

BOWA Presidents Report for AGM 2024

Welcome to you all and Thanks to the Rob Frew for making this facility available through the Scarborough Tennis club.

We've enjoyed another solid year of activities and as always, our committee and event leaders are the core of BOWA's operation and I thank all of you who have helped make our club as successful as it is. 3 committee members however are of special mention for the extra time they dedicate towards our club.

They are Secretary Mike Page, Treasurer Ann Wilson and Membership Officer Simon Hesp.

Additional thanks also to our valued Auditor in John Steele. John has been a long time club member, walks leader and committee member and we appreciate your expertise.

From the excellent record of our event activities I'm able to inform you that in the past 12 months we've run 43 activities with involvement by over 400 members and visitors. I won't reveal any more of Simon's detailed report which he will provide later but the work done by our event leaders is testament to a good year and we welcome our 3 new members who joined us from the 18 individual visitors we had during the year.

Yes we are a small club but our continued existence shows how a keen and dedicated group can keep on providing a variety of walks and activities for all to enjoy.

Our Autumn camp last year was held in early April at Albany and 20 members joined another successful trip away. Thanks John Young for leading a new walk out to Gull Rock and Fernando for both the delightful Luke Penn walk along the Kalgan river and the traditional Bald Head walk now with the greatly improved access to the final approach on Flinders Peninsula. As always we had a great dinner out in Albany at The Earl of Spencer hotel.

And as we enter our 44th year as a club we have a colourful history to look back on and one of our highlights over the past year was the belated celebration of 40 years of our club's existence last August where over 40 of us met at The Charles Hotel and renewed acquaintance with past and current members while enjoying good food and drinks in the function room. Long time member Irene Tarney provided an enjoyable account of her walk along the Bibbulmun track in the early 1990's -before it's completion to Albany and the existence of the reliably spaced shelters and campgrounds we now enjoy. Thanks also to a number of you who provided input to the slide show which included some early snaps from the 1980's.

Valued support from HikeWest who are our pre-eminent body and voice for bushwalking and hiking in WA has provided a number of highlights over the past year. On Sunday the 30th of April we joined their WA Hiking Expo at the Perth Hills Environment Centre to encourage people to take part in bushwalking. This was a very well run multi interest event and we lead one of the 9 walks which attracted around 15 novices on the 9Km Ball Creek circuit. Thanks to Dave Caughey, Gordon Hobday and John Young for organising this event on what was a perfect day for bushwalking.

In May we applied for a grant through Hikewest from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Culture towards a new backpack for Bibbulmun Track volunteers, 5 First Aid kits to be shared among walk leaders and promotional Flyers to place in outdoor stores and at public functions. Our application was successful and our flyers have been placed in some outdoor stores while the new backpack is making for a more comfortable carriage of the equipment needed on the Bibbulmun track and shelter maintenance visits. The new first aid kits will be distributed as our walk program develops.

Hikewest now has an Executive Officer and Meelee Soorkia has been an enthusiastic advocate for bushwalking, and now trail running, bringing with her experience as Chair and senior management in other not for profit organisations.

At their AGM on October 25th last year a number of special resolutions were passed and Hikewest founder and retiring President of 6 years Dave Osborne made a generous donation of \$10000 to the organisation.

Our ongoing maintenance of around 8Kms of the Bibbulmun track and the Mt Dale shelter, which was started by one of our founding members, Dave Foster, keeps a number of us busy every 2 months and is a club event in June or July. Thanks to all of you who have helped in this valuable task but especially Dave Caughey who has traveled with us on numerous visits and sometimes drives up to check access road conditions after heavy rain.

Last year the Bibbulmun Track Foundation celebrated 25 years of the current alignment and shelter completion and our club event on July 16th was timed to the day before a group of walkers passed through on their way towards walking part or all of the track to Albany.

I'm always happy to register any more of you who would like to help our work keeping a small part of WA's world class walking track in order.

At this meeting we farewell 2 of our committee members in Treasurer Ann Wilson and Gordon Hobday. Thanks to you both for your support and especially Ann who has kept our finances in order over the past 2 years.

Shortly we'll be calling for Committee members to help BOWA's operation over the coming year and perhaps you would like to join us. There are only 3 committee meetings a year so your involvement won't be too demanding - and I'm happy to report that one of our current committee has offered to take over as Treasurer.

In this quieter time for bushwalking, membership renewal isn't always high on the list but we do ask if you are maintaining membership can you please renew through the bank details shown on the club website. One of the important benefits of your renewal is the insurance we obtain through Hikewest which provides us with Personnel Accident and club Public Liability insurance.

I look forward to seeing some of you at our Autumn camp in Pemberton over April 15th to 19th and enjoying walks on the 3 days allocated. Detailed plans of the events will be sent out soon.

As always we're keen to add new walks to our program and indeed attract new leaders so if you have a walk in mind or would like to learn how to lead one please let me know and myself or a number of our experienced leaders will be happy to help you. There are plenty of good walks around the metro area to lead for our club before you head out to the bush.

Thank-you