

**MELBOURNE
BUSHWALKERS INC.**

ABN 14 396 912 508



THE NEWS

#907

October
2026



Lake Becking, Murray Sunset NP - 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
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MELBOURNE VIC 3001

www.melbournebushwalkers.org.au

Next committee meeting: Monday 5 October

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

New Members

We welcome these new members to the club:

Terry Stiles
Elena Stiles
Hassan Kamkar
Geraldine Redgwell
Pabitra Gurung
Kerri Cooke
Peter Cooke
Karen Hutchinson
Jess Smith
Emma Rattray



One of the locals from Murray-Sunset NP - R. Jung

Would you like your trip photos featured in the newsletter?

Due date for contributions to November News: 21 October

Email: news@mbw.org.au



First - "GOOD NEWS" to gladden the heart. The direct track from Telegraph Saddle to Sealers Cove is now open! Three successive storms in 2021 battered Wilsons Prom, Yiruk Wamoon, completely destroying the boardwalks located through a swampy area. This missing section has been the cause of much anxiety and disquiet. However, Parks Victoria crews have worked tirelessly to build a brand-new, resilient boardwalk after what must have been a logistical nightmare. Helicopters and barges were used to transport equipment, and a temporary camp and mess hall were established. The track's remote location was a major challenge for engineers and park rangers. The new boardwalk is built of fibre-reinforced plastic and now sits about 30cm higher in anticipation of rising sea levels.



More good news keeps coming: Mount Buffalo Chalet will reopen after two decades. The plan is to make it available to school camps, and the cafe will open next week. It's heartening to know that "the grand old dame" will shine again.

Let's take a moment to congratulate the Catholic Walking Club of Victoria, who are celebrating their 75th year.

Finally, something else to cheer: The latest 2026 AusPlay data confirms that bushwalking is continuing to thrive as one of Victoria's most popular physical activities. According to the Victorian statistics:

- **937,035 Victorians** participated in bushwalking, that's up 10% from last year
- Bushwalking recorded a **16.1% participation rate**
- Participation is now larger than many traditional sports including tennis, basketball and Australian football



Vale Geoff Schafer

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Geoff Schafer, a pioneering figure whose vision and determination helped give us one of Western Australia's greatest treasures: the Bibbulmun Track.

Long before the Track became the world-renowned 1,000-kilometre trail that it is today, Geoff Schafer had a simple but powerful idea: to create a long-distance walking trail that would encourage people to leave the city behind and discover the beauty of Western Australia's bush. More than 50 years later, that idea continues to inspire generations of walkers.

Geoff's contribution remains memorialised in the naming of Schafer Campsite, situated between Pemberton and Northcliffe. Nestled beside a picturesque swimming hole in the karri forest, it provides a fitting place for today's walkers to pause and remember one of the people whose idea helped make their journey possible.

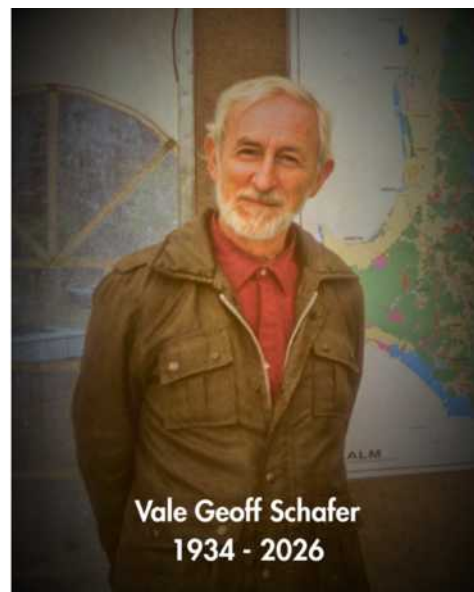
Every walker who follows the Waugal markers, every volunteer who gives their time to the Track, and every person who discovers a love of the Western Australian bush is, in some small way, part of the shared legacy that Geoff Schafer seeded.

The Bibbulmun Track Foundation extends its sincere condolences to Geoff's family, friends and all those who knew him.

We thank Geoff for his vision, his persistence and for having the courage to knock on a Minister's door more than 50 years ago with an idea that would change walking in Western Australia forever.

(Written by Steve Sertis and reprinted with permission from the Bibbulmun Track website bibbulmuntrack.org.au)

Geoff is a former member of MBW before moving to WA and the brother of legendary Past-President, Athol Schafer. Geoff returned to Melbourne for a brief period and renewed his membership with MBW for the period 2014-2020.



Wine and Chat: West Highland Way and the Isle of Skye (Scotland) - 28 October 2026

In September 2025 I spent three weeks in the Scottish highlands, solo hiking the West Highland Way and the Isle of Skye.



The weather was mostly, well, Scottish, all the better to appreciate the rugged beauty of the Deep North.

Join me for a photographic retrospective.

Judith Shaw



October Safety and Risk Reminders

This month the focus is on the **fire season** ahead, with its associated heat impacts, and the **Club's policy on children on activities**.

Fire Season (MOD): The Fire Season generally starts in October and runs through to the end of April. So look out for CFA **Total Fire Bans** and use the **Vic Emergency App** to keep across what's happening near you.

See the article on the Spring Fire Season Outlook in the September News. We are looking at one of our warmest and driest Springs. There is increased bushfire risk forecast for East Gippsland, the far south-west, the Surf Coast, and the area west of Geelong to the southern Wombat Forest.

If there is a **Total Fire Ban in an activity area** or if the Temperature at the Temperature Reference Site is 38 degrees or more (**Extreme Heat Policy**) then all day walks are cancelled. Extended Walks are cancelled or if they have commenced either cancelled or amended for safety.

In Fire Season Leaders should:

- Ensure the **Emergency Plus** (for accurate location data) and **Vic Emergency Apps** (for incidents and warnings) are loaded onto their mobile. Encourage walkers to do the same.
- Ensure the group has a **Personal Locator Beacon** PLB as required (for Sunday Walks they are in the First Aid Kits).
- Review the **Activity Guidelines on Extreme Weather & Considering Bushfire Risk before Overnight Walks**.
- Take an **AM/FM radio or App** for checking ABC Emergency Warnings.
- Make sure the group have mobile phones preferably with good remote area coverage.
- Remind walkers to **carry a minimum of 2L of water**.

The above safety items can also be useful in dealing with flooded creeks/river crossings.

Both PLBs (checked periodically by the Club, **you don't need to test them!**) along with digital radios (**you should check the batteries!**) can be borrowed from the Clubrooms.

Hyperthermia or Heat Illness (MOD): There are several forms of *hyperthermia* or heat illness. Early symptoms such as *heat cramps* are fairly mild. *Heat exhaustion* is more severe, and *Heat stroke* is the most serious form of hyperthermia. It can be life-threatening, so avoiding it yourself and learning how to recognise it in others is important. See the St Johns Ambulance information sheet in this News.

Note: *If someone is delirious or not responsive and vomiting, they need immediate first aid and medical assistance.*

The Red Cross **First Aid** app is free and works in Airplane mode on your Smartphone. It is useful for remembering what to do for hyperthermia and most other medical emergencies at home or outdoors.

Children on Activities: Club rules and bylaws require members to be over 18 years of age. Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. In addition, the activity organiser/leader needs to give their approval prior to the activity (By Law 5.7).

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



Training activity: Navigation by map and compass
– Saturday 24 October 2026

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 marker to another and can fine tune reading of a topographical map. The markers 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.

The plan is to divide into small groups of 2 or 3 people, one of whom will be familiar with map and compass navigation, and to visit several pre agreed points prior to a lunch break when we will debrief, and a further repeat of the process in the afternoon. Maps and compasses will be supplied.

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



Heat-induced illnesses



**IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY
CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE.**

DRSABCD Danger ▶ Response ▶ Send for help ▶ Airway ▶ Breathing ▶ CPR ▶ Defibrillation

The DRSABCD Action Plan is the first step when providing first aid. Use this to assess the immediate situation, **DOWNLOAD THE DRSABCD FACT SHEET**

HEAT EXHAUSTION

WARNING

If a person with heat exhaustion is not managed appropriately, they can develop heat stroke.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- feeling hot, exhausted, weak and fatigued
- persistent headache
- thirst
- nausea
- faintness, dizziness
- rapid breathing and shortness of breath
- pale, cool, moist skin
- rapid, weak pulse

WHAT TO DO

- 1 Move the patient to a cool place with circulating air.
- 2 Help the patient to sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- 3 Remove unnecessary clothing from the patient, and loosen any tight clothing.
- 4 Sponge the patient with cold water.
- 5 Give the patient cool water to drink.
- 6 Seek medical aid if the patient vomits or does not recover quickly.

HEAT STROKE

WARNING

Heat stroke is potentially life-threatening and immediate medical aid is needed.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- high body temperature of 40°C or more
- flushed, dry skin
- pounding, rapid pulse that gradually weakens
- headache and irritability
- nausea, vomiting
- visual disturbances
- faintness, dizziness, confusion
- loss of consciousness
- seizures

WHAT TO DO

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
- 3 Move the patient to a cool place with circulating air.
- 4 Help the patient to sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- 5 Remove almost all the patient’s clothing, and loosen any tight clothing.
- 6 Apply a cold pack to areas of large blood vessels such as the neck, groin and armpits, to accelerate cooling.
- 7 If possible, cover the patient with a wet sheet and fan to increase air circulation. Stop cooling when the patient feel cold to touch.
- 8 If patient is fully conscious and is able to swallow, give them cool water to sip.

Meridian Maps

Meridian Maps is a good place to buy hard copy bushwalking or driving maps, stocking a comprehensive range.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/>

(Thanks to Rosemary Cotter for sharing this information)



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST INVITED:

THE LYCIAN WAY – TURKIYE

(with Ramblers Worldwide)

The Lycian Way in Türkiye has been on my wish list for a number of years. It is a 520km long-distance trail along the Mediterranean between Fethiye and Antalya Province. The trail passes ancient ruins, follows goats' paths that link villages and has amazing sea views that never seem to disappear.

Alas, I am at the stage where a long-distance trail which involves carrying my daily needs is now too much of a challenge. Therefore, it was exciting to find Ramblers Worldwide offer sections of the trail, basically as a moving base camp, visiting the highlights of the trail over a two week period.



Photo from Ramblers Worldwide website

After reviewing the best months to visit Türkiye to walk the trail, my partner, Ian, and I decided to book their walk for September 2027, then I read that they offer private tours if eight or more people wish to walk together. So, I decided that I would send an "Expression of Interest" to club members to see if we would like to do this trail as a club.

Ramblers Worldwide cost is about \$5,400 which covers accommodation, transport along the trail and half-board (breakfast and dinner included daily). Additional costs will be airfares to Antalya (Türkiye) and any extra exploration that you would like to do. Ian and I will definitely stay in Türkiye a bit longer (either before or after the walk) to enjoy what Türkiye has to offer. The best months to visit the Lycian way are April, May, September and October. The dates that I am considering for the walk as a private club walk (not on their current calendar) is from Tuesday September 29 to October 13, 2027. These dates may need to be a be flexible depending on Ramblers' availability. If not sufficient support for a private club walk, Ian and I will definitely explore with Ramblers at their September offering.

The link to Ramblers Worldwide's offer of the Lycian Way is

<https://www.rambleworldwide.co.uk/europe/turkey/the-lycian-way-coast-and-mountain?bu=%2Fsearch%3Fk%3Dturkey%26ri%3D1>

Please review the walk carefully, look at the photo-gallery and see if the walk would suit you and let me know (via email) if you are interested. **Please note that expressions of interest will be COMMITMENTS to do this walk** as it will be your expression that will trigger whether I will contact Ramblers Worldwide to see if we can arrange this walk as a private club trip. **EOIs close on October 31 2026.**

Murray-Sunset Mallee Walk – 29-31 August 2026

Kerry Press

Over three days, our group of 9 bushwalkers traversed the Sunset Country Walking Track for more than 60 km in the Murray-Sunset National Park. To reach the park in NW Victoria is a full day's drive each way.

Camping near Lake Becking on our first night, we were inspired to see this beautiful lake at sunset. There are a number of

salt lakes in the national park, all pink-turquoise and excessively saline, with sandy beaches edged with sparkling salt crystals. The salt lakes are a surprising sight in this hot, dry and sandy mallee country, though sadly not good for drinking from, or swimming in. Apart from a lone Pipit on the shore of Lake Becking, no other birds came near. Here at Lake Becking, we saw the remains of wooden trackways into the lake, and rusty old machinery that spoke of the former salt excavation that occurred here up to the 1970s.



After a silvery moonlit night, we were woken at dawn on the Saturday with an evocative morning chorus, and emerged from our tents into a cold morning that quickly warmed up as the sun rose. After breakfast we set off around the lake and through beautiful open mallee scrub. There were plenty of wildflowers to stop and delight in along the way. A real highlight was seeing a Mallee Fowl up close as it scuttled away through the bush. Later we came across two Mallee Fowl mounds right on the track after our Mt Crozier camp, and we marvelled at their construction and size. One mound appeared to be actively managed, while the other had been dug out around its circumference. Mallee Fowl are remarkable for their building and management of a great circular mound of gravel, soil and leaf litter in which they lay their eggs. Through daily maintenance of the leaf mulch in the centre,

the birds ensure a constant temperature deep within the mound to enable the eggs to incubate. Mallee Fowl are pretty special to see these days. Their numbers have declined significantly as a result of habitat clearing, fox and cat predation and other human impacts.



We were blessed to have calm and perfect weather for the whole walk, with expansive blue

skies and sunshine during the day, and cold nights full of stars and brightly lit by the moon. A lot of rain had fallen a few days earlier so many of the usually dry claypans had filled with (brackish) water. Rob tested the water quality at every puddle, pond or lake that we encountered, using his Conductivity Meter to confirm relative brackishness. The temporary water bodies attracted a few interesting birds, including White-Necked Herons and a (quite uncommon) Chestnut Quail Thrush. Thankfully the rangers had filled the water tanks at each campsite because, despite the recent rain, the mallee country is very arid and drinkable water is hard to find.

Our walking was mostly on soft sandy tracks, (sadly churned up for most of the way by trailbikes), with multiple ups and downs over sand dunes. We tried to dodge the numerous native cockroaches we encountered, and stopped frequently to examine a new wildflower, interesting shrub or tree. Common trees in this hot dry mallee landscape were the Bulokes (Casuarinas) and several species of Cypress Pines (Callitris). There were plenty of yellow flowering Senna bushes (Cassia), Emu bush and Saltbush, and of course many flowering Wattle species

Along the track

that filled the air with their lovely perfume. We found at least 4 different species of orchid, including a Leek Orchid, and several Spider Orchid and Greenhood species. Also characteristic of this arid open woodland was the Spinifex with its extremely sharp spines. From the many distinctive footprints and diggings in the sand, we knew that there were plenty of roos, emus, goats and echidnas in the mallee, but they were extremely elusive. However, we did see four emus as we walked back towards Lake Becking on the last day. We also heard distant drumming sounds of Emus each night, and also a Nightjar and a Boobook Owl.



The Eucalypts were flowering near the temporary ponds at our Mt Jess Sunday night camp, and we saw a variety of honeyeaters excitedly feeding high up on the blossoms. Tree Martins scooped up insects on the ponds with great speed and skill, and a few Wood Ducks and Cormorants flew over. On our last day, we walked over the dunes from the Mt Jess campsite and later walked off-track through the mallee. On the way Rob showed us the most intriguing Bell Fruit tree (*Codonocarpus cotinifolius*), that grows rapidly after fire and produces green bell-shaped fruit. Their smooth straight trunks and cool fleshy leaves seemed more suited to a rainforest than a mallee environment.

We arrived back at our cars late afternoon, feeling rather hot, but invigorated after such a fine adventure. We stayed at Sea Lake that night, sharing a lovely dinner at the pub, then drove back to Melbourne the next day.

Many thanks to our leader Rob for organising and leading a wonderful walk through this remarkable mallee landscape, and for sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm for plants, geology, water bodies and all things natural, which made our trip so interesting and meaningful. Thanks also to lovely fellow walkers, Andrew (from Maroondah Bushwalking Club), Annette, John, Tony, Ralph, Ruby and Mark who together made our walk so rich and memorable.



Gunbower Island Base Camp – 18-20 September 2026

Halina Sarbinowski

Ian and I decided to leave Melbourne early so that we could enjoy the 3.5 hour drive to Gunbower Island at our leisure.

We were delighted to see 16 chicks and one adult emu as we neared camp. The chicks of varying sizes quickly ducked under the fence while the adult frantically ran up and down along the fence line before deciding to just dive headfirst through the gap between wires. He was successful, although a few feathers were lost in the process.



By late afternoon all of our group of 14 had arrived. Several of the group opted for dinner at Gunbower Hotel where the first AFL semi-final was being broadcast. Back at camp we spent a relaxing time around the campfire.

After a restful night we were all in good spirits as we set up for our first walk on Saturday morning. Our first stop was at the homestead of Elizabeth Masters. Unfortunately, the homestead had deteriorated badly and needed struts to prop it up. Views were enjoyed as we followed the mighty Murray upstream as best we could with the aim of reaching Torrumbarry Weir for lunch. We achieved our aim and enjoyed a leisurely lunch at the picnic area of the weir. We spied the new paddle steamer, The Australian Star, which was originally scheduled to commence operation in June but was still idle.

An inland, more direct route was taken back to camp where shared nibbles were enjoyed before most of the group headed to the Gunbower Hotel for dinner. We were delighted to see more emus and chicks along the stretch between camp and town. Dinner was enjoyed before most retired to the bar to again watch a AFL semi-final. On our return to camp our fire kept us warm well into the evening.

While packing up we again sighted emus and chicks. I hurried to some tents not far upstream from us to make sure that their dog did not frighten the emus, however, I had nothing to fear. The staffie terrier camped there on seeing the emus ran full bore in the opposite direction. He was so timid, however, when he realised that I was harmless he was on his back requesting belly rubs. He was delightful.

We drove about 45 minutes to the destination of our second walk, which was still within the Gunbower National Park. Our expectations of reaching the Murray on this walk were thwarted as much of the area was under water. We still managed a 13k walk. The water features of the area looked quite exotic; however, the mosquitos that came with the territory were vicious, even drawing blood through clothing. I think that we all appreciated the shortened walk. Some of the party were fortunate enough to see a red bellied black snake slither into a pond, swim across before exiting at the other end.



As the walk was shortened, we took the opportunity to enjoy lunch at parklands in Cohuna before heading our separate ways. Thank you for your great company, everyone. We were very fortunately with fantastic spring weather and our multiple sightings of emus and their chicks were delightful.

Upcoming activities

October 2026

Thu 1	DAY: Outer Circle Railway	Pvt	E	Bill Metzenthien
2-4	PC: Highlights of the Eastern Strathbogies	Pvt	M/H	Ray Thomas
4-9	PC: Grande Randonnee Nord, Noumea	Pvt	M&M/H	Susan Maughan
Sun 4	DAY: Tallarook Forest-Warragul Rocks-Mt Hickey	Bus	E/M&M	Indu Devanath & Quentin Tibballs
Mon 5	MTG: Club Committee Meeting	Pvt		Susan Maughan
Wed 7	DAY: Masons Falls-Mt Sugarloaf, Kinglake NP	Pvt	E/M	Helen Dobbyn
9-11	BC: Fedwalks 2026: GSWW, Portland	Pvt	Var	Committee
Sun 11	DAY: Bungal State Forest	Car	E/M	Judith Shaw
14-18	PC: GOW Aire River-12 Apostles	Pvt	M	Anne Wilkins
Sun 18	DAY: Anakie Gorge-Steiglitz	Bus	EM&M	David Gilbert & Robert Ian Mair
Mon 19	DAY: Gardiners Ck, Holmesglen-Blackburn	Pvt	E	Sharon Carr
Thu 22	SOC: Albert Park Lake-St Kilda Pier	Pvt	E	Halina Sarbinowski
23-25	PC: Mirimbah-Mt Buller-Mt Stirling	Pvt	M	Mark Simpson
23-26	PC: Grampians Peaks Trail-Central Section	Pvt	M	Gina Hopkins
Sat 24	DAY: Yarra Bend Boathouses-Pub. Transport	Pvt	E	Jan Colqhoun
Sat 24	TRG: Navigation Training by map & compass	Pvt	E	Quentin Tibballs
Sun 25	DAY: Maroondah Res-Donnelley's Weir	Car	E	Robert Ian Mair
Wed 28	SOC: West Highland Way & The Isle of Skye	Pvt		Judith Shaw
Wed 28	DAY: Plenty Gorge	Pvt	E/M	Jopie Bodegraven
31-3	PC: Falls to Hotham crossing-Tawonga Huts	Pvt	E/M	Bernadette Young
31-3	PC: Razorback-Feathertop-Youngs Hut	Pvt	M	Petras Surna

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