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|--|-----------|
| Walking and Talking with the Bushwalking Victoria President..... | 1         |
| First Quarterly Meeting of Club Presidents.....                  | 4         |
| Tracks and Conservation News.....                                | 5         |
| Generous Donation from Melbourne Bushwalkers.....                | 6         |
| New Multi-day Interstate Tracks.....                             | 7         |
| Grampians Peak Trail 3-Day Loop .....                            | 7         |
| Lake Mountain Tracks – New Map.....                              | 8         |
| Federation Walks Weekend 2015.....                               | 10        |
| McMillan's Walking Track - an Adventure .....                    | 11        |
| Volunteer Track Ranger Program.....                              | 15        |
| Survey of Attitudes to Bushwalking News Victoria .....           | 15        |
| Bushfire Safety for Walkers and Campers.....                     | 16        |
| Contributions.....   | 16        |
| Advertisements.....  | 17        |
| <b>Who's Who at Bushwalking Victoria .....</b>                   | <b>19</b> |

## Walking and Talking with the Bushwalking Victoria President

### Federation Weekend 2015

With almost 350 acceptances and about 330 attendees, I am happy to report that the Hepburn Springs based Federation 2015 weekend of 24-25 October was an outstanding success. The weather was kind, the walks varied and interesting amid beautiful and historic country, and the entire weekend superbly planned and delivered by Bayside Bushwalking Club and the Great Dividing Trail Association (GDTA).

It is easy to overlook the amount of planning and effort that goes into making a weekend like this happen – over 18 months of hard work by a very large number of volunteers, all marshalled by a coordinating committee that always seems to have more things to do than time to do them!

A big thank you to Bayside and GDTA on behalf of the entire bushwalking community for a great weekend of walking. Well done!



*Tony Walker,  
President, Bushwalking Victoria*

## Bushwalking Australia Conference

Bushwalking Australia is an organisation that many bushwalkers know little about. It was founded in 2003, in large part through the work of former Bushwalking Victoria President David Reid, who became the first president of Bushwalking Australia. It has gradually developed over a number of years into an organisation able to play an important role at the national level.

I have been involved in Bushwalking Australia since 2008-9, when, as Strategic Advisor to **Bushwalking Victoria's** then president, I was asked to do some work towards formulating some national positions and policies that all bushwalkers could support.

Nowadays, the governing body of Bushwalking Australia (the Council) meets quarterly via teleconference and annually for a weekend face-to-face meeting. This year, the face-to-face was held in Victoria in the historic town of Lancefield. It was a very busy weekend and we worked hard.

**Each state presented a 'state of the state' report** and we discussed the key issues each of us is dealing with.

In common with each of the last few years, it became obvious that, whilst each state has issues unique to that state, we all have a large number of common issues, and that we are all trying to achieve much the same things on behalf of the bushwalking community. As a result, over the last three years, I have become more and more convinced that a clear national voice for bushwalkers is vital.

*Left to right rear:  
Greg Boundy (SA), Ian McDonald (WA),  
Bill Gehling (SA),  
Chris Towers (President, Bushwalking  
Australia), Gavin Dale (Qld),  
John Marshall (Qld), Des Cook (WA),  
Mitchell Isaacs (NSW), David Gordon  
(Insurance Officer), Tony Walker  
(Victoria)*

*Left to right front:  
Kirsten Mayer (NSW), David Atkins  
(Tasmania), Charlie Ablitt (Victoria)*



Bushwalking Victoria is working on a statement of values that reflects its key roles. In brief, these are:

- Provide a forum and framework for sharing work done by any one state with other states

- Provide an electronic library that all can draw on useful reference documents, submissions made by each state, research carried out by each state, etc
- Provide consultative or review expertise to assist state organisations
- Create policy and position statements at a national level which can be drawn on by state organisations
- Respond to initiatives or opportunities arising from Federal government activities
- Represent Australia at appropriate international conferences.

Bushwalking Australia also organises the insurance facilities available to all federated clubs, and much effort is put into ensuring the coverage offered represents the best available at the best price.

As Bushwalking Victoria President, I find it very useful to hear from my state colleagues how they are dealing with issues that we too face. As an example, the Tasmanian federation has been dealing with the issues around balancing access to iconic trails between the rapidly growing adventure tourism sector, and local bushwalkers (who in some cases built the original trails).

This is an issue that has not been of major impact in Victoria – yet, but it is starting to loom. Successive state governments increasingly see adventure tourism as a future major source of regional revenue, and Regional Tourism Boards are taking a growing role in planning new and upgraded trails, and in influencing how they are managed. This is already happening in the Grampians Peaks Trail and in the planned Hotham to Falls Creek Trail.

Another issue that affects us all is the lack of funding available for land managers (locally, Parks Victoria and DELWP are the major bodies involved). When accompanied by the drive for increased adventure tourism opportunities, it can lead to compromise of the quality of care of parts of our natural environment, to the detriment of us all. We need to emphasise to all trail users the need for acceptance **of the bushwalking ‘Minimum Impact’ ethos adopted by Bushwalking Victoria in 2013**, and to support a sustainable balance between conservation values and reasonable access.

We also need, as bushwalkers, to accept our responsibility to care for the bush as best we can. Our work in track maintenance and environment protection via Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation is more important than ever.

As you may have noticed, I have emphasised our relationship with Bushwalking Australia in our last few annual reports, and I have made a point of referencing the work they do frequently in these columns. The Bushwalking Australia President is Chris Towers – former Bushwalking Victoria President, and well known to most of the Victorian Bushwalking Community.

## Review of Adventure Activity Standards (AAS)

Outdoors Victoria is undertaking a project to review and update the Victorian AAS. In the process, it became apparent that the national AAS was also due for such a review, and Outdoors Victoria have been invited to extend the scope of their work to include this.

AAS are aimed at licensed operators - mainly commercial and educational operators and are not directly appropriate for not-for-profit and recreational groups such as bushwalking clubs (although they contain much material that we can usefully draw on). Historically, this has been recognised by the authorities, and AAS has not been applied to our activities. We are obviously intent on ensuring that this remains the case and we are keeping a close watch on the proceedings on your behalf, to ensure that our views are made very clear and our position is respected as the review proceeds.

I have attended a briefing given by Outdoors Victoria, accompanied by Rod Costigan who is on the executive of Bushwalking Search and Rescue. At the briefing I spoke to Chuck Berger (CEO of Outdoors Victoria) making our views clear. The review of AAS was discussed at the following Bushwalking Victoria board meeting and we decided to write to Outdoors Victoria formally setting out our position.

I also raised this topic at the Bushwalking Australia meeting, and Bushwalking Australia will prepare a national position statement on AAS as related to bushwalking clubs and recreational groups, which I and other state organisations will use to reinforce our submissions. I will keep everyone informed as the AAS review proceeds.

## Best wishes for the season

This is the last column for 2015. I hope that everyone in the Victorian bushwalking community has had a happy and fulfilling 2015, and that your bushwalking life has been enjoyable, varied and adventurous!

I wish you all a happy holiday period, and look forward to another great year of bushwalking in 2016.

Bushwalking Victoria has been, and will continue to be the strongest voice it can for the Victorian bushwalking community.

Tony Walker, President, Bushwalking Victoria

## First Quarterly Meeting of Club Presidents

The initiative for the formation of a regular meeting of club presidents arose from recognition that the annual Bushwalking Victoria Leadership Forum and Federation Walks events provide limited opportunity for effective networking and communication between presidents, which, after all, is not their purpose.

At the Leadership Forum it was recognised that there was considerable merit in a dedicated forum whose primary purpose is fostering networking and collaboration on matters of mutual interest to presidents as leaders of their clubs, and that peer support group would particularly benefit those new to the role of president. A meeting once per quarter was considered appropriate. The meetings would be organised from within the ranks of the club presidents, with Bushwalking Victoria offering to help facilitate communication between presidents whilst reserving an option for participation from time to time.

The first meeting was held in October. Nine club presidents attended; another president provided written input; and there were five apologies. The meeting was in Melbourne and attendees came from as far afield as Geelong and Traralgon.

An agenda had been circulated prior to the meeting to provide a series of discussion points. However, the preference was that the format of the discussions be kept semi-formal with the principal role of the 'chair' being to ensure that all participants had an opportunity to contribute and that any substantive items submitted by participants prior to the meeting were adequately addressed.

Words (and wine!) flowed freely in the spirit of networking and developing an understanding of each **other's** challenges and priorities in the role of president.

Exchanges of experience took place on:

- Fixed versus open term for the office of president
- Attracting members to committee roles
- Age profile of membership and the target recruitment age profile
- Membership turnover levels
- Club incorporation
- Walk leader training course content and collaboration
- Use of social media and MeetUp
- Size of walk groups and Parks Victoria permit requirements
- Local Council membership of clubs
- Approaches to club promotion and member recruitment
- Sharing of details of good speakers at club meetings
- Reciprocal arrangements between clubs for the purpose of joint activities
- Newsletter exchanges.

As the two hours allocated for the meeting drew to a close it was unanimously agreed that the opportunity to network had been worthwhile and should be repeated. Late-February was accepted as the target for the next meeting. I agreed to host the next meeting.

Undoubtedly as the forum and networks evolve there will be changes in venue, format and substance of the discussions. The broadening of the participation to include presidents further afield and/or the emergence of regional presidents' meetings should not be overlooked. For now, an additional avenue has been opened to ensure the maintenance of a vibrant and strong bushwalking community in Victoria.

Ian Mair, President, Melbourne Bushwalkers

## Tracks and Conservation News

### Notice of activities

#### Annual Sallow Willow eradication, Falls Creek area

Date: Friday 22 – Sunday 24 January 2016

Organisers: BTAC and Parks Victoria

Description: This is an annual event where we search the high plains near Falls Creek for Sallow Willow, which is a weed in the Alpine area. Our efforts have contributed to the control of its spread in the area.

30 volunteer places are available. We encourage new participants as well as participants from former years to respond. Places will be allocated in order of receipt. If there are in excess 30 expressions of interest, we will create a 'stand by' list in case vacancies occur.

Participants need to have a base level of fitness, be able to walk off track, be prepared to bend and cut Sallow Willow at ground level with secateurs and be prepared to use chemical applicators.

Further details of the activity and associated arrangements will be provided after expressions of interest are received.



**Expression of interest:** Contact Charlie Ablitt on [conservation@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au](mailto:conservation@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au) or 0400 967 054

## Annual track clearing activity in the Baw Baw National Park

**Date:** Thursday 17-Sunday 20 March 2016

**Organisers:** Strzelecki Bushwalking Club, Friends of Baw Baw National Park and Parks Victoria

**Description:** AAWT maintenance, Baw Baw National Park: Mt. Erica car park to Mt. Talbot. Details will be provided in the February edition of *Bushwalking News Victoria*.

## Feedback from walkers

The members of the BTAC committee and volunteers have also been pleased to have received the following feedback from walkers on tracks who recognise and value the work that BTAC and clubs put into maintaining tracks.

Posted on the Bushwalking Victoria Facebook page:

Hi Bushwalking Victoria, Just a quick email I've been meaning to write for a long time. In April this year my partner and I were lucky enough to complete the AAWT from north to south. After reading plenty of blogs of recent walkers there were areas where we were concerned about re-growth and the track condition. However as luck would have it we found the areas - namely coming down in to Buckwong Creek and the track down from Johnnies Top to the Benambra Road - recently cleared! I'm not sure who does these works, but a huge thank you from us. I can only image the time and effort it takes to maintain such tracks, and just want to pass on our sincere thanks. It is greatly appreciated by all of us in the bushwalking world. We look forward to attending a working bee in the future to pay forward our thanks. Emma

Received by email:

Over the Melbourne Cup long weekend I had the pleasure of walking the Northern Prom circuit with a group of friends. I just want to say thanks for the work completed by Bushwalking Victoria and the team of volunteers during the weekend! After a bit of off track through thick scrub from Johnny Souey to 3 Mile, we welcomed the cleared track into Tin Mine Cove. Thank you!

Thanks for your hard work!

Cheers, Monica K

## Generous Donation from Melbourne Bushwalkers

Melbourne Bushwalking Club has made a very generous donation of \$640 to BTAC. This impressive gift is greatly appreciated.

**Thank you, Melbourne Bushwalkers.**

Below is a copy of the response from Megan Major, the BTAC convener.

Ian Mair  
President  
Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc

Dear Ian,

On behalf of the committee of Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation (BTAC), a standing committee of Bushwalking Victoria, I write to thank the members of Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc for their donation of \$640 to further the activities of BTAC.

Please advise your members that your donation will be used to enable our volunteers to continue their work to assist land managers to maintain tracks and facilities for bushwalkers on public land. We hope that our efforts will raise awareness of the interests of all bushwalkers and bushwalking clubs in Victoria.

It is gratifying that the work of BTAC is recognised and supported by your club.

Kind Regards  
Megan Major  
Board Member, Bushwalking Victoria  
Manager Bushwalking Tracks & Conservation (BTAC)  
[tracks@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au](mailto:tracks@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au)

## Grampians Peak Trail 3-Day Loop

A 3 day Grampians Peaks Trail loop walk is in now in place. **Day 1:** Halls Gap via the Pinnacles to a new hiker campsite near Mt Rosea car park. **Day 2:** Climb Mt Rosea, then follow the new trail down to Burrough Huts. **Day 3:** Back to Halls Gap via Bellfield. It demonstrates the standard of proposed trail infrastructure. This middle section of the planned 144km GPT can be booked on [Parkweb](#).



*Left to right: One of 12 tent platforms at Bugiga hikers' campsite; shelter at Bugiga hikers' campsite; signage for GPT*

We have recently had strong indication from Parks Victoria of their continued support for our involvement in scoping the southern sections of the Grampians Peaks Trail (GPT). Parks Victoria has appointed a manager of the GPT development program, and we understand that in future we will interact more directly with him and also the Trail Building contractor. All our work is done also in collaboration with David Witham of the Grampians Track Support Group and Phil Brotchie, BTAC Field Officer, Grampians.

John Petheram, BBOC and BTAC Field Officer - Central & South Western Victoria

# Lake Mountain Tracks – New Map

A new double-sided A2 map of Lake Mountain is available, showing walking, mountain biking, shared trails and ski trails. The range of the map is from Keppel's Hut up to the plateau and down to the entry station at the turn-off on the Woods Point Road. There is an increased range of tracks because previous tracks have been connected, opening up some really great extended day walks.

The map will be available at the Lake Mountain Resort and a number of tourist, bushwalking and cycling outlets. Anyone having trouble finding a copy should to contact Sue Parry at [sue@lakemountainresort.com.au](mailto:sue@lakemountainresort.com.au).



# New Multi-day Interstate Tracks

## Three Capes Walk, Tasmania

The 46 km, 4-day Tasman Peninsula Three Capes walk opens on 23 December. (It's actually a two capes walk involving Cape Pillar and Cape Hauy, but with views to Cape Raoul. The track was originally to include Cape Raoul, but that section was not funded.) 48 people may start the walk each day, year round. The walk starts at the Port Arthur Historic Site, from where walkers are taken by a cruise boat to start of the walking track at Denmans Cove. The walk finishes at Fortescue Bay, from where walkers are bussed back to Port Arthur.



Source: <http://www.themercury.com.au/lifestyle/the-high-price-of-beauty-on-the-three-capes-track/story-fnj6406u-1227545081145>



The cost for the 4 days is \$495 per person, regardless of season, with walkers staying in huts on three nights.

When the upgraded trail was mooted in 2009, the proposed fee was \$200 for a 6-day walk. The higher fee is required to cover the cost of track upgrade (\$25m-\$30m, depending on the source of information) and to 'fund costs associated with the cabin-based experience'.

The new section of walking track can be accessed only by the boat from Port Arthur. All areas that were previously accessible, including day walks to Cape Hauy and overnight walks to Cape Pillar can still be done for the cost of a Parks Pass. But if you are planning an overnight walk to Cape Pillar, you need to check where you can camp. The previous two official and three informal camping sites in the Cape Pillar area are not passed by the new track and have been closed and are being rehabilitated. An update on the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service Facebook page says a new campsite should be open by 23 December and that the previous post that the campsite would be limited to 6 tents is incorrect. The camp ground at Fortescue Bay is still open to the public.

It is a beautiful walk, and despite the hefty fee is heavily booked. For more information and to book, visit [www.threecapestrack.com.au](http://www.threecapestrack.com.au).

Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service say work to upgrade the Cape Raoul track will begin in 2016.

## Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail, South Australia

The Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail is a proposed new 5-day walk in the Flinders Chase National Park on the western end of Kangaroo Island, and traverses Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area and Kelly Hill Conservation Park and will include Remarkable Rocks and Admirals Arch.

The 64km track is expected to open in September 2016. Booking will be required to walk the track. A limit of 12 independent and 36 commercial-operator guided walkers (including guides) will be allowed to depart each day. Dedicated overnight camping areas include 12 independent and 12 commercial operator tent sites. Each campsite will have tent platforms, toilets, shelter for food preparation and rainwater tank.



Two sections of the trail will be suitable for day walks.

More information:

- For details go to <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/Visiting/Bushwalking/ki-wilderness-trail>
- FAQ <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/Visiting/Bushwalking/ki-wilderness-trail/frequently-asked-questions>
- An [information booklet](#) and promotional video are also available.

Fees are yet to be determined.

Thanks, **Warrnambool Bushwalking Club** for alerting me to this new track. Editor

# Federation Walks Weekend 2015

This year's Federation Walks weekend, held at Daylesford on the weekend of 24-25 October, was a resounding success.

346 people attended, including walk leaders and organisers from the host clubs, Bayside Bushwalking Club and Great Dividing Trail Association.

20 walks were run each day. The walk grades varied from Easy to Medium-Hard. All but two of the walks were circuits: the other two walks required a modest car-shuffle. The longest walks were around 19km, taking about 6:30 hours to complete.

The weather was kind; it was warm on Saturday and warmer still on Sunday.

Several of the walk leaders reported seeing snakes, none of which were aggressive or a problem, on or near their paths. There were numerous sightings of wallabies and one or two sightings of echidnas. Many bird species were seen, of course.

The Great Dividing Trail Association led seven walks. Barry Golding, the President of the GDTA, led the Mount Franklin to Jim Crow Creek walk. It was much loved as Barry is a great raconteur and knows a lot of local history. He regaled his walkers with stories of the flora, fauna, geology and history of the area along his walk. He also spoke of the Dja Dja Wurrung people, the original inhabitants of the area around Daylesford.

I stayed back at base, with a phone, a car, a first-aid kit and a defibrillator, to provide support and first-aid to the walkers as necessary. There were two callouts on the weekend; but both were minor incidents, I am very glad to report.

As I watched the walkers returning to base after their walks, there were no sad faces. There were some tired faces – but that is what happens when you are having fun: no?



*Cave Creek walk (photo by Darren McClelland)*



*Left to right: Barry Golding, (President, GDTA), Charlie Ablitt (Vice President, Bushwalking Victoria) Mary Steel (Vice President, Bayside Bushwalking Club), The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas (Member for Macedon), Cr Kate Redwood (Mayor, Hepburn Shire), David Bannear (guest speaker), Sally Walker, Tony Walker (President, Bushwalking Victoria)*

On the Saturday night, we held a dinner in the Hepburn Primary School hall. This was the largest venue that we could hire in the area, and it was jam-packed with 144 seated diners. The local gourmet catering company did an excellent job under difficult circumstances. The guest speaker was Mr David Bannear, historian and archaeologist with Heritage Victoria. David is a great raconteur, and everyone enjoyed his stories of the Gold Rush years around Daylesford.

The Mayor of Hepburn Shire, Cr Kate Redwood, attended the dinner and welcomed guests to the shire.

The Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas, Member for Macedon, also attended, and spoke on behalf of John Eren, Minister for Sport, Veterans, Tourism and Major Events. Her speech touched on the health benefits of physical activity such as bushwalking, and was well received.

Members of 36 Victorian bushwalking clubs attended the weekend. It was an excellent opportunity to meet people of like interest. The afternoon tea each day, at the Hepburn Primary School, was a great time to chat. I have to admit being a bit of a convert to Federation Weekends – I had such a great time! I look forward to walking with the Wimmera Club at the FedWalks16 event next year, in the Northern Grampians. See you there.

Doug Crompton, President, Bayside Bushwalking Club

## Boots missing their owner



Someone attending FedWalks15 went home without their boots. The boots are Kathmandu brand, size 43 and in good condition.

If you are their owner, contact Doug Crompton, President of Bayside Bushwalking Club at [doug.crompton99@gmail.com](mailto:doug.crompton99@gmail.com).

## McMillan's Walking Track - an Adventure

Friday 30 October – Thursday 12 December

This 220km, 14-day walk by members of the Ben Cruachan Bushwalking Club and the Victorian Mountain Tramping Club celebrated the 150th anniversary of the establishment of McMillan's Track. Some walkers walked the entire track; others walked sections or joined for a day. A support team ferried food and camping equipment.

As the track is not in good condition, the walkers GPSed and marked the track as they went along, and identified areas for future work to bring the track into reasonable walking condition.

In 1864, explorer and pastoralist Angus McMillan was commissioned by the Victorian Colonial Government to form a pack horse track from Woods Point to Omeo to link the goldfields in the Gippsland highland. The track was used for many years, but usage declined with the establishment of alternative roads and the depletion and abandonment of the goldfields. During the 1980s, the BCWC in conjunction with predecessors of Parks Victoria and the predecessors of Department of the Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) rediscovered, cleared and marked the track. The track was officially opened as McMillan's Walking Track by Joan Kirner, the then Minister of Conservation, Forests and Land, on 19 March 1988. A plaque at Breakfast Creek on the Wellington River north of Licola marks the event.

Kath Smith, Forest Manager DELWP from Swifts Creek farewelled us and the support crew at Cobungra, near Omeo. Robyn Shingles and Peter Maffei, representing Bushwalking Victoria, were also there to show support and present the walkers with **Bushwalking Victoria's** recently released environmental code *Tread Softly*.



*L to R: Walkers - Helmut Tracksdorf, Clive Davies, Geoff Hindle, Anna Janca, Joe van Beek (walk leader), Michael Dowe (deputy leader and chief navigator) Support crew - Kath Smith (DELWP) and John Kellas (Photo by Helmut Tracksdorf)*

**Day 1** was an easy two-hour stroll with a luxurious camp at Black Sallee.

**Day 2** included a very steep descent along a fire-break down to Mayford Flats on the Dargo River and then a steep climb up Treasury Spur on to the Dargo High Plains. The number of 4WD vehicles at and about our camp spot reminded us that this was Melbourne Cup weekend and the weekend on which many seasonally closed tracks had reopened.

**Day 3** was a stroll down the Dargo High Plains Road. We agreed with Angus McMillan that this part of the route is easy going. We didn't attempt the alternative route down from Crooked River as we know that recent walkers had found the vegetation impenetrable. (Re-establishing that route is a job for a future occasion.)

**Day 4** - After 24 crossings of the lower part of the Crooked River, we arrived at Talbotville, which was a thriving 4WD and camping community on Cup weekend.

**Day 5** - The track off the main Divide to the Wongungarra River and the extension of Station Track off the Cynthia Range down to the suspension bridge over the Wonnangatta River presented us with our first real bush-bashing experience. Parts of these tracks were quite overgrown, but worse was to come.

**Day 6** - We camped on the Moroka River at the bottom end of the Moroka River Track. As it is a Wilderness Area there is no access for private vehicles to this camp site. We are grateful to Sheri and Paul from DELWP who ferried our camping equipment and food from Doolan's Plain down to the river.

**Day 7** - Next morning Sheri and Paul took our camping gear back out. Meanwhile we recorded way points, replaced missing and burnt out markers, as we had done on other days, up Playboy Creek over Beth Saddle and onto the D4 Track up to the Moroka Road. The camp at Volkswagen near the junction with the Moroka Road was not ideal as a dead deer was starting to decay.

On **Day 8** we made our way to Sambain Chalet with a short bush bash up Mt Arbuckle and Kelly Hut to join other walkers who were gathering at the Chalet for the Combined Gippsland Bushwalking Clubs' Weekend. We had lovely hot showers, and luxuriated in eating and sleeping indoors.



**Day 9** - On Saturday seven other walkers joined us for the walk over Mt Tamboritha. It needed careful navigation to follow the track across Little Tamboritha and down to Breakfast Creek. We were ferried back to Sambain Chalet for an evening of camaraderie and celebration of 150 years since the establishment of McMillan's Track. Darren McCubbin, Mayor of Wellington Shire, led the singing and cut the commemorative cake.



*Crossing the Moroka River, having given up on finding and following the track (Photo by Joe van Beek)*

**Day 10** - Another six walkers joined us for the day to climb up towards The Crinoline and then down a recently burnt face to the Macalister River. After lunch they left us at the Glencairn Road and we continued to our camp on the other side of Barkly River.



*McMillan's Track team with Darren McCubbin, Mayor of Wellington Shire, ready to cut the anniversary cake (Photo by Judy van Beek)*

**Day 11** was predominantly a road walk - very steep up McMillan Spur/Morris Rd and then quite gentle along the Jamieson-Licola Road to the junction with Lazarini Spur Track. The 4km off-road section from N18 up to Mt Shillinglaw to join the AAWT and back to rejoin the Jamieson-Licola Road had some difficult bits. This track was overgrown in places and markers burnt out. I misplaced one of my walking poles whilst cutting and remarking this section of the track. The line of the track was easy to follow by noting the gap between the tall trees.

**Day 12** - We were able to follow the track quite well all the way down to the Black River, even though there was a bit of scrub-bashing and some awkward fallen trees to climb over. We passed the trees that were originally blazed by McMillan's party and observed some stone walling also attributed to the original construction of McMillan's Track. The beauty and tranquillity about this isolated part of the world makes the journey worthwhile. From the Black River we climbed steeply up to Champion Spur



Track where we camped. We were very fortunate to have John Kellas as our support crew. John had walked the track twice and had been on many track maintenance work parties. His knowledge of the track was of immense benefit to us.

**Day 13** - The last two days presented us with the greatest challenges as far as the track was concerned. As we dropped off the Champion Spur Track on our second-to-last day, we searched and searched for evidence of the track without finding it. This section was burnt in 2009. The fire burnt/melted the markers and the regrowth was thick. After two hours we were only 600m from our starting point. Eventually we cottoned on to the fact that we should be looking for remnant nails in trees and, after that had some success in locating the track. After a while the undergrowth thinned out and it was relatively easy walking along the ridge. When we got off the ridge we found and lost the benched track a number of times. We did put up markers if we were sure we were on the track. From Stander Creek to Johnson Hill it was a real grind up the Abbot Link Track. We camped near the intersection of Johnson Link Track and Johnson Hill Track.

**Day 14** - For our last day we met up with Catherine, Roger, Geoff and David from the Mansfield DELWP depot to identify and mark the track from Bald Hill down to the Goulburn River. They were equipped with slashers, secateurs, GPS and tape. What we thought might take a couple of hours took close on five. The lower we got the thicker was the undergrowth, which included blackberries, and the more difficult it got to find the track. We were grateful to have the slashers. We worked as a team with the DELWP people, but they did most of the heavy work. We were pleased when we got to the Johnson Hill track just above Comet Flats and walk the last few kilometres into Woods Point on a road.



*The finish at Woods Point (Photo by Helmut Tracksdorf)*

We were met by our pick up crew, but also by the surprise welcome provided by Charlie Ablitt and Dave Rimmer from BTAC who had come from Melbourne. I'm not sure who arranged the short heavy shower of rain just as we entered Woods Point, the heaviest we had since we left Volkswagen. In the main the weather was benign.

Our walk made it obvious that work needs to be done to bring the track up to standard but we are encouraged by the cooperation and goodwill shown by Parks Victoria and DELWP and the determination from Bushwalking Victoria that this track will be one of Victoria's, indeed one of Australia's iconic walks.

Our next task is to produce a condition report for the track and provide a prioritised list of projects. We will then assist with the scoping and planning of the projects so that they are ready for execution as resources become or are made available.

We are grateful to all those who provided support to this adventure and helped to commemorate the 150th anniversary of McMillan's Track.

Sponsors for McMillan's Track walk and the Combined Gippsland Clubs' Weekend were: Aussie Disposals, Traralgon and Bairnsdale; Mitchells, Traralgon; Ray's Outdoors, Traralgon; Mountain Designs, Traralgon; Happy Camper Gourmet; Bairnsdale Camping; BCF, Bairnsdale.

Joe van Beek, Ben Cruachan Bushwalking Club

## Volunteer Track Ranger Program

After the very positive feedback and the wide interest last year, Parks Victoria (Mount Beauty Office) is running the Volunteer Track Ranger Program again this year.

Volunteer track rangers provide a presence by Parks Victoria along key hiking and camping areas, on Mount Bogong, Mount Feathertop, the Alpine Crossing Walking Trail between Falls Creek and Hotham and additionally this year, there might be some opportunities on Mount Buffalo opening up too (this will be decided soon). We are looking for volunteers with hiking and camping experience in remote mountainous areas, good fitness and people skills. They must be self-sufficient. Volunteers may apply as couples or singles, in which case we will pair them up with a second track ranger to ensure safety. **The main dates we are looking to cover are the New Year's period, the Labour Day long weekend and Easter.**

Details of the program and a role description are available at <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/get-involved/volunteer/volunteer-track-rangers-in-the-alpine-national-park>.

If you are interested in widening your volunteer experience with us and exploring the remote terrains and campsites in the Alpine National Park, while helping Parks Victoria during their very busy visitation times, please **register your interest with Ranger Iris Curran via email at [iris.curran@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:iris.curran@parks.vic.gov.au)**.

Yohanna Aurisch

Volunteers Coordinator - Hawkweed Eradication Project  
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Parks Victoria



## Survey of Attitudes to Bushwalking News Victoria

If you haven't yet completed the survey, please do so. There is a link to the survey in the News Blog panel of the Bushwalking Victoria website at <http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/what-we-do/about-us>. Please respond by Friday 18 December 2015.

Thank you to everyone who has completed the survey so far and to the people who pointed out the amusing malapropism: Bushwalking Tracks and **Conversation** (so true!) instead of Bushwalking Tracks and **Conservation**. They're anagrams – DA: eat your heart out! (I'm actually glad John Campbell, who proofs *Bushwalking News Victoria*, didn't proof the survey, or he would have corrected it.)

Joslin Guest, Editor

# Bushfire Safety for Walkers and Campers

Unfortunately, it promises to be a bad fire season, so walkers and campers need to be prepared for the worst over summer and perhaps autumn. An excellent brochure summarising important information and considerations is available from Parks Victoria at

[http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/522197/Hiking-and-camping-in-parks-and-forests-FINAL-web.pdf](http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/522197/Hiking-and-camping-in-parks-and-forests-FINAL-web.pdf).

Its title is: *Hiking and camping in parks and forests: Bushfire safety tips for visitors.*



And don't forget to tread softly while walking and camping. **Bushwalking Victoria's** *Tread Softly* brochure is available from your club as a printed brochure or online from the Bushwalking Victoria website from the **News Blog** panel at <http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/what-we-do/about-us> or the **Publications** menu at <http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/what-we-do/publications/brochures>.

## Contributions

Email or post news, views, club profiles, articles, photographs, sketches and letters on any topic of interest to bushwalkers (publication is subject to editorial approval) to:

[editor@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au](mailto:editor@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au) or

24 Moorhouse Street, Camberwell Victoria 3124

Deadline for the February 2016 edition: Monday 18 January 2016.

The statements and opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views or position of Bushwalking Victoria.

Editor: Joslin Guest

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the newsletter in 2015.

A special thank you to John Campbell, who proofs *Bushwalking News Victoria* and protects readers from my typos and solecisms.

Best wishes to everyone for the rest of 2015 and for 2016.

Josin Guest, Editor



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# BUDJ BIM TOURS

## Guided Tours of the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape

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Visit

- [www.budjbimtours.com](http://www.budjbimtours.com) for more information about our guided tours. Many of these sites may be accessed only in the company of a Gunditjmara community member.
- [www.budjbimtrails.com](http://www.budjbimtrails.com) for details of walking/mountain bike trails that are accessible by the public.

We can customise our day tours for groups. All our longer tours include lunch and refreshments.



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