

# *mxtra*

2/2016  
mx5vic.org.au



THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA & TASMANIA

## ***Once, twice a Champion ... Three times a Legend!***



**In this edition:**

**2016 Wheels Car of the Year  
The Fiat 124 - Club members' perspectives  
Chapters bring in the new year!**

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## Your Committee: 2015-2016

### President

> Peter Dannock | 0408 522 093 (ah)  
 e: [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au)

### VP / Secretary / Communications

> Murray Finlay | 0416 247 677  
 e: [secretary@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:secretary@mx5vic.org.au)

### Treasurer / NatMeet 2016 Chair

> Dave Collins | (03) 9755 2167 (ah)  
 e: [treasurer@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:treasurer@mx5vic.org.au)

### Club Captain – Motor Sport

> Tim Emery | 0424 091 167 (ah)  
 e: [captain@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain@mx5vic.org.au)

### Club Captain – Social

> Cary Warren | 0418 368 246 (ah)  
 e: [social@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:social@mx5vic.org.au)

### Assistant Club Captain – Motor Sport

> Randy Stagno Navarra | 0409 210 872  
 e: [captain2@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain2@mx5vic.org.au)

### Assistant Club Captain – Social

> Alex Hailstone | 0414 155 383  
 e: [social2@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:social2@mx5vic.org.au)

### Social Media

> Ben Sale | 0434 906 673 (ah)  
 e: [facebook@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:facebook@mx5vic.org.au)

### Membership

> Will Campbell | (03) 5261 4816 (ah)  
 e: [membership@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:membership@mx5vic.org.au)

### Merchandise / NatMeet 2016

> Bruce Gray | 0478 219 856 (ah)  
 e: [merchandise@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:merchandise@mx5vic.org.au)

### Points

> Coral Campbell | (03) 5261 4816 (ah)  
 e: [points@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:points@mx5vic.org.au)

### Committee

> Richard Acfield | 0488 747 755 (ah)  
 e: [racfield@bigpond.net.au](mailto:racfield@bigpond.net.au)

### Chapter Captain - Central

> Geoff Roche | 0409 039 867 (ah)  
 e: [central@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:central@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - Eastern Victoria

> Peter Ferguson | 0419 108 128  
 e: [eastern@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:eastern@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - North-Eastern Victoria

> Loz Thomas | 0409 639 718  
 e: [north-eastern@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:north-eastern@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - Western Victoria

> Ian Bradshaw | 0407 556 135  
 e: [western@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:western@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - Northern Tasmania

> Bruce Harvey | 0427 656 074 (ah)  
 e: [northtas@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:northtas@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - Southern Tasmania

> John Waldock | 0409 658 716 (ah)  
 e: [southtas@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:southtas@mx5vic.org.au)

2/2016

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**Cover image:** *The Mazda MX-5 makes history as it takes out its third prestigious Wheels Car of the Year award.*



Find us at:  
**MX-5 Club of Victoria**

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All contributions are welcome: please send articles and photos to the editor, **Don Nicoll**:

- email: [editor@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:editor@mx5vic.org.au)
- post: **mxtra**, Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania, PO Box 7438, Beaumaris VIC 3193

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# Pete's Prespective...

■ Peter Dannock – President [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au)

Well the New Year has certainly gone off with a bang for enthusiasts of the Mazda MX-5.

As you will see from our front cover, the All New Mazda MX-5 (ND) has won the coveted '2016 Wheels Car of the Year' award. The Wheels Car of the Year award is the oldest of its type in the world and this is the third time the Mazda MX-5 has won this award in the award's 50-plus years of history, with previous wins being 1989 for the NA and 2005 for the NC.

To quote Wheels Magazine from the award announcement:

*"The MX-5 roadster is a stunning achievement. It's smaller on the outside but more practical on the inside, it's lighter than its predecessors but is also stronger, and it is quite simply better than ever."*

*"It's motoring at its purest – beautifully simple, yet simply beautiful to drive – and it achieves all that with a delicate global footprint."*

Hot on the heels of winning the 2015-2016 Japan Car of Year, this is a stunning result for a great sports car and I am sure this is the reason why we can call ourselves enthusiasts for this car. See page 14 for our tribute.

In early January, Don Nicoll and I met with Steve Maciver, Senior Manager of Digital and Loyalty at Mazda Australia. This was my first opportunity to sit with Steve and discuss some ideas from the Club and to get some insights into what Mazda Australia is doing with the MX-5.

For Mazda Australia, the '2016 Wheels Car of the Year' award is an exciting announcement and, after first arriving in Australia last August, the All New Mazda MX-5 (ND) had sold 917 cars to the end of 2015. With the 'Wheels Car of the Year' award coming just before NatMeet, we are pleased that Steve Maciver will be joining us at NatMeet 2016 and providing two cars for display. This continued support from Mazda Australia is much appreciated and augments the sponsorship support they have already provided for NatMeet 2016.

As you are reading this edition of *mxtra*, NatMeet 2016 will be well underway.

The motto for this year's NatMeet is "It's all about the car". For those unfamiliar with NatMeet, it is the biennial national meeting of Mazda MX-5 clubs in Australia. Our Club is hosting the 12th NatMeet event at the Country Club Tasmania in Launceston. Keep an eye out for next month's *mxtra* for full coverage.

It has also been a busy year for the Chapters, with over six social runs already held in 2016. As I look at the calendar ahead, I can't see this slowing down, as each month will have a minimum of one event – sometimes two – for each Chapter. If you don't know who your local Chapter Captain is, go to the Club website to find out ([mx5vic.org.au/about/chapters/](http://mx5vic.org.au/about/chapters/)). Along with plenty of opportunities for every member to participate, each Chapter Captain is always keen to hear from members about run suggestions or assistance in organising runs. Their contact details are on the website.

The first round of the City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship has also been run at Phillip Island. Contrary to a gloomy weather forecast in the days preceding the event, the weather was sunny all day and we had over 30 cars participate. Not only was it great to see new members participating for the first time, some members who had previously competed in the championship have returned after taking a break. I have no doubt that this year's championship is going to be hard fought and I wish all participants good luck.

The number of new or existing members who own the All New Mazda MX-5 is growing. On the recent 'Twilight Roam in the Ranges', there were quite a number of the new cars, but it was the three 'Soul Red Metallic' NDs parked side by side that took my attention. One of great range of colours for the MX-5, 'Soul Red Metallic' certainly grabbed my eye, maybe because it is the colour that is used in most of the promotional material for the car. Regardless of your preferred colour,

*For your diary ...*

**See the full calendar for details**

## February

- 21 CEN: Bob's Boolarra lunch run
- 21 EV: Boolarra lunch run
- 21 NEV: Mitta Mitta run
- 21 WV: Run to Somewhere ...
- 28 EV: Khanacross at Bryant Park

## March

- 5 CEN: GOR twilight run & BBQ
- 8 EV: Lunch & Lies at Noojee
- 12-13 NEV: Snowy Mountains weekend
- 13 EV: Phillip Island display
- 20 WV: Run to the Ranges
- 20 NTas: Devonport Motor Show
- 26 CEN: Bendigo Saleyard Dash

## *Mark those corners!*

**Please remember, on social convoy runs, to mark the corners for those following.**

It's very simple: when you get to an intersection or a point where the route of the convoy might be unclear to the car behind you, please wait at the corner until you're sure the following vehicle has seen you.

If it's unsafe to wait at the corner, please wait in a visible position nearby.

*You won't get lost because, if everyone complies, the car you're following will be waiting for you at the next corner!*

if you haven't driven the new ND yet, do yourself a favour and have a test drive.

It's been a busy start and the best of the year is yet to come.

**And remember ... leave sooner, drive slower, live longer.**

*Pete*



# Scene about

■ Photos: Rob Tanner, Peter Ferguson, Cheryl Murray, Alana McDougall, Bronwyn Roche, Clark Menze, Karen Bradshaw, Robert Neighbour



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# Membership

■ Will Campbell – Membership Officer [membership@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:membership@mx5vic.org.au)

Current  
membership count:

654

and growing!

*G'day again!*

## What a bumper crop!

This month, we have been joined by 22 new members and a couple of members who have put in belated renewals. And this month, we have fresh (or returning) faces in *each* of the six Chapters.

Without further ado, I'd like to welcome the newcomers and wish them all the best for an enjoyable and extended relationship with the Club.

### Central Chapter

Chris Ballard	2004 Velocity Red NB SE
Nicholas Cannizzo	2000 Silver NB
Andrew Costen	1990 Neo Green NA
Philip Heuzenroeder	1993 Classic Red NA
Graham and Denise Fossey	2015 Soul Red ND
Peter Lemm	2006 White NC
John, Katrina, Matthew and Ben Palmer	2015 Soul Red ND
Garget and Tim Pedley	1999 Black NB

### Eastern Victoria Chapter

Alan Stockwell	2015 Ceramic Metallic ND
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### North-Eastern Victoria Chapter

Annabel Ranford	1990 Black NA
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### Western Victoria Chapter

Nick Balkin	1990 Classic Red NA
Peter Bosanko	1992 Classic Red NA
Josh Stewart	1991 Classic Red NA

### Northern Tasmania Chapter

Tim and Dot Manion	2000 Art Vin Mica NB
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### Southern Tasmania Chapter

Duncan and Isabel Pyper	2010 True Red NC
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*Enjoy your MX-5 and I'll see you out and about ...*

*Will*



# Club merchandise

■ Bruce Gray, Merchandise [merchandise@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:merchandise@mx5vic.org.au)

*You've bought the car, you've joined the Club ...*

**... now you can look the part too, with a range of Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania merchandise available online.**

You can choose from a range of men's or ladies' shirts, caps or beanies, keep dry with a Club umbrella, or sport an MX-5 keyring.

The range includes clothing and accessories from the same Mazda Australia range that is available to Mazda dealers. Mazda items are all branded with the Mazda logo, and where possible also have the Club's logo.

**Our current selection includes a new range of Cutter & Buck polo shirts (right), but these are available strictly only while stocks last.**

You can pay online (Visa, MasterCard, Amex, Diners or PayPal) and have your purchases delivered direct to you.

Visit our online shop at [mx5vic.org.au/clubroom/merchandise/](http://mx5vic.org.au/clubroom/merchandise/). There's also a link to a sizing chart so you can calculate exactly what size garment you need to order.

**For a limited time we're offering one-off specials on sample stock. Visit the Merchandise page on the website for more details. ■**



# Richard Acfield

## The MX-5 Club Grill

### Central | new Committeeman

**Name?** Richard Acfield

**Age?** The wrong side of 60

**Born?** Geelong, one of a million Baby Boomers

**Current abode?** An "Empty Nest" in Wheelers Hill

**Profession?** Retired after 37 years as an Air Traffic Controller

**Partner?** Lorraine, for many very happy years

**Pets?** Kobi the Golden Retriever who rules the house

**Fave food?** Asian

**Can you cook?** I cook the world's best Seafood Paella, even if I do say so myself

**Favourite tippie?** A really good Pinot Noir

**First drive?** My father's 1921 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost when I was 9

**First car / motorcycle?** Gained my pilot licence at 16; Bultaco 360cc El Montedero motorcycle at 16; Morris 1500 at 20 (didn't need a car as I had the motorcycle and a pilot licence)

**First fender bender?** My father's 1921 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost when I was 9 ... no damage to the Rolls but the other car was a write off, My father did a lot of apologising!

**Everyday driver?** Mazda CX-7 (the turbo version). I hope I don't have to replace it anytime soon as there isn't anything available like it at the moment

**How many MX-5s have you owned?** Just this one

**Current MX-5?** 2005 Velocity Red NC Limited Edition (I couldn't go past the red and black leather interior. I was given a pair of matching red and black driving gloves for Christmas [see top photo!]) so I'm easy to identify on a run)

**MX-5 improvements?** Maybe a small block Ford V8. I'm a Sunbeam Tiger fan. You know, the one that Maxwell Smart drives.

**MX-5 dislikes?** At my age I creak when I get in or out. It could do with a pneumatic system that raises the suspension by at least a foot so I could easily slip in and out

**Why an MX-5?** My son Simon (who is also a club member) took me on a couple of runs in his NA, including one through the local hills. He then took Lorraine on the Great Ocean Road Run last year. She came home wind blown but with a wide grin insisting that we had to get an MX-5. I tried to look reluctant but didn't do a great job

**Fluffy dice?** Not my thing ... I prefer bobbing hula dancers

**Passions besides the MX-5?** My family – Lorraine, our four sons and four granddaughters (and Kobi of course)

**Favourite TV show / movie / book?** TV Show: Wheeler Dealers (a car restoration program); Movie: Ground Hog Day; Book: Catch 22

**Dream wheels (money no object)?** Supercars like Ferrari and Aston Martin don't do it for me but I'd really like an ND

**Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong?** Only if free

**Favourite other Mazda?** Have owned a Mazda 808, currently have an MX-5, CX-7 and a Mazda3, are there any others?

**If not a Mazda (gaspl!), then what?** Over the last decade or so have had bad experiences with Ford, Subaru and VW. Have had a dream run with Mazda however so I'm not interested in experimenting with something different



**How long in the Club?** About three months in the Club and a rookie committee member for one month. I've been on several committees over the years so I bring a bit of experience to the position. I volunteered rather selfishly because I've found that the more you put into a club the more you get out of it

**How many MX-5 Club runs or track events?** At the time of writing five but we intend going on every one we can, including with other Chapters, so by the time you read this the figure will probably have doubled

**Favourite Club run/track?** Yesterday went on the Twilight Roam in the Ranges which was fantastic but they've all been very good so it's hard to choose. We've been very impressed with the run notes on each one.

**Funniest thing seen at a Club event?** The bemused look on Lorraine's face as she wondered what the hooting noise coming from our car was after she opened the door at a club picnic (I'd activated the alarm).

**Have you been to NatMeet?** Not yet

**Ford vs Holden?** Historically Ford, however the last one we owned was a lemon

**What's playing in your MX-5?** Nothing, we like to listen to the world around us as we drive, particularly the bird life. A bit of a waste of the Bose Sound System I suppose

**Favourite holiday destination?** Main Beach Queensland where you often see interesting cars parked on Tedder Ave, last time we saw a Thunder Bird Mk 1 and an early Stingray, not to mention several Ferraris.

**Footy team (AFL / NRL / A-League)?** We are tragic Melbourne AFL supporters who believe every year that this could be the one

**Final comments?** We're loving both the MX-5 and being members of such an active club. As the newest Committee member I will be introducing myself to as many members as possible on club runs, particularly new and prospective members to make them feel as welcome as we were on our first run. ■

# Chapter chatter ...

## 17.1.16 | Western Victoria

■ Words: Karen Bradshaw ■ Photos: Lucas Fitt, Karen Bradshaw

■ Organisers: Jeff Woolf, Lawrie Hocking

*Happy New Year everyone!*

And to kick off the 2016 year of MX-5 fun for the Western Chapter was the *Shannon's All Japanese Car & Bike Show and Shine* on 17 January.

Our Captain abandoned us to ride and show his Z1R Kawasaki motor bike, so it was left up to me to let the MX-5 out for the day – YAY!

What a zooming good time I had! Thank you to Lawrie Hocking who rocked up early and saved us a spot next to the fence and put out our newly purchased witches hats. Also thank you to Jeff Woolfe who did the initial organising for the event but was unable to attend due to "she who shall be obeyed, having to be obeyed".

The *Dragon Abreast* ladies were there directing cars in to the event and collecting gold coin donations as this was also a fundraiser for them. I hope they did well.

We had a small line up of five cars – Lawrie, Everetts (late again!), Lucas Fitt, Ken Young from Melbourne (non-member, but has his car for sale) and myself. There were quite a few cars to squiz at and admire – all different varieties of Toyota, Datsun, Mazda etc.

**Shock horror** – there was an imposter! A *Holden Gemini* had snuck in! There was a really nice Toyota Crown, a Mazda RX-7 and an RX-8 and of course our MX-5s! The bikes were represented by Honda, Kawasaki and Yamaha.

We had quite a few people, young and older, wander over and check out the spiffy MX-5s and have a chat about what we did with our cars and club. We gave out the Club flyers and business cards to the very interested with one couple deciding to attend our Aussie Day run in their MX-5 and join the Club!

Even though the temperature was predicted to be 31°C it was quite a pleasant day, spent chatting to new people and catching up with the Christmas gossip from friends. When we weren't looking at cars we visited the trash and treasure which was next door ... sad to say nothing very exciting was purchased.

**What a great day to ease us into the MX-5 roller coaster of events for 2016!** ●



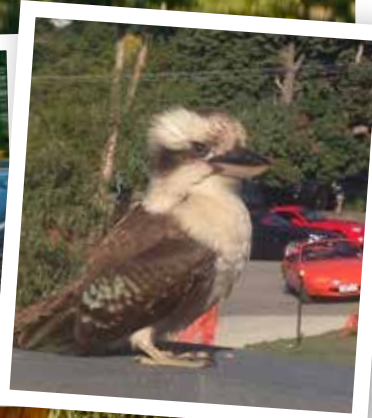
^ Lucas (white shirt) shows Krusty what's under the NA bonnet



^ Lawrie Hocking, Alan Everett and Lucas Fitt

# Chapter chatter ...

9.1.16 | **Central** ■ Words: Alan Bennett ■ Photos: Alan Bennett, Sue Boysen ■ Organiser: Geoff & Bronwyn Roche





*A pleasantly sunny Saturday evening in the Dandenongs, empty car park at Maccas in Tecoma, just six people registered<sup>1</sup> so no time for anyone to get lost.*

### *What could possibly go wrong?*

Glad you asked ... for the first time ever Geoff ran out of run notes as 40 cars turned up! This made it a bit harder for non-Club members and, almost inevitably with so many cars, there was the odd missing in action event.

First on the scene was a black panther but with two fewer letters (can you work this out? Hint, black car with a personalised plate). Arriving some 30 minutes early they at least had the opportunity to try the local cuisine (yes, specially imported local fare); and, I have it on good authority, the local facilities. By the time I arrived (*on time I will have you know*) the car park had no empty spaces.

However, four trial members had already arrived with 50% of them joining up immediately (yes, we passed their trial)... So, welcome Graham and Denise, we hope to see you out and about again soon. Plus, any tips on how to convince my wife that my rapidly ageing MX-5 needs an alphabet boost to an ND like yours would be much appreciated.

A kookaburra stood by with a silent “*feed me or get on with it*” look outside the Salvos, as we piled into our chariots for some twisting and turning. And then we got into our cars. Amongst which was a ND with an oversized Japanese style number plate – Vicroads are now offering custom plates in two flavours of green on white. I can’t pronounce it, but ビクトリア is “Victoria” in Japanese.

**Zooming non-stop for 90 minutes** around the Dandenongs is always fun and this evening was no exception. We did criss-cross a bit so anyone who felt giddy had an excuse. OK, it was me feeling uneasy. So I stopped beside the road to take some pictures of cars panning by (*spectacular attempted pun fail*) – and had to wait over two minutes for any to appear – rumour was they ducked back to Maccas for an ice cream and a sit down. So much for waiting at corners (NB: there are no waiters at Maccas but waiting is common).

New President Peter Dannock managed to frighten his father on the corners – but only 42 times. Not sure if he will be back. Peter, very likely will return as he is showing his face, and blue roadworthy NC, off track much more these days since his elevation to higher responsibilities.

A wallaby was possibly spotted<sup>2</sup> along the way (could have been Quade Cooper?) but the dashcam footage is still being processed. Much like my order for a *Happy Meal*.

Just the one slow-but-strong motorist held the front of the convoy up for a moment (now those at the front know what it’s like to be further back in the field where slow 4WDs and patches of daylight appear randomly between cars).

Most of us arrived spread out but safely at Maccas in Ferntree Gully, energised from the run and ready for a chat or something to raise the blood sugars and calm the adrenalin.

**Now, a trick question!** How many LPG tanks can you fit in an NA boot? One. Just. Miles (he’s definitely Welsh<sup>3</sup> – *definitely not English*, as I found out) is getting a credible 1km for five cents worth of gas. With 342,000 unreconditioned kms and counting, the *Martini Racing* colours stand out amongst the other cars. Performance – a ton(ne) based on my short but energetic test drive (thanks, mate). ●



<sup>1</sup> RSVP not required but would be appreciated to assist with planning (lol)

<sup>2</sup> Usually leopards are spotted, wallabies are jumpy (*pun intended*)

<sup>3</sup> *Mwyaf y brys, mwyaf y rhwystr* - the greater the hurry, the more obstacles there are ...

# Chapter chatter ...

## 16.1.16 | Southern Tasmania ■ Words: Michelle Waldock ■ Photos: Rob Tanner, John Waldock

*The Christmas decorations are packed away, the New Year's resolutions are forgotten ... why, it must be time for our annual Twilight Run!*

Hobart has enjoyed a wonderful summer this year and what better way to experience the warmth than a short run in the world's best sports car?

The group met at the usual spot for a quick catch-up and one of our members, Michael, brought along a friend who is thinking of buying a MX-5 but who usually drives a 928 Porsche. After a quick overview of the route, tops were flipped down and away went the nine cars.

We drove a much-travelled route; out to Richmond through a plane-tree-lined highway with nary a cyclist or caravanner in sight, through to Tea Tree and then a short stop outside Brighton. The group often stops in this spot as there is a large gravelled lay-by next to the turnoff and many a tall tale is told and bonnets raised for inspection and discussion. This was the moment when Michael's friend was regaled with all the superior features of a MX-5, making it actually quite a lengthy stop!

From Brighton the group looped around back through Tea Tree then on to Sorell via a favourite piece of bitumen, Fingerpost Road. On the highway straight through to Hobart's waterfront where lots of fish, chips and ice cream were consumed along with conversations regarding John Hadrill's cameo TV appearance, the contents of a certain grey billfold and plans for the Chapter runs in the months ahead.

**The Chapter is looking forward to another great year careering around southern Tasmania in, yes, the world's best sports car. ●**





.....

■ Organiser: John Waldock



^ Eddie Podolski and Lynsay Millar  
Shane and Wendy Burgess >



# Fish & Chips twilight run



^ Southern Tassie's call to arms (l to r): John Hadrill (at back), Liam & Cassie Cole, Michelle & John Waldock, Lynsay Millar, Eddie Podolski, Michael Watt and guest; Alan & Susie Dear, Garry & Mauren Whittle, Wendy & Shane Burgess.



And baby makes three: a beaming Mazda Australia MD, Martin Benders, receives the 2016 Wheels “Car of the Year” trophy from Wheels editor, Glenn Butler.

## Mazda's brilliantly light and easy sports car won the judges' hearts and minds.

Here is an open-top, rear-drive sports car that weighs about as much as a supermini, yet exhibits the body strength of a car weighing 50 percent more. It's also more compact from nose to tail than any MX-5 in history, yet manages to extract vital cabin-space increases over its larger, heavier predecessor.

As an exercise in balancing weight management with crash safety, and the sporting philosophy of a front-midship drivetrain configuration with 50/50 weight distribution, the ND MX-5 is a stunning achievement. Hence why this delectable roadster has earned the coveted title of *Wheels Car of the Year* for 2016. ”

See the full story in the February 2016 edition of *Wheels*, or on their website, [www.wheelsmag.com.au](http://www.wheelsmag.com.au)

wheels  
CAR OF THE YEAR

**1989**  
**MX-5 NA**

wheels  
CAR OF THE YEAR

**2005**  
**MX-5 NC**

wheels  
CAR OF THE YEAR

**2016**  
**MX-5 ND**



The proud Mazda Australia team (l-r): Vinesh Bhindi (Sales), Karla Leach (PR), Martin Benders, Alistair Doak (Marketing), Steve Maciver (Digital & Loyalty) and Tony Mee (PR).

# Chapter chatter ...

**24.1.16 | Eastern Victoria** ■ Words: James Lang ■ Photos: James Lang, John Poletti, Peter Ferguson

## *Sun! Roof down! Surf! Fish and Chips and twisty bits!*

That was what was on offer for the first Eastern Victoria Chapter run of the year to Inverloch ...

... except the sun was a bit reluctant to come out early in the morning as we all made our way to the starting point at the Trafalgar Holden Museum.

We had quite a good turnout of 15 cars with all models represented. I had optimistically put my roof down on the trip to our meeting place with the intention of leaving it lowered, but after a looking at the dark clouds which were threatening to give us a wet backside; most people decided that lifting the lid was a better option. I do envy the people with NCs that have one button to press and one catch to shut, but hey, the NA/NB top goes up and down pretty quickly anyway. *I hear the ND is a piece of cake to raise and lower.*

After the obligatory coffee and discussion of all things MX-5ish, the drivers' briefing was held and volunteers were asked to put up their hands for (1) 'Tail end Charlie' and (2) run report scribe.

Item 1 is always easy to get someone to volunteer for as it's a nice and relaxing spot, but the latter is harder to give away, unless there is a budding motoring journalist in the group.

So we set off on the first part of the trip, up Sunny Creek road and it was uneventful apart from the surprise of a badly decomposed wombat in the middle of the road. **Yuk!**

On the run through Mirboo North and Mardan there was still the need to turn the wipers on and the road was still a bit damp in places, so I thought the best thing was not to push my luck in the corners. After a stop at McDonald's to have a cuppa and regroup, the convoy set off towards Inverloch.

The road surface was now nice and dry so it gave the opportunity to exploit the bends a little more. The run leader should theoretically know the route like the back of his hand, but I nearly overshot the right-hand turn towards Outtrim ... *oh crap!* How far back is the car behind me and can I brake in time and take the turn safely? An intersection can sure sneak up on you if you're not 100 percent focused! Anyway, to err is human, and all was OK after some of the pack had to do a U-turn and we made it to Inverloch without any further mishaps.

The sun was now out in full force and we stood patiently in line for our fish and chips which were then duly consumed between items of discussion of varied topics from Club shirts and the best sort of hat to wear in your MX-5, through to the more technical items such as how to reduce 'scuttle shake' in your NA and also the completely off-topic observation that we were eating fish and chips at the beach, so why aren't there any seagulls fighting for food ... ?

Once lunch was over a few of the Central Chapter team bade us farewell as it made more sense to drive back to the city from Inverloch, but we still had quite a few of the crew from the 'big smoke' join us back on the run to Trafalgar for more caffeine-fuelled chatter.

**Thanks to all who attended, and a big thanks to the Central folk who came down to spend time with us. I hope you all had a good time, and maybe you can join us this time next year for another run to the beach. ●**



^ The "roll call" (l-r): David & Chris Salter, David Wilson, Mel Krygsmann, Helene McAlpine, Peter Ilijash, Arthur Howie, "Tail-end Trish", Ed Laine, Peter Ferguson, Jenna Perks, Jerome Fisher, Peter Gillies, Siddique Fisher, Leeane & David Evans, John Hayhurst, Phil Harris, Steve Banks, James Lang, Matt Erbs and Rob Krygsmann ...



.....  
■ Organiser: James Lang

Would you like fries  
with your MX-5?



^ So good! (l-r) James Lang, Peter Ferguson, Chris & David & Chris Salter, Peter & Trish Ilijash and Mel Krygsman tuck into their fish and chips at Inverloch ...

# Chapter chatter ...

**24.1.16 | Northern Tasmxnia** ■ Words: Bruce Harvey ■ Photos: Alan McDougall, Cheryl Murray

*From our starting point in Deloraine the smoke all but hid the normally magnificent Western Tiers and could be tasted in the air.*

With over 80 bushfires across Tasmania the chances of not being affected by smoke were slim at best and as we assembled everyone had a story to relate about the fires and the smoke.

By the scheduled departure time we had 17 cars and were pleased to welcome new member Peter Jahnz along for his first run. I calculate that the presence of Peter along with Elliot lowered the average age of those on the run by close to five years, and their insights into why you should own an MX-5 were revealing.

Our first run for each year has always been a gentle easing back into Tassie's plethora of fine driving roads and the offer for today included a couple of sections that I was informed we need to use more regularly ... in particular, the road through the village of Nook, which is a Targa stage, has all the elements of braking, bends and acceleration rapidly repeated.

A short wait at the end of the stage regrouped the convoy and it was a quick cruise to the lunch area at Latrobe where Robert and Veronica, who were joining us, had made themselves as large as possible to reserve an area under a massive tree.

The next couple of hours were spent relaxing and enjoying each other's company. It was a short walk to the water and the ducks and platypus play area, where children also paddled about on the water with brightly coloured canoes.

Lunch finished, we decided to head away from the source of the smoke. Sandra and Keith offered to lead us through the web of roads around the Squeaking Point and Thirlstane area. Ultimately we emerged on to the Frankford Highway where it was a short cruise to one of our favourite starting or finishing spots ... the *Blueberry Barn Café*.

**Thanks to all who came for another brilliant but smoky day in Northern Tasmxnia. ●**

**NB:** As I write this the situation in Tasmania has deteriorated in the strangest of ways. Parts of the state are under water, having received up to 200mL of rain in two days, yet the areas where the bush fires are raging have received none and in fact more fires have started as a result of clear air lightning strikes ... *go figure!*



^ Top: A smoky start at Deloraine.

Centre: Peter Jahnz (left) and Trevor Simms take the weight off...

Bottom: It's art, buddy! A beer-can dog guarding its drum dog house ...



.....

■ Organiser: **Bruce Harvey**

# Summer shade (and smoke!)



^ Bushfire smoke shrouds the regrouping point at Sheffield

▼ Picnic at Latrobe ...



# Chapter chatter ...

**26.1.16 | Western Victoria** ■ Words: Robert Neighbour, Marg Gillick ■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw

*What a wonderful way to spend Australia Day.*

Wandering along open roads enjoying the wide open spaces with friends and the pleasure of driving a great sports car. We had one couple visiting from NSW and two from Melbourne as well as us westies making up the numbers.

Nine cars met at Sebastopol in Ballarat at 8am for an 8.30 start with the weather fine and warming up. The interlude allowed us to catch up with old friends before we moved off. We picked up two cars along the way to the Wallinduc CFA shed where our last member was waiting.

Those who were coming back for the evening BBQ left their gear at the shed and all 14 cars headed off on a circuitous route to Red Rock lookout. Now I've always prided myself on a reasonable sense of direction and pretty much know where I am most of the time, but not today. I not only didn't know where I was, I didn't have a clue where we were going but it is such lovely open countryside that it didn't really matter. The leader did and the roads were empty, open and for the most part, smooth so a great drive!

Feeling as though we were being guided by Captain Peachfuzz (you have to be a Rocky and Bullwinkle fan) we maintained a steady pace and arrived at Alvie (I'd never heard of it) and turned onto the Red Rock lookout road (ditto). A short drive saw 14 cars pulling up at the picnic spot where there was a couple who probably thought they'd found a nice quiet spot- silly them!

After a spot of morning tea and pleasant conversation we took off to visit the lookout over Lake Corangamite which I didn't know was a salt water lake. Now feeling like a city slicker who knows nothing about his country I got back into the car and we all headed off again.



Still not knowing exactly where I was, I thought we were heading towards Ballarat- but no! We eventually crossed the Princes Highway at Winchelsea – YES, I finally know where I am!

We drove down through the beautiful Otway Range forest over roads that should be open speed limit, but the powers-that-be have decided are to be 80km/h - pity. On to Forest to the Barwon Water Reservoir where lunch was had and convivial conversation enjoyed.

After lunch we all headed towards Apollo bay where we left the group to head back towards Melbourne via the Great Ocean Road. My son and I had a great day seeing old friends and meeting some new ones.

*A fine way to spend the start of Australia Day ...*



^ The stayers (for the BBQ) ... (l-r): Ron Gillick, Karen Bradshaw, John Gleeson, Lawrie & Virgie Hocking, Noellene Gleeson, Marg Gillick, Ian Bradshaw, Brian & Mary Carroll, Alan & Dawn Everett, Kevin Brown, Geoff Malloy and Jan Janetski.



■ Organisers: Ian & Karen Bradshaw



*... and after lunch ...*

*We enjoyed a picnic lunch then, while some chatted, others took the opportunity to walk across the dam wall ...*

... where Ian thought he might leave Karen as he was anxious to get started!

With instructions to meet at Lavers Hill, we were off anticipating plenty of fun and plenty of corners.

The convoy was soon split. Our car was one of three stuck behind a farm ute ... we had plenty of time to admire the rainforest ... *with just about enough time to count the trees!*

We caught the first glimpse of the sea as we neared Skenes Creek where a few cars turned towards Melbourne and past the site of recent fires. Headed to Apollo Bay, speed improved for a while only to end up sandwiched by a tour bus and a police car ... so we enjoyed the surf ... finally past that bus we caught another one!

Ice creams and cool drinks were desperately needed at Lavers Hill to cool down lots of frazzled drivers; we reckoned those buses and 4WDs were jumping out from behind the trees. The drive to Colac was much more fun. We waved goodbye to David in his beautiful ND, as he decided Belgrave via Wallinduc was not practical.

The remaining cars charged back to the fire shed for a traditional Australia Day BBQ. Alan provided the entertainment with his recently acquired a new toy, a three-wheel motor bike ... so we let out our inner bikie (or was it bikie moll?) with joyrides for all. Mary could not contain her excitement over the good vibrations, Brian just raised his eyes to the sky!

**A great run and a fun day. A big thank you to Ian, Karen, Alan and Dawn and the Western Chapter. ●**

◀ *Bikie ... er, girls!*



*Hey True Blue  
... Virgie Hocking*



*We love a sunburnt country ...*



# Chapter chatter ...

**31.1.16 | Central** ■ Words: Bronwyn Roche ■ Photos: Clark Menze, Bronwyn Roche ■ Organisers: Geoff & Bronwyn Roche

*Remember the days before mobile phones? Those big clunky landlines anchored to their base sitting on the little table in the hallway?*

Down at Flinders jetty on the Mornington Peninsula, locals remember even further back to when the quickest communication between Tasmania and Victoria was via the undersea cable that came ashore at Flinders. Messages were decoded down at the lower level cable station next to the jetty, run up to the upper level cable station on top of the cliff and sent on to their next destination.

Fortunately when our Central Chapter MX-5 run got a case of *middle convoy spread* on our Mornington Peninsula run, a quick mobile call was enough to re-link the group and ensure we all made it to our run destination at the site of the cable station in Flinders.

Who could blame a navigator for missing a turn when there was so much to admire on this fantastic run: 14 wineries, an apple cidery, beer brewery, three art galleries, two amazing mazes, horse riding, scuba diving, bike hire, restaurants, cafés and roadside stalls and hey, let's not forget those views!

Despite predictions of poor weather, including possible thunderstorms, the sun broke through just as run leader Geoff led us out of the carpark at the start of the run.

The threat of poor weather was enough to keep many of the usual thousands of Sunday tourists away and our 15 MX-5s enjoyed the first of several loops up into the hills and down again before ascending Arthurs Seat (*yippee!*).

At the top we had a quick stop to admire the views and chat to new members Lori and Mary, as well as prospective members Milan and Karolina. Siddique took the opportunity to zoom down and up the hill again before we were all off for our second loop of the Red Hill Hinterland – this time driving *down* Arthurs Seat. Drivers were delighted with the snaking hairpin bends while navigators had clear views across Port Phillip Bay to the city skyline and Port Philip Heads in the other direction.

## Between the Bays

The fresh sea breeze got a little whiffy as we zipped through the Boneo market gardens. *Phew!* Luckily it was only the freshly-picked cabbages and broccoli.

Next, it was some tight curly drops up and down as we crossed two small creeks near Bushranger Bay – the bounce of which took some by surprise, even causing one driver to comment later that he thought he might be catapulted out over his windscreen! Not to worry, it was hardly a challenge for an MX-5!

The road and views then opened up to the country on one side and the ocean on the other. Although our lunch stop at Flinders was tantalisingly close, there was still another loop to go – back through to Red Hill, now looking a little busier, before heading down through Shoreham to Westernport Bay and Flinders. As we drove down Bass Avenue to the Flinders jetty, the view across the bay to Phillip Island and the Nobbies was spectacular, complete with little white sailing boats on a blue, blue bay ... *ahhh, some MX-5 owners have all the luck!*

Many thanks to John Hayhurst for going Tail-end Charlie – first time in the role, using the Club radio and without a navigator too! *Well done, John!*

Our recommendation is to come back another day and do the *Between the Bays* trip at your leisure, stopping in for a quick bushwalk from the Arthurs Seat carpark down to the Matthew Flinders cairn lookout; call in to one or more of those wineries and restaurants for a taste of the peninsula; pick up picnic supplies from the great local produce providers along the way (perhaps not the cabbages), and lose yourself for an hour or two at either of the two excellent botanical mazes.

**And don't forget the mobile phone – you'll want to take plenty of pictures of those bay and sea views! ●**



^ No mobile phone here ... Geoff uses a "proper" camera to capture this priceless portrait



^ What a sight! And the view's not bad, either!

# The new kid (old face) on the block ... the

■ Words: Richard Acfield

*Late last year Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) – makers of Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Lancia, Abarth, Maserati and Ferrari, just to name a few – announced the impending release of a new, two seat, soft-top sports car to be called the Fiat 124 Spider. This reprises the name applied to light sports cars produced by Fiat between 1966 and 1985.*

## Why are you reading about this in *mxtra*?

As many of you may already know the new car is being made by Mazda in Hiroshima, in the same factory as the MX-5. The new Fiat 124 Spider is the result of a lengthy collaboration between FCA and Mazda and is based on the new MX-5 ND platform.

Initially the car was to be badged as an Alfa Romeo but it was eventually decided to market the new car as a Fiat because it was thought Alfa enthusiasts would prefer an entirely Italian design (Fiat already use a large number of Chrysler parts in their cars).

Essentially the Spider is an MX-5 platform with a new body and an Italian power plant. The Italian design team refused to even look at concept drawings of the MX-5 ND and designed the body of the Spider from scratch with a design philosophy of “*make it look Italian*”.

The Italian body is 140mm (5.5”) longer than the MX-5 – but it looks longer than that in photos – the extra length required to accommodate a turbo intercooler and a slightly increased boot capacity. The new design takes quite a few cues from the original Spider. The bonnet has two “power” humps as did the original and the upper grill is the same hexagonal shape. The rear has rectangular tail lights and a small “duck tail” both of which were features on the original. Note the sweeping body line on both the 2016 and 1974 models. The windscreen surround will be painted silver to emulate the original which was chromed. Overall the Spider has a decidedly 1970s retro look.



*A 1974 Fiat 124 Spider (Wikipedia/Streetpeep Blog)*

The new Spider will use the Fiat Abarth 1.4 litre, four-cylinder, turbocharged engine, coupled to the same Japanese gearboxes used in the ND and driving the rear wheels. This is the only longitudinal mounting of this engine so far as it is usually mounted east-west as a front-wheel drive. This engine produces 119kw and 250Nm compared to the 2.0 Litre ND's 118kw and 200Nm, however the Spider produces these figures at lower RPM than the MX-5. *On paper* this should mean that the Spider would be the better performer, however the Spider is about 48kg heavier which gives the two cars almost identical power-to-weight ratios. The final answer as to which will be the better performer will only come from a road test of the two vehicles together (*where do I volunteer?*).

The chassis, suspension, steering and brakes are identical, although the suspension of the Spider will probably be set up differently due to the extra weight; this may affect the handling. The Spider will have unique alloy wheels but the two cars even use identical tyres. The Spider's differential has a different ratio from the MX-5 to take advantage of the power and torque being

produced at lower RPM.

Inside, the two cars are almost identical, the Fiat badge on the steering wheel of the Spider (below, right) being the most noticeable difference between the two car interiors.



The original Fiat 124 Spider was renowned for three things:

1. They were bags of fun to drive
2. They rusted away overnight
3. Like most Italian cars of the day, they were extremely unreliable

This collaboration between FCA and Mazda means that Fiat will have a car that:

1. Is bags of fun to drive
2. Is corrosion resistant
3. Should be reliable

## So is one car more desirable than the other?

A rhetorical question really, as I AM talking to MX-5 enthusiasts, but it is a question that will be asked. In my opinion it comes down to whether you want a sports car that has set the standard in driveability and quality for over 25 years or a quasi-Italian sports car based on the same platform (*am I showing my prejudice?*).

I think the Fiat Spider will appeal to a number of people, particularly those who are European car enthusiasts (with blinkers on, of course) but I doubt that Fiat Spider sales will seriously effect MX-5 sales. Any decision one way or the other will be based on looks, as the performance of the two cars should be very close.

Personally, I like certain aspects of both designs but will reserve my judgement until I see a Spider in the flesh. In any case I think my Limited Edition NC wins hands down.

At the time of writing there was no news from Fiat Australia as to their plans for the Spider. Just to throw the cat amongst the pigeons there are rumours of a high-performance model under the Abarth label in 2017 that could be a game changer.

What a pity FCA decided against naming the new car Alfa Romeo; imagine what it would have looked like with the iconic Alfa Romeo grill. The MX-5 Club and the Alfa Romeo Owners Club of Australia (AROCA) already share a keen rivalry on the track – think of what it would have been like *if Alfa Spiders and MX-5s had gone head to head!* ■

**Author's note:** All of the information above was gleaned from the internet. Some sites had contradictory information, so what is presented above is to the best of my knowledge accurate but is not guaranteed to be so.

# MX-5-based Fiat 124 Spider



*The new MX-5-based Fiat 124 Spider, which is due for release in Australia later in 2016* ➤



■ Words: Siddique Fisher

*I'm sure by now that everyone's aware that the new ND platform has been a joint project with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA), the makers of several marques including Fiat, Alfa Romeo and Jeep.*

As a result, Fiat will be releasing its new 124 Spider in 2016 based on the MX-5 ND. Basically it's a luxury-focused ND, powered by a 1.4 Litre MultiAir® turbocharged four-cylinder engine, variants of which are currently used in the Fiat 500 and 500X, some Alfas and the Jeep Renegade.

I had one of these Jeeps for three days recently whilst my other car was in for service, and I can tell you it's a pretty impressive unit. It offers great torque and power with excellent fuel consumption.

It's hard to believe it's a 1.4 ... with a six-speed manual and ND chassis, it would be *awesommmmmmmme!*

With this engine's first application in a rear-wheel-drive vehicle, Fiat 124 Spider has been confirmed to deliver 119kW and 250Nm of torque. There's an electric power steering system, independent front and rear suspension, electronic locking differential, electronic stability control and traction control.

There will be an Abarth (performance) version (like Mazdaspeed or AMG etc) – more my taste! – which is scheduled to be unveiled at the Geneva motor show next month. This is likely to offer even higher levels of performance from the 1.4T; current

Abarth-badged Fiat 500s deliver up to 140kW/250Nm, making the Italian roadster significantly quicker and more powerful than the MX-5.

Rumour has it that Fiat may also be considering a detuned version of the 2014 Alfa Romeo 4C engine for an Abarth version. The turbocharged, 1.75-litre direct-injection four-pot generates 177kW and 350Nm of twist in the 4C, but its output would likely be decreased if it makes its way into the 124 Spider Abarth.

Paired to either a six-speed manual or auto gearbox, both tweaked for quicker shifts, the unit should enable the roadster to hit 100 kmh in around five seconds, more than a full second quicker than the standard model. Top speed should increase from 208 kmh to about 240 kmh.

**All very exciting ... but price will always be a factor in our market!**

**And the question is:** will Fiat 124 Spiders be allowed to join our club in 2017? (Ed ~ the Club's committee is already considering that question.) ■



*A suggestion of what an Abarth version of the new Fiat 124 Spider might look like ...*



# Stuckey Tyre Service - for all your tyre needs

See Stuckey's advertisement on page 6 ...

Stuckey Tyre Service began selling competition tyres in 1972 from this converted bus. The operation has changed over the years, but the emphasis on supplying the best tyres has not.

2015 saw the addition of both Michelin Vintage Tyres and Avon Motorsport Tyres.

"We have been expanding our specialist tyre range for a few years," said general manager Russell Stuckey, "but being awarded the Michelin Vintage Tyre agency in April 2015 was the icing on the cake. We now have a range of quality tyres to suit most Marques from current day back to the 1920s, and these include competition use as well as for normal road use."

Later last year Stuckey Tyre Service was awarded the Avon Motorsport Tyre agency, which includes slicks and treaded tyres for both modern and historic racing classes. "The modern Avon facility at Melksham in the UK was established in 1981 as a specialist producer of motor sport tyres and now has a wide range of tyres to suit many specialist categories of racing," Russell said. "Our current range includes road legal race tyres, slicks in both bias and radial construction, as well as treaded tyres for historic race cars."

But Stuckey Tyre Service has not deserted its fundamental commitment to Dunlop Motorsport, with new tyres and categories to support, including Toyota's new 86 Racing Series beginning in 2016. ■



## Trading Post

### For Sale

2005 NC (46,000km,  
Melbourne)



For details of this and other items to buy, swap, sell or borrow, see the "Trading Post" section in the "Clubroom" section of the Club's website, [mx5vic.org.au](http://mx5vic.org.au)



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Financial MX-5 Club members may join the **Repco VIP Club** for 10% off full retail at any time, and up to another 30% off full retail with advertised offers.

Enter your details at <http://vip.repco.com.au/registration/register/1160>.

You'll receive a temporary "VIP" card via e-mail, with a plastic barcoded card and key tag following within 14 days.

Repco will e-mail you online catalogues and offers.

### Burson automotive products at trade prices



Current financial Club members can purchase automotive parts, tools, accessories and car care products at trade prices from **Burson Auto Parts** stores.

Simply ask for your discount when you purchase, present your current membership card and quote account number **112558**.

Burson Auto Parts have more than 100 outlets on the east coast. Check out the range at [www.burson.com.au](http://www.burson.com.au)



### Car care products - member discounts

Waxit Car Care in Tullamarine is offering Club members 12.5% off all products (*excluding already-discounted kits and the following brands/products: Polishangel, Vikan, Flex and Concours 900 Polisher*).

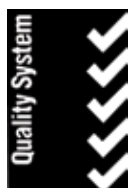
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