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Subject: Important updates regarding the upcoming Outback Car Trek
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Trek 2022 Important Updates (and a note about Bright Smiles) (and the Drive 4x4 The Doc)

Hello to All.

The Trek Route is looking sensational. We have just come back from our survey of the Trek, and we have planned all of the roads and intended stops. We have lined up the food and fuel stops along the way, and spoken to schools and community groups where appropriate. We have sourced lots of brand new (to the Trek) roads, and the Outback looks a treat. As far as the eye could see on every single day the grass was green, knee high or higher - even to the west of Cameron Corner. The roads are all in good condition, and lots of work has been done (still a little more to do) by the local councils after the heavy rains during the Christmas period.

We will swap out Scrubby Creek for Augathella. The recent sale of a large property in the area, and the subsequent loss of a couple of families, has forced us to move our intended overnight stay at the Scrubby Creek Sports & Skeet Shoot complex to Augathella. It is a pretty little town on the banks of the Warrego River and the Memorial Hall will be the venue for our **Auction Night** on Thursday 9th June.

The Beach House Hotel on the Esplanade at Scarness in Hervey Bay is the venue for our Gala Dinner on the Saturday 11th June. We will put some buses on to get you to & from the dinner, but be aware that the suburbs collectively known as Hervey Bay are 17 km long - please book as close to the Beach House as you can so we can collect you efficiently and in plenty of time for the dinner.

In the world of six degrees of separation do we have any Trekkers who have high level contacts within CEVA? This year I am struggling to obtain the style of pick up service for our cars that we have come to know and love so much over the years. My pleas seem to be falling on deaf ears, and there are not too many other people in the car linehaul business that we can approach. We have enquiries out and we are speaking to their competitors, but it is slow going. The preferred option is to see if we can get CEVA to provide us with the same service they have for the past 25+ Treks, so if you know anyone, please let me know so we can get an introduction.

Entry Numbers are a little slow coming in, and with only 73 more sleeps to go we need to start giving some pretty accurate numbers to caterers, fuel suppliers, and the like. I know a few individuals, and a couple of teams, have not yet got their forms in, so will everybody **please** submit your entry forms as soon as you can. The Trek will definitely be on, and we want you to be a part of it.

Virgins are on the rise, and again this year we have a pleasing number experiencing Trekking for the first time. Welcome, our experience is that once you take the leap you will come back for a great many years to come.

After 20 years of fixing broken down Trek cars, veteran sweep Paul Gallant had his own mechanical misadventures last year, which saw him need to truck T12 home to Mackay from Cobar. Some fine print in the roadside coverage policy meant that Paul had to truck the car home at his own expense (4,000 km for a tilt tray). Paul would have been hugely out of pocket, except the Trek family quickly jumped in. A gofundme page was opened, and a significant amount of money was donated to help Paul cover the tilt tray costs, and some of his mechanical repairs. Ever the quiet achiever, Paul asked me to include the following words in the newsletter, in thanks to all Trekkers:

"As I think most Trekkers will be aware T12 suffered a serious mechanical issue last year with an engine failure. With a few phone calls and a bit of organising I was able to get it back home to Ilbilbie near Mackay. A big disappointment was to learn that because of its size the vehicle is not covered by RACQ but in the end they covered the equivalent of the cost of flights home and back. The trip home was very memorable as the driver Kirk was a reformed drinker and smoker. He talked from the moment his eyes opened in the morning until he went to bed. He had the biggest and best stories ever. Dick and I hardly said a word for 2000 kms

The engine was replaced with a new one plus new radiator, starter motor and the like. It's been a mammoth task and an expensive exercise. I am happy to say I finally got it back on the road in February.

*A big thank you must go out firstly to those who organised the Go Fund Me to help with the transport costs and secondly to **ALL OF YOU** who donated. I feel very humbled by your generosity and a little embarrassed by what you all have done though I greatly appreciate your support.*

I have helped on 20 treks and now I am pleased to now be able to help on a few more.

Thanks again and I look forward to catching up in Parkes."

On the subject of mechanical matters: Many Trek car mud flaps need to be brought up to spec. This is a serious issue - we don't want cars spitting rocks out all over the place, bringing complaints from other road users, and from Trek cars on the side of the road. Which is why the Trek spec clearly states *"Mud flaps of stout material shall be fitted behind all four wheels. They shall be no closer than 50mm to, and no further than 100mm from, the ground, shall mask the full width of the tyre when viewed from behind, and be within 300mm of the tyre. Mud flaps fitted behind wheels shall leave un-masked at least one-third of the width of the car. Those fitted in front of the rear wheels shall leave at least 20cm un-masked."* This is not a new requirement, and should not come as a surprise to anyone - it has been a Safety Check requirement for many years. You have a couple of months before the Trek - please use at least a couple of these hours to make sure your mud flaps meet the required specification.

Is your car still for sale? There have been several cars change hands in the past 9 months, and there are still a few people looking for cars. If your car is still for sale - please let me know that you haven't sold it and I will update my records.

Trek 2023 will be A BIG ONE. A little out of sequence from our "once every five years" perhaps, but we have decided that after two years of COVID turmoil, we will hit back and celebrate our freedom with a longer Trek, and yes there will be a FIFO town in the middle. We are still looking at the options and we hope to be able to announce the destination town at the final night dinner in Hervey Bay on June 11th. I am looking at a "coast to coast" event, but that is not set in stone, and all suggestions are welcome.

Team CX Fundraiser. Carl Seaver is organising a night of "yummy food washed down with craft beer or wine or cocktails" at Bucketty's Brewing in Brookvale. The date is the 7th April, and you can register using the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/rfds-fundraiser-tickets-254989609787>

The Doggies Golf Day is one of the better days of the year, and attracts friendly competition from many aspiring Sultans of Swing. Starting with a great sausage sanga (onions on top), there are novelty holes, a cricket bat hole in one and the day finishes with a great lunch and auction. Dunheved Golf course is the place to be on the 12th April. Contact Rob on 0413 857 412 or John on 0418 296 262. There are still a couple of holes left for sponsorship, if you would like to promote your goods and wares to some of the nation's most discerning people.

Brights Smiles Charity Ride is meeting in Tumut on 28th April, and is heading off to Bright, Hastings, Port Campbell (via the Queenscliff ferry and the Great Ocean Road), then back to Mansfield and finishing at Tumut on Tuesday 3rd May. We have 36 people registered on the event, and can maybe squeeze in one or two more - but you need to let me know ASAP.

Drive 4x4 The Doc. The dates for the Drive 4x4 The Doc have been set, and the route (subject to confirmation) looks like being:

- Tuesday 22 November welcome drinks and dinner in Mansfield
- Wednesday 23 & Thursday 24 November - 2 nights in Jindabyne
- Friday 25 November - Omeo
- Saturday 26 November - Lakes Entrance ??? to be decided

I think that's the pertinent news for now. I am off in the next 2 weeks on the second & final survey of the Trek route, and if anybody needs any further information, has any suggestions, or needs a little help, please give me a call on 0418 626 799.

Bill.

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