



Bushwalking Victoria
celebrating 90 years

ANNUAL REPORT

2023/24





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ABOUT

Bushwalking Victoria (BWV) is the state bushwalking peak body that represents the interests of bushwalkers and all who walk in natural areas in Victoria. We support our clubs and members, contribute to track maintenance and conservation activities and provide highly-skilled bushwalkers to assist Victoria Police with bush search and rescue.

Our Mission:

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

BWV is a not-for-profit incorporated association run mainly by volunteers. It was established in 1934 as the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs. The name was changed to Bushwalking Victoria in 2006.

BWV relies on member fees and government grants to fund its activities including:

- Safeguarding and advancing the common interests of all bushwalkers.
- Promoting safe and environmentally responsible recreational bushwalking and its benefits to the community.
- Providing a volunteer specialist search and rescue group to assist in land-based searches for persons lost in Victoria, for the benefit of the community.
- 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 to enhance their recreational bushwalking value for all.
- Publishing information regarding safety, preservation of the environment, walking routes and other subjects of interest to all bushwalkers in the community.

Bushwalking Victoria represents:

- 59 affiliated clubs
- 11 associated organisations
- 181 individual supporter members
- 6,493 affiliated club members collectively
- An estimated 360,000 bushwalkers actively engaged in bushwalking as an outdoor recreation.

Bushwalking Victoria Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the Bushwalking Victoria (BWV) Annual Report covering the financial year of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This report covers the activities of the Board and its standing committees in a year of rebuilding and reconnection - with our clubs, our volunteers and our Board.

Highlights

- Bushwalking Victoria successfully secured funding once again under Sport and Recreation Victoria's Together More Active program. Over the next four years \$20,000 per annum will be allocated to club development programs, aiming to build sustainability and strengthen our clubs.
- In July 2023 outgoing President Mike Grant and I met with the (then) Environment Minister Ingrid Stitt. During this meeting, we outlined our mission and emphasised the vital role our club network plays in supporting the health and wellbeing of the community. We highlighted the activities of BSAR & BTAC, and discussed the training committee's achievements in developing resources for beginner bushwalkers and future leaders. We also expressed our concerns about the extended delays in reopening the track to Sealers Cove at The Prom.
- In August 2023 we introduced a new part-time position of Executive Officer to support the Board in delivering our Strategic Plan. We welcomed Richelle Olsen to the role and we are seeing the benefits in improved communication and connection with our members.
- We continue to enhance the membership management area of our website. The club portals are being increasingly utilised for profile updates and accessing leader training materials.

BSAR and BTAC

Our two long standing sub-committees, BSAR (Bush Search and Rescue) and BTAC (Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation), continue to thrive thanks to a dedicated bunch of volunteers and an extraordinary team effort.

BSAR celebrates its 75th Anniversary in 2024, marking a significant milestone for this respected volunteer organisation. Congratulations to everyone who has contributed to BSAR's success over the years.

BTAC's hard-working team continues to tackle challenging tasks - clearing the remote and steep tracks where access is difficult but improvement is much appreciated by all who use them. It is heartening to see the recognition on social media of their efforts.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT.)

Training

The Training committee has made excellent progress with the online leader training materials which are now almost complete and being utilised by our member clubs. Our face-to-face walk leader training sessions continue to book out quickly and our navigation training is also popular. A huge thank you to our volunteer trainers for their contributions to developing and supporting our current and future leaders.

Thank You

Bushwalking Victoria boasts an incredible group of active volunteers. These include members of the Board, BSAR, BTAC, Training and Safety committees, as well as club members who organise the annual Federation Walks event and contribute to BWV projects. We are deeply grateful to all our volunteers for their time, energy and expertise.

Special thanks to our conveners Monica Chapman and Rod Costigan (BSAR), Joe Van Beek (BTAC) and Lyn Atkinson (Training) and their respective committees for their dedication and contributions. Special thanks also to the Board who have supported me in the President's role this year.

To the Board Members retiring this year, Jenny Hosking, Robert (Bic) Bicknell and Gary Macdonald, I thank you for your contributions and support to our organisation and hope to catch up with you out on the trails.

The Future

Despite a steady overall membership, we face challenges in attracting more people to the club environment, even as bushwalking participation by the wider community increases. We must promote the benefits of walking with a club and simplify the processes required to run a club to attract more members. I am confident we can achieve this!

I am enthusiastic about the future and the opportunity to build on the programs and connections we have established this year.

Robyn Shingles
President



SECRETARY'S REPORT

As a member of the Board of Management and Public Officer of BWV, the Secretary has specific legal responsibilities as well as general administrative functions. The Secretary is registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria, the Australian Business Register and the Australian Tax Office, to carry out the functions associated with this role.

Membership

Affiliated member clubs remain steady at 59. Basically Bushwalking Inc ceased operation during the year, and we welcomed a new club in March 2024, with Central Goldfields Bushwalking and Hiking Inc joining our membership.

Overall club membership numbers have increased from the last financial year, from 6,271 to 6,493. Associated member clubs are now 11, with Swinburne University Explorers not renewing their association. Individual Supporter members total 181.

Board Activities

Members of the Board are responsible for governance and strategy for BWV. Board members are also asked to volunteer additional time to participate in operational activities, projects and events.

Conveners of standing committees are invited to and regularly attend the monthly Board meetings, as are Club presidents.

Name	Role	Club
Robyn Shingles	President	Strzelecki Bushwalking Club
Jeff McDonell	Vice-President	Bayside Bushwalking Club
Jenny Hosking	Secretary	MWC & MWWC
Judy Morris	General Board Member	Strzelecki Bushwalking Club
Robert Bicknell	General Board Member	Boroondara Bushwalkers
Ian Macdonald	General Board Member	Koonung Bushwalking Club
Peter Campbell	General Board Member	Individual Supporter Member
Mark Summers	General Board Member	Gisborne Bushwalking Club
Gary Macdonald	General Board Member	Benalla Bushwalking Club
Jane Spence	General Board Member	Individual Supporter Member
Monica Chapman	BSAR Convener	Maroondah Bushwalking Club
Rod Costigan	BSAR Convener	Melbourne Uni Mountaineering Club
Joe van Beek	BTAC Convener	Ben Cruachan Walking Club
Lyn Atkinson	Training Convener	Boroondara Bushwalking Club



Operations

Bushwalking Victoria retain access to offices at Westerfolds for meetings and training, including activities for clubs

Bushwalking Victoria now have two staff members who assist with the day-to-day operations. During the year an Executive Officer was appointed, Richelle Olsen. Alan Abrahams continues in his role as Administration Officer.

Thanks to all for support in fulfilling this role.

Jenny Hosking
Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Results for 2023–2024

The financial year ending March 31, 2024, reported a surplus of \$19,774, consistent with the previous year's surplus of \$23,539. See Appendix 1 for complete Financial Accounts.

Notably, this surplus contrasts with the budgeted deficit of \$5,750, primarily attributed to lower-than-budgeted expenditures on IT Member Management system costs. This was initially budgeted to be outsourced, with certain tasks being retained in-house.

Financial Position

Overall, the financial position remains sound and healthy with Members' Funds at \$258,303.

The Board has determined Reserves are sufficient to fund unexpected shortfalls in grant revenues, contingency costs, and any unexpected increases in operating expenditure.

Search and Rescue Fund

Contributions from volunteers, clubs, and individuals continue to bolster our Search and Rescue Fund. In the past year, a generous donation of \$500 from an individual has been allocated to support our ongoing activities in this area.

Membership Fees 2024–25

With reserves deemed satisfactory for the year ending March 31, the Board has determined that the fees for the year ending 31 March 2025 for Member Clubs will remain at \$17.60 (incl GST) per club member. Individual Supporter Member fees shall remain at \$20.00 (incl. GST) and Associate Membership fees at \$25.00 (incl. GST) per club.

Acknowledgments and Thanks

We extend our appreciation to all our member clubs for their unwavering support.

Special recognition is reserved to our Honorary Reviewer, Keith Talty, whose steadfast commitment to diligently reviewing our accounts is greatly appreciated.

Judy Morris

Treasurer



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Since joining Bushwalking Victoria as Executive Officer in August 2023, it's safe to say I've been sprinting, not just walking! The past eight months have been a whirlwind of learning, connecting, and – most importantly – figuring out how we at BWV can best support our member clubs in their mission to “Just go bushwalking”. While juggling priorities with a two-day-a-week schedule has been its own adventure, I'm incredibly proud of the progress made so far, and a huge thanks goes to Robyn (our President) and the entire Board for their unwavering support.

It's been a big year, with my key areas of focus being:

- empowering clubs through Club Development initiatives,
- strengthening our marketing and communications
- commemorating our upcoming 90th Anniversary in style,
- and charting a course for a successful 2025–2029 strategy.

It's been a jam-packed eight months on the trail, but one filled with immense satisfaction.

Richelle Olsen
Executive Officer



Mt Baw Baw Strategy Day: L-R (back) Peter Campbell, Jeff McDonell, Ian Macdonald, Alan Abrahams, Mark Summers, Robert Bicknell, Joe van Beek, Rod Costigan. L-R (front) Robyn Shingles, Richelle Olsen, Monica Chapman, Jenny Hosking

BUSHWALKING TRACKS & CONSERVATION (BTAC)

Track Maintenance Activities

Nine key track maintenance projects were completed during the 2023-24 reporting year. 70 volunteers contributed over 4,200 hours to clear 78 kilometres of walking track. The 78km of track cleared includes 50km of the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT). This is over 20% of the 230km of dedicated walking track on the AAWT within Victoria. 34 volunteers attended more than one activity with 18, 'the repeat offenders', attending three or more.

BTAC volunteers also provided their time to support and prepare for other activities such as work in the Grampians, Bunyip State Park and various reconnaissance for upcoming activities.

The weather and fire danger impacted the program of activities causing some projects to be cancelled at short notice. The Eagles Peaks activity was postponed in August by a month because of bad weather.

Work in the Croajingolong National Park was cancelled in September because of fire risk.

Planned work on Mt Buffalo in December was cancelled due to poor weather and work on the track to Mt Howitt was cancelled in January due to the risk of fire.

Other Activities and Issues

Long Distance Walking Tracks - BTAC continues to be concerned about the apparent lack of strategic management; planning, reporting and recording of track condition and work done, for long distance walking tracks that pass through several jurisdictions, e.g. the AAWT. BTAC will continue to pursue this issue through the Bushwalking Advisory Committee and the AAWT Stakeholder forum. In the mean time BTAC have been proactive along with various rangers in the field to ensure the AAWT remains walkable and retains its reputation as an iconic wilderness experience.

"Shovel Ready Activities" - In an effort to avoid the disappointment of a cancelled activity BTAC is now looking at having 'shovel ready' activities that can be switched to at short notice in case of a cancellation of an activity due to local circumstances.

Feral Horses - The BTAC Convener prepared a submission to the Senate Enquiry on the impact of Feral Horses stressing the need for better control of these pest animals.



BTAC REPORT (CONT.)

Park Connect – BTAC continues to use Parks Victoria’s volunteer portal, ParkConnect, as its volunteer data base and for volunteers to register for activities. In addition BTAC are working with the new Parks Victoria Statewide Volunteer Manager on improvements to the functionality of ParkConnect.

Club Track Adoption – BTAC encourages clubs to adopt a track or work on track maintenance and conservation projects with local, or not so local, land managers. BTAC is able, on an as requested basis, to support such activities by assisting with land manager contact, advice on management of projects, the use of ParkConnect, recruitment of volunteers, provision of special skill sets e.g. chainsaw operators and providing access to BTAC’s trailer and/or equipment.

Acknowledgements

A special acknowledgement for the first activity for the year to our partners for that event, the Friends of Baw Baw and also to the Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort who provided free lodge accommodation, transport for our equipment to the work site and assisted with the track maintenance work.

BTAC is grateful for the co-operation and support received from the land managers, Parks Victoria and DEECA. Thanks to them for their hospitality, if it wasn’t a restaurant meal as at Baw Baw, at least they provided the food for a BBQ and many times cooked it for us.

Thanks to the BWV board for their support and encouragement. Thanks to those who represent BWV on Advisory Boards and push the case for bushwalking tracks, for example Chris Towers on the Falls to Hotham Crossing and Jeff McDonell on Wilsons Promontory National Park. Well done to all the clubs, their officers and members who have been busy doing track and conservation work with their local land managers.

Thanks to the BTAC Committee.

Their efforts and contributions to develop and deliver the program of activities are much appreciated.

Special thanks to the project leaders who do such a great job organising and managing the activities from concept to final reporting. A big thank you to Peter Maffei, the BTAC equipment officer, for his work in keeping our equipment in good and safe working order and maintaining the supply of PPE.

Most importantly all the volunteers are thanked for the time and effort they have contributed and their camaraderie.

Key BTAC 2023-24 Activities

Date	Location	Track	Project Leader # of Volunteers
31 March -2 April 2023	Baw Baw National Park	AAWT and Tanjil Link Tracks	Peter Maffei 26
21-25 April 2023	State Forest north of Grant	McMillans Walking Track Crooked River section	Joe van Beek 9
19-21 May 2023	Alpine National Park	AAWT - Omeo Highway to Gill Creek	John Green 12
22-23 July 2023	Baw Baw National Park	AAWT - Firebreak Trail - Thompson Vly Rd to Mt Erica Rd	Joe van Beek 15
14-18 Sept 2023	Alpine National Park Howqua	Eagles Peaks Walking Track	Bob Edwards 8
26-29 Oct 2023	Alpine National Park	AAWT Roper Hut to Big River And track to Cairn Creek Hut	John Green 15
17-19 Nov 2023	Alpine National Park Upper Howqua	Realign track to Mt Thorn	Bob Edwards 17
23-25 Feb 2024	Alpine National Park Upper Jamieson	AAWT - The Knobs to Square Top	Patrick Platt 20
22-25 March 2024	Alpine National Park	AAWT - Johnnies Top to Corner Creek	Joe van Beek 16

Joe van Beek, BTAC Convener

BUSHWALKING SEARCH & RESCUE (BSAR) REPORT



The 2023/24 reporting year was a period of continuing demand for BSAR's services, pleasingly lower demand than the peaks of recent years but still historically high.

BSAR members contributed a total of 230 search and training days from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 including 80 search person-days and 150 training person-days. We had 299 members available for call out on 31 March 2024.

The BSAR Committee currently has approximately 55 positions occupied by approximately 40 individuals. In early 2023 the Committee appointed six members to join the Conveners on the Executive and voted to continue with this arrangement for 2024.

Searches and Rescues

BSAR participated in the following five search and rescue operations from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024:

- 5 May 2023 – Search for overdue motorist in NE Victoria
- 4 July 2023 – Search for missing man near Kinglake
- 12 July 2023 – Search for missing man near Golden Beach
- 12–13 September 2023 – Search for missing man near Winton Wetlands
- 29 September–1 October 2023 – Search for missing man near Native Dog Flat.



BSAR REPORT (CONT.)

Training

5–6 August 2023 – Main Training – JB Plain (snow-based)

Training had a strong emphasis on hypothermia, but also included navigation exercises, search technique instruction and practice, and communications. Sunday was devoted to a mock search culminating in patient care and extraction.

22–23 July 2023 – Steep Snow and Ice Training Weekend

This was held at JB Plain, with self-arrest practice at Little Mt Higginbotham. Training also included safe snow travel, avalanche rescue, including use of transceivers and probes, patient management and stretcher hauling. The training culminated in a search scenario utilising the skills practised during the weekend.

18 November 2023 – First Aid Training

Twenty members participated in a one-day first aid course in the meeting rooms at Westerfolds Park.

Projects in Progress

- **Website** – Work continues to update and improve the website.
- **Manuals** – The BSAR Manual is long overdue for review. A review policy was approved and a working group established. The group has completed some initial work on the Manual's structure and the process of revision. Work on content will commence shortly.
- **Equipment and Safety Clothing** – The Victorian Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) provided BWV with a two-thirds subsidy for the purchase of BSAR safety clothing for members and several items of equipment.
- **BSAR 75th Anniversary** – BSAR reaches a milestone in 2024. It is 75 years since our inception in 1949. Planning is well underway to commemorate this history and achievement with an event in May for current members and all who have enjoyed a connection through the decades.
- **National Medal** – Considerable work has been put into preparing and submitting an application to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to approve BWV/BSAR as an organisation that can nominate qualifying members.
- **Membership Systems** – It was reported in the previous annual report that BSAR has begun transitioning to a new membership and event records system. The Membership Secretary, Chris Jarvis, continues the substantial project of adapting D4H with an MS Access utility to carry on the functions that are outside D4H capabilities.

Summary

Operationally, while demand for BSAR's services has been lower than the peaks of recent years, we continue to be busy. We thank all BSAR volunteers including searchers, Committee, Executive, Membership Managers, Clothing and Equipment Officers, Police Liaison Officers, Field Organisers, Group Leaders, Peer Supporters, Club Delegates and others assisting in various ways for their ongoing contributions to Bush Search and Rescue Victoria.

We thank the broader Bushwalking Victoria community, the BWV Board, Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad and Emergency Management Victoria for their much-valued support. Go to www.bsar.com for the complete BSAR annual report.

Monica Chapman and Rod Costigan – BSAR Conveners

TRAINING REPORT

The Training Project team has continued to work on the development of online resources for leader training under a Together-More-Active grant from Sport and Recreation Victoria.

The Begin Bushwalking page was completed in mid-2022 and is now available to the public from the BWV website.

The Leader Training resources are now ready for use by member clubs. A printed user guide will be sent to all clubs, and ongoing publicity will be provided in BWV newsletters. User feedback will be sought during the second half of 2024, after which an evaluation of the project will be carried out. There are still some funds in the budget to allow for modifications following the feedback and evaluation.

Leader training days

The training team of Judy Hunter, Michelle Gallant, John Hillard, and John Cox were responsible for conducting four training days with bushwalking leaders and potential leaders across the state.

The team also conducted a review of their powerpoint training materials to ensure that the information and instruction slides are current and reflect some newer insights into how we can better present the content. Comments like “Now I know how to use a compass!” and “It has been a great day and I have learnt so much” reflect participants’ enjoyment and appreciation for learning how to lead bushwalks safely and enjoyably.

After 10+ years of presenting this training day we still find that the Melbourne courses book out very quickly and we have a waitlist for each course. There has also been increasing interest from country clubs to run courses in a region. The course run at Stawell was a good example of how we can reach clubs in the western region of the state.

Smartphone Navigation training days

Three single day courses were facilitated by Andrew Robinson; 2 for BWV and one for an individual club, with 38 attendees in total.

Lyn Atkinson
Training Coordinator



Table of training days, locations, clubs with members attending

Date	Location	Clubs attending	Numbers
13 th May	Sale	Ben Cruachan , Strzelecki	13
9 th Sept	Stawell SES training room	Friends of Great SW walking club, Grampians, Warrnambool Camperdown, Ballarat	19
26 th Nov	Sandringham Bowls club	Bayside Bushwalking club	19
March	Westerfolds park	Iranian, Peninsula, Maroondah, Diamond Valley , Croydon, Boroondara, Melbourne Womens	19

FEDWALKS TRENTHAM REPORT

With no host club forthcoming, Bushwalking Victoria hosted the 2023 event over the weekend of 21-23 October, with an organising committee made up of volunteers from five different clubs.

The walks were based in the Central Victorian township of Trentham and extended through Blackwood, Daylesford and the beautiful Wombat State Forest. Approximately 220 bushwalkers from all over Victoria descended on Trentham, participating in 20 walks on each of the two days. All walks were well subscribed.



The weekend culminated with an appetising, sit-down dinner on the Saturday night. An engaging presentation was given by local anthropologist and environmentalist, Peter Yates, who presented a short film that he and his filmmaker son, Rory McLeod created, called the 'Flooded Forest'. Peter also shared his insights into left brain, right brain and how bushwalking can be a way to tap into our right brain potential, helping us to connect with nature. The weekend was considered a great success, with walkers reporting a variety of both interesting and diverse walks, in wonderful bush surroundings.

Thank-you to local club, Gisborne Bushwalking Club members who, along with members of other clubs, volunteered their support over 3 days (registrations began on Friday afternoon) serving refreshments, cleaning up and pretty much anything else that needed doing.

Finally, congratulations and a 'BIG thank you' to the Organising Committee of FedWalks 2023: Robyn Shingles (BWV), Col Purchase (Essendon BWC), Mark Summers & Gail Davies (Gisborne BWC), Gail Greenwood (Essendon BWC), Jenny Hosking (BWV), Martin Norris (Strzelecki BWC) and Jack Winterbottom (Ben Cruachan WC) who worked tirelessly under cramped time constraints to both plan and coordinate a varied weekend, making this the successful event that it was.

In what is also Bushwalking Victoria's 90th year, FedWalks 2024 is being hosted by Bayside Bushwalking Club, supported by Melbourne Bushwalkers, South Gippsland Walking and Adventure Club and Gisborne Bushwalking Club, and will be held at the beautiful Wilsons Promontory, with planning already well underway for a memorable weekend.

Mark Summers
BWV FedWalks Liaison

CLUB DEVELOPMENT



This year we have made great progress with identifying the immediate concerns of clubs in order to prioritise BWV efforts, and provide targeted assistance to clubs, when required.

- **Club Survey** - we asked Clubs what support they needed in order to "Just Go for a Walk". A five minute Club Survey was sent to all clubs in November 2023.
- **Club Connections (CC's)** - the Club Connections (CC) online zoom workshops were created with the aim to improve communication and facilitate sharing of ideas/issues between clubs. Hosted by Richelle Olsen, Executive Officer, Robyn Shingles, BWV President, and other Board members, CC's are a 1-2hr Zoom forum held on a quarterly basis. Aimed at Presidents or Secretaries of clubs (or their representative), they are an informal networking opportunity for clubs, and a chance for them to share what's working, what isn't, and to chat openly about how we can all work together to help clubs to thrive.

Events

- **November 2023** - The first CC zoom meetings took place during the last week of November 2023, with 38 members representing 25 clubs in attendance. Key challenges raised from this session, and the club survey included:
 - finding and retaining committee members,
 - finding and retaining walk leaders,
 - finding new and younger members,
 - simplify administrative processes,
 - website technology support.
 - participants suggested future Club Connections would be quarterly, for an hour and discussing a single topic.
- **February 2024** - This CC was on the subject of Insurance, addressing common queries, answering questions, and explaining the changes to the 2024 insurance renewal process, as well as seeking feedback on BWV's 90th Anniversary celebrations. 48 members attended across both sessions.
- **Future CC Events:**
 - Recruiting and Retaining Great Volunteers (including Succession Planning)
 - Attracting New Members
 - Website/Technology
 - Simplifying Club Processes
 - Avoiding and Managing Issues/Grievances
 - + more

Richelle Olsen - Executive Officer BWV

COMMUNICATIONS

Facebook

This year our goal has been to share high quality content and images to our Facebook page, by creating our own articles, showcasing our Bushwalking Manual, amplifying club, BTAC and BSAR content and sharing important track and safety information. We encourage all members to share great content with us by tagging @bushwalkingvictoria.

Insights:

- 11,600 followers, 10% increase from last year
- 297 Posts - that's almost 6 posts per week
- 241,800 impressions on people's Facebook Feeds, up 28% from previous year. *Impressions are the number of times any BWV content entered a person's screen
- 12,000 Reactions (comments likes and shares), up 25% from previous year

Top Facebook posts:

- Bushwalking Manual - Naismiths Rule - 120,000 impressions, 192 reactions
- Mornington Peninsula Coastal Walk - 40,000 impressions, 234 reactions
- Warburton Redwood Forest - detailed instructions for getting there, avoiding road closures - 20,000 impressions, 265 reactions
- Sebel Mt Buller Advertisement - 15,000 impressions, 106 reactions
- Border Bushwalking Club Kosciuszko trip report - 13,000 impressions, 258 reactions
- Exec Officer Timboon to Camperdown Rail Trail trip report - 11,200 impressions, 173 reactions
- BTAC AAWT track clearing - 7,600 impressions, 232 reactions

Monthly Bulletin

Bushwalking Victoria sends a monthly email bulletin filled with bushwalking news, articles, and happenings. Contributions to the Bulletins are always welcome.

The year in numbers:

- 11 monthly bulletins
- 4300 Newsletter subscribers
- 42% average bulletin opens (vs industry average of 33%)
- Most popular articles:
 - Snake Bite @ Oberon Bay - 635 opens
 - Bushwalking Manual - Map apps and digital maps - 266 opens
 - Great Australian Walks with Julia Zemiro - 266 opens
 - Bushwalking Manual - Naismiths Rule 215 opens
 - 9 Reasons to walk in the high country this spring - 118 opens

Richelle Olsen - Executive Officer BWV



OTHER UPDATES

Safety Committee

Walker safety continues to be an important focus for the BWV Board. Due to resource constraints the Safety Committee function was undertaken by the Executive team. This year 10 club incident reports were received. Of these 8 were related to slips, trips or falls.

Clubs are encouraged to submit all incident reports to Bushwalking Victoria whether or not injuries are sustained or an insurance claim lodged. This enables us to share knowledge with our club network.

Robyn Shingles, President



Bushwalking Australia Inc (BAI)

Bushwalking Victoria was represented on the Bushwalking Australia Council in 2023/24 by President Robyn Shingles and Vice President Jeff McDonell.

Matters of interest to BWV actioned during the year include:

- Hecate Jay from HikeWest was appointed as the President of Bushwalking Australia at the AGM. Robyn Shingles from BWV was appointed as Treasurer.
- Insurance premiums for Combined Liability cover increased by 14% due to claims made and market conditions, however this was offset by a decrease of 18% in Personal Accident insurance, resulting in little change for those who take up both insurance options.
- The part-time Executive Officer position has not been replaced, instead support will be provided from the states for some tasks. BWV will provide support to update the BAI website.

Robyn Shingles, President



Images supplied by: Koonung Bushwalking Club (cover), Richelle Olsen, BTAC, BSAR, Erin Leeder, Peter Maffei.

Bushwalking Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we walk, work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community.

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APPENDIX I FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS 2023-2024

Income & Expenditure for the year ended 31 March
2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Income			
Membership Fees		106,986	102,955
Grants/Funding	1	36,741	24,568
Donations		500	3,150
Interest Received		4,688	342
Sundry Income		2,426	794
		<u>151,341</u>	<u>131,808</u>
Expenditure			
Bush Search & Rescue Support		15,030	7,748
Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation Support		7,976	6,013
Funded Projects		33,605	23,198
Website Upgrade		-	9,600
Subscriptions		160	451
Employee costs		12,563	254
General Administration		43,287	40,520
Communications/IT		7,510	9,509
Training/ First aid subsidies		9,262	10,756
Equipment		-	-
Event Costs/Other		2,174	219
		<u>131,566</u>	<u>108,269</u>
		<u>\$19,774</u>	<u>\$23,539</u>

Movement of Funds	General Fund	Search & Rescue	Future Projects	Contingency Fund	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Fund Balance at 1 April 2023	91,348	18,000	96,181	33,000	238,528
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	19,774				19,774
Fund Balance at 31 March 2024	<u>\$ 111,122</u>	<u>\$ 18,000</u>	<u>\$ 96,181</u>	<u>\$ 33,000</u>	<u>\$ 258,303</u>

APPENDIX I | FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS 2023-2024 (CONT)

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024	Notes	2024	2023
		\$	\$
Current Assets			
Cash Operating Account		73,071	130,671
Paypal		1,954	807
Term Deposits		191,996	187,314
Sandhurst Managed Fund		60,000	0
Total Current Assets		327,020	318,792
Non Current Assets			
Equipment	2	76,990	81,650
Less Accumulated Depreciation		(76,990)	(81,650)
Total Non Current Assets		-	-
Total Assets		327,020	318,792
Current Liabilities			
Sundry Creditors	3	4,145	2,962
Other Liabilities	4	7,442	14,225
Grant Revenues Deferred	5	53,822	63,077
Employee Provisions		3,309	-
Total Current Liabilities		68,718	80,264
Total Net Assets		\$258,303	\$238,528
Members Equity			
General Fund		111,122	91,348
Search & Rescue		18,000	18,000
Contingency		33,000	33,000
Future Projects		96,181	96,181
Total Equity		258,303	238,528

APPENDIX I FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS 2023-2024 (CONT)

Notes to the Accounts as at 31 March 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
1 Grants/Funding		
Volunteer Emergency Services Equip Program (VESEP)	3,486	1,370
Sports & Recreation Victoria - Together More Active - Project	28,956	20,933
Parks Victoria - Volunteering Innovation Fund - Project	409	1,043
Bushwalking Advisory Committee Funding - Project	3,890	1,221
	<u>36,741</u>	<u>24,568</u>

Funds for grants are reported as income when the funds have been spent on the stated purpose.

2 Equipment		
Office Equipment	7,553	14,430
Search & Rescue Equipment	53,616	51,399
Track Maintenance Equipment	15,821	15,821
	<u>76,990</u>	<u>81,650</u>

All equipment has been fully depreciated

3 Sundry Creditors		
Trade creditors	4,145	2,962
Amounts due to staff and volunteers	-	-
	<u>4,145</u>	<u>2,962</u>

4 Other Liabilities		
PAYG/GST payable (receivable)	(58)	(975)
Website/MMS project accrual	7,500	15,000
Office rental accrual	-	200
	<u>7,442</u>	<u>14,225</u>

5 Grant Revenues Deferred (project funding unspent)		
Bushwalking Advisory Committee	10,636	14,526
SRV Together More Active	43,138	48,094
Parks Vic - Volunteer Growth Fund	48	457
	<u>53,822</u>	<u>63,077</u>

6 Recharges to members		
Insurance & BA affiliation fees charged to members	60,660	59,150
Expenses for :		
BA affiliation fees	(6,507)	(6,285)
Insurance for Members	(54,153)	(52,865)
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

Recharges to members constitute a reimbursement of insurance costs and Bushwalking Australia affiliation fees paid by Bushwalking Victoria on behalf of members.

APPENDIX I | FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS 2023-2024 (CONT)

Statement by Members of the Board of Management, Bushwalking Victoria Inc. A0002548Y

The Board has determined by means of the Australian Taxation Office self-assessment system that Bushwalking Victoria Inc. is an exempt entity for income tax purposes and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the notes accompanying the financial statements.

Bushwalking Victoria Inc. does not have any mortgages, charges or securities; and is not a trustee of any trust nor does it have any trusts held on its behalf. In the opinion of the Board, the financial report as set out in this document presents a true and fair statement of the financial position of Bushwalking Victoria Inc. as at 31 March 2024 and its financial performance for the year ended on that date.

At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Bushwalking Victoria Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due during the next twelve months.

Robyn Shingles – President

Judy Morris – Treasurer

Review of the Annual Accounts for Members of Bushwalking Victoria Inc.

I have reviewed the financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Bushwalking Victoria Inc. for the year ended March 2024, as set out in the attached pages.

The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the Associations Incorporations Reform Act 2012.

In my opinion the financial report presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Bushwalking Victoria Inc. as at 31 March 2024 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in the Notes to the financial statements.

Findings:

The financial review involved a review of the financial records given to me, including Profit & Loss Statement, Balance Sheet, Bank Statements, Account Transactions, Account reconciliations and payment documentation. The annual accounts show the following:

- accounting surplus of \$19,774 for the year,
- cash balance is \$327,020 (an increase of \$8,228),
- total equity of \$258,303.

Keith Talty, CPA

Honorary Reviewer

30 May 2024

APPENDIX II

AFFILIATE AND ASSOCIATE MEMBER CLUBS

Affiliate Members @ 31 May 2024 (59 Clubs)	
Ballarat Bushwalking & Outdoor Club Inc	Keilor Bushwalking Club Inc
Bass Coast Strollers Inc	Koonung Bushwalking Club Inc
Bayside Bushwalking Club Inc	Maroondah Bushwalking Club Inc
Benalla Bushwalking Club Inc	Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc
Ben Cruachan Walking Club Inc	Melbourne University & Alumni Bushwalkers Inc
Bendigo Bushwalking & Outdoor Club Inc	Melbourne Walking Club Inc
Berwick & District Bushwalking Club Inc	Melbourne Women's Walking Club Inc
B'Nai B'rith Ramblers Inc	Melbourne Young Hikers Inc
Border Bushwalking Club Inc	Melton Bushwalkers Inc
Boroondara Bushwalkers Inc	Mitchell Bushwalking Group Inc
Bunarong Bushwalking Club Inc	The Nomads Outdoors Group
Bushranger Women's Walking Club Inc	Pakenham Bushwalking Club Inc
CAEX Bushwalking Club Inc	Peninsula Bushwalking Club Inc
Camperdown Bushwalking Club Inc	Peregrine Club Inc
Catholic Walking Club of Victoria Inc	Shepparton Adventure Club Inc Inc
Central Goldfields Bushwalking and Hiking Inc	South Gippsland Walking & Adventure Club
Cobram Bushwalking Club Inc	Strzelecki Bushwalking Club Inc
Croydon Bushwalking Club Inc	Sunraysia Bushwalkers Inc
Dandenong Valley Bushwalking Club Inc	Taradale and District Walking Group Inc
Diamond Valley Bushwalking Club Inc	The Ramblers Walking Club Inc
Echuca Moama Bushwalkers Inc	Victorian Mountain Tramping Club Inc
Eltham & Environs Walking Group Inc	Walking Club of Victoria Inc
Essendon Bushwalking Club Inc	Warby Range Bushwalkers Inc
Friends of the Great South West Walk Inc	Warrnambool Bushwalkers Inc
Geelong Bushwalking Club Inc	Waverley Bushwalking Club Inc
Gisborne Bushwalking Club Inc	Werribee Bushwalking & Outdoor Club Inc
Grampians Bushwalking Club Inc	West Gippsland Bush Walkers Inc
The Great Aussie Hikers Inc	Wimmera Bushwalking Club Inc
Great Dividing Trail Association Inc	Wonthaggi Bush & Beach Walking Club
Iranian Bushwalking Club Inc	
Associate Members (11 Clubs/Groups)	
Alpenverein Melbourne	RMIT Outdoors Club
Alpine Search and Rescue	U3A Ballarat Hiking Group
Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club Inc	Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA)
La Trobe University Mountaineering Club	Victorian Rogaining Association
Melbourne University Mountaineering Club	YHA Bushwalking Club
Monash Bushwalking & Outdoors Club	

APPENDIX III

OTHER KEY ROLES

Role / Project		
Federation Walks Liaison	Mark Summers	BWV Board
Together More Active Online Learning Project	Lyn Atkinson	Training Convener
Together More Active Increasing Participation Project	Robyn Shingles	BWV President
Administration Officer	Alan Abrahams	Individual Supporter Member
Executive Officer	Richelle Olsen	Individual Supporter Member
Honorary Reviewer	Keith Talty	CPA
Representatives on Other Bodies		
Bushwalking Advisory Committee (BWAC)	Robyn Shingles	BWV President
	Joe van Beek	BTAC Convener
Bushwalking Australia	Robyn Shingles	BWV President
	Jeff McDonell	BWV Vice President
Alpine Walking Track Stakeholder Group	Joe van Beek	BTAC
	John Green	BTAC
Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Proposal	Chris Towers	CAEX Bushwalking Club
	Eileen Clark	Border Bushwalking Club