

BSAR Annual Report 2011-2012

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria

Peter Campbell, Convener



Bush Search and Rescue participated in several searches over the last year, including:

- An extensive search over five days for a missing deer hunter at Tomahawk Creek near Mt Stirling (95 searcher days).
- A snow search for a missing teenage girl on Mt Erica who was found and evacuated by helicopter (40 searcher days).
- A follow up search at Tomahawk Creek in small teams searching with Police and Corrections dogs (15 searcher days).

Over 2011 there were 4 searches and 3 alerts. 161 search and 202 training person-days were recorded. 118 people attended training events. There were 240 searchers available for call-out as at 31/3/12, and 14 new members joined.

I would like to thank David Prideaux's family, friends and associates for their very significant and welcome donations totalling \$3000 to Bush Search and Rescue following our contribution to two searches at Tomahawk Creek.

Steep snow and ice training was held on 8-9 July 2011 at Mount Stirling. Twenty-eight members participated in activities including self arrest practice, roping up, "Sound and Light" searching at night, avalanche search and rescue techniques and stretcher hauling.

Duncan Brookes led our very successful annual training weekend in the Wombat State Forest on 19-20 November 2011 with 70 attending. The centrepiece activity was a GPS rogaine, utilising software developed by Wayne Merry. It provided extended and intensive training and practice in fine map reading and the accurate use of the GPS. The program included observation and tracking, the "Sound and Light" night searching technique, and a session on Group Leader skills.

Bush Search and Rescue's strategic plan is close to completion and has already prompted some important initiatives, including increasing our membership, simplifying the joining process, enhancing our identity in the field, obtaining safety clothing, taking steps to increase the number of searchers we provide for call-outs and developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Police. Rod Lawlor and the Strategic Plan Working Group have put a lot of effort into developing this plan and consulting widely with Bush Search and Rescue members and key stakeholders.

The Bush Search and Rescue Executive have tackled several administration and organisational development activities. Eric Krista is now Treasurer and has finalised our budget for the coming year. Rod Costigan completed a major overhaul of our membership processes and database. The Executive is also leading work on developing several operational policies and procedures and sourcing additional funds to implement initiatives arising from the strategic plan.

I also thank all members of the Bush Search and Rescue Committee for their significant ongoing contributions to the work and governance of the organisation, and the Bushwalking Victoria Board and Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad for their continued support.

Anne Casey resigned as Membership Secretary. Anne's contributions to and work for Bush Search and Rescue were greatly appreciated. We wish her well for her work in the United Kingdom.

Sergeant Greg Paul left the Police Search and Rescue Squad. Greg provided Bush Search and Rescue with excellent support and assistance during his time with the Squad. We wish him well for his posting at Marysville. I am pleased to welcome Sergeant Victor Velthuis as our new primary contact with Police Search and Rescue.

Bush Search and Rescue continues to provide effective and specialised volunteer search and rescue services to the Victorian community. For the coming year we will focus on increasing the initial number of searchers we provide to call-outs and on acquiring new safety equipment and clothing.