

Bushwalk Australia

A woman with a red backpack and a light-colored cap is smiling at the camera. She is standing on a grassy hill overlooking a tropical beach with turquoise water and white sand. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the hiker in the foreground.

Summer Swelter

Volume No 20, December 2016

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
An electronic magazine for
<http://bushwalk.com>
Volume 20, December 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



Image by Goodluz

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

The copy deadline for the February 2017 edition is 31 December 2016, earlier preferred.

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

Wow, it is summer again.

How quickly the year shoots past. What a crazy year it has been, but at least we can head bush to escape the madness.

I want to say a big thanks to Stephen and Eva. They do an amazing job pulling each edition together. I have been very busy with other jobs for the last few editions and without hesitation they keep everything running smoothly. Thanks also to the authors and photographers; we love the great articles and images. Thanks for the time and effort in sharing your experiences and expertise.

In this edition, we have showcased two wonderful and vastly different walks, and a last-minute addition details the Falls Hotham Alpine Crossing status. We also have articles on sun protection, rewilding, a club's adventures, photos that will inspire you, a free bushwalking book to download and so much more.

I hope you enjoy this edition. Please keep the feedback coming - we read it all and it helps us to refine each edition. We want this magazine to continue to inspire and equip, more and more, for your next adventures.

I hope you have a very Merry Christmas and awesome New Year.

Happy walking
Matt :)



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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. I operate Bushwalk.com and Wildwalks.com and have written several walking guide books, published by Woodslane, I have also written for Great Walks. I contract part time to National Parks Association NSW on an ongoing basis to coordinate their activities program. I have had a partnership with NPWS NSW and have hosted advertising for *Wild* magazine. I have also partnered with a large number of other organisations in environmental campaigns and have a regular bushwalking segment on ABC regional radio. There is some commercial advertising through the magazine. I have probably forgotten something - if you are worried about transparency please either write to me or raise the issue on Bushwalk.com.

Videos

The Great South West Walk

The Friends of the Great South West Walk (GSWW) have a [promotional video](#). The GSWW is 250 kilometres of forest, river, beaches, and cliffs. This track has a remote wild feel while being surprisingly close to roads and towns, with good campsites. See [BWA February 2016](#) for more details.



The Wheely Big Bushwalk - a fun bushwalk for people in wheelchairs

Saturday 3 December 2016 at 10am, walks leave from 10.30am

Join the fun at Narrabeen Lagoon. This awesome day is run to help people in wheelchairs connect with nature. Please share this with anyone you know that might be interested.

Check the [flyer](#) and sign up here: <http://www.wildwalks.com/events/wheely-big-bushwalk/>

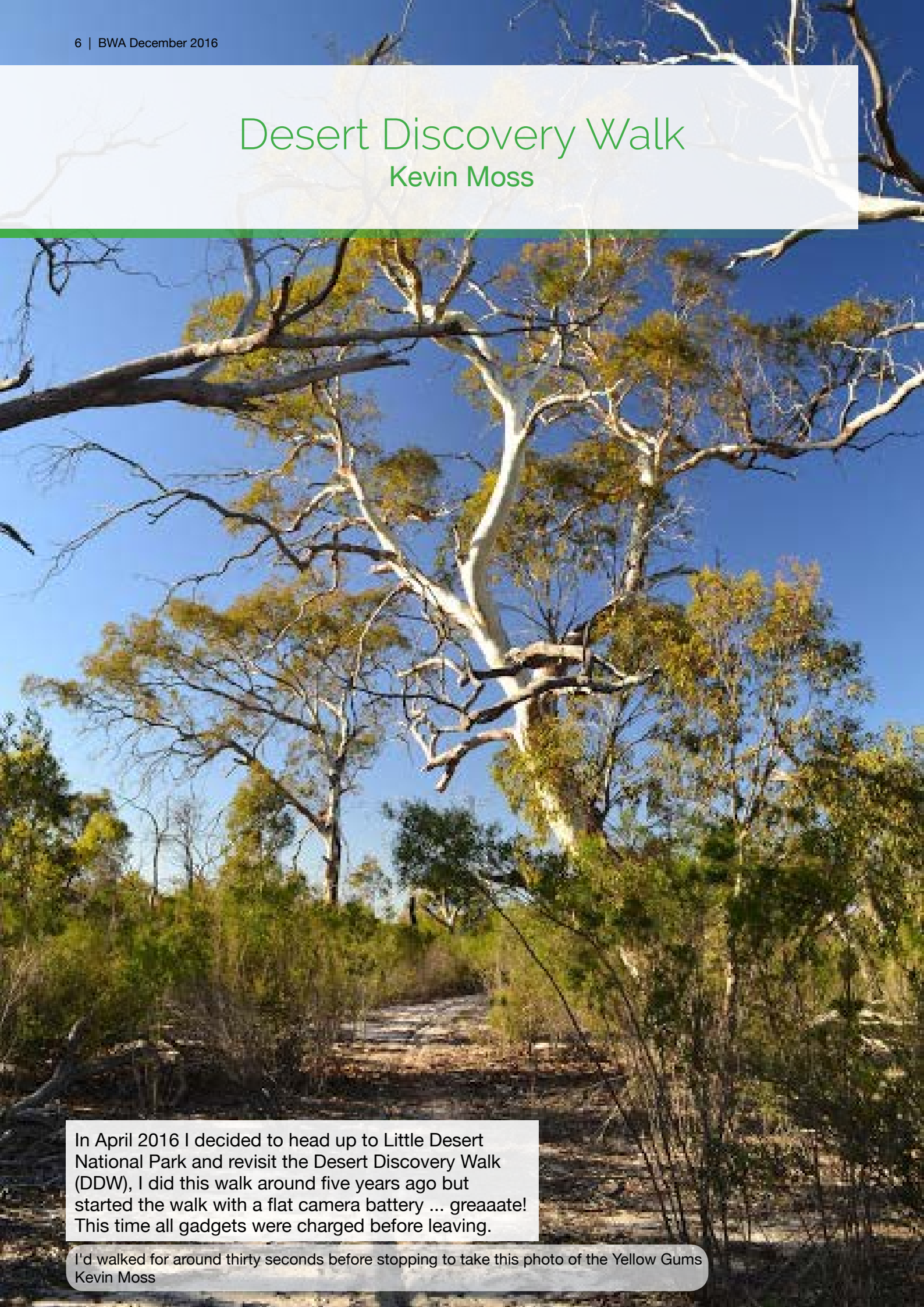
For more information about the event or volunteering please contact

Helen Smith on (02) 9299 0000 or helens@npansw.org.au.



Desert Discovery Walk

Kevin Moss



In April 2016 I decided to head up to Little Desert National Park and revisit the Desert Discovery Walk (DDW), I did this walk around five years ago but started the walk with a flat camera battery ... greaaate! This time all gadgets were charged before leaving.

I'd walked for around thirty seconds before stopping to take this photo of the Yellow Gums
Kevin Moss

Little Desert National Park stretches from the Wimmera River to the South Australian border just to the south of the Western Highway. The park was gazetted in 1968 largely to preserve habitat for the endangered Malleefowl, which nests in the sandy soil among the scrubby Mallee Trees. The park comprises hundreds of low dunes interspersed with sandy heathlands, clay pans and the odd salt lake. As I'm not partial to crowds I decided to drive to Kiata on the Thursday night and start the walk on Friday morning, the theory being that I'd miss any long weekend crowds. So after having dinner with Sam I jumped into the ute and headed towards Adelaide, arriving at the large, almost deserted Kiata Campground just before 1am. I soon had the tent up and drifted off to sleep.

Day one - to Yellow Gums Camp 21.9 kilometres, 203 metres ascent

I emerged from the tent blinking into the sharp light of a stunning morning. Before the walk started I had to stash water at Yellow Gums Camp - the tank is out of action due to an infestation of bees trapped inside and polluting the water.*

*Parks Victoria advises that the bees have now gone, but could return. It would be useful to have a tank with mesh, like in the Barry Mountains on the AAWT. A tank that cannot be relied on is not much use. Parks Victoria suggests that walkers place their own water drops. Perhaps also check prior to the trip to see if the tanks have water. SL

Now I suppose I could have carried water for two days and 45 kilometres but you know, I'm old and broken so I figured that the better option would be to drop some water. Yeah, what could go wrong with that plan?

After driving along Dahlenburghs Mill Track until Mt Arapiles was starting to tower above me I reluctantly admitted to myself that I may have missed the point where the DDW crossed the track, hmmm. A fifteen point turn later I headed back the way I'd come, keeping a close eye out for my intersecting walk. Arriving at Centre Track I'd overshot in the other direction - bugger me! Another fifteen point turn and I'm heading back in my original direction, with good news that as the rutted sandy track was now familiar I was able to scan the scrub looking for the elusive DDW. I managed to locate my walking track near the top of a small dune and headed into Yellow Gums Camp with my water and tent. The end result of all this faffing about though was that I didn't actually get back to Kiata Campground and start walking until 1pm.

So my cruisey first day was now not so cruisey; over 20 kilometres in five hours is a solid walk even in the flat desert landscape. The DDW leaves Kiata Campground on a soft sandy track and basically stays on it for the duration of the walk. The route soon forks to the right (the left hand track is my return route in a couple of days) and heads towards a long low ridge that heads south. The walking here alternates between red clay and the ubiquitous sand, and the low vegetation



It was around 1pm by the time I started walking
Kevin Moss

allows for some nice views over the surrounding country. I arrived at Trig Point for a late lunch and took in what is arguably the most expansive view on the DDW.

I left Trig Point close to 3pm, and with around 14 kilometres to go I kicked it up a gear as I made my way down to Salt Lake. All was going good until crossing Dahlenburghs Mill Track where progress suddenly got a lot harder. The walking track from here has been used by motorbikes and they had cut the soft sandy surface up - it was like walking along a soft beach. With the Yellow Gums on the dune on the eastern side of Salt Lake standing out like a beacon in the flat featureless terrain it was easy to measure progress along here. As well as helping with navigation they also looked beautiful in the late afternoon sun and I dropped the pack for a rest and to explore.

From Salt Lake the DDW heads south before curving around, heading due east. The late afternoon walking along here was probably as good as it would get. The DDW passes through heathland and dunes covered with Tea Tree, Broom and Mallee Trees, with the odd damper spot sometimes home to small cospes of Yellow Gums. The motorbike churned up sand wasn't the only thing slowing me down now, with sun slowly

setting I was now stopping quite a lot to take another awesome (I thought) photo. With the sun slipping below the horizon I crossed Dahlenburghs Mill Track again at the point where I did my water drop so at least I knew exactly how far Yellow Gums Camp was. Arriving at the beautiful Yellow Gums Camp in the twilight I was glad that I'd put the tent up when I left the water. All that was left now was to settle down on the bench under the hut verandah and watch the bush change colour as twilight slipped into night and the full moon rose through the spindly trees like a spotlight. After my Thai green chicken and apple pie (relax its freeze dried) I was into the sleeping bag by 8:30pm on what was feeling as though it was going to be a cold night.



Yellowgum Camp
Kevin Moss



Lookout at Trig Point
Kevin Moss

Day 2 - to Mallee Camp**35.2 kilometres, 221 metres ascent**

Today was a solid day for an old bloke. Most people spend the night at Horseshoe Bend and complete the walk over four days but I wanted a day at home with Sam before going back to work, so I was doing the walk in three days again. Now I knew it was doable for me as I'd done it like this last time, only thing is last time I was a few years younger and I went light weight with just a bivvy. Anyway with all that in mind it was important that I got an early start so setting off at from Yellow Gum Camp at 9 am wasn't ideal, but hey it was early for me! To be fair (or make a piss poor excuse) I'd had to walk my water container back out towards Dahlenburghs Track, the couple of kilometres at least loosening up my stiff leg muscles. After returning from my morning's warm up I set off towards the Wimmera River, only to stop to take photos of the beautiful Yellow gums in the morning light.

From here the DDW heads east towards my next notable landmark, Eagle Swamp. Maybe I was grumpy or maybe it was because I knew I had a thirty plus kilometre day in front of me but the motorbike damage really did my head in this morning. I found myself constantly changing sides on the

track as I searched for some firmer ground that hadn't been churned up by my bogan brothers. Eventually Mt Arapiles came into view to the south and at around the same point open cleared farmland is less than a kilometre south of the DDW. I'd now crossed the park north to the south. After trudging over some slightly higher dunes, which gave me a bit more of a view of the surrounding country, I crossed McCabes Hut Track and arrived at Eagle Swamp. The good news is that my motorbiking mates seemed to have exited the walking track here. The bad news was that my responsible 4WD mates had obviously mistaken Eagle Swamp for a speedway track, and had cut the salt lake, leaving circular scars that will probably remain for 40-50 years.

Leaving Eagle Swamp the DDW crosses more dunes and starts to close on in some distant larger trees that signalled the flood plain of the Wimmera River. The other notable thing along this section is the amount of Banksia trees. Most of the trees were around head height and not mature, which gave the appearance of walking through an orchard. With no churned up sand the walking along here was easy and pleasant but the midday sun was hot and I was looking forward to reaching the river and its



Near Eagle Swamp
Kevin Moss

larger trees that promised some more shade. I wasn't sure how much water would be in the river as the area has been in a severe drought for a while, but on arriving on its bank I was happy to see lots of slow moving brown water, good enough in fact for me to strip off, jump in and wash away the grime of the last couple of days.

Feeling a whole lot better after my short swim I slowly got dressed and headed up River Track towards Ackle Bend. The dry clay of the flood plain along here made walking a lot easier and the open Red Gum and Black Box forest made it easy for me to cut the meanderings of the river, although the now hard ground was playing havoc on my tender feet (One minute I'm crapping on about soft sand, now I'm complaining about hard clay, I'm turning into a cranky old bastard as I type this). Stopping at the Ackle Bend camp ground I enjoyed a late lunch and refilled my water containers. The large national park camping area was almost empty on this long weekend and I couldn't help but wonder if it was because of the exorbitant fees that are now charged for camping in some of Victoria's parks.

Eventually I had to leave the oasis-like surrounds of the Wimmera River and head into the heathlands, west. So not only was

I tired after already having walked around 25 kilometres but now I was walking into the slowly setting sun as well. After passing through another orchard of Banksia trees the DDW starts to cross some large flat heathland plains. Curiously, Mt Arapiles now appeared closer than it did this morning even though I was now at least six kilometres further away. The extensive flat plains allowed plenty of time for reflection as I trudged my way west. The only things to break my trance like state were the occasional kangaroo and odd noteworthy occasion that I'd get to a point of interest like the Dry Well or a larger dune.

With the sun now well and truly set I trudged on into the gathering gloom, stopping frequently to take more photos in diminishing light. After crossing one last dune that was a little higher than the rest I descended to Mallee Camp, suddenly bursting out of the thick cover of Mallee Trees at the dam near Mallee Camp. I had to put on my head torch to locate the hut inside the tree line. I didn't have the luxury of arriving at camp and having my tent already erected tonight so I didn't muck around finding a spot to camp. By the time I'd set up and had dinner (spag bol and apple pie), it was starting to get a little on the chilly side, with stars and satellites twinkling in the cold clear



skies. Eventually the cold drove me into my sleeping bag, my feet finally feeling some relief after a long day. It didn't take me long to drift off.

Day 3 - to Kiata Campground 20 kilometres, 104 metres ascent

Somewhat surprisingly I pulled up pretty good after yesterday's epic. My leg and shoulder muscles weren't feeling too bad at all, and the only maintenance issue I had with my broken body was that my feet were a bit on the tender side. With only around twenty kilometres to go today I wasn't in a great hurry this morning so I lay in the tent for a while and waited for the sun to work its magic, before eventually pulling on some warm clothes and emerging to cook breakfast and pack. Mallee Camp isn't as scenic as Yellow Gums Camp, although it did have one thing going for it and that was it had a water tank with usable water in it, always a bonus when camping in the desert.

This morning I set off at around 9:30am but I was in a good mood, the sand was reasonably firm, the scenery was still great and I was heading for a hot shower and a cold drink. Life was good. After around an hour my mood deteriorated a little just after I'd crossed McCabes Hut Track I heard the sound of motorbikes approaching, initially I

hoped the responsible motorbike riders were on the 4WD drive track. However as the first one ripped over the dune behind me on the walking track I realised that my nice walking conditions were over for a while. Sure enough after the second one had gone past and I was able to resume my journey, now trudging along a soft rutted track.

It took me a while to get my mood back on track after my run in with the bikes but what do you do, you can't let a couple of tools ruin the experience and while they had tore up the track the scenery was still as good as ever. Passing the turn off to Wallaby Track (a short cut track to Yellow Gums Camp that bisects the park north-south) I trudged on to Pump Jack Dam, an old bore from the days when this area was grazed. I had some good news as well as it appears that my bogan mates had decided to leave the walking track here and head out along the 4WD track. Maybe they didn't want to run into any more extra-large pissed off bushwalkers ... who knows. I thought that I looked friendly enough!

With my mood now improved I headed west, the vegetation slowly getting sparser as I progressed. After crossing Centre Track the walking track started to cross a broad open plain, with the track heading towards



Mallee Camp in the new day
Kevin Moss

a long north-south ridge, the same one that I climbed to the Trig Point on day one. I've walked here a few times before, joining the DDW after an off-track walk from Salt Lake Track on one occasion, so I was starting to get into familiar territory and that always seems to make things happen quickly.

Arriving at Albrechts Mill I made use of the picnic table and finished off the last of my salami and cheese. Albrechts Mill is where early European settlers sunk a bore back when they tried to graze this area. The bore and dam are now used for fire fighting purposes. There's one thing I find a little odd at Little Desert: the number of mosquitoes. At both Yellow Gum and Mallee Camps the mozzies are ferocious, and at Albrechts Mill they were pretty full on as well, so after scoffing down a couple of salami and cheese wraps I was happy to be on my way again.

The last few kilometres back to the Kiata Campground is a fairly easy affair, with the tall Red Gums at Kiata seeming to guide me back to the ute. At Kiata I was surprised to see the huge camping area empty except for two caravans on this the Sunday of a long weekend. See my earlier comments about the Ackle Bend camp to maybe understand why people don't seem to be camping in national parks at the moment. Throwing all my gear in the back of the ute I now had to pick up my water container near Yellow

Gums Camp, but at least I knew exactly where to go. After picking up my left over water and using it for an impromptu bush shower I headed off on the long drive home, arriving home to my very understanding wife at 10:30pm after what had been another very solid day.

Summary

Alright, what's the dirt on the Desert Discovery Walk? Well I reckon its a great walk, there's plenty of native animals and birds, and the semi-arid scenery is not your typical bushwalking country. There are basic huts at Yellow Gums Camp and Mallee Camp with water tanks, although the Yellow Gum tank is out of action at the moment. You probably wouldn't want to stay in the huts but they provide shelter in bad conditions. Most people take four days to walk the Desert Discovery Walk, spending a night at Ackle Bend or Horseshoe Bend on the Wimmera River. If done over four days it's a medium grade walk, and over three days it's a hard walk. It appears that motorbikes on walking tracks are a bit of a problem. The start of each section of walking track has a sign banning motorbikes, but the temptation is obviously too much for these budding Paris-Dakar stars. With time the sandy tracks slowly return to their normal state and walking is good again, but it takes months and rain for that to happen. Tracks



that have recently had motorbikes on them are substantially harder to walk on. It pays to contact the extremely helpful rangers at Wail on 5389 0200 to check on conditions before walking up here, at the moment with no water to be had at Yellow Gums you either need to carry enough for camp and over 40 kilometres walking or organise a water drop with a 4WD. If the full walk sounds like a bit much there is an option to shorten the walk by linking Yellow Gums Camp and Mallee Camp via the Wallaby Walking Track, making an easy three day walk.

I used the 1:50,000 Kiata and Natimuk Vicmaps on the walk, I also used an old Westprint Little Desert National Park map for my 4WD trip into the park to drop off my water. Unfortunately Yellow Gums Camp is incorrectly marked on this map, although I was using the 1993 edition! It would pay to carry a PLB. My Telstra mobile had service every time I checked it.



Kevin and his wife Samantha live and work in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. When Kevin isn't at work or working on his [Goinferal blog](#) he is generally planning his next walk. Kevin has walked extensively in every state and territory of Australia over more than thirty years. He has also walked in Argentina, Chile, Peru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, France, America and the UK, but it is the arid climates of Australia where he feels most at home. When not walking, Kevin enjoys mountain biking and wild swimming, and drinking coffee while reading the papers with Samantha at their local cafe.



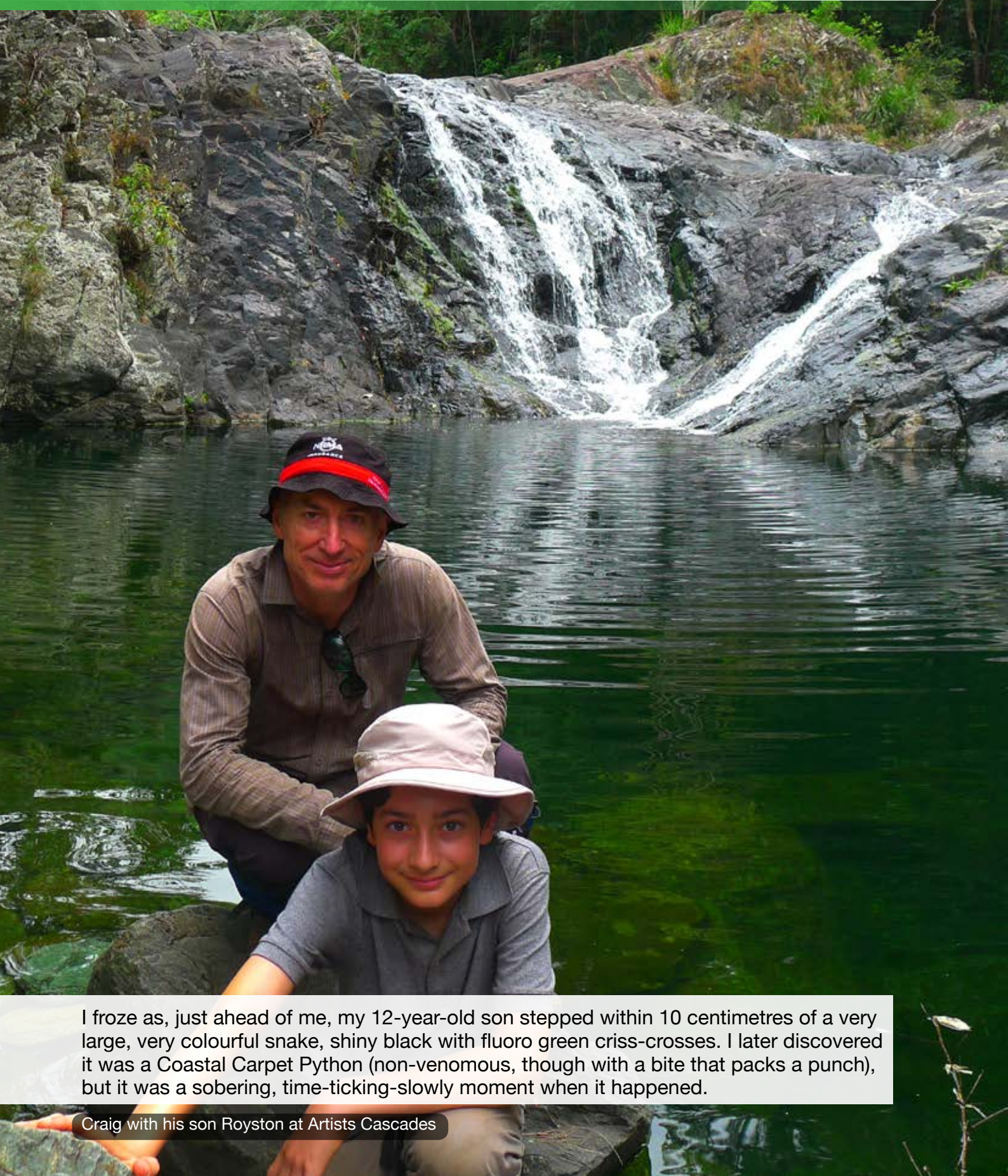
Albrechts Mill
Kevin Moss



**High quality
Locally made
BUILT TO LAST!**

Conondale Range Great Walk

Craig N Pearce



I froze as, just ahead of me, my 12-year-old son stepped within 10 centimetres of a very large, very colourful snake, shiny black with fluoro green criss-crosses. I later discovered it was a Coastal Carpet Python (non-venomous, though with a bite that packs a punch), but it was a sobering, time-ticking-slowly moment when it happened.

Craig with his son Royston at Artists Cascades

This was one of numerous snake encounters on the Conondale Range Great Walk, belying the topo map and info sheet's claim that snakes are "rarely seen". The first of a few red-bellied blacks we saw slithered off from within a metre of my son's footfall immediately after arriving at Booloumba Creek camping area, while a much differently coloured variation of another Coastal Carpet Python meant we did our own snake-like sidle diversion past him deep into the walk.

The Queensland Government's marketing people would probably prefer to adopt the delightful and ubiquitous Rufous Fantail as the walk's icon, but if they used the red-bellied black snake the truth would not be misrepresented!

This proliferation of snake and bird life (Booloumba Creek was thick with kookaburras, for instance, and other more colourful feathered friends), along with lace monitors, frill-necked lizards and mountain brushtail possums, was a – mostly – welcome element of the deeply immersive, and intoxicating, bush experience the Conondale Range Great Walk provides.

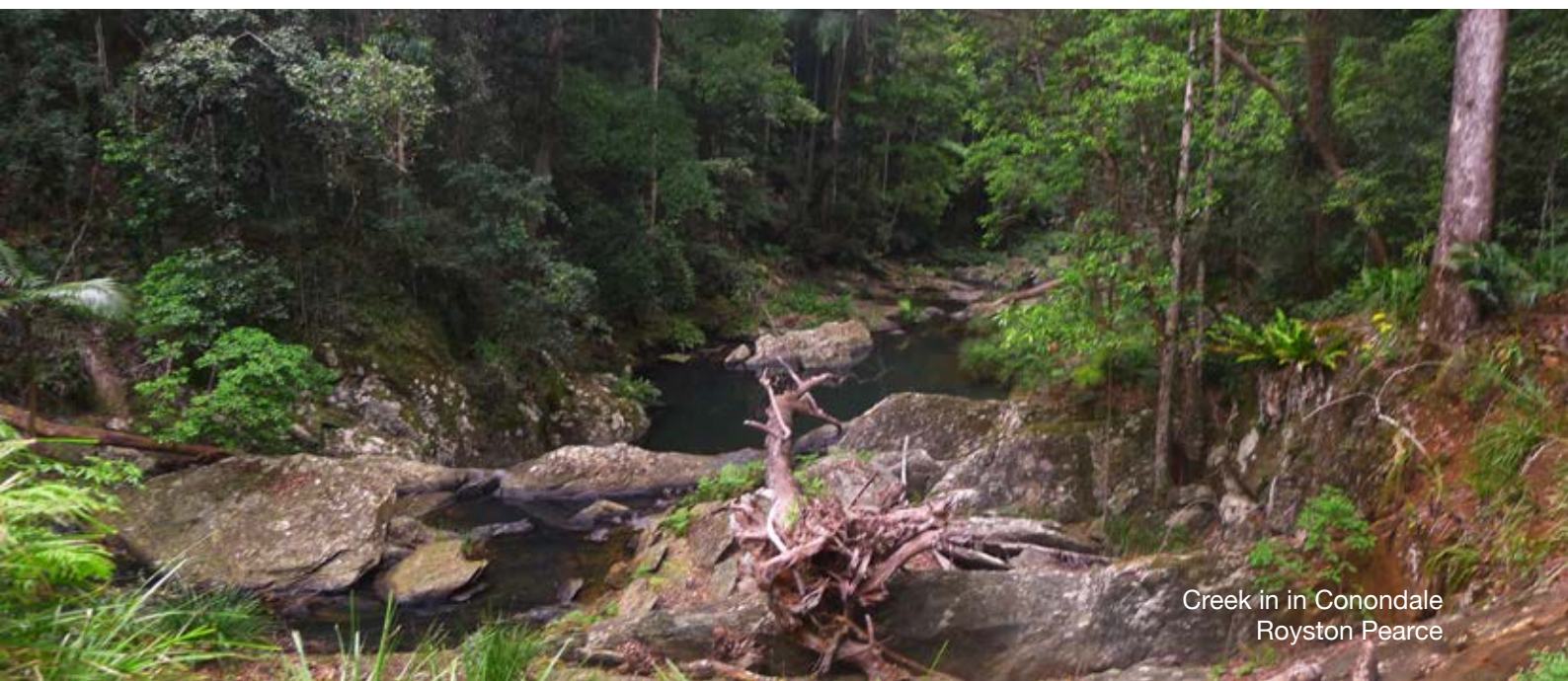
And let's face it, in Australia, if you're not up for some snake encounters on your bushwalking, which ultimately adds to the "wow" factor, then you've probably chosen the wrong leisure pursuit. Even on short bushwalks I make sure my son and I wear long trousers and, more often than not, gaiters. When I see people going on a walk like this in trainers and shorts I'm thinking rather you than me ...

This Great Walk is one of several of this ilk the Queensland Government has developed. It is in the Conondale National Park, about two hours north of Brisbane. After a three year "build", the walk opened in 2010, and it has been constructed with an intelligent and sensitive "light touch". Yes, there are some sections where steps, supported by rocks, have been cut into the incline and, yes, there are a number of designated walkers' camps featuring water tanks (if you can get the damn taps to work ...), toilets and wooden platforms, but for the most part what you get is a raw and rugged, up close and personal nature experience.

The immersive dimension of the walk is apparent as soon as you arrive at the starting point of Booloumba Creek. This is four-wheel drive access only, but you can park two kilometres away before the first of a series of creek crossings and walk into base camp.

With an atrium of palms and eucalypts towering over you and the rainforest giving the impression of wanting to subsume you within its depths, this is the beginning of a journey akin to walking underwater – with the addition of a lung- and mind-clearing amalgam of fecund vegetation and soil aromas. Combine this with the camping area's swimming holes, peacefulness and a morning precipitation of leaves, silver daggers spiralling out of the sky, and I was in the park's thrall before the walk had even begun.

“... I was in the park's thrall before the walk had even begun.”



Creek in Conondale
Royston Pearce

Helping accentuate the underwater feeling is that for 90% of the walk you're in shade, which of course helps cool you down, a great advantage when lugging packs up some of the very challenging inclines. While parts of the walk pass through open, dry forested sections (including on management trails), much of the walk is navigated through confined spaces, where the rainforest and wet sclerophyll forests gradually claim you as a part of their own organic bodies.

Going by the small number of walkers on the trail in the ideal October school holiday period when our visit took place, and the unused look and feel of campsites and the track, it seems that the walk hasn't really been "discovered" to the extent it deserves to be. But the minimal traffic it receives has probably allowed Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to keep it light touch, enabling those who are privileged and fit enough to experience it to get very close indeed to the park's unique characteristics.

Over 56 kilometres the walk passes through and by heavily forested ridges and gorges. The walk is designed to be undertaken over four days, punctuated by the walkers' camps. If travelling in the prescribed clockwise manner, the first two days are physically challenging – if you're silly enough to carry packs the size of ours, anyway – with plenty of steep inclines.

There are many small creek beds cutting through the hills' adjoining creases, as well as countless waterfalls and creeks in the gullies. In the rain-heavy summer months the

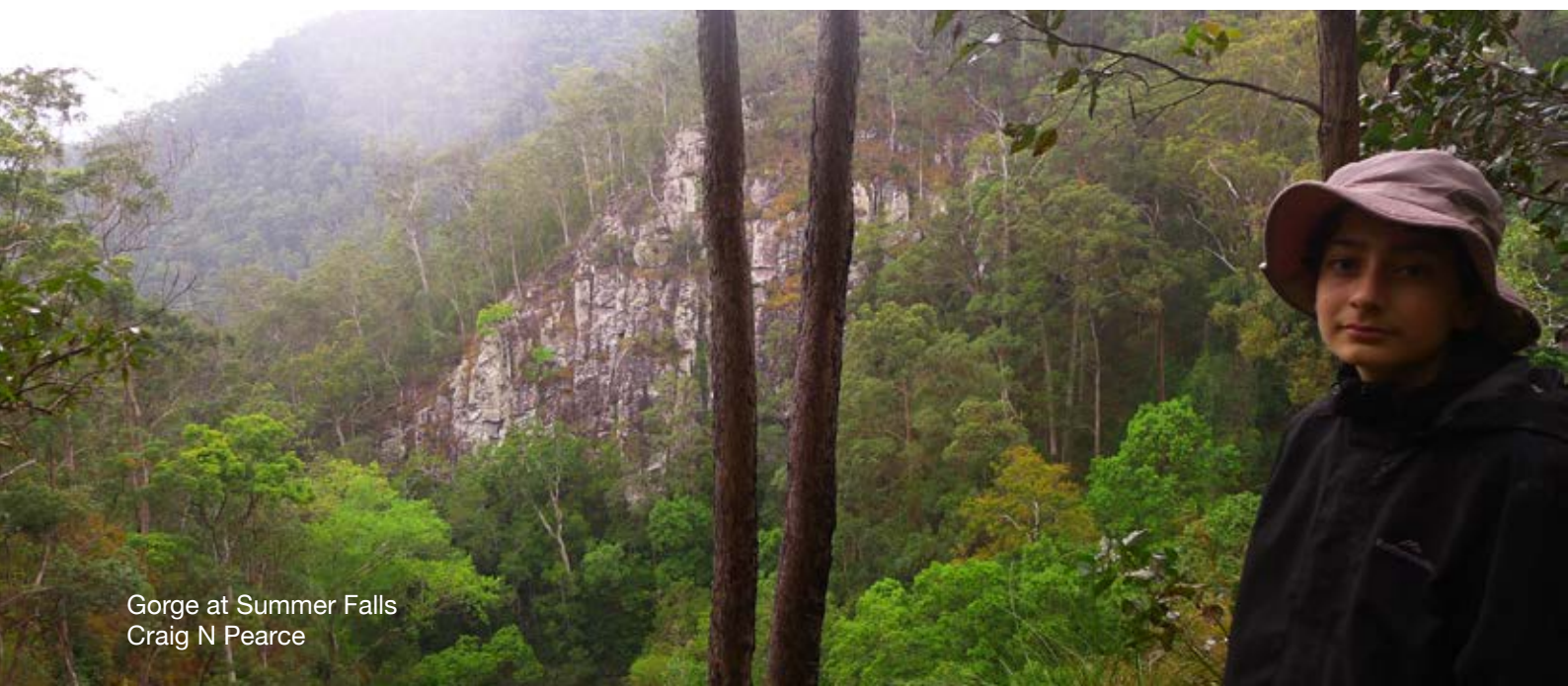
walk must take on a different – or enhanced? – personality as many of the creek beds that were dry at the time of our walk would likely turn into torrents requiring caution.

The first day of the walk you encounter the beautiful Artists Cascades (hello red-bellied black #2 – lesson: red-bellied and creeks go together like damper and golden syrup) and the spectacular Booloumba Falls. The latter features a series of large, mini-falls with linked pools, leading to an impressive 40 metre-ish waterfall, while the Cascades is a fine point to gather your thoughts, as immediately following it is the walk's most brutal climb. The final walkers' camp is adjacent to Summer Falls, another dramatic set of cascades and falls. This is faced across its gorge by a dramatic sheer cliff face comprised, the QPWS tells me, of old meta-sediments forming metamorphic and interbedded volcanic rocks.

Gondwana lives large. Think Jurassic Park – moss, lichen, fungi. On numerous occasions, islands of palm groves materialise, jolting with the way they changed the rainforest ambience. Staghorn ferns, another of my favourite walk features, also had some dense clusters, and a rock face full of ferns was an element to have any garden designer aching with envy. Dinosaurs would feel right at home.

Towering bunya pines and the striking flying buttress features of strangler figs were predominant, while another of those park icons could equally be the large, ropey vines

“Dinosaurs would feel right at home.”



Gorge at Summer Falls
Craig N Pearce

that were everywhere, ideal for Tarzan, and clearly taking pleasure in trying to trip us up. Between them and the tree-avalanches which caused us (and obviously many previous walkers) to take track diversions, and the frequent refrain of branches and fronds smashing through the canopy, you are certainly kept on your toes.

While we weren't standing at the time, we were also kept on our metaphorical toes by a 3am thunder, lightning and tropical downfall show on our final night. Protected only by our tent's thin membrane, we were gifted yet another up close and personal nature experience that, perhaps more than any other, gave us an understanding of our relative insignificance and powerlessness in the face of nature's temper/tempest.

During the course of the walk the thick vegetation allows only limited glimpses of the terrain, so the diversion off the

“It mystifies me why such an intensely enriching, liberating experience seems to have so few people embarking on it.

track towards its end up Mt Allan fire tower is definitely worth it. From here you get to see a fair swathe of the territory you've covered, as well as north where the rich grazing country around Kenilworth opens up.

Other than the fire tower, relatively recent man-made features of the walk include evidence of the area's now defunct gold mining and logging past, as well as the Strangler Cairn sculpture, an egg-shaped collection of rocks featuring a strangler fig which will eventually subsume the cairn. One media report suggested the sculpture cost \$700,000, but I think I'll leave that alone ...

Prior to European settlement, the area was important for the indigenous Gubbi Gubbi people, partially influenced by the important bunya pine's nut resources. The area remains significant for Gubbi Gubbi descendants, and they were involved in the walk's development.

No discussion of the Conondale walk is complete without recounting the challenge of Fat Possum, a brushtail resident at the Tallowood walkers' camp. We were

forewarned by Three Wise Men (walking, no camels) early in proceedings that a possum at this camp rips out the bottom of packs, can undo zips and, in general, causes after-dark mayhem. And so it came to pass. I put our rubbish in the tent, wrapped our packs in a tarp (not an – admittedly enviable – example of those oh so de rigueur lightweight ones), and tucked it in the tent vestibule. And still the possum came knocking at the vestibule and base of our tent where the rubbish was. After a few kicks and yells, however, it eventually got the picture.

This was the first walk I've been on where I carried a personal locator beacon – and I think it was a prudent call. The walk has many difficult to access sections, slippery rocks (especially if you go off piste in areas such as Summer Falls) and, as it turns out, a fair few snakes. Having a 12-year old with me made the PLB compulsory.

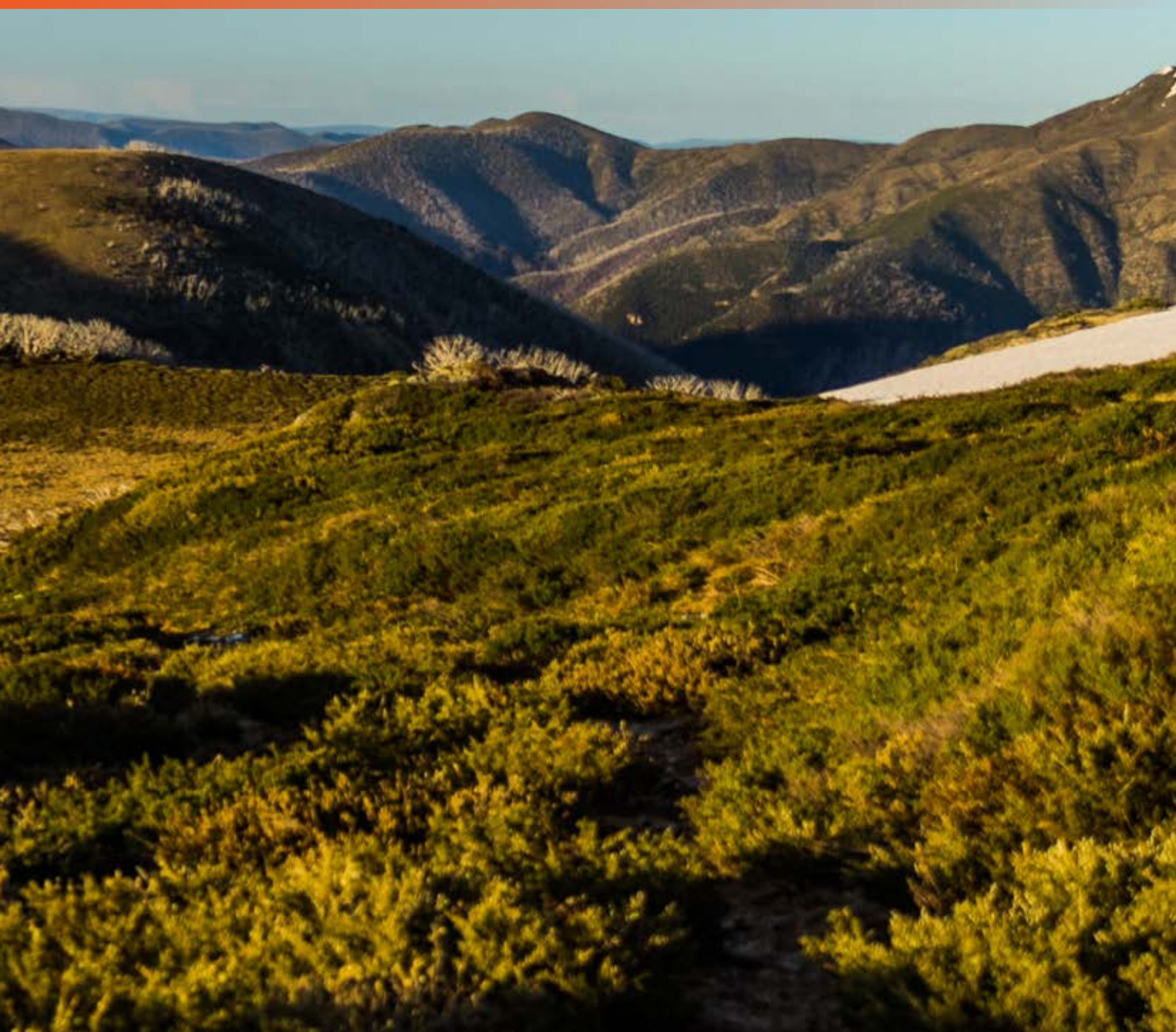
Inside Conondale National Park – and this is a walk where you do feel “inside” something, a womb in which regeneration occurs, perhaps, or simply a blissful, calming state of mind? – I felt intimately close to our earth. It mystifies me why such an intensely enriching, liberating experience seems to have so few people embarking on it. It deserves to be more popular.



Craig N Pearce suffered a mid-life crisis which manifested itself in a desire to spend as much time as possible camping, mountain biking and trekking, ideally with his son. From horse camping in the Kosciuszko, to fly fighting at WA's Fitzgerald River, to crowd avoidance by the Hawkesbury, he reverts to the bush for rejuvenation, inspiration, the physical challenge and its elemental simplicity (who said tech?). In other lives, he is a corporate animal and coaches teenagers in the finer arts of football.

Falls Creek to Hotham Alpine Crossing Draft Plan

Stephen Lake



In April 2016 BWA had [an article](#) about the Falls Creek to Hotham Alpine Crossing (FHAC). There was a public consultation period, and in late November Parks Victoria released the [Draft Master Plan](#) (DMP). This is open for public comment until 19 December 2016. There's a discussion on the BWA website [Falls Creek to Hotham Alpine Crossing](#). As the DMP was received only a few days before BWA was published, I cannot go into much detail. However, some general comments.

Feathertop from the Bogong High Plains
North-north-west

The death of the bushwalker

Extinction is a slow process, it happens over time. A few groups here and there die off until one day there is simply silence. Usually extinction is caused through ignorance, but this time The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change is deliberately displacing adventurous bushwalkers from their spiritual homes to make room for cashed up tourists in our national parks.

National parks play many roles, and primarily they exist to protect nature. They are also a place for people to discover their adventurous spirit, to explore and re-connect with nature.

As bushwalkers we have been exploring these places for a long time. We know and love this land. We love to see others enjoying and caring for it. Each year we see our best bushwalks being turned into tourist theme parks, one by one.

The values of the parks are been sold off to the highest bidder. Private companies are

setting up lodges to cater for wealthy visitors. Bushwalking was once a pursuit for anyone willing to learn the skills and commit the time. The state government is turning it into a pursuit for the wealthy. Our national parks should be places where connection to nature speaks louder than the cash registers.

For decades many bushwalkers have roamed the hills around Mt Feathertop; we have all we need on our back and enjoy the quiet panoramic views from the ridge tops. The trip costs petrol money and food. If the Parks Victoria plan for the Falls Creek to Hotham Alpine Crossing goes ahead then people can pay \$3500 for the trip. They will be able to stay in luxury lodges that are helicoptered in, and sip champagne on their private plot in the national park.

Slowly, walk by walk, our government is making it too expensive for the adventurous bushwalker as they turn our national parks into playground for the rich ... The state government will tell you that bushwalkers are still welcome and that our national parks are large places. But we know ...



There are at least five major objections

1. The numbers are flawed. The current visitor numbers are well under those cited in the report.
2. It's making bushwalking very costly for no reason. Apart from the track being deep and then wet near Westons Hut, a few steps being desirable on Diamantina Spur and bare patches at Federation, most of the track and area are fine.
3. It seems that there's a plan to have 15 platforms for 30 people at Federation Hut, woefully short of current numbers. Present users will simply not fit and it will cost much more.
4. There's no free camping within 500 metres of the track. We may be permitted to camp if there's room. This and the Federation platforms and other aspects are an assault on the way we walk.
5. Glamping on Diamantina is the thin end of the wedge and does not meet the zoning. The resorts support the track.

Share this article, look at the [forum](#), read the [Draft Master Plan](#), and make a submission.

A solution

This is not hard: make the route via Dibbins Hut and up Swindlers Spur. There would be minimal track maintenance and no need for any more platforms. Finish the walk at Mt Hotham, with an option to continue over Feathertop for those that want more, then down The Bungalow Spur. There would be no need to have any more infrastructure on Razorback, Diamantina Spur or Federation Hut. Let people camp where they always have, no restrictions. This would save quite a bit in initial and ongoing costs, and make the walk viable for a larger market segment. The steep and potentially dangerous Diamantina Spur ascent is now a much more gentle Swindlers Spur, emerging above the tree line an hour from the road.

The above saves money, makes the walk more attractive, and preserves the values.

More time, please

It has taken PV and consultants many months to get to this stage, and now it is expected that respondents read 115 pages and reply in under four weeks just before Christmas when people will be preparing to go away or be away. It is unlikely that much will be done with the replies by early to



Feathertop from Diamantina Spur
North-north-west

mid-January. Hence, I suggest that putting back the DMP deadline to mid-January is indicated. I asked PV about this and did not receive a response. However, PV is probably swamped by requests for information, so a non-reply is understandable.

Our values

There's virtually nothing of import added by the infrastructure and a lot that is taken away. The DMP clearly evidences a lack of understanding of what we value and the terrain. Wild places attract and should be left as they are with minimal change, that only necessary to preserve or enhance the environment.

Economics

It's hard to see the economic case stacking up. Most people who go bushwalking overnight or longer drive to the walk area, do the walk and drive back. There are usually just two expenses: food and fuel. My experience has been that both are invariably distant from the walk area. For example, on a weekend trip from Melbourne to the Bogong High Plains, Friday night dinner would be on the Hume Freeway, where the car is fuelled. This is enough fuel to last until the return journey. There may be an ice cream in Mt Beauty on the Sunday. The DMP suggests that bushwalkers will spend time before and after the trip in the region. This may be the case for some but for the vast majority I suggest not.

However, the target market is not the adventure seeker like us. It is the cashed-up experience seeker who is willing to pay for the experience and may stay longer after at the tourist hubs or towns. Pages 8, 86 and 87 say the numbers of adventure seekers will decline because of the project but the experience seekers will rise, mostly coming from interstate and overseas.

On balance, the return on investment would not work. Is this another situation like Eastlink, where the figures were used by the Victorian Government in such a way as to obtain the outcome sought, only to be shown later to be demonstrably false? I asked for the figures to prove the ROI, no reply.

“... the target market is not the adventure seeker like us. It is the cashed-up experience seeker who is willing to pay ...

The numbers

The DMP says that there are 17,000 walker nights on the current walk each year. One experienced walker advised that this figure is fantasy. A count was made of the log book at Weston's Hut 12 months ago and it does not reflect anywhere near these numbers. There is no way to accurately measure this 17,000 figure, most people will do variations but not the precise walk, and Diamantina Spur deters all but the most hardy. I was there at Easter a few years ago. Nobody on the western High Plains. A dozen people at Westons, one person at Blairs, a group of about eight descending Diamantina as I staggered up, and maybe 30 at Federation Hut. Spread over eight months, 17,000 walker nights is 4250 people, or 18 people every day at all campsites, or if they go just at weekends, over 100 every day. The 17,000 figure is false. I invite PV to prove this figure. Quickly. The page 59 graph gives some indication of the Cope Hut tent platform use and this does not reflect the numbers stated either.

Camping platforms at Federation Hut

Camping platforms are proposed for Federation Hut. The rules are that to use these platforms costs. Really, \$31.60/night for one tent on a platform is about double what is paid at a caravan park with better shelter, flush toilets, hot showers and a shop. The DMP indicates that dedicated rangers will patrol the track and camp areas to enforce. PV staff do not like to enforce anything. Bushwalkers are on good terms with PV field staff. Is this to end? Free camping must be 100 metres away. At other places most people avoid the platforms and camp 100 metres away. Trouble is Federation is on a narrow spur, so everybody would have to pay. I wonder if they will pay.

So what we will see is Federation Hut with perhaps 15 platforms for 30 people. Fifteen tents? There's often been more than that at what is probably the most popular alpine campsite in Victoria. Only Cleve Cole Hut on Bogong might have more visitors.

The camping platforms have another problem. At present it's possible to fit tents tightly together when there are a lot of people. Platforms preclude this, much wasted space. PV plan to provide camping for 20 to 100 people at the top of Diamantina

spur and Federation Hut. Cannot be done, no room. I invite PV to say where the higher numbers will camp, and how such hordes fit with the remote nature of the region.

Dispersed camping

Page 59 says that "Dispersed camping will be prohibited within 500 metres of the trail." Camping on Razorback is gone. Page 100 says that "Independent walkers who are prepared to follow a set itinerary are allocated a share, subject to availability." There's a like provision for those with no set itinerary. How generous. Until now there was always room for another, and being crowded out was rarely an issue. What about people that decide to go just before the trip? Will PV respond quickly? I suspect not. This is effectively paying a fee to have staff manage the fee process. The plan also states it will cater for current users but they will have to pay now. Page 100 shows how the system will be preferenced. This plan is nothing less than an end to our freedom of the hills. It ain't broke so don't fix it.

Diamantina Spur

The proposed shelter near the top of Diamantina Spur will compromise a beautiful campsite to "take advantage of the views" and require fees to camp there. This is still proposed as a glamping spot with demountable structures run by private business so they will be staffed and serviced by helicopters. Maybe FIFO glampers.

Equally bad, helicopters are needed to service this "roofed facility". Come again? This is a Conservation zone, defined as "Areas of high natural value where the emphasis is on protection of the environment." How do shelters and helicopters meet the zone requirements? The structures have to be approved by DELWP and fit the zone. Has approval been given? There is talk of en-suites for these structures, which means a septic system or something to contain the grey water. More cost.

Diamantina Spur is steep and long for most people. Those that can manage it do not need much more, although steps in sensitive



Feathertop
North-north-west

places may be useful. We do not want anything like Three Capes. Certainly have some walks for those less equipped for such things, but leave our wild places more or less intact. Seats at regular intervals seem to be planned.

A person not used to places like Diamantina Spur may be caught out by bad weather high on the spur when tired. The choices are unappealing. Continue higher becoming more tired as the walk goes into bad weather on an exposed ridge, or go down to the Kiewa West River, which is a long way from anywhere. There could be mobile phone reception from the upper Diamantina Spur to Hotham. In bad weather the only access is by foot four hours from the road, plus time for a rescue party to get there. If unfit people without adequate gear or experience are enticed into climbing Diamantina Spur by marketing then on balance there will be unhappiness. If so, those who support the idea should be held to account.

A well-known local advises that "Parks have received a lot of feedback from hikers seeking improved infrastructure." I would like to see evidence of this. Can PV do so? I will ask; maybe we all should. PV has estimated 60,500 (camper nights) per year, or 165 people per day using the track. This is not bushwalking. It's a conveyor belt. We go to

wild places to get away from the madding crowds, not to be part of such hordes. The figure of 60,500 is doubtful. These figures make it look attractive to investors. Even 15,000 people a year is a lot.

The environment

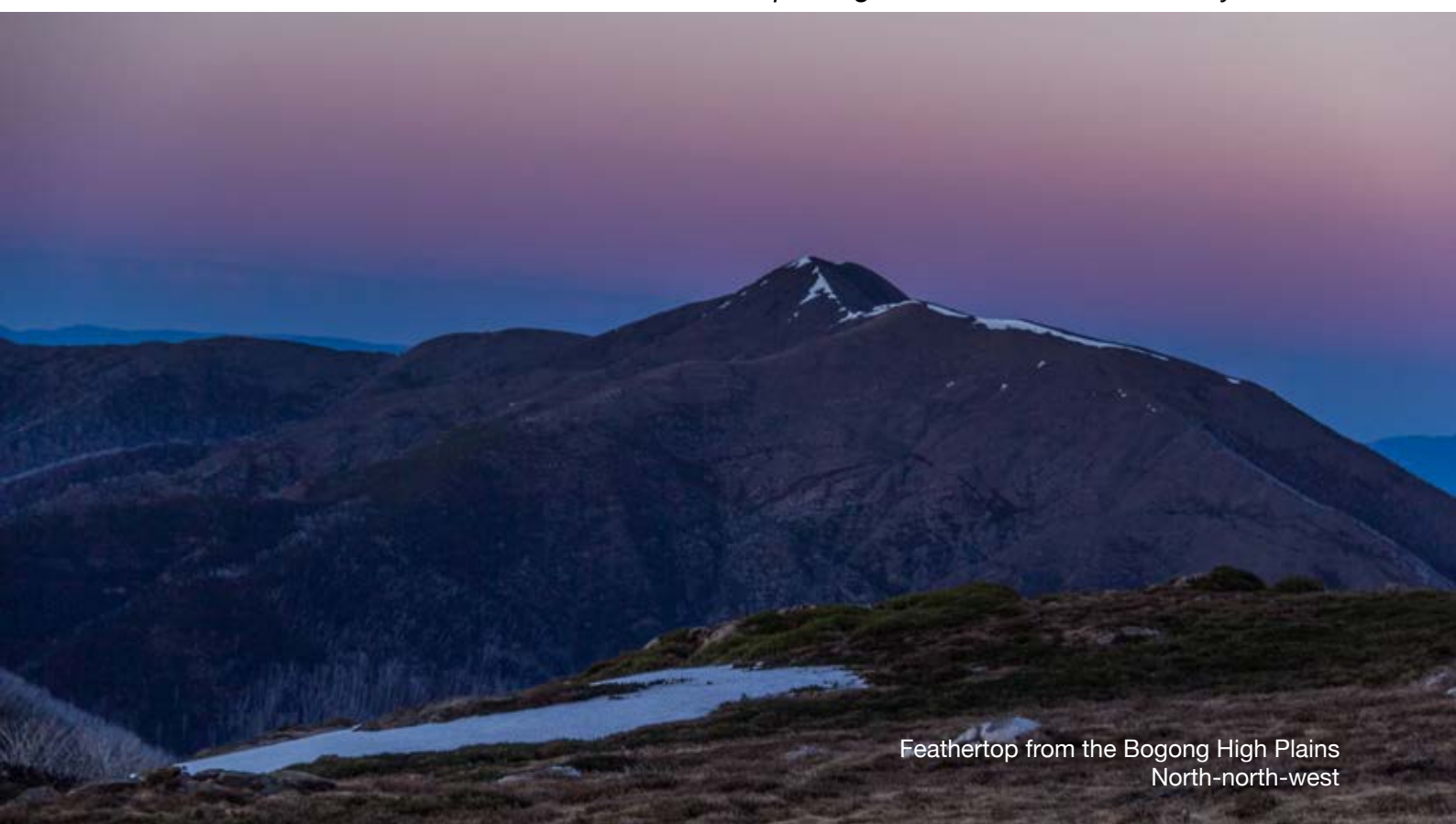
The projected numbers mean that toilets need to be every few hours on the track and much, much more capacity at the campsites. (I refuse to use the words "node", and "trail". Ghastly.) This is a lot of cost to build and maintain. If there are no toilets then we could well see a situation like the Overland Track which has bad faecal pollution. Water supplies will be compromised. The Razorback is zoned conservation. New buildings are contrary to this zone.

Summary

In summary, the proposal is based on flawed maths, optimistic figures, costs too much, has a questionable ROI, breaches the zone requirements, pushes people out of traditional campsites, is hard to enforce, is dangerous, and will probably encourage civil disobedience. A viable alternative is available, costing much less and able to sustain more people without pushing traditional users out. Why not?



The writer would like to thank three people for checking the article and adding words, improving the article. You know who you are.



Sutherland Bushwalking Club

Vanessa Hicks



In 1969 a small informal group working at Australian Atomic Energy Commission at Lucas Heights, all scouting ex-Rovers, discussed their adventures and various bush sports that with the collapse of some Rover Crews it left a void. So began on Australia Day 1969 the first of many casually arranged activities. Starting small with about 13 participants a name was created, "Sydney Bush Ramblers" but over time this did not reflect the location in Sydney where this group based themselves, nor did it help to attract new members. In 1977 it was decided to change the name to Sutherland Bushwalking Club (SBC) and as they say the rest is history.

Over the years the successful name change has attracted new membership each year with many founding and early members still very involved today. From a small interest group to an active thriving club of over 300 members today. Celebrating 45 years with a car camp at Killalea on the south coast recently was a milestone.

How a club starts and why is it's history but continuing the vision is the duty of the current membership. This vision includes promoting of safe bush sports, training and guidance for new interested members, and the all important companionship. Staying true to the original ethos and building upon the values make for a solid member community with genuine interest in all things outdoor.

Today SBC has a quarterly program full of trips and ideas for bushwalking, cycling and kayaking, all ably run by volunteer activity organisers. Places never been to before or heard of make for an interesting program. Bushwalking from Royal National Park to Barren Grounds to Blue Mountains to Snowy Mountains endless ideas. Cycling in the annual "Pub to Pub" ride now in its twentieth year across many states or along the Parramatta River for example, wheels are turning. Kayakers are not forgotten - there is interest in watersports also with tours interstate or locally in the Sutherland Shire. Urban walks have become a new interest, exploring the history of our city and suburbs: you just don't know till you explore! As if

being in Australia isn't enough some roam overseas for more adventures. Places visited include New Zealand, Vanuatu, and Africa. Recently a group of members travelled to England and Switzerland returning to give a photo presentation at our General Meeting. SBC gives back too, creating a "track maintenance" interest group in the Royal National Park with the assistance of NPWS park rangers.

After a great day out it usually ends with a café finish which is very popular and is the social aspect of SBC. So when is a club more than a membership number, well having a coffee with friends is one big clue. Weekends away, caravan tag a-longs around this big brown country, multi-day hikes into the wilderness or just a social Christmas breakfast BBQ all these things are enjoyed with new friends.

So if you are thinking of retiring or have retired and want to do something active, interesting in the outdoors with new friends then consider a bushwalking club. If you like the Royal National Park, Heathcote National Park or any national park then Sutherland Bushwalking Club may be the place to start. Come along for a cuppa and chat at our General Meetings held at Stapleton Ave Community Hall, Sutherland on the last Wednesday of the month at 7pm except December and January. Check out the [SBC website](http://info@sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au) or contact us on info@sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au.



Celebrating clubs's 45 years
Vanessa Hicks

Rewilding

Oisín Sweeney



What is rewilding and how does it apply to Australia?

Aldabra Tortoises created grazing lawns at the Francois Leguat Giant Tortoise and Cave Reserve, Rodrigues, Mauritius by Arnaud Meunier

Nature is under more pressure than any time since humans have been the dominant species on earth. The rate of species loss has led some to suggest we have moved into a new geological period, the Anthropocene. Climate change is accelerating and governments seem powerless to act decisively to head off the worst impacts. So against this dark background, what can possibly be done to protect nature and help make sure as many species as possible can adapt to the future? One potential solution could be rewilding: a novel approach to ecology that focusses more on re-establishing ecological processes and species interactions rather than considering species in isolation. Proponents say it could be a way to ensure that in an uncertain future ecosystems can respond to change.

“... what can possibly be done to protect nature and help make sure as many species as possible can adapt to the future?”

The rise of rewilding

Rewilding is an ecological approach that is becoming more and more prominent in Australia and overseas. It was first described in Wild Earth magazine in 1998 by the distinguished ecologist Michael Soulé. This version very much focussed around restoring populations of keystone species (those with a disproportionately

large influence on other species and ecosystems), particularly large predators, in well connected intact landscapes¹. The most cited rewilding example involves wolf reintroduction to Yellowstone National Park in the USA. Following the wolf reintroduction, elk numbers were reduced via predation and their grazing behaviour was changed through fear of the wolves. But the ecological response went beyond elk to include a recovery of aspen². This phenomenon, where plants are indirectly influenced by animals, is known as a trophic cascade. In turn, an influence on trophic cascades is one of the important features that identifies a keystone species, in this example the wolf. Since 1998 rewilding has gained in popularity, with many conservation organisations advocating rewilding. Crucially, rewilding has also been really successful in capturing the public imagination. That's because it takes an optimistic approach to conservation rather than a traditional, well, conservative approach!

Rewilding is not just carnivores

Large carnivores are still a key part of many rewilding approaches, but they are not the only element in rewilding. Many other approaches are taken in rewilding efforts around the world. See [Nature NSW](#) for a broad overview. For example, ecological surrogates are species, sometimes non-native, that are introduced to perform the



same ecological role as an extinct species. Giant tortoises have been used on Mauritian islands as ecological surrogates to restore the dispersal of ebony seeds. In Europe, North America and Russia the restoration of large herbivore populations is a key element of rewilding because of their influence on vegetation, such as opening forest canopy and cycling nutrients.

“What are the main goals of rewilding, and how do we achieve them?”

What about Australia?

In September 2016 NPA, supported by Conservation Volunteers Australia and Taronga Conservation Society hosted the first National Rewilding Forum in Sydney. The aim was to investigate rewilding in an Australian context and to ask questions such as what is and is not rewilding? What are the main goals of rewilding, and how do we achieve them? We felt this was necessary because some cautionary voices point out we don't have stated aims of rewilding or a consensus on what defines rewilding³. Frans Schepers, managing director of [Rewilding Europe](#), gave a keynote address and outlined some of the notable successes and approaches taken across Europe.

A full report of the forum outputs is available [here](#). The following is a brief summary of some of the key issues.

Ecosystem function

The restoration of ecological processes (like flooding, soil turnover by animals and seed dispersal to name a few examples) and interactions between species (like predation and scavenging) was repeatedly identified as a key rewilding goal. This focus on processes is important in returning control to nature, reducing the need for human management and ensuring ecosystems are resilient to change. It would also mean a shift in the management emphasis from aiming for an ideal condition of nature from a human perspective, as we currently do, to making sure ecological processes can take place and promoting interactions between species. The advantage of this approach is that in a time of rapid change it is impossible for humans to manage the multitude of species individually. Ensuring ecological processes

are occurring means that although the balance of species may shift over time, ecosystems can respond to change and continue to function.

Fences

Fences are really interesting in the context of rewilding. They are used to exclude introduced mesopredators (foxes and cats) which are key threats to mammals weighing between 35 grams and 5.5 kilograms that are vulnerable to extinction. These species are termed Critical Weight Range (CWR) mammals. Fenced enclosures work, with much larger and denser populations of CWR mammals than the broader landscape. However, they are very expensive to erect and maintain - the NSW government is spending \$41 million over five years on fenced enclosures - and they can't be applied over a large area. So are they “wild”? The forum identified fences as necessary step in rewilding as we look for solutions in the broader landscape, but they're not a rewilding end point in themselves.

“... in a time of rapid change it is impossible for humans to manage the multitude of species individually”

Predators

Keystone predators were identified as being a key element to making sure ecosystems were able to function properly. Native predators such as dingoes and Tasmanian devils are thought to be able to exert control over foxes and cats and enable coexistence of native CWR mammals and these introduced mesopredators. This control can occur both by predation and by changing behaviour, like the wolves in Yellowstone. Of course, this raises a tricky issue: because of fears about killing livestock, dingoes are persecuted in Australia, including in protected areas. These fears may be unfounded⁴. The hybridisation of dingoes with domestic dogs doesn't help. The hybrids are known as wild dogs and are deemed worthless because they are not pure dingo, regardless of their ecological function or the degree of hybridisation. Evan Quartermain of Humane Society International wrote an article in the [Nature NSW](#) explaining why this differentiation may be misguided.

Community and people

Over the course of the forum, participants repeatedly stressed the importance of making sure communities were involved in rewilding for our efforts to have the best chance of success. The importance of humans is immediately apparent in the context of predators. Although predators are seen to be very important in rewilding, many farmers are opposed to predators because they're perceived as a threat. Hence, finding novel solutions as a community is vital if we're to restore the role of predators.

“... the importance of making sure communities were involved in rewilding ...”

For example, Rewilding Europe has built community benefits into rewilding programs by funding and promoting nature-based businesses.

Where to next with rewilding in Australia?

There are lots of projects going on already that fit the definition of rewilding, but they're not happening under a shared vision or with a clear set of goals or principles. That shared vision is one thing we want to work towards so that groups involved in rewilding are moving in the same direction. There's obviously much work to do in many areas, like predators. But equally, there are other areas where rewilding principles could be applied relatively easily, such as restoring hollow formation and letting forests grow old via [ending native forest logging](#) and restoring flood regimes to degraded wetlands to

recover vegetation and animal populations. Any action that increases the number of interactions and restores ecological processes contributes to the goals of rewilding. That's the beauty of the concept.



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Oisín is the Senior Ecologist with the National Parks Association of NSW, an environmental NGO dedicated to protecting nature through establishing and linking protected areas. His interest in rewilding stems from its potential to shift the focus of conservation from one of negativity (look what we're losing) to hope (look what we can achieve). Other interests include forests and spiny crayfish. He lives in the Shoalhaven, spends lots of time in the fantastic national parks there and can be occasionally found face down in the waters of Jervis Bay looking at fish.



Eastern quoll
Marc Faucher

Photo Gallery



BWA Photo Competition



Other States

December 2015

WINNER



Club Lake
John Walker



Dry fall
Brian Eglinton

The unique Club Lake is situated on one of my favourite day hikes anywhere - the spectacular near 23 kilometre Main Range-Lakes circuit in Kosciuszko NP. On this occasion my final bushwalk for 2015 on a glorious New Year's Eve. I even managed a swim in the upper Snowy River. The walk starts and finishes at Charlotte Pass and can be done in either direction. My usual preference is to go anti-clockwise which I think places the many spectacular views to their best advantage. Club Lake is one of the five glacial lakes and tarns on the range and is impressively viewed here from below the summit of Carruthers Peak where I had enjoyed lunch. I have previously visited the lake itself, but it is surrounded by sensitive vegetation and needs to be approached with care from the north-east. As you descend the track from Carruthers heading toward the windswept feldmark atop the western fall of the range, the unmistakable shape of Club Lake appears dramatically way below your viewpoint as seen here.



Tasmania

December 2015

WINNER

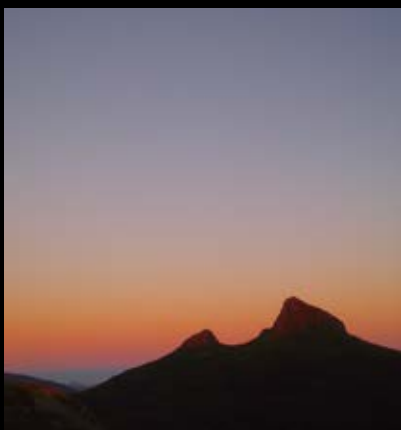


This is one of the more spectacular light displays I have seen, with the sun setting behind Pokana Peak. We were camped along the ridge beyond Bonds Craig, just before the drop off point that leads towards Badger Flats. This was an awesome sight that lasted quite a while.

Camping high has its rewards
- crepuscular rays over Pokana
Peak by MJD



Lake Oberon from Pegasus
(with *R. pandanifolia*)
North-north-west



An evening, almost alone
Osik



Evening wonder
Louise Fairfax



Blue Peak from
an unnamed lake
Peter Grant



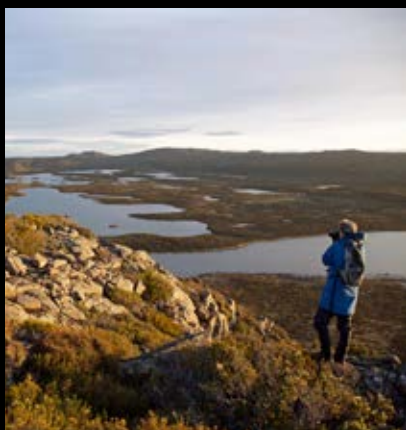
Landscapes December 2015

WINNER



Last light at Lake Oberon
North-north-west

The weather's never bad in the Western Arthurs, just "challenging". And "changeable". It had been challenging on the leg from Cygnus to Oberon, and then changed while a couple of peaks were ticked off the "to do" list. So I had one perfect evening at one of our most beautiful mountain lakes. Which reminds me - it's time to go back.



Land of a thousand lakes,
Blue Peaks, Tasmania
Peter Grant



This is why we do it
Louise Fairfax



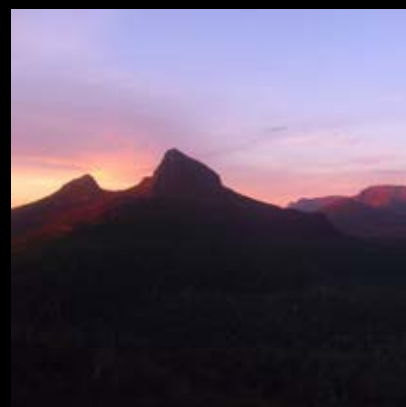
Presenting
Mt Kosciuszko
John Walker



Wading the
New River Lagoon
below Precipitous Bluff
MJD



Black Hill gully
Brian Eglinton



Red night,
bushwalker's delight
Osik



Non-landscapes December 2015

WINNER



Broken reeds,
Little Throne Lake
Peter Grant

The photo was taken in very early December. There had been a wild storm a week or two before, and the waves whipped up by the wind had broken a lot of the reeds along the lake shore. Gradually the dead reeds had blown to the eastern end of the lake, forming a miniature log jam of floating reeds.



I love the smell of Boronia
citriodor in the morning
North-north-west



Looks like ants
for lunch again
MJD



Blue skimmer
landsmith



Take off
Brian Eglinton



Feldmark Sunrays
John Walker



Murray Falls
Caedencekuepper

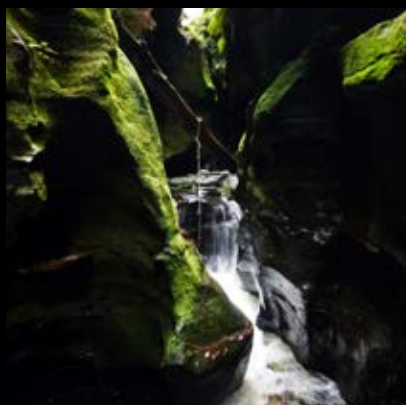


Other States January 2016

WINNER



The storm has passed
Whitefang



Downclimb in
Rocky Creek Canyon
AJW Canyon2011



Across the bar
John Walker



Serene morning
at Rifle Butts
Brian Eglinton



On the edge of the range
landsmith



Tasmania

January 2016

WINNER



The footprint
North-north-west

It's said of cushion plants that they "grow by the inch and die by the foot". Each mound is not one plant, but hundreds, thousands, potentially millions of individuals, often of different species, and they all depend on the integrity of the mound to survive against the harsh conditions in which they grow. It takes just one unnecessary and uncaring step - such as this on a small patch up on Walled Mountain - to compromise that integrity and possibly eventually kill all those plants.

Sure, it makes for a fascinating opportunity to see the inner detail of the mound, but sometimes you'd really rather not have that chance ...



Irreplaceable
Tortoise



Morning on
Melaleuca Lagoon
Nick Morgan



Landscapes January 2016

WINNER



Separate rooms, please
North-north-west

Solo walking is my thing but when a mate invites me on a bash out to one of the more obscure and harder-to-reach Abels it's hard to say no. The trip had many highlights but the best was possibly this lazy afternoon, evening, night and morning on Walled Mountain on the way back out. So many places to pitch up there, and we both managed to find the perfect spot for our tents - albeit with a hefty buffer in between. And then we waited, fingers crossed, for the sun to finally drop below the cloud and light up Hyperion and its companions.



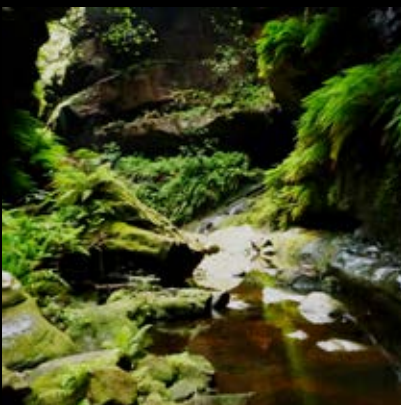
Weather over
the Boggy Plain
John Walker



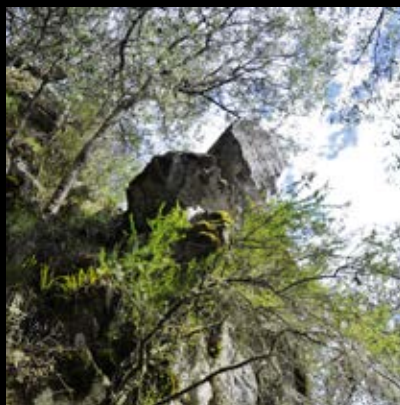
Wilson Bight
Nick Morgan



Last light
Tortoise



Grand Canyon
AJW Canyon2011



Guy Fawkes NP
landsmith



Weed mountains
Brian Eglinton



Non-landscapes

January 2016

WINNER



Common flatwing
damselfly
landsmith

Damselflies are so small that it's so difficult to see them at times, especially when they're in any way camouflaged by the surrounding fauna. Though "common", I've only seen them near Phantom Falls at St. Ives and at Blackdown Tablelands in Queensland, this shot taken at the latter venue. Blackdown is a great place to link with nature in so many ways. I'd never heard of it but the falls there are a very spiritual place to visit, should you ever find yourself there.



Early morning tracks
Brian Eglinton



Sundew
North-north-west



Kicking back at Reids
Flat, Royal National Park
John Walker



Rafting the Grose River
AJW Canyon2011



Sun Clothing

Helen Smith & Carly Chabal



A beautiful, sunny day always makes a bushwalk more enjoyable, but a great day's memories may be ruined by sunburn. Now, we know you've probably heard this all before, but it's always good to run through some general sun safety tips and precautions to remind people about these issues.

Overexposure to the sun may lead to sun spots on the skin, and eventually skin cancer. The [Cancer Council](#)'s "Slip, slop, slap" campaign is one of the most successful in Australian advertising history and has become part of Australian contemporary language. "Slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen and slap on a hat" was the original campaign in the early 1980s, and was more recently extended to include "seeking shade" and "sliding on sunglasses" too. By following these five precautionary rules, along with sensible behavioural choices like planning the walk to avoid excessive sun exposure and having a well-shaded lunch spot, you are more likely to protect your skin from harmful damage.

A challenge every bushwalker faces is how to cover up from the sun while being comfortable. Being sun safe doesn't necessarily mean you have to wear thick, bulky clothes; there are cool and breathable fabrics that offer UV protection for many outdoor activities. Clothing provides protection from the sun by the fabric blocking, scattering and/or absorbing harmful radiation. A long sleeve shirt and long pants give protection to arms and legs, and collared shirts somewhat protect the neck.

Clothing with denser fabrics such as cotton, linen, hemp, polyester, nylon, spandex and polypropylene are more effective at blocking, scattering and/or absorbing harmful radiation than lighter fabrics. One study suggests that a simple see-through test is not a valid test of UV penetration. The reason is that in some materials visible light is scattered, but UV light can still penetrate. Clothing was

“... how to cover up from the sun while being comfortable.”

originally given a sun protection factor (SPF) rating based on a measure of how long it takes for a person's skin to burn under the material. More recently, ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) ratings were introduced giving an indication of how well a piece of fabric can block UV light. UPF ratings are now considered a more reliable measure of a fabric's protection against UV light since different skin types burn at different rates.

In practical terms, most conventional clothing provides moderate sun protection. A study found that around three-quarters of clothing regularly worn by the general public has protection equivalent to (or more than) that of sunscreen with a SPF 15 rating. However, as bushwalking sun exposure is generally higher than in many other outdoor activities, it may be worth considering clothing that has a certified protection rating. Clothing with a high protection rating often works better than sunscreen because clothing, unlike sunscreen, stays on over time.

If you're like us, you don't want anything to stop you from enjoying a beautiful day outdoors, especially the sun. But, with a thinning ozone layer, we need to be proactive in the fight against skin damage and minimise the amount of direct exposure we receive.



Carly Chabal is a senior geology major at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, USA. Her passion for the outdoors has led her to Sydney where she has a spring internship with the National Parks Association helping out with the campaign and activities programs. After exploring the city during the week, Carly likes to head out into the bush or to a remote beach on the weekend.



Hikers on the Sydney Harbour & Coast Walk

Emma's challenge

Danielle Fischer



Keen bushwalker Emma Dunlop may look like a typical 31-year-old, but she's facing the battle of her life: advanced melanoma.

Emma Dunlop on a bushwalk on the Royal National Park Trail
Emma Dunlop

In February 2014 Emma spotted a freckle inside her hairline that was turning pink on the bottom. She had it examined by her doctors, and it was removed that day. It came back as melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer.

Emma underwent surgery on her head and lymph nodes to remove the melanoma and was given the all clear. She continued to have scans every three months.

In September 2015, Emma was married in Koh Samui, Thailand at a beautiful beach-side wedding. After her honeymoon, Emma's oncologist advised that her melanoma had spread to her lungs, and she was put on immunotherapy treatment.

Immunotherapy works by stimulating the body's immune system to fight the cancer. Less than a decade ago, advanced melanoma was treated with chemotherapy and had very little success. Thanks to medical research, today a range of treatments provide hope where before there was little.

“The best way to prevent melanoma is to protect your skin from the sun ...

In a recent clinical trial at Melanoma Institute Australia (MIA), researchers have made a major breakthrough by tripling the life expectancy for some advanced melanoma patients. However many others are not responding to new treatments and so further research is vital.

Emma has been on immunotherapy for a year now, and has seen considerable shrinkage in the lesions on her lungs. Unfortunately though, Emma experienced lots of side-effects, with chronic nausea and exhaustion being the worst.

“... melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer.

Newly married, Emma is concerned about her ability to have children. “You can't conceive while undergoing immunotherapy,” says Emma. “What gets me through is a positive attitude and knowing there are more treatments becoming available. Having a positive attitude is half the battle won.”

“I'm now doing everything I can to give back by participating in fund-raising events to support melanoma research regardless of my illness and how sick I feel on the day,” she says.



MIA's researchers are working hard to find new treatments for melanoma
Melanoma Institute Australia

The best way to prevent melanoma is to protect your skin from the sun and check your skin regularly for any changes. Every time you go bushwalking or are out in the sun, make sure you:

- Wear a broad-brimmed **hat**.
- Wear wrap-around **sunglasses**.
- Wear sun-protective **clothing** that covers your back, shoulders, arms and legs.
- Apply a broad-spectrum **sunscreen** with an SPF of at least 50+ every two hours and after swimming or exercise.
- Seek **shade**, especially in the hottest part of the day.

Emma is volunteering her time to support MIA's annual fund-raising initiative Melanoma March, which supports life-changing melanoma research and is an opportunity for the community to unite against melanoma.

You can join a [Melanoma March](#) event in one of 17 locations around Australia or “[Move for Melanoma](#)” by organising your own group activity or personal challenge to get moving in March 2017. Why not organise your own local group bushwalk, or maybe set yourself a personal challenge to walk the Overland Track or the Larapinta Trail? You can even track your progress online using the new Fitbit integration on your fund-raising page.

Suffering one or more blistering sunburns in childhood or adolescence more than doubles a person's chances of developing a potentially deadly melanoma later in life.

“Why not organise your own local group bushwalk ...”



Danielle Fischer is the Science Communications Specialist at MIA. She is passionate about raising awareness of melanoma and funds for research. As a former scientist, Danielle knows the difference that research can make to patients and how important it is to support. MIA is a non-profit organisation that delivers world-class research and treatment outcomes. MIA is working towards a future where there will be no more deaths from melanoma. To find out more, visit [MIA](#).



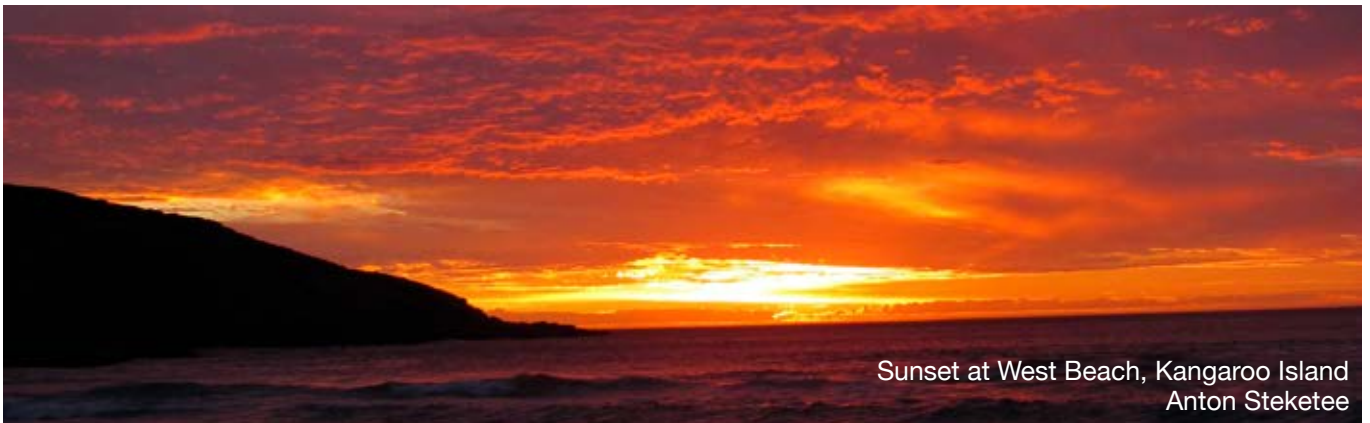
Emma and her supporters at the Western Sydney Melanoma March 2016
Melanoma Institute Australia

In the News

Parks in Victoria a dumping spot for asbestos?

Victoria's prized parks and forests are becoming [illegal dumping grounds for asbestos](#), posing a risk to unsuspecting visitors and costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars every year.

Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail



Sunset at West Beach, Kangaroo Island
Anton Steketee

Nature's secrets are waiting to be discovered at every step of the 61 kilometre five-day trek, with the trail weaving its way through the most botanically unique area in all of South Australia before reaching the rugged, remote and spectacular coastline of the Indian Ocean. The unimaginable beauty of this part of the world has to be seen to be believed. [Go and discover](#) the magic for yourself.

Tasmanian Devils will make it



This is exciting! Tassie devils [appear](#) to be evolving resistance to the deadly facial tumour.

2017 Big Red Run

[Entries opening](#) for the Big Red Run which will take place from 24 to 29 June.



Ten Tips for Safer and More Enjoyable Wild Swimming

Rachel Lewis



It's not like wild swimming is anything new. We Australians have been seeking out cool water in the summertime since long before the jolly swagman jumped into the billabong. But we still think that if you do it right, a trip to a swimming hole is by far one of the most pleasant ways you can spend a summer's day. Here are our top ten ways to maximise the fun on your wild swimming adventure.

Look before you leap, and check for water depth and debris
Andy Lewis

1 Take a hike

So many of our favourite swimming holes are only accessible via a bit of a stomp. Putting in the miles between yourself and civilisation will mean a more tranquil swim and maybe even your own, private swimming experience. Even if a walk isn't necessary, there are often great trails near wild swimming locations, allowing you to work up a sweat before diving in to cool off. [Kondalilla Falls](#) is great for this. Walk down to the bottom of the falls and enjoy the impressive view. After the walk back up there's a spectacular pool at the top to freshen up in. There's no better feeling! For an even more satisfying experience, pick a multi-day with swimming holes en route like the Jatbula Trail in the [Nitmiluk National Park](#).



Start 'em young: Intrepid youngsters on their way for a wild swim in the Royal National Park
Andy Lewis

2 Take a buddy

The more the merrier, so they say. Enjoy the look of awe on friends' faces as you introduce them to a favourite swimming spot and add great conversation and camaraderie to your wild swimming experience. Not only that, you'll be safer exploring in a group and better supported should anything go awry.

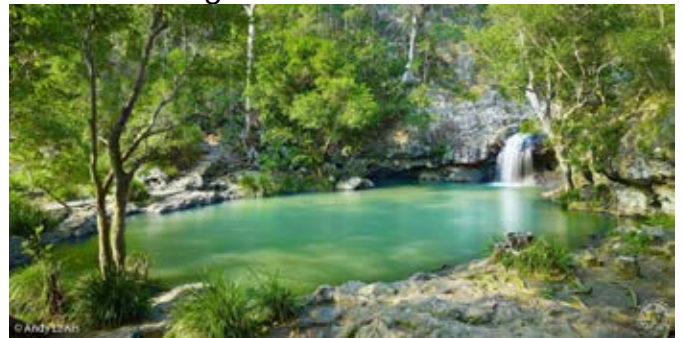
3 Take five for nature

There are so many ways to spread the love whilst wild swimming, and it feels good. Picking up five pieces of litter and carrying them out with you is one great way to make the experience better for the next people who come along.

Not using sunscreen or bugspray before swimming avoids damage to delicate water-based ecosystems which don't enjoy the chemicals in most products. [Protesters Falls](#) in the Nightcap National Park is an example of a waterhole which was not able to cope with the influx of swimmers wearing sunscreen and bug spray, causing the population of Fleay's Barred Frog to become endangered.

Using good bush hygiene such as not pooping near waterways and adopting [Leave no trace principles](#) are really important skills to learn if you're going to swim where there are no facilities.

All this will mean your experience is enriched by the feeling of protecting the places you love and that the spot is still beautiful for the next swimmer who comes along; not to mention that Mother Nature will thank you forever. For more detailed info on how to be a wild swimming eco warrior see [here](#).



Kondalilla Falls
Andy Lewis



A healthy dose of Vitamin N
Rachel Lewis

4 Take a picnic

Elongate your wild swimming adventure by coming well-stocked with provisions. Many swimming holes have a small beach or flat rocks alongside which make the perfect picnic table and the fresh air and swimming will certainly help you work up an appetite. Even better, theme your picnic around the local area you are exploring by making purchases at a local farmer's market or learning about some of the bush foods on offer.

5 Take a nap

There's nothing like the sound of running water to lull you into a peaceful sleep ... providing you don't need to pee. We all need to unwind from the stresses of life so after letting the water wash away the tension, pick a comfy spot by a trickling stream and lie down in the sun to catch up on some snooze time whilst you dream of mermaids.

6 Take a moment: Be mindful

On the same note, why not maximise the opportunity to slow yourself down? Once you've reached your wild swimming destination there doesn't have to be an agenda, and isn't that a refreshing change from the rest of life? Use your senses: hear

the waterfall, feel the water on your skin, notice your breath. What happens to your physiology as you submerge yourself? Use an anchor point like the sound of a waterfall to continually bring your mind back when it wanders off. Drink in every aspect of this precious moment and allow yourself to be completely present, just for now.

7 Take a child

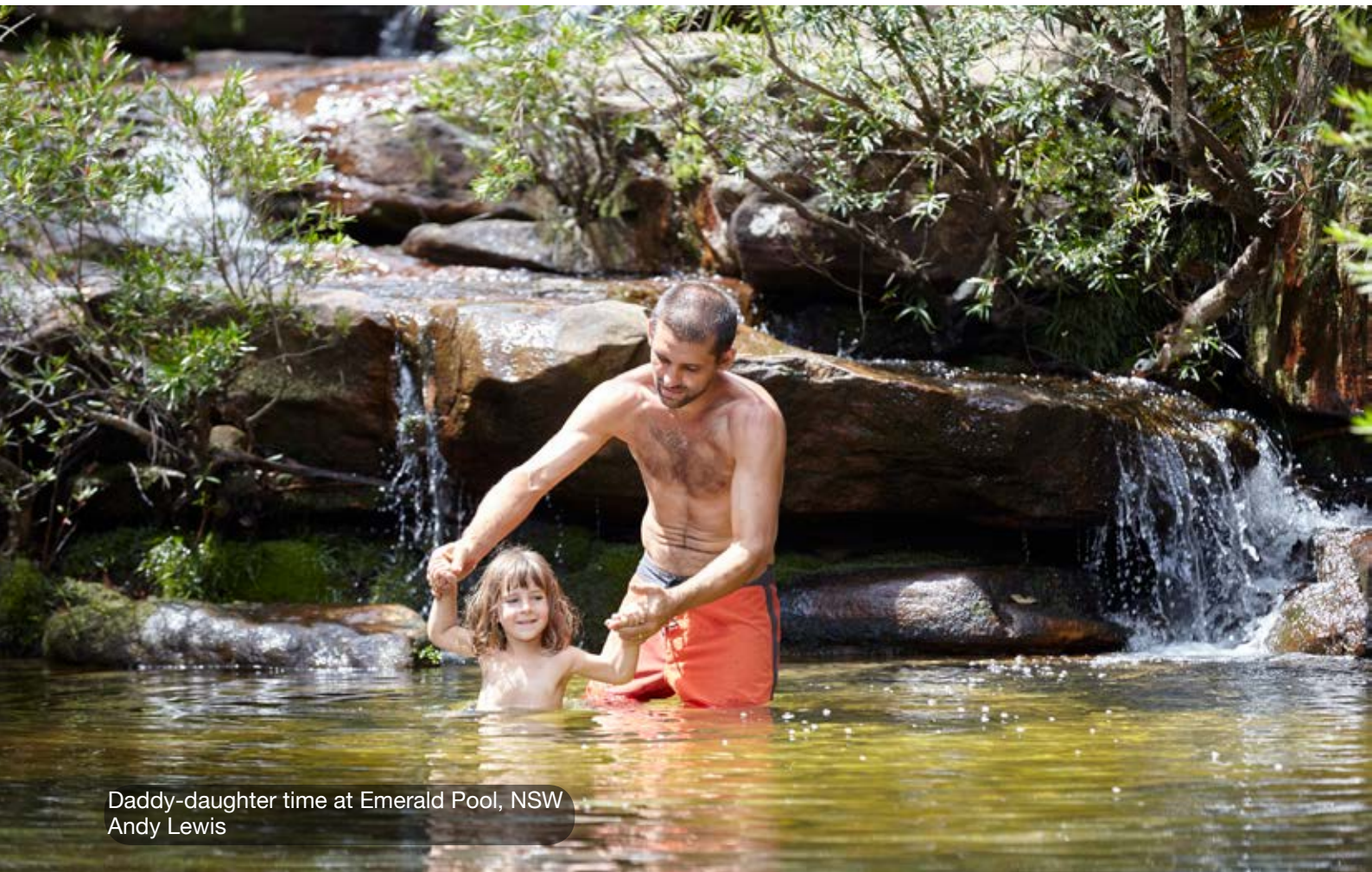
Kids have a knack for finding the fun in anything (see bonus tip below).

Take your favourite mini-person on a wild swimming adventure and let them lead the way to funsville. Go along with their suggestions for games and join in the giggles and splashes that inevitably ensue. They'll love you for it and you'll be doing your bit to curb the growing phenomenon of [nature deficit-disorder](#).

“Take your favourite mini-person on a wild swimming adventure and let them lead the way to funsville.”

8 Take care: Explore the environment and be informed

Not only is every swimming hole different but they can all present a different set of safety considerations from day to day. Weather conditions, water flow or submerged objects can change suddenly so it's important to



Daddy-daughter time at Emerald Pool, NSW
Andy Lewis

check these factors out before diving in. A good example is [Wappa Falls](#) near Noosa. This spot can be awesome for rock jumping and is often full of local kids happily playing in and out of the water. However, after rain it becomes extremely dangerous because the shape of the swimming hole causes strong downward currents, potentially pulling swimmers with them. The rocks also become incredibly slippery after rain and deaths have occurred here. For a more detailed list of safety considerations when wild swimming see [here](#).

9 Take a floatie

Lie back, look up and let the tension float away as you turn your wild swim into a five star luxury experience (maybe minus the cocktails, unless you're very inventive). Bringing a lilo or other inflatable to a swimming hole intensifies the relaxation and fun potential and allows you to be in the water without actually being in the water, meaning you can dip for longer. If you're feeling really adventurous, a lilo trip downstream at a spot such as Wollongambe River Canyon in the Blue Mountains will give you access to incredible parts of the bush not accessible by foot. Liloing safely requires the right equipment, good planning and an early start. Before you float downstream, make sure you're clear on entry and exit points and never try this sort of trip during or after heavy rain as water levels can rise rapidly.

10 Take a picture

Take in the view through a lens, capture a memory and share it with others to inspire them to get out exploring. Whether you're using your phone or have all the gear, framing that perfect memory can be extremely satisfying. Also, looking at the photo later on can transport you back to paradise in times of need, like when you're back in the office on Monday. Maybe even take a pencil and paper and have a go at sketching some of the details around you. 'But I can't draw!' I hear you cry. No matter. The simple act of paying close attention to what you see can enhance your experience massively.

“... turn your wild swim into a five star luxury experience ...”

Bonus Tip: Give it a go!

All the fun of wild swimming awaits you. As we get older we sometimes forget to play and opt for more “serious” pursuits like hiking or cycling, where there is a definite goal and achievement can be measured. But this is all about jumping in and experiencing that childlike abandon again. So if you're new to wild swimming or it's been a while, jump in a swimming hole at least once this summer and put some of the tips above into action. Go on, we dare you.

For comprehensive information on swimming holes across Australia see wildswimmingaustralia.com.



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Blue Mountains Best Bushwalks

Veechi Stuart



I moved to the Blue Mountains almost 30 years ago now, in 1987, with just \$40 in my bank account and a newborn babe in my arms. We were offered a six-week house-sit in Wentworth Falls. The offer was a temporary one, but I knew that we had arrived.

View to Mt Banks
Veechi Stuart

Sometime during those first few weeks, a neighbour lent me a copy of Jim Smith's classic walking guide *How to See the Blue Mountains*. Jim had chronicled pretty much every walking track between Glenbrook and Mount Victoria, and a few more besides. With Jim's book in hand I'd set out most days, walking for hours and only pausing whenever my son demanded to be fed.

I discovered not only the classic walks such as the National Pass, Perrys Lookdown and Ruined Castle, but many lesser-known tracks as well, such as the network of walks behind the Hydro Majestic in Medlow Bath, and the delightful tracks behind Mt Piddington in Mount Victoria.

Another child arrived, and I stopped roaming quite

“... the value of doing the same bushwalk every day or every week across the years ...”

so far afield. By then we were living right next to the Darwin Trail in Wentworth Falls, and pretty much every day I'd head down there with the kids, and spend some time under the overhang or at the “beach”. “I interviewed Jim Smith recently, and he talks about the value of doing the same bushwalk every day or every week across the years – it's the best way, he explains, of tuning in to the changes in landscape, the weather, the animals and the seasons.

In 2004, Woodslane Press asked me if I'd write a book about bushwalking in the Blue Mountains, as one of the first two books in their Australian walking series. I hesitated for about a nanosecond before agreeing. That was a great year. Two or three full days a week I'd head off walking, and then two or three days a week I'd spend writing up notes, reading local history, talking to people, figuring out how to create maps, learning how to take landscape photos, and much

more besides. My youngest son was only aged five then, and I can say with pride he did every walk in the book, including the overnight ones.

I think that it was in that year that the Blue Mountains really got under my skin, where I developed a sense of belonging to the land here, and of affinity with the bush. I think that's the same for many bushwalkers – that sense of calm, that feeling of “rightness” – that comes with a day's walking. I also discovered the buzz of exploring new tracks, including tracks that have been closed or not maintained by National Parks for many years, such as Mulherans Masterpiece which circles from Rocket Point along the top of Kings Tableland, or the Horse Track which zigzags from Evans Lookout down into the Grose Valley.

My book, *Blue Mountains Best Bushwalks*, has sold over 50,000 copies now, and is in its third edition. With this new edition, my idea was to create a partner website, so that each walk from my book has its own page on my website, complete with track facts, a description and photos.




The neat thing about this website is I can add more walks than are possible to fit into the printed version (which is already slightly overweight, with 66 walks and 20 walk variations). For example, my husband and I recently went out to the very end of Mt Hay Road, where we walked to the top of Mt Hay, looking down into the Grose Valley. The views were extraordinary. Similarly, the other day, I took a friend on another track (that I also can't fit into my book) called Stonehaven Pass, a 40-minute circuit that starts off the Den Fenella Track in Wentworth Falls. Stonehaven Pass is so accessible, yet so little known. Even on public holiday weekends when people almost queue to



Blue Mountains panorama
Veechi Stuart

exit from the Valley of the Waters, I know I can quietly pick my way along this Pass and won't see a soul.

The thread running through the last 30 years in the mountains has been sharing my love of walking with my kids. They might groan and grumble sometimes, remembering the time we went camping without quite enough food, or the time we went searching for glowworms in the freezing July pitch darkness, or the time we picked our way back in the dusk, with only fireflies pinpointing the way. But for me, it has been really important that my kids build a connection with the bush. They are the future custodians of our bush tracks, and the ones who will understand how precious this heritage is.

These days, I work at Varuna House (the National Writers Centre), and I relish hearing the stories of how people connect with the land around them, and how they relate the stories of this connection. I'd love to hear from you about the tracks you love, and how you came to love bushwalking.   



So, please visit me online and say hello!

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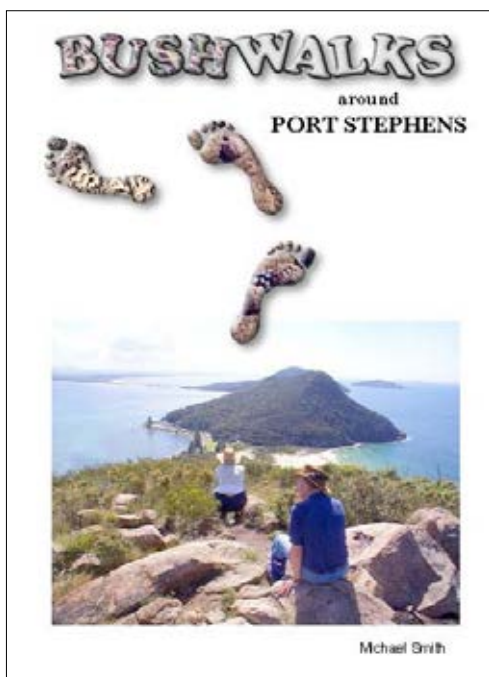
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A free book on Bushwalks around Port Stephens



Michael Smith wrote a book about Port Stephens walks a few years ago. He's offering it now as a [free downloadable pdf](#) for those who'd like to read it. This is the second book Michael has decided to share with us. This is the link to the first one titled [Bushwalking in the Rainbow Region](#).



Pokécology

Jeffrey Craig and Susan L. Prescott



People will never put down their phones, but games can get them focused on nature.

Anyone who has been outdoors in a populated area in the past month will be aware of the massive success of [Pokémon GO](#), which [has rocketed to the top of the gaming charts](#).

People have been avidly collecting Pokémon creatures in various media formats for two decades, so it was a logical move to use smartphone technology to turn the franchise into a “[mobile augmented reality](#)” (MAR) gaming app.

It has proved to be an economic as well as a social phenomenon, sending the market value of its owner Nintendo [soaring to \\$US39.9 billion](#). But the game was not actually developed by Nintendo; it was created by Google spin-off [Niantic](#), which also built Pokémon GO’s popular MAR predecessor, [Ingress](#).

Similar to Pokémon GO, Ingress is a reality-embedded sci-fi game in which players interact with real-world objects that are overlaid (using smartphone cameras) by a veneer of simulated characteristics.

In a [new paper published in the journal Restoration Ecology](#), we argue that MAR games such as these can be a force for good in ecology and conservation, rather than being a cause for concern, as [others have argued](contrary to what [others have written](#).

The key is not to lament or rail against the popularity of gaming or augmented reality, but rather to embrace what makes them a success. They tap into people’s sense of fun and competitiveness, and they get people into the great outdoors – and this is all stuff that can encourage people to embrace nature.

The problem

The growth of our modern civilisation, spurred on by technological innovations, has been underpinned by the exploitation of the natural environment. Today, a large fraction of the Earth, once swathed in wilderness, is now monopolised by humans. Populations of plants and animals have declined, leading to [local losses and global extinctions](#), as a result of habitat destruction, harvesting, invasive species, and pollution.

Yet although the direct causes of wildlife loss are clear enough, what’s less obvious is why many people seemingly don’t care. The environmental writer George Monbiot has ascribed society’s ongoing destruction of the environment to the fact that [not enough people value nature and wilderness](#) any more.

This “eco-detachment” has been described as a symptom of our modernised, urbanised world, in which new technology both dominates peoples’ interests and simultaneously [increases society’s ability to damage the environment](#).

But what if augmented reality – from MAR apps on smartphones to [HoloLenses](#) – could be harnessed in a positive and proactive way, to reconnect the wider public to nature and so unlock their inherent [biophilia](#)?

What if a smartphone game was created that focused not on features of the cityscape, but rather on “gamifying” nature, wildlife, and human interactions with the natural environment?

“... what’s less obvious is why many people seemingly don’t care.”

Such a game would lead its players to actively choose to experience nature. They would connect to it, and protect it (as an in-game reward), and thus understand its value.

Getting more of society to connect with nature has long been an elusive dream of environmentalists. More than a decade ago, a group of leading conservation biologists [famously found](#) children were far more expert at recognising Pokémon characters than they were at identifying common wildlife groups. The problem isn’t with spotting “species” per se – it’s that they were mainly exposed to the electronic ones and not the real ones.

This issue of where people invest their attention is crucial. Ingress now has more than 7 million active players, and has been downloaded by 12 million people since its release in 2012. The fact that the game requires you to get out and about means it encourages players to locate, recognise, and identify with an array of cultural icons they might otherwise ignore.

Egress!

So here's the challenge: to create a new version of Ingress (let's call it "Egress"), that is educational and positive, as well as popular. It might also use augmented reality to visualise environmental changes, either good (restoration) or bad (damage), in people's local landscapes. To be a hit, it would need to both capture an audience and to foster a community. And it could even generate data for [citizen science](#) projects.

There are lots of possibilities for how an app such as this could work. Perhaps it might involve using smartphones to photograph, locate, and automatically "tag" species within a landscape; or to identify rare plants or insects; or detect signs of animal activity (diggings, droppings, and so on). The crucial point is that although its focus would be on ecology and nature, it needs to also incorporate a fun gaming element – sort of like a high-tech version of those old birdwatching handbooks, but one that offers more kudos for spotting rarer species.

A recent [editorial in Nature](#) highlighted some of the potential uses of Pokémon GO, Ingress and others, suggesting that MAR games might even be used to discover and describe new species.

Who doesn't want a new animal or plant to be named after them? Such citizen science activities would strengthen links between research, conservation, and the community.

What Ingress and Pokémon GO have shown is that it is possible to get millions of tech-savvy people out of their living rooms and basements and actively engaging with the wider world. While it's impossible to guarantee that any project will go viral, this recent experience with MAR shows that people really can be persuaded, in large numbers, to get outside and explore.

“ So here's the challenge: to create a new version of Ingress (let's call it "Egress"), that is educational and positive ...

That's surely the first and most necessary step towards getting people to reconnect with, and care about, nature in the digital age.



Jessie C. Buettel

Postgraduate (P.h.D) student, University of Tasmania

Barry W. Brook

ARC Australian Laureate Professor, University of Tasmania

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 27 July 2016.

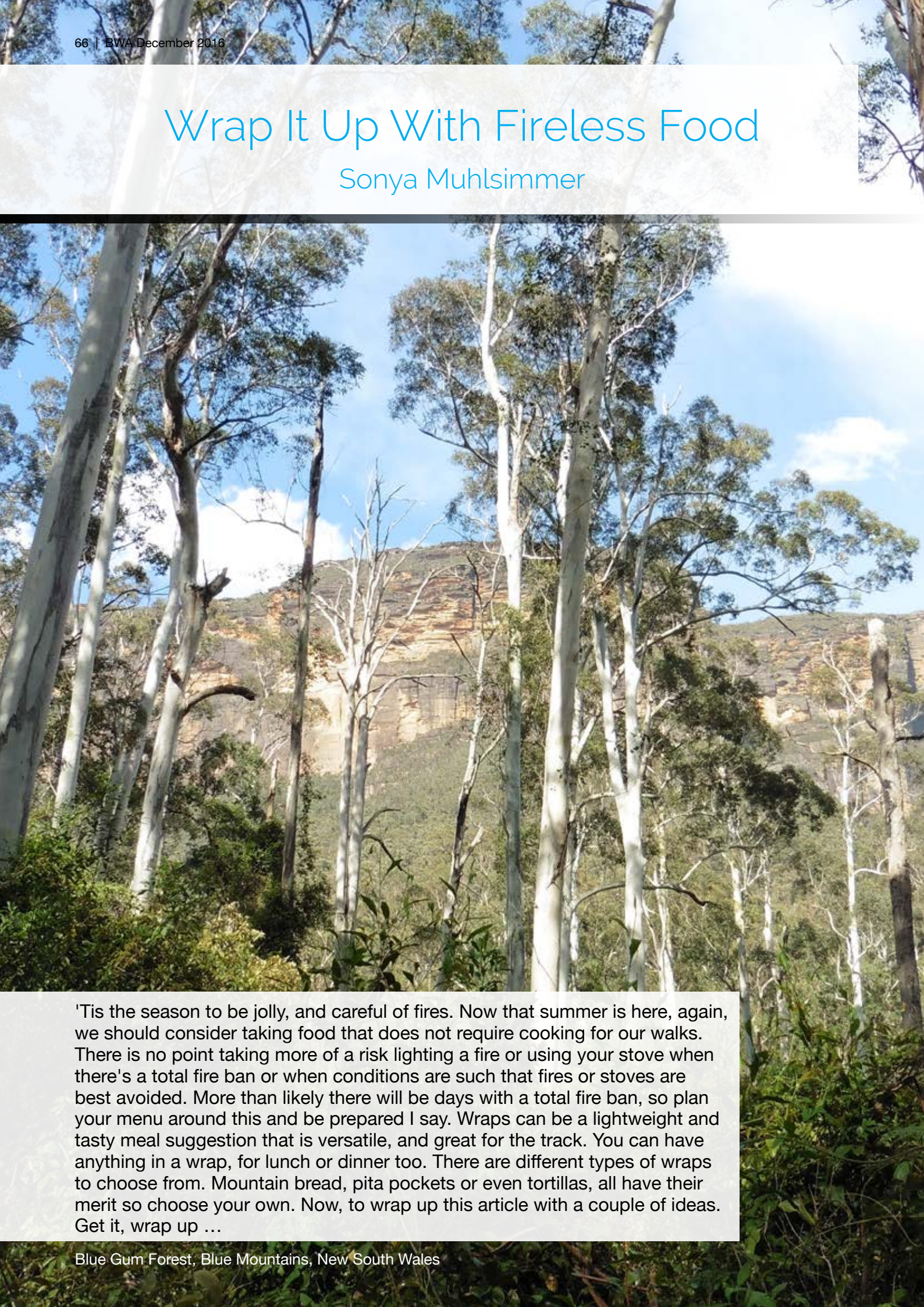


Innes coastal stack
Brian Eglinton



Wrap It Up With Fireless Food

Sonya Muhlsimmer



'Tis the season to be jolly, and careful of fires. Now that summer is here, again, we should consider taking food that does not require cooking for our walks. There is no point taking more of a risk lighting a fire or using your stove when there's a total fire ban or when conditions are such that fires or stoves are best avoided. More than likely there will be days with a total fire ban, so plan your menu around this and be prepared I say. Wraps can be a lightweight and tasty meal suggestion that is versatile, and great for the track. You can have anything in a wrap, for lunch or dinner too. There are different types of wraps to choose from. Mountain bread, pita pockets or even tortillas, all have their merit so choose your own. Now, to wrap up this article with a couple of ideas. Get it, wrap up ...

Salad Wrap

For the first few days of your trip you can carry some fresh vegetables. Carrot, celery and capsicum will last the few days distance no problem. Also throw in a few sun dried tomatoes. Why not even have a salad wrap with some Camembert or Brie cheese? This is sounding better by the minute. By the way, Camembert and Brie are different. Camembert becomes gooey, softer and stronger flavour when mature and Brie is creamier and has a higher fat percentage. These types of cheese are best eaten "at room temperature". This is how the cheese makers want you to eat it as the flavours really develop more. My niece's favourite food is Brie. When I take her out hiking I dare not leave home without the Brie. So why not throw a block in your pack for lunch, or dinner (for the first couple of days!). But be warned the cheese can get pretty soft so keep the cheese wrapped separately from the vegetables, until you are ready to eat. Also you can add either some salami or even a sachet of tuna too. So much choice in just one wrap!

At home preparation

Put all ingredients into a bag, keeping the cheese and salami wrapped separately. Or peel the carrot then slice the carrot, celery, capsicum and sun dried tomatoes into strips and place into a snap-lock bag. Keep the salami separate.

Method in camp

Cut the carrot, celery, capsicum, sun dried tomatoes, Brie and salami in thin slices. Add them to the middle of the bread in a long line, if using tuna open the pouch and add the tuna to the mix. For mountain bread and

tortillas, leave a gap at the top and bottom of the bread. From the base of the mix fold the bottom part of the bread up over the mix then fold one side over. From the side folded over, roll the rest of the bread up. Handy hint - The fold at the bottom means you do not lose the contents from the hole in the base of the wrap. For Pita pockets, make a hole in the top of the bread, place the mix inside and enjoy!



Bag 1 (salad mix)

Carrot	1/2	
Small celery stalks	2	
Capsicum	1/3	
Sun dried tomatoes	3	
Block Brie	1/3	42 grams
Salami or tuna pouch	6 to 8 slices 100 grams	
Wrap (mountain bread, pita pocket or tortilla, your choice)	1	

Falafel Wrap

Falafels can be so easily prepared and cooked at home, and are a convenient way to have a good variety of food. Vacuum seal them for better food safety and storage in your rucksack. Falafels will last a few days out on the track. When I was in Egypt on a sail boat for a few days travelling down the Nile I ate falafels every day and night, and did not get sick. Not like a few others in the group who ate meat and other stuff! The crew cooked a huge amount before our trip and just stored them in a plastic bag for the journey. Here is a meal suggestion for you. Falafels in a wrap with a cous cous and herb salad, drizzled with some sweet chilli sauce. Yum!

At home preparation

For the falafels: Make the falafels according to the packet directions (½ pack gives you 3 or 4 falafels). Let them cool completely. Store them in a snap lock bag or vacuum seal them. For the cous cous salad: Place all ingredients into the allocated bag. Copy or print out Method at camp and keep together with the bag, falafels and sweet chilli sauce.

Method at camp

Add the contents of the cous cous mix into an air tight container. Pour over ¼ cup of water. Place the lid on the container and leave for a minimum of 15 mins (make at breakfast for lunch). When ready to eat, add the falafels, cous cous salad and sweet chilli sauce to the wrap (same wrapping instructions as above) and eat.



Bag 1 (falafel mix)

Falafel mix	½ pack	100 grams
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Water for the falafel mix- 85 grams

Bag 2 (cous cous salad)

Cous cous	¼ cup	25 grams
Dried parsley	½ tsp	1 gram
Vegetable stock	½ tsp	3 grams
Dried dill	1/8 tsp	1 gram

Water for cous cous salad- 1/3 cup

Sweet Chilli sauce	Container	
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To read more about the author or find more delicious recipes check xtremegourmet.com

Magazines



Wild 156 issue

To celebrate our bumper wildflower season this year, Wild's latest issue focuses on the intense beauty of our interior. Journey along the Larapinta, join Swiss explorer Sarah Marquis in the Kimberley or read our top tips for surviving when lost in a desert. We also mark the opening of the new Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail with a Track Notes feature presented by Quentin Chester.



AG Outdoor Nov-Dec issue

Inside this jam-packed issue is our Top six Tassie adventures, plus a massive guide to adventure in Canada. We also explore the Northern Territory's Gulf Country and reveal the latest adventure hotspot of Costa Rica. There's also a how-to guide to getting started in one of Australia's most popular activities: snorkelling!



The Great Walks Dec-Jan issue

Our lead story is on South Australia's latest showcase walk, the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail. We were one of the first media outlets to walk it and weren't disappointed.

"The colour of the sea in this section was mesmerising: the kind of azure you get when the sand is white and the sky above is clear. Step, photograph, step, photograph. Progress was slow," wrote Louise Fairfax, who also took the cover shot.

Other travel stories in the issue include the Great Uluru Trek, Ritchies Hut in the Victoria High Country, Italy's Tuscany region and France's ancient 'Grande Randonnée' walking paths.

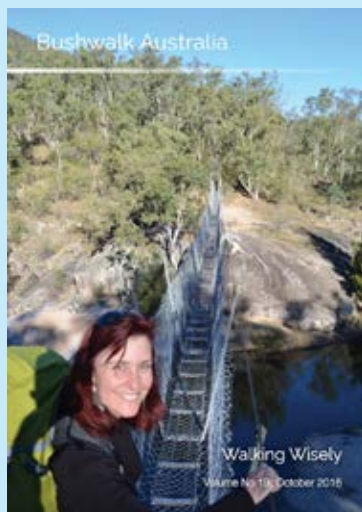
With 30 awesome products our Christmas gift guide will give you plenty to think about.



Outer Edge 50 issue

Edition 50 of Outer Edge takes you to the top of the world with a laugh with Stand Up on Everest; a chat with Alyssa Azar; trekking Uluru, and into the world of ebikes. All of this along with all the best tips and tricks in Adventure School, reviews, and much more.





Walking Wisely

- > Six Foot Track
- > Melaleuca log book
- > Choosing a GPS
- > Water requirements



Bushwalking Conservation

- > Australian Alps Walking Track
- > High Horses: Kosciuszko NP
- > Another shot at the GNW
- > Mapping feral animals



Winter Walking

- > Fig Tree Point
- > Gear freak - footwear
- > 10 Tips for backcountry Snowshoeing and winter



Best of NSW

- > Best walks of NSW
- > Wolgan Gorge adventure
- > S Shoalhaven Coast walk
- > Warbonnet Hammock review



Best of VIC

- > Best walks of Victoria
- > Wilsons Prom
- > Aarn Pack review



Best of TAS

- > Best walks of Tasmania
- > Overland Track
- > Rescue at Cradle



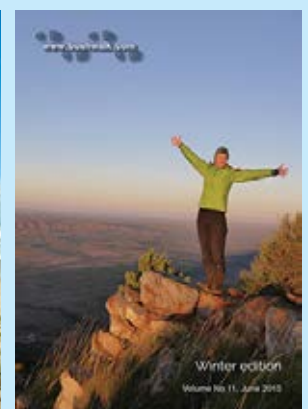
Best of SA

- > Best walks of SA
- > Friends of Heysen Trail
- > Bungy Pump poles



Best of WA

- > WA - a hike for everyone
- > Western Walking Club
- > Forests and logging



Best of NT

- > Best walks of NT
- > Larapinta track
- > Rescue: inside and out



Best of QLD

- > Best walks in Queensland
- > Walking with insects



Best of ACT

- > ACT's best walks
- > Gardens of Stone



Keep Your Cool

- > Total fire ban day
- > Sports drink & electrolytes



Best of Australia

- > Best walks in Australia
- > Bushwalking blog



Winter Wanderings

- > Dehydrating food
- > Colong wilderness walk



Winter Edition

- > 2 weeks in Fiordland
- > Hypothermia



Autumn Edition

- > Aboriginal rock art
- > Bushwalking Tracks



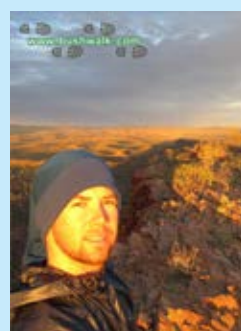
Lifetime of Walking

- > What is BWRS?
- > Are you in a Club?



Walking in Summer

- > Heat illness in the field
- > Is it safe to walk?



First Edition

- > What is BWA
- > Larapinta Trail NT

