

2014-2015 Annual Report

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria

Peter Campbell, Convener



Searches

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria was called out six times during the period 1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015 and participated in the three major search and rescue operations.

Lake Eildon National Park 4-7 April 2015: Sixty three BSAR members contributed to the extensive search for a missing autistic boy who was located after several days searching. BSAR and other emergency services workers involved in the search were thanked in the Victorian parliament by Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Emergency Services Jane Garrett.



Premier Daniel Andrews and BSAR members

Mount Bogong, 5-6 July 2014. Five BSAR members based in Mt Beauty ascended Staircase Spur and located two missing men who were escorted to Bivouac Hut the next morning. Police Search and Rescue and additional BSAR members along with local SES assisted in getting the men off Mt Bogong.

Mount Bogong, 13-15 July 2014. Two snowboarders reporting missing were eventually located deceased after being buried by an avalanche off Eskdale Spur.



BSAR search group on Eskdale Spur. Source: Herald Sun

150 searching and 159 training person-days were recorded, a total of 309 volunteer days.

21 new members joined and 22 resigned. 221 searchers are available for call-out.

Training

Duncan Brookes and Merv Trease led **BSAR Annual Training** at Korweinguboora in May 2014 with 46 members and prospective members attending. Three search exercises were conducted in "typical search weather" - cool and showery conditions in the Wombat State Forest. Field exercises incorporated feature and line searching, patient management and a stretcher carry evacuation. A rotation of practical workshops covered tracking and observation, hypothermia field treatment and helicopter extraction. Navigation skills were also honed with a GPS Rogaine.



Eric Krista and Peter Campbell led **Steep Snow and Ice training** on the Razorback near Mount Hotham in September 2014. 23 BSAR members conducted self-arresting, stretcher hauling, alpine travel and avalanche rescue exercises on steep slopes. Victoria Police Search and Rescue provided us with excellent instruction and support.



Priority actions implemented from our 2012-16 BSAR Strategic Plan included:

- Duncan Brookes managed the provision of safety clothing to all active members.
- Patsy Borton now supports new BSAR members by providing a new member welcome pack
- An annual information evening and members social night is held in October.
- A Letter of Understanding was signed with Victoria Police.

Rod Costigan diligently scanned and stored digital copies of all available historical BSAR search reports to create a valuable archive.

Cameron Plant, Kirilee Chaplin and Geoff Williams contacted several university outdoors clubs and provided presentations to their members about BSAR, which will hopefully result in some new keen searchers joining our ranks. Rod Costigan and I have also provided presentations to several bushwalking clubs to raise awareness of BSAR and how people can participate.

Jack De Vries, Membership Secretary and Ren Millsom, Behind The Log newsletter editor both continue to quietly and efficiently provide important volunteer services to BSAR.

Specialist rescue stretchers were kindly donated by local community groups to our members based in Mt Beauty and North East Victoria following the 2014 Mt Bogong search and rescue operations.

I would like thank all members of the Bush Search and Rescue Committee and Executive for their ongoing contributions and commitment 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.