

Bushwalking NSW Newsletter

Edition 11: September 2014



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

PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO YOUR MEMBERS!

Hello Everyone,

Thankfully, things are now slowing down a little in the office; the Insurance is all organised and I must say that the majority of the clubs were terrific this year in the timely return of documents and payments; thank you. We still have some 'problem children' but all families do!

This year, we have something a little different; instead of sending each club copies of policies and

schedules, they are all located on the Bushwalking Australia website at;

www.bushwalkingaustralia.org.au

where they can be read and/or downloaded. There are some significant improvements to cover this year and these are summarised elsewhere in this newsletter.

If you haven't yet done so, have a look at our new website, we would love to hear what you think.

<http://bushwalkingnsw.org.au>

Don't forget we still have a vacant position, if anyone thinks that they would like to be the new 'me' or you know anyone who might fill the bill, the job description is below.

Position Vacant

Bushwalking NSW - Administration Officer

Bushwalking NSW Inc., the peak body for bushwalking in New South Wales, is an incorporated association run by a Management Committee. It encompasses over 60 affiliated bushwalking clubs NSW-wide with over 10,000 members.

Following the resignation of our current Administration Officer, we are seeking a replacement.

Confidence and maturity is required as the person will have the sole responsibility of managing of the Newtown office, reporting directly to the President. Also required are excellent organisational abilities to meet the demands of this busy multi-faceted role.

Duties include:

- attending to phone, post and email enquiries from bushwalkers, clubs, equivalent interstate organisations and media,
- maintaining the financial Excel Workbook and attending to all financial matters,
- taking minutes at monthly General and Management Committee meetings held at the Ashfield RSL Club,
- club insurance including collating renewal questionnaire responses, preparing the composite NSW Return, and invoicing clubs
- coordinating printing and distribution of our quarterly magazine *The Bushwalker*,
- preparation of the monthly newsletter from articles submitted
- helping to maintain the content of our new web site <http://bushwalkingnsw.org.au>

Work hours are flexible; 15 hours for a 3 day week, plus approximately 3 hours one night per month.

Computer literacy, with MS Office Word and Excel skills. Mature persons are encouraged to apply.

If you feel that you meet the above requirements, please send your CV to Gail.

We have some interesting articles for your reading pleasure this month, so I'll be quiet now and let you all get on with it. Enjoy!

From the President

Back in the early 2000s, risk management was the buzzword. A series of silly public liability cases - not to do with bushwalking - had everyone in NSW worried about being sued. Bushwalking club members were covered by insurance, but the insurers wanted a bit more certainty that they could defend against frivolous claims.

A subcommittee of dedicated people took on the challenge and in 2004 produced guidelines to help clubs prepare their own risk management plans. A couple of years later, they added to this with a set of guidelines for what were uninsured activities at the time, eg, snow skiing, rock climbing. We have Lynda Paju, Margaret Covi and Denise Kruse to thank for all this work, with contributions from Wilf Hilder, Michael Maack, Jan Wouters and Peter Hart.

It is now 10 years later, things have changed, and the Risk Management Guidelines badly need updating.

We have been fortunate to have two people offer to help with this. They are Geoff Reed from WEA Ramblers, and Linda Groom from Canberra Bushwalking Club. It is especially useful to have Linda involved as we need to cater for ACT law as well as NSW.

Together with Margaret Covi, these people have agreed to take up the challenge again and produce updated risk management guidelines. They have been asked to:

- Review the Bushwalking Australia Risk Management Guidelines and identify where we can use them.
- Prepare guidelines for NSW and ACT clubs to enable them to prepare their own risk management plans.
- Prepare a draft risk management plan that clubs can use as a template, including relevant forms.

They expect to have this big job finished by the end of March 2015.

Bushwalking NSW is very grateful to Linda, Geoff and Margaret for taking on this important task.

If you feel specific issues need to be addressed, please let us know.

David Morrison

President

Insurance Improvements

For the 2014-15 insurance year, while the total premium payable has remained unchanged from 2013-14, Bushwalking Australia and its broker, Marsh Advantage Pty Ltd, have negotiated improved loss of earnings and non-Medicare benefits. The Schedule of Benefits under the Personal Accident Policy for 2014-15 include:

- Loss of earnings - Benefit of \$700 per week (increased from \$500 per week) up to age 95, maximum of 80% of income, 7 day excess, maximum of 52 weeks
- Non-Medicare medical benefit, 80% claimable to a maximum of \$3,000 (previously \$2000)
- Broken bones benefit of up to \$2,000
- Capital Benefit - \$50,000 up to age 84, \$10,000 age 85-95 or under age 18

Full information on the insurance coverage for bushwalkers and clubs can be found at the Bushwalking Australia web site:

<http://bushwalkingaustralia.org.au/insurance/insurance-overview>

Logging Walks Made Easy!

Earlier this year a group of us from WEA Ramblers, Sydney, undertook two weeks of walking in Southern France organised by HF Holidays, a UK organisation. During these walks I noticed that the leaders had been issued with a small (A5) laminated booklet which detailed the route for each day's walk. The information provided not only a topographical map with the route highlighted, but the ascent and descent, distance travelled and time taken, plus way-point notes.

Our club has been concerned that a lot of our older, experienced walkers are now retiring from walking, or at least from leading walks. There is the risk that the details of the walks they have led over the years could be lost. We are keen to establish a data bank of those walks, plus the addition of details of all current walks.

With that in mind, I asked one of the HF leaders if he was able to provide me with the details of the software programme HF Holidays uses to produce their guides for leaders. He has recently been able to give me this information, which I provided to those attending the BNSW AGM. The mapping software programme is the 'Topo NSW' programme listed on the www.memory-map.com.au website. This programme has the many useful features, including the following:

- Covers all NSW at 1:25k, 1:50k and 1:100k scale in 3 regions of NSW.
- UBD street maps.
- Topographical maps.
- Includes all walking and 4WD tracks, fire trails and locked gates.
- Index of places, streets and features.
- Full GPS interface with on-screen track-log for those who want to map the route as they walk/ride.
- Auto-tracking.
- Printable route cards.
- Waypoint click and drag – enables you to quickly enter and plan a route using multiple waypoints. This is the feature we expect will be most useful to us in building a database from notes of 'old' walks.
- Can be purchased as DVD set or downloadable version. Also available for mobile devices.

More features are listed on the above website. It is worthwhile noting that software updates are provided 3 times a year, with the map information updated every 3 years. WEA Ramblers believe that the purchase of this software is a good investment and will make it easy for us to produce and maintain a user-friendly data base of walks offered by the club. Having walk details available in this format will also enable relatively new leaders, or leaders asked to cover for another leader in an emergency, to have all the details of a walk readily available. I am aware that some in BNSW are already using this software and have found it easy to use and accurate.

So, check it out. It might help you or your club in the planning and recording walks.

Geoff Reed
President, WEA Ramblers, Sydney

Group Sizes in National Parks

A question was asked at the AGM in August about the maximum group size for trips in national parks. Thanks to Matt McLelland, we have an answer from Simon Stroud, Manager Visitor Experiences and Education, Office of Environment and Heritage.

Unfortunately, at this time we do not have a list of group size limits for all of our over 800 NPWS parks. However, every three years we run a survey called 'State of the Parks' which requires rangers from every park across the State to enter data on their park. We are proposing that the next survey, to be conducted in 2016, include a question on group size limit for parks. Once we have established this list it will be relatively easy to keep it up-to-date and on our website.

In the meantime, we can provide the below size limits for three of our popular parks: Blue Mountains NP, Kanangra-Boyd NP and Gardens of Stone NP. In addition, if your members are able to provide a targeted list of parks that are regularly visited by bushwalking clubs, we could provide size limits for a small number of parks. For any other parks the best way to establish the group size limit until 2016 is to ring the local park office at the number listed for the park on <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au>

Blue Mountains NP – Maximum of 8 people in the wilderness area. Groups of more than 20 who

venture more than 300m from a public access road require prior approval of the Regional Manager.

Kanangra-Boyd NP - Maximum of 8 people in the wilderness area. Groups of more than 20 who venture more than 300m from a public access road require prior approval of the Regional Manager.

Gardens of Stone NP - Maximum group size for bushwalking is 12 persons.

So at this stage, the best way to find out official group size limits is to contact the office for the park you wish to visit. For the time being, you can probably expect it to be 8 in a wilderness area, and 20 elsewhere in a park.

Exploring with Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS)

(or 'lightweight First Aid Training')

Bushwalking is best done with a good dose of curiosity - what is over the next hill; what is down the creek; what mysteries are still in Gardens of Stone National Park; what challenges will the next NavShield throw up??

Electronics can change the way you explore. Map & compass skills require no batteries but careful choice of electronic aids can give you greater confidence in your exploration plus greater safety.

Some mouse exploration when you are stuck at home will help you understand the advantages and limits of GPS, distress beacons (what does PLB; ELB; EPIRB stand for), mobile phones / sat phones. The early explorers did not need all that stuff!! Yes, but they had more time to carefully record / map where they had been so they could retrace their steps.

The BWRS website is worth an exploration to understand the options and cut through the jargon - see www.bwrs.org.au

While at the website you can refresh your memory on safe bushwalking with our simple list of DO & DON'T plus check the dates for the next First Aid course. You have just missed another really comprehensive Remote Area First Aid (RAFA) four day course but you could gain some introductory skills in First Aid on 16 November in a St John Ambulance 'Provide First Aid' course. Follow the link to see registration details.

'Provide First Aid' training will give you greater confidence in First Aid situations. Why not train as a club group?? Our Instructor will suggest a sensible minimum set of items as a First Aid Kit that you each can carry. Thus, no one bushwalker carries a big, heavy First Aid kit but when you do need a First Aid Kit a little bit from everyone makes a really good First Aid Kit!!!

Our BWRS First Aid Training is also lightweight on the pocket. Our Instructor is a volunteer so costs are at a minimum to get a First Aid book and recognised, practical instruction in First Aid in just one day.

Its a great combination; First Aid skills & book, a list of items for your own lightweight First Aid kit at a lightweight price.

Mark your diary now with November 16 as the date for your St John Ambulance 'Provide First Aid' training. Places are limited so don't delay registration at www.bwrs.org.au

Appointed Positions on the Committee

The following people have been appointed to various positions on the committee of Bushwalking NSW. All of them have big jobs to do as well as general committee work, and all would appreciate offers of help.

Media Officer	Mitchell Isaacs
Risk Management Officer	Margaret Covi
Conservation Officer	Sierra Classen
Tracks and Access Officer	Alex Allchin
Magazine Editor	Roger Caffin
Web Site Manager	David Morrison
Training Officer	David Trinder
Public Officer	Margaret Covi
Delegates to Bushwalking Australia	David Morrison, President(ex-officio) David Trinder
Delegates to Nature Conservation Council	Sierra Classen, Conservation Officer (ex-officio) Jim Callaway

Insurance Matters - Visiting club members from other areas

A member of a club from Queensland is visiting NSW and will be staying for some time in the area of a NSW club. She wants to go on trips organised by the NSW club, but fears she will run afoul of the three trips rule for visitors.

The broker advises that provided she is covered at her own club for the same policies organised by

Bushwalking Australia, and that she is only in NSW temporarily, she is not considered a visitor. The insurance from her Queensland club will cover her. However, he does advise that the NSW club minute this at the next meeting so that there is a record that this was considered and approved.

This rule will also apply for club members visiting from a different part of NSW.

David Morrison

Insurance Officer