



The Pretty Beach to Pebbly Beach walk on the south coast of NSW traverses rock platforms and coastal forests.

# Happy feats

WORDS *by* TARA WELLS

It's the simplest of pleasures and one of the greatest: going for a walk. Here are some of our faves.

**D**oes going for a walk have to be an epic, life-changing adventure? Let's dash the idea that unless you're hiking the length of the Pacific Crest Trail or Cornwall's entire coastline, you're not really doing it properly.

Walking is for everyone, everywhere. It's one of the easiest ways to maintain fitness. Stepping out is low impact and requires minimal equipment: a pair of comfy shoes is enough to get started. It can be done at any time of day and at your own pace. Staying closer to home is more convenient, making it more likely for walking to become a positive habit. Start in your own town. Ideally, start at your own front door. Keeping it simple can nurture community connections by bumping into a neighbour or chatting to a friendly stranger.

Whether your walk takes you around the world or around the block, the benefits remain: lowered blood pressure, improved memory, boosted energy levels and a stronger immune system. Let walking be the next step on your health journey.



Hit your stride on the Slovenian alps or the Larapinta Trail (above).

## Top women's walking tours

- Walking with GirlsTrek means exploring Sydney's beaches, popping into Barossa Valley wineries and snowshoeing in the Snowy Mountains.
- Park Trek offers women-only hikes around Australia, such as Tasmania's Bay of Fires and Kangaroo Island off South Australia.
- Australian Walking Holidays has Larapinta Trail departures exclusive to women. Or hike Nepal with sister company World Expeditions and the first Aussie woman to summit Mount Everest, Brigitte Muir.
- Once you've built up confidence and stamina at home, Camino Women takes you to far-flung places like Japan's ancient pathways or the Slovenian alps.



# Regional beauties

## The Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail

winds through goldrush era towns and countryside, crossing the 1890 trestle Nimons Bridge near Newtown on the leg between Scarsdale and Linton.



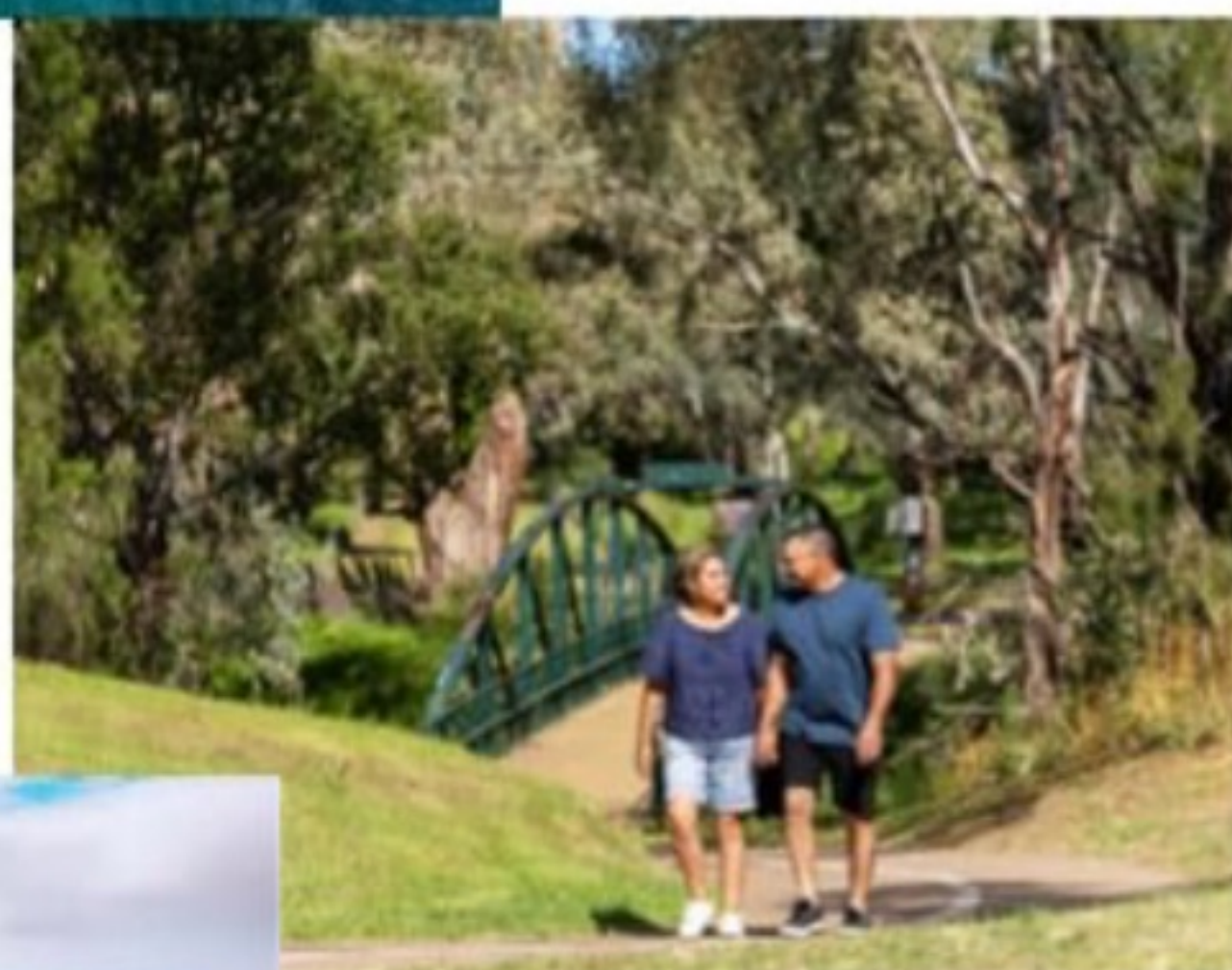
Whether girt by sea or greenery, these trails are good to go.

## The Maitland Bay track

in Bouddi National Park near Killcare Heights is one of the most scenic walks on the NSW Central Coast. Enjoy having the beach all to yourself and discover an 1898 shipwreck lying scattered among the rocks.

## Tracker Riley Cycleway

is easily reached from Dubbo's historic centre and crosses the Macquarie River on its way to Dundullimal Homestead, where you can refuel with high tea before the return journey.



## Mount Gambier's

volcanic crater in SA is home to Blue Lake, a shallow maar rimmed by a 3.6km scenic walking circuit that can be combined with trails around adjacent Valley Lake. **AWW**

*Did you know?* The general consensus is that walking 10,000 steps per day is needed for peak fitness. Now doctors say health benefits start from just 2600 steps.

# GREEN IN THE CITY

## Sydney

For harbour views without the crowds, ferry to Greenwich to walk through elegant neighbourhoods and bushland to Balls Head Reserve. Lunch at the historic Coal Loader.



## Adelaide

For a taste of Adelaide's River Torrens Linear Trail, loop around its central section for parklands, gardens and galleries.



## Darwin

Escape the throngs at Mindil Beach's sunset. Instead, the Nightcliff foreshore in Darwin offers a walk bursting with orange sundowner glows.



## Perth

Spotting kangaroos on Heirisson Island is all part of the fun on Perth's spectacular 10km Swan River loop.



## Canberra

Enjoy views across Lake Burley Griffin from Canberra's 5km Bridge to Bridge Walk, or extend it to take in more sights, cafes and national institutions.



## Melbourne

Bright and colourful scenery abounds in the hidden laneways and street art precinct from Hosier and Union Lanes up to Blender Lane.



TARA WELLS IS THE AUTHOR OF THE BOND/ TO MAINLY WALK. GETTY IMAGES. AIN RAADIK. ALAMY. JAMES VODICKA/DESTINATION CENTRAL COAST. JAXON FOALE. LUKE TSCHARKE. REMY BRAND/DPE.