

# FOOTPRINTS

## March 2022

*Newsletter of the Border Bushwalking Club Inc A5665  
Affiliated with Bushwalking Victoria*

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### From the President's stump

G'day all.

It's great that at last we can all come together as a group, socialise and swap tall tales and true about our adventures in the great outdoors! I am, of course, referring to our first formal Club Night for the year that's happening on **Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>** at Noreuil Park.

I'm looking forward to catching up with as many members and their friends and hearing all about the places you've been and the places you're planning to be over the course of the year.

A quick squizz at our Activities Program indicates that despite all the disruptions we've endured recently, our super switched on Activities Co-Ordinator, David, hasn't let a mere pandemic put a dent in the usual wide range of offerings our dedicated Leaders put out there every month for you to participate in.

The range of activities is nothing short of amazing.

There's walking **AND** singing! Long, languorous bike rides. Canoeing on the Upper Murray. Overnights to far flung spots. A gourmet weekend at Tawonga Huts where there'll be fine dining while dressed to the fours! Exploring the historic cave where Ned Kelly is rumoured to have spied on the local constabulary. Even a film night!

What's probably missing are some easier, shorter walks around the immediate vicinity of the Albury-Wodonga area. I'm dubbing these the '**Seniors Stroll**'. These are short, leisurely 1-2 hour walks that conclude at a café where a much longer leisurely lunch is enjoyed by all.

I know there are a number of members who are finding that the constraints of age and health are making it increasingly difficult to find an activity in our program that allows them to enjoy the company and camaraderie of others and reckon a 'Seniors Stroll' might just fill that gap in our activities program. All we need are some other members to put their hands up and make it happen. Think about it!



Looking forward to catching up with you all at our first Club Night for the year.

Ian

*(Noreuil Park was named to commemorate the actions of the 13<sup>th</sup> Battery of the Australian Field Artillery in the attack on Noreuil in France during World War 1. Noreuil was the scene of a fierce engagement between Australian troops and the Germans on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1917)*

## New members; a warm welcome to

- Cathy and Neil Macqueen
- Adam Lazaroy
- Doug Westland.

## Next Club Night, Tuesday March 1, 2022

As Ian refers to above, we are moving closer to Club Nights returning in their traditional venue and format. As a warmup event with COVID still with us, we are holding our first club night outdoors at Hovel Tree Park, part of the Noreuil Park, Murray River complex in Albury. Many locals may know this as the Albury Community Wood Fired Oven area at the river end of Hume Street.

The riverside precinct is surrounded by temporary fencing whilst the upgrade to the riverside continues however the BBQ area, tables and chairs in the covered area are all still available. Parking in Hume St is also still available.

Kick off time is 6:30 pm. Bring your own dinner, drinks, use the available BBQ facilities or just come for a social catch up.

Ian asks that we share stories on places we managed to visit during COVID or plans for this year now that we are free to come and go to almost anywhere in the world.



## Changes to membership renewals and risk acknowledgment

### What are the changes to membership renewals?

Following confirmation of the 2022/23 membership fees at the 2022 May's AGM (not now!), to renew your membership you will need to log onto the website and complete an annual risk acknowledgment.

This has already been enabled on the website for new members.

Life members do not pay the annual membership fee but must still complete the risk acknowledgment if they intend participating in any club activities (walks or club nights).

We will provide step-by-step instructions on how to renew your membership online in the May newsletter. A word version that can be printed will also be made available.

### Renew membership

#### Renewal of membership - acknowledgement of risks - 2022/23 *(Required)*

☐ I have read and acknowledge the risk acknowledgment statement below.

This acknowledgement of risks applies to all club activities I may undertake as a member of the Border Bushwalking Club. In voluntarily participating in activities of the Club which are described to me by the activity leaders I am aware that my participation in the activities may expose me to hazards and risks that could lead to injury, illness, or death or to loss of or damage to my property. I also acknowledge that I may encounter weather conditions that could lead to hypothermia and being in locations where evacuation for medical treatment may take hours or days. In particular, when participating in abseiling or above the snowline activities I am aware that these activities could expose me to additional hazards and risks described to me by the activity leader.

To minimise risks I will endeavour to ensure that:

1. Each activity is within my capabilities,
2. I am carrying food, water, medication and equipment appropriate for the activity.

### Do Leaders need to keep obtaining signed risk acknowledgements?

The current risk acknowledgment forms must be completed by members and visitors 'per activity' **until 31 May 2022**, the due date for membership renewals.

**After 1 June, you do not need to obtain risk acknowledgements for activities for club members – only for visitors.**

The annual risk acknowledgment has already been enabled on the website for new membership applications, but please continue to obtain 'per activity' acknowledgements for new members until 31 May (we don't expect you to ask when they joined and if they signed it).

### What about the risks we currently list for each activity?

A new information box/field has been added to the activity information on the website - Key risks and hazards. Going forward, all leaders should complete this field (if relevant) when adding an activity to the program. Refer below for more information on what should be included.

## Why change?

The objective of these changes is to reduce the 'paperwork' for both leaders and participants, and in doing so ensure that key risks and hazards are considered and disclosed to participants in a more transparent and timely manner.

Club members should be familiar with the club's policies – which are available from the 'documents and forms' page on the website (under the 'Members' heading). In particular, leaders must ensure they are familiar with and follow the Leaders guidelines – policy 17, and Risk Management guidelines – policy 26.

Per these policies, Leaders are required to consider potential risks for their activity, ensure that effective control measures are implemented, and that these risks and controls are communicated to participants.

Currently the level of detail in activity descriptions varies from activity to activity. Leaders build up a 'collection' of paper/email risk acknowledgements, and often the night before (or the morning of) fill out the risk acknowledgement form listing every possible risk they can think of. Depending on how much detail is provided in the activity description, currently participants may not be aware of the key risks involved in an activity until they sign the risk acknowledgement at the starting point.

Removing the 'per activity' acknowledgement but adding a specific 'key risks and hazards' box to activity descriptions will ensure both leaders and participants are focussed on the key risks and hazards when they need to be (at the planning stage for Leaders, and when deciding whether to book in for participants).

To put it another way, my concern is that by listing every possible risk on the risk form and having participants sign it, we lull ourselves into thinking we've done all we need to. But this can become an 'auto-pilot' part of leading and participating in walks, to the detriment of real consideration of what could go wrong on the activity and how we would mitigate or respond to it.

For reference, the new annual risk acknowledgement is based on the Bushwalking Australia template, and this yearly method is used by the majority of clubs.



## What do Leaders need to list in the key risks and hazards on the web site?

Leaders need to use their judgement in deciding what they consider the risks and hazards that should be disclosed (listed) on the website box/field for each walk.

However, the focus should be on highlighting (listing) key risks specific to the activity. For example, water crossings, height exposure, off-track scrub, stretches without guaranteed water availability, sections of particularly rough or slippery terrain.

For any risks listed, please include further information and mitigation strategies (if any) in the activity notes (e.g. how far, is there an 'exit' point or would you need to back-track, is there shelter nearby?).

The risk of temperature extremes above the snow-line is something all of our Leaders are aware of. Many of us have stories of it being 25+ degrees in Mt Beauty and driving up into snow (or close-to) at Falls Creek. We also know that a warm sudden day can turn into a freezing white-out in under half an hour. Risks pertaining to activities above the snow-line is specifically referenced in the Bushwalking Australia risk acknowledgement template. Depending on the activity, you may not need to call this out as a key hazard or risk in the additional field, however you generally should do so in the activity description if going more than a short distance from cars and shelter. You should also continue



the current policy of ensuring participants are aware of this temperature variability when they book in (especially newer members and visitors), and conduct gear checks if needed at the meeting place.

However, going forward Leaders generally wouldn't be expected to list inherent-to-bushwalking risks such as:

- slipping on a track – unless this is combined with the track having sections of height exposure or some other exacerbating factor,
- getting stung by a bee - unless you know you're walking through an area that has an unusually high number of bees,
- vehicles and other cyclists/walkers – unless walking/cycling on or beside a busy road.

Similarly, you might not list snake bites unless you're walking through dense scrub and/or are walking in a remote location. However you might still recommend in the description, or when taking bookings from visitors or newer members, that they bring snake gaiters if, say, your walk is in an area of narrow footpad or an overgrown track.

For many walks, you may not have any key risks or hazards to list, and this is fine. The new field won't show on the published activity description if there aren't any key risks or hazards listed.

Again though, if you want to call out additional risks either in the new field, or the activity description, that's absolutely fine.

## Further questions

If you have any questions or concerns on the above, please send me an email via [activities@borderbushwalkingclub.com.au](mailto:activities@borderbushwalkingclub.com.au)

David – Activities Coordinator (0432 632 142 after 7pm)

## Policies are for all members!

And they are not about stating the obvious e.g. *"Each Border Walker will receive 104 personal days a year. They are called Saturday & Sunday."*

Your committee led by Alwyn is working through the policy Review Schedule for this year and reclassifying each one into policies about Compliance (C), Operational (Op), Finance (F) and Risk Management (RM) so they may start to look a little different.

Check out the current policies in the members section of the website

Alwyn

## Trip reports

### Buffalo Views

This walk was a variation on the usual 'big walk' and started from below Mackey's lookout to avoid the first half of the climb and instead allow for more exploring up the top of the Buffalo plateau.

After meeting at the old gatehouse and making our way to the start point, we headed 'up' to the Chalet for morning tea. Surprisingly after all the recent rains the 'rocky section' was the driest I've ever seen it.

From the Chalet we continued past the underground river and up to 'View point' where we had lunch looking out over the valleys where there were many hang/paragliders circling.

We then continued to Lake Catani before returning to the chalet and back down the way we came. Aside from the usual beautiful views out over the valleys and the impressively tall trees on the way out to viewpoint,

it was great to have a large-ish group of 14 with several new club members and visitors who were great company and I hope we see again on future activities.

### David





## A collection of short walks at Falls Creek

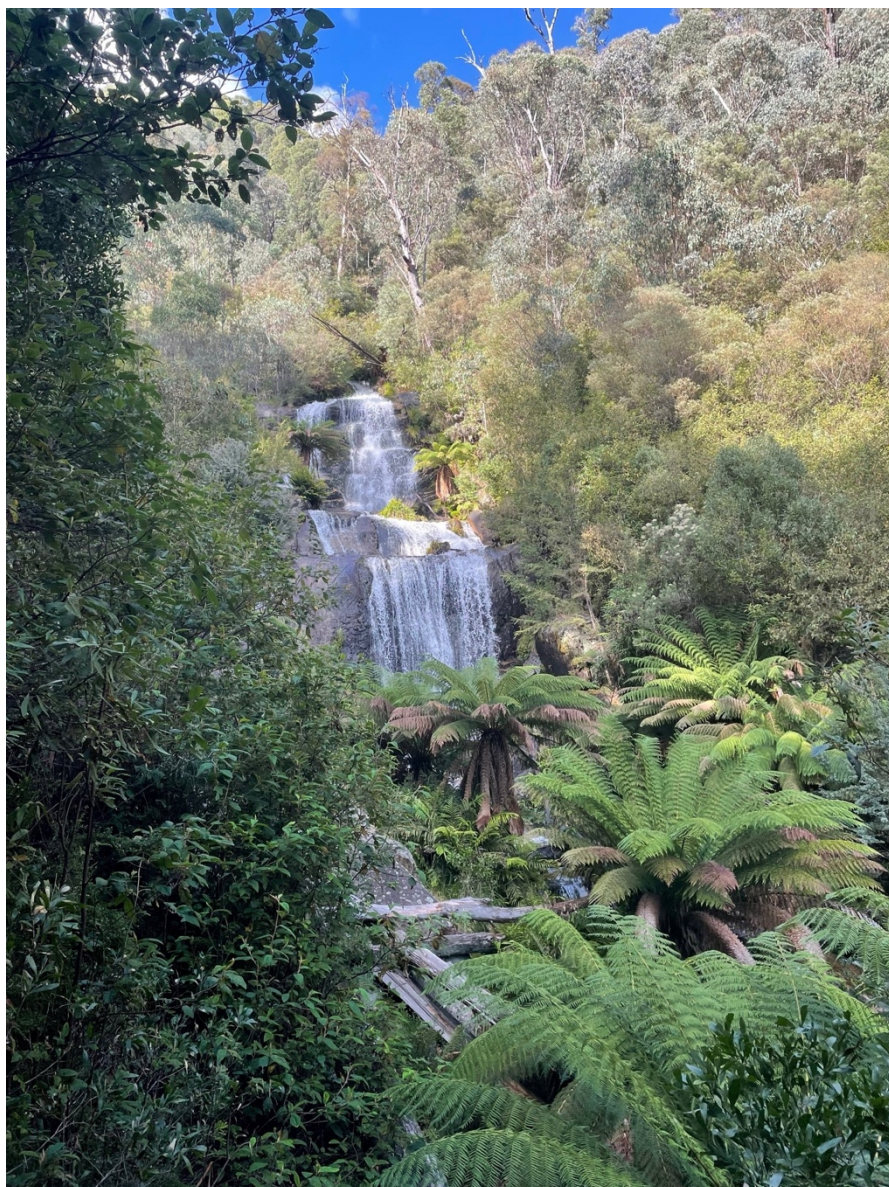
My objective for putting on this activity was to tick off a number of attractions I've always driven past on the way to, or from, other walks, but never returned to. Until now.

Sixteen people booked in for the walk, spread between long-standing club members, some relatively new 'I've been meaning to come on more walks' walkers, and three visitors (welcome!).

After meeting in Mt Beauty, we drove up to the Fainter Falls car park. After a formal briefing under the watchful eye of Club President Ian, we set off on the short walk.

700m later and we were amazed at the height of the falls, and the walk also crossed a beautiful river valley where the water was still quite high and fast following recent-ish rain.

We then returned to the cars and headed up to the Gulley carpark at Falls Creek, and set off down to the falls just below the village.



We then had morning tea at the café across the road. I note that's two coffee vans/café's for morning tea in two weeks (the first being the 'Buffalo views' walk) – perhaps something I need to start planning future walks around...

It was then time to move on to our next walk – Ropers lookout. After some manoeuvring to fit the cars at the trailhead we set off along the aqueduct and out to the lookout.





Our last stop for the day was out to Wallace's hut for lunch, before Eileen lead us on the circuit around the aqueduct up to Cope hut and back along and down to our end point at the cars. A huge thankyou to Eileen for sharing her knowledge throughout the day.

Thanks also to everyone who came along and made it an easy-going and relaxing day.

David plus extra photos from Jenny





## News from Bushwalking Victoria

### Reinstatement of the Mitta Mitta River Walk

For many years, walkers on the Mitta Mitta section of the [Australian Alps Walking Track \(AAWT\)](#) have been redirected onto a road to avoid an area heavily infested with English Broom. Parks Victoria agreed that reopening that 7km of track would significantly enhance the AAWT experience, allowing spectacular views of the Mitta Mitta River.

Twenty Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation (BTAC) volunteers – including five from the Ben Cruachan Walking Club – contributed 500 man hours to achieve the track reinstatement. Many of the volunteers were AAWT end-to-end walkers who wished to give something back to the track and the environment.

### Update: Federation Walks Events

#### **FedWalks 2021 at Licola rescheduled to 2022**

Organisers of the twice-rescheduled event are looking forward to welcoming participants to Licola on 25–28 March 2022.



#### **FedWalks 2022 – Save the Date!**

We are pleased to announce that FedWalks 2022 will be based at Wangaratta on the weekend of 1–2 October. More details soon!



## Services included in your BBC membership include.

A range of gear is available from the club to hire at a very minimal rate

- Sleeping bags
- Back-packs
- Hiking poles
- Waterproof jackets
- We even have a dehydrator if you want to prepare your own meals

Safety equipment is available free of charge for leaders of club activities

- First aid kits
- GPS
- PBLs

All of the above is stored and managed by [Adventure Gear, 479 Dean Street, Albury.](#)

Call in and have a chat to Gino, Wendy and Peter for all your equipment needs whether it be hiring or buying at the special BBC club discounted rate.

**Disclaimer** *All statements and opinions expressed in articles published in 'Footprints' are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, the Committee or members of the Border Bushwalking Club*

***Cut off date for input to the next issue of Footprints March 23 2022.***