

**MELBOURNE
BUSHWALKERS INC.**

ABN 14 396 912 508



THE NEWS

#899

February
2026



Canoeing up the Brodribb River - R. Jung

WE ARE A MEMBER OF



Members of the Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc meet on Wednesday evenings between 6.30-8.30 pm in the club rooms at:

**Mission to Seafarers Victoria
717 Flinders Street
Docklands**

Visitors are always welcome!

General correspondence should be directed to:

The Secretary
Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc
PO Box 1751
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

www.melbournebushwalkers.org.au

Next committee meeting: Monday 2 February

The News of the Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc (The News) is published monthly, and is the official newsletter of Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc.

Editor: Deb Shand

Calls for expressions of interest for club activities and extended trips, walk reviews, articles, poems, news items, photographs of Club events, reports of new gear, book/ movie reviews, letters to the editor, advertisements, et cetera are always welcome (maximum 400 words recommended). However, the Editor reserves the right to edit contributions where space, clarity or propriety dictate, and to maintain editorial consistency.

Note: photographs should be sent as separate high resolution files which are capable of being edited.

Please send your contributions as unformatted text files by email to news@mbw.org.au

Closing date for receipt of material for The News is the 21st of the month.

Advertisements should relate to bushwalking (e.g. gear, maps, trips, tours, health and fitness etc.). These may be published subject to space availability and Editor's discretion. For current advertising rates contact the Editor at news@mbw.org.au



Following Kananook Creek - R.I Mair

Would you like your trip photos featured in the newsletter?

Due date for contributions to March News: 21 February
Email: news@mbw.org.au



"I love a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains, of ragged mountain ranges, of droughts and flooding rains. I love her far horizons, I love her jewel-sea, her beauty and her terror..." (Dorothea Mackellar)

Once again, the Australian summer is throwing everything at us, and I hope you and your families are safe. Our much-loved bush is taking the brunt. Not the best start to 2026, and so sad to see images of destruction. As I write, there are full or partial closures in the Alpine, Great Otway, and Lake Eildon NPs, and Cathedral Range State Park and Mt Lawson State Park. It's worth repeating to be ever vigilant when venturing out, with the emergency app uploaded, mobile charged, a full tank and lots of water. Mostly, though, monitor the Parks Victoria website for updates. The Club has many walks planned for February and March, and the leaders and co-ordinators will be reviewing the situation and looking at alternatives, if necessary.

Your Committee is currently working on preparations for the AGM, which is Wednesday, 25 March. The Rules of Association govern the club, a 25-page document that we have to have, and adhere to, in order to be a bushwalking club. This gives us a legal structure and tells us what we must do and where we have options. Then we have the By Laws, a document of a mere nine pages that contains the rules that the Club has generated over time in order to manage our processes - including the three-walk membership application. On top of that we have to abide by the ATO rules that demand that we do certain things and report our financial activities to the ATO. That's quite a bit of 'red tape' that we have little or no control over.

Most committee members have re-nominated, but there are a few positions which will need to be filled. Perhaps this is your time to shine? Here is the link to the nomination form:

[Committee Nomination for AGM](#)

Finally, be sure to diarise Saturday, 14 February for the Club's Art and Craft Show. Commencing at 1pm at the Mission to Seafarers. Till 4pm.

Susan Maughan



Our president immersed in one of her favourite landscapes

Website Team Expanded

The club's website and linked online platforms have developed over a number of years from a simple window on our activities to a core part of our everyday operations. The importance of these will only increase in the future. The Committee is pleased to note that David Arnold has joined the team of volunteers who maintain the online services with shared management responsibility alongside Ian Mair and Mark Heath. David has had a long association with the website, most notably in the period between 2005-2011 when he was instrumental in the development and

introduction of an advanced photogallery with a simplified submission process, web-based tools for the handling of Sunday walk bookings and a searchable repository of past walk reports to assist in future activity planning. David also registered the shortened domain name mbw.org.au familiar to members today. Members can contact team members using the shared address webmaster@mbw.org.au





Obituary: Harald Goetz 1943-2025

Some of the club's older members will be saddened to learn of the recent death of Harald Goetz, an active member of the Melbourne Bushwalkers in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Harald was born in the Rhineland area of Germany in 1943. In 1967, he travelled to Australia as a tourist and decided to emigrate, becoming an Australian citizen in 1972. In the mid-1970s, he joined the Melbourne Bushwalkers, participating in numerous walks and other club events. His cross-country skiing trips with the club included a challenging weekend expedition to Mt Fainter in 1978. The conditions in Victoria's high country were at their most changeable, with sunshine melting the snow's surface one minute and temperatures below zero the next. With our inexpertly waxed skis, we all struggled to maintain sufficient grip to ascend and sufficient glide to actually ski. During one of the freezing spells, a group of us waited on top of a hill for Harald as he wobbled his way up, balanced on platforms of compacted snow beneath his skis. On his arrival, he uttered a few choice English words in a heavy German accent.

Harald enjoyed several extended summer trips in Tasmania's wilderness and became a keen supporter of the campaign to protect the Franklin River. He volunteered for the Melbourne branch of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society and, in 1982, moved to Tasmania, where he became even more active. In January 1983, Harald was arrested near the proposed damsite during the Franklin Blockade, Australia's largest-ever direct-action protest. Rather than sign the onerous bail conditions, Harald chose to go to gaol with fellow campaigners such as Bob Brown. He rejoiced when, on 1 July 1983, the High Court upheld (by four votes to three) the Hawke government's legislation to stop the dam.

Harald married Felicity Hickman in 1984; together they had two children. During this time, Harald trained and graduated to become a nurse, working full time in this field until he was 71. In 1998, the family moved to South Australia, moving back to Tasmania in 2015, where Harald once again became an active volunteer in various forms of community service. He died of cancer in November 2025.

Harald was a sincere, caring and adventurous soul, travelling from his homeland to a strange country, learning a new language, enjoying the challenge of the outdoors, and becoming an active member of his community in the fields of conservation, education and public health. The Melbourne Bushwalkers nurtured his sense of adventure. Condolences are conveyed to Felicity, Karl and Ingrid and Harald's grandchildren.

Geoff Law



Franklin River, Tasmania (from Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife webpage)

GTEM (Going the Extra Mile) Award: Hiroko Nakano

When Hiroko received her invitation to the MBW Christmas Party, she responded by offering to help with catering and said she was happy to take on a supervisory role in the kitchen, which pleased me greatly. Hiroko met with our team of 6 helpers in the kitchen at 4:30 prior to the party and worked tirelessly until the very end of the event. She allocated clear tasks and developed a plan to ensure the food was prepared in a timely, efficient, safe and happy manner. This was quite challenging,

given that we were catering for 150 people in a small kitchen space with a malfunctioning hot water system and stoves. Despite this, Hiroko's extremely well organised approach ensured a very smooth outcome in the kitchen. Hiroko again offered her support for the New Year's Day party in the garden at the clubrooms. We were very grateful to have Hiroko's experience and expertise and kindness for these very successful MBW celebratory events.



Proposed by: Bernadette Prunty



GTEM Award: Jill Allen

Over many years Jill Allen has fulfilled several roles, namely as Base Camp Coordinator, along with leading PCs, day walks and undertaking social commitments. Through these she has demonstrated incredible enthusiasm, thorough organisation, and always with a caring and inclusive approach. We can thank her for the great breadth of trips which get added to the program regularly, such as Deal Island, Maria Island, Wilsons Prom Lighthouse, and of course the Larapinta. The logistics of these activities are a huge undertaking, and most would not realise the work Jill takes on to put together such rewarding and successful adventures. It has to be said that her Larapinta 'back to back' was an amazing physical achievement, but at the same time she flawlessly organised and managed two walking groups. I whole heartedly recommend Jill for this award.

Proposed by: Geof Martin



Advanced Leadership Skills Series

For February we are looking at:

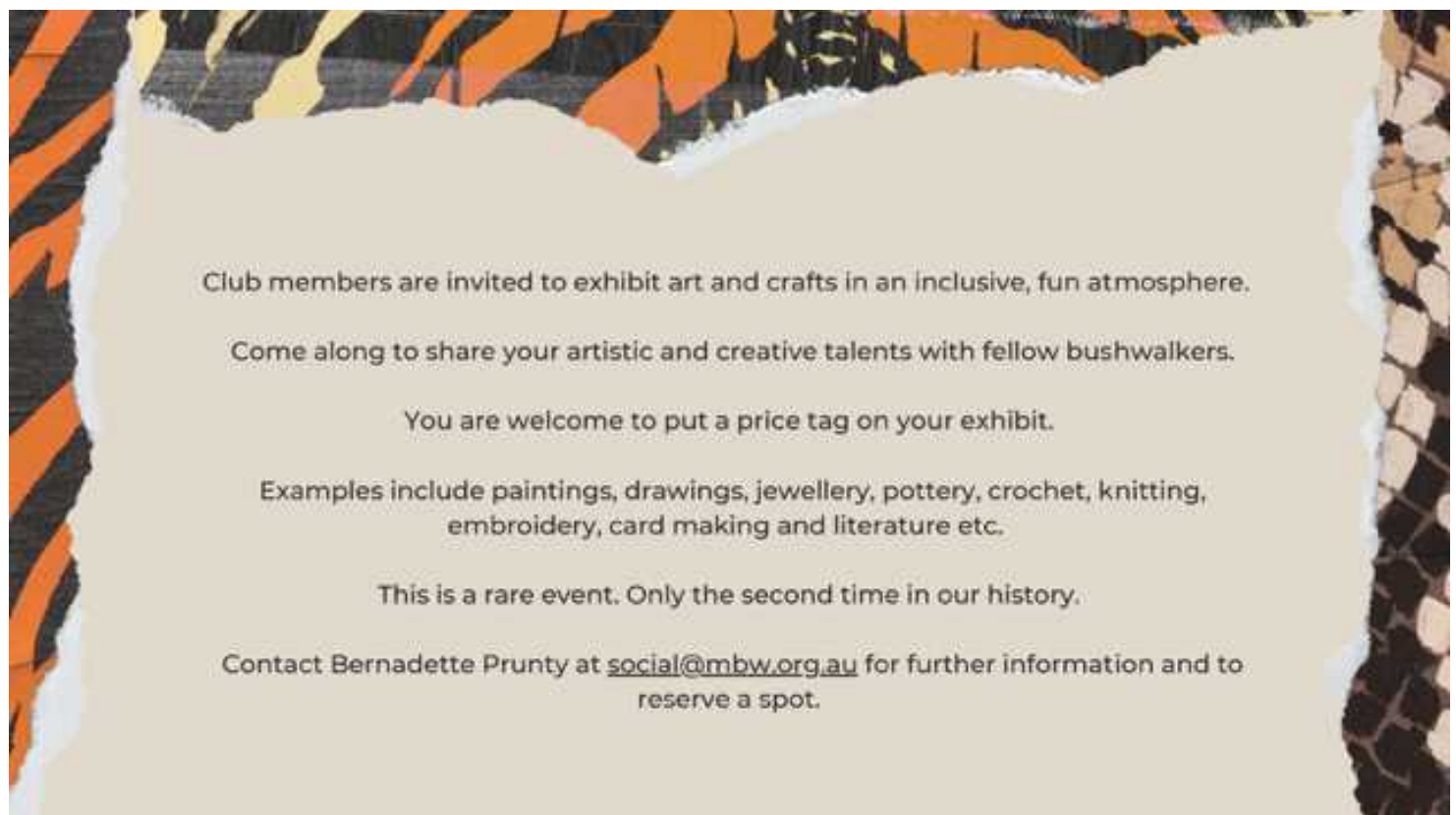
Situational leadership:

This model covers

Directing; Coaching; Supporting,
and Delegating

Note: The complete article set is available on the Website





February Safety and Risk Reminders

This month the topic is the **Club's Emergency Mobile** and its role in our **Emergency Contact System**. It is effectively an insurance policy that we hope never to have to use.



Club Emergency Mobile 0447 489 661: The Club has an *Emergency Contact System* that includes a Club Emergency Mobile. The prime purposes of the mobile are to:

- **Provide members with information on any significant trip delays.**
For all activities the leader will endeavour to advise our *Club Emergency Contacts* of any significant delay so a message can be put on the Emergency Mobile's voice message bank.
- **Advise Leaders, particularly for Pack Carry and remote/walk in Base Camps, who the current Club Emergency Contacts are.** There are 2-3 volunteer CECS on duty each month and their contact details are updated as a minimum monthly by the General Walks Secretary on the mobile's message bank recording. ***Leaders should check the recording just before each walk in case the contacts have changed during the month as sometimes happens.***

Before setting out, walkers should advise people who may become concerned if there is a significant delay of the location of the trip, method of travel, expected time of return and the Club Emergency Mobile Number.

While members should always carry a mobile, depending on your Service Provider the mobile may not work in non-urban areas, or there may be no coverage available at all. So tell anyone who might be worried about you being late home about the Club Emergency Mobile. A delay of 1-2 hours for Day Activity and 3-4 hours or even an extra day for multi-day Activities is not generally a cause for concern.

Have you put this number in your mobile contacts? You can always find it in the **FAQ Section** of the Club Website. Remember it ***cannot*** be used to contact the Club as we only use the message bank to provide information. There is no physical phone!

The Clubs ***Emergency Contact System*** and its ***Club Emergency Contacts*** also have a number of other specific uses particularly for Pack Carries and Base Camps:

1. If a PLB is activated on a Club Activity the CEC/ECS provides information for responding Emergency Services.
2. Leaders can report urgent serious incidents via the CEC and potentially get assistance in managing the incident.
3. Leaders can also call the CEC if they don't have internet access and need urgent advice on incidents that may impact the group e.g. fire/extreme weather/floods.

Members and especially Leaders are encouraged to read these monthly Reminders to stay aware of their responsibilities as participants or as leaders on Club Activities: NEW = a new item; MOD= changed from last time; and the others are unchanged.

Mick Noonan, Risk Officer



Major Update to Guideline on Leading Day Walks

We have recently undertaken a major update of the Activity Guideline on Leading Day Walks. It includes improvements for:

- The management of Sunday Walks with inputs from Quentin and our Sunday leaders. e.g. managing large numbers and allowing Sunday leaders to generate a participants list (previously only for non-Sunday activities)
- Supporting new leaders across all activity types
- Improving safety at the end of car-based activities
- Good practices suggested by current Leaders

While this guide is focused on leading day walks ***it also covers many of the daily aspects applicable to other activity types*** (e.g. extended multiday walks, cycling, kayaking etc)

The main change that applies to ***any*** car-based activity (resulting from a recent possible incident that had a benign ending) is to ensure no participant is left alone to repair a car that can't be driven (e.g. to fix a flat tyre) without another participant being present:

"At the end of car based walks ensure all cars start, are drivable, and no-one is left alone to fix their car e.g. a flat tyre. At least one walk participant with a mobile car must also stay behind to assist (a stranger is not acceptable). There may be more than one location involved if car shuffles are used"

A marked-up version of the guideline is being sent to all current and recent club leaders. A clean version is now on the Website.

We are happy to get feedback, suggestions for future changes, etc.

Regards Mick Noonan
Risk Officer



Club room presentation: From Ocean to Andes to Amazon in Peru - 25 February 2026

In April 2025, four Melbourne Bushies set off on a trip to Peru for 5 weeks. Travelling by plane, bus, train, foot, boat and horse, they experienced varying landscapes and climatic zones as well as quinoa soup and pisco sours. The high points of the trip included treks in the Andes mountains near Cusco with a visit to Machu Picchu, they also stayed overnight on an island in Lake Titicaca and met wildlife at close quarters while helping at an animal sanctuary in the Amazon jungle.

Come along to hear of their adventures, which didn't always go to plan but were memorable nevertheless!

Navigation Training Day – Saturday 14 March

This training day will be conducted on the Victorian Rogaining Association's permanent course in the Chewton State Forest.

Rogaining is an excellent and exciting way to learn map and compass navigation and involves navigating from one permanent checkpoint to another and can fine tune reading of a topographical map. These checkpoints are placed, with a description of their locality, on the map and are generally a half to one and a half km's apart. We could expect to cover up to 10km for the day.



Prior to the day I will email you a 1:25,000 map which I will construct using our club's website facility. This map will include a park near where you live, so you can practise using a compass bearing to travel between 2 points. I will also email you links where you can access information on how to use your compass. Although I have some spare compasses, and can loan these to you, it would be best if you could acquire your own. I recommend a Silva Ranger compass or similar (available from Paddy Pallin/Bogong etc). If buying online you need to check if it is manufactured for the Southern hemisphere (otherwise the needle may not swing freely).

The plan is to have you familiar with using the compass prior to the day and then on site divide into small groups of 2 or 3 people, one of who will be familiar with map and compass navigation. Each small group will then locate several pre agreed checkpoints prior to a lunch break when we will debrief, and a further repeat of the process in the afternoon.

A map of the rogaining area will be supplied on the day or you could print one out from the Vic Rogaining Association's website. Please contact me for further details on geoq@bigpond.com

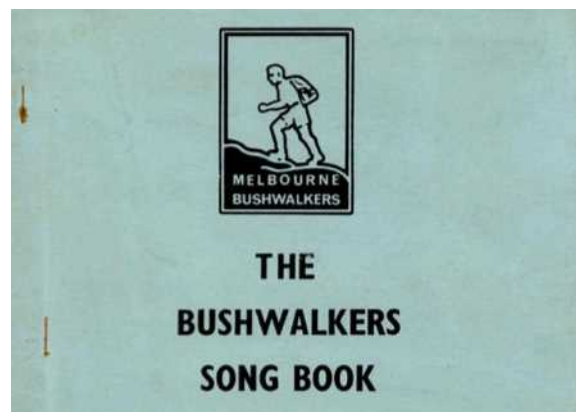
Also, as Chewton is a fair distance from Melbourne I will try as best as I can to arrange car sharing.

Quentin Tibballs

The Melbourne Bushwalkers Song Book (c1970)

The history of the Melbourne Bushwalkers (1940-1990), told by its members, refers to a song book that is an insight into a tradition and character of the club when the "bus" was a "furniture van" and the seats were wooden benches. "Ah, the good old days of bumping along in the van until 1am."

We have been fortunate to obtain a copy of "The Bushwalkers Song Book" which members can now download from the Members' Area Downloads Page.



"The Melbourne Bushwalkers has published another two short booklets: The Melbourne Bushwalkers Song Book and Guide to Bushwalking. In early days singing was common on the van and around the camp fire. Some members played musical instruments but more often we sang unaccompanied. Often we would be awakened in the mornings by Felix Harding's melodies on the flute. Singing on the van was very popular. Young fresh-faced Bob Steel took great delight in leading the singing of risqué ditties with great gusto. No one really knew whether he knew the nuances. In the early sixties it was decided to produce our own song-hook. Doug Pocock organised a monthly song sheet to be included in the News, the idea being to collect them into a booklet. This was a piecemeal affair held together in a vinyl cover. These song sheets were later replaced by a more ambitious publication with a printed cover. The songs were a reflection of the times - a mixture of popular folk, scouting and tramping songs." (https://mbw.org.au/history/MBW_history_162.php)

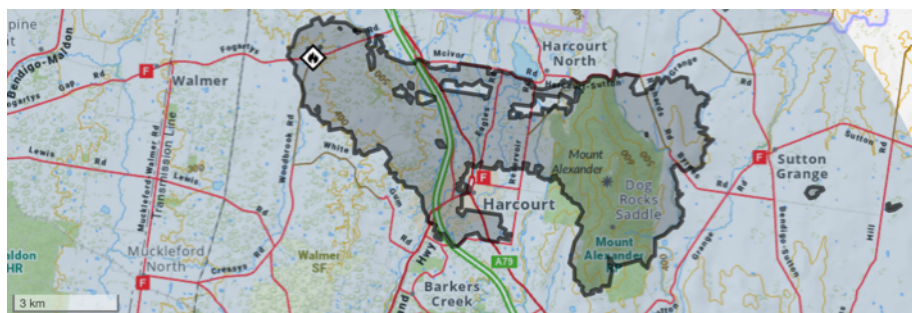
Bushfire mapping and emerging technologies

Catastrophic fire conditions in Victoria, just on some days this January, have produced severe bushfires, a number of which are still burning. Many of us have been following them using the fire maps which are found on VicEmergency's website or phone App. These fires have caused a number of club trips to be cancelled, because the area has been closed by land managers (the Wonnangatta fire) or due to total fire ban or extreme heat forecast.



The ABC recently had an interesting article about how the fire maps are made:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-01-19/near-real-time-fire-mapping-victoria-vicemergency/106229148?utm_source=abc_news_app&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_app&utm_content=mail



These maps of burnt areas are compiled from a whole suite of sources, not just from satellites. The sources include people walking at the fire's edge carrying a handheld GPS, and from photos and video shot from aircraft and helicopters, including specially fitted aircraft, use infrared heat sensors to map fires.

Technology has limitations. Usually, satellites are not involved in the early stage of a big fire, since smoke obscures what they can see. However once the air is clear, a satellite can map a fire boundary to within 50cm. Aircraft cannot fly if it's too windy, nor can they fly through thick smoke. You need to consider that when using these fire maps to plan what you can do. In a rapidly changing fire environment, it is likely those boundaries won't be very precise.

People often rely on their computers and phones to give them action information (to leave or to stay). However, when the power is cut, or there is no internet access, these sources won't be available, and a radio powered by batteries is a more robust device to provide information. Phone and communication towers can be lost in fires. This happened to the ABC transmitters at Mt Alexander near Harcourt recently. In that case Bendigo ABC were able to switch to using another local FM transmitter to relay their warning messages.

In some places on trips, where the communication towers remain intact, there can be good internet access. The Mt Howitt – Crosscut Saw - Mt Speculation area is one such place, however not so Macalister Springs. Recently Telstra has teamed with SpaceX's Starlink to offer "[Telstra Satellite Messaging](#)," enabling customers to send and



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Noticeboard

receive text messages via satellite when outside mobile coverage. This service uses Starlink's Direct to Cell technology, allowing compatible devices (such as iPhone 17 or Samsung Galaxy S24) to connect to satellites in remote, off-grid areas of Australia. One could use this to enquire at home where someone has a more thorough access.

Technology and accurate fire maps are one thing, but what they cannot describe is rapid changes of fire front. In very strong winds the embers of fires can jump many kilometres – described as “spotting”. Thus, the fire can end up very close to you or even beyond.

In another article, the ABC described protection measures for some huts in our alpine walking areas – which are near the present Wonnangatta fires. They have wrapped up historical and significant huts in a fire retardant material. Included are Howitt hut, Guys hut and the Vallejo Gantner hut at Macalister Springs.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-01-24/wonnangatta-dargo-fire-high-country-landmarks-protection/105802954?utm_source=abc_news_app&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_app&utm_content=mail

Cam Walker in the Mountain Journal notes that many high country fires are started by lightning:

<https://themountainjournal.com/2026/01/12/the-dargo-wonnangatta-fire/>

This is something that bushwalkers need to be aware of as they may be in the area when a fire starts in this way.

In Tasmania they are now using AI assisted cameras mounted in fire towers to detect fires and monitor their status. The cameras & software were developed by a Tasmanian software company “Indicium Dynamics”. They seem to be successful. “The AI's really good out to 20, 30 kilometres, but our daytime record is detecting fires 78 kilometres away,” a spokesperson said. “Our night time record is picking up a fire 130 kilometres away.” Of course, quick action is vital when fires are small. Lightning strikes are often after dark.

You can read about it in this ABC article:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-01-12/remote-fire-detection-ai-cameras-tasmania/106209074?utm_source=abc_news_app&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_app&utm_content=mail

And this article discusses emerging technologies aimed at rapidly detecting fires from space to enable early action aimed at controlling any fire before it can become too destructive. Of course, cost, access to technological development and political will can all be stumbling blocks. There is no doubt that in our climate damaged warming world this technology will be extremely useful.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2023-08-30/bushfires-can-be-detected-from-space-within-minutes-of-ignition/102765624?utm_source=abc_news_web&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_web

With thanks to Rob Jung, Geof Martin and Brian Steffenson for alerting the News editor to these articles and especially to Rob for providing content



Guys Hut



The toilet with a view at Macalister Springs

A Mt Jagungal Wilderness Experience -

26-31 December, 2025

Ian Mair

Located in the centre of Kosciusko National Park the Jagungal Wilderness Area includes Mt Jagungal (2,061m), one of Australia's highest and the northernmost 2000m peak in the Snowy Mountains. From the summit a trig marker on the top highlights views as far as the eye can see, with Mt Kosciuszko and Mt Townsend off to the south west. Since it stands alone in an extensive plain Mt Jagungal is visible for many kilometres and attracts walkers from all directions. Traversed by the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) that follows a relatively safe all-weather line along major fire trails passing by the toe of Mt Jagungal, the mountain can be approached all year round.

A more popular route starts from the Round Mountain trail head to the north following wide signposted trails before connecting with the AAWT. The walk boasts some great views across the headwaters of the Tumut River to Mt. Jagungal and visits the iron Round Mountain Hut, originally built in the early 1930s and rebuilt after fire in the 1940s and then again after fire in 2020.



Setting up camp at Mackays Hut

Doubtful Gap, Cesjacks Hut, Jagungal Gap, Mt Jagungal, Grey Mare Track and Farm Ridge Track. We would visit a number of these places.

The description for our walk noted "it will be a combination of established tracks and off-track walking with a climb to the summit of Mt Jagungal before returning to the cars. Sections of the walk will be exploratory and challenging in places as we make our way between the established tracks. Be prepared for some possibly long days." The bonus would be camping next to mountain huts with water and a toilet.

With this in mind we set off from Round Mountain trail head for our first day, a testing 19km to Mackays Hut along established tracks in warm conditions. Spectacular views of Mt Jagungal and the broader wilderness area kept spirits high. So too, native orchids in bloom distracted from the long section on open tracks. Day 2 offered options, continuing on established tracks to Cesjacks Hut or taking a shorter route via Spencers Peak along an untracked ridgeline. Spencers Peak won the day and we wove our way to our



Farm Ridge fire trail above the Tumut River

To truly experience the wilderness though it is necessary to go off-track. Much of the Jagungal Wilderness is open grassland (roughly 70% grassland), which allows walkers with navigation skills to travel off-track quite freely without needing to follow formed paths. However, other off-track lines can involve unexpectedly thick scrub or slow going where maps show more open terrain. Progress can be significantly slower and requires good route-finding. At the time of Paddy Pallin's death, 'Wild' Magazine published an account of his preferred route to Mt Jagungal, a 47km circuit walk via Round Mountain Hut, the Tumut River,



Through the scrub on the way to O'Keefe's Hut

continued next page

Along the track

destination through clear grassland sections alternating with denser scrub and fallen trees as we marked off each peak along our chosen route. Our time to Cesjacks Hut was slower than expected for the distance covered but we were happy to arrive at the hut by early afternoon.

With time on our hands at Cesjacks Hut discussion turned to a review of our plans for the next few days. The initial plan to walk to Valentines Hut and then on to Derschkos Hut with a side trip to Mt Jagungal would involve two days with relatively long distances. A revised plan to make a direct route to O'Keefes Hut and then on to Derschkos Hut the next day would offer a much shorter option and more achievable approach to Mt Jagungal. Maps were studied, hut literature perused and participants consulted. So it was we set out the next day to navigate our way to O'Keefes Hut via Jackys Lookout at the end of Farm Ridge.



On top of Mt Jagungal

An early start across open slopes down to Doubtful Creek looked very promising. So too an easy creek crossing on natural stepping stones hinted that the gods were looking after us. Alas the ascent to the next ridgeline showed they had other ideas. Ever-thickening shoulder high scrub brought our progress to a crawl, tiring more than one person at the front. Eight and a half hours for seven kilometers was slow indeed! It was with a sense of relief that we arrived at O'Keefes Hut and made preparations for the night.

Climbing Mt Jagungal the next day fulfilled the dream of many. The sweeping views made the challenge of the previous day worth the effort. Established tracks led the way back to Round Mountain trail head on New Years Eve after a night at Derschkos Hut. It was an end to 2025 to remember and a kindling of the spirit to go back again and cross the path of Paddy Pallin as we walk through true wilderness.

Snowy River canoe trip – 12-14 January 2026

Quentin Tibballs

We were a group of 9: myself, Roger B, Frank T, Ruby Lu (on her second activity), Fred and Margaret, Carola N, Tony F and Rob J whose previous experience of the river was invaluable. We had initially intended to use 4, 2 person rafts and gear supplied by Bruthen Outdoor Gear and Rob's single inflatable raft to paddle 54kms of the Snowy from the Balley Hooley camp ground at the confluence of the Buchan River to Bete Bolong on the Orbost flood plain over two and a half days. However as this section of the Snowy is very remote, and this fact plus that there were bushfires in many areas of Victoria at that time, I opted for plan B which was to canoe (instead of raft) on day one, a 27km section from Bete Bolong to a boat ramp at Marlo. On day 2 we would explore the estuarine waters of the Brodribb River and Cabbage Tree Creek and we decided to give day 3 a miss because of a forecast of inclement weather. Thankfully we were able to transport the canoes on my trailer which I had towed from Melbourne.

We also set up a basecamp at Orbost Caravan Park which was shady and not too populated and later in the evening an old Citroen 2CV pulled up near our tents which sounded like my two-stroke lawnmower. We reasoned at least it would pick up speed going downhill.

Unfortunately the first 8 km from Bete Bolong on day one involved navigating sand bars every 200m or so because of low river level which was very frustrating.



continued next page

Along the track

Some of the time we could just push our way across a sand bar using our paddles, but mostly we had to jump out of our canoes and walk them through the shallow water. Also 2 of the canoes were quite heavy. Needless to say, that although the guide books describe this section as rather boring through farmland it was quite beautiful with lush vegetation on either side of the river with profuse bird life. Additionally, the water was almost crystal clear and pleasantly warm.

However, four of our party decided to pull out at Orbost Caravan Park roughly half way along our intended route because of the heavy going, whilst the remaining 2 canoes plus Rob in his kayak continued on. The sandbars had more or less disappeared downstream of Orbost and headway was much easier. Exit was at the prearranged boat ramp in Marlo.



At day's end we elected to have a decent country pub meal at the only establishment in Orbost which was well received - no nouvelle cuisine here.

Day 2 was an out and back paddle with all 4 canoes and kayak from the same boat ramp we had finished at in Marlo the day before. We travelled upstream along the Brodribb River to Cabbage Tree Creek then made an exploration of an unnamed lake along this

waterway about one and a half km further on. Both of these waterways are estuarine and thankfully we had a current assist us on the return paddle which made things a lot easier.

Most travelled back to Melbourne later that day but not before helping me unload the canoes at Bruthen Outdoor Gear from my trailer.

Frankston to Kananook Creek – Monday 19 January 2026

Brian Steffensen

A wonderful trip mostly along the foreshore. A benefit is this walk can be accessed by train; a pleasant journey, viewing many new stations and sea views.

Leader Halina, thorough as usual, set the scene and carefully guided a very happy group of travellers, followed by an excellent whip in Sharon. Relaxing, with tea tree walks, water views, pier walk and sightings of a very red lions mane jellyfish. More about this creature can be found here: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-01-19/lions-mane-jellyfish-melbourne-port-phillip-bay/106244362>

Finishing with an excellent coffee or cool drink and fine bushwalker humour. Top walk and all enjoyed a good day in a new area to many. Keep this one on the program!



Sunday Bus: Barwon Heads to Queenscliff -

18 January 2026

David Stockley

The bus is fully booked and the forecast splendid as we leave promptly as always for the drive to the coast. Today the longer walk is the more popular and they are dropped off first to do a loop around the panoramic views of Barwon Heads bluff. This group will walk about 19 kms and the shorter group, which I joined, some 14 or 15 kms.

There is some trepidation about whether the sand will be soft or firm since both groups will be walking along beaches for some 8 kms or more. Fortunately, the sand is firm and a brisk pace established. Unfortunately, there is a 30 kms per hour side/front wind blowing away hats and spraying sand.

We pass groups of beach goers braving the wind and admire the ocean's changing colours, making the occasional sideways scurry when waves threaten our feet. Then, miraculously the wind eases and we raise our heads and talk is possible again.



Lunch for the shorter walk is taken at the Point Lonsdale lighthouse, sheltered from the wind and the heat, and we learn something of the history of the lighthouses. Numbers are counted to confirm we have not lost anyone and off we set for the last 6 or 7 kms to Queenscliff. We keep together walking through the summer crowds of Point Lonsdale and continue single file through pleasant scrubby bush until we reach the Queenscliff lighthouse.

Soon our bus appears and we change shoes and head off when the longer walk group appears. Now the bus is quieter as a number of us 'rest our eyes', but excitement ripples through the bus when it is announced we will pass through the new Westgate tunnel.

Thanks to Brett and Theo for leading us on two relatively easy and interesting walks and thanks to Chris and Halina for acting as whips.



Schools in at Cape Bridgewater - 23-26

January 2026

Ian Mair

As the date for our Cape Bridgewater Base Camp drew near there was no certainty it would proceed. Extremes of heat, fires and flood have dominated news headlines across the state during early 2026. Multiple overnight trips have had to be cancelled with member safety being the highest priority. With good fortune a window of relatively benign weather favoured the chosen weekend, albeit with one warm day and heightened concerns about fire risk leading to a rescheduling of the walks program to safer coastal paths.

For our leader it was a trip a long time in planning. 23 years to be precise since the last time the club held a similar Base Camp at a local "Primary School"! Or at least that was the understanding. Based on a farming property there was indeed an old Primary School building restored for multi-function use. It was not the same building but its charm, utility and surroundings, which included a former iron foundry, multiple garages housing restored vintage cars and a rustic kitchen area, set the scene for a great weekend. Our group of 19 Bushies settled in with ease, chatting frequently with the long-time property owners. The rustic kitchen area on the edge of a small pond transformed into a point of congregation, constant chatter and relaxed socialising.



Rustic kitchen by the pond

The walks themselves are unmatched in Victoria for their scenic beauty boasting breathtaking cliff-top locations and a stream of scenic highlights ranging from "petrified forests", volcanic blowholes, seal colonies and an iconic lighthouse. Nearby limestone caves, coastal lakes and towering sand dunes leave the visitor with a sense of wonder.

With Portland selected as the location for the FedWalks 2026 event during October, hosted by The Friends of the Great South West Walk, a number of participants have already moved to secure their accommodation and another chance to take in this special location.

Thank you to our leader, Halina, for taking us back in time and to all participants for a very enjoyable weekend.



Inside the old "Primary School"

Not far from the section of the renowned Great South West Walk around Capes Bridgewater and Nelson the revised walks program met with general approval. The choice of the Bridgewater Cafe as the end point for the hot Saturday walk rated 10/10. Cool drinks and a welcoming beach for those with an inclination to take a dip soon eased the effects of the rising temperature. So too, a visit to Portland for Saturday dinner was a popular choice.



Approaching Cape Nelson lighthouse

Upcoming activities

February 2026

Sun 1	DAY: Jumping Creek to the Hinterland	Car	E/M	Brett Daniel
Mon 2	MTG: Club Committee Meeting	Pvt		Susan Maughan
Tue 3	MTG: Intro to website mapping utility (Video)	Pvt		Robert Ian Mair
Thu 5	DAY: O'Shannassy Aqueduct, Eastern section	Pvt	E	Graham Hodgson
7-15	PC: GSWW-Portland to Nelson	Pvt	E/M	Robert Ian Mair
Sun 8	DAY: Bostock Res. & Bungala State Forest	Bus	E&E/M	Bettina Brill & David Gilbert
Wed 11	DAY: Merri Creek Trail-Studley Park	Pvt	E/M	Judith Shaw
Sat 14	SOC: Member Art & Craft Exhibition	Pvt		Bernadette Prunty
Sun 15	DAY: Sorrento-Portsea, front & back beaches	Car	E/M	Christopher Collett
Mon 16	DAY: Geelong Foreshore & Botanic Gardens	Pvt	E	Robert Ian Mair
21-22	PC: Beginners-Brisbane Ranges	Pvt	E	Robert Ian Mair
Sun 22	DAY: Strzelecki Ranges Rail Trail & Brewery	Bus	E&E/M	Jan Colquhoun & Keith Dudson
Wed 25	SOC: From Ocean to Andes to Amazon-Peru	Pvt		Deb Shand & Meredith Quick
Thu 26	SOC: Scotchmans Creek, Glen Waverley	Pvt	E	Margaret Campion
26-2	PC: Walls of Jerusalem (Tasmania)	Pvt	M	Dianne McKinley

For detailed preview notes and program updates, please refer to the activities program on our website:
https://mbw.org.au/mbw_activities/MBW_activities_program.php



Around the cliff top paths of Cape Bridgewater - R.I Mair