

SUTHERLAND BUSHWALKERS NEWSLETTER

March 2025



Presidents Report - To the AGM

Thank you to all our club members, volunteers, activity leaders and committee who made 2024 such a successful year. 2024 was a bumper year for membership, with over 380 members being a part of our club. Some amazing activities were undertaken ranging from walks in the Royal, The Blue Mountains, North Shore and South Coast to Interstate and Overseas. Kayaking, cycling, car camps, pack walks, morning walks and of course bushwalks were all undertaken successfully and safely.

The club is on a sound financial footing and has completed a successful audit. It was good to be able to keep fees at a discounted rate for members for their 2025 annual membership, although it is likely that fees will increase for 2026 membership. During the year a number of members completed a first aid course which the club subsidised.

The website continues to be a great source of information for members and visitors and the club's Facebook page is a great way of keeping up with the activities. The club has some great photographers, who continue to post some amazing pictures.

Volunteer track clearing in the Royal and Heathcote National Parks continues to be well attended. The feedback from Park management is always very positive and it is a great way to spend a morning.

The Activity Organiser Get-Together and free Christmas barbecue breakfast were well attended and was a great opportunity to swap ideas and catch up with club friends, with a number of members receiving service awards.

After a long period of investigation, 2025 will see the introduction of a new on-line management system, "Bilby". We have liaised with other clubs who use this software, and have had very positive experiences.

The new system will ease the workload of many of the committee and activity organisers, while presenting members with an easier way to book an activity, and to renew memberships. Some

changes to processes will be required, both at committee and member level, and some minor amendments to By-Laws are required. The committee has worked hard over the last few months to minimise any negative impact on members, and they will be available to help iron out any issues that may arise.

See you on the track!

Ken Newman

President 2024.

Flinders Island

Monday 11th to Tuesday 19th November

Participants: Margaret, Jan, Deirdre, Mark, Gina, Jennifer, Lou, Robyn. Natalie.

Flinders Island is the largest of the Furneaux Islands - a group of 52 mainly uninhabited islands in Bass strait to the northeast of the Tasmania. The population is less than 1000 and there are very few visitors, making it a wonderful place for peaceful, remote walking.



Darling Range - Deirdre Bowie

Monday

We flew into Flinders on the first flight of the day, so after settling into our cabins we had time to walk to Trousers Beach, then through she-oaks and over rocks to Walkers Lookout. This was our introduction to the beaches for which Flinders Island is famous. Flinders Island has 235 km of coastline, half of which are beaches. These beaches are postcard white sand with bright red rocks. The water is in two clearly delineated shades of turquoise - light and bright close to the shoreline and then a sudden switch to almost navy as the water becomes deeper. They look very tempting - the perfect tropical beach, sadly without the tropical weather or water temperature, but the keen swimmers in the group were not deterred.



Red rocks and beautiful beaches

Tuesday

The weather on Flinders is problematic so we took advantage of a good weather forecast to do the Killiecrankie loop. Only 10 km, but it had its challenges. Up the track for 360 degree views. Then the more difficult trek down, ending with a slog over rocks and uphill again.



On the top of Killiecrankie Circuit - Deirdre Bowie

Wednesday

Haulins Gap walk is an easy, comfortable walk. About 12 km long, mainly downhill finishing with a fire trail. There were no beaches, so no swimming, but changing vegetation, including some orchids. A golden wombat was spotted. Golden wombats are the result of a rare gene. Apparently, the scats are also golden.

Thursday

This day we headed north to Stanley Point the most northerly point of Flinders. Rock hopping on red rocks and lunch on the white sand. Wildlife consisted of an echidna, a couple of wombats and Cape Barren geese.

We finished the day with a walk on Palama beach, where the white sand ran forever without a single footprint to disturb it and some of the party headed into the water.



Trousers Beach

We had decided that Thursday would be barbeque night. A local man came by the Pavilion looking for Marianne, who runs the cabins. He had a large lobster which he was going to give to her. Marianne wasn't around, so he handed it over to us. Calculations of the market price made this generous entree worth well over \$100, possibly \$150.

Gina dismantled the lobster neatly for our entrée. The steaks from the local butcher were flavourful and cooked to perfection by Mark, plus a generous salad added to the gourmet meal. Our dinner must have been one of the best, and most luxurious, group dinners on any club trip.

Friday

The highpoint of any Flinders walking trip must be Mt Strzelecki - 736 metres. The day was summed up afterwards as up, up, up, then down, down, down.

While it was a tough walk there was general agreement that it was not as bad as expected. The

trail was clear, the early stages were gentle but as the track went higher it became steeper and rougher and towards the peak it was a scramble.

However, at height, the way led through a cloud forest. This was a highlight of the walk with Tasmanian man ferns and orchids. It was very cold there, the temperature dropping to 7°. At the top, in the patches where the clouds cleared, there was a vista of amazing views over faraway beaches. Also, a surprising wallaby and evidence of wild pigs. While it was a tough walk there was general agreement that it was not as bad as its reputation.



Approaching Mt Strzelecki - Jan Campbell

Saturday

Having conquered Strzelecki, Saturday was dedicated to Flinders Island culture, starting with a coffee at Whitemark.

We drove to Allport Beach for a short beach walk, then headed to meet Kate Mooney, the wombat lady of Flinders Island. Kate has been rescuing injured wombats, or baby wombats whose mothers have died, for 36 years. In that time there have only been 6 weeks when she has been without any wombats. We were introduced to 3 grown wombats, a tiny little baby wombat and a slightly bigger one, Zoe. We cuddled them, took photos and passed them around. Mark is 5'11", fit and healthy. Zoe was about 25 cm fully stretched out and totally cute. So, when she went on the attack, Mark was taken by surprise. One minute he was admiring her sweet little face, the next he was running around "She's latched on. Help! Get her off." Apparently baby wombats have very sharp little teeth. Kaye gave Zoe's nose a flick which had her releasing Mark with only a slight trace of blood.



Zoe, the killer wombat. - Deirdre Bowie

After that highlight, lunch on Allport Beach and a visit to the Furneaux Museum. This is an excellent museum - well set up with different sections dedicated to different aspects of Flinders Island history (e.g. muttonbirding). Everything was labelled with clear and interesting labels.

During the early years of European settlement there was war between the original inhabitants and the settlers. G.A. Robinson persuaded the Aborigines to surrender and move to Flinders Island, on the promise that they would be able to return to their own lands later. They never returned and they all died, mainly of pulmonary diseases, Truganini being the last. In the beautiful Furneaux Museum, there was virtually no reference to this sad history. Our last stop that day was the Wybaleena Chapel and cemetery, the site of the Aboriginal settlement. The chapel now tells the story of this settlement. The cemetery, predictably, has only graves of Europeans.

Sunday

To make sure that we had a true Furneaux Island experience, on the Sunday it rained. The rain was consistent and heavy all day. We went to the Furneaux Lookout which offered only a view of the rain. Cameron Inlet looked as if we could walk out and see the ocean, but the ground was soggy and the tide was rushing in. We went to Lady Barron for coffee and visited the island's only vineyard for something to do.

Monday

Another reminder that we were in Bass Strait, on Monday the wind howled making any attempt to go anywhere uncomfortable and unpleasant. We made short sorties to places that we had not previously seen - Long Point, Lillies Beach, where the transported Aborigines came ashore, and Badger Corner. But the wind made any attempt to do anything outdoors so miserable that we retreated indoors.

The plane that services Flinders is so small that only one passenger does not have a window seat. So, as we caught the morning flight we had a good view of the island that had given us such a wonderful walking holiday and thanked Margaret for doing such a great job of organising it all.

Organiser: Margaret Dooley

Jennifer Whaite

Car Camp at Barrington Tops

Over the week from Monday Dec 3 to Friday Dec 5, 2024, 11 members of the Club enjoyed a car camp in the Barrington Tops. We based ourselves in the Gloucester Tops camping and picnic area beside the Gloucester River.



Our lovely campsite

Barrington Tops National Park includes Gondwana Rainforests Of Australia World Heritage Area. It is a beautiful area of steep sided gorges with dense temperate rainforest. Interesting features include Antarctic beech trees, swamps and fern gullies. There are many short walks to explore but these are spread over a large area. There are also longer multi day walks, which link the East and west section of the park.

Our walks included the Gloucester Tops Circuit Walk. 7.3 km, 3.5 hrs, mainly flat with a few hills. This walk is spectacular in diversity. It starts through an Antarctic beech tree section, finishing at a lookout, then a ridge walk as you descend to the fast-flowing Gloucester River. The final section is a wander through swamp lands, and trees that resemble snow gums. The variety of vegetation is stunning in such a small area.



Antarctic beech forest

That afternoon we cooled off in the very cold waters of the creek next to our camp.

To explore the Barrington tops section, we did a 4WD tour along the Barrington Tops Forest Road, stopping at various lookouts, and incorporating some short walks. We drove down to Murrays Flat, which is a great camping area, for morning tea, then lunched at Pol Blue Swamp, finishing at The Pines, an eerie exotic pine forest.



4WD tag-a-long tour

Our last walk saw us explore the Copeland State Conservation Area, where the Craven grey box tree is preserved, and an old goldmining site is situated. This walk is 9 km, with a 300 m ascent. We passed through beautiful fern gullies, saw huge fig trees with roots or buttresses the size of a child. We had

to be very aware of stinging trees, which were everywhere. We lunched back at the cars and returned back to camp for another fresh swim.



Playing 'Where's Wally'

Thanks to all who participated as it was a great week, enjoying each other's company, and walking in a spectacular part of NSW.

Greg Spencer



Ready for a swim in Blue Lake?

Kosciuszko NP - Charlotte Pass

2 - 9 Feb 2025

This year 35 club members again ventured down for the first of two weeks at Pygmy Possum Lodge to experience the various walks on offer.

The weather was great with many warm sunny days to get out and experience some of the new tracks as well as those we've enjoyed before. The new tracks to Guthega and Porcupine Rocks are

now easily accessible from the lodge. For the recently opened Perisher to Bullock's Flat track, our organiser came up with a plan for the two groups (one going downhill and the other uphill) to exchange car keys mid track, which worked very well, to get around the long car shuffle.

Tim G led the way with the more adventurous walks, with the highlight being navigating up to South Ramshead. The Main Range circuit was ticked off by others, and I was finally able to take a group up onto Mt Twynam for the spectacular panorama. I must also mention the swim in Blue Lake by a couple of our hardy swimmers.



Rams Head? - photo Allan Bunt

The walks whiteboard was full and the evening Trivia Night was fun. Thanks to all the walks organisers for making the week a success and to the whole group for the good company.



Mt Twynam - our 3rd highest hill.

After more than thirty years of staying at PPL, next year the lodge will be closed at this time for major renovations. Other possibilities have been checked out, but sadly, the club has no Kosciuszko trip planned for 2026.



On the way to Watsons Crag

Shaune Walsh

Membership Awards

The 2025 club pins for membership have been awarded to the following people.

25 yrs Pin

Jennifer WHAITE

15 yr Pin

Nerida COSTI
Vic COSTI
Marie HLAVAC
Heather HUGHES
John HUGHES
Greg JOHNSON
Wendy JOHNSON
Sandra KENNEDY
Tony LARKIN
Christine LUMB
Warren MIZON
Paul TRUDGEON
Beatrice WALSH
Shaune WALSH

10 yr Pin

Josephine CHEAH
Jeff COSATTO
Phillip ESCOTT
Roger LARKE
Kerrie McLEAN



A warm welcome to our new members:

Louise	Barton
Nicole	Hawick
Sarah	Hill
Rizwana	Kauser
Patty	Loukas
Debra	Martin
Audrey	McHale
Diane	Millar
Brendan	Moffatt
Bernadette	Murphy
Rachael	Priddle
Lynne	Smith
Pili	Stone

Q4 Club Activity Stats (Oct, Nov, Dec)

Sutherland Bushwalking Club now has 311 registered members and we participated in 67 club activities during Q4 2024.

Activity Type	Number of Activities	Number of Participants
Day Walk	55	385
Paddle	6	27
Multi-day Walk	2	8
Bike Ride	0	0
Multi-day Trip	3	14
Track Work	1	7
(Data from Activity Organiser's Trip Reports)		

Annual General Meeting

The 2025 AGM was held on Wednesday 26 February at the Stapleton Centre, Sutherland. 32 members attended and voted on the new committee and office bearers.

The results are as follows:-

President	Ken Newman
Vice President	Shaune Walsh
Secretary	Annette Mathews
Treasurer	Tim Gardner
Assistant Secretary	Vacant
Program Secretary	Heather Hughes
Newsletter Editor	John Hughes
Membership Officer	Sheree Brinsley
Web Administrator	Ken Newman
Equipment Officer	Heather Hughes, Mark Laurendet
Public Officer	Annette Mathews
Auditor	Phil Escott
Email Administrator	Margaret Dooley
Email Assistants	Annette Mathews, Heather Hughes, Robin Gordon
Friends of RNP	Tony Larkin
Delegates to Bushwalking NSW Inc	Shaune Walsh
Supper Co-ordinators	Beatrice Walsh, Gill Spencer & Vanessa Hicks
Returning Officer	Phillip Meade

Volunteer Opportunity

Volunteers are the heart and soul of our club. Have you got 2 - 4 hours a month to help the club? We're looking for a committed volunteer to take on the Assistant Secretary's role. The Assistant Secretary is a member of the Club Committee and, as such, contributes to Committee discussion and decisions. They take over the duties of the Secretary in their absence. Supported by the Secretary and the Committee, they also:

- Organise speakers for the monthly General Meetings. The Assistant Secretary is not expected to identify speakers on their own, primarily, they contact potential speakers and invite them to a General Meetings. The Committee will help with this, we already have a growing list of potential speakers for 2025.
- Help manage the club's documents and records.

The Assistant Secretary attends the monthly Committee meetings which are usually held the day after the monthly General Meetings (typically 2pm, Thursday at Sutherland or online). A Position Description for this role can be found on our website in the Members Area. Other than basic computer skills, your willingness to give your time to the club is all that's required.

Contact Annette Mathews via secretary@sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au to find out more about this opportunity.

A big thank you to these volunteers who have taken on positions for 2025. These roles are essential to the running of our bushwalking club.



Tim leading the way - Photo by Allan Bunt