

A hiker with a large backpack is walking on a dirt trail on a grassy mountain slope. Below the trail, a vast sea of white clouds fills the valley, with distant mountain ranges visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2024

The logo for Bushwalking Victoria features three stylized, flowing white lines that resemble waves or a path, with a small white circle positioned above the middle line.

Bushwalking Victoria
towards better bushwalking

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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

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 8 years have seen the launch of the new Bushwalking Victoria branding and website and update of **where2walk**, and the development of the online Bushwalking Manual. Club and membership communications management has become more effective with the implementation of a new information management system and an increased use of social media.

Bushwalking Victoria will continue to focus on the promotion of bushwalking to a more diverse community with the introduction of improved information and online education for inexperienced bushwalkers.

We will build the capacity and effectiveness of our organization so that we can continue 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 Bushwalking is a popular activity recognised by the community as enjoyable, healthy, environmentally responsible and safe</p>	<p>Goal 2 Victoria is recognised for its varied bushwalking opportunities and comprehensive track network</p>	<p>Goal 3 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 • 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 • Build our capacity to deliver on projects and other strategic 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 about, and promote, bushwalking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement educational and promotional campaigns about bushwalking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding by public of benefits and accessibility of bushwalking More people bushwalking in more places BWV and its member clubs acknowledged as bushwalking experts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate 90th anniversary of BWV in 2024 	
Strategy 2: Actively encourage more people to bushwalk by providing information on safety, responsible bushwalking and where to walk		
2. Promote the benefits of walking with a bushwalking club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of BWV club focused promotional campaign targeting specific audiences Assist member clubs to tell/market their story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in participating clubs' membership and community reach More clubs ready to participate in promotional activities Clubs recruit 'younger' members to provide for succession in clubs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate feasibility of running annual walking event (eg SA Festival of Walking) 	
3. Encourage more Victorians to walk in more places more often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revamp <i>where2walk</i> to better promote bushwalking and align with user requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of people bushwalking and wider areas walked Bushwalking has a better community profile and is increasing in popularity Increase participation in bushwalking among diverse and under-represented population groups. Increased understanding of the mental health benefits of bushwalking Leverage VicHealth and VicSport focus on physical activity and wellness to increase number of people bushwalking
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a bushwalking participation campaign including amongst diverse and under-represented population groups. (TMA2) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local bushwalking clubs, walking groups, tourism and other authorities to promote walking in their area 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop promotional material about bushwalking to present at appropriate events 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with health organisations and educational organisations to target their members 	

Objectives	Key Tasks	Outcomes
Strategy 3: Contribute our expertise for community benefit		
4. 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 BWV website ● Complete, promote and maintain Bushwalking Manual (Funded Project) ● Develop and deliver online information targeting beginner bushwalkers who do not necessarily belong to member clubs (Funded Project). ● Rewrite the WalkSafe and Tread Softly brochure and distribute ● Assist Victoria Police with searches for missing persons in bushland and snow fields (refer to BSAR Strategic Plan 2018-2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guidelines and information for safe, enjoyable, community-based, more environmentally-friendly bushwalking ● Better educated beginner bushwalkers. ● Improved bushwalking skills in the community ● BWV to be the go-to organisation for community bushwalking-related training and safety information. ● Further improve response to Police requests for BSAR assistance. ● Improve specialist search and rescue training for BSAR members. ● Provide specialist equipment and safety clothing to BSAR members.

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. Work with the Bushwalking Advisory Committee and peak bodies such as Outdoors Victoria and Bushwalking Australia 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work cooperatively with other outdoor peak bodies such as 4WD Vic on shared concerns/ issues 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create strategic partnerships with other peak outdoor bodies, 'Friends of' and other community groups 	
Strategy 2: Support the development of appropriate world class bushwalking experiences and facilities in Victoria		
2. Contribute to the development and maintenance of the track network and to relevant conservation projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a working relationship with the land managers so that the expertise of Bushwalking Victoria is front of mind when new tracks or major track upgrades are being considered. (eg Falls to Hotham, Sea to Summit, Grand Strzelecki Track) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victorian track network is maintained and extended for all to enjoy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the frequency of communications regarding volunteer and training opportunities to our volunteers (BTAC and ParkConnect). 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult clubs/stakeholders about improvements (BTAC) 	

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

Objectives	Key Tasks	Outcomes
Strategy 1: Assist member clubs to ensure their viability and their ability to influence and improve their local bushwalking environment		
1. Support clubs with information and advice that will assist them enhance their capability and viability and to be active in their local areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist clubs, as required, to follow good governance processes and to operate in a viable manner 	<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 Clubs are better able to exert influence for better bushwalking in their local communities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise clubs on attracting and developing prospective committee members 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist clubs to develop programs/activities to attract and retain members and be active in their local area 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help clubs to use technology and social media to create interest in their club 	
2. Develop and deliver training programs targeted at new and experienced bushwalkers and walk leaders in member clubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage clubs to publicise existence of the BW Manual and online beginner information to their new members and visitors. Expand and scale training opportunities for new and experienced bushwalkers and walk leaders. (TMA1). Develop online resources to provide standardised curriculum materials to complement face to face leadership training. Work with member clubs to develop a train the trainer model where experienced club walk leaders can use the online resources in their leadership development activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Club members become capable bushwalkers and activity leaders

Objectives	Key Tasks	Outcomes
Strategy 2: Secure funds and other resources necessary to support our activities		
3. Investigate opportunities to retain and 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More parts of Victoria have active bushwalking clubs Existing clubs remain active and viable Member clubs understand the extent of BWV activities and what is done for members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a revised communication strategy dealing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How BWV invests money back into clubs Board activities and achievements (to clubs and the bushwalking community) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a process/ campaign to encourage meet-up groups and other non-member groups to join BWV 	
4. Obtain funding and other resources necessary to achieve BWV's goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding for required resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant submissions are chosen strategically
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategic partnerships to secure sponsorships for events or projects 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow number of BTAC active volunteers Strengthen relationship with ParkConnect volunteers 	
Strategy 3: Build our capacity to deliver on projects and other strategic activities		
5. Build and maintain BWV / Board skills and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a succession strategy for the BWV board Develop a process/campaign to attract suitable Board candidates and train/support them to become effective Board members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More effective operation of the board All Board positions are filled by appropriately skilled/experienced people Board able to be more strategically focused and less involved in operational matters
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether to appoint a CEO (full or part-time basis) 	
6. Build and maintain skills and resources of BWV Committees, project managers, volunteers and advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas requiring additional resources, eg project management, community engagement, events Take steps to improve project management skills of BWV volunteers and staff. Develop and implement strategies to attract suitable volunteers or staff from member clubs or affiliated organisations Use paid project managers where appropriate and possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BWV activities are undertaken in an efficient and effective manner More resources for projects/key activities Competent volunteer project managers or outsourced staff are employed Reduced safety and reputational risks for BWV