



Bushwalking NSW

Annual Report 2022

President's Report

The year 2021-22 has been an active and satisfying year for Bushwalking NSW. This reflects both quality management by our Executive Officer, her volunteer staff and the management committee, and the impact of the *Bushwalking NSW 2021-2026 Strategic Plan*.

The *Strategic Plan* has, in particular, been important in framing and guiding the activities of Bushwalking NSW, providing clarity around our core interests. May I remind you what the *Strategic Plan* says about Bushwalking NSW's vision and mission?

Bushwalking NSW considers that NSW & ACT should be a premier bushwalking and outdoor recreation destination of Australia, and that our people should enjoy optimal health and well-being through community engagement in nature.

... **Vision:** More people walking in nature more often.

... **Mission:** Advocacy and support for, and promotion of, more, safe, inclusive and extensive club-based bushwalking and related outdoor activities in nature.

... **Strategic Themes:** (1) NSW & ACT: A Premier Bushwalking Destination; (2) Better health for more people through bushwalking; (3) Enhanced stakeholder relations; and (4) Continuous operational improvement.

I highlight our strategic approach to managing Bushwalking NSW because it has, this year, provided real targeted outcomes. It, for example, galvanised Bushwalking NSW behind the Great Escarpment trail project. I acknowledge Gavin Dale's significant role in instigating this major long-distance walking trail, identifying this significant route from the Barrington Tops through to SE Queensland at Boonah, largely through NSW. His attention to detail is impressive. The trail links with walking routes from Barrington in NSW with the mountains of SE Queensland.

Bushwalking NSW was delighted to be able to support this initiative. It is a natural fit with the *Strategic Plan*. I also acknowledge our own Vice-president, Conservation Officer and Tracks and Access Officer, David Bell. He is now working with Gavin to further develop the trail and its governance.

We need to remain alert to potentially limiting developments in and around national parks. Bushwalkers rely on rights of access to national parks and other public land. Unfortunately, we do not have, as I have recently enjoyed, public right of access to all land (in Scotland) or extensive networks of public rights of way as in England.



Bill Boyd
President,
Bushwalking
NSW

Access to our public protected areas is of great importance to bushwalkers. Bushwalking NSW pays continuous attention to issues such as the increasing commercialisation of National Parks. Throughout 2021-22, Bushwalking NSW made regular submissions on behalf of the bushwalking community. We cannot respond to every potential disruption or change, but try to identify the bigger-ticket items. Examples this year include: responding to the draft Snowy Mountains Master Plan; commenting on commercialisation of the Light-to-Light Trail; submitting comment on the proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam; commenting on the NPWS mountain bike draft policy; and commenting on Draft Plans of Management and Master Plan for the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, and the South East Forest National Park.

Bushwalking NSW receives requests to support many submissions and causes, but we cannot address all issues, especially specifically local issues. We encourage local groups to address local issues — you, after all, best know your corner of the world and its local politics.

Our library of policies can support local clubs in such endeavours. During 2021-22, we reviewed, for example, our *Natural Areas Policy*; it is available on our website to assist clubs in advocating for appropriate natural area management. Likewise, Bushwalking NSW recently released a *Draft Invasive Species Policy* for comment. Bushwalkers are in an excellent position to assist natural environment managers in dealing with invasive species in protected areas.

This year saw Bushwalking NSW develop a strong working relationship with lawyer Christopher Birch. He has been an invaluable source of legal opinion, informing us on how the law affects the outdoor activities we value. An example of Christopher's valued contribution, is his research into the legal mechanisms that allow development in National Parks.

As in the past, Kirsten and the Management Committee have expended much energy on insurance matters. Interest in insurance for bushwalking was heightened following several bushwalking fatalities, resulting in our insurers re-assessing risks,. This has, unfortunately, resulted in higher premiums for bushwalking clubs. Bushwalking NSW has been ably assisted by Alan Sauran in navigating this situation. Despite the rise in insurance premiums, we still get very good value for our insurance. This stems from Bushwalking NSW's continuing strong relationship with Bushwalking Australia, the nation's peak bushwalking body. This year, Kirsten was elected as Bushwalking Australia's Chair of Bushwalking Australia, and Bushwalking NSW Management Committee member, Jon Gray, stepped up as Bushwalking NSW's representative. It is through Bushwalking Australia that we still have access to value-for-money insurance.

In terms of our own governance, Kirsten has been aided by Gavin Dale, our volunteer Admin Officer. He worked on several issues, notably introducing Acknowledgment of Country. You will notice Acknowledgement of Country has now been added to our website, newsletter and email signatures. Bushwalking NSW has recently recorded its support for the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*.

Gavin has also been quietly working in the background reviewing our governance documents and structures. This is important work for any incorporated organisation. While it may not seem core to our members' interests, it ensures that Bushwalking NSW remains legally current and compliant.

In terms of supporting our members, i.e. all 70 clubs, Bushwalking NSW continues to find diverse ways to assist clubs and encourage bushwalking. During 2021-22, these included: promoting the *Bushwalking Manual* as a core bushwalking club resource; identifying activity peak bodies for other outdoor sports and distributing information — *Sources of Best Practice Guidance* — to clubs; and winning an Office of Sport Outdoor Active Recreation Marketing Support Grant Program to develop guidance videos for clubs.

To support the management and governance of Bushwalking NSW, the Management Committee approved professional development. Examples include Kirsten and David completing the Nature Conservation Council of NSW "Step up for nature" training, and Kirsten completing Xcursion risk management training. This training will filter through to members support in due course.

I have acknowledged some of the Management Committee above. It would be remiss of me to stop there. Our Treasurer, Peter Jack, has been quietly and efficiently working behind the scenes on our finances. He is especially good at making financial statements clear for the Management Committee, and is especially tenacious at solving problems. He brings to this often thankless task a wicked sense of humour. Thank you, Peter. Margaret Covi, another long-standing member, is another quiet behind-the-scenes-member. She keeps an eye on our risk management issues and policies, and has an unnerving habit of asking *that* question, you know, the one no-one else asks. Thank you, Margaret. And Keith Maxwell, although no longer on the committee, continues his impressive contribution to Bushwalking NSW through his interests in the history of NSW bushwalking. He has been archiving records and ensuring that they remain safe well into the future. Look out for his book about Splendour Rock, in the Blue Mountains, and its memorial to bushwalkers who fell during World War II. Paul McCann is our most recent new Committee management. Many thanks, Paul, for stepping up. Paul is another of those people who asks the questions that need to be asked!

You will be familiar with Bushwalking NSW's web site and newsletter. 2021-22 saw an increase in quality and content. Many thanks to all the club secretaries who distribute the newsletter to their members. The website and newsletter, of course, do not just happen. Without our wonderful volunteers, Leonie Bell (web content editor) and Justine Bourke (newsletter sub-editor), the web site and newsletter would not be the informative media that they are. Many thanks, Leonie and Justine.

Now, if all that sounds like a farewell speech, it is. I will not be standing for the president's position this year. I came into the position a little by accident, at a time when there were several management and governance challenges. You will recall the issue of club fees and a lack of a strategic plan. Our Executive Officer was trying to juggle all the management and governance at the time. My role at the time was to resolve these challenges. I believe we have done so. The management and governance of Bushwalking NSW is now on a steady footing, the Executive Officer and her volunteer staff are firing on all cylinders, and the Management Committee is overseeing the activities and actions of Bushwalking NSW guided clearly through its *Strategic Plan*.

It is time for me to step down. Indeed, I have taken a soft touch in my role over the last six months, as I travelled in and beyond Australia, camped and hiked. I acknowledge the magnificent way that the Management Committee, led by Acting President David Bell, continued on without me. This is a testament to David, Kirsten and all the crew who are steering Bushwalking NSW to a bright future.

President: **Bill Boyd**

Vice-President, Conservation, Tracks & Access Officer's Report

Volunteer Track Maintenance Project – Great North Walk

BNSW and Crown Lands conducted one volunteer working bee involving the Watagan Wanderers in May 2021. Unfortunately, the second COVID lockdown occurred soon after and the project was suspended. Since then attempts to restart the project have been unsuccessful. We remain hopeful that Crown Lands will support a recommencement in the not-too-distant future.

Advocacy

Advocacy is a significant element of the BNSW work program to ensure that the bushwalking community has input into the management of the places we like to walk in. Over the last year, BNSW made submissions into the following:

- **Draft Plans of Management for Royal and Heathcote NPs and Garrawarra SCA.** Our submission included supporting a proposal for an 80km circuit walk in Royal based on the existing track network.
- **Draft Masterplan - Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct.** The draft Master Plan proposed a significant increase in tourist infrastructure in the National Park including an additional 4,000 beds at the resorts, helicopter commuting flights and road access to Rawson Pass for tourists. BNSW was one of the many signatories to a letter to the Premier concerning proposals for an unsustainable 60% increase in on-park accommodation, clearing habitat for carparks, helicopter access into the resorts, commercial vehicles on walking tracks, and insensitive changes to nationally significant historic sites. The letter was also published in the Sydney Morning Herald on August 20. We had some small 'wins' here such as helicopter commuting and road access to Rawson Pass being shelved (for the moment). However, much of the proposed tourist development, including an extra 4000 beds at the resorts has been confirmed.
- **Light to Light Walk Strategy, Ben Boyd National Park.** In 2019 the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) exhibited a draft Light to Light Walk Strategy as well as accompanying amendments to the Ben Boyd Plan of Management. The draft Strategy proposed a signature multi-day coastal walk, transforming the existing campground walk experience with hut to hut and lighthouse style accommodation in addition to new walk-in campgrounds. There were also proposed realignments to the existing track. Along with groups such as the NPA and Fishing Alliance,



David Bell
Vice-President,
Conservation
Officer, Tracks
& Access
Officer,
Bushwalking
NSW Inc

BNSW made various submissions pointing out the flaws with this project. However, it looks like NPWS is proceeding with the proposal, largely as planned.

- **Warragamba Dam EIS.** BNSW made a submission on the EIS. We continue to oppose this development and urge the Government to consider alternative options for flood mitigation.
- **Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park Plan of Management.** NPWS has released a paper summarising all of the submissions made on a discussion paper released back in 2019. They had a good response with over 400 submissions. The summary paper picks up on most of the issues we raised including camping upgrades along the Great North Walk and Harbour to Hawkesbury Track, large group approvals and supporting a proposed Garigal Pittwater Foreshore Trail. No word yet on when the draft Plan will be released for comment.
- **NPWS Draft Cycling Policy and Strategy.** The main problem raised in our submission is that the tone of the documents suggests that NPWS will not have the resources to fully commit to closing unauthorised trails and subjecting them to proper environmental assessment. Illegal trails are a particular problem with parks like Royal and Ku-ring-gai Chase.
- **Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area** There are two documents: a draft Plan of Management and a draft Master Plan. Comments closed July 5 and we lodged a submission expressing concern about many aspects of the two Plans.
- **SE Forest National Park Plan of Management Amendments.** Submission lodged supporting proposed 'rewilding' project and proposed multi-day walking track in the park.

In providing our submissions we acknowledge the contributions of many partner organisations including the Nature Conservation Council, National Parks Association, Wilderness Australia and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Tracks and Access

BNSW took action to forestall closure or modification of walking access to national parks. This included:

- 1-9 Phelps Road, Mt Wilson. Property ownership change threatened access into part of Blue Mountains NP. NPWS advised that it is investigating options to secure ongoing public access to the adjoining Blue Mountains National Park. Options

under consideration include the possible creation of an easement for access or the acquisition of the property.

- Access restrictions at Drawing Room Rocks, Barren Grounds NR (at request of affiliated club).
- Crown road purchase application at Carrington Falls, Budderoo NP. Our objection to this sale has been rejected by Crown Lands. NPWS has advised no objection to sale as they do not support walking access to the park via Cloonty Road.
- Proposed sale of Crown Road at Warrimoo. We objected to this on the basis of restriction of access to Glenbrook Creek area. Crown Lands have advised that the sale will have a condition preserving a right of way for walkers. This is a satisfactory outcome.
- Interview with the ABC concerning the recent fatalities in the Blue Mountains and do's and don'ts' s surrounding bushwalking.
- Following a request from a member of an affiliated club, BNSW contacted NPWS concerning the status of the former bridge over the Muncyang River near Guthega Power Station. This was closed and then dismantled some year ago. The removal of the bridge prevents access to the Aqueduct Track which goes to Whites River Hut. There is an alternative fire trail on the other side of the river which is now the main walking route to Whites River and beyond.
- An affiliated club is seeking support for a track link from Roseville Station to the Lane Cove River. The route makes use of existing tracks but would require a short section of new track. We indicated that BNSW supports this proposal and we would be prepared to provide letters of support to the relevant land managers (NPWS and two local councils).

Feral Horses in Kosciuszko National Park

BNSW made a submission on the draft Wild Horse Management Plan. While we would have preferred a tougher final document in terms of horse numbers, we consider the Plan (as adopted in late 2021) should be supported and NPWS should be resourced to implement the plan without undue hindrance from third parties.

Natural Areas Policy

The existing policy which dates back to 1998 was reviewed and updated. The new Policy was adopted in March 2022. This is part of a program to review all our policies on a regular basis.

Draft Invasive Species Policy

This is intended to replace the 2003 Policy which is restricted to feral horses. This much broader policy was prepared with the assistance

of the Invasive Species Council. It is currently out for membership comment.

Great Escarpment Trail

This is the flagship project of our strategic goal to see 1000 km of new track by the end of the decade. When completed it will provide a walking route from Barrington Tops to Boonah in Queensland. A group called the Friends of the GET is currently being established. Special mention to Gavin Dale from Bushwalking Queensland for being the principal driver of this project.

Seminar and Conference Attendance

Nature Conservation Council Annual Conference – November 2021 (virtual conference). This was attended by David Bell and Kirsten Mayer. It was an opportunity to stay up to date on various conservation issues around the state.

Vice-President: **David Bell**

Executive Officer's Report

Bill Boyd and David Bell have provided a great overview of the year and our achievements which is hard to top. My wholehearted thanks to Bill and David who guided myself and the committee throughout the year. Their assistance was invaluable.

It has been a good year focused on delivering our Strategic Plan. Opportunities have arisen to help us deliver it including a grant, and free mentoring on two separate projects.

We have also enjoyed the vital and continued efforts and support of our wonderful volunteers: Justine Bourke on the newsletter, Leonie Bell on website content, Gavin Dale on administration, Keith Maxwell on history, and all the management committee members: Bill Boyd, David Bell, Peter Jack, Margaret Covi, Jon Gray and Paul McCann.

We are most grateful that Christopher Birch, SC continued to provide pro-bono advice and also researched the topic of development in National Parks. He then presented his findings at our May General Meeting.

Our thanks also go to our other General Meeting presenters: Leonie Bell who presented her new book: Lost; Les Higgins who presented his new book: Connect with Nature; The Bushwalking NSW committee and club delegates; and Gavin Dale who presented The Great Escarpment trail. You can see recordings on [our YouTube channel](#).

Michelle Martignoni and Caro Ryan worked on the Outdoor Active Recreation Grant and produced some excellent deliverables.

Thanks also go to Alan Sauran who has taken up the role of Bushwalking Australia Insurance Contract Manager.

I became president of Bushwalking Australia in the year and continued attending Bushwalking Australia meetings to represent Bushwalking NSW and our clubs. Bushwalking Australia hired its first Executive Officer, Gavin Dale who has taken to the role with gusto.

We continued to assist our clubs throughout the year answering insurance and other questions. We are grateful for the continued support of our clubs and we send out a resounding thanks to everyone who volunteers for our clubs either as activity leaders, committee members or in other ways. You are the lifeblood of our clubs which would not exist without you. A tonne of thanks to you.

Executive Officer: **Kirsten Mayer**



Kirsten Mayer
Executive Officer,
Bushwalking
NSW Inc

Thanks to our Volunteers

Bushwalking NSW would like to thank all its committee members, appointed positions and volunteers without whom we could not operate.

Management Committee Members

Role	Person
President	Bill Boyd
Vice-President	David Bell
Secretary	Bruce Lyman (until November)
Treasurer	Peter Jack
Ordinary committee member	Margaret Covi
Ordinary committee member	Jon Gray
Ordinary committee member	Paul McCann

Appointed Positions

Position	Person
Public Officer	Margaret Covi
Conservation Officer	David Bell
Tracks and Access Officer	David Bell
Risk Management Officer	Margaret Covi
YPIC Working Group Officer	Jon Gray
Media Officer	Vacant
Honorary Historian	Keith Maxwell
Training Officer	Vacant
Newsletter Sub-Editor	Justine Bourke
Website Content Editor	Leonie Bell
Webmaster	Vacant
Admin Officer	Gavin Dale
Bushwalking Australia Delegate (ex-officio)	Jon Gray and Executive Officer Kirsten Mayer
NSW Conservation Council Delegate (ex-officio)	Conservation Officer David Bell

Treasurer's Report

Honorary Treasurer: **Peter Jack**

Peter Jack
Honorary
Treasurer,
Bushwalking
NSW

Bushwalking NSW Inc. Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2022

BUSHWALKING NSW INC

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

At June 30;

Assets	2022 \$	2021 \$	2020 \$
Bank			
ING Bank Interest Bearing Account 60 134 750	131,731.43	91,630.66	106,510.90
NAB Operating Account	4,876.44	24,244.13	3,178.55
Total Bank	136,607.87	115,874.79	109,689.45
Other Current Assets			
Petty Cash Drawer	-	53.65	53.65
Sundry Debtors	-	1,369.34	-
Total Other Current Assets	-	1,422.99	53.65
Non Current Assets			
Computer Equipment	2,537.85	3,054.00	734.12
Accumulated Depreciation	-	-	734.12
Total Non Current Assets	2,537.85	3,054.00	-
Total Assets	139,145.72	120,351.78	109,743.10
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
PAYG Withholding Tax Payable	1,339.00	1,523.00	1,255.00
Superannuation Liability	1,165.27	1,166.55	1,143.64
Trade Creditors	-	-	13.00
Wages Payable - Liability	0.77	-	-
Total Current Liabilities	2,505.04	2,689.55	2,411.64
Total Liabilities	2,505.04	2,689.55	2,411.64
Net Assets	136,640.68	117,662.23	107,331.46
Retained Earnings			
Current Year Earnings	18,978.45	10,330.77	6,958.83
Retained Earnings from Prior Years	117,662.23	107,331.46	100,372.63
Total Retained Earnings	136,640.68	117,662.23	107,331.46

Notes

1 Insurance - Broker Fee

In 2022 the broker fees are not shown separately but included in the premiums paid.

Bushwalking NSW Inc Statement of Income and Expense

For the year ended 30 June 2022

BUSHWALKING NSW INC

Statement of Income and Expense

For the year ended June 30;

	Note	2022	2021	2020
		\$	\$	\$
Group Insurance				
Premium Income				
Insurance - Personal Accident		22,811.55	20,748.32	18,915.53
Insurance - Public Liability - Clubs		<u>28,860.96</u>	<u>27,732.30</u>	<u>23,333.25</u>
Total Premium Income		51,672.51	48,480.62	42,248.78
Premium Expense				
Insurance - Personal Injury		24,371.14	12,174.65	14,371.99
Insurance - Public Liability		30,687.70	17,212.40	17,759.94
Insurance - Broker Fee	1	<u>-</u>	<u>12,764.81</u>	<u>12,894.00</u>
Total Premium Expense		55,058.84	42,151.86	45,025.93
Surplus/Deficit: Group Insurance	-	3,386.33	6,328.76	- 2,777.15
Government Grant Programs				
Outdoor Active Recreation Marketing (OARM)				
Income				
Government Grant		18,200.00	-	-
Expense				
Marketing		12,550.00	-	-
Surplus/Deficit: Government Grant Programs		5,650.00	-	-
Operating Income				
Advertising Income		-	175.00	175.00
Annual Affiliate Dues		71,684.50	66,243.25	69,507.95
Bank Interest		100.77	119.76	807.24
Donations Received		<u>4.20</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Operating Income		71,789.47	66,538.01	70,490.19
Operating Expenses				
Accounting & Bookkeeping		480.40	454.50	450.00
Bad Debts		-	-	1,239.54
Bank & Gov Charges		20.35	116.04	21.75
Bushwalking Australia Ann Subscription		-	8,965.00	9,618.00
Chardon Award Prizes		195.00	195.00	530.00
Donations		485.00	5,000.00	20.00
Meetings & Conferences		86.47	230.22	1,940.81
Nature Conservation Council Ann Subscription		90.00	-	90.00
NSW Dept of Fair Trading Ann Levy		48.21	47.00	47.00
Outdoors NSW & ACT Annual Membership Subscription		420.00	-	-
Postage & Shipping		48.60	98.15	69.97
Rent - PO Box		139.00	136.00	159.00
Rent, Electricity, Outgoings		-	-	203.50
Staff Amenities		101.00	-	7.12
Stationary & Office Supplies		63.65	-	14.00
Superannuation Expense		4,714.07	3,984.82	3,893.19
Telephone/ Internet		329.73	528.63	508.75
Wages & Salaries Expense		47,430.92	42,403.28	41,363.20
Website		200.70	184.65	377.40
Workers' Compensation		<u>221.59</u>	<u>192.71</u>	<u>200.98</u>
Total Operating Expenses		55,074.69	62,536.00	60,754.21
Surplus/Deficit from Operations		16,714.78	4,002.01	9,735.98
Total Surplus/Deficit		<u>18,978.45</u>	<u>10,330.77</u>	<u>6,958.83</u>