

SUTHERLAND BUSHWALKERS NEWSLETTER

March 2026



President's Report To The AGM Feb 2026

2025 was a year of firsts and change for our club.

The biggest change was the introduction of an online activity and membership system. Bilby has streamlined many of the processes for the club while providing tools to better manage our membership. I am very pleased that feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, while taking on board the issues that have been raised. The club continues to work closely with the developers of the system to make improvements.

The club also held its first "Learn to Lead" walk, with a dozen club members walking to Winifred Falls, and on to the upper reaches of South West Arm. Participants all got the chance to lead, were keen, and asked many questions of the more seasoned walkers. Lunch at Audley offered an opportunity to debrief, with many war stories told. Several members have stepped up to lead walks. What does it take to be a leader? It is easy, you just put your hand up!

Our first walk aimed at Guests was held with about a dozen new walkers. Forest Path and Palona Cave were a great introduction to our club. This walk has led to a number of new memberships.

The club's constitution has been updated to reflect best practice following the model published by the Department of Fair Trading. We have also taken the opportunity to update the club's by-laws. This is a painstaking but important process, and the committee continues to review the club's policies and procedures.

Our usual activities continue with the ever-popular Pygmy Possum trip taking place as I write this. The Activity Organiser Get-Together and free Christmas barbecue breakfast were well attended and a great opportunity to swap ideas and catch up with club friends, with a number of members receiving service awards. The Wednesday Blue Mountains walks have become an institution, and the Thursday morning walks are well on the way to becoming one.

Thank you to all our club members, volunteers, activity leaders who made 2025 such a successful year. Kayaking, cycling, car camps, pack walks, morning walks, overseas trips and of course bushwalks were all undertaken successfully and safely.

The club is on a sound financial footing and has completed a successful audit.

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

2026 will see a revamp of our website, which is due for a refresh.

Finally, I would like to thank our hard-working committee and helpers, without whom we would not have a club.

See you on the track!

Ken Newman

President 2025

A Summer/Winter Sojourn In The Snowies 26th November to 1st December 2025

Organiser - Shaune Walsh

Approximately 23 Club members set up camp in a variety of tents, camper trailers and caravans at Kosciuszko Tourist Park, Sawpit Creek for a few days exploration of the Kosciuszko National Park. Everything was against Shaune from the start - many tracks closed for ultra-marathon races, feral animal culling and, last but not least, the weather which had the last word. On the first night, the wind went through camp like a freight train and we were in a sheltered area, so we thought. Mt Stillwell was chosen for the first day's walk and the group

managed to reach the top by hanging on, walking through a snow drift and even managed a further walk beyond to the ruins. When the wind threatened to blow me over, I turned around. The whole of the Main Range was covered in large patches of snow with everyone wearing all their cold weather gear.



Snow drift on the side of Mt Stillwell

The second day was also very windy but dry so a mystery day to find somewhere that wasn't closed by the races and was also out of the wind. Island Bend provided a sheltered walk along the Snowy River and ideal spot for morning tea. We then drove and walked to the dam, only to be frustrated by large, locked gates preventing admission. Another drive took us to the Snowy Adit, where Henry gave a technical talk on the area and explanation of where the water came from and went to. After lunch, a walk downhill on the Pallaibo track from camp was offered, a few of us only going part way down as it is a long, uphill climb back.



Morning tea at Island Bend

Happy hour in a large camp kitchen, complete with lounges, allowed us to regroup every day, discuss the day and play games and quizzes supplied by Leonie, thank you Leonie. Shaune also used this meeting to make suggestions for the next day, always governed by the wind and rain.

Rain stopped play on the third day with a lot of eating, sleeping, reading, driving and shopping achieved. Some were able to sneak in a short walk along Lake Jindabyne. After a drive and lunch in Jindabyne, I got Henry to drop me off at the Thredbo River as I wanted some exercise and thought the weather had cleared. As I put my foot on the Pallaibo Track, the rain began, resulting in a drowned rat arriving at camp six uphill kilometres later! Two members returned home, their tent not surviving the wet weather and two others returned because of sickness - our numbers were dropping.

Our last day began fine and sunny so a very pretty walk to Bullocks Hut, out of the wind, was achieved. However, at the turnaround point - morning tea - the rain gods remembered us, so it was a wet walk back, a bridge providing shelter for our break. Shaune, not being a skier, was not familiar with Thredbo so we drove there, leaving the group to find hot drinks. We returned to sunny Jindabyne for lunch, stepping out of the café to see a massive front approaching over the mountains. Deciding to check it out, the first snow flakes fell shortly after at Wilsons Valley and, with blizzard conditions thereafter, we arrived at Charlotte Pass to find the landscape gradually turning white. By the next day, 18 cm of snow had fallen ... and we didn't have our skis!!



Main Range before the white-out day

Pack up day produced rain showers and extremely strong winds all night, leaving one member with a broken tent pole and part of the night spent in her car. Getting our tent down was a problem without it blowing away but it was finally thrown in the car and we warmed up with hot drinks and brekkie in Jindabyne before a windy drive home. Many, many thanks go to Shaune and Beatrice for organising an enjoyable but difficult trip on many counts and for the company of the other members.

Marilyn Fooks

Palm Beach to Cronulla - A Sydney Epic Organiser - Phil Travis

Last November we began a series of walks from Palm Beach to Cronulla. This will cover all of metropolitan Sydney's coastline and harbours from North to South. We will go over bridges at The Spit, Sydney Harbour and Taren Point. The walks began at Barrenjoey Lighthouse ending at the Hungry Point Lookout at Cronulla. The 20 monthly walks will be around 200 kilometres in total.



View from Barrenjoey Lighthouse

The idea is to have a fun series of walks with beautiful beaches and bushland, a few nice swims, outstanding headland views, 5-star restrooms (occasionally), cafes, shops and easy to use public transport. A basic map is posted on Facebook after each walk so you can do (or redo) walks.

Four walks totalling 43.4 kms have been completed so far over all of the northern beaches. The next walks will be around Sydney Harbour. The award for attending all 4 walks goes to Lauren, Lien, John and Heather with 6 others close behind on 3 walks!

Here are some of the highlights and events along the way with a few photos.

Walk 1 was from Palm Beach to Avalon. We found that getting to Palm Beach takes a long time with our first experience on the double-decker B-Line bus! After taking in the panoramic views of Pittwater and Broken Bay we passed the Home and Away film set and Jennifer Hawkins new mansion. Bangalley Headland was a bit

steep for some but with great views. We dodged the school kids on e-bikes at Avalon and a few of us had a cooling swim there.



Avalon Headland

Walk 2 was from Avalon to Mona Vale. The only shade at Bilgola was in the private area of the life-saving club but the locals didn't mind so we became honorary members for morning tea. Lyndell and Heather enjoyed some geocaching at the lookouts and Kathy needed a new hat, so she ran to Newport and back! After finding the "secret" trail out of Bungan we ended up with a swim at Mona Vale and a luxury hot shower.



Kathy's new hat

Walk 3 was from Mona Vale to Collaroy. We survived the flying golf balls and emergency landing planes at Mona Vale golf course and took a lovely photo at the Headland with two super-friendly golden retrievers! Morning tea was on Isabelle's rocks at stunning Turimetta Beach and onwards to the ocean pools at Narrabeen which John and Karen explored. Lunch was under Heather's Cook Pines and a sandy beach walk to Collaroy with a swim in the ocean pool with 100 school kids.



View North from Mona Vale Headland

Walk 4 was from Collaroy to Manly. Trevor and Judy walked down from their luxury Collaroy accommodation to avoid the bus. Distant views to the Central Coast at Long Reef Headland and then a break under the Norfolk Pines (or were they Cook Pines?) at Dee Why.



View from Long Reef Headland

A great lookout and a boardwalk at Curl Curl followed by a shady lunch overlooking Freshwater with Lauren and Lien on the children's swing. After a hill which Margaret enjoyed (or not), we arrived at Manly just in time for a Messina gelato or a beer along with a historic ferry ride.

Phil Travis



Freshwater Beach

Pygmy Possum - 2026 Organiser - Annette Mathews

37 Sutherland Bushwalkers recently enjoyed a wonderful getaway at Pygmy Possum Lodge in Kosciuszko National Park, based at beautiful Charlotte Pass.

For me, it was a first, both with the group and to the park itself, and what an unforgettable introduction it was. From the moment I arrived, I felt welcomed, supported and included. There is a genuine family spirit within this club. Everyone was generous with their time, encouragement and practical help, which made the experience even more special.



Mt Stilwell track head at Charlotte Pass

Perfect Weather, Endless Choices

We were blessed with spectacular conditions, clear blue skies every single day. The walking program was impressively varied, with many different options to choose from each day, catering for a wide range of abilities and interests.



Taking in the peacefulness of a mountain stream

Highlights included:

- Rams Head - declared by many as one of the best walks ever! Those of us who didn't make it this time (myself included!) have now firmly placed it on the "must-do next trip" list.
- The upper reaches of the Snowy Mountains
- Perisher Valley to Bullocks Flat - with both uphill and downhill options
- Porcupine Rocks
- The Sentinel
- Rennix Gap area
- The magnificent Main Range
- Guthega Dam to Mount Tate
- Guthega to Charlotte Pass



Near the tree line high up on the range

In addition, several members took to the trails on mountain bikes, while others explored the local region, including a visit to the Snowy Mountains schnapps distillery and time enjoying the cafés and shops in Jindabyne, plus a look around lively Thredbo.

Adventure (and Ingenuity!)

Considering the significant level of activity across the week, incidents were minimal. One memorable mishap occurred when Chris lost the soles of his boots on the Main Range walk! Fortunately, John leapt into action, expertly taping and securing the detached soles, enabling Chris to make it safely back to the lodge, a fine example of bushwalking teamwork and leadership in action.



Repairs on the run - Main Range!

Celebrations and Camaraderie

We celebrated Sheere's 70th birthday in style and enjoyed a fiercely competitive and thought provoking trivia night. Each evening from 5pm, happy hour brought everyone together to share stories from the day's adventures, a wonderful way to build connections and relive the highlights.



Everyone enjoys Happy Hour!

Special mention goes to Lien, who bravely swam more than once in the icy waters of the Snowy River an impressive achievement.



Main Range, Snowy River and the Yellow Brick Road

Thank You

A huge thank you to Annette for coordinating the trip so smoothly, your organisation made it all possible. Thanks also to all the walk and bike leaders who provided such a diverse and well-planned program, and to those who generously assisted with car shuffles and logistics.

This trip was a brilliant combination of adventure, scenery, friendship and fun. For a first timer, it was an incredibly warm and memorable introduction and certainly not the last.

Here's to the next Snowy Mountains adventure!

Patty Bianco



Annette and others in the Upper Snowy River

A Different Style of Walk Organiser - Gareth Denyer

Bonus points have to go to Gareth for getting it right: - a low tide and a warm sunny day for our Royal National Park, South West Arm adventure.



Wading in South West Arm

A week prior to the walk Gareth had done a recon of the programmed walk. However, he found that the off-track section up Saddle Gully Creek to Anice Falls was too rough and overgrown and advised us of the intended changes for the day.

The group of eleven met at Warumbul Rd, where everyone decided on just what footwear they would need for both track and water walking. Would putting my faith in wearing Volleys for all conditions be the right choice?



Swimwear was the clothing choice for today.

The walk down to Winifred seemed to have less loose stones than I remembered but I still felt some through the Volley's softer soles. Just downstream a bit from the head of navigation, it was a footwear change for the others. Into the water for a short shallow wade down and onto the other side of creek to a flat bushy area, where we deposited our packs out of sight. (a good hiding spot as Gareth overshot it on our return!) Now we were in new territory, walking in different depths of water, from ankle deep, to waist deep, to shoulder deep and even to have to swim depth. Luckily the water was warm and the sun was shining, so being in and out of water was okay on the body. When the Arm

opened up wide and deep it was time to return up stream stopping at a few deeper pools where some of us swam, with comments that swimming with footwear on wasn't quite so easy.



Cooling off in 'Tony's Pool' before heading up the hill.

Back to our packs where we had a late am tea break, before heading to head of nav where all eleven of us swam. Winifred Falls wasn't looking its best (and it had people there!) so we headed up to "Tony's Pool" for a freshwater swim and lunch. Oh, and empty the sand out of my Volleys and socks. With the lack of walking for the last couple of months, a couple of us old blokes weren't looking forward to the last 30-minute uphill back to our cars along with 30 plus degrees. Very pleased to say it was "no worries" and my Volleys went the distance also!

A really great day was had by all on this different type of club activity, thanks to our leader Gareth.

Allan Bunt

Bonnie Vale
16th - 18th February 2026

Organiser: Becky Rae

Eighteen of us camped at Bonnie Vale in a mixture of caravans, campers, motor homes and tents.

We intended to do a short walk the afternoon we arrived but apart from a couple of hardy souls the majority decided to veg out and wait for happy hour!



There are some magnificent trees around Bundeena.

On day two, in beautiful weather, we walked 12.5 km via Jibbon Head, along the cliff tops to the Cobblers and the Balconies, then through the bush back to Jibbon Beach with various options to shorten the walk and swimming options at the end.

On day three everyone packed up and headed home.

Thanks, Beck, for organising a very enjoyable camp.

Pete Guest

OUR JANUARY 2026 ADVENTURE

After our eldest granddaughter's stunning 3-day wedding at a winery in Pokolbin straight after Xmas, it was time to come back to Earth. Versatility was the name of the game on this holiday, and we needed it in spades.

We drove to Tantangara, passing the Snowy 2.0 portal en route, with the idea of backpacking to Circuits Hut. However, on parking the car, a storm erupted, promising large hailstones which had twice forced me off the road the previous day.

So, we about turned, driving back to Adaminaby and watching the storm from the shelter of a cabin. Next day, we successfully walked across Tantangara Plain to Circuits Hut - built in 1938 to

support grazing and very luxurious with its 4 rooms and a verandah. Next day we intended to continue walking to the next hut, Schofields. However, on departing Circuits, it seemed rather warm so we headed back to the car where we found we were under an extreme heatwave warning with 43 degrees expected for the next 3 days - definitely not safe for backpacking.



Bushfires in Victoria

Khancoban sounded like a safe haven to await cooler temps but there wasn't a bed to be found so Corryong was our next port of call where the last cabin awaited us. The next day, in car air-conditioning, we drove the Geehi Dam Road down to the dam which was a great drive and one which we hadn't done before. The next day, with the whole of Victoria under a state of emergency, we drove to a town lookout to observe the large Walcha fire burning in the north east, before a 4WD trip to Thowgla Waterfall - ironically only discovered when vegetation covering it was burnt in the 2019 fires. On arrival back at Corryong, we found the area to be under a Watch and Act order with the fire only 7 km from us. We drove to the local evacuation centre where we were offered food and accommodation but decided to leave the area whilst roads were still open. Tumbarumba, albeit an hour's drive away in the wrong direction, offered the only bed available in a motel, probably too expensive for everyone else but we had to have a bed for the night.

With a home awaiting us at Mount Beauty, we had to get some mileage under us so spent the next day mostly driving on the NSW side of the border where there was no mention of fires in its neighbouring State - fires know no borders and, by this time, it was too late to leave Corryong so we just got out in time. Crossing over the border later in the day, there was nothing but evacuation and fire info on the radio!

We enjoyed our 3 day stay at Mt Beauty, watching the smoke drifting over Mt Bogong and preparing for another backpack in the Victorian Alps which had so far managed to evade the fires. In fact, we had the whole park to ourselves, securing a great campsite at Pretty Valley after walking into Cope Hut for the night. However, after a couple of days, we heard there were big storms on the way, last year's storms having destroyed a local caravan park. So, we heeded the forecast, decamped and headed to Wodonga for a couple of nights, watching the storms from a distance.



Puffing Billy

The aim of this trip had been to explore a number of national parks north east of Melbourne which were unknown to us. For this reason, we had booked a home at Warburton in the Yarra Valley for ten nights. The large home, buried in the bush and opposite the national park, had us, again, using the Fires Near Me app daily as, with the weather again heating up, we were going to make a rapid evacuation if there was any suggestion of a fire

happening in the area, especially as fires were popping up all over Victoria. Fortunately, the national parks in our location were unaffected and we spent nine days walking and exploring many waterfalls, lookouts, reservoirs, rocks, ranges, botanical gardens, ancient trees and, last but not least, somehow securing seats on the original Puffing Billy steam train which, even with three daily trips, was fully booked until end-March.

We returned home via Wagga, using accommodation we had to cancel a year ago. However, 45 degrees was a real shock to the system. Junee Licorice Factory and The Roundhouse Train Museum kept us out of the heat but we were glad to return home to slightly cooler temps and to reflect on our adventure. Nothing at the beginning had gone as planned but one has to adapt to situations as they arise.

Marilyn Fooks



Communicating with the Activity Organiser

When booking an activity, most members of the club leave a short message to the activity organiser as part of the booking process. The activity organiser will receive an email and will see this message when they log in to Bilby and validate your booking. Further messages can still be sent to the organiser via the booking if you need to ask questions or update the organiser. The best way to do this is through your booking, which can be viewed by selecting 'My Bookings' from the drop-down menu in the top right corner where your name is. Click on the button that says 'View Details' for that booking and there is a box to type in that says 'Send a Message to the Activity Owner'. This message will be sent as an email to the organiser through the Bilby system and the organiser can also reply to that message to you. These messages are only visible to you and the activity organiser, like normal emails are. **NEVER use the message box at the bottom of the activity information page that says 'Have a question for the activity organiser?'**

What is a Closed Activity?

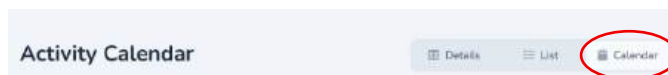
A closed activity refers to an activity that is **closed to Bilby bookings**. To book a closed activity, you need to contact the organiser directly. The activity organiser is listed on the activity information page and there is a link to 'View profile' to find the contact details for the organiser. Check whether the organiser wants communication via email, phone or text. **NEVER use the message box at the bottom of the activity information page that says 'Have a question for the activity organiser?'**

Using the Message Board

A message board is an effective way of having group conversations with others on the activity. Each activity has its own message board which can be accessed via your booking. The message board can be viewed by selecting 'My Bookings' from the drop-down menu in the top right corner where your name is. Click on the button that says 'View Details' for that booking and there is a link on the left-hand side that says 'Message Board'. Any messages here can be seen by any person booked on the activity. Generally a leader will put final details, like starting locations and time etc, here for you to look at. The leader should use the '@Mention' button to put the @everyone tag so all participants get an email notification about the info, as emails are not generated without an @tag. The email will have a direct link at the bottom of the email that goes directly to the message board for that activity. Participants can use the message board to ask questions and organise car-pooling but be mindful that if you use the tag @everyone then all participants will also receive an email, which can be annoying if this is overused. Individual @Mention tags can be used to email the message directly to a specific participant, if needed.

Calendar View of the Program

Another nice feature of the Bilby program is the ways in which the program can be viewed. Most people are familiar with the 'Details' view that gives 10 activities per page with a picture and information about each activity and the 'List' view that allows 50 activities per page, which is good for printing purposes but there is a 3rd view that may have been overlooked. The calendar view shows a month-by-month view on a calendar page and highlights which days have activities. This might be useful if you want to match it up with your calendar to see if there is an activity on the days that you are free. The 'Calendar' button is at the top on the right-hand side of the program page.



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

Membership Awards

The 2026 club badges for membership have been awarded to the following people:

25 yrs Badge

Judith Jaye
Leonie Bell



Judith and Leonie receive their Service Badge from Ken

15 yr Badge

Alan Webb
Bronwyn Hicks
Christopher Carr
Debra Coutinho
Diane Whitbread
Linda Shearman
Najeeb Ul Hassan Syed
Peter Barrington



10 Yr Service Badge presentation Octavia (for Peter), Bronwyn, Debbie & Alan

10 yr Badge

Carol Weston
Clare Wang
Denise Green
Finlay Shaw
Gordon Pickering
Jo Blackman
John Cummings
Louise Ryan
Malcolm Stephen
Michele Howie
Nancy Pickering
Penelope Mcdonagh
Rasia Rubiya Dungarwalla
Shamun Dungarwalla
Stephen Shubitz
Tony Mcdonagh



10 Yr Service Badge presentation

Q4 Club Activity Stats (Oct, Nov, Dec)

Sutherland Bushwalking Club now has 315 registered members and we participated in 61 club activities during Q4 2025.

Activity Type	Number of Activities	Number of Participants
Morning Walk	15	169
Day Walk	37	329
Paddle	6	36
Multi-day Walk	0	0
Multi-day Trip	2	44
Track Work	1	11

(Data from Activity Organiser's Trip Reports)

Annual General Meeting



A warm welcome (or welcome back) to our new members:

Jinrui Bi	Ed Holly
Gary O'Neill	Peter Fane De Salis
Helen Laurendet	Lance Howes
David Priddel	Rose Collins
Louise Lawrence	Claire Morgan
James Orr	Glynis McLaughlin
Susan Close	Jodi Aitken
Matt Bell	Ms Julie Clarke
Nicola Munro	Jeannie Nicol
Ross Munro	

Save the Date



Wednesday 25 March 2026:
GENERAL MEETING
 Sutherland Community Centre,
 Stapleton Ave 7pm.

The 2026 AGM was held on Wednesday 25 February at the Stapleton Centre, Sutherland. 29 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	Lolita Garcia
Program Secretary	Heather Hughes
Newsletter Editor	John Hughes
Membership Officer	Sheree Brinsley
Web Administrator	Ann Kirschner/Ken Newman
Equipment Officer	Mark Laurendet
Public Officer	Annette Mathews
Auditor	Phil Escott
Email Administrator	Margaret Dooley
Email Assistants	Robin Gordon, Annette Mathews, Heather Hughes
Friends of RNP	Tony Larkin
Delegates to Bushwalking NSW Inc	Shaune Walsh
Supper Co-ordinators,	Gill Spencer & Vanessa Hicks
Returning Officer	Phillip Meade
Auditor	Phil Escott

More Club Photos from our Facebook Posts



Kangaroo Ck Falls and Pool - Irina Sorokina



A nice spot for morning tea - Marilyn Fooks



Careful Robin! - Allan Bunt



Not always in the bush - Patty Bianco



Mangroves, Minnamurra R - Marilyn Fooks



Lunch by the Pool - Allan Bunt



Uloola Turrets - Allan Bunt



SW Arm Wading - Libbey Davey



Natalie's favourite tree - Heather Hughes



Urban Bush - Vicky Turner