

# The Roof Of Australia From The Air

THERE is something special about viewing the Snowy Mountains from the air. When the Polish community recently celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki (see page 12), they incorporated scenic helicopter flights into their weekend itinerary.

It would be interesting to see what Strzelecki, the first European to climb Mount Kosciuszko would have thought about viewing Australia's highest peak by air.

Snowy Mountains Helicopters pilot Tyrone Fitzgerald takes guests on

scenic flights, and he was recently at Khancoban with the Polish group. He says he now knows the correct pronunciation of Kosciuszko and Strzelecki, the Polish reminding him as they embarked on flights.

"The day itself was absolutely amazing with all the violins and the choir and the mass, showing just how much appreciation they've got for him (Strzelecki), and then seeing how excited everybody was to go flying was just amazing. Once they came back from their flight, they were just smiling ear to ear," said Tyrone.

Scenic flights are often booked from first timers, Tyrone saying, "we get that a lot of people that have never been in the helicopter, and their first helicopter flight is over the tallest mountain in Australia".

This was the case in November where flights started from Khancoban for the group celebrating Strzelecki. A real thrill for them who have such a fond association with the summit of Australia.

The 30 minute tour from Jindabyne where the helicopters are based is very popular. Guests fly up the Snowy River, past Blue



■ **VIEW: The summit of Mount Kosciuszko with snow pockets in November.** PHOTO: Chris Malek

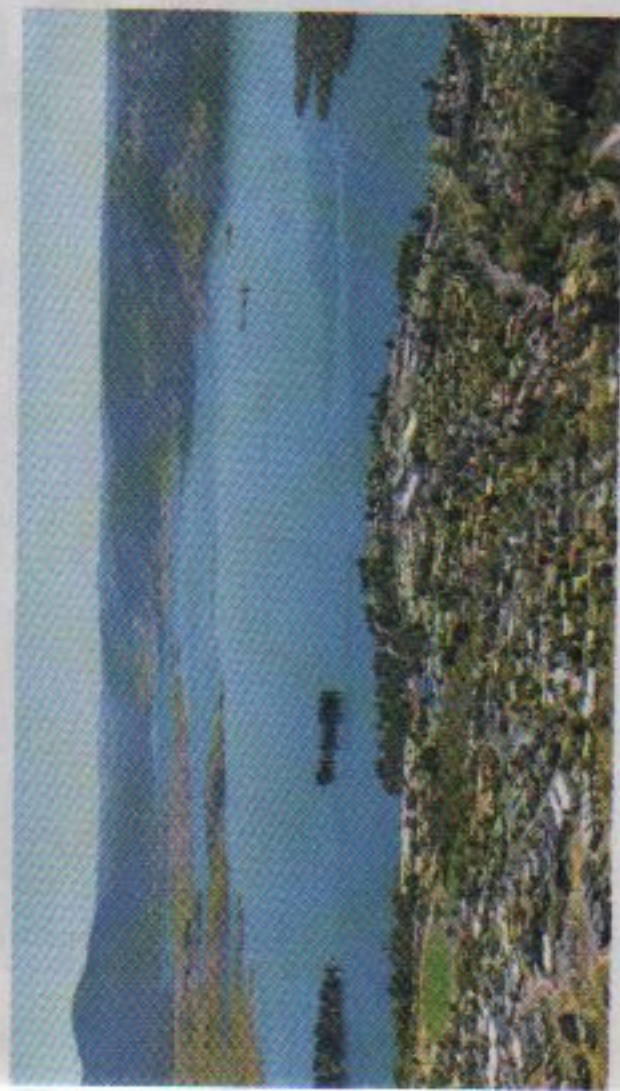
Lake, Mount Twynam, shooting up over the top of Watsons Crags and then around the back of Mount Kosciuszko to view the summit.

"I feel pretty lucky to be able to live and work in the Snowy Mountains, especially flying over the tallest mountain in Australia every day and seeing the many amazing sites that we're privy to. It's just amazing, there's so many things to see,

something new around every corner," was how Tyrone described his daily work.

"Blue Lake is a customer favourite and then that steep decline of Watsons Crags definitely gets a heart racing. We go over it to give them the view that shows just how steep that Watsons Crags area is."

As much as the scenery is special when hiking, the aerial perspective may be more impressive.



■ **Looking down on Jindabyne with high water level in 2021.**