

Mount Coot-tha Night Nav Organisers' Report

Melinda Buchanan (and Luke Goodfellow)

In November, Luke and I were lucky enough to be able to take part in the QRA-subsidised wilderness first aid course, run by [All Aid](#). We got a weekend of excellent hands-on first-aid training for \$50, provided we made a significant volunteer contribution to the QRA in 2012.

After checking out [the volunteer register](#), we hatched the cunning plan to run the upside-down event in the Mount Coot-tha forest reserve. Not only is the reserve close to home, it's also right next to the QRA shed, located at Purtell Park, Bardon. Brisbane City Council came to the party, issuing a permit in good time for the event.

The last upside-down to be held at Mount Coot-tha was in 2004. Luke had participated, and we still had a copy of the map. (Carting all those old rogaining maps from house to house finally paid off!) Inaccurate tracks, a misplaced 120 point checkpoint and some vague contours on this map had been the cause of much angst at the 2004 event, so we knew we had a fair bit of mapping work to do.

Master tactician Doug May assisted with the preliminary course planning – the sort that can be done indoors over a bottle of wine. Once we'd singled out some draft control locations on paper, the legwork started. Several spots that looked good on the map turned out to be on unmarked tracks (too easy) or in lantana-infested hellholes (too hard), requiring a rethink. On the other hand, many of the creek lines were surprisingly good travelling, having been flushed out by heavy rains over the past year.

Trevour Pitt provided invaluable assistance setting the course, and our Garmin GPS watches also rate a mention as “the vetters” – helping us to avoid wildly misplacing any controls. With the reserve being so popular with recreational walkers, runners and mountain-bikers, the control hanging was left until quite late, to minimise the chance of controls going missing before the event. Our vetters/hangers Zac Twidale, Trevour Pitt, Peter McCallum and Sean Henderson came through for us, getting all of the controls hung with over twelve hours to spare.

While Luke took the lead in the course setting, I endeavoured to organise the admin, promotion, sponsorship and hash house. The QRA kindly agreed to donate a portion of each participant's entry fee to Oxfam Australia, via [Luke and my Trailwalker team](#). As a result, we were able to advertise the event through the Brisbane Trailwalker newsletter.

We were also lucky enough to secure the sponsorship of [wildfiresports.com.au](#), a Brisbane company run by rogainers for rogainers, trail runners and other multi-sport athletes. (Owner Brenton Gray and his wife Meredith came a very respectable 18th overall in the event.) The draw prize of a Garmin Forerunner 110 GPS watch, valued at \$229, went to lucky participant Geoff Hines.

Whether because of the proximity to Brisbane, the prize on offer, or the wider promotion of the event through the Trailwalker list, the turnout was huge. At the final tally, there were 182 entrants in 73 teams, and only five people unable to compete due to illness or injury.

As the first competitors arrived at Purtell Park, we got a call to alert us to the severe storm warning issued for Brisbane and Ipswich. The Bureau of Meteorology radar showed lots of red and yellow

marching across the screen from the west, and the lightning flickering behind the television towers on the hills confirmed that a storm was indeed on the way. Thankfully, the forecast hail held off, and most people were able to keep dry during course planning under the admin verandah or the hash house tarpaulin. Thanks to Jenny Edwards and Zac Twidale for assisting with map handout, and a special thank you to Andrew Shannon for standing in the rain for an hour and a half, directing parking.

The weather cleared up soon after the 11pm start, and everyone proved far more hard-core than we had foreseen, with very few people pulling out during the night. This caused some problems with the breakfast catering. My calculations of bacon consumption were clearly a little off, as the 7 kg were devoured in short order – disastrous! If I could have converted the 5 kg of leftover Bircher muesli into bacon and bread, I would have. A big thanks to KT Doyle, Karl Hilton and Derek McKinnon for cooking up a storm and helping to pack up afterwards. Thanks also to Bakers Delight Spring Hill for donating twelve freshly-baked loaves of bread.

We would like say congratulations to all the first time rogainers who took part in what turned out to be a challenging event. We hope you all enjoyed yourselves, and look forward to seeing you at the next rogaine!

The team of Gary Sutherland, Robbie Andrews, Kim Beckinsdale and David Schloss convincingly won the event, visiting all but seven of the controls and scoring 280 points more than any other team. Robbie, Kim and David then rode their bikes around to the eastern side of the course to help collect controls! Thanks also to Debbie, Casey and team, Mike, Dave, Tim, Liam and Jock for clearing up all bar two of the controls – an organiser's dream!

Finally, we'd like to thank to Zac Twidale for setting up the Navlight scoring system, and holding the fort at the hash house overnight on Saturday. Thanks also to Paul Guard and Tony Scott for their admin assistance.

We thoroughly enjoyed putting on the Mt Coot-tha Night Nav upside down, and we hope you had a great time. You can find some photos from the event on the [QRA facebook page](#).