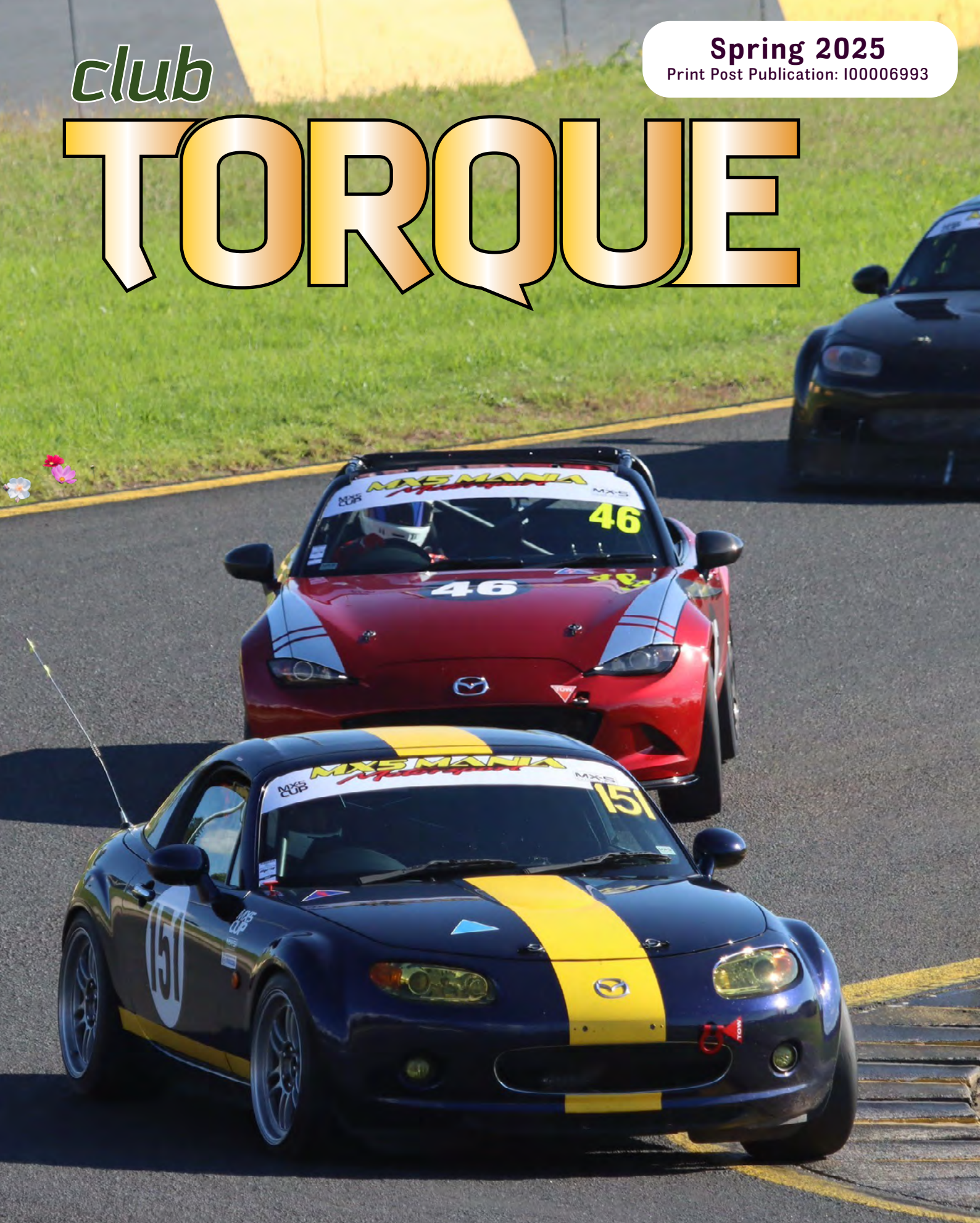


club

Spring 2025

Print Post Publication: I00006993

TORQUE



FAREWELL TSUTOMU “TOM” MATANO

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.

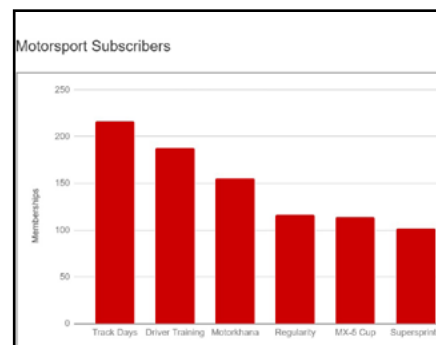
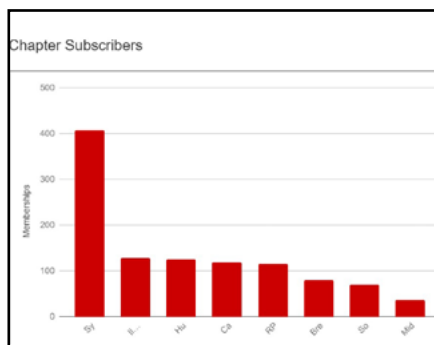
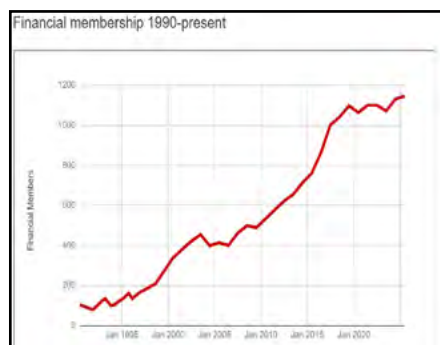
Current Membership at 30th November 2025

1161



Members who joined 7th August 2025 to 30th November 2025

Adam Anderson	Christopher Cooper	Bradley Herring	Michal Pawel Marszalek
QueenCol Anderson	Adam Darvell	Michael Howe	Blake Rochford-Cole
SirDave Anderson	Joanne Darvell	Dave Kaars	Stephanie Rochford-Cole
Jonathan Ball	Adam Davey	Andrew Kelly	Matteo Salvini
Toby Bellew	Billy Dimovski	Jayne Kelly	Gene Savva
Frank Belshaw	Jacqueline Elysee	Ray Khou	Rob Standen
Ben Buikstra	Loray Freeman	Mitchell Lendrum	Reece Sto Domingo
Craig Cameron	Nick Georgiou	Alastair Lonsdale	Keiran Taylor
Chris Chan	Jill Gibson	Man Pen Choi	Mona Torgoman
Greg Close	Matthew Grech	Shaun McManus	Liam Totton
Tom Coleman	Stephen Grech	Colin McNally	Theodore Tynan
Andrew Cook	Aaron Herring	Dennis Mollica	Georgina Van De Water
			John Zampa-Howe



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

On September 20, 2025 we sadly lost an important part of the MX-5 story, Tom Matano, the designer of the original MX-5. We bid him farewell on Page 5.

Our Motorsport Calendar was buzzing through

Spring and an exciting 2026 calendar is being formulated as we speak. Chris Andry has stepped down as Motorsport Secretary, so we are on the hunt for the right person to fit this position, could it be YOU?

2026 will be an exciting year for us, we're hosting **NATMEET**, the biennial, National MX-5 Clubs' get together, being held at the fabulous Rydges, in our iconic Hunter Valley, May 2026. The Event is now full, but you can still put your name down on the reserve list, you never know, someone might have to cancel, it's one Event not to be missed.

Our 2025 AGM took place 31st October at the Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club. Details on Pages 8-9.

Did you know our Chapters are made up of members with an average age of 66? Do you also know that some driver's licence conditions come in from 75 and again at 85 years of age? Ian Hill, a driving instructor, gives us facts and tips on what it's about on Page 42.

We are a Car Club and with that, occasionally accidents happen that may require the services of Careflight, our special Charity. In October the Illawarra Chapter held a fun Careflight Sip n Paint fundraising Event, read all about it on Page 36. A few suggestions were made that we should donate some of the artworks to the Louvre as they seem to be missing a few currently.

As always, thank you Chris Cameron for proofreading our stories, you are truly appreciated.

Our magazine is a little late this edition due to your editor's recent knee surgery. Can't wait to get back in the saddle, just need another 10 degrees flexion, summer is calling.

See you in the New Year, Merry Christmas everyone!

Senia Gaunson

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President's Report

by Ian Combes

have done an absolutely stellar job.

Motorsport

The 2025 motorsport season has now come to a close for the year. This is when we all get to work on our cars for the new year and try not to think about the next fix being a couple of months away!

Don't know about anyone else, but I'm actually going to keep the down time to a month this year, with lots of off-season testing!

The 2026 motorsport calendar is now up on the web site. By the time you read this, we should know when the MX-5 Cup events are – TBD at the moment, although I think we kick off in February.

This year, the MX-5 Club re-joined CSCA, and it was a great success for both the MX-5 Club and for the other CSCA clubs. Not only did we not have to organise six track days like we used to, the other CSCA clubs were very appreciative of the support from MX-5 Club members entering their events. We had the last CSCA event for this year – A Druitt Circuit event with the Jaguar Club, report in this issue. The next is 15th February with the Sprite Club. Lets hope that this event in 2026 is cooler than this year's one, what a scorcher.

In early October, we had the Alfa Romeo (AROCA) 10 hour regularity relay at Winton raceway. The NSW MX-5 club had three teams entered. Once again, the Panorama Mountain Men showed their class by taking out the event. Well done guys! Wasn't easy with a number of car issues to contend with.

The last MX-5 Cup event was on 18th November. Another good event, report is in this issue. Next year, we all need Motorsport Australia race licences with the shift to Motorsport Australia permits.

As some of you will know, we have a

vacancy for the Motorsport Secretary role. We haven't been actively canvassing for this role yet because we are in the middle of finalising documentation around this and other motorsport roles. We hope to have this done by early in the new year. We thought that it was better to advertise the role once we have a good position description that everyone can have a look at. I'm guessing that many members have the impression that the Motorsport Secretary role is complex and involved like it did used to be. These days, all the event organisation is handled by our team of event secretaries. Running our events (we only run one track day now, although we have four motorkhanas) is handled by a separate Clerk of Course volunteer. As a small digression, we are always looking for new volunteers for that role too.

These days, the main task for the Motorsport Secretary is organising the next years competition calendar – even that is easier than it used to be because the other CSCA clubs organise their own events. The Motorsport Secretary just has to coordinate with the other CSCA clubs so that the dates are well spread out and don't clash. The Motorsport Secretary is a member of the Club's Committee, and is the conduit between the motorsport volunteer group and the committee. It isn't a difficult or demanding role with much of the heavy lifting done by other volunteers, but we are looking for someone who is a good communicator and good at coordination.

Wishing everyone a great Christmas and New year and looking forward to more MX-5 fun in 2026.

Keep driving and be safe!

Ian Combes

Here we are at the end of Spring, and by the time you read this, we'll be into Summer, a great time of year to be out in the MX-5, with the top down. With the weird weather that we have been having lately, though, you really have to watch out for those very abrupt storms that roll through. Don't last long, but they sure come down. I know for a fact that one or two members have been caught out lately...

The AGM has come and gone for another year. It was a great night for those that were able to attend. Congratulations to all the recipients of service awards, MXV badges, and tenure badges. This year we had 35 year tenure badges for the first time. It was great to see one of our sponsors at the AGM (we always invite them) – Josh from Lucid Detailing. We also had our first 15-year service award – congratulations to Bryan Shedden. Congratulations to Elaine and David Gazzard for being awarded the Presidents Award for 2025 for their tireless efforts organising Natmeet 2026. A highlight of the evening was Barry and Jenny Luttrell being award life membership of the club – congratulations and very well deserved! The full article for the AGM is elsewhere in this issue.

Speaking of Natmeet 2026, it is well and truly full. Preparations are well in hand, and it should be a truly great event. Many thanks to Elaine, David and the organising committee, who

Cover Photo courtesy of Rob Wilkins - MX-5 Spring Racing MX-5 Cup

Many thanks to everyone who submitted photos for the Spring Cover, we're now looking for Summer, yours might be next!

2025-2026 COMMITTEE



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MX-5 Cup Paul Nudd	mx5cup@mx5.com.au
HCCRS Scheme Administrator Louis Serret	historic.mx5nsw@gmail.com 0466 058 639
Club Historian Elaine Caldwell	



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VICE PRESIDENT - Jeff Rowe



TREASURER - Helen Green



SECRETARY - Wayne Luxford



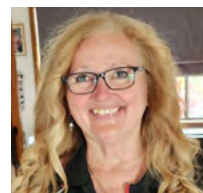
MEMBERSHIP - Bryan Shedden



CLUB CAPTAIN - John Purcell



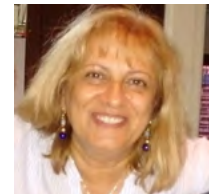
MOTORSPORT - VACANT!



PUBLICATIONS - Senia Gaunson



REGALIA - Fiona Shedden



GOVERNANCE - Ian Marsh and Catherine Combes

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ILLAWARRA - Zan & Phil



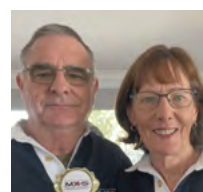
SYDNEY - Kay & Maree



CANBERRA - John



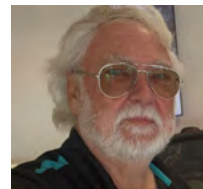
MID NTH COAST - VACANT



SOUTH COAST - Rose & Geoff



HUNTER - Wendy Parsonage



RPM - Ian

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The man behind the Mazda MX-5 has passed away aged 77: Vale Tom Matano

Tom Matano has passed away at the age of 77 but will be immortalised as the man behind one of the most important cars ever made, the Mazda MX-5

**Courtesy of DRIVE September 2025
By Zane Dobie
Photos courtesy of Instagram**

Up there with some of the most important designers for enthusiast cars, Tom Matano has passed away on the 20th of September, 2025 at the age of 77, but leaves behind one of the most timeless designs ever, the NA Mazda MX-5.

Born in Nagasaki, Japan, on October 7, 1947, Tsutomu "Tom" Matano studied Analysis Engineering at Tokyo University. Immediately after graduating in 1969, he began planning to pack up his life and move to the United States aboard his uncle's container ship.

While canvassing for work, Matano headed back to university in the States before landing his very first job at General Motors in Detroit. While nothing from his time in at GM in the States ended up in his portfolio, they decided to ship the young Japanese man off to Australia.

Tom Matano's Holden Years

The nature of Matano's work visa and the mass exodus of auto jobs from the oil crisis meant that he had to pack up his life once again. He found a new home in Melbourne, Australia, where he worked alongside one of the most prolific Holden designers ever, Phillip Zmood, and played a part in designing the iconic LH/LX Holden Torana.

Matano worked on the iconic Holden Dealership Team Marlboro livery during Peter Brock's championship years, not just for the Torana, but for the entire HDT support fleet too, later describing the legendary racer, as well as Leo Pruneau (designer of the Monaro), as his 'mentors' at Holden.

In his pursuit of greatness, Matano once again packed up his life in 1977 and headed off to Munich, Germany, where he rubbed elbows with Paul Bracq, Giorgetto Giugiaro and Marcello Gandini, who were all working with BMW developing some of the most beautiful cars to come out of Europe ever.



Again, by clearly impressing the right people, Matano was called back to North America by ex-journalist and then product planner Bob Hall to serve as the Chief Designer for Mazda in America. The Japanese designer later worked his way up to become the Vice President of Design and eventually the Executive Vice President of Western Operations for Mazda Research and Development.

This is where Matano would finally have a chance to have something to call his own, a design to be remembered by, and what a stunning design it was.

The birth of the Mazda MX-5

The idea of a small Japanese sports-car had been in the back of Bob Hall's head since 1976, when, while a journalist at Motor Trend magazine, he had met with Kenichi Yamamoto and Gai Arai, heads of Research and Development at Mazda.

"I babbled how the simple, bugs-in-the-teeth, wind-in-the-hair, classically-British sports car doesn't exist any more. I told Mr. Yamamoto that somebody should build one, [an] inexpensive roadster," said Hall in an interview with Motor Trend in 2005.

That statement Hall made stuck with him when he joined Mazda in 1981, building a team to develop a "light-weight sportcar", calling on Mark Jordan and, of course, Tom Matano to develop his new vision.

North America pushed forward with a front-engine, rear-wheel-drive layout, but Japan countered with a more compact package: either front-engine, front-wheel-drive or rear-engine, rear-wheel-drive.

Thank God for noise, vibration, and harshness requirements; the MX-5 never would've met them in any other layout other than front-engine rear wheel drive and surely would've met the same fate of all forgettable front-wheel drive sports cars of the 90s.

The concept was entered into a design competition under the codename "Duo 101", where it won thanks to recalling the golden era of design, with features inspired by cars such as the beautiful Lotus Elan.

Matano hustled on his design, and by 1986, the final model was approved and ready to enter its final stages of production. In 1989, the MX-5 (Miata in North America and Roadster in Japan) hit the showrooms, and boy, did it hit hard.

Sure, it only produced 116 horsepower, but it also weighed only 940kg and had a 50/50 front-to-rear weight distribution, making it one of the best-handling cars you could buy at the time.

The real winner? It was under \$30,000 when it was released, offering a convertible two-seater sports car while undercutting European competitors. Matano went on to design part of the FD RX-7, another one of Mazda's gorgeous cars, and stayed with the company until 2002 before teaching industrial design in the United States.

His design portfolio wasn't packed with timeless designs, after timeless designs of unattainable cars by Giorgetto Giugiaro and Marcello Gandini. Still, he had one advantage over them – his designs sold in the hundreds of thousands.

As a true man of the people, Matano managed to design a gorgeous car that everyone could enjoy without laying out a fortune or incurring an expensive maintenance schedule, and he kept that title until his final rest. Always happy to talk to the media, always kind to his fans and just stoked to be around cars.

Having owned several MX-5s now, I can wholeheartedly say that this car has attracted more young people to cars than any other model I can think of. To this day, the NA MX-5 remains a budget-friendly, easy-to-maintain, and cool-looking car that anyone can enjoy driving.

"I wouldn't consider myself a car enthusiast, but I would love one of the MX-5s with the pop-up headlights", is a quote I hear far too often. The design was so good that it remains hip 36 years later.

I adored these cute little cars, and I applaud Matano's hand in it. I'm certainly glad he could see how much he was loved for his design.

Thank you for your service to the car community
Tsutomu Matano.

1985 Mazda MX-5 Concepts



1989 Mazda MX-5 NA (Miata)



FAREWELL TOM MATANO

MX-5 CLUB OF NSW 2025 A.G.M.

Words: Ian Combes and Bryan Shedden | Photos: Rob Wilkins



31st October 2025

The 2025 AGM of the MX-5 Club of NSW was again held at the Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club. Many thanks to our Vice-President Jeff Rowe for organising the venue and the buffet – the food was excellent as always.

Again, we had a video option (Google Meet now) for our members who could not attend in person. Many thanks to Bryan Shedden for setting it up. It is a technical challenge though, and managing it in a short time is very stressful, especially if you want to have some food, so we'll have to think about what we do next year.

We had 47 members attend the AGM in person, and another 6 via Google Meet, with 44 apologies. Thanks to Ed Cory and Norm Barker for making the long trip north from Canberra!

I have attended a few AGMs now, and I think that this was a great night – seemed more enjoyable even than last year.

In the President's report, I presented an overview of the Club's activities over the last year. The highlight was filling up our Natmeet event for next year. Did that in less than three months.

John Purcell presented his report as Club Captain – this year focused on the 25th anniversary lunch. A fabulous event it was!

Due to our Motorsport Secretary stepping down, Ian Combes presented a motorsport

report. This year was our first year back in the CSCA (Combined Sports Car Club of Australia). It was a pretty good year in motorsport, and much easier now that we don't need to run all our own track days.

Our Treasurer Helen Green presented her report. This year there is a lot of cash going through our books for Natmeet next year, but that event is well and truly in the black. The club remains in a strong financial position.

(All the Reports can be found on the MX-5 Club of NSW website.)

At each AGM, we need to re-elect half our office bearers, so this year that was myself (President) and Wayne Luxford (Secretary). We also re-elected half our greater committee, so this year that was Bryan Shedden (Membership Secretary), John Purcell (Club Captain) and Fiona Shedden (Regalia Officer). The Motorsport Secretary position was vacated at the AGM. Whilst we invited nominations for the position in the meeting, surprisingly no-one put their hand up, so it is still vacant. We will canvas applications for the role in the new year once we have tidied up the motorsport role descriptions. The General Committee Member role is also still vacant.

Once the election of the committee members was confirmed by the AGM, we moved onto the awards presentation.

Awards Presentations

First off, it was wonderful to have Josh

Erdogen and Piper Wood attend the AGM as invited guests, representing Lucid Detailing, sponsors of RPM Chapter. Josh was presented with a certificate of appreciation.

Next up was the presentation of Membership Tenure Awards. We had 70 members who qualified for 5-year badges (sadly, none of whom attended the AGM), 46 for 10-year badges, 25 for 15-year badges, 14 for 20 year badges, 2 for 25-year badges, 3 for 30-year badges, and this year we have 3 members who qualified for their 35-year badge.

The recipients of the MXV Award in 2025 were: Chris Wyatt, David Gazzard, Ron Gallop, Keith Monaghan, Bob Judd, Elaine Gazzard, Lena Hill and Tony McDonald. Lena, Chris, David and Elaine were all present on the night. Earning an MXV awards takes some real commitment over many years, so many congratulations!

Bryan Shedden became the first club member to be presented with the Gold Service Award in recognition of 15 years on the Committee. Bryan has served continuously on the Committee since 2010 as Publications Officer (2010-2012), President (2012-2016), Membership Database Secretary (2016-2021), Website Coordinator (2016-2019), NatMeet 2020 Chairperson (2017-2018), Vice President (2024), Membership Secretary (2021-present), and is a Life Member. Bronze Service Awards for 5 years on the Committee were presented to John Purcell and Sandra Duric. Sandra served as Publications Officer (2006-2009) and RPM Convenor (2023-2025), while John served as Hunter Convenor (2020-2023) and Club Captain (2023-present). Their extended term of service benefits the Club by maximising efficiency of operations and utilisation of their experience. Thank you to all recipients for your work in making our club successful.

The President's Award this year went to Elaine and David Gazzard for pulling off an amazing double act this year – as well as being Hunter Chapter Co-convenors, they also put in a huge effort to get our 2026 Natmeet event off the ground. Natmeet has had a very active committee other than Elaine and David, but they certainly put in outstanding individual efforts. Very worthy winners!

The final award of the night was Life Membership to Barry and Jenny Luttrell. While I know that this came as a massive surprise to Barry and Jenny, they have well and truly earned it. Not only have they been very active in the Hunter Chapter, they have both put in a huge effort over many years in motorsport in the role of Event Secretary. Those who know will confirm that this role is not for the faint-hearted – and Barry and Jenny have been at it for many years. Very well deserved!

Editor's Note: Congratulations to all the worthy recipients! The only "negative" of the evening for those of us who couldn't attend, was the online visuals, hopefully we can make some improvements for 2026.



RPM CHRISTMAS IN JULY 2025

Words: Sandra Duric | Photos: Jeff Rowe, Jacqui Quester, Helen Boyer and Peter Cowan-Lunn



RPM- Bundanoon Xmas in July 20th July 2025

It was a cold start to the day, but everyone was geared up and raring to go. We had a long and winding trip entering Picton via the Old Hume Highway to pick up John and Helen Walsh then straight through Tahmoor, Bargo and down the Old Sth Road which is a familiar and favourite road of the RPMers.

We arrived at the Bundanoon Hotel with not a

minute to spare. We had a private room with an open fireplace. We were greeted by Jeff and Pam Rowe, Robyn and Garry Keyvar who arrived a little bit earlier to assure the staff we weren't too far away.

We had a sumptuous four course meal, oysters, prawns, ham, then roast lamb which melted off the bone with the usual roasted veges, a salad and of course the Christmas pudding with custard for dessert.

Some of us stayed over at the Bundanoon Country Inn Motel, modest, clean and affordable and we will definitely be staying there again. We had a lovely breakfast on Monday morning in the township and headed home.

We will be back!

It was lovely to see Jeff and Pam join in, as they did when we ventured down to Gerrigong for our weekend away last month.



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South Coast Zoom to Bundeena 25th September 2025

Our MX5 run to Bundeena began at Hungry Jacks Bomaderry on a lovely sunny 24 degree Spring morning. Kerry, Ian, Keith, Sue, Anda and myself headed off in convoy after being suitably refreshed with coffee.

We were all colour coordinated too with white – red – white - red MX5s all with tops down. Zoom Zoom !

After heading along the A1 Highway we made a detour via Foxground and onto the old highway. Great MX5 winding roads. Then on to Mt Kiera lookout with breathtaking views to Sydney, Wollongong and along the coastline. Made better by lovely clear blue skies.

After stretching our legs, and taking many photos, we were off to our next destination, the Southern Gateway Centre, accessed by doing a loop off the Highway. Delicious gelato being the highlight there, and we just had to indulge, The choice was endless. More fabulous views from the windows and outside from the balcony.

I had driven past the Centre numerous times in the past but this was my first stop there. It is really worth a visit.

Next we headed down Bulli Pass and through the many villages including Thirroul and Austinmer, and across the amazing Sea Cliff Bridge. We continued on through the Royal National Park to the sounds of whipbirds and black cockatoos which dotted many trees along the way,

We then arrived at our lunch destination at Bundeena, a very picturesque spot. We dined at the Bundeena Community and Services Club. Here we were joined by two other club members, Mark and Julie, from our Sydney Chapter.

Lunch was delicious and the menu included fish and chips, and burgers which were colossal. Great food, great service and great company.

After lunch we all went our separate ways. Many thanks to Kerry, our organizer, for a most enjoyable run.



STH COAST ZOOM TO BUNDEENA

Words: Karen Olde | Photos: Anda Clayton



Canberra go to Mudgee

Words: Rod Nicholas | Photos: Rod and Maryanne Nicholas



Mudgee 11th to 13th August 2025

Mudgee has been a popular destination for our Chapter. My records show a Ken Keeling expedition in 2014 to experience the Food & Wine Festival (although Ken probably led a few before that) and half a dozen since then, not counting visits to Mudgee on other runs. My run was intended to be the first stage of a five-day spectacular, but I lost track of time for planning and settled on a three-day drive.

Not surprisingly, the twenty registrants were all at Hall for the briefing well before the advertised departure time, and we set off promptly for our first stop in Taralga. The Short drive from Crookwell to Taralga set the scene for the rest of the day – it's a delightful section of road that can put a smile on the dial of any MX-5 driver.

Excellent coffee at the General Store fuelled us well for the next leg to our lunch stop at Oberon (via Shooters Hill). I'd planned to head to Sofala and Hill End before reaching Mudgee, which scared a couple of drivers off and they left on a more direct route. (I think they were just keen to get to the motel to grab the best rooms and have a rest.)

As usual, I map out all the run in Google maps but somehow, I failed to 'waypoint' Sofala, with the result being that my GPS took me on a 'more direct' route to Hill End. By-passing Bathurst, we found ourselves in Eglinton and then on the Turondale Road to Hill End. The road was quiet, winding its way up the hills through even more quiet rural areas (you could almost hear the banjos duelling) with only a few roos,

wallabies and wild goats to observe the line of MX-5s zooming happily along. Hill End was quiet, and we didn't have much time to look around, but the king parrots were out looking for a feed and we were able to accommodate them.

It was then a quick 70 kms into Mudgee, carefully avoiding the roos and the occasional pothole.

Our accommodation, the Horatio Hotel, is one of the best we have stayed at on our trips. Large rooms, king beds, and delightfully quiet even though it's on a main road. After a bit of a rest, we sauntered off up the road to Kelly's Irish Pub for a tasty dinner and a beverage or two.



It's here that I must admit to a shameful lapse in planning for this run. I was carefully avoiding the weekend (and the busy tourists up from Sydney) but completely forgot that folks in the hospitality business want a couple of days off for a weekend, and typically choose Monday and Tuesday—the cheek of them! This meant the breweries I wanted to visit were both closed, as were several of the wineries around town. Given I had made the experience of enjoying a pint of Mudgee Mud a major highlight of the trip, this was clearly a major planning blunder. To make matters worse, my hope that the Mud on tap at Kelly's Irish Pub was dashed when I learned the owner of the pub was also an owner of the 'rival' brewery in town. Oh well, the best laid plans etc etc. (A quick search of the local bottle shop revealed tinnies of the Mud at a very reasonable rate—problem solved!)

Day Two dawned cool and sunny for our planned trip of about 180 kms from our digs to Rylestone, then a peek at Dunns Swamp, Kandos, Windermere Dam rounded off with a visit to an olive farm. Rylstone was quiet but we stopped anyway for a rummage around the local lolly shop. Our visit to Dunns Swamp (Gangcuddy) was on the suggestion of Mike and Jo, who assured it was worth the effort, even if there was a bit of dirt involved. And so it was! A beautiful billabong on the Cudgegong River, a short stop there failed to do it justice. We took a half km walk around the rocks, took in the views, took photos of the views and indigenous art and then took off. It would have been a great place for a day-long walk or a couple of days camping.

On to Kandos, which is (apparently) famous for its cement (surely exciting for some people), but was largely deserted on a Tuesday (not even the visitor's Centre or Museum). We grabbed a light meal from the local bakery, then left (after the ladies had rummaged through the 'craft' shop) for the viewing platform at the Windermere Dam. Very pretty. Some left from here for the hotel, others chose to drop in on the Aril Estate Olive Farm for olive and olive oil sampling.

A few didn't join us on this action-packed day, spending their time resting or wandering the streets and local wineries, even walking 'The Drip Track', which (I am told) was a beautiful trail along the Goulburn River.

Dinner was pizzas and local wines, enjoyed at our hotel.

Day Three was the trip back home. A couple of cars took the direct route (down the highways) back to Canberra, rather than the longer tour I had planned. I led the troop—now down to ten—out to Gulgong and Wellington for our refreshment break, then down the Mitchell Highway to Molong. This was straightforward driving, uneventful apart from the one bloke in a van who tried his luck passing two semis and thankfully avoiding a head-on with me (I had to brake rather hard to avoid him), and the roo that jumped onto the road between my car and John following me (more hard braking from John). From Molong, our lunch stop was Canowindra, but I took the group on a slight

detour through Cargo. Why? Because I'd never been there, and now I have, I see no need to repeat the experience.

Our pub lunch at Canowindra (another very quiet spot on a Tuesday) was quite pleasant, but the rain had settled in and was making life less pleasant than it needed to, a route rethink was needed. I dropped the plan to travel through Woodstock and Wyangala to Boorowa, choosing the more direct route to Cowra and Boorowa on home. This saved about 30 km and 45 minutes, and avoided the quiet, curvy country roads in favour of the more travelled way. Whether it was necessary is debatable, as the rain eased, but it is always good to get home while there is still plenty of light.

Mudgee was a long way to go for only a few days (we travelled about 1,100 km, at an average of 6.1 litres/100 kms) but the roads were good, to great, the cars loved it, and the company was (as always) a delight. So all up, a good time was had by all. We even got a drop or two of the Mudgee Mud (most of a four-pack found its way home with me).



Hunter - Something to Wine about 26th September 2025

Day 1 Friday - We started our three day trip meeting at McDonald's Huntlee, four cars with a little time to spare before heading out, We all had coffee and brekkie in McDonald's. After a quick briefing, Marlene gave us all a survivor pack filled with Cookies & Snakes

It was a beautiful day for travelling with sunshine all the way, till our first rest stop at Jerry's Plains Camping Ground. Our second stop was at our favourite bakery in Merriwa for lunch which was quite crowded being the School Holidays. It seemed they were all following us to Mudgee.

All the ladies then decided to drive our next leg via Golden Hwy & Castlereagh Hwy to Gulgong. The scenery was spectacular, the countryside was green and the Blue Mountains were at their best. Wendy's photos really showed off the scenery. On the way we had another quick comfort stop at Cassillis Park Rest Area.

Upon arrival at Gulgong we headed to the Prince of Wales Hotel for a much needed beverage for the ladies, before continuing onto the Soldiers Motel in Mudgee. Once we were settled and rested, around 5 we had happy hour by the pool with nibbles and drinks

At around 6:30, we walked across the road to the

Paragon Hotel for dinner, and boy, was it pumping! The atmosphere was great with live music and the food was absolutely delicious. Brian and Kerry did successfully get the drinks but pushed-in without realising it, the young folk took pity on the old fellas HA HA ! Such a great way to start the weekend, and best of all, it was only a short stagger back to our Motel.

Day 2 Saturday - Saturday morning, we all walked into town where we found a great cafe, The Butcher's Cafe, serving a really yummy breakfast. Four members of the group had Breaky Rolls, rating them in the Top 10 they'd eaten! After a brief chat, we headed off to Pieter van Gent for some Wine and Port tasting, with a purchase of two or three, with some great photos taken in the Cellar on what looked like some old Church seating. We did think the wines were a bit young, what would we really know! Then we had a quick stop at Petersons Winery, which was more to our liking. Luckily we had Kerry with us, to use the room in his boot. We then headed out to Burnbrae Winery for lunch where we shared 3 different pizzas and antipasto platters and of course, some more wine tasting. After lunch, we all headed back to the motel for a much needed kip.

At around 4.15 we had a short walk to the 'Flavors of Mudgee' Wine & Food Festival where we picked up our tasting packages. The weather and the atmosphere

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were great with lots of delicious food and wine to try from all the local and surrounding producers. There was live music and everyone was beautifully dressed enjoying themselves. By 7:30, we headed back to the Paragon Hotel for dinner, which again didn't disappoint. We stayed on for a short while for a couple of beverages, coffee, and a chat to finish off a great night.

Day 3 Sunday - In the morning we all loaded up our cars and headed down to our now favourite Cafe, The Butchers, for another yummy breakfast. Those Brekkie Rolls were to die for and the coffee was good too. After breakfast we fueled up and hit the Honey Haven for a quick shop as Brian Mulholland had run out of Cinnamon Honey and we needed to load up more produce in Kerry's car.

It was another beautiful sunny day for travelling, so we headed off towards Merriwa, and had lunch at, you guessed it, the Merriwa bakery.



Hunter - Something to Wine About

Words: Ray Cosier | Photos: Wendy Mulholland



There are many ways to travel to the Country Club but being the Rivers Plains and Mountains chapter, we decided to use all three.

Fourteen experienced explorers met up at our favourite base camp, Maccas at Windsor, and set off north across the Cumberland Plain into the unknown. The first river to cross was the Hawkesbury at Windsor. Fortunately, the bridge builders knew we were coming and built a new structure quite suitable for our small cars. Heading onwards and westward beside the river we passed through the agricultural basin and rose up into the hinterland dotted with the residences of famous early settlers.

Cresting the first rise we were blessed with views up through the tablelands that make up the Blue Mountains before turning south toward the Grose River where the bridge builders are yet to commence their promised overpass. Forced back down the hill through North Richmond on a road named after Mr. Bell and back over the Hawkesbury we turned south over the plains again to the historic village of Agnes Banks. Momentarily turning west along Springwood Road and fording the Nepean River and through Yarramundi between the Grose and Nepean we came across a narrow path of winding switchbacks up the side of a sharp rise. For some reason none of our explorers seemed to enjoy the steep climb as they arrived at the top so quickly. Travelling along the top of the ridge as far south as possible with our meagre equipment we turned east again and followed the pathway surveyed by Messrs Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson down via Mr Lennox's stone bridge and back over the Nepean River as far as the Northern Road.



Starting to feel hungry we searched near by only to find an exotic meal room called Lili and Luna's as part of a large establishment with lots of green land and people hitting little white balls with sticks. The happy explorers feasted on fine fare with loud and shrill voices discussing their next adventure.





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Foxdog Distillery run 23rd October 2025 By Bob and Linda Downing

What a beautiful day to visit a new location. Sue and Keith, Linda and Bob departed from Tomerong and were joined by Karen and Bob in Ulladulla, A uneventful run to Batehaven and a short diversion through the suburbs of Batemans Bay, where morning coffee and yummy cakes from the local bakery/patisserie were consumed before the short 20 minute run to the Foxdog Distillery where Nicky who had travelled up from Cobargo was waiting for us.

The distillery exceeded our expectations with a large menu of delicious food, great beers, naturally superb gins and a couple of vodkas, all distilled and brewed on the premises. Following our lunch, various Gin samples from 2 tasting paddles were consumed and compared. Sue and Keith, Karen and Bob, Nicky and Linda and I all agreed that this is a top venue for a future run. The attached caravan/camping site took Keith's attention and I feel that a weekend away may be on the cards. After purchasing take home samples it was soon time to say farewells and depart.

Thanks Mike for suggesting this run, it was a pity that Madhu and yourself were unable to join us this time.



Drivers Run # 2 14th - 15th October 2025 By Geoff Smith and Keith Monaghan

South Coast's final drivers run for the year was a resounding success.

Commiserations to Phil who had to pull out at the last minute due to a health issue, we missed you.

Keith and Paul met up in North Nowra and joined up with Barry and myself at the Heritage Bakery Milton for a coffee before making our way down the Princes Hwy to Cobargo for lunch.

The weather stayed perfect as we left Cobargo for the run down the highway to Pambula where we all refueled, (petrol not coffee), before the run up Mount Darragh to our night's accommodation in Nimmitabel. Mount Darragh is an amazing drive for an MX-5 so with sufficient curves navigated we arrived at the Royal Arms Bed and Breakfast in Nimmitabel where our hosts Diane and Grant Walker had everything ready for us, even the sitting room fire was laid ready for a wine or two by the fire.

After a restful night Diane and Grant treated us to a cooked breakfast before we said our goodbyes and warmed up the MX-5s.

The perfect weather continued as we left Nimmitabel for Cooma on the Monaro highway. The crisp, clear morning amplified the spectacular views of the Monaro High Plains and the roads were pleasantly devoid of traffic.

We bypassed Queenbeyan via Royalla then on to Bungendore before stopping for lunch in Braidwood.

After lunch we headed down the Clyde Mountain to Batemans Bay before heading back up the coast and home.

This was a top run and the consensus is that we will make it an annual event but possibly in reverse for a bit of diversity.



Sydney - Leura Gardens

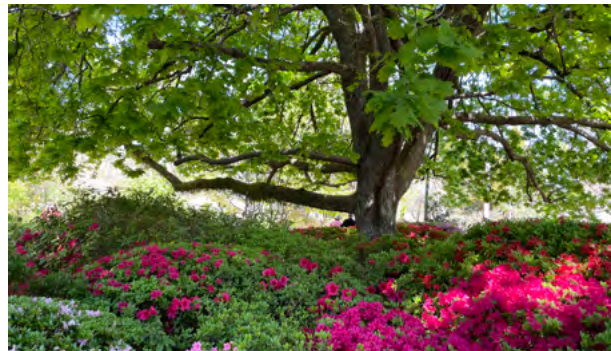
Words: Kay Godfrey | Photos: Mark Godfrey and Rob Wilkins

It was a bright and sunny spring morning, **Friday 3rd of October** when we met in Windsor and made our way through Richmond, which turned out to be a bit of a stop-start exercise. Part of the convoy was repeatedly caught at the traffic lights. Fortunately, Sharon and John, as our tail end Charlie, did an excellent job of letting us know who was held up, and the rest of the group waited so everyone could regroup before continuing.

We then travelled along the Springwood Road, enjoying the drive as we passed through Yarramundi Reserve. The climb that followed delivered plenty of tight hairpin bends, which added to the fun.

We continued up through the mountains and arrived at Wentworth Falls Lake, where we split up for the afternoon. Some headed off to the Leura Gardens Festival, while others went in search of lunch nearby. The gardens were busy but beautiful — the sun was shining, the flowers were out, and each garden offered something a little different.

Those who had packed a picnic lunch were treated to a musical surprise at the lake — it must have been the local band.



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We set off on a beautiful clear morning, Wednesday 22nd October from Dural with our tops down hoping the weather forecasters were incorrect about the predicted heatwave conditions. Our group of 9 MX5s meandered through the backroads enjoying the drive through the picturesque countryside of Cattai, South Maroota and down to the Sackville Ferry. We managed to get all cars aboard the ferry across the Hawkesbury giving us plenty of time for our break at Ebenezer Church.

My almond biscuits appeared to be a winner enjoyed by many under the shade of the church grounds. Prior to setting off again, the temperature had soared to 37C from the blustering north westerly winds. With our tops still down and the aircon on full we banded on up the mountain hoping the temperature would be cooler at our lunch stop. The views of the mountains were spectacular as always.

As we turned on to Bells Line of Rd we nearly missed "Old Garry" from RPM waiting up the road to join our convoy. His vehicle was quickly filling up with leaves as he shaded underneath a tree. As we continued to climb the temperature dropped slightly to 33C, however the winds had not abated. Just a few minutes out from arriving at our lunch spot I received a call from the Hive that they had lost power and no food would be available for our group. The Hive was not to BEE!! I sheepishly relayed this message to our convoy. A suggestion was to eat the leftover biscuits. Regrettably too few left to feed the masses.

Luckily just a few kms up the road the day was saved by The Blue Mountains Botanic Gardens Café who stayed open to provide us all with a delicious lunch. Their generator was working. Yeay! The weather was indeed wild today. No sooner had we all sat down to lunch the wind gusts came up, scattering the tables and chairs across the outdoor terrace. We all remained unscathed as we had opted to sit inside where it was cooler. With lunch over, the generator of the Botanic Gardens tripped signalling that it was time to leave.

Maybe next time I'll bring even more biscuits!



Sydney - Drive to the Hive
Words: Ellis Weir | Photos: Mark Godfrey and Rob Wilkins

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Illawarra trek to Mudgee

10th October 2025

Words: Bryan Shedden | Photos: Bryan Shedden, Fiona Shedden and Ann Hicks



On the morning of Friday 10 October, 12 members assembled at Bean Roasted Calderwood for a delicious brekkie roll and coffee to kick start our trip to Mudgee. Five MX-5s and an Abarth Spider set a course west for Macquarie Pass on a warm spring day with clear skies - perfect for roadstering. From Robertson, we took the roads less travelled and more twisty to Fitzroy Falls then Bundanoon and along the stunningly scenic Highland Way.

Our morning tea stop was at Marulan. It's been a while since we last visited Meridian Cafe and it's been given a substantial renovation since. The walls are now covered with bright murals and the carpet is colourful and lairy - the place has character! The Devonshire teas were more impressive than ever, and the baker's cakes and breads were amazing.

After dragging the girls from the curio shop next door, we zipped down the Hume to Goulburn and turned north onto the Tablelands Way. It was a beautiful drive through open countryside all the way to Taralga for our lunch stop at the historic pub. Verity & Kate made the trip down from Oberon and met us there for lunch. The bistro seating out back was closed for renovations, and the friendly staff set us up on the front patio for our delicious meals.

The road north improved with every kilometre, weaving along reasonably well-sealed roads through the hills around the Abercrombie River. A call over the radio revealed that Emilco & Beti's NA desperately needed a drink so a refuelling diversion to Oberon was arranged. Verity & Kate left us at this point. It was wonderful to meet you both and I trust you'll remember the trick for the

boot lock disabling switch in your NC.

It was the weekend of the Bathurst 1000 and the town was packed so we skirted through Kelso on our way to a rest stop at Sofala, which is best described as the goldtown that time forgot! Tony & Jeanette were keen to have a good look around which proved to be a great idea. We wandered the main street taking in the sights and chatting with the locals. Ann was amazed when the old bloke at the post office explained he'd lived his entire life in the town! We did our bit for the local economy via liquid refreshments from the pub before commencing the final leg of the day. It was a very scenic drive from Sofala to Ilford, then paralleling Lake Windermere before cruising into Mudgee. Accommodation was at the BIG4 in their excellent quality cabins. Later that night, we rejoined at the communal BBQ area to cook a steak, share salads and enjoy a selection of local wines.

Day two began for some of us with DIY bacon and eggs at the BBQ area, while others preferred to have it prepared for them at the cafe next door. We then drove into town and wandered the stalls at the Lawson Park market beside the Cudgegong River. Fiona picked up some gorgeous stained glass pieces made by a local artist. I'll vouch for the coffee at the Butcher Shop Cafe - just what the doctor required. We eventually reunited for the short drive to the wineries for our lunch booking at di Lusso Estate. They have a gorgeous alfresco bistro overlooking a pond, and a mouth-watering menu. Mark set the lead by choosing the marinated Mudgee lamb cutlets and most of our table followed. It was a warm day so we cooled off with a couple glasses of



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Illawarra trek to Mudgee

10th October 2025

Words: Bryan Shedden | Photos: Bryan Shedden, Fiona Shedden and Ann Hicks

Vino Rosato and Pinot Grigio. After a quick game of bocce, we drove down the road to Huntington Estate. Eight of us were treated to a personal wine tasting, resulting in a few sales. Most squeezed the bottles into their cars, but Fiona and I wisely left it for the courier.

Our afternoon was spent with an enjoyable driving tour up and over Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve to Wollar, then circling back around the huge open-cut coal mines at Wilpinjong and Moolarben. Our next stop was at the historic goldtown of Gulgong, which impressed us with its narrow streets and many beautiful buildings lovingly preserved. Sadly we were a bit late and the Holtermann Museum was already closed.

After another short drive from Gulgong to Mudgee, we restocked at Aldi then relaxed in our cabins. I was the only one brave enough to go for a swim - despite the heat, the water was refreshingly icy. The destination for fivesies was arranged on the lawn behind Zan & Phil's cabin with a large circle of chairs formed around antipasto and snacks. Once the families had retired for the night, we shifted to the BBQ area to prepare our meals and settled in for an entertaining evening of hearty conversation and more local wines.

Sunday morning began in much the same way as Saturday, before we packed and hit the road. Driving in convoy to Lithgow for a pit stop, then along Bells Line of Road, we arrived at Mount Tomah Botanic Garden. Amongst our group, only Brigid had visited before and we all left convinced that a return visit was definitely required. Lunch at the cafe was excellent and the gardens were stunning.

This would be the end of our group's journey together, and we made our own way home, some stopping for apples and/or cider at Bilpin. All agreed it was a fantastic long weekend trip!



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Canberra Visits the Shoalhaven

15th - 17th October 2025

Words: Simon Trickett | Photos: Cathy Trickett, Rob Wilkins and Lili Chi

It was a mild morning that greeted the 10 cars and 17 people who congregated at the Little Sutton Bakehouse for a quick drink and briefing before departing. The group consisted of the usual suspects with the addition of Kerry from the Hunter Chapter who had come down for the run.

Not the most interesting of drives to begin, two hours up the Hume Highway to Berrima. Once in Berrima, we split into two groups so we could get some light refreshments at the various cafés and some marmalade from a favourite marmalade shop, Mrs Oldbucks Pantry.

Regrouping, we left Berrima for another, albeit shorter stint of driving on the Hume, before turning onto Picton Road. Once at Wilton we took the scenic road over Cataract River to Appin before beginning the descent towards the coast. We took the Bulli Pass which a number of attendees had never driven or hadn't been on for many decades.

Lunch was at The Headlands Hotel in Austinmer. The food came quickly for some and not so quickly for others, so we had plenty of time to chat and take in the glorious view up the coastline with the cliff face.

The weather couldn't have been better, mid 20's, blue skies, slight breeze, just what the Canberrans amongst us needed coming out of winter! Meandering north through the suburbs we soon found ourselves driving across the Sea Cliff Bridge and onto Bald Hill lookout. This gave us the reverse view from that at lunch as well as a clear view of the bridge. No hang gliders today so we couldn't marvel at the flyer's skill and fearlessness.

Because we could, we drove back over the Sea Cliff Bridge, my preferred direction as you can see the bridge snaking off into the distance. It would have been nice to park and walk across, however the small carpark was mostly full and wouldn't have been able to accommodate our 10, albeit small, cars – next time maybe.

Heading south to Berry, some took the suburban route, others the M1. Those that took the M1, us included, were greeted with solid traffic as there had been a crash up ahead. Even with this delay, we were still slightly ahead of the others as they joined the M1. There were still some sections of slow traffic from merging lanes but once we cleared Wollongong and Port Kembla it was an easy drive to Berry.

Accommodation was at the Berry Village Boutique Motel. As soon as the car was



unpacked, I was off to the donut van which just happens to be opposite the motel. With a '6 pack' in hand I wandered back to the motel for a cuppa and a 'nut – before you think I ate all 6, I had to share with Cathy! From subsequent conversations it appears others have also been indoctrinated into the wonders of the Berry Donut van!

Dinner was at the Berry Hotel, with a number of people having a beverage or two beforehand. Lots more stories and laughs were had over dinner. It doesn't matter how many times we have met, there is always something new to talk about or learn about each other.

Day 2 was another cracking day weather wise. Whilst we would only be covering around 200km, it would be a slower drive given the type of roads we would be travelling on. Again, thanks to Kerry from the Hunter who planned this route for a run he went on with the South Coast Chapter back in 2023.

Back roads would best describe today's type of road, bumpy, narrow, twisty, steep, precarious. But they offered fantastic scenery and some great driving in areas we don't normally get to. If you look at the route on a map, it appears as if somebody has just scribbled all over it! First off, we headed south towards Bomaderry, turning off just before, in the direction of the coast. Farm access roads would be a good descriptor of what we travelled on, fortunately no tractors or wandering farm animals were encountered. Given the number of cars in the group and the number of turns, everybody did a great job of keeping up. After a quick stop given a false reading on a tyre pressure monitoring system (is this a trait of the NDs? It's happened a few times now) we continued on our twisty way before completing a loop which saw us briefly duck into Berry again so that we could then head



up the hill to morning tea.

Kangaroo Valley Road is an interesting road. Limited to cars only, it features very dark and shadowy sections as the sun is mostly blocked by the density of the tree canopy, sheer drop offs and for us a 1st gear corner. Not quick going, but certainly one that tests the driver's skill. Slowing for other vehicles, we were able to group up again as we arrived in Kangaroo Valley. After morning tea and a quick look around, we got back on the road and kept heading inland and up the hill on the other side of the valley. This section of road reminds me of say a ¾ version of the Kings Highway in both length and width, it is quite tight with minimal shoulders – a great stretch of road.

Passing through Robertson we headed for the coast once again. We did pass the Robertson Pie Shop and I was tempted to stop but the brain prevailed over the stomach so we veered off down Jamberoo Mountain Road instead. This road has only been open again for the last few years but it doesn't appear the work was done very well as the road had been closed again for the previous three days due to road work. Today though, we had a good run through the sweeping bends and picturesque country side.

Onwards to our next stop we headed. This time it was the Saddleback Mountain lookout. Alas there was some mist so the view wasn't as clear as it could have been. However, it didn't stop three young ladies from eyeing off Ian's car and twisting his arm to pose for a photo with him in front his bright yellow NC! The reason being, one of them also owned a bright yellow car.

Skirting Kiama we hit the highway for a short period until we turned into Gerringong for our last stretch of road before we arrived at our lunch destination. We have been to Hedy's Bistro at Shoalhaven Heads a number of times now and it has always proved a good choice. A wide selection of tasty food, reasonable prices and quick service. Not to mention a great view across the Shoalhaven River towards the sea.

Following lunch, the afternoon was free time. We went for a wander through Berry and spied a number of other MX5'ers doing the same and also sampling the ice creams on offer from the local lolly shop!

Rather than plan another group dinner, we had left the second night open for people to choose their own given the selection of restaurants on offer. We, along with a handful of others went to the local Italian restaurant, Tre Bambini. The restaurant was chosen due to the high Google rating, and we were not disappointed. The staff were very friendly and the food was scrumptious. I was very satisfied with my choice of a swordfish steak topped with prawns and an amazing garlic cream sauce (the diet can wait for another day).

As we would be heading south, it was at this point we bid farewell to our new friend, Kerry who would be heading in a more direct route home to the Central Coast. Thank you for joining us, we will see you again soon I'm sure, possibly in your part of the country.

A cloudy day greeted us on our final day in Berry but no rain. Having had a bit of a sleep in, we assembled for a leisurely briefing before heading for Nowra. Half the group went for fuel whilst the others went directly to the Fleet Air Arm Museum. During this time a worker at HMAS Albatross had come down to enquire about the cars – we could have a new member as they were looking for a new car and were surprised at the affordability of such an exotic vehicle! The other group arrived shortly after.

This museum focuses on the history of naval aviation in the Royal Australian Navy. Exhibits range from a timber framed bi-plane, fixed wing aircraft, helicopters through to the latest drone technology. It is well worth the visit.

Here we split up, four cars went back towards the coast, whilst we led the remaining five cars back to Canberra via Nerriga, Tarago and Bungendore. However, it wouldn't be a true chapter run if we didn't fit in another meal! Instead of The Loaded Dog in Tarago, we opted for The Chubby Cat Café (no, I'm not making these names up!). Whilst small, they had a good selection of burgers and pies, as well as some yummy homemade cakes and slices. The staff were happy to accommodate our group and the burgers were 'old school', generous in size which pleased all those who had ordered one. Here we bid our farewells and headed towards Bungendore before driving off in different directions.

This run allowed me to introduce the members to a good number of roads that they hadn't been on before or hadn't been on for many years. For me, finding these new roads (at least for the Canberra Chapter) is what I get great satisfaction in. What was helpful on this run? An instant messaging app which we created a group in to allow for easy communication before and during the run. We used this to note changes, co-ordinate meeting times for dinners and remind the group of meeting and departure times. And two-way radios were very valuable when on the road (just get the 5watt version if you are going to buy one, far greater range).

Nikki Gemmell salutes the sun in the MX-5

Reprinted courtesy of Mazda News - 25th July 2025

(Nikki Gemmell is the best-selling author of thirteen novels and four works of non-fiction)

"I'm a convertible convert", beams Nikki Gemmell

Oh you pretty thing! When I first saw the photo of the fabulousness I would be driving, I may have squealed. It was the gorgeous Mazda MX-5, in the pearliest greeny-grey colour, complete with a cool retro vibe of low slung, slinky roundedness with not a jarring line on it.

This baby looked like nothing else on the road – far removed from the yawn-inducing conformity of most modern car manufacturers. It had cheek and flair and wit and looked like it was built for roaring and laughing and prowling in, for sheer delighting in.

This was a car for Audrey in Roman Holiday and Grace in To Catch A Thief, but with all the latest tech encased in its petite little body. I could, possibly, drive through Paris with the warm wind in my hair in it. It demanded driving gloves, vintage scarf and singular sunglasses. Did I have any of these? Two out of three, as if waiting for this very moment; excitement levels were building, I couldn't wait.

Then I was alerted to an incontrovertible fact: my Mazda was a manual. Gulp. I hadn't driven manual for 14 long, kid-crammed years, during which time the brain had been scrambled by early morning school runs and full-time work and cooking dinners that no one ever seemed to like. How would this weary old head cope with gear shifts and heel-toe riffs? Was I too old for this?

Incontrovertible fact: the prettiest modern car I'd ever set eyes on was now giving me nightmares of hill starts and kangaroo hops. Could I remember what order the pedals go in and which foot danced across two of them? I had memories of my dear, departed father instructing me decades ago to "listen to the car talk" when he sold me his old Holden ute, my very first car. What did he mean again? The brain hurt with worry. Could I actually do this?

I said yes. Gulp. The Mazda MX-5 was just too seductively luscious to refuse. I rang my daughter's driving instructor. Panic. Could he squeeze me in for a quick brush up? No, he could not. Because he didn't own a manual, but he suggested I borrow one from a mate and he'd be over like a shot. I couldn't think of a single friend who had one. Cortisol levels rose higher. Should I cancel my longed-for day with this sweetest, prettiest baby? I could not, the Mazda was just too gorgeous to resist.

D-Day. The most beautiful little sports car I'd ever seen was waiting for me at the pickup point, and I did indeed squeal; it was even lovelier in real life. I wanted to instantly drape myself, with scarf, across its long, curved bonnet - but not inside it. And especially not in the driver's seat (beautifully appointed in snug



black leather, a temptation I wanted to resist.) The photographer and my driving partner (a motoring journalist) suggested I head to an obscure local car park for a quick refresher on manual driving. Ok, I said weakly, and off we headed (me feeling secretly sick.)

Deep breath. Relax. Exhale. Find pedals. Familiarise yourself with gears. Remember the order of pedals; right foot does the dancing. Press start button - hang on, an adolescent possum was now doing delirious circles in front of the car, as if mesmerised by the Mazda's beauty and unable to escape its siren lure. Focus, focus, shoo possum. Deep breath. The possum finally shuffled away from killer wheels; I pressed the start button aaaaaaand ...

It worked! Muscle memory kicked in! I listened to my car talk and then responded, instinctively. The gear change was smooth, the lightest and easiest I'd ever experienced. This car was so beautifully constructed, it all felt effortless. Driving a manual was like getting back in front of a sewing machine again - you do not forget, your limbs lead the way. Even the possum was still, poised by the side of the road and staring as if entranced by the madwoman in scarf and sunglasses now doing gleeful little loops, accompanied by whoops, in her shiny new car.

Then the piece de resistance: a button was pressed and the roof disappeared like a giant spider drawing up its web. Air! Light! In all my years I'd never been in a convertible and now I was actually driving one.

Up shot my hand in exhilaration; I instantly felt closer to nature, to soil and sky. Instantly felt younger, free-er, all my cares in the world forgotten. Blown away by the sheer bliss of this Mazda MX-5, my smile as wide as a watermelon split.

The lads urged me to head to the most beautiful driving spot near Sydney, the sinuously stunning old Pacific Highway in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park; delight of bikers and classic car enthusiasts. I only stalled at city traffic lights, er, twice, yet not a single vehicle beeped or blared impatience - I suspect because they were as entranced by the beauty of the MX-5 as I was. Ditto the possum.



Where we were headed has one of the most beautiful train rides in the world, winding around the dramatic shores of the Hawkesbury, and I now discovered that it's a gorgeous car ride, too.

Out on those open roads I discovered the true delight of this car – its engine. The security of its grip as it rounded the bends of the old bush roads, among towering gums and ferns and moss-dappled rock ledges with stunning water glimpses and at one point the panoramic breadth of the mighty river unfurling right next to us, which of course demanded a stop and a stretch.

We also pulled up at the buzzy clifftop hub, "Pie in the Sky," which not only has some of the best homemade pies in the state but was featured in the film *Lantana* and has a regular clientele of fabulous vintage and luxury cars rolling up in a ballet of the best; you could sit there all day and just car watch.

I met John, a Cowan local most splendidly attired in paint-spattered white overalls, helmet, sandals and socks, and ended up being invited back to his workshop to check out his world-leading patent for rowlocks. Fabulous, and typical of this gloriously eccentric legend of a place (it was originally a railway canteen for fettlers as they worked on the great northern train line.)

Then my photographer took over the driving, because, well, he was gagging for a go. The MX-5 is like that; everyone just wants to dive in. It is so seductively sweet, but with a muscular roar underneath. Which Thomas of course duly demonstrated. Let's just say I pootled around those bends - and he thrust. The car was driven with a new assurance, a fresh confidence, and like a thoroughbred under the expert jockey's hand it obediently roared into a new realm of life.

Ah, so this is how you do it; this is what it's made for.

The Mazda MX-5 is not a car for shuffling kids and cricket kits – it's like a state of the art house in *Architectural Digest* but without the cupboards. And only two chairs.

It's utterly, marvellous. In other words: no kids allowed. Sorry, you just won't fit. Nor will school bags or soccer balls.

And in the ballad of Nikki Gemmell I was suddenly not

that mother with the leaking dishwasher and the dog that needed clipping and the "what's for dinner" texts on my phone - I was driving an MX-5 with no roof on one of the most beautiful stretches of Australian road, with my hand held high in transporting exhilaration and the warm wind in my hair.

This was the car's true elixir; happy pill, master distracter, drug of loveliness and forgetfulness and if only every day could be like this. Because on that road, in that Mazda, I turned into someone else. Goodbye to my old life for a blissful moment.

This was a car for vintage scarves and oversized sunglasses. For leisurely weekend drives with hot new dates. For picnic baskets with chocolate covered strawberries and champagne mixed with mango juice. For leather overnight bags containing Moleskin notebooks in the boot. For powering under a cathedral of trees with shadows dancing in golden-hour light. For winding along ocean cliffs in salt-laden air you could almost lick. For smelling the sunset outback earth opening up to receive its benediction of soothing dark. For gazing up to a breathtaking canopy of stars on a clear, still night. This was a car for when the kids were somewhere else. A grownup car, for a grownup world, and frankly I did not want to give it up.

But as the day of being someone else somewhere else wore on, my phone lit up with children and tradies and all their quotidian demands and I knew that soon, soon, my fairytale with scarf and sunnies would be vanished. Soon, soon it would be back to the suburban bedroom in the suburban town.

And so as the light dropped, we headed home. Reluctantly I pressed a button and the giant spider went into reverse, neatly enclosing me once again in (relative) normality. Reluctantly I handed back the key to my magic Mazda chariot. The fairy tale was over.

Time for the real world, for school lunches and soccer runs once again. But for one enchanting day – oh, what joy. For one enchanting day I had the warm wind in my hair, even if it wasn't quite Paris. But I'll always have this. The memory of my MX-5 powering along those winding bush roads and of butting the breeze with my outstretched hand, the memory of the sheer, utter bliss of it.

Sydney and RPM head to Headlands

Words: Julie Sando | Photos: Mark Godfrey



Sydney and RPM head to Headlands Hotel 20th November 2025



Five little cars met up one day, on the southside not too far away

Mother car said, come along follow me, we followed the silver Kia...yip yippee!!

Down through the big park we all went, MX5's loving the roads that are so bent

Mother car said come along turn left, the cars all parked so that everyone could rest

We met with others from mountains and plains, they had a long trip over many terrains

The view was great and the company fun, thank you Maree & Kay for another great run!!

by Julie Sando





Eight cars and sixteen members set off from Newcastle for Tamworth to see the Tamworth Musical Society's production of Mel Brooks' *The Producers*.

This annual Hunter Chapter outing has become a favourite—always a fun overnight trip paired with a top-quality theatrical experience. Our chapter member, Stephen Carter, is part of the Tamworth Musical Society and has previously performed on stage, this time, however, he took on the role of director.

As we left Newcastle, the day was already heating up with temperatures climbing into the 30s. We headed north-west to the Hunter Belle Cheese Factory & Café in Muswellbrook for lunch, which, as always, was excellent.

After Muswellbrook, the weather began to build. By the time we reached Willow Tree, thunderstorms had closed in. Thunder and scattered rain finally forced even the staunchest top-down drivers to concede

and put the roofs up. We stopped briefly at Wallabadah, and as we departed a hailstorm swept through, luckily behind us, so we continued on to Tamworth unscathed.

After checking into our lodgings, the carpark quickly turned into a cheerful social gathering before we headed to the theatre.

The production was outstanding. Being a Mel Brooks show, the comedy and innuendo kept us laughing in the aisles. As a musical, it featured plenty of singing, all performed to an impressively high standard.

Bravo to Stephen and the entire Tamworth Musical Society, an excellent production thoroughly enjoyed by all.

For the return trip, everyone did their own thing in the morning and made their way home at their own pace.

Another fantastic Tamworth theatre trip, one we're sure to repeat next year.



Hunter's Theatre Run to **THE PRODUCERS**

Words and Photos by David and Elaine Gazzard | 8th November 2025



2025 MX-5 Cup Round 5 : One Raceway 16/8/2025

Story: Paul Nudd

Photo: Andrew Edgar

Round 5 on Saturday 16th August was at One Raceway on the Wakefield (clockwise) Circuit. Another fabulous day of racing with a 15 minute Qualifying session, Race 1 of 15 minutes, race 2 of 18 minutes and Race 3 of 20 minutes.

18 MX-5s were entered and were joined by one MG Midget. 17 MX-5s took to the track for qualifying. Tim Herring laid out the challenge with a time of 1:06.2380 and challenge accepted by Brad Herring posting a 1:06.3500 lap of the circuit.

In Race 1 there was good close racing throughout the field with a result of Brad Herring finishing first with a race time of 14:32.6700. Tim Herring was close behind with a race time of 14:32.8240. Third was Stuart McFadyen driving his Naturally Aspirated NB to a race time of 14:33.5450

Race 2 also saw good close racing. Brad took first again with a race time of 16:56.4020. Tim was again close behind with a race time of 16:56.9280 and Sarah Medley came storming through the field to take third with a race time of 16:58.5340.

Before Race 3 the sky turned dark and it looked like we may have a storm. Some slick drivers changed to treaded tyres, anticipating a wet track. We did have a mild sprinkle mid-race but not enough to make the track slippery. Tim Herring finally got the better of Brad and took first with a race time of 13:17.1040. Followed by Brad Herring with a race time of 13:19.6600. This time Sarah started closer to the front and was third again with a race time of 13:20.6848

The fastest lap on the day in the MX-5 Cup was recorded by Tim Herring in Race 2 with a lap of 1:05.3360. Second fastest with 1:05.6460 was Sarah Medley, also in Race 2.

Jett Herring was sitting out this round as he was busy with the Wakefield 300 and two one hour enduro races in his Pulsar. He did however record several laps in the 1:04s in his Naturally Aspirated NC in the lead up to Sunday's Wakefield 300.

Results

Race 3 is designated the 'Trophy Race' with Trophies from MRA. First was Tim Herring with Brad Herring second and Sarah Medley third.

Overall placings for Round 5 with Trophies supplied by MX5 Mania were:

First Brad Herring 23 points

Second Tim Herring 22 points

Third Martin Lyall 22 points

Classes

After breakouts through the day we ended up with no-one left in Class C and only one left in Class A. The remaining competitor in Class A was 'promoted' to Open Class.

Class placings

In the **Forced Induction Open Class**:

1. Brad Herring 23 points

2. Tim Herring 22 points

3. Sarah Medley 17 points

4. John Fraser 16 points

5. Jayden Psaroulis 12 points

In the **Naturally Aspirated Open Class**:

1. Ian Spinks 20 points with a class win in Race 3

2. Ben Cathcart 20 points – no class wins on the day

3. Rod Tippet 17 points

4. Stuart McFadyen 16 points

5. Paul Nudd 12 points

6. Lou Iezzi 4 points

Class B:

1. Martin Lyall 22 points

2. Sam Silvestro 21 points

3. Pete Sallows 20 points

4. Ian Combes and John Conolly each on 12



First club track day at SMP GP circuit By Bryan Shedden

Our first ever club track day at the Gardner (GP) circuit of Sydney Motorsport Park was on Saturday 16 August 2025, organised by Club Lotus Australia as Round 4 of the CSCA Supersprint Series. We counted it as Round 3 of the MX-5 Club Sprint Championship. Several of our track day competitors were already familiar with the track from the NSW Regularity Relay but this was a unique opportunity to sample the circuit in a track day format. The GP circuit is formidably high speed. The 90 degree turn 1 is taken at around 160km/hr, and word-of-the-day was to treat it with respect, owing to a fatality that occurred there only a few weeks prior. We all sign the disclaimer that states "Motorsport Activities are inherently dangerous recreational activities and there is significant risk of injury, disability or death." Such incidents give us all time to reflect!

The Shannons Sydney Classic, organised by CMC, was also booked for the same weekend. Stall holders were given exclusive access for the pitlane garages for the entire weekend, such that we were only able to use the carports on a first-come-first-served basis. Motorsport Secretary Chris Andry tried his best to save us some carports but despite arriving at precisely 7:00am, every carport was gone. Instead, Chris and his dad Jonathan claimed a large space in the parking area and set up a gazebo for some shade. The weather played ball, and it was a lovely warm day with clear skies.

A solid field of 76 drivers competed on the day, 39 of whom were members of the MX-5 Club of NSW. All five of our Club vehicle classes were thoroughly represented, with between 6 and 12 drivers per class. The fastest times were set in the first runs of the day, as the temperature rose after that and a head-wind developed on the main straight. Our Club's 21yo Motorsport Secretary is attracting younger people to our motorsport events, with 7 of today's MX-5 competitors aged under 30 years. Fantastic!

Tyler Schaafsma's NDRF was heard making some very strange noises on the track, which was pinpointed to a loose chassis brace flapping around under his car. Equipment and parts were quickly shared in the pits and Tyler was back on track with minimal interruption. Another driver had a nasty incident at turn 16, losing the rear of his racecar, then snapping and sliding into the concrete wall. His racecar was heavily damaged but has since been repaired after spending a couple weeks with Lou Iezzi.

One of the fantastic things about running at the CSCA Supersprints is seeing the huge variety of classic sports cars that rock up to fang around the track. My personal highlight at this round was an original 1968 Ford GT40 presented in gorgeous Gulf Racing livery. Wow! I hope the owner didn't mind wiping our drool off his car.



Since this was our first club track day at SMP GP, the benchmark times were estimated from about 20 years of records at NSW Supersprints. We thought they would be a decent approximation and we will adjust them for next year, based on these new results. Three drivers beat their benchmark time: Jie Ren (102.06%), Bryan Shedden (101.35%), and Chris Andry (101.25%), claiming the top three outright places in our Motorsport Championship, and Standard Class too. Clubman Class places were John Karayannis 1st, Glenn Thomas 2nd, Tyler Schaafsma 3rd. Modified Class places were Luke Kovacic 1st, Kyle Robinson 2nd, Reece Lyndon 3rd. Open Class places were Brett Lansley 1st, Jason Russell 2nd, Matthew Tarrant 3rd.

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2025 Sprint Championship

Words: Bryan Shedden

Photo: Rob Wilkins

The final round of the MX-5 Club of NSW Sprint Championship — which also counted as Round 6 of the CSCA Supersprint Series — was hosted by the Jaguar Drivers Club of Australia at Sydney Motorsport Park's Druitt Circuit on Sunday 20 October 2025. This marked the first time our club has used the Druitt layout for one of our track days. With its long, fast straights punctuated by a few brief technical sections, it's not exactly the most MX-5-friendly configuration — but it certainly provided plenty of challenges (and fun!) for our drivers.

A strong field of 26 MX-5 Club members joined 74 entrants overall, making for a busy and exciting day. The Jaguar Club organisers were delighted to have our support, helping make the event both successful and financially viable.

We couldn't have asked for better weather: a clear spring day that started cool and crisp before warming nicely as the sessions went on. The quickest times were set early—at least for those lucky enough to avoid red flags and fluid spills interrupting their runs.

As always, the CSCA Supersprint field was full of fascinating machinery. Among the highlights was Mark Hurst from the Triumph Sports Owners Association, piloting a genuine 1965 Brabham BT14 Formula Libre racecar — one of only ten ever built! Mark was having a great time reacquainting himself with the car after a major rebuild, until a sheared gear selector rod forced an early retirement. He certainly deserved admiration for mixing it with much larger cars — his Brabham made the MX-5s look enormous by comparison!

The paddock was a treat too, with an impressive display of classic Jaguars, mainly XJs that looked straight out of Minder. There were also a few elegant Mark 2s and a stunning E-Type that drew plenty of admiring looks. The final run of the day was reserved for the Jaguars, and hearing them fly through Turn 1 in formation sounded like a squadron of Spitfires. Adding to the variety, a BMW 2002 tii went door-to-door with a Ford Escort Twin Cam — proof that diversity really is the spice of life on the track!

The outright fastest time went to Adam Single from MG Car Club Newcastle, who clocked an impressive 1:06.0947 in his Williams Sport Racer, nearly three seconds ahead of the next closest competitor. Leading the MX-5 brigade was Ralph Thompson in his Open Class NC, setting a superb 1:11.8878 to keep the Lotus

drivers honest. Ian Spinks followed in his Open Class ND with a 1:14.1558, and Luke Kovacic wasn't far behind in his dad's lightly modified 30th Anniversary ND, posting 1:14.4623.

In the MX-5 Club Sprint Championship, the day's top scorer was Bryan Shedden, achieving 98.19% in the Standard Class. He was followed closely by a pair of young guns Tyler Schaafsma (96.99%, Clubman Class) and Kyle Robinson (95.80%, Modified Class). In fact, five more drivers scored in the 95s including Ian Spinks (95.61%, Open Class) — a testament to how close and competitive this year's series has been! Interestingly, Bryan, Tyler, and Kyle all shared a garage for the day — clearly, there was something lucky about that spot! In the non-MX-5 class, David Phillips recorded the quickest time of 1:15.637 in his Toyota GR Yaris.

This year's championship was one of the most diverse we've ever run, thanks to our participation in the CSCA Supersprint series. Across five rounds, we competed on SMSP Amaroo (twice), SMSP Gardner/GP, SMSP Druitt, and enjoyed a welcome return to One Raceway (formerly Wakefield Park).

Congratulations to all competitors and class winners — what a fantastic season! Here's to even more great racing, camaraderie, and MX-5 spirit in 2026.

Outright Champion - Bryan Shedden

Standard Class - Bryan Shedden

Clubman Class - John Karayannis

Modified Class - Luke Kovacic

Open Class - Ian Spinks

Ladies MX-5 - Keiran Taylor





2025 CSCA Championship Results

By Bryan Shedden

Results for the CSCA Supersprint Championship have been finalised. Congratulations to our club members for their achievements.

Marque Drivers Champion - Luke Kovacic

Class M1 Post-1985 Production Road Cars 0-2000cc
- 1st Luke Kovacic, 2nd John Karayannis, 3rd Matt Thomas

Class P2 Modern Performance & Modified Road Cars
2001-3100cc - 1st Leo Ascone

Class R1 Competition Cars & AWD Turbos DOT Tyres
0-2000cc - 1st Ian Spinks

2025 CSCA Drivers Championships

Marque Car	Y
Lady	(All)

Sum of Points	
Champion Driver	Total
Luke Kovacic	60
Jeff Breen	60
Colin Rudd	58
Brett Monk	56
Geoffrey Linders	54
Ian Spinks	48
Graham Allen	48
Kyle Robinson	43
Lindsay Day	38
Reece Lyndon	38

Marque Car	Y
Lady	Y

Sum of Points	
Champion Lady Driver	Total
Tammie Hotz	10
Keiran Taylor	9
Elise Manewell	3

Shelley Circuit, Wakefield the wrong way

By Lou Iezzi

Usually when it's summer I don't go anywhere near a race track, I really don't like hot weather, but this was a special occasion, the first race meeting on the new Shelley Circuit.

One Raceway is now a first class facility and one of the best things they did was to set it up to run in both directions. This time I was running in the Super TT class which is basically run whatever you have, V8 RX7, V8 Dolomites, V8 Toyota 86, in my case ND race car with stock engine. The way the track is set up now it appears to suit underpowered cars a bit better so I ended up racing a bunch of much faster cars.

After 3 races I ended up winning the Under 2.0L treaded Tyre class, Todd Herring also won as did Jei Ren, so 3 of the 4 classes were won by MX5s, also racing MX5 were Craig Barney and Ben Cathcart.

Another excellent event run by MRA, looking forward to going back next year, hopefully in cooler weather!



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Challenge Bathurst

Words and Photos by: Stewart Temesvary and Glenn Thomas

20th - 23rd November saw the 10th running of the Challenge Bathurst event at the Mount Panorama Circuit. More than 400 drivers, spread over 10 groups (comprising 4 Sprint groups and 6 Regularity groups) entered the four-day event. MX-5 Club of NSW representatives included: Luke Kovacic (Group A), Jamie Martin (Group B), Glenn Thomas (Group B) and Stewart Temesvary (Group E).

Stewart won three of the four Group E trials and ended up winning the group by a comfortable margin, extending his winning streak to nine consecutive first places over the ten years of Challenge Bathurst.

Group B soon became a two-way battle between Jamie and Glenn. While Jamie took an early lead, at the halfway point Glenn had edged his way to the lead and was never headed from there. Jamie came in a well-deserved 2nd place with a cumulative score

that represented a large gap back to the third position and the rest of the field.

Glenn dual entered his car with his son Brendan competing in Group D. Despite being his first time on the track, Brendan put in a phenomenal performance to take out second position; missing 1st by just three points.

Even though our club's representation was relatively small, the results were outstanding and a great testament to not only the reliability and handling of the MX-5 and the skill of the drivers, but also reflects the Club's contribution to growing grass-roots motorsport.

The results at Bathurst mean Glenn and Stewart have collectively amassed fourteen individual 1st places and three 2nd places over the 10 years of Challenge Bathurst, while as Panorama Mountain Men relay team mates, have taken a clean sweep of all the multi-club regularity events they competed in this year:



2025 MX-5 Cup Round 6 : Sydney Motorsport Park 18/10/2025

Story: Ian Combes and Paul Nudd

Photos: Rob Wilkins

Round 6 was at Sydney Motorsport Park, Gardener Circuit on the 18th October. It was a good day for motorsport – fine and not hot. This round had 20 MX-5s on the grid, combined with a few Midgets and a Dart.

Todd Herring came out to play in #77, putting in a brisk 1:39.49 in qualifying – not too far in front of Jett in that indecently quick atmo 2.5 NC.

Todd took out race 1, followed by Jett and Jaxon Fraser. Jett finished in front in race 2, followed by Brad Herring and Jaxon Fraser.

In race 3 (the trophy race), the order was shuffled a little – Jett still won, but Jaxon was back in second, followed by John Fraser, Jie Ren and Brad Herring.

The overall winner on the day was Jett Herring with 24 points. Second was Craig Barney with 24 points. Third was Brad Herring with 23 points.

In the class results:

In **Forced Induction Open** (FIO) Class: 1st was Brad Herring on 23 points and 2nd was John Fraser on 22 points.

In **Naturally Aspirated Open** (NAO) Class: 1st was Jett Herring on 24 points, 2nd was Jaxon Fraser on 21 points, and 3rd was Jie Ren on 18 points

In **Class A**, 1st was Rod Tippet on 19 points, 2nd was Ian Spinks on 19 points, and 3rd was Sam Hou on 18 points.

In **Class B**, 1st was Craig Barney on 24 points, 2nd was Martin Lyall on 21 points and 3rd was Sam Silvestro on 18 points

This was the last round of the year, so the **MX-5 Cup Champion of 2025 was Brad Herring** on 108 points, followed by Ian Spinks on 103 points and John Fraser on 102 points. Not much in it. Many congratulations to Brad – he has been near the front all season. The full championship pointscore is on the club's motorsport webpage.

Being the end of the season, I'd like to thank Paul Nudd for organising the MX-5 Cup again this year, and Verne Johnston for his time and effort all season tabulating results. Thank you Craig Barney for organising the presentation each round. Thanks too for Sam Silvestro, Jamie Martin and Steven Head for being on the DSC (Driving Standards Committee) – a new initiative this year. The racing has been (mostly) clean this year – we will improve on processes for 2026.

A very special thank you to MX5 Mania for their invaluable sponsorship and support in 2025 – very much appreciated. MX5 Mania provided the round trophies at all MX-5 Cup round in 2025. We all wear the



MX5 Mania windscreen banner on our cars with pride in appreciation of their support – thank you!

The MX-5 Cup racing is part of the MRA (Motor Racing Australia) race events. Thank to MRA and Terry Denovan for giving us the opportunity to have fun in the MX-5 Cup.

Looking towards 2026, MRA is moving to Motorsport Australia permits. Most people (those who do track days anyway) will know that the MX-5 Club had to switch all our remaining track days to Motorsport Australia a couple of years or more ago. MRA were still operating under AASA permits up until this year, but from next year will be operating under Motorsport Australia permits. That means a Motorsport Australia racing licence and a Motorsport Australia logbook for everyone in 2026.

At time of writing, the MX-5 Cup dates for 2026 were yet to be published.



Illawarra Sip n Paint for Careflight

25th October 2025

Words: Senia Gaunson | Photos: Ann Hicks and Senia Gaunson

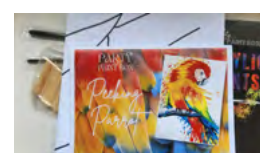
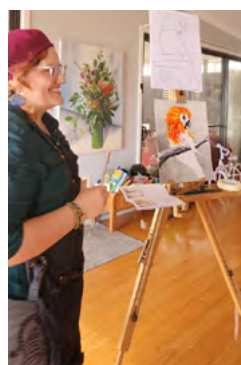


The budding artists gathered and inspected their berets, canvases and paints in readiness for the evening's art lesson and shenanigans.

Our wonderful art instructor for the evening, fabulous artist Cassandra Chapman, needed some Dutch courage in a glass by way of Aperol Spritz' to face this rowdy, but talented mob! She need not have worried, they all (well most) paid close attention to the techniques she described and came away with some wonderful art works ready to be hung.

They painted, laughed, ate, sipped and raised \$325 towards the MX-5 Careflight charity.

We could not decide on the winner and declared them all winners, what do you think? (Disclaimer: None of our paintings were acquired from the Louvre).



A group of excited travellers met at Hungry Jack's in **Bomaderry** ready for today's mystery letter run. There were plenty of guesses about where we were going, particularly after the timing for morning tea was given, but none of them were correct. The convoy needed to leave by 9:00am, but where was Kerry? His car had been parked at a petrol pump for ages and, frustratingly for Kerry, the queue to pay was very slow moving. We were all happy to stand around and chat while waiting. He made it with a few seconds to spare. Everyone guessed we would head north.... not hard to get that right, as it's the only direction you can go from this location. However, using the new overpass we crossed over the highway and headed through the back streets of **Bomaderry** and turned on to **Bolong Road**.

As Kerry had just driven this road to the run's starting point he queried if we were driving back to his place as punishment, however, we turned off long before his address onto **Backforest Rd** and then continued on to **Berry**, driving past Linda and Bob's new home. Rose suggested we call in for a cuppa and Linda wanted to overtake to get the kettle on... next time! A few were disappointed we didn't stop at the Treat Factory. Next it was up **Berry Mtn**, avoiding a few potholes and lyrebirds, through **Bellawongarah** up **Barrengarry Mtn** before finally arriving for morning tea at the **Buzz Cafe** in Robertson. The drive so far was superb. Clear skies, winding roads and very little traffic, despite a couple of stops at roadworks.

Although booked, the **Buzz Cafe** was not really prepared for our arrival. Goodies to go with coffee were limited, and unfortunately for Tony, Geoff got the last portuguese tart. What we consumed was good quality, but with only one staff member, it was slow going. The shops around the Cafe were interesting to browse through and three of us made Christmas purchases.

Appetites fully fuelled and retail therapy satisfied, it was time to drive on. The best roads were behind us and we did encounter heavy traffic in places, but it was still a great drive through **Burrawang** (the pub is being totally renovated), East **Bowral**, **Berrima Rd**, New **Berrima** and finally **Berrima** for lunch. The houses and estates in some of these areas are worth seeing as are some of the hedges. The Surveyor General Inn 1834 **bistro** meals were high quality..well worth the visit. Tony and Jennifer left for home after lunch and the remainder of us had a leisurely



stroll through the shops in the main street.

It was a **bloomin'** great day out. Thanks to everyone for a great adventure. I'm sure you can guess what the mystery letter was for today's run.



South Coast B 2 B or C 2 C Run

Words: Rose Smith | Photos: Linda Downing and Rose Smith | 14th November 2025

Hunter - Rob's 5 Day Run 2025

Words: Denise Birrell, Barry Luttrell, Lilo Bonus and Rob Emmett | **Photos:** Wendy Mulholland



20/10/2025 - Day 1 By Denise Birrell

We all met at Riverside Park at 7.30 for an 8.00 start, 8 cars in all, due to a few late cancellations. Departing we headed up the highway onto Buckets Way for a morning tea break in Gloucester, where we met a great group of bikies on a ride to Tweed Heads raising money for Black Dog, (awareness of depression and suicide). Today was quite special as it was Kerry's 80th Birthday and we were all in good spirits helping him celebrate with lots of happy snaps being taken by Wendy. Back on the road we headed up Thunderbolts Way to our lunch stop in Walcha.

Lunch over, we set up the Oxley Highway for our first night's stay in Port Macquarie to our Motel on the water surrounded with spectacular views. We enjoyed happy hour in the Motel's garden area and presented Kerry with a gift voucher for his Birthday. We then walked to a local Hotel for dinner and afterward a cake for Kerry to end a very enjoyable first day.

21/10/2025 - Day 2 By Barry Luttrell

Port Macquarie to Glen Innes

An early morning for breakfast and a beautiful day. Repack MX-5 which is always tricky, and ready to go. Fill up on Hastings River Drive and join run at River Mark Café. On to M1 and then up to Macksville for comfort stop and watch Pelicans being fed on the river. Out of Macksville and back on the M1 to Bellingen for morning tea. Parking found on the back streets, and we dispersed to available cafes for morning tea. Reassembled on the back streets and commenced our run up Waterfall Way, hopefully a clear run. Roadworks just past Thora

Bridge stopped on a red light with other cars but thankfully no trucks or buses. Opportunity while waiting to check out the local scenery. Green light so continued at a reasonable pace up waterfall way through multiple roadworks and across the Dorrigo Plateau with great scenery and through to Dorrigo town. No stopping here so progressed along Waterfall Way to Ebor village. Lunch at a local delightful whistle stop, Fusspot Café.

Lunch over, progressed through Ebor and then onto Guyra Road and through to Guyra township for a comfort stop. Onto the New England Highway and up to Glen Innes passing through scenic New England High Country arriving at the New England Motor Lodge. Dinner tonight at the renowned Yin Thai 98 Restaurant in the New England Club, which was enjoyed by all. Walked back to the Motel for a good night's sleep after a great day of mountain driving.

22/10/2025 - Day 3 By Lilo Bonus

We all awoke to a beautiful sunny morning at our motel in Glen Innes looking forward to day three. After our debriefing we departed at 8.30 on the New England Hwy to Tenterfield for morning tea, Casino for lunch then onto Grafton to stay the night. With tops down we had a lovely run with great scenery to Tenterfield where we all parked behind the Main Street.

Most of us opted for the bakery with yummy pies cakes, slices and coffee to choose from. We took this across the road to a lovely little park with shade and toilets as temperatures were already rising. Leaving Tenterfield on the Bruxner Hwy we drove past the Tenterfield Saddler Shop looking forward to our windy

section around the mountain. Most drivers were courteous and allowed us to pass so we had a spirited zoom zoom drive to Casino. Rob had picked out a great spot for us all to park with just a short stroll to "Kibbles Bakery" who were expecting us. By this time the temperature was already around 33 dg. We met the owner who is an inspirational 90 yr old and still working in the business, and also was a hot rod racer in his younger days. His pies, pasties and freshly made sandwiches were just what we needed. There was even a modern digital single toilet across the road. Lucky we were all smart enough to operate it. Leaving Casino, we all decided to leave tops up as temperatures were still rising. We travelled along Summerland Way and arrived in Grafton to a spectacular display of blooming Jacaranda Trees. Such a pretty sight. We drove around trying to find spots for photo shoots but decided it was too busy and would leave earlier in the morning. The Abbey Motel was in a fantastic spot with a shopping centre opposite where some of us girls went for a look. We also booked a table for breakie for those that wanted to dine out as we had been having our own breakfasts. The motel was lovely and clean with a great covered area for happy hour, offering a rest we all enjoyed. As usual lots of happy chatter and laughter. Dinner had been booked at the Clocktower Hotel which had lots of character, was spacious and cool and the menu divine. After a great dinner we all managed to slowly head back to our rooms, taking in all the beautiful lit up tree and main St. Grafton certainly was the highlight of the trip so far. Sooo pretty.

23/10/2025 - Day 4 By Rob Emmett

A late departure today allowing for a leisurely breakfast and some group photos of cars and participants. Although I must say the three previous days had us driving on some twisting and winding roads and today was expected to be the road with the tightest twists and bends of all. The road from South Grafton to Ebor is known as the Corkscrew and is aptly named. The road not in its best condition but still in a drivable condition. Some rough patches and some potholes but with full attention on the road could still provide some exuberant fun driving, the sort of road MX-5's are built for. Those out in front took full advantage of the road whilst the rear runners a little more relaxed approach. At Tyringham, a left turn took us to the park at Bostobrick where we had our first comfort stop and a few minutes to unwind after an exuberant drive. Thirteen kilometres on to Dorrigo through some very picturesque scenery and as we drew close to Dorrigo, past the world's largest private railway collection. We circled the village of Dorrigo to orient ourselves with the town facilities before proceeding to Danger Falls, a short distance from town, for a look at what proved a pretty sight. From here it was back to town for lunch where the group split, some opting to eat at cafe's others at the Pub which is often advertised on Hunter local TV as a fine provider of food. Reassembly after lunch and re-join The Waterfall Road to Ebor Falls for another short stop and then on to Armidale for

the night. Tonight's Motel proved to be a LET DOWN after the three previous night's accommodation, but I guess you get what you pay for this being the least expensive venue we stayed in. (Half the cost of Mid Pacific at Port Macquarie). This motel has been used on other memorable occasions by Hunter MX5 but that was in the past and even the members of the club are showing their age since our last visit. Try somewhere different next time.

The Day One to Day Four driving on this trip should be done at least once by every MX5 driver. Such fun, hard work but fun.

24/10/2025 - Day 5 By Rob Emmett

After a few grumbles regarding our night's accommodation members headed for home. Prior to our departure on the first day there had been three couples drop out of the trip just before departure date (health reasons) and one couple on the wait list taking up a position. 8 vehicles and 14 members participated. This morning, one couple departed home early to complete some work on a family car started before the trip, another couple headed to Southwest Rocks for a few days, another couple headed back to Glen Innes to spend time with family. A fourth couple headed straight for home to celebrate a son's birthday and a fifth couple who had not visited northern NSW before made their own way to explore a little more. This left one couple and the two singles to form a convoy for the home journey. The run down the New England highway apart from the scenery is not the most exciting but the company and the chat on the two-way radios helped the journey to pass pleasantly. The planned itinerary was abandoned and we made our way with comfort stops as necessary. Our last stop/lunch and final farewell was at the Crown Hotel Muswellbrook, a satisfying finish to a wonderful five days of driving, company, laughs and good scenery.

Someone should be planning the next trip by now. Well, I hope!



10 Year 200,000km Road Test Report By Bryan Shedden

Way back in the Winter 2015 edition of Club Torque, I wrote a story called Confessions of an ND Addict detailing the ordering process and delivery of my 1.5L ND. It turned out to be the first ND delivered to an Australian customer. I took delivery on 5 Aug 2015, the same day as the national dealer launch in Noosa. My son Alex was 10½ years old. Now here we are, 10 years later, Alex has spent half his life around this car, and I'm still deeply in love with this amazing vehicle. It's incredible to note that my base model cost \$31,990+ORC, and now the cheapest MX-5 you can buy lists for \$42,735+ORC, a 33% price hike. The launch edition of the ND was amazing value. Read on for my 200,000km road test report!

First visit to Wakefield Park for MX-5 Cup on 8 Aug 2015

Visiting Wakefield Park on 8 Aug 2015 to watch MX-5 Cup racing. Cameron Macarthur from Blue Mountains Mazda brought his GT demonstrator.

ND Sales History

First, I'll start with a bit of a sales history. The ND has now been on sale longer and sold more than any other generation of MX-5. To the end of August 2025, there have been 8796 NDs sold in Australia (10.2y), followed by 6533 NBs (7.5y), 5565 NCs (9.8y) and 4826 NAs (8.4y). Surprisingly, ND MX-5 sales have been growing in recent years despite nearing end of lifecycle, from 442 in 2019 to 662 in 2024. With 565 sold in 2025 up to August, MX-5 is headed for 850 sales this year. In it's 11th year on sale, the ND is selling stronger than the NC did in its 4th year when the NC2 was launched! No wonder Mazda seem comfortable sticking with it for a bit longer.

Fuel Consumption

I have kept meticulous records of fuel consumption. Covering 200,000km has taken 12,000L of fuel at a total cost of \$20,000. Filling mostly with 95 Premium from Caltex/Woolies, and the odd fill with 98 Premium from Enhance or Shell, my ND has a lifetime average consumption of 6.0L/100km. It was 5.9L/100km when I was commuting around the Illawarra, but climbed to 6.1L/100km when I started work at Moss Vale, using Macquarie Pass each day. I still have the original ADR 81/02 fuel consumption sticker, which states a combined test figure of 6.1L/100km. And people say I have a lead foot! The Skyactiv technology is incredibly efficient. I found the onboard computer display is highly accurate, with most fills reading within 0.1L/100km of the correct value.

Servicing

For the first 7 years, I had my ND serviced at Dwyers/Wollongong Mazda, before shifting to Moss Vale Mazda as it's closer to my work. Since the 180,000km service, I've been using a local mechanic (Illawarra Service



Centre) and additional oil changes I do myself. Ten years of logbook servicing cost me \$7000.

Tyres

I've gone through five sets of tyres, starting with Yokohama Advan Sport V105 195/50R16 and then a replacement set. I then went through three sets of Michelin Pilot Sport 4 205/50R16. Each of them lasted me about two years and 40,000km. Since the start of 2025, I'm regularly driving my ND on the track, so I've now got Bridgestone RE-71RS 205/50R16 for the track, and Goodyear Eagle F1 205/45R16 on stock NB8B wheels for the road. I think the NB wheels look nice on an ND and they're easier to clean than the stock 16" wheels. The tyre profile is slightly too small though and I'll return to 205/50R16 or 195/50R16 with the next set.

Warranty Claims

At my first service, an air-conditioning refrigerant leak was fixed.

I noticed excessive wear marks on the soft-top within the first six months and the roof was replaced in October 2016. A Mazda Service Bulletin reported that when driven with the top folded, the fabric vibrates and the stitching line touches the top fabric causing rubbing/contact marks. This occurs more commonly with the "budget" top which does not have an inner cloth lining, because the folded height is set lower and so the top fabric is folded more tightly. This second soft-top began to wear excessively after a couple years, and was replaced again in September 2019. It is much improved now, but still showing slight wear marks (see photo of current appearance). At least it has not had the same problems that occur on the premium top, where the lining drops and the front edge rubs on the rollover hoops. I love the ease of use for the roof mechanism, which permits one handed operation while moving at low speed.

ND roof wear upper

I had an annoying issue with a creaking noise from the clutch pedal with the pedal switch replaced in April 2018.

In September 2019, my ND was subject to a recall to replace a metal bracket on the underside of the car, which may fall off while driving.



Tech Talk

Issues with the gearbox failing in early 2.0L NDs have not affected my 1.5L ND although they are not immune to it. I have a theory that these issues occurred mainly because the ND was originally designed only for the 1.5L engine. The 2.0L engine with a hobbled rev limit came late in the development after American insistence, and the gearbox was not really up to the torque demands of the bigger engine.

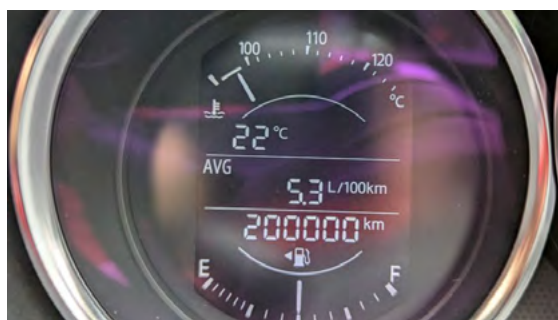
The only modification I've done to the ND is fitting silver rollover hoop covers. They replaced the stock black plastic items and give the ND a nice look from the rear view.

After having my windscreen replaced due to a crack, some years later the top cowl garnish flew off on the highway during strong winds. I discovered the repairer had broken the clips when replacing them and the new part cost me \$432! Make sure this part is replaced not recycled when you get a new ND windscreen.

The front-left wheel bearing developed a humming noise and I replaced it myself in December 2023. The old bearing had definitely seen better days!

The Bluetooth unit failed in January 2024 and I've made do without it since the replacement part was quoted at over \$1000. I've enquired about aftermarket head units but nothing is available to replace the stock audio unit I have.

After 200,000km of daily driving, the Soul Red paint on the bonnet, quarter panels and front bar is heavily peppered with stone chips. I'm giving thought to getting the whole car wrapped - yellow perhaps?



All the paint is original and I've not had any accidents requiring repair. The only sign of rust is on the door quarter glass guide where it meets the beltline moulding, as per Mazda Service Information.

The cloth seats and cabin trim have held up very well. The cloth has not faded at all, despite being driven with the roof down almost exclusively. The "leather" on the handbrake arm has worn off after using tape to hold the button down for motorkhana. Tiny pieces of the metal plating on the gearshift have flaked away and the leather is a bit worn.

Track Performance

Since the ND was my daily driver and I had an NC for track use, I never used it on the track except for the odd lap at Driver Training Days. Alex started doing motorkhanas with the ND from the age of 12 years (he's now 21 and bought his first MX-5 recently!), but it didn't see any serious motorsport use. That changed at the end of 2024. First, I took the ND to Wodonga TAFE for the NSW/VIC Interstate Challenge in November because the NC had a power steering issue being repaired. With a worn out set of Michelins, the ND proved to be impressively quick and huge fun on track. However, I discovered that the "hands off" technique doesn't work with the electric power steering of the ND.

Over the Summer, I bought a new car for daily driving (BYD Seal - my first EV) so I decided to sell my NC after nine years, and keep the ND for track duties and weekend runs. I fitted a set of Hawk HPS brake pads, Bridgestone RE-71RS tyres, and a fire extinguisher. The little 1.5L ND in Standard class has proven to be highly competitive, with benchmark scores between 99.71% and 102.54%. How does it compare with the NC? 1.2s slower on GP circuit and 1.8s slower on Amaroo circuit. I love it! Alex loves it too as he's co-driven it at a couple rounds.

Final word

In my 2015 Club Torque story, I described how I tracked the delivery of my ND onboard the Felicity Ace cargo ship from Hiroshima to Port Kembla, and watched the ship arrive and unload in port. Throughout the journey, friends teased mercilessly about sinking cargo ships. Incredibly, that eventually came true! It was reported by ABC News on 2 March 2022 that the Felicity Ace had sunk in the mid-Atlantic Ocean. The ship was transporting up to 4000 cars to the US from Germany and sank 13 days after a fire first broke out.

Member Tips - Aged Driving

Approximately 16% of all driver's licences in NSW are held by people aged 75 and over. In 2024, there were 452,000 drivers in NSW aged 75 and over, which represents about 16% of all licensed drivers, as there are roughly 2.8 million licensed drivers in total.

Older drivers account for 10% of all road fatalities between 2018 and 2022, and preliminary data for 2023 indicate older drivers (aged 70 and over) accounted for 9% of all fatalities in NSW.

By comparison, in 2022, young drivers (17-25) made up about 13% of NSW licence holders but accounted for 19% of drivers involved in fatal crashes.

The requirement for an 85-year-old to take a driving test in NSW was introduced as part of broader older driver licensing reforms in 2008. At that time, the on-road driving test became mandatory for drivers turning 85 and began to be required every two years for them thereafter.

Ian Hill, a member of MX-5 Club of NSW (Illawarra chapter), a licensed driving instructor offered some tips and suggestions for our members over 75.

Fellow MX5 members,

My name is Ian Hill and I am a driving instructor in Wollongong,

At the September Illawarra mx5 monthly meeting, I was asked a question about driving regulations for people 75 and over.

My understanding is as follows, but always check with the RMS for any changes that may occur.

At 75yrs old everyone has to pass a yearly eyesight and medical test.

When you reach 85 you will be asked to pass an aged assessment driving test every two years. You must still pass all medical tests.

The aged assessment can be obtained through the RMS, or you can go through a driving instructor who is qualified to do aged assessments.

With the RMS you will receive 3 free tests, after that you have to pay a fee. A fee is payable with private assessors.

I would highly recommend a couple of driving lessons before the test if you go through the RMS.

The RMS will give you a brochure to read on some helpful hints about the test.

One reason I would recommend a couple of lessons, you may or will turn up nervous for the test, or you are not sure what is expected in the test.

If something happens during the test (maybe through nerves) that the examiner classes as a Serious Fail, your licence can be cancelled on the day.

You may be put back on L plates and given one more chance to pass.

If you fail the test again your licence may be cancelled.

If you do fail the second time you may not even be allowed a restricted licence.

You can apply for Restricted licence at 85, which will allow you to drive 5,10 or 15 klms without a test.

You will be interviewed on where you regularly drive when applying for this licence. Make sure you include the furthest point you need to drive to or you might only be given the closest options (ie. 5 or 10km).

At any time and age if we get an adverse medical report that can affect our driving we can be asked to do a driving assessment.

In more serious cases you can be asked to be assessed by a occupational therapist who will assess your physical abilities, then you will go for an assessment drive with a qualified driving instructor and the therapist, which can take up to 2hrs and cost between \$700 and \$1100.

These tests and medicals are there for a reason to make our roads as safe as possible for all road users and pedestrians as we all get older,

I hope this article has helped you with the available options.

*Regards
Ian Hill
Ian's Driving School
Wollongong*

Preserve and protect your MX-5 with Professional Paint Protection

For many owners, this vehicle showcases more than just transport, it's a cherished companion for many years ahead. The opportunity to ensure it's timeless appearance as much as its driving experience is where paint protection becomes invaluable.

Here at Lucid Detailing, we've partnered with Xpel, regarded as the industry leaders insurance preservation with Paint Protection Film (PPF) and Coatings. PPF provides an invisible shield against stone chips, scratches, and daily road wear, while ceramic coatings deliver a deep, enduring gloss that resists dirt, water, and harmful UV exposure.

For many enthusiasts like yourselves, the MX-5 is the "forever car", a final or long-term investment in driving enjoyment. By protecting its finish today, you safeguard its beauty and value for the years to come.

With Lucid Detailing's expertise, paired with the proven performance of XPEL products, you can enjoy complete peace of mind knowing your vehicle will continue to present at its absolute best.

For further information, or to discuss the most suitable protection for your MX-5, please contact Lucid Detailing on **0452 521 560**. Our team will be delighted to assist you.



Tech Talk

G-LOC Brakes supplies high performance brake pads for daily drivers, occasional track day enthusiasts, autocrossers, club racers, professional racers, armored vehicles, law enforcement vehicles, emergency vehicles, and even heavy duty military vehicles.

G-Loc Brakes Australia is a brand new and exciting venture for **Herring Racing**. Todd Herring has worked on cars since he was 6 years old. Starting speedway at the young age of 11 started his passion for racing. In 2012 Todd bought his first MX-5 race car and started his journey in racing, building and developing these cars. These years of research and development have earned Todd one of the most trusted, knowledgeable and respected names in MX-5 racing. Todd's experience and knowledge is not limited to only MX-5's, his skill set is across a broad range of road and race cars. There are now many Herring Racing MX-5's seen on Australian race tracks.

G-Loc Brakes USA have created a brand that nobody can beat. Their experience and knowledge has created a brake pad of the highest quality and performance. Herring racing saw that there is nothing like this in the Australian market, so approached Danny from G-Loc for the chance to distribute his quality product. Thankfully Danny was as equally excited to partner with Herring Racing and so our adventure with G-Loc Brakes begins.

Some G-Loc Brake Facts more on the website

Each G-Loc Compound is the result of an extensive and rigorous R&D process that gives our customers peace of mind knowing that they can rely on the consistency and high performance nature of every one of our compounds. The longevity of these pads is something we have never seen before, the amount of track time these pads get is incomparable. These pads are becoming popular in the longer endurance events like the Motor Event's Racing 2 day events. That is one of the reasons why we are excited to get these pads onto road vehicles as they will perform to the highest level and last the longest. You can find many road MX5 pads available now on our website.

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