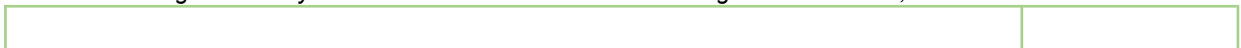




Bushwalking NSW

Annual Report 2024

Image: Dalmeny Narooma Bushwalkers at Warrumbungle National Park, Amanda Marsh



President's Report

It's been a fulfilling year for Bushwalking NSW due to the good work of our Executive Officer and her team, our hard-working Management Committee and the continued impact of being guided by the *Bushwalking NSW 2021-2026 Strategic Plan's mission and values including:*

- ***NSW & ACT to be a premier bushwalking destination;***
- ***Better health for more people through bushwalking;***
- ***Promotion of safe, inclusive and extensive club-based bushwalking.***

We aim to achieve greater recognition of the bushwalking community as a stakeholder in outdoor recreation and conservation. This is more than making development and park management submissions (though still important!).

As Gardens of Stone Alliance member we have been able to articulate bushwalking interests to the State Government. This contributed to the Government toning down some of the extreme elements of the draft Master Plan such as Lost World developments.

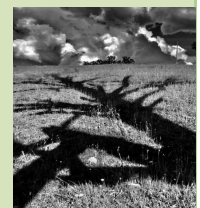
We are still battling the National Parks and Wildlife Service on a commercial lease for construction and operation of private lodges in the Gardens of Stone SCA. If approved, they will set a dreadful precedent for privatisation of our national parks.

However, we can achieve 'wins' and along with our friends in the conservation movement, we were able to convince the Water Minister to delete the Warragamba wall raising proposal from the Major Projects portal. Although we are not so naïve as to think a future government would never propose this project again, we are confident that with alternative measures to manage flood risk, the need for environmentally destructive measures such as flooding World Heritage Areas will not be necessary.

Following adoption of an Invasive Species policy in 2023, we supported feral horse management in Kosciuszko National Park. This long-standing problem is in part due to interest group opposition to sustained horse numbers culling. Progress is being made and we hope the NSW Government can continue to implement the management plan. A petition to NSW Parliament is underway to repeal the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* that protects feral horses



David Bell
President,
Bushwalking
NSW



*Image: Tree
Shadow by
Andrew Vilder*

over native wildlife. We support the intent of the petition and urge you to look out for it.

We also joined a Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) stakeholder group. RIFA have the potential to infest virtually all the country with major impacts on agriculture, ecosystems, health and outdoor recreation (including our ability to enjoy wide-open spaces as walkers).

The RIFA has been described as a pest way worse than the cane toad. Currently, confined to southeastern Qld and northeastern NSW, we have supported efforts to secure funding for eradication of this pest.

As Bushwalking NSW was a sponsor, both myself and John Flint from the Bushwalking NSW Management Committee were pleased to attend the 80th birthday of the establishment of Kosciuszko State Park (now known as Kosciuszko National Park). It was a chance to meet up with people from different groups and interests, all of whom cherish the park and are dedicated to its continuation as an ecological and cultural jewel.

Although we continue to be active in advocacy and submissions, we cannot address all issues, especially local ones. We encourage local groups to address their issues — you, after all, best know your corner of the world and its local politics.

A perennial issue is Crown Roads disposal and sale. To assist clubs we asked that Bushwalking NSW be notified of disposals adjoining the national park estate. Once again, we were rebuffed. The best way to stay informed on this issue is to monitor the Crown Lands [website](#) and object to any proposed disposal that will impede access to public open space.

Our Vice-President, Jon Gray, surveyed people inside and out of the club movement to gauge views on changing the Bushwalking NSW name to something more attractive to a younger demographic. Jon will continue to develop name change options during 2025.

Our Honorary Historian Keith Maxwell continues his impressive contribution to our history. Keith has been [archiving records](#) to ensure they remain safe into the future as well as researching topics and people in our bushwalking heritage.

We benefit from a strong relationship with Bushwalking Australia which delivers national insurance scheme access and extremely cost-competitive club insurance.

So closes another year. I acknowledge the contribution of our Executive Officer, Kirsten Mayer, and her team of Administration Officer, Justine Thomas, and the volunteers that ensure BNSW Inc. hums along.

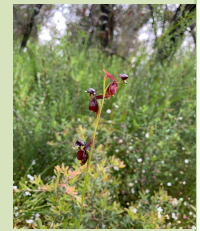


Image:
Shannon
Langford



Image: Real
Mulgum,
Michael Smith

Kirsten Mayer also served as Bushwalking Australia Secretary during 2023-24.

I also acknowledge this year's Management Committee contribution including our office bearers Jon Gray, Peter Jack, Trevor Caldwell and Margaret Covi (OAM) and our general Committee Members John Flint, Lionel Sonntag, Paul McCann and Steve Millard.

Margaret Covi's Order of Australia Medal was recognition of her decades of service to the bushwalking movement at both club and state level. Thoroughly deserved!

Finally, I acknowledge the effort of all volunteers who serve on club committees and related organisations, the activity leaders that are the backbone of the club movement and all those individuals who participate in club activities and love and cherish our bush.

President: **David Bell**

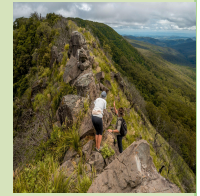


Image: Tess Roser

Wicked Problems:

Attracting young people to clubs

- Videos
- Leadership Training
- Facebook campaign
- Names change ideas

Commercial Development in National Parks

- Campaign win
- Continuous advocacy
- Regular meetings
- <https://protectournationalparks.org/>

Track Maintenance

- We need a subcommittee
- More Tracks
- Friends of the GET

Not informed of Hunting in Forestry Areas

- Letter writing

Image: Andrew Vilder

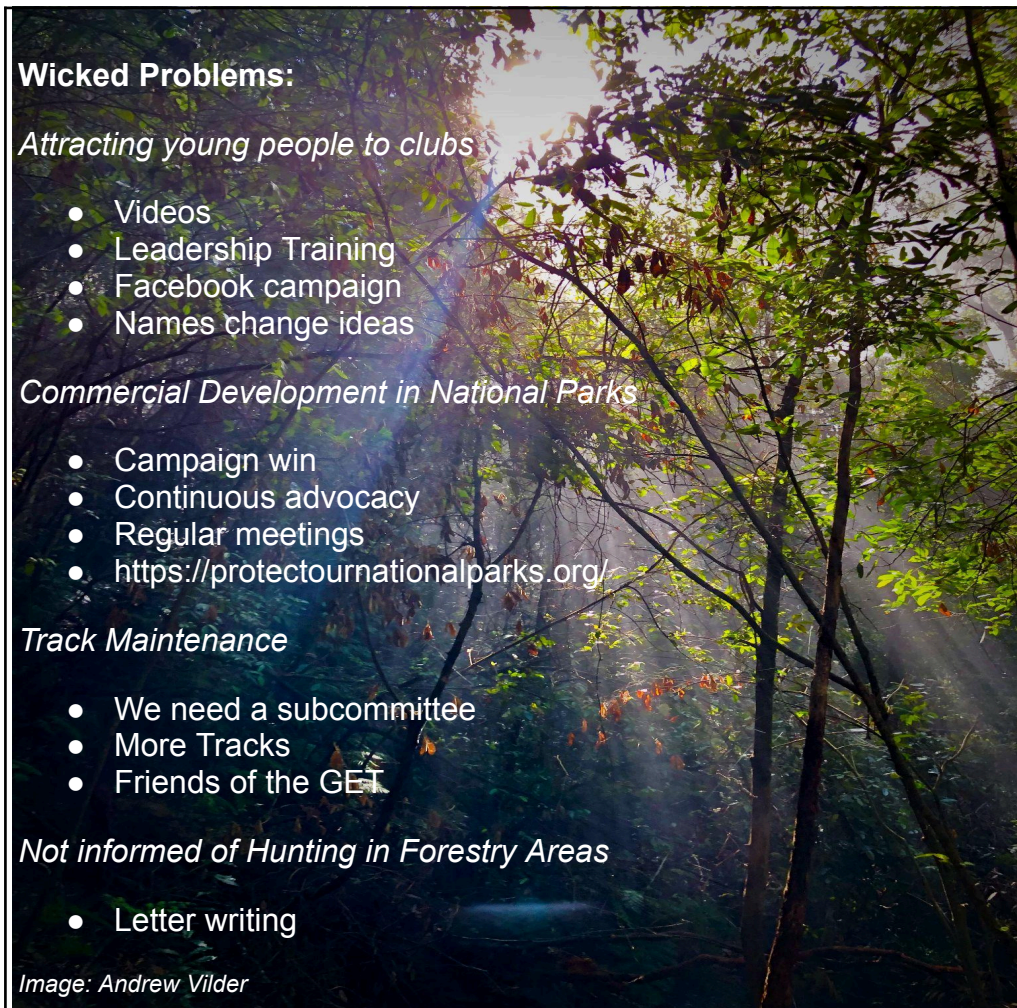


Image: Tess Roser

Friends of the Great Escarpment Trail

When eventually realised, the Great Escarpment Trail (GET) will form a walking route stretching 1500 km, potentially the longest trail in Australia.

The GET is a joint initiative of Bushwalking Queensland Inc. and Bushwalking NSW Inc. that proposes a walking route from the NSW Barrington Tops to Boonah in SE Queensland.

The dual state Friends of the GET Committee has been developing a strategic plan and project marketing strategy to take to land managers and interest groups. More information on the GET and the proposed route can be found [here](#).

Public Officer, Friends of the Great Escarpment Trail:

David Bell



*Image:
Sunset from
Mt Townsend,
Robert Croll*

Wins

- Community Development Fund Grant \$56,555 -
- Enriching the Team Spirit & Nature Connection of Leaders & Participants training - taken up by 51% of clubs and 338 members
- Feral Horse Management - Kosciuszko NP
- Warragamba Dam wall raising shelved
- Stopped Commercial Development in Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area
- 402 kms of new tracks in NSW!

Image: Tess Roser

Executive Officer's Report

It has been a fantastic year for Bushwalking NSW Inc. as we aimed for more people walking in nature and safe and inclusive club-based bushwalking and outdoor activities. Our President, David Bell has ensured our success with his relentless advocacy and commitment to all things bushwalking and conservation.

A significant highlight was development of our online leadership training course: Enriching the Team Spirit & Nature Connection of Leaders & Participants, which has been taken up by 51% of clubs and 338 members.

The project included a social media campaign to promote our clubs and reduce suicidal ideation in NSW. This Leadership Training rollout is the next step in our strategy to renew club cultures and increase volunteering in our clubs.

We launched our Liloing Guidelines so you can stay safe when liloing.

This year we held five small general meetings on key topics including mentoring new presidents and vice-presidents, tax changes for treasurers, and club management automation systems. Attendees appreciated these meetings so we will hold more next year.

Thanks also to our General Meeting presenters Les Higgins: A fresh approach to walks leadership; Tabatha Badger: Rewilding Lake Pedder; the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service: National Park closures; and John Evans from Canberra Bushwalking Club: the Benefits of Leadership Training. Catch up with these events on our [Youtube Channel](#).

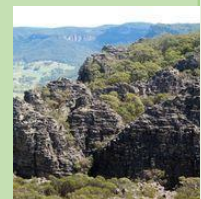
Extensive thanks to all our hardworking club committee members and club activity leaders because none of us can enjoy our club adventures without them. If you haven't done either, now is a good time to start doing your bit!

Finally, we are again extremely indebted to David Bell for all his huge contributions, wise direction, and enlightened vision.

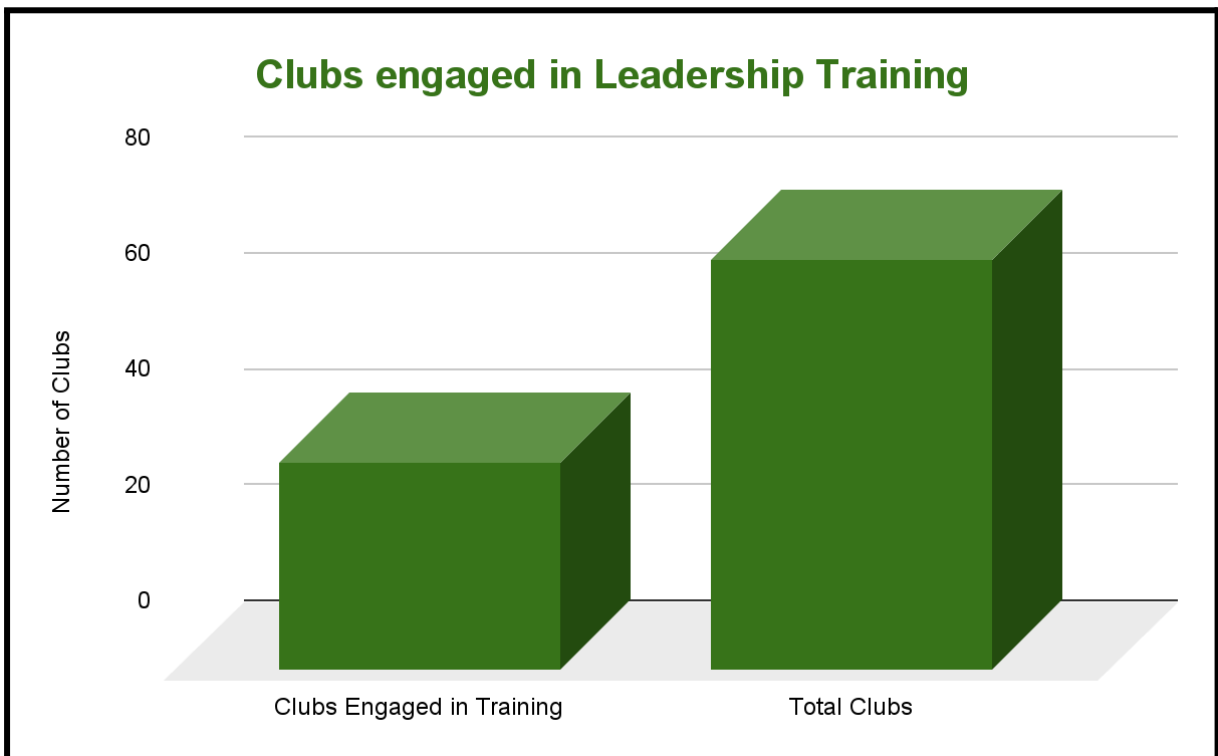
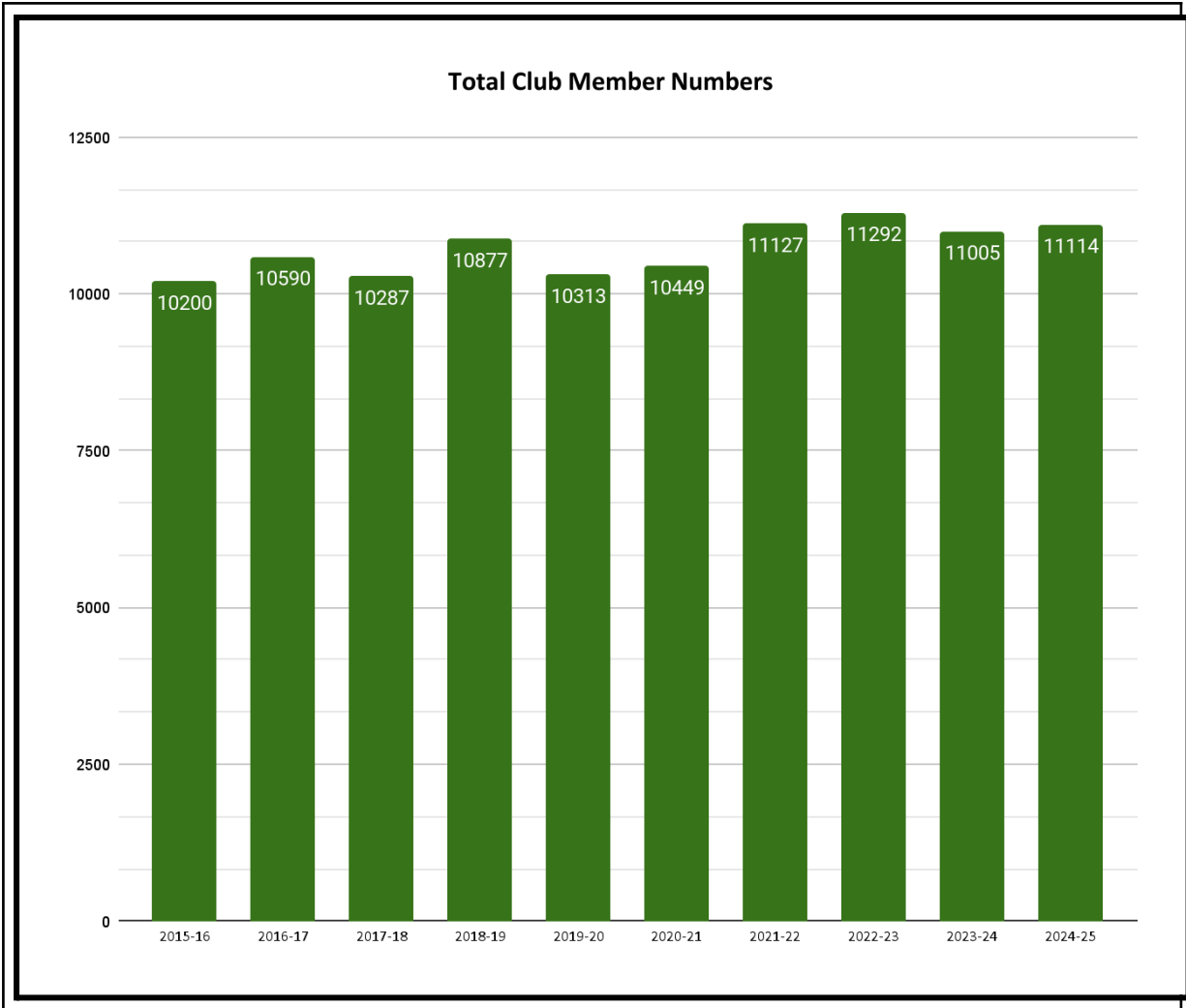
Executive Officer: **Kirsten Mayer**



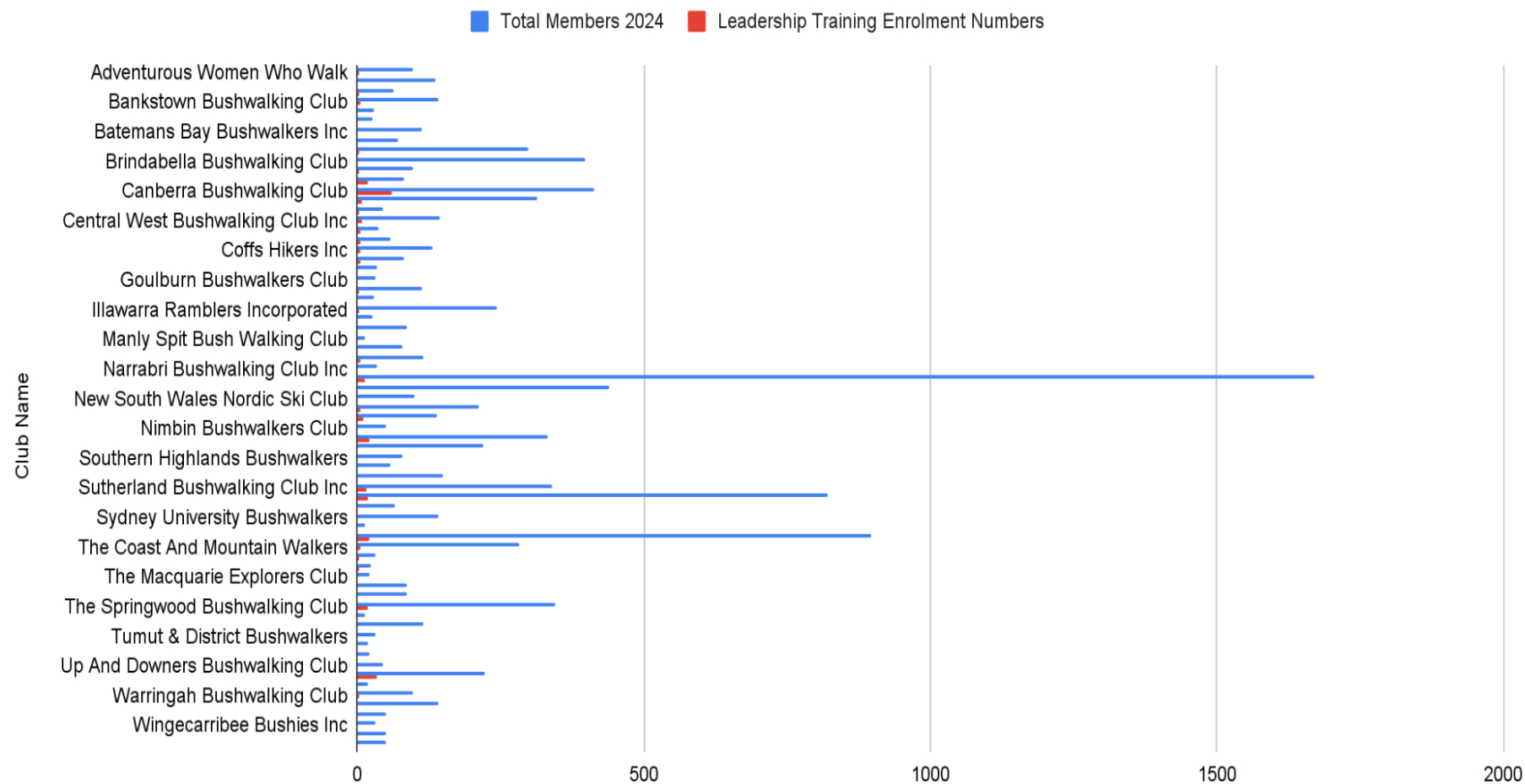
Kirsten Mayer
Executive Officer,
Bushwalking
NSW Inc



**Gardens of
Stone NP -
rock pagodas**



Total Members 2024 and Leadership Training Enrolment Numbers



Young People in Clubs Report

The BNSW Young People in Clubs (YPIC) Working Group was formed to examine the issue of progressively aging membership with relatively few young people joining NSW and ACT bushwalking clubs. This is a threat to the long-term viability of our clubs over the coming decades, and a shame for young people missing out.

The problem is difficult to address because the current older age demographic creates an inherent disincentive for new younger members to join our clubs. Newly formed social media groups, such as Meet-up groups, further tend to draw young people away from our more formal Clubs.

Building on previous BNSW surveys and commentary by others, the YPIC Working Group has compiled a number of strategies that might help to reverse the current trend. These strategies need to work together to achieve the success we need.

(i) Rebranding and updating our image: this is suggested to create a greater sense of dynamism and adventure for Clubs that will be more appealing to younger generations than our current somewhat staid and less-than-exciting image. We similarly should endeavour to promote the fact that we often do much more than just bushwalking, eg outdoor adventure activities such as cycling, canyoning and kayaking.

We recommend a slight renaming of our Clubs, and BNSW itself, to include the words 'outdoor adventure' or even just 'adventure', e.g., a name such as the 'Highlands Bushwalking Adventure Club'. The imagery we use on our websites should also show more dynamism and adventure, and preferably feature more youth. We are not advocating for extreme outdoor pursuits like rock climbing or bungee jumping; - even a standard bushwalk is an 'adventure'. By promoting this adventure mindset, young people may be encouraged to come along, and not care about the age of their fellow adventurers.

(ii) Enhanced social media presence: promotion through Facebook or Instagram appears to be an effective way to attract interest and membership in our clubs, particularly from younger tech savvy people.

(iii) Promote benefits of bushwalking clubs: we need to sell our many benefits, including safety elements, accident and personal indemnity insurance for leaders; relatively very low costs; ongoing meaningful social connections and involvement in environmental protection.



Jon Gray
Chair, YPIC
Working
Group,
Bushwalking
NSW Inc



Image:
Andrew Vilder

Young People in Clubs Report

(iv) Welcoming club policies: ensure attitudes and programs are welcoming and suitable for young people, e.g., ensure sufficient weekend activities, offer mentoring services and facilitate social functions that might appeal to young and single members.

(v) Facilitate subgroups that cater for younger age members: Subgroups such as the 'Tiggers' in the Sydney Bush Walkers for 20 and 30 year olds have shown success in attracting a growing core of younger members who then integrate into the broader club.

Further detail on these strategies, together with copies of previous relevant surveys and recommended strategies are included within the [full 2024 YPIC Report](#). Implementing these combined measures should contribute to the ongoing viability of our valuable bushwalking/outdoor adventure clubs.

Chair, YPIC Working Group: **Jon Gray**



*Image:
Caught out
Canyoning
Claustral*

What's on the horizon?

- More Leadership Training for more clubs
- Tracks & Access Lobbying
- First Nations Joint-Management of National Parks
- More fights against commercial development in NPs
- <https://protectournationalparks.org/>

Image: Andrew Vilder

Honorary Historian's Report

I trust that you are not reading this report out of a sense of duty but of general interest! Bushwalkers, clubs and BNSW have a history worth remembering. I am passionate about sharing Search & Rescue and BNSW history archives. I have tried to make the BNSW archives accessible, well organised and interesting.

The BNSW website holds considerable history and access has been greatly improved. Splendour Rock content has been re-organised to answer questions about this remarkable landmark in the Wild Dog Mountains of the Megalong Valley of the Blue Mountains. Information has been added on fallen bushwalkers remembered at Splendour Rock, other plaques in the adjacent area and the ANZAC Day Dawn Service.

The "SES BSAR History Timeline" has footnotes to past incidents that show the changes of BWRS to NSW SES BSAR. Among incidents is the death of Dot Butler's (the barefoot bushwalker) daughter, Wendy in the Kowmung River and Rolf Walker on Korrowall Buttress off Mt Solitary. Both bushwalkers were remembered by song books.

Many other bushwalkers have written excellent books on topics including Bruce Cameron, Jim Barrat, Andy Macqueen, Warwick Blayden, Michael Keats and Brian Fox. I was very pleased when my nomination for Margaret Covi OAM was successful. My work has revealed many other bushwalker OAM names.

A visit to [this](#) web address will reveal:

- Bushwalkers Search and Rescue and Safety
- Bushwalking NSW Clubs including history and past lists
- Bushwalking NSW 70th Anniversary
- Conservation eg Myles Dunphy Greater Blue Mountains NP proposal
- Splendour Rock
- Bushwalkers describing significant past bushwalkers
- Campfire songs, past Bushwalkers Balls and Annual Reunions
- Publicity Pamphlets and Historic Sketch Maps
- The YHA 50 Peaks Project from 1993
- A short history of St George Bushwalking Club

I hope that I have infected you with the BNSW History bug! I am grateful for the help of Website Content Editor Leonie Bell who has assisted me re-organise history content. Thank you also to the State Library of NSW for their assistance archiving and safeguarding past BNSW records.

Honorary Historian: **Keith Maxwell**



Keith Maxwell
Honorary Historian,
Bushwalking NSW



*Image:
Bushwalking
in the rain,
Kosciuszko
NP*

Thanks to our Volunteers

Bushwalking NSW would like to thank all its volunteers in every role from committee members to appointed positions, we could not operate without them.

Management Committee Members

Role	Person
President	David Bell
Vice-President	Jon Gray
Secretary	Trevor Caldwell
Treasurer	Peter Jack
Ordinary committee member	Margaret Covi
Ordinary committee member	John Flint
Ordinary committee member	Lionel Sonntag
Ordinary committee member	Stephen Millard

Appointed Positions

Position	Person
Public Officer	Margaret Covi
Conservation Officer	David Bell
Tracks and Access Officer	John Flint
Risk Management Officer	Margaret Covi
YPIC Working Group Officer	Jon Gray
Media Officer	Vacant
Honorary Historian	Keith Maxwell
Training Officer	Vacant
Newsletter Sub-Editor	Justine Thomas

Website Content Editor	Leonie Bell
Webmaster	Vacant
Admin Officer	Justine Thomas
Bushwalking Australia Delegate (ex-officio)	Jon Gray and Executive Officer Kirsten Mayer
NSW Conservation Council Delegate (ex-officio)	Conservation Officer David Bell
Community Liaison Officer	Stephen Millard
Social Media manager	David Morrison

Treasurer's Report

Bushwalking NSW Inc. Statement of Income and Expense

For the year ended 30 June 2024

		2024	2023
Group Insurance	Note		
Premium Income			
	Insurance - Personal Accident	33,165.26	27,317.59
	Insurance - Public Liability - Clubs	49,381.20	35,627.02
	Total Premium Income	82,546.46	62,944.61
Premium Expense			
	Insurance - Personal Injury	26,627.18	28,820.42
	Insurance - Public Liability	41,626.67	35,421.37
	Insurance - Broker Fee	14,219.30	-
	Total Premium Expense	82,473.15	64,241.79
Surplus/Deficit from Group Insurance	1	73.31	- 1,297.18

Government Grant Programs

Community Development Fund 2022			
Income			
	Government Grant	56,226.40	328.60
Expense			
	Marketing	49,338.68	328.60
	Surplus/Deficit: Community Development Fund 2022	6,887.72	-
Outdoor Active Recreation Marketing			
Income			
	Government Grant	-	15,300.00
Expense			
	Marketing	-	6,199.99
	Surplus/Deficit: Outdoor Active Recreation Marketing	-	9,100.01

Surplus/Deficit: Government Grant Programs		6,887.72	9,100.01
Event Organisation			
	Income	-	1,960.00
	Expense	-	- 3,056.09
Surplus/Deficit: Event Organisation		-	- 1,096.09

Notes

1 Group Insurance

Bushwalking NSW endeavours to operate the group insurance program on a breakeven basis. We seek to avoid any surplus or deficit from this activity. Comparatively small surplus or deficits arise when clubs join or leave the scheme in the time between the census date and the insurance commencement date.

Bushwalking NSW Inc. Statement of Income and Expense (cont.)

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Operating Income	2024	2023
Advertising Income	159.09	350.00
Annual Affiliate Dues	67,458.64	73,960.10
Bank Interest Received	3,428.10	1,578.79
Donations Received	-	350.79
Total Operating Income	71,045.83	76,239.68

Operating Expenses		
Accounting & Bookkeeping	513.30	518.00
Advertising	-	150.00
Bad Debts	0.98	-
Bank & Gov Charges	39.00	18.00
Bushwalking Australia Annual Affiliation Fee	2 20,582.00	10,020.00
Chardon Award Prizes	172.73	190.00
Donations	2,000.00	5,500.00
Meetings & Conferences	3,546.52	977.42
Nature Conservation Council Ann Subscription	90.00	90.00
NSW Dept of Fair Trading Ann Levy	-	-
OutDoors NSW & ACT Annual Membership Subscription	454.55	500.01
Postage & Shipping	42.66	236.20
Rent - PO Box	140.00	148.00
Staff Amenities	-	-
Stationary / Office Supplies	318.18	-
Superannuation Expense	5,917.42	4,666.77
Telephone/ Internet	645.51	303.41
Travel Allowance	185.45	-

Wages & Salaries	43,892.16	45,087.19
Website	243.86	196.65
Workers' Compensation	451.99	294.12
Funding Centre Grant Search Annual Subscription	181.82	-
Risk Management	880.00	186.00
Total Operating Expenses	80,298.13	69,081.77
Surplus/Deficit from Operations	- 9,252.30	7,157.91
Total Surplus/Deficit	- 2,291.27	13,864.65

Notes

Bushwalking Australia Annual Affiliation Fee

2

In the financial year ended June 30 2022, Bushwalking Australia Inc did not invoice Bushwalking NSW for the annual affiliation fee. This was rectified in the current year and is the reason for the substantial increase in this expense this year. This is a non-recurring anomaly.

Bushwalking NSW incurred a substantial operating deficit in this financial year - a most unsatisfactory result. This unacceptable position arose from the non recurring expense increase of the affiliation fee for Bushwalking Australia.

Bushwalking NSW Inc Statement of Assets and Liabilities

For the year ended 30 June 2024

30 June 2024 30 June 2023

Assets		
Current Assets		
Macquarie Bank Ltd Cash Management Account	-	156,039.52
Macquarie Bank Ltd Accelerator Account	119,467.62	-
NAB Operating Account	13,936.45	31,497.72
Sundry Debtors	175.00	-
Total Current Assets	133,579.07	187,537.24
Non Current Assets		
Computer Equipment	2,643.30	2,537.85
Total Non Current Assets	2,643.30	2,537.85
Total Assets	136,222.37	190,075.09
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Government Grant: Community Development Fund 2022	-	50,571.40
GST	355.52	-
PAYG Withholding Tax Payable	1,438.00	1,563.00
Sundry Creditors	-	225.94
Superannuation	1,431.35	1,249.67
Trade Creditors	72.52	1,248.05
Wages Payable	-	0.78
Total Current Liabilities	3,297.39	54,858.84
Total Liabilities	3,297.39	54,858.84
Net Assets	132,924.98	135,216.25

Retained Earnings

Surplus/Deficit: Current Year	- 2,291.27	13,864.65
Surplus/Deficit: Prior Years	135,216.25	121,351.60
Total Retained Earnings	132,924.98	135,216.25

