

Bushwalking NSW

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IT'S SWEET TO WALK SOFT – PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project purpose

The “It’s Sweet to Walk Soft” (ISWS) project seeks to promote nature conservation and protection of biodiversity and biosecurity in NSW, utilising the principle that: People protect what they love.

Reason for the project

There is a current upsurge of urban dwellers being encouraged to venture into nature. However, they aren't equipped to venture safely and softly to ensure the protection of our natural environments. They are at times endangering their own lives, and are very likely to cause adverse impacts on the environment including campfire escapes, spread of diseases threatening biosecurity, water pollution through poor toileting, unwanted waste, and careless track use. These adverse effects negatively impact on their own, and other's experience of our natural areas.

27.3% of NSW residents went bushwalking either regularly or occasionally in 2015 - up from 17.2% in 2011 (Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia)). Some of these people are learning about our natural areas through city-lifestyle newsletters and social media – sources which don't teach Minimal Impact Bushwalking and Bushwalker Safety.

This movement represents an excellent opportunity to increase the numbers of people who are life-long lovers, defenders and conservers of our natural environments. We can train these people in how to engage safely and softly with the bush so they enjoy their experiences, want to return and build their skills. Through the repetition of these experiences they will learn to love nature and develop a deep desire to protect it because it provides their own fulfilment.

The ISWS project seeks to address these issues using the following approach & objectives.

Project Objectives

1. Reinforce the awareness of our existing bushwalking club members in Minimal Impact Bushwalking and biosecurity principles and practices. Then build the capacity of our existing bushwalking club members to impart these principles and practices to the increasing number of community members engaging in bushwalking and outdoor adventure.
2. Introduce the new bushwalkers and adventurers in NSW who are using online bushwalking mediums to the principles of caring for nature and Minimal Impact Bushwalking, biosecurity, and nature conservation; with a professional electronic communication campaign to enrol them in a monthly newsletter, Minimal Impact Bushwalking training, online tools, and/or a bushwalking club to equip them to enjoy safe, Minimal Impact Bushwalking.
3. Continue to actively engage with all these individuals through our website (bushwalkingnsw.org.au), a professional monthly newsletter, and face-to-face training which interests them in the environment, environmental conservation and biosecurity; deepens their sense of ownership of our environment; and empowers them to work together to protect and enhance the natural environment.

This Project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust.

