

BUSHWALK



Fifty Shades

Edition 50, December 2021

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
An electronic magazine for
<http://bushwalk.com>
Edition 50, December 2021



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.



Transcendent
Tortoise

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

The copy deadline for the February 2022 edition is 31 December 2021.

Warning

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

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

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

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After COVID-19

From the Editor

Hi

I hope this edition finds you well and enjoying the cooler start to summer.

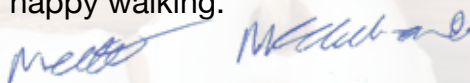
In October 2013 when this magazine started, I really had no idea where it would go or if it would last. I wanted to be guided by a general vision and community views. I am so excited by the fact that we have produced 50 editions - not so much for the milestone but for all the people I have met, interacted with, and the stories I have heard. I have loved learning about parts of this great land that I had not even heard of or even had a sense existed.

So a big thank you to all those who have directly contributed, to those who have shared the magazine with their friends and to our contributors for giving your precious time so that others can enjoy the articles. Also, a big thanks to Stephen, Eva and Sonya for their friendship and commitment to the magazine every edition.

In this edition, we get a little self-indulgent. We reflect on where we have come over the last 50 editions and then get into the regular great content. Jules takes us on a quick teaser of a trip to the spectacular Mount Kaputar NP, and Simon guides us along a sandy undulating 60-kilometre walk through Murray Sunset NP. Tracie takes us deep into the Grose Valley in the Blue Mountains NP to better understand the recovery of the special Blue Gum Forest. Then we check out the 50 beautiful Aussie plants at risk of extinction, finishing with one of Sonya's yummy desserts to try on your next walk.

Stay safe, happy walking.

Matt :)



Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)

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Declaration

The opinions stated in articles are those of the authors and not of those involved in the production of this edition. If you are worried about transparency or any editorial aspect please either write to me or raise the issue on Bushwalk.com. The bushwalking community is a small world and paths often cross. To improve transparency I thought it would be helpful to list my main associations within the outdoor community.

I operate Bushwalk.com, Wildwalks.com and Overlandtrack.com, a number of other smaller websites (and related apps) and have written several walking guide books, published by Woodslane. I contract to National Parks Association NSW and I am a member of the Walking Volunteers. I have had contracts with state and local government departments regarding bushwalking and related matters. I have also partnered with a large number of other organisations in environmental campaigns. Any commercial advertising or sponsorship will be clear in the magazine.

Calendar 2022

The 2022 calendar is another collection of great pictures from the winners of the Bushwalk.com photo competitions. To enjoy this amazing imagery, order your copy by emailing Eva at eva@wildwalks.com or click **PayPal** to order it straight away.



Fifty Editions

Eva Gomiscek

I can't believe that this is our fiftieth edition. What a journey it has been, with a lot of amazing people on the way.

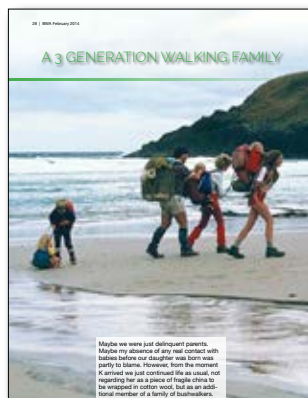
Golden Arch
Bogholesbuckethats

Locations

We try to find a few different walks for each edition. We've had a huge variety, kicking it off with Larapinta Trail in the first edition.



Edition 1, October 2013



Edition 3, February 2014

Most walks are in Australia, mainly NSW, Victoria and Tasmania, usually in wild places. There are also walks from other parts of Australia such as the Bibbulum Track, Larapinta Trail, and Flinders Ranges. We've had walks from New Zealand, Scotland, South America, America, France, and Slovenia.

In February 2015 we started a series of best walks by state and territory. We gathered information from our readers and got a nice list that is still relevant to this day.



Edition 7, October 2014



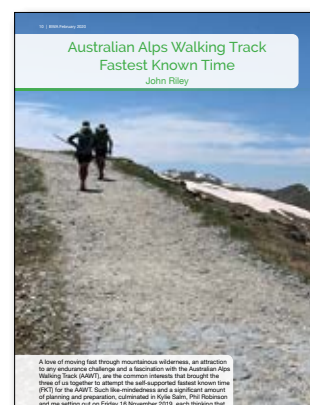
Edition 10, April 2015

Longer trips

We covered a couple of walks that showed exceptional strength and endurance. One of them is the *Australian Alps Walking Track fastest known time*, a great challenge that was tackled in 11 days and 9 hours. Another party did the AAWT in winter. There was a traverse of south-west Tasmania, a major trip. *Island Lagoon* was walked by Nick Gleeson, who is blind. Wow!

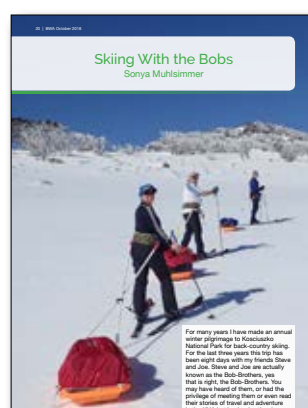


Edition 37, October 2019

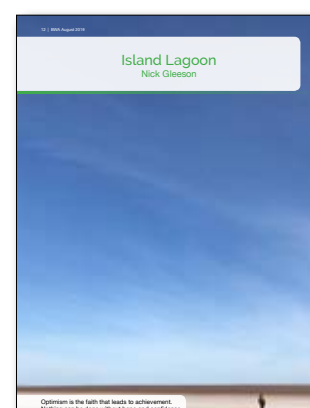


Edition 39, February 2020

Learn about the way he tackled this obstacle and made it a victory. Sonya wrote about her regular ski trips with the Bobs.



Volume 31, October 2018



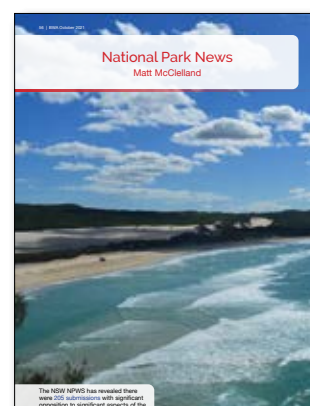
Volume 36, August 2019

Improving bushwalks

We're passionate about the state of bushwalking tracks and want to know how they can be even better. Learning about practices from different states is very important. Articles such as *Long-distance walking tracks in Australia - how we can make them better*, and *National Park News* discuss how overnight walks could and probably should be improved. Something to make you think and discuss with fellow walkers on your next bushwalk.



Edition 36, August 2019



Edition 49, October 2021

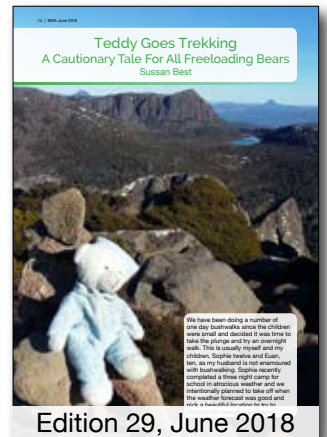
Safety in the bush

This is another topic we're passionate about. Articles such as *Rescue: Inside and out*, and *First aid kit* describe what can happen in the bush and how to be well prepared for it.



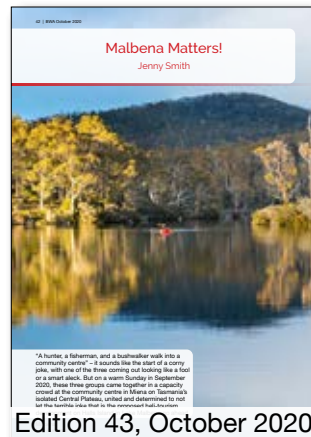
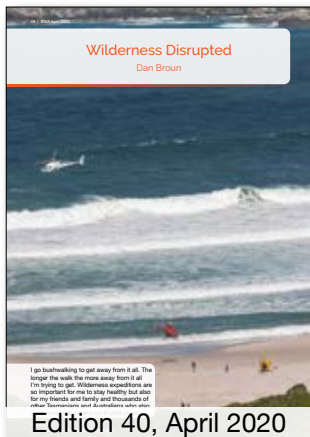
Walking with families

There's one more topic we're fond of but do not have many people writing about. We've covered it in articles such as *Walking with children* and *Teddy goes trekking*.



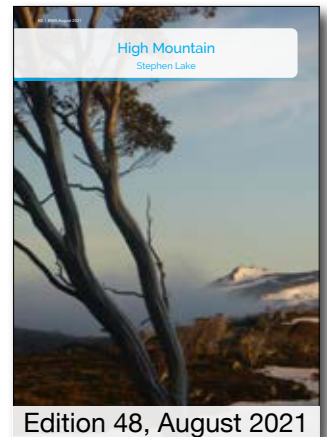
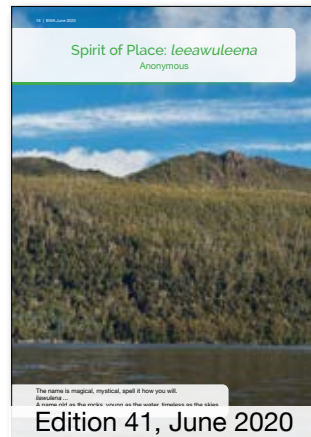
Protecting nature

Protecting bushwalkers is one thing, but protecting the nature we walk in is another. Articles such as *Wilderness disrupted* and *Malbena matters* talk about that.



Reflections

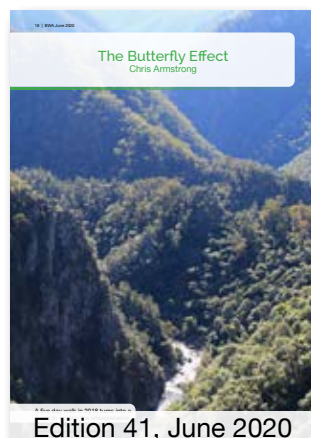
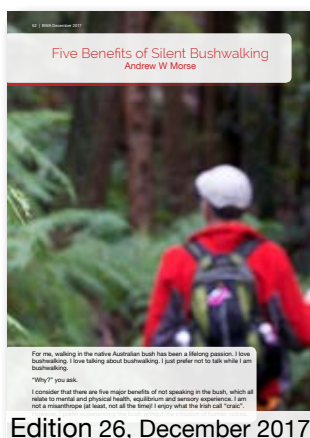
Some have been very poetic about bushwalking and made us cherish the bush even more, such as *Spirit of place: leeawuleena* and *High mountain*.

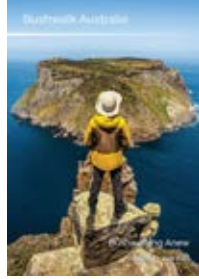
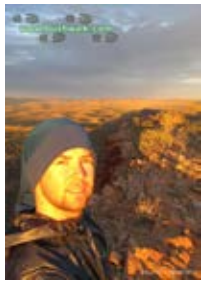


This great bushland is very special, and so are the ways we can enjoy it. Articles such as *Five benefits of silent bushwalking* introduces us to a different kind of bushwalking as well as giving us the opportunity to be more open to the sounds of nature.

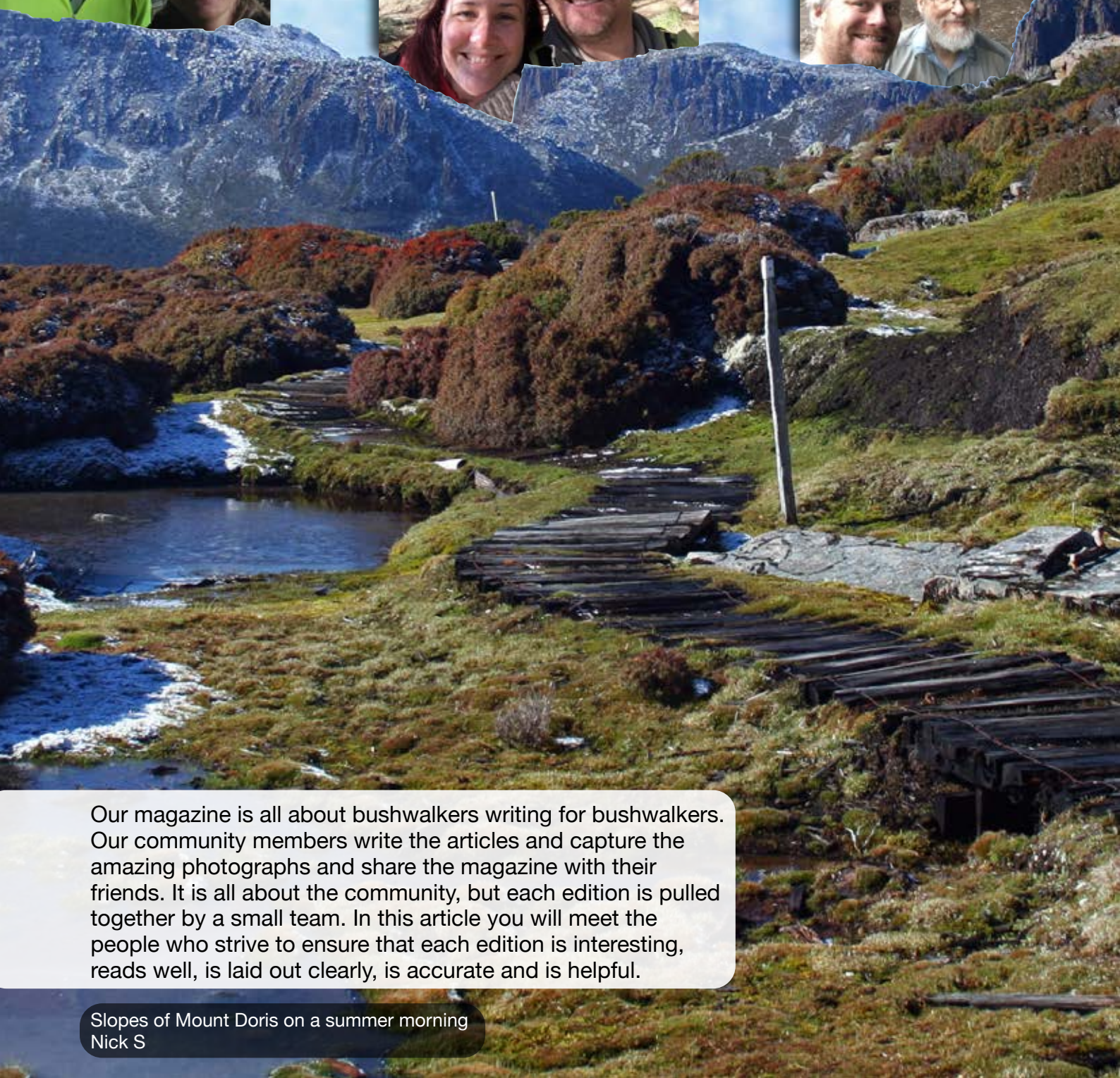
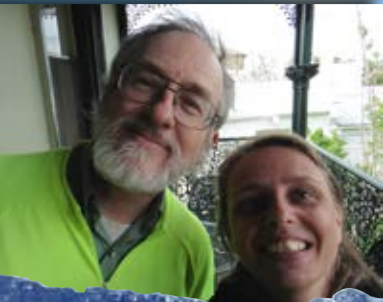
Delicious food

And at the end our one and only Sonya keeps creating new recipes for the time in the bush to be even more joyous.





Meet The Team



Our magazine is all about bushwalkers writing for bushwalkers. Our community members write the articles and capture the amazing photographs and share the magazine with their friends. It is all about the community, but each edition is pulled together by a small team. In this article you will meet the people who strive to ensure that each edition is interesting, reads well, is laid out clearly, is accurate and is helpful.

Slopes of Mount Doris on a summer morning
Nick S

Matt McClelland - editor

Tell me a few sentences about you

I live on the north side of Sydney, NSW. I am a father of two and have been bushwalking since I was a Scout. I really enjoy multi-day walks and getting to know other bushwalkers. Most of the walking I do these days is on well-maintained walks as I spend a lot of time bushwalking, documenting walks for other people. I still love getting out to more remote places with friends and the kids. I have written four bushwalking books and have been working full-time in the bushwalking space for about 15 years. I'm most passionate about helping people get started in bushwalking.

How did you get involved with the magazine?

I love hearing people's bushwalking stories, and rather than starting up yet another bushwalking blog (I think there are many great ones out there), I thought a digital magazine would be great. I have always wanted it to be a magazine for the bushwalking community - by the community.

Favourite bushwalk

I don't have a favourite walk as such, more a favourite style - I like longer walks at a slow pace. The idea of a week or more on track, taking time to wander, explore and meet

other walkers on track. Sitting around chatting with friends or family at dinner. There is something about walking that is good for the soul.

Favourite memory on a bushwalk

I am really not sure - it is a hard question. I think my favourite memories are ones where I got up early and walked to a peak for sunrise, or swimming on a lazy summer walk and hearing from other walkers about how they got into bushwalking.

What inspired you to start doing what you do for the magazine?

To help bushwalkers have a stronger voice. I wanted bushwalkers to have a place to share their experience and stories with each other and for us all to build our understanding of what makes bushwalking better. I guess that the end goal is that we all can enjoy bushwalking more.

Your favourite food on a bushwalk

Happy hours with my friends and new friends. This tends to be cheese, crackers, chips and some drinks. Something shared with others. Otherwise in a group I really enjoy making nachos and sushi rolls. Solo winter trips tend to be laksa and summer trips ravioli pasta and sauce.

Your favourite article in the magazine

Man, I am hopeless with favourite type questions. I think it is any stories where people are vulnerable and share something real. Something that was hard or a mistake made on track. Something I can relate to and learn from.

Your wishes for the magazine

Fifty editions is amazing. I am very aware that this magazine could not exist without our fantastic team driving it. I am first very thankful for Stephen and Eva, who put in a huge amount of time and effort, and for Sonya, who is there in nearly every edition with something great to share. I am, of course, very thankful for all the authors who share their stories in each edition. My hope or wish is that more and more people would get involved and share their experience, skills and expertise, especially those who do not consider themselves as writers or do not have something to share. I would love to see how we can tease out these stories and experiences.



Matt on The Overland Track, Tasmania

Eva Gomiscek - layout

Tell me a few sentences about you

I live in the tiny country of Slovenia, Europe. I'm a mother of two wonderful children and a wife to a great husband. I love hiking, and walking in nature with my family is what I picture as a perfect day.

How did you get involved with the magazine?

Back in 2013 when Matt and I had been working together for about a year, Matt came up with the idea of an online bushwalking magazine. He knew people in the bushwalking community so he asked around for articles, I laid them out and the first emag was born. I loved every minute of creating it from the first edition on and still do.

Favourite bushwalk

In Slovenia we have stamps at tops of the mountains and in the huts. I love collecting these stamps, so I like any easy walk that has a hut and a stamp for my bushwalking booklet. And I need company. Solo hiking is not in the books for me, yet.



Bushwalking booklets for collecting stamps

Favourite memory on a bushwalk

Years ago I saw a picture of the salt marsh on the Mount Ku-ring-gai Track to Berowra station walk, and promised myself I'd see this if I ever visited Australia. I was overwhelmed when Matt took me there without me realising where I was going.



The salt marsh

What inspired you to start doing what you do for the magazine?

Years ago I set myself a goal to work from home, online and wanted it to be something in relation to design and hiking. I think I have exactly what I asked for, as well as a great team and a great boss to top it off.

Your favourite food on a bushwalk

I've never done an overnight camping walk (yet) where I'd need to cook for myself. The food we eat on a hike is usually something quick from the backpack or a stew and some kind of strudel that we can get in a hut.

Your favourite article in the magazine

Oh, that's a hard one. I don't think I can name one, but I prefer the ones that inspire me, either with photos, the lightness of the writing, the daring challenge, the knowledge or the yumminess (check Sonya's recipes, you'll understand what I mean).

Your wishes for the magazine

I consider the magazine to be one of my babies, so I wish it all the best and look forward to at least another 50 more. I hope it inspires people to start bushwalking, to start writing about it and sharing their experiences and knowledge.



Eva on the Great North Walk

Stephen Lake - sub-editor

When I was 12-13 years-of-age, I joined Scouts, starting a bushwalking journey of over 50 years. Along the way I skied in remote places, went rock climbing, and went mountaineering, meeting the most wonderful people. Banjo Patterson pre-dates and describes bushwalking:

And the bush hath friends to meet him,
and their kindly voices greet him
In the murmur of the breezes and the
river on its bars,
And he sees the vision splendid of the
sunlit plains extended,
And at night the wond'rous glory of the
everlasting stars.

I saw the first edition of Bushwalk Australia and contacted Matt, offering to assist.

Favourite areas

Many places appeal, with two being best for me. Jagungal has rolling plains, minimal scrub, good campsites and plenty of water, making it possible to get away from the crowds and vary routes. The Walls of Jerusalem and points south are similar, except the scrub is carnivorous in places and there's less people away from the Walls. Maybe the scrub ate them. For a few Central Plateau trips I drew a line on a map, letting the compass and hope guide the way.

I enjoy camping high, watching the sun set and the next morning watching it rise. This is often a gamble, for if the weather turns, I might get blasted off the campsite. It's nice to go back to familiar places.

Favourite articles

Safety and conservation are important, making the bush safer and better. It's wonderful to soak in the words of creative people and be part of the publication process. Two writers stand out in this regard. Craig N. Pearce has a most delightful way with words, unusual syntax and forms, words used in ways that I have never seen before, with a lovely flow. Read his October 2021 article *Waking up to wilderness: a mid-life crisis* and see what I mean.

North-north-west is similar, always expressive. The most powerful introduction of all articles was in the 2015 rescue report. Instead of the usual 50-150 words, NNW was

much shorter: "How do you know when it's time to call it quits?" For sheer beauty, read her trip report *Snowy Mountains Ramble* in February 2018.

The most unusual article is by Nick Gleeson in August 2019 about his walk across Island Lagoon. It's flat desert country, easy navigation with one twist – Nick is blind.

One person has written more articles than anyone else, and excluding a few people, more than any 10 people put together. Sonya Muhlsimmer has provided wonderful recipes, written about her trips to many places, summer and winter, and advocated conservation values.

There are simply too many people and articles to name, so my apologies for not including you above. Your words and pictures make the magazine what it is, adding to the knowledge of many areas. Sharing the publication journey is truly lovely. You know who you are.

Life is meeting

In 1953 John Hunt led the first expedition to climb Mount Everest. He wrote the book *Life is meeting*. Meeting people online, entering into their world and sometimes meeting in person is a good part of BWA. BWA makes a difference - conservation, safety, or very readable accounts of trips and other things.

Subbing BWA has led to matters unrelated to editing. I've gained friends and developed a close relation with people who are often far away, people I trust implicitly. Sometimes it's a real struggle to fill the pages, so my main wish is that people would write more.



Stephen on the Six Foot Track, New South Wales

Sonya Muhlsimmer - food expert

Tell me a few sentences about you

I live in the Blue Mountains, NSW. For me, there is nothing better than either exploring a canyon, hiking for a day, a week or even two weeks out in the bush, or on the snow backcountry skiing. I also love food. I'm a qualified chef, a food scientist and an author of a cookbook specifically written for multi-day adventures, *Xtreme Gourmet*.



Sonya in Dione Dell Canyon, Kanangra NSW
Laurie Cohen

How did you get involved with the magazine?

I went to a book launch and met Matt. He helped me with information about publishing a book, and I slowly got involved in the magazine.

Favourite bushwalk

Western Arthur Ranges, Tasmania. Australia. I would say it is one of the most rugged, hard and spectacular hikes I have done. This is

the best place to celebrate New Year's day with a good and tough bunch of friends. This walk is not for the faint-hearted. The glacial lakes, jagged peaks and hanging valleys are just stunning.

Favourite memory on a bushwalk

Hiking in New Zealand. I had just crossed the Ball Ridge, on the Mount Cook mountain range, and the wind blew me off my feet and down the hill. The feeling of awe in nature, the accomplishment and listening to avalanches in the distance is very humbling. I was blown over, literally ...

What inspired you to start doing what you do for the magazine?

To give something back to a community where I belong. If my food knowledge can help someone's meal plan for a hiking trip and they eat a hearty meal on the track, the time and effort are worth it.

Your favourite food on a bushwalk

When you share a meal or snacks with friends, but I do enjoy making laksa and chocolate cake.

Your favourite article in the magazine

Do I really have to answer this? This is a tough question. It is not an article as such, but a poem from Stephen called *Dedication*.

Your wishes for the magazine

To read about everyone's adventure. If I can't get to all the places I want, at least I can read about it and experience it through others.



In the Western Arthur Ranges above Lake Oberon, an awesome place to celebrate New Year's Eve. From left to right, Paul Every, Sonya Muhlsimmer, Maj-Britt Engelhardt and Chris Riley.

Overland Track App

This app is to help you plan and prepare for the Overland Track in Tasmania, and then navigate this safely and enjoyably.

You will find detailed packing lists, information on each day of walking, itineraries, yummy recipes, a guide to flora, fauna, geology and travel planning, first aid and much much more. The app has a navigation section with topographic maps that will work offline, photos, terrain profiles, track notes and weather forecasts.

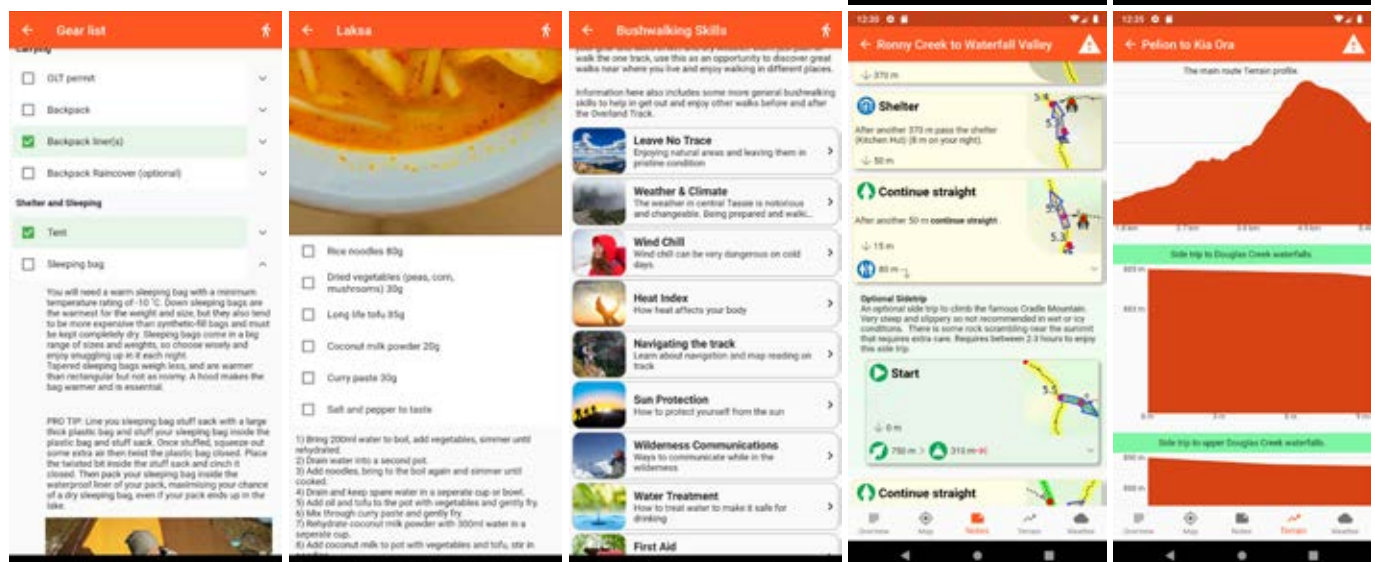
Think of this as the ultimate reference for the Overland Track, a happy marriage between a GPS and a bushwalking guide book.

Each section of the walk has an overview and a moving map (download the map tiles for offline use before hitting the track).

Information on bushwalking skills and equipment also applies to other parts of Australia to help you build your bushwalking skills before getting on track.

This app was made to help you get the most out of your time on the Overland Track, and is designed for all people: those new to bushwalking, hiking or tramping up to seasoned walkers.

More information at www.overlandtrack.com



Mount Kaputar

Jules Cook



I seem to only write a trip report in the depths of COVID restrictions. The last report I wrote was a trip I took at exactly the same time last year, the first few days of June. Perhaps I am thinking about the wider world and how we interact with it. Or maybe as it is just because my red wine consumption goes up during these sorts of times and I get chatty?!

Sunset and the XMid with shrubs in the vestibules
All photos by Jules Cook

Barrington Tops

I live in regional NSW in the foothills of the Barrington Tops, which affords me the benefit of beautiful walking on my doorstep and many lovely snowy wintry walks. Sometimes, my local area also offers frozen stuff hurling from the sky, but more the stinging, sleety kind rather than the fluffy white stuff. It was just such a weather prediction ahead of two midweek days off that prompted me to think about national parks that were west of the fairly ordinary weather forecast. I had a trip to the Warrumbungles already planned for July, so had to get creative and think of something else less obvious. I took to reading my op shop copy of Gregory's *NSW National Parks* and landed upon Mount Kaputar National Park, close to Narrabri, NSW. A quick recce on the forum turned up some interesting ideas so, I decided to leave at 9 pm the night before the trip to potter about on the Skyline Traverse.

The drive was pleasant, with open plains and rural scenery. I had downloaded a great podcast series, so I binged that while the hours whiled away. I arrived around lunchtime and drove to some of the other walks in the park, only to find most were closed after wild weather in the days before.

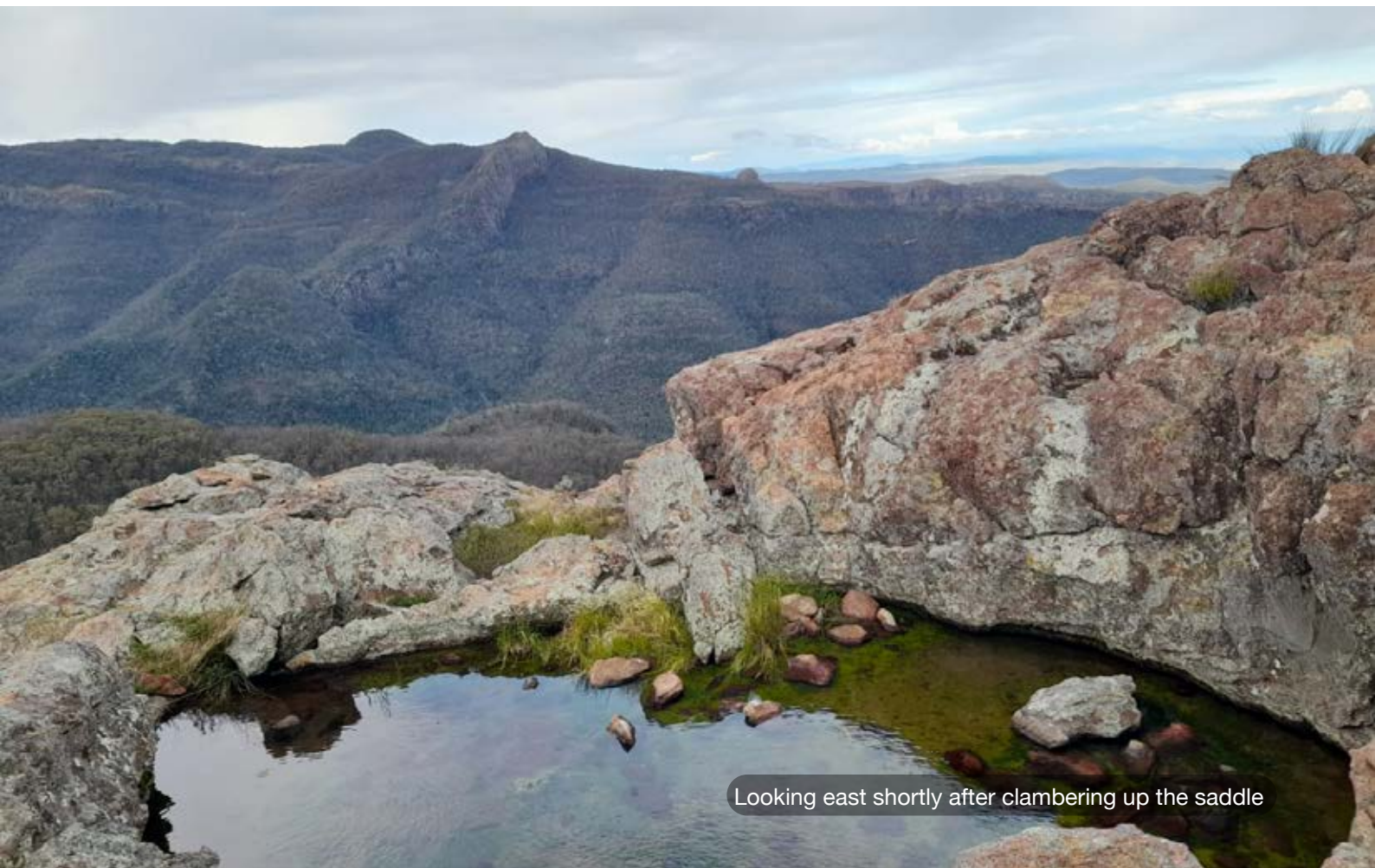
There were huge banks of snow at the sides of the road as I got up higher, much more still on the ground than I had thought there would be. After a quick look at some of the lookouts and my abandoned walk plans, I headed back down to Green Camp car park at the start of the Mount Yulludunida walk.

Yulludunida Crater

The formed track was steep and nice walking, with plenty of steps and elevation gained in a short distance. Before I knew it, I was at the end of the designated walk and at the base of the Yulludunida Crater. It was a choose your own adventure from that point.

I skirted along the base for a while, taking care along some of the slippery sections. Water was still seeping out from the recent precipitation. I then came to the point that I knew from my (limited) research would be the optimal point to scramble up to the saddle between the two main peaks.

Having an irrational fear of heights, I always struggle with scrambling up or down anything with any hint of exposure. I knew rationally that the climb up was easy. The rocks had plenty of jutting out handholds that looked like dragon scales. They were solid and many; it was not hard to find



Looking east shortly after clambering up the saddle

somewhere to put your hand next. Yet, I still had adrenaline pumping through me and was having a stern but encouraging conversation with myself as I picked my route and clambered up. Once safely up top in the saddle, I realised that my legs were shaking, something that had happened before when I felt a bit frightened, presumably from the surge of adrenaline.

The views were nothing short of spectacular; I will let my photos do the talking on that front. I spent the afternoon exploring the peaks on either side of the saddle. It was fun making like a mountain goat and climbing up, down, around and up and down some more, safely pushing my comfort levels with exposure.

After exploring along the crater in either direction, I decided I would camp off to the side of the saddle as it afforded views across to nearby Mount Ningadhun and would make a fabulous sunset location as well as proximity to a scramble that would make a perfect sunrise vantage point. My choice of location would also allow me to get back to my car in a timely fashion to be home in time to do the school pick up run and make dinner for my family.

Sleeping real estate in my choice of location was somewhat limited. The fires of 2020 and recent rains had made for dense shrubby undergrowth, and after searching around a bit, I found a me-sized sleeping spot that was free of rocks and reasonably favourable with no real slope. Unfortunately, my sleeping spot did not lend itself to situating my XMid easily around it, but I managed to McGyver up a creative solution for the pegs and shared my vestibule with some shrubs.

The clouds and flurries of snow had all but blown away, and sunset was just pure magic with calm conditions. I ran from spot to spot, taking it all in, before settling in with a cup of tea to watch the final show.

I settled in for the evening just as strong gusts of winds began. My tent was not optimally pitched but seemed to be holding strong, so I drifted off to sleep. I was woken around 11 pm by the flapping of my tent that was louder than when I went to sleep. I soon found one of the corners had come unpegged. I reluctantly got out, found some rocks to hold the shrubs down and affixed some extra line to in lieu of pegging that corner out. It held and I went back to a toasty and restful sleep.

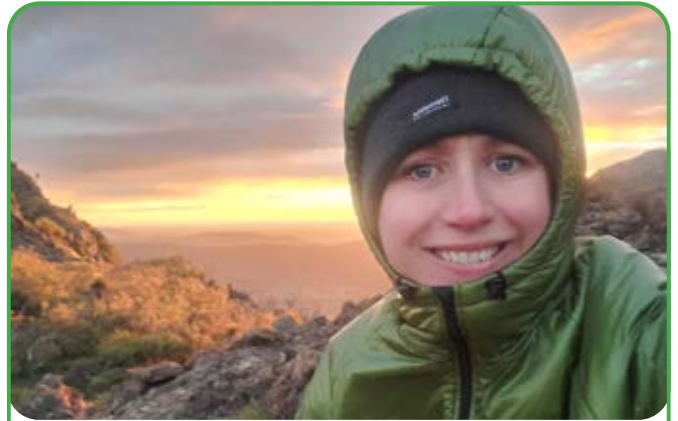


This sunset really was the golden hour

Sunrise and home

Coffee watching the sunrise was as gorgeous as I had hoped. I chose a different route down the rock face than I had coming up and was pleased to find that my nerves were much more solid. I even paused halfway down just to chill out and take it all in. Once at the bottom, I was able to see my route down had been significantly steeper than my route up, evidence that my confidence was in a much better place after managing my fears the day before. I was back down to my car at Green Camp within the hour and back on the road.

I left Mount Kaputar National Park, vowing to return and explore some more. My version of the skyline traverse, which was an up and down of it rather than a circuitous route, was unexpectedly mind blowing. The views were superb and the scrambling enjoyable. I could see from my brief visit that there are many more interesting off-track options, and I am keen to spend some time exploring the many challenges the area presents.



Jules is from the Hunter Valley, NSW and is a mother, grandmother and midwife. In her spare time she enjoys bushwalking, kayaking with her family, annoying her husband with attempted conversations about the merits of various outdoor equipment, running slowly and cycling with her “gang”, having been made a honorary member of the local Prostrate Peloton. Jules appreciates the principles of lightening a pack for carrying comfort, except when it comes to coffee, where she would be happily carrying a commercial coffee machine on her head than go without her tri-daily intake of quality caffeine.



Setting aside irrational fears on the descent, pausing to take it all in

Sunset Remote Walk

Murray Sunset National Park, Victoria

Simon Matthee



The hike was on Sunday 11 to Tuesday 13 July 2021 on the country of the Millewa-Mallee, Latji Latji and Ngintait People.

Walking track on Day 1
All pictures by the author

Hike Information

- Grade 4
- 3 days, 2 nights
- 60 kilometres, 630 metres climbing

Contact the ranger in Underbool before departure to confirm water tanks are full.

The hike should only be attempted in autumn, winter or early spring – it's dangerous in summer, too hot.

General track notes

The track is really well marked and very clearly defined. It looks like it is patrolled regularly with a quad bike, which gives you an idea of how wide it is throughout. Some sections seem to be cut up by dirt bike tracks, but this was rare. Most hills were sandy, so it was pretty hard work - the track changes between loose sand, hard-packed sand, and dry earth. You'll get very familiar with the quad bike tracks, as well as the dinosaur-sized roo prints you'll see along the track. All three water tanks were right on the track, so impossible to miss, and all were well maintained. Tanks are kept full by the rangers, so about a week before the trip make sure they know you're coming! Overall this is an exceptionally well-maintained walk.

“Overall this is an exceptionally well-maintained walk.”

Getting there and back

It's 5.5 hours from Melbourne driving to the trailhead. To do this walk comfortably, you should stay nearby the night before your hike. You can camp at the trailhead (Lake Becking), and there is a larger campground at Lake Crosbie. Lake Becking has a water tank, drop toilet and some fire pits. Lake Crosbie has drop toilets but no water.

You can also camp at well-serviced roadside rest areas in Underbool and Walpeup. The nearest town with accommodation is Ouyen, about an hour from the trailhead. We stayed at Sea Lake, as one of our party was visiting there to do photography while we hiked. It is a bit far from the trailhead, but the services there are excellent, and the food at the pub is worth a stop on its own! Even if you don't stop in Sea Lake, have a rest stop at Lake Tyrrell, about 10 kilometres past Sea Lake. It's a stunning spot with excellent facilities. If you're going to get to the trailhead with a couple of hours of light left, you can hike to the first water tank and camp there, making it a three night hike. On the way back, if you started on day three early, it's feasible to walk out and drive home on the same day.

My gear

- Osprey Pack - Aether Pro 70
- Lanshan 2 Pro tent
- Exped UL Down LW sleeping mat
- Blackwolf Hiker 500 sleeping bag
- Trangia 27-2
- Ketadyn BeFree Water Filter modified for Gravity Filtrations (hope to post on the mod in the Gear forum soon!)
- Phone and Suunto Baro9 watch for navigation and tracking, with the Spatial Vision Victorian Deserts map and compass as backup.

Our hike - weather

We were fortunate. The first morning was bitterly cold, but we had hot sunny days (my watch recorded a max temp of 29 °C), and nights went down to low single digits. We met two hikers coming out as we hiked in. They had freezing temperatures both nights, and the day after we finished, it rained cats and dogs (which would have been stunning).



Mount Crozier Track where it crosses the walking track

Day 1 - Lake Becking to Mount Crozier
18.9 kilometres, 300 metres ascent,
4 hours 50 minutes

Just past the main Lake Crosbie is the Lake Becking trailhead. It has a water tank and a drop toilet at the camping and parking area. Walk up a ridge, and you'll see Lake Becking - a stunning salt lake - where the hike starts. The trail heads clockwise around the lake for a few hundred metres, and the path continues west for another few hundred metres to an old fence which was our guide for the first half of the day. We didn't see another lake until we finished the hike!

We followed the fence for at least eight kilometres, and after that, continued almost due north to Mount Crozier. After about four kilometres, we came across the first of three water tanks at Salt Bush Flat. It's a nice spot to rest for a moment, but we still had plenty of water, so we didn't linger long. The Salt Bush Flat to the left of the tank is a nice preview of the bush to come on days 2 and 3. We kept following the old fence posts for another four kilometres in reasonably dense, sandy bush with 3-4 metre high gums and scrub.

We caught a fleeting glance of a Malleefowl on this section, on the track ahead of us. It was on the track, then gone in an instant and wholly camouflaged in the bush. We also came across two hikers on their way



Water tank

out after completing the hike, the only other hikers we'd see, and we were the only other hikers they'd seen too. Towards the end of the fence there's a T intersection where the walk continues ahead or branches off to the east. We continued ahead to Mount Crozier and would return to this spot two days later, coming from the east.

After the fence, the track winds around a bit through some open plains before settling back into an undulating sandy track in varying degrees of bushland heading north to



View from Mout Crozier

Mount Crozier. This section puts the legs to work; with sandy dune-like paths uphill, you'll undoubtedly be working hard! We found a pleasant hill to enjoy our lunch, with our first introduction on how to stay upright in our Helinox Chairs on the soft, sandy soils! After lunch, the rhythm of the undulating track hides the general incline, and before long, we summited Mount Crozier almost without realising it! As we made our way around the ridge, we were well rewarded for what has been a pretty big first day on the track. At 177 metres high, Mount Crozier would barely rate as a hill anywhere else, but in the Murray Sunset NP, it's big enough to see for days, and the view is stunning! While taking in the view, we were surprised by a couple who had come up by 4WD. They told us about the camp below and enquired about our walk. These were the last people we'd see on the whole hike.

From the top of Mount Crozier, we headed down some steep steps and came to a fork in the track. Left went to the second water tank and the hikers camp, and right went to the 4WD accessible campsite, which has an excellent drop toilet, some fire pits, and some picnic tables (but no water). The two camps are only a few hundred metres apart, and you could camp at either.

We ended up camping at the hikers camp, with the water close by and walking to use the drop toilet. Both camps were empty, so we had our run of the place! The hikers camp had a couple of nice makeshift campfire spots, so we set up, had a nap, then lit the fire and settled in for a lovely night.

Day 2 - Mount Crozier to Mount Jess Track, 21.85 kilometres, 177 metres ascent, 5.5 hours

Starting the morning in the shadow of Mount Crozier, we headed east out of camp on the track through the quite varied bush with the odd pine tree making an appearance in the Mallee scrub. Before long, we reached far more exposed savannah-like bush, which dominated the day's hike. The sparse bushland is genuinely stunning and had us amazed for the rest of the day. But even in the middle of winter, we felt the hot, dry sun.

Somewhat counterintuitively, the more sparse and dry the bush, the more birdlife we came across with parrots, galahs, and many smaller birds flying around us as we walked.

As the path continued west through saltbush flats and dried water holes, after about 10 kilometres, we eventually come to the Mopoke Hut Track. We stopped near here on a nice log for lunch, taking in the surrounding silence. We saw and heard no other signs of humans that day, none at all.

After Mopoke Hut Track, the path begins to bend southwards as you head around the bend in the "P" that makes up the shape of the walk. Another few kilometres through the bush, we come across an abandoned camp with what looks like 40-50 years old cans and oil drums scattered around. It's quite an eerie sight.

We came to Honeymoon Hut Track, a 4WD track that heads to the Honeymoon Hut. The original homestead for the [Sunset](#)



Pastoral Co. now provides hostel-style accommodation through Parks Victoria, something I'll be keen to check out one day.

After Honeymoon Hut Track, we kept keep going through the sparse Mallee desert. It's incredible how these landscapes continue to change, and about now, we got into the rhythm of noticing the subtle changes in the landscape and getting to know all the different types of sand, bush, trees, and birds.

After another few kilometres, about 19 kilometres in total since we started today, we reached the water tank and official camp for night two. As with the other water tanks, this tank is in excellent condition and well maintained. There is a small camp area just beyond the tank with a campfire spot. Mount Jess Track is a few hundred metres further on.

Like day one, it was only mid-afternoon when we arrived at the tank/camp, so we decided to resupply with water and keep going for a few kilometres to make day three a bit shorter. So with all our bottles and bladders full, we continued, finding a place to rough camp along the track in some low lying bush.

Rain was threatening on night two, so after dinner and a nightcap, we retired early, but the rain never came, and the cloud cover kept us pretty warm all night, although strangely, it seemed to me that by morning it was warmer outside than in my tent!

Day 3 - Mount Jess Track to Lake Becking 20 kilometres, 156 metres ascent, 5 hours

Starting day three, you'll be heading west along the bottom of the "P" curve to the intersection with the fence. We were meeting our ride at 4 pm at Lake Becking, then on to a booking at the Royal Hotel in Sea Lake for parma night. We had plenty of time to get there, but the promise of a parma put an extra hop in our step, and we were making great time.

The track west is another completely remarkable display of different kinds of bush, starting with undulating dunes, quite exposed, but each hill gives a great view around. After some more exposed plains, we moved into a forest that looked like it had recently burnt, but only partially. Something burned the dead trees at the base, but all the leaves were intact, with new sprouts coming out the bottom. Again, somewhat counterintuitively, the birdlife here was very active!



A small camp area
just beyond the tank

The bush continued to change like this, with little sections of mixed plants and burnt areas as the track came to Mount Crozier Track. This 4WD track heads up to the Mount Crozier campground from night one.

After the track, there was a fascinating, varied section of bushland for a short time before we moved into an extensive area of native pine forest. This transition is probably the starkest change to the landscape you'll find and is unlike anything you've seen thus far. A keen eye on the top of Mount Crozier would have spotted this stand of pines, an entirely different shade of green to the surrounding eucalypts. The ground was also completely different in the forest, much less scrub, much more open space and shade.

“The thick salt made an exciting walking surface ...

We found a pleasant spot for lunch, lingering to enjoy a hot chocolate after lunch, to finish off our rations and because we were making a great time. After a short while, we reached the fence and the crossroads where the track goes south, back to Lake Becking.

As we headed south, towards the water tank from day one, it felt like the tank is just over each rise, then the next, but it comes into view after a few kilometres. We paused here for a short break and to top up our water (as I'd forgotten there was a water tank at Lake Becking). We hatched a plan to take a different route back to Lake Becking for something different.

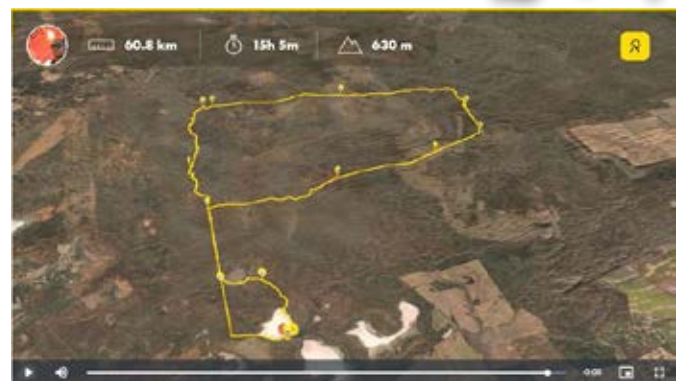
The standard track continues south and turns west to join Lake Becking at the lake's south-west corner, finishing the walk as it started. At the water tank, we went east to join a 4WD track that skirts the edge of the Salt Bush Flat. Then we headed south to meet the top point of Lake Becking. This diversion required a short distance of off-track walking, which was reasonably easy in the sparse bush.

Meeting Lake Becking at the top corner provided a whole other perspective on the lake. The thick salt made an exciting walking surface, although I found out the hard way when you hit a thin section - the mud underneath is like black tar, and did my boots no favours!

Skirting the edge of the lake, we were back at the trailhead by 3 pm, feeling satisfaction from our accomplishment and processing the incredible adventure we'd just had.

Now it was time for a shower and a parma!

Check the Relive video below.



Lake Becking

Photo Gallery



Bushwalk.com Photo Competition



Landscapes

December 2020

WINNER



Bullimah Track sunrise
Crollsurf

The Bullimah Spur Track on the NSW Central Coast is a short walk through a tall red gum forest and ancient ferns. At the end of the walk is an expansive view overlooking most of the Bouddi National Park. This particular view I have visited many times in the past, to check out one of my favourite surf spots and to see if it's worth making what used to be an overgrown 1.5 hour walk to the distant point.



Storm clouds brewing
Bam



The Pelions
Doogs



Circumnavigation
Osik



Lunch o'clock
North-north-west



Considering my options
from Alice Rawson Peak
John Walker



Devils Nose
Brian Eglinton



Non-landscapes December 2020

WINNER



Iso flower
Crollsurf

Walking in Ku-ring-gai National Park, NSW, I came across groves on Narrow-leaf Drumsticks (*Isopogon anethifolius*) in flower. They were larger and whiter than any I had seen before, so couldn't resist stopping to get a few nice photos.



Warroa Creek
North-north-west



Humid Licuala
Bunyips



Fragile and endangered Windswept
Feldmark ecological community
John Walker



Rock hopper
Brian Eglinton



Other States

December 2020

WINNER



Cape Horn
Crollsurf

Wolgan, Newnes and Ben Bullen State Forests, north-west of Sydney, although a 4WD and motor bike mecca, are also stunning places to walk. Walk anywhere to the edge of the plateaus and you will be rewarded with stunning views, gorges, and rock formations.

This day was wet and miserable, so I decided to take a drive and visit some of the more accessible 4WD spots, which included a visit to Cape Horn.



Queen of the glacial lakes
John Walker



Red dirt rambling on dusk
Osik



South Para River
Brian Eglinton



Tasmania

December 2020

WINNER



Classic Lake Elysia views
Doogs

One word, and a short one too: "ants". I've visited The Labyrinth several times, but never when the weather has been warm, so I was excited with the upcoming forecast. I'd heard about ants in the area and never realised the plague proportions that I would experience on this trip! When I took this photo I would have been hopping around and cursing them. The views are worth the dealing with the pernicious ants. Just.



Dove Lake Boat Shed
Grunter



Sundowner
North-north-west



Landscapes

January 2021

WINNER



Transcendent
Tortoise

Precipitous Bluff (PB) had been on my radar for years, but I knew it was a challenging, scrubby walk. I'd looked at it cautiously from Pindars Peak three years earlier, wondering if I'd ever make it out there.

I very nearly didn't. Several glitches early in our January trip led me to pull the pin on PB, settling for the easier peaks of Wylly and Victoria Cross.

But an early morning challenge on Wylly Plateau by my sensible friend had us quickly changing our plans back to PB. Not only did we get to visit the summit, but we got to camp on the plateau on a stunning evening - one of the best ever.



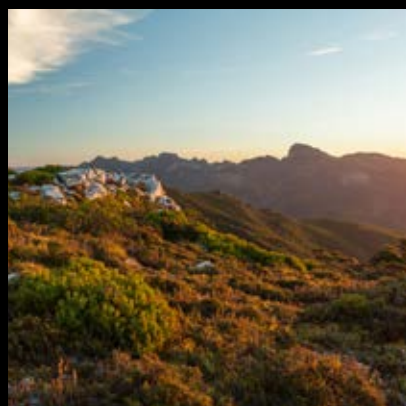
Toward the end of the
rainbow
John Walker



Bang
Crollsurf



Osmiridium abstract
Steve Waters



Just chillin' in the evenin'
North-north-west



The 'Bungles at dusk
Osik



Venus Bay cliffs
Brian Eglinton



Non-landscapes

January 2021

WINNER



Dark
Crollsurf

I'd planned to photograph a famous Granite Tor on the Rams Head Range in NSW, but the pond which makes the photo special was devoid of water. I didn't have a plan b, so I wandered around for a while until I came across this outcrop next to North Rams Head.

It's also a well-known spot but I was so impressed with the location, I decided to set up camp and spend the afternoon and evening exploring and taking photos. Early in the morning, nature called and once out of bed, I couldn't resist taking a few night shots.



Snowgum octopus
John Walker



Folded strata, Chatfield Point
North-north-west



Coastal colour
Brian Eglinton



Leg meets mud
Tortoise



Other States January 2021

WINNER



Weather engulfs
the range
John Walker

I was holidaying in the Snowy Mountains with extended family over the Christmas break. During a very long day walk on my own up on the range I managed to aggravate an old knee injury, then had to take it easy.

So, on this very rainy day I had lunch in one of the cafes at Charlotte Pass with my wife and five year old granddaughter. For those in Sydney and Melbourne, remember eating out? I proposed a very short walk afterwards on the Snowgum boardwalk.

In the end I was the only one silly enough to go walking in the rain, but at least got some shots of dramatic weather for my troubles.



A late afternoon atop Crater Bluff
Osik



Talia Caves
Brian Eglinton



Tors
Crollsurf



Tasmania

January 2021

WINNER



New Harbour Range
North-north-west

Good weather in the South West is something to savour. Good weather with a high camp is even more special, particularly when there's a new summit to bag and heaps of new ground to explore. Views can be decent, too ...



New River Lagoon
Steve Waters




PB at peace
Tortoise



The Blue Gum Forest A Story of Change

Tracie McMahon



Everyone has one of *those* places. The one they go back to again and again. Mine is the Blue Gum Forest. A flat area of land at the confluence of Govetts Creek and the Grose River in Darug Country (Blue Mountains NP). Perhaps it's because it was the first place I ever experienced as a real camper, carrying a pack and everything I needed for survival, or perhaps, it is just the magnificence of the Blue Gums (*Eucalyptus deanei*) themselves, but I'm certainly not the first to wax lyrical about the Blue Gum Forest.

Andy Macqueen's excellent book *Back from the Brink* (2007) chronicles the history of the forest from a non-indigenous perspective and its importance as the "cradle of conservation". I love looking at the old black and white photos of walkers, artists, farmers, engineers and loggers, as they stand in front of the huge tree that marks the junction between the Perrys Lookdown, Acacia Flat, Burra Korain and Du Faur Head tracks. I have heard that tree described as "the Grandfather Tree" and it seems an apt description as it towers over all others, marking the end of a heavy journey or the start of a steep one.

Or it did.

Bushfires and floods in the Blue Gum Forest

This is a story of the impact of recent weather on the Blue Gum Forest (the forest) from a frequent visitor's point of view. The forest and its magnificent trees not only suffered the devastation of the 2019-20 bushfires, but also many years of drought, and two significant follow up floods. The culmination of these events has left the area unrecognisable.

If you have not visited the forest after March 2021, prepare yourself for a shock. Not only is the misty canopy of Blue Gum gone, but the March 2021 flood has resulted in a changed water course. The ridges and gullies leading down into the forest are scored with deep crevices as minor tributaries that usually trickle into Govetts Creek have carved out tonnes of sand and scree, dumping it onto the flat below. Huge landslips are evident high on the sheer walls of the Grose, including one which locals have taken to calling "the seahorse".

In the forest, some trees initially carried water marks 2-4 metres from their base and that is if you could see the base. Many of the trees now have sand, stone and debris dumped at their feet. You may be familiar with the fallen tree bridge that allows a walker to cross the creek to Du Faur Head or Walford Gully, without so much as a wet toe; it was thrown to the side like a toothpick. The first photo below shows the log in 2018. The second photo is from October 2021, wedged in boulders some 20 metres behind where the walker sits in the first photo.



Walker on natural bridge over Govetts Creek, 2018



The same bridge tossed to the side, October 2021

Recovery

You might be asking, will the forest recover? Well, the answer is only time will tell. National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is undertaking a study of hundreds of trees to answer that question, and if you are down there, that is what all the pink tape is about. As I write in October 2021, some of them appear unrecoverable, but others are recovering, and it will be a slow process. My photos below of the forest in 2018, October 2020 and October 2021 give some indication of the magnitude of the destruction.

But in order for the area to recover, it's not just the trees but the whole forest we have to consider. During 2020 when the area remained closed, I was fortunate to be part of a volunteer remote weeding team with NPWS, hoping to get a head start on the weeds emerging in the first spring after the fires.

In October 2020 when it was first deemed safe for us to visit, (charred trees still crashed to the ground in the distance, and sections of the track were obliterated) we started pulling Scotch Broom and Gorse.

These weeds were thought to have been bought under control 10 years ago, but the seeds remain dormant and will very happily take over if given a chance. If you don't know what they look like they are the super bright yellow bushes you find often on the clifftops and occupied ridges of the Upper Blue Mountains. On the next page is a photo

of Scotch Broom on the top of a ridge in Blackheath in a vacant house block and a seedling pulled out on the banks of Govetts Creek. Not only do you have to worry about the seed bed remaining dormant, the seed is water dispersed so it is washed into the Grose Wilderness Area from the creeks upstream. [Weeds of the Blue Mountains](#) is a great source of information for those keen to find out what is, and is not, a weed in the bush.

NPWS weed teams and Bushcare groups have been working all spring 2020 and into autumn 2021, hoping to remove the seedlings before they can take hold. This allows the native vegetation to recover, giving the forest a better chance of recovery.

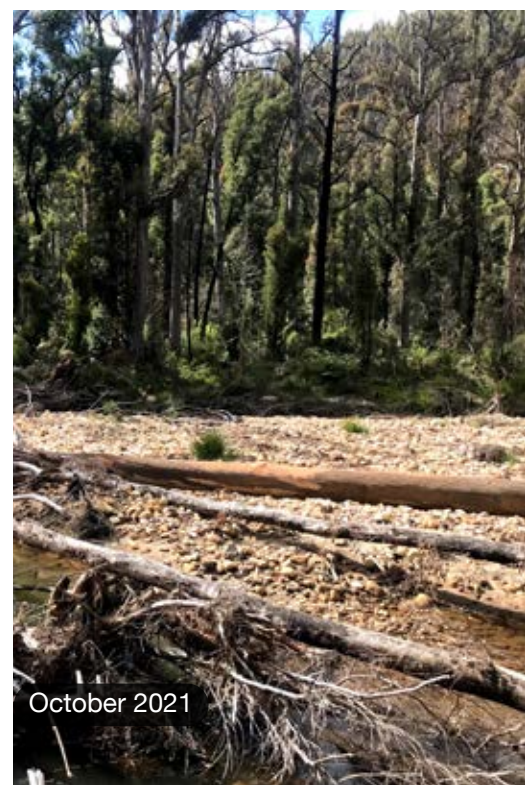
For me, this means finding and pulling weeds about 1 inch high from the sandy banks of Govetts Creek and its tributaries for a few days and weekends a year. Each seedling is pulled by hand, to ensure minimal damage to the surrounding native vegetation. It is vital that the native vegetation is left in place to stabilise the creek bank and outcompete the weeds. The volunteer team I worked with can cover about 500-1000 metres creek line in two days. Big infestations are marked for commercial teams to manage. All of this falls to the management of the lone ranger of the Grose Valley (there is only one for the whole Grose!). For anyone wanting to get involved, I highly recommend it. Just get in touch with [NPWS Blackheath](#).



December 2018



October 2020



October 2021

Things we can do to help

But there are other things we can all do, when COVID-19 lockdowns permit, and many of our feet start walking through this magnificent space. Here's a few suggestions. I am sure there are many others. Firstly, be mindful that the area is still recovering. Stay on marked or used tracks. Popular tracks like Perrys and Burra Korain, have been rebuilt, are wider and have far better design for environmental management. Camp in designated areas only and don't have a fire, unless permitted. Decisions about where fires are permitted are made for lots of reasons. This is not just about bushfire risk.

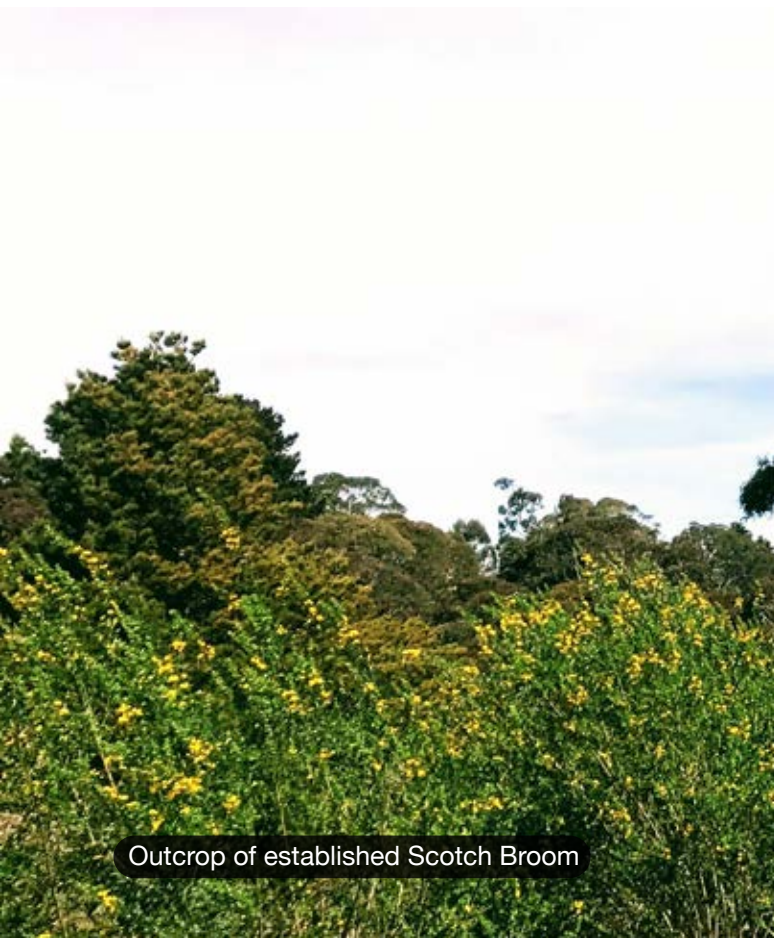
Your fire might seem small but think about how much wood was burnt. Now multiply that by how many campers visit the area each year. Now compare that to how long it takes for a tree to grow that wood and replace the wood. Fallen timber is habitat for native fauna, and also valuable replacement of nutrients to the soil. Wohlleben's *The Hidden Life of Trees* (2015) contains some eye-opening data on this for those interested. Thirdly, check your gear, shoes, tents, etc. before you come. Clean and disinfect them. Don't bring weeds and fungal diseases like phytophthora in inadvertently. Finally, whatever you carried into the forest, carry it out.

My involvement with the weed team was fuelled by a desire to get back to my "special place" as soon as possible, not from any particular environmental fervour, it just seemed like a "fair exchange" for the privilege of early access. But it has made me realise that the word "exchange" has no relevance in places like the Blue Gum Forest. The forest is not there so I can visit. As I look up and see the old Grandfather Tree's outstretched limbs torn, barren and leafless, I realise that not everything is forever. We have to look after it.

I am beginning to think that, in my lifetime, I will never again be enveloped in the silvery blue softness and dappled light of the eucalypt canopy. Instead, I will have to content myself with a cuppa and chat with the old tree about "the good ol' days." And that, is certainly a conversation worth having.



Tracie McMahon is a corporate escapee, and member of the Upper Blue Mountains Bushwalking Club. She now spends her time bush wandering and wondering. You can find more of her ramblings at [The moving pen](#).



Outcrop of established Scotch Broom



Scotch Broom seedling Govetts Creek, October 2021

The 50 Beautiful Australian Plants at Greatest Risk of Extinction

Jennifer Silcock, Jaana Dielenberg,
Roderick John Fensham, Teghan Collingwood



As far as odds go, things don't look promising for the slender-nerved acacia (*Acacia leptoneura*), a spiky plant with classic yellow-ball wattle flowers. With most of its habitat in Western Australia's wheat belt cleared for agriculture, it was considered extinct for more than 160 years.

Grevillea sp. Gillingarra
Jean and Fred

Now, just two plants are known in the world, and they're not even in the same place. This species is among many Australian plants that have come perilously close to extinction.

To help prevent the loss of any native plant species, we've assembled a massive evidence base for more than 750 plants listed as critically endangered or endangered. Of these, we've identified the 50 at greatest risk of extinction.

The good news is for most of these imperilled plants, we already have the knowledge and techniques needed to conserve them. We've devised an [action plan](#) that's relatively easy to implement, but requires long-term funding and commitment.

“... we already have the knowledge and techniques needed to conserve them.”

What's driving the loss?

There are [1,384 plant species and subspecies](#) listed as threatened at a national level. Twelve Australian plant species are considered probably extinct and a further 21 species possibly extinct, while 206 are officially listed as critically endangered.

Australian plants were used, managed and celebrated by Australia's First Nations people for at least 60,000 years, but since European colonisation, they've been beset by a range of threats.

Land clearing, the introduction of alien plants, animals, diseases, and interruptions to ecological processes such as fire patterns and flooding have taken a heavy toll on many species. This is particularly the case in the more densely populated eastern and southern parts of the continent.

“Land clearing, the introduction of alien plants, animals, diseases ...”

Things aren't improving. [Scientists](#) recently compiled long-term monitoring of more than 100 threatened plant species at 600 sites nationally. And they found populations had declined on average by 72% between 1995 and 2017.

This is a very steep rate of decline, much [greater than for threatened mammal or bird populations](#).

On the brink

Many species listed as threatened aren't receiving targeted conservation action or even baseline monitoring, so an important first step in preventing extinctions was [identifying the species at greatest risk](#).

To find the top 50, we looked at the evidence: all available published and unpublished information and expert surveys of over 120 botanists and land managers. They're targeted by our [Action Plan for Australia's Imperilled Plants](#).



Thirty of the species in the plan have fewer than 50 mature individual plants remaining.

And 33 are known only from a single location, such as the [Grampians pincushion-lily](#) (*Borya mirabilis*), which occurs on one rocky outcrop in Victoria. This means the entire population could be destroyed by a single event, such as a major bushfire.

So how can we protect them?

Some of the common management actions we've proposed include:

- Preventing further loss of species' habitat. This is the most important action required at a national scale.
- Regularly monitoring populations to better understand how species respond to threats and management actions.
- Safely trialling appropriate fire management regimes, such as burning in areas where fires have been suppressed.
- Investing in disease research and management, to combat the threat of phytophthora (root-rot fungus) and myrtle rust, which damages leaves.
- Propagating and moving species to establish plants at new sites, to boost the size of wild populations, or to increase genetic diversity.
- Protecting plants from grazing and browsing animals, such as feral goats and rabbits, and sometimes from native animals such as kangaroos.

Another common issue is lack of recruitment, meaning there's no young plants coming up to replace the old ones when they die. Sometimes this is because the processes that triggered these plants to flower, release seed or germinate are no longer occurring. This can include things like fire of a particular intensity or the right season.

Unfortunately, for some plants we don't yet know what triggers are required, and further research is essential to establish this.

Now we need the political will

Our plan is for anyone involved in threatened flora management, including federal, state, territory and local government groups, First Nations, environment and community conservation groups, and anyone with one of these plants on their land.

Plants make Australian landscapes unique — over 90% of our plant species are found nowhere else in the world. They're also the backbone of our ecosystems, creating the rich and varied habitats for our iconic fauna to live in. Plants underpin and enrich our lives every day.

Now we have an effective plan to conserve the Australian plants at the greatest risk of extinction. What's needed is the political will and resourcing to act in time.



Jennifer Silcock
Post-doctoral research fellow,
The University of Queensland

Jaana Dielenberg
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The University of Queensland

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[The Conversation](#) on 13 May 2021.



Grevillea caleyi at Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne, Victoria
[Melburnian](#)

In the News

Orchids at risk

Orchid hunting is increasingly popular, with fears the flowers are being loved to death.

Tasmanian deer population increasing

The most recent aerial survey by Tasmania's Primary Industries Department estimated the state's fallow deer population has grown by more than 5% every year since 2006.

Family dies in extreme heat

A Northern California family has been found dead on a hiking trail near the Merced River after they overheated and ran out of drinking water. As the Australian summer starts, this article shows that care is needed.

Bushwalker dies after being hit by a falling tree branch

After heavy rain, a woman in the Watagan NP was killed by a falling branch. In Australia, on average, four people die a year from falling branches, twice the number of people who die from snake bites. High winds and/or saturated soils are associated with about 86% of tree-related fatalities.

Walking can change your life

A 2700-kilometre solo trek across the Western Himalayas had unexpected results.

Avenel Station is a new addition to NPWS

The 120,000-hectare Avenel Station north of Broken Hill is the latest in a series of acquisitions by the state government designed to reshape the state's far west. More than 500,000 hectares have been added to NPWS since 2019.

14 Peaks: Nothing is impossible

A movie about the quest to climb the 14 highest mountains in the world in seven months.

Grampians Peak Trail opens

At a cost of \$33 million, the Grampians Peaks Trail is now open, but land clearing is a concern for some people. Also, the \$47.70 camping fee per tent site per night is excessive. This is more than a caravan park tent site.

Ben Boyd National Park to be renamed

Ben Boyd NP in NSW will be renamed in the language of traditional custodians. Boyd was a blackbird, shipping South Sea Islanders to the colonies and paying minimal wages to evade anti-slavery laws.

Illegal logging made legal, catchments threatened, VicForests spying

After the Victorian government changed legislation allowing logging in previously off-limits areas, water catchments now have less protection. The quality, quantity and timing of water supply will be compromised. Spatial data has illegal logging details. VicForests is accused of having a private investigator follow campaigners, and not regenerating forests.


Children and fairy doors

In Holsworthy, NSW, fairy doors were put on trees in the Harris Creek Reserve bushwalking track. Young children loved it, but there was environmental damage, so a new way was found.



Golden Celebration

Sonya Muhlsimmer



Wow, fifty, this is a golden anniversary. Can you imagine that we have reached this milestone? I feel so privileged to be a regular part of this magazine for the last six years. I have loved reading all the stories, looking at all the photos and hearing about important environmental matters and campaigns to protect our wild places we love so much. What an adventure we have all been on over this time, so much has happened. I really do enjoy sharing the stories of my adventures, conservation issues close to my heart, nutritional advice and recipes with you and I do hope you enjoy reading them too.

So firstly, I want to say a huge congratulations to Matt, Stephen and Eva for creating such an awesome magazine and thank them for letting me slowly become part of their lives (yes there has been some tough moments) and magazine as a regular contributor. Also, a massive thanks from the bottom of my heart for being there for me and helping me publish the cookbook I wrote. Seriously, this book would not have come to fruition if it was not for their amazing encouragement and support. Thank you. Within the Wildwalks team, true bonds and friendships have been made that will last a lifetime, which I am so grateful for. I am really looking forward to working towards another milestone with the team and being part of this amazing and inspiring magazine.

So, that is enough of the sentimental stuff which I don't do so well at, and for this fiftieth edition I thought I would try to create something special, it even has some golden bling. I hope you like it, so here goes. Happy hiking everyone and enjoy this golden celebration.

Yummy food for a special occasion
All pictures by Sonya Muhlsimmer

Peanut Butter Lava Cake

A what cake? A lava cake, that's right. I was experimenting in the kitchen with my sister trying out different recipe ideas for this edition and this is what we came up with. She named it and we both agreed this cake tastes awesome. A lava cake is somewhat of a gooey cake, so expect this cake to be sticky and the chocolate bits melted through and run out of the cake when you cut the cake open. Get it, sticky and runny, just like lava. And the benefit of this cake is cooking it in a bag so there is no washing up, great. Peanut butter powder can be found in good health food shops, some supermarkets or ordered online. Nutritionally the powder contains a good source of protein and fibre, so it is good for you; this cake just keeps getting better. Peanut butter and chocolate are such a good flavour combination, this cake has it all.

At home preparation

Place the ghee in a well-sealed, airtight container. Place all other dry ingredients into the bag. Label the bag, print out the method at camp instructions and pack with the bag.

Method in camp

Add the ghee to the cake mix in the bag. Seal the bag and with your fingers work the ghee through the mix from the outside of the bag. Now add the water to the bag and mix well. Boil about 2 cups of water in a pot and add the sealed bag into the water. Cover if you have a lid and cook for about 6 minutes. If you don't have a lid cook the cake for an extra minute or two. Serve from the bag or empty onto a plate. Optional, sprinkle with golden flakes and enjoy. Serves 2 decent-sized portions.

Bag 1 (Peanut butter lava cake mix)

Peanut butter powder	4 Tbsp
Egg powder	2 Tbsp
Cocoa powder	2 Tbsp
Chocolate chips	40 grams
Self raising flour	¼ cup
Vanilla sugar	2 tsp
Salt	Pinch

Container

Ghee	40 grams
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Water

Water	½ cup
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Tiramisu

Tiramisu is a layered cake made with sponge finger biscuits soaked in coffee. Tiramisu means “pick me up”, and with the biscuits soaked in coffee, this is a fitting cake for a golden celebration. This is a simple dish to make with all the ingredients found at the supermarket, however you will need a few bits of crockery to make it. For the extra special occasion and you don't mind carrying it, adding a bit of Kahlua to the cake will really be something special. Gold flakes can be bought online, they can be expensive depending on what type you get. But for a fiftieth anniversary it is worth it, just go online and look for edible gold flakes for cakes and I am sure you will find something. Why not have a bit of bling for a fitting anniversary?

At home preparation

Pack all the ingredients separately. Label the bags, print out the method at camp instructions and pack with the bags.

Method in camp

Boil $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water. In a bowl add the coffee powder and boiling water, let cool. In the meantime, in another bowl add the instant pudding mix and milk powder, and with a fork stir through 225 ml of water and mix until the mix thickens, about 2-3 minutes. Now soak about half the biscuits in the coffee and water for a few seconds each side then layer the soaked biscuits in a flat pan approximately 180 mm diameter or until the bottom of the pan is covered. Spread half of the pudding mixture over the biscuit base. Soak the remaining biscuits in the coffee mix and layer them on top of the pudding mix. Spread the remaining pudding mix over this second layer of biscuits. Optional - sprinkle with gold flakes. Serves four.

Bag 1 (Biscuits)

Savoardi biscuits	$\frac{2}{3}$ pack
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Bag 2 (Tiramisu mix)

Instant pudding	$\frac{1}{2}$ packet
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Bag 3 (Coffee)

Coffee powder	1 Tbsp or 1 coffee bag
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Bag 4 (Milk powder)

Milk powder	3 Tbsp
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Container

Gold flakes	Enough for decorating
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Water

For coffee	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
For the instant pudding	225 ml



Glühwein

Mulled Red Wine

As you may have guessed, I come from German ancestry. My dad moved to Australia when he was around the age of 20, so his German heritage and traditional German food tastes are still a big part of him. That meant that I grew up on all that German food, which included the mulled red wine called glühwein. Yes, it makes kids sleep well, you don't need much. I really did not appreciate this kind of food, and growing up in Australia I just wanted normal Aussie food like what all my friends ate. Did you know Germany has around 1500 varieties of sausage? We always had different types of sausages, salami and sauerkraut in the fridge.

Anyway, it was only when I went to live in Germany that I began to understand my father and appreciate my German heritage, traditions, and traditional German food. It has also been the only time I have not had to explain or teach the correct pronunciation of my last name ... Oh by the way, my last name has those funny things called umlauts over the u too. There are many fond memories of living in Germany and there is really something special about walking around the Weihnachtsmarkt at night, drinking glühwein. Weihnachtsmarkt means Christmas Market, which most towns have around Christmas, and at night there are plenty of small food vans that sell that mulled red wine, it is a tradition.

Admittedly this is a nice recipe for the wintertime, especially for camping in the snow but this recipe really oozes with those warm and fuzzy feelings. It will feel like you are glowing when you drink it - get it, glüh, or glow. Yes, I know you can just drink the wine, but making glühwein is for special occasions, and for a fiftieth edition, this indeed calls for celebration. Now, grab your warm mug of glühwein, stare your friend in the eye and say as heartily as you can, Prost, and enjoy the glow and the warmth you will feel deep down inside. Oh by the way, Prost means Cheers, go on and enjoy the tradition.

At home preparation

Keep the wine separate in the pouch or decant into a Nalgene bottle. Place all ingredients in a zip lock bag, label the bag with gluhwein mix. Print out the Method at camp and pack with the bag and wine.

Method in camp

In a pot add the water and the contents of the bag then simmer until the sugar dissolves, about 2 minutes. Add the wine and simmer for 5-6 minutes. Decant into mugs, then add the rum and enjoy!

Hint

Do not let the wine boil; the alcohol tends to evaporate at heat. The real recipe calls for a few slices of lemon or orange. You can add a few slices if you want to carry the lemon or orange, alternatively sliced fruit can be vacuum sealed. Substitute the real fruit for the mixed peel. Serves 2 to 3 people.

Pouch or bottle

Red wine	2 pouches or small bottles, about 4-500 mL
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Bag 1 (Peanut butter lava cake mix)

Cinnamon stick	3 sticks
Clove	6 each
Star anise	3 whole
Mixed peel – or optional 2 slices each of orange and lemon	½ tsp
White sugar	20 grams or 1 Tbsp

Water

Water	½ cup
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Optional

A few splashes of rum	Add when the wine is ready to serve
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Those Were the Days, My Friend

Stephen Lake



Bruce, Dana and Jenny on Jagungal on a perfect day
Stephen Lake

Tune: *Those were the days*

Once upon a time we went bushwalking,
Climbed our mountains for a day or two.
Remember how we went in rain and sunshine,
Going on the tracks that we all knew.

Those were the days, my friend,
We thought they'd never end,
We'd walk and camp forever and a day.
We'd go on trips we choose,
We'd walk and never lose,
For we were young and sure to have our way.
La la la la ...

Then COVID-19 made us wary.
In our homes where lockdown said to stay.
Mountains were then just a distant memory,
Thinking of the old times we would say.

Those were the days, my friend,
We thought they'd never end,
We'd walk and camp forever and a day.
We'd go on trips we choose,
We'd walk and never lose,
For we were young and sure to have our way.
La la la la ...

Last weekend I went into the mountains,
They are still the way they used to be.
Windswept slopes, terrain that ventures upwards,
Waiting for the visitor to see.

Those were the days, my friend,
We thought they'd never end,
We'd walk and camp forever and a day.
We'd go on trips we choose,
We'd walk and never lose,
For we were young and sure to have our way.
La la la la ...

The campsite had the old familiar laughter.
COVID came, but old ways they remain.
Oh, my friend, we're older and still walking,
And where we go the hills are still the same.

Those were the days, my friend,
We thought they'd never end,
We'd walk and camp forever and a day.
We'd go on trips we choose,
We'd walk and never lose,
For we were young and sure to have our way.
La la la la ...



Bushwalk Australia

 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Epic Escarpments Volume 52, October 2021</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Better Bushwalking Volume 48, August 2021</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Reflections & Rescues Volume 49, June 2021</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Hidden Hikes Volume 49, June 2021</p>	
Epic Escarpments <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Carnarvon Gorge-ous> Korrowall Buttress> Waking Up to Wilderness> National Parks News	Better Bushwalking <ul style="list-style-type: none">> The Mount Hotham Diamantina Circuit> Night walking> NSW Great walks mistake	Reflections & Rescues <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Junction Lake> Feathertop via Wilsons Prom> Swift Water Rescue Course> Archive - Glimpses of the past	Hidden Hikes <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Nitmiluk Gorge> Boltons Hut> Can artificial intelligence write a bushwalking article?	
 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Terrific Terrain Volume 47, October 2020</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Borderless Bushwalking Volume 44, December 2020</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Resounding Rocks Volume 43, October 2020</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>COVID Contingencies Volume 42, August 2020</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Bushwalking Anew Volume 41, August 2020</p>
Terrific Terrain <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Helicopter Spur> Gibraltar and Washpool> Freycinet Circuit	Borderless Bushwalking <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Ettrema Wilderness> Tripping in NSW> Western Macs	Resounding Rocks <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Traversing the Winburndale Range> Malbena Matters!	COVID Contingencies <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Barrington Tops> Mount Emmett> South West Cape circuit	Bushwalking Anew <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Three Capes> Spirit of place> The butterfly effect
 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Staying Home Volume 51, April 2020</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Fire and Fury Volume 50, February 2020</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Hills & Valleys Volume 49, December 2019</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Alpine Adventures Volume 47, October 2019</p>	 <p>Bushwalk Australia</p> <p>Awesome Adventures Volume 46, August 2019</p>
Staying Home <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Mount Giles> Bushwalking in a pandemic	Fire and Fury <ul style="list-style-type: none">> 2019-20 bushfires overview	Hills & Valleys <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Orange Bluff> Walking on fire	Alpine Adventures <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Hannells Spur Loop, NSW> AAWT	Awesome Adventures <ul style="list-style-type: none">> McMillans Track, Victoria> Island Lagoon