

Bushwalking NSW

NEWSLETTER

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October 2015



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NEWSLETTER

From the President, Mitchell Isaacs



I've been laying low this month with a sprained ankle, but resting up and getting ready for plenty of time in the bush this summer.

This month it was great to have the first full meeting of our new committee, with everyone back in the country from various overseas trips. It's exciting to have a number of keen, enthusiastic and dedicated people volunteering their time, energy and insights to further the bushwalking movement in NSW.

Thanks to the NPA for putting on a fantastic annual dinner, Kirsten and myself both attended, and we were the proud winners of the "build a Great Koala National Park at your table" challenge, raising funds to help support the push to establish a real Great Koala National Park on the south coast of NSW.

In two weeks' time we will be heading to Melbourne for the annual Bushwalking Australia annual face to face meeting, where we will be discussing things like our insurance, the push for national harmonisation of the Activity Adventure Standards (AAS), and ways that we can collaborate better with the other state bodies to deliver more for bushwalkers for less effort.

As you're walking this month, remember that the stormy skies make for dramatic photos and atmospheric afternoons, but can also lead to flash flooding and bushfires! Stay safe out there, but keep exploring and be amazed!

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David Trinder is the new editor of the Bushwalking NSW Newsletter

Send any informative articles or letters to The Executive Officer



A note from the Executive Officer

Hi all,
You are warmly invited to the Bushwalking NSW General Meeting to be held on Tuesday 17 November, 2015 at Ashfield RSL Club 374 Liverpool Road, Ashfield. We have an interesting and varied agenda for you (see next page) which includes beautiful photographs of the Gardens of Stone. We look forward to seeing you there!

Many thanks!

Kirsten Mayer

Executive Officer
Bushwalking NSW Inc.
P: (02) 9565 4005
E: admin@bushwalkingnsw.org.au
W: <http://www.bushwalkingnsw.org.au>
OFFICE HOURS: Monday Wednesday

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Agenda – November General Meeting

17 November, 2015

To be held at the Auditorium, Ashfield RSL Club 374 Liverpool Road, Ashfield

Official proceedings to commence at 7:30pm.

- 7:00 Meet and greet – refreshments provided
- 7:30 Welcome and introduction - President (Mitchell Isaacs)
- 7:35 Acceptance of Minutes of Annual General Meeting of 19th August 2014, Special General Meeting 17th February 2015, and Annual General Meeting of 18th August 2015
- 7:40 Keynote speaker – Yuri Bolotin
The Gardens of Stone in Focus photographic competition
- 8:05 Insurance – Presentation by Mitchell Isaacs on insurance discussions at the Annual Bushwalking Australia Conference held on 13 – 15th November
- 8:20 Release of the Bushwalking NSW Risk Management guidelines:
What your club can do now for Risk Management
- 8:35 Co-opted members – motion to re-examine the need for individual members of Bushwalking NSW.
- 8:45 Update from Bushwalking NSW
- 8:50 Update from clubs
- 9pm Close and drinks at bar

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Kirsten Mayer

Executive Officer

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Conservation report from Sierra Classen

Hi there bushwalkers of NSW, it's your friendly conservation officer, here with this month's conservation news.



Plans of Management Under Review

The following plans of management are up for review.

Bago Bluff National Park

Deadline for submissions: 7th of December, 2015

Have your say now!

Coorabakh National Park

Deadline for submissions: 7th of December, 2015

Have your say now!

Mugii Murum-ban

Deadline for submissions: 18th of December, 2015

Have your say now!

Hunter Wetlands National Park

Deadline for submissions: 20th of December, 2015

Have your say now!

Yarriabini National Park

Deadline for submissions: 14th of January, 2016

Have your say now!

Please

A little request from me on this section:

It would be great if you could let me know if you write or have already written a submission on any of these plans of management. That way I can have a running tally for upcoming newsletters on how many submissions are coming from bushwalking clubs.

Nature Conservation Council Annual Conference

It's that time of year again! Kirsten Mayer, our Executive Officer and Sierra Classen (that's me!), our Conservation Officer spent a glorious weekend at the end of October at The Nature Conservation Council Conference. This means we spent Saturday (and half of Sunday for me) in the company of some of the biggest superstars of the conservation.

We attended workshops and voted on important environmental policy issues and what actions should be taken in response. We heard intelligent speeches from state politicians and key individuals in the Environment Movement. We ate delicious food, and drank tea and wine

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with intriguing and knowledgeable characters. Almost by osmosis in this conservationist-rich environment, we became more aware of key developments in environmental law and discovered exciting campaigns about issues affecting bushwalkers and the wild places beloved by our kind.

Passing on skills we gained at the conference, Kirsten and I will be running a mini workshop on social media and effective club email communications at the upcoming General Meeting (19:00 on Tuesday the 17th of November at the Ashfield RSL Club).

People's Climate March, 29th of November, 1pm

Climate Change is an issue with broad reaching effects such as extreme weather, which directly impact on bushwalkers and the ecosystems we walk in.

On the weekend of 27th to the 29th of November, the participants in the People's Climate March will speak with the united voice of Australians across the political and social spectrum to say that Climate Change is an issue on everyone's agenda. The Sydney People's Climate March will take place on 29 November 2015 from 12pm. To participate or stay in the loop, please register www.peoplesclimate.org.au.

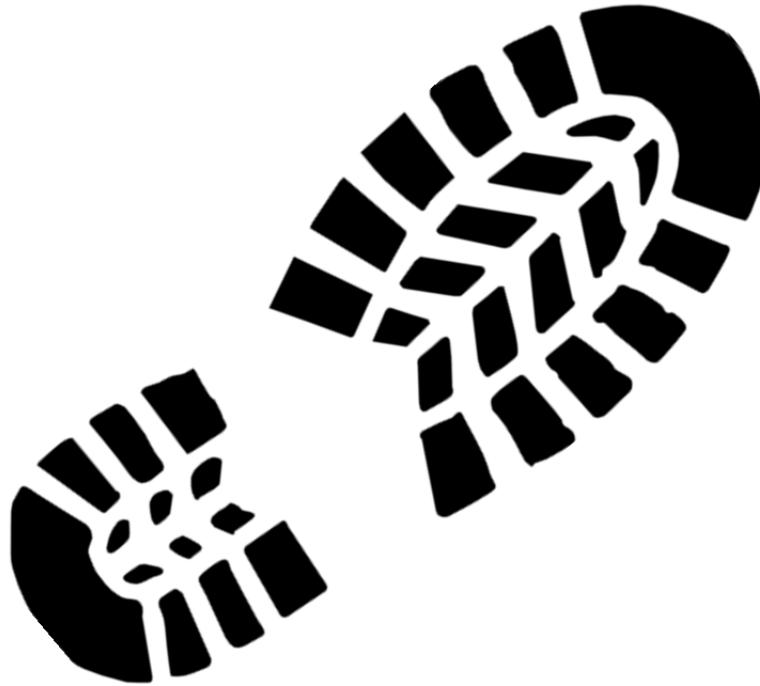
Bushwalking NSW invites you to make the People's Climate March (PCM) a walk on your walks programme for November. Make it fun. Get dressed up, coordinate your club contingent's bushwalkerly outfits, have a club banner with the PCM bushwalkers' logo on it (See explanation in the following paragraph).

The March is organised into coloured factions to provide a striking visual display for the public, media and aerial photography*. *Our Common Home* is the section for people like us bushwalkers who are united by our care for the environment. In this section, we will be wearing **GREEN**. The slogan for *Our Common Home* is **'Tread Lightly'** so our symbol will be a boot print (as shown).

Get crafty and creative. Why not organise a club day of banner, placard and T-shirt painting? Make your contingent fun props and costumes.

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We are very interested in what you decide to do as a club. Let us know via email about your plans. We'd love some pictures of your club in costume for the website or the next newsletter. If you plan a costume preparation and painting day, let us know. It may be good to have two or more clubs do a joint event.



There are so many ways to get involved. Don't forget to [REGISTER HERE](#) and you will be informed of details. If social media is your thing, Our Common Home has also has a searchable Facebook group that you can join to chat with other participants and stay up to date.

NB: Joining the Facebook group is not registering for the walk. All participants should [REGISTER HERE](#) in order to facilitate the monumental organising task that is involved in these kinds of events. Thanks!

*References to the aesthetics of aerial photography may deter those who have read Catch-22 by Joseph Heller. Please be appeased that this is a context where artistic considerations are valuable.

Bootprint art courtesy of www.clker.com

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Your Feedback on Our Development in National Parks Policy Draft

Bushwalking NSW needs your feedback on our policy on Development in National Parks. I have attached the policy to this newsletter so you can read it and make comments. Please take a look and email me to tell me what you think. I'd love to hear from you!

Initial Draft of Proposed Bushwalking NSW policy on development in National Parks

Definitions:

Natural area is defined in the Natural Areas Policy of Bushwalking NSW and is "any area with predominantly intact native indigenous vegetation cover and containing suitable habitat for its dependent fauna"

Modified natural area is defined in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and means "an area of land where the native vegetation cover has been substantially modified or removed by human activity (other than activity relating to bush fire management or wild fire) and that is identified in a plan of management as not being appropriate for or capable of restoration." A modified natural area does not generally fall within Bushwalking NSW's definition of natural area.

Development includes all works, building and modifications including walking tracks, buildings, roads, and any proposal that will require a lease under Part 12 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

Bushwalking NSW:

- Supports the existing objects of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and principles for management of National Parks within that Act
- Urges caution when considering any commercial development in National Park
- Opposes development in National Parks that is inconsistent with, or risks jeopardising the objects of the Act
- Considers that all alternatives for locating a development outside a National Park must be considered before considering a development within a National Park
- Considers that any development in National Parks must:
 - Seek to improve the environment and ecological values of the National Park where possible, or reduce the impact of existing human activities
 - Be low key
 - Be sensitive to surroundings
 - Promote sustainable visitation and awareness of the natural surrounds
 - Be located within modified natural areas
 - Promote sustainable and low-impact activities such as bushwalking
 - Be consistent with BNSW Natural Areas Policy
 - Consider the broader community perspective towards the proposed development
 - Not restrict access to bushwalkers or other low impact users of the National Park

When considering consistency with the objectives of the Act, specific consideration for any development in a National Park should be given to:

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- Runoff, erosion and pollution (sediment / chemical use)
- Control of weeds, invasive species and diseases (including dieback)
- Restriction of lighting (Flood lighting is not appropriate within a National Park)
- Ensuring non-native animals and domestic pets are not brought into the park
- Reducing sound pollution
- Impacts to bushwalking and other low-impact activities
- Encouraging all visitors to appreciate their location in a national park and promote low-impact recreation
- Impact of roads, access, parking, and any other ancillary development

(1) The objects of this Act are as follows:

(a) the conservation of nature, including, but not limited to, the conservation of:

- (i) habitat, ecosystems and ecosystem processes, and
- (ii) biological diversity at the community, species and genetic levels, and
- (iii) landforms of significance, including geological features and processes, and
- (iv) landscapes and natural features of significance including wilderness and wild rivers,

(b) the conservation of objects, places or features (including biological diversity) of cultural value within the landscape, including, but not limited to:

- (i) places, objects and features of significance to Aboriginal people, and
- (ii) places of social value to the people of New South Wales, and
- (iii) places of historic, architectural or scientific significance,

(c) fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of nature and cultural heritage and their conservation,

(d) providing for the management of land reserved under this Act in accordance with the management principles applicable for each type of reservation.

A national park is to be managed in accordance with the following principles:

(a) the conservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of ecosystem function, the protection of geological and geomorphological features and natural phenomena and the maintenance of natural landscapes,

(b) the conservation of places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value,

(c) the protection of the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations,

(d) the promotion of public appreciation and understanding of the national park's natural and cultural values,

(e) provision for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with the conservation of the national park's natural and cultural values,

(f) provision for the sustainable use (including adaptive reuse) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas having regard to the conservation of the national park's natural and cultural values,

(fa) provision for the carrying out of development in any part of a special area (within the meaning of the Hunter Water Act 1991) in the national park that is permitted under section 185A having regard to the conservation of the national park's natural and cultural values,(g) provision for appropriate research and monitoring.

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Wild Waratahs and Blooms of the Blue Mountains

Before the year is out, take a trip to the Gardens of Stone where the waratahs bloom a heady scarlet and wildflower nectar smells irresistible!

Have you noticed the amazing wildflowers all in bloom right now? There seem to be a hundred different types of flowers out all at different elevations and in different pockets of vegetation.

Of all the flowers that I have seen and smelled this spring, though, I have concluded with no hesitation that this year the monarch of all the blooms is the waratah. The waratahs this season are out in the hundreds and thousands, thronging to even the duskiest corners of the eucalypt woodlands. Their flaming blooms in the gathering heat and afternoon storms of spring and early summer are inspirational. You should take a look. They are our state's emblem after all.



Photo courtesy of Roger Lembit, of the

Our Wollangambe Still Choking on Clarence's Sludge Spew

Seeing for the first time in real life the sickly viscosity of the blackened Wollangambe, that moment will be with me for a long time to come. I swore (uncommonly) silently to myself that I had to do something about this devastation, and it had to be done immediately. With your help, this can become something really big.

In partnership with the Colong Foundation, Alex Allchin and I, and a number of other conservation-minded bushwalker types (Felix from SUBW, for instance) are propelling the *Get out to the 'Gambe* campaign into a new phase.

Our demands:

THAT

- A) the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ensure the Centennial Coal urgently remove all coal fines deposits from the Wollangambe River in accordance with Clean Up Notice 1532719, and
- B) that daily pollution from the Clarence Mine is managed in order to eliminate impact on the World Heritage Area and the Wollangambe River.

The Story: Getting out to the 'Gambe

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On Friday the 16th of October I was walking along a vaguely discernible fire trail down a ridge emblazoned with waratahs. I came to a lip of sandstone and climbed over it, towing over my shoulder by its curly leash an absurd looking blue and white body board (long story). I scrambled down the steep bank. Ahead of me, a thick black swill ribboned between naked and sun-bleached tree trunks to disappear between tarnished sandstone pagodas. These were blackened waters and sludgy banks of the Wollangambe River.

I had not been to the Wollangambe since it was so severely vandalised by (Centennial Coal owned) Clarence Colliery's spill back in July of this year. I was overseas at the time when it happened and this particular weekend in October was my first real opportunity to go out there and see for myself the damage that had occurred. I was shocked at what I saw there, on the Wollangambe River.

I think I needed to see it for myself to truly understand what had happened with the spill. The extent of the damage is enormous. Where the sludge came down the hillside from where it is heaped on the tops, the creek bed has been patched up with hessian (anti-)erosion matting. Little saplings in protective plastic cases are planted on the swathes of sandy brown cloth. Many of the saplings, the ecologist of our party lamented, needed much more water than they were getting, and besides, they were not necessarily the appropriate tree species to plant there!

Arriving at the Wollangambe, only a skinny creek at that point in its course, I saw a quite a bit of sludge, but this was still not so bad compared to what I saw only a kilometre or so downstream.

The Bush Doctors is the name of the company that Centennial Coal have hired to repair our river. On this trip, I wanted to investigate the claim that the Bush Doctors had cleaned up 3 km of the river. This is not very much to have cleaned in three months, but the second part of the rumour is that there has been high staff turnover and the project is severely underfunded by Centennial Coal. Nevertheless, I wanted to see what clean looked like and what natural barriers or difficulties could be impeding their progress on the clean up.

What I saw on the 6/7 km of river that I visited was very disappointing. The first section after where the spill entered the river seemed alright. I was getting to think that there might be some hope to the whole project. Less than 500 metres down stream, though, we began seeing thick sludge deposits on the banks and in the riverbed. The rocks were coated in at least a thin black layer. The layer was thicker as we went, and sometimes it tapered in a section that seemed to have been cleaned more thoroughly. You could scrape your hands along the rocks and the bank and easily come up with a palm full of sludge. Really, it's just like a toilet that hasn't been cleaned in years. It needs a good scrub—some elbow grease, my mother might say.

We found a rubber glove in the scrub, probably discarded by one of these so-called bush doctors. We began scooping the stuff off and depositing it in piles on the bank wherever we could. I don't know if this is better than having the sludge in the river, but it seemed like the right thing to do. As we walked, there was a viscous feeling on the slick bottom. It softened our tread. Black clouds mushroomed up to obscure the underwater world. From the skeletal ferns and heaps of dead black-logged vegetation in the creek, I imagined the silken plumes of black sediment rising from my footfalls could be a dark blush of shame in the water of this beloved river (to be a bit dramatic about it).

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If the standard of cleanliness I saw on the 16th and 17th of October is the best that Centennial Coal can offer then I am shocked and furious with this ineffectual system. The Wollangambe River must get hundreds of visitors every summer. For the bushwalking and canyoning community, the moseying current runs deep with many happy memories of family, friendship and adventure.

The way I see it, this place has given so much to us. Now we need to give something back. Mines need to be held accountable for the damage they cause to our environment. It's our job as bushwalkers to protect the wild places we love—stop this horrific violence in its tracks.

Speak Out!

Channel your inner Lorax.

Speak for a river whose voice has been silenced.

Tell your friends. Tell your family. Write to your local member. Write to Centennial Coal. Write to the EPA. Don't be silent on this crucial issue.

The Challenge

Get out to the 'Gambe where the black sludge is slickest
below the Colliery—
away from our usual haunts in the arterioles of 'canyonland'.
See for yourself
how this incredible place is mutely suffocating.

Send me an email to either Alex Allchin (ajallchin@gmail.com), or to me (angelina.willow@gmail.com) if you are thinking of heading out there. We can give you maps and other details. Go onto the [Facebook](#) page to get regular updates.

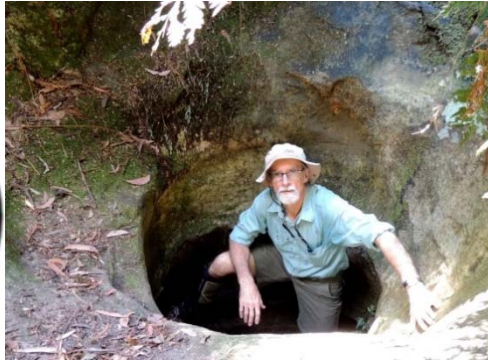
The best thing you can do is get out there. We have maps. We can give you guidance on this.

Credits

'Please Please Please' graphic courtesy of: http://www.oyegraphics.com/o/please/please_004.jpg

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Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad is an arm of, was instigated by and is supported by Bushwalking NSW. This an article by its President Keith Maxwell



Bushwalking with a Purpose

Bushwalkers have been enjoying the friendship of clubs since before 1932 when a number of clubs came together to defend Blue Gum Forest. We now know this organisation as Bushwalking NSW.

Just a few years later in October 1936 bushwalkers from clubs offered assistance to NSW Police in a search for four lost walkers in the Grose Valley. The Search & Rescue Section that evolved after this search is now known as Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS)

Bushwalkers of BWRS have been walking with a great purpose ever since. BWRS is renowned in going past where others stop going. Since 1936 there have been many significant searches where BWRS played an important role. In the past year BWRS has been involved at Kanangra Walls, Mt Kuring-gai and Colo Heights.

On the weekend of 16 - 18 October our purpose was to search a new area of Barrington Tops. In August 1981 a Cessna plane, VH-MDX disappeared on a bleak night. Tracking its last movements, to determine a search area, has always been difficult. An area not previously considered was suggested through analysis by BWRS with a commercial pilot plus more recent computing power.

The mystery of VH-MDX has intrigued many individuals and groups who have been drawn to BWRS due to our many visits to Barrington Tops. Many planes have disappeared over Barrington Tops. This is the only outstanding plane of all the planes that have taken years to find. A good portion of this latest area was searched but the trail is definitely getting colder.

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Now, distress beacons were developed after a similar large search in Alaska failed to find two missing USA Congressmen. There are three major types of beacon depending on the situation. Boaters use EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicator Radio Beacons) while aircraft use an ELT (Emergency Locator Transmitter) Now, unlike 1981 downed aircraft (over land) rarely stay lost for long.

Some bushwalkers whose purpose is to visit remote areas choose to take a PLB (Personal Locator Beacon). Your safety is greatly improved but a PLB is not a magic box. Don't be over ambitious in your bushwalking just because you have a PLB. You still need still to follow the DO and DON'T list of guidelines at the BWRS website to ensure your personal safety.

The website - www.bwrs.org.au also gives information on PLBs and their uses and limitations. The website also gives details of how a PLB can be borrowed at little or no charge through NSW Police and NP&WS.

Remember a PLB is a last resort and should only be used if no method of direct communication is possible and urgent assistance is required. Irrespective of how you contact emergency services "you need to prepare to survive"

In the purpose of searching & training BWRS members have visited many and sometimes unexpected areas. Areas including power stations and restricted zones of water catchment plus other unusual bushland. BWRS as a great community service would like to share these challenges with experienced bushwalkers. Please email our Secretary on - secretary@bwrs.org.au for details to this specialist squad of the VRA.

FIRST AID for BUSHWALKERS on November 15

All bushwalkers should have some level of First Aid knowledge. Accidents and injuries sometimes occur so simply. However, there are some easy to learn First Aid basics that could keep a family member or bushwalking friend alive / comforted until emergency help arrives.

Bushwalking has become a safer activity with the advances in communication (to raise an alarm) plus medical treatment and evacuation procedures for an injured person. However, you may still need to offer First Aid to your injured companion until emergency services arrives.

You can gain the confidence to provide adequate First Aid, for situations where medical help may be only an hour or so away, with just one days training in First Aid.

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On November 15 you could complete a recognised St John Ambulance First Aid course. "Provide First Aid" is being offered by Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS).

"Provide First Aid" - This nationally recognised course can now be completed in just one day because of the theory you prelearn before the course. This course used to be known as Senior First Aid that required two days of instruction.

BWRS has a special extra for bushwalkers in this "Provide First Aid" course since the Instructor has permission to show some splinting and bandaging not usually taught in other courses.

Registration is now open for this great opportunity to learn some basic life saving First Aid skills in just one day.

You will need to book on line at the BWRS website and pay the full course fee to confirm your place (the class size is limited)

<http://www.bwrs.org.au/>

You will find answers to all the frequently asked common questions at this website.

Pre learning - Please be aware that you must learn some First Aid theory from the St John Ambulance website BEFORE 15 November. There will be no revision on this day. The first activity on 15 November will be the theory exam.

Practical Skills - after the exam the rest of the 15 November will training in practical skills in First Aid.

Instructor - is an experienced bushwalker who has taught many First Aid courses. Past trainees have praised the instruction.

Enrol today to learn First Aid with fellow bushwalkers on November 15; don't let another bushwalker take your place. The next "Provide First Aid" course from BWRS is not until May 2016.

Keith Maxwell.

BUSHWALKING CLUB badges

All bushwalkers should be proud of their club and its badge. Bushwalking NSW would like to make a virtual museum of bushwalking club badges, past and present, on our Bushwalking NSW website - www.bushwalkingnsw.org.au

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Currently our web master has images for The Bush Club, Sydney Bush Walkers, YMCA Ramblers (disbanded), Mt Druitt Bushwalking Club and Kameruka Bushwalking Club (KBC; also no more)

As a teaser here are some badges:



Show some pride in your club. You sew the badge on your rucksack so why not show the badge to all the world.

Please forward an image of your club badge to our Bushwalking NSW Executive Officer, Kirsten Mayer at email address - admin@bushwalkingnsw.org.au

Bushwalking NSW would love to see your club badge!!

Keith Maxwell