

club

Summer 2025
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TORQUE



**Celebrating 35
Years of MX-5**

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF NSW

Membership Report - by Bryan Shedden

A warm welcome to the MX-5 Club of NSW.

New members are encouraged to contact their Chapter Convenors for local events and to visit our website - nsw.mx5.com.au for the full range of social, technical and sporting events.

Current Membership at 13th February 2025

1124



Members who joined 13th November '24 to 13th February '25

David Bailey	Kane Fieldsend	Rhonda Magritzer
Deborah Bailey	Helen Fragakis	Cody Martelli
Bill Bannister	Belinda Fulloon	Daniel Moloney
Bill Burnett	Brian Geach	Tammy Noradechanunt
Tracey-Ann Burnett	Diane Geach	Roberto Pettini
James Crowhurst	Kavi Gowrishankar	Sheree Piskorz
Graham Davis	Helena Hall	Jordon Pollock
Lorraine Davis	Phillip Hall	Dennis Ryan
Thomas De Caria	Tim Hill	Tyler Schaafsma
Ivy Dimovski	Luke Jeffress	Adam Selwyn
Milly Dimovski	Kim Kownacki	Donovan Stone
Ruby Dimovski	Mark Kownacki	Peter Toman
Andrew Elliott	Martin Lyall	Rayna Toman
Katherine Elliott	Al Magritzer	Cooper Yates



Welcoming new members with an Illawarra Chapter Cap

Membership Renewals - if you are having any difficulties logging into the Membership portal to process your renewal, please contact Bryan Shedden on 0422 340 010 and he will happily assist in resolving any issues.

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From the Editor - Senia Gaunson

Summer time for those of us on the coast, is all about the beach and driving "topless" in our MX-5s.

This issue is jam packed with Christmas

stories and Award presentations, great to see our members out there socialising (all your stories on pages 20 - 27). Hope everyone had a fun, safe Christmas.

A Brave New World is coming to Motorsport! Our new Motorsport Secretary, Chris Andry has all the goss (page 29-30).

We celebrated 35 years of MX-5 with an NA Register run to Patonga, what a fabulous sight (cover and pages 6-7). We can't wait to see the Anniversary edition coming to Aus very soon (keep an eye on the Autumn edition, we hear one of our members is expecting one soon!).

There is another 35th Celebration coming soon, the MX-5 Club of NSW turns 35, celebrations are on target for the **21st of June**, keep an eye on the website for all the details and put the date in your diary.

Australia Day 2025 was a bit of a break with tradition, with chapters holding individual events in their area. It looks like this was a big hit, with good attendance at each (see pages 32-33 for some happy snaps). We were sorry not to catch up with our neighbours at Cordeaux dam, but can certainly understand the long, mostly highway, drive home is not much fun.

There are so many great events planned for the year, including **A Christmas (in July) Mystery Tour**, can you find Santa, or evil Brendan? This is certainly a fabulous club to belong to!

Finally, thank you once again Chris Cameron for doing a final check of the magazine, you rock!

Senia Gaunson

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President's Report by Ian Combes

Here we are with another edition of Club Torque. It's a nice 'problem' to have - needing to write another President's report! It comes around pretty regularly now - a huge thanks to our (very) hard-working publications Officer Senia Gaunson! I hope that you are all getting your articles in regularly now - you know that Senia will be on your case, don't you?

Hopefully everyone got through the Summer break ok. Hot for top-down motoring, but that's what hats are for... We are now into the swing of things for 2025 with social

runs and motorsport events happening. Lots of great runs on the event calendar now. The club is lucky to have such a great group of Chapter Convenors, run coordinators, run leaders and other volunteers to make this possible.

Our first (CSCA) track day is still a little way off (middle of March) but the last I heard, our club made up 80% of the entries at the time (it was early days)...

The MX-5 Cup has already kicked off with the first round. Hot steamy day to be driving around in a triple-layer race suit! You know what they say though - an average day at the track beats any day at work...

This year's motorsport calendar is a beauty. Great work getting this sorted and on the website by Chris Andry and Bryan Shedden. Looking forward to some of these events!

Our Natmeet 2026 committee is getting serious about planning - expressions of interest will be sought fairly soon. Won't be that long before we open entries (golly). Much work to be done by Elaine and David Gazzard and the organising committee!

The other major activity in the works is the event to mark the Club's 35th anniversary. At the time of writing, planning is coming along nicely. You could well hear about it by the time this issue hits your letterbox.

This also has a planning committee, coordinated by John Purcell. It should be a great event.

Notmeet 2025 is even closer (April), which is a fun event from what I've heard.

Keep driving and stay safe!

Ian Combes

Motorsport - Christopher Andry

Christopher Andry became the MX-5 Club of NSW Motorsport Secretary in November 2024 after a very successful 2024 motorsport year. He was named 2024 Motorsport Champion of the Year and then the Motorsport Secretary soon after, well done Chris!

"The 2024 motorsport year was full of great competition

and new ground, among many things as a competitor, it was thrilling to have run at a new track, Wodonga TAFE and the Club hosted its first ever round under the lights at Sydney Motorsport Park.

I'm grateful for the amazing work our volunteers put in to run these events and hope to build and grow from the



strong foundation we have" - Christopher Andry

Cover Photo by Grant Paisley - NA Register Drive Celebrating 35 Years of MX-5

COMMITTEE

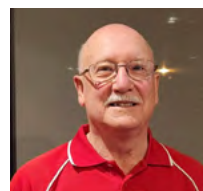
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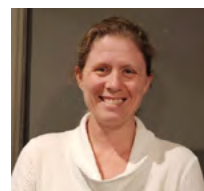
2025 COMMITTEE



PRESIDENT - Ian Combes



VICE PRESIDENT - Jeff Rowe



TREASURER - Helen Green



SECRETARY - Wayne Luxford



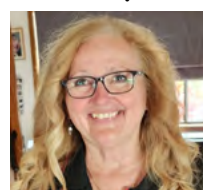
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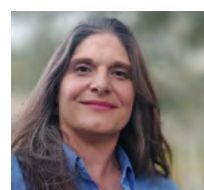
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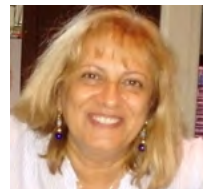
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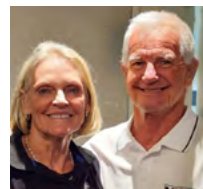


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ILLAWARRA - Zan & Phil



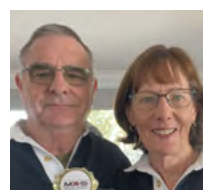
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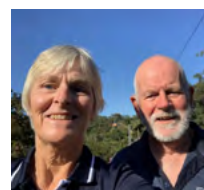
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NA REGISTER DRIVE TO PATONGA



The NA generation MX-5 started it all for us, manufactured by Mazda from 1989 to 1997. The Club has had a Historic Register for a number of years with almost 60 cars currently on historic registration.

This run was aimed to bring out as many NAs as we could, and judging by the turn out we succeeded! We had 27 members and partners attend plus 6 non-members and partners who were interested by the NA run. Of the members, almost half were first timers on an MX-5 Club run! We had apologies from 5 other members who were not able to attend, but very keen to attend the next Register run. Clearly members are interested in this run format.

There's something special about seeing over 20 NA generation cars parked with their roofs down, pop up lights up and Spring sun shining off their paint. I dare say it's been a very long time since this many NAs have got together.

The drive commenced at the old Weighbridge at Cowan at 8am. The day was organised by long time club members Louis Serret and Mauro (Mick) Consalvi.

As I rolled up to the meeting area at 7.45am Mauro and 3 other cars were already there having taken a quick run through Galston Gorge as a warm up to the day. Very quickly the car park was full of NAs with members crooning over the various

models and admiring the condition of these vehicles. Members cheerfully exchanged stories of their cars and recent drives whilst admiring this collection of the very first model MX-5.

At 8.20am, we went through the driver briefing and took time for a great photo opportunity. The day was perfect for top-down driving in these little jewels.

We pulled out from the Weighbridge at Cowan headed down the Old Pac, made for the NA with its winding roads and smooth tarmac towards Mooney Mooney. The drive meandered through the National Park on arguably some of Sydney's best winding roads. With speed limits set at a lowly 60km we were assured of plenty of interest from the local constabulary! But even that couldn't take the shine off the joy of driving a convoy of historic cars along a beautiful winding, picturesque road.

After 40 minutes or so we turned off to Woy Woy Road and meandered through the suburbs and then climbed the hill on Mount Ettalong Road where you get great views of the ocean.

The convoy arrived at Patonga Beach, a very charming part of the north coast suburbs. Members enjoyed brunch at the beautifully positioned Boathouse Hotel, across from the beach, providing a lovely view.

Our group of just over 30 people enjoyed the

NA REGISTER DRIVE TO PATONGA

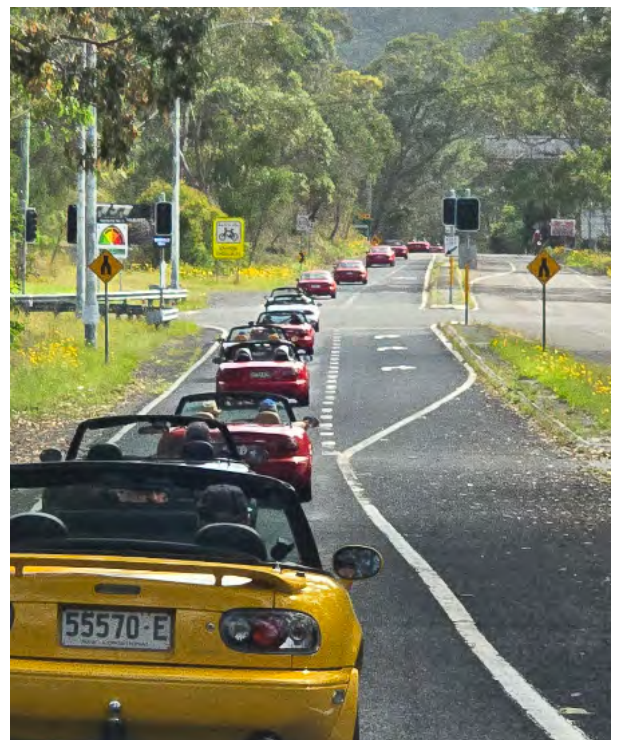
Story: Louis Serrett | Photos: Grant Paisley and Brandan Milo
10th November 2024

delicious breakfast menu, sun and car chatter in the outdoor courtyard under striped umbrellas.

It was a great spot for people to catch up and talk about their love of the first MX-5. And can I say there was an amazing variety of cars, from the "off road" MX-5 to the highly tuned NAs and everything in between.

The drive to Patonga was more than just a drive, it was a celebration of camaraderie of old and new friends all sharing a particular love for that original little MX-5 that began a passion that started with the NA MX-5 and continues 35 years on.

For those who participated it was also a reminder of the fun that comes with membership of the Club.



Canberra and South Coast zoom off

Words by Rod Nicholas, Bob & Linda Downing, Bill Short and Keith Monaghan



Canberra Story - 21st to 24th November 2024

Last year I revisited one of old mate Ken Keeling's legendary runs and knocked out a loop around the Snowies over a long weekend. It was a hoot, and the run found its way onto the calendar again—same time, same place. All good, but I felt like mixing it up a bit, so found myself dillying and dallying around with the planning until I had five (yes five!) different runs, all variations on a theme (the theme being 'have a bucket-load of fun').

Getting ready to put my choice up on the website, I realised I had been gazumped: our South Coast cousins were doing my run (more or less) the following week! I made contact, and we agreed we would conduct a joint run. It was a good idea, saving time and effort for both run leaders by sharing the organisation workload.

And so it was that my small group assembled at Hume for a run down to the sea—Bermagui via Bombala and the Brown Mountain to kick off our four-day weekend. We were joining up with an equally small group of South Coasties for a relaxed dinner. It was an effortless trip to Nimmitabel for refreshments and then on down the Brown Mountain. We were in Bermi in time for lunch and a little sight-seeing.

Day 2 was back up into the sky—Bermi to Jindabyne the wiggly way. Joining up with the Coasties, our group, now nine cars, headed out of Bermi via Tathra and Merimbula for morning tea at Candelo. This section was pretty cruisy, following the beach down to Merimbula, and then a short burst through the green countryside to Candelo. It was the next section, from Candelo to Bombala that I was looking forward to.

I'd been wanting to try out the challenging Mount Darragh Road, which seems to be a favourite of the South Coast Chapter, for several years, and finally got the opportunity to give it a go. It did not disappoint. It wriggles and jiggles beautifully up the hill, dense bush scenes either side, and more than a few corners to excite. Simon had a little heart flutter as a wallaby dashed across in front of him moments after leaving Wyndham, but otherwise all was good. The only downside was the short section of traffic light-controlled roadworks as we approached the top and the 4WD towing a car on a trailer that exercised its right to drive in a manner that kept both vehicles on the road, unfortunately (for us) ignoring the several places to pull over that would have allowed a small convoy to pass. But once over the hill, we had a straight run into Bombala, waving to the pack of Porsches that were headed down the mountain (we would see these folks several times over the trip).

Bombala was our lunch stop, then on to Jindy via Dalgety. Good country roads, not overly exciting, but enjoyable anyway. They were mostly empty, other than us, and the rural scenes are picturesque. We arrived at the Jindy Inn in good time, but a little late for anyone who wanted to visit the Wild Brumby Distillery. So, fivesies were in order after a short rest and prior to our walk to the pub for dinner.

TO THE SEA - TO THE SKY IN THE SNOWIES

To the Sea - To the Sky in the Snowies

Photos by Rod Nicholas, Simon Trickett, Bob & Linda Downing

On **Day 3** it was time for some Skyjinx, as we zoomed a loop around the Snowies (totally bereft of snow). The Snowy Loop was a feature of my run last year, but reluctant to do exactly the same thing again, we mixed it up a bit. The first stage was an easy run down to Adaminaby; a bit of highway to Berridale, then some open country road before we joined the Snowy Mountains Highway with its sweeping bends and expansive views. The roads seem to encourage right-foot pressure, but ever mindful of setting a good example for other road users, we exercised all due care and responsibility and arrived a little short of the hour Google maps reckoned we should take. Coffee and cakes were the order at the bakery.

Back on the Snowy Mountains Highway, after Adaminaby we turned left after passing by the Kiandra Heritage District on to Link Road and headed towards Cabramurra. Last year we took Elliott Way to Tooma, but we hung a left at the intersection and dropped downhill on Goat Ridge Road. The road was bordered by a forest of dead gums, starkly white and ghostly. It was an enduring reminder of the January 2020 fires that smashed much of the Kosciuszko National Park. As we turned into Cabramurra, it was evident there had been a significant rebuild following the fires. The 2020 fires destroyed 36 houses, along with several of the unit blocks, the school, the old ski club, and the Edinburgh Cottage where many members of the Royal family, including the Queen, and other guests have stayed over the years. New apartments and buildings dominate the scene, which is much changed from the time Maryanne and her family visited friends there fifty-plus years ago. We ventured to the lookout, took some snaps, and then restarted our journey down the mountain to Khancoban.

Goat Ridge Road became Snow Ridge Road, then Tooma Road as we dropped down to Tumut Pond Dam. We stopped for photos and to allow a couple of vehicles plenty of time to get ahead of us, then hit the road again. What. A. Blast! The road was in great nick, and as twisty as I could wish. It was top-down all the way, although very hot, and we made fairly short work of the run. We passed a few brave cyclists on the way, wondering what in the world possessed them to ride such an extreme track—did they not know how narrow the roads were and how steep the hills?

Lunch at the Pickled Parrot in Khancoban was another hot affair—the air conditioning appeared to be nothing more than leaving the door open, which didn't help given it was over 30 degrees out.

Khancoban to Dead Horse Gap is a short 70 km, but this road is a blast. There's up, down, up, down, up until it reaches 1588 metres, and throughout it all there are good roads, corners and bends galore and stunning scenery. There is very little chance to get into the higher gears, so much of the time is spent in 3rd and 4th, with a few 2nd gear hairpins as well. Traffic was light, catching up to a few cars every now and then, but mostly it was free reign (albeit law-abiding, of course). Plenty of grins by the time we stopped at Dead Horse Gap for another couple of snaps. Then straight down to Jindabyne (without stopping at Wild Brumby) and getting ready at the Jindy Inn before walking a short (but uphill) path to the Jindabyne Brewery for dinner. Tasty food, tasty beer and good company. What more do we need?

Day 4 saw us heading home, although our South Coast friends, who still had 300+ kms to get home, were going to overnight at Gundagai. Back up the hill to Dead Horse Gap, then down to Corryong, just across the border into Victoria, for morning tea. Going down the Alpine Way is a very different experience to going up. We were mostly unhindered by traffic, and it was a good drive, but I missed the excitement of the humming engine as it pulls 6K revs in 2nd gear around a corner. After our recaffeination, and farewells, we headed on through to Tumbarumba, where our cousins were stopping for lunch. We kept going, taking lunch at the old favourite, the Oriental Hotel in Tumut, and then proceeded home via Gundagai and the Hume Boreway.

By the time I got home, I'd travelled a little over 1,350 km, consumed 84 litres of fuel (for which I'd paid \$171) and reaped a return of 6.2 litres per 100 km.

Our long weekend away was a hoot, and I am delighted to have spent it in the company of such wonderful people. I want to thank, particularly, Bob and Linda Downing for their planning efforts—great work, and a lively, fun-filled run. Thanks all for your enthusiasm—I hope to see you again on another run. I also want to say that having members of other Chapters involved—this run featured the Canberra, South Coast, Illawarra and Sydney Chapters—is brilliant. It totally reinforces the 'One Club' perspective!



South Coast Story - 21st to 25th November 2024

Day 1

4 cars met in Milton at The Heritage Bakery and left with the intention of having morning tea at Mossy Point boat ramp which ended as lunch at Grumpies in Mogo, followed by a mooch around. The mooching continued in Central Tilba where we helped the local economy at the lolly shop and small bar. Onwards to Bermagui where we were met by our Canberra friends, another 5 cars. After a chill out and fivesies, the ladies of the group decided that it was too chilly to have Pizza on the lawn and decided that the local club was the place to go. A wise choice everyone later agreed.

Day 2

Our run commenced at an ungodly hour (for some who are not early risers) at 9am when we left the motel in convoy. It was a warm and windy start to the day and most MX5's had their tops down. It was a scenic but uneventful run south through Tathra and Merimbula and then across to Candelo where we stopped for morning tea with the flies and locals who were impressed with our little cars.

Having survived morning tea, the flies and questions from the locals, we split into two groups for a more spirited top down run up the hill with the Canberra mob leading. Ah, good to have radios as not long after the lead pack set off it sounded like a wrong turn message coming from the radio. Forewarned, our group took the same wrong turn a short time later.

We had a mostly uneventful run up the Mount Darragh Road to Bombala via Wyndham. Most of us had lunch at Cosmo Café followed by a brief walk around in the heat, swatting the flies, to stretch our legs and take advantage of shopping opportunities.

We continued as two groups along the next section of the run along the Monaro Highway and Snowy River Way to our next way stop just outside Dalgety and beside the Snowy Mountain River. Thankfully there were not quite so many flies here. It was very calming listening to the babbling water and cicadas.

Waving goodbye to the flies, we combined groups for a relaxing run to Jindabyne where we settled into the Jindy Inn Motel. The Motel people were very accommodating and made a room available for our pre-dinner social gathering. Yep, lots of stories told there. There was a short walk to the Jindabyne Hotel for dinner on the balcony, with the lake in the background. Excellent food, a glass or two, more stories and people drifted back to the motel in due course in preparation for tomorrow's adventure.

Day 3:

Around the block.

The day started bright and sunny with predictions of temperatures reaching into the 30s, which started early with the air conditioning needed. Nine cars gathered together to start the trip around the block. We left the accommodation at around 9:00 and drove through Jindabyne out across the dam on our way north.



After passing through East Jindabyne we came across what might be, due to the weather, a not so suitable event of riding a bicycle through the hills north of Jindabyne. After overtaking these, it was on to Berridale and we were surprised not to see a radar trap in town. At the end of town we took a left turn towards Adaminaby.

The group travelled through some very scenic countryside until we reached the Snowy Mountains Highway. We continued to Adaminaby where a stop was taken for refreshments.

Next, it was into the Kosciusko National Park through the historic gold mining town of Kiandra. Kiandra is the home of the first recreational ski field in Australia and the longest running ski club in the world, both starting in 1861. A little way down the road we took a left turn onto the link road. This took us past Three Mile Dam and onto the intersection at Goat Ridge Rd. We turned onto Goat Ridge Rd and continued to Cabramurra for short stop to take in the views and some photos. Having not been to Cabramurra for several years it was surprising to see the damage bushfires had done to the town and the surrounding bush.

From there it was on to Khancoban with a photo stop at Tumut Pond Dam. The country is very rugged here and it makes you think how hard it was building the Snowy Mountains Scheme. We arrived at Khancoban for a lunch stop and enjoyed a break from our cars and discussions with our cohort. After replenishing our energies, we took the Alpine Way heading back towards Jindabyne.

This section of road winds further South before turning north at Tom Groggin. This is rugged country and the road showed this as we wound our way through the Great Dividing Range under the shadow of Mount Kosciuszko. Just before Thredbo we stopped at Dead Horse Gap for another photo opportunity and then continued on our way down the mountain and back to our accommodation in Jindabyne.

This around the block trip was a short 350 kilometres across some of the most spectacular country Australia. It was enjoyed by all who did the run.

To finish a great day, we walked to the Jindabyne Brewery for a drink, some dinner and discussions on the day's and tomorrow's events.

Day 4

The start of our homebound journey took us in the reverse direction from Jindabyne to Khancoban which we had travelled the previous afternoon. A quick stop in Khancoban to recover some lost property and we were on our way to Corryong for a final morning tea stop. Following this, the Canberra contingent departed for home. The rest of us continued on to Tumbarumba for lunch at the bakery and then to Gundagai for the night. We had a delicious Chinese meal for dinner at the local club.

Day 5

Leroy and Grant were early morning starters which left only 3 cars for the final homeward run. By this stage the few remaining decided to traverse the highway towards home, Bill and Janice took the Picton Road home from the Hume whilst Sue and Keith, Linda and I opted to travel through Bundanoon and Kangaroo Valley for lunch before tackling the ongoing Cambewarra Mountain roadworks on the way home. An enjoyable five days away zooming around the mountains in our great little cars and some great company.

U-Turn count Rod 1 Bob 2 (no run in strange surroundings is complete without at least 1 U-turn)

Words : Zan Dimovski | Photos: Senia Gaunson and Ann Hicks
16th - 17th November 2024

Lonely Planet has named Barunguba Montague Island, off the NSW South Coast, one of wild Australia's most underrated destinations.

Seven months in the planning, Paul and Dianne Byers were ready to take us on an adventure, leading their first run since moving to the Illawarra, to Narooma, with a short cruise to Montague Island, the "star" of the trip. Montague promised pods of whales, seal colonies and many bird species, eagerly anticipated by Chris Cameron, who along with John Purcell and Kerry Redfern, joined us all the way from the Hunter on this adventure.

The predicted weather had other ideas and the cruise was cancelled by the charter people the day before we were due to go. Big scramble, do we go, do we cancel? Everyone was excited and ready to go, so we decided an overnight trip in an MX-5 to the South Coast is worth it even without the "star". We felt almost sad when the sun came out for a perfect day of cruising.

Paul and Dianne led 19 members from Haywards Bay to Narooma, where a few more joined in on the fun. We travelled along some incredible roads, including a few I'd never driven before, I even had my first cap mishap, losing it while driving, luckily, Phil came to the rescue and managed to retrieve it (note to self: don't look up in the wind with the top down!)

Most of us stayed at the Tree Motel, named for the giant 300 plus year old eucalypt on the property, offered comfortable accommodation, a pool for those so inclined and the convenience of Woolworths and BWS right across the road for "fivesies" provisions.

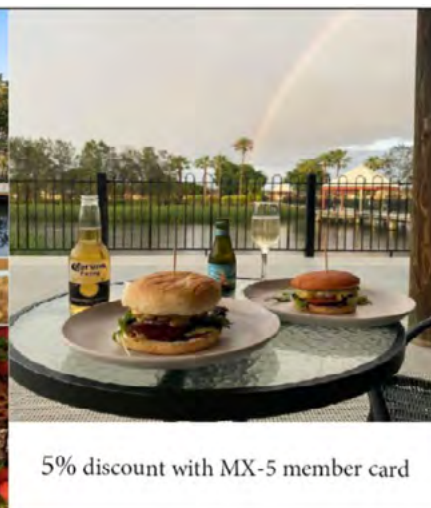
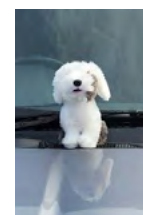
On Sunday we took a short trip to Tilba, where we indulged in some retail therapy. The Tilba Dairy was a standout, with its selection of delicious cheeses. We continued our drive and discovered one of the best dirt roads yet, leading to the magical Tilba Valley Winery and Ale House for a delightful lunch, complete



with their massive, homemade sausage rolls and a small sample of their ale and cider.

A big thank you to Paul and Dianne for organising such a fun getaway, even though it was not what it aimed to be, we all had a great time, hopefully next time we'll get to see "the star" attraction as well.

ALMOST MONTAGUE ISLAND



Words: Glen Hawkins | Photos: Denise Birrell and Helen Mayo
24th November 2024

Sunday the 24th of November turned on a bright, sunny and fairly warm day.

Our not so little group of some 24 club members, with 14 very well turned out MX-5s, gathered at the meeting point of Anaconda Rutherford at 9:30 for Bob and Wendy's run briefing.

We toured along the New England Highway through Lochinvar, Luskintyre, Elderslie and Mitchells Flat, enjoying the lush, green country side.

We wound our way through the Valley, with a run across the ridge on Bingleburra Rd before turning off onto the road to Chichester Dam (a few rough spots here and there but not too bad). Arriving at our picnic spot around 12:30ish we sought the shady side of the picnic grounds to enjoy our lunch.

After lunch our intrepid run leaders had prepared a trivia quiz all about Chichester Dam. We all learned some interesting facts and those who answered (guessed) correctly, were rewarded with a bag of sweets.

Then it was down to the Dam wall for a walk around and view of this engineering marvel. It was here we picked up a few extra passengers for the run home, (of the insect kind) there must be a healthy tick population there.

On the run home the heat was quite intense, so most of us put the roof up and the air conditioning on high.

Many thanks to Bob and Wendy for organising a great day out with more than a few laughs had by all.

PS - now we know how well you lead navigate Wendy, we expect to hear from you more often.

Glenn Hawkins



HUNTER RUN TO CHICHESTER DAM



Words and Photos by Rose Smith 4th December 2024



On first inspection, I thought we had 30 people coming on this run. I then noticed almost all members had booked twice... that's not usual for almost everyone! Two spreadsheets from different runs decide to merge... It's not happened before. We ended up with approximately half this number 16 members and 9 cars coming along.

The Heritage Bakery was our morning tea stop, rather than just a meeting place. It always offers good coffee and nibbles, both savoury and sweet. During conversation a few members were keen to find out where our mystery stops were.....it wasn't a mystery if you had looked at the google map sent out 3 days before.

Paul led us straight down the highway, collecting Mike and Madhu on the way, until we turned off at Batemans Bay to follow the coast road. Although it is difficult to stay in convoy, we all arrived at our first not so mystery stop at Observation Point in Batehaven. Interestingly, no one had been here before. The recently upgraded viewing platforms gave us great views to Snapper Island and the Tollgate Islands. There was even a seating area for members who were not up to a short walk.

Next it was off to Guerilla Bay. The drive along the coast road is well worth doing... the road often hugs the beaches and coastline and we were lucky to see it at high tide. Unfortunately, there was no parking at the Guerilla Bay lookout so after a short detour, it was off to lunch. Most members were happy about this as there were a few rumbling stomachs amongst us.

Lunch at Mossy Point cafe was a first for some of us, but a semi-regular haunt for others. There was plenty of outdoor seating but a powerfully scented Mexican Orange Blossom set of hayfever amongst a few of us. The lunch menu offered a wide selection plus a few specials of the day. Lunch was of high quality and according to regulars, the food is always great. As lunch was coming to an end, some light rain started which sent us hurrying back to our cars and home. So glad this held off for most of the day.

A very pleasant "non-meeting".... Maybe a few more like this next year?



SOUTH COAST MEET AT MOSSY POINT

Words and Photos by Barry and Jenny Luttrell
7th December 2024



This was our first run for a while, so we were definitely looking forward to the day out. Especially one arranged by Chris and John.

Sixteen members in nine MX-5s assembled at the Hunter valley Visitors Centre for a run through the Hunter Valley vineyards, past the horse studs of Jerry's Plains and into the foot hills of Barrington Ranges to an historic pub in a village called Gundy.

The weather forecast was for a 35 degree day then afternoon thunderstorms and possible hail.

We all took the opportunity of a relatively cool morning to put the roof down and enjoy a convey run through Pokolbin out to Broke and then onto the Golden Hwy. At Jerry's Plains we took the twisty backroads through scenic rural areas past dairy farms and on to BYO morning tea and comfort stop at Denman Memorial Park.

After a sociable morning tea, we progressed to Aberdeen via another of John and Chris's backroads called Mangoola Rd. This road included some interesting little causeways just to ensure our drivers were paying attention. We passed massive open cut coal mines and more horse studs. The temperature was starting to climb into the low 30s. On arrival at Aberdeen we joined the New England Hwy, but only for a few kms because John and Chris had another backroad called Segenhoe Rd to take us to Gundy. Again we passed multiple iconic horse racing studs and great scenery as the road started to climb through the foothills of the Barrington Ranges. A right turn onto Alan Bridge Rd took us to a high level historic bridge over the river. Maximum weight allowance was one car at a time on the bridge. On arrival at Gundy we parked up at the local historic pub called Linga Longa Inn where we participated in a very sociable lunch all overseen by the resident hotel dog.

We returned via the boring roads, ie New England Hwy and Hunter Valley Freeway, to arrive home before the forecasted storms.

Thankyou Chris and John for organizing a memorable day in the country doing what we enjoy, driving our cars and getting together.



HUNTER GOES TO LINGA LONGA INN - GUNDY



The Kangaroo Valley Twilight Run is a popular annual staple for Illawarra Chapter, kick-starting the new year in style. This year was the seventh running of the event. Previous iterations have contended with heavy fog, torrential thunderstorms, bushfire, searing heat, and plague. Fortunately, the last two years have been bliss, and 2025 was no different. We met at Hungry Jacks Haywards Bay on a warm afternoon in the mid-20s, although some ominous thunderstorms on the Southern Highlands raised questions about whether to raise roofs. The rain radar revealed that we had nothing to worry about, and so it proved. A perfect summer evening for a country drive and pub meal in a beer garden!

But I'm getting ahead of myself. A couple days before the event, I checked the online registrations and confirmed final numbers with The Friendly Inn at Kangaroo Valley: 59 people. An impressive number, but I jumped the gun. Registrations continued to roll in, and come Saturday afternoon, 56 members and 3 guests, in 32 MX-5s and one Mustang rocked up at Haywards Bay. Plus, Wilco and Joe phoned to say they'd be late and would catch up at Robertson. Another 4 members were due to meet at Kangaroo Valley for dinner, so the final tally was 65 people for dinner. It would have been more except for 5 apologies due to illness. Whew!

How on earth would I manage 33 cars on a convoy run? We used CB radios to communicate, but with all the mountain roads ahead, I knew they'd not cope with the convoy expected to stretch at least 3km. At the briefing, I called for a few volunteers to assist on the CB radios with relaying messages. Huge thanks to Lena, Julie, Pam and Paul for helping out. You did an amazing job and it worked! We only

lost one car momentarily at Robertson, and the entire convoy arrived together, including the two late additions. Miracles happen!

The drive itself was gorgeous. This is my favourite local route, taking in Marshall Mount, Macquarie Pass, Tourist Road, Kangaloon, Robertson, Myra Vale, Fitzroy Falls and Barrengarry Pass. The roads have plenty to offer in twists and turns, nearly all the potholes were filled in, and the scenery was spectacular in the late afternoon sunshine. I had considered changing it up this year but was glad I didn't because it was wonderful. We'll excuse the caravan driver on Macquarie Pass that obstructed the back half of our convoy – you can't avoid that.

The Friendly Inn handled our meal and drink orders promptly, despite the queue meandering through the bistro and down the outside stairs. The kitchen was exceptionally quick, and meals were collected within 15 minutes of ordering. We had our usual spot reserved under a large marquee, plus a couple of extra picnic tables to squeeze everyone in. Roberto approved the beer selection at the bar – Reschs on tap! Celebrity spotters also noticed that Tim Minchin was ordering beers from the bar.

Checking the Club attendance records afterwards, I discovered that this was the second biggest Chapter Run in at least ten years. Josh & Lindsay's Run to Hunter's 10th Anniversary Celebration has the record with 79 people. Thanks everyone for supporting this event and making it a success. I look forward to doing it again in 2026.

Kangaroo Valley 2025

4th January 2025
Story by Bryan Shedden
Photos by Phil Betts, Bryan Shedden and Senia Gaunson



Good Night. See you in 2026!

18th January 2025

Story and Photos by Roberto Giacometti and Zan Dimovski



It was a drizzly Saturday evening when we set off for a scenic drive to Bundanoon for dinner. A group of 11 spread across 6 cars, gathered at Hungry Jack's in Haywards Bay, ready to embark on the journey. The drive offered rolling countryside views, lively chatter on the radios, and the camaraderie that makes these outings special.

The convoy of six cars, joined by another five members in a seventh car, cruised through the lush landscapes of the Southern Highlands, navigating winding roads boarded by towering trees. Along the way, cheerful waves were exchanged at traffic stops, and playlists synced with the rhythmic hum of engines, creating a light-hearted atmosphere.

"Only two Magnificent Macho Men and their Mechanical Masterpieces from the Wellington Drive sub chapter of the Illawarra Chapter (together with Max's Special Passenger) tackled the Maniacally Messed up Moresby Hill Road leg of the route and thus were the only ones to complete the drive as per the run sheet, whereas the remaining convoy took the cleaner route option!!" (Roberto Giacometti)

As the daylight faded below the horizon, the group arrived in Bundanoon, greeted by its quaint charm under the glow of evening lights. At Bottega B Ristorante, six more members awaited, completing the gathering. The ristorante exuded a warm and elegant atmosphere, with the tantalising aroma of freshly baked pizza and sizzling herbs welcoming everyone at the door.

A shared menu had been prepared, starting with mixed arancini balls, salt-and-pepper

squid, and warm olives. The main courses followed, offering a delicious selection of delicate pizzas, rich bolognese pasta, and chili prawn fettuccine.

Conversation flowed as freely as the wine, with laughter filling the cozy space. Stories were exchanged, and bonds of friendship grew even stronger. The evening also marked a special celebration as we welcomed four new members to the club - Tammy, Milly, Ivy, and Ruby.

What began as a simple drive with friends turned into an unforgettable night of shared joy, delicious food, and lasting memories.

A heartfelt thank you to Rob for organising such a wonderful evening for us all to enjoy!

P.S. This little gem of an eatery will not exist after February, so if you are interested in purchasing, or know anyone that is interested in purchasing a fully functioning ready to go Trattoria style establishment, reach out to the owner Fiona pronto.



ILLAWARRA TWILIGHT RUN TO BOTTEGA B

Member's Story

MX-5 owners are not limited to MX-5s, most also have a "family car" for kids and grandkids, shopping and the long trips where extra space is required. Tony and Jenny Heathwood recently updated Jenny's 25 year old BMW with a brand new Mazda 6 from Wollongong Mazda.

Len from Wollongong Mazda looked after their every want and need with their new Mazda.

Tony says:

"Today we took delivery of Jenny's brand spanking Wollongong Mazda Mazda 6 Atenza 20th Anniversary Edition in a unique new colour Artisan red with tan leather interior. Just beautiful inside and out and a fitting replacement for her venerable and magnificent 2000 E39 BMW 525i that has given 23 years and 260,000kms of magnificent driving pleasure."

"So looking forward to more zoom zooming in the new Mazda and giving Marilyn a bit of a break from long drives. We now have a garage full of Mazdas".

The first (car) love in Tony's life is "Marilyn", an MX-5 True Red 2009 NC2 Touring Soft Top (Limited Edition). In beautiful condition, Marilyn loves a run with the MX-5 Club.

(Note: **Artisan Red** with tan upholstery features in the MX-5 35th Anniversary edition, zoom zoom!)



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Christmas is a time for parties, celebrations and presentation of achievement awards and volunteer appreciation gifts.

This year we were fortunate to have some amazing people putting together so many fabulous runs, almost too many to mention, and let's face it, volunteers keep a Club like ours ticking. From President to Motorsport organisers, to Convenors and Run Co-ordinators and so many others in between, we are ALL volunteers, giving up time and offering expertise for our members' benefit.

Our sincere thanks go to all you fabulous volunteers, here are some of your stories.

South Coast Christmas 7th Dec 2024 - by Anda Clayton

Today's much anticipated event took place in St Georges Basin's waterfront restaurant, the Pelican Waterfront Cafe.

A glass of bubbles, and our list of awards recipients was finally revealed!

Congratulations to:

Linda Downing - South Coast Member of the Year 2024

Nichola Hutteman - South Coast New Member of the Year 2024

Well deserved, ladies!

Rose acknowledged a number of run organisers and assistants for their hard work and effort organising our runs during the year:

Wine and Xmas hampers were received by Karen Olde, Paul Rigney, Mike Fowler (presented last Tuesday), Robert Downing, Linda Downing, Brian Clayton and Anda Clayton.

Rose also thanked our Chapter volunteers - Bob Downing (Run Coordinator), Anne Zattera (regalia officer), Brian Clayton (Web manager), Anda Clayton (Publicity Officer) and of course Geoff Smith (Co-Convenor and Rose's "partner in crime")

Time for a bit of fun - the winner of the guessing competition was announced....new member Nicole Wallace guessed the closest number to the 126 chocolates in the jar. Happy eating Nicole!

Lucky door prize winners-new member Gary Wallace (a lucky couple?), Bob Olde (2nd year running) and Valerie Reed. Congratulations, enjoy your treats!

Our 2-course lunch was delicious, as always. Conversation flowed, as did the wine and orange juice. A very pleasant end of year celebration with our MX5 friends.

A sincere thankyou to Rose for, yet again, organising a successful Xmas event. Your hard work and dedication is appreciated by all of our Club members.



Christmas 2024



RPM Christmas at Berowra Waters

6th December 2024 - by Tracey Redman (Photos by Gillian Fletcher)



'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the... No. Wait. Wrong story. 'Twas the 6th of December and with temperatures nudging 41° a hardy group of RPMers converged in the comfort of Windsor MacDonald's air conditioning where icy cold (and some hot) beverages were quickly consumed. After some laughs and lots of complimenting Christmas shirts and comparing sparkly silver shoes (you had to be there – really!), our trusty leader Graham made us go back out into the heat where he read the riot act. Maybe he called it the rules of the cruise. That done, we pondered the darkening skies and 'extreme weather' warnings, while some enthusiasts began decorating cars. As the first deafening clap of thunder elicited swear-words from some, we were off! Now Dasher! Now Dancer! Now Prancer and Vixen! On Comet! On Cupid! On Donner and Blitzen! And at the traffic lights, as 13 MX5s turned into Pitt Town Rd on a single green arrow, a voice rang out through the still hot air – perhaps Santa himself (or was it tail-end Charlie on the CB?), saying "Last car round. It's a Christmas miracle!"

Through the winding country roads, we travelled with recent rains making the Australian bush even more beautiful. Then somewhere around Maraylya the storm hit, sending down buckets of rain for

most of the remaining trip. As we approached our Berowra Waters destination the rain eased a little, but pulling into the marina carpark the blackening skies threatened another downpour, so it was time for another Christmas miracle – it came in the form of a Christmas key fob that allowed us to park in the marina's undercover secure carpark!

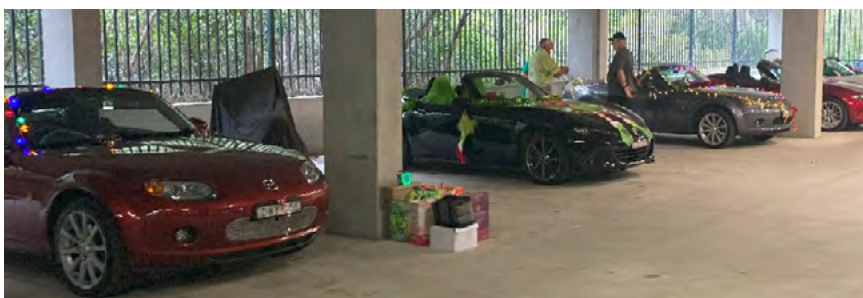
In we went and the elves busied themselves decorating their cars in the hope of winning the grand title of 'best decorated car' – or was the bottle of wine the motivation? After miles of tinsel, lights, and candy canes had been hung and strung, the winner was announced: Congratulations to Garry and Robyn Keyvar with their flashing lights! Based on the banter at Macca's and while decorating, I personally think Temu was the winner! It was then time for awards to be presented, with Chris Wyatt receiving RPM Member of the Year, and Ian Redman (in his Grinch-mobile) receiving New Member of the Year.

Time to wine and dine so we headed into Water Vista café where amongst more laughter and tales of mods, trips, and grandchildren, enormous quantities of cocktails, seafood platters, and gelato were consumed. Just when we thought there couldn't be any more excitement, we received a surprise visit from Mr President, Ian Combes, and the First Lady, Cathy, to present the MX5 Club Member of the Year award to the well-deserving Chris Wyatt. Congratulations Chris!

The chitchat continued until it was finally time to succumb to full tummies and Christmas cheer and head home.

So with temperatures dropping, not a rain cloud in sight, 13 little Mazda's prepared to take flight. Their engines were purring as if trying to cite,

Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night.





Hunter Christmas 14th December 2024

Wow what an epic gathering. The planning and the execution was flawless.

The party was held at Mara and Phil's "Ellos by the lake". A beautiful home backing on to Lake Macquarie at Swansea.

Friday started with a swarm of volunteers to put up shade marquees and decorations, the result being a lovely festive feel and lots of shade. Our main worry was the heat, but the weather fairies were on our side with the breeze blowing from the south east just enough to keep it at a nice temperature.

Party time Saturday everyone was in high spirits and our members enjoyed the cool drinks and appetizers. Lots of catching up was done with one of our long-distance members, Steve Carter. It was also great to see Daryl Grimes, Chris Church, Phil and Helen Mayo and look forward to seeing more of them in 2025.

Fresh Prawns was our entrée and weren't they something special. Freshly caught off our coast the day before. So sweet and juicy, the best. Huge thanks to Phil Ellerton for the special trip to pick them up for us. Next there was the main meal. The ladies in our group can always be relied on to help out with some great salads, providing lots of variety. The selection of meats - Ham, Pork and Chicken all so delicious and tender. What can I say but Yummy.

To give our tummies a rest, we gave out the thankyou gifts to all those that had helped out during the year, the Tenure badges and trophies. It was our pleasure to give out some very deserving MOTY and service awards, and to say thank you to our awesome members who we call friends, for all the help, encouragement, and support throughout 2024.

With the formalities over it was desert time and again, wow strawberry short cake, profiteroles, Oreo cheese cake, chocolate minis, fruit platter and the always popular, Kerry Redfern's cheese cake, which is a staple at any Hunter gathering. Secret Santas was certainly interesting.

It was the most wonderful time of the year. Everyone

had a great time and our many thanks to everybody who helped and participated. Especially Phil and Mara our wonderful hosts.

MERRY CHRISTMAS everyone, Looking forward to more great adventures in 2025.

Zoom zoom. - Elaine Gazzard



Christmas 2024

Illawarra “Red Passionate Christmas”

15th December 2024

It was a hot summer's day....and Ann and Senia carried out their final duty as 2024 Convenors, organising and hosting the 2024 Illawarra Christmas Party and Presentation day at Passionate Palate Cafe, a hidden gem in sleepy Kanahooka, owned and run by Karen Hall.

Air conditioner was on full blast but the heat was on! Food was delicious, drinks were cold, service was fabulous, so we hardly noticed the weather.

Fifty seven members laughed, ate, drank and celebrated each other. We presented 12 members with a fabulous 35th anniversary of MX-5 board (engraved by Phil Betts). These are the people that put their time and effort into providing some interesting runs and trips for all of us through the year. They were:

Phil Reid (in absence) for Mazdas in the Mist, a monthly breakfast run

Bryan and Fiona Shedden for Kangaroo Valley Twilight run (annual event), High Country Hijinx, Buderoo Loop and Steampunk

Lesley and Peter Willing for Eling Forest Winery and Cars and Coffee in the Southern Highlands

Lena and Wes for Yulefest on a Paddlewheeler

Mark and Hella (we missed you Hella) for Pedro's Run to the Border

Tony Cox for Spirit of Vietnam Vets

John and Chrissie Zaremba for Bundeena Mystery Run

Jan Gibson (in absence) for Midweek Feast of Lookouts

Bryan and Ann Hicks for Twilight Bowls, Pelican Rocks, Rangers Twisters and Temora V8 Boats

Francesca Fenn for looking after our Regalia

Brendan Barr for helping us out on all Web issues

Paul and Dianne Byers for “Almost” Montague Island

Zan Dimovski and Phil Betts for Jamberoo Car Show,, WBTW High Tea at Peppers Sutton Forest and Engraving of boards for Volunteer Gifts.

and Wally for stepping in whenever Phil is not available for Mazdas in the Mist

We proudly presented our **Member of the Year Award** to Bryan Shedden, who is also the Club Membership Secretary and has been a member since 2009!

New Members of the Year award was presented to Zan Dimovski and Phil Betts, who were also presented with the MX-5 Club of NSW New Member of the Year Awards by Bryan Shedden. Zan and Phil are our new



2025 Convenors.

Our heartiest Congratulations go to all the award recipients and 2024 Volunteers!

On behalf of Ann and myself, we are grateful for all your help in 2024 and we wish everyone a Very Happy Christmas and New Year! BRING ON 2025!

All the Best Senia Gaunson





Sydney Christmas Lunch and Awards Presentation 8th December 2024

Sydney's Christmas Lunch and Awards Presentation at the St George Motor Boat Club was a resounding success, attended by 71 enthusiastic guests. The event was marked by joyous celebrations, delicious food, and the recognition of outstanding contributions within our Chapter. Following lunch we challenged everyone to some Mazda trivia which was enjoyed by all immensely.

A full account of the awards presented has been sent out by email to all Sydney members.

Sydney member of the year were Sharon & John Cassidy and New members of the year were Kay and Mark Godfrey.

Thanks go to Rob Wilkins and Mark Godfrey for capturing the fun moments of the day in photos.

A special mention goes to our Chapter Sponsors, Alan and Claudine Townsley from Cullenbone Schoolhouse Accommodation Mudgee, our special guests at the event.

Thank you, Sydney, for the lovely gift, which was totally unexpected but deeply appreciated.

We look forward to many more such memorable gatherings in the future.

Steve and Maree Eccleston



Christmas 2024



Mid North Coast Christmas Lunch and Awards Presentation 7th December 2024

Twenty six Chapter members and thirteen MX5 cars joined us for the Christmas lunch run and Awards Presentation at the Abundance Cafe in Port Macquarie on the 7th of December.

Following a short run down the coast and through Wauchope we arrived at Abundance Cafe for a delicious lunch.

It was a very hot day but fortunately the venue was airy and there was a light breeze from the waterlily covered lake. We enjoyed turtles, water dragons and water birds as we waited for our meals.

Rosy and Ken (the Co-Convenors) handed out Christmas crackers and later Christmas cards with Christmas chocolates that were greatly appreciated.

Following our meals Rosy and Ken presented the NMOTY (New Members of the Year) award to Cath and Graham Dickey and MOTY (Chapter Member of the Year) award to Kevin and Jen Chappell.

Lots of photos were taken by various members, some happy chatter and a good day was had by all!

Rosy Black





Is there anything that says Christmas more colourfully than Christmas fairy Lights?

A story by Senia Gaunson

I love fairy lights, let's just get that out there to begin with. So three weeks in a row, I went Christmas light hunting around the Illawarra.

The first time it almost didn't happen. An Illawarra facebook car group advertised they were going cruising around to look at lights, so Bob and I thought we'd tag along. The weather report said rain (it didn't) and they chickened out...but we didn't.

Joined by Paul and Dianne Byers, off we went, roof down and were treated to an amazing sunset along the way and some stunning lights!

The following week, I advertised a "Christmas Light Hunt with Dinner" for the MX-5 Illawarra mob and we got sixteen takers (probably the thought of dinner at the Plough and Ale got them in, after all we are a "drive and dine club").

So to make sure we cruised around the BEST displays, I enlisted my neighbour, Bernadette, for a top down drive through the Christmas light fairylane. Another lover of fairy lights, she was raring to go! We vetoed all the "not as special as they could be" light displays, it was hard as so many houses were just amazing!

So the reccie was done, the best displays plotted with the help of Google, the interactive maps emailed to all our participants, and Bob and I led a merry group through a fairylane of amazing Christmas light displays the following Friday, five days before Christmas, my third "hunt".



Christmas 2024



Canberra Christmas Party and Awards Presentation 14th December 2024

This year's event was held at the Ainslie Football Club on Saturday 14th December and was attended by 44 members. There was no formal run to the event so members simply met at the venue at the appointed time. Of course, several members arrived early to help our Convenor John with the final setup activities.

Our separate function room within the club was quite spacious and we had our own dedicated bar, so accessing the odd one-or-two celebratory drinks was readily accomplished! As members arrived, they were given tickets in the huge Lucky Door draw by Iris and were assured the tickets were indeed 'lucky'.

Our 3-course lunch was served on an alternate basis and although the two choices per course were fine fare, there was still a bit of plate swapping to satisfy individual tastes!

Following the main course, 5-, 10-, and 15-year membership badges were presented by Convenor John, as were the Member of the Year award to Peter

and Annemie Wilson and the New Member of the Year award to Mike and Cathy Phillips. Recipient of the President's Award for services to the Canberra chapter and the Club Committee, Rod Nicholas, was absent on a cruise to south-east Asia and so missed John's words of praise for his efforts.

All members were thanked for their support of the Chapter over the past year and encouraged to keep up their valuable contributions.

Following the presentations, the long-awaited Lucky Door draw was conducted with all winners obviously happy with the prizes they selected from the huge pool on offer. Not everyone could be a winner though and those who missed out had to come to terms with their tickets turning out to be not so lucky as when handed out!

To conclude the event, John thanked all present for their attendance and their support of the Chapter throughout the year and wished all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. In response, Tony thanked John for his efforts in organising the event and wished him well in his remaining time as Chapter Convenor.

John Chapuis and Tony McDonald



NSW / VIC MX-5 Club Interstate Challenge

Words: Ian Spinks & Bryan Shedden | Photo: Bryan Shedden



The 2024 NSW/VIC MX-5 Club Interstate Challenge was hosted by the MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania on Sunday 3rd November for the first time at the Wodonga TAFE Driver Training Complex just off the Hume Hwy to the west of Wodonga. We kicked off the event with a casual dinner at The Goods Shed in Wodonga on the Saturday night which was a nice way to catch up with and size up our competitors for the following day, over a meal and couple of quiet drinks.

Sunday morning presented a patchy looking sky as we arrived at the circuit, many for the first time. 12 NSW cars had made their way south to take on the 23 entrants from the Victorian club. First impressions of the circuit we good - a little bit like a small Mallala or a flat Pheasant Wood with plenty of runoff everywhere except the last corner. The only negative that anyone was discussing was the strong local contingent of flies.

The Clerk of Course was fellow club member Chris Hogan who was running the day on behalf of the Albury Wodonga & Districts Car Club. After the drivers briefing, the run groups kicked off and with the NSW cars all being in groups 3 and 4, we had the opportunity to watch our Victorian counterparts to get an idea of the lines and techniques to follow on the circuit.

As we started to assemble on the dummy grid, spots of rain began to appear on our windscreens to add another challenge on the new circuit. After the first run the consensus was that we were all quite impressed with this little track and all struggling to work out how to take the long sweeping corner over the back of the circuit. The spots of rain were a common theme for the morning, almost every time

we were on track up to the lunch break, but our times continued to tumble as we grew in confidence. Following the driest period so far over lunch we were greeted with another brief shower when competition resumed, but this didn't last long as the wind picked up to clear the clouds. The bright sunlight then pushed the track temperature up, effectively locking in most of the times set from earlier in the day.

The NSW team ended the day with the fastest time over all (Ian Spinks 0:55.5976) and a couple of fastest times in class. Chris Andry 0:59.2525 in Standard NC was lauded for clocking this highest benchmark score. However, the volume of Victorian cars, combined with their favourable vehicle classifications, meant that they were able to score sufficient points to take the trophy back from NSW this year.

Overall, a good day was had by all with no damage sustained and only a couple of minor mechanical concerns. We look towards next year where we can hopefully utilise the home ground advantage in numbers to reclaim the trophy in 2025. The full results with our own vehicle classes for our Sprint Championship point score are online, with summary shown below.

During the day, Chris Hogan told us about another mysterious little track called Wilby Park that none of us had heard about before. This 1000m circuit is located only an hour to the west of Wodonga, near Yarrawonga, and is managed by Albury Wodonga & Districts Car Club. The circuit is apparently very cheap to hire (\$1000!) and would make an ideal double-header weekend with one day at Wilby and the next at Wodonga. Something for the future maybe?



Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW Wodonga TAFE 3rd November 2024

Class	Cat.	PL	Car	Driver	Make & Model	Time	Benchmark	Score	Points
1-Standard	1C	1	103	Bryan Shedden	Mazda MX-5 2015	61.219	64.7	105.69%	25
1-Standard	1F	2	101	Chris Andry	Mazda MX-5 2009	59.253	62.5	105.48%	22
1-Standard	1K	3	102	Matt Thomas	Mazda MX-5 2018	60.786	59.2	97.39%	20
1-Standard	1B	4	106	Gregory Unger	Mazda MX-5 1999	66.751	63.5	95.13%	18
1-Standard	1E	5	105	Graeme Tierney	Mazda MX-5 2007	67.130	63.5	94.59%	16
2-Clubman	2F	1	100	Kim Jacobs	Mazda MX-5 2005	63.165	61.2	96.89%	25
4-Modified	4B	1	108	Mal Smith	Mazda MX-5 1999	61.935	60	96.88%	25
4-Modified	4J	2	104	Jamie Collins	Mazda MX-5 SP 2002	65.116	58.3	89.53%	22
5-Open	5N	1	97	Ian Spinks	Mazda MX-5 2016	55.598	55.9	100.54%	25
5-Open	5T	2	99	Peter Barniwell	Mazda MX-5 2006	58.756	54.8	93.27%	22
5-Open	5N	3	98	Ian Combes	Mazda MX-5 1999	59.958	55.9	93.23%	20
6-Non-MX-5	6O	1	96	Andrew Digney	Hyundai i20n 2021	60.010			25

Motorsport News in brief!

From: Christopher Andry - Motorsport Secretary

MX-5 Club joins CSCA (Combined Sports Cars Association)

Due to the declining attendance over the last few years, the motorsport committee has worked hard at a solution and have fortunately been able to join CSCA.

This is a fantastic move as it means that we will have the ability to compete at more tracks including the likes of One Raceway and the GP Circuit at Sydney Motorsport Park and will keep motorsport events financially sustainable for the club. (More details Page 30)

New Club Track Day Championship Rules

Since we've joined CSCA our Motorsport committee has reviewed our technical rules and have made a few major changes. (refer Website - Club Track Days)

These changes were made in order to remain competitive in CSCA's rule set, reducing costs for competitors and keeping our club track days competitive.

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Motorsport News - a brave new world!

From: Christopher Andry - Motorsport Secretary

Introducing the 2025 Sprint Championship

Hello Motorsport friends, I wanted to share a few updates about club track days for this year.

Firstly, due to declining attendance over the last few years, we will no longer be organising all our own club track days because it is not financially viable for the Club. We've joined CSCA (Combined Sports Car Association) and will utilise all CSCA rounds for our Sprint Championship, allowing us to compete in more events over the season and at more tracks, including the GP and Druitt Circuits at SMSP which have never previously formed part of our sprint championship. We will be organising one of these rounds, at SMSP Amaroo Circuit on 21 September, which will double as the NSW/Vic Interstate Challenge. Competitors will be eligible for both the Club Sprint Championship (using our rules) and the CSCA Championship (using CSCA's class structure).

The Sprint Championship will consist of five rounds with one drop-round and utilise four circuits: One Raceway, SMSP Amaroo (x2), SMSP GP, and SMSP Druitt. The variety on offer is truly very exciting for competitors, especially those who've missed Wakefield Park for the last few years!

Since we've joined CSCA our Motorsport committee have reviewed our technical rules and have made a few major changes. These changes were made in order to remain competitive in CSCA's rule set, reducing costs for competitors, and keeping our club track days competitive.

The most significant change is allowing all classes to run any tyre provided it is road legal and commercially available in Australia. Tyres are no longer restricted to the previous 200TW, and R-spec tyres are permitted in all classes. Open Class may continue to run with slicks if drivers prefer.

The Clubman and Super Clubman classes have been merged, with the number of permitted modifications in Clubman increased from 5 to 8. The benchmarks for Clubman are still 2.0% faster than Standard, while Modified is now 4.0% faster than Standard (reduced from 5.5% to account for tyre changes).

Given that we're also racing at new tracks Bryan Sheddin has crunched the numbers and determined benchmark times for SMSP GP and SMSP Druitt based on historical records. We will use the old Wakefield Park benchmarks for One Raceway this year. The benchmarks for all other tracks have been updated to account for the faster times that will come from the use of faster tyres.

A new 2025 class declaration form is required for all club track day entrants. Those who wish to reserve a competition number must apply via the CSCA website and pay an annual fee of \$10.

Benchmark Times 2025

Changes for 2025 from 2024

All benchmark times for Modified class are increased to accommodate the reduced performance difference between Clubman and Modified.

Benchmarks for Clubman are 2.0% faster than Standard, while Modified are 4.0% faster than Standard.

SMSP Amaroo and Pheasant Wood times have been tweaked slightly.

New benchmarks have been estimated for SMSP GP and SMSP Druitt circuits based on old data from NSW Supersprints Type 1.

The old Wakefield Park benchmarks will be used for One Raceway in 2025. Adjustment will be made for 2026 once new times are available for calibration.

Refer to 2025 Class Benchmarks for full details.

SMSP Amaroo Circuit (South)

Category	Model	Standard	Clubman	Modified	Open
A	NA6	68.4	67	65.6	
B	NA8 NB8A, NB8B, NB8C, NB8D	67.2	65.9	64.5	
C	ND15A, ND15B	67.7	66.3	65	
D	NB SE	66	64.7	63.4	
E	NC RC	66.9	65.6	64.2	
F	NC, NDRFA	65.9	64.6	63.3	
G	ND20A, NC 2.5L	65.4	64.1	62.8	
H	NDRFB	64.5	63.2	61.9	
J	NB SP	63.3	62	60.8	
K	ND20B	63.9	62.6	61.4	
N	NA				60.1
T	FI				58.7

SMSP Druitt Circuit (North)

Category	Model	Standard	Clubman	Modified	Open
A	NA6	80.4	78.8	77.2	
B	NA8 NB8A, NB8B, NB8C, NB8D	77.9	76.3	74.8	
C	ND15A, ND15B	79	77.4	75.8	
D	NB SE	76.7	75.2	73.6	
E	NC RC	77.9	76.3	74.8	
F	NC, NDRFA	76.9	75.4	73.8	
G	ND20A, NC 2.5L	75.8	74.3	72.8	
H	NDRFB	74.5	73	71.5	
J	NB SP	72.8	71.3	69.9	
K	ND20B	73.8	72.3	70.8	
N	NA				70.9
T	FI				67.3

SMSP Gardner Circuit (GP)

Category	Model	Standard	Clubman	Modified	Open
A	NA6	119.3	116.9	114.5	
B	NA8 NB8A, NB8B, NB8C, NB8D	116.8	114.5	112.1	
C	ND15A, ND15B	117.7	115.3	113	
D	NB SE	114.8	112.5	110.2	
E	NC RC	116.2	113.9	111.6	
F	NC, NDRFA	114.9	112.6	110.3	
G	ND20A, NC 2.5L	113.6	111.3	109.1	
H	NDRFB	112	109.8	107.5	
J	NB SP	109.9	107.7	105.5	
K	ND20B	111.2	109	106.8	
N	NA				103.2
T	FI				100.8

All entrants to club track days are required to submit a 2025 Vehicle Declaration Form. Subsequently, the form must also be recompleted when entering with a new car, or after performing any modification that may affect the class of their car.

The 2025 technical rules have three parts:

2025 Technical Rules - technical definition of modifications permitted in the various Classes of vehicle.

2025 Class Benchmarks - methods of calculating the benchmark times and the scoring system used to calculate points for each event.

2025 Benchmark Times - benchmark times for each category of vehicle.

As our club track days now operate under the CSCA rounds, Club members are also eligible to compete for the 2025 CSCA Championship.

Club members wishing to compete in the 2025 NSW Supersprint Championship should be very familiar with the rules for that championship, which can be found on the NSW Supersprint website. In addition, members competing in the new MX-5 Club Modified Class should read the Type RM rules in the 2024 NSW Supersprint Championship rules since the MX-5 Club Modified Class rules are those for Type RM (with some adjustments).

(Refer to MX-5 Club of NSW website for full details)

One Raceway

Category	Model	Standard	Clubman	Modified	Open
A	NA6	75	73.5	72	
B	NA8 NB8A, NB8B, NB8C, NB8D	73.3	71.8	70.4	
C	ND15A, ND15B	73.9	72.4	70.9	
D	NB SE	71.8	70.4	68.9	
E	NC RC	72.9	71.4	70	
F	NC, NDRFA	71.9	70.5	69	
G	ND20A, NC 2.5L	70.8	69.4	68	
H	NDRFB	69.7	68.3	66.9	
J	NB SP	68.5	67.1	65.8	
K	ND20B	69.1	67.7	66.3	
N	NA				65.8
T	FI				62.9

Pheasant Wood

Category	Model	Standard	Clubman	Modified	Open
A	NA6	65.6	64.3	63	
B	NA8 NB8A, NB8B, NB8C, NB8D	63.5	62.3	61	
C	ND15A, ND15B	64.3	63	61.7	
D	NB SE	62.1	60.9	59.6	
E	NC RC	63.2	61.9	60.7	
F	NC, NDRFA	62.3	61.1	59.8	
G	ND20A, NC 2.5L	61.2	60	58.8	
H	NDRFB	59.9	58.7	57.5	
J	NB SP	58.3	57.1	56	
K	ND20B	59.2	58	56.8	
N	NA				56
T	FI				54.6

Vehicle Classes 2025

The intent of our class structure is to provide a logical progression in terms of technical development from a standard road-going MX-5 through various levels of modification up to a dedicated MX-5 race car. The full progression is available for all MX-5 models.

These 2025 technical rules are carried over from 2024 with some significant changes. A summary of the changes can be found at end of the 2025 Technical Rules document.



Sprint Championship Technical Rules Update

19th January 2025 | From the Sprint Championship Panel

The recent announcement of details for the 2025 Sprint Championship raised questions and concerns from several club members. The Sprint Championship Panel has met to review the feedback, and prepared a detailed response. A few clarifications and minor changes have been made to the 2025 Technical Rules.

Why were competitors not consulted on the rule changes?

The Sprint Championship Panel is focussed on increasing competitiveness and participation. Including a large number of members in the rule revision process could have biased these decisions.

Maintaining consistency - in previous seasons, a small panel has met to review the rules based on feedback received throughout the year.

The 2025 Panel consisted of four members who compete in Standard, Super Clubman and Modified classes. They are highly experienced with the rules and have received feedback from other competitors throughout 2024.

Trying to get consensus from a very large group of people on a set of rules is very challenging and not everyone will be happy.

Why are we continuing with our own Class system instead of just adopting CSCA rules?

The CSCA rules are deemed to be unsuitable for our Club competition. They are limited for our MX-5 competitors because all variants of naturally aspirated MX-5s fall within the one 0-2000cc capacity category. Hence, 1.5L NDs and 1.6L NAs would be competing directly against 2L NCs and NDs. While we accept that these rules are designed to suit the CSCA Championship which covers the full breadth of vehicle capacities, this is not a fair competition at our Club level. The CSCA rules also do not have a Standard class which attracts large numbers of MX-5 competitors and provides an entry point into motorsport. Hence, Standard MX-5s compete against lightly modified MX-5s in the CSCA Class M, which is not fair for our club competition. Our members will be eligible for both competitions and are free to set up their car to suit the competition they want to focus on.

Why is the Regularity Class not included in the 2025 competition?

The Regularity Class was introduced for the 2024 season with the aim of attracting participants who rarely entered club track days, and arrest the decline in total number of participants. A total of 13 members competed in 2024 Regularity Class, with 1 doing all three rounds, 3 did two rounds, and the other 9 only one round. At most there was only 7 competitors in a round, which required a dedicated run group. Only a few of these competitors did not enter club track days in the previous season. The trial did not significantly achieve the desired aim because the total number of competitors in 2024 (83) was identical to the total for 2023. Meanwhile, operating the Regularity Class at club track days increased complexity in operation of timing and the processing of competition results for the point score.

Having a regularity class in 2025 would require the CSCA member clubs to support a regularity competition and organise their grids accordingly, as it would not be fair to mix sprint and regularity drivers in the same run group. As this is our first season with CSCA, it was deemed inappropriate to make such a request. It may be possible to have Regularity Class added in future.

Why are R-spec tyres now permitted in all classes?

It was recognised that in recent years, the use of "Super 200" tyres such as Yokohama A052, Bridgestone RE71RS, etc achieved lap times similar to historical records with R-spec tyres. Evidence of this is available in the 2025 Class Benchmarks document. This gradually complicated and compromised the calculation of benchmarks over the last few years. It was also recognised that some R-spec tyres are available for significantly lower cost than Super 200 tyres, such that continuing to permit Super 200 tyres but not R-specs is counter to the aim of minimising costs for competitors. It is likely that tyre technology will continually evolve. Opening up the choice of tyres for all simplifies the rules and their management, while increasing the options for everyone. Finally, R-spec tyres are permitted in all CSCA classes, which improves the competitiveness of our drivers in that competition.

What is the reason for wheel size restrictions in Standard and Clubman?

In Standard, the wheel size must be as specified by the manufacturer. The exception is NAs and NB8B/C/Ds are permitted 15" wheels with the original

width. The reason for this exception is to increase availability of suitable track tyres.

In Clubman, wheel diameter may be $\pm 1"$, while wheel and tyre width may be $+1"$. This limitation has been in place since Clubman was introduced many years ago. It is designed to be consistent with road registered vehicle requirements.

As all naturally aspirated NBs and NA8s are in Category B, it has been decided that the maximum tyre width permitted for all these models in Clubman is 230mm, wheel width is 7.5" and wheel diameter is 17". The 2025 Technical Rules have been updated to reflect this clarification.

Why are body modifications not permitted in Clubman?

This takes away from the spirit of the Clubman class, as body modifications to improve aerodynamics are not in line with "common modifications" to be made to a car. The spirit of Clubman class is to have cars that look relatively standard with OEM body kits permitted. Body cutouts significantly change the appearance of the car which is not consistent with the spirit of the rules.

Why is any ECU/ECU software upgrade permitted on naturally aspirated cars in Clubman?

This change was made because Clubman and Super Clubman classes were merged, so modifications that were previously available to Super Clubman, are

now also available to Clubman. The intention was to avoid pushing Super Clubman cars into Modified. In recognition of concerns about the potential costs involved with customised tuning of ECU software, this modification has now been changed from 1-point to 2-points. This change reflects the options available with exhaust modifications, e.g. non-standard exhaust header/downpipe and mid-pipe and/or muffler count as 2-points total.

In reconsidering the question of ECUs to customise ignition timing, it was recognised that advancing timing on NAs by adjusting cam angle sensor position within OEM range is a practice that has been commonly used for many years in Standard class. It is not considered to be a modification as it is a simple mechanical adjustment on par with a wheel alignment within the OEM range. However, the installation of an ECU software upgrade is considered to be a modification.

Is the NSW Supersprint at One Raceway included in the Sprint Championship?

No! Sorry, there was a misunderstanding and it was mistakenly included in the previous News story (which has been corrected). The NSW Supersprint round on 18 May will NOT count towards the Sprint Championship. The Sprint Championship will consist of five rounds. This decision was made because it creates significant management complications for the Supersprint round.





Canberra - Lake Burley Griffin by Joanne Blackburn

The Canberra Chapter of the MX-5 Club of NSW celebrated Australia Day with a scenic gathering at Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra. Members met at 8:00 AM along Gary Owen Drive on Black Mountain Peninsula.

16 beautiful cars and 24 members gathered for a breakfast BBQ of bacon and egg rolls, together with the essential lamingtons and anzac biscuits.

By 10am there was increasing scrutiny of our cars, not only because they are beautiful, but because of the increasing scarcity of parking on Black Mountain Peninsula as it hosted Dinofest, 2 blowup Aquatic parks and an increasing number of picnics. We exited carefully into the traffic having enjoyed an early start with friends and food for Australia Day 2025.



RPM - Cathedral of Ferns by Sandra Duric

There were plenty of tents and people enjoying the day at Cathedral of Ferns, our Australia Day Picnic destination. A spot in the middle under a good solid tree, with a gazebo donated by Andrew Duric for the day served us well. How many men does it take to put up a gazebo???

We dined on homemade sausage rolls baked by Robyn Keyvar, lamingtons, mini pavlovas, a good ole damper with golden syrup, nibbles and dip provided by Jaqui Quester and Gillian Fletcher and a slice made by Garry Keyvar, delicious with a cup of tea. Everyone had a great day.

Gail Sunderland played a game of cricket with a family camped nearby and Paul enjoyed a chat with the dad. We all mingled well and a resounding "that was great" was heard and we will be back next year.



Australia Day 2025



Sydney - Wildflower Gardens by Maree Eccleston & Sharon Cassidy. Photos Mark Godfrey

Absolutely fabulous Australia Day celebrations done Sydney Chapter style at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Gardens today. Thank you so much to our Convenors Maree & Steve Eccleston for their detailed planning and thought into pulling this together.

There was "guess the celebrity" and "toss the thong" but best of all was Maree's "homemade", yep you read that correctly, homemade lamingtons for 30 odd revellers.

In total we had 16 cars with 30 members, along with a few grandchildren. We helped Joe Kovacic celebrate his birthday, a great day to remember! A special mention to new members, Kim and Mark Kownacki, who only joined the club in the morning and attended their first run same day!



Illawarra - Cordeaux Dam by Senia Gaunson

Zan and Phil, along with some early risers were at Cordeaux Dam early to stake out the best spot, and just as well, the place filled throughout the day, with some anxiously awaiting for us to leave.

The day was filled with games, food, laughter and lots and lots of chatter. This year was not as large a gathering as usual, with other Chapters having local get togethers, but with 45 members and friends it was more intimate and easier to get around and chat. There was no shortage of cricketers or thong throwers, or lamingtons for that matter. The cricket game was abandoned when all the balls were lost to the roof.

Many thanks to Zan and Phil for great organisation and yum lamingtons. And brother Emilco! Best sausage rolls ever! Fabulous day, great weather, Happy Australia Day everyone!



Story and photos by Chris Wyatt 14th January 2025

We thought it would be nice to commence the year with a slightly shorter run and get everyone back in the swing of things, in a gentle way.

We found in recent years that Settler's Restaurant at Mulgoa is a very agreeable way to start the day and the run. Fifteen members got together and we were pleased to welcome our newbies Al and Rhonda from Lithgow for their first excursion with us.

The weather remained threatening but the rain never came and we had a interesting run through Camden, Menangle and Douglas Park where we had the joy of a drive on the Douglas Park Road under craggy overhanging rocks on a very narrow windy stretch. Members seem to love this little diversion. Then onto Wilton Road and the Broughton Pass which is another one of those windy, narrow but delightful roads.

We arrived at Appin Pub just in time and found our friends Jeff and Pam from Illawarra waiting and it was great to see our old mates.

Of course, the social aspect of our Club became apparent as we chatted loudly. Many topics were covered such as the dogs in our lives, and venues to get a really nice feed, as well as our hobbies which are as varied as fishing and theatre and the members penchant for going on holidays (a lot) got a look in as well.

At the end of the day, Ron and Brigid felt quite pleased to be able to tick that one off as a successful start to 2025



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Story and photos by Maree and Steve Eccleston 17th January 2025

The day started well, only light rain was falling and we had an uneventful drive to our meeting point, Macca's at McGraths Hill. We arrived at 9.30 with loads of time to spare as the start time wasn't until 10.30. So we took our time, we made/responded to several calls and Maree happened to look at the Club events page as she likes to check things. It was then that we discovered that we were starting from Macca's Dural! Oh dear, a run organiser's worst nightmare, and we couldn't blame anyone, as we put the run up!

So we had a discussion and set the satnav for Dural and set off after ringing ahead and advising Andy to let everyone know we could be a little late. We duly arrived before the start time and were greeted with much hand clapping and backslapping. So no harm done. I advised everyone that due to our unfortunate start we would have to shorten the run as we were a lot further away from the original starting point as per our run sheets. At this point Maree decided to change the run name to the **Magical Mystery Tour** which proved rather prophetic.

Well you know when things go wrong they can keep going wrong, and that's what happened. Macca's Dural is situated at a very busy round about and is hard to get out in one go. The short story is that we lost 3 cars at the start due to them not following clear and precise

instructions, well at least they were very clear to me....

Everyone else fell into line and we followed Bob Lipa as he was several cars ahead of us in Macca's carpark and he said he knew a good way to Windsor. We agreed that once we got to Windsor I would then lead on the original run route as the spreadsheets were still good and we could claim that we followed the run except that we started from the wrong place!

Well that didn't happen either, as after Windsor we headed out to Richmond, not as per the run sheet, but hey, it was going in the right direction and we had an uneventful drive to our destination at Hillbilly Cider Bilpin, and we arrived at the time we had originally booked. At least we got that right. The three recalcitrant drivers also turned up on time which was nice.

We had a welcome glass of cider and a tasty pizza and everyone told us what a great run it was despite a few miss-steps along the way. The run was very well attended with 24 members in 14 cars, including several first timers who must have thought, what organised chaos, but we got there in the end.

One thing we did get right were the awards. 10 year pins were presented to John and Jeanette Bramley as well as a thank you gift to Godwin and Gillian Camilleri as they were unable to attend our presentation lunch.



What an Expert is saying about the MX-5

Excerpt from CarExpert November 2024 - by James Wong

Born at the end of the 1980s, the formula has hardly changed since its inception. A compact, lightweight two-seat roadster with a free-revving naturally aspirated engine driving the rear wheels.

Some 35 years and several generations later, the Mazda MX-5 remains a cult classic, and one of the last of a dying breed. Two-seat sports cars, particularly affordable ones, are thin on the ground. You have the Mazda and the Subaru BRZ/Toyota GR86 twins, but other than that there's not much.

The Nissan Z has moved much closer to the six-figure mark and the Ford Mustang is pushing upmarket with its new generation – some variants are six figures now. It's not like the MX-5 hasn't crept up over the years, but you can still have one in your driveway for less than \$50,000.

For 2024 the MX-5 has been treated to a mild facelift – the first actual design change for the ND-generation – and debuts Mazda Connected Services in the Australian market, among other upgrades which should help on spirited stints and on track.

Is this old faithful still a pulse-setter? Or is the little Japanese auto icon's star starting to fade?

How does the Mazda MX-5 compare?

How much does the Mazda MX-5 cost?

Pricing for the facelifted MX-5 is up by around \$2000-\$2500 compared to the outgoing range, and already has been subjected to minor price increases since the original announcement (by about \$150).

What is the Mazda MX-5 like on the inside?

The ND-generation MX-5 has been largely unchanged inside and out since it launched nearly a decade ago, but one of the biggest developments with this update is in the cabin.

Sitting proudly atop the dash is the larger 10.25-inch Mazda Connect infotainment system that debuted on the Mazda 3 some time ago, but here it debuts Mazda Connected Services in Australia.

Complimentary for three years after the vehicle's first date of registration, connected services allow various net-based and remote features, most of which are accessible via the MyMazda smartphone app.

Highlights include vehicle status and health; stolen vehicle assistance; remote lock, flash lights; vehicle locator; curfew notification; geofencing; SOS emergency call; recall notification; and Mazda eCare.

All of these features are available from launch, and it's expected Mazda will roll these features out throughout its wider range in the coming year – the new CX-70 and CX-80 have already been confirmed to offer the tech.

Other minor changes inside include the option of a Tan leather interior for the MX-5 RF GT, though this is only available with the black roof option as well as an automatic transmission – surely Mazda, let the manual drivers have it too?



The base MX-5 RF also picks up a new Legane synthetic suede upholstery to accent the black cloth, and the instrument cluster has been revised with a new background colour for a flatter and cleaner look designed to boost legibility.

Mazda has also added leatherette extended upholstery along the centre console with contrast stitching, which further enhances the ambience and presentation.

There's no escaping its compact proportions, but I'm 6'1 and could get comfortable in the driver's seat. Less so in the passenger's pew.

I really appreciate the simplicity to the layout and ergonomics, with everything within easy reach and pretty clearly labelled. It does all this without feeling particularly basic or cheap, either.

All the touch points feel solid, from the leather-trimmed steering wheel to the gearshift and manual handbrake. There's a leatherette-lined dashboard insert and centre console, which is a good substitute for hard plastic.

If there's any real complaint it's the limited storage, even if this segment isn't designed to be family friendly. There's limited space for odds and ends, and the slot ahead of the shifter may not always hold your phone when driving dynamically.

RF GT Black Roof

Points to Mazda for keeping this cabin fresh and functional for nearly a decade, and the new bits definitely make a difference. The new infotainment system is quicker and has nicer graphics, and the enhanced functionality doesn't hurt. It also better aligns the MX-5 with newer models in the Mazda stable.

I'm also always impressed by the sound system. I spent my time in the Roadster GT RS for a week and the nine-speaker Bose audio system is excellent even with the roof down at 100km/h on the freeway.

The Roadster's manual roof is a quick and easy job irrespective of speed, unlike powered systems. It can go up and down in a matter of seconds. The RF, meanwhile, requires 13 seconds below 10km/h to raise or lower its metal roof.

Worth noting is the small boot. There's just 130 litres in Roadster guise and 127L in the RF, which means you have room for soft bags and light luggage but not much more – a Subaru BRZ or Toyota GR86 is more practical in this respect, in addition to having an extra pair of seats in the rear.

How does the Mazda MX-5 drive?

This is one area where the MX-5 doesn't need to change...

It may only pack a small naturally aspirated petrol motor shared with passenger cars, but the MX-5 is a back to basics machine that reminds you of the joys of purist driving.

The typical buzzy Mazda cold start up is characteristic of the Skyactiv-G petrol engine family, but there's a more of a sporty growl from the MX-5 to give it more purpose than something like a CX-5.

For me, manual is the only way to go. The GT RS is manual only regardless, but the slick shift of the MX-5 (and other Mazda models for that matter) is just a joy to use even when driving day-to-day.

I spent almost a whole week commuting to the office in this thing, and it really feels like an extension of the driver. Even for mundane commutes, the response to inputs are accurate, predictable, and linear.

Weighing in at just over a tonne, the 135kW/205Nm atmo four under the bonnet offers a fun revvy nature and plenty of go without being silly fast.

Mazda doesn't officially quote a 0-100km/h time for the MX-5, but various outlets have reported anywhere from the mid-6.0s to low-7.0s mark – part of the variance will be down to how well you can launch the manual and shift.

It's already hot hatch quick and a featherweight at that, so it's quite easy to plant your right foot and get to legal highway speeds in a brisk manner, and it's so much fun rowing through the cogs in this.

The engine note is growly and purposeful at full noise, and Mazda has even made a point to note it draws the engine's sound directly into the cabin "without raising the acoustic pressure any more than necessary" for a more "stirring" experience – whatever that means, it sounds pretty good.

We didn't take the MX-5 to the track to try out the new DSC-TRACK mode for the stability control nor the new Asymmetric LSD at the limit, but our Roadster GT RS test car proved to be a lot of fun on a run through the Victorian hills around Healesville and Toolangi Forest.

It's a route I often take for smaller performance cars, and the MX-5 ate the twisty hillclimb and descent beautifully. There's no scrabbling or scrambling for traction, and it's so linear in its throttle response that you won't have it kicking out or lighting up the traction control like you might get in more powerful, turbocharged sports cars.

As with most current Mazdas the steering is buttery smooth and super accurate, allowing you to point and shoot, threading corners together beautifully. It all comes back to that 'extension of the driver' feel I mentioned earlier, you really feel at one with the machine.

The sticky Bridgestone Potenza tyres also have good grip in all weather conditions, making this a great daily and all-rounder should you not need big boots or rear seats.

Like we've reported previously, even the GT RS isn't super stiff and tied down like more focused sports cars, instead offering controlled and playful body roll in corners. All of this allows you to gradually dial up the heat and gives you time to explore and enjoy its capabilities, even on public roads.

Top down is really the only way to drive this thing too. My rule while it was in my hands was "no rain, no roof". Given how rare convertibles are these days, it's a nice refresher as to why they're so fun when you have the wind in your hair and the sun shining down on you – yes, even during Melbourne's chilly winter.

While not as important in a car like this, the MX-5 is equipped with a range of assistance functions – though not all of the available catalogue is offered in Australia.

Standard blind-spot monitoring and rear cross-traffic alert are appreciated given the over-shoulder obstruction in both roof types when roof-up, and the reversing camera and sensors help when backing into parking spots. Front sensors would be good too, but alas they're not available.

Basic cruise control and lane departure warning carry over from previous iterations, and work fine. It's a shame Mazda hasn't taken the adaptive cruise control and reversing AEB available in Japan, however, as the former would make this an even more liveable daily if you drive to and from work every day.

Traffic sign recognition and driver attention monitoring round out the inclusions, and unlike some newer cars on the market these features are far less intrusive and noisy.

Is the Mazda MX-5 safe?

The Mazda MX-5 is currently unrated by ANCAP, as the ND-generation's five-star ANCAP safety rating expired as of 1 January, 2024.

Pre-update models wore a five-star ANCAP safety rating based on 2016 testing, where the Japanese sports car scored 35.20 out of 37 against older criteria.

How much does the Mazda MX-5 cost to run?

The MX-5 is covered by a five-year, unlimited-kilometre warranty, with five years of roadside assistance too.

Scheduled maintenance is required every 12 months or 15,000 kilometres – whichever comes first. Mazda offers five years of capped-price servicing.

CarExpert's Take on the Mazda MX-5

Every time I drive an MX-5 I'm almost compelled to go out and buy one.

There's a wonderful simplicity and purity about this car that isn't common, and despite its advancing age it still looks super in the right colour – Soul Red Crystal on a Mazda is hard to beat.

(Just wait for the Artisan Red with tan upholstery 35th Anniversary Edition!)

James Wong is the Production Editor at CarExpert based in Melbourne, Australia. With experience on both media and manufacturer sides of the industry, James has a specialty for product knowledge which stems from a life-long obsession with cars. James is a Monash University journalism graduate, an avid tennis player, and the proud charity ambassador for Drive Against Depression – an organisation that supports mental wellness through the freedom of driving and the love of cars. He's also the proud father of Freddy, a 2019 Volkswagen Golf GTI.





Tech Talk

What secrets lie within your tyre walls?

Did you know the week and year your tyres were manufactured as well as the tyre speed rating is stamped on the sidewall of your tyres? I didn't, but I do now!

One of our members recently purchased "brand new" tyres, only to discover three of them were already almost 5 years old and one was nearly 3 years old!

This is what he said;

"It turns out that these tyres were dated 4020, 4020, 4420, 2222. So 3 of them were nearly four and a half years old. After raising a complaint, the Bridgestone rep agreed that they should never have been shipped from the warehouse at this age because their cut-off is about 3-3.5 years."

To find the age of a tyre, look for the four-digit "DOT" code on the sidewall. The first two digits indicate the week of manufacture, and the last two indicate the year. For example, a "2319" code means the tire was made in the 23rd week of 2019.

Explanation

The "DOT" code is a serial number that identifies the tyre.

The date of manufacture is required to be displayed on the sidewall of all tyres.

Tyres should be inspected or replaced if they are older than six years.

TYRE SPEED RATING

It is both illegal and dangerous to drive with tyres that are lower than the recommended speed rating.

This can result in poor handling and unpredictable steering. There is no problem installing a higher speed rated tyre on your vehicle, as it can improve your cornering response.

It is not recommended that you mix and match tyres that have different speed ratings.

Most tyre manufacturers recommended that speed-rated tyres be replaced in sets of four. If replaced in pairs, the new tyres should be of the same or higher speed rating. If tyres with different speed ratings are installed on a vehicle, it's recommended that they be installed with like pairs on the same axle.

Ideally, the lower speed-rated tyres should be placed on the front axle, regardless of whether it's front or rear-wheel drive, in order to prevent oversteer.



This tyre was made in the 7th week of 2023 (0723)

Tyres can wear out over time, even if they aren't used much.

Other signs that tyres need to be replaced

Tread wear: The tread depth should be at least 1.5 mm in the main grooves. You can check the tread wear indicator bars molded into the tread.

Cracks or bulges: These could be a sign of damage.

Frequent air pressure issues: This could be a sign that the tyres need to be replaced.

Discomfort and vibrations: This could be a sign that the tyres need to be replaced.

Oversteer occurs when the vehicle loses traction at the rear tyres first, causing the vehicle to spin and the driver to lose control.

The overall tyre speed rating for all tyres should be based on the lowest speed-rated tyre on the vehicle.

Tyre Speed Rating Chart

The chart shows a list of speed ratings, along with the corresponding speeds they represent. Remember, the speeds are test speeds, not recommended speeds. Letter on left indicates max speed in km (shown at right)

N	140	U	200
P	150	H	210
Q	160	V	240
R	170	Z	240
S	180	W	270
T	190	Y	300



Tech Talk

An NC Oil filter change...without the mess By Simon Trickett

The first time I changed the oil and filter in our NC, it felt like most of the oil came out from where the filter attaches. It was likely less than 100ml but it spread far and wide including into the cross member – good rust proofing maybe? For those that haven't done this task, rotating the MZR engine 90° from its normal front drive layout places the oil filter right above a front cross member instead of its more common location of between the engine and radiator with nothing but the easily removed undertray beneath.

I cursed and carried on but didn't give it another thought until I saw something online explaining a neat trick of placing a plastic bag over the filter as you unscrew it. It was a revelation. Suffice to say all filter changes since have been done without mess! Simple but effective.

I won't bore you with a step by step guide of how to do an oil change but here's my method for removing the oil filter.

Remove the plastic under tray. This is fastened with 10mm bolts. You'll be able to see the filter, refer image. You will hopefully be able to get the filter moving without needing to resort to a removal tool. Once moved a fraction, STOP. Now it's time to get the bag. I use a 2.5l Ikea bag with the top third folded back on itself, I also put some paper towel in the bottom, refer image. Place the bag over the filter and tuck it up as high as it will go, refer image. Place a rag over the cross member. Continue to slowly turn the filter, oil will start emptying into the bag, STOP and WAIT. Once the oil appears to have stopped coming out, continue to unscrew the filter. Once unscrewed, remove the filter (the rag will soak up any further drips). Fold up the plastic bag and zip it shut. Done, with hopefully minimal mess.



NC Filter change - filter



NC Filter change - bag

NC Boot only opens with the key? By Simon Trickett

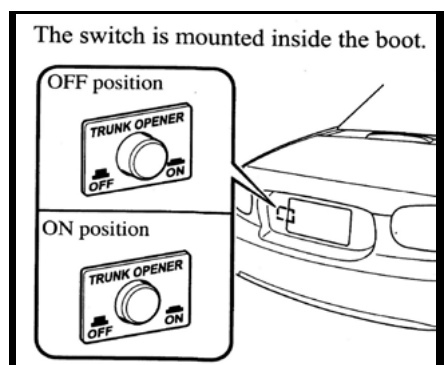
Have you ever gone to open your boot using the interior switch or the button on the key fob and found the boot won't open? You can use the key, but that's just so inconvenient! It's happened to me and I know it has happened to others, some have even had auto electricians problem solve the issue. This 'issue' however is a security feature but it can catch people out.

In the boot there is a button to the right of the boot light, refer image (taken from Page 3-10 in the NC3 manual). The button is recessed but still easy to knock. If the button is pressed in (ON) the key fob and interior switch will work, if the button is out (OFF) then only the key will unlock the boot.

It would have been much better had Mazda put a cover on the switch or placed it in an area that was less likely to get knocked but we can't fix what's done, but we can spread the word on how to stop people getting caught out by it in the future.



NC Filter change - bag on filter



Tech Talk



MX-5 ND Roadster Hood Filter Cleaning

by Bob Gaunson

If a car is left outdoors on a regular basis it is important to clean out the hood filter drainage system to avoid water seeping into the cabin, causing flooding. The ND owners manual suggests clearing this out yearly.

1. Take off plastic sill cover by pulling upwards
2. Take out 4 attachment pins of vertical cover around storage compartment and remove vertical trim piece.
3. Wiggle filter box to remove it. Lift on small tab.
4. Remove sponge filter taking note of its' position.
5. Clean sponge and re-install.



1. REMOVE SILL COVER



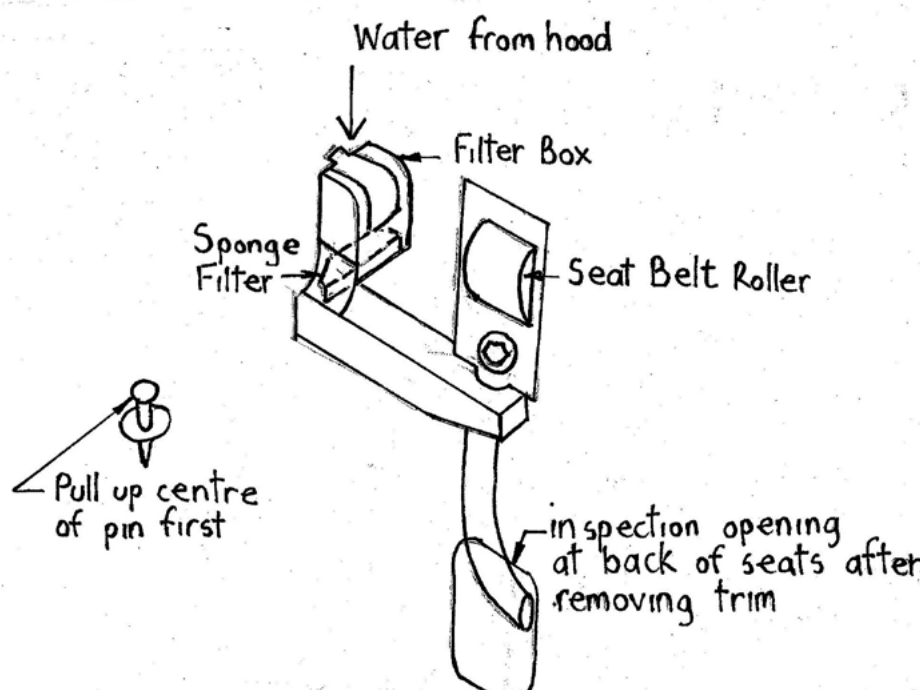
2. REMOVE VERTICAL COVER



3. FILTER BOX



SPONGE AND FILTER BOX



Drivers Side Filter Box shown (passenger side is similar)

Note: No rubber tube is visible from under the car as drainage hose exits through side of chassis.

This is a reference only, all repairs are at owner's responsibility.



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