

# Subaru 4WD News



November 2020



## Jo is Club Member of the Year!

The Club's premier award this year goes to **Joanne Norton**. Jo, has worked hard for the Club in so many ways this year, including leading trips, organising social events, and organising this year's fabulous annual dinner and awards night at the Nannup Bowling Club. For other prize winners and more on the Nannup weekend, turn to pages 4 and 5.

**Annual General Meeting Nov 10. Details page 3**

**SUBARU 4WD CLUB of WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.**

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

<http://www.subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au/>

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# Subaru 4WD Club of WA Inc. 2019/20 Committee

PRESIDENT: Adrian Longwood 0424 723 558

[president@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au](mailto:president@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au)

SECRETARY: Deborah Thyne 0420 791 762

[secretary@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au](mailto:secretary@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au)

TREASURER: Joy Unno 0429 374 709

[treasurer@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au](mailto:treasurer@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au)

SOCIAL ORGANISER:

Joanne Norton 0411 151 024

[social@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au](mailto:social@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au)

TRIPS CO-ORDINATOR:

Travis Maskey 0422 815 737

[trips@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au](mailto:trips@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au)

EDITOR: Stephan Millett 0405 221 845

[editor@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au](mailto:editor@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

David Peck 0402 177 886, Jim Wilcox 0419 040 969, Ross Mead 0417 920 848, Mark Smithers 0415 954 898, Karen Eldridge 0412 133 629

[Contact 'all committee': comm@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au](mailto:comm@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au)

MERCHANDISE: David Peck 0402 177 886

WEBMASTER: Rob Griffiths 0411 249 933

Jim Wilcox 0419 040 969

4WD ASSOC DELEGATES:

Adrian Longwood 0424 723 558

Keith Low 0407 477 980

MEMBERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR:

Ross Mead 0417 920 848

[membership@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au](mailto:membership@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au)

PROPERTY OFFICER:

Tony Richards

ENVIRONMENT OFFICER: tbc

[environment@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au](mailto:environment@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au)

## Club member of the Year 2019-2020

**Joanne Norton**

## Life members

Fred Offer, Keith Anderson, Jonel Householder, Ray Stewart, Ian Johnson, Peter Andruskiw, Ron Counce, Jim Wilcox and Tony Richards



# Annual General Meeting

**10 November, 7.30pm**

*Mopoke Room in the South Perth Library  
and concurrently via Zoom*

Use the details on the following link whether you are attending in person or via Zoom and to check on meeting etiquette.

**Sign on here <https://www.subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au/trip/view/719>**

**To attend in person,**  
join the trip and type 'In Person" next to your name

## **Join Zoom Meeting**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86045235458?  
pwd=ZnA5SGFtTkJwQ1AzSVlQQmtLUXVadz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86045235458?pwd=ZnA5SGFtTkJwQ1AzSVlQQmtLUXVadz09)  
Meeting ID: 860 4523 5458 Password: SUBARU

**PLEASE NOMINATE FOR ONE OF THE POSITIONS, OR  
NOMINATE SOMEONE ELSE**

## **See nomination forms here**

[https://www.subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au/images/uploaded/  
SUB1702.pdf](https://www.subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au/images/uploaded/SUB1702.pdf)

## **Get the Minutes from last year here**

[https://www.subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au/images/uploaded/  
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Left: Nina McLaren and Ian Johnson were joint winners of the Trip of the Year award for their series of trips into the Great Western Woodlands.

They work as a team and make meticulous preparations, not just for the route, but seek out information on geology, history, fauna and flora.

Oh, and Nina is an inspirational campfire cook! Club President Adrian Longwood (right) was the MC for the night.

## ***Awards for this year's best***



**Left:** David Peck receives the award for Trip Leader of the Year, which he won jointly with Ross Mead.



**Above:** Jo Norton with her prize for Social Trip of the year. She was also Social Trip Leader of the Year and Club Member of the Year.



**... and Nannup did us proud**

The Annual Dinner and Awards night, held this year at the Nannup Bowling Club, was a lovely event. We played bowls under clear skies, with the patient assistance of Bowling Club member. We ate great food - thanks to Jo's efforts and the help of members who pitched in. And there were cafes, shops and sights to see in this very welcoming town. We had around 48 attending the event, and most stayed a day or two extra. And birders, walkers and one crazy man on a bike loved the walking trail along the Blackwood River in town.



**Thanks to**  
**Jo Norton**, for everything  
**Deb Thyne and Joy Unno** for organising the awards and prizes  
**Stephan Millett** for his woodwork skills in remodelling the main award to make room for more winners  
**Tony Richards** for arranging engraving.  
**Adrian Longwood**, kitchen helpers ---  
**Nannup Bowling Club** and the people of Nannup

# A tough year to end my term

Well my time has come to an end as Chair and President of this amazing club. It has been an exciting and challenging time for me as a person, jumping in the deep end four years ago into a role out of my depth. It took me some time to settle in and find my feet but with the support of the Committee and Club members around me I got the hang of it and really grew with the role.

A lot has happened over the past 4 years, from switching between five venues for assorted reasons, to Rob and Jim rebuilding the Club website – and, of course, keeping on meeting online when the Covid pandemic set up shop in Australia. There were smaller things such as expanding the club clothing range with the outdoor shirts and hats and getting setup with an EFTPOS system. What a journey!

While all this has gone on, we have been running regular trips and socials and have strong Membership numbers. Regardless of what I've done as President, there's just as much credit for you and your fellow members, as you're the ones who create the inquisitive and exploring basis to the trips and activities we

## President's report

do and the supportive environment we go out on trips for.

The AGM will be a little harder to coordinate this year, thanks 'Rona...

Please keep an eye for email instructions coming out, and read the notice on page 3 of this edition. If you are not familiar with ZOOM Chat, then call me and I will help you before the day.

I have just returned from a holiday in the South-West that followed our annual dinner and awards night. It was well attended and a bright afternoon in Nannup. Many bowls were rolled in the arvo which was a great laugh as many wandered off the wrong direction. Some struggled to work out which circle determined the direction it curved. Unknown to most beforehand, the Dinner was almost solely prepared by Jo Norton along with a little help from the Committee and friends.

Preceding dinner we had our Awards ceremony for which we welcomed a few tuning in from home that could not otherwise make it in person. I made a late decision the night before to make it happen and managed to pull it off. A few



*Adrian, with a broken foot, plays for sheep stations at the club's annual dinner outing ... this year to Nannup Bowling Club*

ned in to see who the major award winners were. I would like you all to join me in congratulating Jo Norton, who is the Club Member of the Year! A long list of contributions over the year earned her award, and importantly, it's worth noting that all votes were placed before most even knew she was preparing all of the meals for the annual dinner. It just goes to show how much she has selflessly done for the club.

**Cont. p.10**

**do** more of the  
**fun stuff**



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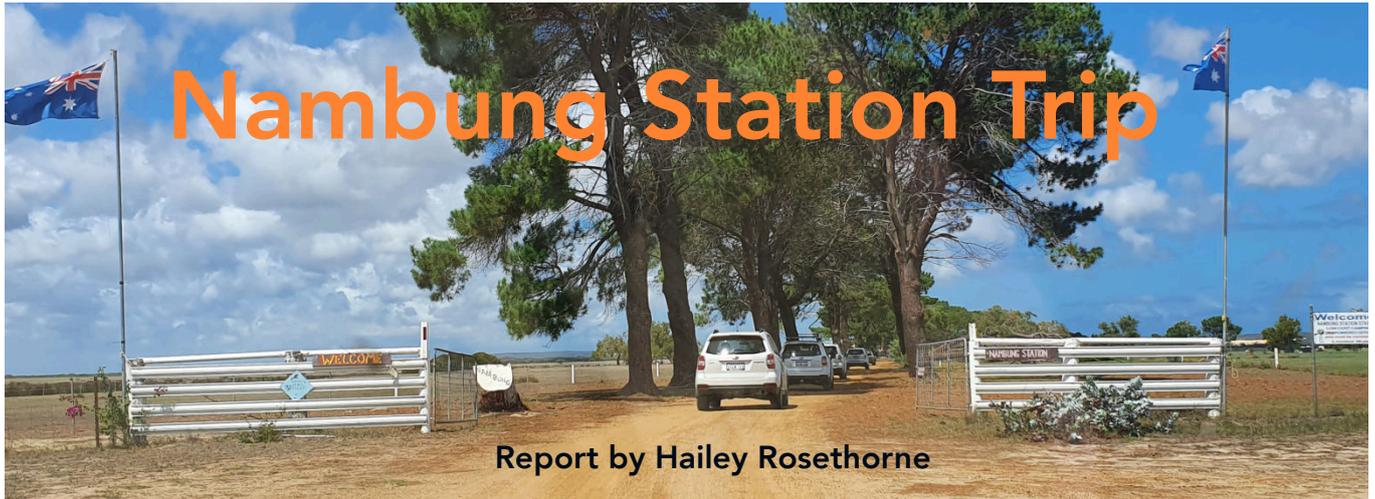
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Report by Hailey Rosethorne

Labour Day Long Weekend  
29 February – 2 March 2020

### Day 1

All packed up, we arrived at the meeting point at the John Glenn Park in Muchea. I counted Jo (Trip Leader), Stu, Katy, Guy, Dave, Anne, Brian, Nola, Michelle ... and me.

We then left in convoy with our Urabus as tailend Charlie to Cataby Roadhouse, where we stopped to have morning tea and a pitstop. There were also a lot of different animals who wanted to join our group. Then we carried on our drive to the station to see farm life.

Reaching the entrance to Nambung Station we saw how windy it must have been during the week with a number of large trees lying flat on the side of the driveway. After finding our patch of farmland we set up camp. Lunch came next, but who forgot the pulled chicken ... Dad?

After a trip to Cervantes to buy some ham for our sandwiches we ate lunch in town by

the beach.

After a walk around the farm looking and photographing the animals we meet up with everyone to hear about their day's journey.

After dinner we sat in a circle and looked at the beautiful Milky Way with the narration of David and Brian.

### Day 2

It started off very windy, then the tents started flying around and everybody tried to peg theirs down before we left for a long day's activities. At 8.40 we left Nambung station and headed north. On the way we saw about 50 Black Cockatoos on the side of the road and when they took flight they nearly flew into the cars.

We headed to Stockyard caves, passing through the Peel river reserve and seeing plenty of wildlife on the way, such as emus running across the open paddocks and bobtails sunbathing on the road.

It was bumpy going through the Stockyard Gully National park on a 4wd-only track. We then trekked through the Stockyard cave which was pretty cool!

After travelling to Jurien Bay on the Coorow-Greenhead Road we stopped for morning tea at the Jurien Bay Bakery

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and sat on the grass out front. Later we went for a swim at the beach where the water was flat as a pancake. Then we had fish and chips for lunch sitting by the beach.

The day continued on to Lake Thetis to see the stromatolites.

We then had ice cream, coffees and beers at the Lobster shack in Cervantes and talked about our very busy day.

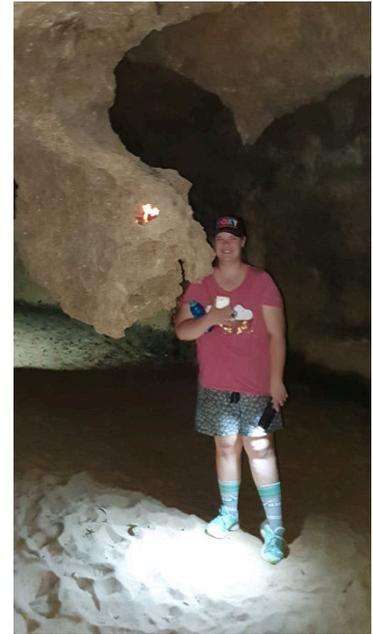
As a group we travelled back to Nambung station and saw the damage from

the day's winds. Everyone spent the rest of the afternoon fixing tents and relocating some. The Edwards family decided the wind was too strong for another night under the stars and packed up along with Nola and Michelle, with everyone helping.

Later we had dinner and talked for a while before going to bed.

**Day 3**

Woke up early then packed up camp, had breakfast and headed for a look at the Pinnacles. After the visit we said thankyou and goodbye



Above: Hailey checks out the cave

In opposite page: young emus negotiate the traffic

The Editor apologises for this report getting to you months late

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**Richard's Tyrepower**  
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From p. 6

## President's report

Check out who the rest of the winners were on page 4.

Covid restriction easing dates continue to be pushed back, currently estimated until mid-late December so our Online (ZOOM) and in-person meeting room (max 25) style of meetings will continue. A trip placeholder on our website will be there. We only need to use this for those attending in person now. Just to ensure we keep to our 25 person Limit. We have usually had around 10-15 people, so still space for more.

There are a few ways to tune in online! We have created a Facebook Event, which includes the Zoom Meeting Link. There is also a Trip setup on the website with all the details/links.

Read on to Trav's section on the rest of the upcoming trips and get your name down. You will only regret the trips you missed.

Do not forget our Club Sponsors during this time. It is just as hard for them as it is us and we need to make sure we are all in this together. And consider putting yourself forward as an office-bearer or a committee member – or if you know someone who you think would do well in one of the roles, give them a nudge or nominate them yourself.

Safe Subaru-ing! **The Pres. – Adrian Longwood**

# Plenty of trips and a position for you?

Hi All. First up I would like to congratulate all the winners of this year's awards. Ross and Dave, for being Trip Leaders of the Year. Jo for best Social trip, and Social Trip Leader of the year. AND Jo again for taking home the Club Member of the Year. The first

woman to get the award since Anne Newton back in the day. If anyone hasn't done so, they should thank Jo for pulling out all stops in getting the food ready for the annual dinner. It was as trying and stressful as any of the major catastrophes that has plagued this club over the past 12 months.

With that out the way, I need to talk about the positions that will become vacant on the club's committee. All of which will become vacant at the AGM. Most of the jobs that the people running the club do aren't that hard. Some are more challenging than others, granted, but most people in the club will be able to do them. For example, I have to think of

things to write each month, and for me that's hard, but for others it would be a breeze. Think about either joining the committee or putting your hand up for an office-bearer role. It's fun, challenging, and in the end

## Trips Coordinator's report

rewarding. Plus, there is chinese at the last meeting of the year. If you want to nominate yourself, or someone else, please let someone on the committee know, or better still, download a nomination form (just click on the nominations form link on page 3 of this edition if you don't already know how to get the nomination form).

There are plenty of trips already in the planning, and already on the website. If you want to either lead a trip, or have an idea for a social gathering or place to go, please let Jo or myself know.

See you out there. **Travis**

- *If you have somewhere you'd like to go for a Club trip*
- *If you would like family and pet friendly trips*
- *If you need trips and events in the school holidays*

*Contact Travis or any committee member*

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# Market Place

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**2. Rope.** 24 metres of soft rope (about 16mm diameter). Make an offer.



**3. Felt.** 4WD Show photo display royal blue (Club colour) felt "boards" or hangers x 5. Each piece of felt is approx 85cm x 190cm. Velcro sticks to it e.g. for kids playing with numbers and letters print the letters and the alphabet, laminate, cut out and stick velcro on the back. Free to a good home.



*Bids to Tony Richards - get his email in the Members section of the website.*

**All proceeds to the Royal Flying Doctor Service.**

## TRIPS and EVENTS

**Nov 6-8.** 4WD Show.

**Nov 10.** AGM and General Meeting. Zoom and the Mopoke Room. Sth Perth Library

**Nov. 15.** Subaru Sunday

Swim

**Dec 5.** Christmas Dip:  
Christmas party at Jo's  
**2021**

**Jan 22-30** Esperance  
Adventures

**Feb 27-Mar 1.** Nornalup  
Nature Navigations

**April 2-5.** Murchison Station  
Refresher

**April 2-5** Trek Around  
Woolibar

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*This was not the way Stephen anticipated leaving Mount Augustus*

Ross and David had put a lot of work into planning for months before we left. Ross had led many overnight and day trips, but this was his first big trip as trip leader and he sought support and guidance from David who has done many. Because of Covid restrictions on travel to the regions, for quite some time we were unsure if the trip could go ahead. It was to have been the last leg for another Club trip to Kimberley as well as a stand-alone trip for those with less time available. The Kimberley trip had to be cancelled so going to Mount Augustus and the Kennedy Ranges was a nice consolation prize.

# It was the worst of trips, and the best of trips

**By Stephan Millett, Joy Unno, Deborah Thyne, David Peck and Ross Mead**

It was a trip planned well, with much detail provided to the crew travelling together. It was also planned well in advance. Despite this, there was a succession of disasters. But this little yarn is not a 'woe is me' story. Rather it is a story of how a great team of well-prepared people in

the Subaru 4WD Club coped with what we might euphemistically call 'problems on the road'.

We started north early on Saturday August 15, meeting up at the big new fuel stop on Great Northern Highway in Upper Swan. We were seen

off by Chris and Deborah's son Tom who came down from his home in Bullsbrook to catch up with his folks.

## 'Something feels wrong'

Stephan now takes up the story, as it was not the last he would see of Tom that day.

We negotiated several wide loads on the way to Bindoon, but didn't stop at the bakehouse this time, because the schedule had us staying at the Granite Gardens outside Cue that night. Chat on the two-way was about the idea that Bindoon would be a good place to start from next time we headed to the inland Murchison or Gascoyne. But 29 kilometres after leaving Bindoon came the first drama – when I came perilously close to my right rear wheel falling off. I had been thinking the road was a bit rough – and it was – but I was paying close attention to my car, and this felt different. I called the others on the two-way to ask if anyone else felt the road was unusually rough. It was rough, they said, but no-one remarked on it being unusual. I said I was stopping to check and went around kicking, pulling and checking wheels. I didn't see anything. About five kilometres later my steering started to wander and the



*Tom comes to the rescue on Stephan's Forester which had several damaged studs.*



rough ride got a lot rougher. I called the group to stop – and they did, in a layby. There was no safe place for me to stop any earlier, and by the time I had limped the short distance to meet up with them, I was seriously worried.

I stopped on flat ground as soon as I could and then saw my rear wheel. It had a strange camber and on inspection three wheel nuts were gone and three studs were sheered off. I jacked the

car and got out my tools. Two studs of the five were usable, but their threads were damaged. Two studs were broken close to the hub. The remaining stud had no wheel nut, but looked like it might have a couple of threads left that could be used.

The first action was to swear at the mechanics who had serviced my car the previous day, then to swear at myself for not checking my wheelnuts as I routinely do before a long trip,. The next

task was to get out a thread die and to re-make the thread. Subaru studs are M12 bolts with 1.25 fine thread. I had the right tool, and I had one spare nut but needed two more.. David and Ross each gave me a nut from their spares supply. I managed to re-thread the studs and get a good tight union on two and a purchase on the third: I judged it was enough to limp back toward more serious help.

In the meantime others in the group had been on their phones finding a place I could buy studs and get them fitted. No luck anywhere at that point. Deb phoned her son Tom, who is a heavy diesel mechanic, to ask if he knew of anything. He struck out too, so I started my slow motion limp back toward Perth.

While on the way, Tom rang. I pulled over and answered. He said he had found one place in Midland that had the right studs (thanks Veales!). He insisted on going to get them, and asked if I could get to Bullsbrook, where he lives, as there were two businesses their that might have a hoist we could use. We struck out on those, too, so Tom and I headed off to his place, parked my Forester on his drive and proceeded to replace all five studs in my rear wheel. That makes it

*This tyre was near new, but was shredded by a freak chain of events on a newly-graded road*



sound easy. It is straightforward, but wasn't easy: first remove the cable handbrake housing, then hit the studs out and put new ones in. It took a little while till we settled on a way using nuts to draw the studs through from the back. Tom now has hero status and I would have promised him my firstborn, except my firstborn is a few years older than Tom and may have objected. Late in the afternoon my car was safe again and I headed north. I stopped a few times to check the wheelnuts with my torque wrench, and gradually came to trust them. I stopped for fuel and snacks in Dalwallinu as it started to get dark and was hoping to get to Paynes Find and to kip in my car there. I didn't make it. My high beams went, so I pulled into a clearing in the bush, ate a cold meal, re-

assessed, replaced the fuse and decided to sleep. I got up before the sun and headed off and made it to Cue at the same time as the rest of the crew, who had come in from Granite Gardens – about 16 kilometres east of town.

We continued uneventfully and took the Berringarra road toward Mount Augustus, stopped at Mount Gould lockup for lunch and carried on past Landor station and the Burringurrah community before the fates intervened again.

### **A rock and a hard place**

Stephen noticed he had a flat tyre and stopped to change the wheel. The outside of the tyre looked fine, but the inside sidewall was ripped apart and there was a very large hole in the inside of the



*This strange cloud formation over Mount Augustus brought many picture takers out early*

alloy rim and what was confirmed later to be damage to a lower control arm. We deduced that a large rock must have been thrown up and become wedged between the control arm and the rim, shredding the tyre so quickly there was no warning on Stephen's tyre pressure monitoring system. None of us had seen such major damage to a tyre and rim on such a relatively smooth and recently-graded gravel road. We changed the wheel, but this left Stephen with no spare and because his late-model Subaru had the new 5x114.3 stud pattern and the rest were the older 5x100 pattern we couldn't share wheels and we couldn't fit one of our casings on to his rim as that rim was ruined. If this had been one of our more remote trips each vehicle would have had two

spares – but ...

### **Not the best of trips**

We made it into Mt Augustus, lit a campfire in the pit provided and settled down after a tumultuous drive up. Some of us had retired for the night and missed much of what came next. It was a moonless night with a cloudless sky and stars were ... well what do you say about a night sky in the bush – awesome. Now the campground at Mt Augustus has old tyres encircling the unpowered camp area where we had pitched our tents to prevent cars from driving on the grass. Around 9pm Ross heard a small cry and found Stephen crumpled on the ground. He tripped over one of the tyres and was in great pain and unable to use his arm. He had broken bone in his upper arm. This was the preliminary diagnosis on the

ground by first Deb and then when Jason was summoned from his bed, he confirmed that the arm was very likely broken. Deb is a nurse with many years experience and Jason has a degree in Paramedicine and works as a safety officer in a remote minesite.

### **Joy now takes up the story.**

Jason swung into action, assessed the patient, and after advice from the RFDS he created a makeshift splint to stabilise the arm from an A4 paper box that Deb happened to have, and did the whole "collar and cuff" and sling bandaging thing. All the triangular bandages from the Club first aid kit were used as well as a couple from Deb's personal kit. Campground staff were contacted and told of the incident. They were not helpful, saying that the RFDS would not come out for a

broken arm and suggested that Stephen would have to be driven six hours to the base in Meekatharra where the RDFS could then fly him to Perth. Fortunately, Jason already had experience contacting the RFDS through his work and knew exactly what to say to them about the situation and the patient. He contacted them again by the pay phone at the campsite (there is no mobile cover from any carrier) and arranged for a pick up the next morning. Steve couldn't sleep in a tent so Ross paid for a donga room where Jason could monitor him overnight.

We were very fortunate (and grateful) to have Jason and Deb as trained medical personnel on the trip. Although many Club members, including myself, have done the Apply First Aid Certificate and would do our best, having experienced people on hand was very fortunate for Stephen who really had had a bad day. He also now has the dubious honour of being the first Club member to be evacuated by the RFDS since the Club was formed 40 years ago.

**Deb takes up the narrative for the next day (with extra details from David)** . A small group of us were up at first light as arrangements had yet to be confirmed for the RFDS



*Stephen was now in good hands, and it was time to regroup*

flight to take Stephen out to hospital. Jason had been in contact with the RFDS and he briefed us on their request to walk the Mt Augustus Station airstrip to remove any rocks greater than two fists in size and anything that could potentially puncture an aircraft tyre.

After breakfast Ross, David, Chris Joy and Deb formed a line across the airstrip and began walking down removing any loose rocks that could damage an RFDS aircraft and dug out weeds that could have been considered encroaching on the path the aircraft may take. The runway was in good condition and the work was done in time for the RFDS. David measured the length of the airstrip and it was 1.3km long so we all walked a minimum of 2.6km to check the strip! From time to time, we had to walk to the edge of the strip to dispose of

handfuls of weeds adding to the length of this walk. Rocks could generally be thrown providing we missed our nearby walking companions! Of course, we had spectacular views of Mt Augustus as we undertook this task!

Once the job was almost complete Jason arrived to tell us that the RFDS pickup booked for 11.40am. Back at the caravan park Stephen was helped to get a few items together and to share the contents of his fridge and we all headed down to the airstrip to watch the plane land on time at 11.40am. The pilot and flight nurse disembarked and the nurse took a handover from Jason and assessed Stephen before he boarded. The pilot was making sure the ground around the plane was safe and had no small stones that could be sucked into the air intake. The plane was not on

the ground for long and, after watching it taxi and take off, we headed back to the campground for lunch.

We weren't happy driving Stephen's car without a spare wheel, so Ross organised for it to be stored at Mount Augustus.

After lunch we all visited Cattle Pool – a marvellous stretch of permanent water that is a 'must see' item for anyone passing through Mt Augustus. It had been such a traumatic couple of days so we decided to stay another day to chill out. That extra day Stephan spent beside the water at Cattle Pool reading as he had a hip injury. The others went exploring.

On day five of our trip we had planned to be on the road at 9am, on our way to the Kennedy Ranges.

## Not a dual fuel vehicle

**Here David takes up the team's story.**

I drove Stephens's car to the back of the office where it was going to be stored, and Jason drove my car. I was debating whether to fill up the fuel tank and decided that it would be worth it.

Jason followed the other cars and ended up stopping at the petrol fuel pump and the woman from the shop was



*David and Jason try a hand pump to remove unwanted ULP*

quick to open the fuel cap and start pumping fuel, clearly not noticing the large label saying DIESEL FUEL. By the time the others realised the mistake it had about 10 litres of petrol in the tank. Jason knew not to start the car and pushed it to the side and we started to figure out what to do. I used my satellite phone to make a call to one of the Subaru specialist garages in Perth asking for advice and they suggested that I phone a national company who specialise in misfuelled cars. I did and they said that Mt Augustus was outside of their coverage area and suggested that I should get the car towed, I explained that the closest town was 400 km away, but they didn't

understand.

I had a full workshop manual for my model diesel Forester on my tablet, but the tablet battery had gone flat, which caused some more anxiety. Stephan tried to charge it and get it going whilst Ross and Chris tried to siphon some fuel out of the filler. Our cars have an anti-siphon system so they couldn't get much out. I knew that there were fuel tank access points under the rear seat and set about unloading the car to get access and get the tools out.

The station lent us some tube and containers to put the fuel in. We did the left hand side first as it looked easier, but when we loosened the cover plate fuel started running out.



*All hands on deck*

I was worried that it would pool in the car but found out that it didn't.

We managed to siphon what we could, but this still left a few litres in the bottom of the tank. Luckily Joy had a hand pump and we were able to get a bit more out that way. Stephan had the idea to use a sponge and a pair of tongs. I replaced the sponge with a micro-fibre towel which worked much better and did not run the risk of leaving broken off bits of sponge in the tank. It was 12 noon by the time we finished the left hand side of the fuel tank and Jason and I went and had some lunch.

Ross had disconnected what he could from the fuel pump on the right hand side and after lunch Jason and I started on that one. We used

the same process of siphoning what we could, then Joy's hand pump, and then the towel and tongs. We had this side done quicker but there was concern about damaging the pump which we could not remove entirely and needed to be held gently to one side – thus providing only a small access hole.

We had it all back together about 3pm and pushed the car back to the diesel fuel pump and filled it up with 63.1 litres in a supposedly 64 litre tank.

When we went to start it we found that the battery was flat, so Stephan bought over his jump start battery but that was not enough to get it going. I had noticed an oddity in that the Ultra Gauge showed the ECM

voltage as 11 volts and dropping, but the car battery was 12.1 volts. Anyway Ross got his jumper leads out and we managed to get the car started. I left it idling when I went to pay for the fuel and we managed to finally get going about 3:30. There was no hint of apology from the shop and a question as to whether the litres of lost fuel could be given to us was firmly rebuffed. We chose not to argue, paid and simply left.

This put us way behind schedule as we were supposed to make it to the Kennedy Ranges for the night, but we decided to go as far as we could before dark. We managed to make it about 150km and found a camp listed in WickiCamps on the banks of Mangaroon Creek. This ended up being a nice spot even though the creek was dry.

Deb made dinner for Jason and me using some of Stephen's food. It was a nice touch.

We heard donkeys a few times during the night and they sounded fairly close. I had left the back doors on the car open to air out the diesel smell, but ended up getting out of bed to close them in case a donkey got too close.

From there we headed to the Kennedy Ranges, but that is a

story for another time, except to say that nothing went wrong and we managed to catch all the sights that were on David and Ross's original plan.

We learned a lot on this trip, and it was memorable not just for the disasters – which sound like they are from the script of a comedy road movie – but also for the resilience, the preparedness, the resourcefulness, the teamwork and the trust that are the hallmarks of our club.

## Retrieval of Stephen's Car

Ross Mead and David Peck. Part of the aftermath of our eventful trip to Mt Augustus and the Kennedy Ranges was the need to retrieve Stephen's car from the Mt Augustus Tourist Park. It was decided to leave it there for future retrieval following Stephen's accident and subsequent evacuation by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). The other issue was that he no longer had a spare wheel as the left rear tyre had been shredded and the rim destroyed on the trip up. With no spare and being 350 km from the nearest mechanic (Meekatharra) it was decided to leave the car for a time when we could bring up extra

spares to safely get it home. David and I decided that we would come back up in a few weeks' time to get the car. In the meantime, we were able to leave it parked behind the shed at the Mt Augustus Tourist Park while we completed the rest of our trip. Stephen got home for treatment and recovery and he was able to obtain a replacement spare.

Getting a replacement spare was easier said than done as Subaru do not make a steel

rim for the latest model Forester. A new alloy rim is quite expensive (\$800 - \$1200 each depending on style). There are a few second hand ones to be found but Stephen decided on getting a new one to match his car. The next problem was to find two new tyres to match the tread pattern and size of the new tyres he had fitted to his car prior to the trip (Pirelli Scorpions). It was decided to purchase just one new rim fitted with a new tyre and

## What we learnt

- *How to change wheel studs in a Forester.*
- *To always carry two spare tyres if a trip takes us more than 100km from a major town.*
- *More closely scrutinise vehicles before departure*
- *Know how to contact RFDS and have the info they need to prepare for the a patient.*
- *Encourage members to carry their own first aid kit.*
- *How to get fuel out of a vehicle (in this case it was unleaded fuel put in a diesel, but it may be water too).*
- *Listen and seek guidance from people around you on a trip.*

### Mitigation strategies

- *Prepare a hand out/orientation sheet especially for new members participating in trips.*
- *Insert an information tab on the website for new members undertaking trips and especially longer trips. There is an existing planning tool on the website that can be linked to the tab.*
- *Run induction courses for new members, drawing attention to what is required on trips and what they need to be responsible for.*

take the second tyre and some tyre repair and changing gear should we get another puncture.

David and I had a window of time available in the the first week of September to do the four-day round trip to Mt Augustus. Fortunately, Stephen was able to get his rim and tyres in time. So I picked up David from his place at 8am and we set off. It was a bit of a struggle to get everything and everyone

into my Forester but we managed. Two complete spares (mine and Stephen's) on the roof rack plus the spare tyre sat on the back seat, all our camping gear, food, water and tools was put in and there was still room for David.

The trip north was uneventful. We stopped at Wubin for fuel, Payne's Find for lunch, Mt Magnet for fuel before arriving at our camp spot by 4pm. We had

decided to camp at the Garden Granites east of Cue again as it is a good camp spot. After setting up camp, we managed to have a wander around the rock. Unfortunately, we were not able to locate the Aboriginal grinding spots shown on a research paper I had come across but we did track down the old Government Well.

Next day it was on the road again to head to Meekatharra for fuel before taking the Carnarvon – Meekatharra Road towards Mt Augustus. We stopped at the old Mt Gould Police Lockup for lunch before continuing on to Mt Augustus via Landor. Generally the road was in good condition. There are several stretches of bitumen in the first section across what would become wet and boggy after rain. These made a pleasant change from the dirt.

We made it to Mt Augustus Tourist Park by mid-afternoon. We were pleased to see that Stephen's car was still parked behind the shed as we had left it three weeks previously. The moment of truth was at hand. Would it still start? Yes, it did, much to our relief. I had packed jumper leads just in case but it was good not having to use them.

After refuelling both cars, the



## Royal Flying Doctor Service

Everyone on the trip and especially the patient, were extremely grateful for the prompt, professional, caring, and free service that the RFDS provided in this emergency situation.

The RFDS is the Subaru 4WD Club of Western Australia's main charity that we donate to, so PLEASE be generous and DONATE to the RFDS. It is an incredibly WORTHWHILE cause:

<https://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/wa/>

Also, the RFDS has many wonderful products available through clicking on the link above - Support Us tab - Visit Shop. There are calendars, Xmas cards, clothing, toys, and much more.

Do all your Xmas shopping there .

There is an interesting RFDS Visitor Centre in Kalgoorlie that is really worth visiting.

**The Club will have a RFDS donation box at the Club Xmas Party, so please donate.**

**DONATE  
and get  
Christmas  
gifts online**

next job was to set up camp and then get into replacing what was the spare wheel on Stephen's car with the new rim and tyre. In the process, we had a close look to see if we could determine the cause of the original fractured rim. The working theory was that a stone flicked up by the right front tyre had landed on the inside rim of the left rear wheel where it had been held in place by centrifugal force until it was jammed between the brake calliper and the rim before it punched a hole through the rim. Our investigations confirmed the theory with clear evidence of where the stone had hit the brake calliper. A bracket next to the brake calliper which holds the wheel speed sensor had also been bent out of shape.

With everything back together, the next trick was to get everything back into Stephen's car. As the appointed driver, David then had to work out what all the extra buttons and switches etc. on his new drive were all about. This was to keep him amused for the rest of the long drive home. After a quiet tea, it was early to bed to get some sleep ready for the trip home the next morning.

The next morning (Thursday), we were on the road by 8.30.

It was a relief to see Mt Augustus disappearing in the rear view mirror as we headed out on the 340km trip back to Meekatharra. The road was generally OK but had the odd section of rubble surface which brought the nagging fear of a puncture to mind.

And so it came to pass. We stopped at Mt Gould Lockup for some morning tea and returned to our vehicle to see the right rear tyre on my Forester looking decidedly underinflated. With a quick jack up it was off with the wheel to see what the problem was. After a fair bit of careful searching and squirting with soapy water we found the offending hole. Fortunately, it was only a small one from a sharp rock and easily plugged.

We stopped for lunch at Peace Gorge just outside Meekatharra to have the last of the tasty curry puffs David's wife Marian had made. It was good to reach the bitumen at Meeka where

we again refuelled before heading off south towards home. The next stop was for fuel and an ice-cream in Mt Magnet and our final stop for the day was to set up camp about 18 km south of Mt Magnet down a track to Windibin East bore

After breakfast on Friday morning, it was back on the highway and heading south to Wubin for a final refuel and then continuing on to Dalwallinu for lunch. We decided to check out the Dally bakery and can now recommend that as a good spot for food and coffee. They certainly make a great pasty.

We finally made it back to the city and its traffic. It was with a great sense of relief that we pulled into Stephen's driveway in Canning Vale to return his car to him. David was particularly relieved that he was able to hand over the car still muddy, dusty, loaded up with stuff, but in one piece.

**We learned a lot on this trip, and it was memorable not just for the disasters – which sound like they are from the script of a road movie – but also for the resilience, the preparedness, the resourcefulness, the teamwork and the trust that are the hallmarks of our club.**

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