

Dick and Pip Smith

Leadership Through Adventure Fund

Patrol Leader - Alba (Queensland Scout)

Hello, my name is Alba, from Queensland. At the start of 2024, I knew that I wanted to complete my Adventurous Journey for my Australian Scout Award. However, considering how much work is needed, I thought "I may as well make it worth the work".

So, I decided to make it as big an adventure as possible; something that would take me out of Queensland and explore somewhere I'd never been. Though of course this is expensive. So, this is where the Dick and Pip Smith - Leadership Through Adventure (LTAF) comes in.

I spent about four months planning before I sent my application off to the LTAF Committee for approval. I was successful and they granted half the fee required for the expedition for a Patrol of six Scouts to travel down south to Wilsons Promontory, Victoria.

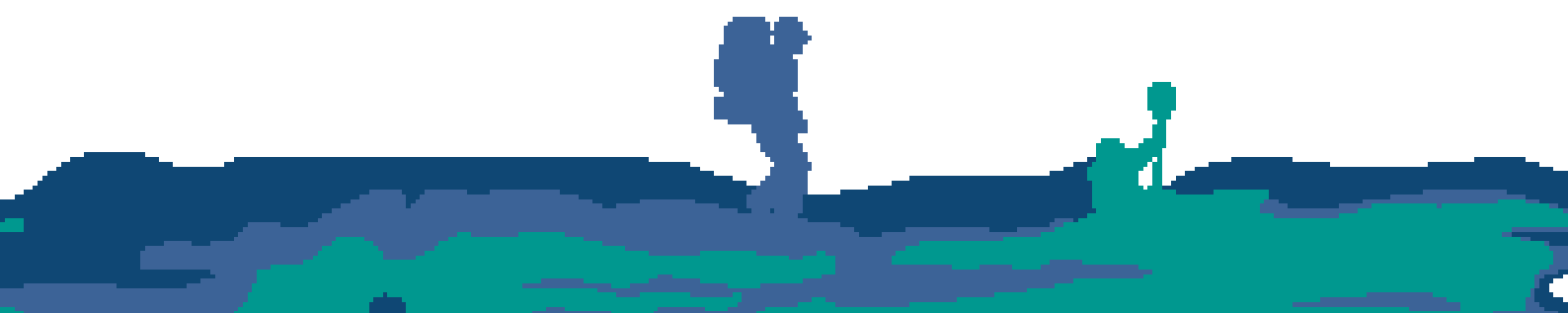
So, so, so, so, so much work is involved in terms of planning, but don't be taken aback by the load, just attack it one step at a time and remember there are always people around you to ask for help if you get stuck. If I did it, then so can you! So, in the middle of September 2024, I Led a Patrol of six (including myself) on an Adventurous Journey through the beautiful National Park of Wilsons Promontory, Victoria.

The entire adventure was for six days: two days of travel, three days of hiking, and one day of exploring the culture, history and activities of the Melbourne CBD.

As we board the flight to Victoria, the excitement was real and so much that it was almost physical. We spent that afternoon driving down to the Prom where we camped for the night. We almost became ice blocks at Tidal River: it was super-duper cold, but mostly the wind made it like Antarctica!

The next day, we packed up our tents in the rain and waited for it to pass before begin the 47km journey at 11am. It was steady going, downhill to start but then it became a gradual climb. One of my Patrol member found a large, heavy rock that he dubbed "Rocky", very original I know :), and proceeded to carry the extra kilogram and a bit for the entire journey and even through the CBD. I remember the anticipation that we all felt when a sign came into view. How many more kilometres until the end of the day? 6.1km, 6km, 4.7km, 2.7km, we're here! About three quaters of the way through day one, we found a fabulous viewing point back to Mount Oberon and to the ocean.

The second day of the hike, we left at 8:30am. However, we made up the late leaving time with our fast pace. We completed 6km in 1.5hrs! Our usual base pace was 3km/hr including breaks. Along that first 6km stretch, we caught glimpses of the Lightstation, a waypoint on the way to the next campsite. One outcrop of rock had a splendid view with the waves crashing against the steep cliff and islands out to the south. When we reached the Lightstation, it was blowing a gale. Our original thought was to go on a quick 1.6km return side trip without our packs up to see the Lightstation, passing by the humungous Skull Rocks only 100m from the junction.



However, the hill to the Lightstation being overly steep, we only managed to the Rocks before turning back. From there we continued the next 10.1km to the campsite, up, over, and back down the headlands. The up wasn't so bad, a long hill, but the down badly hurt our ankles. The rain came and visited a few times but otherwise stayed away. The last km was over beach, and it was gusty, maybe 7-knots blowing out to sea from our left.

The last day we woke at 6am to get going by 7am because we wanted to finish before the major winds and rain hit in the afternoon. They never did, but we didn't have a constantly updating weather forecast! The view over Little Waterloo Bay was stunning in the dazzling morning sunlight. There was 2 river-crossings to come that day.

The first greeted us after 1km. We waited for the waves to go out then awkwardly climbed across the sand and rocks. The wind followed us across the plains and into the trees. We made it to the first junction, 6km away, in just over an hour. Continuing the 11km to go, we walked at a quick pace on the undulating management trails for the 4km to the next junction. We stopped on a grassy sunlight patch for a toilet stop, borrowing the use of the Oberon Bay Campsite amenities before heading into the gusty, 30-knot winds that fought us for our hats and pack-covers. That 1km of beach was probably the slowest and most arduous part of the entire hike. It took us 40-minutes. It was a relief to step into the shelter of the trees on the trail, but not before navigating a long but shallow river crossing. The next 6kms passed fairly fast with a brief stop for lunch on the way. We concluded the hike at 1:45pm and surprised our leaders with our brisk pace.

An Adventure to Remember

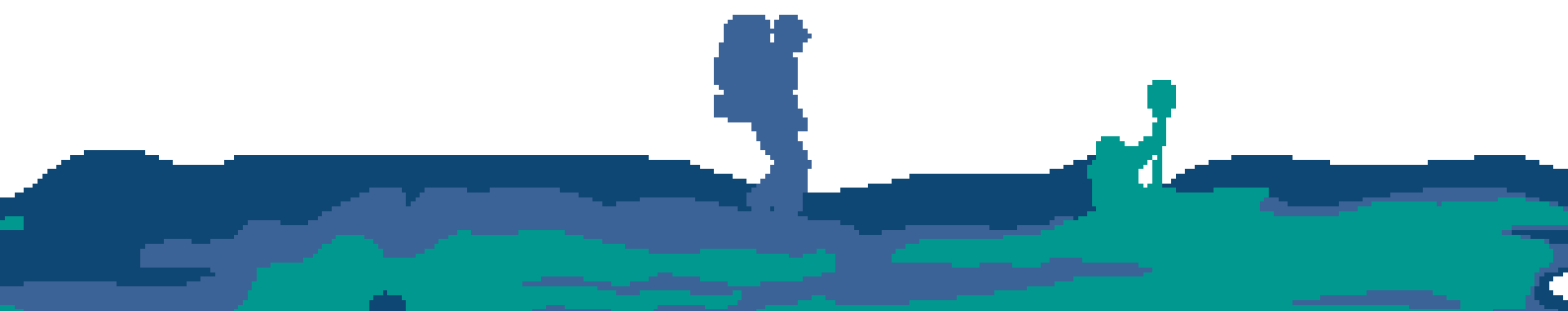
The hike was spectacular!! It was also extremely windy. Each day, we found an amazing natural look-out point over the ocean, Bass Strait, viewing the prettiest parts of the Prom all at once. The hills were never too steep, mostly long, or gradual and arduous, but my Patrol was always enthusiastic and positive. They stepped up to any challenge or learning opportunity with eagerness.

As one of our Leaders commended at the conclusion of the journey, "Thank you to the youth for their exemplary behaviour and teamwork. ... they met every challenge with an amazing attitude." During our time at the Prom, we definitely acknowledged the importance of layering to keep warm in the cold climate, as the wind always made the 11-degrees feel like 7-degrees.

When we completed the hike at 1:45pm, the sun was shining enough to convince our Leaders that we deserved ice-creams! Everyone then showered before we commenced the three hour drive back to Carlton, just north of the CBD. That evening, we had pizza on Lygon Street, a street famous for its Italian restaurants, and more ice-cream as dessert from Brunetti's. The cakes from the shop, that were beyond our imagination!

The next two nights our accommodation was the Carlton Scout Hall. It was great to have a space to play, sleep, and cook, plus a bathroom. (Thank-you Carlton Scouts for the use of your hall. :) Greatly appreciated!)

We spent Thursday exploring Melbourne CBD. We visited the crucial attractions like the Original Lolly Store and Lego Land, but we also paid a visit to Old Melbourne Gaol, the State Library, and Hardrock Climbing, all within our budget. We used our feet and one tram to get around the city.



The Gaol was very interesting to learn about the history of the criminals that were kept and executed there, as well as how it had been used previously (like in WWII to keep enemies).

The State Library was massive and impressive. On the top level, you could look down on the spider-web of desks with green lamps, like a scene from Harry Potter. The climbing was amazing, the walls taller than any wall we have on the Sunshine Coast. The CBD was such a great experience, and one we'll never forget, the history, the fun, the sheer scale of it all was just the best. Certainly, it was a highlight of the trip.

Thank you

The LTAF fund have provided us with half of our total cost of the expedition. These crucial funds supported this truly irreplaceable experience. Thank you.

To my Patrol, Thank you for accompanying me on the journey and putting in so much effort in preparation and completion and a fantastic positive attitude toward everything.

Thank you to the families for supporting their children on the adventure and for being so ready and motivated to help with anything and everything.

The Leader, Arunga, and adult, my father, that came with us to the Prom, providing support throughout the entire expedition. Planning, Doing, and Reviewing> you were always there to guide us.

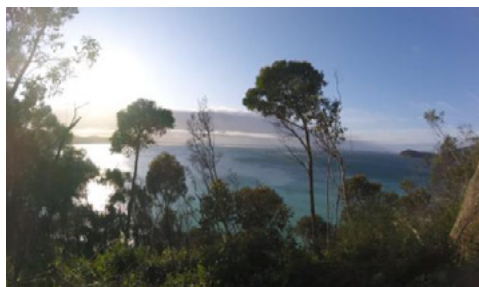
My Scout Leader, Stretch, for being the emergency contact and continuously checking up on our location to make sure we were ok. Also for providing the GoPro to record the Adventurous Journey :).

Everyone else who either knowingly or unknowingly provided some form of support or guidance to get myself and my Patrol down to the southern-most point of the Australian mainland and back again. (Like buying a sausage and drink from the countless Bunnings BBQs for our fundraising).

Alba's Wilsons Promontory AJ – Funded by LTAF



- Start of Hike -



- Little Waterloo Bay, Day 3 Morning -



-View to Mt Oberon and Ocean, Day 1 -



- Great Sea Eagle -- Ice-creams Outside of Brunetti's -



- State Library of Victoria -



- Start of Day 2 -



- Start of Hike -



- Little Waterloo Bay, Day 3 Morning -



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- Great Sea Eagle -- Ice-creams Outside of Brunetti's -



- State Library of Victoria -



- Start of Day 2 -

