Walk on a scenic wild side

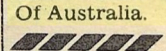
AT last a Queenslander has taken a leaf from the Tasmanians' books.

For many years, Tasmanians have been extolling the wilderness virtues of their island state in high quality books filled with excellent photographs.

Many are records for the memory – areas such as the once-magnificent Lake Pedder, now buried beneath a man-made lake, exist only in photographs.

But books from Tasmania have helped the rest of the world realise the importance of preserving the State's unique wilderness.

Queenslander Robert Rankin is destined to do the same for much of the rest of the nation with his book Classic Wild Walks Of Australia.



His book is about truly wild places – spots which can be reached only by one prepared to don walking boots, shoulder a pack and set off into the unknown.

Classic Wild Walks does more than just present a list of destinations for the wilderness lover to dream about.

Rankin includes detailed maps, information on the walking trips in the region, weather conditions, access and campsites. He thus enables the wilderness lover to actually get there – not just dream.

Rankin's photographs put the book in the coffee-table league and the added information makes it a practical, useful guide. (But read up before you leave home – it's a large format book which is a bit on the heavy side for lugging in a rucksack.)

By KATE McILWAINE

Rankin has covered every State in his selection of what he regards as the top 25 bushwalking areas in Australia.

In Queensland, he has chosen Hinchinbrook Island, the Lamington rainforests, the Carnarvon Gorge in Central Western Queensland, the Main Range national park at Cunningham's Gap, and Mt Barney in South-East Queensland.

Rankin's interest in bushwalking is evident in the detailed information he has provided in Classic Walks, his third book.

And his photographic skills are shown at their best in color prints which show Australia's wonders in varied moods.

Rankin says his book was intended to motivate people into exploring Australia's wilderness for themselves. It provides not just inspiration, but explicit instructions and information.

He comments that the greater the proportion of the population with first-hand experience of Australia's wilderness, the greater the likelihood that these areas and others like them will receive continuing protection.

Classic Wild Walks is a magnificent volume which should achieve its aim.

● *Classic Wild Walks Of Australia, by Robert Rankin, Rankin Publishers, PO Box 406, Toowong 4066, $44.*