

Bushwalk Australia



Peak Promenade

Volume 32, December 2018

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
An electronic magazine for
<http://bushwalk.com>
Volume 32, December 2018

**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



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

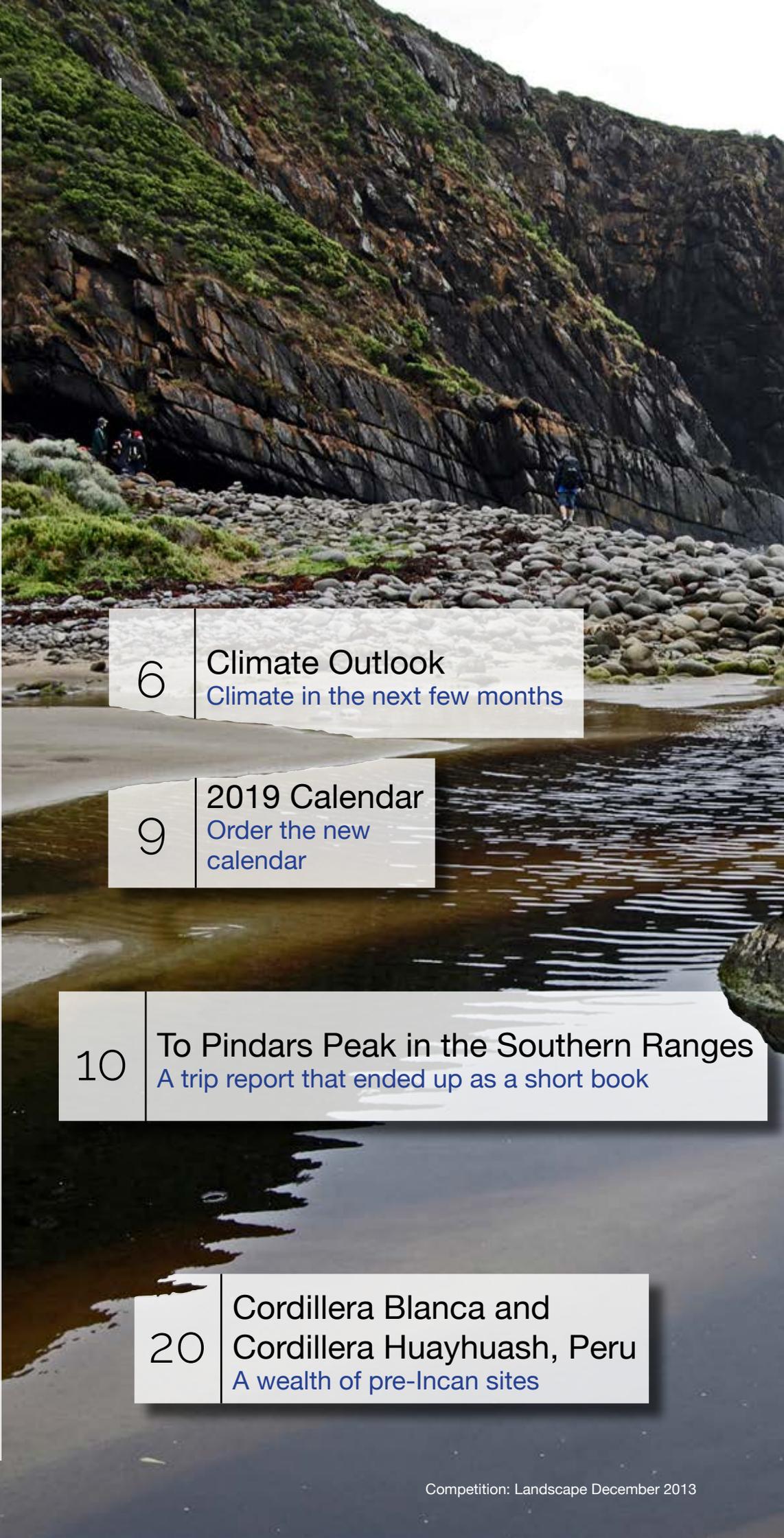
The copy deadline for the
February 2019 edition is
20 December 2018.

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.



6

Climate Outlook

Climate in the next few months

9

2019 Calendar

Order the new
calendar

10

To Pindars Peak in the Southern Ranges

A trip report that ended up as a short book

20

Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Huayhuash, Peru

A wealth of pre-Incan sites

24 | **Brothers Point, Scotland**
A fantastic little walk on the Isle of Skye

30 | **Photo gallery**
Another set of
stunning photographs

48 | **Staying hydrated on bushwalks**
Dehydration is preventable

52 | **National Park threats**
Summaries and comments
of three ABC articles

56 | **Trails on trial**
Where do we draw the line?

59 | **Don't sleep in the tent**
A song about being trapped in a hut



From the Editor

Hi

As I write this I am reminded of how big Australia is. In just past few days we have had blizzards in New South Wales and Victoria. New South Wales has had a significant dust storm followed by flash flooding in Sydney. Meanwhile, significant bushfires burn across Queensland with towns being evacuated. That is just our east coast.

Now as I re-read these articles I am reminded of how small our world is, that there are friendly people all over this beautiful planet who are willing to share their adventures with us. In this edition Tortoise takes us on a tour of Tassie's Southern Rangers, Deadwood guides us through some peaks in Peru, and Andrew shows us a stunning point on the Isle of Skye.

You will also find the beautiful artworks in our photo gallery, Sonya will help us stay better hydrated, and we read about "Trails On Trial" as protected places become more and more popular ...

A big thanks to Stephen and Eva who really carried this edition through to completion with very hectic schedules.

Happy walking
Matt :)



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Declaration

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

Video

Essential safety tips for bushwalking in Tasmania

The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service's [video on bushwalking preparation](#) and the essential steps for a safe and enjoyable walking experience is the latest addition to their suite of safety initiatives.



Climate Outlook December 2018 - January 2019

Every fortnight the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) publishes climate outlooks for the next few months. These can be handy when planning longer trips or if you have a busy month of bushwalking coming up it can help give you a sense of what the temperate and rainfall trends are likely to be.

Climate outlook vs weather forecasts

A **weather forecast** is generally reliable for the next few days or week and gives you a sense of the likely specific temperature minimums, maximums as well as how much rain you can expect on each day. **Climate data** is not a forecast, rather is the average or typical weather patterns for an area over recent history. Climate information has the average minimum temperatures, average maximum temperatures and rainfall for a period of time, giving a sense of what we can typically generally expect.

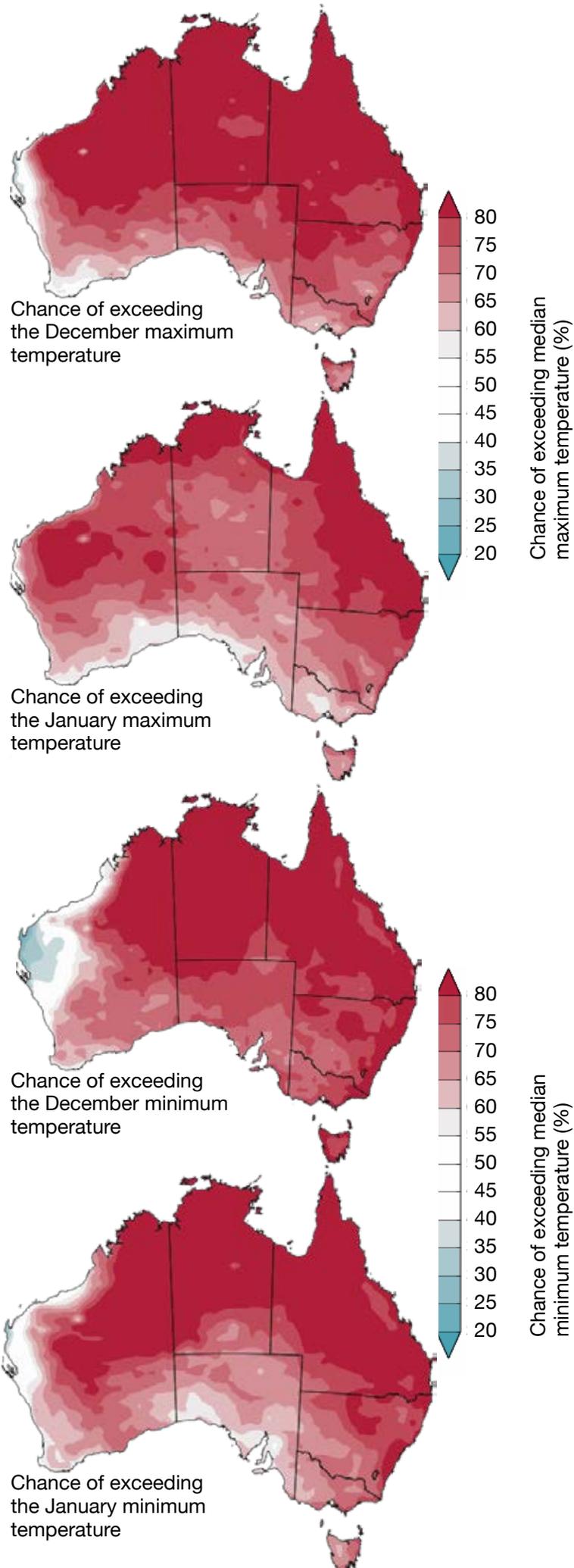
This **Climate outlook** is actually a forecast that gives us a sense of how much to expect the weather to deviate from these normal climate conditions. It gives us the probability of it being hotter/colder or wetter/drier than normal for specific areas.

The BOM provides more details on their [climate outlook pages](#) including the significant influences on their models that impacted on the forecast, such as El Niño. These are generally sea temperature related, but we will not go into the details in these summaries.

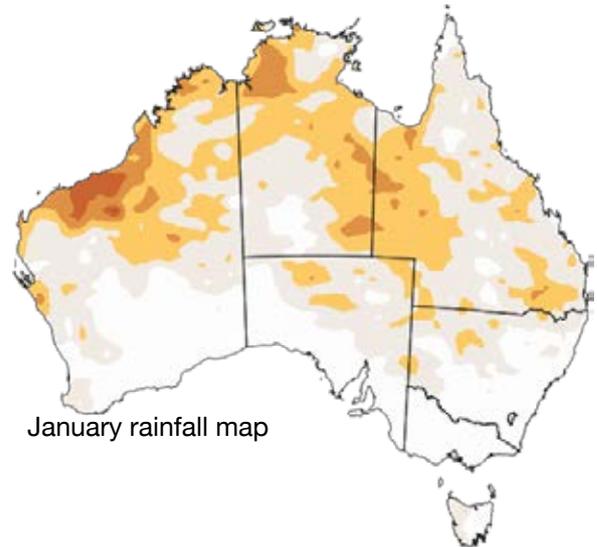
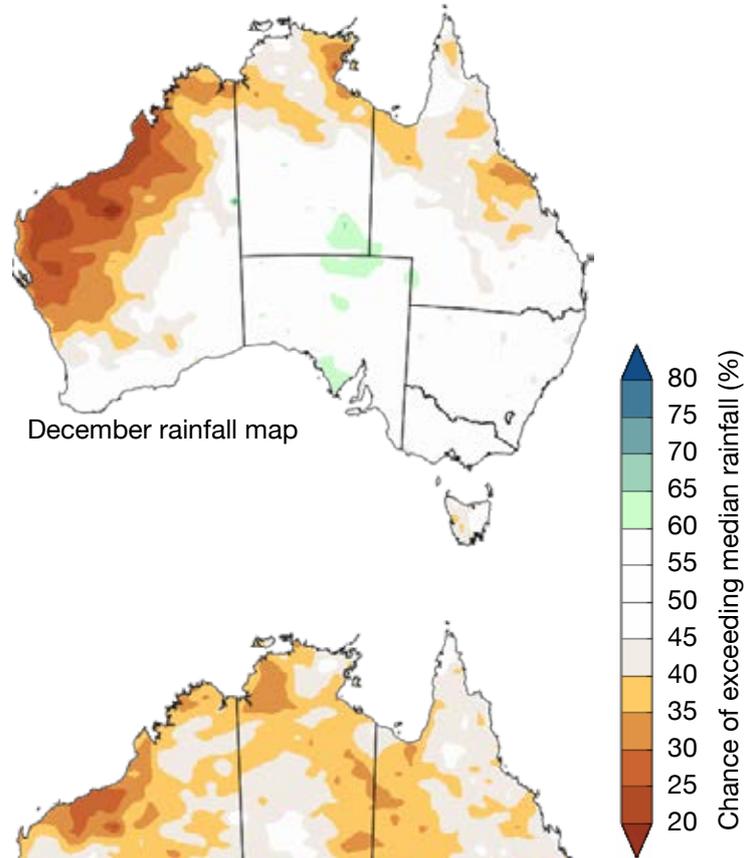
Temperature outlook for December to February

Generally, we are looking at a warmer than typical summer days and nights for Australia.

- Days are very likely to be warmer than average for most of Australia. Chances of a warmer summer are greater than 80% over of Australia, with lower chances for southern and western coastal areas closer to 70%.
- Nights are also very likely to be warmer than average across most of Australia, with chances of warmer nights exceeding 80% over most of the country. Far western WA is really the only area that is more likely to have cooler than average summer nights.



You can watch the BOM video here.



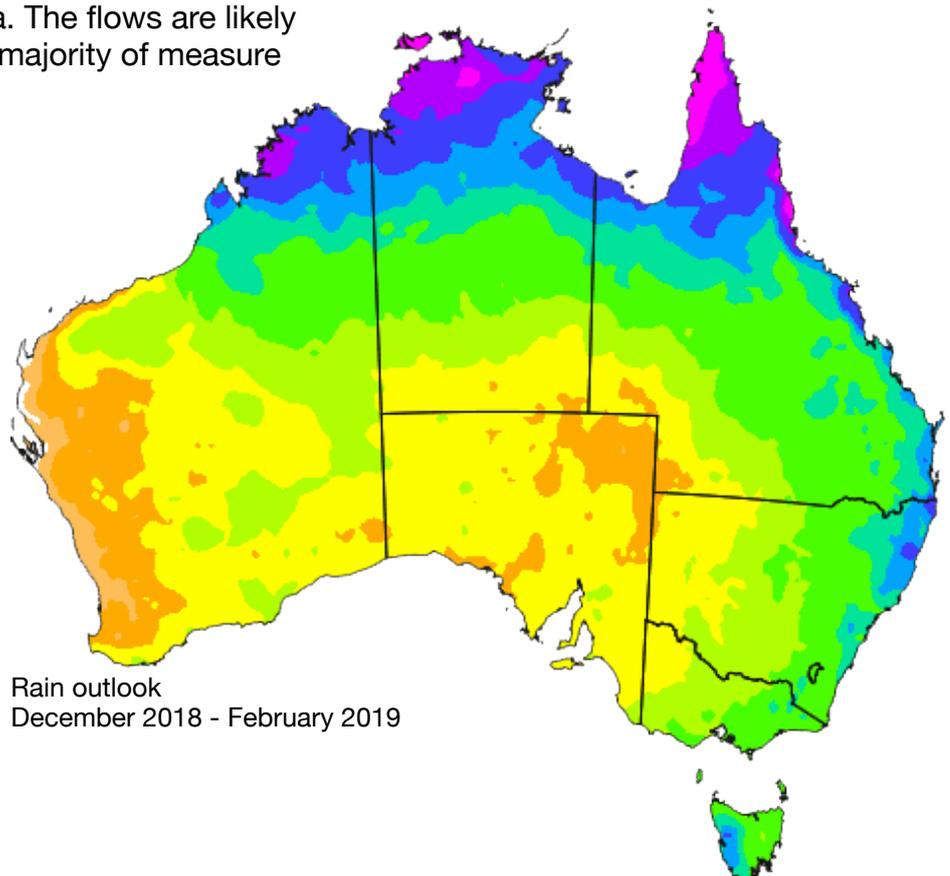
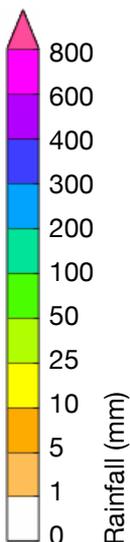
Rainfall outlook for December to February

Generally, for most of southern and eastern Australia, there is a roughly equal chance of wetter or drier three months.

- However, it is likely to be drier than average for large parts of Western Australia, Queensland and the Top End of the Northern Territory. For the remainder of the country, there are roughly equal chances of a wetter or drier three months.
- Bushfire risks in southeastern Australia have reduced at the start of summer due to rain, but even a short hot and dry spell will see this risk increase quickly again.

We can expect mostly low streamflows across Australia for December 2018 to January 2019.

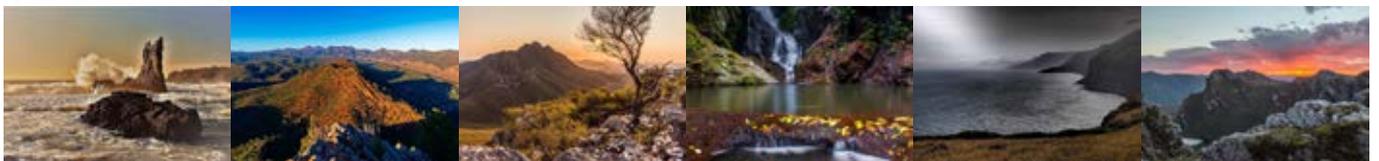
Low flows observed at 75% of locations in October across Australia. The flows are likely to stay low at by far the majority of measure areas for summer.



2019 Calendar

The 2019 Calendar is available now

Like past years, the [new calendar](#) is full of beautiful photos by Bushwalk.com photographers. To enjoy this amazing imagery the whole year long, order your copy by sending an email to Eva at eva@wildwalks.com or click [Buy Now](#) to order it straight away.



To Pindars Peak in the Southern Ranges

Tortoise



What began as a trip report ended up as a short book. I wanted to record details both serious and silly, vast and tiny, as together they made the trip the fantastic adventure it was for us. Apologies to readers who just want information about the track. Hopefully you'll be able to skim off some useful bits and pieces.

Clear Pool Moores Garden
All photo by Tortoise

The quest

After years of being regaled with tales of marvels and exploits in the Southern Ranges of Tasmania (notwithstanding a degree of suffering), Tortoise had the general plan to obtain her own. When a forecast of heat wave conditions with light winds coincided with some available days, she instigated a long-awaited foray into the Southern Ranges with two dauntless friends.

Two Abels were calling her name loudly, and she knew Short Step was keen to get to Alexandra, one of only two peaks in that part of the state she'd never visited. Peak Baggers' Assistant (who is not into counting peak-bagging points, but is happy to tag along and share her skills, experience and dry sense of humour) was still recovering from a more challenging trip in the Southwest. But she also had been hanging out for decades for the right opportunity to visit the area, so she pulled off an admirably short turn-around time to join the others on their adventure. Peak Baggers' Assistant

(PBA, aka Grumble Bum – self-titled – or Grandma Boots), at 5 foot 2, was rewarded with the rarely-experienced status of being the tallest of the party.

The Abels are 158 Tasmanian mountains higher than 1100 metres with "a minimum drop of 150 metres on all sides before higher ground is reached". Major peaks include many summits within a few days of Mount Ossa, Federation and Eldon Peak. The Abels list was devised by Bill Wilkinson in 1994, based on the Munros in Scotland. Climbing all the Abels is a goal of more experienced bushwalkers. Many Abels may be easily climbed, such as Rufus, Campbell and Kate, with plenty more reachable within a two hour climb. The more isolated peaks - and the idea of climbing them all - are only for the experienced. There was a [Bushwalk Australia August 2018](#) article about Zane Robnik who climbed the Abels in record time. The Abels are described in [two books](#). See also [What makes an Abel](#) and the [List](#).



Day 1 - Moonlight Flats

When the long drive was over, the three quickly saddled up and set out. With the mountains calling, the mysteries of Mystery Creek Cave would remain unplumbed, for now at least. The wide, flat track allowed for a good warm-up for the slow plod up the big hill. Some extra water was carried, just in case a dry camp became the best option.

Beautiful forest made for an enjoyable ascent, and the trio eventually broke out into the open. Moonlight Flats, with its stark post-fire contrasts of death and life, monochrome and colour, afforded increasingly expansive views. Adamsons Peak, thus far elusive due to unfriendly weather forecasts and conflicting commitments, stood tantalisingly by, with the Calf and Mesa suggesting they may also be worth a visit. Short Step pointed out the intervening scrub, which is apparently less than hospitable. But then, she is understandably a bit over scrub these days.

Threatening clouds produced dramatic skies, keeping secret the details of the day ahead. Bullfrog Tarns pleasantly surprised Tortoise when they suddenly appeared next to the track. These are apparently well known, but aren't graced with a name on any maps

she had seen. (Unlike the [Tasmap](#), the topo basemap on the [list](#) does show the track where it actually is, right next to the tarns.) Now with abundant water, the adventurers headed off to find some vaguely reasonable spots on which to make a home for the night.

The Five Fit Young Women (FFYW)

As the three were settling in, there appeared Five Fit Young Women (who were perhaps a little chuffed at being described as such, but it's all relative). At first, they had seemed to be a commercial group or with an organisation of some sort - all bearing identical red packs. But no - "just an embarrassing coincidence". It was only later that the Three Not-Quite-So-Fit Older Women realised how easily they could have given the same impression - avoided only because of Tortoise's dodgy sacroiliac joint that doesn't like Osprey hip belts. After a brief confab, the Five Fit Young Women continued on at good speed in the fading light, hoping there would be water at Moonlight Creek.

“Threatening clouds produced dramatic skies, keeping secret the details of the day ahead.”



Skeletons on Moonlight Ridge with the Calf and Adamsons Peak

Day 2 - Alexandra

Next morning, an early start was in order. Moonlight Creek turned out to have provided the water and tent sites needed by the FFYW. Certainly not brilliant, but just enough of both.

Climbing Hill 1 – the first of four on Moonlight Ridge – Tortoise and PBA were thrilled to finally reach such a special area, and delighted in the vast tracts of cushion plants. Short Step relished being in familiar territory in relaxed conditions, rather than doing the usual scrub bash to PB and back with men twice her size.

After the beautiful open walking of Moores Bridge, a small band of scrub needed to be negotiated, and Tortoise found – well, a route not to be particularly recommended. The sensible thing to do would have been to back out and reconsider options. But she bore optimistically on, crawling on hands and knees through the intricate tangle of low branches, cutting grass and myriads of spiky bits of vegetation, with an “It looks a bit clearer just over there!” now and then. Impressively, Short Step and PBA followed with only minimal complaints.

The scrub behind them, they stumbled onto the pad that had eluded them earlier. Stunning views spurred them on. A beautiful clear pool with a rocky base provided exquisitely cool, sweet water on a hot summer day.

Scoparia guarded the final few metres of Alexandra’s summit. PBA gave up in disgust. “I don’t *need* to get to the top. I *don’t care!*” Short Step and Tortoise somehow persuaded her to join them in the scoparia on top, with “views all around” as the bushes were mainly below waist height. Just in case one day she does.

Their return trip saw them relatively obstacle-free, as PBA skilfully led them to more open leads, and onto the old cut track. As they neared the meadows of Moores Bridge, they discovered why they had missed the pad on the way in. A far more attractive open lead had enticed them away from the invisible start of the said pad.

Back at camp, magic light gilded the landscape. Not a breath of wind disturbed even the most vulnerable of grasses. Evening mellowed the sky to soft pastels, and quietly brought the day to a close. Paradise.



Day 3 - Pigsty Ponds, La Perouse and Reservoir Lakes

Despite the forecast heat, the trio (well, Tortoise and PBA to be more precise) were keen to visit the first Abel of their trip. And so they continued on to the famed Pigsty Ponds, which would be their base for a couple of nights. A beautiful area with water and tent sites a-plenty, but infamous for wild wind, funnelled in by surrounding mountains.

Checking out one of the Pigsty Ponds, PBA exclaimed that it tasted of tadpole excrement. Tortoise wondered how she knew exactly what tadpole excrement tasted like, but was happy to follow suit and drink instead from the sweet water from the Deep Hole.

Short Step didn't think sitting it out in the heat for a few hours would be that much fun, so she joined the others in their pursuit of La Perouse. The plateau arrived sooner than expected, despite oodles of view and camera stops. Even more magnificent views were to be had than on the plod up, when "Wow!" was already an oft-utilised word.

After a welcome rest and lunch in the shade afforded by the not insubstantial cairn, Tortoise checked out numerous bumps, rocks and cairns, in an attempt to ascertain the actual high point. Perhaps more sensibly, the others enjoyed more shade.

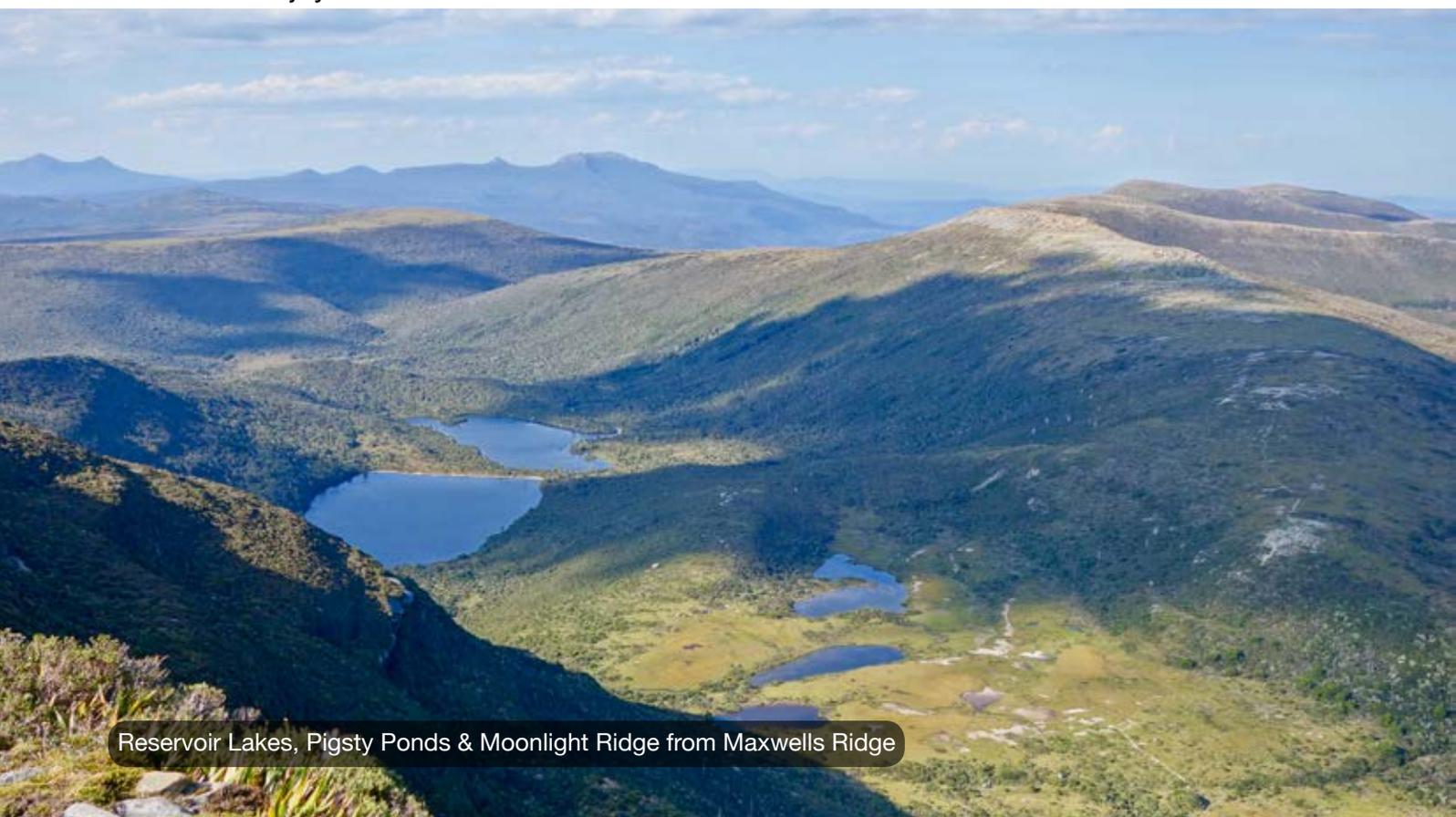
Forgetting a friend's recommendation to check out Swallow Nest Lakes to the north-east of La Perouse, and forgetting what the map said, Tortoise found her jaw dropping at the unexpected and spectacular view as she explored the eastern edge of the summit plateau. Eventually she dragged herself away, and the continuing views of famously wonderful places kept their steps springy on the easy descent. Paradise!

“... forgetting what the map said, Tortoise found her jaw dropping at the unexpected and spectacular view ...”

Reservoir Lakes

Wonderfully wet as the Pigsty Ponds were, they were too shallow to be really refreshing on the still-hot afternoon when the intrepid three returned to their campsite. So Reservoir Lakes, with their deliciously cool waters, were just attractive enough to overcome the inertia that quickly set in for Tortoise and PBA. And what a joy they would have missed out on had they not been persuaded to be bothered!

As they headed back through the forest, a young Frenchman (maybe Belgian or Swiss) materialised in their path. His small backpack was adorned with items intriguing and scary – like the K-mart-esque pop-up beach tent. His water bottle had fallen unnoticed



Reservoir Lakes, Pigsty Ponds & Moonlight Ridge from Maxwells Ridge

just prior to this encounter. Hopefully not too many other items underwent the same fate. PBA had the plausible theory that he was a backpacker who was fruit picking. Somebody may have mentioned that Reservoir Lakes are nice to visit, so he thought he'd go on a little walk to check it out. Hopefully he got out safely in the intense heat, the day before the storms hit, as his gear would probably not have survived more than a couple of minutes in extreme Southwest conditions. He didn't make an entry in the logbook at the track head, so nobody knew for sure. Still, no missing backpacker was reported in the news, so it looks like he got away with it this time.

The Five Fit Young Women part two

As the first of the Five Fit Young Women returned from Pindars Peak, the Three Perhaps-a Little-Fitter-Than-Average Older Women were eager to benefit from their experiences of the day. And so they picked their brains for any information regarding priceless sources of water, how long it took them, that sort of thing. (Tortoise added a couple of hours to their time, which turned out to be about right for her, not including Knife Mountain that the FFYW traversed as well.) As they chatted, PBA made mention of how Short Step was into doing easier walks now that she's completed the Abels. With a barely perceptible raise of one eyebrow, one of the FFYW queried: "Easier walks?" "Yes," was the reply, "these days they mostly have tracks."

Eventually the FFYW were able to extract themselves from the conversation, and continued on to their camp at Reservoir Lakes, which would perhaps still be warm enough in the rapidly cooling evening for a dip to cap off a very satisfying day.

Day 4 - Pindars: A matter of heat and hydration management

Gas cylinders safely stashed, food bags hung in the shade of a thick scoparia bush, and tent guys slackened, the adventurers set out at first light in search of their next Abel. At least they would have a fair bit of climbing under their belts before the worst of the heat took hold. The mercury was forecast to be nudging 40 nearby, and indeed the day did break some Tasmanian records.

“ So she mother-henned them, regularly checking on input of water ...

Tortoise was a little concerned, as both the others had experienced heat exhaustion or possibly even heat stroke in less drastic conditions in the past. So she mother-henned them, regularly checking on input of water and electrolytes, output of wee, and any sign of things a little out of the ordinary.

Maxwells Ridge would have been a lovely place to explore more fully, but they were single-minded in their focus on the goal.

As oven-like conditions developed, their parasols (thanks to Moondog for the reminder of these when hiking in the heat)



proved to be quite useful. If there's going to be minimal shade, it can be very handy to take some with you. Tortoise also made the fascinating discovery that even after she had drunk as much water as she possibly could before leaving Lake Ooze (their last source of water), she had no trouble immediately downing another 600 mls of hydralyte. "Interstwesting", she thought, as she filed away the handy piece of information for future reference.

Tortoise and PBA were prepared for the "Three Big Steps" that apparently needed to be negotiated to reach the summit of Pindars. In fact, they encountered just one Quite Tricky Step. A bit of a scout around revealed no easier way than climbing onto the top of a wobbly cairn in order to access some hand and toeholds up a slot. Okay for going up, but there was a little nervousness about the inevitable return. Still, the summit was within spitting distance (not that they would have wasted a drop of precious spit that day), so up they grunted, with the prize almost upon them.

Reality bites

Whoops of joy resounded from this spectacular mountain which, along with its noble companions Wyllly, Victoria Cross and PB, overlooks Prion Beach and New River Lagoon. (PB stands for Precipitous Bluff, not Peak Bagger nor Peanut Butter in this instance.) Excited to be so close to the famed PB, Tortoise was also faced with the reality of the route beyond the cautionarily named Leaning Tea Tree Saddle. Victoria Cross slipped quietly down her bucket list, and, not keen on wading eight kilometres waist deep down New River Lagoon, she

“... the summit was within spitting distance (not that they would have wasted a drop of precious spit that day) ...”

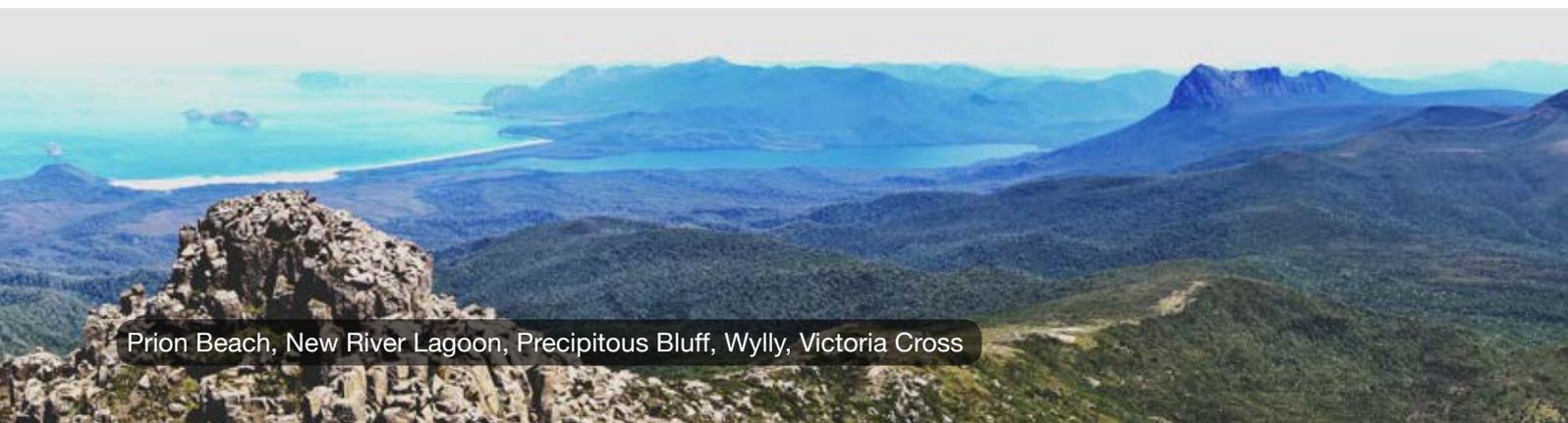


The Tricky Step on the wobbly cairn

wondered aloud if it would be possible to be dropped off by boat at the base of PB. "Nah, it's full of submerged logs and tree stumps. I know people who got bad injuries wading through that." Short Step brought her back to earth with a little bump.

Thus Tortoise was not able to call out her usual cheery greeting to a nearby mountain, "I'm coming!" Instead it was a little hesitant, "Hello, PB! I may come and visit, but I'm not quite sure ...".

Suddenly, the celebration was cut short by wasps or similar flying creatures of some sort. First PBA, then Tortoise, did the erratic I've-just-been-stung-and-I-don't-know-if-the-wretched-critters-responsible-are-still-lurking-under-my-shirt dance.



Making a quick exit, they were disappointed to find some of the swarm following them. Fortunately, by the time the women reached the wobbly-cairn slot, most of their tormentors had given up, and the remaining few could be swatted away without further ado.

“As she sank in above her knees in the indeterminate slimy substance ...

Belying her "Senior" years, Short Step scrambled down the slot so swiftly that neither of the others had a chance to see how she did it. Not a climb with great exposure, but a slip could still lead to a long and leg-breaking slide down a steep, rocky slope. It required a Hobbit to dangle over the edge in search of the nice toehold, then to lower herself gently onto the top of the teetering cairn below. Tortoise and PBA were grateful for Short Step's guidance for their feet to get them safely down.

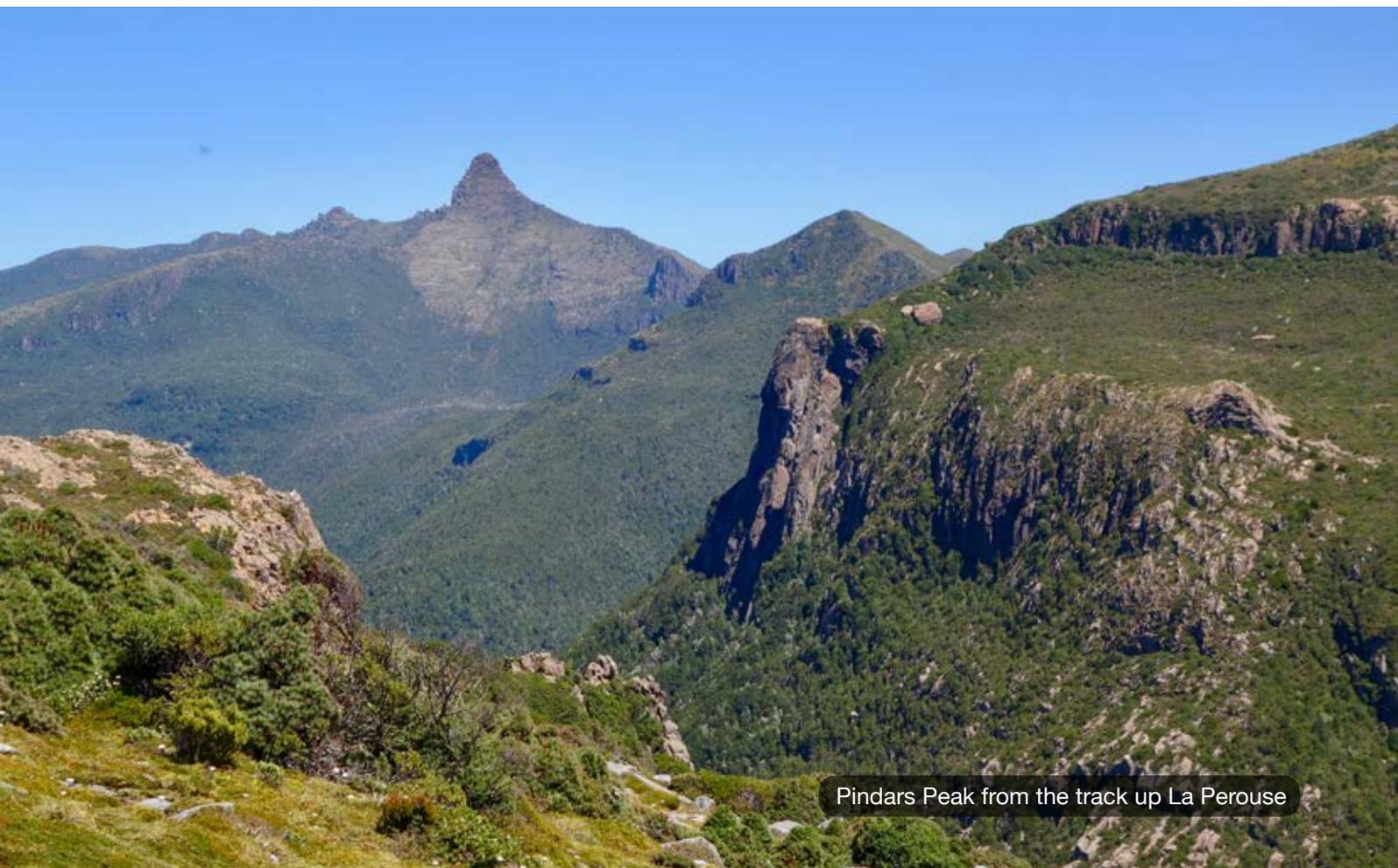
“It required a Hobbit to dangle over the edge ...

After a rest in the bit of shade provided by a rock and their trusty parasols, and after consuming plenty more hydralyte, they continued on their way. Stunning views urged them on, and gravity was kind.

At Ooze Lake Tortoise found a deeper bit that would allow complete immersion, and set about her cooling procedure. As she sank in above her knees in the indeterminate slimy substance that made up the floor of the lake, her prior question regarding the lake's nomenclature was satisfactorily answered.

Back at the Pigsty, all three decided a shallow dip would do, as the heat of the day was finally starting to ebb away.

And so it was that Tortoise, true to name, was thrilled to make it to the top of two Abels, in very hot conditions, without actually getting puffed. A steady rhythm of breath and steps allowed her to maintain momentum (small though it was), and to maintain her capacity to breathe through her nose, saving precious moisture and maximising the Bohr effect - whereby a higher level of carbon dioxide in the blood paradoxically results in an increased release of oxygen into the tissues that need it. With brief stops now and then, and going at her ideal pace, she had enough energy to take photos, pop up to the summit of Lake Mountain on their way past, and hugely enjoy a day whose forecast appeared to keep all other walkers out of the stunning area on a bluebird day in peak season.



Pindars Peak from the track up La Perouse

Day 5 - Electricity, cyclonic winds and return to the Flatlands

The forecast of possible thunderstorms "in the morning and afternoon" had the party keen to get away early the next day, putting the utterly exposed, iron-laden (real or imaginary), lightning-attracting mountains of rock behind them. With the "Carnage at Pigsty Ponds" thread title ringing in Tortoise's ears, she unsuccessfully attempted a quick getaway. It began to sprinkle. Short Step and PBA tried admirably to reassure her, as she faffed around, no more capable of packing up in five minutes if her life depended on it. Calls of "We're happy!" and "No stress! Our choice to take our tents down early and eat our breakfast in the rain!" did little to penetrate the fog of confusion and frustration that had Tortoise going in metaphorical and literal circles within the confines of her little *abode*.

“The rain pelted down so hard that it stung through her rain jacket and thermal.”

There's nothing like a bit of physical exertion to break unhelpful circles of thoughts. So when Tortoise was finally ready, she scampered up Hill 4 with the others, as fast as she her little legs, spurred on by adrenalin, would take her. Halfway up, however, they were hit with torrential rain and gale-force winds. The rain pelted down so hard that it stung through her rain jacket and thermal. Next came the first of the lightning and thunder. Years before, Tortoise had found herself on top of Mount Feathertop in an electrical storm, when a lightning bolt struck the ground close by, with sizzlings and odd flashes of light and hair doing unusual things. So when the flash and bang were now pretty much simultaneous, two of the women sought the best refuge available - crouching, feet together, in the low alpine vegetation rather than on the rock, having abandoned walking poles temporarily – just in case. Paradise lost.

One of the Hobbits reminded PBA that she was at a distinct disadvantage for lightning strikes, being as tall as she was. The other Hobbit, for reasons unknown, decided to brave the lightning and remained upright. Protecting PBA, perhaps.

Thankfully, the electrical aspect of the storm soon left Moonlight Ridge and the women alone. They continued on at their PB (personal best) speeds, frequently interrupted by the need to extract themselves from the vegetation into which they had been thrown, and to do their communal next-cairn-spotting in the swirling mist.

"They don't call them the Roaring Forties for nothing!" yelled Tortoise at one point, to the friend at her side. "*What?!*" came the very-loudly-uttered-but-barely-heard response. "*I can't hear you!!*" Hand signals proved much more useful under the circumstances when communication was actually necessary.

Finally, the storm passed, and Hills 4, 3, 2 and 1, and Moonlight Flats were traversed. The rest of the world was getting closer. Short Step, more aptly referred to as Quickstep when she shifts into greyhound mode on descents in favourable conditions, was relegated to second spot by PBA, whose internally scarred knees prohibited a rapid descent to the car. Tortoise claimed the ultimate position, so she could relax in the certainty that nobody would tailgate her, at risk of being impaled on her walking pole if a muddy slide sent limbs and pole flying in an unrestrained manner. Injury-free, they arrived back at the car just as rain began to fall. A quick change, and they were away, dreaming of their next adventure, with half-planned trips vying for attention.



Tortoise spent her childhood dreaming of bushwalking adventures, and has been making up for the lack of real ones ever since. After a couple of aborted attempts at practice walks, she headed down from Sydney for her first "overnighter" - a nine day epic doing the Overland Track with side trips, with an unsuspecting friend. Undeterred by a crook knee and burns from a billy of boiling water spilled on her bare foot on day two, she continued on to become totally hooked on bushwalking in general, and mountains in particular. She now resides very happily in Tasmania.

In the News

New Brush-turkeys app

The app allows people to report sightings of Brush-turkeys, their behaviours, and locations of their nests and roosts. The data from the app will help track changes in the distribution of Brush-turkeys Australia wide, as well as see how their behaviour changes with location and season.

Using the app gives keen spotters a chance to get involved in a Citizen science project, learn about a native species, and keep track of the population of Brush-turkeys in their local area. It also gives a platform for interested people to communicate with each other and comment on each other's sightings.

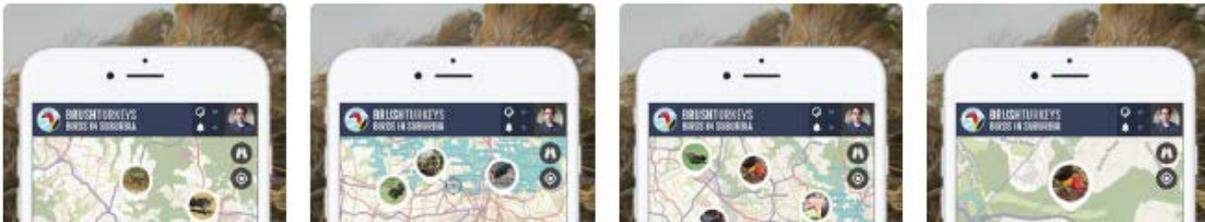
Here are the links to the [apple](#), [android](#) and [web](#) versions of the app below.



BrushTurkeys | SPOTTERON

Birds in suburbia
SPOTTERON GmbH
Free

Screenshots [iPhone](#) [iPad](#)



Gift lightweight backpacking gear ideas, perfect for Christmas

Section Hiker wrote an article on the topic and maybe you can get some ideas for your bushwalking companions.

Sydney's healthiest suburbs

North shore reigns supreme in new study by Deloitte Access Economics and Tract Consultants.

Victoria's largest native title claim

Under agreement, 3000 Taungurung people will have access to crown land for hunting, fishing, camping and gathering resources

Funding injection for Tasmania's rescue helicopter service

The wait for help from Tasmania's rescue helicopter service is set to be dramatically cut, thanks to a \$10 million injection into the emergency service.

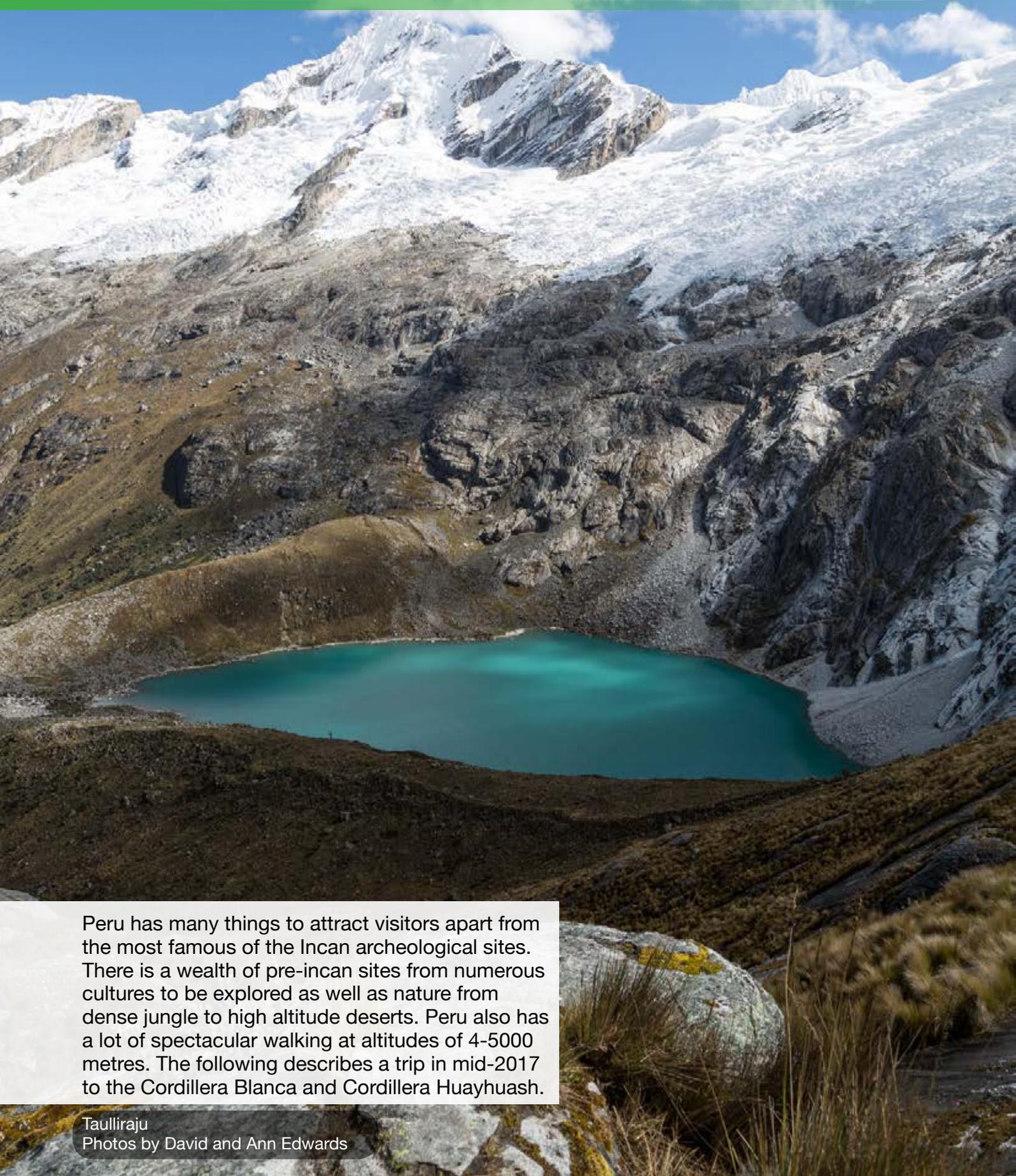
Mathoura community supports the bill to change national park status

Residents in a small town in southern New South Wales have welcomed a move to change the status of a national park and let loggers back in.



Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Huayhuash, Peru

Deadwood



Peru has many things to attract visitors apart from the most famous of the Incan archeological sites. There is a wealth of pre-incan sites from numerous cultures to be explored as well as nature from dense jungle to high altitude deserts. Peru also has a lot of spectacular walking at altitudes of 4-5000 metres. The following describes a trip in mid-2017 to the Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Huayhuash.

Taulliraju
Photos by David and Ann Edwards

In May 2017 we headed off to Peru to spend five weeks hiking in the Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Huayhuash. The plan was to have four days acclimatising in Huaraz (3100 metres) with a couple of day walks up to around 4600 metres, and then tackle a 12 day circuit of Alpamayo in the Cordillera Blanca, have two days rest back in Huaraz and then head off for 14 days in the Cordillera Huayhuash. We chose to go for guided walks for a number of reasons, including, in no particular order:

“ We chose to go for guided walks for a number of reasons ...

- If anything went wrong (altitude sickness, accident, whatever) we had some local help at hand to get us out.
- We could stay in the mountains for far longer at each place than if we were carrying all our own food.



On the way up to Punta Union. Ririjirca and Taulliraju



First crack at a night photo at our second camp site

- Only having to carry day packs meant we could carry more camera gear.
- It's nice getting to camp and your tent is already set up waiting for you so you can spend more time looking around.
- Speaking of tents - an expedition four person tent is nicer than squeezing in our lightweight two person tent.
- Local knowledge helps for doing some extra side trips.
- Booking early meant we could choose the maximum group size, six. More people means it's a bit cheaper.
- You really only see the donkeys and their handlers at the camp and then briefly as they jog past you on the trail.



Laguna Churup

The agency we chose was [Peruvian Andes Adventures](#) and they were faultless. The guides, cooks, transport and general organisation were spot on. They also have a hotel-standard guest house in Huaraz which was perfect for pre- and post-walk stays. The Peruvian Andes Adventures website has some maps and [itineraries](#) that show where we had extra days, but not all the side walks we did on the rest days were well marked.

Day walks

We did the [Laguna Churup day trip](#) first which is fairly close to Huaraz. It's only 6 kilometres long - but it goes to 4600 metres altitude so for your first day walk at altitude, assume five hours. Yes *five* hours for *six* kilometres. Second up we did the walk to [Laguna 69](#) which is further from Huaraz, a longer travel time and a longer walk at 13



Highest pass for our Alpamayo Circuit, Ann and David Edwards

kilometres. It's longer at altitude, so I found by the time I got to the lake, progress was very slow indeed! They are good acclimatisation hikes and Churup followed by 69 is the best order. They are both nice walks in themselves.

“The third lung just doesn't grow that fast!”



Re-tying the freight before the mules head downhill

Acclimatisation and temperatures

Despite the four days acclimatisation, walking uphill at over 4000 metres in altitude still took a while to get used to. The third lung just doesn't grow that fast! Cordillera Blanca is a little lower and not quite so cold overnight, so going in that order worked very well. With the less exertion required for the guided option, going to both locations in the



Starlight Alpamayo

one holiday also worked out really well and meant that by the time we got to the 5000+ metre pass in Cordillera Huayhuash, we were well acclimatised and weren't even really struggling with the breathing at altitude.



On the "rest" day the team assembled on the summit of the hill above the Laguna Carhuacocha camp site

Temperatures during the day were pretty good - I was mostly walking in a light [Icebreaker](#) 150 T-shirt with one of their long sleeve 260 tops once the day warmed up and a heavy fleece on before that. Overnight was quite cold especially in the Cordillera Huayhuash with frost on the tent every morning, ice in puddles and frozen mud (easier to walk on than bog!). I didn't have a measuring device so I can't tell you exactly how cold it was, but I would guess -5 °C to -10 °C. I found wearing my heavier down jacket over my lightweight down jacket quite comfortable at night though! April can still be wet and we had some rain into May, so make



sure you have very good wet weather gear if you're heading to the mountains in April especially. We took our own sleeping bags and mats, but you can hire them.

Choosing between Cordilleras

I was asked to compare the two cordillera given we were going to one after the other. It's a bit of an unfair comparison for Cordillera Blanca because we had some unseasonal rain there and also being better acclimatised at Cordillera Huayhuash I think meant we were able to relax and enjoy it more. Cordillera Blanca has a lot more vegetation and wild flowers than Huayhuash, but both have their spectacular peaks and passes.

Until seven years ago, we had done lots of long day walks in Australia and other countries, but had never ventured into multi-day walks and didn't own the required gear ... and then I started planning our first trip to Patagonia and it became clear that things needed to change. Our first multi-day walk ever, was an eight night circuit around Torres del Paine in Chile. Since then, the gear collection keeps growing and we've walked the Overland Track, Carnarvon Great Walk, Larapinta Trail and several walks in Argentina, Chile and Peru. Things on the to-do list include The Snowman (Bhutan), The Arctic Circle Trail (Greenland), many things in Patagonia, Tasmania, WA, etc.

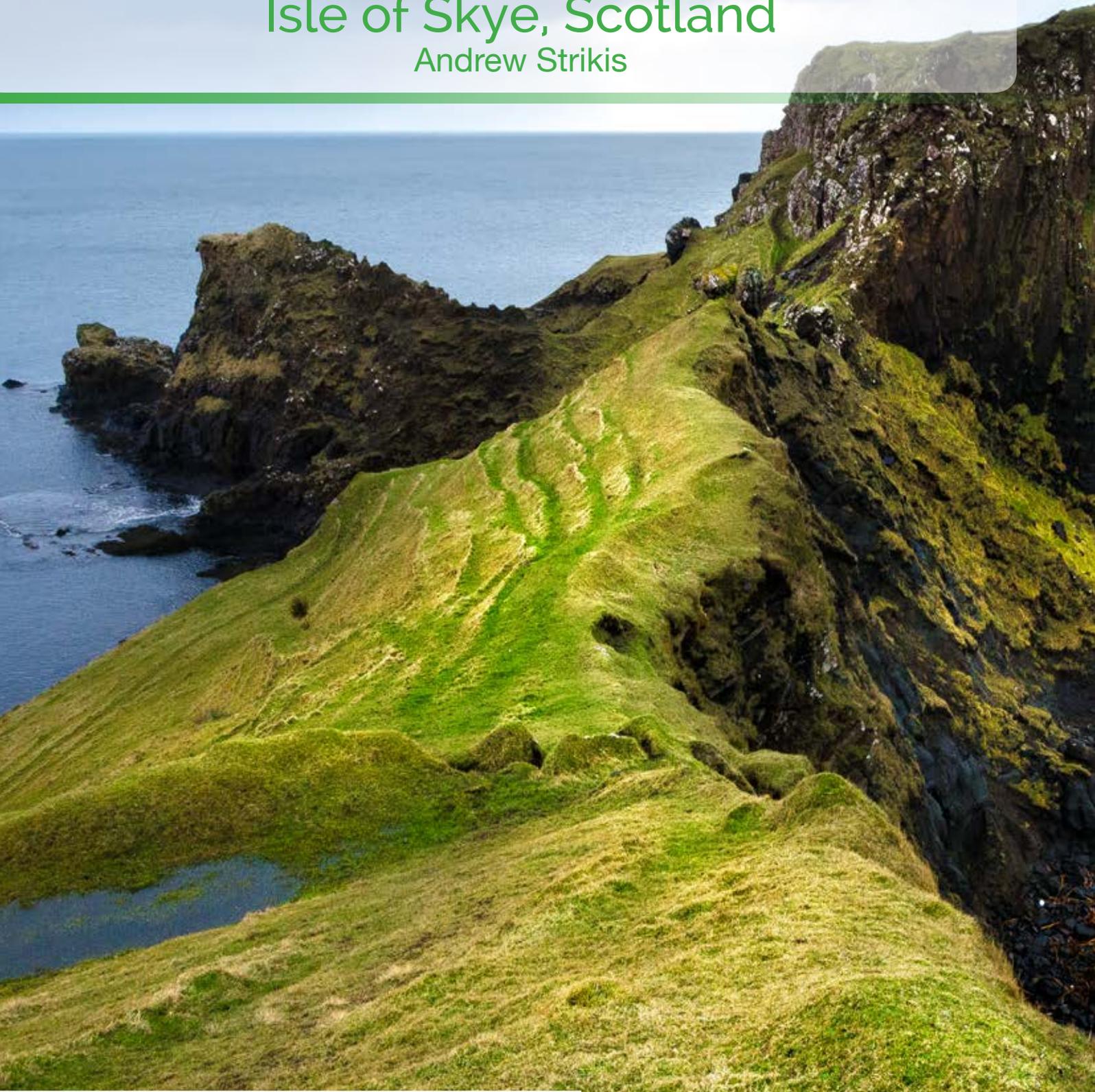


Yerupaja and Jirishanca from our Laguna Carhuacocha camp site

Brothers Point

Isle of Skye, Scotland

Andrew Strikis



It is so hard these days to find a ‘thing to do’ or a ‘place to see’ that hasn’t been done or seen by a *gazillion* other tourists already. But in Brothers Point - or Rubha nam Brathairen if you prefer the Gaelic version and don’t mind tripping over your own tongue - we found a fantastic little walk on the Isle of Skye that we know you’ll love!

Hiking to Brothers Point - Looking out along the peninsula
All pictures by Andrew Strikis

We didn't discover the hike to Brothers Point through our normal channels ([Walkhighlands](#) being our primary resource). This was a bizarre left-field discovery.

One evening, I happened to be thinking about the Aurora Borealis (the Northern Lights) and whether the coastline of the Isle of Skye would present any good photographic opportunities of this natural phenomenon. And so, Google Maps was opened and a methodical tracing of the coastline commenced. Hours later (yes, hours ... silly man) I found what appeared to be a very oddly shaped, yet intriguing headland jutting out from the Isle of Skye's eastern coast ... Brothers Point.

We'd never heard of this one before, but after a bit more research to confirm it could actually be accessed safely, we knew we were on a winner!

How to get to Brothers Point?

The car park for the Brothers Point hike – if you can call the small bitumen layover by the side of the road a car park – is about 20 kilometres north of Portree, or five kilometres south of Staffin. As you're driving, keep an eye out for the "[Skye Pie Café](#)" (we've heard very good reviews, but sadly it was closed in January) and you'll find the layover just 100 metres to the north.

Park your car and then head back towards the café where on the opposite side of the road you'll find the dirt road (with a very faded sign). This is the start of the walk to Brothers Point.

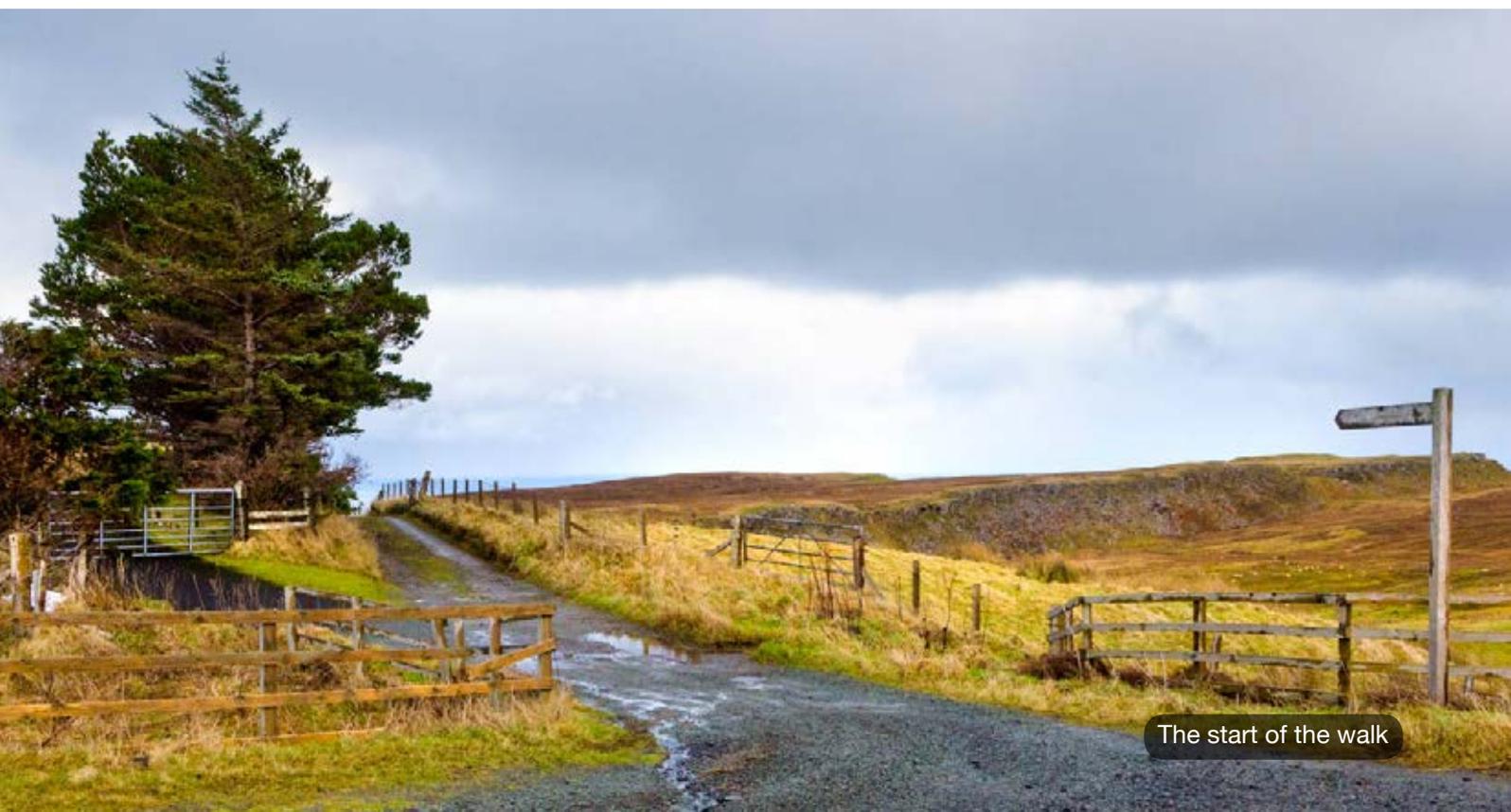
Hiking to Brothers Point

The hike to Brothers Point is in three parts, all reasonably short, but distinctly different from each other.

The first section takes you past a white-washed holiday bothy, through a gate, and past someone's house. We felt a little bit weird simply letting ourselves in and walking through (making sure we closed the gate behind us of course!), but it's important to remember Scotland's amazing [Outdoor Access Code](#) that essentially allows walkers the right to wander across any land that isn't seeded with crops (it's a little bit more complicated than that ... but that's the gist of it). How cool is that?

Once past the house you'll find the trail snaking down the hill (keep your eyes open for the cascading waterfall to your right, back near the road) and towards the ruins of an old bothy. The path descends to the pebbly beach and tumbled-down remains of what used to be an old salmon processing shack. The evidence is sketchy, but it's also thought that monks lived here hundreds of years ago ... hence the name of the headland.

“... wander across any land that isn't seeded with crops ...”



The start of the walk

While you're not going to be sunbathing anytime soon on such a rocky beach – unless you really love the smell of kelp and the intimate caress of a thousand rocks under your spine – the views are lovely looking out to the tip of Brothers Point and further up the coast.

As you climb up and away from the beach you'll notice that the trail gets very boggy and becomes unclear. It's of no concern though as you only need to follow the line of cliffs on your right-hand side to the only place that gives you access to the next dramatic section.

This final spit of land is why you're here, and it is simply amazing. Upwards and outwards along a fast-narrowing ridge, only curious sheep for company and a long drop all the way down to the crashing breakers below.

It looks worse than it is in real life. We wouldn't say it's dangerous, but a lot of caution is needed as you navigate the narrow trail to Brothers Point. It rises to a small plateau where you'll find the faint remains of an old fort. The views will take your breath away, from the epic Mealt Falls and Kilt Rock in the north, sweeping across the grey waters of The Minch to the dark silhouette of the Isle of Rona in the east.

This is Scotland and the Isle of Skye at its finest!



Looking north to Mealt Falls and Kilt Rock

What's most surprising though is the way the headland then flattens out into rolling meadows of the most vivid green. Time it right and you'll find it to be the perfect place for a picnic lunch.

Alternatively, if you're looking for a unique angle on the Isle of Skye, between September and April the sunrise dramatically lights up the southern side of Brothers Point. If you're a photographer you've got to check out some of the photos online, and then go and create your own memories!

“... unless you really love the smell of kelp and the intimate caress of a thousand rocks under your spine ...”



Passing through the property

Accommodation near Brothers Point

If this hike to Brothers Point sounds tempting then it makes sense to book your accommodation either close by, or a short drive south in Portree. The other bonus is that this region is central to two of the most popular walks on the Isle of Skye – The Quiraing (see our review [here](#)) and The Old Man of Storr – making this an ideal base for all your explorations.

We're not joking when we say that the Isle of Skye books out fast – months ahead of the peak and shoulder tourist period – so don't leave it too late!!

Here are some excellent options that get great reviews from fellow travellers. Clicking through these links and making a booking won't cost you a penny extra, but we may receive a small commission helping us keep our caffeine levels above critical, and [our blog](#) costs low. Thanks for your support!

- *Cheap and cheerful* – [Benview B&B](#) is a gorgeous family-run bed and breakfast only 6 kilometres north of Brothers Point. Free WiFi is included in your rate and everyone raves about their delicious hot Scottish breakfasts!
- *Family value* – [Beinn Edra House](#) is located close to the epic clifftops for which the Isle of Skye is famous. The views from the rooms are amazing and you'll love their cooked breakfasts. They also have the perfect touch when it comes to making your children feel welcome – and we all know how important that is. Even better, they're only a 15 minute walk (1.5 kilometres) from the Brothers Point trail head.
- *Self-catering luxury* – [Lochside](#) is an ideal option for couples or small families wanting to relax in comfort, with the option to cook your own meals whenever you like at a fraction of the cost of eating out. Sitting on the shore of Loch Mealt, this beautifully restored property is fully equipped, wonderfully appointed (wait 'til you see the bath!), and is only a five minute walk to the massive Mealt Falls viewpoint.

“The views from the rooms are amazing and you'll love their cooked breakfasts.”



Looking back along the knife edge

Accommodation in Portree

- *Self-catering value* – [Home Farm Apartments](#) is located on the northern outskirts of Portree, just a short walk from the restaurants and other attractions in town. The little welcome pack on arrival is a nice touch and should tide you over until you can do a proper shop in town. You'll find the kitchen to be well equipped for all your cooking adventures, and their heating is rock solid in winter.
- *Surprising luxury* – Your jaw will drop when you see [The Apartment](#) in Portree. They've thought of everything here to make your stay as comfortable and memorable as possible. The old stone cottage shows its heritage from the outside – but on the inside it's a different story altogether, with a brand new kitchen and bathroom, fuel stove, free WiFi, and fantastic views across town.
- *Budget comfort* – The [Portree Youth Hostel](#) is the perfect option for backpackers and small families looking to stretch their Scottish pounds as far as possible. Linen is provided – unlike many other hostels – and their rooms are

comfortable, with both shared and private options available. The communal kitchen is large, and breakfast can be purchased for a little extra if needed. Best of all, they are located extremely close to public transport and central Portree.

While exploring the Isle of Skye we stayed at [Bealach Uige Bothy](#).

The Bothy is gorgeously decorated with a modern interior (quite rare!), it's self-catering and we found it to be the perfect escape from winter's bite. Click [here](#) to view rates and availability for the self-contained Bothy – it's an absolute gem!

If you haven't tried [Airbnb](#) before, we highly recommend that you do. It can save you an absolute packet!

Our final thoughts on hiking to Brothers Point

It's not overly taxing, the landscape is truly memorable, and you'll even get a little adrenalin rush navigating the steep ridge. Even better, hardly anyone knows about it so just like us you may well get the whole place to yourself! (so keep it quiet, yeah?)



Walking down the hill

What more could you want? This is one of the best walks we completed on both the Isle of Skye and in Scotland in general.

In total the return hike took us around two hours. The weather was turning for the worst though, so we didn't spend as long on the meadow than we would have liked. The only reliable thing about Scotland's weather is that it's always changing, so dress in layers and make sure you take a waterproof jacket. If the winds were high then you definitely would *not* want to be attempting the ridgeline, so do check the forecast before you go.

Reward-to-effort: 10/10

Leech count: 0

Snake count: 0

Update – April 2018

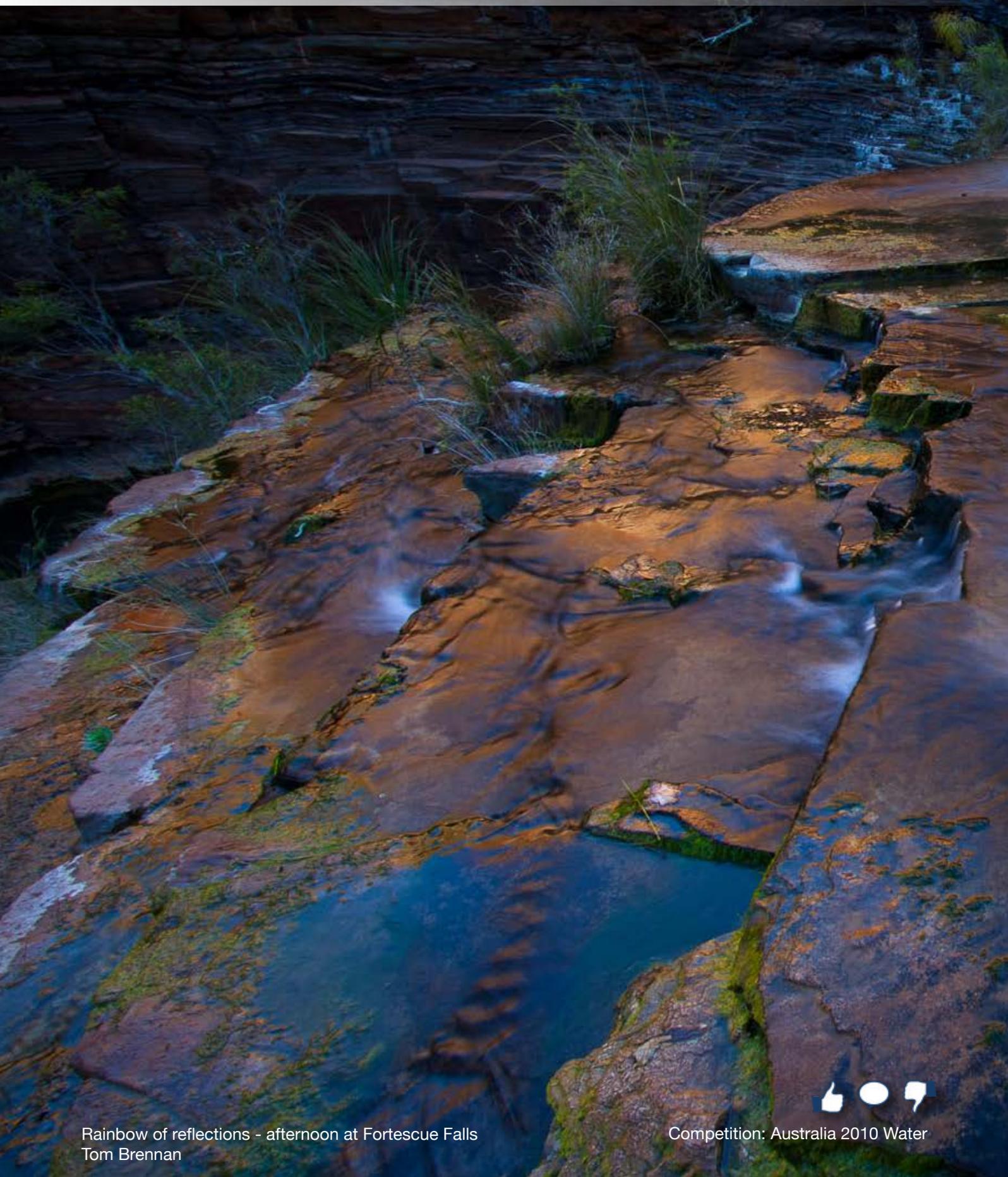
Well, if it wasn't awesome enough, it turns out Brothers Point has more than a dozen dinosaur tracks that can be seen at low tide! While this news is fantastic, it also means that the peninsula is going to see a lot more foot traffic as people hike to Brothers Point. If you're planning on walking or hiking to Brothers Point, please do everything you can to minimise your impact by sticking to the beach and the marked path wherever possible – future generations will thank you for it!



After moving to Tasmania more than 10 years ago, Andrew and Karen fell in love with Tasmania and its wonderful landscapes. Through captivating photography and engaging stories they share their love of hiking - and all the trails they've explored around the world - on their award-winning food and travel website [Fork + Foot](#).



Photo Gallery

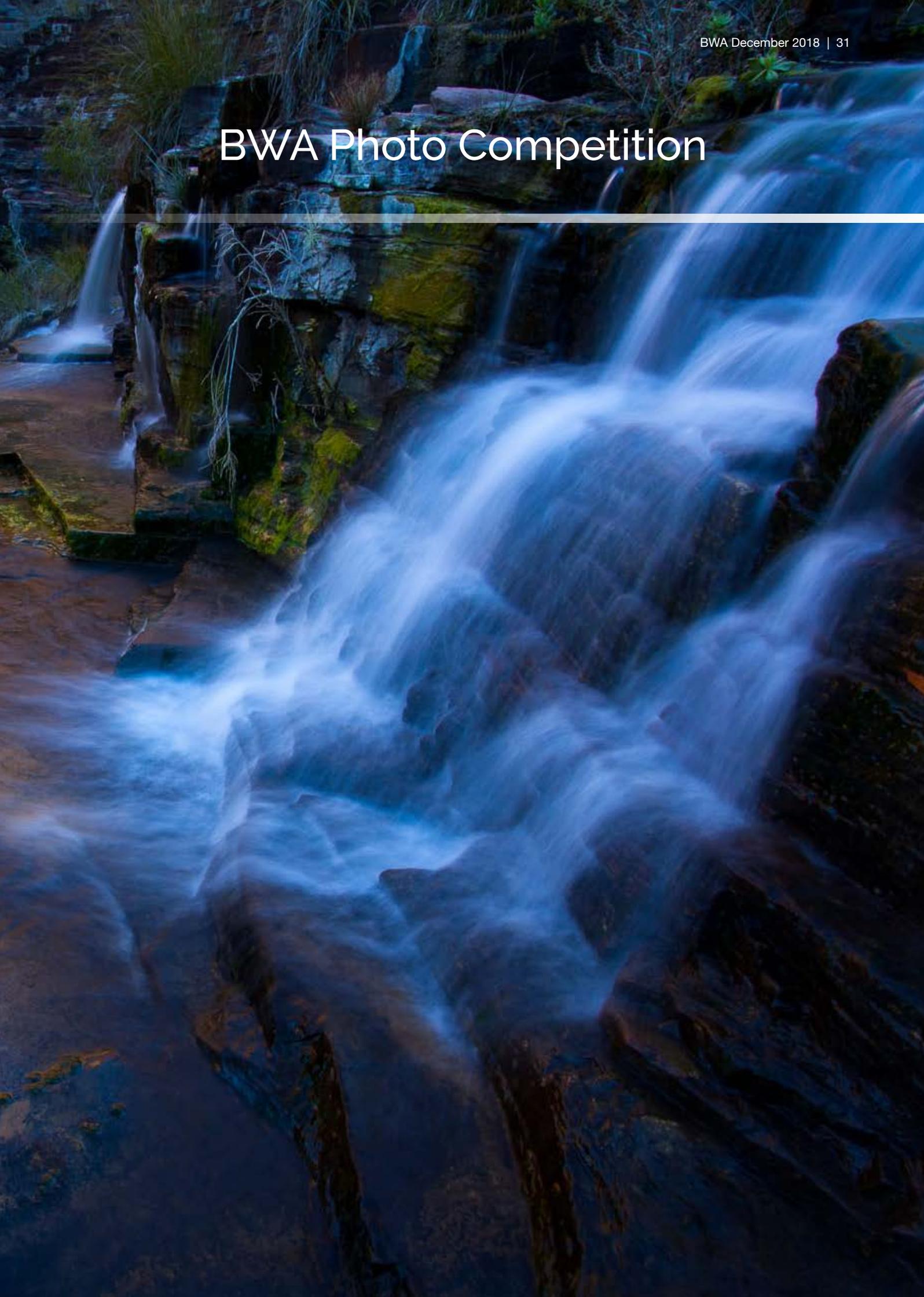


Rainbow of reflections - afternoon at Fortescue Falls
Tom Brennan

Competition: Australia 2010 Water



BWA Photo Competition



Landscapes December 2017

WINNER



Evening light show
North-north-west

You know what they say about red skies at night and at morning - well, this time it worked the other way around, with the glorious sunset heralding a weather change that made for an uncomfortable night and even more unpleasant descent the next day. But it did present a great photographic opportunity.



Laying out
the green carpet
Peter Grant



There's a whale out there
Osik



Clarke Gorge,
Snowy Mountains
AJW Canyon2011



Mt Gould from
The Labyrinth
Iaindtiler



The quest of
Kangaroo Ridge
John Walker



Below Briggs Bluff
Brian Eglinton



Non-landscapes December 2017

WINNER



Summer delight
landsmith

We visit some friends at Cooranbong every so often and, around a nature pond on the street are these gorgeous gum trees. So, one day I simply pulled up with camera in hand. Sometimes you don't have to go far!



Mother and orphan
John Walker



Flowering Cushion plant,
morning drink
laindtiler



Impact
Brian Eglinton



G'day bright eyes
Peter Grant



Bare to see
Picnic



Going great Gunns
(*Sarcophilus australis*)
North-north-west



Tasmania December 2017

WINNER



A room with a view
North-north-west

I first tried to climb Secheron nearly fifty years ago, from the old (real) Lake Pedder with a school group, but the supervisors wouldn't let us do it. This time, however, there was no-one to say no. The wind came up overnight and the descent the next morning was through thick fog and had me staggering back to the kayak with concussion, but it was so worth it.



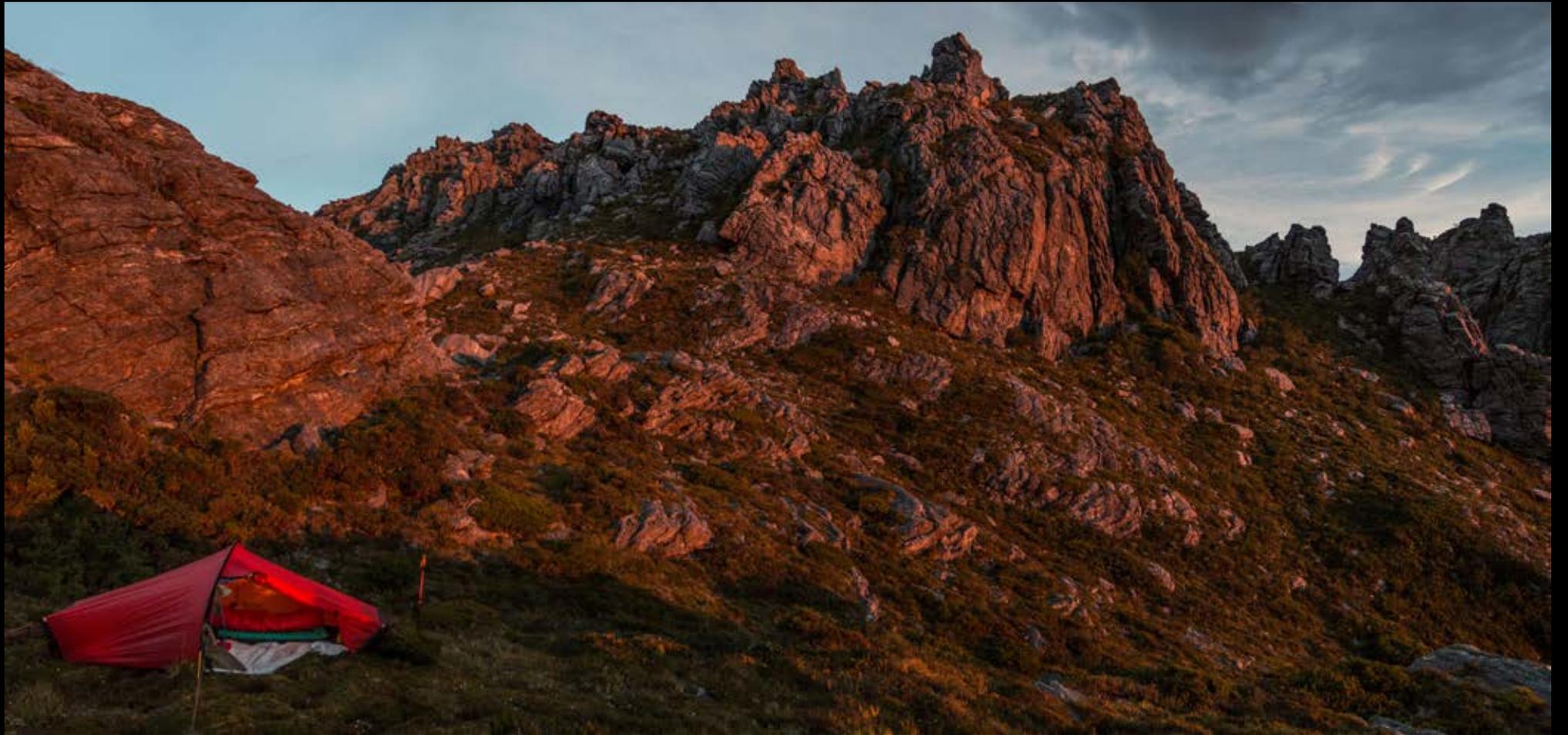
Secret Falls
Caedo12



Walled Mount Shadow
Iaindtiler



Sunset in the land
of a thousand lakes
Peter Grant



Other States December 2017

WINNER



A secret valley in the
Kimberley
Osik



Beehive Falls
Brian Eglinton



The serene Upper Snowy
John Walker



Road to the track,
road to the hill
Picnic



Cleared for landing
landsmith



Landscapes January 2018

WINNER



Lake Pedder sunset
Ben Trainor

Late on a warm summer afternoon my brother and I walked up to High Camp Hut for our first night on the Mount Anne circuit. With a storm brewing, after dinner we scrambled part way up Mount Eliza to watch the sunset with the Lake Pedder impoundment glistening below. Spectacular views, yet a sobering reminder that the wondrous real Lake Pedder remains flooded somewhere beneath.



Mount Pillinger
from Lake Price
Bogholesbuckethats



Tassie jewels
Tortoise



Triggers & Needles
Andrew Smyth



The moody Twynams,
Kosciuszko NP
John Walker



Tarkine Coast
North-north-west



Coastal
Picnic



Non-landscapes January 2018

WINNER



Richea rotations
Ben Trainor

Resting weary feet we explored Mount Field National Park for a few days. We went on a Pandani guided walk with a brilliant ranger Emma who taught us about *richea* species endemic to Tasmania. Inspired, we strolled along Tarn Shelf. We found some old *richea* specimens with some spiralling formations beside Lake Newdegate.



Female
wandering percher
landsmith



U-turn
North-north-west



Tiger snake keeping dry
AJW Canyon2011



Make a wish
Picnic



Tiger country
Andrew Smyth



Tidal pool
Brian Eglinton



Tasmania January 2018

WINNER



Reynolds Falls
Bogholesbuckethats

An excellent place to spend a 30+ degree day. We spent hours floating around the large bowl and numerous waterholes below the falls. The refreshing feeling of the water was soon forgotten while slogging back up the steep spur.



Summit day
North-north-west



Lake Judd
Ben Trainor



Summer walking
in the Southern Ranges
Tortoise



Florentine Forest
Andrew Smyth



Misty Southwest sights -
Iaindtiler



Other States January 2018

WINNER



The hills are alive...
John Walker

We've been biennial summer visitors to the NSW Snowy Mountains for a long period. I often enjoy inventing my own solo day hikes exploring previously unvisited locations. While looking for prospective routes from near Charlotte Pass to the Snowy River, paralleling Spencers Creek, I came across this pretty spot on a traverse over the top of Mount Guthrie, on its northeast flanks. Coming from Charlotte Pass the route I chose was a little scrubby and awkward in places but quite doable. It is relatively close to the road, but high above it, and felt like a million miles from anywhere. It's one of those areas that I doubt many bother with but I found it worth the effort. One disappointing aspect was that I later discovered that the bright reddish flowers in the photo are actually an introduced *Rumex* species, i.e. a weed. It shows that you always learn something, and I duly reported the sighting to NPWS.



Shelly Beach
Picnic

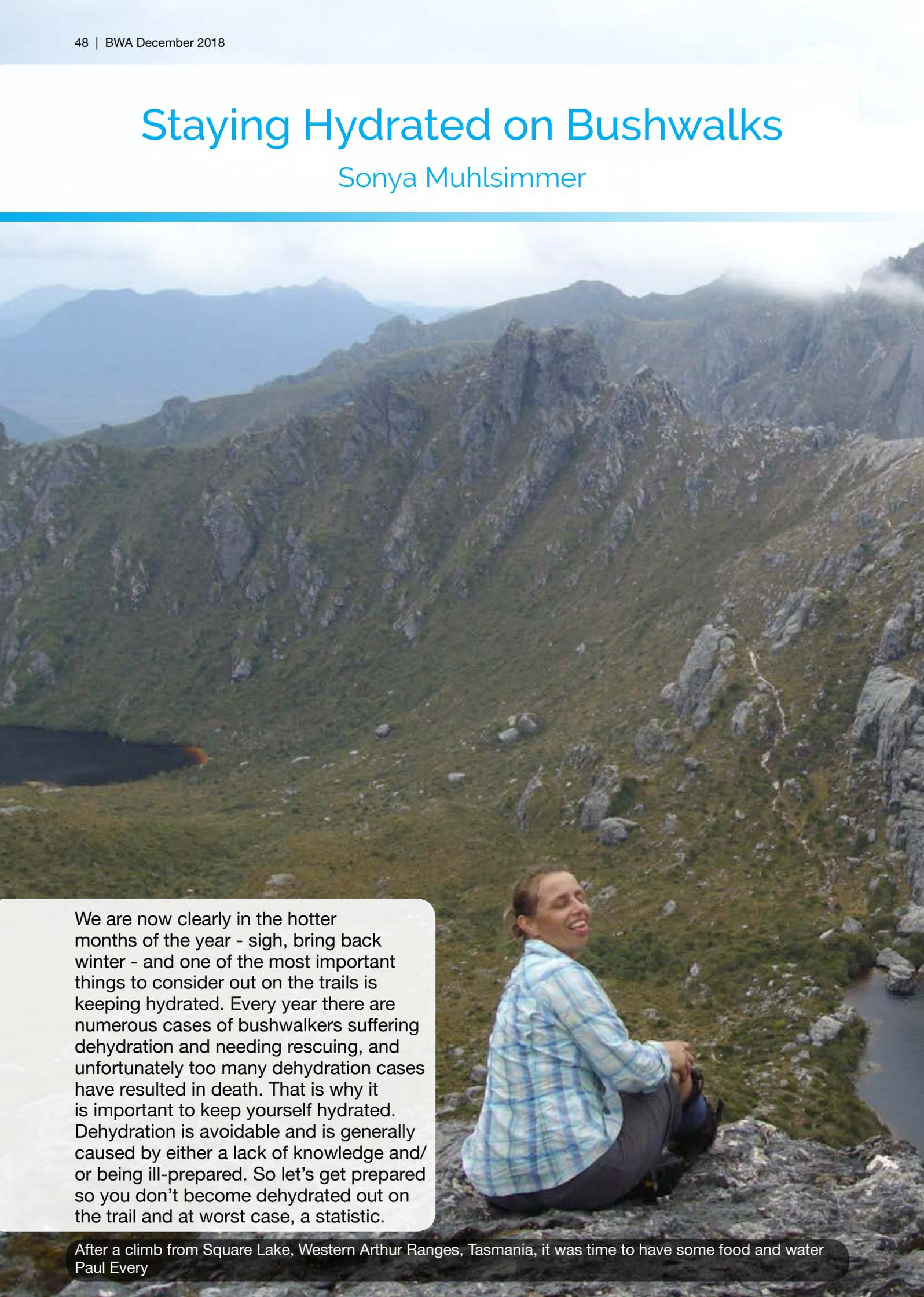


Anna Bay
Brian Eglinton



Staying Hydrated on Bushwalks

Sonya Muhlsimmer



We are now clearly in the hotter months of the year - sigh, bring back winter - and one of the most important things to consider out on the trails is keeping hydrated. Every year there are numerous cases of bushwalkers suffering dehydration and needing rescuing, and unfortunately too many dehydration cases have resulted in death. That is why it is important to keep yourself hydrated. Dehydration is avoidable and is generally caused by either a lack of knowledge and/or being ill-prepared. So let's get prepared so you don't become dehydrated out on the trail and at worst case, a statistic.

After a climb from Square Lake, Western Arthur Ranges, Tasmania, it was time to have some food and water
Paul Every

Water in the body

Water makes up to about 50-70% of the body's weight, a huge amount.

- Blood is about 90% water.
- Muscles are about 75% water.
- Bones are about 25% water.

Water loss up to 3% can decrease the blood volume – this means less oxygen can travel through the body, less blood gets pumped through the heart and the body temperature can raise a lot quicker. A 5% loss causes disorientation and confusion and a 10-20% loss of water can be fatal. You can lose 2-3 litres a day of water by sweating, going to the toilet and also by breathing, and in worst cases you lose a lot of water when you are sick and are throwing up or are suffering from diarrhoea. It is not only water that you lose; it is the electrolytes and sodium which are contained in the cells that can be lost. These electrolytes are important as they regulate nerve and muscle functions and need to be replaced.

“ Dehydration is preventable, by drinking enough water.



Dehydration

Some symptoms of dehydration include:

- Having a dry mouth,
- Feeling thirsty,
- Dry skin,
- Suffering a headache,
- Not needing to pee much and when you do pee your pee is a dark yellow colour, (check the table below),
- Lack of energy,
- Loss of appetite,
- Rapid heartbeat, and
- Feeling dizzy or even fainting.

This chart can help determine how hydrated you are (chart taken from dripdrop.com). Check it out.

What colour?	Are you hydrated?
	Pale yellow to clear is normal and indicates that you are well hydrated.
	Light yellow and transparent is also normal and indicates an ideal hydration status.
	A pale honey, transparent colour indicates normal hydration, but may mean that you need to hydrate soon.
	A yellow, more cloudy colour means your body needs water.
	A darker yellow, amber colour isn't healthy. Your body needs water.
	Orangish yellow and darker: you're severely dehydrated. Contact your doctor immediately.

Dehydration is preventable, by drinking enough water. No, not by guzzling a bottle every few hours, and I know a lot of people that do that, or worse still that they even wait until camp to rehydrate. The best way is sipping as you go. Do not wait until you are thirsty; remember this is one sign that you are already dehydrated.

Keeping rehydrated

As mentioned, I find the best way out on the trails is by sipping water, and electrolytes, regularly. This way you won't get thirsty, won't lose a lot of electrolytes and won't suffer dehydration.

Water bladders are great as you can sip on the go without having to take the pack off and reach for the water bottle. I also keep a bottle on the side filled with a sports drink formulation. Sports drinks are designed to replace water and electrolytes and give you a bit of energy. This gives you a choice of drinks, as sometimes water alone can be pretty boring and not sufficient enough, and the sports drink replaces the electrolytes your body loses through sweat.

There are plenty of sports drinks on the market, and they are scientifically designed so follow the instructions. Go for the one you like best or either pick the one that has the highest energy level per 100 ml content. There is a good range at the supermarkets.

Hydrolyte tables or powder sachets are also a scientific formulation and can be found at chemists. I always keep some sachets in my first aid kit; you never know when you, or someone may need a pick-me-up and besides, the sachets only weigh in at 6 grams each, and are designed to be added to 200 mL of water. I have had to help bushwalkers suffering dehydration a few times, and it is not good for them or me to be in that situation. One sachet goes a long way in treating someone with mild dehydration.

Finding safe drinking water on the trails

How do you know if the water you find on the trail is suitable to drink? It looks clean, right, so is that good enough? Well, that

does depend a lot on where you are. Are there farms, or suburbs close by? Areas that have a lot of visitors and no toilets may also have poor water quality, such as either side of Pelion Gap in Tasmania. Most remote Tasmanian wilderness has clean, drinkable water but in some parts of Kosciuszko National Park in NSW it is advisable to treat the water as Giardia has been found. And if you are camping in the Blue Mountains, treating water with tablets and filtering the water is advisable. Do your research of the area before you head out. But if you have any doubt, I suggest treating the water. This can be done with tablets, filtering, boiling the water or even with UV light.

Tablets for disinfecting water

There is a range of tablets on the market, but the Katadyn Micropur tablets are the ones I use. I have suffered terribly due to drinking bad water, and it is not pleasant. It doesn't take much to treat water, just pop a tablet into the water; it may just save you a lot of pain and suffering in the end. These tablets come in a blister pack and can last a long time, just use what you need. Some other tablets come in a bottle which is heavier to use and due to the moisture in the air every time you open the jar, they don't last as long. With treating water, the moral of the story is if in doubt, treat the water. The active ingredient in the tablets is usually chlorine, chlorine dioxide or iodine, so you may be able to taste a taint in the water, pending your sense of taste. They are



designed to kill bacteria. Again the tablets are a scientific formulation so follow the instructions, oh but you have to wait at least 30 minutes for the tablets to work. It can be a good idea to carry two water bottles, one for ready to drink water - and one for water that is being treated. The other disadvantage about the tablets is, they do not remove sediments. This is where filtering can be used.

Filtering water

Pump filters can be used, however they are a bit time consuming, especially if you have been allocated the job of collecting water for camp for the night. You could find yourself sitting on a river bank, pondering the day and well, um, pumping water, litres and litres of it. And it depends on what kind of pump you have as to how long it takes. I have been told the Sawyer brand pumps are good. The pumps trap most bacteria – but not viruses, that are in the water, but they come with a few parts and you have to maintain them to be any good. And some can be a bit on the heavy side. There are a few brands and sizes around at different price points so for the scope of this article I suggest you do your own research. Talk to your camping store, they will be able to suggest the best one for your needs.

You do have an option of a life straw for personal use. A life straw is a water filter that looks like a large thick straw. It uses a hollow fibre

membrane and does not require chemicals and it removes 99.9 percent of waterborne bacteria and it reduces the muddiness of water, so it cleans the water..

Lifestraws are small and light weight and great for minimalists, as you can just stick it in a stream and drink.

Admittedly I do not own a filter pump, and I have been known to filter water through my shirt when needed, with the use of the tablets.



Lifestraw - ultra-light "straw" water filter

Boiling water

This is great at camp, but not necessarily during the day when you're on the move.

Boiling water will kill bacteria, viruses and anything really. Simply put a pot of water on and boil for about two minutes. If you're at high altitudes, boil for around three minutes. For example, on higher NSW and Victorian peaks and plains the boiling point for water is around 92 °C. There's a [calculator](#) showing altitude and boiling point.

Ultra violet

Some wastewater treatment plants treat the water with UV light - and other treatments - before releasing it into the environment, so I guess that is some reassurance in the method. I must say I have not used one before, so I have just Googled this information. Steripens kill off 99.9 percent of bacteria and viruses. It does not add an additional chemical so there is no faint taint. They are expensive, but they are light and fit in the top of a rucksack nicely, there's no bulky parts and no real maintenance required, and they are easy to use. Just pop it in the water and turn it on, presto you have clean water, and your own pocket size force beam. May the force be with you! Steripens do require batteries, so you want to ensure you take spare batteries if you use this method. I have seen tourists in the Blue Mountains on a day walk using a Steripen on water they collected from a waterfall.



SteriPEN Classic 3

Final advice

As mentioned there are numerous cases of rescues and deaths due to dehydration, so it pays to be prepared. Do your homework for the area, including the availability and potability of water before you head out. And remember this, TREK:

- T - Take adequate supplies of food, water, navigation and first aid equipment.
- R - Register your planned route and tell friends and family when you expect to return.
- E - Emergency beacon (PLBs) are available free of charge from NSW Police Force and NPWS.
- K - Keep to your planned route and follow the map and walking trails.



National Park Threats

Stephen Lake



National parks are still under threat from feral horses and logging, with four ABC articles reporting these issues. The following is a summary of the articles, and my views.

Feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park
Matt McClelland

Snowy River feral horses die of starvation

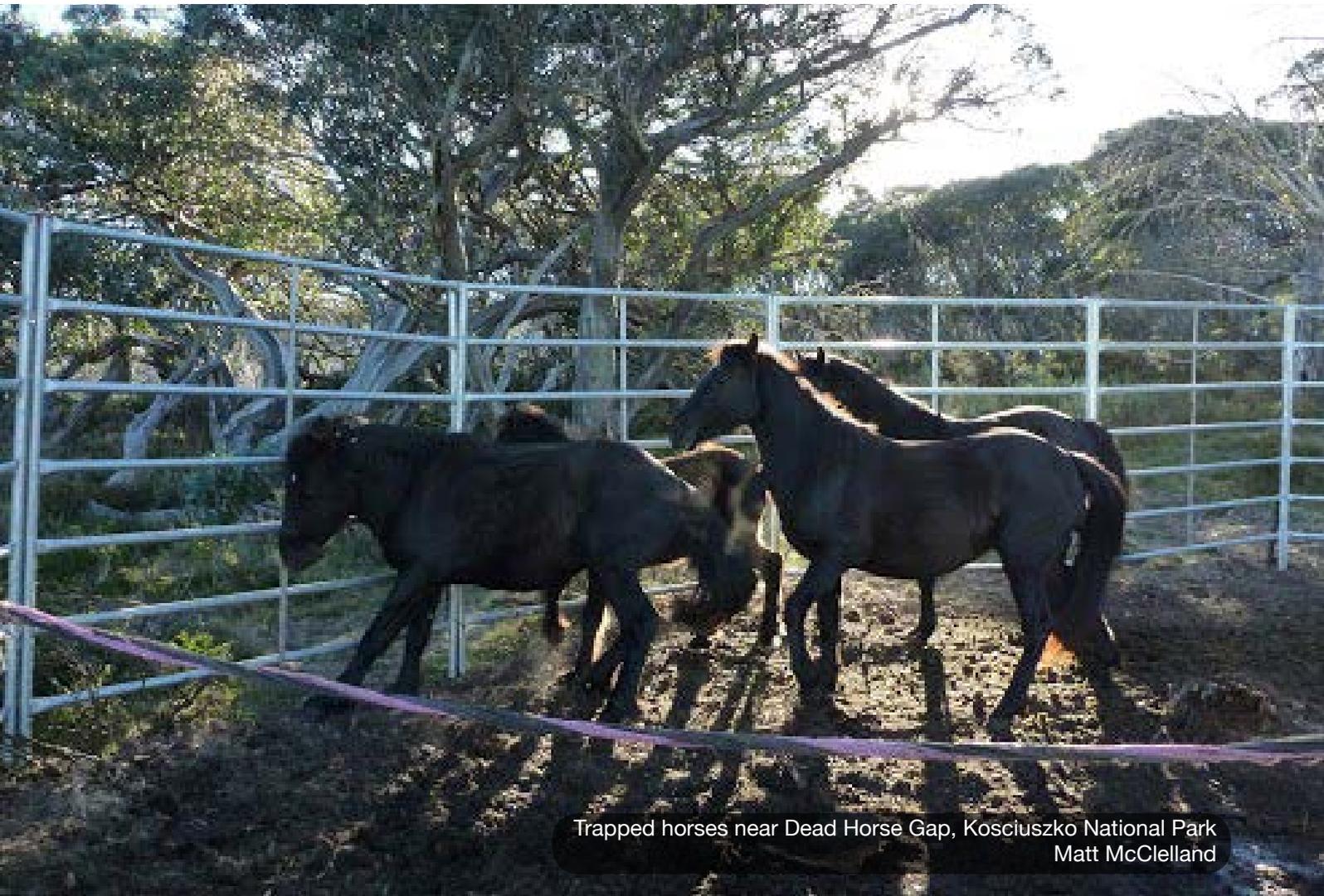
This is a [very graphic article](#), a horse dead of starvation near the Snowy River in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP). The image is one that feral horse advocates do not want us to see – animals suffering and dying.

It's hard to know the truth. Certainly horses have died of starvation as reported, but is this typical over time and geography? On balance, I think so. The deaths were reported by Richard Swain, who has run guided river tours for more than 20 years. He is also a member of the Invasive Species Council. In my view he has more than adequate experience and judgement to assess matters.

A contrary view has been taken by Peter Cochran, a former state MP who runs horse treks in the Snowy Mountains. He is quoted as saying "If you were to go into [the park] you will see there is an abundance of feed throughout the majority of the park. There are some areas that are stressed and where there has been less rain, but again that's part of nature." I cannot say for sure that there is feed in most of the park. Immediately after winter – indeed with snow on the higher

peaks at publication of the article on 8 October 2018 – KNP would be very green. It would be useful to see how KNP looks in late summer and count the number of dead horses. This needs to be measured and assessed over time. I agree with his last words – differing vegetation is part of nature. What Mr Cochrane sees as "feed" is actually native plants protected in a national park, which exists to protect them. To define a national park as "feed" is to start thinking of parks as paddocks. This is unacceptable.

Due to his horse trekking business, Mr Cochran may not be as objective as desired. I know that the science over the last 10-15 years shows that horses starve in winter, with cold wet weather hastening their death. BWA has had articles about feral horses in the [August 2016](#) and [June 2018 editions](#) discussing this issue. The environmental damage caused by feral horses is significant, taking NPWS resources. There is nothing "natural" about horses in an Australian landscape competing for food, especially at times of drought. Horses are an introduced animal, significantly different from all native animals in their size, hoof hardness and



Trapped horses near Dead Horse Gap, Kosciuszko National Park
Matt McClelland

appetite. There is nothing natural about horses eating the food supplies of native animals such as the wombat. There is nothing natural about the way the way horses hard hoofs rip up fragile river beds and bogs. Suggesting that national parks can be put to a good use as paddocks to feed horses is a far cry from their original intention of protecting native biodiversity.

Scientists call for feral horse protection to be dropped

This is much clearer than the above; it's science, conclusions based on evidence and peer reviewed. [The article](#) says:

"Dozens of scientists today signed a new accord, calling on the New South Wales Government to overturn the so-called Brumby Bill which handed new protections to the wild horses in the Kosciuszko National Park based on their cultural significance."

Dr Dick Williams from Charles Darwin University said that an emotionally engaging message is needed. He is quoted as saying, "What science has to do, is to sell the beauty of the Australian Alps." This will not be easy. Feral horses are part of our culture, and this needs to be reviewed in light of contemporary values. The cost of allowing feral horses to continue to degrade alpine and other regions is significant.

The Snowy River has been damned, er, dammed, and is now much smaller than before. The following is the start of a poem, *The man from Snowy Trickle*.

There was movement on the high plains, for
the scientists had shown
That the horses trampled hard the soft grass
land.
And had caused extensive damage – parks
budget it was blown,
So conservationists they had to take a stand.
The did not act for money, saving nature was
their only goal.
They called upon the government to change
Save the future for our children, and save
your mortal soul
Then later look proudly on the mountain
range.

Read [another article](#) that talks about similar themes to the above.



Proposal to change a national park to state forest

[The article](#) says:

"Nationals MP Austin Evans is preparing to introduce a bill to state parliament to return the Murray Valley National Park in southern New South Wales to state forest."

This is an unprecedented suggestion. National parks are not created on a whim. There's a fairly long process to consider the merits of the possible park, 30 years for Murray Valley NP. While jobs are important, parks have benefits that may be hard to quantify, and do not have the appeal to the broader community that jobs do.

For example, biodiversity does not rate on most balance sheets. There's no immediate dollars in this. However, the science is clear: biodiversity is essential. Another aspect that is often not considered is the quality, quantity and timing of water. A pristine forest slowly absorbs precipitation and slowly lets this run off, like a sponge. Logged areas have precipitation rapidly run off, causing siltation and loss of soil nutrients. Water was one reason that logging ceased in a number of Victorian areas.

So the matter must be considered holistically, with all costs over time. One example is the Heyfield logging mill in Gippsland, Victoria. Due to dwindling supplies, the mill was no longer viable and the Victorian government bought the mill for around \$50 million. There are 250 jobs at the mill, so it works out at about \$2 million a job. This is not a final figure as the mill staff spend in the community.

It should be noted that if the mill was run sustainably, perhaps from pine plantations, then the problem would not have arisen. For as long as I can recall, conservationists have been suggesting pine plantations.

One Murray Valley local says that visitor numbers have dropped. The change in conditions could well be due to the visitor practices being unsustainable and damaging the land. We need to think longer than the short term, and consider what we are leaving for our children. I've made short-term sacrifices to achieve long-term goals. After many years this has paid off very well.



Wild flowers, Watsons Crags, western view and beyond
Main Range walk, Kosciuszko National Park
Tony

Trails on Trial

Bill Laurance and David Salt



There's no question about it: parks and protected areas are the absolute cornerstone of our efforts to protect nature. In the long term, we can't save wildlife and ecosystems without them.

Road for an industrial gold mine slicing through Panamanian rainforest
Susan Laurance

But [people want to use parks too](#), and in rapidly growing numbers. Around the world, parks are destinations for recreational activities like hiking, bird-watching and camping, as well as noisier affairs such as mountain-biking, snowmobiling and four-wheel-driving.

Where do we draw the line?

Road risks

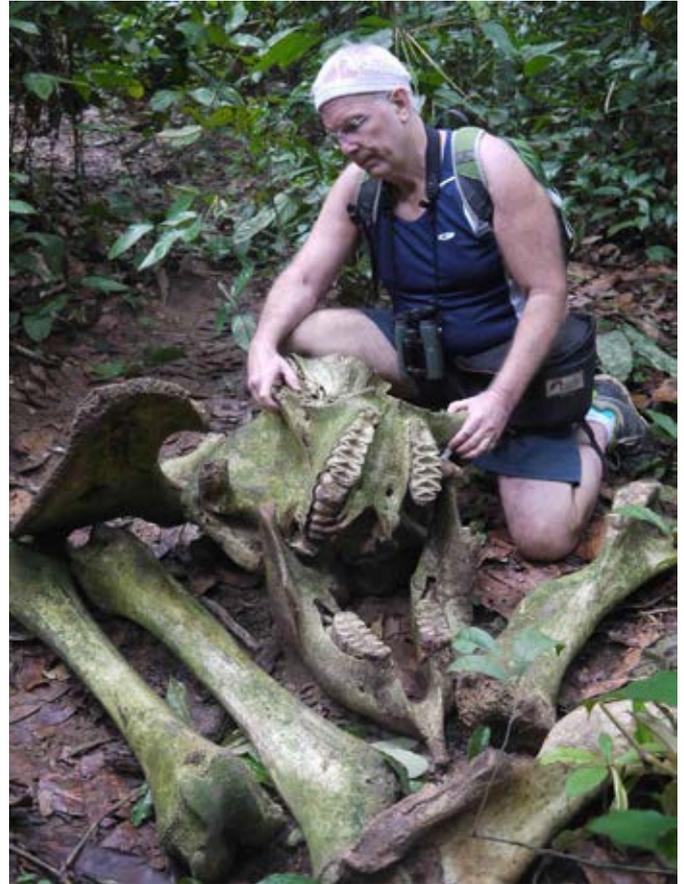
Let's start by looking at the roads that take us into and through parks. They can be a double-edged sword.

Roads are needed to allow tourists to access parks, but we have to be very careful where and how we build them.

In regions where law enforcement is weak, roads can rip apart a forest — [sharply increasing illegal activities](#) such as poaching, deforestation and mining.

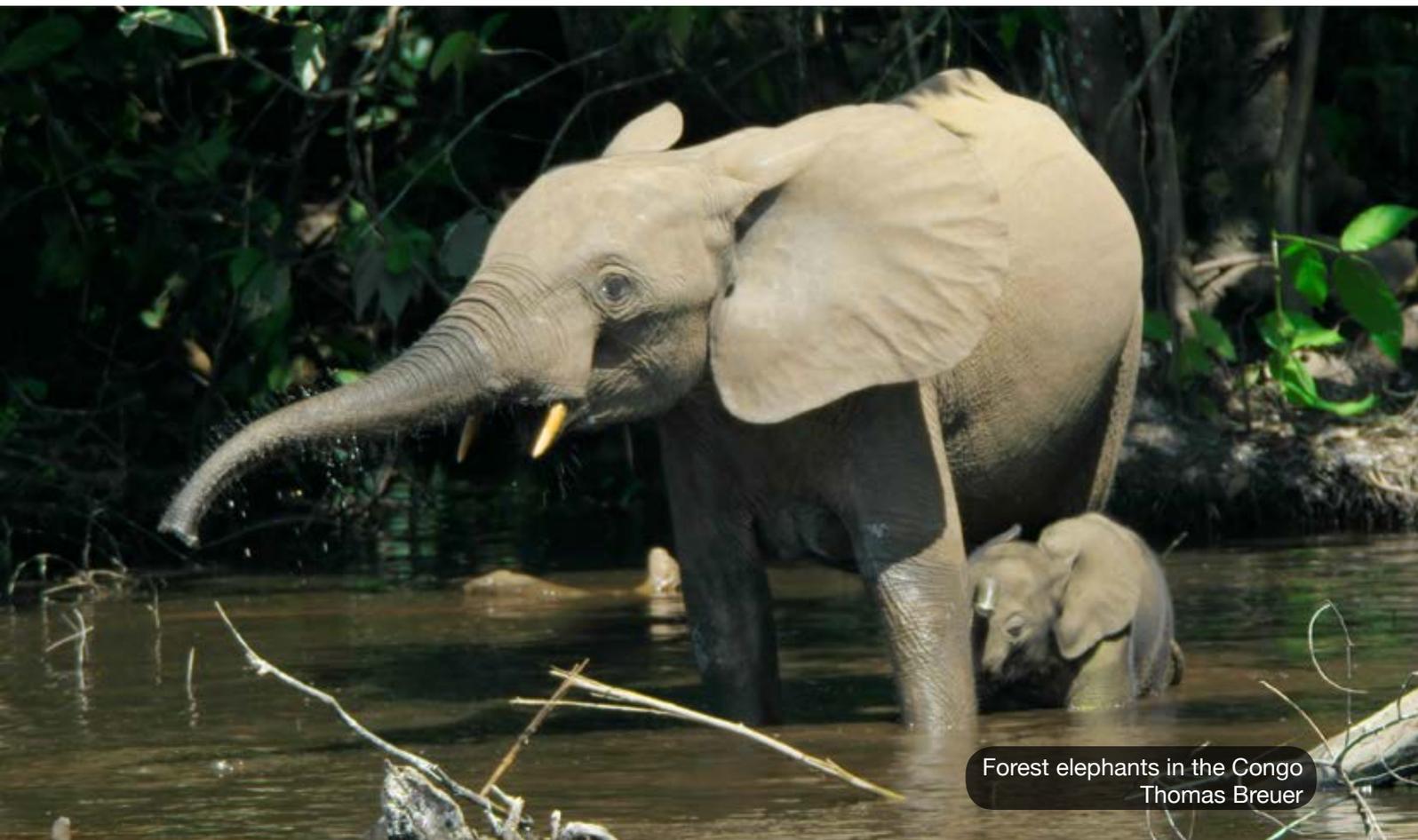
According to my (Bill's) [research](#), new roads – often driven by foreign mining or timber investors from nations such as China – could damage up to a third of all the protected areas in sub-Saharan Africa.

In [Nouabale Ndoke Park](#) in the Congo Basin, poaching wasn't a big problem until a new road was built along the edge of the park.



Bill Laurance examines a forest elephant slaughtered by poachers in the Congo. The elephant's face had been hacked off to extract its valuable ivory tusks. Mahmoud Mahmoud

Suddenly the fatal *rak-rak-rak* of AK-47 rifles – often aimed at elephants by ivory poachers – was being heard all too often.



Forest elephants in the Congo
Thomas Breuer

Trails on trial

Roads are one thing, but what about a simple bike trail or walking track? They let in people too. But they are harmless, right?

Not always. A [2010 Canadian study](#) found that mountain biking causes a range of environmental impacts, including tyres chewing up the soil, causing compaction and erosion. This is a significant problem for fragile alpine vegetation in mountainous areas where many bikers like to explore.

Rapidly moving cyclists can also scare wildlife. In North America and Europe, many wild species, such as bears, wolves, caribou and bobcats, have been shown to [flee or avoid areas](#) frequented by hikers or bikers.

In Indonesia, even trails used by ecotourists and birdwatchers [scared away some sensitive wildlife species](#) or caused them to shift to being active only at night.

Every type of human activity – be it hiking or biking or horse riding – has its own [signature impact](#) on nature. We simply don't know the overall effect of human recreation on parks and protected areas globally.

However, a [study](#) earlier this year found that roughly one-third of all terrestrial protected areas worldwide – a staggering six million square kilometres, an area bigger than Kenya – is already under “intense” human pressure.

Roads, mines, industrial logging, farms, townships and cities all threaten these supposedly protected places. And on top of that are the impacts – probably lesser but still unquantified – of more benign human activities aimed at enjoying nature.

Keep people out?

Is the answer to stop people from visiting parks?

Not really. Visitors in many parts of the world help to [fund the operation](#) of national parks, and provide vital income for local people.

Exposure to nature is also one of the best ways to [enhance human health, build support for environmental protection](#), and generate political momentum for the establishment of new protected areas.

What's more, locking people out of land is a very unpopular thing to do. Governments that block people from accessing nature reserves often face an electoral backlash.

How to manage humanity

If we accept that people must be able to use parks, what's the best way to limit their impacts on ecosystems and wildlife? One way is to encourage them to stay on designated trails and tourist routes.

A [recent study](#) (using geotagged data from photos) showed that half of all photos by park visitors were taken in less than 1% of each park.

In other words, most visitors use only a small, highly trafficked part of each park. That's good news for nature.

If people tend to limit their activities to the vicinity of pretty waterfalls, spectacular vistas, and designated hiking areas, that leaves much of the park available for sensitive animals and ecosystems.

There are many opportunities for practical science and management. We want to help design protected areas in a way that lets people enjoy them – but which also focuses their activities in particular areas while retaining [large intact areas](#) where wildlife can roam free with little human disturbance.

And while we're designing our parks, we want to use every opportunity, and every visit, to educate and empower tourists. We need people using parks to understand, appreciate, and stand up for nature, rather than thinking of parks as simply playgrounds.

Bill Laurance

Distinguished Research Professor and Australian Laureate, James Cook University

David Salt

Science writer and editor, Australian National University

The article was first published in [The conversation](#) (an independent source of news and views, sourced from the academic and research community and delivered direct to the public) on 31 October 2018.



Don't Sleep in The Tent

Stephen Lake

In October 2018, raging creeks, snow, strong winds and cold made me stay at O'Keefes Hut for three nights. Despite there being room in the hut, one party put up tents.

Tune: *Don't sleep in the subway*

You wander around in a high alpine cloud,
And you don't see the views that you're here for.
You climb hills with me, have lunch 'neath a tree,
And the weather is not what you care for.

I've climbed this peak a hundred times before.
Pack up your tent, my love, and close the door.

Don't sleep in the tent my darlin',
Don't camp in the pouring rain.
Don't sleep in the tent my darlin'.
The hut is warm,
Forget your lightweight tent,
It's dry in here,
And you're beside me again.

You try to keep warm in your tent in the storm,
But the wind cold and rain are quite chilling.
Oh, you don't seem to know that it's cold in the
snow,

And the temperature's low and it's killing.
Comfort is hard when it's five below,
So why persist when you've somewhere else to go?

Don't sleep in the tent my darlin',
Don't camp in the pouring rain.
Don't sleep in the tent my darlin'.
The hut is warm,
Forget your lightweight tent,
It's dry in here,
Now you're beside me again.

The fire is hot and I think it's the spot,
To relax and drink hot tea all the morning.
It's nice here and dry, let the weather pass by,
And the heat makes us sleepy, we're yawning.
It's good to sit on chairs and watch the snow.
Just stay with me and let the day go slow.

Don't sleep in the tent my darlin',
Don't camp in the pouring rain.
Don't sleep in the tent my darlin'.
The hut is warm,
Forget your lightweight tent,
It's dry in here,
And you're beside me again.

Don't sleep in the tent my darlin',
Don't camp in the pouring rain.
Don't sleep in the tent my darlin'.



O'Keefes Hut, snow bikes
Stephen Lake

Bushwalk Australia

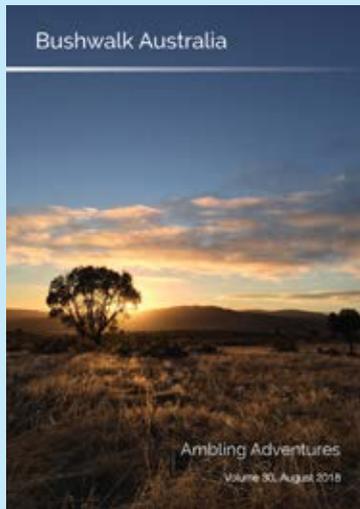


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- > Buffalo, The Bluff and Mt McDonald
- > Skiing With the Bobs
- > Dehydrated Meals For Your Trip



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Ambling Adventures

- > An Abel Challenge
- > Triglav Lakes, Slovenia
- > Pack Hauling
- > Sleeping Mats



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Act Now

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- > A Blogger's Journey
- > Overland Track
- > Teddy Goes Trekking



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Meandering Mountains
Volume 26, April 2018

Meandering Mountains

- > D'Alton Peaks, Grampians
- > Three mighty peaks
- > Sleeping bags
- > Our forests are worth standing

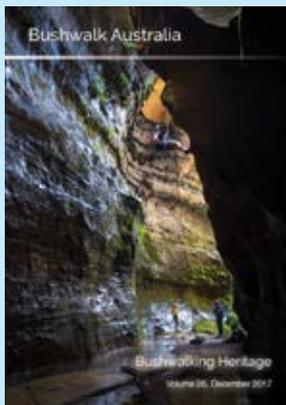


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- > The Spires via Holley Basin
- > From hiker to Globewalker



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- > Kidmans Hut Walk
- > Conquering the Giant
- > Dam Madness



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- > The Great River Walk
- > Mount Triglav, Slovenia
- > First aid kit



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- > From hiker to Globewalker



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- > Bibbulmun Track
- > Skinners



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- > Desert Discovery Walk
- > Sun clothing



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