

Bushwalking Victoria

Draft AAAS – the “Fit” with Bushwalking Club
Management Practices

Presentation to Club Presidents by Mike Grant
Secretary Bushwalking Victoria 28/11/17



Bushwalking Victoria
towards better bushwalking

Draft AAAS – the “Fit” with Bushwalking Club Management Practices

- **This presentation discusses the fit between the draft AAAS and Bushwalking Club management practices**
- **Each of the 6 topics in the draft AAAS has been reviewed and the degree of fit determined**

The topics are :

- **Management of Risk**
- **Activity Planning**
- **Participants**
- **Environment**
- **Equipment and Logistics**
- **Leadership**

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Sources of Guidance for Volunteer Leaders

- **Clubs use 4 major sources of information to manage their activities, train their leaders, educate their people and identify and manage risk. These are:**
 - The Risk Management Guidelines for Bushwalking Victoria Member Clubs**
 - Walk Safe**
 - The BMLC /STLC manual**
 - Outdoor leader on line**
- **This body of knowledge has been developed and refined over many years. It reflects the collective wisdom of bushwalkers in this state on how to provide a safe, experienced based environment and leadership model thru which to manage volunteer led bushwalking**
- **In contrast, the draft AAAS is understood to be a high level “standard” that seeks to harmonise various state level adventure standards into a single one size fits all document. In so doing it appears to be somewhat wordy, legalistic, overly detailed and in terms of focus, directed at commercial tour operators and outdoor recreation professionals.**

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Management of Risk

- **For clubs, the main source of information available for guidance in bushwalking risk management is “The Risk Management Guidelines for Bushwalking Victoria Member Clubs”.**
This is a practical document built on ISO 31000 and contains advice on specific bushwalking risks, club risk process requirements, duty of care, and sample template forms to manage risk.
- **In contrast, the draft AAAS includes the above, and expands extensively on ISO 31000 processes. It also requires the implementation of detailed risk management plans for activities conducted, and is considered excessive.**

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Activity Planning

- **For clubs, relevant material on trip planning is available in the BMLC/STLC manual and Outdoor leader on line website references. These guidelines are advisory, and the extent that clubs adopt these practices into their training programs is dependent on individual club appetite for detail and their available resources. Needless to say most clubs have in place an approval process for their trip calendar that includes a sign off on both leader and trip suitability for their members.**
- **In contrast the draft AAAS requires defined planning and approval processes for all activities. It also specifies a plan be prepared and implemented for each activity that includes emergency response, and support for OH&S and other requirements. To require such detailed individual trip plans from volunteer leaders is considered excessive.**

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Participants

- **Clubs have in place methods of identifying participants unsuitable for outings and the means to communicate accordingly. Intending participants are vetted by club leaders to ensure they are capable of completing the activity. Where there is doubt most clubs will fully support their leaders decisions**
- **In contrast, the draft AAAS discusses a range of factors surrounding participation including dependency, behavioural codes, communications, drug and alcohol issues, cultural/ religious considerations. and gender requirements.**
- **Most clubs would not see the need to substantively develop their position, processes and materials on these requirements and would conclude these apply mainly to Commercial operators.**

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Environment

- **For clubs, relevant material on environment is available in the BMLC/STLC Manual and Outdoor leader on line website references. These guidelines cover managing environmental risk and avoiding environmental impact, as well as the typical outdoor issues associated with weather, fire, wild life, and hygiene.**
- **This material is freely available. Being further codified thru the AAAS adds little value for volunteer leaders.**

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Equipment and Logistics

- **The AAAS outlines the frame work and requirements by which equipment should be selected, purchased, managed and maintained. This is clearly of more relevance to commercial operators than volunteer groups.**

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Leadership

- The draft AAAS proposes that a competency based approach be implemented using the VET competencies from the Outdoor Recreation Training package as the benchmark to measure all leader competence
- In contrast the volunteer bushwalking sector does not operate in a competency based leadership environment.
- The draft AAAS proposes that to manage competence, volunteer leaders can operate under a “Peer based recognition and verification scheme”.
- The development and implementation of such a scheme that will allow volunteers to achieve the competency benchmarks in the AAAS , will for clubs, be onerous and expensive.
- It will also be seen by clubs as excessively bureaucratic and a challenge to their continual need to keep red tape to a bare minimum in order to survive.

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Leadership (Continued)

- **The work to create and manage such a scheme would involve:**
 - **Deciding on which units of competency would be adopted by volunteer bushwalking leaders.**
 - **Developing and introducing an agreed leader assessment process**
 - **Developing appropriate assessment tools**
 - **Sourcing and gaining the commitment of suitably qualified peer assessors**
 - **Putting in place mechanisms to get leaders with assessed shortfalls up to speed**
 - **Developing appropriate tools to audit process integrity**
 - **Building a mechanism to record results and manage individual progress that is preferably electronic**
 - **Gaining commitment from clubs, their leaders and members as to the worth of such a scheme in the face of existing arrangements which are considered “not broken”**

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Leadership (Continued)

- **An assessment has been done of the relevance of the proposed Units of Competence to volunteer bushwalking leaders**
 - **79% of the proposed core competency standard performance criteria have either no relevance to or are excessive for volunteer leaders.**
 - **43% of the proposed bushwalking competency standard performance criteria have either no relevance to or are excessive for volunteer leaders.**

It is clearly not appropriate for the AAAS Leadership Competency approach to be applied to volunteer bushwalking groups.

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In summary:

The Victorian bushwalking community regards its leader development, training processes and associated governance practices to be appropriate for:

- **Maintaining the level of skills required for safe volunteer bushwalking**
- **Providing an appropriate standard of care to bushwalking trip participants**
- **Meeting the operational and management needs of clubs**
- **Avoiding the costs and administrative burdens that competency-based schemes impose.**
- **Meeting our obligations to insurers with respect to managing risk**

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Thanks for Listening