



BUSHWALKERS WILDERNESS RESCUE

BUSHWALKERS WILDERNESS RESCUE is the Rescue Section of
The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc PO Box 2090 GPO Sydney NSW 1043

INFORMATION SHEET

Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad Inc (BWRS) is a specialist unit of the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association Inc. (VRA). BWRS's role is to search for and rescue people in wilderness areas. Our personnel are highly experienced bushwalkers who are at home searching rugged terrain, whether it is bushland, snow covered mountains or rocky canyons. We can send ground parties into the field, when the weather is too foul for helicopters. Each ground party operates with high technology HF radios well suited to rugged terrain and all of our personnel hold a current first aid certificate.

BWRS draws on personnel from Bushwalking clubs all over NSW and the ACT. Our search parties are often familiar with the area being searched and can use this local knowledge to our advantage. BWRS is the oldest land based volunteer rescue organisation in Australia (est 1936) and is accredited by the NSW State Rescue Board for general land search and rescue anywhere in NSW.

If a party is overdue in the bush, contact BWRS who will inform the Police (as BWRS operates under their control). A member of the committee will then contact the necessary squad members. Often these "callouts" come late at night and require the dedicated searchers to prepare their packs with their own gear and food for two days and nights and then drive to the field headquarters for a dawn rendezvous. After the field officer has briefed leaders, the searchers proceed into the search area to locate the lost party.

BWRS personnel donate their own time and transport costs, so operations are free to the public. Whilst BWRS's success is mainly due to the quality of the personnel involved, it does have some essential equipment to maintain, (base and field radios, rescue ropes, stretchers, trailer etc.) Its funding comes from membership fees and VRA grants. The NavShield event (a 24-hour rogaine for bushwalkers and emergency services) also provides additional funds to BWRS. Donations from the community are gratefully acknowledged and are tax deductible.

Three exercises a year are conducted to train and refresh members in search and rescue methods. These include stretcher carrying, search techniques, remote area first aid, radio usage, helicopter operations and crime scene requirements. Additional regional exercises with other rescue units are also undertaken.

BWRS includes a group of dedicated rock climbers and canyons known as the Rock Squad. The Rock Squad is trained to rescue trapped or injured persons in canyons or on cliff faces, using stretcher hauling and lowering techniques, as well as personal vertical skills. Members of the Rock Squad hold Australian Lightweight Vertical Rescue Instructors (ALVRI) certificates as rescue operators and are endorsed as V3 Rescue Operators by the NSW State Rescue Board.

BWR is restructuring into a fixed squad during 2001, in order to align itself with the Emergency Services competency standards.

For further information visit the BWRS web site at <http://www.bwrs.org.au>

BWRS Emergency Contact, phone 132222 and ask for pager 6277321 and leave a brief message including a return phone number. One of our personnel will phone you back.