

Peter and Jean purchased their 1992 diesel Troopie 2-3 years ago with the intention of getting into the 4WD scene and more particularly to go fishing in those out of the way places. I first met them after the purchase, when they concluded that to realise their dream they needed to know how to drive it properly and how to look after their new expensive get-a-way machine.

After a couple of basic training days learning the ropes we enjoyed a few adventure training weekends and they soon recognised they had to prepare the vehicle a lot more than they thought before they purchased it.



Mt Pyrenees north of Ararat Vic

Even though the Troopie had relatively low km on the clock it still needed a good catch up service. A couple of wheel bearings and shocks needed replacing but otherwise it was in OK shape. We fitted long travel gas shocks to suit long travel springs in case they went that way in the future. It always pays to match shock valving with spring rates. The air filter was replaced with the reusable Unifilter type for better economy and lower future service costs. The fuel filter was changed to the CAV adaptor with the glass bowl for easier detection of contaminants.

Another vehicle had a problem on one of the training days so why not learn from someone else's problem? Training days are great for learning how to handle the vehicles in all sorts of situations, mixing with other owners to see how they are setting up their vehicles and learning how to use the appropriate recovery equipment safely.

As all experienced 4WD drivers know, tyre pressure is critical so a decent under bonnet compressor and long hose was next on the shopping list along with the mandatory recovery gear including snatch strap, rated shackles, tree protector, winch extension strap, snatch block and hand winch.

Carvings in WA.



One of the many Canning Stock Route Wells

Peter intended to travel with no companion vehicles so he was setting up to be self sufficient, hence the hand winch and accessories (and twin automatic lockers later). Recovery hooks were fitted front and rear. Extended diff breathers were also fitted to front and rear differentials.

Between the two of them they designed and built a storage system that entailed a false floor with underlying plastic tubs for food, parts and equipment.

On top sat the esky (later replaced by a 12volt fridge) clothes and bedding. A CB radio was considered the minimum requirement for safe travelling and hire a Flying Doctor radio on the bigger trips.

An overhead console was fitted to handle the radio and a variety of other items like sun glasses, wallet, maps, pens etc. There's not much useful storage in most 4WD's these days. With the fridge came the dual battery system which also provided power for lighting at night. That meant gas wasn't required at all.

On each of the trips Peter and Jean went on they couldn't help but notice the significantly greater ability of our vehicle compared to theirs and others. The secret was soon out, two 4WD Systems automatic diff lockers result in a vehicle that never spins a wheel, climbs up and over virtually any obstacle put in front of it, at very low speed and without any visible effort. Into the troopie they went!

As experience grew so did their appetite for adventure. Last year they participated in a 4 week trip across the centre including the Gun Barrel Highway. Another shorter trip was through the little known Strzelecki Desert area west of Innaminka. Both these trips required a greater fuel capacity than offered in the standard vehicle so a 150Li auxiliary tank was fitted under the rear. Who wants to drive from one fuel station to another anyway? The idea is to have that freedom to take a few detours as they present themselves and check a few things out. The extra fuel really took the pressure off. The larger fuel capacity and extra load necessary for the longer outback trips made a suspension upgrade unavoidable. The reliability of these components is extremely important.

Replacement springs with polyurethane bushes and greasable shackle kits were the order of the day. We selected heavy duty rear springs and medium duty fronts. This was a good set up as the ride comfort

improved and the rear load capacity substantially increased using Systems Suspension Components. The springs matched the shockers previously fitted. A turbo has been considered but as they are not towing they find the diesel power just adequate. It would make travelling easier but with appropriate tyre pressure and twin diff lockers it's OK. I think a replacement rear bar will come as the rear step bumper is looking a little tatty.

This year Peter and Jean have enjoyed a 7 week trip up the Canning Stock Route, with a diversion into the Rudall River National Park, the Kimberly region including Mitchell Falls and Kalumbaru.

All they needed to do before the trip was a good service and pre trip inspection. The vehicle was set up over the previous 2 - 3 years of smaller excursions. This was the adventure trip of a lifetime for both of them. It was great, it was fantastic, you should have seen this, you should have seen that, it's all I heard for weeks. Cape Yorke next.



The Bomb Roads Central Australia NT

They're in their 40's. I wonder what they've been doing all their lives. They obviously had no idea what the rest of the real Australia was like. Hmmm PS: He's only been fishing twice since he got the 4WD. Waste of time buying it really!



Peaceful bush camp QLD

