

Bushwalk Australia



Best of Victoria

Volume No 15, February 2016

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
An electronic magazine for
<http://bushwalk.com>
Volume 15, February 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



Marching on, Bridgewater Bay
Dean Thomas

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The copy deadline for the April 2016 edition is 29 February 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

I hope this edition of Bushwalk Australia magazine finds you fit and well. As we have been working state by state around Australia I have learned a lot and met some amazing people. Each state has been great, but Victoria is special to me.

When I finished high school I moved interstate to Bendigo in the middle of Victoria to study outdoor education. I had already done a fair bit of walking but this was a really wonderful experience to walk in more varied places and learn from some very experienced people. I was young and did not fully appreciate it at the time, but did love walking in places like the Grampians and the alpine high plains. I also started to appreciate short trips, escaping into local bushland near home.

Victoria is a wonderful place to bushwalk, especially if you want to broaden your horizons. You will find landscapes ranging from deserts to alpine and from coastal to ancient volcanoes. On a weird side note, Victoria is home to the Giant Gippsland Earthworm, which can grow up to two metres in length - that is a big worm.

Just a quick shout out to say a big thanks to all the contributors who share their time and experience with us. Also a big thanks to Stephen who is so much more than a sub-editor, he really gets his hands dirty making every edition of this magazine better and better.



Happy walking.

Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)
matt@bushwalk.com



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.

Bushwalk.com

Off to New South Wales we go. If you have bushwalking experience in NSW, could you please fill out the following survey. There are three favourite day and three favourite overnight walks to write in. Please share your top of the list by following [this link](#) or clicking the image below.

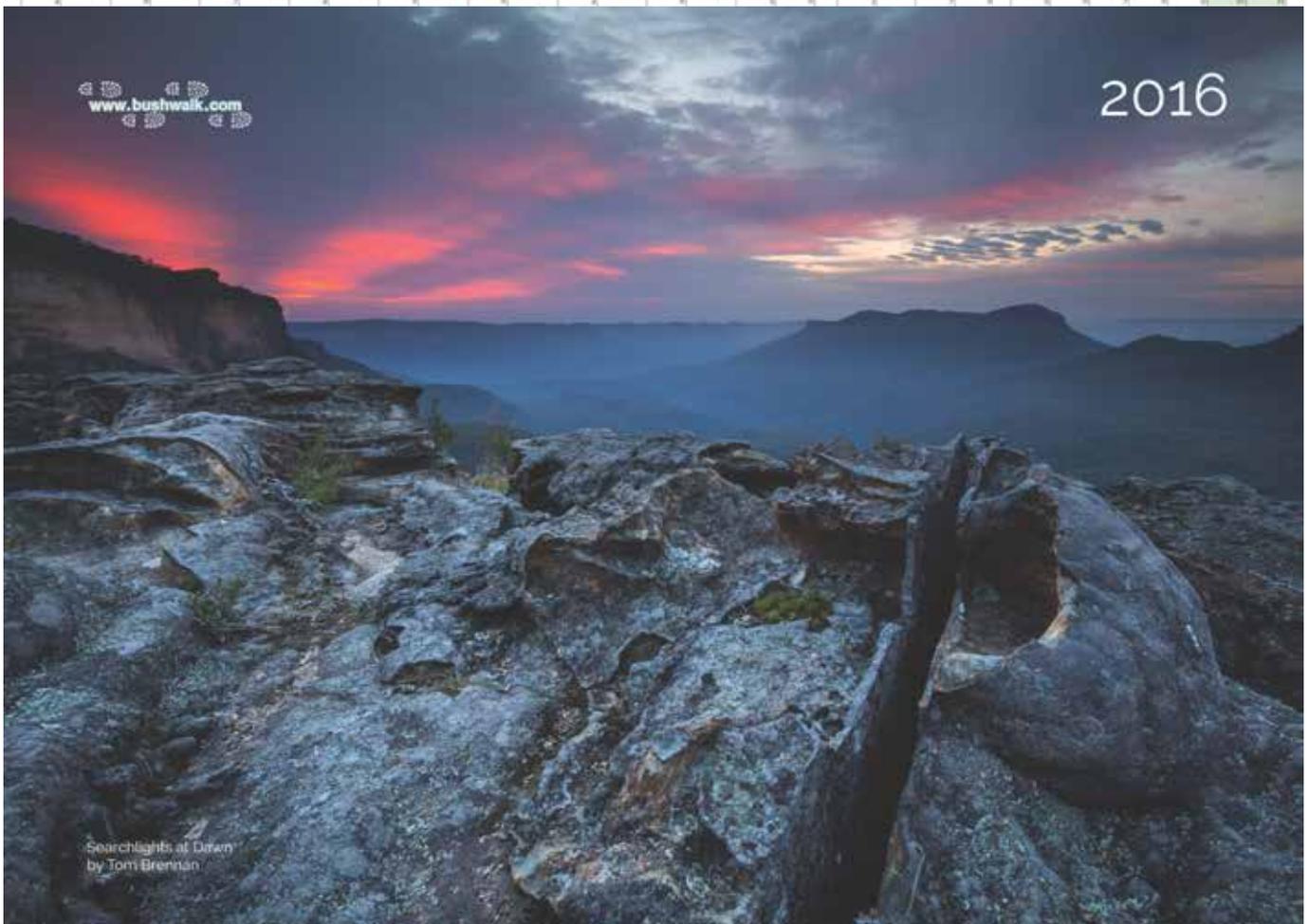
Bushwalk Australia Best Walks in NSW

Over the next few pages I will ask you to list your favorite day and overnight (multiday) walks in NSW. If you only want to list one walk that is okay but you can include up to 6 (3 day walks and 3 multiday).
Let's start with the state you live in now.



Bushwalk Australia Calendar 2016

There are still a couple of calendars left for those who missed out on them. They are filled with winner photos of the photo competitions. If you want to look at them on your wall, you can order them at only \$12.50 [here](#) or view the PDF [here](#).



www.bushwalk.com

2016

Searchlights at Dawn
by Tom Brennan

Best walks of Victoria

Stephen Lake



Victoria has a wide range of landscapes, including desert, alpine, beach, and rainforest.

Great Ocean Road
Gudellaphoto

The west and north-west are hot, dry and arid, with Hattah-Kulkyne NP, Wyperfeld NP and Little Desert NP offering flat walking that's delightful in spring when flowers bloom. The Grampians aka Gariwerd NP has rugged cliffs and terrain such as The Fortress that challenges and delights many. In the south-west, Discovery Bay Coastal Park, Lower Glenelg NP, Port Campbell NP and the Great Otway NP have an excellent range of walks, with the Great South West Walk and the Great Ocean Walk for longer trips.

Central Victoria includes a large number of parks and pleasant walking areas – Mt Cole, Wombat State Forest, Whipstick, Strathbogies, and many more. The apparent small size is often deceiving; it's possible to get a sense of remoteness close to the road.

There are numerous bushwalking areas near Melbourne: You Yangs, Brisbane Ranges NP, Werribee Gorge, Lerderderg Gorge, Mt Macedon, Kinglake NP, Cathedral Ranges, Yarra Ranges NP, Mt Donna Buang, Dandenong Ranges NP and Blue Range. Most of these are quite suitable for day trips or easy overnight trips. The sprawl that's Melbourne has many small areas of bush or places away from the vehicles that choke our streets. The Yarra River and its tributaries have tracks, usually shared with cyclists. One innovation has been to turn disused railway alignments into paths, rail to trail. These

are quite lovely to walk on, and can also be found in rural areas, like the Wangaratta-Bright and Wodonga-Cudgewa Rail Trails.

Gippsland has a good selection of areas: Baw Baw NP, Avon River, Mitchell River NP, Grand Strzelecki Trail, Snowy River NP, Reedy Creek Chasm, and Croajingalong NP. One of the gems of Victorian bushwalking is Wilsons Promontory NP, known more simply as Wilsons Prom or The Prom, a good place for beginner overnight walks. To cater for the significant demand and preserve the environment there's a booking system, which some find to be a burden. I can't see another option.

The north-east has the highest and most remote peaks, with arguably the best walking for experienced people. This region is big – 200 kilometres from Baw Baw to the NSW border, covering about 40,000 square kilometres with a lot of relatively pristine bush. Between Baw Baw and NSW there's only a handful of through sealed roads.

Mt Buffalo NP is a pretty place with stunning views over granite cliffs. The Alpine NP is extensive and covers 6400 square kilometres. While suffering from adverse flora and fauna, not to mention ill-advised developments, the Bogong High Plains are well worth visiting. It does not take long to leave the masses. The start of a favourite walk leaves the car park and 90 minutes

later I'm at a camp site that very few visit. No track is one reason. The next day involves light scrub, and again no track. I've done the walk several times and not seen anyone, four days of solitude and bliss.

Mt Feathertop has a deserved reputation as a friendly mountain. The Bungalow Spur is well graded with a few creeks and soaks, climbing in a sheltered forest until Federation Hut. The summit is 45 minutes away. You can also approach Feathertop from Mt Hotham on The Razorback, an easier flatter trip of a few hours, and a slightly challenging return day trip. In winter the snow gets deep. One year it took three hours to flounder a kilometre to Federation Hut. The North-west and Diamantina Spurs are steep, long and ill-suited for beginners. South of Feathertop the Dargo High Plains attracts.

Mt Bogong has no easy approach – 1300 metres up from the north, 7-900 metres up from the south. It's worth it. I rate Bogong aesthetically better than Kosciuszko: no tourists. In winter it's a wild mountain.

The Snowy Plains are approached from Gippsland, with gems such as Moroka and Bryces Gorges, Snowy Bluff, Mt Howitt, Crosscut Saw, Razor Viking, Tali Karng and Wonnangatta. The Howitt region can also be approached from the west via Mansfield. Tali Karng is a lake hidden deep in the mountains

and was not discovered by whites until relatively late. This is the only natural lake in the Victorian Alps.

Whilst subjective, I've left the best to last, the Australian Alps Walking Track. The AAWT started as a dream in the late 1960s as the Alpine Walking Track going from Baw Baw to the NSW border west of Thredbo at Tom Groggin. By the mid-1990s the AAWT was on a new route to Cowombat Flat near the head of the Murray River, whence the track continued north to the ACT. Whilst I'm biased, I reckon the AAWT takes some beating. Tassie's Overland Track is shorter, the NT's Larapinta and SA's Heysen are longer. Which is better? Can you tell? Does it matter? All are good.

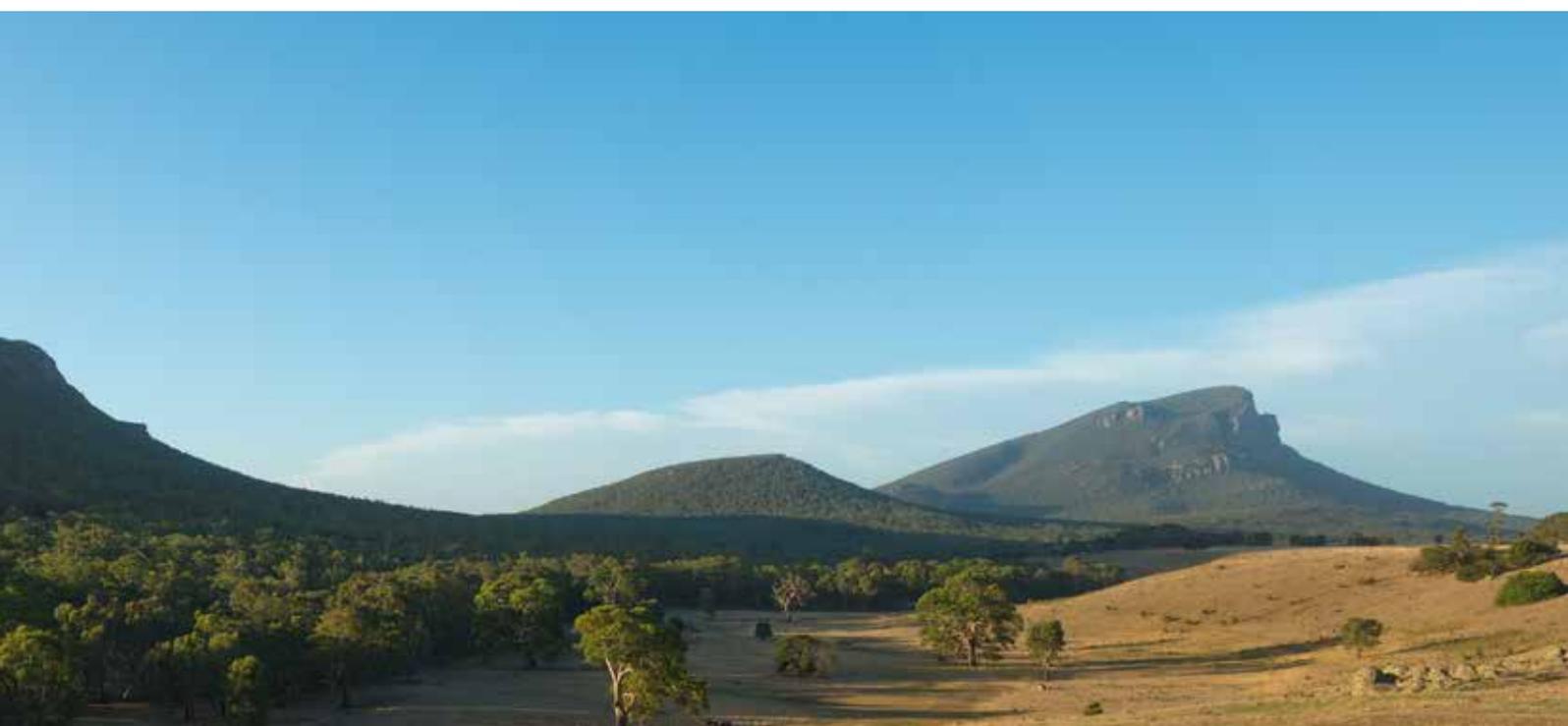


Links

Neil Fahey bushwalkingblog.com.au/
Chapman john.chapman.name/
Tempest osp.com.au/

theaustralianalps.wordpress.com/the-alps-partnership/publications-and-research/australian-alps-smartphone-guide-and-map/

The following pages are a compilation of best walks based on a survey of readers of the last edition of BWA, from reviews of various websites and books as well as from chatting with people who know Victoria's walks.



Victoria

Hattah Lakes (Hattah-Kulkyne National Park)

various, parkweb.vic.gov.au and australiannationalparks.com



Hattah-Kulkyne NP is best visited in autumn, winter or spring – the summer heat is harsh. Wander in an arid and enchanting landscape on tracks or cross country to seasonal lakes. Campsites are also available. Four main walking tracks, from a 600 metres lookout walk to the 10 kilometres 3.5 hours Mournpall Lake Loop.

Victoria

Hollow Mountain (Grampians NP)

2.2 km return, 1.5 hours, visithallsgap.com.au



The rock formations and the views south along Gariwerd. Caves, walls, overhangs, weird shaped lumps and some really fun scrambling.

Inside Hollow Mountain
Brian Eglinton

Victoria

Mt Rosea (Grampians NP)

12 km return, 5 hours

This is the highest peak near Halls Gap. Light forest, rocky sections and excellent views.



Mt Abrupt (Grampians NP)

7 km return, 4 hours, redzaustralia.com and bushwalkingblog.com.au

Steep climbing leads to a panorama of the southern Grampians, a most scenic outlook.





Victoria

Great South West Walk sections (SW coast)

various, greatsouthwestwalk.com

Mainly flat beach walking on good tracks trails. Watch the tides! Much wildlife with diverse ocean and forest views. Definitely recommend the GSWW. See page 36 for details.



Victoria

Melville Caves (Kooyoora State Park)

5-10 km return, 3-5 hours, several options, parkweb.vic.gov.au



Interesting day walks with a variety of fascinating rocks. Large granite boulders and distant district views, great photography and exploring the area.

Mt Cole (Mount Cole State Forest)

4 km return, 1.5 hours, bpadula.tripod.com



Large district views and granite boulder country. Lots of walking tracks and options in the area. Longer options available to make a day of it.

Cumberland Falls (Cumberland Falls State Resort Park)

9 km return, 4-5 hours, visitgreatoceanroad.org.au



Just off the Great Ocean Road, south of Lorne. Great varied scenery including a sheoak forest and views from the top of cliffs. Castle Rock well worth a visit. Start with a picnic on the Cumberland River near the beginning of the walk.

Victoria

Mt Macedon (Macedon Regional Park)

various

Enjoy a mixed forest of snow gum and alpine ash. The large Macedon Memorial Cross war memorial has a sealed path. Views limited from the area, but you get glimpses in places along the walk. See the lights of Melbourne from the cross at night. Various walks in the area from 2 to 30 kilometres. Douglas Road to Macedon Memorial Cross is a 2 kilometres 1 hour walk.



Lerderderg Gorge (Lerderderg State Park)

18 km circuit, full day (or overnight walk), trailhiking.com.au

Lovely river with series of course sand beaches and granite outcrops. For experienced walkers only.



Brisbane Ranges (Brisbane Ranges NP)

8 km circuit , 3 hours, bushwalkingblog.com.au

Nice circuit walk up a hill. Good variety of vegetation. Short side trips to some lookouts, Nelson Lookout provides distant views. Walks start from the Stony Creek Picnic Area.



Victoria

Flinders Peak (You Yangs Regional Park)

3 km return, 1 hour, bushwalkingblog.com.au



A pretty easy and very popular walk. Granite peak with views at top. There is a lookout platform at the top providing 360 degree view. Sometimes get fighter aircraft from RAAF flying low in area.

Cathedral Ranges (Cathedral Range State Park)

9 km return, 5 hours, bushwalkingblog.com.au and bushwalkingblog.com.au



Spectacular narrow ridge walk. Not viable in bad weather. Southern Circuit - fun, technical (almost) rock climb on the ascent of Sugarloaf Peak. Incredible views and geology. Stunning district views. Northern and southern circuit options, both are good.

Cape Schanck, Baldrys Crossing (Mornington Peninsula NP)

2 km circuit, 30-60 minutes, bushwalkingblog.com.au, bushwalkingblog.com.au, bushwalkingblog.com.au



A few options to around the main headland. Nice beach and stunning water views. Time it well and you may spot a penguin. Popular well maintained clear path. Longer options in area available.

Victoria

Mt St Phillack (Baw Baw National Park)

10 km return, 3-4 hours, bushwalkingvictoria.org.au and bushwalk.com

Climb both Mount St Gwinear and Mount St Phillack. Great views and open alpine country. Snow shoe or ski in winter.



Bryces Gorge (Alpine NP)

8 km return, 2-3 hours, bushwalkingmelb.blogspot.com.au

Great walk in the high country. Stunning views from looking into Bryces Gorge. Views to Piemans and Conglomerate falls. Check out Guys Hut whilst in the area.



The Big Walk, Mt Buffalo (Mount Buffalo NP)

12 km one way, 5 hours (add extra time for side trip to Rollasons Falls), parkweb.vic.gov.au

The well named (it is a big) walk up Mt Buffalo. Stunning variety of vegetation and even more stunning views. Great views, needs good weather and fitness. Need a car shuttle.



Heathy Spur, Mt Nelse (Alpine NP)

14 km return, 4-5 hours, parkweb.vic.gov.au

Wonderful open grasslands and snow gums. Watch the weather, best on a cooler day in summer. Part of the walk is on the AAWT, then a short side-trip to Mt Nelse. Views that go on forever.





Victoria

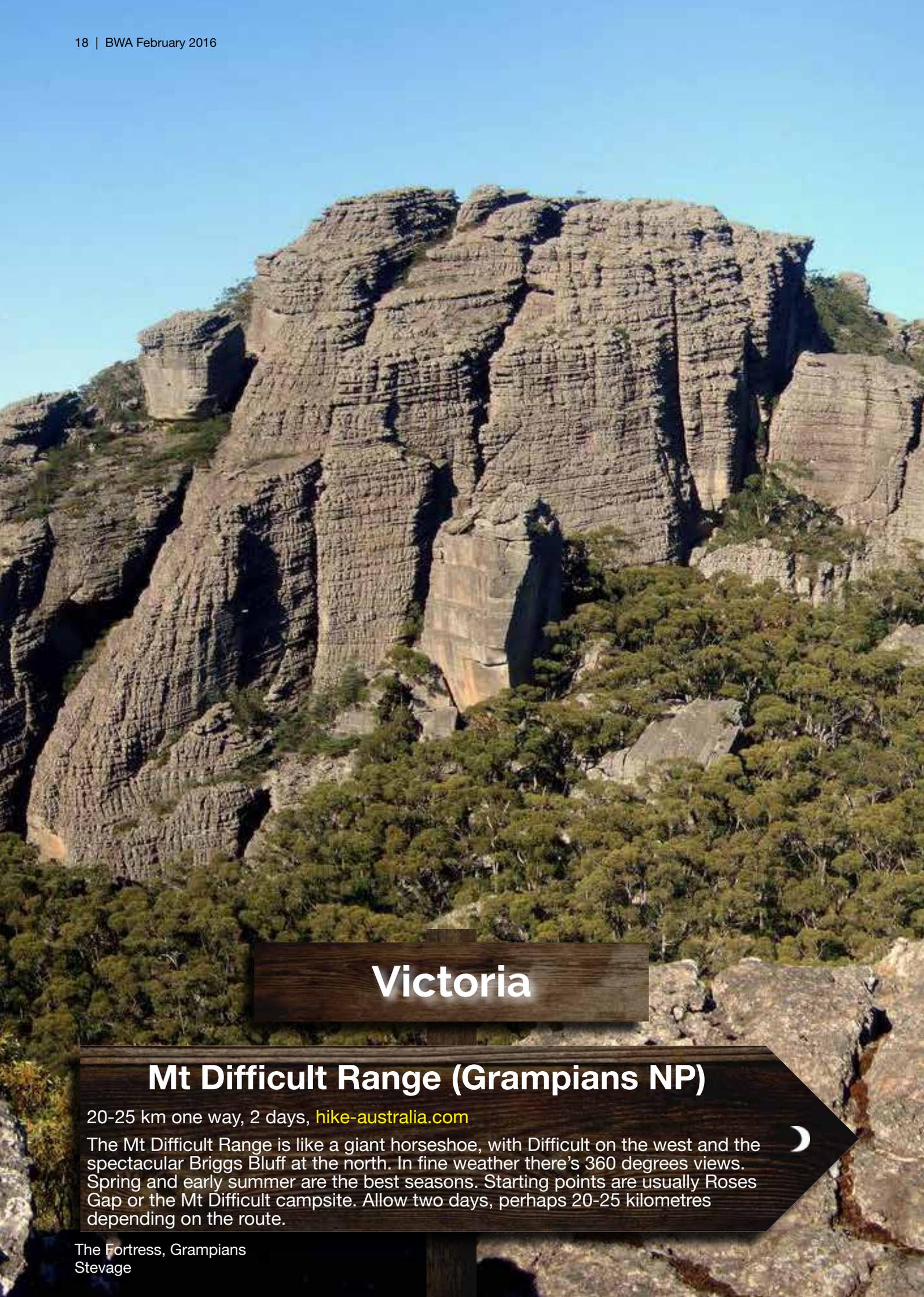
Great South West Walk

250 km one way, 15 days, greatsouthwestwalk.com

Easy to follow, well maintained track, varied terrain. This can be done in one trip or in sections. See page 36 for more details.



Cape Bridgewater coastline
Mattinbgn



Victoria

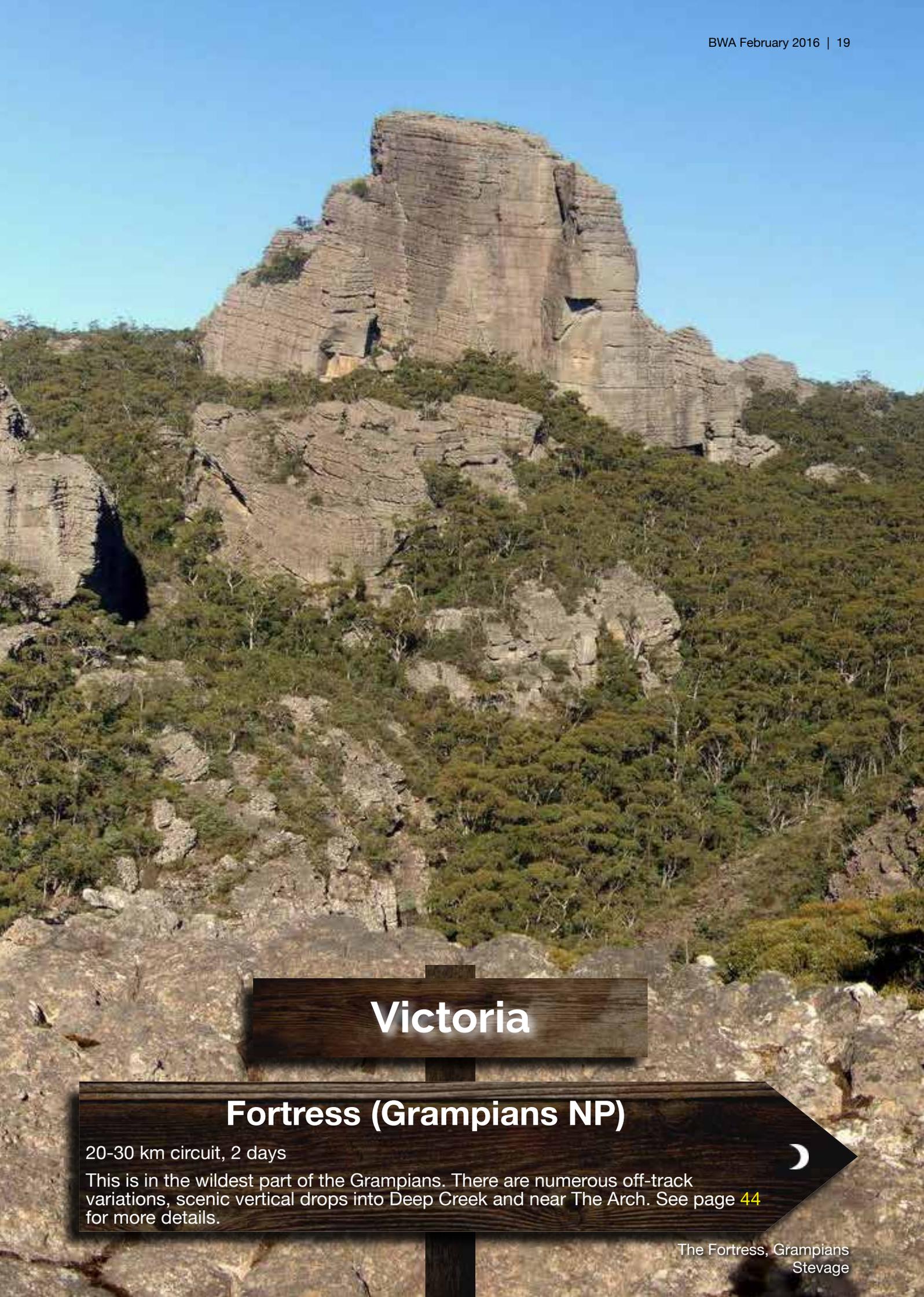
Mt Difficult Range (Grampians NP)

20-25 km one way, 2 days, hike-australia.com

The Mt Difficult Range is like a giant horseshoe, with Difficult on the west and the spectacular Briggs Bluff at the north. In fine weather there's 360 degrees views. Spring and early summer are the best seasons. Starting points are usually Roses Gap or the Mt Difficult campsite. Allow two days, perhaps 20-25 kilometres depending on the route.



The Fortress, Grampians
Stevage



Victoria

Fortress (Grampians NP)

20-30 km circuit, 2 days

This is in the wildest part of the Grampians. There are numerous off-track variations, scenic vertical drops into Deep Creek and near The Arch. See page [44](#) for more details.



The Fortress, Grampians
Stevage



Victoria

Great Ocean Walk (SW coast)

100 km one way, 8 days or walk one or two sections at a time,
visitgreatoceanroad.org.au

Walk from Apollo Bay to the Twelve Apostles. Stunning coast line. Luxury guided options available. Camp or use accommodation options. Several places to resupply to reduce your pack load. Stunning ocean views.

Twelve Apostles
Thomas Enguehard

Victoria

Mt Feathertop (Alpine NP)

20-25 km return, 2 days, visitharrietteville.com.au

Due to easy safe access on the Bungalow Spur, a mix of sub-alpine and alpine vegetation and having a classic peak, Feathertop is justly popular. Other routes include the Bon Accord Spur, Razorback, and the much steeper Diamantina Spur. Winter or summer, the Razorback ridge to Feathertop is one of mainland Australia's best and most popular walks. Camping on the Razorback has stunning views to the Bogong High Plains, the Kiewa Valley, St Bernard and Hotham.



Feathertop and the Fainters from Machinery Spur
North-north-west

Victoria

Bogong High Plains (Alpine NP)

various distances and times

Walk at about 1600 metres, with many relatively easy tracked and untracked trips possible over a large area. There's reliable water and sheltered camping in many places. You're only limited by your imagination.

Mt Bogong (Alpine NP)

16 km or longer depending on route, 2-3 days, weekendnotes.com

Highest point in Victoria, challenging, it takes you from the valley floor to above the tree line. While it is somewhat about peak bagging, the location and scenery make this a fantastic and rewarding walk. Generally starting at Mountain Creek, the start is flat until you reach the Staircase Spur, then the fun begins. Possible water at Bivouac Hut, have a snack then push on to the summit. There's plenty of route variations, with a transition from forest to an almost bleak alpine zone. Can be done as a day trip – but why rush?

Razor Viking (Alpine NP)

varies, 3 days

This is in a remote part of the alps. There's no easy way in other than on foot, which can be from the AAWT or the Wonnangatta River. Stunning wilderness area with limited signs, you need to be an experience walker and navigator.

Victoria

Sealers Cove (Wilson's Promontory NP)

9.5 km, 3 hours one way, 2 days for the circuit, parkweb.voc.gov.au

A classic. Sure it gets busy, but the distance is short the scenery fantastic. This is a perfect introduction to bushwalking and is worth multiple visits. Take the bus to the start then walk 10 kilometres via eucalypt forest and rain forest to the cove and a perfect beach. After this there's the rest of The Prom to explore.

Moroka Gorge and Snowy Bluff (Alpine NP)

various, 2-4 days

Moroka and Snowy Bluff offer wild and isolated off-track walking for experienced people. Be prepared for river walking, cliffs, possible abseils and camping on rock.

Mt Howitt (Alpine NP)

15-25 km, 2 days, longer if you can manage it, bushwalk.com, [Wild magazine](#), [WildPeak Bagging booklet](#)

Showcases the Victorian high country. You stand on the edge of wilderness with seemingly endless hills and forest of the Alpine National Park. The other way is the Mt Buller ski resort. Howitt is the heart of the Victorian alps with probably the most spectacular part of the AAWT. Several routes make Howitt a highly accessible walk – Speculation, Crosscut Saw, Magdala, Wonnangatta. The spring and early summer alpine wildflowers are second to none.



Victoria

Avon River (Gippsland)

15-25 km, 2 days

This is a very pretty river with good access and a number of routes, grade easy to medium. Some walks go from ridges to the river, where in hot weather you may average two swims per kilometre.

Grand Strzelecki Track (Alpine NP)

varies, 3-5 days, grandstrzeleckitrack.org.au

Walk between parks, with longer walks beyond park boundaries. There are waterfalls, sweeping views, rare and endangered ecosystems, and flora and fauna such as Mountain Ash and lyrebirds that most visitors never see. Enjoy walks for everyone.

Snowy River (Snowy River NP)

various, 3-4 days

This is a wild and remote river for experienced walkers. You may be walking in the river or floating with your pack, so warmer seasons are best. Allow 3-4 days, several routes and distances.

Victoria

Cobberas (Alpine NP)

various, 2-4 days, mickbeckers.com/

Cobberas, Cleft Peak, Moscow Peak and the surrounding bush are well worth visiting. Plan 2-4 days to take in all the peaks and surrounds.

Croajingolong Wilderness Coast Walk (Croajingolong NP)

100 km, parkweb.vic.gov.au

The Croajingolong Wilderness Coast Walk has a remote beach setting for most of its length, and is partly in NSW.

AAWT (Alpine NP)

660 km, 40-60 days, takeawalk.com.au

This is a major undertaking, 660 kilometres from Walhalla to the ACT, 40-60 days. If you have the experience, stamina, gear, motivation and time, give it a go. You will not be disappointed. Some parties do the AAWT a week at a time, about 100 kilometres.

Letter from the Minister

Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Environment and Climate Change



What kind of bushwalks if any do you enjoy?

The Banksia Trail in the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve is one of my favourite bushwalks. It's a reasonably easy trail of about three kilometres through the only remaining grassy woodlands on the Bellarine Peninsula. There are wonderful things to see such as grass trees that are hundreds of years old and native orchids everywhere in the spring. It's a place to see the rare local Bellarine Yellow Gum, as well as lots of wallabies and echidnas. The reserve is also home to hundreds of native birds, such as the beautiful tiny Blue Wrens. I love the fact that even though this isn't a very big reserve, when I'm walking in it I feel like I'm in the middle of nowhere. I love the mental and physical peace and quiet I get from being immersed in such a beautiful place and feeling away from it all.

What role do you see bushwalking playing in the conservation of native landscapes?

Walking through the bush connects people with nature and fosters in them a sense of stewardship for natural places and a desire to protect them. This is evident in the many passionate members of Friends groups who work to care for and protect these open spaces. Bushwalkers can also be the eyes and ears for park managers in parks and reserves that are often remote and not

easy to access on a regular basis, reporting issues such as weeds, damage to tracks and vandalism or illegal activity.

What message would you like to share with people new to bushwalking?

Explore places that are in your local area and start with walks that are not too long or physically demanding. Gradually building up your fitness and walking experience means you are more likely to have an enjoyable experience. Be prepared; carry a phone, some food and water and let someone know where you're going. Always check if dogs are allowed and be aware of current fire bans. Joining bushwalking groups or clubs like the Geelong Field Naturalists is also a good way to get started. The Parks Victoria website parks.vic.gov.au has some really useful maps and detailed information on planning your walk.

What message would you like to share with experienced bushwalkers?

Even though the nature reserves on the Bellarine may not be vast or remote they are still significant and well worth exploring. By sharing their experiences, walkers can encourage others to get out and explore new landscapes. Social media is a very effective way of doing this. Having more people enjoying the benefits of bushwalking is good for both the health of the general community and for these natural environments.



If you could ask the bushwalking community to help you in any area what would you ask them to do?

I would encourage them to get more involved in the future of these places they enjoy and hold special by joining Friends groups and taking an active role in the health and preservation of these open spaces. Parks Victoria has hundreds of volunteers of all ages enjoying the health and social benefits of being active outdoors with like-minded people. There is more information on how to get involved at parkweb.vic.gov.au/get-involved/volunteer

What are some of the key challenges and opportunities faced by the Victorian native ecosystems?

Introduced weeds and predators are the two biggest challenges to park ecosystems. Parks Victoria has a range of long-term partnership programs that are the most effective means of controlling these.

Rubbish dumping and general litter is also having a very negative effect on parks and reserves through contamination and injury to native wildlife. I would urge all bushwalkers to take care in keeping the places they walk through in pristine condition.

Another challenge for open spaces is the spread of urban communities. Many of these are encroaching on sensitive environments such as grassy woodlands and regional parks and reserves. Parks Victoria is now working with these new communities to make sure these environments are cared for and protected.



Hon Lisa Neville MP

Lisa is from Queensland, and has a BA and LLB. She has held a number of positions related to universities, social areas and politics. She was elected to the Victorian Parliament in 2002. Her former portfolios were Mental Health and Community Services and Senior Victorians. She is currently the Minister for Environment and Climate Change. Lisa is determined to raise the profile of environmental issues, vital to the future of Victoria and the nation. She is a strong advocate for improved services and infrastructure for the growing population on the Bellarine Peninsula.



In the News

There'll be no additional budget for the search and rescue operations in Tasmania despite the expanding bushwalking tourism

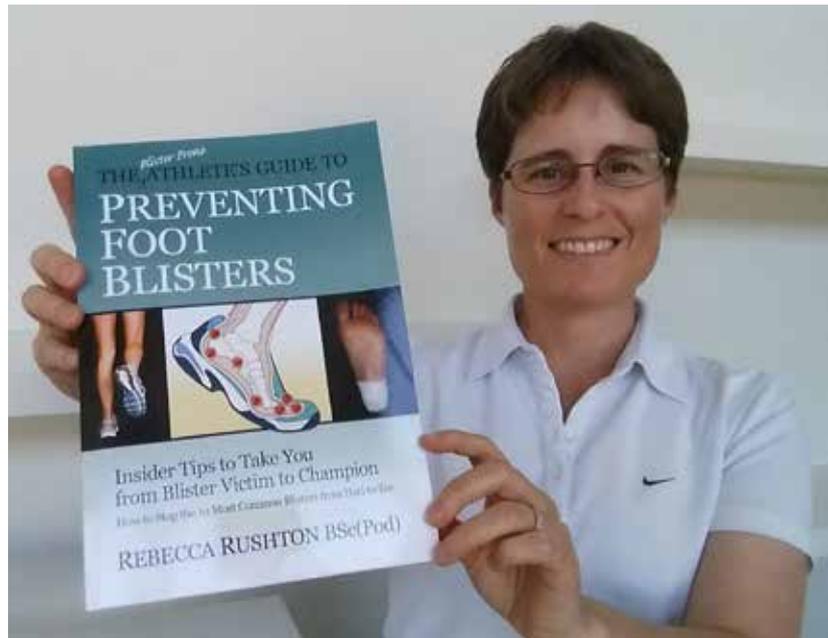
Search and rescue operations are not straining police resources in Tasmania, the force has said, and officials are confident they can deal with more, even as bushwalking tourism expands in the state. Read more [here](#)

Book on preventing foot blisters

Rebecca Rushton is an Esperance podiatrist who has written articles about blisters for BWA. Rebecca has written a book "Preventing foot blisters, insider tips to take you from blister victim to champion". The book is available from Amazon, and the Australian link is [here](#). Rebecca has a website <http://www.blisterprevention.com.au/blister-blog/my-first-book> with a number of very positive reviews. Here's one of them:

Truly a great resource for runners, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts!

Rebecca is truly one of the world's experts on blister care, prevention and recovery. Her book is loaded with up-to-date tips that go beyond the typical and often incorrect recommendations from others (such as to use petroleum jelly to reduce the likelihood of a blister) and get right to the heart of what truly WORKS to reduce blister risk as well as blister recovery. Thank you for writing this, Rebecca. Runners, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts the world over will enjoy greater success (and less pain and discomfort) because of your book. *Amazon customer Coach Al Lyman*



Dehydrated water, just add air?

Funtus are just about launch their crowdfunding campaign on a self-filling water bottle. The bottle harvests water from the humidity of the air. In good conditions it can harvest 0.8 litre an hour. There are two models, one for your bicycle, and one with a solar panel for your backpack.



Wilson's Prom - Southern Circuit

Hamish Scott aka Scoha



There's no doubt The Prom is a gem, and for people living in Melbourne or south-east Victoria it's a jewel in the crown of terrific walking trips with easy access. The Prom is a place which can be overlooked, or considered "done" and hence there's no need to return. This article describes a walk in August 2015.

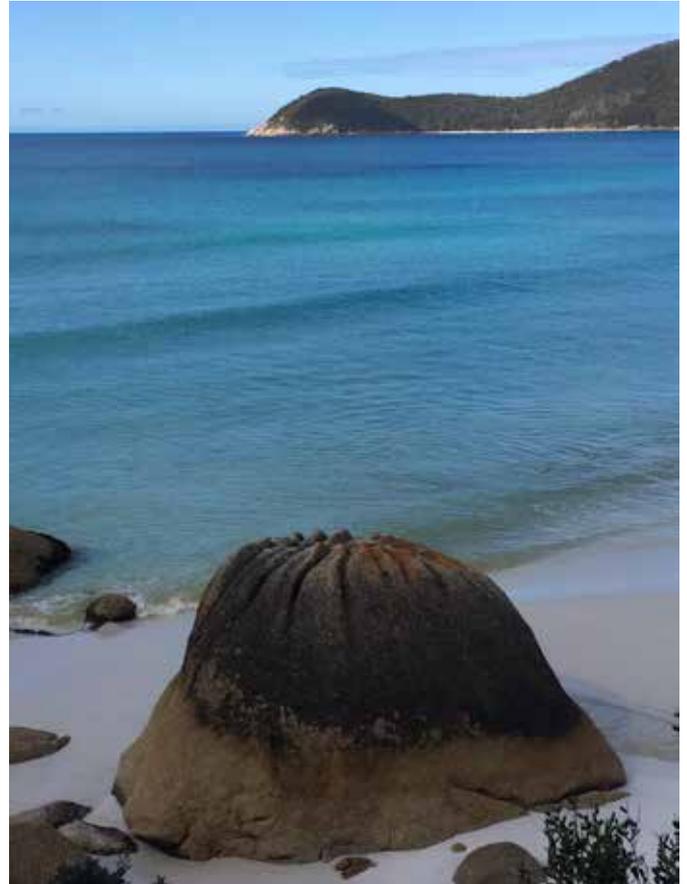
A view towards South East Point and Rodondo Island, Tasmania in the background

I've just completed two fabulous Prom trips and could go back this weekend and get something different again. (But don't tell anyone because then it might get crowded.)

In August 2015 I turned to the southern circuit, which is very much more popular and more straightforward than the northern Prom, but every bit as rewarding. This time I did the trip solo as a final preparation for my solo AAWT later in the year.

Day one

Being winter I parked at Telegraph Saddle. In summer or busier periods there's a shuttle service from Tidal River. Leave Telegraph Saddle and head south down a closed road. It's not that exciting being on a road so this stage is just about refamiliarisation of body and pack and getting a steady rhythm going. It's about 6.5 kilometres to the Oberon Bay turnoff to the west and the Waterloo Bay turnoff to the east. Then a short walk south to Halfway Hut, built to support the lighthouse and connected telegraph line. The hut has withstood the ravages of weather, bushfire, flood and campers for over a hundred years and is still in great shape.



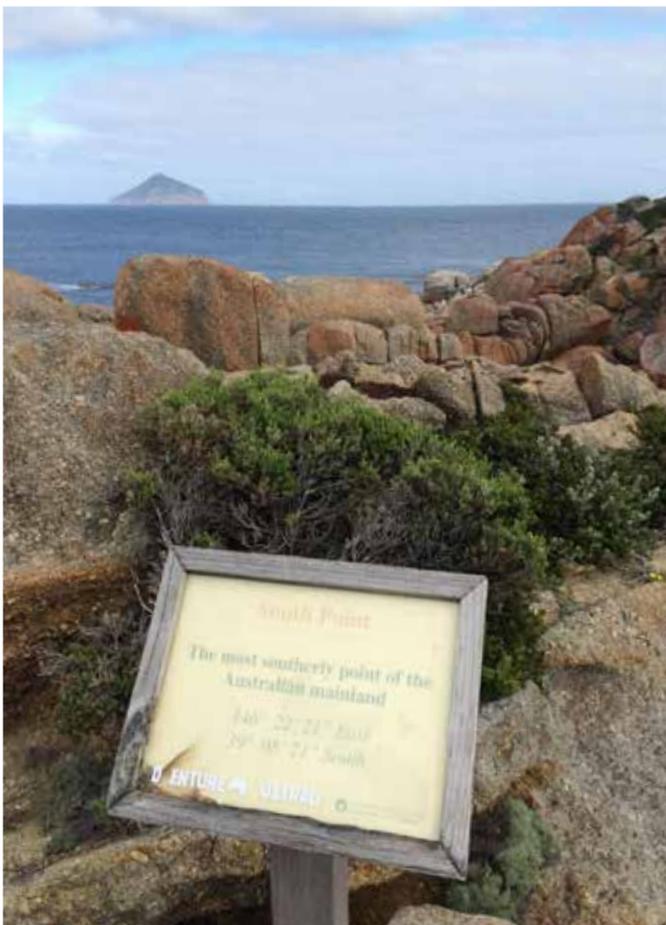
Dim Sum Prom-style!
Waterloo Point from Waterloo Bay

Not long after the hut the road becomes a walking track to the Roaring Meg campsite, a nice camp by a little river with very inquisitive ravens. Set up the tent and then walk 3.6 kilometres to South Point, the southern-most point on the Australian mainland. Just off the coast are a number of islands. The closest is Rodondo Island, about 10 kilometres away, which is interestingly in Tasmanian waters. So you can very definitely see Tasmania from South Point, an inspiring sight.

Day two

Next day I headed across the very well kept track to South East Point, all the while getting nice views across Bass Strait and the various Tasmanian islands. South East Point is where the famous lighthouse built in 1857 sits gazing across some of the world's roughest oceans, though on this day it was pancake flat (well a bit of a lumpy pancake anyway).

There's a really interesting museum as part of the lighthouse, and if you get the opportunity, it's very worthwhile to get a tour of the lighthouse itself. Sea Eagles soaring in the constant breeze were beautiful to watch.



Southern tip of Australian mainland



Pristine water - cold in winter!

Then I went northish on a relatively new track, the South East Walking Track, which connects South East Point with Waterloo Bay on the east coast of The Prom. There are lots of little runoffs along the way so there's plenty of water. After about 10 kilometres the track descends to Waterloo Bay, a classic intense white quartz sand beach and oh, so beautiful. The sea is clear and blue and looked very tempting for a swim, but being winter I knew it would be a bit brisk so opted to just enjoy it from the beach. From



Waterloo Bay

Waterloo the trail cuts over headlands to get to the Little Waterloo Bay camping area, which was empty. Some really nice rainforest walking followed before gradually climbing to the lookout at Kersop Peak, with distant views way back to the lighthouse about 12 kilometres away.

Its only about 45 minutes to the Refuge Cove camp site, again deserted. Refuge Cove competes for the most beautiful place in the world. Big call I know but go there and let me know why it isn't! Had the place to myself which was sublime, and the ever present ever inquisitive ravens. The water was so clear it looked like liquid glass.

Day three

Breakfast looking over Refuge Cove makes porridge and dates like the full buffet at the Windsor - too much to look at and hoping you can absorb more than is actually

“ ... it was seriously considered that the trail might never be able to be re-opened ...

possible. Unfortunately, I had to eventually leave this little slice of heaven and headed through tall eucalyptus forest up to Horn Point, where it started to rain in true winter style and didn't stop for the rest of the day. The track went to the hugely popular Sealers Cove, though at this time it was completely deserted. Boots off for the fording of Sealers Creek; fortunately the tide was low and therefore it's calf height only. High tide means swimming, so match the time of your crossing with your enthusiasm for a dip and you'll be fine. In my case, torrential rain and a temperature hovering around 8 degrees Celsius made low tide a great time for crossing!

There was a 500 metre walk up the beach and then into the forest. It seems unlikely that the stobbies and beach BBQ rubbish on the track would have been left by bushwalkers, which means that the culpits were probably boaties, horrifying and disappointing all in one. How people could come here and selfishly desecrate such a place is incomprehensible - surely the place was enjoyed at the time.

“ ... too much to look at and hoping you can absorb ...



Wilsons Prom - Southern Circuit map

Anyway, onwards through the rain - really raining rain - through the rainforest on the duckboards that have been installed through there swamp. It felt just right to be walking through such heavy rainforest swamp in such heavy rain.

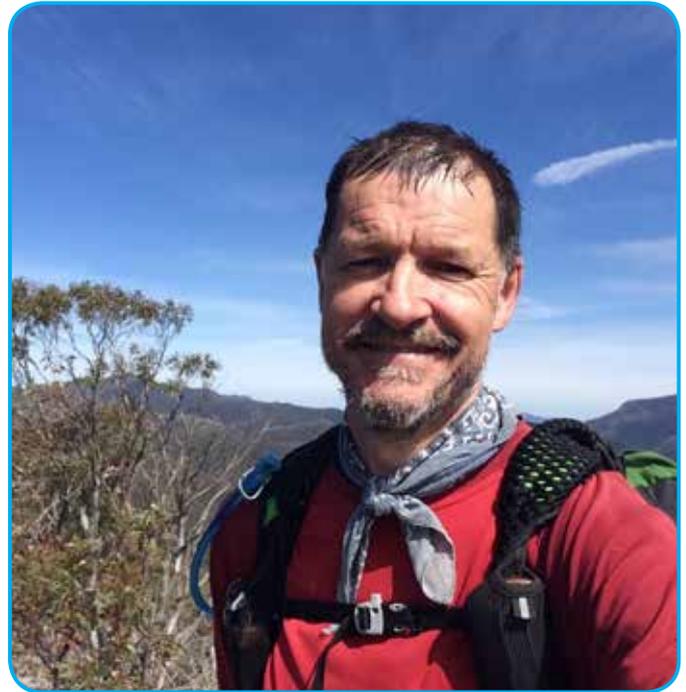
I negotiated a few areas where the floods of March 2011 had closed the track, re-opened in June 2013 after much painstaking dedicated and effort by Parks Victoria - a great job. At one point there was discussion on whether the track could be repaired because the damage was so extensive.

Having the track closed would have been a huge blow to Australian walking. Leaving the duckboards the trail gradually climbs up to Windy Saddle.

Eventually I reached Telegraph Saddle and the warmth of the waiting car.

“ Having the track closed would have been a huge blow to Australian walking

This is a must do walk. It's on great tracks, well set up camps and has spectacular scenery - if it's summer don't dare do it without some discreet means of swimming.



Hamish has been bushwalking from a early age, initially accompanying his botanist father on field plant collection trips. Memorable walks include the Western Arthurs, Overland Track, Walls of Jerusalem, Kiandra to Kosciusko both ways and during winter and anywhere in Wilsons Prom. Most recently he completed the AAWT solo from the north between Canberra and Walhalla. Hamish lives in Melbourne with his family and loves eating, Shiraz and Gippsland in roughly that order. Planning for the next trip has not yet been socialised!



Refuge Cove - most beautiful place in the world?

In the News

A Dutch woman survived five days in Victorian bush by using “bushcraft”

A Dutch woman lost in a “dense and unforgiving” Victorian forest for five days used “bushcraft”, including covering herself with mud and stuffing her clothing with river moss, to stay alive. Read more [here](#)

New High-tech Fabrics: Industry Changing Revolution

Just as digital technology has changed our social and working lives, developments in textile technology are changing our active lives. For decades, breathable and waterproof synthetic fabrics and insulation have been pushing out the old standbys of cotton and wool, improving the way we play and perform in the outdoors. But now many of these standbys are being retooled, including wool and goose down. Read more [here](#)

Beach wheelchair at Wilsons Promontory gives better experience for people with disabilities

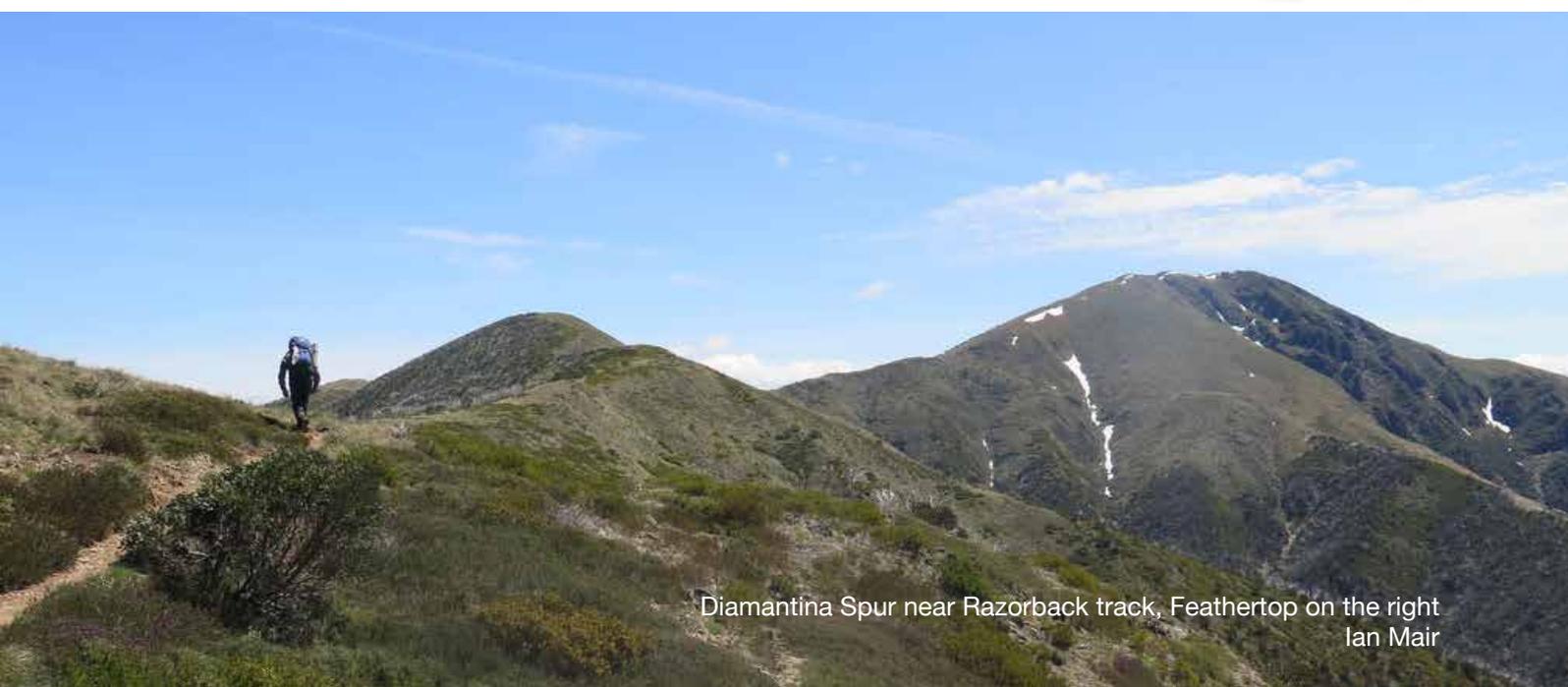
Parks Victoria presented it's first beach wheelchair that offers people with disabilities to go where they couldn't before. The chair, a first for national parks in Australia, allows users to push themselves across sand and into water. Read more [here](#)

Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan

Parks Victoria is considering significant changes to their walk between Falls Creek and Mt Hotham. Their plan is to build the third Victorian “icon” walk, and attract many more visitors walking in the area. This early concept shows access to The Razorback via the Diamantina Spur, with a potential new campsite (or hut) on the ridge or spur. In many ways it is great to see parks investing in the pursuit of bushwalking, however in this case many bushwalkers are uncomfortable with the planning process and the current plan. As the planning process is at the preliminary concept phase this makes it difficult for many bushwalkers familiar with the walk to appreciate the “upgrades”. The Draft Master Plan for the walk is due out soon and we look forward to seeing more specifics on the plan and to see how public submissions have been received. BWA will review the Draft Master Plan and keep you up to date.

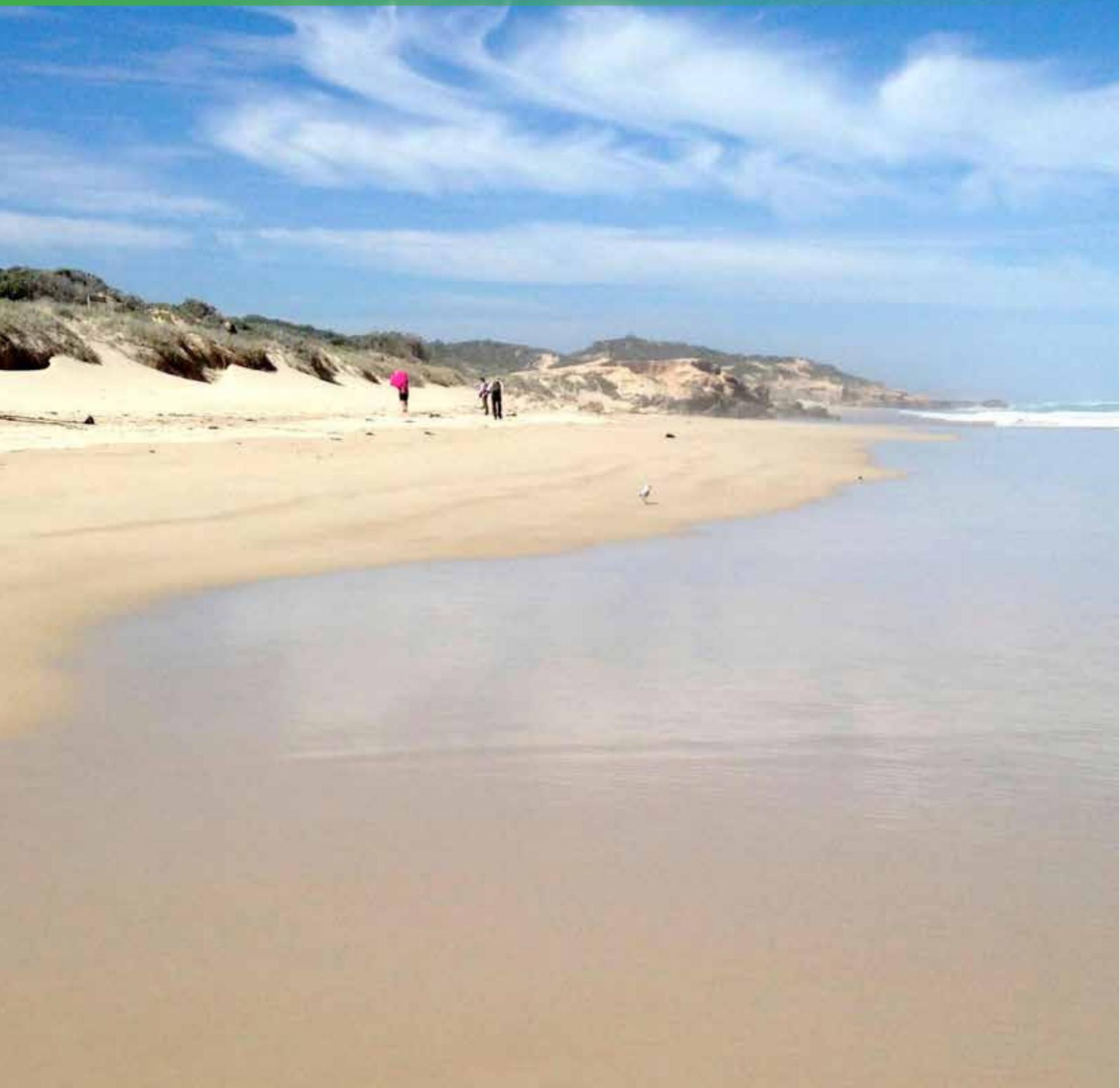
Join in the conversation at bushwalk.com.

Check out the [Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Preliminary Concept document](#).   



Diamantina Spur near Razorback track, Feathertop on the right
Ian Mair

The Great South West Walk 250 Kilometres, 14 Days ... Incredible Sarah Sharp



That is the only word I was able to use to sum up the Great South West Walk, an amazing walk that 14 others and I completed in March 2015. The 250 kilometre walk meanders around the south-west corner of Victoria, taking in forests, rivers, the ocean, beaches and cliffs.

Discovery Bay, Victoria
by Lynne Outhred

The Great South West Walk (GSWW) is spectacular. Having grown up locally I had done a few sections. I can remember being young and going out with my family helping in a working bee to build part of the track. To finally walk the whole walk in one go was incredible, but not as incredible as how it came to be, and how it exists today.

While sitting around the campfire after a day's walking we were visited by some

“ Three times a week teams ... travel out onto the track and do maintenance

of the volunteers of the Friends group that maintain and manage the walk, alongside Parks Victoria. They told us the story of the walk. In 1980, the National Park's Chief District Ranger, the late Alan (Sam) Bruton and the Principal of the local Portland High School, Bill Golding were seeking to utilise the outstanding natural assets of the area to help stimulate and educate the local students.

They were told they were mad, but the two persisted with their dream and managed to organise a co-operation between Portland

High School, the Education Department, the Lands Department, the Forestry Commission, National Parks, Local council, Commonwealth Transport Department and local landowners. Anyone who has had anything to do with a few different departments will appreciate how hard this is. The dedication they must have had. Work on the track began in 1981.

Teams of school children were transported into the scrub and varying landscapes and tasked with carving a track in the direction they were given. And from these humble beginnings, the GSWW has become one of Victoria's largest, community initiated and run projects, attracting, school groups, bushwalkers and nature lovers from all around the world.

For the past 35 years and today the GSWW has been maintained by volunteers, the Friends of the Great South West Walk. Three times a week teams of mainly retired men travel out onto the track and do maintenance.

And once a month the Friends have a committee meeting to coordinate fund raising, plan walks, organise maintenance and discuss and plan the general welfare of their beloved Great South West Walk.



Cobboboonee Forest
Sarah Sharp



The eager 2015 group
Sue Hanson

So as I walked on with my fellow hikers, we really appreciated the work these volunteers do. I walked in a group of 15. It was the Friends of the Great South West Walk's Long Walk. We had a trusty team leader, Gordon, who carted our food and bedding in his custom modified ute and trailer between the



Burnt Forest
Rita Burridge

camp. Gordon is one of the volunteers and knows every step of the track. We were also accompanied by our guide, Nevan, whose late father was Sam (one of the instigators of the walk). This left us able to enjoy the walk with only a daypack.

So after a briefing at Gordon's house we were taken to the start and set on our way. There was quite an array of us. Experienced hikers from Sydney and Melbourne, up to the age of seventy, a few couples, and a few local people, like myself, that had managed to organise time off work.

We set off, busily introducing each other, and chatting excitedly amongst ourselves. We walked along the cliff tops and beaches of Portland Bay, before we started a steady climb, inland and into the local Cobboboonie Forest, leaving the daily grind of everyday life behind us.

It wasn't long before we found our rhythm, and started enjoying the sounds and calmness of the forest about us.

By mid-afternoon we had reached camp, to be greeted by Gordon and a boiling billy on a



Glenelg River, Patterson Camp
Sarah Sharp



Waking up on the Glenelg River
Lynne Outhred

camp fire. What a pleasant surprise. Our food boxes were laid out and our, tents, bedding and bags all in easy reach. The camps are nearly all in National or State Parks, and consist of a shelter, picnic table, fire pit, eco loo, and fresh rainwater tank. There was plenty of room for our tents, which we set up before we relaxed into our evening camp.



Shade hunting on Discovery Bay
Lynne Outhred

After waking to the sound of the fire crackling, we cooked our brekky, made our lunch, packed up our tents, and continued on. This became our routine for the next two

weeks, and we all became very efficient.

The walk made its way in a north-easterly direction, through the forest to the Glenelg River. The water was an absolute delight to walk beside after the dryness and heat. The trail traces the weaving path of the river downstream to Nelson, with views of the river slowly opening up. The river has carved its way through limestone gorges up to 50 metres high and is extremely beautiful, with many lovely swimming holes and secluded campsites.

We reached Nelson, a sleepy coastal village and enjoyed a meal at the pub, and a shower at the local caravan park. Nelson sits on the edge of the river and estuary, which has an abundance of birdlife and lovely views to the river mouth.

The next section of the walk was Discovery Bay. Walking easterly along an ocean beach to the sound of the crashing waves and the flocks of seabirds, and the salty wind blowing against our backs is invigorating. And there are many interesting things to discover, whale bones, ropes, floats.



Climbing the first cape
Sarah Sharp

The camps along this section are in the shelter of the dunes, beside freshwater lakes, and we saw remains of ancient middens and signs of volcanoes. The huge dunes transport you to another world, extraordinary.



Rest stop
Sue Hanson

Then we headed inland again to Mt Richmond National Park, with delightful bush, vast stands of grass trees and views of the surrounding lands, before coming back to the coast. The views of the ocean are spectacular. We walked along rugged

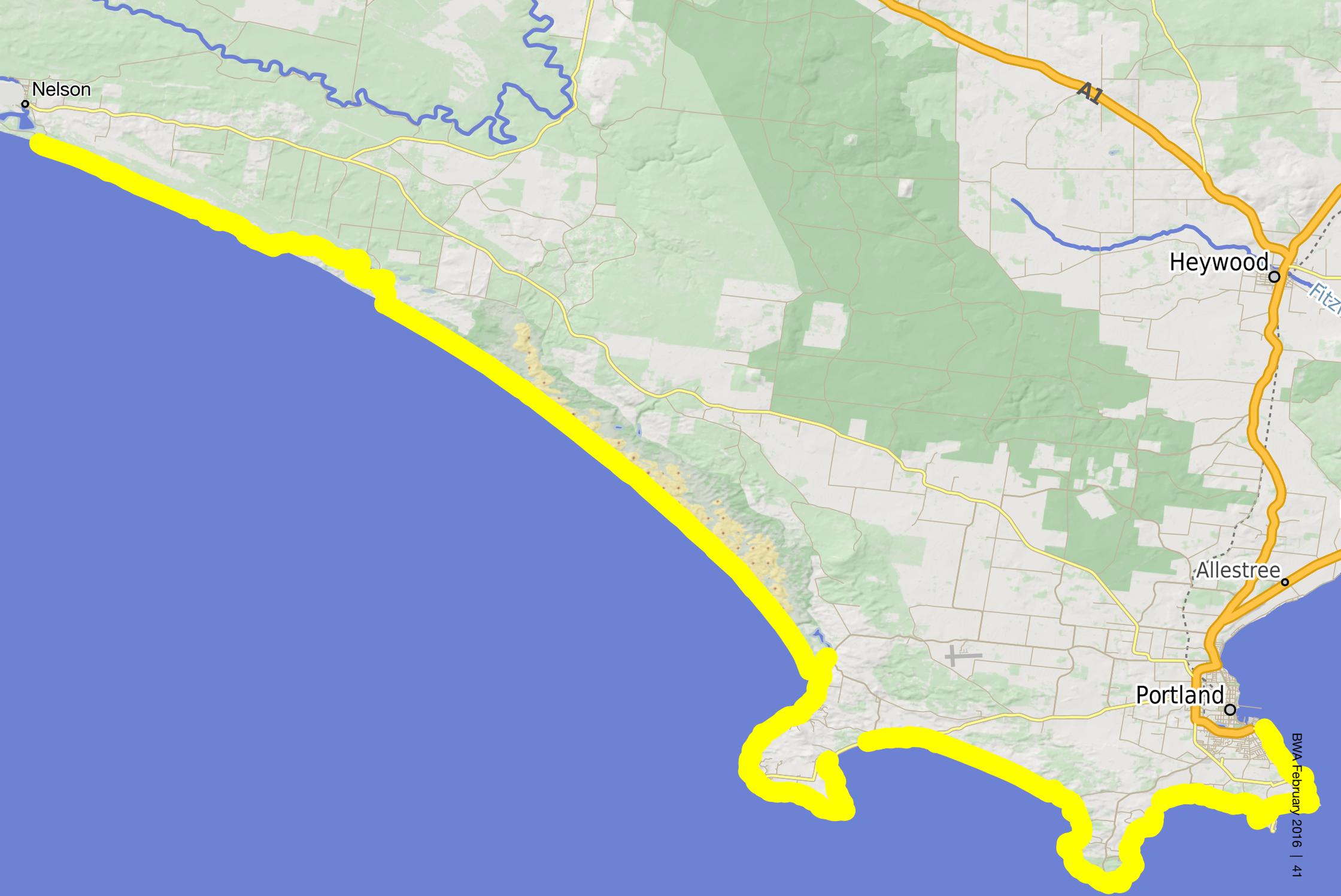


Cape Nelson Lighthouse
Lynne Outhred

(highest in Victoria) seacliffs. But beware, the weather can change. We were pounded with heavy rain and what felt like gale force winds. While some struggled with the conditions and their poorer quality coats, I found it exciting, wild. We viewed blow holes, petrified forest, a seal colony and passed through the delightful Bridgewater Bay. More beach and cliff top walking led us to the



The Springs, Cape Bridgewater
Lynne Outhred



Nelson

A1

Heywood

Fitz

Allestree

Portland

BWA February 2016 | 41

Map of Great South West Walk

Cape Nelson Lighthouse, standing proudly above the treacherous rocks. At the base of the light, is Isabella's Café, a welcome surprise for the non-locals on the walk.

Then on towards Portland, with more spectacular views, where you can watch whales, gannets, fishing boats, surfers and all the wildlife the coast has to offer.



Protected from the storm, Trewalla Camp
Dean Thomas

Exhausted, elated and proud we make it back into Portland to be greeted by Gordon and some other members of the Friends.

What an incredible experience, one I will never forget. I found it quite overwhelming

that volunteers maintain the whole walk. It is a credit to them.



Yellow Rock
Sue Hanson

And so after completing the walk, I have joined the Friends of the GSWW. I am now on the committee and I too want to share my love of this incredible walk and help others to experience something special and made possible by an incredible group of everyday people, like you and me.

For enquiries on the Friends of the GSWW Long Walk, please contact Sarah at sarah@capenelson.com



Cape Nelson
Sarah Sharp

Magazines



Wild 151 issue

Wild, Australia's wilderness adventure magazine

Bringing in 2016, "The echo of sacred songs" is Wild's 151st issue and the first to take a strong stance on the issue of Native Title. Our contributors have collected tidbits of traditional knowledge from around the country to offer a fresh perspective on Australia and its Indigenous peoples.



AG Outdoor Jan-Feb issue

- Story on the Whitsunday Islands' Ngaro Sea Trail, one of Australia's premier sea kayak adventures

- Five of the world's best paddle destinations, including two Aussie ones.

- A brilliant father-son canoe adventure, a kayak trip in southwest Tassie, and a behind-the-scenes look at how canoes are built.

- Road trip to Coober Pedy in South Oz, discover the hidden secrets of British Columbia's Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region and profile one of Australia's premier female mountain bikers.



The Great Walks Dec-Jan issue

Great Walks delivers stories of amazing walking adventures, walk guides with marked maps, gear tests and reviews, preparation and conditioning advice, a various, and often-overlooked, techniques and tips for more enjoyable walking.

Read more at greatmagazines.com.au

- Three Capes Track

- Grampians Peaks Trail

- Mount Warning

- Xmas gift guide

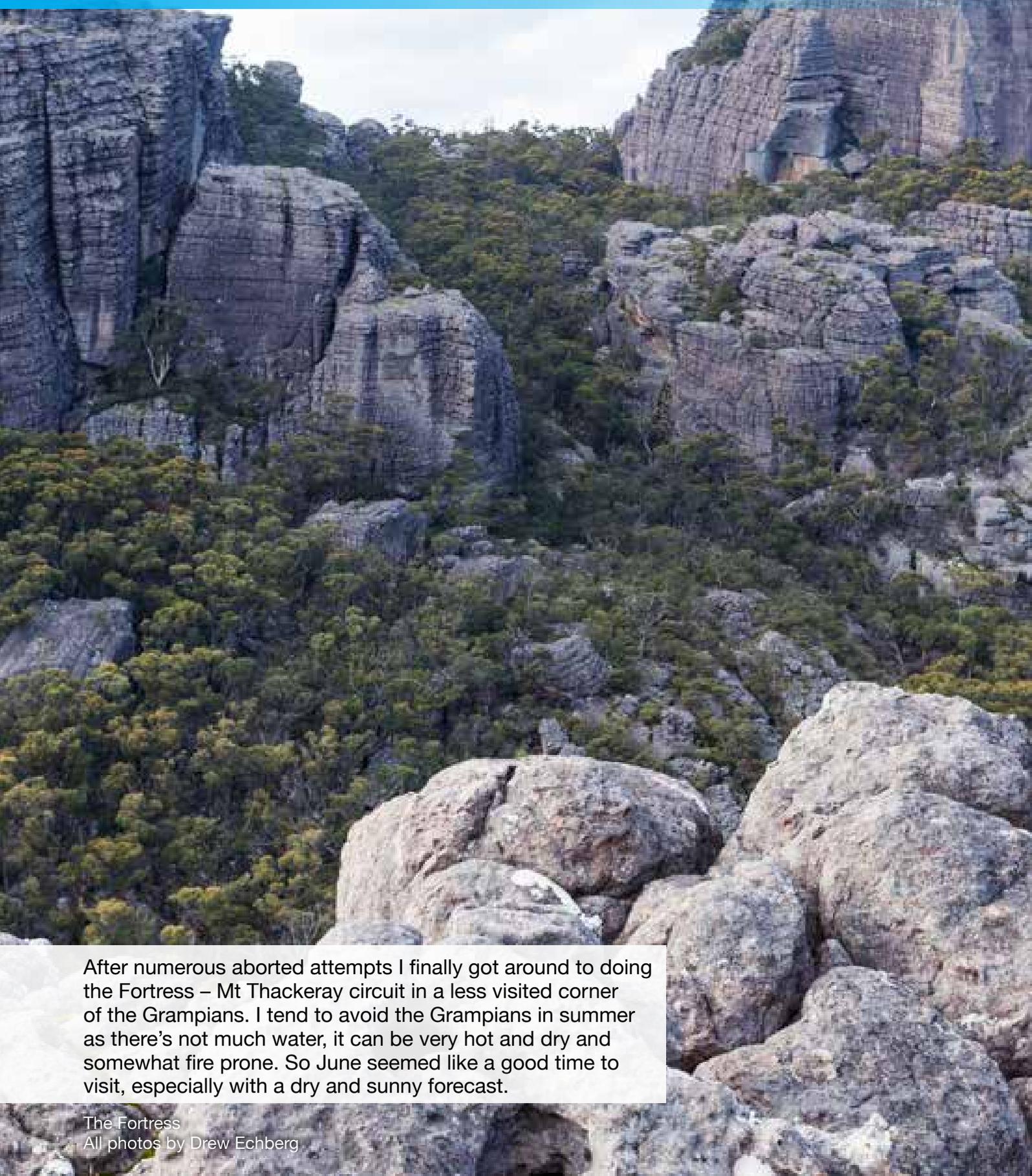
- Wilderness first aid



Fortress

Mt Thackeray Circuit, Grampians

Drew Echberg aka Drew



After numerous aborted attempts I finally got around to doing the Fortress – Mt Thackeray circuit in a less visited corner of the Grampians. I tend to avoid the Grampians in summer as there's not much water, it can be very hot and dry and somewhat fire prone. So June seemed like a good time to visit, especially with a dry and sunny forecast.

We drove up on Friday night and camped at near Buandik, about four hours from Melbourne via Dunkeld. There are a number of spots south of Buandik. You can camp at Buandik and pay \$34 for the luxury of some grass, a toilet, a tap, a fire pit and a table to have your brekky at. And lots of grazing roos and wallabies.

On Saturday our starting point was at Deep Creek, which has plenty of flat ground for camping and a creek that may be unreliable in summer. Given that it's meant to be a three day walk (and with the days at their shortest in mid-June), we thought we shouldn't stuff around too much. We were walking by 8.45 am, early for us: early starts are not our forte. I'd read that Manja Shelter to Western Cave would take 3-4 hours, and another 4-5 hours to Mount Thackeray Camp, so we were expecting a 7 or 8 hour today even though we'd taken a couple of kilometres off by starting at Deep Creek.

After 90 minutes or so and a fairly steep climb we'd reached a spot just off the side of the track (a little scramble) with great views towards The Fortress, across the plains and with Mt Thackeray also visible. After less than two hours walking from the start we were at Western Cave. The creek was flowing nicely and there was a pretty waterfall. The next section of walking to Eastern Cave was really nice, with lots of rock formations, cliffs, some good views, a really huge weird earthworm and lots of bright orange fungus things.



Western Cave

Another half hour or so (including a rest to admire the views) brought us to Eastern Cave. There were better camping caves here than Western Cave, but a steep couple

of hundred metres of descent to get water, probably not flowing in summer or early autumn. Much to our disappointment we found that after descending from the Eastern Cave site we were walking on a road. I hadn't looked that carefully at the map or notes and thought it was only the second day that involved road walking. It wasn't the most exciting walking for the rest of the day, especially with the fire-damaged nature of the bush. But it was quick. We stopped for lunch along the way and arrived at Mt Thackeray campsite around 2.15 pm after collecting water at a creek that crossed the road a few hundred metres before the campsite. We must have eaten our Weet Bix that morning as it only took us around 5 hours instead of the expected 7 or 8.



Fungus

The campsite was more or less a car camping spot, but thankfully no cars or other people were there. After setting up our tents and having a cup of tea we headed off for Mt Thackeray summit. With lots of brief stops for photos on the way up this climb took us 45 minutes or so. It was really beautiful country, classic Grampians, with amazing rock formations all over the place. Great views from the top too. Looking towards



Burnt trees and rock face between Western Cave and Eastern Cave

The Fortress across the rocky landscape I thought that surely, with a bit of effort (and budget), a wonderful dedicated walking track could be built that would pass through all those rock formations, rather than forcing people to plod along a road. I thought maybe the new Grampians Peaks Trail will remedy this. Later I found out that it won't. Unfortunately the Peaks Trail bypasses this beautiful area.



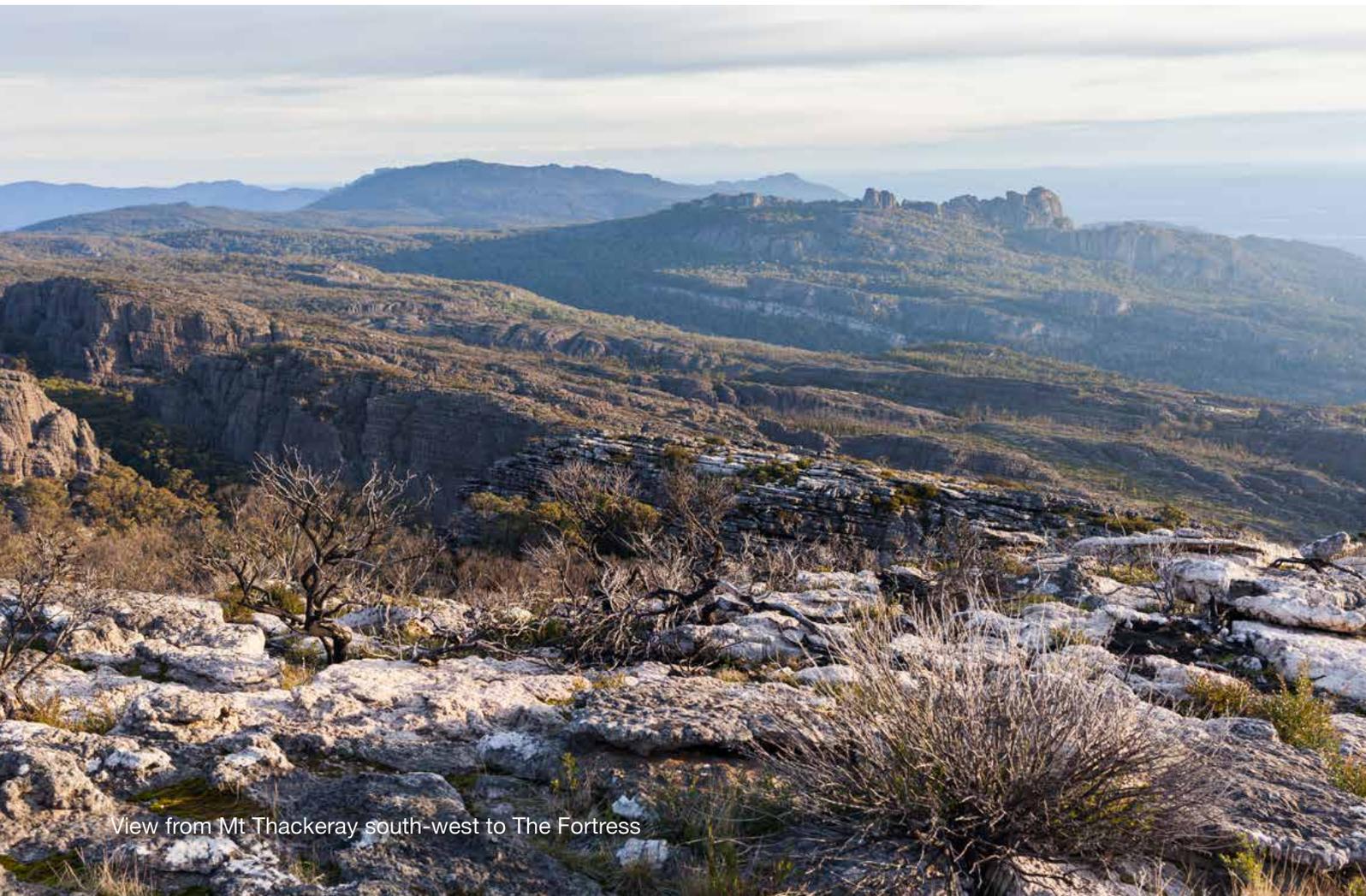
Rock face on the climb up Mt Thackeray

We returned to camp and enjoyed a pleasant evening. Another pair of walkers arrived, making their rather heavy dinner with an enormous broccoli, a tin of coconut milk, glass jars of spices and various other heavy

ingredients. Oh well, they got more exercise than us with our dehydrated meal.

Despite being a clear night it was surprisingly mild - I could have left the winter sleeping bag at home! It appears that fires are not allowed. I'm unsure what the logic is. At Buandik there are "official" fire pits every few metres. At Thackeray There was an enormous fire ring filled with ash - clearly plenty of fires have been had there. The Grampians is a tinder box in summer but pretty damp and cold in winter. Maybe a blanket fire ban from November to April would make more sense.

On Sunday we left around 9.30 am. We collected water a few hundred metres down the road, and set a good pace, thinking of visiting wineries on the way home, perhaps. Apart from a few nice views it was pretty boring walking along the road. However, the bush will only get prettier as it continues to recover from fire (unless there's another one of course). After seven kilometres or so we left the road and descended Hut Creek Track. On Chapman's map a campsite is marked by the creek at the bottom of the descent, but it has mostly been reclaimed by weeds - it



View from Mt Thackeray south-west to The Fortress

looked like there were more flat, clear spots after crossing the creek. The next section was fairly pleasant, criss-crossing the creek and enjoying the sunshine. Unfortunately though there are lots of weeds around. After a few kilometres we came out on the Buandik road, which we followed for a few hundred metres to get to the Manja Shelter Car Park. We continued on to Manja Shelter, where the rock paintings are very faint and rather underwhelming. The ugly security fence also detracts somewhat from the experience. It's a shame that the indigenous cultural heritage attracts vandals and the fence is necessary. We had some lunch basking on the rocks and then followed an overgrown track back to our car, finished by about 2 pm.

“... a wonderful dedicated walking track could be built that would pass through all those rock formations ...”

We walked 29 kilometres in 10 hours including breaks, with 1456 metres of ascent and descent. Not a bad walk but not amazing. Typically for the Grampians, there are some really nice sections but some pretty dull sections of road bashing, made worse

by the fire damage. Unless you're driving up from Melbourne (or somewhere else far away) and starting on the same day then it's really only a two day walk. If you camped at Western Cave you could spend a lot of time exploring and rock scrambling in that area. It could be quite fun but potentially a little dangerous. It could also be great fun to go off-track from Mt Thackeray west towards the start, but I've got no idea how slow and difficult the going might be - you might end up lost in a maze of rock formations.



Drew Echberg is a Melbourne photographer. He grew up doing the odd bushwalk but over the last few years has become quite obsessed. Drew most often walks in the Victorian alps but has also walked in Patagonia, Nepal, West Africa, Iceland and various other places. Photographically he's more interested in weird and ugly scenes than conventionally beautiful landscapes, but still lugs his heavy camera with him on most walks. The photos in this article were shot with a Canon 5DMkii with a Canon 35 mm f2 lens. You can see his photos at drewechberg.com



On the descent from Mt Thackeray

Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc.

Bushwalking Club Profile

Club President Ian Mair



Melbourne Bushwalkers has enjoyed accessible CBD locations for over 75 years. It continues to offer over 400 members and several hundred visitors annually a diverse program of outdoors activities, including its unique Sunday Bus Walks, throughout Victoria and beyond. The club meets every Wednesday night.

Descending Eskdale Spur on Mt Bogong, Victoria.
Ian Mair

Melbourne Bushwalkers embodies the spirits of adventure, inclusiveness and fun. Forged from a vision of hope amongst those escaping the ravages of war-torn Europe, it continues to welcome walkers of all backgrounds. Arguably it was the first mixed-gender club in Victoria, commencing in April 1940, with only YHA Bushwalking also offering shared walking experiences. From its convenient CBD location the club draws its membership from across Victoria and beyond. MBW is a vibrant club with over 400 members exploring and engaging with the outdoors wherever their imagination leads them.

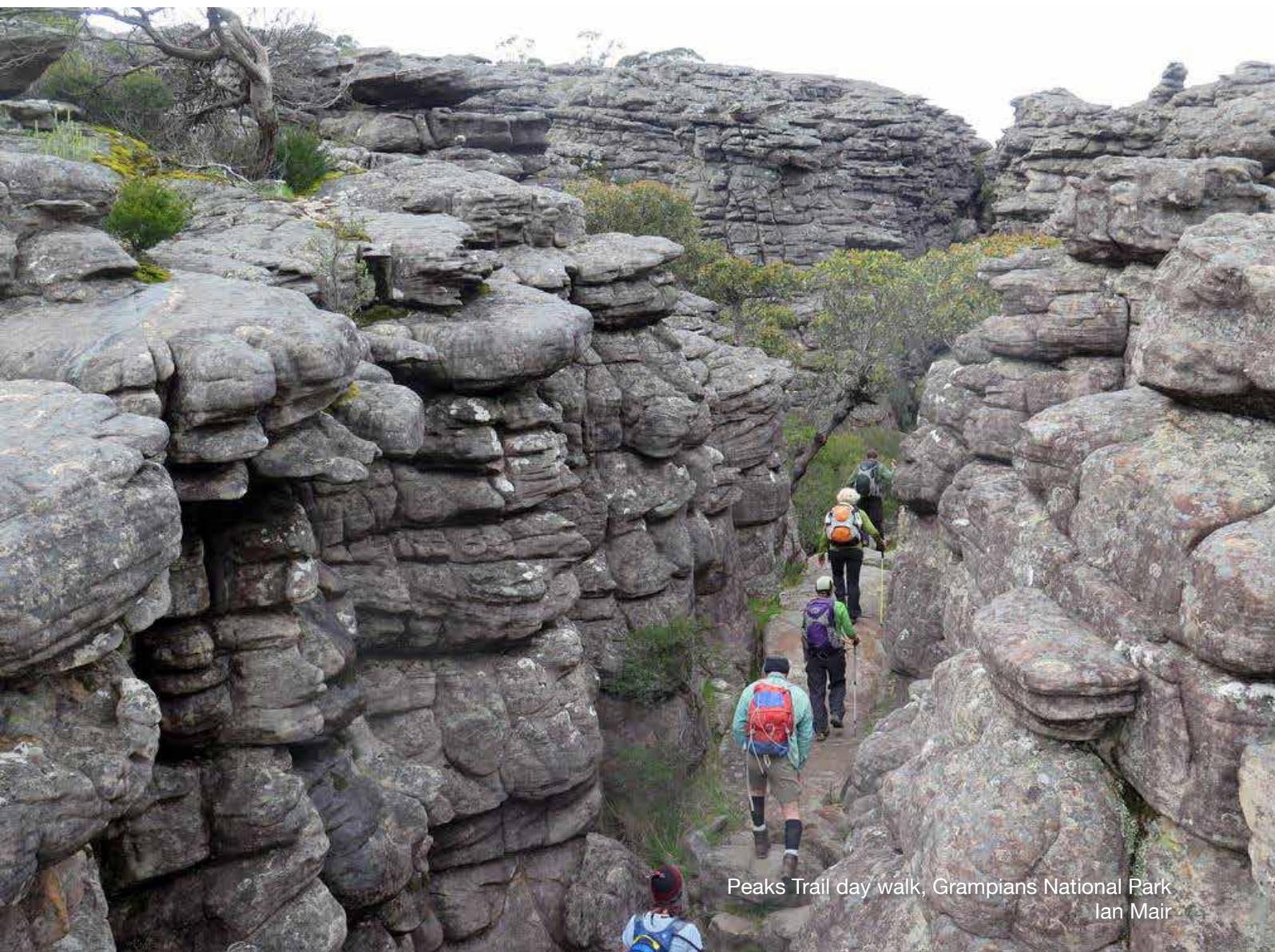
Melbourne Bushwalkers believes in spreading the word about the joys of bushwalking irrespective of how or where it is embraced. Most club activities are open to visitors, whilst information on the club's programs and activity details are readily accessed through its website and Facebook presences. So too are helpful tips on how to prepare for a safe and memorable adventure.

The spirit of sharing extends to being an active participant in Bushwalking Victoria, the peak body for Bushwalking in Victoria, a foundation member of the Victorian National Parks Association and a collaborator with other Victorian Clubs on joint activities.

Whilst advances in communications technologies have transformed the landscape of social structures through the emergence of organisations like MeetUp, Facebook and many others, more traditional clubs like Melbourne Bushwalkers continue to evolve and prosper by embracing the new where it fits. No single framework meets the preferences of all bushwalkers, now or into the future.

In the early years Melbourne Bushwalkers faced different challenges not paralleled today. Convenient access to bushwalking

“... believes in spreading the word about the joys of bushwalking irrespective of how or where it is embraced ...”



Peaks Trail day walk, Grampians National Park
Ian Mair



Pushing the furniture van on a Sunday walk, 1963
Barry Short

venues required a bold solution that has become a tradition. In the past there was a converted furniture van; today we have an air-conditioned coach that moves members in comfort on popular Sunday walks. Gone are the days of helping to dislodge a bogged van on a remote country road, or enduring bone-rattling rides on hard wooden benches, but the camaraderie developed has seeped deep into the club's DNA. New members are embraced for their shared passion for bushwalking and preparedness to shoulder

the load to help each other, irrespective of the activity type or transport mode.

An active activities program caters for all skill levels and ages. Training and mentor programs in navigation, first aid, leadership and basic backpacking equipment selection and use enhance the

“... passion for bushwalking and preparedness to shoulder the load to help each other ...”

competence and confidence of members to take on new adventures and challenges. We have a wide selection of equipment for hire: tents, packs, GPSs, PLBs, and other hiking gear, easing the barriers to trying something new. With more than three activities a week on average, there is plenty of scope for involvement, whether you are under 35 or over 70, or anywhere in between. Gender balance has moved from around 38% female in 1980 to closer to 60% today.

Day walks across the week, longer weekend walks and extended ventures encompassing longer distance routes, blend with other



Razorback day walk, Cathedral Range.
Ian Mair

options for camping, skiing, cycling and more social events to meet all preferences. The more popular of Australia's and New Zealand's iconic walks feature repeatedly to ensure that newer members have the chance to experience them too as they prepare for the path less travelled. These include the Overland Track and Frenchmans Cap (Tasmania), The Larapinta Trail (Northern Territory), Wilsons Promontory Circuit, Great Ocean Walk and Great South West Walk (Victoria), The Milford, Routeburn and Kepler Tracks (New Zealand), to name just some. Experienced leaders give their time to help newer walkers develop a passion of their own as they savour the scope of what bushwalking has to offer.

Organised activities extend beyond the shores of Australia and New Zealand. Though less frequent, trips further afield are well catered for to places as far apart as the UK and Cambodia.

“ If a member wants to lead a trip, the club will help make it happen.



A Western Arthurs steep descent, Tasmania
Ian Mair

If a member wants to lead a trip, the club will help make it happen. More often, club members will band together and undertake a private trip together, frequently sharing the experience with fellow club members during our regular social slide nights.



Check the club out at <http://mbw.org.au> or <https://www.facebook.com/melbournebushwalkers/>



South West Cape, Tasmania
Ian Mair

Victoria Walks - Exploring Victoria's Urban Walks and Tracks

Andrea Rowe



While thoughts of walking in Victoria conjure up high country and classic coastal trails, there's also a host of scenic city and regional rambling routes to explore. Victoria Walks promotes these walks, and also encourages walkers to share their own favourites.

About Victoria Walks

Some of Victoria's diverse walking trails have been made more accessible thanks to Victoria Walks. Showcasing classic strolls as well as urban secrets, their walking maps have provided useful tips and suggestions for countless walkers.

Since 2009, Victoria Walks has been inspiring more people to get out and walk with free online walking maps covering Victorian towns and neighbourhoods. Victoria Walks also offer a host of helpful and contemporary walking activity sheets and suggestions on how to advocate for more walkable neighbourhoods.

Victoria Walks is an independent walking for health organisation with a mission to nurture supportive walking neighbourhoods in Victoria. They promote positive walking experiences for all, and have developed some super online resources for walkers, by walkers.

“They promote positive walking experiences for all ...”

Walks on every doorstep

Victoria certainly ticks the boxes for great wilderness walks. But when you have limited time to walk while staying in shape, or you're gently introducing friends and family to walking, you sometimes need to look closer to home.

Regional towns and Melbourne's suburbs have a walk on every doorstep, and [Victoria Walks](#) demonstrates that you don't need to go too far to experience what's on offer.

The Victoria Walks online [Walking Maps](#) are a great planning resource, and are the result of walkers sharing information. With a keen walking family who frequently hosts international travellers, I've found the site to be incredibly helpful planning around varying abilities, interests and budgets for visitors.

Recognising that not every walk needs to be an epic adventure, the site features over 1300 shared urban and outer Melbourne and regional Victorian walks, and a few national highlights as well. The website is





easy to navigate, allowing you to search walking routes via locations, or keywords such as parks, green walks, art and culture and historical interest. For the best walks, select Staff Picks. The images are a key feature, submitted by people who've actually walked the trail and demonstrating realistic conditions of paths and access points. The list is growing as avid walkers

continue to upload images and walking track descriptions detailing locations and points of interest, length, duration and walk rating. No glossy brochure images and poetic licence, just realistic tips for exploring by foot.

Walkers can create and submit their own walks and share favourite local routes. We've enjoyed submitting walking routes from our neighbourhood, and uploading images of landmarks and conditions, before sharing it on social media with friends.

Melbourne has proven to be the perfect walking city, merging nature with urban sprawl. The story of a city unfolds on the [Princes Bridge Yarra River Loop Walk](#) or you can head for history with the [Carlton Historical Walk](#).

Regular contributors are continually updating their favourite local walks. [The Brimbank Park Nature Trail](#) wanders by western plains and Maribyrnong River scenery, while the [Jells Park Circuit](#) is a firm favourite with the birders.



Norman Bay, Wilsons Prom
Victoria Walks

Beyond the city there's a picture perfect forest trail at Gembrook. Towns like Bendigo allow you to stretch your legs and your mind, as you connect with culture, history and country Victoria.

For coastal walking experiences the Mornington Peninsula's Sorrento Backbeach to Portsea Village, and across the Bay at Edwards Point, St Leonards offer coastal woodlands, lovely views and family friendly trails.

There's the iconic walks too like the Prom's Tidal River to Squeaky Beach and the Alpine National Park's Moroka Gorge - both consistently gaining praise from experienced walkers.

From Mildura to Mallacoota, so many of these routes have been uploaded by others keen to share walks on their doorstep. Victoria Walks has presented them as a comprehensive resource to plan regional and urban meanderings, and it's all supporting a more connected and healthy walking community.

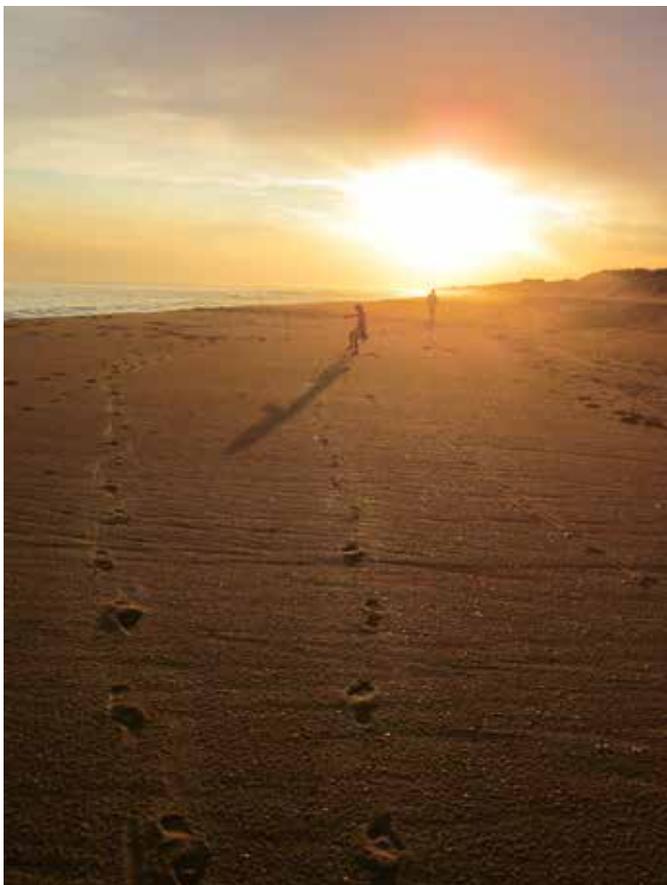


Mt Erica, Baw Baw National Park
Andrea Rowe

You can discover Victoria's walks, download track routes and notes, or map your favourites to share with others at walkingmaps.com.au

Established in 2009, Victoria Walks is all about inspiring more people to get on their feet! Whether you walk for health or leisure, Victoria Walks is on a mission to encourage more people to walk every day. They actively nurture supportive walking neighbourhoods throughout Victoria so that people can enjoy positive walking experiences. victoriawalks.org.au and at facebook.com/victoriawalks1

You can search for walking routes, create your own maps and share your walking experiences at walkingmaps.com.au. This free on-line resource helps you find and prepare walking routes right where you live, work and play.



Mornington Peninsula National Park
Andrea Rowe

Photo Gallery



BWA Photo Competition

Your mind is like a live camera
that is constantly taking pictures
of every single moment that comes onto you...
So be a good photographer!

David Acuna



Other States February 2015

WINNER



Gardens of Stone
Tom Brennan

After leading a club trip to Breakfast Creek Canyon in the Blue Mountains I drove to the end of a nearby firetrail, set up a tent, and then walked down a track until I reached the cliff edge overlooking the Carne Creek Gorge. There was a brief moment looking along the cliffs after sunset when the sun lit up the high clouds.

Canon 650D, 10-22 mm lens at 10 mm, 1/6 second, f/8.0, ISO 100, Grad ND Filter.



Fritzroy Falls,
the beginning
Lorraine Parker



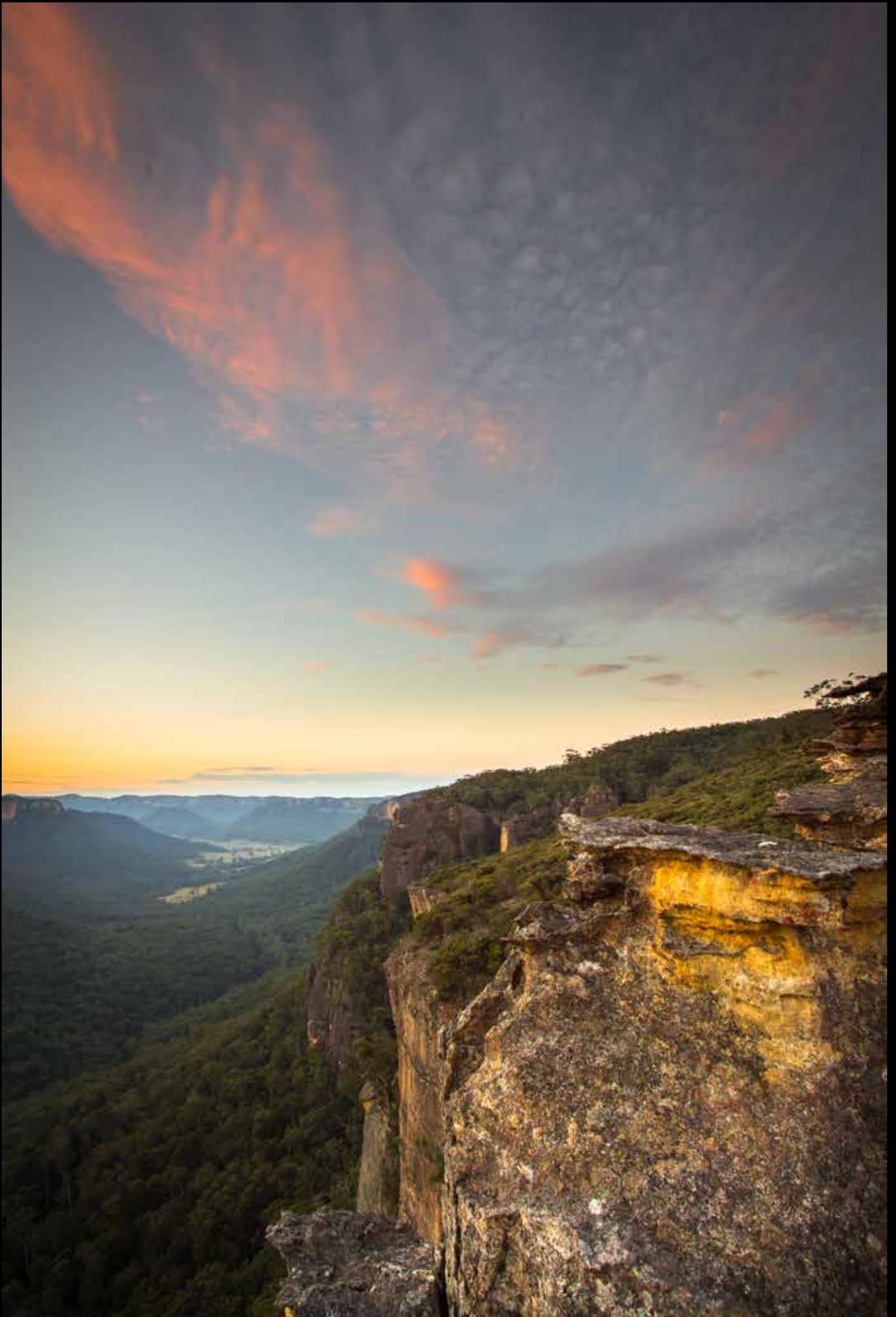
Cape Hauy
landsmith



Falls on Palona Brook
John Walker



Mackenzie Falls
Brian Eglinton



Tasmania February 2015

WINNER



Misty Mountain Hop
North-north-west

During a lazy ramble through the Traveller Range, Walls and Mountains of Jupiter, three nights were spent in high exposed camps, waiting for just this - the morning light on Geryon, the Acropolis and the DuCane Range. Didn't get it until the last of those nights but it was certainly worth waiting for.



Misty morning
Tigercat



A sunday morning
on the Tyndalls
Osik



Wet Cave Point
Brian Eglinton



Mt Manfred
Graham51



Near St Columba Falls
landsmith



Halls Falls
near St Columba
Lorraine Parker



Landscapes February 2015

WINNER



River of cloud
Tom Brennan

This was shot on a Sydney Bush Walkers photography walk. On the Sunday morning we woke early and did the short walk out to Anvil Rock on the rim of the Grose Valley. While the sunrise itself was fairly unspectacular, the river of cloud flowing through the valley was the highlight of the morning.

Canon 650D, 10-22 mm lens at 10 mm, three shots at 1.6 second/6 second/25 second, f/9.0, ISO 100.



Time for a ramble
Osik



Lake Helios
Graham51



Lake Herbert
Brian Eglinton



Bay of Fires
landsmith



Tahune reflections
North-north-west



Cape Hauy
Lorraine Parker



Non-landscapes February 2015

WINNER



Mustard-Bellied Snake
Tom Brennan

On a club trip I led through Cesspit and Dumbano Canyons, we came across a lot of snakes, perhaps six all up. Being a cold place, they were generally pretty sluggish and unmoving. This was the most photogenic, a beautiful little Mustard-Bellied Snake (*Drysdalia rhodogaster*) sitting on a log below the junction of the two canyons.

Canon S120, 1/60 second, f/2.0, ISO 400.



Painted Cliffs,
Marai Island
Lorraine Parker



Elysian dreaming
Osik



Just looking
Brian Eglinton



Palona
limestone formation
John Walker



Time out for a scratch
landsmith



Warts and all
Graham51



Other States

March 2015

WINNER



The Washing Machine
Tom Brennan

The day after Gardens of Stone, I took my camera for a solo trip through Rocky Creek Canyon. I spent quite some time shooting in the canyon, and by early afternoon, everyone else had left and I had the canyon to myself. The Washing Machine is a tricky drop near the start of the canyon, and it was the last spot I stopped for photos on the way back up through the canyon. The light was quite different than on the way down, and after about 15 minutes of setting up and trying to keep the lens from fogging up, I managed to get this shot.

Canon 650D, 10-22 mm lens at 10 mm, 3.2 second, f/8.0, ISO 200, Circular Polarising Filter.



You talkin' to me?
landsmith



Tea Tree,
Lower Kangaroo Creek
John Walker



Wildflower Track,
Black Hill
Brian Eglinton



Deep Creek morning
Beardless



Tasmania March 2015

WINNER



Lake Ewart and
early morning mist
clings to Eldon Bluff
MJD

My second traverse of the Eldons in two years and this time we got to camp at Lake Ewart. This photo was taken in the morning as the mist slowly and reluctantly lifted from Eldon Bluff. It's a rugged, remote and largely untracked area with Eldon Bluff standing like a huge sentinel at the eastern end of the range and dominating the views for several days. There are several campsites around Lake Ewart and this one protected us nicely from the overnight wind and rain despite being right next to the lake. The full traverse from Lake Burbury to Pigeon House Hill is a serious undertaking and includes a full day of boulder hopping along the range between Eldon Peak and Eldon Bluff.



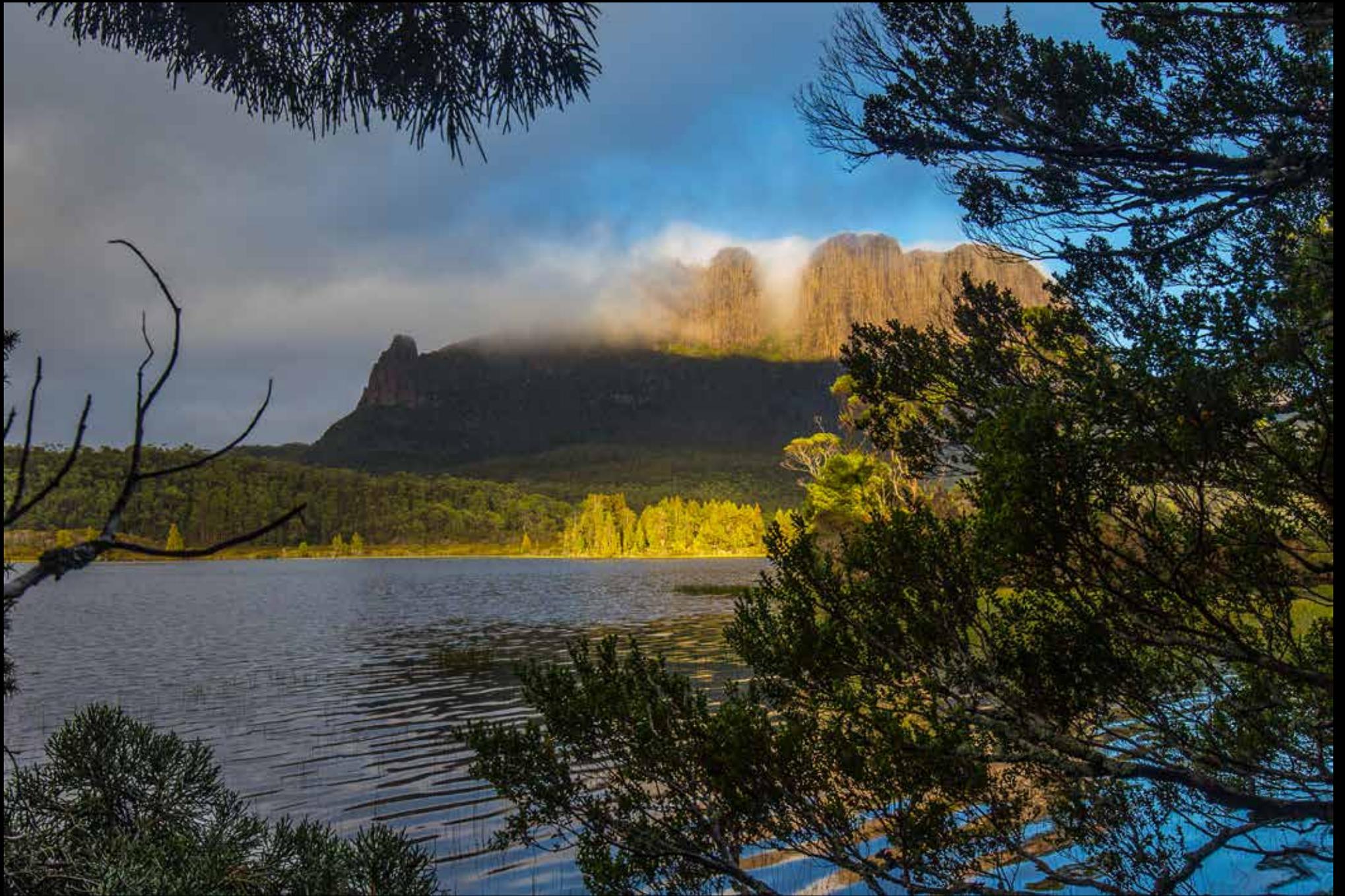
Sunset on Gould Plateau
Graham51



The path less taken
North-north-west



NW Bay River
Tigercat



Landscapes March 2015

WINNER



Searchlights at dawn
Tom Brennan

After a night sleeping out on Narrow Neck, I did a short walk to a lookout that I didn't remember much about. It looked like sunrise was going to be clouded in, but a few rays of light were able to escape through the clouds, looking for all the world like high-powered torch beams.

Canon 650D, 10-22 mm lens at 10 mm, 1.0 second, f/9.0, ISO 100, Grad ND Filter.



Reach for the stars
(Eldon Bluff)
MJD



Ducane morning
Graham51



Good weather at last
North-north-west



Looking up
Cameron Semple



Megalong afternoon
John Walker



Shipstern wave
Tigercat



Non-landscapes

March 2015

WINNER



Hygrocybe firma,
Myrtle Forest
Andrei Nikulinsky

Red Waxcap (*Hygrocybe firma*). A striking fungi, it varies in colour from deep, blood red through to light orange and washed-out yellow. I often find them in a disturbed ground of leaf-litter in and around ferns and mosses. This is a “focus-stacked” image of 19 exposures taken near Collinsvale.



The eye has it
Tom Brennan



Stream ripples
Tigercat



Pebbles on
Boat Harbour Beach
Beardless



Southern
Brown Bandicoot
Brian Eglinton



Bush relics
John Walker



Gear Freak



Every so often someone is brave enough to go back to basic principles and start the design process from scratch. This pack looks unusual, it's a bit tricky to use but it's by far the most comfortable pack I have ever worn.

Back of Peak Aspiration main pack
Fiona McClelland

Aarn Pack Review

Matt McClelland

In third world countries, people carry large loads on their heads. Research suggests that carrying large loads like this is significantly more energy efficient than carrying the same load in a conventional pack. This is because the centre of gravity of your body and load is still in line with your normal centre of gravity. The reason we lean forward with a heavy pack is to try to maintain balance, and this lean makes walking that much harder.

Carrying large loads on your head is not ideal because the centre of gravity is higher, making you top-heavy. The pack is designed by New Zealand trumper Aarn Tate. Aarn's design moves the centre of gravity of the pack to the natural point for your body. In practical terms it means that your load feels significantly lighter, it's easier to keep balance and you use less energy walking. I know it's very subjective, but I reckon my Aarn pack feels around 20% lighter compared to the same mass in my older internal frame pack.

I'm impressed with the pack's features, but they do increase the complexity of using it. Somewhat like going to an Apple store, when I bought my pack it came with an in-store lesson. This was surprisingly worthwhile. I also watched a few videos on YouTube to learn more. You don't just pick this baby up and start walking. You get the basics quickly, but it took me a full day and a bit in the bush until I could make all the little adjustments without having to think about it.

Okay, that is all a bunch of broad sweeping statements. So let me give you a bit of context. When doing a short overnight walk for fun, I carry around 8-12 kilograms. If walking for work I add an extra 5-8 kilograms of equipment. Most of my walking is on formed and faint informal tracks, with some off-track walking. Let's look at the key differences between this pack and more conventional internal frame packs.



Front Pockets

You can spot an Aarn pack from a mile away because of the two goofy looking front pockets attached to the harness. These pockets are nicknamed, sexistly, but somewhat appropriately, "boobs" or "Pamelas". These pockets have a capacity of six litres each.

The pockets have a small frame that runs diagonally through them, transferring the weight to your hip belt, not your shoulders - very clever. The top of the pockets attach to your harness with a sliding clip just below the sternum.

The instructions recommend that the pockets are where you carry the bulk of your weight, so I use the pockets for water, fuel, electronic stuff and heavier food. This is how the centre of gravity shift is achieved, so you need to completely re-think weight distribution when packing.

“Aarn's design moves the centre of gravity of the pack to the natural point for your body”

The pockets also have all items needed during the day like maps, snacks and gadgets. The front pockets are really easily accessible whilst walking, very handy. I was surprised to notice that I would usually keep the pack on when I stop for a break.

I had two main worries about the pockets. Firstly, would they impede the view of my step? Secondly, would it be too hot with them against your chest?

View: The front pockets clip together with a gap between them. You can easily look down between the pockets and see your feet. One walk had a scramble down a sheer rock wall. I unclipped the pockets allowing them to pivot back under my arms to give me full view. At the bottom I realised I didn't need unclip them, but it's nice to have the option if I need to get close to the cliff.

Heat: I was surprised by the design of the frame in the pockets. The frame has a concave shape that hold the pockets away from your body, allowing for plenty of airflow

“ These systems ... allow you to ... move in a more natural way ...

and also probably making it comfortable for women. There is some room for adjustment, but I'm unsure how it would work for large-breasted women.

The only annoyance I found with the pack is doing up the straps. The front pockets get in the way when adjusting your hip buckle. There are also an extra two straps connecting the pockets to do and undo when taking your pack on and off. Aarn recommends not doing up the bottom Balance Pocket connector strap. That strap is primarily used when you clip the pockets together as a daypack. Whilst it's not a great problem I do find it a tad annoying. Having said that I can't think of a way to solve it and it only impacts a few times a day.

Ohh I almost forgot. The front pockets can unclip easily, which is handy when you need just the main pack for day walks. There's also a strap with the pockets that turn them into a summit pack, handy if you want to leave the main pack and do a side trip with essential gear.

“ The front pockets can unclip easily ...



Top sliding clip of pocket on harness
Matt McClelland

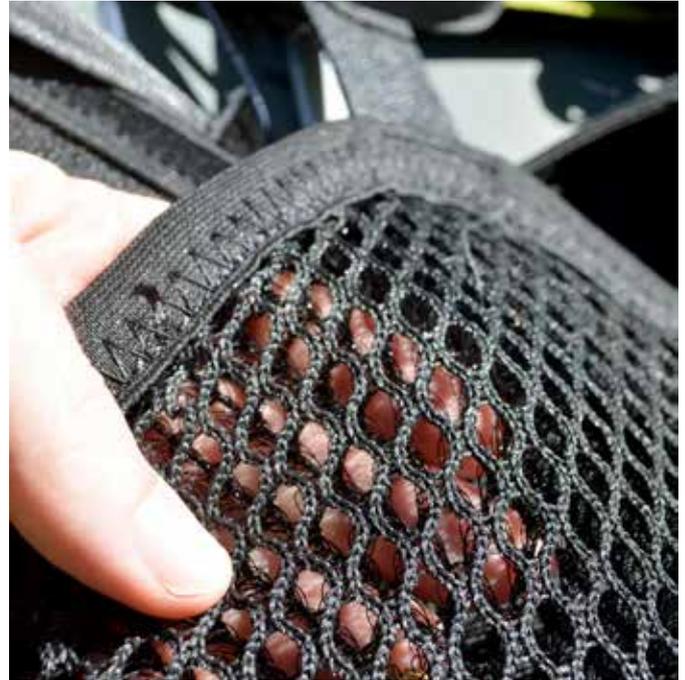
Harness

The Aarn website mentions a “Flow” systems, and when looking for a pack I assumed it was marketing spin and just ignored it. When I first put on an Aarn pack on I thought “That’s weird”, in a clever way.

Aarn call it “Natural Movement” and it is a good description. There are various straps and loops on the harness that allows:

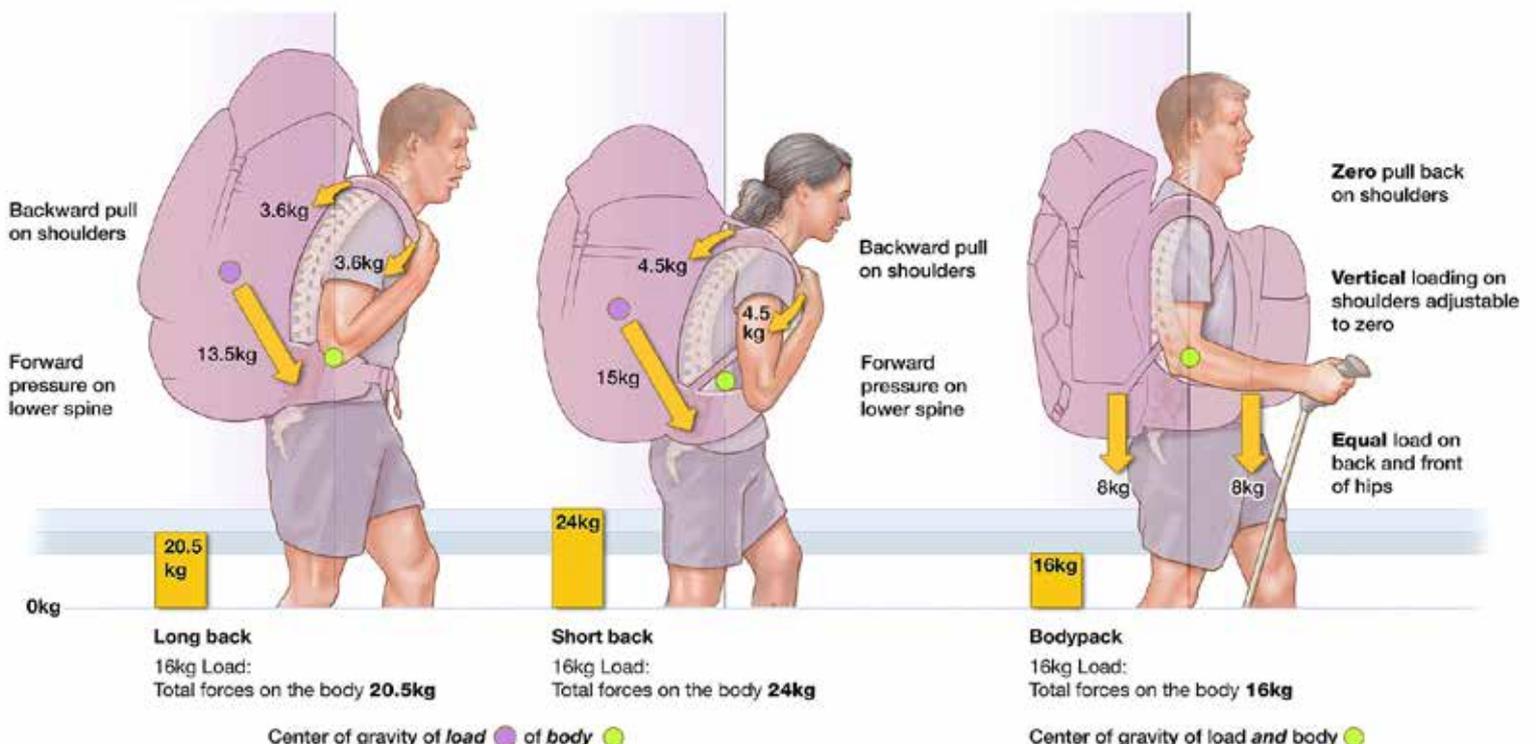
1. your shoulders to move up and down with minimal or no resistance;
2. you to freely rotate and pivot your hips; and
3. a shock cord that allows you to bend forward a bit.

These systems and others allow you to walk, climb and move in a more natural way than with a standard pack harness. For example, you can move a shoulder up and your pack does not move at all because your harness straps allow the movement. You avoid all those extra bits of inertia from the pack with all the little movements you make, annoying aspects I had not noticed until they had gone away. This combined with a good centre of gravity means that I will jump from rock to rock with much more confidence and enthusiasm than with my my older pack.



Air flow on back rest - top of Aarn Pack
Matt McClelland

Your back rests against what Aarn calls a “Matrix Mesh”. This is a wide spacer mesh that is extremely porous, provides good padding, about one centimetre thick. Behind this spacer mesh is another gap before the main pack, providing a comfortable back rest and extremely good ventilation. A few hours into a walk my back used to end up wet from sweat, but this system allows sweat to evaporate, keeping me cooler, drier and less stinky.



Natural upright posture
Supplied by Aarn Tate

Adjusting the pack

All packs need adjusting, and this is no exception, I reckon this pack has more adjustments than the space shuttle. There's no point going into them all here, partly because in writing this article I found one I didn't know existed, so I'm no expert in fitting these packs. If you are thinking about buying one, I suggest buying it in a store. The training I got was very valuable, and also check out the videos on [Aarn's website](#) and the many reviews on [YouTube](#). I think it is fair to say that if you don't do the learning you will still find it a great pack, but if you understand the details then you will get more value and comfort from it.

One feature I like, but only use a little bit, is that you can adjust the height of the harness on the main pack up and down whilst you are wearing the pack. It is also possible to tilt the hip belt to better fit the hips.

“... this pack has more adjustments than the space shuttle.”

Waterproofing

My pack came with three waterproof liners for the main pack and each pocket. The liners are lightweight and have the standard roll down clip closure. I use the liner for the main pack all the time. I tend to not put anything I am going to access during the day in the dry bags. For me the front pockets are mostly for water containers and waterproof gadgets, so the waterproof pockets for the front get very little use.

Celebrity Status

When bushwalking I look goofy at the best of times. I usually walk solo and often have a large pole with a camera attached or some other gadget that means people tend to stop and say, “Hey, what's that?” This pack adds to that perception. It's a bit like wearing five fingered shoes, people want to ask about it. Although I walk solo, I do love to stop and chat with people on the track, so I don't mind the gear spiel. I know it's not a feature of the pack, but it is worth keeping in mind: if you want to stay anonymous it's harder with this pack.



Back of Peak Aspiration main pack
Matt McClelland

Statistics

Main pack and harness

Model	Peak Aspiration
Volume	50 litres, 42 litres for the small version
Dimensions	Height 65 cm, 55 cm for the small version Width 34 cm Depth 20 cm
Weight	1.7 kilograms
Material	Mostly made of 500 D Kodura nylon; 210 D, 40 D ripstop nylon
RRP	\$A340

Front pockets

There are different pocket options. I have the Sport version. You can get smaller or larger ones, and ones for SLR cameras.

Volume	each pocket holds 6 litres plus another 1 litre in the mesh
Dimensions	Height 35 cm, 29 cm for the small version Width 16 cm Depth 12 cm
Weight	420 grams/pair
RRP	\$A100

If you are an ultra-light walker then the big benefit of weight shifting is of less value to you. There are other packs with very lightweight versions, including a Cuben fibre option for the packs. Who doesn't love Cuben fibre?

Clearly I like this pack, but the price is up there. If you are interested in the pack, I suggest asking around and borrowing one from a friend for a weekend. I'm sure you'll love it, and am yet to meet someone who doesn't prefer the feel of the pack once you are wearing it. I have had a few friends say they like the feel, but not the "vibe" of the front pockets. They are fiddly and a bit goofy looking and I'm sure there are a some body shapes that do not suit the Aarn. Not all camping stores stock Aarn and only a few have a wide range. I appreciated buying from a store that had a full range of Aarn gear. You can mix and match front pockets with different packs.

I was not paid, neither did I received any gift or incentive for writing this article. I purchased the pack in mid-2015 from my local outdoor store ([Camp Hike Climb, Hornsby NSW](#)).

There's heaps more info at the [Aarn Website](#).



Hanging packs to show significant shift in center of gravity with front balance pockets
Supplied by Aarn Tate

New on Kickstarter



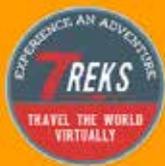
Woman checking compass app on her smartphone
Kaspars Grinvalds

Trail Hiking and Navigation App



trailhiking.com.au is a website for hikers. It helps them select trails according to their hiking preferences. The information they offer covers trail descriptions, key features, photos, maps, GPX files, elevation profiles and more. So far they're covering more than 160 hikes all over Victoria. They want to improve this existing website by developing a mobile trail hiking app. The app will be an interactive guide to trails including photos, trail notes, and GPX files, synchronisation with www.trailhiking.com.au, view topographic maps, add geotagged photos, plan routes and trips, stats tracking, location based weather updates, compass for navigation, push notifications and deployment via iOS, Android and web app. Read more [here](#).

7TrekS - Virtual Reality Worldwide Tours at 360°



For all those who'd like to go on tours but want to check them up front or maybe just want to enjoy a virtual tour, the [7TrekS](#) is for you. It allows you to step outside of the normal video frame and experience everything, all around you - looking up, down, left, and right. Read more [here](#).

Apex Camping Shelter & Hammock Camping Tarp for Everyone

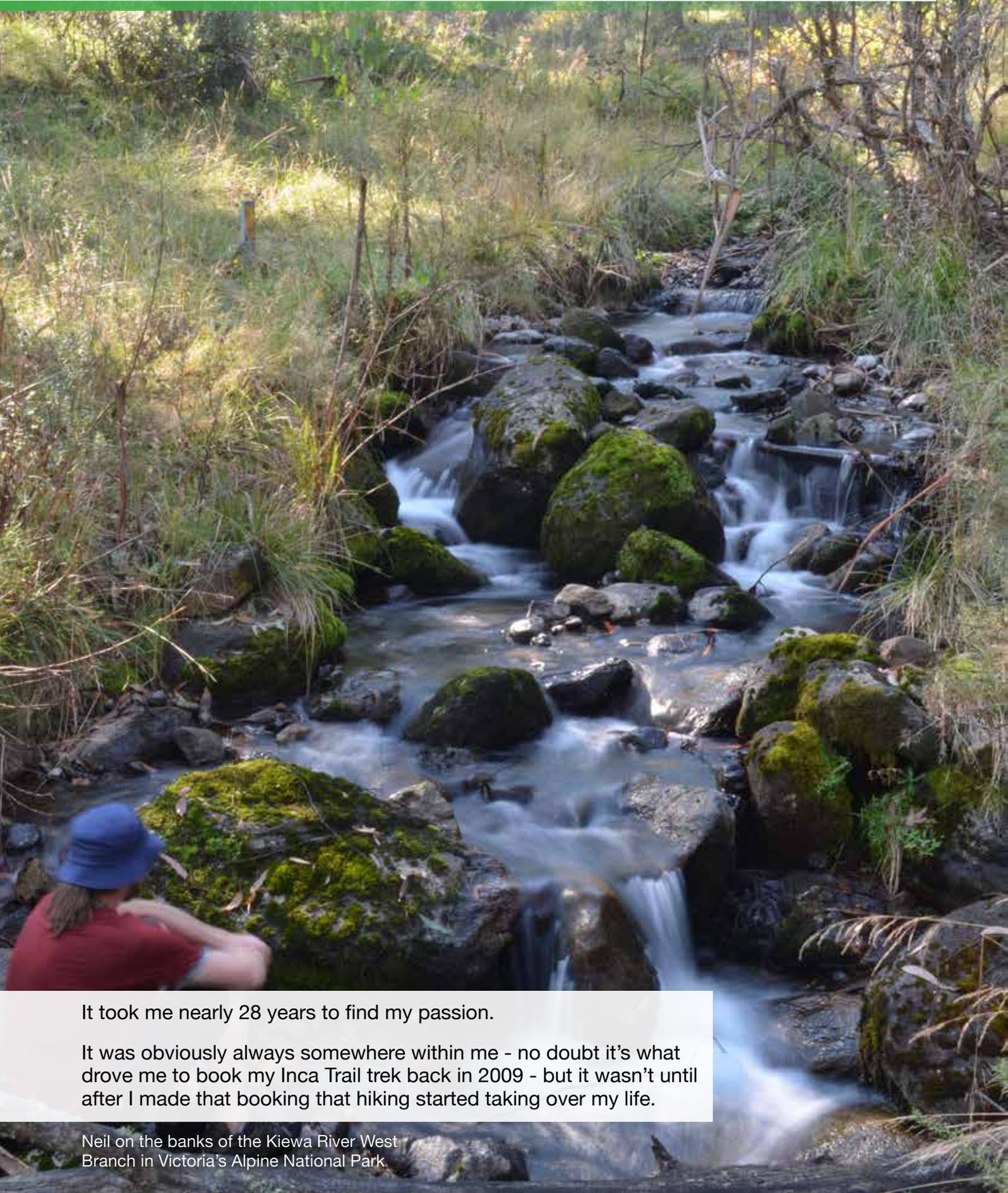


The Apex Camping Shelter is lightweight, portable and easy to set up. It will protect you and your gear from rain, wind, sun, and even snow! The Apex can be pitched in countless configurations to adjust to changing weather conditions. It is designed to be combined with the GO! Hammock to give you more options. You can use it as an all-purpose camping tarp, or shade canopy. It is made from high strength 70d polyester fabric with a waterproof polyurethane coating. Read more [here](#).



AussieHikingTours.com

Neil Fahey



It took me nearly 28 years to find my passion.

It was obviously always somewhere within me - no doubt it's what drove me to book my Inca Trail trek back in 2009 - but it wasn't until after I made that booking that hiking started taking over my life.

Neil on the banks of the Kiewa River West Branch in Victoria's Alpine National Park

That impending dream-trip prompted six months of hiking at every opportunity, sometimes up to four or five times a week. I'd been a desk worker and couch potato for nine years, but suddenly I was hiking at a state park near work most lunchtimes, and even finding places to visit for a hike on my way home, clutching at the last hours of daylight. That would get me through the weekdays, and then I'd spend my entire weekends in the bush.

“... it wasn't until after I made that booking that hiking started taking over my life ...”

A passion was born.

It wasn't just the hiking that I loved, though. I'd fancied myself as an amateur photographer for years, so I wanted to share photos from my hikes online and show people the incredible beauty I was finding right on Melbourne's doorstep. There wasn't a lot of solid information online about hikes around Melbourne either in those days, so I started meticulously recording every detail of my hikes. That's how [Bushwalking Blog](#) came to be. I'm creative at heart and had loved making websites since I first started doing it for bands back in 1995, at the age of 14. So it's no surprise that I started blogging as a way to bring my passions together.

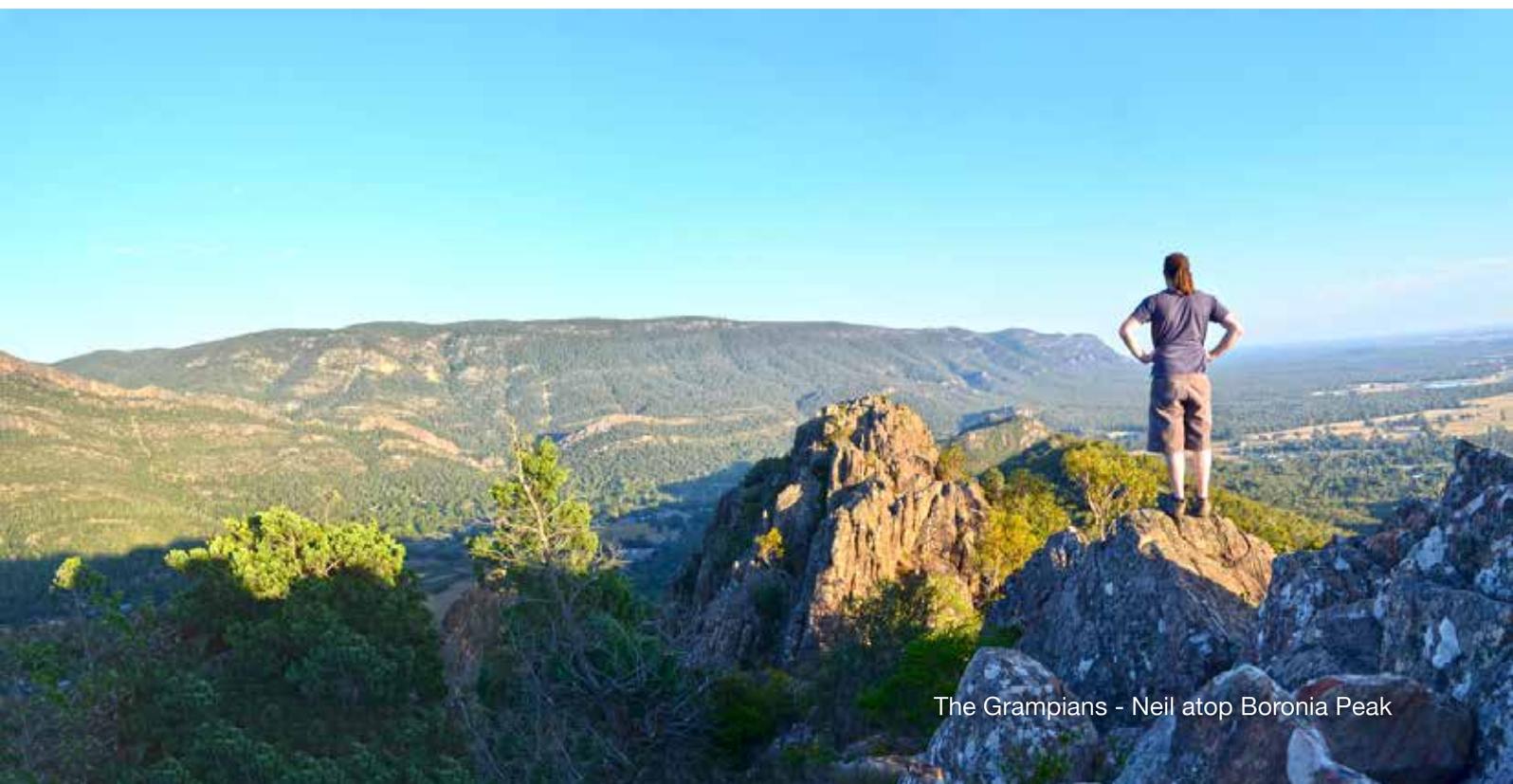
Soon I was writing for *Great Walks Magazine* as well, and it wasn't long

before Bushwalking Blog started building an audience and a community. I've never been one for joining bushwalking clubs and didn't know anybody with quite the passion for hiking that I had, so it was amazing to feel like part of a community. I've met and kept in touch with some incredible people through blogging, and even way back then I was getting emails from people telling me that Bushwalking Blog had inspired them to change their lives, the way I'd changed mine.

The realisation that I had a voice that I could use for good is probably what has kept me going all this time. I don't hide the fact that Bushwalking Blog is a business, but it's only a business because if I can build it up enough I'll be able to quit my job and put everything I've got into it. A small percentage of the content is paid for (this is always disclosed in the blog post), and I do serve up the occasional banner ad as long as the advertiser is relevant, but this does little more than covering costs.

“My PLBs have now been to every corner of Australia ...”

In 2013 I started to offer PLBs for hire through Bushwalking Blog, figuring that if it has to make money then I should offer something beneficial. My PLBs have now been to every corner of Australia, offering peace of mind to hikers who don't get out enough to justify purchasing their own PLB,



The Grampians - Neil atop Boronia Peak

and probably peace of mind to their loved ones awaiting their return.

More recently, I started sharing all the outdoor gear bargains that land in my in box, under the name Aussie Outdoor Deals (on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)). This is also attracting quite a bit of interest and positive feedback.

“... I absolutely love setting off into the bush for a few days by myself ...”

With those two ideas under way and at least mildly successful I had the confidence to go for something bigger. It was time to start the thing I'd had in my head for years. So in September 2015 I launched [AussieHikingTours.com](#).

Ever since my guided Inca Trail trek, I'd loved guided tours. It's not considered cool in the outdoors community, but I get so much out of a hike when there's a knowledgeable guide, not to mention a diverse group of travellers to share the experience with. Don't get me wrong, I absolutely love setting off into the bush for a few days by myself, with everything I need to survive on my back, but guided trips offer something different and equally valuable to me.

For people like me, and for others who love nature but would never go hiking without a guide, I wanted to spread the word about the incredible range of guided and assisted options available in Australia. I also wanted

to show international hikers that Australia is an amazing destination for hiking holidays. Most of all, I wanted to make the process of finding, comparing and booking a hiking tour as easy as possible, especially for the most popular areas where choosing between the similar tours offered can be a challenge.

I hope that, through all of my online creations and the articles I write for other publications, I'm helping increase the popularity of hiking in Australia and, therefore, helping to protect the awesome wild places we have left.



Neil exploring the Kings Canyon Rim, Northern Territory

+61 405 268 545 | neil@aussiehikingtours.com

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Upcoming Events

Walk in Her Shoes - 8 - 14 March 2016

The week-long challenge sees Australians walk every day from 8 to 14 March 2016 and raise funds for their efforts. Participants walk 25, 50 or 100 kilometres over the week and raise money and awareness for projects that help break the cycle of poverty. By signing up to Walk in Her Shoes and getting friends to sponsor you, you can raise funds to support CARE Australia's vital projects that help reduce the distance women and girls have to walk by providing clean water and nutritious food close to home. This means girls can spend more time in school, women can earn an income and together they can help their communities step out of poverty. Read more [here](#)



Canberra Walking Festival, a walk for all ages, 1-3 April 2016

The Canberra Walking Festival is a non-competitive event open to everyone. A walk for all ages. This will be our 25th walk. Entries now open! Four walking events are offered over three days. Walkers choose their own walking challenge, from 5 kilometres to a full marathon (42.2 kilometres). The 5 kilometres guided walk is designed for the over 75s and under 8s, plus their walking companions. To celebrate their 25th event they are also offering a number of pre- and post-Festival guided walks in 2016 that will showcase the best of Canberra; including Australia's Parliament House, the Australian War Memorial, the National Museum of Australia, The Australian National University, Canberra City, National Arboretum Canberra and the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Read more [here](#)

Oxfam Trailwalker, Melbourne 8-10 April 2016, Brisbane 17-19 June 2016

Whether you're taking part in Oxfam Trailwalker or donating to a team, you're making a significant difference to the lives of others. Oxfam Trailwalker in Australia has raised more than \$70 million since 1999. With the support of our Trailwalker teams, Oxfam has the funds to carry out our vital work around the world and enable the people we help to bring about positive change in their lives. Together we are promoting education, ensuring access to clean water, teaching skills to grow food and fighting for their rights.

Team registration for Oxfam Trailwalker Melbourne 100 kilometres challenge is filling fast, the Oxfam Trailwalker Brisbane 100 kilometres and 60 kilometres challenges are now open! Read more [here](#)



Buzz, Buzz, Slap!

Why Flies Can Be So Annoying

Maggie Hardy



You know the drill. A picnic in the park, a walk in the bush or a barbecue with friends and family – all perfect summer activities that can be ruined by annoying flies that never leave you alone.

Golden-green bottle fly
Studiotouch

So why do they do it and *what do they want?*

Flies are one of the most diverse insect orders, with **more than 150,000** species described worldwide in more than 150 different insect families.

In Australia, entomologists (scientists who study insects) estimate there are more than **30,000 species of fly**, and yet only 7,700 species have been described.

There are two main types of fly: the **Nematocera** (which includes mosquitoes and non-biting crane flies) and the **Brachycera** (which includes house flies, fruit flies, and horse flies).

In Australia, there is only one type of fly that's attracted to us, rather than our blood: the **bush fly** (*Musca vetustissima*, Diptera: Muscidae), which is a non-biting fly and close relative of the house fly (*Musca domestica*). These flies are after the proteins, carbohydrates, salts, and sugars naturally present on your skin.

All the other flies around you are probably after your blood, and that includes mosquitoes and horse flies. And yes.

“ In Australia, there is only one type of fly that's attracted to us, rather than our blood ...

unfortunately **some people** are more attractive to mosquitoes than others.

Although mosquitoes and other blood-feeding insects are attracted to the carbon dioxide we exhale, we know the insect sensory system also helps **find exposed skin**. Since the skin near our faces is often exposed, that's one reason flies are always buzzing around your face and hands.

Mouthparts with bite

In the mosquito, the proboscis is sharp and needle-like; in the deer fly (also known as the horse fly, or march fly in Australia), it is a large, wide spike.

This reflects the different feeding styles found in flies: mosquitoes use a hypodermic needle approach, and are so selective about where they bite research has shown they can actually find capillaries underneath the skin.

As most people know, these bites can be very itchy and in rare cases the proteins transferred during a mosquito bite can cause **anaphylactic shock**.

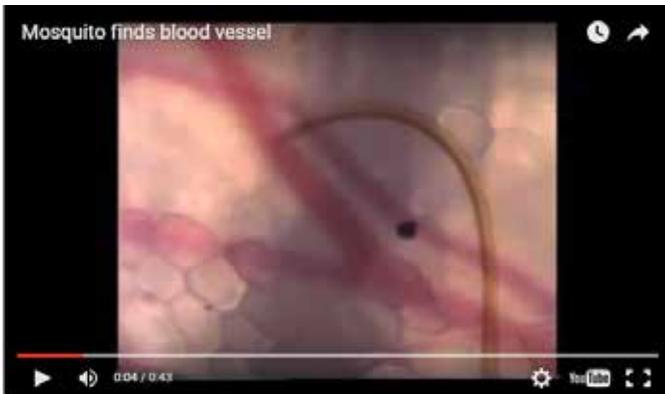
Horse flies use a “slash and suck” approach, where they cut the skin and then lap up the blood that comes out. These bites are my least favourite of any insect.

“ Horse flies use a “slash and suck” approach ...



Biting midges, also known as sandflies in Australia, are blood-feeding flies (Diptera: Ceratopogonidae), and are **known vectors** of lesser human pathogens and major veterinary pathogens in livestock. Their bites are also intensely itchy.

Fruit flies and house flies use a slightly different method: their mouthparts are like sponges, and they regurgitate a mixture of digestive enzymes onto the surface they're feeding on and then lap up the resulting liquid. Although they are irritating, they don't bite humans.



Mosquito finds a blood vessel

Along for the ride

The biggest problem with fly bites isn't so much that the injury is painful or irritating, it's the pathogens the insect can transmit through their bite. In order for a **vector-borne disease** to spread, three things need to be present:

1. the disease
2. the insect that spreads the disease
3. the vertebrate host.

For some diseases, such as dengue fever, in Australia we have the mosquito but generally **don't have the virus**. Outbreaks of dengue occur when someone brings the dengue virus into the country, and then the mosquitoes that are already here can spread the disease.

When you look at the number of notifications for dengue virus infection, you can see that Queensland has the highest number of cases.

“The biggest problem with fly bites is the pathogens the insect can transmit”

But when you factor in the population size, how does that change? When you look at the number of notifications per 100,000 people in the population, the tropical areas of Australia (the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and Queensland) are by far the most at risk. That's because those areas are where you're most likely to have the disease, the insect that spreads the disease, and humans.



Mosquito drinks blood
Kokhanchikov

Humans vs flies

How can you reduce your risk of being bit? DEET or picaridin containing topical insect repellents [work best](#) to stop mosquitoes from biting. Wristbands have been shown [not to repel mosquitoes](#), and botanicals rarely if ever provide the same level of protection.

For nuisance flies this may not matter, but for those insects that can carry human disease your best method is to remove all the standing water from around your house (to prevent eggs from developing there), and stay inside when you are able at dusk (to prevent being bit when the mosquitoes are most active).

Most blood feeding flies, like mosquitoes, take opportunistic blood meals to complete their lifecycle. The blood meal is required in order for females to lay eggs. In several species of mosquito, females aren't selective and will take their blood meals from a range of vertebrates.

Adult males and sometimes females feed only on nectar or pollen. In tabanids like horse flies, nectar feeding [occurs frequently](#) in both males and females.

When flies land on a series of plants to feed on nectar, they spread the pollen between flowers and help fertilise the next generation of plants. As pollinators, flies perform a valuable role in the ecological community for our native plants, and are also helping farmers.

Recent research from scientists in Australia has shown that [non-bee pollinators](#), including flies, play an important role in crop pollination across the world.

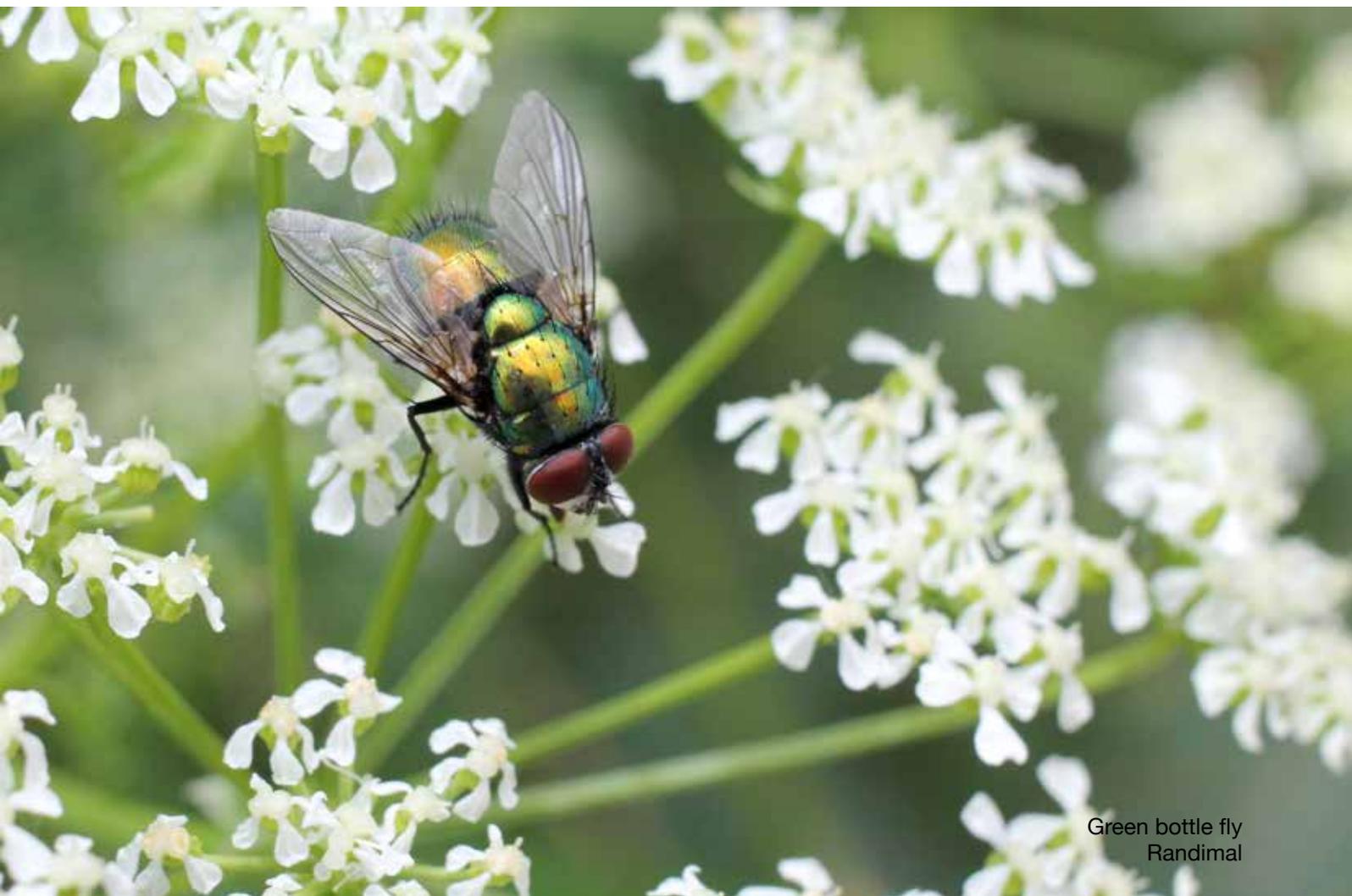
So next time flies flood your picnic, bushwalk or barbecue, consider that they may have helped put some of that food on your table.



Maggie Hardy

Postdoctoral Research Fellow,
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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 4 January 2016.



Green bottle fly
Randimal

Food Allergy or intolerance?

No problem
Sonya Muhlsimmer

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, almost four million people in Australia are reported avoiding a food type because of an allergy or intolerance. Are you one of these people? I am, to seafood. Having a food allergy or intolerance can be a real problem, for some it could be fatal. The diet must be changed by restricting the ingredient, and it must be accomplished for your wellbeing.

Many people are sensitive or intolerant to gluten. Gluten is the name given to the protein found in wheat, rye and barley. The immune system reacts abnormally to the protein and it can cause bowel damage. If you have been diagnosed as gluten intolerant, it's recommended to eat a gluten free diet. But how, as many gluten containing ingredients are added as an ingredient in many different foods? Some soy sauces have wheat added and even some medications may contain gluten. Well, you must learn to substitute ingredients you can safely eat. For example, Tamari is a good substitute for soy sauce. People with a food allergy or intolerance need to carefully read the ingredients labels on all food, and understand your allergy or intolerance. If in doubt at all, ask your doctor or dietician.

In Australia the Food Standards Code mandates labels of all allergens that are present. If a product states "Gluten Free", the manufacturer should be able to guarantee that this statement is true. And if there's a risk that an allergen may be present by cross-contamination (by an allergen processed in the same factory), food manufacturers state that the product you are buying "may contain" a certain allergen. If you have any question about a product you want to buy, don't hesitate to contact the manufacturer for any information. Here are two recipes that can be eaten in a gluten free diet, with no problems.

Quinoa Curry

Quinoa is such a beneficial seed for anyone. It is gluten free and it is a complete protein, it contains all the essential amino acids your body needs. It actually contains more protein than any other grain. It is a low GI food which is good for the blood glucose level and it is packed with minerals and vitamins. You can get Quinoa in grain, flakes or ground as flour, so it can be used in many recipes. It is a perfect substitute for pasta or cous cous. Spice this dish up with 25 grams of Beef Jerky, some of the Jack Lings Jerky range is gluten free. Also, all of the Massel brand stock is gluten free too.

At home preparation

Chop the mixed peel as fine as you can. Label the bag and place all ingredients into the allocated bag and container. Copy or print out Method at camp and keep together with the bag.

Method at camp

Add the contents of the bag into a pot, add 2½ cups of water and soak for a minimum of 20 minutes. After the soaking time put the pot on the heat and bring to the boil, then simmer. Add the ghee and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. In the last 5 minutes, stir more frequently as the mix starts to thicken up. When ready take off the heat, remove the curry leaves and enjoy.



Bag 1 (quinoa mix)

Quinoa	½ cup	90 grams
Coconut milk powder	3 Tbsp	30 grams
Spicy broad beans	2 Tbsp	20 grams
Green split peas	1 Tbsp	18 grams
Cashews	1 Tbsp	12 grams
Fried shallots	2 Tbsp	12 grams
Vegetable stock	1 tsp	6 grams
Coconut sugar	1 tsp	4 grams
Garam marsala	½ tsp	2 grams
Black mustard seeds	¼ tsp	1 gram
Ground cumin	¼ tsp	1 gram
Ground coriander	¼ tsp	1 gram
Mixed peel	⅛ tsp	1 gram
Ground cinnamon	⅛ tsp	1 gram
Dried onion	⅛ tsp	1 gram
Dried garlic	⅛ tsp	1 gram
Dried lime leaves	2 each	1 gram
Ground chilli	few pinches	
Salt, pepper	few pinches	

Container

Ghee	1 Tbsp	16 grams
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Water - 2½ cups

Buckwheat pancakes

Buckwheat is another gluten free ingredient. It can be used as flour, as shown here, or it can be used for porridge, noodles and pasta or groats. Buckwheat is high in carbohydrates, protein, minerals and B vitamins. Another beneficial seed for anyone, especially for gluten free diets. The nutty flavour of buckwheat combined with chocolate make this combination really work. But don't tell your friends, they will want some too. Just a warning with this recipe and the ingredients used, not all baking powder is gluten free. Wards brand baking powder is gluten free, so just make sure you choose the right one.

At home preparation

Label the bag and place all ingredients into the allocated bag and containers. Copy or print out Method at camp and keep together with the bag.

Method at camp

Add the contents of the bag into a bowl. Slowly stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water over the pancake mix, stirring constantly to make a thick paste. In a hot pan add about 1 tsp of ghee to cover the base and then pour in about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the pancake mix. Swirl the pancake mix to cover the base of the pan and cook until bubbles appear on top (about 2 minutes). Flip the pancake and cook for another 2 minutes. Repeat until all the mix is used up. Spread the Nutella over the pancakes. Enjoy!



Bag 1 (pancake mix)

Buckwheat flour	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	78 grams
Coconut milk powder	2 Tbsp	20 grams
Egg powder	2 Tbsp	16 grams
Vanilla sugar	1 Tbsp	14 grams
Baking powder	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp	2 grams
Cocoa powder	2 tsp	4 grams
Salt	few pinches	

Container

Ghee	3 tsp	15 grams
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Container

Nutella	2 Tbsp	50 grams
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Water - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup



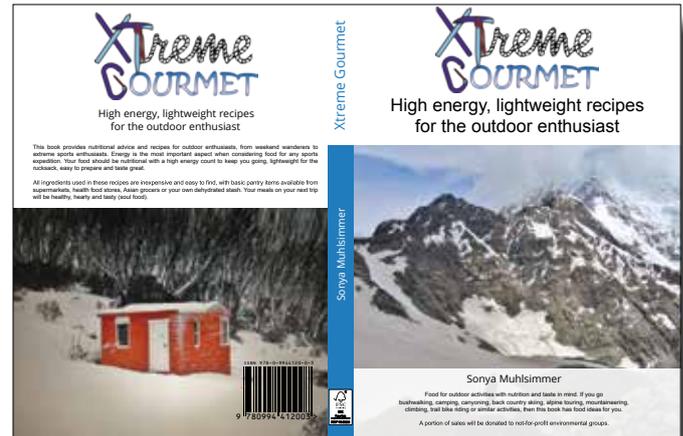
A bit about Sonya

As soon as she could walk, Sonya's father took her skiing, camping, caving, and bushwalking, hence spending a lot of time in the wilderness. Sonya loves the bush and mountains, and has completed a number of extended and hard trips. She also goes rock climbing and caving, and has recently returned from Antarctica.

Sonya's two favourite things are spending as much time as possible outdoors and food. She has a BSc in Food Science and was a chef for about 15 years, a handy combination which her book combines, and explains her ever-present food cravings.



For the last five years she has worked in quality/food microbiology, and now is a quality manager for an Australian food manufacturer.



Sonya in Antarctica

Xtreme Gourmet - Book Review

Chris Horsfield

Xtreme Gourmet



High energy, lightweight recipes
for the outdoor enthusiast

Sonya Muhlsimmer



Sonya Muhlsimmer

Food for outdoor activities with nutrition and taste in mind. If you go bushwalking, camping, canyoning, back country skiing, alpine touring, mountaineering, climbing, trail bike riding or similar activities, then this book has food ideas for you.

A portion of sales will be donated to not-for-profit environmental groups.



Sonya Muhlsimmer has recently released the eBook version of her cookbook Xtreme Gourmet aimed at raising the standard of bushwalking food. This is a fantastic book, and I've not seen anything that comes close to the ideas in this book. The print version is not far away and it should do well.

Sonya has at least three strengths that qualify her to write the book. She was first a chef with a passion for flavours and food. Then she morphed into a food technologist, and the excellent photos in the book reveal that she is an avid outdoors person from way back. The book starts with a quick whiz through nutrition basics, then looks at five different food groups with suggestions of dried versions that are suitable for bushwalking. There are a lot of ideas you could use to spice up your own recipes - crispy bacon bits perhaps or dried capers. She has suggested menus for 7 and 14 day trips. Impressively, the seven day menu has a different meal suggestion each day for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The heart of the book is the recipes. These are attractively presented with lots of colour pictures and tables of ingredients with weights and cooking times. A typical Sonya meal has the ingredients in two bags, prepared at home. It's obvious that a lot of effort has gone into the recipes - they often have a fair list of ingredients to maximise the flavour but mostly condense to two bags. There are clear instructions of what to do at home and what you need to do in the bush. In a brilliant addition, the back of the book has print-yourself labels to stick on the bags, with brief instructions of the typical two steps needed to cook the meals. And make no mistake: this is cooking, not just rehydrating. It does require a bit more effort than just pouring hot water into a foil bag and will use a bit more fuel.

There's a lot of variety here - chick pea patties, buckwheat pancakes with Nutella, cracked wheat salad, savoury shallot pancakes. It beats the pants off the stuff most of us eat. Vegetarian variations are suggested and each recipe has a kilojoule count so you can make sure you have enough energy to cope with your exertions. She has two recipes including my favourite bushwalking food Lup Chong, sweet Chinese

sausage. If you didn't like it you didn't cook it long enough so the fat renders down.

This is a timely book. I found it disturbing that even on the first night of a walk through the Overland Track most people in the hut opened foil packets. This book shows it doesn't have to be so. There also seems to be a trend from the ultralight end of bushwalkers to go ultralight with food as well as equipment and only take 50% of the energy they actually need, that is, effectively starve for the trip. A few basic facts on nutrition and energy are worth considering.

As you can tell I'm a big fan of this book. It's great. I have no connection with Sonya other than paying \$20 for her eBook, but if she offered me a spot on one of her trips where she was doing the meals I wouldn't hesitate.



The above is an edited version of a review written in mid-December 2015. The printed version of Xtreme gourmet is very close to being available.

There's a forum discussion at bushwalk.com



Chris lives in NSW but mostly walks in Tasmania. He has just returned from the South Coast Track. Last year he did a two week sea kayak in Port Davey, and the South-West Cape circuit will probably be next. Chris has been known to go cross-country skiing but more recently has been getting into Audax bike riding.

What they say - what they mean

Stephen Lake



It is increasingly difficult for bushwalkers and ski tourers or aspirants to understand the jargon of these recreations. Too often there is misunderstanding and confusion, with subsequent problems. As a community service to minimise these problems, a list of translations to assist the uninitiated in their first steps has been prepared. Any resemblance to reality is unintended and is sincerely regretted.

Good spring skiing	Rotten by normal standards.
Fair cover	Rotten by normal standards.
Patchy cover	Rotten by normal standards.
Snow report	Work of fiction.
Some icy sections	Suicidal.
Good igloo building snow	Isn't.
There's the hut!	But it's full.
Nice powder snow	Still searching for the lost parties.
Fantastic deep snow	Uphill - you go first, a slog.
	Downhill - you go first so the rest of us can turn.
Steepish	Cornice.
Difficult snow	Impossible by normal standards.
Lean into the slope	Fall sideways.
Face down the slope	Fall downhill.
It's easy	It isn't.
Interesting turn	Telemark cartwheel.
Cold snow	Forgot the toilet paper.
The road in is okay	In your car, and do you need the muffler?
River walk	Ten swims/day.
Easy walk	Less than 20 kilometres a day.
Medium walk	More than 20 kilometres a day.
Hard walk	More than 20 kilometres a day, with cliffs, steep slopes, many climbs and descents, sword grass, killer leeches, no tracks, heavy scrub and dry camps.
Very hard walk	A hard walk with snow, rain, sleet and cold.
The first day is the hardest	Day trip.
Fine weather	Possible sunshine.
Weather could be bad	Probable snow, rain, sleet and cold, or worse.
Rained only once	From the first day to the last.
No one complained	All died.
Navigation exercise	I'm lost.
Can I borrow your map?	Left mine behind.
We camp here	Picnic shelter on wet Friday evening.
I thought you had the tent	Minor adverse event.
No wine or cheese?	Major adverse event.
Good food	Best eaten in the dark.
Food suss	Violent stomach cramps.
Interesting food	Fish, muesli and chocolate puree.
Lovely crumbed	Wombat.
Plenty of wood	Somewhere else, and you get it.
Only needed one match	Plus Saturday's paper, firelighters and 500 mL of meths.
Bring warm clothing	Heat before packing.
Change of undies	Everyone swap, preferably with someone of the same gender.
Bathers	Skin.
Blue bathers	Cold swim.
Bit short!	Very cold swim.
Bush safety award	Stayed home.
Bush bravery award	Went on a trip.
Bush foolish award	Went to the post-trip night.

Bushwalk Australia Emagazine



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

