



This month I feature Andy Smylie from South Australia who loves shooting birds. Also Mel Brackstone from Queensland who takes images in our temperate climate. Both of them love Tasmania & come when they can.



Eastern Spinebill

BIRDING FROM A PHOTOGRAPHER'S PERSPECTIVE

There are over 800 species of birds in Australia ranging from the smallest Weebill to the largest Emu. There are black and white birds and birds with feathers that are all the colours of the rainbow.

The aim of most birders/"twitchers" is to see and identify as many birds as they can in a given location or period or lifetime. Hence the word "lifer" refers to having seen or identified a bird for the first time. Committed bird-watchers will travel long distances to see a new species just to add a species to their "lifelists", "year list" or any other lists.

So, how did I get into this state of "twitching"?

Well, I started my hobby in 2003 when we went on holidays to NZ and I purchased a one-megapixel digital camera and took some great landscaped images (well I thought they were great at the time). I was hooked and joined a couple of camera clubs. I bought a Canon 300D digital camera and a couple of lenses and that hobby (I still went to work weekdays) became a full pastime and quickly progressed to a passion/obsession.

I joined APS and gained an AAPS by doing well in APS comps and venturing into international comps. I liked taking candid shots of people and landscapes and open subjects. I did not consider myself as a nature photographer at all.



Juvenile Eastern Spinebill

Well, to do well in landscape photography you have to get up early and stay out late to catch that golden light and the great moods that that light brings. What do you do with the rest of the daylight????? Buy a longer lens and shoot birds of course!!

It seemed simple at the time. My friend (who took magic panoramas) and I, bought a 300 mm lens, added a 1.4 extender and started taking photos of birds. Our approach was always as photographers. We tried to get the best image possible using all the same principles we applied to other forms of our photography. E.g. good light, right exposure, good use of DOF, good composition, attention to detail, simplify the image, etc, etc. I still approach my bird photography in this way today: photographer first then birder.

Of course, my hard drive is full of bird photos these days and very few landscapes and people shots. I realized eventually, that to get good bird shots you have to have good light, get up early and stay out late and go to places where the birds are, which may not be conducive to good landscapes or portrait photography.

Part of the appeal of my birding is getting out and about and into this glorious land of ours. I have fallen asleep under an overhanging gum tree while taking photos of little brown bird in the same tree, and sat for an hour or so in some shady spot while watching the birds, not really concerned about imagery. It is good for the soul.

I use Canon equipment just because that's the way I started and see no reason to change. For my birding I purchased a 5DIII, which is also great for landscapes and people shots and video when combined with the right lens. Great focusing setup on this camera but the frame rate at 6 shots per second left a little to be desired. I have 25-megapixels to play with and can crop 50% off the image and still have plenty of leeway for printing. I also found the camera to be very good in low light.

I shot with the 5DIII for some time using at first a 70-200 IS USM lens with a 2x converter; too heavy and too short for birding really. I progressed to a 300 f/4 with a 1.4 and 2x converter. Much better images but still a little short for birding.

The Canon 400 mm f/5.6 is the lens I would recommend for those starting their birding experience. This lens is reasonably priced and while there is no IS (image stabilization) it is nice and light for handholding, great for birds in flight and sharp as. This lens combines well with the 1.4 and 2x converters but is best on a tripod if you are going to use a 2x converter. I am also hearing great things about the newer Canon 100-400mm IS USM lens.

I keep the 5DIII as a good backup for birding, for landscapes and videos as I am just starting to shoot videos of the birds etc. My current setup is a Canon 7DII camera combined with a Canon 300 f/2.8 IS USM lens and usually a 1.4 or 2x converter. I can hand hold this lens most of the time but as I age, (we all do) it is becoming a lot heavier. The 500 f/4 is on the radar for when I win the lottery !!

Juvenile Eastern Spinebill with pollen



Juvenile Eastern Spinebill





Focusing on the 7DII is great and the 10 frames per sec on burst mode is way better than the 6 on the 5DIII. This is a cropped sensor camera so I have an effective focal length of 672mm with this setup, if my math is correct and 20 megapixels to play with. I don't believe the noise factor is as good on the 7DII as the 5DIII, but not bad all the same.

I have recently added a cheap gimbal head to my birding kit and it is working well on both a tripod (too cumbersome in the bush) and a monopod. While taking most of the weight off my shoulders, the gimbal and monopod combo seems to be giving me good results. I believe my images are sharper, especially on the tripod, and I can hold the camera and lens aloft while waiting for the right moment. You know, when the bird decides to pop it's head from behind that bush for a short moment.

It is a little more difficult to explain how I use this setup in the field/paddock or bush etc. Mostly I shoot on AV (aperture priority), as I find it easier to think of only one thing at a time – aperture and DOF (I know that is two things) and manual mode, does not give that luxury. I try and keep my shutter speed around the 1000/sec mark and find that I can control this pretty well in AV mode. ISO is set usually at about 400, but I will go to 800 if needed. I have shot at 2500 and on occasions 3200.

I have tried TV (time value) to control the shutter speed, but I find myself back in AV mode before too long.

Something about being an "old dog", I know !!

Major Mitchell
Parrot in Flight

Spotted Pardalote





Brown Headed Honey Eater

I also “shoot to the right”. Which is nothing to do with the way I am facing but to do with the highlights and shadows in a histogram. I find that if I am shooting towards the sky and I want to get reasonable exposure on the bird I over-expose by 2/3 of a stop (sometimes a whole stop). Yes the sky will be blown but I get good details in the birds most of the time. I can recover some of the highlights in post processing. Sometimes I like the “graphic” look of the bird set against a white sky. Most other times I will shoot just 1/3 over, and this seems to work well for me.

Mostly I shoot on evaluative metering but will use spot metering when trying to isolate my subject from the sky, or when there is not enough contrast for the camera to focus.

The first part of my post processing is in camera. If it is not sharp in camera it will not be sharp on the computer screen. I take a lot of pictures (memory is relatively cheap) trying to catch that “right” moment, not for the sake of it, but I am looking for features, such the turn of a head or a catch light in the eye. These things can make a difference in the final image. Backs of heads and bums and out of focus or blurry pics generally don’t make for good imagery, so a lot of images are deleted in camera.

I use Lightroom CC and a little Photoshop CC to do my post processing. Mostly I use LR for cataloguing and basic adjustments. The problem is you need a very clear path for your processing. If the image is to remain as a “nature” shot in club and APS comps, then you have to be very mindful not to add or remove any content of the image etc., with only cropping and basic adjustments applied. I am always mindful of not over processing my birdshots, unless of course that is what I set out to do, then anything goes. I am not adverse to using PS to add textures and layers etc and playing with imagery. That is half the fun of photography to me.



Textured Blue Wing Parrot

In Light room, first I will crop the image to a ratio that I think fits, depending on the use of the final image. We can revisit the crop tool again if we change our minds or want to use the image for a different purpose. (This can be output to specific sizes later through LR or PS). I adjust white and black points in the image. I then adjust highlights and shadows to taste. Then I will add a little clarity and vibrancy, being careful not to overdo both. I follow this with a dose of colour, noise adjustment if needed and sharpening to taste, remembering that this is “raw sharpening” not output sharpening.

Editing in Photoshop is where I apply a couple of actions to resize, sharpen for output, add a stroke and output for FB or what ever the end use might be. Images can also be exported from LR with specific parameters, but I find that most times the actions in PS work best for me.

If the mood and image takes your fancy, then in PS the moon is the limit. I love PS for the flexibility of layers and layer masks. YouTube and the Internet is a wonderful place to learn all sorts of things, if you have the inclination and time. I will use textures on backgrounds of some of my bird images because there are distractive elements in the image or background. One has to be mindful to match the colour and texture to the bird etc. The added texture has the ability to destroy as well as enhance.

So proceed with caution..... But have a go and have fun.

“Make no mistake, bird photography will challenge your skills”. B. Moose Peterson

Cheers -

Andy Smylie

Rainbow bee-eater texture added





Welcome Swallow



Shy Heath
Wren

SOME
MORE OF
ANDY'S
IMAGES



Rainbow
Bee Eaters



Nankeen Kestrel with supper



Red Capped Plover



Double Banded Plover



A touch of Summer - Featuring different images I have taken in Tasmania during this time - Anne O'Connor



Tasmania in the eyes of a sub-tropics dweller

Mel Brackstone EFIAP FAPS

I've always been fascinated by temperate climate plants, and I guess that's because, as I was growing up, the only magazines or gardening books I could buy were produced in, and for, temperate climates.

My personal library is full of them. I lusted after trees I couldn't grow, trees that changed colour in Autumn, lost their leaves in Winter, and budded afresh in Spring. I wanted bulbs that showed their fresh buds and flowers as the Spring slowly warmed up, and I wanted Japanese trees so that I could bonsai them.

It took me a couple of decades of disappointment before I finally realised that I would never be able to grow most of the plants I saw in my books.....

Travelling to Tasmania is my cure. I can soak up the softer light, the wonderful deciduous trees, the fabulous colours of Japanese maples and poplars, and the endless forests of mountain ash and antarctic beech.

I tend to shoot macro a lot, when I am in the national forests, but the process I use might be different to the one many photographers usually follow. I have a love for soft bokeh, and beautiful blur, so I use lenses that aren't necessarily very sharp, but give the fantasy look I'm after. The images I've provided here are mostly shot with a Petzval Art lens with extension tube. The Petzval lens is based on the original Russian lens from a couple of centuries ago, and it can sometimes produce a wonderful swirl in the background.

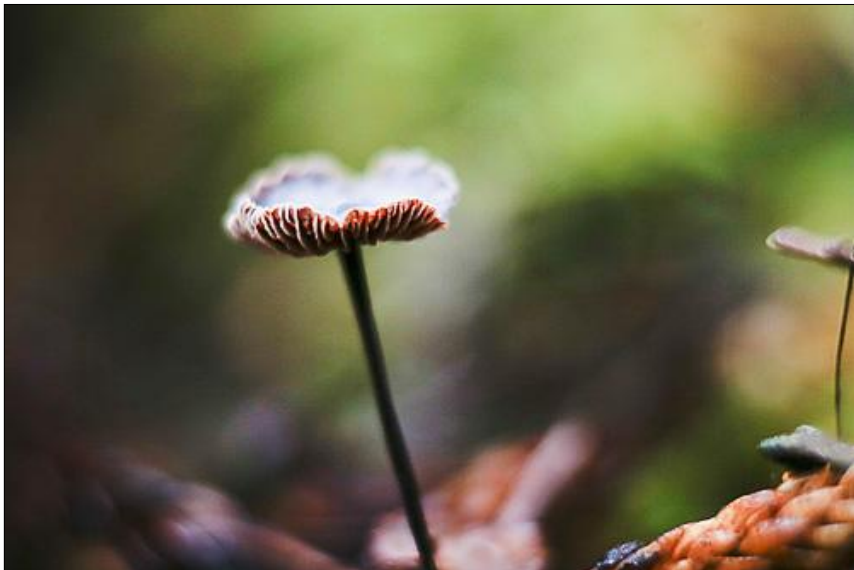
All of the attached images were shot in the Cradle Mountain National Park, in Autumn. We've visited the park every April for the past 3 years, and each year the foliage on the Fagus has changed colour at a different time and different rate. This year the colour was all but finished by Anzac day, whereas last year it hadn't even begun to show its best by Anzac day! That's what a change in rainfall will do!

Needless to say, I love the temperate rainforest, and the soft rain, and the occasional snowfall, and the wonderful trees and plants that I'll only ever see in pictures otherwise. Shooting them with my crazy lenses helps me to remember them even better - Mel



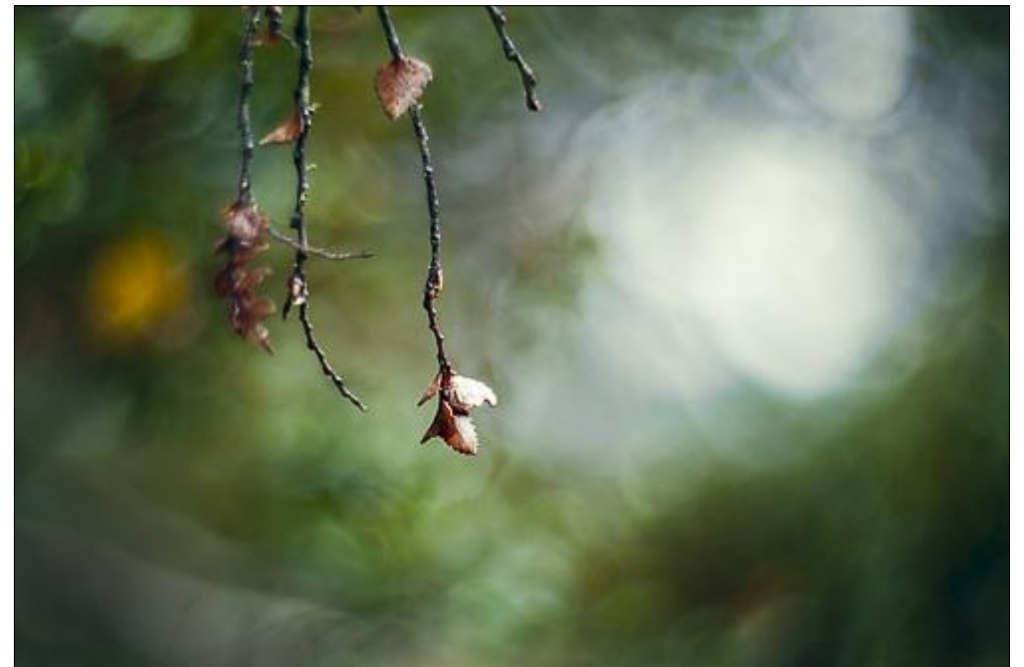
Images - Tasmanian Deciduous Beech or Fagus

The following are photos taken by Mel in Tasmania at various places - Mel





Images from Enchanted Forest TAS





Above - Bath House Weindorfers & below - Memorial Weindorfer, Cradle Mt NP TAS



Top - Droplet, Below - Dawn Dew - TAS





From the Editor - Anne

This year has flown with Christmas just around the corner. Many changes are afoot within the society and APS is asking for your input to the discussion paper about change. Please read it and consider carefully what you would like to see happen & respond as requested. Don't just ignore it and rely on others to respond. The society cannot go ahead without input from members as to what you would like it to look like. The link can be found on the APS webpage under downloads with a heading of APS REVIEW. Here is the link if you haven't already found it - <http://www.a-p-s.org.au/index.php/downloads/aps-review>

I notice that I have trouble accessing the links I get sent in my browser because I am using explorer as the automatic option. Explorer tends not to like some web pages, so I mostly use chrome to get onto the APS webpage links. Others may be experiencing the same thing. If you change to chrome to get onto the APS webpage, you will find most of the download links under downloads. Also rather than click on the links which freeze in explorer, I go direct to the website to find them and this works with explorer as well.

Two changes have already been made within APS. The first one is a change in the name of what were called Divisions. These are now to be called Special Interest Groups. Joining what was a Division, is a way of giving members the option of being part of a group who have a special interest in a specific type of photography and they were created many years ago. Some of those groups still exist and are relevant, some have moved on and others have expanded. For example the digital division was first formed when the majority of people were working in film and at the time, members were not aware that it would become the way of photography in the future. So whether or not it stays as a special interest group or just becomes the society as a whole, we are not to know. Yet some people only produce digital images, other people like prints etc. So it could remain. Other groups, such as nature, contemporary, print, etc may also be questioned and it is possible be that they all will be looked at over time dependent upon input from the members. However now, when we are trying to look at change, the term "Division" was considered to be divisive, rather than uniting, plus it was not very self explanatory, hence the name change to special interest groups. What the change implies in real terms associated with the operations of each one, is yet to be decided, as they could all come under review in time. Especially in relation to what will each of them should look like. Your thoughts and words on this will have a bearing on the outcomes.

The second item of change is the reversion back to having a joint membership to include partners, with a reduction in annual fees for a couple, rather than 2 single memberships. Again fine details relating to the actual cost and what this will look like is still to be decided, but change is happening and change can be good. Elsewhere in this newsletter, Rod Oliver has given us some input on this year's APSCON just gone, which had a changed format to allow for more attendees over a weekend with a shorter lead-up time to the main events held over the weekend. Plus I have included a promotion from South Australia for next year's APSCON in Adelaide. So they are off to a good start.

Lastly I would like to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a bright and happy New Year to come. Thank you to all who have participated in our ventures during this year and it is hopeful there will be more ventures in the next - All the very best in APS - Anne

AIPC 2015—TWEED HEADS

Here is the results of the AIPC competition between the States. I have outlined the state winners of each section. In the mono prints, we were equal 3rd with Qld. Colour prints 3rd, mono & colour digital 5th. Meaning the competition is a lot greater in the digital sections.

Overall we come 4th, which is not too bad. Perhaps another time we will outdo ourselves.

Judges were - Daryl James, Margaret O’Grady and John North from Qld

Tasmania however, did receive some individual awards in the form of merits & congratulations go to the following people:

Silvia Chatterton for her work “Foggy Morning” in monochrome prints
Georgie McKie for her work “Storm over Lake Diamond” in colour prints



Entry	MONO PRINT	COLOUR PRINT	MONO DIGITAL	COLOUR DIGITAL	TOTAL
QLD	109	106	113	122	450
NSW	114	124	108	115	461
TAS	109	110	100	96	415
SA	100	101	9	95	305
VIC	115	114	114	103	446
WA			105	111	216

This image on the left won the best image award over all catagories. (I am including it here as an example of the quality of work that gets submitted.

**Congratulations go to Jason Pang
from NSW for “Old Man”**



Colour print—Merit AIPC
Storm over Lake Diamond - Georgie McKie



Monochrome print—Merit AIPC
Foggy Morning - Sylvia Chatterton

APSCON 2015 - A Summary - Rod Oliver

The Australian Photographic Convention, APSCON 2015 was held in the Twin Towns Services Club at Tweed Heads on the QLD - NSW border, but officially in NSW. This raised some issues, with NSW on daylight saving and Qld not. APSCON was on Qld time, an interesting combination.

The conference venue was held on the third floor & separated from regular patrons. The room for registrations, trade displays, morning and afternoon teas was adequate. Prints were displayed off that room and there were sufficient meeting rooms attached for workshops, etc. The main lecture room was large, but a lack of tiered seating was a negative.

Tweed Heads and Coolangatta, are completely dominated by high rise buildings. There are a few reminders of what the area looked like 50 years ago with some remaining one and two bedroom holiday homes with fibro cladding. Fortunately, planning has kept the high rise buildings off the beaches which are a regular habitat of surfers. From sunrise onwards, they appear with surfboard in hand, looking for that big ride.



Heading to the surf

Sunup at 5.00am was the best time of the day to be on the beach – Sun shining, warm and a light breeze – fantastic. And apart from surfboard riders, there were lots of photo-opportunities – many of the surfers have elaborate warm up routines before surfing.

Most of the delegates up at sunrise opted to photograph the surfers coming in on waves. I opted to photograph those on the beach doing their thing. The strong sunlight looking out to sea facilitated subjects in silhouette.



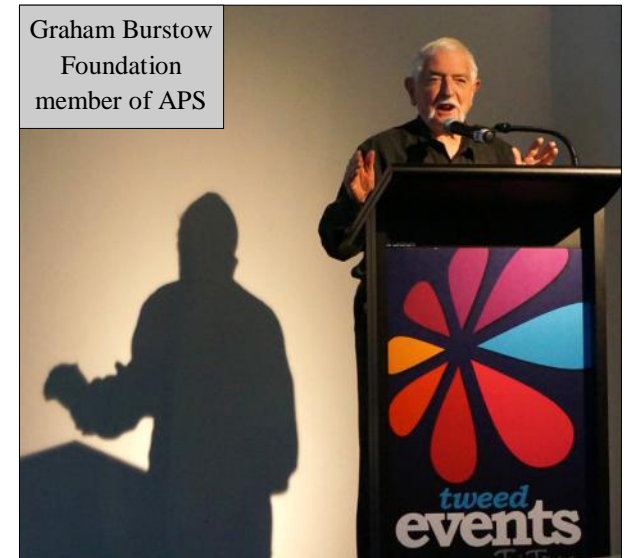
Stretching

The 2015 program was a makeover of previous APSCON's with the program shortened from 7 to 5 days and changed around. Basically this worked, mainly due to the line-up of keynote speakers. Leaving the two conference dinners to the last two nights was not a good idea. Lack of any organised social activity on the first three nights was an unfortunate oversight. Four Tasmanians attended including one who now lives elsewhere: Felix Staub, Ian Hubble, Rod Oliver and Hector Beveridge (considered an honourable Tasmanian by the local photography groups).

Day 1 of the conference was given over to workshops, with the choice of attending one of three in the morning session (Lightroom 5 features, Creative AV's and Street Photography). In the afternoon, choices were Portraiture, Landscape Photography and Hands on Macro. Obviously, there was a variation in the standard of workshops presented, but a lack of suitable locations for nature photography contributed. The APSCON competitions and exhibitions presented at the end of the day had some wonderful images, but were let down by pretty average presentations. In the Australian Interstate Photographic Challenge, NSW was announced as the winning state with no mention of other states placegetters or points scored.

Day 2 was tour day with tours to (1) Fingal Lighthouse and Tweed Regional Art Gallery, (2) Tweed Coast and Valley Highlights, and (3) Gold Coast, Surfers Paradise and Graham Burstow's exhibition of Surfers Paradise 50 years ago. A feature of the tours was the diversity of the scenery from high rise buildings and ribbon retail development, to waterways, farmland (sugar cane and tropical crops) to villages and countryside basically untouched by developers. Fingal Heads is one such village - a real step back in time. Graham Burstow's exhibition of photos highlighting Surfers Paradise in the 1950's and 1960's was most impressive.

Friday of APSCON was set aside for Divisional presentations, and what promised to be a fairly mundane day, was surprisingly good. The presenting Divisions had organised excellent presentations .e.g. Pia Jessen on Ethiopia, Mark Galer of Sony on Sony Mirrorless cameras, Graeme Guy on Nature Photography (amazing photos), and Roger Skinner (interviewed by Brian Rope) on Contemporary Photography. Anne O'Connor's abstract photography was singled out for excellence.





Above from left - Hector, Felix & Ian at a farm in the Tweed Valley
Below - Hector at Rainbow Bay

Saturday at APSCON – the conference moved up a gear with top notch presenters – Graeme Guy on Nature Photography, Wendy Roche on Creative Photography with Lensbaby, Mark Rayner on Travel Photography, Valerie Martin on Travel Photography (Ethiopia) and Pele Leung on the Endless Track (his photography journey). Delegates unwound at the Social Dinner (formerly the Digital Dinner).

Sunday at APSCON continued on from the Saturday with presentations by Graeme Guy on Targeted Nature Photography, Roger Skinner on Perils and Pleasures of Publishing, and Robert Walker on Street Photography. That evening saw the end of APSCON with the usual awards dinner.

Two things to sum up:

- (1) Roger Skinner delivered the best one liner of APSCON 2015. “All judges are idiots, except for the one that awards you first place.”
- (2) It was pleasing to see a much larger trade display at APSCON 2015, than at previous one’s.

Footnote:

APSCON 2015 may have been a watershed moment – the end of the domination of the digital SLR’s. Sony are promoting mirror less cameras with the slogan “Move to Mirrorless”, and Fuji and Olympus are following suit. Attractions of mirror less cameras include less weight and possibly less expensive, although the latest Sony, the A7RII is priced at \$4,000 (body only)!

An eminent disciple of Nikon Digital SLR’s recently moved out of Nikon gear and re-equipped with Fuji mirror less cameras. We live in interesting times!

APSCON 2016 will be held in Adelaide from October 12 to 16

Rod Oliver - APSCON 2015 delegate





APSCON 2016



Wed 12th - Sun 16th
OCTOBER 2016

Westminster School
Marion, SA
15mins from Adelaide city centre

SPEAKERS

Tony Bridge	Lou Marafioti
Mark Galer	Phillipa Frederiksen
Dylan Toh	Paul Atkins
Marianne Lim	Paul Macdonald
Denis Smith	David Evans

The Australian Photographic Society
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www.ap-s.org.au



PROGRAM

Wednesday	Opening, Social Dinner, Trade Displays.
Thursday	Workshops.
Friday	Trips & Tours.
Saturday	Speakers, Awards Dinner.
Sunday	Speakers, AGM with Nibbles & Drinks.

Diverse, arty, scenic and delicious, Adelaide has it all. Isn't it time you joined the party?

Is it the Mediterranean weather, the exciting sporting and arts festivals, funky small bars, laid-back atmosphere, beautiful parks that surround the city or the glorious beaches that stretch for kilometres that makes Adelaide so special?

Come and find out.

For more information please contact Yvonne Hill on
0450 091 322 or the office 02 9890 9795.

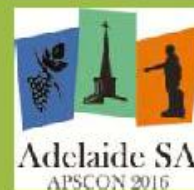


Photo book competition 2016

Cash prize pool \$500

Entry free

The maximum allowable size for your book is A4 and it can be in any format - portrait, landscape (21cmx29cm) or square (21cmx21cm)

The maximum number of pages allowed is 60 (30 sheets)

The content of your book is entirely up to you within the bounds of propriety and may have a soft or hard cover

Books will be judged according to the usual photographic standards in September 2016



More information will be available after this year's APSCON on the APS web site and Facebook page

In the meantime for further details contact
Yvonne Hill

hilly308@bigpond.com



A project of the APS Print Division

THANKS TO ALL FOR THEIR INPUT TO THIS EDITION

WITHOUT IT, THERE WOULD BE NO NEWSLETTER

To conclude, I have added one of Mel's images,
From Maryland's Track Cradle Mountain NP.
Known as the Hounslow Heath walk
More information about this area can be found [here](#).

EXTRA THANKS TO THE MAINLANDERS
ANDY & MEL
FOR THEIR INPUT TO OUR NEWSLETTER

I am always happy to receive any material from anyone for inclusion
Provided it is related to APS, Tasmania or Tasmanian members of APS.
It can also include information about photography or photographic material to
benefit our members in APS.



It will be printed in an edition with the first available space as close as possible to receipt of the material.
It must also be within the ethics and principles of the APS

NOTE: Content is copyright to the author. Any reproduction must be with that person's consent.

The next edition of **Tasmanian Light** will be a Autumn edition, hopefully out some time before March,
so I will be wanting material anytime from now until the second week in February. Thanks again for all the
wonderful contributions. Lets hope the next one equals what has gone before — Anne

UNTIL NEXT TIME ENJOY
YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY —
ANNE

ab_oconn@bigpond.com