



Newsletter No. 46 January 2018

G'Day, Outback Vic

here. I know, I know, I only issued a Newsletter last month, and these are supposed to be irregular and not often. Well, it is certainly irregular for me to send out two newsletters just one month apart, and to be honest I'm not sure if I'll get another one out before my usual Christmas Newsletter at the end of 2018. So you will just have to be grateful for two in two months. The reality if there has been a lot going on here in the GDT (Great Divide Tours) camp over the past month and most of it affects you, so I thought I should at least keep you on top of what's going on.



Apologies

When it comes to technology and computers and email and that kind of stuff I'm the first to admit I am way out of my depth and last Newsletter proved just how deep I was in it. You see, when I send out these emails (there are over 3000 people on my "Willing to receive my newsletters as long as they are not too frequent (whoops)" list. I always just do a bulk email to you all. Well of course with that number of emails going out it crashes the system. So I have to break the bulk number down to around 30 at a time, do the maths and you can see that it is usually a long night when I issue these, just like this one is right now.

So last month I decided to get smart or is that tech savvy? Anyway, whatever it is

called it didn't work. You see I paid for a subscription to a mail out service (via Outlook I might add) it all seemed to work ok initially, but it was a tad slow. So slow in fact that after 3 days of sending the newsletter email I discovered it had really got it wrong. After 3 x 24 hour days of slowly whirring away sending my fantastic (self praise is fantastic too) newsletter I discovered that only about 50% had been sent but more scary most of you had received multiple copies, I think one person actually received it 6 times! So my sincere apologies if you were one of these unlucky people. I stopped the automated mail out and with the help of Jenny in the office sent the rest by our old a "few at a time" system. Slow, but at least it works without upsetting anyone.

I looked at mail chimp, but it wanted me to pay \$50 a month and that just doesn't add up when I'm lucky to send 3-4 of these newsletters in a 12 month period. Happy to receive any suggestions that you, far more tech savvy people may have to address my email problem.

You might miss out

Apart from apologising for harassing you several times last month the other major reason for this Newsletter was to let you know that our bookings have gone ballistic over the Christmas period. Now I'm not complaining about this, in fact it too is fantastic! But! It means a lot of my great customers are missing out on trips they wanted to do with us this year. I am endeavouring to put on extra trips but eventually my pool of reliable tour leaders will run dry.

So here is the state of the nation in respect of our longer trips for 2018. I have listed each one here along with the vacancies or the status of a second trip where that trip is already full. If you are keen to join us on any of these trips, please let me know asap. The reality is, a lot of our new bookings are coming from simple word of mouth and internet research and these are always new customers outside of my core group who enjoy receiving my newsletters and getting aboard our trips.

What does this mean? It means there will be a few people who miss out on doing their trip of a lifetime if they leave it much longer to book.

I've listed each of our longer trips for the this year so you can see few vacancies remain. We limit all trips to 8 vehicles.

3-10 February Victorian High Country Accommodated tour - I have 3 spots remaining.



11-17 February Victorian High Country Camper Trailer tour - This trip was fully booked but sadly one client has had to delay his trip until next year so the good news is I have one spot available.

17-24 March Victorian High Country Accommodated tour - I have just one spot remaining, this trip too was fully booked

until recently when a customer had to transfer to the December 2018 trip.

30 March - 2 April Easter weekend The Man From Snowy River tour - this one is going against the trend and has 7 spots currently available, we just lead two trips into the Snowy over New Year and they were well received . In fact I received this email from one of our clients

Hi Vic we are Karen and Wes and we'd just like to thank you for our wonderful trip to the Snowy. We were so lucky to have Neil and Gail as our guides and I can't thank them enough for the four days we had with them, and the wonderful group of people we meet. We took our two kids 10 and 5 and they cried all the way home missing their new friend especially Neil. My son has a new hero.

Vic it was a fantastic trip and Neil was amazing, we felt safe and challenged at the same time. My husband was busting for this trip to put our Challenger through its paces and he hasn't stopped smiling.

Neil and Gail are fantastic guides and their knowledge is remarkable.

They made our kids feel like part of the crew and our whole group got on really well. So again thank you.

Neil and Gail you are just the loveliest people and what gets us excited about taking our kids off the beaten track.

AGAIN THANK YOU Karen and Wes

Well, if that doesn't make you want to join Neill again on the Easter Man From Snowy River trip I don't know what will.

Hopefully you weren't thinking of joining me on my amazing New Zealand tour in April, it has been booked out for several months now, and we can only run one of these each year, next trip will be in late March 2019.

15-21 April Victorian High Country camping trip - sorry folks but you missed this one too, it is fully booked.

6-26 May Vic's Simpson Desert Circumnavigation trip - yep! Its fully booked, you missed it, we may do this one again in 2019.



8-26 May - Maralinga and Beyond - Well this just goes to prove that I can't get too excited about all my trips being booked out, because this incredible trip hasn't received any bookings as yet. Come on you guys and girls, I did this trip in 2016 and I rated it as one of the best 4wd journeys I have ever undertaken. We not only see where the British tested their atomic bombs (it's ok it is safe to visit now) but the trip also includes the beautiful Gawler Ranges, Lake Gairdner, Googs Track, the amazing beaches around Ceduna and Fowlers Bay, and then a trip down the famous Anne Beadell Hwy and a visit to the seldom seen Surveyor Generals Corner before concluding at Uluru for a sunset viewing of the Rock.

19-26 May Victorian High Country Accommodated tour - I have 5 spots remaining

21 May - 3 June The Simpson Desert Safari - well before I went away for a short holiday with the family last week this tour had plenty of vacancies, but when I walked back into the office today, Jenny

tells me there is just one spot remaining! Like I said, you need to hurry and book your trip of a lifetime or you will miss out.

2-16 June - Botswana - we have two trips going to Botswana this year and we have one spot remaining between the two trips, it's not too late to get on board, but it soon it will be.

7 June - 2 July The Canning Stock Route - the longest and most remote 4wd track in the world has 5 spots available, note the same trip in July is fully booked.

6-17 July The Big Red Bash - finally an outback trip with vacancies, we have 4 spots remaining, with John Farnham the lead artist I might even break out the swag and join this trip.



9-22 July The second of our Simpson Desert Safari trips, well our trip in May might be all but full but we have 5 spots remaining on this school holiday trip to the largest parallel sand dune desert in the world.

6-31 July Kimberley Explorer - was fully booked but last week we had a customer transfer to our second Kimberley trip, so we now have one spot available.

9 July - 3 August Canning Stock Route - fully booked.

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26 July - 20 August The Kimberley Explorer tour - our second trip for 2018 and it has only 2 spots available.

26 July - 13 August Cape York - is fully booked

16 August - 3 September our second Cape York trip is now also fully booked.

Note I am investigating offering a third Cape York trip in August so let me know if you wanted to do the Cape this year.

2-10 August Our Kimberley cruise is fully booked.

22-30 August Our 2nd Kimberley Cruise now has just one double room left.

8-27 August The amazing Arnhem Land trip is fully booked with two reserves.



1-20 September - we have now listed a 2nd Arnhem Land trip with Neill leading it.

31 August - 8 September we have our Accommodated Outback Icons trip taking place and have 5 spots on it at the moment

3-14 September Flinders Ranges Wildflower Spectacular - we've got 5 spots still on this incredible tour.

22-29 September The PCFA rally - not strictly a tagalong tour but run under the same format by me. This event is designed to raise money for Prostate Cancer Research, prostate cancer kills 9 men every day in Australia. So I am leading a fund raising rally out to Birdsville and back, you can participate in two ways, either join the rally with me or if you can't get the time off work, sponsor my entry in the rally, all money provided to me in this sponsorship will go directly to Cancer Research. See

www.charitycarevents.com.au or email me info@4wd.net.au

Our weekend trips over the next couple of months are also filling up with a few spots on our Barrington Tops tour on 3-4 March and a few on the Brindabella mountains tour on the same date 3-4 March.

And if you were thinking of attending our driver training course, well we are already booked out for January and February with just 3 spots left on the March driver training course on 10-11 March.

My Advanced 4wd course on 17-18 March has 3 spots left so get in quick if you wish to hone your off road skills.

So as you see, 2018 is going to be a big year for us here at GDT, but if you were thinking of joining us please contact me real soon, as we are receiving bookings every day and what few vacancies we currently have I expect will be snapped up.

Iceland 2019

In my last Newsletter I announced that we will be going to Iceland in 2019, well, that trip is now fully booked! I had a lot of inquiries in the first week following release of my last Newsletter and had to ask everyone to confirm with their deposits, 7 couples did and the trip is now full. If you are still thinking about joining Julie and I as we explore what is now being called the next "tourism hot spot", then drop me an email, I am looking at running a second trip commencing in July 2019.

A Super Blue Blood Moon 31 Jan 2018

Well, this might be the real purpose of this early Newsletter. You see in just 2 weeks time on 31 January 2018 we will experience an extremely rare event, in fact the next Super, Blue, Blood Moon is not expected for another 10 years, and I for one can't wait that long to see it. In fact the last such event was over 150 years ago in 1866!!



So, what is a Super Blue Blood Moon? Let me break it down for you. Super = On 31 January 2018 the moon will appear 7% larger and 16% brighter than usual due to its proximity to earth.

Blue Moon = I'm sure you may have heard the terminology once in a Blue Moon? Well a Blue Moon is the name given to the Moon that has two cycles of being full in the one month, this month we had a full moon on 2/1/18 and will again on 31/1/18.

The Blood Moon is far more rare, it occurs when there is a total lunar eclipse where the moon is completely blocked by the Earth from the Sun's rays. Although the Moon will be blocked for over an hour it isn't completely dark but rather glows red. This is set to occur at around 12.30 am actually on 1 February but as the full moon also occurs on 31 January we will take this as a very rare event. In fact to have all three amazing lunar occurrences to take place on the same night is truly rare. Scientists say the last similar occurrence was over 150 years ago but the next one is just a mere 10 years away. Sorry! I am not waiting that long to take a gander at this spectacular scene.

So what am I doing about it? Well whenever I'm down at my 4wd property at Braidwood I am simply blown away by the dark night skies filled with millions of stars, we never get to see the night sky like this in Sydney. So I'll be going down to my training centre to witness this event.

If you would like to join me I am throwing the doors of the training centre open from midday on 31 January through to midday on 1 February, you can camp on site, avail yourself of our showers toilets and even the kitchen to cook dinner and breakfast, and then step outside into our clear dark skies to witness an event that has not occurred since 1866. If you are into photography bring your tripod and we will show you how to capture it, if you have binoculars or even better a telescope bring it along, you won't be disappointed.

There is a small camping/entry fee of just \$40 per vehicle and of course you can bunk down in my bunk beds for just an extra \$20 per bed if camping after Moon gazing doesn't do it for you.

To be part of this incredible event in just two weeks time drop me an email today and book in at info@4wd.net.au

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A great cheap car for your daughter or son?

I mentioned in my last Newsletter that my daughter Emma was expecting her first child in May this year, she has owned a 3 door Rav 4 since 2003 but sadly it will be too small now for her growing family. So she has purchased a new 5 door Rav 4 just last week. As you can imagine the trade in on a 15 year old car was minimal, so she is trying to sell it privately. So here it is.



It has covered 156,000 absolutely faultless kilometres, it is automatic, has near new Cooper tyres on it of course, has been regularly serviced by Eddy and Chris at Artarmon Automotive (02 9439 2995 ring and ask them about it) and only a couple of months ago had a new battery fitted, it is registered until August 2018.

It has never been in an accident and the only issue is that the clear wax on the metallic maroon paint is peeling on the roof of the car. Short people can't see it! If you are looking for a really cheap car for your son or daughter to get to uni or as a run around town car coming from someone you know and trust (That is me in case you couldn't work that out) then give me a call. Similar models but with lots more kilometres on the clock are listed in car sales for between \$3,000 and \$5,000, so I am asking just \$3,500 for it. To be honest, if I needed another car this

would be it. But Julie says the five I have already is enough!



Give me a call on 02 99131395 if you are interested, I live on the northern beaches of Sydney if you wish to have a look at it.

Need a Plumber?

While I'm in the mood for plugging family members, my nephew Ty Widman has just started up his own plumbing business (some of you will have met Ty on our Stockton Beach trips where he helps lead these trips)

Stop Drip Plumbing is based in Sydney and will do any plumbing jobs or gas fitting jobs in the Sydney area. Ty has been in the plumbing game for over 10 years now but recently branched out on his own. I have used his services and of course he is fantastic. So if you've got a drip you can't stop, call Stop Drip Plumbing on 0403 847 378.

Australia Day controversy

Now that I have your attention, I'm not about to add to this subject matter but rather tell you that on the day after Australia Day on 27 January we have a day trip up to Cox's and Kowmung Rivers in the Blue Mtns. I've got 5 spots remaining on this trip so if you and the family would like to join us for a day in the bush to celebrate the freedom we have to explore our great country just hop on

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my website www.4wd.net.au and book in for this great day out. The cost is just \$220 per vehicle, and includes some easy 4wd terrain around Cox River and Jenolan Caves, then a visit to one of the best lookouts at Kanangra Walls, followed by some low range 4wd action across the Kowmung River and through the valley known as Dingo Dell. The trip commences at Lithgow and concludes near Little Hartley.



4WD Shows

Just so you know the importance for booking early on our upcoming outback trips, we are coming into the 4wd show season again have no less than 3 shows in February. On 3-4 Feb we will be at the Queanbeyan show grounds at the 4WD Spectacular, drop in and say hello if you are from Canberra or surrounds. Then from 8-11 February I will be manning my display at the Newcastle Caravan and Camping Show, it's always hot weather up there so please drop by to say hello. Then on 23-25 February I will be down at the Illawarra Caravan and Camping Show or Kemplar Grange. Sadly my usual host at this show, Richard Hettig will be missing in action as he recovers from some poor health. I wish Richard a full and speedy recovery, you may have met Richard, he is the Vic Widman look alike at many of our shows.



With all these shows taking place next month and so few spots remaining on our longer trips, it is no wonder I already have our 2019 trip dates on our website.

That's all for now, this was meant to be a short newsletter, don't forget if you would like to join me on the night of 31 January to witness the Super, Blue Blood Moon just drop me an email at info@4wd.net.au

Regards

Vic Widman



2018 is going to be a big year, if you are thinking of joining us on one of our trips, don't delay too long, you might miss out.