

9 December 2010

The President
Affiliated Member Club

Dear President

Code of Conduct

In April 2010, David Reid, my predecessor as President, wrote to all affiliated clubs advising that Sport and Recreation Victoria required Bushwalking Victoria and its member clubs to formally adopt a Code of Conduct. Having a Code of Conduct in place is now a condition Bushwalking Victoria must satisfy to continue to receive funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria as a State Sporting Association. This funding helps to pay first aid subsidies to club members and a portion of our administrative costs.

Sport and Recreation Victoria later distributed information concerning the Code of Conduct directly to clubs that included a DVD and posters showing various unacceptable behaviours which a Code of Conduct seeks to eliminate. As Bushwalking Victoria had anticipated, that material had a strong focus on competitive sport and highlighted many situations and issues which are either not applicable to, or rarely encountered by bushwalking clubs. Nonetheless, Bushwalking Victoria strongly endorses the principles embodied in the Code of Conduct and the need to apply these principles in the manner in which both we and our clubs operate.

Under our current funding agreement, by the end of 2010 Bushwalking Victoria was required to develop a Code of Conduct and processes for dealing with breaches of the Code at both Bushwalking Victoria and club level. We will also be required to report breaches of the Code to Sport and Recreation Victoria but, to date, we have not been advised of the content, format and frequency of the reports to be submitted. It is our expectation that reporting will be on an annual basis and that we will seek data from clubs on the same frequency.

David Reid invited clubs to submit examples of their existing grievance or disciplinary procedures and to raise any concerns they might have with applying a Code of Conduct. I would like to thank those clubs which responded with information.

Bushwalking Victoria met with representatives of Sport and Recreation Victoria to discuss the needs and perspectives of bushwalkers in developing an appropriate Code. Our aim has been to keep the Code and processes simple and clear so that the adoption of the Code of Conduct would be as straight forward as possible for our clubs. We have now completed a Code of Conduct which satisfies the requirements of Sport and Recreation Victoria and which we believe will meet the needs of our clubs.

A copy of the Code is accompanies this letter and I urge you and your committee to review this document and ensure that your club's rules, policies and practices are consistent with its requirements. It is also important that you promote the Code to all your members.

Bushwalking: At a natural pace in a natural place

If you have any queries regarding the Code of Conduct, please contact Jenny Sykes, our Administrative Officer on (03) 8846 4131 or admin@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au. The Board of Bushwalking Victoria will be grateful for your feedback and we will do our best to assist with any problems you may encounter in adopting the Code.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Towers
President