



## FWDV eNews - June 2010

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### **Corporate Governance**

The role of corporate governance and how we deal with conflict of interest is a matter that has recently been addressed with the Board and its committees. The importance of ensuring that all committee members are able to understand their role "in committee" is not well known amongst our organisation and members. In a presentation to the Board and the Education Training Unit (ETU), members were shown the decision of Mr. Justice Street in Bennett's case:

*"Undoubtedly there will be differences of opinion between board members. Indeed, it is well that this should be so: sound and wise decisions by the board can only be based upon a full and informed discussion of varying and conflicting views and considerations. Nomination of the individual members and their election to membership by interested groups ensures that the board as a whole has access to a wide range of views, and it is to be expected within this wide range of views that inevitably there will be differences in the opinions, approaches and philosophies of the board members. But the predominating element which each individual must constantly bear in mind is the promotion of the interests of the board itself. In particular, a board member must not allow himself to be compromised by looking to the interests of the group which appointed him rather than to the interests for which the board exists. He is most certainly not a mere channel of communication or listening post on behalf of the group which elected him. There is cast upon him the ordinary obligation of respecting the confidential nature of board affairs where the interests of the board itself so require.*

*If the members of boards such as the present board constantly keep before them their overriding duty to the board to promote the purposes for which it exists, then they should have little difficulty in discharging honourably their public duty, and there will be perhaps little likelihood of litigation such as is presently before the court eventuating. Disagreement is to be expected from time to time, having regard to the wide range of problems with which such boards must deal, but it must be disagreement relating to what should best be done in the promotion of the purpose enshrined in the statute, this being the common interest which all the board members must serve."*

All members of Boards and Committees have different reasons for serving and volunteering their time but the clear rule is that *"If the members of boards such as the present board constantly keep before them their overriding duty to the board to promote the purposes for which it exists, then they should have little difficulty in discharging honourably their public duty,..."*

For those who wish to read the full text for a better understanding please see  
<http://www.pers.mq.edu.au/pmh/24/2401b.html>

The other issue that constantly needs reminder is the conflict of interest. Many of us work in the industry or have friends that can be affected by what we discuss and deal with in our Board or Committee role. This influence can be very disruptive to the proper business. The common approach of most organisations is to call for a declaration relating to a conflict of interest before a meeting and to make members aware of the duty during the meeting and after. If any clubs would like a presentation on this issue they are invited to contact the Association.

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### **Research Report**

Louise Munk Klint reports on current track issues

DSE Track Closure Proposal – North East Area. Louise Munk Klint and Jason Lock attended the first DSE site visit (13 February 2010) and has provided a report to club members on the forum. Michael Coldham attended the Rubicon Track Closures site visit on 17 April 2010 and has provided a report of this to the board as well as members on the forum. No one from FWDV attended the Strathbogies Track Closures site visit on 01 May 2010, but FWDV had in its submission supported the few track closures that took place in the Strathbogies after consultation with club members. If you want further information, please have a look on the FWDV forum.

Otways Management Plan. A letter has been sent to the Chief Ranger in the West Otways asking for further information re issues that have not been addressed in the final management plan. Gail Wright contacted Louise and asked where it said that dispersed vehicle camping was a Government policy, and FWDV provided her with a report outlining that it was. FWDV board has been supplied with this report. Dispersed vehicle camping will be discussed at the 4WD advisory committee meeting. FWDV had received a reply to our letter and this has been made available on the FWDV forum.

Fire Preparedness Work. FWDV has been given the opportunity to provide ideas and comments re fire preparedness works. This letter was forwarded to affiliated members with the appropriate expertise in this field. FWDV based their response on comments made by the club members that responded to this letter and made general comments re fire education and fuel reduction burn strips. The Draft Fire Operations Plan will be on display during August 2010.

4WD Works Program. On Wednesday 5 May, FWDV received an email from Gail Wright with the Parks Victoria draft Works Program for the 2010/2011 financial year. The Works Program was made available to club members on the forum on 5 May, and was further distributed to club presidents, secretaries and delegates on Thursday 6 May by Suzie Christan. FWDV received some comments and through consultation with Parks Victoria the PV Works Program has been completed. See the forum for further information. The DSE Works program was received on 1 June and members have been given time to comment on this by 29 June COB. This information has also been made available to members on the forum.

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### **Recover Me Please**

As was announced last month, a joint partnership commenced between Victoria Police and FWDV to free up police resources. This partnership is a service to recover stranded or bogged four-wheel drive vehicles from four-wheel drive tracks where the Police and normal accident towing services are unable to assist. This new initiative is called "Recover Me Please" and is available day and night via a phone call to 000 which would then be redirected to a FWDV coordinator. Initially it will operate in the Wombat Park and Lerderderg State Forests in central Victoria.

No sooner was it announced when the first request came in! Following the initial call to Police it went through the system which eventually found several members of the CityWest 4X4 Club called out to recover a guy who had gone four-wheel driving by himself in the Wombat Forest. *(Full details are in the June issue of FWDV's June Trackwatch magazine).* The stranded motorist was very grateful for being retrieved from the depths of a lonely dark forest after a 15km walk into Blackwood to seek assistance.

This new initiative frees up Police from this time consuming task and provide information to the assisted persons about driver training and further education. About twenty calls annually are received by Police in the Moorabool Police District alone to recover members of the public, who are stranded in their four-wheel drive vehicles in the local parks and forests. FWDV can now draw on the resources and skills of trained and competent four-wheel drive club members who will recover the stranded vehicle for a set fee. The volunteers who are trained in vehicle recovery and First Aid are a welcome support in this area. The CityWest 4X4 Club is to be congratulated on their prompt response to this call, which was also much appreciated by the Trentham Police.

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### ***Four Wheel Drive Advisory Committee***

The 4WD advisory committee met on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May and the outcome was significant in a number of ways. Most importantly was the discussion about Tracks and when is a track not a track. DSE have the responsibility of maintaining roads under the road management act and consequently they have had to be managed in accordance with the provisions of the legislation. So one would not be surprised to understand that a track is not a road. The issue for our members is that state forests have thousands of non-roads so even though they exist on the ground they are only for operational purposes.

This issue has been a thorn in the side for our members for sometime. Management reports from local DSE offices say we are closing this non-road as it is not required for management purposes. The 4WD advisory committee has adopted a policy that deals with non-road closure however regional management have consistently disregarded the policy and have forgotten that these non-roads have other recreational purposes.

At this meeting, it was resolved that we would work towards a policy for DSE to define what is technically called "unmaintained roads". This will enable these roads to be defined and a set of protocols can be set around them so all recreational activities will be able to have access to these tracks and we will be able to manage the process in a way that recognises recreational use.

The meeting also resolved to implement a design guideline within DSE for dispersed vehicle based camp sites to enable management to recognise the need for differing classes of recreational camp use. A policy has already been worked with Parks Victoria and we look forward to a new set of guidelines inside of DSE.

Management Vehicle Only (MVO) track access is not a matter for State Forests under DSE management and the committee resolved to draft an agreement between FWDV and DSE to deal with tracks allocated for four wheel drive access only. Called the track access agreement this draft agreement is designed to deal with area's that create public risk but can be dealt with in a structured way, as we do with the MVO track access agreement with Parks Victoria. There are many unmaintained roads inside the DSE Forests that have been left from disused logging activities. The rehabilitation of these areas is something that we all support conditionally upon the need to maintain the recreational experience. To this end, the track closure policy will have, it is hoped, a capacity for tracks to be closed save for access to four-wheel drive clubs affiliated with the Association. The outcome will be preserving the environment, managing the risk and maintaining the experience.

Other issues of note is the launch of the Icon drives program, which should be in July this year, when Minister Jennings will launch the promotion of four-wheel driving across the state. This program, to be run in media and promoted with Tourism Victoria, will promote these Iconic drives in Victoria across Australia. Victoria is the place to be as our number plates state and support for our recreation at a statewide level is a terrific delivery of a policy promise from the last State election.

Finally the Track Classification program is nearing completion of stage one. It is expected that the completed project, which covers a number of Parks and Forests, will be live later in July of this year. The most exciting development of the program has been the overlay that will be available online with DSE's Forest Explorer program. This allows members of the public to have access to track information live online and select the track classification overlay. It is hoped that we will be able to demonstrate this at the upcoming AGM this year.

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### ***National Council Report***

Russell Sturzaker (CEO) attended the National Council meeting on behalf of the Association in April together with Graeme Walsh (Vice President) as a result of which Russell reported that great steps were being taken to reinvigorate the National Council and deal with Victoria's issues. A new planning committee was established and is developing new guidelines for the future. It is proposed that Council will employ a National Manager who will be resident in Canberra to deal with National issues. This is a terrific development and will enable work to be done all year rather than just at bi annual meetings.

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### ***Grants***

A number of clubs have been assisted recently with a new grants program. FWDV has undertaken steps to apply for a variety of monetary Grants available to organisations to assist them in their continuing operation. FWDV also applied for and obtained Grants for various Clubs. More information is available from Board Member Hari Maragos through FWDV's Office.

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### **Board and Staff Changes**

Following last month's mention about changes to FWDV's Board and Staff, John Turbill has been appointed as President, with Graeme Walsh as Vice President. This leaves two vacancies on the Board which we require to be filled. Nomination is sought from Clubs to fill these interim gaps on the Board up to the AGM. The Board is now involved in strategic policy making for the benefit of its members and some great new programs are being developed with Parks Victoria and DSE that will have far reaching consequences for our recreation. The Office also now has several club members who volunteer to work there one day a week, which is great to see, and helps ease the workload of the regular Staff.

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### **Affiliation Fees**

By now all clubs will have received their Annual Affiliation Renewal Invoice. Clubs are reminded that these fees are due and payable by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010. Please Note: Insurance for the current year (2009/2010) ceases at 4.00pm on the 30<sup>th</sup> June, so it is vital that your Affiliation Renewal is received by the FWDV Office prior to this time. *(If not paid by that date your club will not be a FWDV affiliated member, and more importantly your club and its activities will NOT be covered by any Public Liability insurance!)* **FWDV is unable to give any extensions on this date.** To ensure your club has received this paperwork please check with your club's Secretary that FWDV has the latest up-to-date address and contact details of the key people in your club, and also check that your club has paid the Fees and Insurance by the deadline.

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### **Visits to Clubs**

Over recent months FWDV's Russell Sturzaker (CEO), Wayne Hevey (Events & Projects Manager), and John Turbill (President) have visited several groups of affiliated clubs in country Victoria, in addition to several metropolitan based clubs. During these visits they have met and mingled with members of those clubs, given power-point presentations, and spoken about what FWDV is currently doing. These visits and presentations are being very well received and more are planned in coming months to other areas. If you would like a visit and presentation to your club why not organise this with a group of clubs in your general area, and then contact FWDV's Office to discuss further. This offer also applies to metropolitan based clubs.

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### **Closed Road Permits**

Mansfield Shire Council has given approval again to ONLY members of FWDV affiliated clubs and associate members to use the Jamieson to Licola Road during the June 15<sup>th</sup> - October 28<sup>th</sup> official closure this winter. You MUST have a Permit to travel this road when it is officially closed. Permits are ONLY available from FWDV website (and not the Shire Council or Police). Full details on how to obtain a Permit at no cost is available on the FWDV website under 'downloads'. Once issued the Permit must be carried in the vehicle at all times when using that road. The Police and Shire Council will be checking users for valid Permits. Of special interest to interstate clubs affiliated with their state associations is that we have now expanded the access permit process to those interstate clubs that wish to take advantage of this privilege. Any Interstate Clubs wishing to avail themselves of this permit system should contact the FWDV Office on (03) 9857 5209.

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### **Club Sites at Four-Wheel Drive Shows**

The National 4X4 Show at the Showground's (3rd to 5th September) has offered four-wheel drive clubs a chance to occupy one of 10 sites at a bargain price of \$660 including GST per site. Here is a chance for Clubs to promote themselves. The Melbourne Leisurfest at Sandown Racecourse (30<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October) has rearranged the layouts of its sites, and Four-wheel drive clubs who plan to have a display site will be better accommodated and will be adjacent to FWDV's own site. These will be located along one of the main passing pedestrian traffic areas. FWDV's Wayne Hevey is now part of Leisurfest's organising committee, enabling us to have more input. More details from the Events & Projects Manager Wayne Hevey at FWDV Office. It will be first-in-best-dressed for both events!

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### **Camp Host Weekends**

Camp Host sites were conducted by six different clubs over the Queen's Birthday Weekend. The campsites being occupied stretched from the east across to the west of the State, with the Wonnangatta, Talbotville, Licola and Kelly's Lane areas being manned in the East and Chinaman's Camp, and the Grampian's in the West.

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### **Black Tie Dinner at Craig's Hut - December 4<sup>th</sup> 2010**

We are presently working on the feasibility and costs of holding a Black Tie Dinner at Craig's Hut to celebrate FWDV's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. There are a number of people working on the feasibility concerning the remote location and all things associated with running such an event at the highest standard possible. We are endeavoring to have

a proposal to present at the next Board Meeting on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June, this event will not proceed if we cannot show a realistic ticket pricing along with a better than break even result.

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### **"Coxy's Big Break – 7 Network"**

As a result of our relationship and membership of the Caravan Industry Association and Parks Victoria an opportunity arose to promote the Association training operations. Recently FWDV's Michael Coldham took part in a segment filmed for "Coxy's Big Break" regarding Driver Training and Towing. From reports the filming was a great success. This episode of the show will go to air on the 7 Network on Saturday 14 August, subject to change. FWDV's involvement was very much appreciated by Caravan Industry Australia,

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### **Beyond Hotham 2010**

The 2010 Beyond Hotham 4WD experience program was a terrific success with 10 days of four-wheel driving and activities. The Mt Hotham RMB and in particular Annie Duplex are to be congratulated for their hard work and for delivering a terrific experience. Next years event to be held from 7<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2011, promises to be even better as the word spreads about the fantastic opportunities for touring and learning about all things 4 x 4.

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### **Correct Club Details?**

FWDV's Office still experiences difficulties with quite a few clubs when trying to contact the current club contacts. Does your Club have the correct details of your CURRENT President, Secretary, Delegate and Editor registered with FWDV? Some clubs do not, which makes it hard to provide the latest information to all Clubs. Please ask your Secretary if they have supplied the latest details to FWDV (Note: FWDV Club Committee Listing 2010-11 is available on the FWDV Website in the Downloads Section).

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**FWDV Calendar for 2010** - Is available on the website at [www.fwdvictoria.org.au](http://www.fwdvictoria.org.au)

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We hope you have enjoyed this edition of *eNews*.

So much is happening at FWDV's Office that it is sometimes hard to keep up.

More importantly, if your Club Delegate is not giving you the latest news each month then you should ask WHY?

Happy Four Wheel Driving from the *eNews* team!