

# Bushwalking NSW Newsletter

Edition 7    May 2014



Warragamba Dam, from Narrowneck

**PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO YOUR MEMBERS!**

## **Welcome to May!**

Since I last spoke with you all, I have been very busy with the Insurance questionnaires. I am a bit disappointed in the response, I have had to spend a great deal of time chasing clubs who haven't returned them or who have not included required information; at the deadline date there were still 26 clubs outstanding! This has earned me a great deal of grief from BAI, who are far from happy! I suspect that next year there will be sanctions of some sort applied to those clubs who don't respond on time, so that is worth bearing in mind.

Apart from that, many positive things are happening so I will refrain from waffling as much as I usually do and leave you to read all the interesting and informative items we have this month.

## **New Website for Bushwalking NSW**

You will all be pleased to know that Bushwalking NSW is updating its web site. The new site has the following goals:

- To promote bushwalking as an activity, and encourage people to join clubs

- To provide a way to make information relevant to bushwalkers available (eg, where, how, safety, environment)
- To provide a way to make information conveniently available to clubs (eg, policies, insurance info)
- To allow clubs to update their information themselves (eg, contacts, web address)
- To demonstrate that Bushwalking NSW is a modern, relevant organisation
- To enable staff/officers to update the content without professional help

The new site will be rolled out in stages. The first will be to get the basic structure and information there. The second stage will be to implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This will be a database of club contact and marketing information which will be used to provide details of clubs for the website. Clubs will be able to update this themselves to reflect changing officers, goals, etc. In the longer term, it will enable better communications with clubs.

It is hoped the first stage will be completed by mid-July, with the second stage probably by the end of the year.

The project manager is David Morrison, a member of the Management Committee, and an IT veteran.

HELP!! Yes, this is a big task, and we could use some help! If you have skills in copy writing, finding or writing good content, or setting up a CRM, we would love to talk to you. This will be a limited time commitment, and may only take a few hours.

If you are able to help, or have any questions or suggestions, please contact [webproject@bushwalkingnsw.org.au](mailto:webproject@bushwalkingnsw.org.au)

**PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO ALL OF YOUR MEMBERS. IT IS IMPORTANT.**

## **From the President**

I have mentioned previously that the Bushwalking New South Wales Management Committee intends to make changes to the organisation so it becomes more beneficial to the Clubs of NSW.

We are in the process of building a new web site that will be more adaptable, useful and will operate as a vehicle for many services.

The Management Committee is considering 3 matters in the short term.

Recently we had a brain storming session and discussed these subjects in separate groups.

### **Activities Program**

We want to develop a program to assist Club Activity Coordinators and reduce the work they do in organising the programs. It will be on the Bushwalking NSW web site and be available to all Clubs to use if they want to. It will be a calendar into which the leaders can enter activities and a box to click for participants to register for an activity. The administration work will be reduced to checking and will be a minimum. It can be linked to the Club Data Base if necessary and it can have special conditions for special activities or for each Club. It might also incorporate a post activity reporting system and easily accessible emergency contacts and it might have to be adaptable to non-computer literate people. NPA is developing such a program and they are happy for all Clubs to use it.

### **Training**

Face to face training can be done in the larger Clubs or it can be on video recordings on the BNSW web site and/or Club web sites or on YouTube for smaller groups. Several Clubs can get together to share resources. Regional Clubs will have to travel further to share. Some Clubs have a trip leader manual. Sydney Bush Walkers may provide training for other Clubs when they are training their own people. Training can cover

leadership, navigation, First Aid, abseiling, rope rescue and bushcraft. Clubs will not be forced to participate in training but it would be to their advantage to do so.

### **Publicity**

We should let the people of the state and people who are visiting the state know about bushwalking. We need to encourage people to get out into the bush, to exercise and enjoy the natural places. We want to encourage people to join the Clubs of NSW. Walking with a Club is safer, more social and will take people to new places. Our magazine "The Bushwalker" is well known and accepted. It is and will be placed in shops so it is accessible to all bushwalkers. It can be used to publicise bushwalking and show the advantages of joining a Club. Our web site, under construction, can be made easy to find by search engines. We might advertise in other ways to make us known by more people in the State.

### **Great Walks**

The State Government Intends to build some "Great Walks" in New South Wales to encourage people to do more bushwalking and increase the number of people coming to the state. We will be talking to the Minister for the Environment or one of his staff to assist by letting them know about the existing tracks that can be upgraded and of the importance of conserving the natural areas in National Parks and especially in Wilderness Areas. Upgraded tracks in NSW will be used by the Clubs and can be used to gain members for Clubs.

### **Articles for The Bushwalker magazine**

The Bushwalker magazine is published four times a year by Bushwalking NSW. All the articles are written by bushwalkers about subjects of interest to bushwalkers.

Many of them are reports of interesting walks, but gear reviews, photos, articles on conservation issues for bushwalkers, historical material, etc are all welcome.

If you are describing a walk somewhere, it would really help if you could give the reader (who may be from far away) some idea of where the walk is. We don't need GRs, just a general idea. We need suitable photos for most every article, so please include a few.

Because of the production process, Word documents or PDF files are not good enough, and there are technical requirements for articles and photos. These are fairly simple but can make a big difference to the finished result. For full details, please download the latest magazine and read the bottom half of the first page below the editorial.

<http://www.bushwalking.org.au/mag.html>

### **NSW Great Walks**

You may not be aware that the state government has announced that they want to make NSW a worldwide walking destination. They intend to set up a series of Great Walks, much like those in New Zealand and Queensland. And they are prepared to spend real money setting up the campsites, tracks and other facilities.

This is a fantastic idea to get bushwalking actually on the agenda and recognised for what it is, and for the value it brings to the state. It should also lead to improvements in these tracks which will benefit us.

At present, they are seeking suggestions from the general public about walks that could be included.

<http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/Experiences/nsw-great-walks>

## **The Bushwalker Survey 2013**

### **Summary of results**

In the second half of 2013, Bushwalking NSW set up an online survey to find out what readers thought of its magazine *The Bushwalker*. The opportunity was also taken to gauge how Bushwalking NSW was regarded by bushwalkers, and to gather some demographic information about bushwalkers.

Invitations to complete the survey were sent to all bushwalking clubs in NSW with a request that they distribute it to their members. An invitation was also included in the October issue of the magazine.

192 responses had been received by 25 December 2013. Not all respondents answered all questions, and it seems that some clubs chose to provide a "club" response rather than letting their members respond individually. Thanks are due to all the people who completed the survey.

The executive summary is that people really enjoy *The Bushwalker* as it is, but many good suggestions were made to improve it.

This document will attempt to summarise the answers given. A summary of comments offered is included lower down.

A few points did arise that you could help with:

1. There were a number of comments about the types and quality of articles in *The Bushwalker*. The editor can only publish what is offered to him, so if you would like to see different types of articles, think about writing some yourself, or encouraging talented friends to do so.

2. On the subject of Bushwalking NSW, there were a number of complaints about things promised some time ago that had not been done yet. Bushwalking NSW relies on (a small number) of volunteers for most of its operations, and many of these volunteers have been devoting time to Bushwalking NSW for many years. Sometimes it is hard to get enthusiastic all over again

Offers of help are always welcome. This does not necessarily mean attending meetings, and is not a long term commitment, but if you have skills or knowledge in some area that you think would help, please contact us. Or if you know someone who could help, let us know. (Please ask if you are not sure what needs to be done.)

3. If you worry about throwing away paper copies of *The Bushwalker* after you have read it, or if your club has copies left over, do something useful with them. Give them to an outdoors shop in your area, or to a library or tourist office so that other people can have the pleasure of reading them.

### **1. The Bushwalker magazine**

#### *1.1 How often do you read it?*

Only 6% of respondents had never seen the magazine. The rest read all or some issues. Mostly this appears to be because of distribution problems within clubs.

#### *1.2 Do you read the paper or electronic version?*

60% of people read the paper version only. 19% read it electronically only. The rest read it in both media.

The under 50s were significantly more likely to read it electronically than on paper (40% to 27%) than the over 50s who preferred the paper version overwhelmingly to electronic (66% to 16%).

### *1.3 How do you get it?*

The vast majority of readers got the magazine through a bushwalking club (65%), with the next most popular being from a friend (11%). Presumably these are people who are not members of a bushwalking club.

### *1.4 Would you prefer to read it on paper or electronically?*

There was a small overall majority preferred electronic, indicating that both paper and electronic versions are still very popular. Of the people who preferred electronic, few wanted to see it in a format suitable for ebook readers. Most preferred it as a PDF file.

Under 50s preferred electronic 3 to 1, while over 50s preferred paper 2 to 1.

### *1.5 Please rate your enjoyment of/interest in each part of the magazine.*

The results showed average enjoyment ranging from 3.3 to 4.2 on a scale of 1-5. This indicates that readers find the magazine to be very worthwhile, although some areas could perhaps be reviewed.

Editorial: 3.5

Trip reports (Australia): 4.1

Trip reports (overseas): 3.4

Gear reports: 3.6

Historical articles: 3.9

Photos: 4.2

News from Bushwalking NSW: 4.0

### *1.6 Have you ever visited or travelled with any of the companies who advertise in the magazine?*

29% of the readers of the magazine have patronised the companies who advertise in the magazine.

Extrapolated to the full membership of Bushwalking NSW, this would mean that 2610 bushwalkers patronise the advertisers, a significant number in all respects.

## **2. Bushwalking NSW**

### *2.1 Have you ever heard of Bushwalking NSW (formerly the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW)?*

Almost everyone had heard of Bushwalking NSW.

### *2.2 What do you think it does? (Tick all that apply)*

Protect the interests of bushwalkers: 87%

Lobby for preservation and extension of bushwalking areas: 83%

Maintain a search and rescue unit for bushwalkers and others: 55%

Arrange personal accident and public liability insurance cover for members of bushwalking clubs: 82%

Publish a magazine about bushwalking: 89%

Provide information on bushwalking, camping and other related activities: 78%

Provide advice on risk management, legal matters, etc for clubs: 73%



There was no difference between under and over 50s.

The lowest response, 55%, was for maintaining a search and rescue unit. Many years ago, Bushwalking NSW operated its own search and rescue unit. Legal issues and the need to comply with VRA standards led to the search and rescue unit transforming itself into a separate organisation called Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Service. <http://bwrs.org.au>

Bushwalking NSW now provides funding each year to support the operations of BWRS.

*2.3 Have you visited Bushwalking NSW's web site <http://bushwalking.org.au>?*

Around two thirds of respondents had visited the Bushwalking NSW web site.

*2.4 Bushwalking NSW will be redesigning its web site over the next few months. What would you like to see on the new website?*

Many useful comments were provided.

### **3. About you**

*3.1 How often do you go bushwalking?*

Around 80% of respondents bushwalk once or twice a month or more. More of the over 50s walk every week (35%) than the under 50s (20%). Under 50s do not seem to walk as frequently as the over 50s.

*3.2 How long have you been bushwalking?*

The vast majority have been walking for more than 10 years (79%).

*3.3 Are you a member of a bushwalking or outdoors club?*

All except one were members of a club.

*3.4 Where do you live (town/suburb)?*

2% were from ACT, 44% were from Sydney region (excluding Blue Mountains), and the rest came from all over NSW or other states.

*3.5 Age range?*

There are not many under 50 (16%), with the peak being in the 60-69 age range (39%). It is difficult to know whether this is representative of all bushwalkers in NSW or just those who are members of clubs.

*3.6 Gender?*

42% were female, 57% male. This was the same for under and over 50s.

*3.7 Leave e-mail address?*

39% of respondents left their e-mail address to receive a summary of the results, indicating an interest in this process, Bushwalking NSW and *The Bushwalker*.

## **Some Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS) highlights**

Older bushwalkers will remember Bushwalkers Search & Rescue (the Search & Rescue - S & R Section of Confederation) Bushwalkers from member clubs would 'answer the call' when fellow bushwalkers were overdue or lost in the bush. Times have changed; there are stronger rules and better equipment for all emergency services.

In 2001 S&R became BWRS. We still need experienced bushwalkers to provide this valuable community service. It is worthwhile being part of modern rescue. BWRS has a varied training program that includes communications and vertical (cliff) rescue that makes our personnel special. Membership details are at our website - [www.bwrs.org.au](http://www.bwrs.org.au)

First Aid is a great skill to have when some one is injured nearby. But the chance just slipped by for training in May. Twice each year BWRS gives you the chance to train for one day in First Aid. "Provide First Aid" is useful when your bushwalking is not unduly adventurous.

For the more adventurous a four day (two weekends) of Remote Area First Aid (RAFA) training gives you far better skills to help an injured person survive when medical help is not close. BWRS members use RAFA as their First Aid standard.

Sunday May 18 will be a St John Ambulance "Provide First Aid" course simultaneously as a RAFA course finishes. Don't despair, RAFA will be on again in September while "Provide First Aid" will be provided again in November.

See the BWRS website for dates and booking details; [www.bwrs.org.au](http://www.bwrs.org.au)

The website is full of useful information including safety, remote area communications, GPS and PLB emergency beacons (not EPIRB; that is a marine emergency beacon for boaties) plus NavShield.

Navigation makes bushwalking a far more interesting activity than just following the crowds on tracks. Each year BWRS gives bushwalkers and teams from emergency services the opportunity to improve their navigation skills in a friendly atmosphere at NavShield.

You can participate in either a one day or two event of NavShield on July 5 / 6. Checkpoints are currently being set by BWRS members at a mystery location in bush around two to three hours drive from Sydney. Final details will be released on 29 June. At the event you will given a list of grid references for all the checkpoints. Your challenge is to find as many checkpoints as you can without being late.

NavShield is catching. You will want to come back. I have presented attendance awards for 5, 10, 15 & 20 years of participation!!

During March members of BWRS practiced their search and rescue skills in Winburndale Nature Reserve. Our HF communication system was integrated the VHF system of another volunteer rescue squad, WICEN in finding and retrieving 'lost' persons. Our members will be acting as "Bushrangers" to help ensure the safety of participants at NavShield.

Many bushwalkers look forward to NavShield each year. BWRS would love to see more bushwalkers enjoy the spirit of NavShield. This can also be a great starting point, for joining, as you meet BWRS in action. My own club always puts in a team each year. Details of NavShield registration are (as you guessed) at the BWRS website - [www.bwrs.org.au](http://www.bwrs.org.au)

## **Tracks and Access Report for 10 May 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.

- 0 park currently affected by fire
- 73 parks with closed areas
- 17 fire bans
- 2 Hazard Reduction Burns
- 7 Parks with 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 <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>.

### **Crowdy Bay National**

Diamond Head Camping Area Upgrade Temporary Closure

The Diamond Head camping Area will be closed from the 5th May 2014 for up to 12 weeks.

Reason for this closure is to allow essential drainage and ground levelling works to be completed.

### **Deua National Park**

Dampier Mountain Fire Trail - Deua National Park

Due to increased heavy traffic use (and ongoing use of trailers on this trail) over the Easter and Anzac long weekends, sections of the Dampier Mountain Fire Trail have become difficult to negotiate and will soon become impassable without significant remedial works.

As a result, NPWS are now advising visitors to not use Dampier Mountain FT to access Bendethera from the west for now. NPWS will schedule works to commence in the next few weeks to repair the section of damaged trail.

### **Morton National Park**

Old Burrier Firetrail is closed for construction work. The alternative route between Yalwal and Burrier is via Yalwal Road and Burrier Road. For further information please contact National Parks on (02) 4428 6300.

Tianjara Fire Trail Closed

Due to environmental damage the Tianjara Fire trail is closed. The trail will be closed until urgent work can be carried out. The trail is currently impassable

Hazard reduction burn (Ends Sunday 1 June).

UPDATE 02/05/2014: the Budawang Wilderness Area of Morton National Park is now open for bushwalking. A prescribed burn has now been completed. Bushwalkers are advised to take care in any fire affected landscapes. For further enquiries NPWS Ulladulla 02 4454 9500.



**Myall Lakes National Park**

Blue-Green Algae Alert for Myall Lake.

Visitors to Myall lakes National Park are advised that some camping areas will be temporarily closed over winter, to ensure the sites remain grassed, and are at their optimum for the busier holiday times. The temporary closures also allow for facility maintenances, and for pre-season hazard reduction work to be undertaken.

**Sydney Harbour National Park**

Track maintenance northern end of Hermit Bay on the Hermitage Foreshore Track (Ends Friday 30 May)

The walking track at the northern end of Hermit Bay on the Hermitage Foreshore Track will be closed for maintenance works. Works are expected to be complete by Friday 30 May 2014. People can detour around the works by either entering or exiting the Hermitage Foreshore Track from Tingara Ave or Queens Ave, Vaucluse. Locations affected: Nielsen Park, Hermitage Foreshore Track, Hermitage Foreshore track.