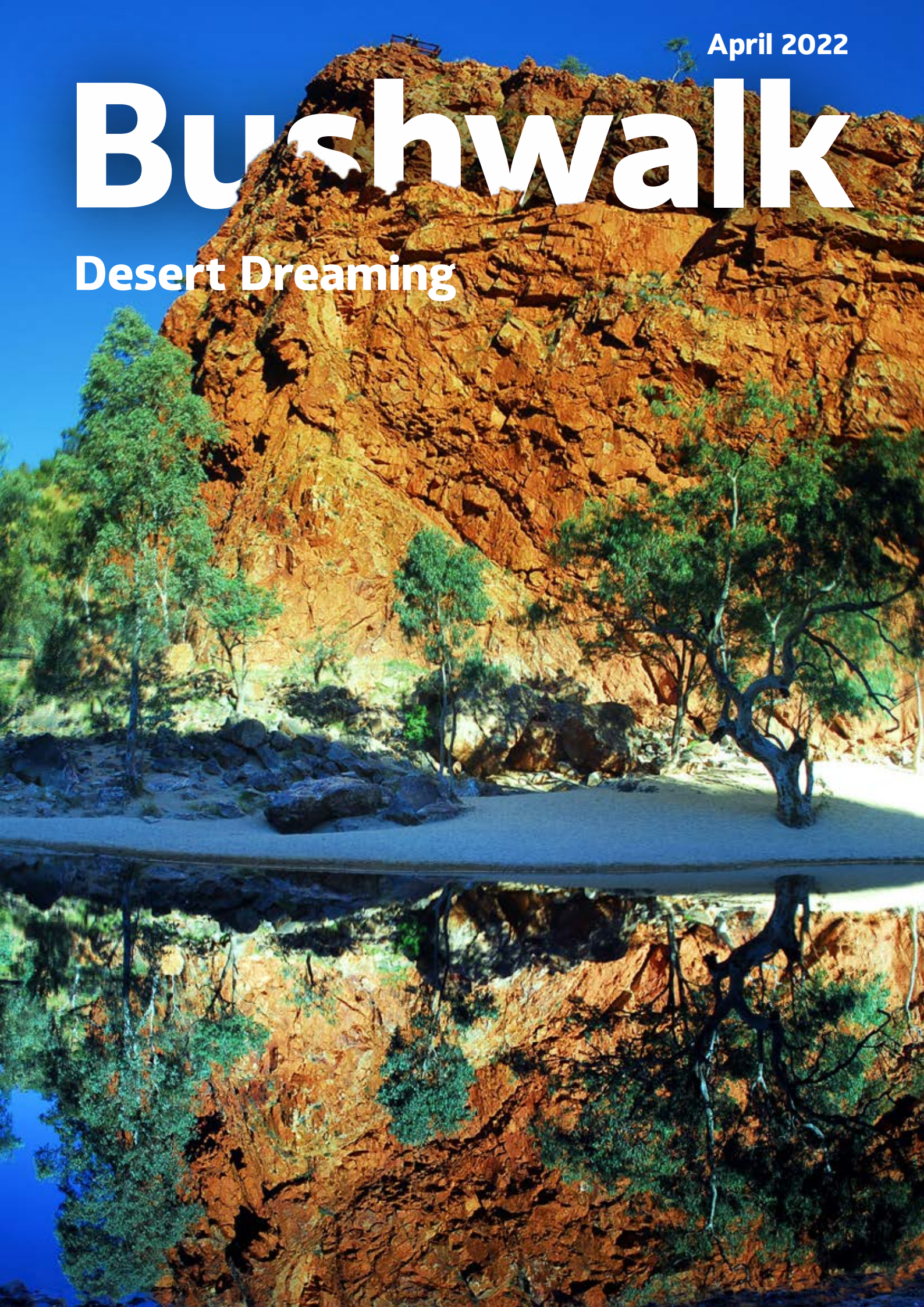


April 2022

# Bushwalk

Desert Dreaming





Bushwalk Australia Magazine  
An electronic magazine for  
<http://bushwalk.com>  
Edition 52, April 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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Please send any articles, suggestions or advertising enquires to Eva. We would love you to be part of the magazine, read our [Writer's Guide](#) to get started, and we are here to help.

The copy deadline for the June 2022 edition is 30 April 2022.

BWA Advisory Panel  
North-north-west  
Mark Fowler  
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#### 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.

Lake MacKenzie  
Brian Eglinton

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## From the Editor

Hi, I hope this edition finds you well.

This edition comes at a time when Australia is opening up at the (current) peak of our COVID infections and death rates. Many are mopping up from flooding and others still recovering from fires, with some trying to deal with all these and more. I am so glad we still have natural places where we can reconnect and enjoy at crazy times like these.

In this edition, Robert climbs Australia's 15 highest peaks, with some interesting weather - no spoilers! Matti guides us on one of the best day walks in NSW, the Grand Canyon in the Blue Mountains. Dotti gives us excellent advice and a great taste of the Jatbula Trail in the Northern Territory. Klaus Hueneker, AM, looks back on decades of involvement with the outdoors. Paul shows that there is more to choosing the material in your undies than you might expect. The Gardens of Stone in NSW is in danger, and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shows us what is going on and how to protect this amazing area. And of course trusty Sonya has a new recipe that beats them all.

I hope you can get out there and stay safe.

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](http://Bushwalk.com), [Wildwalks.com](http://Wildwalks.com) and [Overlandtrack.com](http://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.



## Video

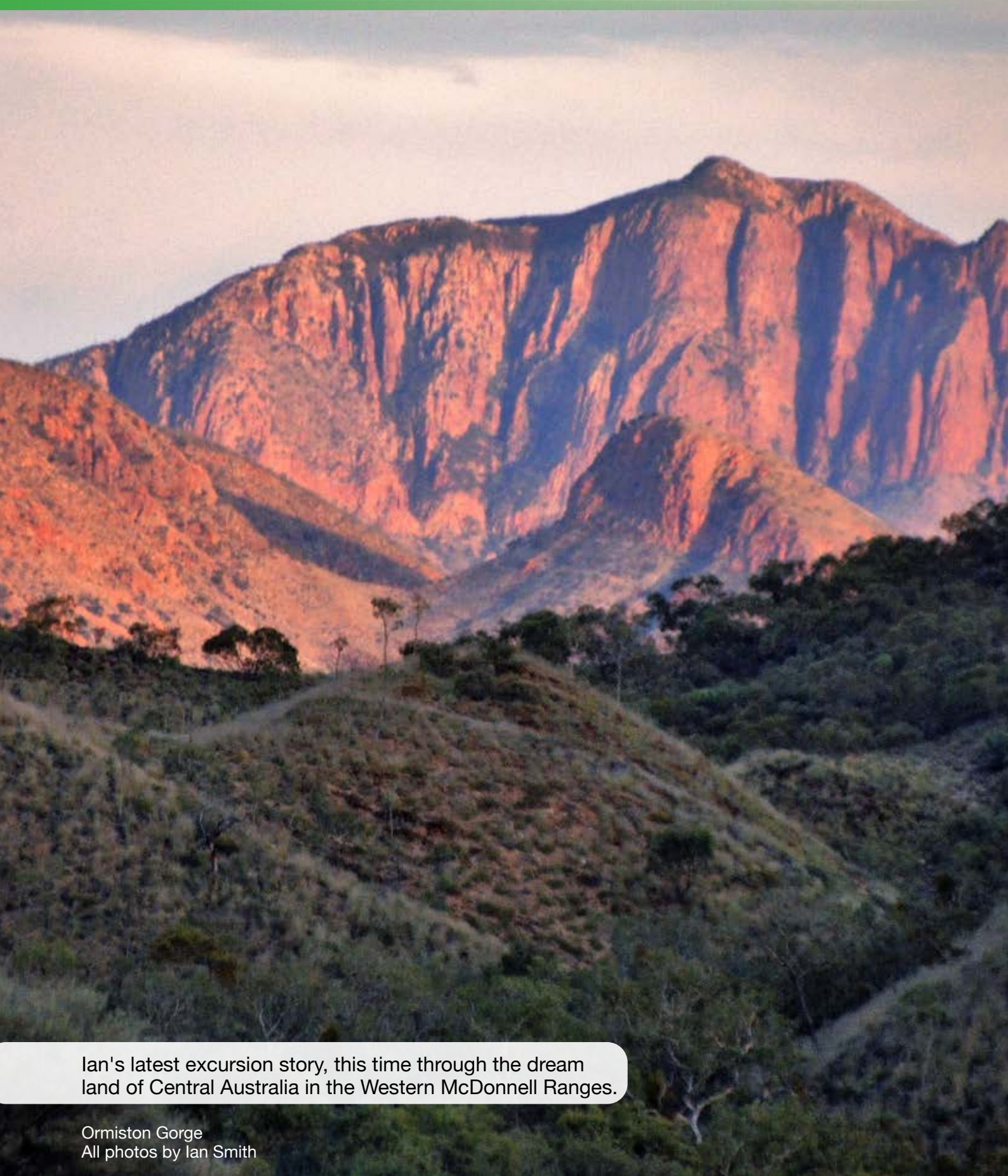
Join Josh Carr on his [13 day solo hike](#) along Larapinta Trail and enjoy the stunning scenery.





# Namatjira Dreaming

Ian Smith



Ian's latest excursion story, this time through the dream land of Central Australia in the Western McDonnell Ranges.

Ormiston Gorge  
All photos by Ian Smith



It's odd how selective one's memory can be. I couldn't tell you when my parents passed on, but I can remember sitting in our local cinema at Teralba, the town where I was raised, and seeing a black and white newsreel of Albert Namatjira being presented to the queen.

Photographs of his work were shown and immediately I liked what I saw. At that time, in 1954, Albert was at the peak of his powers, but other aspects of his life were in tatters. He'd been granted a grazing licence but had it taken away less than a year later. He bought a block of land in Alice Springs but wasn't allowed to build on it due to the racial climate of the day.

He'd married outside his "skin" and had been ostracised by the Aboriginal community, but when he started making money, he had up to 600 people wanting a "share".

Eventually, in 1957, he was granted citizenship, the first Aboriginal to be so blessed, which seems totally weird in today's more enlightened times. The appalling prejudice that existed then didn't allow native Australians rights in their own country.

Sadly, being granted these rights allowed him to buy alcohol which made him more in demand and, when sharing some with fellow artist Henech Raberaba, he was arrested and got six months' gaol, later commuted to three months, but he survived only days after his release and died of congenital heart failure in 1959. The main reason he was arrested was because an Aboriginal woman had been killed due to an alcohol inflamed argument, alcohol that Albert had indirectly supplied.

By then, his legacy was writ large on the landscape. The first indigenous person to be painted (by William Dargie) and win the Archibald Prize; he was the first Aboriginal to have his portrait on a postage stamp. Though talented at many forms of art, his outback watercolours, prompted by his mentor Rex Battarbee, are what Namatjira will be remembered for. Battarbee had been badly wounded in WWI and, unable to do heavy manual work, turned to art.

Over 60 years later, it's hard to believe my memory of Namatjira stuck, but when I first visited Hermannsburg, the village of



Ormiston Gorge



his origin, I could sense something. Then I walked into a dilapidated building and the spirit was here. Relatives and friends had their works hanging on the wall in what should have been a serious attraction, but only two lights were working in the four rooms, and you mainly relied on the dim light from outside to see the paintings and read biographies of the artists. Sadness was my main emotion when I left there.

Still, I reasoned that he had left people like me a legacy and I might have the opportunity now to pass it on.

Next, at Ormiston Gorge, I was primed for the Pound Walk; I'd pigged out on my Weetbix ration, all packed up with camera gear and was on my way before the sun flooded the camp. I hoped I'd be first away, but there was a Swedish couple reading the information board when I rolled up.

A minute later I headed off, strolling down to Ormiston Creek and beyond, heading east along a grassy valley on a well-worn narrow track. It was in shadow almost all the way until the trail rose from the water and went over a pass where I glanced back to see Mount Sonder being woken by the sun's early rays.

After about three kilometres there's a 500 metre diversion to the Pound View lookout. The walk went from ordinary to spectacular up the ridge with grand views in all directions. The soft light of post-dawn highlighted the ridges and the furrows of an aged landscape in the distant gorge. "In these timeless surrounds, it is easy to believe that civilisation is light years away", said the sign back at the camp.

On these walks you can't help but feel the power of nature, and begin to understand the spiritualism associated with such



Ormiston Gorge



places; surely they inspire us and deserve our reverence. Albert is writ large upon this landscape, not only on the interpretive signs but in what he felt for the land.

I like to think I felt a lot of it too on this walk; at certain ghost gums I feel I paused beside him, felt his presence as we gazed at the majesty before us. At one of the white trunks beside stagnant ponds I framed the tree around the range beyond before clicking and swore I had seen this image in a painting. Tramping on, a knowledge that this had changed something inside me wouldn't go away; I felt a refreshing insight into why indigenous people respect the land. Across the plain I stroll until the river is reached. Ormiston Creek is a tributary of the Finke River, the Territory's longest ... well, when it flows anyway. Down here, the stagnant ponds are the key to life; dragonflies, wasps, bees and all manner of other insects abound.

Returning to the trail, the colours of Ormiston were omnipresent as a purple layer was exposed below the bright orange cliffs and the occasional ghost gum, whose amazing roots reach all the way to the water table, stood out in stark contrast. I reached the long pool about the same time as a Swiss couple who were shaking their heads when they realised that, just across the water, was the place where they'd thought the trail had finished. After three hours of chasing me, they still had to cross it anyway, only from the opposite direction.

With due respect, we took off the requisite amount of clothing, in my case down to my underwear, and it still got a touch damp during the fording. I short-circuited along the bank and took the easy route back to camp where I lathered in the joy of a cool shower. I'd had an experience with Albert, and it had been special.



Ormiston Gorge



# 15 Highest Peaks in Australia in Four Days

Norbert Benko



Have you ever dreamed of climbing a continent's highest peak? For many, I am sure this question immediately evokes images of the Himalayas and the stunning Mount Everest. Whilst there would be few capable of tackling such heights, it's out of reach for the rest of us.

Sunset from Kosciuszko  
All photos by Norbert Benko



Australia's highest peak, Mount Kosciuszko, is only a quarter the height of the famous mountain. Summiting it is just a gentle few kilometres walk on tracks, then you're there on top of Australia at 2228 metres. Situated in the beautiful Kosciuszko National Park (KNP), the mountain is surrounded by beautiful lakes and streams.

We might not have the highest mountains in the world, but we certainly have the oldest. Our peaks have withstood the force of time, battered by millions of years with high winds and extreme weather to achieve their current beauty. The Australian Alps Great Dividing Range and KNP are unique. There is no other mountain range in the world where you can summit all 15 highest peaks within one pack carry hiking expedition.

I named it "15 Highest Peaks in Australia in 4 Days Expedition", and planning began. Mapping out a suitable trail proved challenging. Not only to ensure that all 15 peaks could be reached within four days, but also that the trail could be tackled with 20+ kilogram packs without ropes or climbing equipment. There is no better way to plan this than on a detailed topographic map where we could clearly see ridges and any cliffs. I will get into the details of the chosen trail later, but the walk was to start and finish at Charlotte Pass, near the ski resort.

Being a summer expedition, we set the date to start on 26 January, Australia Day. As I've mentioned "we" several times, it's only fitting to introduce the members now. We are a team of seven passionate hikers with experience from many corners of the world. Two members with experience in hiking in the Himalayas, including summiting 6000+ metre peaks, an experienced hiker from Quebec, Canada, two members originally from Iran and Scotland, our Captain and oldest member who has hiked almost every continent in the world, and of course me. Having such experience was comforting, and I knew that we could rely on each other no matter the circumstances.

Departure approached; anxiety levels grew, but the excitement of what we were about to embark on was insane. Backpacks were checked and rechecked to ensure we had everything to survive the four days, exposed to the elements at altitudes of 2000 metres. Weather forecast watching became a daily habit, and it wasn't looking great. The forecast for three out of the four days was thunderstorms, following a heatwave that preceded the entire week before our journey.

Then came D-day. We said our goodbyes to our families and loved ones and began the 500 kilometre drive from Melbourne to Jindabyne, a small town near the Snowy Mountains. It is one of the highest settlements of its size in Australia. It overlooks the beautiful Lake Jindabyne and serves as a gateway to Kosciuszko National Park.

After driving through Gippsland it was slow going through the Snowy River National Park on the gravel and unpaved roads, but that allowed us time to admire the scenery of the stunning Snowy River. Should you wish to extend your stay there are many camping sites on the way. For us though, it was a straight drive through to Jindabyne.

At Jindabyne we stopped overnight, and the next day drove to Charlotte Pass 43 kilometres away to begin the expedition. This was the last night of sleeping in dry, soft beds with the luxuries of kitchen and bathroom facilities. I don't know when I fell asleep or how many times I woke up that night, but one thing but one thing I recall quite clearly was waking up at 5:30 am. The first thing I did was to unpack the entire backpack and rechecked it for maybe the 100th time. This was day 1 when we left civilisation and headed into the mountains.

We drove the short distance to Charlotte Pass, arriving at around 8:30 am. The sky was a little cloudy but there was no sign of rain or other extreme weather.



Camp below  
Rawson Pass



### Day 1: Charlotte Pass, Twynam, 18 km

The first part of the day's itinerary was relatively easy, with a gradual ascent. We followed the well-travelled Main Range Track for about five kilometres and arrived at Blue Lake at the foot of Mount Twynam. After a short break to fuel up and take some photos, we followed the track for another kilometre or so, before joining the ridge that would eventually take us to the first three peaks of our expedition, which we would summit today. At this point, our experience showed. It was decided that we would leave our packs at the junction with the ridge and tackle the peaks with day packs only, then return to the intersection.

“The icy snow was a metre or two deep, and all this was in the middle of the Australian summer.

The following 12 kilometres were relatively easy-going with only day packs on. One thing to note is that there is water everywhere, with many streams from the melting snow. Yes, you heard me right. There is snow still up there in January. Therefore, you don't need to carry much water with you, maybe 1.5-2 litres in your pack is sufficient at any one time with constant refills. Some streams are clean, and the water doesn't need to be treated most of the time.

After about two hours from the junction, we reached the summit of Mount Twynam, 2195 metres. The views are stunning up there, and on the southern sides, the slopes were covered in snow. After a short break, we descended into a valley and climbed the next peak, Little Twynam, 2132 metres. The snow-

covered views from here are just exhilarating, and we knew we had to explore them before continuing onto the third peak of the day.

I could not believe my eyes. The icy snow was a metre or two deep, and all this was in the middle of the Australian summer. Just stunning. The melting snow created several small waterfalls and streams of fresh water. A short snow fight followed, and then we were off again through grassy and rocky terrain. At about 2 pm we reached the last summit of the day, the Tenison Woodsknoll, 2134 metres. The views of the Snowy Mountains from here are spectacular and need to be put on canvas for all to see.

As we slowly descended the ridge back to the junction, the sun and the gentle wind started to take a toll on some members. We returned to the junction at 5 pm and decided to set up camp nearby, as the next section of our journey was another peak, and we all needed a rest.

We found a flat plain on the southern side of the hill, just south of the Twynam turnoff, which proved to be the best decision made on this expedition. With camp set up we made some warm lunch/dinner; and some of us ascended a nearby hill to watch the sunset. It was partly cloudy, but the sun's rays created beautiful colours on the mountains - a relaxing time contemplating the day's 18 kilometre journey. As the sun set, the clouds started to come in, so we decided to call it a day and returned to our tents. The wind also started to pick up, but nothing could prepare us for what was to come in the morning.



The south side of Twynam



## Day 2: Carruthers, Northcote, Kosciuszko, 17 km

I woke up around 6 am to the relentless sound of the wind. It was insane. I looked outside and could not see past 15-20 metres. We were covered in white clouds with such wind gusts that we could not hear each other talking. To make things even worse, one of our team members had set up his tent some 100 or so meters from the rest of the group to be closer to a stream. This proved to be a huge mistake. He lost his orientation and could not find us for two hours and vice versa. Frustration grew as we should have been on our way, and instead, we were searching for one of our own. The number one rule to remember in any expedition is to stick together, and I am sure none of us will ever forget it. It was 10 am by the time we were all together again, and to add to the wind, the rain arrived. This was on a day we had planned to summit seven peaks.

We began by following the Main Ridge Track, with summits of the Carruthers Peak (2145 metres) and Mount Northcote (2129 metres) in zero visibility, slashed by the relentless wind and rain. Due to the weather, seven kilometres into the day we decided to walk all the way to below Mount Kosciuszko in the hope we could track back the next day and complete the other five peaks.

By around 2 pm we arrived under Mount Kosciuszko, and the weather had completely cleared, with the sun out again.

We set up camp in the valley north of Rawson Pass and decided to summit both Kosciuszko (2228 metres) and the nearby peak Etheridge Ridge (2188 metres) with just day packs. This gave us the opportunity to tackle the five peaks we missed out on the day before, as well as the remaining three, on the final day. The weather was kind to us the whole afternoon, so summiting was quite easy. We also managed to visit Lake Cootapatamba, beautiful.

Returning to our camp at about 6 pm, someone suggested that it would be nice to summit Kosciuszko for the sunset, so five of us went up again. The sun hid behind the clouds, but we were still given some gorgeous views of the Alps. Arriving back at camp at around 9 pm it was high time to sleep. The 17 kilometre day had it all, and we were grateful to be safe and progressing our quest to climb all 15 peaks, with eight completed in two days. Not bad, considering the extreme changes in weather. A thunderstorm came with the night, but we were all safe in our tents and exhausted from the day, so most of us slept through it well.



Looking north from Kosciuszko



### Day 3: Du Faur, Abbott Peak, Townsend, 14 km

The morning of day three started with cloudy skies but no rain and good visibility. Unfortunately, two of our team members decided to head back to Charlotte Pass and not complete the expedition. Without going into the reasons for their departure, it was a sad moment. We bonded so well over the first two days, and they will be greatly missed.

After saying our goodbyes, we decided to keep our camp as is and head out to the five peaks with day packs only. We set off at about 8 am, reaching the summit of Mount Du Faur (2159 metres) by 11 am. After this we went to Abbott Peak (2155 metres) and then on toward the second highest mountain in Australia, Mount Townsend (2209 metres). This mountain was considered the highest mountain in Australia for years. It was called Mount Kosciuszko until it was discovered it was smaller, and the names were simply switched. We reached the summit at around 1 pm and had a short break to replenish energy and of course, take photographs. The weather was holding up for us with only some low cloud cover around, and the morale in the group was upbeat. We then continued along the ridge summing Alice Rawson Peak (2170 metres) and then finally Muellers Peak (2129 metres), which overlooks Lake Albina.

By now, the bad weather was coming in fast, and we hurried back to our camp, arriving at around 5 pm. We were so lucky.

After this 14 kilometre day, within 30 minutes, the mountains were covered in grey clouds with zero visibility. The icy wind and rain started to beat on us. This was the coldest night by far. Everything was damp, and the only warmth available was in our sleeping bags. I don't remember if anyone set foot outside of our tents, except for a toilet break, of course.

An early night meant early morning; that was the plan. All agreed that we would abort the mission and return to Charlotte Pass the next morning if the weather did not improve.

### Day 4: Rams Heads, Charlotte Pass, 23 km

The weather gods were on our side as the morning greeted us with sunny breaks and partly cloudy skies.

We quickly had our breakfast, packed up the camp, and headed towards the three Rams Heads to complete our goal. After a four kilometre hike we arrived at a junction under North Rams Head (2178 metres). It was around 9 am with no sign of rain. We headed to the summit with day packs on our backs, reaching it around 10:30 am. We reached the summit of Rams Head (2193 metres) through the ridge an hour or so later. One more to go.



Serenity of the mountains, just below Rams Head summit



By now, everyone was on autopilot and still enthusiastic, with one last summit remaining. The route to the South Rams Head (2191 metres), took us through some valleys with plenty of water. The sun was shining, and it was pretty humid, so the water was refreshing. Here is where we saw our only snake, a red-belly black enjoying the sun on a rock. At about 1 pm we finally made it, the last and 15th peak of our expedition. High fives and hugs were all around as our exhausted bodies realised what they had achieved. After a well-earned break, it was time to head back to our packs and then walk out of the mountains to Charlotte Pass.

Exhaustion causes bad decisions, and it was no different with us. Tracking off the summit we decided to take a shortcut, thinking it would be easier than climbing over a smaller peak. What a wrong choice! It did take us around the peak, however, to get back we had to go over additional two smaller peaks.

By the time we reached the junction and our packs, it was 3 pm. The skies had turned completely dark, and peals of thunder could be heard in the distance. In front of us was another eight kilometres, four of which were through some level plains full of little streams and creeks.

As soon as we lifted our packs onto our backs, literally all hell broke loose. Heavy rain and lightning were all around us. The ground underneath turned to running creeks within minutes, and for the next three hours we put our heads down and walked among hundreds of lightning bolts that were hitting the ground around us. I am not exaggerating at all. Over 100 bolts hit the very plains we were walking on. All I could see from underneath my hood were flashes of light followed by its immediate rumble. This was the scariest thing I have ever lived through.

Ankle deep water and lightning just don't go well together. I don't think any lightning hit closer than a couple hundred metres from us, but the sound was deafening. I think all of us just accepted the fact that if it hits, it hits, and just kept walking through the water. With all the downpour, my pack felt heavier than when we started, but fear eliminated tiredness, and we kept on.

And as with previous days, about a kilometre away from Charlotte Pass, the weather cleared and the sun came out.

### Summary

We survived and climbed the 15 highest peaks in Australia in four days. There was certainly joy among us, but exhaustion could be seen on all of our faces at Charlotte Pass.

We not only battled through kilometres of ascents and descents to reach each peak, but the weather threw a few curve balls to make it more interesting. Adventure it was. All 72 kilometres. Great memories and great friendships formed on this expedition. A love of nature and exploration brought us together and bonded us forever. If you respect the mountains, they will reward you with unforgettable views and memories.



Norbert is a hiker, photographer and an adventure seeker. He was born in eastern Europe, and has backpacked and travelled to many parts of our beautiful world, finally settling in Melbourne in 2013. He founded Norby's Adventures, an online portal, portraying the beauty of our nature and inspiring readers to venture outdoors through his lens. Each post is a photographic journey and focuses on a hiking trail or a stretch of our beautiful coastline. In nature, we find peace. In hiking we find the challenge. Challenge yourself to reap the reward.

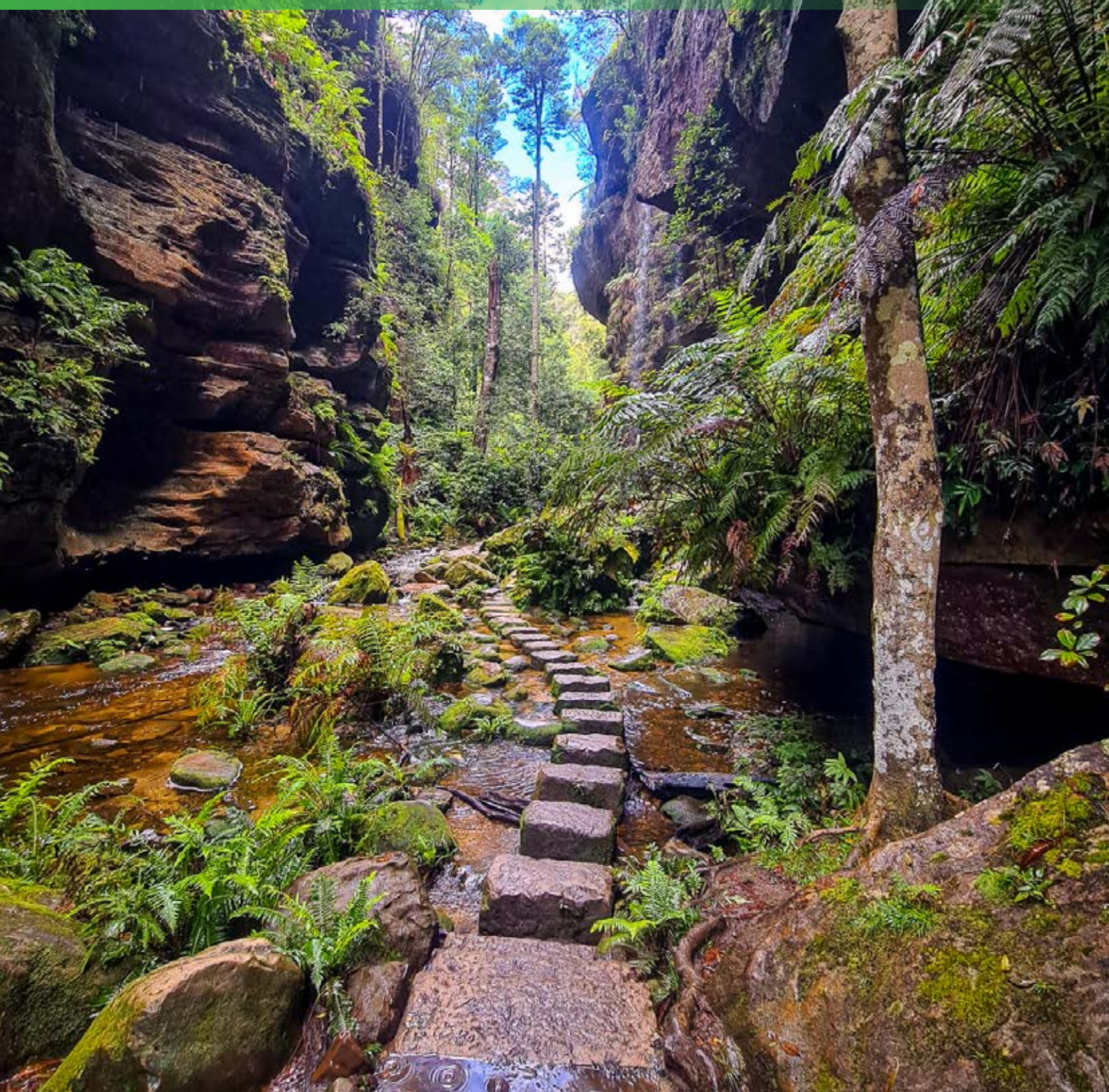
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# Grand Canyon Walking Track Blackheath, Blue Mountains, NSW

Matti Ramsay



When people talk about the Grand Canyon, there is usually only one place that comes to mind, *the* Grand Canyon in Arizona, USA. However, there is another Grand Canyon, right in Sydney's backyard near Blackheath in the Blue Mountains. While maybe not quite as grand a scale as the one in America, its lost world-like beauty is awe-inspiring in its own right.

Sandstone stepping stones through the main creek in the canyon  
All pictures by the author



My friend Chris and I had been talking about exploring the [canyon walk](#) for some time with much excitement, yet we hadn't quite made it out there until now. There had been around 40 mm of rain during the week, which is my preferred type of weather to visit the Blue Mountains. Although you compromise on big views, you get rushing waterfalls, flowing streams, and often low clouds and fog, which always help to create mood and atmosphere.

With both of us off work on Friday, we decided that would be the day we ventured into the canyon. I'm an early riser and usually out the door by 6-6:30 am, but Chris is a night owl, so we compromised and aimed to leave Sydney's inner west suburbs by 10 am. Due to stopping for coffee at Blaxland, we arrived at the Grand Canyon car park around noon.

### The start at Neats Glenn

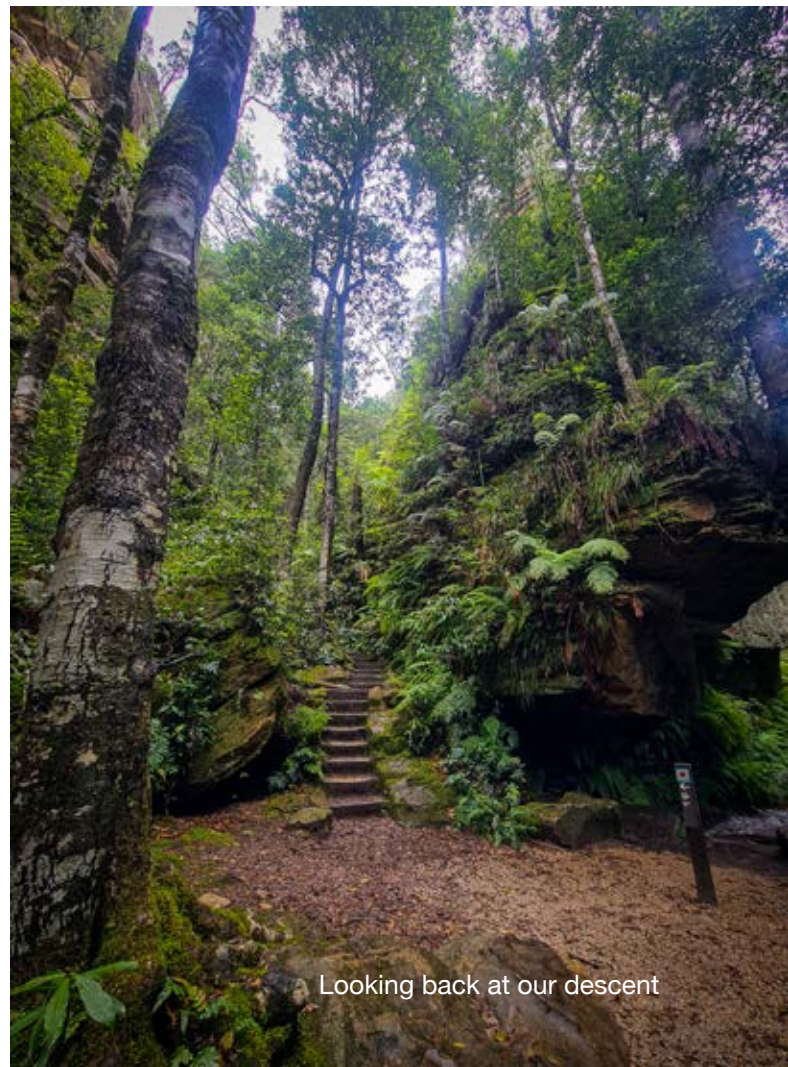
Parking is easy, with three main spots to park. The first one you will see is the smaller car park, Neats Glenn, which is right near the trackhead or end, depending on which direction you want to walk the track. If you keep driving past this, there are two more parking areas. The Grand Canyon car park as

well as Evans lookout car park at the end of the road, which is closest to Evans Lookout and the trackhead. Most people start here and walk the track in a clockwise direction. While there are a decent number of stairs at both ends, there are significantly more at the Evans Lookout end, which makes starting here the preferred option as there won't be as many to climb at the end of the walk. The track is a well defined and marked 6.3 kilometre loop track and there is a path at the top to walk back to the car park where you left your car.

Of course we did it the harder way and parked at Neats Glenn, walking the track in an anti-clockwise direction, unknowingly leaving the big climb to the end. We organised our water and I got my camera ready and began our walk. The descent on the steps begins almost immediately, zigzagging through the dry sclerophyll forest. There are a variety of native shrubs and grasses, Banksias and wattles with bright flowers of reds and yellows. I can hear white browed scrub wrens busily chatting as they dance through the dense foliage, only allowing us a moment to spot them.



The track runs behind this waterfall



Looking back at our descent



### Down to the canyon

The stairs become shorter and steeper and the track becomes narrow, with handrails to guide us along the track which is carved into the sandstone rock. The vegetation begins to transform from the browns and greys into dense layers of green rainforest, with thick moss covering rocks and walls and ferns line the track's edge. Everything was saturated from the recent rain, so be prepared to get your feet wet, but remember, that's part of the fun.

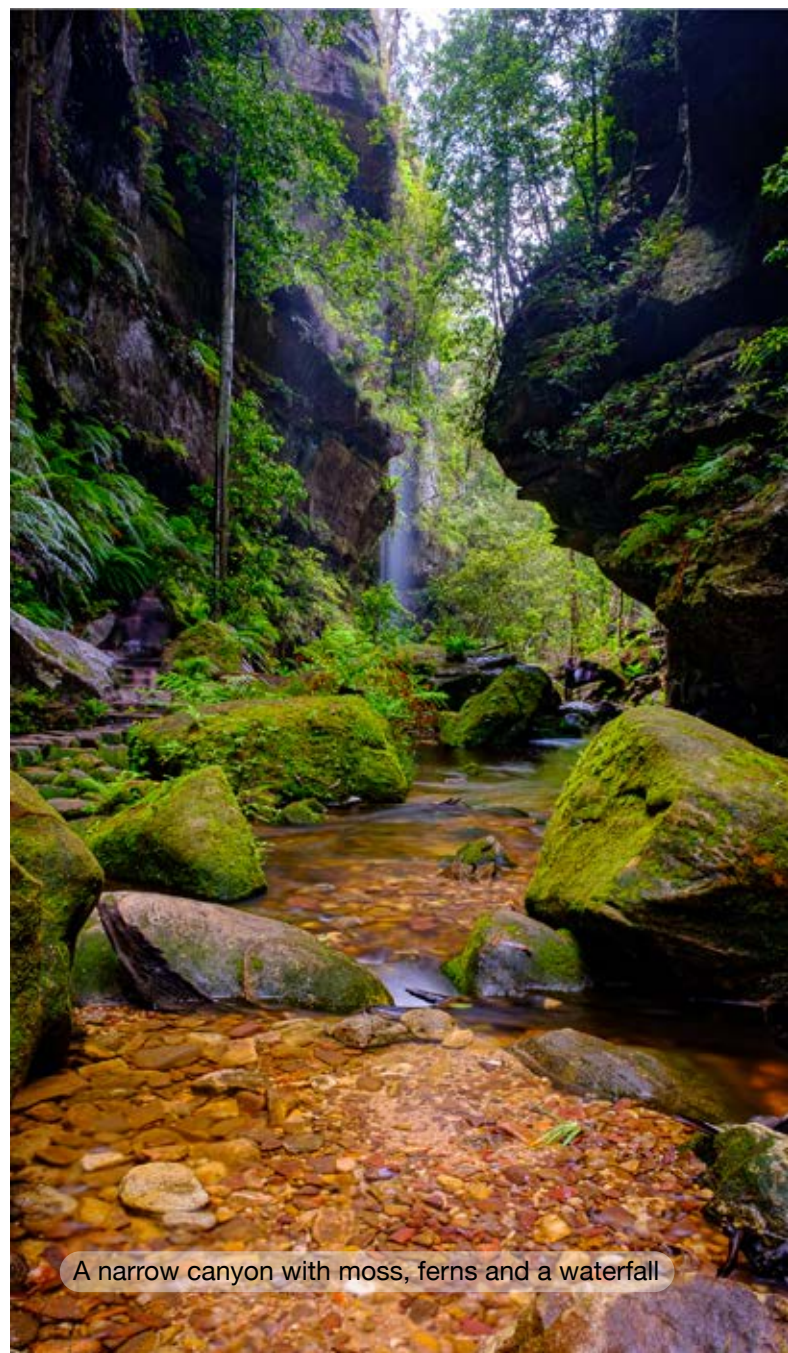
After this, the canyon opens up a little here and we look out over a forest of tree ferns, like a soft sea of green. Continuing on the canyon widens again, letting in much more light and returning to the dry sclerophyll-type vegetation similar to the top of the plateau, dominated by eucalypts, climbing tall to maximise the sun before the canyon walls

block out the light. We haven't yet reached the canyon floor at this stage. The track follows the edge of the canyon walls and begins to climb a little before then dropping into what's known as the Rotunda. The track goes to the right, and to the left there's a massive rock overhang. Walking underneath there is a creek at the end, flowing down from above, running along the far side of the canyon wall. If you started at the Evans lookout end, this would be a good spot to have a rest and refuel with some water and snacks before beginning your climb out of the canyon. For us, the best was yet to come.

Continuing on with the track we come to a small tunnel through some rocks, it is completely dark inside and I can't see where I'm putting my feet, treading carefully, the tunnel bends around and there is enough



One of many creek crossings



A narrow canyon with moss, ferns and a waterfall



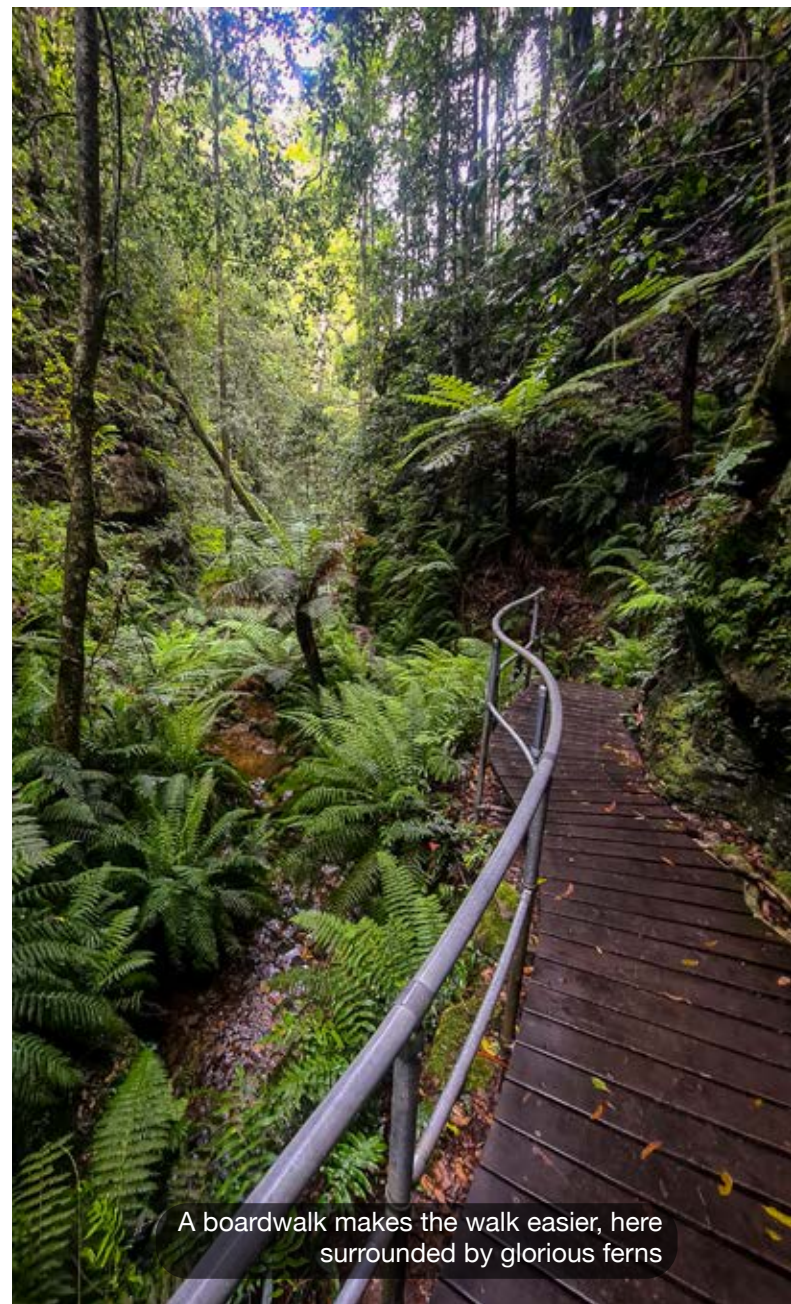
light from the other side to see now. On exiting the tunnel, we are greeted with a beautiful waterfall. The morning's rain means that there is plenty of water pouring over the edge, so I find a spot on some boulders to take a couple of photos. The track runs behind the waterfall, so you get to walk under it and with this much water flowing you can't avoid getting a little bit wet. There are some nice flat rocks here where you can sit and take it all in.

At this section, the canyon narrows quite significantly and the track becomes a ledge on the right side running underneath rock overhangs. There is a hand rail on the left side before dropping down deep into the canyon. You can't see the bottom here but you can hear the water rushing through the canyon below. We follow this section for a little while before bending to the right and then there's a steep drop where the track

seems to be carved out between rocks with sandstone steps placed to make the descent easier. There's a lovely little creek flowing down the right side and I can't resist stopping for more photos. Continuing our descent leads us to the canyon floor where it really becomes spectacular. The main creek is full and flowing, with streams leading into it from the track which crosses over the creeks and streams multiple times with the help of sandstone blocks. With so much water, wet feet are unavoidable. I could spend all day down there taking photos but also just watching, listening, breathing it all in. Staring up at cliffs and rock overhangs that make up the canyon walls, covered in moss and ferns and other plants growing out of cracks, ledges and anything that will hold enough to sustain them. Water showers over the edge, the creeks are crystal clear and mountain crayfish are easily visible, given away by their bright orange colour.



Sandstone steps through a sea of vibrant green ferns



A boardwalk makes the walk easier, here surrounded by glorious ferns



As we carry on criss-crossing the creek once again, we pass the start of the Rodriguez Pass track, there are actually a couple of other tracks that lead off the Grand Canyon walking track for those who want to turn their hike into a full day or multi-day hike. At this point we head to the left and up some sandstone stairs, surrounded by more glorious tree ferns, which continue to cover the canyon floor along a creek to our right of the track. We hit a section of timber boardwalk with an overlook which provides us with a view back towards where we've just come from, rock cliffs on the right and a sea of green tree ferns below us.

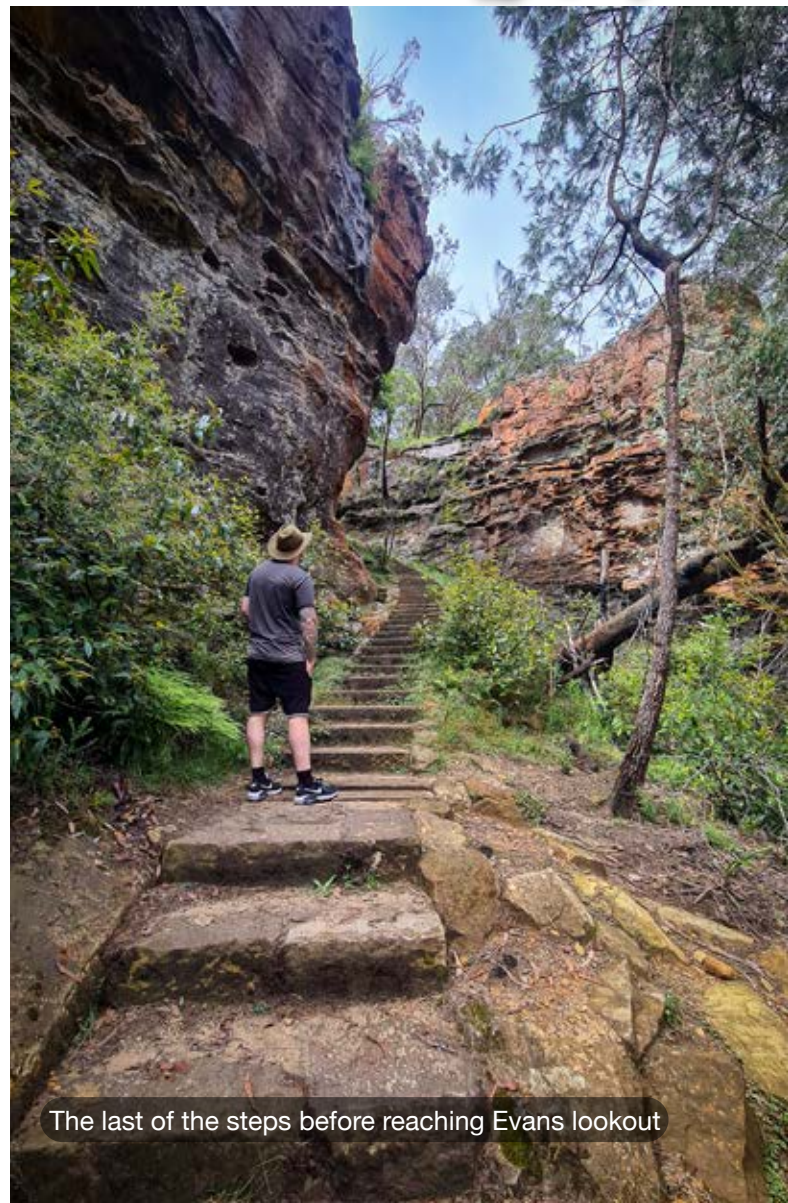
### 1000 steps up to Evans Lookout

As we turn to keep going, we pass a couple who kindly inform us that we don't have far to go but there are about 1000 steps to climb before we reach Evans Lookout. Remembering I'm not at my fittest right now and wishing I had not just been told that, we push on, psyching each other up for the climb. While there's more than a

few steps the hike isn't as hard as I was expecting. The landscape changes as we rise out of the canyon into more of a winding gully, with evidence of the 2019-20 bushfires. Vegetation is still somewhat sparse and blackened tree trunks are now woolly with new growth sprouting to life. Life has returned. There are views through the eucalyptus trees across the Grose Valley and we can see cliffs on the other side. We're almost at the top, with sandstone stairs leading us between two rock faces before the ground begins to level out and we arrive at Evans Lookout. The breathtaking views across the Grose Valley leave us in awe, looking across to Mount Banks to the north, the perfect way to end the Grand Canyon walk. We still need to get back to the car with a nice flat 1 kilometre walk from the lookout back to Neats Glenn. Despite finishing with the longer climb, we are elated and invigorated by the incredible sights that we experienced from the walk.



Due to recent rain the waterfalls were flowing well.



The last of the steps before reaching Evans lookout





A beautiful creek and moss-covered rocks beside the track



# Hiking the Jatbula Trail

Dotti Mazga

Ahhhh, the Jatbula Trail. Even just saying the name brings a smile to our faces.

Pristine waterholes. The incredible views of the craggy Arnhem Land escarpment. Ancient rock art. This hike is truly special and should be high on any adventurer's bucket list. We feel pretty confident saying it's one of the best things to do in the Northern Territory and one of the best multi-day hikes in Australia. Trust us; you're going to love it.

In this guide to the Jatbula Trail, you'll find all the information you need to get yourself organised and out enjoying the trail.

Sweetwater Pool  
Dotti Mazga



## What is the Jatbula Trail?

The Jatbula Trail is an epic 62 kilometre hike that traverses [Nitmiluk National Park](#) up in the top end of Australia's Northern Territory. This is one of Australia's best hikes, featuring magnificent waterfalls tumbling from high quartzite cliffs, shady monsoon forests, and stunning Jawoyn Aboriginal rock art. The Jatbula Trail takes you up onto the Arnhem Land Escarpment, where you set up camp each day at spectacular waterholes, with no saltwater crocodiles. Small numbers and a set itinerary make this more of a complete hiking "experience" to be enjoyed rather than a race to the end. Take your time and soak in the area – this is one hike that you're going to want to draw out and savour. I call this "holiday hiking", and it's fantastic.

Zandy and I hiked this trail in June 2021 and fell absolutely in love with it. Since we moved to the Northern Territory in 2019, we had heard rave reviews about the Jatbula, and after finishing it, we completely understood what all the fuss was about.

## The Jatbula Trail Overview

Location	Nitmiluk National Park, Northern Territory
Length	62 kilometres
Time	5 or 6 days
Season	1 June – 30 September
Type	One-way hiking
Limit	15 people per day
Bookings	Required
Permit cost	\$116 or \$145 per person (depending on how many nights you choose)
Accommodation	Camping
Start	Nitmiluk Visitor's Centre at Nitmiluk Gorge/ Katherine Gorge
Finish	Leliyn/Edith Falls
Difficulty	Moderate
What to expect	Spectacular waterholes, few people, ancient rock art and the chance to experience an ancient Aboriginal songline

## Location

Nitmiluk National Park is just outside Katherine, 320 kilometres south of Darwin, the capital of the Northern Territory. We're talking outback territory here, where the desert meets the tropics. We love this part of the Northern Territory; not only is it beautiful with tons of fun things to do, but it's also culturally significant, and you can feel the ancient history around you.

## Culture

One thing that makes this hike so special is the cultural significance of the trail. Everything about this trail is embedded with the deep spiritual and historical connection for the Jawoyn people, an Australian Aboriginal cultural group, and Nitmiluk National Park's traditional owners.

The Jatbula Trail follows an ancient Jawoyn songline and hunting route. We're talking ancient – think in the area of tens of thousands of years old.

By walking the trail, you follow the footsteps of generations of Jawoyn people who traditionally travelled through parts of this magnificent country.

The trail is named after Peter Jatbula, a Jawoyn elder and traditional owner who was instrumental in securing land rights for his people.

Nitmiluk is a Jawoyn word that translates to "Cicada Place". The name comes from a dream-time story for the Jawoyn people, and the area is an important place for the Jawoyn. It's a culturally rich and significant area, and the Jawoyn have graciously allowed the trail to be opened to public use. For this, we couldn't be more thankful.

## The trail

The Jatbula Trail is specifically designed as an experience, and it must be hiked in one direction only, from Nitmiluk Gorge (Katherine Gorge) to Leliyn (Edith Falls). All walkers must follow a set itinerary and camp in a designated campground each night. You cannot stay more than one night in each campground and must move on each day.

“The trail is named after Peter Jatbula, a Jawoyn elder and traditional owner ...”



While this may sound off-putting to many independent travellers (and it did to us before we did it), don't worry about it. It does help build the unique atmosphere of the walk, and we didn't find it any hassle at all.

You can choose to walk the trail in 5 days (4 nights) or 6 days (5 nights). While the hike is precisely the same with either option, you spend a night at Sweetwater Pool Camp in the more extended version, whereas in the shorter version, you hike on to the end rather than camping at Sweetwater Pool.

One of the best features is that the Jatbula is limited to 15 hikers a day, so you'll never feel crowded and have plenty of space to enjoy the scenery.

### Hiking season

Due to the extreme heat and the onset of the wet season after October, the Jatbula Trail is usually hiked from 1 June to 30 September. Temperatures can rise to over 40 °C from October to late November, so we think it's a good idea to follow the recommended guidelines!

The trail is open between 1 October and 31 May. However, you must be experienced, well prepared, and need special permission. You must apply in writing for special permission to [jatbula.trail@nt.gov.au](mailto:jatbula.trail@nt.gov.au).

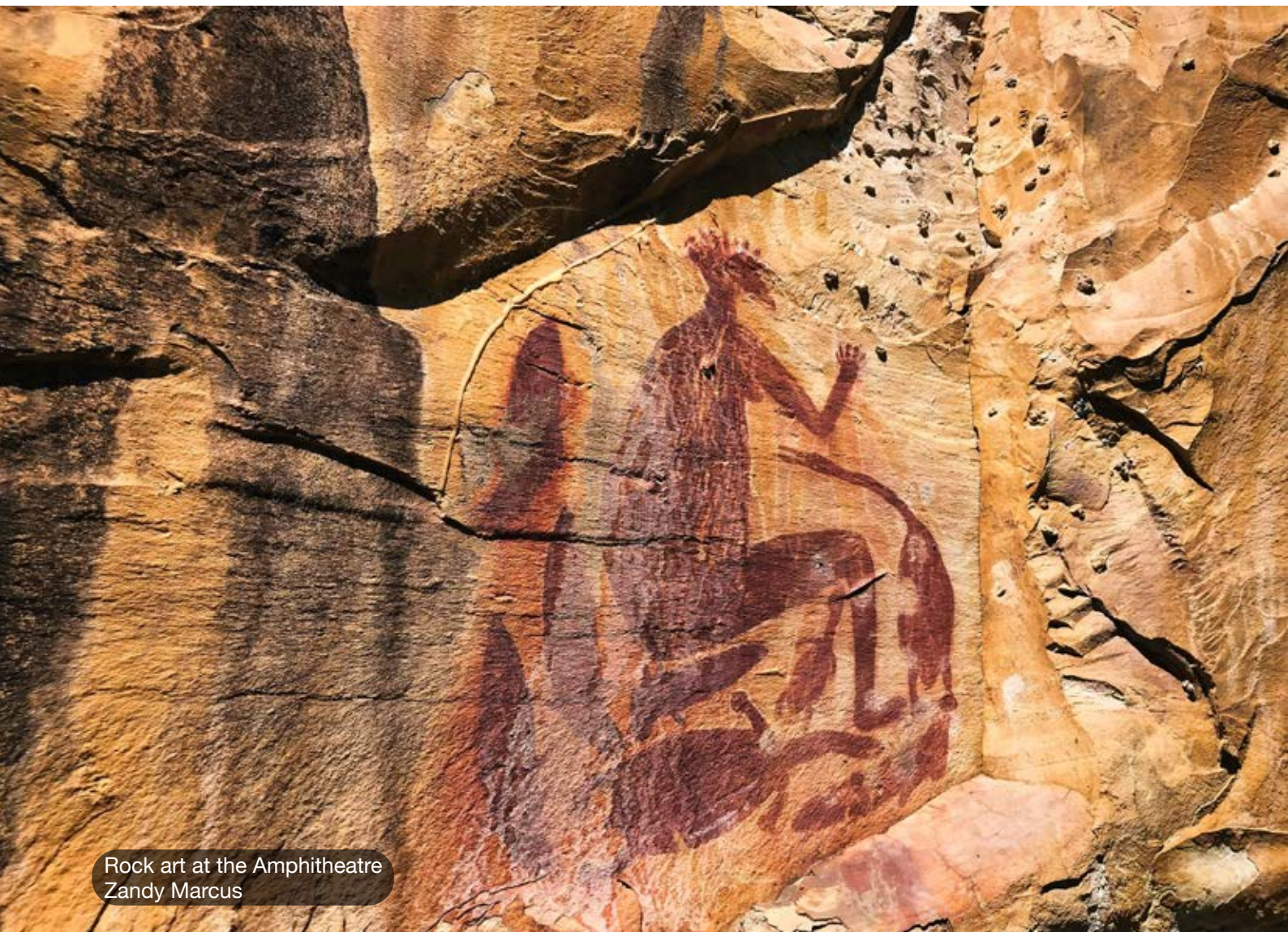
Due to the unforgiving conditions and risk of flood outside the regular season, we do not recommend undertaking the trail in the off-season.

### Best time to walk

In our opinion, the best time to hike the Jatbula is in June. Not only are the temperatures relatively cool, but it's also the start of the dry season, so the waterholes are all still very full from the previous wet season. It's remarkable how much they dry up throughout the dry season. Getting in early means the water is fresh and clean, and the heat is significantly less oppressive.

### Booking

Booking is where things get tricky - the hardest part of the Jatbula is getting a spot in the first place. The Jatbula Trail must be booked, and a note of warning here – this



Rock art at the Amphitheatre  
Zandy Marcus



hike is extremely popular, which means that it books out very fast. When we booked in 2020, it booked out within one hour! So, to get a spot, you need to be ready at the time bookings open.

### Hiking independently

The Jatbula Trail is an easy hike to do independently. It's very beginner-friendly, and we shared the trail with many first-timers. We encourage all people to give it a go. To hike the trail independently, you simply book via the NT Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security's online booking system.

“It's very beginner-friendly ...”

When you book, select your date (or any available date!) and then choose either the four or five night option. Once you proceed to pay, wait for the confirmation email to come through; this is how you know it was successful. Make sure you get the confirmation email – we have heard many stories of false-positive bookings.

The NT has recently introduced a [new online booking system](#) for the trail.

### Hiking in a tour group

Hiking as part of a tour group is a very popular way of walking the track. Some people do this to meet other like-minded individuals, feel a sense of security or just because they couldn't get tickets through the online booking system. Just note that walking in a group tour is much more expensive, \$1500 – \$2500 per person, if not more.

There are several companies offering group walks.

[Trek Tours Australia](#)  
[Gecko Canoeing and Touring](#)  
[World Expeditions](#)  
[Australian Walking Holidays](#)

When we hiked the trail, we met a group from Trek Tours Australia, and everyone on tour raved about the experience. The guides were also very friendly and knowledgeable.

### Waitlist

If you aren't able to get a ticket when bookings open, there is a waitlist, and we know many people that have been able to

get a spot this way. Contact the Nitmiluk National Park Booking Office on 08 8973 8821 and ask to be put on the waitlist. Should a spot become available, the Park office will contact you to let you know.

Cancellations inevitably happen, and vacant spots always pop up, so if you can be flexible, this is another good way to get in.

### Cancellations

Unfortunately, if you cannot make the hike, Nitmiluk does not issue refunds for cancellations. If you cancel, you forfeit your spot and the amount you paid for your permit.

### Transportation – getting there and around

There are a few different ways to get to the Jatbula Trail. Most are pretty expensive. However, if you are adventurous, it can be much cheaper. Adventure and affordable – our favourite!

### Starting the hike

The closest major airport is Darwin International Airport, which has regular flights to most capital cities in Australia and some international destinations. From Darwin there are three ways to get to Katherine, 312 kilometres:

1. fly, daily service;
2. rent a car; and
3. take a bus, daily services with [Greyhound](#)

One way of getting from Katherine Airport to the Katherine is to organise a taxi with one of the many Katherine taxi companies. It may be worthwhile to book a taxi to avoid waiting times and perhaps to agree upon a rate with the driver.

The track starts at the Nitmiluk Visitor's Centre at Nitmiluk Gorge, approximately 30 kilometres from the town of Katherine.

The easiest way to get to the Jatbula Trail is to drive there by car. Public parking is available at both ends of the trail. If you do not have a car, the first step is to get to Katherine. Katherine has an airport, which is mainly used for smaller, regional flights.

Once you get to Katherine, you can get a taxi to the start of the hike at the Nitmiluk Visitor's

“... if you are adventurous, it can be much cheaper.”



Centre (30 kilometres). Alternatively, you can hitchhike (this is the adventurous and affordable part). There are usually many cars going between the two, and it shouldn't be hard to get a lift.

### Finishing the hike

The track starts at Nitmiluk Gorge and ends at Leliyn, so you need to manage this. Leliyn to Katherine is 63 kilometres or approximately 45 minutes drive. Leliyn to Nitmiluk Gorge is 90 kilometres or roughly a one hour drive.

If you have two vehicles, park one at each end and do shuttle runs. Easy and cheap. If you only have one car, there are three ways you can do this:

1. Park at Nitmiluk Visitor's Centre, then make your way back from Leliyn when you finish the hike; or
2. Park at Leliyn and make your way to Nitmiluk Visitor's Centre on the first day of your hike.
3. Park at Katherine, go to Nitmiluk Visitor's Centre.

Whichever you choose, be sure to tell the parks desk or Leliyn kiosk your name, car details and return date.

To get back, you have the following two options.

### Shuttle service

A shuttle service provides transport from Leliyn to either Katherine or Nitmiluk Visitor's Centre every day. You could arrange this for either before or at the end of your hike (but as the shuttle leaves at 3:00 pm each day, if you want to leave your car at Leliyn you will need to arrange the shuttle the day before your hike starts).

This option is pretty pricey. Leliyn to Katherine is \$55 per person and to Nitmiluk is \$75 per person. However, there is a minimum car charge of \$285, so if it's only two of you, it will actually cost \$142.50 each!

You can arrange the shuttle via [Gecko Canoeing and Trekking](http://GeckoCanoeingandTrekking.com) at either [gecko@nttours.com](mailto:gecko@nttours.com) or 0427 067 154.

### Hitchhiking

Another option is to leave your car at one end and hitchhike to the other. This is what we did, and it was very easy. (We're coming back to the theme of adventurous and affordable again).

We left our car at the Nitmiluk Visitor's Centre at the start of our hike with the intention to hitchhike back at the end. Despite the Leliyn car park being very full, it was a pretty slow start to our hitchhiking attempt. We had many cars drive right past us (some smiling,



The top of 17 Mile Falls  
Dotti Mazga



others avoiding eye contact), and it took about 20 minutes of steady traffic before we were finally picked up and dropped off at the highway. But, from there, it was easy cruising. At the highway, we were quickly picked up and brought to Katherine and then got a ride from Katherine to the Nitmiluk Visitor's Centre.

I think this is a very doable option. I mean, since you've been hiking (or will be starting to hike), you won't have much on you, and there's heaps of traffic going between the two locations. Of course, it's all up to what you're comfortable with, but if it's something you'd consider, I say go for it.

### How much does it cost to hike the Jatbula Trail?

The fees for the Jatbula changed as of March 2022. It used to be a ridiculously cheap hike at \$3.30 per night.

The price you pay depends on how long you decide to be out on the trail. You can choose to hike the Jatbula Trail in either 5 days and 4 nights, or 6 days and 5 nights. If you choose the former, your permit price is \$116 per person, and for the latter, it will be \$145 per person. Considering the quality of the experience, I still think this is an excellent value.

In addition to your permit fees, you will need to consider your transportation costs (see above) and your ferry across the river (see below). You will also need to bring all your own gear, fuel and food.

### What to expect – practicalities

The Jatbula Trail is a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience, and you can expect beautiful swimming holes and incredible rock art. But it's also important to consider the practicalities.

“... you can expect beautiful swimming holes and incredible rock art.”

### What's the weather like?

Even in the hiking season (1 June to 30 September), the weather can be pretty warm, and this is something you'll definitely need to be prepared for. When we hiked in June (the coolest month), we still had some days

reaching 32-33 °C. It will be even hotter in August and September. People say the heat is the most challenging thing about the hike, and multiple people are evacuated each year due to heatstroke.

So, you need to prepare for the heat. The best way to do this is to hike early in the morning. Luckily, most days are pretty short and only require a few hours of walking, so we were almost always finished by midday.

Even in the cooler months, I would say 2:00 pm is probably the latest you'd want to be out on the trail.

“... 2:00 pm is probably the latest you'd want to be out on the trail.”

In September, most people start well before sunrise to get a good start before the heat sets in.

### Difficulty

The hike isn't particularly challenging, and anyone with a reasonable degree of fitness should be able to complete it. The first day includes some climbing onto the Arnhem Land escarpment, but it's pretty flat going from then on. However, this is a hike where you are expected to carry all of your own gear and supplies (even in the guided options), so you will be carrying a pretty heavy pack every day.

To assess whether you're able to finish the trail, you should be able to walk for 3-4 hours a day with a 15 kilogram pack.

### Water, food and rubbish

There is ample drinking water everywhere, so there is no need to carry large amounts of water. Coming from the arid environment of Central Australia, we were used to water paranoia on our hikes and started by carrying many litres with us at a time. By the second day we had come to our senses and would carry approximately two litres at a time. You're usually only an hour or so from a water source, and every night you camp at a different water hole.

While you can drink water at each campsite, we recommend treating it. Our go-to method is via Steripen. However, Aquatabs (which you can pick up at any chemist) are also a good option.



You will need to pack all of your food. Dehydrated meals such as Backcountry Meals are a good choice, if not a bit pricey. We experimented with dehydrating our meals. We also recommend trying instant pasta packages, couscous, and ramen for hiking meals.

As with all hikes in national parks, you must pack out all your rubbish. Carry a few small bags (double bag it just in case of leaks) and carry it with you. We decant as much food as possible before hiking to limit packaging.

### Safety

There are emergency call devices at each campsite, so we didn't feel it was necessary to hike with a personal locator beacon (PLB). As with all hikes in Australia, you should be mindful of snakes and always carry a first-aid kit with a snake bite bandage. The most significant risk on this hike is heat, so as we've said, make sure you're walking early in the day to minimise any risk. Electrolytes are useful.

You must complete a mandatory safety briefing before you even get on the trail. These are held at 8:00 am and 3:00 pm each day. If you take the 7:00 am boat, you must attend the 3:00 pm safety briefing the previous day. If you take the 9:00 am boat, you can choose which one to attend. This is a very comprehensive briefing, going through all the information you need to ensure you're safe on the trail.

Then, the fun begins!

### The trail

#### Day 1: Nitmiluk Gorge to Biddlecombe Cascades, 8.3 km

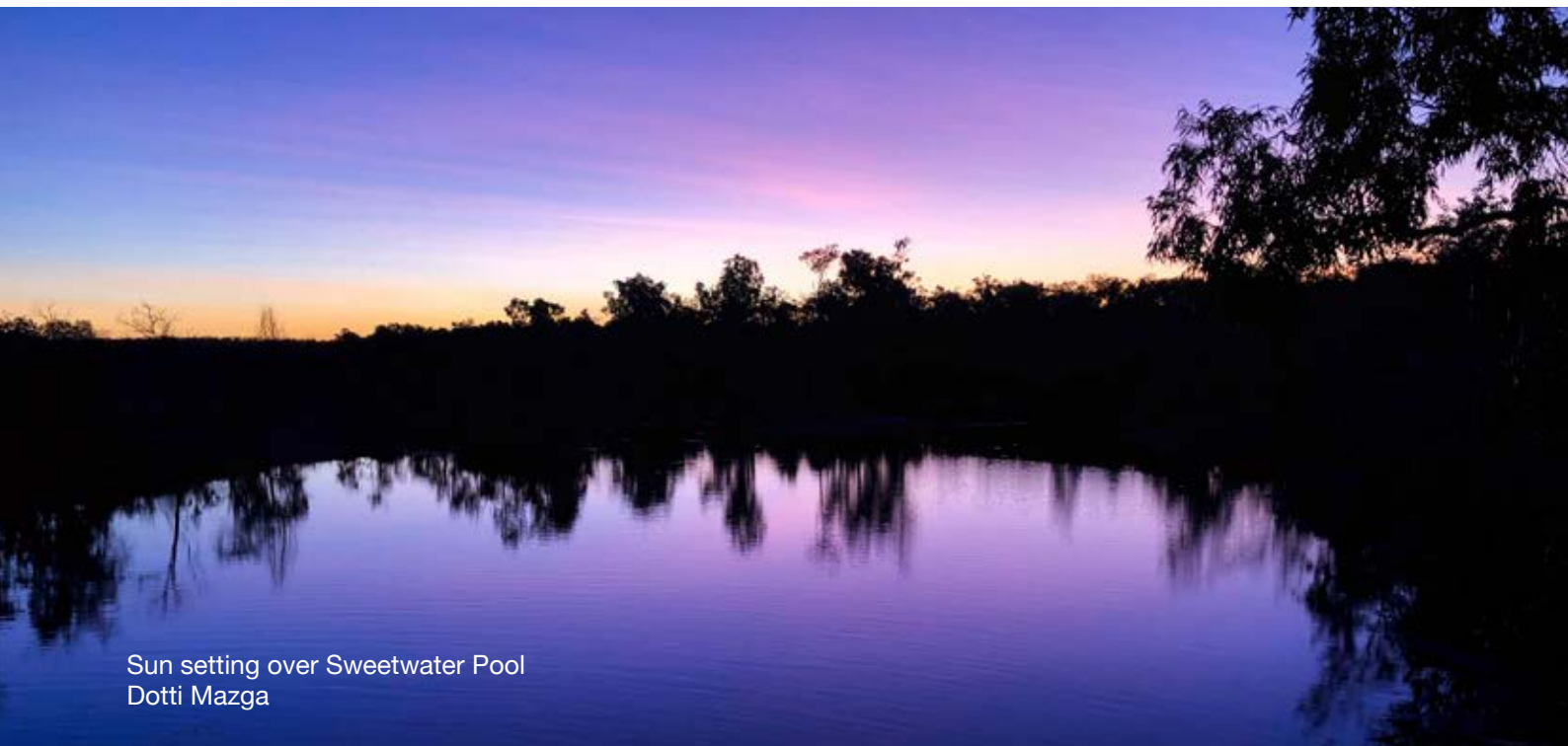
The hike begins with a boat trip across the Katherine River. This is a 2-3 minute shuttle at two times, 7:00 am and 9:00 am. Do not get your hopes up for any scenic cruise here. This ferry is \$15 and must be [booked in advance](#). Be sure to have your permit with you as it will be checked, and it is a condition of entry that you carry it with you at all times.

Once you're across, you're officially on the trail, marked by the blue triangles.

The first four kilometres are flat, easy walking and lead you to Northern Rockhole. This spectacular waterhole has a gushing single drop waterfall in the early dry season (in the later dry season, it has usually slowed to a trickle or stopped altogether).

The waterfall is below the escarpment and can attract saltwater crocodiles during the wet season. When we walked the trail in early June 2021, the area hadn't been surveyed yet, so it was not deemed safe for swimming – another reason to make sure you pay attention to that safety briefing. Even if you can't go in the water, it's an excellent spot for a snack or lunch before continuing to Biddlecombe Cascades.

After leaving Northern Rockhole, you climb up onto the Arnhem Land escarpment, where you will stay for the duration of the trail. Once you reach the top, there are some magnificent views of the park. You should



Sun setting over Sweetwater Pool  
Dotti Mazga



soon approach the Biddlecombe Cascades camping area. This is a particularly lovely campground on the trail. It is large and spacious and there are plenty of flat spots that are good to set up. The campground itself is about 100 metres from the cascades which are fed by a permanently flowing creek that drops into a waterfall. At the top of the waterfall there are multiple rock pools to lie in - an absolutely divine experience. For us, it felt like being in paradise.

### **Day 2: Biddlecombe Cascades to Crystal Falls, 11 km**

Day two has you walking through tall grass and climbing over large rocks. After a few hours on the trail, you'll approach Crystal Falls. The campground is set up right on the water. There is a large main camping area, but if you keep walking, there are a few more secluded spots as well.

There are small rock pools to enjoy and a large, lake-like swimming hole. You can swim up the swimming hole to approach a larger waterfall, climb up onto the banks and do some exploring.

### **Day 3: Crystal Falls to 17 Mile Falls, 10 km**

Don't even bother putting your hiking boots on in the morning, as day three has you crossing a river very first thing! Here the waterproof sandals come in very handy.

The depth of the river crossing will depend on how far into the dry season it is and how good the wet season was before. We crossed at the start of the dry after a very generous wet season, and the water came up to mid-thigh on me (but I am pretty short). We have heard that it can be as low as ankle-deep by the end of the dry season. After crossing and putting your boots on, you're almost immediately treated to a spectacular view of Crystal Falls.

At about six kilometres you reach the junction for the Amphitheatre. Take a left at the junction and head to the Amphitheatre - this is an absolute highlight of the entire trail. After going down the stairs, you'll find spectacular rock art on the cliff walls, painted from clay pigments. There are depictions of animals and ancestors.



Crossing at Crystal Falls  
Zandy Marcus



There is a brilliant view of the 17 Mile Falls just before you reach camp. The 17 Mile Falls campground is large, flat and spacious. However, it is the waterhole that steals the show. This was our favourite swimming spot, and we managed to swim to a naturally-formed “seat” at the top of the waterfall that looked out on the entire park. Nature at its best.

We spent too much time on that seat and we both became sunburned a bit. Be sun smart and don't repeat our mistake.

#### **Day 4: 17 Mile Falls to Sandy Camp, 16.8 km**

This is the longest day on the entire trail, so to beat the heat, it's best to leave early.

After 11 kilometres you reach the Edith River, which only very occasionally has water in it. You might be tempted to stop here for a break or a swim, but we highly recommend pushing on instead of taking a break at Channel Waterhole, which is only a short while later, and is much more beautiful, in our opinion.

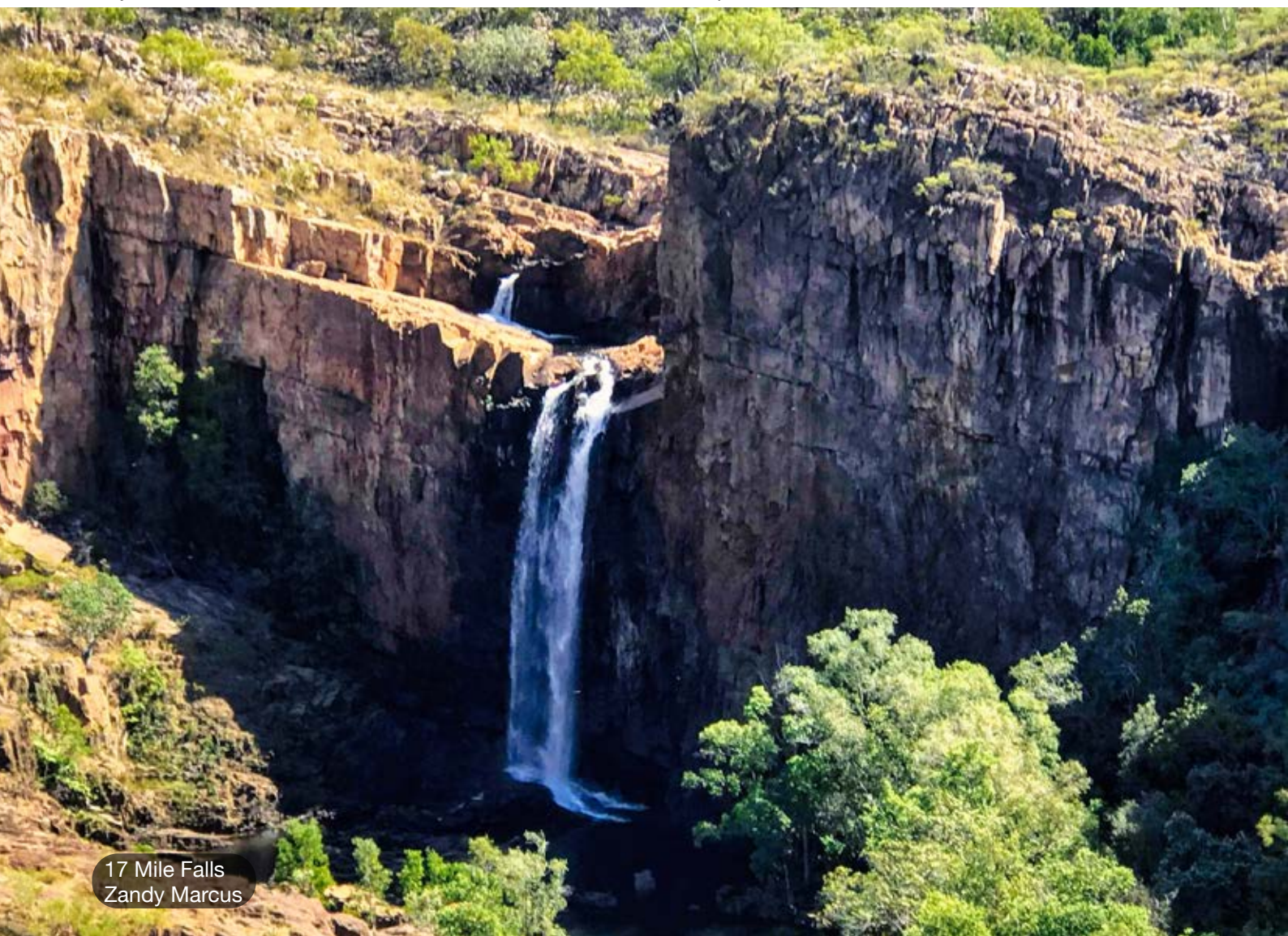
After a few more kilometres you reach Sandy Camp. The darling camp of the entire trail! It feels like a tropical oasis. True to name, there are sandy banks, and the waterhole is almost a large lake. The camp is set up very well, right on the water's edge with little stone tables constructed.

Sandy Camp also has the honour of hosting a population of freshwater crocodiles. Don't worry; these guys are relatively harmless. They're timid creatures and mostly like to be left alone. If you put your head torch on its red setting at night and shine over the water, you may be so lucky to see their eyes reflecting back.

#### **Day 5: Sandy Camp to Sweetwater Pool, 11 km**

After Sandy Camp, you follow the Edith River the rest of the way. There are numerous small pools and waterholes along the way. You pass through the monsoon forest before reaching Sweetwater Pool.

Sweetwater Pool is a lovely, large swimming hole (also home to a freshwater crocodile



17 Mile Falls  
Zandy Marcus



population). It's a popular day hike from Leliyn (also known as Edith Falls), so it can be quite a shock to be around so many people after the solitude of the past few days. Most day hikers leave by 2-3 pm though, and after that, you'll be back to the small group of 15.

For those choosing the five day version, you continue to Leliyn from here and finish the same day.

#### **Day 6: Sweetwater Pool to Leliyn, 4.5 km**

From here, it's a very short 4.5 kilometres to the finish. We recommend taking a quick dip at Longhole Swimming Hole before finishing. We also recommend walking to the upper pools of Leliyn. It's a popular spot, with many people around, but you'll understand why once there. It's such a beautiful swimming spot.

#### **Tips and tricks**

- Download the maps.me map onto your phone. The trail can be hard to follow at times, especially at the start of the season. Having a downloaded map helped us out on a few occasions.
- Bring mosquito repellent. The mozzies are pretty full-on.
- Always get your water from a fast-flowing source. The closer to the waterfall, the better.

- Bring a good book and some games to play at camp. Most days finish around midday, and you have plenty of downtimes.
- Remember to bring enough money for the kiosk at Edith Falls. Trust us; you're going to want to buy a meal at the end. Don't be like us and bring only a ridiculously small amount of money so that you have to count your pennies just to buy a veggie burger. Epic fail on our part.
- Don't miss the rock art in the amphitheatre. This blew us away.



Dotti and Zandy have embarked on a global journey together, leaving their lives in Australia to wander the globe with no fixed itinerary. While they had a few destinations in mind, they're really just roaming about and seeing where life takes them. They've created [Travel Oasis](#) to share their stories, tips and, importantly, highlight what it means to travel in this weird COVID world of ours. They mostly want to show us that travel is possible and inspire us to get out there.

Dotti and Zandy can be found at [Travel Oasis](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

This article was originally posted on their blog [exploretraveloasis.com/jatbula-trail](https://exploretraveloasis.com/jatbula-trail)



Leliyn/Edith Falls  
Kim Martin



# Photo Gallery



The drowned land  
Andrew Smith

Competition: Landscape April 2015





# Bushwalk.com Photo Competition





# Landscapes

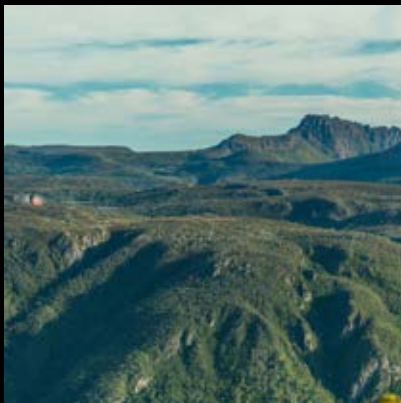
## April 2021

### WINNER



Sunsets on the Western faces of the Main Range in New South Wales are spectacular, even on a cloudless evening.

Going going gone  
Rob Croll



The other side of Cradle  
North-north-west



Formby Bay  
Brian Eglinton



Lake Oberon,  
Western Arthurs  
MulgaBill



Bombo rocks  
- it certainly does!  
landsmith

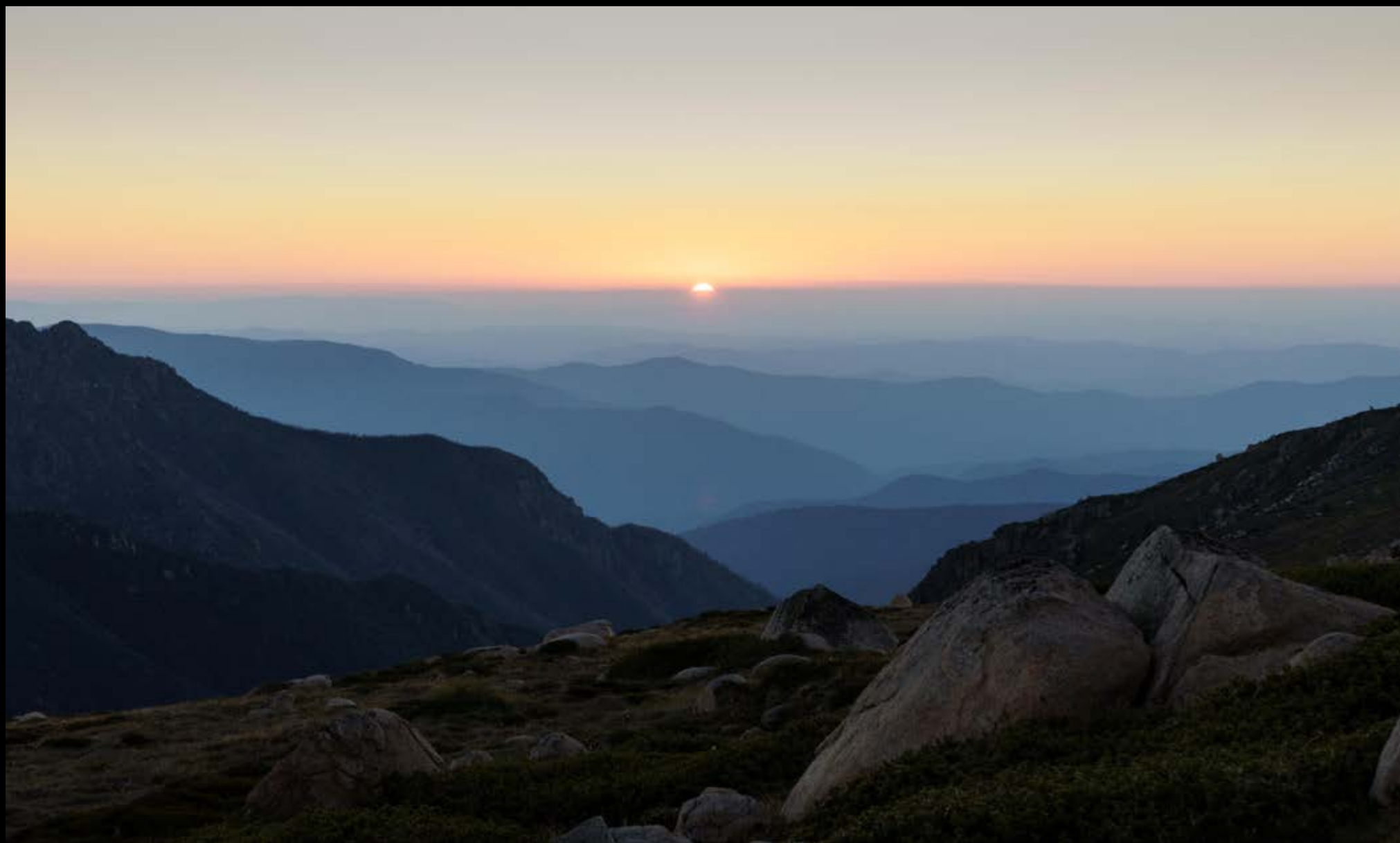


Early morning light  
on the Bibb  
Bam



Autumn highlights  
Tortoise







# Non-landscapes

## April 2021

### WINNER



Big old Snow Gum  
Rob Croll

An old giant Snow Gum that many walking from Illawong Hut up to Mount Twynam would know.



A hard life  
Tortoise



Frozen  
North-north-west



Bomaderry Creek Regional Reserve  
landsmith



What remains  
Brian Eglinton







# Other States

## April 2021

### WINNER



Anderson sunset  
Rob Croll

Perfect weather on the Main Range over Easter allowed camping on the Western faces, enjoying amazing views and spectacular sunsets.



Rocky  
Brian Eglinton



Walking out after three days  
in the Kanangra Walls  
Osik



Bomaderry Creek Regional Reserve  
landsmith







# Tasmania April 2021

## WINNER



Pool of Bethesda  
North-north-west

Who needs the wide views when you can have this?  
Bethesda is always beautiful, and cold, misty mornings just  
make you more aware of the closer intricacies.



Morning light in the Labyrinth  
Tortoise







# Landscapes

## May 2021

### WINNER



Infinity Gorge  
Ribuck

Infinity Gorge lies just across the Chewings Range from the Redbank access road, and can be visited as a day trip that also takes in both ends of Redbank Gorge and the saddle of Mt Sonder. After a wet season, a delightful string of pools nestles between the glowing orange walls, interspersed with pleasant scrambles - but there's some prickly vegetation up on top.

The bright light of the Red Centre is conducive to taking photos with a phone, and this one was taken with a Samsung S10e.



Sunset  
over the Chewings  
Tom Brennan



The mirror  
North-north-west



Bongon Head  
landsmith



A view you can bank on  
John Walker



Paddy's  
Rob Croll



Bararranna Pools  
Brian Eglinton







# Non-landscapes

## May 2021

### WINNER



Winter stream  
North-north-west

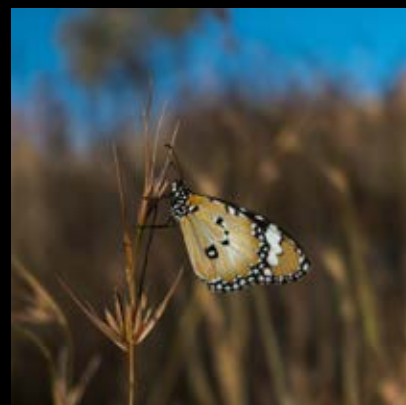
Follow any of the tracks climbing *kooparooka niara* and you'll spend at least a little time beside a creek or rivulet or baby river. During winter, the higher reaches inevitably add frozen decorations.



The preening  
landsmith



Rare and resilient *Isopogon Fletcheri* continues its renewal post-2020 inferno  
John Walker



Delicate  
Tom Brennan



Signposts in the desert  
Brian Eglinton



Flutterbyes  
Ribuck







# Other States

## May 2021

### WINNER



Goanna Track  
Brian Eglinton

The Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve sits on the edge of the Simpson Desert. The breakaway landforms are interspersed with sand dunes.

We had a delightful day exploring the various rock pillars and eroded structures. I particularly liked the untouched look of the sand dunes with the various animal tracks on them.



Stark reminders  
John Walker



Sunrise at Portals  
Tom Brennan



Storm surf at Snapper Point  
landsmith



Ground nest  
Ribuck







# Tasmania May 2021

## WINNER

Foggy morning  
in the highlands  
North-north-west

The last morning of a long ramble into the Walls and out again ticked off a lot of must-do items from the list. The sun came out eventually, but I could have happily gone all the way home with it like this.





# In the News

## Louise Fairfax climbs all the Abels

In 2022 Dr Louise Fairfax became the third woman and twentieth person to climb all Tasmania's Abels, 158 mountains more than 1100 metres high with a 150 metre drop on all sides.

## New Queensland national park

A 35,300 hectare parcel of land The Lakes about 100 kilometres north of Hughenden, near Townsville will be a new national park.

## AAWT new fastest time

Paul Cuthbert and Tom Bartlett walked the Australian Alps Walking Track in 10 days 23 hours and 14 minutes, [breaking the existing record](#). The last day was 89 kilometres in 23 hours.

## The Great Escarpment Trail, NSW and Queensland

Bushwalking NSW and Bushwalking Queensland [hope to create a trail](#) linking all Gondwanan World Heritage rainforests from Barrington Tops in NSW to Boonah in south-east Queensland.

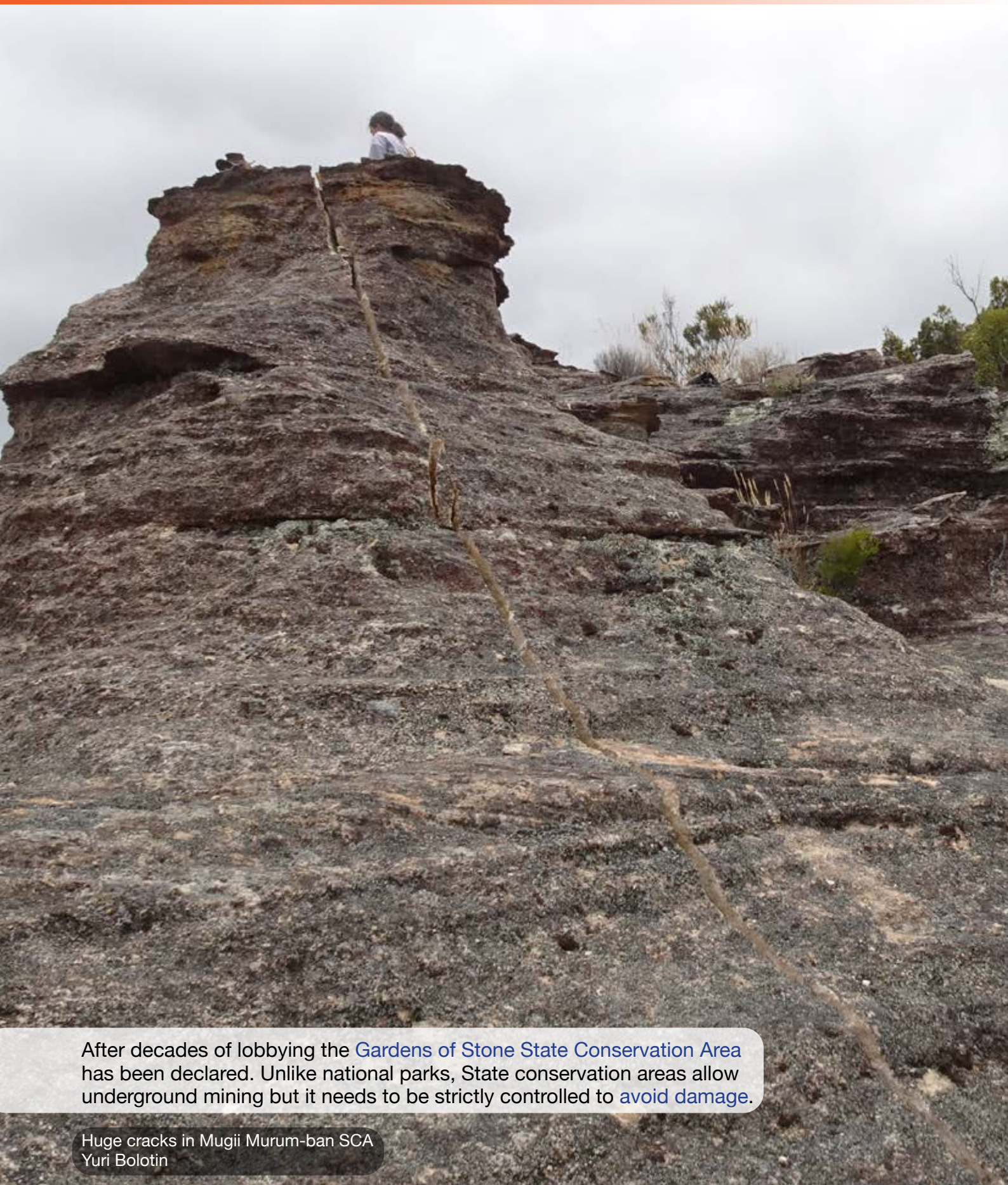


I'm very gregarious,  
but I love being in the hills on my own.  
Norman MacCaig





# Gardens of Stone Damage



After decades of lobbying the [Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area](#) has been declared. Unlike national parks, State conservation areas allow underground mining but it needs to be strictly controlled to [avoid damage](#).

Huge cracks in Mugii Murum-ban SCA  
Yuri Bolotin



## Blue Mountains Conservation Society statement

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society has issued a press release about the cracking. See the [BMCS website](#) for more details.

## Internationally significant pagodas damaged in NPWS managed reserve

Centennial Coal's Airly Mine has cracked pagodas in the Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area in the Capertee Valley 35 kilometres north of Lithgow. Mugii Murum-ban is a small but spectacular part of the Gardens of Stone area.

"As conservationists predicted, mining intensity at the Airly Mine was too great, and subsidence occurred, cracking the reserve's internationally significant pagoda rock features and opening up several sinkholes", said Ms Maclean, Vice President of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. "The surface of the reserve has subsided up to 700 mm, which is more than five times the approved limit of 125 mm."

"Centennial Coal must be prosecuted and fined by the NSW Government for this significant breach of its development consent causing damage in this National Parks and Wildlife Service managed reserve," said Madi Maclean.

The mining damage also contradicts commitments made by the company. In July 2014 Centennial Coal stated: "Centennial has not gone back on previous

commitments and we have no intention to initiate a massive subsidence event. Frankly speaking, that is in no one's interest."

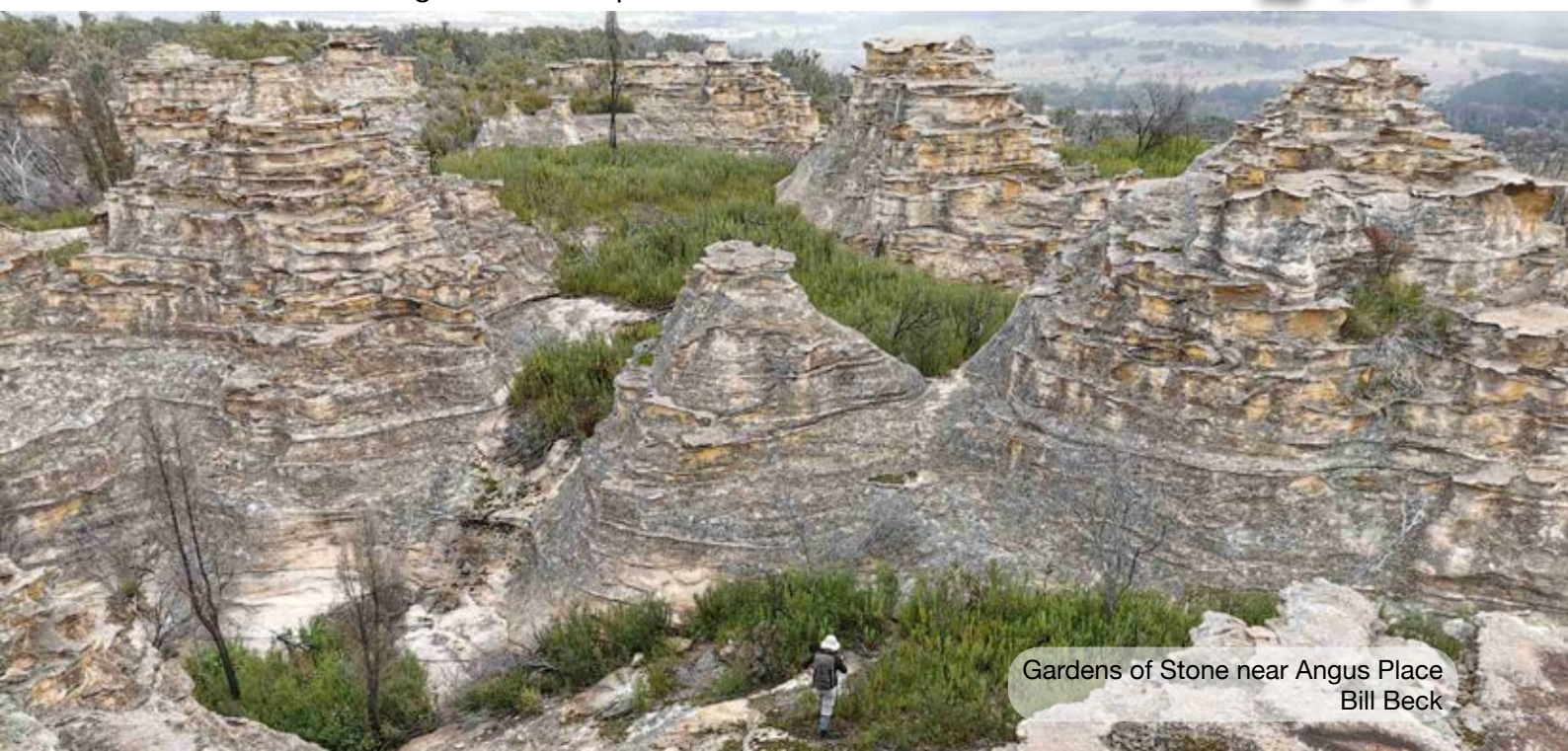
And at the subsequent public inquiry into the mine in 2015 the miner claimed that: "Our activities will not deliver a negative net effect upon the environment."

"The Society understands that mining intensity was over 70% coal extraction when the cracking damage occurred. We have written to Planning Minister, Anthony Roberts, asking he uphold the provisions of development consent and ensure that coal extraction is limited to the current level of 46%" said Ms Maclean.

“Enough is enough, the damage must stop.”

Ms Maclean said that "The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has confirmed that this mining will be required to comply with the subsidence performance measures established under the consent. Coal mining in the Gardens of Stone region is a history of cliff falls, fractured pagodas, stream pollution and drainage of nationally endangered swamps. Enough is enough, the damage must stop."

Coal mining is now progressing under the Genowlan Mesa, an area of the highest environmental sensitivity with continuous high cliffs and beautiful pagoda-studded ridgelines.



Gardens of Stone near Angus Place  
Bill Beck



# Why Do We Love The Great Outdoors?

Richard Fuller, Brenda Lin, Chia-chen Chang, Danielle Shanahan, Kevin J. Gaston, L. Roman Carrasco, Rachel Oh



Do you love spending time in nature? Or are you a city slicker, happier in the concrete jungle than the great outdoors? Back in 1986, the US biologist EO Wilson proposed that humans have an innate connection with the natural world, [an idea known as biophilia](#).



Almost every aspect of our lives depends on nature, from food and shelter to fuel and clothing. Yet some of us are much more “into” spending time in nature than others.

To try to understand why, we studied more than 1,100 pairs of twins to find out how much of our connection to nature might depend on our DNA. We found [almost half the variation in people’s connection to nature](#) can be put down to genetics.

### Nature is good for you

There is strong evidence even a wander in the local park can be beneficial for our mental and physical health. Yet with work and family responsibilities and packed social schedules, most of us do not regularly spend time in nature.

We wondered why some people spend more time in nature than others, and what underpins the fact some of us feel more strongly connected to nature.

Perhaps our affinity for nature is inherited. Or perhaps we get it from environmental factors – such as beautiful forests – in the places we live. Or again it might come from our cultural milieu such as the books we read or the TV programs we watch.

Finding answers to these questions might help us work out how to get some nature back into people’s lives.

### Studying twins

We studied more than 1,100 pairs of twins to understand the origin of affinity for nature, and report the results in a [study published today in PLoS Biology](#). It turns out identical twins are much more similar to each other in the strength of their connection to nature than non-identical twins.

Statistical analysis of the results showed 46% of the variation in connection to nature, as measured on a psychological scale, can be explained by genetic factors. Even the amount of time we spend in our own backyards and visiting local parks seems to have a strong genetic basis.

Why the strong genetic influence on our love for nature? Well, one can imagine a strong affinity with nature conferring a significant survival advantage for early humans. This might have led to the formation of complex networks of genes that govern how we relate to nature, and how we behave in it.

Despite the clear role of genetics, our results show other factors actually shape most of our affinity to nature. These might include childhood holiday destinations, the examples set by our parents, friends and other family members, educational experiences, and whether we live in a biodiverse area.

This is good news, because many of these things are under our own control.





## Nature and health

Nature-based health interventions such as green gyms or environmental volunteering can improve physical, mental and social health and well-being. Nature-play initiatives such as the Green Passport for Queensland kids can give children powerful experiences of nature that could benefit their health over the long term.

A deeper question, and one we don't yet have a clear answer to, is whether spending time in nature fosters our sense of environmental concern, and in turn, support for nature conservation.

The US ecologist James Miller has argued interactions with nature are crucial in sparking support for protecting nature. Yet an Australian study led by environmentalist Jessica Pinder showed conservation concern among Australian undergraduates was more strongly associated with social and cultural experiences in childhood than with the amount of time a person spends in nature. Clearly, there is much more to learn in this area.

Ultimately, we now know despite a genetic basis for our affinity to nature, much of it also depends on other factors that are decidedly under our own control. So make a resolution today to rekindle your connection to the great outdoors!

Richard Fuller  
Professor in Biodiversity and Conservation,  
The University of Queensland

Brenda Lin  
Principal research scientist, CSIRO

Chia-chen Chang  
Research fellow, University of California,  
Davis

Danielle Shanahan  
Chief Executive, Zealandia Te Mara a Tane,  
and Adjunct Professor, Te Herenga Waka —  
Victoria University of Wellington

Kevin J. Gaston  
Professor, University of Exeter

L. Roman Carrasco  
Associate professor, National University of  
Singapore

Rachel Oh  
PhD Student, Centre for Biodiversity and  
Conservation Science, The University of  
Queensland

This article first appeared in  
*The Conversation* on 3 February 2022.



Delaware Water Gap





## SAY HELLO TO YOUR NEW FAVOURITE MERINO



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ETHICALLY, IN MELBOURNE.



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SUPERFINE, SUPER SOFT AND COMFY.



**DESIGNED BY HIKERS,**  
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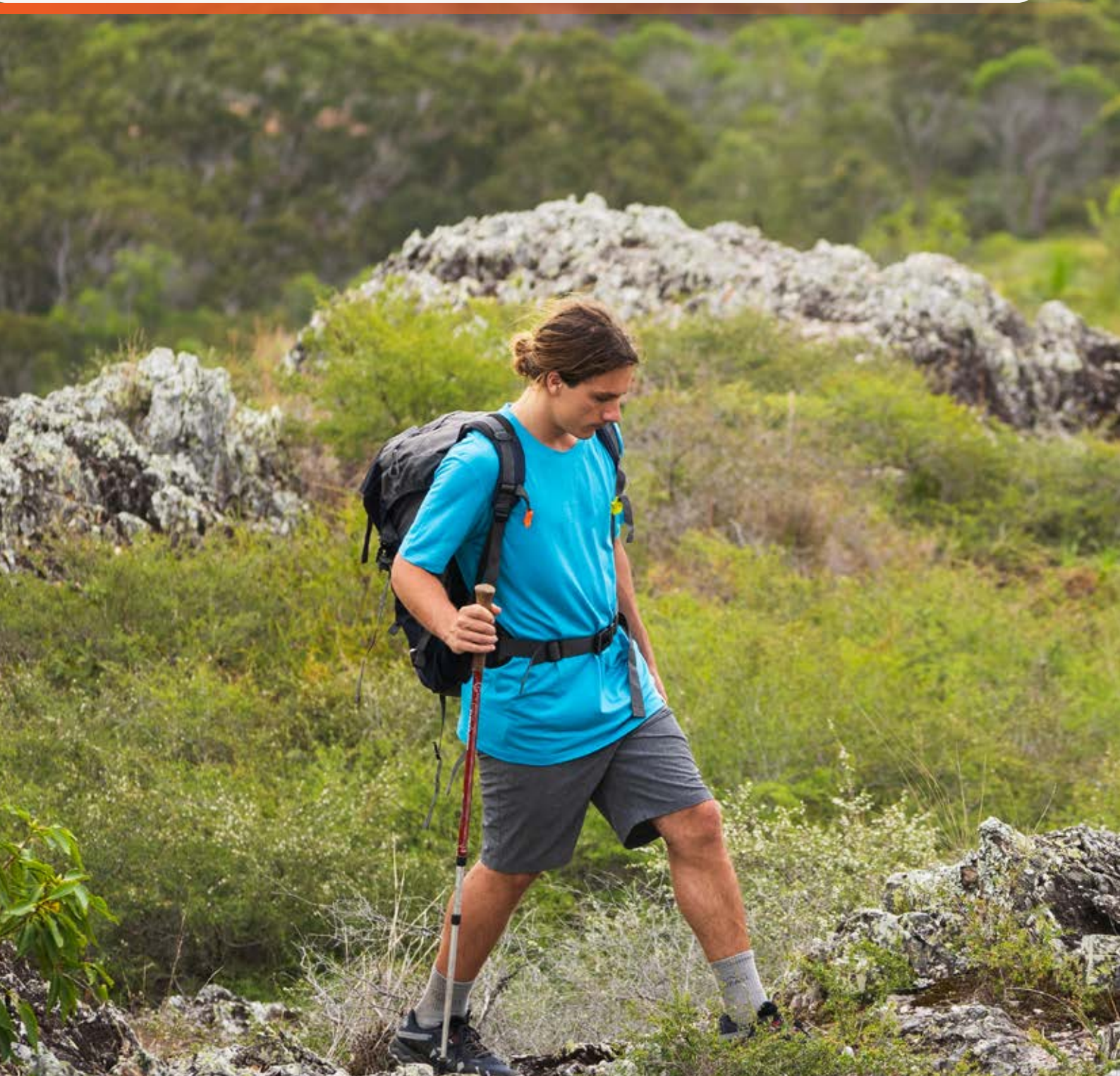
**WANT 10% OFF YOUR FIRST ORDER?**  
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# Merino Wool Underwear

Paul Goodsell



To the uninitiated, merino wool underwear sounds like a terrible idea, right? Well, anyone that knows the benefits of quality lightweight merino wool can probably imagine how much of a good idea they are. That is why a merino wool boxer shorts and [merino wool briefs](#) are the next cabs off the rank in the Ottie Merino product range were launched in February 2022. Here are some of the benefits of merino wool underwear.



### Merino wool underwear is breathable

The reality is the human crotch tends to get sweaty. Wearing tight, non-breathable fabrics down there exasperates the problem. Physical activities like hiking, climbing, cycling, skiing, and running exacerbates it further. So, when choosing good underwear, breathability should be high on the list, and merino wool underwear is really breathable. As [Woolmark](#) puts it: “Merino wool is one of the most breathable fibres. Wool fibres can absorb large quantities of moisture vapour then move it away to evaporate into the air.”

### Merino wool underwear wicks moisture well

There’s nothing worse than soggy jocks. Eek, it pained me to type this sentence. I could have probably put it more tastefully, but a spade’s a spade. Merino wicks that moisture away quick, smart, meaning you feel more comfortable even in warm conditions.

Another benefit of the moisture-wicking qualities of merino garments is you can wash them and wear them again quickly. Imagine you’re backpacking around Europe next northern hemisphere summer. You’re travelling light. You don’t want to have to carry a dozen pairs of undies or spend all your time at the laundromat. I remember backpacking around Germany a few years back and struggling to find laundromats. Wash your merino underwear in the basin, pop them on the shower rail, and they’re dry in the morning. I can’t say the same about cot-ton.

“Merino wicks that moisture away quick, smart ...”



And, of course, if you get soaked through in that downpour, you can reasonably have some dry jocks after drying them in the tent or hut.

### Merino wool underwear is odour resistant

Hikers are a resilient lot - or are we just a bit grotty? The Overland Track with a couple of pairs of underwear and socks, one T-shirt, that’s a pretty standard fare. Merino wool undies will stay fresher, longer. If they need a bit of refreshment, you can always give them a dunk in the stream - or go for a dip yourself with them on.

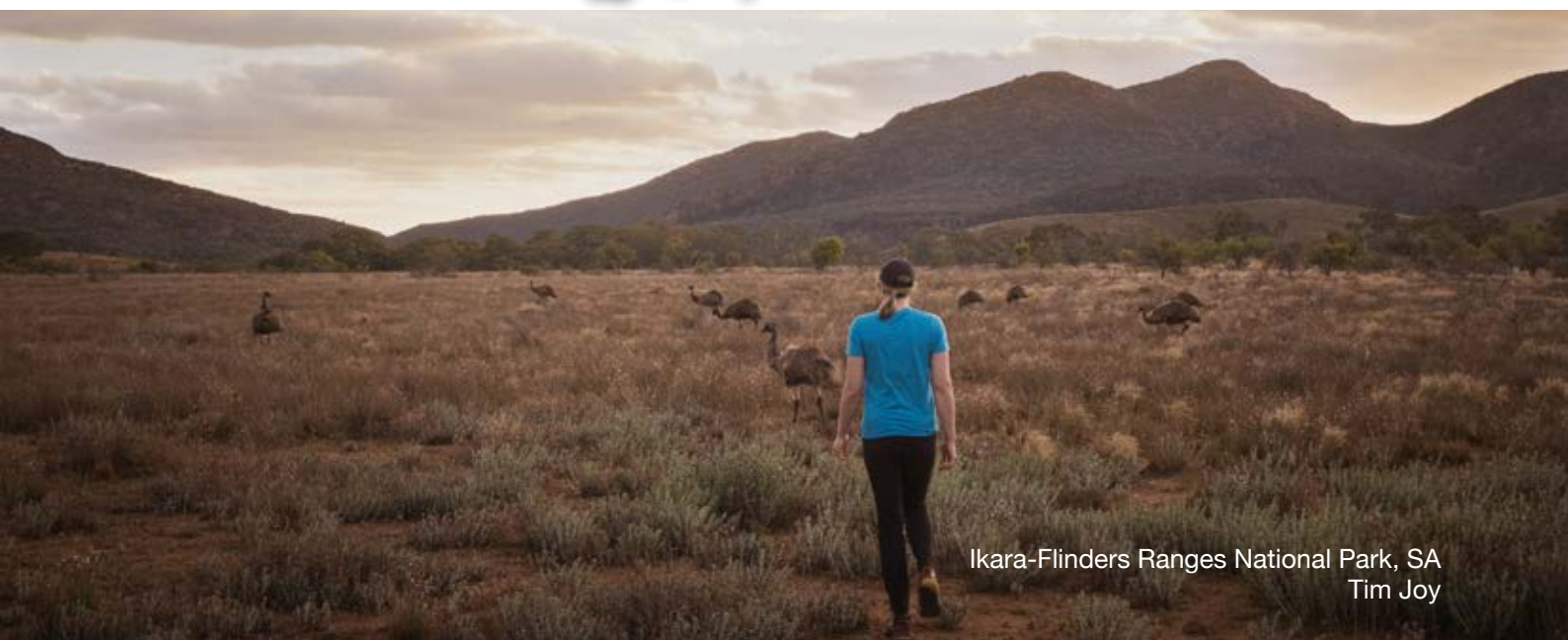
Merino underwear teamed with a merino T-shirt makes for a fresh-as-a-daisy hiking fit on those long multi-day hikes or long days on the ski slopes.

### Merino wool underwear is soft and comfortable

Who doesn’t want to be comfy in their dacks? We have designed our merino wool boxers and briefs to be super comfortable by using a beautiful blend of Australian merino wool, TEN-CEL™, nylon and elastane (but not too much of these to undo the benefits of the natural fibres).

Many people probably have dated views about wool, perhaps due to a scratchy school jumper. A wool T-shirt is fine, but merino wool underwear? That may be seen as a bridge too far, but it doesn’t need to be. The merino fabric downstairs is just as silky, soft and non-itchy as upstairs on your body.

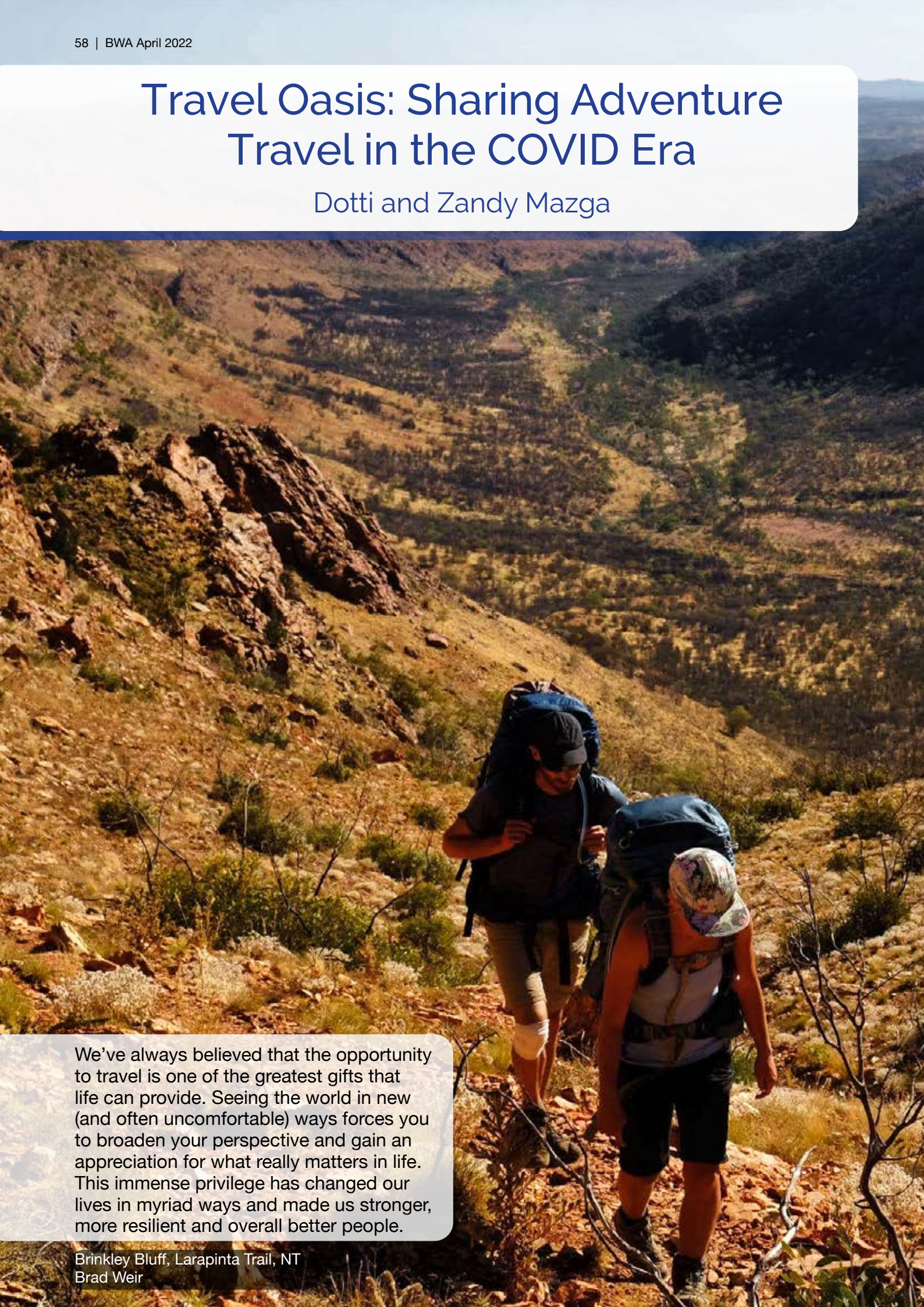
To read more about the merino wool underwear and shirts or if you want to order them, check out the [Ottie](#) website.





# Travel Oasis: Sharing Adventure Travel in the COVID Era

Dotti and Zandy Mazga

A full-page background photograph showing two hikers, a man and a woman, ascending a steep, rocky trail. They are both wearing large backpacks and hats. The landscape is arid with sparse vegetation and rolling hills in the background. The hiker in the foreground is a woman wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a backpack, while the hiker behind her is a man also with a large backpack. They are walking on a narrow, rocky path.

We've always believed that the opportunity to travel is one of the greatest gifts that life can provide. Seeing the world in new (and often uncomfortable) ways forces you to broaden your perspective and gain an appreciation for what really matters in life. This immense privilege has changed our lives in myriad ways and made us stronger, more resilient and overall better people.

Brinkley Bluff, Larapinta Trail, NT  
Brad Weir



And when you think about it, travel and bushwalking are very similar experiences.

Like bushwalking, travelling pushes you to new limits, forces you to rely on yourself, challenges you in unpredictable ways, provides new insights and opens the world in ways you could have never imagined.

It's not surprising that you often find people who love both. Travellers are often bushwalkers and bushwalkers are often travellers.

We are both.

We love exploring the world by all means, but especially on foot. We love connecting with other people and taking in the awe of nature's wonders. We love experiencing new cultures and opening ourselves up to new experiences. We even love walking for hours on end with our heavy backpacks on. And we really love posting up for the night in our little two-person tent.

### Travel Oasis

We're Dotti and Zandy. We run Travel Oasis, a new blog focusing on post-COVID and adventure travel. We share our love of the outdoors with the world and give practical guides and resources so that others can camp, hike and explore this incredible world of ours, in this crazy COVID time.

In 2021 we began planning and preparing for a big, global adventure. Our plan is to travel with no fixed itinerary, nor with a specific end date. We have some ideas and countries that we're keen on, but in the end, we're going to let the journey guide itself. We've always been pretty flexible travellers and if COVID has taught us anything, it's that flexibility is key!

Central to our planning was the development of Travel Oasis. We wanted a purpose behind our trip and a project to focus on and channel our energies into. We also wanted to document our travels and share them with the world. We've always loved passing on



Dotti and Zandy at Walls of Jerusalem, Tasmania  
Zandy Marcus



tips and tricks to friends and fellow travellers we meet so it felt like a natural fit. And finally, we thought it would be fun!

Through Travel Oasis, we highlight the places we experience and the people we meet along the way, whilst sharing useful and relevant information that inspires others to embark on adventures of their own. And most importantly, we explore what it means to travel in this new COVID world we're living in. Because we know that we have questions as to what COVID travel looks like and we imagine you do too.

### Where are we going?

If it has not come across already, we're both incredibly passionate about life!

We're driven by curiosity and a deep-seated desire to explore and experience new things. We also love a good challenge. It provides us with a goal to work towards and offers a great opportunity to grow as individuals. For us, this clearly explains our love of both adventure travel and bushwalking.

Looking forward, we can't say too much about what the future holds for us. We're currently living life one day at a time and we love it. That said, we plan to be travelling for at least a year.

We left Australia in December, starting our trip in Thailand and then Sri Lanka. From here, we're looking to get into more off-the-beaten-track destinations soon. We're focusing on hiking and camping and are planning to get to some regions that offer fantastic hiking opportunities.

We don't want to give away too much right now, but let's just say we're fondly gazing towards the high mountains of Central Asia.



Dotti was born in a small town in northern Canada. She has lived and travelled through more than 30 countries and far from satiating her passion, her desire to explore has only grown and intensified. She is also addicted to long-distance thru-hikes and in 2021 completed a solo walk of Central Australia's Larapinta Trail.

Zandy is a Kiwi/American hybrid and has a love for all things outdoors. He is a passionate long-distance runner and is looking forward to competing in his next ultra-marathon. With over 10 years of experience in the travel industry, he loves booking and planning new adventures for himself and Dotti.

Dotti and Zandy can be found at [Travel Oasis](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).



Dotti and Zandy at Section 9, Larapinta Trail, NT  
Brad Weir



# 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.

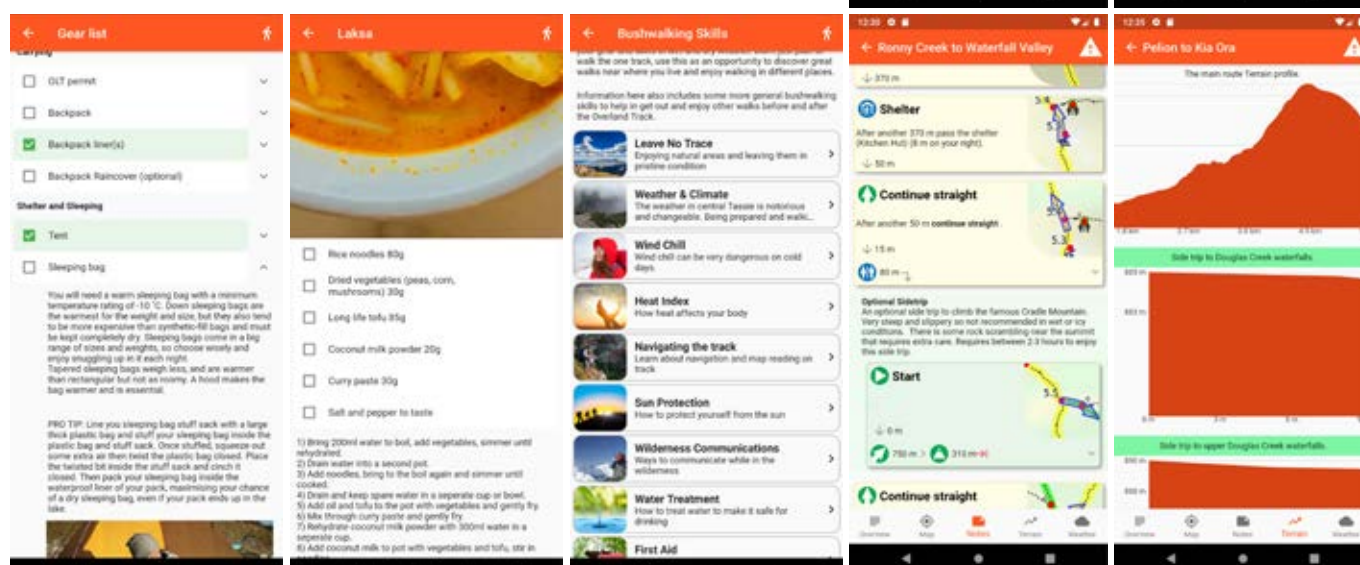
Think of this as the ultimate reference for the Overland Track, a happy marriage between a GPS and a bushwalking guide book.

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.

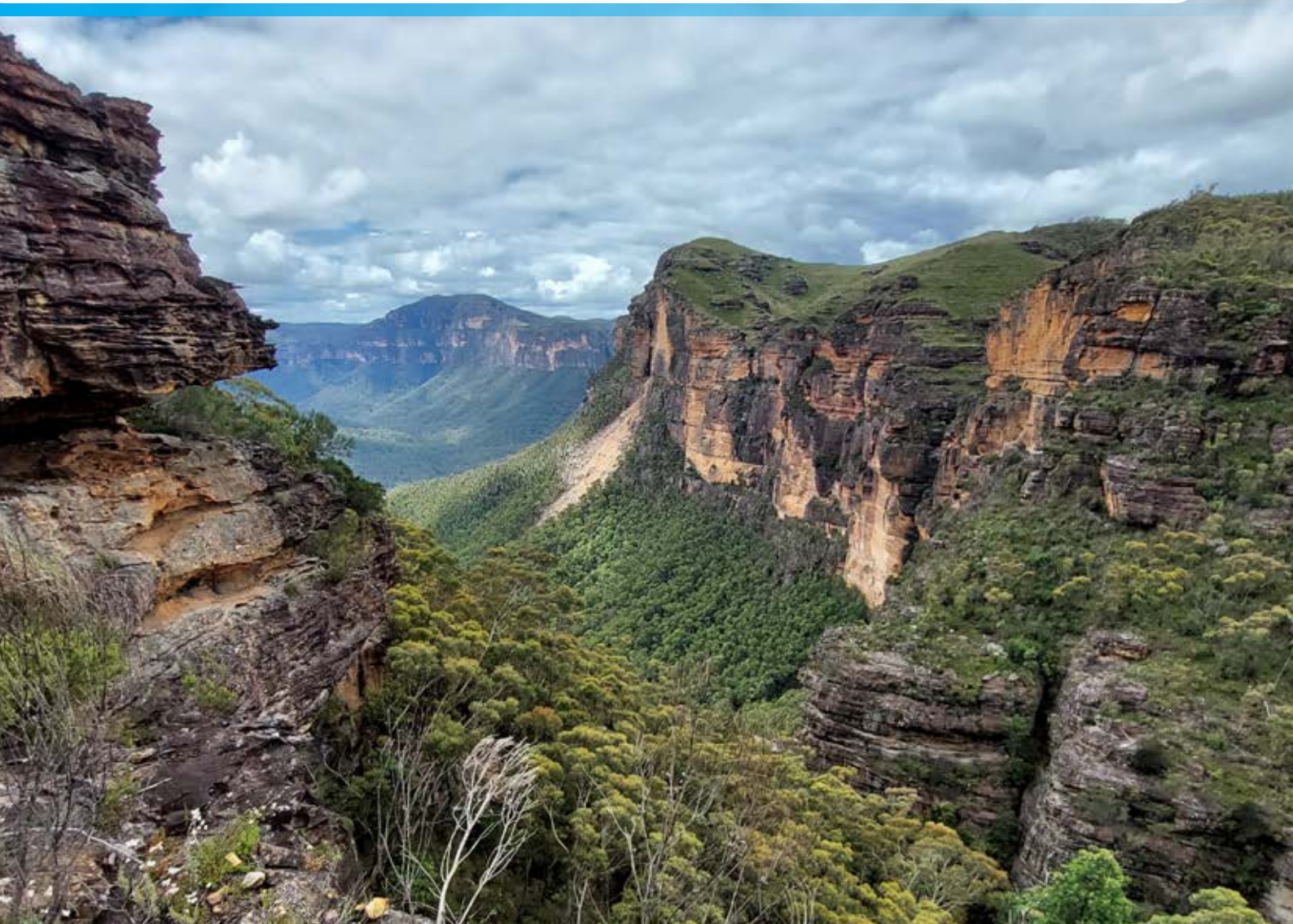
More information at [www.overlandtrack.com](http://www.overlandtrack.com)





# You Can't Beet This ...

Sonya Muhlsimmer



No that is not a typo you think you see, I am in fact referring to beetroot. This is not the typical food item you would think of for bushwalking, but if you can get your hands on some beetroot powder, you can make some amazing things. Last time I visited my dad in Taree, we went to this awesome little café for lunch in Wingham and they just happen to have a 150 gram jar of beetroot powder. I had to get it. I then looked online to see if I could get some more and the availability. Well, it seems it is readily available - just google beetroot powder and you will find a good selection. [Inspired Ingredients](#) and [iHerb](#) are pretty good suppliers, I often use them for other specialty items.

Beetroots are packed with antioxidants, folate, potassium, vitamins, manganese and fibre. They can help lower blood pressure, improve energy level, great for us hikers, and reduce the risk of heart disease. The antioxidant betalain, which is responsible for the colour is also known to help with inflammation. Take note, if you do eat a lot of beetroot your urine and stool can become discoloured. Also, they are high in oxalate, this is something to be wary of if you suffer from kidney stones. So I will stop beeting around the bush and get into some recipes now.



# Beetroot Dal (Dahl or Daal)

Dal is a staple dish in India and South Asia and the main ingredient is either lentils, peas and beans. The pulses are cooked into a thick stew like dish with endless variations of flavours. This variation is a pretty healthy and tasty dish, it is vegan, gluten free, dairy free and quick and easy to make. What more could you want? By the way, this dish may not look that great, but it is not about what the food looks like, it is how good it tastes, and how healthy it is for you too. Go on, try it, serve it up with some flat bread if you wish.



## At home preparation

Label the bags then place all the ingredients in the allocated bag. Cut out method at camp and pack with the bags.

## Method in camp

In the bag the lentils are packed in, add 1 cup of water and soak for about 30 minutes. Drain and add one more cup of water, swirl around and drain. In a pot add all the ingredients, stir well and bring the pot to the boil. Once boiled bring the pot to a simmer and cook until most of the liquid has absorbed and it is at a stew like texture, about 8 minutes. Serve.

## Bag 1 (lentils)

Red lentils	4 Tbsp
-------------	--------

## Bag 2 (dal mix)

Beetroot powder	2 Tbsp
Cumin powder	¼ tsp
Coriander powder	½ tsp
Fenugreek	¼ tsp
Mustard seeds	¼ tsp
Turmeric	⅛ tsp
Onion	⅛ tsp
Garlic	⅛ tsp
Chilli	Pinch

## Water

Water	1 cup for cooking 2 cups for soaking
-------	---



# Beetroot Dip

I often take some dehydrated hummus or eggplant dip on my hikes to share with friends. Dips are easy to prepare at camp and go a long way, especially after a hard day. Dips are versatile, you can use them for a spread on mountain bread or simply have some dip on a cracker, or even if you want to carry a carrot or two cut the carrot in fingers and dip it in the dip. There is something so satisfying making something so simple, yet so tasty and sharing with friends. Beetroot powder makes the preparation job at home even easier, saves hours of dehydrating.



## At home preparation

Label the bag then place all the ingredients in the allocated bag and container. Cut out method at camp and pack with the bags.

## Method in camp

In a bowl add the dry ingredients, add the tahini and lemon juice and stir through. Slowly add the water stirring thoroughly. Enjoy.

## Bag (beetroot dip )

Beetroot powder	2 Tbsp
Cumin	½ tsp
Coriander	½ tsp
Cinnamon	½ tsp
Paprika	1 tsp
Garlic powder	1/8 tsp
Salt	pinch

## Container

Hulled Tahini	2 Tbsp
Lemon juice	2 tsp

## Water

Water	¼ cup
-------	-------





# In the News

## Western Arthurs helicopter rescue video

Great [footage](#) of a Westpac Rescue Helicopter Tasmania in action.



## IPCC climate change report

Areas from Kosciuszko to the coast are [at risk of irreversible damage](#). It's starting to get very serious, but the lack of political action is beyond belief. There will be costs now, probably big ones, but the cost of not doing anything will be far, far bigger.

## Calls to rethink geotagging

Pictures on social media with geotags are causing a surge in visitor numbers to semi-remote and remote places in Tasmania, [increasing the pressure on resources](#).

## Deer and feral animal control in response to bushfires

The 2019-20 bushfires affected habitat. A [Parks Victoria and DELWP program](#) aims to remove deer and feral animals from priority fire-affected and adjacent areas, giving native plants, plant communities and animals the best chance of recovery.

## Queensland windfarms protests

In [February](#), Bushwalk Australia had an article about Queensland wind farms. The matter [is escalating](#), with calls for the Queensland government to stop approving large, foreign-owned wind farm developments in Far North Queensland, amid fears the area could become an "industrial wasteland".

## Critically endangered southern corroboree frog conservation efforts ramp up

A collaborative [breeding program](#) between Taronga Zoo in Sydney, Victoria Zoos, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the NSW government's Saving our Species program hopes to save the corroboree frog from extinction.

## Tailings dam likely to leach acid, scrutiny blocked

The Bob Brown Foundation says it is taking "[urgent legal advice](#)" about a lease granted to MMG along an access road on Tasmania's west coast near where the mining company wants to develop a heavy metals tailings dam. The lease is designed to keep protesters and media out, avoiding scrutiny.

## Cease of native forest logging in WA

In what's been described as unprecedented in Australian environmental history, the Western Australian government announced that [a massive change of policy](#) would come into effect by 2024. Native forest logging will cease.





# Mountain Hut

Klaus Hueneke, AM

This year Klaus Huenke's *Huts of the High Country* book is 40 years in print and in the public eye. Klaus writes:

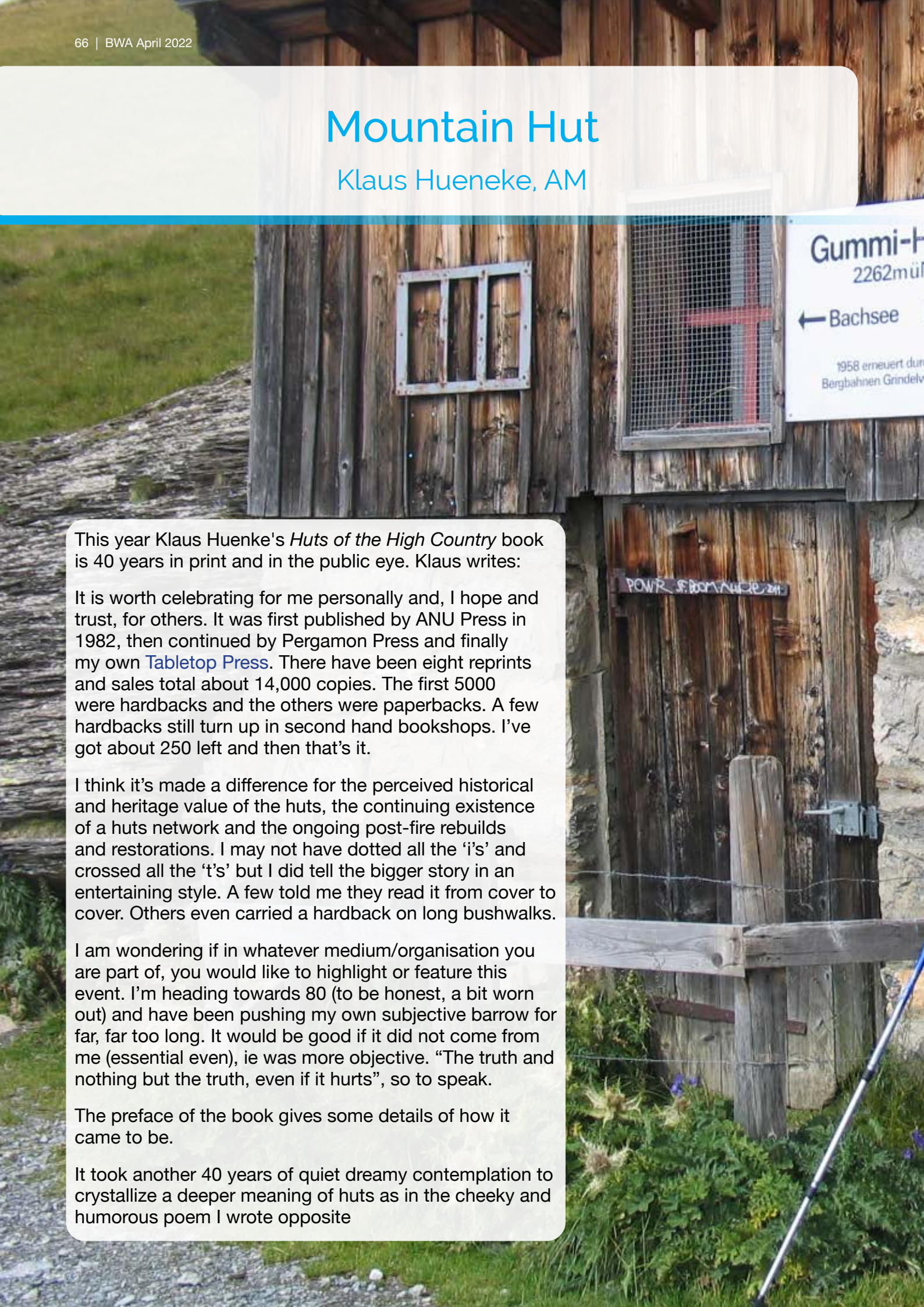
It is worth celebrating for me personally and, I hope and trust, for others. It was first published by ANU Press in 1982, then continued by Pergamon Press and finally my own [Tabletop Press](#). There have been eight reprints and sales total about 14,000 copies. The first 5000 were hardbacks and the others were paperbacks. A few hardbacks still turn up in second hand bookshops. I've got about 250 left and then that's it.

I think it's made a difference for the perceived historical and heritage value of the huts, the continuing existence of a huts network and the ongoing post-fire rebuilds and restorations. I may not have dotted all the 'i's' and crossed all the 't's' but I did tell the bigger story in an entertaining style. A few told me they read it from cover to cover. Others even carried a hardback on long bushwalks.

I am wondering if in whatever medium/organisation you are part of, you would like to highlight or feature this event. I'm heading towards 80 (to be honest, a bit worn out) and have been pushing my own subjective barrow for far, far too long. It would be good if it did not come from me (essential even), ie was more objective. "The truth and nothing but the truth, even if it hurts", so to speak.

The preface of the book gives some details of how it came to be.

It took another 40 years of quiet dreamy contemplation to crystallize a deeper meaning of huts as in the cheeky and humorous poem I wrote opposite





### If I was a Mountain Hut

If I was a mountain hut I would  
be warmed by the morning sun,  
be protected from icy westerly winds,  
be close to a gurgling mountain stream  
and have a view across a snowgrass plain.

If I was a mountain hut people would  
renew my scarred and tired old skin,  
replace my worn out, tottering legs,  
leave some food for me to eat,  
replenish my wood supply,  
build a fire to keep me warm and  
tell me stories, tall and true.

If I was a mountain hut I would never  
have to move house,  
pay rent, get a divorce,  
be in a traffic jam,  
put my clothes away,  
or have to wash the dishes.

If I was a mountain hut I would hear  
wombats scratching and scuffling under my floor,  
swallows building and tending their nests,  
the wind swishing in nearby snowgums,  
currawongs composing melodious tunes,  
snow settling like a butterfly kiss and  
later sliding off with an oooompphh.

If I was a mountain hut I would be famous in  
people's minds and memories,  
their photographs and archives,  
their videos, movies and books,  
and their sacred management plans.

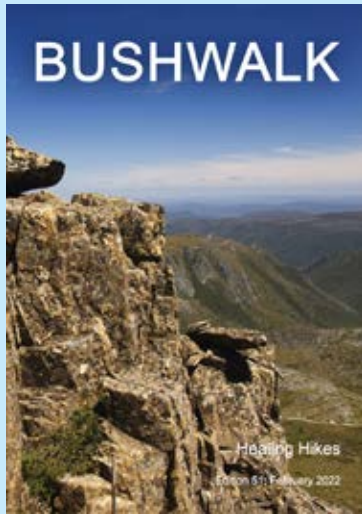
If I was a mountain hut I could  
meditate all day and night,  
sleep whenever I like,  
be silent if I wish and  
never write another damned word.

If I was a mountain hut I could  
live forever  
as long as people loved me and  
no joker burnt me down.  
Amen



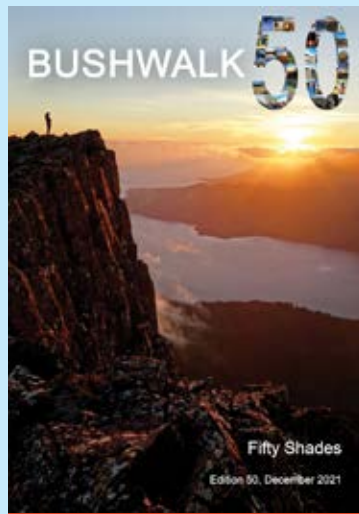


# Bushwalk Australia



## Healing Hikes

- > Hiking the Port Davey Track
- > Pool of the Gods
- > Walking 30 Kilometres a Day
- > Huts of the High Country



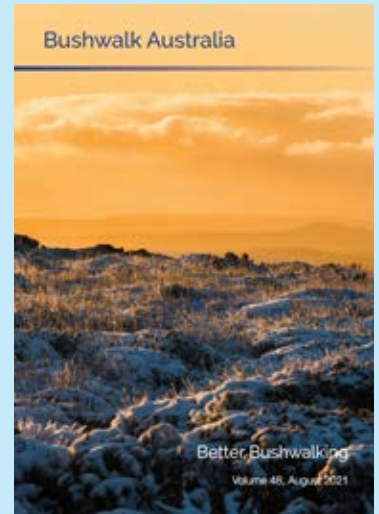
## Fifty Shades

- > 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



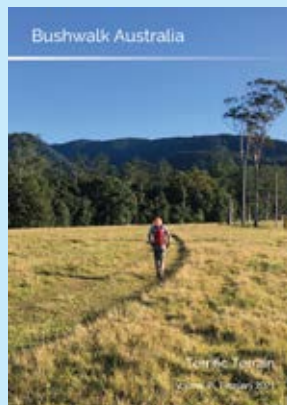
## Reflections & Rescues

- > Junction Lake
- > Feathertop
- > Swift Water Rescue Course



## 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!



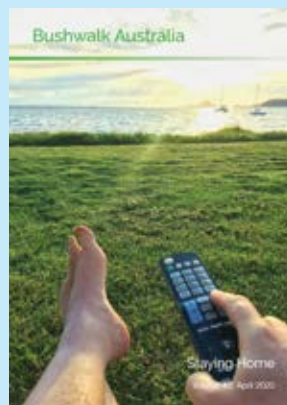
## COVID Contingencies

- > Barrington Tops
- > Mount Emmett



## Bushwalking Anew

- > Three Capes
- > Spirit of place



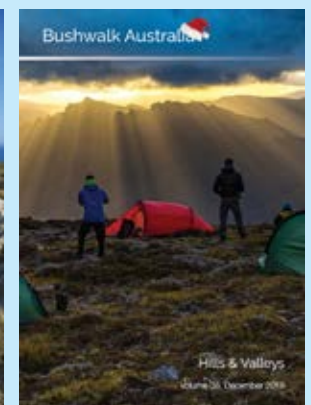
## Staying Home

- > Mount Giles
- > Bushwalking in a pandemic



## Fire and Fury

- > 2019-20 bushfires overview



## Hills & Valleys

- > Orange Bluff
- > Walking on fire