

2 / 232 Uralla Rd,
Armidale. 2350,
21 April, 1998.

The Director,
Wilderness Rescue,
Keith,

Sorry it has taken me so long to get round to replying to the request for information on my history with "Federation."

From memory I joined Federation as a councillor / delegate for SBW in 1977. I was elected as President in 1981 and continued till 1991 (please check). Incidentally, the reason I did not stand for re-election was the result of a technicality. SBW had not paid their affiliation fees that year so I was not eligible to be nominated.

During my association with Federation (I still find it hard to call it Confederation) I was active with S&R (Wilderness Rescue) and attended most of the training weekends where I was sometimes used as an instructor. I was eventually accorded the position of Field Officer on 24hr call and as such took part in many call-outs.

It was also during those years that S&R started The Rogaine which was initiated as a training weekend with a difference. No one expected it to come to be the event that it is now. I am proud to say that I was, with others in S&R, part of the organisation of this till I resigned.

On the urging of John Berry, a one time secretary, the question of what was to be done about the "Newsletter" was raised with me. Up till this time it had been a spasmodic affair, being presented often as a single foolscap sheet. John thought that it should be upgraded to a magazine style publication and that it should be produced on a regular basis, so a folded A5 "Newsletter" was presented which, if I remember correctly was called "The Bushwalker," as had some magazines in the past.

This received a mixed reception. I elected to take on the post as Editor after John resigned (someone please help with the date) and did so until the August issue, 1993, when I was told that an article written by me was not suitable for "The Bushwalker." In addition it was alleged that, as editor, I was too autocratic. I quit. However, with the inspiration of John Berry's idea I can say that "The Bushwalker" was knocked into the shape (which I hope it still retains) by the effort I put into it. From the one foolscap sheet it became a 12 page newsletter / magazine with sufficient advertising to make it self-funding. I still have some of the Mags, the earliest dating from June, 1990.

There were at least three occasions when I represented Federation at National conferences. One in Melbourne with other State Feds to try and establish a National body. This I am sorry to say has never come to fruition. Two others, one in Adelaide and one in Tasmania to get a Leadership Training and Registration Program up and running. This is, I believe, still unresolved.

During my sojourn as President I think I can say without fear of contradiction that the meetings, long drawn out affairs as I had known them previously, were streamlined so that they very seldom ever extended beyond two hours. Some of the "old hands" may recall the joke about "general business." I must admit that I did not stick to a strict agenda, except for the regular items - apologies, acceptance of minutes and bus. arising and correspondence. However if there was anything of real importance or controversial this was dealt with as early in the meeting as possible rather than being left to gen. bus. when most of us were tired and wanting to get home.

Of course it was during this period that Federation was incorporated and became (Ugh!) Confederation and protective insurance for the delegates and Clubs was made available.

As a postscript may I add that, except for holidays, I was, as far as I can recall, absent from only two or three meetings and I blush to say that on at least two of those occasions I had mistaken the date of the meeting.

Gordon Shee