

Bushwalking NSW Newsletter

Edition 6 February 2014



Warragamba Dam, from Narrowneck

Happy New Year

Here is the February Newsletter, albeit in March, however it has been a quiet period for your intrepid AO, with only routine stuff happening and nothing to write, however life is now getting interesting again!

You will have all received your Insurance questionnaires on February 28, to be completed by no later than 13 April. You will note that, as stated in the covering letter and the follow up amendment from BAI, **ALL** questions must be answered and numbers cannot be altered once submitted. Those clubs that routinely alter their invoices and pay according to their changes will not be considered to be covered until the full invoice amount is paid. Look out people, I'm getting tough this year, I hope you're all suitably impressed by my scariness!

Not much else to report, the insurance will now see me with head down, other parts up, until probably September. If you have any queries, there are FAQs on the BAI website, at www.bushwalkingaustralia.org.au

The General Meeting in February voted to apply to have the Bushwalkers War Memorial at Splendour Rock, (Blue Mountains) registered in the list of NSW War Memorials, Keith Maxwell (BWRS) has undertaken this task and has submitted the application as of writing.

A Message from the President of Bushwalking NSW

Last November I attended the annual “Face to Face Meeting” of Bushwalking Australia Incorporated, (BAI) in Queensland. Present were the Presidents and usually another representative from each state.

Insurance was a big item on the agenda because BAI arranges the insurance for all clubs in Australia. Bushwalking Australia has engaged Marsh Insurance Brokers Pty Ltd to manage its insurance requirements, including obtaining the policies and cover we require and handling claims and enquiries from member clubs. Marsh have set up a dedicated telephone number of 1300 723810 for Bushwalking Australia member clubs to directly contact them for all enquiries regarding claims, policy terms and coverage, Certificates of Currency or additional cover. The following policies are provided

- Personal Accident Insurance,
- Public Liability Insurance,
- Associations Liability Policy.

The insurance section of the BAI web site should be used for information and claims, <http://www.bushwalkingaustralia.org/insurance>. Clubs should not have an insurance officer or information about insurance on their web sites. The insurance section of the BAI site is kept up to date and should be the only reference. Visitors on club walks should sign an acknowledgement of risk before each trip, club members are required to sign only once per year, usually at their annual renewal.

At the meeting, it became obvious that the states operate differently.

Most of the other states have contact with their state Governments and receive grants to assist with their operation and ask for track upgrades, etc. The NSW Committee is different and prefers no contact.

Bushwalking Victoria is providing membership to non-club walkers and is negotiating with the insurance broker to provide a special rate for the organisers and the members of non-club individual trips.

Some of the states have developed a Strategic Plan, the basic aim being to get more people bushwalking.

New South Wales has a well-trained and effective rescue organisation, the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Service that the other states don't have.

It is difficult for the smaller clubs to provide training for leaders and members. Victoria is organising training for small clubs by grouping a few clubs together. The NSW clubs have a preference for not being organised into training.

I will be happy to receive the thoughts of NSW clubs on any of these issues via the admin office email, admin@bushwalking.org.au

David Trinder

Insurance Matters - Scouting trips and reccies

A club recently asked about scouting trips, where a leader goes out to research a walk, and whether the insurance policies covered this sort of activity.

The first thing to note is that a scouting trip should be officially recorded somehow to be regarded as a club activity. This may mean listing it in the club's walk program, adding it to a web calendar if the club has one, or maybe the club officially recording somewhere that the walk took place as a club activity. The latter could be just noting it in the minutes of a general or committee meeting.

The second thing is that for all club activities, the broker recommends that a waiver form be filled in and signed. This provides clear evidence that all participants were aware of the risks and took responsibility for themselves. It is especially important if there are visitors on the trip.

David Morrison
Insurance Officer

Tracks and Access Report for 13 February 2014

David Trinder

Tracks and Access Officer

Bushwalking NSW Inc

Bushwalk leaders should refer to the following web site for alerts for the area in which they are walking, This report includes relevant extracts from the "Alerts" section of the "National Parks and Wildlife Service Visitor Web Site" <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au>. For further information refer to the link.
Last update: 13 February 2014

- 1 park currently affected by fire
- 69 parks with closed areas
- 408 fire bans
- 2 upcoming closed areas

For hazard reduction burning information, major wildfire updates and a list of all current incidents in NSW, please visit the NSW Rural Fire Service [websiteexternal link](#).

Bargo River State Conservation Area

Walking track closure due to fire damage

Caves Creek walking track in Bargo River State Conservation Area is closed until further notice due to fire damage.

Barrington Tops National Park

A park fire ban applies in the park. (Future bans will also apply.)

Blue Mountains National Park

Fire-affected areas remain closed

- Pierces Pass and Hungerford's Track (picnic area and road open)
- Mt Banks walking and cycling track (picnic area & road open)
- Track to Victoria Falls (picnic area & road open)

As a result of fire impact some canyons will remain closed until the next canyon season (summer 2014/2015) to allow for recovery. These include:

- all canyons in burnt areas accessed via Waratah Ridge (Hole in the Wall Canyon and Bungleboori Creek canyons)
 - all burnt areas and canyons in burnt areas north of the Wollangambe River
 - Dalpura, Birrabang, Yileen and other canyons south of the Bells Line of Road between Bell and Mt Banks
- Part of the Grand Canyon walking track will be closed from Tuesday 28 January 2014 for several months until further work is completed on the track.

Grand Canyon is also closed for canyoning for the same period because the work site is directly overhead. The Overcliff Track at Wentworth Falls between Lyrebird and Breakfast Point lookouts remains closed due to storm damage.

Kosciuszko National Park

A park fire ban applies in the park.

SOLID FIRE FUEL BAN

Due to exceptionally hot and dry conditions across both parks and the increasing risk of fires, a solid fuel ban has been declared for Kosciuszko National Park and Brindabella National Park until 28th February .

The ban means that only gas cookers will be permitted.

BUSHWALKERS WILDERNESS RESCUE SQUAD

February, 2014

This is a brief report to cover BWRS since the November 2013 General Meeting. Good training makes rescue easy – to quote Dave Sheppard, “train hard, rescue easy”. As usual, this is a snapshot only of some of the recent many activities of BWRS.

Callout - Bungonia Caves. On Monday 17 February at short notice BWRS provided some vertical trained personnel to assist in a rescue in the B4, B5 network of Bungonia Caves. Three cavers had been trapped by a sudden downpour that filled a sump. They retreated up to Coffin Chamber but could go no further. Rescue may have involved cave divers. Slightly built NSW Cave Rescue and BWRS members would assist in moving equipment. Luckily it was possible to drain some water to create an air gap. With helmets off the cavers were able to exit their chamber on their backs with their faces just above water.

BWRS Remote Area First Aid (RAFA) courses regularly attract many trainees due to its content and excellent Instructor. RAFA training provides a far better of awareness of First Aid than Apply First Aid for the areas bushwalkers like to visit. RAFA is the First Aid operational requirement for members of BWRS.

RAFA courses now fill quickly. Last weekend was the second of the two required weekends for RAFA training. Trainees are normally expected to camp in a semi rural setting for the first aid scenarios. This latest course was held in the Newcastle area for Newcastle Ramblers bushwalkers and others.

The next **RAFA** course will be a weekend recertification course for bushwalkers who are already RAFA qualified March 29 - 30. A full RAFA course will be held on May 3/4 and 17/18.

Also on May 18 Belinda Keir (First Aid Instructor) will run a one day St John Ambulance **Apply First Aid** (previously known as Senior First Aid.) course. Good publicity has brought a welcome surge in trainee numbers. This is a revised mode of instruction where trainees prelearn the theory prior to one day of practical instruction.

Please note that the first activity on the 18 May will be the **theory exam**. There will be no theory revision. The rest of the day will be training in the required practical skills of CPR etc This course is aimed at bushwalking club members. Belinda has permission to show some extra skills, that could be useful in bushwalking incidents, that are not currently taught in other Apply First Aid courses.

Please see our BWRS website for dates & the registration procedure for either **RAFA** or **Apply First Aid** training.
<http://www.bwrs.org.au/?q=first-aid-training>

Recruitment Day / CBT training. On February 8 BWRS held an Open Day BBQ at Rooty Hill as recruitment. Potential members joined existing members who were reviewing the progress of CBT (Competency Based Training) recognition of member skills. This follows on from a CBT training session on December 7 / 8, 2013. This was a continuation of a weekend held in February 2013. Members will be guided in completing competencies in Certificate II, III & IV in Public Safety.

ALL volunteers in emergency services undergo recognition of skills through CBT. The resultant skills are recognised Australia wide to produce a more professional group of emergency services volunteers. BWRS Operational Members are recognised as a skilled S&R resource.

Maintaining equipment is an ongoing process for BWRS. Currently, we are finalising purchase of a replacement trailer for our RAFA Instructor to move his stores. The radios / mobile telephone in the Toyota Troop Carrier have been upgraded. The UHF radio network will come under review with changes to frequency allocations. Extra channels have been inserted between existing channels.

MAPS. BWRS has become an accidental clearing house for unwanted maps via our **Map Sale**. There still are interesting sheets that are worth adding to your collection. Many bushwalkers have expanded their library of maps at a great saving. The available maps have been expanded with a new slab of maps that were recently collected. The more you buy the cheaper per map with our bulk discount! For a list of maps see our website - <http://www.bwrs.org.au/?q=node/462>

BWRS is a long established community organisation that specialises in bush search and rescue. BWRS is an informal, friendly group that concentrates on doing not talking. PUT your bushwalking skills to good use. GET involved in BWRS! To join Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad please contact our Secretary, Steven Ruten on secretary@bwrs.org.au or visit our revised website at www.bwrs.org.au