

Bushwalking News Victoria



March 2016 Issue 266

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Walking and Talking with the Bushwalking Victoria President

Planning for 2016 and beyond

Our planning for the next three years is partly dependent on the grants we receive from Sports and Recreation Victoria (SRV). As I mentioned last month, the Department of Health and Human Services has announced the latest round of grants aimed at **'Supporting Victorian Sport and Recreation'** and that this time the grants have a longer focus – 3.5 years – and are aimed at supporting organisations with longer term programs.

We know what we want to do, and we do have some funds set aside to carry out our main priorities for the next three years, but how quickly we can achieve our objectives depends greatly on the funding available. We have not, at the time of writing, received notification of the results of our grant application. I will let all our members know, as soon as we find out.



*Tony Walker,
President, Bushwalking Victoria*

We are still operating on the basis of the [Bushwalking Victoria Strategic Plan](#) we agreed with Bushwalking Victoria members in 2013. While we have reviewed this plan and will do so again this year, so far it has stood up remarkably well to the rigours of time and changing circumstances.

Our basic challenges as an organisation remain:

- How to ensure that Victoria remains a great place to go bushwalking
- How to help the community understand what a great recreation bushwalking is
- How to build a strong, active and involved bushwalking community, based around healthy and growing bushwalking clubs and enthusiastic non-club bushwalkers
- How to maximise our influence on behalf of the bushwalking community.

Although I have deliberately stated it last, maximising our influence is essential to achieving any of our other objectives. Historically we have not been good at this – we bushwalkers tend to be a reticent and generally unobtrusive lot!

Over the last few years, we have succeeded in building relationships with key land managers and peer organisations, but we do not have the access to all the decision makers that we would like, and that we need to have. We will be focussing strongly on this challenge this year, really for the first time. We will have more to say on this subject later in 2016.

Bushwalking News Victoria survey

We had a strong response to the survey on Bushwalking News Victoria. 323 responses were received. Its editor, Joslin Guest had prepared a full report on the survey, which is now available on our website.

I want to thank everyone who responded, and we will be working to update and change *Bushwalking News Victoria* to reflect more what you have told us you want to see.

From my reading, a few points did stand out clearly. When we asked you what kind of information you wanted to see in Bushwalking News Victoria, your top priorities are:

- More news about what Bushwalking Victoria is doing on behalf of bushwalkers (80%)
- BTAC activities and news (78%)
- News from government and land managers that affects bushwalkers (74%)
- Information about what different clubs and bushwalkers are doing (58%).

There were a number of other areas, but these four really stood out, and Joslin and her colleagues will be looking at how best to adapt Bushwalking News Victoria to meet these priorities.

I was particularly interested in the fact that a number of you raised the idea of using Bushwalking News Victoria as a forum for clubs to share information on walks and trips they had done, to publish **'club profiles' and on how clubs are attracting new members.**

We'll follow up on these and other good ideas proposed. Bushwalking News Victoria will change over the next few months, and we'll need your feedback and comments on what worked and what didn't!

Board club contacts

As you may know, in 2015 we started a system of asking each board member to liaise with a number of clubs, to help get to know them, to act as their conduit to the board, and to help them with any issues where they felt Bushwalking Victoria could be of assistance.

The need for this approach was made apparent to me at the start of my time as president, when I tried to read all the club magazines, and get a feel for how each individual club worked. It was an impossible job for one person!

So far, the system has worked well. Many clubs have welcomed the chance to speak to and get to know, a board member. Some clubs have worked with Bushwalking Victoria to solve particular issues, or to pick brains for good ideas. **Some clubs have invited 'their' board member to speak to their members in open forum, or to attend a committee meeting.**

I would encourage all clubs to contact their board member whenever they want help, a pair of friendly outside ears and eyes, or to discuss any issue affecting them. **We won't push ourselves on you, but we're here to help where we can!**

Training Coordinator

I am delighted to announce that Bushwalking Victoria now has a training coordinator focussed on leadership training.

Judy Hunter is from Bayside Bushwalking Club. She is a former teacher, and played a large role in establishing and delivering **Bushwalking Victoria's** Leadership Training Courses – Initial and Extended. These courses are freely available to any club.

Although Bushwalking Victoria is not in a position to run a school, Judy is there to help any club to plan and deliver leadership training, using or based on the Bushwalking Victoria material. She can help you **'localise' the material to suit your club, and help your own club deliver the courses.** The courses themselves have been used to train 80+ event leaders from over 25 clubs. They are practical

courses derived from 'best of breed' contributions from six major Victorian bushwalking clubs, and can be delivered over a weekend, or as two one-day sessions (or adapted to your own particular needs).

Please contact Judy, if you'd like to know more, or to discuss leadership training with her. Her email is training@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Bushwalking Victoria has been, and will continue to be the strongest voice it can for the Victorian bushwalking community.

Tony Walker, President, Bushwalking Victoria

Nominations for the Bushwalking Victoria Board

If you think you would like to be a member of the Bushwalking Victoria board, working on behalf of the Victorian bushwalking community, please download and complete a nomination form available from [Bushwalking Victoria website](#) (navigate to **Members → Forms → Board of Management**).

The board is appointed at the annual AGM in June, and your term of office would begin then.

If you'd like to contact either me or any other member of the current board, we'd be happy to talk with you informally and without commitment about what the board does, and how you could contribute.

Board membership is open to any club or individual member of Bushwalking Victoria. You do not have to have held an office-bearing position in the past or to have been a club committee member.

The board is a volunteer group of bushwalkers just like you.

Tony Walker, President, Bushwalking Victoria

When Hikers and Bushwalkers Go on Holiday

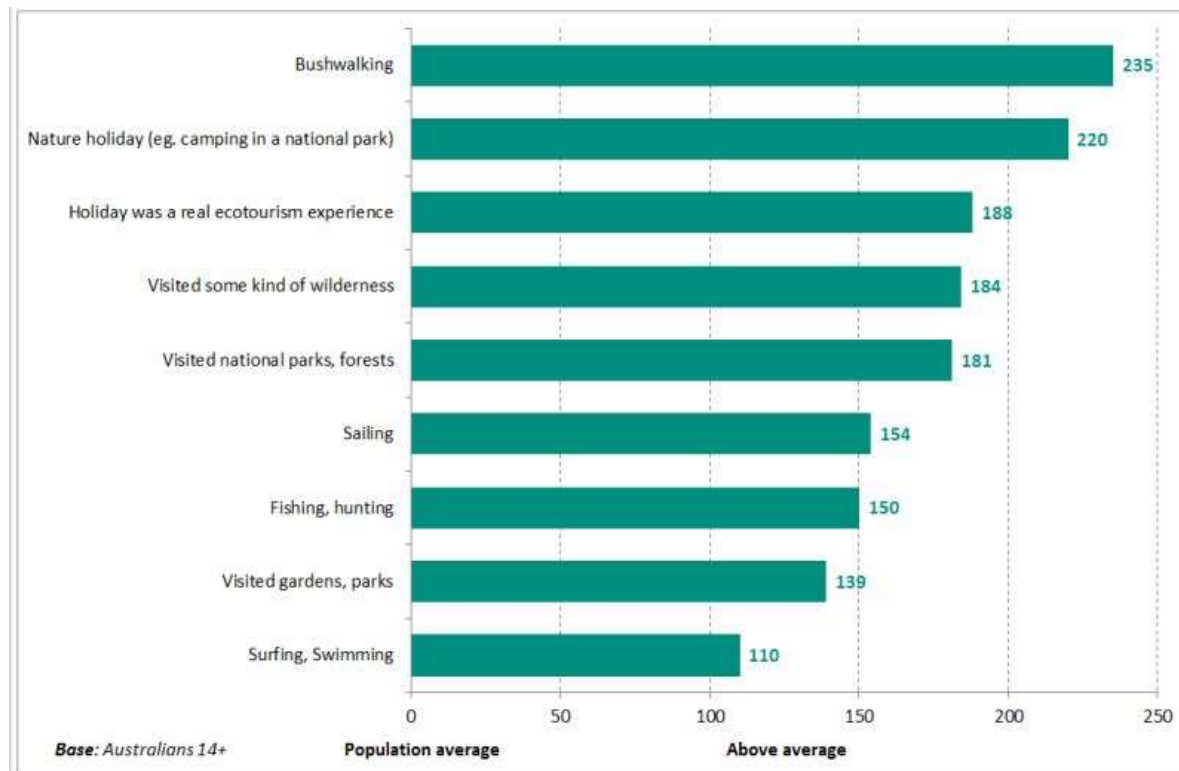
With medical experts around the world waxing lyrical about the diverse health benefits of bush-walking – or any kind of 'green exercise' for that matter – it is encouraging to learn that the proportion of Australians who go hiking/bushwalking has sky-rocketed over the last five years. **What's more, it** appears not to be a fad, but an actual lifestyle choice. In fact, the latest findings from Roy Morgan Research indicate that people who hike/bushwalk even tend to take holidays where they can enjoy the 'Great Outdoors' in its myriad forms.

Between October 2010 and September 2015, the proportion of Australians 14+ who reported going hiking/bushwalking on a regular basis grew from 2.9% to 5.2%, while those who participated either regularly or occasionally increased from 15.6% to 27.3% (or more than 5.3 million Australians).

When asked what activities they did on their last trip, regular/occasional hikers/bushwalkers were consistently more likely than the average Australian to nominate active, outdoor pursuits. For example, they are 84% more likely than the average Aussie to have visited wilderness of some kind on

their last trip, 81% more likely to have gone to a national park or forest and – of course – 135% more likely to have gone bushwalking.

What hikers/bushwalkers did on their last trip compared to the average Australian:



NB: Chart shows the index of the target profile group compared to population average, with 100 being the average.

Occasional and regular hikers/bushwalkers are also 54% more likely to have gone sailing on their last holiday and 39% more likely to have visited gardens or parks.

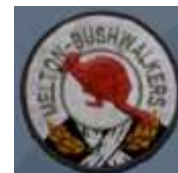
When asked to nominate a description that best summarised their last holiday, hikers came in well above average for ‘Nature holiday’ and ‘A real ecotourism experience’.

Source: Roy Morgan Research

<http://www.roymorgan.com/findings/6638-when-hikers-bushwalkers-go-on-holiday-201601250049>

Broaden Your Walking Experience – Walk with Another Club

An invitation from Melton Bushwalking Club



Thank you, Strzelecki Bushwalking Club for inviting other club members to walk with you. (See *Bushwalking News Victoria*, Issue 265 February 2016.)

Melton Bushwalkers completely agree with your suggestions. In fact, it has always been our policy to accept members from other Bushwalking Victoria clubs to walk with us. The problem, of course, is that without it being published widely, very few knew about it.

We are a small club with a consistent annual membership of between 40 and 45 members. We publish a 12-month Activities Program in one go, which is available from our club website from late November each year. We do 28-34 walks a year. We have day walks at the weekend, on the Saturday or Sunday, and a couple of weekends away. Our program can be opened from the **Home** page of our website at meltonbushwalkers.org.au.

Any member of Bushwalking Victoria and its affiliated/associated clubs who wishes to join us on any of our walks is most welcome. We do have a small fee of \$2 for each day walk that our members attend to help with administration costs. All we ask is that you select a walk grade that matches your fitness level.

We car-pool to our walk location, and gather for an 8.00am departure at the car park at the corner of High Street and Station Road, Melton. We are easy to spot as a walking group gathering around our cars close to the road.

To contact us, please use the email address on the [Contact Us page](#) of our website or phone me on 9743 7441.

Terry Manning, President of Melton Bushwalkers Inc.

Leadbeater's Possum Draft Recovery Plan 2016

At the Threatened Species Summit on 16 July 2015, the Federal Minister for the Environment committed to releasing an action plan for the **Leadbeater's Possum**, after earlier in the year uplisting the possum from Endangered to the Critically Endangered category of the EPBC Act threatened species list.

A draft Action Plan was released on Friday 19 February. This plan replaces the plan published in 1997.

According to Tom Arup, *The Age's* environmental editor, 'The new plan aims to halt the decline in **Leadbeater's Possum** numbers by better protecting its habitat, introducing tighter controls on logging; expanding protected areas via an effort to identify all current and future habitat locations and stopping logging there; reconsidering fire regimes and even moving some possum colonies to new areas. There is no recommendation to end central highlands logging entirely, even though timber harvesting is listed as a major threat to survival of the species.'

'**Professor** David Lindenmayer, an ecologist at the Australian National University, said he was deeply concerned that big, old trees that Leadbeater's Possums are dependent on were not also properly protected under the proposed plan. The draft plan does not seem to propose the establishment of a **Great Forests National Park**.'

'**The** 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, which wiped out a third of its primary habitat in the highlands, also wiped out 80% of the possum population. Currently possum numbers are forecast to decline by further 80% over the next 18 years.'

'The draft Recovery Plan includes 35 measures estimated to cost \$31 million over five years.'

The draft document postulates that possum numbers will still fall over the next decade even if the recommended measures are put in place, as more of the preferred possum habitat type in Victoria's central highland forests is lost as a result of past bushfires. But it argues that decline can be

slowed, boosting the possum's long-term chances of recovery. The ultimate goal is to see possum numbers stabilise and then increase over the next 20 to 50 years.

Sources:

Tom Arup, [The Age](#) and [Sydney Morning Herald](#)

<https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/leadbeaters-possum-action-plan>

Invitation to comment

Download:

- [Draft National Recovery Plan for Leadbeater's possum \(*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*\) \(PDF - 1.44 MB\)](#)
- [Draft National Recovery Plan for Leadbeater's possum \(*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*\) \(DOCX - 2.05 MB\)](#)

Additional information:

- [Review of the Recovery Plan for the Leadbeater's Possum \(Mac Farlane, Smith and Lowe, 1997\)](#)
- [Leadbeater's Possum \(*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*\) Recovery Plan - 1997](#)

You are invited to comment on this draft recovery plan in accordance with the provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The plan is open for **THREE MONTHS** for comment. The public comment period closes **20 May 2016**.

Send comments, quoting the title of the plan, to:

Email: recoveryplans@environment.gov.au

Mail: The Director
Terrestrial Threatened Species Section
Wildlife, Heritage and Marine Division
Department of the Environment
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601



Draft only

National Recovery Plan for
Leadbeater's possum (*Gymnobelideus
leadbeateri*)

February 2016



River Red Gum Parks Management Plan

Parks Victoria is developing a management plan that will guide the protection of Victoria's River Red Gum floodplain forests and wetlands, cultural sites and the management of tourism and recreation. Nine new parks were created in 2010 to protect the health of the Murray River and River Red Gum forests. The 220,000 hectare planning area includes national parks, state parks, conservation reserves, crown land reserves and other areas managed by Parks Victoria along the Murray River between Wodonga and the South Australian border.

Some of the areas to be included in the plan are:

- Gunbower National Park
- Hattah-Kulkyne National Park

- Warby-Ovens National Park
- Kings Billabong Park
- Leaghur State Park
- Lower Goulburn National Park
- Murray-Kulkyne Park
- Nyah-Vinifera Park
- Sections of the Murray - Sunset National Park.

The plan will not cover Barmah National Park as the long term strategic directions for the park will be determined through the Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board.

The key stages of the planning process involve review of existing plans and information, a program of community engagement, release of a draft plan for public consultation, and release of a final plan.

‘Community input is an essential part of the planning process and we are seeking all views of interested individuals and **organisations**,’ said Parks Victoria Chief Executive Bradley Fauteux.

Community Open House meetings will take place in April in major regional centres across the planning area and in Melbourne. Dates and locations will be announced via the website at www.parks.vic.gov.au/redgumplan and newspapers.

Download a brochure about the planning process from http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/675647/River-Red-Gum-Parks-Brochure-Jan-2016-.pdf.

Information sheets will be available to download from February 2016.

Regular updates will be provided on the Parks Victoria web page at www.parks.vic.gov.au/redgumplan.

Planning Timeline

- **Registration of Interest - 2016**
Groups and individuals who register their details will receive regular updates on the planning process and how to be involved.
To register your details contact the planning team at redgumplan@parks.vic.gov.au.
- **Community Information Sheets - February 2016**
A series of information sheets covering key management themes to assist groups and individuals gain an understanding of key management issues will be available to download from web page.
Email your thoughts and ideas via email at redgumplan@parks.vic.gov.au
- **Community open house meetings - April 2016**
Discuss ideas and issues with Parks Victoria staff.
- **Review of community input - mid 2016**
- **Draft Plan - mid 2016**
- **Call for Submissions - 2016**
Draft plan released for community comment for minimum of 60 days.
Hard copies may be purchased by calling 131963 or download free from the website.
- **Review of submissions - 2017**
- **Release of final plan - 2017**

For more information, contact James Hackel at redgumplan@parks.vic.gov.org or 0429 950 636.

The index of all Parks Victoria management plans is available at <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/site-search?collection=parksvic-web&query=management+plans>

Source: Parks Victoria website and Parks Victoria media release 11 February 2016

Point Nepean National Park Master Plan Renewal - Update

Parks Victoria thanks everyone who attended the Community Information Days on 5 and 6 February at Point Nepean National Park or emailed the project team with comments, queries and suggestions regarding the Master Plan renewal.

As part of Phase 1 for the project, Parks Victoria reminds interested persons that submissions, surveys and responses should be submitted by Friday 4 March 2016. This will allow time to consider all feedback to help inform the draft master plan, which will be available for community review and comment mid-2016.

For further information on the project and how to have your say, please refer to the project webpage: www.parks.vic.gov.au/pointnepeanplan <<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/point-nepean-national-park/plans-and-projects/point-nepean-master-plan-review>.

See also page 11 of the February edition of [Bushwalking News Victoria](#).

Cleaning Up Rubbish in the Bush

Letter to the editor

On 5 January, I walked with a group in Maroondah Reservoir area where there were many visitors, including visitors from overseas. It was very disappointing to find a pile of rubbish left at the lookout. I sent a report via Snap, Send, Solve and got an email back to advise that Parks Victoria are the land managers. The email included a link to Parks Victoria website. See the following article.

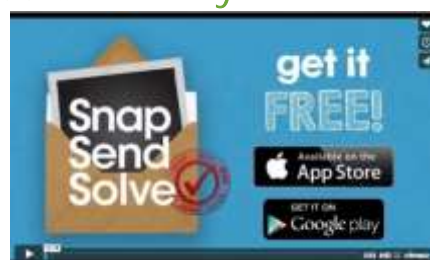
On the same day a group from my club walked in Coopers Creek area near Walhalla. They were disappointed too to find dumped rubbish (see image in the following article) which so easily could have been taken home.

What does it cost land managers to clean up the bush and what can bushwalkers do to help?

Megan Major, West Gippsland Bushwalking Club and BTAC Convener

Use Snap Send Solve app to report dumped rubbish while you walk

Snap Send Solve is an app that allows you to report problems to the authority responsible for controlling them. It can be used to report dumped rubbish, damaged infrastructure, etc.



When you see something wrong, it enables you to take a photo and use the GPS on your smartphone to send the photo and report the location to the appropriate local authority.

All contacts are acknowledged.

Example provided by Megan Major:

The report:

Incident Type: Litter

Location: Unnamed Rd, Healesville VIC 3777, Australia

Geocode: 37°38'26' S, 145°32'58' E

Photos:



This report is created using Snap Send Solve.

The reply:

Dear Megan

Thank you for your correspondence dated 05 January 2016 regarding litter.

The responsible authority for Maroondah Reserve is Parks Victoria.

Please click [here](#) to be directed to their website.

If you have any further questions, please contact us by responding to this email or calling 1300 368 333.

If you would like to find out more about Snap Send Solve and how your authority can benefit from it, please visit [Snap Send Solve for Authorities](#).

The hidden costs of cleaning up rubbish in Victoria's parks

Parks Victoria Chief Executive, Bradley Fauteux, said Victoria is very lucky to have some of the most beautiful and accessible parks in the world.

'It's our great responsibility to manage these special places that Victorians have chosen to protect. But, it is a sad reality that **hundreds of thousands of dollars** are spent every year dealing with the issue of

rubbish dumping, including significant ranger time. The time and money spent cleaning up rubbish is time and money that **we're not able to spend on work to make** the parks better for visitors and the plants **and animals that call them home'**, Mr Fauteux said.

Government agencies, volunteers and visitors have reported significant instances of rubbish being dumped in some of Victoria parks and reserves over the past year.

Examples of the activity needed to combat and remove rubbish dumping which cost money or divert scarce staff time and other resources include:

- Establishing local partnerships with Councils, Catchment Management, Landcare, DEWLP Protection Authority to both clean up and catch and prosecute people dumping in parks, reserves and crown land
- Conducting surveillance, particularly in hot spots where rubbish is being dumped on a regular basis
- Undertaking more patrols around problem areas
- Cleaning up dumped rubbish as soon as possible
- Campaigns urging the community to help us catch and prosecute people dumping rubbish by reporting details of dumping activity.

Mr Fauteux thanks members of Bushwalking Victoria for their support in helping Parks Victoria to manage and promote the issue of rubbish dumping.

'Please contact your local Parks Victoria office if you'd like to help with a clean-up activity or report rubbish dumping. Together we can make a significant difference for everyone who loves Victoria's parks,' he said.

To connect with Parks Victoria, go to www.parks.vic.gov.au or call 13 1963.

David Petty, Manager Communications and Media, Parks Victoria

Indications of the cost of cleaning up rubbish in Victoria's forests

Although Parks Victoria has not estimated the precise cost of cleaning up dumped rubbish at a state-wide level, I know it is an ongoing problem.

As an example, at the last Clean Up the Bush initiative which we ran with 4WD Victoria across parks and state forest in the Rokeby/Crossover, Hill End and Moondarra areas in May 2015, it took 12 4WDs with trailers and 21 volunteers over two days to pull approximately 40m³ of general waste, 18m³ of recyclable steel, 4m³ of TV's/microwaves and more than 120 car/truck tyres out of the forest.

We could repeat this exercise every year at multiple locations and still not get on top of the dumping problem.

A continuing issue is the dumping of asbestos. I had a call from our Daylesford staff recently who needed \$5,000 to remove illegally dumped asbestos from the state forest.

As to what it would cost DELWP across the state to clean up the bush if it was fully funded: it would be **hundreds of thousands of dollars** each year just to start making a dint. As with all things of this nature, it would also require funding for better community education and for prosecutions.

Clubs already cleaning up the bush

Peregrine Bushwalking Club

For the last 15 years club members inspired by Harry Barnett, who has sadly passed on, have been collecting cans on their walks. They estimate that they have donated well over \$1,000 to Cancer Council Research from cans collected, and the bush, tracks and roadsides have also benefited.



All it takes is a few people on each walk to carry a light supermarket bag and a willingness to pick up after others.

Bayside Bushwalking Club News February 2016

In 2015 Bayside Bushwalkers collected 61kgs of cans and raised \$52.05. The grand total value of cans collected over 13 years is \$1253.66.



Unfortunately the base metals price has dropped for aluminium. At the beginning of 2015 the price per kg was \$1.10 but now it is \$0.45. Never mind - just think of the clean green beautiful bush.

Bayside Bushwalking Club News February 2016

If your club has a regular cleaning up the bush activity, tell us about it.

What clubs and members can do

- Report any rubbish you see being dumped or already dumped
- Contact your **local Parks Victoria office** if you'd like to help with a clean-up activity
- Pick up rubbish where practicable while on the walk
- Participate in **Clean up Australia Day** held on **Sunday 6 March**.
For more information, go to <http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/>
- Participate in **Bushcare's Major Day Out** held on **Sunday 11 September**.
For more information go to <http://www.bushcaresmajordayout.org/about>

If those dates don't suit, it is OK to choose a different day on which to clean up.



Contact details for reporting dumped rubbish

- Environment Protection Authority (EPA) 1300 372 842 or 1300 EPA VIC (24hours a day)
- Parks Victoria 13 1963
- Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DEWLP) 13 6186

Alternatively use **Snap, Sent Solve** app (see page 9).

Forum question: [Is it now time for all of us to DOB IN A DUMPER?](#)

Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation Activities

Forthcoming activities

Track clearing - Omeo area

Date:	Friday 11-Monday 14 March 2016
Organisers:	BTAC and Parks Victoria
Description:	Travel to the work area on Friday. Work on track on Saturday and Sunday. Return Monday. More details on application.
Expression of interest:	Contact Charlie Ablitt at conservation@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au or 0400 967 054

Annual track clearing activity in the Baw Baw National Park

Date:	Thursday 17-Sunday 20 March 2016
Organisers:	Parks Victoria, Friends of Baw Baw National Park and Strzelecki Bushwalking Club
Description:	<p>The activity will focus on clearing the Australian Alps Walking Track from the Mt Erica car park to where we finished last year beyond Talbot Peak. This will further enhance walking opportunities in Baw Baw National Park following the completion of track works in the remote Mt Whitelaw area of the park in 2012.</p> <p>Note change of base camp: Parks Victoria will establish a base camp for this activity at Jeep Track Flat from early Thursday March 17. Access to the base camp is via the St Gwinear car park or Baw Baw Village.</p> <p>Parks Victoria will supply fresh fruit, general consumables, energy food and meals for participants who register an interest in attending. There will be ample water at the base camp.</p> <p>Volunteers will need to bring camping gear, sturdy footwear and wet weather clothing.</p> <p>All safety gear will be provided by Parks Victoria.</p> <p>Participants are welcome for whatever time they can spare and there will be a variety of tasks to complete from very easy to arduous.</p>
Expressions of interest:	For further information, or to register your interest in this activity, please contact Darren Hill, Parks Victoria Latrobe Ranger in Charge, on darren.hill@parks.vic.gov.au or 03 51722143.

Cathedral Range SP track clearing, Saturday 6 February - report

Four Boroondara Bushwalkers – Roger, Richard, Coral and Jim – cleared along the Ridge Track on Saturday. The next day we were joined by two other club members and walked the Southern Circuit.



After the JSA by ranger Rhyl and tool allocation (hand tools) we started work at 10am.

- **Jawbone car park to The Farmyard**

We did a small amount of clearing here. With the exception of one major hazard, this track is in excellent condition. About a quarter **of the way up, there's a fallen burnt tree trunk** (E 89063; N 61884) which needs chain-sawing. **There's another small tree near the top of** the track, but that can be easily stepped over.

- **Ridge Track, heading northward**

Progress was very slow here as it is a tough climb and because we needed to hack back a lot of prickly acacia. With only four of us clearing with hand tools we only managed to clear about 1km of track before heading for home shortly after 3 pm. There definitely is a need to do the rest of the section all the way to The Cathedral.

- **Neds Saddle to Neds Gully**

One of our number spent the afternoon clearing track down from Neds Saddle to Neds Gully. This track is now in excellent condition, apart from a number of small trees lying across the track along the ½km or so out from Neds Gully.

Rangers Bonnie and Neil put on an excellent barbecue for us and we had a very pleasant meal together. **We didn't** quite manage to do justice to all the food. Neil managed to prevent the kookaburras from enjoying a free feed too.

Track conditions:

- The steep track off the back of The Cathedral to Neds Saddle is pretty clear.
- The Canyon Track up from Sugarloaf Saddle to Mt Sugarloaf is in good nick.
- The Razorback Track from Mt Sugarloaf to The Farmyard is pretty clear and, apart from a couple of patches near The Farmyard, free of prickly acacia.
- The track down from the Jawbone car park to Cooks Mill is in pretty good condition, apart from a couple of big trees over the track near the bottom of the track. One is a large tree that has collapsed with branches all over the place (E 89998; N 62383). The other has fallen across the path and onto the fence at the back of the **Cook's Mill campsite**.

Boroondara Bushwalkers' next scheduled track clearing days at Cathedral Range SP are June 4 and November 12.

Roger Thornton, President, Boroondara Bushwalkers Inc

News from Land Managers

Great Otways National Park - status

Parks Victoria has reopened a number of key visitor sites and walking tracks in the Great Otway National Park following rehabilitation works and containment of the Wye River fire.

Parks Victoria Eastern Otway Ranger Team Leader Peter Hay said risks assessment teams had inspected the popular visitor areas and had deemed several sites safe to reopen.

Great Otway National Park, Friday 12 February, 2016:

- Areas now **open**
 - Sheoak picnic area
 - Sheoak Falls Walking Track
 - Cumberland Falls Walking Track
 - Kalimna Falls Walking Track
 - Castle Rock Walking Track
 - Godfrey Beach access
 - Sharps Track camping area
 - Henderson Falls Walking Track
 - The Canyon Walking Track
 - Grey River Road
 - Grey River picnic area
 - Garvey Track
 - Sharps Road
- Areas that remain **closed**:
 - Wye River Road camping area
 - Jamieson Track camping area
 - Wye River Road
 - Jamieson Track
 - Godfrey Track
 - Wye Track
 - Curtis Track
 - Kennett Road

Parks Victoria website

Planned burns

Each year Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), together with Parks Victoria and the Country Fire Authority, carries out a fuel management program in Victoria to reduce the risk of bushfire to communities, property and the environment. We are monitoring conditions all year and burns can occur at any time, and currently some parts of the state are still experiencing summer fire conditions. However conditions in other parts of the state are becoming suitable for planned burning, and over the next couple of weeks you will see burning starting in these parts when it is safe to do so. The burns most likely to occur first those at high elevation, small asset protection burns close to towns, and grassland burns (often for ecological purposes).

DELWP will only conduct burns when weather and fuel moisture conditions allow safe and effective burning. Our local experts monitor weather and fuel conditions closely and work with the Bureau of Meteorology to determine when we ignite burns.

Until June 2016, DELWP will continue to work to a hectare target of 275,000ha, with a focus within that on areas that most effectively reduce the risk of bushfires to life and property. From 1 July 2016 onwards DELWP will begin to work to a risk reduction target set by the Victorian Government's new Bushfire Management policy Safer Together - <http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/safer-together>.

DELWP works with communities and stakeholders year round to understand potential impacts of conducting planned burns, and to share information about the program with stakeholders and communities to help them make decisions. As in previous years, we will continue to keep you informed about the progress of the season through a weekly outlook. This outlook will commence next Thursday 18 Feb once per week, and increase to twice weekly during peak periods. The outlook provides a statewide overview of the program scheduled across Victoria for the coming week. Please feel free to share the outlook with any of your partners and stakeholders who may be interested.

You can also subscribe to the Planned Burn Notification System (PBNS) to receive updates about planned burns in your local area or area of interest: <https://www.pbns.vic.gov.au/>. This system complements the local notification processes carried out by DELWP staff, as well as web pages that provide information about current planned burning activity. These include the DELWP [planned burns now and next 10 days webpage](#) and the [VicEmergency](#) website and [FireReady App](#). You can also call the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186 for more information or to be put through to your local DELWP fire management officer.

The Fire Engagement Team

Engagement Unit | Fire and Emergency Management

Land, Fire and Environment | Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

E: fire.engagement@delwp.vic.gov.au | www.delwp.vic.gov.au

National Parks

In some jurisdictions in Australia and around the world private enterprise has stepped in to build private lodges and other forms of accommodation in national parks and wilderness areas. However the idea of built facilities in national parks is a contentious one in and continually divides opinion.

On Saturday 30 January 2016, Michael Williams in the *Blueprint for Living* program on ABC Radio National discussed with three experts the complexities of opening up national parks and wilderness areas for public enjoyment while protecting them for years to come.

Some of the interesting areas raised were **the damage that 'benign' users can do**; the question of revenue, including hypothecated funding; the practicalities of and options for user pays; and using tourism/private investment to overcome the funding void being experienced by land managers.

Listen online or download the podcast from

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/blueprintforliving/blueprint-for-living-saturday-jan-30-2016/7120330> (18minutes).

You can also provide feedback on the discussion via the [Blueprint for Living Facebook page](#).

Why not open a discussion on the [Bushwalking Victoria Facebook page](#)?

Source: [Blueprint for Living, Radio National](#)

Bushwalking News Victoria Survey Detailed Report

The full survey report is now available on the Bushwalking Victoria website. There is a link to it on the [News Blog](#) panel. Again, thank you to all who participated in the survey.

Joslin Guest, Editor

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Bushwalking App

Walking in Western Australia

The Trails WA app was released in time for Christmas last year. The app was the latest in a range of online and mobile resources being rolled out by the State Government to assist people in planning their camping and recreation experiences in national parks and reserves in Western Australia.

Importantly, the app includes alerts for park, trail and road closures, bushfire alerts and road condition reports, and people can also report problems or issues about trails.

The app was developed in partnership between Trails WA and the Department of Parks and Wildlife with support from the Department of Sport and Recreation. It is part of the \$21 million, four year *Royalties for Regions-funded Parks for People* initiative to expand camping and visitor experiences in parks and reserves in Western Australia.

The Trails WA app is a companion to the Trails WA website, which can be viewed at www.trailswa.com.au. The app can be downloaded from the app store at <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/trails-wa/id1056427684?mt=8>.

Source: [Western Australia Parks and Wildlife](#)

Duck Season, Patho Wildlife Reserve, Victoria – a Poem

I

Refuse litters the wetland's bank:
smashed bottles, dead fire,
five spent shotgun cartridge shells.
Beside a log, feathers – torn
from carcasses by bloodied hands –
lie in heaps.

II

A dozen Diamond Firetails dart, flit, hop,
bold and noisy, red rumps flashing,
crushing seeds amongst tall native grasses.
Crowning a sapling, the breeding pair's nest
of stems and woven rootlets, lined
with feathers, gathered along the billabong.

III

Pete's frowning as the others leave,
their raucous insults fading.
A weekend squandered.
Just three Wood Ducks, two Black;
his kills were quick and clean,
but Stewie, drunk, shot messily,
and Richo maimed a Teal
then, laughing, clubbed its head.
Pete's appetite for butchery has gone.
He notices the lakes are low;
moorhens swim not far from cover;
rushes snag a scattering of feathers.
He'll skip the pub tonight.
Ice-chest packed, he drives away.

© Liz Robinson, Koonung Bushwalking Club
This poem was first published in *Poetrix*, Issue 35

Fed16 – Keep 8-9 October Free for It!

FEDERATION WALKS 2016 – WESTERN GRAMPIANS



If you haven't already seen it, the Federation Weekend 2016 website is now up and running at: www.fedwalks.org.au/. The format is the same as last year's website. Currently it only has very basic information on it such as venue, accommodation and contact details. As more details come to hand, we will publish these on the website.

At this stage we are not sure how many direct email communications we will do, so it is probably best for you to keep up to date by visiting the website from time to time. We may only use the email system for major announcements or updates.

The event venue has been set as the Laharum Sports Ground. Laharum is a small locality 30km from Horsham and 11km from Wartook. Although there is no actual accommodation at Laharum itself, there are a number of different accommodation options in the surrounding Laharum and Wartook Valley areas (see link on the website). And there is also plenty of accommodation options in Horsham and at nearby Stapylton Campground (currently closed, but it will be open by the event).

You may be wondering why this location was chosen to host the event. In return for the event being partially funded by the Horsham Rural City Council, we were encouraged to draw some business to these areas which were affected by recent fires. Also, this location will serve as a good starting point for many of the walks. There is also plenty of parking available. The local community there are only too pleased to help with catering for the Saturday evening dinner.

Walk planning and scoping is well under way, but it may be a little while yet before we have our final list available. As many parts of the Grampians have been affected by severe fires over the last several years, we are still in communications with Parks Victoria regarding the availability of several tracks that are currently closed. Please don't be too put off by the thought of walking through burnt out areas. The regeneration is amazing to see - often promoting prolific wildflowers and new fresh growth. Some walks you may have previously walked will look completely different now. You will see things that were previously hidden from view.

Registration for this year's event will again be via Try Booking. You will be notified when this is up and running.

Please visit the website regularly for further information and updates.

Chris Dunmill, President, Wimmera Bushwalking Club

Regent Honeyeater Project Nest Box Weekends 2016

Bushwalking Victoria supports the Regent Honeyeater Project.

19-20 March 9-10 April 14-17 May

The nest box program has been in operation for over 14 years. 381 boxes are in place, with Squirrel Gliders and Sugar Gliders nesting in about two-thirds of them. An increasing number of boxes contain the Stringybark nests of the rare Brush-tailed Phascogale. Regular checking of the nest boxes helps us to discover preferred habitats in different seasons, the breeding success of particular colonies, barriers to wildlife movement across the landscape and determine areas in which to place additional boxes.

If you don't know what the Regent Honeyeater Project is about and to see what nestboxing is all about view the video on <http://regenthoneyeater.org.au/index.php>

Activities

- Checking nest boxes to see the wildlife at home
- Recording data for our ongoing research investigations
- Sharing insights from our day's observations
- BBQ tea (BYO food and drink).

Accommodation

- Own arrangements
- OR
- Free accommodation at Benalla Scout Hall
 - Mattresses supplied
 - BYO sleeping bag and pillow
 - Minor kitchen facilities available
 - BYO tent if you prefer to camp outside.

Meals

- BYO lunch and drinks for Saturday and Sunday as we are out all day
- BYO food and drink for the Saturday night BBQ.

Personal gear – standard gear for a full day of bushwalking

- Sun screen, hat, sturdy shoes, long trousers
- Sock protectors to keep out grass seeds.

Group gear

Please let me know if you can bring any group equipment, e.g.:

- 5-6m extension ladder
- Roof rack and rope to carry ladder
- Tow bar to carry a ladder on one of our trailers
- A compass for map reading
- GPS unit for easy location of boxes.

Meeting place

- 9.30 am Saturday; 9.00am Sunday
- Regent Honeyeater Nursery, Sydney Rd, Benalla
Located at the Yooralla Community Farm, about 1km past the Mitre 10 store. Look for the steel gates and cattle grid. **We're behind the buildings at the end of the long drive.**



Registration of interest

- Please let me know the number of people expected
- And any of the extra group equipment you can supply.

Contact

For more information: Regent Honeyeater Project website at <http://regenthoneyeater.org.au/index.php>

Ray Thomas:

- Email ray@regenthoneyeater.org.au
- Tel Business hours (03) 5761 1515

Ray Thomas, Coordinator, Regent Honeyeater Project

Images: [Regent Honeyeater Project website](#)

Contributions

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

editor@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au or

24 Moorhouse Street, Camberwell Victoria 3124

Deadline for the April 2015 edition: Monday 14 March 2016.

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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Organisations where Bushwalking Victoria Members Provide a Bushwalking Perspective:

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Living Links Steering Committee	Tony Walker