



# Going bush

Adventure-seekers **ROB AND TRACY MORRIS**, from The Blonde Nomads, share their beginner tips for 4WDing in the Aussie bush.

If you are new to 4WDing, going 'bush' can be a scary prospect, especially if you have your family in tow. But, with a little know-how and commonsense, taking your 4WD into its natural habitat need not be as daunting as you think. Here are five tips we have picked up on our travels.

## 1 Know your vehicle

Understanding your vehicle's off-road capability is crucial. Read through your owner's manual to check details such as the maximum angle your vehicle can pass over an obstacle. You should also understand the various drive modes and when to use them. For example, you could have transfer case settings 2H, 4H or 4L, which help navigate different road surfaces such as sand, gravel and tarmac.

## 2 Take a buddy

Never go it alone, especially when starting out. Following an experienced friend through an obstacle or, even better, having them guide you through, is a great way to learn. You'll get the sensation of driving serious terrain without the risk of a damage bill.

## 3 Tyre pressure

Changing your tyre pressure is one of the best 4WD tips and tricks you'll learn. The recommended pressure for your vehicle will vary depending on factors

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including vehicle weight and rim size, but, as a general guide, drop your tyre pressure to between 14-18 psi for sand driving and to around 25 psi for standard off-roading on dirt tracks. Also remember to reinflate your tyres when you return to bitumen and/or fast speeds.



#### Read the road

Reading dirt and sandy roads is a skill. Some routes can be in good condition with smooth sections, but can quickly become rough with deep washouts, corrugations and steep shelves that need to be taken at walking pace to avoid damage to your vehicle. When driving on sand, it is important to maintain a good speed as slowing down can increase the risk of getting bogged. At water crossings always check the depth and if there are any hidden obstacles before driving through, and be mindful of strong currents.



#### Be prepared

With all elements of adventure and remote travel, you need to ensure you have the right recovery and survival gear in case things don't go to plan, especially when venturing into the Aussie bush. Notify a friend or family member of your plans before setting off, and carry sufficient food and water, a puncture repair kit, air compressor, recovery gear, a first-aid kit and communication gear, such as a UHF radio or satellite phone. ▲

01 Tackling a clay track 02 Getting off course is part of the fun in Watagans National Park, NSW © Jennifer Ennion 03 4WDing can be a great family activity. Images 01 & 03 © Tracy Morris