

# SUTHERLAND BUSHWALKERS NEWSLETTER

June 2026



## President's Report

One of my favourite sayings, originally Scandinavian, but mostly associated with the famous English Rambler Alfred Wainwright who pioneered England's famous Coast to Coast track is - "*There is no such thing as bad weather, just unsuitable clothing*". I have often enjoyed a walk in the rain. The smells, the noises, the lack of other people all add up to a different experience. Even urban walks have an added dimension in the wet. As I write this, I seem to have been on a lot of walks in the rain lately and enjoyed each and every one of them. I must admit, setting up camp and breaking it down in the rain is a little less fun!

There has been a recent spate of people cancelling very late on walks. This is disrespectful to the activity organiser, as well as problematic in many ways. Of course, late changes are often unavoidable. Medical and family issues may arise, but the earlier you can advise the activity organiser the better. This allows members who are on wait lists a better opportunity to attend. Other clubs flag club members who consistently pull out of activities at the last minute. I hope that we don't come to that.

On a happier note, we will be refreshing our website with a major facelift over the next few weeks. Keep an eye out for the email. Ann, our new webmaster, is looking to update some content over the next few months. If you have any comments, please email [info@sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au](mailto:info@sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au) and your ideas will be passed on. I would also like to acknowledge the excellent work that our treasurer, Tim, did when he built and published our original site. The clean design and comprehensive documentation made the refresh substantially easier than it might have been.

At our April general meeting Southern Waters Legal presented on estate planning. Twenty five members were able to ask questions and clarify their concerns. Many shared their personal experiences and the overwhelming message was that you need to have a Will, Power of Attorney and

Enduring Guardianship documents. There is a short article on this later in the newsletter.

Lastly, if you have been on an activity recently, please consider writing an article for the next newsletter. Facebook has its place, but a short newsletter article will reach many more people.

Cheers

*Ken*

*President 2026*

## Taking Our First Steps

### Celebrating NSW Women's Week in the Royal National Park

To celebrate NSW Women's Week 2026, our club proudly joined a statewide initiative hosted by Bushwalking NSW to introduce more women to the joys of the great outdoors. This program, supported by Women NSW, invites women across the state to experience bushwalking in a welcoming, supportive environment—whether they are complete beginners or returning after a long break.

### A Morning in East Heathcote

On Monday, 2 March, we hosted our own "First Step Into Bushwalking" event. The walk, led by Annette Mathews and Heather Hughes, explored the beautiful East Heathcote area of the Royal National Park.

The turnout was fantastic, bringing together a diverse group of walkers:

- 6 guests introduced to our club through the Bushwalking NSW initiative.
- 7 additional female members and guests who joined for the morning.

## Why Women's Week Walks Matter

NSW Women's Week (2-8 March 2026) is designed to recognise the achievements and diverse experiences of women and girls. Events like ours, funded by the 2026 Women's Week Grants, aim to help participants feel comfortable, confident, and connected with nature and their local community.



Sutherland Bushwalkers Women's Week Walkers

Bushwalking offers a unique "natural tonic," using muscles for balance and strength that aren't typically engaged in urban environments. Beyond the physical benefits, these walks provide a friendly introduction to being part of a club and exploring local tracks and reserves that are often right on our doorstep.

*Annette Mathews*

## Estate Planning

At our April General meeting, Rosie, Emily and Sarah from Southern Waters Legal presented on the topic of Estate Planning. This presentation certainly made an impact on those who attended with many questions asked and answered. Members took the opportunity to discuss issues and ask questions over a cup of tea.



Southern Waters Legal

Generally, people should have a Will, Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship documents. These documents ensure that your wishes are carried out. You should also revisit the documents every 5-10 years or after a major life event.

One of the takeaways from the presentation was to name people that you trust as executors, with POA and as guardians. If you die without a will there is an order of succession where your estate will be distributed, the last of which is "everything goes to the state".

Please don't be like some who believe it isn't their problem. You can avoid much stress and pain for your loved ones by being prepared.

If you have any concerns please contact Southern Waters Legal, or your solicitor.

*Ken Newman*

## Martin Place to Sydney Fish Markets 12 May 2026

The walk followed the water from Jerremon Bay to Pyrmont Bridge passing all the usual suspects of Botanical Gardens, Opera House, The Rocks and large tourist groups clicking away. Some detours to the walk for Vivid installations and the occasional rain shower painted the harbour in a different light.



Sydney Fish Markets

It was also Sydney Fashion Week and the colourful display of umbrellas and rain-covers on the backpacks of 10 walkers added to the lustre of fashionable sightings.

Completing the walk at the new Fish Markets (juxtaposed to the now abandoned old market) allowed us to wander through the new facility and pick up a tasty lunch and ogle at the seafood displays.

*Lisa and Ray Madden*

## Exploring the Old Illawarra Rail Line

Walks around the Helensburgh area through Garawarra SCA and Royal NP have been very popular, especially with the inclusion of some of the old railway tunnels.

The original Illawarra railway line opened in 1888 and was considered a remarkable engineering achievement for its time. The route crossed rugged country through what is now the southern edge of Royal National Park, requiring eight tunnels between Waterfall and Stanwell Park, many of these abandoned tunnels can still be explored on foot today.

Probably the most well known one is the old Otford Tunnel that goes through to Stanwell Park. At around 1.5 kilometres long, it was once the largest railway tunnel in New South Wales. Steam trains struggled on the steep gradient, and crews often endured intense heat, smoke and poor ventilation while climbing towards Waterfall. These dangerous conditions eventually led to a new rail deviation being built between 1914 and 1920.

Starting from Helensburgh, a walk to Stanwell Park can incorporate three of these tunnels. A short tunnel at Helensburgh was used in some recent movies, like Planet of the Apes. The longer tunnel at Helensburgh, with the old station at the entrance, has a stunning display of glow worms and is always worth a visit, even though you will probably end up with wet and muddy shoes. The tunnel itself, Metropolitan Tunnel, is closed at the southern end and was used as water storage for the coalmine in Helensburgh.



Crossing Camp Creek - Photo by Mark Laurendet

There are two tunnels just north of the old Lilyvale station (the station is now completely gone) but these tunnels are more difficult to access.

The walk to Stanwell Park is around 14 km and can be completed in numerous ways as there are many tracks through the bush here, some are formal tracks but many are local tracks and can be a little overgrown. There are remnants of old farm roads and even an old tractor in the bush. Sections of the Burgh and Lilyvale tracks are used to make your way to Otford, where there are magnificent views down the coast to Wollongong and the clifftops make an ideal place for lunch.



Amazing Fungii in the rainforest - Photo by Mark Laurendet

After lunch, we venture into the Otford Tunnel. The tunnel is not easy walking as the ground is littered with broken concrete flooring, erosion ditches and remnants of the mushroom farming activities. Originally there was a drain below the floor but a lot of that is now broken and a creek has replaced the drain. If you look carefully, there are yabbies living in the water puddles within the tunnel. A ventilation shaft can be found halfway along the tunnel as well as an old bathtub. At this point I have seen some small insectivorous bats flitting about in the dappled light coming in from the shaft. Although you can see the tunnel entrance, it is pitch black inside from about 50 metres in, so a small head torch is essential.

As you get closer to Stanwell Park, the walls become covered in graffiti art, a lot of this art is very impressive! Just before you exit, there is a section

that has been repaired as it was previously deliberately collapsed. Apparently, the tunnel was collapsed to stop the chance of Japanese soldiers hiding in there if they landed near Stanwell Park - the concern was that it could be used to launch a secret attack on Sydney!



Tunnel Art - Photo by Mark Laurendet

This walk finishes at Stanwell Park, so public transport can be used to get to the start and end points of the walk.

*John Hughes*

### Prince Henry Cliff Walk Friday 22nd May

Eight of us ventured along the Cliff Top Walk in The Blue Mountains.



Foggy Lookouts

We caught the train to Katoomba and the bus to the last stop before Scenic Skyway and then walked along Cliff Drive to Prince Henry Cliff Walk. It started off very foggy and light sprinkling but eventually cleared. We passed Katoomba Falls and Cliff View Lookout, Wollumai Lookout, Little Milou Lookout, Allambie Lookout, Lady Darley Lookout, Kedumba View, Queen Elizabeth Lookout and Echo Point Lookout and still all we could see was fog!



A Superb Lyrebird

We continued on to Lady Carrington Lookout, Minnamurra Lookout and Honeymoon Lookout, Honeymoon Point and Banksia Lookout, Lomandra Lookout and Burrabarroo Lookout. The fog started to lift!

We walked up to Carrington Park and had lunch but just as we finished eating there were more fine drops of rain and we took shelter. It wasn't looking promising so we decided to walk to Katoomba and catch the train home.

In all we walked 5.9km. Had we gone on, it would have been another 6km and a big day but we didn't want to get caught in the rain that was looking imminent.

Thank you Di for a lovely day and for keeping us dry.

*Alayne Michel*

## Bike Rides are back on the Program

Despite some wet weather, six riders enjoyed the club's first cycling ride in a very long time in May. A big thank you to Annette Mathews and John Hughes for hosting the ride, which took in Wollie Creek, the Cooks River path, the GreenWay and the Bay Run around Iron Cove.

The group escaped the rain with a stop at a cosy coffee shop for morning tea, and by the time everyone returned to Tempe the sun was shining.



Cooks River Cycleway at Wollie Creek

We'd love to see cycling become a regular part of the club activity program. John and Annette will host more rides in Q3 and are looking for other club members interested in helping to host future rides.

The goal is to offer one ride each month.

Contact Heather Hughes  
[programsecretary@Sutherlandbushwalkers.com.au](mailto:programsecretary@Sutherlandbushwalkers.com.au)  
if you would like to know more about leading a club ride.

*Annette Mathews*

## Teaching the Regent Honeyeater to Sing Again

Bushwalkers across New South Wales are always hoping for a glimpse of a rare or uncommon bird. With the striking Regent Honeyeater, one of Australia's rarest birds, with fewer than 300 believed to remain in the wild, every sighting is special.

Researchers and conservationists are now tackling an unusual problem facing the species: young Regent Honeyeaters are forgetting their traditional song. Because so few birds remain, isolated males are sometimes copying the calls of other species, including wattlebirds, instead of learning the complex "love song" needed to attract mates.

A joint program involving scientists from the Australian National University and the Taronga Conservation Society Australia has been working to restore the birds' original song through a captive breeding program. Young birds are exposed to recordings and even tutored by wild adult males. Researchers found the best results came from smaller "class sizes", where a few juveniles could directly interact with experienced song tutors.



Regent Honeyeater

The encouraging news is that some released birds are now singing the traditional call again in the wild. For bushwalkers exploring woodland areas around the Blue Mountains and Hunter region, hearing that distinctive song may become a little more likely in years to come.


[Read the full story](#)

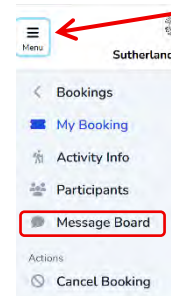
Shared from [ABC app](#)

*Thanks for this information, Janice McLeod*



## Using Bilby on a Phone

Bilby on a phone is a 'narrower' version of what you see on a computer but the menu items that were on the left are now found in a hamburger menu  in the top left of the screen.



Importantly, the message board for each activity is in this menu.

To find the message board, open your booking and tap the menu in the top left corner. The items in this screen shot show what items are available here.

## Searching the Activity Program

When looking for an activity to go on, there is a search facility that can help you find an activity that you are more interested in.

### Upcoming Activities

Quick Search Activities

By typing in a key word you can limit the list of activities. For example, typing 'Di T' will bring up all of Di's walks or typing 'Track Work' will list all of Tony's upcoming track maintenance activities. Typing 'Kayak', 'Morning', 'Cycle', 'Royal', 'Coast' or 'Grade 4' will similarly limit the listed activities to those you are after.

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

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

## Q1 Club Activity Stats (Jan, Feb, Mar)

Sutherland Bushwalking Club now has 324 registered members and we participated in 60 club activities during Q1 2026.

Activity Type	Number of Activities	Number of Participants
Morning Walk	10	123
Day Walk	41	399
Paddle	4	19
Multi-day Walk	1	3
Multi-day Trip	3	51
Track Work	1	10

(Data from Activity Organiser's Trip Reports)

## Membership Awards

As you may know, we acknowledge our members service at 10, 15, and 25 years. These milestones are established in our by-laws and have been celebrated with the presentation of a badge since the club's earliest days.

As the club is now more than 50 years old, the committee decided that we need recognise longer memberships, and we are still working our way through those options.

In recognition of their outstanding commitment and service to the club we would like to congratulate and thank the following club members.

### 50 Years or more

Maurie Bloom	56 yrs
Joy Scott	53 yrs
Murray Scott	52 yrs

### 35 Years or more

John Morris	43 yrs
John Holland	40 yrs
Roger Fisher	40 yrs
Margret Rozea	39 yrs
Mary Moffatt	39 yrs
Peter Wherry	38 yrs
Paul Rendell	38 yrs
Robert Trudgeon	36 yrs
Jayne Daniels	35 yrs
Henry Fooks	35 yrs
Marilyn Fooks	35 yrs



A warm welcome to our new members:

Lee Tyler	Bing Sun
Joanna Di Cicco	Royden Smith
David Gavin	Peter Ellis
Kim Shade	Atm Islam
Robert Silburn	Lucinda Bratby
Wendy Wright	Damia Mawad



Vale  
**Brendan Robert Moffatt**  
15/10/42 - 10/5/26

Brendan joined the Sutherland Bushwalking Club soon after his retirement in the late 90's, taking part and leading many Club activities in the years to follow. He continued with these activities until his illness prevented him from doing so.

Brendan loved to kayak. He particularly enjoyed the extended river paddles, with his list including The Murray, The Murrumbidgee, The Lachlan and Macleay Rivers. Cycling was another of Brendan's pursuits while in the Club. Along with his wife Mary, he organized some of the "Pub to Pub" bike rides, which continued for twenty years on the Club program.

As members grew older, tents were upgraded to camper trailers, and finally to the comfort and comparative luxury of caravans. During this period Brendan enjoyed the planning and organizing of a number of extended holidays in NSW and interstate.

Above all, Brendan loved to be out in the bush. He shared his knowledge and enthusiasm for birds and plants with all who walked with him, becoming known for his ability to spot orchids.

Brendan's life was a full and happy one, and his love of nature and the bush will be remembered by all who knew him.

- **Club Social Night**  
Join us at Club on East for a relaxed social evening on Wednesday 26 August. More information will be provided soon. Meals and drinks will be at your own expense. This get-together will replace the monthly General Meeting.
- **Annual Leaders and Volunteers Lunch**  
Saturday 1 August. Leaders and volunteers will receive further details in due course.
- **Annual Christmas BBQ Breakfast**  
Saturday 5 December. All members are warmly invited to attend.



Christmas Brekkie - Audley



Vale Brendan Moffatt

## More Club Photos from our Facebook Posts



Mill Ck Walk - Alayne Michel



Coote Ck - Irina Sorokina



Sydney Coast Walk - Phil Travis



Cowan Ck walk - Allan Bunt



Gadigal National Park - Alayne Michel



Cawley Tunnel - Libbey Davey



Maianbar - Marilyn Fooks



Murrua Rd climb - Libbey Davey



Castlecrag walk - Alayne Michel



Bombo - Alayne Michel



Cawley Tunnel Helensburgh