



Across the High Plains by Snow Shoe
 Photo: Gill Sydes, Benalla Bushwalking Club

Contributions

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

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Deadline for the November edition:
Monday, 17 October 2011

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

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WALKING AND TALKING WITH YOUR PRESIDENT

Become a bushwalking ambassador – volunteer for the Green Walks in the Park Project

Bushwalking Victoria has been running this important project for several months now. While we have employed Erica Gurner as our project officer for the project, its success and our ability to run it will rely on the participation of volunteers from our member clubs to help identify walk locations, describe walking opportunities and lead and co-lead walks. Despite several different attempts to recruit such volunteers, the number that have so far put up their remains small and unless more people come forward our ability to deliver what we have promised is in jeopardy.

Volunteers on this project have the opportunity to be ambassadors for bushwalking, Bushwalking Victoria and our network of clubs. The target 'market' for the Green Walks in the Park Project is essentially people who do not currently walk, let alone bushwalk. Surprising as it may seem to many bushwalkers, there are many in the community who have little or no knowledge of bushwalking or have an incorrect view of bushwalking, eg. that it is dangerous (snakes, spiders etc), requires expensive and specialised clothing and equipment, bushwalkers are always getting lost, or who believe 'I couldn't possibly walk 10+kms'.

Our volunteers, through their ambassadorship, have a vital role to play in making this project a success. The more volunteers we can recruit will mean that the commitment and effort required can be spread around more which will hopefully mean that each volunteer will only be required to lead or co-lead a walk a couple of times a year in their local area. Apart from individual volunteers, clubs can also volunteer to organise walks in their local area.

Through this project it is hoped that we will encourage more people to be more active, more often, in more places, by introducing them to walking in green spaces in the first instance, and hopefully this will also lead more people to try bushwalking too. This project provides an excellent means for bushwalkers to contribute to the development of a more active and healthy Victorian community.

To volunteer or to learn more about the project, email Erica Gurner at gw@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au or phone on 0487 804 321.

Great Aussie Camp Out

The Great Aussie Camp Out (GACO) brings together thousands of Australians for one big night on Saturday 15 October where they share the experience of camping out under the stars in their back yards, on a river bank, in a camp, a national park, a caravan park; in fact, anywhere they might feel like! If you or your club will be camping out on Saturday 15 October, why not register and be part of GACO? If you have nothing planned, how about organising a camp for the night?

GACO promotes healthy active lifestyles, encouraging individuals, families, friends and clubs to enjoy the great outdoors experiencing the fun and adventure of camping out. It's free to register and registration makes you eligible to win prizes too. Register at www.greataussiecampout.org.au

GACO is enthusiastically supported by Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) and the Australian Camps Association (ACA). SRV provides funds to Bushwalking Victoria to support our operations and assist the development of bushwalking in Victoria. The ACA and its members provide many opportunities for Victorians to have bush and other outdoor experiences and is also a passionate and enthusiastic advocate for the outdoor sector in Victoria.

Trip Intentions Form – now online

Letting someone know before you go is an essential risk management element for all bushwalkers, whether walking with a club, with family or friends, or alone.

Peter Campbell, the Convenor of Bush Search and Rescue was recently setting out on a bushwalk while visiting Tasmania and realised that he didn't have anyone to provide the details of his planned walk to. While he could download a *Trip Intentions Form* from the Victoria Police website, he didn't have anyone to leave the form with, so he decided to have a go at developing an online version of the form.

www.tripintentions.org provides a facility for you to enter the details of your trip (ie. walk, outback adventure, ski trip etc) and the email addresses of two people you nominate to act as your contacts. When you complete the online form the details you have entered are automatically emailed to these two contacts and copy sent to you. You can also print out your completed *Trip Intentions Form* (just before you submit it) then distribute hard copies and also leave copy in your vehicle. You can send your *Trip Intentions Form* via email without creating an account on this website. However, if you create free account you will be able to access the *Trip Intentions Forms* you previously submitted.

The service is provided free of charge in the interests of improved safety for outdoors, and wilderness trips and adventures. However, it is up to you to check that the *Trip Intentions Forms* you prepare and submit using this site reach their intended recipients.

See www.tripintentions.org

On the road again

Once again I am writing this 'on the road'. My wife and I are leading a three-week trip for our club, visiting many of the national parks in the New England region of NSW and further north. We have been caught up in the severe wintry blast of early September that affected most of south-

eastern Australia. We even had sleet while staying in Walcha, which is certainly a weather condition we were not expecting.

Although still early in our trip, and having visited or stayed in only four national parks so far, one thing that has really struck us is the excellent facilities provided for both campers and day visitors in each of the parks visited.

Victoria has a lot of catching up to do and Bushwalking Victoria, our clubs and our members need to take every available opportunity to advocate and lobby for a fairer share of resources for our under-funded national parks. Spending on our parks must be seen as an investment for current and future generations and visitors too, and not as an expense.

Chris Towers

BSAR TRAINING WEEKEND - 19-20 NOVEMBER



Bush Search and Rescue's annual training weekend is on 19-20 November. Experienced bushwalkers who are interested in becoming members of BSAR are very welcome.

BSAR has been a significant part of Bushwalking Victoria for over 60 years, with BSAR members assisting the Police in many searches for people lost in the bush over that period. Most recently, in August it was Bushwalking Victoria BSAR members who tracked and found a 13 year old girl missing in the snow on Mt Erica. For Bushwalking Victoria to continue to provide this emergency service to the community, BSAR needs new members.

The bushwalking skills and experience required to become a member of BSAR can be found at <http://www.bsar.org/joining>. Search callouts occur at short notice and are usually at night, so BSAR members need to have the support of their employer to take leave for emergency duty.

This November training weekend will provide a varied training program in the skills required for bush searching. It caters for new through to our most experienced members and includes an extended rogaine style GPS navigation exercise to develop members' navigation skills with a GPS. Other exercises will include observation and tracking, 'sound and light' night searching, the group leader's role, and first aid.

It will be held in the Wombat Forest. The Police provide bus transport, leaving Northcote early Saturday morning and returning Sunday evening. Participants will need normal food and equipment for an overnight camp on Saturday night and day trips in the bush; off track and some thick scrub.

More details on the training weekend and how to sign up to attend can be found at <http://www.bsar.org/annualtraining2011>

Duncan Brookes

9379 6163 or training@bsar.org

SPECIAL DISCOUNT ON THREE CONSERVATION TITLES FROM MUP

To celebrate the release of *A Hostile Beauty: Life on Macquarie Island*, Melbourne University Publishing is offering a 20% discount on three of their conservation titles while stocks last.

- *Australia's Remarkable Trees* by Richard Allen, photography by Kimbal Baker
Explores the extraordinary lives of 50 of Australia's oldest, largest and most unusual trees. More than 500 photographs.
RRP \$44.99, special price \$35.99
- *Feeling the Heat* by Jo Chandler
Takes us into wild landscapes in the company of scientists trying to decode climate information that will be critical to the decisions we make for the future of

the plane to reveal startling truths about that delicate, confounding organism we call Earth.

RRP \$36.99, special price \$29.60

- *Hostile Beauty: Life on Macquarie Island* by Alistair Dermer and Danielle Wood

Macquarie Island is one of the few places today are considered truly wild—a small, wind-blasted rocky outcrop between Tasmania and Antarctica. *A Hostile Beauty* takes us deep into a landscape that is beautiful and life-giving as it is hostile and pitiless.

RRP \$69.99, special price \$55.99

To obtain the order form for the books, contact Olivia Blake at oblake@unimelb.edu.au

BUSHWALKING ENVIRONMENT

Track clearing/conservation projects

<p>Sunday 16 October Freemans Mill Walking Track, Bunyip State Park</p>	<p>We will clear 2009 post-fire re-growth from the 6.5km track. The activity will also include re-aligning a section of track, track marking and step placement. Note: This activity replaces the Cora Lyn Big Tree event previously advertised. Contact Steve Robertson (Bushwalking Victoria Conservation and Tracks Project Officer) on 0438 267 129 or via email at srob7859@bigpond.net.au to register your support or for further information.</p>
<p>Saturday 19 November and Sunday 20 November Wilsons Promontory Northern Walking Tracks</p>	<p>In partnership with Parks Victoria and Friends of the Prom, we will improve walking tracks in the Northern Section of the park. Complimentary camping for both Friday and Saturday nights will be available at Stockyard Camp at the entrance to the park. (Still to be confirmed is the possibility of backpack camping out on the track for some participants.) Contact Steve Robertson (Bushwalking Victoria Conservation and Tracks Project Officer) on 0438 267 129 or via email at srob7859@bigpond.net.au to register your support or for further information.</p>
<p>Sunday 11 December Condons Walking Track, Yarra Ranges National Park</p>	<p>TEN volunteers required to complete the annual sweep of the track from the top (the easy way). This track was adopted by Bushwalking Victoria (Vicwalk) for annual maintenance. Contact Steve Robertson (Bushwalking Victoria Conservation and Tracks Project Officer) on 0438 267 129 or via email at srob7859@bigpond.net.au to register your support or for further information.</p>
<p>Thursday 26 January - Sunday 29 January 2012 Track clearing on the AAWT</p>	<p>We will camp at Native Dog Flat for the weekend to clear sections of the AAWT between Limestone Creek Track and Cowombat Track, to Mt Stradbroke Track to Cobberas No1. A similar successful activity was held at the same time last year. Contact David Miller on 0417 565919 or email at davidmiller3199@gmail.com to register your support or for further information.</p>
<p>Friday 27 January - Sunday 29 January 2012 Alpine Restoration in the Alpine National Park</p>	<p>This ever popular annual weekend for 30 volunteers to search and destroy sal-low willow. THE DATE IS NOW CONFIRMED - Get in quick! We will be providing accommodation for two nights fully paid in a ski lodge at Falls Creek, as well as the usual 'good tucker bbq' on the Saturday night as a small way of saying thank you for your participation. Contact Steve Robertson (Bushwalking Victoria Conservation and Tracks Project Officer) on 0438 267 129 or via email at srob7859@bigpond.net.au to register your support or for further information.</p>
<p>Friday 24 February - Monday 27 February 2012 Australian Alps Walking Track Clearing</p>	<p>This track clearing event will be held on the Baw Baw Plateau clearing a few kilometres of track between Whitelaw Hut Ruins and Phillack Saddle. This is a continuation of a progressive clearing activity over a number of years that Bushwalking Victoria have been able to give assistance to the Friends of Baw Baw and the Strzelecki Bushwalking Club with Parks Victoria as Land Managers. Please refer to separate article on the next page of this newsletter for more details.</p>
<p>Sunday 22 April 2012 Bunyip State Park and Kurth Kiln Regional Park</p>	<p>The walking tracks in this area are used regularly by many walking clubs, and now it is time to give back and improve those tracks we walk on. In addition, we hope to, on this day, create a new walking track link between Bunyip State Park and Kurth Kiln. There will be many varied tasks from the easy secateur stroller to the more arduous. A day for everyone - it will be fun!! We hope to have other passive recreational user groups also involved on the day but I need your support. Contact Steve Robertson (Bushwalking Victoria Conservation and Tracks Project Officer) on 0438 267 129 or via email at srob7859@bigpond.net.au to register your support or for further information.</p>

Australian Alps Walking Track Clearing

Bushwalking clubs and individuals are invited to join local Parks Victoria staff, Friends of Baw Baw National Park and the Strzelecki Bushwalking Club over a four-day track clearing activity on the Baw Baw Plateau (Baw Baw National Park) between Friday 24 and Monday 27 February 2012.

The activity will focus on clearing a remaining 2km section of the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) between Whitelaw Hut ruins and Phillack Saddle. This will complete a project that has seen the progressive clearing over a number of years of the AAWT through the entire length of the park.

Parks Victoria will establish a base camp for the activity at Jeep Track Flat, from early Friday 24 February 2012. Access to the base camp is via the St Gwinear car park or Baw Baw Village. Ample water, fresh fruit, general consumables and energy food will be available for all participants and people attending only need to bring camping gear and their own basic food requirements they would normally take on an extended bushwalk.

Participants are welcome for whatever time they can spare and there will be a variety of tasks to complete from very easy to arduous. All safety gear will be provided by Parks Victoria.

BEC report

Mornington Peninsula, report by Margaret Madge

The Mornington Peninsula is the location of this year's Federation Walk in October. Although the Peninsula has not been affected much by floods and storms, the unusually high rainfall has resulted in some tracks becoming overgrown. Parks Victoria has been co-operative in clearing the relevant tracks in readiness for October 23, so that our planned walks can be seen at their best. For anyone planning day or weekend walks, it is a wonderful time to walk on the Mornington Peninsula with the wattles and wild flowers coming into full bloom.

Wilsons Promontory, report by Ian McKellar

A schedule has been prepared to get walking tracks and outstation campsites re-opened, although in some cases the reopening is several months away. Listed below are more immediate re-openings.

Bushwalking Victoria has indicated that its members will be involved in track works on the northern Prom on 19 and 20 November. As with other Bushwalking Victoria projects these will be carefully planned to ensure that equipment and access is available. For more information about the November event, see the previous page.

The following tracks will be open for visitors when the park Tidal River re-opens on 23 September:

- Lilly Pilly Gully / Mount Bishop circuit walk. The section from the car park through to the boardwalk has been completed and contractors and the tracks crew

are working on the upper Lilly Pilly Track and Mount Bishop Track which was heavily impacted on by the flood event

- Lilly Pilly Gully to Squeaky Beach has been fully reformed
- South Norman Track has been reformed
- Tongue Point Track has been reformed and new sections of boardwalk constructed.

Works are planned for the next three months on:

- Squeaky Beach Access Track (car park to beach)
- Picnic Bay car park to beach
- Picnic beach to Squeaky beach
- Northern area wilderness walks.

Works will be scheduled in the southern part of the park when vehicle access via Mount Oberon Rd and Telegraph Track is established. The focus will be restoring access to Waterloo Bay, Refuge Cove and to Sealers Cove via Refuge cove. Track damage assessments still need to occur along the South East Track, South Point Track, and Roaring Meg to Telegraph Track.

Otway Ranges

The first 5km of the Birregurra-Forrest 'Tiger' Rail Trail located between Geelong and Colac in Western Victoria is now open. The surface is dirt.

The southern end of the trail starts in Barwon St, Forrest, opposite the Terminus Hotel. The trail here is in the road reserve and continues beside the Birregurra Rd, past Yaugher Rd which provides access to the recreation reserve and one of the mountain bike route trail heads. From here the trail continues towards Barwon Downs where it currently ends at the intersection with Birregurra Rd.

Currently the length is 5kms. The plan is for the trail to meander another 25kms along the old railway formation to Birregurra, on the main Melbourne-Warrnambool rail line.

Grampians, report by Phil Brotchie

I attended the official opening of the Grampians Rd (direct from Halls Gap to Dunkeld). It was supposed to be launched by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Hon Ryan Smith, but because he was running two hours behind schedule, he gave permission for Parks Victoria to open it in his absence. So the Grampians Chief Ranger had the honour of opening the road, supported by the mayors of the Northern Grampians Shire and the Southern Grampians Shire. The ranger gave a good speech which included due recognition of the huge contributions of VicRoads and the contractors.

The opening should markedly improve access to some areas of the Grampians for bushwalkers, and is a great leap forward in the rehabilitation of the Grampians after the floods.

There have been some other recent re-openings. These comprise the Buandik picnic area, Billiamina and Manja

cultural sites, Boreang camp ground (access from west only), Strachans camp ground, the Chimney Pots (for both rock-climbing and walking), Red Rock picnic area, Brim Springs and the Moora Moora Reservoir. These have been brought to a 'safe' standard only; it will take about two years to return them to their antediluvian condition.

More re-openings are expected in the next month or so. These include the McKenzie Falls walk to the base, Mt William summit, Borough Huts camp ground, Jimmy Creek Road, Mafeking, and Serra Rd.

Other openings are expected to occur later in spring. These will be Sundial Rd (via Northern Grampians Rd, Wartook, Zumstein, and Reed Lookout), Sundial Peak, the Sundial Car park to Pinnacle walk, Lakeview Lookout and the Halls Gap via Mackeys Peak to Pinnacle walk.

Things which will take longer are the Zumstein area, the McKenzie Falls to Zumstein walk along the McKenzie River, Venus Baths (Peucker Track), Mt Rosea, Mt Abrupt, Jimmy Creek camp ground, Kalymna and Bomjunna, the Fortress area and the Major Mitchell Plateau.

The Grampians Peak Trail remains on the drawing board. \$2.6m of funding has been provided for the first two phases. A loop from Halls Gap through Wonderland, Mt Rosea, southeast of Lake Bellfield, and back to Halls Gap is expected to open by 2013. There will be public consultation before any dedicated infrastructure goes in and this aspect of the planning phase is expected to occur within the next 12 months.

VicRoads reports that the 'Northern Grampians Rd's southern section is expected to be open in late November 2011, Silverband Falls Rd above the Falls [in] May 2012, Northern Grampians Rd to Silverband Road to Sundial Rd by mid-September 2011. The big news, though, is that the Grampians Rd from Halls Gap direct to Dunkeld (not through Victoria Valley) is expected to be open [imminently]. Slated to take longer are the Boreang camp ground to Mt Victory Rd (there is alternative access via Roses Creek Rd), Redmans Road and Mitchell Rd. These were said to be 'a fair way off.

Ferntree Waterfall Nature Walk re-opens at Mount Buangor

Parks Victoria has re-opened the popular Ferntree Waterfall Nature Walk in the Mount Buangor State Park. Repair work on damaged structures and clearing fallen vegetation caused by the storms earlier in the year is now complete. The walk is a 1km, 45 minute, return circuit that passes three waterfalls, including Ferntree and Cascade Falls, and gives many excellent viewing points over the fern-lined upper reaches of the Middle Creek below, and passes through awe inspiring tall forest of bluegums and messmates.

Local Ranger, Tony Veit, says this is the first major walk to be re-opened in the park since the flood and storm damage. 'The Ferntree Waterfall Nature Walk is a very popular walk with visitors and we had just opened the walk

after a fire in March 2010, when flooding and storm damage caused it to be closed again.' Mr Veit said. 'There is still a great deal of work to be done to repair other walks, but fingers crossed people can again enjoy the views on this walk for many years to come.'

Churchill National Park re-opens

Churchill National Park and all of its nine tracks and trails have re-opened to the public following storm damage in early 2011.

The storm event in February this year caused significant damage to the park and this resulted in the majority of the tracks and trails being closed to ensure visitor safety. Following the hard work of Parks Victoria staff, Contractors Services South East, and the thorough insurance assessment process, the park is now fully accessible again. A large amount of work was carried out to repair the storm damage. This included \$60,000 spent to undertake drainage, road and track reconstruction.

David Rimmer

Manager, Bushwalking Environment Committee

Natural environment

New coal-fired power station in Victoria

Environment Victoria is spearheading a major campaign to stop the construction of a new coal-fired power station in Victoria. Planned actions include appealing the decision in the courts and compiling a 'monster petition' to be forwarded to the Federal Government asking them to withdraw their funding offer. More information on Environment Victoria's campaign can be found at <http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/no-new-coal/petition>.

Other than the publishing of this notice, Bushwalking Victoria will not be taking an active role in this campaign as, although we are concerned with the impacts of climate change, we believe this project is too far removed from our core focus of representing the bushwalking community on issues that directly affect walking opportunities.

Grazing in the Victorian Alpine Park

The Baillieu Government seems determined to continue with its intention of reintroducing cattle grazing in Victoria's Alpine National Park and its attempt to bypass federal laws that derailed last summer's controversial trial.

According to The Age, DSE has hired auditing firm Deloitte to comb through the emails of Parks Victoria staff to trace any leaks. The Age also reports that DSE's biodiversity research arm, the Arthur Rylah Institute, has been selected to assess various sites for the existence of rare species that could be used by the federal government to put the kybosh on the second attempt.

DSE's initial 'research summary' on last year's trial, which obtained by The Age, is just two pages long. It cites an earlier NSW trial that concluded the impact of grazing on fire reduction was 'less clear'.

DSE has not responded to freedom-of-information requests for details of the trial lodged by the Victorian National Parks Association, which has now referred the issue to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Summary from various articles in **The Age** newspaper

Old growth forest in the Central Highlands

Before European settlement up to 80% of the wet eucalyptus forest of Victoria's central highlands was old-growth mountain ash, with trees taller than 90m towering above the landscape.

According to research published in US journal the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the old-growth is nearly gone and on the verge of being unrecoverable. The paper says decades of logging and frequent bushfire have reduced the area of old-growth to about 2000 hectares - 1.2% of the forest area north-east of Healesville.

Lead researcher David Lindenmayer, from Australian National University's Fenner School of Environment and Society, said if the current combination of clear-felling and fire continued the mountain ash could be lost and replaced by wattle, or 'acacia scrub. This forest is one of the saddest things I've ever seen in 30 years of ecological science. What we are seeing is a truly iconic forest evaporating before our eyes and it will never be the same again,' Professor Lindenmayer said. 'If it collapses into acacia scrub, it is impossible to get out again. It really is a catastrophe in the true sense of the word.'

The paper says Victoria's central highlands forest is an example of a 'landscape trap' - a new label for an ecosystem that is fundamentally changed through human action and natural disturbance. More than 150 years ago the central highlands were dominated by forests aged 200 to 450 years, and regulated by infrequent late summer wildfires that released seedlings from burnt trees to produce new stands. According to the paper, in the past century the natural cycle has been disturbed by more frequent bushfires - there have been at least five, including Black Saturday in 2009 - and clear-fell logging for pulp and timber. It says the frequency and severity of fires has been exacerbated by the reduction in rainfall and overall forest age in recent decades - young mountain ash saplings are densely packed and more likely to burn.

between regenerating events is less than 20-30 years, mountain ash is at risk by being replaced by other species.

Professor Lindenmayer said the loss of mountain ash had a huge impact on biodiversity, water supply for Melbourne's catchments and carbon dioxide emissions.

A 2009 paper found the central highlands' forest was the most carbon-dense in the world. About 40 local vertebrate species rely on old-growth tree hollows for habitat.

Trees older than 100 years are no longer logged, but Professor Lindenmayer said fixing the landscape trap would require ending clear-fell logging and trying to limit future fires through prescribed burning in some areas to reduce the risk to surviving old-growth.

'What is really needed now is restorative forestry, not industrial forestry, which is what we've got now,' he said.

State government-owned timber agency VicForests says it operates sustainably. Last week it released a consultant's report that found claims that plantation timber could completely replace native forest wood in Victoria were unrealistic.

The paper [came] as conservation group My Environment is applying for a court injunction to stop logging in three forest coupes near Toolangi on the grounds they could be home to the endangered Leadbeater's Possum.

Adam Morton, The Age

<http://www.theage.com.au/environment/conservation/just-1-of-central-highlands-old-growth-survives-20110911-1k498.html>

Court orders logging injunction

The Victorian Supreme Court has extended its injunction against the state-owned timber company, VicForests, logging in the Sylvia Creek Forest, north-east of Melbourne to next year.

Environmentalists had sought an injunction to stop what they describe as accelerated logging in the forest. They say the area is an important habitat for the threatened Leadbeater's Possum. DSE, which is responsible for surveying proposed logging sites, has consistently claimed that there was no sign of live possums in the relevant coupe and that it did not meet the legal criteria of prime possum habitat.

WILDERNESS FIRST AID COURSE

14-16 October 2011

VNPA have arranged Wilderness First Aid training through Equip Wilderness First Aid Institute.

The three-day (Fri-Sun) residential course will be held at Anglesea and offers a well-rounded introduction to wilderness first aid for bushwalkers, climbers, paddlers and those who find themselves out and about. The course includes a mixture of theory and scenario-based teaching and leads to a Certificate in Wilderness First Aid valid for three years and a CPR Certificate valid for one year.

The cost is \$575, which includes tuition, accommodation and all meals.

The course is open to non-VNPA members and can be booked directly with Equip.

For details of the course and to book online see

<http://www.equip.com.au/training/Calendar/showCalendar.asp?CalendarID=574>

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Organisations where BWV Members Provide a Bushwalking Perspective

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 Metropolitan Melbourne Reference Group: Phil Brotchie
 Outdoor Recreation Centre Committee of Management:
 Chris Towers
 Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) Technical committee:
 Paul Chamings
 Living Links Steering Committee: Tony Walker



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