

JU1 RESURRECTION

BY MICHAEL BOWEN



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Some of you will be saying what is JU1? And other readers will know instantly what JU1 is – a very rare model from Jeep history here in Australia. Lucky for us, Jeep Action Magazine subscriber Vern Keys, knew exactly what he was looking at when he viewed this rare Jeep at a clearance sale. I had a voice message on my phone from Vern saying he was standing in front of JU1 and it was for sale. After checking the message again to make sure I had heard it correctly I returned Vern's call and he confirmed what he had found.

JU1 was one of three Jeeps trialed by the Australian Army in Project Perentie.

I went from Vern's description of JU1, then spoke to the owner and secured a deal on the phone. The Jeep needed to be moved so Vern kindly went back a few days later and transported JU1 back to his family's property.

We purchased JU1 from John Peut who was the second owner after Tony Crawley. Tony was a Jeep Australia employee who was involved in the Prentie Trials and had purchased JU1 from Jeep Australia. John bought the Jeep in the early 1990's and used it to commute to his farm in the Brisbane Valley. JU1 had already been fitted with the cab roof and rear cab section. The ute back was still wearing its military canvas. JU1 then moved with John to an 1100 acre property in Kyogle NSW, where it was used extensively on the property including carrying fence posts. It was here that John fitted the tray back for more practical farm use. The Jeep's next move with John was to Alstonville NSW where its work load was reduced and it was retired to the shed.

Back at Jeep Action we were reading through our previous articles on Project

Perentie and familiarizing ourselves with the Perentie Jeeps. Next was to organise pick up of JU1 which was a couple of hours drive away. My son Jeremy and local Jeep nutter Jim Sawtell volunteered for the pickup which went smoothly and Jeep JU1 was now sitting safely at the Jeep Action shed.

Now we knew not to expect too much but were surprised by the overall condition. JU1 has never been restored, it has been through a vigorous vehicle trial and then used for general duties at Jeep Australia. It has had three private owners and is over 30 years old, so yes, we were happy with its condition. And for it to be left so close to original condition from the Perentie Project was fantastic.

It had been a whirl wind week from receiving the call from Vern to having JU1 sitting at Jeep Action. So it was time to