

Jeep Hospital



Each month Dr Jeep (Tony Whitehead) takes us through the trials and tribulations at his "Jeep Hospital", USA 4X4 Jeep Specialist in Melbourne, Victoria. Over 20 Jeeps are admitted weekly for servicing and suspension work through to differential, transmission and engine rebuilds. Dr Jeep explains the diagnosis, the corrective surgery and future care of these vehicles.

Great snow falls over winter attracted many 4WDers to trails in the high country and in particular Mt Skene; a very well used road that connects Licola to Jamison that had nearly two metres of snow on it! The Melbourne Jeep Owners made a trip there and we were kept busy with a few Jeeps' pre-trip preparation. Mainly the usual diff and gear box oils, greasing and checking second sets of tyres that only come out in the wetter months. Even if you didn't hit the snow there was loads of mud around and it was a great wheeling season down here.

We've been busy on an old 1983 CJ7 fitting a T176 gearbox. The original BorgWarner T5 in these Jeeps had a bad habit of cracking the teeth off the cluster gear and 3rd gear for no apparent reason and that transmission went to the junk yard years ago. The current Tremek TR3550 transmission we were replacing was converted to 4WD many years ago but was still not up to scratch

The T176 gearbox was in all the Australian delivered J10s (otherwise known as CJ10s to the rest of the world) and in any diesel CJ7 and CJ8's. The four speed T176 gearbox doesn't have over-drive like the T5 but its strong and reliable. The only real thing to change was the spigot bearing ID so our local clutch shop found us one. There were some new holes to drill in the bash plate to line it up on the chassis and the transmission was the same length so there was no tail shaft work required.

We set up a few JKs too this month with the teraflex budget boosts that we'll separately report on in a JK suspension special soon, and also churned out a Commander 2" Teraflex budget boost.

We ended up spending a week refurbishing a 1977 F100 4WD that held us up for a week. We normally don't touch anything other than Jeeps here unless they're friends or family and in this case it was a friends referral. We finished off our 97 TJ we purchased with the 5th gear hub broken. The AX-15 5 speed in the early TJs have a weakness in the 5th gear hub assembly and when loaded up and hot from a big haul they break open rendering the transmission locked in neutral. We have seen this a few times including our old rig, Jeep-1, that broke on the way to the S.A. 4WD show back in 98. Not only did we learn all about the 5th gear issue, we also found out about the 24 hour qualifying period from the RACV total care coverage! I had to arrange my own lift home that time, the break down occurred 18 hours after I joined up!

On that note, any Jeepster with a Jeep out of warranty period and Jeep Assist is crazy not to be a member of some sort of the





to be running out of fuel or something, we even tried another PCM and checked all the senders....and then we lifted it off the deck to pack up the work shop that evening and there it was.... a HUGE hunk of the catalytic converter had broken out of the cat and made its way through the muffler and was plugging up the tip of the exhaust! That's a new one. It must have been banging away for so long but the owner didn't care. We disconnected the engine pipe section of the exhaust from the bottom of the exhaust manifold and tried to start the motor and it ran perfectly! So it's getting a new cat and muffler and going back home.

We had another 2004 TJ in for a Teralow too. They're a great product that replace the 2.72:1 low range unit with a planetary set that's 4 to 1. It gives the equivalent final drive ratio drop similar to dropping to 4.56:1 diff gears with out touching the diffs. Just like the teraflex developed 4:1 in both the Rubicon TJ and JK it gives you great road gear ratios and awesome low range. It's a complete half of the transercase so there is a bit of work fitting one but a very handy component. Jeep-1 has had one since the 3rd TJ version was 100% reliable and has been bullet proof.

This next week we'll be prepping Jeep-1 for the drive to the Watagans in NSW and the National Jeep Jamboree that the Cherokee Club are hosting. We're giving away a full Rancho MyRide remote in cab and RS9000XL shocks to suit any Jeep and an Optima Deep cycle cattery plus other teraflex and USA 4X4 prizes and I know many other sponsors are giving away lots more stuff so it will be an event not to miss! And I also look forward to joining and representing the MJOC and meeting up with lots of keen Jeepers for no doubt another fantastic event.

Happy Jeeping till next time and remember to keep the greasy side down.

JAA

NRMA/RACV/RACQ etc. The total care package is priceless and takes all the hassle out of the smallest or worst break down. We've had customers cash in on it many times. The best example was a locked up Dana 35C in the back of a 96 ZG towing a caravan. It was towed back from the southern corners of QLD and the NT to USA 4X4 and the couple were trained back to Melbourne after the RACV decided the outback repair wasn't viable. It's my first question to people when they call with a break down.

And a funny one, We got a call from an old customer, his TJ wont go. He had the RACV look at it and he tells me it has a clutch issue. Anyway it shows up on a flat bed and when we tried to start it would fire once or twice and try to idle but stalled in no time. The catalytic converter rattled badly as they do and we knew it was crook but kept looking. We hooked up the scanner but it wouldn't talk to the PCM, so we kept looking. It seemed



Old Dr Jeep and Nurse Jeep also had the chance to do some research in Hawaii last month. I needed to check out some LHD/RHD issues and the best way was to hire one of the LHD JKs from one of the many car rental companies over there. They rent out V6 two and four doors in branded the X model. They are bare bones as such with wind-up windows, no central-locking and open diffs. (Funny how we get used to the mod cons). And while they all moan about their gas prices we were still filling up at under \$4 USD a gallon, that's \$4.93 (@ \$81C) and 4.6l (US gallon). That's just over a dollar a litre so they shouldn't complain too much over there.

One things for sure, they don't have our ridiculously tight rules pertaining to modifications on vehicles, the number of Jeeps and other makes you see with MASSIVE tyres just going about their daily business is amazing, we saw six Suzuki guys in a row with +35" tyres and 36" and 38" rubber on all sorts of things, they don't have issues with wheel track like we do either. We're allowed to widen them 50mm before engineering questions are raised. One XJ I saw would have been 500mm over! Just driving around you see countless CJs, YJs and even more TJ and JKs plus older rigs, but not much full size stuff or Commanders for that matter.

