



Dharug Country — August 2026

“WHO runs the country”



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Thanks James, Josh and Vivien for contributing articles. Send any articles for future newsletter to [Vivien](#).

Photos above: Emmanuelle on the last leg of day 2 at Swiss O Week.

From the President

I love seeing and experiencing all the different things that orienteering enables. Selwyn and I were preparing for the Relay Champs at Wiannamatta and had a few emu encounters. In some cases the emu was only metres away from us. I also learnt about emu poo, which looks more like a cow turd than a kangaroo or sheep pellet. This fascinated me but I guess they are quite big birds. Now my work colleagues are all across emu poo too, just as you are as well!

When Leah ran in to complete her first leg of the relay, she exclaimed “an emu chased me!”, which

would have been exciting and a bit terrifying for one of our youngest and shortest competitors. A bit of extra adrenaline and a great story to take away.

In the last month or so whilst wandering around various bush areas for orienteering, I've come across emus, echidnas, kangaroos, wallabies, one small snake and an owl. And you can see the photo above of Emmanuelle with a Swiss cow. There is plenty more to orienteering than animal encounters but it's a bonus that I really enjoy.

See you at an event soon.

NSW School Team Announced

Well done to our junior members who were selected in the NSW School Team for the upcoming Australian School Orienteering Championships being held in the ACT in September-October.

Good luck to Matilda Saunders (Senior Girl), Ho Lam Marcus Cheung (Senior Boy), Justine de Remy de Courcelles and Tiffany Palmer (Junior Girl) and Shay Sweeney (Junior Boy).



Emmanuelle, Justine and I included some orienteering to our visit to our families in France by doing the Swiss O Week (SOW) that was conveniently held in the Portes du Soleil, a group of ski resorts across the Swiss and French border near Lake Geneva.

Except for a couple of school events for me more than 35 years ago, it was our first experience of orienteering overseas. Here are a few remarkable take outs from the week.

The event is big: just under 2600 entries... and this year was a small one compared to the last time SOW was held with more than 4000 people. There were 36 nationalities represented, including 62 Australians. This requires some serious organising and no less than 300 volunteers! That's more volunteers than we have runners at most NSW State League.

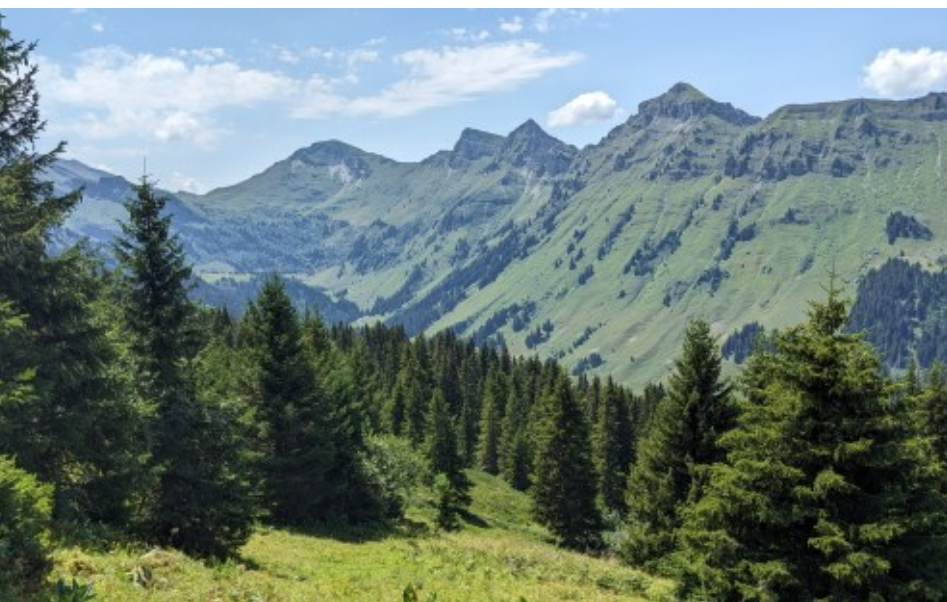
Being held in the Alps, the hills were brutally steep and high. On the first day, the programme announced 300m of climbing for 2.9km of running for Justine and about 380m for Emmanuelle and I with

courses of 3.7 to 4.2km. On other days we had "only" between 150 and 250m of climbing but sometimes such as on day 2, the walk from the top of the chairlift to the start was more than 2km long with 120m of downhill and 260m of uphill. We were glad to have a rest day in the middle of the week. At time on courses, the steepness of the slopes, particularly those covered with grass, meant that a good old bum slide was the fastest and safest way to go downhill.





The arenas were set in spectacular places, particularly the first one overlooking the Dents du Midi mountains (the first photo of this article is Emmanuelle running the finish chute). If you were inclined to do so, looking at the scenery on courses was very enjoyable. The terrain itself was very interesting as most courses were set in karst areas and offered many holes including some big sink holes on the last day. In the Alpes they don't have kangaroos like we do but many cows, and fences are not barbwire but might zap you with electricity. If you are lucky, as we were, you might spot a stoat on your way to the start.



One perk of this year's SOW was that we accessed all arenas by ski lifts and some stages required another ride to get to the start. The fifth stage was going to require three rides just to get to the arena plus another ride to get to the start but it was cancelled due to a forecast of high wind and thunderstorms. It was replaced with a backup forest sprint near town. We were still able to get our daily ride on the ski lift by using the event weekly pass that gave us access to all ski lifts in the whole Portes du Soleil. Another perk was that events were set both in France and Switzerland and stage 3, dubbed the cross-border stage, made us cross the border up to 6 times.



The best Swiss orienteers are world class, and they were some big names running including Daniel Hubman, one of the most successful orienteers of all time, and Matthieu Buehrer who had just collected a few wins at JWOC. The winner of my category H45, Marc Lauenstein was the silver medallist of the long distance at World Orienteering Championships in 2005 and 2006. I can tell I got within 21:24 minutes of a WOC silver medalist... on a sprint race, let's not talk about the longer days!

The mapping is a bit different due to the terrain and

climate. On the first stage, I thought one of my early controls (#4) was a watercourse junction. When I got there and could not see the flag I looked around until I realised the control description said the control location was a marsh and indeed, I found the tiniest of marshes marked with two blue lines on the map. Back at the watercourse junction, I went around an uprooted tree that had left a depression in the ground that was filled with water. In dry Australia, this would not have been wet and therefore not mapped at all.



Such a big event has its own website which is expected these days. What is less usual is to organise a bus service to get orienteers from the event center to each arena, partner with a ride sharing website to encourage car-pooling, organise side activities such as a raclette dinner party or have photos and a video produced every day for all to enjoy in the evenings: you can watch them all [here](#): enjoy the scenery and try spotting Justine and I at the arena on day 1 or Justine in her ACT school shirt on day 3; or check the [aftermovie](#) that is a good summary of the whole event.

The effort of the organisers went as far as making sure that orienteers from the same family (or club or who had entered together) started at similar time. It saved us having to potentially wait 4 hours or more for each others.

It was funny to spot the Australians we did not know from their club or event shirts although one brand new Uringa shirt was worn by someone from Norway or another European country: most likely exchanged at EYOC or JWOC. We got a lot of nods of acknowledgement from Kiwis on the days that Justine was wearing her Peninsula and Plain shirt; she even got a "go PAPO" encouragement.



As spectacular as the scenery was on the orienteering side of things, there was a lot more to see and do in the region. The (100-odd page) programme of SOW suggested activities and sightseeing. On the rest day we drove down to Lake Lemman/Geneva and visited Chillon castle, built in the XII century to control the route through the region. It was also a week spent with family enjoying the scenery, local food, fireworks for French national day and introducing them to the atmosphere of a big orienteering carnival. They were very impressed with the wide range of people practicing our sport particularly the huge age span starting with a baby being carried in a backpack by his mother to the usual over 80 year old categories.

We picked SOW because it fitted with our time in France for the holidays and the location worked well with one of my brothers leaving reasonably close and his family spending the week with us in

the mountains. We could have chosen many other events in Europe as it seems every week offers one or more such event: 5-days Val Di Sole in Italy were on the week before SOW. O-Ringen in Sweden was on less than a week after the last stage of SOW. OOCup started the weekend after SOW and O'France two days later... Just bear in mind that some of those events only happen every two or three years.



Exciting Events

In NSW, we are lucky that in the next two national orienteering carnival will be held in the State and the ACT.

First Orienteering ACT is organising the Oceania Orienteering Championships between 26 September and 4 October including the Australian School Orienteering Championships (ASOC).

Oceanina will be on both weekends and everyone can enter either in their age category or open easy, open moderate or open hard. Each age category also as a shorter version: look for AS for instance M35AS is for men 35 years old and over on shorter

course than M35A. There are public races run in parallel with the ASOC races during the week and school students not selected in their state teams can enter as independent students. There is even a Development Camp for those who missed out on selection or who did not nominate for their state team. Finally, you can enter any event individually, no need to enter the whole carnival.

Five of WHO's juniors have been selected for the NSW school team that is managed by our very own Saffron and other club members will be at the Development Camp.



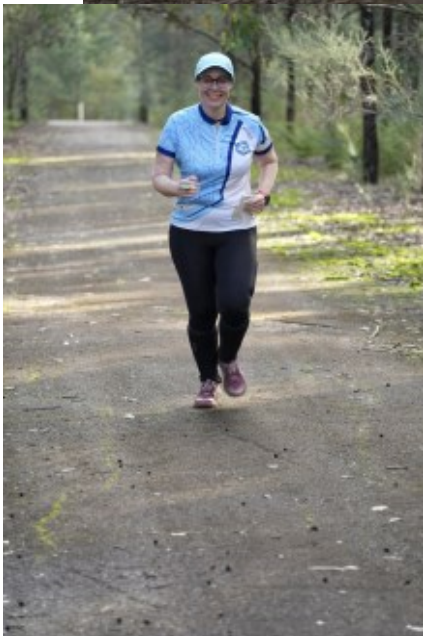
Looking further ahead, Easter carnival 2027 will be held in and around Goulburn and WHO is heavily involved with two of the four days. No doubt members' help will be needed on these days. I have heard great things from the map used on these two days.

Again, it might be a national carnival but anyone can enter regardless of fitness or abilities.



Other News Since Last Time

WHO organized the State relay in Sydney.



WHO had another successful weekend of State League in and near Orange for SL11-12 and NSW School Champs. Both days offered great terrain to run through.



Round 4 - Pennant Hills

Bennelong hosted us for Round 4 of Metro League at Pennant Hills Park, and while it was a little on the damp side overall conditions were ripe for a great day of orienteering. Our numbers were down a little with a number of people overseas, but that didn't stop us from putting in a competitive showing. Let's see how we fared in each division.

Let's start with our WHO-UR Division 1 team who, despite being outnumbered by our Garingal opposition still managed to come out on top 27-25 in a close match up. His Excellency President James McQuillan took out the 10 points this round with a very fast time of 36.58. Seth Sweeney was only minutes behind picking up 8 points for 39.16. This result now sees WHO-UR clear out on top with 3 wins from 4 rounds giving us 6 points overall. A great position to be in as we approach the final rounds.

Our Division 2 team didn't fare quite as well, going down 22-32 to SHOO-IKO. The ever-dependable Lee Coady not only picked up the 10 points with his time of 36.18, but was also the fastest in the field overall. Lachlan Coady was our next best with 7 points for 41.51. Special mention to Emma Inglis and Sue Moore who on their first Metro League outing decided to tackle Division 2 head on making a valuable contribution to the team result. This result means that WHO now has 3 wins from 4 rounds, giving us 6 points overall, the same as Big Foot and SHOO-IKO, who lead us on points difference. This is shaping up to be a nail biter as we approach the final rounds.

WHO didn't have any luck in Division 3 either, going down to SHOO-IKO 20-36. Dan Smith led the way with 10 points for 38.17, with Wai Man Wong our next best picking up 4 points for 53.09. With only 1 win and 1 draw so far this season, unfortunately WHO is placed 6th out of 7 teams - so a good performance in our next round will be vital.

In a recurring theme, WHO also went down to SHOO-IKO in Division 4, although it was reasonably close with a scoreline of 28-24. Levi Coady bagged the 10 points with a time of 40.01, with Martine Valais returning to Metro League in good form with 7 points for a time of 48.20. With no wins so far this season, WHO is unfortunately anchoring the bottom of the ladder in 6th place - so the next couple of rounds will be for pride.

Finally some good news in Division 5, where WHO trounced SHOO-IKO 40-15. Blake Read was the fastest whizzing around the course in 24.57, earning him 10 points and the fastest in the field overall. Elliott McQuillan was next fastest with 9 points for 34.33. Similarly fast times from Hudson and Nathan, showing how much depth we have in this division. We are having an outstanding season in this division, clear out on top with 4 wins out of 4, well positioned for the final rounds.

Some more good news in Division 6, where we beat GO Falcons 33-16. Linda Chan made it look easy with 10 points for 21.35 - wow. Flynn Chain wasn't far behind on 8 points for 24.14. This was our first win for the season, so hopefully there will be more to come!

Round 5—Grays Point

The penultimate round for Metro League 2026 took place at Grays Point in the Sutherland Shire, a long but worthwhile trek for most WHO members. Some recent controlled burning allowed for more off trail bush navigation opportunities than might otherwise have been the case, not to mentioned blackened clothing by the end. Courses were relatively challenging, and for the most part not what would be described as fast. Definitely a suitable preparation for the final round. Let's walk through WHO's performance on the day.

WHO-UR in Div 1 were unfortunately outclassed by an on-fire SHOO-IKO outfit, beating us 37-17. Seth Sweeney was our fastest picking up 6 points for a time of 72.36 - that gives you an idea of how slow some of these courses were. Matt Palmer and James McQuillan were only minutes behind. This places us in 3rd place on the ladder - with 3 wins and 2 losses being identical to SHOO-IKO and Bennelong, but unfortunately we sit below them on points difference.

We had much better luck in Div 2 where we convincingly defeated an underweight Bennelong team 32-8. Lee Coady took home the 10 points with a time of 57.06, and was fastest in the division overall. Solid performances from Savanna, Shay, and Marcus contributed to the blowout result (despite a lacklustre result from the club captain). This win cemented WHO's place at the top of the Div 2 ladder with 4 wins out of 5 and setting us up for a showdown with SHOO-IKO in the final.

In Div 3, UR-CC was too good for us beating us 36-18. Justine de Remy de Courcelles can hold her head up high picking up 9 points for a time of 48.31 - the only one on our team to clear the course in under an hour. Unfortunately this leaves us 6th out of 7 teams on the ladder, well and truly out of finals contention. But still pride to play for!

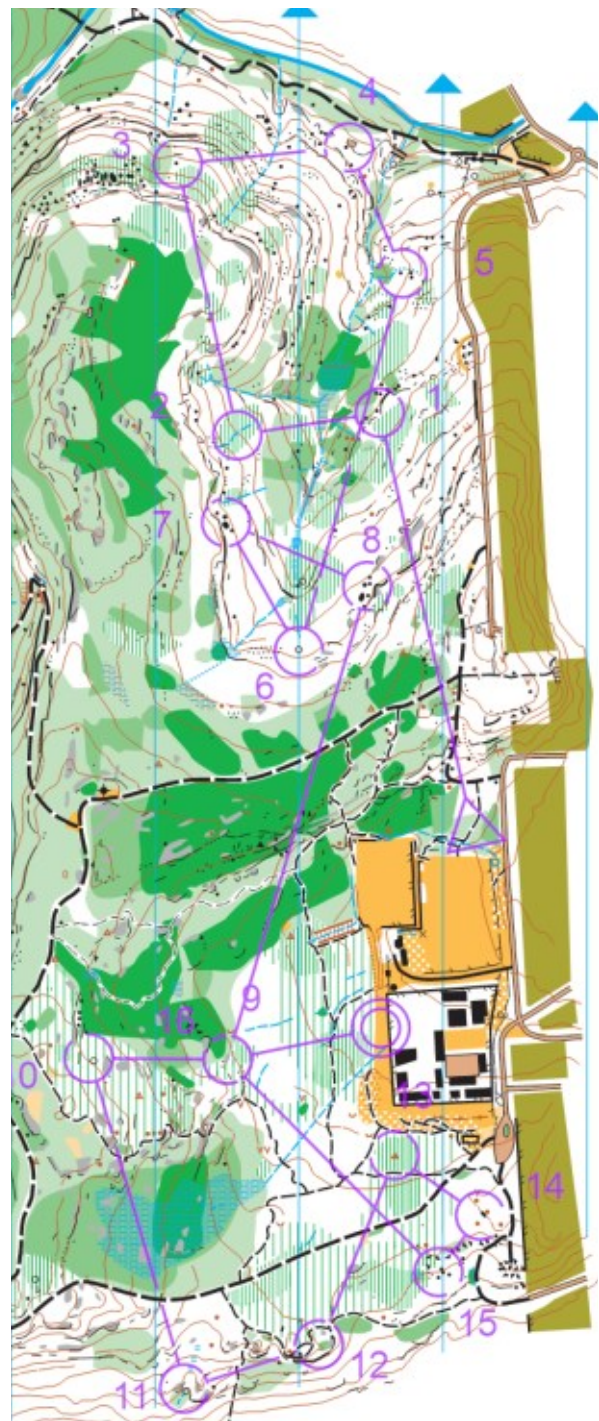
Things looked a lot better in Div 4, where we outshone Bennelong 31-23. Levi Coady replicated dad's success picking up the 10 points for a time of 36 minutes and taking out the honour of fastest in the field. This was our first win in Division 4 for the season, but unfortunately not enough to have us in the final.

The Div 5 success story continues with WHO taking our Bennelong 32-22. Blake Read took home 10 points for a super fast time of 27.50, also fastest in the division on the day. Toby Said was not far behind picking up 9 points for 28.30. This means our Division 5 team not only has a stranglehold on the top of the ladder, but is also the only team in any division to be unbeaten. Great work team and good

luck in the final against Garingal!

Finally, we also saw success in Div 6, beating Bennelong 23-17. Linda Chan again showed us her credentials picking up 9 points for a time of 35.15. Unfortunately we remain 4th out of 4 in the division.

So all eyes will be on our Div 1, Div 2 and Div 5 teams in the final round hosted by WHO at Glenbrook on September 6. The rest of us will be competing for pride while we cheer on these two teams that have shown so much consistency throughout the season. Looking forward to a big turnout from WHO at Glenbrook!



Event Calendar

There are many events all around Australia or even all around our own state of NSW. Rather than listing them all here, we'll focus on our local events as well as State League events. For more check [Eventor](#).

Saturday Orienteering Series (SOS)

Organised on Saturday mornings during school term by the Bold Horizons team including some of WHO's juniors.

22 August	Vision Valley, Arcadia
29 August	St Ives
5 September	Beauchamp Park, Chatswood
12 September	Penrose St Playground, Lane Cove West

NSW State League 2026 Program

State League events are the best bush orienteering in the state as well as a reason to travel to new places.

Date	Map	Event Format	Town / Locality
15 August	NSW School champ	Middle distance	Orange
16 August	NSW School Champ	Sprint	Orange
12 September	Tuckland SF	NSW Middle Champ	Dunedoo
13 September	Tuckland SF	NSW Long Champ	Dunedoo

Metroleague and Other

The Interclub team events with courses ranging from easy to hard in Division 6 to 1. The best way to start bush orienteering.

6 September	Knapsack reserve, Glenbrook . WHO is organising
19-20 September	Cockatto Island weekend of navigation with a sprint on Saturday and a rogaine including using ferries to get to the mainland on Sunday. Register on Eventor for Saturday and here for Sunday's Ferrygaine .

ORIENTEERING JUNIOR PATHWAY IN SYDNEY

NSW team and beyond

Take-off

SOS & CLUB EVENTS

Try out a variety of events and terrain
Develop skills

SCHOOL EVENTS

Participate in school programs and Regional School Carnivals



Skill Up

METRO LEAGUE

Step up to this inter-club Series on some of the best Sydney terrain

SOS & CLUB EVENTS

Build fitness, speed and racing skills
Meet friends

COACHING

Seek out coaching and support from your club, school or other providers



Step Up

STATE LEAGUE (including NSW Schools Champs)

These are the premiere NSW events. There are courses for all ages and experience levels. Events will be in a variety of terrain and most will be in bush areas.

BLUEBOTTLES

Join school holiday camps and training opportunities with other young orienteers from across the State.



NSW SCHOOLS TEAM

The selected team represents NSW at the Australian Schools Championships.

AUSTRALIAN TEAMS

Orienteering Australia selects teams for various honours including the Junior World Orienteering Championships.

