


# Bushwalking NSW

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## 20 FEBRUARY 2024 BNSW GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

**Time & Date** 7:30-9:00pm on Tuesday, 20 February 2024

**Location:** Zoom

### Attendees

Adrian Hoffman	Leonie Bell
Amelia Walsh	Linda Mallett
Ana Vrancic	Louise Stuart
Andrew Lumsden	Lucy Moore
Andrew Mitchell	lynne vaughan
Andrew Stanger	Marc Hendrickx
Andy Flans	Margaret Covi
Andy Macqueen	margaret simpson
Anna Janczewska	Michael Kozok
Anne Dickson	Nadiah Roslan
Anthony Hutchings	Narelle Watson
Caro Ryan	Nicky Hanson
Caroline Bowman	Olivia Zurek
Chris Mein	Paul Jennings
Claire Allen	Paulus Wijngaarden
Colin Albo	Peter Raines
Dani Gentle	Phil Murray
David Bell	Rachel Yeomans
David Morrison	Rob Simon
David Springthorpe	Robert Croll
Di Browne	robert lewin
Dianne Thompson	Robin Stuart
Emma Williams	Roger Lembit
Erica Griffiths	Rosemary Nichols
Gordon LIU	Sam Hassan
Graham Richter	Samantha Newton
Harry Creamer	Scott Drysdale
Heather Ferguson	Shaune Walsh
Helen Yoxall	Stephen Jones
Howard Dengate	Steve Millard
Igor H	Susan So
Jeanette Robertson	Susanne Larson
Jenny Taylor	Terence Herbert
Joan Bourne	Terry Sze
Jonathan Gray	Tess Carrad
Julian Ledger	Thais Turner
Julie Campbell	thomas Cordingley
Justine Bourke	Tomás Dowling
Karen Huchendorf	Trevor Caldwell
keith maxwell	Ute Foster
Kirsten Mayer	Vanessa Wills

Quorum: 5 delegates present in person or by proxy, representing at least 3 approved organisations constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a general meeting.

Will Batson

## Chair & Quorum

The meeting commenced at 7pm with David Bell as chair. The chair announced that a quorum was present and that the meeting was duly constituted.

## Previous Minutes

Minutes of the Tuesday 21st November 2023 General Meeting were accepted.

## Agenda item/topic

# National Park Closures

*Presentation by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) speakers:*

- Claire Allen, Director of Policy & Engagement
- Susanne Larson, Manager Community Engagement
- Dr Will Batson, Area Manager, Upper Blue Mountains
- Anthony Hutchings, Digital Program Manager

*Key Points include:*

- 53 million national park (NP) visitors each year with changing demographics, eg not always well prepared, varying fitness levels, influenced by social media - risky behaviour eg ignoring signs for selfies
- Bushwalking is the most popular activity in NPs. 8 multi day walks are being established to cater for visitors
- NPWS duty of care for visitor safety requires they reduce foreseeable (reasonable person) risks mainly resulting from more visitors and extreme weather impacts on parks
- [Park closure](#) reasons include fire, pest/feral control activities, climate change impacts especially fire, flood, extreme heat, coastal erosion and sea level rise
- In the past 4-5 years, very high rainfall has caused landslides in the Blue Mountains NP eg Mount Solitary landslide, Federal Pass rock fall, Wentworth Fall landslide, Narrow Neck Trail Culvert Failure
- Multiple jurisdictions are involved with fire events - visitors should check with [RFS](#), [hazards near me](#) and [NPWS](#)
- Landslide Risk is managed using the Trigger action response plan (TARP) - where actions are based on past landslide events and rainfall levels. Track closure decisions are based on forecast rain using the BOM forecast 50% chance of rain level. Many landslide events happen after rain. The beauty of the Grand Clifftop Walk is that it helps keep visitors safe above the escarpment.
- [NPWS](#) is the most popular NSW Govt website with 34 million page views per year. 3000 alerts per year, trip intentions forms (3000 in 2023), free PLB hire in some parks
- NPWS Feedback request:
  - Do you use the [trip intention form](#)?
  - Would you recommend it? [Let us know](#)
- Visitors are recommended to use the [NPWS mobile app](#) for offline access to maps

## Bushwalking NSW Inc.

### Questions

*Q. Why in some Sydney parks does a rating of extreme danger often result in whole park closure?*

This year has been unique due to a new fire danger system. In the Blue Mountains NPWS is learning how the system works in practice. A case by case approach is used for decisions on park closure.

*Q. Trip Intention Forms are difficult to use for multi day/park trips - it is often best to submit an individual form for every park used.*

The form is a prompt to tell people of your trip plans with the form focus being self-sufficiency. However, form improvements will continue - eg the multi-park issue.

*Q. Campground bookings don't work outside NPs.*

Unfortunately, different land management agencies don't work together as well as they should.

*Q. When can BNSW comment on joint management of NPs eg Wollumbin NP, Mount Warning Summit Track.*

This is a long-term process. Significant consultation about ongoing park management has occurred with indigenous groups. Next phase of consultation is with other interest groups. Refer to [NPWS website](#) for more information on the consultation process.

*Q. Why have Blue Mountains fire bans not been lifted?*

A consistent approach to fire bans across parks has been taken. Fire bans will be reviewed now that fire danger period has passed.

David Bell thanked NPWS for the very informative presentation and invited NPWS to be a regular visitor to BNSW general meetings. NPWS asked for a copy of questions posted.

### Poll Results

NPWS are absolutely awesome and we need more national parks!

### Bushwalking NSW Update

Congratulations to Margaret Covi who received an Australia Day Award for services to bushwalking. Thank you to Keith Maxwell and Leonie Bell for their work in setting up awards information page on BNSW website.

**Free Leadership Training** has been established to help club members connect with nature and to create more leaders for clubs.

### Update from BNSW President and Conservation Officer David Bell:

Keith Maxwell advised [The Bush Club](#) celebrated 85 years of operation by going to 85 trips which are recorded for others to view.

Rob Simon advised the Coast Mountain Walkers 90-year anniversary year was celebrated this year. The Club's inaugural walk to burning palms in Royal NP was recreated and members stayed overnight in the surf club. A club celebratory dinner was also held.

Sydney Bush Walkers also dug out details of old original walks and then recreated them.

Q. In the past walkers did solo walks trips over the Blue Mountains and took personal responsibility for their safety. Is there over-regulation of NPs and visitors today?  
DB view was probably not, given increased visitor numbers and lack of visitor bushwalking experience. Additionally, in a more litigious society NPWS must protect itself. The positive side of more NP visitors is higher awareness of the importance of conserving the natural environment.

## **Next Meeting**

The next Bushwalking NSW General Meeting on **Leadership Training** will be held at:  
**7:30-9:00pm on Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 by Zoom conference**

Meeting ended at: 8.15pm