

club

TORQUE

Christmas Celebrations and Awards
Getting ready for Natmeet 2026
Throw a thong on Australia Day

Membership Report - by Bryan Shedden

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

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

Current Membership at 13th February 2026
1162



Members who joined 1st December 2025 to 13th February 2026

Aiden Ash Ali	Richard Hambly	Oliver Moogan
David Carter	Christine Hawes	Mai Hien Nguyen
Giretta Carter	Neil Hawes	Joshua Niland
Rodney Clark	Dave Ingham	Emily Ramsay
Suzanne Clark	Hamish Ingham	Mitchell Ribar
Peter Davis	Ian Lawson	Jan Sialana
Jill Feutrill	Yupeng Li	Nicholas Taylor
Peter Feutrill	Raymond McGhie	Rod Taylor
Josh Foran	Oscar Mikha	Sherwin Taylor
Brad Forgeard	Trent Mitchell	Simon Taylor
Rob Grieve	Ashana Mohammed	Phil Van Dissel
		Matthew Vaughan



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

It's hard to believe this is my 8th magazine edition, 2 years have flown by! Hopefully you're all still enjoying the stories, articles and photos. I love your positive feedback (good and bad), after all

it's your magazine, so don't be afraid to tell me what you really think!

Natmeet 2026 is just around the corner, are you excited? David, Elaine and our Natmeet Committee (mostly from the Hunter, so they know what they're about) have been busy organising the best runs for us, venues, meals and all the other myriad of details for such an event. Do you have your fancy dress costume organised? The theme is "M" but not Mazda related!

Summer is always full of activity, Christmas Parties, Australia Day get togethers and the iconic Kangaroo Valley Run held the first Saturday in January. This has become the annual "must do", not only for the Illawarra but for the Club in general. What a great way to meet

up with mates we haven't seen for a while, with a twilight run over the mountain and some amazing summer south coast scenery thrown in. If you haven't done it yet, put it in your diary for 2027.

Another couple of important dates to add to your calendar;

President's Picnic - Saturday 19th September 2026

This will again be held on the beautiful grounds of the historic Ebenezer Church, established in 1809, it is Australia's oldest church.

Brass Monkey - Sunday 5th of July 2026

Keep an eye on the web for details, along with all the other great Runs and Events to be held in 2026.

Our **Motorsport** Calendar is looking impressive, check out the Motorkhanas, a great way to have fun and go fast in the wet, safely. Anyone from the age of 12 can have a go.

Thank you for your stories and photos, keep them coming. And again, thank you Chris for making sure our magazine is legible, you rock!

Senia Gaunson

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President's Report

by Ian Combes

Welcome to the 2026 Summer edition of Club Torque! A big thanks again to our hard-working Publications Officer Senia Gaunson, and to the many contributors who have written some great articles for this issue.

Like many people, I've got a love/hate relationship with Summer – the longer days are great. The sun is good, as long as it's not too hot. I've found this summer a bit hot, but maybe I'm just getting old!

Good way to keep cool – top-down motoring in your MX-5. Many members have been doing exactly that – many stories to read in this issue.

December saw Christmas parties held in chapters across the Club. What a great way to come together and have fun – not that we need much of an excuse for that of course!

This issue features an impressive series of articles celebrating Australia Day across the chapters in the club, so we are up to date. Another great opportunity for Club members to get together (and throw a thong or two!).

Natmeet 2026 is getting closer – not long to go now. It will be here before you know it. Booklets are being finalised. Runs being fine-tuned. A thousand and one details are being checked and re-checked.

Motorsport

The 2026 motorsport season kicked off with the first CSCA round at the Amaroo Circuit at Sydney Motorsport Park on the 15th February. As has been tradition, this round was hosted by the Sprite Car Club. Too late for a report in this issue – next time! Last year was too hot. This year, it drizzled off and on all day. At the end of the event, the MX-5 Club held the presentation of trophies for the 2025 season. Again a bit late for this issue – look out for a report on the event in the Autumn issue.

The 2026 motorsport Calendar has been tweaked a little with the TSOA (Triumph) round moving to the

middle of the year, and to One Raceway. This is a big commitment by the Triumph Club, and the MX-5 Club will do our best to support the event. Keep an eye out on the website for updates.

The first motorkhana of the year is open at the time of writing. This year, we will have four of them, building on the success with our motorkhanas in 2025.

The MX-5 Club's CSCA round is not far off now (3rd May). We picked that date so that we could offer a circuit event as part of Natmeet. Unfortunately, we didn't get many takers from the Natmeet attendees, so whilst the supersprint will take place, there unfortunately will not be Natmeet motorsport trophies awarded.

As I said in the last issue, 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. The new, slimmed down Motorsport Secretary role description will be finalised before the Autumn issue, so watch out for that. We have really tried to trim the role down to a core set of responsibilities, with most of the heavy lifting being done by other volunteers. Please give it some thought – we will be actively looking to fill the role real soon.

Keep driving and be safe!

Ian Combes



Photo courtesy of Rob Wilko

Cover Photo by the talented Wendy Mulholland - "MX-5s with Jacarandas"

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

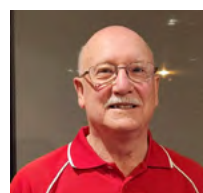
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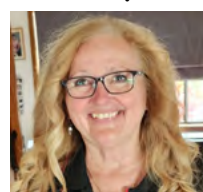
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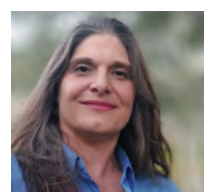
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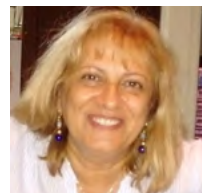
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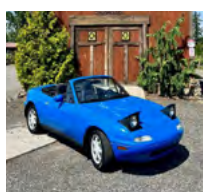
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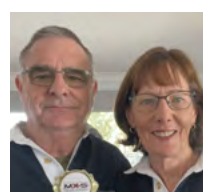
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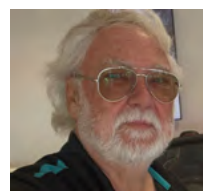
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SOUTH COAST - Rose & Geoff



HUNTER - Wendy Parsonage



RPM - Ian

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Hunter Prepares for NatMeet 2026

Since the chilly August and September mornings in the Hunter our enthusiastic NatMeet run committee members have been meeting regularly to test out the runs being considered for NatMeet. Our starting point, the Cessnock Airport carpark – just across the road from the actual carparks we will be using at Rydges Pokolbin. We short-listed several runs to try out and have been going out as a group to test them out.

There's more to this than meets the eye, as the scale of NatMeet means that there will be multiple groups doing each run on the same day with a fixed time gap between them, so toilet stops, meal locations, parking and other considerations all need to be carefully planned and tested. But logistics aren't the only thing being evaluated! Road condition, quality of the driving experience, scenic interest and intersection safety all play a big part too. The run program has been designed to show off the diverse aspects that make up our beautiful Hunter Valley and we intend to give all NatMeet attendees a program of runs that will be fun for drivers and for passengers too.

We're really excited to be hosting NatMeet 2026 and look forward to meeting up with old friends and making lots of new ones. Hope to see you there!





A Hunter Chapter Xmas Tale

*'Twas two weeks before Christmas, on a hot summer's day,
 Hunter Chapter stood ready to send off the year our way.
 Thirteen cars and nineteen souls faced the rain at the start,
 Unaware that the clouds soon would drift right apart.
 Onward to Wangi Workers for lunch and good cheer,
 To catch up with old friends and some newly held dear.
 A feast then appeared of roast pork and vegies so fine,
 As the air-con gave up and the heat chose to climb.
 Many drinks were consumed, conversation ran free,
 Of cars and great roads and holidays to be.
 Laughter echoed through stories of journeys and time,
 As the afternoon warmed and spirits did climb.
 With lunch at an end, it was awards time at last,
 Wendy stood ready with a box unsurpassed.
 Thanks were shared with all those who helped make the year glow,
 A chapter well run, a success we all know.
 Then silence fell gently as Wendy announced,
 This year's MOTY winners—Ray and Marlene—renowned.
 A well-earned achievement, the room did agree,
 "Outstanding job!" rang out, loud and free.
 The new MOTY members were nowhere in sight,
 So for now we stay quiet—no fuss, no spotlight.
 All good events end, as this one must too,
 With best wishes exchanged among friends old and new.
 Out the door we all wandered, with plans yet to be,
 To do it again next year—Hunter Chapter, you see.*

Congratulations to:

- Ray and Marlene Cosier for Hunter Chapter MOTY members of the year.
- To be announced New MOTY members of the Year
- To Wendy our new Chapter Convener.
- To our Entertainment crew Felicity Harnden, Denise Birrell
- To Wendy Mulholland for the Photos and helping with the venue..



Christmas in the Hunter

Words by: David Gazzard | Photos: Wendy Mulholland

Sydney Christmas at the Sharks

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



MX-5 Club Christmas Party — A Celebration of Community, Cars & Connection

The sun was shining and the chrome was gleaming as members gathered for our annual MX-5 Club Christmas Party — a day that always reminds us why this club is so special. It's more than the cars we love, the roads we chase, or the kilometres we share. It's the friendships built along the way, the laughter, the stories, and the feeling of belonging to something just a little bit wonderful.

This year, the organizing team — Steve and Maree Eccleston, along with Julie Sando — put together another fantastic day. With the festive spirit in full swing, members enjoyed a relaxed afternoon of good food, lots of laughs, and of course, the much-anticipated Trivia led by Steve. Competitive? Maybe just a little. Fun? Absolutely.

But the highlight of the afternoon was without question our Annual Awards Presentation — recognising the people who help make our club vibrant, welcoming, and full of energy.

2025 Award Recipients

- New Member of the Year — Jonathan Wood
- Members of the Year — Kay & Mark Godfrey
- Young Member of the Year — Emma Wood

We also acknowledged our run leaders — those who mapped the roads, set the pace, sourced cafés, prepared routes and kept the adventures rolling throughout the year. Their contribution keeps our club active, engaged and always ready for the next corner.

A heartfelt thank-you also goes to Claudine and Alan Townsley, whose generous support provided the wonderful accommodation prizes for Cullenbone Schoolhouse and Cullenbone Cottage, Mudgee — warmly received and very much appreciated.

As the afternoon wound down, the atmosphere was filled with smiles, conversation and the feeling of a year well-lived. It was a celebration not just of Christmas, but of connection — of shared roads, shared tables, shared memories and the joy of belonging to a community that drives together and laughs together.

If this gathering was anything to go by, 2026 is already looking bright, spirited and full of adventure.

Because the MX-5 may bring us together — but it's the people who make us stay.





Seventeen Chapter members joined the Christmas run from Port Macquarie to Kew where we enjoyed morning tea in the garden at the Kew Store.

Though it was getting very hot by then, a short run along Bago Road with some nice twists and turns took us to Wauchope, where we turned east and headed to Abundance Cafe at Sancrox.

The Cafe is situated on a lovely lake full of water lilies, turtles and many water birds and water dragons. We all enjoyed a delicious lunch and some Christmas treats. Rosy and Ken presented the NMOTY award to Cody Martelli and MOTY to Cath and Graham Dickey.

We also welcomed new member Liam Totton.

The members kindly presented Rosy and Ken with two bottles of wine as a thank you for being the Co-Convenors for the past two years.

Wishing all our Chapter members a wonderful festive season.

Ed Note: The Mid North Coast currently does not have a Convenor or Run Co-ordinator which means the Chapter can not continue. If you would like your Chapter to keep going, why not think about putting your hand up? If you would like more information, give me, or any of the current Convenors, a call to find out what's involved, the Committee is always there to help!

As a member of the MX-5 Club of NSW you are encouraged to join ANY Club runs or events.

Senia Gaunson - Publicity Officer (and former Illawarra Chapter Convenor)



Mid North Coast Christmas

Words and Photos by Rosemary Black

Illawarra Christmas

Words by: Zan Dimovski | Photos: Jenma Belsito, Bryan Shedden and Ann Hicks



56 Members joined at The Sands to enjoy a delicious two-course buffet, providing the perfect opportunity to relax, mingle, and reflect on the many memorable runs, events, and friendships formed throughout the year.

A special highlight of the night was recognising the dedication of our volunteers, who were presented with thank-you gifts in appreciation of the time and effort they generously give to support the chapter by organising and leading runs and overnight stays. Their commitment plays a vital role in making our runs and activities such a success.

The evening also celebrated our members with the presentation of Member of the Year awards. Emilco and Beti Dimovski were proudly awarded both Illawarra New Member of the Year and Club New Member of the Year, acknowledging their enthusiasm and valuable contributions since joining. John and Chrissie Zarembo were honoured as Illawarra Members of the Year, a well-deserved recognition for their continued involvement and ongoing support of the chapter.

The night was a true celebration of the year that was, reflecting on shared achievements, friendships, and the passion that brings the Illawarra MX-5 community together.

A heartfelt thank you to Cam and his team for hosting such a fantastic evening and ensuring everything ran seamlessly. A fabulous night enjoyed by all.



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It was a fabulous Christmas celebration

for 33 South Coast members at the Butter Factory in Pyree. This was a new venue for our Chapter and it didn't disappoint. Initially, we were sharing a room with another small group, however, due to our increased numbers we were lucky enough to be allocated an entire room to ourselves, so we could make as much party noise as we wanted... just use your imagination to set the scene.

Our day started at the bar, and with drinks organised, it was time for the Club and Chapter Award presentations. First up, tenure badges were presented to Brian & Anda (10yrs) and Kerry & Lesley (5yrs). South Coast New Members of the Year was awarded to Roger & Lesley Brook. South Coast Member of the Year was awarded to Keith Monaghan. Keith was also presented with the MXV badge, having accrued over 1015 points.



Then, two big awards, NSW Club wide MOTYs! New Members of the Year Runner Up went to Roger & Lesley Brook, (yes - there were tears) and Members of the Year Runner Up went to Robert & Linda Downing. Well done and richly deserved, guys!

Recognition awards were presented to Chapter volunteers Bob (Run Coordinator), Anne (Regalia), Anda (Publicity Officer) and Brian (Webmaster). Geoff and Rose can't thank these members enough for the work they do throughout the year. We really appreciate the help they give us.

Several Run organisers for 2025 were acknowledged with a gift: Roger & Lesley, Mike, Kerry, Bob & Linda and Brian & Anda. At members request, Geoff let the group know that between us we organised 17 runs (3 multi day) and 10 monthly meetings this year. Geoff rightly commented "no wonder I'm tired"! The group gave Geoff and Rose a huge thank you.

With all the awards and thankyou's done, it was time to eat. Entree and main meal choices were finalised a week before the lunch and with the expert help given by Rose and Geoff, all food orders made it to the correct destination (although I think one member had a bite of someone else's entree). What a relief! Dessert was alternate plating so most were able to get their dessert of choice. A couple of people fitted in two desserts. I'm not sure how they found the space for it. The food was delicious and the private room generated a great ambience.

Somewhere in between all of the talking and eating, for a bit of fun Rose got different members to draw several lucky door prize winners out of a hat. Keith was first and drew his own name. The response from the crowd was 'this is rigged'. Other prizes went to, yes you guessed it, Roger (we'll call you "lucky Rog"), Karen, Tony and Phill. The 'guess the number of lollies in the jar' competition winner was Helen, with a guess of 89.

The Christmas Party had fantastic turnout and was a most enjoyable and fun event. I think we all agreed that this venue was an excellent choice for our event. Thank you to everyone for making this year's party & awards presentation a huge success!

South Coast Christmas

Words and Photos: Anda Clayton and Rose Smith



Merry Christmas Canberra

Words: John Chapuis | Photos: Lili Chi



Fifty-six members of the Chapter signed up for the Christmas Party this year but unfortunately due to illness only 53 members made it to the Gungahlin Lakes Club.

There was lots of noise, chatter and laughs circulating around the room. We had an excellent meal and then got down to business of thanking, awarding and recognising all those Chapter members who helped make it a very busy year.

Special mention and Tenure Awards were presented:

25 years membership - Ed Cory

20 years membership - Connie Brown, Bob Judd & Bricet Kloren, Iris & Tony McDonald

15 years membership - Peter & Lia Battisson, Ian & Robyn Bottcher, Jill Hurcombe, Jennifer & Peter Le, Annie Taylor

10 years membership - Giulia & James Schiemer, Kerry Shepherdson

5 years membership - Lilli Chi, Ashley & Rhys Howse, Frances Wood

Bob Judd and Tony McDonald were presented The **2025 MXV Award**

The announcement that Mike Masters & Jacqueline Killmeir were the **NMOTY members for the Chapter** surprised them both. Interestingly, Mike is a former member (from 2007-2021). He has clearly been energised by having Jacqueline in the passenger seat.

The Canberra MOTY winners for 2025 are Simon & Cathy Trickett. These two organised some great runs and wrote some great run reports. It is really great having people like this in the Chapter and the Club.

I want to thank all those who have contributed to the Chapter in whatever way - as run leaders or organisers, tail-end Charlies, administrators, photographers, reporters and participants.

The odds were good with the 'lucky door' raffles, with plenty of chances of taking home a prize. The raffle draw was filled with anticipation, and many members went home with a little extra to remind them of a great day.

The lunch pretty much wrapped up a full year, that saw many members out and about in their fun machines. It will be hard to top it, but we already have great plans for 2026.

As Convenor of the Canberra Chapter, John Chapuis wished all members of the Club a happy, safe and peaceful Christmas season.





This year for Christmas RPM did not have a run, instead we all met at the Nepean Rowing Club for lunch. It is a central location, so as a group we decided to just simply meet there and enjoy the event. Our "room" was all glass with a fantastic view over the Nepean River, looking towards the historic railway bridge. It was a fantastic sunny summers day.

The decorations were fantastic and all put in place by Sandie with the help of Tracy and Gillian. The club had already put up some roof decorations for us so we concentrated on the tables and small tree that Sandie brought along.

We had 36 members come along to enjoy the food, drink, and (minor) revelry.

Multiple awards and thankyou's were handed out on the day, and it was also the final event for Sandra Duric as the Convener.

Sandra was also presented with gifts for all her fantastic service over the previous few years.

All in all, a great end to a fantastic year and we all look forward to 2026 being bigger and better...





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RPM Christmas

Words: Ian Redman | Photos: Graham and Gillian Fletcher, Sandra Duric and Chris Wyatt



South Coast's Cherry Pickers

Words: Bob Downing | Photos: Rose Smith and Linda Downing



5th to 7th December 2025

This was the final run for the year and the planning paid off, with one exception "the weather". It didn't rain or snow and the wind didn't blow. We had picked the hottest days of the year so far to make the trip to Young for the Cherry Festival. 3 cars left the South Coast headed for Goulburn, tops down at a comfortable 20+ deg.

By the time we reached our coffee stop at Rose's café it was 33Deg and heading higher. Here we met Christine and Ron from Illawarra before heading to Boorowa (tops up and A/C full on) for lunch. What used to be a lively country town, has in the last few years seen many stores and cafes close. After grabbing a coffee and sandwich we continued to our accommodation in Harden where it was 37deg when we arrived. After an afternoon rest we left for Young and the festival proper which commenced on Friday evening with street food and entertainment. The ladies of the group ventured along the street to view the entertainment whilst the gentlemen went in search of a cool venue where thirsts could be quenched and hunger pangs satiated. The girls didn't last long in the street (too hot) and returned to join the boys in the air conditioning. Everyone else had the same idea and the pub was packed. Later, we were joined at the pub by Hella and Mark from Illawarra. After a dinner of varying quality, we left to view the firework display, and yes, it was still hot at 9:00pm. It was a fantastic display and well worth seeing. Next, it was time to return to our accommodation in Harden hoping we didn't encounter wildlife on the way.

Saturday morning dawned hot again and not pleasant for picking cherries, however as that was the point of the trip it had to be done. So, off we went to Allambie Orchard at Wombat to fill our pickers buckets. After each couple picked about 1kg of cherries

(and probably eating a kg before reaching the bucket), it was deemed to be coffee time. Having sampled cherry ice cream, cherry pie and coffee it was time to go and buy some cherries picked by the professionals from Halls Organic Orchard. After returning to the motel to refrigerate our purchases, it was off into town to visit the markets and street entertainment. However, the heat took its toll amongst us with our visit cut short and most were back at the motel by 3:30pm. After sixes (late fiveses) at the Light horse Hotel in Murrumburrah we ventured across the road to a recently opened Thai restaurant where we all enjoyed meals of excellent quality.

Sunday morning saw us all leaving the motel by 9am for our journeys home in various directions. Sue and Keith, Rose and Geoff, Linda and I travelled together along some great MX5 roads to Jugiong and then the boring freeway to Goulburn for a stop at the Paragon Café. The meals here were large... just ask Linda about her crepe. The trip back to the coast was along the well trodden route through Windellama, Oallen Ford, Nerriga and Sassafras, everyone agreed that despite the heat encountered it had been a great weekend away.





8th December 2025

Summer is finally here so to the Cherry Orchard we must go. It's Monday morning, after the weekend Cherry festival. The great unknown - will there be any cherries left for us?

As there are a lot of pre-Xmas roadworks in the region this was a cruiser run taking the main roads from Canberra to Yass through Harden to the Orchard just outside Young.

We have been visiting Rupert and his orchard for several years. It is exclusively a pick your own orchard. You want cherries - you work for them. And you can eat as many as you like. Although Rupert has a tin on the cash register if you feel like making a donation for the ones you ate.

At this time of the year, we are picking lovely dark luscious Rons cherries. The Rons cherry was apparently developed by Sid Thornell, a fruit inspector in the Department of Agriculture based in Young and he named it after his son, Ron. I ended up with 4.7kg. There were some smaller pickings and some much bigger ones. I'm sure they will all be

enjoyed by family and friends. At \$10 a kilo, and fresh off the tree, definitely a bargain.

By noon, it's hot, cherry pies and cherry jam have been purchased, large cherry ice cream cones have been eaten and it's time for lunch.

A short drive back to Murrumburrah to a place that is becoming a favourite. At Barnes Emporium you can enjoy excellent pies, and wraps and sandwiches, and homemade cakes in a large room with plenty of space for our group. On your way out you can acquire homemade chocolates, farm fresh eggs, flavoured salts and oils, and spices. The owners of the Emporium are easy to deal with for group bookings and very welcoming. Our table today was beautifully dressed as if we were having a Xmas celebration.

And now, nothing to be done except get these cherries home.

Run Organiser Mike Lawless
Run Leader - Jo Blackburn



Canberra - Cherry Pie Anyone?

Words by: Jo Blackburn | Photos by: Jo Blackburn and Lili Chi

RPM Barefoot Bowls

Words and Photos: Ian Redman | 10th November 2025



As our newly crowned Social Co-ordinator, Sandra has challenged us with something completely different.

Hardly MX-5-centric, barefoot bowling provides us all with the ability to get our toes out into the fresh air. Breaking into four groups of three (or something like that) we took the challenge to roll those balls (sorry bowls) down that lovely green to the far end without losing them in the gutter. Somehow it ended up being the two boy's teams being totally put to shame. Within the first couple of ends the girls were easily putting the bowls within inches of the Jack while we were still struggling to keep them out of the gutter.

With the sun going down and only marginal



improvements to the scoreline we decided to try again another day, adjourn and retire to a great restaurant in Glenbrook and drown our sorrows in great food and wine.

Whilst Ballaminos is a shopfront in Glenbrook shopping centre it is some of the best great value Italian around and comes highly recommended.

Toasting Sandra for a great day, everyone drove off into the cool evening for a quiet run home, several of us with more than an hour to enjoy.

We look forward to many more events in the coming year.

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6 MX-5 cars met at the Nowra Boat Ramp for the run to Tallong, led expertly by Bob and Linda. Roger and I volunteered to be Tailend Charlie. We departed at 9:30am for our route up Cambewarra Mountain to Kangaroo Valley, where we had approx an hour's stop for morning tea/coffee, and were joined by Loray and Grant, who live in Bundanoon. Yummy coffee and snacks were consumed at the Kangaroo Valley Coffee Co. We all then had a bingle up and down the Main Street.

When it was time to depart, the convoy travelled via Barrengarry, Fitzroy Falls, Exeter, Bundanoon, Penrose and Wingello to our destination at Tallong.

As you will see from the photos, it was a day of sunshine, and some very light showers, though we all managed to dodge the raindrops and keep the roof down. The trip was very scenic with many interesting places to see enroute. Surprisingly, there was only one radio call of 'pot hole' on the driving line which I thought was pretty impressive.

We got to the Midge Cafe a little after 12. What a charming place it was. Thank you again Bob and Linda for finding this little gem. I am now the proud owner of a very fetching new sun hat. It had all sorts of little treasures. Lunch and the convivial conversations were very pleasant. It turns out that all the lovely ladies participating in the run today have names beginning with L!! How coincidental is that.

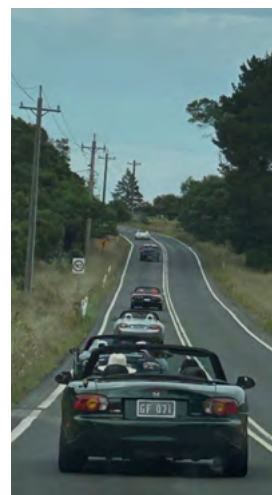
Fun Facts about Tallong..

It's the home of the famous Big Apple and the rare Tallong Midge Orchid. It is surrounded by breathtaking scenery, although, no rare orchids were seen during our visit.

At the 2021 census, the village had a population of 914.

Tallong Apple Day Festival, takes place on 27 September 2026. Apparently you can enjoy whipcracking, medieval battles, wood chopping, pig racing, pony rides, bake-off as well as a photography competition. And of course, being an Apple Festival, there will be lots of apples for sale, including toffee apples and apple pies.

After lunch we all made our way home via different routes.



South Coast Zoom to The Midge

10th February 2026 | Words: Lesley Brook | Photos: Linda Downing, Lesley Brook and Loray Freeman

Breakfast Club Putty Run

Words: Brett Hardey | Photos: Jason Brown



The Breakfast Club's first drive of 2026 began with a cautious kind of optimism. The sky was grey, the sort that suggests possibility rather than threat when we met at McGraths Hill for morning coffee, swapping jokes and predictions about the day ahead. The Putty Road stretched out before us, quiet and inviting early in the morning, and for a moment it truly did look like the weather might hold.

The first kilometres rolled by easily. Mist clung to the treetops and the bush smelled fresh, washed clean by rain that must have fallen overnight. The road surface was damp but manageable, and spirits were high. It felt good to kick start the year, the kind of drive that reminds everyone why the Breakfast Club exists in the first place. But the Putty has a way of changing its mood, and before long the sky darkened with intent. What began as a steady drizzle quickly turned into torrential rain. Sheets of water hammered down, drumming on roofs and blurring the world beyond the wipers. The bush on either side of the road seemed to come alive. Small trickles of water appeared on rock faces, then grew into streams, and soon into full waterfalls cascading down embankments that were usually dry. Every corner revealed another ribbon of water pouring through the green, a dramatic and unexpected reward for braving the conditions.

Despite the rain, the drive demanded focus and respect. Visibility dropped, puddles formed in the low points, and the Putty's sweeping bends felt sharper and more serious under the deluge. Yet there was a shared sense of adventure, a quiet satisfaction in pressing on together through the elements. Headlights cut through the

grey, brake lights flared gently as the group navigated the worst of it, and the rhythm of the road carried everyone forward. We pulled into the Grey Gum Cafe for a comfort break and to relive the tension on our fingers from gripping the wheel. Not our usual stop but it had some shelter. The rain had eased but still taunted us alone the way. Eventually we had the opportunity to drop roofs but only for short intermittent periods. But hey, better than not at all.

Eventually, Pokolbin appeared like a promise kept. Cafe Cuo Cuo was a welcome refuge from the rain, lifting tired spirits. Breakfast did not disappoint. Plates arrived loaded with flavour, generous portions, and that comforting quality that only a well cooked morning meal can provide. Outside, the surroundings were beautiful, vineyards softened by rain and mist, glowing green and alive. It was easy to soak it all in.

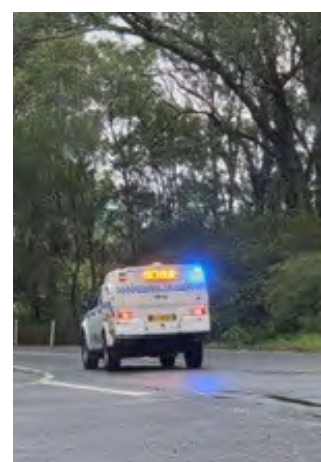
The only blemish on an otherwise excellent stop was the service, which felt a little off. Orders took longer than expected, and there was a sense of confusion that hovered around the tables. Still, no one let it dampen the mood. Conversations flowed easily, laughter bounced off the walls, and the rain became part of the story rather than a problem to complain about.

When it came time to head home, reports filtered through of more wet weather waiting for us. The drive back proved them right. Rain returned in waves, sometimes easing, sometimes pounding down hard enough to demand full concentration. The waterfalls were still there, for the crew that went back along the Putty. For the group that returned the so called "boring" way along the highway, getting on the expressway at Gosford was



like driving through a spa bath. It was a challenging return, but also a memorable one, the kind that stays with you long after the engines cool.

By the end of the day, soaked but satisfied, the Breakfast Club had its first drive of 2026 etched firmly into memory. What began with hopeful skies turned into a rain-soaked adventure, rich with scenery, good food, and shared experience. It was a reminder that the best drives are not always the easiest ones, and that sometimes the weather has its own plans for making a day unforgettable.



RPM - Happy Birthday Theodore

Words: Sandra Williams | Photos: Gillian Fletcher



Saturday 29th November 2025

A convoy of two MX-5s journeyed up to Winmalee to surprise our youngest member, Theo for his birthday. He is a keen enthusiast of the MX-5 cars so his grandmother, Kirrily joined him up to the Club and asked if there was any way we could organise a surprise visit on his birthday.

Gillian and Graham Fletcher, with Paul and Sandra Williams arrived at his house where a very excited young man jumped up and down with joy when he saw them. He loved Paul's NA with the pop up lights, a hit with all the children at the party.

Both Paul and Graham took Theo for a drive around the block and presented him with his RPM cap. Graham and Gillian gave him a red and yellow MX5 matchbox car set as well as an RPM scarf. Theo had the best birthday ever!



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B R A K E S



The Kangaroo Valley Twilight Run remains a firm favourite on the Illawarra Chapter calendar, reliably kick-starting the new year with a great drive and a solid pub meal. 2026 marked the eighth running of the event, and after past encounters with fog, thunderstorms, bushfires, extreme heat and plague, it was refreshing to enjoy a third consecutive year of near-perfect conditions. One couple withdrew due to dire storm and hail forecasts—neither of which eventuated—proving once again that weather apps are not to be trusted.

We met at Hungry Jack's Haywards Bay on a cloudy but warm mid-20s afternoon, with storm clouds brooding over the Southern Highlands and the usual MX-5 debate underway: roof up or roof down? A quick radar check settled the matter, and it turned out to be a perfect summer evening for a country drive and beer-garden dinner.

Attendance was excellent: 60 registrations, only four cancellations, and 56 people on the day. The carpark buzzed with excited conversation as 30 MX-5s and one lone Mustang assembled, while four members made their own way directly to Kangaroo Valley.

Managing a convoy of this size is never easy, particularly across mountain roads. CB radios were employed, with the convoy stretching close to 3km, and a big thank you goes to Lena, Pam, Julie and Paul for relaying messages along the line. Apart from one "runner" requiring an urgent stop at Robertson, the convoy arrived intact—no small achievement.



The drive itself was superb, following Jamberoo Mountain Road, Tourist Road, Kangaloon, Robertson, Myra Vale, Fitzroy Falls and Barrengarry Pass. Traffic was absent except for a ridiculously slow Porsche Cayenne doing 40 in the 60 zone over to Jamberoo. The roads delivered plenty of twists, most of the potholes had been repaired, and the late-afternoon light showed off an ever-changing landscape of dairy country, rainforest, towering eucalypts, reservoirs, potato fields and finally the sweeping view into Kangaroo Valley.

Dinner at The Friendly Inn began with a lengthy queue, but the kitchen was impressively efficient, with meals arriving within 15 minutes. Our reserved marquee seating proved well-timed when a brief shower passed through, and it was great to see members from Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the South Coast mixing easily with Illawarra regulars.

The return drive was the icing on the cake. Much of the route was retraced, and for some of us it delivered uninterrupted, roof-down motoring. A light shower left the road steaming in the cooling evening air—an atmospheric and fitting end to another memorable Twilight Run.



Illawarra's Kangaroo Valley Twilight Run

Words by: **Bryan Shedden** | Photos by: **Andrew Edgar**



Pickled Octopus

23rd November 2025

By: Mike Fowler

From a modest start two weeks out from the Run the numbers picked up quickly. Over the phone Simon Trickett from Canberra promised to test the waters there for any interest, and within days that promise had morphed into four cars and seven riders. Thanks Simon! Then there was my old mate, Mal Mann, recently returned from five years in Tassie, older but no wiser, with his better half Jan. How good to see them back, and happily settled in Catalina. I'm sure we'll see more of them. At the other end of the age scale (by about a century) was young Nick Taylor, all the way from Merimbula. Nick has done a spectacular restoration job on an old blue NA that was about to be scrapped, and learned a great deal about the inner anatomy of the original MX5 along the way. I encouraged Nick to come along by promising that we would not expect him to drive all the way to Milton and then turn him around to drive back to Tuross Head. The inimitable Nicky Hutteman kindly undertook to lead him up from Cobargo to the Tuross Head turn-off, and that seemed to do the trick. He not only turned up for his first run with the South Coasties but he brought with him his dad, Scott, and very good company they were.

"Ah, but what about the weather", I hear you asking. Well there was some in the vicinity, but from looking at the new BOM website it was hard to tell where, or when or in what manner it might manifest itself. So I did what any competent run leader would do - I said a little prayer, crossed my fingers and hoped for the best, and kept the top on all the way there and back (happy wife, happy life as they say). We got lucky, very lucky. There was nary a drop of rain from either Canberra or Milton until we reached The Pickled Octopus car park. There we made introductions to the newcomers, chatted about our toys and



waited for Mal and Jan to complete their homecoming tour of Tuross Head. And then out of a bright blue sky it really started to pour down, as if to say "move your backsides - go eat lunch, that's why you came".

The Pickled Octopus rose to its customary culinary excellence, featuring authentic Thai cuisine, fresh oysters, seafood curries and seasonal dishes, complemented by Thai herbs and vegetables like kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass and basil. I tried the pickled octopus (yes, really) which was chargrilled to tender, tangy perfection - highly recommended. During lunch the rain came down, then the sun shone, then the wind blew over the lake, and waterbirds wheeled, swooped and fed while we did likewise - well maybe not the wheeling and swooping bits. But all good things must end, and all too soon it was time to move on. The Canberrans had plans that seemed to involve pedals to the metal up and down the coastline, while the Miltonians were looking northward to their side of the Clyde River. Nicky said she was cruising on to Sydney, like it was just ten minutes down the road not five hours, to change her top (on her NA). I hope that went well Nicky. Young Nick promised to keep in touch, and maybe even join the South Coasties, and we sincerely hope he does.





Twilight Run to Shoalhaven Heads

13th January 2026

Words: Roger & Lesley Brook Photos: Rose Smith

The weather gods were smiling on the members and guests of the South Coast chapter as we met up at Hungry Jacks in Bomaderry for the first run of the New Year.

Even with thunder storms on the forecast there was no discussion of roofs up or down, it was down for everyone, planning to drive faster if it rained!

7 cars were in the convoy, with Geoff and Rose leading, and Roger and Lesley having their first go at being tail end Charlie at the back.

The highway was busy just north of Nowra, but the 'magnificent Seven' managed to stay together just, and were enjoying it so much that Geoff missed our planned turn off to Berry, requiring a detour around Taylors Lane to keep everyone on their toes!

We left Berry along Woodhill Mountain Rd, and kept together as the numerous potholes, expertly called out by Rose in the lead car, kept everyone's speed down.

The rain was light, and the mist gave an atmospheric feel as we wound our way up the mountain. Wattamolla and Bellawongarah came and went, and soon we were on the Kangaroo Valley road, heading back to Berry.

The route was a new one to me, and one I will enjoy driving again, hopefully in sunnier weather! Though we did glimpse a spectacular rainbow.

From Berry (without a stop at the treat factory- another thing for next time!) but a short stop for a train to go past we headed south to the Shoalhaven Heads pub just as the 'ping' on my phone alerted us to incoming thunderstorms. Good timing!

At the pub we met up with 3 other members, and enjoyed a convivial couple of hours socialising and swapping war stories of how we had all survived the Christmas, New Year holiday period!

With Pub Trivia starting at 7pm, and not wanting to show up the younger element who had arrived for that event, we all went on our merry way. Thanks Geoff & Rose for organising, and the year of fun times in our wonderful little cars begin!



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Anchor Restaurant at Spencer

14th January 2026

Story: Sharon Cassidy

Photos: Mark Godfrey and Rob Wilkins

Where the bloody hell is SPENCER I hear you say. Follow me says Grasshopper and so we did, all 19 souls in 12 cars, ably led by Andy Bottomley after meeting for hugs, and haven't seen you in ages sentiments at Maccas Mt Colah.

As you've heard me say before, MX5's go everywhere, and boy were we thankful for Marnie's phone call from the heavens suggesting we pull over and put our tops on, both the hard and soft tops that is, as rain it did.

Three of Sydney Chapter's elite photographers were onboard, happily snapping randomly, especially at lunch which was great. What a wonderful little find Spencer is, one I'm sure will be returned to. And thanks to RPM'ers Gary and Graham for meeting us at lunch.



Pie in the Sky

1st February 2026

Photos: Mark Godfrey

Sydney Chapter makes their regular pilgrimage to Pie in the Sky the 1st Sunday of each month. Check out the interesting photos of the February run taken by one of our talented Club photographers, Mark Godfrey.





Twilight Run to West Head

10th February 2026

Story: Jonathan Wood

Photos: Ellis Weir and Mark Godfrey

It was a balmy 27° as we left McDonald's Mount Colah on our scenic adventure in the Ku-ring-gai Chase NP. We were please to be joined by new members David and Giretta Carter. The scenery was stunning with vistas of distant hills or shimmering waters appearing by surprise as we rounded some of the many corners.

Our little convoy of eight differently coloured Mx5's firstly enjoyed a sweeping descent on the Bobbin Head Road before climbing back out of the National Park and into the melee of civilisation at North Turrumurra.

Despite losing visual contact on Mona Vale Road, we managed to regroup at Terrey Hills for re-entry into the National Park and a scenic loop through Akuna Bay. There were just a few cyclists and oncoming vehicles to be wary of as we enjoyed the undulating road and its tightening bends.

The final section of our trifecta of loops was a faster (but legal) run out to West Head where we at last stopped to stretch our legs and admire the view across Pittwater. A few spots of rain fell, so that the return to Terrey Hills was done with most roofs up. The rain definitely didn't dampen our spirits and we all enjoyed our meal at Terrey Hills Tavern. A great way to end a great night.



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A photograph of the Cullenbone Schoolhouse, a historic white building with a corrugated metal roof and a brick driveway. The building has a classic, rustic feel with a chimney and a small porch. The surrounding area is landscaped with plants and trees.



Australia Day 2026



Australia Day 2026 was celebrated by our Chapters at a number of beautiful locations. Illawarra was led by Bryan and Fiona Shedden to Fitzroy Falls Reservoir, Sydney was at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Gardens, RPM headed out to Mt Wilson Picnic Grounds and Canberra breakfasted along Lake Burley Griffin in our Capital.

There was thong throwing and lamingtons and lots of laughter and friendship, a perfect way to celebrate Australia, Bryan Shedden and I even featured in Sydney's "Celebrity Heads".

Our heartiest congratulations go to Illawarra member Tony Cox, who was awarded an OAM on the day for his service to Vietnam veterans. - Senia

ILLAWARRA - By Bryan Shedden

Australia Day 2026 gave the Illawarra Chapter the perfect excuse to do what we love most: drive great roads, share good food, and enjoy even better company.

The day began at Hungry Jack's Haywards Bay, where 28 people assembled in an impressive convoy of 14 Mazda MX-5s, plus an RX-8 and a Mazda 3. At the driver's briefing, Bryan welcomed 23 members and five guests, including Slavka (riding shotgun with Tania), Steve and Tania in the RX-8, and Peter and Jill in the Mazda 3 whose presence was particularly special — Peter is the founding Convenor of the Illawarra Chapter, and it had been a few years since we'd last caught up. Their return was met with genuine warmth and plenty of smiles.

While the group gathered, Chapter Convenors Zan and Phil had already dashed ahead to Fitzroy Falls Reservoir Picnic Area to secure prime real estate and decorate the shelter. After a scorching 35°C the previous day, no one expected the Southern Highlands to deliver a chilly surprise — jumpers would be essential.

We set off at 9:30am, winding through the back roads of Marshall Mount and Calderwood before tackling the twisty ascent of Macquarie Pass. From there, the Tourist Road and the stunning Moresby Hill Road delivered narrow lanes and postcard scenery. After regrouping, we flowed through East Kangaloon and Kangaloon—roads we'd driven earlier in the month, but which felt entirely new from the opposite direction. Range Road dazzled with rollercoaster rises, rich farmland, towering hedges and immaculate stone walls, before Mittagong delivered the surprise highlight: the climb and descent of Mount Gibraltar via Oxley Drive. A missed turn by Bryan on the way down prompted a convoy U-turn and plenty of laughter.



Ninety kilometres and one hour forty-five minutes later, we rolled into Fitzroy Falls—Phil's lowered NC having bravely endured every bump along the way.

At the picnic area, another 15 members and five guests joined us, filling the shelter with 48 happy faces. First priority: rugging up. Beti, cocooned in picnic blankets yet still shivering, became an instant icon. Conversation buzzed, food was shared, lamingtons disappeared at an alarming rate, and the electric BBQs delivered sausages and onions in fine style.

The traditional thong-toss followed, with young Aries keeping the judges on high alert. Grant and Paul emerged victorious, while Giant Jenga entertained the kids and young-at-heart. Cricket, however, was no match for the lure of warmer clothing.

All told, it was a brilliant Australia Day run — great roads, great laughs, and a reminder that it's the people who truly make the journey.

And then came the postscript no one saw coming. Later that very night, Peter and Jill officially rejoined the club, proving that some connections never really fade. As if that wasn't enough, just a few days later they added a Stormy Blue NC to their garage. Clearly, the Illawarra Chapter hadn't just been missed—it had been calling them back all along.

SYDNEY - By Kay Godfrey

Good company, good food, and a few airborne thongs — a perfect Australia Day morning at Bidwell Clearing.

Australia Day gave us a relaxed and very enjoyable morning, with members gathering from 9:00am at Bidwell Clearing in the Wildflower Garden. While the skies were cloudy, it turned out to be a blessing, keeping the temperature down and making conditions ideal for a comfortable outdoor get-together.

The morning had a laid-back, social feel from the outset. Games were the order of the day, with Genga drawing a competitive crowd, thong throwing providing plenty of laughs, and "Guess the Celebrity" keeping everyone guessing — with names like Senia Gaunston and Bryan Shedden thrown in just to mix things up.

Jono was the standout in the thong throwing, showing impressive form. Best of all, no thongs were permanently lost, although a few did briefly end up in the trees, much to everyone's amusement.

As always, the highlight was the company. Good food, easy conversation, and plenty of laughs made for a great morning, with relaxed vibes and plenty of smiles all round — a fitting way to spend Australia Day with fellow MX-5 enthusiasts.

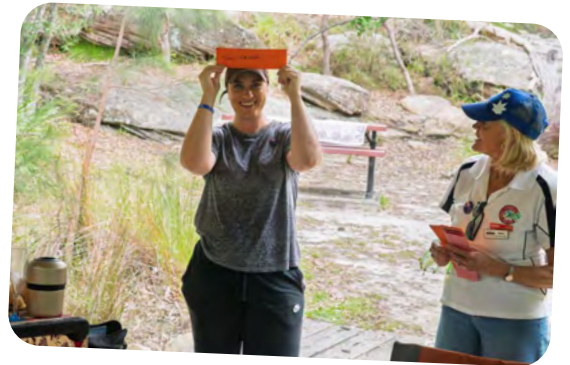


Australia Day 2026





Australia Day 2026





Australia Day 2026





Australia Day 2026



RPM - By Sandra Williams

Another mountain trip up to Mt Wilson to celebrate Australia Day. The weather did not disappoint and with Graham and Gillian Fletcher at the lead, the group meandered up the Bells Line of Road to Mt Tomah for a quick break and then onto the Cathedral of Ferns picnic and camping area. There were 13 cars in convoy up the Bells Line of Road, with a further 7 cars meeting at the venue.

We saw a new member, Rodney Clark with his dad attend and Verity Lomax all the way from Oberon, joined in the drive up the hill. Keith Berry is a newish member and it was great to see him there also.

Ian and Tracy Redman along with Paul and Sandra Williams arrived early to grab the best spot and to erect an 18ft canopy care of Ian and Tracy and to set up the tables and chairs.

Cars started to arrive with Graham and Gillian at the helm with two rather large flags heralding their arrival. Tim Hill's car was the best dressed with Australian flag number plates and a decal of the flag wrapped on the left-hand side front which look fabulous.

In the pause between lunch and dessert a new member of the year trophy was awarded to Tim Hill, who was very surprised and extremely happy to receive this honour.

In the Aussie tradition of "bring a plate" the table was overflowing with food. We ate, drank and chatted throughout a long lunch, including an array of desserts until it was time to pack up and head home. Everyone had a great time and that is thanks to all who attended and participated in providing the food and desserts.





Australia Day 2026





2025 Motorkhana Championship Finale

Words: Bryan Shedden

Photos: Rob Wilkins

On Saturday 15 November, the 2025 MX-5 Club Motorkhana Championship reached its exhilarating conclusion under the floodlights of Sydney Motorsport Park's skidpan. For the first time ever, the event was held in the evening, kicking off at twilight at 6:30pm and wrapping up at 10:30pm. The warm spring night provided perfect conditions, and we were fortunate that the thunderstorms drifted just north and south of us, putting on a spectacular light show in the distance.

This novelty of a Saturday night motorkhana drew an enthusiastic full field of 42 drivers, including six visitors. While the majority piloted MX-5s, a few diversions into other makes included David Phillips in a GR Yaris, Matt Fraser in a Ford Escort, and the visiting Gotch family sharing a Toyota 86. It was especially inspiring to see six Junior competitors, led by 13-year-old Chase Raddatz, who drove the NB he built himself at MX5 Mania. Remarkably, one-third of the entrants were under 30, highlighting the growing appeal of motorkhana among younger drivers. The atmosphere was made even livelier by strong support from family and friends cheering on every test.

Our Clerk of Course, David Wilson, crafted a challenging series of six tests despite a tighter four-hour schedule—significantly shorter than the usual seven hours of daytime competition. Skipping the typical meal break, David expertly guided the field through two attempts at four tests, then quickly transitioned to a final test with one attempt each in two sections. This well-planned format allowed everyone to experience five tests, with only a minor time

overrun past the 10:30pm cutoff.

Although the Druitt Circuit was quiet and the Garage Cafe was closed, the Amaroo Circuit buzzed with a smoky and noisy drifting event. Unfortunately, the food truck ran out early, so many of us resorted to vending machine snacks and a late-night Macca's run—thankfully, I had enjoyed a big lunch earlier!

On the skidpan, lightning-fast times were posted by several competitors: Alex Shedden blitzed Bowler, David Phillips dominated Lazy Eight, Ian Hung excelled on Tophat, Chris Andry mastered Crazy Square, and Charlie Karayannis conquered Plumb Crazy. Congratulations to the class winners — Damian Ryan in Open, Helen Green in Ladies, Charlie Karayannis in Junior, and David Phillips in the non-MX-5 class. Charlie's outstanding performance, earning outright second place, showcased the impressive skills he's honed under the guidance of his dad John- and crowned his final year in Junior Class with flair.

With the championship wrapped up, the 2025 Motorkhana titles were decided. Christopher Stevens took the Open Class crown, followed by Damian Ryan and Ian Hung. In the Ladies Class, Annie Chan emerged victorious, with Helen Green close behind. The Junior Class saw a nail-biting finish, with Charlie Karayannis clinching the title, Chase Raddatz just one point behind in second, and Mackenzie Ryan in third. Congratulations to everyone who competed and contributed to a fantastic season!

A heartfelt thank you goes to the dedicated officials who made this event possible: Barry Luttrell, Jenny Luttrell, David Wilson, Ian Combes, Phil Reid, Phil Donnelley, Greg Unger, and of course our talented photographer, Rob Wilko. Their tireless efforts and professionalism ensured a smooth and enjoyable evening for all.



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MOTORSPORT - 2026 Calendar

Date	Event	Venue	Hosting Club
Sun 15 Feb	CSCA Supersprint round 1	SMSP Amaroo	SCCA
Sat 7 Mar	NSW Supersprint round 1	One Raceway	One Raceway
Sat 7 Mar	Motorkhana round 1	SMSP Skidpan	MX-5 Club
Sun 29 Mar	CSCA Supersprint round 2	One Raceway	MG Car Club Newcastle
Sat 11 Apr	NSW Supersprint round 2	SMSP GP	NSWRRC
Sun 26 Apr	NSW Supersprint round 3	SMSP Amaroo	Impreza Club
Sun 3 May	CSCA Supersprint round 3	SMSP Amaroo	MX-5 Club
Sun 17 May	NSW Supersprint round 4	SMSP Druitt	Southern Sydney SCC
Sun 17 May	Driver Training Day	Pheasant Wood	MX-5 Club
Sun 14 Jun	CSCA Supersprint round 4	One Raceway	TSOA
Sat,Sun 27-28 Jun	NSW 10 Hour Relay	SMSP GP	NSWRRC
Sun 12 Jul	Motorkhana round 2	SMSP Skidpan	MX-5 Club
Sun 19 Jul	NSW Supersprint round 5	SMSP GP	ARDC
Sat 1 Aug	Motorkhana round 3	SMSP Skidpan	MX-5 Club
Sat 15 Aug	CSCA Supersprint round 5	SMSP GP	CLA
Sun 27 Sep	CSCA Supersprint round 6	SMSP Druitt	JDCA
Sat 10 - Sun 11 October	Alfa 10 Hour Regularity	Winton	AROCA
Sun 1 Nov	NSW Supersprint round 6	One Raceway	MSCA
Sun 8 Nov	Motorkhana round 4	SMSP Skidpan	MX-5 Club



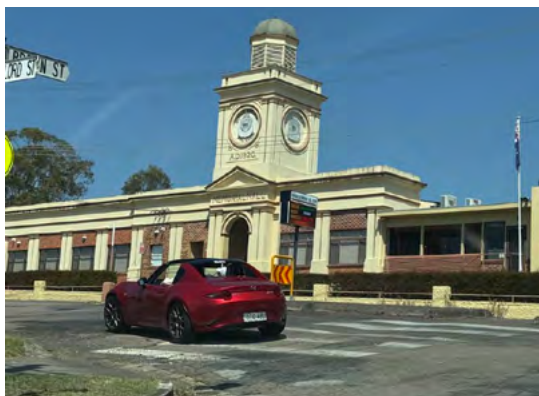


Friday February the 6th turned out to be another hot day, by 9.00am the temperature in the carpark at the Hunter Valley Information Centre was around 30 degrees. The only shade in the carpark was provided by the Tour Coach (Bus that is usually parked there). Nine cars and sixteen members assembled for the run to Lexie's on the Beach at Stockton, with a departure time of 9.30am. Just before 9.00am members started to arrive and drivers and passengers assembled in the shade by the bus. The usual greetings and banter carried on till Glenn called for order and laid out club run rules and information regarding the run.

At promptly 9.30am engines of the nine cars with their sixteen drivers and passengers aboard were started and pulled out on to Wine Country Drive turning left towards Huntley and then on to Branxton to join the New England Highway. A right on to the Highway and then a quick left led us through a small acreage sub division with lovely modern homes. It's interesting to see new homes and sheds being added from the last time we passed through. Then on to open country through Eldersley and East Gresford, most of which is in the Cessnock Shire where the potholes have been repaired somewhat. It was also interesting to see the countryside green but absolutely no length in the grass and I pitied the cattle farmers trying to raise stock, of which there was little in the paddocks.

On to Dungog for morning tea in the park. Now in the Dungog Shire the potholes are abundant. The roads leading to Dungog township are good, fun MX-5 roads and dodging potholes keeps the driver alert and more fun to be had so long as you miss the holes. At morning tea we were joined by another car and two members. All rested, tea, coffee and cakes consumed, it was off to Stockton.

We travelled through Clarence Town and onto Raymond Terrace and Heatherbrae,



picking up the Masonite Road and on to Cabbage tree Rd, then Nelsons Bay Rd, which took us to Stockton turn off.

A short drive from here after working our way through Stockton Village we arrived at Lexie's on the Beach to be met by another MX-5 and two members.

On arrival at the restaurant we were ushered upstairs to the balcony room area, where we had the place almost to ourselves. Lunch and drinks ordered, members relaxed and admired the view of Stockton Beach, the break-wall of Newcastle harbour and some of the harbour itself. As usual the chat around the table goes up a few decibels with each person trying to be heard. Great morning, a lovely lunch, the best company, all in all a wonderful day.

Thanks to all those who attended but most of all to Denise and Glenn who organised and lead the run again.



Hunter Run to Lexie's on the Beach

6th February 2026 | Words: Rob Emmett | Photos: Wendy Mulholland

Canberra - Five Hills 2026

Words and Photos by Norm and Roz Barker | 11th January 2026



The Five Hills Run is our traditional first run for the year. The weather was quite a relief from the past few days of high 30s but there was quite a smoky haze from the Victorian bush fires. There were 8 MX-5s lined up in front of the Russell offices.

At the top of the first hill (Mt Pleasant) we received a phone call from two late starters who quickly met us there as it was only just up from the meeting place. Here we took in the view over Canberra to the right and the airport to the left.

Next was up Mt Ainslie, which involved a steep climb on a winding road. A short stop was made to take in the view impeded somewhat by the smoke haze. Most of the group took the opportunity to buy a pre-picnic icecream. The 10 Cars were able to stop mostly in one long line which attracted attention from the visitors to this popular lookout.

After descending Mt Ainslie, the convoy drove past the Australian War Memorial and down Anzac Parade. At the bottom of Anzac Parade, the group turned right and followed the lake along to Black Mountain. This is another steep and winding road and at the top we circled the car park. The tower on the top of this mountain is currently closed but is to be restored to a visitors' centre and lookout. The carpark seems to have become a temporary skidpan for some of the more adventurous Canberra drivers to test the traction of their vehicles.

At the bottom of Black Mountain, we all turned right and kept in a convoy as the traffic was very light. A red NA passed us going the opposite direction, did a U-turn and joined the convoy. We continued along the lake to the National Arboretum and up to the top of Dairy Farmers Hill. There were a few people

looking to west through the smoke haze but we did not stop.

Leaving the National Arboretum, we followed the route past the Canberra Zoo and across the top of Scrivener Dam, through Curtin and Deakin and up Red Hill. At the top the convoy formed up in the car park for some photos. We then welcomed the driver of the NA and explained the club to him and invited him to join us for the picnic which he graciously accepted.

Once all the photos had been taken, we proceeded to Lennox Gardens for a picnic by Lake Burley Griffin. The breeze was not as forceful as at the top of the hills and we set up our chairs on the grass. As usual there was much chat and the NA driver was enthusiastic about joining the club.



Canberra - Mystery Runs

Words and Photos by Peter Wilson



13th January 2026

The idea of a mystery run seemed rather unusual for many members of the Chapter. There seemed to be some concern about the destination with many questions, "...where are you going...?" Apparently many in the Chapter are risk-averse.

My reasoning for mystery runs considered:

The number of participants (not all pubs/cafes in small towns are able to cater for a large group arriving at the same time.);

Is the pub/café still operating (I don't like planning many months ahead, in this economic climate many fail to continue trading.)

The weather conditions; and

The road conditions (could be roadworks involving gravel and water.)

Despite some concern about the destination, nine members in six cars met at Daughters at Hall for a coffee and briefing prior to the departure. I'm unsure if members with red cars are more open to adventure; however, all participants were in True Red, Copper Red Mica, Soul Red or Crystal Soul Red MX5s. Tuesday is a quiet day on the roads and this was the case for the drive to Crookwell via towns all commencing with the letter "G", i.e. Gundaroo, Gunning and Grabben Gullen. Due to the age of drivers, there was the mandatory "comfort stop" at Gunning. With Crookwell at just under one thousand metres above sea level, the road from Gunning to Crookwell offers some challenging twisty roads and attractive scenery.

Ten years ago, The Crookwell Hotel was a favourite venue for my motorbike group and it was worth a try this time. Although the standard of meals was not on a par with the Courthouse Hotel at Boorowa, they were acceptable.

A short run of only 221kms, however, enough to satisfy the urge to be out driving on some quiet country roads. Thanks to all on the run, very enjoyable!



10th February 2026

There seems to be a little more acceptance of the Mystery Run as eleven members and one visitor were prepared to risk it with a drive to a mystery destination. Not much of a mystery, we have driven to this destination less than two years ago in May 2024.

The usual starting point, Daughters at Hall, for an excellent brew before our scheduled departure at 10:00am. In attendance were seven cars, with six in various shades of red and a "Bluey". The drive to Young was uneventful apart for the delay with roadworks on Burley Griffin Way as we waited and waited for the pilot car to lead us through a single lane whilst the road is being widened.

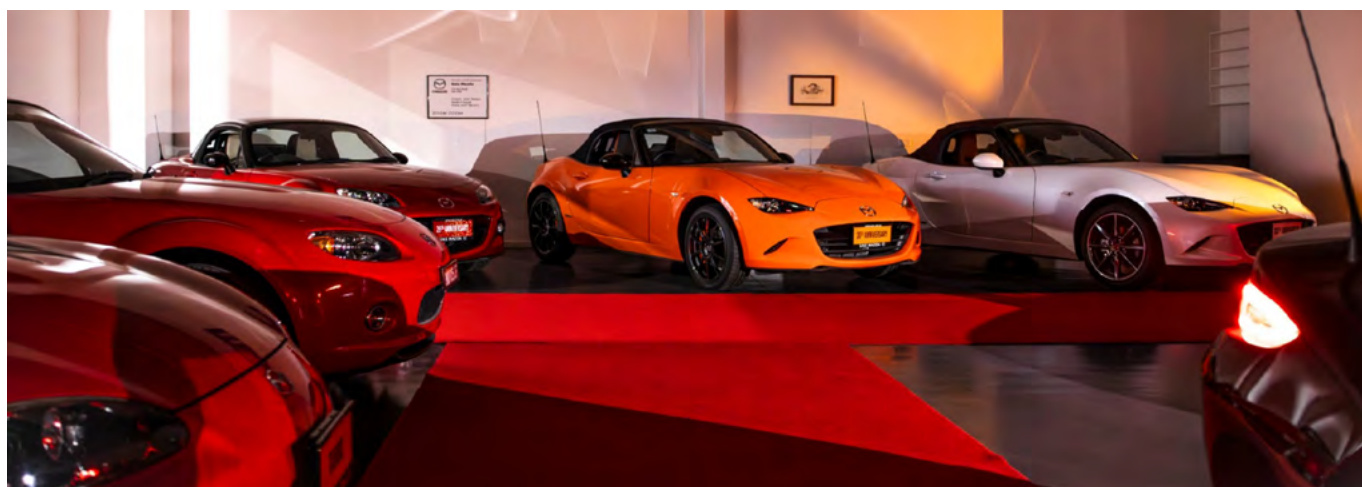
The usual good meal at the Services Club in Young with members suggesting we could come back again. After lunch, "Bluey" made an early departure for home and the rest made their way to Boorowa via Murringo. Another good coffee was served at the Marsden Street Café in Boorowa. During coffee, we noticed the blue sky was becoming rather dark and we decided to head for home. Maybe we should have rested in Boorowa a little longer! Just as we departed the 50kph zone the wind and rain hit us with a vengeance. For the next ten minutes or so, we travelled at speeds between 60 to 80kph and hoping for the best. Thankfully there was no hail. The rain and wind subsided and we hit a little more rain near Murrumbateman.

Generally, it was a good day to be out driving the MX5. I arrived home at 3.30pm with 290kms being the return trip to Hall. Thanks to all on the run today.



Australia's Greatest MX-5 Collection

Excerpt from Mazda Australia 11th December 2025



Just as the entrance to Narnia was hidden in a humble wardrobe and Alice entered Wonderland through a hole under a tree, there's no external hint of the treasures that lie within this innocuous cream-coloured warehouse in rural Victoria.

Step through the door, however, and like in those fictional lands you're treated to a special sight, with 13 examples of Mazda's iconic MX-5 lined up in chronological order. All are in immaculate condition, gleaming under the bright floodlights, and all bar one are highly sought-after limited-run versions of the world's best-selling sports car.

Owner Alan Wilson grew up driving classic English roadsters like the MGB and Austin Healey Sprite, so when news reached his ears that Mazda was planning a new model inspired by these characterful convertibles it's only natural his interest would be piqued.

"Wheels or one of those magazines did a story that there's going to be a new sports car released into the world market," he remembers. "I was driving Sprites at the time as my hobby car, so when [the story] came out, I remember at the car club meeting everyone saying 'wow, look at this!'."

The MX-5 promised the lightweight, open-top driving thrills synonymous with those British roadsters of the 1960s and '70s but built with modern production practices to ensure quality and reliability. Alan already had a relationship with Mazda, having first bought a 626 and a 929 in 1984, so he wasted no time in securing his spot before the MX-5 had even been launched.

"Because I had an association with my local Mazda dealership, I went and put an order in and the only way you could get one in those days was to actually fill in an order with your salesman and pay a deposit. That order then had to be given to Mazda Australia as proof of the purchase." Buying sight unseen was no small feat, when the MX-5's \$29,550 price tag at launch is the equivalent

of almost \$80,000 in today's money!

This was in 1988 and Alan's original car was in the very first batch to come to Australia, but such was the early demand vs supply equation the dealer asked to keep Alan's car as a showroom demonstrator – a situation that repeated itself six times before delivery finally occurred in 1990.

"I was one of the first members of the MX-5 Car Club," says Alan. "That's when the journey started. I should have kept that first one, but I got some other NAs, adding different cars, [but] it wasn't until I got this one here that I thought 'I might start collecting these'," he explains, gesturing to the turbocharged NB-series SE beside him.

This is an appropriate spot to start introducing the collection itself and Alan wanted to start at the very beginning. "I couldn't find my old car at that point, so we went to Mazda and there's a program in Japan where you can restore these NAs, so I said, 'Can I get one and send it across to Japan?'."

Mazda replied "certainly" but there was the small issue of the hundreds of cars already in the queue to be restored. Happily, HQ had a solution. "They said to me, 'we know where there's one you can buy that's only done 8000km'. He was in the car club, so I went and bought that."



The red NA6 greets visitors as they enter the collection with an NA6 Limited Edition sitting alongside it. One of 300 cars offered in Australia, all were painted in a unique shade of Neo Green with a tan interior, colour-coded removable hard top, air conditioning, CD player, speakers in the headrests and a numbered Momo wooden gear knob.

Next in line is a facelifted NA8 Clubman, which along with the larger 1.8-litre engine that increased outputs from 85kW/130Nm to 98kW/155Nm, added a Torsen limited-slip differential, Bilstein dampers and deleted the power steering for a true back-to-basics driver's car.

The second-generation NB arrived in 1997, further increasing outputs to 106kW/165Nm and adding a four-speed automatic option. To celebrate a decade of MX-5s the 10th Anniversary was released – dubbed 10AE – using a unique blue for the paintwork, suede inserts of the leather seats and various bits of interior trim.



Once again, a Torsen LSD and Bilstein dampers were installed along with a six-speed manual gearbox (the standard car retaining a five-speed), front suspension strut brace, 15-inch polished alloy wheels and a Nardi steering wheel and gear knob. Just 7500 were offered worldwide, owners also receiving his and hers watches, a scale model of the car and a 10AE key ring.



A year later, the Heritage Edition appeared as the most luxurious MX-5 yet. The deep Art Vin Red Mica paintwork was teamed with a tan leather interior and soft top, Nardi wooden steering wheel and shift knob, white-faced instrument dials and the six-speed manual gearbox appeared again.

Just 100 were made available and it's Alan's favourite.

"I really like it," he grins. "It's just got that nice feel to it." There's a lovely symmetry between the Heritage Edition and the latest addition to Alan's collection, the Mazda 35th Anniversary – "I think they've done that deliberately".

One of just 50 that will come to Australia, all manual soft tops, the 35th Anniversary mimics its Heritage forebear with triple-layer Takuminaru Artisan Red paint, a beige soft top and Tan Nappa leather upholstery along with bespoke 17-inch alloys. Just when I thought that Alan's 35th Anniversary couldn't get any more special, I unearth the fact that his particular example is build number one for the world.

The NB facelift in late-2000 added variable valve timing to the 1.8-litre engine for even more performance – 113kW/181Nm – and the six-speed 'box became standard. Limited to 100 units, the Classic built upon this with Cerrion Silver paint and a blue soft stop, leather interior, six-stack CD player, 16-inch alloys in a unique design and a two-tone steering wheel and shift knob.

Undoubtedly a lovely car, but slightly overshadowed by the extraordinarily rare Lightning Yellow machine next to it. Only 179 Roadster Coupes were made across four variants before a factory fire stopped NB MX-5 production early, Alan's being one of just 40 Type As.

A base 1.6-litre was initially purchased in Japan, the only market to officially receive the Roadster Coupe, but as it was not eligible for import into Australia, Alan



had to sell it on to a buyer in New Zealand. The silver lining to this cloud was the vendor who sourced the original car found the sportier Type A in a museum and a deal was negotiated.

And so to the SE, the car that started this adventure. Bought new for Alan's wife Deb, it's another favourite in absolutely showroom condition, though it does beg the question: where's the SP? The Australian-fettled turbo hot-rod would be right at home in this collection, but Alan informs me it's a matter of finding the right car.

"I've looked at a couple of SPs, but the quality of them haven't been there. The guy I got the Heritage Edition from has got one and I'd buy his, because I know the quality, but he won't sell it." In other words, stay tuned.

Australia's Greatest MX-5 Collection Cont'd.....



The third-generation NC MX-5 is represented by a Limited, the 250 offered in Australia featuring chrome windscreen, fog lamp and grille surrounds, unique 17-inch wheels, Bilstein dampers, red and black leather seats, red Maztex door trims and brushed aluminium instrument and dash panels, and the 25th Anniversary.

Only 40 examples were offered in Australia, Alan's one of the 24 manuals with another 16 automatics, with chrome exhaust tips, black A-pillars, door mirrors and roof, a strut tower brace, Bilstein dampers (manual only), beige leather seats with red stitching, drilled aluminium pedals and matching his and hers watches. This example was delivered straight from the dealer and has just 20km on the odometer.

Another highlight in a room full of highlights is the ND2 30th Anniversary, limited to 3000 examples worldwide with only 30 of those for Australia, all manual soft tops. These were for the true enthusiast driver with everything in Mazda's performance arsenal, including Bilstein dampers, Brembo front brakes and Rays alloy wheels along with Recaro seats to keep the occupants in place, though the searing orange paint – with matching highlights inside – is an obvious aesthetic enhancement.



Last, but not least, the ND 100th Anniversary – as the name suggests – celebrates the 100th anniversary of Mazda with Snowflake White Pearl Mica paint and a burgundy interior and soft top. In total, 700 cars were brought into Australia for the centenary celebrations across Mazda's entire range, but only 20 of those were MX-5s with half again soft tops.

Alan's love of cars stretches well beyond Mazda sports cars, the adjacent room holding everything from a time-warp Holden EH Special to a Porsche 911 Turbo Cabriolet to a Rolls-Royce Phantom, with a number of his beloved British roadsters off being restored, but it's the MX-5s that have pride of place.

Alan and Deb even created the 'Miata Bar', stocked with fine Japanese spirits, for friends to come and relax and perhaps peruse some of the memorabilia stationed around the room. The giant Mazda signs, secured by scouring EBay, give the room a feel closer to that of a museum than a mere hobby.

Despite their condition, rarity and, in some cases, mileage, all bar the 25th Anniversary are driven regularly – after all, that's what the MX-5 was designed to do. "These I think are great value for any young person that wants to get into a sports car. They're safe, they've got air bags, they're reliable, there's no drip trays under any of these, these are great cars."

Alan's collection stands as a tribute to the enduring appeal of the lightweight, driver-focused roadster; after all, more than 1.25 million customers can't be wrong.



Fundraising for CareFlight

Story by Jeffrey Rowe



For more than 14 years, the Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW has proudly stood behind CareFlight, turning our shared passion for driving into real-world impact. Since June 2025, our members have once again shown what a committed club can achieve together.

From a \$40 donation at our 35th Anniversary celebration, to the incredible \$1,617.36 raised through the Brass Monkey event, generosity has been front and centre. The Illawarra Chapter added their own special touch, contributing \$150 from the "Polar Bear Express" run and \$325 from a relaxed and creative "Sip & Paint" event.

These efforts total **\$2,132.36** raised in just six months — bringing the Club's cumulative CareFlight donations to an outstanding **\$31,696.23**. It's a powerful reminder that every drive, every event, and every member contribution helps CareFlight continue its lifesaving work. Together, we're not just enjoying the road — we're making a difference.



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For MX-5 Club Members only

How to check your Disc brake pads

By Bob Gaunson

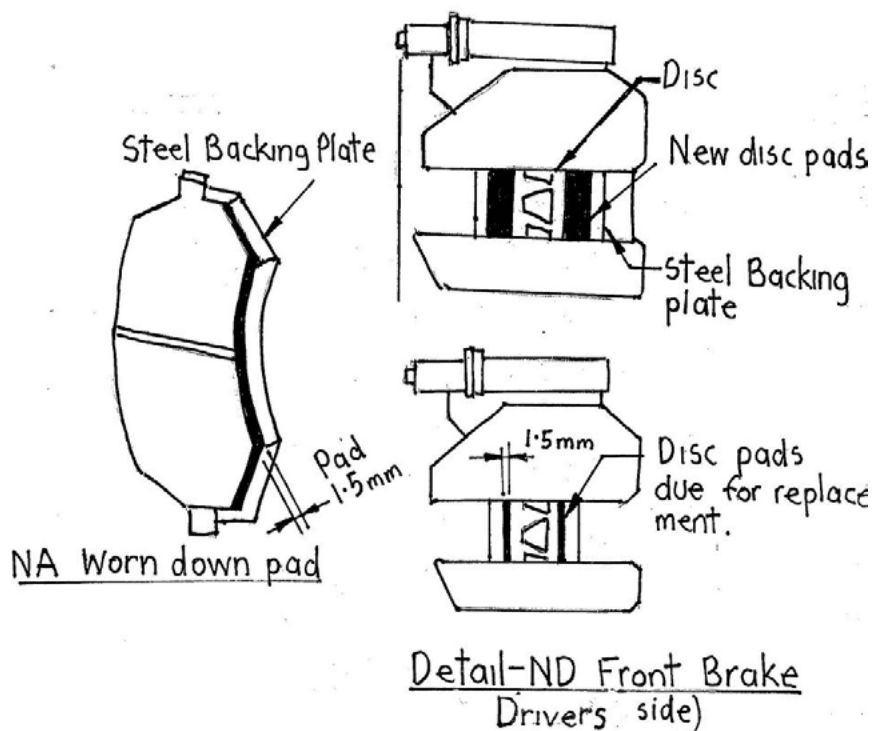


Just like checking your tyres, it's a good idea to check your brake pads from time to time, particularly if you take your car to the track occasionally, or are a little hard on your brakes.

Start by removing the wheel for the disc you are checking. Clever people may be able to check the pad thickness without removing the wheel, but I'm not one of them.

When pads are new, the pad thickness is approximately 9 mm thick, as they wear down they get closer to the metal backing plate.

You should change the pads when they get to around 1.5mm off the steel backing plate, failure to do this will likely result in the steel backing plate demolishing the disc and will be a costly repair.



Tech Talk

Some technical advice from Google AI as well as Sponsor information:

Mazda MX-5 repairs, particularly for older models (NA/NB/NC), commonly focus on addressing rust in the sills and rear quarters, along with fixing seized brake calipers and oil leaks (crankshaft seals). Routine maintenance, including logbook services and suspension repairs, is relatively affordable, with average annual costs around \$429.

We have a number of Mazda dealers who sponsor us and advertise with us, offering great Member Discounts on service and parts prices, as well as other incentives. Some of them will extend this discount to your other Mazdas as well! Don't forget to flash your membership badge and ask when you book your next service.

Do you have some Technical advice to share? Email it to publications@nsw.mx5.au.

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