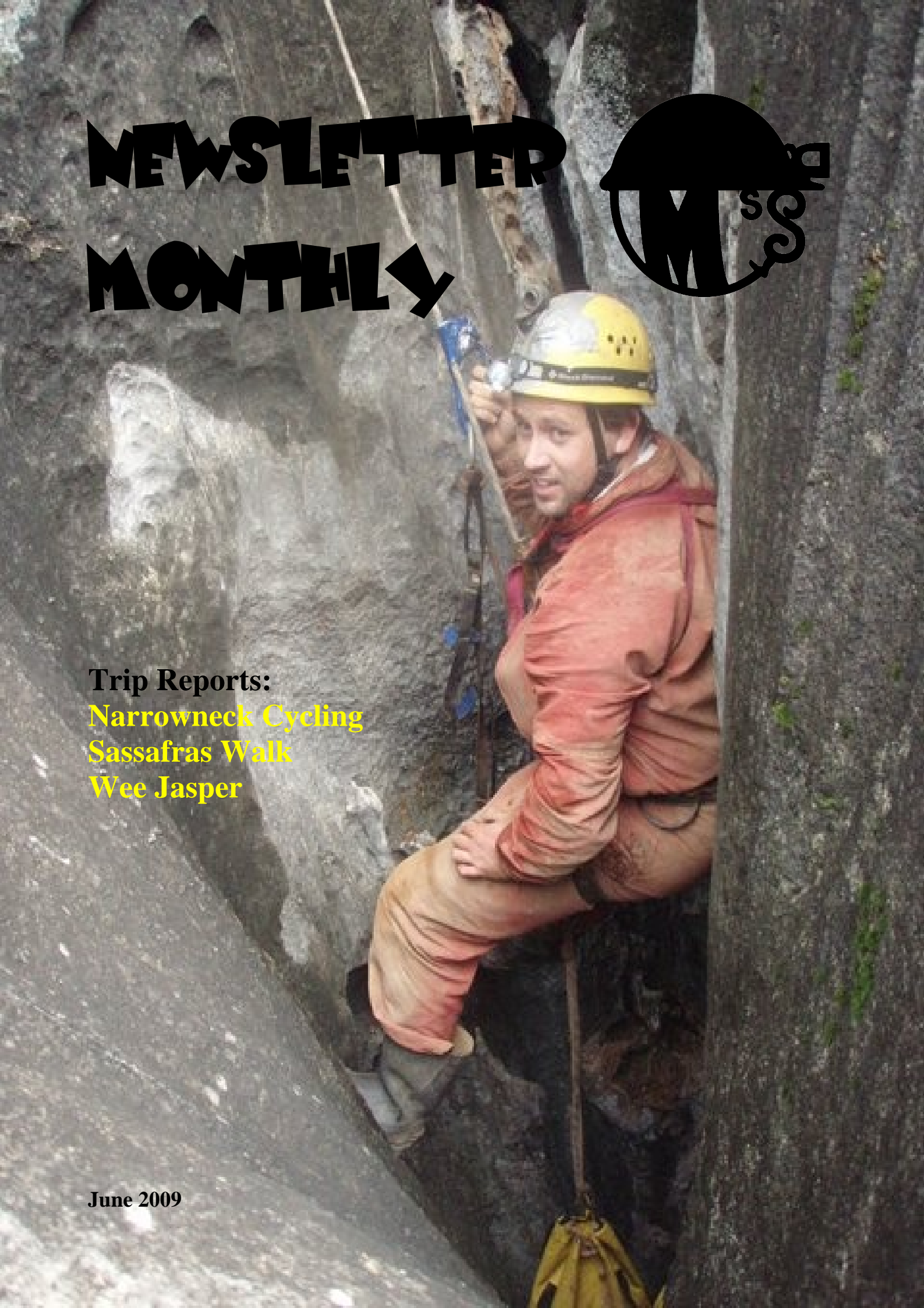


# NEWSLETTER MONTHLY



**Trip Reports:**  
**Narrowneck Cycling**  
**Sassafras Walk**  
**Wee Jasper**

**June 2009**



## In this issue

Last Meeting	3
Next Meeting	3
Quote of the Month	3
Announcements	3
Trip Reports	3
Narrowneck - 14th June, 2009	3
Sassafras Walk - 20th - 21st June, 2009	4
Wee Jasper - 27th - 28th June, 2009	4
Future Trips	7

Cover Shot:

Rod prussiks back out of an unnamed hole in the ground.

Photo by Julie Burton

## Trip Reports

### Last Meeting

Watch this space, we're working on something extra special!

### Next Meeting

Monthly meetings are temporarily suspended due to the loss of our venue.

The committee are currently seeking alternative accommodation and will advise in due course.

If anyone is able to assist, please let us know.

### Quote of the Month

"Damn ... my car's being washed." - Rod lamenting the weather during the Wee Jasper trip.

### Announcements

There has been an update on the bet between Brett and Dave. Due to the unfortunate cancellation of the November Jenolan trip, the bet has been postponed. It is also worth noting that Brett has lost the bet. As such, the next Jenolan trip that goes ahead, Brett will be supplying lamb shanks (cooked in the slow cooker) and a bottle of Mead.

### *Narrowneck - 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2009*

Cyclists: John Marshall, Bob Horn, John Stathakis, Rod Smith (TL).

I had never been to the end of Narrowneck, not that it was that high on my to-do list, but an easy mountain biking trip seemed like a good way to tick it off.

The morning arrived and it was planned that I would give John a lift. He was a little late getting to my place, plus I hadn't allowed quite enough time, so we arrived late. But I wasn't concerned, as trip leader I had decided to wait for me to arrive before starting.

We met Bob and John in the carpark at the furthest you can drive along Narrowneck and wondered where everyone else was. I was expecting at least two more people, but that'd have to miss out.

John decided to get a head-start while John and I got organised. It wasn't long before Bob, John and I were over the gate and on our bikes, wondering how far ahead John had gotten.

Narrowneck isn't flat, but the first couple of hills were reasonably gentle and a good way to start. The wind was refreshing, but coming from the side wasn't proving too much of a hinderance. Other than the wind the weather was behaving itself.

We caught up to John at the top of the first decent descent. Riding down it felt like stopping wasn't an option, the brakes were just helping control the speed, what a rush (albeit a slow and controlled one)! Immediately the downhill becomes an uphill and we were all off our bikes and pushing them.

Before long we arrived at the Fire Tower and had a short break. At this time Bob made some slight mechanical adjustments to John's bike since he was having some problems with the gears. We also observed the weather further west, which was looking less than pleasant.

Back on the bikes and another downhill. I was thinking that unfortunately all these downhills would become uphills on the way back, but then all the uphills would become downhills, which made it alright.

After less than two hours we arrived at the end for some lunch. We also admired the views, from the back of Mt Solitary and Kings Tableland, round past Warragamba Dam, the Wild Dog Mountains, Kanangra Walls, to the vast Megalong Valley. So much wilderness with power lines right through the middle of it.

The weather started turning a bit dubious, so it was time for us to turn around and head for the cars. The trip back was even quicker, mainly due to the impending weather, which, thankfully, held off until we were in the cars (almost!).

It had been decided that coffee was on the cards, and Bob and John had stopped at the cafe just down from Scenic World on the way up, so we went there. Unlike the morning when it was almost empty, we arrived when it was almost full, securing the last table. It took a while to get our drinks, due to a shortage of staff, and by the time we had finished the weather was looking pristine again. How fickle the mountain weather can be!

Rod

## ***Sassafras Walk - 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2009***

Participants: David, Johan, David Watts, Carolyn and Warwick.

It had been raining all of the previous week with no sign that the weekend would be any different. Believe it or not some of the people on the trip were making noises like “surely it won’t be on”. My response was “it’ll be OK on the day and anyway we will have a fire in the evening to dry you out”. As we all know, the weather can often be quite different between Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

So, we met on the Saturday morning at Mash Café in Glenbrook, our table in front of a roaring fire, the rain still bucketing down outside. My plan worked – by the time we left the café (and a great café it was) it had stopped raining and we drove the short distance to Picnic Point at Springwood. I had done the walk before as a day walk last summer and the opportunities for swimming were one of its highlights. However, I guessed we weren’t going to see too many swimmers on this trip!

We followed the well made trail down Magdala Creek, crossing and re-crossing the creek until we reached Magdala Falls and then a bit further on Martins Falls. This section of the walk could easily have been confused with any good canyon – mosses, ferns and some impressive rock overhangs. We soon reached the junction of Magdala and Sassafras Creeks where we took the track upstream reaching our campsite after only 3 hours of walking. This was always going to be an easy walk.

The campsite was not in the best condition, some nice people had left behind rubbish and some mindless sole had thrown bottles against a large rock and broken glass ‘peppered’ the area where Carolyn and I had to pitch our tent.

Johan was determined to make sure we had a fire that night, so even carried in some firewood, fire-starters and (get this) even a bow saw. The rest of the afternoon and evening was spent in our by now comfortable abode discussing the answers to life and the rest of the walk was completed in what seemed like a blur without further event.

It hardly needs to be said that Johan’s expertise resulted in a top fire that we all appreciated .....

## ***Wee Jasper - 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2009***

Cavers: Rod Smith, Julie Burton (TL)

Rod and I were the only two willing to take on the bowels of Wee Jasper. But that didn’t stop us.....

Rod arrived in Wee J first and went to play find-a-karst while he waited for me to show up which I did about an hour and a half later. I joined him in scratching around a pile of boulders for a while searching for particular numbers. We found several cave openings that were untagged. This did nothing to identify which cluster of Karst we were poking around. Eventually I suggested we go and have a chat to Steve, the ranger of Wee Jasper Reserves. If anyone knew where to look, it might be him. Steve remembered Rod from last time when he was searching for John, who at that time, had proved to be more elusive than Karsts. We learned that we had been searching the correct area.

Poor weather had been forecast for the weekend so I had taken a cabin at the local pub which was now run by a lovely hospitable lady named Janet, who had bought out the formidable and unfriendly Angela. It was at the bar that night that we met locals, some of whom were happy to talk about caves on their property, and an invitation to explore was issued, which will be taken up next time. Steve the Ranger was there too and accepted our invitation to explore Dangly Bits cave the next day.



Evidence of some cave movement  
Photo: Julie Burton

Saturday morning and our first adventure was to go into the Dip Series and explore the series 3 extension. Last time Rod and I were in there, we went as far as we could without ropes (we'd left them back in the Main Chamber), so this time we armed ourselves with all the gear and squeezed down a rat-hole (yes there's two rat-holes in Dip), downclimbed, slithered, grunted and squeezed our way back to the furthest chamber shown on the map. We climbed the far wall with difficulty, (I had the luxury of a hand-line this time) and reached the point where we turned back last time. Using the handline, Rod carefully made his way over the other side down to a boulder and rigged for an abseil into the unknown. It was an awkward, tricky start holding onto the hand-line with back wedged against the wall while connecting to the rope, then swinging around and into space. Rod made it look hard. I quickly followed much more gracefully.

The abseil deposited us into a large, wet chamber. Until now the cave had been dry. But here water was dripping off everything. There more decorations here and no evidence of caver's traffic. This chamber does not appear on the map in the Wee Jasper book. We climbed the slippery far wall of this chamber and the cave ended here. We found a pool of water in an alcove. There was evidence of cave movement with a two inch gap in a large formation. Exploration of anything that looked like a hole proved fruitless. There was nowhere else to go so we turned back. The 12m ascent wasn't too bad. But getting over the edge at the top was interesting. With the anchor not allowing us to get over the edge, and having to transfer to the hand-line and disconnect whilst bracing against slippery walls this was not for the faint-hearted!



Julie prussiks out of the furthest chamber in the Series 3 extension of Dip Cave  
Photo: Rod Smith

Exploration of series 3 extension over, we retraced our steps (and slithers and grunts) back to the rat-hole we downclimbed. I made good use of Rod the Mobile Hand and Foot-hold to get up, and set a hand-line for him. After lots of new technical cave maneuvers, (complete with sound effects), he made it out.



Back to the cabin where we had lunch and waited for Ranger Steve to join us. Next adventure - Dangly Bits cave. This cave has three openings and Rod had already identified one so in we went. Not bad - but lots of evidence of the cave being used by wildlife. There were animal droppings, bones and even swallow's nests! Openings to crawl through everywhere, most of which went nowhere! But one went. Steve led the way until it got a bit too tight. Rod tried and failed. I persevered, pushing my helmet in front of me. The roof was pressing on my back as I slithered through powdery dust at least an inch thick, pushing it ahead of me like a grader. I might have travelled about 20m when suddenly I could stand in a small chamber. Immediately I was struck with a blinding headache and felt faint. What the? I called out I was turning back and found out no-one had followed me. Back through the dust I had stirred up. Must be why no-one had followed me. Back outside where my blinding headache became a blinding pain and I had to sit for a while.

Around the corner from the entrance we took, we found the next entrance, which was actually the main entrance. And then we found the Dangly Bit! Rod rushed over to it and striking a pose, looked at me expectantly. "What?" I says. "Take a photo" says he who is not camera shy. Naturally the boys had to be boys and do boy things with the Dangly Bit.....



Rod and Steve admire the Dangly Bit  
Photo: Julie Burton

Once playing with the Dangly Bit was over, we pushed on and found a nice little climb of 3m. Rod found a hole that twisted upwards and contorted himself trying to get up it. I was sent down another hole (note to self - must put on weight). This hole went and I came out into the small chamber where I had met with my blinding headache earlier. But no headache this time!!! That's really odd.....I rejoined the boys and after checking out all the passages and holes we could find, headed back out. Before the exit we found a nice passage with a beautiful pristine false floor. Crawling beneath it, we found a lovely little pool in the far end of the floor. Rod turned back to find the final opening to the cave that is supposed to allow voice connection while Steve and I pressed on to say hello. But we couldn't go any further and rejoined Rod on the surface. The walk back to the cars turned into a Karst finding expedition with many tagged openings found.

Sunday dawned overcast and wet. Rod and I set off to look at the untagged openings we found on Friday afternoon. The first looked promising. A 15m rap in. "It goes" called Rod. So in I went. Then out I went after we explored maybe 5m in each direction.

On to the next hole. Rod abseiled a very tight 20m hole while I waited on top while he decided if it went. Obviously it didn't. Up he came. Unhappily for Rod my enthusiasm for karst exploring didn't match his and the wet weather came to my rescue. Not feeling 100% and worried about battling roos on my back roads drive home, I called it a day and left Rod happily pottering around with his GPS looking for Karst. I think he came back!

Photos of the trip are here  
<http://imageevent.com/jburton/caving/weejasperjune2009>

# Future Trips

Welcome to the new look future trips section. Anyone with artistic abilities are welcome to submit their own icons for any of the categories here, and/or any other categories. If we use your icon then you'll have to be prepared to accept the praise and admiration from your fellow club members. Send your icons, or any other feedback, to [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com).

## Legend:

### Activity



Caving



Canyoning



Diving



Hiking



Abseiling



Cycling



Horse Riding



Kayaking



Climbing



Skiing

### Grade



Easy



Easy/Medium



Medium



Medium/Hard



Hard



Extreme

### Accommodation



Camping



Cottage















### Extras













Kites



Camp Ovens

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Penrose Gully and Tiger Snake	12 <sup>th</sup> Jul			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 <a href="mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com">roderick_smith@hotmail.com</a> (that's 2 underscores)			8 <sup>th</sup> Jul	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Kanangra	25 <sup>th</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> Jul			Dave Stuckey 0414 590 305 <a href="mailto:stuckedl@cba.com.au">stuckedl@cba.com.au</a>			22 <sup>nd</sup> Jul	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Jenolan	1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aug			Rob Clyne 0409 033 224 <a href="mailto:caver@people.net.au">caver@people.net.au</a>		\$5 hut fees	27 <sup>th</sup> Jul	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Castle Head	15 <sup>th</sup> Aug			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 <a href="mailto:johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au">johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au</a>			12 <sup>th</sup> Aug	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Snowy Mountains	22 <sup>nd</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> Aug			Dave Stuckey 0414 590 305 <a href="mailto:stuckedl@cba.com.au">stuckedl@cba.com.au</a>			19 <sup>th</sup> Aug	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Yarrangobilly	7 <sup>th</sup> - 13 <sup>th</sup> Sep			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 <a href="mailto:jim.crockett@reach.com">jim.crockett@reach.com</a>		We'll be staying in Caves House, which will be an additional	14 <sup>th</sup> Aug	



Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
						cost		
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Mt Solitary	10 <sup>th</sup> - 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			7 <sup>th</sup> Oct	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Tongariro Track – New Zealand	Jan 2010			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au		Flights, huts fees etc.	1 <sup>st</sup> Jul	
<b>Other Info:</b> One of New Zealand's “great walks”.								
Lake Waikaremoana Track – New Zealand	Jan 2010			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au		Flights, huts fees etc.	1 <sup>st</sup> Jul	
<b>Other Info:</b> One of New Zealand's “great walks”.								
Waitomo – New Zealand	Jan 2010			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au		Flights, trip costs etc.	1 <sup>st</sup> Jul	
<b>Other Info:</b> These are commercial trips, but well worth the costs for the amazing experience.								