

THE BUSH CLUB INC

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Held at McMahons Point Community Centre
165 Blues Point Rd North Sydney at
6.00 PM on Thursday 1st December 2016**

Present: Suzanne Aubrun, Walter Baer, Kaye Birch, Allison Boyle, Sandra Bushell, Jacqueline Calandra, Christa Carey, Robyn Christie, Lydia Chua, Jolan Cikos, Graham Conden, John Cooper, Peter Cunningham, Arthur Cunningham, Evelyn Dowling, Tom Dowling, Ian Edwards, Chris Edwards, Julie Elsworth, Pam Freeland, John Friend, Katrina Gaitero, Katherine Gloor, Jill Green, Regina Haertsch, Shirley Hart, Carol Henderson, Jacqui Hickson, Tony Hickson, Charo Hogan, Cavan Hogue, Elizabeth Hungerford, John Hungerford, Peter Jordon, Julie Kelly, Jenny Kelso, John Kennett, Helen Kershaw, Henrike Korner, Graham Lewarne, Nicola Le Couteur, Colleen Loudon, Lesley Lowe, John Maltby, Jan Mathieson, Keith Maxwell, Rose Maxwell, Belinda McKenzie, Diane McPhail, Ron Mead, Paul Millgate, Barbara Mitchell, Rosie Moon, Anthea Michaelis, Lynne Outhred, Mike Pickles, Jill Paillas, Chris Paine, Michael Pratt, Ingrid Radford, Julie Rea, Colin Reid, John Renzenbrink, Alan Sauran, Neil Schafer, Sandra See, Bob Taffel, Anne Tribe, Dick Weston, John Wilson, Jan Wilson, Bob Wood, Marlene Wood.

Apologies: Graeme & Lyndal Lawless, Bev Barnett, Jane Millgate, Jan Armour, Melinda Long, Margaret Rozea, Alexandra Nugent.

President's Welcome to the Membership:

Bush Club President Cavan Hogue welcomed the membership to the Annual General Meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes of the 2015 AGM:

Motion: "That the Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting be confirmed.

Moved: Colin Reid

Seconded: Henrike Korner

Carried.

Treasurer's Report: Barbara Mitchell (attached)

Barbara thanked the Committee for their support during the year. Particular thanks to Ron Mead for all his assistance and Bob Wood who has continued to act as Honorary Auditor and advise us on financial matters.

Our members and Emirates continue to be generous with donations, with the Club making equal contributions to the following organisations:

Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Kosciuszko Huts Association

Colong Foundation

National Parks and Wildlife Foundation

The Bush Club continues to assist members by reimbursing full or partial First Aid training and PLB maintenance costs.

The most significant change for the coming year will be the cancellation of the hard copy Newsletter and Program except for members who do not have an email address, the Club will continue to send them a copy at no extra charge.

Motion 1: "That the meeting approves the audited financial statements of 30 June 2016 as submitted.

Moved: Alan Sauran

Seconded: Sandra Bushell

Carried.

Motion 2: "That the President and Treasurer sign the Annual Statement in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1984 as amended."

Moved: Evelyn Dowling

Seconded: Anne Tribe

Carried.

Walks Secretary's Report: Colin Reid (attached)

Colin opened by acknowledging the contribution made by The Bush Club's walks leaders who provided a full and varied program in 2016. Colin thanked Jacqui Hickson, Ron Mead and Lynn Dabbs for their considerable efforts in keeping the electronic program and the short notice program functioning smoothly. Thanks also to Walter Baer for assisting with the Spring program and providing support through-out the year.

Motion: "That the Walks Secretary's Report be accepted".

Moved: Colleen Loudon

Seconded: Anthea Michaelis

Carried.

Attracting and Encouraging Leaders Report: Chris Edwards

Chris opened by reminding members that our leaders are the lifeblood of the Club, without them we wouldn't have a club. In 2016 there were 17 new leaders and one lapsed leader. Also this year the Club has introduced a register of experienced leaders/members who are willing to do pre-walks with new leaders and support them on the day of their walk. This initiative has been welcomed by prospective leaders.

Chris concluded by thanking all the leaders for their contribution to the Club and encouraging anyone who is interested in leading to come and speak with her.

Moved: Colin Reid

Seconded: Graham Conden

Carried.

Membership Secretary's Report: Diane McPhail (attached)

Diane opened by explaining the slight drop in member numbers was due to the removal of all non-financial members. However the Club continues to grow with most new members coming through word of mouth.

Diane acknowledged the wonderful work of Jacqui Hickson (website), Ron Mead (database manager) and Graham Conden (membership subcommittee). She also thanked Adrienne Kinna, Jan Mathieson and Helen Kershaw for their assistance while she was on overseas trips.

Diane is resigning as Membership Secretary and concluded with a special thanks to her very patient husband who has coped and assisted with her daily Membership Secretary duties.

Motion: "That the Membership Report be accepted".

Moved: Keith Maxwell

Seconded: Chris Edwards

Carried.

President's Report: Cavan Hogue (attached)

Cavan commenced by thanking the committee members. Without these volunteers nothing would get done and they have been a great source of strength during his time as President. Cavan announced that he will not be standing for another term. Nominees for the incoming committee consist of older and younger members, a good mix who should provide a new approach. They will be instrumental in implementing the suggestions of the 'refresher group' he formed in 2016 that was chaired by Graham Conden.

Cavan concluded by reminding us what a wonderful activity bushwalking is and what a great club we have. He encouraged us all to make the most of it.

Motion: "That the President's report be accepted".

Moved: Cavan Hogue

Seconded: Katherine Gloor

Carried.

The President handed over the meeting to Graham Conden as Returning Officer.

Graham Conden took the Chair thanking the outgoing Committee and declaring all positions vacant.

Election of Office Bearers for 2015-16

Nominations were:

President: Robyn Christie
Vice President: Helen Kershaw
Vice President: Jan Mathieson
Secretary: Ingrid Radford
Assistant Secretary: Katherine Gloor
Treasurer/Public Officer: Barbara Mitchell
Membership Secretary: Lydia Chua
Walks Secretary: Colin Reid
Events Coordinator: Shirley Hart
Ordinary Member Responsible for New Leaders: Chris Edwards

No further nominations were received from the floor and the Returning Officer declared all above to be elected unopposed.

Committee Ratified Positions:

The following committee appointments will be ratified by the Bush Club Committee at the February Committee Meeting

Other Office Bearer Positions Determined by the Committee

Webmaster: Jacqui Hickson

Two Ordinary Members to be appointed by the Committee

Ordinary Member: Vacant

Ordinary Member: Anthea Michelis

Auditor

Honorary Auditor: Bob Wood

Other appointments to assist the Committee

Membership Registrar: Lydia Chua

Newsletter Editor: Colleen Loudon

Newsletter: Bev Barnett, Tam Khuat

Electronic Program Coordinator: Jacqui Hickson

Updates Coordinator: Lynn Dabbs

Insurance Officer: Alan Sauran

Librarian/Archivist: Michael Keats

Training Officer: Walter Baer

BWRS representative: Keith Maxwell

Confederation Representatives: Dick Weston

Search and Rescue Reps: Graham Conden, Keith Maxwell.

Updates Program Approval Sub-committee: Graham Conden, John Cooper, Lionel Sonntag, Bob Taffel.

New Members Approval Sub-committee: Graham Conden, Ron Mead, Diane McPhail.

Advisory Panel: Graham Conden, John Cooper, Bob Taffel, Graeme Lawless

Following confirmation of committee positions for 2016/17, Graham invited Robyn Christie to take the Chair as President.

Incoming President's Report: Robyn Christie (attached)

Robyn expressed her thanks and said how flattered she was to be invited to be the new President. During the year she formed part of the Refresher Group and looks forward to implementing the recommendations of the group.

Robyn concluded by thanking all the leaders, outgoing and incoming committees and a special thanks to Cavan who has done a such wonderful job throughout his 2 years as President.

The meeting closed at 7:00 pm.

Treasurer's Report:

Year ended 30th June 2016

The Club ended on a high note for the year ended 30th June 2016, with cash assets to the value of \$45,210.

Membership fees only increased slightly, with a slight drop off in prospective fees.

So many generous members , donations almost doubled. A special thanks to Geoff Fox who works closely guiding and providing navigational aid to the Emirates Resort in the Wolgan Valley. Emirates now donate \$100 each year to our club .

As you all know postage costs increased this year resulting in an 80% increase in our printing and postage costs

Our insurance increased by approximately \$500. For the overall good of the club our First Aid and other training costs increased significantly.

Thank you all for your support, particularly Bob Wood who continues to audit and provide us with recommendations for your Club's finances.

Walks Secretary's Report:

The Bush Club 2016 AGM

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by The Bush Club's walk leaders. In 2016 they have provided a full program of great variety. Activities have varied from city meanders of historic and musical interest to bike rides and more difficult, exploratory off-track walks. While as expected activities are concentrated in the Sydney region, leaders have ventured into other parts of Australia and overseas.

Indeed, if the current advance notice program is an indication The Bush Club should be renamed the International Adventure Club.

I would also like to thank Walter Baer for bringing together the Spring Walks Program in my absence and more generally for providing support through-out the year.

With the increasing reliance on the short-notice program, Lynn Dabbs' twice weekly updates provide leaders the opportunity to add new walks and vary existing ones. If, as foreseen by Graham Conden, the current distinction between the quarterly program and the weekly updates disappears then we will move to a continuous program and there will be great reliance on the system operated by Lynn.

The support provided by Jacqui Hickson and Ron Mead must also be acknowledged. Without them our support systems would not exist, be continually updated and work so efficiently for the benefit of members.

Developments over the past year

The participation rate by members in Club activities in 2016 has been consistently high. For example, the participation rate for the 2016 Winter Program (including short notice walks) was:

June walk statistics (Reported Day Walks)

Grades	Number of Walks	Range in number of attendees	Average Attendee Numbers
1	1	N/A	7
2	6	5-19	13
3	18	4-24	11.4
4+	<u>14</u>	<u>4-16</u>	<u>10.1</u>
Total	39	4-24	11.1

July walk statistics (Reported Day Walks)

Grades	Number of Walks	Range in number of attendees	Average Attendee Numbers
1	1	N/A	11
2	5	7-23	14.8
3	23	5-24	13.9
4+	<u>8</u>	<u>4-14</u>	<u>8.8</u>
Total	37	4-24	12.8

August walk statistics (Reported Day Walks)

Grades	Number of Walks	Range in number of attendees	Average Attendee Numbers
1	2	7-16	11.5
2	3	7-14	11.7
3	18	5-28	14.3
4+	<u>10</u>	<u>6-16</u>	<u>9.9</u>
Total	33	5-28	12.5

However, the 2016/17 Summer Walks Program shows a significant reduction in the number of leaders and walks offered compared with the equivalent 2015/16 Summer Program. Over 30 members who led walks in the summer of 2015/16 are yet to nominate walks for the summer of 2016/17.

While there are new leaders, their numbers do not compare with the drop-off from the 2015/16 list of leaders. Possible explanations include:

- An increased reliance on the short notice/walks update program and leaders are yet to submit walks
- A generation of walk leaders are vacating the field but are not being replaced by an equivalent number of new leaders
- Existing leaders need greater support and encouragement.

Excluding Advance Notice Walks outside the period, the profile of the 2015/16 summer walks was:

Description	December	January	February	Total
Original Program				
Day walks	34	20	14	68
Overnight walks	3	3	3	9
Overseas walks	0	0	0	0
Sub-total	37	23	17	77

Short Notice	19	22	20	61
Total	56	45	37	138
Walks cancelled or no report	8	8	2	18
Net	48	37	35	120

Note: This information was manually extracted from the 'Past Programs & Report Sheet'. (E & EO) All walks marked as 'new' in the walks' report are classified as 'short notice'. Those not marked as 'new' are reported as part of the original program.

This compares with the 2016/17 summer walks' program:

Description	December	January	February	Total
Day walks	19	15	15	49
Overnight walks	1	0	0	1
Total	20	15	15	50

The drop off in the number of walks offered is not matched by any recent decline in the number of members attending walks, as shown above for the Winter of 2016.

At the end of 2015 we conducted a survey of members to help assess what would:

- Attract new leaders;
- Encourage existing leaders to continue to lead.

The outcomes of that survey were presented to the 2015 AGM and have been an important input into the Refresher Group led by Graham Conden. A copy of the Group's report was sent to members and its findings have been adopted and are being implemented, as outlined by Cavan.

It is important therefore to repeat the conclusion of the Refresher Group:

'To ensure a sustainable, successful and progressive Club our overarching task is to identify, target and attract the next generation who will continue to drive the Club with energy, ideas and good fellowship well into the future.'

Colin Reid
Walks Secretary
December 2016

Membership Secretary's Report:

**The Bush Club Inc
AGM 1st December 2016
Membership Report**

Membership numbers as at the end of October

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
Prospective Members	95	96	104
New Full Members	80	58	58
Total Full Members	703	704	667

The trend from previous years for prospective members to find the Club through word of mouth continued during the year, with 75% of 2016 new full members citing word of mouth as their first reference. The Club has a growing gender imbalance with 54.3% female full members and 67.6% female prospective members. The youngest new full member this year was born in 1972.

	Female	Male	Median Age
Full Members	54.3%	45.7%	66 years
Prospective Members	67.6%	32.4%	63 years

Acknowledgements

- Thanks to all leaders and members who welcomed and supported prospective members during the year. The full member applications consistently comment on friendly welcomes, helpful advice, variety of walks, excellent organisation:
Number and variety of walks on the program, and very welcoming atmosphere created by leaders and other members.
It's great to be able to join like-minded and very experienced people walking in the bush. The organisation is excellent and it makes it all very easy which really helps someone like me who still works full time.
- During my overseas holidays in 2015 and 2016, telephone and postal communications were expertly handled by Adrienne Kinna, Jan Mathieson and Helen Kershaw.
- Our database manager Ron Mead has continued his meticulous record keeping and constant monitoring of names of members, guests and prospective members. I cannot overstate Ron's commitment to the daily database tasks, his wise counsel when I have queries, and his readiness to respond immediately to requests and issues.
- My thanks also to our webmaster Jacqui Hickson. Jacqui has designed and implemented my requests for changes to forms on the website, always with a smile (I think!). Jacqui and Ron have spent many hours designing and trialing the new database.
- I especially thank Ron and Jacqui for their support after our house burnt down. Ron and Jacqui assisted when I had no house, no computer, no records and very dodgy Wi-Fi.
- All club members, and particularly the new members, thank the membership subcommittee. The membership secretary, Ron Mead and Graham Conden have reviewed all applications for full membership by carefully checking current membership status and the walk reports cited by the applicants. Ron and Graham invariably complete their reviewing tasks within six hours, thus shortening the waiting time for new applicants. Our thanks also to our excellent leaders who understand that many applicants submit their online forms approximately two hours after they arrive home from the third walk. I appreciate that this puts some pressure on walks leaders to submit their walk report very quickly and to carefully document events from the walk.
- I must also thank Alan my patient husband who has coped with my daily involvement with bushclubmembership emails and has also printed all of the full membership congratulatory letters.

Diane McPhail

Membership Secretary

Outgoing President's Report:

PRESIDENTIAL ORATION

Over the last year, your committee considered the report of the group chaired by Graham Conden and prepared it for full implementation next year. There were a number of valuable suggestions which we think will improve the workings of the Club. We are in the process of implementing some of the recommendations. For example, we are putting together a list of mentors to help new leaders. We are also preparing a data base of leaders with the kinds of walks they do. In the past, regular walkers have found out which leaders put on walks that suit them by a process of trial and error but now newcomers will be able to see who is likely to suit them right from the word go. For privacy reasons, leaders' profiles will only be available to Club members and the leaders will decide what to include. You will be kept informed of progress on other recommendations.

We also looked very carefully into the question of providing hard copies of the regular program in this digital age. It is as much a question of workload as of money. Most members have access to the internet and if they want a printed copy can easily print one off. Therefore the Committee decided not to provide hard copies of the program to people with access to the internet. We do have a small number of people who do not have access to the internet and we will continue to provide hard copies for them at no cost.

We have found that the short notice walks are growing while the regular ones are declining. Where most members are on the net, this is inevitable. It is clearly easier for leaders to put on short notice walks instead of committing themselves months in advance. We can expect this trend to continue and the terminology will change.

You may have noticed that we are providing more things for free. Our finances are in good shape and I only wish that the Federal Treasurer did as good a job as the Bush Club one does! I would remind you that first aid courses are available for free to leaders and at half price for others.

I have now walked with the Club for all of this century and led walks for most of that time. Leaders are the backbone of our club and we now have a range of things to help new leaders. When I started you just set off and hoped for the best but we now have mentors, training walks, free first aid courses and an atmosphere of encouragement for new leaders. It really isn't that hard so I would encourage those of you who haven't yet led walks to take advantage of what is offering and take the plunge.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Committee members for putting up with me and to remind you all that our Committee members do a great job and, like our leaders, are all volunteers. There is a position of ordinary member in 2017 for which we have no nominations so that would be a good way of seeing what the Committee does before thinking about taking on something with a fixed workload.

I will turn 80 next month and have back problems which prevent me doing any serious walks. It is therefore time to hand over to someone younger and more energetic so I will not stand for another term as President. Being unable to do the walks I used to enjoy so much has brought home to me what a wonderful activity bushwalking is and what a great Club we have.

So make the most of it.

Enjoy!

Cavan Hogue

Incoming President's Report:

Hello Everyone

I know quite a few of you, but there are obviously quite a few I don't know. For those of you I don't know, I left work just over 3 years ago from a company I had worked with for 35 years. I didn't actually retire and was intending to go back to some sort of work after a short break, but as many of you would have said yourselves "I'm that busy now I don't know how I fitted work in" and so I am now officially retired!

It was quite flattering to be suggested as the new President, although quite a daunting though. Many said to me "it's easy - you don't have to do anything". Ha - if it's that easy why isn't anybody else putting their hand upbut nothing ventured, nothing gained. As some of you know I was part of a sub-committee earlier this year to brain storm about where the Bush

Club sits with members, leaders, prospectives, luring new members, what our age demographic is among other things.

It was exciting to get input from our group of 5 and some of the ideas have already been implemented such as Leader Profiles, and a stand-in leaders list when a leader can't make their walk. Of course there are things like should we have a Facebook page that keeps getting asked, and the answer is yes - but there are logistics to this as to who will run it and control it, how will it work. So it will happen, but just needs a bit more research into it.

This is a great club - everyone is always friendly and happy to help each other - there is no competition to be the best walker, or the fastest walker - everyone just gets on with it, which I love. And it is all of you which make the club without you - the walkers, our Leaders and Committee members - the would not run. So thank you to the Leaders, and many thanks to Cavan who has done a wonderful job throughout his 2 years if Presidency and all the outgoing and incoming committee members.

Enjoy the night, have a wonderful Christmas, and see you on the track somewhere, sometime.

Robyn Christie
