

Jeep Hospital



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



WJ Grand Cherokee fuel filter/regulator



Nick inspects a Dana 35c rear differential



An oily differential housing indicating a leaking pinion oil seal



This month we have fitted a third external filter/regulator to a WJ Grand Cherokee which had a surging engine while towing due to a tank of bad fuel. We originally replaced the in-tank filter strainer that was extremely fouled. It's common with fuel injected rigs. We get a lot of crusty in-tank filters and poorly performing fuel pump motors resulting in a starving engine, particularly when towing.

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Unfortunately the WJ has no after market pump available or filters and the tank has to be removed, complicated by tow bars and massive plastic bumpers, unlike an older XJ Cherokee with the external second filter and cheaper non genuine pump and strainer

kits which can be removed with the tank in position.

Another patient this month was a ZJ Grand Cherokee, purchased cheaply, in for a full check up. With 230,000km on the speedo we found the normal problems associated with the rear Dana 35C differentials, worn axles from the wheel bearings running directly on the axle surface and insufficient differential oil changes over it's life. The ZJ had the usual leaking front axle seal, which requires the front axles to be removed, hemisphere out and replace the inner axle seals. If the axle

is worn where the seal runs the axle needs replacing or we can use a speedy sleeve if on a budget. Speedy sleeves are fine stainless steel collars that can be driven onto various shafts to give a fresh surface for the seal to mate with. While those ZJ axles are out we'll have a good look at the CV boot and if worn new boots will be fitted.

And finally, I had a weekend up in Cairns to visit my old mate with his '78 CJ7. We drove it from Cairns to Cooktown up the coast road and discovered that in the tropics nylon bushes in sway bars and shock absorbers die sudden deaths on that road. By the time we made it back the poor old soft top was about to lift off on its own. We had a blast, thanks Ian. **JAA**



CV boot on a ZJ Grand Cherokee front axle and signs of a leaking inner axle seal.



A worn ZJ rear brake disc found on a brake inspection.



Tony (Dr Jeep) on right with Simone and Ian travelling between Cairns and Cooktown

Its funny, most people's second biggest financial investment in life after a home is their vehicle, but for some reason many get forgotten and neglected. A lot of the damaged or broken parts on a Jeep are due to lack of maintenance. The other problem is people cutting corners. As a whole, most Jeepers have some sort of mechanical

knowledge and skills and can maintain their Jeep to some extent. Basic oil changes, filters, brake and tyre maintenance is all stuff we can do at home with a half decent tool kit. But for some reason, probably time restraints or a lack of facilities most Jeeps get used more than they get cared for and that's when Jeep speciality shops are

needed. I have the luxury of a full work shop at my disposal so it's a bit easier for me but it can be done yourself at home to some extent. Cleaning mud from your suspension, engine bay and radiator, body work and brakes will make it easier to check over the basics of your rig and save yourself some

money. I always end my trip with a quick or sometimes long trip to some version of a jet wash bay, and if it's really caked-on mud and wheels are full of mud and miles out of balance I'll drop into the first one I see. Driving an extra 50 kilometres with wheels one kilogram out of balance can kill ball joints, tie rod ends etc.