

BUSHWALKERS WILDERNESS RESCUE SQUAD

November 2011

In the last three months BWRS has been busy, as usual, in training as well as alerts. As usual, this is a snapshot only of some of the recent many activities of BWRS.

There were a number of **alerts** during the past three months.

BWRS 75th Anniversary Dinner. On last Saturday night (12 November) 75 years of volunteer bush rescue was well remembered at Coogee Bay Hotel. We had an excellent MC with Mr Bob Carr giving the after dinner address. We gave out an internal award to some past members for distinguished service. The Paddy Pallin company lent us props so that we were able to have a great display to show old vs the new methods of remote area search and rescue. A report will eventually go on our BWRS website with photos.

Callout. Sometimes it is hard to catch breath. On Sunday afternoon 13 November BWRS was asked if could send members promptly to St Ives to search for an autistic boy. Fortunately this callout was resolved quickly and before any members left home.

Training Grant. Competency Based Training (CBT) of our members has required a large commitment of time and computer resources to develop our course materials. Under a recently announced EVSS scheme BWRS will receive funds to develop a web page which can store, collate and track our training records.

Barrington Tops Op Ex. The Land Cruiser Club and WICEN assisted BWRS in mounting a double pronged search of Barrington Tops for an elusive light plane (VH-MDX) that disappeared in 1981 during bad winter weather. Two teams approached the high slopes of Mt Paterson from inland near Scone while four teams came in from the Gloucester Tops side. Some experienced SES and RFS teams look forward to this joint exercise each year.

Vertical Rescue. BWRS has a strong core of members trained to the State Rescue Board competency in vertical rescue. On 10 September we had most of our qualified vertical rescue Operators and Instructors at a refresher session held at Wahroonga Rocks.

TrailWalker was held on August 27 / 28. This is the major annual event of Oxfam to fund their overseas community aid. Teams of four attempt to walk 100km within 48 hours. This route runs from Brooklyn via Ku-Ring-Gai Chase, Berowra Waters, and Middle Harbour to George's Head at Mosman. Not only does BWRS form an important part of the Oxfam Safety Plan but it provides BWRS great visible publicity. There were reduced withdrawals over Friday night (I suspect it was due to warmer weather than usual) Late Friday afternoon there was a water born evacuation from Berowra Creek approaching Crosslands.

Maintaining equipment is an ongoing process for BWRS. The extra gear required for NavShield has now been checked and put back into storage. As you know BWRS is now the custodian for a small block of Crown Land in the western suburbs. Photos on the BWRS website now show that the slab for our new shed / headquarters has been poured and steelwork is being erected. Completion to lockup stage is in sight!

BWRS Remote Area First Aid (RAFA) courses regularly attract many trainees due to its content and excellent Instructor. RAFA training provides a far better of awareness of First Aid than Senior First Aid for the areas bushwalkers like to visit. RAFA is the First Aid operational requirement for members of BWRS.

RAFA A RAFA course that commenced on August 6 / 7 concluded on August 20 / 21. A Recertification course (requiring just two days of instruction) was held on October 29 / 30. Future RAFA courses are on hold until our Instructor completes knee surgery to repair damage from previous Army service. Please monitor our BWRS website for the registration procedure and future RAFA course dates. <http://www.bwrs.org.au/?q=first-aid-training>

A one day St John Ambulance **Senior First Aid course** was held on November 5. This new mode of instruction (one day NOT days but prelearning is required) was well received and the 2012 courses on May 20 and November 18 will follow this model. This course is aimed at bushwalking club members. Belinda has permission to show some extra skills, not currently taught in other Senior First Aid courses that could be useful in bushwalking incidents.

PUBLICITY. Our annual pocket Calendar has not been forgotten. Production will commence soon on this little gem which packs so much information including Full Moons, Public Holidays and some BWRS training dates.

MAPS. BWRS has become an accidental clearing house for unwanted maps via our **Map Sale**. There still are interesting sheets that are worth adding to your collection. Many bushwalkers have expanded their library of maps at a great saving. The more you buy the cheaper the map with our bulk discount! For a list of maps see our website - <http://www.bwrs.org.au/?q=node/462>

BWRS is a long established community organisation that specialises in bush search and rescue. BWRS is an informal, friendly group that concentrates on doing not talking. PUT your bushwalking skills to good use. GET involved in BWRS! To join Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad contact our Secretary, John Tonitto on 8678 1087 / secretary@bwrs.org.au or visit our revised website at www.bwrs.org.au