

March 2007

Bulldust



Newsletter of the River City 4WD Club Inc.

Club Meets 2nd Wed of every month at 7:30pm, in the QAFWDC Hall, 90 Muriel Ave. Moorooka

Editor's Comments

First and foremost, I must apologise to all the wholesome male members in the club, who got into strife for visiting the Top Of The Town website. As pointed out by Johnny Navara, it is actually a Gentleman's Club in Melbourne. It is definitely not where we are going to stay for the June club trip. Damn, sounded like fun !! The correct website to visit for accommodation details, is www.topoftown.com.au. I am not responsible for the mix up. I printed the information supplied to me from Kerin. Good one Kerin !!!!!

As mentioned at the last meeting, Jenny G came up with a fantastic idea of having a car boot type sale, to offload all of that unwanted camping / 4WD gear we all have at home in our garages. You know, the tents us caravanners don't use any more, the half worn 4WD tyres you replaced with some new muddies and so on. I think it is a brilliant idea for a number of reasons. Obviously it would be good to sell this unwanted stuff, you

might even find a bargain that someone else has that you want. But in addition to these, it could be a huge money spinner for the club. A sausage sizzle and raffle alone, would rake in some good money and then there is an admission fee for the sellers.

If you want to help out with this great idea, give Jenny a call and let her know you are willing to help. At the moment, it's looking a little challenging finding a venue which does not see it as a conflict of interest with other activities taking place at that location on the day i.e. venues that have Sunday markets.

As mentioned last month, how good would it be if we had new club shirts to wear on the day as well. Hopefully Kermie has made some progress with this venture he volunteered to pursue.

What's the go with the Stanthorpe trip ! It's always been a great weekend with an exceptionally good turnout. When last I looked, there were very few names in the trips book. We rely on names in the trips

book to confirm there is enough interest in activities. No, or very few names in the book and the activity is likely to be cancelled. Spare a thought for those organisers. They don't want to go to all the trouble of organising things, doing reces and making tentative bookings, to find out closer to the day all those who expressed interest are no longer coming. It just really makes it unpleasant and can turn people off organising things. What are people doing on weekends anyway ?

Helen and I won't be staying at the Top Of Town Caravan Park, as we'll be taking the dog and they're cat lovers. We will however be staying at the Blue Topaz Caravan Park just South of town. This is where we all stayed last time, when we couldn't get into Top Of Town. Let us know if you'll be joining us. We of course will be joining the rest of the group for all the social activities over the weekend.

John

Club Contacts

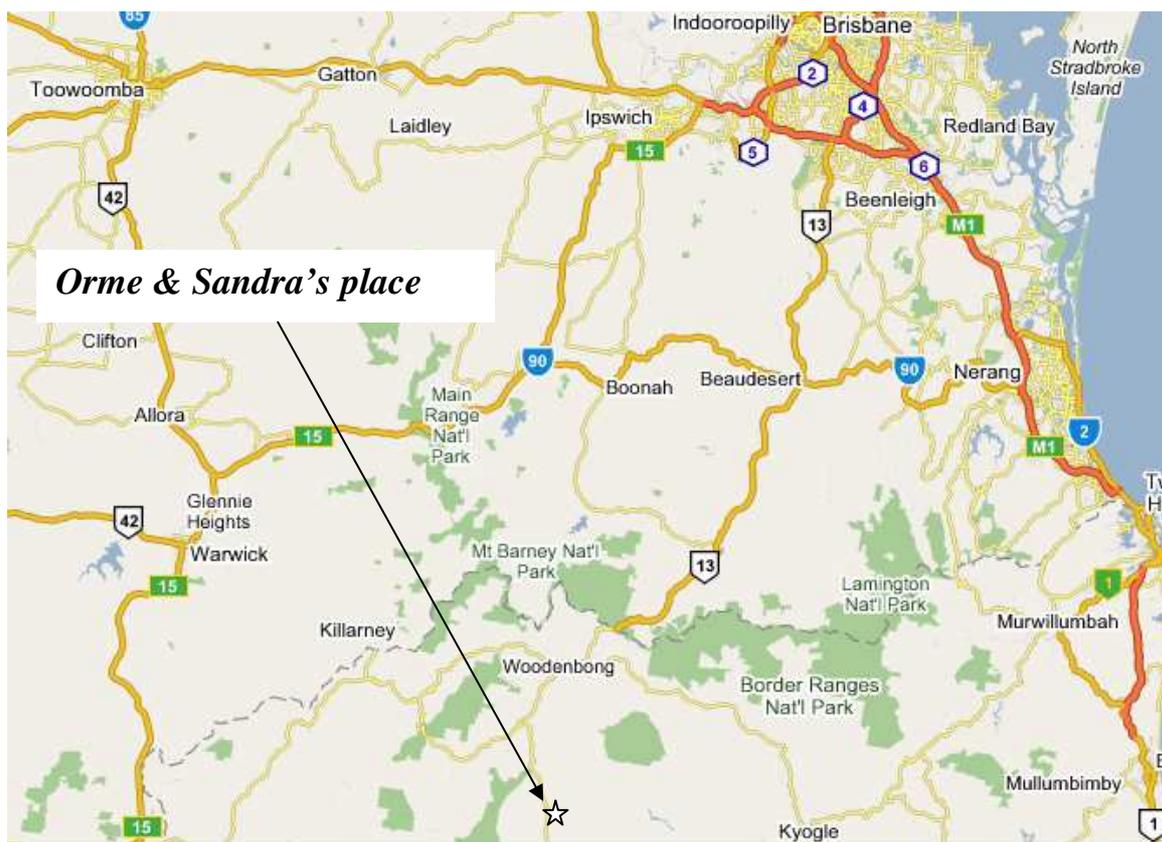
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The Johnny Navara Comedy Corner

Did you hear about the Dentist who married a Manicurist ? They fought tooth and nail.

There were these two ambulance officers, who got a call to the local bakery. The call said that the head baker had been electrocuted. When they got there, they discovered that he had and was doing so while he was mixing up some fruit buns and he had stood on some fruit. What caused the problem, was that the currant had run up his leg.

What's Happening this Month



17, 18 March : Orme & Sandra's Richmond Range SF

Trip Leader : Roger & Jenny 3802 1355

Meeting : Saturday 17th at 8:00am

Where: BP, corner Mount Lindesay Hwy & Wearing Rd, North Maclean

Orme & Sandra are club members from way back. Some years ago they made a sea change and moved from Sandgate to Bean Creek. They live on a very beautiful property, located between Urbenville and Old Bonalbo. Other than a great social weekend, we'll be going for a drive through the Richmond Range SF and surrounding area.

Saturday night we'll be having a yummy communal camp oven stew. Make sure you bring some meat and veges to add to the stew.

There'll be farm animals for the kids and lots of green grass to play ball games or fly a kite. All those things us 4WDDrivers love to do.

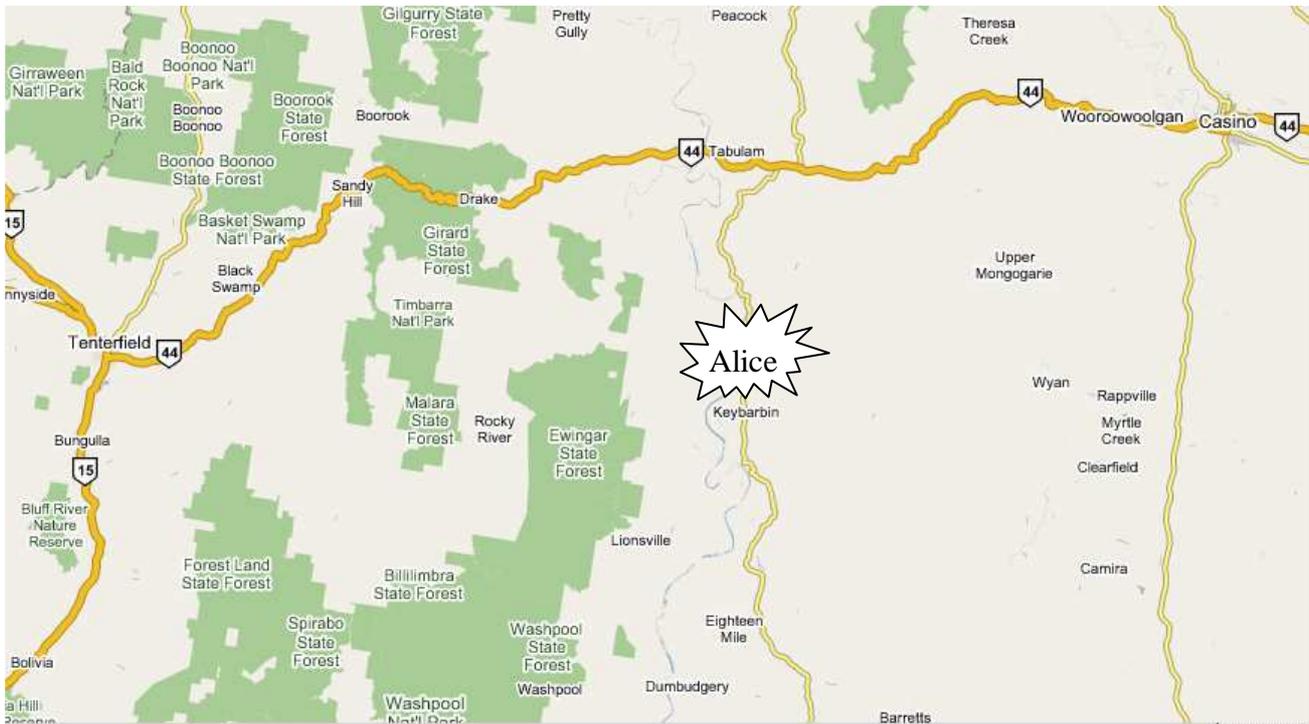
Don't forget BYO toilet, shower, water etc.

Trip Participation Mandatory Requirements :

Working UHF radio (Ch 28)
Snatch Strap with no fraying
2 x 3.25t rated shackles

Front & rear recovery points
Club sticker (members only)

- Visitors are welcome to attend trips, for the small fee of \$5/vehicle. The above requirements must still be met.
- The member who introduces the visitor will be responsible for that visitor throughout the trip.
- The trips book must be signed by all adults, whether they are members or visitors.
- The Trip Leader has the right to refuse participation in the trip to anybody not complying with the above.
- The club strongly suggests you have your own first aid kit and fire extinguisher on all trips.



Easter Weekend

6th, 7th, 8th, 9th April: Clarence River / Alice (Alice, where the F.... is Alice?)

Trip Organiser : John Dibble 3289 5402 or 0429 428 467

Meeting Time : 8:30am

Meeting Place : BP, corner Mount Lindesay Hwy and Wearing Rd, North Maclean

Cost : Nothing other than food and fuel

BYO : Toilet facility (shovel or porta potti), drinking water, power

Alice is no longer a township. It was back in the gold rush days of the 1800's. Now it is a lovely grassy flat, on the banks of the Clarence River. Access to the river will be at your tent flap or van door. All sites are flat and grassy. Bring your bike, your soccer ball, your cricket bat and anything else that takes your fancy. It's a perfect place for swimming and canoeing. I expect a camp fire will be enjoyed by all. We'll be doing some 4WD driving in the Ewingar and Malara State Forests, including the Malara Creek Fire Trail. Bring your gold pan if you want to strike it rich. No promises, but there is also the possibility of a day trip to Rover Park and/or the Girraween State Forest and/or Boonoo Boonoo National Park (the back way).

Christmas in June (it gets earlier and earlier every year)

When : Queens Birthday Weekend 9th, 10th, 11th June

Where : Stanthorpe – Top Of Town caravan park



As has been done in the past, we're heading down to Stanthorpe for a weekend of wine tasting, olives, chocolates and snuggling up by the fire (yeah right). Guaranteed to be another great weekend away. Probably no 4WD driving though, unless Prado Pete convinces us to go for a day drive into Sundown National Park or maybe the drive out the back of Girraween to Wallangarra.

Due to deposits being required, you must phone up and make your own bookings

For details on the Top Of Town, have a look at their website. www.topoftown.com.au

Trip report – Sandy Creek

Normally rain would mean a miserable camping weekend, but how can you complain when we are on our current water restrictions. After all, with most of us now owning caravans, the days of packing up a wet canvas tent and having to dry it out when you get home in the garage, are a thing of the past.

If you haven't made the change, I highly recommend it. Caravan camping is just so more relaxing, enjoyable and convenient. You can still sit around the fire and cook in the camp oven, but you've got the luxury of a solid roof over your head to keep you dry, a comfy bed off the wet ground, much quicker and easier to set-up and pack-up between showers, but this is a trip report, so I should get back to the weekend.

Scott was already up there, because you know the story. We arrived at the BP servo to greet Adam, Deb and the kids. We made a few calls to try and track down those in the trip book that hadn't arrived. After about half an hour, we gave up waiting and headed off.

We stopped at Wamuran to meet up with Helen's sister and our nephew and niece, who came up with us for the day, in their non-4WD Falcon.

We made our way to Sandy Creek, which was quite an adventure in itself, as the amount of recent rain they had had, meant the dirt road in was extremely muddy. It was interesting in parts towing the van, but I think Anne and the kids in the 2WD Falcon had even more fun in the mud.

Scott was all set up and looking comfortable under the

awning of his Coromal. Johnny Navara was also all set up looking comfortable under Scott's awning. He had his Navara reversed up to the awning with a tarp joining the two. Kim and Sonjya had their little dome tent set-up nearby and were also looking comfortable under Scott's awning.

Apart from a group of about 4 cars and campers, we were the only ones there. It's always a very pleasant camping area, with lots of grass and good amenities. The overcast weather and intermittently drizzling rain, made the temperature that little bit more comfortable.

The track to the campsite was very boggy and we soon noticed that the two main 4WD tracks leading to the depths of the property were signposted as closed.

We headed up to the office to pay our camping fess and had a chat to Brian, the owner. If you've got a cool 1.5 million lying around and want to buy a 4WD park close to Brisbane, give him a call, as it's up for sale. He informed us the tracks were closed due to the rain, but provided it didn't rain any further that day, he would open them up.

We sat around and talked for a while, before getting itchy feet. Realising we had our forestry permits, Adam & Deb (SWB Maverick), John Helen Anne Emily Thomas & Tibby (Landcruiser) and Johnny & Sonjya (Navara) decided to go for a leisurely drive in the nearby Bellthorpe State Forest.

Just as we headed out of camp, the Blacker's arrived in their recently converted 6.5L GU Patrol with 6" lift kit (yes, the cat is finally out of the bag). While waiting for the Blacker's to set up their van (which took

the experienced 'vanners all of 10 minutes), Brian arrived to open up the tracks.

Fully loaded with 5 and a dog, we attempted the first little climb, which normally is no big deal. We slid straight into the ruts and didn't go any further. Reversing back and having another go, we didn't show any sign of getting up.

Our recently appointed DAU instructor politely told me to "get out of the way" so he could show off, I mean have a go. Of course the SWB Mav with lockers and Mud tyres walked up very easily. The Blacker's followed, again walking up easily.

As the rain began to come down again and my discussion with Brian was quite clear he didn't really want people driving the tracks in the rain, we spat the dummy and went for a drive to find the Bellthorpe SF entry.

The rain eased, so we headed back to the tracks. We could hear the other 3 vehicles (Johnny Navara had managed to tag along with the locker equipped vehicles), on the UHF. It sounded like he was struggling a bit, but still doing well to keep up with them. After all, he does like the mud. Unlike Scotty Crawford, who hates the mud as much as rocks and stayed back at camp with Kim.

After having a pretty good drive around, despite the rain and track conditions, we eventually all caught up. We headed up a track that followed the fence line between trees and rocks, until a sign warned of a very steep downhill section.

With Debbie walking ahead, Adam slowly descended. The tone of Debbie's voice heard over the radio, made it quite obvious this was a seriously steep track, with some equally steep ruts

and the odd rock ledge thrown in. Maybe her concerned tone, was due to the kids being in the back seat. Deb's got the right idea, there's no point in mollycoddling them, or they'll never grow up to be true River City 4WD Club members.

We watched as Johnny and Sonjya headed down the track with the odd clank and crunch. Sonjya even stopped reading her book, that says something. There was lots of stern instructions given over the radio, but they made it down without any real safety concerns.

My virgin 4WD passengers, where somewhat nervous about what they were in for. I wasn't too keen on putting them through it either, to be honest. After Shane giving his honest opinion that we would be best not following (which I was very appreciative of), we turned around and headed back to camp.

We listened to everything that was going on

over the radio. The track got even worse and Adam got into a spot of bother. Gee were we glad we didn't follow.

Apparently Shane winched Adam back up the track so he could take another line for his descent. Johnny went bush, as he didn't like the look of where Adam had gone.

We all met up back at camp, to find Scott and Kim had done a fantastic job of creating a very impressive camp fire. There was so much wood in the fire ring, we were hard pressed to find a spot for the camp ovens.

Dinner was had and we sat around an excellent fire and chatted. Thanks heaps goes to Kim and Scott. As promised, I cracked open the bottle of Kelly's Revenge Shiraz, that I won at the meeting. It was a pretty smooth drop actually.

Elle disappeared for a while and much to all of our surprise and delight, she returned with a huge plate of YUMMY pancakes. What a

way to enjoy a camp fire. Thanks Elle.

Unfortunately, the rain started coming down quite heavily and we all decided to call it a night.

Some of us had a pretty good sleep in on Sunday. It was drizzling. The Blacker's and Murray's headed off for a drive to Kilcoy for a coffee. Scott packed up his van and headed for home early (as he does). Johnny Navara wasn't far behind. We sat around under our awning with Kim and Sonjya for a while, until we decided to start packing up. Kim and Sonjya left. The Blacker's and Murray's arrived back. We left and presumably they left.

All in all it was still a very enjoyable weekend away and as usual, we're looking forward to the next trip.

John

\$\$\$\$\$ FOR SALE \$\$\$\$\$

Pre Car Boot Sale items, all in really good condition, Porta Potti (Elegance 165) - only ever had Helen and John's bum on it. Thoroughly sterilised and very clean. Not used for about 5 years. 4 man Cabin Tent- Jackaroo, canvas, can sell with silver tarp that fits perfectly over it for added weather protection. Gasmate 2 burner gas stove and stand. Chescold 3-way fridge (brown metal casing) and protective cover. Truck-Air air compressor, a good cheap compressor, but be warned they are noisy. 4x 235/75/15 Dunlop Road Grippers (near new) and 15x7 rims, perfect for small 4WD, caravan or trailer. Rhino Roofrack legs only, for gutter mount roof, 3 sets, 150mm high. Fold-up camping table, all metal hammertone finish, used about twice.

Talk to John Dibble if you're interested in any of these. 0429 428 467

EvaKool Fridge/Freezer 70L, replacement value over \$1800. Sell for \$1100. Ph Scott Crawford

Porta Potti with chemicals, hardly used \$50 Ph Keira Johnstone 0412 309 683

Chair Covers, custom made in polar fleece. Makes your folding camp chair heaps more comfy, especially in winter.

Ph Jenny Gesch 3802 1355

Honey, fresh from our own local producers, better GI than processed honey. \$12 for 2 litres.

Ph Wayne or Andrew 3287 3771

Our condolences to the Osbaldiston family, on the passing of John's mother

Minutes of the RIVER CITY 4WD CLUB General Meeting – 14/2/2007

Meeting Opened: 7.30pm
Visitors: Phil, in a Hilux
Apologies: Anthony Semmler, Shane & Elle Blacker
Minutes Previous Meeting: Moved: Scott Seconded: Andrew
Correspondence: Moved: Jenny G Seconded: Bob
Treasurers Report: Balance as at 31/1/07: \$2,687.07
Expenditure: \$60.00
Income: \$62.34
Raffle: A bloody big bottle of "Concreter's red"
QAWFDC: Nothing to report.
Trips Completed: Ten Pin Bowling Night: excellent night, no report received from Cassie Richens however. She's not as reliable as her big sister, Wendy (Wendy for Secretary !!)
Yarraman: 3 vehicles attended and had a great weekend.
Fraser Island Clean-Up: about 8 club vehicles attended and picked up heaps of rubbish. A good effort from Peter Prado for setting up the banner for all to see.
Trips Coming Up: Sandy Creek – Book your own site. Scott is going up Friday. John will be at the BP Caboolture for a 7:30 start Saturday. Dogs are ok.
DAU: No updates reported.
TECHNICAL: Keira asked the question about the likelihood of a read door mounted spare exploding. The one on her RAV4 did and it was a hardly used tyre.
GENERAL: Roger & Jenny G are hoping to organize a car boot type sale in June, for all 4WD clubs.
MEETING CLOSED: 8.10pm

So, you're thinking of going solar ? - my personal views, written by John

If you're doing a lot of bush camping, or intend staying away from 240v power for weeks at a time, then you really don't have any alternative than to go solar. Generators are too noisy, no matter what brand you buy and are still quite expensive by comparison. They are a petrol driven motor and won't like sitting around most of the time, not being used. Solar panels on the other hand, require no real maintenance (other than keeping them clean), have no moving parts and the only ones you should consider buying typically have a 20-25 year warranty. I'm talking BP, Kyocera, Sharp, Unisolar and the likes. Of course you'll need a solar regulator, to control how much charge your battery gets and protect it from over charging. This is an electronic device which could fail, but does not have to be a super expensive device.

Unfortunately, despite what many "experts" have said, as solar panels get more popular, they are not in fact getting any cheaper. Expect to pay up about \$10 per Watt. If you're paying more than \$12 per watt, you're paying more than you should. Anything under \$10 is a good price. Of course I am talking the better brands already mentioned. There are plenty of cheap panels around, especially on e-bay, but you are getting what you pay for. Have a look at the warranty covering faulty workmanship and the build quality, you'll see the difference. A regulator will set you back anywhere from \$59 for a 5Amp Steca Solsum with only a single led to tell you what's going on, up to \$590 for a 60Amp Plasmatronics with multiple display options to tell you exactly what is happening. You can go even dearer if you have multiple panels and want the best.

Firstly you need to decide what size panel you require. You need to sit down and do your sums. What 12V gear will you be using for how long and what current rating are they. Your solar panel can be used to directly power an item, but usually they are used to put charge into a storage (deep cycle) battery. What amp/hour rating does your battery have. There is no point in having heaps of current available from your panels, but nowhere to put it because your battery is fully charged and you are not using much power. It's a very big balancing act, that requires lots of thought. Those in the know, recommend a 130 Watt panel per good quality 100 Amp/Hour battery. This is for a fairly high use application however. It would typically provide you with about 35 Amp/Hours per day. On a good day, you would hope to get about 5 hours of usable sunlight. Obviously you won't get much out of the sun when it is lower on the horizon in the morning and afternoon.

What type of panel should you buy ? Whether you buy Monocrystalline, Multicrystalline (sometimes called Polycrystalline) or Amorphous, just stick with a good brand. Polycrystalline (distinctive black circles or shapes), are made from whole silicon crystals and usually have the best efficiency (up to 20%), but are the

dearest. Multicrystalline (sparkly blue that looks almost like smashed glass) is made from lots of silicon crystal pieces joined together, are cheaper, but not as efficient (about 12%). Amorphous (a uniform blackish colour) is made of randomly arranged silicon cells with no crystal structure, are typically the cheapest and have about 5% efficiency. However, technology has improved and it is not uncommon to get up to 12% efficiency out of good amorphous solar panels.

Below I've listed some reference prices you can use as a guide, if you're in the market for solar panels. In the end, for our current circumstances, I decided not to go solar. When I worked out how long we are usually away from 240v power at a time, the cost of an 80W BP or 64W Unisolar panel, Morningstar Sunsaver 6.5A regulator, mounting brackets and good quality wiring, at almost \$1000 is still a bit cost prohibitive for me. This set-up is really the bare minimum, anything less is not really worth having. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for solar. If it suited our camping style and I didn't have a shopping list of other things I want to buy, then for sure I'd go solar.

Panels :

Kyocera

KC65T 65W 3.7A \$690

KC85T 85W 5A \$860

Sharp

NE80EJEA 80W 4.6A \$749

BP

BP365U 65W 3.7A \$649

BP380J 80W 4.8A \$769

Unisolar

US64 64W 3.9A \$550

Despite its larger size, this amorphous panel is very popular due to it actually being almost as efficient as the 80W panels from other manufacturers. It also has a polycarbonate top surface, instead of glass like most others. Mind you, the glass normally has a 25mm hail rating.

Suntech

STA060 60W \$570

STA085 85W \$696

Regulators:

Steca Solsum 8A \$95

Steca Solarix 8A \$129

Steca PR1010 10A \$195

Steca Solarix 20A \$185

Steca PR1515 15A \$235

Morningstar Sunguard 6.5A \$109

Morningstar Sunsaver 6.5A \$109

Morningstar Sunsaver 10A \$219

Plasmatronics PL20 20A \$290

Plasmatronics PL40 40A \$390

In closing, be aware that smaller self regulating panels are far less efficient and only supply 14.5V at the panel. Externally regulated panels normally will have about 17V available to be regulated, which allows more flexibility for correct charging of your battery.

Don't forget the Anaconda 15% off everything Sale on 20th March. They phoned me through the week to get an idea of numbers that are interested in going. This sale includes items already advertised in catalogues and they assure me they don't want anyone going away disappointed that they didn't pick-up something at the very best price. It is happening at every store between 6pm and 9pm, but you must show your current membership card to get the discount. They are also keen to support clubs in any way they can. Unlike what was said at the last meeting, they are in direct competition with shops like BCF.

6 Month Fridge Calender

	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	
MARCH				1	2	3	4	
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Richmond Range
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
	26	27	28	29	30	31		
APRIL							1	April Fools Day Rally
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Clarence River / Alice
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	Border Ranges drive
	30							
MAY		1	2	3	4	5	6	Manar near Proston or
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Corroboree / Mackay
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Kilkivan / Goomeri
	28	29	30	31				
JUNE					1	2	3	
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Xmas in Stanthorpe
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
	25	26	27	28	29	30		
JULY							1	
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Neurum Ck/ Mt Mee
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
	30	31						
AUGUST			1	2	3	4	5	
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Levuka
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
	27	28	29	30	31			