

Strategic Plan 2017–2020



Bushwalking Victoria

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Our Vision:

Better Bushwalking for Victoria

A large and diverse bushwalking community enjoying world class walking opportunities across a wide range of Victorian landscapes

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Introduction

In February 2012, the Bushwalking Victoria Board appointed a working group to research bushwalking and bushwalkers in Australia and overseas, to determine the most appropriate directions for Bushwalking Victoria and to prepare a strategic plan.

The research highlighted that bushwalkers want their peak body to focus on improving the Victorian bushwalking environment through development of the track network, and bushwalking amenities to support world-class bushwalking experiences. This led to the development of a new Vision for Bushwalking Victoria.

The past 4 years have seen the launch of the new Bushwalking Victoria branding and website and update of **where2walk** with continually improving accuracy and clarity of maps. Club and membership communications management had become more effective with the implementation of a new information management system,

The next few years will see a focus on the promotion of bushwalking to the wider community and an increase in our role as an advocate of bushwalking to ensure that the concerns of bushwalkers are heard.

Bushwalking Victoria

Who we are and what we do

Bushwalking Victoria is an incorporated association, and is the peak body in Victoria representing all bushwalkers and bushwalking clubs in Victoria. Bushwalking Victoria was established in 1934 as the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs and undertook a major restructure in 2006 to modernise the organisation, including changing its name to Bushwalking Victoria to better reflect its key area of interest.

Bushwalking Victoria's Rules of Association outline the following purposes:

- Safeguarding and advancing the common interests of all bushwalkers;
- Promoting safe and environmentally responsible recreational bushwalking and its benefits to the community;
- Maintaining for the benefit of the community as a whole, a volunteer search and rescue group to assist in land based searches for persons lost in Victoria;
- Promoting and actively working for the conservation and effective management of the environment including national and state parks, wilderness and other public land areas to enhance their bushwalking value to the community;
- Working with other organisations having like interests; to assist with the development, maintenance and protection of the integrity and accessibility of walking tracks, so as to enhance their recreational bushwalking value for all; and
- Publishing information regarding safety, preservation of the environment, walking routes and other subjects of interest to all bushwalkers in the community.

Bushwalking Victoria consists of more than 60 bushwalking clubs, 8 associated organisations and approximately 300 individual members. We advocate on bushwalking and conservation issues in Victoria, collectively representing 8,000 members and 250,000 bushwalkers actively engaged in outdoor recreation.

Bushwalking Victoria is a signatory to and supports the principles of the Walk 21 International Charter for Walking.

Our Values

Values that drive our efforts	Imperatives that focus our efforts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty, integrity, openness and responsiveness in our dealings • Inclusiveness of and respect for all those we relate to and partner with • Respect of and love of the natural environment we walk in • Utilising our knowledge and skills for the greater community good • Safety in everything we do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for members and the community • Building an effective sphere of influence • Best practice management and government • Recognition of the role of the club network and members / supporters and their dedication to the cause • Supporting the improvement of tracks and conservation • Providing a remote area volunteer emergency service to the community

Our Vision

Better Bushwalking for Victoria

A large and diverse bushwalking community enjoying world class walking opportunities across a wide range of Victorian landscapes.

Research has confirmed that there are significant benefits to the community in encouraging more people to walk more often in natural places and further that more accessible and reliable information on responsible and safe bushwalking and where to walk is needed.

There is a wide spectrum of bushwalkers who want a wide range of bushwalking challenges. They want access to world class opportunities to enjoy and discover Victoria's diverse landscapes and parks, from easy walks on well-constructed paths to multiday off track walks in remote areas. In popular walking areas adequate amenities, parking and transport options are important, as is accurate, consistent signage.

Victoria has a good track network, but bushwalkers have told us that this can be improved and expanded and expressed their concerns that the existing network is not being adequately maintained. They have told us that they see bushwalking as a life-long activity available to anyone with appropriate fitness levels but that the walking track network must reflect the needs of the young, aged, people with disabilities as well as those seeking more demanding walking challenges.

Bushwalkers want to appreciate the bush. They want the bush to be as natural as possible, free from excessive development, noise or interference from other recreational users.

Our vision encompasses all of this. Many of these issues are beyond Bushwalking Victoria's direct control so it is important that Bushwalking Victoria has the knowledge and resources to educate the community, decision makers and land managers on what is important to bushwalkers and the ability to advocate effectively on behalf of all bushwalkers.

Our Mission

To inspire more people to walk in natural areas for enjoyment, health, wellbeing and appreciation of the Victorian environment

Our mission, supported by our three strategic goals, is about providing people with the confidence and motivation they need to go bushwalking. For those with limited experience or ability it is about access to good information on where to go, the type of track and level of physical fitness involved. For more experienced walkers it is about making them aware of new places to visit and providing maps and information they need to ensure they take the appropriate precautions and return home safely.

Our club network provides the Victorian community opportunities to bushwalk in a safe and friendly environment. It needs to be supported and promoted so that more people are aware of the benefits of joining a club.

Our mission is also to ensure our community leaders and land managers are aware of the health and wellbeing benefits of bushwalking so they provide the resources and support to encourage more people to bushwalk more often in more places.

Further, our mission encompasses our duty to use our knowledge and expertise to benefit the community: through volunteers undertaking track maintenance or environmental restoration work, our highly regarded bush search and rescue service, by educating people on safety in the bush and responsible bushwalking, and through caring for our environment.

Our Goals and Strategies

Our goals and strategies for the period covered by this strategic plan are summarised in the table below:

<p>Goal 1</p> <p>Bushwalking is a popular activity recognised by the community as enjoyable, healthy, environmentally responsible and safe</p>	<p>Goal 2</p> <p>Victoria is recognised for its varied bushwalking opportunities and comprehensive track network</p>	<p>Goal 3</p> <p>Bushwalking Victoria and its member clubs are well resourced and effective organisations that support the bushwalking community</p>
<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote bushwalking as an enjoyable activity suitable for all ages as part of a healthy lifestyle Actively encourage more people to bushwalk by providing information on safety, responsible bushwalking and where to walk Contribute our expertise for community benefit 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to proactively influence decisions that impact on bushwalking and bushwalkers in Victoria Advocate for the maintenance of existing tracks and further development of tracks Support the development of appropriate world class bushwalking experiences and facilities in Victoria 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist member clubs to ensure their viability and their ability to influence and improve their local bushwalking environment Secure funds and other resources necessary to support our activities

Goal 1 - Bushwalking is a popular activity recognised by the community as enjoyable, healthy, environmentally responsible and safe

Objectives	Key Tasks	Outcomes
Strategy 1: Promote bushwalking as an activity suitable for all ages as part of a healthy lifestyle		
1. Educate the public and decision makers about, and promote, bushwalking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a promotional campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding by public and decision makers of benefits of bushwalking More people bushwalking in more places
Strategy 2: Actively encourage more people to bushwalk by providing information on safety, responsible bushwalking, and where to walk		
1. Promote the benefits of walking with a bushwalking club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify guiding clubs that want to participate Develop and implement campaign - audiences, key messages, channels/events, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in participating clubs' membership and community reach More clubs ready to participate in recruitment activities
2. Encourage more Victorians to walk in more places more often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local bushwalking clubs, regional tourism authorities and walking groups to promote walking in their area Work with health organisations and educational organisations to target their members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bushwalking becomes an integral part of regional tourism Increased number of people bushwalking and areas walked Bushwalking has a better community profile and is increasing in popularity
Strategy 3: Contribute our expertise for community benefit		
1. Promote safety, respect for the natural environment, and facilitate the provision of skills to people interested in bushwalking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, update and expand information on Bushwalking Victoria website Use informal electronic channels for promoting messages e.g. Facebook, blogs, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safer and more environmentally friendly bushwalking

Goal 2 - Victoria is recognised for its varied bushwalking opportunities and comprehensive track network

Objectives	Key Tasks	Outcomes
Strategy 1: Work to proactively influence decisions that impact bushwalking and bushwalkers in Victoria (advocacy)		
1. Formalise arrangements with key decision makers and land managers to ensure that bushwalking issues and opportunities are understood and considered when policies and decisions are made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into agreements that formalise and strengthen cooperative working arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bushwalking Victoria has effective liaison with all decision makers and land managers who influence the bushwalking environment • Bushwalking needs and issues are being heard and acted on by key land managers
2. Work with other peak bodies to develop and support policies, initiatives, submissions and other advocacy activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue proactive involvement to share knowledge and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies relating to bushwalking matters are developed in a proactive manner and communicated effectively • The needs of the bushwalking community are acknowledged by peak bodies, and considered in their policy development
Strategy 2: Support the development of appropriate world class bushwalking experiences and facilities in Victoria		
1. Encourage and enable bushwalkers to contribute to the development and maintenance of the track network and to relevant conservation projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with involved clubs and other stakeholders about improvements that could be made • Encourage clubs to “adopt a track” and contribute to its maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Victorian track network is maintained and extended for all to enjoy

Goal 3 - Bushwalking Victoria and its member clubs are well resourced and effective organisations that support the bushwalking community

Objectives	Key Tasks	Outcomes
<p>Strategy 1: Assist member clubs to ensure their viability and their ability to influence and improve their local bushwalking environment</p>		
1. Support clubs with information and advice that will assist them enhance their capability and viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and support to clubs on promotional activities to maintain and grow their membership • Encourage clubs to be active in their community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better resources for clubs to help with recruitment, membership retention, engaging with the media • Clubs are growing and providing better services to their members
2. Build the capacity of our clubs to be active in their local community, influence local outcomes and to provide effective feedback to Bushwalking Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify clubs working well in this area and seek their involvement • Identify clubs requiring assistance/advice • Develop and implement program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clubs are better able to exert influence for better bushwalking in their local communities • More clubs have community engagement program or activities
<p>Strategy 2: Take actions to secure funds and other resources necessary to support our activities</p>		
1. Investigate opportunities to strengthen our existing club network by expanding into new areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas of potential based on geographic or demographic gaps, local clubs oversized, or struggling • Engage with walking groups outside of our affiliated and associated clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More parts of Victoria have active bushwalking clubs • More bushwalking clubs are joining Bushwalking Victoria

