

## *Newsletter November 2008*

### *What have we been up to?*

Lots of course, some great outback trips led by Wayne, Peter, Eric and even myself, see below for all the details.

### *New Website*

Take a look at [www.4wd.net.au](http://www.4wd.net.au) I had to mention this again and thanks to all those people who took the time to email me and say how much they liked it. We have been working on the photo section of the website and have now added many photos from our recent trips, in fact in the next week or so we will add about 500 new photos from our 2007-08 outback trips, so make sure you come back to the site during November and check out some of the amazing places we have been to.

I have to say right now that not only does Wayne D know how to fix broken shocks and lead people safely all over Australia but he also has an eye for a good photo. Wait until you see some of his pics from the Kimberley, Karijini, CSR, and the high Country, simply stunning.

### *Recent Trips*

#### *Vic's Ocean to the Outback*

Gosh where do I start, we only had 4 customers with us, some that had travelled extensively, (John & Barbara) and some for whom this was their first trip with GDT, (Hugh & Heather). Judging by the feedback I received they all thought it was fantastic. I won't give a detailed report here as I have written that in a 2,500 word article which will appear in Overlander Magazine's January 2009 edition. Suffice to say that we explored some great beach areas around Ceduna, drove up Goog's track, explored the Gawler Ranges (fantastic) and endured a ferocious dust storm between Coober Pedy and William Creek, I have never driven in

that kind of condition previously, at times I could not see past the bull bar! The real highlight of this trip was our two day flight around and over the Simpson Desert including Lake Eyre and the New Painted Hills. This was a very special trip, and whenever I get out from behind this PC to personally lead a trip, it is my goal to make it very special and very memorable; I believe we achieved this 100%.



**On the sand dunes at Fowler's Bay SA**

#### *Simpson Desert Safari's*

Peter and Ngaire led this trip again through very difficult conditions due to the heat and the dust storms. When Pete called me on the Sat. Phone to advise that it had cooled down from 46 degrees to 39 degrees, I knew he was having a pretty tough time of it. But it is the Simpson Desert in October and I guess that is what people expect of a desert.



**You see dunes like this on the Hay River trip**

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Peter also took a group on our favourite Simpson Desert/Hay River trip in the cooler months and as usual this trip was a real cracker especially with the stopover in the Northern Simpson at Lindsay Bookie's Baton Hill camp.

### *Cape York*

This time our country cousins, Greg and Helen and their two fabulous children led the Cape York trip. Whilst the trip was fantastic as per usual, we had real dramas with 3 of the 6 customers even before it started. One customer was missing in action, on an overseas holiday and forgetting he was booked on the Cape York trip, happens when you are having just too much of a good time burning up all of the kid's inheritance. Then one customer literally had his 4WD confiscated from him by the Toyota dealer the day before we were due to leave. It seems there had been a recall on it from the Factory for a potential brake problem, and when it was put in for some pre trip work, they said "sorry mate, you can't have it back until we fix the brake problem" Only problem was, the parts took 3 weeks to arrive, and so he spent his holidays in a Caravan Park in Cairns instead of on Cape York! But the real hard luck story went to another of our clients who felt a little unwell the day before the trip was due to commence. He managed to see a local GP in Cairns and before he could say "What about my trip to Cape York" he was in hospital having his appendix removed. Anyway, for the 3 other cars that did stick with us on the Cape, they had a blast.

### *Kimberley and Best of the West*

It's hard not to get excited about these areas and we had another successful trip through the Kimberley, we now spend a few days at the new Wilderness Sanctuary at Mornington Station and explore the Fitzroy River and its beautiful gorge country. Our trip also took us to areas used by the New Nicole Kidman film "Australia" and we found that the campsite we use at Digger's Rest had hosted many of the cast and personnel making the film and, as a result,

had gained some new facilities. When you watch this film, take a long look at the dramatic Kimberley scenery you will see depicted in it and then realise that is the country through which we travel on the Kimberley trip.



### **Chamberlain Gorge in Karijini NP**

Wayne D had not completed the Best of the West trip previously and I kept telling him how good the scenery was around Karijini NP, I think he now believes me, and was completely blown away by its raw beauty. We have realised now that for those joining us on the Kimberley trip, a little more time in Broome before we head back on the Best of the West trip would have been nice, so next year we have several days between both trips.

### *Flinders Ranges*

This has to be one of the best trips we offer. Wayne D again took a small group, two with trailers in tow, because it is trailer friendly, and two camping. A great mix of 4wd action and stunning scenery with easy camping at several base camps, what more could you ask for?



**Silliers lookout in Arkaroola**

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### *Driver Training*

These events continue at least once a month, but a week before I headed off on the Ocean to the Outback trip we hosted about 40 tyre fitters from Cooper Tires fame at the Driver Training property. The usual education process in how to drive off road was followed, but these weekends for the Cooper guys is also an opportunity for their retailers, who come from all over NSW, to get to socialise together. We set up our very own live band in the picnic shelter at Castle View, and I have to tell you that our mate Alex, is a real whizz on the drum kit. He almost stole the show with his percussion display. I reckon he would give Phil Collins or at least the big gorilla being featured on TV of recent, a run for his money.



**Alex on the drums, yes he really can play!**

### *4WD Talk*

Our next night under the stars is scheduled for Mid February 2009 at TJM Penrith. Not only will we give you the good oil on your outback travel but the slide show will feature some fantastic pics from my recent Ocean to the Outback tour, I'll keep you posted on the exact date in my next Newsletter, or check with Earle on 9622 1000.



**Vic's gone mad, look at the discounts he is offering!**

### *Exciting trips coming up and Hot Specials*

Okay, whilst I was out in the Gawler Ranges we had a Barrington Tops trip scheduled for early September, but due to heavy rain that weekend, we had to postpone it. So this great 4WD trip has now been rescheduled to 8-9 November (yes, next weekend) I have 3 spots left on it and will discount these down from \$320 to \$250 for the weekend to the first three people to contact me via email. [info@greatdividetours.com.au](mailto:info@greatdividetours.com.au) This is a camping weekend with lots of 4WD action and we are camped in a small caravan park with facilities.

On the 15-16 November I have one my favourite trips, our South Coast Explorer tour. Now, not only does this tour take you to some of the best 4WD locations on the South Coast but it includes a stopover on the water's edge in Batemans Bay in well appointed cabins, We usually pop over the road to the Bowling club for dinner too so it makes the whole camping thing really easy. Alex is leading this trip so if you would like to join him, I have two spots left with a \$30 discount on each, first in best dressed, via [info@greatdividetours.com.au](mailto:info@greatdividetours.com.au)

On Sunday 23 November, Wayne D heads out of Bright on another of his favourite Victorian High Country trips. This is a 7 day trip through some of the best 4WD country in Victoria, we have 4 customers registered thus far, so if you would like a break before the silly season, drop me an email.

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If you can't manage the time off work, but will be sitting around at home over the Christmas break, then throw off the boredom and join us on either our 4 day Man From Snowy River trip over the New Year or return to the High Country for our best 7 day trip commencing in the New Year on 4 January. I have detailed itineraries on each of these trips, so if you would like a better idea of how good they are, just ask me for a copy of the itinerary.

On the 4WD training front, if you want to enhance your skills and learn how to get yourself out of trouble, then join us on our Advanced 4WD training weekend on 29-30 November.



**The Advanced course is a lot of dirty fun!**

### *Christmas Vouchers*

I know we have only just got over last Christmas, but its only 7 weeks away to the next one! If you are stuck for an idea for a gift then why not use our Gift Voucher service. All you need to do is call me on 02 9913 1395, tell me what trip or 4WD course you wish to give as a present and I can make up a personalized voucher for the person you are presenting with this great gift idea. Gift vouchers are available for one day trips such as our Stockton trip through to the Driver Training courses, or you can even give a money voucher for the recipient to receive the value of the voucher off their next booking no matter what trip they decide on, we offer vouchers to the value of \$50, \$100, \$200 or for that matter any amount you wish to nominate.

And Guys, don't think this is all about her giving you a 4WD trip, you can purchase a voucher for one of our accommodated trips such as the Sth Coast Explorer or the Abercrombie/Hill End tour, where she doesn't have to camp or cook! A win win situation (that's what I reckon anyway).

### *Vic Writes more for Overlander*

If you enjoy reading my ramblings in my column in Overlander Magazine and these occasional Newsletters, then you'll be excited to hear that as of January 2009, I will have published in Overlander Magazine a whole series of outback places to visit. We call it Cooper Tire Tracks, as it will be sponsored by our mates at Cooper Tires. The articles are destination style stories with lots of info on history, what's there to see and what the road conditions are like. I have just written the January edition on Willandra and Kinchega National Parks and I'm writing the February story on the Gawler Ranges and Lake Gairdner as soon as I get this newsletter out to you. So keep an eye on Overlander for this great new series in 2009.



**Where is this place? Read Overlander Magazine in February 2009.**

### *4WD Of The Year*

Yes, it's that time of year again, and once more I have been invited to be a judge on this prestigious award. I have designed a testing 4WD course for the finalists, taking in places like Stockton Beach, my 4WD facility, the Snowy and Victorian High Country and the Brindabellas. We head off a few weeks just before Christmas on this grueling test. Of course I'll bring you all the

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nitty gritty on the test program as soon as the winner is announced at the end of January 2009.

### *A 4WD proposal*

I can't say too much for obvious reasons but I am working on some new ideas for Great Divide Tours and if anyone out there wishes to be part of it in a part ownership way drop me an email at [info@greatdividetours.com.au](mailto:info@greatdividetours.com.au). This is an investment proposal that will move GDT forward to enhance it in the 4WD world.



*Our customers can walk on water.*



A Monster Truck doing its training at Castle View.

### *A sneak look at our 2009 Calendar*

I have literally only just put the finishing touches on the Calendar for next year; it is attached as a separate pdf file in this email; so you are seeing it before anyone else. Even the website has not caught up with all of its content, it is that HOT off the press.

### *Merry Christmas*

Finally a Merry Christmas to you and your family, and safe travels during the festive season.

That's all for now from the crew at Great Divide Tours:-

Vic, Julie, Wayne D, Wayne B & Jenny, Peter & Ngaire, Alex, John, Eric & Anne, Brian, Dave & Irene, Richard, Greg, Ian B & Skippy/Yarn/Ian.

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You never know, the man in the big red suit might leave you a big yellow truck under the Christmas Tree!

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