

# Orienteering in Australia

An adventure-based sport for all



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission



## What is Orienteering?

Orienteering is a sport that combines outdoor adventure with map reading and navigational skills. It involves navigating through the bush, parks or streets with the aid of a specially produced map and orienteering compass. The aim is to locate checkpoints (controls) on various natural and man-made features along the way such as a boulder, track junction, bench seat or street lamp.



The skill in orienteering is in choosing the best route between controls — while beginners' courses may not offer choice, as you progress you will learn to decide between options — perhaps over a hill or a longer route which goes round it. It is this stimulating mental challenge as well as the physical activity that makes orienteering so popular. Each event may have a number of courses of differing lengths and levels of navigational difficulty occurring at the same time.

Orienteering is not new. The first public orienteering event was held in Norway in 1897 and started in Australia in 1969. The International Orienteering Federation now comprises 67 national federations.



Orienteering comes in several disciplines:

- Foot-Orienteering – the most common in Australia where competitors run/walk.
- Mountain Bike Orienteering (MTBO) - similar to foot orienteering but competitors navigate mountain bikes over different grades of tracks between control points.
- Ski-Orienteering (SkiO) – not very common in Australia, mainly due to poor ski conditions. The sport is similar to MTBO with competitors navigating complex track systems.

Further information for the newcomer is available at: [www.orienteering.asn.au/newcomers/](http://www.orienteering.asn.au/newcomers/)



Why do people orienteer?

*Lots of reasons!*

*“The friendly company, meeting a range of people and forming friendships (here, interstate, overseas).”*

...It's an adventure sport in both urban and bush environments with competitions world-wide.

...It is a truly trans-generational sport, many participants are hooked for life.

...The physical and mental tests keep both body and mind fit.

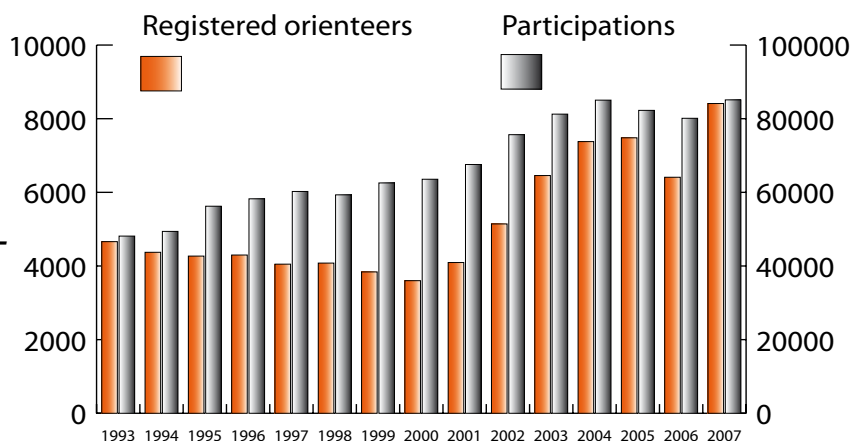
...It's a rewarding challenge where participants gain confidence and navigational skills.

...Great community atmosphere providing opportunities for everyone from social family groups through to internationally competitive athletes.

...Orienteering is a well organized sport and great value for money

*“Travelling to interesting places, rural and urban, often out of the way and otherwise not accessible.”*

Orienteering Australia figures



*“Running, navigating in the bush, the outdoors ... getting out there.”*



# Orienteering Maps

Orienteering maps are made especially for events and show much more detail than most topographic maps. Such maps depict natural features such as contours, watercourses, rock detail and vegetation as well as constructed features such as roads, building and power lines.

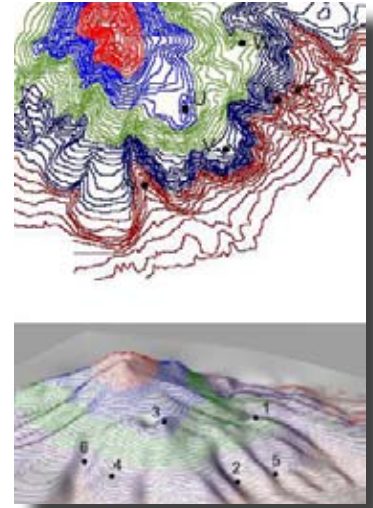
Maps are scaled depending on the area and event.

Contour lines join points of equal height above sea level and are used to depict the shape of the terrain.

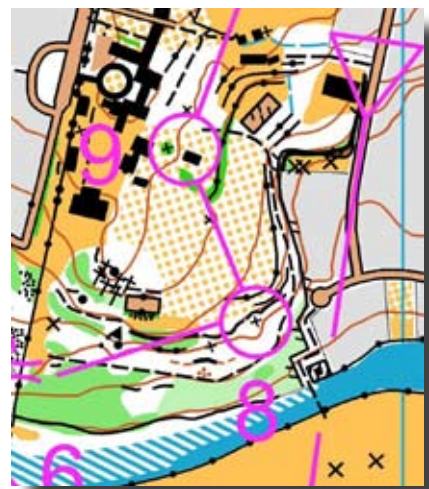
Navigation is assisted with the use of a compass although the map remains the key tool.

Increasing use of technology has seen the introduction of systems such as GPS units. Although too inaccurate and slow to assist competent orienteers, GPS is used for creating maps, coaching and in broadcasts of major competitions.

*“The skill in orienteering is selecting the best route choice and executing it with speed and precision.”*

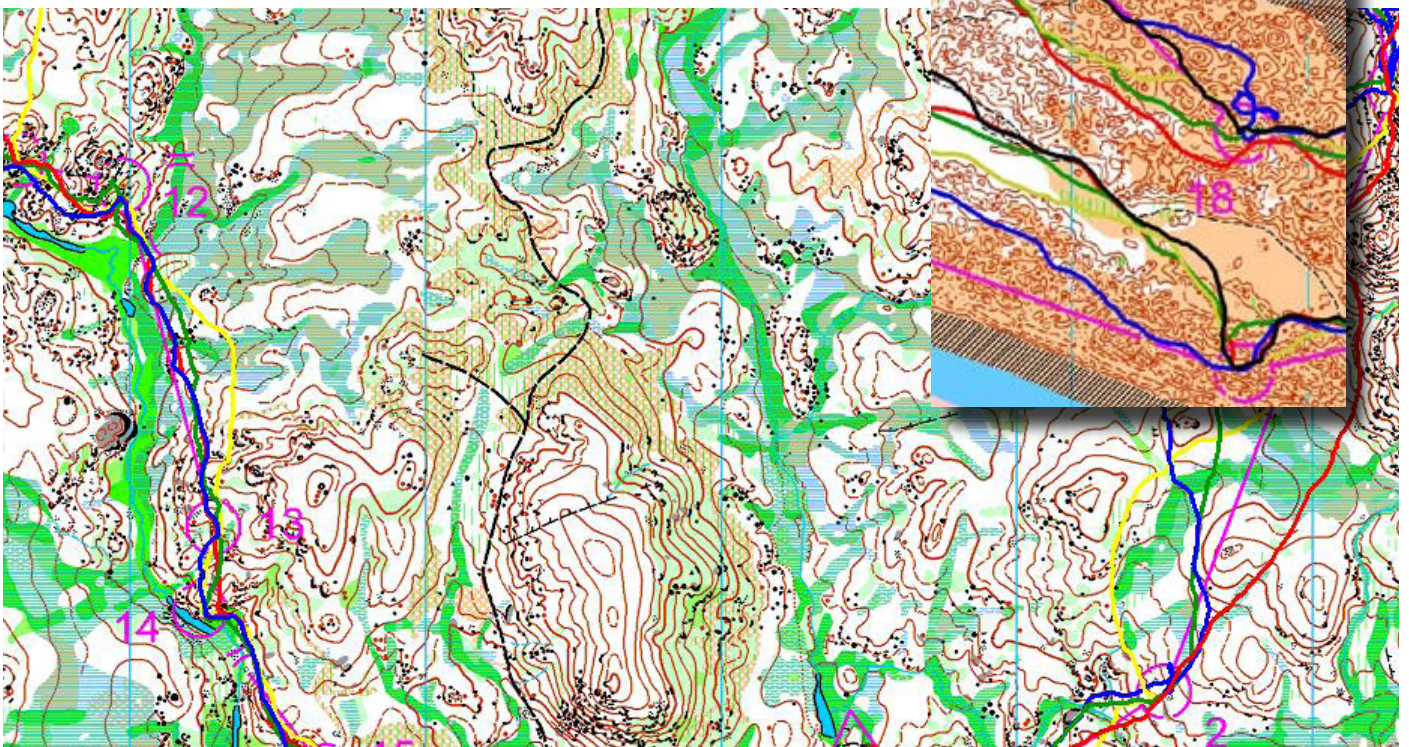


Contours are the key to orienteering!



Urban (above) and bush (below) maps

GPS “tracks” of competitors’ routes.

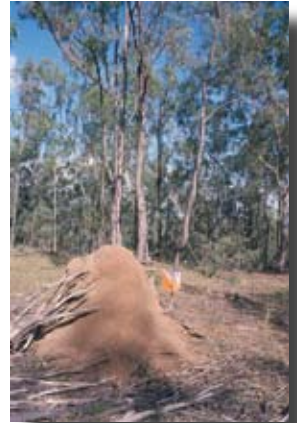


## Where is orienteering held?

Orienteering takes place in a range of places.

Traditionally a forest sport, areas used for orienteering include parks and forest reserves as well as private grazing land and bushland. An increasing number of events are being held in urban areas including urban parks, suburban streets and even through urban landscapes such as around university buildings. Events nowadays are held almost everywhere but predominate around major centres.

Check out your state association to see if there are events or clubs based in your area. Complete directions and locations of events will be listed as part of their event schedules.



## Orienteering and the Environment

Orienteering is a sport which is intertwined with the natural environment: it helps to educate people about the natural environment, and utilises national parks, state forests and private land to hold events.

Orienteering's impact on the environment is negligible in most cases, but events are managed to avoid areas of extreme sensitivity when necessary.





Hanny Allston on her way to becoming 2006 World Champion

## Elite orienteering

Australia is a world power in orienteering and undisputed leader outside Europe. Australia has top ranked athletes in both conventional orienteering, and the mountain bike form, both males and females.

The strength of elite orienteering in Australia combined with the wide popularity of the sport world-wide, especially in Europe, means Australia attracts a lot of international interest.

Domestically Australia has a strong National League with competitions held all over Australia and bi-annual matches with New Zealand.

Development is through a strong junior national league and national junior teams including a schools competition. Assistance is provided by the National Training Centre at the ACT Academy of Sport.



2006 Women's Relay Team - Podium



World Ranked number 1 in 2006  
MTB Orienteering - Adrian Jackson

## Australian Performance over the last 5 years

	2002 MTB FRA	2003 SUI	2004 SWE	2004 MTB AUS	2005 JPN	2005 MTB SVK	2006 DEN	2006 MTB FIN	2007 UKR	2007 MTB FIN
<b>Top 3</b>	1			3		1	1			
<b>Top 8</b>	2	1		8	2	4	1	2	1	
<b>Top 16</b>	5	2	2	10	3	6	2	2	3	1
<b>M e n ' s Relays</b>	8	9	10	3	15	7	20	-	13	15
	5	14	16	3	8	-	4	-	7	-

# Orienteering Events

In Australia, events are organised by State Associations/Clubs.

## National Carnivals

Australia has a series of open National all-age events held annually. This includes the two major carnivals (Australian 3-Days and Australian Championships) which are shared amongst the states. All states hold at least one major carnival every 3-4 years.

- Australian 3-Days – held over Easter
- Australian Championships Carnival – held last week in September or first week in October



## General Events

Orienteering events are held throughout the year, most typically on Sundays. Through the summer months low key events are typically held through streets and parks of suburbs and often on a week night.

## International Championships in Australia

- 2007 and 2011 Oceania Orienteering Championships
- 2007 Junior World Orienteering Championships
- 2009 World Masters Orienteering Championships



	World Games (multi-sport games)	World Championships	Junior World Championships	World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships
2007		Ukraine	<b>Australia</b>	Czech Republic
2008		Czech Republic	Sweden	Poland
2009	Chinese-Taipei	Hungary	Italy	Israel
2010		Norway	Denmark	Portugal
2011		France		

## Want to know more or get involved?

To find out about events, or to seek advertising and sponsorship opportunities:

- \* contact us (see below), or
- \* look out for one of our publications

## Publications

**[www.orienteering.asn.au](http://www.orienteering.asn.au)**

Orienteering Australia's national website including news, events, results and information.

### **The Australian Orienteer magazine**

Australia's National Orienteering magazine delivered direct to all registered members' homes.

### **Orienteering Australia e-bulletins**

A free registration email keeping readers informed of current Orienteering Australia activities and news.

State websites, newsletter and e-bulletins



## Orienteering Australia Partners

Australian Sports Commission

Australian Sports Foundation

ACT Academy of Sport

SILVA

Melbourne Bicycle Centre

Ansvar Insurance

Skins Compression Garments / High 5 Sports Nutrition

AROC Adventure Sports

Smartplay

Run For Your Life magazine

## CONTACT US

Orienteering Australia  
PO Box 284 MITCHELL ACT 2911  
02 6162 1200  
[orienteering@netspeed.com.au](mailto:orienteering@netspeed.com.au)

[orienteering.asn.au](http://www.orienteering.asn.au)