

Bushwalk Australia



Best of New South Wales

Volume No 16, April 2016

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
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Volume 15, April 2016

“We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this vast land which we explore. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and thank them for their stewardship of this great south land.”

Cover picture



Splendour Rock sunrise, Blue Mountains, NSW
by Mandy Creighton

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We would love you to be part of the magazine, here is how to contribute - [Writers Guide](#).

The copy deadline for June 2016 edition is 30 April 2016.

Warning

Like all outdoor pursuits, the activities described in this publication may be dangerous. Undertaking them may result in loss, serious injury or death. The information in this publication is without any warranty on accuracy or completeness. There may be significant omissions and errors. People who are interested in walking in the areas concerned should make their own enquiries, and not rely fully on the information in this publication.

The publisher, editor, authors or any other entity or person will not be held responsible for any loss, injury, claim or liability of any kind resulting from people using information in this publication.

Please consider joining a walking club or undertaking formal training in other ways to ensure you are well prepared for any activities you are planning. Please report any errors or omissions to the editor or in the forum at BWA eMag.

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From The Editor

Hi

What a privilege it is to be part of a team that is excited about sharing bushwalking adventures. Over the past year in this magazine we have explored the best walks in each state and territory, as voted by you. In this edition we finish this tour in NSW, my home state.

NSW has a lot on offer and seems unique due to having walks with a remote feeling within the city boundaries and with public transport access. It is interesting flicking back through the previous editions to see the amazing variety of walking options we have in Australia We are spoiled for choice.

We started this magazine in 2013 to help Inspire, Entertain and Equip us all. It has been a fun journey and I continue to learn heaps. I have been impressed by all our contributors who put in soooo much effort to write great articles and share wonderful images. It is a great joy to hear about other people's adventures. If you have a story in you, even just an idea, but just not sure how to get it out, please get in touch - we are keen to help. Each edition we receive ideas and articles from a wide range of people, and the greater this diversity the better.

Well, I hope you enjoy this edition and that it helps you in some way in your next adventure.



Happy walking

Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)
matt@bushwalk.com



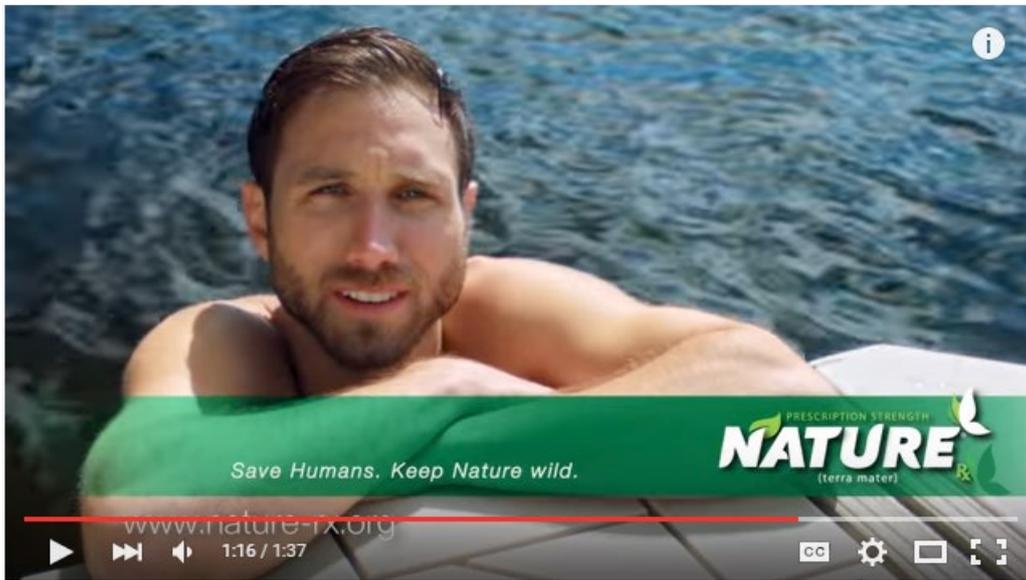
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Matt McClelland'.

Declaration

The bushwalking community is a small world and paths often cross. To improve transparency I thought it would be helpful to list my associations within the outdoor community. In many cases I approached the authors of the articles included in this edition and suggested the topics. The opinions stated in articles are those of the authors and not of those involved in the production of this edition. The authors are mostly people I know through Bushwalk.com. I operate Bushwalk.com and Wildwalks.com and have written several walking guide books, published by Woodslane, I have also written for Great Walks. I contract part time to National Parks Association NSW on an ongoing basis to coordinate their activities program. I have had a partnership with NPWS NSW and have hosted advertising for *Wild* magazine. I have also partnered with a large number of other organisations in environmental campaigns and have a regular bushwalking segment on ABC regional radio. There is some commercial advertising through the magazine. I have probably forgotten something - if you are worried about transparency please either write to me or raise the issue on Bushwalk.com.

Videos

If you need a good laugh you better check out this video. The award-winning Nature Rx Part 2 will inspire you to get out in nature :)



Nature Rx Part 2: Discover your dose of nature.

An interesting set of pictures instead of a video this time. Photographer Oleg Grigoryev shares one man's view from the inside of a tent. See more [here](#).



Best Walks Of New South Wales

Matt McClelland



As we've done this series of best walks around Australia I've enjoyed exploring the amazing diversity in each state and territory. It is great to see what makes walking in each place unique and understand their bushwalking strengths.

Kosciuszko and Abbott Ridge skyline
John Walker

Looking through all the votes for best walks in NSW it's interesting that most walks are close to populated areas and only a few are far inland. When looking at other parts of Australia, most walks have a significant car trip from the city. In NSW, many walks are accessible by public transport and are in large national parks in or on the edge of the cities. Even some of the overnight walks start with a train trip. In this article I want to highlight the top walks and walking areas. The following pages list the specific walks that you voted for.

With more than 100 individual walks voted on I can't list them all, sorry, just the most popular walks.

Day walks

The survey results suggest that short walks are "a thing" in NSW. There were around 80 unique day walks listed, microadventures mostly in and around the cities. Although all states voted for day walks, there was a strong focus on them in NSW.

I grouped all the votes into regions to help organise the walks. The three most popular regions are as follows.

Blue Mountains NP

Unsurprisingly, the Blue Mountains was very popular for day walk votes. Walks in the Blackheath and Wentworth Falls areas really stood out as the most popular, with the Grand Canyon and National Pass at the top of the list. The Blue Mountains is a stunning area, with most walks starting high on the escarpment and heading along the top of the cliff or into steep valleys.

The Great North Walk

This was a surprise to me. I knew the GNW was popular, but I was not expecting it to end up with its own category. Our readers voted for a bunch of walks that are sections of the main spine of the GNW. The walks were mostly just south of the Hawkesbury such as Cowan to Brooklyn and Mt Kuring-gai to Berowra. These walks start and end at train stations and very quickly head into bushland that feels surprisingly remote. It seems that having the larger goal of completing the whole track is also a motivator for getting out and doing these sections.

Sydney Harbour

It was great to see so much interest in walking along the Sydney Harbour foreshore. Spit to Manly smashed it in as the most popular in the area followed by the series of walks along the northern shore between the Harbour Bridge and Balmoral. This area has a mix of urban and bushland walking, with plenty of cafes, swimming spots, and stunning panoramic views.

Honourable mentions that rated nearly as highly go to other day walk areas including the **Royal NP** on the south edge of Sydney, the **Central Coast**, the **South Coast** and **Kosciuszko NP**.

What a privilege it is to live in a place that allows us to explore such amazing places in our own backyard.

“NSW is a big state and has some great overnight and long-distance walking tracks.”

Overnight walks

NSW is a big state and has some great overnight and long-distance walking tracks. NSW does not have the the same focus on formal overnight walks like Tasmania or WA. Having said that, there are some very popular walks. The 45 kilometre Six Foot Track has a mix of bush and semi-rural areas with more people walking it each year than the Overland Track. The Six Foot Track is also more popular than many of the premium NZ walking tracks. As many NSW walks are close to urban and rural centres there are opportunities for inn-to-inn style walking on many tracks, an idea that is starting to catch on on NSW after being popular in Europe for a very long time.

Looking at the survey results, here are the most popular areas.

Blue Mountains NP

Like the day walks, the Blue Mountains area was the most popular for overnight walks in this survey. A walk into Blue Gum Forest in the Grose Valley was the most popular walk and with four main tracks suggested; there are plenty of ways to enjoy this special place.

Next on the list was the **Six Foot Track** from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves. Other walks in the area are the less formal non-signposted walks such as Mt Solitary, Kanangra to Katoomba and Pantoneys Crown.

Royal NP

The Royal Coast Track ranked highly in readers votes. The Royal Coast Track links Bundeena and Otford in the Royal NP, on the southern edge of Sydney. The walk can be done in a day, but makes a great overnight walk. While the track has fallen into disrepair and become heavily eroded over the years, the NPWS has started a major program to improve the track and signs. Waterfall to Heathcote also made the list, this is a short 10 kilometre walk that again can be done in a day, or stay for a swim and an overnigher. This walk is in Heathcote NP across the road from the Royal and has train stations at the start and end.

Kosciuszko NP

With the same number of votes as the Royal we now head to the top of the country and the majestic Kosciuszko NP. Carved out by glaciers and blanketed with snow in winter this region is a stunning place to explore on in summer or with snowshoes in winter. The Australian Alpine Walking Track (AAWT) was the most popular walk, it is a 650 kilometre walk that links Walhalla (Victoria) and Tharwa (ACT) with significant sections in Kosciuszko NP. Other walks include the Main Range (camping in Wilkinsons Valley), Round Mountain to Mungah and of course Mt Jagungal.

There are a few walks that did not get a mention in the survey that I think deserve should appear on this best walks of NSW list.

Watagans NP in the Hunter region has a series of great overnight and day walks, well worth visiting. Green Gully Track in the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park is a 65 kilometre, 4 day hut-based walk. Linking Yass and Albury, the 440 kilometre Hume and Hovell walking

track has recently been upgraded and is a great walk for people wanting to get into long-distance walking.

One of the hassles of putting together a list like this is that you can never really stop: there are so many great options and walking experiences.

I'm not intending to make a list that will be considered definitive and stand the test of time, but rather one that inspires. My hope is that as you flick through these walks you will discover your next few adventures and maybe learn a little more about what features of walks inspire you most.

If looking for more information to help you on your adventures, here are some great starting points.

<http://bushwalkingnsw.com/>

Tom's site has a great range of walks around NSW, focused mostly in the Blue Mountains.

<http://www.walks.com.au/>

Woodslane have the largest series of bushwalking books in NSW and Australia.

<http://takeawalk.com.au/>

John and Lyn have a series of books covering walks in NSW.

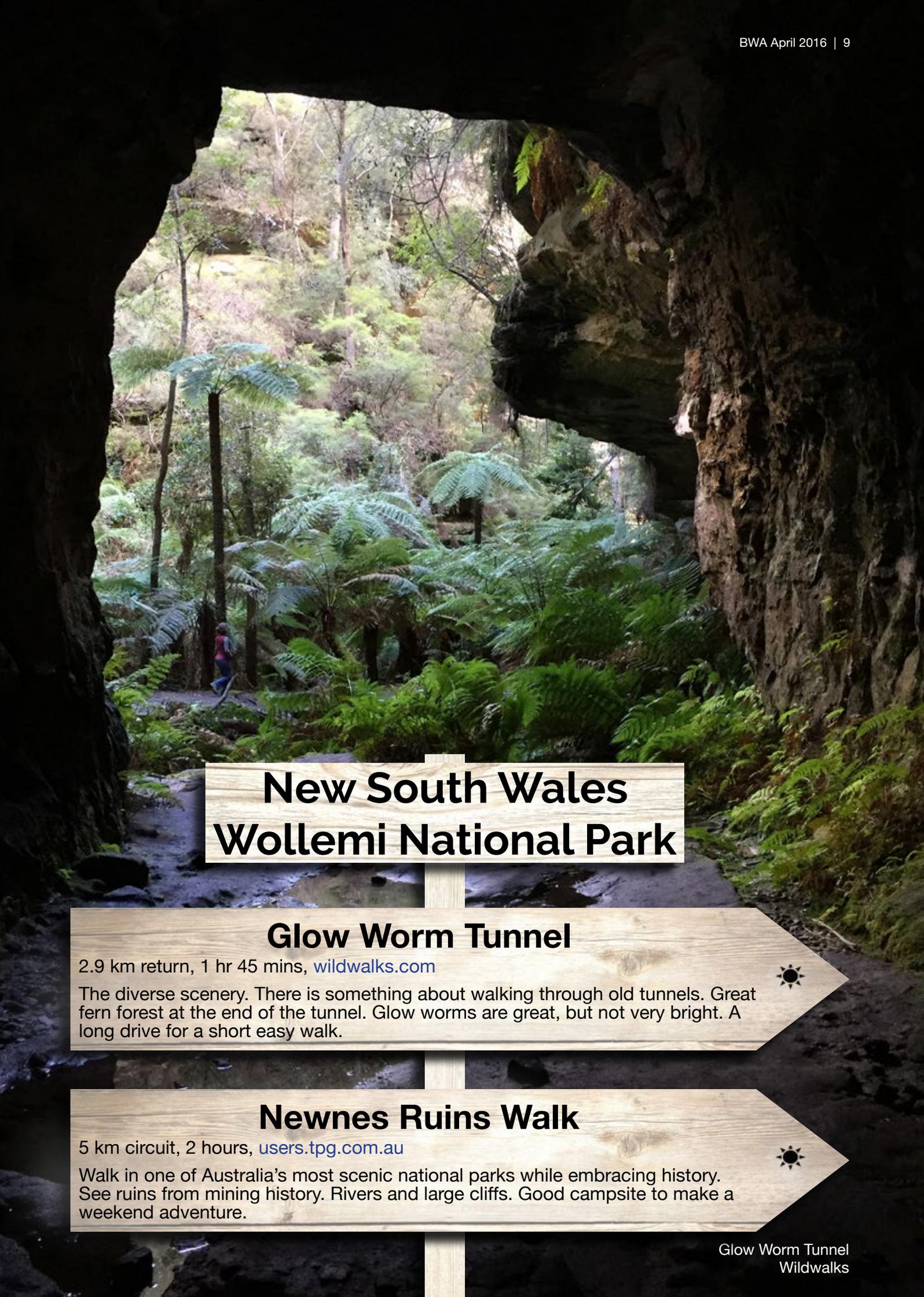
<http://wildwalks.com>

My website is helpful for walks around Sydney, Blue Mountains NP, South Coast and Southern Kosciuszko NP.

Happy walking
Matt :)



The following pages are a compilation of best walks based on a survey by readers from last edition of BWA.

A photograph showing a person walking through a lush fern forest at the end of a cave tunnel. The tunnel is dark and rocky, with a path leading out into a bright, green forest filled with various ferns and trees. The person is wearing a red shirt and blue pants, and is walking away from the camera towards the forest.

New South Wales Wollemi National Park

Glow Worm Tunnel

2.9 km return, 1 hr 45 mins, wildwalks.com

The diverse scenery. There is something about walking through old tunnels. Great fern forest at the end of the tunnel. Glow worms are great, but not very bright. A long drive for a short easy walk.



Newnes Ruins Walk

5 km circuit, 2 hours, users.tpg.com.au

Walk in one of Australia's most scenic national parks while embracing history. See ruins from mining history. Rivers and large cliffs. Good campsite to make a weekend adventure.



New South Wales Blue Mountains NP - Blackheath

Grand Canyon

5.4 km circuit, 3 hrs 30 mins, wildwalks.com

Unique beautiful scenery, very diverse flora (rainforest and eucalyptus), several waterfalls, stunning rock cliffs. You get to walk behind a waterfall. Did it with my 3- and 5-year-olds last year and they loved it - the challenge of the steep steps, the stepping stones across the water, the caves, the view deep into the canyon and the rocks to climb, with supervision. Stunning canyon features with an easy walking track and brilliant views in an accessible location. Feeling of being miles away from civilisation. The walk is currently closed for upgrades until mid-2016.



Blue Gum Forest

8.1 km one way, 5 hrs 30 mins, wildwalks.com

Excellent views, well crafted passes and scenic waterfalls. Access via Perrys Lookdown, Evans Lookout, Lockley Pylon, Govetts Leap or Peirces Pass. Walk into the Grose Valley knowing the history of the Blue Gum Forest, the start of the modern NSW conservation movement, with a cooling swim in summer. The very steep walk out is a bit of a killer.



Lockley Pylon

6.8 km return, 3 hrs 15 mins, wildwalks.com

Visited by relatively few (compared to other places nearby) but gives some of the most amazing views in the Blue Mountains and the Grose Valley. Very accessible walk in terms of gradient while feeling remote. The amazing panoramic view and the untouched location away from the hordes of people that gather at popular tourist points. A way to get to the Grose Valley.



New South Wales Blue Mountains NP

Ruined Castle

7.9 km return, 5 hours, wildwalks.com

This has 360 degree panorama views. Short walk with stunning views. Fantastic. Beautiful Bell Birds in the valley. Flat a lot of the way though the climb out is steep. Have lunch on the top of the Ruined Castle. Return via the Golden Stairs or the Scenic Railway.



National Pass

5 km circuit, 4 hours, nationalpass.com.au and wildwalks.com

Unique cliff walk. There are many walks in the Upper Blue Mountains with views of the Jamieson Valley, but few have a track carved into the cliff. Best walk in the Blue Mountains and number one pick for showing visitors something amazing that is very close to Sydney. Waterfalls and a good workout too! We found this the best and most special day hike we have ever done.



Wentworth Pass

5.1 km circuit, 4 hours, wildwalks.com

Below the National Pass, steep down and up. Fantastic waterfalls, rainforest and swimming. The Slack Stairs; nothing slack about them. Views of valleys and cliffs and waterfalls - who could ask for more?





New South Wales Central Coast & Hunter

Mt Tomaree (Tomaree NP)

5.4 km circuit, 3 hrs 30 mins, nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

Views out to the ocean and over Port Stephens. The incredible panoramic views, especially at sunrise and sunset. Great during whale watching season. Well constructed staircase, great viewing platforms. Interesting history.



Bouddi Coastal Walk (Bouddi NP)

8.1 km one way, 5 hours, wildwalks.com

Challenging yet achievable for first timers. Rewarding scenery and swimming locations. Great coastal walking with views that go on forever.



New South Wales Great North Walk

Cowan to Brooklyn (Ku-ring-gai Chase NP)

13.4 km one way 5 hrs 30 mins, wildwalks.com



View at Jerusalem Bay and views descending down to Brooklyn, also pub at the end of the walk. Challenging terrain for a day walk, particularly the downhill on the final stretch. Can be tough going but the river and Jerusalem Bay are beautiful.

Mt Kuring-gai to Berowra (Berowra Valley NP)

9.7 km one way, 4 hrs 15 mins, wildwalks.com



A pretty walk along the river and not too hard. Surprising untouched bushland at the edge of suburbia. Train at start and end. Wetlands and salt marshes. Nice.

Berowra to Cowan (Berowra Valley NP)

12.9 km one way, 6 hours, wildwalks.com



Great scenery and good for training for even tougher tracks. The railway makes access very easy. Cafe and ice creams halfway at Berowra Waters. Big hills. Nice secluded creeks. Views from cliff tops.

Hornsby to Mt Kuring-gai (Berowra Valley NP)

20.8 km one way, 8 hrs 30 mins, wildwalks.com



Good length and level of challenge for a day walk with great variety of landscape and vegetation, not too far from central Sydney plus train to train makes it easy with one car. Do side trip to Fishponds. Amazing sense of remoteness, but close to civilisation.

Berowra to Mt Kuring-gai via Berowra Waters (Berowra Valley NP)

9.4 km one way, 4 hrs 30 minutes, wildwalks.com



Sandstone caves, waterfalls and the ancient banksias. Large open saltmarsh and closed dense forests. The walk up from Sams Creek is steep but wonderful. Side trip to Naa Badu Lookout is a must.

New South Wales Kosciuszko NP

Main Range Walk Circuit

21.9 km circuit, 9 hrs, wildwalks.com

Big ticket natural wonders (Blue Lake, Albina Lake, Mt Kosciuszko), unique plant communities, sweeping views and a real sense of achievement when completed. Being above the tree line, stunning views for ever. One of the most beautiful areas in Australia. Air is crisp and clean. Best done as a loop walk in January or February from Charlotte Pass. Wonderful wildflowers, views to the Victorian Alps, moving clouds, perched glacial lakes, picnic lunch on top of the range, good trail, swim in Snowy River near end, snow gums at Charlotte Pass and views back up to where you have been - simply glorious.



Munyang to Schlink Hilton Hut

22.4 km return, 9 hours, wildwalks.com

Magnificent high country scenery, snow gums, rivers, granite tors and historic huts. Mostly on fire trail, easy navigation.



New South Wales Lord Howe Island

Mt Gower

10 km circuit, 7 hrs, bushwalkingsw.com

This is a climb of 850 metres from sea level. Fabulous views of mountains, forests, and coral reefs fringing the island. Beautiful and unique forest to walk through, with endemic plants and birds seen nowhere else. Rope-assisted scrambling up cliffs adds a level of adventure. Physically challenging and remote, this is the best day walk I've ever done.



View over Lord Howe Island
Ashley Whitworth

New South Wales Northern NSW

Mt Warning (Wollumbin NP)

8.8 km return, 4 to 5 hrs, bigvolcano.com.au

Quite challenging for the novice walker, with spectacular views when the weather permits. First place on the east coast to see the sunrise. Walk up before dawn to see the sunrise with a freshly brewed cuppa. Views beyond Cape Byron lighthouse, past the Gold Coast, sense of achievement at the dawn of a new day.



Bald Rock Summit Walking Track (Bald Rock NP)

3.2 km one way, 1 hr 30 mins, nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

The drive in from either end is pleasant through forests and rocky fields and hills. The walk up Bald Rock can be either a meander along the scrubby path or a goat trail up the face. Both have their charm. I like to go up the rock and come down the longer easy path. The top has the biggest chunk of granite in Australia, and has spectacular views.



Grand High Tops (Warrumbungle NP)

12.5 km circuit, 4 hrs 30 mins, nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

When you walk up the valley to approach the Breadknife, it will take your breath away. Walk along the base of the Breadknife and sit under its shadow. Such a fabulous walk with stunning rock formations everywhere you look. Very hot in summer and cold in winter, autumn and spring.



Kaputar Plateau Walk (Mt Kaputar NP)

6 km circuit, 3 hrs, nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

Extensive views and rugged volcanic formations in what is otherwise a dead flat (and relatively cleared) north-western plains. Interesting flora - reminiscent of bush closer to the coast, but surrounded by much drier semi-arid bushland in the lowlands below. Keep an eye out for the pink slugs. Stunning views.



New South Wales Royal NP

Coast Track (Royal NP)

Varies, wildwalks.com



The entire walk spans the eastern fringe of the Royal National Park, from Otford to Bundeena. The walk takes us through a wide variety of terrain and flora. A classic. Beautiful beaches. Can do the whole thing in a day, or do sections with easy access at Wattamolla and Garie.

Engadine to Bundeena via Deer Pool (Royal NP)

35 km one way, 8 hrs



It is all on walking track and crosses the Royal National Park from west to east, then north on the Coast Track. See most of the highlights of the Royal including crossing of Kangaroo Creek at its tidal limit, crossing of the Hacking River at Audley Recreation Area, Winifred Falls, Anice Falls on Anice Track, great views over Port Hacking and Cronulla on link track, Marley Track via Deer Pool to Marley Beach with its unique dune and lagoon hinterland, along Marley Beach on Coast Track to Bundeena via Wedding Cake Rock.

Waterfall to Heathcote (Heathcote NP)



10.8 km one way, 5 hours, wildwalks.com

Great swimming at the pools, easy train access. Track not in best condition, but nice and rugged still.

New South Wales South Coast

Pigeon House (Morton NP)



6 km return, 3 hrs, <http://bushwalkingsw.com/walk.php?nid=806>

Physically challenging, but not too hard half-day walk, excellent views.

The Castle (Morton NP)



10 km return, 10 hrs, bushwalkingsw.com and
[Bushwalking in the Budawang's book](#)

Brilliant views, varied terrain, interesting features and a challenging climb to the top due to the amount of vertical gained and lost. For experienced walkers only. The top section has some slightly exposed scrambling. The views in all directions both from the top and lookout points along the way are truly spectacular.

Illawarra Escarpment Traverse



18.5 km one way, 7-8 hrs, [Best Bush, Coast and Village Walks of the Illawarra](#)

The walk traverses the longest continuous tracked stretch of the great Illawarra Escarpment, from Stanwell Park Railway Station south to Austinmer Station. It incorporates several older tracks with a newish link track. It provides a succession of stunning viewpoints, some delightful creeks and rainforest gullies and a diverse range of plant communities. Much of the bushland is remarkably intact, thanks to it having previously been locked up by BHP as it sits on top of coal reserves. On reaching Sublime Point, there's a much-needed cafe before dropping down over the edge to reach Austinmer.

New South Wales Sydney

Blue Gum Track (Berowra Valley NP)

6.7 km circuit, 3 hrs, wildwalks.com

A lot of surprises along the way such as leeches and river crossing. Short side trip to Fishponds is well worth it. Crossing Waitara Creek at the "Spa" is stunning, a great place to stop and watch the water dragons and waterfall.



La Perouse to Cape Bank Circuit Walk (Kamay Botany Bay NP)

7.3 km circuit, 3 hrs, wildwalks.com

Easy track and amazing views of the coast. The rock formations at Cape Banks are amazing. Easy public transport, great ocean views.



Mackerall Beach to West Head (Ku-ring-gai Chase NP)

8.6 km circuit, 5 hours, wildwalks.com

Relaxing day out of Sydney CBD. Some big hills, ferry access. Feels like a million miles from anywhere.



Seven Bridges walk

27 km one way, 1 day, 7bridgeswalk.com.au

A scenic suburban walk with some great bush views. Great training circuit.



New South Wales Sydney Harbour NP

Spit to Manly (Sydney Harbour NP)

10 km return, 10 hrs, wildwalks.com and sydney.com



Harbour views, variety of terrain, accessible by public transport, good for visitors to Sydney, possibility for swimming. I like to think this is the walk most characteristic of the active outdoor Sydney lifestyle. Fantastic views, great people watching and perfect for those who like a good coffee with their walk.

Coogee to Bondi (Malabar Headland NP)

8.8 km one way, 3 hrs 35 mins, bonditocoogewalk.com.au



Gorgeous coastal scenery and beaches. Well maintained walkways. The Maroubra to Malabar section of the walk is closed to the public at the time, can bypass via the roads. Great mix of stunning water views, bushland and pops in an out of suburbia.

Circular Quay to Taronga Zoo (Sydney Harbour NP)

11.5 km one way, 5 hrs, wildwalks.com



Although this walk is mostly on the urban fringe on formed trails, it takes you through some of the most picturesque Sydney Harbour views. Many people may not have walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge and this gives them the perfect opportunity to do so. The end reward is they can visit the zoo or take a relaxing ferry ride back to Circular Quay. No experience required.

Taroonga to Balmoral (Sydney Harbour NP)

6.8 km one way, 3 hrs, wildwalks.com



Beautiful and interesting walk past gorgeous houses, cliffs, coves, beaches, Sydney Red Gums etc. An accessible and lovely walk! Start with a ferry ride, finish with fish & chips, and a bus ride home. Cafe and toilets along the way. Check out the gun emplacements at Georges Heights.

New South Wales Classic Overnight

Blue Gum Forest (Blue Mountains NP)

20 km one way, 2 days, bushwalkingnsw.com

Lovely area to camp overnight at Acacia Flat. Inspiring for the trees, the Grose River and its significance in the story of bushwalking and conservation in NSW. A night excursion to Blue Gum is recommended, spotlighting the blue gums is awesome enough with possible sightings of possums, gliders, wombats, kangaroos etc. With several routes into Blue Gum (Perrys Lookdown, Lockley Pylon, Govetts Leap, Evans Lookout, Pierces Pass or Victoria Pass) there is scope to avoid an out-and-back route. Can be done as a day trip.





New South Wales Classic Overnight

Six Foot Track

45 km one way, 3 days, wildwalks.com and sixfoottrack.com

Easy to navigate with nice established camping grounds. Bush and rural scenery. Great to end at Jenolan Caves. Challenging hills, beautiful diverse scenery and landscape. Love the bridge crossing. A great Australian overnight hike; accessible to many due to the proximity to the Blue Mountains; camping by the Coxs River.



New South Wales Blue Mountains

Mt Solitary (Blue Mountains NP)

20 km return, 2 days, bushwalkingnsw.com

Some fun scrambling up onto Mt Solitary, great views and plenty of informal campsites. Challenging climbs, stunning views. Sections are not signposted, not always water on top of Mt Solitary. For experienced walkers. New campsites below Ruined Castle, water tanks and picnic shelters. Can be done as a day trip.

Splendour Rock (Blue Mountains NP)

24 km return, 2 days, bushwalkingnsw.com

Spectacular views from Splendour Rock and great high informal campsites over the mountain. The relative remoteness also allows more opportunity to see some wildlife, especially wombats and swamp wallabies. The rugged scenery is a little different to that of the more popular Blue Mountains lookouts. A small amount of scrambling makes for an interesting climb onto Dingo Mountain. For experienced walkers.

Kanangra to Katoomba (Blue Mountains NP)

45 km one way, 3 days, bushwalkingnsw.com

Everything. Ridge walks, huge exposure, great lookouts, and you actually need to use some real compass nav as it's thick shrub and you can get lost, a great four day adventure.

Pantoneys Crown (Gardens of Stone NP)

2 days, ozultimate.com

Challenging and spectacular. Remote and quiet area off the beaten track. Significant rock scrambles. Great rock formations and distant views. No formal track, for experienced walkers only.

New South Wales Royal NP

Coast Track

27 km one way, 2 days, wildwalks.com

Just fantastic. Stop at one of the secluded beaches and feel like you have it nearly to yourself. Despite being close to Sydney and almost too popular with a myriad of hikers it still stands out for a variety of views, flora and Aboriginal heritage, plus plenty of places to have a dip in hot weather - many beaches, creeks and lagoons to pick from! Wonderful scenery and good for fitness.



Waterfall to Heathcote

10.8 km one way, 2 days, wildwalks.com

Easy walk to access with a train station at each end. Camping at Kingfisher Pools, swimming spots along the way. This is a very short walk, suitable for first overnight walk.



New South Wales Great North Walk

Cowan to Brooklyn (Ku-ring-gai Chase NP)

13.4 km one way, 2 days, wildwalks.com

Great walk for first overnight walk. Some big hills. Start and end with a train trip, on the northern edge of Sydney. Camping at Brooklyn Dam, fish and swim if you want. . This is a very short walk, suitable for first overnight walk.

Great North Walk

260 km one way, 12 days, wildwalks.com

Great variety and feels remote even close to city. Plenty of options for day and short multi-day trips with most legs starting or finishing close to a train station. Hornsby to Mt Kuring-gai with camping at Crosslands is a great first overnight. Spectacular views walking along the shores of Lake Macquarie around Warners Bay are heavenly. Walking along the beach toward Newcastle in the early morning is also breathtaking. Sleep in tents or walk inn-to-inn. Some campsites have water tanks.

New South Wales Morton NP

The Castle, Monolith Valley, Hollands Gorge, Castle Gap

29.5 km return, allow 3-4 days to take in the summits, [Bushwalking in the Budawangs by Ron Broughton](#)

Classic Budawangs scenery, very interesting passes and passages. The navigation is challenging in places. Views from The Castle are remarkable. Exposed rock scrambling.

Ettrema Gorge

30 km one way, 3 days, [bushwalkingnsw.com](#) and [lotsafreshair.com](#)

Very rugged, remote, off-track walk. Wonderful scenery, old mine, caves, gorges and beautiful swimming holes. It has it all, but not for the faint of heart. For very experienced walkers only.

Wog Wog - Corang Peak - Bibbenluke Mountain - Mt Owen - Monolith Valley

40 km one way, 3 days, [Bushwalking in the Budawangs by Ron Broughton](#)

Stunning variety for vegetation and rock formations. Monolith Valley is a wonderful highlight. Camping caves make for a great overnight stays. District views from cliff edges.

New South Wales Kosciuszko NP

Main Range Circuit

22 km circuit, 2 days, wildwalks.com

Just west of the Main Range Track between Kosciuszko and Townsend, Wilkinsons Creek has beautiful flat campsites and a succession of pools for summer swimming. Start from Charlotte Pass or add extra adventure and time by starting from Guthega. If you have time, the side trips to the Rolling Ground and Tate are worthwhile.

Australian Alps Walking Track

NSW section is about 240 km long plus side-trips and takes 10-20 days. Total walk is 660 km long and takes 10 weeks, [Australian Alps Walking Track \(4th Edition\)](#) by Chapman & Siseman

The AAWT is a must-do for those with the time, experience and stamina. The KNP section has a number of variations, all brilliant. The Main Range, Gungartan and Jagungal are all recommended. With two or three food drops you can walk from Tharwa in the ACT to the Victorian border.

Mt Jagungal

25 km or more, return, 3 days, [Australian Alps Walking Track \(4th Edition\)](#) by Chapman & Siseman

Jagungal is a prominent peak that stands alone in the Kosciuszko NP. Walk in from Round Mountain or Mungyung power station, or between them. Alpine scenery and weather can be delightful, especially when wild flowers are out. Camping out under the stars on the roof of Australia. Huts and rivers to explore.

New South Wales Northern NSW

Yuraygir Coastal Walk (Yuraygir NP)

65 km one way, 4 days, nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

This walk takes in a number of small coastal communities and close proximity to larger rural towns. Many accommodation and camping options. Coastal walk but still quite remote.

Mt Exmouth (Warrumbungle NP)

26 km one way, 2 days, bushwalkingnsw.com

Amazing area for day walks, but better to soak it up with an overnighter. The Grand High Tops, is grand indeed. This area is all about breathtaking rock formations and beautiful grass trees. It is dry country, check with parks before the walk that tanks and springs are running or carry all your water. Balor Hut is a simple option for overnight, needs to be booked, but if weather permits plan for a night under the stars, amazing. The Breadknife is a highlight.

New South Wales Far South Coast

Nadgee Wilderness Walk (Nadgee Nature Reserve)

80 km one way, 5 days, [BWA201312.pdf](#)

Coastal wilderness walking, what else can I say? Striking difference in coastal scenery on the NSW and Victorian sides of the border. Fairly easy walking, great camping spots, time to relax and soak up the best the coast has to offer. Permit required, so it is nice and quiet.

Southern Shoalhaven Coast Walk

55 km one way, 4 days, [read more on page 52](#)

Walk from Narrawallee Inlet north of Ulladulla south to Durras Lake. Traverse Meroo NP and Murramarang NP. Meroo has some of the coast's loveliest lakes and some superb Bangalay forest. Resupply in towns, enjoy accommodation or camp - your choice.

Light to Light (Ben Boyd NP)

31 km one way, 3 days, [wildwalks.com](#)

Walk from Boyd Tower to Green Cape light house. Rugged coast line. Red rocks make for great contrast with blue water. Established campsites are pretty busy, use a quieter walk in only clearings.

Letter From The Minister

Mark Speakman MP
Minister for the Environment



My favourite national park is the Royal National Park, not far from home.

Little and Big Marley, Royal NP
Andrew Smith

A bushwalk in the Royal is a great way to spend time with the family, to take a break from the hectic pace of life and to enjoy the natural environment in the world's second-oldest national park.

The park offers exceptional bushwalking, swimming and scenery. You can go whale watching from one of the lookouts and take a swim at beaches like Garie and North Era. The Coast Track also offers a spectacular multi-day hike.

Bushwalking is not only excellent for our health and wellbeing. It also helps to build community appreciation for our natural environment and educate the community about the places we need to conserve. The government wants more people, especially younger people, to explore and learn about NSW heritage and our native fauna and flora. We want to make sure that all sections of our diverse community connect with our parks. As Sir David Attenborough said:

“No-one will protect what they don't care about, and no-one will care about what they have never experienced.”

I'm thrilled to see the growth in indigenous management of our parks and reserves. It's more than an important act of reconciliation:

it allows knowledge to be passed down between the generations, and important skills and management to be taught.

I'm also keen to ensure increased access to national parks for all to enjoy. For example, last year I re-opened the Three Sisters Walking Track after a significant upgrade, which included making the track assisted-wheelchair accessible. We're also making sure there is better information, and better visitor facilities in our parks. You don't have to be an avid explorer or professional bushwalker to enjoy and appreciate NSW national parks.

I encourage you to plan your bushwalking excursion, not only for your safety and wellbeing but also to ensure that you're maximising everything there is to see and enjoy. If you're heading out on a walk it's important to be prepared. Ensure you're comfortable with the planned route, you've checked weather conditions and you have the right clothing and equipment for the conditions. NSW Police and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) provide bushwalkers and adventurers in the Blue Mountains with a free loan personal locator beacon. For more information visit [Think Before You Trek](#).



Winifred Falls, Royal NP
John Walker

You can also plan your bushwalking adventure and learn more about the area before the trip using the Google Street View Trekker for many of our NSW walking tracks. If you have any questions about a walk contact the local park office.

Walking in national parks provides a great opportunity for solitude and self-reliant exploration. It's a great opportunity to reset the brain and re-energise. Science is showing that nature-based activity is both physically and mentally rewarding.

Best of all, there's something for each level of ability. There are plenty of short, relaxing walks, and multi-day treks or hikes along our coast and rainforests. Walking tracks are maintained at different grades, so there's a track for you regardless of your level of experience.

The government recognises the need for community participation to identify ways to improve tracks, track safety and the overall visitor experience. I encourage the community to report any track issues and to provide ideas for improvement to the NPWS.

We also ask all walkers to ensure that native plant, animal communities and heritage sites are disturbed as little as possible. Parks and reserves offer protection to endangered wildlife, while conservation and research programs target particular Australian native plants, animals and ecosystems under threat. Many programs, especially those for pests and weeds, involve community volunteers and contribute enormously to the restoration of native habitats.

In our national parks kids can get among nature and join the [WilderQuest](#) gang on an adventure of discovery of their very own. More and more research links childhood experience of nature with a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits. Events run during school holidays, including exploring underwater life, becoming a bug detective and learning how to find bush tucker in the forest. These tours are engaging, exciting, educational, and above all, fun for kids.

With school holidays coming up and the arrival of autumn's weather, it's the perfect time for families to pack a picnic and set out on a relaxing walk. The NPWS and its visitors have shortlisted some of the best nature walks in NSW including a selection of short and easy walks for families.

To plan your nature walk or to see the complete list of best walks, visit [Best Nature Walks](#). Don't forget to share your experiences on [Facebook](#) or get the latest information by subscribing at the [Naturescapes e-newsletter](#).



Mark Speakman was born in Sydney and grew up in the Cronulla area in Sydney's south, where he still lives today. He graduated in law and economics and later gained his Master of Law. From 1983 to 1991 Mark was a solicitor. He was subsequently admitted to the NSW Bar and appointed Senior Counsel in 2004. Mark was elected as the Member for Cronulla at the March 2011 state election. In 2013 he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Tertiary Education and Skills, before becoming Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury in 2014. After being re-elected at the 2015 state election, Mark was appointed as Environment and Heritage Minister.

In the News

New multi-day Uluru Trek

23 to 27 August 2016



Trek for five days and over 100 kilometres through stunning and varied desert landscapes and learn about aboriginal culture and the aboriginal history of the area from the traditional owners who will accompany the Trek. Never before has the general public been able to access the areas covered by the Trek, and experience a fully supported multi-day Trek on the remote and beautiful desert lands in the Uluru Kata Tjuta region. Read [more](#).

Is extreme parenting your thing?



Many of young kids sadly spend more time inside playing computer games than playing outside in their backyard. To change that, some parents are taking this one step further. Check out the [Extreme parenting](#) news article.

Fontus self-filling water bottle



It sounds too good to be true, but game changes usually do. The makers claim that this bottle is can fill its self by condensation humidity in the air. So the water bottle fills as you walk or ride your bike, no creek required. They claim that in good conditions it will generate just shy of 1 liter an hour. A potential game changer on many walks. Check out the [Fontus website](#) to find out more about their product and their crowdfunding campaign starting on April 4.



Bushwalking in NSW

Mitchell Isaacs
President of Bushwalking NSW



Bushwalking NSW is the umbrella group that represents clubs and bushwalkers in NSW, and can help put you in touch with the right club to help get you started in the bush, and also has some great information online.

Splendour Rock, Blue Mountains NSW
Albert Chetcuti

In 1931 there was a threat to the Blue Gum Forest in the Blue Mountains. A Sydney Bushwalkers group discovered that the Grose Valley forest had trees believed to be hundreds of years old that were about to be destroyed by a local farmer to plant walnut trees. A famous protest action took place in 1932, with conservation groups raising £130 to buy out the lease and save the forest for posterity. This was the genesis of Bushwalking NSW, with just 10 bushwalking clubs in 1932 evolving to become one of Australia's foremost outdoor recreation groups, representing 69 clubs and around 12,000 bushwalkers.

While many bushwalking clubs are based in major cities of Sydney, Canberra, Newcastle and Wollongong, Bushwalking NSW affiliated clubs extend state-wide to country areas including the Shoalhaven, northern and southern NSW, Blue Mountains, Bathurst and as far west as Broken Hill.

“The only thing missing from a NSW bushwalking holiday is an active volcano ...”

Bushwalking in NSW

Bushwalking in NSW has something for everyone. We have rugged coastlines, lush gullies and canyons, cool, crisp alpine areas (with or without rainforest), towering cliffs, knife-edge traverses, panoramic summits, and secluded rivers and waterholes. You can go for an hour or two or a week or two. The possibilities are endless.

The only thing missing from a NSW bushwalking holiday is an active volcano – however this is made up for by the Burning Mountain, where a deep coal seam has been smouldering away for thousands of years, and the spectacular remains of extinct volcanoes at the Warrumbungles and nearby Mount Kaputar.

According to Destination NSW, the state's tourism body, NSW is officially Australia's most popular bushwalking destination with more than 5.5 million visitors on the State's bushwalking tracks every year.



"Don't have any **gear**? Not much is needed for short bushwalks: **comfortable clothes**, good **walking shoes or runners**, a **day pack** and a **few items**. There are short walks all over NSW. The first step is just to get out and start exploring!

If you want to get into longer, harder or more regular bushwalking, NSW also has around 70 bushwalking clubs where you can join in with other like-minded groups and individuals, who are only too happy to share their knowledge and experiences with new walkers. Most importantly, clubs can provide you with valuable tips and insights to help keep you safe in a range of conditions and locations.

Here's a list of some of the best bushwalking destinations in NSW.

Blue Mountains

This World Heritage Area covering over one million hectares and a number of declared wilderness areas stretches over 200 kilometres, and can be reached in just an hour from the middle of Sydney. It includes towering cliffs and spectacular ridge walks,

deep gorges, waterfalls galore, and such a range of different experiences that you can be sure there will be something for bushwalkers of all ages and abilities.

The Blue Mountains is also easily accessible by public transport, with a direct train from the city to around 15 stations that take you to some great bushwalking.

“ Sydney is blessed with an amazing network of urban bushland ...

Sydney's urban walking

Sydney is blessed with an amazing network of urban bushland through the Sydney Harbour, Garigal, Lane Cove and Maroubra Headland National Parks; the list goes on and on. Most of these parks offer spectacular walking accessible by public transport, with mobile phone reception and never too far from civilisation, creature comforts, and a hot coffee.

Even as a seasoned bushwalker having walked all over the globe, I am consistently amazed at the quality of some of the bushwalking around Sydney.



Traverse of the Red Rocks, Blue Mountains
Albert Chetcuti

Royal National Park

Just a short distance to the South of Sydney, the Royal NP is one of the world's oldest national parks. It hugs the rugged coastline broken up by spectacular beaches and lagoons. The Royal NP makes an excellent escape for the day from Sydney.

South Coast

From the spectacular cliffs of Morton NP to the windswept coastline of Nadgee, the South Coast of NSW offers fantastic walking with a genuine remote and wild feel.

“... South Coast of NSW offers fantastic walking with a genuine remote and wild feel.”

Western NSW

Otherwise known as “most of NSW”, there are outstanding bushwalking opportunities right across the state. These include the ancient landscapes of Mutawintji NP, north-east of Broken Hill; volcanic remnants of the Warrambungles near Coonabarabran and Mt Kaputar near Narrabri; Aboriginal heritage and spectacular sandscapes of Mungo NP;



and the majestic river red gums and Ramsar-listed wetlands in the Murray Valley NP in the Riverina.

North Coast

Northwest of Newcastle lies Barrington Tops and Gloucester Tops - a high, sub-alpine plateau with an abundance of rivers and rainforest. It offers great day and multi-day walking in a spectacular and varied setting. Further north you have wonderful rivers, beaches, waterholes and rainforest, just waiting to be explored.

The high country – Kosciuszko National Park and surrounds

Commonly known as The Snowies – this alpine area is covered by snow in winter, and gives rise to broad, rolling grassy plains, beautiful snow gum stands, and a myriad of sparkling streams. A premier destination for multi-day summer bushwalking.

This is barely even making a start on places to go bushwalking. The bottom line is that it doesn't matter where you go in NSW, you will be amazed by the scenery and the bushwalking opportunities. The only problem is how to choose between them all!



Northern Rivers Bushwalkers Club

My first year experience

Julian Dimbleby



Retirement: a new phase of my life. Interacting with the friendly members of the Northern Rivers Bushwalkers Club and going on many wide-ranging club activities is now a rewarding part of my life.

Mt Cordeaux
NRBC

Yes, I made it! Retired at last.

Will I miss the crowded commute to the CBD? I don't think so.

Will I miss the "stimulating" regular office meetings? I don't think so.

Will I miss the big smoke? I don't think so.

I can't wait to get back to the Northern Rivers – the place we call home.

The [Northern Rivers Bushwalkers Club](#) runs a variety of bushwalking and other activities each week in national parks, state forests and coastal areas of the NSW North Coast Region. The Club has been operating since 1976, is based in Lismore and is affiliated with [Bushwalking NSW](#).

Only thirty more shopping days to Christmas 2014, but more importantly only ten more

“ ... join the flotilla of kayaks paddling through water lilies in full flower with a stunning backdrop of Mt Warning ...

days until retirement. I've submitted my application to become a member of the Northern Rivers Bushwalkers Club (NRBC). And I've checked the [Event Programme](#) on their website. Good news – our furniture will be delivered to our new home just a few days before the NRBC Christmas Party, held at Crams Farm, Clarrie Hall Dam. And what a wonderful day it was. The first priority was to join the flotilla of kayaks paddling through water lilies in full flower with a stunning backdrop of Mt Warning (Wollumbin) directly ahead of us. At noon we joined a gathering of over 60 friendly people to enjoy a real Christmas feast of festive fare brought by all to share. Wearing his Gandalf look-alike hat, the club President brought the gathering to order and entertained us with his welcoming speech. He summarised the activities of the club throughout the year and acknowledged the contributions of many involved with organising and leading these events.

Well, that introduction to the club certainly provided the motivation and set the scene for the year ahead. Wednesday mornings very quickly became diarised for a bike ride somewhere in the local region. Still in the heat of summer, the first rides were

called "short" being under 25 kilometres. But as the cooler autumn weather arrived the rides grew ever longer. My personal best would have been the 72 kilometre ride from Coolangatta heading north along the coast, but the most challenging ride would be a climb of 960 metres over 67 kilometres from Murwillumbah heading north over the border into Queensland then down to Currumbin and return. For someone who previously rode up to 20 kilometres, I feel like I've come a long way, in more ways than one. My bike maintenance skills also got a kick-start when I quickly became adept at repairing punctures, practising my skills on two successive rides. But without a doubt, the highlight of each trip would be the very carefully selected venue for coffee.



Jerusalem Creek
NRBC

With cycling now a regular part of my life, I next turned my attention to walking. Years ago, I was envious of my son joining a group from his school to climb Mt Warning. A quick check on the club website showed that in March the club would climb this mountain. At only 8.8 kilometres I thought this would be a breeze, but I seriously underestimated the climb. While scrambling up the last stage using the chain handrail was a great challenge, the 360-degree view at the top made it all worthwhile.

As well as having walks at different grades scheduled every week in the local national parks, state forests and coastal areas, the club also organises many walks of longer duration throughout the year. This might be for four days, one week or more to locations in Australia and overseas. My first experience

of an extended walk was a visit to Lake Moogerah, 1.5 hour's drive south-west of Brisbane. Over 30 were in the group and stayed in a range of accommodation. All the different walks and evening activities were very well organised. I can't wait to head south in just a few days for one week of walking in the Tasman National Park, Tasmania. When first advertised, this walk proved to be so popular, that a repeat week of walking was organised for another group of 24 club members.

My kayak had been stored high in the garage gathering cobwebs for a long time, but since joining the NRBC, that is definitely no longer the case. Living in the Northern Rivers we are spoilt by having so many different waterways nearby to paddle and explore. Regular paddles are organised and advertised online and by email. Like the bushwalking activities, these events also include extended visits further afield and are often combined with club walks. Typical destinations include Woolli Woolli River near Grafton, and the Upper Noosa River in Queensland where, as a leader put it, "reflections of the banks and trees in the water are of such clarity that you don't know whether you are the right way up or upside down".



Upper Noosa River
NRBC

I have not yet gathered the courage to join an abseiling activity, but I can get the adrenalin flowing simply by watching any one of the many abseiling videos posted on the club website.

Did I mention social activities? Perhaps you may be interested in wine tasting, barefoot bowls, poker, slide nights showing travels to distant exotic locations, or musical soirées on a river bank. This club certainly has something to satisfy all tastes.



Upper Noosa River
NRBC

And if I should happen to get snowed under with household or gardening responsibilities, then I can still enjoy the club activities by reading the monthly Newsletters and viewing regularly posted photos and videos to both the [club website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

In February 2016 I went to Tasmania with NRBC. The walks in Tasman National Park were fantastic. I've never before climbed up and down so many steps as on the day I did the walk to Cape Hauy. After five days of walking, our treat on the last day was to step aboard a yellow boat and fasten our seat belts for an action-packed wilderness cruise

from Eaglehawk Neck to Port Arthur. It was wonderful. You are welcome to check out the [Tasman Island Cruise](#) video and photos on the NRBC websites.

Would I miss being a member of the Northern Rivers Bushwalkers Club? I definitely think so.



Links

- northernriversbushwalkersclub.org.au
- facebook.com/northernriversbushwalkingclub

Julian is a retired IT academic. He derives great satisfaction from writing computer program code that cannot possibly go wrong ... cannot possibly go wrong ... cannot possibly go wrong! Actually, he is a firm believer that a well-designed spreadsheet can go a long way to help solve many of the challenges in life.



Clarrie Hall Dam
NRBC

Top Sydney Coastal Walks

Elaine Kindred



Whether you're training for the 30-60 kilometre Wild Women On Top Sydney Coastrek or simply want to cleanse your lungs and stretch your legs, here is a guide to some spectacular walks.

Each walk is part of the life-changing adventure that is Coastrek, a 30-60 kilometre trekking challenge that thousands of people complete each year in March, to date raising more than \$13 million for The Fred Hollows Foundation

We asked inspiring women experts to select the highlights of this event, and came up with ten Sydney coastal walks.

Schedule a weekend date with a friend, pack some snacks and a camera, or plan a rewarding lunch stop in between. Lace up your walking shoes, rub in that sunscreen and let's go!

1 Manly to North Head

by Di Westaway (Coastrek Founder)

This 8 kilometre, 3 hour walk is perfect when timed with the sunset. It's not too difficult, starting with a coastal stroll from Manly Wharf to Shelley Beach, offering fresh salty air and endless ocean views.

I love the lookout at the end of North Head. It's breathtaking. You'll be stunned by the views of South, Middle and Dobroyd Heads.

2 Balmoral to Middle Head Forts

by Lisa Marshall (Lisa is the Trek Athlete and Director of Wild Women On Top and Coastrek)

This short walk (30 minutes) is an explorative bush path. You will discover some heritage listed sites, absorb some fantastic headland views and if you're game ... check out some of Sydney's most beautiful nude beaches.

Start at Balmoral Oval and head up the metal stairs to the top, turn left and down past the Navy Base and enter Middle Head Reserve. Turn right to the old bunkers, then find the bush track that winds to the end of the headland to another bunker and more trails. Coming down to the nude beach if you dare then find the bush track back up to the oval and return beside the road. To extend your walk, follow the trail opposite the top of the metal staircase above Balmoral Oval to Clifton gardens and enjoy a coffee at Bacchinos.

3 Sydney Harbour Bridge to South Head

by Jo Vartanian, Wild Women On Top Coach (In 2014 Jo's Coastrek team came in second on the Balmoral to Coogee event)

This is one of the best urban walks in Sydney. The trail tightly hugs the iconic harbour while exploring Sydney's top city suburbs and harbour beaches. Ending at South Head is truly a reward, showcasing Sydney Harbour and the Tasman Sea

This walk treats you to magnificent views of Sydney Harbour at every turn. The Bridge, the Opera House and the Botanical Gardens. You also appreciate secret bush tracks throughout the Sydney Harbour National Park including its secluded beaches and iconic bays. Historic buildings like Strickland House and Vaucluse House and the pretty Parsley Bay Bridge keep your mind engaged on this section of the trail. It's a secret gem that I never knew about until I trained for Coastrek.

4 Hermitage Foreshore Walk

by Erica Beaton (Erica has completed the 50 kilometre Sydney Coastrek at night, and the inaugural 30 kilometre Melbourne Coastrek)

If you want a short burst of exercise but still want to soak in fantastic views from the south of Sydney Harbour Bridge, this is the walk for you. This trail treats you to one hour of coastal goodness, with postcard views of the Sydney Harbour and even Shark Island.



Stunning Sydney views from a magic part of North Head by Sydney Coastrek

Just before you head down the trail there is a stunning view of the Harbour Bridge, The track alongside the water at night is like a mystical forest with gnarled tree roots. Wear a head torch and bring company at night.

5 Diamond Bay to Coogee

Christina Graham (Christina has completed Sydney Coastrek twice, and has also volunteered at the event as a Team Leader)

This eight kilometre walk boasts cliff top trails, beaches, bays and forest. The ocean views from the cliff tops stretch out wide. Gorgeous houses and parklands line the pathway and lead down to the cafe culture of Bondi and its iconic white sand beach.

I particularly love walking on Sunday mornings when walkers and runners are powering down the boardwalks, tourists sauntering, and families are enjoying time at the beach.

6 North Sydney to Lavender Bay

by Lisa Marshall (Lisa is the Trek Athlete and Director of Coastrek)

This walk is most breathtaking in the late afternoon as a half an hour power walk. Just watch as the city lights up before your eyes. But don't go too late as you need a bit of light to explore the secret garden.

Start under the Harbour Bridge at the North Sydney Pool, head long the waterfront passing Luna Park and enjoy the harbour

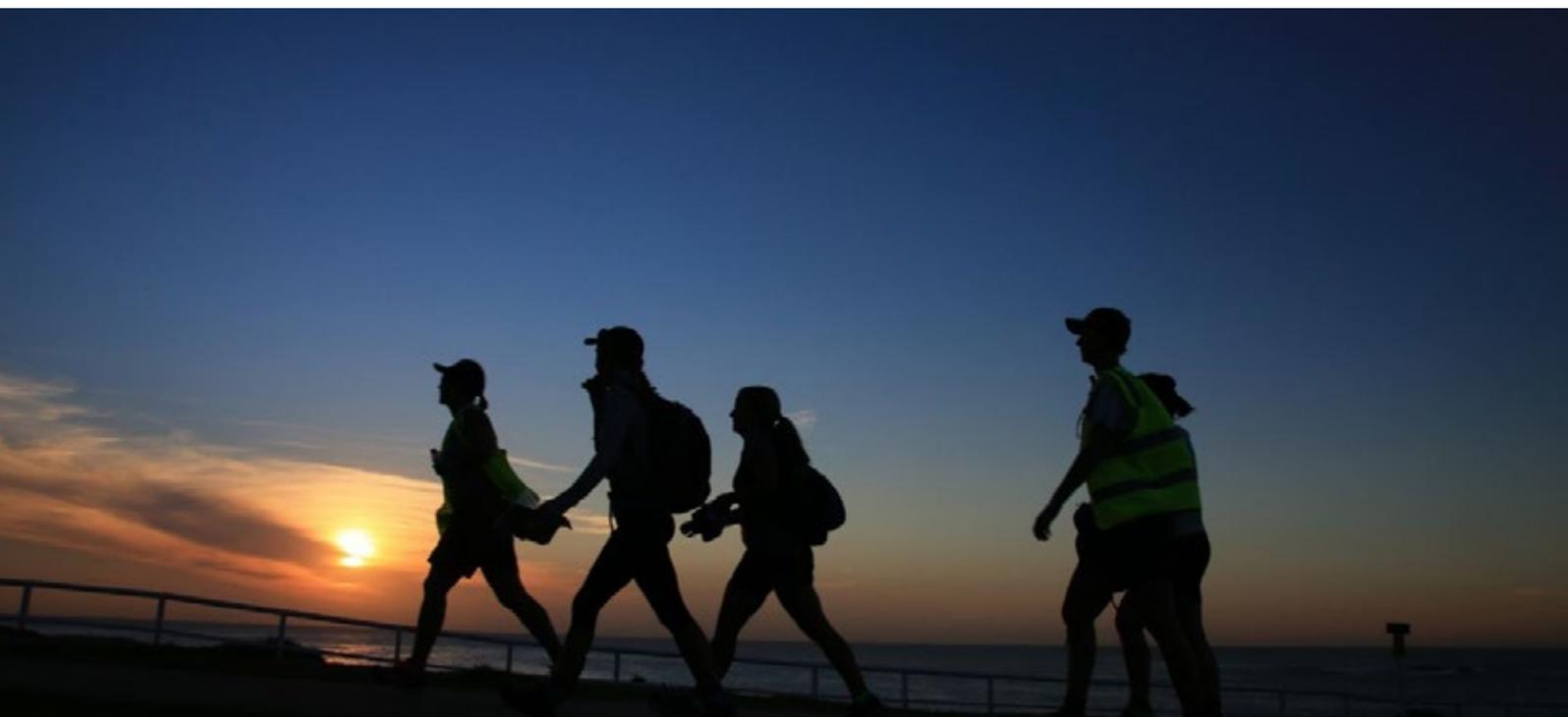
views. At Lavender Bay, don't miss Wendy's Secret Garden, a tropical oasis created by Wendy Whiteley, wife of the late Australian artist, Brett Whiteley, set above the railway line and below Watt Park. Continue along to the stairs up to Bayview Street, then cut up and over Milsons Point to Sawmillers Reserve.. Return via Blues Point Reserve and make your way back to Bay Street and Lavender Bay and the Harbour Bridge. This walk takes in iconic views, beautiful gardens, stately homes on the waterfront and some green parks.

7 Resolute Loop Walk, Ku-ring-gai Chase NP

Nicola Moran (Wild Women On Top Coach Nicola was involved in originally testing the Coastrek route, she has also competed and volunteered five times to support the cause)

Despite not being on the Coastrek route, the eight kilometre return loop is one of the most beautiful bushland walks Sydney has to offer, and therefore we encourage Coastrekkers to train along it. The walk takes 2-3 hrs, but you can spend at least half a day looking at the rock art, swimming in secluded pools and simply being out in nature.

I recommend doing it in the anticlockwise direction. The bush in this area has stunning trees, a bit of subtropical forest around the creeks and local wildlife such as goannas, wallabies, and some aboriginal rock art. The beaches are swimmable and beautiful.



8 Dee Why to Curl Curl

by Katherine Rothwell (*Katherine has walked Coastrek three times, including supporting Susie O'Neill's team*)

This headland and bush track is a short 3.2 kilometre return, and truly epitomises the beauty of the Northern Beaches with sensational views of Long Reef and South Manly. Bring your swimmers and soak up the waves. It's one of my favourite walks along the Coastrek route.

9 Mosman Bay to Clifton Gardens

by Jacq Conway (*Wild Women On Top Coach*)

A 30 minute walk through bushland, looking over bays and striking harbour views is most definitely what we call a micro-adventure. The amphitheatre at Bradleys Head, Mosman, is a major highlight.

Along this fairly easy trail you will pass magnificent groves of towering red gums, stunning city views, a couple of small, secluded beaches, historic Bradleys Head (Sydney Harbour National Park), and a beautiful view of Clifton Gardens as you descend the path towards it. A dip in the clear waters to cool you off is your reward.

10 Palm Beach to Barrenjoey Lighthouse

Lisa Marshall (*Lisa is the Trek Athlete and Director of Sydney and Melbourne Coastrek*)

A walk with delicious scenery, rocky terrain and many swimming opportunities. The route described below will take you around four hours to complete, according to trek athlete and Coastrek Guru Lisa Marshall.

Start opposite Iluka Road, Palm Beach, at The Stairway to Heaven. Climb up the stairs and follow the trail and signposts for "Ocean Beach". When you reach the main beach, turn left and walk along Palm Beach towards Barrenjoey Headland. If the tide is low or mid, do a two hour rock scramble all the way round the headland and finish on the Pittwater side, returning along the beach and back up and over to the start. If you aren't up to the rock scramble, take the steep trail up to the Barrenjoey Lighthouse, sit on the rocks up top, enjoy the views of Lion Island and beyond and return back down the same trail to the beach and back to the start.



[Wild Women On Top](#) is a community of motivated, energised women who lead healthy balanced lives by exercising in nature. Their passion is to inspire women to transform their lives through team trekking challenges. Their mission is to "transform 50,000 Australian women's lives with wild adventure by 2020".

The Wild Women On Top [Sydney Coastrek](#) is a 55-100 kilometre team trekking challenge to restore sight. It is held on the Friday of the first weekend in March along Sydney's stunning coastline. They provide trekkers with a six month training program leading up to the event day to help best prepare them for the challenge. If you missed this one you can join the [Melbourne event](#) in November.



Coogee Coastrekkers and an iconic Sydney view
Sydney Coastrek

Wolgan Gorge Adventure In The Gardens Of Stone Region Yuri Bolotin



The breath-arresting view from the tip of a long narrow spur above the Wolgan River is great place to take first-time Gardens of Stone visitors. It has always amazed me that this spot has no name, so I decided to do something about it. An appropriate name was elusive, then fate intervened and delivered. The following describes a trip in November 2015.

Despite the inclement weather forecast I decided to go ahead. Little did I know how hot and windy it would get. We left Sunnyside Ridge Road and descended a fire trail in a shady forest with beautiful flowers. The spur had a faint path to a narrow ridge, and we scrambled up many stunning pagodas there.

Gorges and Pagodas

The magnificent view included the sinuous Wolgan Loops and the wide, green expanse of the Wolgan Valley. This area has some of the best Gardens of Stone platy pagodas.



Platy pagoda formations at their best
Yuri Bolotin

We continued down the ever narrowing spur to its terminal point, joined by a narrow uneven neck, singularly beautiful in this area of scenic grandeur. The flat rocky platform was about eight metres wide, with sheer sides dropping into the Wolgan Gorge. The fourth side plunged to a razor-like 10 metre long spine connecting to a huge isolated pagoda towering over the gorge. We could hear but not see the falls; their top was about 20 metres below us. There were spectacular yellow, orange and grey sandstone canyon walls, a sea of sculptured pagodas, and a grand view of the Wolgan Valley.

Honouring Richard Green

I'd been thinking about this place for several weeks, and came here today to name it. Four months ago, I was here with Richard Green, an extraordinary photographer and staunch environmentalist. Richard used his helicopter to photograph remote Australian wilderness. He had been taken by the beauty of the Gardens of Stone and offered to help protect this region, becoming an Invited Photographer for the *Gardens of Stone: In Focus Photographic Competition*. He chose this location to feature in his photographs, flying over this area and later joining us for a walk down the spur. His photographs are



View from the first pagoda
Yuri Bolotin



The group at Point Green
Brian Fox

spectacular, and the small size of the one in this article (below) does not do it justice.

On 7 November 2015, less than two weeks before this walk, Richard Green, his wife Carolyn and film-maker John Davis tragically died when their helicopter crashed on a flight from Liverpool Plains, where they were making a film to help stop the Shenhua coal mine. I was, and still am, shaken beyond words by his death.

To honour Richard's extraordinary photography and contribution to the protection of the environment, I named this stunning place Point Green. The narrow, pagoda-studded spur that leads to it from Sunnyside Ridge Road is now Greens Spur. We had a small ceremony.

Stunning Waterfalls

Once down we left our packs at the bottom of the descent and walked to an area below Point Green, above Wolgan Falls. We returned to our descent point, a crack in the cliff, where a 15 metre tape just reached the bottom. Once down we left our packs



Above Wolgan Falls
John Fox

and walked to an area below Point Green, above Wolgan Falls. The view of the falls and the valley from here is phenomenal. We were about 40 metres above the top of the falls and about 100 metres above the valley floor. The edge of the viewing platform is sheer, so extreme care was exercised not to be tempted to lean out and see more.

“The view of the falls and the valley from here is phenomenal.”

With packs, we went on a wide ledge under cliffs that provided much needed protection from the sun. After a hundred metres, I decided to move to a ledge above us. This short scramble paid off quickly, when we came to a great overhang that featured some 150 metres of continuous high orange, white and brown cliffs on one side, expansive views into the valley on another side, and many interesting erosion residuals littering the crumbly floor.

We descended into the gorge and walked towards the base of Wolgan Falls in a green and pleasant valley. Several enormous Brown



Wolgan Gorge
Richard Green



Group under the overhang
Brian Fox

Barrel Gums were encountered, with one over two metres wide at the base. This valley was too inaccessible for logging.

As expected, there was a big drop, only 250 metres away from the Wolgan Falls. Progress was slowed by tiredness, the heat, enormous boulders, scrub, fallen timber, and thick ferns.

Eventually, we reached a landslide that had a really good view of the falls, but the heat and blinding light from the white rocks kept us moving quickly towards the water. The sight and the sound of cool spray so close within our reach promised paradise to our hot and tired bodies.

Wolgan Falls are at least 40 metres high and up to 20 metres wide, with plenty of water. They're a great sight at any time, but today the fine cool spray and the waist deep cold pool were simply irresistible.

Lunch was in the deep shade of giant boulders. With a lot of yelling and laughter, one by one, everyone went under the falling torrents. Well, nearly everyone, as some had to be encouraged into submersion.



Jafar and Lucy under the falls
Yuri Bolotin

A challenge

Whilst we were enjoying the rest, shade and swimming, I considered our next step – getting back. It was rather challenging. We were at the lowest point of our route and furthest from the cars. The shortest distance would be to retrace our steps. It had been very physically demanding in the heat going downhill, and with even higher temperatures than expected, it would be a lot harder going up.



Crossing the Wolgan River near the landslide
Yuri Bolotin

Alternatively, if we climbed 150 metres up the southern cliffs and walked 600 metres, there would be trails to the start. It was longer but it should be faster and safer than retracing our steps.

Within minutes of leaving the cool shade of the waterfall we were scrambling up a very steep and unstable slope towards the first line of cliffs. The bare rock reflected the intense heat, but even worse was the 45 kph wind that desiccated our bodies. When level with the top of the falls, we paused for a drink, then up and up we went, reaching the base of the first cliff. It was hot.

“Wolgan Falls were at least 40 metres high and up to 20 metres wide ...”

Several people were unwell; a few of them threw up. The intention was to find the best way through the cliffs. This was a new area for me, and was not easy. It helped knowing that this route is possible: Geoff Fox was here a week ago.

Magic secret routes

We came to a slot that looked doable. I was relieved to see that the ledge allowed us to break through the first cliffs, emerging on a dry slope leading to the second and last cliffs.

Suddenly, I noticed a hole in the rock. Geoff had mentioned going through a hole, and we headed towards it. This was the magic way up. A couple of scrambles, and the entire group made it to the top! We had another drink whilst taking in the fantastic panorama of the Wolgan Loops and Greens Spur.

The sun and wind were now merciless, preventing us from fully enjoying the view, and we moved up a spur with dense scrub and occasional pagodas. Frequent drink stops were needed. We came upon a very old fire trail and used it to walk to Fire Trail No. 5, which I was very relieved to see: at least the navigation would be easy.



Through the magic hole
Yuri Bolotin

The trail was followed down through the Spanish Steps, which have been utterly desecrated by 4WDs and trail bikes. Rubbish, car parts, an abandoned and burnt vehicle, and a deeply eroded track were the sad features of a formerly spectacular place.



Greens Spur and Point Green, the prominent spur with the block at the end.
Yuri Bolotin

Rivers and Wildlife

Luckily, there was enough water with us to share; it was hot. We trudged on, too tired to pay much attention, and soon came to a cool and shady part of the trail that follows a Wolgan loop. There were three river crossings, and at the first one we had a 10 minute cooling down break. Some people were now running short of water, but unfortunately the water in the Wolgan is polluted by the Centennial Coal's Springvale mine upstream and is not potable. Luckily, there was enough water with us to share.



Powerful Owl, *Ninox strenua*
Yuri Bolotin

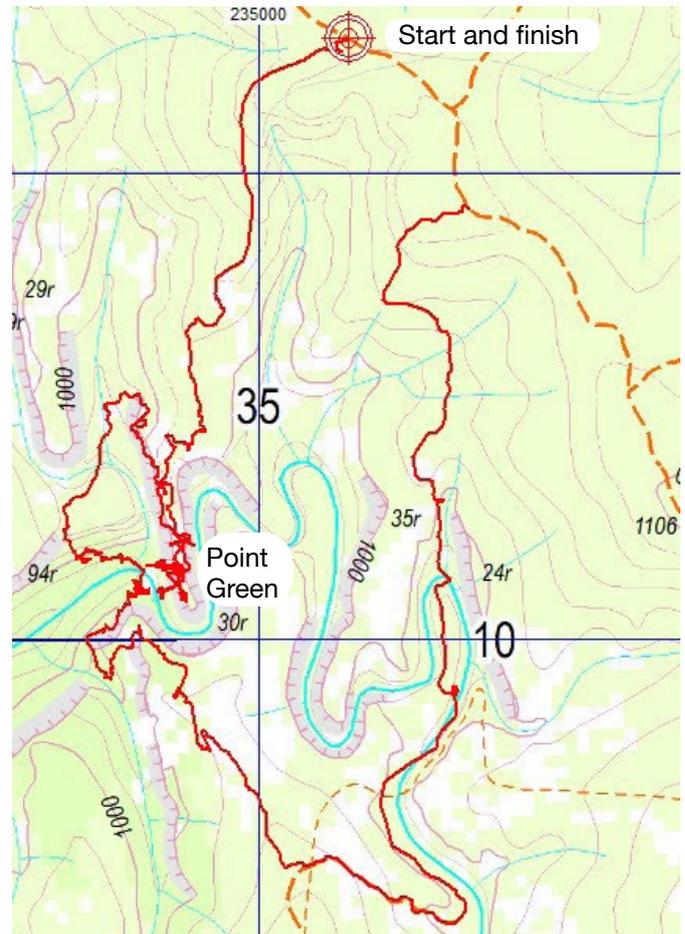
Just after the first crossing, we saw a beautiful Powerful Owl that flew across our track and sat 4-5 metres away for about half a minute, staring at us with apparent disbelief in his huge yellow eyes. At well over 50 cm in body length, that was the biggest Powerful Owl I've ever encountered.

After the last crossing, we walked slowly uphill. We reached Sunnyside Ridge Road after 45 minutes, over 100 metres of climbing and many drink and rest stops. Several people had gone ahead and brought the cars here, saving the rest 500 metres of walking.

It was a tough but interesting day, with many spectacular sights, but we felt quite exhausted as we paid the high price due to the extremely hot weather. I was very happy that despite the difficulties we were able to come to Point Green and hold a dedication ceremony to honour Richard. It was also very satisfying to observe the amazing level



of support, help and human kindness shown by all group members towards each other during the trip. Well done, guys, this has made all the difference! Next time, let's pick a cooler day.



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The square side is 1 kilometre.

This article is a short version of the [original](#).

Yuri Bolotin is an explorer, author and environmentalist. He is also a director of BigCi, Bilpin international ground for Creative initiatives, a non-for-profit organisation that provides support to Australian and International artists.

Yuri is part of the [Bush Explorers](#). This trio (Michael Keats OAM, Brian Fox and Yuri Bolotin) explore the Greater Blue Mountains together and share their experiences and discoveries through books, such as the [Gardens of Stone National Park and beyond](#) series (seven books have been published, with two more being written), and the [Wollemi National Park](#) series (Book titled *The Complete North-South Traverse* is out and the next book is currently being written).

Southern Shoalhaven Coast Walk

John Souter



The Shoalhaven is the most visited region in NSW and its long and beautiful coastline has always been the main attraction. So it's surprising how few walkers take full advantage of the multi-day, year-round walking opportunities on offer here.

Murramarang gulch

One such place is the Southern Shoalhaven Coast Walk (SSCW), a superb 55 kilometre, four day walk from the mouth of beautiful Narrawallee Inlet near Mollymook all the way south to Durras Lake, the Shoalhaven's southern boundary. The walk traverses thirty beaches of all shapes and sizes, numerous headlands and rock platforms, seven lake inlets, some delightful tracts of forest and heathland with only a negligible amount of road walking. At this stage it is more a concept than an official, waymarked walk. That said, a booklet describing 40 kilometres of this walk south to Merry Beach was published in 2002 and may still be obtainable. In any event, the walk presents no great access or navigational difficulties if you keep the ocean on your left!

It's a walk of two halves. The first few days you're never too far away from civilisation, mostly little coastal villages - so getting caffeinated won't be a problem - but as you head further south you traverse the largely unspoilt landscapes of Meroo and Murramarang National Parks where you'll experience a pleasing sense of remoteness.

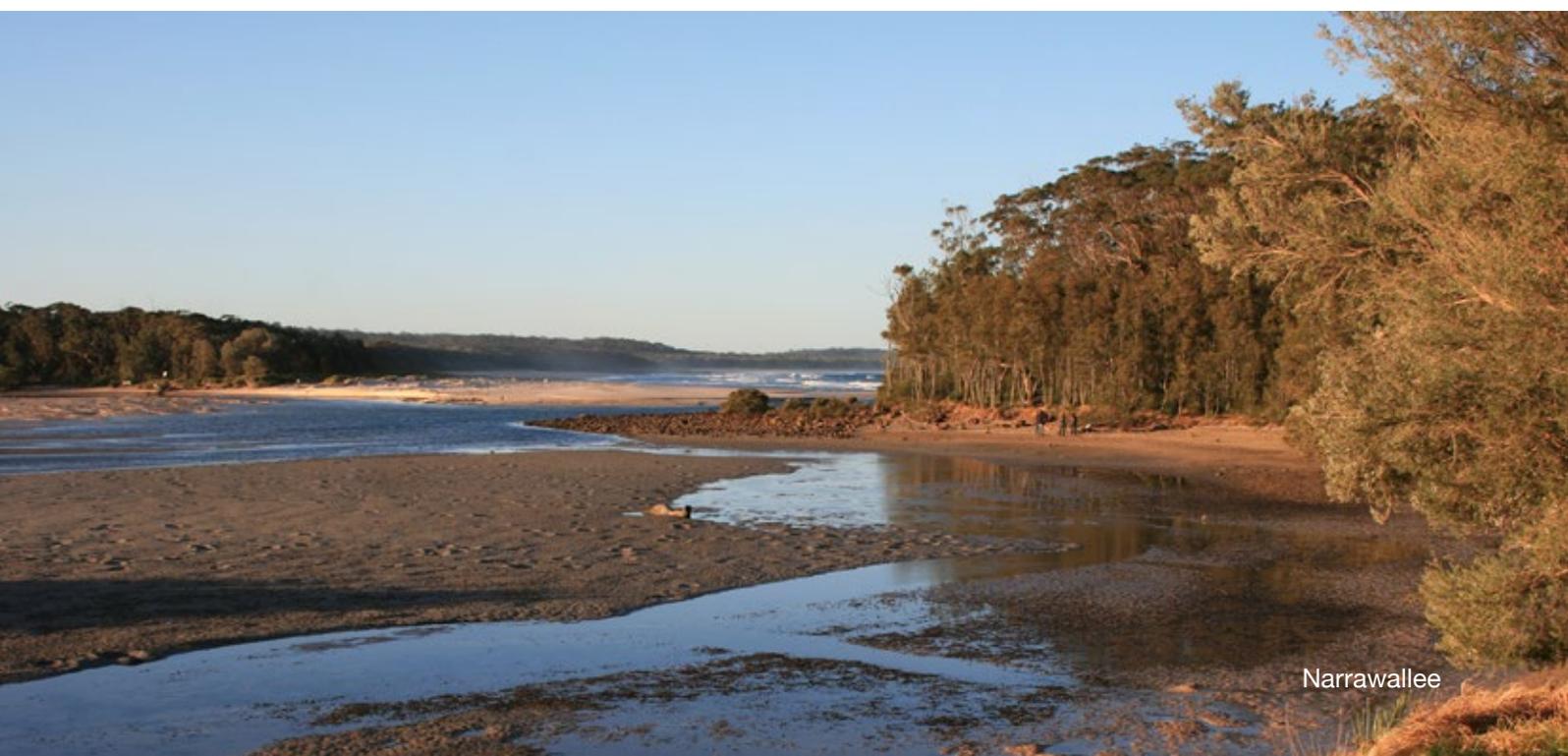
With two cars at your disposal, the SSCW is most easily tackled as four day walks, basing yourself at one or two places en route. Seaside Mollymook and Ulladulla or the lovely town of Milton just inland are northern possibilities, while Bawley Point or

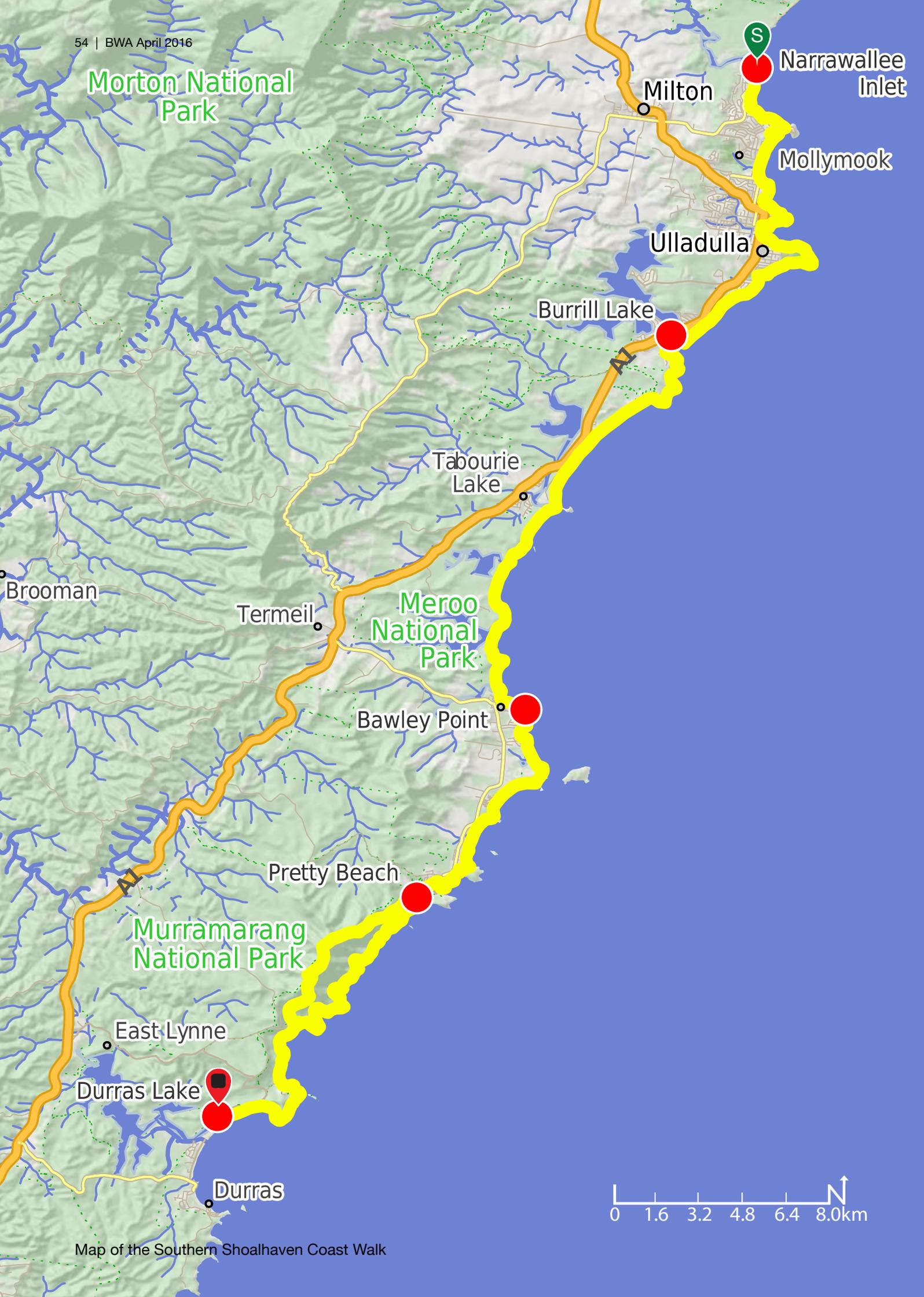
“ The walk traverses thirty beaches of all shapes and sizes ...

Kioloa, Merry, or Pretty Beaches are good southern options. Through walkers can avail themselves of the many beachside caravan parks and there's a free camping area in Meroo National Park. If you have an extra day or two, you might hire a kayak or stand up paddleboard in Ulladulla, visit some of the nearby wineries or head inland to walk in the iconic Budawangs. Shapely Pigeon House is the most accessible of the Budawangs peaks and makes an exhilarating half-day climb with a series of fixed ladders used to scale its upper ramparts. Named by Captain Cook but known as Didthul or Dithol (breast) in the Dhurga language of the Budawang people, Pigeon House is a natural landmark holding significant cultural meaning.

Day one - Narrawallee Inlet to Burrill Lake

After soaking in the views from the inlet mouth, it's a beach, track and street walk to Bannisters Point, home to Bannisters Restaurant run by celebrity chef Rick Stein. On the southern part of the point, a track leads you through a rare patch of littoral rainforest dominated by She Oak and Lillypilly. Walk along Mollymook Beach past cafes and around a headland to Collers Beach with its Bogey Hole natural rock pool. You'll soon reach Ulladulla Harbour's northern headland - make sure to do the One Track for All headland loop. Created by the Budawang Aboriginal Landcare group, it uses sculptures, carvings and signs to provide a confronting history of the area from an indigenous perspective.





Morton National Park

Narrawallee Inlet

Milton

Mollymook

Ulladulla

Burrill Lake

Tabourie Lake

Meroo National Park

Termeil

Bawley Point

Pretty Beach

Murramarang National Park

East Lynne

Durras Lake

Durras



The rock platform below Warden Head, the harbour's southern headland (negotiable at low tide), provides a wealth of mudstone treasures with embedded dropstones and glendonites and a profusion of marine fossils – crinoids, sponges, worm burrows, bivalves and brachiopods. There are also trails circling the headland above the cliffs. The lookouts near Ulladulla lighthouse are a prime vantage point for viewing the annual humpback whale migration.

Continuing south towards Burrill Lake entrance, you can explore the South Pacific Heathland Reserve, a hotspot for spring wildflowers and for birds; over 90 bird species have been observed. There's a caravan park near the south end of Burrill Beach.

Day two - Burrill Lake to Bawley Point

Cross the lake entrance (or detour over the road bridge if necessary), round Dolphin Point and Lagoon Head and traverse the walk's longest beach – Wairo – to reach Tabourie Lake Inlet, which can usually be crossed safely. Just off Tabourie Point, Crampton Island can also be circumnavigated at low tide.



Meroo Lake swans

The SSCW now enters beautiful Meroo National Park with its handful of golden beaches bookended by rocky headlands and backed by tranquil lagoons. Rock-hopping around the headlands is an option at mid to low tides but there are easy-to-follow forest track alternatives. The rocks at Termeil Point make for a fascinating geology lesson; seams of iron oxide criss-cross the softer stone like a chocolate box tray, sometimes empty, sometimes full. At Termeil Beach watch out for endangered hooded plovers

and at the delightfully-named Armchair Beach, just sit a while. Be sure to spend time on the wetland fringes of Termeil and Meroo Lakes where you'll likely see black swans and numerous migratory water birds. Nuggan Point makes for a great rest stop before continuing towards Bawley Point village.

Day three - Bawley Point to Pretty Beach

After two full days, today's walk is a short one. Follow the coast to Murramarang Beach and the Murramarang Aboriginal Area, a 60 hectare reserve protecting the largest complex of middens on the south coast, where a variety of stone artefacts and rare bone tools have been discovered. The area was a meeting place and burial ground, and Swan Lagoon behind the beach is home to the serpent associated with creation stories. Interpretive signs provide a self-guided tour, enhanced by views of Durras and Pigeon House Mountains and Brush Island.

More beach and headland walking brings you to Merry Beach with beach front camping sites in the caravan park. From here, a headland walk takes you over Snapper Point to Pretty Beach but it's far more interesting to rock-hop Snapper Point's rock platform, another geologist's delight. Pretty Beach, with its NPWS camping area, is the northern gateway to Murramarang National Park.



Spotted gum forest

Day four - Pretty Beach to Durras Lake

The best is left for last because the north Murramarang coast is the Shoalhaven's secret gem and this is one of the state's classic day walks! Depending on the tide, you have the option of sticking to the coast (pathless at first) the whole way or heading inland up Durras Mountain where the

views are limited by forest regrowth (there was once a farm on the mountain), before descending to the coast north of Pebbly Beach.

Staying on the coast, you'll reach unnamed little beaches, undercut rock shelves, narrow chasms and – south of Dawsons Islands – a fascinating stretch of rock platform: pocked, cratered, honeycombed and littered with dropstones. Between Snake Bay and Pebbly Beach you're back on a track, undulating through spotted gum forest and a series of rainforest gullies.

Pebble Beach is flanked by steep headlands and its grassy dunes are grazed by a mob of kangaroos. The rocks can be hopped or take a much longer road walk to Depot Beach, a tiny village enclave in the national park. If you want to break the journey, there's another excellent NPWS camping area here with cabins also available, but no shop.

Now for the grand finale: a low tide walk around the rock platform of the aptly-named (again by Cook) Point Upright, below spectacular, arching cliffs. Take great care as the rocks can be very slippery. At high tide or when seas are rough there's an excellent alternative, the Burrawang Walk over the headland to North Durras Beach. A beach

walk brings you to the hamlet of Durras North and the mouth of Durras Lake where the Shoalhaven coast ends and the Eurobodalla coast begins. But that's another story ...



John has lived in a village in Jervis Bay for almost fourteen years. His love of recreational and exploratory walking has taken him all over the Shoalhaven and surrounds and to many overseas walking destinations. With his wife, Gillian, he has co-authored three books on walking in Europe: [Classic Walks in Western Europe](#), [Walking in Italy](#) and [Walking in France](#). More recently they have written three local walking guides for Woodslane Press: [Best Bush, Coast and Village Walks of the Shoalhaven](#), [Best Bush, Coast and Village Walks of the Illawarra](#) and [Best Walks of the Southern Highlands](#).



Point Upright

Wombat Poem

Wombat poem as transcribed on the left hand side of the toilet block at Pelion.

As you splash along the track,
Eyes alert and ears pinned back,
You may have seen those queer square turds,
And thought; if not expressed in words,
“The stress of such a deification;
Baffles ones imagination.”
But it is not done to entertain us,
The wombat has an oblong anus.
So if your slumber is disturbed,
By cries and screams; don't be perturbed,
Eyes tight shut, teeth grit in pain,
The wombat's gone and shat again.



Two old fahrt Canadians in Kosciuszko NP

Pam Olson



Two summers in one year are better than one. For the past 25 years or so, during the North American winter, we have taken annual punishment holidays in the antipodes – Australia or New Zealand. Such holidays involved loading up our mountain bikes with camping gear and exploring back roads. They are called punishment holidays because we made ourselves ride at least six hours a day before allowing ourselves to enjoy some of the wonderful wines produced by those countries.

Snakey Plains FT, December 1999
Pam Olson

Part one: Bikes up the Dargals, December 1999

Since our first cycling trip to Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) in 1999, we have revisited KNP and the high country of ACT, NSW and Victoria a few more times. While cycling in the bush is great fun, as we have gotten older, we have found that cycling on the highways to get to the back roads has become increasingly scary because of the vehicular traffic. Since we are long-time mountaineers and hikers, a bushwalking holiday was an obvious choice.

Our introduction to KNP was during a bush ride in December

“... we felt like we were riding in glue.”

1999. Just before Christmas that year, we left Khancoban pedalling toward Cabramurra on loaded mountain bikes. We stopped at Bradneys Gap picnic area for a rest and to check our route. There was something about the road surface or our tyres that seemed to make for slow progress; we felt like we were riding in glue. One of our maps showed Everards FT joining up with Dargals FT then rejoining the road to Cabramurra. It looked like a more interesting route than the highway. Everards was steep and we had to unload the bikes and carry our packs up the steepest parts. The only thing more difficult than riding a loaded bike uphill is pushing it. We amused ourselves by trying to remember the words to Dylan’s “Positively 4th Street”.

The first night we camped on Everards Flat next to Khancoban Creek, a peaceful spot with a view of the cascade on Waterfall Creek. In the morning we filled all our water containers. Between the two bikes, we had about ten litres of water. Our intention was to camp in the snow gums and were not sure of the availability of water on Broadway Top. However, just as we got to a lovely camping spot, we could see dark

“The only thing more difficult than riding a loaded bike uphill is pushing it.”

thunder heads building so we beat a retreat down to the Tooma River. The river was fairly shallow and we could easily have waded across it carrying our bikes but foolishly, we did not cross. We were somewhat naive at the time about Australian mountain storms. We sat in the tent for about 18 hours listening to the rain and thunder.



Dargals FT, descending to Tooma River crossing, December 1999
Pam Olson

When the rain stopped, the Tooma was a raging torrent. There was no way we were going to get ourselves and our bikes across it. We looked at our 1:50,000 Khancoban map and saw that there was a hut and a fire trail about two kilometres in a direct line from our position. It took all day but, by ferrying loads, we carried our bikes and all our gear through Spanish broom, tussock grass, wombat diggings and creeks to Wheelers Hut where we camped. The next day, we followed Snakey Plains FT out to the highway and continued on toward Cabramurra. By the time we got to the Tumut Pond Reservoir, we had ridden off our map and realized the town

was up a long hill and that we were not going to get to the shop before it closed at 5:30 pm. But that is another story.

During our first few walks in Namadji National Park and KNP in early 2016, it took us a while to get used to the idea of walking along a road. In the mountains of Vancouver Island where we hike, sometimes there's a remnant of an old logging road, but more often, if there is a trail, it was built several decades ago by an outdoor club. In places, it might be a bit overgrown. Above the tree line, usually there's no defined trail but it is obvious where to go as the vegetation on the rocky ground is sparse and low growing. Large areas are often snow covered, even in late summer. By that time, the snow is well consolidated and makes for easy walking on the level, step kicking on uphill sections and boot skiing downhill sections. Ice axes are useful on Vancouver Island but for Australia, we armed ourselves with a walking pole each.

Getting used to walking through old pasture land took a while. When we had cycled on fire trails, because our focus was mainly on the road we had not been as aware of the surrounding landscape. When walking, one has time to look around without worrying

about skidding on a patch of loose gravel or avoiding a snake. The scarcity of trees on the higher slopes and ridges was somewhat disconcerting. The early white settlers were unaware of the long-term consequences that would result from the practice of grazing cattle and sheep on the sub-alpine and alpine grass lands, a practice that was carried out from the mid-1800s until mid-1900s when conservationists became concerned. Whereas Australia had to re-invent the idea of wilderness by turning old grazing areas into parks, there's plenty of undisturbed wilderness in the high mountains of Canada.

We frequently hike in BC's oldest provincial park, Strathcona Provincial Park, established in 1912 on Vancouver Island. Its boundaries were determined by what the members of the Geological Survey of Canada party could see when they made the first ascent of Crown Mountain. Since then the boundaries have been moved to accommodate forestry and mining interests and the Park has been fiercely defended by environmental groups

“ Getting used to walking through old pasture land took a while. ”



In the Dargals, December 1999
Pam Olson

to keep commercial operations out of it. There is a working mine within the Park and a ski resort at one edge. There are some hiking trails but much of the Park is untracked wilderness. The highest peak on Vancouver Island, The Golden Hinde (2195 metres) is within the Park. While its elevation is comparable in height to that of Mt. Kosciuszko (2229 metres), it is a more remote peak and to make the climb enjoyable, many climbers and hikers allow a week to do the summit and return.

The grid system used for Australian topographic maps was unfamiliar to me. In some 40 years of mountaineering

and hiking I have navigated using geographic coordinates (latitudes and longitudes). Canadian topographic maps have both geographic coordinates and UTM grid coordinates. While I am aware that many mountaineers use GRs, I had never bothered to figure out how to determine them. My GPS was preset to WGS 84. On an earlier trip at Tin Hut we met a walker from Albury who told me to set my GPS to UTC and it would save way points as GRs. Well that was easy. Then using my topo maps, I entered several GRs into my GPS to mark significant points along the routes we were planning to take. We did not expect that we'd get lost on the obvious tracks, but it is useful to know where we are in relation to other reference points.

“ I wonder if all those people going to the top of Mt. Kosciuszko think there is a paved walkway to the tops of all mountains.

While we were aware that thousands of people walk to the summit of Mt. Kosciuszko annually, we were a bit surprised by the crowds at Charlotte Pass when we were on our way to Mt. Townsend earlier in our holiday. Just as we started out, a group of about 30 teenagers surged along the track, herded by a few adults, one of who had a drone camera and was filming the expedition. One boy was carrying a cricket bat. We soon caught up to the group, at the Snowy River crossing where one of the herders had her first aid kit out and was tending to a girl who had fallen and hurt herself. We veered off the track and headed for the Twynams by way of Hedley Tarn. I wonder if all those people going to the top of Mt. Kosciuszko think there is a paved walkway to the tops of all mountains.

To be continued in BWA June 2016. Pam tells the story of their 2016 trip to Jagungal.

Pamela Olson lives in British Columbia, on the Pacific Coast of Canada. She began rock climbing and mountaineering in the mid-1970s and did most of her serious climbing in BC ranges during the 1970s to 1990s. Pam and her partner spend their summers walking up and down mountains on Vancouver Island where they live. During the winters, they try to escape to the antipodes for cycling and hiking holidays.



Sunrise at Wheelers Hut, December 1999
Pam Olson

Service To Bushwalking Michael Keats Receives The Order Of Australia Medal



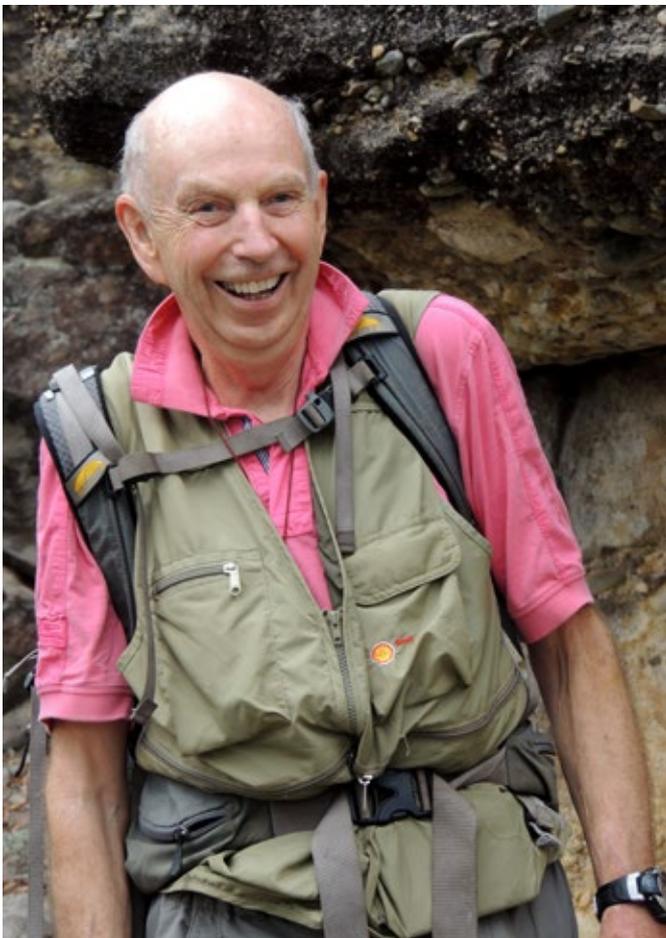
On Australia Day 2016 Michael Keats was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to bushwalking and as an author. This is an interview conducted by Bushwalk Australia editor Matt McClelland a month later.

Michael Keats at Hero Point
Yuri Bolotin

When did you get into bushwalking?

I grew up during WWII living at Balmoral Beach. In those halcyon days even getting to the beach was an adventure - crawling through coils of barbed wire. I would have been five or six. The adjacent headlands were then natural bush. Encounters with wildlife were a daily occurrence. Tracks were few or non-existent. Dad had a petrol ration so we were always going "bush". We would picnic at Oxford Falls, Turimetta Head and on school holidays go to Camden, visit the underground marvels of Jenolan Caves, or explore the New England Ranges. As a family we did lots of walking. It was unremarkable to be in what others regarded as outlandish places - we went where the spirit of adventure called.

I was 11 when we took the flying boat to Lord Howe Island for two weeks and 14 when I went on a student exchange to rural New Caledonia. Interest in walking became more intense when I was at Sydney University and used the vacations to be a mule for post-graduate field geology students, walking miles across the Central West.



Michael Keats

However, serious bushwalking had to wait until retirement, when I turned 60. In a self-interrogation a year or so earlier I reviewed the spectrum of what I had enjoyed most in my life to date. Bushwalking and chronicling activities topped the list. So bushwalking became my de facto occupation.

“... what I had enjoyed most in my life to date. Bushwalking and chronicling activities topped the list.”

What initially drew you to bushwalking?

I suffer from excessive curiosity. If I find something out of place, exotic or unusual I need to know all about it. What I love about the Australian bush is the huge diversity of everything, from the big picture horizons to the subtle nuances of individual floral speciation. When I encounter man-made objects I want to understand how and why and when. In this mode I become part detective, part researcher and then find myself seeking out descendants of the people who built or crafted railway lines, dams, stockyards, etc. Research is also a disease and knowing when to stop can be hard. Love of maps is another failing. My first book on the Lower Grose River was inspired by a first edition copy of the Kurrajong topographic map given to me by bushwalker Don Brooks. It was annotated with evocative notes. I just had to go and see for myself.

What do you now look for in a good bushwalk?

Diversity, challenges, the unknown, any factors that cause adrenalin to rush are essential ingredients for a "good" bushwalk. To plan a walk I take a topographic map and seek the area that is most crowded with wiggly topographic lines, then study the aerial photos of the same and see how much bare rock, deep canyons, slots and challenges are in that area. Then I concern myself how to get there. I am so fortunate that over the years so many like-minded adventurers have been prepared to come with me on the basis that it is an adventure and that we have no idea of what we may find. After the walk I enjoy the pooling of photographs and reliving the day (or days), as I document the sights seen and the emotions experienced. Then there is the sharing of the story with other walkers and non-walkers who would love to have been there. That is my recipe for a good bushwalk.

You have written more books than most bushwalking authors. Tell me, what are the books about and why did you write them?

In the world of work I always had goals, key benchmarks to achieve and time lines that were often ridiculous. I was also an innovator and dreamt up activities that drove the organisations I headed up. I guess a reason I wanted to write about what I saw and experienced was that nothing else existed. "Therabulat Country" was conceived because the area is so special. When it came to writing the first book I was very green. By the time I had the second one in concept form I was already organising a logical flow of the material - Passes of Narrow Neck. By the time of the fourth book, "The Upper Grose Valley - Bushwalkers Business," co-authored with Brian Fox there was a pattern to the work.

This process has reached its effulgent flowering in the Gardens of Stone series.

“... Gardens of Stone area. From the very first contact I was smitten.

What is it about the Gardens of Stone area that makes it so special to you?

Love affairs are always hard to explain to third parties. It is now ten years since I first went walking in the Gardens of Stone area. From the very first contact I was smitten. I had discovered pagodas, high level canyons and remote terrain that was relatively easy to walk through, and where the topographic maps were largely empty of any reference to human intrusion. This dry unique area was chock-a-block with all the elements that pressed my bushwalking buttons. I conferred with co-author Brian Fox and explained to him what I wanted to do. Fortunately he loved the area as well. My initial construct for the work was three books. This rapidly grew to five and now it is nine. The magnitude of the area and the wonders within it leave me astounded after every walk that there is more exploring to do and so much more to learn. The prospect of the coal industry wantonly seeking to destroy the area is like a third party wanting to kill your lover. You stand up and fight.

If you could pass one piece of legislation in NSW this year what would be it be?

An irrevocable law preventing any expansion of the coal industry, domestic or for export coupled with an open-ended financial requirement that every coal mining company and executive, past and present be compelled to pay the total real cost of restoring what can be restored and that the state work towards the expansion of solar energy and battery technology.

“Sixteen years ago I could never have imagined that a decision to embrace bushwalking would have led to such recognition.

Being awarded an OAM is a big deal and a real honour. I imagine that it changes your perspective and focus somewhat. Has your mission changed in anyway this year?

When the letter arrived in October 2015 I went into mild shock. The fact that it had to be kept secret until January 2016 did not help. What the wait did do was to provide time for careful and thorough thought about my role in bushwalking. Sixteen years ago I could never have imagined that a decision to embrace bushwalking would have led to such recognition. I also never expected to be standing up in front of Commissions of Inquiry defending the National Estate. Being an activist is a new mission. So much of our natural heritage it is at risk from economic, political and social pressures. I look around and find that there is only a handful of stalwarts to fight the good fight. My passion will not let me rest until the future of our natural heritage is secure.

“My passion will not let me rest until the future of our natural heritage is secure.

If you could encourage bushwalkers on anything, what would it be?

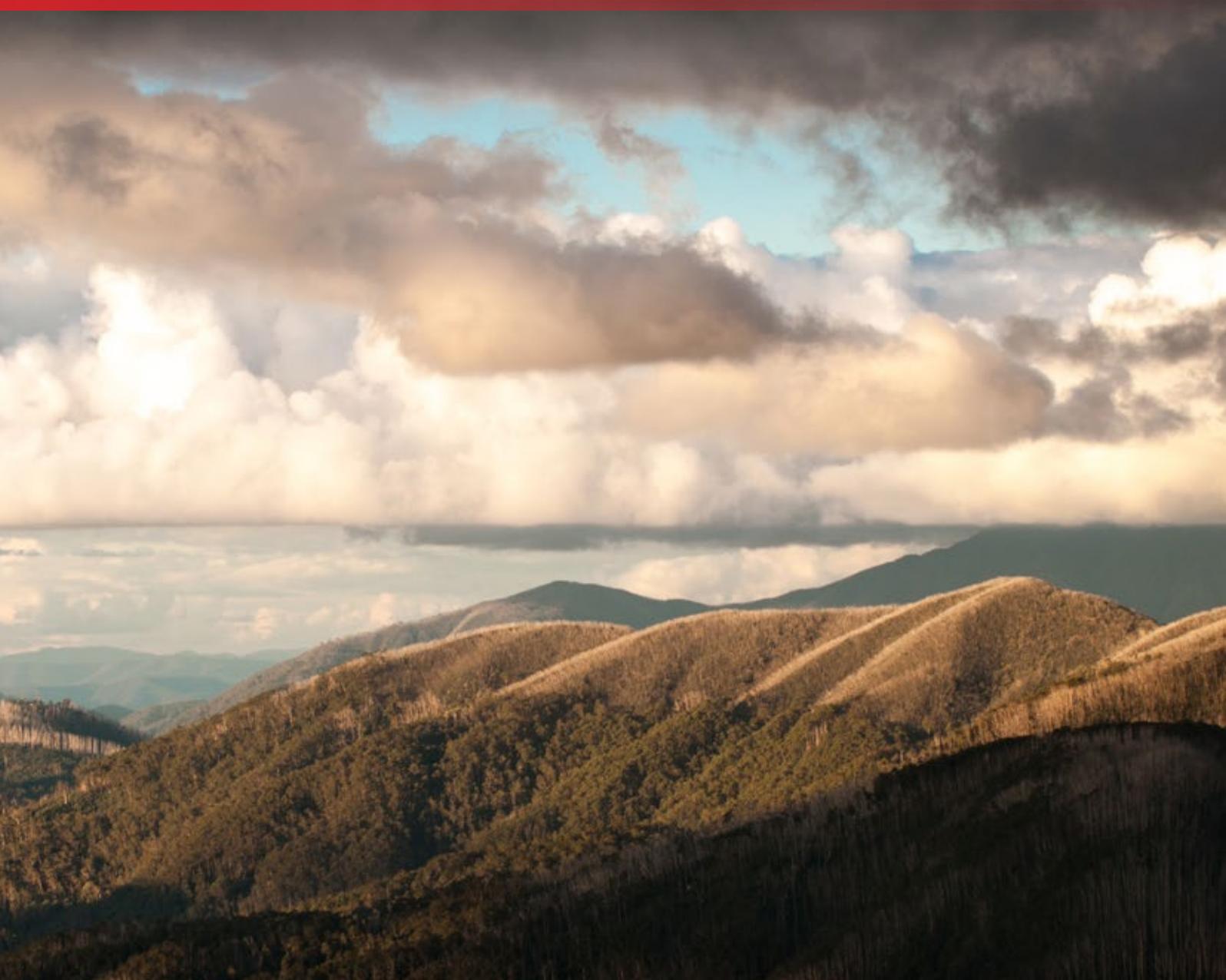
Nurture your curiosity, go bush, explore, discover, capture images, use social media to share, encourage others to venture forth with you. Use the political system to give the bush a voice. It does not have a vote unless you give it one.





Falls Creek to Hotham Alpine Crossing

Stephen Lake



The Victorian Government has a policy of establishing four “icon walks”. The first is under construction, in the [Grampians](#). When completed it will go from Mt Zero to Dunkeld, 144 kilometres. The [Great Ocean Walk](#) is another, from Apollo Bay to the 12 Apostles, 100 kilometres. The third is Falls Creek to Mt Hotham, 40 kilometres. The concept is nice but it does not always work. The following article discusses the Falls-Hotham walk and is based on the [Preliminary concept master plan](#) (“Preliminary Plan”). At present the Draft master plan will be available in September-October 2016.

Initial information

The Falls to Hotham Crossing is in the planning stages and it's something of a muddle. There's already a walk by the **same name** camping at Dibbins Hut and two nights. Using the same name has caused confusion in the bushwalking community, with significant differences in the two routes that are not clear enough.

There are two main public documents about this proposed walk, the [website summary](#) and the Preliminary Plan cited above. The Preliminary Plan shows a new track cutting Diamantina Spur a short way above the current start at the road, three nights and 40 kilometres. The Parks Victoria (PV) [website](#) says to go via Dibbins: "A permit is required to camp at the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing campsites." This is misleading. While you need a permit to camp at the camping platforms, you are still allowed to camp in most parts of the park without a permit, but not within 100 metres of these camping platforms.



Cope Hut campsite sign

Economic viability

The Preliminary Plan says: "The Falls to Hotham Crossing will provide demonstrable economic benefits". I assume this means they expect a reasonable return on the investment. I think this is presumptuous and should not be included. There has been no PV economic or cost-benefit analysis, so it's impossible to state exactly how much the walk will cost to set up and maintain. The main costs are infrastructure, maintenance and staff. It beggars belief that a preliminary cost-benefit analysis was not undertaken before the release of the discussion information.

I asked PV about this and was advised "The first step in determining an accurate economic analysis is the development of a broad concept (in this case, a proposed route) and test that idea with community and stakeholders." This does not make sense to me. It's very easy to do a cost-benefit analysis based on proposed options. I did this, took less than an hour. Why not do this before spending much time, effort and cost with the consultation process? One hour would have shown that the economics do not support the proposal.

My low figures are about \$1.28 million to build, \$200,000 a year to maintain and will attract perhaps 1100 paying visitors a year, a very high number. PV says that there will be no fees for other walkers. To see a return on their investment within 10 years this means that PV needs to collect \$300 per guided walker, camping on the platforms. When the costs of the commercial entity are added the total will be closer to \$2700.

I cannot see independent walkers paying \$300 or so to camp on platforms when they have happily camped on grass for ages with no fee. When you compare this to the expensive new Tasmanian Three Capes Walk – up to \$500 per person staying in high-class huts - you can see that this walk will cost a similar amount for camping. Many families and walkers will find this price prohibitive. Note that I cannot be sure of the fees as PV has not advised about them.

For just four days this is a lot, especially as the first day is quite short. Compared to the Overland Track this is hugely expensive.



Mount Feathertop



Diamantina Spur



View to Razorback South of Mt Jaitmathang



Tawonga Huts



Rocky Valley Storage



Wallace Hut



Diamantina Horse Yards



The Razorback



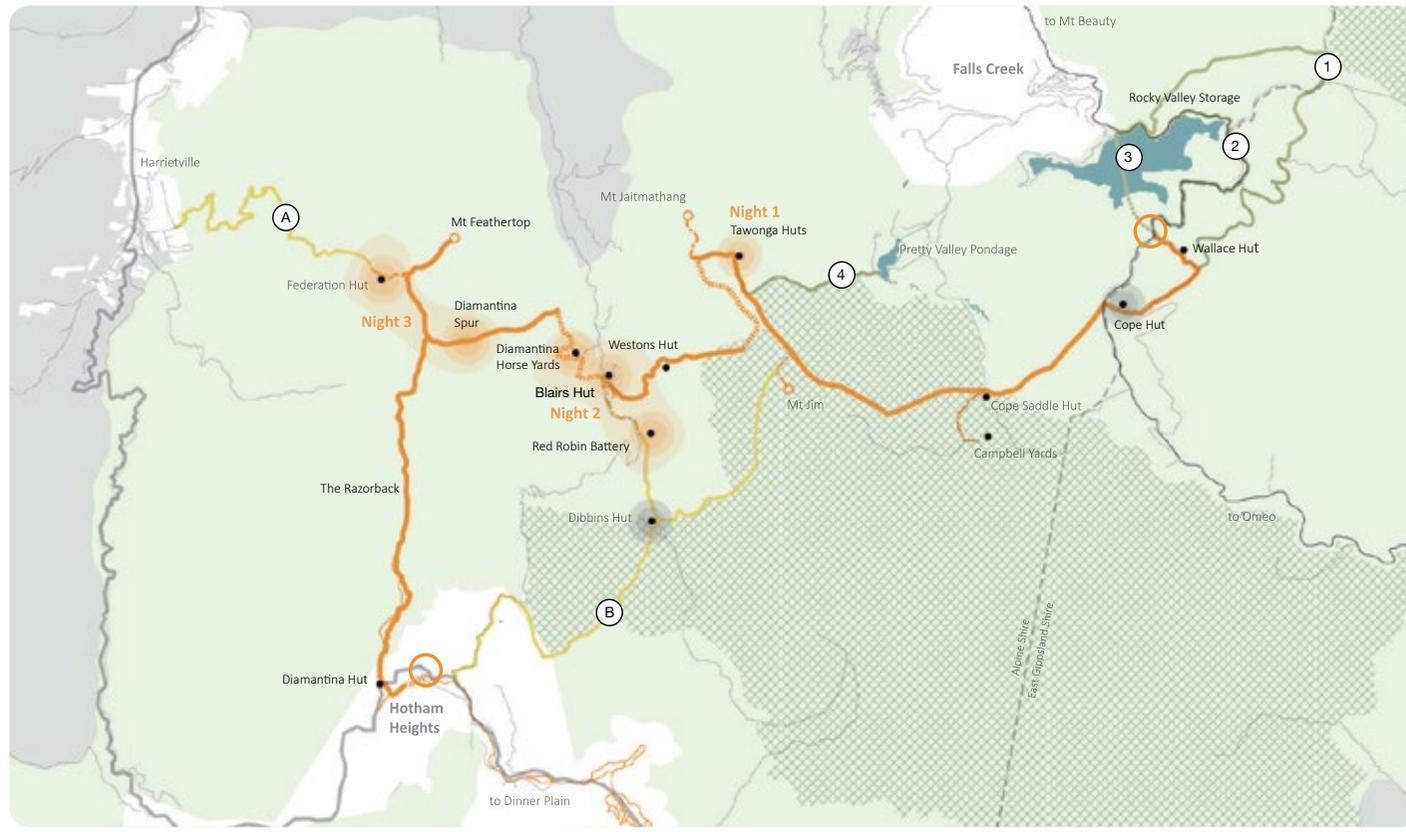
Red Robin Battery



Dibbins Hut Campsite



Diamantina Hut



Cope Hut



Trail East of Weston Hut



Blairs Hut



Bogong High Plains



Campbell Yards

Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Preliminary Concept



SCALE 1:100,000 @ A3
0 1 2 4km

Note: This is a preliminary concept for consultation. Detailed location of huts and assets requires confirmation with Parks Victoria. Further detailed design, alignment and planning approvals, including environmental assessments, a cultural heritage management plan and consultation with Traditional Owners, will be required prior to final selection of new track alignments and infrastructure locations.

- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (proposed alignment on existing trails)
- - - Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (proposed alignment on new trail)
- Trailhead
- - - Side trip options
- Alpine National Park
- Remote and Natural Area
- State Forest

- **Alternative Routes**
- A Bungalow Spur to Harrierville
- B Alternative option to Mt Hotham

- Overnight Stays**
- Core on-trail accommodation precincts
- Ancillary off-trail accommodation precincts

- Existing track
- - - Proposed track

- 1 Heathy Spur Track
- 2 Bogong High Plains Rd: Shuttle
- 3 Rocky Valley Storage: Over water access (includes walk along redundant bench track)
- 4 Pretty Valley Pondage walk

The Overland Track guided walk of four days is \$2350. The cost of a current guided commercial walk Falls Creek-Hotham-Feathertop-Harrietville starts at \$2400, with just four walks programmed between December 2015 and February 2017, maybe 40 clients. This is on the main pole line, easier than the PV proposal and includes Feathertop, yet they have very few clients. These figures support my view that the proposed walk is too hard and will not attract many people.

Any economic benefits will be tiny compared to the ski season, where more is spent at resorts in one day than will be spent by walk patrons in a year. In response to this point PV said “The specific economic benefits of any project cannot be determined until the planning and assessment stages have been undertaken.” Not so – I've done it. The government has cut back [PV funding \(vnpa.org.au\)](http://vnpa.org.au) and is unlikely to fund works or maintenance, which means that there could well be environmental degradation. Not good.

PV say that the economic analysis comes after the broad concept plan. This Preliminary Plan exists and it's possible to do an analysis. This analysis has been done and the broad concept plan does not work, too expensive, dreadful cost-benefit.

In mid-2015 PV said that the Walk Plan “will provide demonstrable economic benefits”. PV now says “The establishment of an iconic walk in the Australian Alps has the potential to bring economic benefits, as well as social, employment and environmental benefits, to the north-east and the resorts in summer.” Note the word “potential” - no guarantee. So in about nine months the benefits have gone from certain to potential. The process is being done backwards. PV should have made a proposal, done a preliminary in-house analysis and if the idea looked good, then undertaken detailed planning and

consultation. The economic benefits will be tiny compared to winter. Why bother? Is anybody listening? Apparently not.

PV says that “a thorough economic assessment and modelling of the environmental, social and economic benefits of this walk proposal will be undertaken as part of the next phase of design. It is not possible to accurately cost works and model benefits without a more developed design. The preliminary concept does not provide a sufficient level of detail to undertake this.” Accurate figures are not required - preliminary figures will suffice. PV has had information for three months, time enough to get a rough idea.

So when the Preliminary Plan says “The Falls to Hotham Crossing will provide demonstrable economic benefits”, or the latest PV view about the “potential to bring economic benefits”, I wonder about the significance of these benefits.

Environmental impact

The Preliminary Plan has a standing camp or hut at or near The Razorback at High Knob. The Preliminary Plan suggests there may be one or two campsites in two main areas, part of the way up Diamantina Spur or at Federation Hut. There's usually a lot people camping at the Federation Hut area - no more room there! The way the plan is drawn suggests that High Knob on the Razorback is also a possible site, although less likely.

High Knob is in a Conservation zone, defined as “Areas of high natural value where the emphasis is on protection of the environment.” PV says “The preliminary concept tests the idea of an overnight camp and/or hut on the top of Diamantina Spur below High Knob. It is a beautiful location that is already used by campers. This is not inconsistent with the zoning in the Alpine National Park Management Plan.” In my view the word “test” is spin. The



Preliminary Plan proposes a standing camp or hut. Sorry, it's impossible to reconcile a new standing camp or new hut within a Conservation zone. The very substantial upgrade planned for Diamantina Spur has been condemned: not needed, waste of money, and inappropriate for the location. Why not leave harder options for those that want them? PV says that all “normal planning and permitting processes will need to be adhered to in implementation. Works within the conservation zone are acceptable so long as they meet the requirements of that zone.” This is fair enough. But what if the hut or campsite breach the zone?

It appears that a driver for a hut at High Knob is to make the Hotham-Feathertop Walk more attractive for visitors to Mt Hotham who lack the wherewithal to do the journey without a hut. This hut could be far above a bush hut standard, more like a ski lodge. That is, High Knob would be a de facto extension of the Mt Hotham resort, privatisation and expansion by stealth. Walkers and skiers from Hotham would stay at this lodge. Current PV policy is that camping within 100 metres of the camping platforms is prohibited. If applied to the new High Knob hut or campsite, it means that traditional walkers would be squeezed out. But the Preliminary Plan does not state that a hut or camp will be built here, it's just a broad zone – the next phase will provide the specific site. What if a tent platform is built at Federation Hut? Free camping would be no more.

The logistics of supplying consumables and water for regular commercial parties at High Knob are significant. PV says that supplies to the hut or standing camp at High Knob are “likely to be a combination of helicoptering and walking in. This is a similar model to remote hiker camps on the Grampians Peaks Trail. No new roads are proposed.” That's a relief – no roads on The Razorback. Using helicopters is an ill-advised precedent. PV says “These are management issues which will be considered as part of the plans development and are consistent with the operation of other similar walks around the globe.” Surely our local zones and history have greater sway than what is happening elsewhere.

“It will be a challenge for many people ...”

Visitor safety

The proposed walk is dangerous. Diamantina Spur is a steep, mainly exposed, long climb requiring stamina and mental toughness that are not present at that level in most or all people who go on guided walks. In higher reaches the spur becomes more exposed as tiredness sets in. People new to bushwalking will be placed at risk. Parties that turn back will lead to a loss of reputation for Victoria: the trip was harder than advertised, did not finish.

The Preliminary Plan has three main proposals to deal with these risks. Firstly, the proposed new track at the bottom avoids the very steep lower section of the track, making the overall climb less steep. They will also “upgrade” the track, making walking easier, including steps and seats. Lastly, the proposed campsite about one third of the way from the top means that the day's walk is significantly shorter and the climb is reduced.

With Diamantina Spur in mind I asked why the walk was so dangerous. PV replied “These risks currently exist and are managed accordingly by Parks Victoria. The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing provides for both independent and guided opportunities, so visitors can work within their level of experience and capability.” Diamantina Spur is tall and long, ill-suited to guided parties. Why bother with the upgrades? What management? PV has missed the point. Encouraging people to go on a guided hard walk like Diamantina Spur is ill-advised and increases the risk. Those that can do it with a comfortable safety margin do not need guides. There are other popular walks like NSW's Six Foot Track with steeper and longer climbs that don't seem to cause much trouble for self-guided or guided walkers.

PV says “This is a complex issue and warrants a detailed discussion. The plan suggests that Diamantina Spur would be an exciting and achievable section of the walk if properly constructed with stonework and rest points. Importantly it creates the opportunity to visit Feathertop. It will be a challenge for many people, some of which may instead opt for one of the easier alternative alignments, loops or options that support the iconic route.” Diamantina Spur is quite nice the way it is. Certainly some parts could have

treatments to minimise erosion and the like. An upgraded Diamantina Spur is not needed to walk to Feathertop, a key fact that PV missed in the above. Dumbing down places will detract.

I asked about going via Machinery and Swindlers Spurs: safer and less cost. PV said “while the pole line may be acceptable for independent walkers, this route and the facilities do not meet the "world-class" standard that the current (walk) is aspiring to and which will allow it to compete with other iconic walks in Tasmania, New Zealand and overseas. PV considers that including Mt Feathertop as part of the walking experience is crucial in meeting this benchmark.” It's advantageous to compete on what we have that's better and different, not attempt to best other places. No amount of spin will vary the difficulty of Diamantina Spur. Why not go from Hotham to Feathertop?

PV says “Hotham to Feathertop will be any option as it currently is. But for those who are fit and capable and seeking a challenge, the iconic route which takes in Diamantina Spur will be an outstanding walking experience.” It already is an outstanding walking experience. More camping platforms mean that traditional places will be unavailable to those not using the platforms, and those of us who are used to walking this area will need to pay or find other areas to camp.

Summary and alternatives

The ANP Draft Plan and the proposed walk have insurmountable conflicts, although this makes sense because the first is a draft and the second is just a preliminary concept that once completed will advise the first. After all, that is why we have drafts. In my view, walkers will be placed at risk if PV make the changes proposed in the Preliminary Plan. The Walk Preliminary Concept Plan is economically, environmentally and aesthetically irresponsible, at odds with the historical use, and may not meet the zone requirements. Current users will be unable to camp where they have camped for many years, although to be fair I must say there is already a permit system required for two specific camping areas, but there may be three new campsites built. PV says “These are unsubstantiated, subjective claims.” I gave PV examples that substantiated my

advice, and PV did not reply. PV has not denied the above, and responses are still vague.

An easy solution that does not require much cost is to use the existing pole line or Machinery Spur. No new facilities are needed beyond maintenance on some steeper and wetter sections of the track. Why not put the walk here and assess the commercial viability? See if demand exists for a much harder walk up Diamantina Spur before spending \$1-2 million. Another option is to overnight at Mt Hotham and make the last day a bit harder: Razorback, Feathertop and Harrierville. This will show visitors what it's like on a high ridge and major bushwalking peak without the need for an abhorrent hut on High Knob, which we know from the preliminary concept may be unlikely. If tiredness or weather so dictate then walkers can go for a day walk and then be driven to Harrierville to meet those that walked to Feathertop and then down.

Another option is for a real alpine crossing – Mountain Creek to Harrierville. This will take in Victoria's two highest mountains over a week or so. While being slightly short to be described as long-distance, it's acceptable. It also has the advantage of a low cost to set up. The numbers on this harder walk will not be as high as on an easier walk, but the cost-benefit is greater.

PV should be emphasising the unique features of Victoria, not attempting to compete with other places. It's quite probable that if we attempt to so compete we will lose. Loss of reputation will take years to repair.

The region is well worth visiting and has much appeal. The idea of promoting it and bushwalking in general is good. More work needs to be done to identify a viable solution. My strong view is that the above criticisms do not reflect the dedicated and competent PV staff. If PV had more resources their job would be a lot easier. Funding cuts are taking their toll.

See a discussion at bushwalk.com.

Parks Victoria were asked to comment about this article, and were kind enough to respond.



Photo Gallery



Good morning Budawangs, NSW, Australia
Mandy Creighton

Competition: Other States September 2014



BWA Photo Competition

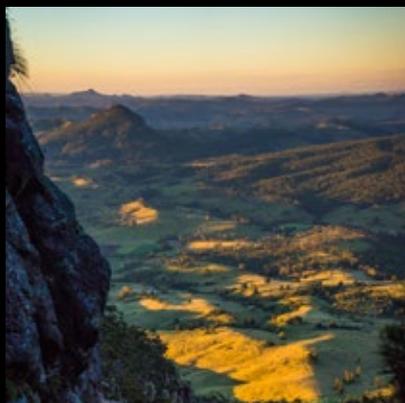
Photography is the only language
that can be understood anywhere in the world.

Bruno Barbey



Other States April 2015

WINNER



Maroon sunset
Cameron Semple



Stormy morning
at Boulders Beach
Lorraine Parker



Guess who's
coming to dinner
landsmith



Bundanoon Gorge
John Walker



Deep Creek outlet
Brian Eglinton



Sunrise over Thackeray
Beardless



Bushranger Bay
Graham51



Tasmania April 2015

WINNER



Evening on the Pieman
North-north-west

As part of the Tarkine in Motion event, I spent Easter around Corinna. This was on the first night there - just a quiet wander down by the river after the sun went down, trying not to get in the way of other photographers, videographers and artists. As an introduction to the special wild beauty of this area, it was the perfect moment.



Anne's breath
Andrew Smith



Rainforest fall
Tigercat



Lone Pine,
Walls of Jerusalem NP
Andrew Smyth



Landscapes April 2015

WINNER



The drowned land
Andrew Smith



Stars over granite
Cameron Semple



Tranquility before the
storm Lorraine Parker



Chink in the curtain
North-north-west



Resurrection Sunday
(or the stone rolled away)
Beardless



West Wall & Pencil Pines,
Walls of Jerusalem NP
Andrew Smyth



Discovery -
John Walker



Non-landscapes April 2015

WINNER



Pixie's Parasol
Julius River, Tarkine
Andrei Nikulinsky

Pixie's Parasol (*Mycena interrupta*). A fairly common find fruiting on dead wood in forests across Tasmania, the Pixie's Parasol is hard to miss, shining out like a blue beacon among the greens and browns the mosses, logs and rocks. This is a "focus-stacked" image of 22 exposures taken near Julius River, The Tarkine, during the "Tarkine In Motion" event.



Lunch time
landsmith



Lick that
Tigercat



The forest path
Andrew Smith



Day's end
John Walker



Climbing
Cameron Semple



Pencil Pine Forest,
Dixons Kingdom
Andrew Smyth



Other States

May 2015

WINNER



Moody Colo morning
Tom Brennan

First trip out after replacing all my camera gear that had been stolen. We did a hard overnight bushwalking and abseiling trip to the remote western side of the Colo River. Sunset and sunrise were fairly unimpressive, but I was experimenting with a new 10-stop ND filter to get the brooding clouds.

Canon 700D, 10-22 mm lens at 10 mm, 202 seconds, f/8.0, ISO 100, 10-stop filter.



Goomoolahra Falls
Cameron Semple



Lunch time
landsmith



Hoop Pine on the edge
Brian Eglinton



The Paperbark Swamp
John Walker



Tasmania May 2015

WINNER

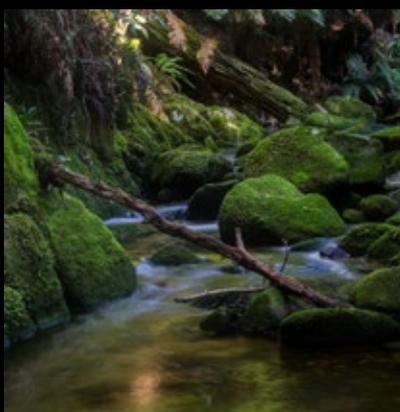


A-Dora-ble
North-north-west

Walford Peak. Three climbs, each with slowly improving conditions. *This* time I finally got the views all round, including down over Lake Dora to Spicer and beyond to Marble Bluff.



Featherstone Falls
Tigercat



CPL might help
Gayet



Landscapes May 2015

WINNER



Western
mountain morning
North-north-west

Returning from camp just above Walford Peak, the road slog along the Lake Spicer Track relieved by the kaleidoscopic patterns of the rocks on the track, and the drifting, lifting cloud hanging over Murchison and the north end of Lake Plimsoll. One of those moment of magic that stay with you for a lifetime ...



High camp
with woolly blanket
Tom Brennan



Myrtle Forest magic
Tigercat



Blencoe Falls
Brian Eglinton



Sunray fan
Gayet



Springbrook Canyon
moonrise
Cameron Semple



Swamp reflections
John Walker



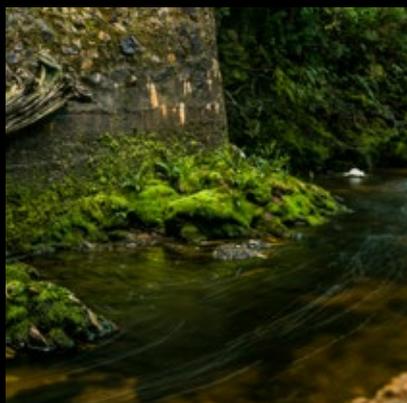
Non-landscapes May 2015

WINNER



Jenny Wren
landsmith

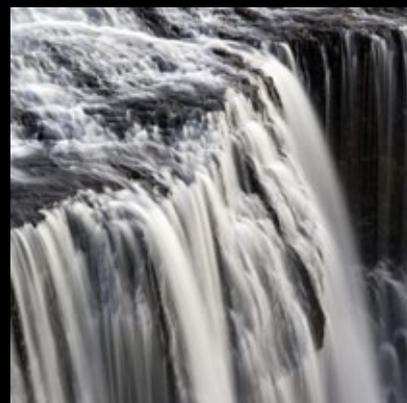
About once a year I go out with a birding group and we'd had the morning session and stopped for a cuppa beside some sugar cane field near Ulmurra in northern New South Wales. I'd finished mine and was itching to take a pic or two so I just started off with the Jenny Wren, a bird I normally wouldn't bother shooting. It turned out so clear though, so being a little short of pics for the comp, I sent it in. I was as surprised as anyone when it won - thanks to my supporters, whoever they may be!



The old Stitt River Bridge
North-north-west



An unusual encounter
John Walker



The Millstream
Brian Eglinton



Stranded
Gayet



Wellington ice
Tigercat



Yellow Faced Whip Snake
Cameron Semple



Gear Freak

About five years ago I purchased a Blackbird hammock, I now love sleeping in hammocks and can't go back to a tent.

Inside of the Blackbird Hammock
Matt McClelland

Warbonnet Blackbird Hammock Review

Matt McClelland

The best night's sleep I can recall in a tent was in a pine forest on a deep cushion of pine needles. I liked the pine aroma and the natural mattress was just divine. I was happy with my self-inflating mat and life in a tent was good until a walker informed me about his hammock. Okay, to be honest, it was less a general chat and more of a sermon from a convert, and there was real excitement about the hammock. The thing that was different about this conversation from most gear conversations was that it was about the concept, rather than the model or specific features that he loved.

I was sceptical. I sleep on my side, don't like to bend like a banana, and thought that hangers (people who sleep in hammocks) must be freaks. I was intrigued, so I tried one and in a few minutes, I too become a convert.

Why sleep in a hammock?

Let me explain some basics of hammock camping aka hanging.

Banana Back? In most hammocks you sleep on an angle off the main spine of the hammock, sleeping almost flat with your head slightly elevated, just as you would with a pillow.

You need trees? Yep, you need two anchors. Trees are most common, but sometimes large boulders can do the trick. The hammock is suspended with two straps, and cushioning to protect the tree. A tent needs flat ground, and where I normally walk there are more trees than flat ground. I have even set the hammock up over a small creek for a night, just because I could. Obviously in Australia we have trees that can drop very large branches, so you need to look up and take great care in choosing where to put the hammock.



Social? When walking with others you have the option to share tents or pitch beside friends. With hammocks it's not as easy. Most of my walking is solo. My kids (8 and 10) will top and tail in a hammock, but not for too much longer. If you are walking with ground-dwelling friends you tend to end up camping on the edge of the clearing away from others. It's possible to stack hammocks, but this makes getting in and out a bit of an exercise.

There are many other reasons I like hammocks, but that's enough for now.

Specifications

I have two similar hammocks, the Blackbird and the Blackbird XLC. Both have options in terms of the number of layers of fabric and its thickness. I tend to use the Blackbird for lightweight trips and the XLC when I want more space or for the kids to use.

Rather than going into all the details of each option, here are the specifications.

Weight	600-1100 grams (including straps and bug cover)
Weight capacity	90-180 kilograms
Ridge line length	250-280 cm (your sleeping area is less than this)
Materials	Base is a breathable nylon with a water repellent top

**Anatomy of the Blackbird Hammock
Main Body**

The main hammock parts are made from breathable nylon fabric gathered at each end. My XLC is double layered. This means that there's a second piece of nylon fabric on the bottom forming a pocket to hold a sleeping mat, which tends not to slide around. You can still use a foam mat between you and the single layer, but this tends to be a bit more fiddly. Instead of a sleeping mat, many hangers use an underquilt, which is often lighter and warmer. I prefer an underquilt to a sleeping mat, but I find the elastics that hold them in place annoying.

One thing I really like about the Blackbird hammock is that it also doubles as a seat. You can unzip the bug net and sit in the hammock with you feet on the ground, or turn a bit and recline. Great at dinner time and looking over maps.

The hammock is large enough, but not enormous. I usually leave my pack and heavy items on the ground below the hammock. The fly keeps my gear dry if it rains.

Bug Net

The bug net is sewn into the main body of the hammock and held aloft by sitting over the ridge line. While some hammocks have a bug net as separate item, I prefer built in, making it easier to keep the bugs out. The net zips open, so when the bugs are not around you can fold it back and enjoy the open air more. The net is black but easy to see through, and since the ridge line holds



Main parts of the Blackbird Hammock
Matt McClelland

the net up there's plenty of room for reading, getting dressed etc. The Blackbird XLC has the zipper all around allowing you to remove the whole net, but this also adds to the weight.

Storage Shelf

This seemed a bit a gimmick to me at first like pockets in the side of a tent, but I love it. A shelf is a bit of an overstatement; think of it more as an open and handy pocket near your head. Overnight I keep my phone, water bottle, shoes and snacks there. I loop my torch over the ridge line and keep clothes at the end of hammock past my feet. I also have a jacket in the hammock with me that I use as a thin pillow.

There are elastic guy lines on each side of the hammock that hold the shelf out making access much easier and keeping the sides of the hammock open. The bottom of the shelf is the main nylon and the top is the bug net.

Foot box

Again I thought this was a bit of a gimmick, but it turned out to be one feature I really like. The foot box is basically another shelf but designed for your feet. As I mentioned before, you sleep on an angle, partly across the hammock with your feet in the wide foot box. Sleeping at an angle to the ridge line means your body is mostly flat and you can sleep either on your back or on your side. If you want to curl up or stretch out that works as well. The foot box allows you to sleep on this angle with no pressure on the sides of the hammock, thus pushing your feet back to the centre, simple but clever.

Straps and set up

The hammock is stored and carried in a double ended stuff sac. There are a few strap options, but the simplest is a length of 6 mm tape with a carabiner. The tape is wrapped around a tree and the carabiner secures it. I usually add a strip of closed cell foam mat between the tape and tree for extra tree protection. The other tape is wrapped around another tree about four to six metres away. The straps then have an attachment near hammock to make it easy to get the tension right.

I find that the buckles are a little fiddly, and they need a bit of work to adjust. This preferable to them loosening overnight - not fun.

Hammock Options

Single or double layer

The hammocks have a single or double layer option. The double layer adds more weight but also makes it much easier if you use a foam mat under you. I prefer to use an underquilt, so I mostly take my single layer. My XLC is a double layer and also provides better protection from mozzies biting you through the bottom of the hammock in summer.

Straps

The standard option with the hammocks are the more adjustable "webbing and buckles" and the lighter "Whoopies with tree straps" option. Both work fine, I think at the end of the day it just comes down to how you prefer to set things up, but if you are new to hammocking I suggest the "webbing with buckles" and a couple of carabiners.

Blackbird or Blackbird XLC

I started with the Blackbird first about five years ago and the XLC was bought about a year ago. I have not used the XLC as much as I thought I would; I like the extra space, but it's much heavier. I use the XLC for lazy trips or for the kids to sleep in.

Quality and service

Overall I have had great service from Warbonnet Outdoors over the last five years. I've purchased the two hammocks, a tarp and a bunch of little bits and pieces. The latest hammock suddenly developed a very large rip on my first use. I believed it should be a warranty repair, and we ended up agreeing that I pay for materials and postage for the repair. I initially found it difficult to get a response, but they came good in the end. Other than this one negative experience I have had other positive experiences over the longer term, so I tend to think they are a good small business. Buying overseas has its risks and extra postage costs that are also worth considering.

In summary

There are lots of great hammocks on the market and some Aussies are also getting into them as well. I would recommend the Blackbird and the XLC to walkers interested in hanging. They have served me well.

“... Blackbird hammock ... doubles as a seat.”



11 Tips For Getting Addicted To Bushwalking ... If You Aren't Already

Caro Ryan - Lotsafreshair.com

Many of my non-bushwalking friends think I have a problem, possibly one that requires an intervention. Maybe you can relate to this particular vice or have sought assistance from it in the past, as it's something that affects your friends and loved ones as it does mine.

The stately Wentworth Falls from the National Pass, NSW
John Walker

Symptoms include, missing significant birthdays and weddings because they fall on a weekend (can't people get married on a weeknight?), wearing inappropriate footwear to the office because you're "breaking them in", and spending an inordinate amount of time with spreadsheets and a set of kitchen scales.

If some of these sound familiar, I regret to inform you, that you may be addicted to bushwalking.

It's true, other symptoms may be an increase in overall fitness and general wellbeing, reduced stress levels and the ability to cope with life's issues as your mental health improves.

As the experts say, the first step to healing is recognising you have a problem. So, to assist others, here's how I became addicted to bushwalking.

1 Learn that your adventure gland was not removed when you became an adult

Remember those games and stories you would lose yourself in as a kid? Playing Secret Seven or Famous Five with the local

kids in the street, building a fort or hut in the bush and imagining you were shipwrecked on an island like Swiss Family Robinson? Bushwalking gives you permission to have these types of adventures as adults, in the bush, navigating, solving problems, relying only on yourself and friends.

2 Realise that exercising is incidental to the wonders around you

I don't know about you, but I was not a sporty kid. Participating in team sports at school was not enjoyable as I felt un-co and as the fat kid, was the last one picked for the team. If I was ever going to have a higher rate of fitness than my parents, I was going to have to find an exercise that I enjoyed. Or go bushwalking, where exercise happens on the way to somewhere else, whilst having an adventure (see point 1).

3 Join a club ... or four

I confess, there was a time in my life when I belonged to four bushwalking clubs*. Every club is different and has its own style of walks and demographics that it attracts, but the key benefit is discovering new areas to walk in and opening up your own knowledge of what's available outside your front door.



Yes, I know clubs aren't for everyone, but there's other options these days such as MeetUp groups and simply your own Facebook page for finding like-minded friends to share time in nature. *now just one!

4 Plan for your personal Everest

When Matt McClelland, Geoff Mallinson and I put together the [Six Foot Track website](#) and [Facebook page](#) a few years back, we didn't do it because it was our favourite walk. In fact, only recently, I found myself speaking with someone who was being apologetic to me about how they didn't like the track, thinking that he would offend me. He was relieved to learn that I didn't much like it either (especially day two). The truth is, that trips like the Six Foot Track are "someone's Everest", and we wanted to encourage and inspire people to set achievable goals to work towards. Bushwalking is a great way of starting small and building up your skills and fitness to be able to take on ever bigger challenges.

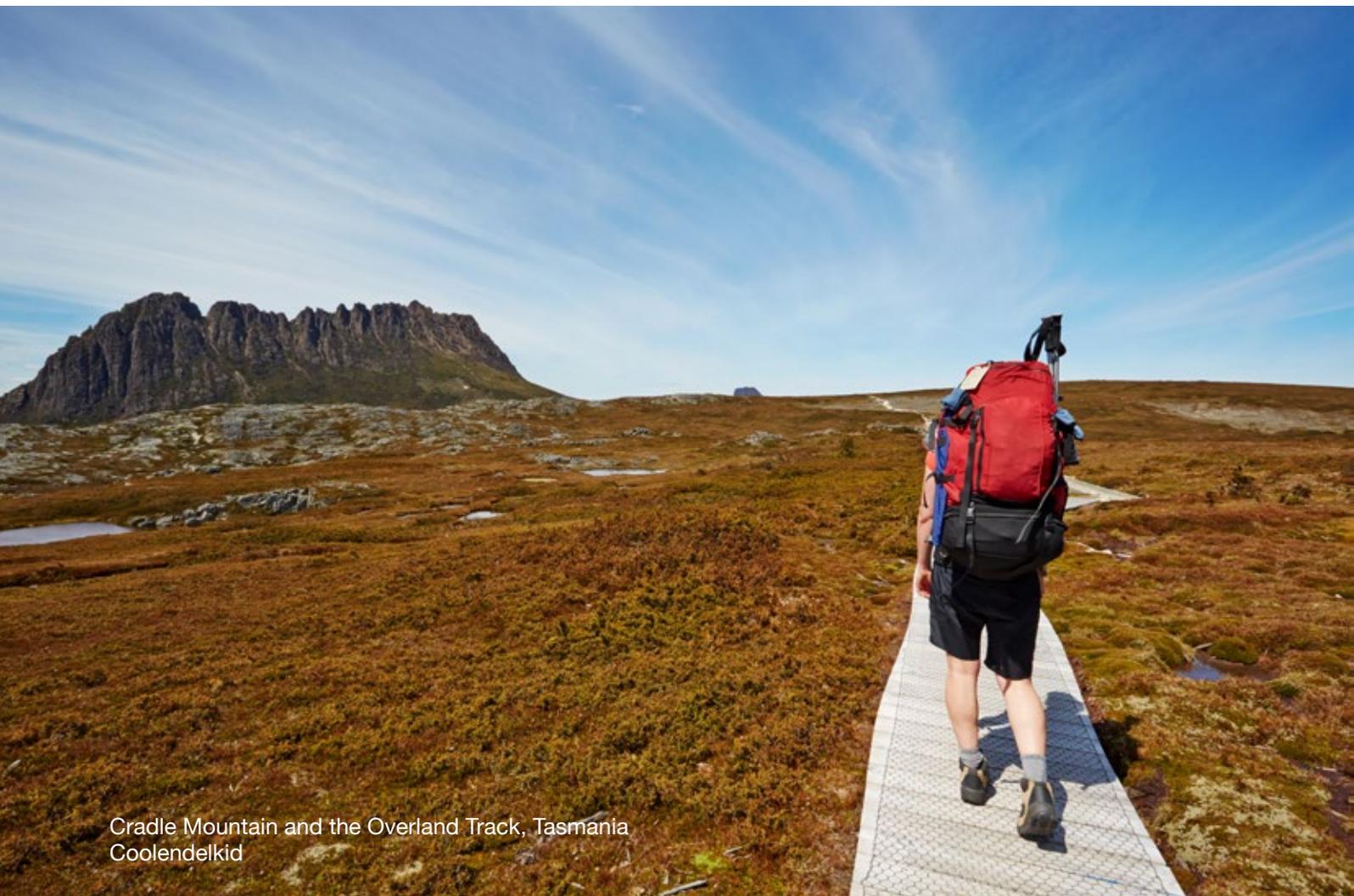
5 It's a great way to become "a finisher"

I started so many things in my youth. Ballet, physical culture, flute lessons, piano lessons, drama club and wait for it ... synchronised

swimming. Apart from the piano, I pretty much gave up on everything after a few terms and quit. Generally speaking, quitting isn't an option when it comes to being half way through a bushwalk. If you're at the bottom of the infamous Perrys Lookdown in the Grose Valley and you have 600 metres of ascent in front of you, within one kilometre of distance to get to your cars after already walking 20 kilometres, then you learn pretty quickly to find that place, deep inside yourself where you just get on and suck it up ... Princess.

6 Feel the wonder of something bigger than yourself

There's something about big skies ... And small mosses ... And singing creeks and the whistle of wind in the casuarinas. Of the first time you see a Wedge Tailed Eagle take flight in front of you, soaring on thermals below you or follow a friendly lyrebird along a track, with full tail display. Or waking in the night, on top of a mountain, to wonder at the satellites and stars overhead, maybe catching a glimpse of the International Space Station and whispering a quiet hello to the people living within.



Cradle Mountain and the Overland Track, Tasmania
Coolendelkid

7 Slow down to the pace of life

Any teacher of meditation will tell you that developing an awareness of your breath and being aware of its rhythm, is the starting point to meditation. The art of walking takes this a step further by creating another rhythm, similar to an ancient chant, that helps us focus on being present, rather than letting our minds scurry and dash, filled with myriad issues and conversations (never had and never to have). When walking in nature our pace is ordered and when in tricky off-track areas, the ability to keep our minds on the job is often the key to staying safe.

8 Become aware of your stuff

Although there's probably a bit of a gear freak in all of us, being able to live well out of a backpack for extended periods of time (or even just a weekend) is a wonderful way of realising how much stuff we have in our homes. Stuff we often unconsciously buy and accumulate, keep for just in case and then surround ourselves with. We may even come to the conclusion that stuff has a weight to it that can't be measured in grams or kilograms, yet we assume it brings us happiness.

9 Connect with people

In our busy lives where catching up with someone can be a 140 character SMS or simply liking their Facebook post, the bush and it's quiet allows us to get back to real conversations. It gives us time to ask real questions and not rush to assume the answer, just so we can say the next important thing on our mind. It helps us learn to listen again and to really hear.

10 Try something different

I had a backyard camp dinner with friends last week. We brought our camp stoves and favourite hiking recipe to cook up and share ... In suburbia. It allowed us to share the experience with non walking friends and have some laughs along the way. Micro Adventures can happen any day, not just on the weekend, so check out the [Micro Adventures site](#) for some inspiration.

11 Find your tribe

And when it's all said and done, feel the connection to millions of people, all around the world (and your city) who have discovered a way of life and feel the same way as you.



Hiker crossing a river
Jens Ottoson

Bushwalking Booms as Participation Nearly Doubles

Matt McClelland



Interesting consumer research has found the number of Australians going bushwalking has risen significantly in the past five years.

Large group climbing Mt Maroon
Thomas Hansson

Roy Morgan Research findings show that between October 2010 and September 2015, the proportion of the population over the age of 14 who reported going bushwalking at least occasionally has almost doubled from 15.6 percent to 27.3 percent – a total of 5.3 million Australians. That is a lot of people.

The information was gleaned by a survey conducted by the reputable consumer research organisation, which asked respondents about how often they go bushwalking, and what they did on their last holiday.

Self-reported regular or occasional bushwalkers were shown to be more likely to visit wilderness locations, as well as undertake other outdoor adventures. I got in touch with researchers at Roy Morgan and they kindly provided state-specific information that shows South Australia saw the greatest increase in bushwalkers over the period, while Tasmania has the highest rates of participation overall.

Most importantly, it seems the trend towards an increasing interest in bushwalking holds true across the country.

From personal experience near my NSW home, I've seen walks increase in popularity in recent years, with one route in particular jumping from up to 15 walkers on a good Saturday to now closer to 80. There have also been some incredible increases in the number of people on a few specific walks in Royal National Park, but these are big outliers and unsustainable increases rather than the slow and steady growth we might hope for.

This growth is also visible online and in community groups that are closely affiliated with bushwalking. I've seen a clear increase in participation in recent years on Bushwalk.com and Wildwalks.com.

But this seems to be leading to more people being underprepared for their adventures. I've come across more walkers without an



Bushwalkers fording a cold river
Dudarev Mikhail

adequate map or relevant details for their walk. This is a worrying trend and I hope that as more experienced members of the bushwalking community we can assist beginners whenever and wherever they need the help. Adequately equipping beginner walkers should be a priority, not only for their health and safety, but also to try and minimise their impacts on the parks, tracks, flora and fauna.

Related industries to benefit

The overall result of this increase in bushwalking participation will have knock-on effects for the businesses that are closely related to the activity, especially for information services such as [Wild](#).

Cafés and other businesses near walking tracks should also enjoy an increase in walkers, which would be a great win for the edge

of suburbs. Hopefully the number of people enjoying a day walk will also graduate into multi-day hikes, and they'll do so with the help of guides and tour operators. This is the good news Roy Morgan Research wants to communicate, with group account director, Angela Smith saying the apparent boom in bushwalking represents "a wonderful opportunity for savvy tourism operators and destination marketers".

"Not surprisingly, destinations offering scenic wilderness hold greater appeal for hikers and bushwalkers than for the average Australian considering a holiday. When asked where they'd like to visit, this group showed an above-average preference for unspoiled regions such as Freycinet National Park, the Flinders Ranges, Cradle Mountain and Lord Howe Island," she said.

If this graduation process occurs then the adventure-specific retailers and clubs should also start to see a marked increase, but it may be too early to see these effects taking place. Also, given the popularity of online retail and community groups, the benefit to traditional organisations will no doubt be a little muted.

“... destinations offering scenic wilderness hold greater appeal for hikers and bushwalkers than for the average Australian considering a holiday.”

We need to be careful that we don't love these special places to death. Hopefully the most significant change will be for parks and reserve management, otherwise the increase in participation will have adverse impacts on the environment. In NSW, we have seen some walks become over-the-top popular, going from just a few walkers per day to sometimes as much as 1000. Many of these bushwalkers are inexperienced and not aware of potential risks to themselves and the bush. This is not the norm, but show the impact social media can have in encouraging people to adventure, a lesson and warning.

Keeping bushwalking on track

Since we are now talking about nearly 30 percent of the population participating in bushwalking (more than golf, competitive sports, and cycling) it is time to start doing some solid research.

We need to better understand where people are walking, how they use the track networks, how often they return, walking speed, direction of travel, group sizes and so on. Much of this is easy data to collect and will help in better planning, equipping and promotion.

If we can better understand how people are using walking tracks now, I am confident that we can plan for a future where even more people are walking, where we maintain a sense of wilderness and look after these precious areas. To do this we need to stop making assumptions and get some real data that can inform planning.

Unlike golf and cycling, the cost of entry to bushwalking on most popular short walking tracks is much lower. Gear suppliers have done a wonderful job at producing light-weight gear for experienced walkers. A challenge for the industry will be to find ways to provide products and services of interest to all these new bushwalkers, again the challenge would be made easier if we can better understand how, when and where these people are walking.

In the meantime, at least we know our national pastime is more popular than ever.

A version of this article first appeared in [Wild](#) magazine.



In the News

82 Summits In 61 Days, Ueli Steck Tests His Endurance In The Alps



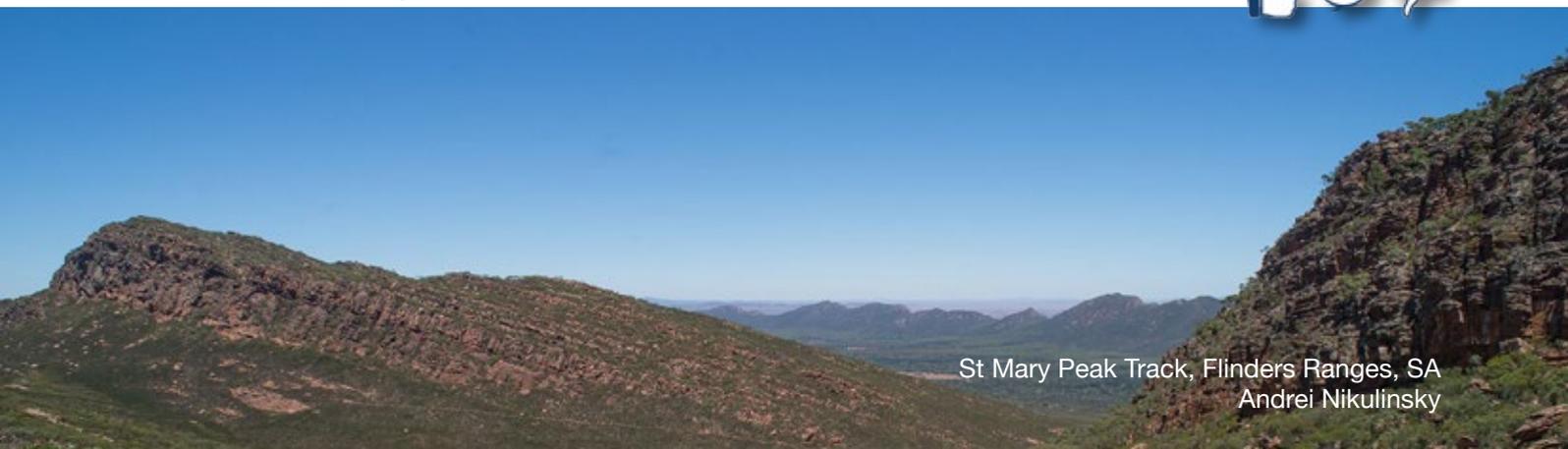
In 2015 a renowned and respected climber Ueli Steck decided to take on a very special challenge. He planned to climb 82 summits of 4000 metres or above in the European Alps in 80 days, but he did it in 61. He didn't use any cars, lifts, just his own strength from start to finish.

He filmed a four part series The Classic Alpinist on his journey and you can watch it all [here](#), link to the other parts of the series top right on the website.

Renaming of Flinders Ranges National Park

On Friday, 12 February 2016, the Flinders Ranges National Park officially became Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park. The additional word Ikara represents a traditional Aboriginal word for the area.

An Adnyamathanha word, Ikara, means “meeting place”, reflecting the traditional name for Wilpena Pound — a natural amphitheatre of mountains forming one of the most prominent features of the Ranges. Read more [here](#).



The NSW Biodiversity Legislation Review: Where It Came From And Where It's Going Next

Oisín Sweeney

New South Wales is about to make sweeping changes to environment legislation that environment groups believe open the door to renewed land clearing and will place further pressure on beleaguered native species and ecosystems. Dr Oisín Sweeney of the National Parks Association of NSW explains.

A root and branch review

In 2014 then Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Rob Stokes, initiated a review (“the review”) of four pieces of legislation related to biodiversity in NSW. The four-person review panel was chaired by Neil Byron of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists and included Hugh Possingham (also of the Wentworth Group), Wendy Craik (Charles Sturt University) and John Keniry (Natural Resources Commission). The review produced 43 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the government just days before the last NSW election. And just three days before the election, the NSW Government also signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with NSW Farmers that committed the NSW Liberals and Nationals to “enhancing the State’s biodiversity for the benefit of current and future generations” and developing “a new Biodiversity Conservation Act which takes an outcomes-focused and evidence-based approach to biodiversity”.. As will become clear, environment groups do not believe the new Act will deliver on this commitment.

What are the major changes from the old system?

1 The Native Vegetation Act 2003

The most dramatic (and contentious) change is the repeal of the Native Vegetation Act 2003 (NV Act). The introduction of the NV Act was the first time that NSW had successfully managed to reduce broad-scale land clearing. A [report by WWF](#) calculated that approved clearing fell quickly from 88,000 hectares per year on average, to just 911 hectares. And, at a conservative estimate, the NV Act saved the lives of 53,000 native mammals per year. Furthermore, the money available for farmers to conduct on-ground environmental works went from \$18 million in 2002-03 to \$118 million in 2004-05¹. The implementation of the NV Act was heavily influenced by the Wentworth Group and, crucially, had the support of the NSW Farming Association and the broader community.

The Government is gambling that the focus on private land conservation incentives in the new Biodiversity Conservation Act will avoid

a reversion to broad-scale land clearing. Environment groups are not convinced because the money’s not yet in place and this strategy relies on ongoing government funding. Recent vacillating government policy on native vegetation in Queensland has been an [environmental disaster](#).

2 Offsetting

The review recommended an expansion of offsetting to apply it to all types of development. A biodiversity offset is when the impact on a species or ecosystem by a development is mitigated by the protection of a similar species or ecosystem elsewhere. Although offsetting is generally supported as a last resort option by environment groups so as to achieve no net loss of habitat, there are major issues associated with it. These include the implicit assumption that it’s possible to recreate nature; difficulties in calculating baselines and benefits; difficulties in designing effective offsets and time lags between replacing the lost biodiversity with the offset which may negatively affect species—such as for hollow-dependent species for example.

One of the key foundations of offsetting is the concept of “like for like”. That is to say the habitat secured (the offset) should be the same as the habitat lost by development. The absence of an available like for like is most likely to occur in the case of rare species or ecological communities, and therefore a “red flag” situation should occur: the development is refused. So it is a major source of concern that the review states “the [offsets] fund should only move to a broader suite of offsetting options where like-for-like offsets are not available”. In the absence of any ecological relevance, offsetting moves from a last resort to a con. It simply [facilitates development](#) with a high environmental cost to proceed.

Offsetting is also deeply flawed in urban areas, as the offset will almost certainly occur a long way from the development. This renders the offset useless for the native species and the human community affected by the development. In urban areas, where green space is already at a premium, those affected will see trees and parks removed for development and offset in peri-urban areas

where space is available to secure an offset. This happened recently in the case of the [fig trees in Randwick](#).

3 Climate change

The review was remarkably quiet on the subject of climate change, in particular, regarding the interaction between climate change and land-clearing. This is a major concern because farmers will bear the brunt of climate change more than most as conditions become hotter, dryer and more unpredictable. Besides [contradicting the Federal policy](#) of reducing emissions from retaining native vegetation (the Emissions Reduction Fund has spent \$673 million on carbon from avoided clearing²), research demonstrates that past land clearing has made south-eastern Australia [drier and hotter already](#). Neither farmers nor the wider community can afford for the new Act to ignore climate change.

So what happens next?

After having provided detailed analysis of the review and consulted for over eight months, environment groups walked away from consultations in mid-February. This hasn't been the only fall-out: Neil Byron resigned from the Wentworth Group shortly after the review was published. Remember that phrase "evidence-based"? Well, it wasn't. No matter what input was provided, it was apparent that the new legislation was pre-determined to suit some extreme elements

of the Government. The groups have since formed an alliance called [Stand Up For Nature](#), and will redirect their time and resources to informing the community of the inadequacy of the legislation in order to put pressure on more moderate MPs.

How you can help

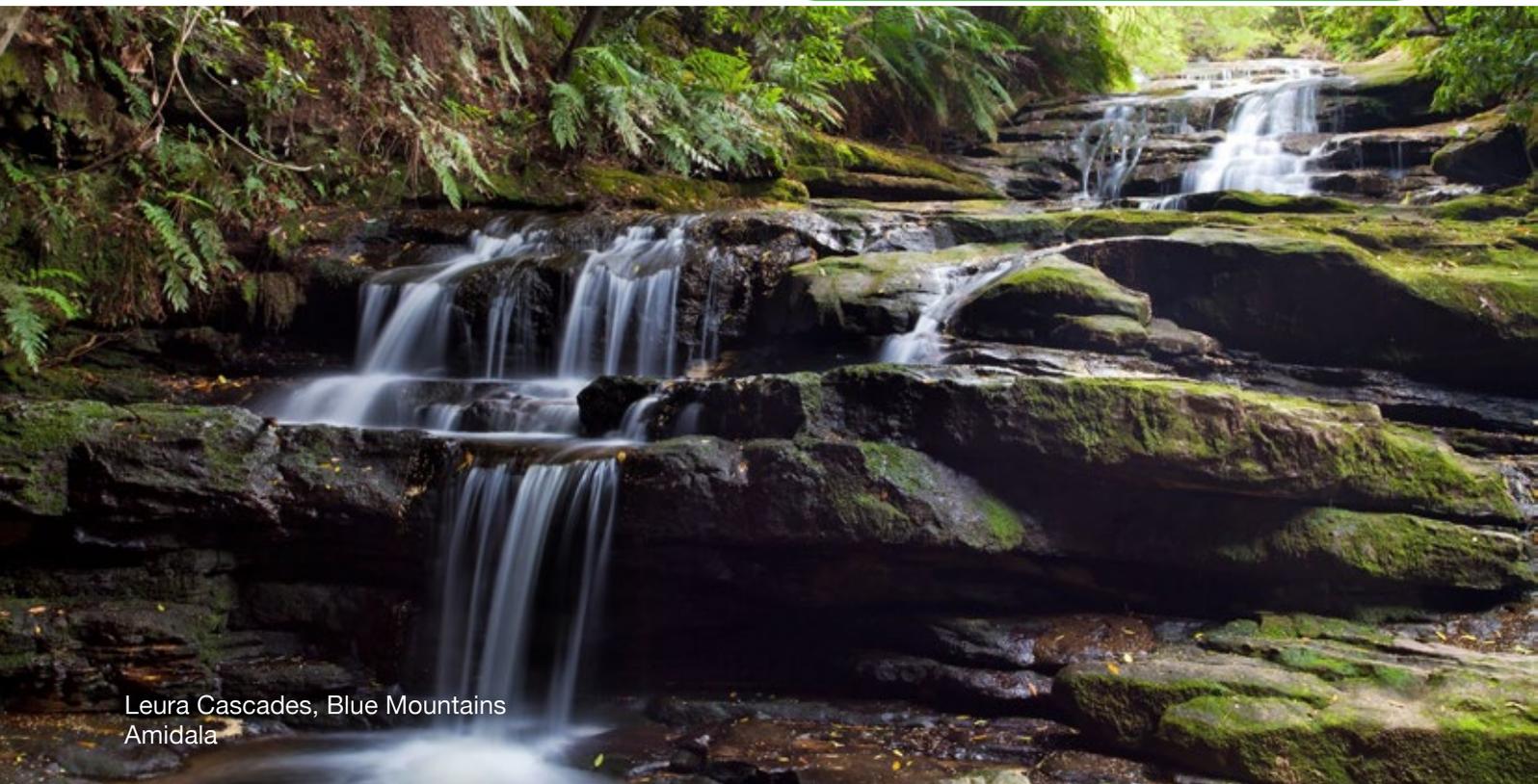
It's really important that politicians feel the heat on this, and the only way that will happen is if the community mobilises. The Stand Up For Nature website has lots of resources to help you get involved, please make use of them! Follow and share proceedings on Facebook and use the hashtag #StandUp4Nature on Twitter. These "reforms" are a major threat to our shared environment: we need to show Mike Baird that we care.



1 Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists: Submission to Biodiversity Legislation Review Panel. September 2014.

2 Native vegetation abatement has accounted for 51.3 million tonnes of emissions reductions. At \$13.12 per tonne the amount paid by taxpayers has been \$673 million.

Oisín is the Senior Ecologist for the National Parks Association of NSW Inc. He is one of several people who have been closely involved in developing the environment group's response to the biodiversity review. He lives on the south coast of NSW and enjoys getting out and about in nature with his family.





St Michael's Falls - North Lawson, Blue Mountains
John Walker

What Should You Do If You're Bitten By A Snake?

Ken Winkel



In October 2014, a 41-year-old man in the goldfields region of Western Australia collapsed and died within an hour of being bitten by the brown snake he was trying to capture.

Large Eastern Brown Snake - Tamban Forest near Kempsey, estimated length 1.7 metres
Peter Woodard

While such deaths are infrequent, around 580 Australians are hospitalised for snakebites each year. But compared to centuries past, we now have a much better understanding of this bush hazard and how to combat venom toxicity.

In the 19th century, the treatment for a snakebite was at times more dangerous than no treatment at all. Health authorities promoted intravenous ammonia and strychnine (the latter is now recognised as a poisonous pesticide) as antidotes against the effects of snake venom. This resulted in the death of at least one child in Victoria.

It was only in 1930 that Australia finally developed our own, “homegrown” snake antivenom. This horse-based product, for human use, is now made by bioCSL in Melbourne and provides an antidote against the venom of all the major dangerous snakes.

“... don't panic, stop what you are doing, and initiate first aid.”

Antivenoms act as molecular sponges, mopping up and helping eliminate venom in the blood so it can't do any further damage. Such toxins can attack the blood clotting and cardiovascular system, the nerves, muscles and kidneys.

Most snakebite deaths and hospital admissions in Australia are due to brown snakes. This is because the six species of brown snake are more widely distributed than any other of the

five major Australian land snakes: tiger, death adder, black snakes and taipans.

The good news is that although brown snakes produce a highly toxic venom, due to its very small fangs (about three millimetres in length) and low venom output, most bites do not result in serious illness. Indeed, many snakebites are hard to see.

But you can never tell which one will be deadly or harmless so treat all suspected snakebites as if they could be deadly: don't panic, stop what you are doing, and initiate first aid.

Snake venom moves into the blood via the low-pressure lymphatic system. This network of channels drain the fluids in our limbs outside of the blood vessels where venom is usually injected. As our muscles help pump this system, the worst thing you can do is to panic and run for help, as this will accelerate the circulation and action of the injected toxins.

Ideally a second person should apply the pressure immobilisation technique of first aid to help stop venom moving into the circulation.

“When it comes to avoiding snakebites, common sense goes a long way...”

First recommended in 1979, this approach combines the application of a firm circumferential limb bandage from the finger tips (if the bite is in the upper limb) or toe tips (if in the lower limb, where most snakebites occur) to the trunk.



King Brown aka Mulga Snake (*Pseudechis australis*)
AllenMcC

This should be pressure equivalent to that for an ankle sprain bandage – not a tourniquet that would painfully block all blood flow.

Next, the person’s limb should be splinted and they should be kept still while transports arrives.

All elements of this approach are required for it to be effective as otherwise the venom will still move into the blood.

Avoiding snakebites

When it comes to avoiding snakebites, common sense goes a long way: when in the bush, wear boots, long trousers and watch where you walk.

Obviously snakes should not be chased, harassed or struck as this increases the chance of receiving a dangerous bite. This is especially true when alcohol is involved, as it impairs judgement and reflexes.

Sometimes people are not aware that they have been bitten, especially children running around in the bush during summer, so any suspected snakebite should be treated as if it were a definite snakebite.

Because it’s difficult to formally identify dangerous venomous snakes in Australia, its

safest to assume any snakebite is potentially dangerous and proceed as if for a harmful one. Not all “brown snakes” are brown coloured, likewise not all brown-coloured snakes are “brown snakes”. Similarly, not all tiger snakes have a striped colour pattern and some brown snakes may have “tiger-like” stripes.



Dejan Stojanovic

Toxinologist; Director, Australian Venom Research Unit, University of Melbourne
Ken Winkel has telecommunications support from bioCSL for the 24/7 medical advisory service of the Australian Venom Research Unit in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at the University of Melbourne. The AVRU receives funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council.

The article was first published in [The conversation](#) (an independent source of news and views, sourced from the academic and research community and delivered direct to the public) on 2 April 2015.



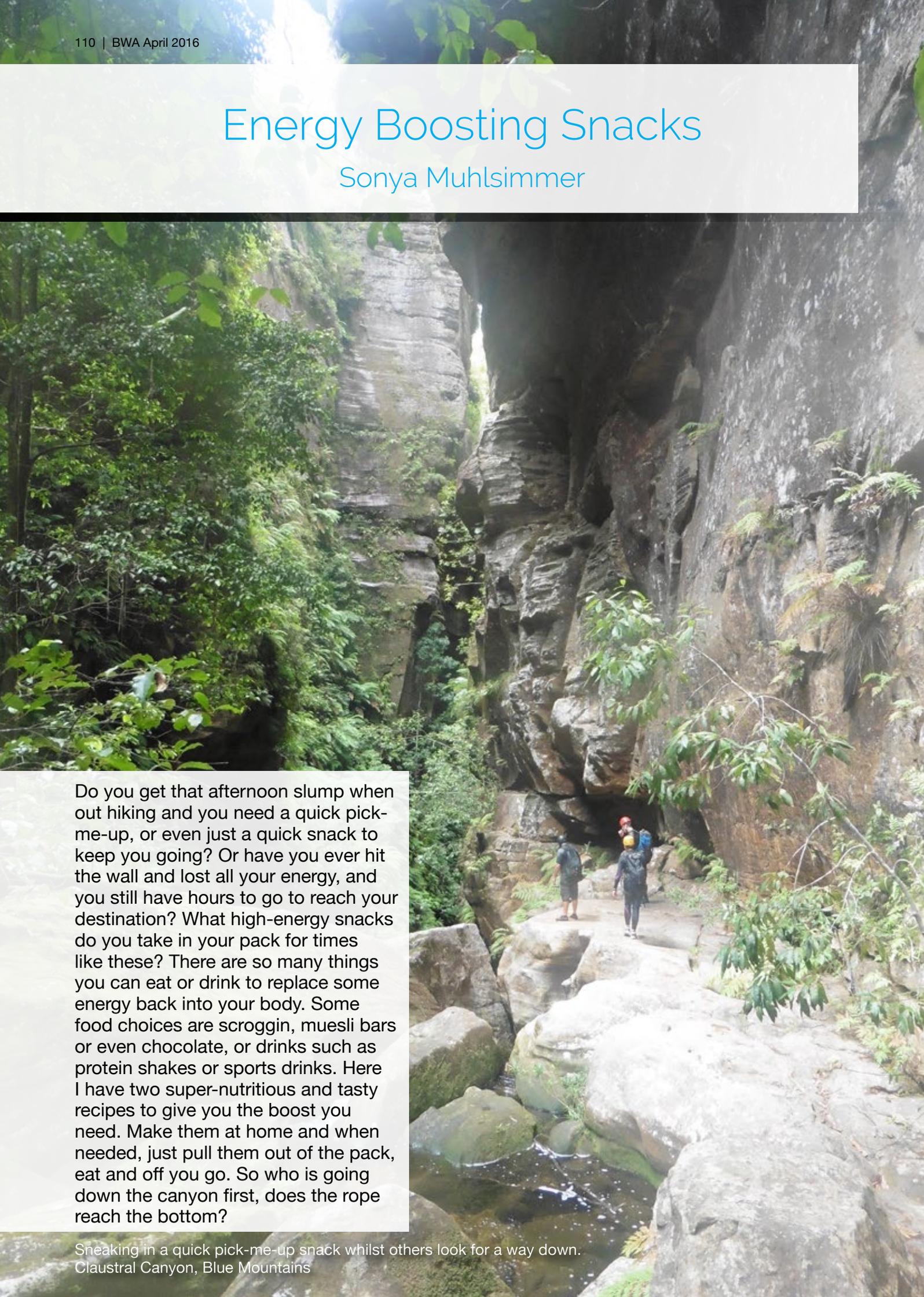
An eastern brown snake, Koorlong, Victoria, Australia
Longhair



Whaleback Rock - Uloola Track, Royal NP
John Walker

Energy Boosting Snacks

Sonya Muhlsimmer



Do you get that afternoon slump when out hiking and you need a quick pick-me-up, or even just a quick snack to keep you going? Or have you ever hit the wall and lost all your energy, and you still have hours to go to reach your destination? What high-energy snacks do you take in your pack for times like these? There are so many things you can eat or drink to replace some energy back into your body. Some food choices are scroggin, muesli bars or even chocolate, or drinks such as protein shakes or sports drinks. Here I have two super-nutritious and tasty recipes to give you the boost you need. Make them at home and when needed, just pull them out of the pack, eat and off you go. So who is going down the canyon first, does the rope reach the bottom?

Sneaking in a quick pick-me-up snack whilst others look for a way down.
Claustral Canyon, Blue Mountains

Nutrislice

This is a super-nutritious snack for on the run, and will keep you going till the end of the day. It's packed with energy, protein, carbohydrates, minerals, vitamins and antioxidants. Some of the ingredients are known as super-foods and are available at health food shops. I'll give a brief run-down of the super-foods and some of the not so common ingredients. Cacao nibs are crumbled cacao beans that have a chocolate flavour; they are full of minerals and vitamins. Quinoa flakes are gluten free and are loaded with protein. Protein isolate (I use a soy protein isolate) is 90-95% protein. Coconut contains carbs, fat, protein and minerals. Linseed is the richest source of omega-3 fatty acids and some essential amino acids. And finally, amaranth is a pseudocereal (gluten free) with a high level of protein and some minerals such as magnesium, potassium and calcium. This is one super-nutritious slice ...

Method

Preheat a fan forced oven to 160°C. Using baking paper line a 28 x 18 cm baking tray. Pulse almonds, cranberries and hazelnuts in a food processor for about 30 seconds and place in a large bowl.

Chop dates up into small chunks and add them to the large bowl with the nuts and cranberries. Add all other dry ingredients into the large bowl and stir through to combine. In a small bowl add all the wet ingredients and stir through thoroughly. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and mix through thoroughly. Place the mixture on the greased tray, pat down firmly and bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Let the slice cool in the tin for about 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Cut in half lengthways, then into about 6 cm long.

Hints

Once the slice cools it is quite firm, however the next day it is a bit softer. It is not a super-

firm slice so be careful when placing this in the pack. Cryovac the slice when it has cooled down. When it is Cryovaced it becomes quite sturdy, and will last in your pack for a long time without being squashed.



Almonds	4 Tbsp	60 grams
Dried cranberries	4 Tbsp	48 grams
Hazelnuts	4 Tbsp	14 grams
Dates	4 each	24 grams
Pumpkin seeds	4 Tbsp	56 grams
Sunflower seeds	4 Tbsp	32 grams
Cacao nibs	2 Tbsp	24 grams
Quinoa flakes	2 Tbsp	20 grams
Protein isolate	2 Tbsp	20 grams
Desiccated coconut	2 Tbsp	16 grams
Linseed	4 tsp	16 grams
Puffed amaranth	2 Tbsp	4 grams
Ground cinnamon	½ tsp	2 gram
Honey	¼ cup	85 grams
Tahini	¼ cup	62 grams
Olive oil	2 Tbsp	30 grams
Vanilla essence	2 tsp	8 grams

Anzac Biscuits

Anzac biscuits have a long and interesting history; they are part of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The origin of the Anzac biscuit is uncertain. Anzac biscuits were a substitute for bread and apparently the crunchiness of the biscuit was important. The biscuits were extremely hard and some soldiers actually preferred to grind them up for porridge. Now there is another idea! Luckily for us though, the humble biscuit has come a long way. And you can add to the recipe as I have here for something unique. The energy and nutrition in the biscuit is great for our afternoon slump too. Oats are actually a good source of carbs, protein, fibre, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and are known as a health food. Cranberries are packed with nutrients too such as vitamins C, E, K and so much more. Macadamia nuts are full of energy; it is one of the highest calorific value in the nuts. And of course coconut, the super-food that contains almost all of the daily essential minerals and vitamins we need in our diet. Now who doesn't like Anzac biscuits?

Method

Preheat a fan forced oven to 160°C. Grease or place a piece of baking paper on two oven trays. Pulse macadamias and cranberries in a food processor for about 30 seconds. Combine flour, sugar, oats, coconut, pulsed macadamias and cranberries in a large bowl. In a small saucepan combine butter, golden syrup and water, stirring constantly over a medium heat until the butter is melted. Take the pan off the heat and stir in the bicarb soda. Stir this wet mixture into the dry ingredients and mix well till the ingredients combine. Place round tablespoons of mixture on a greased oven tray, flatten a little and bake for 15 minutes. Then let cool on the tray for about 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Depending on the size of your spoonful, this recipe makes about 10 to 12 biscuits.

Hints

Again, once cooled you can Cryovac the biscuits to make them a sturdy pack of snack biscuits.

Macadamia nuts	2 Tbsp	30 grams
Dried cranberries	2 Tbsp	24 grams
Brown sugar	½ cup	90 grams



Plain flour	½ cup	80 grams
Butter	¼ block	62 grams
Rolled oats	½ cup	45 grams
Desiccated coconut	½ cup	44 grams
Golden syrup	1 Tbsp	32 grams
Bicarb soda	½ tsp	3 grams

Water - 1 Tbsp



Magazines



Wild 152 issue

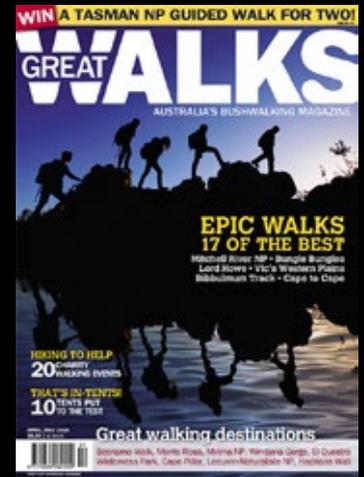
Wild, Australia's wilderness adventure magazine

"Retracing lost paths" was created while fires continued to burn in Tasmania's World Heritage Area and the magazine has taken on something of a sombre tone as a result. Featured locations include the Solomon Islands, MacDonnell Ranges and the Little Desert, each article highlighting the indelible mark the past leaves on our present.



AG Outdoor Mar-Apr issue

This issue is jam-packed with adventure. We list eight of the world's best multi-day walks and go on an epic Tropical North Queensland adventure road trip. We explore the remote Eastern Himalaya and also dive deep and learn how to scuba dive.



The Great Walks Feb-Mar issue

- Annual Gear Awards
- Exploring Japan on foot
- Queensland's best day walks
- First aid in the bush
- Wet weather hiking



The bush it is calling

Stephen Lake



This was written on a trip to Jagungal, Kosciuszko National Park

Jagungal and the Valentine River
Stephen Lake

The bush it is calling

My love's in the hills,
Has always been there,
With people so good,
With people who care.

This is my life,
Camped by a stream,
All that I need,
A wonderful dream.

To roam the wild hills
To go as I please,
To places I love,
The plains and the trees.

In the bush you will see
Many beautiful things,
Wonder behold
And the joy it will bring.

You who have been there,
You'll understand.
For those that have not,
It's an alien land.

The sun it is hidden,
Clouds tower grey,
Jagungal has vanished,
Gone for the day.

In two days I hope
To camp on your peak,
Not conquered at all,
Just a night for the meek.

Alone in a hut,
Memories clear,
Friend's distant days,
Amazingly near.

The trips of the past,
Lucky for me.
To be in those times,
Bush track and scree.

If I had my time over,
I'd do it again,
The highs and the lows,
The cheers and the pain.

Friendship formed in a furnace,
The heat and the snow,
Interminable climbs,
As onwards we go.

Together we make it
We are one, never fail,
Look after each other
This is our grail.

Take any chance,
Do anything.
To look after a mate,
What the fates bring.

Race solo for help,
Give up a meal,
Hold the infirm,
It's part of the deal.

You've done it for me,
I've done it for you
People well known,
Strangers anew.

Out in the bush,
Problems left far behind,
Away from the stress,
Peace in my mind.

Crags loom overhead,
The sun shines so bright,
And when it is sleeping,
Stars glitter at night.

A pace that is slow,
Scenery changes,
As vistas unfold,
High in the ranges.

The ascent it is long,
Time to look all around,
Just birds and clean wind,
Natural sound.

No diesel air,
No noise from a train,
Scent in the breeze,
Pleasant drumming of rain.

No track do we need,
The way it is clear,
Follow the trees,
The route is right here.

The hut it is sound,
Pretty Plain is so true,
Tomorrow's fresh path,
As a year starts anew.

Sad to leave KNP,
But all trips must end,
To stay would be nice,
Yet homewards I wend.

The trip is now over,
I hope to go back,
To walk the sweet hills,
The scrub and the track.

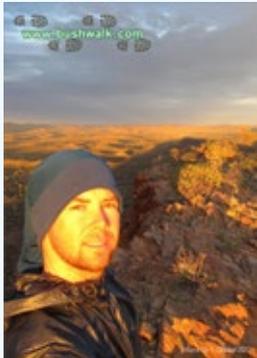
Fifty years in the bush,
My bones they now ache,
Hard trips are receding,
Short journeys I make.

And when I am gone,
No grave will there be.
Just ashes atop
A mountain for me.

The bush it is calling,
Calling to me,
So there I must go,
Must go to be free.



Bushwalk Australia Digital Magazine



First edition

- What is Bushwalk Australia
- Larapinta Trail NT
- Our adventurer – A2K
- 10 things that ensure your rainshell is up for the walk



Walking in Summer

- Nadgee Wilderness & The Coast Track RNP
- Heat illness in the field
- Is it safe to walk?
- Making water safe to drink



A lifetime of walking

- What is BWRS?
- Dealing with emergencies
- Wilderness communications
- Are you in a Club yet?



Autumn edition

- Aboriginal rock art
- Bushwalking Tracks round Sydney and beyond
- Was the heat an outlier or a taste of things to come?
- How to make your feet love you



Winter edition

- Two Weeks in Fiordland – Tips on trip planning
- Guthega River Snowshoe
- Snowshoeing – Tips to get started
- Hypothermia in the field



Winter wanderings

- Dehydrating food
- Snowshoe walk – Wheatley Circuit
- Colong Wilderness Walk
- Sydney Harbour & Coast Walk – The Inaugural Walk



Best of Australia

- Best walks in Australia
- Bushwalking blog
- The AAWT for Peter Mac
- Sea to Summit Ultra - SIL



Keep your cool

- Hornsby To Mt Kuring-Gai
- Our national parks need visitors to survive
- What is a Total Fire Ban day?
- Sports Drinks And Electrolytes



Best of ACT

- ACT's Best Walks
- Gardens of Stone
- Powering the 21st century bushwalker
- Terra Rosa Gear
- A Quick Guide to Blister Prevention for Bushwalkers



Best of QLD

- Best walk in Queensland
- Toolona Creek Circuit and other walks in Queensland
- Walking with insects
- A quick guide to foot blister treatment



Best of NT

- Best walks of Northern Territory
- Kakadu-bushwalking on Aboriginal land
- Larapinta track
- Jatbula trail
- Rescue: inside and out



Best of WA

- Western Australia Offers A Hike For Everyone
- Western Walking Club
- Native Forests and Logging



Best of SA

- Best walks of SA
- A Weekend in Deep Creek Conservation Park
- The Friends of the Heysen Trail
- Review Bungy Pump Poles



Best of TAS

- Best walks of Tasmania
- Overland Track
- South Coast Track Adventure
- Rescue at Cradle
- TasTrails.com



Best of VIC

- Best walks of Victoria
- Wilsons Prom
- Fortress
- Aarn Pack Review
- AussieHikingTours.com

