

Bushwalk Australia

A wide-angle photograph of a coastal landscape. In the foreground, there are sandy dunes with sparse, dry grass and some green shrubs. The middle ground features a deep blue ocean with rocky outcrops and a small bay. The background shows a clear blue sky and distant landmasses on the horizon.

Fire and Fury

Volume 39, February 2020

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
An electronic magazine for <http://bushwalk.com>
Volume 39, February 2020

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.



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Hallu

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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 2020 edition is 29 February 2020.

Warning

Like all outdoor pursuits, the activities described in this publication may be dangerous. Undertaking them may result in loss, serious injury or death. The information in this publication is without any warranty on accuracy or completeness. There may be significant omissions and errors. People who are interested in walking in the areas concerned should make their own enquiries, and not rely fully on the information in this publication.

The publisher, editor, authors or any other entity or person will not be held responsible for any loss, injury, claim or liability of any kind resulting from people using information in this publication.

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

Crater Lake
landsmith

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From the Editor

Hi,

I hope this email finds you well. What a mixed summer it has been.

Hot, dry and windy conditions have fanned many horrific fires across large parts of Australia. The fires have claimed 33 human lives, razed nearly 2000 homes, killed around a billion native animals and pushed 700 insect species to the edge of extinction. With around 97,000 square kilometres burnt so far, we need to remember that we are still only partway through our fire season.

As with all tragedies we see awesome acts of humanity. Firefighters working tirelessly on the front line as well as the people working to keep them safe, feed and up to date with the latest information. Communities supporting each other in crisis and recovery. People standing up to those in power when dumb things are said. We have also seen the NSW government make really positive steps towards carbon-neutral economies. We also saw historic efforts to protect engaged ecosystems such as those that nurture the Wollemi Pines.

Bushwalkers have done well listening to the safety messages and changing plans to avoid fire-prone areas. We still do not know the full extent of the losses but do discuss some of the high country huts lost. We are starting to see fire-affected parks open now and will get a better sense of the total losses in time.

In this edition, we look at both impacts of the fires and some great walks, including the fastest traverse of the AAWT. Sonya also cooks up two batches of scones, one at home and one on the track, yum.

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.

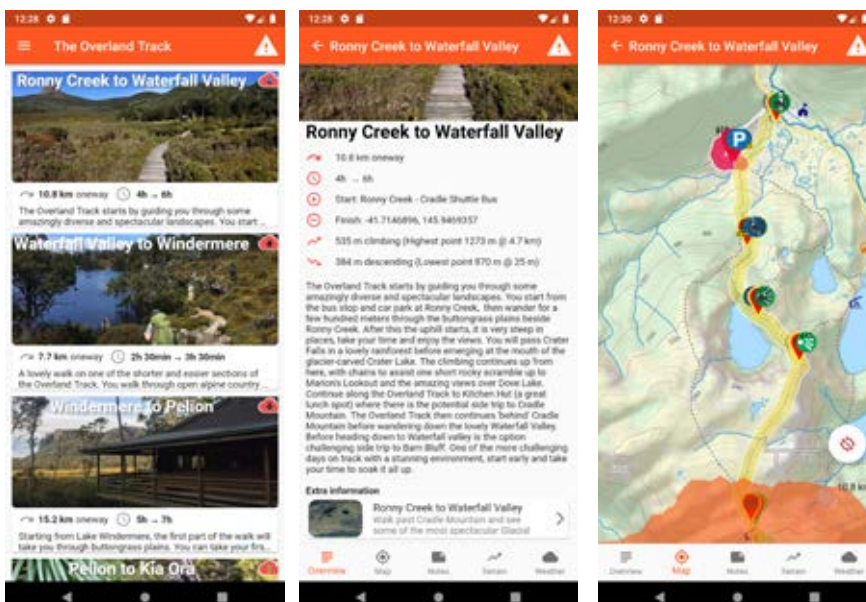
Video

Federation Peak in a day

Jen Brown and Justin Boocock ran 47 kilometres in less than 24 hours, up one of Tasmania's most remote and exposed mountains in the wild South West.



Overland Track App



An electronic guidebook for planning and walking the Overland Track.

Download this app for loads of information about planning, gear, food, accommodation and much more about the Overland Track.

You will also find topo maps, terrain profiles and track notes for offline use.



The Great Dividing Trail, Victoria Bacchus Marsh to Castlemaine

David Bell



The mysterious severed wallaby tail was lying on the track not far from our first campsite in Lerderderg State Park. We hadn't noticed it on the way to set up camp and so we assumed it had been left there during the night. Who or what had left it there? A dog, a hunter, a mad axe murderer? The explanations became more sensationalist and lurid as the morning went on. Maybe someone was watching us from the scrub! However, we put all that aside, finished breakfast, packed up and continued our walk along the Lerderderg Track.

Day 1 - Ascending a hill outside Bacchus Marsh
All pictures by David Bell

The Great Dividing Trail (GDT) is a network of over 200 kilometres of tracks in Central Victoria stretching from Ballarat in the south to Bendigo in the north. The GDT covers some wild and remote country as well as striking reminders of the gold rush days. It isn't an area any of us were much familiar with so what we came across during our walk would be a pleasant surprise.

The walk would take us from Bacchus Marsh to Daylesford along the Lerderderg Track and then the Dry Diggings Track from Daylesford to Castlemaine. The total length is about 150 kilometres and we took eight days. There were five in the party.

Getting away from Bacchus Marsh was a little tricky as the southern end of the Lerderderg Track has now disappeared under housing development. This is one of Australia's fastest growing locations and the housing expansion around here is relentless.

We eventually found the edge of Bacchus Marsh but with no track markers we proceeded over a fence and up a grassy hill where we stopped to look back at the Melbourne skyline 40 kilometres away. Once over the hill we found a track marker and took a road up to the edge of Lerderderg State Park where Karen had left a water drop. This was extremely useful as the first two days of the Lerderderg Track stays on high ridges and water would have been hard to find.

Incidentally, the word "Lerderderg" is an Anglicised amalgamation of two Aboriginal words which was given to the name of a nearby pastoral station.

After the encounter with the wallaby tail, we continued along a high ridge with great views of the Lerderderg Gorge below us and more views of the region from Mount Blackwood.



Late on **day two**, and after a close encounter with a tiger snake, we reached the Lerderderg River and set up camp at Amblers Crossing for our second night. There was plenty of water here and enough for a wash.



Day 2 - Crossing the Lerderderg River at Amblers Crossing

Day three saw us stick with the river and head upstream along an old gold mining water race to the village of Blackwood where we stayed at the local campground. Water was crucial to the type of gold mining carried out here and water races were an ingenious method for moving water to the mine sites.

Blackwood also afforded us our first opportunity to “take the waters” from the mineral springs that occur throughout this part of Victoria. This is not to everyone’s taste but it’s claimed that the water from these springs is good for one’s health. Later we saw visitors filling up bottles of the stuff.

Day four took us through some beautiful ferny gullies on the edge of Blackwood before we re-joined the water race to continue along the Lerderderg River. The gorge has a remote feel to it even though we were not that far from Melbourne. We reached Nolans Creek in good time to set



Day 3 - Following a water race along the Lerderderg Track

up camp, though we were later distracted by a dog that appeared out of the bush. The colouring was un-dingo-like so we assumed it was a town dog which had gone feral. Needless to say, no one left their food bags or shoes outside the tents that night.

Day five took us away from the river to ascend a long spur to eventually reach Balt Camp, our highest point of the walk at nearly 900 metres. Balt Camp is an old forestry workers’ camp. All that is left are some chimneys and building foundations. By now we had left Lerderderg State Park and had entered Wombat State Forest. Formerly nice forest to walk through has tracks that have been badly cut up by trail bikes.

Before we reached Daylesford for our next camp, we had crossed the Great Dividing Range at a mighty 726 metres and were now in country where all the rivers flowed to the Murray. There was another snake encounter, this time a black one – red-bellied or copperhead. A windy camp at Daylesford proved a challenge of tent assembling and after some resupplying from a local supermarket we commenced our next leg: the Dry Diggings Track to Castlemaine.

As is commonly encountered, exiting an urban area to find the right track head proved a challenge of navigation but we eventually found the Dry Diggings Track and headed north along Sailors Creek. Once again, we followed an old water race. Here the water race clung to a steep hillside and the drop to the creek bed was quite significant, so this required concentration on not slipping or tripping.

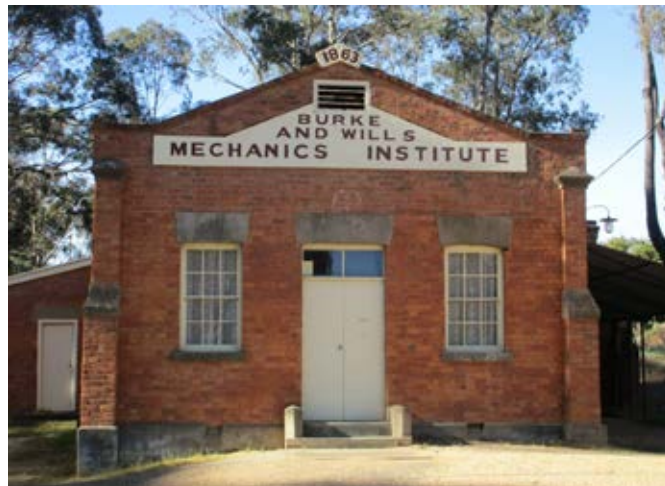
We found a camp in the bush adjacent to the Hepburn Springs Reserve. There was no time here to enjoy the luxurious (and expensive) spa facilities. Save up the money for another time.



Day 7 - Spider Orchid

Leaving Hepburn Springs, we followed more water races through regenerating bushland and skirted the edge of the one-million old Mount Franklin volcano. This is now extinct, though a local we met said it is a popular place for strange goings on at Halloween. We now entered the Castlemaine National Heritage Park. This forms part of the Central Victorian Goldfields and in the mid to late 1800s it was the richest goldfield in the world. Tens of thousands of people lived and worked here and small villages like Fryerstown and Vaughan Springs once housed thousands of people. Mining still goes on but the area is rich in buildings, mine shafts and artefacts from the 1800s. It is also a story of environmental recovery as much of the forest and woodland was destroyed for mining and settlement. However, in recent decades the woodland and forest has

started to regenerate. We were impressed by the wildflower displays, in particular the profusion of ground orchids in places. We had come at the right time.



Day 8 - Mechanics Institute at Fryerstown

Our last camp was near Vaughan Springs on the banks of the Loddon River, another mineral springs location. Following Vaughan Springs, it was a gallop into Castlemaine for a late lunch and dinner at the pub for those who stayed on. We saw few other people on the track over eight days – a couple of day walkers and some mountain bikers.

Gary still had some energy so he continued walking the next day on the Leanganook Track to Bendigo. He walked the 60 kilometre to Bendigo in under three days. As far as I know he stopped there.

Thanks to Karen, Gary, Don and Gordon for making this an enjoyable walk in a part of Australia rarely visited by our bushwalking club (Sydney Bush Walkers). There is more walking to do there.

For those who want to sample the walking in this part of Victoria, there is an excellent website, [The Great Dividing Trail Network](#).

David has been bushwalking most of his adult life. He loves the outdoors, in particular long-distance walks. There are places that are remote and wild and it is a privilege to be able to visit them. He recently decided to write more about these places, hopefully encouraging others to also visit them or, if not, to at least enjoy reading about these places. He is a member of three bushwalking clubs and is involved in several campaigns to protect our national parks.



Australian Alps Walking Track Fastest Known Time

John Riley



A love of moving fast through mountainous wilderness, an attraction to any endurance challenge and a fascination with the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT), are the common interests that brought the three of us together to attempt the self-supported fastest known time (FKT) for the AAWT. Such like-mindedness and a significant amount of planning and preparation, culminated in Kylie Salm, Phil Robinson and me setting out on Friday 16 November 2019, each thinking that while obtaining the AAWT FKT of anything less than the record of 11 days and 18 hours was possible, it really was not probable.

Day 9 - Just above Rawson Pass
All uncredited pictures by John Riley

For those not aware of its attributes, in simple terms the AAWT is a 660 kilometre traverse across the roof top of Australia, passing through some of the most remote and scenic areas in the country. Starting in Walhalla in Gippsland, Victoria and ending in Tharwa near Canberra, the AAWT demands over 27,600 metres of ascents (more than three Everests) and a similar amount of descents.

The record self-supported FKT for the AAWT was set by Paul Cuthbert in March 2016. In fact it was the fastest anyone has done the full AAWT period - supported or otherwise. He was at the time, and still is, a very well-known and accomplished ultra-runner/athlete. He was clearly someone that could move over mountainous terrain much faster than us. It was therefore obvious that to get anywhere near his time we would have to be at our physical best, have luck on our side and make very few mistakes on the track. Perhaps the edge we needed was a combination of good weather and a good knowledge of how to navigate through the less defined areas of the track.

We had varying degrees of experience with the AAWT, however each of us had previously been defeated by its many forms of defence. For the AAWT, the well-known saying "to succeed you must first fail" is truly apt. Attempting the AAWT, no matter what form that attempt takes, is certainly a humbling experience.

In our 2018 attempt, after five days I had my feet stripped of a substantial amount of skin resulting in me hobbling off Mount Bogong at the 280 kilometre mark to be rescued at Mountain Creek. That year Kylie and Phil with another experienced ultra-runner, Simon Turnbull, had made it 447 kilometres to Dead Horse Gap only to retreat to Thredbo due to illness and storms on the Kosciuszko Main Range.

Phil also had a couple of failed FKT attempts in earlier years. Again a combination of poor weather, navigation issues, injury or illness, were to blame for abandoning the track or falling behind record pace.

“... each of us had previously been defeated by its many forms of defence.”

Given these experiences we certainly had an appreciation of the challenges and risks we faced. We also had a love/hate relationship with the track. Overwhelmingly though we had an inability to put the AAWT FKT at the back of our minds. To use mountaineering terminology, we were "prisoners" of the AAWT. Our only escape from a life sentence was to complete the track in less than the record time.

Preparing for the FKT attempt

A goal without a plan is merely a wish and wishes rarely come true.

We were travelling super-light, carrying little in the way of food and water. This meant many well-placed food drops and a good knowledge of where water could be found.

On water, we were lucky with some good falls of rain and even snow in Victoria the week before our departure. With the exception of the 37 degree day when we went over Johnnies Top, water never needed to be rationed. Nor did we have to leave the track far to find it.

For food we had 10 food drops, each placed at our intended bivvy/sleep stop. Our wishful thinking was that for most days we would never have to carry dinner or breakfast. As it turned out, we only made two of these drops by the designated night, Low Saddle and Mount Speculation. So in the end for the majority of the time we were carrying 2-3 kilograms in food.

“Putting in food drops took many weekends ...”

Putting in food drops took many weekends through October and November, of driving 2WD and 4WD vehicles, mountain biking and long hikes. Most of the national park roads in Victoria remain closed until Melbourne Cup weekend, so with the exception of Low Saddle Road and Kiandra, it was never a case of placing a food drop straight out of the car.

Obviously there was also the need to prepare our bodies for 12 days of continuous running and walking up and down mountains. I started in August with mostly long runs in Melbourne, which ultimately led into full fastpacking days around Wilsons Prom

and the Grampians during September and October. My Melbourne runs reached 32 kilometres on most Sunday mornings, while my day long fastpacks were up to 70 kilometres. I supplemented this with heaps of fast road cycling through the weekday mornings and a long ride in the hills on Saturdays. Some weekdays I would ride in the early morning and then run up to 12 kilometres at night after getting home from work.

In the end, while I was pretty happy with my fitness level at the start line, how my body would be after four or five days of long continuous running and walking up mountains remained an unknown, and is perhaps something that cannot be addressed through any specific training approach.

One area I was found lacking by comparison to my AAWT companions was hill speed, both up and down. They trained over hilly terrain around Port Macquarie while I mostly stuck to pancake flat bayside Melbourne. My thinking that quad strength through cycling would address this was just plain wrong. Phil and Kylie absolutely smoked me in the mountains, particularly running down anything steep. The clear message being, if you want to play in the mountains then you need to train in the mountains.

Our AAWT journey

Day 1 – Walhalla to Red Jacket 70.3 km

After a great counter meal the night before at the Wally Pub, a good night's sleep at the very comfortable Star Hotel, and a big breakfast there, we set off from the Mountaineers Brass Band rotunda at 6.02 am on Friday 15 November. Once up and on to the old tramway it was a very fast start for the first 7 kilometres to the Poverty Point Bridge. We did this in a little over an hour and then after crossing the Thomson River we launched into the long climb up to and onto the Baw Baw Plateau. Apparently this is the longest continuous climb on the AAWT, ascending some 1125 metres to Mount Erica.

“... our first of only three snake encounters ...”

On the climb, our first of only three snake encounters was a sleepy tiger snake near Mushroom Rocks. It was enjoying the sunny conditions as much as us and at first refused to move off the path. Prodded lightly with a long stick, it eventually slowly moved to the side of the track, signifying we could now pass through its territory.

With such perfect weather and a few remaining snow drifts, the Baw Baw Plateau was at its picturesque best and good speed was enjoyed to make Mount Whitelaw Hut site at 1 pm. After a quick lunch and a water refill it was an easy jog down to Stronachs

Day	Date	Description	Time	Km
1	15	6 am, Walhalla, Baw Baw Plateau Red Jacket, 8.30 pm	14.5	70
2	16	5.45 am, Black River, Mount Sunday, Low Saddle, 9 pm	15.3	57
3	17	6.25 am, McDonald, Clear, Magdala, Speculation, 10.20 pm	16	44
4	18	7 am, Razor, Viking, South Selwyn, 7.45 pm	12.8	32
5	19	5.55 am, The Twins, Hotham, Cope Hut, 8 pm	14	53
6	20	5.20 am, Ropers Hut, Long Spur, Wills, Wombat Divide Track, 11 pm	17.7	55
7	21	5 am, Mitta Mitta, Johnnies Top, Buckwong Hut, 9.30 pm	16.5	57
8	22	5 am, Cowombat Flat, Tin Huts, 8.30 pm	15.5	53
9	23	5 am, Dead Horse Gap, Main Range, Rolling Ground, Whites River Hut, 8.15 pm	15.3	52
10	24	6 am, Valentine Hut, O'Keefes Hut, Nine Mile Creek, 7.45 pm	13.8	64
11	25	5 am, Kiandra, Murrumbidgee River, Dairymans Gap, Oldfields Hut, 8.45 pm	15.8	67
12	26	4 am, Murray Gap, Cotter Gap, Honeysuckle Creek, Tharwa, 3 pm	11	50

This summary shows very clearly how long and hard the days were.

Camp before our first real AAWT obstacle was encountered, a two kilometre gym session going under, over and around a maze of fallen trees while trying to stay on a vague foot pad. It's a difficult but thankfully short lived section of the track. Small and light packs also help.

Once through the pick-up-sticks section, the AAWT popped out on to Thomson Road which runs north-east into a very ugly logging coupe, a stark contrast to the beauty of the Baw Baw Plateau. From there it was a quick descent into the mass of mosses that rule the Thomson River. Crossing the river is now very simple thanks to a new log bridge complete with handrail. What is not simple though is the 600 metre climb up Mount Eaton that follows. Tired legs, ridiculously steep terrain and many false summits, make this climb late in the day torturous. Still we grovelled our way to the top in fading light and increasing rain, only to almost immediately lose our hard earned altitude descending steeply into the Jordan River. It was 8.30 pm and nearly dark by the time we made Red Jacket but thankfully the rain had stopped.

Too tired to head up Victor Spur Road we made the decision to tackle the Victor Spur track at first light in the morning. I found a relatively flat spot under a tree and after a quick Back Country dinner, I climbed into the bivvy. Despite being tired, the constricted space of the bivvy and sore legs and hips made for a restless night.

Day 2 – Red Jacket to Low Saddle 57.4 km

This day was mostly roads so navigation was going to be easy, perhaps with the exception of descending off Mount Sunday at the end of the day in the dark.

An early start of 5.45 am and a speedy climb up Victor Spur, meant a well-earned breakfast at our first food drop on Mount Victor. From there the 19 kilometre road bash to Black River commenced. Rather than contend with numerous river crossings we took the longer route down the Champion Spur Link Track and hit the Black River log crossing for an earlier lunch. This really is a pretty spot and I was a bit disappointed that we could not set up camp and spend the afternoon bathing in the crystal clear shallow waters of Black River.



Day 1 - Departing Walhalla. Phil, John, Kylie and our first day companion Kohby Poole
Picture by Michael of the Star Hotel

We kept moving and next on the menu was the 700 metre climb up Mount Shillinglaw. The track was easy to follow at first but then got a bit sketchy as it changed direction in a saddle near the top. Still, we found the linking jeep track and powered up to the Jamieson Licola Road and then on to Middle Ridge Road. While it was a road walk, I always found Middle Ridge Road enjoyable. There are many heavily ferned gullies with waterfalls and streams that run into or under the road. Expansive views to the north-east are also to be enjoyed.

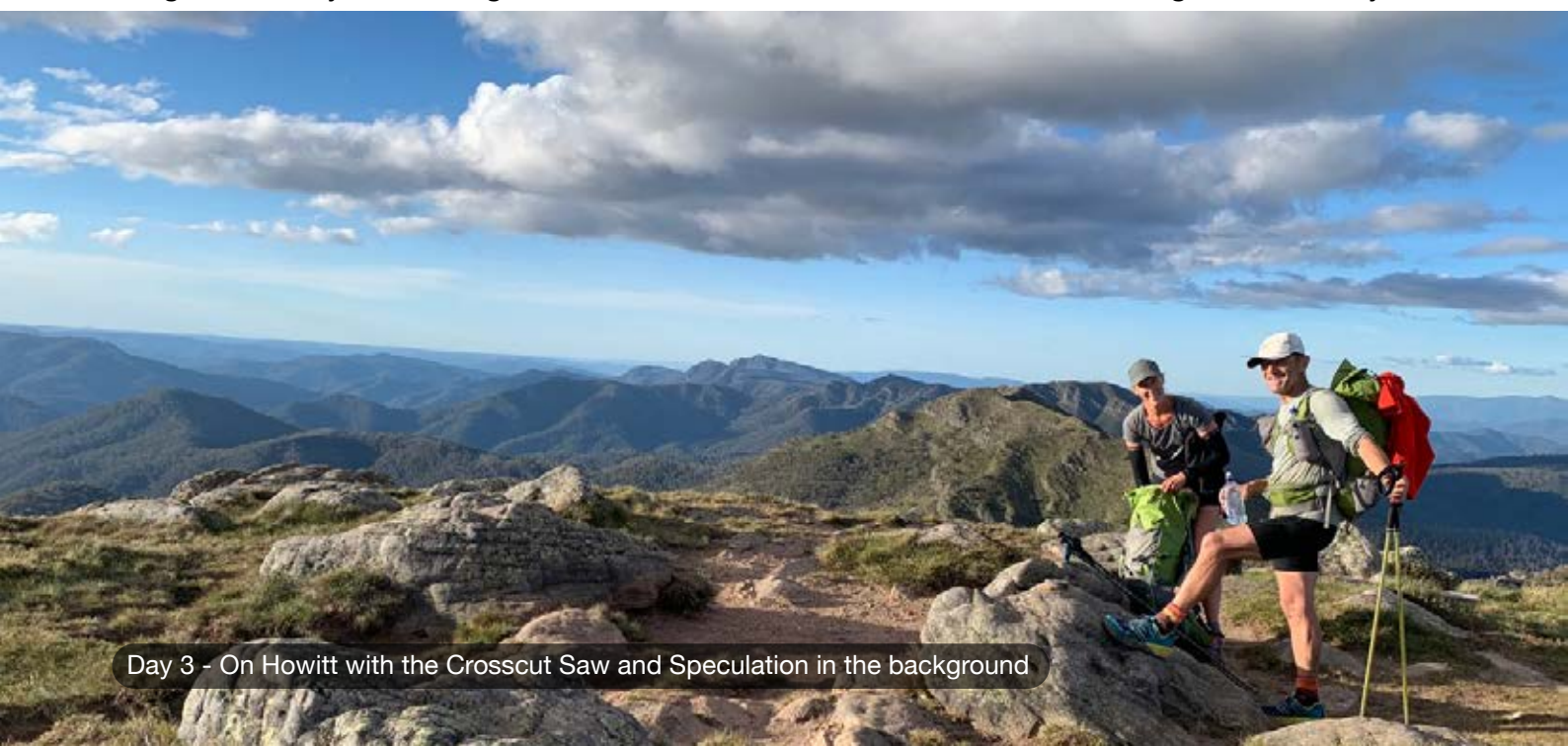
We stopped for a quick late afternoon break at Rumpff Saddle and then made the 14 kilometres to the top of Mount Sunday by sunset. We knew coming off Mount Sunday into Low Saddle would be difficult in the dark, however we were surprised at how overgrown and difficult the track was for the last two kilometre; it seemed much worse than in 2018. We finally made Low Saddle at 9 pm. Too tired to eat, it was straight into the bivvy for another restless night with sore legs and hips. I began to wonder whether my body will adapt or whether the long days plus little sleep will ultimately get the better of me. I also started to worry about my feet, with blistering similar to the previous year starting to develop. I even contemplated my AAWT exit routes for the next day, thinking a retreat down the Howqua Feeder Track may be an option. These negative thoughts and the cold night, -1 °C, also helped to keep me awake. Recollecting the 2018 feeling of AAWT failure began to fill my weakening mind.

Day 3 – Low Saddle to Mount Speculation 44.2 km

I climbed out of the bivvy bag early so that I could bandage my blistered feet and place gel toe caps on the two toes that were now red raw, although unlike 2018 the skin was still on. A quick breakfast and then we headed up Mount Sunday Road to the Mount MacDonald turn-off at 6.25 am. My feet were painful at first but somehow they warmed up, allowing me to move at normal speed and keep up with my faster companions. We made good time once high and passed through The Nobs, (where we ran into two completely camouflaged deer hunters with high-powered bows), High Cone and Mount Clear. We then stopped for a late lunch next to the Chesters Yard spring.

“My feet are painful at first but somehow they warm up ...”

In the early evening the scenery was spectacular as we moved past Mount Magdala, Big Hill and Mount Howitt. We arrived at the start of the Crosscut Saw as the light began to fade. This meant the last two-thirds of the Crosscut Saw and up and on to Mount Speculation summit was under torchlight in near complete darkness. Half-way across I thought the top of Mount Buggery would be the end of a big day, however Kylie powered on and led us over Mount Speculation to our third food drop near the Camp Creek campsite. It was another late finish at 10.20 pm and another cold and uncomfortable night in the bivvy.



Day 3 - On Howitt with the Crosscut Saw and Speculation in the background

Day 4 – Mount Speculation to South Selwyn 32 km

This day was always going to be our slowest. There is no quick way through The Viking. Navigating its faint pads and confusing multi-direction track takes time, and so does climbing up and over and then descending its steep rocky slopes. Despite a late start of 7 am and a stop for water in Viking Saddle, we made Barry Saddle for a late lunch. From there we only managed a 17 kilometre afternoon to South Selwyn. We decided to finish early and enjoy a relatively early and relaxing dinner. Compared to the previous three days this seemed like a bit of a rest day.

The easier day and with my body adapting to the daily pounding, a great sleep in warm and windy conditions was enjoyed near the water tank on the top of South Selwyn. My feet bandaging and gel toe caps also seemed to be working. The blistering had stabilised and the morning pain remained temporary as my feet warmed up after the first hour.

Despite the easier day we also remained ahead of record pace. By our calculations at the end of day four we were holding a 17 kilometre buffer on the record.

Day 5 – South Selwyn to Cope Hut 52.7 km

Revitalised from the easy day four, we set off at 5.55 am and ambitiously agreed to an end of day target of Ropers Hut. We ended up 16 kilometres short of that, but enjoyed perfect conditions running down Swindlers Spur and then across the very scenic Bogong High Plains. Another highlight of the day was our fourth food drop at The Twins which, after 30 minutes of failed searching by me, was eventually found by Phil despite me placing it there only three weeks earlier.

Another earlyish finish (8 pm) at Cope Hut meant a full body wash in the creek and a three course dinner could be enjoyed. The hut also provided comfortable lodgings after four nights in the bivvy. Our spirits were high, although Kylie had begun to develop some Achilles problems; both her ankles and feet were now completely bandaged and some bad blistering to her toes and the bottom of her feet had also started to become painful. By contrast, Phil remained completely blister free, jokingly commenting that one of his feet felt slightly wrinkled.

Pleasingly, our lead on the record had also increased. We estimated that at the end of day five we were 26 kilometres ahead of record pace.



Day 6 – Cope Hut to Wombat Divide Track 55.4 km

A 5.20 am departure and flat terrain along the Langford West Aqueduct and Big River Track made for a very fast start in the early morning. We ran most of the way to Ropers Hut and then dived quickly down Duane Spur to the Big River crossing. The crossing was no more than thigh deep, although for myself and Kylie it meant getting our heavily blistered feet wet, inevitable. Avoiding my mistake of 2018, we stopped and dried everything out and rebandaged where necessary. I also swapped to my completely dry second pair of Armaskin inner socks and DexShell waterproof outer socks.

It seemed that our bodies were starting to adapt to the demands of the AAWT as we maintained a good pace up T Spur to Maddisons Hut site. After a quick water collection we immediately hit Long Spur for the 13 kilometres descent to Big River Saddle. I have now passed my 2018 exit point and I started to feel some slight achievement from going further than the previous year.

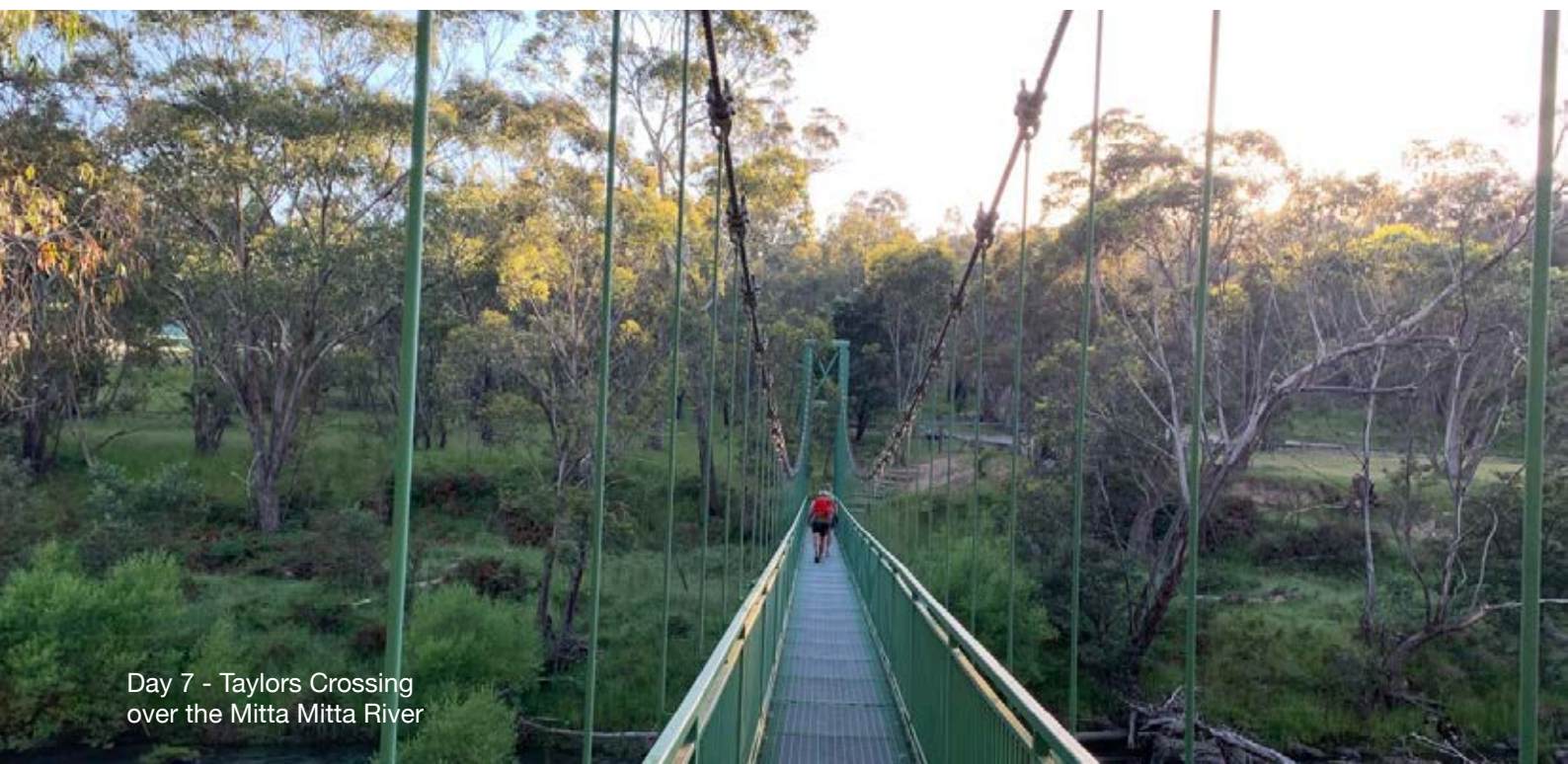
Big River Saddle looked like a nice campsite and perhaps a good place to spend an afternoon in the sun recovering, however that was really not an option for us. Our only option was the long and steep climb up to Mount Wills Hut where our fifth food drop awaited. The climb reduced us to our slowest pace for the day, however increasing hunger drove us to the top of Mount Wills.

The Mount Wills Hut area really is a special spot. Beautiful snow gums sit amongst huge granite boulders, with large expanses of alpine grass providing ample tent sites. The rocky outcrop that is the summit of Mount Wills provided 360 degree views of where we have been and where we are headed. This included our future objective of the snow-capped Kosciuszko Main Range.

We had an extended rest in the sunshine outside the hut, ate a late lunch and chatted with a friendly party of three fellow AAWT trekkers, who I previously ran into a few weeks earlier doing our Low Saddle food drop. One of the friendly party happened to be a doctor who provided great advice and even examined and re-strapped Kylie's feet.

“By the time we cross Gill Creek it's dark ...

The temptation was to stay put and enjoy a star-filled night on Mount Wills, however it was too early in the day for that and we gave in to the ever present feeling of the need to keep moving. So down Mount Wills and along the Omeo Highway we went, turning off at the Gill Spur Track. By the time we crossed Gill Creek it was dark which in the end was fortuitous as we were unable to see the gradient of the climb coming out of Gill Creek. This is a seriously steep and tough section of the AAWT, which I was not aware of. My calves were burning and my Achilles were stretched to their limit as I tried to keep Phil and Kylie within sight. I was thankful that my pack was only circa eight kilograms



Day 7 - Taylors Crossing
over the Mitta Mitta River

and I thought of those much tougher AAWT adventurers who must have somehow climbed up this with 15+ kilogram packs. We all eventually got to the top and, in the dark, crashed on the side of the road which was the Wombat Divide Track. It was nearly 11 pm so it was straight into the bivvy, hoping that no vehicle traffic would be on the track as a lack of cleared level ground forced us to set up on the very narrow shoulder of the road.

A check of our comparison with record pace suggested that despite our big day, our lead had reduce to a little over 19 kilometres. Paul's bigger engine was starting to eat into our slender lead!

Day 7 – Gill Creek to Buckwong Hut 57 km

This would be our hottest day with temperatures reaching 38 °C. Accordingly, an early start was in order. We hit the track a bit before 5 am. The morning quickly warmed up and we stopped at Taylors Crossing for a leisurely breakfast and water collection. The Mitta Mitta River felt unusually warm and I filtered my water for the first time.

From Taylors Crossing, the AAWT offered a refreshing change of scenery as the harsh scrub gave way to pleasant pastoral land through the Fraser Tableland. Such pleasantries were short lived as navigation became tricky and the very swampy Morass Creek must be crossed. We avoided wet feet but not the bush bash to find our way back onto the track, which we lost soon after

crossing the creek. Eventually we popped out onto Benambra-Corryong Road and commenced the drawn out very hot climb to Johnnies Top. By this time it was the middle of the day and we were suffering in the heat and a little worried about the very hazy smoke-filled air that surrounded us. What was comforting though was the lack of any scent of burning bush.

In the heat and with limited water, I rationed myself to a sip of water per kilometre. Consequently I was extremely relieved to reach the water tank at Johnnies Top, where I quickly mixed up and guzzled down a litre of Gatorade. We had lunch and then got on the move again to quickly reach the hot gully within which the Buenba Creek gently flowed. Following the creek we made it to Buenba Hut site and then crossed Buenba Road to begin the climb up to Mount Hope Road. To me this was another one of the AAWT's "ghost climbs" – easily missed when looking at the map but certainly not something un-noticed at the end of a long hot day.

Our goal was Buckwong Hut and we still had seven kilometres to go once on Mount Hope Road. Thankfully it was mostly downhill, initially allowing for a slow jog until darkness set in. We arrived at Buckwong Hut around 9.30 pm and forced ourselves to eat a late dinner from our sixth food drop near the hut. We had the company of a large and noisy school group which delayed the onset of much needed sleep.



Day 8 – Buckwong Hut to Tin Mine Huts 53 km

I was woken early by two feral horses who were sniffing around, and were uncomfortably close to my bivvy. Sleep was impossible after that so breakfast was at 4.15 am and after filtering water we were on our way under torchlight by 5 am. Although the track was a little undefined in places the terrain was flat which allowed us to travel quickly up and on to Misery Trail, from where we enjoyed our first views of The Pilot and the Cobberas.

“I'm woken early by two feral horses ...”

After leaving Misery Trail the confusion of the many feral horse tracks continued and we lost some time trying to stay on, or at least near, the official track. Things got easier upon reaching the Limestone Creek Track, from where it was a case of following the western bank of Stony Creek in a southerly direction until the Cowombat Flat Track was met.

While easy to traverse, I found the country up to Cowombat Flat the least interesting of the whole AAWT. There were only limited views from the shallow gullies that the track followed and the vegetation seemed to be very dry and monotonous. It was therefore with some relief that we arrived at the open expanses of Cowombat Flat and enjoyed the achievement of passing into NSW where an easier AAWT was promised.

At this point I also noticed that feral horse damage was becoming increasingly obvious. Protecting these animals in an ecosystem in which they do not belong is completely wrong. This is clearly evident from the polluted waterways and the trampled vegetation in areas that would otherwise be untouched wilderness. The sight of a young feral horse hobbling aimlessly with an obviously badly broken leg also signified that their proliferation was perhaps a fate cruel to them as well.

Back onto our AAWT journey, we pushed ahead, keen to make our goal of Tin Mine Huts by nightfall. We eventually got there at 8.30 pm and we were welcomed in from the cold night by a roaring fire and a friendly mountain biker who has ridden up from Dead Horse Gap.

We set up our bivvies on the dirt floor of the hut and after dinner it was time to calculate where we sat compared with record pace. We thought that perhaps we were about 25 kilometres ahead of Paul at the end of day eight.

It was also time to assess injuries. Kylie's blistering has developed into large patches of skin missing from the bottom of her feet. Essentially they appeared heavily sandpapered. It was hard to look at and evidently extremely painful. I wondered how she could walk, let alone run. Kylie talked about exiting at Dead Horse Gap but Phil



quickly shut that down, correctly pointing out that she was not slowing us down and to date she has managed the pain. After Phil's friendly chat, there was a degree of acceptance by Kylie that more Ibuprofen, Panadol, blister pads and Fixomull tape was the only way forward.

Day 9 – Tin Mine Huts to Whites River Hut 52 km

Today more than ever we needed the weather gods on our side. Thankfully they did not disappoint. We left Tin Mine Huts at 5 am under clear skies, making the 25 kilometres to Dead Horse Gap in 5.5 hours. We had a late morning tea at our seventh food drop and after confronting the stark reality of human civilisation at the Dead Horse Gap car park we quickly moved on to the climb up to the Kosciuszko Main Range.

Being near perfect weekend weather and the middle of the day, there was a constant stream of people moving between the express chairlift and Rawson Pass. We managed our way through the crowds and were relieved to reach the quieter trails after Muellers Pass. For me, this quickly became one of the most memorable parts of the

AAWT. The scenery was eye-watering. It brought on that feeling of how lucky I was to be in this place. Looking down into Albina Lake and Blue Lake and crossing Carruthers Peak and Mount Twynam were all highlights. There were a few lengthy snow drifts to negotiate in our trail runners, but this was made slightly easier by the soft snow in which we kicked small steps and footholds.

We stopped for a late lunch at a small stream, near the Anton Anderson saddle on Pounds Creek, laying in warm sunshine and sheltered from the chilling breeze by large granite rocks. It was hard to move on but our preference was to traverse The Rolling Ground in daylight. Phil took the lead and although we initially aimed for Schlink Pass and then onto Schlink Hut, we settled on Whites River Hut as darkness and fatigue set in. It was also quickly becoming very cold and the warmth and comfort of the hut was embracing.

After dinner it was time for a quick AAWT record check. Our calculations suggested we remained around 24 kilometres ahead of record pace.



Day 9 - Albina Lake and snow drifts on the Kosciuszko Main Range

Day 10 – Whites River Hut to Nine Mile Creek 64.2 km

In our minds this was to be the start of the speedy part of the AAWT. Our expectation was to increase our speed and daily kilometres from here on. Personally I also felt that my body and feet were finally co-operating. My blistering had stabilised and I no longer felt fatigue in the legs until the late afternoons.

Kylie was still suffering, with little skin left on the soles of her feet. There was still some talk of her finishing at Kiandra, however Phil quickly silenced this again. He now had the added armoury of pointing out how close we were to finishing.

We made a late start, leaving Whites River Hut just after 6 am. The flat roads that led us into the Jagungal wilderness area allowed for some easy running early in the day. Despite the quick pace, we seemed to travel forever towards and then around Mount Jagungal.

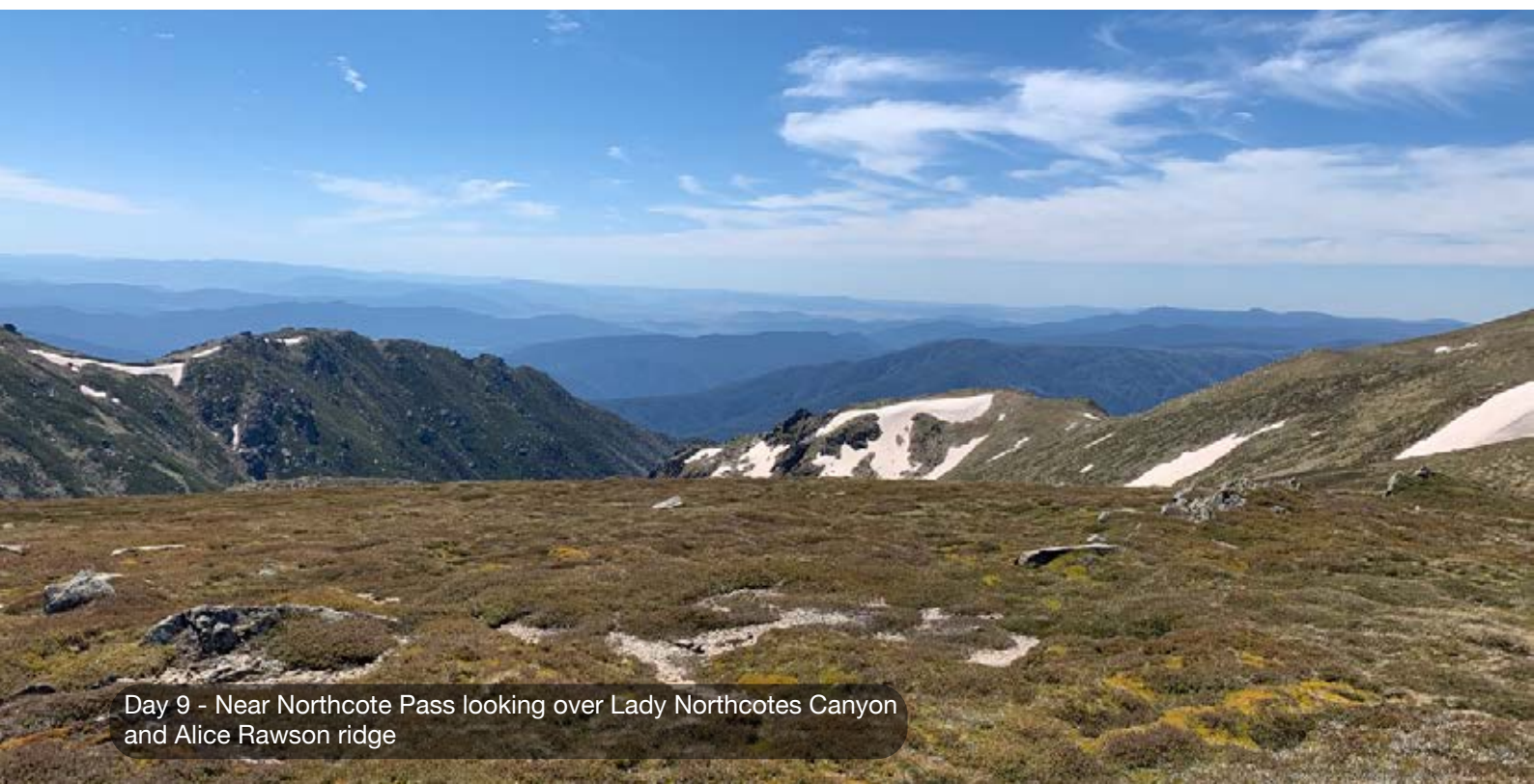
Our first stop was an early lunch at our eighth food drop near the Round Mountain Trail-Grey Mare Trail intersection. After loading the day's food we continued at a fast pace, eventually passing the very prominent Mount Jagungal and soon after O'Keefes Hut and then Mackays Hut. Our next stop was near Tolbar Road where we had a late afternoon tea and reassessed the likelihood of meeting our initial objective of

Kiandra by the end of the day. We decided Nine Mile Creek was more likely which was still 14 kilometres away. We arrived at Nine Mile Creek in fading light and set up for what would be our coldest night. Under clear skies and at 1600 metres the temperature quickly dropped to below freezing. I had every piece of clothing on but I was still too cold to get any meaningful sleep.

Day 11 – Nine Mile Creek to Oldfields Hut 67 km

The cold got us up early. Better to be moving than laying in a frozen bivvy. A quick breakfast and after collecting water we were on the move to Kiandra under torchlight and still with puffer jackets and gloves on. We quickly covered the 12 kilometres down to the Kiandra bridge for our second-last food drop where we enjoyed morning tea in the sunshine, drying out wet bivvies, sleeping bags and mats.

Today was about river crossings and, for Kylie and me, trying to keep our blistered feet dry. I had one foot that was only mildly blistered so I took to hopping across the rivers and creeks that could not be passed with dry feet, keeping my bad foot in the air and out of the water. In the end Kylie just ploughed through and rebandaged (plus more Ibuprofen and Panadol) where necessary. This was difficult as for her looking at her feet just confirmed why her mind was telling her to stop.



Day 9 - Near Northcote Pass looking over Lady Northcotes Canyon and Alice Rawson ridge

We continued to move at a good pace and crossed Tantangara Creek and the Murrumbidgee in the late morning. From here we moved up a narrow gully following Dairymans Creek, hoping that some new AAWT track markers would lead us to the old telephone line which eventually runs into the Port Phillip Trail. For some reason the old telephone line never appeared and I felt we have gone too far east. I could not check the GPS as my phone was out of battery, but a compass check did confirm that since the last AAWT marker perhaps we had been following feral horse tracks that have led us in a easterly direction away from the AAWT. Decision time. I wished to return to the last marker or even bash in a NW direction back to the trail. Phil wanted to push on and cut across to the Mosquito Creek Trail once we hit open ground. We did the latter and, after scaring a large herd of wild pigs, we eventually linked up with a track that runs directly north along the Tantangara Reservoir and up to the Old Currango Homestead. From the homestead we continued north for two kilometres to re-join the AAWT at Morris Creek.

“ I cannot check the GPS as my phone is out of battery ...

“ ... our tiredness is kept at bay by the exciting prospect of finishing ...

In the end we had probably wasted an hour of time, but overall travelled the same or slightly more in distance. Anyway it was a good feeling to be back on the AAWT and we then powered ahead to our final food drop a few kilometres past Pocket Saddle. We loaded up the additional food and completed the day's journey with a short two kilometre walk in the dark to Oldfields Hut.

It was a late dinner in Oldfields Hut, but our tiredness was kept at bay by the exciting prospect of finishing the AAWT the following day. We also completed our final check against record pace and worked out we were around 35 kilometres ahead on distance. Surely, bar storms or injury, we could make the final 50 kilometres before midnight the next day?

Day 12 – Oldfields Hut to Tharwa 49.6km

The night before we were told by a school group that the forecast was for afternoon storms, so we made the decision to leave very early. It was up at 3 am and then on the track by 4 am. We went over Murray Gap as daylight first began to show. The wind was already up and, in the increasing light, storm clouds became visible on the horizon. We pushed on as showers developed. It was still warm though and we had our first break at the top of Cotter Gap. After that it was down into the beautiful roo-filled Orroral Valley and then on to the very steep Link Track that led up to Orroral Ridge Road. This brought back memories of grovelling up Mount Eaton way back on day one. It was just as steep and it was also peppered with many false summits. We eventually got to Orroral Ridge Road and from there we jogged down to the Honeysuckle Creek Space Station site for an early lunch.

A little over 16 kilometres to go, which we thought we could cover in three hours. This would give us a finishing time of a little after 3 pm and a total time of 11 days and 9 hours. With that timing in mind we kept a fast pace to the base of Mount Tennent, from where we were slowed to a walk until we reached the Mount Tennent summit turn-off. We got our first glimpse of the Namadgi Visitors Centre but kept our eyes fixed on the descending rock-filled trail as we ran past Cypress Pine Lookout and down to the flat lands upon which the Visitors Centre sits. We crossed the road and arrived at the Namadgi Visitors Centre at 3.08 pm on Tuesday 26 November, completing the AAWT in 11 days, 9 hours and 6 minutes.

“ ... completing the AAWT in 11 days, 9 hours and 6 minutes.

The feeling was perhaps more one of relief than joy. For me that relief also came with a realisation of tiredness. It was like I could finally relax after 12 days of continually feeling that I needed to keep moving and also thinking and addressing what could stop me in my tracks - literally. So overall, I have to admit, perhaps not the most enjoyable way to do the AAWT. However, I was no longer a prisoner of the AAWT and that release had to come at a cost. A cost well worth it in the end.

More reflections

No matter how you tackle it, end-to-end the AAWT is very tough. It requires endurance, good navigation skills, mental toughness and generally the knowledge and ability to keep yourself healthy in remote wilderness for lengthy periods of time.

As for our trip, I felt our AAWT success came from good team work. Despite my weaknesses on descents early on in the mountains, generally we moved at a similar pace. Fortuitously, we also seemed to be on the same wave length on appropriate start and finish times for each day. Overall I can honestly say there was never any real disagreement (perhaps we were too tired to argue) and in different ways we each made valuable contributions to the team effort.

For me the physical impact of the AAWT was significant. I lost five kilograms (about 7% of my total body weight) and my immense

“As to AAWT tips, number one is look after your feet.

tiredness at Tharwa only gradually dissipated over the next fortnight. It has taken a similar period of time for my feet to heal. For Kylie, things were a little more serious with a need for crutches and antibiotics as part of her recovery.

As to AAWT tips, number one is look after your feet. Have a blister prevention and management plan and practice it before your departure. Know what to use and how to use it. This was the sole reason for my failure in 2018. Second to feet is navigation. Read up on the difficult parts of the track, study the maps and read the track notes for these parts. Have a GPS as back-up. Number three tip is take a water filter and use it, particularly in feral horse country. Getting sick on the track is really not an option.

Would I do the AAWT again? Yes, but perhaps I would take a different approach. I would also only accompany someone who has a strong personal goal to complete it. The AAWT is certainly not something that you can force on another. The desire to tackle the AAWT must come from within.



Arriving at Namadgi Visitors Centre - Phil, Kylie and John
Picture by Alison Riley

GEAR LIST	Weight grams
Ultimate Direction Fastpack 35 litres	710
Outdoor Research Helium Bivvy	510
Exped SynMat Hyperlite mat	360
Sea to Summit Spark 3 Sleeping Bag	610
Sea to Summit Silk Liner	145
Sea to Summit Aeros pillow	105
Jetboil Zip Stove	345
Fuel	100
Sea to Summit collapsible mug and titanium spork	80
Mobile phone + Solar Powerbank	320
Spot Messenger & GPS tracker	114
Compass, relevant sections of John Chapman's AAWT track notes	
MSR Dromlite water bladder 2 litres	100
Sawyer mini water filter	70
Petzl Tikka head torch	
Snake bandage, Elastoplast & Fixomull tape, blister kit & toe caps, Ibuprofen, Panadol, Body Glide, hand sanitiser, tooth paste, tooth brush, sunscreen, waterproof matches & 2 x lighter, spare AAA batteries	
Total base weight: 4 kg (approx.)	

CLOTHING
Short sleeve running top, cap & sunglasses
Long sleeve running top
Running/compression shorts
Long running tights/compression
Macpac lightweight merino thermals (1 set)
Lightweight merino gloves, buff and beanie
Montane anti-freeze down pertex jacket
Polar fleece
2 pairs DexShell waterproof socks 2 pairs Armaskin socks
Mountain Hardwear Plasmic Ion Jacketwaterproof outer shell
Altra Olympus 3.5 trail runners

FOOD DROP CONTENTS
<i>Dinner:</i> Soup packet, Back Country/Outdoor Gourmet Company freeze dried (2 serve), rice or steam pudding, hot chocolate
<i>Breakfast:</i> Oats, milk powder and raw sugar mix
<i>Lunch:</i> Wholemeal wraps with jam and cheese
Long life flavoured milk - coffee/chocolate
Gatorade powder
Cliff bars, muesli bars and gels
Large block of chocolate
Soy crisps

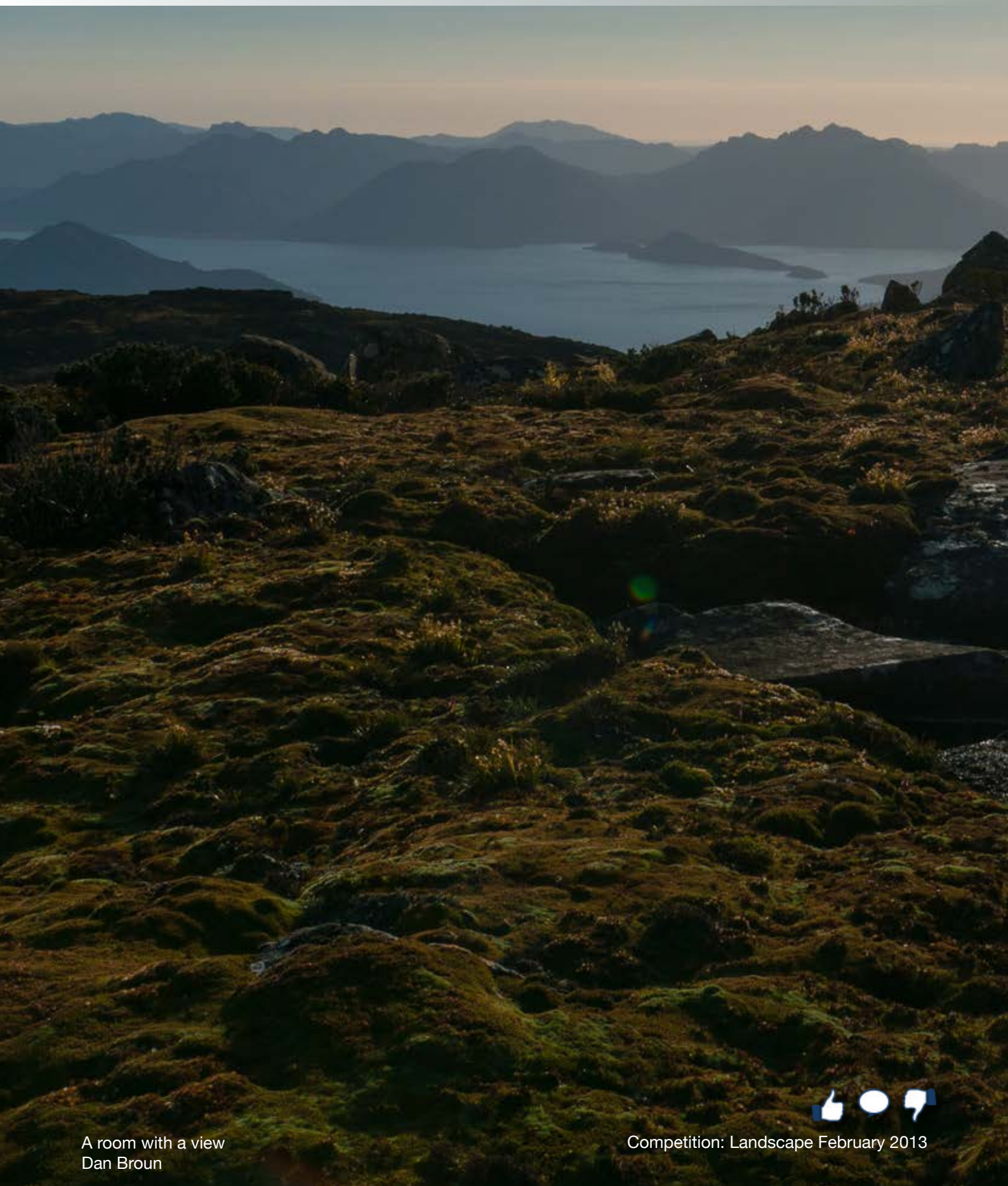
John is a Melbourne-based lawyer who likes being out of the office enjoying the more remote and wild parts of Australia. He has hiked and climbed extensively throughout Tasmania and Victoria and in more recent years has taken to fastpacking solo over mountainous terrain. Travelling light and fast has brought together his two passions of long distance running and spending time in the wilderness. Other pursuits that keep him fit include road cycling, mountain biking, rock climbing and mountaineering.

Phil is a pecan farmer on the Camden Haven River near Port Macquarie NSW. He is a former high school physical education teacher and exercise physiologist. He is a keen tennis player and has coached a former Australian number one wheelchair athlete. Phil has been an ultra runner for around 10 years but now prefers to fastpack wild places alone or in select company.

Kylie is mum of two, a Pool Aquatic manager and also has a fish farm in the Hastings Valley near Port Macquarie. Kylie has always had a love for sport growing up she represented NSW in swimming and running. When Kylie has some spare time she loves to run, hike and swim. In her local area she can explore the hidden trails and beyond. Over the past few years she has gained a love for ultra-running and now taken up fastpacking treks and plans to go on a Breca race in New Zealand in the next few months.



Photo Gallery



A room with a view
Dan Broun

Competition: Landscape February 2013

BWA Photo Competition



Landscapes February 2019

WINNER



Golden Tarn
Bogholesbuckethats

A welcome surprise on the Fossey Mountains after a long and dry traverse from Mount Claude.



A plain evening
North-north-west



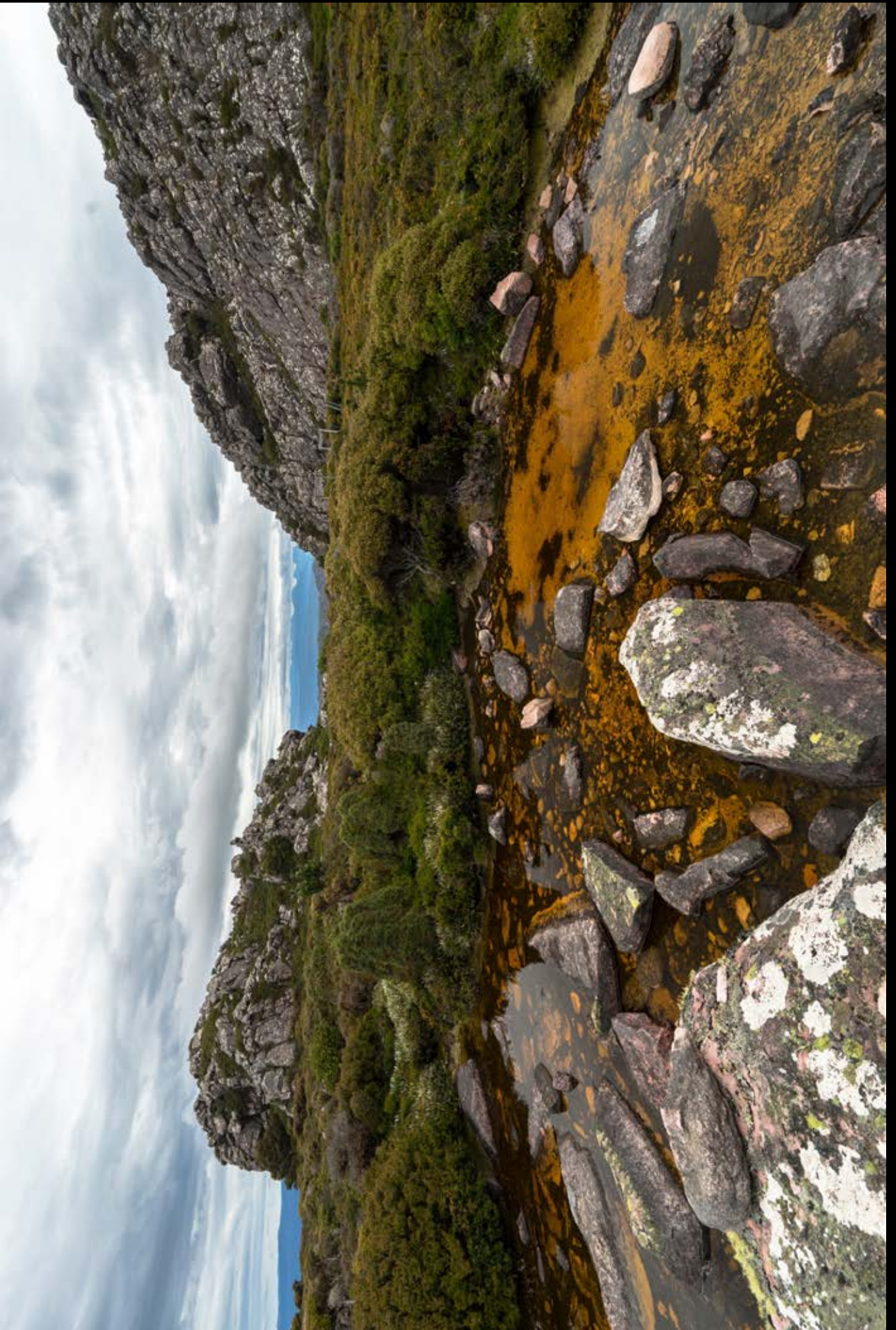
On my way home
Brian Eglinton



Evening sky
John Walker



Early morning
on Gould Plateau
Graham51



Non-landscapes February 2019

WINNER



Glory on Kosciuszko
Cajun

The glory on Kosci was taken as we walked up to the summit for sunset. We had walked from Charlotte Pass, and with the mist thickening we thought that it would be a whiteout. However, the mist rose, we saw a glory, a circular rainbow seen only at altitude. The picture was taken as we walked to the summit for lovely sunset. While I could only see my shadow, a Brocken spectre, my wife could only see hers!



Kingfisher
Brian Eglinton



On reflection
Graham51



Secret Garden
Bogholesbuckethats



Rosy Skimmer
landsmith



Looking for a way across
North-north-west



Heights and depths
John Walker



Tasmania

February 2019

WINNER



Mount Geryon
Graham51

A steep tracked walk from Pine Valley Hut will bring you to The Labyrinth, a plateau with an array of lakes, tarns and mountains. Possibly the jewel is Lake Elysia with its backdrop of many amazing peaks - Mount Geryon, The Acropolis, Walled Mountain and Mount Eros. Lake Elysia reflects Mount Geryon, inviting the walker to attempt to climb its craggy peaks.



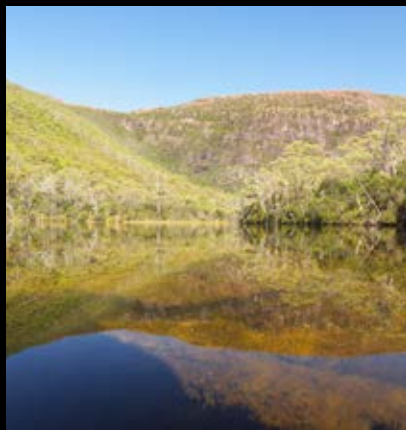
Prion Beach
on the South Coast Track
Phil Moody



Mossy Myrtle
Bogholesbuckethats



The Maid
and the Mountains
North-north-west



Calm reflections
IainDtiler



Other States

February 2019

WINNER



We three kings
Cajun

The photo was taken in Macquarie Pass National Park, just west of Albion Park in New South Wales. After a wonderful morning walk with many waterfalls and waterholes, we came across this. I love the light in this shot.



Slender skimmers mating
landsmith



Grounded
Brian Eglinton



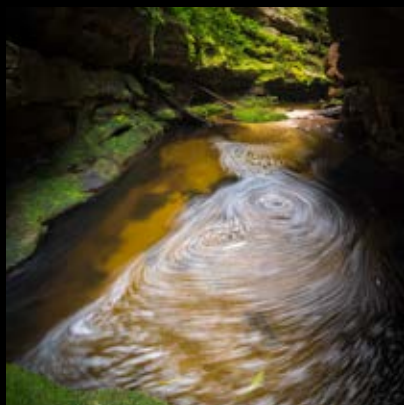
A window on the river
John Walker



Landscapes

March 2019

WINNER



The vortex
of Bell Creek Canyon
Tom Brennan

I swam into Bell Creek Canyon with the express purpose of taking photos, only to find that I had wrapped the camera in a couple of leaky drybags. Thankfully the camera was fine, but the lens was misty and the cloths were all wet. Nevertheless, as long as the sun was out of shot, I was able to get a few snaps. Recent rain meant that there was foam floating in the creek, and a long exposure attenuated the slow patterns that flowed.



And the peaks roll on ...
North-north-west



On a Korowal Knife Edge
on Mount Solitary
James Robertson



Timely advice
John Walker



Waterfall Gully
Brian Eglinton



Non-landscapes

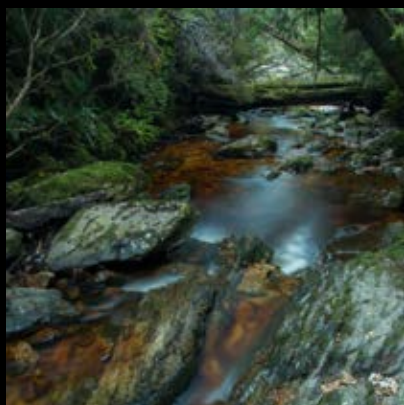
March 2019

WINNER



Below the canopy
John Walker

Each March or April there's a Gold Coast reunion trip to catch up with childhood friends for a few days. As the only bushwalker, I always try to explore local walking tracks accessible by public transport and/or on foot. It's surprising what you can find in an area heavily impacted by urbanisation when you look. Burleigh Head NP is one of those small gems. It's possible to walk about 3.5 kilometres through the bush, connecting different tracks to form a double circuit, observing different landscapes and plant communities. This shot is from the quite spectacular Oceanview track which is gated, and closed during times of high seas/bad weather due to rockfall risk. It was pouring rain during this walk (unheard of currently!) which made photography challenging. This view from below the Pandanus grove canopy gave me some protection to capture the interestingly lit medley of plant structure, detritus, rocks, waves and sub-optimal weather.



Tonight's kitchen
North-north-west



Banksia
Brian Eglinton



Tasmania

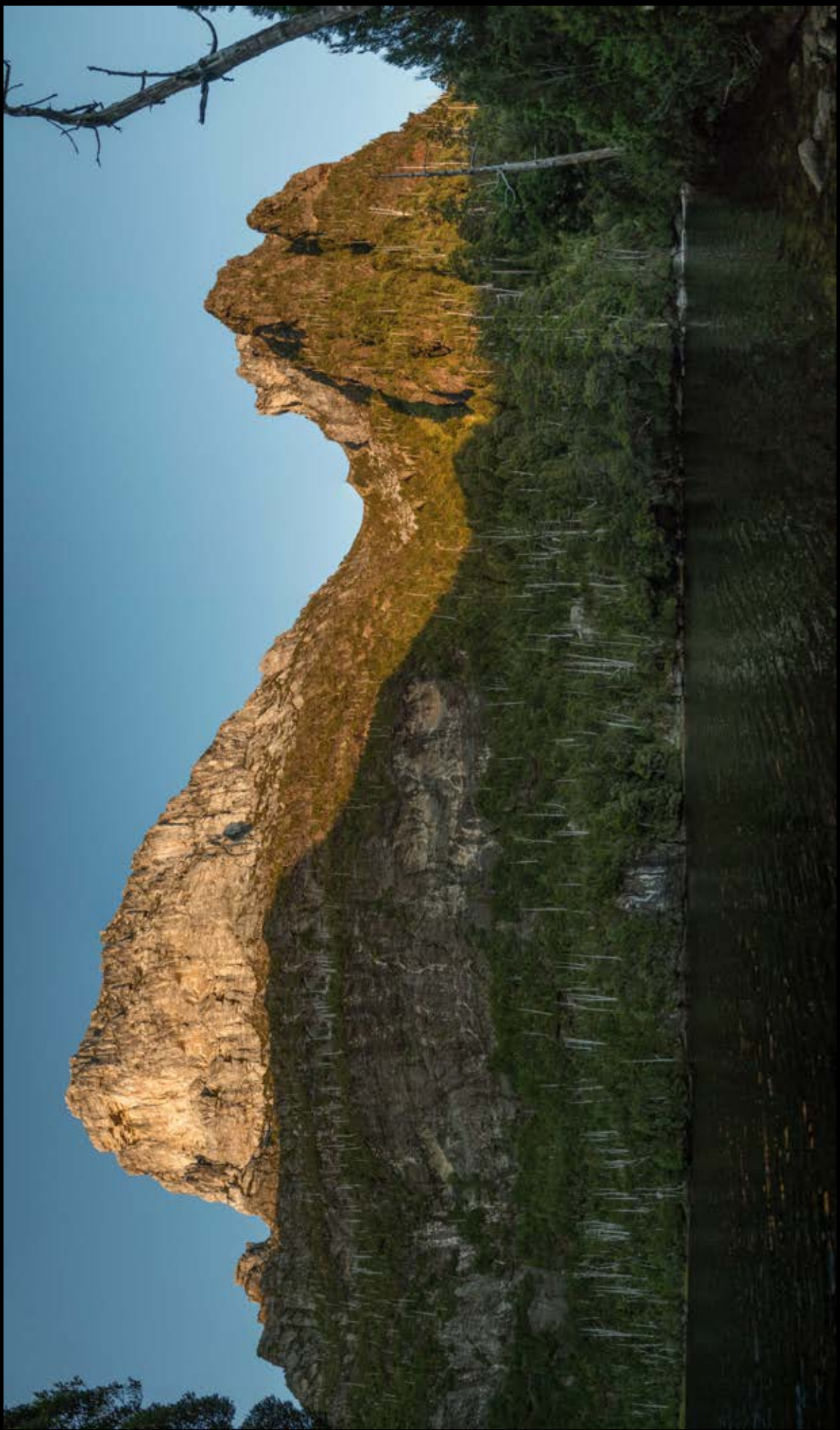
March 2019

WINNER



Bonjour monsieur
North-north-west

Lake Tahune. Morning or evening,
it's always a special place.



Other States

March 2019

WINNER



Light in a dark place
Tom Brennan

The mossy dark lower corridor of Bell Creek Canyon starts to open out into the light of ferns and coachwoods.



Second Falls
Brian Eglinton

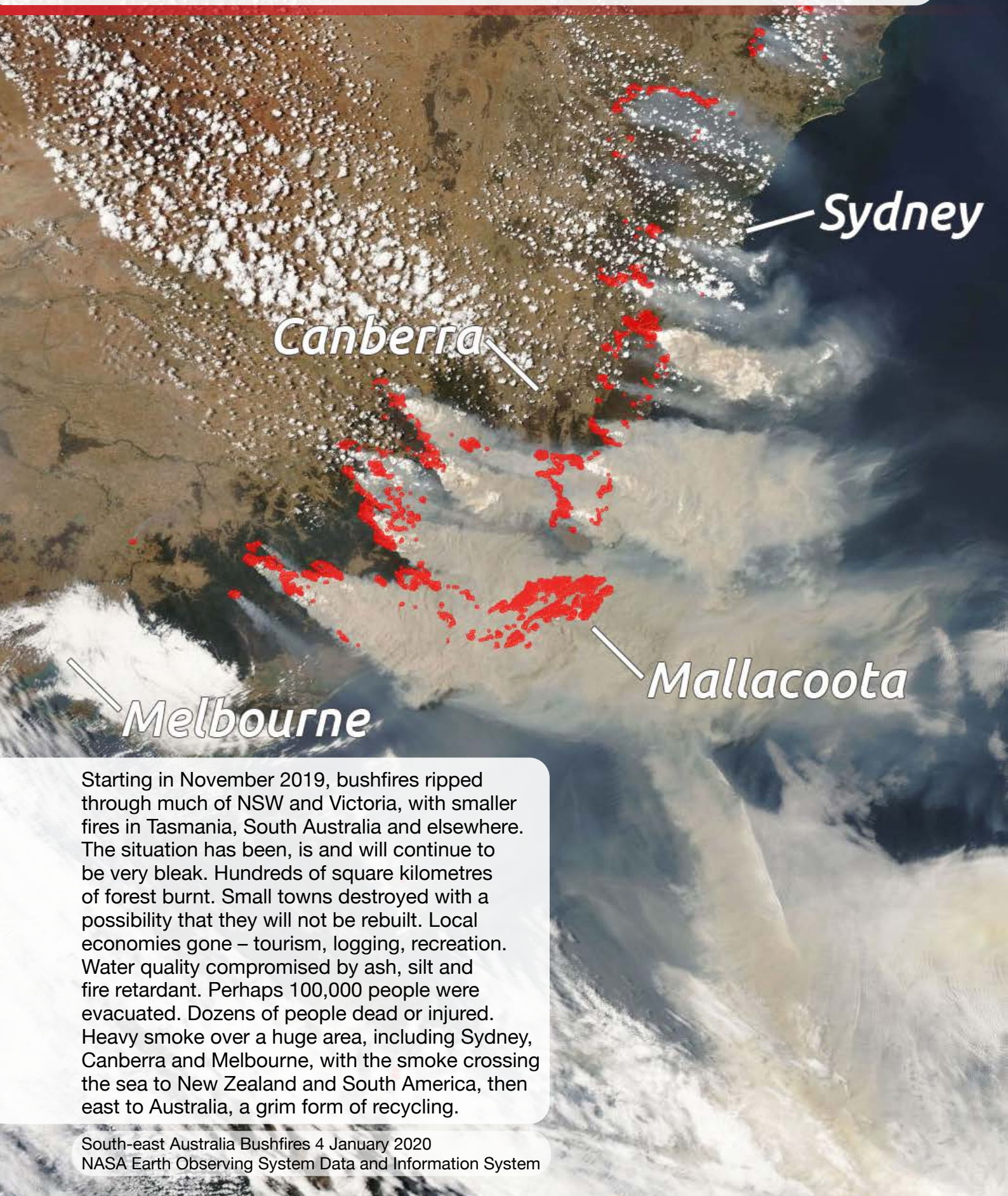


The coast
from Burleigh Head NP
John Walker



2019-20 Bushfires Overview

Stephen Lake



Starting in November 2019, bushfires ripped through much of NSW and Victoria, with smaller fires in Tasmania, South Australia and elsewhere. The situation has been, is and will continue to be very bleak. Hundreds of square kilometres of forest burnt. Small towns destroyed with a possibility that they will not be rebuilt. Local economies gone – tourism, logging, recreation. Water quality compromised by ash, silt and fire retardant. Perhaps 100,000 people were evacuated. Dozens of people dead or injured. Heavy smoke over a huge area, including Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, with the smoke crossing the sea to New Zealand and South America, then east to Australia, a grim form of recycling.

Around 97,000 square kilometres have been burnt. By comparison, Tasmania is 68,401 square kilometres, so the fires have burnt 1.4 times the area of Tasmania.

Some media, people and websites have made things worse by publishing [false information](#). For example, it has been said that there should be more [fuel reduction burns](#), but the conditions for this have often been unsuitable. NSW NP&WS have done 75% of the prescribed burns over the past four years, but longer fire seasons are making it very difficult to find a time for safe burns. Even if all the burns could be done, prescribed burns have very little impact on the [speed of fires](#), especially in elevated fire danger periods. [Arson](#) has been cited as a cause of the fires. While there is some arson, most fires have been due to natural causes such as lightning. The issue this season has not been the number of fires, but the hot, dry

and windy conditions that allowed fires to spread quickly and to be difficult to contain, even with huge fire fighting efforts.

The NSW National Parks Association has a [good commentary](#) on fires, much of which applies to other jurisdictions.

Bushwalking areas burnt

The following is a list of major bushwalking areas that have had bushfires in the last few months. It's subjective; the full list is 18 pages on my word processor. Note that the list does not convey the extent of the bushfires. For example, the Victorian Alpine National Park has fires over 100 or more kilometres of the AAWT. Maps and lists are on the links.

New South Wales

A selection of [impacted parks](#), mostly the larger ones. List courtesy of NPA.

Badja Swamps NR	Cunnawarra NP	Murramarang NP
Barakee NP	Deua NP	Nadgee NR
Barrington Tops NP	Ellerslie NR	Nattai NP
Ben Boyd NP	Georges Creek NR	New England NP
Biamanga NP	Goonengerry NP	Nightcap NP
Bimberamala NP	Gouburn River NP	Oxley Wild Rivers NP
Biriwal Bulga NP	Gourock NP	Parma Creek NR
Blue Mountains NP	Jerrawangala NP	Tapin Tops NP
Bogandyera NR	Kanangra Boyd NP	Tooloom NP
Budawang NP	Koorban NP	Wadilliga NP
Bugan NR	Kosciuszko NP	Wako NP
Bundjalung NP	Lake Innes NR	Warrabah NP
Bungawalbin SCA	Mongo NP	Washpool NP
Bungonia SCA	Morton NP	Willi Willi NP
Capertee NP	Mount Imlay NP	Wollemi NP
Carrai NP	Mount Jerusalem NP	Woomargama NP
Cataract NP	Mount Neville NR	Yarrungully NR
Clarkes Hill NR	Mount Royal NP	Yengo NP
Colymea SCA	Mount Seaview NR	

Victoria

Alpine NP, Avon Wilderness Park, Croajingolong NP, Errinundra NP, Grampians NP, Mount Buffalo NP, Snowy River NP. These are [big areas](#), with some parks having several fires.

The rest of Australia

Other parts of Australia have had bushfires, but much smaller than in NSW and Victoria. Tasmanian fires [are here](#). As is the case for all places, the heartbreak, tragedy and loss are significant to those who live there.

Park closures and water

A number of parks were closed, and many remain closed. Heed these closures – it's still dangerous. This will not change for some time as burnt trees can fall at any time with no warning. The Australian Alps Walking Track is closed in many places, huge and small bushfires in the ACT, Kosciuszko National Park, The Barry Mountains, Howitt region, and near all these places. It's unclear if water tanks at The Twins and Mount Selwyn survived, and this alone is reason to avoid the AAWT in The Barry Mountains until this is determined. Even if the tanks are intact, water could be compromised by ash. While this can be filtered and treated, the taps may be blocked. Also the areas affected by fire are not pretty, and water quality in streams and rivers could be compromised.

Much of Sydney water comes from the Warragamba Dam. Water levels of around 40% full capacity will not be fixed by the catchment, which is very much burnt. Professor Stuart Khan from UNSW Sydney explains the immediate and long-term effects of bushfires on water quality in [this article](#). It's serious, far more serious than many people envisage. Most people take water for granted – turn on a tap and water comes out. The impact on freshwater systems is [bad](#).

Wildlife

While the loss of houses, farms, and infrastructure is serious, the loss of wildlife is equally important. One estimate has a billion

animals, birds and living creatures killed by the bushfires.

It's bad for people caught in bushfires or who have to evacuate or breathe air filled with smoke. It is arguably worse for terrified animals who flee before fires, and this time is worse – safe areas are limited. One NSW fire spread from near Tarcutta to Eucumbene Dam, 110 kilometres. In Victoria, the Mount Buffalo fire spread from south-west of Myrtleford to west of Omeo, over 100 kilometres. These fires are very big.

If you want to assist, contact [RSPCA](#), [Wildlife Victoria](#), [Animals Australia](#), [WWF](#), or many other similar entities.

Park management agencies are doing what they can to protect wildlife. Pam O'Brien, Manager, Snowy River Area, Southern Ranges Branch, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service said "While the fires have been devastating in KNP, they could have been worse and we've been able to protect some of the most sensitive bits of the park. We are also looking at feeding pygmy possums, watering Corroboree frogs and relocating rare native fish out damaged streams."

Further north, the [Wollemi Pine was saved](#).

Huts

The following lists are an indication, and fires could easily move a hut from the left and centre columns to the right column.

Victorian Huts		
Standing	Uncertain	Lost
Bluff	Bentley Plain	Towong Hill Station
Cope	Moscow Villa	
Cobungra Station (mostly)		
Dinner Plain CRB		
Guys		
Howitt Plains		
JB Hut		
Lovicks		
McNamaras Hut, Buckety Plain		
Spargos		
Vallejo Gantner		
Wallaces		

New South Wales Huts		
Standing	Uncertain	Lost
Boobee	Bill Jones	Bradleys and O'Briens
Brayshaws	Black Jacks	Brooks
Broken Dam	Cooinbil	Courthouse/Chalet Kiandra
Cascade	Coolamine Homestead	Delaneys
Cesjacks	Hainsworth	Four Mile
Circuits	Millers	Happys
Currango	Old Currango	Matthews
Gavells	Oldfields	Pattisons Kiandra
Gooandra	Pedens	Round Mountain
Hains	Pockets	Sawyers Hill
Ingeegoodbee	Townsend	Wolgal Kiandra
Long Plain		Vickerys
Mackeys		
Patons	<p>Any hut not listed could be in the uncertain category. Fires are still burning as BWA is published, and some places cannot be visited due to fires or smoke, so the situation may change.</p> <p>Bushfire impact on carbon emissions</p> <p>On 24 December, Time reported that “The unprecedented bushfires devastating swathes of Australia have already pumped out more than half of the country’s annual carbon dioxide emissions in another setback to the fight against climate change.” The bushfires are having a measurable effect on carbon emissions. A Reuters report on 9 January</p>	
Pretty Plain		
Schofields		
Tantangara		
Tin Mine		
Valentine		
Wheelers		
Witzes		
Yarrangobilly Caves House (just)		



Remains of Sawyer's Hill Hut, New South Wales
ABC News

said that the fire emissions have nearly reached the 2019 Amazon fire levels. On 21 January [Bloomberg](#) said that “The fires sweeping Australia probably have doubled the nation’s annual greenhouse-gas emissions, producing as much climate-damaging pollution as all the airplanes in the world, new research shows.”

Economic cost

The economic cost will be very significant, with estimates in the \$10-20 billion range. Small towns that have been destroyed may not be rebuilt. With farmland and tourist attractions gone there is no economic base. Rural Australia is [at risk](#). Former residents might well be counted as among our first climate change displaced people.

Due to no or minimal crops, grazing, tourism or even residents, local economies will go south for a while. With no power, fuel cannot be pumped and services such as ATMs and cash registers will not work. If there is no potable water then water needs to be brought in. It will be a long haul back to normality. In time the rebuilding will add to local economies. I read about tradies with no tools who want to assist with the rebuilding.

Tourists are leaving fire and other areas, a [\\$1 billion loss](#). This will have an effect for some time as our reputation as a desired tourist

destination drops. With so much smoke and fire, it's hard to say where tourists will go.

Health

In the past, similar bushfires have led to stress and PTSD. This will happen for the current bushfires. Some people will not be able to cope. Smoke has been a big problem, including outside fire areas. Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne have had air off the scale in pollution. The basic face masks that many people have been wearing are ineffective. A P2 mask or better is necessary. Many shops have sold out.

Politics

The political fallout has been harsh for the Morrison government, with a recent poll showing that the leader of the opposition Anthony Albanese is now the preferred prime minister. Many commentators are critical of the government. Funding cuts have been unhelpful.

More preparation for the bushfires could have been made. [Australian Science](#) had a report on this:

"The 2017 federal budget has [axed funding](#) for the [National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility](#) (NCCARF), an agency that provides information to decision-makers on how best to manage the risks of climate change and sea level rise."



Blue Mountains bushfire, Gospers Mountain, New South Wales, December 2019
Meganesia

A similar report was in [The Conversation](#): "The NCCARF received A\$50 million in 2008 to coordinate Australia's national research effort into climate adaptation measures. That was reduced in 2014 to just under A\$9 million. For 2017-18, a mere A\$600,000 will be spread between CSIRO and NCCARF to support existing online platforms only. From 2018, funding is axed entirely.

"This decision follows on from the 2014 streamlining of CSIRO's Climate Adaptation Flagship, and comes at a time when a national review of Australia's climate policies is still underway."

Providing support

There are many agencies looking after victims. First, a warning. Scammers often use disasters and media reports as hooks to scam people. For example, there's a scam about NBN, with scammers saying that payment needs to be made to stay connected. Similarly, there are reports of scammers posing as charities. I'd avoid people in the street seeking donations for bushfires or any charity. It's easy to fake a charity identification tabard and tin. Beware.

Similarly, make sure that any donation goes to the fire victims. The Liberal Party had an advertisement with a bushfire theme seeking donations. It was not clear that the donations went to the Liberal Party. Some charities have high expenses, what would be called an MER, management expense ratio, in a managed fund. Some MERs are very high, 80-90%, so that only 10-20 cents in the dollar go to the intended people. Look for low MER charities.

Make sure that charities can and will get donations to victims. Some cannot. Donations of over \$2.00 are an allowed tax deduction, so get a receipt.

The following are established entities: [DHS](#), [Disaster Assist](#), [Salvos](#), and [Red Cross](#). There are other similar organisations. See also this [ABC article](#).

Climate change

Since the 1970s, Australia has seen longer fire seasons and more severe weather, with people and property also at greater risks. It is

not possible to attribute any specific weather event due to climate change. It seems most likely we are seeing the effects of climate change. This does not mean that next year's fires will be worse than this year's. It does mean we are going to see more severe weather related events like this much more frequently than in the past.

Inaction, lies, political ideology, short-term thinking and arguably corruption have led us to this point. I sacrificed a lot to achieve financial security, and those that were critical of me then can now see the wisdom of early sacrifice to achieve a better outcome later. So it is with climate change. The choice is stark. Pay the price now for minimising climate change – and it will be a lot – or pay the price later, and it will be a huge price. One example will suffice. The Greenland ice sheet has enough ice to raise sea levels by about seven metres and the loss of ice is increasing. National Geographic has a [report](#).

"The moment of crisis has come" in efforts to tackle climate change, [Sir David Attenborough](#) has warned.

A Cree Indian saying is worth repeating. "Only when the last tree has been cut down, the last fish been caught, and the last stream poisoned, will we realize we cannot eat money."

In February 2018 BWA published a poem by Keith McKenry, *National Park Lament No. 1*, written in the early 1970s. This poem ends:

Now I'm only a boy from the bush near
Fitzroy
And I don't understand people's games.
But I'd still like to know where our children
will go
When none of the bushland remains.

Right now there's not much bushland in too many places in NSW and Victoria, with smaller losses elsewhere. Burnt areas will be dangerous for months, probably years, due to branches and trees falling. Summer 2020-21 may have similar fires. The 2019-20 bushfires have changed the way bushwalking is conducted in NSW and Victoria for quite some time. Recovery will be slow.



Kosciuszko Fires 2019-20

A Personal Story

Stephen Lake



As I have done for many years, last Christmas I went bushwalking, Kosciuszko National Park (KNP), Kiandra to Dead Horse Gap. This trip was different.

From Townsend looking at the Corryong fire and Khancoban, lost in the smoke
All pictures by Stephen Lake

The day before the walk started I went to Tumut, 46 °C, unpleasant. The drive from Tumut to Kiandra was in moderate to thick smoke from fires burning in many places in NSW. The start of the walk was also smoky, not especially enjoyable. It was very disappointing that there were no views for this and most days.

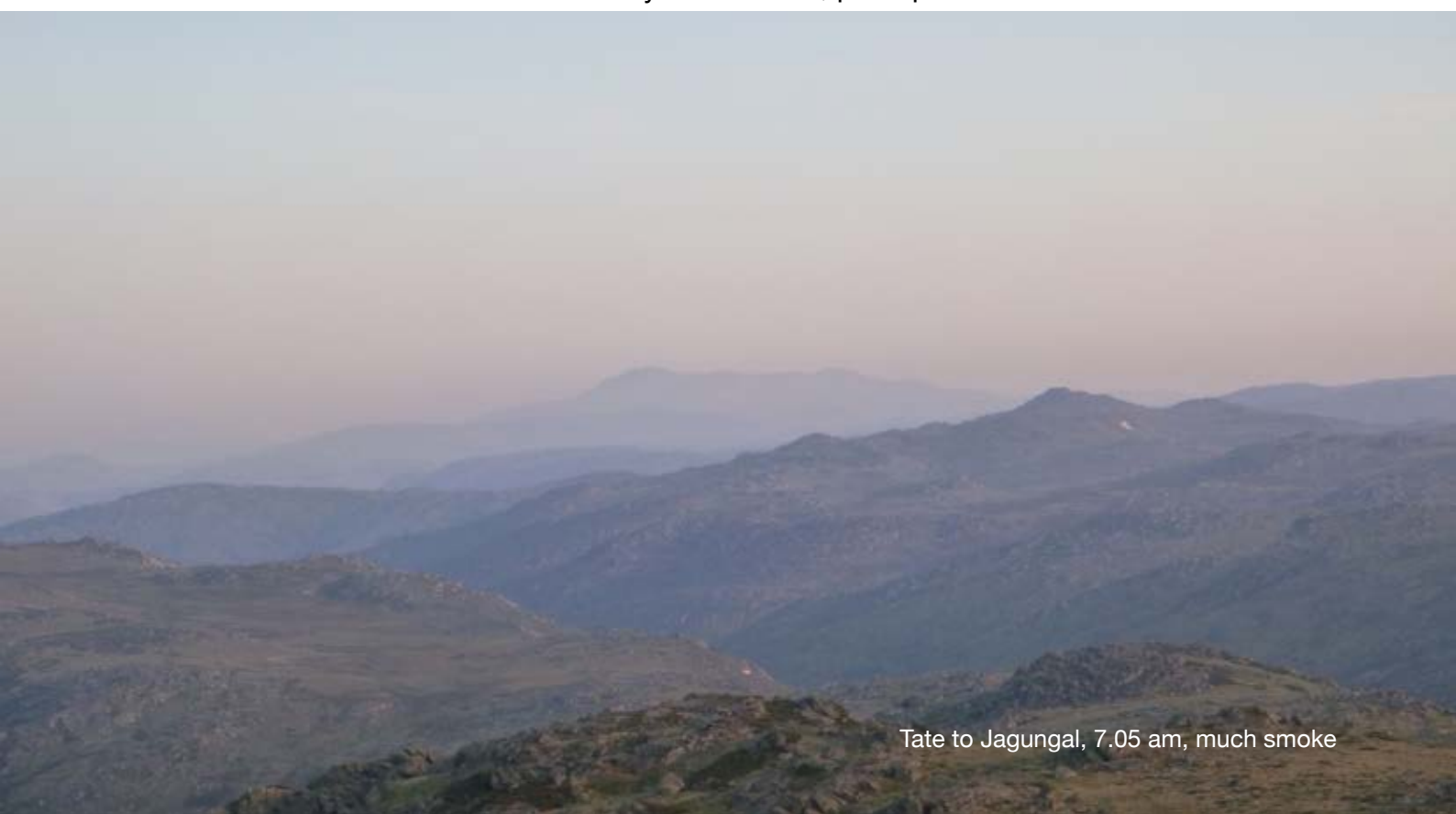
Up onto the ridge, past Selwyn, Four Mile Hut, Tabletop and then down to Happys Hut, a lovely place to camp. It was a late start, hot day and late finish, somewhat exhausting. Next day I went to Boobee Hut, also nice. I camped all nights and used the huts for cooking. Then to Mackays Hut and Cesjacks Hut. This day was somewhat confusing in the smoke, with visibility about a kilometre. I later found out that the fires were getting bigger.

There was a side-trip to Jagungal with a second night at Cesjacks, then Tin Hut, getting caught in a lot of slow exhausting scrub following the ridge. Next time I'll stick to the valleys. My suggested route – and I have not done some of this – is from Cesjacks up Doubtful Creek, keeping high on the east bank in hopefully light scrub going south to the valleys north-west and west of Bulls Peaks. Then go south, Mailbox on the right, Brassys on the left. This should be mainly open. Most creeks were dry, and I was fortunate to find one near the Brassys.

On a hot day after too much scrub it was a relief to reach Tin Hut. Until here I had met just one walker, near Tabletop on the first day. Tin Hut had a family in from Mawsons and two very fit blokes who came from a camp just below the summit of Jagungal, a long day.

From Tin Hut it was more scrub to Gungartan Pass (two people camped near there), Gungartan, Schlink Pass (maybe 30 people), Dicky Cooper Bogong, over Granite Peaks and Consett Stephen Pass. From here I went off the track due west to the ridge, then south on the old SMA track to Tate, a flat exposed campsite just below the summit, with water in a small runoff from a snow drift just before camp. There are pools a short way south-east of the summit, just off the track but hard to spot from the track. I cannot say if the pools would be viable in late summer.

The next day was an on-off track to Twynam (hordes of people), as always marvelling at the SMA track through the boulder fields. I saw a few good lines, maybe grade 15-18, but it's a long way to walk to climb rock. From Twynam there's a major track all the way to Muellers Pass. While the new steel boardwalk between Carruthers and above Albina Lake makes it easy to maintain a fast pace, it's quite hazardous in the strong gusty winds, perhaps 60-70 km/hour.



I was nearly blown off a few times, and day trippers were crouching to avoid a tumble of up to a metre to the ground.

Townsend was also exposed, what turned out to be my last summit camp, and like most days did not lead to decent dusk or dawn pictures, just smoke. At 7.05 pm a day walker came through, very casually asking how to get to the summit. I showed him the track and said that in the strong gusty winds the summit rocks could be a bit dicey. He went up, and as I was beginning to get worried about him he came off the summit going nearly due east, and I called him to the track. If he had kept going he would have gone down a steep snow drift.

After dusk I saw a fire to the left of Khancoban, which was hidden by smoke during the day, but I knew where it was. Later I learned that the fire was Corryong.

Breaking camp was hard; the tent and small items of gear were caught in the stiff wind. At Rawson Pass, like other walkers, I hid in the toilets, away from the wind. I decided to go to Seamans Hut for some hot food and a brew. I also wanted to think about my proposed last two nights, Rams Head and just above Dead Horse Gap, from where I was going to Corryong. Some bushwalkers had mobile phones, and the RFS website looked grim. Seamans Hut was nice, sheltered. A hot drink was lovely after being unable to use a stove.

Around noon NP&WS rangers instructed us to go east to Charlotte Pass – the bushfires were getting serious. That night I bivvied in Jindabyne, smoke swirling, images ethereal in the gloom. This was not the New Year's Eve I planned!

I got a lift north but we were turned back near Adaminaby, what I later found to be a massive fire bearing down on KNP. Back to Cooma, then much slow traffic to Canberra, and a late train to Melbourne, arriving quite tired.

A few weeks later the destruction is very apparent. Kiandra, Selwyn, Four Mile Hut, Happys Hut gone. Massive chunks of NSW

and Victorian national parks and wild places gone. Too many people dead, too many houses lost, too many small towns blasted, too much infrastructure gone. My path was ash. The Tumut road was cut, from the freeway and going south to Kiandra. Further afield the Blue Mountains, the Budawangs, Bogong High Plains region, and much of the AAWT were burnt. I've walked in these places for decades.

KNP has been part of my bushwalking life since 1973. Ski trips include one starting at Bradneys Gap to the old Pretty Plain Hut, Grey Mare Hut and across to Cesjacks Hut, out of the park to Nordheim. One day I skied from Albina Hut to Tin Hut, finishing after dark, wrecked. Bad weather has driven me off Rams Heads, the Main Range and Jagungal. I've hidden in huts waiting for the tempest to cease. I've camped in remote places, watching the sun set, glad to be there. Sunsets and sunrises from the summits of Jagungal, Townsend, Rams Head and elsewhere have been truly lovely. Many of you will have done this sort of thing in KNP and elsewhere, and have the emotional attachment I have.

Now KNP and other parks are blackened shells of what was. Huts are gone or scorched. The AAWT is compromised. This is deeply disturbing. As I was being driven from Charlotte Pass I was nearly crying at the scale of the destruction.

In October 2017 a song of mine was published in BWA, KNP, tune *Blue bayou*.

The song ends:

I'm goin' back some day, gonna stay in KNP.
Where the hills are fine, and the place is mine
at KNP.

With those wondrous views and time to lose,
if I could only see,
The mountains wide, as I do stride, how
happy I'd be.

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

I want to go back to a green national park,
no bushfires, clear water. Sadly, this may not
happen for a while.





From Jagungal looking south

Four Mile Hut In Memory Of Klaus Hüneke



Births and Death Notice

Bush Telegraph 9 January 2020

Four Mile Hut 1937-2020

Refuge, Inspiration, Companion, Symbol, Museum, Quiet Place.

Four Mile Hut

All pictures by Stef De Montis

Dear Four Mile,

We are mourning your loss.

You have always been open, welcoming and free.

You have warmed our hearts, bottoms, fingers and toes.

You have taken us back to harder, quieter, simpler times.

You have passed on the spirit of Bob Hughes - miner, skier, hut builder, gentleman.

You have kept alive important old tools, tales and traditions.

You have inspired us to wax lyrical, sing you a song and record your life.

You have sheltered birds, mice, lizards, wombats and people of all ages, sizes and creeds.

You have given us a quiet space to contemplate and clarify the road ahead.

You have seen, felt and heard everything but kept your silence and asked for only a few repairs in return.

Four Mile Hut was on Four Mile Creek, Four miles from Kiandra, a township also obliterated by recent fires. It was built by Bob Hughes in about 1937, in part from slabs at the Elaine Mine. It was smaller than Henry Thoreau's famous hut at Walden in the US, about the size of a small master bedroom with one four-pane window, a wooden floor, a very tall iron chimney and many artefacts and wooden boxes preserved from the past. Its unique, almost iconic feature was hundreds of rusty strips of iron fastened over many cracks with flat head nails and leather washers.



After the end of grazing it was used by bushwalkers, ski tourers and occasional horse riders. In recent years it was sought out by people walking from Walhalla in Victoria to Tharwa near Canberra on the 660 kilometre AAWT. The Nordic Ski Club (NSC) have looked after it for the last 30 years after I and others did the first restorations in 1978 and 1981. The club rebuilt the chimney twice, replaced some slabs, restored several posts, kept it spick and span and restocked the wood supply. One of their members, Bob Guy, wrote a superb song about Bob Hughes and a girl called Lilian wrote an evocative poem about the hut. People have scattered sacred ashes there.

It survived the big blazes of 1939 and 2003, many small blazes in between, but could not quite dodge the fierce blast of 2020.

The hut has featured in books by Pauline Downing, Matthew Higgins, Harry Hill and others including me with Huts of the High Country first published in 1982 and still in print. It has featured in a KHA huts film and in many short videos. I have almost finished a 50,000 word hut life story and now have the difficult emotional task of writing about its fiery end. I felt an urgent call to visit the hut before Christmas and was glad I did. The mountains were cool and green!

I believe there are many people who in the fullness of time would like to see it rebuilt and restored as authentically as possible.

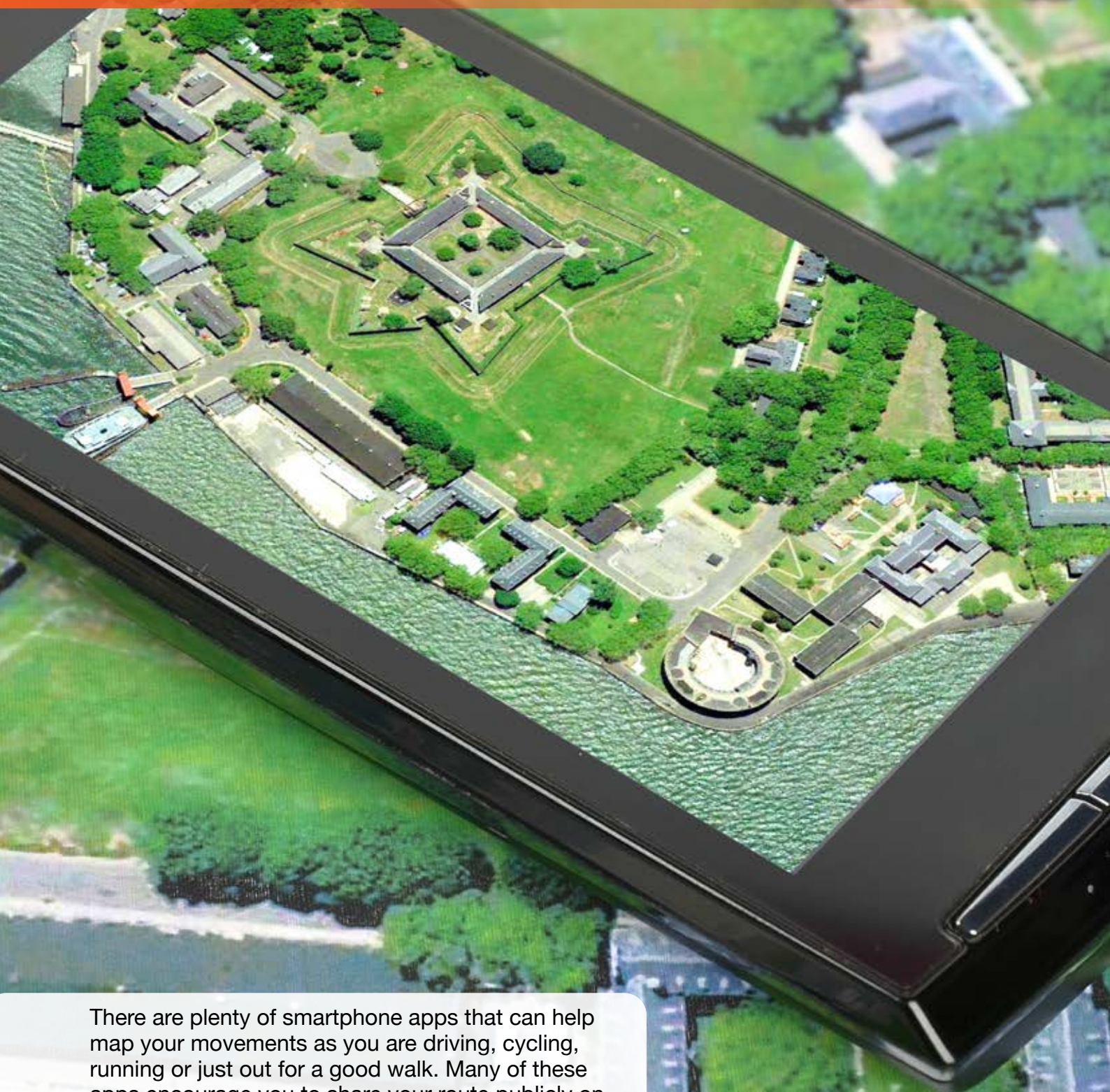
Yours,

Klaus Hüneke (spelt the old German way) with friends and extended family



Protecting Your Privacy If You Use a Route Mapping App

Farhad Farokhi



There are plenty of smartphone apps that can help map your movements as you are driving, cycling, running or just out for a good walk. Many of these apps encourage you to share your route publicly on websites or with friends on social media.

Some people even go to extreme lengths to pre-plan their routes to produce maps with entertaining shapes.

What many people don't realise is that by using such apps, you could be giving away information that could be abused by others.

For example, in the UK last year, police in Hull revealed how [a spate of bicycle thefts](#) was linked to hi-tech thieves who used such app information to track expensive bikes online. Since many of the routes people recorded started and ended at home, the thieves were able to pinpoint the location and type of bicycle being used.

This is not an isolated case. There have been several other thefts prompting [warnings from insurers](#) that people should think more about their privacy when using such apps.



Privacy zones may not be that private

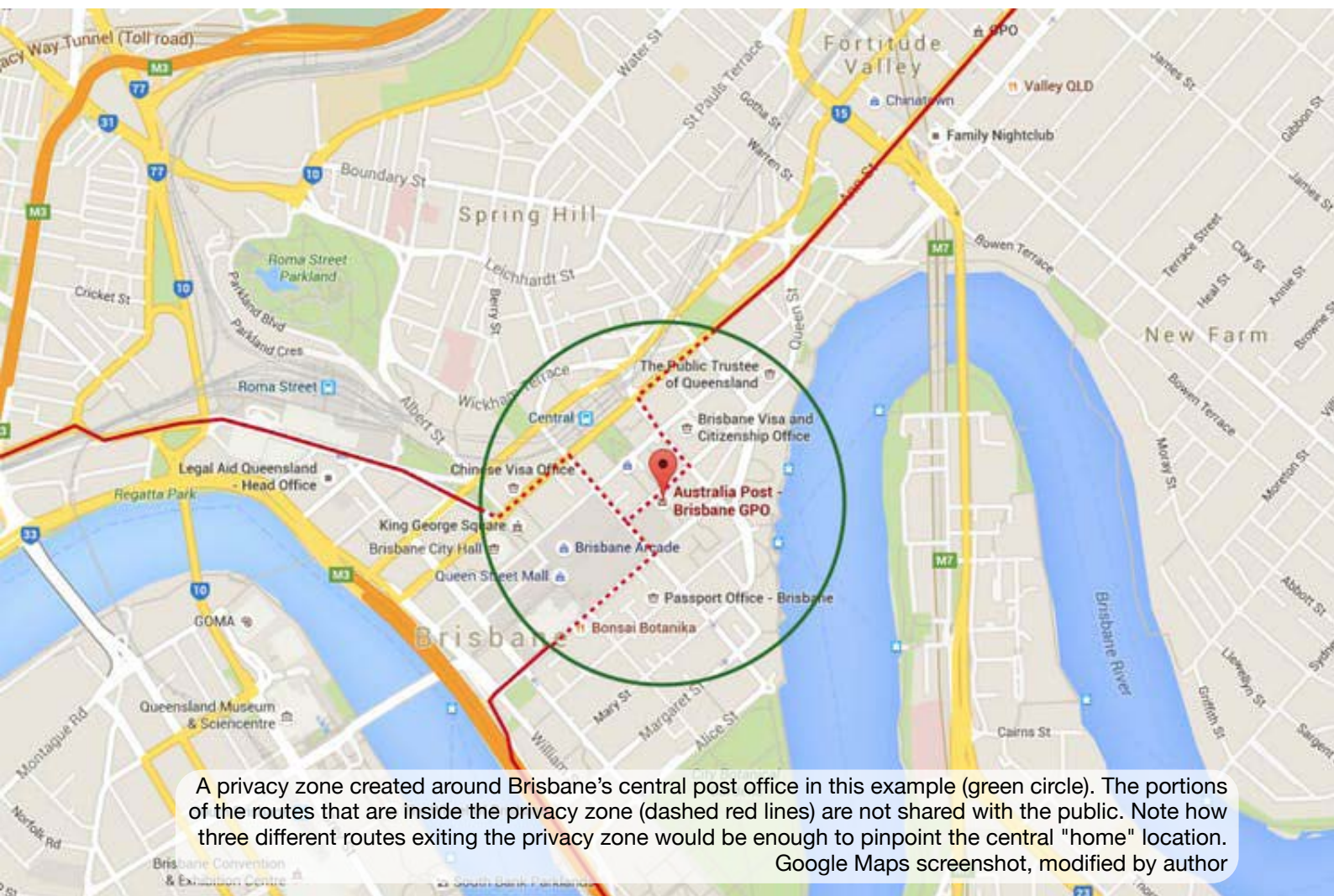
One approach is to mask the specifics of your “wearabouts”. [Strava](#), for example, is a fitness app that allows people to set up a [privacy zone](#) to hide the start and the end points of their trip.

Users can enter their home address (or any other place they don't want others to know they have visited) and create a radius of exclusion around that location.

The app hides the portion of a user's activity that starts or ends in their privacy zone. But this feature, like many others that rely on not sharing data in a structured manner, simply doesn't work, at least not against tech-savvy thieves.

“The app hides the portion of a user's activity that starts or ends in their privacy zone.”

Assume you have created a privacy zone around your house (or Brisbane GPO, as above) with a radius of 500 meters (noting that the issue will arise with any given radius). When you leave home, the data as amended by the privacy zone feature shows your starting point as being 500 metres away from your actual home.



A privacy zone created around Brisbane's central post office in this example (green circle). The portions of the routes that are inside the privacy zone (dashed red lines) are not shared with the public. Note how three different routes exiting the privacy zone would be enough to pinpoint the central "home" location.

Google Maps screenshot, modified by author

Each time you pass through a new point 500 metres away (assuming you don't always pass through the exact same point when leaving or returning home), you provide a new data point 500 metres from your home.

Over time these data points can be plotted on a circle, and some simple geometry can determine the radius of the circle and the centre of the privacy zone: your house.

You might be sharing more than you think

Even if you are a privacy-aware person and do not share your route data with strangers, there are chances that several apps and services are infringing on your privacy (sometimes unintentionally).

If you use sat-navs or mobile phones, then many of these devices [share your movements with other apps](#), albeit in an anonymised way (your movements are shared without attaching your name to them), to [improve traffic estimates](#) and to identify the location of the traffic jams to reroute you through shorter paths.

“... there are chances that several apps and services are infringing on your privacy ...”

In addition to these devices that share data behind our backs, we are used to sharing anonymised data. We provide anonymous feedback to our teachers or bosses. We submit anonymous feedback to app developers when they crash.

But anonymising data most often doesn't work in preserving your privacy. It turns out that four anonymised spatio-temporal points (each spatio-temporal point is a measurement of your position at a different time of day) are enough to [uniquely identify \(figuring out the name of\) 95% of the individuals](#). These identifications mostly rely on us being creatures of habit.

What can you do?

The good news is that sometimes there are convenient fixes for unintentional privacy leaks. For instance, if you want to use the privacy zone idea, you should set the centre of the privacy zone at a random location in your neighbourhood, but within the radius of privacy zone around your home.

This way, the thieves cannot centre in on your home inside the privacy zone. Remember if you do this, you should not frequently change the centre point (since you provide more information to the thieves).

Another fix is something that apps such as Strava could develop in the future. It could allow the use of random shapes for the privacy zone.

The common theme between these two fixes is randomness, which takes away hidden structures that can be used to identify your private information (without your knowledge).

We need to remember that there is always a trade-off between privacy and utility. I can stop sharing everything by not using any online services and connected devices, but then I will be lost every time that I am driving to a new location.

Sometimes, it is perfectly fine to share a bit to receive great services. For instance, I personally would be happy to share my position in real-time on my way to work and back so long as no one can infer where my home is (everyone can figure out where I work by a simple Google search, so that's not an issue).

The first step in preserving our privacy is to understand how much of it we are losing, such as the extent to which privacy-preserving features actually work, and any unintended consequences of their design.

In this quest, an important thing that we need to remember is that common sense might not align with reality: privacy zone and anonymisation don't work, at least not without careful consideration.



Farhad Farokhi

Research fellow, University of Melbourne

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 16 May 2016.

In the News

Improved Park Pass System for Tasmanian National Parks

The park pass system in Tasmanian National Parks will get an [upgrade](#), starting from 1 May 2020.

Upgraded Mount Strzelecki walking track

After severe damage caused by erosion, the track has been [upgraded](#). The project works are complete and the track is now open to the public.

Coastrek 2020

27 March 2020 Sydney Harbour & Coastline

22 May 2020 Mornington Peninsula

24 July 2020 Sunshine Coast

18 Sep 2020 Fleurieu Peninsula

[Choose your adventure](#): trek 60km, hike 30km or walk 15km along Australia's most spectacular coastlines to get fit with friends and raise funds for mental health. Join thousands of wild women (and a few awesome men!) in teams of four as we immerse ourselves in nature for an epic adventure of fun, fitness, friends and fundraising, proudly supporting Beyond Blue.

More feral horses

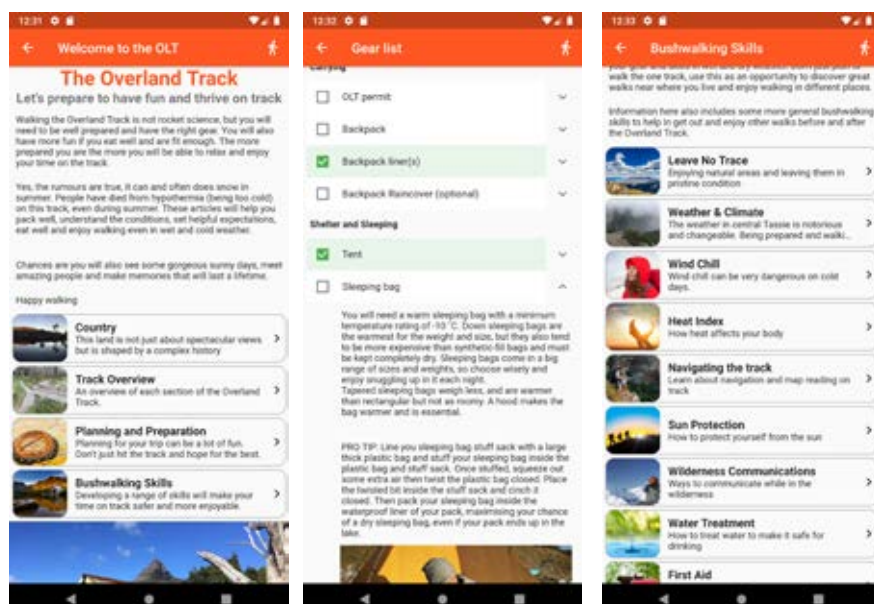
The population of feral horses in Australian Alps is [getting bigger and bigger](#). It is now estimated there are 25000 feral horses running wild.

Take only photos, leave only footprints

Rockstacking is presenting a danger to animals hiding places.



Overland Track App



An electronic guidebook for planning and walking the Overland Track.


Download this app for loads of information about planning, gear, food, accommodation and much more about the Overland Track.

You will also find topo maps, terrain profiles and track notes for offline use.



Scones

Sonya Muhlsimmer



This edition I am going to give you two variants of the same dish. One variant is to make at home, which you can enjoy the next day out on a hike, and you can even freeze them for whenever you feel like a scone. And another variant to make on those multi-day hikes when you want something a little sweet, or savoury at night time. You can even make them at night, or at breakfast for a snack later on in the day, oh a Devonshire tea in the bush with friends, sounds a little divine. Either way, I am sure you will enjoy them.

Making scones is easy, just add water

Bake at Home Scones

I bet you have all had a scone or two, but have you ever made them yourself? I've heard that baking scones and particular scones recipes are handed down for generations in families, like a traditional family recipe. I know I used to be very close to my grandmother and she taught me to make scones. There were many hours spent in the kitchen with her cooking up a storm, oh the good old days where have they gone? Then, when I was cheffing I made scones nearly every day, and was pretty good at it. Some people have tried and tried again and still can't get it right. Don't worry, these two recipes are hard to get wrong. Go on, make some for your grandmother and see if they pass the test.

Scones – historical background

The word scone is thought to come from the Scottish name for the Stone of Destiny where Scottish Kings were once crowned. Other sources say it originated from the Dutch word Schoonbrot, and German word schönbrot which literally means beautiful bread. Back in the early 1500s the word scone was in print in a Scottish paper, and apparently the Scots started the trend as a quick bread. Scones became popular in England in around the late 1700s and early 1800s due to Anna, the Duchess of Bedford. Anna ordered her servants to bring tea and sweet bread one day, and she loved what the servants made up, so she ordered them every day after that. Here is the bake at home variant. By the way, you can add some mashed pumpkin, cheese and chives, diced dates, sultanas, currants, chocolate chips, and the list goes on.



Preheat the oven to about 200 °C. In a bowl add the dry ingredients and mix around. Add the cream and milk and mix with a spatula until just combined. Add half of the additional flour to a clean bench, and the other half to a baking tray. Scrape the dough out from the bowl onto the bench. Knead the dough just for a couple of minutes. Depending on how sticky the dough turns out you may need to add a little more flour. Just sprinkle a small amount of flour over the dough, enough that you can work with the dough and it does not stick to your hands completely. Then roll out to about an inch thickness. Using a cutter, or small cup, cut the scones. Place the scones on the flour coated baking tray and bake for five minutes. Turn the temperature of the oven down to about 160 °C to 170 °C and cook for about 15 to 17 minutes until they are golden brown. Pull the scones out of the oven, let them cool then serve with jam and cream or butter. By the way, to know when the scones are ready, simply pick up two scones and bang the bases together and they should sound somewhat hollow.

Read more at foodreference.com/html/a-scone-history.html

Self raising flour	3 cups and 1 cup extra for rolling out
Baking powder	1 tsp
Cream	250 ml
Milk	250 ml

Camp Scones

Traditionally, scones were griddle-baked, so, technically this camp style recipe is like the original scone. How about that! Now you can cook up some scones for your friends and even tell them the history of the humble scone. Don't forget to pack your butter portions and jam or honey. If you bring the portioned jam and butter, they last a long time like a year or more, but if you take a container of jam, it may last about a month, and the butter, only expect about a week, pending weather temperature. The rule is, cooler it is the longer it will last. However you can substitute some Ghee for butter. Ghee has had the milk solids removed so it will last a lot longer before going rancid, but it will not taste as nice as butter as the milk solids have been removed.

At home preparation

Place all ingredients into the allocated bag. Print out method at camp label and place with the bag. Cut out a piece of greaseproof paper to the size of your pot or pan.

Method at camp

In a bowl add the contents of the bag. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water to this and mix thoroughly to make dough. In a fry pan place the greaseproof paper down, then dollop about 1 large tbsp on the paper to make about three scones. Turn the stove on to a low heat and then add the pan to the heat. Cook for about 2 to 3 minutes, covered with a lid. Take the lid off and take the pan off the heat. Flip the scones, flatten the scones down on the paper in the pan and return to the stove. Cover the scones with a lid and cook for about 2 to 3 minutes. If you do not have a lid, don't worry, just cook them for a few extra minutes. The lid just helps to keep the heat in. Serve as is, or serve with butter and jam or honey.



Bag 1 (Scone mix)

Self raising flour	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	85 grams
Vanilla sugar	1 Tbsp	14 grams
Milk powder	1 Tbsp	10 grams

Water - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup



Any Trip Will Do

Stephen Lake

Tune: [Any dream will do](#)

Before the dawn,
Opened the tent door,
To see the splendour,
That I'd seen before.
I've come so far,
To places distant,
And in an instant,
Know I am home.

I took my pack,
With gear for camping,
On mountains tramping,
See wondrous views.
And in the east,
The dawn was breaking.
As I was waking.
Any trip will do.

I walk the tracks, into the bush.
No more noise, far from the push.
The serried ranges vision peaceful,
I am truly home.

I will return,
Will stay forever.
It's that or never,
And the trips are too.
The bush and I,
We are as one now.
Will have some fun now.
Any trip will do.

(Spoken)

There are no strangers here.
Just friends we have not met.
The years have been kind.
So many peaks, sunlight and storm.
Summer and winter.
Shared experiences and values.
Equalised before nature's majesty.
Humbled and given perspective about what
is really important.

I walk the tracks, into the bush.
No more noise, far from the push.
The serried ranges vision peaceful,
I am truly home.

Would I return,
To the beginning,
As light is dimming,
And the trips are too.

The bush and I,
We go together,
And so forever,
Any trip will do.



Bushwalk Australia



Hills & Valleys

- > Orange Bluff
- > Two State 8 Peaks
- > Walking on fire
- > Hand Hygiene in the Bush



Alpine Adventures

- > Hannells Spur Loop, NSW
- > Australian Alps Walking Track
- > Skiing With the Bobs, take two
- > MUMC – 75 Years Old



Awesome Adventures

- > McMillans Track, Victoria
- > Island Lagoon
- > Franklin River, Tasmania
- > Long-Distance Walking Tracks



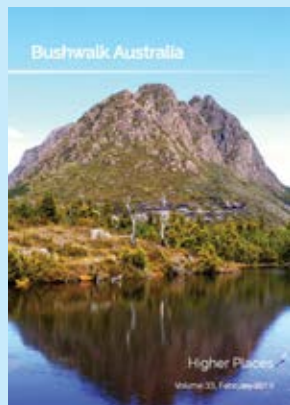
Wild & Rugged

- > Queen Charlotte Track, NZ
- > Huemul Circuit, Argentina
- > Never Say Never
- > 100 Man Cave



Going the Distance

- > Mt Wills to Mt Bogong
- > Hume & Hovell WT
- > Walk of Wonders



Higher Places

- > AAWT
- > Tassie Winter Trip
- > Our High Country Lore



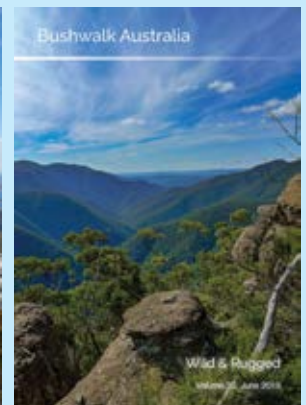
Peak Promenade

- > Pindars Peak
- > Cordilleras in Peru
- > Brothers Point, Scotland



Ridges & Valleys

- > Buffalo, The Bluff and Mt McDonald
- > Skiing with the Bobs



Ambling Adventures

- > An Abel challenge
- > Pack hauling
- > Sleeping mats



Act Now

- > Viking Circuit
- > Overland Track



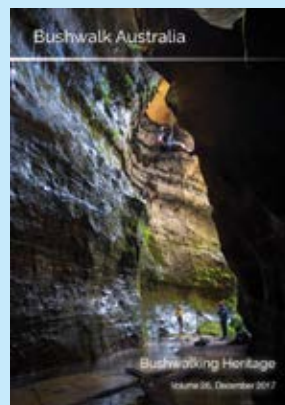
Meandering Mountains

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



Far-flung Places

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



Bushwalking Heritage

- > Kidmans Hut Walk
- > Conquering the Giant



Wonderful Walking

- > The Great River Walk
- > Mount Triglav, Slovenia