



OLD SCOTCH BUSHWALKING CLUB

Tracknotes

December 2024

Number 110

OLD SCOTCH
BUSHWALKING CLUB

Visit the Bushwalking Club's page on: www.oscanet.com.au.
Click on 'Clubs and Societies', then 'Recreational Clubs'.

OSCA Merit Award to Tom Morris OAM

One of the club's most beloved members, Tom Morris OAM, has been awarded an Old Scotch Collegians' Merit Award, in recognition of his sterling service to our club. A whole table and more of our club members attended the OSCA President's Dinner on 13 November to support Tom as he received his award. *For more about Tom's award, turn to page 3.*



Tom Morris



To all our members ...

**A very merry Christmas and
a happy and safe
new year of walking**

**from
President Neil Hart-Smith**



and the club committee

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Ten questions – Liz Rand

How long have you been a member of the bushwalking club?

I am new to the club, having only just joined in June this year.

How did you find out about the club?

My friend Julie Walpole has spoken often about the club, and knowing my love of hiking, encouraged me to join too (now that I've retired).

What are your links with Scotch College?

I don't have any direct links, but have two friends whose sons went to Scotch and another friend who worked there until her recent retirement.

What is your dream walk within Australia?

I have done many hikes around Australia and find it hard to pick which is my favourite! I loved the Larapinta Trail, the Great Ocean Walk, and the Great South-West walk, also some Tassie walks. I am about to do the Cape to Cape in WA and would love to do the Three Capes Walk in Tassie, too.

What is your dream walk overseas?

I dream of doing the Camino (French) one day, but love hiking in New Zealand – it is so well set up for 'trampers'.

What is your dream holiday in Australia or overseas?

Anywhere in the Australian outback. We hope to take our caravan over to WA next year to do the west coast and inland to Karajini and the WA goldfields.

What are your hobbies and interests, other than bushwalking?

I enjoy art (looking at it – I'm no good at it myself), music (listening), history, getting out in nature (exploring Australia in our caravan), gardening, reading, playing cards, knitting, sewing and catching up with friends and family.

I belong to an outdoor exercise/training group, and that is a big part of my life which I enjoy going to several mornings a week.

What is or was your occupation?

I am recently retired. I initially trained as an occupational therapist and then did post-grad neuroscience. After initially working in rehabilitation, I then managed a multidisciplinary cognitive assessment and diagnostic service up until my retirement.

What football team do you barrack for?

I have four sons and they (and my husband) are Bombers supporters – so I stick with that!

What is your favourite Melbourne restaurant?

Hmm – that's a hard one. Sowl in Carnegie is great for a special night out. Hanoi Hannah is also a favourite.



Liz is shown during a hike in New Zealand





President's Tree-Stump

Well, here we are heading towards the end of a very busy year, which has included lots of very good day walks and a couple of weekends away, all planned, and led, by your committee and walk leaders. The most recent weekend away was held at Maryborough, which was very ably planned and led by Norrie and Pam McLeod, Ian Hansen and Laurine Symington.

Saturday was very hot and when the long walk members returned to the motel, most just lay down and slept for a couple of hours until they were roused for 5pm drinks and nibbles.

Congratulations go to Tom Morris OAM on recently receiving an Old Scotch Collegians' Association Merit Award. Well done, Tom.

Thanks to Laurine and Jenny who planned and organised our very successful Christmas Walk and Dine at Ivanhoe Golf Club on Sunday 8 December.

Your committee has been planning walks for 2025, but we have noticed that a few of the midweek walks this year have had low numbers of walkers. Thought is being given to perhaps reducing the number of midweek walks. This will be discussed at a general

meeting ahead of our AGM, to be held at Horsham next March.

Your committee and walk leaders put a great deal of time and thought into their planning and look forward to your feedback. I know that I have said it before but we desperately need more walk leaders and volunteers for the committee, so please think about it and step forward.

I again sincerely thank your committee and the walk leaders. Without them we would not function. Thanks, team.

Finally, to everyone – a very safe and merry Christmas.

Until next time or when we meet 'out on the track'

Neil Hart-Smith
President
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OSCA Merit Award to Tom Morris OAM

Congratulations to our former Weekend Walks Organiser, Tom Morris OAM, who has received an Old Scotch Collegians' Association Merit Award, acknowledging his excellent service to our club.

A large group of our members were on hand to see Tom receive his award during the OSCA President's Dinner, held in the Cardinal Pavilion at Scotch on Wednesday 13 November.

Tom was a member of our club's committee from March 2015 to March 2023. During this period, he served as Weekend Walks Organiser for the club.

The Weekend Walks Organiser takes on one of the most important committee roles in our club. Arguably, the success or failure of the club is largely in the hands of the Weekend Walks Organiser. The role involves planning the weekend walks up to a year ahead, appointing leaders for walks, and making sure a first aid kit is carried during walks. Tom performed this role admirably, contributing materially to the success of our club.

In his working life Tom was the owner of a large building construction company. He was a board member of the Master Builders' Association of Victoria and the National President and a life member of the Australian Institute of Building. In 2020 Tom was



Tom receives his OSCA Merit Award from OSCA President, Stephen Webster.

awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his services to the building industry.

Tom was educated at Caulfield Grammar School and went on to complete a building and construction course at RMIT. He served in the CMF (Citizen Military Forces), retiring with the rank of Captain.

Tom's late younger brother, Hugh Morris, served as the club's Treasurer for a number of years.

Our midweek walks

Rail trail walking for a small group of six

LAURINE SYMINGTON

The midweek walk on Thursday 19 September 2024 was a rerun of a walk I had led before, about six years ago. Perhaps that was the reason I had a very poor turn-up for a very pleasant walk.

The weather forecast was not great, but quite wrong. The predicted showers did not eventuate and most of our walkers didn't even open their umbrellas. Only six walkers were coming, and they met at Glenferrie Station, Chatham Station, the bus stop at Lilydale, or at the Wandin coffee shop.

After a coffee and the use of the toilet, we headed down the hill to the sign which proclaimed 'The Warburton Rail Trail'. We met a couple of other walkers at the start, but during most of the walk we were unaccompanied. There was at first a gentle incline then a gentle decline. We passed a car graveyard, a sight that seems to be frequent on large back paddocks in the country.

A group of schoolchildren were enjoying an opportunity to burn off some energy on the path, with the teachers



A typical long straight stretch of the rail trail

and parents no doubt looking forward to the school holidays which commenced the next day.

Lunch was as planned at the Hometown Espresso at Mount Evelyn. It proved to be a good choice, offering Devonshire coffee with scones and jam (a home-made local berry compote) and delicious sandwiches. After that we set off further downhill to the township of Mount Evelyn, where accommodation had been provided for the workers who were building the Silvan Dam and the aqueduct in the 1930s.

We continued on a gentle downhill slope, enjoying glimpses of various homes built within the forest. We noted that older homes were built on acreage, while new houses, as we got closer to Lilydale, were on small blocks with very small gardens. Was that 'progress'?

The walkers all enjoyed the opportunity to stretch their legs over the walk's gently undulating 11.5km.



Six walkers took part in the rail trail walk



Hometown Espresso offered Devonshire coffee with scones for lunch

Our midweek walks

A really enjoyable Yarra Bend walk

JAN WARD

On 24 October a group of 10 left the Studley Park Boathouse on a typical spring day – cool and partly cloudy, with a temperature of around 19 degrees.

After crossing Kanes Bridge, which was built in 1928 to replace a ferry, we set off along Yarra Bend Road, where there was much activity as the Thomas Embling Medium Security Forensic Mental Hospital was having a \$515.7 million upgrade.

We walked through parkland to Merri Creek, to join the Capital City Trail. On the way we discovered a labyrinth created by local residents. Some of us attempted to navigate the labyrinth, to ground, balance and centre us, and others read the attachments to the nearby Wishing Tree.



The walkers tackle the labyrinth, built by local residents

Soon we reached the confluence of Merri Creek and the Yarra, and Dight's Falls. The falls were artificially formed in the 1840s to provide water for the Ceres Flour Mill, part of which now stands as a heritage building. There is a kayak/canoe course which has been set up for competition events. We noticed a lot of debris still left from the recent floods and some of the bank was severely eroded.



Crossing Kanes Bridge near the Studley Park Boathouse

When we reached the Abbotsford Convent we had our lunch in the beautiful gardens, where roses and peonies were in full bloom.

The convent was sold by the Good Shepherd Sisters in 1975 and gifted to the community. At that time, a developer produced a residential plan, which included 289 apartments and a six-storey building overlooking the Collingwood Children's Farm, but fortunately due to public outcry the plans weren't passed.

On our way back alongside the river, we passed Deep Rock, the place where, in 1918 Alik Wickham jumped 62 metres into the Yarra from a wooden tower while 60,000 people watched!

Heading back to the Studley Park Boatshed, we marvelled at how fortunate we are to have such beautiful bushland so close to the city.



Lunch was in the Abbotsford Convent gardens

The tranquil Yarra

Sidetracks



The Bushwalker's Christmas Ode

Christmas comes but once a year,
And for bushwalkers from far and near,
It's the chance to relax and enjoy a beer,
A wine, a cappuccino, or the cup that cheers,

To sit back and recall, as your muscles relax,
The sore feet, blisters and aching back;
The sweat you've expended out on the track,
When you've said, 'One more hill and I'm not coming back!'

When the walk leader says, with a face full of smiles,
'There's 10k to go – that's only six miles!'
You press on, over mountains and fences with stiles,
With the hope of a latte at the end, as your prize.

But for all the climbing, rock scrambles and cliffs,
You wouldn't swap walking for all Santa's gifts;
You've made great friends, and braved snow and mist –
So let's look ahead to next year's walk list!

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'That's what I call a walk!' – new 900km UK trek



Great Walks magazine reports that a new walking route – the Northern Trek – has been launched in the UK, stretching from the Peak District to the summit of Ben Nevis. The magazine says the aim is to encourage walkers to explore the spine of England and Scotland, whether it's in one 40-day burst or split into different sections over a series of months or even years.

The Northern Trek is challenging, in terms of distance alone – 901km – but it will reward anyone tackling it with some of the most breathtaking scenery that England and Scotland have to offer. It will take them through four national parks and three UNESCO World Heritage sites, as they trek from the east coast in Northumberland to the west coast in the Scottish Highlands.

Keeping things relatively even between two countries, the walk covers 467km in England and 434km in Scotland. The invitation is to 'walk or run, camp or backpack, youth hostel, bed and breakfast, or stay in pubs or hotels'.

As the Northern Trek website (www.northerntrek.co.uk) says, 'That's what I call a walk!'



Our midweek walks

A ‘moderately’ enjoyable walk at Steiglitz

NEIL HART-SMITH

On the bright sunny morning of Sunday 13 October, 15 walkers met at the old Steiglitz Court House to tackle the Deadman's Gully Track, a walk of about 9.5km.

Today the town of Steiglitz, which is situated in the Brisbane Ranges National Park approximately 83km west of Melbourne, has about half a dozen houses, but in its heyday when gold was discovered in the 1850s the town's population was about 2000.

The group headed off on the track which was described as ‘moderate’ in the notes, and so it proved to be in the early part of the walk. But soon the team headed down off the ridge to a little creek in the Steiglitz Gorge which was easily crossed. Then an ascent followed, taking us up to the same ridge where we all had a well-earned rest. We then pressed on down the steep hill again to the creek and up the other side.



Discussions before departing from Steiglitz

By this time there were murmurings heard in the group. Reassured that the worst was over, we proceeded through lightly treed forest on a good track. The stumps of several large trees that were felled more than 160 years ago were passed. They were well preserved, showing how dry the area is.

We crossed the Steiglitz-Meredith Road and continued on a bush road to our lunch stop at the picnic area. After lunch, and a rest, we continued on bush roads which brought us back to Steiglitz. The group wandered around the old town, reading about its history from well-placed information boards.

The group all thanked their leader for a very good walk, even if the description of ‘moderate’ was not quite right as it been hard in places, especially in the first part of the walk.



Walk leader Neil Hart-Smith at the head of the group



‘Twins’ – Sonia and Celia similarly attired in blue



Part of the ‘moderate’ section of the walk

Our weekend walks

A very pleasant late spring weekend in Maryborough

The club's weekend of walks at Maryborough from 15 to 17 November was very successful, with 36 members participating. The Golden Country Motel and Caravan Park was a comfortable base for our weekend of activities.

Right across the road from the motel was the Maryborough Golf Club, which was the venue for our Saturday night dinner. We shared the spacious Fairways Bistro with the celebration of a local's 18th birthday, but there was plenty of room for all.

For the weekend the weather was kind – perhaps a bit too kind on Saturday, as the mercury rose well into the high 20s – but it was a very good opportunity to get to know a very pleasant part of Victoria.

On Saturday morning there were three choices for our walkers – three short walks and a longer 11km walk in Paddys Ranges. Sunday's activity was a 1.6km stroll around Maryborough's Goldfields Reservoir.

Saturday – three short walks

LAURINE SYMINGTON and IAN HANSEN

Eighteen walkers who were looking for an easier start to the weekend on Saturday drove out of town to the Craigie State Forest. The first walk for the day was from the Forest Dam to the Bull Gully Rock Wells. A circuit was well signposted and on formed paths with a few inclines and about 2km long. It was a good start for a hot day and all within the forest with dappled shade. The trees were mostly red ironbark, grey and yellow box and yellow gum.

Starting at Battery Dam there were ruins of the old Cornish boiler which was used to supply the steam to power the stamp battery which crushed the quartz to allow the separation of the gold. The battery was then repurposed for use as a eucalyptus distillery.



Ruins of the boiler at Battery Dam

We continued on a well signposted track through fairly open forest to the Bull Gully Rock Wells. The wells were a crucial source of water for local indigenous people, as there were no permanent streams in the area. The original miners developed a system of collecting drinking water from trenches dug in the sandstone. Water seemed a very scarce commodity in this area. There was a lot of signs of gold mining in a previous age.

Returning to the cars, we drove to the Picnic Area in the Paddys Ranges State Park. It is a park in need of a lot of maintenance: there are no toilets and no signposts except

names on a few trees and no directions. Here the box-ironbark forests and woodlands were very different from the fauna of the Craigie State Forest.

There were no obvious diggings but a very obvious levy bank which we realised met a bridge near our cars. So, heading in the direction of the map but finding no markers or logic in the route, we enjoyed some real bushbashing. We found the levy bank and followed it back to our starting point. Again, dappled shade allowed us to continue even though it was hot.

As planned, we adjourned to our accommodation for lunch (and for some a swim) before the third of our walks for the day, the historic centre of Maryborough.

Refreshed after lunch, our group reformed at the railway station where we listened to an interesting and informative history of the station from a local tourist guide.

Heat and tiredness got the better of us, and we abandoned our planned walk around the town after reaching point five (of 15!) of the local historic sites that we had planned to view during the afternoon.

Considering the temperature of the day, our three short walks were a very successful way to see a sample of the walks in Maryborough.



Maryborough Station by night

Our weekend walks

Saturday – Paddys Ranges walk

PAM MCLEOD

Who was Paddy? The people of Maryborough knew him simply as an Irishman, so the area south-west of the town where he lived, some time before the 1880s, became known as Paddys Ranges.

From the 1840s the area was used for grazing, gold mining, timber harvesting and eucalyptus oil and honey production. In 1951 the Maryborough Field Naturalists' Club began pushing for the protection of the park's unique box-ironbark forest, and in 1989 Paddys Ranges State Park was reserved.

The park was increased to 1954 ha in 2002 to conserve and enhance what remains of the box-ironbark forests and woodlands of north central Victoria.

Eleven members met at 10am at the Settling Ponds Track picnic area. A hot day was forecast but it was still reasonably cool, and we enjoyed the forest track through the open bushland so typical of the goldfields country. On part of the walk the map showed an interesting feature. To our left was the area where prospecting was permitted, on our right prospecting was not permitted, and the map was coloured accordingly. The temperature was rising and no one was tempted to search for gold nuggets.

We reached the Kari Track Camping Area and stopped for our lunch break. From here another walking track led back to the picnic area.



Typical of the countryside encountered during the Saturday walk

Along our route we passed a dam, stepped over many ants' nests, and saw a large well camouflaged lizard. Unfortunately the wildflower season was over, but there were lots of common everlasting daisies, and their golden colour brightened the scene.

During the last few kilometres the temperature was approaching 30 degrees and everyone was starting to feel the heat, so a slightly shorter route was taken to the finish.

It was a pleasant walk of 11km. A good effort on a hot day!

Sunday – Goldfields Reservoir walk

LAURINE SYMINGTON

The 1.6km walk around the Goldfields Reservoir was a delightful end for our weekend. All our members met in the car park, and with difficulty most of us read about the history of the reservoir on the information board. The reservoir was built in 1852 as the water supply for Maryborough, and is now used for recreation and fishing. It also has some walking tracks, and a boat

ramp, but the lake was rather shallow – I don't think there would be too many boats using the water.

It was a delightful finish to a weekend away. Many cars were heading home, but quite a few used the opportunity to have a look around the centre of Victoria.



On the Goldfields Reservoir track – Russell and Gaile Kemp and Murray Hooper



The group lines up at Goldfields Reservoir

Sidetracks

Opening night at the QArt exhibition



This photo was taken on 14 June during the opening night of an art exhibition by the QArt Gallery at Toorak Uniting Church, which included works by our club member, Sarah Gibson. Bushwalking club members who attended the event that day were (left to right) John Isaac, Layton Moss, Laurine Symington, Christine Moss, the artist – Sarah Gibson, Celia Dynon, Jan Ward, Joyce Isaac and Jenny Stewardson.

Camino de Sydney – an Australian pilgrimage



If you're contemplating travelling to Spain to take on El Camino de Santiago – wait! There's an alternative 'Camino' right here in Australia, which could save you all those overseas air fares and accommodation expenses.

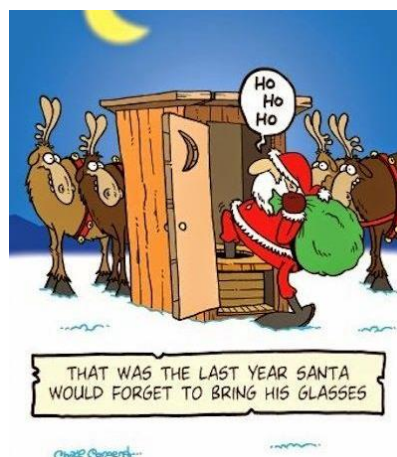
Camino de Sydney is a pilgrimage inspired by El Camino de Santiago, offering a spiritual journey across various parts of Sydney, and covering 600km over 29 days of walking in seven stages. It passes many religious, historical and cultural sites. Participants can download a passport and fill it in or have it stamped at post offices as they complete each stage of the route.

If 600km sounds like a heck of a lot of walking, you can break it up into sections of day walks over an extended period. If that still sounds like too much walking, you can cycle, or even drive or take public transport through individual days or stages; and as the organisers suggest, take as long as you like to complete it. Buen Camino!
([www. https://caminodesydney.wordpress.com/](https://caminodesydney.wordpress.com/))

Footnote: in 2022 a small group of women participated in 'The Aussie Camino Pilgrimage Vic/SA', a route from Portland in Victoria to Penola in South Australia. Similar to the traditions of Europe's El Camino de Santiago, the walk was inspired by the life and journeys of Australia's St Mary McKillop.



Pam and Norrie enjoying a coffee on Sunday morning after the reservoir walk at Maryborough



ChatGPT

Coming to terms with artificial intelligence

DAVID ASHTON

Is anyone else out there like me – first being rather frightened of what artificial intelligence (AI) might do to the world, but later rather warily coming to terms with it, and then even rather enjoying some aspects of AI?

Take the AI app, ChatGPT. I have been using this app, through which you can ask literally anything and instantly receive a well expressed and thought-out response. It's unbelievable!

Now what I'm about to tell you will suggest I have too much time on my hands, and if so, I will have to live with that. Just for fun, I asked Chat GPT, 'can you compose an alternative Australian national anthem to *Advance Australia Fair*?' This is what it came up with INSTANTLY:

[Verse 1]

*Oh, Australia, land of beauty,
Under skies so vast and blue,
With hearts united, we stand true,
In peace and harmony, we pursue.*

[Chorus]

*Advance Australia, with hope aflame,
For justice, freedom, and fair acclaim,
With courage strong, and voices raised,
Our spirit soars, in the sun's embrace.*

Another verse, a 'bridge' and final chorus followed. OK, maybe it will never take the place of *Advance Australia Fair*, and is rather clichéd, but remember it was composed in literally one second. Not bad!

I then decided to challenge ChatGPT further: 'How about a new national anthem for Outer Mongolia?' Less than one second later, this arrived:

[Verse 1]

*Beneath the vast Mongolian sky,
Where steppe and mountain meet the eye,
With nomad hearts, so wild and free,
Our homeland's spirit, eternally.*

[Chorus]

*Oh, Outer Mongolia, land so grand,
Endless plains and dreams expand,
In unity, our strength we find,
Bound by history, to future entwined.*

There was more to it than that, but I hope you can see where that was going. Also clichéd and rather simplistic, perhaps, but the product of less than a second's 'thought'!



Taking this a little further, and to put things in some perspective, I finally asked ChatGPT: 'what should be the aims of an Australian bushwalking club?' Here is part of what it instantly suggested:

- Promoting outdoor recreation: encouraging members to explore and appreciate Australia's natural landscapes through bushwalking and other outdoor activities.
- Community and social connections: fostering a sense of camaraderie and friendship among members, through group hikes, social events and shared experiences in nature.
- Health and wellbeing: promoting the physical, mental and emotional benefits of spending time outdoors and engaging in regular physical activity through bushwalking.
- Accessibility and inclusivity: striving to make bushwalking accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities by offering a variety of hike options.

ChatGPT concluded thoughtfully: 'These aims can serve as a foundation for the club's mission and guide its activities and initiatives.'

Some interesting perspectives about bushwalking there, coinciding with what our club actually believes in, and does – all composed in an instant by artificial intelligence!

Whatever we may think of AI, as something to worry about or simply another amazing outcome of human ingenuity, it's here to stay, and something we will learn to live with.



The club's 2025 program

The dates for our 2025 walks are final, but the location of nominated walks may need to be changed.

	2025	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Feature	Walk (Proposed)	Leader
Public Hol.											
New Year	Jan			1	2	3	4	5	New Year		
	Jan	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
	Jan	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
	Jan	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Australia Day		
Australia Day	Jan	27	28	29	30	31	1	2			
	Feb	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			Neil
	Feb	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Valentine's Day		
	Feb	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			Jemmy
	Feb	24	25	26	27	28	1	2			
	Mar	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
Labour Day	Mar	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
	Mar	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
	Mar	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Horsham	Murray
	Apr	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	Day Sav Ends		
	Apr	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
Easter	Apr	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Easter		
Anzac Day	Apr	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Anzac Day		
	Apr	28	29	30	1	2	3	4			
	May	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Mother's Day		
	May	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
	May	19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
	May	26	27	28	29	30	31	1			
	Jun	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
King's B'day	Jun	9	10	11	12	13	14	15			
	Jun	16	17	18	19	20	21	22			
	Jun	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			
	Jul	30	1	2	3	4	5	6		Box Hill Golf Club	
	Jul	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
	Jul	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
	Jul	21	22	23	24	25	26	27			
	Jul	28	29	30	31	1	2	3			
	Aug	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Aug	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			
	Aug	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
	Aug	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
	Sep	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Father's Day		
	Sep	8	9	10	11	12	13	14			
	Sep	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			
	Sep	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	AFL Grand Final		
	Sep	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	Day Save		
	Oct	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
	Oct	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
	Oct	20	21	22	23	24	25	26			
	Oct	27	28	29	30	31	1	2			
Cup Day	Nov	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		Marysville	
	Nov	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Rememb Day		
	Nov	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
	Nov	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
	Dec	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Christmas	
	Dec	8	9	10	11	12	13	14			
	Dec	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			
Christmas	Dec	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Christmas		
	Dec	29	30	31							

31 =

School Holidays

= Bushwalks

27-Nov-24