

Reclaimed Heritage Tracks:

“This land is mine and my children’s by moral right. We use it!” Myles Dunphy, the father of NSW conservation, 1920.

Although that statement was made nearly 100 years ago many Australians still feel strongly about sense of place and bond with country. Heritage and freedom to enjoy recreation on public land is important to us. That is why the changes for horse riding in wilderness areas of national parks is being celebrated by those passionate about their heritage and recreation.

- In 1994 there were 328 national parks covering 4 million hectares of NSW.
- By 2006 there were 770 national parks covering 6.6 million hectares.
- In 1994 there were 650,000 hectares of Declared Wilderness protection.
- By 2006 there were 2 million hectares of Declared Wilderness.
- National parks now cover 8.8% of the state and approximately 30% of national parks is wilderness.

These statistics may sound good for protecting flora and fauna, but national park policy is also to provide for heritage and recreation. The expansion of wilderness meant that access was virtually denied to all but self-reliant bush walkers in 30% of our national parks. In the south-east area three heritage tracks were cut off by the wilderness declarations- the **Shoebidge Track** connecting Araluen to Nelligen, a purpose built track dating back to the gold rush days, **WD Tarlinton Track**, an ancient Aboriginal path pioneered by William Tarlinton in 1829 to move stock from the table lands to the coast and **Georges Pack Track** used by families living on the upper Deua River to bring supplies to Moruya from Bendethera.

Access for All was started in 1999 in response to the then proposed wilderness expansion. Our efforts probably won some reduction to the scale but could not stop

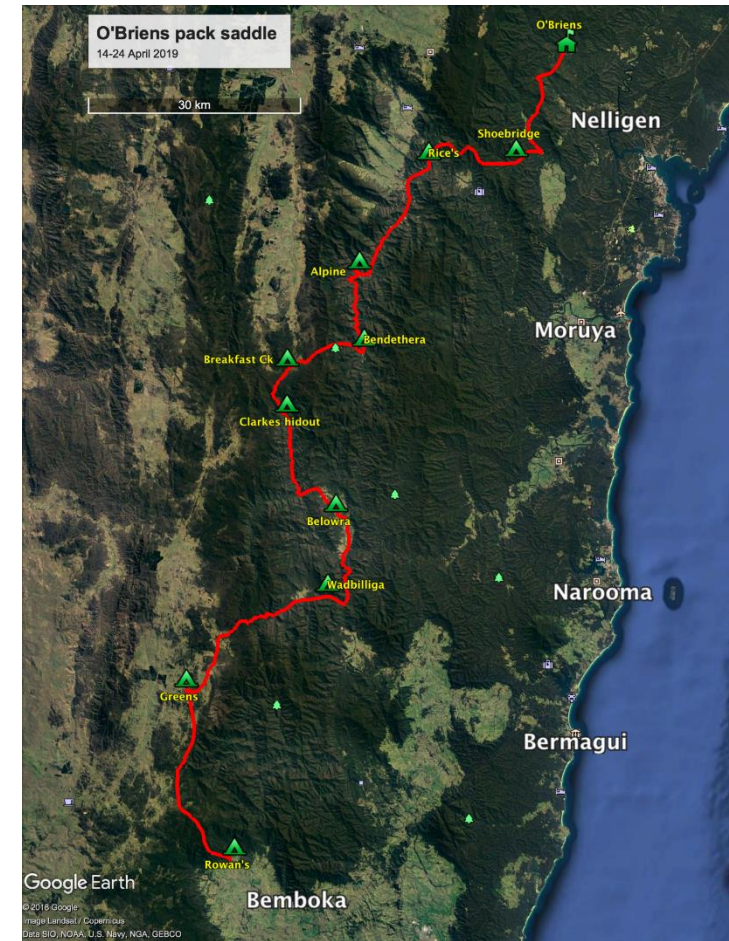
a determined government. It then took a twenty year battle to win back a concession allowing horse riding access along these specified tracks.

In April a group of Access for All members completed a great adventure, riding from Currowan Creek, Nelligen, to Bemboka. It would not have been possible without access to the Shoebidge Track and the WD Tarlinton Track.

The expedition riders were Michael and Melissa O'Brien from Nelligen, Bella Hart of Braidwood, descendant of the Rankin pioneering family of the Deua River, Annabelle Dobson of Bemboka and Kerryn Hopkins of Belowra. The ride took 10 days through spectacular scenic country following a series of interlinking tracks. The good weather helped as the group took on the ever changing landforms, traversing rainforests, dry stony mountain ridges, winding around mountain passes with steep drop offs, steep descents and climbs, river crossings and great camp sites.



Melissa, Michael and Bella, pictured, completed the 10 day ride. Annabelle rode to Bendethera and Kerryn to Belowra.



Map showing the track and camp sites of the 10 day ride

Michael is quick to point out, *“the success of such an expedition involves careful route planning, organised equipment, pre-arranged food drops, the right horses and good riders. It’s not for the feint hearted and in some places you need to arrange access through private property and respect the landowners.”*



A forest of tree ferns in contrast to the dry stony ridges.



Wadbilliga National Park- spectacular rocky ridges.



Descending the WD Tarlinton Track to Belowra.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE:

Family \$20.00. Pensioner \$5.00. Individual \$10.00.
Corporate \$100.00 includes GST.

NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY 28th July at 10am

Moruya Golf Club. This is the AGM therefore there will be an election of officers. Consider standing.

AFA 2018-2019 COMMITTEE

Chairman: Garry Gowen 0416268964

Secretary: Julia Short (02) 44745412

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Membership: Jenette Hindmarsh (02)48471115

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**TO NATIONAL PARKS &
WILDERNESS**

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