

April 2019



SUBARU 4WD NEWS

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SUBARU 4WD CLUB of WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.

P.O. BOX 434, SOUTH PERTH, W.A. 6951

Next meeting

Tuesday, 9 April, 7.30pm

Moresby Street Hall, Kensington

SUBARU 4WD CLUB OF W.A. INC.

2018/2019 COMMITTEE

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Club member of the Year 2018-2019: Robert Griffiths

Life members: Fred Offer, Keith Anderson, Jonel Householder, Ray Stewart, Ian Johnson, Peter Andruszkiw, Ron Counce, Jim Wilcox and Tony Richards

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



New, improved meetings are coming!

Camped along the Moore River I find myself writing this report while one of the dogs stares down a bobtail and the other chomps at flies. It's been a hot weekend, so I am fortunate to be in some shade and near water. I'm here trying out the camper trailer ahead of its voyage over

Easter, Anzac Day and the school holidays to Exmouth and back. The good news is we got it up without any arguments!

March had the annual Caravan and Camping Show, and I went down for a gander. I found some LED strip lights which I'll bring along for show and tell at this month's meeting. Get down to check them out and see Dave demonstrate 'Plastic Welding' too.

While at the show I found a neat new 100AH Lithium battery pack that is a complete box, with Anderson input charging and multiple outlet types including cigarette plugs, USB, Anderson and 2.5mm jacks. The tall and slimmer design looks like it would fit in the back nicely. It's even



A new camper trailer. Looks like Mel has it sorted!

completely portable so it can be removed from the car when not in use, or moved in to the tent to power lights or a fridge. Google the Nomad PDU v5 for more info.

Glen at Ranger Outdoors Bentley hosted us last month and showed a few neat new products. The Garmin PLB/GPS/communicator looks great and is, according to Glen, a highly-advanced version of the Spot units that some members are familiar with.

Remember you can pop in to Ranger Outdoors Bentley year-round for great advice and a discount. **Cont. p.4**



President's report. From p. 3.

Behind the scenes, we are gearing up for a few changes and improvements. We will be increasing the amount of show and tell at meetings, and covering a few learning topics of relevance to the club. We hope almost every meeting will have a learning topic. That's where we need your help! We have soooo... many knowledgeable members in the club and we want them to share more of what they know. Topics can be anything outdoors-related, so please let us know what topic you can present on for 15 mins and we will set aside a meeting

night for you.

Some topics that come to mind are:

Come and tell us about things you know, or have made

cameras and equipment, using OziExplorer or Hema software, tyre repairs, flora and fauna species identification, dieback precautions, vehicle modifications and accessories, kayaks. If its relevant to any trip or activity we do, then please share it.

Not only will the meetings include more learning topics, the trips will too, with some specific learning days being planned, such as a recovery day, bushcraft day, and more!

Got something to show? Bring it to any meeting and share it with all or send a pic and write-up to our editor Stephan.

The Pres, Adrian Longwood

Trip co-ordinator's report

April will be a busy month for us with the Finska World Cup as our social event then a couple of extended camps. For those who can only get Easter off we are going to Warriédar – an old pastoral station which, when the pastoral lease expired, was returned to Government (Parks and Wildlife) control. It is part of the larger Karra rangelands which is several old pastoral leases all joined into one large conservation area.

After Easter we will head further north into the Murchison to explore some more stations. Some, such as Melangata, are still operating. Melangata is now run by Jo Clews of camp oven cooking fame. Other stations, such as Muggon, have been abandoned for many years.

With the announcement that there is more funding for rangeland parks there is also the possibility that some of these areas may not be open to the public in future, which to me goes against the reason for making more parks. They need to be accessible for the public so the public can be educated about our diverse natural attractions and the environments within the stations.

Cheers, David Peck

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4WD Show Prices



*Subaru 4WD Club Members receive 10% discount on RRP. Does not apply to monthly specials.

Rear diff high temp light

Some model Foresters have a rear differential high temperature warning light.

I have one on my 2010 diesel and had noticed that I was momentarily flashing as I was changing gear. Upon investigation the wiring all looked good, as there is an earth connection from the differential body and a single wire to the temperature switch. I took the earth spade connection off and cleaned it as it did appear dirty. This didn't fix the problem, which was starting to become more frequent. I remember Stephan having problems with the wire to the temperature switch so I gave it a gentle wiggle and it broke off. I managed to dismantle the connector to get at the broken wire and solder it back up.

I believe the initial design is a latent failure and I suggest that a simple modification is done to prevent his happening to other cars. The wire to the connector is covered in insulation except for the last couple of millimetres. With the movement of the rear axle this bit of wire moves and will eventually break. What I did was to cover the end of the connector and part way up the wire with adhesive/sealant – which will take the strain off the wire. **David Peck**



Still one of the best and safest SUVs off-road!

While there are issues being raised about the effectiveness of the Subaru CVT ([see pp. 14-18](#)), there is no doubt the Forester is still among the best SUVs off-road ... and safe ... and fuel-efficient, according to an RAC review. The review in the April/May Horizons magazine highlights the new Driver Monitoring System which can tell if you are tiring or distracted ... and give you a warning. It also praises engine changes making for greater efficiency.

Karratha Gathering

The latest details of the WA 4WD Association Gathering in Karratha are on the Club website. This year the Gathering is from Friday 12 to Monday 15 July at the Karratha Caravan Park. Dogs are welcome and there are 4WD side trips on Sunday to choose from. Camping spots are all powered (\$27/night), and some have ensuites (\$41.60/night). **Our club needs to submit details and money from all members attending, before 10 May.** We need to know names, if you have a caravan, what trips you want to do, whether you want a free breakfast on the Monday and how many days you are staying.

Those intending to do the Three Deserts Trip should sign up for the Gathering too as this trip starts in Karratha.

Seabird Scramble

Sunday 5 May

This double-option trip starts as a mid-morning beach run from Moore River to Seabird and finishes up at the Seabird Tavern for lunch. You can skip the beach run and head straight to the Tavern if you wish. The Seabird Tavern is a refreshed coastal tavern overlooking the water with a family-friendly setting. We will be soaking up the views while enjoying a nice lunch and beverages from 12:30 onwards. Before that, we will be meeting early to make a run along the beach and bush tracks from Moore River. **Contact Adrian Longwood**

Track Care Project

From 18 May to 16 June, Track Care will be building a dunny at Punmu and doing maintenance between Well 33 and Wiluna on the Canning Stock Route. More info from Track Care

**TRIP
PROMOTIONS**

A sortie to the silo art trail

1 June - 3 June

This is our chance to explore the Wheatbelt again, this time following a trail which connects world-class murals by local and international artists. These mural have transformed grain silos, public walls and transformer boxes in a number of country towns and in doing so have brought tourists back.

This social event is suitable for caravans and camper trailers as we will be driving along main roads to view the new public art in Northam, Merredin, Katanning, Pingrup, Newdegate, Ravensthorpe, and Albany.

do more of the
fun stuff

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Finska World Championship 6 April

It's on again sports fans! Finska at its best...and worst! After dominating last year's competition, Wayne will be looking at winning back-to-back titles. Stephan put in a poor performance last year, and will need to improve this year to be a chance to get back on the top [*where he belongs!* -Ed]. Adrian and Travis made it to the finals again but were not able to take out the title, but with a little luck, either way, one of them could be in with a chance this year. Julie, the



dark horse, was also a top performer last year. Coming out of nowhere, she came close, but missed out on the title. Will there be an upset? Will Wayne hold off all-comers to be a two-time World Champion? Will someone jag the title with a dodgy bounce? Most importantly, who will take out the Bung Chuck? Be quick to register your name, to be in contention for the Subaru 4WD Club's premier sporting event. It is free to enter, but back-handers and brown envelopes are always welcome.

This is open to current members only, but spectators and cheer squads will be greatly appreciated. As in previous years it will be at **Tranby Reserve in Maylands** opposite the Mayland Tennis club at the corner of Clarkson and Hardey roads, where there is plenty of parking. The competition will kick off at 10.30, with the warm-up and knock out rounds. Depending on how many people play and how many games we end up with in the first round, the first 2 to 3 people from each game will go through to the final. After lunch, those still in the running will take centre stage. After the dust settles, the winner will be lauded and the trophy handed over. We should be done about

1. **Contact Travis Maskey.**

**Will it be Wayne's
World ... again?**

Great Sandy, Simpson, Great Victoria – 5 trips in one

July-August

This trip is intended as part of the celebration for the Club's 40th anniversary, and it is set to be a cracker.

It starts with the 4WD Association's Gathering, this year in Karratha, then heads east across the Pilbara, the Great Sandy Desert and the Gary Junction Road to the Northern Territory and Alice Springs via the birthplace of desert art, Papunya.



TRIP PROMOTIONS

There is a separate trip, leaving on July 20, from Perth to Alice for those who wish to tackle the Simpson Desert but don't have time for the rest. And on the way home to Perth you can either head home via the Nullarbor, or if things work out, traverse the Anne Beadell Highway to Laverton.

From Alice the trip goes past the geographical centre of Australia. Then the convoy crosses the **Simpson Desert on the French Line track**, ending up at Birdsville. Then down the **Birdsville Track** to **Coober Pedy**, where the (fool)hardy will travel to Laverton via the Anne Beadell Highway – which definitely is NOT a highway – across the Great Victoria Desert. At Coober Pedy the time-poor people can head back to Perth arriving August 11.

Annual Dinner

*The annual dinner for our 40th year is at the **Woodvale Tavern on 2 November.***

Jim wrangled a great deal for a great venue. So, put the date in your diary and get ready for a great night. The dinner will also be the annual Awards ceremony, so get award nominations in whenever you can.

Easter and Anzac: one trip or two?

Here is your chance to take off into the Murchison during the Easter and Anzac Day break later this month. Choose one of the trips, or join them together for one big one. The first is over Easter at Warriédar, the second explores other Murchison stations over the Anzac Day break.

See details on the facing page

Warriédar and beyond. April 19 to 22. This is a trip to Warriédar station for Easter. Warriédar is a former station that is now managed by DPAW. It has some very special places that you will get to see.

Murchison meander. April 22-28.

The plan is to go onto Melangata Station for two nights, stopping at Thundelarra station and Jokers tunnel and Yalgoo for supplies and fuel. Melangata homestead is one of the special places designed by Monsignor J.C. Hawes.

We will then day trip out to Dalganga meteorite crater (don't get too excited) and Walga Rock. Then it's on to Wooleen Station and Murchison for fuel. Still heading north we go to Muggon Station before turning southwards towards Woolgorong Outcamp passing the Murchison River at Ballinyoo Bridge. The night's camps will be a bit flexible as we might spend a couple of nights in one spot if we like it.



For all your 4WD Subaru tyre and wheel needs, see our friendly sales teams at the following locations:

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SUBARU 4WD CLUB OF W.A. INC.

CLUB CALENDAR

APRIL 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Tues 2. Committee meeting 7pm
Sat 6. Finska Cup
Tues 9. General meeting 7.30pm
Fri 19 - Mon 29 Warriédar for Easter, then other stations the week following

MAY 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Sun 5. Seabird Tavern
Tues 7. Committee meeting 7pm
Fri 10. Last day for Gathering details to be lodged
Tues 14. General meeting 7.30pm
Sat 18. Mystery tour around Jarrahdale (with optional overnight stay)

JUNE 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30	31					1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Sat-Mon 1-3. Silo art tour
Tues 4. Committee meeting
Tues 11. General meeting
Sat 15. Noble Falls Tavern lunch

CLUB CALENDAR

JULY 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Tues 2 Committee meeting
Tues 9. General meeting
Sat 6 – 20. Gathering short trip
Mon 15-25 Karratha-Alice Springs
Sat 20 – Wed 24. Perth to Alice
Thurs 25 – 5 August. Alice via Simpson Desert to Coober Pedy

AUGUST 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Tues 6. Committee meeting
Tues 13. General meeting 7.30pm
Sat 17. Breakfast at the Left Bank. 8am
Sun 25. Lancelin Dunes

EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT GRAB BAG

David Peck has assembled a bag for Trip Leaders to take on trips, particularly if they are going somewhere remote. The bag contains the Club Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) and the Emergency Personal Location Beacon (EPLB). To arrange pick up Contact David 0402 177 886, trips@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au

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Quiz question. What creature does the CVT article have in common with a fauna find on the Mundal trip, reported in this issue? Why? Responses to the editor.

What the Subaru 4WD Club of Victoria said ...

QUERY RE OFF-ROADING IN A CVT TRANSMISSION VEHICLE

By Martin Foot - Subaru 4WD Club of Victoria March 2019

The club receives some interesting correspondence from members of the public. Some ask for advice about the suitability of a particular model for off-roading. We may not all be engineering experts on our cars, but the collective experience of club members is, hopefully, of practical value to these people. Recently, the club received an enquiry from a non-member as follows:

"Thinking of purchasing the Outback, but a little put off by Youtube videos of it, just sitting on a steep hill revving, but no wheel spin. I do long runs to Qld and want to explore more off road regions like the Darling River track or the high country Mountain Goat 4x4 track. I am a little worried of going into a place and not being able to get out. What experience have your members had with the current outback and have they experienced the problem mentioned above?"

There had been discussion amongst some members on this topic, but I realised I would need to do a little research before responding. This is an edited version of my response: Thanks for contacting the Subaru 4WD Club of Victoria.

Members report that in some circumstances, Subaru's CVT transmissions will not allow the vehicle to move. This is also reported in a review of the 2015 Outback by motoring journalist Robert Pepper of *Practical Motoring*. The issue appears to be due to a limitation imposed by the computer system. According to a post on <https://www.subaruoutback.org/> (that I haven't verified elsewhere), if the car is stationary, initial revs are apparently limited to 2400 rpm, in order to protect the CVT. If this is not sufficient to move the vehicle, due to drive train resistance caused by mud, deep slushy snow, or rock shelf, or whatever, the transmission will not engage the driveshafts. Turning stability control off does not seem to affect this, neither does X-Mode.

Because of this, we tend to regard the current generation of CVT Subarus as touring cars capable of back-roads (but not serious off-road) travel. Members enjoy all the modern safety features, but when we want to scale Billy Goat Bluff track or other challenging climbs and descents in the high country, or indulge in some serious sand or desert driving, we prefer to use more traditional vehicles.

In my case, I have a 2015 Diesel Forester for towing and long distance touring. For 4WD-ing, I use a modified 2003 Forester 2.5X with dual range. L-series cars are popular in the club due to their low cost, light weight and capable 4WD system (along with Brumbys). Older Outbacks have been less successful due to their heavier weight: one of our senior members suffered gearbox and driveshaft breakdown under full load.

Members with growing families have reluctantly shifted to more traditional 4WDs such as Landcruisers, Pajeros and more recently dual cab utes. Finally, as a 4WD club, we don't tackle difficult tracks alone. Convoy travel ensures that should we run into trouble, we can be recovered by our mates. On solo trips we are much more conservative.

In its March edition the Subaru 4WD Club of Victoria magazine addressed a query on the off-road abilities of a CVT (continuously variable transmission). What the author, Martin Foot, found prompted responses from some of our members. His article is copied on the opposite page. Thanks to Martin for giving permission to use it. If it's a bit hard to read go to their mag: https://issuu.com/mhfoot51/docs/march_2019_magazine_online_version

What are the pros and cons of a CVT off-road?

Some of the Club brains trust were quick to put keyboard to email in response to Martin Foot's article.

The conversation started with **Jim**, who asked whether the Club had had trouble like that discussed in the Victorian article, then noted that the issues had been around forever in autos. He said his old

green Forester with a standard auto had the problem of starting on a hill etc., as the torque converter would

not let the revs go above around 2500 when not moving. This was not usually a problem, but there was no way to sit on the rev limit and drop the clutch.

Adrian said it was an issue not many would have been exposed to yet, but acknowledged that in a CVT the "transmission would not always deliver power to the wheels if the load/resistance were too high to get the car moving from a stationary position."

He continued: "In the past we may have spun a wheel on the spot and sunk down or just not moved forward, whereas with the CVT, it may simply just not turn the wheel at all. I've experienced it driving the latest model Forester, and seen it from time to time in Forester and Outback CVTs. It mainly happens in more challenging conditions, from a standing start, trying to go up hill, or against great resistance, (sand or mud). **Cont. p. 16**



Ian's CVT Forester on the Wunnamurra Track

CVTs
off-
road



**CVTs
off-
road**

A Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) is an automatic transmission that doesn't use gears, instead relying on a belt, chain and pulleys to transfer power to the driven wheels. As it has no physical gears or fixed gear ratios, a CVT actually features the equivalent of an infinite number of gears. The Lineartronic® CVT has replaced most traditional automatic transmissions in the Subaru line-up. [Text:Subaru Canada; Image stanleysubaru.com]

Pros and cons of a CVT off-road

From p.15 "In a manual, you simply end up riding the clutch and forcing the car to move (at risk of damaging the clutch). The four-speed autos had better abilities to deliver power and get the car moving, simply by planting your foot more.

"I have found that in almost all cases of a CVT failing to move the vehicle (forwards or backwards) tyre pressures could have been reduced (on any terrain) to get it to a point where it would go.

"So yes, it is an issue that can leave you stranded in awkward situations, but can be alleviated by always keeping momentum, or drastically reducing tyre pressures (down to 8-15psi).

"When travelling with others we would have the safety of a recovery vehicle, but travelling alone, on difficult tracks, with a CVT would present a higher risk of being stranded."

Jason said this was "partially true" as there were computer-based controls getting info from myriad sensors that try to protect the CVT.

"Most of these are very conservative," he said. "If Subaru were concerned about the CVT they wouldn't be offering it in WRX STI models and Levorg models." The issue could be alleviated by having someone with the right electronic gear and know-how to remove some of the software limits (e.g. Matt at Throttle Happy).

Cont. p.17

Pros and cons of a CVT off-road

From p. 16 “Most of the other tuning options are focused on the WRX STi. I haven't asked Tokyo or similar if they do anything for other CVT Subarus or not. There are some companies that do re-mapping/improvements on the Si-Drive system as well, such as DCCDPro.”

Jason also noted that “the linked article to *Practical Motoring* is interesting in itself; it actually sounds more of driver error than Subaru error.” The article, he said, also made claims based on limited information, such as “I do know the WRX CVT doesn't handle track days, and perhaps the CVT in the Outback would suffer from prolonged use on hills with heavy loads.”



“The early model CVTs from Subaru did have some issues, mainly those around 2011/2012 vintage. Since then they have made a large number of improvements, finishing with a product that is very nice to drive.

“A CVT WRX goes just fine on a track; as does the CVT Evo as well. The 4-speed autos do have some degree of similar power limiting functionality but not to the same level, for example: in the last model Forester with the 4EAT (i.e. my model) it limits power if the steering wheel is at full lock.

Jim then jumped in again to note: “In my understanding of the old autos the torque converter loaded the engine down more and more as the revs increased until an equilibrium was reached where the engine could not produce any more power at those revs. I did get the torque converter modified to not load quite as much to allow the engine a few hundred more revs to get a bit more starting power out of it. The modern computers may also tend to limit power a bit, but I imagine it is more the torque converter load limiting the engine revs, hence take-off power. **Cont. p. 18**

CVTs
off-
road

Pros and cons of a CVT off-road

From p. 17. Then **Ian** made a contribution.

“My previous 2001 2.0 4-speed auto Forester was fairly ordinary, but at least it would crawl slowly over most obstacles. On a trip up the coast “somewhere” a few years ago, it simply would NOT go up a particular sandy hill with flat tyres and a lot of speed. I put that down to not enough low-down torque. **Adrian** would remember towing me the last few metres over crest of that hill (with a smelly clutch!).

“On last year’s Purnululu – Gibb River Road trip we tackled the ultra-challenging Wunnumurra track with our 2014 CVT Forester behind **Keith and Jo** in their extremely capable (effortless) Cruiser. It was indeed a very serious track with big washaways and huge rocks. It could not have been done by a diesel, manual, or 4AT Subaru. Keith was more than amazed at Puggie’s effort [*Puggie is Ian’s Forester – Ed*]. Certainly Subarus are limited – Puggie has a 25mm lift and BFG tyres. As you may have heard me say many times – “*Sell everything you have and buy a CVT*”. I believe the engine and CVT are amazing pieces of technology, even before pressing X-Mode!

“One massive down side (at least with the 2014) is the dreadful throttle curve which makes it close to impossible to drive from just above stationary.

‘One massive downside is the dreadful throttle curve’

It is so abrupt and jerky in town and off-road. The economy is close to the same as the old Forester and our Hilux (± 10 km/l).

Erica asked: “Does the manual mode help at all? I can push mine into manual and then have levers on the steering wheel to “change gears” – which I believe are pre-set ratios.” **Adrian** responded: “Yes, it certainly does. It won’t always guarantee getting you moving from a standing start – which is the common issue – but off-roading in manual mode will give you more throttle response and increase the likelihood of getting up hills.”

And there we have it: there are limitations to the CVT, but there are several ways to reduce those limitations.

Note: some of the manual diesel owners have had good success with engine chip re-mapping to give a longer and stronger power band so they can make it up long, sandy hills. Talk to them about where they got it done - Ed.



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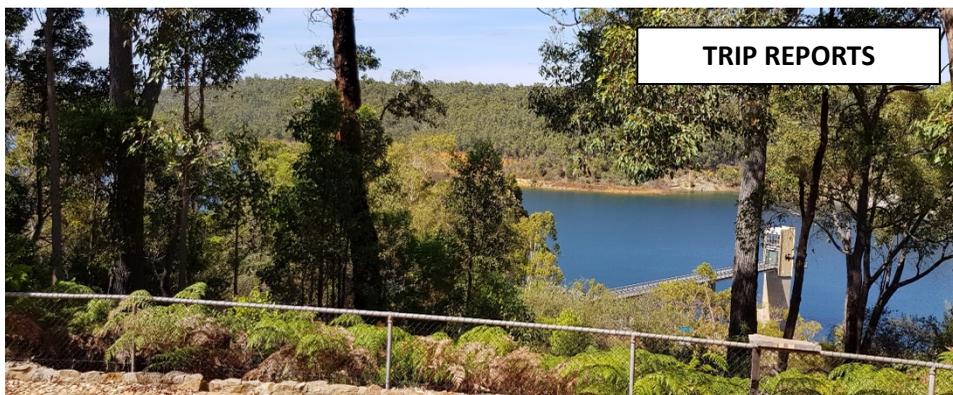
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TRIP REPORTS



Serpentine Dam from the café

Mundal Track to Wedge Tailed Eagle Retreat

Saturday 2 March 2019

A fine and warm morning saw trip members meet at the usual spot at McDonald's in Armadale. Tony, our trip leader gave us a briefing and we headed off on time for a relatively short drive down Albany Highway before joining the Mundal Track at Glen Eagle. A couple of members had done the track to Albany last April but a couple of sections were skipped on that occasion due to time constraints so they were able to be explored today.

The first turn off was onto Miller's Log Road that took us into the beautiful forest and the road was in good condition. The morning saw us winding our way along a number of tracks through the forest towards Dwellingup. Along the way we stopped at Serpentine Dam café for morning tea. Here, there were quite a number of parrots gathered hoping to be fed seed available for purchase at the café. A lovely view was afforded through the trees to the dam. Keith proclaimed, 'water crossing' on a couple of occasions including going over the Serpentine Dam and North Dandalup dam walls! Along the track a couple of significant washaways were encountered that required a degree of concentration, grit and determination to negotiate.

Tony, as always, was a great trip leader, but a few turn-offs were missed and quickly corrected including the first one onto Miller's Log Road. It is acknowledged it must be difficult to watch the track and the GPS at the same time. However, a younger member of the group, Rowan, came over the radio at one point and asked, 'Are we lost'?! Tony's response was, 'We are not lost I know exactly where we are'. Rowan then suggested he was 'lost in the dust'. **Cont. p.21**

Mundal Track

From p. 20

For most of the day the group did raise dust on the tracks due to the very dry summer conditions.

Following lunch at Dwellingup we began the next leg to Collie passing Lane Poole Reserve and



Just hangin' around in Boyup Brook!

Nanga Bush Camp and followed Scarp Road for quite a distance. The track through the lovely forest took us to Collie. The track loop east of Collie was omitted due to time constraints. In Collie some refuelled and we headed off again through forest and farmland for Wedge Tailed Eagle Retreat, our camping spot for two nights. Some adjustments were made from the Mundal Track on roads at the back of Boyup Brook to reduce the kilometres required to enable us to reach Wedge Tail Eagle Retreat in better time to set up camp.

Thank goodness Tom had worked on a horse property in a previous life was the only one who knew how to secure the gate!

Wedge Tailed Eagle Retreat is about 40 kilometres from Boyup Brook. Thank goodness Tom had worked on a horse property in a previous life as he was the only one who knew how to secure the gate.

Silvi our host greeted us and showed us on a map the available camping spots on the property. We chose the corner of the paddock nearest to the walk to the Blackwood River. There was a large group camped behind one of the dams but we heard very little of them. A toilet and shower were available at the farmhouse which was driving, but not walking, distance away. Well, you could have walked but would have needed advanced planning for such a purpose!

We all set about choosing our tent sites and making camp before settling into drinks and nibbles before dinner. After dinner Tony, Keith, Mark and Rowan went for a bird spotting walk in the dark and found a tawny frogmouth not too far up in a tree. **Deb Thyne**

Wedge Tailed Eagle Retreat: Lake Unicup Sunday 3 March

The second day at the Wedged Tail Eagle Retreat had most people 'choosing their own adventure' with Tom and Jenni opting for a relaxing time around camp with some bushwalking, Deb and Erica going into town in search of coffee and some sight seeing as did Keith, Tony, Rowan and me. After a short walk around town and some handy advice from the Information Centre on where to find some birds, a quick trip down to Lake Unicup was in order.

Deb and Erica thought about seeing the Mayanup Camp Draft but eventually decided against it. When Keith, Tony, Rowan and I arrived at Lake Unicup we each went in search of birds and mud – what else does a 10yo boy want to do! Walking out into the barren centre of the lake we



Now Rowan knows 'first hand' that echidnas are sharp little fellas. This one was put back safely.

TRIP REPORTS

were surprised at the quantity of sun baked small marron that had nowhere to go as the lake dried up.

There were some animal tracks, a kangaroo and what looked like a dingo. After a quick lunch and with Keith and Tony planning the return trip we managed to get back to camp via a dusty shortcut passing plenty of blue gum plantations. Once back at camp the nibbles came out. Keith went in search of more birds and came back shortly with some news of an echidna in the river bed. **Cont. p.23**

Lake Unicup. From P.22

Rowan and I followed to find the little fellow partially buried but he was no match for a determined boy. After some gentle coaxing he was out of his shallow hole, with Rowan keen to get a closer look. A few photos later we put the echidna back in his shallow hole and joined the rest of the campers. An early night was planned by most as we knew Erica was planning



Echidna at Lake Unicup

an early departure the next day for Laverton – where she arrived in the late afternoon. It was a great weekend away, without the crowds. **Mark Smithers**

Citizen Science: Chingarrup nature reserve 1-4 March.

While others were on a trip to Albany for the March long weekend, **Joy Unno** attended a Citizen Science event at Chingarrup nature reserve, near the Stirling Ranges. The event, sponsored by the Tending the Tracks Alliance was aimed at families, and got the kids involved in practical science in the bush. They checked pit traps, helped band birds and got first-



hand experience of our bush heritage. Among the animals they encountered were mallee fowl, Western whistlers, antechinus, a Regent parrot, honey possums, pygmy possums and monitor lizards.



The next Tending the Tracks event will be on 18 and 19 May at Charles Darwin Reserve.

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