



DANDENONG RANGES 4WD CLUB

MEMBER'S BOOKLET



Welcome to Dandy Ranges 4WD Club

Welcome to the Dandenong Ranges Four Wheel Drive Club (DRFWDC). Although it could be said that the Dandy Ranges is very much a 'vehicle' based club, it would be fairer to describe the Club as a group of people who enjoy the bush and their vehicles, and the joy of being with friends who enjoy the same.



Most trips, be they one day, one night, a weekend or much longer, are attended by people of all ages; from babies to those who no longer talk about their age. The Club was formed in July 1973, has over 80 members and is a

foundation member club of the Victorian Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs (VAFWDC).

Not only are we involved in 4 Wheel Driving, we are also involved in a number of other activities. We support inter-club events such as competition weekends (Boho Bounce, Pajero Challenge, Rhino Trophy), social weekends away and 4WD trips with other clubs. Dandy Ranges has always been involved in the Victorian 4WD Show at Wandin.

We have many social events - an annual dance, bowling nights, observation rallies, progressive dinners, movie nights, and much more.

Our Club also participates in voluntary events like helping Parks Victoria clean up Gembrook, Toolangi and Kinglake by removing old car bodies, clearing and maintaining tracks, etc.

The Swap Meet

The Dandy Ranges Club is best known for organising the 4x4 Swap Meet at Swinburne TAFE, Wantirna. The Swap Meet has become one of the major events on the 4 Wheel Drive Calendar and is attended by thousands of Melbourners looking for pre-loved parts, camping equipment, cars, etc.

Your help in organising these events, or suggesting new ideas, is most welcome and appreciated.



The Swap Meet is normally held in February/March each year.

Club Meetings

All members are welcome to attend Club meetings and Committee meetings.

Club Meeting	Every second Wednesday of the month, at the HV Jones Pavillion, Kingston St, Ferntree Gully. The meeting starts around 8pm, and supper is served after the meeting.
Committee Meeting	First Wednesday of the month, at a Committee Member's house, see the trip calendar for details.

Traction Action magazine

Traction Action, the Club newsletter, is published monthly. Each edition includes trip reports, photos, an updated trip calendar, list of club equipment, meeting minutes and news on all the social activities coming up. All members (including probationary members) receive *Traction Action*. All members are encouraged to participate. Deadlines for the next edition are always published in the trip calendar.

The Constitution

As the Dandy Ranges 4WD Club is an incorporated body, we have an official constitution. If you would like to see a copy, please ask one of the committee members to get a copy for you.

The Trip

Members will be notified of a trip by either an announcement at the Club meeting by the Trips Coordinator or trip leader, or as printed in the Trip Calendar in the magazine. The magazine will give brief details, but for more information, contact the trip leader.

Trip Lists are placed on a table at the front of the hall at each Club Meeting. If you wish to go on a trip, put your name on the list and give the trip leader a courtesy call during the week before the trip to confirm that you are going, and to gather up-to-date information on what you need to bring. If you have put your name on the list but are not able to make it, you must call the trip leader so they don't wait for you at the meeting point.

Trip Gradings

It is difficult for a trip leader to guarantee the grading, as conditions can sometimes change overnight. These gradings are meant as a guide only.

It is always best to go out on an easy trip first to get an idea of the standard of trips. Don't attempt to tackle a hard drive on your first trip. Another way to familiarise yourself with the trip standards is to jump in as passenger with an existing club member if possible.



Our trips are graded as follows:

Trip Gradings	Definition
A Grade or Hard Drive	Usually wet conditions. These trips will consist of steep climbs, rough, rocky and rutted tracks, river crossings and occasionally overgrown tracks. Snow trips are generally graded as A grade trips. A winch is necessary. This type of trip could be dangerous for inexperienced drivers. Vehicles fitted with bald or highway tyres will not be allowed on these trips. Hard drives usually consist of constant driving.
B Grade or Medium Drive	Same as A Grade trip, only during dry weather conditions. Check with the Trip Leader as to whether a winch is necessary.
C Grade or Easy/Medium Drive	Difficult four wheel driving with sufficient time to negotiate the terrain. Suitable for inexperienced drivers.
D Grade or Easy Drive	Mild four wheel driving and consisting of a great deal of two wheel driving.
'Lamington' Drive	Suitable for non-4WDs, a social drive.

Be aware that **4WDing can be dangerous** and you should take great care on all trips.

Writing trip reports

It is common for new members to get asked to write the trip report, and it's a great way to get involved. Here are some tips for writing the report:

- Get a pen and paper ready, as you'll need to take notes along the way. The types of things you'll need to keep track of are the names of the people on the trip, what type of vehicle they are driving, where the convoy went, what you saw, details of anyone getting stuck, etc. If you want to write a humorous report, it can help to make a note of any of the jokes on the trip.
- Write the report up as soon as you can. It is much easier to write it while it is fresh in your mind than a week later.
- Look at some old editions of *Traction Action* to see how other people have written their trip reports. There are no word limits or rules when writing the report, so feel free to ad lib a bit.
- Ring the trip leader if you want to know details of tracks you were on, but these aren't necessary for every trip report.
- Make sure you are aware of the deadline for the report by ringing the editor and letting them know it's coming. At the same time you can make arrangements to deliver the report to the editor (via email, mail or delivering it in person). Trip reports are accepted in writing or on disk or via email. Photos always enhance a story but if you didn't have a camera, don't worry - someone else may have.

Preparation

Before your first trip, it is suggested you work out your fuel economy. You will then know your distance capability and whether you need to carry extra fuel. Get to know your vehicle and its individual clunks and knocks. This way, when something is wrong, you'll hear it (and perhaps save yourself a lot of money).

Routine checks which should be performed before each trip, and during the trip:

- all fluid levels - battery, brake, clutch, engine, radiator, transfer case and gearbox, window washer fluid
- tyres
- general vehicle check

If you own a winch, it should be checked regularly. It's not worth having one if it doesn't work.

Compulsory items

- comprehensive tool kit
- first aid kit
- fire extinguisher
- operative UHF or CB radio (UHF preferred)
- rubbish bag
- snatch strap and D shackle
- water
- WD40 or similar water repellent
- front and rear towing points

Recommended items

- fan belts
- filters (fuel and oil)
- fuses
- oils (brake, engine & gear)
- portable 12V accessory light/torch & batteries
- radiator hoses
- shovel
- coil
- condenser
- distributor cap
- distributor points
- electrical wire
- insulation tape
- light globes
- nuts & bolts
- silicon
- spark plugs and leads
- tyre tube and valve

Recommended packing checklist

- camera & film
- camp chairs
- camp oven (if fire allowed)
- cooking gear (billy, saucepan, frying pan, tongs, fire proof glove)
- eating gear (plate, bowl, cup, cutlery, stubby holder)
- foil/glad wrap
- folding table
- gas bottle
- jaffle irons/toasting fork
- maps
- matches

Think carefully about your purchases - most modern 4WDs have nowhere to use a highlift jack.

- mattress/stretcher/lilo
- plastic wash basin, detergent, sponge, tea towel
- portable fridge, eski & ice
- portable gas stove (if fire not allowed)
- sleeping bags, pillow, blanket
- small tarp or plastic sheet
- tent, poles, pegs
- toilet paper
- clothes (wet weather clothes such as waterproof coat, hat, boots)
- toiletries
- food and drink

Most members pack an extra day's food in case of an emergency. Remember that the aim is to be totally self-sufficient and that there will be no shops in the bush. Always take a cash reserve or credit card.

Packing

Use your common sense. Heavy, flat and non-breakable goods should be packed at the bottom and secured and then the lighter, breakable goods can be packed and secured on top. A cargo barrier is a must for safe 4WDing.

Some people prefer to keep their recovery gear close at hand (shovel, high lift jack). These can be easily secured to the outside of the vehicle. Get some ideas from other club member's vehicles.

Overhead parcel shelves are a great idea, except when you are 4Wding. There is nothing worse than trying to concentrate to beat a hill while your belongings are trying to beat you!



Have all gear ready and packed before you set off from the meeting place. Don't leave it until you are mobile to stop and buy some bread, or petrol. This will only annoy another participants on the trip.

Convoy Procedure

You should ring and confirm your attendance with the trip leader in the week leading up to the trip. We have a convoy procedure with which you should familiarise yourself with before your first trip.

- 1) Arrive at the meeting place early or on time. Normally the last person has to write the trip report. Normal trip procedure is that a trip leader will wait a short time after the designated departure time and will then leave without any stragglers. If you know you will be late, call the trip leader (make sure you have the trip leader's mobile phone number with you). He/she may decide to wait for you, or arrange to meet up with you along the way.
- 2) At the meeting place, the trip Leader will introduce all trip participants, give a brief description of the trip. He/she will advise on last petrol available, possible stopping place, arrange UHF/CB channels and nominate a vehicle to be Tail End Charlie (last).
- 3) All vehicles should stay in that convoy order unless otherwise directed by the trip Leader.
- 4) It is at the trip Leader's discretion to refuse participation on a trip to any vehicle which is not properly equipped or prepared for the particular trip (including tyres, winch, etc).
- 5) At all times in convoy, each driver is responsible for the following vehicle when at cross roads or intersections. The trip leader will stop at any turn-off or intersection and wait for the following vehicle before moving in the correct direction. This vehicle must then wait until the next vehicle has arrived, and so on.

- 6) On arrival at an intersection where no vehicle is waiting and the driver is in doubt as to the correct direction, he/she should always follow the main track (and contact other vehicles for confirmation as soon as possible).
- 7) Do not travel too closely to the vehicle in front of you. Allow a generous distance between yourself and the vehicle in front, particularly whilst on hazardous tracks.
- 8) On hazardous tracks it is your responsibility to ensure that the vehicle behind you always clears the obstacle before you continue.
- 9) If you intend stopping behind a hazardous section, always allow at least two vehicle lengths for each of the following vehicles, so as to allow all vehicles ample room to stop beyond the hazard.
- 10) When leaving a stopped vehicle you should always leave the vehicle in low gear, pull the hand break on and turn off the engine. If you are in any doubt as to the effectiveness of your hand break, you should chock the wheels before leaving the vehicle unattended.
- 11) If you are unsure as to the best and safest techniques to proceed on a hazardous track, always ask for some advice from the Trip Leader or another experienced driver. Remember you probably won't be the only one experiencing difficulties.
- 12) In the event of winching or snatching a vehicle out of a hazardous section, all people must stand well clear of any cables and straps (at least 1.5 lengths of cables or straps in all directions). The winch operator or driver of the towing vehicle is in charge of the operation.

- 13) All gates are to be left as they were found. The trip leader will advise Tail End Charlie whether to leave the gate open or closed.
- 14) If a driver is trying to contact other members of the convoy and is unable to make radio contact, the driver should flash his headlights on to the vehicle ahead. This is a signal for the rest of the convoy to stop.
- 15) Persons leaving the convoy must notify the trip leader and the following driver, and if possible, give details of their intentions.
- 16) Waterlogged brakes do not work. After exiting water, dry them out by holding your left foot lightly on the brake pedal while continuing to drive until the brakes are functioning properly.
- 17) In the interests of conservation, vehicles are to keep on formed roads/tracks whilst in bush areas unless directed by the trip leader to bypass an obstacle. We do not use chains except in *extreme* snow conditions.
- 18) No driver shall drive in a manner or at a speed that could endanger themselves or other persons, or break any traffic regulations. We do not condone drink driving on trips, and you should always wear a seatbelt.
- 19) Always observe regulations as laid down by relevant authorities such as Vic Roads, Parks Victoria and the CFA.
- 20) Convoy communication in our Club is by UHF using **Channel 16** or on AM CB radios using **Channel 6**.

Code of Ethics

- 1) Keep to the laws and regulations governing the use of four wheel drive vehicles. They change from State to State. Observe all restrictions on the use of public land.
- 2) Others have the right to peace and solitude - avoid noisy driving.
- 3) Keep to constructed vehicle tracks.
- 4) Alpine areas, swamps and vegetated sand dunes are easily damaged. Avoid them.
- 5) Respect our wildlife. Stop and look, but never disturb or chase animals. It can affect their survival.
- 6) Keep the environment clean. Carry your own - and maybe other people's rubbish home. Don't put tinnies or plastic in the campfire.
- 7) Obey all fire restrictions. Extinguish your camp fire before leaving. Use existing fire places where possible.
- 8) Obey all restrictions on use of public land. Respect national parks and other conservation areas.
- 9) Get permission before driving on private land. Leave livestock along gates as they are found.

- 10) Keep your vehicle mechanically sound and quiet with an efficient muffler.
- 11) Take adequate food, water and spares on trips. Always travel with another vehicle.
- 12) Join an appropriate and responsible 4WD Club if you use your vehicle mainly for recreation.



Around the campsite

Please take care when choosing a campsite - look for a flat spot and remove sticks or rocks that could puncture the floor of your tent. Be particularly careful not to place your tent under trees or heavy limbs.

The Fire

On arrival at the campsite, everyone normally pitches in to collect firewood and get a fire started. There's nothing better than sharing stories around the campfire at night!

Burnable rubbish can be placed in the fire, but only late at night after the fire has been vacated - never put rubbish in the fire when people are cooking or sitting around talking. Items like tinnies will not burn so please don't put them in the fire. Never leave rubbish of any sort behind, and it's a must to leave the area just as you found it - or cleaner.

The Trip Leader will often nominate someone to ensure the fire is put out and the campsite is clean before the group leaves.

Going to the toilet

It is environmentally friendly to bury your No 2's, so please take a shovel with you whenever you go to the toilet in the bush.

Bathing

Again, for environmentally friendly camping, do not use soaps or detergents within 100 m of a creek or river as it can kill native flora and fauna.

Cost of Membership

Probationary membership	\$20 for 3 months
Joining Fee	\$30
Full membership	\$80 (pro rata for 1 st year)

Membership fees are due at the June meeting annually. Any inquiries regarding membership fees should be directed to the Vice President.

Any Queries?

If you have any queries regarding the club, please contact one of the committee members who will only be too happy to help you. The Vice President is responsible for new members, so it is best to approach the Vice President first.

Have fun!



Contact details

If you need to contact the club, here are the details:

Dandenong Ranges 4WD Club
PO Box 33
Ferntree Gully Vic 3156

Phone:

As the committee members change regularly, here are the phone numbers of some long-term members of the club. Feel free to contact them at any time.

Marg Goodie	(03) 9763 7131 (life member)
Davo Nankivell	(03) 9758 2418 (life member)
Rob Sturdy	(03) 9729 0054
Graeme Pain	(03) 9712 0094
Mike Jones	(03) 9725 0530

Membership cheques should be made payable to:
Dandenong Ranges 4WD Club.

