

## Marketing your Club!

If you're struggling to find new members for your club, here's a few pointers to refresh your marketing activities.

### Finding potential members

- Think about who your potential new members may be:
  - Identity - age, gender, location, interests, etc.
- Where do they go, where do they get their info from?
  - Website – review your site, does it encourage new members?
  - Facebook – post regularly, short posts with only a few photos are great
  - Newspapers – local papers with a community page, include a “people” photo
  - Bushwalking gear shops
  - Word of mouth – talk to people out walking
- Create interesting/newsworthy events
  - Fundraising for an external cause
  - Events aimed at very specific people, eg. beginners or seniors bushwalk, intro to bushwalking workshop, etc
- Team up with local council “get active” initiatives to obtain free marketing
- Offer to speak at libraries, local community groups, neighbourhood houses; put up posters in these locations. What about a stall at a local market or a stand in a local shopping centre? Community groups may be welcomed for free. But have materials ready to hand out (see below).
- Special Offers! For example, promote a free walk, offer free first two months membership. (Bushwalking membership is inexpensive so cost of this type of promotion is minimal).

### What Materials do you have, need or can update?

- A club brochure or business card is a handy tool to carry around and hand out to people you meet. These can be prepared quite inexpensively online (maybe your kids or grandkids can assist if needed).
- A club banner is inexpensive and useful to put up at activities or speaking events. Also great for photos with your members which can then be added to your website or Facebook page!
- Your club logo is your identity. Does it need an update or bit of sharpening up? Ask your members what they think. Would they be interested in a club polo shirt – they are a great conversation starter.

## Make it Welcoming, make it EASY!

- Make it easy for participants to get all the information they need – online or via email
- Pre-empt hurdles that may put them off attending their first bushwalk, e.g.:
  - Unclear walk gradings (what does Easy really mean?), having to phone in RSVP's, not knowing what to bring
  - Too many documents attached to an email, too many rules!
  - Being too rigid with the rules – sneakers may be okay for a first easy walk; an experienced hiker may be offended if forced to do a very easy walk.
- Approach potential visitors with empathy, remember what it is like when you start something entirely new.
- Avoid jargon, all the different types of gear can be daunting, so avoid bombarding new people with too much info.
- Upon arrival, welcome new people immediately, don't make them feel like they are crashing an established clique.
- After the walk check in to see how they enjoyed the walk – was it too hard, too easy, did they feel welcome.

## Views on Bushwalking Clubs

Be aware that there is a general perception that clubs have too many rules and are set in their ways. It can be hard to change long-standing processes but consider if it is really necessary to stick to all your requirements, such as:

- Three qualifying walks - abilities and personality are often obvious on the first walk or by an open and honest chat. Experienced walkers may be put off if they have to 'prove' themselves.
- Explaining all the rules before someone comes on a walk - leave the full details until they decide to join and then consider pointing them to an online version rather than attaching multiple documents to an email.
- Beware of too much focus on risk and insurance. It makes bushwalking appear high risk when walking with a club is quite the opposite. Reading and signing the Acknowledgement of Risk and hearing a pre-walk briefing should be sufficient for a visitor.

Instead, emphasise the **friendly, welcoming and supportive** aspects of your club which is the cornerstone of our bushwalking community. Don't forget the FUN!

## Useful Resources & Links:

For Promotional Materials: <https://www.vistaprint.com.au/>  
<https://www.officeworks.com.au/>