



OLD SCOTCH
BUSHWALKING CLUB

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Tracknotes

March 2025

Number 111

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

Open wide! Luna Park's 'Mr Moon' hungrily eyes our walkers

The familiar 'Mr Moon' face entry to Luna Park, dating from the park's opening in 1912, looks about to devour nine of our walkers in Norrie McLeod's photo. Ten walkers set off from Luna Park on an excursion through St Kilda in mild weather on 19 February, linking up later for lunch with John and Joyce Isaac.

It was a really interesting way to take in many aspects of St Kilda, and included lunch in the beautiful St Kilda Botanical Gardens, and a stroll down Acland Street, where scrumptious pastries tempted the walkers. Jenny Stewardson led the walk well, pointing out many historical features along the way. Her story of the walk begins on page 6.



Vale – Richard Piesse

Club members were deeply saddened to hear of the death of one of the club's founders – Richard Piesse – on 28 December. A wonderful memorial service for Richard was held at Darebin Parklands on Friday 7 February, at which the large attendance included more than 25 of our club members.

At the service David Ashton delivered a eulogy for Richard on behalf of our club. An edited version of the eulogy appears on page 4.

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Ten questions – Yogita Gupta

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

I am a fairly new member of the club and joined the club late last year.

How did you find out about the club?

Being JSPA (Junior School Parents' Association) Auxiliary President, I attended the OSCA Auxiliary Presidents' Breakfast in August 2024, and met lovely Laurine who was sitting next to me and told me about the club.

What are your links with Scotch College?

I am a proud Scotch parent, since the last 12 years, with my older son Samarth Gupta (Year 12) and Vivaan Gupta (Year 5) in 2025. I am also a very active volunteer for the JSPA (President 2025), the Scotch Parents' Association and its auxiliaries.

What inspired you to take up bushwalking?

During my conversation with Laurine, I thought if there is one club that I should join, it's the bushwalking club. It will be a wonderful opportunity for me to experience some of the walking trails within the Melbourne region; and also walking is good for my health.

Is there a walk within Australia or overseas you've always wanted to tackle?

I would be honest if I say I don't have much experience with the walks, but I am looking forward to participating in the club's walks, whenever it's possible. Being VCE year for us, it's a busy year for our family.

What is your dream holiday in Australia or overseas?

Although it's very hard to name just one dream holiday, I would love to visit the beautiful Kashmir Valley in



India, and also take a road trip to Leh in India with some friends/family. 😊😊

What are your hobbies and interests, other than bushwalking?

I am really interested in meeting new people, learning from their experiences, and sharing interesting stories.

Dancing, singing and sharing a laugh with friends is what keeps me going.

What is your occupation?

I am a dentist by profession and a full-time mom, if that qualifies as an occupation! 😊

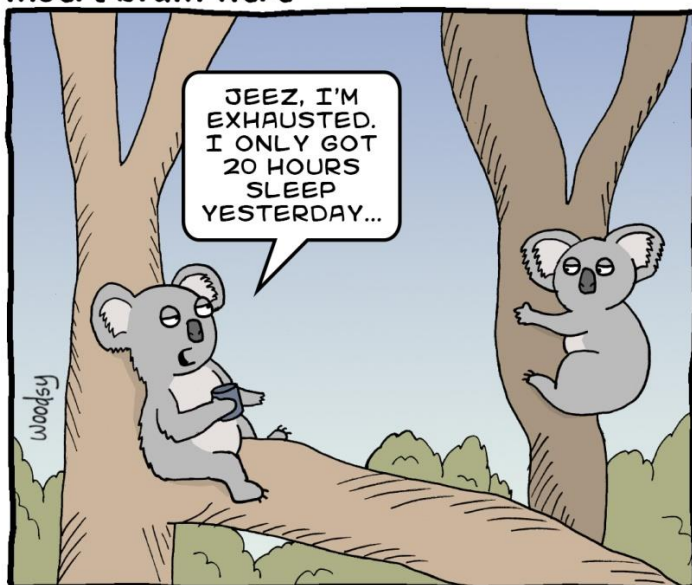
What football team do you barrack for?

Go Hawks! is the only mantra when it comes to the footy. The boys are diehard fans too! Hopefully they have a good season this year. It's time ...

What is your favourite Melbourne restaurant?

Oooooohh ... another difficult one! Very hard to choose one, but we always enjoy a meal at Crown Conservatory Buffet as a family. The kids have a ball with the chocolate fondue and I am a super happy/relaxed mama there! 😊😊

insert brain here



by woody



President's Tree-Stump

At the time of writing we have already had several very good walks in 2025 as we approach our weekend away at Horsham, where we will hold the annual general meeting. It was interesting to note that at our recent walk at St Kilda around Luna Park the men outnumbered the ladies – and that is not usually the case!

Our most recent midweek walk in the Blackburn Lake district on 13 March, I must say very ably led by Julie Walpole, was a real gem. It was one of the best and most interesting walks that I have been on. The walk was topped off with a lavish afternoon tea hosted by Andrew and Jane Gibson. As with our weekend walk at the 100 Steps of Federation at Altona, many birds were sighted at the Blackburn Lake, this time of the inland variety rather than seabirds.

The time has come to pass on the presidential walking stick: I will be standing down as President at our upcoming AGM. I will leave the club in the very capable hands of Murray Hooper, whom I recommend you elect at our AGM at Horsham. I will continue on your committee as Immediate Past President.

It has been an absolute pleasure to lead our club from 2021 to 2025 as it was in my first term as President from 2003 to 2008, and earlier as inaugural Treasurer from 1995 to 2003. My role as President was made so much more enjoyable and easier by the united help and support of your committee. I cannot thank them enough for their assistance. A special thank you to David

Ashton without whom we would not be able to enjoy *Tracknotes*.

To Ian Hansen (Treasurer) and Laurine Symington (Secretary and Treasurer), Norrie McLeod (Membership Manager), Murray Hooper (Vice President) and Jenny Stewardson (committee member), again I thank you.



It would be remiss of me not to make special mention of one of our 'founding fathers', Richard Piesse. Sadly, Richard lost his long fight with cancer late in 2024. I will always remember his love of the bush and his extensive knowledge of the flora and fauna we encountered on the many walks he led, especially in the Goldfields area of Victoria. His daughters and other family members gave him a very fitting send-off at Darebin Park, which was well attended by bushwalking club members, along with other members of the clubs which he was associated with.

Finally, Anne and I are looking forward to our weekend away at Horsham and the remainder of the year's walks. As I mentioned in my last 'Tree-stump', your committee has discussed the low attendance at some of our walks, and your thoughts and guidance will be sought at the AGM regarding the future walks program.

I know that I sound like a broken record, but we desperately need walk leaders and volunteers for the committee. 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!

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

Neil Hart-Smith
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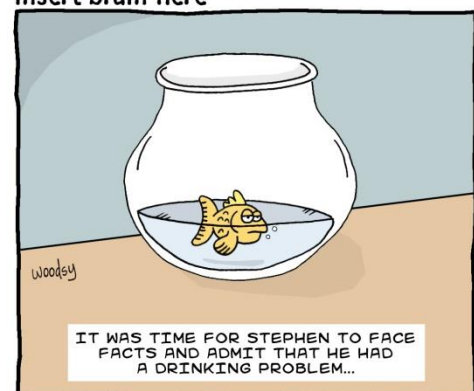
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by woodsy

Vale – Richard Piesse

This is an edited version of a eulogy I delivered at the memorial service for Richard Piesse on Friday 7 February at Darebin Parklands. Richard died on 28 December 2024.

David Ashton

Richard Piesse was one of the 'founding fathers' of the Old Scotch Bushwalking Club, and he could even be called our club's 'tribal elder'. In the early days, Richard provided valuable information about suggested walks, based on his considerable experience of walking in many parts of Victoria, and he led many of our walks. He encouraged us to take public transport to our walks when this was possible.

During walks he noticed plants such as tiny, delicate orchids which other walkers, including me, had overlooked. He had a great knowledge of central Victorian plants, and initiated a flora guide for the Castlemaine Field Naturalists' Club.

Richard was also a leading member of the Great Dividing Trail Association, and in 2013 he won Bushwalking Victoria's gold Distinguished Service Award for advancing the development of recreational bushwalking in Victoria, and for adding value to bushwalking for the wider Victorian community.



Richard was grateful for the education Scotch College had given him, and took a close interest in the school. As well as his active participation in our club, Richard was also a very active member of the Old Scotch Tennis Club and the Old Scotch Athletic Club.

At the tennis club he was a very good player who was frequently selected as Captain of his team. He played in several premiership teams, served as Treasurer and was Vice President from 1980 to 1985 during a successful era for the club. For the athletic club, Richard principally competed in cross country events.

In 2023 Richard received an Old Scotch Collegians' Association Merit Award. It was fitting that Richard's daughters, Frankie and Celia, along with a large group of club members, were present when Richard received his award at the 2023 OSCA President's Dinner. Last year, our club awarded Honorary Life Membership to Richard for his excellent service to the club.

Richard was immensely proud of his children and grandchildren, and revelled in their achievements. He could be grumpy, and phone conversations were usually quite short and to the point, but always constructive. At other times he would ring simply to find out what I had been up to, and to send his love to Micky.

He did have a particular aversion to being photographed, and we have quite a few shots of the back of Richard's head as he avoided yet another photo opportunity. He especially disliked videos!

Richard was a very much loved and greatly respected member of the Old Scotch Bushwalking Club. We will greatly miss Richard's company on our walks. Undoubtedly we will blunder past many an orchid, grevillea or wattle without a second glance, which Richard would instantly have identified and brought to our attention.



New walks

Three walks to stir the imagination

There seems to be no end to the list of imaginative new walks opening across the country – which can go onto the list of ‘must-do’ walks for those of us still able to contemplate serious bushwalking! Here are three excellent examples.

Grand Clifftop Walk (Blue Mountains)

Opened last March after four years’ construction at a cost of \$10 million, this 19km walk links new and existing tracks along the Blue Mountains’ southern escarpment, between Wentworth Falls and Katoomba. With its closeness to accommodation options, there is the possibility of a Camino-style ‘inn to inn’ experience; or the walk can be tackled in smaller sections. Search: Grand Clifftop Walk.

Snowies Alpine Walk

The Snowies Alpine Walk is a 55km multi-day walk in the Kosciuszko National Park, which is now complete after six years and an outlay of \$27 million. It offers the opportunity to climb Australia’s highest mountain, wander through wildflower meadows and walk through glacier-carved landscapes and snow gum forests. Park or mountain village accommodation is available along the way. Search: Snowies Alpine Walk.



The Snowies Alpine Walk offers the opportunity to climb Mt Kosciuszko.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta Signature Walk (2026)

Next year the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Signature Walk, of 56km, will enable small groups of up to 14 the opportunity to spend four days and nights inside the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park on fully-guided five-days/four nights hikes, learning about local Indigenous culture and history, connecting with nature and staying in environmentally-sustainable accommodation. Search: Uluru-Kata Tjuta Signature Walk.

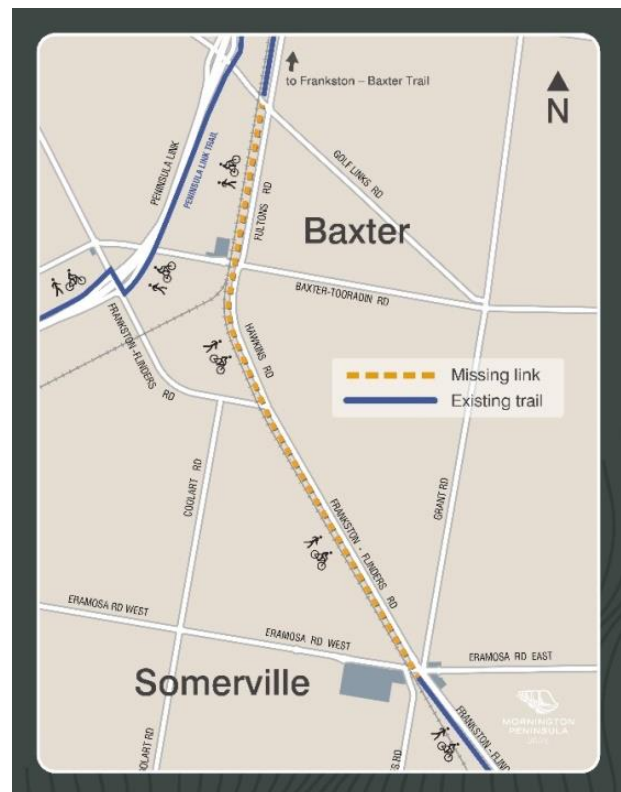
Construction starts on a link in the Peninsula Trails project

Work is underway on the Somerville to Baxter Trail, which is part of the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council’s proposed 170km Peninsula Trails project.

Although two-thirds of the trails project is already in place, an investment of over \$62.5 million is still needed to complete the project. There are several significant missing links, such as Merricks to Bittern via Balnarring and Mornington to Moorooduc.

The Somerville–Baxter Trail will extend from Eramosa Road in Somerville through to Golf Links Road in Baxter where the existing Baxter Trail currently terminates. Upgrades to road crossings will be undertaken along the length of the path. This shared-use trail has been funded by the federal and state governments, and the council. Work is expected to be completed by late this year.

The alignment for the Somerville to Baxter trail



Our midweek walks

Taking in the many sights of St Kilda

JENNY STEWARDSON

On Wednesday 19 February, 10 of us met outside the entrance of Luna Park on a mild day, and headed off past the Palais Theatre to Catani Gardens. We were to link up later with John and Joyce Isaac.

Luna Park, now 113 years old, brought back memories of childhood trips riding on the Scenic Railway, the Rotor and the Ghost Train. The nearby Palais Theatre is a historic picture palace hosting live entertainment such as ballet, opera, and pop concerts. The original 1915 building was destroyed by fire, and the new one, dating from 1927, can seat 3000.



Luna Park appears to be about to devour our walkers



The Esplanade Hotel

Heading along the Esplanade we passed the Esplanade Hotel – 'The Espy' – a legendary music venue. It dates from 1878, was first built as a resort hotel, and has fought off developers' demolition and rebuilding plans ever since.

Having crossed the pedestrian overpass, we headed for the palm-lined central avenue of the Catani Gardens – a popular venue for concerts and fun fairs. A memorial statue and plaque honours Carlo Giorgio Domenico Enrico Catani.

A civil engineer born in Florence, Catani spent 40 years with the Victorian Public Works department. As well as reclaiming and laying out the St Kilda foreshore, he was noted for widening and improving the Yarra River upstream from Princes Bridge, making roads to Arthurs Seat and Mt Donna Buang, draining the Koo-Wee-Rup swamp, constructing the Elwood Canal and later, Lake Catani on Mt Buffalo. He lived in Blessington Street, St Kilda.



The historic kiosk



Dark clouds over the city in this view from St Kilda Pier



Norrie getting in close to take a shot of a little penguin

Our midweek walks

Proceeding to the beach, we saw the newly reclaimed dune area. As we headed back onto the new pier, we spotted the (rebuilt) historic kiosk – minus coffee – and examined the little penguin sanctuary. To our delight, two penguins were nestling among the granite boulders.

Later, we enjoyed coffee in a beachfront café and then continued to the Botanical Gardens via Peanut Reserve (which did once grow peanuts and is now used for sports). We had passed the St Kilda Baths on the foreshore, noted for being Australia's only heated sea water swimming pool, and its original Spanish and Moorish features. For 6km along the foreshore you can see miniature but proportionate versions of planets in the solar system.

The Botanical Gardens are delightful, beautifully laid out

and with mature trees and a noted rose garden, and were a cool spot for lunch. Post lunch we headed back to our tram stops via Acland St, trying not to be tempted by scrumptious looking patisseries en route



Enjoying coffee in a beachfront café



Lunch in the beautiful surroundings of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens

A section of the St Kilda Breakwater that the penguins call home



Part of the new St Kilda Pier

Our midweek walks

A memorable autumn walk in Blackburn's Bellbird Area

DAVID ASHTON

Fine, cloudy weather prevailed on the morning of Thursday 13 March, as 10 club members gathered for a congenial chat outside a Laburnum coffee shop at the start of our Blackburn Lake walk. Unusually for our club there was a 50/50 male-female split for this walk: these days females generally outnumber males on our walks.

Coffees having been consumed by some, the walkers set off in Laburnum's backblocks. After overnight rain there was a heady scent emanating from the peppermint gums along the way, causing a few sneezes among walkers with delicate sinuses.

We soon reached Black's Walk, a very pleasant, mainly level path next to Gardiners Creek, and exited it near busy Middleborough Road. A sign here depicts the Whitehorse Artists' Trail, commemorating the work of artists such as Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin, who founded the Box Hill artists' camp and produced many famous works.



Gathering for the walk in Laburnum

In 1974, Jeffery Street was classified by the National Trust as 'part of Blackburn Lake and Bellbird Streets significant landscape'. The aims of the local Jeffery Street Association include retaining the dominance of the vegetation cover, in keeping with the bush character of the environment, and ensuring a reasonable proportion of each property is free from buildings, to provide for planting trees in a natural garden setting. There are no gutters or footpaths, and electricity is delivered underground in this very attractive street.

The group swung into Lake Road, and then into Blackburn Lake Sanctuary. Before European settlement, the lake was an important natural watercourse for the Wurrundjeri people, who hunted and gathered along its banks. In the 1880s, the Freeholds Investment and Banking Company dammed the watercourse to create the lake. Ever since it has been a popular place for visitors.



A brief stop along the way

After walking for a short distance along Middleborough Road, we entered Kalang Park, resuming our walk next to the creek, as king parrots screeched and wheeled above us. Here, Neil revealed that many years ago he and his brother trapped a bagful of tiger snakes at this location, then emptied the bag into the creek, from where the rather confused and no doubt angry snakes swam off to safety. So much for protecting native animals!

Reaching Blackburn Road we headed south, then turned left into Jeffery Street. Settlement in the Blackburn area dates from the 1840s, but 70 years ago local residents first took custodianship of the local Bellbird Area streetscapes, and managed and improved the environment and the wildlife corridor.



Julie Walpole and Jenny Stewardson leading

Our midweek walks

In 1908 the Adult Deaf Society purchased 70 acres of land here, including the lake, and built a home for 'Aged, Infirm and Feeble-Minded Deaf Mutes'. In the 1960s, residents urged the local council to purchase the remaining land to protect it from future development. By 1976 the National Trust had classified the area as a significant landscape, and by 1980 the council had purchased the land round the lake.

Our walkers took the Lakeside Circuit, with its pleasant glimpses of the lake. Birdlife was in abundance: the sanctuary is home to scores of species, ranging from pelicans to hawks, kingfishers, magpies and butcher birds. We arrived near the visitor centre, and unpacked our lunches on two picnic tables. Lunch and convivial chat completed, after a short visit to the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Astrological Sunclock, we set off for Jane and Andrew Gibson's home in nearby Gordon Crescent. Along the way, Richard Pugsley, Laurine Symington and Jan Ward left the walk.

We were delighted to visit Jane and Andrew, who treated us to a magnificent afternoon tea, highlighted by a superb



Julie briefs the walkers about Jeffery Street and the history of Blackburn.

strawberry and cream sponge. We sat in the shade in the Gibson's large backyard, enjoying some respite after our 6.6km morning's walk. Many thanks to the Gibsons for their hospitality.

It was then time to head home, by train from nearby Blackburn station. It had been a beautiful walk along interesting paths, interspersed with a fair bit of history and culture. Many thanks to Julie Walpole for organising such a memorable and enjoyable walk.



Serenity – Blackburn Lake



Afternoon tea at the Gibsons'

Andrew and Jane Gibson provided a superb afternoon tea.



Our weekend walks

Windy, enjoyable walk at Altona

NEIL HART-SMITH

On the windy and overcast morning of Sunday 9 February, 14 walkers met at the Laverton railway station to walk to the Altona railway station via the 100 Steps of Federation, a walk of about 9.25km.

As the team set out a comment was passed that although we would not get sunburnt today there was a high likelihood that some of us would suffer from windburn. On the walk a few hats did fly off in the wind.

During World War II there had been a large air force training base at Laverton which was used until the 1950s for annual aeronautical displays. The runways still exist but the area is now suburban housing.



Along the Laverton River

We headed out to the east of Laverton, walking along the Laverton River and through low-lying swampland. Many water birds were sighted, including black swans, egrets, Pacific black ducks, grebes and many other species. The walking track was also very busy with bike riders and people walking their dogs.

Reaching the reserve with the 100 Steps of Federation we climbed up the 'hill' on the steps. This site was developed as part of a community project to celebrate Australia's



Anne and Neil Hart-Smith heading off on the walk

federation, and opened in 2001. The 'hill' had been the local garbage tip for many years, but it has been turned into a bush reserve.

Although the 'hill' was only about 20m high, the view was fantastic. As it was surrounded by low-lying swamp ground we could see all the hills that surround Melbourne, from the You Yangs to the south-west, past the Brisbane Ranges, Mount Macedon, Mount Slide, to the Dandenong Ranges in the north, and to Arthurs Seat in the south-east.

After descending the 'hill' we walked along the Altona Esplanade, which follows the old sea walk. Along this part of the walk we enjoyed watching up to 20 kite surfers displaying their prowess at taming the wind, some of them leaping up to three or four metres into the air, before landing back on the sea.

As we passed the Altona Pier, Murray Hooper reminisced how 71 years earlier he had earned his Herald Learn to Swim certificate at this very pier.

The walk ended in Altona Mall, with a welcome cup of coffee. At least one member lashed out and had sweets as well.

The group all thanked their leader for a very good walk, even if 'moderate' was not quite the correct description.



The group at the top of the 'hill', after climbing the 100 Steps of Federation



Kite surfers at Altona beach

Deep and meaningful Australianisms



The following are some results from an Oz-words competition, in which entrants were asked to take an Australian word, alter it by one letter only, and supply a witty definition.

Bludgie: a partner who doesn't work, but is kept as a pet

Dodgeridoo: a fake indigenous artefact

Fair drinkum: good-quality Aussie wine

Flatypus: a cat that has been run over by a vehicle

Yabble: the unintelligible language of Australian freshwater crustaceans

Bushwanker: a pretentious drongo, who reckons he's above average when it comes to handling himself in the scrub

Crackie-daks: 'hipster' tracksuit pants

insert brain here



by woody

Baby dolphin in Port Phillip



Scientists in the Mornington Peninsula Dolphin Research Institute were excited at the news that a baby dolphin had been born last November in the bay.

Port Phillip is the only bay in the world which provides a home for common dolphins – and there were 165 of them in the bay at last count. According to a report in January in the *Southern Peninsula News*, the tiny creature is the first calf of bay dolphin Hailey and the great-grandcalf of Esther.

Ella Hutchinson of the Dolphin Research Institute was delighted at the calf's birth. She described Esther as 'a remarkable mother, who we think had her first calf in 2007'. Esther's new calf is her fifth, and it is only a few weeks older than her great-grandcalf! There are now at least seven common dolphin calves in the bay, reliant on their mothers.

There are also approximately 120 Burrnan (bottlenose) dolphins in Port Phillip Bay, and about 63 of this species in the Gippsland Lakes.

Stranded hiker survived on water, snow – and toothpaste!

An 18-year-old hiker, Sun Liang, was miraculously rescued after surviving for 10 days in the freezing mountains of north-western China.

According to a report in the February-March issue of *Great Walks* magazine, two days after setting out on a solo trek along the Ao-Tai Pass in the Qinling range, Sun's electronic devices died, leaving him stranded at an altitude of 2500 metres.

The magazine said that with no food and facing extreme conditions, Sun relied on river water, melted snow, and even toothpaste to stay alive. Then, as he attempted to follow a stream in search of help, he suffered multiple falls, breaking his right arm. He took shelter behind a large rock, using dry leaves as bedding. Against the odds, Sun survived the ordeal.

His rescue marked the first known successful retrieval from this treacherous, steep and dangerous path, which has claimed over 50 lives or left climbers missing in the past two decades.

The club's 2025 program

Note: This program is currently under review and may be modified

	2025	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun		Walk (Proposed)	Leader
Public Hol.									Feature		
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	Altona	Neil Hart-Smith	
	Feb	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Valentine's Day		
	Feb	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	St kilda	Jenny Stewardson	
	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	Blackburn	Julie Walpole	
	Mar	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
	Mar	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Horsham	Murray Hooper	
	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			22-Feb-25		