

YETI

The official magazine of YHA Bushwalking Victoria

ISSUE No. 58 | October to December 2024



85 Years

Special Anniversary Edition



yha
bushwalking victoria



A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

85 years! That's how long people have been enjoying Victoria's great outdoors with YHA Bushwalking!

We are particularly proud to re-present the history of YHA Bushwalking, as originally told by club stalwarts from over the years.

Also, a very special shout-out to Bruce Meincke. A Life Member, Bruce has led countless walks with YHA Bushwalking, and celebrates his 60th year with the club this year. He's running a couple of events this season to mark this very special day occasion – do join us for either a day walk or a pack carry led by Bruce to celebrate.

Another special event is the Jonas Lea Memorial Walk, which will be held on Saturday, 5 October. Jonas was one of our most popular and reliable leaders, passing away in 2018 at 41. All members are welcome, whether you knew Jonas or not.

We also hope you like the history of YHA Bushwalking, which we've captured in this edition. There are some interesting stories in there, including a tragic event in the 1960s in which one of our attendees drowned.

However, let us celebrate this fine club and its achievements over the years, and let us remember the good times and the people we have met and laughed with.

Craig Beer and Rachel Weddle

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POSITION VACANT

COMMITTEE AND NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We are down to six committee members and a handful of hangers-on who make this club run as smoothly as possible. But we desperately need more! Would you be able to help us out in some way? The committee has some pressing jobs, and many hands make light work. As for getting paid? Forget it! We're all volunteers!

One role we'd particularly like filled is Social and/or Club Nights Co-ordinator.

We run a monthly club night with a small 'social' aspect, such as organising and attending an occasional trivia night or restaurant or a historical-themed walk around Melbourne with a professional guide. However, we need someone to take on the role of organising these things!

As the club night organiser, you will arrange guest speakers, provide nibbles (paid for by the club), and manage our venue's bookings. Naturally, you'd be expected to attend as well. As the social organiser, you will create an event, coordinate it, manage bookings, and naturally host it.

If you are interested in either or both roles, please contact Adnan, the club president, at president@yhabush.org.au.



Are you a social butterfly? Do you love organising events?

Why not get involved in our committee?



YHA BUSHWALKING CLUB'S COMMITTEE

Any confidential concerns should be addressed to the Club President via the email below. Queries of a general nature can go to contact@yhabush.org.au. A generic committee email address exists at committee@yhabush.org.au.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESIDENT

Adnan Lovic

president@yhabush.org.au

SECRETARY

Tanveer Ahmed

secretary@yhabush.org.au

TREASURER

Richard Lawrence

treasurer@yhabush.org.au

WALKS SECRETARY

Doug Miers

walkssecretary@yhabush.org.au

GENERAL COMMITTEE

Sonya Radwyl & Ken Sussex

contact@yhabush.org.au

GENERAL STUFF

BUSH SEARCH & RESCUE REP

Tanveer Ahmed

ADOPT-A-TRACK

Richard Lawrence

CLUB NIGHTS AND/OR SOCIAL

Vacant

NON COMMITTEE MEMBERS

YETI EDITOR

Craig Beer and Rachel Weddle

yetieditor@yhabush.org.au

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMS

Erryn Stephens

socialmedia@yhabush.org.au

WEBSITE

Stephen Smith

contact@yhabush.org.au

AROUND THE CLUB

NEW LEADERS!

Thank you to our newest Leaders, **Jo Osborne** and **Rod Hayes**. You're now part of the inner sanctum of YHA Bushwalking! As for everyone else, our newest leaders both look forward to meeting you and have plenty of ideas for more adventures. So, hop on board and join them!

As always, the need for new leaders is never-ending! We've had some success with new leaders coming on board recently, but we always want more, and we still haven't recovered our leader stocks from the pandemic. If you could help, please email our Walks Secretary, Doug.

ADOPT-A-TRACK

We are getting on board an exciting initiative called Adopt-A-Track, where clubs such as ours '**adopt**' a bushwalking **track** somewhere in the state and make a trip out there once or twice a year to clear it up a bit. The idea is in its infancy, but our Treasurer, Richard, has kindly agreed to lead this initiative to get it moving. A big thank you to Richard, and we will no doubt hear more soon.

CANCELLATIONS AND NO-SHOWS

The scourge of absolute last-minute cancellations and no-shows continues to rear its ugly head and draw the ire of leaders and walkers who miss out on an event due to it filling out, only to find that a couple of empty spots exist due to last-minute cancellations and no-shows. Leaders have the right to refuse someone at one of their events for any reason. This is rarely exercised; some leaders may knock someone back if they are concerned the person may not keep up or is an unknown quantity. But leaders readily decline people who have become regular last-minute cancellers or have been a no-show at any YHA Bushwalking event. This is utterly their prerogative. **So, if you don't want to be cancelled, don't cancel us!**



UPCOMING EVENTS

Our Walks Program has events that appeal to everyone and continues to evolve. In addition to our usual selection of Saturday and Sunday walks, club nights, and social events, we have some accommodated trips and pack-carry events on the horizon.

The following list is current as of 1 October 2024 and will be added over the next weeks and months. Keep an eye on the club website, and as always, please book through the website at <https://yhabush.org.au/activities/current-walks-program/>. Check your emails in case of last-minute cancellations or changes to the plan. Events open a week early for members.

We have a couple of noteworthy events coming up: a Navigation Training Day with club Life Member Ken Sussex is planned for Saturday, 19 October in Central Victoria. This is a great way to hone your skills with physical map reading; we cannot afford to let this skill die with the rise of the internet!

Club legend Bruce Meinke invites you for a special stroll down memory lane as he celebrates 60 years of walking with YHA Bushwalking Victoria on Saturday, 26 October/ This unique adventure is packed with highlights, from towering gum trees and historic homestead ruins to the chance of spotting a sunbathing Eastern Brown snake in a water tank (don't worry, from a safe distance!). We'll also encounter massive mobs of kangaroos, visit the Weeroona Koorie Cemetery, and explore the former North West Hospital site. Join us to celebrate Bruce's milestone and immerse yourself in the rich history and wildlife of this captivating park!

Our pack carry adventures are ramping up, with David L leading a trip to the southern Victorian Alps this Melbourne Cup Long Weekend! This hard-rated pack-carry trek to The Crinoline (Mt Ligar) is for experienced hikers. Named for its petticoat-like shape, this Gippsland peak offers a thrilling circuit walk starting from the peaceful Breakfast Creek campsite, 20 km north of Licola.

Bruce M is also leading a pack carry in the Alpine National Park around Mount Bogong. This is the rooftop of Victoria where memory and adventure awaits.

More pack carries will be released on to the program over the coming weeks, so keep an eye out.

Note that we have some sensational accommodated trips coming up to Lorne (full), but the Grampians, Canberra, Walhalla and Sydney and the spectacular NSW Central Coast all have vacancies.

A base camp at Sheeppark Flat (near Mansfield) is also planned over the Christmas/New Year break with easy access to the nearby town of Mansfield and a crisp clean water supply (being the Howqua River) nearby. We also have some pack carries coming up that will stir the wanderlust in the more intrepid of you. Spots still exist for most of these, so get on board if they interest you.

And, of course, day walks continue to bound. Looking forward to seeing you out there!

Date	Duration (Days)	Location	Day	Walk Level	Leader
Oct 4	1	Great Otway National Park: Moggs Creek	Friday	M	David M
Oct 5	1	Great Otway National Park: Coast Walk – Jan Juc to Anglesea	Saturday	M	David M
Oct 5	1	Arthurs Seat State Park: Jonal Lea Memorial Walk	Saturday	M	Doug M
Oct 6	1	Macedon Regional Park: Mount Macedon	Sunday	M	Jo O
Oct 8	1	Clubnight: Hiking in the Caucasus Mountains, Georgia and Armenia	Tuesday		Doug M
Oct 12	1	First Aid Course 2024; Free for Leaders	Saturday	N/A	Richard L



Date	Duration (Days)	Location	Day	Walk Level	Leader
Oct 13	1	Mornington National Park; Bushrangers Bay to Cape Schanck	Sunday	M	David L
Oct 13	1	Cathedral Ranges State Park: Northern Circuit	Sunday	M	Bill X
Oct 18	3	Accommodated: Lorne	Self-Accom	M-H	Craig B
Oct 19	1	Navigation Training Day – Map and Compass	Saturday	E	Ken S
Oct 26	1	Woodlands Historic Park: 60 Years with YHA Bushwalking!	Saturday	E-M	Bruce M
Nov 1	4	Grampians National Park: Accommodated	Accom.	M	David S
Nov 2	3	Alpine National Park: Mt Nelse Area and Southern Bogong High Plains	Pack Carry	E-M	Bruce M
Nov 2	3	Alpine National Park – The Crinoline	Pack Carry	Hard	Daivd L
Nov 2	1	Hepburn State Park: Blowhole and Bald Hill	Saturday	M	Craig B
Nov 9	1	Hogan Track and Old River	Saturday	H	Richard L
Nov 16	1	George Bass Coastal Walk	Saturday	M	Rod H
Nov 17	1	Wilhelmina Falls, Murrindindi Scenic Reserve	Sunday	M	Lloyd P
Nov 23	2	Alpine National Park: Mt Clear Traverse	Pack Carry	M-H	Stephen S
Nov 23	1	Wirrawilla Rain Forest Walk, Lavendar Farm and Alowyn Gardens	Saturday	E	Angelica P
Nov 23	1	Lerderderg State Park; West No 6 & Lerderderg Gorge	Saturday	E-M	Claudio P
Nov 24	1	Point Addis to Fairhaven	Sunday	M-H	Jo O
Nov 30	1	The Christmas Party to End All Christmas Parties: Elwood Bowls Club	Saturday	S	Adnan L
Dec 1	1	Talbot Heritage Trail	Sunday	M	Richard L
Dec 7	1	Lerderderg State Park; Scenic Rim	Saturday	H	Craig B
Dec 14	1	Clearwater Gully	Saturday	H	Richard L
Dec 15		You Yangs Regional Park – Flinders Loop	Sunday	M	Lloyd P
Dec 21	1	Summer Solstice Night Walk at Castlemaine	Saturday	M	Craig B
Dec 27	5	Christmas-NYE – Canberra	Accom	M-H	Richard L
Dec 27	4	Base Camp: Sheeppyard Flat, Howqua	Base Camp	M	Craig B



Date	Duration (Days)	Location	Day	Walk Level	Leader
Jan 5	1	<u>Fireline, SkyHigh, Zigzag and Dandenong Creek Tracks</u>	Sunday	M-H	Jo O
Jan 12	1	Northern Brisbane Ranges	Sunday	H	Richard L
Jan 19		Macedon Ranges Walking Trail	Sunday	M	Lloyd P
Jan 23	4	Accommodated: Australia Day weekend at Rawson	Accom.	M	Craig B
Jan 30	1	Summer Night City: Thursday Night Urban Walks	Thursday	E	Craig B
Feb 1	1	Otways National Park: Phantom Falls, Cora Lynn Cascades and Erskine Falls Loop	Saturday	H	Jo O
Mar 8	3	Phillip Island	Accom	M	David S
April 17	10	Accommodated: Sydney and Central Coast	Extended	M	Craig B

CONTRIBUTE TO YETI

A big thank you to all our amazing Yeti contributors!

If you have something interesting to say, a story of something that went wrong on a hike, a trip report, a helpful map, or a special article, please reach out. We would love to hear from you. Send your Yeti contributions to yetieditor@yhabush.org.au.

Some publication guidelines exist. We love photos and will print 2-3 for each trip report. We have the following word limits:

- Trip Reports: 300 words, 2-3 photos (1 page only)
- My Favourite Hike: 500 words, 4-6 photos
- Special Features: 1000 words, 4-6 photos

Have you got something interesting to tell your fellow bushwalkers?

BITS AND PIECES

PODCAST THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

Claire Nelson was hiking alone in the Joshua Tree National Park in the United States in 2018 when she slipped on a stack of boulders and fell over six metres to the ground.

The impact shattered her pelvis. She was out of phone range, which probably didn't matter as her battery went flat. She lay there for days.

This resilient woman's story is now a podcast on abc.net.au; just search for **The unexpected plot twist: how a solo hiker stayed alive after shattering her pelvis in Joshua Tree National Park**

You will be blown away but also humbled by this woman's courage.



THE HISTORY OF YHA BUSHWALKING

Former and current club stalwarts Bruce and Gillian Meincke, David Burnett, Roger and Shirley Palmer, Ken Sussex, John Braakhuis, University of Melbourne Archives, Paul Dorrington, Don Baker, Ken McInnes, and Anna Crawford all made various contributions to a written piece on the club's history in the mid-2010s. Rachel Weddle has reproduced a shortened version to celebrate the Club's 85th anniversary!

The YHA Bushwalking Club can be traced back to 1939. Since then, countless walkers, leaders, committee members, and various others have graced the club, either with a single visit, never to be seen again, or with regular attendance for more than 50 years. Despite its name—the 'Y' stands for 'Youth'—it is fair to say the average age no longer represents youth, with an average age now exceeding 40.

However, the YHA Bushwalking Club is one of Victoria's most active bushwalking clubs – possibly the most active – with a membership base of between 300-400. It runs events throughout Victoria, with at least one foray each year into an interstate region or New Zealand. It runs a variety of pack carries, day walks, accommodated overnights, urban walks, club nights and social events that are sure to appeal to anyone with a love of the outdoors.

IN THE BEGINNING (1939 TO 1949) (YETI AUTUMN 2013 EDITION)

The club's origins are linked to the Victorian Youth Hostel Association (YHA), established on 4 September 1939, the same day World War II broke out. The YHA's mission was to support young people with adventures, exploring nature, and meeting new people.

During the first half of the 1940s, the YHA established the first generation of approximately 15 hostels in what are now the north and eastern outskirts of Melbourne, such as Kinglake, Warrandyte and Mt Evelyn. They also created a Routes and Survey Committee to develop maps covering known bush tracks and blaze trails, marking them with the international YHA symbol.

The inaugural walk took place in March 1940, with a mixed party of around 32 university students hiking 11km from Ringwood station to Windermere hostel at Christmas Hills.

On 30th July 1944, the YHA held its first one-day walk following numerous member requests. It was a success, and the Routes & Survey Committee was engaged to suggest further day walk routes.



Inaugural walk, 1940 (Photo: Nancy Morgan)

The end of the World War II

At the end of the war, interest in outdoor activities flourished, and the YHA started organising hikes twice a month. These included day walks and more frequent hostel-based walks. Interest in overnight camping trips also grew, and the YHA gained permission to use forestry commission huts in Cumberland Forest and Lake Mountain.

A growing number of YHA members were keen to explore other Victorian regions and wanted to visit more inaccessible areas that required extensive camping gear to camp overnight. These trips were referred to as 'bushwalks'.

The first Bushwalking Committee

The first bushwalking committee was established in October 1947 to focus on overnight hikes. Their first overnight "bushwalk" took place in November 1947. It comprised a circuit near Warburton and took in Mt Donna Buang—Boobyalla and the Acheron Way. They held their first Club Night in July 1948.

1950S (YETI SPRING 2013 EDITION)

By the early 1950s, the Bushwalking Committee looked after bushwalks, walking trips, day walks and hostel trips. A core identity of our modern club began to take shape – with walks catering to all tastes and abilities.

The early committees also served as an advice bureau, establishing a map library and equipment hire service. YHA's Routes & Survey committee prepared detailed maps of the regions surrounding its hostels, and other walking clubs mapped some of the areas beyond. Topographic maps from aerial surveys were



many years away, and government maps didn't cover remote areas and were often outdated.

The committee began purchasing and lending equipment, starting with two packs, a sleeping bag, and an A-frame tent. This proved popular and profitable and encouraged new overnight walkers.

Supporting Bush Search & Rescue

YHA became affiliated with Bush Search & Rescue (BS&R) in the 1950s. The Bushwalking Committee promoted active involvement and encouraged members to attend practice weekends. YHA contributed significantly to two of the most significant searches in Victorian history—Donna Buang in August 1953 and a ten-day unsuccessful search for a lost skier on Mt Baw Baw in June 1955. YHA provided 89 searchers for the Baw Baw operation, earning considerable respect and recognition as one of Melbourne's major bushwalking clubs.



Mt Howitt from Mt Magdala, Easter 1951 (Photo: Dulcie Duncan)

The first walks program

In the 50s, activity listings relied on YHA's monthly newsletter "Hosteller". A six-month walk program was produced and was the norm for many years, only changing to quarterly in the late 1980s.

Club Nights

After several venue changes, Club Nights moved to the Victorian Railways Institute (VRI) ballroom above Flinders St station in March 1952 and stayed there until the ballroom closed for renovation in 1985. Club nights, held weekly on Monday nights, saw 100-200

attendees in the 1950s-60s. Members met, chatted, shared photos from previous walks, and booked future ones.

1960S (YETI SUMMER 2013-14 EDITION)

The Bushwalking club thrived throughout the 1960s. Despite occasional drops in number, new generations of leaders were nurtured, helped by an annual leadership training weekend at Warburton Hostel. Average day walk attendance increased from 20 to 26 between 1964 and 1969, with weekend averages also in the 20s. Although statistics were skewed by cancelling trips with fewer than 20 bookings, weekend trips often had 30-40 participants, all walking as one big group. Personalised trip booklets were also distributed during this period.



Bob Prudhoe entertains - Wilsons Prom 1966 (Photo: Fred Bloomer)

Tragedy at Sealers Cove

Wilson's Promontory, Victoria's oldest national park (established in 1908), saw increased popularity and development post-WWII. By the 1960s, Tidal River was crowded with summer campers, but tracks to its eastern shores were limited. A path to Sealers Cove ended at the swamp without a boardwalk for the last two km. Bushwalkers relied on maps and compasses to proceed to Refuge Cove.

In April 1966, 25 club members set out to Sealers Cove during Easter, including a side trip up Mt Wilson. There were no regulations on group size, routes, or campsites. On Sunday, 10th April, 20-year-old Robert Turner and two others swam across Sealers Cove. While returning, Robert disappeared, likely due to cramp or exhaustion from the cold water. Despite an extensive search, his body was never found. This was the club's only fatality in its 85-year history.



1970S (YETI WINTER 2014 EDITION)

In the 1970s, regulations began restricting group sizes in areas such as Wilsons Promontory, and the club started to split bushwalkers into more manageable group sizes and allow different walk grading offerings.

Campaigning for wilderness value

Members helped to campaign to protect the wilderness from logging, land clearing, road building, and other developments and set aside areas for conservation and recreational use. One such victory was preventing logging roads within 100m of the Alps Walking Track. Others included preventing recreational snowmobiles on the Bogong High Plains and a proposed chairlift on Mt Feathertop. Although it was another decade before the Alpine National Park was declared in 1989.

In campaigning for wilderness values, bushwalkers also had to clean up their act. Until 1970, "Burn, Bash and Bury" had been acceptable, and the slogan even graced YHA's programs. This gradually gave way to the "Carry In what you Carry Out" message that today's walkers are (hopefully) familiar with. This meant no campfires unless there was an existing firepit.

Training weekends

Bushwalking and leadership training weekends were a feature of the 1970s that weren't sustained through subsequent decades. Held once or twice a year at a hostel, beginners were given lessons in basic bushcraft (pitching a tent, camp cooking, hygiene, equipment, and safety). At the same time, leaders were tutored in first aid, navigation, and group dynamics.



Bob Prudhoe outside Federation Hut, early 1970s (Photo: Bruce Meincke)

Bushwalking boom

Thanks to couch potato "Norm," the centrepiece of the "Life Be In It" campaign, a mini bushwalking boom occurred in the second half of the 1970s. The campaign encouraged Australians to become more active. YHA benefited from this, but the increased level of participation also led to the formation of new suburban clubs.

A logo with longevity

The most visible legacy of the 1970s debuted as part of a YHA Bushwalking promotion in the December 1971 "Hosteller" magazine, with the Yeti logo appearing on the walks program. Yeti was adapted from cartoonist Luigi Giovanetti's figures Max the Hamster and Hedgehog, first appearing in Punch magazine during the 1950s. Accessorising the furry fellow with equipment such as skis, an ice axe, or a camera-enabled various activity themes to be highlighted.

Cross-country skiing

Cross-country skiing was another fledgling activity that grew under the Bushwalkers' wing. At the beginning of the 1970s, those wanting to ski needed to import equipment. Popularity steadily increased throughout the decade, with outdoor shops eventually stocking Cross-country skis. By 1978, an instruction weekend at Mt Baw Baw was booked out within 30 minutes, and other YHA activities, such as canoeing, were included in the program. In 1982, a separate Nordic Skiing committee was established, and in time for the 1983 season, it had a complete program.

1980S (YETI WINTER 2016 EDITION)

At the beginning of the 1980s, YHA's fifth decade, a range of activity groups were well-established and flourishing. Members regularly flocked on Monday evenings to the VRI Ballroom above Flinders Street station for YHA Club Night. Over a hundred people would often mill around tables dedicated to each activity. Committee members and leaders answered questions and took event bookings. The Club treasurers would leave carrying large sums of cash to be tallied up and banked over the next few days. Bushwalking was the most popular activity, offering fortnightly Sunday walks or, on alternate weekends, overnight pack carries.

The Committee included a Publicity Officer and, at times, a subcommittee responsible for promoting the club. Regular articles about Bushwalking appeared in



the Hosteller, while free radio advertising and listings in the Age Friday 'EG' helped spread the message to the outside world. Programs were distributed to hostels and outdoor shops, and attendance was boosted, particularly on day walks.

In the 1980s, Gore-Tex became the material of choice for keeping bushwalkers dry, fleece replaced woollens to keep them warm, and Thermarests took over from Styrofoam mats to make them comfortable.



Snowy Bluff –Easter 1980 (Photo: Bruce Meincke)

1990S (YETI AUTUMN 2017 EDITION)

The 50th anniversary of YHA Victoria in 1989 was well-publicised and celebrated. Recognising that bushwalking had also amassed considerable heritage, in 1992, the slogan "Walking Since 1939" was added to the walks program, which has remained to this day.

The introduction of Sunday social walks

Day walks started being scheduled with weekend trips, and by the mid-1990s, Sunday 'social walks' were a weekly fixture. A casual system of turning in the city on Sunday morning made the walks attractive to leaders and walkers and was unique to YHA. Saturday walks were scheduled when no weekend trips were available and focused on smaller groups and more challenging terrain.

Yeti newsletter

The Yeti was launched in April 1993. The newsletter featured descriptions of upcoming events, trip reports, and general items of interest about bushwalking. The 'Yeti' logo had been a well-established club symbol since its origin in the 1970s, so it was an obvious title.

Black tie bushwalking

Formal Dinner walks began in 1993. After setting up a campsite somewhere scenic, everyone changed out of their usual bushwalking clobber into jackets, ties, and dresses and contributed to a shared feast. One member even carried a cello on their back to several.



Formal Dinner, Mt Stirling 1996

The first club website

While the club used 'Yeti' to communicate with regular walkers, it needed a way to engage new members. The first website was built with government assistance and contained similar content to the current version, but it was functionally little more than a brochure for its first few years. Anyone interested in bushwalking still needed to attend the weekly club night to obtain a copy of the program or book a walk. Soft copies of the walks program and email distribution weren't made available until the early 2000's.

Direct memberships and trip cards

The website invited the outside world to bushwalk with us and coincided with a transition during the 1990s from a club for YHA-only members to a club for anyone. Non-members were permitted a guest pass on condition that they joined within a month. The rules were never officially changed, but during the 1990s, guest passes gave way to a simple \$2 surcharge on booking fees. It was up to the individual whether they thought joining YHA worthwhile or were happy to keep paying the extra cost.

In late 1999, the YHA Bushwalking's own 'membership', the Trip Card, was introduced. Initially, an annual payment of \$30 avoided walk booking fees (\$3/day, \$5/weekend). This made the club more attractive to its regular walkers while maintaining the pay-per-walk system, making it easier for newcomers to participate.



2000S (YETI AUTUMN 2018 EDITION)

Over six decades, YHA Bushwalking evolved in response to societal change, and since 2000, this transformation has continued at an even greater rate, with the most significant change being the internet.

Moving to email

A club email address and rudimentary mailing list were set up in early 2000, migrating to a Yahoo group in 2003. In 2006, leaders' email addresses began being published as part of the program, and in 2011, the facility was introduced to contact leaders via the website Walks page.

Booking on trips, mostly done through club nights and via telephone, moved to email, much to the relief of some leaders and organising walks became more manageable. However, the reduced personal contact meant the occasional newcomer joined a walk they were unprepared for.



Late-spring snow-walk: Howitt-Cross Cut Saw Nov 2003

Reinvention of the Club Night

Attendance at Club Nights dropped sharply with less necessity to visit to sign up for a trip, and reinvention was needed. Club Nights changed from weekly to fortnightly in 2007 and monthly the following year, a format maintained today. They continue to have an ongoing role as a social event, including guest speakers, and provide opportunities for newcomers to talk to someone about YHA bushwalking.

A Taste for Comfort

YHA Bushwalking latch onto the growing popularity of "glamping". YHA Bushwalking's origins were in the organisation of hostel based walks, but the formation of a Bushwalking activity shifted the focus to day walks and camping. Accommodated, mostly hostel-based, weekends still appeared on the program but by the early 2000s were mainly easier graded walks appealing to the club's older demographic. Those

wanting harder walks away from Melbourne had the options of an overnight pack-carry or base-camp. The use of a 40+ seater bus for long-weekends was made viable by offering various grade base-camp and overnight walks.

Glamping (a contraction of glamour-camping) appealed to those who enjoyed walking hard by day but insisted on their creature comforts at night, chief of which was a hot-shower. Easter 2004 at Falls Creek marked when the glamping trend took hold within the club. Until then, surprisingly little use had been made of off-season ski-lodges. Lodge-based trips at Mt Hotham, Thredbo and even a bogong-moth infested one at Baw Baw followed, becoming regular long-weekend fixtures from then on.

The Easter 2006 Thredbo trip sounded the death knell for the use of a bus on long-weekends. The necessity to drive to the full distance to the accommodation instead of being able to camp at an intermediate staging post such as Corryong meant a very long drive and extremely late night. The new style accommodated trips mainly impacted basecamps. Those who liked pack-carrying weren't lured away by the prospect of comfort, but many who had hitherto begrudgingly base-camped jumped at the opportunity not to sleep in a tent. Thus areas like Wilsons Prom and the Grampians also featured regularly for more challenging accommodated walks.

2010S (YETI AUTUMN 2018 EDITION)

The start of social networking

In the 2010s, attendance began to decline, particularly on the popular Sunday walks, which had reliably averaged around 25 for generations. Although there was still a core of regular walkers, new attendees had dwindled. The Club was forced to embrace Meetup to reannounce its presence.

The effect was immediate. Sunday walk attendance recovered and surged into the unmanageable 50+ region! Leaders were overwhelmed, and it quickly became unworkable. Adjustments were required to throttle back the numbers! But the extra numbers meant extra walks, and two, sometimes even three events could be offered each weekend.

Website revamp

In 2017, a new modern website was set up, with easier sign-up processes and a modernisation and tidy-up of club policies.



Jonas Lea Award

The Club also initiated the Jonas Lea Award, an award to commemorate a popular walk leader who passed away in 2018 at the age of 41. The award was provided to the person who had made the most noteworthy contribution to the club over 12 months.

Helicopter evacuations

From the late 2010s onwards, an uptick in helicopter evacuations was noted, leading the committee to warn walkers that they should have ambulance cover.

2020S

And so, we arrive at the tail end of 2025.

Global pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic caused havoc. The club practically ceased operations, and when operations did commence, walkers had to maintain social distancing from each other and be vaccinated against the virus. Events were severely curtailed, numbers were limited, and carpooling became a thing of the past. But of course, human kind found a way – it always does! We are now back at or above pre-pandemic levels of activity and membership and firing on eight cylinders!

Interstate Trips

Interstate-accommodated trips became popular, and accommodated weekends went upmarket with better accommodation options.

So, where to now?

Much has unquestionably changed since the club started, some better, some worse, but the quintessential YHA Bushwalking experience remains the same. On the weekend after you read this, someone will have their first trip with the club, possibly their first taste of bushwalking. They will mingle with a mix of other relative newcomers and seasoned walkers. Hiking in a natural landscape will leave them invigorated, their mind temporarily freed from the preoccupations of weekday life.

For those spending the weekend away and camping overnight, the effect of being in the bush from dusk to dawn will be even more powerful. Experiences will be shared, new friendships forged, and the worst part will be returning to Melbourne unless the weather is particularly unkind.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD . . .

Cryptic Crossword

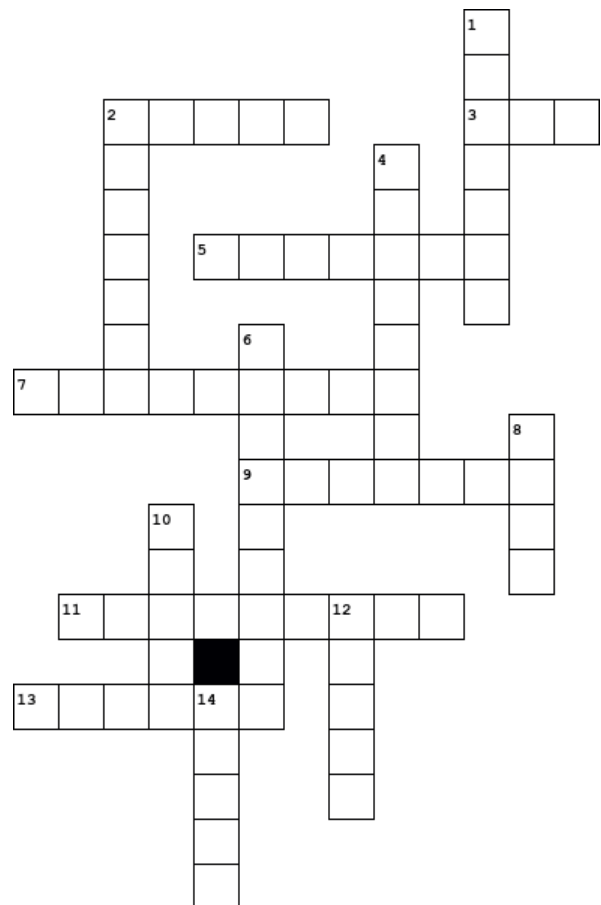
Fancy yourself a crossword genius? Grab your pencil trekking poles, sharpen your wits like crampons, and get ready to navigate through wordy underbrush and linguistic boulders with this cryptic hiking crossword. Answers – bottom of page 14.

Across

- 2. Leather for your souls
- 3. The land folded
- 5. There is no chance for King Brown
- 7. Love from Alice to Over Yonder
- 9. Body organ in your pack
- 11. What we measure
- 13. A painter's trail

Down

- 1. Follow me
- 2. Pop friction
- 4. Tassie epic
- 6. Over a thousand in WA
- 8. A flash of blue
- 10. North and South, some won't walk without
- 12. Leave no
- 14. In case of emergency





HIKING TRANSPORT THROUGH THE AGES

Transport plays a significant role in our ability to access exciting and diverse hikes, and the YHA Bushwalking Club's access to hikes has changed significantly over its 85-year history. Unsurprisingly, when the Club was established in the 1940s, almost all the YHA hikes used trains and occasionally a bus service to the trailheads.

THE ROLE OF RAIL IN THE HIKING BOOM

Back in the 1940s, all the walks started in the city. Groups boarded a Flinders or Spencer Street train as the primary means of transport. Places now firmly entrenched in suburbia, such as Ringwood, Wattle Glen, Hurstbridge, and Mt Evelyn, were sparsely populated and well-forested. Rail back then not only serviced these now familiar outer suburbs but extended well beyond them.

Whittlesea, Yarra Glen, Healesville, and Warburton were a Sunday morning train ride away, while country towns such as Bright, Mansfield, and Daylesford benefitted from now long-gone branch lines. Victorian Railways offered hikers concession fares and would arrange special drop-off or pick-up points away from the regular stations for large walks.

The journey didn't end until participants, often wet and tired but happy, returned to the city on Sunday evening. The trips were as memorable as the walks, with friendships and romances blossoming during the long miles back from a day or weekend outing.



Last train to Warburton at Ringwood Railway Station August 1, 1965

INTRODUCING THE PICNIC VAN

As trains declined, so did the Club's primary mode of transport. The club used converted removal trucks from the 1950s to the late 1980s. During the week, they were furniture vans, but by Friday afternoon, bench seats were installed, accommodating 40 people plus extra seats in the front. They were a cheaper alternative to buses or coaches, used by many bushwalking clubs and social groups.

YHA Bushwalking initially used Eyle's vans, then switched to Gronow's after a wheel fell off on the way back from a walk. In 1961, they started using Les White's van, maintaining a loyal relationship for over three decades.



Whites Iconic Picnic Van - Bogong High Plains, Anzac long w/e 1972

Vans departed from Batman Avenue at 6:00 pm on Fridays or 9:00 am on Sundays. Trips were scheduled weekly, alternating between day and weekend walks. Packs were either hung from overhead cords or stored above the cabin. Despite the discomfort of the hard wooden benches, the journey was enjoyable, with groups entertaining themselves by singing from folk songbooks. Those seeking extra warmth sat in cuddling seats covered in blankets. Cold drafts were warded off by huddling, while summer trips often featured water fights. Weekend trips included a dinner stop before arriving at a dark, usually cold, roadside campsite where the walk began the next day.



TRANSPORT MODERNISATION

At the beginning of the 1980s, White's furniture van was still being used for most trips, but it was clear that its days were numbered. Transport regulations had been toughened, with the intent of phasing out the use of vans as people carriers. Existing licence holders could be renewed but not transferable to another vehicle or operator.

An increasing level of car ownership led to calls by members with heavily bone-shaken backsides for private vehicles to be used on weekend walks. For van trips, those wanting to drive still had to pay the fare unless the van was either full or had insufficient numbers to break even; this resulted in a tactic of delaying bookings to force its cancellation. A problem for those lobbying to use cars was that there weren't always enough of them. There was also a faction who still preferred not having to drive after a strenuous walk.

Cars steadily displaced the van over the decade, from 10% of trips at the beginning to 75% at its end.

An odd hurdle to using private vehicles that had to be overcome was that under late 1970s road regulations, passengers sharing petrol costs could be interpreted as "for fare or reward". This was illegal unless the driver was licenced to do so. To get around this, passengers didn't directly pay petrol costs. They bet the driver an

amount similar to their share of the fuel that they wouldn't return safely! In the late 1970s, YHA lobbied the Victorian government to recognise car-pooling formally. (Seems like the Club had a lot of lawyers amongst its membership back then?)

THE COMMENCEMENT OF CARPOOLING

Eventually, the law was clarified to recognise carpooling. In 1980, a subcommittee was set up to develop the Bushwalking Club's first car-sharing policy, not least of which was a complex formula for how drivers would be compensated for petrol plus a wear-and-tear component. Initially, the extra fee was 0.8c/km, then petrol went up, and it became 0.9c/km; fuel went up again, making it 1c/km, then 1.1c... until 1985 when someone came up with the idea of doubling the fuel cost and dividing by the number of occupants. Simple!

Nowadays, drivers are reimbursed at \$0.40 per km, plus any tolls incurred, divided by the number of people in the car.

In recent years, the Club has steadily introduced more public transport-accessible hikes. Still, the car remains a constant companion for most bushwalkers wanting to access the rugged and wild outdoors.

ANSWERS TO CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Answers to the Cryptic Crossword – Don't Look In Advance!

Across

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| 2 Boots | 7 Larapinta | 11 Kilometre |
| 3 Map | 9 Bladder | 13 Heysen |
| 5 Gaiters | | |

Down

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|----------|
| 1 Compass | 6 Bibbulmun | 12 Trace |
| 2 Blister | 8 Wren | 14 Epirb |
| 4 Overland | 10 Poles | |



85TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

YHA's 85th Anniversary party was on 7 September 2024.

Tasty canapes (as opposed to dry bushwalking food mixed with hot water) were on the menu. People wore fancy clothes instead of hiking gear, and they got to sit at a civilised bar in South Melbourne instead of under the stars in the cold and dark. President Adnan made a speech.

We hope you enjoy the selection of photos!



Committee members were seen having a strong glass of Moscato or alcohol-free beer on the night.



Former President Andrew Stevenson, current President Adnan Lovic.



Life Members Ken Sussex, Bruce Meincke, Andrew Stevenson







TRIP REPORTS

WARBURTON

Craig B led an accommodated weekend to Warburton. Given its proximity to Melbourne, we were somewhat surprised to have 20 people attend the weekend, with more than half making a long weekend of it and hiking further on Monday.

The first day was extremely wet and cold, so winter warmers were more than welcome at the group pub meal!

This trip has definitely put the Yarra Ranges on our radar as a regular weekend destination.



KOROROIT CREEK TRAIL

Leader Mary L has commenced a campaign to walk Melbourne's beautiful, largely underrated waterways. (Some of them are beautiful, and some are underrated). There are surprisingly many waterway walks in Melbourne, some of which lend themselves to a very pleasant day walk.

The Kororoit Creek Trail does have you occasionally walking through suburbia, but the Creek can be very pretty in parts, with plenty along the way. The weather was appallingly cold, but I did it!

Photos: Craig B



LYSTERFIELD

Bill X led an enthusiastic band of hikers to a trip our Lysterfield way on an extremely cold winter's day.

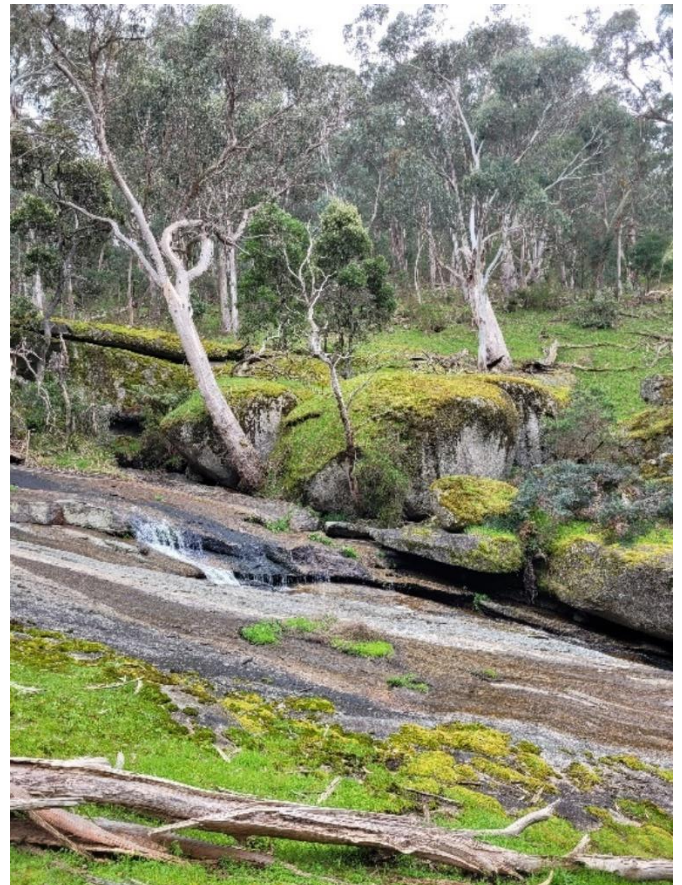
Photos: Bill X



SWITZERLAND RANGES

Ken S led a true off-track hike in the little known Switzerland Ranges on 14 September. A freak wind gust had us wondering what the hell was going on, and a few showers passed by, and there was even flurries of snow, but the heavens didn't truly open up. Parts of the track were extremely overgrown, but overall, a very pretty hike.

Photos: Craig B (top), Erryn S (bottom)



WERRIBEE GORGE

The day started out totally fine without a cloud in the sky; it ended with the most dramatic electrical storm, during which some walkers learned that the slower they walk, the more time they spend in the rain. It seems that Werribee Gorge always serves up an element of drama! At a mere 8 km, it certainly packs a punch as far as hiking destinations go.

Photos: Craig B



Photo: Angelica P

DAYLESFORD LAKES AND FALLS

Craig B led a day walk around Daylesford in late September. It was beastly cold. The hike walked along some of the Goldfields Track, a path from Ballarat to Bendigo that retraces the paths taken by Chinese gold miners who travelled to the Bendigo Goldfields after landing in South Australia to avoid a 'landing tax'. Other parts of the hike walked through an old railway line that was opened in 1887 but fell victim to the rise of the motor car in 1953 and was closed.



WOMBAT STATE FOREST

The Wombat State Forest has recently become a happy hiking ground for YHA Bushwalking after seemingly not being visited for many years. Craig B. led one of the hikes out there. The Wombat (named after the original town name for Daylesford) offers relatively easy, serene bushwalking.



MERENDA TO GREENSBOROUGH





A public transport accessible hike, this particular hike has not featured on our programs often in the past. It is a pretty hike as the following photos attest:

Photos: Elias T

FOUR BROTHERS ROCKS

Bill X lead an enthusiastic band of hikers to the beautiful Four Brothers Rocks in the Dandenong Ranges on a cold spring day.

All photos care of Bill X.



HOBART ACCOMMODATED

Craig B organised a self-accommodated trip to Hobart on Grand Final Weekend, which was fortuitous, as no Victorian team was in it, and therefore no Victorian was interested.

Day 1 saw us do an urban hike around Hobart, visiting Cascades, Battery Point, Salamanca and the Botanical Gardens. Day 2 was a hard day with an ascent to the top of

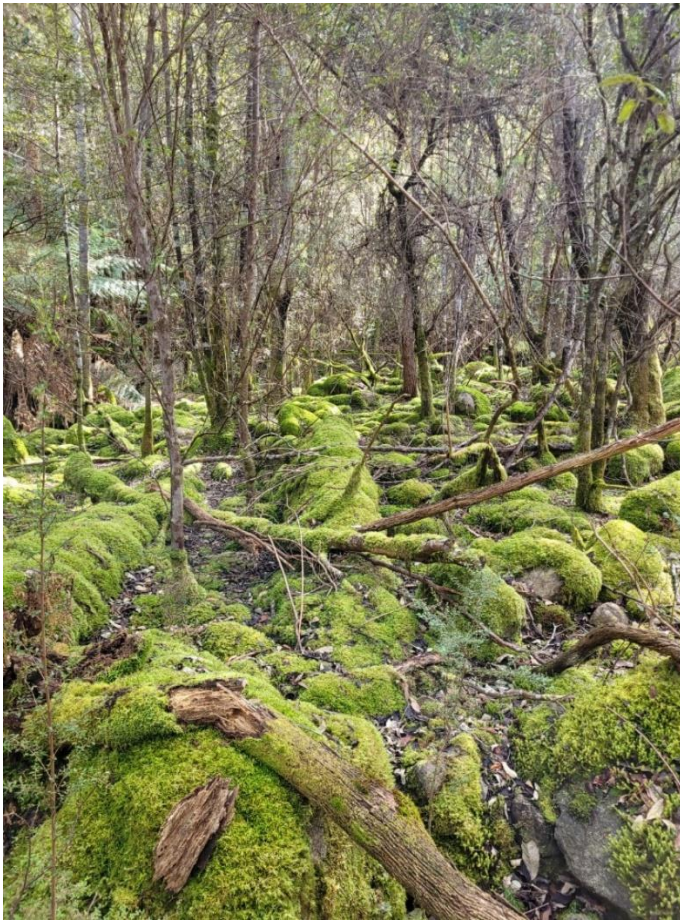
Day 2 saw us climb to the top of Mount Wellington. Some of us did a spooky ghost tour In the evening and dare I say it, a paranormal 'experience' was felt by at least three of our number. Gladly, no ghosts bothered me.

Day 3 was a toughie – Mount Montagu and Wellington Falls. We were meant to finish by 3 pm, but came in closer to 5 pm. This is one of those hikes that only Tasmania throws up, where a perfectly good hiking path could have been forged on the bench of the mountain. But no . . . the people who designed the paths decided to go over every bloody rocky outcrop they could find. Then we lost the path and were steadily trudging through bush when a trail runner coasted by, barely three metres away. Smart arse.

Day 4 was a relaxed hike around Fern Tree and the Waterworks Park before drinks and dinner.

Wildlife abounded, with people seeing pademelons, wallabies, echidnas, lyrebirds and lots of bird life – oh, and a couple of ghosts.

Weather was superb, but we still don't know who won the Grand Final!



The way to Mount Montagu – one of the toughest hikes I have ever done, but incredible – you felt like you'd done something. Jo O



The best dinner party ever! Photo care of the waiter. Number of margaritas consumed at this point is unknown.



On the way to Mount Wellington. Craig B



Views from Mount Wellington. Craig B



HOW DO LEADERS KNOW WHERE TO GO?

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBLE WALKS

Victoria is not particularly blessed with true bushwalks wholly accessible by public transport. However, with some pre-planning, they exist and can be loads of fun.

For example, you can catch a **metro train** to Ferntree Gully or South Morang station for hikes in the Dandenong Ranges and Plenty Gorge. There are several walks at both destinations.

Or you can head a bit further afield; the **Bendigo line** will get you to Macedon Railway Station (being the Macedon Ranges Loop, but you have a 3km walk or so to get to the starting point!). And don't forget that Castlemaine has several walks (and even a train ride) available. Bendigo also provides some opportunities, with walkers easily able to do the Strathdale to One Tree Hill circuit, an extremely pleasant walk of around 12 km through the Greater Bendigo National Park with great views of Bendigo and central Victoria via a lookout. This walk is accessible via train and bus.

Heading towards **Ballarat**, walkers without wheels can reach the southern part of Lerderderg Gorge or head to Ballarat for the Ballarat to Creswick walk. It is a reasonably flat but long walk of around 26 km from train station to station through some lovely bush, with plenty of evidence of the area's gold mining past. Highly recommended.

You can also take a bus and train combo to Halls Gap for the **Grampians** and everything it offers. Some extremely challenging walks head straight out from Halls Gap itself; you don't have to leave the town!

Heading up on the **Albury line** can get you to the Wandong Regional Park loop, a relatively easy 15 km walk on management tracks starting and finishing at Wandong station. It's not at the top of most lists, but you get some decent views in the second half of the walk.

You can also reach the fabulous **Otways** for day walks out of Lorne and Anglesea by bus.

URBAN HIKING

Of course, Victoria's country cities, Geelong, Ballarat, and Bendigo, make for some cool urban hiking destinations. Melbourne also has a plethora of recognised day walks, particularly along its coastline and two major rivers, which can be easily linked to public transport to make for a fantastic day out. Or, sheesh, you could walk around Port Phillip Bay. Please don't laugh – it has been done!

Several country destinations also offer a hybrid of 'urban' walking and hiking; think Ararat, Harrietville, Queenscliff and Bright.

They are out there; you gotta find 'em!

DAY HIKES

A plethora of options that are viable as day hikes exist in and around Melbourne, with the Dandenong Ranges, Plenty Gorge, Werribee Gorge, Yarra Ranges, Lerderderg, You Yangs, Mornington Peninsula, Kinglake, Castlemaine, Daylesford, Trentham, Brisbane Ranges and Macedon Ranges offering interesting day walks within an easy one hour or so of Melbourne. Those willing to travel a mere half hour further will have even more options. And, of course, Melbourne has several day walk destinations along its waterways and beachfronts.

One of the questions leaders are regularly asked is . . . what is their favourite day hike?

A straw poll of our leaders revealed the striking Cathedral Ranges to be considered Melbourne's most spectacular day hike. This was quickly followed by the Lerderderg State Park, which has a plethora of day hikes. Coming in third was the Sherbrooke Forest.

One relatively little-known destination is the Pyrete Range, which is close to Melbourne but feels extremely remote.

The Yarra Ranges are also an unstoppable mecca for hiking, so close to Melbourne, and well worth a few day trips, particularly if you enjoy exploring some lesser-known tracks.



WEEKEND TRIPS!

Some of our regular weekend walkers will readily tell you that many beautiful day walking destinations exist around Victoria that are not particularly accessible as day trips. So why not combine a couple of days hiking with fabulous restaurants, excellent accommodation options, and the wonderful company of your fellow bushwalkers and take a break from the city?

- The Grampians is probably Victoria's ultimate hiking mecca. It could lend itself to around six weekends where you wouldn't do the same walk twice. You could stay at Dunkeld or Halls Gap or further afield at Ararat, which is close to Mount Langhi Ghiran.
- The Otways have several day walks around Lorne and along the coast and old rail trails that now make for easy hiking or mountain biking. Aireys Inlet and Torquay may also be suitable.
- High Country destinations such as Mount Buller (2-3 days, including Victoria's most spectacular hike, the Buller North West Ridge) and Mount Hotham (5-6 various day hikes) are also wonderful and quiet places to visit in summer.
- Falls Creek is not far behind, with around 8-day walks and several overnight pack carries.
- Walhalla/Rawson offers several day hikes at the commencement of the Australian Alps Walking Track and several long-gone railway lines turned into rail trails, as does nearby Mount Baw Baw.
- Wilsons Promontory has several day walks and many overnights – you can even stay in a lighthouse.
- The Portland region is probably too far for a weekend, but it can easily provide several day hikes on the Great Southwest Walk.
- Ballarat, Daylesford, Castlemaine, and Bendigo all have a number of day hikes, with the Great Dividing Track being an obvious focal point. Several other variations are also available.
- Benalla provides the sensational Mount Samaria and the nearby Warby Ranges.
- Kinglake, Marysville, Warburton and Mornington Peninsula may seem close to Melbourne, but each has variations of two to five different day walks in their respective areas.
- Phillip Island has many shortish-day walks that can be combined to form a short weekend.
- Avoca lends itself to a weekend exploring the Pyrenees.

- Yarram has easy access to the nearby Tarra Bulga National Park, where several challenging hikes (including overnights) await.
- Beaufort has some beautiful walks near Mount Cole State Park.
- Taggerty/Alexandra can access the sensational Cathedral Ranges, Lake Eildon and Rubicon Valley Historic Area.
- Beechworth has hikes (and bike rides) in the nearby Beechworth Historic Park.
- Wonthaggi is close to the Bass Coast Rail Trail, and also has access to some awesome windswept beach walks.
- Walkerville is close to Cape Liptrap and several nearby day walks. Further down the coast, Mallacoota is close to Nadgee and Croajingalong hikes, incredible and remote overnights that require genuine preparation.
- Bairnsdale is close to the Mitchell River Trail, one of Victoria's loveliest walks.
- Mansfield has several day walks and overnights in the vicinity.

By now, the discerning reader will have calculated that there are upwards of 45 separate hiking weekends where you can do day hiking trips and be based in a town or small city – and I'm pretty sure we haven't captured them all. As for accommodation? Most of these destinations include pubs, Airbnb's, Stayz and motels. Hostels and ski lodges are available in some. Free camping or caravan parks (with camping sites or cabins for hire) are available in others.

YHA Bushwalking has made trips to all these destinations over the years, with organisers generally spoilt for choice. Several destinations exist where camping-only options are available, particularly in the high country or the more remote areas of the Grampians or Wilson's Prom.

It's just a matter of finding someone who doesn't piss you right off to go with.



VICTORIA'S ICONIC PACK CARRIES

No discussion like this would be complete without a nod to Victoria's most compelling pack carries. Did you know we have pack carries that go for as long as 14 days within our State – even longer if you include the Australian Alps Walking Track?

- **Australian Alps Walking Track:** The biggest boy of all! Starting from Walhalla, this 650km hike takes you through the spectacular High Country to Canberra. This trip requires meticulous planning, including food and water drops over roughly five weeks. It can be broken down into smaller chunks if a five-week pack carry does not truly appeal. To complete this hike is to complete one of the toughest in Australia!
- **Great South West Walk:** The Great South West Walk starts and finishes at Portland in Victoria's far southwest. Broken into four unique environments, walkers can experience the Glenelg River Gorge Walk, Discovery Bay Beach Walk, Capes and Bays Walk and a Forest Walk. Wildlife abounds. Expect to take about 14 days to complete all 250km or break it down into smaller parts.
- **Grampians Peaks Trail:** Victoria's newest long-distance trail is fast becoming the most iconic. The mighty Grampians (also known as Gariwerd in the local Aboriginal dialect) never fail to disappoint bushwalkers. At 164km, you should expect to take about 12-13 days to complete this. Permits are required.
- **Falls Creek to Mount Hotham:** This hike is much shorter than the others. It covers parts of the Australian Alps Walking Track and is one of the most memorable you'll ever undertake, even if it is only three days long. Permits are required.
- **Buller Huts:** This one has taken hold of late, but it's a tough, remote track that requires established navigation skills and carries a level of risk with water supply. It takes about 14 days to complete the entire hike.
- **Grand Strzelecki Track:** Located in Tarra Bulga National Park, this 40km hike can be completed in three days. Several variations of the hike exist. I remember it involved many ankle-deep water crossings, a very high number of snakes (I've never seen so many on a hike!), and leeches. Oh, my god, the leeches . . . But it is a gorgeous hike, nonetheless.
- **Two Bays Walking Trail:** On the Mornington Peninsula, this is ostensibly a 28km overnight hike through some of the best hiking in Victoria and is oh-so-close to Melbourne. Hunt around a little – it is entirely possible to extend your adventure in the region and hike for up to 100km on an extended trip known as the Mornington Peninsula Walk.
- **Victoria's High Country:** Many one-, two- or three-night hikes exist in various parts of Victoria's High Country, generally at places along the Australian Alps Walking Trail or nearby.
- **Great Dividing Trail:** Several off-shoots exist of this hike; you can go from Ballarat to Bendigo via Daylesford and Castlemaine or divert at Daylesford to Bacchus Marsh. The Ballarat to Bendigo leg is not particularly difficult, but sensible planning for water supply along the way is required. It also allows you to enjoy the occasional stay in a town. With all its variations, the entire trail goes for 280km but can easily be done as a long series of day walks.
- **Beeripmo:** On the other side of Ballarat, the Beeripmo hike is extremely short—barely 21km—but it's extremely pretty and a great introduction to overnight pack carries.
- **Brisbane Ranges:** Relatively close to Melbourne, the Brisbane Ranges is a relatively short but easy 2-3 day walk, again suitable for beginners.
- **Wilson's Promontory:** With some of the most beautiful beaches in Australia in its southern part and some of the toughest scrub bashing ever in its northern part, Wilson's Prom has something for everyone.
- **Great Ocean Walk:** At 110km, this route takes you from Apollo Bay to just shy of Port Campbell. This one also offers glamping, with tourist companies prepared to carry your gear, cook your meals, and ferry you to and from the starting point for each day while you lap it up in luxurious hotels. Alternatively, you can just do it the hard way and tough it out in your tent.
- **Surf Coast Walk:** Suited for beginners, this 44km walk takes adventurers on an end-to-end walk from Torquay to Airey's Inlet. Koala sightings abound.
- **Mitchell River Walking Track:** At a mere 18km, some may consider this a day hike, but it makes for a very pretty introduction to overnight hiking for beginners.
- **Pyrenees Endurance Walk:** At 18km, this makes for a beautiful overnight trip. Despite its name, I did not find it particularly difficult.
- **Little Desert Discovery Walk:** Two, three, or four-day variations of this walk can easily be done, although it is very sandy underfoot and quite



exposed. It is not recommended in summer due to the glaring heat and flies, flies, flies. However, the campgrounds are amongst the most peaceful I have ever been to.

- **Walk into History:** An overnighter in the Warburton/Powelltown area, this interesting hike showcases the relics of the timber industry that are still evident today - but beware! The hike is also famous for its leeches!
- **Croajingalong and Nadgee Wilderness Walks:** In Victoria's far southeast, these can be combined into a 10-day (even longer) pack carry, although a water supply needs to be planned.
- **Around the Bay:** Okay, you probably don't consider this a true pack carry, but it is possible to hike around Port Phillip Bay, staying either in tents at unofficial and official campsites or in fancy hotels.
- **Lake Tali Karng:** The mystical Lake Tali Karng is not easily accessible and requires planning in an extremely remote part of the state north of Moe. This includes the Valley of Destruction – and no, I am not making that up
- **Viking Circuit Hike:** Although only 41 km, this is supposedly the toughest hike in Victoria. It requires good weather, planning for a water supply, exceptional navigation skills, and lots of courage.

NEW HIKE: SNOWIES ALPINE WALK

A new hike has been developed in the Snowy Mountains around Australia's highest peak, Mount Kosciuszko.



The **Snowies Alpine Walk project** has delivered a world-class, multi-day walk across the alpine roof of Australia!

Featuring active days and comfortable nights, the 55-kilometre, 4-day walk will extend existing walks across

the park's spectacular alpine area to link the resorts of Guthega, Charlotte Pass, Perisher and Lake Crackenback.

The walk is fast becoming a 'must-do' experience, and we've already got our eyes on it!

Image courtesy of: <https://snowymountains.com.au>

THE RISE OF YETI MAGAZINE

Yeti Magazine is becoming so popular, that a retail store in Sunbury has begun promoting it.





MEET THE ANIMALS OF THE BUSH!

QUOLL

An Aussie animal you probably have never seen is the tiger quoll. Originally called the native fox, native cat, and tiger cat, these tiny creatures are carnivores that eat insects, frogs, small birds, and even echidnas and possums. They are prey for foxes, wild cats, dogs, and dingos.

The mothers can give birth to up to 30 live young, although typically only about five will reach adulthood. The mother has a temporary pouch, and the joeys are the size of a grain of rice at birth.

The creature generally lives up to five years and can be found up and down the East Coast, Tasmania, and some isolated populations in Western Australia. It is also endemic to New Guinea.

These creatures are incredibly elusive, so seeing one in the wild is truly something to remember.



Eastern Quoll (Courtesy of National Geographic)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quoll>

TASMANIAN TIGER

Common wisdom is that the Tasmanian tiger has been extinct since 1936, right? Maybe, but maybe not!

Firstly, a lesson in history for some of our readers: the Tasmanian tiger was called a 'tiger' for its distinctive striped pelt. It was also known as the Tasmanian wolf. They grew to about two feet tall and about 1.8 metres long. The creature was said to be 'usually mute' and described as follows:

The thylacine was shy and secretive and always avoided contact with humans. Despite its common name, 'tiger' it had a quiet, nervous temperament

compared to its little cousin, the Tasmanian devil. Captured animals generally gave up without a struggle, and many died suddenly, apparently from shock. The thylacine relied on a good sense of smell and stamina when hunting. It was said to pursue its prey relentlessly until the prey was exhausted. The thylacine was rarely seen to move fast, but when it did, it appeared awkward. It trotted stiffly and, when pursued, broke into a kind of shambling canter.



Tasmania Tiger (Courtesy of National Geographic)

The tiger ate meat and would hunt animals as large as wallabies. After European settlement, it readily took to sheep and poultry. This led to its extinction, as early farmers feared the animal and hunted it mercilessly.

The poor creature was not particularly adept at avoiding humans. Fossils and Aboriginal rock art suggest it lived on mainland Australia and New Guinea once but became extinct in those areas, probably due to primitive hunting and competition from dingos. The thylacine could be easily found and killed.

After extinction, many people continued to claim they saw the creature, usually at night in northern Tasmania. Interestingly, reported sightings also come in from mainland Australia. However, a body, genuine footprint, or scat sample has never been found after all these years. Accordingly, it is now categorised as a mythical creature of the bush.

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/fauna-of-tasmania/mammals/carnivorous-marsupials-and-bandicoots/tasmanian-tiger#:~:text=Diet,various%20small%20animals%20and%20birds.>



BUSH FIRST AID

INSECT STINGS

Ah, a mere insect sting! Oh, come on, they aren't serious . . . are they?

Stings can be extremely serious for some people; some regular hikers carry their own EpiPen in case an ant bites them, as they have such a serious allergy that can lead to anaphylaxis – an extremely serious condition that can lead to death.

So, do you know what to do with certain stings?

In Australia, we can be bitten by insects, such as ants, bees, wasps, march flies, and mosquitoes, and stung by other creepy crawlies, such as centipedes or scorpions.

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/bites-and-stings-first-aid>

Insects, such as ants, bees, wasps and march flies, can cause different reactions in some people, from mild, temporary pain and discomfort to significant swelling and a severe allergic reaction.

In the case of a bee sting, first remove the sting by sliding or scraping your fingernail across it. No other creepy crawlies leave a stinger.

Any particularly annoying or painful insect stings may respond to a cold pack. Over-the-counter medication such as paracetamol, insect sting cream, or antihistamine may relieve some.

However, in very rare cases, the victim of a sting may go into anaphylactic shock. Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. It can happen seconds or minutes after exposure to something you're allergic to. Peanuts or bee stings are examples. In anaphylaxis, the immune system releases a flood of chemicals that can cause the body to go into shock. Blood pressure drops suddenly, and the airways narrow, blocking your breathing. The pulse may be fast and weak, and you may have a skin rash. You may also get nauseous and vomit. Anaphylaxis needs to be treated right away with an injection of epinephrine. If it isn't treated right away, it can be deadly.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anaphylaxis/symptoms-causes/syc-20351468>

A victim of anaphylaxis will require an injection of adrenaline from an EpiPen, particularly for ants, bees and wasp stings. This is serious. You'll need to call 000 immediately if no one has an EpiPen.

Mosquitos can carry a variety of diseases and even parasites, so getting bitten in the wrong place at the wrong time can get extremely serious very quickly. If you're in an area where mosquito-borne diseases have been reported, prevention is better than cure.

Centipedes and scorpions – yes, we have scorpions in Australia, although they are very small. Our centipedes can cause an extremely painful sting, sometimes lasting a few days. Again, ice packs are very effective. These bites are extremely rare, but the risk of anaphylactic shock remains.

It may be useful to include the following in your first aid pack:

- A pack of antihistamine tablets, such as Claratyne: available from good chemists.
- An instant ice pack: available for chemists for less than \$10.



- EpiPens: Be careful when looking for EpiPens online; for some reason, many US sites are extremely prevalent in the search results, and EpiPens are extremely expensive if purchased from one of these sites – up to \$600. Otherwise, pop down to your local chemist; you can buy them for around \$100 should you decide to add one to your first aid kit.

