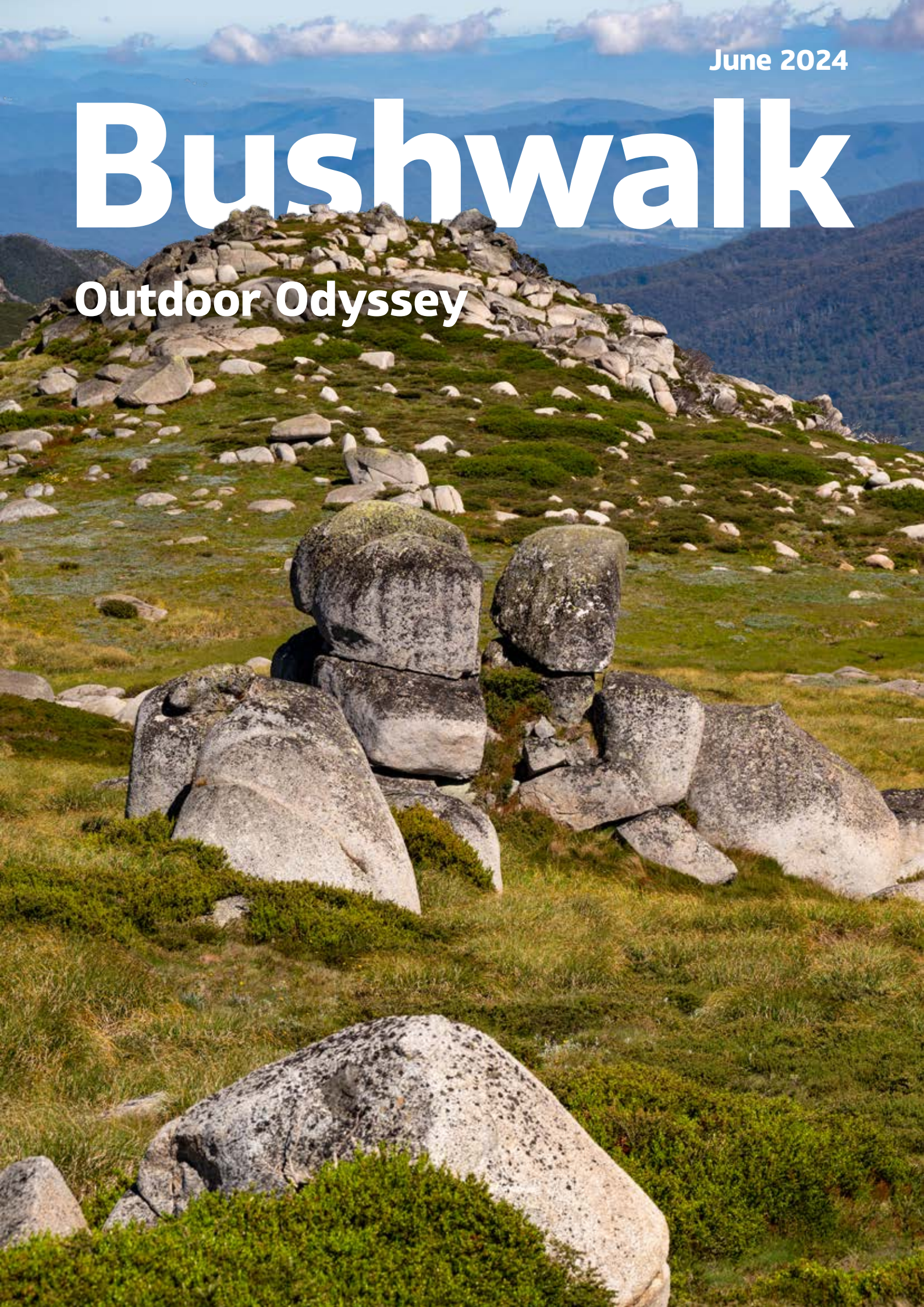


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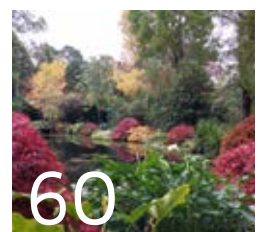
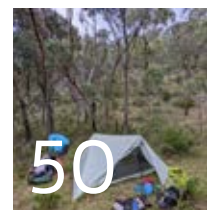
Bushwalk

Outdoor Odyssey



Contents

- 4 **Yuraygir and Solitary Islands Coast Walk**
A pilgrimage along the magnificent coast
- 16 **Mount Twynam Circuit**
A walk that provides solitude
- 22 **The Western Arthur Range Traverse**
A challenging and spectacular hike
- 36 **The Stacks Attracts**
A walk in UK's Pembrokeshire Coast NP
- 40 **Photo Gallery**
Magnificent coastal imagery
- 50 **Tent and Sleeping Gear**
Terry's gear on check
- 56 **Forests Reduce Their Own Bushfire Risk**
Mature forests control fire rather than drive it
- 60 **Apple Crumble**
Yummy apples in Blue Mountains



**Always Was
Always Will Be
Aboriginal Land**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and Owners of this vast land on which we live and explore. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present and thank them for their stewardship of this great south land.

Editor's Letter



Hi all,

I hope this edition and winter finds you well.

In this edition Greg shares with us his third chunk of the NSW coastal walk in Yuraygir NP, a long and worthy walk. Mark takes us on a beautiful solitary Mount Twynam circuit walk in the NSW Kosciuszko NP. Rebecca tackles the Western Arthur Range Traverse, Tasmania, a place that always tests stamina and skills. Our regular author Ian takes us for a walk along a section of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path in the UK with tall cliffs and sandy beaches. Terry gives us a helpful overview of his choice of tent and sleeping gear, Sonya teaches us another yummy recipe with apples, and we learn how forests can reduce their own bushfire risk from two Adjunct Associate Professors at Curtin University.

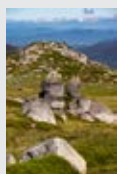
If you have a story to share with the bushwalking community, please reach out to Eva and let us give you a hand.

Happy reading, I hope it leads to some happy walks.

Matt :)

Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)
matt@bushwalk.com

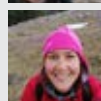
Cover image
Mark Jekabsons
View from the Main Range
heading towards Mt Tate



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Editor
Matt McClelland
matt@bushwalk.com



Design manager
Eva Gomiscek
eva@wildwalks.com

Please send any articles, suggestions or advertising enquires to Eva. We would love you to be part of the magazine and we are here to help.

Declaration

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

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

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 Bushwalk magazine.

Yuraygir and Solitary Islands Coast Walk

Text and photos
Greg Keaney



Day 1: Angourie sunrise



Day 1: Angourie Back Beach

Lao Tzu famously said the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Last year I took that first step on a thousand-mile, thousand beaches coastal hike, aiming to walk every beach and every headland of the magnificent coast of New South Wales. A pilgrimage I can truly believe in.





It's no marathon odyssey, though. I broke the thousand miles into one week 'chunks' to allow me to align the walk with my 'normal' life (and, fortunately, to provide lots of pleasurable opportunities for planning, reading, preparing and improving for the next stint). This article recounts my third 'chunk', having completed Coolangatta to Ballina in chunk 1 and then Ballina to Angourie in chunk 2. Chunk 3 is the stretch from the small surfing town of Angourie to the land of the big banana, Coffs Harbour, via Yuraygir National Park (the longest stretch of national park protected coastline in NSW) for four days, and then a further two along the northern section of the Solitary Islands Way.

Day 1: Angourie Point to Brooms Head 18km, 6 hrs

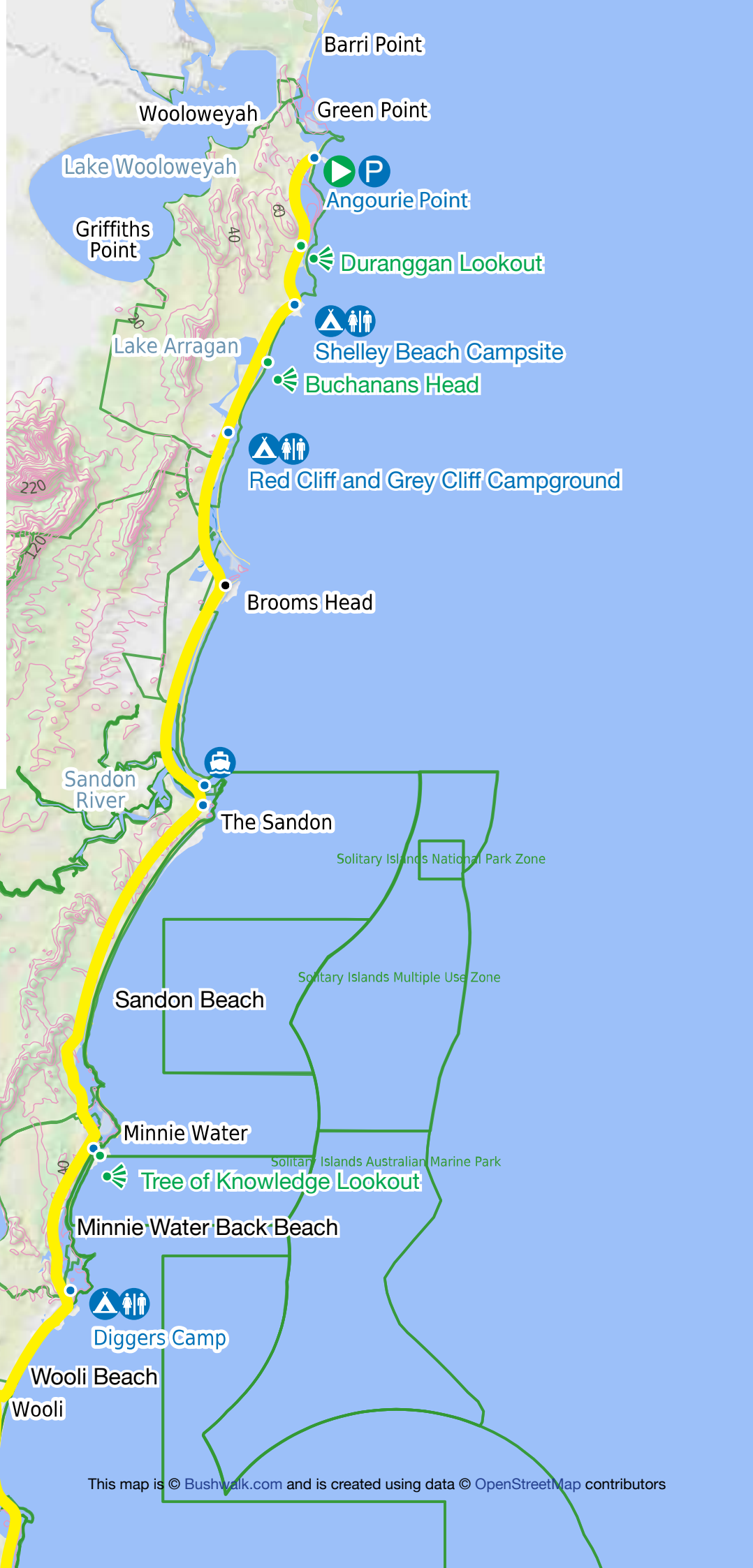
Angourie, or 'tail feather', is the jumping-off point for the Yuraygir Coastal Walk. My overnight 'backpacker express' bus arrived at Yamba at 5.00 am – excellent timing for an early morning coffee and a lucky lift with a dawn surfer to arrive at Angourie Point just in time for a perfect sunrise.

There's always a peculiar moment for me at the start of each chunk – it's the first 'official step'. Of course, there are plenty of 'pre-official' steps - in this case, getting off the bus, walking to the café, getting into and out of the car, walking to the lookout platform to take a few sunrise snaps... But there comes an actual conscious moment – a dramatic, fully aware mindful 'second', where the inner voice announces to itself that THIS is the first official step of the walk. A deep breath - a bit of internal triumphal music – a look around and then up and then down – the step is taken... and I'm on my way!

-  Start of the walk
-  Parking
-  Campsite
-  Toilet

-  Road, four-wheel drive track, walking track (treed)
-  Main track, side trip, alternative route
-  Cliff, major contour line, minor contour line (20 metre interval)
-  Lake, river, waterfall or creek

Angourie Point to Wooli





Day 1: Most of the Yuraygir Walk is very straightforward with easy beaches and well-made tracks

Along the firm low tide sands of Angourie Back Beach, it didn't take long to settle into a comfortable stride. I walk with poles, which makes walking on sand much more relaxed. The regular movement of arms and legs, combined with the rhythmic sounds of the waves and wind rapidly puts me into that peaceful, serene, almost meditative state that all solo hikers know and love.

I soon reached Duranggan Lookout and enjoyed the kangaroos having an early morning graze nearby. I feel as if I am in a beautifully produced tourist ad for Australia - kangaroos, a glorious view, an idyllic surf, wrapped by national park and enjoying some fine steaming black coffee from the Yamba café that I cleverly poured into my thermos... just sublime.

The sun inched higher and the day moved on. I rounded One Man Bluff –a place that the Yaegl people must have enjoyed for tens of thousands of years before my little sojourn. I wandered along 'pretty as a picture' Little Shelley Beach. Next was Shelley Headland



Day 1: Red Cliff



Day 1: Looking south towards Shelley Head from One Man Bluff

and its delightful campground followed by a scramble down to Shelly Head Beach - a charming little cove enhanced by the Shelley Caves that can be accessed at a lowish tide – simply magical!

The track then returned to a stretch of sand at Caves Beach before arriving at Buchanans Head. Plumbago Beach offered another few kilometres of softish sand. It's no trudge though; walking towards Red Cliff with its glowing cinnabar colouring made for a spectacular motivational target on this segment of the day's walk.

Red Cliff and Grey Cliff both have NPWS camping areas and would both be mighty fine places to pitch a tent. I was staying in comfort tonight though, so I set off for the final leg along Main Beach to the delightful town of Brooms Head. The settlement there consisted of some houses, a caravan park, a café, a bowling club and a small general store with attached accommodation and my abode for the night. A hot shower, a cold beer and one very happy coastal walker.

Day 2: Brooms Head to Minnie Water **18km, 5 hrs**

Sunrise over beautiful Brooms Head was an ideal way to start the day. Then it was down to the beach along a well-made track for the 9 km stroll to The Sandon. Plenty of birdlife along this stretch, most impressively the many white-bellied sea eagles who sometimes feel like my totem bird for the walk. They swooped and soared past me and always seemed to be heading south, scouting the way. Occasional dingo tracks near the dunes, and a dingo-mauled wallaby along the beach, but no sign of dingo stalkers (at least none that I know of!) anywhere along the walk.

The [NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service \(NPWS\) website](#) provides contact details for a boat to take you across the Sandon River. It's a great service and reasonably priced - I paid \$20. While I carried a small inflatable pack raft, I took the easy way out. It's a relatively short crossing and looks perfectly fine to do by raft with an incoming tide – possibly even swimmable – but then again, with plenty of shark sightings in the area, a \$20 'tinny' ride seems like a bargain to me.



Day 2: Crossing Brooms Head



Day 3: Tree of Knowledge sunrise



Day 3: Minnie Water Back Beach.
Leave nothing but footprints

Once across the Sandon, it was another 12kms or so to Minnie Water along Sandon and Illaroo Beaches – more postcard-perfect walking with only the gulls, shorebirds and occasional eagle for company. Beaches are always easier when the tide is low, but I had to do a bit of soft sand trudging on an incoming high tide for this section of the walk. Once 'the tide turned', the going was much easier and I was happy to have lived through an idiom, so to speak.

Minnie Water was another pleasant settlement with a sophisticated general store (note that it closed at 4pm). There are a range of provisions available there, including fine coffee and some gourmet food options. I stayed in a cabin in the caravan park – possible to book one-night stays on weeknights, although you might have to call direct, as web bookings usually state a two-night minimum.





There's not much in Minnie Water other than exquisite natural beauty and wonderful people... can't complain!

Day 3: Minnie Water to Wooli 16km, 4 hrs

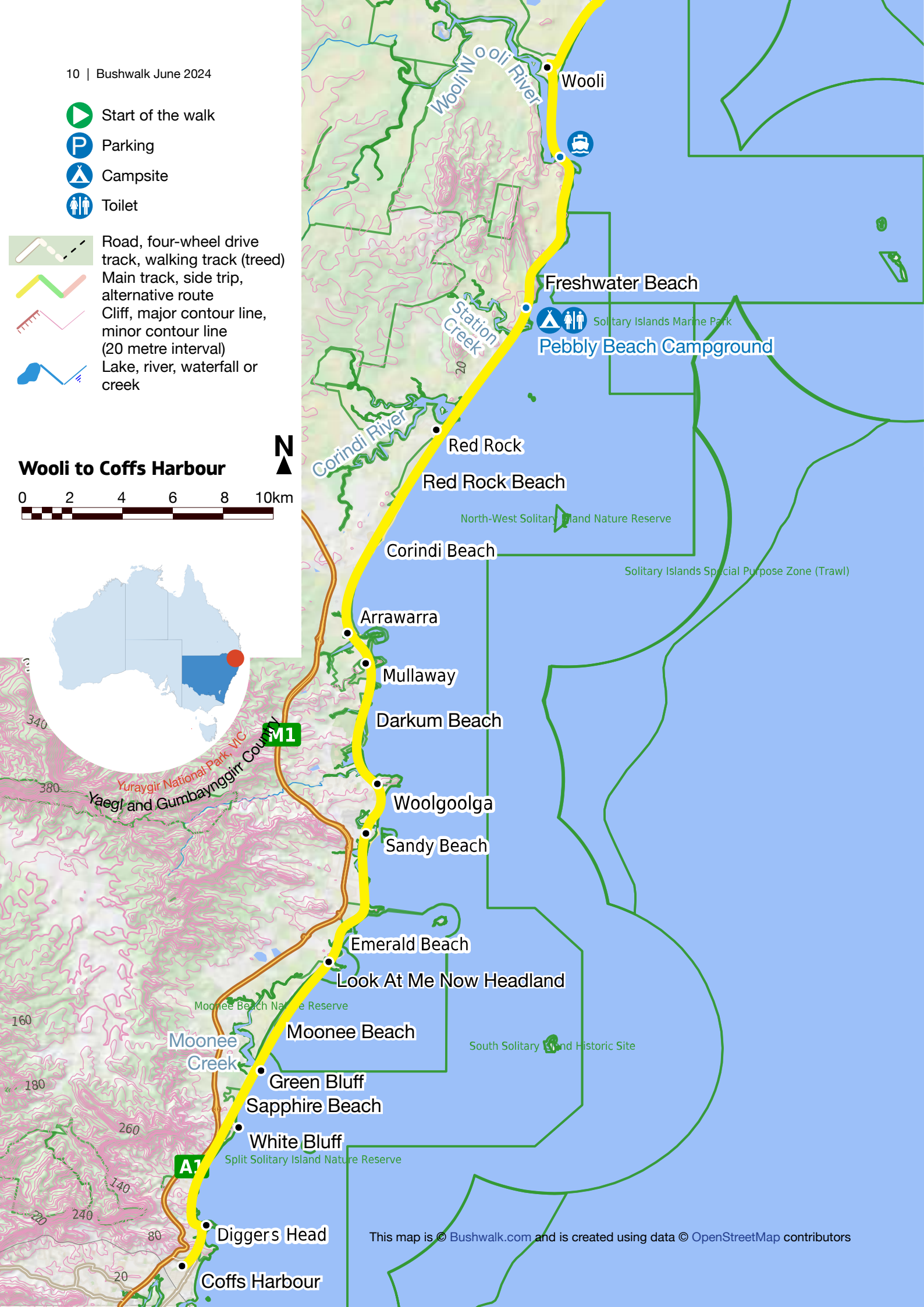
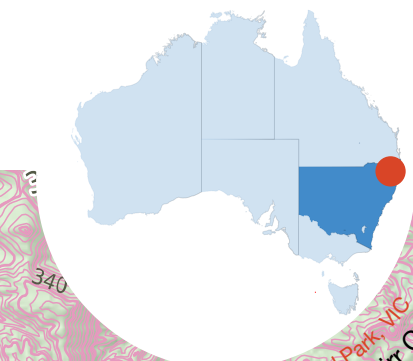
I again began by immersing myself in the sunrise. This time at the Tree of Knowledge Lookout (amazing view, but sadly I'm none the wiser), and then following a delightful trail down to Minnie Water Back Beach. A 'back' beach generally faces a different direction from the 'main' beach and is usually more exposed to larger swells (so in this part of the coast, facing a more southerly direction). Anyway, the back beach was a grand walk in the early morning light before arriving at Diggers Camp; a refreshing highlight being the permanent freshwater showers that run down from the peculiarly named (for Australia) Lake Hiawatha.

Nearby exquisite Boorkoom Campground leads on to the Wilsons Headland Track, which is definitely on the nomination list for the headland Oscars - just an incredible place. After a few small unnamed beaches, I had another soft sand trudge along Wooli Beach with the high tide approaching - nothing too

-  Start of the walk
-  Parking
-  Campsite
-  Toilet

-  Road, four-wheel drive track, walking track (treed)
-  Main track, side trip, alternative route
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-  Lake, river, waterfall or creek

Wooli to Coffs Harbour



difficult, and the lovely Woolli River Lodges on the bank of the Woolli Woolli River provided perfect therapy at the end of the walk.

Woolli is the largest town on the Yuraygir Walk and a delightful place to spend the evening. The local hotel has a gourmet touch with an ex-chef from Australia's longest-running Italian restaurant, having made a sea change to the town – unusual to be enjoying five-star food on a five-star trek!

Day 4: Woolli to Red Rock **22km, 6 hrs**

I started before sunrise with a NPWS boat across the Woolli Woolli River – this is a more significant crossing than The Sandon, but once again, mobile phone details are available on the NPWS website. The boat captain also mentioned that he is able to arrange a crossing of the Corindi River at Red Rock, which might be worth enquiring about. This last day of Yuraygir is quite tide-dependent, so depending on your starting point and the day's tide, you might be grateful for a boat at Red Rock.

The first part of the day 4 walk was wild and remote – stunningly beautiful, but probably the only slightly tricky bit of the whole Yuraygir Walk; nothing too difficult, just some climbs, a few slippery bits, some sharpish rock platforms and the occasional need to make a 'high road or low road' decision.

It was a joy for me to finally arrive at Freshwater Beach and take a comfortable stroll along the sand, followed by a short trek over the headland to the campground at Pebbly Beach. Then a thigh-deep wade across Station Creek and more pleasant sand-walking past Barcoongere.

A cooling southerly was blowing up, Red Rock was a vermillion sentinel in the distance, and I had a superlative hour or so of iconic beach walking with everything 'just so'. And then, as happens in life, the cooling southerly became a gale, the cloudy coolness turned to driving rain, and when I finally reached the Corindi River, it was peak high tide.

Of course, I could have waited a few hours for the tide to recede, but being on an exposed sandbar in the middle of a southerly gale,



Day 4: Successfully across the Woolli Woolli River



Day 4: Station Creek



Day 4: Corindi River

with warmth and civilisation in sight, made the prospect less than ideal. I put on my swimmers and navigated much of the way over the river on sand bars with my pack on my head, disturbing some slumbering sting rays in the process. Finally, I gave in, inflated my pack raft in the wild winds and put my gear inside while I swam the final channel.... It would be possible to swim the deep channel with your pack finely balanced on your head – not ideal, but definitely not impossible. As noted above, it is possible to arrange a boat passage across the Corindi River when you arrange your Wooli crossing. All that being said, at a lowish tide on a normal day, the Corindi River should not be too difficult to cross chest-deep.

I should mention the [Woopi Connect App](#). It provides an on-demand public transport service in the areas north of the Coffs Harbour bus network. It works like Uber but at public transport prices. It is a great option if you

are completing the Yuraygir Walk at Red Rock, but want to get to, say, Woolgoolga to connect with long-distance transport.

Day 5: Red Rock to Woolgoolga 17km, 5 hrs

Red Rock (made of red jasper) marks the official southern terminus of the Yuraygir Walk, so today, I moved onto the northern section of the Solitary Islands Way. The walk from Red Rock to Woolgoolga includes crossing the technical border between the Coral Sea and the Tasman Sea, as well as Red Rock Little and Big Beaches, Pipeclay Beach and Corindi Headland. After Corindi is wonderful Arrawarra Beach and its sensational headland, then Ocean View Beach, Mullaway Beach, Mullaway Headland, Cabins Beach, Darkum Beach, Safety Beach and finally Woolgoolga with its Sikh connections and amazing Indian restaurants - what a selection! Just a magnificent series of beaches, headlands and sensational coastal scenery.



Day 5: Little Red Rock

There are plenty of ICOLLS (intermittently closed and open lakes and lagoons) along the way. Most are closed at present, and the few open ones were a knee-deep wade. There are a variety of places for water and snacks in this section of the walk, which makes planning and provisioning much easier.

I stayed the night at [Woopi Backpackers](#) – a delightful establishment primarily filled with young working holidaymakers doing their visa-required time on farms in the hinterland. They provide great company, and the friendly relaxed atmosphere (and quirky front bar) make it highly recommended.

Day 6: Woolgoolga to Coffs Harbour 33km, 8 hrs

And so, to the final day for this phase of my NSW coast walk from Woolgoolga to Coffs Harbour. Coffs is known as a place where the mountains meet the sea - and while they are Aussie-size mountains (hills with delusions of grandeur), it certainly made for amazing scenery while ambling along the beaches.

It was a longish walk of 33 kilometres or so (and the official guides recommend doing this over two days), but there was 'civilisation' along the way for refuelling stops. This part of the Solitary Islands Way is an incredible stretch of coastline and includes Woolgoolga Back Beach, Dammerel Head, Sandy Beach, Bare Bluff, Fiddamans Beach, Diggers Point, Emerald Beach, Serenity Bay and Shelly Beach.

My lunch stop was at the wonderfully named Look At Me Now Headland with its myriad kangaroos lazing about on the enormous grassy headland. Moonee Beach, Green Bluff, Sapphire Beach, White Bluff, Campbells Beach and Pelican Beach are next. Pelican Beach is difficult to access except at a very low tide. Otherwise, it is a long trip back up to the road to walk around the resorts that restrict access to the beach. Then it's on to Hills Beach, Korora Beach, Charlesworth Bay Beach, Little Diggers Beach, Diggers Beach, Gwiddy Beach and Macauleys Headland.

The town of Coffs Harbour was now well and truly in sight and after another few kilometres via Horne Beach, Park Beach and North Wall



Day 6: Look At Me Now Headland



Day 6: Follow the grey brick road

Beach I was finally at Coffs Harbour Jetty Beach. Outstanding variety, great tracks over the headlands and just enough bush-bashing to wear a tired bushwalker out.

I was doing the walk on St Patrick's Day, and it got me thinking about my long-ago ancestors from County Leitrim in Ireland. They jumped on a ship into the unknown of New South Wales nearly 200 years ago. It must have felt like going to Mars - imagine the goodbyes to loved ones, knowing you would never see them again. I feel so lucky they made that choice, however, even though it was no doubt forced by poverty and desperation. I feel truly blessed to have this astonishing thousand-mile coastline almost as a birthright. Every bit of beach is publicly owned and accessible, the geological variation is incredible, the wildlife, both terrestrial and marine, is amazing, and the restorative effect of simply being by the sea is exquisite.



Day 6: It's not all blue skies and fair weather!
Looking south from Look At Me Now Headland

I arrived in Coffs Harbour as darkness fell. A swim and a shower, and then I sank a Guinness or two in honour of those Irish forebears and their choices. I made my way to Coffs Harbour Station. I caught the night

train back to Sydney and, after a blissful week of 'coast-questing' through Yuraygir National Park and the Solitary Islands Way, I agree with Helen Keller 'Life is either a daring adventure or nothing ...'.



Greg grew up in Sydney but lived for many years in SE Asia. He has now returned home to Sydney and loves exploring Australia's magnificent bushwalks, parks, coasts and waterways. When he's not bushwalking or mountain bike-riding, he works in education for Deloitte and Ecctis UK.



Solitary Islands NP
landsmith

Mount Twynam Circuit

Text and photos
Mark Jekabsons

Kosciuszko's Main Range loop seems to be more popular with each passing season, but you don't have to go too far to find walks that provide solitude.



Day 3: At Consett Stephen Pass looking down the Guthega River valley



Illawong swing bridge



Day 1: Campsite at the foot of Mt Twynam

To the north of Mt Kosciuszko lies Mt Twynam, Australia's third highest peak (2195m) and the equally impressive Mt Tate. Both can be visited on a 23km loop starting at Guthega. While it is possible to do this walk in a day, I chose to camp out for two nights to experience the alpine night skies and hopefully, those sunsets and sunrises that photos don't do justice.

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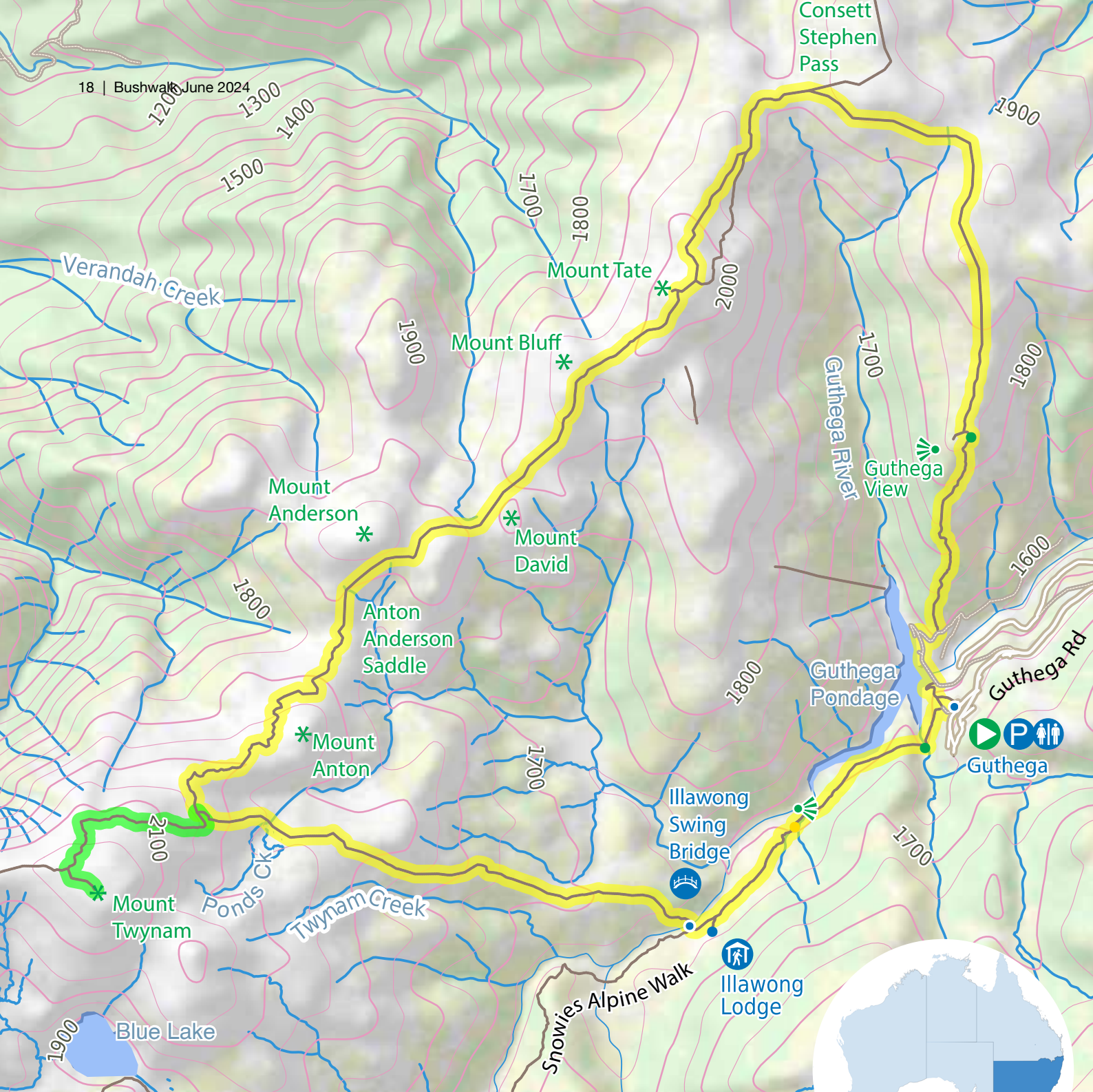
I chose to camp out for two nights to experience the alpine night skies and hopefully, those sunsets and sunrises that photos don't do justice.

Day 1: Guthega to Mt Twynam 8km, 3 hrs

Arriving in Guthega by motorcycle, I was able to park close to the start of the walk, but there is plenty of parking available no matter your means of transport. I chose to walk in a clockwise direction which meant

I shared the first 2.5km with those walking south along the Guthega-Charlotte Pass section of the Snowies Alpine Walk, opened in 2022. This follows the Snowy River upstream from Guthega Pondage to the Illawong swing bridge. At this point I turned west, crossing the bridge and the gentle slope of the Snowies Walk suddenly became a more serious climb as Mt Twynam loomed directly in front of me.

The track from here is a narrow but well-worn footpad winding its way up a ridgeline and past a stand of the oldest and gnarliest looking snow gums that you'll find anywhere on the Main Range. Before the final kick up to the peak of Twynam, lies a small wetland near the source of Pounds Creek. The terrain levels out here and with some lush, grassy patches between the pools, I decided to pitch my tent here. I had only started walking mid-afternoon, but the wind had increased considerably in the last couple of hours. I knew that this would be the last sheltered spot before the exposed ridgeline on top of the range. The only drawback was not having a view of the impending sunset, and when a



Mount Twynam Circuit



0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5km



Road, four-wheel drive track, walking track (treed)



Main track, side trip, alternative route



Cliff, major contour line, minor contour line (50 metre interval)



Lake, river, waterfall or creek



Start of the walk



Hut



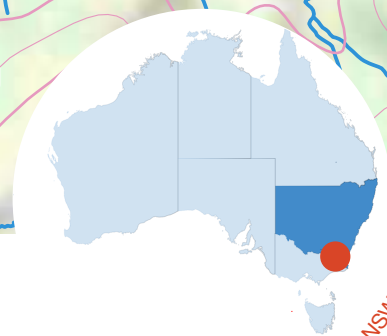
Bridge



Toilet



Parking



Kosciuszko National Park, NSW
Ngarigo Country

Bushwalk.com notes and maps on [webpage](#), [GPX](#) and [PDF](#)

This map is © [Bushwalk.com](#) and is created using data © [OpenStreetMap](#) contributors

bright orange glow appeared on the summit of Mt Anton to the north, I knew I'd missed out on a good one.

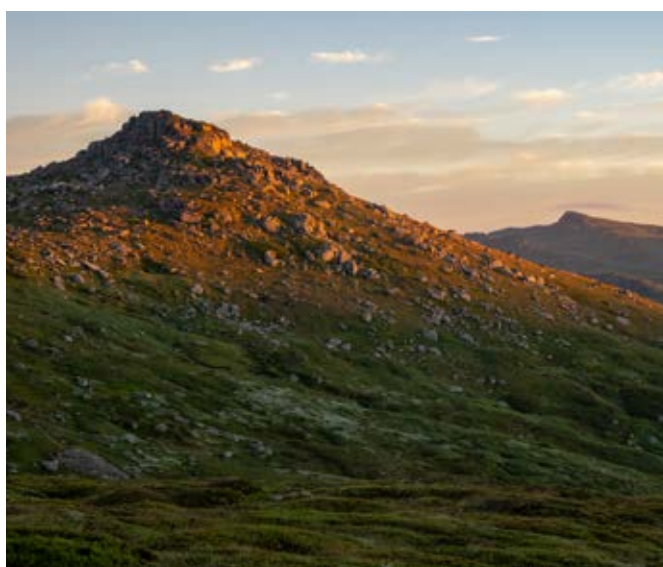
Day 2: Mt Twynam to Consett Stephen Pass 10km, 3.5 hrs

When the sun hit the other side of Mt Anton the next morning, there was just a light breeze and a full moon was setting. From my campsite it was only 500 metres to the ridgeline where the loop turned to the north. The summit of Mt Twynam is just off the route to the south so I dropped my pack at the junction and walked the short side trip to enjoy the views over Hedley Tarn to Mt Kosciuszko.

By the time I descended from the peak and returned to my pack, the wind was more noticeable and grew stronger as I passed Mounts Anton, Anderson, David and Mann Bluff. This section of track afforded spectacular views across endless ranges to the west. While not peak wildflower season, some of the slopes were still carpeted with the yellow and white of yam daisies, billy buttons and alpine sunrays. The numerous boulder fields provided shelter from the wind when I needed to boil the billy for morning tea and lunch.



Day 2: View from the summit of Mt Twynam



Day 2: View over Mt Anton in the early morning light



Day 2: Yam daisies and billy buttons on the slopes

At Mt Tate the track drops off the ridgeline and starts the descent to Consett Stephen Pass. I persevered with the wind and stayed high, looking for a sheltered campsite so I wouldn't miss the sunset again. I eventually found a flat spot below the peak's boulders just the size of my tent's footprint. The afternoon was spent enjoying reading with cups of tea. When the sun was close to the horizon I ventured back upslope. My camera tripod could only barely withstand the wind coming directly in from the

west but the scene of layers of violet ridges under oranges and reds kept me up on that exposed ridge for a couple of hours. Behind me, the lights of Guthega were turned on as the stars came out.

**Day 3: Consett Stephen Pass to Guthega
6km, 2 hrs**

Day three started with another colourful lightshow over a bumpy white sea of fog in the valley below. After breaking camp, I dropped down into the bowl of Consett



Day 2: Sunset from Mt Tate



Day 2: Stars over the campsite below the summit of Mt Tate



Day 3: At Consett Stephen Pass looking down the Guthega River valley

Stephen Pass. From here there is the option of continuing north to the Rolling Ground, however I turned to the south where I could see Guthega in the distance. I lost the footpad at this point, but the Guthega River valley pointed the way and crossing the meadow-like grassland was easy walking. I picked up the track again near Guthega Trig where it drops sharply off a spur.

The descent was tough on the legs, not only because it drops nearly 300 metres in 2 kilometres but because the low woody shrubs that have almost entirely engulfed the track take a toll if you are wearing shorts, as I was.

Where the track isn't visible, take the path of least resistance through the scrub. I emerged at Guthega Dam and from here it's a short ascent back up to the village car park on formed track.

I had seen no one on the final day's walking, and few other hikers on the entire loop once I had veered off the Alpine Snowies Walk. My total ascent was just over 1000 metres with most of this being on the first day approaching Mt Twynam. Like other walks on the Main Range, the main hiking season is from November to April but plan for bad weather at any time of year.



Mark is a keen bushwalker and amateur photographer with a particular interest in our natural environment through his thirty-year career as an ecologist, predominantly working on aquatic projects. From his home in Canberra he has extensively explored Namadgi National Park, both for work and recreation, and feels he is still getting to know Kosciuszko National Park. He will soon be moving to a rural property with his partner where he is hoping to restore some natural habitat to the cleared land. Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jekabsons/> Instagram: @markjek

The Western Arthur Range Traverse

Text and photos
Rebecca Jacobs

After doing a lot of reading for the past couple of years, scouring over social media posts on local hiking pages and literally watching every video that I could find, the time had finally come for me to tackle the well-known Western Arthur Traverse, or colloquially referred to by locals as the Western Arthurs. I mean, who doesn't want their own picture-perfect shot looking down into Lake Oberon?



Day 3: Lake Oberon prior to final descent



Federation Peak

The Western Arthur Traverse is a challenging and spectacular hiking route located in the remote wilderness of Southwest Tasmania, Australia. Spanning approximately 50kms through the rugged and pristine landscape of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, this traverse offers adventurers like myself a truly unforgettable journey through some of the most breathtaking scenery in Tasmania or, arguably, Australia.

I will have to admit that I went into the Western Arthurs with a quiet sense of confidence. The week before I had successfully summited Federation Peak on the Eastern Arthurs. Federation Peak is an iconic and challenging mountaineering destination. Rising to an elevation of 1,224 metres, its distinctive blade-like summit presents a formidable ascent, requiring technical climbing skills and nerve. Surrounded by rugged and at times somewhat delicate terrain and unpredictable weather, reaching the summit demands careful

planning, stamina, and a deep respect for the wilderness. It's no secret that Federation Peak has been referred to by many as "Australia's only real Mountain", and after completing it, I can confirm that this is for good reason. So, I gathered when the two are compared, the Western Arthurs should be easy, right? ... Wrong! As I set off on day one, little did I know how wrong that quiet sense of confidence could be.

“

The week before I had successfully summited Federation Peak on the Eastern Arthurs.

The traverse begins at the car park at Scotts Peak Dam, where hikers embark on a multi-day journey that takes them deep into the heart of the Arthur Range. The route traverses a series of deep valleys, jagged peaks,

dramatic cliffs and alpine lakes, offering stunning panoramic views of the surrounding wilderness at every turn. The terrain is rugged and demanding, with rocky ridgelines, steep ascents and descents and challenging scrambles that require careful and sometimes precise navigation and physical endurance.

Due to its remote location and challenging terrain, the Western Arthurs is best suited for experienced hikers with strong navigation and wilderness survival skills. Hikers should be well-prepared with appropriate gear, including a suitable 4-season tent, an adequate sleeping system, warm clothing, sturdy hiking boots, ample food, water supplies, personal locator beacon, first aid, and tools for navigation. It is also essential to be aware of the unpredictable weather conditions and to plan for contingencies in case of emergencies.

To make the hike sound a little less overwhelming, I have decided to break the walk down into a day-by-day recount of what sections we covered each day and the highs and lows our journey entailed. It is important to note that others may choose to break up

the walk differently and many choose to do it over additional days. In hindsight, this choice is probably a wise one. Our original plan was to complete the traverse in 6-7 days. But with the weather forecast looking less favourable on days 6 and 7, we decided to cover a little further each day and completed the traverse in 5 days. If you know much about Tasmanian weather, one thing you will know is that the weather is incredibly unpredictable and often unfavourable in the southwest. For our 5 days we got lucky. Extremely lucky. Albeit, we were still prepared for if the weather turned.

**Day 1: Scotts Peak Dam carpark to Junction Creek Campsite
~ 9km, 2.75 hrs**

Day one was our shortest day. Our group of four was unable to meet at the track start until the afternoon. With this in mind we decided to at least make a start and walk in to Junction Creek where we would set up camp for our first night on the track. The McKays Track from the car park to Junction Creek camp is moderately flat, open, clear, well-marked and easy to follow. We were quite lucky to



Start of the track

Lake Pedder

Scotts Peak Road

25

Huon Campsite



Road, four-wheel drive track, walking track (treed)



Main track, side trip, alternative route



Cliff, major contour line, minor contour line (50 metre interval)



Lake, river, waterfall or creek



Start of the walk



Campsite



Toilet



The Western Arthur Range Traverse, part 1

0 1 2 3 4 5km



Southwest National Park, TAS
Needwonnee Country

Junction
Creek
Campsite



Arthur Plains Trail

Southwest National Park

Moraine A Track

Mount
Hesperus

Lake Pluto

Lake Neptune

Lake Fortuna

Capella Crags

Lake
Cygnus

Lake Nereid

Lake Triton

Mount Hayes

Lake
Ceres

Procyon Peak

Mount Orion

Mount Sirius

Lake
Oberon

Campsite

Mount Pegasus (South)

Mount Pegasus

Lake Uranus

Mount Capricorn

Lake
Titania

Lake
Ariel



High
Moor
Campsite

Bushwalk.com notes and maps on [webpage](#), [GPX](#) and [PDF](#)

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only encounter a small amount of mud that wasn't too deep. It was however obvious that sections of this track would be incredibly muddy in the wetter months and hikers would likely encounter the additional challenge of wading through deep mud.

The Junction Creek Campsite itself offers a range of areas for one to pitch their tent both nearby the creek amongst the trees or a little further away on higher ground with a stunning view of the Arthur Range in the background. We completed the Traverse in January this year (2024) and the creek was actively flowing, providing a good source of water. Near to the campsite is also a barrel screw lid toilet for use, but you will need to carry in your own toilet paper.

“

We completed the Traverse in January this year (2024) and the creek was actively flowing, providing a good source of water.



Junction Creek Camp



Toilet at Junction Creek Camp



Arthur Range from Junction Creek



Beginning of the traverse

Day 2: Junction Creek Campsite to Lake Oberon with side trips

~ 13.5km, 11.75 hrs, including side trips:

Mt Hayes - 600m return and 25 mins,

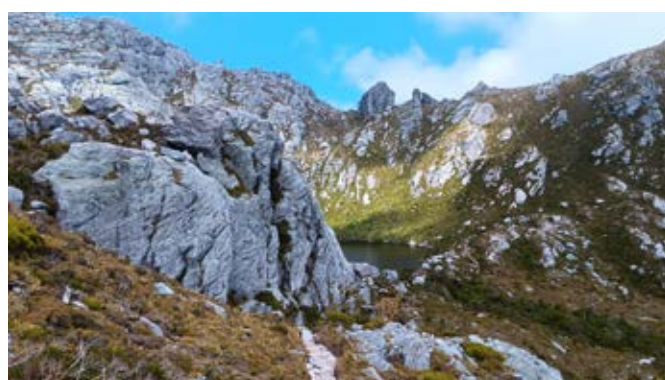
Mt Sirius- 800m return and 30 mins and

Mt Orion- 800m return and 40 mins.

Today the plan was to walk from Junction Creek Camp to Square Lake, skipping Lake Cygnus with a side trip to Mount Hayes, one of the 5 Abels on our list to tick off. We woke up to an overcast morning and the ground was wet after a light shower of rain overnight. We set off early at 0730hrs following the 'Old Port Davey Track' and then onto the 'Moraine A Track', knowing we had a big day ahead, and quickly found ourselves ascending our first climb up to the open ridgeline of the Arthur Range. The climb was steep, but easy to follow. A slow and steady approach found us up the top and commencing the traverse in good timing. The overcast morning had begun to pass but the wind had picked up, although still pleasurable walking weather.



From the summit of Mount Hayes



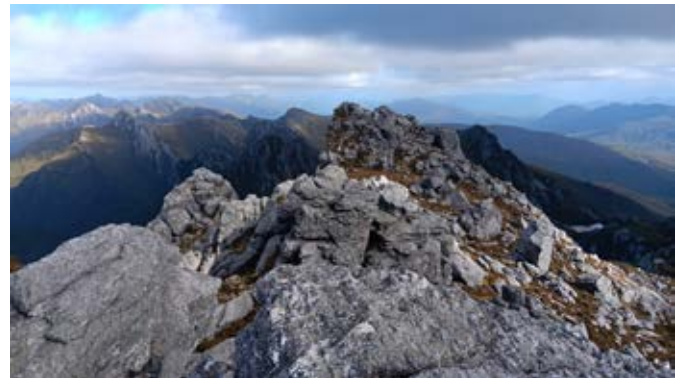
Heading toward Square Lake

Mount Hayes was our first side trip. The summit sits at an elevation of 1,119 meters. From the track, it took just under half an hour to reach the summit. The track start for Mt Hayes was not obvious. We relied on a GPX file saved on our Garmins to find the start, although quickly picked up a pad to follow which had some cairns sparingly as well. Before we knew it, we were back down and continuing on to Square Lake where the plan was to pitch our tents for the night. We reached Square Lake at 1600hrs. Square Lake was stunning, but we soon realised the ground was quite wet and the sensitive terrain lacked ideal camping spots for 4 tents. We quickly re-assessed and decided we had enough daylight hours left to head on to Lake Oberon via the summits of Mount Sirius and Mount Orion.

Mount Sirius was our next side trip after a short and steep climb out of Square Lake to the plateau. At the plateau, the track to Mount Sirius was to the right off the main track.



Heading toward Mt Sirius Summit



From the summit of Mt Orion



Lake Oberon prior to final descent



Heading toward High Moor

Again, the start of this track was not obvious, but we picked up some cairns to follow after relying on our Garmins to point us in the right direction. The summit of Mount Sirius sits at 1,151 metres elevation. In terms of difficulty, the climb itself was easy and showcased incredible views of the range as well as down to Lake Oberon.

After returning to the main track still in good spirits we decided to venture on and tackle Mount Orion. The last of our Abels on the list to complete before Lake Oberon. The summit of Mount Orion also sits at 1,151 metres elevation, but in terms of difficulty, it was harder than Mt Sirius and Mt Hayes. Truth be told, this may or may not be compounded by the fact that we had already been hiking for close to 10 hours and were noticeably starting to fatigue. While the whole day did not cover an extensive amount of kms, the rugged terrain, continual ascents and descents impacted the overall km which one can reasonably gain.

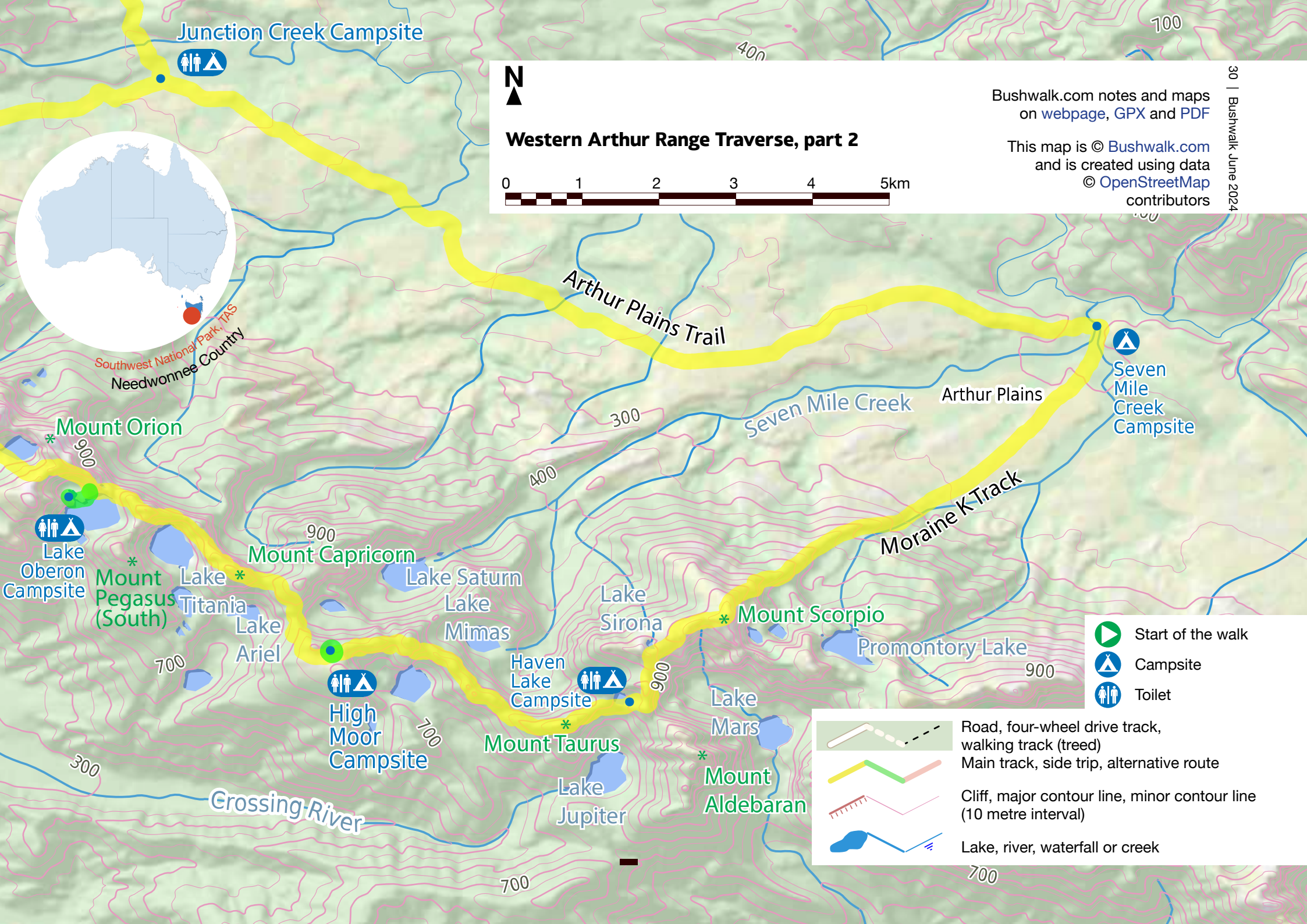
After a steep and somewhat technical descent, we reached Lake Oberon at 1915hrs and it is fair to say we were feeling ready to find a spot to camp, hastily eat and climb into bed. Lake Oberon could best be described as a pristine alpine lake, nestled amidst towering peaks and surrounded by dramatic cliffs, well sheltered from the wind. In recent years the hike to Lake Oberon has become increasingly popular. The scenery is breathtaking, and it's notably understandable why hikers enjoy the tranquility of this remote wilderness setting. Although, this increasing popularity has in turn meant that many hikers and large groups are opting to do quick return hiking trips to Lake Oberon. We quickly discovered that the booking system is not always effective, as we found the campsite to be overcrowded and well above the booking limit. This required us to anxiously negotiate with others who had already pitched their tents, to squeeze our tents in. Like Junction Creek, the campsite also had a toilet and being lakeside meant the water supply was ample.

Bushwalk.com notes and maps
on [webpage](#), [GPX](#) and [PDF](#)

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contributors



Western Arthur Range Traverse, part 2



- Start of the walk
- Campsite
- Toilet

- Road, four-wheel drive track, walking track (treed)
- Main track, side trip, alternative route
- Cliff, major contour line, minor contour line (10 metre interval)
- Lake, river, waterfall or creek

Day 3: Lake Oberon to High Moor ~ 4.5km, 5.75 hrs

I have heard it said amongst the hiking community that if you find it too challenging getting down to Lake Oberon, to highly consider turning around at this point. Despite being very capable, two people in our group decided to turn around here for individual reasons. While our second day was long, I did not find the technical aspects of it too challenging. I have been hiking in Tasmania for a few years and felt reasonably prepared for the full traverse. That being said, I did not have extensive pack-hauling experience so I was cautious heading into the next two days, knowing that it would be important for me to take my time in some sections and not rush.

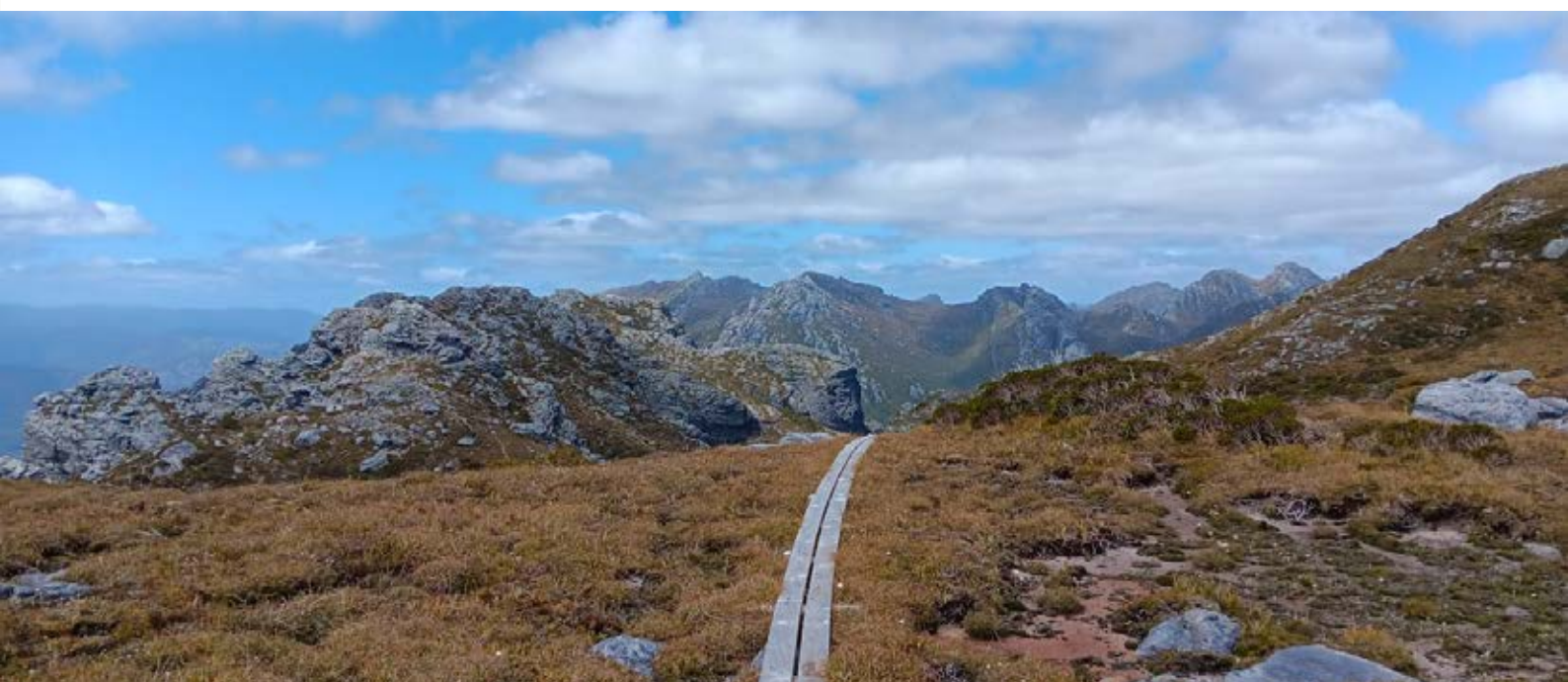
We had a late start on day three at 0815hrs, knowing that it was a shorter day with no side trips planned. Very quickly after leaving Lake Oberon, we came to our first obstacle. A short, almost vertical climb. There appeared to be a few good hand holds and foot rests, but we decided to test out our pack-hauling ability early in the day to give us an indication of how the rest of the day may unfold. As it turned out, this was the only time we needed to pack-haul that day. There was one section which required us to remove our packs and pass them to each other through small gaps in the rocks, but other than that we were



Steep gully on route to High Moor

able to navigate the steep gullies slowly and cautiously without removing our packs. The other groups following chose to pack-haul through some of those sections. I would recommend if you found the descent into Lake Oberon difficult, or you find yourself not feeling sturdy on your feet or unbalanced by your pack, the steep gullies would be the place to remove the packs and use ropes to guide the packs down safely but more importantly, get yourself down safely.

This section of the track was relatively easy to follow and well-marked most of the way. There were a couple of sections though at which we needed to stop and have a look around for the correct path. Each time the correct path was easily enough found. It is



View before final descent into High Moor

important to note that apart from a small tarn close to Lake Oberon, we did not come across anywhere else to fill up on water before High Moor, so carrying enough for this section is wise. The highlight of the day was the view just before the descent down into the High Moor Campsite. It was one of those views where it takes your breath away and you are instantly lost for words. Maybe it was the fact that we had been walking for 5 and a half hours already that made it such a great sight, I'm not sure. What I do know is that feeling has stayed with me as such a fond memory of our hike. It's moments like these that add so much warmth to the overall experience. Moments like these where you realise how truly blessed we are.

The campsite at High Moor had numerous tent platforms and is surrounded by multiple peaks that made for a fun and relaxed afternoon of exploring as we reached the campsite at 1430hrs. There is also another toilet nearby, alike the other campsites and a small stream for filling up water. I could imagine though, in peak times, that small stream may become close to non-existent.

**Day 4: High Moor to Lake Sirona
via Mount Aldebaran
~ 7km, 11.8 hrs**

**Side trip: Mount Aldebaran 2.2km return,
and took us 1.6 hrs.**

Day four was definitely our hardest day.

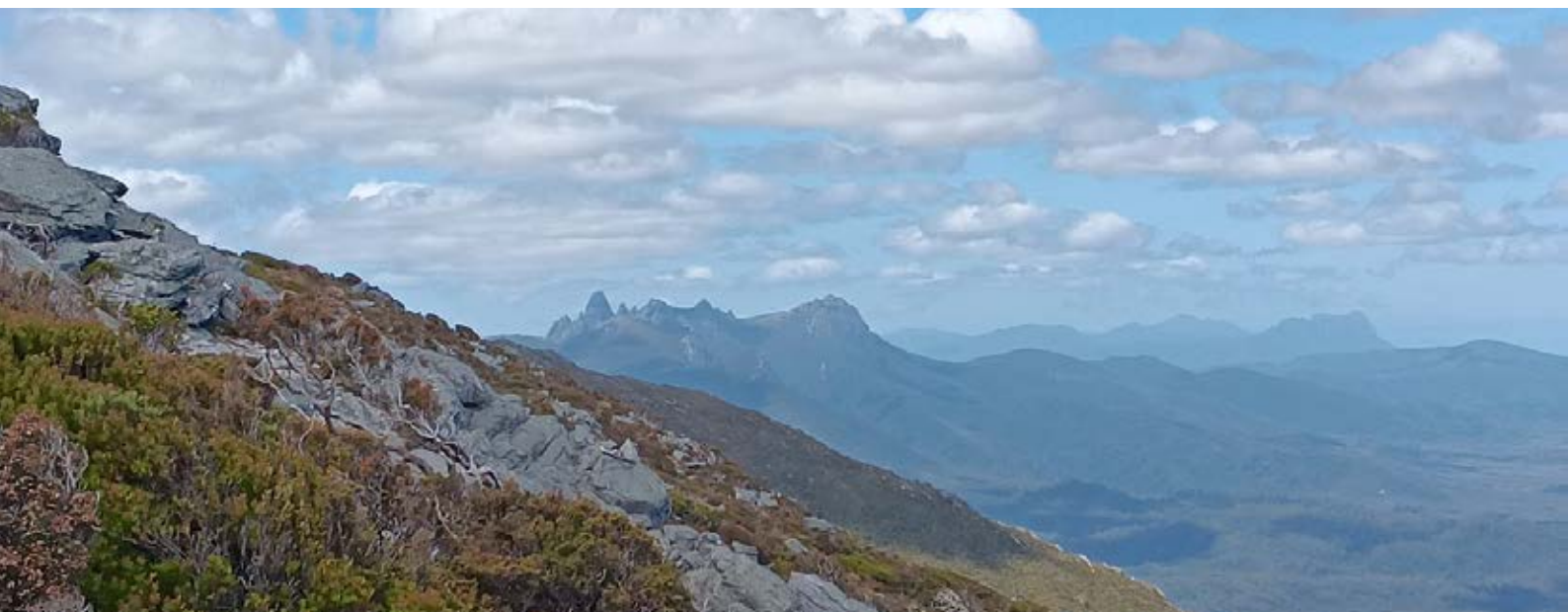


High Moor tent platforms



First steep gully descent past High Moor

Today was the day when I realised that the quiet sense of confidence that I had started the traverse with was indeed toeing the line of foolishness. It's not even so much the technical side of it, but being day 4, the fatigue had started to weigh in. Today we walked much slower, adding considerably to



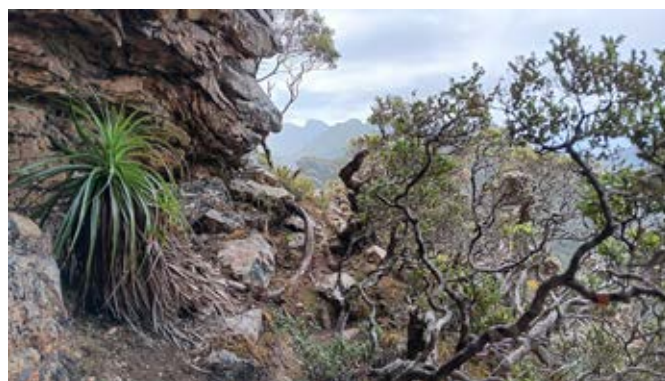
On way to Haven Lake with view of Federation Peak in the background



View from Mount Aldebaran

the overall length of the day. We had to carry adequate water for the whole day, knowing there was nowhere to fill up prior to Haven Lake. Everything seemed much bigger, felt much harder. The plan at this point was to get to Lake Sirona with a side trip to Mount Aldebaran, and walk out on day 5 via the last Abel on our list. We had been watching the weather forecast closely and felt it would be safer to avoid the incoming bad weather and make the most of the long summer days.

Knowing that we had a big day ahead of us, we set off at 0720hrs. The sun was shining and the wind was to a minimum. Today was the day we met with “The Beggary Bumps”. I had heard and read many things about the Beggary Bumps, but I’m not sure anything could have quite prepared me for what I was in for. At a glance, the Beggary Bumps are a series of prominent peaks. Navigating these bumps requires a whole new level of strength, endurance, careful route-finding skills and a good understanding of the terrain. I was constantly reminded just how delicate parts of the terrain were and I’m not sure I will ever forget the moment of descending one of the peaks and looking down, realising the path was but a small section of dirt relying heavily



Navigating Beggary Bumps

on the rocks and plants to keep the track from completely disintegrating beneath our feet. There was a lot of trust being put into the delicate terrain and I couldn’t help but wonder about the impact we were having and how long these tracks will last. I’m not sure I realised at the time just how challenging navigating the constant ascents and descents was or just how big of an accomplishment it would be.

Most hikers set up camp at Haven Lake for the night. We stopped in at Haven Lake for a quick lunch break and commenced the steep climb up to the ridgeline before dropping our big packs and summiting Mount Aldebaran.

The Mount Aldebaran summit sits at an elevation of 1,107 meters. The track to Mount Aldebaran was not clearly marked or easy to find. We found ourselves relying heavily on our map and Garmins. Parts of the track were cairned, but the cairns often led into the thicker scrub which was harder to push through. We stuck to our GPX track and summited by sticking to the left on the rockier sections of the mountain. While we were fatigued and had a moment of considering giving Mount Aldebaran a miss, the summit views definitely proved worthy of the push.

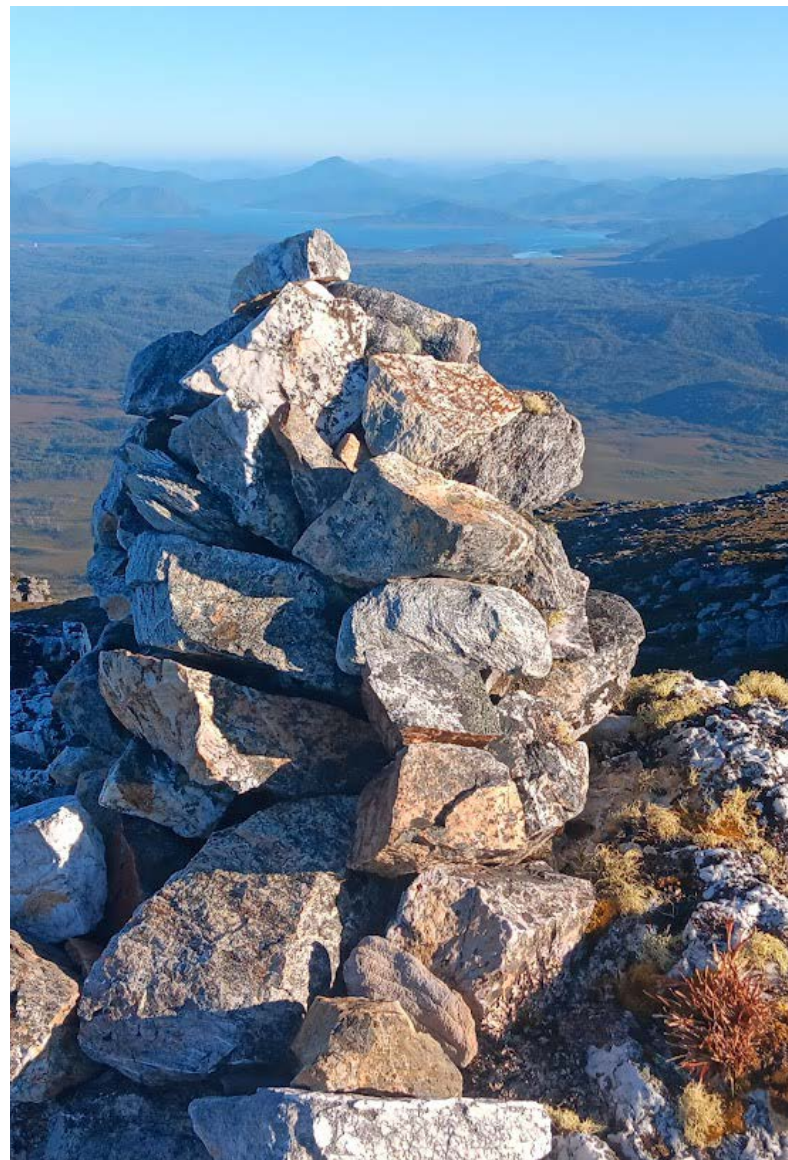
Once down from Aldebaran and back on the main track, we only had less than a kilometre to go to get to Lake Sirona. In our minds, we estimated we could get to Lake Sirona in an hour. Again, we were very wrong. It took us much longer. Although it wasn't far and nowhere near as technically challenging as the rest of the day had been, our bodies were definitely saying, or rather screaming, 'enough'. It certainly was a huge relief to make it into Lake Sirona and set up camp before dark.

Day 5: Lake Sirona to Scotts Peak Dam carpark via Mount Scorpio
~ 24km, 8.75 hrs with a 50-metre side trip off the main track to summit Mount Scorpio

Day 5 and our final day of the Western Arthur Traverse. We set off early again at 0700hrs knowing that the most technical part of the traverse was already completed, but we had many kms ahead of us if we wanted to walk all the way out today. Very quickly into the morning we found ourselves summing Mount Scorpio, the last of the Abels on our list that we wanted to summit, and thankfully the easiest. The summit of Mount Scorpio sits at 1,106 metres elevation and is a short 50-metre scramble off the main track. The scramble is technically easy and we found some cairns that lead all the way to the summit from the main track. Again, the views from the summit were breathtaking and well worth the quick scramble to the top. Once down from Mount Scorpio, our journey of descending from the ranges began. We followed the Moraine K Track for about one and a half kilometres before taking a shortcut known by locals through to the Arthur Plains Track. Here we were back into the open plains and very

exposed to the elements with the majority of the final 17kms providing little to no shade unless crossing creeks. It would be very fair to say that at this point there was little talking amongst us until we reached the car park. We were hot, we were tired, our feet were aching, but what an adventure we had had.

Despite its challenges, the Western Arthur Traverse offers a truly unforgettable wilderness experience for those willing to take on the adventure. From the pristine lakes to its rugged peaks, this traverse truly does showcase the raw beauty and untamed wilderness of Tasmania's southwest. I can now say I have a new and deeper understanding of why this hike has become such a bucket-list destination for outdoor enthusiasts around the world.



View from Mount Scorpio



Looking back on the Arthur Range on the way out



Rebecca with daughters Matilda and Evie at Twisted Lakes

Rebecca is a resilient single mother of four, residing in a small coastal town in Northern Tasmania. By profession, she is a dedicated Registered Nurse, lending her compassionate care to the local district hospital.

Beyond the walls of the medical facility, Rebecca's spirit finds solace and rejuvenation amidst the untamed beauty of the Tasmanian wilderness. In recent years, she has forged a deep connection with the rugged landscapes and pristine nature that Tasmania offers, discovering within herself a profound love for exploration and adventure. In recent years Rebecca has found a new passion in sharing her love for the wilderness with her children.

You can follow Rebecca's adventures via:

Youtube: [@becandthekids](#)

Facebook: [Bec AndThekids](#)

Instagram: [becandthekids222](#)

The Stacks Attracts

It came from research
and a tip-off.

Text and photos
Ian Smith



Barafundle Beach



Barafundle Beach Where to now



There was a plan to visit Bosherton Lily Ponds, but our host had advised us to do Stackpole as well. We had no idea what that was except cliffs were involved, but we went anyway.

The road in was mentioned with a shake of the head, so we suspected another laneway. We were right, we just didn't figure how bad a one-lane road could get with so much traffic on a long weekend. It was a nightmare. How many times we were brushing the foliage on the side of the road, we lost count. Some drivers were considerate, a couple were reckless, and that made it all the more scary. Needless to say, the carpark was overfull as well, but we parked off-piste, grabbed a map and were on our way. Initially we headed up through a lovely wooded path with exposed tree roots designed to keep you on your toes, literally.

Then came a right-hand turn, following the coastal direction until we reached a charmer of a beach called Barafundle Bay, where

others were already frolicking... or not. The narrow stepped path was a bit challenging with dogs vying for the same space, echoing the Brits' seeming predilection for taking their dogs everywhere.

I pointed out to Lorraine the trail that we were aiming for at the far side of the beach. It was not a happy face I saw in return as our legs continually complained, but the people down there were obviously enjoying themselves. We did make it however, and then it was a bit of a clamber up a slope. The lady at the parking ticket office had warned me, and I chose not to tell Lorraine, but after the 20 or so initial ancient steps, it was not really that hard, and the woods were charming. It turned out the whole area is a part of a 3,000 acre 5 square mile Grade One National Trust estate with wonderfully varied scenery.

Cresting the rise, the whole vast flat headland opened up to flat sheep grazing country. Apart from a partly worn track, it was mostly soft grass and the sky was our friend as we

traipsed across to the far side, discussing directions along the way. Signs were significant by their absence, but the lady at the kiosk had given me clear directions and, when we reached the southern side, it turned out she was smack on the money.

The ragged cliffs drop away and there were a couple of remnant stacks made all the more photogenic by the rocks shed over the millennia at the base and the sea lapping on the walls. The sandstone formations date back 400 million years whereas the limestone segments are only 40 million.

The updraft caressed our faces as the sheep nearby looked on, obviously somewhat humanized over the years by the number of harmless humans walking by.

The required number of shots were clicked off, but the scene was a bit mesmerizing, and we tarried a short while longer. On the way back we discovered an even more direct route and, somehow, it all seems a bit easier when you're returning on the same path.

We moved along a little bit closer to the sea across Barafundle this time, the harder wet sand making the steps easier to take. We were constantly bemused by the fact that the dogs have so much freedom here, obviously relishing the fact that they can run in any direction unrestrained.

The last climb past the stone wall of unknown origin was complete and we traversed to Stackpole Quay, a strange bit of significant stonework designed to allow access to, one suspects, rescue craft. Then it was past the lone shop and jump in the car to brave, yet again, the horrors of the way-too-narrow access road. It was the best I've ever driven on the way out; again, most drivers were careful and did the right thing, except for a couple of large 4WDs who seemed to believe the access was made only for them, and I was forced into brushing the hedge and cursing somewhat.

Still, I couldn't help but think that, when we returned to base, it had all been worth it.



Looking east across Stackpole Quay

Upcoming Events and News

5 Lands Walk

22 June 2024

Starting at MacMasters Beach this walk takes you on a [10km journey](#) along the Central Coast's coastline where you will connect with others through the forms of music, dance and story telling.

The Bloody Long Walk

23 June 2024 in Wollongong

4 August 2024 in North Sydney

Walk from Stanwell Park Beach Reserve to Lang Park in [Wollongong](#) or/and from Palm Beach to Manly Promenade in [Sydney North](#) and raise funds on this 35km long track.

The Kokoda Challenge

13-14 July 2024 on Gold Coast

In July on [Gold Coast](#) challenge yourself and team on Australia's toughest team endurance by choosing one of the 30, 48 or 96km adventures.

Coastrek

19 July 2024 on Sunshine Coast

Join in on this adventure, either 20, 30 or 50km long and experience the team adventure on this beautiful [Sunshine Coast](#) walk.

Bug Hunt

Take part in this hunt to help locate non-native and discover new native bugs throughout Australia. By using [iNaturalist app](#) and taking pictures of ants, bees and other bugs you will help scientists to keep track.

Hiking with assistance dogs

There is a way for people with assistance dogs to hike multi-day walks. Read about Elise's experience while preparing for Overland Track.

Wild Bush Luxury private campsites plans

The company is planning on building three low-impact sites in Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, but not everyone agrees with their plans.

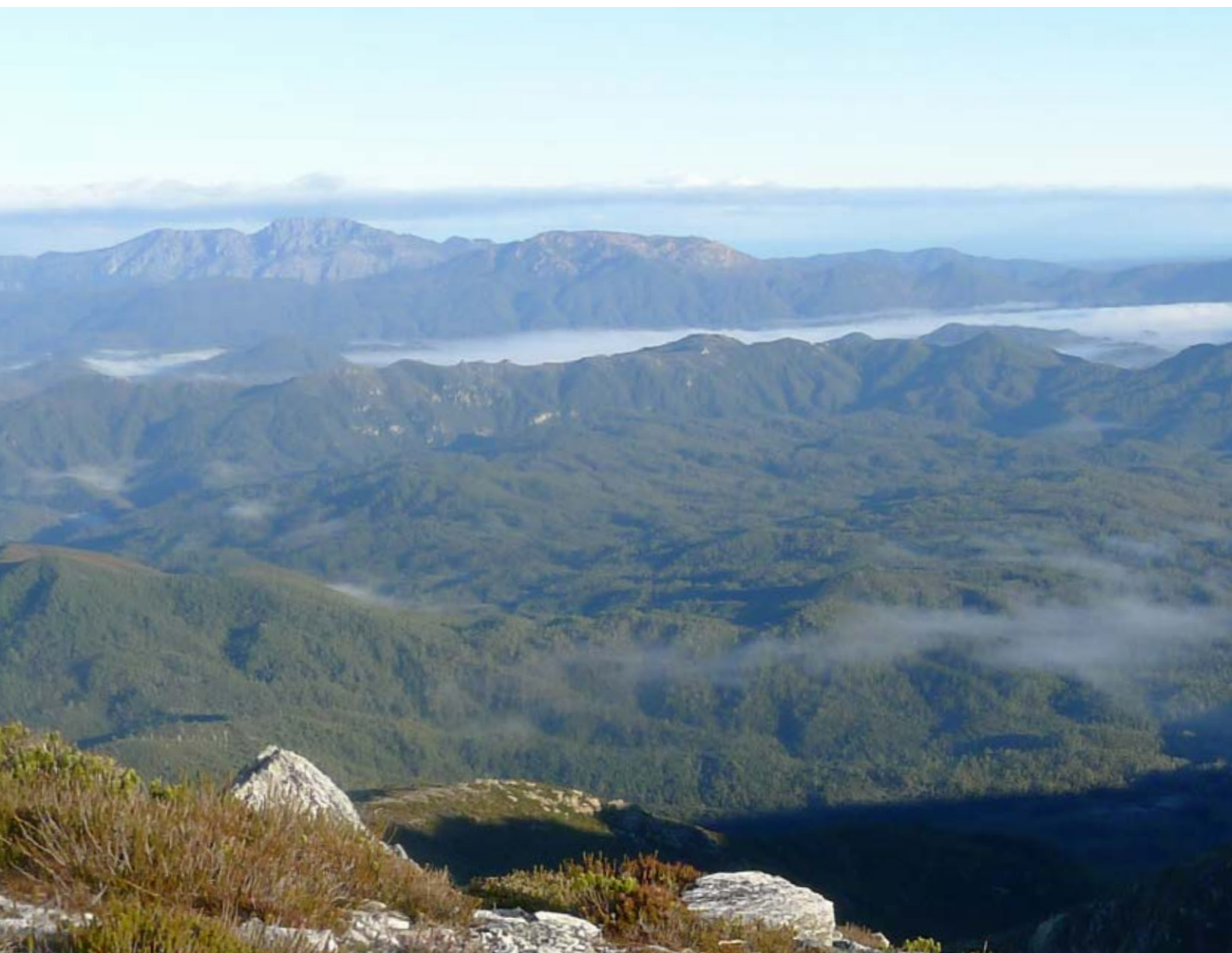
Bluff Knoll rescues

The rescue team of State Emergency Service had been called three times in the past month, which has just doubled the number in comparison to the rest of the past year. So authorities are now asking people to prepare more before tackling this mountain.

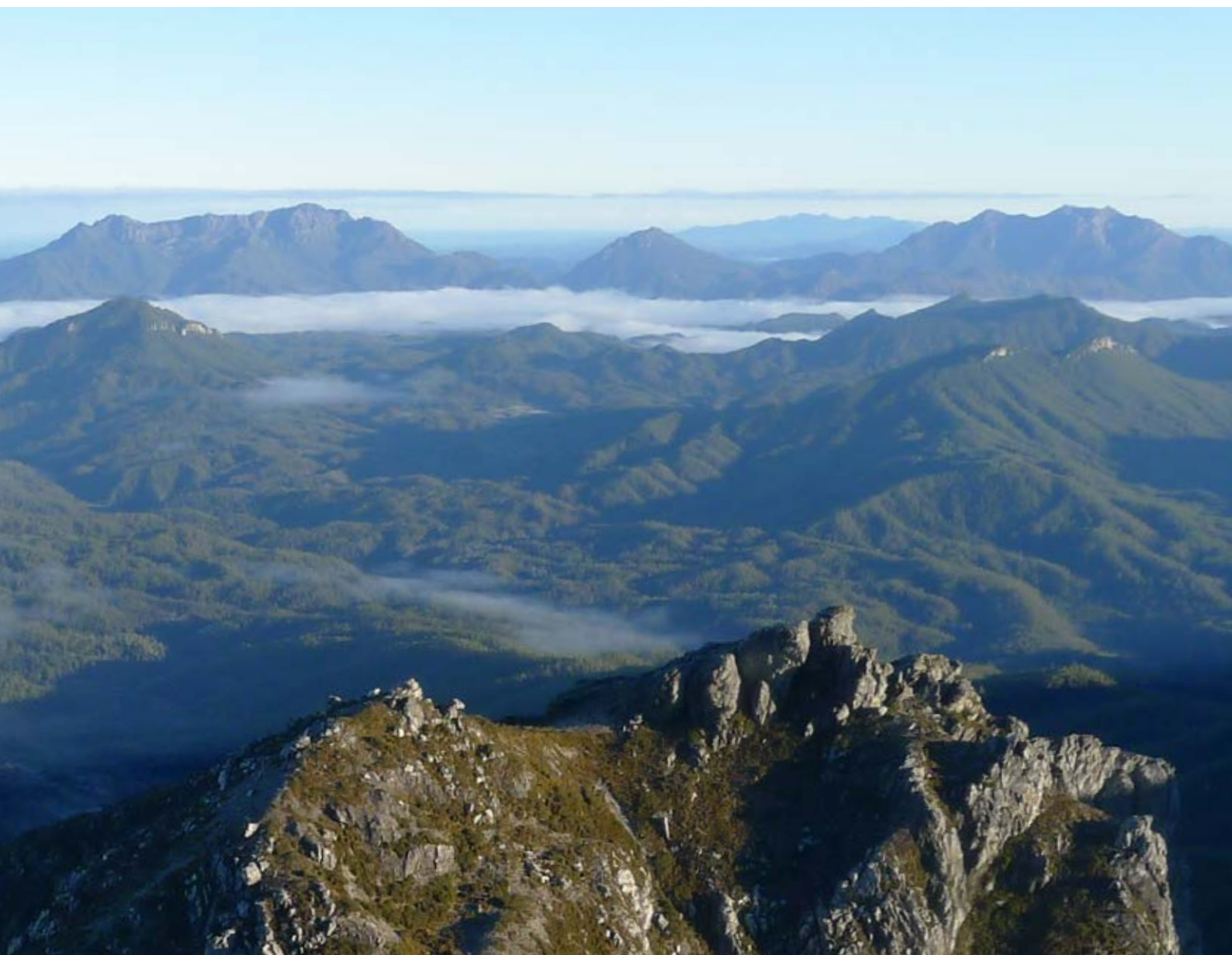


Photo Gallery

Photos
Bushwalk.com photographers



Check this and
other entries at
[Bushwalk.com](https://bushwalk.com)
Photo competitions



Towards the West Coast Range
Doogs

Landscapes

June 2023

Winner

A hike in, paddle out kinda trip

Osik

A trip I've wanted to do for years, hiking into the eighth gorge at Nitmiluk Gorge, followed by a couple of days lazily paddling back.



NS Ridge
Ribuck



Not for everyone - Hanging
Rock
landsmith



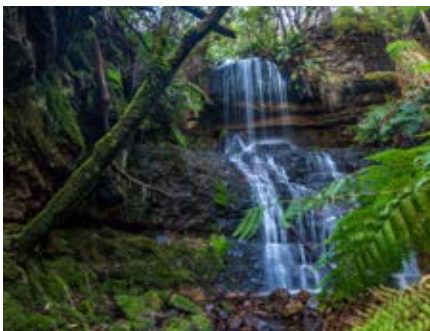
Tongue Point, Wilsons Prom
Kwad12

Non-landscapes

June 2023

Winner
Buffelfly
Ribuck

On the plains beneath the Chewings Range I often see these beautiful butterflies. Sometimes just a few, sometimes dozens at a time. Their straw-coloured markings closely match the colour of the grasses around which they flutter.



Camp Creek Falls
North-north-west



Fairy Martin nests
Osik



Forest fungi
Eggs

Tasmania

June 2023

Winner
Glassout
North-north-west

The perils of being a retired SCUBA diver: on days like this down on the Tasman Peninsula, all you think about is how the conditions are perfect for diving. They were pretty good for walking the coast track, too.



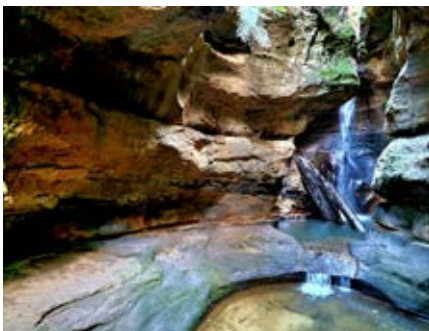
Moody
Tom_brennan

Other States

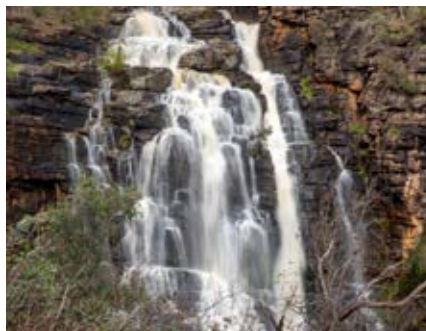
June 2023

Winner
Mirror with a moon
Osik

A dry season visit to Edith Falls for a swim under the moon, with nil fear of salties (freshies still about!).



The canyon, Centennial Glen
landsmith



Second Falls
Eggs



Heavitree dawn
Ribuck

Landscapes

July 2023

Winner

Rawsons Creek sunset

Crollsurf

The day before I had dropped my phone and watched it get blown off Rawson Pass, and disappear into the whiteout. By the time I found it, I'd had enough and set up camp in the spot where I'd found the phone. The next day was a glorious bluebird day and that evening, we were treated to a beautiful sunset.



Kakadu sunset
Deadwood



Enlightened Mt Kembla
Johnw



Looking west from
Mount Rowley
landsmith

Non-landscapes

July 2023

Winner
The vines have it
landsmith

The photo was taken at Wingham Brush, an extraordinary remnant of rainforest on the North Coast (though it's a tad inland) of NSW. It's a strangler fig and it, and the fruit bats that inhabit it, were in danger until a community-driven rescue attempt was made to remove the vines that threatened them. The often misrepresented bats are necessary pollinators and fly long distances each afternoon to feed.



Rainbow bee-eaters
in Kakadu
Deadwood



Granddaughters warm up
after a walk on Kunanyi/Mt
Wellington
Whynotwalk



Corybas unguiculatus
North-north-west

Tasmania

July 2023

Winner
Serenity
North-north-west

The Freycinet isthmus lagoon is a haven for birdlife, but on this morning no-one else was stirring, not even the swans.



Other States

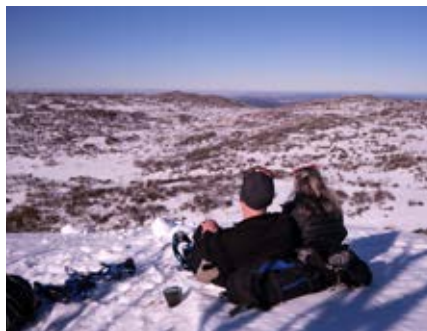
July 2023

Winner
Kakadu sunrise
Deadwood

One of the benefits of walking in the NT is some of the splendid waterholes you get to camp by and swim in. The scenic sunrises over the waterholes make it so much harder to get up and moving quickly before the heat of the day sets in.



Symmetry in the forest
Johnw



Cuppa while snow-shoeing,
Mt Wheatley
Whynotwalk



Josephine Falls
Eggs

Tent and Sleeping Gear

Text and photos
Terry Cornall

I give lots of links to gear in this article. All of it is unsponsored and all of it is stuff I've either purchased or considered purchasing. You should be able to tell from context. Any recommendations (or damnations) I make should be considered in the lights of your own needs and not taken as gospel.



Kelly Hut, McMillans Track, Victoria



Tent at Carey Creek, McMillans Track, Victoria

I make plenty of opinionated assertions in this article too, born out of experience and consideration. If you disagree, feel free to drop me a line with new evidence for me to consider. Just telling me that I am an opinionated, arrogant, grumpy old man, whilst true, will not further the discussion. I'd love to discover that my cynical disdain for gear manufacturers' claims is wrong, for example and that there really is a perfect waterproof but breathable boot or raincoat out there.

Tentage

Gordon has this lovely light two-man tent. [X-Mid 2P Tent](#) designed by Dan Durston. It is lightweight but needs hiking poles to keep it up, and it does have a fairly big footprint. It works well in rain and moderate wind, and has two generous vestibules and doors. So I took my Black Diamond Carbon Distance Z poles (more on them later) to use one for one side, and Gordon carried a telescopic hiking pole for the other support. Worked a treat.

Things that go bang in the night

Sleeping mats are essential to keep you warm and comfortable, although Gordon once found me asleep in the tent with my Neo Air mattress newly inflated but not yet tucked under me. I was too tired to do it and had nodded off with it still sitting on top of me...

And they are not supposed to go bang, but that's exactly what Gordon's Thermarest Neo Air did, and not just once. On multiple occasions it let out a loud pop when yet another one of its internal baffles let loose, and he ended up with a herniated foot-end



And they are not supposed to go bang, but that's exactly what Gordon's Thermarest Neo Air did, and not just once.

on the thing with the bottom 6 baffles gone. Fortunately, it didn't break any external seams and deflate, so he was able to operate on it and tie off the foot end, leaving it inflatable and useable. No doubt messages will be sent to Thermarest regarding warranties...

“

However, it would be wise to think about what happens if they fail on a long trip.

There are lots of choices regarding mats, from lightweight, cheap and reliable closed-cell foam to luxurious (but weighty and bulky) down-filled air mats. They vary in comfort, packed volume, cost and weight, naturally. I like the Neo Air by Thermarest (at least the ones that don't go bang) because they are very light, pack into a small-ish volume, and work on snow as well as on tussocky grass and moderately rocky surfaces.

However, it would be wise to think about what happens if they fail on a long trip. The closed-cell ones are light and cheap, can't really 'fail' (other than being less comfortable), but they don't pack well because they are incompressible. By the way, if you use one and hang it naked on the outside of your pack, don't be surprised if it gets shredded at the edges by the bush. Put it in a tough bag to stop that.

Light 'em up

Torches. I got this a bit wrong, by being overly careful. I took two main torches, both rechargeable, plus a spare battery for one of them. In the middle of the hike at a resupply spot, I ditched a torch and the spare battery into a drop-barrel to be retrieved later.

Gordon just took a tiny little Petzl headlamp that ran on lithium button cells. Mainly for reading. Probably weighed in at a poofteenth of nothing (10g maybe), whereas my collection would have come to twenty times that at least.



Torches

My reasoning was: What happens if we have to pathfind at night? What happens if a torch gets left on and flattens its battery? What if the electronics or batteries fail? All good questions and critical in certain circumstances, like alpine climbing or other situations where you can't really camp just anywhere and have to make it to the next campsite or perish. However, in summer, when daylight is plentiful, where being caught out in the dark isn't going to kill you, perhaps a single torch (especially if reliable and rechargeable and you are carrying a charger) is sufficient.

“

What happens if we have to pathfind at night? What happens if a torch gets left on and flattens its battery? What if the electronics or batteries fail?

Clothing maketh the man

Clothing was something I got wrong this time, too. As well as mandatory hiking shorts and tee shirt (or a quick drying long sleeved shirt like Gordon took would have been better) and down puffy jacket for night-times and secondary use as a pillow, I thought I'd need an extra jacket and trousers, as well as thermals to sleep in. I tossed in the down booties as well. They are light and, on a really cold night, very comfy. So far, so reasonable. Then I wore a tracksuit for the drive up to the start and didn't want to leave it in Heather's car, so I took that too. OK, so an unplanned change of warm clothes, so what? I'd appreciate it if it got a bit wettish. Except that I didn't realise it weighed 700g. I've been forced to become a gram-weeny in my dotage and that much extra would have horrified me. The very first night at Black Sallee Lake seemed to justify my choices as it was cold enough for the down booties and thermals under the summer sleeping bag. However, in the end, I only used them that one time and at the halfway point, I was happy to stuff about a kilo and a half of unnecessary clothes into a drop-barrel for later retrieval. (Actually, on a

wet night a few days later, after my raincoat had left me a bit dampish, I would have liked to have had that spare dry jacket...).

Forty days and forty nights, it rained

Speaking of raincoats, I got that wrong, too. I have a range of coats, from a heavy-duty 3-layer Gore-Tex monster, good for blasting Antarctic blizzards, down to ultralight things for running that might stop a shower, maybe. In the middle, there was the choice between a long Torrent jacket from One Planet and a shorter Gore-Tex jacket from Kathmandu. (Model unknown, but it had waterproof zips, pit zips, high pockets that are good when wearing a pack, nice hood, etc. and a 'Guaranteed to keep you dry' label. Clearly designed for this purpose, so I thought...). The Kathmandu one was a few hundred grams lighter, so I chose to take that. It was a mistake. One morning of bashing through the wet bush and hours upon hours of drizzle, and the 'Guaranteed to keep you dry' Kathmandu jacket proved inadequate. Not cold and saturated or anything, but definitely on the dampish side. And before you start down on the 'but you sweated inside it' path, no, it was only a 16 degree Celsius day, and I was not hot enough to sweat much. Mind you, if I had, the jacket fabric had well and truly 'wetted out' (the so-called durable water-proofing treatment had lasted all of 1/2 an hour), so the sweat would have had a hard time getting out. I'll keep it for day trips or bike riding from now on, not serious stuff like this. I think the (obvious in retrospect) moral of the story is to take the raincoat you'd rather use in a bad situation and not the one you'd rather carry if everything goes perfectly.

“

... 'Guaranteed to keep you dry' label. Clearly designed for this purpose, so I thought...

About bush-bashing in the wet. I forbore to take waterproof trousers, so naturally, my shorts got saturated when pushing through soggy bushes. No biggie, they dried out quickly, but I was envious of Gordon's rain

'kilt', and so on the second wet day, I made a kilt for myself out of a big lightweight dry bag. It worked OK-ish after a bit of fiddling with the depth of the splits required to let me lift my leg over a log or climb a steep bank, but next time I'll bring a proper kilt or w'proof trews.

Sleepy bags

My choice of bag for this trip was easy. It was way too hot for the alpine bags but too cold for nothing, so I went with my [Western Mountaineering Summerlite](#). Rated down to 0 degrees C, but really only comfortable to about 5. It is light, packs down small and worked very well either as a true mummy bag or spread out as a quilt. There was one night where I needed to get my Kathmandu puffy down jacket on as well, but that was my fault for getting the bag damp. It was after that drizzly day going up and down from The Crinoline (Mt Ligar) and then walking for hours through the drizzle, and my raincoat did a less than stellar job of keeping me dry. I thought I'd try to wear my damp clothes to sleep and that they'd dry out from body heat (sounds silly, but this does work if you aren't too damp, say just a slightly damp tee shirt maybe), but instead they just messed up the insulation of the sleeping bag. So I pulled the puffy down jacket out of its pillowcase and put that on after removing the damp tee shirt from the equation. All was toastie after that. In general, I'd suggest you avoid trying this method of drying clothes unless it is a warm night. Save them up for a sunny day instead. Mind you, sleeping bare-skinned on a Neo Air is not all that pleasant either, so maybe plan ahead and keep a light shirt dry for sleeping in. (This was after I'd left all my 'excess' clothing in the drop-barrel. Perhaps I should have kept just one spare tee shirt. And a dry jacket. Sigh.)

“

Mind you, sleeping bare-skinned on a Neo Air is not all that pleasant either, so maybe plan ahead and keep a light shirt dry for sleeping in.

Gordon uses a liner in his bag. It is made from a thin, light, natural fabric that would reduce sweating and keep body oils away from the down bag. Good for you and good for the bag, too. Maybe like this one: [Premium Cotton Travel Liner - Sea to Summit](#).

Lay yer head down

Pillows are important to me. If only I could just sleep on my back, I wouldn't need one, but after an hour or so of that (unless really exhausted, when even a bare rock is comfortable), I have to roll onto a side. And then I need a pillow, or my neck wakes up in agony. I've tried a few of the commercially available camp pillows, but found them variously too heavy, bulky or 'bouncy'. Sometimes I can get away with spare clothing stuffed into a dry-sack, but the best is a puffy down jacket in a breathable 'fluffy' fabric like cotton or polar fleece. So I take an old fleecy bag designed for a hot water bottle, and stuff the puffy into that. It works a treat either on my side or on my back. You hardened travellers out there may well sneer in scorn, but I can't do without something like this. Besides, the puffy is great in the evening before bed to keep me warm. And it is very light and packs well. You do have to keep it dry, though.

This article will continue in the next edition. It was originally a part of a larger article that you can find on Terry's blog [Outdoors OZ](#).



Terry in a puffy

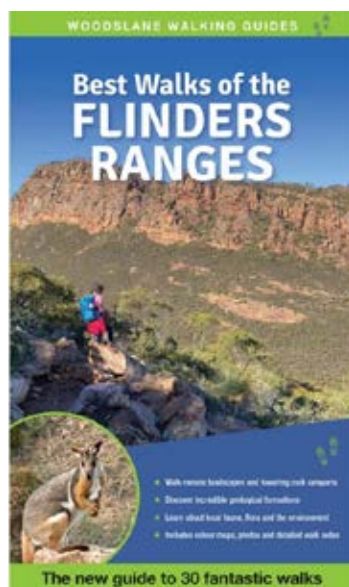
Published

Best Walks of the Flinders Ranges **Julie Mundy, Debra Heyes**

Covering 30 walks in the region, this book gives an insight on the history and wildlife of the area, as well as offering of walks, ranging from child-friendly walks to adventurous tracks.

Softcover, 212 pages

AU\$33



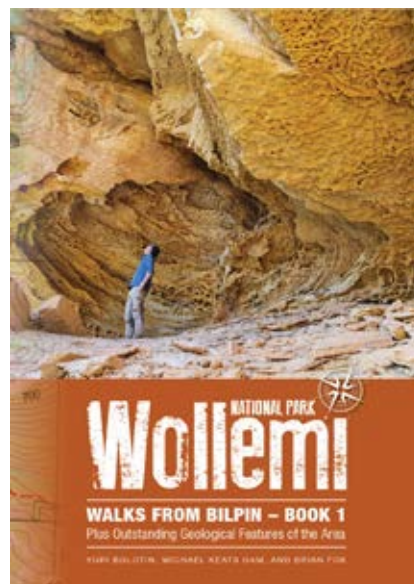
Wollemi National Park: Walks from Bilpin, Book 1

Yuri Bolotin, Michael Keats OAM, Brian Fox

The book contains 28 unique, not previously published bushwalks, and an essay explaining the origin of the amazing rock formations found here. It is illustrated with maps and hundreds of colour photographs.

Softcover, 572 pages

AU\$66



Forests Reduce Their Own Bushfire Risk

Text

Philip Zylstra

Grant Wardell-Johnson

Fire management in Australia is approaching crisis point. Seasons such as the Black Summer four years ago showed how our best efforts in fire-fighting and prescribed burning are insignificant in the face of a changing climate.

But what if forests have their own tools to manage bushfire risk, and we could tap into them?



Mount Solitary bushfire



Tingle tree crown, Valley of the Giants, Walpole Nornalup National Park, Western Australia
Dhx1

We know long-unburnt mountain forests in south-east Australia are **far less fire-prone** than more recently burnt areas. And forests in south-west Australia have the lowest fire risk when they've not been subjected to prescribed burning.

Our study just published set out to understand why this occurs, by modelling fire behaviour in iconic red tingle forests of south-west Australia. Our findings offer a clear set of tools for living with fire, even in a warming climate.

The "fuel load" dilemma

Most bushfires in the south-west forests of Western Australia occur in areas burned specifically to reduce fuel loads.

Current fire management by government agencies focuses on broadscale burning to reduce fuel load. The practice is also known as prescribed, planned, controlled or hazard-reduction burning. It aims to reduce the intensity of future fires at a location by burning leaf litter and other fine surface matter.

Fuel-load reduction is premised on the idea that the amount of fuel in a forest determines how flammable it is. The idea comes from early attempts at fire behaviour modelling imported from the United States in the 1960s.

“

... the amount of fuel in a forest determines how flammable it is.

But more recent work has shown prescribed burning can lead to catastrophic outcomes. This includes the near-destruction of critically endangered wildlife populations and the destruction of homes when prescribed burns escape.

So what can be done? Our study on the iconic red tingle (*Eucalyptus jacksonii*) deals with this dilemma.

Getting to know the red tingle

Red tingles are among the tallest eucalypts, growing up to 70 metres. They grow only in a 6,000-hectare stretch along the high-rainfall south coast of Western Australia.

Red tingles can live for more than 400 years. They regenerate well after fire – even an intense fire – and form naturally mixed aged forests **dominated** by large old trees.

“

Red tingles can live for more than 400 years.

But red tingles are sensitive to frequent fires, no matter how mild. Flames can enter the tree and hollow it out, eventually causing its collapse.

The understorey of red tingle forest consists of tall, long-lived shrubs that germinate prolifically after fire. These understoreys thin and open as they age.

The goal of our research was to understand how these changes in red tingle forests affect fire behaviour. To do this, we used an advanced fire modelling tool developed by the lead author of this article, Phillip Zylstra, and his colleagues.

The tool doesn't use a simple number to characterise a forest's fuel load. Instead, it uses hundreds of thousands of calculations to determine which plants will ignite – and importantly, which plants won't ignite but will instead calm the flames.

So what did we find? As the understorey of red tingle forest ages and thins, the lower branches of taller plants “self-prune” – in other words, they shed dead leaves and twigs.

When this litter is on the ground, it begins to decay and poses a lower fire risk than if it were still suspended.

The lower branches of taller plants, once self-pruned, are then less likely to ignite as fuel. Instead, they act as “overstorey shelter” that reduces wind speed and fire severity. In this way, mature forests *control* fire rather than drive it.

Our study showed that, due to this calming effect, fires in mature red tingle forests could be extinguished by firefighters most of the time.

By contrast, our study showed that prescribed burning in red tingle forests creates dense regrowth, which burns severely during bushfires. In such cases, our study showed



A red tingle tree
M Howe



A collapsed red tingle after repeated fire.
M Howe

firefighters are often unable to extinguish the flames and must resort to backburning - a risky fire suppression technique.

Making peace with the bush

Contemporary fire management approaches, and their dependence upon broadscale prescribed burns, contrast starkly with the approach of Australia's First Nations people.

Menang and Goreng Traditional Owners of red tingle and surrounding forests say fire should be used in specific locations, burning only what is needed in [small, strategically placed patches](#). Wadandi Pibulmun Yunungjarlu Elder Wayne Webb advised our team that Traditional Owners deliberately excluded fire from tall red tingle forests.

In our contemporary context, we can co-operate with the landscape - balancing the effects of climate change by using [specialist fire-fighting skills](#) and [technological advances](#) to reinforce safe forest havens.

The fire risk in WA's south-western forests, and [many other eucalypt forests](#), is so much lower if they're left unburnt and allowed to mature. Our analysis of red tingle forests helps explain why.

One thing is clear: if we still want forests in our flammable country, we must stop burning their defences away.



Left to right, a red tingle forest after a prescribed burn, the resulting regrowth, and mature forest.
M Howe; P Zylstra

Philip Zylstra

Adjunct Associate Professor at Curtin University, Research Associate at University of New South Wales, Curtin University

Grant Wardell-Johnson

Adjunct Associate Professor, Molecular and Life Sciences and ARC Centre for Mine Site Restoration., Curtin University

This article first appeared in
[The Conversation](#) on 21 March 2023.

Apple Crumble

This is not going
to be your typical
bushwalking article

Text and photos
Sonya Muhlsimmer





Windyridge Garden



Yengo Sculpture Garden



This is going to be something very different, about stepping back and taking an easy day out on a misty autumn day in Blue Mountains.

The best months to visit the Blue Mountains are literally any time, as this place has so much to offer regardless of the season. However, to see the most amazing array of colours nature can offer you, the best time to visit is autumn. This is especially so on a misty day with a lot of rain forecast. Well, at least for us locals up here, as the rain and mist keep the tourists away and we get to experience this glorious place to ourselves, without the typical madding crowd.

I had the most magical day recently with some pretty awesome friends, Es, Kat and Remi. It was the perfect mini-adventure, starting at a small family orchard named Logan Brae, which has occupied the same land for over 100 years. The orchard was planted in 1919 and is only five minutes from the town of Blackheath, but beware, Logan Brae is only open on the weekends during apple season which is from March to July. We indulged in hot spiced apple juice and a steaming hot apple pie with a light dusting of icing sugar whilst overlooking the escarpment. Gee it was good. Okay, so I know it is not quite the same as a hot apple pie fresh out of the oven,

but I will share with you a recipe for an apple crumble at the end which you can enjoy on your overnight or multi-day hikes. Hold tight though, I do want to share a little bit about the open gardens we visited.

Our next stop was at the little village called Mt Wilson. We were on a mission to check out the Avenue of Autumn leaves and to visit a couple of the open gardens in the area, such as Windyridge and Yengo Sculpture Garden. Starting at Windyridge, the garden is voted as one of Australia's most beautiful gardens and well worth a visit. The garden is nearly five acres and it sits at an altitude of 1050 metres above sea level and has a lot of cool climate plants. Each section of the garden has a theme and being in the mist, it felt like we were in a dream. The next stop was Yengo Sculpture Gardens, boasting an alpine garden with 147-year-old trees, amazing bronze sculptures and a sanctuary for the rare Parma Wallabies. I know right, wow. Wait until you see them for yourself, photos just don't do them justice.

So, that is enough about the misty Blue Mountains mini-adventure, now over to the recipe. One last thing, put it in your calendar to visit the Orchard and gardens next year in autumn and I will see you there.

Apple crumble

Ingredients

Bag 1

Dried apple pieces	6 each/30 grams
Vanilla sugar	2 tsp/12 grams
Mixed peel	1/8 tsp/1 gram
Ground cinnamon	1/8/tsp/1 gram

Bag 2

Brown sugar	2 Tbsp/32 gram
Plain flour	2 Tbsp/28 grams
Rolled oats	2 Tbsp/20 grams
Shredded coconut	2 Tbsp/16 grams
Ghee	2 Tbsp/32 grams

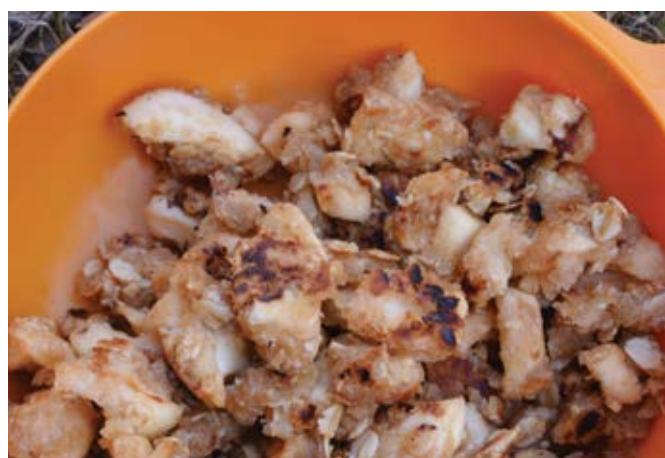
Water - ½ cup

At home preparation

Chop the mixed peel as fine as you can. Chop apple pieces up into small chunks. Label the bags and place all ingredients into the allocated bags and container. Copy or print out Method at camp and keep together with the bags.

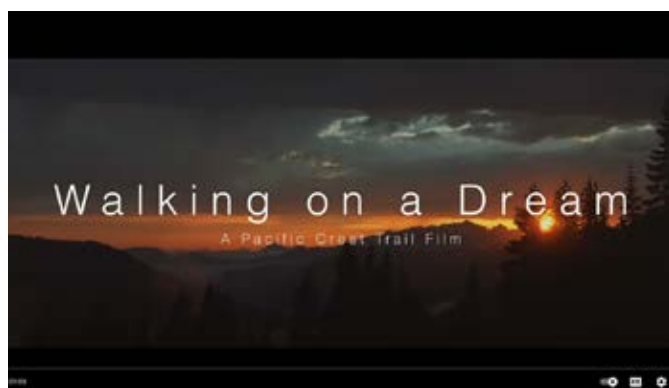
Method at camp

In a pot, add the contents of Bag 1 (apple mix), then add 1/2 cup of water and soak for about 5 minutes. Place the pot on the stove and cook over low heat for 2-3 minutes until all the water has evaporated. Take off the heat, add the ghee, then add the contents of Bag 2 (oat mix), stir through and place back on the heat. Cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly until the crumble starts to brown and crisp up and serve. If you want, you can cook up a bit of custard to serve with the crumble, yum.



Logan Brae Orchard

Videos



Walking on a dream

A film about a 2022 thru hike of the Pacific Crest Trail in USA by Jack Keogh.



Warrumbungle walkabout

Go on an adventure with Scotty's Gone Walkabout as he walks through the Warrumbungle National Park in NSW.



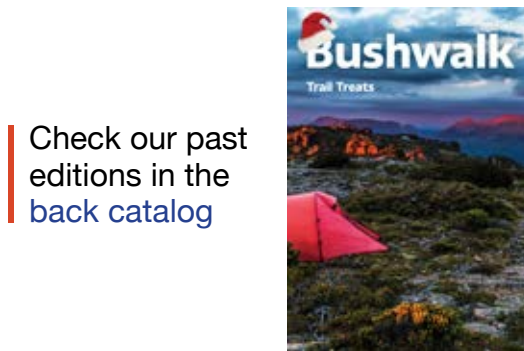
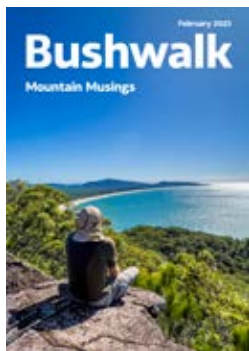
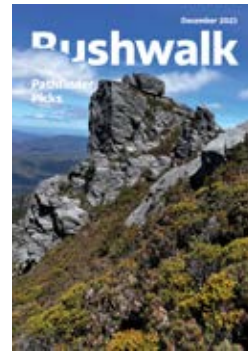
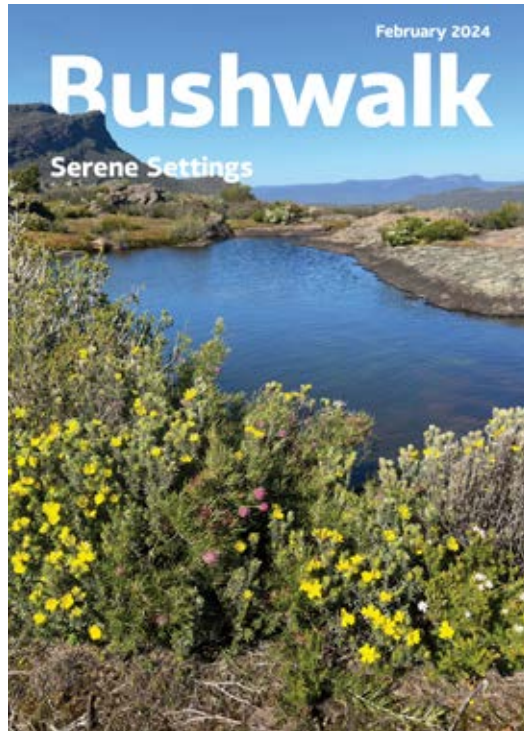
Out there

Another film, this one is an award winning documentary on The Great Divide Trail in Canada by Ryan Kodak Brown.



Wake up and walk

Follow three female bushwalkers in this Tom's Outdoors video, who spent three days exploring the Jagungal Wilderness in Kosciuszko National Park in NSW.



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