

BSAR Annual Report 2013-2014

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria

Peter Campbell, Convener



Bush Search and Rescue Victoria was called out twice during the period 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2014 and participated in the following searches:

Razorback. Two skiers were stranded in bad weather. A rescue team comprised of Police Search and Rescue and 7 BSAR searchers skied in and accompanied the two skiers back to Diamantina Hut.

Howitt Plains. 17 BSAR searchers participated in a search for a missing woman in the Howitt Plains region. The missing woman was located by police helicopter and winched to safety.

In summary, 24 search and 166 training person-days were recorded. Seventeen new members joined and 8 members resigned. 240 searchers are available for call-out.

Rik Head and Frank Zgoznic led the **Winter Training weekend at Lake Mountain** on 20-21 July 2013 with 45 members and prospective members attending. Heavy snow falls during the weekend provided us with realistic winter search conditions. Victoria Police and the Lake Mountain Resort Management and Ski Patrol provided excellent support for the planning and execution of our training.



Eric Krista and Peter Campbell led the **Steep Snow and Ice training at Mount Buller** on 1 September 2013. 14 members carried rescue equipment along the West Ridge then conducted stretcher hauling exercises on its steep slopes. Victoria Police and the Mount Buller Resort Management and Ski Patrol again provided us with excellent support.



Eric Krista organised an Applied First Aid Training course on 29-30 March 2013. Andy Elam provided 15 attendees with the skills and knowledge required to provide first aid response, life support, and the management of casualty(s), the incident and other first aiders until the arrival of medical or other assistance.

Cameron Plant and Rod Costigan completed the successful implementation of our new integrated call-out system that includes phone, SMS and email. The system is a significant improvement over our previous call-out systems. Craig Lapsley, Victoria's Fire Service Commissioner, and the State Control Centre were instrumental in providing us with this excellent facility.

Duncan Brookes managed the purchase and distribution of more safety high-visibility clothing including:

- 60 more safety shirts to cover the balance of active members, generously funded by Bushwalking Victoria.
- Soft shell safety jackets to all active members. These jackets have already proven to be very effective in both in alpine and scrub environments.

This has completed our project of providing safety clothing to members. We have spent \$24,700 on over 600 items of safety clothing for 180 active BSAR members over an 18 month period.

We thank each of these organisations for their generous support:

- Department of Justice, Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) grant: \$9,700
- JJ Gardiner Trust donation: \$8,500
- Bushwalking Victoria: \$4,500
- BSAR funds: \$2,000

Rod Costigan scanned available BSAR search reports right back to the earliest days in 1949 – this was a significant effort and will help preserve and archive our rich history.

I thank all members of the Bush Search and Rescue Committee and Executive for their ongoing contributions to the operations and governance of the organisation.

I also thank Bushwalking Victoria Board, the Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad and the Victorian Department of Justice for the continued and much valued support they provide to Bush Search and Rescue Victoria.

Implementation of priority actions from our Strategic Plan include:

- Provision of safety clothing to all active members
- Support for new members via a new member welcome pack and information evening
- Letter for Understanding with Victoria Police is nearing completion.
- Confidentiality of search information policy now in place and included in new membership applications.

For the coming year we will continue to focus on increasing the number of searchers we provide to call-outs, refreshing some of equipment including GPS and radios and further improving member skills and training opportunities.