

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria

Behind the Log

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Bush Search And Rescue Victoria, P O Box 1007, Templestowe Vic 3106

www.bsar.org

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BSAR appreciates the annual funding from the Department for Victorian Communities to Bushwalking Victoria, a component of which is put towards BSAR administration and training activities.

Editor of Behind the Log – Ren Millsom
Next issue May 2009 - deadline 30 April

Our New Name and Website

We are now Bush Search and Rescue Victoria. After a lengthy consultation process, your Committee agreed to this new name in July. Thank you to all members who provided feedback, to the Working Group and those who attended the special meeting in July for their participation and contributions.

The protocols for using our new name are in brief:-

- In written form in all formal documents and correspondence, the full name Bush Search and Rescue Victoria to be used at first mention and Bush Search and Rescue subsequently;
- In verbal communications (radio and TV, meetings, etc), Bush Search and Rescue Victoria to introduce the organisation and Bush Search and Rescue thereafter;
- In general discussions (particularly external), Bush Search and Rescue should be used in preference to BSAR;
- The acronym will be BSAR and should be limited to use in internal documents, internal emails, radio call signs and the like (note the reduced use of the acronym);
- Other acronyms are not to be used.

Thanks mainly to the efforts of Peter Campbell, we also have a revamped website, still at the same address. Members are encouraged to visit.



Participants on the Steep Snow and Ice Practice. More great photos on the website www.bsar.org

West Kiewa River Rescue

15 September

Seven Bush Search and Rescue members from BNSC, WOA and AlpineSAR participated in the evacuation of an injured kayaker on a rugged and isolated section of the West Kiewa River on Monday, 15th September 2008. Members of NE SES groups and Police Search and Rescue Squad were also involved.

The group left Mount Beauty at 05:45 to begin the descent from the Dungeys Track to the river in daylight. The kayaker was successfully evacuated by helicopter at 09:15. Our group then returned to Mount Beauty at 11:15.

Jim Gargan, Field Organiser

Steep Snow and Ice Practice, Mount Buller West Ridge

Bush Search and Rescue's annual Steep Snow and Ice Practice was held on Mount Buller's West Ridge on the 19 & 20 July 2008.

On Saturday the fifteen participants travelled in a Police bus to the base of the Mount Buller's West Ridge. We ascended following the route to the West Ridge in overcast conditions to a high campsite in the snow on ridge, then spent the afternoon reviewing and practicing skills including safe travel in steep snow and/or ice terrain. We traversed under the frozen waterfalls on Mt Buller's North East face.

During the night, very strong winds buffeted our campsite, resulting in a couple of broken tent poles. On Sunday, the wind was gusting above 60 knots on the crest of the West Ridge so we traversed across below Mt Buller's summit to the ski resort where we were shuttled by ski mobile back to the resort.

*Peter Campbell and Mark Oates
Practice Organisers*

New Logo

The need to change our logo prompted the discussion on a new name. Now that we are Bush Search and Rescue Victoria we can move ahead with developing the new logo (the one currently on the website is *very* temporary)

A professional designer is helping us and we should have a couple of options for the Committee to look at in November.

Monica Chapman, Convener

Notes from the Convener

CAEX BUSHWALKERS DONATION

Thank you to the CAEX Club for its donation of \$260 that is being put towards the cost of the Bothy emergency shelters.

NEW MEMBERS

New Zealand Alpine Club Joins

The Australian Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club has recently joined Bushwalking Victoria in order to participate in Bush Search and Rescue. We warmly welcome the group and look forward to their contributions.

Individual Members

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria now has three individual members. We hope that with the recruitment campaign funded by the EMA grant, this number will steadily increase.

MINUTE SECRETARY STEPS DOWN

Cheryl Walker has resigned from the position of Minute Secretary. Cheryl was appointed in May 2007 as Membership Secretary, a role she is continuing to do and in September offered to also do the minutes. However, Cheryl has returned to full-time employment and with her other volunteer activities found there were not enough hours in the day to fit the minutes in!

So, we are again searching for someone able to take meeting minutes. If you or someone you know might be willing to come along to six meetings per year please contact me.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES – THE 50s

I have been writing and editing articles on Bushwalking Victoria's history and the one that mentioned the famous Snow Girl search in 1953 resulted in the following letter to the Editor. It comes from John Scholes, a past BSAR member who was part of the 1953 search team and more recently an Insurance Convener for Bushwalking Victoria.

John writes: Readers might like to know that the 'Snow Girl', Jennifer Laycock (Elford), is still alive and well, and living in Wodonga. She has asked me to express her continued appreciation of the efforts of the Search and Rescue section, led by Bill Bewsher as Field Organiser, in rescuing her and fellow walker Kirk McLeod on Donna Buang. Kirk is also well and lives in the Riverina District.

Following her exposure to the adverse weather conditions she lost both her legs below the knee due to frostbite. However, with the use of prostheses and lengthy rehabilitation, she has been able to live a normal life. Currently she is Coordinator of the Albury-Wodonga Amputee Support Group.

Monica Chapman, Convener

A Great Grant Success!

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria recently received slightly over \$31,000 under the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund. This Federal grant scheme, under Emergency Management Australia, provided funding for recruitment, retention and training of volunteers involved in emergency service roles.

The general aim of our project is to enhance skills and safety of volunteers through practical search and rescue training in remote bush and alpine environments and increase volunteer searcher numbers. More specifically we aim to use the project funding to:

- increase membership by encouraging participation of prospective members through more stimulating and interesting training activities;
- improve retention and increase the skills of existing members by offering more diverse training;
- improve, through practical skills training, members' and potential members' ability to use the latest GPS technology, incorporating mapping data, as an aid to navigation and location reporting in difficult bush conditions and snow, including at night;
- provide instruction in the use of avalanche beacons to improve the safety of members during training in hazardous, alpine terrain;
- provide training in the use of rapidly set up emergency shelters to improve the safety of search groups and the missing person(s);
- conduct a promotional/recruitment campaign that clearly identifies BSAR at training and other public events with publicity items including

safety vests and polo shirts for practice coordinators, display banners and caps/hats for members to attract attention of potential new members and the media thus visibly raising BSAR's public profile;

- increase membership through a promotional brochure distributed through outdoor equipment shops, bushwalking clubs and other appropriate avenues;
- increase membership through promotion of BSAR's contributions and role through articles and advertising in Victorian issues of specialist outdoor magazines;
- promote accredited first aid courses and provide a subsidy for successful completion to encourage members to gain new skills or update existing qualifications;
- provide training and update the knowledge of BSAR's Police Liaison Officers and Field Organisers in the efficient use of the SMS/Email alert system; and
- provide multiple training opportunities in metropolitan and country areas so as to enable all members to access training.

The September training rogaine was part of the project and you will be advised of further training opportunities between now and the end of June next year as part of this project. We look forward to your participation and hope that this significant injection of funds will provide existing members with new skills and encourage new members to join our group.

Monica Chapman, Convener

Bush Search and Rescue Training Weekend, Brisbane Ranges 6-7 September

Fifty Bush Search and Rescue members and prospective members participated in the recent training weekend, an excellent response given the clash with a very good snow season and Father's Day. As is now "traditional" for our off-snow training, on Saturday we joined the VRA's 12-hour rogaine. Rogaining is the ideal training for our members as it is such a close match to what is expected during a search; accurate off track navigation in a small group. Being a 12-hour rogaine several hours of night navigation were involved, a particularly necessary skill given the advent of Rapid Response Callout by Police, where we may be searching at night. All our teams achieved very good results.

On Sunday, the focus was training in the technical "tools of trade"; the new generation GPS units, Police and UHF CB radios. Also covered was line searching, particularly the coordination aspect. New and prospective members were welcomed in a special session, and we tried out getting into the new Bothy shelters.

The program aimed to give members plenty of "hands-on" time with the GPS and radios, while providing those members already experienced with this gear the opportunity to pass on their skills to less knowledgeable members.

Bush Search and Rescue thank the Victorian Rogaining Association and the Police Search and Rescue Squad for their invaluable support.

Duncan Brookes, Merv Trease, Rod Costigan

BSAR searches Mt Dom Dom again: “Cold Case” callout 4-5 October 2008.

Bush Search and Rescue had a significant involvement in the large-scale search for Warren Meyer, just after Easter at Dom Dom Saddle. Mr Meyer disappeared while on a solo half-day walk from Dom Dom saddle on Easter Sunday. Subsequently, BSAR assisted Police in a further “cold case” search for Mr Meyer’s body in April, again without success.

Most recently, on the weekend of 4th and 5th of October 12 BSAR members, together with Police from the Search and Rescue Squad, Mounted Branch and Marysville, along with over 30 SES members and 20 family members carried out further searching for some trace of Mr Meyer.

Bush Search and Rescue members line searched the upper sections of Mt Dom Dom over the course of the weekend. Again, the search was

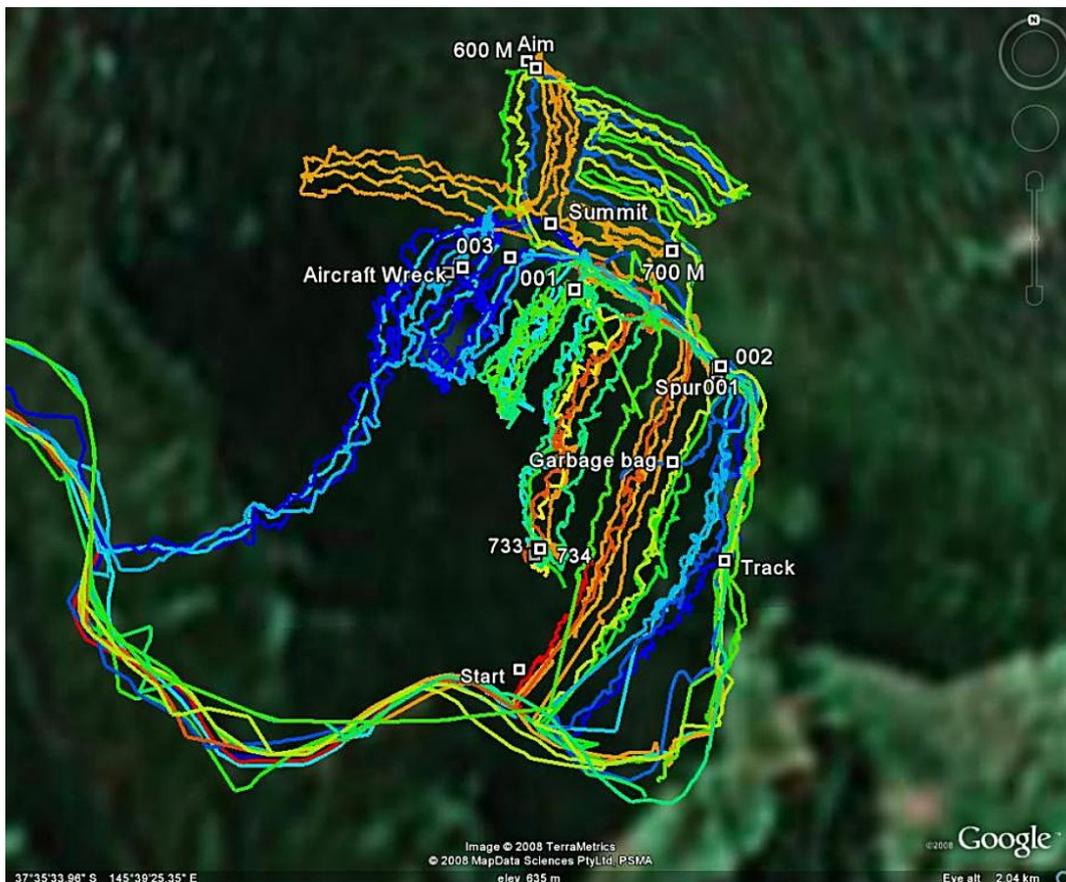
unsuccessful. This was the final Police effort to locate Mr Meyer. Subsequently the family has announced a \$100,000 reward for the finder of his remains.

This recent callout was the first time our new model GPS units have been used intensively. They proved their worth in the fine navigation required when line searching in difficult terrain. The generous donation from the Meyer family following the Easter search funded the purchase of these GPS units.

With hindsight, we discussed with Police the option of providing a bus for each day, rather than for the whole weekend, were a similar “cold case” callout to occur again. This would enable members who were available for one day to participate. The Police response is positive to this enhancement of our “cold case callout” arrangements.

Duncan Brookes, Field Organiser

BSAR GPS TRACK LOGS IN GOOGLE EARTH: MOUNT DOM DOM



The new GPS units proved their worth.

“COLD CASE” SEARCHERS FROM BSAR AT MT DOM DOM, 4-5 OCTOBER



Thank You to Searchers

A note of thanks to your members for the tremendous efforts they put into the search for Warren Meyer. We are very sad to lose him and are feeling it especially at this time, as he was scheduled to be visiting us here in Canada.

Glen and Helene Gowryluk, 1st August 2008 [*Enclosed with this note was a donation of \$100*]

ICE – In Case of Emergency – An Important Contact Initiative

Rural Ambulance Victoria Paramedics are supporting the ICE program being introduced by Victoria’s emergency services to make it quicker and easier to get in contact with someone who can help with vital information.

Area Manager Alan Kennedy said the program encourages people to store emergency contact details in their mobile phone under the word ICE – ‘In Case of Emergency’.

“It’s very simple to set up an ICE contact; just type the acronym ICE followed by a contact name (for example ICE – David) into the address book of your mobile phone, then save their phone number and tell your ICE contact you have nominated them as your emergency contact.”

“Your ICE partner should have a list of people to contact on your behalf eg. friends, family, your place of work and should know your blood type and any medical conditions that could affect your emergency treatment – for example allergies or current medication,” said Mr Kennedy.

Mr Kennedy said it was possible to have more than one ICE contact, by saving the entries as ICE 1, ICE 2 etc.

“It is important to understand that ICE is not a substitute for the common sense steps you should take to notify friends or relatives when you are going out or going on a trip.”

According to Mr Kennedy, in Victoria the police will normally be the organisation to make contact with the family of accident or emergency victims, and will usually do this in person. It is possible that the emergency services will also make contact with family members in specific circumstances.

“Victoria’s police and emergency services have well practiced processes in place to contact family members. However ICE is a welcome additional tool to complement existing procedures and it is another information source that is available to the Police and Paramedics in circumstances where existing family contact processes are unable to be used.”

From a media release, Rural Ambulance Victoria.

First Aid Training Subsidy

All requests for reimbursement should be made on the **NEW First Aid Subsidy form** available on the BSAR website and sent, with receipt and proof of completion, to the Convener at:

PO Box 1007, Templestowe, 3106.

All courses must be undertaken with a registered training provider.

Advanced Remote Area first aid courses with a minimum of 24 hours – attract a subsidy of \$160.

Courses with a minimum of 14 hours – attract a subsidy of \$80.

BSAR members are also eligible for the Bushwalking Victoria subsidy of \$40

If undeliverable, please return to:
Bush Search and Rescue Victoria
Bushwalking Victoria
P O Box 1007
Templestowe Vic 3106

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