

SEARCH AND RESCUE SECTION

S & R swings into action, not only when club members are injured or overdue on trips, but at the request of the Police Department, or anyone else, for persons missing or injured in the bush.

S & R is highly organised, with a central committee and contact officers in every club who call up their volunteer members in an emergency. As many as 124 members of Federation have been engaged in the one operation.

The organisation includes bushwalker, rock-climber doctors, rock rescue teams, and a radio section which operates a base radio to keep in touch with search parties with 2-way radio sets they carry.

Practice weekends are held, and every year a Demonstration Weekend, at which different clubs and speakers cover such subjects as Safety in the Bush, in the Snow, in Bushfires, in Canoes, Rock Climbing Techniques, First Aid and improvisation of equipment in the bush, How Not to Get Lost, etc.

During the past 5 years, S & R has been called on for 15 major searches, 21 rescues and 60 other alerts and in all cases has been successful. All service is voluntary, and usually employers co-operate by allowing time off without penalty, on production of a certificate from the S & R Operations Chief.

However, one of the chief aims of every bushwalking club is to train its members in commonsense and skilled bushcraft so that, apart from unavoidable accidents, they need not call on S & R for help.

N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs

N.S.W. FEDERATION OF BUSHWALKING CLUBS
G.P.O. BOX 2090, SYDNEY 2001

Bushwalking is as old as the history of man in Australia—from walkabout aborigines, explorers, bushrangers, pioneers—Today's movement began with the fight to save Blue Gum Forest in the Grose Valley, and bushwalkers organised the first reservation of what is now Bouddi State Park, and Garrawarra Primitive Reserve. Now, as members of 31 affiliated clubs, they explore the bushlands, near and far, and speak with a united voice seeking, before it is too late, further conservation of the wild and beautiful places of our land.

THE CLUBS

Those who enjoy self-propelled outdoor life are almost certain to find congenial companionship and activity in one of the affiliated clubs. Walks programmes cover every type of outing from sedate half-day walks, base camps with day walks, to hard walks by map and compass in trackless wilderness, or speed and endurance tests on the “three peaks”, Cloudmaker, Paralyser and Guougang in the Blue Mountains. Longer holiday expeditions extend to Carnarvon Gorge and Barrier Reef islands in Queensland, Flinders Ranges and Ayers Rock in S.A. and the Northern Territory, Cradle Mountain and South West Tasmania, New Zealand, Peru and the Himalayas. Specialist groups include rock-climbing, ski-ing, canoeing and caving enthusiasts. Articles in club journals reveal members interested in every branch of natural science, in local history, map making, study of aboriginal rock carvings and paintings, art, photography, etc.

Meetings are held at regular intervals, some every week in city clubrooms, for discussion, planning of trips, bushcraft, campcraft, map-reading, first aid training, with associated social programmes.

In most clubs new members join as “prospectives”. They take part in test walks and camps, after some instruction in this essential basic knowledge. On these trips they find out by experience whether they are physically and temperamentally suited to roughing it, and compatible with the other members of the club.

RULES AND CODES OF ETHICS

Clubs have their own rules and code of ethics to cover their activities. Rules are mostly a matter of common sense and common courtesy. The goodwill of landowners is maintained by asking permission to camp, by leaving gates and sliprails as found, by causing no damage to fences, crops, water supplies and domestic animals, and by leaving no rubbish. Always it is impressed on members the importance of care with fire, of keeping streams free of pollution, of walking on tracks and camping in clearings (where these are available) to prevent damage to the bush, of leaving campsites clean for others to use by removing rubbish, by replenishing supplies of firewood in huts and camping caves, etc.

WHY FEDERATION?

The N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs was founded in 1932. Elected delegates from member clubs meet every month for the exchange of information on many different matters of interest and importance to the clubs—information on tracks, maps, gear, additions to parks, conservation campaigns, etc. Through Federation clubs speak with a united voice in their approach to Government or private bodies, and information or inquiries from outside bodies can be quickly passed on by delegates to their own clubs.

JOINT FEDERATION ACTIVITIES

1. Every year, a reunion of clubs in a camping spot specially chosen so that older members and those with young children can attend.
2. A Federation Ball, held in September, as chief fund raising activity.
3. Search and Rescue Operations.