

Bushwalking NSW Newsletter

Edition 8 June 2014



Blue Mountains National Park: thanks to Kaushalya from SUBW for use of your great photos!.

PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO YOUR MEMBERS!

I imagine that many of you are busy trying to get everything up to date for the end of the financial year, as am I. Next week we can start the countdown to Christmas, only 130 days left!

A few matters I would like to bring to your attention; I have had an email from one of our members who is a member of 3 different clubs. He told me that he never received any information, a newsletter or a copy of the Bushwalker magazine from any of those clubs. This is really disappointing; each of those clubs receives a bulk mail out of the magazine and is on the mailing list for information and newsletters. This would indicate that these clubs and probably several others do not pass information on to their members, despite repeated requests to do so.

I ask again, could those club secretaries and other office bearers please pass on information from us, this is the only way that our members can know what we are doing.

The other matter of importance is the upcoming AGM. It will be held on 19 August at Ashfield RSL Club at 7.30 pm. In the next few weeks I will be sending out regular reminders and information, but meanwhile please give some thought to not only sending delegates from your clubs, but also think about nominating either yourselves or others for positions on the management committee. It is only by participation that the organisation can grow and we know that we have many talented and motivated members who may be able to spare some of their time and expertise.

In about 3 weeks you should start to receive your invoices for Affiliation and Insurance. I normally receive the premiums in around the 3rd week of July, so invoices will be sent immediately after that. Please note that there will be 21 days to pay, if you all budget a total of around \$17 per member that should cover and may leave you with some change!

Enough now from me, please keep in mind that we always need articles/photos for the Bushwalker magazine

From the President's Desk

The Management Committee of Bushwalking NSW is attempting to increase and improve the services provided to the Clubs and other bushwalkers on NSW. We are trying to increase our numbers and the amount of work we do to achieve this end. All bushwalkers of the state, whether in Sydney or not, are welcome to enlist with us if you feel that you can make a contribution.

Our new web site is progressing, we should have some pages to see in a months' time. The site will include an activities calendar which is being developed by NPA and this could save work by the activities coordinator of Clubs by making the activities systems more automated. The web site will also include training assistance, more publicity, a conservation section and communications with other parties. The web site will also attempt to help struggling Clubs to gain new members.

The recent Blue Mountains night search for a party who made an unplanned overnight extension to their walk raised a few questions. We are discussing an aim to provide better communications between bushwalking parties and the police or rescue organisations. There are satellite text messaging systems available now and electronic communications are becoming cheaper and easier all the time. Many parties have a PLB with them but they only say "we are in trouble, come and get us and this where we are", they can't say we are "OK", we will be late and you don't need help and they can give a position without a PLB.

The Bushwalking NSW Annual General Meeting is coming up on the 19th August at the Ashfield RSL. We want many bushwalkers to come and meet us, we expect to have a guest speaker and food and drinks available; we hope to meet many of you there.

We are working with Bushwalking Australia in developing new systems and services to the Clubs. New South Wales has more Clubs and more bushwalking members than the other states and our areas for bushwalking are more extensive and more available and free. The branding of our web site will be consistent with Bushwalking Australia and the other States.

David Trinder
President

Bushwalking NSW Web Site Update

The designer is hard at work creating the design for the site. This will be a modern design similar to some of the latest designs from large companies. Once this is finished, we will start loading content into the site.

The site will be developed using the Wordpress Content Management System (CMS). The idea is that much of the content will be able to be updated by Gail or other officers of Bushwalking NSW, rather than having to get an expert to do it.

So far, we have almost half of the content written. Thanks are due mainly to Leonie Bell for her work on this. We would be happy to have other helpers if you have the time and expertise.

HELP!! If you have experience setting up a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for a small organisation, we would love to talk to you. This will be a limited time commitment, and may only take a few hours. If you can help with this or writing content, please contact me immediately.

Club Communications

As a part of the website development, we are taking steps to improve our communications with clubs. One of the problems we have is that the current e-mail list is a dog's breakfast. There are up to 10 addresses for some clubs. It is constantly out of date due to changes of officers within clubs, and clubs not telling us of the changes. Messages get sent to people who are no longer members of the club, and they do not get passed back to the club. This has caused many problems, especially with the insurance renewals, and Gail has to spend many hours chasing down people to get an answer.

To help make this work more smoothly and efficiently, we have now asked all clubs to take responsibility for distribution of our messages within their club by having a single address for us to use. We ask that the address is monitored regularly, and especially that it does not depend on anyone's personal e-mail address. This can be a serious problem if that person goes away for extended periods, as many of you apparently are.

There are two convenient ways to handle this. If your club has its own hosting arrangement for your web site, you can set up a forwarder for e-mail for your own use. So for example, you could set up a forwarder for *committee@bushwalkers.org.au* to automatically redistribute all mail for that address to as many people as you like. Clubs would be able to update the list of people whenever they needed to without having to remember to contact Gail..

David Morrison
webproject@bushwalkingnsw.org.au

Insurance Matters - Not paying fees on time

Here is a salutary lesson for all clubs. Earlier this year, a club had an accident on a walk, and the injured person stated a possible intention to make a claim on the club's insurance.

Unfortunately, despite all Bushwalking NSW's attempts to contact them over several months, the club had not replied to the annual insurance survey, had not updated contact details of the club officers, and had not paid

their annual fees and insurance to Bushwalking NSW. Under the Bushwalking NSW constitution, if fees are not paid by the AGM (August) the club automatically ceases to be a member and no longer has insurance cover.

In this situation, the club, the leader and possibly others could be subject to legal action by the injured person. Even if they have done nothing wrong, the cost of defending a court case could run into tens of thousands of dollars. This cost would have been covered by the insurance policy.

If the club later decides they want to rejoin Bushwalking NSW, they have to apply as a new club would. Insurance cover will not apply between the AGM and when they rejoin.

The moral for all clubs is:

1. Immediately after your AGM, advise your new contact details to the Bushwalking NSW office.
2. Always reply to the annual survey before the due date.
3. Always pay your affiliation fees and insurance before the Bushwalking NSW AGM in August.

David Morrison
Insurance Officer

Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS) News

There is a buzz within BWRS as we are approaching another NavShield on 5 / 6 July. The course flags have been hung and we are doing the myriad of small things to finalise the event - trophies, toilets, maps, lighting, communications, registrations etc We look forward to NavShield each year as a shop front on our abilities.

We are not alone; we have many emergency services teams that are back for their 5th, 10th, 15th or 20th NavShield.

NavShield is a great way for your club members to practice remote area map & compass navigation in a friendly atmosphere. Each year BWRS invites emergency services teams to participate in either a ONE day or TWO day event. The location is kept secret until the last week before NavShield but is typically 2 to 3 hours drive from Sydney.

Teams at registration get a copy of the topo map plus a list of grid references for the checkpoints. The challenge is to select a route to suit their team to find as many checkpoints as possible in the available time. There are penalties for returning late.

Team Registration is straight forward at the BWRS website - www.bwrs.org.au

Searching for vulnerable persons such as autistic children, young children, despondents (suicides), mentally deficient persons plus dementia patients will always present special challenges. In the recent past BWRS has assisted NSW Police in such searches. However, incidents in Australia can only provide a small database in looking for common features to aid Search Manager training.

On Monday, Tuesday 16 /17 June NSW Police Bomb and Rescue Squad held a fascinating seminar on vulnerable people. Two members of BWRS were among the emergency services invitees. A visiting Search Manger specialist presented his results from a large data base gleaned from the USA and other countries. There are distinct differences in their pattern of behaviour. Understanding this pattern can minimise wasted effort and increase the chances of a successful outcome in locating a missing person alive.

This was great training. BWRS is a valued part of the emergency services in NSW. We should be able to more effectively search for vulnerable persons in future.

During May BWRS ran a four day Remote Area First Aid (RAFA) course. RAFA skills are designed for incidents where medical help may be hours / days away. The basic First Aid skills you get from a one day St John Ambulance "Provide First Aid" course will give you great confidence when medical help is around an hour away. Again, both informative courses were well attended.

RAFA and "Provide First Aid" will be offered again later this year. Full details and registration details are available at our website - www.bwrs.org.au While you are at the website why not explore the information on GPS, PLB, outback communications etc.

Keith Maxwell.

Critical Wildlife Under Threat



The tiger quoll is the largest marsupial carnivore on the Australian mainland and it could be extinct in less than a decade, but at the moment it is alive and well deep in the Watagan Mountains west of Newcastle. An elusive but thriving tiger quoll population has been found in the Watagans using motion activated cameras.

University of Wollongong researches baited their cameras with raw chicken to flush out the bird and possum hunting predator, and to their delight found a small but thriving tiger quoll population.

The cameras captured images of an array of other native and introduced species. It seems that the Watagans are not just home to tiger quolls, but many birds, feral dogs and cats as well as inquisitive wallabies, and small native animals such as bandicoots and potaroos.

This sort of research provide invaluable scientific data that will help manage the endangered tiger quoll and ensure it keeps its top marsupial predator status for a long while to come.

However the tiger quoll's future is not a certainty. In this week's budget Premier Mike Baird slashed funding for the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage by almost 10 per cent.

If that wasn't enough, radical elements in government have just launched another attack on native wildlife and bushland, announcing a [review](#) of the state's key conservation laws.

It is clear that this review is nothing more than a thinly veiled attack on the most important laws protecting native plants and animals in NSW. WWF [estimates](#) these laws have saved tens of thousands of hectares of bush in NSW, not only is the tiger quoll in danger, but as well as 265,000 native animals, including hundreds of Koalas.

Special interests want to scrape bushland bare without regard for native wildlife, soil, or water.



This is a real test for new Premier Baird. Does he want to protect the native animals and landscapes people love, or will he bow to radical elements who would put profits before nature?

Let your friends know what's at risk here. Wherever you can, share [this story](#) on Facebook and Twitter. People deserve to know what the government is putting at risk.

[Robert Gascoigne- Newcastle Ramblers Bushwalking Club](#)

Info garnered from The Newcastle Herald and Karl Berkert