

WHO runs the Country

Newsletter of Western and Hills Orienteers
Dharug Country – November 2026

Photo by Tom de Jongh

From the President

James McQuillan

As I'm sure you all know, tragedy struck at our Metroleague Final event at Glenbrook in September, with the passing of Dan Redfern. Obviously a very distressing time for his friends and family and those orienteers involved. I'd like to once again thank those orienteers that came to Dan's assistance. Whilst it was a terrible incident, I'm so proud to be part of a group that responded in the way we did. I attended Dan's funeral and it was very evident that he lived life to the fullest and was always cooking up new outdoor adventures to share with others. Let's always remember to make the most of our own outdoor adventures.

Speaking of which, the WHO cup is coming up fast. It's local, 3 distances to choose from and FREE! With lunch and our AGM to follow, I hope you can all make it.

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NSW State League and Championships

It was a bit of a drive to get to the final State League weekend of the 2026 season that doubled at the NSW championship but the courses on offer and the scenery on the way there were worth the trip. Nice very open running on both days with a lot of erosion gullies on Saturday. Orienteers stayed either in Gulgong or Dunedoo and Saturday dinner was a shared experience by many.

The usual suspects placed. Notably, there was an unusual sighting of a regular winner at the presentation on Sunday, the joy of the M16A podium was contagious, Rob showed that quality trumped quantity by placing for the third time in as many state league this season, Savanna timed her finish perfectly to accept her badge as soon as she downloaded.













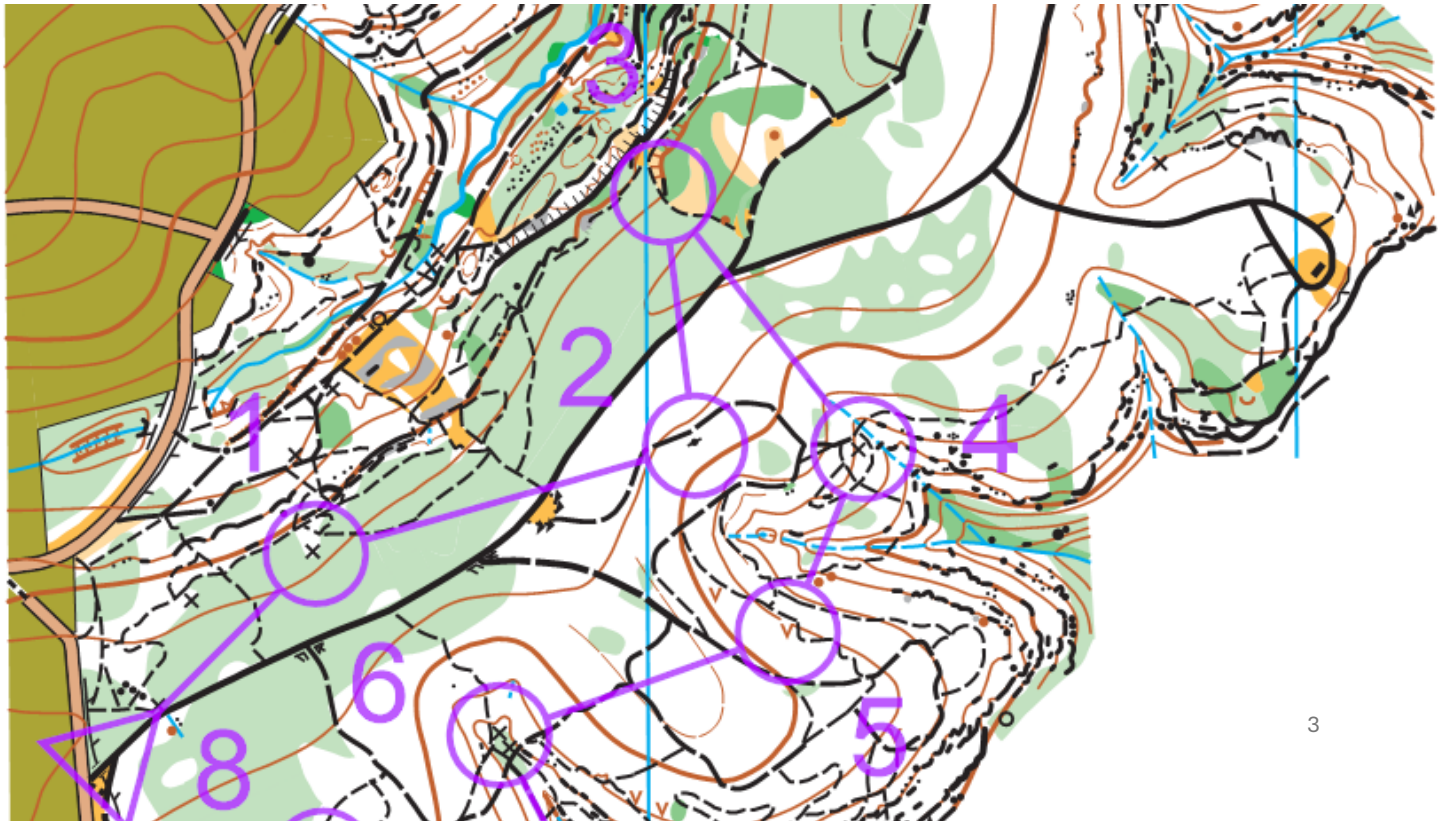
The Club Captain's report on Metroleague

Josh Braidwood

Time for a look back on a massive 2026 Metro League season. WHO yet again made its mark in the competition, and a lot of this is down to the outstanding progression of our juniors who just seem to keep getting better every year. The season culminated in the WHO-hosted event at Knapsack Gully on 6 September, which saw a great turnout and lots of blue shirts pitching in to help make the event a success. With Dan Smith setting the courses and Matt Palmer controlling, we knew we were in for some great orienteering.



Although the WHO-UR Div 1 team had been competitive throughout the season, we were unfortunately not in contention for the silverware this time around. In the final round we went down valiantly to Bennelong 29-25. James McQuillan led the way picking up 9 points for a time of 52.15. In the end though, it was SHOO-IKO who were Div 1 champions and took home the Frank Assenza trophy. Meanwhile, WHO's highest point scorer for the season was Seth Sweeney on 41 points, only just pipping James McQuillan on 40 points! Maybe next year it could be WHO!



In Div 2, WHO was up against SHOO-IKO, and we well and truly dominated this match up with a 37-18 victory. The ever-dependable Lee Coady led the way with 10 points for a time of 42.00. Marcus Cheung and Shay Sweeney were hot on his heels though with solid times of 46.20 and 48.26 for 9 and 8 points respectively. As a result, WHO romped home as Div 2 champions for the season!! Well done to everyone who contributed to Div 2 throughout the year - Lee Coady, Ho Lam Marcus Cheung, Lachlan Coady, Shay Sweeney, Justine de Remy de Courcelles, Nicholas Crass, Savanna Sweeney, Matt Hackett, Emmanuelle Convert, Emma Inglis, Charlotte Palmer, and Sue Moore. And finally a huge congratulations to Lee Coady who picked up the individual medal for Div 2 - Lee accumulated a massive total of 58 points for the season which was at least 20 points clear of the next highest point scorers across the division - this must be one of the most dominant individual performances for a season I can recall. Well done Lee!



In Div 3, WHO was able to restore some pride with an emphatic 31-21 victory over Big Foot. The most outstanding performance was Justine de Remy de Courcelles who picked up 10 points for a time of 62.25, followed closely by Charlotte Palmer with 9 points for 63.40. It was too late in the season for WHO to have any meaningful impact though, with UR-CC taking out the Div 3 championship. Emmanuelle Convert was our highest point scorer for the season with 38 points.

WHO's Div 4 match up in the final round was against SHOO who just managed to beat us 29-25. Levi Coady was our best with 8 points for 70.04. Levi was also (easily) our highest point scorer for the season in Division 4 with 33 points. Bennelong took out the Div 4 honours this season.

Div 5 was another story of glory for WHO. Up until this round, WHO had been unbeaten throughout the season, so all eyes were on the Div 5 team in the final - could they make it a straight sweep? Well the answer was an emphatic YES. WHO overran Garingal in the final 35-20, making this team the most consistently successful team of any team in any division this season. Blake Read picked up 10 points for an incredibly fast time of 21.29 but frankly there were no slow times in the entire team, with Toby, Levi, Elliott and Nathan all putting in strong performances. Blake also had the double honour of being the individual medal winner in Division 5 for the season, with an incredible 55 points. Tellingly, his main competition were his own teammates, Toby Said and Elliott McQuillan, who were the second and third highest point scorers across Division 5 for the season. Well done to everyone who contributed to Div 5's success throughout the season - Blake Read, Toby Said, Elliott McQuillan, Levi Said, Tin Yan Nathan Cheung, Hudson Chain, and Nerise McQuillan.



Finally, we saw success in our final Div 6 round with WHO beating GO Geckos 26-19. Well done to Flynn Chain who picked up 8 points for 52.43. Unfortunately we weren't ultimately in contention for this division, with Bennelong picking up the honours this year. A big call out to Linda Chan who was WHO's highest point scorer in Div 6 with 34 points.

So there you have it. Another successful year for WHO, and in particular for our Division 2 and Division 5 teams where we were crowned champions.

On a more sombre note, of course most of you will be aware of the terrible tragedy that occurred at our Metro League Final at Knapsack Gully. Our condolences and best wishes go out to the family and friends of long time Garingal member Dan Redfern. This tragedy left us all shocked and shaken. However I do want to recognise the incredible spirit of WHO members and other orienteers who went to Dan's aid and did everything possible in the circumstances.

That's it for 2026 - hope to see you all at Metro League in 2027, and if you haven't tried it before and are curious then next year is the year to give it a go!

Cockatoo Island weekend

The weekend before Oceania Championships, Sydney had an interesting weekend of combined orienteering and rogaining based on Cockatoo Island. The heritage buildings of the island from the convict era to its more recent industrial history provide a great setting for sprint orienteering. Add camping by the water, socializing around dinner at the rogaine hash house or the island camp kitchen and an exercise in navigation including negotiating ferry timetable, a round of croquet and double point for one hour and you are in for one of the most unusual weekend of navigation.

WHO had 17 members doing the sprint on Saturday and another 17 doing the rogaine with some great first places from Rachel, Marcus, Saffron, Bel, George and Justine.













Oceania Championships

Photos: Vivien, Tom de Jongh, Sandra Stewart. https://oceania2026.orienteering.asn.au/

In Australia, the big event of this year was the Oceania Championship and the Australian School Championship (ASOC) including the Southern Cross Challenge with NZ school teams.

A total of 1121 orienteers ran at least one event with the middle distance, on the first day of the carnival, being the most popular with 914 orienteers. WHO had at least 25 members running on each of the 7 events and a total of 34 members ran at least once during the week: That is a third of our membership!

The carnival started hot and sunny with a waft of rotting kangaroo for the middle distance in Namadgi National Park. Rob continued is streak of performances at major events by winning in M55AS. Louisa in open easy and Vivien M35A finished with bronze only 10s ahead of Lee for the latter.











Sunday's relay was also in Namadgi NP but the similarities stop here: it was cold, wet and at altitude rather than down in the valley. Many WHO members shone with their teams. One standout was in W14A where Tiffany launched the NSW1 team and Justine anchored it for the win after a great run by their teammate Isobel. It was a very suspenseful race as Justine started the last leg at the same time as their opponents of NZ1 and Australia1. Equally impressive, Levi ran the middle leg for the NSW1 team that also took gold. In W21AS, Micaela and Karen's team took bronze while Anthony's team did the same in M21AS.











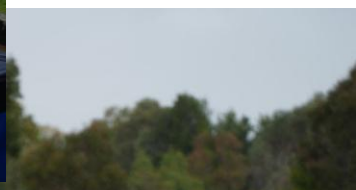


After a hot week of orienteering for those doing ASOC and the Flight of the Bogong events (see below), the second weekend started with a bang!... The bang of a storm over the venue of the long distance. There were delays at the start line and much water on the ground and in the creeks. Some orienteers were seen wading in waist high water and others reported having to swim. Some good views were had from many places on the course, particularly from the Mt Stromlo observatory. Vivien was first in M35A and Charlotte missed bronze in W45A by only 3 seconds!













The grand finale was held on the southern end of the ANU campus. The clever use of artificial barriers and the compulsory road crossings made for an intricate sprint run under warm sunshine. Vivien predicted a complete reverse result to the day before and indeed mispunched but somehow walked away with a bag of very good coffee beans as lucky-finisher price. The club has some speedy sprinters and Marcus and Lee took the win in M18A and M35A. Of note Tiffany was running W16A which is an IOF official category and therefore her 6th position is a podium position.













Australian Schools Orienteering Championships

Justine RC



The Australian Schools Orienteering Championships (ASOC) took place in the middle of the week between the Oceania weekends. The carnival was kicked off with the sprint in Orana Steiner School which featured lots of barriers and map flips. The remote start and quarantine was a different experience from previous years with competitors not seeing the arena or finish set up. Notable WHO results included Tiffany coming 6th overall and 3rd Australian in Junior Girls and Marcus placing 5th Australian in Senior Boys.





The long distance at Mount Ainsley saw a steep increase in climb with Junior Girls having 160m of climb and Senior Boys having 325m of climb! The mix of heat and climb was not ideal, but competitors pushed through for amazing results. Top performances from WHO were Justine placing 6th overall and 3rd Australian and Tiffany coming in 7th Australian.





The hot weather persisted through to the final day for the relay. The air was thick with excitement, anticipation and hairspray. The courses made the most of the narrow map with pivot controls creating varied loops for maximum forking. Marcus was in the Senior Boys team that secured a silver medal behind the ACT and Junior Girls 1 came in 4th Australian just 1 minute behind South Australia.













Overall, this ASOC showcased some amazing performance from both the five WHO members on the NSW team and the five WHO members who entered as Independent Athletes.

Who's up for the WHO Cup?

The WHO Cup, our very own annual club event, is coming soon on Sunday 6 December in Carlingford, and this will coincide with our AGM.

It is free for all WHO members to enter as well as their parents and family. There will be helpers on the day for those family members new to orienteering and this video is a great introduction.

You can find more details and enter here. It offers 3 line-courses (short, medium and long). WHO members can challenge each others for line honours on each course. There will be a trophy for handicap honours across medium and long distance as well as the ultimate WHO Cup (male and female) on the long course.

We'll then have lunch in the Scout hall before or at the same time as we'll have our AGM.

Please bring a plate of something that you would like to eat and share, the club will provide soft drinks.

- The schedule for the day is as follow:
- WHO Cup (free to WHO members) 9.30 to 11am starts with course closure at 12pm
- Pack up the event asap including control collection
- Lunch at the scout hall, please BYO plates/ cutlery and cups as well as camping chairs.
- AGM.





Start anytime between 4.30pm and 6.45pm. Visit as many controls as you can, in any order and in 45 minutes trying to maximise your score. 1-10=10 points, 11-20=20 points, 21-30=30 points

25-Nov-26	GLADESVILLE	Banjo Paterson Park, Punt Rd
2-Dec-26	WENTWORTH POINT	Community Centre opp Marina Sq
9-Dec-26	TURRAMURRA	Kent Oval, Kent Rd
16-Dec-26	WILLOUGHBY	Willoughby Bowling Club, Robert St
23-Dec-26	GEORGES HEIGHTS	Clifton Gardens Reserve, Morella Rd
30-Dec-26	WARRIEWOOD	Rat Park, Pittwater Rd ***MapRun***
6-Jan-27	MARSFIELD	Macq Uni Sports Fields, Culloden Rd
13-Jan-27	PADDINGTON	Trumper Oval, Glenmore Rd
20-Jan-27	ZETLAND	Matron Ruby Grant Park, Joynton Ave
27-Jan-27	ALLAMBIE HEIGHTS	Allambie Heights Oval, Allambie Rd
3-Feb-27	CABARITA	Cabarita Park, Cabarita Rd
10-Feb-27	WAHROONGA	George Christie Field, Yanilla Ave
17-Feb-27	BAULKHAM HILLS	Ted Horwood Oval, Renown Rd Organised by WHO
24-Feb-27	CURL CURL	Harbord Bowling Club, Stirgess Ave
3-Mar-27	BALMAIN	Mort Bay Park, Mort St
10-Mar-27	WEST PYMBLE	West Pymble Village Green, Kendall St ***with Line course option***
17-Mar-27	NORTHMEAD	Northmead Reserve, Elizabeth Cres Organised by WHO
24-Mar-27	FIVE DOCK	Five Dock Park, Park Rd
31-Mar-27	NORTH SYDNEY	The Greens, Ridge St ***Please stay for dinner and presentations***

XMAS 5 DAY 2026 ORIENTEERING CARNIVAL SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS, NSW

Five days. Five courses. One fantastic adventure!

Get ready for a brilliant end-of-year orienteering experience!

The **NSW XMAS 5 DAYS** is heading to the beautiful NSW Southern Highlands, bringing five exciting days of orienteering from **27–31 December**!

Look forward to a fantastic mix of fun and challenging bush and sprint events, along with spot prizes, social activities and plenty of opportunities to catch up with friends and fellow orienteers as we race towards the New Year.

Make a holiday of it!
Camping will be available at Belanglo Hut, with plenty of other accommodation options possible in the surrounding area. Now's the perfect time to start planning your stay!

Five days
Five courses
One brilliant way to finish the year!

Day	Date	Start Window	Format Winning Time	Map Location
1	Sun 27th Dec	4.00 - 5.30pm	Middle 30-35 mins	Mt Alexandra res, Welby
2	Mon 28th Dec	8.00 - 9.30am	Middle/long 30-35 mins	The Piggery Belanglo
3	Tues 29th Dec	8.00 - 9.30am	Long 40-45 mins	Tallowa Gully Wingello
4	Wed 30th Dec	8.00 - 9.30am	Long 40-45 mins	Penrose North Penrose
5	Thurs 31st Dec	8.00 - 9.30am	Sprint 15-20 mins	Broughton Anglican College Menagle park