

# A wheely worthwhile winch



**We've seen a good many new products over the years, with most of them claiming to be the best thing since sliced bread and our testing has either confirmed or exposed these claims. So when asked to test the "Bush Winch", which is claimed to be the latest and greatest bit of recovery gear and that "No traveller should leave home without one", I jumped at the chance.**

I had heard about these new winches that slot onto your wheels but the thing that I was really interested in giving a tough workout was the ground anchor system from Bush Winches and Anchors Pty Ltd (BWA), as I hadn't come across a ground anchor system that had worked successfully in sand as yet.

There are 4 basic components that make up the full recovery kit. These comprise :

- (1). The Bush Winch Kit \$874
- (2). The Bush Rope Guide x 2 (optional extra) \$300
- (3). The Bush Ground Anchors incl. 2 augers, 2 spades, 1 Tbar and 1 kit bag \$363.64 (optional extra)
- (4). The Bush Bridle \$420 (optional extra)

The Bush Winch comes complete and ready to go, the other optional extras above just help make the job easier and are well worth considering.

The Bush Winch (1) comes with:

2 x Wheel winches  
2 x lengths of winch rope, 2,000kg or 3,200kg

Wheel nuts to replace existing wheel nuts (these then stay on the car).

And a carry bag.

The whole lot has a total weight of just 10kg

The Bush Rope Guides (2) come as a



pair and slot onto the same wheel nuts that are used for the winch.

The Bush Ground Anchors (3) again come as a pair, along with the necessary "spades", T-Bar and a very impressive carry bag. The well designed bag has packing foam blocks so that they don't rattle and bang around when stored in the car (nice touch BWA).

The Bush Bridle comes with 30 metres of 8mm rope, 2 x shackles, 2 x nylon rollers and carry bag.

The documentation and instructions that come with the equipment are very, very good. Simple and easy to follow,

with plenty of well drawn pictures and photographs. Many and various types of rigging situations are shown,



▲ *Storage is well thought out.* so working out the best solution for what ever type of predicament you find yourself in, shouldn't be too hard.

So my initial impressions of the equipment and presentation were good, but now the big one, does it work?? To find out, I teamed up with one of our instructors from Eureka

rush. There were no trees or other vehicles to use as anchor points. The BWA anchors were going to be given a hard time, pulling a bogged 100 series up a soft sand dune under its own steam was going to stress them to the maximum.

The Bush Winches had obviously been on and off the testing vehicle a few times so getting them located was easy. Patrick recommends that when you first get them, that you put them on and off a few times to loosen them up, as they are tight when new.

At this point, with the winches fixed onto the rear wheels, the rope threaded through the rope guides and fastened around the anchors, it was time for the acid test. Alison jumped in the driver's seat, started the car up and under very low revs started to drive forward. Richard and I looked at each other and smiled. This is a good product. The vehicle was walking itself up a soft sand dune, the anchors never looked like moving and there was no stress; amazing stuff. Part of the success of

**“Richard and I looked at each other and smiled. This is a good product.”**

4WD Training, Richard Nicholls, the product designer Patrick Verbeek and the General Manager of BWA Alison Mannino to “do the test”

We headed out to one of our top secret testing locations (Gnangara Sand Bowl) where the sand is particularly soft and pretty unforgiving, especially with fully inflated tyres. It didn't take too long for Patrick's 100 series to go down and I'd made sure that when it did, he was facing up a sand dune. One of those normally impossible situation when forward is not an option. Not today!

From the time the vehicle went down, to the time we were ready to do the recovery, only took us around 7 minutes and this was not done in a

the Bush anchor is the strength of its construction, with the main shaft made from high tensile steel, but the unique “spade” which pushes into the ground, up against the central shaft of the auger, is the key to its success. It creates a wide face in front of the auger, preventing it from tilting over and pulling out. This is difficult to explain without seeing it in operation, and I suggest a visit to the BWA web site is a good idea [www.bushwinch.com.au](http://www.bushwinch.com.au)

Patrick wanted to set the Bush Bridle up for a demonstration and was keen to try a new (yet to be released) anchor. The same as the ones we had been using, but a little longer. Patrick explained

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that he would screw one of the shorter anchors in a position where it would be expected to pull out and it did. We then used the longer one and it held tight.

I'm told that a primary safety feature of the Bush Winch vehicle recovery system is the choice of rope. It has been specifically tested and matched for use with the Bush Winch. It has a breaking strain of 2000kg or 3200kg, depending on your choice and is designed to break first should excessive loads be experienced. The winch rope



*BWA's ground anchor is the best we've tested by far.* ▲

has been especially selected, being very high quality and non-stretch, and as such, there is minimal recoil or back lash should it break under load. However, it's always safer to stand to the side and well clear of the vehicle when it's under load.

I can honestly see this winching recovery system taking the place of many others. Where OH&S is a factor, and on many mine sites it is, this could be a solution. A number of government departments are banning the use of snatch straps and maybe this could be an alternative for them. It also overcomes the ever increasing difficulty of fitting recovery points to newer 4WD vehicles.

For more product information and suppliers, why not give Alison a call on: 0419 938 995

So until the next edition, if you have any new products that we can push to the limit or that need testing give the Ed a call on 9291 8303