

# REVERSE RUBBER

In return for playing tour-guides to Antman, a bunch of Tassie four-wheelers cruised across Bass Strait for some hardcore action in the High Country

**F**or the last couple of years, Jane and I, along with some friends, have been travelling down to experience four-wheelin' Tassie style along the west coast, places further south and through the guts of the Apple Isle. To say the least, it's been sensational.

This year the Tassie guys and gals made the trip across to Victoria so that we could show them just what four-wheelin' in the High Country is all about. Our intended route was planned to take in as many hardcore loops as possible, while delving into the history of our mining and forestry towns along the way. The hardest part for us in planning this route was to ensure that we showed them as good a time as they have shown us in the past.

## MURRINDINDI

Just an hour and a half from home, tyre pressures were being dropped ready to tackle the Murrindindi area. A couple of minor tracks were used to get our visitors ready for Rocky Track and the first hardcore section.

It was dry and dusty as each four-wheeler headed up the steepish, rocky track, bouncing over boulders and kicking stones back down at those waiting below. It was a teaser for things to come. From the top of Rocky track, with grins from ear to ear, we took some major tracks to what are commonly referred to as the Bog Holes and Widow Maker on the Kalatha Creek.

With such dry weather, there was virtually no water in the Bog Holes, so it was around to the Widow Maker and an adrenalin-rush climb on the hard side (left), or a steep side-sloping climb on the easy side (right).

I angled the 'Cruiser up the left side and switched on the Air Lockers. I'd never actually driven this side of the Widow Maker but was full of confidence. With the 'Cruiser's front wheels bouncing 4ft in the air, it was all to no avail, though, and with my tail between my legs I had to reverse down and take the easier route. Oh well, it happens.

Darren Mitchell in his HiLux offered a top pic opportunity and stood the Tojo dual-cab almost on its bum trying to get up before also having to back down. Lindon Kettle in his V6-powered Bundy made a good attempt before dinging the B-pillar and nearly rolling A over T to the bottom. This was the sort of action we were looking for, but no-one wanted that kind of panel damage.

Of the whole group, only Adrian Burns in his heavily modified 75 Series tray bounced and crawled his way to the top over the really hard section, and it was one up for the Tasmanians.

After everyone else had a go - well, those who wanted to - the action on this mongrel hill was finished, except to say that Richard Picone (local VIC representative) popped a tyre off the rim on his attempt, which became a regular occurrence on the trip.

After some fun, it was a cool-down drive along some easier tracks to the Murrindindi Scenic Reserve and a wander over the suspension bridge before heading off to the Cascades Walk to loosen tightened muscles.

*Having a decent front lawn meant plenty of space for our Tassie visitors, who also took up most of the rooms inside the house as well*



**THIS WAS THE SORT OF ACTION WE WERE LOOKING FOR, BUT NO-ONE WANTED THAT KIND OF PANEL DAMAGE**



*Adrian Burns' 75 Series ate up Rocky track with plenty of grunt from the modified turbo-diesel and big Simex rubber*

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*It took a bit of ballast to help Lindon get the Bundy back on its feet and heading backwards off the Widow Maker without rolling*

## MARYSVILLE AND BEYOND

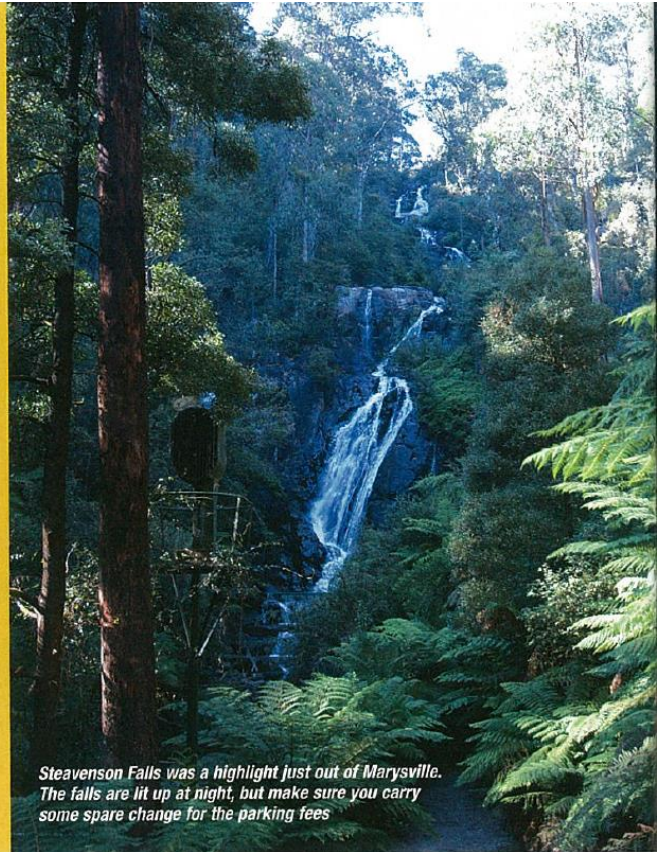
After our first night's camp on the Acheron River near Marysville, it was into town for last-minute supplies and a visit to the info centre. While many Victorians have been through Marysville countless times, for the Tassie guys this was a picturesque town to explore, with a quick visit to Steavenson Falls before heading bush again.

En route was a stop at Cambarville, or what's left of the town, before winding through the hills and overgrown tracks leading to Frenchman's Spur Track and Short Cut Tracks 1 and 2. Short Cut Track 2 saw plenty of action, with big tyres trying to bite into soft dirt and claw their way across rocky sections, ledges and culverts.

There are two ways to tackle this track: the hard but easier way to the left, or the hard and harder way on the right. Being first up a track means you never know the best line to take. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. I scrambled and bounced the 'Cruiser up the right-hand side and got up with the Air Lockers coming into play big time. Richard tackled it next, getting crossed up and popping tyre number two, which led to an interesting fix and recovery.

With the winch cable anchoring Rich's 'Cruiser, an airbag was brought out to lift the back end so willing helpers could get the tyre back on. This approach failed due to a hole in the bag, so it was out with the Hi-Lift jack. With care, the weight was taken off the back end of the 'Cruiser and the rim and tyre cleaned before being pumped up and re-seated correctly. Then it was winch to the easier side before continuing the harrowing climb up.

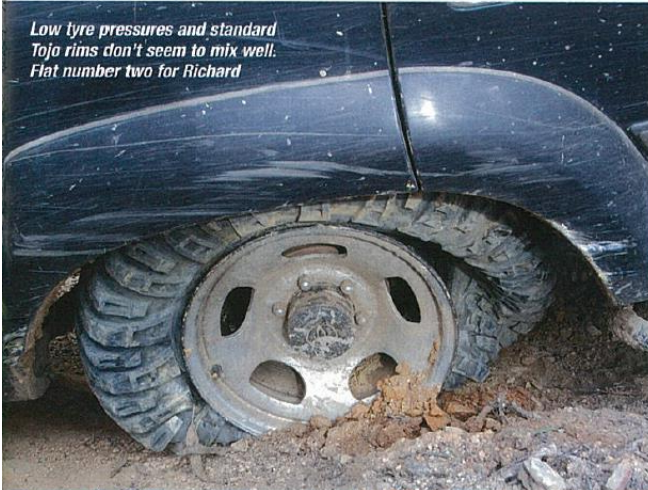
After this, each person tackled the left, except Adrian in his 75 Series, who, on his second attempt on the right-hand side, spat the rear axle out with a ripper bang. The bummer about this was not just the problem of getting Adrian up and running, but also the poor guys waiting at the bottom to go up and another group waiting to come down.



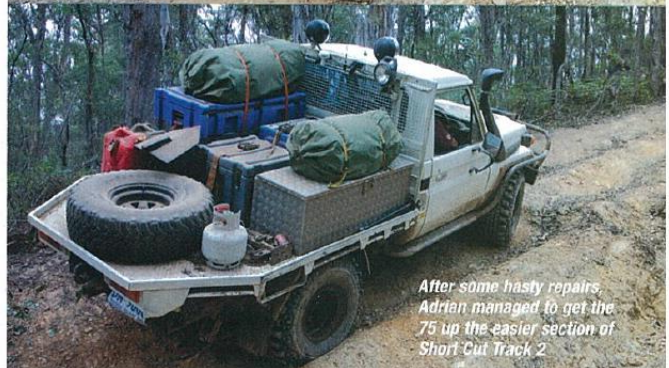
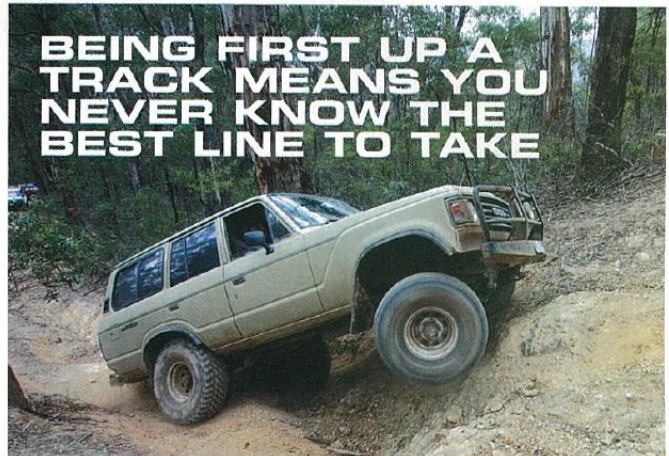
*Steavenson Falls was a highlight just out of Marysville. The falls are lit up at night, but make sure you carry some spare change for the parking fees*

## TRAVEL VIC High Country

*Low tyre pressures and standard Tojo rims don't seem to mix well. Flat number two for Richard*



## BEING FIRST UP A TRACK MEANS YOU NEVER KNOW THE BEST LINE TO TAKE



*After some hasty repairs, Adrian managed to get the 75 up the easier section of Short Cut Track 2*

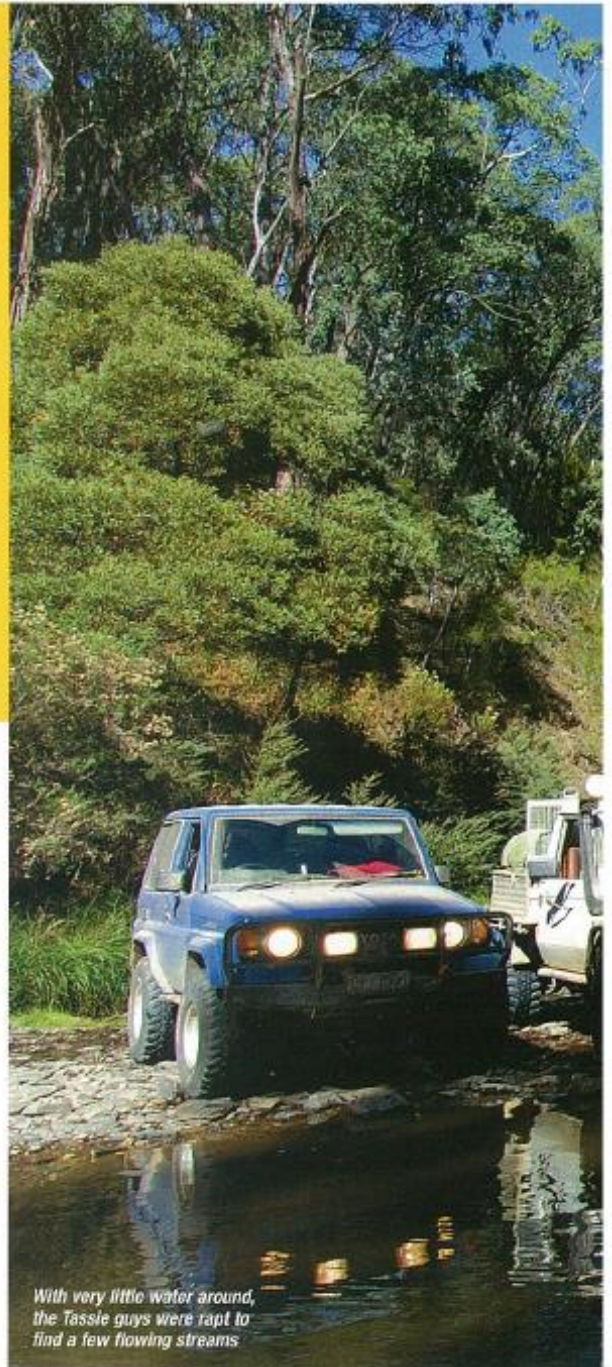
Adrian reversed off the hill to make a temporary repair and we shuffled our guys forward and let the next group below give the mongrel hill a bash. To their horror, the first fourby to have a go, an 80 Series, spat a front diff and then there were two broken vehicles at the bottom of the track.

With some temporary repairs made and a minor winch, we had Adrian through the worst of it and our group continued. That night at camp, the damaged axle was welded to the hub to keep the 75 on the go, as we were only day two into a five-day journey. I should also point out that it was one for the Victorians at this point, so we were even.

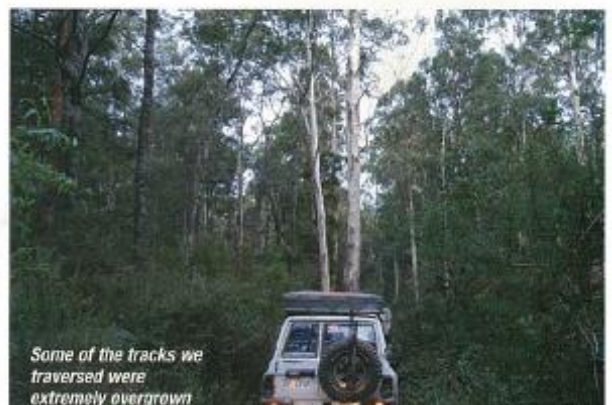
## WOODS POINT TO WALHALLA

Having spent some time exploring around Woods Point previously, we had some hardcore tracks planned with alternative routes for wet weather. We'd told the Taswegians about how tough these tracks were going to be, only to find the grader had smoothed out every hard section leading in and out of town. It was disappointing to say the least, but the sun was burning gaily in the sky and this made the travel that much more pleasant.

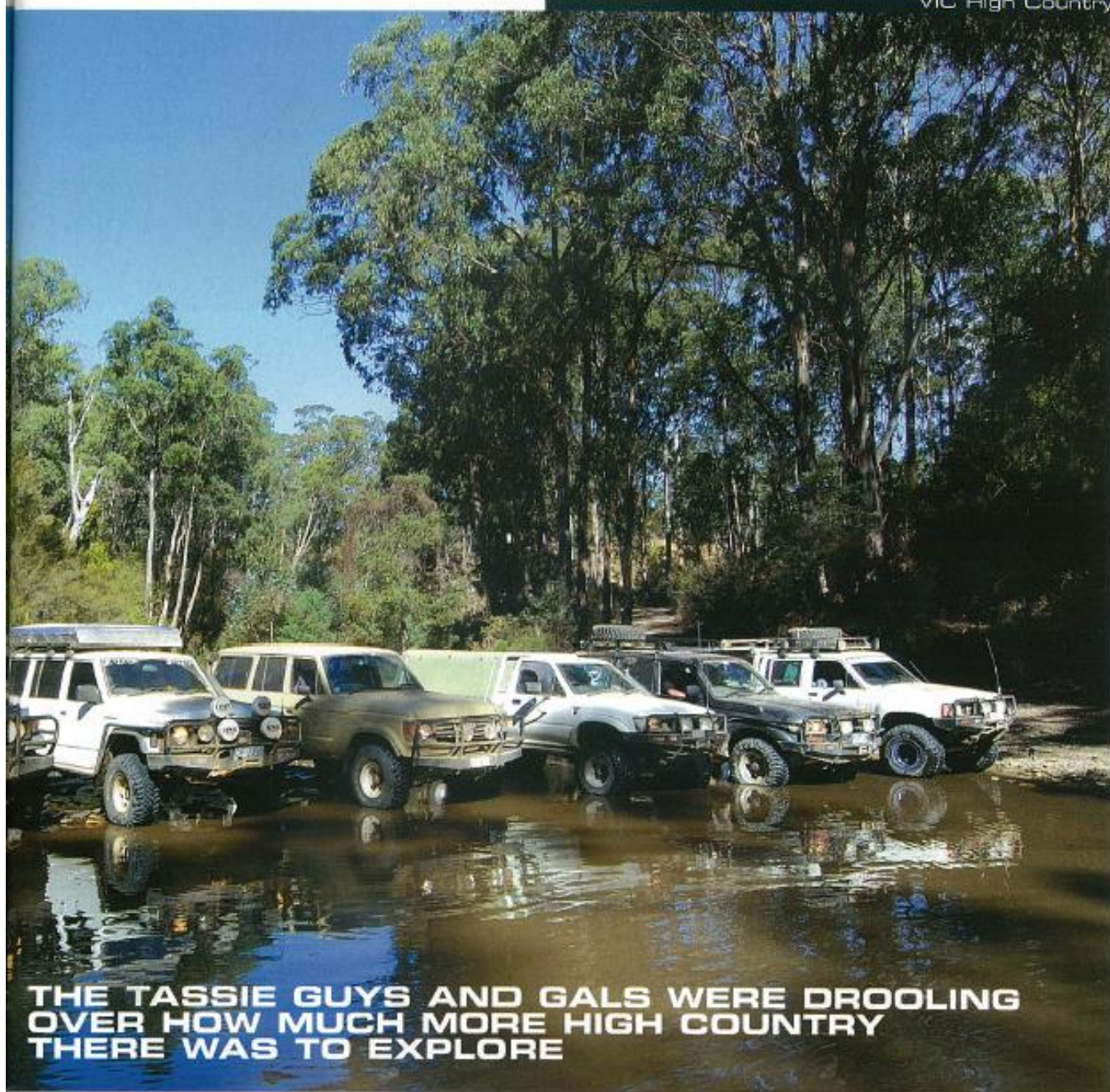
There's a silver lining to every cloud, and a visit to the Woods Point pub offered some people solace in a drink while enjoying the pictures adorning the walls of the bar, and others took happy snaps of the infamous bowser and wandered around the town. A decision was made to head off and visit a couple of mine tunnels before heading into the Jericho Red Jacket area.



*With very little water around, the Tassie guys were rapt to find a few flowing streams*



*Some of the tracks we traversed were extremely overgrown*



**THE TASSIE GUYS AND GALS WERE DROOLING OVER HOW MUCH MORE HIGH COUNTRY THERE WAS TO EXPLORE**



*A couple of batteries, some weld-all rods and safety glasses are all that's required to weld on the track. Having your mates sitting around drinking and offering advice is something that's not always required*



## TRAVEL

VIC High Country

The Jericho area has several old mines and town ruins, along with plenty of steep climbs for us as we headed to the Thompson Dam wall. Again, many Victorians have seen this amazing dam, but for the Tasmanians it was yet another first-time experience.

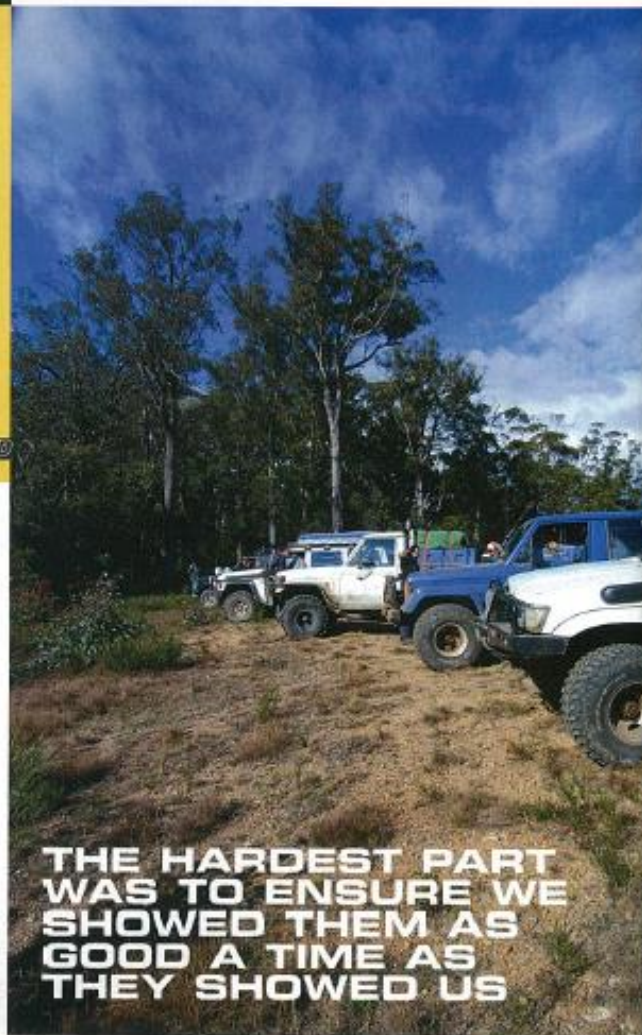
The final leg of the trip heading to Walhalla took in several steep climbs. My 'Cruiser spat out its rear axle and required several winches and a long tow to get us out of the poo. Being also a Nissan owner, I didn't mind the 'Cruiser being winched and towed by Tim Hanson in his heavily modified GQ. Much to the surprise of the other Tojo owners, who stir Tim relentlessly about his Nissan. Boy, won't the tables be turned next year when Galah's Datto hits the road.

So with the 'Cruiser in limp mode, I headed into Walhalla to find a camp, while the others tackled several of the Deep Creek tracks as the light disappeared from the sky. That night was spent around the fire with the Tasse guys and gals raving about how much fun they'd had and drooling over how much more High Country there was still to explore.

A great time was had by all, and the good news is the Taswegians are coming back next year to experience more of our fantastic High Country. **4009**



Exploring cemeteries like the one at Aberfeldy gave the Tasmanians an indication of just how tough it was, and still is in some respects, living in the High Country



**THE HARDEST PART WAS TO ENSURE WE SHOWED THEM AS GOOD A TIME AS THEY SHOWED US**

Jane barely got the Cruiser wet at a more appropriate (read: wussy) pace

