

**BUSHWALKING VICTORIA
BUSH SEARCH AND RESCUE VICTORIA**



**POLICY FOR RECOGNITION
POLICY FOR FUNDING**

INTRODUCTION

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria is a volunteer search and rescue group within Bushwalking Victoria Inc. Bush Search and Rescue has over 200 trained searchers, all experienced bushwalkers and/or cross-country skiers, together with an additional 66 members who support communications within the group.

The Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad regularly requests assistance from Bush Search and Rescue to search for people missing in bushland or the snowfields of Victoria. Bush Search and Rescue volunteers have assisted the Victoria Police in land searches for missing persons since 1949. Victoria Police provides Bush Search and Rescue with the transport and communications required for searches as well as support and expertise for training.

Members use their own personal bushwalking, skiing and mountaineering equipment when called out on a search. They are equipped to be self contained for up to three days in the bush or snow.

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria is currently only indirectly recognised in the Search section as Others as per the VicPol register in the *Emergency Management Agency Roles* Emergency Management Manual Victoria.

RECOGNITION

Bushwalking Victoria believes in, promotes and pursues formal recognition by the State Government and its agencies of Bush Search and Rescue Victoria, appropriate to its recognised specialist role within the Victorian emergency services framework.

Such recognition will support Bush Search and Rescue Victoria in promoting the value to the community of its specialist service that it has been delivering for more than 60 years. Formal recognition will assist Bush Search and Rescue in retention of existing members as well as continuing to attract and support new members. In addition, formal recognition opens access to additional sources of public funding that are currently restricted to the existing recognised emergency services.

Bushwalking Victoria supports the similar recognition of other specialist emergency service organisations that play a similar niche role to that of Bush Search and Rescue Victoria.

FUNDING

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria requires assured, ongoing funding for administration, specialist training and specialist equipment.

Bushwalking Victoria believes that Bush Search and Rescue Victoria should be funded through the Victorian Government emergency services budget within the Department of Justice. This will align Bush Search and Rescue funding with that of other emergency services and enable Bush Search and Rescue to maintain a high standard of training for its members and to ensure members are properly trained, especially in the use of new navigation and communication technologies.

When required, additional special purpose funding will also be sought through the Federal Government National Emergency Volunteer fund and similar funding initiatives.