

2012-2013 Annual Report

Bush Search and Rescue Victoria

Peter Campbell, Convener



Bush Search and Rescue was called out four times during the period 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2013 and participated in the following searches:

Blue Range. A missing person in the Blue Range was located while 13 BSAR searchers were en route to the search location.

Wellington Plains. A group of school students were rescued by oversnow transport on the Wellington Plains. 18 BSAR searchers were deployed to Licola for this search.

In summary, 33 search and 168 training person-days were recorded and 168 people attended training events. Twenty-one new members joined and 12 members resigned. 225 searchers are available for call-out.

Jim Gargan led the very successful annual training weekend held in conjunction with a Rogaine at El Dorado on 27-28 October 2012 with 64 members and prospective members attending. The endurance, navigation skills and night travel required for the Rogaine provided attendees with a challenging training opportunity. The activities on Sunday included field workshops on using GPS and radios, followed by a line search and stretcher carry.



Steep snow and ice training was held 22 July at Williamstown and on 28-29 July 2012 at Mount Buller. Twenty-two members participated in activities including using ice axes and crampons, roping up, self-arrest, holding climbing falls, avalanche search and rescue techniques and stretcher hauling. Senior Constable Simeon Ranik helped organise this training and provided excellent instruction to our members.



Eight BSAR members attended the inaugural Victorian Emergency Services Leadership Forum, an event sponsored by the Emergency Services Foundation for current and future volunteer leaders. Around 180 delegates from around Victoria attended from emergency services organisations such as the CFA, SES,

Volunteer Ambulance, Red Cross, other regional Search and Rescue organisations and Bush Search and Rescue.

Cameron Plant is leading an initiative to replace our current call-out systems, including phone, SMS and email, with an improved integrated system that is used by other Emergency Services Organisations in Victoria. The system is undergoing final testing by BSAR prior to us using it.

Bush Search and Rescue's Strategic Plan was completed in 2012 after 18 months of effort by a working group led by Rod Lawlor. The Strategic Plan identified the following priority areas:

1. Membership, member engagement and retention
2. Search Effectiveness
3. Skills and Training
4. Budget and Finance
5. Committee and associated activities
6. Organisational Risk Management

Arising from the Strategic Plan, Duncan Brookes managed the purchase and distribution of safety high-visibility polo shirts, caps and fleece beanies to all members. This safety clothing was funded by a grant from the Department of Justice Victoria and some additional funds from Bushwalking Victoria, and will also assist BSAR to operate and identify as a distinct and single organisation.

I thank all members of the Bush Search and Rescue Committee 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 support they provide to Bush Search and Rescue.

For the coming year we will continue to focus on increasing the number of searchers we provide to call-outs, recruiting new members, further improving member skills and training opportunities and providing some additional safety clothing items.