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Quarterly Magazine
Canberra Bushwalking
Club



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Canberra Bushwalking Club Inc
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A break beside the Upper Shoalhaven River, Nadgigomar Nature Reserve

Photo by Ian Wright

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Guidelines for Contributions

Members' contributions are welcomed – articles, poems, recipes, photos, artworks and other items related to bushwalking, conservation and allied activities. Articles may be up to approximately 2,500 words in length, although most will probably be considerably shorter. Those describing long trips, especially if they are exploratory or unusual in some way, may need to be longer in order to be useful to readers interested in the areas described.

Please send all contributions to:

contributions@canberrabushwalkingclub.org

If you would like a short message to be published in the Monthly Update, please mark it as **URGENT**.

Disclaimer: Any opinions expressed by individual authors do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, the Committee or members of CBC.

Deadline for contributions to the next Quarterly Magazine will be 1 August 2024, though earlier would be appreciated.

Please follow the **Detailed Guidelines** on page 3 when making a contribution.

All members of the committee can be contacted in one email to:

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CONTENTS

CBC Committee 2023-24	2
Guidelines for Contributions	2
Contribution Guidelines	3
ACT Public Holidays.....	4
KNP Closures for Feral Animal Control 4 April to 4 October, 2024	4
President's Report.....	5
Walks Waffle	7
Membership Matters.....	13
Editor's Effusions	14
Ginini Falls: Past and Present	15
Bagging the Big Ones: Mounts Bimberi, Murray and Morgan - A tale of One Man and Six Women (21 – 24 March 2024)	19
Minimal Impact Bushwalking continued.....	23
High Tatras – Slovakia, 23-30 September, 2023.....	25
Helicopter Rescues	28
CBC Social Media	32
Equipment Hire	33
Bulletin Board.....	34

Contribution Guidelines

Continued from page [2](#)

Please follow these Detailed Guidelines when making a contribution

- The most acceptable text software is Word. Please *do not* use Publisher, or send via Google. I mostly use Calibri 12.
- Please ensure your articles have been thoroughly edited and spell-checked, and use only basic formatting (paragraphs and headings, if needed; no boxes. or dividing lines)
- Please make sure any photos have captions and the photographer's name. If a photo is not yours, make sure you have permission to use it.
- Photos should be high resolution, though I would appreciate it if you could straighten seriously oblique horizons.
- Please specify the topic of your contribution in the Subject line of your email, and send only one article / contribution per email. (More than one photo can be sent in an email, depending on the file size.)
- The deadline for contributions to the next Quarterly Magazine will be 1 August 2024, though earlier would be appreciated.
- If you are considering writing a walk report, please check with the Editor first so that we don't end up with more than one article describing the same walk.

ACT Public Holidays

Why not take advantage of the long weekends to run some extended overnight walks?

King's Birthday: Monday 10 June 2024

Labour Day: Monday 7 October 2024

Christmas Day: Wednesday 25 December 2024

Boxing Day: Thursday 26 December 2024.

New Year's Day: Wednesday 1 January 2025

Australia Day: Monday 27 January 2025

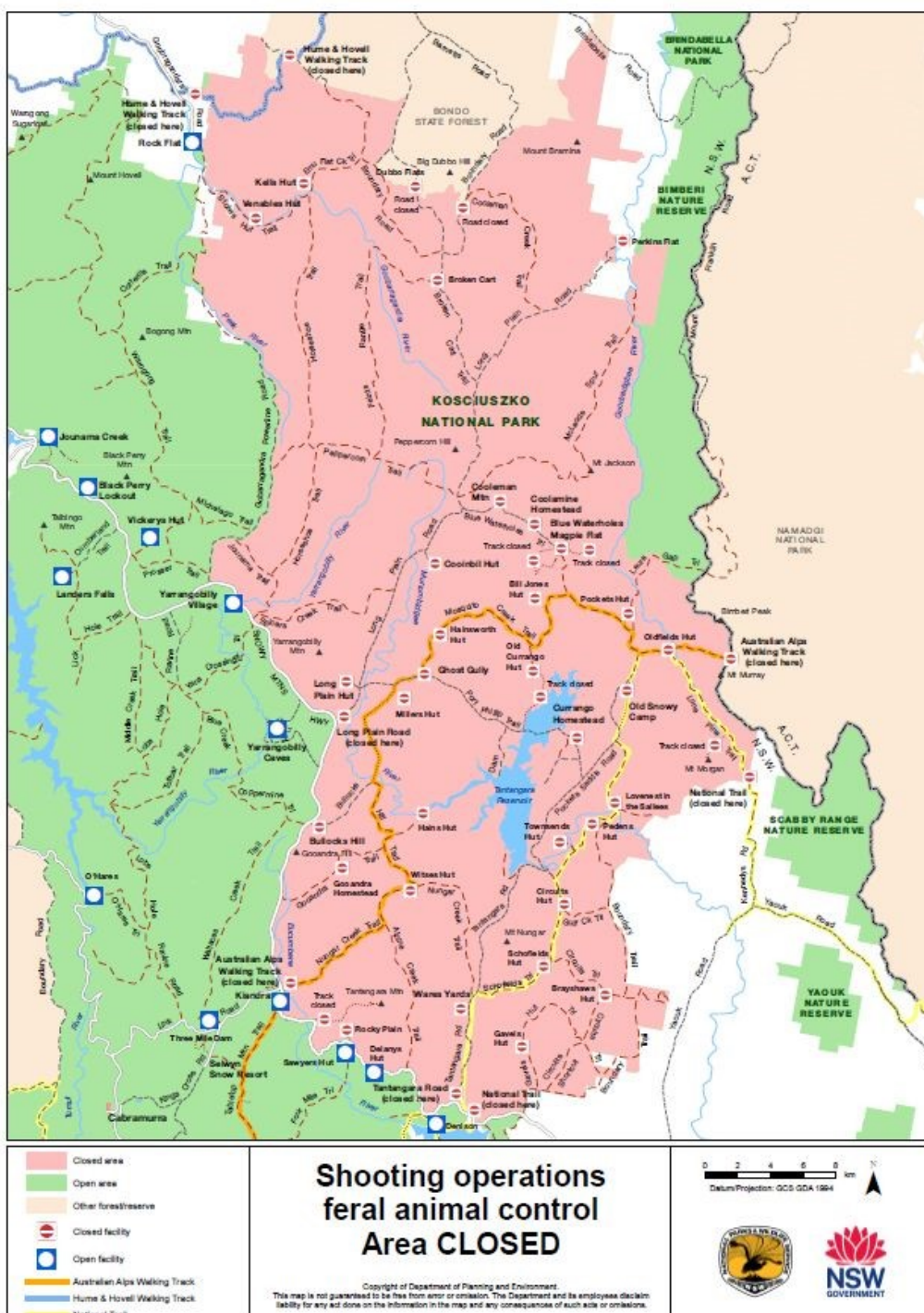
Canberra Day: Monday 10 March 2025

Easter: Friday 18 April – Monday 21 April 2025

ANZAC Day: Thursday 25 April 2025

Reconciliation Day: Monday 2 June 2025

KNP Closures for Feral Animal Control 4 April to 4 October, 2024



As I'm lying here in my sleeping bag on a bitterly cold night camped by Scabby Lake, I am reflecting on how wonderful it is to have so many experienced bushwalkers in our Club. The amount of knowledge they have is just amazing, and they are always so willing to share their wisdom and skills. I have felt very much like a student on this trip, trying to take it all in.

Then on the flipside, it is equally amazing just how much I have learnt in the past five years. It is very rewarding to be on trips with less experienced walkers, and to be the mentor and provider of information in that situation, passing on tips and traps, and helping people to feel confident and at ease.

This constant passing on of information and sense of camaraderie between our members makes me so proud to be associated with the Canberra Bushwalking Club. Our sense of community, of inclusion, and the willingness to help each other out is second to none.

A frosty camp (8.12am in late April) at Scabby Lake.....*photo by Noelia Pinto*



We are a close-knit community, and when we suffer a loss, it is strongly felt. Unfortunately, we have lost not one, but two, of our beloved members in the past couple of months, and both quite unexpectedly.

Robert Walters I met out on the track before I even became a member of the CBC, just over five years ago. In fact, he may well have been the first person to inform me of the existence of the CBC. Robert was a genteel man, who thought nothing of climbing his way into the most precarious of positions, aiming for that perfect shot with his camera. He never had a bad word to say about anybody, and was a true lover of nature.

The other member that we lost was Bob Dewar, a man of incredible intellect, who passed away suddenly in the UK whilst undertaking a six-month sabbatical. When he was not occupied in the world of theoretical plasma physics, Bob was an avid bushwalker, and led many walks. He was particularly active with the Wednesday Walks program and was also a member of the Brindabella Bushwalking Club.

In terms of the CBC's walking program, our range of activities continues to be strong and varied, and we continue to attract new members and guests. John Evans and Garry Boxsell continue to do a stellar job, both as Walks Secretary and Assistant Secretary, and as leaders as well.



In order to assist with the provision of training and resources to Club members, which forms part of our activities program, the Committee re-evaluated the CBC's budget and made some reallocations in order to bolster the resources available for the provision of safety and training.

Needless to say, safety and training is extremely important to the CBC, and the extra financial resources meant that we were able to start offering first aid training to our leaders. We are hoping to be able to offer the first aid training a couple of times a year, and are looking into advanced first aid options as well.

On the note of safety, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members that they should familiarise themselves with what to do in the event of an emergency. Please refer to our website for information in this regard.

Alan demonstrates how to apply a snake bandage
Photo by Noelia Pinto

I would also like to remind members that there are a number of walking areas that are currently closed:

- The northern part of Kosciusko National Park is closed for feral animal control between 4 April 2024 and 4 October 2024 (see map on page 4); and
- The ACT Government is also undertaking a Thermal Assisted Aerial Control (TAAC) program to remove vertebrate pest species from key conservation areas, water catchments and peri urban areas between 13 May 2024 and 11 June 2024. This will affect parts of Namadgi National Park, Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Molonglo River Reserve, Googong Foreshores and Tidbinbilla. The table showing these areas can be found in John Evan's Walks Waffle in this issue on page 4. Finally, I am excited to share that Bilby has recently been updated to version 14.0.0. I will not go in to detail about the changes as John Evans has already done so via his weekly email. Hopefully, members will find the updates useful.

That's a wrap from me. Until next time, happy walking!

Noelia Pinto, President

I trust you are enjoying activities. Your leaders are doing a fantastic job in offering a large range of quality trips – from half-day local rambles to multi-day ACT, interstate and overseas trips. Do thank them.

As the weather gets colder, don't stop getting out. There's nothing like walking on a clear, frosty morning once you've warmed up.

If it's your aspiration, keep challenging yourself in manageable increments to enjoy more. It might be to try a longer day walk after becoming proficient at half-day rambles. Try an overnight trip – carrying your bedroom, kitchen, larder and other essentials on your back. The Club has equipment for hire. Multi-day trips can take you to places few will ever visit and overseas trips to different cultures and land forms.

First Aid Training – preference given to activity leaders

Garry Boxsell, our Assistant Walks Sec, has arranged first aid training:

Looking to update your first aid skills? The club is offering first aid training for up to 20 leaders at no cost to members. The training is scheduled for 12 Jun 24 and all leaders are invited to attend. So checkout the details in Bilby [here](#), make a booking, and the course registration details will be on-forwarded to you. Participation is currently limited to leaders, but may be extended to members if numbers are needed.

Communication via Bilby

You would be familiar with email messages from Bilby. For example, when your activity booking is accepted, Bilby sends you an email alert 'Message from Bilby'. (If not, check your spam/junk mail.)

You can also communicate 1-to-1 with your activity leader via a private Note. Each interaction also results in a Bilby email alert.

Most leaders send out final arrangements for an activity using the Bilby Message Board, tagging all valid participants via @everyone. Some leaders ask that you confirm receipt of the details. But if you do not **TAG them** by selecting them from the @Mention list, no Bilby email alert will be generated. So how will they know you saw the details?

Any Valid participant can send a communication to any other Valid participant/s using the Message Board. Again, if you don't **TAG them**, they won't get a Bilby email alert.

Get the message? Whenever you use the Message Board, **TAG the recipient/s!**

Bilby Enhancements

Have you noticed any changes to Bilby recently? They were asked for by CBC members and put to the developer by Keith Thomas, our Web Manager. See the fine print here, but:

- Duration of multi-day activities now appears in activity list

- The activity owner has been added to the @Mention dropdown list in the activity Administration tab. This facilitates communication between the activity owner and admin officers. For example, if you'd like a 'short notice' activity published as soon as possible, send a Note from the Administration tab to the Walks Sec (currently John-Evans). Alternatively, text/ring me.
- A warning is displayed if you update your activity description and try to leave the page without saving changes.
- Shift+Enter removed from Notes, Message Board entry creation. (If you want a new line or blank line in your note, just press Enter).
- Search function improved on the well-used [Bilby wiki](#).

Health Limitations

A party was recently attacked by aggressive European Wasps. Thankfully, no one suffered anaphylaxis.

Do you remember that box that you blithely ticked when renewing membership, or signing an Acknowledgement of Risks and Obligations form? It includes:

Advise the leader of any physical or other limitation, or any dependence on medication, that may require urgent attention during the activity.

Do privately advise your activity leader of relevant issues before the trip starts. The importance of this increases for overnight trips in remote areas.

Member Profile: Linda Groom



1. You have been a 'bush baby' all your life. When did you first join the Canberra Bushwalking Club?

Around 1976. I had been a member of bushwalking clubs in Brisbane and Sydney, so when I moved to Canberra, it was a natural thing to do to join a club.

2. What is one of the most challenging adventures that you've been on?

Back in the late 1970s, as I recall, a group of CBC members went to New Zealand and hired guides. We climbed Mt Dechen, one of the easier alpine peaks. I didn't find it all that easy, however, and was so focused on moving quickly past a spot with a few hundred metres of exposure that I stood on my own hand. Which is not a good idea when you are wearing crampons.

Linda takes a pause in Tallaganda State Forest

3. *When did you decide to pay a bit back and become a walk leader? What obstacles or fears did you have to overcome? Where was your first led walk?*

I led my first CBC walk to Craggs Creek and Siren Song Creek in Kosciuszko NP. Pretty much everyone else on the trip would have been capable of leading the same walk, so it was an easy way to start leading.

4. *You have a tremendous reputation for leading trips to interesting places. How do you find them?*

I have a recipe:

- a) Roam around Google Maps and find the green patches.
- b) Look more closely at the green patches, using GPS Visualiser Draw, a free online source of maps. Flick between contour maps and satellite image maps and look for rocky places, places where the contours bunch up, sharp bends in creeks, white patches in creeks (often these are cascades), the greener bits that are rainforest, flat areas near creeks that might be campable, and access points where cars could be parked.
- c) Way point all these interesting bits.
- d) Draw a line that connects some of the interesting bits – a route that looks to you like you could walk it in the time you have available.
- e) Often, do a recce, mainly to check the access, and a little bit of the walk to get a feel for how fast you would travel in that country. Take a photo for Bilby.

And you're ready to go.

5. *What would be your advice to someone thinking of stepping up to become a CBC walk leader?*

Firstly, walk with a variety of leaders and ask them questions like 'What will you do if the group turns out to be slower than expected?' Or, if they hesitate, looking left and right 'Are you weighing up options? What are your thoughts?'

Then, remember the answers that seemed to fit with your kind of walk, discard the other answers, and plan walks that suit your own style.

6. *What's your opinion of Bilby, the Club's activity and membership management system?*

It's more streamlined and easier to maintain than the old system. I think the privacy balance – between leaders, who need certain data to respond to bookings and organise transport easily, and participants, who may not want to reveal much to a leader – should be shifted a bit more towards helping leaders.

Linda is a life member of CBC, has held many committee positions over the years, and has contributed a huge number of activities to the life of the club. She has a keen interest and involvement in conservation.

Walking Tracks

Into track walking? Many urban and urban fringe tracks are being upgraded by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. Areas include North – Black Mountain Forest Loop Track (Stan's 'Hat Band'), Googong – Blue Tiles Track, The Pinnacle and Mt Painter Summit Tracks; South – Mt Arawang Summit area, some Mt Taylor tracks, Red Hill; TNR - Baraygnu Murawung Walk; Woodstock NR – Uriarra Loop Trail; Murrumbidgee Discovery Trail – Tuggers to Pine Island; CCT – Northern Section.

I recently [checked out](#) the Granite Tors Walking Track improvements.

AAWT from Mt Tennent summit to NSW border (Murrays Gap) closed Tuesday 14 May reopening Saturday 25 May. NVC to Mt Tennent summit remains open. NSW AAWT closure reopens 7pm 4 October.

Local Walking Area Closures

Many closures for aerial control programs in NNP, MRC, Rob Roy, TNR and other areas May-June. Check-out locations and times [here](#).

		13-May-24	14-May-24	15-May-24	16-May-24	17-May-24	18-May-24	19-May-24	20-May-24	21-May-24	22-May-24	23-May-24	24-May-24	25-May-24	26-May-24	27-May-24	28-May-24	29-May-24	30-May-24	31-May-24	01-Jun-24	02-Jun-24	03-Jun-24	04-Jun-24	05-Jun-24	06-Jun-24	07-Jun-24	08-Jun-24	09-Jun-24	10-Jun-24	11-Jun-24	12-Jun-24		
		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed		
Namadgi National Park	East (East of Boboyan Road)																																	
Namadgi National Park	West (West of Boboyan Road)																																	
Namadgi National Park	Northern Namadgi & Lower Cotter Catchment																																	
Murrumbidge River Corridor	Stony Creek Nature Reserve & Hyles Forest (Cotter Pines)																																	
Murrumbidge River Corridor	Bullen Range Nature Reserve & Miowera and Pierces Creek Forests																																	
Murrumbidgee River Corridor	Gigerline Nature Reserve & Ingledene Forest																																	
Canberra Nature Park	Rob Roy Nature Reserve																																	
Murrumbidgee River Corridor	Swamp Creek Nature Reserve																																	
Murrumbidgee River Corridor	Sherwood Forest & Uriarra Forest																																	
Molonglo River Reserve	Molonglo River Reserve																																	
Googong Foreshores	Googong Foreshores																																	
Tidbinilla	Tidbinilla + Pierces Creek Forest																																	

Extra hard M/H Wednesday Walk

A trial is underway of CBC-sponsored, ad hoc, leader vetted, capped numbers, extra hard M/H Wednesday Walks. The first activity was completed on Wednesday 10 April, the next on Wednesday 15 May. The concept originated from discussion between walkers from multiple clubs on a recent trip. Wonderful idea from Monika.

Interested in Your Trip Leader's Navigation?

Around 30 members have completed a half-day Practical Map and Compass Navigation exercise. They're all primed to book on Rob and Jenny Horsfield's renowned Navigation Course when it is advertised. Many thanks to Terrylea Reynolds, Meg McKone, Rob Horsfield, Di McDeane, Sandra Teffer and Garry Boxsell for providing mentoring help during the recent exercises.

But navigation requires practice, practice, practice. Why not ask your walk leader if they are willing to share details of the trip with you? For each leg or bound from recognisable spot to the next, they'll have a good idea of details such as destination, estimated distance, elevation change, expected going, map to ground features (eg, handrails and catching features).

Bushwalking NSW Leadership Training - available to ALL CBC members

63 members have completed this online training. It’s back on the Bilby activity list [here](#), and is always available via the [2024 Training Plan](#).

Have you walked in Kowen?

The Kowen area, in the ACT but to the east of Queanbeyan, provides different walking. From the Molonglo Gorge in the south, to ACT border markers in the north and the Glenburn Historical area in the east, it also has many pine trees. I recently came across an e-book on Amazon, [‘Kowen: Trails and Tales’ by Peter Komidar](#). It’s a great read and it rekindled my interest in the area. \$4.

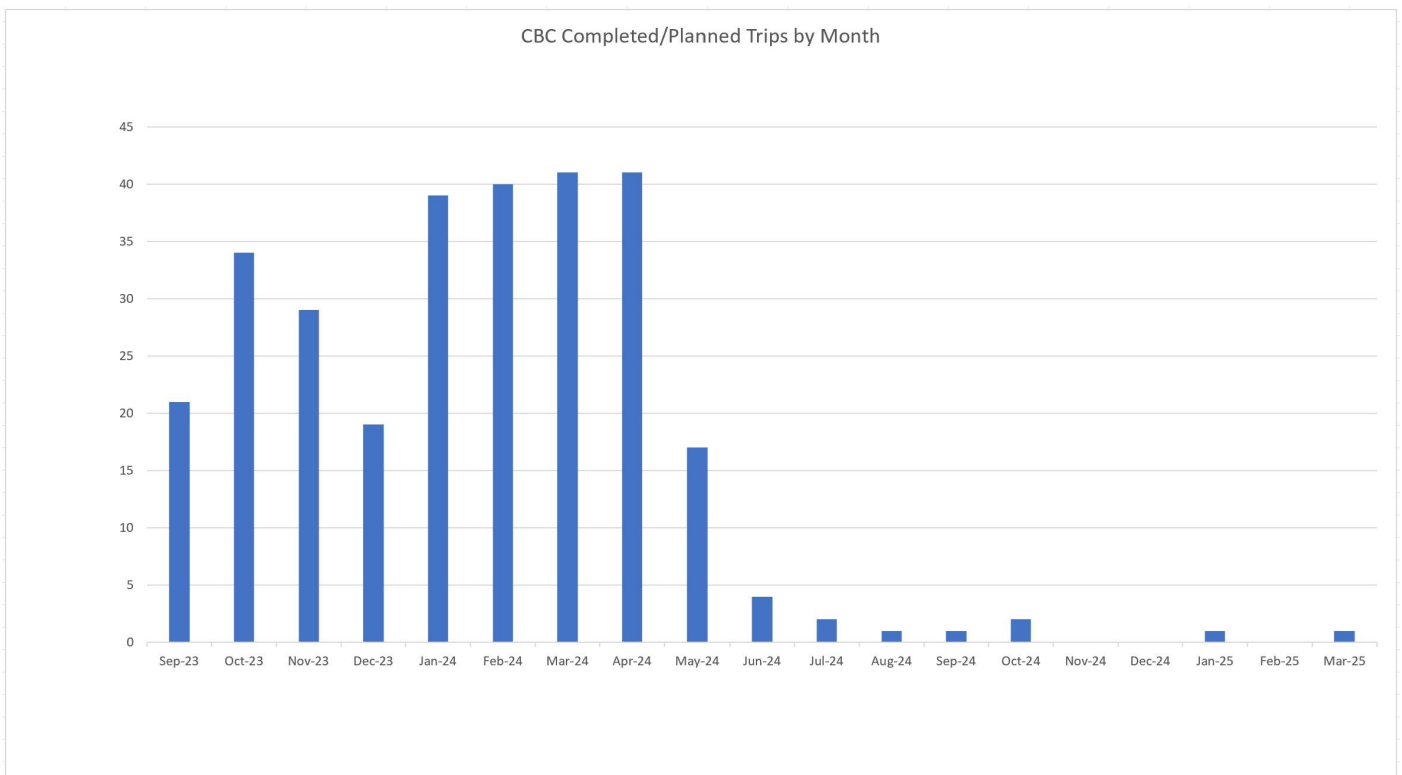
New Facebook Administrator

Lam (SenFei Lam) is our new CBC Facebook Administrator. Get a handle on what she does for us, and how you should submit your Facebook post requests [here](#).

Many thanks to Joe Carmona who has very ably filled the role to date.

Activities for everyone! - CBC Trip Metrics

Your wonderful volunteer activity leaders continue to produce a smorgasbord of offerings. In the last quarter, trips have been led by Dave Abela, Jenny Arnold, Jeff Bennetts, Monika Binder, Garry Boxsell, Mike Bremers, David Briese, Greg Buckman, Cynthia Burton, Michael Clisby, Andrea Coombas, Luisa Dal Molin, John Danaro, Irene Davies, David Dedenczuk, Michael de Raadt, Gerald Dodgson, Allan Donnelly, Roger Edwards, Marlene Eggert, Linda Groom, Laeli Hogan, Jenny Horsfield, Rob Horsfield, John Kelly, Diana Kirby, Stephen Marchant, Meg McKone, Dick Morton, Sal Ozgul, Mark Peirce, Terrylea Reynolds, Phillip Starr, Andrew Struik, Sandra Teffer, Keith Thomas, Ian Wright, Tim Wright, John Evans.



Preparing for a Multiday Walk

More great information from Caro Ryan at Lotsafreshair - how to get fit and prepare your body for a multi-day walk. Watch Caro's video [here](#).

Tidbinbilla NR Temporary Visitors Centre

The temporary Visitors' Centre is now open. The Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve is open 7.30am till 6.00pm (8.00pm in daylight savings). Free entry.



View of Gibraltar Rocks from beneath the Bullen Range, on one of John's recent day walks

Photo by Meg McKone

Welcome to our new members who have joined since our last newsletter (12 February 2024) to 30 April 2024:

Joanne Brown	Mahil Kuruppu
Imogen	Boyd McCarron
Lynne Rackley	Susannah Mennen
Cordelia Gee	Deborah Rothschild
Philippa Larkin	Bernadette Murphy
Kathy O'Neil	Jojee Joseph
Abraham Kurian	Nathan Li
Penny Steel	Glenn Stroud
Hugh Sweatman	Laura Castell
Alicia Kaylock	Debra Robertson
Renata Kruger	Karol Andrzejewski
Maureen Gardner	Leathen Johnson
Trudy Thornton	Helen Hunter
Andra Eisenberg	

It's great to see so many new members, and after a period where our membership stubbornly hovered at around 400, this year so far has seen an upward trend. As of 29 May, we have 412 members.

Andrea Coombas

Membership Secretary

One of the benefits of doing a particular walk more than once is noticing how different it may look on different occasions, depending on the season, the weather and even one's frame of mind.

I remember a trip years ago where we'd camped at the junction of Wheengee Whungee Creek and Middle Christies Creek in Kanangra Boyd National Park. We spent some time exploring up Christies Creek and the next day continued downstream to the Kowmung. One member of the party commented that the downstream section was much more beautiful than upstream, which surprised me, thinking as I did that both sections were pretty special. Then I realised that the first day had been cloudy and dull, while the second was fine with the sun glistening through the leaves and sparkling on the water. Since then, I've always hoped for sunny days on river trips.

The season makes a difference too, obviously in what flowers are blooming, but also in subtler ways. Last February I followed the road from Frank and Jacks Hut round the western side of Bogong Creek. The reeds were a carpet of feathery mauve surrounded by verdant grass. The colour palette a few months later was quite different—the reeds had seeded and turned yellow while the surrounding grass was looking somewhat browned off.

Floods can tear away beautiful flat river banks and leave great piles of debris which make walking difficult and camping there impossible. Drought can cast a bare, thirsty pall over land which was previously lush and green. Recovery after a raging bushfire can result in the growth of almost impenetrable scrub.

We tend to expect that what we see the first time is what has always been and should be in the future. But Nature is always in a state of flux and the landscape will never stay the same.



Bogong Swamp in January (left) and April (right) *Photos by Meg McKone*



View from the top of Ginini Falls *Photo by Greg Buckman*

Past:

Talking to Philip Gatenby about the recent day trip Garry Boxsell led to Ginini Falls in January 2024 reminded me of the story of early Canberra bushwalker Cla Allen and his circle of intrepid friends who explored much of the mountain country west of Canberra in the 1930s. This was at a time when maps of the area showed very few details of the lower Cotter catchment area. Here is an account of the trip, followed by a 2024 postscript!

Allen, in his small book *Hiking from early Canberra* published in 1977, recalls a memorable trip to Ginini Falls in the long weekend of 1-3 October 1932. For one thing it was the first 'mixed party' (one that included women), a practice which at that time was considered undesirable unless there were chaperones present.

The large group of nine men and nine women, joined on the second day by three more men who'd come in later - they worked in banking and had to work on Saturday mornings – were dropped by a truck at Lees Springs on the Mt Franklin Rd on the afternoon. Dividing into three groups for purposes of fires and cooking, they collected water and set out along the boundary survey lines. By 6pm they had climbed Mt Franklin and turned down the south-east side of the mountain and then turned south to hit Ginini Creek. It was dark as they made their way down the steep bank towards the creek, with nowhere easy to camp because of fallen logs. They set up camp among the logs and struggled to get fires going and get good wa-

ter from the creek. 'Everywhere was boggy and we kept tripping over logs and losing things in the dark. Later on there was some singing and we did our best to get a good night's sleep.' During the night one of the girls, Nina, developed a bad cramp in her foot.

Next morning they moved downstream to a delightful camping ground. From there it was a short distance to go down to admire the Falls. Many of the party went to the bottom taking the safe part around the edge. Cla measured the Falls' height as 520 feet. With his scientific bent (he was an astronomer at Mt Stromlo) Cla calculated the stream temperature at the top of the Falls as 45.7 F and as 46 F at the bottom – heat generated by the fall.

By the next morning Nina was in great pain and couldn't put her foot to the ground. The men (most of them keen Rover scouts) devised a stretcher made of young saplings, with an old sleeping bag placed over the cross pieces. Nina sat on this facing back while going uphill then facing forward going downhill to the Brindabella road. The 12 men broke into two teams, with three men lifting on each side, while still carrying heavy packs. 'At each rest and change, Cla's aneroid showed we were making substantial progress against the 1600 feet to be climbed.' In one or two thick patches of scrub Nina was 'piggy backed'.



A log provides a welcome creek crossing from one patch of scrub to another *Greg Buckman*

The party was to be collected by truck at the upper end of the road in Brindabella – so there was a further 3000 feet to go steeply down, some of which was again with Nina on piggy back through thick wattle regrowth. They reached Brindabella after 4pm, carrying the stretcher across the river before depositing Nina near the truck. ‘The girls walked across the Goodradigbee on a long thin log without a hand rope, and found this an adventure.’ Mr Blewitt of Brindabella station supplied the party with hot coffee and then they scrambled aboard the truck, taking the stretcher home as a memento for their Rower headquarters. Poor Nina had a nightmare journey in considerable pain over the jolting road. The truck was so loaded that in the end the stretcher was thrown out.

Present:

On 25 January 2024 Garry Boxsell led an intrepid group of seven on a challenging CBC day walk to Ginini Falls, the highest falls in the ACT. The falls are down a ridge from Mt Franklin. The walk started in moderate scrub but about halfway down hit fairly thick scrub made worse by a lot of fallen trees from the 2003 ACT bushfires. We only averaged 1km/hr and it took us nine hours to walk ten kilometres down and back but the effort was worth it: The view from the top of the falls was spellbinding with a great view over Mt Domain, Tidbinbilla Mountain and Stockyard Spur plus the upper part of the waterfall. This walk is strictly for the dedicated but the falls are more than worth it.



The intrepid 2024 party enjoying a brief respite from the scrub. *Photo by Greg Buckman*

Border Marker Hunting near the ACT Nudists' Club and HQJOC

John Evans

Walking the border in Sheaffe's steps one day,
I was with some mates out off the Kings Highway.
It was to be a special – no, make that spatial – walk,
Soon we were off with no time for talk.

Armed with GPS stuffed full of data,
Thanks to Alex Petrow from ACTPLA we knew where we'd be later.

First to the east-most point of the ACT,
Marked with a near 100-year blaze still on a tree.

As a 'man of the cloth' the next part filled me with fear,
We were to pass by the ACT Nudists' club, very near.
I called to my mates "Avert your eyes, I say
Or else I'll have to spend time on my knees and pray."

Past that temptation our next goal was the rail line,
Searching for border markers from time to time.
Arriving, no rail nor train was in view,
Explanation from a mate "You're standing on top of a tunnel – you goose, you!"

We found the rail tracks where they emerged from the hill,
And followed them along until
Cameras and lights and sharp barbed wire announced where we be
Crossing the road leading to secret HQJOC.

On the railway easement we gave it a wide birth
Not intending to disturb soldiers, they're the salt of the earth.
So following the surveyors we continued on our way,
By now near Kowen Forest, well east of the Kings Highway.

To my trusty companions I said, "There's a mile marker somewhere there,"
And snapped a pic of them searching, bums in the air.

The next thing to happen certainly gave us a stir
As up pulled behind us the AFP, "What are you doing here sir?
I must see that map you're holding in your hand.
What are those markings, so near to our land?"
"We're hunting border markers," I said.
I reckon the cops thought I was gone in the head.

No spy could dream up a scheme so weird ... so they sent us on our way with a polite "Good day".

Well, that's my story for today and it's the gospel truth
No doubt you surveyors have led such field excursions in your youth.

Bagging the Big Ones: Mounts Bimberi, Murray and Morgan A tale of One Man and Six Women (21 – 24 March 2024)

Noelia Pinto



The biggest (Bimberi) in the bag

Photo by Noelia Pinto

Participants: Greg B (leader), Rivera, Noelia P, Maggie D, Wahyu S, Inga D, Jeanette S.

Day 1

Our meeting spot was in the north of Canberra, just for a change, at the Watson shops. From there we drove, via the bakery at Adaminaby, to the end of Pocket Saddle Road, east of Tantangara Reservoir. Around 12.30pm we started walking along the Blue Waterholes, Murrays Gap and Lone Pine Fire Trails to a campsite on the upper Goodradigbee River. After our first morning tea break, Greg was already getting a sense of how wonderful it is to be with a group of women. The conversation topics were broad and enlightening. We arrived at the 'campsite' around 4.30pm and found a spot that was relatively flat and close



to water, but the ground was far from ideal, covered as it was with high, tussocky grass. The moon was very bright that night, and it was quite cold.

And we're off! Check out the clear blue sky.

Noelia Pinto



That's the moon, not the sun! *Photo by Greg Buckman*

Day 2

Once we cleaned the ice off our tents and packed our gear away, we started off the day with a climb up Mt Morgan (1,875m) with day packs, along an old walking track. We momentarily had to divert off the track as it was also being used by a snake for sun-baking purposes and the snake was not going anywhere. We eventually enjoyed morning tea at the top, admiring the views. Note that Greg is still smiling.

Bagging Mount Morgan *Photo by Greg Buckman*



After the climb to the summit ridge of Mt Morgan, the group split in two, with one group (Maggie, Wahyu and Noelia) following the Lone Pine and Murrays Gap fire trails across to Murrays Gap, where we planned to camp. A second group (Jeanette, Inga, Rivera and Greg) went off-track over Mt Murray, the third highest peak in the ACT (1,845m). They planned to meet up with the first group at Murrays Gap.

Mt Murray was burnt by the 2019/2020 fire and had a fair bit of regrowth, which at times was a bit challenging but not awful. Its southern slopes also have some alpine swamps that needed navigating around. After about four hours, the group made it to the twin summits of Mt Murray and were blessed with great views across to Mt Bimberi, Mt Morgan and the Namadgi peaks in the Bimberi Wilderness area. The descent from the mountain down to Murrays Gap was quite scrubby but everyone was driven on by the thought of the nice, comfortable camp which was going to be established at the high point of the gap.

Amazingly, the two groups both arrived at their destination within minutes of each other.

Bagging the third peak, Mount Bimberi

Photo by Greg Buckman



Day 3

Today’s climb was up Mt Bimberi (1,913m, the highest peak in the ACT). We packed up our belongings and hid our overnight packs so that we could do the climb with just day packs again. The weather was just about ideal at the top, with more awesome views, and barely a breeze — perfectly conducive to lying on the warm rocks in the sun. Given it was a Sunday and the weather was so good, it was no surprise that we saw two other small walking parties, also making their way up to Mt Bimberi.

Once we descended from Mt Bimberi, we devoured our lunch, collected some water from a nearby creek, and off we went to Oldfields Hut, arriving there mid-afternoon, which gave us ample time to set up camp and enjoy doing not much in the late afternoon sun. We had the place to ourselves! We built a fire, and enjoyed an evening of Fantales, nuts, Aussie trivia, and much conversation.

Enjoying the fire at Oldfields Hut, Bimberi (and the moon) in the background.

Photo by Noelia Pinto



Day 4

After a little sleep in, we completed the relatively short distance to the cars, and drove home (once again, with a stop at Adaminaby for sustenance). We were home by mid-afternoon.



Our tent city at Oldfields Hut on a misty morning Photo by Greg Buckman



Last day. Not only did Greg survive, he had a huge smile on his face. Photo by Noelia Pinto

We all enjoy the outdoors and many of us are sensitive to the importance of minimal impact bushwalking ie making sure we leave no trace of where we've been. Like me though, I'm sure you've noticed sometimes that others don't always share this same philosophy of protecting our environment. On a recent multi-day walk led by Jenny Horsfield to the 'Huts and Hills of the Nungar Plains' orange peel was left outside a couple of the mountain huts. Some walkers and visitors seem to think that this isn't a problem. Orange peel is degradable after all, isn't it? Well, the short answer is no. Ditching organic matter is still littering. While these items will eventually decompose this takes much longer than you might think. An apple core can take 8 weeks to decompose, and banana and orange skins can take up to 2 years. But that's not the most important thing to consider. By leaving food waste behind we are providing an opportunity for native animals to eat things that may endanger them. At Dawson Springs campground, in Mount Kaputar National Park, there is a serious problem for campers and walkers alike with kangaroos which have become unafraid of humans. These large animals will have no hesitation approaching your tent, tables, and van to take food in a flash and they can be very intimidating. In fact, so intimidating that when I was last up there (about 12 months ago) I noticed that the 'bucks' weren't there. I suspect that the Parks officials have made a concerted effort to ensure they have been removed given the threat they may pose. Those kangaroos which were around our campground were quite assertive and you could hear them at night tipping over tables, and emptying out the campfire pits, searching for food. One of them gnawed through a completely new Chux which I'd tied to a guy line on my tent to prevent anyone from tripping over it.



Nature Walking with Jenny H on a Nungar Hill

Photo by Terrylea Reynolds

Perhaps it's time to take a few minutes for a quick reminder about the code we follow as a Club to protect the wilderness that provides us with so much pleasure. The material below has been taken directly from our website. I'd encourage you to click through onto [Minimal Impact Bushwalking](#) for more information on how to treat this land with respect and make sure you 'leave no trace'.

- Use an existing campsite rather than make a new one in the same area.
- Don't burn those food scraps – take them with you.
- Do not camp in sensitive areas eg catchments of glacial lakes, or near delicate sphagnum moss.
- Remember not to light fires in sensitive areas such as sub-alpine regions and ensure that you distribute ashes and unused firewood before you leave.
- Quench the fire completely with water and don't forget to keep water handy to control the fire should it spread. Better yet, make sure your fire area has been cleared of all leaves, grass and any other flammable materials for 2 metres around the site.
- Use only fallen, dead wood for fires – don't take any from trees.
- If there's a toilet – use it. If not, bury your waste in a hole at least 15-20 cm deep and at least 50 metres away from water sources.
- Walk on formed tracks and don't take shortcuts. If the track is waterlogged walk through the water (yes, we know you may get wet feet). Don't widen the track by walking around it.
- Report sightings of feral flora and fauna. Better yet, take a gps location, and use this to report to the local parks' officials. This includes feral wasp nests and the dreaded fire ants.
- Don't share gpx files which would identify sensitive historical and cultural sites. Some of these places are in danger of being over loved. Worse still, not everyone shares a similar level of respect for special Indigenous places or artefacts.
- Turn your mobile phone off. Enjoy the outdoors and its unique sounds.

More information can also be found here:

[Minimal impact bushwalking - Bushwalking Manual](#)

[How to leave no trace - Minimal Impact Bushwalking - Lotsafreshair](#)

[Bushwalking code \(old\) \(theaustralianalpsnationalparks.org\)](#)

[Bushwalker's Code - Bushwalking NSW](#)

The third leg of our trip to Europe, led by Terrylea Reynolds, involved further exploration of the amazing High Tatras, this time from the Slovakian side. We were based at Sibir, a train stop away from Novy Smokovec (great name!!!) with fabulous hospitality from Palko at Penzion Sibir. Easy access to trains (and buses if the tracks were being maintained), to Novy Smokovec and Stary Smokovec for restaurants and shops, and to funiculars and chairlifts to help the less fit of us get to amazing heights in reasonable time.

Kezmarok – On our way to Sibir we visited the historic town of Kezmarok. Not many (I assume!!) have the excitement of arriving at the ‘new evangelical church’, a unique sacral building, to see lots of activity as people were busily trying to mop up after a roof leak. We must go back to have a peep inside (the church is the building at the back of the photo).



Walks – We were spoilt by our fabulous leaders who provided options for easy, moderate or difficult walks. All walks had stunning views of mountains, lakes and ravines, and generally included a chata for refreshments!! Photos are better than anything I can describe!! What’s even better is being there!!! I am sure many of us will return to this amazing part of the world.

Left: Strbske Pleso, Chata Pod Soliskom, Predne Solisko 2117m, Furkotska Dolina (Monday, 25 Sept)

Right: Tatranska Lomnica, Skalnate Pleso to Hrebienok, Zamkovskeho chata (Tuesday, 26 Sept)



Below left: Tatranska Polianka to Sliezsky Dom and Stary Smokovec (Thursday, 28 Sept)



Above right: Slavkovsky Stit 2452m (Thursday, 28 Sept)



Above left: Popradske Pleso, Hersky Hotel (Friday, 29 Sept)

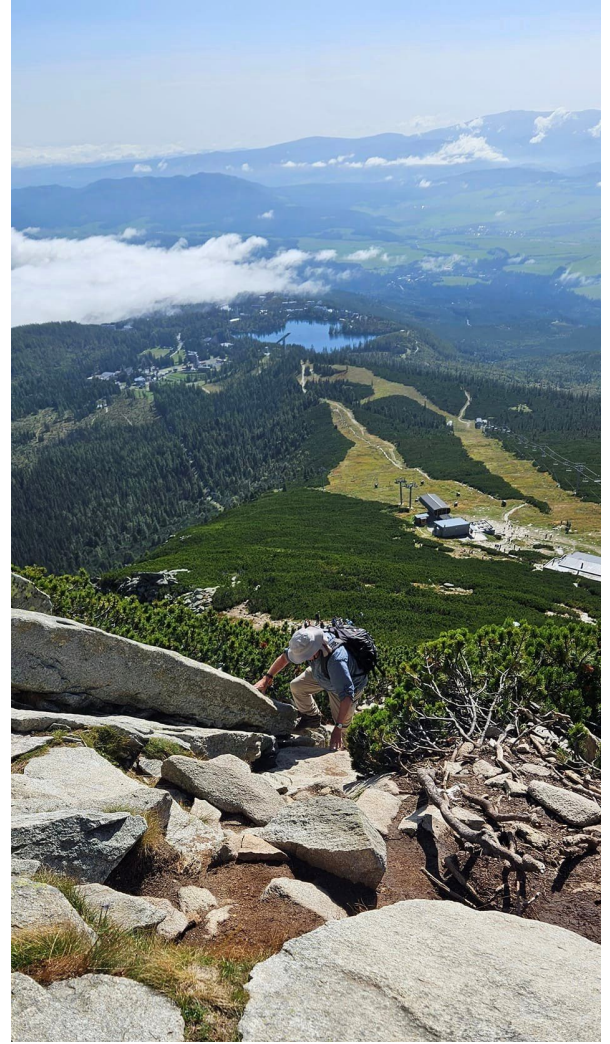
Other activities – We also had time to visit Poprad, a larger town with a shopping mall, and Levoca (oops turned down the wrong road but redeemed by amazing reversing skills by our bus driver).

Levoca – Levoca, a historical town, has a well-preserved town wall and a Gothic church with the highest wooden altar in the world.

Photo by Cynthia Burton



**Photos by Robyn Bilston and Garry Boxsell
unless otherwise indicated**



Clockwise from above left: Popradske Pleso...*Meg McKone*;
Climbing Predne Solisko *Terrylea Reynolds*; The gang at
Majlathova, Popradske Pleso *Terrylea Reynolds*; *Terrylea*
and *Meg* at Velické Pleso *Terrylea Reynolds*

“It’s best not to ask”:

**Everything you never thought you needed to know
about helicopter rescues and ambulance insurance**



Sometimes it is best not to ask. A sensible prompt from John Evans to investigate whether I had ambulance insurance, however, sent me down a long, dark and tortuous rabbit hole.

There are a number of questionable beliefs about the costs of remote area ambulance rescues. These include that there are no charges for helicopter rescues for significant injuries and that the ACT state government will routinely cover such expenses for its residents. The Canberra Bushwalking Club (Club) website states that

“in life-threatening circumstances, rescue services are provided by government agencies at no cost. In the Club’s experience, walkers with fractures have been rescued at no cost.”

My research suggests that this statement is at best misleading or incomplete. While I don’t claim to be an authority in this area, I hope this article casts some light in this complicated area.

Club insurance cover

The Club website states that it provides public liability cover within Australia for all members, but that it does not provide personal accident insurance cover. That is, members would need to meet any expenses of an ambulance evacuation from the bush. Medicare will cover many public hospital costs, but not ambulance fees.

Ambulance rescue costs within Australia for accidents on land

The ACT Ambulance Service (ACTAS) website cites ambulance fees (including transport and treatment) of \$1070 plus \$14 for every kilometre travelled outside the ACT. Depending on the accident location, rescue could be carried out by motor vehicle (including four-wheel drive) ambulances or by helicopter ambulances, and the fee structure is the same. The site mentions a range of possible grounds for fee exemptions, none of which is specifically triggered by a bushwalking accident.

A curious quirk is that ACTAS currently has no mechanism to charge for helicopter rescues. This might be a temporary gap, as a Club member was previously charged for a helicopter rescue within the ACT.

The NSW Ambulance Service (NSWAS) fees for emergency rescues for non-NSW residents are \$840 plus \$7.58 per kilometre. There is no maximum charge. Again, these fees are the same for road, fixed wing or

helicopter rescues, and there is a range of exemptions which are not specifically triggered by a bushwalking accident. Indeed, the NSWAS confirmed that there was no such exemption. Neither the ACT nor the NSW differentiates in their billing on the basis of injuries being life-threatening or not, although there might well be significant additional penalties if a call-out were a hoax or for a trivial condition. The fee rates for NSW residents are significantly lower. A Club member has confirmed that a helicopter rescue from Kosciuszko National Park to Jindabyne was billed to them.

There can also be anomalies in individual situations, where bills are either not sent or are later rescinded, but these instances should not be assumed to reflect normal practice.

Some confusion doubtless arises from the different circumstances relating to the residency of the evacuee, and the coverage provided by their state government. The Queensland Ambulance Service will meet the ambulance costs of Queensland residents for services provided across Australia. South Australia used to do the same for its residents. Tasmanian residents are covered across Australia except in Queensland and South Australia. I am certain, however, that the ACT and NSW governments generally do not cover their residents in this way.

Ambulance insurance

I am a big believer in 'self-insuring' for potential losses we can cover ourselves and I generally only insure against potential losses that would be financially damaging or disastrous (e.g. having a house destroyed by fire). That said, I appreciate most of us have a psychological bias towards avoiding the risk of lumpy financial losses.

There are grounds to be critical of Commonwealth private health insurance policy, but it is a difficult decision not to insure if you can afford it. Some of us are pushed this way by the Medicare Levy Surcharge. A side benefit of private hospital insurance policies is that at least some include ambulance cover for ACT and NSW residents. The terms of the nib ambulance cover, for example, are pretty generous. It provides unlimited, almost immediate, cover for emergency call-outs anywhere in Australia, paying full cost (i.e. without an excess), including for emergency treatment when transport to hospital is not required. I am using nib to illustrate rather than to endorse, because I have ready access to their policies.

For those who do not have hospital cover, nib provides ambulance cover as a stand-alone policy. Other companies would likely provide similar offerings but there might be differences, so you may like to check your hospital insurance policy....

if you dare. My caution here is because trying to get some simple clarifications from nib on the ambulance cover was very frustrating, as I will explain.

Nib ambulance insurance as an example

Public or private ambulance services?

The first clarification necessary is that nib ambulance cover is only for 'State or Territory' ambulances, and not for private operators. I suspect other insurers have a similar restriction. This is a grey area. Many if not most helicopter ambulance services are public-private partnerships. 'Toll' helicopter ambulances service the ACT and parts of NSW. There are 'Westpac' helicopter ambulances in NSW and Tasmania. While these services appear to be solely funded by those companies, the Australia Institute revealed that the

vast majority of the funding for the former ACT Westpac helicopter ambulance was by government, and that Westpac paid a relatively small fraction of the costs to be granted naming rights. This is likely to be the case for most other corporate-branded helicopter ambulances, although Careflight claims that it is the only medical retrieval organisation in Australasia to own and operate its own fleet of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. It appears that the NSW Ambulance Service also operates its own fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

Nonetheless, you can be confident that in most cases your insurance policy will cover these helicopter retrievals, *as long as* they are initiated by the relevant state or territory emergency agency. In these cases, the bill you receive and forward to your insurance company will be from a government agency.

There may be some exclusions to this. While 000 calls go to the relevant state or territory agency, if you use most personal locator beacons, the signal will be channelled through AMSA. For land-based emergencies, it will nearly always forward the notification to state and territory agency, but this is not automatic. AMSA told me that there might be some situations where they determine that the emergency can be best addressed by a non-government party, and this might be a commercial private operator. In this case, your insurance company might not reimburse your fees.

I have also heard that Apple phones now provide access to an emergency retrieval system outside that provided by government. I have read of a bushwalker stuck on Tasmania's South Coast track successfully using this service when his otherwise functional PLB did not trigger a government agency rescue(!) It is unlikely that ambulance insurance would pick up any costs for this service. If you have a non-standard personal locator beacon or device, it might be worth checking whether distress signals are routed to AMSA or to a private organisation.

Using a beacon or calling 000

This was where the fun with nib really started. I kept being told that nib would not pay for services triggered by a beacon; they would only cover rescues prompted by a 000 call. If we are in telephone range, it is much preferable to ring 000 or to use a state government emergency app, as we can then provide much more detailed information about our predicament. If we are out of phone range and not near a road, however, activating a beacon is likely our only option.

Each different nib staff member stuck to this story despite my lengthy explanations as to why this made absolutely no sense – the service provided by the government ambulance service by calling 000 or via a beacon would likely be the same. Fortunately, nib eventually relented and agreed that using a beacon was an acceptable means of seeking a rescue.

During my research, I have heard stories of insurance companies having standard practices not written into policies that provided unexpected benefits to customers. In my case, it seems the problem was that the staff I dealt with had limited understanding of the complexities of Australia's emergency systems, and felt they had to take the most restrictive interpretation of their company's policies. Yet, this exclusion of beacon-triggered rescues was clearly an unreasonable extension of the wording of the policy provided to customers, and I am sure would have failed legal challenge.

One Club member who was transported by a helicopter ambulance suggested it might be best not to ask too many questions of ambulance services or of our insurance companies. He feared this could draw attention to loopholes in their policies, which they might tighten to our detriment. He may be right. My more practical concern is that when seeking answers to reasonable questions, you can spend a lot of time deep in the labyrinth and have difficulty finding your way back to the light of clarity and common sense.



Acknowledgements: The author is grateful for the assistance in writing this article provided by several club members, the ACT and NSW Ambulance Services, AMSA, Toll Rescue Helicopters and nib staff.

Jonathan Miller

CBC Social Media



Have you checked out CBC's social media posts recently? You'll find them on the [CBC Facebook page](#).

They're a great way to show the wonderful places we visit and perhaps encourage people to join the Club. You can even share posts to your personal Facebook page to let family and friends know what you're up to.

If you are a walk leader, or have a walker who has a camera/phone, and would like to share your trip in this way, just check with party members during your pre-walk briefing that everyone is happy to be included in photos.

Write up a short and appealing description and email it to facebookadmin@canberrabushwalkingclub.org, along with a small selection of attached photos. Provide captions for the photos and indicate the order in which they are to be posted.

Simple, and with a great result.

SenFei Lam

CBC Facebook Admin

Equipment Hire:

Please note that **\$20 deposit** is required for all items. *First overnight loan of gear gets a free loan.*

Tents: \$15 per weekend, \$40 per week: 2 person Olympus tent, 2-person Macpac tent, 1-person Microlite tent, 2-person snow tent

Liner and mat: nil cost

Metho stove and fuel bottle: \$5 per weekend, \$15 per week

Snow shoes: \$10 per day, \$25 per week; **Climbing gear:** \$10 per day or weekend per person

Pack: \$5 per weekend, \$15 per week

PLB, GPS: nil cost

Borrowers are requested to look after the gear and return it promptly.

Contact Rob on 6231 4535 or robhorsfield@bigpond.com



When it's cold, wet and misty, you need good gear. *Photo by Meg McKone*

Bulletin Board

The Bulletin Board is for members to advertise (at no cost) goods for sale, private trips or other personal bushwalking-related matters. The Club is not involved in, takes no responsibility for, and does not endorse, the activities or goods advertised here. Hence, if people participate in any activities advertised here, they do so as private individuals, not as members of the Club, and will not be covered by the Club's insurance.

Join Brigitte Muir on an inspirational trek through the heartland of the lower Solukhumbu supporting AHF and women's health in Nepal

I am NOT a mountaineer, but I am inspired by the scenery and culture of Nepal. This ladies only trip led by Brigitte Muir (acclaimed Australian Mountaineer, now a resident in Nepal) combines mindful trekking, meditation, cultural interaction and purpose. It is organized by The Australian Himalayan Foundation, through World Expeditions (not a CBC walk). We would be walking trails less visited, enjoying unrivalled views across the entire Himalayan range, visiting monasteries and immersing ourselves in the life of local communities.

After confirming its suitability for someone with no prior altitude experience, I have just registered for the April 2025 trip and would love a few other CBC ladies to share the experience with me. For more details, go to: [Women 4 Women Empowering Didi* Trek \(humacharitychallenge.com\)](http://humacharitychallenge.com)

You can register through the same website if interested.

Laeli Hogan (CBC member)



A fox in the High Tatras *Photo by Noelia Pinto*