

# Bushwalk Australia

A person wearing a light-colored bucket hat, a green long-sleeved shirt, and dark shorts is crouching in a grassy field. They are holding a camera and appear to be taking a photo. The background is a dense, out-of-focus forest or bushland. The foreground is filled with tall, green grass and some small white flowers.

Bushwalking Conservation

Volume No 18, August 2016



Bushwalk Australia Magazine  
An electronic magazine for  
<http://bushwalk.com>  
Volume 18, August 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



Small Wonders,  
Tasmania's  
Central Plateau  
by Peter Grant

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suggestions or advertising  
enquires to Eva.

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

The copy deadline for  
October 2016 edition is  
31 August 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

I hope this latest edition of Bushwalk Australia finds you fit and well.

Even though it seems that Pokemons have invaded and taken over our planet, we can still bushwalk. It has been a very busy few months for me, and I'm super-thankful to Stephen and Eva for pulling this edition together - they have done a fantastic job. A lot of work goes into each edition, with authors and photographers pouring the sweat and tears into sharing their story; then Stephen puts in a massive effort to make the words sing; with Eva then pulling it all together into one song. It is a blessing to be part of a team and a larger community who do amazing things - thanks, guys.

I love bushwalking. I love it for the simplicity of the pursuit, the idea that anyone can give it a go. I also love it for the complexity of the battles to protect the landscapes we enjoy. It is so easy to take wild places for granted, after all, they have been here forever, but they are very fragile places. Although they seem permanent, the protection of national parks can be lost. Like the loss of a species, it does not happen suddenly, areas are degraded either through neglect or poor choices. Over time people lose interest then hope is lost. Jacques Cousteau said it best, "People protect what they love."

Our authors have inspired me, and I hope they also help inspire you to get out there, explore some wild areas and share your love of these places with others .

Happy walking

Matt :)



Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)

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### 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](http://Bushwalk.com). I operate [Bushwalk.com](http://Bushwalk.com) and [Wildwalks.com](http://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](http://Bushwalk.com).



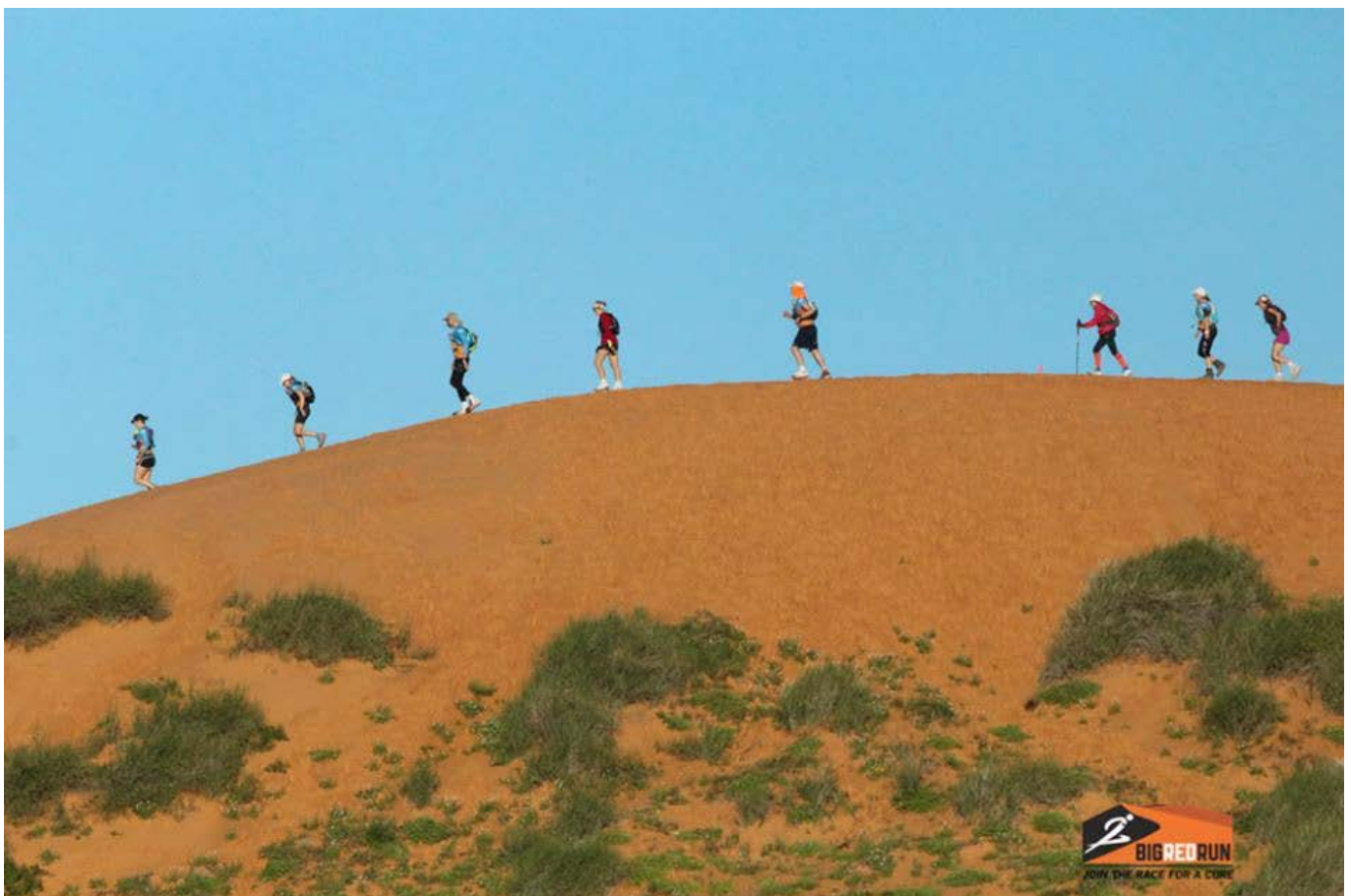
# In the News

## Big Red Run – 2016 report

The Big Red Run is Australia's only desert stage race where runners and "power trekkers" cover 250 kilometres through the Simpson Desert over six days at the end of each June. The event raises funds for Juvenile Diabetes Research and so far has raised over \$800,000 since it began in 2013. The start line is right outside the famous Birdsville Pub as is the finish line, and that first beer after covering 250 kilometres through the desert is always welcome!

The course comprises dunes, clay flats, gibber plains, salt lakes and 4WD tracks with daily distances ranging from 30 kilometres right through to the 84 kilometres long day which has a maximum 21 hour time allowance. This year there was extensive rain throughout the outback, including all of the second day of the event. Runners and trekkers endured some wet and muddy conditions, which is unusual for the desert, but the upside was that they enjoyed the desert in a stunning state of green, with wildflowers in abundance.

If a challenge of this magnitude in such a magnificent desert setting is something that appeals to you then have a look at the website [bigredrun.com.au](http://bigredrun.com.au)





# Australian Alps Walking Track

## Joanne Bell



The Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) reaches from Walhalla in Gippsland, Victoria, to the Namadji National Park Visitor's Centre in the ACT. It's one of the premier Australian long-distance walks. This is the story of one trip.

Joanne on Crosscut Saw, day 12  
John Drysdale



Walking the AAWT had been on my bushwalking “to-do” list from the time I first became aware of it in the early 1990s. In late 2015, some 25 years later, I was finally able to tick it off that list. I started from Walhalla in late November 2015 and finished at the Namadji Visitor’s Centre just before the New Year. At about 680 kilometres and taking 38 walking days to complete it was my longest walk to date and the only multi-day walk I have done with another person, as I usually prefer to walk alone.

For me the AAWT was the ultimate walking challenge; its reputation as the most difficult Australian long-distance track only made it all the more appealing. The bigger the goal the more motivated I find myself to complete it and it is fair to say that I live for my outdoor adventures. Whilst I consider myself to be well experienced and equipped for an adventure like this, I also thought that this track with its somewhat formidable reputation might require something more. This is why rather than attempting it on my own I arranged to walk it with a friend, John. We met bushwalking on Fraser Island and walked some of Western Australia’s Bibbulmun Track together.



Alpine Walking Track signs consumed by a Snow Gum on Baw Baw Plateau, day 2  
Joanne Bell

As exciting as it is to start a walk there is also a lot of enjoyment for me in the preparation, which is lucky as the AAWT is a walk that requires a massive effort in that department. I spent a full year mulling over my gear choices, working on my track fitness and

enjoying several week-long shake-down walks which included the Cape to Cape Track in Western Australia

as well as a 10 day walk through Fraser Island and Cooloola National Park using the Great Walk trails. There was also the walking itinerary to prepare, resupply drops to plan and the not so small task of shopping for, dehydrating and assembling meals for those resupply drops. After twelve months of preparation plus three full days placing the drops we were on our way, walking down the AAWT out of Walhalla. I remember feeling this overwhelming sense of relief when all the hard work of the preparation was behind me and we were finally underway.

### Walhalla to Hotham

I found the first section of the walk to Mt Hotham to be the hardest, with nearly half of the total metres ascended and descended concentrated into what represented only about a third of the AAWT's total distance. I went up the mountains quicker than I came down. My fitness was more than sufficient to make a slow but steady ascent no matter how big the climb, but more often than not by the time I reached the bottom

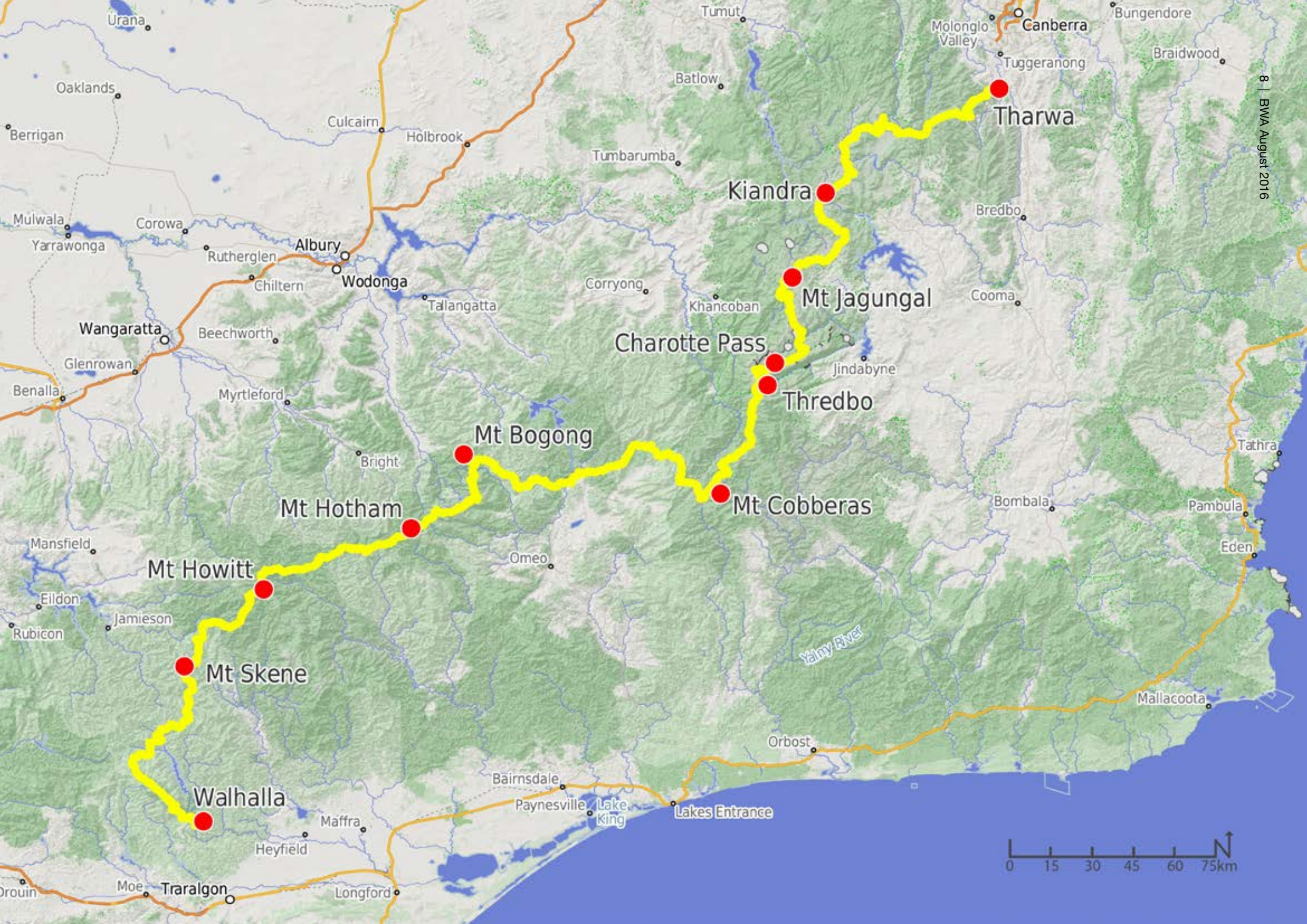
of a mountain my knees would be shaking from the effort of staying upright on the long, steep and slippery slopes. I particularly remember the descents to the Thomson and Jordan Rivers as among the more difficult and I was often reduced to walking off track in the bush where the footing was a little more stable, but even there stepping down sideways to improve my grip on the ground. Water was also a challenge, relatively scarce compared to earlier trips, and we found ourselves making some quite long and sometimes challenging side trips to find it, as well as carrying the not so insignificant extra weight of additional water when we were planning a dry camp.

The track lived up to its reputation and gave us our fair share of excitement. In particular, I have vivid memories of the windstorm we

“After twelve months of preparation plus three full days placing the drops we were on our way ...

“I found the first section of the walk to Mt Hotham to be the hardest ...







experienced while camped beside Black River, on the sixth night of our walk. The campsite was really only just big enough for our two tents, with a huge fallen tree forming a slippery bridge over the river nearby. Many more burnt and very dead trees decorated the steep slopes on each side of the narrow river valley. At about 11.30 pm I went from sleeping to sitting bolt upright with my eyes wide open as I listened to the sound of a wind gust travelling up the valley that sounded very much like a freight train. This was followed by an equally strong and loud wind gust which I quickly realised was coming from the opposite direction, up the valley. Leaves and sticks rained down on my tent from the canopy above as the wind gusts arrived and almost immediately came the unmistakable and utterly terrifying sound of one of the dead giant trees falling down nearby. I was out of my tent in a flash, grabbing my waterproofs as I went. I quickly removed my tent's only pole from the sleeve, leaving the tent flattened to try to protect it from the missile-like debris flying through the air around me. John and I sought out the only available if not all that sturdy shelter between the rotting trunks of two large fallen trees as the wind gusts continued to roar overhead and more trees continued to fall. We distracted ourselves over the next three or so hours from what was quite possibly going to be our imminent demise by using the

end of one of my walking poles to relocate away from us the large and sometimes hairy insects that were sharing our shelter.

This storm was easily the most frightening situation I have ever been on any of my bushwalks, wild dog encounters included.

“... terrifying sound of one of the dead giant trees falling down nearby. I was out of my tent in a flash ...

### Highs and lows

Any lows of the walk were easily matched if not outweighed by the highs, and I'm not only talking about the ascents and descents that the mountainous terrain presented to us. Walking over Mt Howitt and the Crosscut Saw to Mt Speculation was simply spectacular and will remain in my mind as somewhere I must revisit. Eating dinner while we watched the mist swirl into the valleys below us just as the sun was going down at High Cone camp was another special moment. I had my best laugh of the walk after we startled a sleeping snake in the middle of a track not far from Chesters Yard. It was late in the day and we were walking side by side down a four wheel drive track that had long grass growing in between the tracks. The snake reared up as we walked on each side of it and all of us, including the snake, bolted in different directions. What I



Steel pathway Rams Head Range Kosciuszko National Park, day 31  
Joanne Bell



had not foreseen was that my unconscious self somehow would decide that the best course of action as I ran was to do some weird knees-up high step to elevate my bare knees away from the threat. If someone had caught the incident on video it would have been a Youtube hit for sure.

“ I had my best laugh of the walk after we startled a sleeping snake in the middle of a track ...

As someone who is highly motivated by coffee, particularly good coffee, finding out that a coffee van was servicing the cyclists in the road race that was taking part as we walked up the road to Mt Hotham certainly picked up my pace. I tucked my takeaway soy latte into one of the top pocket of a front pack of my AARN Effortless Rhythm bodypack and kept walking. This was possibly not a use for the pocket that had been foreseen by the pack designer but works very well for me. This first coffee was quickly followed by another at [The General Pub and Store](#) at Mt Hotham and I can wholeheartedly recommend their breakfasts, lunches and dinners as I tested and tasted all three meals after arriving there with a good appetite in mid-morning on the 17th day of our walk.

Before walking out of Mt Hotham the next day we took the Omeo-Bright bus down to Bright for a quick morning's visit to replace

my smart phone with a lesser quality but adequate replacement from the Woolworths supermarket. My phone had inadvertently met a sticky end when I made a quick exit from my tent in the middle of one night in the Barry Mountains to confront a contingent of less than friendly four wheel driving drunk and dare-I-call-them “bogans” who thought it would be funny to drive right up to my tent, spot light it and rev their engines. Given I was a tad short of food supplies at that stage of the walk my anger was intensified by my hunger and they were faced with an extremely “hangry” hiker that night. They lived to tell the tale. In hindsight, I should have taxed them some of their food supplies for the trouble.

### From Hotham to Jagungal

A few days after leaving Mt Hotham we walked across the Bogong High Plains in driving sideways rain and hail, with the clouds swirling around us. Wet and very cold we only stopped walking when we reached Cope Hut, making full use of the facilities to help us get warm and dry. It was about this stage of the walk that I discovered that the high plains huts featured something else I would value even more than a roof over my head in the inclement weather. There is truly nothing more luxurious when you have been out bush for weeks on end than a long drop, made even more so when it comes complete with a view.





We spent our only non-walking day at Thredbo, where we stayed at the very comfortable, well-equipped and bushwalker-friendly YHA. It was a week before Christmas by this stage of our walk. By the end of the day both of us were restless and dare I say it, almost bored. We couldn't wait to be back out walking on the track. The next day the chairlift did not open until about 9am and I had already determined that this was one mountain I was not going to walk up if I did not have to. With a takeaway coffee in hand, we were there promptly, as were about 200 day-walkers headed for the top of Mt Kosciuszko, so we had to queue patiently for our turn. Up on top the numbers dwindled away as the increasingly strong wind gusts discouraged people from continuing. We walked on, at times more sideways than forwards as the wind gusts got stronger. As a thunderstorm approached we diverted down off the Main Range past Blue Lake to Charlotte Pass. From there it was a long road slog through the closed-for-summer ghost towns of Perisher and Smiggins Holes before we finally set up a less than ideal camp somewhere off the side of a road as it got too dark to continue. With our tents badly pitched on the sloping ground and

lumpy snow grass we sought shelter just before the skies opened and the rain bucketed down. My tent kept most of the water out, but a leak developed sometime in the middle of the night right over my head. I thought about packing up my sleeping bag and putting on my waterproofs and sitting out the night in my tent, but instead chose to simply put my rain jacket over the top of my head and go back to sleep.

“... I discovered that the high plains huts featured something else I would value even more than a roof over my head in the inclement weather ...

A ranger stopped by in the morning as we packed up. Instead of wanting to talk about our unorthodox camping location he wanted to check if we were aware of a large bushfire over near Geehi. While on the summit of Mt Kosciuszko the day before we had looked down towards Geehi and seen what looked like teeny tiny helicopters disappearing into the billowing black smoke from a bushfire which was consuming the side of a mountain. I remember watching anxiously to see that they reappeared from the smoke. So yes, we were well aware of it. This is in



Joanne and John on Mt Kosciuszko, day 31



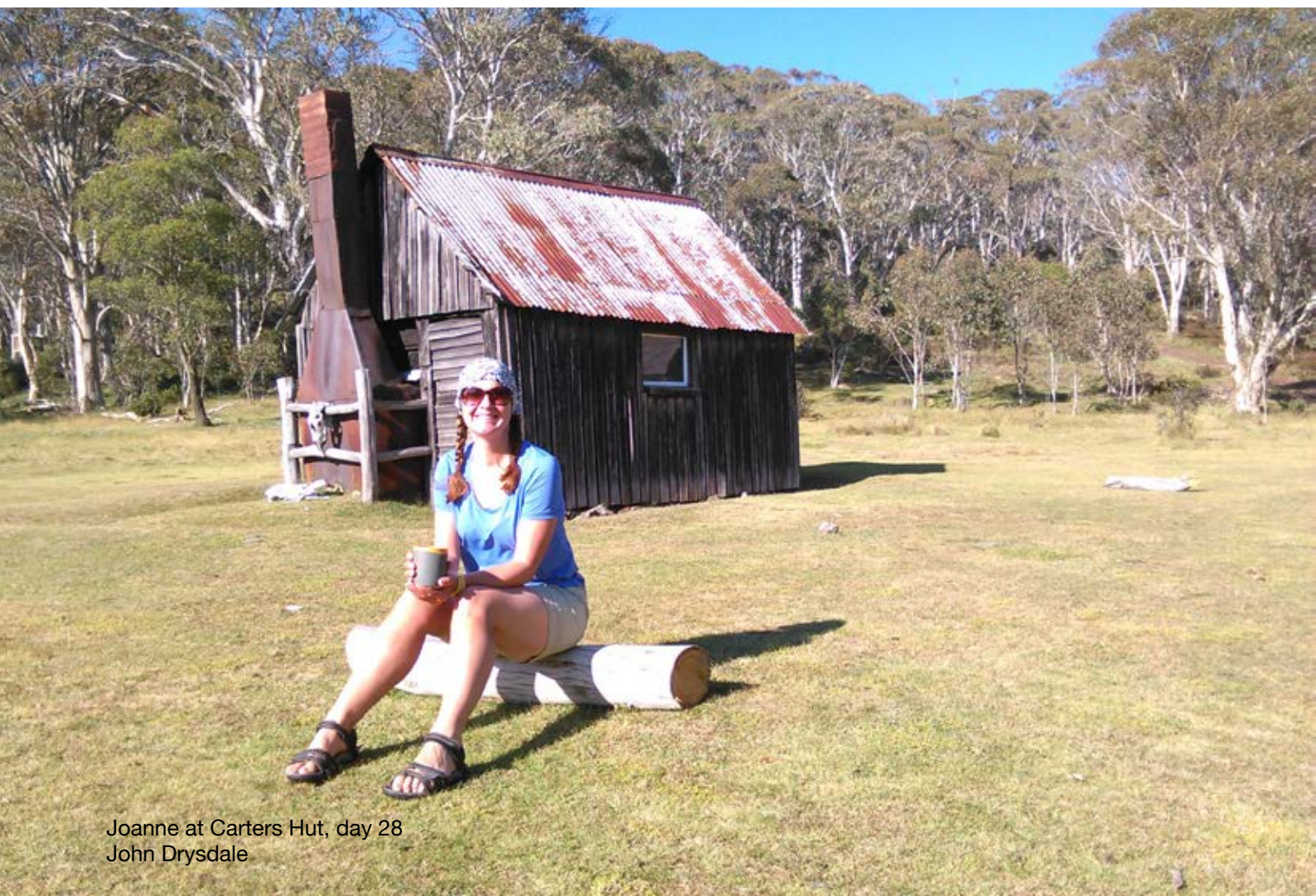
contrast to the bushwalkers we encountered later that day in the Jagungal Wilderness Area who had walked in before the temporary park closure and were oblivious to any potential issues.

### Christmas Food Drop

Out of all our food drops, the one we collected near Kiandra on Christmas Eve was the most exciting, mainly because by then I had forgotten exactly what treats I had included in the drop. Right on top of my resupply when I opened it was a packet of Nestle brand Scorched Almonds which John and I pretty much inhaled while we sorted through the rest of the contents of the drop. That night we camped beside Chance Creek in the middle of Wild Horse Plain, on what amounted to a grassy flat lawn courtesy of the local but not always welcome equine residents. We were treated to an unusually warm and mild night which meant we were able to lie back on the grass under a star-filled sky while we enjoyed our wine and beer made cold from soaking the bottles in the creek along with our assorted sweet and savoury nibbles. I couldn't have asked for a nicer Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Day we walked through to Ghost Gully. The day's walking made miserable for me by a significant pain level from an injured toe impacting the inside of the front of my shoe every step, not to mention the incessant biting of the very unsympathetic march flies. I had not expected that we would come across anyone on the trail that day, but we passed another walker heading the other way early on and were equally surprised to arrive at Ghost Gully to find not only another solo walker, but several very friendly horse truck campers with all the accompanying amenities. The campers wasted no time in offering us both cold beers and food, topping off their hospitality by sharing with us an absolutely enormous bowl of toe pain neutralising Christmas trifle. Hippocrates was spot-on when he said "Let food be thy medicine and thy medicine be thy food". I needed little encouragement to accept a second generous serve of dessert before going to bed feeling oh-so-much happier than I had earlier in the day.

“I couldn't have asked for a nicer Christmas Eve.



Joanne at Carters Hut, day 28  
John Drysdale



### The end of the walk

It would be fair to say that the last few days of our walk were a little rushed. We were both keen to be home with our families and friends for New Year's Eve and this meant that I did not spend as much time as I would have liked at rather special places like Oldfields Hut. I consoled myself with the thought that I would have to walk through there again with a little more time to spare, and as I write this I find myself debating just how soon I might schedule that next walk in. Namadji National Park was also a bit of a blur, though much of it a familiar blur as I've lived in Canberra and walked in its surrounds for a significant part of my life.

“Six months on and I find myself wanting to walk the AAWT again, perhaps this time from north to south

Walking down Mt Tennant I could see the end of the AAWT, the Namadji National Park Visitor's Centre, tantalising me with its proximity in the valley below. As I finished the AAWT and walked up the path towards the centre I did not think the day could get much better. Unexpectedly so it did get even better, as my very thoughtful partner Chris had arrived there early and not only greeted me with a big smile and a cuddle but also

with a cold champagne and fresh sushi picnic all set up on a table ready to celebrate our achievement. We were also presented with “end to end” certificates by a friendly ranger who shared our enthusiasm for the AAWT and there was another little surprise and maybe a hint for me as well; Chris had a gift for me; a bag containing soap and other toiletries.

Six months on and I find myself wanting to walk the AAWT again, perhaps this time from north to south. Other walking tracks also beckon. My biggest lesson in walking this track was the confirmation that I am better off walking on my own. As much as John's company was comforting through the wind storm and certainly served to bolster my confidence when we encountered the more difficult conditions on the track, I prefer to mosey along at my own pace without the worry or pressure of conforming to someone else's timetable. And whilst it is certainly possibly for someone with average fitness but bucket loads of determination to complete the AAWT in 38 walking days, it's not necessarily going to be the ideal experience as it does not allow, in my book anyway, enough time to sit and take in the views.

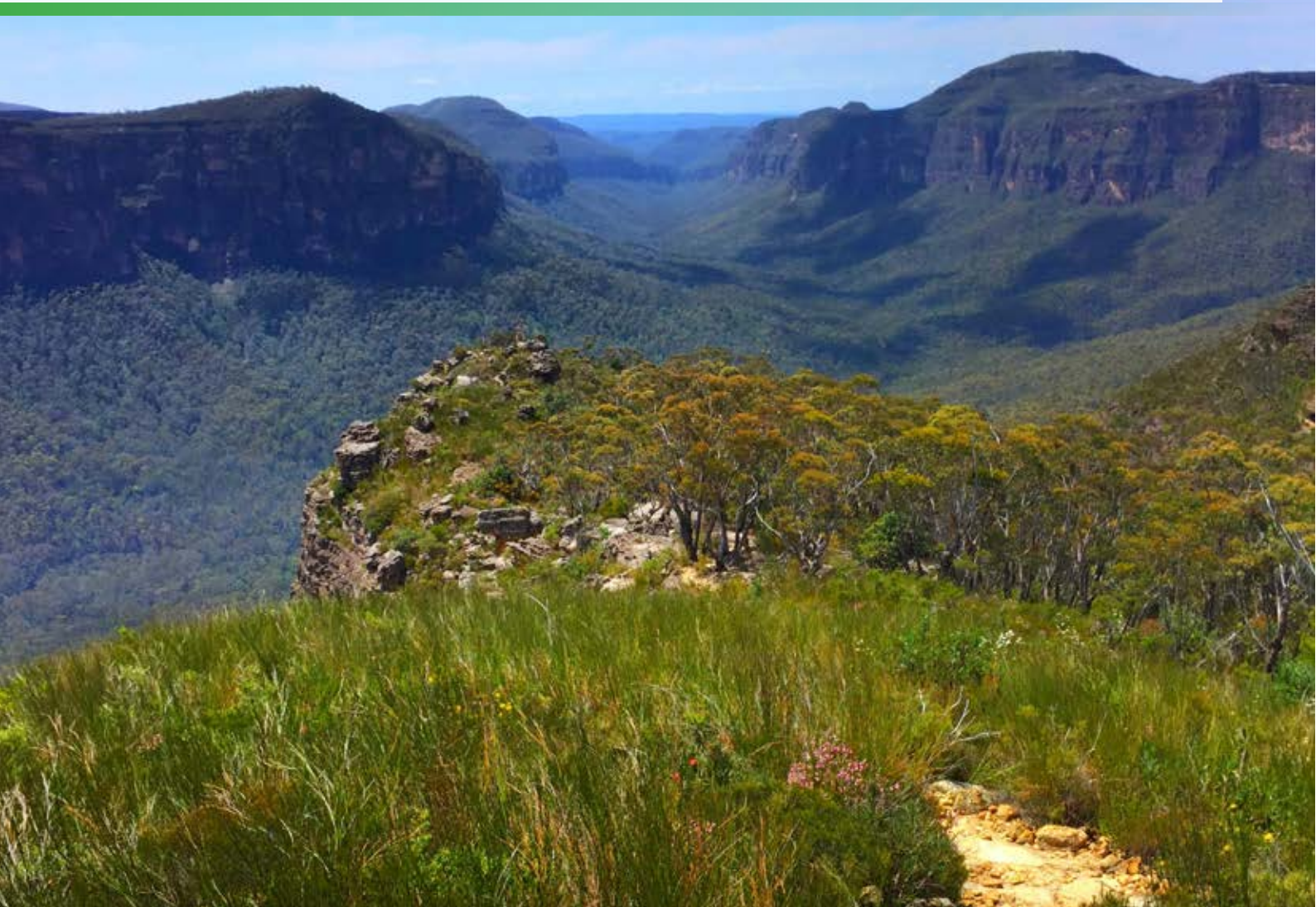


Joanne lives in a tiny Upper Murray town in Victoria, where she and her partner Chris are renovating a former trucking depot to serve as a home base between adventures. A health scare in her early thirties meant a change of lifestyle, where making dreams a reality became more important than a career or a regular income. This led to her becoming a uniformed police officer in her mid-thirties and working in Australia and the Solomon Islands then resigning after five years to travel the country in her restored VW Kombi campervan. Joanne counts amongst her lifetime achievements paddling the length of the Murray River in a sea kayak and aspires to completing many more long-distance walking tracks in Australia and overseas. For a full report of the AAWT walk, see Joanne's blog at [ratherbeebushwalking.blogspot.com](http://ratherbeebushwalking.blogspot.com).



# Lockley Pylon to Blackheath Station

## Matt McClelland



16.5 kilometres  
one way



Two days



1295 metres ascent  
1107 metres descent



**Hard**  
(Very steep  
hills, section  
of faint track  
and no  
signage)

This walk starts in the low heath and with great cliff views of Lockley Pylon. The pylon, and other notable features, can be seen along the track, while the descent to the Blue Gum Forest provides plenty of photographic opportunities. After camping overnight at Acacia Flats, the walk heads out via Govetts Leap and Popes Glen, visiting many little cascades and the awesome Bridal Falls. A great overnight walk.

**GPS at the start** -33.651076, 150.37163  
**GPS at the end** -33.633876, 150.2844

### Getting there

**Train:** There are trains to Sydney about every hour.

**Car:** Practically you need to drive to the start of this walk. From Leura, drive north for 10 kilometres along Mount Hay Road, much of which is unsealed, fine for most 2WD cars. There is a car park at the signposted "Lockley Pylon" trackhead.



### Point Of Interest - Free Beacon Hire

A Personal Locating Beacon (PLB) is a hand-held device that, when triggered, sends a message to the emergency services with your location. The emergency services staff can then look at your trip intention forms and decide how best to help you. In the Blue Mountains, you can borrow these for no charge, just complete this [Trip intention form](#), and a borrowing form. The device can be picked up from:

NPWS Office - Govetts Leap Road  
Blackheath - 9am to 4pm 7 days  
Ph: 02 4787 8877

Katoomba Police Station - 217 Katoomba St  
Katoomba - Anytime Ph: 02 4782 8199

Springwood Police Station - 4 Jerseywold  
Avenue Springwood - Anytime  
Ph: 02 4751 0299

### Lockley car park

(0 km) From the car park, walk past the sign Lockley Pylon Track and another sign with a map on it. Follow the track which leads up a slight hill to tend right, along the edge of a spur. The track slowly climbs to the southern pinnacle (rocky outcrop) and then continues approximately 100 metres to the intersection below the middle pinnacle. Veer left keeping the pinnacles above to the right of the track, passing the most northern pinnacle before coming to an intersection. Veer left and walk up the hill away from the pinnacles. Then descend further 100 metres into a sandy and flat saddle, until the track rises out up the next hill. Ascend the hill to gently undulate across the plateau, through the trees. Follow the track as it then opens out onto a clearing where it continues up the hill for approximately 200 metres to the intersection on the next rise. The intersection is marked by a rocky outcrop to the left of the track.

### Mt Stead Track

(1.8 km) Continue straight towards the surrounding valleys, leaving the rock feature behind on the left of the track. Enter the tree line on the other side of the knoll and meander through the trees for approximately 400 metres to get out onto a clearing. Head down through the clearing to pass to the right of two knolls. Cross the saddle and

head up the stairs on Lockley Pylon to a sign marked intersection. Veer left following the sign to *Lockley Pylon* up the wooden stairs to the summit of Lockley Pylon. This is marked by a stone cairn.

### Lockley Pylon

(3.4 km) Lockley Pylon, Blue Mountains National Park, gives 360 degree views of the Mt Hay area with excellent scope over Fortress Creek Waterfall and into the Grose Valley.

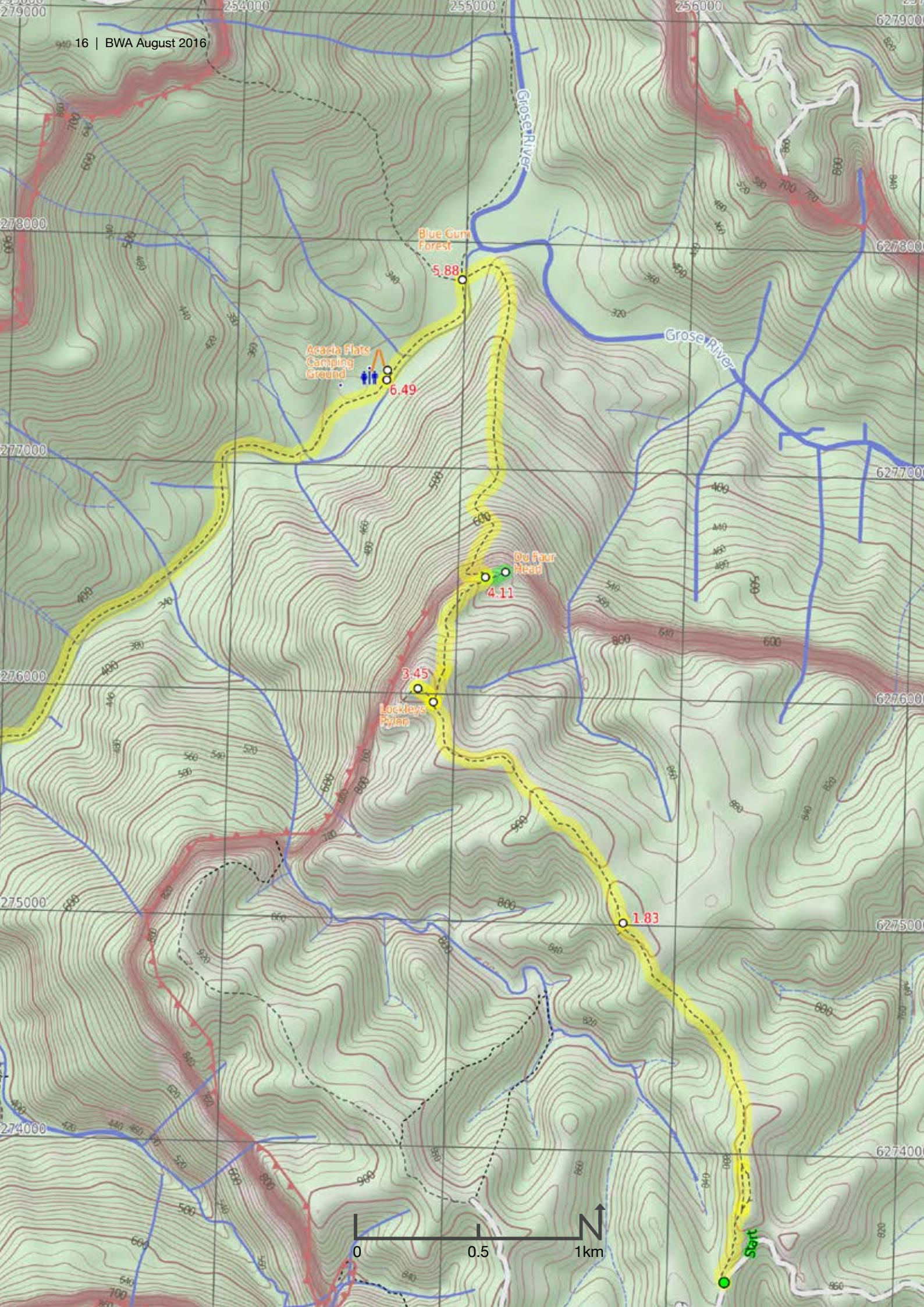


Lockley Pylon

### Lockley Pylon

(3.4 km) From the cairn on top of Lockley Pylon, walk down the wooden stairs away from the valley. Head down the stairs to a signposted intersection. Turn left and go up the stairs, towards the large grassy knoll, keeping the valley to the right, and soon arrive at an intersection signposted *Lockley Pylon*. Continue straight down the stairs to a creek, leaving Lockley Pylon behind on the left. Cross a creek and meander across a saddle and past a void in the rock before traversing several rocky knolls. Follow the track as it then drops down a rock step and very soon comes to an intersection in a rocky saddle (marked with white paint).





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**Walk variation - Side Trip to Du Faur Head**

(4.1 km) Walk up the hill for approximately 20 metres to a rocky outcrop with stunning views down the Grose Valley. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then turn right.

**Du Faur Head**

(4.1 km) Du Faur Head, Blue Mountains NP, is situated north of Lockley Pylon. The knoll gives spectacular views up and down the Grose Valley and River. Du Faur Head is worth a visit on your way up or down to Blue Gum Forest from Lockley Pylon.

**Junction of Lockley Pylon and Du Faur Head Tracks**

(4.1 km) Veer left and walk down between a break in the rock, descending steeply left down the cliff line, keeping the cliffs on the left of the track. From the bottom of the cliffs, tend right, down the hill for a few hundred metres, then steeply descend a spur into the valley. Continue down to come to a fallen log and then turn right to descend off the spur. Meander from the hill across the grassy and ferny vegetation of the creek flat, then cross Govetts Creek. There is a fallen log

upstream which many walkers have used to cross the creek. Wind through more grass on the creek flat before coming to a signposted intersection.

**Blue Gum Forest**

(5.9 km) Blue Gum Forest, Blue Mountains NP, is a large stand of *Eucalyptus deanei* trees on the junction of the Grose River and Govetts Creek. The magnificent trees stand tall on the flats with low vegetation beneath. The trees of Blue Gum Forest represent the protection efforts of Myles Dunphy, who led a group to raise the £130 required to buy the Blue Gum Forest - quite a sum in 1931 during The Depression - and save it from being cleared. The group were successful and the Blue Gum Forest is now protected within the Blue Mountains National Park.

**Blue Gum Forest intersection**

(5.9 km) Follow the sign *Camping only at Acacia Flats*, heading downstream. Walk along the track as it tends right, away from the Grose River and towards the hills on the right. Head downhill and across a small creek, then meander for approximately 100 metres before arriving at Acacia Flats camping area.

**Acacia Flats Camping Ground**

(6.5 km) Acacia Flats Camping Ground, Blue Mountains NP, is on the floor of the Grose Valley between Perrys Lookdown and Lockley Pylon. The camping ground is approximately 50 metres from Govetts Creek and approximately 500 metres upstream from Blue Gum Forest. Acacia Flats Camping Ground is appropriately named after the dense population of Acacias found in this area. Acacia Flats is a wonderful area to camp with tall shady Blue Gums and level grass clearings which make for a great place to pitch a tent. There is a pit toilet and sitting logs to make camping more comfortable, and plenty of room for large groups. Water is available from Govetts Creek (treat before drinking).

**End of day 1**

(6.5 km) This is the planned overnight stay for the end of day 1, happy camping.



Blue Gum Forest



### Acacia Flats Camping Ground

(6.5 km) Leave the camping area with the Grose River far to the left and the majority of the camping areas to the right of the track. Pass a pit toilet on the right after approximately 100 metres. Continue along the creek flats before climbing up a small hill, then follow the track as it contours and undulates for approximately 600 metres to round a hill which gives views of Pulpit Rock above on the cliffs. Turn right to climb up the hill, and then left to contour for some time. As the slope lessens, the track descends to the creek bank, which is on the right. The track continues to contour for approximately one kilometre just above the creek, on a steep bank which has minor undulations, until it comes across a clearing with a *No Camping* sign. Turn left here and descend to the creek bank at a signposted intersection of Junction Rock. Junction Rock intersection sits in the middle of the creek.

### Junction Rock

(9.5 km) ) Junction Rock, Blue Mountains NP, is a rock situated in the middle of the Govetts Leap Brook and Govetts Creek junction. The rock is signposted, giving directions to Evans Lookout, Neates Glen, Acacia Flats and the Blue Gum Forest. Junction Rock is a great place for lunch and a swim in summer.

### Junction Rock

(9.5 km) From Junction Rock, follow the *Govetts Leap* sign, soon crossing the brook. Follow the brook for approximately 150 metres, to another creek crossing. Walk along the track as it continues, with the creek now on its left, for approximately 60 metres, before crossing back to the other bank. Continue for approximately one kilometre with the creek to the right, and undulate steeply in sections between magnificent waterfalls. A section of track traverses a rock shelf for a short stretch, before continuing to wind up and down (with the creek to the right) to a few sets of steeply-cut stairs. From these, continue over hills to a creek crossing. Head up the spur, winding between views of waterfalls, before tending left further up the hill. Head up the meandering steps for some time, until crossing the creek at the bottom of a waterfall cascading off the large cliffs - Govetts Leap Falls.

### Govetts Leap (Falls)

(11.8 km) Govetts Leap is a waterfall in the Blue Mountains NP. The fall is fed by Govetts Leap Brook which runs over the cliff into the Grose Valley. The falls are best viewed from Govetts Leap and Barrow Lookouts. Leap is a Scots dialect word for cataract or waterfall.

### Bottom of Govetts Leap Falls

(11.8 km) ) From the bottom of Govetts Leap Falls, walk north-west, following the blue signs up the hill. Zigzags steeply up to a wall of rock covered by moss, ferns and grasses. Pass along the base of this cliff to a metal staircase, passing through the rock. Continue to wind steeply below the cliff, passing two lookouts before coming to the signposted intersection. Follow the sign to *Govetts Leap carpark* up the stairs. Zigzag up the hill before tending left to the signposted intersection. Turn left and walk across the grassed area towards a platform structure. Climb some stairs onto Govetts Leap Lookout, with its great views and sandstone monuments.

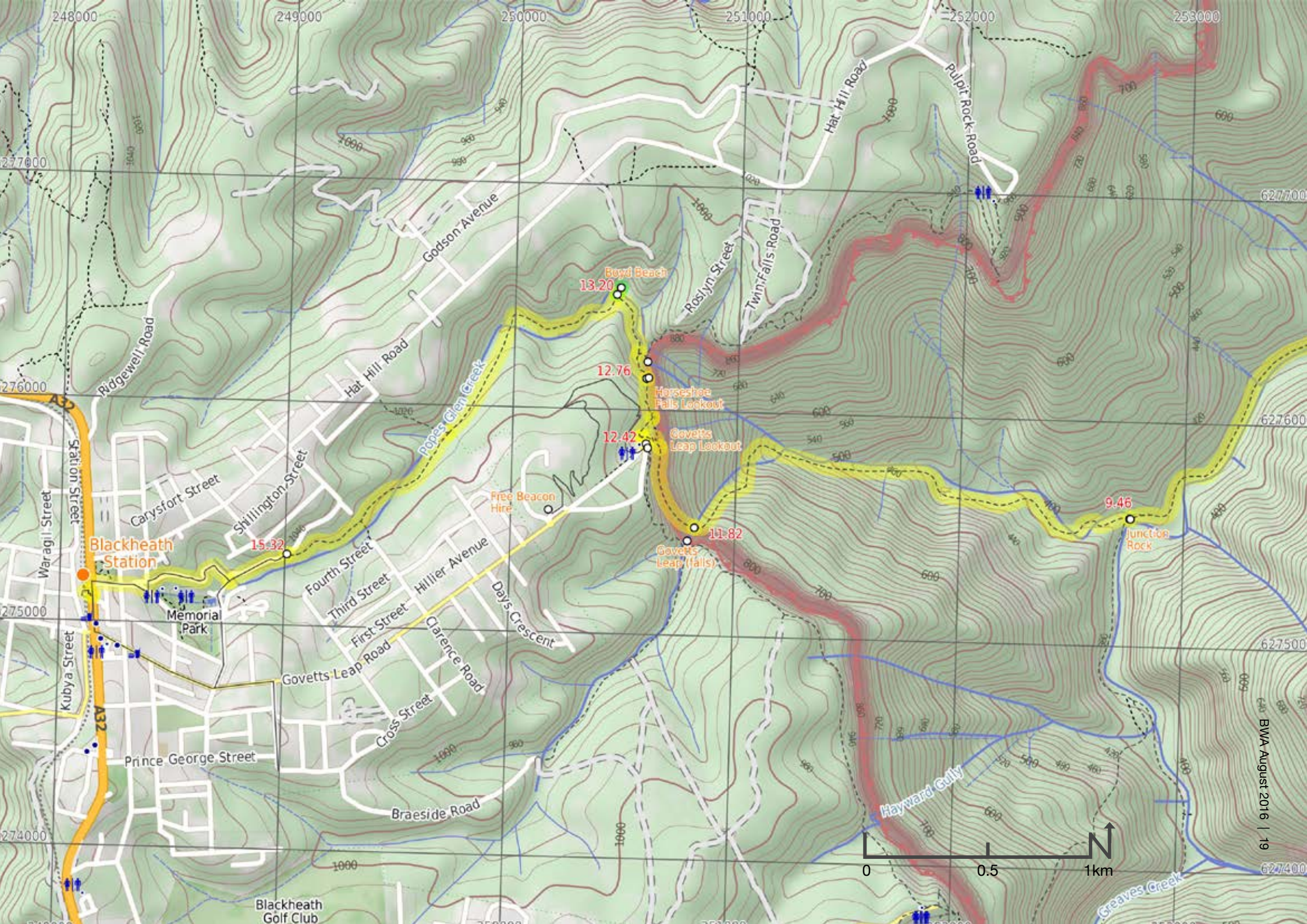
### Govetts Leap Lookout

(12.4 km) Govetts Leap Lookout is named after the first European man to have enjoyed this view, William Govett, as an assistant surveyor in June 1831. Govetts Leap Lookout offers wonderful views over the Grose Valley and the spectacular Bridal Falls. The word "leap" is an old Scottish word meaning waterfall. The lookout is easily accessed from the car park, there are also toilets and picnic shelters nearby.



View from Govetts Leap Lookout







### Govetts Leap Lookout

(12.4 km) From Govetts Leap Lookout, walk down the stairs at the edge of the lookout, keeping the valley to the right. Then cross a grassed area to a well-signposted intersection on the edge of the tree line. Walk down some stairs, keeping the valley to the right. Turn right over a bridge, continuing around the hillside to drop down onto a viewing area and intersection. Walk down steep stairs, keeping the valley to the right. Follow the track as it winds along the cliff top until coming to an intersection, near Horseshoe Falls Lookout.

### Point Of Interest - Horseshoe Falls Lookout

(12.8 km) Horseshoe Falls Lookout, Blue Mountains NP, is a small fenced lookout. There are views down to Horseshoe Falls and across the Grose Valley.

### Point Of Interest - Horseshoe Falls

(12.8 km) Horseshoe Falls, Blue Mountains NP, are sourced by Popes Glen Creek which runs over the cliff into the Grose Valley. The Horseshoe Falls seem to be named after the shape of the valley into which they drop.

### Horseshoe Falls Lookout

(12.8 km) Walk along the cliff top towards Horseshoe Falls, with the valley below to the right. Follow the track as it winds for some time around the hillside, to a lookout on the right, before continuing around to a railing of some steep stairs. The stairs lead to Popes Glen Creek, where you continue through the ferns to a street sign. Follow the sign to Popes Glen keeping the creek below on the right. Continue for approximately 100 metres, rising to the left of a prominent rock feature. Pass another track on the right, then continue to rise past the rock feature (on the right - The rock feature has a trail to its top.) Continue from the rock feature, heading down the hill to a signposted intersection.

### Walk variation - Side Trip to Boyd Beach

(13.2 km) Walk down the hill following the *Boyd Beach* sign. Wind down the rocky steps for approximately 40 metres to Boyd Beach. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then continue straight.

### Point Of Interest - Boyd Beach

(13.2 km) Boyd Beach, Blue Mountains NP, is a small sandy bank on Popes Glen Creek. The beach is a quiet spot with nice ferns and shade. The beach is a short distance from the Popes Glen track.

### Junction of Popes Glen and Boyd Beach Tracks

(13.2 km) Walk up the hill, following the arrow on the sign pointing to *Blackheath*. Continue above the creek (on the right) for some time, then cross a bridge so that the creek is now on the left. Cross a second bridge, then continue for some time up a rocky hill to an intersection below power lines, with a bridge below on the right. Walk up the hill, keeping the creek below on the right. Soon cross the creek at a bridge, continuing along the other side to a small waterfall (on the left). Continue up the hill, passing an intersection (with access tracks to Clarence Road). Continue to head up the hill for approximately 300 metres to the intersection with Dell Street.

### Junction of Popes Glen Track and Dell Street

(15.3 km) Walk down Dell Street, keeping the bush to the left of the road and houses to the right. Soon pass Cleopatra Street on the right and continue along Dell Street to the intersection with Gipps Lane, on the right (where Dell Street changes name to Wills Street). Walk along Gipps Lane, passing a large wooden house to the right of the road. The road tends left onto Robertson Lane which then becomes Wills Street. Follow Wills Street then turn left onto Inconstant Street and then right onto Gardiner Crescent. Gardiner Crescent is followed to the Great Western Highway, where there is a petrol station on the left. From here, turn left to follow the Great Western Highway, keeping the petrol station on the left, as you head towards the Gardners Inn pub. Continue to the pedestrian crossing, opposite Blackheath Station steps. From the pedestrian crossing, cross the Great Western Highway to turn right up the covered station steps. Follow the railway bridge to the top of the station staircase.





## In the News



### Carnarvon Gorge visitor centre opened on 6 July 2016

Carnarvon Gorge's revamped visitor centre is the culmination of about five years of work by Queensland's Parks and Wildlife Service. The visitor centre has new interpretive signs, upgraded carparks, and a new ranger office. Read more in their [Media release](#).



### Bigfoot Snow Trail on 17 September 2016

With snowshoeing continuing to grow, you may want to check your calendars and get ready for this event which will be iconic. Might be time to head to Falls Creek. For more details and to sign up see [www.snowtrail.com.au](http://www.snowtrail.com.au). Wilderness Sports will be there with Crescent Moon Snowshoes.





# Trans-Tarkine Track

Dan Broun and Stephen Lake



The Tarkine Wilderness on the NW coast of Tasmania covers 450,000 hectares between Corinna and Marrawah. The region is largely undeveloped, and is threatened with mining. A walking track has been proposed.

View north from Rupert Point, Tasmania  
Martin Hawes



## Background

There are more than 60 threatened species in the Tarkine, which has a variety of ecology: temperate rainforest, sand dunes, buttongrass, and coastal heath. The Tarkine has bandicoot, echidnas, possums, Tasmanian Devils, quolls, and wombats. There's also more than a hundred bird species, including the threatened Orange-bellied Parrot. Importantly, there are many places where Aboriginals lived, evidenced by middens, cave paintings and other subtle features. Contemporary Aboriginals have a strong connection to the region.

The Tarkine Forest Reserve and the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area cover about 1000 square kilometres. Less than 5% of the Tarkine is protected in national parks or the like. In 2013 the Federal Minister for the Environment Tony Burke declined to list some 4300 square kilometres of the region on the National Heritage Register. He added only 210 square kilometres to the Heritage Register due to their Aboriginal values. Conservationists were and are appalled by the lack of protection to the area.

## The walk

The Bob Brown Foundation (BBF) commissioned planning expert Martin Hawes to look into the matter. Preliminary planning was undertaken in late 2014 and early 2015, with most field trips being made between September 2015 and January 2016. [Martin's Report](#) on a preliminary survey of a Trans-Tarkine Track (TTT) was released in May 2016.

The proposed TTT begins south-west of Burnie and traverses rainforest, tall eucalypts, Mt Bertha, button grass moorlands, the Norfolk Range and the wild Tarkine coastline before finishing with a river cruise to Corinna. The walk will take ten days or can be completed as two five day trips finishing or starting at the Western Explorer Road. At 100 kilometres the TTT is longer than each of Tasmania's Overland and South Coast Tracks. The TTT will be a class three track, the same as the Overland Track.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and Aboriginal Land Council have joined environmental groups and tourism operators to support the TTT.



Trans-Tarkine Track  
Map courtesy of Martin Hawes



### The figures

The cost to build the track will be in the vicinity of \$20 million, with income of about \$1.4 million a year projected, covering maintenance. As some money will be spent in local communities by the estimated 6-7000 visitors a year, the TTT is expected to provide a regional boost, especially after taking multiplier effects into account. Jobs will be created. By comparison, the Overland Track has 8000 visitors a year. One very good benefit is that the Tarkine will gain a higher profile, which is likely to lead to more protection from mining and other adverse impacts. In time, the Tarkine may even be a national park and World Heritage Area.



Trans-Tarkine Track  
Dan Broun and the Bob Brown Foundation

The BBF is considering the report, and there may be a detailed survey to fine-tune the route.

“The Tarkine is truly Tasmania's best kept secret.”

### Comments

The Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary is just outside Hobart and operates guided walks in the rainforest section of the proposed TTT. Director Greg Irons, said, "The Tarkine is truly Tasmania's best kept secret. We are turning people away from Cradle Mountain and Freycinet in our peak periods and this is a prime opportunity to make the Tarkine the third wilderness tourism hub."

"We put this plan forward as a centrepiece for a future Tarkine protected with World Heritage status. Our foundation also backs wild areas of the Tarkine returning to Aboriginal traditional ownership, and sees a major role for Aboriginal rangers in presenting the heritage of the region to visitors using the Trans-Tarkine Track," Bob Brown said.

There's a [discussion](#) about this in the BWA website, Tarkine, starting half-way down tab nine.



Tarkine, Tasmania  
Rob Blakers








# Bushwalking and Conservation

## Esther Gallant, NPA-ACT

A group of five bushwalkers are seen from behind, walking away from the camera across a grassy ridge. They are wearing hats and carrying backpacks. In the foreground, one person is crouching down, possibly examining the ground. The background features a steep, rocky mountain slope with patches of green vegetation, under a clear blue sky.

The National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory (NPA-ACT) is a conservation organisation based in Canberra. The aims are conservation of natural areas of the ACT and surrounds, especially Namadgi National Park (NNP). In addition to bushwalking, and conservation, our programs include environmental education and political lobbying on environmental issues.

Day walk to Watsons Crags in Kosciuszko National Park  
Esther Gallant



NPA-ACT was founded in 1960 to advocate for a national park in the national capital. Accomplishing this objective required 24 years of energetic exploration and persistent lobbying. Namadgi National Park was established in the southern part of the ACT in 1984 and subsequently expanded to include nearly half of the ACT. Hence, the NPA-ACT has a strong interest in protecting the NNP from degradation and exploitation. We are particularly concerned with preventing the invasion by weed and feral species and with a continuing high standard in management practices.



Removing unneeded fencing in NNP  
Sabine Friedrich

Our conservation program includes a large number of work parties assisting Park Rangers with weed removal and replanting of native species. There are also work parties to stabilise and/or refurbish historic structures and occasionally to remove unnecessary fencing. Non-members may join these work parties by contacting the leader listed in the program.

### Bushwalking

The NPA-ACT has a rolling three-monthly program of day and multi-day bushwalks in the ACT and surrounding areas of NSW, especially Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) and other areas further afield. Non-members may join bushwalks and information on the program can be found at [npaact.org.au](http://npaact.org.au). Many of our walks explore the wilds/wilderness of NNP and the adjacent KNP. During the shorter days of winter there are walks exploring the numerous ACT Nature Parks and Reserves as well as snowshoe or cross country ski trips to KNP. Canoe and kayak trips are occasionally on the program. Walks vary in difficulty from gentle explorations of urban fringe parks to multi-day walks in NNP, KNP and elsewhere. Walks are graded, and more details can be obtained from the leader.

“... NPA-ACT has a strong interest in protecting NNP from degradation and unsuitable exploitation.”



Rendezvous Creek in Namadgi NP  
Esther Gallant



Weeding around endangered Swainsona plants along an unused railroad  
Martin Chalk



## Another Shot at the GNW

Matt McClelland



In yet another blow to the Great North Walk, Tunks Ridge campsite in Berowra Valley National Park has been scaled back. In July, the toilet was removed due to "some serious hygiene issues with the structure". NPWS staff went on to say that "At this stage we don't intend on replacing it. Due to the close proximity to the rifle range we are trying to scale down usage at this site to smaller groups and directing larger groups to Crossland". You can still camp there, but there will be no facilities.



It is a real indictment on NSW that the existence of a neighbouring rifle range can dictate the use of protected national park land. There is no safety risk, no impact on visitor experience and no impact on the rifle range. The campsite is on national park land and 1.7 kilometres from the range firing point.



Tunks Ridge Rest area loo before it was removed  
Wildwalks

This closure is just another blow in a series for our community and the national park. Earlier this year, a beautiful section of the Great North Walk was closed and redirected via public roads. It seems the plan is to chip away slowly, making the walk worse month by month. Three months ago I sent a proposal to the NSW Government on how to keep this section of the walk off the roads. I have received no formal response.

While most other states are investing to improve bushwalking experiences, the NSW Government appears to be running as fast as it can the other way. It is no wonder that NSW has the slowest growth rate of bushwalkers then any other state.

Despite the popularity of the pursuit and the potential economic benefits to the state, there is no vision for bushwalking in NSW, there is a lack of communication with the bushwalking community and a significant underinvestment on areas that need attention. Ironically in some regions, there is a massive overspend on really inappropriate information and infrastructure that makes the walking experience significantly worse for visitors. To say it is a complete shambles is not overstating the problem.

I asked Minister Speakman's office for a comment on this article and got the following response from a spokesperson for the Office of Environment and Heritage:

"As per the Berowra Valley National Park's Draft plan of management which was put out for public consultation last year, the National Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to investigate camping needs and suitable camping sites along the Great North Walk."

“It is no wonder that the community feels disenfranchised seeing national parks been compromised by rifle ranges ...

The [draft Plan of Management](#) (page 30) says "One non-flush toilet is available at the walk-in Tunks Ridge camping area", but NPWS have removed the toilet and in an email say they "don't intend on replacing it. Due to the close proximity to the rifle range." It is no wonder that the community feels disenfranchised seeing national parks been compromised by rifle ranges, while we also see NPWS managing land contrary to what they said during the public consultation. A complete shambles.

Well, I guess we have to accept the toilet is gone, so bring a spade, dig a hole and bury your business.



Toilet at Tunks Ridge Reserve before it was removed  
Wildwalks



# Photo Gallery



View from the eastern side of Cradle Mountain with a view over Benson Peak  
Biggbird

Competition: Landscape August 2012



# BWA Photo Competition





## Other States August 2015

### WINNER



I spy lunch  
John Walker

It was a late winter's day and I wanted to go for a walk to test a new telephoto lens. I was a bit short on time so I decided to revisit the Curra Moors Circuit in Royal National Park, an old favourite. Making quick work of the first four kilometres or so I arrived at the Coast Track near the ubiquitous Eagle Rock. I took a lunch break overlooking Curracurrong Creek and noticed a White Faced Heron wading in search of *its* lunch. With the zoom lens I was able to get a bit closer without disturbing the bird - something that never happens for me with wildlife!



Horsnell Steps  
Brian Eglinton







# Tasmania

## August 2015

### WINNER



Beyond the pass  
Nick Morgan

Waking up late the last night's winds had died down and the sun had returned for another day. Mist poured over The Rodways, petering out across the frozen glacial lakes when I continued across the Tarn Shelf. Read the whole story on my [blog](#).



Sassafras near  
Lees Paddocks  
Rolfe de la Motte



Heaven on the  
Cradle Plateau  
Peter Grant







# Landscapes

## August 2015

### WINNER



Winged for a white winter  
Nick Morgan

In mid-winter I went snow-shoeing at Mt Field Plateau Circuit. On one of the clearest blue-skied days I'd ever witnessed I saw a Wedge-tailed Eagle near K Col. Read the whole story on my [blog](#).



My serene lunch spot  
John Walker



Even the ripples froze:  
winter on Kunanyi,  
Mt Wellington  
Peter Grant



Blooming hillside  
Brian Eglinton







# Non-landscapes

## August 2015

### WINNER



No work, no worries  
Nick Morgan

In winter my friend and I went on a trip to the tip tops of the Mt Eliza Plateau in South-West Tasmania. The picture was taken near our camp on the plateau. Read the whole story on my [blog](#).



Wrath on the rocks  
John Walker



"Me corduroy's frozen!"  
Peter Grant



Natural necklace  
Brian Eglinton







# Other States

## September 2015

### WINNER



On the edge of vastness  
Brian Eglinton

The Flinders Ranges in SA are a very long series of ranges stretching north south. They go from higher rainfall southern sections to far north desert sections. But in all cases it is a corridor of mountains with vast plains on either side, sometimes with large salt lakes in view.

This photo was early morning from the Dutchmans Stern Conservation Park near Quorn in the middle Flinders. On a long trip into Eyre Peninsula we opted for a bivouac on the mountains rather than a motel room. Much better to get in some exercise and to enjoy a nice quiet meal in the outdoors on rock seats with views that went forever. On the walk out in the morning, we went to the key lookout on the track. Here we had a great platform with a view towards our later destination - somewhere way out there beyond the horizon. The foothills were still a lovely green from winter rains and we remembered an earlier wet walk on the Heysen Trail that comes up through the creek beds directly below. Some Wedged-tail Eagles were drifting on the winds overhead as we enjoyed the view. A motel room had no chance against this kind of experience.



Misty day on  
Major Mitchell Plateau  
Ian Foletta



Late afternoon at  
Natures Window  
Farefam



Evening glow  
Beardless



After the devastation  
John Walker







# Tasmania

## September 2015

### WINNER



Morning has broken  
Louise Fairfax

I took this photo as a part of a trip to climb Goulds Sugarloaf. It was a glorious time of year, and much of the walk was done in snow. The expedition involved two sunrises, both of which were pretty perfect in my eyes. This is one image from one of them. More pictures can be seen in my [blog](#) and/or [instagram](#) accounts.



Rising above  
North-north-west

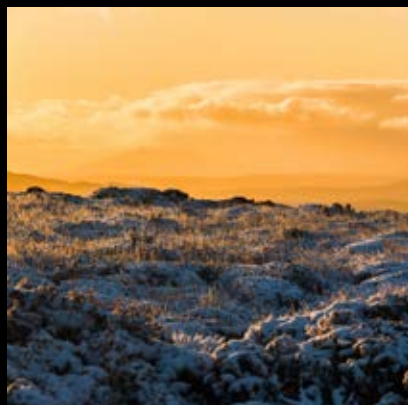




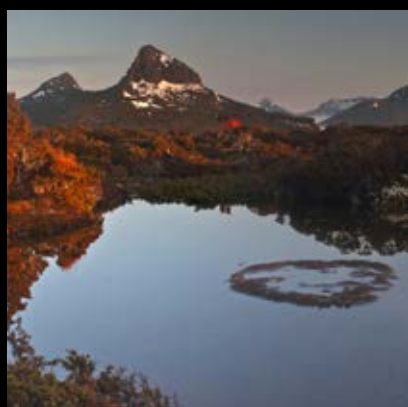


# Landscapes September 2015

WINNER



Gold and white  
North-north-west



Peace on high  
Louise Fairfax



Air of a coming change  
Nick Morgan



At the crossing  
John Walker



Sunrise at the  
Murchison River Gorge  
Farefam



Alligator Gorge  
Brian Eglinton







# Non-landscapes September 2015

WINNER



Winter decorations  
North-north-west



Wildflowers at Z Bend  
Farefam



Reaching out  
Beardless



Don't mind me,  
just warming up  
Brian Eglinton



Angophora and friend  
John Walker







## Foot Care

Helen Smith



Our feet take a lot of wear and tear in day to day life and even more so on a bushwalk where they are expected to support our body and backpack weight. It's easy to forget to look after our feet, but they're one of the most important things we use on a bushwalk.

Image by Maslov Dmitry



BWA April 2015 had an article “A quick guide to foot blister treatment” by Rebecca Rushton, describing how to manage blisters on walks. Following on from Rebecca’s article, here we detail ways to avoid foot infections and pain, and to help keep your feet in the best possible condition for your next bushwalking adventure.

### Foot care at home

Long-term foot care starts at home, with good daily foot care routines. Here are some tips.

- **Check feet daily:** Feet swell during the day, so inspect feet after they’ve been in shoes for several hours. Look for and monitor small cuts, bruises, scrapes, swelling, toenail infections and other skin abrasions.
- **Wash feet regularly:** Wash with warm soapy water including between toes. Dry with a towel and use talcum powder to keep a dry environment between toes and prevent infection.
- **Keep toenails trimmed:** When the nails are soft after showering or swimming, cut nails short. Cut directly across the top of the nail, and smooth rough edges with a nail file, thus preventing or minimising the chance of ingrown toenails.
- **Monitor corns and callouses:** Thick patches of skin can form on the soles of the feet. Advice from a podiatrist may be needed to obtain a suitable treatment.

### On a bushwalk

A good foot care routine is needed on bushwalks. Here are some ideas.

- **Use appropriate footwear:** Select shoes or boots that fit well and are suitable for the terrain and temperature conditions. Use sunscreen if wearing thongs or sandals, and warm footwear in cold conditions.
- **Use appropriate socks:** Wear comfortable socks that help keep feet dry. Cotton holds moisture and increases friction, and should be avoided.

- **Fix problems as soon as they’re noticed:** Remove stones or sharp objects immediately. Skin abrasion rapidly becomes uncomfortable and can lead to infection. Treat blisters early. If footwear becomes uncomfortable, try adjusting lacing.

“A good foot care routine is needed on bushwalks.”

- **Air and check feet at breaks:** Take off footwear and allow feet to dry at breaks. Shake out any stones, rocks, sand or sticks. Do a quick check for ticks or leeches that may have gone unnoticed and treat appropriately. On overnight or longer walks, to relieve swelling or tension, consider resting and washing feet in creeks downstream from water collection points. Removing boots and elevating feet can also reduce swelling. On overnight walks, air out feet at camp by wearing sandals or thongs, and treat any issues (e.g. skin abrasions).
- **Take a change of socks:** It’s hard to avoid socks getting saturated with sweat and this moisture may increase the chance of blisters, odour and infection. Some people find that changing socks half way through a day walk is an effective way of keeping feet dry and avoiding blisters. On overnight or longer trips, carry enough socks so that while some are drying, others are dry enough to wear.
- **Dry feet after river crossings:** Some bushwalks require fording rivers or streams. Take a pair of sandals for river crossings and dry feet thoroughly before putting on walking footwear.



Muddy boots  
Rebecca Rushton



## Other tips

- **Strengthening exercises:** Basic strengthening of the feet, calves and Achilles can make a big difference to reducing foot pain or strain on a bushwalk.
- **Lightweight Gear:** Carrying a heavy pack increases the chance of foot injuries. The extra weight invariably leads to earlier and deeper fatigue and mistakes such as tripping or slipping. Consider lighter gear and sharing group items such as a tent, stove, and first aid kit.
 

“ Carrying a heavy pack increases the chance of foot injuries.
- **Gaiters:** Use gaiters to stop stones, sand and vegetation getting into footwear and to reduce the chance of a snake bite penetrating.
- **Reduce foot odour:** The build-up of bacteria causes foot odour. Feet have a lot of sweat glands, and some people are very prone to sweating even without much exercise. Wash feet regularly and thoroughly, always downstream from where drinking water is being collected from. Bacteria can build up in two places: between toes and the edges of toenails. Keep these areas clean. Dry feet thoroughly and use talcum powder to keep a dry environment between toes. Talcum powder is really lightweight and works wonders for creating a dry foot environment. You don't need much for it to be effective. Wear wicking socks to keep feet dry. If particularly odour prone, consider using an antiperspirant, and after the walk, thoroughly air footwear, and sprinkle baking soda or talcum powder onto the insoles to reduce odour. Alternatively, try some home remedies for treating smelly feet.
- **Use high-quality insoles:** Some cheaper footwear has poor quality foam insoles that quickly wear thin, reducing support and shock absorption. High-quality replacements can make all the difference and may even outlast the shoes or boots.

## Useful gear

Here are some equipment ideas to help deal with any foot problems arising on a bushwalk.

- **Antiseptic liquid/cream:** For preventing infections.
- **Island dressings:** For protecting intact or broken blisters.
- **Compeed hydrocolloid dressings:** For dressing de-roofed blisters (not blisters with an intact roof or torn roof).
- **Penknife with scissors:** For cutting nails.
- **Tape:** For taping up the blister-prone areas. Some people find this an effective way of preventing blisters.
- **Moisturiser:** For the relief of dry or cracked skin.
- **Lance:** For draining blisters. A lance is preferable to pins or needles.

Be prepared to experiment with a range of products to find out what works best. Also, visit [Rebecca Rushton's website](#) for ideas on essential items for a blister prevention kit.

“ ... equipment ideas to help deal with any foot problems ... on a bushwalk



Gauze, ace bandage, tape, trauma shears and bandages  
Jim Barber



## FOOT INFECTIONS

Skin provides a natural barrier to pathogens, however, if the skin is broken via a wound, then the area is prone to infection. Unfortunately, due to the warm and moist environment caused by sweating, feet are extremely susceptible to bacterial and fungal infections. Infected areas can turn nasty pretty quickly, particularly in hot and humid conditions - perfect for pathogens to multiply.

Here we run through prevention and treatment of two key types of foot infections, bacterial and yeast. Remember, if an infection doesn't improve quickly or gets worse, seek medical attention.

“ Infected areas can turn nasty pretty quickly, particularly in hot and humid conditions ...

### Bacterial infections

Typical signs of bacterial infection include increased redness, swelling, pain, warmth and tenderness around the area; pus in and around the area; and fever. The body's inflammatory response is a way of fighting infection by sending extra blood to the affected area. That's what causes localised redness, swelling and warmth at the site of infection.

Good foot care and maintenance can go a long way to reducing the chance of infection. Appropriate management of infections in the field is critical.

Treatment of bacterial infections in the field depends on whether or not the skin is broken. If the skin is broken, wash the area with a saline solution, or flush it out with drinking water. Apply chlorhexidine or antiseptic liquid and apply a bandage. Betadine is a popular iodine-based antiseptic, although care must be taken as some people are allergic to iodine.

Monitor the patient for signs of infection such as increased aches, pain and fever. If the condition becomes severe, seek medical attention. If infection occurs at home, regularly clean and dress the wound. Monitor and seek medical attention if the wound does not heal.

## Yeast infections

Because shoes provide the ideal warm, moist conditions for fungi to thrive, feet are also extremely susceptible to fungal infections.

Common fungal infections include:

- Athlete's foot (red, itchy patches, white flaking skin)
- Jock itch (rash, patches of redness or bumps)
- Ringworm (itchy, red, scaly patches)

Athlete's foot, jock itch and ringworm are all caused by dermatophyte fungi, although athlete's foot can occasionally be triggered by yeast (candida) infections. Fungi feed on keratin, which is a protein found in skin, hair and nails.

Here are some tips to reduce the chance of getting a fungal infection.

- Develop a good foot maintenance routine.
- Wear footwear and socks made from breathable materials.
- Wash feet thoroughly after exercise and change socks.
- Keep toenails cut short and clean them regularly (note that fungal infections can develop underneath toenails).
- Air out feet as much as possible (i.e. use open shoes around the house). When feet are infected, avoid walking barefoot as this can spread fungal infection to other unwary victims.

Treatment of yeast infections on a bushwalk is tricky because it's difficult to keep feet clean and dry. Consider soaking feet in creeks downstream from water collection points for relief, applying antifungal cream (if this is something in the first aid kit) and changing socks regularly to keep feet as dry as possible. At home, wash and dry the rash area thoroughly; apply antifungal creams and/or powders. If it hasn't cleared up within two weeks or gets worse, seek medical attention.

“ Fungi feed on keratin, which is a protein found in skin, hair and nails.



## FOOT PAIN

Foot pain is usually caused by injury, disease, trauma, some biomechanical misalignment or a poor choice of footwear. Walking and weight bearing for extended periods in poorly fitting footwear or on an injured/inflamed foot leads to pain and tenderness, with the potential for long-term problems.

Below are some common foot complaints with short- and long-term treatments in the bush and at home, and prevention methods. Please be careful: if foot pain persists, seek medical attention as some of these conditions must be treated effectively early on to prevent long-term problems.

“The main way to prevent heel pain is to select footwear that has good arch support and heel height.”

### Heel pain

Heel pain refers to extreme discomfort felt through any part of the heel. It may be caused by:

1. Overuse, repeated impact on particular regions of the foot; and
2. Inflammation of tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot connecting the heel with the toes or *Plantar fasciitis*. It is often a result of a biomechanical problem such as flat feet.

The main way to prevent heel pain is to select footwear that has good arch support and heel height. Some people find a heel cup or orthotic helpful for absorbing shock and relieving some of the pain.

If heel pain occurs on a bushwalk, take frequent rests and consider shortening the trip. Back home, rest and recover until the pain subsides. Seek medical attention if the pain gets worse.

### Achilles tendonitis

The Achilles tendon inserts into the heel from the back of the leg and controls flexing movements of the foot. Achilles tendonitis is the inflammation of the Achilles tendon, resulting in a sharp shooting burning pain. It should be treated early to prevent complications.

Achilles tendonitis may be caused by poor-fitting footwear, a short Achilles tendon, trauma to the Achilles tendon, inadequate stretching and strengthening before activity, or over-pronation.

Stretching before a walk to warm up the muscles is a great way of preventing Achilles tendonitis. Some people also find that a heel cup helps. Alternatively, an orthotic to control over-pronation and support the longitudinal arch may assist.

Manage Achilles tendonitis as you would heel pain, and reduce physical activity, apply ice and avoid walks with steep uphill climbs.





### Arch pain/strain

Arch pain can be the result of inflammation or burning of muscles associated with the arch of the foot. Arch pain/strain may be caused by foot injury or structural imbalance or *Plantar fasciitis*, inflammation of the tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot connecting heel with the toes. Arch pain is often the result of a biomechanical problem such as flat feet.

Well-fitting footwear with good shock-absorbing soles is the best way to prevent arch pain and strain. Consider an orthotic to give good arch support and prevent over-pronation.

Make sure you treat arch pain before it gets any worse. Manage arch pain as you would for Achilles tendonitis and avoid shoes with heels.

### BUNIONS

Bunions are a prominent bump on the inside of the foot beside the joint of the big toe. They're a common foot problem caused by the big toe bone moving towards the smaller toes and it's possible that the big toe rests above or below the second toe. Bunions

may cause swelling, inflammation and soreness and in extreme cases may cause walking difficulties. An analogous problem (a bunionette) may also occur on the outside of the foot at the little toe joint due to the little toe moving inwards towards the fourth toe. Bunions are more common in women and are thought to be associated with wearing dress shoes that are too small for the toes.

The best prevention strategy for bunions is to select shoes that are well fitting and with a wide toe box. Orthotics also provide additional support, comfort and protection. Bathing feet in warm water may give temporary pain relief. Some people find a "bunion shield" effective at reducing pain and limiting bunion formation.

### SUMMARY

Our feet are one of our most precious tools on a bushwalk and taking good care of them over a lifetime ensures we can continue to have a lot of fun in the bush. A good foot care routine both at home and on a bushwalk means that you'll pick up any problems early and be able to sort them out before they become an issue. Happy walking!

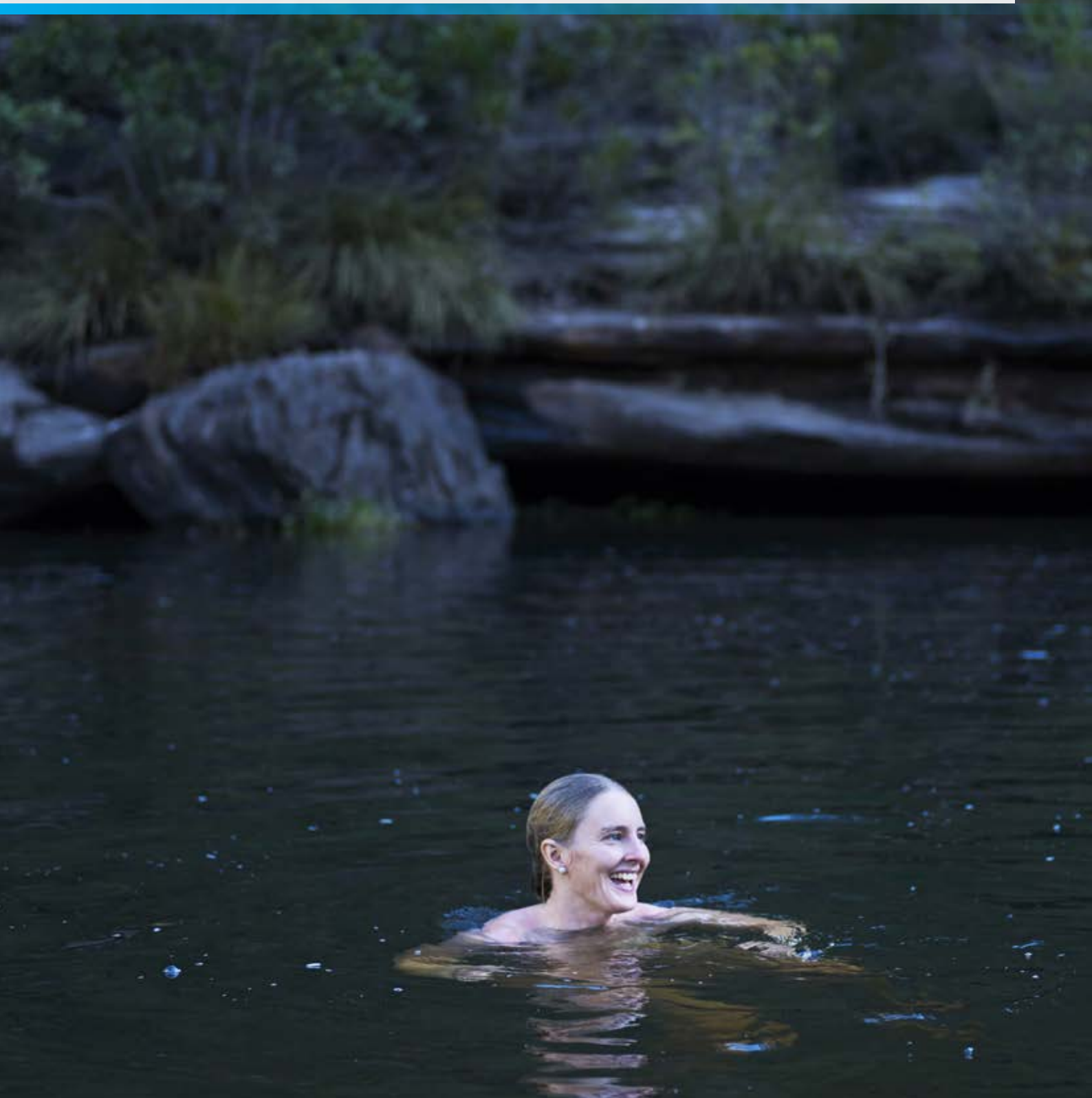


Helen Smith is a passionate conservationist and someone who is constantly planning her next escape into the bush. In early 2015 she completed her PhD at The University of Sydney studying the impacts of exotic and native rodents in Australia and New Zealand. Now she's working at the National Parks Association NSW developing information to help bushwalkers build their confidence and bushcraft skills.



# Winter swimming

Rachel Lewis



“Aaaaaaarghhhh, it's freeeezing!’, I gasp as the sound of my squeals reverberates around the rocky amphitheatre below Minnehaha Falls in the Blue Mountains.

Glenbrook Creek  
Andy Lewis/Wild Swimming Australia



“It's refreshing Mummy”, my seven-year-old daughter reminds me, telling me what I've told her a hundred times. Nevertheless, she dips her feet in and then decides to retreat to her towel and enjoy the view as my husband and I continue swimming across the small but very deep pool below the impressive falls. We then climb out onto the rocks to get dressed and bask in the winter sun, which filters through the trees and gradually returns some life to our extremities. Only the brisk walk back up the trail to the car park will finish the job, but by then the euphoria will have kicked in and we'll be talking about how awesome it was, completely forgetting the shock and the fleeting thoughts of, “I'm never doing this again”. I guess it's a bit like childbirth: painful at the time but the rewards come later.

I'm not entirely sure exactly what happens biologically when the [body is exposed to cold water](#) but I know that, for me at least, it feels amazing. It's probably something to do with feel-good hormones which are produced when our bodies experience stress. Cold showers have even been shown to effectively [treat depression](#). There are biological changes that happen with long-term, repeated exposure to cold water, such as improved circulation, less respiratory infections, [increased antioxidant levels](#) and the restorative effects of [being in nature](#). These changes mean that wild winter swimming could be seriously good for your [sense of wellbeing](#).

Ross MacDowell from the [Brighton Icebergers swimming club in Melbourne](#) sums up what many cold-water swimmers know to be true.

“When you get out after swimming in nine degree water and you can't feel anything, you can't feel your hands and feet, your teeth are chattering, you can't even see straight, it doesn't matter because you feel like you've been re-born. No matter what's going on in your life, whether you're a politician or a retired plumber - we all have struggles – but cold-water swimming is like a feather duster on a chalk board: it rubs it all out. You get out of the water and you're alive, you survived!”

But the reasons people swim in cold water don't stop there. There's something about the winter landscapes that many swimmers, including me, find more beautiful. Maybe its the lower light, creating stark silhouettes of the trees, the peace and quiet, or the fact that waterfalls are likely to be in full flow. Hardened winter swimmer Peter Hancock loves it all.

“I swim in all seasons, but I think I prefer winter to the others. One reason is that the water is clearer at low temperatures because there is less life (algae, phytoplankton and zooplankton), and the water has a lower capacity for absorbing organic matter.

“Above the water, the landscape is more beautiful than in summer. The water has a darker, more moody feel to it, the grass is



Mist at Dumaresq Dam  
Peter Hancock/Wild Swimming Australia



frosted white, and there is often mist swirling up off the water. I also enjoy the solitude. Where I swim most often is [Dumaresq Dam](#). During winter, when the water is six degrees and the air is below zero, there is nobody there. I feel as though I have my own private lake to share with the musk ducks, coots, and wood ducks. However, with all of the reasons above, perhaps the main reason I swim during winter where I do is because nobody else does. It makes the whole experience mine.”

And Peter will go to great lengths to get his winter swim fix, even being known to [swim in the snow](#) on occasion.

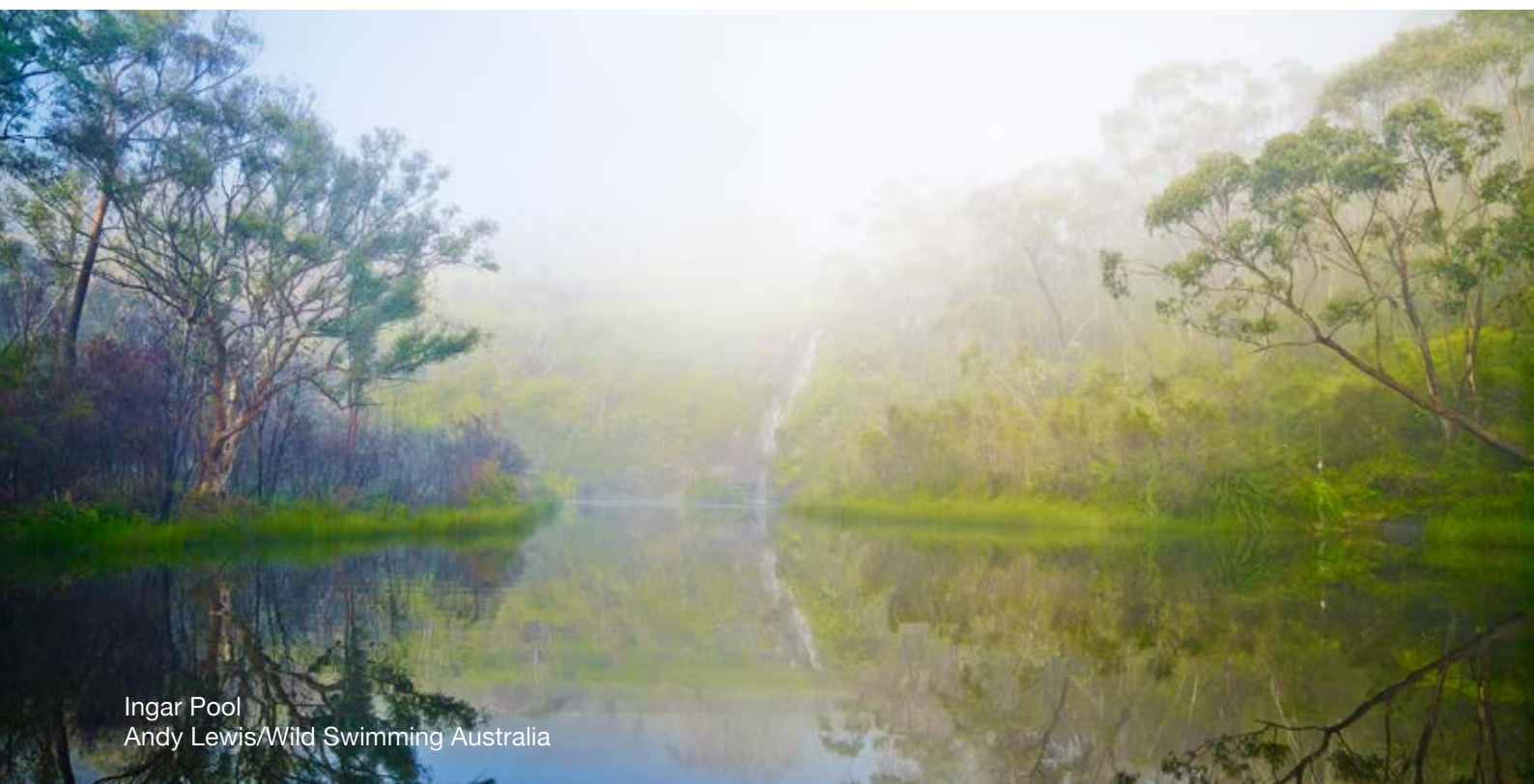
Pretty much all the swimming holes on the [Wild Swimming Australia map](#) will have their own charm in winter and are pretty much guaranteed to be uncrowded. However, it's a great time to seek out more sheltered spots such as the tranquil [Ingar Pool in the Blue Mountains](#), where you can exit the water and head straight back to your campfire in the campsite just metres from the pool.

Whilst waterfalls such as Minnehaha Falls are really impressive to look at after heavy rain, it's not always a great time for a dip at the bottom: huge amounts of water will be moving through causing powerful, unpredictable currents. Whilst breathtaking, waterfall pools are best left for days when there hasn't been recent rain and the water will be calmer, cleaner and clearer.

Swimming spots on lakes such as [Acacia Flat](#) and [Beehive Point](#) on Lake Yarrunga, NSW are another great option for winter wild swimming as currents will not be much of an issue and the water is likely to be crystal clear in colder temperatures. These too have the added luxury of a fire pit for warming up post-swim, as well as being close to the famous pie shop in Kangaroo Valley; a great place to warm the insides.

Even the more urban spots which are very popular in summer, such as [Manly Dam](#) or Lake Parramatta in Sydney, are likely to be empty of swimmers in the colder months while beaches such as the stunning [Elephant Cove in Western Australia](#), with its unique bouldery scenery, are likely to be completely deserted.

No matter how crazy it may seem to the uninitiated, there are plenty of winter swimming enthusiasts out there, as proved by the existence of the [Winter Swimming Association of Australia](#) and the slightly less official sounding “[Hobart Nude Winter Solstice Swim](#)”. And there is safety, or at least motivation, in numbers. Ross MacDowell says that the camaraderie of his fellow Icebergers is what he enjoys most about swimming in the winter. It certainly takes a “special” (read “slightly deranged”) mentality to hurl yourself into freezing water daily. But if that's what floats your boat then it's a bonus to find a tribe of like-minded souls.





It's worth bearing in mind that winter storms bring their own set of risks such as significantly faster currents in rivers and the ocean, and potentially large obstacles such as branches which can be washed down with extra rain. This means that there will be days when some normally safe and popular spots are unsuitable for swimming. It also helps to learn about the [risks of cold water](#) and how to [acclimatise your body](#) to the cold to minimise these

If you decide that cold water really isn't for you, then not to worry. The Australian winter climate means that [swimming holes in the Northern Territory](#) and Northern Queensland,

are still nice and warm, really coming into their own. Further south there's always the option of a [hot spring](#) which can be a great way to end a hike in the bracing winter air and still get your daily dose of water. Or do it the Scandinavian way with a cold dip after a soak in a [BYO hot tub](#)!

Don't write off cold water swimming until you've tried it at least once. As Mary Rose MacColl, author of the Australian open water swimming novel *Swimming Home* says,

"I love swimming in wild water through the winter as it gives me moments when I know I am fully alive and life is grand."



If you can get past the bellybutton, it's plain swimming from there  
Andy Lewis/Wild Swimming Australia



Rachel is a trainee counsellor and has coached surfing for over ten years in the chilly waters of the UK as well as South Africa and Costa Rica. She is shamelessly addicted to being in water and has used it to help her through her fair share of health challenges. Her experiences have led her to believe that getting outdoors and cultivating a relationship with nature is as important for wellbeing as good food and healthy human relationships. She hopes to inspire more people to get outdoors through [Wild Swimming Australia](#), a website which makes it easy to find beautiful swimming holes across Australia.



# Swapping Cows for Kangaroos

Euan Ritchie and Adam Munn



We may be what we eat, but our dietary choices also affect the health of the environment, and farmers' back pockets.

Kangaroos family father mother and son portrait  
Andrea Izzotti



Energy and water use, native habitat cut down for crops and grazing, and emissions that [exacerbate climate change](#), are just some of the profound effects agriculture has on Earth. And, there are more and [more mouths to feed](#).

Perversely, both starvation and obesity are severe health issues across the world. With agriculture confronted by economic and environmental uncertainties, society faces enormous challenges.

But [challenges also offer great opportunities](#). Drastically rethinking what we eat, and where and how food is produced, could help our health, the planet, and our farming businesses.

That means eating fewer sheep and cows, and more kangaroos, feral animals, and insects.

### Unsustainable farming

[Australia's rangelands](#) - the drier regions of the country predominantly used for livestock and grazing - cover about 80% of the country. They are often in poor condition and economically unviable. In part, this is due to the fact we still farm many animals, mostly in ways that are [unsuited to the Australian climate and environment](#).

Hard-hoofed animals contribute to soil compaction and erosion, and have even been linked to the spread of the [invasive cane toad](#). But the environmental impact of intensive stock farming extends much further.

Continuing to farm using a European-derived, intensive system is a recipe for land degradation and environmental collapse, especially with the compounding impacts of climate change (severe weather events, more frequent and intense droughts, and fires).

Past and current agricultural practices have also profoundly altered our environment. It may be impossible to restore these lands to their original condition, so we must learn to operate in the new environment we've created.

More broadly, many experts have identified our [meat consumption](#) and intensive farming as a significant driver of global problems.

### Treading lightly

To address these issues, we need a cultural shift away from intensive agriculture. The days of riding and relying on the sheep's back, cattle's hoof, or the more recent, and increasingly popular, [chicken's wing](#), may need to pass.

Native wildlife and some feral animals [tread more lightly](#) on the environment than intensively produced livestock do, and thus provide more sustainable options for food production on Australia's arid lands. [Kangaroos](#) and [goats](#) place one-third of the pressure on grazing lands compared with sheep.

We already eat some of these animals, but could arguably eat more of them, including [feral goats](#), [camels](#), [deer](#), rabbits, [pigs](#), and [buffalo](#), as well as native emus and [kangaroos](#).

Yet more [extreme proposals](#) could include feral donkeys, cats, horses; and even cane toads. [Horses are already consumed in Europe](#) and [cats in central Australia](#).

[Eating more feral](#) and native animals, and relying less on chicken, sheep, domestic pigs, and cattle would help meet [ethical concerns](#) too. Wild animals such as kangaroos are killed quickly, without the extended stress associated with industrialised farming, containment, and transportation to abattoirs.

And by harvesting sometimes overabundant wild native animals (such as kangaroos) and feral species, we may be able to [reduce their impacts on ecosystems](#), which include [overgrazing](#) and [damage to waterways](#).

An even greater leap would be to eat fewer four-limbed animals and more [six-legged](#) creatures. Insects are often high in protein and low in fat, and can be produced in large numbers, efficiently and quickly. They are already consumed in large numbers in some regions, including Asia.

Evidence that a market for such a food revolution exists is that [shops are already popping up](#) selling mealworm flour, ant seasoning salt, and cricket protein powder, among other delicacies.



## Boom and bust

Thanks to Australia's variable climate, swinging between drought and flood, many farms are also tied to a boom-and-bust cycle of debt and credit.

As the climate becomes increasingly unpredictable, this economic strategy must be [detrimental to the farmers](#), and is shown by many farm buy-backs or sell-offs.

It makes sense to use species that are naturally more resilient and able to respond to boom-and-bust cycles. Kangaroos and other species can forage on our ancient and typically nutrient-poor soils without the need for nutritional supplements (such as salt licks), and are physiologically more efficient at [conserving water](#). This could lead to a more sustainable supply of food and [income for farmers](#), without the dizzying economic highs but also without the [inevitable prolonged and despairing lows](#).

## Future-proofing

To be clear, we are not suggesting completely replacing livestock, but diversifying and tailoring enterprises to better suit Australia's environment.

To support more diverse agricultural enterprises we will need to overcome many obstacles, such as licences to hunt, what we're [comfortable consuming](#), and [land use regulation](#). But we shouldn't shy away from these challenges. There are tremendous opportunities for rural, regional and [Indigenous communities](#), and indeed cities too.



We need a more diverse mix of meat to adapt to the pressures of a growing population and climate change. Supermarket aisles that display beef, chicken, pork and lamb, alongside kangaroo, camel, deer, goat, and insects, could be just what the environmental, health and economic doctors ordered.

“Kangaroos and other species can forage on our ancient and typically nutrient-poor soils without the need for nutritional supplements ...”

### Euan Ritchie

Senior Lecturer in Ecology, Centre for Integrative Ecology, School of Life & Environmental Sciences, Deakin University

He is affiliated with the Ecological Society of Australia and the Australian Mammal Society.

### Adam Munn

Adjunct lecturer, UNSW Australia

He has previously received funding from the Australian Research Council and National Geographic Society.

Adam Munn has been associated with projects receiving funding from Meat and Livestock Australia. Adam Munn is a member of the Australian Mammal Society and the Australian and New Zealand Society for Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry.

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 22 May 2016.





# Upcoming Events

## Bush Capital Marathon Festival

6-7 August 2016

A two-day off road running and bush walking [event](#) from the centre of Canberra in Mt Ainslie and Mt Majura nature reserves.

## Spring Trek Sydney

7 August 2016

An annual 18 kilometre or 30 kilometre four person [team trail walk/run](#) to raise money for Room to Read, set in the stunning Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

## Oxfam Trailwalker

19–21 August 2016 in Sydney

16–18 September 2016 in Perth

Tackle 100 kilometre of Australian bush [within 48 hours as a team of four](#), and make a difference by raising funds to help overcome poverty and injustice around the world.

## The Bloody Long Walk

21 August 2016 in Adelaide

4 September 2016 in Sydney North

25 September 2016 in Perth

2 October 2016 in Brisbane

Enjoy the [35 kilometre challenge](#) at your own pace, be it a walk, jog or run, knowing that every step is one step closer to finding a cure for mito!



## The Big Uluru Trek

23-27 August 2016

Trek for five days and over 100 kilometres through stunning and varied desert landscapes. Learn about aboriginal culture and the aboriginal history of the area from the traditional owners who will accompany the Trek. For more information and registration check [bigulurutrek.com.au](http://bigulurutrek.com.au)

## Bigfoot Snow Trail

17 September 2016

A unique and spectacular [42.2 kilometre event](#) offering both a SnowMarathon and a SnowSprint event in Victoria's beautiful Falls Creek resort.





# High Horses: Kosciuszko NP

Jessica Hancock



On 1 May 2016, the draft Wild Horse Management Plan for the Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) 2016 (the 2016 Plan) was released for public comment. This article is a response to that plan, and is written by a bushwalker for bushwalkers.

Curious herd, Currango  
Jessica Hancock



In the winter of 2013 while cross-country skiing at the fatefully named Dead Horse Gap we stumbled across a mob of starving horses. They had been trapped above the snow line after the blizzard, and the tracks in the snow told us that they were so exhausted that they'd barely moved a few dozen metres in the past week. One of the mob had already fallen, and carnivores had moved in on the carcass. Subsequent accounts revealed that the remaining animals had taken a further two weeks to finally succumb to the elements.

Clearly, natural attrition was brutal.

With only a basic understanding of wild horse management, I decided to research the issue, and have been following the debate since then. The 2016 Plan was released for public comment after a long and arduous process of reviewing the 2008 plan. The review included extensive community consultation and an independent review panel of expert professionals, and the most up to date aerial surveys of population counts. The [2016 Plan](#) is on public display until 19 August, with an accessible and inoffensive [Questions and Answers Information sheet](#) for those who want to provide quick responses on the most contentious subjects. Yet media articles about the 2016 Plan are always accompanied by vitriol below the line, as public commentators variously bemoan the concept of horses in national parks at all or claim that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is a corrupt institution intent on killing all the horses.

So contentious is the issue that the 2008 plan review report (included with the 2016 Plan) described that even naming the horse was a careful decision in balancing views:

"In this Review, NPWS refers to the horses as 'wild horses' in an effort to maintain balance between environmental and horse advocacy stakeholder groups that regard the terms 'brumby' or 'feral' as either romanticising or being derogatory, depending on the viewpoint. Use of such terms by NPWS, it is argued by stakeholders, could cloud or influence community opinion. This in itself is an indicator of the level of controversy, debate and emotion that is associated with this management issue."

Understanding both sides of the argument is an important first step towards community support for wild horse management, and helps to tackle some of the misinformation being spread. In this article I want to address what wild horses mean to the community, to help contextualise why there has been such a contested response to the 2016 Plan, before I describe the current horse management practices. As such, because I am addressing this to a bushwalking audience, I'll start with what is usually the other side of the debate: the pro-brumby arguments.

“Abandoned or escaped horses made it into the alpine regions at least 150 years ago ...”

### The Brumby Perspective

Horses arrived in Australia on the First Fleet in 1788, and have been a major part of the European settlement of the continent. From pastoralism in the high country to their use in war, horses have a special place in Anglo-Australian culture reflected in our literature, films and artwork. Abandoned or escaped horses made it into the alpine regions at least 150 years ago, and the word “brumby” for these wild horses has been in use since at least the 1880s. Contrary to popular beliefs about Sergeant James Brumby or derivations of Aboriginal words, the Australian National Dictionary states that word brumby is of unknown origin.

The connection between Anglo-Australian culture and horses runs deep. The creation of a specifically Australian sense of identity (as distinct from British) was taking place at the end of the nineteenth century across multiple cultural mediums, including the Heidelberg school of art, and bush ballads by Henry Lawson and A.B. “Banjo” Patterson. This identity solidified the relationship between the settler, the horse and the bush. Significantly, it also served to naturalise the settler: settlers were connected with horses, horses became a part of the landscape, therefore settlers were connected with the landscape. This cultural meaning for the wild horses is not explicit, but it helps to explain the unconscious drive behind the determination of brumby supporters to argue that horses have evolved in tune with the alpine region – a defence that is not extended to other feral animals.



This unconscious indigenisation of horses explains why brumby advocates are defensive or disbelieving about the damage done by horses but freely acknowledge the damage done by other animals. At the extreme end of this logic is blaming native animals for the damage done by horses, but this is precisely what happened in the Save The Brumbies response to the 2016 Plan when they declared that “More damage is caused by wild pigs, wombats, digging around water holes and creeks.” Online forums have other references to wombats as culprits. Although not supported by scientific evidence, claims about the importance of horses to the landscape are routinely presented to show that the horses are not only valuable but vital: they keep away weeds, they reduce fuel load for bushfires, they assist and are a part of the alpine ecology.

It is also about a prioritisation of values. For brumby advocates, the brumbies represent one of the most essential parts of the alpine region, absolutely necessary to their appreciation and understanding of that landscape. In comparison, 4WD use, the skiing industry, and people in general cause much more damage to the landscape for much less value. To brumby supporters, park management plans developed especially for horses just show the bias in the industry: why pick on horses when there are other culprits that are being ignored?

Of course, the answer is that the cultural value of the horse is precisely the reason that they get their own management plan. Unfortunately, many of the key messages of horse management have not been adequately communicated. Indeed, Straight Talk – an independent consultation agency that the NPWS brought in to assess community feelings for the 2016 Plan – commented in the review of the 2008 plan that:

“Community members have a low level of knowledge about the impact wild horses are having on Kosciuszko National Park, and although people think they are well informed about the management of wild horses the evidence from the engagement project demonstrated that they are not.”

There is also a basic and pervasive mistrust of the NPWS by some people in the pro-brumby community. The report produced by Straight Talk summarised these issues:

“For many of these horse stakeholders there is also a complex history of government land management decisions and actions, such as the removal of high country grazing access, wilderness area declarations, and restrictions on recreational horse riding access, which have all created a sense that they have been displaced and disenfranchised by the declaration of the park. Fire, weeds, recreational access and other pest



Starving Horses at Dead Horse Gap  
Jessica Hancock



management practices, have also influenced their perceptions and motivations, and their relationships with the organisation. This history, their sense of ownership of the issue and the idea that theirs are the only credible views all impact on their engagement and interaction with NPWS on this issue. Their refusal to acknowledge the right of NPWS to publish factsheets about this issue, on the basis that they do not agree with the views being presented, is an example of this.”

### A History of Wild Horse Management

In 1944 Kosciuszko was declared a State Park, and in 1967 the area became a National Park. Cattle grazing was phased out between 1949 and 1972, but with wild horse numbers rising, formal management of them was introduced in the 1970s through licensed brumby running. Concern about the stress caused to the wild horses by brumby running grew through the 70s, and in 1982 the Plan of Management declared a ban on brumby running due to animal welfare and the risk to participants. Horse numbers increased, and by the 1990s it was clear that the population needed different management.

The NPWS developed the first Horse Management Plan for the KNP Alpine Area

in 2003. This plan noted the legislative responsibility of NPWS to control the impact of the wild horses on the landscape, which required a decrease in their population. The impact of horses is both direct herbivory (consumption of native plants), and degradation of natural habitats (which includes fouling waterways, accelerating gully erosion and trampling native vegetation). All studies of horses in the alpine region have concluded unambiguously that they do damage. This is simply because the landscape did not evolve with large hard-hoofed animals such as horses, and it is impossible for the horses not to make an impact.

Several strategies for controlling the population growth were considered. Trapping, roping and mustering were trialled. Leading the horses on a rope from a trap was discontinued early, as it was both high risk to personnel and volunteers and caused severe stress for the wild horses themselves. Since that time, all horses caught in the traps have been removed directly into transport (limiting trap setting locations to those accessible by road).

“This is simply because the landscape did not evolve with large hard-hoofed animals such as horses ...



Stallion, Currango  
Jessica Hancock



A few years later, in 2008, a broader KNP Horse Management Plan was adopted. The objectives of this plan were straightforward: to exclude wild horses from areas of exceptional natural and cultural significance (Main Range, Yarrangobilly and Cooleman Plain); to reduce horse numbers; and to reduce horse numbers humanely. Unfortunately, the plan was actually quite unsuccessful in achieving these objectives. Horses moved into the sensitive areas specified, and areas where horses were removed were simply recolonised from neighbouring areas. Basically, horse numbers have increased markedly rather than being reduced at all (perhaps unsurprisingly, given that studies of horses elsewhere show that removing horses keeps their growth rate high and their populations healthy). Although NPWS did follow best humane practices in removing the horses, due to a low demand for wild horses, less than 20% of these went on to be rehomed.

Overall, the 2003-16 trapping and removal program removed 3183 horses from the park at a cost of \$3.3 million, or about \$1116 per horse. Of these horses, 583 (18%) were rehomed, while the rest were sent to a

knackery or abattoir for slaughter. The 2016 Plan also notes that there is concern for wild horse welfare in the multi-stage trapping and subsequent transportation system that can cause them prolonged stress, only for the great majority of them to be euthanised at the end of the process anyway. Over a similar period, the KNP horse population increased from 3000 in 2002 to 6000 in 2014. In short, trapping is not getting control over the number of horses.

### Horse Management in Other Parks

It is instructive to look at other horse management strategies in different national parks in order to contextualise other solutions. For instance, in nearby Namadgi National Park in the ACT, horses were eliminated entirely in an aerial cull in 1987 that attracted public backlash. However, Namadgi was then kept relatively horse-free through passive trapping and monitoring, and caused no further controversy. The currently expanding KNP population threatens to thwart this if not kept in check.

“... areas where horses were removed were simply recolonised from neighbouring areas.”



Brumbies in the Victorian High Country, Falls Creek  
Jessica Hancock



## Guy Fawkes

An even more dramatic backlash had been in response to the aerial shooting at Guy Fawkes National Park, north-east of Armidale in north-east NSW in 2000. Wild horse numbers had been increasing in the park over the 1990s, and mustering and trapping operations had not only failed to control numbers, but had caused injury and considerable stress for the animals involved. Fires and severe drought through the park in 2000 left the wild horses in a poor condition, and drove them into the open gullies and creek beds where their plight became obvious. The death of individuals and the ill health of the population at large, as well as the ease of accessing them in the confined open ground where they had relocated, made an aerial shoot the most humane response. An independent veterinarian looked at the deceased horses after the shooting and concluded that those examined had been killed humanely. Of the 606 horses shot over three days, one horse was found alive later, in spite of two bullet wounds in the killing zone of the heart/lungs. The suffering of this animal, as well as photographs of the deceased wild horses, sparked outrage and the RSPCA prosecuted the NPWS for aggravated cruelty.

“... I am in doubt that natural attrition is the most humane method ...”

## New Zealand Kaimanawa Horses

After the Kaimanawa Horse was declared a protected species in New Zealand their numbers soared, and concern for the environment prompted a decision to reduce and control the population. In recognition of the public preference for mustering and rehoming, rather than the aerial shooting technique recommended by animal welfare groups, a muster and capture was done of 1069 horses. Many of these horses were in poor physical health (part of the impetus for the muster), and the sheer number of them outweighed limited public demand for wild horses. Consequently, very few of these animals were re-homed and most had to be euthanised, but annual musters to control the population since then have been more successful in rehoming the majority of the animals. Debate around fertility control

continues in New Zealand, but even with a tiny and controlled population of 300 horses this is seen as unfeasible.

The musters have been biannual since 2010 to reduce the costs to the Department of Conservation.

“After the Kaimanawa Horse was declared a protected species in New Zealand their numbers soared ...”

## The 2016 Draft Wild Horse Management Plan

The objective of the 2016 Plan includes reducing this population to 3000 in 5-10 years, and to a manageable 600 in twenty years time. The 2016 Plan information sheet says:

“The Plan is based on an integrated and adaptive pest management approach to be implemented in conjunction with other long term park management and control programs for pest species, such as pigs, deer, goats, rabbits, foxes and other introduced species. There are a range of humane and cost effective control methods proposed in the draft plan and the decision to use some or all will be taken to suit particular circumstances using the best available information at the time. It's expected that different methods will be selected at different times depending on seasonal factors, location of the horses and population size.

Proposed control methods are:

- trapping and rehoming
- trapping and transport to knackery or abattoir
- trapping then shooting at the trap site
- aerial and ground mustering for rehoming
- aerial and ground mustering for transport to knackery or abattoir
- aerial and ground mustering then shooting at muster site
- ground shooting
- fertility control (in the longer term when populations are reduced)
- fencing.”



One of the most contentious aspects of horse management seems to be aerial shooting. The Victorian RSPCA released a statement supporting an aerial shoot and calling on Parks Victoria to implement one in response to the suffering of the horses in overpopulated areas of the alpine region. After witnessing the slow death of the wild horses trapped by snow at the appropriately named Dead Horse Gap, I am in doubt that natural attrition is the most humane method, for the horses or for the environment of an overpopulated region before drought or snow drives the population of horses down.

If an aerial shoot improves the condition of the remaining horses, humanely euthanises the excess population, and causes less stress for the same result as mustering and trapping, why is this not considered a win-win for all involved? The answer is that this conclusion does not address any of the issues on the pro-brumby side of the debate. Jumping directly to aerial shooting skips the earnestly felt indigenisation of the horses that makes them a balanced and necessary part of the environment for brumby supporters. It skips the tradition of pastoralism and brumby running in the alpine region. And it skips the

emotional response that aerial shooting provokes in people. Our enjoyment of national parks is anthropocentric – we want to access them, walk through them, ski in them, take photographs of them. To invalidate equally anthropocentric forms of recreation such as brumby spotting and horse riding is to – pun intended – take the high horse on the issue.

The 2016 Plan acknowledges the cultural value of the wild horses, and responds directly to the concerns of brumby advocates. Indeed, the vision that opens the 2016 Plan is:

“To conserve the outstanding values of Kosciuszko National Park with the support of the community through active, adaptive and humane management of wild horses to minimise their adverse impacts on natural, cultural and visitor values, while acknowledging the cultural and social values of the Kosciuszko National Park wild horse population.”

“Jumping directly to aerial shooting skips the earnestly felt indigenisation of the horses that makes them a balanced and necessary part of the environment for brumby supporters.”



Brumbies at Gooandra Homestead  
Jessica Hancock



And while the first two objectives of the plan reflect earlier plans (reduce horse numbers and impact; reduce the risk of adverse horse incidents), the third is devoted to community consultation.

But if brumby supporters were already off-side before the 2016 Plan and now refuse to read it, how can we talk to them about the future management of the park? This article is, I hope, a step towards bridging this language divide: if we can make the effort to understand the assumptions of brumby supporters, then we can at least not get them off-side when discussing wild horse management. Being informed about the issue is a step in the right direction – if you know the advantages of the Kaimanawa horse management, then you can talk about the same issue (wild horse management) without directly challenging the value of brumbies in Australia. But most importantly, we need to accept a compromise: while there is agreement that horses should be

“... while there is agreement that horses should be kept out of the true alpine ecosystems, horses will never be completely removed from the sub alpine and montane regions of Australia.

kept out of the true alpine ecosystems, horses will never be completely removed from the sub alpine and montane regions of Australia. If the country was run entirely on scientific evidence with the accepted premise that a pre-1788 environment was superior and our modern cultural traditions (bushwalking and other activities that do not involve brumbies) were the only way the area could be enjoyed, then sure, maybe we could remove them. But Australia in 2016 has cultural traditions in the alpine wild horse, and while this is an Anglocentric cultural tradition, it is a tradition nevertheless.

“But Australia in 2016 has cultural traditions in the alpine wild horse, and while this is an Anglocentric cultural tradition, it is a tradition nevertheless.

In Australia, we do not simply have wild horses: we have brumbies. But through the active and humane management of these brumbies we can also have a future goal: the cultural tradition of Australian alpine recreation based on science and our appreciation of our endemic environment. And bushwalkers can lead the way.

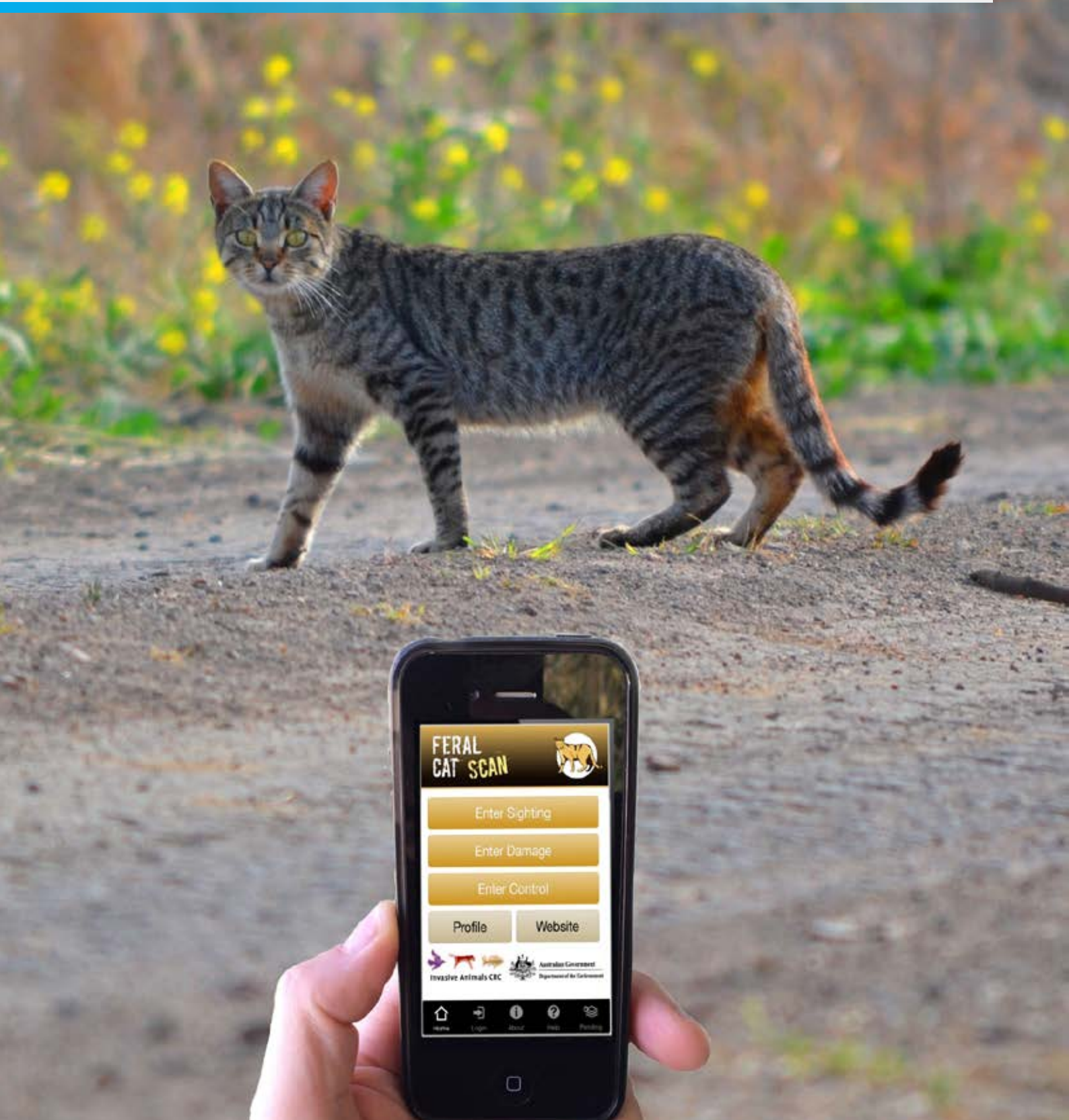


Jessica Hancock's parents met through a bushwalking club, and she has been bushwalking since before her memories of these walks were even formed. Her executive roles with the [UTas Bushwalking Club](#) (Vice-president 2009-11), [UWA Outdoor Club](#) and the [ANU Mountaineering Club](#) (President 2015) have seen her living her love of the outdoors as dedicated procrastination from her studies, which currently involve completing a PhD in Literature at the ANU. She blogs about her adventures at [wordsandwilds.wordpress.com](#), has recently started actually contributing to (instead of just reading) [Bushwalk.com](#) as Zingiberacea, and has even more recently joined the [Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service](#) as a Host Ranger on the Three Capes Track.



# Mapping Feral Animals

Peter West



Have you ever seen an introduced pest animal while bushwalking or camping? If you have, then here are two great resources to identify and record your sighting for local land managers.

Recording pest animals such as feral cats is easy using the FeralScan mobile app  
Jason Wishart



Introduced pest animals such as foxes, feral pigs, feral cats and rabbits cause damage estimated at approximately \$1 billion across Australia each year, and impact heavily on Australia's unique native plants and animals, ecosystems and wild places. Pest animals also degrade landscapes, damage cultural sites, impact on agricultural production and can pose a serious human health risk.

You can help to protect Australia's native flora and fauna, farmers and the environment by reporting whenever you see introduced pest animals to local authorities.

First, learn how to identify which introduced pest animals are around. Recently developed by the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, the "[Field Guide to Pest Animals of Australia](#)" phone app (available for Apple devices) can be downloaded onto your phone and used while bushwalking to help you to identify up to 52 of Australia's worst introduced pest animals, and the signs they sometimes leave behind such as tracks and scats. The app contains pest animal photos, and even audio calls for some species such as foxes barking in the night, or the alarm calls of feral deer. Once installed on your phone, the app isn't reliant on an internet connection or phone reception, making it ideal for bushwalking in remote areas.

Once you are familiar with identifying pest animals, you can also record sightings of pest species into the *FeralScan* program. *FeralScan* is an Australia-wide resource (also developed by the Invasive Animals CRC) that farmers, community groups, and bushwalkers can easily use to report sightings or problems caused by introduced pest animals. Local land managers need

to know where pest species occur, how many there are, and what problems/damage they've caused in order to implement management programs to protect our landscapes and natural areas.

You can help by recording the locations where you see pest animals into *FeralScan*. Information you provide about sightings can be used to improve the way pest species are managed, and help protect our wild places and environment.

*FeralScan* is available as a website [feralscan.org.au](http://feralscan.org.au) and as a dedicated mobile app that can be downloaded free from the [AppStore](#) or [Google Play store](#). The app contains over 50,000 community records of pest animals, including photographs supplied by over 25,000 people Australia-wide.

Species that can be mapped include rabbits, feral cats, foxes, feral pigs, wild dogs, feral goats, Indian Myna birds, European starlings, cane toads, plague mice, feral camels, and even pest fish such as carp – all of which cause significant impact to our environment, people and our economy. Soon the resource will be available to report feral deer.

So, next time you spot a pest animal, use the Field Guide App to confirm the species, and record your observation into *FeralScan*. For further information, go to the website [feralscan.org.au](http://feralscan.org.au) or contact the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre at [feralscan@feralscan.org.au](mailto:feralscan@feralscan.org.au).



Peter West is the Project Coordinator at the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre.

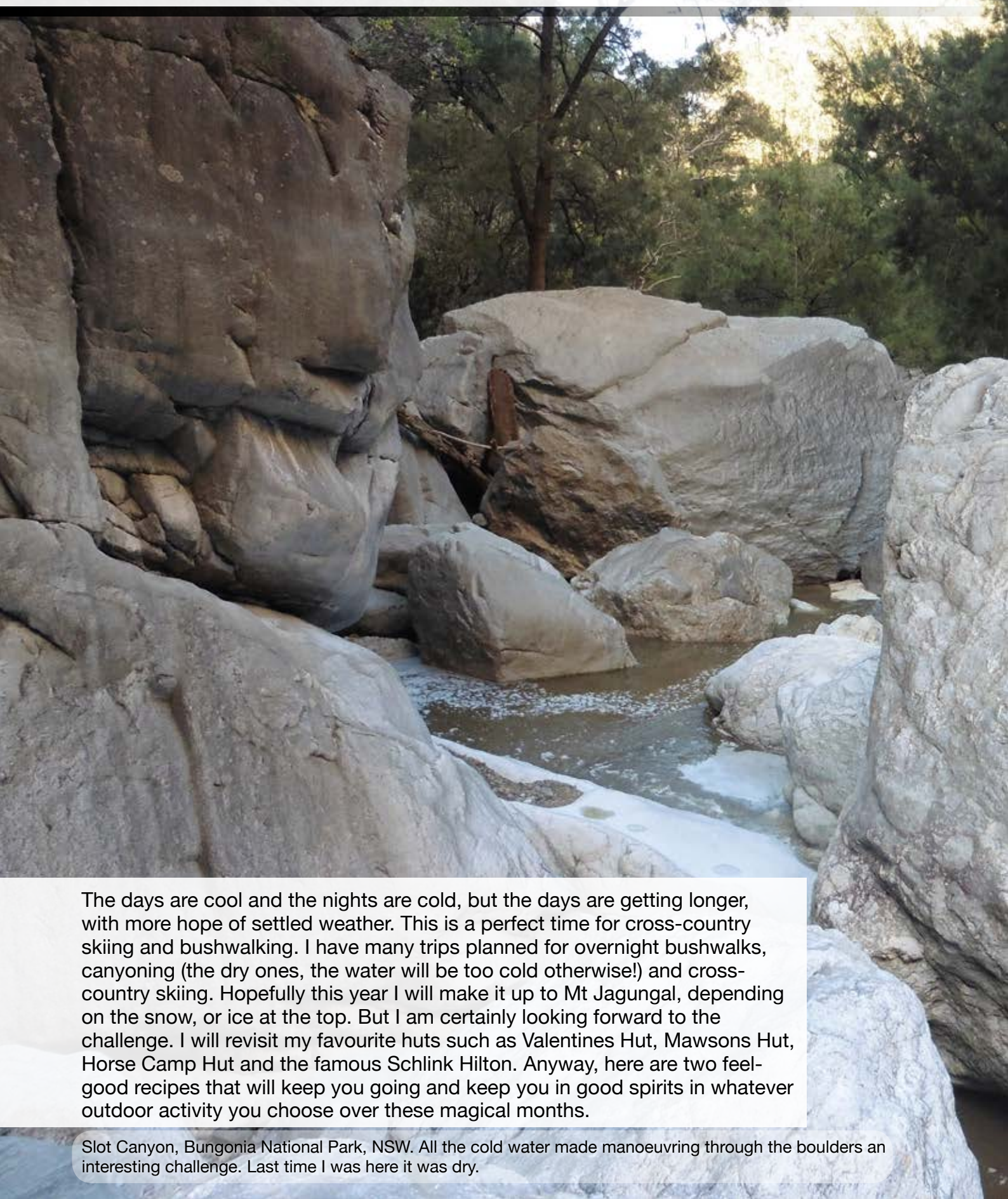


Introduced foxes are often seen by bushwalkers but are rarely reported  
James Doumstis



# Feel-good Meals

Sonya Muhlsimmer



The days are cool and the nights are cold, but the days are getting longer, with more hope of settled weather. This is a perfect time for cross-country skiing and bushwalking. I have many trips planned for overnight bushwalks, canyoning (the dry ones, the water will be too cold otherwise!) and cross-country skiing. Hopefully this year I will make it up to Mt Jagungal, depending on the snow, or ice at the top. But I am certainly looking forward to the challenge. I will revisit my favourite huts such as Valentines Hut, Mawsons Hut, Horse Camp Hut and the famous Schlink Hilton. Anyway, here are two feel-good recipes that will keep you going and keep you in good spirits in whatever outdoor activity you choose over these magical months.

Slot Canyon, Bungonia National Park, NSW. All the cold water made manoeuvring through the boulders an interesting challenge. Last time I was here it was dry.



# Pasta Carbonara

This dish took me quite some time to get it right. I tried many variations, and had some epic fails. One variation worked quite well at home, but out on the trail it did not work at all and my meal was awful. I had to eat it as I was on rations but it left me with a dull mood for the rest of the night. Finally I got the recipe right. I believe there is something about food that can either make or break a mood. A really tasty meal can be so uplifting to your spirits, or a bland meal can make you feel, well um, bland I guess. Pasta carb is based on egg, cheese, bacon and pasta but you do not need to take fresh eggs: they can break and go through your rucksack. Instead, use powdered eggs which are available at supermarkets. Also you can get this really yummy stuff available from Asian shops called pork floss - light, fluffy and super tasty. It reminds me of fairy floss but it is made from pork. It works a treat in this recipe, and after this meal you will be feeling great.

## At home preparation

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

## Method in camp

In a pot boil 2 cups of water, add the contents of Bag 1 (pasta mix) and cook for about 6 to 12 minutes (depending on the cooking time of the pasta. Try to get the quick 5 to 6 minute cooking time pasta, saves on fuel). Whilst the pasta is boiling, in a bowl add the contents of Bag 2 (sauce mix). Slowly pour in about ½ cup of water over the sauce mix stirring constantly to make a paste. When the pasta is ready add the sauce mix and the contents of Bag 3 (herb mix) to the pasta, stir through. Cook for about 2 minutes stirring constantly until the sauce thickens.



## Bag 1 (pasta mix)

Pasta		100 grams
Dried peas	1 Tbsp	11 grams

## Bag 2 (sauce mix)

Grated parmesan	3 Tbsp	30 grams
Milk powder	2 Tbsp	20 grams
Egg powder	2 Tbsp	16 grams
Vegetable stock	½ tsp	3 grams
Mustard powder	⅛ tsp	1 gram

## Bag 3 (herb mix)

Fried shallots	¼ cup	20 grams
Pork floss	1 Tbsp	20 grams
Dried basil	½ tsp	16 grams
Dried parsley	½ tsp	16 grams
Dried onion	⅛ tsp	4 grams
Dried garlic	¼ tsp	2 grams
Ground chilli	few pinches	85 grams
Salt, pepper	few pinches	62 grams

## Water

½ cup for preparation  
2 cups for cooking

## Vegetarian option - Bag 1

TVP mince	¼ cup	20 grams
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# Camp Apple Crumble

On multi-day hikes I never take fresh fruit as it weighs me down too much, but this apple crumble recipe is a way to have a bit of a fruit intake on longer trips, and an indulgence at the same time. Now, who doesn't like apple crumble? The sweet golden crunch of the crumble topping, with the soft, sweet tasty apples, and just a hint of cinnamon, yum! Talking about it is making me hungry. What about serving it with a bit of custard? Especially after a hard day out on the trails, wherever you are, how good would that be? This apple crumble is so easy to make, and it is a sweet way to finish the day whilst getting your fruit quota in. By the way, did you know that the apple crumble originated in Britain during the World War Two due to food rations? The ingredients were unavailable to make pie bases, so they got creative and came up with this. Not bad I say!

## At home preparation

Chop the mixed peel as fine as you can. Chop apple pieces up into small chunks. Label the bags and place all ingredients into the allocated bags and container. Copy or print out Method at camp and keep together with the bags.

## Method at camp

In a pot, add the contents of Bag 1 (apple mix) then add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water, soak for about 5 minutes. Place the pot on the stove and cook over a low heat for 2 to 3 minutes until all the water has evaporated. Take off the heat, add the ghee, then add the contents of Bag 2 (oat mix), stir through and place back on the heat. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring constantly until the crumble starts to brown and crisp up. Serve.



## Bag 1 (apple mix)

Dried apple	6 each	30 grams
Vanilla sugar	2 tsp	12 grams
Mixed peel	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp	1 gram
Ground cinnamon	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp	1 gram

## Bag 2 (oat mix)

Brown sugar	2 Tbsp	32 grams
Plain flour	2 Tbsp	28 grams
Rolled oats	2 Tbsp	20 grams
Shredded coconut	2 Tbsp	16 grams

## Container

Ghee	2 Tbsp	32 grams
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**Water** -  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup



To read more about the author or find more delicious recipes check [xtremegourmet.com](http://xtremegourmet.com)



# Magazines



## Wild 154 issue

Wild, Australia's wilderness adventure magazine

Wild 154 explores some of the common issues people might have while on a remote wilderness adventure. Laura Waters shares her experience of activating her EPIRB in NZ, Louise Fairfax presents a satirical take on technology dependence and Mark Daffey discusses how troublesome new hiking partners can be. For the wildlife lovers, Inger Vandyke travels to the Ladakh region of India to photograph the elusive snow leopard.



## AG Outdoor Jul-Aug issue

Packed with all things adventure, this issue includes six of the best Victorian adventures, the awesome Hollyford Track in New Zealand, a great overnight walk in Barrington Tops National Park, and loads more. There's a How to guide on using a map and compass - one of the essential outdoor skills, and there's also a brilliant 4WD adventure retracing the route of one of Australia's first explorers through the northern Simpson Desert. Add in a look behind the scenes at the Banff Mountain Film Festival and a pile of expert gear tests and it is another bumper issue of inspiring adventure to get you through the winter months.



## The Great Walks Aug-Sep issue

- Epic summits to strive for
- 28 cutting-edge products
- Dealing with altitude sickness
- When good feet go bad
- Becoming a volunteer Park Ranger





# Bushwalk Australia Digital Magazine



## First edition

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



## Walking in Summer

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



## A lifetime of walking

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



## Autumn edition

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



## Winter edition

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



## Winter wanderings

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



## Best of Australia

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



## Keep your cool

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



## Best of ACT

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



## Best of QLD

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



## Best of NT

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



## Best of WA

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



## Best of SA

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



## Best of TAS

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



## Best of VIC

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



## Best of NSW

- Best walks of NSW
- Wolgan Gorge Adventure
- Southern Shoalhaven Coast Walk
- Warbonnet Hammock Review



## Winter Walking

- Fig Tree Point
- The GNW Takes a Big Step Backwards
- Gear Freak - Footwear
- 10 Tips for Backcountry Snowshoeing and Winter

