

Bushwalking Queensland Inc.

From the President 05-July-09

Hello, just a short introduction to the new team from your newly elected President. At the BWQ AGM on 25th June, a new committee was elected. Members of 5 affiliated clubs filled the positions of: Vice President – Desley Pedrazzini (BCBC), Secretary and Insurance Officer – Gavin Dale (GBC), Treasurer - Andrew Ryan (GBC) , Assistant Sec. - Robyn Cox (GCBC), and myself as President - John Marshall (BOSQ). Tom Hulse (BBW) will continue as web administrator. Many thanks to the retiring members Tom Cowlshaw, Kevin Blain and Rodney Bradey.

While BWQ is still a relatively new organisation, I thought it timely to take a step sideways and reflect on what we have achieved, and what our aspirations might be. I think our main achievement to date is the lifting of the profile of the federation within the outdoor community through participation in other outdoor recreation peak bodies, and having a greater role in consultation with government on various outdoor recreation initiatives. The benefits of this activity may take some time to become apparent, but certainly in the short term “the bushwalkers” have gained much recognition and respect.

Internally, there has been greater cohesiveness and a growing spirit of cooperation among clubs, driven in no small measure by the interest shown in federation affairs by BBW since incorporation. To have the senior club in the state offer to coordinate the walks program for the Pilgrimage is indeed most gratifying.

So what of the future? While the Rules clearly set out the objects of the association, I feel bushwalking clubs are on the verge of a new era, and we need to be more outward looking and adaptive to societal changes. I often hear the comment at outdoor conferences that “bushwalking clubs are dying”. No, we are still evolving! We are at an interesting time in history when a huge pool of baby boomers are seeking new challenges to take up in their retirement, at the same time as advances in information technology are providing opportunities to better engage with young people. We need to get our act together to take advantage of this!

I believe therefore that our immediate concerns are to lift our collective public profile, to better define and promote what our culture is, and to grow our membership base by whatever means are at our disposal. A secondary, although necessary role I suggest is to provide a backup for clubs where required in such areas as administration, safety and training, and leader development. This will enable club resources to be better utilised in focusing on the core business of running a good walks program.

The first step on this journey however is commitment by individuals at grass roots level. Support and contribute to your own club in the first instance, and the energy and expertise will surely flow upward. I look forward to meeting with many of you at the Pilgrimage in August, meanwhile please feel free to contact any of the committee via our email:

secretary@bushwalkingqueensland.org.au

John Marshall
President
BWQ