

# School's in for Bush Trekkers.

An enthusiastic group of four-wheel-drivers in Devonport on the North-West Coast have joined forces to provide Tasmania's first off-road driver training programme.

By  
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Photo courtesy of the Advocate Newspaper, Burnie

Four Wheel Drive School Instructor Wayne Harris of Devonport.

The programme was the idea of Off-Road Connection Proprietor and former leading off-road buggy racer Wayne Harris, and is being conducted in conjunction with the Devonport Four Wheel Drive Club.

The two-day 12-hour courses cover theory and practical applications, and have already attracted a good deal of interest from corporate clients keen to reduce the annual damage and accident bills for their 4WD fleets by educating their drivers in the correct techniques.

Mr Harris said the course involved teaching drivers how to handle heavy, rocky conditions, mud, steep slopes, and sand driving.

"The courses also involve recovery techniques (from being bogged), correct driving habits to avoid damage, stall-starts, winching, emergency repairs, and preparation of vehicles before a four-wheel-drive trip," he said.

Mr Harris said environmental responsibility was also a key element

in the course, which followed the "Tread Lightly" philosophy.

"We believe in responsible recreational off-road driving – if we damage the bush, we won't have anywhere left to drive."

Mr Harris has already successfully conducted courses for Renison Ltd and Mt Lyell on the West Coast, as well as courses for Forestry Tasmania and Telecom on the North-West Coast in the past few months



Lesson (1) – Many hands make light work – especially when you're stuck.

since instigating the programme.

"There's been a need for this type of course in Tasmania for some time, so I finally decided to do something about it," he said.

"Too many people buy expensive four-wheel-drives and think they can go anywhere once they have a vehicle."

"It's not that simple – they often get into trouble and either damage their vehicles or the environment, or even worse, hurt themselves, simply because they haven't been shown the correct techniques and a few simple basic rules," he said.

"I see it all the time in my line of work, and it could easily be avoided with a bit of basic instruction and application of common sense."

"Whether it's for recreational purposes or for employment, the same principles apply, and hopefully we can teach the people who will be driving the vehicles the safest way to drive in the bush," he said.



*Lesson (2) – Always get out to check steep descents before starting, just in case you can't come back up if you get into trouble.*



*A bird's eye view of participants in a course near Baker's Beach.*

Further information can be obtained from:  
Wayne Harris  
Off-Road & Canvas Connection  
232 William St, Devonport 7310  
Phone (004) 24 1168

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