

‘Challenges and Opportunities’

Welcome back everyone to another year of great bushwalking. Bushwalking clubs should be aware of an emerging issue that could be of relevance to all of us in the coming year. The first wave of baby boomers will be retiring en masse! This is likely to raise some challenges as well as some unique opportunities regarding recruitment. Many of these retirees will be looking for “low cost” recreational activities, the sort of activity that bushwalking clubs can certainly provide. In addition, BWQ is currently exploring ways to engage young people with the club network through liaison with youth organisations.

Are the clubs ready for this potential influx? Do the clubs have the resources to run an imaginative program of walks that people will want to do and at a standard of expertise that newcomers will expect? What value added features can the clubs offer that cannot otherwise be experienced by walking privately?

Clubs need to promote these member benefits, such as:

- harnessing of members’ collective knowledge
- offering an inspiring program of walks
- enhancing bushcraft skills
- learning about the environment
- promoting a culture of safety
- instilling a bushwalking ethos

There are pressures within some clubs to run more socials or “latté walks”. While social events have value, clubs should continue to focus on the core business of bush walking.

Federation Mountain Rescue (FMR), is the specialist training and bush rescue body within our federation. By combining the high end training provided by FMR with in-house training of leaders by the clubs, we can be ready for any potential influx. Regional clubs are also invited to partake of this training, we can arrange visits to your clubs by FMR reps. Refer to the FMR website for the training program and contact details: <http://fmrqld.bwq.org.au> or contact the BWQ secretary: secretary@bushwalkingqueensland.org.au

Collaborative Management Group (CMG) is the liaison group between BWQ and QPWS where matters of mutual interest are discussed. BWQ reps have recently provided input to the draft Lamington N.P. Management Plan, and the proposed long distance trail in D’Aguilar N.P. Consultation regarding a bushwalker volunteer group to assist with graded track maintenance is continuing. Our reps are also active in various other nature based recreation sector focus groups. More BWQ reps are needed for this important work - please contact the BWQ secretary if you are interested.

The Campsite Monitors group is continuing under a new coordinator Robyn Cox, with the annual get-together with QPWS representatives planned for 6th February at Daisy Hill. Campsite Monitors carry out important survey tasks on various bush campsites in the South-East to monitor the extent of impact. We need more monitors, if any bushwalker would like to become involved in this interesting volunteer field work please contact the secretary also.

All clubs - please note in your planners the Pilgrimage dates, being organised this year by Toowoomba Bushwalkers, in the Crows Nest area. This is a chance for some great walking, fun and games, and networking with your fellow bushwalkers. **Dates: 20- 22 August 2010**

For all updates on Bushwalking Queensland Inc. activity, please refer to our website: www.bushwalkingqueensland.org.au or the short version: www.bwq.org.au

Bushwalking is serious fun – let’s all take it seriously in 2010

John Marshall

Pres. BWQ