

Bushwalk Australia

A photograph of a young woman with long brown hair, smiling and looking to the right. She is wearing a green tank top and has an orange backpack on. In the background, a man is partially visible, also looking to the right. The background is a lush green forest.

Wonderful Walking

Volume 25, October 2017

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
An electronic magazine for
<http://bushwalk.com>
Volume 25, October 2017

**"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



People hiking
- happy hiker
couple at
Hawaii
by Maridav

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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
December 2017 edition is
31 October 2017.

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

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From the Editor

Hi

I have really enjoyed reading through this edition of Bushwalk Australia. It has shown me the brilliant diversity in places to walk and the different approaches we have to bushwalking.

This has been our first family edition, with three articles from the O'Connor family. Shoshannah (daughter) shares her adventure climbing the top Aussie 10, Gary (dad) allows us to join in a family trip along the Larapinta and Sue (mum) takes us on the classic Great Ocean Walk. It's so wonderful to see a family enjoying and sharing adventures like this.

A big thanks to Peter Campbell, Roger Caffin, and Stephen Lake who help us explore the possible impacts and opportunities the Australian Adventure Activity Standard might have on bushwalking clubs. We have four articles with four different views, which makes for a good campfire conversation.

As always "wow" to the photographers. What stunning images, what a great privilege it is to be able to share these images - thanks so much for sharing your artworks. Also thanks to James Webb for sharing his 30 peaks adventure and to our regular contributors Dr Oisín Sweeney and Sonya Muhlsimmer who always open our eyes and make the inner person very happy.

We have seen a hotter and drier than normal winter across most of Australia, which looks likely to continue through spring and into summer - keep safe.

Happy walking
Matt :)



Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)
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Declaration

The bushwalking community is a small world and paths often cross. To improve transparency I thought it would be helpful to list my associations within the outdoor community. In many cases I approached the authors of the articles included in this edition and suggested the topics. The opinions stated in articles are those of the authors and not of those involved in the production of this edition. The authors are mostly people I know through Bushwalk.com. 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

Understanding fire weather

How and why does the fire spread



Hygiene on the Appalachian Trail

Answers to some of the biggest questions about trail hygiene for any long distance backpacking trip.



Aussie 10

Shoshannah O'Connor



After the culmination of seven years of study (thankfully) and a bit of time on my hands in December before I began the hectic life as a graduate teacher in January I decided to hit the Snowy Mountains and tackle a few of Australia's highest peaks. And who would have thought there would be an abundance of snow in December! It made for an adventurous three days tackling the *Aussie 10* with my mum.

Near Muellers Peak on day one

The Aussie 10 is not an official walk as such, in the sense that there are no signs to point you in the right direction towards peak one, peak two, etc. Because of this unofficial nature, navigation skills are needed. When I was doing research in the days leading up to it there wasn't a lot of information online and so I printed some track notes from [Aussie 10](#) and [Wildwalks](#), bought a couple of maps and borrowed a compass. In hindsight, I'd recommend getting a GPS so that you can plug in peak co-ordinates and easily navigate to them. However, the map and compass should be the main way to navigate, with a GPS as backup to confirm a position or the right way to go. When every mountain looks the same or in bad weather it's somewhat challenging to decipher what's what. Generally though, the walk follows the Main Range Track, with detours so that you can climb the 10 peaks. Of course, all of this is in Kosciuszko National Park, Australia's not so elevated alpine region. It is a beautiful part of Australia, and if multi-day walking is not for you there is still an abundance of day walks scattered throughout the national park.

After driving from Brisbane and staying in Jindabyne we drove to Charlotte Pass to begin the three day walk. Walking down to the Snowy River from Charlotte Pass meant that the final day would be mainly downhill from Rawson Pass and a slightly shorter distance. It was beautiful weather, barely a cloud in the sky and lots of snow drifts about made for an excellent time.

It is true that Australia is by no means an alpinist's dream, with a few peaks nothing more than big grassy hills. But it was still a spectacular sight nonetheless, with rocky outcrops, steep slopes and a handful of glacial lakes. Our first peak to tackle was Mount Twynam (pronounced like the tea Twinings I would later learn after mispronouncing it 8000 times). Twynam is 2196 metres high, and is one of the easier ones to get to. After crossing the Snowy River, and winding our way up towards the Main Range, we had views of the majestic Blue Lake and eventually reached the Twynam turn off. We dumped our packs and very gradually ascended a few kilometres to Twynam, which is easy to spot. Some of the other peaks were harder to identify, causing much confusion.

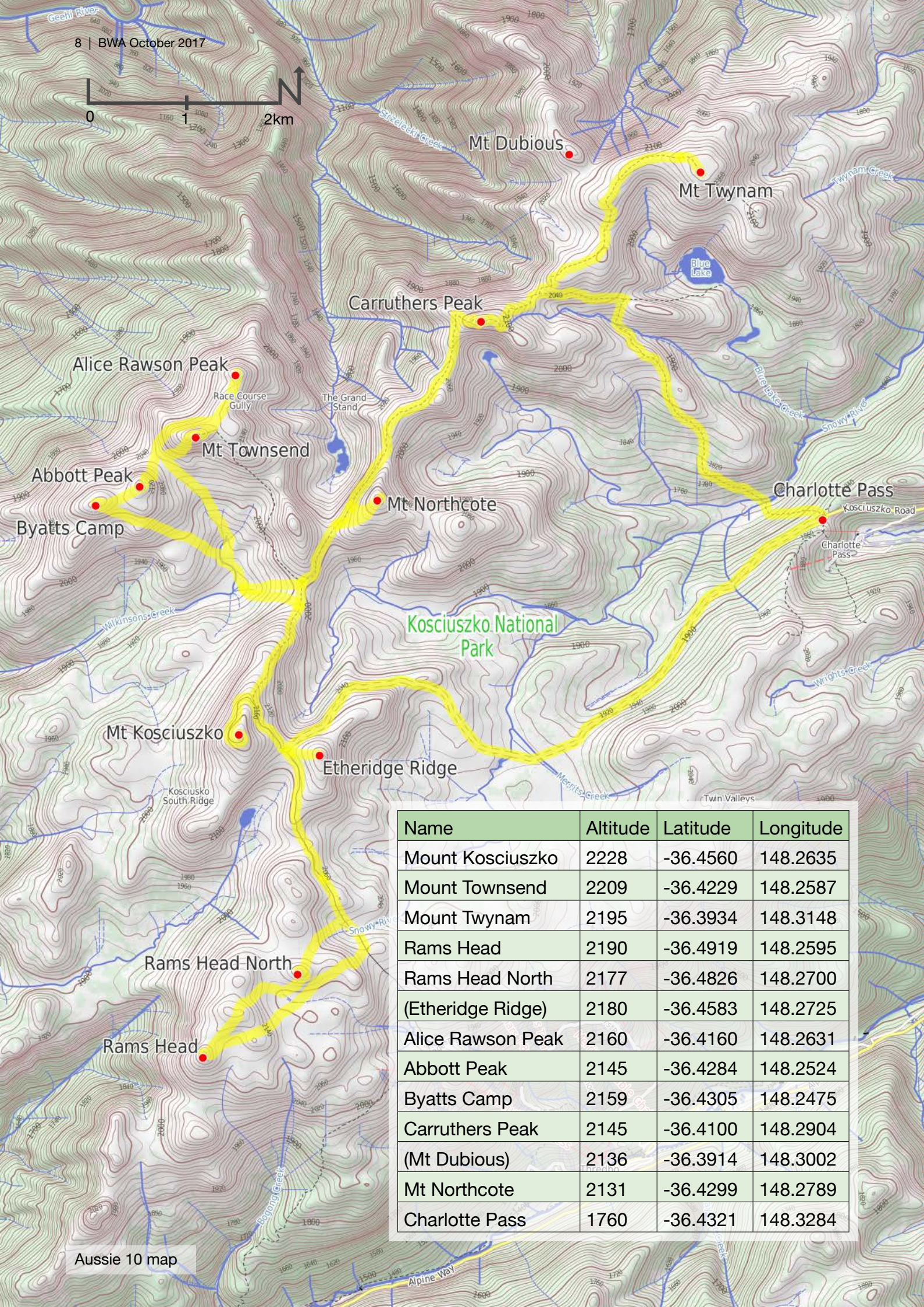
After bagging our first peak we returned to our packs then headed towards Carruthers Peak. Here we came across a couple of back-country skiers, grasping on to what little winter there was left.

“Because of this unofficial nature, navigation skills are needed.”

We tramped along the Main Range Track, passing beside Mount Northcote to our east and spectacular views of Lake Albina and Mount Townsend to our west. By this stage though, the peaks were becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish and the wind was blowing a gale. We continued along a narrow goat track nestled into a ledge above Lake Albina.



The Snowy River and our route ahead on day one



Name	Altitude	Latitude	Longitude
Mount Kosciuszko	2228	-36.4560	148.2635
Mount Townsend	2209	-36.4229	148.2587
Mount Twynam	2195	-36.3934	148.3148
Rams Head	2190	-36.4919	148.2595
Rams Head North	2177	-36.4826	148.2700
(Etheridge Ridge)	2180	-36.4583	148.2725
Alice Rawson Peak	2160	-36.4160	148.2631
Abbott Peak	2145	-36.4284	148.2524
Byatts Camp	2159	-36.4305	148.2475
Carruthers Peak	2145	-36.4100	148.2904
(Mt Dubious)	2136	-36.3914	148.3002
Mt Northcote	2131	-36.4299	148.2789
Charlotte Pass	1760	-36.4321	148.3284

We eventually realised that we were passing Mount Northcote and that we should probably climb up it as it too is one of the highest peaks. It's really nothing more than a big grassy hill though and it didn't take us long to reach peak number three.

After numero tres our energy was starting to dwindle so we quickly continued on the Main Range Track then ducked into Wilkinsons Valley, following advice from a couple of walkers we had seen earlier in the day. I'm glad we met them, because the valley was one of the best places I've ever camped. Camping alongside a snow-fed stream, surrounded by mountains and snow was remarkable. It was hard to believe we were in Australia, let alone that it was summer!

After tucking into some rehydrated risotto, feasting on some chocolate and sipping on some Baileys we enjoyed watching the sun slowly vanish behind the mountains.

The next morning we arose early, ready to tackle Mount Townsend, Alice Rawson Peak, Abbott Peak, Byatts Camp, Kosciuszko and

an unnamed peak. There was nothing like a few weetbix to get the energy levels up and then we reluctantly packed up camp to leave Wilkinsons Valley. I'd highly recommend staying there for a few nights and exploring the surrounding area each day. It is truly superb. We headed up a gully towards what I believed was Mt Townsend and Abbott Peak, that followed Wilksons Creek which involved a lot of rock hopping and scrambling through the patchy snow. Like I said earlier, my navigational skills are somewhat sketchy and even though it was Day two I still couldn't identify Mt Kosciuszko among our surroundings. I had to stop frequently to consult the now shredded map to justify our direction. We decided that we'd just head up what appeared to be the highest mountain, and luckily for us there was a cairn on top and with much excitement, we celebrated climbing Mt Townsend, Australia's second highest peak at 2209 metres. It was a beautiful sight, and the views on offer continued to exceed our expectations.

“... the valley was one of the best places I've ever camped.”



Camping in Wilkinsons Valley with Abbott Peak behind us



Sliding down the mountain on day two

After much basking in the sun, we went north-east to Alice Rawson Peak which we quickly scrambled up, then went back around Mt Townsend to hit peaks three and four of the day (six and seven overall) – Abbott Peak and Byatts Camp. We ran into a few trail runners who were doing the Aussie 10 in one day and after seeing them race down the snowy slopes, we quickly adopted their way of moving. These four peaks are really quite close together and form a rough line running towards the north-east. With map in hand, once we had identified Townsend it wasn't too much trouble working out the others as well.

“... I continued sliding down some grass and got catapulted off a rock.

It was so much fun slipping and sliding over the snow as we made our way across the four peaks. It didn't take us long to trade carefully tiptoeing down the snow to sliding down on our butts. I became complacent and after sliding down a short section of



Walking out of Wilkinsons Valley with the Abbott Range and Mt Townsend on the skyline, day two

snow, thinking I would come to a natural stop, I continued sliding down some grass and got catapulted off a rock. Mum was in hysterics after my near-death experience.

It was early afternoon when we arrived back in the valley to pick up our packs and continue towards Kosciuszko. We lingered for a while though, basking in the sun, enjoying some mi goreng and peanut butter wraps; ahh the little luxuries of a three-day walk.

It was onwards and upwards towards Kosciuszko, Australia's highest peak, 2228 metres. Compared to the others we had climbed that day it was a gentle walk on a well-worn tourist track. The solitude of the last two days quickly dissipated though, as we encountered a number of day walkers. But it still didn't feel too busy,

“... we were rewarded with stunning views of Kosciuszko ...”

considering that over summer, about 100,000 people make the ascent. The views from the top are spectacular and although some people may say it is spoiled by the masses or too easy, I would definitely recommend it if you are only in the area for a day trip.

By this time we had now climbed eight of Australia's highest peaks and we were feeling it. Heavy packs in tow, we pottered down Kosciuszko and with mum thinking we were done for the day I suggested we quickly head up the unnamed ninth peak which sits behind the huge toilet block at Rawson Pass. It was a rocky climb with patchy grass that occasionally would result in you falling knee deep into weird holes, but we were rewarded with stunning views of Kosciuszko and a good vantage point to suss out a spot to camp for the night.

“The Snowy Mountains are a truly unique and beautiful part of Australia ...”



Scrambling on the unnamed ninth peak east of Rawson Pass

Heading south towards Rams Head and Thredbo we pitched our tent close to Lake Cootapatamba Lookout. It was a beautiful spot. Patchy snow again surrounded us, and even though we were tired and ready to rest as soon as we got to camp, we stayed up and enjoyed the sunset over the Snowys.

Day three, and we had some 17 or so kilometres to cover. Feeling a tad ambitious we thought we'd try and knock it out by lunch time. We rose early, again letting the sun dictate our sleeping patterns. I feasted on my last unpalatable breakfast of weetbix with milk powder and sultanas, sipping on an instant coffee brew, and relished in the simple pleasures of being in the mountains. We hid our packs near what would soon become the busy Kosciuszko Track from Thredbo. We headed south with day packs to tackle the last two peaks – Rams Head and North Rams Head. The instructions for this last bit were somewhat vague, however the best advice would be

“... I suggest visiting the Snowy Mountains in summer, where the stunning landscape reveals itself without snow ...”

to head south-west (or to the right from the track), just before or after crossing the Snowy River. We ummed and ahed about where the Snowy River actually was, (like I said navigation wasn't my strong point...nor Mum's), but luckily we were heading in the right direction. Upon reaching the plateau, some 2100 metres above sea level North Rams Head and Rams Head become quite obvious. In particular, North Rams Head is a unique arrangement of incredibly large and strangely weathered boulders that juts out from the surrounding landscape. It probably requires the most scrambling to summit out of the Aussie 10, and with weary legs and a fear of heights (mum) we made it to the top of our tenth peak.

We continued, making our way to the eleventh and final peak of our trip. Why 11? You might wonder. Well after doing a lot of research in the weeks leading up to the trip, there seemed to be some controversy as to what peaks were the actual 10 highest. Who would have thought that with modern technology that this would be up for debate,

but I suppose we do live in Australia. The unknown peak near Kosciuszko appeared on a number of lists, and thus leaving it out wasn't an option. Rams Head was the final peak we would climb on the aptly named *Aussie 11*.

Unlike its northern counterpart, Rams Head is only a climb up a grassy slope. This is much easier than hopping and scrambling over boulders, and it's a nice relief for those who didn't like heights.

It was a great feeling to climb the *Aussie 10*. We covered some 50 kilometres and 2500 metres of elevation gain in three days, and our legs were definitely feeling it. As we wandered back to our packs from Rams Head, and walked about 9 kilometres to our car at Charlotte Pass, this time via the Kosciuszko summit track, I couldn't help but reflect on the last three days. The Snowy Mountains are a truly unique and beautiful part of Australia, generally renowned as a place to hit the slopes in winter. But now, I suggest visiting the Snowy Mountains in summer, where the stunning landscape reveals itself without snow and offers a different kind of wonderland to explore.



Shoshannah is from Brisbane and teaches high school maths and science. Recent adventures have taken her to the Larapinta Trail in the Northern Territory and a number of multi-day hikes in the South Island of New Zealand. Making the most of school holidays she will head to Nepal to tackle the Annapurna Circuit this summer.

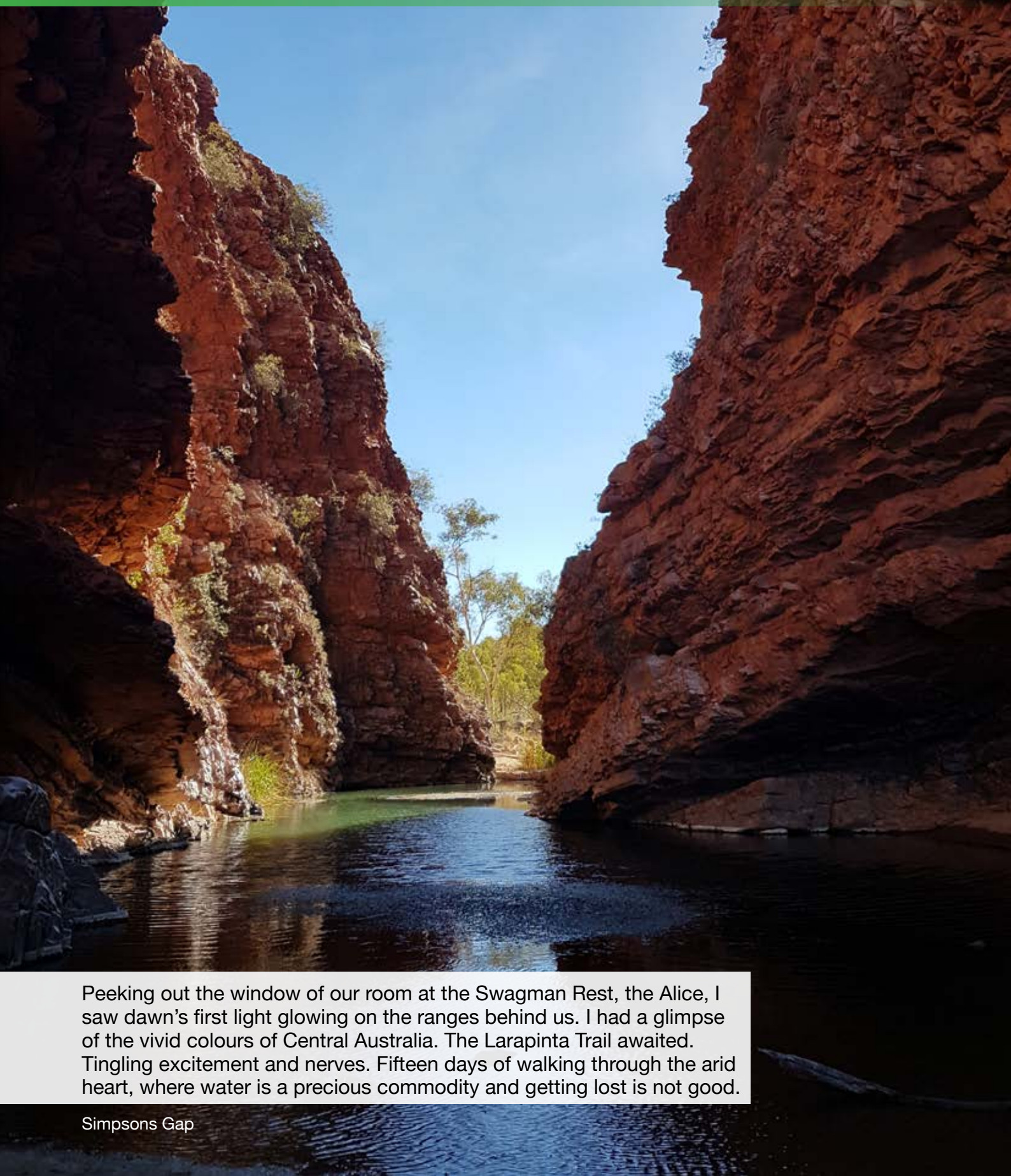
She also writes a [Make trails blog](#) where this article was first published.



Sunrise on the final morning
Shoshannah O'Connor

The Larapinta Trail

Gary O'Connor



Peeking out the window of our room at the Swagman Rest, the Alice, I saw dawn's first light glowing on the ranges behind us. I had a glimpse of the vivid colours of Central Australia. The Larapinta Trail awaited. Tingling excitement and nerves. Fifteen days of walking through the arid heart, where water is a precious commodity and getting lost is not good.

Soon enough, our trek began at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station. The four of us headed off into a warm afternoon along a flat grassy trail towards the sun. Around and before us were the ranges that would be our home for two weeks. Majestically coloured, enveloped in mystery and timelessness.

We ascended Euro Ridge, steeply tilted beds of rock levered upwards more than a billion years ago. As we rose the vista of the surrounding ranges was revealed and the desert winds blew in our faces. As if to accentuate the spirit of the adventure, in our vision a brown kite surfed the unseen waves of air cascading up and over the ridge. What a sight, what an introduction to Larapinta.

The preparation

Walking Larapinta was not done on a whim. We had heard about it through friends and on the radio. So we researched it and thought, this will be tough but it sounds like it's worth the time and effort.

The “we/our/us” in this story is my wife Sue, our youngest children Shoshannah and Sheamus and me (Gary). We all have some walking experience with packs and enjoy the rough adventure of hiking. Sue and I feel very lucky that Shoshannah and Sheamus, who are young adults, have taken a liking to bushwalking and do not mind walking with us.

Our time-frame for the walk was set at 15 days because of leave constraints for some (not for me!). So 14 nights meant 56 dehydrated meals, which took a while to prepare. The menu was somewhat varied:

- Makhanawahla
- British raj beef curry
- Vege pasta
- Spaghetti bolognese
- Vege couscous
- Chickpea vege rice
- Barley risotto
- Vege risotto
- Stir fry

“... this will be tough but it sounds like it's worth the time and effort.”

This is a total of 7.6 kilograms. Add to this about 25 kilograms for breakfast, lunch and snacks (which includes a few kilograms of chocolate and cheese). 32.6 kilograms of food for the four of us.

An important feature of the trail is the food drops where walkers can store food for the forthcoming sections, so reducing the initial weight carried. Food drops can also have a treat or two. We went for a bottle of red at each of the three drops along with some Jatz, cheese and shapes. That's living.

Alice Wanderers did our food drops and picked us up at the end. It all went to plan so a big thanks to Alice Wanderers.



Gary, Shoshannah, Sheamus and Sue at sunrise on Mount Sonder

Physically we prepared ourselves with local walks carrying weighted backpacks. So we were okay without being super-fit.

As we are dedicated athletes, our final preparations were intensive. Our flight to the Alice was via Adelaide with a three hour stopover; there are no direct flights from Brisbane to the Alice on week days. This gave us the opportunity to go to the City Markets and enjoy breakfast, followed by a stroll and a beer. Off to the Alice where once again we continued the fitness build up with some beers there too. We felt ready for the adventure.

Off we go

We started after lunch on Saturday 24 June 2017, when Shoshannah arrived on her flight from Brisbane. Our track was east to west (a lot of people go the other way) and, after a little trouble finding the actual track, we tramped off at 1.45pm. After a little over four hours walking, we arrived in camp at Wallaby Gap as the light faded. This was a busy camp with nine tents in total, including ours. We were a bit surprised at the numbers walking this lonely desert track.

Two other walkers arrived at about the same time as us and, as luck would have it, we shared the trail with them from Wallaby Gap. While we didn't introduce ourselves at the first camp, being somewhat insular at this stage, we did later. Dean and Mick are their names.

I should explain our routine on entering camp. Tents would be pitched (they are amazingly easy to pitch these days), the Jetboil lighted to boil water for the food rehydration, which took about 30 minutes for firmer food pieces, such as carrot, potato and pasta, to soften. A nice cup of tea or coffee and some rich fruit cake, my Mum's recipe. The fruit cake had been soaked in Grand Marnier for preservation purposes. Do we sound like alcoholics?

The rehydrated dinner would then be heated up to a simmer, adding water as necessary to provide a moist texture and delicious sauce. This would take about five minutes or so and then we would devour it promptly. There

“Sue's fear of heights surfaced high up on the ridges ...”

would be some miserly discussion about the distribution of cheese. Cheese proved to be a precious and treasured commodity on the walk, a cause of a number of family arguments.

“That's a big slice!” “How come Dad gets three slices!” “We're going to run out!”

Some chocolate, a clean of the teeth and bed, or should I say into the tent and slumber on light-weight mattresses.

I forgot to mention something very important, our showering – there was none apart from that oasis Ormiston Gorge, which will get



Scrambling to Standley Chasm at Cycad Creek
Sheamus O'Connor

a special mention later, and at Standley Chasm. Water is at a premium in the desert so a very basic wipe down with a damp cloth was the best to be done apart from swimming in a gorge. Then change into the cleaner set of clothes.

We took with us only two sets of clothes, a walking set and a night-time set. As you can imagine the walking set gained a life and personality of its own during two weeks of fairly hard walking, some more “outgoing” than others. (I am expecting to be interviewed by the NT Parks Department for allegedly killing a tree by hanging my jocks out to air on one of the branches.) As you can imagine, the “cleaner set”, while remaining technically that, would not be described as smelling like roses at the end.

Now I’m not going to bore you further with a step by step description of the walk but for those considering hiking the trail, I have put some detail of times and distances at the end.

So let me tell you a few tales.

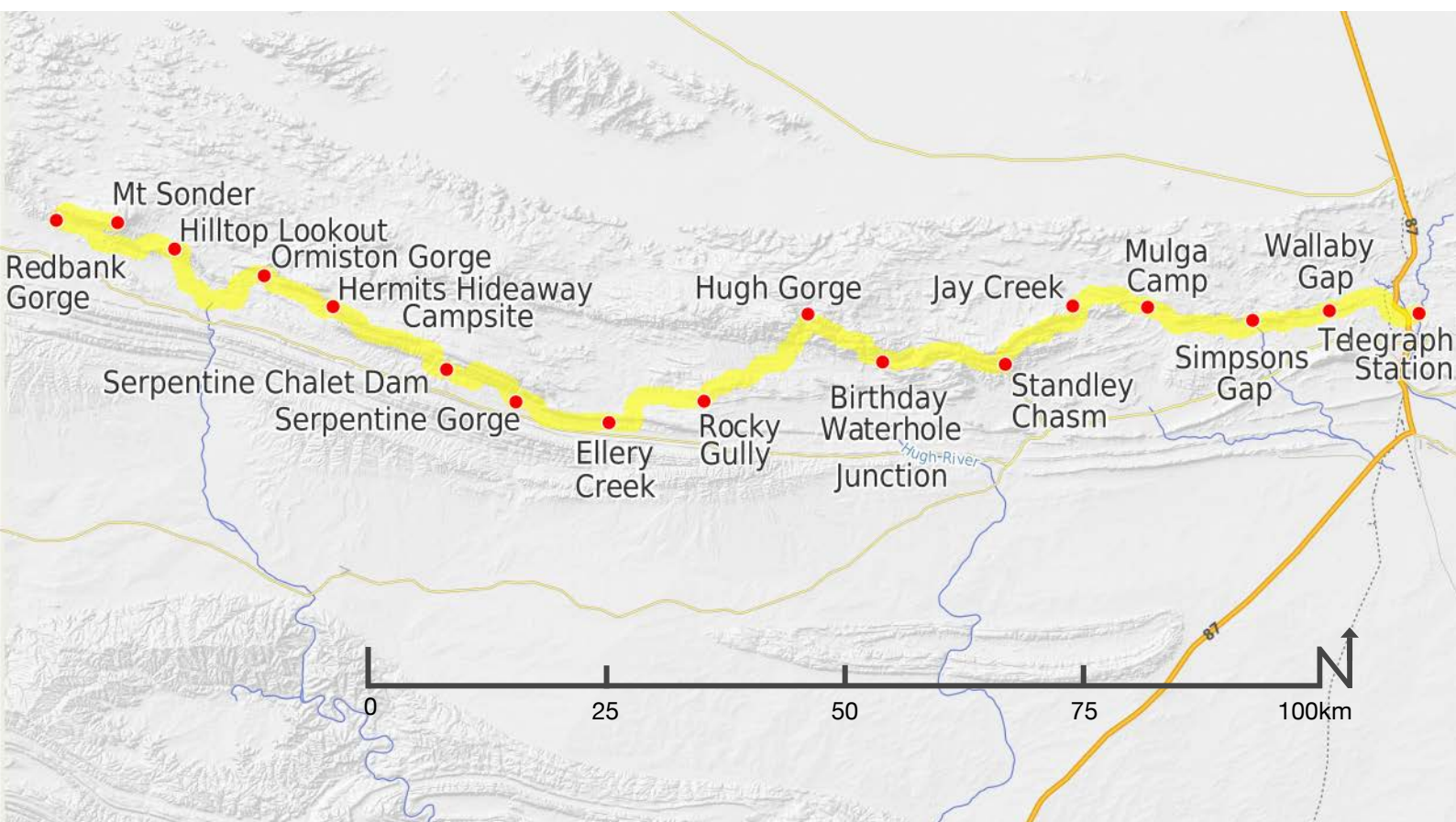
The cathedral effect

I have to jump in straight away and tell you this is the most stunning countryside. Your vision is taken up by spectacular views on all sides. The ranges of the West McDonnell Ranges, chiefly the Chewings and Heavitree

Day	Camped at	Km	Time
1	Telegraph Station to Wallaby Gap	14	3:45
2	Mulga Camp	30	7:15
3	Jay Creek	10	2:30
4	Standley Chasm	15	5:45
5	Birthday Waterhole Junction	18	6:00
6	Hugh Gorge	15	6:30
7	Rocky Gully	15	4:00
8	Ellery Creek	15	4:00
9	Serpentine Gorge	14	4:45
10	Serpentine Chalet Dam	15	4:45
11	Hermits Hideaway	15	5:30
12	Ormiston Gorge	12	3:30
13	Hilltop Lookout	19	4:45
14	Redbank Gorge	16	4:15
15	Mt Sonder	14	4:45

Itinerary

Ranges, are made up of jagged rocks formed from ancient sea beds. The colours and intensity vary throughout the day, changing the “feel” of the landscape quite dramatically, and mysteriously transforming the feelings of the viewer.



Within this harsh landscape a variety of plant life prospered. The spinifex appeared like soft light green cushions from the distance. Ghost gums stood out in the red landscape, white trunked with vivid green leaves. The crevices and narrow gullies in the rocks were vibrant green, very often with ancient cycads.

And just when you thought that you had seen all the spectacular sites possible, a walk into a gorge or a gap would envelop you in majesty. The nearest to the feelings I have had is that of walking into the great cathedrals of France, like Notre Dame and Amiens, so I have called it the "cathedral effect". I shall try and describe it by one example although there were many.

On day nine we arrived at Serpentine Gorge. After settling in we strolled up to the gorge in late afternoon. Turning a corner, the gorge stood in front of us. Red rock walls towered above the sandy base on which we stood and reflected in the water of the gorge. All

conversations stopped and the silence and grandeur of the scene enveloped us. Peace and tranquillity. As if to emphasise the scene and its ancient creation, the power and mystery of nature was evident in the rock walls, once great sea beds rendered vertical by some unimaginable tectonic force. And there, on the face of the rock, a "window" into that time, the preserved imprint of ripples on a sandy shore.

“All conversations stopped and the silence and grandeur of the scene enveloped us.”

As with Notre Dame we walked up a ridge onto the "roof" of this cathedral gorge. On top there were not gargoyles or bells, but a view of the gorge as it went for several kilometres. Majestic.

We were able to swim at quite a number of these gorges and gaps. Now the water temperature was low, and some fish had died



Ripples of the past, Heavitree Range, near Eagle Landing, an inland sea from about 900 million years ago
Sheamus O'Connor

because of protozoa (a natural process at this time of year) but we were pretty sweaty and only twice had the opportunity to shower along the way. So a swim was good. The water was bracing, I don't know what the water temperature was but it was cold.

The falls

This is not to be confused with waterfalls; there were none.

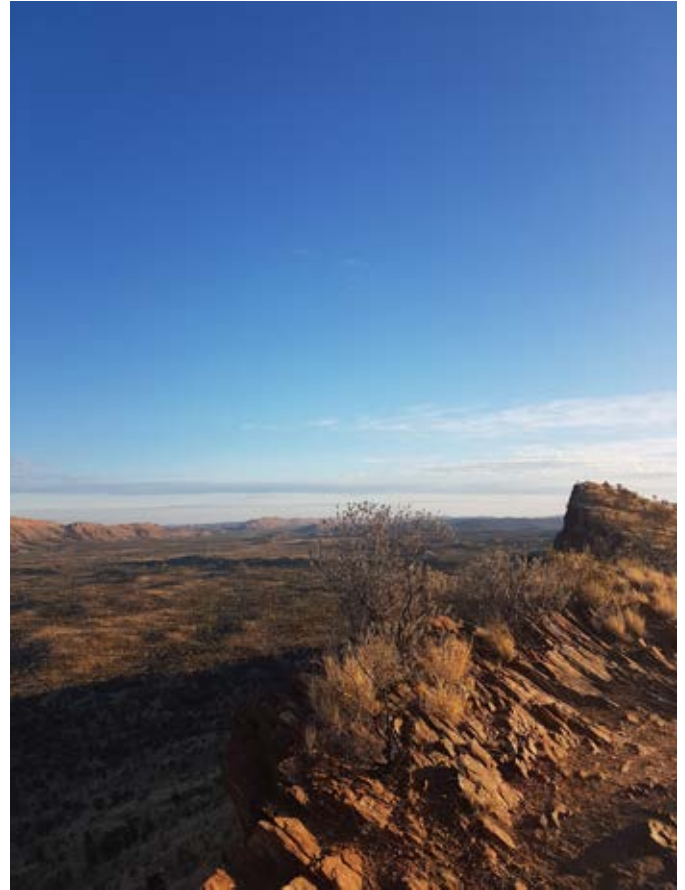
The trail has a reputation as being very rocky. It is in many parts and the potential for falling with ghastly outcomes is evident on the high ridges like Razorback or coming down from those ridges such as from Brinkley Bluff. Care is needed, and, in Sue's case, a big shot of rum. Unfortunately we had not brought rum. Sue's fear of heights surfaced high up on the ridges or on any rock climbs.

But these turned out to not be the most dangerous places. Shoshannah was the first to fall, coming down a set of rock stairs. A momentary lapse in concentration and over she goes, getting a big dark purple clam shaped bruise on the leg. She fell again later with less serious bruising.

Not to be outdone, Sue went one better. We were walking along a flat track across a plain littered with quite sharp rocks. I looked up and saw the World Expedition group (more about this wonderful group later) reaching the top of a saddle about a kilometre away. I said "Sue, look there's World Expeditions."

Sue looked up and went down hard. She had tripped on a rock hiding on the edge of the path, falling onto a set of hard pointy rocks on the edge of the path. Immediately her upper arm swelled up and her wrist bled. Sue was in pain and I thought there may be a breakage.

Fortunately not, although a very nasty bruise appeared on her arm. This bruise caused me all sorts of grief. Not only had I caused the accident by telling her to look up (Sue



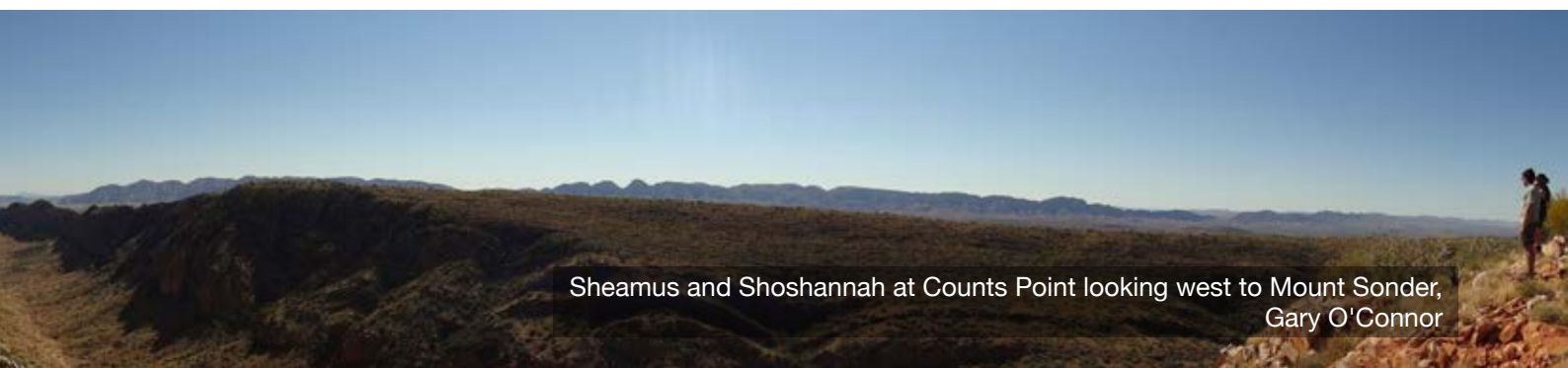
Euro Ridge
Sheamus O'Connor

takes no responsibility for not looking where she was going) but people we met would say, "That's a nasty bruise! How did you get that?" followed up with a judgemental look at me.

Sue would fall again, once more a trip on a rock hiding on the edge of the path this time knocking her head. Fortunately I was blameless and the head knock was not too bad.

Vision splendid

The trail was designed to show off the landscape of this remote area. As a consequence the trail winds up and over hills and ranges so that the hiker, although tired from the climbing, is rewarded with tremendous views, looking forward and backwards, left and right along the path. The views are stunning.



Sheamus and Shoshannah at Counts Point looking west to Mount Sonder,
Gary O'Connor

After Euro Ridge, the first couple of days were relatively flat and quite unseasonably warm, in the high twenties. We could not imagine what it would be like to be out on the trail in summer.

Our first experience of the high views was at Pravda Spur and Loretta's Lookout, at least Sheamus and me. Sue was dwelling on her paranoia of heights at this early stage and so took the alternative low route with Shoshannah. Sheamus and I drank in the views of the Chewings Range. The range was formed over a billion years ago when some ancient seabed was squeezed and pushed up.

Most walkers would next comment on Brinkley Bluff, a much vaunted sunrise and sunset spot. Not so for us. Low cloud had settled on the 1200 metre high ridge and made visibility close to about 30 metres. This was good news for Sue who was unable to see the deep chasms around us or imagine tumbling clumsily down them.

The mist gave us the opportunity to notice the clever survival techniques of the little trees on the ridge. They capture the moisture of the mist in their leaves which then falls in drops on the soil surrounding their roots.

Sue's relaxing blinkered walks along the ridge lines did not last. The next day the weather cleared and the trail once again headed



Mount Sonder at sunset from Hilltop Lookout
Gary O'Connor

up onto the Chewings Range (we had descended some 380 metres the day before) and Razorback Ridge. The name says it all. To Sue it was an impossibly narrow path of jagged rocks waiting to trip her and send her plummeting to certain disfiguring death, on either side. She managed somehow and even was able to look up from the perilous depths to admire the stunning view of Hughes Gorge in the distance.

On we went. The day we ascended to Counts Point on the Heavitree Range was picture perfect, views for kilometres in every direction. Similarly, the steep climb up from Waterfall Gorge had the reward of a spectacular view of Mount Giles and Mount Sonder.



Gary on a misty hike up to Brinkley Bluff
Sheamus O'Connor

Another highlight was relaxing by the waterhole at Davenport Creek. We arrived at about 1pm on a warm day and immediately stopped when we saw it.

Our last ascent was Mount Sonder with an elevation gain of over 700 metres in the dark. We rose early to climb Sonder for sunrise. With head torches shining brightly we set off at 4am for a two and half hour walk. It was near a full moon, which shines brightly in the desert, casting the shadows of the mountains onto the landscape. This morning we were also lucky enough to see the moon set, golden like the sun into the desert beyond.

Our head torches cast the shadows of the jagged rocks, illuminating images in the mind of sheer cliff faces beneath the shadows. A wrong turn and it's a funeral. The light of day on the descent showed a much less threatening path. Sue nervously continued in the dark.

We reached the top after moon-set, as the sky just started to turn from star-punctured black to a hint of star bejewelled blue. The night sky had been a brilliant part of our hike, with the Dark Emu clearly visible in the Milky Way on many nights.

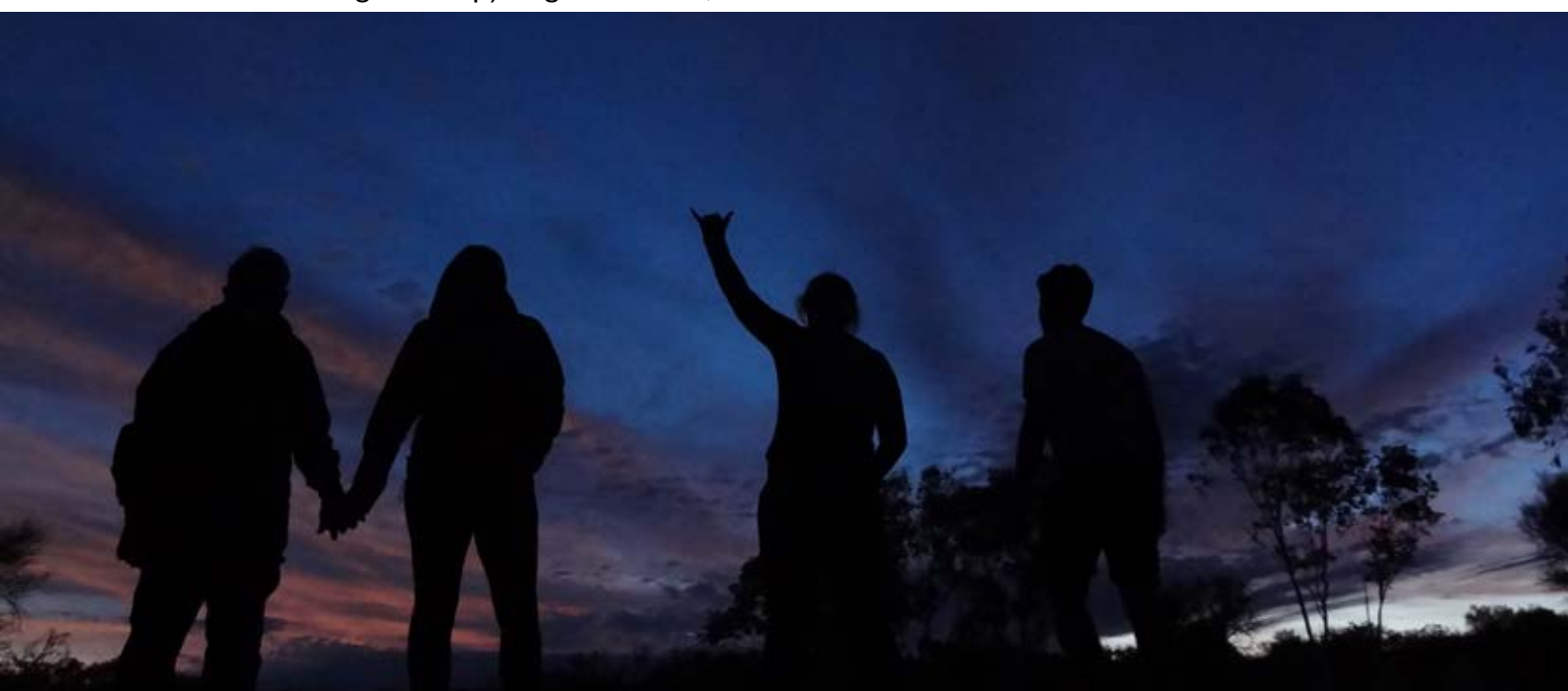
At the top were some people from World Expeditions that we had become quite friendly with along the way (and who I blame for making Sue trip). Eight walkers,



Sue, Shoshannah and Sheamus leaving Spring Gap
Gary O'Connor

carrying day packs, left Alice Springs with their guides Alice and Ed. Six of the walkers finished the full walk, including a 31 kilometre day that started and finished in the dark. World Expeditions provide a fully supported end-to-end walk which includes World Expeditions' own separate camp sites and delicious guide-cooked food every night. They walked the whole way and loved it. Alice and Ed were lovely and, as it turns out, were brother and sister. We had many a chat with the World Expeditions crew, sharing our experiences and the joy of the trail. They also shared some of their food with us when they had excess. That was much appreciated.

“The night sky had been a brilliant part of our hike ...”



The family at twilight, Jay Creek

I'll just divert a bit and advise that one of the really pleasant surprises of the hike was the friends we made. I imagined a rather lonely walk in this remote part of Australia with only a few other walkers along the trail. In fact it was reasonably busy, with a few camps having over 10 people camping. Serpentine Gorge had about 20 people including a French group, some avid walkers from Victoria that had escaped the cold wet winter and a couple of adventurous young women who wore hats with "surf rescue" written on them. They made a pastime of swimming up gorges to find the more inaccessible ones. They carried a ukulele and sang us to sleep.

“... one of the really pleasant surprises of the hike was the friends we made.”

We were lucky to make special friends of a number of people that we shared the track with. Jonas and Jasmine, the Cairns couple, Stuart and Alex, the Perth couple, Dean, the medical student from Melbourne and Mick the creative artist from Melbourne. It was nice to sit down at the end of the day and talk about the day past and things in general. It was something special.

As we all know, when humans get together and start talking, they can't help but gossip. And so various trail gossip tales gained lives

of their own. For example the nude hiker who was travelling with a journalist and the lady hiking with a porter (or slave). One of my favourites (apart from the nude hiker) was the reported mouse and cow plague at Jay Creek. A mother and daughter party told us that Jay Creek, our next stop, was overrun with mice and cows. We decided to sleep on the shelter platform at Jay Creek, probably to limit the risk of being trampled by the impending cattle stampede. Sue insisted on me pitching the tent on the platform to stop the mice from nibbling her appendages. As a further level of security Sue positioned my sleeping mat beside the tent so that the pestilence would start on me first. It worked by some means or other, we only saw one mouse and no cows; perhaps my vile body odour caused them to up and leave.

“A few people along the way had said to Sue and I that we were lucky that our adult children wanted to walk with us. We are. That says it all.”

Another favourite was Ormiston Gorge. Like the incessant beat of native drums the story of the gorge and its fabulous food drove us on. From camp to camp, as we rehydrated our food, we heard rumours of steak sandwiches, vegetable lasagne, unbelievable



Shoshannah, Sheamus and Gary at the last camp, Redbank Gorge
Sue O'Connor

biscuits and slices. And showers! And chairs and tables! We reached this nirvana in the desert and were very satisfied as we gorged ourselves on all these delights, sat in comfy chairs and smiled. Serenity now.

Back to Mount Sonder. A beautiful sunrise greeted us all on a chilly morning. The shadow of Mount Sonder behind us in the west like some ancient pyramid. All on the mountain top felt the warmth of the new day and the joy of the Larapinta Trail.

The Family

I hadn't thought of us unusual when we set out but apparently we were. We became known as the Family walking the trail. Apparently people would mention us, "has the Family been through?" On Mount Sonder a few of the World Expeditions team took pictures of us!

A few people along the way had said to Sue and I that we were lucky that our adult children wanted to walk with us. We are. That says it all.



The Family
Painting by Mick Douglas, 2017, Larapinta



Resources

Our [Larapinta blog](#) has details of the trip.

We used the book [Larapinta Trail](#) by John and Monica Chapman to guide us on the trail. The maps were handy. It is worth noting that the trail is well marked and easy to follow, thanks to Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife and the volunteers who help with track maintenance. More information regarding the book is available on John Chapman's website.

The Northern Territory [Parks and Wildlife website](#) has good information on the trail. A number of walkers found the PWS maps to be very useful. They may be purchased with the information pack through the website.

The [Larapinta Trail website](#) is very useful. For us the general information was great and the information on food drops and transfers helped greatly with the planning.

As noted above, [Alice Wanderers](#) did a great job with our food drops and transfers.

And finally for those who would like to enjoy the wonders of the trail without lugging a heavy backpack, we found Alice and Ed of [World Expeditions](#) to be top people.



Gary lives in Brisbane, Queensland. Gary and Sue have three children, all grown-up, with only one still at home. Their oldest lives in the United Kingdom, so he missed out on the Larapinta trail. The family shares a passion for the outdoors and exercise including bushwalking, running and skiing. The last full family holiday was a wonderful skiing trip to Nozawa Onsen in Japan. Gary is retired and finds there still is not enough time to do all the things they would love to do.

Great Ocean Walk

Sue O'Connor



My husband Gary, our dear friends Mack and Vicki and I embarked on a walk in Victoria along the Southern Ocean, the Great Ocean Walk (GOW), 104 kilometres. With lots of training carrying backpacks full of sand or weights and weekends walking Mount Cootha we were all set to start on Sunday 6 September 2015 from Marengo, 2 kilometres from Apollo Bay.

Twelve Apostles
Mack Dreyer

The ocean stirs the heart, inspires the imagination and brings eternal joy to the soul.

Along the GOW at various stages there are decision points: the following sign was one of the first ones we came across:

“The GOW follows the inland route. Only attempt to walk along the coast during low tide. The beach and rock platforms can be regularly covered by rising tides and waves and consist of deep gutters, poor sightlines, rock scrambling and lack of escape routes!”

After the initial rock scrambling on the coast line and then walking along the beach for quite a few hours we came across another sign advising of another alternative route – inland. This time we chose the inland route.

After following the inland route for some time we finally got into Blanket Bay mid-afternoon after a long walking day; we had combined two days walks into one, 22 kilometres.

Fortunately for us the weather was fine and we got to set up and bask in the afternoon sunlight. Only the four of us were camped at Blanket Bay overlooking the ocean. Magic, peaceful and a great start to our adventure.

“It was blowing an absolute gale and there were showers along the way.”

Day Two – Day Four

Cape Otway – Aire River – Johanna Beach

We were lucky to get our tents down in dry weather though it wasn't long before showers and wind set in. It showered as we walked along boardwalks and crossed boot hygiene cleaning stations, then climbed to Point Lewis Lookout. After leaving the lookout we had to cross the Parker River estuary keeping clear of waves as the tide was rising. There is no inland track for about 100 metres.

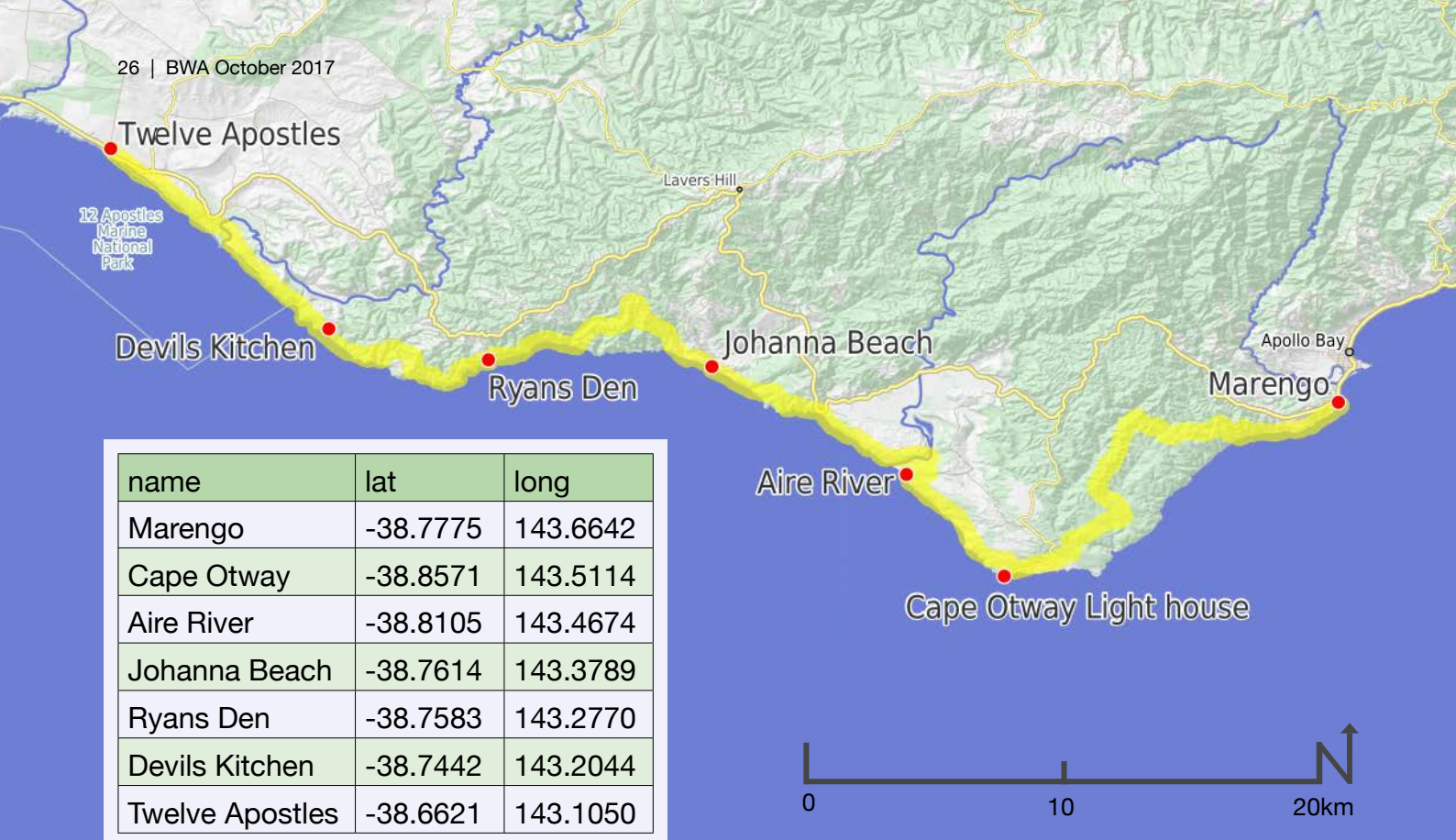
After this section we headed up and up and up along the old tramway route and then along the beautiful cliff tops, gazing out to the magnificent ocean before finally reaching Cape Otway Light station. It was blowing an absolute gale and there were showers along the way.

Cape Otway is the oldest working lighthouse in Australia. We did the lighthouse tour which was fantastic, just the four of us. We walked around the outside with the anemometer reading over 80 km/h. The Lighthouse Keeper was certainly a character and explained all the workings. I definitely recommend the tour.

We then went into the cafe and warmed up with a hot chocolate and scones. I recommend lunch here, avoiding carrying



Blanket Bay campsite
Sue O'Connor

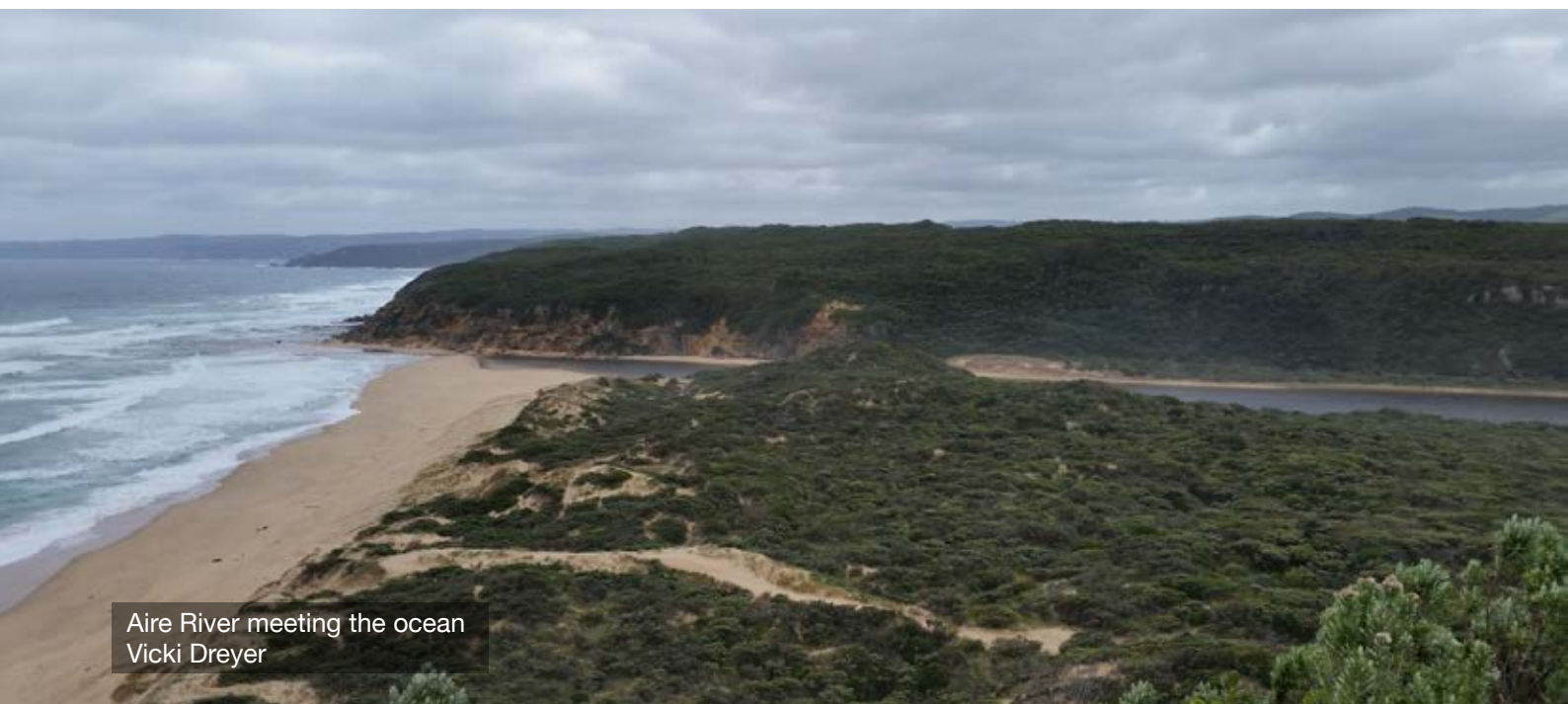


this meal - every bit of weight counts! The smell of the burgers and soup looked and smelled better than our wraps and peanut paste. Like the lighthouse tour, it was just the four of us walking to the Cape Otway camping ground, where we spent the night.

Day three was a beautiful fine day and saw us heading from Cape Otway to Aire River. We followed the inland track along the cliff tops, with spectacular views out to the Southern Ocean. When walking along the cliff tops I couldn't take my eyes away from the spectacular scenery. The beauty of the ocean gave my mind a cleansing and it felt like I didn't have a worry in the world.

It was really beautiful looking out to where the Aire River came in and met the Southern Ocean – a river meeting up with wild seas – stunning. The Aire River camp ground is not much further, you cross a bridge across the Aire River and walk through an open area – up another hill and you come to the actual camping grounds. Due to vehicular access this camping ground was quite busy. Down on the water's edge there were quite a few koalas, such beautiful unique animals. Watching them eat their way through leaf after leaf never seeming to be filled up was

“... I couldn't take my eyes away from the spectacular scenery.”



Aire River meeting the ocean
Vicki Dreyer



Moss covered rocks at Johanna Beach
Sue O'Connor

a great way to spend the afternoon. They look so cuddly and cute, and it was great to get up so close to them in their natural surrounds.

We had another young couple Natalie and Ben join us, which was good for Vicki and I as now there were four of us that could play cards together. I finally got to put up my Ticket to the Moon hammock so I could lie back and read in the tranquil bush setting. The hammock was an extra kilogram and definitely worth carrying!

“Talk about first-class camp sites ...”

The next morning we left Aire River and followed the track along the cliffs with spectacular views of the ocean. We walked through eucalypt woodland and grass trees.

We stopped along the way for a snack of chocolate whilst gazing out at the most amazing view of the wild Southern Ocean.

We then descended to Johanna Beach for a two kilometre walk along the sand – hard work and with the tide coming in we again



Well earned rest, campground above Johanna Beach
Vicki Dreyer

had to dodge the waves! Along the beach we came across the most vibrant green moss-covered rocks. We had a rest here before the hard slog up the sand dunes to get back onto the bush track to head to Johanna Beach camping ground.

We arrived at Johanna Beach camping ground which is beautiful. Talk about first-class camp sites either on the edge with views out to the ocean or hidden away in the bush.

Day 5 Johanna Beach to Ryans Den

We left the beautiful Johanna Beach camping ground to head to Ryans Den. We passed through beautiful farmland with kangaroos galore who were blissfully unaware of us walking up and up and up. Even though we were heading inland, the vibrant green of the farmland was beautiful. Parts of the walk were along the Old Coach Road, still beautiful walking through farmland. We had to climb over a gate to get access to Milanesia Beach after which we started our descent to Milanesia Beach, having to cross



Johanna Beach
Vicki Dreyer



Track to Milanesia Beach
Vicki Dreyer

two creeks (no bridges) and also negotiate the incoming waves with the water flowing from the creek, which led to many laughs watching someone (Mack) trying desperately not to get his boots wet. Mack did get across but failed in keeping his boots dry!

We came across an old beach shack (prime location) and had a snack, rest, and just basically chilled out in the beauty of our surrounds. Stayed for quite a while, it was absolutely beautiful.

After chilling for a while we started back walking along the beach and then had a massive ascent up and up and up some more. There were beautiful views along the way, so we stopped, and also to catch our breath. We finally reached Ryans Den,

another fantastic walk in camping ground. Natalie and Ben were also camped here so Vicki and I ended up playing cards with them after dinner. Another beautiful day travelling along the GOW.

Day 6

Ryans Den to Devils Kitchen

The walk today from Ryans Den to Devils Kitchen was a really hard slog with lots of stairs. We walked along cliff top tracks crossing a number of wet forested gullies via wooden bridges.

We finally got to the Devils Kitchen walk in camping ground, and bypassed Wreck Beach; I didn't think we could face the 366

steps up to the camping ground. The hard slog though was certainly worth it as the camping ground was stunning, with absolutely gorgeous views from the top. We

all just sat up there watching the sun set, sipping on a flask of rum and lost in our own thoughts and soaking up the beauty of our surrounds.

Along the way we were fortunate not only to stay in camping grounds with top views but also meet fellow adventurers. One young couple from the US Natalie and Ben joined us on a few nights. They had many stories, with lots of laughs and card games to follow.

“ They had many stories, with lots of laughs and card games to follow.



Friends, we made it - Mack, Vicki, Sue and Gary Mack Dreyer



Castle Cove
Mack Dreyer

They left us a lovely note to keep and add to our memories of the GOW.

Day 7

Devils Kitchen to the Twelve Apostles

The final day and destination was the Twelve Apostles. We started early as we were keen to get to the end, and we had a shuttle meeting us at a specific time so didn't want to miss our ride back to Apollo Bay!

The walk meandered high above the beach with immense coastal views. We even saw a whale way out to sea. The rock cliff tops offered views right along the coast. We descended to a sandy track and estuary and then followed a board walk, stopping with views to Princetown and the recreation reserve.

After leaving the board walk we went back up the cliffs for the final traverse across the top, heading to the Twelve Apostles. The views were spectacular and the weather was perfect. The lighter packs also helped us to keep a steady pace to reach our final destination.

It was great to get to the end of the walk and see The Twelve Apostles even though there are now only eight. I know the four of us were pretty happy in reaching the end carrying all our own gear. Vicki and I though did feel a bit flat, even though we had only been walking for six days, it felt like that we had been away from crowds and tourists for a lot longer. Back to reality pretty quickly though with a purchase of an ice cream from the shop!

This walk was definitely worth it – great facilities, spectacular views, both of the rugged coast line and also the lush farmland and national park. Unfortunately and

tragically since completing our walk parts of the Great Otway National Park has been destroyed by fires. Hopefully nature will recover in time and the beauty of this area will be enjoyed by many more trekkers over the years. Of course what made it even more special was sharing this trek with our best mates Mack and Vicki.

Resources

The [Great Ocean Walk Website](#) had plenty of information on suggested itineraries.

We booked our campsites directly with the [Victorian Government](#)

We dropped into [Rays Waurn Ponds Store](#) on the drive from the airport to Apollo Bay to pick up our last minute supplies and gas canisters. The Waurn Pond store is on the Princes Highway which is on the way to Apollo Bay.

We booked the shuttle to pick us up at a pre-arranged time at the end of our walk through [Great Ocean Walk \(walkers transfers\)](#).



Sue lives in Brisbane with her husband Gary and son Sheamus who are also keen bushwalkers. Their eldest son Riley lives in Edinburgh with his Irish partner Mary-Ann. Sue works full time, keeps active with crossfit, and cycling to and from work. Sue loves being outdoors, and exploring new destinations. Sue says “the fact that I can carry everything I need on my back and get to places where cars can't go gives me a sense of accomplishment. To walk, set up camp, sleep and then do it all again the next day surrounded by beauty and with family and/or friends is my idea of a perfect holiday”.

Photo Gallery



Morning light on the Razorback from Mt Bryan, South Australia
Brian Eglinton

Competition: Australia October 2010

BWA Photo Competition



Landscapes October 2016

WINNER



Sunset over Lake Pedder
Cameron Semple



Morning light
on Mt Rugby
North-north-west



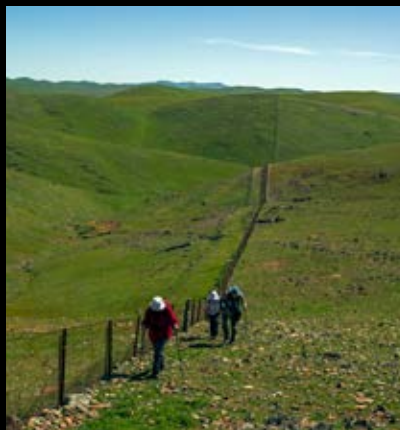
An ocean of sandstone
John Walker



Dunse Falls
Ed Arnfield



Dawn from Speculation
Stephen Lake



Up and down
the Heysen fenceline
Brian Eglinton



Creekton Rivulet
Cascade
Caedence Kuepper



Non-landscapes October 2016

WINNER



Exploring
Brian Eglinton

There are a lot of koalas in the Adelaide Hills, and some places are very reliable for sightings. We have seen koalas on the ground, running up the smooth trunks of the gums and even fighting in deadly duels high up in the tops. It is particularly nice to see young koalas with their mothers. Morialta is one of the top spots for koalas, and it was here we found a mum and her young one. She was sleeping (as is common!) while the baby was exploring along the branch.



Morning dew
North-north-west



Native Clematis spp.
John Walker



Channel billed cuckoo
landsmith



Spring snow adventure
Cameron Semple



Pineapple Falls
Mt Wellington
Caedence Kuepper



Tasmania October 2016

WINNER



Lake Oenone
Doogs

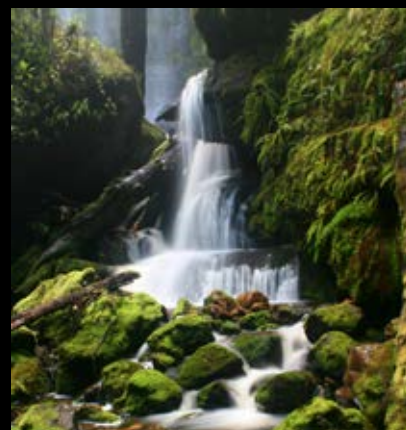
I was on a solo trip to Mount Olympus via an overnight stop at Lake Oenone. As it was spring I knew the snow would melt so I started early to reach the summit via the medial moraine between the glacial cirques of Lake Oenone and Lake Helen. Pausing to look back from where I had ascended I was in awe of the landscape which lay before me. Suffice to say the of the day was fantastic too!



When you walk
through the storm
North-north-west



The Needles
Cameron Semple



Creekton Falls
Caedence Kuepper



Other States October 2016

WINNER



The Arch,
Grampians NP
Ben Trainor

This rock formation is called "The Arch" and is located in the Victoria Range near the Fortress, and involves a fair amount of off-track walking. Access is from the far side, under the arch, then up the ramp going to the right. It was windy on top. I scrambled half way up a nearby local high point to take this photo. This was my second trip to this spectacular place, and I would happily return.



Among the granite
landsmith



Skeleton
Brian Eglinton



Descending the gorge
John Walker



Landscapes

November 2016

WINNER



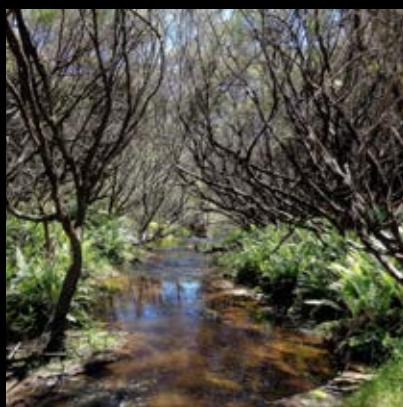
Machinery Spur
Brian Eglinton

Inspired by photos of the Victorian Alps, I had a great desire to check out Mt Loch and Machinery Spur. At Loch car park the car was rocking due to the high winds. After struggling to open the door I was greeted by high-velocity snow and wondered if this was a good idea. But hey - I was a long way from home and the weather was not going to be like this over the next three days ...

So I headed off and it was not long before the track dropped below the wind and it was much more pleasant. Remnant patches of snow were scattered around and I met a school group from Dibbins Hut who had been blasted by the storm and were glad to be going home. The weather improved, and when I reached Mount Loch there were blue patches in the sky. Machinery Spur, Mount Feathertop and the Fainters lay before me.



Valley of love
Snowzone



A stroll in the creek
John Walker



Boulder Beach Reserve
landsmith



Non-landscapes

November 2016

WINNER



Spotted Pardalote
Brian Eglinton

While exploring the highs and lows of the Victorian Alps I was keeping an eye out for some of the great variety of birds up there.

On the descent off the bare slopes of Feathertop, in the small section of bush at the track junction near the distinctive "tree", this Spotted Pardalote was hopping around in close proximity.

I was grateful that it was not in too much of a hurry to prevent me getting a few photos.



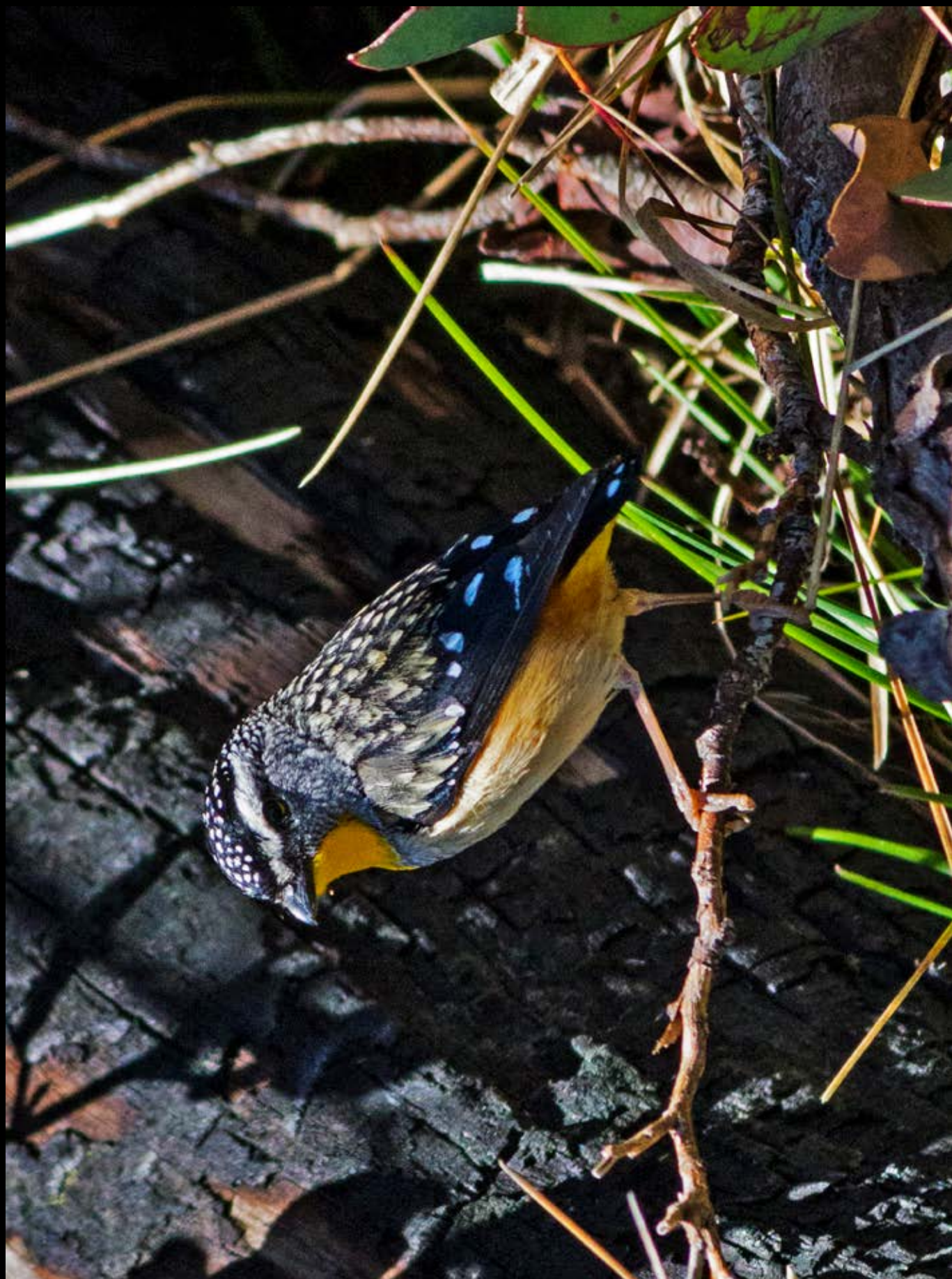
Soldier on
Snowzone



Swamp paperbark
John Walker



Orange threadtail
damselfly
landsmith



Tasmania

November 2016

WINNER



Morning sun
Geevesy

Morning sun was taken on a camping trip to Bruny Island in spring last year. After a night at the campsite at Lighthouse Jetty Beach, we explored the beach following morning in glorious Tassie sunshine.



Cradle Mountain dawn
Son of a Beach



Mt Olympus morning
JimBob



Willies Falls
Caedence Kuepper



Other States

November 2016

WINNER



Light rays
Snowzone

The sun rising and shining its rays through snow gums at Macalister Springs was a beautiful sight prior to a wonderful day spent on the Crosscut Saw.



Touching Feathertop
Brian Eglinton




Boulder Beach Reserve
landsmith



Perspective from
a small waterfall
John Walker



Bushwalking Adventure Activity Standard



Outdoors Victoria is the peak body for all outdoor activities in Victoria. Outdoors Victoria is lobbying for the adoption of a National Adventure Activity Standard for outdoor activities, including bushwalking. Not everyone agrees.

Four views about the AAS are on the following pages:

Peter Campbell is the Chairman of [Bushwalking Victoria](#).

Roger Caffin edits [The Bushwalker](#) magazine.

Stephen Lake edits Bushwalk Australia, BWA.

Matt McClelland has written extensively about bushwalking and is the BWA editor.

Outdoors Victoria declined to provide a written response.

Photo by Pavel Klimenko

Adventure Activity Standard
A four part series

Bushwalking Victoria's View

Peter Campbell

Bushwalking is a popular activity in Victoria dating back to the late nineteenth century when clubs such as the Bright Alpine Club and The Wallaby Club were formed by people interested in visiting and exploring Victoria's alpine and bush regions. The Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs, now known as Bushwalking Victoria, formed in 1934 as a peak body for bushwalkers in Victoria.

Bushwalking clubs provide safe trips from beginner levels to multi-day hikes and provide opportunities for people to gain experience with and enjoy the significant benefits of bushwalking.

The Bushwalking and Mountaineering Training Advisory Board developed and provided training and a manual for bushwalking leaders for over 35 years. Bushwalking Victoria has operated a volunteer search and rescue section since 1949 and provides leadership training, advice and materials that contribute to bushwalker safety.

A *Bushwalking Adventure Activity Standard* was developed and published by the now defunct Outdoors Recreation Council in 2003. Commercial providers have been required by the Victorian Government to comply with this document to get a tour operator licence and land access permits. Volunteer bushwalkers did not support compliance with this standard applying to their bushwalking activities and the state government has not required compliance with them to date.

In 2015, Outdoors Victoria announced they would develop new national standards (AAAS) for over twenty adventure activities including bushwalking, mountain biking, rock climbing and recreational angling. Outdoors Victoria and the AAAS Steering Committee continue to insist that their "standards" must apply to both commercial and community volunteer groups. However, the AAAS do not recognise there is difference in the standard of care between leaders of volunteer groups (e.g., a bushwalking club or community group) and commercial operators providing a professional service with paying clients (e.g., guided bushwalks).

If the AAAS do come to apply to volunteer trip leaders, legal liabilities would increase, and increased insurance costs are very likely. The increased compliance burden on voluntary community organisations could lead to many clubs ceasing to operate. It would be extremely difficult for any volunteer bushwalking leaders to demonstrate meeting National Outdoor Recreation qualifications specified in the AAAS. Competency-based standards are simply not suitable for volunteer bushwalking leaders. In addition, volunteer bushwalking leaders may be refused access permits if it is deemed they don't comply with the AAAS.

If AAAS impacts lead to reduced volunteer participation in bushwalking, this would directly contradict Parks Victoria's *Healthy Parks Healthy People and the Biodiversity Strategy 2037* to get more Victorians active and outdoors.

The solution to this problem is very simple - the AAAS must state they do not apply to volunteers.

Volunteer trip leaders will continue to ensure their trips are safe by enhancing and using a variety of resources on topics including trip planning, trip management, leadership, bushcraft, navigation and handling emergencies. Bushwalking Victoria is also committed to further develop and promulgate the considerable body of knowledge that informs and guides safe and enjoyable bushwalking.

Please consider writing to your local state Member of Parliament about the impacts the AAAS may have on your bushwalking and ask them to ensure that they do not apply to volunteers. You can also sign the Bushwalking Victoria [petition](#).



“It would be extremely difficult for any volunteer bushwalking leaders to demonstrate meeting National Outdoor Recreation qualifications specified in the AAAS.”

This article appeared in the September 2017 edition of Park Watch, the magazine of the [Victorian National Parks Association](#). Peter is the President of [Bushwalking Victoria](#).

AAS: Utterly Inappropriate For Bushwalking Clubs

Roger Caffin



In considering the proposed Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAS), we should start with their targets and how the AAS will affect them. There are four major groups.

Photo by Daxiao Productions

Adventure Activity Standard
Part 2 of 4

1. Commercial operators

These offer Adventure trips on a commercial basis, for a fee. They may be strictly compared to Guides organisations as found in New Zealand and Europe.

How the AAS applies to commercial operators

The idea of having some form of regulations to cover commercial operators is, at least in principle, a good one. In most countries the “laws” simply require that anyone wishing to offer “service for a fee” must belong to a recognised Guide Association of some sort. It is then up to the Guide Association to set the qualifications, and these can be very strict. The tests for guide-aspirants are legendary.

This approach, of leaving technical regulations and qualifications to the real experts (ie experienced guides who have the respect of their fellows) rather than attempting a paper bureaucracy, has an overwhelming amount to recommend it. It may well be an appropriate path for Australia to follow, and I have no reservations about it.

2. School parties run by a teacher or a parent

The term “school parties” should be taken to include church groups and the like. While these are not commercial, the leaders are nonetheless taking responsibility for minors who are usually completely unskilled.

How the AAS applies to school parties

One is loathe to place restrictions on the idea of getting kids out in the bush, but the sad fact is that a major fraction of SAR activities have always been associated with school parties. The “leaders” (teachers etc) may be enthusiastic, but they are generally unskilled in the bush and are not equipped with the knowledge to handle problems or emergencies.

“... the leaders are nonetheless taking responsibility for minors who are usually completely unskilled.

This is a difficult area. I can only suggest that such parties should be led by a qualified guide, while the teachers' role is to ride herd on the kids. I realise that this could add significant cost to these activities, but it might save on SAR costs.



3. Bushwalking clubs

These are groups of individuals who have joined together out of mutual interest. Membership fees are low and cover no more than club insurance, administration, and possibly the costs of room hire for meetings. There is no concept of profit in these organisations.

How the AAS applies to bushwalking clubs

Bushwalking clubs have been in existence for nearly 100 years in Australia, and by now they have well-developed sense how to run a club. Many of them have well-developed “rules” for who can go on what trips, based on personal assessments by older and more experienced members. In addition, such Clubs have been complying with the requirements of their insurers for a long time.

“For most clubs “adventures” is the last thing they want.

By and large, it is the bushwalking clubs which provide the members of any Bushwalker Wilderness SAR. To be sure, Police, ambos and SES (with their helicopters!) may today handle the first response, but very rarely are they searching for a club member. Yes, a club trip may call for a medivac if a club member is injured, but that is the smart thing to do.

It should be noted that most bushwalking clubs reject the concept of adventure activities. Club bushwalking trips are not treated as “adventures” with the attendant excitement. For most clubs “adventures” is the last thing they want. For most clubs safety is already the highest priority.

4. Casual unaffiliated bushwalkers

These do not belong to an organised or official club. They can be quite a large fraction of walkers these days.

How the AAS applies to casual walkers

This group is large, and they present an insuperable problem for any AAS. Such groups may or may not have a “leader” on any trip. Most of these walkers (aka the general public) will not even know there is an AAS, and won't pay the slightest heed to anything like that anyhow. Why should they? And no, the State will never succeed in convincing the public otherwise.

But there is a real problem here. A law which gets completely ignored is a bad law, and in general society tries to avoid creating bad laws. Having laws which everyone ignores tends to teach people to ignore all laws.

Summary

The bottom line here is that the AAS concept is utterly inappropriate for bushwalking clubs and casual members of the public.

AAS Details

It is a bit hard to know where to start in detailing all the faults in the AAS. So many of the technical requirements seem to have arisen from a committee meeting run by bureaucrats who have never been bushwalking - and have never been in a bushwalking club. I entirely agree with many of the points in the article by Stephen Lake on page 52 about the stupidities.

It is in these details that we can very clearly see huge differences between commercial trips, where the customer signs up for a pre-defined “experience”, and a club trip, where the members want to go for a possibly-exploratory walk “to see what is there”. It is recognised that club members on club trips are totally responsible for their own safety at all times. The club does not accept any liability: it can't, as all members are volunteers.

It may be relevant to note that some NSW bushwalking clubs have simply dropped the idea of having organised publically-scheduled walks with a designated “Trip Leader”. Instead they now have “unscheduled” walks with someone coordinating the transport. That was partly to deal with a similar stupid NPWS requirement many years ago that organised trips in national parks must get approval weeks in advance. Mind you, I suspect that quite a few clubs have simply ignored all the hassles and gone their own way. See under “bad laws” for that.

It may also be noted that there was a push in 2009 to introduce the AAS, but thankfully it was defeated. It was discussed in [The Bushwalker, Vol 34, Issue 2, Autumn 2009](#). It seems that some (commercial?) people won't give up easily. I have yet to understand why.





Let's Find a Way to Make This Work

Stephen Lake



My initial opposition changed during the writing of this article. One person whose views I greatly respect set me straight on a number of points. While the matter could have been managed better, and while the [Adventure Activity Standard](#) (AAS) wording could and should be improved, the main thrust is good. That said, there needs to be genuine engagement between [Outdoors Victoria](#) (OV) and those opposing the AAS or wishing to give input.

Photo by Xalanx

Adventure Activity Standard
Part 3 of 4

Bushwalking Victoria (BWV) is concerned about these standards, which President Peter Campbell says “have been written by and for commercial operators.” He says that “Bushwalking Victoria does not believe it reasonable or appropriate for these commercial-level standards to apply to volunteer community-based bushwalkers.”

There's a thread on this on the website [AAAS impacts on volunteer community-based bushwalkers](#). A number of people have spoken for and against the proposal. Some AAS details require comments.

The Adventure Activity Standard

The AAS is more than just covering one's back and about legal responsibility. The primary function of standards is to prevent mishaps. To some extent, the AAS is the “brand” of bushwalking and provides a framework for quality good experiences.

Point 2 of the AAS says “AAS are written specifically for formal groups (commercial and non-commercial organisations) undertaking organised activities and are

intended to provide guidance towards satisfying the legal obligations inherent in delivering such activities.” This seems to me to be fair enough, and most people on the above thread agree to some extent. One immediate problem is that bushwalking clubs are formal groups and people are paying to attend, be it via club membership or a fee for each walk. Most bushwalking club leaders do not get paid, so a question arises – is this a commercial relationship? Does this apply to meet-up groups?

“... a question arises – is this a commercial relationship?”

Planning

Point 3 details trip planning. There's nothing contentious here, just the sort of things that most leaders do. Around here I started to become uneasy. While the information is similar to that which has been covered by bushwalking leader training for some time, and is or should be adopted by bushwalking clubs, in my view the format is not one that matches what bushwalking is about.



Photo by Inu

For example, the AAS *Planning* section has a heading Activity plans, which has “objectives of the activity (desired outcomes) and participant expectations”. I've been leading bushwalking club walks for decades and have never done this. Instead there's a plan, such as walking the Overland Track or climbing Jagungal. The trip details are made known, and party members come on the basis of the broad information. Commercial groups would have a similar approach in that most applicants would know something about the walk. That said, except for the easiest walks in the most friendly of weather, commercial group leaders have a duty of care to assess applicant's suitability, gear, fitness and the like more rigorously than is done by bushwalking clubs. There is also a duty of care to apprise applicants about the walk.

Not everything in the AAS has to be applicable to everyone, and this point should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Leaders

Just below this the AAS says that “At least one leader should be suitably familiar with the area being visited”. This is too general in nature. The way that trips are conducted depends on the trip type. For example, an easy day walk that will have beginners should have a lot of preparation, with the leader very sure of the trip with what many

call a survey, before the actual walk. The duty of care is higher on such trips. Alternatively, extended walks in unfamiliar terrain should have a warning that this is like an exploratory trip, so be ready for anything, with party members carefully selected.

“Not everything in the AAS has to be applicable to everyone ...

There can only be one leader, with deputy leaders, or people who can lead should the need arise. If the leader is smart, he or she will either know or research the walk area. The leader will take note of those of similar skills on the trip, and seek their advice. I've frequently gone to places I have not visited before, including days off-tracks, no GPS, no track notes (there was no track), just a map and a compass, and on a few trips, no map in places (there was no map). How can one be familiar with long-distance walks, such as Larapinta, the AAWT, or the Bibbulmun? When I walked the Alpine Walking Track (AWT) there were track notes for just a very small portion and a lot of unknowns. Party members had walked about five days out of 30 before the trip. I made a lot of mistakes, but we survived and had an adventure. The AAS seems to say that before walking the AWT I should have walked it or read track notes. Or maybe the AAS means that when leading dependent people the leader should have walked the trip before. The level of dependency is where it becomes relevant.



As leader I make sure that people who want to go on the walk have adequate experience, stamina and gear. This is assessed by how they conduct themselves on easier trips. A few weeks ago a friend had an overnight trip compromised by a person that was long on assurances and short on requisite skills. It happens. I said “So the rule is - disregard any stories, any BS. For harder and/or longer trips the newish person must be known to at least one other person from similar walks, if shorter and/or easier.” That is, start with easier shorter walks and progress as the person becomes known. While this is subjective it works.

Record keeping

Point 3.3 *Competencies* says “It is recommended that leaders keep a diary record (sic) of activities they participate in and/or are responsible for as relevant experience is also extremely important.” This is fair enough for formal qualifications, but seems to me to be unnecessary for bushwalking clubs. Some clubs have leader training, and I have instructed on these. An easier way - best used in conjunction with leader training - is to have the potential leader take over a group with the official leader close by in case things go amiss.

Note that only people with adequate experience are or should be allowed to begin leading via baby steps such as this. The potential leader does short temporary leadership stints on trips until he or she is deemed good enough to lead a trip, which

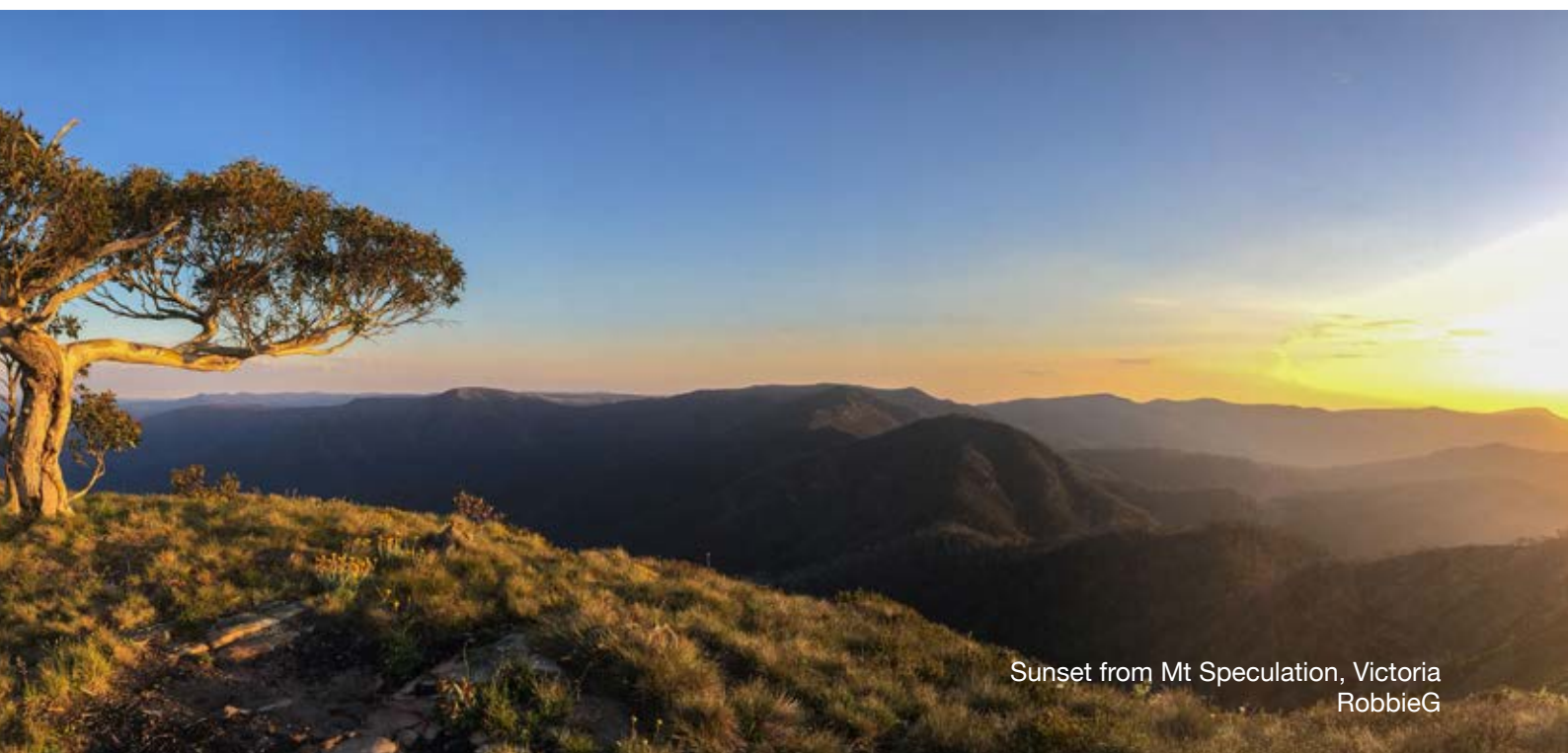
happens with an experienced person as backup. Learning to lead this way is like an apprenticeship.

It has been put to me that keeping good records is the best way to cover your back. However, most people take photographs and will have other records to show that they have been on the requisite number and type of trips. Clubs know their leaders, and if requested, should be able to evidence the experience of leaders. I was advised that “Demonstrated ability and a written record carries considerable weight with insurance companies and in court.” I agree with this, and keep contemporaneous records that have been submitted in court and peak bodies with a lower remit. Certainly keep training records, but beyond that there seems to be minimal need.

Training

It seems that the AAS wants to formalise standards so a person can be recognised and the organisation is protected. If a bushwalking club can provide training to the standard then a person could take that training to another club and have it recognised. The problem is that the standard may be very hard for some people to achieve. If so, then potential leaders will walk away from such training, leading trips without the backup they need.

“... only people with adequate experience are or should be allowed to begin leading via baby steps such as this.”



Sunset from Mt Speculation, Victoria
RobbieG

Attempting to quantify and teach all aspects of bushwalking in the manner of the AAS may not succeed. Some background. In the 1960s there were a number of bushwalking incidents in Victoria and elsewhere. In Victoria, this led to the formation of the Bushwalking and Mountaineering Leadership Course (BMLC), starting in May 1969, based on a similar UK course. Secondary school teachers were among those participating, and it was soon a requirement that teachers have a BMLC certificate before leading school groups.

It was too late for some. In November 1971 a school party was caught by bad weather in the Cairngorms, Scotland. Five children and a leader died of exposure. In 1971, secondary student Glen Matters died at Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park, a victim of poor leadership and bad weather. Too many others have died or suffered on bushwalks due to poor leadership. It's strange that BMLC funding was stopped by the Victorian Government.

Adoption of a standard criteria for leadership is useful.

How it is done is contentious. If bushwalking clubs could be made responsible for training their members, with elements of the AAS selected to suit, it may work. Creating a standard, competency-based, course description would make it easier. Recognition of bushwalking clubs as trainers could then be possible.

“... it was soon a requirement that teachers have a BMLC certificate before leading school groups.”

A training accreditation course may be needed, train the trainers. These trainers and the people they teach would keep detailed records of who has done what when. Such records are a great protection for a bushwalking club.

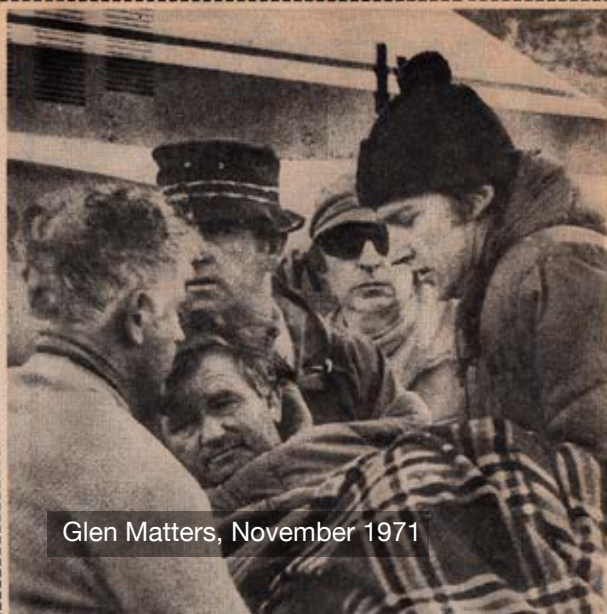
While the BMLC and AAS material is similar, the BMLC was not quantified to the extent of the AAS. The BMLC relied on a few aspects to teach potential leaders:

- A base level of skill and experience before people could be on the course;
- Formal training trips over one or two years;
- A mentor for all candidates; and
- Several assessment trips and exams.

Similar material was covered by BMLC differently to AAS. Instead of separating the parts of leadership into very small bits, like *AAS Interpret weather conditions in the field, unit code SROOPS004B*, BMLC looked at candidates more holistically. This included what trips the candidate had done, and how the candidate led assessment walks.

Also, if the candidate made a mistake, the assessor might ask if the candidate has learned from this, and will do better in the future. All my candidates made minor mistakes, all were honest about these, all learned, and I marked them all accordingly – acceptable. If a candidate is fully compliant with major items and 95% compliant with the rest, “acceptable” is apt. It seems that the AAS is more rigid. Note that there were a number of people assessing candidates over a period of time.

* Page 14—The Sun, Friday, Nov. 26, 1971



Glen Matters, November 1971

**'THE BLIZZARD WAS CUTTING INTO OUR FACES
AND THINGS WERE GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE'**

BOY TELLS OF A TRAGEDY AT CRADLE

By BILL HITCHINGS

"IT WAS real bad out there on that mountain. Very bad.

"We knew it was going to be rough almost from the time we changed into our warmer clothes and started the hike.

"But we never thought it would be as bad as it was." Gary Minter, 15, of Cum-ling St., Footscray, was

"There we met the ranger we had seen earlier at Kilvert and Scott and he was staying there with a man and a woman.

"We decided to step it out. "We couldn't see the rest of the party, but we knew Mr. Vernon was



* GARY MINTER ... "We were freezing cold."

and Glen and heaved Mr. Vernon the half a mile or so back to the hut. "Victim to chas-

So I'm not at all keen on the way that AAS makes each aspect of leadership a separate item. Certainly mention the items – BMLC did, and I had them on my marking sheet – but not for training purposes in small segments. The AAS units take 339-588 hours, day walk leader to advanced leader, a lot longer than BMLC. Might it be that service providers seek to have courses that line their pockets? This has happened in other education areas. I could not see any provision for recognition of prior learning or experience.

The AAS and diverse groups

Point 3.3.2 *Bushwalking leader on tracked or easy untracked (easy)* (sic) has a list of skills needed, including “Apply sport and recreation law” and “Follow defined Occupational Health and Safety policy and procedures”. This may not be applicable for bushwalking clubs but applies to commercial groups. This illustrates a significant aspect – the AAS is too broad to adequately cover commercial and non-commercial activities. National OHS laws do not see a difference between volunteers and paid staff, so volunteers and someone doing a similar job as an employee need to have the same safety training and equipment.

Sport? Bushwalking is not a sport. What recreation law? As far as I'm aware, the main laws that bear on outdoor recreations involve negligence, duty of care, contracts and

liability. I cannot find anything on the legal database [Austlii](#) about sport and recreation law in the context of the AAS. I was directed to [NSW sport laws](#).

The *Wrongs Act 1958* (Vic) has specific protection for volunteers in community organisations and community work. “A volunteer is not liable in any civil proceeding for anything done, or not done, in good faith by him or her in providing a service in relation to community work organised by a community organisation.” The *Wrongs Act* applies to clubs and what may be termed “private” trips. Even if the leader receives money for costs incurred, this clearly falls under the class of volunteer. Club fees do not constitute a contract for services because you can pay the fee and receive nothing. The *Wrongs Act* protects the leaders in Victoria, not the club or the the participant. The *Wrongs Act* does not protect leaders from negligence.

Emergency

Point 3.6 says “An emergency strategy must be devised from the risk assessment to manage foreseeable incidents and minimise their escalation. This strategy should be documented.” This is very poor writing and evidences a total lack of understanding of a bushwalking emergency. It's not possible to document a strategy in advance, as all situations are different. In any case, if the emergency is foreseeable, then it can

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is intended as an accurate, comprehensive, up to date guide for running trips. Running trips successfully is a combination of information, experience, knowledge, and to a certain extent, luck. There are too many small aspects of a trip to state them verbally as one could not be sure that everything is covered. Hence this document.
- 1.2 Not all contingencies are covered, and the information should be used with your own experience, the advice of others and commonsense. This document should be updated as necessary and given to Committee and leaders for retention.
- 1.3 Points 2-7 are for weekend and day trips, but some sections are for weekend trips only. Point 8 details specific procedure and information regarding day trips, and a little miscellaneous information.

be avoided. For example, the emergency is a flooded campsite, so we will camp elsewhere. It has been suggested to me that the AAS may not explain it well enough. True. Maybe the AAS means “risk assessment to manage possible incidents.” I do not know.

A few years ago I was quite unwell, and staggered up Jagungal. On the top I realised that I needed to rest for a few days, and instantly changed the walk. There was no planning, I just knew. Leaders should have enough experience to be able to make calls like this, quickly. On another trip from a 4am start I left the group and made rapid time solo off the map to get help for an injured party member. A note was left for another person to lead the group, which he did. I broke a few rules and put a few noses out of joint, but help arrived five hours earlier than expected. My risk assessment took 20 minutes of deliberations about the worst case scenario for the party and me paid off. On another trip a party member was injured and I skied off the map, solo, reaching help on dusk. On Search and Rescue, nearly anything goes. How can there be an assessment before the trip for these sorts of things? Leaders should have skills to make these sort of decisions in a variety of situations. The ski rescue was a party of four. One person stayed with the casualty at a hut while the last person, the leader, went back to tell the rest of our group what was happening.

So the party must have enough strength, experience and resources to manage and resolve unforeseen emergencies. All parties that I have led and been in have these attributes. The leadership can also draw on others in the group whom they feel are capable and delegate accordingly. That is good leadership.

Random points

The detail in the AAS staggers me. For clubs a lot is unnecessary. Usually there's known people on walks, with a higher proportion of new starters on day trips than on weekend trips. An adverse incident on a day trip is manageable. Weekend trips have more experienced people who can look after people on their first weekend walks, and new people are discouraged from harder overnight trips until they are known to leaders and club regulars. It's informal and it generally works. On the rare occasions when an adverse situation arises then it can be managed satisfactorily. This may not be the case for all bushwalking clubs at all times. Assuming it will be the same each time leads to complacency which leads to disaster. There might be a pro forma gear list. Pre-trip information includes or should include a map, details of the walk, how hard it is, transport and all the rest. The AAS is a good basis for planning, but it's too formal for my liking.

“How can there be an assessment before the trip for these sorts of things?”



Photo by luckybusiness

I got a laugh from one section, no reflection on the AAS, which says “as a general rule, groups should be of no less than 4.” For bushwalking club trips I agree with this, but I work on a group of no less than one. I laughed louder when I read “Use established campsites. Take care not to create new ones. Otherwise camp on rock, sands, or gravel where impact is smallest.” There is a difference

“I urge all those involved to tone down the words and find a way to make this work.

between how large commercial groups and smaller bushwalking club or private groups are conducted. I wonder how Outdoors Victoria wants tents to be fixed to the rock. Bolt anchors? I've camped on thousands of places that are not established. Very few of these campsites have been rock, sand or gravel, and yet I've left no trace. There's an old bushwalking saying, leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photos. Many of my campsites have probably not been used before, like a bivvy on the summit of King Davids Peak Tasmania. This was on rock. The dawn was unbelievable. Fog.

The top of page 12 says “Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.” This is silly. A tent takes up a fixed amount of room, and cannot be reduced. The somewhat muddled words seem to say that “activity” (whatever is meant by this) should be on rock, sand or gravel. I cannot understand this point.

Just below this the AAS says “Protect water sources by camping at least 100 metres from rivers and billabongs.” Section 84 of the *National Parks Regulations 2013* (Vic) provides that camping must be more than 20 metres from water. This is a good rule, but is impractical in many places. Instead, it's better to rely on the experience

“There's been a lack of meaningful consultation about the AAS.

of the group to minimise riparian impact. Think about it. If the tents are close to the water then the most probable toilet areas are further away from the water. But if the tents are 100 metres from the water, people may go closer to the water for toileting. Advocating camping 100 metres from rivers and billabongs is ill-advised.

The AAS says “if they must be used, use only small amounts of biodegradable soaps and detergents”. All soaps and detergents are suss, should not be used. Oops.

Finally, the AAS has not been edited very well. There's rather a lot of typos and poor forms of words. While most people will not see these or care, a higher standard would have been nice and improved credibility.

Summary

While the AAS has merit, it is badly drafted and seems to be too onerous for bushwalking clubs. There's been a lack of meaningful consultation about the AAS. Adopting the AAS in a very informal and relaxed way for bushwalking clubs to achieve compliance should be a goal. The AAS is not far from BMLC. I urge all those involved to tone down the words and find a way to make this work.

An early draft of this article was sent to Outdoors Victoria for comment. OV said that there were errors in the article but declined to identify them. OV said:

“I suggest it is best that you visit [Australian Adventure Activity Standard](#). There is a FAQ area that will assist you. Additionally I encourage you to access the current drafts of the Australian AAS for Bushwalking, and there is also the Core standard that every activity, whether it be for example abseiling, horse trail riding, kayaking or bushwalking with refer to ... [bushwalking-camping - Your Say Australian AAS](#)”

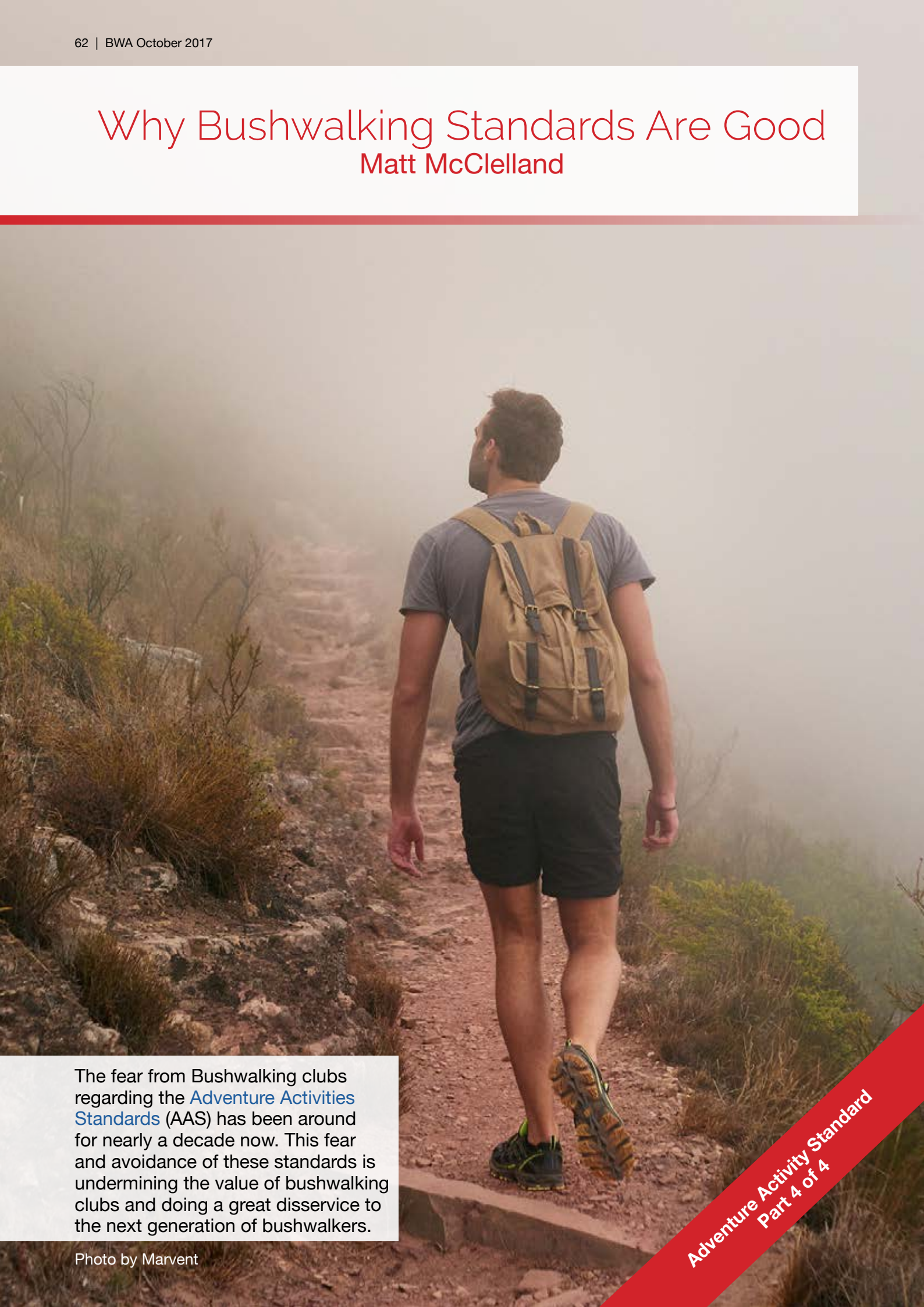
I sent OV the above and there was no reply. I looked at the links but could not find germane information – there's a lot of pages. It's a pity that OV declines to engage with BWA. I am advised that OV did not reply in 2009 either.



Stephen has been bushwalking for over 50 years. He led what seems to be the first AWT walk, and many club and other walks since then. He was very active on rock and XC skiing. He has instructed on bushwalking club trips and was a BMLC assessor. He was on the SAR A list. Stephen sub-edits Bushwalk Australia.

Why Bushwalking Standards Are Good

Matt McClelland

A man with a beard, wearing a grey t-shirt, black shorts, and a tan backpack, is walking away from the camera on a dirt trail. The trail is surrounded by dry, bushy vegetation. The background is hazy and misty, suggesting a high-altitude or early morning setting. The man is wearing black and green trail shoes.

The fear from Bushwalking clubs regarding the [Adventure Activities Standards](#) (AAS) has been around for nearly a decade now. This fear and avoidance of these standards is undermining the value of bushwalking clubs and doing a great disservice to the next generation of bushwalkers.

Photo by Marvent

Adventure Activity Standard
Part 4 of 4

Why bushwalking standards are good

Much of the debate for bushwalking clubs around the AAS seems to have focused on whether or not the standards should explicitly apply to “volunteer” organisations such as bushwalking clubs. Much of the debate I have heard focuses on detailed definitional arguments, rather than if the concept of standards are a good idea or a bad idea. To me, the debate should be how do we make the AAS work well for the the whole outdoor community, including clubs - that is a debate that excites me.

In this article, I want to show that standards are not to be feared, that they are inherently good and should apply to all people and organisations, whether paid or volunteer. The standards should allow for context specific variation. For example, the requirements for leading a bushwalk vary depending on the walk grade, remoteness, skill of participants, climate, equipment, etc.

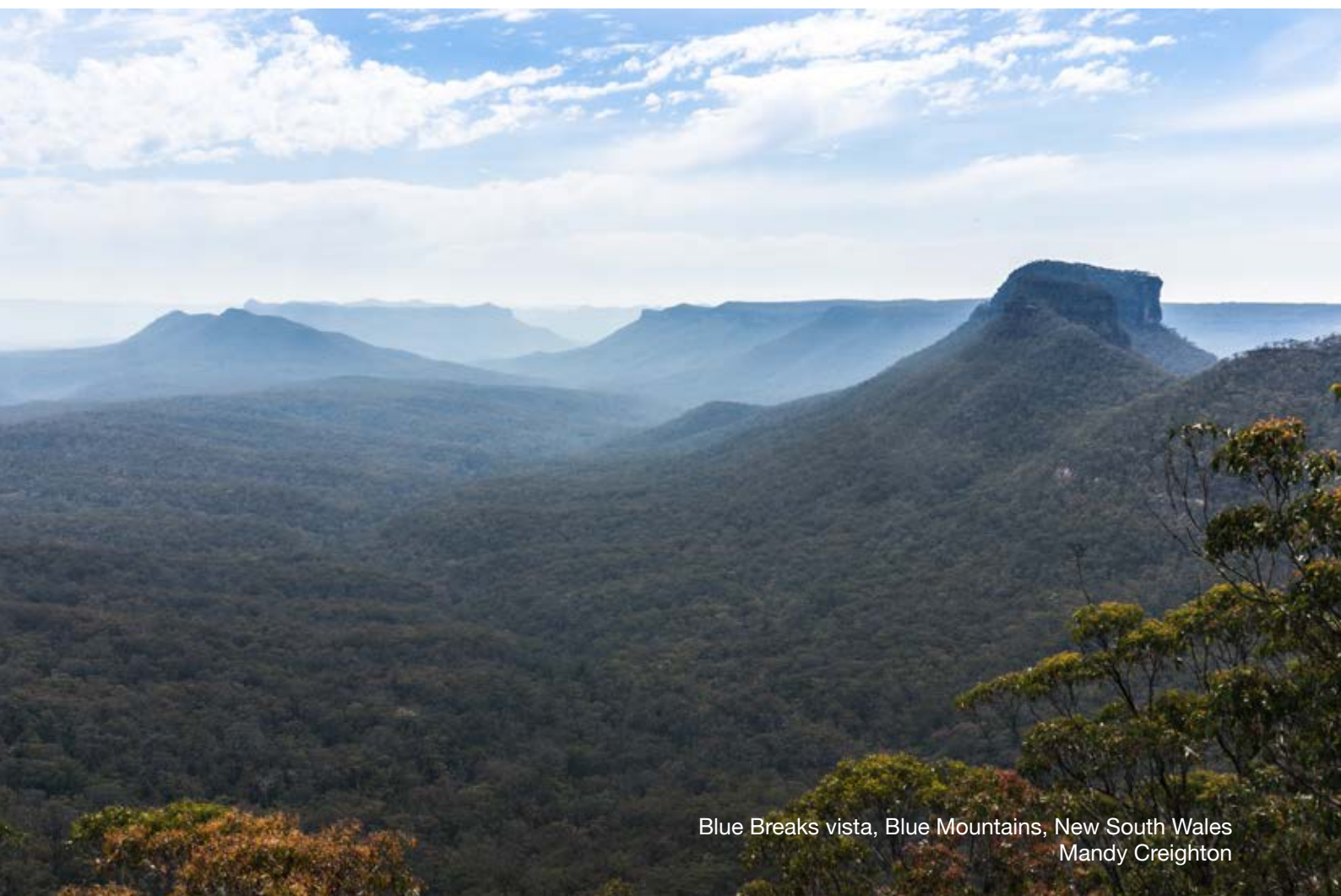
“... the debate should be how do we make the AAS work well for the the whole outdoor community, including clubs ...

Bad standards exist - don't get me started on them - but they are usually bad because of a poor development process (usually from leaving out core groups), leading to a standard that does not reflect the whole community expectations. A few bad standards do not make the idea of standards a bad thing.

It seems that most bushwalking club organisations across Australia have been pushing to be excluded from the AAS, arguing that volunteer leaders should not be subject to such standards.

“If the AAS is developed wholly by commercial operators, ignoring the context of clubs, then we will be much worse off.

By removing the idea of “volunteer leaders” we are removing a very important set of contexts from the standard, narrowing the community input. In time clubs may well be forced to comply to the AAS, perhaps by insurers or land managers. If the AAS is developed wholly by commercial operators, ignoring the context of clubs, then we will be much worse off. We need to be proactive and create an awesome standard that helps all bushwalkers.



Blue Breaks vista, Blue Mountains, New South Wales
Mandy Creighton

What is a standard?

Let's all get on the same page. [Standards Australia](#) says "Standards are documents setting out specifications, procedures and guidelines. They are designed to ensure products, services and systems are safe, reliable and consistent."

Standards are developed through broad consultation and allow for context specific variations.

Consider building construction standards. We live in a country where our houses can handle big storms and do not just collapse randomly. Standards mean we all have common types of power points and light fittings. The type and level of fire resistance varies depending on the local environment and use of the building. Yet every house is unique, built for each owner as they want it.

“ Good standards make life easier and better for providers and users ...

When we walk into a house, we never have to research the builder, job and materials used to know if it is safe to enter. This is why cars, helmets, power plugs, dog food, nearly everything has a stamp on it to say what standards they meet.

Good standards make life easier and better for providers and users of products and services. Poorly created or out of date standards are a real pain in the ass.

Legal mumbo jumbo

I am no lawyer and honestly most legal debates do not interest me. At its heart, the law is meant to be about protecting moral obligations. The law is about we, the people, saying what are the minimum expectations we have of each other when living in a community.

Our community has an idea of “duty of care”, so we tend to think of it in legal terms, but it is a moral obligation at heart. All relationships carry some duty (obligation) of care. That duty of care may simply be not to stab our friends or it may be to provide life-saving intervention. The level of care expected varies widely depending on context and the nature of the relationships.

I do not want to spend time arguing if we owe a duty of care to others on a bushwalk, but rather, better understand how we can best care for others on a bushwalk. In some contexts, the best care is very little intervention, and in other contexts, it may mean literally holding someone's hand.

Standards are similar to laws in the sense that they are developed by experts in specific communities. However, standards are generally not legally enforceable, in that you will not get arrested or fined for not following a standard. You may, however, have a legal or moral debt to pay if something goes wrong and you are not following a closely matched standard. For bushwalkers, in some cases not following a standard may mean you are refused insurance or access to land by the land managers.

The wonderful part of documented standards is that they provide a clear framework to work within. If the standards are not written then you are left to guess and constantly debate what the community expectations are, or just stick your head in the sand and hope for the best. If we do not write the standards proactively then they get written by others or effectively get written by expert witnesses in courts following accidents. No one wants standards produced through adversarial processes; they are much better produced collaboratively.

“ ... we should influence the written expectation of skill and care that we provide.

As a bushwalking community, especially for those in clubs, we should influence the written expectation of skill and care that we provide. We will never be able to say there is no minimum community expectation on bushwalking leaders. Whether leaders are paid or not, there are still community expectations regarding the skill they have and the care they provide, even though that will vary in different contexts.

The AAS is a chance to formalise those community expectations and give clubs some guidance on how to fulfil them.

Why broad contexts matter in developing standards

Within the clubs and other bushwalker's involvement in the AAS debate there seem to be a few key issues that keep coming up. Here are the key points as I see them.

1. Does the volunteer thing matter?

Volunteers are amazing. Australia would be much worse off without volunteers. When the SES turn up to remove the tree from my roof, even though they are volunteers I expect that they will be safe and not fall through my ceiling. If I scrape my knee at the football I expect that the St John Ambulance volunteers will do a reasonable job cleaning the wound.

These expectations certainly increase if I pay for an arborist to remove the tree or for a doctor to dress my knee. Notice that while my expectations increase, the minimal expectations are the same.

Formal agreed standards help clubs, participants, commercial operators and others better understand what these expectations are.

So, yes, the volunteering thing matters. Volunteering is such an important part of the bushwalking community that without their voice in it's creation, the AAS will be considerably worse off.

2. Clubs cannot afford the training costs!

If the clubs cannot afford the training requirements then the standard most likely needs fixing as it does not match community expectations. If the community expectations are higher than those of the clubs, then the standard should provide a mechanism to determine more affordable training options.

“Volunteering is such an important part of the bushwalking community that without their voice in it's creation, the AAS will be considerably worse off.”

First Aid training is an interesting example of this. The current AAS suggests that at least one leader in the group must have first aid qualifications, varying with remoteness. Formal first aid training can be costly. For clubs the standard could



be more open and say that for walks in more urban locations then someone in the group should be able to demonstrate specific knowledge of first aid.

If during the building the standard you discover that the community does expect formal first aid training in club settings, then the standard creates opportunities for clubs to apply for volunteer training grants.

The point is that we need to be involved in setting the understanding and standards.

3. **Clubs lead experienced members, not newbies, like commercial operators**

I have heard the argument that clubs are different in nature from guided walking groups because club participants are experienced bushwalkers. I assume that most clubs trips have more experienced walkers than most commercially guided trips.

Not everyone who joins a club is an experienced walker, so there are going to be some club members with little if any experience on at least some walks. Different clubs have different ways to manage this.

This argument does not suggest that no standards or community expectations apply, but rather that the current draft standard does not suit club's needs. Clubs provide a clearly different context that the standard needs to recognise and work within.

For example, the standard currently focuses mostly on leader's requirements, but perhaps in some contexts should also focus on how participant experience impacts on leadership requirements.

“... we need to be involved in setting the understanding and standards.”

4. **Clubs are just a group of friends, aren't they?**

Some people have suggested to me that since clubs are just a group of friends then standards like this do not apply.

You know me well enough by now that I obviously disagree on a few layers here. Firstly, community expectations still apply with friends and therefore a formal standard can help define those expectations.

My main issue with this line of argument is that clubs are more than a group of friends. A club is a group of people dedicated to a cause or activity, in our case, bushwalking. Most of our time as clubs should be out enjoying the pursuit and helping others enjoy it as well. If as a group we are dedicated to bushwalking then we should also be dedicated to the furtherment of the pursuit. Each club will have a different focus on this, whether it is land protection, promotion of Leave no Trace principles, documenting and mapping, advocacy etc. Whatever we do, we should be starting with a clear understanding of the broader community expectations. We should also be involved in influencing those expectations.

“... the current draft standard does not suit club's needs.”

In the past five years we have seen a massive rise in the number and activity of less formal bushwalking groups, namely the “Meet up” style groups. My experience of these groups is limited, but I have seen leadership ranging from very good to atrocious. Community expectations still exist for these groups and I would argue that members of formal clubs should attempt to influence establishing the AAS to protect the brand of bushwalking clubs and to help these less formal groups to thrive on their trips.

5. **We will never get people to lead if they need a degree in bushwalking**

Ohh, it frustrates me greatly when people exaggerate the demands that standards place on people and groups. If as a community we expect leaders to have a doctorate in bushwalking then fine, that is our expectations. If standards are community expectations (as set by the bushwalking community, considering the wider community), then they are our expectations.

If these expectations are higher than we currently provide, this can be seen as an opportunity to attract leaders. Clubs can become the training ground for commercial operators.

I get that some people are sick of training and jumping through compliance hoops, but this is kind of the point. If clubs are included in setting the standards then we can define those hoops and make them good for clubs, leaders and members. Training does not have to be painful, time consuming and boring. I have studied outdoor education, I have worked commercially in the outdoor education and recreation, I have run training workshops and worked with clubs. I still have a lot to learn and look forward to good and helpful training.

I suspect that clubs who develop a culture of continuous learning for leaders and members will do far better at engaging people than those that do not.

Why are clubs fundamentally better off with standards?

It is clearly my belief that bushwalking clubs would be fundamentally better off if specifically included in the AAS.

The AAS:

- helps set clearer expectations for members;
- establishes minimal pathways for becoming leaders;
- helps leaders provide an experience that meets community expectations;



- enables clubs (and peak bodies) to provide appropriate training pathways;
- increases communities' perceived value of bushwalking clubs;
- allows broader participation of leaders (and members) in other activities by allowing transfer of recognised skills (such as helping on SAR) etc; and
- makes it easier for leaders to co-lead, transfer between clubs and become commercial leaders more easily.

These do come at a financial, time and emotional cost.

Standards are simply the formal writing down of the basic community expectations of the service we provide. We may not like that it seems too professional or formal for our pursuit but the standards are being written regardless. I feel that bushwalking clubs, especially groups that represent bushwalking clubs in Australia should be leading the way here. A good standard will improve bushwalking generally, make managing a club easier and make leader's responsibilities clearer. Instead of pulling out of the AAS development process, bushwalking clubs and associations should be leading the way to ensure that bushwalking clubs thrive into the future.

Please note that this article is simply my point of view and is not representative of the views of any organisations of which I am a member or where I consult.

“... clubs who develop a culture of continuous learning for leaders and members will do far better at engaging people ...”



Photo by Koldunova

30 peaks in 30 days blog

James Webb



I've always loved the mountains. This love started as a five-year-old learning to ski at Mt Hotham, then adventures in the Cathedrals and Grampians as a teenager.

James on Glacier Creek Waterfall, Backcomb Mountain, Whistler, Canada
andrewdoran.com

After high school I embarked on the first of many overseas ski trips. From there it didn't take long to discover climbing and mountaineering, and after 10 years of learning the ropes on 3-6000 metre peaks, I was lucky enough to go climb Cho Oyu (8201 metres) in 2013, my first 8000 metre peak. Six months later I was supposed to climb Everest, however thieves broke into my home and relieved me of all my gear. So I postponed to 2015. Unfortunately my father passed away early that year and once again I had to postpone. But, like a lot of things in life, what often seems to be bad luck is a blessing in disguise.

In 2014, at least 16 Sherpas died when a serac fell from above, while they climbed the Khumba Icefall and then the 2015 earthquake, which killed thousands, including at least 22 people at base camp, put an end to all climbing those seasons.

By the time 2016 came around both my employer and my wife were getting sick of my changing plans. So, I took my long service leave, booked a trip to Europe with my wife and decided to keep in shape before leaving by hiking some Victorian peaks I hadn't visited before. I had climbed

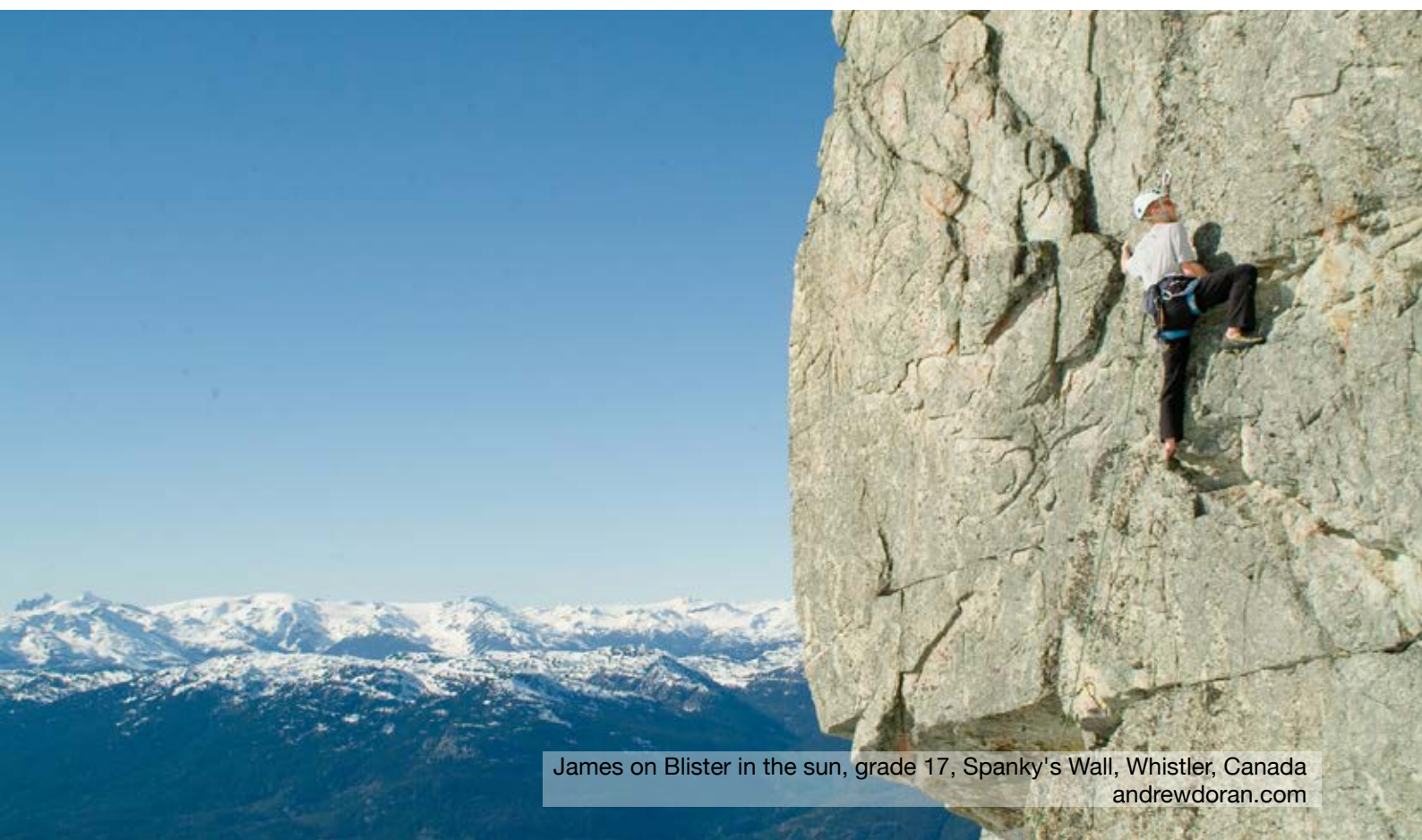
“... what often seems to be bad luck is a blessing in disguise.”



James on Calcheck, grade 17, Whistler, Canada
James Webb collection

Bogong and Feathertop (Victoria's highest and second highest mountains) many times in winter and summer, but I had no idea what were number three or four or any of the others, so I started researching and listing them. However, a lot of data I found was either wrong or conflicting, and with the lesser-known peaks, almost non-existent. The recording of this information formed the basis of what was to become my website and blog.

“... a lot of data I found was either wrong or conflicting, and with the lesser-known peaks, almost non-existent.”



James on Blister in the sun, grade 17, Spanky's Wall, Whistler, Canada
andrewdoran.com

I soon realised that there were roughly 30 mountains above 1700 metres in Victoria and with just over a month to try and get them done before I left for Europe, the project 30 peaks in 30 days was born. I recorded all my trips in pictures and words as a diary with the thought that someone else may be interested. Gear reviews came later as I had a lot of new clothing and equipment (due to aforementioned theft) that I was very impressed with. Technical reviews that I read in magazines mean very little to me, so I wrote them from a more practical point of view, if they worked or not, and why.

“... it's always been about the journey, which I hope never ends.



Mount Cope turnoff, Bogong High Plains
James Webb

The blog is an ongoing project. A year later I still have three peaks to get too and I ended up summiting more than 50 high points over 1700 metres in 30 days. But like all my projects, it's never been about getting to the end or to the top; it's always been about the journey, which I hope never ends. I hope to continue adding walks and trips on the blog as I train and search for new or repeat favourite adventures, and being a “gear whore” gear reviews are included. I hope people will enjoy reading the blog, find it informative and most of all that it encourages readers to get out. But ... even if they don't, I enjoy writing it.



James is from Melbourne, with a wife, dog and a son on the way. He is a high school teacher (yes, for the holidays), when not on a mountain somewhere, or up at the family farm near Mansfield. His 30 peaks in 30 days blog is [30peaksin30days](#).



Ryders Hut campsite
James Webb

KNP

Stephen Lake

Tune: *Blue bayou*

I'm trapped in town working hard each day,
I'm missing hills so far away,
Fond memories always stay from KNP.

Mortgage and food, power bills,
While my mind's in distant hills,
Looking forward to happier times in KNP.

I'm goin' back some day, come what may to KNP.
Where you walk all day and take the way at KNP.
With those skies of blue and not much to do, if I could only see,
A new sunrise from camp on mountain highs how happy I'd be.

Oh to see the bush once again,
And walk with a few of my friends
I'd be quite happy then in KNP.

I'm goin' back some day, gonna stay in KNP.
Where the hills are fine, and the place is mine at KNP.
With those wondrous views and time to lose, if I could only see,
The mountains wide, as I do stride, how happy I'd be.

I'd never be blue, my dreams come true
In K-N-P.



In the News



A leisurely stroll
EPA/Valentin Flauraud

The longest pedestrian bridge in the world is in Switzerland

The "Europe Bridge" is a 494 metre long bridge, located near the Swiss town of Zermatt.

Sighting of Tasmanian tiger, and extinction due to climate change

Trio release footage which they claim is sighting of thylacine which they have been searching for for the past 26 years. Unlikely a tiger, but we all love a mystery. Until now, scientists believed the cause of the thylacine mainland extinction was increased activity from indigenous people and dingoes. But a [new study](#), based on analysis of DNA extracted from fossil bones, has found that the likely cause was climate change.

An Austrian hiker survives a lightning struck

After a lightning bolt hit his head and exited through his foot, Mathias Steinhuber made a miraculous recovery.

A Spring Day in the Gardens - Banner event

This is at Newnes State Forest on Sunday, 26 November from 11am to 2.30pm.

To attend apply here colongwilderness.org.au/

Tasmania has a new iconic bushwalk

Wukalina walk in the Bay of Fires is the newest addition to the list of great walks in Tasmania.



Old Pelion Hut on the Overland Track celebrates 100 years

The hut has many stories to tell. It was originally built to house a mine manager. At this stage it is used as an emergency shelter.

Illegal drone flying in national parks and reserves in Tasmania

Unless you have a written permission from NPWS you're [not allowed to fly drones](#) in national parks.

Leslie Southwell found dead in the Victorian Alps

The author of the book *The mountains of paradise: The wilderness of south-west Tasmania* went missing on a 4.7 kilometre walk on Mount Bogong from Cleve Cole Hut to Michell Hut and was found the next day.



Forests For All: Think Big and See the Benefits Grow!

Dr Oisín Sweeney

The current state of play

The people of NSW have two million hectares of public native forests along the coast. This beautiful country is home to diverse wildlife and myriad forest ecosystems. But the primary use of these forests is timber production. Native forest logging takes place under Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs), 20-year agreements between the NSW and Commonwealth Governments that permit logging. The aim of the RFAs was to allow timber production while protecting nature. Unfortunately, despite the intentions being good, they haven't worked as planned.

Open canopy west of Wollombi Brook, New South Wales

With the RFAs coming to an end from 2019 the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) believes it's time to think laterally about whether the focus on the forests as a timber resource is the best use of this precious shared asset. The expiry of the RFAs provides a glorious opportunity to shift the use of our forests from logging to conservation, recreation, tourism and education. This would provide a means for regional communities to make money from the protection of our most important and unique asset - nature.

Back in 1995, Prime Minister Paul Keating said "(our forests) are a national treasure and their management must be ecologically sustainable and economically clever". At the moment it's neither, but it could be both under our plan.

Unleashing the potential of our state forests

Protected areas are already economic powerhouses in regional economies. The two million hectares of public forests currently locked up for logging have huge potential to complement existing protected areas by safeguarding nature and providing diverse recreation and tourism opportunities for the fastest growing segment of the tourism market.

NPA wants our state forests to be used for a major expansion of recreation activities and nature-based tourism, as well as providing more opportunities for outdoor education and field studies for young people. These forests are some of the most spectacular landscapes on the eastern seaboard, and some of the most attractive anywhere in the world for outdoor sports and recreation. Our plan would see their potential fulfilled. Many regional communities on the coast are predicted to grow over the next 20 years. The NPA approach will help deliver recreation and employment opportunities for these growing populations.

Yes, state forests are currently available for recreation. But recreation plays second fiddle to the main game of harvesting timber. Only 4800 hectares of the entire state forest estate are zoned primarily for recreation. The primacy of logging means it's inevitable

that logging will undermine recreation and tourism. And we have already seen this happen: conflict arose in Tasmania in 2016 over plans to log close to a valued mountain bike track, and in NSW community members were horrified when logging took place along a scenic drive near Narooma. Mountain bike tracks in Currambene State Forest in the Shoalhaven are located in the harvest area which means their future is not assured.

A high-value nature-based ecotourism industry requires security that the scenic and natural values upon which it's based will be there for the long term. At the moment, that certainty is lacking. Let's be honest: would you invest your hard-earned cash or try to build a business when the forest you depend on could be turned into this overnight?

“The expiry of the RFAs provides a glorious opportunity to shift the use of our forests from logging to conservation, recreation, tourism and education.

Didn't think so. That's why logging is a sub-optimal use of our forests; other forest activities can't blossom in its presence and a potential source of jobs, fun and good health is neutered.

The tourism industry is now one of Australia's most important: \$107 billion is generated every year, with 534,000 people directly employed in 273,000 tourism businesses. And for every tourist dollar spent 44 cents are spent regionally, and a further 87 cents are generated in other parts of the economy. Yet only 14% of tourism investment is located regionally, so there's huge room for improvement.

At the moment, national parks are heavily relied on to provide outdoor experiences - they receive almost 40 million domestic visitors every year. In some cases, this reliance on national parks threatens to undermine the core function of those parks, the protection of nature. The reasons are that some activities are too high-impact for sensitive environments, visitor numbers are growing and development to support the visitation threatens to damage natural values. And because nature is the key reason people want to go to parks, this threatens the visitor economy in the long run.

We're not proposing that all state forests become national parks. Where declining threatened species like koalas occur, where state forests retain high conservation value and where there is a pressing need to connect up the landscape, national parks are the best option. As state forests are also public land, adding these high conservation value public forests to the national parks estate is simply a tenure swap. This is a really important step to protect and enhance the reasons that many people come to Australia. This step also helps satisfy Australia's international reservation commitments and makes sure that nature can adapt to climate change.

But we're proposing that the remaining forests should become a mix of protected area categories under the National Parks and Wildlife Act and Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs). This would ensure that conservation and sustainability are primary objectives, while providing for greater flexibility in recreation activities to respond to community needs and increasing access to forests. This could include dog walking and horse riding opportunities close to urban areas,

higher impact sports and recreation and ecologically sensitive infrastructure needed to support it. Importantly, this approach would promote Aboriginal ownership, joint- and co-management arrangements, traditional management practices and provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to benefit economically from forest products and businesses centred on forests.

With clever cross-tenure and regional recreational planning, regional parks and IPAs could be used beside other protected area categories to support recreation, eco-tourism and major events throughout regional NSW. NPA envisages a scenario where the State Government pays for the initial public infrastructure (such as roads, signs, trail development, cabins, lodges etc), and small business is encouraged to take the lead in areas of service provision. Protection of the forests is key to stimulating small business, as the certainty that forests will remain attractive places to bring visitors is a prerequisite to investing.

NPA's plan closely aligns with several national and state strategic plans for achieving tourism and health outcomes.



The Basin campsite to Heaton Gap track, New South Wales

New Zealand offers a model

Let's face it, the Kiwis are miles ahead of us at the moment. They take tourism and nature conservation seriously and have recognised the inherent link between the two. New Zealand's Queenstown region is considered by many to be the adventure playground capital of the world. Yet NSW is a potentially superior attraction: the terrain is less steep for adventure sports and the weather's better meaning these sports could happen year-round. Plus we've got the advantage of more abundant wildlife like koalas, gliders, quolls and cockatoos!

Our forests have landscapes perfect for multi-day bushwalks, downhill

and long-distance mountain biking, multi-day four-wheel drive routes, hang-gliding launch spots, canyoning adventures, extreme events like rogaining, ultra-marathons and bungee jumping. Or, for the less active, there's great locations for idyllic eco-lodges and glampsites.

“Conservation and recreation must be two sides of the same coin.”

Where can we do all this fun stuff?

Recreation tourism needs to be well planned. Because nature-based and adventure tourism completely depend on nature and a high-quality environment, recreation can't come at the expense of nature. Conservation and recreation must be two sides of the same coin. This is vital, because nature-based visitors spend more money than other visitors and expect a high-quality product. But some forms of recreation aren't compatible with each other because one undermines another's enjoyment. This inevitably leads to conflict between user groups, and that's not a good start when developing a world-class tourist offering. For example, if you go bushwalking expecting to see nothing but bushland and birds, noise from a road will ruin your experience, even if you can't see it. Similarly, if you're a mountain biker seeking an adrenaline-filled downhill run, slowing down constantly for walkers will ruin your experience. NPA is committed to working with stakeholders to undertake this assessment to ensure that people and conservation are both adequately considered.

That's why tenure and planning are crucial elements of our plan. NPA sees careful planning as the key to both protecting the environment and making users happy by putting the right activities in the right places to avoid negative impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage and sensitive environments. This allows flexibility of forest uses to be applied depending on the landscape context, proximity to urban areas and roads and public transport links. The right activities in the right places: that's the key to making this plan work.

Win-win in so many ways

Besides protecting nature and making millions for regional communities from an influx of nature-based and adventure tourists, there are several other valuable spin-offs from our plan.

Creating opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike

Using state forests to provide a new stream of employment opportunities and niches for small business would increase the employment base and provide high-quality, rewarding jobs. We believe our plan would also be better for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal ownership and traditional management approaches would occur, and Aboriginal use of forest products is also possible under Plans of Management.

Arakwal National Park near Byron Bay is a great example of a joint-managed protected area. The Plan of Management provides for Aboriginal use of traditional foods and fibres. The success of this approach has led to Arakwal being one of only three protected areas in Australia to be recognised on the IUCN Green List of protected areas - the gold standard for protected area management. Given that many forests will likely need management intervention for restoration after decades of damaging logging, this is a huge opportunity for regional Aboriginal communities. The logging industry cannot achieve this: in NSW logging directly employs approximately 600 people and employment is in long-term decline due to mechanisation and market forces.

“We believe our plan would also be better for Aboriginal people.”

Initial government investment would be needed to upgrade infrastructure, begin the restoration of forests and provide the certainty for the private sector to take advantage of the fresh opportunities. It's important that small businesses are encouraged, because this would kickstart employment in regional areas and further the visitor economy by increasing the length of stays and diversity of opportunity. One way to help this to happen would be for government to provide low-cost loans to those that want to create new (or expand existing) businesses based on nature based tourism or recreation in forests. This model of private sector delivery on public land is used successfully in New Zealand and Europe.

Human health and wellbeing

There is an ever-increasing body of evidence that contact with nature is vital for mental and physical wellbeing. A recent study in Australia showed that the magnitude of the benefit was linked to dose - how often people engaged with nature - and that such benefits could reduce the medical costs of depression alone by \$800 million per year. Parks Victoria estimates that avoided healthcare costs in Victoria from physical activity being undertaken in National Parks is up to \$200 million per year. The cost of infrastructure, like tracks, to provide access to natural areas is outweighed by the savings in health costs. Our plan will increase the opportunities for people to get out and play, improving both their physical and mental well-being. A NSW Premier's Priority is reducing childhood obesity. This plan is one pathway to achieving that.

“... such benefits could reduce the medical costs of depression alone by \$800 million per year.”

Education

Outdoor education should be a key part of any child's upbringing: it offers the chance to form bonds, build trust, develop problem solving skills and of course, play. Under this model, we could develop a network of outdoor education and field study centres where kids can be introduced to activities like orienteering, climbing, abseiling and kayaking and learn about the natural world. This would mean future generations of kids would be more likely to develop a love of the outdoors and an environmental education which in turn would lead to better health and conservation outcomes. [Nature schools](#), common overseas, are not recognised by the NSW Government as an education facility. But they may in future offer a complementary approach to educating children, and this plan would provide for that eventuality.

Showcasing our cultural heritage

Cultural tourism is an element currently absent from much of the coast, with some notable exceptions. Adding Aboriginal knowledge and skills to tourism offerings would deepen the tourist experience and be a major international tourist drawcard while recognising the cultural heritage of the first Australians. This would also provide genuine opportunities for Aboriginal self-determination, in the form of Aboriginal owned and operated businesses based on Aboriginal forest management and tourism.

Logging is not the optimal use of our precious forests

In 2016, NPA conducted a thorough analysis of the performance of the RFAs against their stated aims to evaluate how successful they had been as a mechanism for public forest management. Our key findings are set out next.



Looking through the trees east of Mt Warrawolong, New South Wales

The RFAs have failed to protect threatened species. The number of threatened forest species has risen over the 20 years of the RFAs, and iconic species like koalas, quolls, gliders and owls are now threatened.

Logging under RFAs is violating the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management, supposedly the key guiding principle for logging practices. Logging disrupts the carbon and water cycles and drives Key Threatening Process including the loss of tree hollows and forest dieback.

The RFAs have not delivered an Adequate, Comprehensive, and Representative reserve network of Forest Ecosystems. This is a key promise of the RFAs.

The RFAs have not secured the native timber industry. Jobs have steadily declined, governments have had to step in to buy out timber contracts and ratepayers shoulder substantial hidden costs.

As a result of the above, the RFAs have failed to resolve the “Forest Wars” because the public does not believe forests and wildlife are adequately protected.

Our analysis clearly showed that the RFAs have not optimised the use of forests for the entire community. Rather, timber extraction has been the overriding priority at the expense of all other forest values: nature, recreation, tourism, water supplies and carbon storage.

It's clear that nature, the biggest attraction for overseas tourists, is being badly harmed by logging: koalas are becoming more and more scarce, and the greater glider is the latest species to be added to the national threatened species list due to clearfell logging and loss of the tree hollows that it calls home. The government agency Tourism Australia tells us that nature is the single biggest drawcard for international visitors, yet we continue to support industries that directly harm our prize asset.

Forests For All is a plan to protect nature and allow NSW to take advantage of its natural advantages to become a world leader in

adventure and eco-tourism. Our plan would deliver real economic and social benefits to regional communities in NSW, as well as protecting our natural environment and helping in the fight against climate change.

Conclusion

Public land is a scarce commodity and the public deserves it to be used in the best way possible. That means any use that compromises the natural values for future generations is not appropriate - because it's not consistent with the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development which explicitly recognise the need to ensure that what we do today doesn't ruin the future for generations that follow us.

That's why Forests for All plan is a good idea: this way, current generations can have fun in forests and can gain economically. But because of the inclusion of careful planning and management the ecological values of forests can be protected indefinitely. That means future generations will have the same economic opportunities from forests, continue to enjoy forest wildlife and keep enjoying the clean water and clean air that our forests provide. You can't say fairer than that.



Oisín is the Senior Ecologist for the National Parks Association of NSW, a not-for-profit environmental NGO with 20,000 members and supporters in remote, rural and urban Australia.

Oisín's background is a mix of academic, on-ground and, most recently, advocacy. He has long held an interest in forest ecology and a love for forest ecosystems. In his current role with NPA he strives to apply scientific knowledge to the policy arena and to ensure that NPA's advocacy has a strong evidence-base.

Today Oisín retains his passion for forests and is also keenly interested in re-wilding and spiny crayfish. He lives near Jervis Bay on the NSW South Coast, spends lots of time in the beautiful national parks of the area and is involved in local conservation efforts.

Scroggin and Sweet Desserts

Sonya Muhlsimmer



So finally the weather is starting to warm up. But at least I got eight days back country skiing in this winter. I started off at Guthega Power Station then went hut hopping to a few old favourite huts of mine and met a whole bunch of awesome people out there. Gee, some of them even knew of me, how about that! But alas I did not get to Jagungal; we were aiming for it but it didn't happen. Never mind, next year we must make it, but at least we survived the blizzard. Seriously, we had the worst blizzard ever ... (well it is when your skiing through it) with around 85 to 90 kilometre per hour winds going over Schlink Pass. It really tests all your skills, stamina and willpower going through something like that. When we got to Schlink Hut our packs and outer clothing were frozen solid. Thankfully when we got there the fire was already on. What a week, we had a little bit of everything, snow, sunshine and even rain on the last day. We skied up on The Kerries and The Rolling Ground, we had good weather for those days and it was absolutely spectacular up there. Now back in the Blue Mountains bush in the Gardens of Stone National Park I did a short little dry canyon trip called Pleasant View Canyon. The canyon ends at the cliff looking over Carne Creek, with a very pleasant view. I'm looking forward to doing more bushwalks in the warmer weather.

Scroggin

We all want a quick go-to snack that keeps us going along the trails, and scroggin is many a bushwalker's snack. But, did you know scroggin has numerous names such as Trail mix, student food and Gorp and you can put any fruit, nut, candy and chocolate combination in it as you please? Apparently scroggin stands for Sultana, Carob or Chocolate, Raisin, Orange peel, Grains, Glucose (or Goody-Goodies), Imagination, Nuts. Gorp also stands for Granola, Oats (or Good Old), Raisins, Peanuts. Doing my research I even came across this, Grapes, Oranges, Raisins, Peanuts, or how about this Gobs Of Raw Protein. Now, there are some recipe ideas for you already, but do you get the idea so far? The idea with scroggin is to have a quick, high-energy snack full of goodness such as a blend of carbs, fats (the good ones) and protein. Oh, and don't forget to add the imagination.

At home preparation

Chop dates and apricots. Place all ingredients into the allocated bag.

Hint

Any combination of fruit or nuts can work. Roast the nuts for extra crunch and flavour or add some banana chips, marshmallows or small chunks of chocolate.



Bag 1 (vegetable mix)

Hazelnuts	1 Tbsp	20 grams
Almonds	1 Tbsp	14 grams
Dates	5 each	30 grams
Apricots	6 each	30 grams
Dried cranberries	1 Tbsp	15 grams
Pumpkin seeds	1 Tbsp	14 grams
Sesame seeds	1 Tbsp	12 grams

Polenta Cake (With Stewed Fruit)

Polenta, otherwise known as cornmeal has a long history. Aztecs or Mesoamericans worshipped corn, Romans ate it, Americans had it and Columbus took it back and introduced Europe to it. Then Italy adopted it as their own, but in Italy it was known as food for peasants as it was for the poor to eat. Now it is found almost anywhere, including in those fancy restaurants where you can have it either as like a porridge, or set into like a loaf, then grilled or fried and topped with fancy toppings, or even as cakes and muffins. But what can bushwalkers do with it. You can make a cake with it, for one suggestion at least. Top it with some stewed fruit, (psst, stew some of the dried fruit from your scroggin mix with a few spices and serve that on top of the cake). By the way, a tad of Amaretto goes so well in the stewed fruit too, just saying. Having this with friends in a warm cosy hut with a raging blizzard outside, well, is bliss. Did I mention the Amaretto ...?

At home preparation

Cut out two pieces of greaseproof paper to fit the bottom of the pan. Label the bag and place all ingredients into the allocated bag. Copy or print out Method at camp and keep together with the bag and the greaseproof paper.

Method at camp

In a bowl, add the contents of the bag and pour in ½ cup of water, stir together. Put a piece of greaseproof paper in a pan and pour the mix over the paper. Cover the cake

with a lid and cook on a low heat for about 5 minutes, or until you can slide a knife under it and lift it up a bit. Take the pan off the heat and cover the cake with the other piece of greaseproof paper. Flip the cake over, placing it back into the pan and remove the top piece of paper. Cook for 2 minutes.



Bag 1 (cake mix)

Polenta	½ cup	95 grams
Coconut powder	4 Tbsp	40 grams
Vanilla sugar	2 Tbsp	28 grams
Egg powder	2 Tbsp	16 grams
Almond meal	2 Tbsp	20 grams
Mixed peel	¼ tsp	2 grams
Mixed spice	1 tsp	3 grams

Water - ½ cup

(Stewed fruit recipe on the following page).



To read more about the author or find more delicious recipes check xtremegourmet.com

Stewed Fruit

At home preparation

Chop the mixed peel as fine as you can. Place all ingredients into the allocated bag. Print out method at camp and place with bag.

Method at camp

Boil $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water in a pot. Add the contents of the bag (stewed fruit and spice mix) to the water. Cook for 2-3 minutes, or until the water has evaporated to about half. Take off the heat and serve over the cake.

Bag 1 (stewed fruit and spice mix)

Chopped dried fruit (3 apricots, 3 dates, 2 dried apples)		Approx 50 – 60 grams
Coconut sugar	2 tsp	8 grams



Ground cinnamon	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp	1.5 grams
Mixed spice	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp	1.5 grams
Mixed peel	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp	1 gram

Water - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

The Wilderness holds answers
to more questions
than we have yet learned to ask.

Nancy Wynne Newhall

Bushwalk Australia



Discover & Explore

- > The Great River Walk
- > Mount Triglav, Slovenia
- > First Aid Kit
- > Firestorms



Wandering the World

- > 10 reasons to Hike The PCT
- > The Spires via Holley Basin
- > From hiker to Globewalker
- > Should they be stopped?



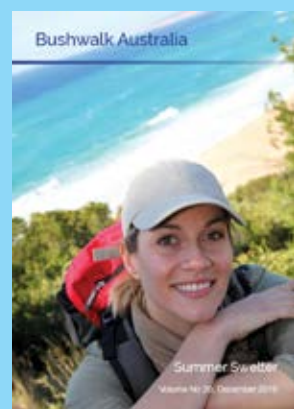
Longer and Wilder

- > The Western Arthurs
- > Bibbulmun Track
- > Skinners
- > Why do we hike?



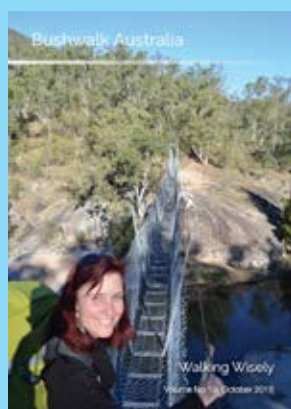
A World of Walking

- > South West Tasmania Traverse
- > Three Capes Track
- > Australian Hiker
- > Gaiters - a few advantages



Summer Swelter

- > Desert Discovery Walk
- > Rewilding
- > Sun clothing



Walking Wisely

- > Six Foot Track
- > Choosing a GPS
- > Water requirements



Bushwalking Conservation

- > AAWT
- > High horses
- > Another shot at the GNW



Winter Walking

- > Fig Tree Point
- > Gear freak - footwear
- > 10 tips for snowshoeing



Best of NSW

- > Best walks of NSW
- > Wolgan Gorge adventure
- > Shoalhaven Coast walk



Best of VIC

- > Best walks of Victoria
- > Wilsons Prom



Best of TAS

- > Best walks of Tasmania
- > Rescue at Cradle



Best of SA

- > Best walks of SA
- > Bungy Pump poles



Best of WA

- > WA - a hike for everyone
- > Forests and logging



Best of NT

- > Best walks of NT
- > Larapinta Track

