

BUSHWALK

A scenic view of a rocky mountain peak. The foreground is dominated by a rugged, brown and grey rock face with some green moss or lichen. A small, dark, overhanging rock formation is visible on the left. In the background, a vast valley stretches out, filled with rolling hills and mountains covered in green vegetation. The sky is a clear, deep blue with a few wispy clouds near the horizon.

Healing Hikes

Edition 51, February 2022

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
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Edition 51, February 2022

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

The copy deadline for the April 2022 edition is 28 February 2022.

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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From the Editor

Hi

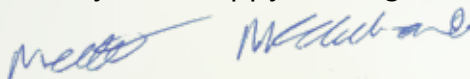
I hope that 2022 and this edition finds you well. The COVID landscape is shifting yet again, but with more people able to go bushwalking across state borders safely again.

We all go bushwalking for different reasons - more and more I am hearing of the healing that occurs on track. Recovery from the anxiety, growing in physical fitness, growing in emotional intelligence, connecting with friends and also helping to heal the country we walk through. This issue celebrates this theme of healing as we walk.

The magazine starts with Brad McCartney who takes us down the Port Davey Track in Southwest Tasmania. Ian Smith goes to the Pool of the gods in Budderoo National Park in NSW. Stefan takes us on his transformative 900 kilometre series of walks with purpose. Sonya discusses hut etiquette, with recent advice from the NSW NPWS. Phil Ingamells of the Victorian National Parks Association writes about feral horses in Victoria and NSW. Carolyn Emms of the Rainforest Reserves Australia helps us understand some serious governance concerns in Queensland wild places. There's also an exciting update on Lake Malbena, where the Supreme Court ruled against a heli-tourism development.

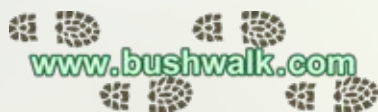
Explore well, stay safe, happy walking.

Matt :)



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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.



Too stubborn to quit
I pushed on through all the gunge
Oh, welcome summit!

Joy to be on top
All-round views and chocolate
The return awaits.

Esmeralda Jones

It's a long way to the top -
Esmeralda Jones

Hiking the Port Davey Track

Brad McCartney



This report will give you a bit of an insight into what it is like hiking the Port Davey Track in Tasmania.

Brad and Bathurst Harbour
Valérie Naslin

Day 1 Scotts Peak Dam to Crossing River 19 km in 6.5 hours

The hike started with light rain and drizzle which was only heavy enough to annoy rather than dampen anything. Within a couple of hours the drizzle ceased and the Western Arthur Range came into view. Most people stop at the campsite at Junction Creek but as it was early so we forded the creek and kept moving. In heavy rain this can be a very sketchy crossing so keep that in mind if the creek is running fast.

We continued through the glacial sculpted valleys of the Crossing Valley with the White Valley Mountains on the right and the Western Arthur Ranges on the left to our first campsite of the trip at Crossing River. At Crossing River we had a most interesting meeting with a German couple heading in the other direction.

They advised that they had been hiking for about 28 days from Lune River with lots of side trips. The guy started with a pack weight of 40 kilograms and the girls started with a pack weight of 30 kilograms, mostly cookies. They were in great spirits and very positive in their attitude, even if they looked like they needed a good feed and a week under a hot shower.

Day 2 Crossing River to Spring River 26 km in 10.5 hours

From Crossing River there had been some recent fire damage that had made an obvious changes to the landscape. It meant that there was easy walking for us as most if not all of the trees and shrubs had been decimated by the fire.

The results meant uninhibited views of the surrounding White Monolith Range and its mountains such as Sculpted Mountain, Wombat Peak, Scrubby

Peak and Stonehenge Peak. By lunch time we reached another campsite, Watershed Creek. We were

somewhat surprised to find a German bloke, Sven. He was late in leaving camp, seems like he was taking his time. We took our time over lunch before heading off to the area known as the Lost World Plateau.

The track was in great condition with easy walking so we decided that we would try and make it to Spring River for our overnight camp. As we got closer the area scarred by the fire finished and the track took on a more muddy side. We passed Sven who camped at a small campsite near a flowing creek just

“The track was in great condition with easy walking ...”



Crossing Junction Creek
Valérie Naslin

off the Lost World Plateau. It was getting late when we reached Spring River and we followed the obvious footpaths through the storm damaged area until the footpaths disappeared.

We backtracked and followed the next most obvious track, they too disappeared. Then a third time until we saw the error in our ways and found the track. The river crossing was damaged by a fallen tree. We made it across to find that the marked campsite had been destroyed by trees felled from the storm. Back across the river again to the less than favourable camp. With positive attitudes we laughed the day off as a long tiring day which made our minor but frustrating errors multiply.

Day 3 Spring River to Joan Point 13 km in 8 hours

Once again there was fine weather when we left Spring River again for the third time as we set our sites on camping at Bathurst Harbour by the end of the day. The walking was fine and we temporarily set our sites on climbing Mount Rugby, one of the highest mountains in the area which promised great views of the surrounds. As we approached we decided that it would be more prudent to give it a miss for now and continue to Farrell Point on the North Side of Bathurst Harbour.

The track up Mount Rugby looked non-existent; at least we couldn't easily find it.

We were there in perfect weather. It was even warm enough for me to go for a swim and I hate cold water. Bathurst Harbour is huge. There is a narrow channel that needs to be crossed by row boat. National Parks provide the boats for hikers. The winds and tidal flow can make things interesting for some groups. We arrived to tides that appeared to be running out through the Bathurst Narrows at about 2 knots. We waited until late afternoon when the tide slowed to cross the 300 metre crossing. There are supplied row boats on either side of the narrow channel which required us

“The winds and tidal flow can make things interesting for some groups.”



Boat trip across the channel



to make three trips to ensure there was a boat on either side. The campsite on Joan Point was stunning and the afternoon dinner spent watching the setting sun on one of the remotest harbours in Australia was magical.

Day 4 Joan Point to Melaleuca Inlet 17 km in 7.5 hours

When we set off the weather was grand, with low fog drifting outwards from the harbour onto the surrounding valleys and low lying country. After another brief geographical error we arrived near what appeared to be a track which indicated that it went to Mount Beattie. We checked with the map and decided to give it a crack. And I'm so glad we did.

The views from the climb and summit of Mount Beattie were stunning. Bathurst Harbour, Mount Rugby, the narrows and Port Davey were visible as was our ultimate destination for the day, Melaleuca. We lingered at the top for quite a while taking in the vista. We decided to take a short cut down to the remaining sections of the Port Davey track. It was shorter both in time and distance.

“There is diversity and the region around Bathurst Harbour is stunning.”

It was a very hot day and we ran out of water while at the top of Mount Beattie. Lucky the short cut took us to a small creek to quench the thirst. We sighted Sven again who was busy making a cup of coffee for the afternoon. He invited us to partake in the ritual. It provided the energy to make it to our destination.

Our campsite for the night Melaleuca has a free hut to stay in. Valerie, Sven and myself were the only one staying in the hut. There were posters in the hut of Lake Pedder before the dam was built. The old map showed the original Port Davey Track which crossed the now flooded dam area on route to the small town of Maydeena. It must have been quite a trek back in the sixties and earlier. Friendly and helpful volunteer rangers greeted us at the hut. Our food package had arrived so we opened the box of wine and fruitcake after dinner. Only a small amount of wine and I was somewhat tipsy; my tolerance when hiking was obviously non-existent. Suffice to say I slept well.

“It must have been quite a trek back in the sixties and earlier.”

The Port Davey Track is often overlooked as one of the boring tracks of the South West. I enjoyed the whole thing from Scotts Peak Dam to Melaleuca. There is diversity and the



Point Joan
with Mount Rugby behind
Brad McCartney

region around Bathurst Harbour is stunning. The great weather on the trip added to the pleasure. Highly recommended. Click on the link for Part II of the trip the South Coast Track.

Information

The Port Davey Track is not hiked as often as it's nearby neighbour The South Coast Track. Most people start at Scotts Peak Dam and hike to Melaleuca Airstrip. From there you can fly back to Hobart. A better option, if you have the time, is to continue on the South Coast Track to make a continuous 9-13 day hike about 160 kilometres in length. To facilitate an easier hike you can organise a food and fuel drop half-way at Melaleuca.

Food and fuel drop at Melaleuca Airstrip

Organise to start or finish at Melaleuca Airstrip and fly with [Par Avion](#). If choosing to hike the Port Davey Track and South Coast Track Par Avion can deliver a food drop to the Melaleuca airstrip. The freight price is \$5.50 per kilogram, so the total is \$60.50 + \$6 for 1 litre of fuel, or \$15 for a 230 gram gas canister. Flights cost \$300.

They fly there on a regular basis with food drops and also sell fuel for all types of stoves. I organised a litre of fuel to be picked up. When I hiked the trail I flew in 11 kg of food which included 2 litres of wine and 1 kg of fruit cake along with other treats to keep my hiking group motivated.



Port Davey Track Transport

There are several transport options to and from the Port Davey Track. Getting to Scotts Peak Dam to access the hiking trails such as the Port Davey Track and Western Arthurs is not easy.

Public transport	Tasmanian Wilderness Experience
Hitchhiking	Not easy but that is how I got there
Driving	Private transport or rent a car. There is a large carpark at the trailhead

The food and fuel are stored in a rodent-proof box near the airstrip and hut. Our cardboard box was undamaged when we arrived. After unpacking our food box a pilot arrived and kindly packed our box out for us, including our rubbish. That was not expected but greatly appreciated.

Brad grew up in Sydney but spent most of his life in the Northern Territory as a Tour Guide and Police Officer. Most recently he spent time managing a Macpac Store in the Sydney Region. He has been hiking since his early 20s and is a Hiking Triple Crowner, having thru hiked the Pacific Crest Trail, Continental Divide Trail and Appalachian Trail in the USA. He also spent a summer hiking the length of New Zealand on the Te Araroa Trail. When he is not hiking he can be seen drinking excessive amounts of coffee, cycling or writing on his website [BikeHikeSafari.com](#)



Brad overlooking Bathurst Harbour
Valérie Naslina

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.

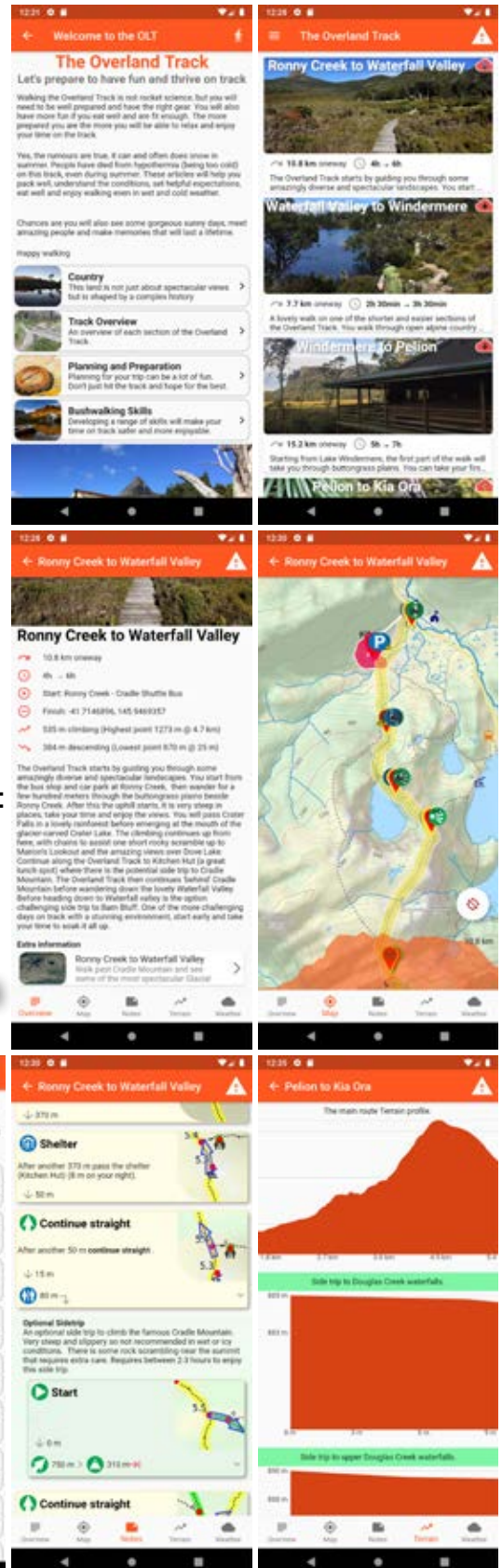
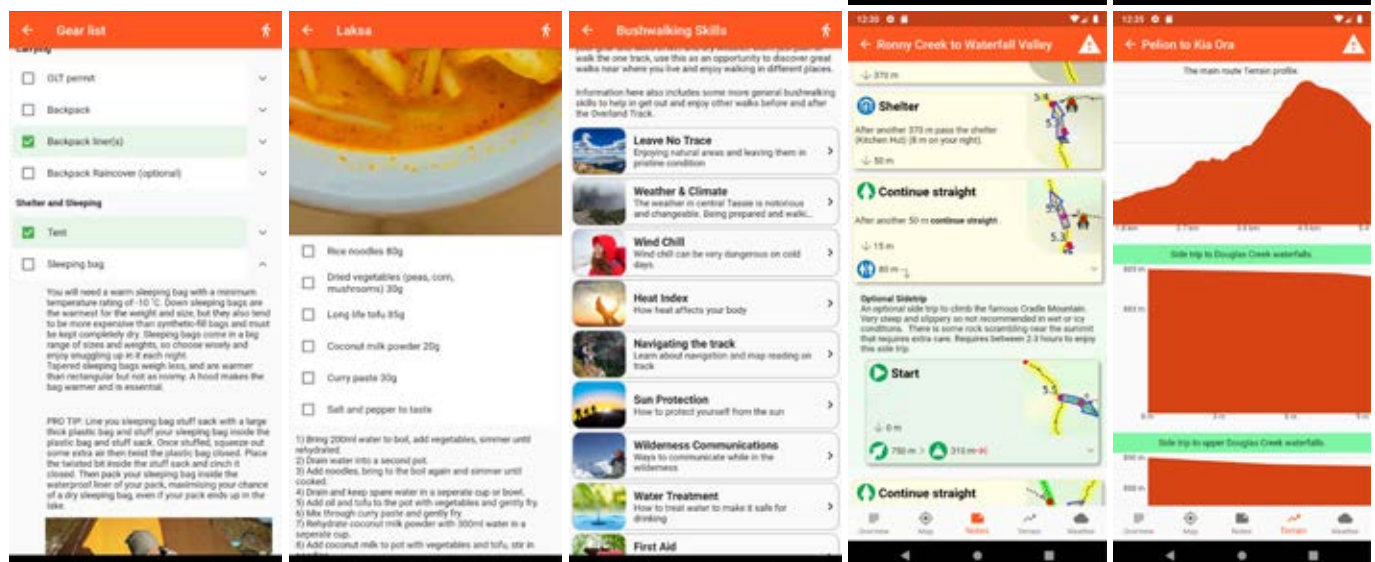
Think of this as the ultimate reference for the Overland Track, a happy marriage between a GPS and a bushwalking guide book.

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.

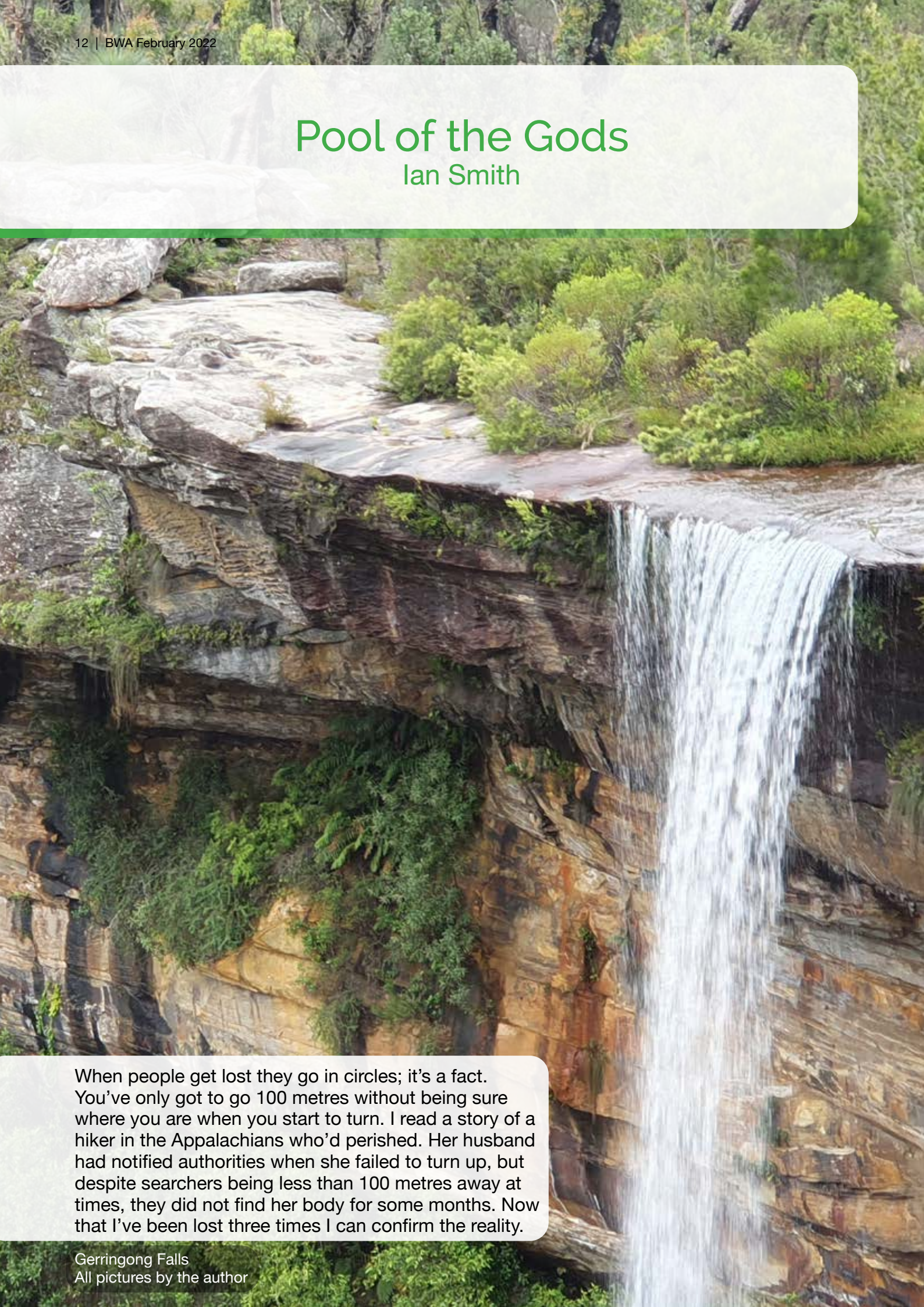
This app was made to help you get the most out of your time on the Overland Track, and is designed for all people: those new to bushwalking, hiking or tramping up to seasoned walkers.

More information at www.overlandtrack.com



Pool of the Gods

Ian Smith



When people get lost they go in circles; it's a fact. You've only got to go 100 metres without being sure where you are when you start to turn. I read a story of a hiker in the Appalachians who'd perished. Her husband had notified authorities when she failed to turn up, but despite searchers being less than 100 metres away at times, they did not find her body for some months. Now that I've been lost three times I can confirm the reality.

Gerringong Falls
All pictures by the author

To Budderoo National Park

Budderoo National Park is less well known than its nearby neighbours and borders the Southern Highlands and Kangaroo Valley. A special place in springtime, it features the highest of the four main waterfalls that drop off the escarpment (Fitzroy, Belmore and Carrington are the others) but is less popular because you can't drive to them; it's either walk approximately 12 kilometres return or cycle.

I'd left New Berrima uncertain of my destination but thinking I'd end up at Carrington Falls, so I headed in that direction. My brain however, was wandering and, from the depths came some falls I'd been told about. Was it "Belvedere?" I pulled up and typed in Carrington because they were roughly in the same area and there it was on the perimeter – Gerringong! Sounds like Belvedere ...

Part of me wanted to go, the other was reticent. I headed there anyway; I mean, what else was I doing on New Year's Eve? Somewhere south of Robertson I swung off where the sign said "Budderoo National Park". It's around 600 metres in on a rough dirt road to the locked gate. Others had arrived before me but I got the second last parking spot, unpacked the mountain bike and started to get excited; not before time.

The start

Just then two fellow bikers returned so I button holed them. "Don't go past the gate like we did" was the repeated message. They'd missed the Hersey Fire Trail and gone about four kilometres past before their error was realised. I took note and headed off. Wildflowers were out in such proliferation on the Budderoo Plateau Road that, in places, it looked like a massive white hakea doona had been thrown across the plateau.

A walker came into view coming over a locked gate as I rode on and I pulled up as he exited. There was a small dam beyond but he said it wasn't exciting. His name was John, he was a former maths and science teacher, looking at the trackside pools, of which there were many. It was with enthusiasm that he spoke about the tadpoles he was looking for. He said that by tapping the puddles with your toe that the tadpoles moved and he proceeded to demonstrate. However, John knows a whole lot about nature generally. The botany, the birdlife, just being in the bush; it was obviously his life and his knowledge was vast.

“... it looked like a massive white hakea doona had been thrown across the plateau.”



Budderoo Fire Trail

We moved on and came across two men and a car. They lived further down the road, one of only a couple of property owners from when the whole area was gazetted for grazing and divided into blocks. The eldest of the two men originated from Iowa 40 years ago but had retained some of his accent. He, too, was a font of knowledge.

Quolls

In this area there are 82 quolls. I asked how was that figure determined. It turns out that NPWS have a trap that captures a few hairs off them and the hairs are then DNA tested – who'd have thought? He then got on to sugar gliders, quite a few around here as well but, turns out Iowa man goes back to Wisconsin every year to a dairy convention. While at one of them a lady was walking past wearing a fisherman's many pocketed jacket and he heard a noise. "You haven't got gliders have you?" Indeed she had, one in every pocket! Apparently, it's a big thing in the States and there's even a group of vets who specialise in treating them.

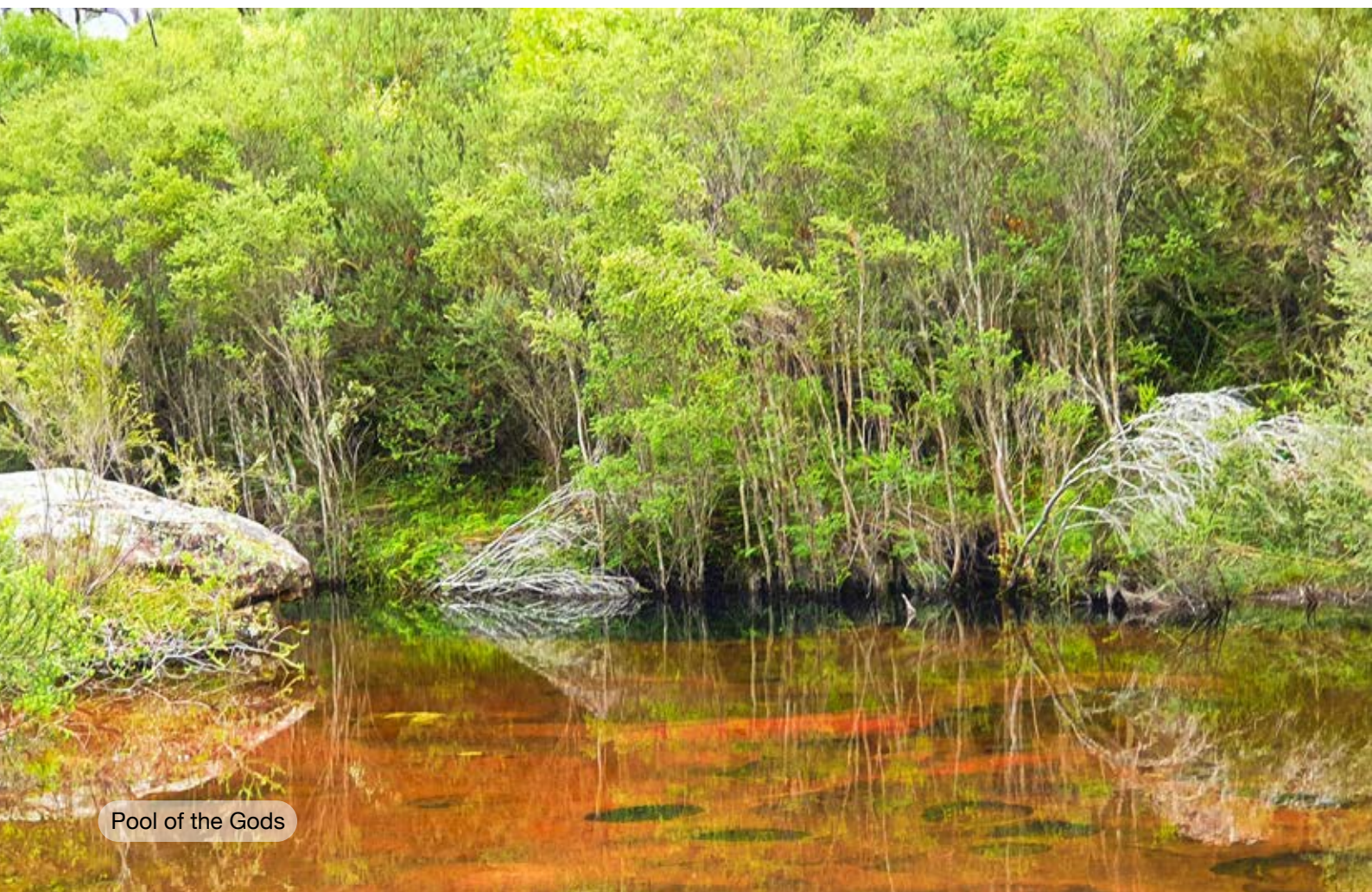
Iowa man then explained how he maintained the road at his own expense, even though it was Crown Land. I'd have loved to learn more but my goal was still ways off.

Iowa man told us it was downhill, then uphill to a rainforest and turn right after about 300 metres. I left Tadpole John and sped off, figuring I'd see him later. I bundled the bike over the locked gate to the Hersey Trail and headed off, anticipation rising. In just a few minutes the noise of a creek foretold how close I was getting, but there were very rough gravel patches and two large logs to get over first, put there to prevent erosion.

Pool of the gods

The two bikers had said something about going 30 metres to the left when you arrived at the feeder creek but I parked the bike and couldn't help but notice a seldom used track going somewhere across the other side, curiosity reigned so I moved to ford the waters but, on the right was one of the most beautiful pools I'd ever seen. The green was reflected from the forest into a pool coloured red and brown from the local minerals. I fancied that ancient civilisations would have labelled it the "Pool of the Gods".

In time I moved onto the track, such as it was, for it was overgrown and you continually had to brush vegetation aside. Up to your waist the trail was visible but, the top part was reclaiming the heath lands.



Pool of the Gods

I pushed on, unsure just where it came out but I figured it had to lead somewhere. Small bits of red on top of stakes indicated that fox baiting was taking place here, the main reason for the healthy quoll population.

Iowa man had told us they used to have a terrier that woke them every night with barking. The first night after it died, they lost their chooks. The quolls' persistence had paid off.

Meanwhile, I pushed on and eventually stumbled through the branches to another stream, Gerringong Creek as it transpired. Upstream was a small cascade that I deemed worthy of a pic or two so I removed my shoes and socks and in an ungainly manner waded through the waters, pausing to gaze at some strange insect at the water's edge, but it was a yabby claw. It felt like a privilege to just be here, immersed not only in the waters but nature itself.

Working my way around the stream to get different angles I noticed a trail on the far side and pondered its destination, so I barefooted my way along it and, lo and behold, here was a side angle on the falls.

Frankly, and I'd been warned, it's downright frightening because here, in true wilderness, there are no railings, there's no OHS, just a massive sheer drop over the edge if you make a false move. I got low on the ground and hauled myself closer and gazed down on the Sassafras Way below and the deep gully that stretched to the far horizon. A braver man might have gotten closer still but I wanted to enjoy a few more years in the world.

Disoriented

I returned, crossed the stream and put my shoes on again and headed off. The trail seemed more indistinct on the return journey and I reached a spot where it got confusing. It seemed like there were three options. In hindsight, I took one of two wrong ones and ended up squeezing through scrub and starting to doubt if I was heading the right way. It's the cobwebs that give you the clue. If you start brushing cobwebs aside, you know no-one has been here for a while. You're probably getting lost. Not probably, I was, and realised it when I stumbled into a round clearing. There was no way out save bush bashing.



Gerringong Creek

Well, I stumbled around that clearing for what seemed like ages but was probably only a few minutes. I even had trouble finding how I'd even gotten in here and pushed through where it seemed possible to do so. In hindsight it seems ridiculous but reality can be a big awakening.

I could hear water splashing not that far away but could only see a metre in front while getting a face full of twigs, the scrub being that thick. After some time I stumbled out at Gerringong Creek again, just 10 metres from where I'd left originally.

I started out again and this time jagged the actual trail. An occasional footprint and red label made me confident but then, I met up with John again, who was also exploring, and somehow convinced him it wasn't worthwhile continuing on and we headed back towards the crossing.

Back at the feeder creek we took the downstream option as I'd been advised and there was the trail. A narrow bush one but clearly utilised by many people and it followed the unnamed water flow before swinging south to follow the ridge line to the best lookout, a protruding section of sandstone cliff that lorded over the chasm beneath.

Towards one edge there was a raised section about the height of a sofa, ideally placed for relaxing and soaking up the view. We sat down and pulled out food, though John had a proper lunch while I made do with an apple. We were both agreed that taking time out in a place like this was special, not to be forgotten and to be savoured for longer than a glance or two. The whole time you're there you keep thinking "Wow, it's a long way to the bottom", or more coarse words to that effect.

The falls

The man who'd tipped me off over a year previously had raved about them and the two bikers had echoed those sentiments. They were all agreed it was the best of the Southern Highlands waterfalls, now I was here checking them out. As for height, they were correct, though exact elevations are hard to come by. Roughly they are as follows: Fitzroy – 80 metres; Belmore 100 metres; Carrington 160 metres; Gerringong 180 metres.

The other factor here is that there are no crowds. In the middle of the busiest holiday season of the year, less than a dozen people were sighted in three hours. There's a genuine feeling of being somewhere special,



View beside Gerringong Falls

unlike the very popular Fitzroy where they come, literally, by the busload and you have to pay parking fees if you're in your own car.

Chilling out with John is a totally different experience. If you weren't in touch with nature before you met John, you'd certainly be a lot closer afterwards, his quiet demeanour echoing that of the location.

After we'd tarried on the rock we parted ways as John had an app that showed a shorter way out if you were walking whereas I had to return to where I'd left the bike. En route back I worked out there was another view point if you went off piste and so it transpired, though hanging onto a tree while you're trying to photograph with 200+ metres of nothing less than a metre is away unnerving, to say the least.

Back on the bike I felt a sense of joy at having seen these elusive falls and thought of nothing else until I reached the Budderoo Plateau Road and visions of the thick ferns in the rainforest came to the fore. It is an added bonus to the experience because it's a different look to the other waterfall entries. The variation from low heathland scrub to rainforest is unusual and offers so many variant types of habitat and flora. Amazing to think they were going to use it all for grazing.

Meanwhile, John, in his own words "I mucked around a bit getting back to the road. Glad I had the app on the phone."

Return

When I reached the car I sat down on the stile and ate a meal of prawns and avocado, much to the amusement of a family who'd returned not far behind me. There was concern voiced as to the wisdom of eating the prawns after they'd sat in the car for three or four hours. I had to relate it bothered me not as I plopped another in my mouth, savouring the garlic seafood flavour yet again and thinking how lucky I was to have brought them with me to cap off one of my best ever bushwalking days.



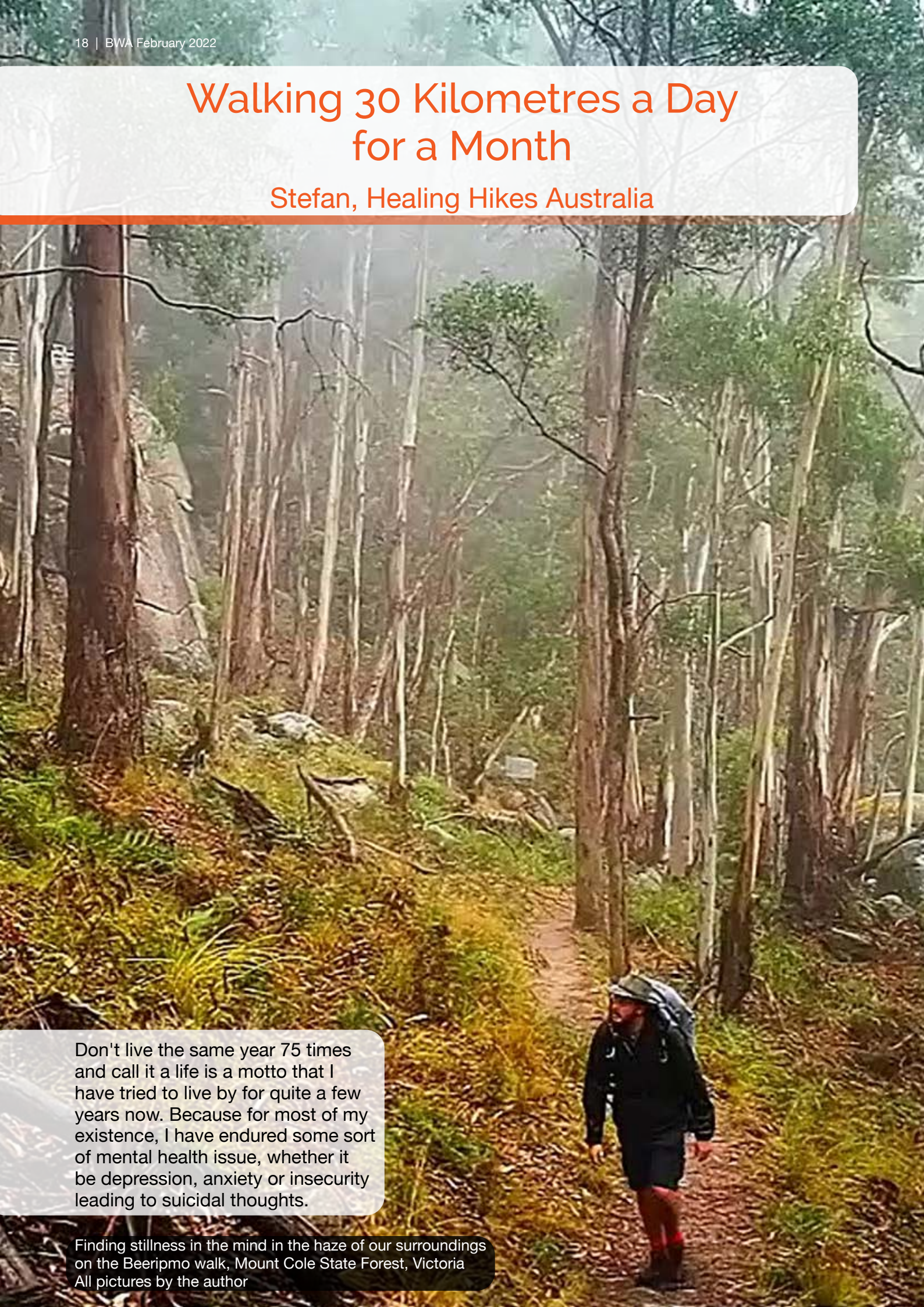
Ian hails from Lake Macquarie, Australia's largest salt water lake, as in one with water in it! He's been a writer almost all his life, starting with surfing, then soccer, then travel; but he's always been in love with the bush, especially after his father took him to the Blue Mountains in his younger days. He loves finding places few others go to, hence his book title *Taking You To Places You've Never Been*. He hopes to open your mind a little on what you might find in Australia.



Feeder stream

Walking 30 Kilometres a Day for a Month

Stefan, Healing Hikes Australia

A photograph of a person hiking on a dirt path through a dense forest. The person is wearing a dark jacket, shorts, and a backpack, and is walking away from the camera. The forest is filled with tall, thin trees and lush green undergrowth. The lighting is soft, suggesting a misty or overcast day.

Don't live the same year 75 times and call it a life is a motto that I have tried to live by for quite a few years now. Because for most of my existence, I have endured some sort of mental health issue, whether it be depression, anxiety or insecurity leading to suicidal thoughts.

Finding stillness in the mind in the haze of our surroundings
on the Beeripmo walk, Mount Cole State Forest, Victoria
All pictures by the author

So about 10 years ago, I needed something different than a dark, cold counsellor's room. I tried a walk down by the Yarra River alone, really it was to find perspective and escape to a quiet peaceful place. From that very small first step ignited a future of hiking daily in Australia's most iconic destinations.

Discovering new philosophies, places and pushing my body to thrilling limits in cold, wet and even boiling temperatures. With every step, my connection to nature and my self-awareness became stronger.

Over time I have realised the primary expressions of emotions - anger, fear, sadness, and joy - are an important form of human energy output. In those troubling personal times it has been hiking that has been a constant for me to remember ... who am I, what I can control and what I can not only achieve but what is required to feel fulfilled and worthy in this world.

Nature has taught me about finding balance whilst in harmony with my mind and body, finding resolution and meaning with my paradigm, reality and self-image. Walking in nature has made me reconnect with my

“With every step my connection to nature and my self-awareness became stronger.”

primordial nomadic instinct, realising that feelings are only generated to serve and motivate through thought and action, not to control.

So as regional Victoria was coming out of another COVID lockdown, my personal self worth from being isolated for so long was low. I needed a distraction, a challenge, something that would allow me to rediscover myself.

An idea

An idea came to me: 30 in 30 - walking 30 kilometres every day for 30 days. This had a poetic sound. I never heard of anyone doing this before, let alone filming it as a documentary. I wondered if this was possible. I know in America there are thru-hikers, but they don't walk a consistent distance every day.

Pre-production and planning began. I gave myself one month to prepare for this journey. As a past personal trainer and now experienced hiker, I was able to apply learnt knowledge about pace, timing, performance and programming.

There were so many doubts, will I even make it to day three? How will I still be able to go to work? How will I complete tasks on the property while maintaining a marriage?



Feeling the breeze at Passage Peak, Hamilton Island. Whitsundays, Queensland

Sensory information serves as our most basic form of communication, and we receive a lot of stimulus from the outside world. Hence, it was vital that I remained disciplined and channel my energies into the right areas over the challenge.

The days

Day two of the challenge it absolutely stormed with lightning and hail all day. After day five I had never felt more isolated. Walking 5-6 hours every day alone was starting to grind. A friend gave me some wise words over the phone, "you may be physically alone ... but you are not alone spiritually, there are many people in and around our lives daily that care, love, and admire us." Those words were able to give me strength until day 12. I started to develop blisters, with calves and ankles stinging and swollen with pain. That feeling of knowing that you have trained for this moment, you have put in the time, dedication, discipline, and all you can do is remember, "I must learn to be comfortable in being uncomfortable".

“I must learn to be comfortable in being uncomfortable”

Conscious breathing while walking provides that first energy input, and with this in mind, I believe the deep breathing techniques that I have learnt along the way have allowed me to become a calmer, stronger and generally a healthier individual. But essentially, in the end, all you truly have to rely on is your mind and whether that will be strong enough to push you through "our own perceived limitations".

I now see that days 1-10 were the hardest, while days 20-30 were the easiest. It's fair to say that by day 30 I was quite sad that the journey was coming to an end. My mind and body were both in a routine and I was beginning to understand my physical limitations and how I can control my feelings through actions.

Mental and physical energy is intimately connected with the energy of feeling and emotions. Understanding our internal version or interpretation of external reality with this in thought; I believe having the ability to reflect, think, feel, sense and place extra emphasis on awareness has improved from walking. Being able to see koalas in the wild



What I packed for the walk
Refuge Cove, Wilsons Prom, Victoria

and share precious moments with family and friends whilst inspiring people to achieve great things have been the highlights.

Total distance walked	900 kilometres over 158.32 hours
Average duration of each walk	5.27 hours at 5.5 km/hour
Total hours slept	297.5 hours
Water consumed	on average 3.6 litres daily, 110 litres in total
Energy expended	255,000 kilojoules

Reflections

The 30 day challenge was varied, as were the experiences, but on reflection I believe that they were the best 30 continuous days of my life. It gave me purpose and the ability to assess and transform parts of my own life that needed re-adjustment. It also highlighted my awareness, the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through behavioural development social, intellectual, cognitive, emotional as well as general well-being.

Through walking I can now learn to think, ask questions and plan. This will not only improve many capabilities and how you will go about approaching them, but help provide positive results towards eating, moving, self-responsibility, self-awareness and transcendence.

Inspire yourself, don't live the same year 75 times and call it a life. Get moving.

See [the video](#) for more details.



Stefan was born and raised in Yarra Glen, Victoria on the Yarra River, surrounded by many of Melbourne's beautiful national parks. He has been bushwalking for over 10 years now simply to connect with nature and cleanse the mind. Yearly he likes to challenge his body and walk in the Oxfam trail walker 100 kilometre walking event. He recently became the father of a boy, a new walking and camping buddy for the future. You can see more of Stefan's videos at [HealingHikesAustralia](#).



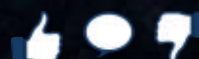
My sense of place, where I feel most comfortable in the world.
Yarra River, Wonga Park, Victoria, my favourite bushwalk

Photo Gallery



River of cloud
Tom Brennan

Competition: Landscape February 2015



Bushwalk.com Photo Competition



Landscapes

February 2021

WINNER



Bungle Bungles
in the wet sunrise
Dave Edwards

We were initially hesitant about a northern Australia walking trip in the wet season, but it was fantastic. Having seen the creek flowing and waterfalls with water in, I can't help but think the dry season in the Bungle Bungles would be disappointing now. Although there is the risk of untimely rain restricting the exploring of side gorges, seeing the water flowing was glorious. Apart from when the water was flowing dangerously fast, there was always somewhere for a swim multiple times a day and once up in the gorge, there was always some shade to be had.



Daisies and sandstone
Rob Croll



A heath-en outlook
John Walker



Primeval beauty
Tom Brennan



Morialta
Brian Eglinton



Lane Cove National Park
landsmith



Non-landscapes February 2021

WINNER



Out of its night time element, a Tawny Frogmouth watches cautiously from its urban bushland perch.

Watching me
watching you
Tom Brennan



Mountain Devil
John Walker



Rosellas
Brian Eglinton



Eastern water dragon
landsmith



Other States February 2021

WINNER



Lovely end to a wet day
Rob Croll

It was wet and cold for a summer's day, but not too bad for walking. Then the weather lifted and this unexpected sunset, overlooking Narrow Neck Plateau came into view.



A study in sandstone
John Walker



Over the edge
Brian Eglinton



Step Trail - Lane Cove National Park
landsmith



Boolijah Falls
Tom Brennan



Landscapes

March 2021

WINNER



Horseshoe Falls
landsmith

Horseshoe Falls with lots of tree debris at the base and a surprisingly dry cave. You had to trample over tree roots to get down there but it was all a bit special having it to yourself. I loved the massive wavy patterned rock just a fraction downstream, it balanced the shot perfectly.



Mimosa rocks
Rob Croll



Almost caught out
Osik



Home sweet home
North-north-west



Sunbeams
and water drops
Tom Brennan



Mount William - Brian
Eglinton



Toolooma dreaming
John Walker



Non-landscapes

March 2021

WINNER



Damsel fly
Brian Eglinton

Walking in Tropical North Queensland is typically immersed in rainforest with limited views.

The wonderful cool streams cascading over granite blocks offer some good photo opportunities.

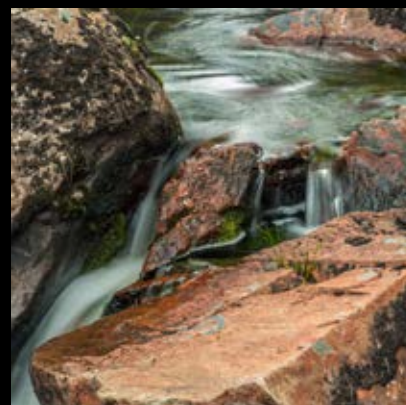
This colourful Damsel Fly was on Stoney Creek near Cairns.



Who you callin' a 'coot?
Tom Brennan



Campfire under the stars
Rob Croll



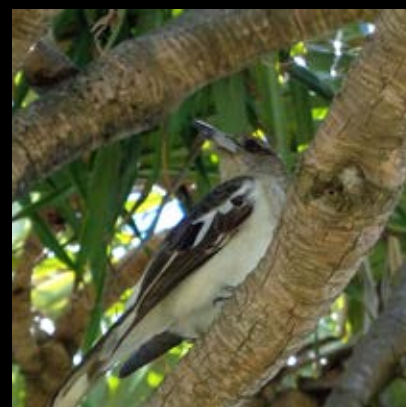
Detail, Douglas Creek
North-north-west



Pink bells
Osik



It must be autumn
landsmith



I'd better look at that roofing
before the next storm
John Walker



Other States

March 2021

WINNER

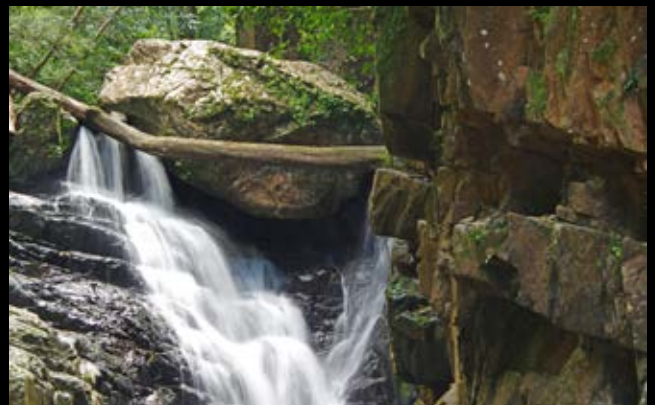


In the depths of Claustral Canyon, the roof of this chamber ripples with the reflections of the handful of sunbeams that reach the canyon floor.

Cathedral
Tom Brennan



Grose Valley
landsmith



Stony Creek
Brian Eglinton



When flood meets ocean
John Walker



Heath was here 2020
Rob Croll



Tasmania

March 2021

WINNER



Evening light on Oakleigh
North-north-west

A classic view from a classic campsite: the saddle below Paddys Nut has welcomed so many walkers, and always provides a visual treat of some sort.

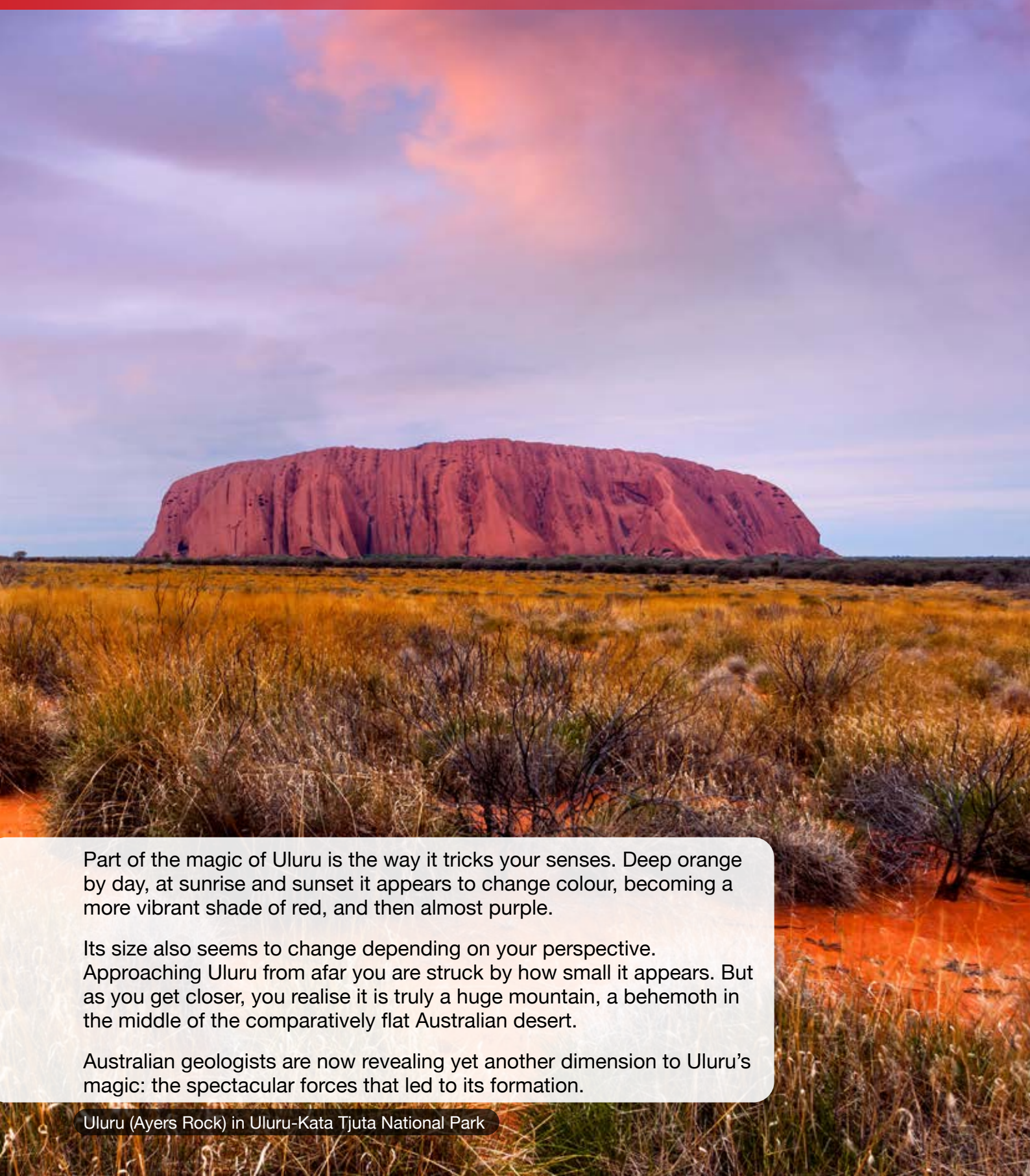


Dawn from Nevada
Osik



The 550-million-year Story of Uluru

Melanie Finch and Andrew Giles



Part of the magic of Uluru is the way it tricks your senses. Deep orange by day, at sunrise and sunset it appears to change colour, becoming a more vibrant shade of red, and then almost purple.

Its size also seems to change depending on your perspective. Approaching Uluru from afar you are struck by how small it appears. But as you get closer, you realise it is truly a huge mountain, a behemoth in the middle of the comparatively flat Australian desert.

Australian geologists are now revealing yet another dimension to Uluru's magic: the spectacular forces that led to its formation.

Uluru (Ayers Rock) in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park

Uluru is a time capsule. Within its sand grains there is an epic 550-million-year saga of continents colliding, mountains rising and falling, and the remarkable strength of our most iconic mountain.

Uluru is sacred

To the Anangu, Uluru [is sacred](#). The Anangu are the owners of the land on which Uluru sits and they have long understood its magic.

Their Dreaming stories tell of the dramatic creation of Uluru and Kata Tjuta on the previously featureless Earth by ancestral creator beings known as the Tjukuritja or Waparitja.

If you get the opportunity to tour Uluru with a Traditional Owner you will hear [stories](#) about the significance of some of the dimples, caves and undulations, many of which have a unique and important place in Anangu culture.

Compared to the Traditional Owners, whose knowledge dates back several tens of thousands of years, scientists have only realised the significance of Uluru over the last 30 years or so.

Uluru's geological history has been revealed by assembling different types of data, like pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle. That puzzle is taking shape and the scene it reveals is perhaps even more spectacular than the rock itself.

To tell Uluru's story from the beginning we need to travel back in time 550 million years.

India smashed into the Western Australian coast

Earth's tectonic plates are constantly in motion, continents collide with each other and then rift apart. Around [550 million years ago](#), continents collided as part of the assembly of the supercontinent Gondwana, [one of several times](#) in Earth's history where most of the continents were stuck together in one continuous piece of land.

Back then, a map of our globe would have looked very different. At this time, Antarctica was nestled against the Great Australian Bight. If you were around then you could have walked from Australia directly into Antarctica without getting your shoes wet. India was situated to the west of Western Australia when it was pulled toward our continent and smashed into the coastline.

India and Australia's collision caused massive stresses to reverberate throughout the Australian crust, like waves of energy crashing through the continent. When those waves got to Central Australia, something pretty remarkable happened that geologists can understand by [mapping the rocks beneath the surface](#).

Those maps reveal [a complex network](#) of ancient, interwoven fractures and faults, similar to the famous [San Andreas fault](#)



Uluru, Red Centre, Northern Territory

network. Unlike a fracture in your arm bone, these faults never healed, so they remained broken, forming weak zones susceptible to breaking and moving again.

So, when the waves of energy from WA reached Central Australia, the network of fractures moved, pushing rock packages on top of each other. As the rocks moved past each other, they also moved upwards and were thrust into the air.

An enormous mountain range emerged

Each fault rupture moved the rocks so quickly that [huge earthquakes](#) shook the ground. Gradually, these faults uplifted an enormous mountain range. It was called the Petermann mountains, and it was unlike anything in Australia today.

The mountains were hundreds of kilometres long and five kilometres high, more akin to the [Indian Himalaya](#) than Australia's [Great Dividing Range](#).

They were mostly made of granite, a rock that crystallises from molten rock (magma) deep underground. This granite was pushed up to the surface in the mountain-building process. Normally, mountains would be covered in vegetation, but 550 million years ago land plants had [not yet evolved](#), meaning these mountains were probably bare.

Boulders cracked off, an ocean formed

Bare mountains weather quickly because they are more exposed to rain and wind. Big cracks formed in the granite, splitting away rocks and boulders, which fell into rivers gushing down deep valleys carved into the mountain.

As the eroded rocks tumbled in the torrential water, they broke apart, until only grains of sand remained, like the [sand you see on the bottom of a river bed](#). These huge braided rivers came off the northern side of the Petermann mountains and snaked across the landscape until the rivers entered a low-lying region, called a sedimentary basin.

When the river reached the basin, the [sediment from the mountains dropped](#) out of the water, depositing layer upon layer of sand. The weight of it pushed down on the

underlying rock, causing the basin to deepen until it was kilometres thick.

The overlying layers compacted the sand deposited previously, forming a rock called sandstone. Over time the basin continued to deepen and was covered by water, forming an inland ocean lapping at the foot of the huge mountain range.

Ancient faults reawakened, and Uluru rose from the ocean

Sediment continued to deposit into the ocean until about 300 million years ago when the ancient faults began to reawaken during a new mountain-building event called the [Alice Springs orogeny](#).

The thick layers of sand that had cemented into solid sandstone were uplifted above sea level. Squeezed together by huge tectonic forces, the layers buckled and folded into M-shapes. The apex, or [hinge of folds](#), was compressed more than surrounding rocks, and it is from the hinge of a massive fold that Uluru formed.

Folding and deformation made Uluru strong and able to resist the forces of weathering that eroded the surrounding, weaker rocks, including almost all of the once mighty Petermann mountains. If we could dig underneath Uluru, we would see it is only the [very tip of a rock sequence](#) that extends kilometres down under the surface, like a rock iceberg.

Uluru is a sacred site to Anangu and our respect for their deep knowledge and ownership of this land means we [no longer climb Uluru](#).

But even if we could, why would we want to? Uluru's magic is most evident when you stand at its base, look up, and picture in your mind the enormous forces that conspired to form it.

Melanie Finch

Lecturer in Structural Geology and Metamorphism, Monash University

Andrew Giles

Assistant lecturer, Monash University

This article first appeared in [The Conversation](#) on 29 December 2021.



In the News

Great Ocean Road Trek 2022 November 2022

Walk this great walk from Apollo Bay to Twelve Apostles [for a great cause](#).

A new book, A Bushwalking Paradise by the Bushexplorers

The Bushexplorers Yuri, Michael, and Brian just released a new book about the Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area which is now available to purchase via [their website](#). Like all their books, it is delivered free anywhere in Australia.

Bogong moth listed as endangered by IUCN

The bogong moth is [one of 124 Australian species added](#) to the International Union for Conservation of Nature's "Red List of Threatened Species".

VicForests referred to Victorian ombudsman and corruption watchdog

The Victorian government-owned logging agency VicForests, as well as its regulator, have been [referred to the state's anti-corruption watchdog](#) after a string of allegations reported by the ABC since 2018. Shortly after the above articles were published there was an announcement that VicForests will soon face [harsher regulation and greater oversight](#) by the regulator.

NSW logging costs millions of dollars

A study by Frontier Economics and Professor Andrew Macintosh, from the Australian National University, estimates [taxpayers would be better off](#) by approximately \$62 million over the next 30 years if the harvesting of native timber was stopped.

NSW government leaked report: stop logging native forests

The Natural Resources Commission report said [logging should have stopped for three years](#) after bushfires in Nowra, Narooma and Taree. Logging continued.

Federation plane crash findings

The ATSB report into a [fatal 2018 light plane crash](#) found that pilots were encouraged to fly, even when forecasts indicated they may encounter adverse weather. Bushwalkers going to or from Melaleuca Inlet may need to wait for better weather for a flight.

Lake Malbena Supreme Court ruling - we won!

The [Supreme Court](#) has ruled against a heli-tourism development at Halls Island, Lake Malbena, in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The [Environmental Defenders Office](#) has commented on this win.

Cradle Mountain report

The ABC [Back Roads](#) program featured the Cradle Mountain and nearby towns. There's also an article about the [background](#) to that episode.

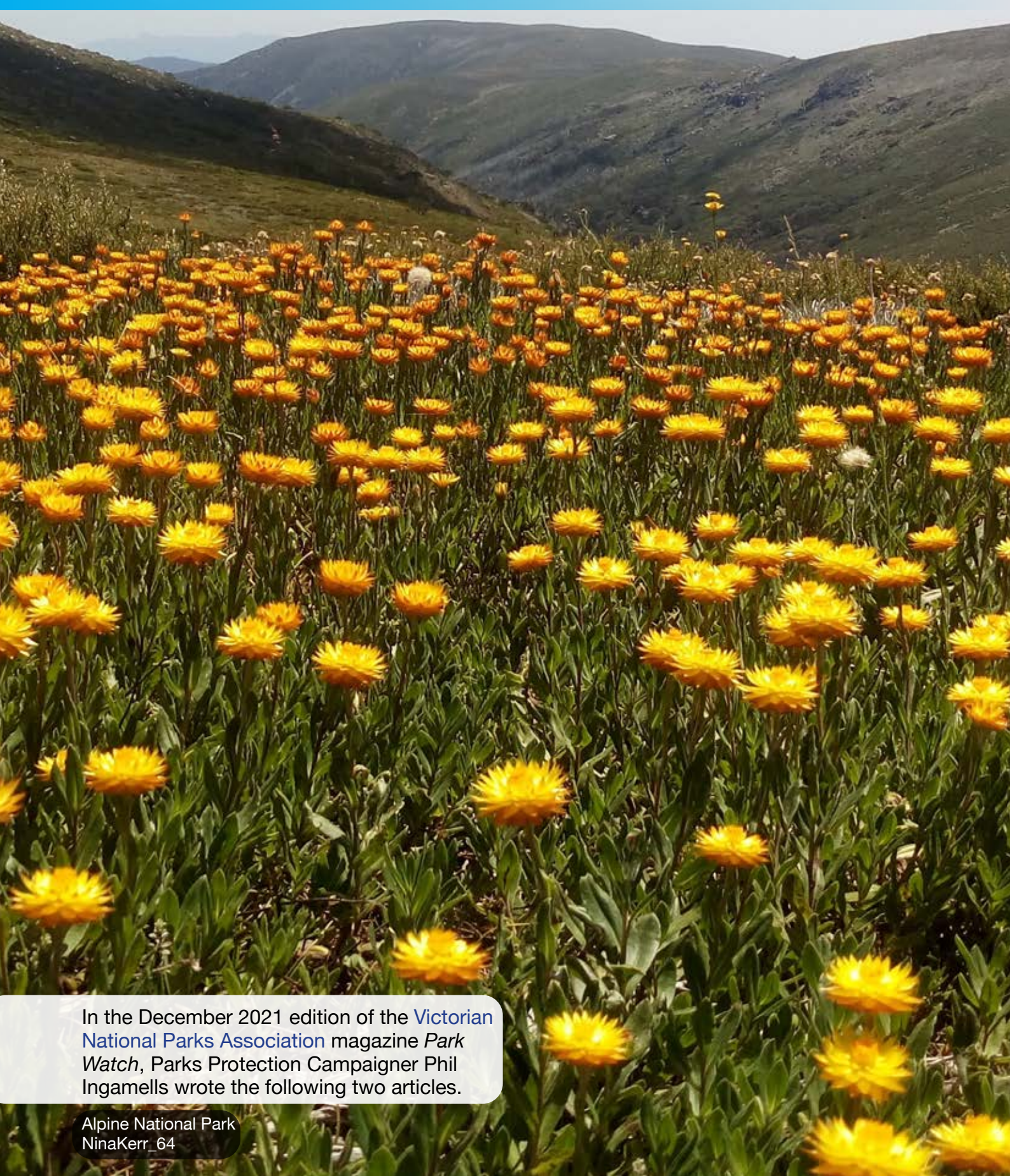
Nature and mental health

Spending time in natural settings is linked to reductions in stress, feelings of anger, and fatigue; increases in happiness, and fewer symptoms of depression in adulthood and reductions in symptoms of attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder in children. This is one reason [why bushwalking is good](#).



Feral Horse Update

Phil Ingamells,
Victorian National Parks Association



In the December 2021 edition of the [Victorian National Parks Association](#) magazine *Park Watch*, Parks Protection Campaigner Phil Ingamells wrote the following two articles.

Alpine National Park
NinaKerr_64

Feral Horses in Victoria

It's been a tough journey, but Victoria now has a real plan for alpine recovery.

Nature conservation is largely about contested territory, and the battle for Victoria's high country has been no exception.

Since well before 1974 when the Victorian National Parks Association published Dick Johnson's remarkable book *The Alps at the Crossroads*, we have fought for a substantial Alpine National Park, fought to have licensed cattle grazing removed from the park, and more recently campaigned to have management of the high country – and the rest of Victoria's parks system – properly resourced with both expertise and funds.

One of the most difficult problems in that journey has been that the high country is one of those places where impeccable evidence is routinely confounded by entrenched assumptions, where the truth is undermined by community ignorance or, unfortunately, outright mischief.

The Alpine National Park's feral horse population (about 5000–6000 in Victoria with an additional 20,000 in Kosciuszko National Park over the NSW border) has been the subject of the most recent of those battles.

I remember one moment when a brumby advocate, invited by Parks Victoria to be a privileged member of an alpine horse advisory panel, assured the group that a scientific paper said horses improve the diversity of birds in grasslands. It turned out to be an Argentinian paper, and it actually said the opposite: horses trample nesting sites in that country's extensive Pampas plains.

That's a small problem, perhaps, but the relentless feral social media campaign that has personally targeted individuals, including park staff whose only crime is to call for evidence-based management of a national park, is no small matter at all.

Parks Victoria's final *Protection of the Alpine National Park: Feral Horse Action Plan*, released recently, sets up a decade-long management program that has the capacity to reverse the declines in alpine ecosystems brought about by the expanding feral horse population.

It will aim to remove all horses from the Bogong High Plains and reduce the main population in the eastern part of the park by up to 500 in the first year. Rehoming will be the first option, with ground shooting and then aerial shooting considered to be the most humane method of controlling the remaining animals.

Brumby running, the control method championed by many horse supporters whereby wild horses are rounded up, roped, then trucked or driven out of the park before ending up in a knackery, is not supported by animal welfare advocates and won't be allowed in the future.

The plan is the result of many decades of scientific study, and involved years of consultation with the broad community, brumby support groups, cattlemen, animal welfare experts, Aboriginal communities and ecologists. Along the way Parks Victoria has also had to defend its plan in a series of cases in the Supreme and Federal Courts, each of which resulted in unambiguous support for Parks Victoria's intentions to control these feral animals.

We congratulate Parks Victoria in its pursuit of a plan that has real integrity, and we congratulate the Victorian Environment Minister for her unwavering support for that endeavour. We also congratulate our members for their crucial support for the long campaign to restore the ecological integrity, and the great beauty, of the Alpine National Park.

Now all we need is to get the [NSW Government to control horses over the border](#). And, yes, we need to make sure the plans for managing all hard hooved animals are resourced well into the future.



Horseplay in NSW

The deeply flawed draft 'heritage' horse plan from NSW is a burden for feral horse management in Victoria, Phil Ingamells writes.

As long ago as 1986, the environment ministers of Victoria, NSW, the ACT and the federal government put their signatures to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would improve conservation management across Australia's alpine region national parks for decades to come.

Still current (though now signed by the heads of the park management agencies), the MOU promises to achieve "excellence in conservation management ... through an active program of cross-border cooperation".

How strange then, that there seems to have been no attempt to co-operate on the control of some 8000 feral horses that roam on both sides of the NSW/Victoria border.

In 2018, the NSW government passed its extraordinary *Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Act*, a law that actually protects feral animals in the most prized conservation reserve in that state. This law was largely driven by then-Deputy Premier John Barilaro, who has since resigned but left alpine management chaos in his wake.

The natural values of the alpine region of mainland Australia have been the subject of vigilant study by botanists, zoologists, soil scientists and ecologists for well over 150 years. The breadth of that knowledge has been recognised in the National Heritage listing for the Australian Alps National Parks (AANP).

The listing states that "The AANP has outstanding heritage value for the scientific research that has taken place since the 1830s, demonstrated by the density and continuity of scientific endeavour".



Alpine sunray in Kosciuszko National Park

That National Heritage listing sits within the federal government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, along with recognition of a series of threatened alpine plants and animals, and the critical listing of Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens as a nationally threatened ecological community.

Horses trash peat beds, bogs and fens.

If that needed any further clarification, in a [2019 Federal Court case](#) brought against Parks Victoria by the Australian Brumby Alliance, the Judge unequivocally ruled that controlling feral horses would have no discernible impact on the cultural heritage values of the Australian Alps.

Moreover, the Judge said that the scientific evidence of the damage horses cause was "persuasive" and that retaining horses on the high plains "would not be an appropriate control of the threat they present to ecosystems, habitats and species in those alpine areas".

The Judge dismissed contrary submissions that horses didn't harm the high country, saying it "was not supported by scientific studies and was not persuasive".

He was stating what pretty much anyone who walks in the high country knows, of course, but his judgement after such a comprehensive Federal Court trial should bear decisive weight.



It's time to stop talking about feral horses, and act.

Meanwhile, the Victorian Government has released its final alpine feral horse management plan that aims to take all horses off the Bogong High Plains within three years, and reduce horse numbers in the eastern alps to at least levels that allow the recovery of alpine ecosystems there.

The ACT has been keeping their Namadgi National Park horse free for decades.

Hopefully, under a new environment minister, the NSW Government will re-interpret its horse heritage law, and all park agencies can fully co-operate on alpine management under the long-standing MOU.

It's good to speak about 'excellence', and 'co-operation' in management, but far better to actually enact these things.

The links below were not in the [Park Watch](#) articles, and give a good background to the feral horse problem.

[Invasive Species Council](#)
[Parks Victoria](#)
[We are Explorers](#)
[Frontier Economics](#)

The last one refers to [Reining in feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park](#) which says that: "Drawing on the best available information, our analysis suggests the potential benefits that may come from reducing feral horse numbers in the park could be significant and in the order of \$19-\$50 million per year."



Broad-toothed Rat in the Alpine National Park, Victoria

Huts of the High Country and Hut Etiquette

Sonya Muhlsimmer



Did you know there are around 200 huts in the Australian Alpine region and do you know what hut etiquette is? Well, keep reading if you are interested in learning a few basic facts about the huts of the high country.

Seamans Hut, Kosciuszko NP, NSW
Sonya Muhlsimmer

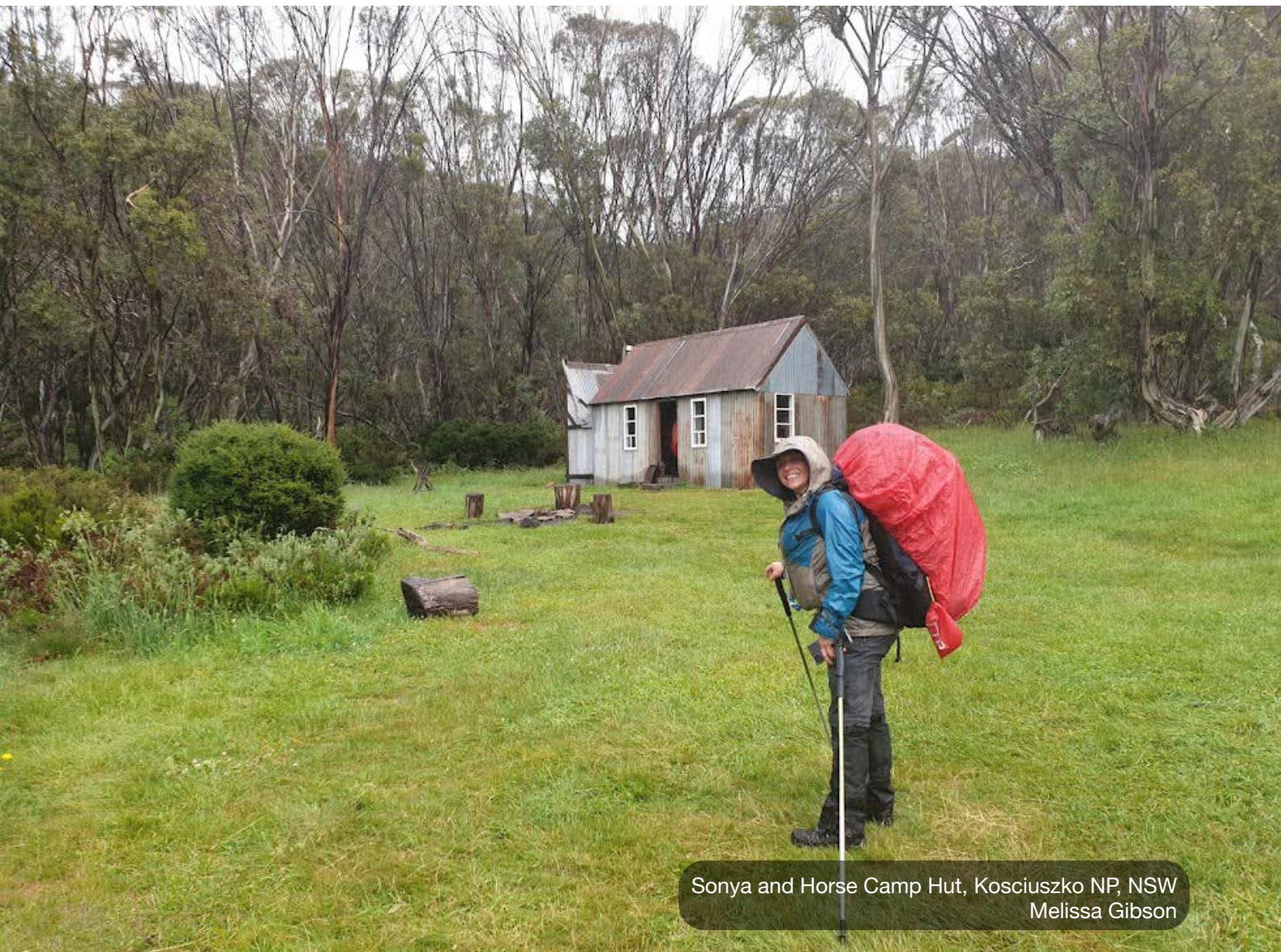
Recently I took a few experienced and novice hikers down to Kosciuszko National Park for a three-day hike. I took them to see and experience some backcountry huts like Horse Camp and Whites River Huts and along the Main Range to Seamans Hut and a short way from there to view Cootapatamba Hut.

Before we get onto the huts of the first explorers, I want to acknowledge and pay my respects to the traditional custodians on their traditional land of the Monaro-Ngarigo people on which we work, live and play and we give respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

In the high country there has been some evidence found as high as Perisher Gap (around 1815 metres) of occupation and dwellings which may date back to 7000 years. However, there is still no information on how or where the huts were made. The thought is that rock shelters and dwellings were made out of sticks, bark and animal skins in an A-frame construction that could

have been utilised in conjunction with the annual migration of Bogong moths. Then the first explorers, squatters and stockmen came around 1830 that started constructing simple huts with bark or canvas roofs. By the 1930s, huts were more one-room structures with fireplaces and corrugated iron roofs.

There are three main classifications for huts: survival huts, recreational huts and historical and architectural huts. Before we go any further, the majority of the historic huts are only to be used for emergencies. There is so much history around Kosciuszko National Park and huts from the old days available and is worth a read. The late Klaus Hueneker has written an excellent book called *Huts of the High Country* if you are interested in the history and range of huts spread out over the landscape. His in-depth knowledge of the history of the huts is astounding. This is where I have collated some of my information from. Klaus was a long-time member and former president of the [Kosciuszko Huts Association](#), KHA.



Sonya and Horse Camp Hut, Kosciuszko NP, NSW
Melissa Gibson

The KHA is an association that has been around since about 1970. KHA is a voluntary members club which strives to preserve, manage and reconstruct the huts of the High country. They have set down some guidelines for hut restoration, in which when required they work closely with Kosciuszko National Parks. Go check them out and donate or join. I have been a member for many years.

“ KHA is a voluntary members club which strives to preserve, manage and reconstruct the huts of the High country.

There are a number of sources of information about Australian alpine huts, most with similar advice. A list is at the end of this article. There is no definitive hut etiquette for Australian alpine huts. The following is a compilation from the sources below, and elsewhere.

Respect the hut's heritage

Australian alpine huts were first built in the mid-1800s by farmers, miners, loggers, hydro and park management, skiers and bushwalkers. Quite a few of these huts have

significant heritage value, and this must be respected. Graffiti should not be placed on the hut, or anywhere for that matter.

Huts are for shelter, not accommodation

It's essential that all visitors have tents, hammocks or the like and do not need to use a hut for sleeping. However, in prolonged or very bad weather, huts are seen by many as better. Due to a massive dump of snow, a blizzard, and a whiteout, a friend was forced to stop in Cesjacks Hut in Kosciuszko National Park for three nights. Not far from there at O'Keefes Hut there was a blizzard for three days – in spring. Moving away from the hut was risky.

Quite often parties camp near huts for the convenience when cooking, especially in bad weather, then sleeping in tents. Huts are also social centres. Beware of mice and rats that live in the hut.

One reason that park managers advise that huts should not be used for accommodation is non-compliance with the Building Code of Australia. Due to the remoteness and cost, it's very expensive to comply with the BCA for many huts.



Whites River Hut, Kosciuszko NP, NSW
Melissa Gibson

Never rely on a hut

A hut may be hard to find in bad conditions, or the hut may have burnt down. In August 1943 the Gadsden party attempted to find Summit Hut on an exposed slope on Mount Bogong. The blizzard meant that they did not find the hut, and all three died. In the 1970s Summit Hut was deliberately burnt down, no loss.

Share the hut

With most huts on Crown Land and there being no exclusive use, anyone can use most huts. In bad weather there's always room for more. On the Routeburn Track in New Zealand, the weather was so bad that parties could not leave the hut, and when the next lot of trampers arrived there were 60 or so people in a hut designed for 30 people. Cosy. Make new arrivals welcome.

Be very careful with fires


Misguided parties have accidentally burnt down huts, like Fitzgeralds on the Bogong High Plains. Many huts have had the open fireplace replaced with a pot belly stove, some of which are excellent, and some have poor designs.

Fires should be small and used only for warmth in cold conditions and perhaps cooking. Make sure that the fire is out before leaving, with lots of water. Fires outside huts are generally discouraged, with some huts having these fireplaces revegetated.

A friend of mine jumped into Mungyang Creek at Whites River Hut to rescue a tent that had fallen off the pack of a beginner in another party, and was happy to use the fire to dry and get warm from the snowmelt.



Witzes Hut, Kosciuszko NP, and dangerous firewood Stephen Lake


Australian Alps national parks
11h · 🌐

Caring for our High Country Huts! 🏠

Seems we need to keep reminding everyone of the need to follow the Hut Code. A recent visit by NSW NPWS staff to Cascade Hut in Kosciuszko National Park found the hut and a open fire unattended and still smouldering in the fireplace, and the emergency wood supply completely gone.

Both bushfires and inappropriate and careless use of fire (fireplaces, combustion and fuel stoves, candles etc) by visitors in huts are probably the two greatest threats to these important heritage and visitor safety assets of the Australian Alps National Parks. 🔥

You can do your part in protecting and caring for the heritage huts across the Australian Alps by knowing and following the Hut Code:
<https://theaustralialpsnationalparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/code-huts.pdf>

Please remember the huts are managed to be there for everyone to experience, enjoy and share as short day visit and emergency overnight shelter use only. They are not to be relied upon as your primary shelter or for exclusive accommodation, occupation or use. 🏠

Replenish the wood, including kindling. Stoves are better, faster and cause less impact compared to wood fires.

Log book

Huts often have log books, and these should be used. Include party details, useful information about where you have been, and departure details. These will assist other walkers, management, and perhaps search and rescue. Advise the hut manager (often a bushwalking club) or the park manager if the log book is full or nearly so.

Water

Always wash away from the creek or river. In case others have not done so, if you can, go upstream from the hut for drinking water. If there's a tank, be thrifty – tanks may run dry. If a tank is dry then put this advice in the logbook at the next hut.

“ If a tank is dry then put this advice in the logbook at the next hut.

Clean

Huts should be clean and neat. If there's a broom, use it to sweep the floor. Food for the next party or an emergency should not be left. The chance of it being needed is slim to non-existent. Open packs of food attract rats and mice, and cannot be eaten due to this. Carry out your rubbish, and on the last day of your trip, see if there's room in your pack for rubbish others have left.

“... on the last day of your trip, see if there's room in your pack for rubbish others have left.”

Conclusion

So when you are visiting the huts, please pay respect to the first Australians and abide by the hut etiquette. Oh and if you have not done so already, consider joining the KHA. It is well worth it.

Hut etiquette resources

- [Kosciuszko Huts Association](#)
- [Bushwalking Victoria](#)
- [Victorian High Country Huts Association](#)
- [South Gippsland Walking and Adventure Club](#)
- [Australian Hiker](#)
- [Australian Image](#)



Mount Wills Hut, Alpine NP, Victoria
Stephen Lake



Mawsons Hut, built in 1930, Kosciuszko NP
Sonya Muhlsimmer

Queensland Windfarms and Habitat Loss

Carolyn Emms
President, Rainforest Reserves Australia

In Far North Queensland (FNQ) in landscapes with high biodiverse values, numerous large-scale industrial renewable energy projects are proposed. These locations are inappropriate.

Land clearing for Kaban wind development,
taken in September 2021

Rainforest Reserves Australia (RRA) are a small group of hands-on regenerative conservationists who operate the Tablelands Cassowary Facility in partnership with the Queensland Department of Environment and Science. RRA have a particularly high stake in the conservation of the landscapes of FNQ. We care for sick, injured and orphaned Cassowaries and release them to the wild once they're ready. The Atherton Tablelands is now home to some of our released Cassowaries and these big birds claim large territories of land and often roam far and wide, impervious to cars, roads, signs, fencing and any other human intervention.

Cassowaries and other iconic wildlife of FNQ are now facing two main existential threats: habitat loss and climate warming. Habitat loss accounts for the majority of species extinction in Queensland. While climate change requires a prompt move away from fossil fuels into renewable energy sources, the construction of industrial-scale renewable energy developments – or any developments for that matter – on the high-biodiversity landscapes of our region is ill-considered. Losing our forests and grasslands will negatively impact the water cycle, contribute

to species loss, contribute to habitat loss, increase degradation, and fragment habitat. These will assuredly impact the capacity of our highly vegetated region to absorb carbon.

Wilderness and wildlife collateral damage

There are at least 17 large-scale renewable energy developments planned for FNQ and there may be more in the wings. The majority of these proposals impact the habitat of [EPBC](#) Listed Endangered or Vulnerable wildlife yet the requisite land-clearing will result in thousands of acres of vital habitat lost. According to recent estimates by ABC journalist Mayeta Clark, should all renewable energy proposals go ahead in Queensland, an estimated [13,332 hectares](#) of remnant vegetation will be cleared statewide and 90 per cent of the land clearing will take place in North Queensland.

The scale of impending habitat clearance required for so many proposed renewable energy developments in FNQ is catastrophic. Clearing that amount of landscape for “green energy” runs counter to any good sense, which suggests we conserve our wild places and high biodiversity habitat for future generations to enjoy.



[Greater glider](#), endangered in Queensland and vulnerable nationally



[Spectacled flying-foxes](#) are endangered and live on the Tablelands region

Ring of Steel Atherton Tablelands

We're confronted with a looming ecological disaster when we consider that, if approved, five industrial-scale wind developments are to be crowded into a small highly biodiverse pocket of the Ravenshoe region at the southern end of the Atherton Tablelands.

There are wind farms proposed for Chalumbin, Windy Hill, High Road and Mount Emerald. If all projects are approved, this is a minimum of 213 wind turbines within a short distance of each other on the Southern end of the Atherton Tablelands.

In painting this picture I hope that you can envisage the "ring of steel" that the wind developments will create, impacting rare and endangered migratory birds, raptors and bats in ways that have not been anticipated in any legislation.

See the videos on land clearing in the [Chalumbin](#) and [Kaban areas](#) near Ravenshoe.

The fading call of the Sarus Crane

The small populations of Brolgas and Sarus Cranes are beloved to the people of the Atherton Tablelands. A world-renowned specialist on these birds Dr Tim Nevard,

who lives in Ravenshoe, recently presented research on the impact this wind turbine "ring of steel" will have on nearby roosting Brolgas and Sarus Cranes. He reveals the five-kilometre buffer zones around Kaban and Chalumbin wind farms contain numerous confirmed roosting areas of these beloved birds.

Sarus Cranes are listed as vulnerable globally and are the world's tallest flying birds. They are universally loved and play a significant cultural role in many countries. They also play a key role in our Indigenous people's songlines and stories.

These graceful birds possess a complex emotional life and choose only one mate to bond with. When courting, they participate in an enigmatic dance together, leaping and bowing, trilling and trumpeting to each other in unison, a ritual reflected in images and folklore all over the world.

Globally threatened due to depleting wetlands, these remarkable birds are now under threat right under our noses from the above-mentioned progression of industrial wind farms on the Tablelands. It's truly a travesty.



Brolga (*Antigone rubicunda*)

Dr Tim Nevard says that “Biodiversity has always provided the crucial buffer for life on earth, mitigating the effects of previous climate catastrophes. Choosing between nature and wind power is therefore not an option. To secure the future we must have both. Careless destruction of biodiversity in our time of climate change can only bring on many more problems for future generations ... and badly located renewable energy projects should not be our legacy.”

Zoning doesn't account for cumulative impacts.

The [Queensland Renewable Energy Zone scheme](#) doesn't account for the cumulative ecological impacts of multiple renewable energy developments in North Queensland. There is no plan for a sensitive rollout of development. Developments are being rushed through with no community consultation and those impacted don't find out until the bulldozing has started. By then it's too late.

[Queensland State Code Section 23](#) was designed to ensure wind developments are appropriately sited. But the legislation fails to protect affected flora, fauna or scenic values in any way. There are “no prescribed outcomes” for impacted habitat, wildlife, watercourses and scenic values. This allows proponents a license to destroy during the construction process without real legal consequence.

On the site of the proposed Chalumbin wind farm, 200 species were found by ecologists during a short window of observation last year. It's estimated that there are many more species here yet to be witnessed. This gives one a sense of the sheer biodiversity of the area and what, or who is at risk if the wind farm development proceeds.

Sacred region

Chalumbin is a sacred region of high significance for the Jirrbal and Warrangu tribes and their clans' peoples. Locals refer to the area of Wooroora, Blunder Park, Blunder Creek, Glen Gordon and even Glen Ruth as Chalumbin (pronounced Chalumbn), seen as one of the last remote wilderness

frontiers. According to Jirrbal lore, Ancestors still reside in the forests of Chalumbin. The area also holds significance for our wider community – a region where the stories of colonial force are in living memory. If a wind farm is built here, the unique history of Chalumbin, embodied in the remnant scrubby trees, rocky outcrops and grasses, will be destroyed.

To conserve existing high biodiverse ecosystems and preserve vulnerable and endangered wildlife species, renewable energy developments should not:

- be located on areas of Matters of National Environmental Significance;
- be located on areas of Matters of State Environmental Significance;
- be located on any area that impacts vulnerable or endangered species or any location that impacts aquatic ecosystems or water quality;
- be situated on good quality agricultural land;
- be placed adjacent to World Heritage Wet Tropics Area.

This position is supported by the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) in their [QREZ Technical Discussion Paper Submission](#). Rainforest Reserves Australia argues that all renewable developments planned for FNQ that do not meet the above criteria be stopped.

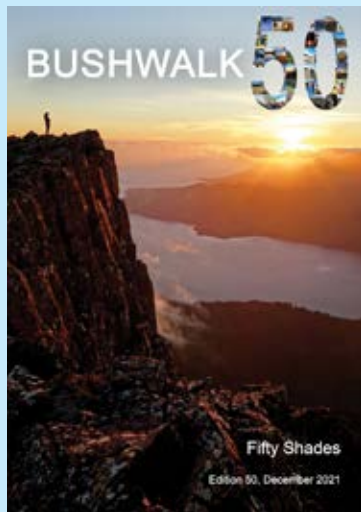
Action and links

We invite you to visit the parks and reserves of the Atherton Tablelands to experience the ecological significance of the region. If you are passionate, we encourage you to [find out more](#) and take action by writing to the Queensland State Environment Minister [Meaghan Scanlon](#) and Federal Environment Minister [Sussan Ley](#) and follow [Keep Chalumbin Wild Facebook](#) page to keep abreast of the campaign to Keep Chalumbin Wild.

The ABC had two recent articles about this matter, [The wind farms angering renewable energy fans](#), and [Background Briefing: The giant wind farms clearing Queensland bush](#).



Bushwalk Australia



Fifty Shades

- > Fifty Editions
- > Mount Kaputar
- > Sunset Remote Walk
- > Golden Celebration



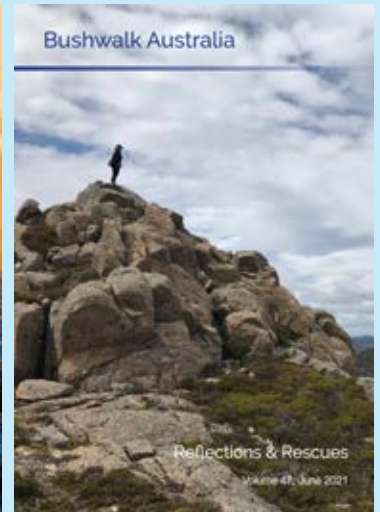
Epic Escarpments

- > Carnarvon Gorge-ous
- > Korrowall Buttress
- > Waking Up to Wilderness
- > National Parks News



Better Bushwalking

- > The Mount Hotham Diamantina Circuit
- > Night walking
- > NSW Great walks mistake



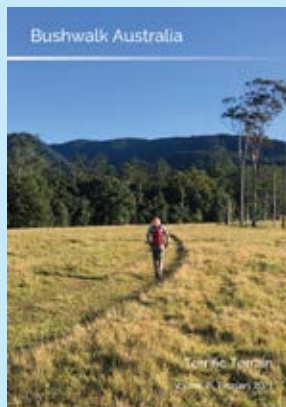
Reflections & Rescues

- > Junction Lake
- > Feathertop via Wilsons Prom
- > Swift Water Rescue Course
- > Archive - Glimpses of the past



Hidden Hikes

- > Nitmiluk Gorge
- > Boltons Hut
- > Can AI write an article?



Terrific Terrain

- > Helicopter Spur
- > Gibraltar and Washpool
- > Freycinet Circuit



Borderless Bushwalking

- > Ettrema Wilderness
- > Tripping in NSW
- > Western Macs



Resounding Rocks

- > Traversing the Winburndale Range
- > Malbena Matters!



COVID Contingencies

- > Barrington Tops
- > Mount Emmett
- > South West Cape circuit



Bushwalking Anew

- > Three Capes
- > Spirit of place



Staying Home

- > Mount Giles
- > Bushwalking in a pandemic



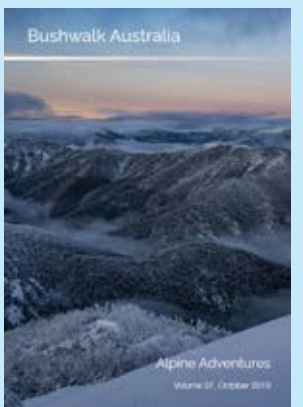
Fire and Fury

- > 2019-20 bushfires overview



Hills & Valleys

- > Orange Bluff
- > Walking on fire



Alpine Adventures

- > Hannells Spur Loop, NSW
- > AAWT