



Trail Torque



The official Magazine of the New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association

June/July/August 2026

REEFTON ROCKS

REPORTING FROM
THE NZFWDA
2026 AGM TRIPS



Central Club Truck
CHALLENGE

INSIDE:
Coming Events
Macetown Update
How Ashley got in to 4 Wheel Driving
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:
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secretary@nzfwda.org.nz

NZFWDA ONLINE:
[NZFWDA Website](#)
[TidyHQ](#)

FACEBOOK:
[NZFWDA Facebook](#)

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

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

DECEMBER 2026/JANUARY/
FEBRUARY 2027
Deadline: 20 November 2026
Out to Members: 13 December 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: NZFWDA AGM Trips "Reefton Rocks" Photo by Kent. Club Truck Challenge - Crazy Pajero driving - Photo by Andrew Gee.

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.

Spotted at Council Training

Fresh in from our spy network...

Seen during a Civil Defence / Emergency Management course for staff of several Councils in the mid-lower North Island recently - a large exercise set in the far north after a large landside cut off a music concert venue - evacuation of 4,000 people was required - Civil Defence brought in the 4wd community to get everyone out via farm tracks.



The Government has introduced the Conservation Amendment Bill 2026, and if it passes, 60% of New Zealand's conservation land could be sold, exchanged, or leased to private companies for up to 60 years.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS 11:59PM THURSDAY 2 JULY 2026

Read about the proposed Bill and make your submission via the NZ Parliament website:
https://www3.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/make-a-submission/document/54SCENV_SCF_BD7D0F89-D8CB-42F7-9C5F-08DEABEDA048/conservation-amendment-bill

You don't need to write much, say what this land means to you and that you oppose these changes. Every single submission counts.

Please share this with everyone you know.

NZFWDA Rules Updated

Quorum Change

In March the National Governance Committee approved a change to the quorum rule in our Standing Orders for Zones and Comps, it is now 50% of their elected officers and 30% (it was 50%) of the remaining Sub-Committee.

Clubs and members can see the full wording of the rule in the Online Document Library in TidyHQ.

All Clubs must be Incorporated

At this year's AGM in Picton, a remit was approved by delegates to require all clubs to be registered as incorporated societies.

The reasoning for this has been written about numerous times in the past.

It was agreed there would be a phase-in period, allowing time for the few remaining Clubs to complete their registration. The National President will organise assistance to them if they wish.

4x4 OUTDOOR EXPO

ENVIRONMENT HUB

SAM THE TRAP MAN

OFFER WORKSHOPS CATCHMENT COLLECTIVE

PREDATOR FREE NZ

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION

There is only one Earth. Respect it.

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

There is no rush...

Heading out on the trail for a day, for a week or more? Check, stow and secure your gear regardless of whether you have a wagon, ute or tray deck. The trail has no respect for 'she'll be right' or short cuts in order to rush getting away. Loose gear can be dangerous let alone the harm it may cause to others and the damage it may cause to your or someone else's vehicle.

When you have to get gear out such as shovels, tools, tyres changing and recovery equipment take the time to restow it properly in its allotted and secure place. It is also a good

way to keep track of your gear so that it doesn't get left behind or find someone else has inadvertently walked off with it!

On the trail and something goes wrong? Take a moment to draw a deep breath, stop and think about the sequences of events that need to happen before rushing to action and making mistakes which may have minor or catastrophic consequences. Failing to put a vehicle in park (auto) or in gear (on a manual) and the handbrake on is more common than you might think and is almost always as a result of being distracted by the

ON BEHALF OF THE HEALTH & SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE

need to exit the vehicle to attend to an issue that has arisen.... or for a quick chat.

There is no need to rush. Four wheel drive trips are frequently punctuated by the need for patience and waiting for any number of reasons in or out of our control. The most important thing is that we get home safely which is a result of effectively managing the things we can control and anticipate. As for denting a panel or popping a tyre bead or a temporary hurting of our pride....well....that is four wheel driving!

The King's Service Medal

FOR SERVICES TO SPORT AND THE COMMUNITY.



Mrs Karen Mary BURROWS.
PIC:Hokitika RSA Facebook page

"A massive congratulations to our Club member and friend Karen Burrows for her inclusion in the Kings Honours with a Kings Service Medal.

Karen (and Pat) are stalwarts of our trips to the West Coast and Musters; and all-around good people. So thoroughly deserved!! Awesome award for a very hard-working young Lady..."
Greg Carroll, OR4G.

NZFWDA Life Member

Grant Purdie has been involved in 4x4ing since 1994, with significant Club contributions as a Committee member, President, Vice President, Club Captain, Land access officer, trip co-ordinator and more.

Grant first joined the NZFWDA Executive in 2016 as a Project Facilitator for the development and implementation of the NZFWDA Health & Safety Policy and Guidelines.

Grant was nominated the following year for National Public Relations Officer, a position he held until 2021. He remained on the Association Executive as Projects Officer until 2025. During the 2025 - 2026 term, he was a Portfolio Officer. At the 2026 NZFWDA AGM, Grant was elected as Vice President for our Organisation and nominated for Life Membership.

Grant is an active member and Life Member of the Cross Country Vehicle Club (CCVC) and participates in Shiny trips, Club 4x4 trips, Hard Yakka trips, mostly as a Trip Leader. He has always been involved in working bees, community committees and currently heavily involved in the Manawatu Estuary project waving the flag for the NZFWDA and four wheel drivers as a whole.

"I want to congratulate Grant on his election on as NZFWDA Vice President as well as being awarded an Honorary Life Membership for all of his hard work over the years, especially in the environmental



stewardship space. Grant has done a phenomenal amount of work with the Horowhenua District Council and others to raise the profile of CCVC, NZFWDA and 4-wheel drivers in general as people who care deeply about the places we visit".

*Shaun Ross
CCVC President.*

LIFE MEMBERS OF THE NZ FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION.

- Awarded 2026 - Grant Purdie
- 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

MACETOWN TRACK MANAGED ACCESS

– how is it performing?

BY KEVIN MARLOW

The Macetown Track managed access system was phased in from late December 2025 with gateway installation followed by a CCTV camera system in early 2026 and, after a lot of testing, the online permit system went live on 1st April 2026.

Since going live, despite concerns about starting on April Fools' Day, the system has performed extremely well and exceeded expectations with the gate, camera system and online permit system all operating continuously without issues.

Traffic volumes can now be managed as appropriate for weather conditions, maintenance activities can be scheduled and remote monitoring of the camera system supports checks against permits and allows follow up with non-permitted vehicles accessing the track alongside permit holders.

In the absence of ongoing external

maintenance funding, the system relies on permit fees for individual 4WD vehicles and off-road motorcycles, commercial operator agreements, and donations to raise \$16,000 each year for the annual work programme and to gradually build a contingency fund of at least \$80,000 to address any significant slips, rockfalls or track deterioration in future.

Since the 1st April, over 150 permits have been issued, including 128 for 4WD vehicles, 7 for motorcycles generating over \$4,400 in single trip fees (after deducting GST and merchant fees). In addition we have sold 11 Annual Passes at \$100 each and negotiated confidential commercial agreements including 2 tourist operator agreements, and 3 first year sponsorship agreements. Allowing for seasonal variations we expect to cover annual work operating costs and commence building the contingency fund.

NZFWDA has fully funded development of the online permit system, including core flexibility to add additional tracks to the system. Setting aside individual track locations and access issues regarding appropriate gates or camera system needs, other tracks could be added at a low marginal cost under \$1,500, subject to local NZFWDA-affiliated Club taking the lead for a track project.

For information about adding a track, email kevin.marlow@nzfwda.org.nz.



SAVE THE DATE

A photograph of a person wearing a helmet and a muddy jacket, sitting in the driver's seat of a 4WD vehicle. The vehicle is covered in mud, and the person is also covered in mud. In the background, another person in a high-visibility vest is visible.

25 - 27 February 2027 Kauri Coast 4WD Club MUD DRAGS at the Northland Field Days, Dargaville.
Contact: kauricoast4wdclub@outlook.com to enter!

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.

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REEFTON ROCKS

NZFWDA AGM - CCVC Trip Report. ARTICLE BY: KENT & ROSIE THE PURPLE SAFARI.
PHOTOS BY: DENISE ROSS (CCVC TRIP LEADER), KENT & ROSIE.

Interesting title right? That's because there is actually a lot of rocks in Reefton!! Who knew!! Anyway, this all started when Darren suggested we head down for the NZFWDA AGM being held in Picton a few months back. The grade 5 trips in the week leading up to the AGM were going to be based out of Reefton so I decided that could be a bit of fun. The grade 5 trips started on the Wednesday so I booked the ferry, packed some decent tires on a trailer on the back of my SWB Safari (Rosie), and left at 6am Tuesday arriving at the Reefton motor camp at 3.30pm that afternoon. Yes it's a bit of a trek but first grade 5 trip was the next day. Chasm track.

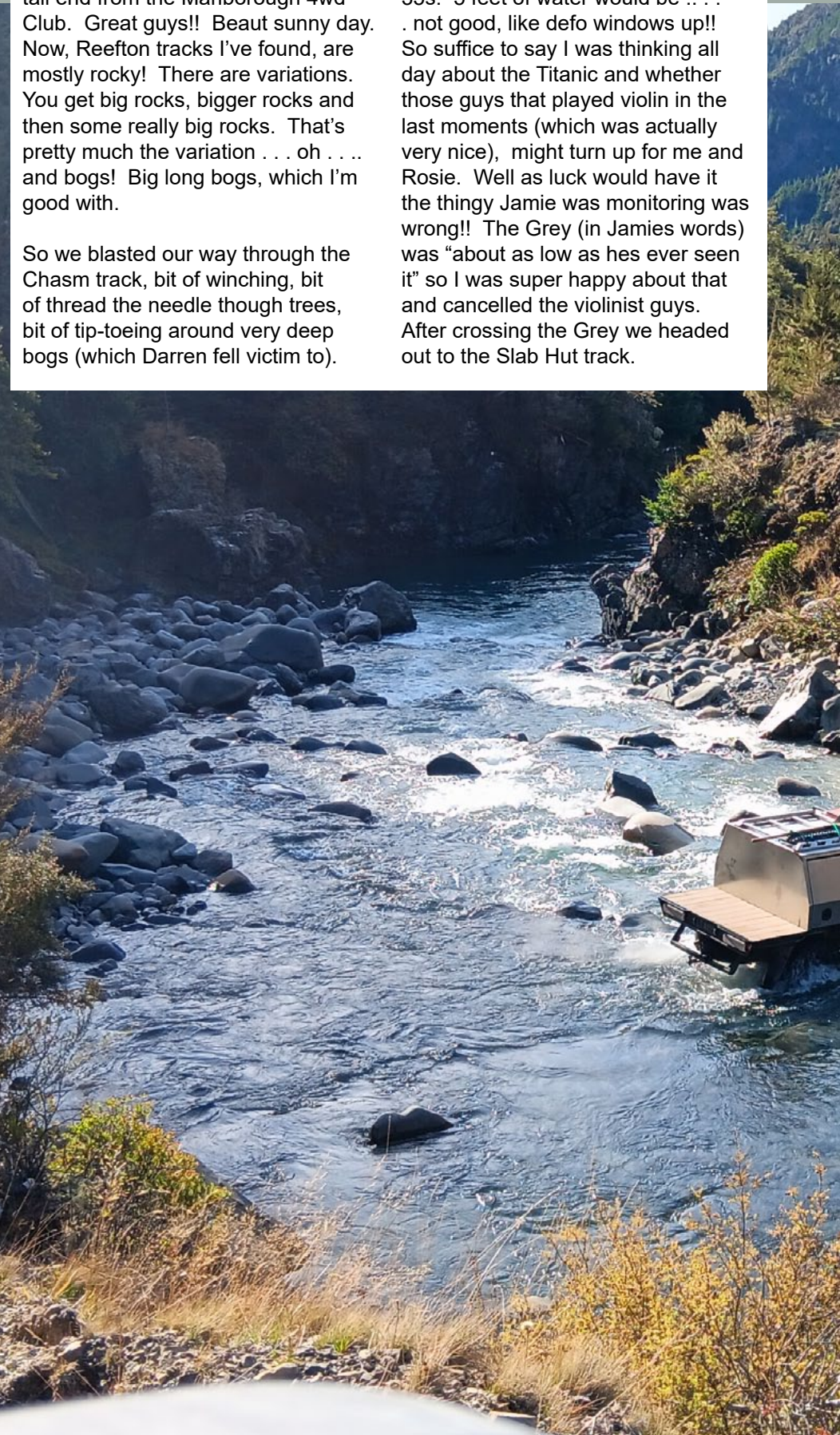
So, I was bunking with Darren in a cabin. That was interesting. Not because of Darren, but because the guy in the cabin next door talked in his sleep. Like I mean proper conversations . . . very loudly . . . all night! There was yelling, I love you calls, snorts, you name it. Darren slept like a baby. I chuckled. Was interesting times but all part of the adventure! Next day I hear this guy say to Darren "hey so I hope I didn't keep you awake cos I sometimes talk in my sleep". "no" says Darren, I wear earplugs and never heard a thing. LOL. It was pretty funny.

CHASM TRACK

Anyway, enough about that. We departed for Chasm track at 8am, met the other 5 trucks on the trip with 2 trucks (Jamie & Leigh) leading and tail end from the Marlborough 4wd Club. Great guys!! Beaut sunny day. Now, Reefton tracks I've found, are mostly rocky! There are variations. You get big rocks, bigger rocks and then some really big rocks. That's pretty much the variation . . . oh . . . and bogs! Big long bogs, which I'm good with.

So we blasted our way through the Chasm track, bit of winching, bit of thread the needle though trees, bit of tip-toeing around very deep bogs (which Darren fell victim to).

Kinda at the end you cross the Grey River. Jamie had been telling us it was likely 4 – 5 feet deep. I'll say that again . . . 4 – 5 FEET DEEP!! Rosies got a sagged 2 inch lift on 35s. 5 feet of water would be not good, like defo windows up!! So suffice to say I was thinking all day about the Titanic and whether those guys that played violin in the last moments (which was actually very nice), might turn up for me and Rosie. Well as luck would have it the thingy Jamie was monitoring was wrong!! The Grey (in Jamies words) was "about as low as hes ever seen it" so I was super happy about that and cancelled the violinist guys. After crossing the Grey we headed out to the Slab Hut track.





Leatham



Maungatapu Track



Maungatapu Track



Leatham

SLAB HUT

Ok this is a pretty good fun track. Mud bogs, steep clay climbs, tree roots, rutsI mean kind of like the Akatarawas but also Rocks! It's not that long and it probably took us a couple of hours start to finish. On one of the climbs, one of the Landy's snapped a front axle, otherwise no real dramas oh except for Darren nearly drowning his truck. Yeah, there was that bit!. So, I understand the theory was straddle the bank and the high point

in the center of a very large bog, but it was VERY slippery. Anyway, wet carpets and a bit of water later, all was right in the world and we headed back to Reefton.

REEFTON NIGHTLIFE!

I'll touch on this. Lots of bar/ restaurant set ups but the best dinner was the roast at the Reefton Hotel. Best lunch was the little bakery! Darren wanted to hit the Disco's and see if we could find a line dancing Club and stuff like that, but I was like





.... na, not for me buddy ;). I'll have a cup of tea and a Tim Tam. He seemed to enjoy himself however (OK, ok just jokes team. Just in case some of you thought I was being serious. There are actually no line dancing Clubs in Reefton, lolololol, and the only Disco we talked about was one that seized on another trip).

TAILINGS TRACK

Ok, Thursday we drove about an hour towards Westport to Tailings Track. Only 4 trucks today. Two

broken from the day before and 1 who had done Tailings only 6 weeks earlier so he wanted to do some exploring. So, Tailings Track is a bit like the Chasm but maybe ... more rocky.

The track winds its way in and out of deep rocky creek ravines so typically steep descents over very large rounded loose slippery river boulders, to a creek bed with even larger loose slippery river boulders, to an exit where you climb steeply up over - you guessed it - large slippery

river boulders. Its super good fun!! In between the boulder stuff is actually some very smooth nice track til suddenly you are dropping or climbing again. I managed to put a significant bend in a chromoly track rod somewhere along the way.

I'm not sure which very loud clunk it was (there were many), but one of them did the damage so Rosie was a bit pidgeon toed until we found a flat spot to have a look. Darren "the disco queen" just happened to have a spare one...IN HIS TRUCK! (so,



enough rubbish about Darren now. He is now a legend). Like he actually had a track rod on hand!! So, we stopped for lunch, I pulled the bent one out, put in the spare and we headed off again. Phew!! Cos this was not your average bend. It was seriously boomeranged.

Tailings is an all day track. Apparently there is a long version and a short version. Somewhere about half way there is an exit track you can take. However, we did the long version.

Was a great experience. In my view more difficult than the Chasm track, and pretty challenging but good barwork and winch, and we moved along pretty well with only 4 vehicles.

Final day the guys did Petrol hill. I did not attend as I had some Rosie repairs to make before the 4 hour drive back to the meet and greet in Blenheim that day. But the lads knocked that track out in record time and Darren was back at the cabins by 11am. From there we took a scenic backroads drive which was awesome.



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Anyway, Reefton was a great experience to get behind me. Was great fun down there and the Marlborough guys ran a really good trip. Darren and I had a bloody good time, so was well worth the time and cost to make the trip. I'll defo be looking at the AGM next year for what trips will be on offer.

You'll find the videos on my youtube channel "[@kentoutdoorsinnz](#)".



Hosts of the NZFWDA AGM

The Marlborough 4WD Club hosted 5 days of trips in the lead-up to the AGM on 23 May. These included Grade 2 trips in the Reefton area to Big River Mine, Napoleons Hill (Tunnels), and optional Grade 4/5 Trips to The Chasm, Petrol Hill, Tailings track, Slab Hut Creek, Green Hut (Commissioners Flat).

In the Marlborough area, we also visited the Maungatapu Track (to Nelson), The Leatham Valley, and a tour of the Grigg Family Farm Tempello, in the hills separating the Wairau and Awatere Valleys.

The AGM itself was then hosted at the Queen Charlotte Yacht Club in Picton. This involved a huge effort for a small Club, and was successfully achieved by voluntary contributions from many members and partners.

This included a small team of organisers, a larger group of Trip Leaders and assistants, as well as a hard working team on the thankless task of running the catering throughout the AGM (Morning tea, Lunch and Dinner - the Dinner was done by Stephan) on Saturday. I

won't mention other names for fear of missing someone – but you know who you are...

As Club Captain, I wish to publicly acknowledge these efforts, and thank those involved. Thanks also to the wider 4WD fraternity for the high participation (64 trucks) which made it all worthwhile.

As a result of a successful auction of donated items (over \$3000 raised) and trip fees from participants, the AGM was run at no cost to the NZFWDA except flights and accommodation for members of the Executive, which will also be offset by a further disbursement following settlement of all accounts.

It is also intended to make some donations to worthy causes in the areas we visited – a continuation of our Club policy of using trip fees to support local communities and differentiate us from less considerate 4WD users.

Cheers
Richard Gifford



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

3 - 5 JULY 2026 MAXXIS MUD & STEEL WINCH CHALLENGE Hosted by 4x4 Events. Read full details and entry form [here](#).

26 JULY 2026 AUCKLAND 4WD CLUB. BETHELLS BEACH, MURIWAI. A great trip for any level of vehicle and for learning how to drive your 4x4 as it was meant to be used. An excellent property for new members interested in joining the Club. Club Members - \$30. Non-members - \$50 (Note: this includes a \$20 day membership fee). Registration closes 24 Jul 2026. Full details: <https://www.auckland4wd.org.nz/event-details/bethells-sand-dunes-sun-26th-july-26>

3 OCTOBER 2026 MT EGMONT 4WD CLUB PAIRS EVENT. 300 Lower Durham Road, Inglewood. 9am start. Cash only on the gate.

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](#)

25 - 27 February 2027 KAURI COAST 4WD CLUB MUD DRAGS at the Northland Field Days, Dargaville. 3 vehicle classes and side by side racing is held on two tracks. Entries are open to anybody affiliated with a 4WD Club. Prizes in each class. Entry forms and further details to come. Contact: kauricoast4wdclub@outlook.com

8 MAY 2027 AUCKLAND 4WD CLUB INTERNATIONAL SAFARI. Woodhill Forest 4WD Park. Constructed challenges for all levels of 4WD experience, and navigating tracks in a 'poker-run' format. Grade 2 Shineys to good Grade 4 tough truck stuff. "We may even open up a Grade 5 winch track if there is enough mad b'stards enthusiasm". Camp over in your motorhome, Roof tent, or other suitable outdooriness - night run, a Winch Drag race and Rocker Cover race. We haven't forgotten the young/at heart - have some fun with that R/C crawler you have in your shed and you can leave your pots 'n pans at home, we're even doin' the cooking. Capped at 100 trucks, the Club is expecting 4wd Association members to fill it fast! More details can be found on the Auckland Club public page. Hit the GOING button and you'll be some of the first in line to be messaged Registration forms or send an email to fish@auckland4wd.org.nz to pre-register for this event.

22 MAY 2027 NZFWDA AGM - Northern Zone.

2026-2027 NZFWDA Contact Emails

National Committee

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Vice President	Ashley Lucas	nthvicepresident@nzfwda.org.nz
Secretary	Ashley Taylor	nthsecretary@nzfwda.org.nz
Treasurer	Ian Grant	nthtreasurer@nzfwda.org.nz

Central Zone

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Vice President	Trevor Hendra	czvicepresident@nzfwda.org.nz
Secretary/Treasurer	Colin Lindsay	czsecretary@nzfwda.org.nz

Southern Zone

President	Bob Holmes	szpresident@nzfwda.org.nz
Vice President	Ben Thompson	szvicepresident@nzfwda.org.nz
Secretary/Treasurer	Barb Adam	szsecretary@nzfwda.org.nz

Competitions

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Secretary	Dan Morris	compsecretary@nzfwda.org.nz
Treasurer	Kelsey Van Waas	comptreasurer@nzfwda.org.nz

Support Roles

Patron	Neville Dunton	patron@nzfwda.org.nz
Secretary	Kerry Quigley	secretary@nzfwda.org.nz

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

The tough part of the election process are those who are retiring or stepping down from positions on the Association Board.

We wish to acknowledge Rowan Coutts and Frank Allen for their work as Zone Vice Presidents, your dedication and commitment certainly has been appreciated.

Tariq Wasim and Peter Vahry, National VP and General Officer respectively, two long serving people at both Zone and National levels. Your work and patience over the years has helped shape the Association for the future. Thank you for your commitment and service to the New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association, its Clubs and Members.

HOW I GOT INTO 4 WHEEL DRIVING.

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY ASHLEY LUCAS

Okay, I have had the hard word from our new Vice president Grant Purdie (congratulations Grant) to do a short introduction piece for this elite publication or even a series of articles. I didn't think my four wheeling life was that interesting and our VP will find this out very soon.

The question was asked 'How did I get involved in four-wheeling?' Well it goes back a long time to my very much younger days. My father was a chain sawing contractor felling trees back in the 1960's and 70's and the vehicles were mostly old Bedford or Ford trucks until the time when he borrowed a Land Rover Series II, well side pick-up from a family friend to go to a bush job in Marokopa. Mum and Dad in the front and my brother and I travelled in the back, with all the gear for a couple of days camping in the bush, while dad was felling native timber deep in the bush.

The Land Rover proved so handy and versatile that Dad had to get one for himself. My cousin Les Lucas, had a wrecking business, Bond Auto Wreckers, specialising in Land Rover and truck wrecking and Dad ended up with a 1955 Series One Land Rover SWB station wagon. It was mostly original, with the Safari roof which was a second skin roof meant for hot climates and it would keep the vehicle cooler inside. It was usually loaded with his fuel cans, chainsaws, tools, etc most of the time, but as it was the only vehicle in the family, if we were to go away, it was cleaned out and us kids rode in the back.

The Land Rover was eventually replaced with a later model, 1957 version of the same vehicle including the safari roof. This one eventually got an engine upgrade to the Series III 2.25 petrol engine and was fitted with extractors which seemed to give it a lot of power, especially as it still rode on 6.50x16 tyres, small by today's standards, but enough to allow the vehicle to travel off road in the bush and across farms, wherever Dad would be working at the time.

As the only vehicle in the family, I learnt to drive in the Land Rover.

Lot of people thought they were difficult to drive due to the three gear levers; Black, Red and Yellow knobs.

However it was just the opposite as putting it in low range (red) it was easy to learn the feel of the clutch without stalling the vehicle or bunny hopping too much across the paddocks off road. By the time I came to get my driver's licence, I had mastered the basic skills of driving a manual vehicle, including driving off road.

Of course in the early 70's, four wheel drive Rallys and Clubs were becoming popular and cousin Les was a member of the Waikato 4WD Club and competed in the Rallys often with Dad as navigator. This meant as a family we would head off to the Rallys and Mum still has the programme from the Easter 1975 Karakariki Off-Road



Safari as it was called back in those days when Les and Dad competed. The event was held on the property of the Hodgson Family and while it is in the same area as the Waikato Clubs long time Club property, I

don't know if it was the same property or a neighbouring place.

Most of the vehicles back then were Land Rovers, Jeeps, Toyotas, Austin Gypsy's and even an Austin Champ. There was one solitary Nissan with a Chev V8 in Class 4. Dad and Les were in Class 1 with Les' Series One Land Rover SWB.

I joined the work force in early 1975 and I wanted a Land Rover of my own, as Dad was over having to spend too much time fixing his each time I had borrowed it. In fact when it came to my 21st with the traditional presentation of the key to the door, cousin Les was to pipe up and ask Dad if it was the key to the Land Rover.

My very first Land Rover was a soft top with no canvas, sitting in the middle of a rubbish pile on a farm out the back of Matamata with the head off and sitting in the back. I had great plans of re-building it and after an eventful Saturday, Dad and I finally got it A-framed home, using borrowed wheels and tyres from cousin Les. It was still behind Dad's Land Rover Sunday when Les came around and after some hard bargaining Les bought it, returning me a small profit. (I still wonder today if Les realised he was buying his own wheels and tyres!). In return Les would look out for a better vehicle for me.

And it wasn't too long before Les did come up with a 1960 Series II SWB soft top. It was a standard 4-cylinder



2.25 but was in pretty good condition for its age. It needed a new soft top, so a local guy made one up in green canvas, so it stood out from the usual khaki.

It was around then that I was transferred to Te Puke where I joined the Bay of Plenty 4WD Club and got fully involved with 4WD Club activities, including competing in National Rallies in my own Land Rover. I have been a member of a 4WD Club ever since (around 45 years now).

The Land Rover stayed pretty much standard over the years, but Les fitted a rear roll bar from one of his earlier rally vehicles and also a full heavy bulbar on the front and side rails. For National Rallies it was fitted with a full roll cage and I used 750x16 Firestone SAT's on widened LR rims, which weren't strictly legal for A-class (standard 4-cylinder vehicles). I was transferred to Masterton in

1983 and drove the Land Rover north to Te Awamutu, stripped it of windscreen and top and then trailered it to Tauranga to compete in the National Rally finals at Welcome Bay in 1994.

Over the years, I drove the vehicle in many 4WD events, and wasn't particularly easy on it either (yes, it was rolled a couple times in competition) and even used it to drive to work. I even drowned it on at least two occasions, once when I took some scouts at a scout camp 'swimming'. Put them in the back and ran backwards up stream, filling the back in water. Unfortunately, I found a hole near the bank and the whole front went under. The farmer's tractor pulled it out and I left it in the paddock overnight. Next day after allowing the water and oil to settle I changed the engine oil, pulled the spark plugs



and for the gearbox, diffs etc, I just drained the water out and put the bung back when the oil started to flow. It drove home fine and lived for many more four wheeling adventures. The other time was in the Waipoua River, running through to the town and yet again after letting it sit, changing oils, it lived on once again. Eventually I sold it around 1986, when I bought a Land Cruiser FJ V8 wellside, again off Cousin Les, but that's a story for another time.

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MAINTAINING TRACKS FOR FOUR WHEELING

HERE'S THE HARD TRUTH: ACCESS IS NOT GUARANTEED. IT'S CONDITIONAL, SHARED, AND IT'S FRAGILE. TRACKS DON'T USUALLY CLOSE OVERNIGHT. THEY FADE AWAY—THROUGH ABUSE, NEGLIGENCE, LACK OF ENGAGEMENT, AND SILENCE. VOLUNTEERING IS HOW WE PUSH BACK AGAINST THAT.

In New Zealand, vehicle track management and maintenance is a crucial aspect of ensuring the future of the myriads of routes currently being used and those many kilometres of often disguised unformed legal roads (ULR).

Using volunteers is our first option, although there are occasions where contracting out the work to be done, is the alternative.

In almost every track scenario, we are using existing routes, sometimes carved out by hand many years ago to enable access and transportation to various resources such as timber, farms and minerals. Often there is evidence of the thought that had gone into those routes, such as effective water management and use of land contours to reduce steep grades. Neglect has been a prime factor on many of those old routes where the original reason for their existence has faded away.

They do however now offer opportunities for four wheeling, if some of that neglect can be repaired. All the time we must be very clear that the word 'sustainable' is applied to all changes we might consider being incorporated in the restoration process.

If the route is an ULR, it will fall under the management of the local district council and councils have rules around what work is allowed on a legal road, formed or not. Routes on Department of Conservation (DOC) land also need permission before any work is undertaken. DOC has health and safety rules that can limit what and how some tools are used. Chainsaws are generally banned by DOC for most volunteer projects.

Ideally, once agreement with the land manager has been reached to allow specific maintenance on a route, there is a planning process to identify how the work will be tackled and what resources to achieve that will be required.

Track management practices often include measures to minimise ecological

impact. This might involve using environmentally friendly materials or methods that reduce soil erosion and protect native flora and fauna. Silt and mud attract criticism. Loose soils must be 'stabilised' with planting, or other protection from dispersal.

One of the simplest projects can be vegetation management. Controlling the overgrowth on a track allows light and wind to dry the surface and the wider track helps prevent 'ruts' developing, as vehicles are not forced into a single central lane.

Water management is crucial to almost every track, as without it, any water will soften soils and moving water will pick up soil particles. Those 'particles' can even be rocks the size of vehicle if the water flow is strong enough. Water needs diverting off tracks as soon as feasible. The amount of soil particle 'pick up' is dictated by the speed of the water, so slowing flow can reduce erosion. There are many ways to slow and divert water flow, and they can include 'rolling dips' and 'water bars'. The rolling dips are humps and hollows along a track at relatively close intervals, where the humps push the water into the hollow, from which it is drained away from the track. Unless there are natural formations existing, such engineering of the track surface usually requires moving quite a bit of material, which may be better managed with machinery.

Machinery may also be needed to install 'culvert' pipes below the surface to shift water across a track. I've been involved in a culvert install using a couple of steel 44-gallon drums welded together to create a pipe. It was taken up the track on a roof rack and dropped into a wash out and then backfilled by hand. Usually, the plastic culvert pipes are towed in by drilling a hole in the pipe and attaching a rope to lift the front of the pipe, while the other end just drags on the track. Another method is the use of water bars, where a flexible material such as conveyer belting is sandwiched between some wooden planks and partially buried at an angle (ideally about



ARTICLE BY PETER VAHRY

60 degrees) across the track width to divert surface water off the track. They are simple to create and only require a narrow trench diagonally across the track width that can be dug with a 'grubber'. They do require occasional 'cleaning', but there are two on the clay based Maratoto track, that have been working well for 20 years.

Water will sit in 'potholes' along a track and the soft wet soils are easily moved by vehicle tyres, resulting in a steady increase in the pothole size. A proven method to halt that problem, is to 'harden' the wet area and a simple method is to use rocks, gravel etc. in jute/hessian sacks that are dropped into the potholes. Plastic sacks are useless, as they don't retain and bond with the soil particles in the way that 'natural' fibre sacks do. The plastic also breaks down into ugly strands and micro plastic particles. Natural fibre sacks can usually be sourced 'free' from coffee roasting companies, although the sacks can be rather large. Just don't fill them up too much and simply fold the surplus sack over. A couple of sacks can usually be carried by a 4WD and then dropped in a hole when passing. Just don't make them too heavy.

Maintaining tracks builds credibility with land managers

- Strengthens partnerships
- Shows the public we care
- Keeps routes open for the next generation
- Attend one meeting or workday
- Sign up for a cleanup or track maintenance project
- Step up, introduce yourself and ask how to help

Trails still need maintaining. Access still needs defending. Public lands still need people willing to step up.

Every hour you give helps, and no special skills are required. Just get involved. Access doesn't begin with policy. It begins with responsibility.



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Be Safe | Be Accountable | Be a Team | Be Real

In a groundbreaking result, the New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association Inc and Bathurst Resources Ltd have signed an MOU for agreed access to the Denniston Plateau and the Mackley Track on the West Coast!
There is still work to do for both parties in the future, but this is a great start!

Check Facebook page: Whangamata Track at Maratoto for updates.

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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

Club Members' H&S Responsibilities

Every person (including every 4wd Club and every member of a 4wd Club) is responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care for their own health and safety
- Taking reasonable care that what they do (or do not do) does not adversely affect the health and safety of anyone else
- Complying with any reasonable instruction given by the Club so that it can comply with its health and safety obligations including all safe work procedures, rules and health and safety training
- Attending any trip briefings, ensuring they can hear it, and paying attention to the details.

2026 CLUB TRUCK

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY ANDREW GEE

CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?

World War 2 and America gave us the Jeep for which we are all thankful for, but this year America gives us a fuel crisis and unheard-of fuel prices, thanks Donald. Some parts of the NZFWDA send a message that competing in Motorsport might be a bad look but if you enjoy doing it you can't ever look bad, maybe that was more confused Donald thinking. This year we knocked out four Rounds of the Central Zone Club Truck Challenge (CTC), from Taihape to Wainuoru, Wellington and back to Taihape. Thanks to everyone who helped to put on events and our landowners, Dave Hintz, Sue Butcher and Malcolm Judd.

We are always grateful to Brendan Watchorn who oversees the whole Series and Raewyn Watchorn who travels to every Round and keeps the score sheet.

2026 OVERALL SEASON RESULTS

Class 1 - Dave Seymour
Wairarapa 4x4 Club
Suzuki Jimny

Class 2 - Brendan Watchorn
Wairarapa 4x4 Club
Mitsubishi Pajero

Class 3 - Dave McGinnity
Windy City Offroaders
Jeep Wrangler

Class 4 - Brent Ward
Wairarapa 4x4 Club
Nissan Patrol

The deadline for the article was a bit tight for me so I threw it over to AI to bash out a few words.

THE CLUB TRUCK CHALLENGE: GRASSROOTS 4WD MOTORSPORT AT ITS BEST

The Club Truck Challenge is one of the most accessible and community-driven forms of off-road motorsport in New Zealand. Built around the idea that ordinary four-wheel-drive enthusiasts should have a place to compete, the Series gives drivers the chance to test skill, nerve, and vehicle setup in a fun but genuinely

demanding environment. Rather than focusing on expensive, purpose-built competition trucks, the Challenge is designed for registered and warranted 4WD vehicles with low-range capability, making it a practical entry point for Club members and everyday off-road drivers alike.

Entrants compete across four Classes that reflect different levels of traction aids and tyre size, helping keep the competition fair while still allowing a wide variety of vehicles to take part.

The origins of the Challenge reflect its grassroots spirit. Material in your files and older Club correspondence indicates that the Central Zone version of the Club Truck Challenge began in 2011, with the first Event organized as part of what was intended to become a wider Series.

The concept was deliberately kept simple: road-legal trucks, basic safety requirements, and obstacles that would reward smart driving rather than extravagant spending. That philosophy helped distinguish the Series from more extreme forms of 4WD Competition and gave Club-level drivers a place to compete without needing a dedicated trailer-only machine. Over time, the Competition grew from a Central Zone activity into a series open to members of the New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association from a wider area, attracting competitors from around the Southern North Island.

What makes the Club Truck Challenge especially compelling is the way the competition itself is structured. Drivers attempt a series of short hazards or driving tests that are intentionally tough and often impossible to complete perfectly. Progress through the course matters, and penalties apply for mistakes such as stopping, reversing, or touching markers. In that sense, the Challenge rewards precision as much as bravery.

According to published descriptions of the event, traction matters more than

Dave Seymour Class 1 Champion



Brendan Watchorn Class 2 Champion



Peter and Shirley Pope at their home round in the Wairarapa

CHALLENGE



*Brent Ward
Class 4 Champion*



*Craig McGinnity at the
Haywards Hill round*



*Dave McGinnity,
Class 3 Champion*

outright engine power, which is why a well-driven, lightly modified truck can often outperform a more powerful machine in the wrong conditions. Tyre size and traction aids help determine Class placement, but driver judgment remains central. That balance between machine and technique is one reason the Competition has stayed relevant and appealing over the years.

Another key strength of the Series is its inclusiveness. Organizers describe it as suitable for both novice and experienced drivers, and Event reports show that the field can include everything from Suzuki SJ413s and Jimnys to Jeep Wranglers, Mitsubishi Pajeros, and Nissan Patrols. Some Rounds also include speed sections, adding a different challenge and a spectator-friendly element to the day.

Reports from recent events describe how changing weather can transform the hazards dramatically, turning dry ruts and open slopes into slippery, high-risk terrain where balance and recovery skills become even more important. Those same reports also highlight the character of the Series: families competing across generations, newcomers learning quickly, and competitors enjoying the camaraderie as much as the final result.

The Club Truck Challenge is not just about winning; it is about participation, improvement, and sharing the experience with others who love four-wheel driving.

In many ways, the Club Truck Challenge represents the best of grassroots motorsport. It preserves the spirit of earlier “fun trials” while giving modern Club members a safe and structured environment to test themselves and their vehicles. It also reinforces the idea that motorsport does not always need to be elite, expensive, or highly commercial to be meaningful. A day of club truck competition can teach vehicle control, build confidence, strengthen Club culture, and create memorable stories at the same time. That is why the Series continues to attract loyal competitors year after year. The Club Truck Challenge is more than an off-road event — it is a celebration of practical 4WD driving, local initiative, and the enduring appeal of motorsport shaped by community rather than spectacle.

President's Corner

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

So, my allegiances have changed! Having seen the number of Land Rovers headed out on the pre-AGM trips this year, I am delighted to say that I am not alone, from Series 3s to Defenders to Discoveries to Range Rovers of all vintages and condition. There is a smile on every drivers face and a brotherhood that I hadn't seen before. I do wonder if it's a kind of "knowing" that you only get sitting behind the wheel of a Land Rover - with that air of superiority??? now that I have wound everyone up; I'll change the subject.

I am getting the feeling that our Association is coming of age, the comradery built from the week of 4x4ing leading up to the AGM has been outstanding, the organisation of the Event has built on the previous 4 years of trips with what appears to be a calm urgency. The Friday night meet n greet dinner, a success. the Marlborough 4WD Club, great job well done! The Saturday morning info sessions – which the President forgot to send out the program for,

situated in the picturesque Picton Yacht Club, the AGM with some good healthy debate, and of course the elections, congratulations to the new Executive Committee. We lost two seasoned executives, who have each contributed considerably to the NZFWDA over the years, Tariq and Peter, I thank you for your service to the Association. From the loss we have had some gains, we have some new blood in the organisation, Kevin Marlow is our newest member of the executive committee, Daniel Smith as the new Northern Zone president, Trevor Hendra as Central zone VP and Ben Thompson as Southern Zone VP. See page 11 in this edition for the NZFWDA Line up.

To cap off the day, the delegates were treated with an outstanding dinner that required multiple belt loosening! Whilst we dined, we were honoured to have Richard Tacon the CEO of Bathurst Resources Ltd, supported by Group Manager, Community James Marshall and General Manager Health & Safety Fiona Bartier to speak to the



Delegates about Bathurst Mining and the plans for the Denniston Plateau. The evening was capped off with an auction of goods donated by numerous local businesses and a auctioneer (retired) all of whom I suspect will be honoured by the Event organiser: last but not least the organiser, Richard Gifford who aptly described himself as being like a duck swimming up stream, all calm on the surface but paddling like a bugger under the surface! You had a terrific team around you, but it was your "duck" calm that glued it all together.

Looking forward to the year ahead
Tread lightly
Steve Adam
President
NZFWDA

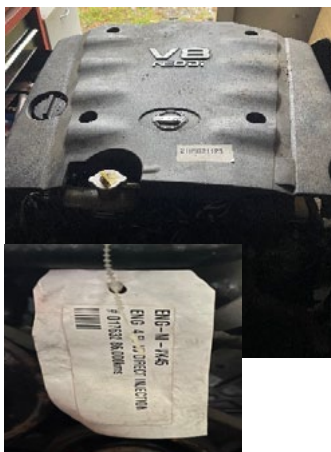
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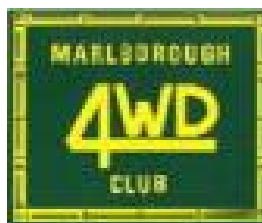


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