

SUTHERLAND BUSHWALKERS NEWSLETTER

September 2025



President's Ponderings

Did you know that the club's membership fees have been \$30 or less since before 2010? These fees are used to pay Bushwalking Australia affiliation fees per member, Bushwalking NSW affiliation fees per member, Public Liability insurance, Personal Accident insurance and assorted taxes and duties. These are the fees that are compulsory, and account for nearly 60% of what we collect. Of course there are other costs, including Hall Hire, Christmas Barbecue, Activity Organiser's lunch, First Aid course reimbursement, Speaker donations or payment and many other miscellaneous costs.

The part that is important to you is the personal accident insurance, which this year accounted for \$3.50 per member. I have heard often enough that this insurance does not provide enough cover, but a number of members have utilised the insurance and apart from the paperwork, have been pleased to get some reimbursement. I think that it provides good value for \$3.50!

Club funds built up over time and we were pleased to offer members discounted fees over the last 5 years until the funds had been reduced. Moving forward, our membership fees will need to increase to counter price increases for just about everything mentioned above. Fees for 2026 have been set at \$35 for existing members and \$40 for new membership.

The club has now transitioned fully to the on-line system, Bilby. We have made suggestions to the developer and many have been undertaken and completed. While the system isn't perfect, it is certainly working well. Our membership renewal process will be automated and all members that have verified their account will receive reminders. All renewals for the vast majority of members will be due by 31 December. If you don't renew by then, your membership will be inactive.

The highlight of the last quarter was our Activity Organiser's lunch. Nearly 30 people attended, and it was great to catch up with everyone, and listen to the lively discussion. This lunch has become a

fixture over the last 6 years and I hope will continue for many more years.

Much is going on behind the scenes as the committee is revisiting our constitution and by-laws to better match the model constitution published by the Department of Fair Trading. Our wonderful Secretary Annette has taken charge of this project and has it well in hand.

Finally, and importantly, if you haven't verified your account on Bilby, please take a few minutes to do so. If you are having trouble, send an e-mail to bilbysupport@sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au and a committee member will get back to you ASAP. Bilby can be accessed by clicking the Activity Program button on the homepage of the Club's website.

Cheers

Ken

Some Heartfelt Thanks

Greetings from a pom! In early June, I was on holiday in North Wales (UK) with some Aussie friends, and it was great to look up some old haunts dating back to my teenage years. On my return home I was pleased to receive in the post my 10-year badge from the Sutherland Bushwalking Club. I am probably the only international club member ever to have received such a badge.

How did this come about? Well, my daughter emigrated to Australia in 2008, initially to Bondi and then Randwick, and later to the Caringbah area. My wife Nan and I have consequently visited Australia 13 times, initially for lengthy stays of 3 months for the birth of our three grandsons. So, with time on my hands, and being a keen UK walker, I searched the internet for a bushwalking club local to Caringbah and found the excellent Sutherland Bushwalking Club!

I applied for my first walk on-line from the UK. I don't remember the route, but I do remember the meeting point - a seat on the platform at Sutherland Station facing the stairs. I well remember meeting

three 'Alans' - Alan Webb, Alan Stone, and Allan Bunt. There might even have been a fourth. I got a great welcome! I walked nearly every week in various National Parks, plus some liloing and kayaking, and made many good friends, some of whom have visited us in the UK. I was very grateful to Phil Escott, Tony Larkin, Alan Webb, Bruce Franklin and Allan Bunt for picking me up.



Roger relaxes in one of our warm (?) pools

Walking in Australia is somewhat different to walking in the UK, as many of you know. We do have leeches in the UK, but they are rarely seen and don't lie in wait and spring out on you! We only have one rarely seen venomous snake, the Adder. Then of course there are the frequent swims in crystal clear warm water - this is a rare occurrence over here!

Several of the walk leaders went the extra mile and took me on separate adventures like the Bungonia Slot Canyon, Royal Coast Track (in one day), Wollangambe Canyon and several interesting industrial heritage locations in the Illawarra.

Well, age, ill health, rising travel costs and an unstable world may possibly impact further travel to Australia so I thought I should say now, many thanks for adventure, friendship and showing me some fascinating corners of New South Wales that I would not have seen as a tourist.

Best Wishes,

Roger Larke

Adopt-a-Track 10th Anniversary

2025 marks a special milestone for the Sutherland Bushwalkers - ten years of volunteer track clearing and trimming in the Royal & Heathcote National Parks!



Cutting the 10 Year Anniversary Cake

What began with Tony Larkin's initial discussions and negotiations with the National Parks and Wildlife Service has grown into a well-attended monthly club activity during the cooler months. Over the past decade, our dedicated volunteers have helped keep the park's walking tracks safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all.



The originals still attending received a 10-Year Badge.

To celebrate the occasion, Vanessa brought along a delicious cake to share at today's track work - a nice reward during a solid morning of lopping and clearing along the Burgh Track.



Tony does the compulsory safety talk to start us off.

A huge thank you to everyone who's picked up a pair of secateurs or a pruning saw over the years. Your efforts have made a real difference. Here's to another ten years of giving back to the parks we all enjoy.

Shaune Walsh

Starry Skies and Beady Eyes Our First Experimental Night Walk

Our recent experimental night walk along the Heathcote National Park Pipeline Road attracted 11 rugged-up, hot-chocolate-fuelled adventurers keen to experience the bush after dark. The cool, clear evening delivered a touch of magic: koalas, possums, a very cooperative Tawny Frogmouth, some atmospheric Angophoras, and even a few shooting stars overhead.



Tawny Frogmouth

Far from being just a novelty, the night walk offered some valuable insights for planning future excursions of this kind. One key takeaway: fire trails, which may seem a bit uninspiring by day, are ideal at night. Their wide, even surfaces allow walkers to move safely without constantly watching their footing. This frees everyone to cast their torchlight into the surrounding bush, dramatically increasing the chances of spotting wildlife. With eleven people each sweeping the darkness, it's almost unfair on the animals!



Koala along the Pipeline Road

In contrast, narrow bush tracks pose challenges at night: rough footing demands constant attention, and close vegetation can reflect torchlight back into your face, limiting visibility. While these trails may shine during the day, they lose much of their appeal after sunset.

Another important consideration: destination priorities change at night. Day walks often aim for scenic lookouts, waterfalls, or swimming holes—but these don't offer much in the dark. Instead, the best night walks focus on the experience of the bush itself: sounds, scents, wildlife encounters, and

maybe even a crackling campfire at a suitable spot. Throw in a few toasted marshmallows and a yarn or two beneath a flickering Angophora, and you've got the perfect end to an evening on the trails.

All in all, this first night walk was a great success, and with a few lessons learned, we're already planning the next one. Keep your torches charged!

Gareth Denyer

Bushwalker's 13-Day Ordeal in Kosciuszko Highlights Key Safety Lessons July General Meeting

At the July General Meeting we looked at the story of Hadi Nazari's story and discussed the lessons we can use when planning our own activities, be they a morning activity or a remote, multi-day walk.

Over the 2024-2025 holiday season, 23-year-old medical student Hadi Nazari became lost for 13 days in Kosciuszko National Park after separating from his hiking group to take photographs. A massive multi-agency search involving over 300 personnel culminated in his rescue near Blue Lake on January 8, 2025.



Safe and sound

Despite lacking essential gear – no map, compass, GPS, or Personal Locator Beacon – Hadi survived by drinking from creeks, eating wild berries and muesli bars, and sheltering in a mountain hut where he read others' notes to find a path forward.

Authorities praised his resilience but warned against several poor decisions, including discarding his backpack and letting his phone battery die. His story reinforces vital safety messages: **stay with your group, carry navigation tools and a PLB, tell someone your trip plan, and never leave tracks.**

Let's take these lessons seriously – **plan ahead, be prepared, and don't take shortcuts.**

Annette Mathews

Red Hands Cave or not?

Di's Red Hands Cave walk at Glenbrook didn't turn out quite as expected. A track that looked more interesting led us down cliffs to Glenbrook Creek where we spent the day scrambling, climbing and pushing our way through dense vegetation along the creek. No Red Hands Cave at the end - next time?



Not quite what we were expecting!

A test of everyone's agility on slippery, wet rocks. My thanks to the guys and gals who pushed and pulled me at times. One guy did a spectacular, though unfortunate, slide into the creek, up to his waist, another fell knee deep into the water on the crossing, there was a minor head injury and torn pants!



Still scrambling down

Great scenery, Di, and a group who all helped each other.

Marilyn Fooks

Shire Climate Action Network (ShireCAN) Talk June General Meeting

ShireCAN members came to our June meeting to share the work and activities of their group.

Part 1 of Talk - Who is ShireCAN and Helpful Sustainability Resources

ShireCAN is a Campaign Group, that has existed since 2007, under the umbrella organisation Sutherland Shire Environment Centre. ShireCAN is a network of growing Shire residents who are very concerned about the threat climate change poses to the Shire and our planet. Residents join because they want to share with like-minded people and feel they are not alone. They wish to play an active role in climate education and action to ensure the planet is protected for our children and future generations. ShireCAN has quarterly café get togethers so potential and new members can meet with members and chat in an informal setting.

For more information or to join ShireCAN's Facebook Group or subscribe to their newsletter go to their web page [HERE](#).

[\(https://www.ssec.org.au/our-campaigns/climate-action/\)](https://www.ssec.org.au/our-campaigns/climate-action/)

Want more information email here:

info@shirecan.org.au

Help ShireCAN advocate to Council to support clean energy and all-electric in new builds, which are important for our health, affordability and for moving away from fossil fuels.

Please support ShireCAN's latest community initiative and also pass onto your friends and family (partners, adult children) in the Shire.

ACTION: Find out more and register below - It will take you just 30 seconds to add your details:

[Register your Support HERE:](#)

Other Useful Resources

RecycleSmart

Recycle soft plastics, e-waste, textiles, kitchen items, blister packs, batteries, vapes. Pick up free from your door.

[Register HERE to RecycleSmart](#)

Fact: Plastics contribute to climate change. Due to their reliance on fossil fuels for production and their high rate of disposal in landfills, they can release harmful greenhouse gases.

Soft Plastics via Woolworths

Woolies has brought back its recycling soft plastic program, check out your local store in the Shire.

SolarQuotes - Independent advice and information for Aussies for solar and EV chargers since 2009. Website: <https://www.solarquotes.com.au/>

New Funding Program for Apartments to Solar

A NSW government initiative, supporting roof-top solar in medium density apartments. For more information go here:

<https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/households/rebate-s-grants-and-schemes/solar-apartment-residents>

Tips on How to Electrify Your Home

Information here: <https://www.ssec.org.au/our-campaigns/climate-action/how-and-why-to-electrify-your-home/>

Support ShireCAN advocating to Council for new builds to be all electric

Scan the QR code and place your details to support this initiative.

WHY?

- 1. Gas is not clean or renewable.**
Burning gas releases harmful pollutants like carbon monoxide, benzene, and nitrogen dioxide, all of which are known to affect human health and contribute to climate change. So-called 'renewable gas' still emits harmful byproducts, and hydrogen leaks easily from existing gas infrastructure, making it unsafe and inefficient.
- 2. Electric homes are healthier and cheaper to run.**
All electric homes produce fewer emissions and can save households on energy bills compared with homes using gas and electricity.
- 3. Free choice**
Appropriate electrical wiring in a new building should be installed, so that the occupant has the choice to change to all electric at a later date.
- 4. Councils can require electric-only builds.**
Lane Cove, Waverley, Hornsby, Parramatta and Newcastle Councils are implementing all-electric regulations for new builds and other Councils are in the process of doing the same.
- 5. BASIX now supports electric homes.**
NSW's sustainability assessment tool makes it easier and more cost-effective for builders to meet standards with all electric.
- 6. Induction stoves are fast, safe and precise.**
They offer better temperature control than gas and are regulated to meet safety standards, though not recommended for people with pacemakers.

ShireCAN logo and NSW Government logo.

Part 2 - Impacts on Climate Change on our Youth

Information was also shared from one of ShireCAN's younger members, Rose Miller on one of her passions, youth in the Shire and the impacts of climate change on youth mental health. In a study conducted by the Australian Psychological Society, they reported that 95% of youth consider climate change to be a serious issue, with 4 in 5

youth feeling anxious about it and that it will decrease their quality of life. To support our youth and their mental wellbeing, it is imperative that we don't dismiss their feelings, or the extent of the climate crisis as this can negatively impact their wellbeing. Instead, we can focus on supporting and encouraging them to be open about how they feel, listen and validate their feelings, be a good role model and create supportive environments. As our future generations will be the ones to weather the ever-intensifying storm, providing them the resources to improve their mental health and increase their resilience will only become more important as the climate continues changing.

Part 3 - A Walk Through Country from a First Nation's Voice

Sonja Scherer, also a ShireCAN member, First Nations person, Larrakia woman who has lived in the Shire for many years spoke about the history of the land/country that we all walk upon and what our footprints on country means to the environment. Sonja shared a story about the Sheoak - A Tree of Memory, Ecology, and Comfort.

"Our ancestors told children that if they were ever lost, they should find a Sheoak and rest under it. The soft cushion of fallen needles, the sheltering branches – it would be a signal. Mums knew to look under the Sheoak. So, the Sheoak became known as a comfort tree, a protector tree, a place of rest and reunion. The Sheoak forms critical microclimates: beneath their canopy, moisture levels are retained, air temperatures are moderated, and insects and birds find refuge. These microclimates, multiplied across a landscape, help buffer climate extremes. After fire, Sheoaks are among the first to regrow, often forming pioneer cover that protects slower-growing native species. This capacity to heal the land makes them one of the most valuable climate allies we have."

Gay Curtis

Survival Skills - Stay With Your Car

The following is a copy of Kel Jackson's Facebook post on Van Life Australia on 13 July 2025. It provides some valuable information about why people should not leave their car if an incident occurs in a remote area and what to do to help get rescued. The actions listed in the post, are part of a comprehensive 3-day course. For all the things mentioned, there are another 100 things that haven't been mentioned. The post is about why

people leave their vehicles, and what to do to keep you busy. The post is NOT about what gear to take or when it is appropriate to leave your vehicle (there are instances when that is the solution).

"Here's what you need to do if your car breaks down in a remote area.

Everyone already knows they need to stay with their car. So why do people leave their cars, then?

People leave their car for two reasons:

a) because they don't know what to do when staying with their car. They do nothing, and then get stuck in their own heads and panic. They feel like doing nothing except waiting, is not going to help them get rescued; and

b) When you're in an emergency situation, you have what's called an amygdala hijack and can't think logically. This is when people make bad decisions, like deciding to leave their car.

Here's what to do, instead:

Firstly, KEEP YOURSELF BUSY with survival priorities

1. Put your bonnet up - it's the universal signal of vehicle distress.

a) Identify where you're going to sleep to stay warm at night and how you'll stay cool during the day.

b) signalling is the most under rated survival skill - you want to CONTRAST nature with colour, sound, noise, movement.

- write SOS in the dirt, in 3 metre high letters that are square (square is not in nature).

- if you have a white car, write SOS on the roof with charcoal or lipstick in big letters.

- Break off a side mirror and use that to start signalling at the sky in different directions, every hour.

Three of anything is a universal signal for distress. Tilt the mirror up and down, three times. Then go do that in several directions.

Do that every 30 minutes.

- Use your horn to give 3 short blasts - every hour.

- pull off your spare tyre, puncture it and set it alight - black, toxic billowing smoke from burning rubber can be seen for miles on a still clear day. You can burn one tyre each day.

- hang a Mylar space blanket off a nearby sapling so it can blow in the wind (and signal passively for you. These are usually in a first aid kit.

- hang bright coloured clothing off branches nearby, so they blow in the wind.

c) If your car is still running, wind all the windows down and turn the air con on, full - you can get clean drinking water from the air con condenser pipe - DON'T drink liquids from anywhere else in the vehicle, including the windscreen.washing liquid or the radiator.

d) if you drink your pee, you will survive in spite of, not because of drinking it. Instead, use your pee to wet your hair or wet a buff, to keep you cool.

e) learn how to apply a transpiration bag to native trees, to get water the most efficient and safest way.

f) find something in the car you can rig up, in the event that it rains, to catch water (eg small tarp).

g) condensation often forms in outback areas overnight, especially on metal cars. Use a shirt or buff to wipe the dew off your car and suck that moisture from the buff, or wring it into a cup.

Limit and restrict your movements and activity, in the hottest part of the day.

h) if you have wood around, scout around in the cool part of the day for kindling and fuel for a fire. If there's enough, consider building two fires - one for warmth, and one as a signalling fire to which you can add green material. Collect firewood and tend to your fire as a survival priority.

i) there are six different methods to light fire, including catching a spark by shorting your battery with a screwdriver. Always carry a cigarette lighter and some dry tinder (tampon and Vaseline) so you can more easily start a fire.

j) Food is not a survival priority. Most adults can last 45-60 days before their body starts to consume their organs (medical definition of starvation). You won't feel great and might be light headed, but you are not going to die without food. In addition no one has died from starvation from being lost in Australia, in the last 100 years.



Secondly, research from people lost for a long time at sea tells us that the people who survive, are the ones who also 'act like they would at home' - this means trying to follow your home routine, as much as possible. As stupid as that sounds, it works. So if you meditate or do yoga and stretching in the morning, do that. Clean your teeth with some charcoal. Prepare 'hot water' for dinner. Try and 'act normal' and keep to your 'normal routine' as much as possible.

Thirdly, mindset is the most important survival tool (apart from PERSONAL LOCATOR BEACONS (PLB's) in remote areas!). Think about the people you love. Imagine a future event with them in very intricate detail - what restaurant you'll go to when you get rescued, what's on the menu, what you will wear, what's on the drinks list. People who survived long-term kidnapping, spent a lot of time in their head remembering intricate details from joyful things in their life (what are all the record albums they had as a teenager, what were the songs in each Album or what books they have at home in their bookcase). Imagining future events in detail with the people you love, is a great way to keep hope and pass time.

Using faith, hope or love is what will get you through.

People leave their vehicles because they don't know what survival priority activities to do, to keep themselves busy, and they feel like they're not doing enough to contribute to their own rescue. If you are not keeping busy, that's when despair hits. Despair makes people give up or leave their vehicles.

They think that walking is being more active about their rescue, and will get them rescued sooner.

Learn what to do, and stay safe x



P.S. yes, not getting involved in an incident in the first place is best, but here's why people don't stay with their cars."

Kel Jackson runs Survival Skills Courses (for women) with Bushsafe.com. Perhaps print this article out and keep a copy in your first aid kit and glove box.

Kel Jackson

(Reprinted with permission)

If you are interested in learning survival skills, then visit Kel at Bushsafe.

www.Bushsafe.com

Thanks, Sheree Brinsley, for sharing this invaluable Facebook post.



Bilby Tips...

Waiting Lists

If an activity is showing as '**Activity Full**', you can still book on the activity. If the organiser has a waiting list you could be placed on the list. Personal circumstances change and many organisers get cancellations, which means you could get on to the activity if you have asked to be put on a waiting list.

If you need to cancel, contact the organiser directly, either by email/phone or by sending a message via Bilby. If you open your booking for that activity, there is a cancel booking option on the left and any note you type in a booking will be sent as an email to the activity owner.

Organisers: You can tag the activity as '**FULL - WAITLIST ONLY**' in the activity info section of your activity. You can also change the setting here for 'New Bookings' from 'pending' to '**Waiting**'.

Is Your Contact Info Available to Organisers?

Navigate to your '**My Account**' area in Bilby and click on the 4 tabs (shown below) to make sure all your information is up to date. Emergency contacts need a name and number. If you have two contacts, put them both on the same line (as below). Also check your '**Privacy Settings**' to make sure that your Email, Contact and Emergency Contact settings are '**Visible to any Activity Owner**'. Full name should be '**Visible to any Active Member**'



Sutherland Bushwalkers

Organisers: If information isn't there, ask members to fix the issue first, otherwise notify Bilby support.

Don't forget that 'Bilby Help' is available.

- Bilby documents are on our club website.
https://www.sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au/?page_id=15983
- In the Bilby system use 'Help and Support'
- Or email directly to
bilbysupport@sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au



A warm welcome to our new members:

Max Owen
 Joanne Owen
 Yanti Norton
 Mathew Hunt
 Janette Dart
 Adam Wiltshire
 Sandy Tout
 Keith Wade
 Chris Henwood
 Peter Hickey

Q2 Club Activity Stats (Apr, May, Jun)

Sutherland Bushwalking Club now has 333 registered members and we participated in 51 club activities during Q2 2025.

Activity Type	Number of Activities	Number of Participants
Day Walk	42	386
Paddle	3	20
Multi-day Walk	2	16
Multi-day Trip	2	23
Track Work	2	20
(Data from Activity Organiser's Trip Reports)		

More Club Photos from our Facebook posts



Mt Westmacott - Vanessa Hicks



Exploring Illawong - Margaret Dooley



Off-track with Tim - Allan Bunt



Whale Watching - Annette Matthews



On Track with Tim? - Allan Bunt (Heigh-ho, Heigh-ho?)