

# Four Wheel Drive Victoria Rural Response Group

Newsletter No 4 - 3rd April 2009



## A brief update on FWDV Rural Response to the bushfires

### *Overview of Activities*

Of the 75 Clubs in Four Wheel Drive Victoria, 56 of them have registered interest in providing assistance to the bushfire survivors. To my knowledge, approximately 46 of these Clubs have already provided services. Later in this Newsletter are some Club reports describing the services they have rendered so far

During Easter and Anzac Day weekend, members of some NSW and ACT Clubs will be join Clubs operating in the Beechworth fire area. Their services are being co-ordinated by David Blore from the Wangaratta 4WD Club. The NSW-ACT Four Wheel Drive Association Vice President Roger Sheath will be accompanying the NSW members.

We are receiving many requests for assistance as listed below.

#### **1. Request for assistance from Wellington Shire's Recovery Centre**

Recovery Officer Raquel Harris is asking for FWDV assistance for properties in the Yarram, Devon North and Callignee areas. If your Club can offer any assistance, please contact her. A number of Clubs assisted that Emergency Centre in 2007. Raquel commented that FWDV's assistance in the past was much appreciated by both affected residents and Council, and she hopes to work with us again to help those in need after this latest emergency event.

Raquel Harris - phone: (03) 5142 3383 - Mobile 0429 172 889 - [Raquel.Harris@wellington.vic.gov.au](mailto:Raquel.Harris@wellington.vic.gov.au)

#### **2. Request for fencing assistance Shires of Yarra Ranges, Nillumbik, and Whittlesea**

Recently we have received calls for assistance from the Victorian Farmers Federation's fencing coordinators in for the Shires of Yarra Ranges, Nillumbik, and Whittlesea. I am aware that a number of Clubs are already providing services to farms via VFF Co-ordinators in the Shires of Murrindindi, Mitchell, and Latrobe. If your Club is able to assist the VFF, let me know.

#### **3. Request for assistance from the Gippsland 4WD Club**

The Gippsland 4WD Club invites other Clubs to join them in a combined Club weekend in the Labertouche fire area on 2nd-3rd May. For further details, refer to their Club report later in this Newsletter.

#### **4. Request for assistance from Toyota Landcruiser Club**

TLCC would like assistance after Easter with properties in Yarra Ranges Shire. Refer to the their Club report later in this Newsletter.

#### **5. The Salvos need help – Goods Sorting at their Warehouses**

The Salvos have been inundated with goods from the public and private sector over the last month and a half, which is currently warehoused at facilities in Noble Park and Clayton. The goods need sorting into various categories for distribution to the various relief centres around Victoria and time is running out for them to get everything done. Whilst numerous volunteers have already supplied many man-hours of time, they urgently need additional assistance. If your Club has any members who can spare as little as a half day to help the Salvos, please e-mail Norma Norris at [normal@netlink.com.au](mailto:normal@netlink.com.au) for further details.

## **6. Request for help moving furniture to fire victims**

The objective is to match people with trailers or tray utes with those who have furniture available to give to fire victims. The deliveries will be directly to the households and not to a storage facility.

I thought that the following might work -

Dale Wickberg, a Nissan 4WD Club member is requesting offers of assistance from anyone with a trailer or tray ute to assist in moving household goods from metropolitan area homes to fire victims. If you can assist, contact Dale Wickberg on 0409 669 889 - [wickberg@cleverdirections.com.au](mailto:wickberg@cleverdirections.com.au)

## **6. Global Care's request for assistance**

A group named Global Care has asked for assistance in the Kinglake area with fencing and chainsaw work. If any Club is interested in helping them please contact Eric Abolins on 0412 312 217.

If your Club is still wanting to get involved, and has not been able to do so, or is uncertain of its role, please contact me at [dhammerton@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dhammerton@optusnet.com.au) or phone 0409 381 699

## **Victorian Farmers Federation**

The Victorian Farmers Federation has established coordinators responsible for fencing recovery in most of the fire areas. The various co-ordinators have been hearing about our activities and phoning in requesting help. VFF are assisting with fencing on any property irrespective of VFF membership. Their state co-ordinator contacted me and supplied a list of contact details for all their co-ordinators. I will attach a copy of that list to my email issuing of this Newsletter. A significant number of Clubs are now in contact with the VFF co-ordinators responsible for fire areas in Shires of Mitchell, Murrindindi, Yarra Ranges, Alpine, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and City of Latrobe. As the co-ordinators are dealing with all types of properties, including lifestyle type retreats etc, it is advisable to discuss the what type of property you want to work on if your Club has a preference

On 30th March I emailed all Clubs asking for assistance for VFF co-ordinators at Yarra Ranges, Nillumbik and Whittlesea. The following Clubs offered assistance: Wanderin, Werribee, Hilux, Goulburn Valley, and Geelong.

In a recent email, Matt Ellis, Murrindindi VFF coordinator said *"This is brilliant. The help that you guys are providing at the moment is being very well received and is servicing a large part of Murrindindi's need. I expect the need to increase over the next couple of months. Again, the efforts of the 4WD Clubs have been fantastic"*.

A number of Clubs are operating in that Shire under his direction.

When working at a property under the direction of a VFF co-ordinator or a Shire's Emergency Centre, it is FWDV's preferred position that all members and guests complete one of their volunteer forms

## **FWDV Caravan deliveries to homeless bushfire families**

FWDV has received a letter of thanks and appreciation from the Department of Human Services for assisting them with the Caravan Delivery project. A copy of the DHS letter was emailed to all Club's rural response contact with this Newsletter.

The Caravan Delivery project has now advanced from towing vans to the staging areas to delivery of the caravans to recipients from the staging areas. Club-members from six different Clubs have moved 14 vans in the last fortnight. This number is lower than expected due to lower demand for the vans, but has been all that was requested by the DHS. Some of these deliveries have been 'rush' jobs. Ron Reed who is managing the project is happy to report that FWDV members have risen to the challenge when necessary and delivered in a few short hours. In general, he is trying to streamline the process and get the job done without some of the panic and that was evident in the first couple of weeks.

## **FWDV Hi-Vis vests and car door magnets**

Brett Dashwood, President of the Melbourne Jeep Owners Club was able to arrange for the donation of the printing and creation of sets of car door magnets and hi-vis vests for RRG identification. The backs of the vests read *"Four Wheel Drive Victoria RRG Rural Response Group"*. The door magnets have similar wording. Both vests and magnets look great, especially with the FWDV logo on the door magnets in color! Complete Print Solutions ([www.completeps.com.au](http://www.completeps.com.au)) made the donation of the car door magnets. The vests were donated through Promocorp Australia ([www.promocorp.com.au](http://www.promocorp.com.au)). I have distributed vests and magnets to a number of Clubs, and any Club wanting some should contact [dhammerton@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dhammerton@optusnet.com.au) and arrange collection.

## **CLUB REPORTS**

### **Adventurers 4X4 and Central Highlands 4X4 Club**

The Adventurers 4x4 Club in conjunction with the Central Highlands 4x4 Club have combined efforts within the Mitchell region. We joined Kevin Butler's VFF group under the 'Mitchell Blaze Aid' banner. Our Clubs have been assigned a property just outside of Wandong, which bore the full fury of the devastating fires on 'Black Saturday'. The property was located on the ridgeline and the fire swept through with such ferocity that everything in its path was destroyed. Unfortunately, the family who lived there tragically lost their Father/Husband to the fire.

The house was burnt to the ground. Our job was to try and rebuild the physical assets lost, like fencing and sheds. We have also embarked on a project to finish the horse/pony shelters that the owner intended to build for his wife and seven-year-old son. We have met on every weekend for the past weeks and have started the task of helping out. There is still plenty more to do though.

The owner has moved back some of her ponies to the property and is already utilising the first built shelter frame to hold the feeder bucket. The owner has indicated that she wishes to move into one of the main sheds soon and is trying to organise an area within the shed to place furniture.

Electrical power has now been restored to the shed. Therefore, with a bit of cleaning up to be done we can help set them up for the winter months, which are fast approaching. The owner has opened up to us with her story, which is part of the healing process and she has a very positive attitude towards her situation. She has expressed her appreciation in what has been achieved for her and her son so far. Her comments are that, *'she is amazed what complete strangers, like Four Wheel Drive Clubs are doing to help'*.

We have met all sorts of people back at the Kevin's wool-shed for the end of day BBQ and refreshments. We have met locals, farmers, farmers from the Wimmera region, Freemasons, members of MJOC and even a couple from Perth WA who drove all the way over to help. They have all donated their time and effort like true Australian spirited people. (*Lance Griggs*)

### **Kyneton 4X4 Club**

The Club has started to do some fire fencing work on a property at Barfold during the week as most of our members are retired and a couple of us do shift work. We are helping clear old burnt fences on one property this Friday and have another lined up. At this stage most of the work has been obtained by word of mouth. (*Anthony Davis*)

### **Wesley 4WD Club**

- Conducted a bushfire relief working bee at Labertouche on 21st-22nd March, arranged through Labertouche Relief Co-ordinator
- Rebuilt sections and repaired sections of approx 2km of boundary and internal fencing for a local beef farmer
- Planning further fencing working bees in future weeks
- Club is experienced in fence building following Licola fires in 2006, and can work unsupervised which suits some landowners
- We would be happy to have other small Clubs join our fencing working bees and we could provide the lead. However we are not able to lead large working bees due to shortage of leaders experienced in rural relief work.
- The Club is heading back to Labertouche this weekend to continue work with our new farming friends.

(*Nick Wirubov*)

### **Range Rover Club**

Since the last Newsletter, the Range Rover Club assisted by the Melton & District 4WD club has completed two more weekends on four properties in the Narbethong area and a property in Toolangi. We have six other properties to attend to in the coming weeks. We are currently compiling a schedule for the next three months where we allocate every second weekend as a clean up trip. At the same time our members have moved around a dozen caravans in the area. (*Tim Trainor*)

### **Toyota Hilux Club**

The Club plans to go up to St Andrews on 18th-19th April. We have two properties lined up to do general clean up and crosscut of fallen trees. While up there, we will conduct a reccy, to see if we can help out others in the future. We would also like to be included in assisting the VFF. (*Troy Garner*)

### **Wangaratta 4WD Club**

The Club had a successful weekend in partnership with Swan Hill 4WD Club a month ago when we removed around 6km of fire-damaged fencing on three properties in the Mudgegonga area. We are gearing up for Easter with our NSW-ACT 4WD Association colleagues. We expect up to 25 vehicles arriving which will enable us to make a significant impact on the task, and a visit by the Land Rover Club of the ACT in April. (*David Blore*)

### **City West**

The Club is currently planning on continuing to work with Gippsland 4WD Club however we expect to be in a position to assist with some of the new VFF jobs. We would be particularly interested in assisting Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Mitchell Shires as they are in close proximity to most of our members and areas that we are familiar with.  
(Mark Andrews)

### **Gippsland 4WD Club**

The Club invites other Clubs to join them in a combined Club weekend on the 2nd-3rd May. I have received feedback from the Baw Baw Shire and VFF regarding our last weekend in Labertouche fire area, and a clearer picture is emerging regarding jobs still to be done. I will be attending meetings with the VFF in the next seven days to put the May weekend together. Fencing will still be a major part, so I will be looking for experienced fencers from Clubs. I am hoping Clubs can supply chippies to work on jobs on a fire affected caravan park where we will be staying. I am trying to vary the work a bit, and will hope to have a scope of works by mid April. Well done to all Clubs that have taken part in Rural Response work so far and I look forward to working with you on another weekend. Members have been working with Wildlife Rescue and Protection (W.R.A.P), and moving donated goods to locations in the fire affected areas around Churchill. (Dave Mapleson)  
(Regarding the combined Club weekend, contact Dave on 0400 562 817 - [davem@dcsi.net.au](mailto:davem@dcsi.net.au))

### **Toyota Landcruiser Club**

TLCC is still actively involved in fence-line clearing and re-fencing the Diego property at Flowerdale, together with two properties along Break O'Day Road, Glenburn. The terrain has proven to be very taxing on members. We have worked on the property for three weekends. Due to the owner's health situation, we stood down last weekend and to give our crew a weekend off and will recommence again this coming weekend 4th-5th April. There are 37 TLCC volunteers plus several member from Pajero and City West Clubs, and farmers from the Mitta Mitta area also offering assistance. I have also had a meeting with Lyn Mullens, the VFF co-ordinator for the Shire of Yarra Ranges and have advised her that we are prepared to assist in that Shire sometime after Easter. She provided me with a list of six properties needing assistance. Given the number of properties, there may be a need to seek assistance from other clubs. (Bruce Fullard) (Contact Bruce on 0418 316 504 if your club can assist after Easter)

### **An earlier report from Toyota Landcruiser Club**

Another great weekend where we had approximately 17 members and five visitors participate, with one tag-along from another Club. Some of the visitors were farmers who had come down from the Mitta Mitta area, who wanted to show their appreciation for the work done by TLCC and others during the 2003 fires and give something back to the farming communities who are now in need. This is a great gesture and all credit to the members from the 4WD Clubs for the friendships that are built during these working bees. The wet weather curtailed some of the fencing in the steeper and more difficult areas, however there was plenty of other work that kept the group busy. The areas along the main road and one of the creeks have been almost completed but further work is required on the other creek and the neighbor's boundary fences. The steep terrain will slow the progress as there is clearing still required before any fencing can proceed. The group will be back next weekend and are looking forward to it. (Tony Bryant)

### **Land Rover Owners Club**

The LROCV team has been out and put in a lot of hours in a number of locations over the month of March. We had a team up at the Mitchell Blaze Aid area (Sunday Creek, Kilmore East) on 14th March. This effort was being co-ordinated on behalf of the Victorian Farmers Federation and they had volunteers from a number of other Clubs and Organisations. We worked with the Melbourne Jeep Owners Club doing some fence work. Others at that location were from the Freemasons, the Toyota Hilux 4WD Club, and the Adventurers 4WD Club. We have also provided many work parties into the Strathewen and Glenburn areas. Strathewen was hit pretty hard and we have had people out most all weekends from 14th March onwards, and on one occasion we had people out both Saturday and Sunday which resulted in some requiring a sicky on Monday. After that occurrence we have been a little more conservative and have only had people working at one location and one day per weekend.

Bob O'Brien has been working the Strathewen area and is doing a sterling job getting the volunteers efforts where it is truly required. We have been lucky to have the services of a Bobcat and Club-member operator Peter Rodger and more recently a donated hire of a Dingo from Diamond Valley Hire Service. Nigel Gamblin has worked the Glenburn area and the volunteers there have had to grow a longer leg to cope with the slopes in the area. It appears that all the volunteers, not just LROCV, are now gaining a reputation with the numbers of calls increasing. We have had calls for assistance from the Landcare Group at Murrundindi for assistance with fencing and both the Mitchell Blaze Aid area, and Gippsland also looking for volunteers to help out. (Gabriel Orzeszko)

**Pajero 4WD Club**

The Pajero Club has already held four working bees - three at Callignee and one at Taggerty. On the weekend of 4th-5th April, the Club will have over 40 members working on farms at Callignee and in the Kinglake area. Another is planned for 18th-19th April. The VFF co-ordinators for those areas are giving us the properties. In addition, some members have been assisting the Salvos at the Clayton warehouse while others have been towing caravans.

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**Doug Hammerton** (*Pajero 4WD Club of Vic*)  
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*Feel free to forward this Newsletter to your Clubmembers and other interested people*