



Trail Torque



The official Magazine of the New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association

March/April/May 2026



MACETOWN ROAD MANAGED ACCESS



Exclusive Farm Tour
- Maungahau Lodge -

INSIDE:
4x4 Expo
LVVTA News
Coming Events
4WD Club Activities
PLUS MUCH MORE!

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Established in 1974,
The objective of the
Association is to
grow, develop
and improve
recreational four-
wheel drive activities in New Zealand.
As a member of the NZFWDA, you
become an integral part of this effort
to ensure that present and future
generations can continue to enjoy
our country in four wheel drive
vehicles.



Contact:
NZFWDA Secretary
secretary@nzfwda.org.nz

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TidyHQ

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Anything underlined in
this edition will either
open up in your internet
browser or open your
email to send the person
a query.

Deadlines for Trail Torque Submissions

JUNE/JULY/AUGUST 2026
Deadline: 7 June 2026
Out to Members: 28 June 2026

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER/
NOVEMBER 2026
Deadline: 14 August 2026
Out to Members: 6 September 2026

If you would like to share your
Club's achievements, events or a
story in Trail Torque, send them in
to editor@nzfwda.org.nz

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COVER PIC: Macetown

THE NEW ZEALAND FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION



- * Values the highest safety standards before, during and after all 4WD activities.
- * Endorses respect and care while participating in 4WD activities in the Environment.
- * Acknowledges the contribution of its members and their values.
- * Values and respects land owners and land users.
- * Encourages non-discrimination of all participants.

ARTICLES AND LETTERS NZFWDA DISCLAIMER.

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Trail Torque is produced four times a year and delivered via the NZFWDA Membership email database.

New 4WD Access

BY GRANT PURDIE

Great news for Central Zone!

All those hours of work that our members have done on planting days, rubbish clearing, and pest plant removal, have helped to show to communities that we are the good guys & gals.

Our responsible approach to running our trips while being careful about properties, the environment and H&S is recognised and look, we have some new off-road access as a result!

The local Council gave us an introduction to the Manager of a large pine forest that everyone had said we'll never get access to. Some conversations later, we were given a permit to enter the forest for a look around, which we did.

This is a very large forest, mostly fairly flat, with many tracks criss-crossing it.

Those tracks would be of interest to our members with "shiny" trucks who would enjoy a day exploring them. As for making new tracks amongst the trees - the forest manager has good reasons for not allowing that.

There is a lot of long grass and in dry weather there would be a high fire risk from hot exhausts. So not really a summer venue.

We have agreement from the Forest Manager to apply for an annual event in the forest and this will be organised by Central Zone as a Zone Event. We hope to do the first one this winter.

Thanks again to all of you who have helped at all those work parties!

Keep off the Dunes!

BY GRANT PURDIE

It gets worse - now there has been publicity about trailbikes and 4wd vehicles going onto the fore-dunes at Waikawa Beach. They have damaged delicate areas that had been planted to try and prevent erosion, which risks the integrity of the dunes as resilience against flooding. And they have disturbed the nesting areas of rare bird species, ignoring and in some cases damaging signs and fences.

This adds to the publicity we've been hearing from coastal areas in many parts of the country.

It's the same old story - a few thoughtless individuals who are presumably not NZFWDA members, are acting in a way that tarnishes the good reputation of the NZFWDA and its clubs and members.

Our attitude is clear, and all our members know it. We do not drive on or amongst the foredunes except where there is a genuine track. We do not stray off the track. We do not drive over vegetation or "play" on the dune faces. We watch out for nesting birds and avoid disturbing them.

**We do not stray off the track.
We do not drive over vegetation or
"play" on the dune faces.
We watch out for nesting birds and
avoid disturbing them.**

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to editor@nzfwda.org.nz Letters should not exceed 200 words and should carry the author's signature, name and residential address and a phone number so as to enable their authenticity to be confirmed. Letters may not be formally acknowledged and may be edited, abridged or discarded at the discretion of the editor.

**A BIG SHOUT OUT TO OUR
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
BRINGING REAL BENEFITS
TO OUR MEMBERS:**



4X4 ACCESSORIES

These 7 organisations have helped the NZFWDA bring genuine change to what it means to be an Affiliated Member.

If you are not already a Member of the NZFWDA but curious about it... here's 7 very good reasons to enquire!

*If you want to know more email me, Steve -
president@NZFWDA.org.nz*

Incorporated Societies Act 2022

Act now before it's too late; 5th April 2026 is the last day that your Club can continue as an Incorporated Society without updating its constitution, according to the new Act.

Why is it important to become an Incorporated Society?

It is important because it transforms a group into a distinct, formal legal entity, separate from its members. This structure, governed by the Incorporated Societies Act 2022, provides crucial legal protections, stability, and credibility that unincorporated groups lack.

Here are the key reasons why becoming an incorporated society is important:

1. Limited Liability for Members

Protection of Personal Assets:

The primary benefit is that members and officers are generally not personally liable for the debts, contracts, or legal obligations of the society.

Safety Net:

If the society is sued or faces financial failure, personal assets (like homes or savings) of members are protected, unlike in an unincorporated group where members can be held personally responsible.

2. Separate Legal Identity and Permanence

"Body Corporate" Status:

The society can own property, enter into contracts, take out leases, and sue or be sued in its own name.

Perpetual Succession:

The society continues to exist even if its membership changes, its leaders resign, or its members die. It provides long-term stability for community groups, sports clubs, and organizations.

3. Increased Credibility & Funding

Trustworthiness:

Registration on the public Incorporated Societies Register signals to the public, donors, and stakeholders that the organization is legitimate, accountable, and follows set rules.

Access to Grants:

Many funders, councils, and gaming trusts require groups to be incorporated before they will consider applications for funding or sponsorship.

4. Defined Governance & Structure

Constitution:

The society must have a constitution (rules) that governs how it operates, providing clarity on decision-making, voting, and dispute resolution.

Clear Rules:

It prevents ambiguity regarding how the group is run, who makes decisions, and how members can join or leave.

5. Tax Exemptions and Benefits

Income Tax Status:

Incorporated societies may be entitled to income tax exemptions if they meet certain criteria.

Charitable Status:

If the society has a charitable purpose, it can register with Charities Services to receive additional tax benefits.

6. Protection of Assets and Name

Asset Protection:

Property, money, and trophies are held by the society, not individual members, ensuring assets are used only for the organization's purposes.

Name Protection:

Once registered, no other group can use the same name, providing legal protection for the organisation's identity.

If your club hasn't registered a new or updated Constitution yet – its not too late.

NZFWDA Clubs that are incorporated under the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022....

Northern Zone only **38%** registered

Central Zone only **48%** registered

Southern Zone **73%** registered

**REMEMBER
THIS SIMPLE H&S
MESSAGE...**
you can't indemnify out of
being stupid.

NZFWDA AGM PICTON

SATURDAY 23RD MAY 2026. Queen Charlotte Yacht Club, Picton.

All information regarding Trips prior to the AGM, will be available on the Marlborough Four Wheel Drive Club website by following the link: <https://marlborough4x4club.weebly.com/national-agm-2026.html> or going directly to the website and following tabs. If you require more information, please reach out through the website contact panel.



The NZFWDA AGM Agenda will be sent to all Clubs by March 31st.

BIGGS & CRAWFORD BACK ON TOP AT KAUKAPAKAPA



POSTED ON NZ4X4TRIALS.CO.NZ BY DANIEL HOWAT

The defending champs reminded the field who's on top, with Jarred Biggs & Fleche Crawford taking their first win of the season in Kaukapakapa.

The Conquering Kaukapakapa Trial took place north-west of Auckland for the furthest Round north this Season, with the Rodney Off Road Club hosting their first National Trial.

The course was laid out to make the most of the dry terrain on offer, providing plenty of traction as well as dust throughout the day! Mud was still on offer, with a few bogs that would ultimately decide the scores at the end of the day.

TOP FIVE

At midday Chris Gifford & Sam Thomsen would lead the way by 13 points ahead of Biggs & Crawford. Angus Hamilton & Daniel Howat

would be a further 24 points behind in 3rd. Dave McKie & Reece McKie sat fourth, followed by Matt Dodge & Sam Lee in 5th. Dodge & Lee would later drop down in the afternoon with a broken rear diff.

The day went down to the wire, with only 4.24 points between first and second. Biggs & Crawford had to overcome a 13 point gap in the morning, equivalent to going one grading further than Gifford & Thomsen on a stage to make up 20 points. Stage 4 in the afternoon, a mud bog with a bottomless pit towards the end would be the one to make a difference. Most teams could only manage a score of 20 points before getting stuck in the mud, with Biggs & Crawford the only ones to skip across the top to put themselves into the lead with a zero.

[Full Results can be found here.](#)



Chris Gifford & Sam Thomsen would continue their strong start by finishing 2nd. Together with their win at Round 1 they lead the way in the standings.



Angus Hamilton & Daniel Howat would stun the field finishing 3rd with their C Class buggy, in only their second attempt.



Shaun Nicholson & Mike Ferguson back up their Round 1 result by finishing 8th two times in a row.



Defending champs Shayne Towers & Tony Hadland would survive the morning and come 4th outright in the afternoon to take 3rd in C Class and 12th overall, as they find their rhythm heading into 2026.

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Macetown Rd Managed Access System

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY KEVIN MARLOW

The Macetown Rd Managed Access System is nearing completion of the implementation phase and we anticipate the full system being operational by late February 2026.

The system is being implemented by a community-led multi-agency group (The Macetown Rd 4WD Access Advisory Group) including 10 parties operating under a Memorandum of Understanding. The parties are Soho Property Limited, QEII National Trust, DOC, Herenga ā Nuku | Outdoor Access Commission, Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC), Arrowtown Village Association, Queenstown Trails Trust, Arrowtown Charitable Trust, NZFWDA and Shotover 4WD Club.

NZFWDA has been appointed as the Track Manager and host of the online permit system with local support from the Shotover 4WD Club to coordinate the annual work programme and lead the project.

Progress to date:

- The gate system including a vehicle gate and adjacent 'squeeze barrier' has been installed. Vehicles and horse riders will use the locked vehicle gate. Walkers and cyclists will use the 'squeeze barrier' to pass through the gate.

- The CCTV camera system (with online monitoring and number plate recognition capability) has been installed and is fully operational.
- The online permit system is nearing completion and we expect it to be operational by late February 2026. The gate will not be locked until the permit system is operational and we have completed live testing. NZFWDA are funding the development of the permit system.
- Easement applications are under way over private land and Crown Riverbed. A full field survey of the tracks has been undertaken by Scope Surveying and QLDC is acting as the applicant and grantee for easements to be registered on the property titles to achieve enduring public access.
- The annual work programme phase has already commenced, incorporating monitoring the camera system, regular track condition assessments, coordination of track maintenance and track improvements.

Permit System

Once the system is operational,

permits for individual 4WD users can be applied for in advance or on the day of travel. The permit system will be accessed directly online at <https://permit.nzfwda.org.nz/> or by using the QR code on two signs on the track. Information pertaining to the Macetown Rd Managed Access System and links to the permit system will be available from multiple websites including NZFWDA.

The permit system is designed to accommodate real-time permit processing without the need for human intervention and provide:

- Standard permit applications for Individual 4WD vehicles and motorcycles requiring online payment at the time of application. \$40 fee.
- Permit processing for Annual Pass holders (residents within the QLDC territorial boundaries who have paid an Annual Fee of \$100 for access throughout the year)
- Separate permit processes to provide the current gate code and enable free access through the vehicle gate for horse riders, Mining Claim Permit Holders and approved user groups.



- d) Individual access agreements for commercial tourism operators and major event organisers.

Access for NZFWDA-affiliated Clubs for sanctioned Club trips is available by email application to shotover4wdclub@gmail.com for up to 12 vehicles at a cost of \$100 providing the group provides a trip report to the Shotover 4WD Club noting track conditions and identifying any areas requiring attention.

Permit fees, donations and funds from commercial arrangements will be banked directly with a dedicated

project account with Arrowtown Charitable Trust. Funds can only be used for the implementation project or annual operating costs.

In addition to donations, we must also acknowledge work undertaken by NZFWDA's 4WD community, specifically NZFWDA President Steve Adam and volunteers from local Clubs; Kevin Marlow (Project Lead), Dave Phipps, Jake Gregory, Keith Milne, Raymond Keys, Pete Bersani (Shotover 4WD Club), Jamie Gilbert (Marlborough 4WD Club) and Joshua Benck (Central Otago 4WD Club).

Optional donation to support the project. The group needs funds for the annual work programme and must build a contingency fund in the event of a significant slip occurring. You can donate to the Arrowtown Charitable Trust's Macetown Rd Access account at BNZ Bank.

The account number is 02-1265-0020909-010. If you would like a tax-deductible charitable donation receipt please email arrowtowncharitabletrust@gmail.com with details of your name, the amount and date of the donation. A receipt will be sent to your email address.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the funding and services support from the following contributors who have made this project possible, specifically:

- Community Trust South
- Central Lakes Trust
- QLDC
- Shotover 4WD Club
- Raymond Keys
- NZFWDA
- Scope Surveying
- ACL Communications Limited
- NZFWDA Southern Zone
- Otago Recreational 4WD Group
- Nelson 4WD Club
- Central Otago 4WD Club
- Otago Land Rover Club
- Queenstown Lions Club
- Wanaka and Districts Lions Club.

The NZFWDA Governance Committee

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Tariq Wasim	Vice-President	vp@nzfwda.org.nz
Barb Adam	Treasurer	treasurer@nzfwda.org.nz
Bob Holmes	Southern Zone President	szpresident@nzfwda.org.nz
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Chris Tomalin	Comp Officer	compofficer@nzfwda.org.nz
Neville Dunton	Patron	patron@nzfwda.org.nz

LIFE MEMBERS OF THE NZ FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION.

Awarded 2021 - Neville Dunton
 Awarded 2021 - Mel Street
 Awarded 2018 - Russell Quin
 Awarded 2017 - Bob Holmes
 Awarded 2017 - Eileen Revell (nee Austin)
 Awarded 2017 - Steve McMinn
 Awarded 2016 - John & Nonnie Cowper
 Awarded 2015 - Ces Horan
 Awarded 2015 - Kath Jaggard
 Awarded 2011 - Peter Vahry

TRACKS & BUSINESS

BY PETER VAHRY

Access is the basis of the vehicle and aftermarket industries. Tracks, roads, forests, and backcountry aren't just playgrounds, they're working infrastructure that needs maintenance, planning, education and shared responsibility to stay open.

The public land system supporting outdoor fun operates on a grand scale. The Department of Conservation (DOC) manages a portfolio of land amounting to around one third of New Zealand. Their system is designed around conservation, rather than recreation. Across our Government, land agencies and local authorities, deferred maintenance totals tens of millions of dollars. Staffing hasn't kept up with participation, leading to backlogs that often result in restrictions or closures to manage impacts sustainably. From the outside, closures seem sudden, but they're usually predictable from the inside.

We keep talking to the same people within the outdoor community, chats about responsible recreation are common among long-time users and established groups who already get that access is earned, not guaranteed.

These folks already live by the DOC 'Care Code' principles. The issue isn't awareness among the committed; it's that our fast-growing segment of off-road vehicle enthusiasts is made up of newbies who don't know about the decades of investment keeping today's tracks and roads open. Many see public land as an opportunity, not history, missing the planning, volunteer work, and partnerships that keep it all running. Without that context, responsibility can seem optional instead of foundational.

Access, not equipment or experiences, is the four wheel drive vehicle industry's most valuable asset and access is more fragile than many



people think. Outdoor equipment businesses need access like transportation companies need roads, yet stewardship often feels secondary, reactive, or optional. Culture doesn't form by accident, marketing and silence shape expectations. When responsibility isn't embedded early, new users fill in the gaps themselves, and entitlement can replace understanding. Land managers see these patterns long before conflicts become public.

At today's participation levels, responsibility can't rely solely on peer reinforcement. The message needs to reach earlier and wider, into first experiences, rentals, retail interactions, social platforms, and high-use landscapes where norms are still forming. The commercial world needs to engage with our recreation to help with education.

Track closures rarely stem from a single incident. They happen when misuse outpaces education and damage accumulates faster than it can be addressed. This is where groups like the New Zealand Four Wheel Association Inc. (NZFWDA) play a crucial role, operating upstream to reduce impacts early through proactive education, visible stewardship, and coordinated partnerships. The outcomes are tangible: restored sites and routes, educational signage, volunteer projects removing rubbish, and added capacity where land managers lack staff or funding. This work extends responsibility beyond those who already understand it. That's how

access is actually kept open.

Reaching beyond like-minded circles doesn't happen organically. It needs funding, coordination, and trusted messengers, which is why support matters. Business partnerships carry responsibility into customer touchpoints, donations expand education where capacity is limited, and membership provides steady reinforcement of expectations. It's not about speaking louder to those who already agree; it's about speaking earlier to those who don't yet know what's at stake.

Our outdoor recreation will keep growing; evidence makes that clear. What's undecided is whether responsibility will grow alongside it.

Public lands are meant for use, not abuse. Conservation lands rely on a public willing to balance freedom with restraint. That balance can't be enforced everywhere, all the time. It must be taught, modelled, and reinforced. Responsible recreation doesn't sustain itself. It requires leadership, partnership, and a willingness to invest in reach, not just agreement.

Access will be protected by those who invest early enough to ensure the next generation understands what it takes to keep these places open. Stewardship of access is infrastructure.





SOURCE: LVVTA NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2025-DECEMBER 2025

One of the items to come out of the 2024 LVV Certifier National Conference was feedback about high-sided race seats in vehicles with three-point (lap and diagonal) seatbelts.

Because of how these seats are designed and their intended use with race harnesses, they often do not allow for proper routing of normal three-point seatbelts – vastly increasing the risk in a crash of an occupant not being properly restrained.

This Information Sheet outlines the expectations around seatbelt routing where high-sided race seats are used, and why some fixed-back bucket seats simply can't be used with three-point seatbelts.

This fixed-back race seat shows some of the issues with mounting a three-point seatbelt across a sports seat.



Read the HIGH-SIDED RACE SEATS AND THREE-POINT SEATBELTS Information sheet [here](#)

The Good



This cut-down Safari sports an LS with a hairdryer. Not only have they eliminated the roof rail rust, but they've done a very nice job of the flat deck conversion, and the turbocharged Chev V8 provides a lot more grunt than the original asthmatic TD42.



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4X4 ACCESSORIES



LIFE AS A JEEP HUSBAND (JEEP CLUB EDITION)

BY STEPHAN JOHN.

*A couple of members of the NZ Jeep Club have written submissions for the upcoming Trail Torque. Kind regards
Richelle Edwards
Secretary*

MAMAKUS

BY RUSSELL ARDLEY

The Mamakus run in late November was an awesome day out.

Meeting at Mamaku township was a good spot to unsieze a brake calliper. Weather looked good, off we went.

Very cool to have access to this place, and awesome to have Gary know it so well. We covered a LOT of ground, with the damp ground providing a few challenges for us.

A bit of winching and digging got us up a steep slippery slope, but then the wet uphill caused all but one of us to winch.

Great team effort with 2 or 3 winches per vehicle up to trees on a very high track. Lots of teamwork and communication needed.

We found a nice quiet spot under canopy for lunch the usual trash talking and fixing of the worlds problems.

A good amount of afternoon track maintenance and cutback saw the heavens open and flood our last 15 mins heading back to the gate.

We left WET but happy.

Damn good day out, can't wait to go again!

For years, my Jeep lived at my mechanic's place. I just paid the rent.

Still, every club run made it worth it. Good people, good laughs, and the universal understanding that panel damage is character building.

The real relationship issue though? The engine light. Always on. Always watching.

After five years of building, fixing, rebuilding and financially negotiating, the big re-gear finally happened. 4.33s.

Which sounds awesome until you remember the run-in period. Slow driving. Gentle starts. No lockers. 1,000 km of "yes, it's ready" but also "no, it's not."

Then came The List:

- 4.33:1 re-gear
- ECU reprogrammed to accept how I drive
- **No more gear hunting up hills**
- **Proper torque in the lower gears**
- New brakes
- Front & rear lockers actually locking
- Locker solenoids finally cooperating
- TPMS deleted because... obviously
- O2 sensors replaced and behaving
- Transmission oil cooler fitted
- Transmission oil changed
- Diff oil changed post re-gear
- Engine serviced (oil, filters, air filter)

- Spark plugs replaced
- New steering box — drives straight now
- Suspension finally doing what it was paid to do
- Exhaust stopped trying to escape
- Winch works without three spotters and a prayer
- Reversing lights work
- Fuses refusing to pop
- No death wobble
- No dash lights. At all. Suspicious.

Which is honestly the weirdest part.

I now drive a calm, sorted, suspiciously reliable Jeep, waiting for the CEL like someone who's been hurt before. Trust issues take time.

Just passed 1,500 km. Lockers are finally ready. Haven't used them yet — that moment deserves ceremony. Torque is down low where it should be, and I'm hanging out to get back out to Porters, Woodhill, or anywhere that smells like diff oil and poor decisions.

Final twist?

Now that the Jeep is home more than it's at the mechanic, I built it a proper home. New driveway. New carport. Because once a Jeep stops breaking, it earns better accommodation.

Jeep.
Just Empty Every Pocket.





Muriwai

November, December 2025, and Jan 2026

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY RUSSELL ARDLEY

BEACH CLEAN UP



It's been an exciting Quarter for the NZ Jeep Club.

The event Calendar is often a little dry over Christmas, as the forests shut down, and we are all busy with Family commitments over Christmas and the New Year.

We have had numerous events and get togethers tho, with assisting the Auckland Club and Landrover Owners for the November Muriwai Beach Cleanup, The November Mamakus Forest Run, just out of Rotorua, and the December Christmas Party. The Calendar ahead has us at Woodhill forest, and there's a Porters Rd trip logged as well. Good Times!

The Muriwai Cleanup was a great morning out. With the tides behaving,

we met the other clubs at the Tennis courts carpark, picked up bags and gloves, and headed down the beach in teams of 3 or 4 trucks, each stopping another 5kms down the beach to start our 5km pickup. It's amazing the amount of trash we found, certainly enough to fill the back of a wrangler.

Rubbish on the beach was a combination of washed up plastics, water and beer bottles left by beachgoers, and misc items washed up and tossed. Thanks to the Auckland Club for filling the Councils BBQ with food and putting on lunch at the end.

Great day out, lots of feel good factor. 4WDs can be greenies too.



EXCLUSIVE FARM TOUR

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY ASHLEY LUCAS



The Land Rover Enthusiasts Club Rotorua provided vehicles to transport 25 guests of Nicki who purchased an exclusive day out at Manugahau Lodge in the Wharepuhunga Valley.

The Club had previous association with Manugahau Lodge when they took residents of the Highfield Retirement Village in Te Awamutu around the property and surrounding neighbouring properties and were asked by Geoff and Johanna Fitzgerald if the Club would provide vehicles for a similar day out.

Manugahau Lodge is situated in the Wharepuhunga Valley and has been owned by Geoffrey and Johana Fitzgerald for many years. In fact the

Fitzgerald's were very fortunate to end up with the property in the early 1990's when the original purchaser had a condition in the purchase agreement that the Otorohanga Council tarseal the road within 90 days. Needless to say that condition was not met by the Council allowing the Fitzgerald's to buy it.

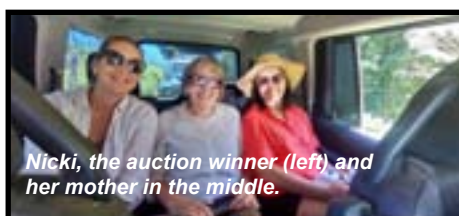
Manugahau Lodge, as well as being a working cattle farm, offers guided hunting and fishing tours and also have farm stay options with cabins

secluded away in bush and beside a 5 acre tranquil lake. They also hold an annual fundraising event, 'Walk for a Cause' on the 1000 acre property and in October 2025, they had an auction for a pre-Christmas business/family function day for 25 people and wanted to include a farm tour as part of the package. This is where the Land Rover Enthusiasts Club Rotorua were asked to assist with the transport.

The funds raised this time would go to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, which Geoff has used 3 times over the years. The auction bid was won at \$2,000 and total raised on the day was over \$18,000.

So in mid-December the auction winner, Nicki and her family and friends, met at the Lodge along with members of the Club and the wide variety of Land Rovers from early Series Ones to Range Rover Sport, Defenders and Discoverys. It started with a mix and mingle with morning tea as a group down by the lake.

Once all were fed and watered it was into the vehicles to be led in convoy around the property. Geoff in the lead vehicle gave a commentary of points of interest on the property and how they have developed it over 35 plus



Nicki, the auction winner (left) and her mother in the middle.





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years. We stopped at a cabin built in the bush, beside a stream which now has a walking bridge across it for the walkers and hikers who walk through the bush and farm.

As we drove higher up Geoff told us how they have managed to get water reticulated around the property. Getting the water out of the hillside and gravity fed down, proved there was too much pressure so they had to find ways to regulate and control the water.

We made our way up to the highest point of the property, which is also an airstrip, where there is a Trig point and communications site powered by solar panels. The Fitzgerald's have even added a 'signpost' with directions and distances to various places in the greater district. It was a very clear day with all round views, although I would think it could be very cold and windy up there during winter.

We made our way down, staying in the same wheel tracks as the paddock grass was long and would be cut to be winter feed for the farm. It was then onto the hunting bush block where



we drove through the bush. The lead vehicles did see some deer but they soon retreated deeper into the bush.

We came upon a grassed clearing where up in the bush behind was yet another lodge for hunters etc to stay in. Wonder if anyone has managed to shoot the deer from the deck of the lodge?



Land Rover Enthusiasts Club president Lon Vanstone (left) with Geoff Fitzgerald.

With lots of stops on the way to take photographs, we were a little late getting the guests back to the idyllic lake and their specially catered feast, but no one was overly concerned. As club members, we dropped our passengers off down by the lake and then made our way up to the main house where we too were given a feast and refreshments.



The highest point on the property has an airstrip, Trig point and "direction sign post".



Manugahau Lodge is a very unique property and it was of great enjoyment to be able to drive around the property once again and to meet some fantastic people while doing so.

And as for the original property deal that required the road to be tar sealed? The road is still metal and the original purchaser was one Peter Jackson who went elsewhere searching for his ideal property and found it in Matamata. An 'only what if ..' moment if the Otorohanga Council had tar sealed the road in the first place. Never mind, I enjoy Manugahau Lodge just the way it is and Geoff and Johanna Fitzgerald certainly do too.

Manugahau Lodge is a unique property



Several deer were spotted by lead vehicles



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Quarter Page	(94mm x 135mm)	\$150
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"Now that is how you get a tasty smile", Brian Howat.
 Photo by Willow Eayrs Photography.

2026 4x4 OUTDOOR EXPO

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY PETER VAHRY

It seemed that the shift of date into February paid off for the organiser's, with the weather suitably dry in Kumeu. They also altered the layout, bringing the commercial vendors up closer to the clubs and other group's displays.

Only four of Auckland's NZFWDA clubs had a formal presence this year, Manukau 4WD Club, Land Rover Owners (Auckland), Rodney Off Road Club and Auckland 4WD Club. I didn't tally the other groups, but there did seem to be slightly fewer than in the past, although there have been some 'mergers' I believe.

Attendance appeared to ebb and flow over the two days, with a mix of visitors. Plenty of young guys and girls, along with quite a few older men. We had several of the latter talk with us on the Auckland 4WD stand, who admitted that their motorbike days were past and they were looking to four wheeling as their recreation. The Auckland club display included a loaned EcoFlow portable fridge freezer that kept a supply of cold drinks available.

As clubs, we were encouraging visitors to join our ranks and certainly on the Auckland 4WD stand there was often surprise expressed when the annual membership cost was explained.... Most visitors were

astounded at the low overall cost! Being much closer to the commercial displays this year, allowed a better idea of the interest from visitors and one stand, the Repco site, seemed to be doing a great trade with a constant crowd. Besides the product mix, maybe an attraction might have been

the presence of NZFWDA member Jules Lee with his well set up vehicle. Jules is on Facebook as JL 20FFRD and Overlanding 4WDing New Zealand.

Another 'online' influencer at the show, was 'Mad Matt' from Australia and during Saturday he visited the Auckland 4WD Club display to have a look at the very well set up Safari of Sarah Barnes. Sarah is also the generator of some excellent videos of local four wheeling on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok as @4x4sarahnz

Matt also took a moment to sign a Series Land Rover front mudguard for the organizer of the LRO Club (Auckland) display, Ethan Harvey. Another well run 4x4 show with no mud this year, although there was plenty of dust evident when the 'Ultra 4's' were showing their skills at the far end of the Kumeu Showgrounds.



COMING EVENTS

Events Disclaimer. Care has been taken in entering details of these events. However NZFWDA does not take responsibility for any inadvertent inaccuracies or subsequent changes made by the event organisers. Trips and events will normally be hosted and organised by a Club or Clubs and not the Association itself. All events, trips and runs are the responsibility of the hosting Club. Potential participants should contact the relevant event organiser or Club. Email events to editor@nzfwda.org.nz

31 MARCH 2026 NZFWDA Clubs receive 2026 NZFWDA AGM Pack.

11 APRIL 2026 THOMPSONS TRACK (KAIMAI RANGE) Vegetation Cut Back. Approved by the Council and all welcome to help out. For details contact peter.vahry@nzfwda.org.nz

11 APRIL 2026 NZ 4X4 TRIALS

2025/2026 National Trials Series.

Round 6. Hawkes Bay. See

nz4x4trials.co.nz for more.

12 APRIL 2026 WAITARERE BEACH MONTHLY BEACH CLEAN-UP - ALL WELCOME.

11:30 AM. Meet at the Waitare Beach Surf Club carpark

This is a community project supported by NZFWDA Central Zone in

collaboration with Horowhenua District Council, who will be providing gloves

and bags. Start time coincides with

low tide. Walkers, quad bikes, 4WD

vehicles and trailers all welcome! You

do not need to register to attend this

event. Council staff will direct you

when you arrive at the venue.

09 MAY 2026 MARATOTO CUT

BACK WORKING BEE. 48 Wires

Road, Hikutaia 3674. Annual trip to

Maratoto track to help with cutback and

track maintenance. This is a Grade 2-3

trip. All Terrain tyres are required as

minimum. Full details [here](#).

10 MAY 2026 WAITARERE BEACH

MONTHLY BEACH CLEAN-UP - ALL WELCOME.

10:00 AM. Meet at the Waitare Beach Surf Club

carpark. This is a community project

supported by NZFWDA Central Zone in

collaboration with Horowhenua District

Council, who will be providing gloves

and bags. No need to register. Council

staff will direct you when you arrive.

10 - 23 MAY 2026 NZFWDA AGM &

Trips. Picton.

17 MAY 2026 PLANTING DAY - TE

RAU PURIRI REGIONAL PARK.

South Kaipara Heads, the meeting

time is 9.30 with planting until around

midday. Bring a 'clean' spade, gloves,

suitable footwear and weather

appropriate clothes. The Council

Rangers then puts on a sausage sizzle

and if conditions allow a drive across

the park. Please register your interest

by Friday 10th May with Peter Vahry

pete4wd@gmail.com

14 JUNE 2026

WAITARERE BEACH MONTHLY

BEACH CLEAN-UP - ALL

WELCOME. 2PM. Meet at the

Waitare Beach Surf Club carpark.

This is a community project supported

by NZFWDA Central Zone in

collaboration with Horowhenua District

Council, who will be providing gloves

and bags. No need to register. Council

staff will direct you when you arrive.

24 - 26 JULY 2026 MAXXIS MUD &

STEEL WINCH CHALLENGE Hosted

by 4x4 Events. Read full details and

entry form [here](#).

9 - 11 OCTOBER 2026 FORCE 4

KING OF CANTERBURY. Where you

have to go FAST enough to WIN, but

SLOW enough to SURVIVE. Alford

Forest, Methven. The course is approx

7.5km long circuit with up to 10 bonus

deviations to test teams, made up of

fast flowing areas, some rough terrain,

possible winch walls, Valleys, rocks

and mud. \$100 for NZFWDA Members.

Full details [here](#)



Kauri Coast 4WD Club

7 March

We had a fantastic three days at the 2026 Northland Fieldays.

Looking forward to next years event at our purpose built track on site...it just gets better each year.

A special thanks to all major sponsors including Defender Offroad NZ, Maxxis Tyres and many local businesses.



Nelson 4 Wheel Drive Club

2 February

Over the last couple of days some members of the Nelson 4x4 Club have been helping transport pilots to the days launch site for the 2026 New Zealand Paragliding Champs.

There are 3 main launch sites

Barnicoat Range

Takaka Hill

Mount Murchison

Thanks to those who were free and able to do a bit for the community.

I was just stoked to be able to go and take some pictures.

Huge thanks to our tireless Secretary Ian for organising this great opportunity.

This was from Mount Murchison



President's Corner

Steve Adam - Email: president@nzfwda.org.nz - Mobile: 027 228 8221

It's an end of an era for me two weeks ago; I sold my beloved 1990 Nissan Safari after 12 years of reliable 4 wheeling around the South island.

From wading windscreen deep rivers to climbing some challenging bare rock tracks, the only limitation was my courage to push the go peddle. I had spent a considerable amount of time and money, lost layers of bark off my knuckles doing mods and maintenance myself. When my skill had limitations, I found someone who had the passion and know-how to do the tricky bits and gladly paid him!

Every hour and \$ well spent for the enjoyment I got out of the old beast. But I don't miss the go-slow up hills with the ensuing "bush fire" behind me contributing a small portion to the greenhouse gases and maybe clouding the vision of anyone game enough to get close behind me!

So now I am taking on another, probably more expensive and questionably less reliable 2007 twin turbo V8 diesel Range Rover – yes,

I can hear the gasps of incredulities from here. So into the money pit I go with my eyes wide open, it's getting the requisite lift, bigger grippier wheels, a hidden winch, snorkel, the latest CB radio and some fancy electronic gismos, with a solar panel but before all that, my wonderful long suffering Wife suggested we should have a rooftop tent, not known for my disobedience I gladly acquiesced. To be fair, it's been absolutely awesome!

Back to the Range Rover, a significant issue I found with it is, it's a damned radar magnet, up to a year ago I had just one speeding ticket in nearly 20 years, alas I now have had 3 more in the last 12 months... I thought I was a quick learner, clearly not. Cruise control is religiously used now.

Moral of the story guys.... Be aware of the pitfalls of overcompensation!

Tread lightly
Steve Adam
President
NZFWDA



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- 🚗 Anything Relating to Four Wheel Drive Only:
- 📏 1/8th page: 91mm x 64mm
- 📷 Two photos
- 📝 50 words, including phone number and/or email address
- 🔗 No links to other adverts please.
- 💰 \$75 per Trail Torque edition.
- ✉ Email classifieds to editor@nzfwda.org.nz

PUBLIC NOTICES

Every month NZFWDA Members receive the NZFWDA NEWS in their email inbox. If you didn't get yours, please let your Club Secretary know. Members are invited to share information and good news stories by sending them to Steve Adam, President NZFWDA, president@nzfwda.org.nz

FOR SALE



1994 Stewart & Stevenson. 3,000 genuine miles. 3116 Cat Engine. 7 speed Alison Auto. Eaton diffs. Selectable CTI. 8.5T. Left hand drive. Currently not NZ road legal. This beast goes places, makes a Mog look silly! Was brought for a project that didn't eventuate. Needs a home. \$25,000. Phone Steve 027 228 8221

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