

# Celebrating Strzelecki's Naming Of Mt Kosciuszko

AUSTRALIAN'S are passionate about their country and their iconic places, Mount Kosciuszko as Australia's highest mountain one of the most iconic.

Just as proud of Mount Kosciuszko are the Polish community who have a huge affinity with the mountain. Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki is believed to be the first European to ascend Australia's highest mountain on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 1840. He would name the mountain Kosciuszko after Polish patriot and freedom fighter Thaddeus (Taduesz) Kosciuszko.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko was a Polish-American hero and champion of freedom, liberty and equal rights and has a fascinating history in America. A skilled engineer with military education, he arrived in America in 1776 where he became a military leader in the American revolution. One of his great feats was

overseeing the building of military fortifications at West Point, which is today the United State Military Academy.

Paul Edmund Strzelecki was a Polish explorer and scientist born in 1797. He left Poland in 1830 for England before arriving in North America in 1834 where he travelled widely analysing soil and minerals before venturing to South America in 1836.

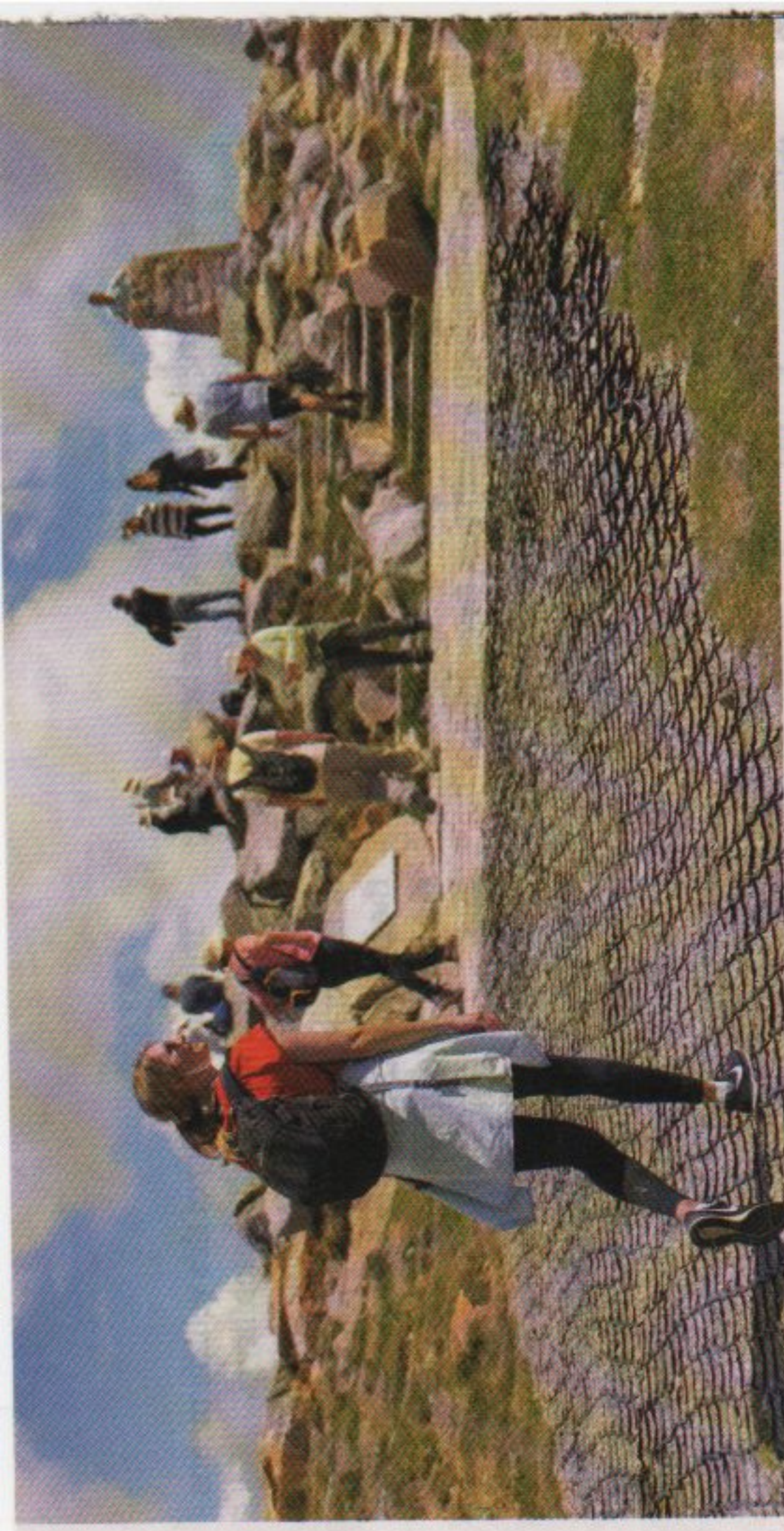
In 1839 Strzelecki reached Sydney and would commence creating a geological map of New South Wales and the Australian alps, where he ascended what he considered Australia's highest peak, naming it after Kosciuszko. He left Australia in 1843 arriving back in London where he became a British subject in 1845.

The Polish community celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Strzelecki's death with a ceremony in Towong, near Corryong in November 2023. The

Kosciuszko Heritage Inc. unveiled a Strzelecki Memorial in a prominent point above the Upper Murray River on Towong Hill Road.

It was this route from the western side of the Snowy Mountains that Strzelecki ventured to reach Australia's highest mountains. A much steeper climb than how we traditionally walk to the top of Kosciuszko today.

Attending the unveiling in Towong were the fabulous Paderewski Youth Orchestra from Chicago, USA, with 13 musicians plus directors. The Lajkonik Folklore Ensemble performed several dances and world-renowned piano maestro Krzysztof (Chris) Malek played at the function at the



HIKE: Reaching the top of Mount Kosciuszko.

PHOTO: Thredbo Resort.



HISTORY: Unveiling the Strzelecki Memorial in Towong, and the Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki statue in Jindabyne. PHOTO: Chris Malek.

Corryong & District Memorial Hall.

A final celebration had several attendees embarking on scenic flights with Snowy Mountains Helicopters over Mount Kosciuszko, Mount Townsend and the ranges from Khancoban. (see page 14 helicopter story)

An existing tribute is the bronze statue of Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki in Jindabyne's Banjo Paterson Park. The statue was presented to the people of Australia by the Polish People's Republic for Australia's Bicentenary in 1988. The monument depicts the explorer with his hand outstretched towards Mount Kosciuszko.

## CLIMB MOUNT KOSCIUSZKO

Today most people climb Kosciuszko from Thredbo, the shortest route at 6.5km

each way. Ride the chairlift to the top of Thredbo and simply follow the walking path to the summit allowing 4-5 hours.

The 9.3km route from the Charlotte Pass lookout follows the Summit Road. Hikers cross over the Snowy River, past Seaman's Hut via Rawson Pass to the top allowing 6-7 hours. Both routes intersect at Rawson Pass where you will find Australia's highest amenities.