

BASIC DRIVER TRAINING

NOVEMBER 2015

On the 13 - 15th November and the 22nd November, fourteen club members and instructors attended the Basic driver training Course to learn about 4WD equipment and provide us with the skills to drive a four-wheel drive vehicle through difficult terrain and apply basic vehicle recovery techniques.

It's been four years since I purchased a new 4WD Vehicle, a 2011 Mitsubishi Challenger. Finally, I had the opportunity to learn more about my car and its capability. I thought I knew the basics but I have never been more wrong.

It's Friday night and I headed off to the Bredbo PUB located on the Monaro Highway 82km from the Canberra CBD. On arriving at the pub, I met up with other club members and the instructors. After a nice meal we headed to the Club's Training Facility about 1.5 hours' drive. Prior to reaching our destination some of us experienced our first taste of four-wheel driving, removing some air from the tyres, putting the car into low range and driving in convoy listening to the instructions on the UHF radio.

On arriving at the training grounds, we all gathered in the classroom where we had some initial training before setting up our tents etc. On Saturday we had more training in the classroom before heading out with our designated instructors. The training was intense, learning about safety principles, convoy procedures, recovery equipment, driving techniques including radio techniques and procedures etc.

Saturday night included a well-earned beer and an early night.

On Sunday, we had more training in the classroom followed by more practical experience. We learnt about tyre placement and practiced driving through difficult terrain including practicing correct procedures for stopping vehicles on both ascending and descending slopes. I also learnt that using and knowing where the side mirrors are, is important, even before heading off. All I can say is that it can be costly if you don't. I have booked my car in for a new side mirror to be fitted.

In the afternoon, we were shown advanced recovery methods and techniques using appropriate recovery equipment and safety requirements.

22nd November 2015

The following Sunday, we all headed towards Uriarra homestead where we all met prior to heading off again in convoy with our designated instructors.

We had a full day practicing our skills that we had learnt from the previous week. The first challenge was using the snatch straps connected between two vehicles. This activity highlighted that safety is paramount, using correct equipment, communication skills, connection technique including keeping others at a safe distance away are key to ensuring that everything is done correctly and all risks are minimized.

The second task proved to be very challenging with a few vehicles managed to avoid the ruts before having to abandon due to the high spots collapsing making it difficult for other vehicles.

The other tasks proved to be a little easier where we had the opportunity to practice our hill climbs and descents avoiding all ruts where possible.

I made new friends at this training course and everyone was approachable and friendly. I personally thank everyone, students and instructors for their support and assist throughout the course.

We all appreciate the time and effort that the instructors put in and would like to thank them for their expertise and patience. Without their dedication, this would not be possible. I am more confident in my own ability and that of my vehicle. I look forward to many new adventures with the Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive club.

Thank you

Signed

The Challenger