

President's Report 2014

This year is my final one as President. The last three years have been a period of learning, challenges and rewards. I am fortunate to have such a wonderful Committee. Its members have a diversity of skills and contribute ideas and opinions on behalf of you all. The Club would not function without the work that all these members do. My heartfelt thanks to all members of the Committee for all they have done over the last few years.

The last year has again been a busy and successful one for the Club. Our electronic program, online renewal of membership and submission of walks continue to evolve.

Highlights of the last year

The 74th birthday celebration

Members walked or drove to Lane Cove Park to enjoy soft drinks, coffee and cake. Thank you to Chris Edwards, Jill Green, Michael Keats, Mike Pickles, Laurence Priddle, Bob Taffel, and Daryl Watson who led walks; Cavan Hogue who coordinated a Central Coast celebration and Graham Lewarne who organised our refreshments.

The Leaders' get-together

This annual event is to thank our leaders and Committee members for the work they do throughout the year. It was held in March at Andy and Alison Briscoe's house and was a relaxed and happy occasion. Thank you Andy and Alison. I'd like to thank John Hungerford for his enthusiastic recruitment of new leaders. We have about 35 new leaders and 10 returning leaders. Please support and encourage all our new leaders.

75 National Parks Project

This project began in May 2013 and was completed in August 2014, thanks to the efforts of Bob Taffel. Over the last year, members of the club have walked in all 25 national parks in the Sydney region, as well 19 in other parts of NSW, 13 in other states and 18 overseas. So I want to thank all our fantastic leaders who have contributed to the success of the club's walking program for this year. Our aim is to publish a book documenting these walks in March 2015. Michael Keats, Barry Hanlon, Judy O'Connor, Bob Taffel and John Wilson comprise the Editorial Committee.

I'd like to single out four leaders for special mention: Adrian Jones, Graham Conden, Morrie Donovan, and Graham Lewarne. These leaders led an astonishing total of 41 of our 75 walks. I am very proud to belong to a club with such inspirational leaders.

The 75th birthday celebration

Over a hundred members celebrated our 75th birthday at Bobbin Head with a delicious catered BBQ lunch with wine. Bev Barnett, Trevor Brown, John Hungerford and Lyn Hungerford led walks while Bob Taffel and a group paddled to the venue. Anne Tribe, Elizabeth Hungerford and Helen Kershaw worked with Graham Lewarne to ensure all ran smoothly.

Walks and Talks

Lynn Dabbs and a group of volunteers are retyping Walks and Talks. Some of the reports in these old newsletters give vivid accounts of places walked by the older members of the Bush Club.

Some decisions that we've made

The Committee undertakes many tasks, dealing with correspondence, communications with Bushwalking NSW, first aid providers, NPWS, our insurers, and other clubs about

issues that affect bushwalkers. We monitor the Walks Programme to insure that we are minimizing risks of accidents, and organize events, discuss administrative aspects of the club's organization, provide new leader and navigation training and consider all the questions and requests that are part of the life of a club of our size. I have included some of the issues that we have debated over the last year so that members have some idea of the issues that arise.

Charge for printing

We realized that the cost of printing and posting the quarterly newsletter and program exceeded the cost of the yearly subscription. To be fair to our members we decided to keep the Bush Club annual fee at \$25 and charge members electing to receive a paper copy an additional fee of \$10.

Commercial and overseas trips

Graeme Lawless wrote to the Committee about the use of Bushwalking NSW's grading guidelines for overseas walks. Bushwalking NSW's higher grades emphasise off-track and scrambling, whereas the risks associated with overseas walks may involve altitude, exposure and significant ascents and descents. *As a result the Committee decided that walks by commercial operators, here or overseas, will not be graded using club guidelines.*

A Commercial trip is defined as a trip where each participant signs the commercial organiser's booking form and accepts the booking conditions. Commercial trips may be in Australia or overseas. All other trips are Club trips. Commercial trips must have a disclaimer in the Walks Programme that they are not a Bush Club activity. The Committee is involved in ongoing discussions about the best way of grading of club overseas walks so that members have sufficient information to make an informed decision about the physical demands of the trip.

Closed areas

Any Bush Club programmed walk that is within, or passes through, a closed area, must be cancelled as a club walk. Such a walk cannot be advertised as a Bush Club walk and insurance arrangements will not apply.

People that I need to thank

The Walks Programme: Thanks to John Cooper for his six years as Walks Secretary. John was been responsible for improving the format of the Walks Programme and encouraging leaders to submit walks. Also involved are Lynn Dabbs (updates), Jacqui Hickson and Ron Mead who have worked on the evolution of the electronic aspects of the Walks Programme and all our leaders for the Programme itself. We are all indebted to Sandra Bushell for organising the New Leader Training Program; to Alan Sauran for monitoring safety and insurance; and to John Cooper, Graham Conden, Lionel Sontag and Bob Taffel for their role on the Approvals Sub-Committee.

I would like to thank Colin Reid for acting as Walks Secretary while John was visiting family in Perth. Walter Baer has been working with Colin. John is not seeking re-election as Walks Secretary at the AGM and both Colin and Walter have volunteered to join the Committee. I would like all leaders to support Colin and Walter who will be finding their feet next year.

75 National Parks Project: Thanks to Bob Taffel (Coordinator), to the sub-committee, Graham Conden, John Cooper, Michael Keats, Judy O'Connor, John Wilson, and to all leaders who submitted walks.

Our lifeblood – new members: Thanks to Diane McPhail, our extraordinarily efficient Membership Secretary and to Bob Taffel and Col Prentice who filled in for Diane when

needed.

Ensuring the Club runs smoothly: Thanks to Carol Henderson who always contributes constructively to discussion, Katherine Gloor (excellent minutes) and Bob Taffel who chairs meetings when I'm away.

In the black – our finances: Thanks to Barbara Mitchell (treasurer) and Bob Wood (auditor)

Communicating with members: Thanks to Bev Barnett (printing), Jacqui Hickson (our super webmaster and Bulletin editor), Ron Mead (Member records) and Judy O'Connor (Newsletter)

Enjoying social functions: Thanks to Graham Lewarne for his enthusiasm and creative ideas for social occasions and his support team:., Anne Tribe, Elizabeth Hungerford and Helen Kershaw who all worked to ensure the success of the 75th Birthday celebration and the post-AGM function.

I would also like to thank: Michael Keats for maintaining the Bush Club library of maps, books, documents etc.

Keith Maxwell for his help and advice related to the Bushwalkers' Wilderness Rescue Service. Keith is such an enthusiast and attends all our meetings, as does Dick Weston who represents Bushwalking NSW.

Lynne Outhred

Outgoing President