

Bushwalk Australia



Higher Places 

Volume 33, February 2019

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**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



Twisted Lakes
by Steve

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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
April 2019 edition is
28 February 2019.

Warning

Like all outdoor pursuits, the
activities described in this
publication may be dangerous.
Undertaking them may result in
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Please consider joining a walking
club or undertaking formal training
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in the forum at BWA eMag.

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From the Editor

Hi,

Just in case you did not notice, it has been a hot summer. We have seen temperature records fall across the whole country. Very sadly, as I write this I see on the Tasmanian Fire page that there are currently over 100 fires burning across the state with 13 of these in Emergency Warning. The fires have impacted on people's homes as well as wilderness areas.

As our planet warms the challenge to protect our fire-prone forests increase enormously. The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service said the trial of a [new sprinkler system at Lake Rhona](#) protected the ancient forest.

Our wild places are under so much pressure from politics, climate change, invasive species, economic pressure and from the growing number of visitors. As we explore it is more important than ever to set a good example to others on how to ease the pressure on these ecosystems and let wild places remain wild.

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](#).

Upcoming Events

65K for 65 roses

23 February 2019

Location: The Bay Run, Leichhardt Park, Rozelle

Distance: Choose between 7km, 21km, 35km, 42km or 65km walk. Solo or team.

Cost: \$20 – \$65 per person. \$120 – \$150 for families.

More information: 65kroses.com

Great Illawarra Walk

2 March 2019

Location: Shellharbour to Austinmer.

Distance: Up to 40km. Solo or team.

Cost: \$40 per adult and \$20 per child.

More information: greatillawarrawalk.com

Coastrek

15 March 2019

Location: Rushcutters Bay to Manly (30km), or Maroubra to Manly (60km)

Distance: 30km & 60km. 4 person team (50% women).

Cost: \$172 – \$234 per person Minimum \$2000 fundraising commitment per team.

More information: sydney.coastrek.com.au

Walk for kids with cancer

24 March 2019

Location: The Rocks to Manly.

Distance: 27km. Additional options: 1 km, and virtual walk.

Cost: \$55 early bird.

More information: walkforkidscancer.org.au

Oxfam

29-30 March 2019

Location: Emerald Lake to Fairfield, Melbourne

Distance: 100km or 50–55km

Cost: \$700

More information: trailwalker.oxfam.org.au

Canberra Walking Festival

30-31 March 2019

Location: Canberra

Distance: 42.2km, 21km, 11km and 5km.

Cost: \$10 per child under 10, \$20 per child 10-17 years, \$45 per adult

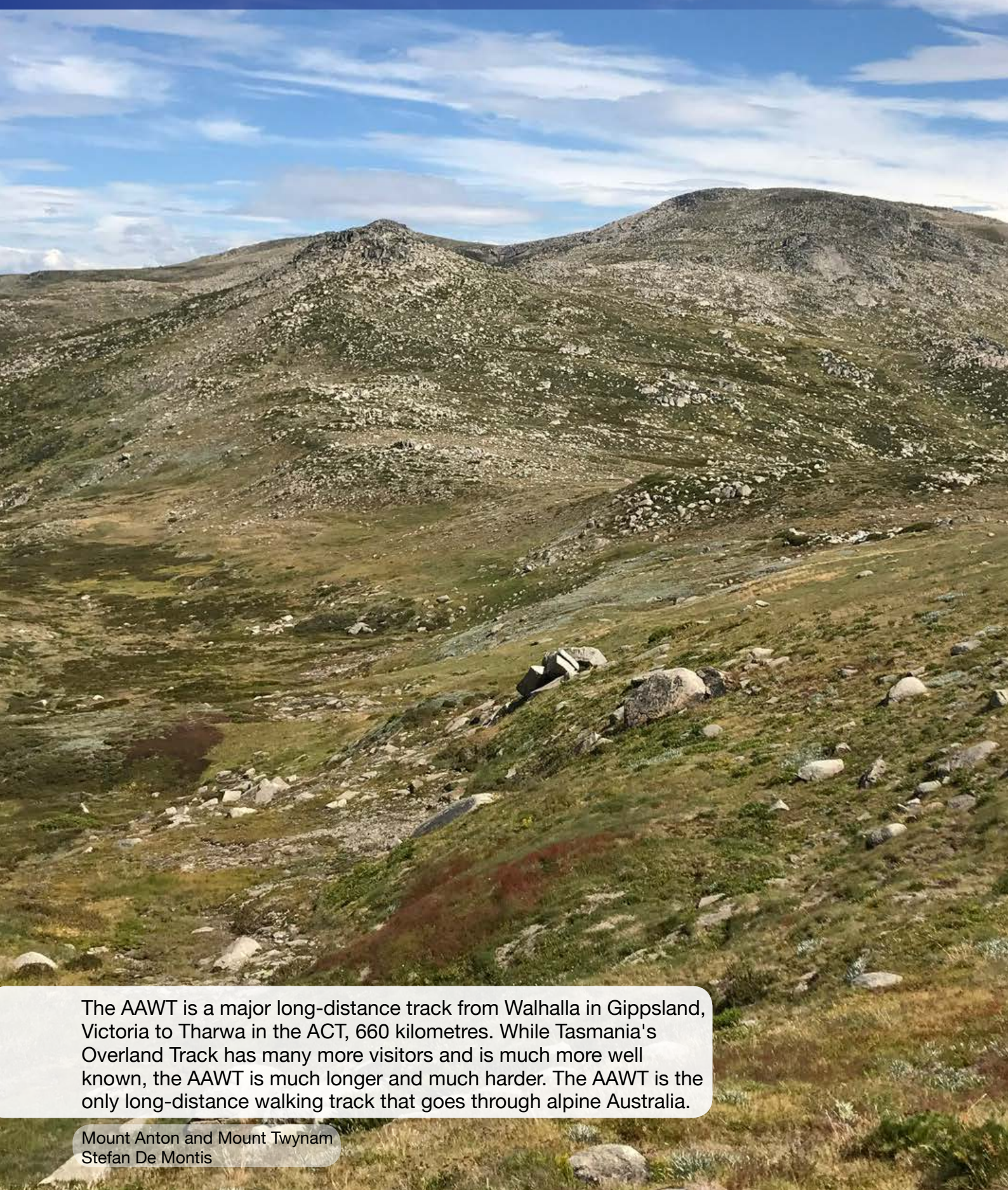
More information: aussiewalk.com.au/cwf



Australian Alps Walking Track

Past, Present and Future

Stephen Lake



The AAWT is a major long-distance track from Walhalla in Gippsland, Victoria to Tharwa in the ACT, 660 kilometres. While Tasmania's Overland Track has many more visitors and is much more well known, the AAWT is much longer and much harder. The AAWT is the only long-distance walking track that goes through alpine Australia.

Mount Anton and Mount Twynam
Stefan De Montis

Why walk the AAWT?

The year before George Mallory died on Mount Everest in 1924 he was asked why he wanted to climb it. He said, "Because it is there". The same reason applies to the AAWT.

This is not an easy walk. Unlike a number of other Australian long-distance walks, the AAWT passes through wild and remote places. Many days have moderate to significant climbs. The entire track has over 27 kilometres of ascents and descents. Unlike the Overland Track, except for a short Main Range section there are no boardwalks. Signs and track markers are often minimal. There are long sections with no huts. Snow falls in every month.



Howitt Car Park, 26 December. It was cold!
Stephen Lake

Everyone has their own reasons for walking the AAWT. Reasons include the challenge, the sense of achievement, the wonderful scenery, the ability to look at a map that shows Canberra to west Gippsland, see the AAWT, and then think, I did that.

The AAWT is a walk that all people with suitable experience, endurance, planning skills and time should walk.

How long does it take to complete the AAWT?

Some parties do sections at a time, perhaps 7-14 days each year. Others do the walk in one trip, with a huge variation in the time. Witzes Hut has log book entries for north-bound AAWT walkers taking 34, 38, 43 and an amazing 70 days, Cascade Hut has an entry from a walker who went from Bulley Creek over The Pilot to Cascade Hut in a day, 47 kilometres. Another north-bound

walker at Cascade Hut was on day 13. A hut near Jagungal had an entry "Day 55 of 70 walking the AAWT south to north. (We're taking it more leisurely than most hikers ... the Kennedys, Diane, Alena, Oliver and Kevin.)" Most people will take 4-8 weeks. [Paul Cuthbert](#) took 11 days and 18 hours, very light pack, 14 hours of running most days. Wow!

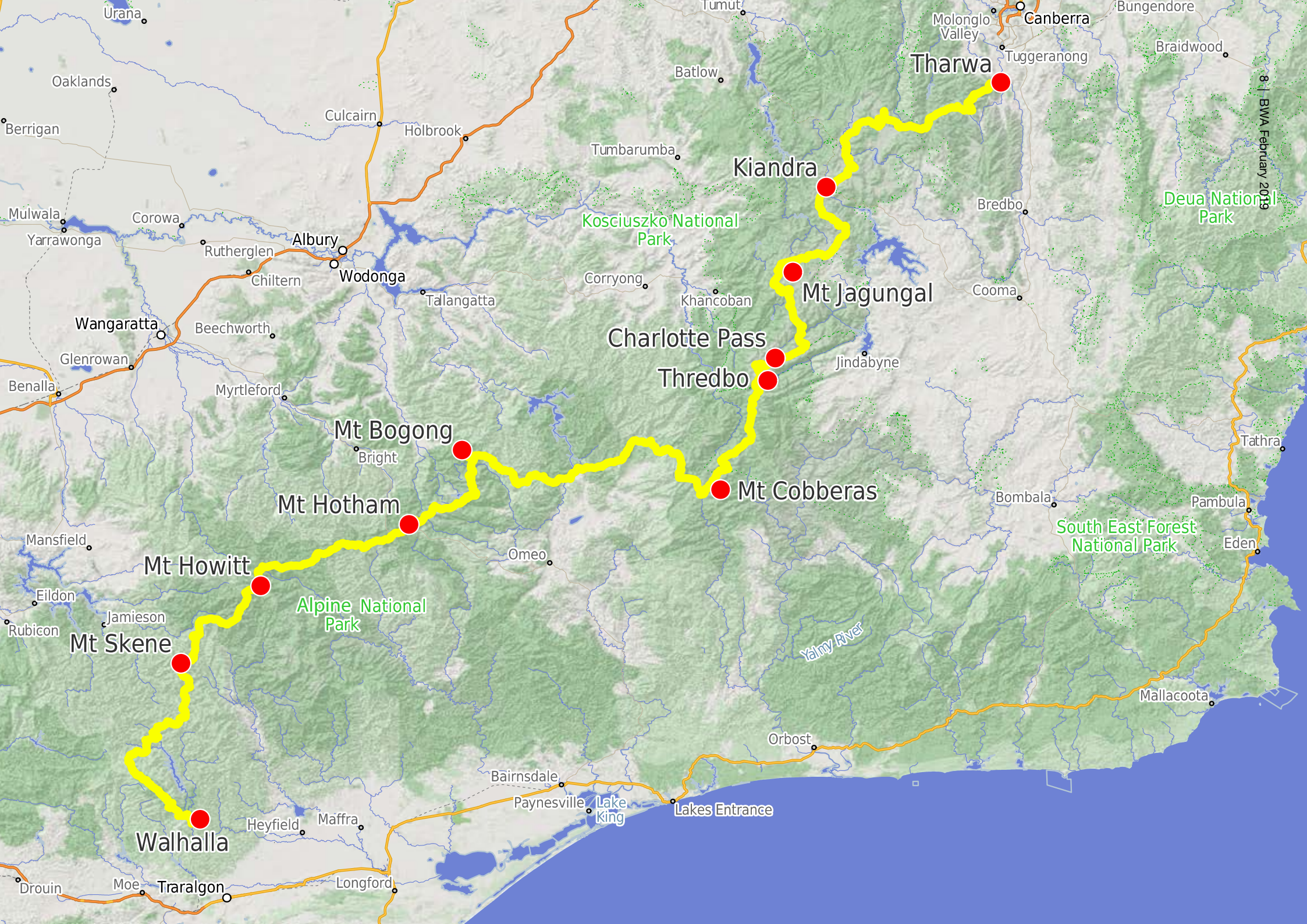


Cascade Hut
Stephen Lake

I set a record of sorts. The Alpine Walking Track (AWT) was a long-distance Victorian track and is the predecessor of the AAWT, which follows a lot of the 1974 AWT. In January 1974 I finished the AWT, which was recognised as the first party to do so. In December 2016 I had walked the AAWT starting at Tharwa. From Mount Wills Hut I went north, reaching the point where the 1974 AWT came from the north. I had been there nearly 43 years before, an average speed of 15.4 kilometres a year. This falls into the walk by section method, and is unlikely to be beaten. One does one's best. A well-known walker said "You beat me there. My first walk on the AAWT was in January 1981, the last in November 2013 - a measly 32 years and 10 months."

Food drops and accommodation

If you move fast it's possible to have just two food drops – Hotham Heights and Thredbo. There are usually 4-8 food drops for parties that walk the AAWT in one trip. Putting in food drops involves a huge amount of planning, time and effort, maybe 1000 kilometres of driving and two days. After the trip the empty containers need to be collected, another two days of driving.



Most people seem to collect a food drop and stop overnight at Hotham Heights and Thredbo. Apart from builders, Hotham is very quiet in green season, and accommodation is limited – most places are closed. Two that are open are [The General](#) and [Asgaard](#). Both are opposite the Police Station.

On the Omeo Highway about 40 minutes south of the AAWT where it goes north to Gill Creek is [Glen Wills Retreat](#), lovely accommodation.



Glen Wills Retreat
Stephen Lake

Thredbo is a big contrast to Hotham, with many people and a selection of open accommodation. The [Youth Hostel](#) is clean, warm and does not cost much. Non-members can stay there.

History part one

Early days and background

In 1778 Thomas West published a very popular walking guide to the Lake District in England. In 1876 Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *Walking Tour*, and in 1879 *Travels with a donkey in the Cevennes*. Rambling and walking clubs proliferated.

The word bushwalking is based on the Sydney Bush Walkers, formed in 1927, the first mixed gender bushwalking club in NSW. This era gave us such notables as Myles Dunphy and Paddy Pallin, and was the basis of the Australian environmental movement. Bushwalking took off in the 1920s.

This excerpt is from *Chief Guardian* by Allen Fox.

“During January 1954, Allen Strom, then Secretary of the Caloola Club, led a trip into Victoria to follow the Great Divide from



Baw Baw Trees
Terry Cornall

Mt Baw Baw via Matlock to Mt Kosciuszko and ultimately to Mt Franklin in the ACT. His Proposal for a Tri-State Trail in March 1954, used the 3,000 kilometre [Appalachian Trail](#) in the United States as a model and is an example of the way in which his imagination was fired by field work coupled with his extensive knowledge of activity in other parts of the globe (hand written edited note that says “particularly by the Club’s US counterpart, the Sierra Club”).”

History part two

The Alpine Walking Track

From the [AAWT Strategic Plan](#):

"In the mid 1930's, conservationists dreamt and advocated for creation of a continuous protected area of national parks to across the Victorian high country. This interest became even stronger with the dedication of the Kosciuszko National Park in New South Wales and its proximity to the mountain areas in Victoria. In the early 1970's, bushwalkers began establishing a long-distance walking track from near Melbourne to the New South Wales border at Tom Groggin."

The prime mover of the track to Tom Groggin was the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs, now called Bushwalking Victoria. This walk was the Alpine Track, which became known as the Alpine Walking Track, AWT.

The AWT started at Tom Groggin station on the Murray River west of Thredbo on the Alpine Way, which at that time was unsealed from near Murray One Power Station to near Dead Horse Gap. The AWT went west and



Preliminary Alpine Walking Track Map

south over Mount Gibbo to the Mitta Mitta River at Soldiers Point, a wide thigh-deep crossing in swift water. The next section bypassed the summit of Mount Wills to ascend Long Spur, with an interesting option, splitting at the top of T Spur. One part went over Mount Bogong to Quartz Ridge, Big River and Timms Lookout. The other way was T Spur, joining the Timms Lookout track near Ropers Hut.

From the top of T Spur the next two weeks are well known to bushwalkers: across the Bogong High Plains, the Barry Mountains, Mount Speculation, Mount Howitt and Mount



Hells Window, Mount Magdala
Terry Cornall

Magdala. The Barries had a reputation for there being no water, and were known as the Dry Barries, a name that is still justified and used. About half way on the Barries a water tank was put in, now no longer working. There was a track from Barry Saddle – another tank – over The Viking to Viking Saddle. Many consider the section from Barry Saddle to Mount Magdala to be the best on the AWT, and the best on the Victorian part of the AAWT. It's nearly all foot tracks, with spectacular scenery in wild locations.

A short distance after Mount Magdala there's a ring of mountains culminating in Mount McDonald, nice walking when away from the open 4WD tracks. From Mount McDonald



Magdala with Howitt and the Crosscut Saw behind
North-north-west

the AWT went south, never quite regaining the brilliance of the Viking-Magdala section. Walking is often on 4WD tracks, generally at a lower altitude.

The last few AWT days were over the Baw Baw Plateau to Erica Car Park, an easy end to a good walk.

The AWT had a very distinctive track marker, a yellow diamond with baggy legs. These are still visible in many places, some battered by 45 years of weather to just a silver diamond, maybe buried deep in the outer layer of trees. These markers are an important link to the past.



An AWT marker
Stephen Lake

History part three

Dartmouth River & Thomson River Dams

In 1972 the Dartmouth Dam on the Mitta Mitta River was approved, with construction completed in 1979. This meant that the AWT would need to be changed; Soldiers Point would soon be under water. The end of the AWT was moved south from Tom Groggin to Cowombat Flat on the NSW border at the infant Murray River. The Cowombat Flat route is generally west over Johnnies Top to reach the Mitta Mitta upstream of the dam, with a bridge making it easier to cross. The bridge here was washed away a few times and rebuilt. The AWT then went west to the Omeo



An AAWT marker
Stephen Lake

Highway and Mount Wills, meeting the original route a short way north of the summit.

In 1984 the Thomson River Dam north of the Baw Baw Plateau was completed, and the AWT was moved around the dam.



Thomson Dam signpost
North-north-west

History part four

The Australian Alps Walking Track

The Tom Groggin start was isolated, with no easy way to walk there from NSW. However, Cowombat Flat has good walking access from Dead Horse Gap, which is on the Alpine Way and is an hour's walk from Thredbo. From this region the Main Range, Jagungal and points north beckon.

An excerpt from [AAWT Strategic Plan](#):

"The formation of the Australian Alps Co-operative Program in 1986 (cross-border co-operative management program between the national parks managers within Victoria, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and the Federal Government) saw interest develop in finding a symbol of the unification of the mountain protected areas. Agreement was reached on a route for the Australian Alps Walking Track to divert and extend the Alpine Walking Track through the new links of the Alpine National Park, into and through Kosciuszko National Park and subsequently through Namadgi National Park in the ACT. The track was uniformly marked according to guidelines drafted by all the land managers along the route from Walhalla in the south to the Namadgi Visitor Centre in the ACT. In 1989, a month-long trek through the Australian Alps National Parks closely followed the Australian Alps Walking Track and celebrated the dedication of Victoria's Alpine National Park and the unification of a contiguous protected area from near Canberra to Mt MacDonald in Victoria."

The AAWT had 254 kilometres of extra track added to the AWT in the north from Cowombat Flat to Tharwa, and 20 kilometres extra in the south from Erica Car Park to Walhalla, making it 660 kilometres in total. Like the AWT, most of the new AAWT tracks existed previously. The AAWT opened in 1995.

AAWT new tracks

Walhalla to Erica Car Park and Thredbo

The start at Walhalla is gentle, along mining tracks, followed by a 1300 metre climb to Mount Erica, somewhat surprisingly the biggest ascent on the AAWT. From Mount Erica there are 365 kilometres on the AWT to Cowombat Flat. A short way north of here The Pilot is a worthwhile side-trip, an imposing mountain. The AAWT meets the Alpine Way just below Dead Horse Gap, and goes up to the Eagles Nest at the top of the chairlift. Most bushwalkers go to Thredbo, a food drop, hot showers, a beer and a bed. After a rest, it's probable that most north-bound AAWT bushwalkers make a fast ascent to the Eagles Nest – on the chairlift.

AAWT new tracks

Main Range to Schlink Pass

The most populous part of the entire walk is Eagles Nest to Rawson Pass. Instead of taking the obvious way from Rawson Pass over the spectacular Main Range to Twynam, the Rolling Ground and Schlink Pass, the AAWT is on 40 kilometres of roads from Rawson Pass to Guthega Power Station, with vehicular traffic often very busy and dangerous after the locked gate at Charlotte Pass. It's not very tranquil, and it's most certainly not a walking track or bushwalking.

Point 8.6 of the [2006 KNP Plan of Management](#) says:

“Retain the route of the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) along the Dead Horse Gap Track, Kosciuszko Walk and Summit Walk from Rawson Pass to Charlotte Pass. In order to protect the outstanding values of the area and retain the current range of alpine walking experiences, the AAWT will not be re-routed to traverse any other part of the Main Range.”

I estimate that about 2000 people a year walk the Main Range Circuit. The 2000 figure could well be low, and numbers have been much higher in recent years. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) advise that 100,000 people a year summit Kosciuszko. I have been unable to determine how many people walk from Schlink Pass and Whites River to Mount Twynam. However, it's a major route from the Schlink side to the Main Range which I have skied

and walked in both directions many times. My research shows that there are about 60 AAWT parties a year, about 150-200 people. It's highly likely that AAWT walkers go on the 40 kilometres of road on the official route to Charlotte Pass and Guthega Power Station only in bad weather. Having navigated for a few weeks from Tharwa or a month from Walhalla, a short trackless Main Range and Rolling Ground section will not stop parties in fine weather. These parties follow the tracks if they exist, and meander through sensitive habitat where tracks are not defined. Would it not be better to keep all walkers in one track, away from sensitive areas? The AAWT and other parties going from Mount Twynam to Schlink Pass or the other way cannot be stopped, so why not manage them to protect the environment? There would be minimal extra walkers due to a track, and even if the track led to more walkers, the impact would arguably be less as the walkers would be on one track.



Crowds on the summit of Kosciuszko and at Rawson Pass
NPWS

It seems that the NPWS has a track from Mount Twynam to Schlink Pass as a low priority. Funding is limited. However, most of this route will not require much works, and follows tracks that have gone into disrepair. There was a vehicular track north from the Mount Twynam turnoff for a few kilometres, a most amazing serpentine path through big rocks. It stopped at or near the saddle before Mount Anderson, and a foot track went from there to Mount Tate. One section here had or has a big eroded washout. There are many tracks contouring on the east side of Mount Tate, and one over the summit. They come together west of Consett Stephen Pass, which has a track across it that fades as it ascends the Rolling Ground side.

Another possible reason that NPWS oppose a Main Range track is to protect wet areas. The only one I've seen is on the east side of Consett Stephen Pass; on the ridge it's dry walking all the way to Whites River Hut or Dicky Cooper Bogong and Schlink Pass. This has been confirmed by a very experienced walker. A track around this wet area would protect it.

I am simply unable to see how a track would compromise protecting "the outstanding values of the area" or "the current range of alpine walking experiences". It has been suggested that the opposition to a track is to avoid infrastructure spending.

Much of the Twynam-Rolling Ground section will not need work. There could be markers for most of it to keep people in existing pads and tracks, erosion control for the washout and multiple Tate tracks, and some new works on the east side of Consett Stephen Pass. The latter may involve going south-east around the wet areas instead of east or north-east.

NPWS is in the early planning stages of a new track from Charlotte Pass to Guthega, so the AAWT may end up following that route, and if so, at Guthega most walkers

will cross the Snowy River to Mount Tate or the Rolling Ground. Like the current official road route from Rawson Pass, except in bad weather I cannot see AAWT or any experienced walkers taking this new route in good weather. It's longer, involves more climbing, and the views are inferior to those on the Main Range-Dicky Cooper Bogong route.

Main range camping

Camping between Eagles Nest and Dicky Cooper Bogong is limited. The first spots are on Rams Heads overlooking either the Snowy River or Lake Cootapatamba. The next campsites are in Wilkinson Valley, although due to lack of toilets the water may be compromised. Dispersed overnight camping is permitted except within the catchments of Lake Albina, Blue Lake, Club Lake, Lake Cootapatamba and Hedley Tarn. There is no camping within 200 metres of the Eagles Nest to Kosciuszko track, Kosciuszko's summit and Rawson Pass. There are a number of good places to camp on the Main Range, and I'm not going to say where. Find them.

Let's follow the Main Range. A short way below the summit of Kosciuszko is the turnoff to the Main Range Circuit where the



Main Range campsite
Stefan De Montis

steel boardwalks, vehicular management track and most of the masses that summit Mount Kosciuszko are left. There are a number of brilliant side trips on this section – Mount Townsend, Lake Albina, Blue Lake, The Sentinel, Watsons Crags, Mount Twynam and other places. The foot track follows the spine of the Main Range to the Twynam turnoff, where nearly all day trippers are left. On my last three summer visits between Schlink Pass and Mount Twynam, I saw just two people on a day trip from Guthega Pondage, and only a few people on Mount Twynam.

From Mount Twynam the walking is brilliant – high ridges, windswept plains, no scrub, excellent views, clear water in small creeks, and minimal people, with plenty of camping options, albeit often in exposed positions. There are patchy tracks from Mount Twynam for the next four hours to Consett Stephen Pass, and after here tracks are mainly absent for about four hours over the Rolling Ground. There are two ways down, Whites River or continue north to Dicky Cooper Bogong and Schlink Pass. Dicky Cooper appeals to me more as there's a high open plateau, fantastic views, no need to walk on the management vehicle track from Whites River, less descending and less climbing.

AAWT new tracks Jagungal region

From Schlink Pass the AAWT goes on management vehicle tracks to Grey Mare Hut and Mackays Hut. There's a consensus among experienced bushwalkers that any route near here is considered to be walking the AAWT. For those that can navigate off-track, perhaps the best option is Gungartan, Mawsons Hut and Mount Jagungal, from where there are a number of ways north to O'Keefes Hut or east to Cesjacks Hut, then to Mackays Hut or nearby. Another option



Dawn on 1 January 2016 from Gungartan
Stephen Lake

is to go east to Tin Hut, Bulls Peaks and Cesjacks Hut. This eastern route avoids river crossings, notable the Geehi, and may be best in spring as snow melts. This also keeps with the spirit of the walk which is to stick to the higher ridges and the alps.

AAWT new tracks Mackays Hut to Tharwa

After Mackays Hut the rest of the AAWT is mainly 4WD tracks - some management and closed to the public, some open - pleasant enough and usually not too many people except on open vehicular tracks. Road head campsites are passed.

One nice diversion is Happys Hut, a short distance from the AAWT in a sheltered valley. This can be approached from near the Dr Phillips Hut site. Cross the creek as high as possible, perhaps aiming for the 4WD track to the hut east of the creek. North-bound there's a short scrub bash uphill to the AAWT; south-bound is easier, downhill. Regrowth has made this a little energetic. Kiandra is a day or two away, vehicles swishing past at speed, unaware of the [history](#). In 2006 the Holmenkollen Ski Museum, Norway, confirmed that the [Kiandra Snow Shoe Club](#) was founded in 1861, and was the world's first ski club.

There's one trackless section, just north of the Murrumbidgee River, only a few hours on open plains to Ghost Gully. The AAWT then does doglegs, getting deep into feral horse country. From Oldfields Hut it's not far to the ACT border at Murray Gap, a lovely alpine clearing. There are more valleys and ridges to Honeysuckle Creek.



Oldfields Hut
Stephen Lake

The last day has a climb over the shoulder of Mount Tennent, then a pretty descent to the end at the Namadgi Visitor Centre at Tharwa, south of Canberra.

Challenges

The main one is probably funding. Park agencies are not seen as a high priority by governments, so agencies have to do more with less. The bottom line for bushwalkers is track maintenance and water, especially in Victoria. Winter snow brings down trees every year, and trees fall across the track for several reasons, notably age, wind and fire. Tenacious springy bushes grow over tracks, which may then be invisible. Unless there's a lot of foot traffic or agencies clear the track regularly, progress can be slow and require more effort. Park agencies do their best but cannot keep up. Feral horses in KNP are now a political item, preserved to gather votes at the expense of the environment. This magazine has had feral horse articles in [June 2018](#) and [December 2018](#).

There was a delightful entry in Cleve Cole Hut about a track that is not on the AAWT but applies. In November 2016 a party went from the Bogong High Plains to the west ridges of Bogong. "Lots of dead fall on lower slopes of Quartz Ridge after crossing Big River. Although not a significant obstacle, the repeated over-and-unders are an embuggerance." This describes what the AAWT is like in too many places. The worst sections vary as park agencies and others attempt to clear tracks. For example, Long

Spur had many logs and high scrub over the track. Volunteers and Parks Victoria are keeping the tracks open.

Water

Climate change means that a number of high water sources are drying. For example, in autumn 2018 there was no water at Cleve Cole Hut. At times it means a longer walk to water than before, such as at Viking Saddle. Mac Springs has never flowed strongly, and the flow is now less than was the case. It would be good if there were more tanks. Inadequate funding and competing priorities mean that some things are simply not done. There's been a suggestion for a tank at Viking Saddle to replace the diminishing water in the creek. Not everyone supports tanks and tracks in remote regions.

The design and manufacturing of a tank storing drinking water must comply with the provisions of Australian Standard 4020 (Materials in Contact with Drinking Water). There are three tanks at critical spots in the Barry Mountains: Barry Saddle, Selwyn Track and near The Twins. The Barry Saddle tank is very old, perhaps an AWT vintage, with lots of wriggles, good if you like fresh protein. The tank should be replaced. The age of this tank means that AS4020 and health [guidelines](#) may be breached, possibly causing lead poisoning.



Quartz Ridge and the northern Bogong High Plains
Stephen Lake

The Cotter Gap creek is somewhat hard to access and has silt. A simple low dam with a short overflow pipe would make this much better.

Most AAWT water is potable and does not need treatment. BWA December 2018 has an [article about treating water](#).

The NPWS recommends "that people treat water, especially when a lot of visitors are accustomed to drinking treated water instead of perhaps tank water and so may not react well to water from natural sources even though it may not have any significant health risks." I do not share this view. For many years I have sought science to support the need to treat water, but none has been provided. While care is needed near huts and popular places, most wild water is clean. Treating or not treating is a personal choice based on where the water is obtained and an individual assessment. I always get wild water.

New routes and maintenance

A number of suggestions have been made about new routes, clearing some sections, or marking existing ones. One theme in the list below is that having a variety of tracks and routes giving several ways to walk from A to B will spread the impact. In some places there is no need for many or any new tracks or signs, just say that the AAWT options exist and to leave it up to the party to decide. The numbers 31, 49, 82 etc are the distances in John Chapman's book [Australian Alps Walking Track](#).

31 Consideration could be given to establishing a campsite north-east of the rock shelter on the Baw Baw Plateau, 10-15 minutes from the AAWT. This area is popular with skiers and a modern toilet would be a boon, enhancing water quality.

49 One walker said that the "Thomson River diversion was terrible (not that I am familiar with what it used to be, but it had to be better than it is now). This was the worst part of the walk by far, for me." A logical route is on the Upper Thomson Road and Basalt Hill Track. This comes out nearly opposite the track to Mount Easton, and avoids a boring walk on the Thomson Jordan Divide Road.

82 There's a hut with a tank on Short Spur. When this hut was built it was intended that half would be kept open with access to all parties. The hut and especially the tank could be mentioned in track notes. See the next point for an alternative.

83 A number of parties have a food drop and stop at Fiddlers Green, so maybe a formal campsite could be established with a tank. To avoid use by people in vehicles, this would need to be a little distance from the road.

101 The track at the top of Mt Shillinglaw is vague, needs attention.

105 The climb from the Jamieson Licola Road is seriously scrubby, and it's better to use the Mount McKinley Road at present

110 The track from the Mount Skene road to Rumpf Saddle is overgrown, and described as "a pretty serious scrub bash".

116 Just north of Middle Ridge Road the Mount McKinty Road goes steeply down to the west. A better gradient is to have switchbacks going generally north-west to meet the road in the saddle. If this was marked then over time boots would form the track.

141 There's not much reliable or convenient water between Low Saddle and Chesters Yard, 26 kilometres and 13 hours of walking. A tank about mid-way would be useful. The best place seems to be The Nobs, just off the 4WD track.

166 Mac Springs is now often dry towards the end of summer. One option is to have a small dam with an overflow pipe. A tank may be useful. However, the number of people visiting means that the roof would need to be large.

176 The nearest water to Catherine Saddle is some distance away, and a tank at the saddle would be useful.

182 The Viking Saddle water is becoming less reliable, and it's a long hard day from Catherine Saddle to Barry Saddle. A tank at Viking Saddle would be good.

182 Razor Viking is designated wilderness, and Parks Victoria have decided that there shall be no track. Unfortunately, old AWT markers away from the current alignment are in place, making it confusing. AWT markers should be moved to the current alignment. I see no problem with a foot track in wilderness. By keeping walkers in one place there is less trampling of habitat. Not everyone shares this view or having a tank at Viking Saddle.



Sunrise from The Viking
North-north-west

191 The following sections need cutting. Selwyn Track 191.1 to 196.9; 203.6 over Mount Selwyn, and 216.6 near Murrays Hut site to 224.2 The Twins tank.

226 From The Great Alpine Road at Mount St Bernard it's seven kilometres to the Mount Feathertop turnoff at Diamantina Hut. Most of this is on the road, uncomfortable. A foot track should bypass the road as much as possible. This track could be on the old coach road and probably new benched tracks.



Mount Feathertop from Mount Loch
North-north-west

233 Mount Feathertop is a beautiful mountain, and is very popular. The AWT had two routes over Mount Bogong, West Peak and T Spur. Similarly, there could be an AAWT option to Mount Feathertop, Diamantina Spur, Westons Hut and the main pole line. This would require very little expenditure. There's a thread on this on Bushwalk.com forum.

272 The brilliant AWT route over Quartz Ridge and Bogong could be reinstated. Again, this is just something to decide; the tracks exist. New signs would cost a pittance.

309 The track on the east side of Gill Creek could go nearly due east to meet the current track at about 870 metres altitude. This is very steep but would be shorter, even with switchbacks.

322 Realign the track and add 2.5 kilometres of new track on the west side of the Mitta Mitta River, from the end of the vehicle track near Kennedys Hut, with a foot bridge at the big bend. This would eliminate the tedious road walking between Taylors Crossing and the ascent to the ridge above Morass Creek. Alternatively, cut a track on the east side downstream from the bridge.

328 The track to Morass Creek has blackberries and needs clearing on a regular basis.

330 A bridge over the very grotty Morass Creek would be nice. A less satisfactory alternative is a cable or chain.

331 A track from Stony Creek north to meet the current route at about 750 metres altitude would be good, a more direct route with no road walking for people camping at the creek. It's mainly open forest, just needs to be marked.

353 The track at the north end of the Johnnies Top ridge peters out just above Corner Creek and needs to be marked. While east of here is easy enough, a track would assist to avoid the marshy areas. All it needs is markers and boots will make the track. A few sections may need small simple bridges.

382 The track after Smoke Oh Creek needs a few markers to avoid going on the many feral horse tracks.

447 The more scenic route from Dead Horse Gap is up the spur to Rams Head, and this could be an alternative AAWT. However, it's highly likely that all parties go to Thredbo for a food drop and stay overnight in the village. North-bound parties could go back to Dead Horse Gap and onto the Main Range. It seems likely that in fine weather most take the chairlift to Eagles Nest, following the tourists to Rawson Pass.

455 From Rawson Pass one option is on the Summit Road then north along Spencers Creek, across the bridge at Illawong Lodge, and then to Tate or the Rolling Ground. This would need a track along Spencers Creek, which is scrubby. The new track from Charlotte Pass to Guthega will assist and may avoid the need for the Spencers Creek route.

455 As detailed above, from Rawson Pass a splendid option is Mount Twynam, Mount Tate, The Rolling Ground and Whites River or Dicky Cooper Bogong to Schlink Pass.

472 The east side of Mount Tate has a number of tracks; only one is needed and the rest should be closed and revegetated. There's a vague track from Mount Tate north along the ridge, and then it's much more defined east to Consett Stephen Pass. This could be more defined on the ridge, allowing the slow regeneration of plant communities currently being walked on in a harsh windswept area. I favour having the ridge track as the only one; it's easier to maintain than one on the steep east side.

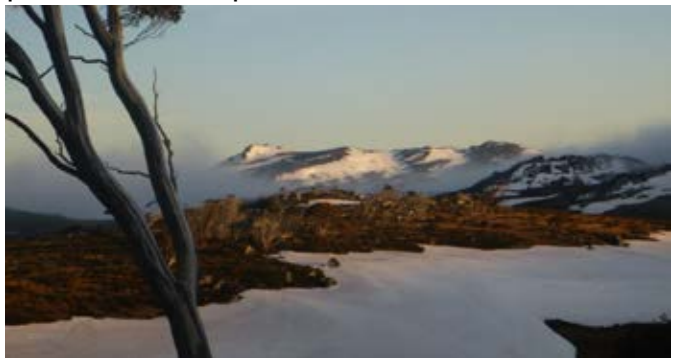
479 From Whites River Hut there are a number of creeks and rivers that can be obstacles. In October 2018 I was at Whites River Hut when a party was struggling to cross the unbridged creek in front of the hut. A tent came loose and fell into the creek, with one person jumping in the creek to get the tent. A few days earlier another party forced their way across Doubtful Creek, which was running dangerously high. Small bridges would make it safer. However, the same bridges would allow inexperienced walkers and cyclists to go further into the park. If faced with deep, swift water and an urgency to get to the other side, then some people will have a go. I see no easy solution.



Doubtful Creek, deeper, swifter and more treacherous than it looks
Stephen Lake

Possible bridges could be at Whites River Hut, 488 Valentine Hut, 509 Bogong Creek, 512 Doubtful Creek, and 517 Tibeaud Creek. Doubtful Creek is the most pressing.

503 There's a soggy track from the infant Tumut River up Jagungal. The river section could have boardwalks or something to protect the wet parts.



Jagungal from Mawsons Hut, October 2018
Stephen Lake

528 The plains at the Doctor Phillips Hut site could have an AAWT option to Happys Hut. This is far nicer than the road, less

climbing and shorter in time and distance. This would be very easy to mark. This section could be a little soggy and may need some minor works, with one small bridge across Happy Jacks Creek. Alternatively, go to just east of the bridge on the Happys Hut Trail.

531 While Happys Hut is a lovely place to camp, a toilet is needed for the 2-300 annual visitors. The hill north of here was open scrub, but is now thicker after fires. A track to the ridge would be useful. If marked at 10-20 metre intervals it would not need to be cut very much, as boots would do the job.

567 In 2018 the track between Witzes Hut and the Murrumbidgee River was a mess, Snowy Hydro 2.0 project operations. There were exposed pipes, porta potties, fencing, vehicles and general construction-related material scattered around. It has been suggested that walkers go cross-country between the track and Tantangara Creek for this whole section, much more enjoyable and the navigation is very easy.

576 From Tantangara Creek the 4WD AAWT goes north-west up a hill and then north down the hill to the Murrumbidgee. It's far more logical to have a track

either contouring the hill or along the Murrumbidgee. Find the best way, mark it and let boots make the track.

615 The east side of Murray Gap is swampy, and picking a path through this is a little tricky. Consideration should be given to establishing a boardwalk. It may be that treated pine on the ground will suffice, which costs a lot less than more sophisticated tracks such as Royal NP, from the Eagles Nest to Rawson Pass, and parts of Tasmania's Overland Track.

632 The Orroral Valley has a long section of broad dusty road, and a better option exists. Leave the road at the elbow at 743577 and go east through forest for about a kilometre to where the valley is cleared. There are old tracks, patches of trees, light scrub and clearings, should be easy to mark, hopefully not much need to cut a track.

Feeder tracks

One AWT concept that the AAWT lacks is feeder tracks. The AAWT feeder tracks suggested below are mainly existing tracks, the idea being to formalise them, giving flexibility and ideas to people who want to walk a portion of the AAWT. It would also give a bigger AAWT footprint with more AAWT recognition, and hence more publicity.



Townsend rock, Jagungal in the distance
Stephen Lake

Feeder tracks also give bushwalkers an insight into the AAWT.

1. St Gwinear Car Park to the rock shelter. An easy hour one way, 3 kilometres.
2. Baw Baw Village to north of Mount St Phillack. An hour one way, 4 kilometres.
3. Warburton to north-west of Mount Whitelaw. This is an old major route that has fallen into disuse.
4. Howqua River to Mount Howitt. Apart from the river eroding the track a short way below Howitt Spur, there's minimal work to be done. This was an AWT Feeder Track.
5. Kelly Track. This is a well-established track from Shannonvale.
6. The Everards Flat Track near Pretty Plain was a good way to Grey Mare Hut and the Jagungal region from the west. Bushfire regrowth has made this quite hard. This would be an excellent feeder track, and open up the Pretty Plain region to circuit walkers. NPWS and Kosciuszko Huts Association volunteers spent a lot of time, money and effort rebuilding Pretty Plain Hut, but due to poor access from Grey Mare Hut it's not used much.
7. The walk Round Mountain, Farm Ridge, Jagungal and back on the Toolong Range is quite popular, and could be a feeder track. There should be encouragement to do this clockwise, to cross the Tumut River on the first day rather than risk having a flooded Tumut River to cross on the last day.

SoNo or NoSo?

Over several years I read hut log books and found that direction numbers seem to be fairly evenly split, with more north-bound. For example, in October 2015 Barry Saddle had nine south-bound and six north-bound AAWT parties. Cascade Hut in December 2016 had 14 north-bound and 11 south-bound. The reasons for going in a particular direction vary with the parties. It might be that leaving in spring means that going north is best as this reduces the chance of bad weather in KNP. One person from Canberra walking north had a log book entry "Walking home." This was why my AWT party walked south – it seemed better to head towards home in Melbourne. Also, we did not have the sun in our eyes in the morning.

Mount Wills is close to halfway on the AAWT. For the period November 2013 to March 2018 the log book had 59 AAWT entries. Some parties did not give the direction or the number of days. The following is a summary.

South-bound

25 parties taking 12-30 days to reach the hut, with most walkers taking 17-24 days.

North-bound

32 parties taking 9-25 days to reach the hut, with most walkers taking 17-25 days. North-bound parties stated their times much less than the south-bound parties.

This is how the Mount Wills Hut AAWT entries looked.

Month	Parties	Month	Parties
January	8	July	0
February	1	August	1
March	6	September	0
April	5	October	4
May	1	November	21
June	0	December	12

Summary

The AAWT is a must-do for any experienced walker. I did the AWT in one trip, and that experience has stayed with me for 45 years, defined who I am. A long walk such as the AAWT, Larapinta, or Bibbulmun - especially if done in one trip - will be a journey worth remembering.

Information

- John Chapman's book *Australian Alps Walking Track* has excellent track notes. Updates are on his website.
- This is the official [AAWT website](#).
- [AAWT plans](#)
- There's a terrific contemporaneous source on the Bushwalk.com [AAWT forum](#).
- [GPX files](#) on page 2 towards the top. Note that the route may not be the AAWT.
- [Fastest known times](#) is for long-distance runners, and includes the AAWT.

Many people have posted AAWT information online – just search. Some will be useful, some not. Some will be accurate, some not. It's best to check information.

The Bushwalk.com AAWT forum cited before is probably the best place to seek information.

Acknowledgements

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Any errors in the article are mine.

Stephen started bushwalking in Scouts, then became involved in a number of bushwalking clubs. He sub-edits Bushwalk Australia.



Trackless plains near Boundary Creek
Stephen Lake

Los Dientes Circuit, Southern Chile

Alexander Willows



My partner and I are took an extended overseas trip, and tried to fit in as much walking as possible, from Patagonia to Nepal and various places in between!

Descent to Laguna Los Guanacos
All pictures by Alexander Willows

The Los Dientes de Navarino (The Teeth of Navarino) are located on Isla Navarino, located in the extreme south of Chile on the southern side of the Beagle Channel. The circuit is about 50 kilometres sans sidetrips and is described in various places on the net and in books. Some people name it the most southerly major walk in the world, located as it is at around 56 degrees south. For anyone who has done much walking in Tasmania, it is a comfortable combination of fagus, cushion plant and occasional mud, mixed with some very non-Tasmanian elements. There is a fantastic guide booklet produced by the Chilean government with more than enough information (including regular compass bearings!) to make the walk safely. Somewhat ironically, it is widely available in Punta Arenas, but almost impossible to find in Puerto Williams. We borrowed a copy from a local tour operator, which we had to return once back in town. The local tourist information office presumably would have them available, if the lady running it had not run off with a foreign sailor some time ago, yet to be replaced it seems! Certainly wasn't open while we were there anyway.

As do many, we took a boat from nearby Ushuaia, in Argentina, to Isla Navarino. We used Onashaga Expeditions, and the trip cost us US\$120 each, if I recall correctly. It involves a 30 minute or so boat crossing and a significantly longer bus ride to the main settlement of Puerto Williams, population about 1800. There were plenty of operators offering the trip from the waterfront of Ushuaia, with slightly varying prices. One can also take a ferry from Punta Arenas (32 hours on the boat, very scenic, much more expensive) or fly from Punta Arenas (cheaper than the ferry, availability varies depending on the day of the week).

“Some people name it the most southerly major walk in the world ...

We left for the walk the day after arriving in Puerto Williams after stocking up (I recommend Simon y Simon supermarket) and registering with the local police. It's a road walk out of town at first until arriving at a set of waterfalls, where the real track begins. An extended ascent follows to Cerro Bandero (Flag Mountain), a hill visible from



Traversing the mountainside, views of Los Dientes

Puerto Williams with - surprise, surprise - a large Chilean flag. Not sure I've ever seen a country so seemingly patriotic ... Chilean flags are everywhere here!

After reaching the flag, one makes a slow ascent across very open, flat ground, before reaching an undulating traverse along the mountainside with beautiful views. There is a steep drop at times, and some slightly loose bits, but certainly nothing of real concern. Many photos later, we arrived at our first campsite at Laguna del Salto, a beautiful spot with space for 5-6 tents in various locales around the lake shore. We were joined by three other tents - one of which contained a fellow from California whom we had adopted on the boat ride from Ushuaia and became fast friends with.

A still night by the Laguna saw us with a tent dripping with condensation the following morning - such is life! After allowing it to dry for a little while, we packed up and headed around the edge of the lake, up past the waterfall and into a lovely little valley which led us up onto some barren scree slopes under impressively sharp looking peaks. We made a quick detour along one of the ridges

here for views back over the campsite and the Beagle Channel (well worth it) before continuing on to Paso Australia. Not really much of a pass to speak of, it's just a bit of a saddle reached before descending to traverse above Laguna Paso. After making it around the corner past the laguna, we arrived at a track junction, with the option to continue along the circuit or to head to Lago Windhond, a little further south. We chose the sidetrip, which looked great in all the other reports, and came highly recommended for views, particularly from the summit of Monte Bettinelli. Which of course was where we had our worst weather of the trip, an hour or so of gusty wind and driving, cold rain. Such is life, I suppose. A pleasant descent over open scree past Laguna Bettinelli, followed by a steep-at-times descent through some lovely forest, a quick river crossing on some fallen logs and a seemingly interminable stroll across a cushion plant meadow had us arriving at Cabana Charles, near the shores of Lago Windhond. A long day, but beautiful.

“ We chose the sidetrip, which looked great in all the other reports ...



Heading along the ridge on our short detour, Paso Australia in the sun

The following day we made a daytrip down to Bahia Windhond (Windhond Bay), with great views down to Cabo de Hornos (Cape Horn). Pretty simple sidetrip - find the eastern shore of the lake and follow it until reaching a cairned pad heading south-east, which fades in and out but leads you generally towards a river crossing, and eventually the bay. Took us about 3.5 hours each way, if I recall correctly. There is a pad in the forest at the start when coming from Cabana Charles, but we found it better to just walk on the beach - much more open, way fewer downed trees.

The next day had us headed back up over Monte Bettinelli (with clouds obscuring much of the view, of course) to rejoin the circuit, followed by some pleasant walking around some lovely lakes before eventually arriving at camp at Laguna Escondida (Hidden Lake). We passed a number of areas this day where the destruction caused by beavers was very evident, with lots of deads trees and flooded basins. Beavers were introduced some time ago in an effort

“... the destruction caused by beavers was very evident ...”



Dead trees by Laguna Los Dientes

to create a fur trade, but whilst that effort was not successful, the beavers certainly were. Their influence is obvious throughout much of the walk. Don't worry though, you can get your own back on them - have a go at a beaver pizza at the local pizzeria in Puerto Williams. Sadly, it was sold out when we were there, and the beaver hunter was apparently away, or sick, or for whatever reason not busy catching beavers!

We had a pretty windy night and interrupted sleep at Laguna Escondida, but it was still a beautiful campsite. It was made even better when we were given an extra lunch by a



Heading back to the circuit from Lago Windhond

not-as-hungry-as-he-thought German fellow. Score! Apparently Aconcagua had given me a serious case of the hiker munchies, and I was making a habit of waking up in the middle of the night to scoff half of the following days' worth of nuts. This, added to the constant complaints about being hungry, did not seem to be endearing me to my walking companions. Needless to say, we took more food on the next walk.

From Laguna Escondida, we headed to just past Laguna Los Guanacos (Lake of the Male Guanacos, not to be confused with Laguna Las Guanacos, Lake of the Female Guanacos). Leaving the lake, we made our undulating way through various bits of forest and an open grassy valley before eventually ascending to Paso Ventarron (Gale Pass), which thankfully didn't quite live up its name. A descending traverse with stunning views to the west was followed by an equally stunning walk amongst various lakes and tarns, eventually leading to lunch somewhere near the shore of Laguna Martillo, under the watch of the fantastic Cerro Clem. This mountain was named for Clem Lindenmayer, the Australian fellow who apparently first walked or proposed this circuit, back in the late



View back towards the valley while nearing the top of Paso Virginia. Cerro Clem and his cirque of friends.

1990s or early 2000s as I understand it. Onya Clem! After lunching here, we made our way through the beautiful valley to the beginning of the ascent to Paso Virginia, our last pass and the highest point on the normal circuit (Monte Bettinelli is slightly higher). It was a little muddy, and the track a little hard to find at times, but after a steady plod we made it to the top, to be met by fantastic views back across the valley, and eventually to fantastic views across the Lagunas Guanacos and the Beagle Channel. Fantastic views were certainly a recurring theme of this walk! And I'm sure the weather is always like this, too.



Cerro Clem and friends

After spending the night at some nice sheltered sites in the forest beyond Los Guanacos, we trundled on down to the road the next morning and managed to score a lift back into town. Sans hitch, it's a 2 hour or so walk back along the road to Puerto Williams, passing an abandoned cannery fairly early on.

All in all, five nights and six days of great, varied walking, lovely scenery, good company and fantastic weather. Definitely one to put on the list for anybody thinking of heading to this area. I thought it was a better walk than Torres del Paine, and certainly far less crowded. The local police (Carabineros) said they get around 1000 people/year, plus or minus. For better or worse, this number

will likely increase, as apparently the Chilean government is pushing this walk as an alternative to Torres del Paine in an effort to reduce the overcrowding issues there. Given the remoteness and access issues, I don't see it ever really taking off to that scale, but I certainly see it becoming more busy. One can only hope that sufficient track work and infrastructure come with the increase in numbers.

Anyhow, congratulations if you made it to the end, and thanks for reading. After Isla Navarino, we took the 32 hour ferry to Punta Arenas (well worth the trip, though apparently better in the other direction) and then headed on to Torres del Paine.



Descent to Laguna del Salto - steep and rocky, with some loose slippery gravel in a few spots

Tassie Winter Trip, Part 1

Peter Hodges



A family trip to Tasmania that started off with a few problems became magical as soon as we reached the bush.

Cradle Mountain from the saddle between Mount Campbell and Hansons Peak
Photos by Peter Hodges

Days 1 and 2 – setbacks and surprises

My family lives in Bundaberg, Queensland, which is quite different to Tasmania. When we started the trip our flight was delayed and connections were missed, then the flight to Launceston was cancelled due to fog ... We were not happy and stayed for a night in Brisbane.

At Launceston we had two pleasant surprises. The hire car was the same that we drive at home, making the driving much more comfortable, especially with our 20 month old daughter. The second surprise was the warmth and friendliness at our accommodation, The Sebel Launceston. They were amazing! Not only did they waive all of the fees normally associated with changing a booking at the last minute, they were also very helpful with providing us with all sorts of information. In addition they gave our daughter a free teddy bear when we checked out which she absolutely loved. Every interaction we had with the staff at this hotel was overwhelmingly positive. Their breakfast was amazing too!

“... our first impressions in Tasmania were overwhelmingly positive



The Sebel Launceston

So in short, despite a difficult two days of travelling our first impressions in Tasmania were overwhelmingly positive. The next day was spent driving to Cradle Mountain for a three night stay inside the national park. I couldn't wait!

Day 3 – the drive to Cradle Mountain

Today was great! We certainly didn't have any time for walking when we passed through Sheffield but I knew we would have more than our fair share of beautiful walks in the Cradle Mountain area. The drive was leisurely.

We arrived at Cradle Mountain late in the afternoon. It was a cool 2 °C outside and we could see that it had been raining. My wife and daughter were struggling a bit with



The famous Dove Lake boat shed from the opposite side of the lake

the cold and the Waldheim heater took a little while to work, in time making the cabin super comfortable. I was absolutely chuffed with our accommodation! A humble cabin in the midst of the most prehistoric looking rainforest I had ever seen. I couldn't wait to explore the area over the coming days.



Our Cradle Mountain accommodation

Day 4 – The Enchanted Forest

The day started off with another pleasant surprise (we soon discovered that Tasmania is full of pleasant surprises), a pademelon feeding just outside our cabin. My daughter absolutely loved the pademelon and every time we returned to our cabin she would look out the window and see if she could spot it. We mistakenly told her that it was a wallaby so she proceeded to ask about the “wobby” for the next two days.

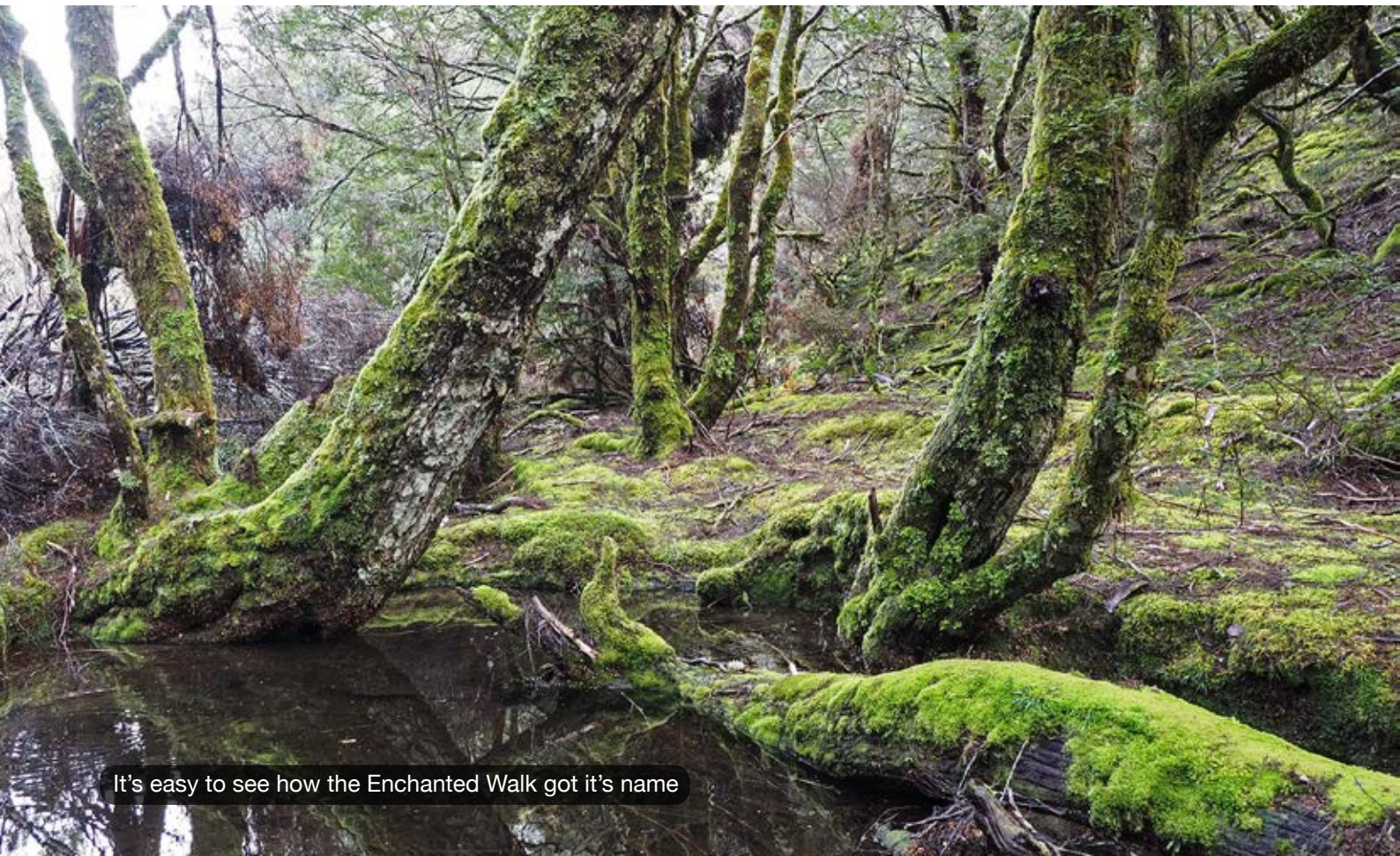


A pademelon behind our accommodation

It took us a little while to put all our layers on and get dressed. [The Enchanted Walk](#) is an easy 20 minute circuit entirely on boardwalks or pavement, the majority of which is beside the rushing waters of Pencil Pine Creek. The water looks so pure and is deeply shaded by tannins. The walk is through the most ancient looking rainforest. Everything looks so old and so alive at the same time. It literally looks like the forest from a fairy tale. We thoroughly enjoyed our time here.

“It literally looks like the forest from a fairy tale.”

We headed to Dove Lake but unfortunately the rain had set in. My wife and daughter returned to our cabin while I braved the weather.



It's easy to see how the Enchanted Walk got it's name

I had heard a quote recently from Alfred Wainwright:
 “There’s no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing.”

With that in mind I grabbed my waterproof gear and ventured out to Dove Lake.

The Dove Lake Circuit

Dove Lake was busy, and high traffic levels stopped me driving, so I caught the [shuttle bus](#). This impressed me - even in mid-winter buses run every 15 minutes from 9am to 3pm.

I intended to complete the Dove Lake Circuit (5.7 kilometres, 2 hours) as per the map below.



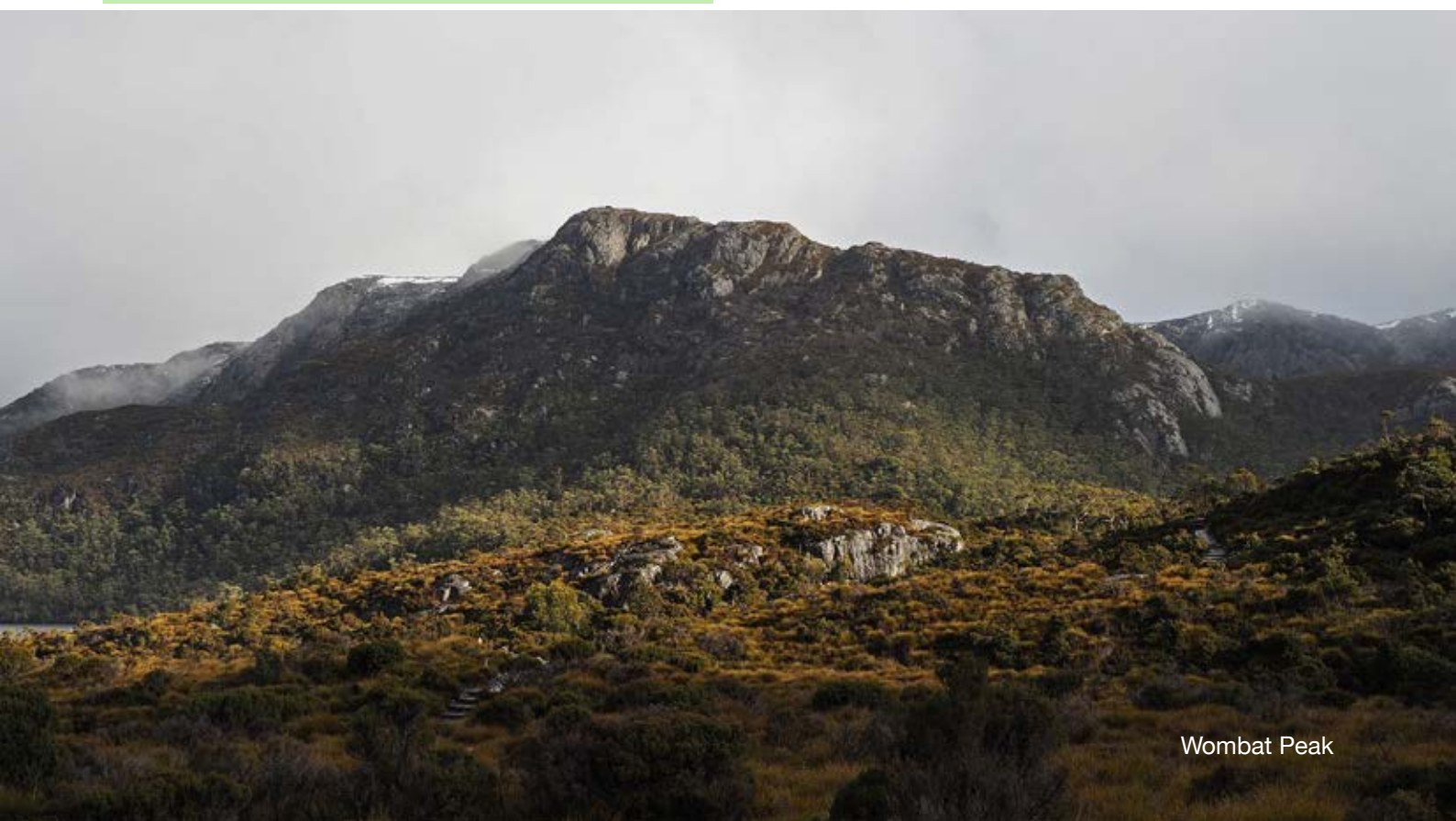
Even though low cloud was covering Cradle Mountain the view of the surrounding countryside was spectacular. I was immediately drawn to the way the light was shining on Wombat Peak. When I zoomed in with my camera I could just make out a group of people at the top.

From the car park I went clockwise towards Glacier Rock thinking how grateful I was to be walking in partial sunshine. There had been showers but at the start of the walk the weather looked like it was clearing.

“ This impressed me - even in mid-winter buses run every 15 minutes ...

Maybe I was being a little optimistic? In any case I was enjoying the views across the lake and I could see the famous Dove Lake boat shed on the opposite side.

It wasn’t long before I reached Glacier Rock and when I did I was disappointed to see that it had been fenced off for construction/safety purposes. Light rain began and a stiff cool breeze started blowing across the lake. Before long the light rain turned into heavy rain and the entire landscape changed. Even though the weather had deteriorated I was really enjoying the opportunity to be walking in nature and to see a type of landscape I had never seen before. Yes it was cold and wet but the rain had caused several



Wombat Peak

waterfalls to flow over the cliffs. It was amazing to see and hear all the rushing water around me.

Just as I was starting to tire of the rain I found myself entering the lush Ballroom Forest. It was similar to the Enchanted Walk forest and with the shelter of the canopy above me I enjoyed a short respite from the rain.



Streams in the Ballroom Forest

I soon realised that I would need to pick up the pace if I was going to make it back to the car park in time for the last shuttle bus. So I hurried along, only stopping briefly at the boat shed for a quick photo and a chance to catch my breath.

At this point I realised the new boots that I had bought before this trip were not suited to my feet as they were just that little bit too narrow. My feet were killing me! At least the boots had kept my feet dry and warm.

“... the new boots that I had bought before this trip were not suited to my feet ...”

I looked at my watch and realised that I would have to run back if I was going to make it in time. Wincing in pain, I jogged to the car park to see the last shuttle bus pull up just as I made it over the hill. There was a long line of people boarding the bus which bought me just enough time to make my way across the car park. I was so relieved!

Day 5 – Dove Lake

On our second full day in Cradle Mountain I drove out to Dove Lake at dawn while my wife and daughter got ready for the day. It was a little overcast and chilly but there was not a breath of wind on the lake, so quiet, still and peaceful. I quickly took some photos by the lake before heading to the boat shed.

It was an absolutely beautiful morning. Cradle Mountain had received a dusting of snow and I loved the reflections of the mountains in the water. When I reached the boat shed I was also struck at how the light and colour kept changing as the sun poked through the clouds.

After a good 30 minutes or so I headed back to our cabin to pick up my wife and daughter. The plan for the rest of the day was for a family visit to Dove Lake and then I would spend the rest of the day walking in the area on my own.

On our way to Dove Lake my wife noticed a pair of wombats grazing in a clearing by the side of the road. She was thrilled! Seeing a wombat was one of the things at the top of her Cradle Mountain list, so we all got out of the car to watch the wombats graze.



Dawn at Dove Lake

We were soon on our way again but were stopped by a boom gate due to the high traffic volumes. No matter, a short drive had us back at the Visitor Centre and before long we were on a shuttle bus to Dove Lake.



My wife and daughter watching a wombat

When we arrived I carried my little girl on my shoulders as we all made our way to the boat shed. It was great for my wife to spend some time taking photos while my daughter and I played with the rocks by the shore of the lake. We were so grateful to another tourist who kindly took a photo of our family. It's one of my favourite family photos thus far, all of us out enjoying nature together.



Family photo at Cradle Mountain

I was having such a good morning but even better things were yet to come. We returned to the shuttle bus stop where I waved goodbye to my little family. They were headed back to the cabin for lunch while I headed off on another adventure.

Mount Campbell and Hansons Peak

I planned to do a long walk to Mount Campbell, Hansons Peak, Marions Lookout and finish at Dove Lake car park. I started walking at noon, so to catch the last shuttle bus at 4pm I decided on Mount Campbell, Hansons Peak, Face Track, Lake Wilks to Dove Lake car park.



My actual walking route at Cradle Mountain

When I started I was a little concerned because the weather looked very similar to the previous day where I ended up walking in heavy rain. As I made my way past the Glacier Rock I was immediately struck by the snow gums on Mount Campbell. They are such a distinctively Australian tree and I particularly like their interesting shapes as they twist up from the ground.

Knowing that I was on a tight time schedule I kept a quick pace as I made my way to the saddle between Mount Campbell and Hansons Peak. From here there are a number of obvious paths to the top of Mount Campbell. After only climbing for a couple of minutes I already had fantastic views over Dove Lake and Cradle Mountain.

Even though Mount Campbell is not an official walk (you will not find any information about it from Tasmania Parks & Wildlife) it is a relatively straightforward walk to the top. There is just a short section of scree to climb before you reach an alpine plateau.

The alpine plateau at the top is relatively large, and I headed straight for the summit cairn. On my way there I passed a number

of quartzite formations where sharp, jagged rocks clustered together into all sorts of interesting shapes.

As I explored the alpine plateau I was struck by the magnitude and beauty of the landscape in front of me. An endless collection of mountains and valleys that stretched into the distance. Clouds that slowly rolled over ridge lines before disappearing into thin air. It was magical!

Then the clouds which had been completely covering the summit of Cradle Mountain slowly began to lift. Within minutes the entire summit was visible and I could see that fresh snow had fallen all over the mountain. The combination of soft afternoon light, fresh snow and the remaining cloud resulted in the most dramatic landscape. I remember feeling so truly blessed to be able to just sit and enjoy this moment.

It's one of the things I love most about getting out into nature, particularly to places that literally take your breath away. In those moments it's like my mind and soul are given a chance to stop and reset. I have a better appreciation of my own smallness in such a vast world and I always walk away feeling so grateful for the gift of life. Maybe that's why I enjoy walking so much.

“ I have a better appreciation of my own smallness in such a vast world and I always walk away feeling so grateful for the gift of life.

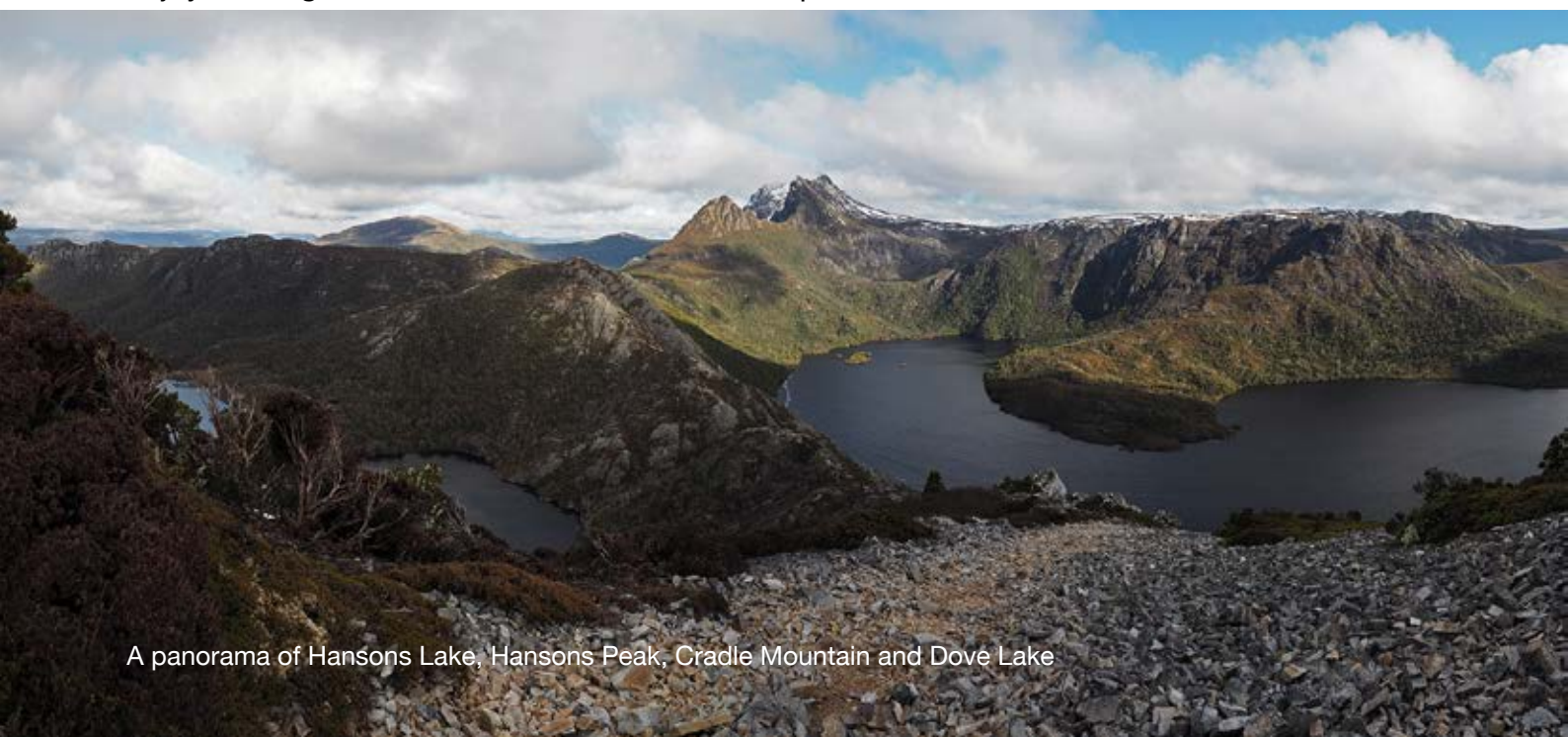


The summit of Cradle Mountain

Even though I was on a tight time schedule I decided to start walking more slowly and to just enjoy this part of the walk. The clouds were really starting to disperse now and I was getting increasingly better views of Dove Lake and Cradle Mountain on the descent from Mount Campbell.

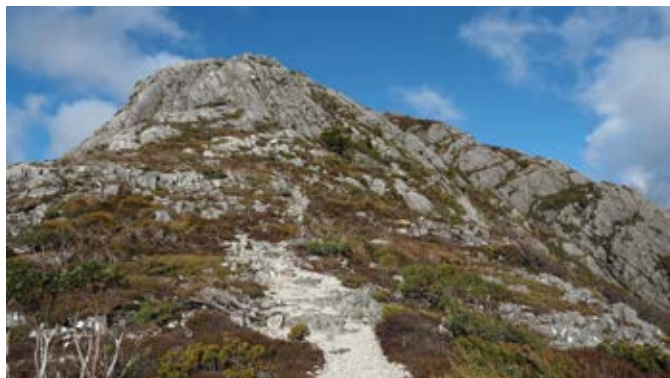
Once I reached the saddle I rejoined the Lake Rodway track and started the ascent to Hansons Peak. I really enjoyed this section of the walk, particularly because of the sweeping views across Lake Hanson. In a strange way the softness of the colour and light of this area reminded me of a painting. There were all sorts of interesting lines and shapes, as though all the features of the landscape; the trees, the lake, the clouds, the ridges, the mountains, were all working together in harmony. It was really beautiful.

The final section of the ascent to Hansons Peak is very steep. The peak rises suddenly from the surrounding area and some climbing is required to reach the top. Fortunately, poles and chains have been installed to



A panorama of Hansons Lake, Hansons Peak, Cradle Mountain and Dove Lake

assist walkers in this section. There are also great views of Cradle Mountain on the way up. At the summit there are more great views of the surrounding area, particularly Cradle Mountain and the landscape to the south.



The track to Hansons Peak

From here I headed west along the Face Track and then towards Lake Wilks. If I had more time I would have definitely traversed the entire Face Track and headed to Marions Lookout but I would have to save that adventure for another day.

At this point in the walk some fatigue and cramping had started to set in. I think it was a combination of not enough water, uncomfortable boots and being a bit out of shape. As a result my progress slowed to a crawl. Even though it was a tough slog I appreciated seeing Dove Lake, Lake Wilks and Cradle Mountain from a unique perspective.

I was starting to run short on time so I picked up the pace again as I rejoined the Dove Lake Circuit. As I had completed the Dove Lake Circuit yesterday I only stopped to take a handful of photos before reaching the car park.

Unlike yesterday I had made it with plenty of time to spare, 3:45pm. After signing out of the walker's registration logbook I boarded the second last shuttle bus for the day. I was exhausted but so completely satisfied at the same time.

As we made our way back to the Visitors' Centre we came across a group of tourist whose companions had left for Marions Lookout at 3:30pm. Marions Lookout is usually a three hour return walk and these inexperienced walkers were definitely

going to miss the last shuttle bus. They would be walking in the dark for hours with temperatures below freezing. The frustrated driver called the rangers and they had to send a search party for them. It's hard to believe that anybody could be so foolish.

I spent the bus trip speaking with a young couple from Sydney who had spent the last two days in the area. We swapped stories of the walks we had done before wishing each other the best of luck for the rest of our respective trips throughout Tasmania.

By far the two most popular walks at Cradle Mountain are the Dove Lake Circuit and the walk to Marions Lookout. While both

of these walks are very beautiful in their own right I have to say that I think the walk to Mount Campbell and Hansons Peak is definitely worth

considering as an alternative. You are guaranteed to see less people and there are so many beautiful highlights on this walk. I can't recommend it highly enough. In fact, it has inspired me to complete the Overland Track with my brother in 2020.

It really is an amazing place.

“... I think the walk to Mount Campbell and Hansons Peak is definitely worth considering as an alternative.”



Peter is from sunny Bundy in Queensland. He loves nothing more than spending time with his family, walking in nature and taking lots of photos. When he is not teaching in front of a classroom he is almost certainly on a bushwalk or planning some other kind of adventure.

Blog: travelwithpete.com

Instagram: [instagram.com/plhodes](https://www.instagram.com/plhodes)

To read the entire article, check out Peter's [blog](#). We will have the second part of this trip in the next edition.

Photo Gallery



BWA Photo Competition



Landscapes

February 2018

WINNER



Fading light
on Weld Ridge
Bogholesbuckethats

Growing up in Garden Island Creek, I first saw this ridge from one of my favourite fishing spots near Eggs and Bacon Bay and have been captivated by it ever since. Having made good time getting to our campsite, we decided to head to the summit for sunset instead of getting up early for sunrise. This decision paid off as the light hitting the western edge of the ridge was mesmerising.



Morning light
Gannet Point
North-north-west



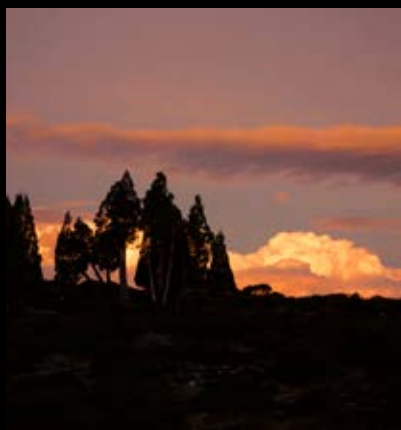
Box Creek Falls
Tom Brennan



Geronimo Constriction
AJW Canyon2011



Natural bridge
Picnic



Marching clouds at
sunset, Blue Peaks
Peter Grant



Urupukapuka,
Cliff Pa loop
landsmith



Non-landscapes

February 2018

WINNER



Dappled light
on the upper Weld
Bogholesbuckethats

A leisurely Sunday stroll following the banks of the upper Weld River.



The spell of wildflowers
Lorraine Parker



We could do with a drop
of rain, Central Tasmania
Peter Grant



Shells'n'kelp,
Tarkine Coast
North-north-west



Magic mushroom
Picnic



Male and female
Brian Eglinton



Tasmania February 2018

WINNER



Above the clouds
North-north-west

Redoing an old walk with a few differences - looking down over the Arthur Plains towards Fedders, from Hewardia Ridge, just before the route plunges into the scrub on the way down to Pine Tree Saddle. It had been so much easier the previous time when the line had been freshly taped and even cut back a bit. Amazing how quickly it regrows.



Douglas Creek
MickyB



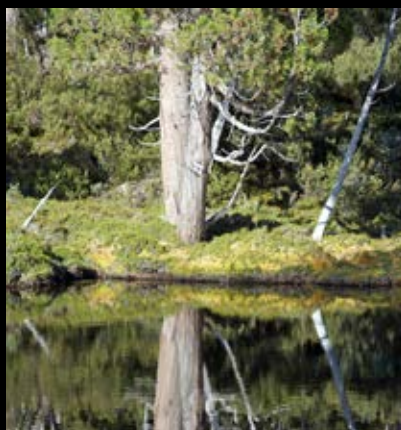
View from top of Alpha
Moraine, Western Arthurs
Teak



Refuge
Bogholesbuckethats



Morning at Tent Tarn
Robl



Reflections,
Walls of Jerusalem
Peter Grant



Casting the eye north
Geevesy



Other States February 2018

WINNER



Curtis falls
Picnic

It was my first time taking my friend with me on a hike. I decided to start with an easier one with the Curtis Falls Track. This time it wasn't as busy and I got to spend more time taking photos. I waited for the sun to move a little. My friend was getting impatient so this was one of the last shots I captured. The moment I saw it on my computer screen I loved it. It was also my last hike in Queensland before I moved back to Western Australia. Every time I look at it I feel transformed back to that day, the fun, the calming sound of the falls. It's like I can smell and feel that day all over again.



Cloud and Cloudmaker
Tom Brennan



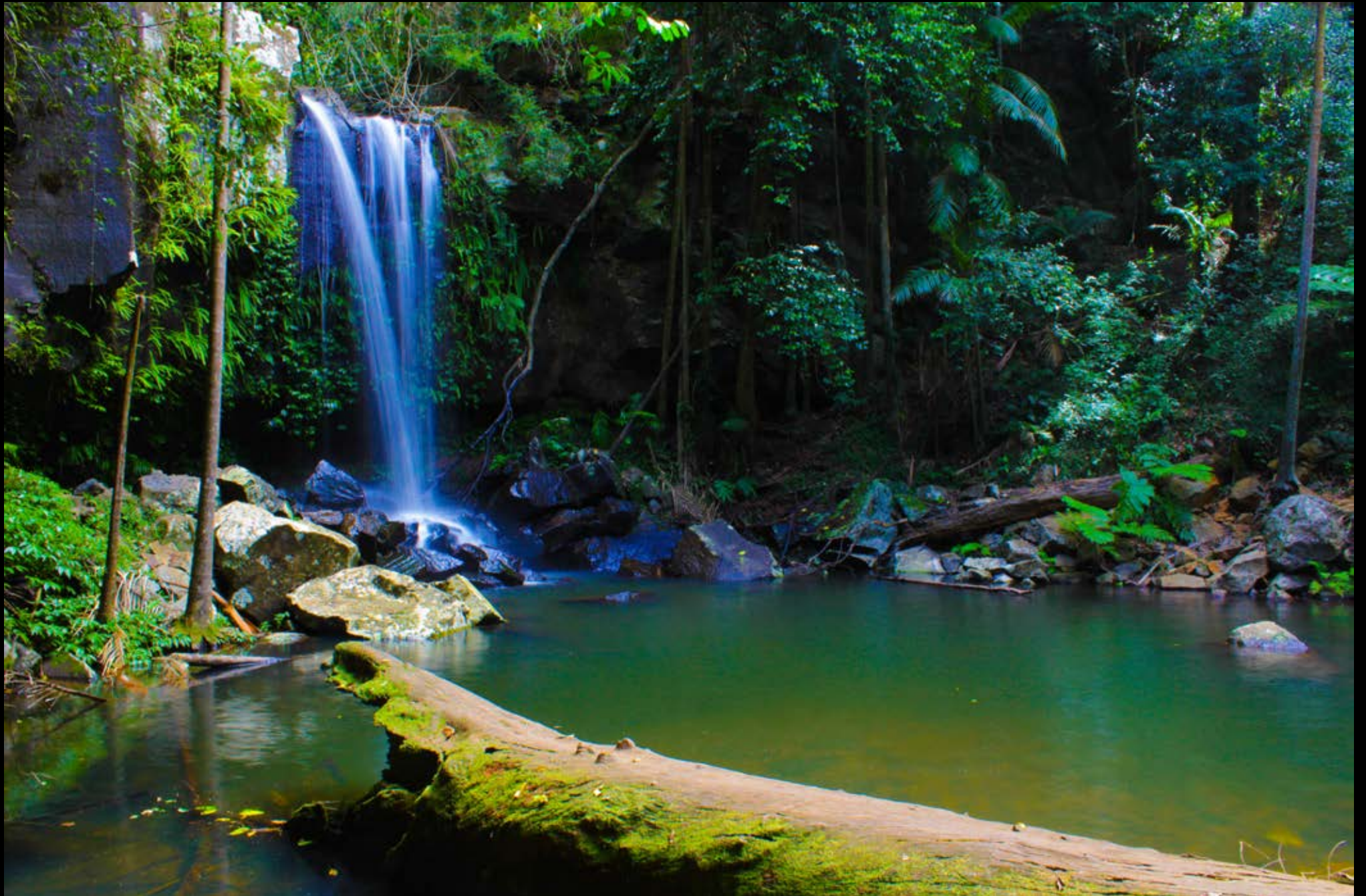
St Pauls Rock panorama
landsmith



A patch of green
Brian Eglinton



A nice day for a swim
in the Wollangambe
AJW Canyon2011



Landscapes

March 2018

WINNER



Wakey wakey - morning
on Schnells
North-north-west

One of those walks that had a bit of almost everything, but not even finally getting out to the Gallagher Plateau could top this morning, wandering around near my campsite between the two western towers on Schnells Ridge. Sometimes the weather gods do smile, even in south west Tassie.



Unnamed creek
Bogholesbuckethats



An afternoon stroll
with a view
John Walker



Great Aussie bite
Picnic



Southern face
of Ben Lomond
Brian Eglinton



Waterfall in Yileen
AJW Canyon2011



Sunrise
Lighthouse Beach
Lorraine Parker



Non-landscapes

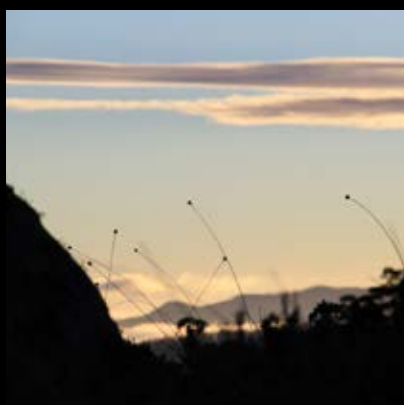
March 2018

WINNER



Brush wattle bird
landsmith

The least colourful of the species but there's quite a few different types of birds get in a grevillea that's somewhat hidden from view at Buttaba. I make a beeline down there for an hour every so often. It's wonderful to see the variety arrive and depart.



Buttons
Graham51



Benefits of a cold night
Brian Eglinton



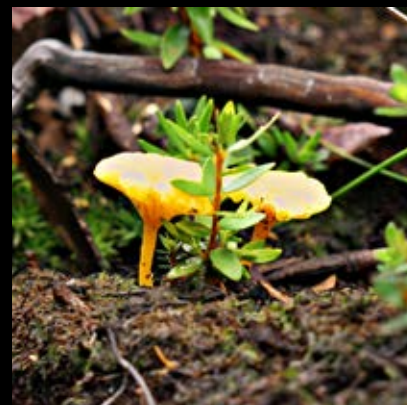
What a tangled
web we weave...
John Walker



Nullarbor
Picnic



Alert, but not alarmed
North-north-west



Small
laintiler



Tasmania

March 2018

WINNER



Lake Meston sunrise
Bogholesbuckethats

Having spent the previous night wrestling possums at Dixons Kingdom, this campsite was a significant improvement. We woke to find a thin layer of mist covering the lake that slowly started to rise as the sky went from grey to pink.



Mist forming on Youl
Brian Eglinton



There are worse
places to camp
North-north-west



Rhona sunrise
Graham51



Range
IainDtiler



Other States March 2018

WINNER



Wide passage
Devils Pinch Canyon
AJW Canyon2011

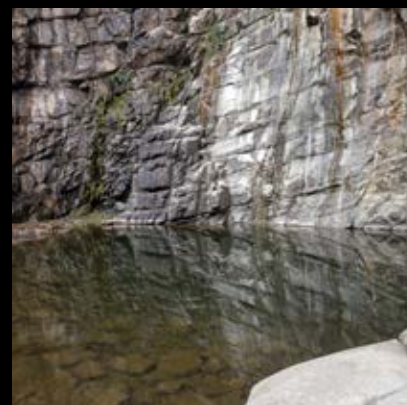
I took the photo of the slot in one of the dry sections of Devils Pinch Canyon towards the end of the canyon after we had done all of the wet abseils in the constriction.



The wonder of Bromeliad
landsmith



Sunset
Picnic



Plunge Pool
Brian Eglinton



A spot of colour - *Bruguiera gymnorrhiza* (orange mangrove),
Tweed River Northern NSW
John Walker



A quiet moment
Lorraine Parker



Our High Country Lore and Literature – 1880s to 2010s

Klaus Hueneker



One of the challenging suggestions to come out of a little known international publication called *Les Alpes australiennes* (The Australian Alps, 1992) is an inventory of alpine literature. The editors, Roger Good and Philippe Grenier, proposed headings such as accounts of exploration, personal experiences, studies of tradition and folklore, picture books and travel guides.

Klaus with Ben and Zoe at the historic Four Mile Hut with its ornate metal decorations in 2017
Abi Curtis

This overview is facilitated by the many books it's been my pleasure to collect and dip into over the last 50 years. Some 300 titles or about five metres, all in some way related to the Australian Alps, now sit in roughly alphabetical order on my bookshelves. I won't be as systematic or as academic as the editors suggest but will range widely and mention some of the most representative and interesting. Readers will no doubt have favourites of their own.

Aborigines and explorers

The Aborigines didn't leave us any bound volumes, at least not in the usual form, but their activities were recorded by the likes of [Hume & Hovell](#), [Howitt](#), [Lhotsky](#), [McMillan](#) and [Strzelecki](#). Hamilton Hume, William Hovell and entourage were the first white people to spy the snow covered Snowy Mountains back in 1824. The historic journey, and the one you can do now, was engagingly written up by Harry Hill in 1993. The track covering some 300 kilometres between Wee Jasper and Woomargama in New South Wales, can be done as walks of a day, a weekend, a week, or as long as a month.

Alfred Howitt was a keen observer of Aboriginal life, language and customs and made many journeys into and across the

mountains. His biography [Come Wind Come Weather](#) was written by Mary Howitt Walker. John Lhotsky came through the Monaro and got as far as a hill south of Thredbo. His [A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps](#) was edited by Alan Andrews and published by Blubberhead Press in 1979.

One of the books about Angus McMillan is Kenneth Cox's [Pathfinder](#) (1973). McMillan traversed large parts of Gippsland and the foothills of the Victorian Alps. Count Paul Edmund Strzelecki was active about the same time. He and James McArthur climbed the Kosciuszko Main Range from the Geehi valley in 1840 and then went on to Melbourne via Gippsland. They had Aboriginal guides for at least part of the journey.

The number of books and articles about Strzelecki's life, including whether or not he climbed Mt Kosciuszko, is legion. They include [The Count](#) by Geoffrey Rawson (1953), [In a Dark Glass](#) by Helen Heney (1961) and [Kosciusko - the Mountain in History](#) by Alan Andrews (1991). The latter is perhaps the most even-handed. It is still in print.

Research into the life and times of the Aborigines has generated many theses, reports and papers but very few books for

The lore

It's more heart than intellect,
it's both knowledge and wisdom,
it builds instead of pulling down,
it whispers rather than shouts,
it's more humble than haughty,
it embraces nature instead of fighting it,
it respects those who have gone before and
inspires those who are growing now,
in short, it's quite like the "Songlines" that have
flourished here for thousands of years.

Klaus with daughter Abi near Mount Tabletop,
KNP, in 2017
Mark Curtis

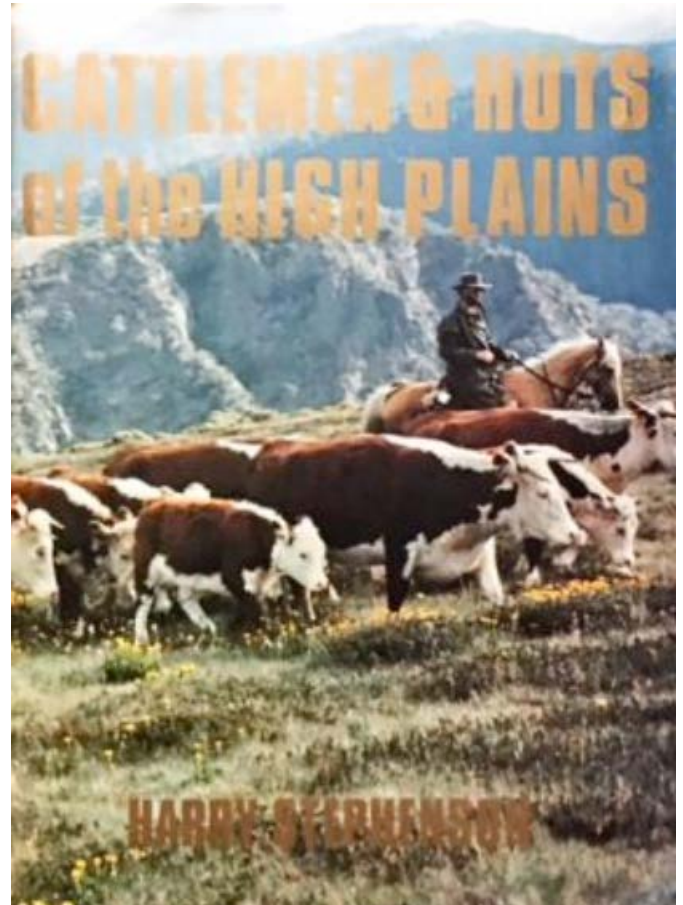


public consumption. Josephine Flood's *The Moth Hunters* (1980) was a great beginning. I can still taste the nutty flavour of roasted Bogong moths served with Jatz biscuits at the launch. It is out of print except for some parts which were published as *Moth Hunters of the ACT* in 1996. Some of her assumptions have been challenged in a thesis *The myth hunters* by Alistair Grinbergs, but where is the book? Another person to counter earlier beliefs is Peter Gardner. His *Gippsland Massacres* (1993), in revealing many sordid details of the way Europeans really dealt with Aborigines, trod on many establishment toes. Up at Kosciuszko, Michael Young's *The Aboriginal People of the Monaro* (2000 and revised in 2006) has done much to counter the belief that there are no descendants of high country Aborigines. Some of them have now helped John Blay write *On Track – Searching out the Bundian Way* (2015). It is one possible walking route used 200 years ago between Kosciuszko and Eden.

The colonists

Squatters, miners and cattlemen followed the first white explorers. They rarely put pen to paper but left enough evidence for others to trace their movements. The life of *Murray of Yarralumla*, who took stock into the northern plains of the Kosciuszko area in the 1840s, was meticulously researched by Gwendoline Wilson. My Tabletop Press printed a revised version in 2001. It is still in print. The Pendergasts and O'Rourke's rode into the Omeo area about the same time. Their journeys and those of many others were collected, edited and bound into a best seller *Cattlemen & Huts of the High Plains* by Harry Stephenson in 1980. Harry was one of the first to tap into the rich lode of high country lore.

One of the most vivid descriptions of life in a high country mining town is by George Ogilvy Preshaw in *Banking Under Difficulties*. He lived in Kiandra in 1860 but the book wasn't produced until 1888. To get to Kiandra he had to endure a seven day ride on the back of an uncooperative horse, and when he did, he had to shake down in a small room with six others. The bank, at which he was a teller, was made of calico and had a stream running through it.



Cattlemen & Huts of the High Plains

Scientists and others

The men intent on making a living from grazing were followed by artists, surveyors, botanists and scientists. They were well educated, articulate and often interested in self-promotion. Ferdinand von Mueller became one of the most famous. He wrote thousands of letters, as well as books, learned papers, treatises, pamphlets and lectures. An in depth and well written character study is Edward Kynaston's *A Man on Edge* (1981). The title says it all.

A latter day equivalent to Von Mueller, at least in terms of output, is Alec Costin. Author of numerous papers he is also responsible for a weighty tome on the ecosystems of the Monaro (including the high country) and in conjunction with Wimbush, Totterdell and Gray wrote *Kosciuszko Alpine Flora* (1979). This exhaustive much acclaimed work was reprinted by CSIRO a few years ago with new colour plates and some revisions. It is still in print as a paperback. Three of the four authors have passed on but Alec Costin is still active especially on the controversial brumby culling issue.

The only substantial book on the unique flora of the alps before Costin and others burst into print was Thistle Harris' *Alpine Plants of Australia* (1970). A popular and more general text is Leon Costerman's bible *Native Trees and Shrubs of South-East Australia* (1981). Many others have filled in various gaps including members of Friends of Grasslands (ACT) with *Grassland Flora of Southern Tablelands* and *Woodland Flora – Field Guide for Southern Tablelands*. Still in print, they include species found in the high alps. In Victoria, John Murphy and Bill Dowling produced *Plants of the Victorian High Country* in 2010.

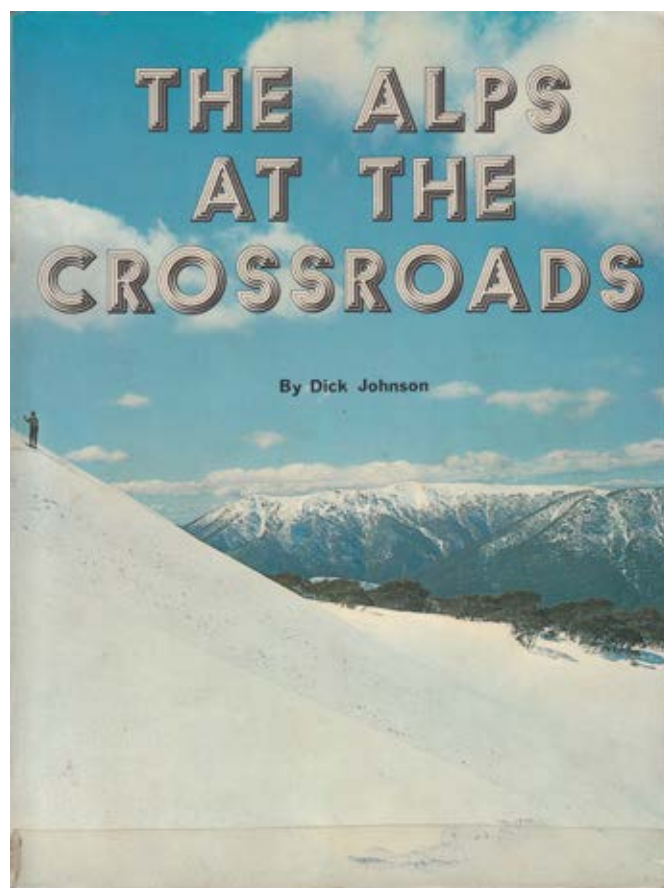
On the animal front, the best volume is still *Wildlife of the Australian Snow Country* (1994). The authors, Ken Green and Will Osborne, started their snow country research as undergraduate students at the University of Canberra in the 1970s. I visited Ken with a group of adult students at his tree line camp below the Ramshead in 1981. The pipe-smoking author was monitoring native rats, and in winter sometimes had to dig down three metres to get to the traps. Later on he formed a high country scientific research collective.

About 30 years ago the scientific community pooled its knowledge and published two collections of papers. *The Scientific Significance of the Australian Alps* came out in 1988 and the French volume alluded to at the beginning of this article a few years later. It is quite an honour for an European research institute to pay our mountains so much attention given that they are not very dramatic or terribly high. Geoff Mosley's dream, enunciated in that volume, of them becoming a World Heritage Area is still not a reality. The cultural side of things was not neglected. A popular symposium in 1991 resulted in the 357 page *Cultural Heritage of the Australian Alps*.

Exploration, conservation and history

Books of exploration, history and folklore include Harry Stephenson's *Skiing the High Plains* (1982), George Seddon's *Searching for the Snowy – An Environmental History* (1994), Matthew Higgins *Skis on the Brindabellas* (1994), the highly influential *The Alps at the Crossroads* by Dick Johnson (1974), and

Niall Brennan's *Tales from the Australian Mountains* (1979). Wally Mortimer has written two books on the history of Wonnangatta Station and Professor Keith Hancock wrote *Discovering Monaro – a Study of Man's Impact on his Environment* way back in 1972.



The Alps at the Crossroads

Of these books, Dick Johnson's is something of a classic especially now that the Alpine National Park, for which he and many conservationists fought so valiantly, has become a reality. Niall Brennan's book includes an enlightening chapter about the error prone Gadsden tragedy on Mt Bogong. Keith Hancock's volume is the best-known in academic circles. Most of these titles are now only available second hand or in libraries.

Tor Holth and I started photographing, interviewing and writing about the same time. It was in the mid-70s when little was known about our rustic mountain huts, the grazing era and the lore of the high country. His *Cattlemen of the High Country* appeared in 1980 and his *Challenge of the High Country*, written in conjunction with his wife Jane, in 1985. My *Huts of the High Country*, with

seven reprintings, has become a classic and is still selling 37 years hence. It was joined by *Kiandra to Kosciusko* in 1987, *People of the Australian High Country* in 1994 and in 2003 by *Huts in the Victorian Alps*. I wrote about the south coast of NSW for a while before coming back to the mountains with *Charlie Carter – Hermit, Healer and High Country Legend* (2017).

Personal memoirs

Many books based on personal experience have come from dingo trappers, bushwalkers, skiers and naturalists. Clyde Sykes wrote about his dingo chasing days in *A Man from Gelantipy* (1982) and Paddy Pallin, after a lifetime of making, using and mending outdoor gear put together his recollections as *Never Truly Lost* (1987). John Landy, the great runner of the 1950s, metamorphosed into a caring naturalist in the 80s and in his *Close to Nature* (1985) gave us a gem of nature writing. Detailed observations of insects and fungi are complemented by serene early morning photos taken in the foothills of the Kosciuszko area on the Murray side.

One of the mountain legends was Mick Hull. He was a mate of [Cleve Cole](#), and was with him when he died in 1936. His *Mountain Memories - Sixty Years of Skiing* (1990) was put together with the help of Harry Stephenson. It's a 420-page epic with lots of photos. Post war migrants have also put pen to paper. Ernest Forras, who had a lot to do with early ski developments at Mount Buller, wrote *Earnest Escapades* (1994) and Tony Sponar, who chose the site of Thredbo, wrote *Snow in Australia - That's News to Me* (1995). In 2013, Gillian Salmon produced *The King of Hotham – My Father*. These titles are part of a recent avalanche of books about the history of downhill skiing and the ski resorts. There are at least six about Thredbo and some of its legendary personalities. Numbering in the dozens, they deserve a separate overview.

Most of their authors were pro-development whereas Ian Stapleton was against it. Ian, after being the outdoor education teacher at Timbertop for some years, built Wollangarra and Mittagundi, two bush camps for teenagers on the McAllister River and the Mitta Mitta. To help pay for the building costs



Klaus on the Cobberas in 2000 at the beginning of a walk to Dead Horse Gap
Graham Scully

he wrote books about the experience and sold them at well attended public gatherings. In time he also had a trailer load of historic photos, interviews and papers. From his home at Harrietteville these are now turning into a four or five volume history of the Victorian high plains. Catchy titles include *Hairy chested history* and *From Drovers to Daisy-Pickers* (2006).

Skiing

Most of the early accounts of ski exploration are in the *Australian Ski Year Book*. They include trips to the Main Range, winter crossings from Kiandra to Kosciuszko and journeys across the Bogong High Plains. First published in 1928, the early editions constitute the bulk of recorded skiing history. They are also quite rare, even the National Library doesn't have a complete set.

Elyne and Tom Mitchell feature in some of the early editions and so does Alan Andrews, for whom I have published four books: *Kosciuszko – the Mountain in History*, *Skiing the Western Faces - Kosciuszko*, *Earliest Monaro* and *Rainforest and Ravished Snow*. Few would know the gullies, chutes and funnels of the western faces better than Alan. He started skiing them in the 1950s and was still having a go in his mid-70s.



Neil Wilson ski touring at Crooks Racecourse in 1984

Fiction and poetry

Much of Alan's inspiration, both in his writing and skiing, came from Elyne Mitchell. Her *Australia's Alps* (1942) is still the most poetic and romantic evocation of being in, and seeing and feeling the high country in winter. It's also a good, if sometimes flowery, piece of nature writing. She was one of our most prolific authors, having produced *The Snowy Mountains* (with Mike James in 1980), *Discoverers of the Snowy Mountains* (1985) and the evergreen multi-volume *Silver Brumby Series*. In 2001 Alison Lester added to the mystique and romance of wild high country horses with *The Snow Pony*. She has not been the only one.

Many of Elyne's poems appeared in *A Vision of the Snowy Mountains*. Other poets of note include Banjo Paterson, Douglas Stewart, David Campbell, Mark O'Connor, Don Kneebone, Neil Hulm and Ted Winter. Mark O'Connor's poems appeared in *Tilting at Snowgums* and Ted Winter's in *Mountain Verse* as well as my *Huts of the High Country*. Lesser known but just as important are small volumes with dramatic titles like *If That Man Comes Here, I'll Shoot Him* by Rosemary Curry. It features poems from Gladys Weston and Emily McGufficke, the daughters of a stockman. Lots of poems, in traditional ballad style, have appeared in *Voice of the Mountains* the Journal of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria and in other places. The Banjo's work continues to be popular, especially when there is an anniversary, a film or another reworking of his life and times.

Banjo's *The Man from Snowy River*, illustrated by MacArthur-Onslow, is the best seller amongst books for children. It is closely followed by *Diary of a Wombat*, *Baby Wombats Week* and *Wombat Goes to School*, all by Jacky French. Many authors have been fascinated by wombats including Ruth Park with *The Muddleheaded Wombat* and Susanna Chambers with *The Snow Wombat*. I am sure there will be more.

Novels that come to mind include Miles Franklin's *Childhood at Brindabella*, Eleanor Stoddard's *When the Mountains Change Their Tune* (1985), Niall Brennan's *Man Upon His Mountain* (1984), Hugh Capel's *Where*

Guide books

A recent increase in the number of bushwalkers and skiers has led to more guidebooks, and more guidebooks has led to more people in the bush. The first and for many years the only guide was *Snowy Mountain Walks* compiled by the Cooma based Geehi Club. Next came a number of Algonia guides including *The Alpine Track*, *Mount Buffalo National Park*, *Bogong National Park* and *Ski Touring in Australia*. When John Brownlie sold Algonia, John Siseman and John Chapman continued his work and produced *The Australian Alps Walking Track* as well as a number of others.

Others who have sought to show us how to get to and enjoy dramatic places in the alps include Charles Warner and his *Bushwalking in Kosciuszko National Park* (1983), Philip Ingamells with *Discovering Mount Buffalo* (2001), Ian Fraser and Margaret McJannett with *Above the Cotter* (1991), the many works of Graeme Barrow such as *Namadgi & Tidbinbilla Classics* (2000) and *Bold Horizon* by Matthew Higgins (2018).

Final notes

So there you have it according to my collection of books and personal biases. The above represents the bulk of books written but does not include all the reports and musings in club journals, newspapers, magazines and conference proceedings. The output of books on the high country is obviously rich and diverse, perhaps more so than for any other part of Australia. There are indications that this will grow in depth and strength as new generations become inspired and add their observations. I hope there will be some epic novels and gripping pieces of nature writing amongst them.

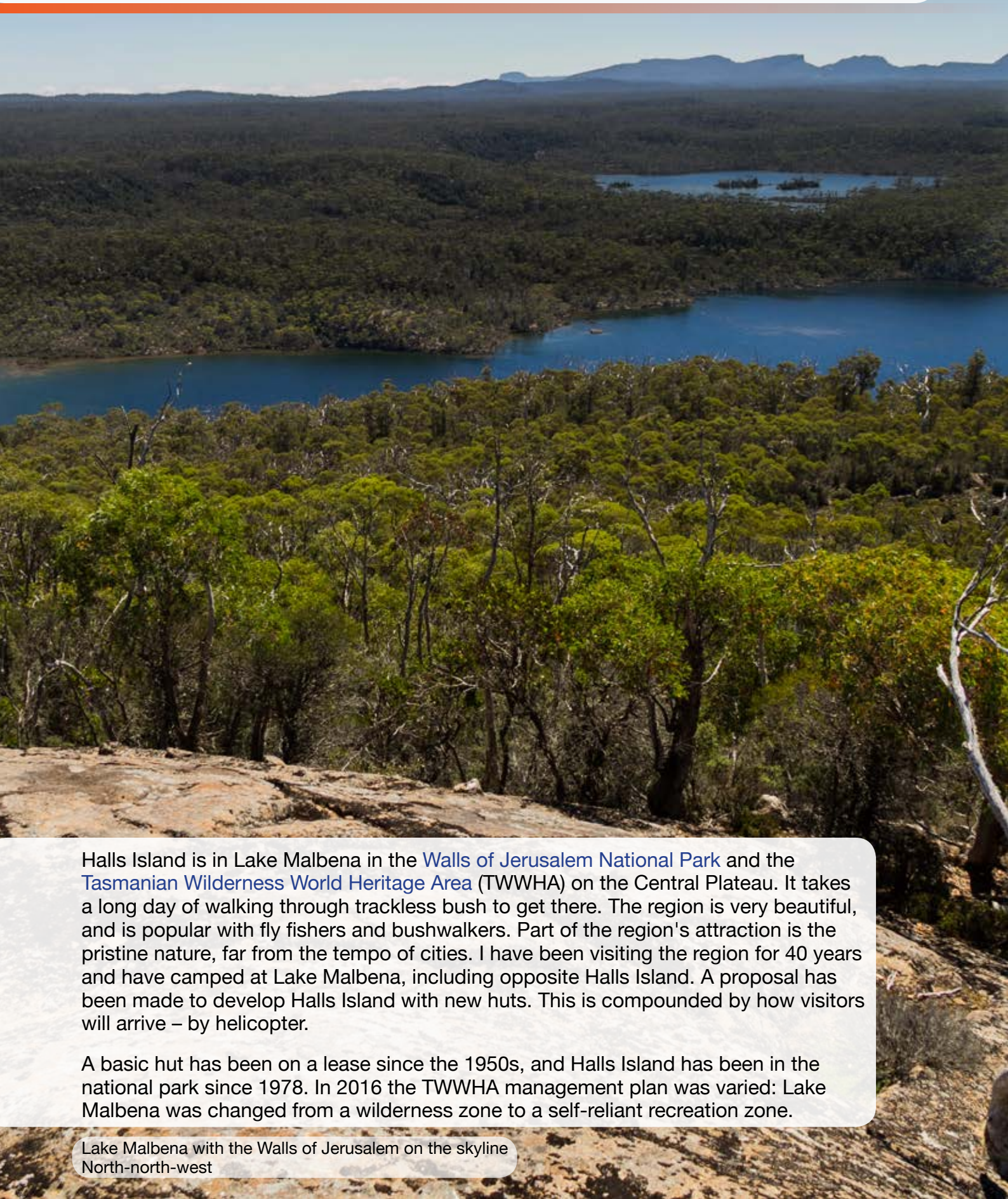
Klaus Hueneker, OA-AM, is the author and/or publisher of about twenty books set in the high country. His company Tabletop Press has been distributing books about the mountains to regional bookshops since 1987. He can be found at khueneker@bigpond.com.au or the web site Tabletoppressbooks.com.



Some of the books I have published or written on the high country. And a couple of calendars.

Halls Island

De facto privatisation in a
World Heritage Area national park
Stephen Lake



Halls Island is in Lake Malbena in the [Walls of Jerusalem National Park](#) and the [Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area](#) (TWWHA) on the Central Plateau. It takes a long day of walking through trackless bush to get there. The region is very beautiful, and is popular with fly fishers and bushwalkers. Part of the region's attraction is the pristine nature, far from the tempo of cities. I have been visiting the region for 40 years and have camped at Lake Malbena, including opposite Halls Island. A proposal has been made to develop Halls Island with new huts. This is compounded by how visitors will arrive – by helicopter.

A basic hut has been on a lease since the 1950s, and Halls Island has been in the national park since 1978. In 2016 the TWWHA management plan was varied: Lake Malbena was changed from a wilderness zone to a self-reliant recreation zone.

Lake Malbena with the Walls of Jerusalem on the skyline
North-north-west

There was no consultation with interested parties, including peak Aboriginal groups, conservationists and the wider community. The rezoning is similar to Lake Pedder in 1967, effectively revoked from the national park.

The development proponent is Riverfly 1864, the new lease holder. Riverfly 1864 is currently making it hard for non-clients to go to Halls Island, part of the national park which until now was open to all. It amounts to privatisation.

Greg French has been fishing there for decades, and like most if not all of the fishing fraternity he objects to the proposal in the strongest terms. On 16 January 2019 the Hobart Mercury reported that Greg said that “The Franklin Dam and forest wars led to bad publicity all around the world. It gave us an image overseas as a petty, bigoted, redneck island that nobody wanted to go to. It is no coincidence our tourism industry has boomed after the forest wars were effectively stopped.”

[Anglers Alliance Tasmania](#) (AAT) has about 27,000 freshwater anglers. AAT said helicopter access would have a significant impact on the “remoteness, silence and connectivity to nature” enjoyed by bushwalking anglers.

Peak groups such as [The Wilderness Society](#), [The Environment Defenders Office](#), the [Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre](#), and other groups oppose the proposal.

The Federal Government’s main heritage adviser is the Australian Heritage Council. They say that “The buildings, helipad and tracks do not conform to the zoning



An artist's impression of bushwalking in the national park under a helicopter

prescriptions in the TWWHA Management Plan ... The proposal also raises the issue of appropriate activities in a self-reliant recreation zone (hut construction) and wilderness zone (helicopter access). The cumulative impact on both world heritage and natural heritage values would be considerable, particularly noting the impact of helicopters on the outstanding natural aesthetic value of the wilderness area in which it is situated.”

[The National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council](#) advises on TWWHA management to the Tasmanian and Commonwealth Governments, and does not support the proposal.

Sacred Aboriginal sites are at risk. There are a number of compliance issues – storm water, human waste, bushfire, monitoring, visual intrusion. As far as I can determine, none have been addressed. Environmental assessment under the federal EPBC Act has been [bypassed by the federal minister](#).

One major issue is the helicopter flights, more than 240 per year, according to Riverfly 1864 documentation. A helicopter is audible and visible for 5-10 kilometres either side of the flight path, degrading the experience for those on the ground.

Another major issue is that this is seen by many to be the thin end of the wedge, with other so-called eco-tourism projects in the planning process. The projects come from governments and companies with scant awareness of what aspects of an area attract visitors. Too much development and the attraction fades.

The only driver is corporate profit. I analysed a similar proposal in Victoria catering for rich people. The result was clear – the return on investment was very poor.

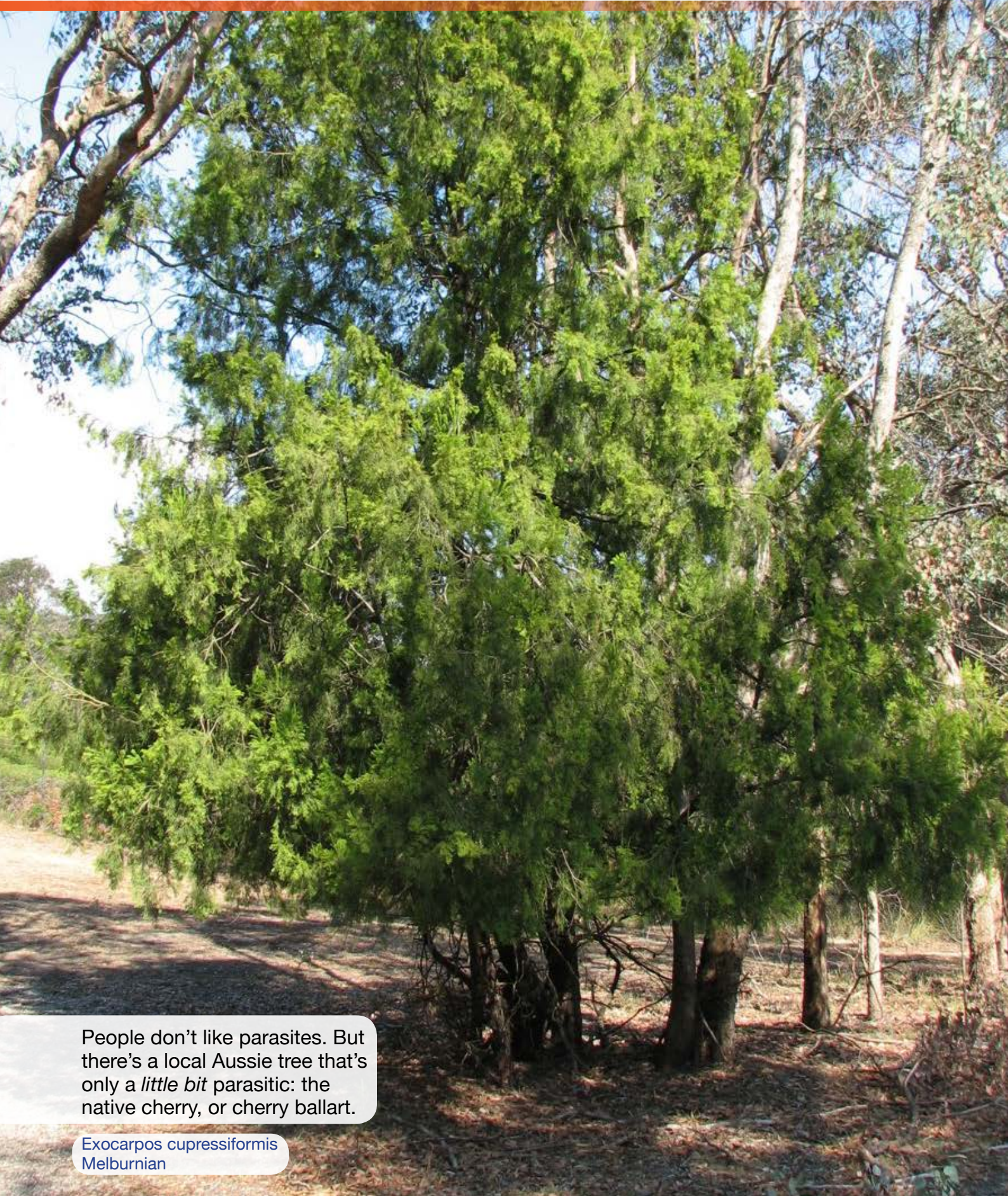
The Central Highlands Council is calling for [submissions](#), closing on 15 February. This issue is important because it could be a precedent for privatising Australian national parks.

Check [Bushwalk.com forum](#) for discussion and the [Halls Island website](#) for more information.



Mysterious Native Cherries

Gregg Müller



People don't like parasites. But there's a local Aussie tree that's only a *little bit* parasitic: the native cherry, or cherry ballart.

Exocarpos cupressiformis
Melburnian

It's what we call *hemiparasitic*. It can photosynthesise, but gains extra nutrients by attaching its roots to host plants.

The native cherry, *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, might be our most widespread root hemiparasite tree, but we're not quite sure – root-parasitic shrubs and trees are a bit of a research blank spot. We are not even really sure who all the hosts of cherry ballart are.

Although other parasites – like mistletoes – have a more direct Christmas association, cherry ballart does have an Australian Yuletide connection. Their conifer-like appearance (the species name *cupressiformis* means “cypress-like”) was noted by homesick European settlers, who chopped them down for Christmas trees.

On the map

Cherry ballart grows from the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland to southern Tasmania, and across to the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia.

The first European to record it was Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardière, the botanist on d'Entrecasteaux's expedition in search of La Perouse. He formally described the species in 1800, but we have no physical type specimen – the botanical type is his [illustration and description](#). Maybe he lost his specimen, or disposed of it, or thought a picture would do; Jacques seems to have been a bit [cavalier with his record-keeping](#).

Or perhaps it was stolen or misplaced after all his specimens were seized in an overlapping series of defections, wars, defeats and revolution as the expedition tried to return to Europe.

The collection was eventually returned after the intercession of English botanist Joseph Banks – but no cherry ballart.

“Its distinctive shape led to native cherry being marked on early Australian orienteering maps ...



Cherry ballart or native cherry
John Tann

Its distinctive shape led to native cherry being marked on early Australian orienteering maps, since they are in a cartographic Goldilocks zone: obvious, just numerous enough to make them useful, but not so many as to clutter the map.

That was until Australia held the World Orienteering Championships in the mid-1980s, when the standardisation of Australian orienteering maps for overseas competitors led to the cherry ballart becoming an early victim of internationalisation – at least cartographically speaking.

Its utility also extended to the timber. Among the uses of its “close-grained and handsome wood” are tool handles, gun stocks and map rollers (although the last is probably a niche market these days).

Indigenous Australians ate the fruit, used the wood for spear throwers and reportedly used the sap as a treatment for [snakebite](#). They [called](#) it Tchimmi-dillen (Queensland), Palatt or Ballot (Lake Condah, Victoria) and Ballee (Yarra).

Grow baby, grow!

Despite producing large quantities of fruit and seed, no one seems to be able to get native cherry to germinate reliably. There are anecdotal reports that feeding the seed to chooks works, but other growers dismiss this approach.

The edible fruit isn’t actually a true fruit: it’s a swollen stem. It’s reported to have the [highest sugar level](#) of any native fruit in the forests of southern Victoria and is much tastier than you’d think a stem would be. (It’s also probably an important nutrient supply for some birds, but that’s yet another thing we are yet to prove.)

This odd “fruit” gives rise to the genus name (*exo* = outside, *carpos* = fruit,) and was often touted by early European writers as another example of the topsy-turvy nature of Australia – “cherries” with the pit on the outside went along with “duck-billed platypus”, animals with pouches, trees that shed bark rather than leaves, and Christmas in the middle of summer.

Despite their oddness, native cherries in the bush are biodiversity hotspots. My camera trap data show they preferentially attract echidnas, possums, foxes, swamp wallabies, white-winged choughs and bronzewing pigeons.

This might be because they modify their immediate environment. My research shows they create moderate micro-climates in their foliage, reduce soil temperatures, increase soil water retention, concentrate nutrients in the soil beneath their canopies, and alter the understorey vegetation. They also kill some of their host trees, creating patches with higher concentrations of dead timber. All these probably have something to do with their animal attraction, but exactly how is a mystery yet to be solved.

“Despite their oddness, native cherries in the bush are biodiversity hotspots.”

In addition to their attractiveness to vertebrates, native cherries are required hosts for some striking [moths](#) and share specialist host duties with mistletoe for some of our most beautiful [butterflies](#) (although mistletoes take most of the glory in the scientific literature).

My research into our cherry ballart hopes in part to correct these historical slights. I want to set the record straight on this overlooked widespread and attractive little tree, which has a long indigenous use and was one of the first of our native flora to be described by Europeans.



Gregg Müller

Lecturer in Natural History, La Trobe 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 14 December 2018.

In the News

Pilot killed in Tasmanian mountain crash

Nikita Walker, 30, a pilot with Par Avion, died when her twin-engine Britten-Norman Islander aircraft crashed near Federation Peak on 8 December 2018 in poor weather while on a routine run to pick up passengers.

Multiple fire warnings issued in central Tasmania

Emergency warnings have been issued for six areas in central Tasmania, with lives and properties at risk, as weather conditions continue to worsen.

Missing walker found at Woods Point

Victorian hiker found alive and well at Jamieson campsite after police search.

"Off the Grid" with Jon and Suzy Muir

16 - 20 Mar 2019 or 2 - 6 Nov 2019

This is a rare opportunity to get up close with Australia's most accomplished adventurer, Jon Muir, as well as his wife Suzy, on this unique farmstay at their home where you will enjoy a hands-on experience learning about sustainable living, energy saving techniques and enjoy some bushwalking.

A trail closure on the AAWT

The Cascade Fire Trail between Cascade Hut and Tin Mine Huts is closed in March 2019.

Find your new favourite place

Youcamp is where you will step outside into a whole new world of amazing private land camping adventures.

Tasmanian laws

In 2017 the High Court ruled that Tasmanian laws were unconstitutional. The Tasmanian government is now attempting to resurrect these failed anti-protest laws.

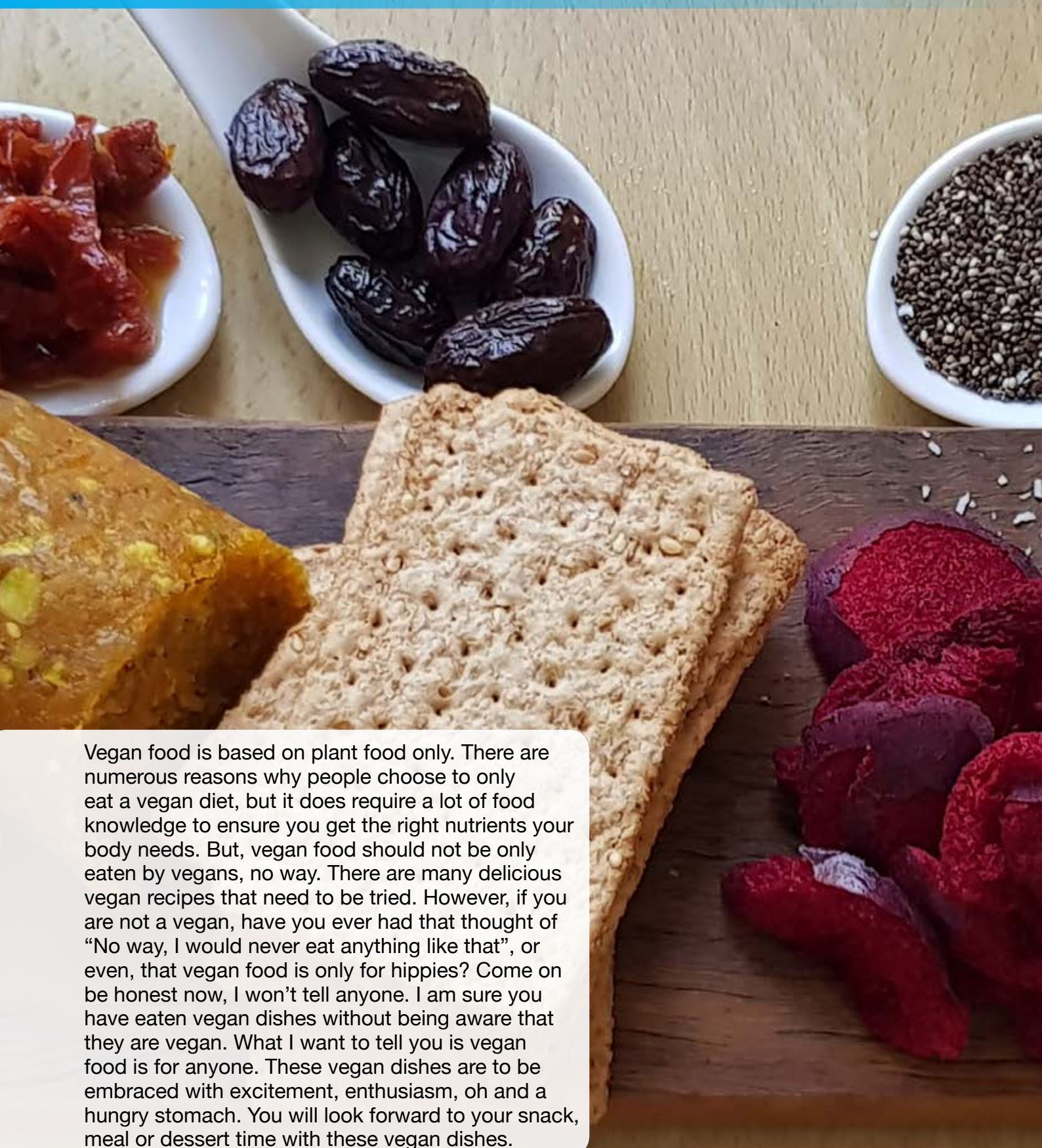
Turning wilderness into theme parks

After the Tasmanian government pledged A\$160 million to build a new visitor centre and tourism village on the edge of the Cradle Mountain heritage area, they added another A\$160 million so that visitors will soon be able to arrive at Dove Lake in minutes using a cable car instead of taking a shuttle bus.



Vegan Food

Sonya Muhlsimmer



Vegan food is based on plant food only. There are numerous reasons why people choose to only eat a vegan diet, but it does require a lot of food knowledge to ensure you get the right nutrients your body needs. But, vegan food should not be only eaten by vegans, no way. There are many delicious vegan recipes that need to be tried. However, if you are not a vegan, have you ever had that thought of “No way, I would never eat anything like that”, or even, that vegan food is only for hippies? Come on be honest now, I won’t tell anyone. I am sure you have eaten vegan dishes without being aware that they are vegan. What I want to tell you is vegan food is for anyone. These vegan dishes are to be embraced with excitement, enthusiasm, oh and a hungry stomach. You will look forward to your snack, meal or dessert time with these vegan dishes.

Apricot and Pistachio Salami

This is the easiest thing you will ever make. And it is so good for a snack on its own or even with a bit of cheese – oops not vegan sorry – or on a biscuit for lunch. Another option is to serve this on a fancy platter when you're hosting a get together with your friends to discuss the next hiking trip. This vegan salami is so versatile, and it only has two ingredients, apricots and pistachios. For a richer, nutty flavour roast the pistachios, but this step is not necessary. All you need is a little preparation and bingo, you have a treat in this dish. I wish I could take credit for this one but unfortunately not, check [Trail recipes](#) out for some super delicious treats.

At home preparation

Roast the pistachio nuts for about 8 to 10 minutes in an oven at around 160 °C for a fan forced oven or around 180 °C in a conventional oven. Let the nuts cool, then pulse in a food processor for about a minute. Remove from the food processor and put aside. Chop the apricots into smaller pieces and put into a food processor and blend for a few minutes until it forms a ball, or a sticky paste. Break this mass apart and add the



chopped nuts. Pulse the nuts and apricots together until the nuts are mixed through. Cut this mass into three sections and with your hands roll them out to a salami shape. Cut some greaseproof paper and roll around the salami, place in the fridge to set for about 1 or 2 hours till firm. Vacuum seal the salami or place in a zip-lock bag.

Chopped dried apricots	2 cups	260 grams
Pistachios	½ cup	60 grams

Method at camp

Slice off a portion and eat as a snack or serve with cheese and a biscuit.

Plum and Chia Pudding

Oh this dish is so good; I can't get enough of this one. I have made it a few times now to be sure it works. So let's talk about the health benefits of some ingredients in this dish. Chia seeds have a good amount of omega 3 fatty acids – the good essential fat – and they are high in fibre, protein and lots of minerals and antioxidants. There is not a huge amount of flavour in them alone but it is what you do with them that counts. Coconuts are a functional food, and they are the most nutritional fruit of all fruits containing lots of amino acids – the building blocks for protein, iron and fibre. Almonds contain good fats, fibre, protein, antioxidants and minerals such as magnesium. And finally, plums are full of vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants – they are good for you. Freeze dried plums can be bought through an online shop called [Tastebom](#), they are expensive but a little goes a long way. Wow this dish has everything you need for recovery of muscles after a long hard day on the track, it is so easy to make and tastes so good. Why wouldn't you try this dish, go on try it.

At home preparation

Place all the ingredients in the bag. Copy the method at camp and keep together with the bag.



Method at camp

Place the contents of Bag 1 in a cup or bowl and add the water stirring thoroughly. Let sit for a minimum of 20 minutes then serve.

Bag 1 (Plum & chia pudding)


Desiccated coconut	3 Tbsp	30 grams
Almond meal	3 Tbsp	27 grams
Chia seed	3 tsp	9 grams
Coconut sugar	3 tsp	12 grams
Vanilla sugar	1 tsp	4 grams
Freeze dried plums		5 grams
Mixed peel	¼ tsp	1 gram

Water - ¼ cup



The Bushwalker

A. R. Davies

A photograph of four people (three men and one woman) sitting around a campfire at night. The fire is bright and glowing, illuminating the scene. The people are wearing outdoor gear, including jackets and hats. They appear to be resting and enjoying the warmth of the fire. The background is dark, suggesting a forest or wilderness setting.

Planning, packing and heading out trekking,
The simple pleasures of those wide vistas beckoning.
Walking determinedly through the green hills,
With keen anticipation of scenic thrills.
Hours spent tramping to gain those highs.
Memories of mateship and strangers passing by.

At last the seclusion of first camp is reached.
The tent is all set, and it's now time to eat.
The fire is lit and the billy is boiling,
All is well after that day's hard toiling.
A bite to eat and a mug of hot tea,
Now to relax, look out at those hills still to see.

Night draws in and the birds cease their winging.
Animals hushed, wind in the trees whispers its singing.
The moonlight is soft and stars light the way.
For night creatures; owls, beetles, bats and come what may.
The silence creeps in, like a blanket it wraps you.
'Till daybreak steals the night, and settles sparkling dew .

Once more stoke the fire with its coals quietly glowing.
Breakfast is done, camp packed up, now knowing.
Quiet reverie of all that is so much treasured.
Steps out with a tread that is determinedly measured,
And walks by on faint paths travelled before.
Into solitude for love of the landscape, country and more.



Bushwalk Australia



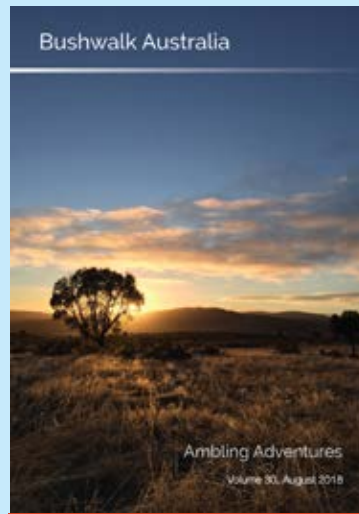
Peak Promenade

- > Pindars Peak, Southern Ranges
- > Cordilleras in Peru
- > Brothers Point, Scotland
- > Staying hydrated on bushwalks



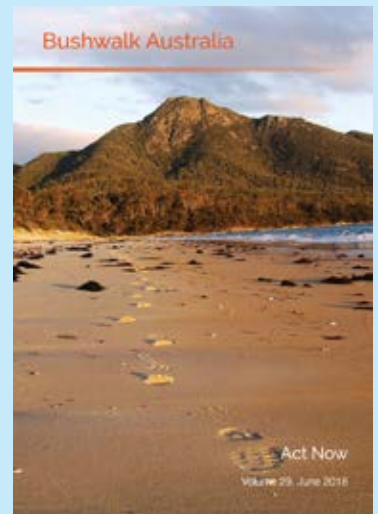
Ridges & Valleys

- > Buffalo, The Bluff and Mt McDonald
- > Skiing with the Bobs
- > Dehydrated meals for your trip



Ambling Adventures

- > An Abel challenge
- > Triglav Lakes, Slovenia
- > Pack hauling
- > Sleeping mats



Act Now

- > Viking Circuit
- > A blogger's journey
- > Overland Track
- > Teddy goes trekking



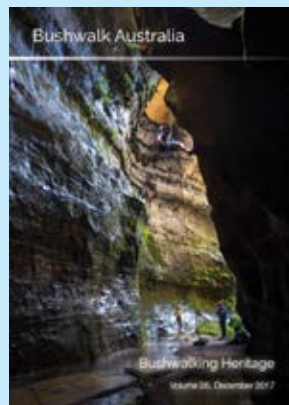
Meandering Mountains

- > D'Alton Peaks, Grampians
- > Three mighty peaks
- > Sleeping bags



Wandering the World

- > 10 reasons to hike the PCT
- > The Spires via Holley Basin
- > From hiker to Globewalker



Bushwalking Heritage

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



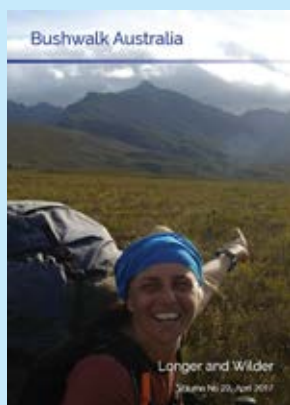
Discover & Explore

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



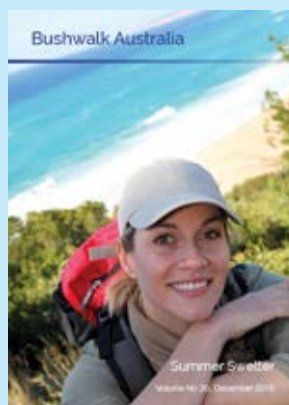
Wandering the World

- > 10 reasons to Hike The PCT
- > The Spires via Holley Basin
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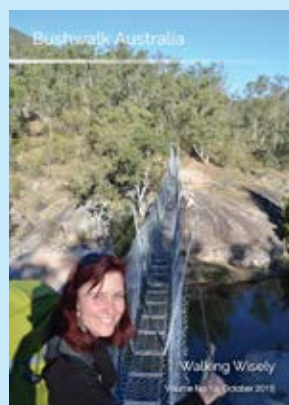
Longer and Wilder

- > The Western Arthurs
- > Bibbulmun Track



Summer Swelter

- > Desert Discovery Walk
- > Sun clothing



Walking Wisely

- > Six Foot Track
- > Choosing a GPS



Bushwalking Conservation

- > AAWT
- > High horses



Winter Walking

- > Gear freak - footwear
- > 10 tips for snowshoeing