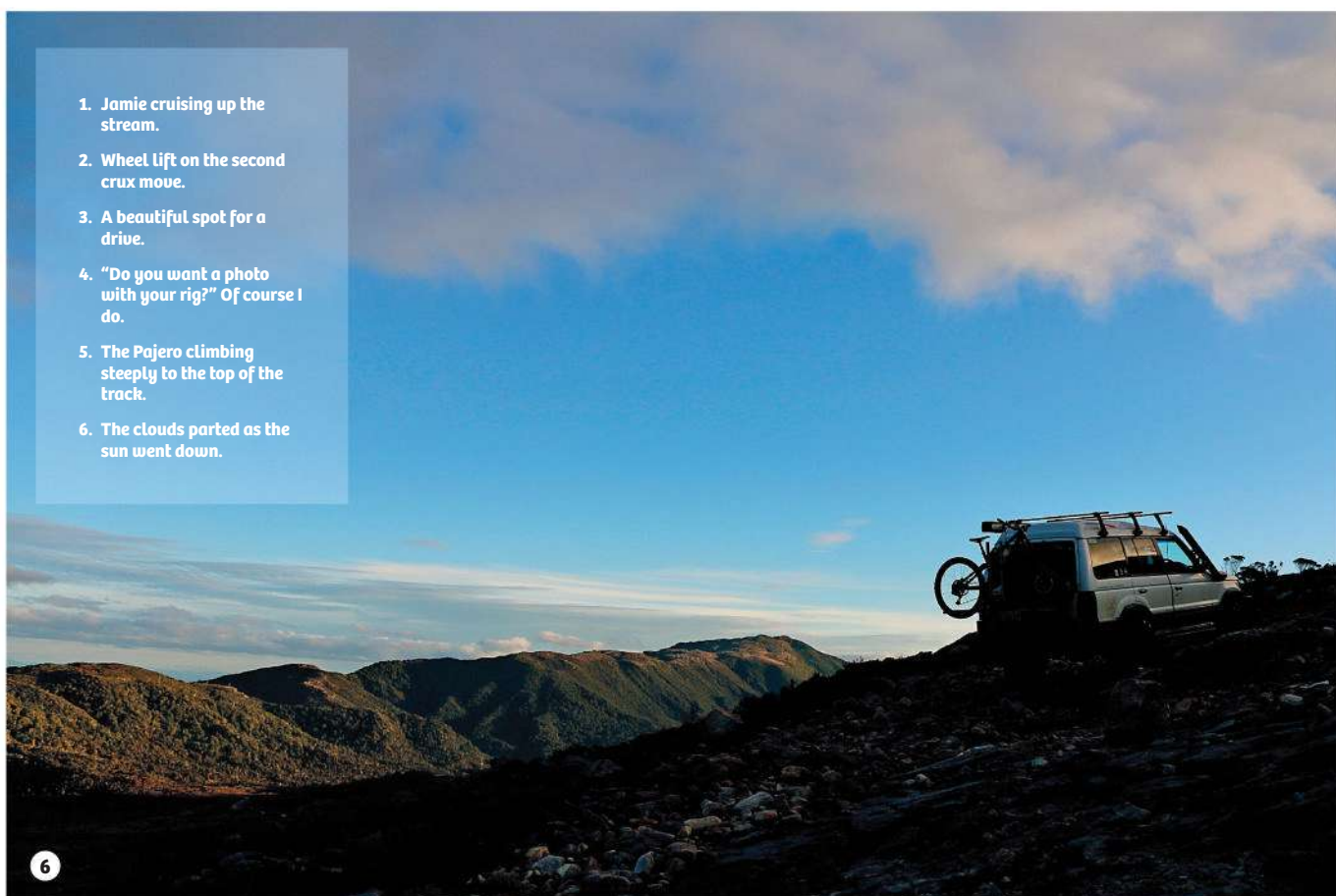
were to the real climb up the mountain. This starts with a very steep track up a long rock face. It is intimidating, but especially intimidating when you've never seen it before. With appropriate skepticism Stew walked the hill and we showed him the line and gave him encouragement. Pointing the trucks at the sky we headed upwards. Camera out again of course! At the top Stew was all smiles with his latest achievement, as he should be!

From this point on it is one

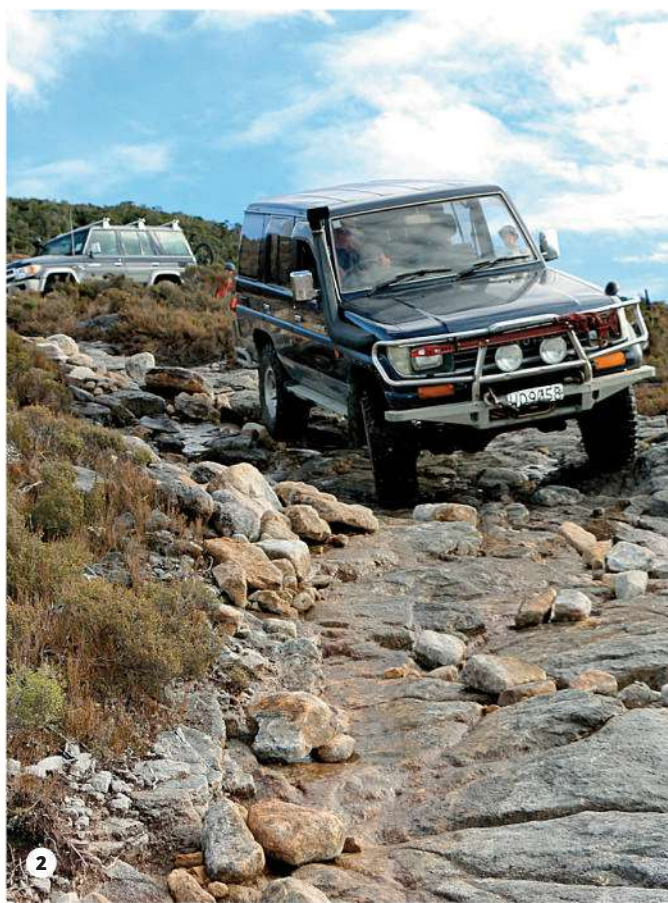
obstacle after another all with perfect traction due to the huge slabs of sandstone. Jamie is an old hand at this 4WD thing and was actually the reason I got mine in the first place. He is amazing at giving advice and encouragement (goad) to try harder lines. I've driven this track a couple times before but was able to do some better driving and more challenging lines with his help. I learn something every time we go out together. Stew, possibly being in a bit over his head,

was in good hands and enjoyed the challenges.

The crux of the climb is probably little waterfall you drive up, or maybe the incredibly steep slab at the end of a super steep scabbly climb near the top. Either way both were negotiated with relative ease by the crew, though my rock slider really got put to the test on an unseen boulder at the top of the slab. It's hard to look for rocks when all you can see is sky out the windscreen. As we climbed higher and higher the sun



1. Jamie cruising up the stream.
2. Wheel lift on the second crux move.
3. A beautiful spot for a drive.
4. "Do you want a photo with your rig?" Of course I do.
5. The Pajero climbing steeply to the top of the track.
6. The clouds parted as the sun went down.



emerged from behind the clouds and we were treated to a spectacular evening! Perfect evening light for some more photo practice! Once again, the rad trucks and gorgeous surroundings made it feel easy to capture a good shot. Maybe a really nice camera helps too.

Parked up at the top, cold beer in hand, it really soaks in what a serene place this is to set up camp. Stew was really beginning to see the appeal of

this 4WDing. An evening spent yarning around a campfire only solidified that notion.

After a peaceful night in the back of the Pajero, coffee was enjoyed on a warm sunny morning. We had all brought bikes with us as Denniston also has some cool riding. Jamie's family decided to tackle the decent down Mount Fredrick on two wheels instead of four. Along the way this gave me an opportunity to

try my hand at action sports photography. Near the bottom of the track I took photos as one of the kids, Kailash, aired off a ledge gapping out onto a smooth rock face below. I was able to get a photo of Stu coming down the same slab in his truck. The juxtaposition between my two favorite modes of transport was pretty cool.

We had brought bikes because we had our eye on a

specific trail for riding. A long decent through the native bush following an old miner's track. But since this is *NZ4WD* magazine and not *NZMTB* magazine I'll just say that the track turned out to be more adventure than we expected. Envision carrying your bike through West Coast jungle while trying to navigate huge slips that had taken out the trail. Everything with Jamie seems to turn into an



5

adventure somehow.

After a long day out on the bikes and in the vehicles, we decide the best thing to do is to poke our noses out to a secluded part of the beach at the bottom of the Denniston Plateau for another beautiful evening of campfires and yarns. Just another amazing spot to camp where 4WD is required.

Sitting around the fire I had a moment to reflect on the

enjoyment of trying to capture the weekends adventures on camera. It was certainly more effort than just snapping a few photos on the phone, but somehow the act of trying to frame a good shot, get the settings correct, choose the right lens, all makes the photo achieved so much more rewarding. And it was certainly cool to have a little bit of Dad's kit along as a reminder of how much he influenced me to

enjoy the outdoors and 4WDing specifically.

The next morning, we parted ways with Jamie and I headed back towards Reefton and Stew taking his (only slightly more dinged up) truck up to Karamea for some much-deserved RnR after what was truly a challenging second 4WD trip.

All I can say is: trucks, bikes, mates, camping, I think I'll be looking to do that again soon.

1. Getting set up for a sunset camp.
2. The way down isn't easy either!
3. Jamie and Stew cruising on down.
4. Option 1: Jump it!
5. Option 2: Drive it!

# On safari — IN AFRICA

Going wild in South Africa with the Ford Everest





**Dave McLeod, editor of NZ4WD's sister publication Company Vehicle, was invited on a memorable trip to Africa driving Ford's Everest SUV. Here's what he saw, and did.**

To many, very many in fact, the Ford Everest is a large family-sized SUV that takes the kids to school, handles daily chores with aplomb and since it boasts a 3.5-tonne towing rating, will happily tow the boat and other toys for long-weekend aways.

But it's also an incredibly capable off-roader that will conquer most of the rugged terrain that our blue planet has to offer. To prove the latter, Ford invited us to South Africa to climb a mountain, ford some streams and play with some of the local wildlife.

The event was split into two challenges, the first being a Safari drive on a quest to spot Africa's 'Big 5'; the second being a gruesome climb up to the peak of the eastern escarpment's tallest mountain. Let the game (and games) begin.

Our chariots for the African adventure came with two powertrains and two trim levels. The Sport with a 2.0L bi-turbo diesel with 154kW@3750rpm and 500Nm@1750-2000rpm; and the premium level Platinum 3.0L V6 turbo-diesel with

184kW@3250rpm and 600Nm@1750-2250rpm. Both powertrains were mated to the company's 10-speed automatic and both models were full time 4WD with Ford's impressive Terrain Management System.

As a footnote, what I want to point out here is that these were standard 'off the shelf' Everests, with just the wheels and tyres being changed to reduce the risk of puncture. All the rides were fitted with M+S 255/65R18 Wranglers and they performed admirably.

First up, big game hunting. Established in 1986 by the late Johan Roode, the Kapama Private Game Reserve is a place like no other. Spanning 13,000 hectares of the pristine South African wilderness and bordering the renowned Kruger National Park, Kapama is one of the country's most prestigious wildlife destinations. Its magnificent beauty offers the perfect sanctuary for a wide variety of wildlife, with over 40 different species of mammals including the Big 5 – elephant, lion, leopard, African buffalo and rhinoceros (as well as 350 bird



species), that all thrive in this natural habitat.

The grounds are intersected with thousands of kilometres of unsealed roads where, led by a professional tracker in an extended wheelbase Toyota, we drove in convoy seeking out the wildlife I had previously only seen in zoos.

The initial part of my exploration was conducted in the 2.0 litre Sport and in 2WD, with the dusty gravel offering little challenge to the large seven-seater Everest riding on

its 18-inch alloys. It didn't take long for us to spot a few giraffes and zebras grazing on the local foliage and in all fairness, they appeared unfazed by the line of eager-eyed tourists in our suburban SUVs.

The Everest's cabin itself offered both upmarket comfort and, with its high-riding size and large windows, great visibility. And while the temperatures outside were nudging towards a baking 30-degrees, our AC was set at

cool 18 – who says Safaris have to be unpleasant?

Apparently, tracking some of the harder to spot '5' meant venturing a little further off track, and that meant turning the drive mode dial and engaging 'Sand'. Sand mode is designed to be used on both sand and deep snow and optimises gear shifts with lower gears held longer to help maintain momentum, similarly stability control intervention is reduced to ensure the vehicle can keep moving forward



1. Wild Africa.

2. The locals are hardly shy.

3/4/5/6. Traction, climbing and descending – Everest proves its capability.

7. That sand is deep and soft.

through soft, dry sand.

This may sound like a lot going on, but for me the driver, I just had to keep the SUV pointing in the right direction and keep the momentum up – not exactly tough work. And although the sand got pretty deep in places, thankfully, I still had time to look out of the window and was rewarded with a few lions feasting on a giraffe carcass. It may appear brutal, but it's just life in the wild.

All in all, we managed to see hippos at the waterholes, numerous giraffes, zebras, impalas and the bones of a cape buffalo. We tracked, but were unable to see a rhino and watched a lion make out with its partner, but that's a story for another day.

The next morning we were up early for a more arduous climb up the Mariepskop mountain, the highest mountain peak in the eastern Drakensberg Escarpment. The





peak stands with its back to the Blyde River Canyon 1945 metres above sea level; with Maputo and the Indian Ocean visible on a clear day.

In order to get there, we travelled a short stint along the tarseal of the R40 before heading onto the gravel trail where the pass began. My ride for the day was the top-of-the-line Platinum – if you're gonna climb a mountain, you might as well do it in style.

The pass proper starts alongside the southern bank of the Motlasedi River, which it crosses via a small bridge before heading deep into forest. However, in true Everest style, we opted to switch into 4L and ford the stream, testing out the SUV's 800mm wading depth.

The journey to the summit is an adventure in itself, with a labyrinth of gravel and tarred roads leading you through stunning landscapes, it's an experience worth the trip to Africa for all by itself.

The next test for the Everest was a deeply rutted unsealed stretch of road that had the SUV's front and rear wheels waving to the crowd while its ladder frame remained stoic. From the outside, watching a large SUV pitch and roll along gaping ruts and giant troughs is dramatic, but from the cabin it was a more serene experience, with just gentle throttle and braking required. In all honesty I felt like I was the master of off-road driving, but in all fairness, it was the Everest's smart Terrain Management System doing all the heavy lifting.

After a while the pass heads north, rising rapidly up the mountainside. Crossing the boundary between Limpopo and Mpumalanga twice, there are a series of twists and turns before reaching the village of Mariepskop Forestry Station. The road then bypasses the village, reaching the tarred section of the road at a Y-junction.

As the pass ascended towards the summit, we were greeted by a thick mix of cloud and mist. Visibility all around was limited, creating an otherworldly atmosphere, particularly as you're driving through what feels like a rainforest. Seriously it was a complete contrast to the dusty trail that we had been climbing along a few moments before.

The final leg of the pass is the country's second biggest, rapidly gaining 1100 metres in altitude.

Once you've reached the lofty heights of Mariepskop, you feel like you're on the edge of the world, engulfed by breathtaking panoramas that seem to stretch on forever. At the summit, there are the remnants of an old SAAF radar station, a tall microwave tower, and forestry fire lookout posts. This area, protected due to this military presence, has remained a sanctuary of wilderness, preserving its natural beauty and biodiversity.

In stark contrast to the Kapama Game Reserve, Mariepskop's plant diversity is nothing short of astonishing, surpassing even that of Table Mountain with over 1,400 floral species and 2,000 plant varieties. At its foothills lies the expansive Savannah biome, while its slopes are a tapestry of pristine montane forests. Moreover, the crystal-clear Klaserie River finds its source amidst the rugged beauty of this mountain. Simply put, the entire climb is a feast for the senses while being a real test of the Everest's capabilities.

The ride down was of course a reverse of the climb. Again, the Everest lapped up the experience, offering a cradled drive back to reality.

As a country, South Africa is a truly amazing adventure playground and an experience that pictures don't do justice to. There is so much to see and do, and on terrain that is both thrilling and unique.

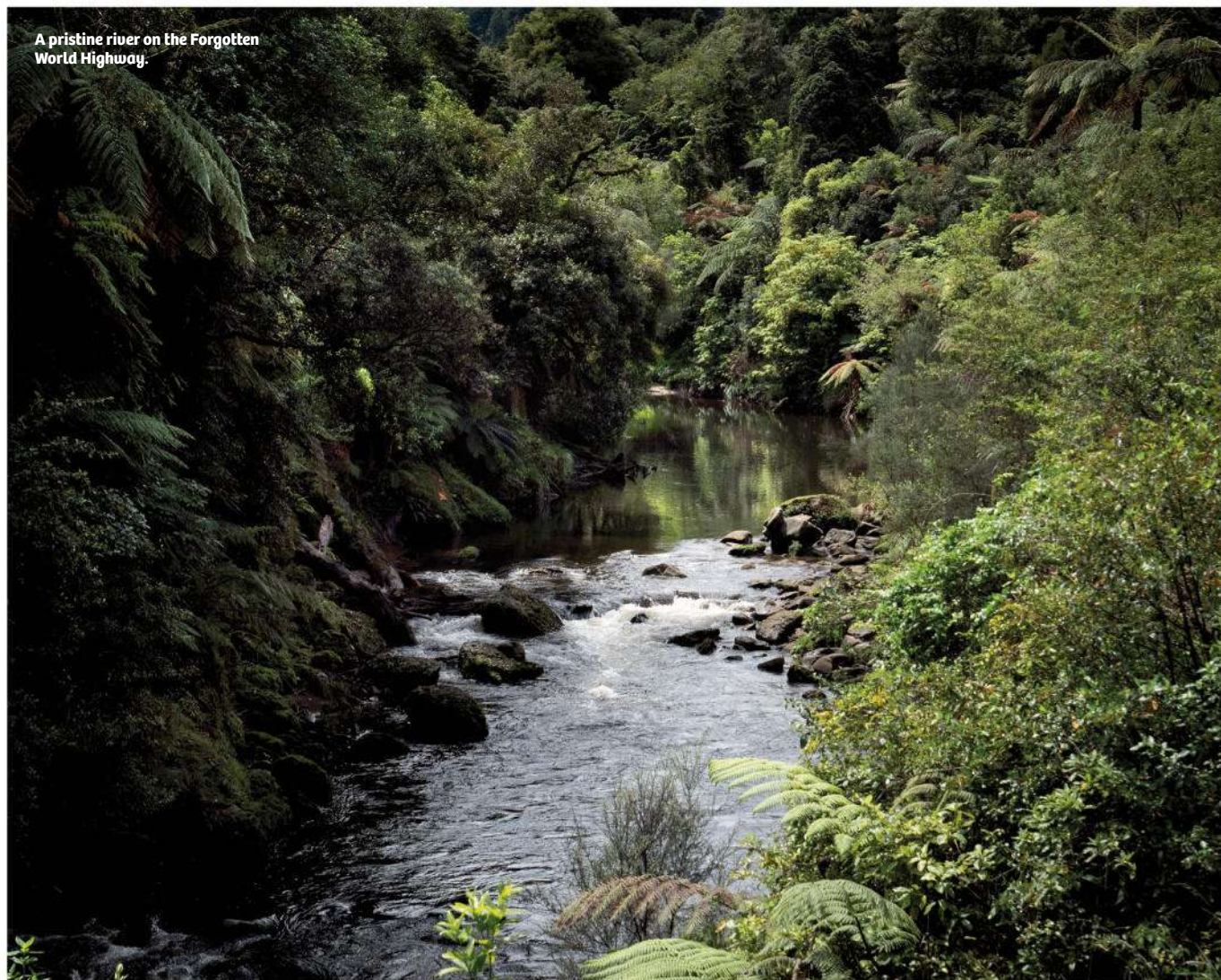




Above and below: Everest's clever transmission copes with sketchy traction in deep sand.



A pristine river on the Forgotten World Highway.



# In the Forgotten World

## *Heading for the centre of the North Island*

We were keen to explore the northern half of the Forgotten World Highway on our way to the centre of the North Island.

While at Bushlands, we had heard rumours of the road north being closed for roadworks to seal the final section of through the gorge so we had a plan in place for a longer back-road detour if needed. However, were hoping we would not need it since this section of the iconic Forgotten World Highway was a major drawcard for the trip, especially for those who had already explored the area but had bypassed the highway in favour of the more remote routes.

So, with Ashley leading, we headed north with fingers crossed. We saw a lot of equipment but no sign of anyone working, possibly because this was the Monday before Waitangi Day, making for

heavier than usual holiday traffic.

Travelling on a fine, sunny morning, this part of the Highway was certainly extremely scenic and well worth its reputation, and while there has been some debate about the progressive sealing of the road (with some arguing that the rougher, unsealed road was part of the adventure) I found the sealed section was actually a more attractive experience because the vegetation was clean rather than being covered in dust as it was on the remaining unsealed section.

Leaving the pristine native bush of the gorge for flatter farmland we paused at Lauren's Lavender farm café for a late morning coffee before fuelling up at Taumarunui. We then followed a network of backroads that more or less paralleled the main highway, as a more scenic and

relaxing alternative to SH4.

Just before returning to the highway, we stopped for lunch in the shade of some trees on the side of the road at the little settlement of Ongarue. It was then a steady run on sealed roads until we joined SH30 near Bennydale and followed this to the turnoff to Pureora and the Pureora Forest.

We didn't go into Pureora itself but took the main gravel road through the plantation forest. This was rougher and, at times, a little less distinct than I remembered from last time, but at least this time it was sunny, not pouring with rain.

Finding the weather-beaten sign for the turn-off to the centre of the island was a little easier than it could have been as I had the track from last time to follow, and



One of the few sections of gravel road left on the Forgotten World Highway.

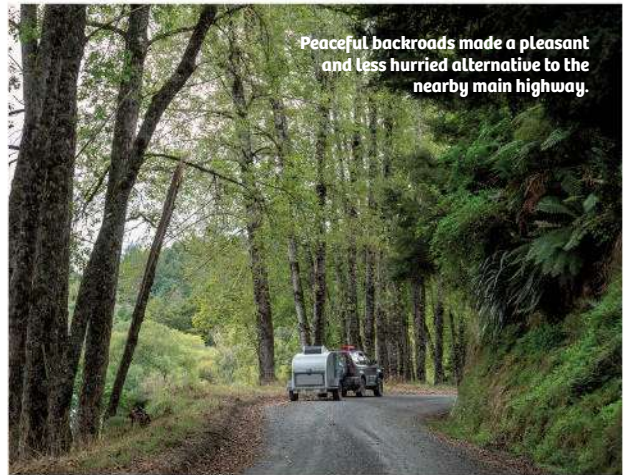


There were still some amazing views as we left the Forgotten World Highway for more rural surroundings.

## Weekend Drive



It may be late summer but Ruapehu was still shrouded in snow.



Peaceful backroads made a pleasant and less hurried alternative to the nearby main highway.



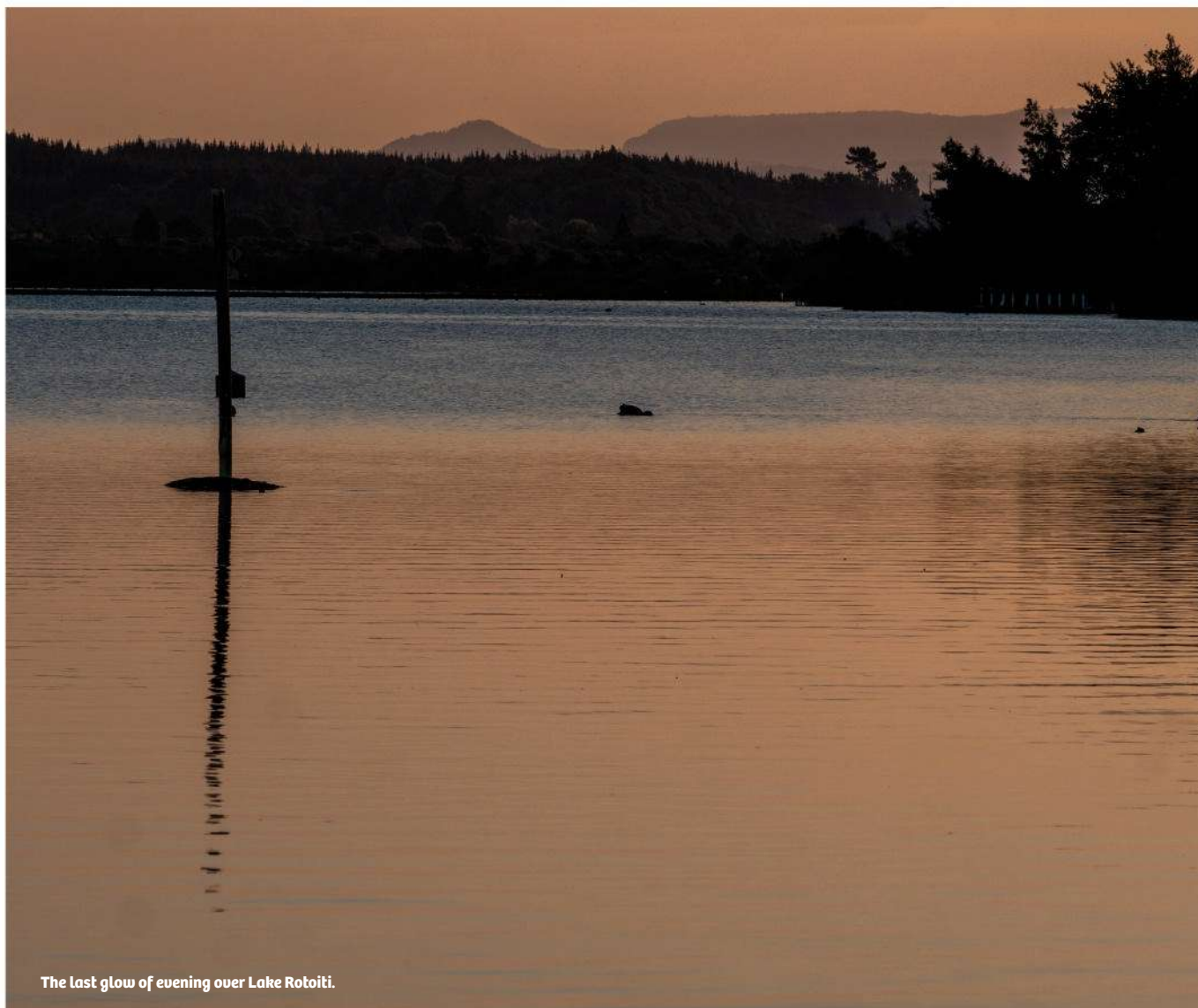
We assumed this sign was to the car park for the centre of the island.



We made it!



Cooling off in Lake Rotoiti. An interesting choice for an assembly area, although you would certainly be safe from a fire.



The last glow of evening over Lake Rotoiti.

several people had also set it as a destination on their GPS.

The final sign on the side road, pointing to the carpark, has now faded into almost total illegibility, but once again it was GPS to the rescue. From the car park was about a five-minute walk to the mini-obelisk marking the centre of the Island, based on the coastline being the outline of the island. There is now some academic debate over whether the exact edge of the island should be the coastline or the edge of the continental shelf, moving the centre some distance away, but to me the really amazing achievement is not locating the centre on a map but actually surveying that position on the ground in the middle of dense forest with no visibility.

After the obligatory group photo, and with time getting on were soon heading back to the main access road for the relatively short run to our accommodation at the DOC Kakaho

campsite. Although there was adequate room for everyone, we ended up spread out over a few separate areas, largely because one group had blocked off half on one of the bollarded areas as their playground, effectively claiming another half dozen sites over what they had booked. However, I got a nice little corner under the bushes and in the setting sun, making a very peaceful ending to another successful day.

The next day was mainly highway driving, and I had route planned to work our way across to Rotorua using as many of the minor roads as possible. This was one of those days when the navigation did not go as planned. I missed a turn because the map showed it as a main road I was staying on with a side road on the left, while in practice the main road curved to the left and I needed to take the minor side road to the right. Luckily there was enough of a network of roads for me to be able to take the next right

and get back on track. Then a few suggestions for other stopping points were raised, so in the end I let Ashley take over the lead so that Gillian could navigate. The end result of this was an unplanned stop at some hot pools for a soak followed by lunch. It was then a final run up to Rotorua and around the lake through far more traffic than I was used to before reaching our camp at Lake Rotoiti.

The camp was an interesting mix of some rental accommodation and some privately-owned units on nicely landscaped grounds. With most guests leaving after the long weekend we had the place almost to ourselves, and ended up spread out on the lawns around the units, with million-dollar views of the lake. It was so hot that we all went swimming, or at least wading, in the cool water, a memorable part of the trip and a pleasant end to what we always expected to be just a transit day.



# Hard working Hilux

A tough southern truck is reborn





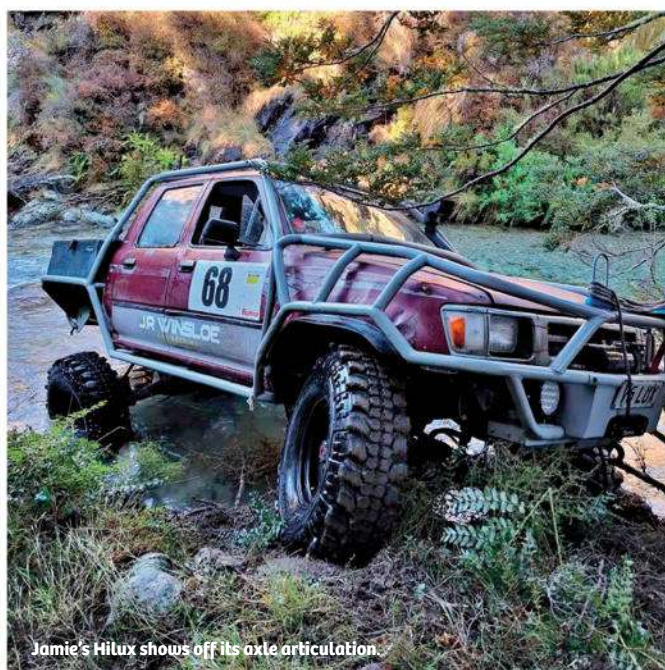
The Hilux is a trailer queen when it does events.



Collecting a wee pine while adventuring.



Sub runs? No problem.



Jamie's Hilux shows off its axle articulation.

Jamie Winsloe's 1993 Toyota Hilux has been reborn several times.

Built for hard farm work back in the early 2000s in Christchurch, it went to a farmer near Lake Hood in Canterbury.

It was used to cross a river on the property almost daily, avoiding a longer commute down to the state highway to use a bridge.

It had an on-board air compressor to positive-pressurise the starter motor and diffs to prevent water getting in.

Next, it was sold to a new owner in Gore, where it got a new low km engine. It then went to another new owner who fitted a new transmission, before being bought by Jamie.

"The previous owner was a good friend

of mine. He had the truck for years, using it as a highly capable club truck completing many runs all around the South Island including Nelson and West Coast trips, even a couple of team winch challenges and 24-hour challenges where I navigated and set winch lines multiple times."

When Jamie's mate moved to a bigger farm, and with the truck needing a lot of maintenance, "I made an offer on the old Hilux and it made its way home to the shed. As it had been trailered a lot to and from events it still never missed a beat with a few minor setbacks such as belts or manual hubs playing up."

The first few months were used figuring out what wearable parts needed replacing.

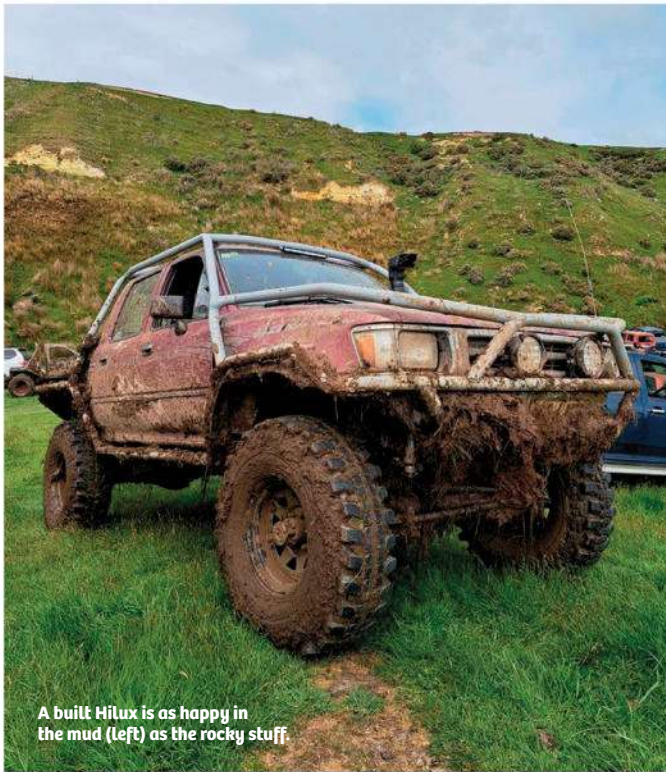
The base running gear mainly stays

unchanged because the truck was certified in its current format.

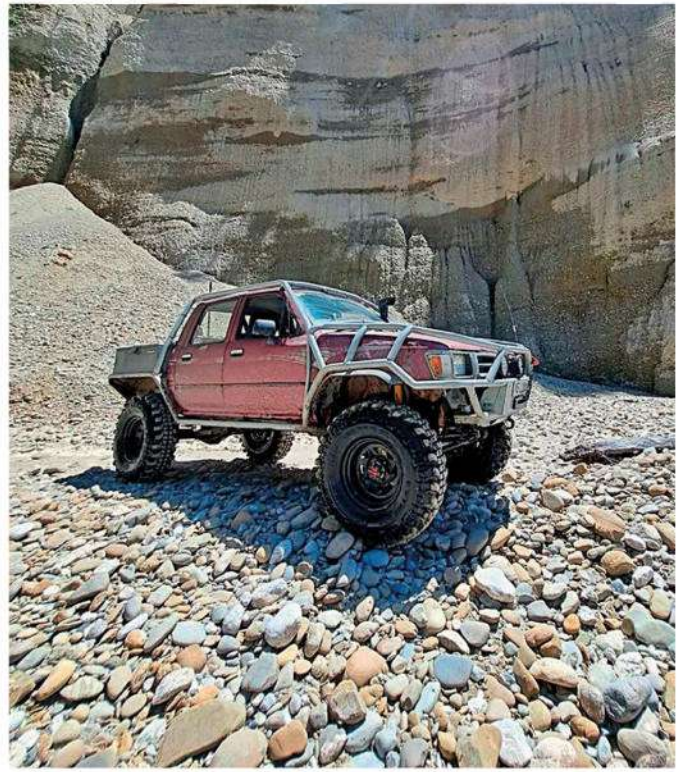
"I was mainly just tidying up a lot of the mounts and conversions. With information being limited when I purchased it, I've had to track down a fair few bushings and other parts."

Jamie owned a modified 80 series Land Cruiser in the past and had always wanted to compete in more 4WD challenges. The 80 was always too heavy to be competitive but the Hilux was just right.

"I had always wanted to compete in the long-standing Mainland winch series. However once most of the build was complete, I enquired about competing and due to low entries the last few years it



A built Hilux is as happy in the mud (left) as the rocky stuff



had been put on hold."

When 4x4 Events advertised a 'give it a go' enduro in Methven, "we headed along and had a blast".

"We've attended three more events there. It is so well run, always changing around and the team are awesome to deal with! They also hosted the 25-year Mainland anniversary on-site."

Next up was the Mud and Steel event in September with Friday night stages and Saturday stages and an NZ1 enduro run on the Sunday.

So what's been done?

Bar work. Jamie set about replacing the old farm flatdeck and the pressed steel bumper.

"I decided to tube the front, rear and have an exo-cage for the likely rollovers."

The current winch set up is a Runva EWS10000 with twin 7.2hp motors in the front with a 108:1 ratio and a Runva EWB9500-Q with a 7.2hp motor and 80:1 ratio in the rear.

"This is a beast of a winch, a super-fast line speed and still plenty of power."

The battery was upgraded from a 700cca to twin 1000cca red top with 95mm cabling using a 2500-amp isolator in the cabin. He also moved the battery from the engine bay and mounted it on the rear deck.

The alternator was replaced from an 85-amp to a 140-amp output model with mounts and wiring altered to suit.

Jamie converted the old leaf spring diffs

to coil using custom mounts welded to the factory chassis and diff housings. The front diff is running generation one Mitsubishi Pajero rear trailing arms as radius arms with GQ Safari Panhard rod and 79-series coils with four-inch lift 80 series Land Cruiser rear shocks mounted inside the coils.

The rear diff is five-link with custom arms using GQ safari bushings and rear Springs of unknown origin. Like the front, the rear uses four-inch lift 80 series rear shocks.

The diffs are 5.29 ratio chromoly Hilux crownwheel and pinions with limited slip diff centres.

"No budget for lockers just yet!"

The heart of the truck is a generation one 3.8-litre Buick V6 engine out of a VP Holden Commodore, bolted to a TH700 transmission and a Hilux transfer case using a Mark's Adaptors mount and retaining the factory crossmember. The engine also features a Mark's Adaptors wiring loom. Custom driveshafts send power to the front and rear, both with double Cardan joints.

In the cab, the original Hilux dash and gauges have been retained.

The truck uses a generation two Toyota Surf steering box through 60-series Land Cruiser steering joints to high steer arms.

Tyres are twin block Simex 35x10.5x16 on -28 D Window beadlocks for competition; 35x12.5x16 Goodride M8085 for coast/road and club trips on ROH

Blactracs; and 34x10.5x15 Simex Jungle Trekkers to run in classes that require tyres under 840mm.

Jamie says a lot of basic maintenance was required to get it back to road-worthy standard.

"It had been trailered a lot to and from events, all the bushings, bearings and serviceable parts had to be sourced and replaced. The bar work was completely removed and remade including the cage, flat deck and front bar. The front winch cradle is removable, and the rear winch can bolt-in in about 20 minutes if needed."

Is it finished? Jamie says any build is always ongoing.

"The power steering is not a strong point with the set up running off the factory Holden engine steering pump it's not a good match for the Hilux steering box so I need to adapt a Falcon pump to the engine in the future."

Later, he wants to build a later model Ecotech 3.8-litre V6 with a tweaked cam and a stand-alone computer to make a bit more power.

All of the work has been carried out by Jamie's own auto engineering company, J R Winsloe Limited with products supplied from Adventure Autos.

The Hilux has been on multiple west coast day trips and longer adventures with Reefton and Haast being highlights.

Jamie says he plans to continue to use the truck for more club trips and competitions.





**Superstage  
excitement  
at Manukau**



**NZ4WD  
SPORTS  
SECTION**



**Revo T1  
wins in  
Australia**

# SUPER STAGE EXCITEMENT

## RALLY CARS UP AGAINST OFF-ROAD RACE CARS AND TRUCKS



Image: Daybreaker Rally/Taylor Burke



Mickey Thompson-backed events: the Offroad Grand Prix on 7 December, the opening round of the 2025 New Zealand Offroad Racing Championship on 18 January and the Stadium Offroad Championship event on 1 February.

Rallysprint entries are being handled by former top rally driver Marty Roestenburg and the first rally crew to enter the event is 2025 European Rally Champion Hayden Paddon.

All three rounds and the off-road racing events take place on the Counties Manukau club's purpose-built racetrack in the Colin Dale Motorsport Park at Puhinui near Auckland Airport.

For the first time this century, rally cars and off-road racers will compete at a top-level super stage event.

Counties Manukau Offroad Racing Club

has set in place a televised three-round rallysprint series for December 2025, January and February 2025.

The series will run alongside three

## YOUTH TALENT ON SHOW

### WAIKATO CLUB ENDS THE YEAR WITH A BANG

The track belongs to the young racers as Waikato Offroad Racing Club hosts a youth race day at the Tect Park near Tauranga on 16 November.

The day follows last year's inaugural 'Skux' race day and will give young racers in the Kiwitruck categories of offroad racing centre stage in a day packed with short course and short enduro races.

The Kiwitricks are miniature race trucks, with two classes powered by 'stationary' engines or motorcycle engines. They enable school-age children to take part in racing in a safe environment. There are more than 30 Kiwitricks in New Zealand.

The event will be part of the club's Christmas celebration, with families invited to camp at the venue on Friday and Saturday nights and a BBQ on Saturday evening.



## DEBUT AUSSIE WIN REVO T1+ WINS SUNRAYSA SAFARI

The Revo T1+ has won on debut in Australia.

Driver Adam Kaplan dominated the first three days of the eleven-stage Sunraysia Safari Cross Country Rally to secure the victory.

With Aleshia Penney as navigator, Kaplan set the fastest time on the first day, clearing the WRC-branded Subaru Crosstrek of Dean Herridge by nearly three minutes, then repeated the feat in Day 2. He kept his foot on the pedal and built his lead even more during the third stage while Herridge finished seventh, effectively securing the win for Kaplan.

It was not plain sailing: Kaplan got lost on the first corner to start the final day and lost two minutes. It was "the dumbest thing ever". The misadventure prevented a clean sweep as Will Dunn's Nissan Patrol beat Herridge for the stage win. Kaplan was third.

Developed in South Africa, the Revo has mainly competed in the South African Rally-Raid Championship, later broadening its campaign to include the Dakar Rally, World Rally-Raid Championship and FIA Baja Cup.

To date, this is the closest a Dakar prototype has come to New Zealand.



## TOUGH, DIRTY FUN RAINFOREST CHALLENGE A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

It has been raced and won by Kiwis – admittedly, that was last century. The Rainforest Challenge remains the toughest off-road mud plug known. It started way back in the late 1990s in Malaysia and now RFC events are held in more than 60 countries.

As it expanded from its single-event origins to a global event series managed by RFC International it has attracted the toughest of the tough to compete in national RFC events with the aim of selecting the participants for the international final.

Though not strictly a 'race' the RFC is ranked among the top five toughest off-road races in the world. That ranking puts it ahead of the Baja 1000 and the Dakar rally. Some might disagree.

The RFC circuit of events is expanding



and events are now held in 60 countries. Both New Zealand and Australia are affiliated members of the RFC network, though we don't have an

event based in-country.

This year, the series Grand Final will be held in Perak, Malaysia from 29 November to 9 December.

## Giti backs our epic enduro



It's big news, and it's out there: Giti will be the naming rights sponsor of the longest off-road endurance race in the southern hemisphere, the NZ1000 at Kurow.

This epic race runs across two farm holdings just outside the Kurow township, and the Otago club has just confirmed its 2025 race date. That means it's time for race crews to start planning their '1000' weekend, booking accommodation (or

sorting out options for sleeping at the track). Also means we'll be getting the Giti Racing Chev ready for a big outing.

I hear there are already a few Aussie teams looking to front up, which will make the '1000' this country's sole international race.

Barry Phillips at the Otago club says the race laps may even be longer than they were in the 2023 event. They do have

access to a lot of race-friendly land down there.

We've been a longtime supporter of, and competitor in, these big endurance races right back to the 1000's early days in the 20th Century. It ran every couple of years until Mike Parkes picked it up and made it the final round of his Extreme off-road race series. He ran it every year while the extreme series was a kind of de facto national championship.

The biggest years of the Taupo 1000 came when Tony Saelman and his crew turned it from a race into a full-on international event; its lowest point was arguably the couple of times it ran near Atiamuri as the NZ1000. Those went back from event status to just being a race; the second of them was cold, miserable and drove away the international teams.

Now it's well entrenched in the South Island thanks to Barry Phillips, Slim Slee and the hard-core enthusiasts of the Otago club. Getting Giti on board will of course draw us down to Kurow for another crack at the biggest enduro in the southern hemisphere.



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*Bryan Chang*



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## Defining utility

'Useful': able to produce good results'.

'Utility': useful'.

Dictionary says it all!

The first mass production, wheeled, self-powered, 4WD ute must have been the WW2 Jeep. But take out 'wheeled' and the history prize goes way back to slavery – captured, bought, or traded. 'Here's an apple for lunch, bring trice cords of burnwood of length one cubit. By sundown.' What a life.

Also the beast of burden – horse, llama, donkey, or the camel whose back was broken by that 'last' straw. Did the ancient word for straw include fenceposts? Give that man a ute!

I fail to quite get the current ute attraction, being personally more focussed on the 4WD off-roader-I-can-sleep-in aspect. If you need to shift a load, get a flatdeck, small or lorry, or a trailer, to suit the job. Why drag that mostly empty bum around all the time? Do ute owners dislike all the other too-long utes that cramp car-parks designed for short vehicles? The seven-point turns to get in and out of them?

We have VVT engines and campers with pop-outs and pop-tops. Why not utes that concertina to a shorter wheelbase when the tray is empty? And longer travel suspension adjustment so they'll fit into a normal garage?

There was a job where I had the use of a Holden ute. Small

comfortable cab. But that large, seldom used, insecure, weather-dependent tray following me around permanently? Couldn't see the point of that.

Three fenceposts took the rear hard onto its bump stops, posts then wanted to vibrate downhill and out. No tiedown points. Deck would pool if parked nosedown in a storm. I had to bolt a tin trunk behind the cab to put any gear in. Hope the boss never found the bolt holes! It needed drainholes anyway.

It was really a 2WD streetcar with a different bum. The poor thing wasn't improved either by a previous operator running it into a stump that shortened the collapsible steering column so rendering the column-change gears unpredictable.

It took me to the West Coast one wet Easter. Gear in tray got soaked. Cramped cab not a happy refuge in a storm. Nowhere to boil the billy for a cuppa. Passenger footwell and tiny space behind seats crammed full of parka, bedding, tent, camera gear, some of the victuals, maps, clothes etc. Had to hop outside to get stuff from the trunk in the rain.

I hated it.

Today's 4WD utes are much improved from that ancient Aussie contraption, most obviously by the king-cab/double cab concept. Room for a family or four blokes and some gear inside. Good secure



It's a Colorado, but a bit more flash than the one Geoff drove.

lids for the trays, or a canopy, and proper 4WD functions with traction control, low range and useful tyres.

A week of running a Holden Colorado around Otago on road test a while back updated my ute experience. I was impressed. A huge step-up from my first and they've stepped up yet again since. Bigger and taller, more luxurious, more powerful and more economical.

4WDs come in three wheelbases – 'short' 'mid' or 'long', a ute being 'long'. Currently I run 'mid' as being just long enough to sleep full length. A tall person would need a LWB.

Ute trays are not really sleepers. I did sleep in the tray of the Colorado under a tarp. It worked but was not very practical. A hardtop may have been ok but they were seldom lined and often leaked.

An ex-rental, locally bodied, Land Cruiser 'troop carrier' I

once owned was my ideal 4WD. LWB, good mechanicals, plenty of room and very capable off-road and on. Unfortunately it didn't last.

Good OEM specimens are rare and expensive. Often they've been commercially used and had a hard life, though commercial sometimes includes an excellent maintenance history, valuable if documented and presented.

My local version had some advantages over the OEM. The chassis was extended by about 300mm and the body had vertical sides at full width so was cavernous inside. Its nickname became 'The Great Yellow Cave' and was entirely appropriate. The rear floor was higher than the cab floor so headroom was a bit short for tall persons, though fine for kids. Three burly fully equipped Army dudes weren't too impressed when we took them to the hills for snow-raking one snowy winter!

## A new framework for DoC-managed lands

Submissions closed in early October on the Department of Conservation (DOC) draft Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for a region called Te Hiku in upper Northland.

The draft Te Hiku CMS was co-authored by Te Rarawa, Ngāi Takoto and Te Aupōuri of Te Hiku iwi and Te Papa Atawhai. Ngāti Kuri has not participated but is being kept informed each step of the way. As a result of the co-drafting process, the term 'Te Korowai lands and waters' is used to represent public conservation lands and waters within Te Korowai.

The draft CMS was influenced by the Treaty claims settlement Acts and the Te Hiku CMS has identified different means of accessing Te Korowai lands and waters that could be required for cultural activities under tikanga Māori: "This can be seen in the following provisions within this document: Ngā Moutere O, Ngā Moutere Ki Place Policy 5.3.4.1 regarding motu access; Ngā Wai O, Ngā Wai Ki Place Outcome 7.2.6; section 11.13 Vehicles and other means of transport, descriptive text; Watercraft Policy 11.13.1.15; and Horses and other animals Policy 11.14.14. The cultural activities informed by tikanga are so broad and varied among iwi that it is not possible to specify all protocols and procedures for all whenua, moana and wai, especially because tikanga develops over time."

Within the preamble to the CMS it states: "While the statutory context is important, it has become clear through engagement that whānau and hapū want to take a leading role in conservation as kaitiaki. Whether this is in the form of joint projects, resource sharing, capacity and capability building, or simply restoring the environment, it is acknowledged that whānau and hapū have an important role in meeting conservation goals."

A CMS describes what will be allowed or not. It is a legal document with a supposed

life of ten years, describing DOC aims in general terms. In the draft CMS the word 'must' was used in relation to Treaty matters.

For recreational driving it would seem that Ninety Mile Beach (Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Beach) would be important in the CMS, but it has its own management plan in place and is outside that CMS. Reference is made to the possibility that vehicles could be banned from the beach under that management plan by the Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Beach Management Board.

Recreation opportunities on Te Korowai (DOC) lands and waters have been categorised into four different destination types to reflect known and potential demand and to capture people's outdoor leisure preferences. This is part of an approach that is known as 'destination management'.

'Icon destinations' are areas that the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai has identified as high-profile, popular destinations that underpin national and international tourism and provide memorable visitor experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand.

'Gateway destinations' are places that introduce New Zealanders to the outdoors and enable them to learn about conservation; these destinations may provide for a diverse range of activities but include many traditional camping and tramping destinations.

'Local treasures' are vehicle-accessible, locally valued locations that provide recreation opportunities for, and growing connections with, nearby communities. Motorised ground access is generally restricted to roads and designated routes.

In the draft CMS Volume 1 the section 11.13 detailed policies around vehicles and other means of transport and the first statement was "11.13.1 Liaise with vehicle and watercraft users to identify opportunities to:

- a. Be involved in conservation programmes; and
- b. Maintain the roads, tracks, routes or waterways that they are permitted to use."

However, being more specific "11.13.6 Should allow motor vehicles only on the roads (including designated parking areas) within Te Korowai lands and waters as identified in Table 11.13.1.

"11.13.7 Consider provision for use of motorised vehicles outside areas provided for by Policy 11.13.1.6 only where such use is identified at sites listed in Table 11.13.1 and subject to Policy 11.13.1.5."

It was an interesting draft document that would seem to be a precursor to future CMS proposals. The 4WD community were alerted to the opportunity to put forward submissions about the draft CMS, but it is unknown at this time how many had input. The New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association was one organisation that submitted arguments for managed 4x4 access to conservation lands.

Four-wheel drive recreation is going to need to organise itself to respond to future drafts of CMSs as they are formulated around the country. If 4WD recreation options are not recognised within a CMS, they can not exist on those DOC managed lands.

In the process of drafting a CMS, there is supposedly input from the wider community through notification of intention. That too needs to be better identified, as in the case of the Te Hiku draft CMS the inputs appear to have been driven by specific interests.

Inviting comment (submissions) on how public conservation lands are managed is a final step in the process and the volume of responses is important. In a supposedly democratic society, if there is clear evidence that an outcome is preferred, then that outcome should be recognised.

# FEATURING IN **DECEMBER** **NZ4WD**

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## Heading into safari season

Summer is just around the corner. In a little over six weeks, it will be Christmas and that leads us into 2025 and there are already quite a few trips on the calendar, with many more to come.

Whatever type of adventure you want there will be a safari, tag-along or competition to suit your needs.

But what is a tag-along safari? Tag-along safaris are usually aimed at the general public with a 4WD and club vehicles that are also fully road legal with WOF and registration for insurance purposes. Generally, the worst that usually happens is a little bush pin-striping but some events cater for the 'tougher' modified vehicles such as the recent Matariki Forestry trip or will have 'play areas' where you can have a go with recovery vehicles ready to pull you out if necessary.

Because of the wide range of people attending these trips there is no shortage of experienced people to help should you require assistance or the event organisers have roving helpers who are able to provide assistance and recovery should it be required.

Tag-along safaris have become very popular over recent times largely due to the usually inaccessible areas that many include as part of their trip. This has been especially important as we encounter increasingly restricted access to areas for our recreation almost on a monthly basis and the media view 4WD vehicles and their drivers negatively.

Many of the safaris and trips are part of fundraising efforts for local groups and schools, with farmers and property owners allowing access to their properties in support of the local community. It becomes a

rare opportunity to see and experience more of our unique and scenic countryside. In many cases local property owners so willing to support their community, they even lend a hand in the organising or make suggestions for the tracks to be used.

Many of these tracks are used daily by the owners and the last thing they need is for 50 to 100 vehicles damaging the tracks to the point that they cannot use them or they have to spend money to have machinery in to repair the damage so a lot of these trips are limited to the best months of the year, January through to March, especially the weekend events where camping is involved. Even then restrictions may apply in adverse weather. Because of the fundraising nature of these events the local communities get in behind the event and farmers open up their properties allowing up to 100-120 vehicles to traverse through. It is even better when the organisers can string several properties together so that you spend the majority of the time off-road or at least on back country metal roads. Sometimes there will even be a local identity or historian who will be able to cover some of the early days and history of the area adding yet another dimension to the experience.

Many of these types of events are very

social with many relaxing after a good day, enjoying a drink and good company into the evening. Sometimes the limited numbers available are filled months in advance.

Many of the community fundraiser tag-alongs and safaris usually involve a 4WD club for their experience and insurance so they require vehicles to have a minimum standard of equipment, in line with the clubs' own guidelines. These usually involve a fire extinguisher, first aid kit, a spade or shovel, a 4WD nylon snatch recovery rope (or strap). In addition they often state that the vehicle will need proper recovery points front and rear and the manufacturers tie down points are not sufficient for snatch or off-road recovery.

If your vehicle has a tow bar then removing the tow ball and using a rated shackle through the hole in the tongue is usually sufficient for the rear. In some instances the organisers may request that tow balls be removed anyway to ensure they are not used for recovery purposes. With many vehicles having front spoilers, it is not as easy and may need a specialist to fit a recovery point.

To find out about each of these events, keep a close eye on the NZ4WD website, specifically the NZ4WD Events page where all details of trips are listed as soon as we have the details about them. Yes,

we also list in the magazine each month but with limited space and publishing deadlines there are delays and at times by the time the printed issue is out registrations are full – like the recent Moawhango School and upcoming Kauri Coast trips.

I have got my list of trips I will be doing, so get planning your trips for the summer of 2025 before you miss out entirely. These trips and adventures are really worth participating in.



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