

# WARBY RANGE BUSHWALKERS

*fun, fitness & friendship*



## NEWSLETTER 3 (July), 2015

[www.warbybushwalkers.org.au](http://www.warbybushwalkers.org.au)

Our 38th ANNUAL DINNER and AGM was held at the historic Vine Hotel on Monday, March 16th, and it was a well attended event, with about 40 members present.

During the formal part of the evening the following office bearers were elected.

President: Glenda Hall

Vice-President: John Van Riet

Secretary: Kerri Davenport

Treasurer: Margot O'Halloran

Committee Members: Karen Davis, Jeanette Farquhar, Cecily Fletcher, Andy Kimber, Chris McLaughlin, Bob Shaw, Trevor Turnbull, Adrian Twitt and Trevor Walder.

The guest speaker was Ruth Rampling from *No Roads Expedition Foundation*, a not for profit charity. Ruth lives in Beechworth and is into adventure tourism, and it was most interesting to hear her speak.

Please remember that subscriptions became due at the AGM, and that they should be renewed as soon as possible.

The subscription renewal form can be found under "General Information" on our website, and at the back of this Newsletter.

In the meantime, the winter walking season is upon us, with many perfect sunny days to enjoy some of our favourite walks in the north-east.

Come and join us, check the walks calendar today, and pencil in a few dates for a perfect day in the bush.

### 2015 Week Away, NSW Central Coast, August 22—29

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the planning for our famous 'week away' is well advanced, with the organising committee, led by Glenda Hall, doing some great preparatory work.

The Club has booked out Camp Breakaway, near Wyong on the Central NSW Coast, with full facilities and three person en-suite cabins, and no top bunks.

A range of daily walks across a variety of terrains including coastal, lakes and mountains will be offered, and full details will be available on our website.

In the meantime, don't forget that June 29th is the absolute cut off date for members wishing to attend the week away, as the sub-committee will be meeting on the 30th to finalise costings etc.

### Cowombat Flat to Taylors Crossing March 7—11

Again we headed off to complete another section of the AAWT with Adele as leader. Excited and looking forward to another week in our great country, seven of us headed off in two vehicles to begin the journey at Cowombat Flat carpark.

The drive up was lovely, great weather and beautiful scenery, Hotham, Dinner Plain, Omeo, and Benambra; lovely mountains and valleys whetting our appetites for what was to come.

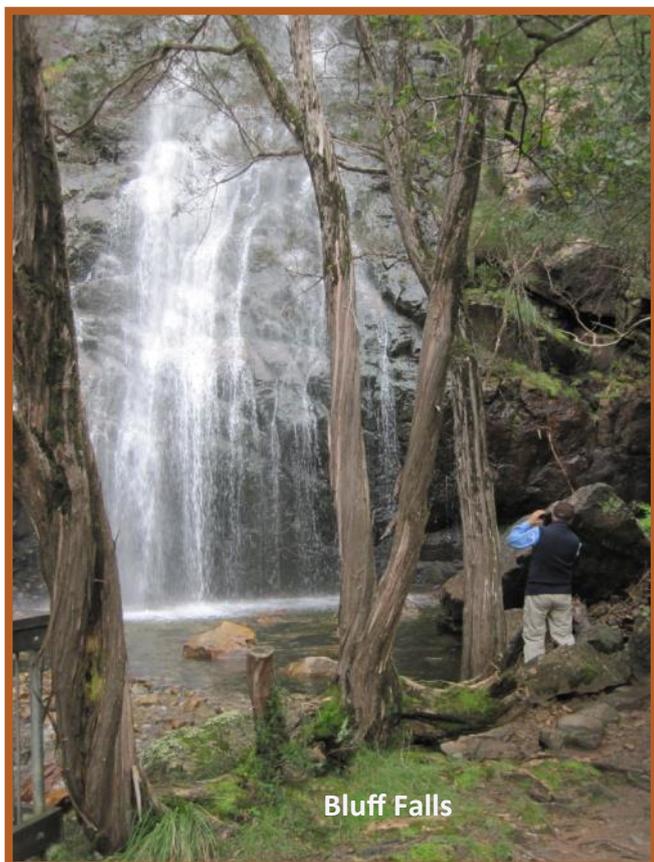
After arriving, six walkers headed off for our first day along the Cowombat Flat Track, which appeared to have been fairly recently cleared with a reasonable amount of markers.

It was lovely walking through this bush. The track then sidled along Limestone Creek, on the side of a ridge most of the way, undulating at times, but a very pleasant walk, and finally reaching our Limestone Creek Camp in the afternoon.

The next day we went on to the Buckwong Hut camp spot, another glorious walk in, at times, dense bush.

Our views were limited due to tall trees, and smoke in the distance from planned burns in the surrounding areas.

Our back up vehicles then drove us down to the Mount Murphy Historic Site, a Tungsten Ore mine. It was great to see the remains of this mine, and to be able to go inside was exciting.



Bluff Falls

Stalactites are forming, in the caves, and in many years to come will no doubt be an added feature of the site.

Buenba Gap was rather memorable to us all (due to its very steep and long climb) as was the day we climbed onto Johnnies Tops, although this certainly was not as steep as Buenba Gap had been.

When we got to Morass Creek (a tributary of the Mitta Mitta River) we went into an unexpected gorge, with magnificent volcanic rocks and cliffs.

The track had been cleared as far as the creek crossing, but after that, the track seemed to disappear into the thick bush. So a bit of searching for the track ensued, and eventually we found our way onto the AAWT where it crosses the Lower Tablelands Road.

We then dropped down, following the more defined and obvious AAWT into our second last camp spot.



We checked Kennedys Hut, which is a very old log cabin style hut close to Taylors Crossing, and is situated on the banks of the Mitta Mitta - a magical spot.

We then were collected by our back up vehicles, and taken back to Taylors Crossing (because it was such a nice camp spot) and then the next day we were dropped off where we had finished the previous day, to walk the last section.

This was again a lovely section of the AAWT, made even more special because of the company of walkers participating - Therese, Sylvia, John, Adele, Willy, and our support vehicle drivers, Trevor and Ian. They were fantastic support and great navigators, finding access to us when needed. Ian also had a chance to do some fishing, with success, along the way.

Thanks again Adele for a great walk, and for all the "reckie" work done by yourself, and Ian, prior to this walk; it was immensely enjoyed by us all. [Willy Skinner]

### Robinsons Bend, March 15

This area is shown as Robertsons Bend on some maps, whereas signage on the ground says Robinsons. However, by either name, for this easy walk we headed out past Boorhaman, to the Ovens River flood plain, east of Peechelba.

With fine sunny weather, and a light breeze and very minor smoke haze from burning off, a dozen walkers set off from the National Park entrance gate.

From here we completed a four kilometre loop to the north, and then a six kilometre figure of eight to the south; an easy walk on 4wd tracks with plenty of opportunity to admire the riverine scenery.

Distance covered was about 10km, with morning tea being enjoyed alongside the Ovens River, and lunch alongside a large billabong. No walk is complete without tea and biscuits at Pat's Café, which on this occasion was located beneath a huge old redgum at the start. [Chris McLaughlin]

### Friends Track, March 20

In warm but hazy conditions, six club members walked the eight kilometre round-trip in the Warby Range from Wenham's, with brief pauses at Kwat Kwat Lookout and Mount Warby.

They discovered that the mainly stringybark forest on the ridgelines are suffering from temporary dieback, with leaves almost totally removed by an infestation of the Cup Moth caterpillar.

At the end of this short, but delightful, autumn trek, everyone enjoyed the now traditional Pat's cuppa, and extraordinary biscuits. [Adrian Twitt]

### Mount Buffalo—Big Walk, cross-over March 28

This walk is always one of our landmark events of the year, with 23 walkers taking part in the 2015 Big Walk.

As well as the 'local crew' we were pleased to welcome walkers from Deniliquin, Yarrawonga and Geelong.

Of the 23 participants, 15 opted to walk uphill from the Eurobin Creek Picnic Area (near the entrance to the Mount Buffalo National Park) to the Gorge Day Visitor Area near the Chalet.

The remaining nine walkers drove to the Gorge Day Visitor Area, ready to begin their walk downhill, aiming to finish either at Rolasons Falls, or to complete *The Big Walk*, and finish at Eurobin Creek Picnic Area.

Great views were enjoyed from various lookout points along the walk, and the two groups of walkers reunited at the rock face near Mackeys Lookout for lunch.

At the completion of the separate walks, the complete group then met up at the Eurobin Creek Picnic Area for afternoon tea.

The weather was fine, but a smoke haze from burning off diminished the views as the day progressed. [Bob Shaw]



### Australian Alpine Walking Track— Taylors Crossing to Mount St Bernard April 3-7

Day 1 of this great section of the AAWT saw us up bright and early, but delayed in departing to commence a complicated car shuffle and food drops. Finally we set off from Taylors Crossing waving goodbye to our wonderful drivers, (thank you Ian and Trevor).

Our first camping spot didn't look that inviting, (beside a 4wd track, and very dusty with heaps of 4wds going past) and so we set off for the next camp spot. Unfortunately we all walked past the turn-off, not realising until we were three kilometres down the wrong track.

After a good deal of consultation with the map and compass, it was decided to retreat back to the first camping spot. Suddenly it didn't look too bad after all, and at least there was water there.

Day 2 dawned, and we wound our way up our first hill, down to the next camping spot, and straight back up another hill, reaching our food drop late in the afternoon. No water was available until Mount Wills Hut, 6.4 km away.

One of our members, after enduring 12kms of straight up and down, with no flat walking, felt another six kilometres of straight up was too much, and decided to take the opportunity to hitch home. And so his adventures started, which included going up and down the Mitta Mitta River Road, checking out the famous Blue Duck Inn, and being back-up crew for a bunch of bike riders.

He finally boomeranged home two days later, when his wife went out on a rescue mission for him. He has a good wife!

By this stage the leader had hit a wall, and it was only the thought of a drink at the top of the hill, and a team effort, that she was able to grit her teeth and keep going.

The gang reached Mount Wills Hut just on dark, and in the fog, to be greeted by a warm fire, and our two friends Lynn and Willie, who had decided to do an easier version of our hike. I think they were the wise ones. Someone was so thirsty that they gulped two cups of water, before realising that their gloves were stuffed in the bottom of the cup.

Day 3 was an easier day of 16km, with only minor ups and downs, and Maddison Hut site (on the side of Mount Bogong) was reached in good time, although no one wanted to do side trips, or help with geocaching.

Day 4 One very big down, a notorious river to cross, and one very big up before Ropers Hut, and our first hint of relatively flat ground.

By this time we had another member of the party succumb to injury and tiredness, or was it the thought of spending another two days with me. Anyway, the two girls were going home as soon as Falls Creek was reached, as they had to be back in Melbourne.

So there I was with the ute 36km away by foot, or a very big drive around to get it. It then became Adele's adventure. With a broken tent, and an impending storm, I high-tailed it for Cope Hut which 10 years ago I said I would never sleep in.



With the fire going and a full belly it wasn't so bad, and at 3am when the storm finally broke it became a palace.

Day 5. The next morning, heading for the long drop in the darkness with some speed, I suddenly kissed the ground. On sideways inspection it appeared it had snowed, and snow is slippery.

I now had 31km to cover, and two days to do it in, crappy weather, a back that wouldn't let me lift the pack by myself (not inflicted by the fall, but old age), and no Trevor No 2 to help me lift the pack.

So what did I do - decided to bolt for the ute. I left the Hut as the possums were returning to roost in the rafters, (brought me back to the days at the construction camp, when I was leaving to go hiking as the boys were returning from their night out).

I could only take my pack off at each hut where there was a table, so my pockets were jammed full of maps and food. Good job I needed all the clothes I had on.

I have now been across the high plains in the heat, and in the mist, and I can't recommend either, down to Dibbins Hut (dark, leaky

and dreary), up Swindlers Spur, on to Derrick Hut (only a shelter, no water) and then onto Mount Loch.

Mist now turning to rain, and in danger of being blown off the mountain, and then through the cloud appears a 4wd ute, and two girls working on the mountain that thought that anybody out in that weather was being severely punished by the gods.

The fact that someone was there by choice didn't seem to register. The weather was getting worse, and the tiny bit of my brain that is sane over-rode the other parts, and admitted defeat.

My two lovely Angels took me down to my ute at Mount St Bernard, 12Km away. It was too wet to change at the ute, so it wasn't until I was well off the mountain that I was able to change, eat and reflect on the adventure.

And so concludes the Taylor Crossing saga. [Adele Ritchie]

## Mount Hotham to Pretty Valley Dam (Falls Creek), April 11

On this great day, and at the early hour of 6.30am, 22 club members left Wangaratta by mini bus (driven by our very affable, non-walking, volunteer John Gullock) for Mount Hotham.

Once on-site, and in quite cold and windy conditions, we trudged down towards Mount Loch, and then headed off down the steep, but now windless Swindlers Spur to Dibbins Hut, situated in a delightful grassy area, close to the source of both the Kiewa and the Mitta Mitta Rivers.

After a short rest near the ancient and undamaged Hut, we climbed up onto the edge of the Bogong High Plains.

Lunch was then enjoyed near the dramatic Basalt Temple feature, with superb views back across to Mounts Hotham and Feathertop.

This 20km hard walk was completed with a swift seven kilometre amble across the Plains, accompanied by a group of inquisitive brumbies.

John (and the bus) were waiting for us, and John had the now famous tea table ready, with its hand crafted table cloth, containers full of hot water for tea or coffee, and of course the array of biscuits. [Karen Davis and Kerri Davenport]

## Salisbury Track, April 17

Nine walkers, including three newcomers, one from Deniliquin, one from Echuca and one from Glenrowan, started this walk near the end of Shanley Street.

We set off on the first part of the walk by heading up to Salisbury Falls. This was quite steep, with many steps, then after crossing the creek via a steel bridge, the terrain levelled out.

All remarked on the ravaging of many eucalypts, caused by a plague of cup-moth caterpillars last summer. Hopefully most trees will recover from this outbreak.



Near the end of Cox Road, the group noticed a bad infestation of Mount Morgan wattle. It is one of the most beautiful wattles when in flower, but loves colonising, so beware of it.

Finally John took the group past what was Cox's Dam, used previously for a huge citrus orchard, but now providing water for properties in the Cox Estate.

Everyone enjoyed a delicious morning tea at the Van Riet's, and admired their Australian plant garden. Fortunately, the expected rain held off till late afternoon. [John Van Riet]

## **Hume and Hovell Walking Track— Henry Angel Trackhead to Clear Springs April 17-20**

For this section of the HHWT, the Friday early birds arrived at Tambarrumba caravan park, made brief comments about the rain, and headed to the pub for a lovely meal.

On Saturday it was still raining, but not so much. But, even with umbrellas out, the scenery made up for the dismal weather.

Our back-up vehicle met us for a late lunch, and the rain began to get heavier. Arriving at Mannus Lake, and the gate at the edge of a private road, two of us decided to unload our day packs into the car of our support crew, and guess what was in one of the packs (keys to the ute at the end of the walk).

Thank goodness to a wonderful support officer who had a think about what may be in one of the packs, and met us at the ute, instead of heading off for warmer climates. A long long walk back to Tambarrumba in the rain had been averted, and we were back at the pub for tea.

On Sunday, fog and drizzle cleared to sunny conditions, and we had to detour along roads due to forestry operations. There was no actual forestry activity on a Sunday, but this maze of tracks was too confusing to negotiate a detour.

We retreated to the starting point, and had morning tea. Someone then had the brilliant idea of driving the detour, and walking the rest - excellent views, and guess where dinner was.

Monday was fine and sunny, and we had brilliant views and a lovely walk. On the way home, we stopped for afternoon tea at the bakery in Holbrook – a popular place.

Thanks everyone for your company it was a great weekend. [Adele Ritchie]

## **Wandiligong Heritage Walk, April 26**

The group had seven walkers participating in the Wandiligong walk which started at the Hawthorn Lane Bridge over Morses Creek at Bright.

The walkers followed the shared bike/walking track alongside Morses Creek, crossing the creek and road at Dougherty Bridge to continue on the foot track to the Alpine Park at Wandiligong.

The Wandiligong Nut Festival was on at the Alpine Park, and the group enjoyed their lunch, and a wander around the Festival, before continuing onto the Chinese Swing Bridge.



The walkers continued on the track, returning to Alpine Park, then returned along the foot track we had started on, back to Hawthorn Lane. [Jeanette Farquhar]

## **Goldie Spur Track end-to-end, May 2**

There were 10 participants on this great adventure, with the walkers starting at two different points, and swapping car keys in the middle. The east point was the Buckland River Bridge on the Buckland Valley Road out from Porepunkah.



The west (second) point of departure was the intersection of Yararabulla Creek Road and Goldie Spur Track, which is 10.5 km south of Lake Buffalo out of Myrtleford.

The distance planned for this walk was 20km, and we had a fine, albeit cold, day for this sub-alpine route, which was rated as hard.

We met at Apex Park in Wangaratta at 7.30am, and started walking from both ends at around 8.45am. We were finished by 2.30pm, and after both parties met for a coffee at the Savoy Club at 3.00pm, we were home in Wangaratta by 4.15pm.

The stronger walkers were given the east to west route, as it is much steeper than the west to east climb (that is, east to west climbs 800m in 6km, whilst west to east climbs the same altitude over 10km). [Bob Shaw]

## **Stanley State Forest, May 9**

This interesting outing saw 20 walkers complete a 12km walk in part of the Stanley State Forest. Walking through a mixed forest of stringy bark and yellow box, they were confronted with rain squalls and low level cloud.

Stanley State Forest occupies much of the high country and plateau that clusters around Mount Stanley (1050m), and covers a large area of very scenic high country.

Thanks to our leader, Cecily Fletcher, we were informed about how the area was settled, and used from the 1880s till 1940s.

We visited the site of market gardens that used to service the Stanley goldfields during this time, the Burgoigee Tunnel that helped drain the landscape, and supplement the water storages in the Murrumbidgee basin, as well as the foot track, used for about 60 years, by miners between Beechworth and the diggings.

## **Mount Glenrowan, May 12**

On this club favourite, seven mid-week walkers ventured from Taminick Gap along the Ridge Track to Mount Glenrowan, with views of Lake Mokoan very prominent as usual.

The return trip was via the Chick Hill Track which this walking club helped to design and construct. [Margo O'Halloran]

## **Moyhu State Forest, May 24**

This was to have been a walk in the Wabonga Plateau area, but was moved to this new venue because of access problems.

The walk started at Fletchers Lane, Moyhu (south of Moyhu township, west of Edi), with 14 walkers in attendance.

As this was mostly an 'off-track' walk, we needed all of our navigation skills, and followed spurs, ridges, gullies, on rough and broken ground through open mixed species forest, occasionally faced with

steep ascents and descents through low prickly scrub, and bands of wattles.

Members brushed up on their navigational skills, revising their knowledge of relating what is seen on the map, to what is seen on the ground, translating true bearings to magnetic bearings then maintaining a bearing etc (no GPS!!)

The distance planned for walk was about 10.5km, but given the rugged terrain, this took about 6.5 hrs to complete.

We had an 18C, fine, day for our adventure, with little wind and some high cloud (cirrus).

The views were rather good through the trees from some high points. The western side of Mount Buffalo stood out, as did Mount Cobbler in the south. [John Kerby]

## MISC NEWS

### Vale Helen Curtis

Helen Curtis, a founding member of the Warby Range Bushwalkers, and for many years a Life Member, has died peacefully at her home in Wangaratta on April 4, 2015, after a long and debilitating illness. Helen, and her husband Peter, led the first walk of the Warby Range Bushwalkers.

Helen Newman was born in 1931, and was a keen bushwalker - her family holidays usually involved the bush, including many areas of North East Victoria.

Her love of the mountains, and her familiarity with the North East, influenced her decision to move to Wangaratta in 1958 to take up a position as the librarian at the town library. It was here that she met Peter Curtis, who was starting his career as an optometrist.

For over 50 years, Helen contributed to the local community as a volunteer in the areas of the environment, community, health, education and the arts. This included the Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, Wangaratta Arts Council, school committees, and The Centre for Continuing Education.

She took a major role in several local conservation groups - the Warby Range Protection Society, the Friends of the Warby Ranges and the Wangaratta Urban Landcare Group. The Protection Society was instrumental in the campaign to get the Warby Range State Park (now Warby—Ovens National Park) created.

One of Helen's major contributions to the environment has been the rehabilitation of Kaluna Park, and a book she co-authored with Peter, *Floodplain Woodland Plants of North East Victoria*.

The Warby Range Protection Society morphed into the present day Warby Range Bushwalkers and, as mentioned above, Helen was a founding member of this organisation, and recognized by the Club as a Life Member.

### Federation Walks—Bushwalking Victoria

Bushwalking Victoria was originally established as the Federation of Victorian Bushwalking Clubs at a meeting on 15 May 1934. At that meeting, the first of the six aims of the new organisation was to 'Unite all Victorian walking clubs for the protection and advancement of mutual interests to promote the pastime of tour walking (as bushwalking was known at the time) and encourage good fellowship among affiliated bodies'.

To foster good fellowship among the eight inaugural member clubs, the first Federation Walk was organised by the Melbourne Amateur Walking and Touring Club, and held on 6 October 1935. The tradition of a member club organising a walk event was thereby created, and 2015 will mark the 80th anniversary of the first Federation Walk.

The 2015 Federation Walks are being hosted, and organised, by Bayside Bushwalking Club and the Great Dividing Trail Association. Walks will be held in the Victorian Goldfields and Spa Country around Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, on the weekend of 24-25 October 2015.

The venue for registration, afternoon tea and Saturday evening meal will be the Hepburn Primary School, 156 Main Road, Hepburn (corner of Fourteenth Street).

Due to the wide range of accommodation available in the area, and the fact that it is close enough to Melbourne to permit day trips, the hosting clubs will not be organising accommodation. Instead they will provide information about suitable group and budget accommodation.

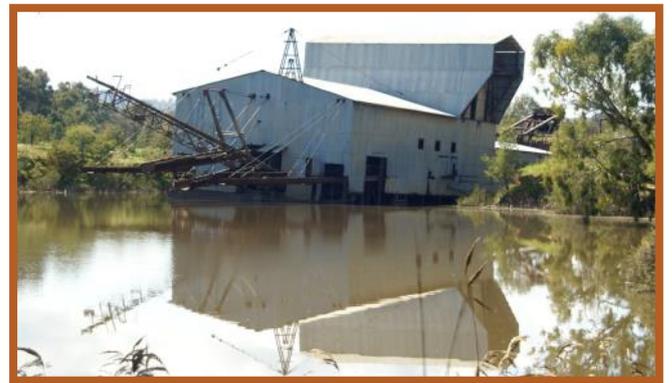
The Daylesford area is very popular, and accommodation can book out quickly, sometimes a year in advance, so if you would like to participate in some of the great walks we are planning while staying overnight in the area, it might be a good idea to book your accommodation soon.

In the meantime, keep up to date about the Federation Walks weekend at [www.fedwalks.org.au](http://www.fedwalks.org.au).

### Eldorado Pathway

The Eldorado shared path was officially opened in May, and links key tourism attractions, namely the historic dredge, museum, old swing bridge and Top Cut Lake.

The project, which includes a new playground with a shade sail, more seating and shelter, and a new disabled toilet in Gunhouse Park, was funded by the State Government, the Rural City of Wangaratta and the Eldorado community.



The pathway was the culmination of a five year campaign led by local residents, with support from the Rural City of Wangaratta, and the state government.

### Brabralung Trail

The 12km Brabralung Trail, which links Mount Hotham to Dinner Plain, is now open, and helps to highlight 25 Indigenous heritage sites.

The trail highlights the cultural significance of the Victorian Alpine Area, in particular its indigenous history and experiences of european settlement including cattle grazing, gold mining and tourism and recreation.

### Winton Wetlands

The new Mokoan Hub at the Winton Wetlands is now officially open, and marks a significant phase in returning the former Lake Mokoan to a wetland.

The new building, which is located on Lake Mokoan Road, features a cafe, a function space, an outdoor dining area and information boards on the wetlands.

See our Walks Program for details of our mid-week walk around the Wetlands on September 9.

### Search and Rescue

Two minor search and rescue operations were conducted in the North-east over the past few months. The first was at Reform Hill, in Myrtleford, where a walker became confused and overdue. Friends notified police, and the walker was eventually located at about 9pm, suffering from mild hypothermia.

The next S&R occurred at Paradise Falls, in the Upper King Valley, where a group of teenagers were benighted, and had to call for help. They were found safe and well by police, and local search teams, at about 9pm.

### **Merriwa Park**

Work has started on transforming the Comfort Station at the exit ramp from Merriwa Park into the 'Merriwa Park Bicycle Hub'.



The project will include a deck overlooking the Park, outdoor bike racks, showers, toilets and bike lockers. The existing underpass ramp, which currently provides pedestrian access to the Park from Murphy Street, will be removed as part of the works.

During construction works, access for pedestrians will be via Ely Street or Meldrum Street.

### **Indigenous Culture Trail**

Work is set to commence on an Indigenous trail along the Ovens River at Wangaratta, honouring the Pangerang people.

The Bullawah Indigenous Culture Trail will stretch 2.4km, and will become part of the existing river path, telling a story of how a local tribe has lived historically to the present day.

The \$180,000 project, which also includes an Elders Rock, will be the first of its kind in Wangaratta, with the Council calling for expressions of interest for artists to create three sculptures along the Culture Trail.

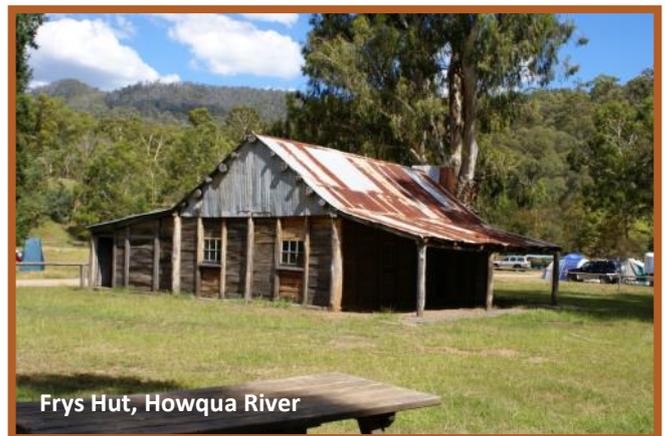
### **Parks Victoria—camping fees**

From 2 April 2015, fees will no longer apply to basic category camping sites managed by Parks Victoria.

For all stays up until 30 June 2015, you will still need to book a basic campsite, but no fees will be charged.

After 1 July 2015, no bookings will be taken for campgrounds where fees do not apply and camping will be first in, first-served.

Camping fees and bookings are still applicable for all other camping and accommodation categories.



Frys Hut, Howqua River

# Subscription for membership of Warby Range Bushwalkers Inc.

**2015-2016**

Please note that all current memberships expire on the 31st March 2015 (see notes below).

Single \$35; Family \$65; Associates \$20 (see notes below).

Life members receiving newsletter \$20; Casual walkers \$5

Notes.

If you join after the 1st of October in any year, then the membership fee is \$20 for a single, \$40 for a family.

If you join after the 1st of February in any year, then the full subscription is payable, however this will be regarded as a subscription lasting until the following year (that is, approximately 14 months, as compared to a normal 12 month subscription).

Associate membership will not give you access to walks unless you are a member of a Club affiliated with Bushwalking Victoria, but it will give you our newsletters and entitlement to attend social evenings.

Pay cash, cheque or bank transfer.

BSB: 633 000; Account no: 110647799; Reference: (your name)

Name(s). \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form with subscription payment to:**

**Warby Range Bushwalkers Inc**

**PO Box 974, Wangaratta**

**Victoria ,3676**