



Policy Formulation Process

Background

Bushwalking Australia Inc (BAI) is the national peak body representing walkers and those interested in bushwalking throughout Australia and its territories. BAI is primarily comprised of state federations who in turn have walkers and bushwalking clubs as members.

Each state federation is separately governed, and individual bushwalking clubs are also largely independent of each other. Governance within this three tiered structure is also made difficult by the distance and cost factors, which makes it necessary to run meetings of BAI electronically. Under these circumstances, it could be difficult to apply democratic principles to the discussion of complex issues. The process outlined in this paper would provide the means of allowing BAI members an effective say in the formulation of BAI policy.

BAI is called upon to represent walkers at the national level. This requires us to speak to federal government agencies, non-government organizations, international organizations concerned with walking and the environment, and liaise with other national recreational, sporting, land management, conservation and environmental organizations. To do so BAI has to have some well thought out policies in these areas.

It is not intended that BAI policy be formed in relation to a specific state-based issue, which is properly the business of the state federation. BAI would be involved in an issue arising in one state, but is likely to occur in other, or has implications for several states. A state may request the support of BAI on any issue, in which case it is likely that this support would result in some BAI policy being established.

Principles

1. The aim should be to make decisions by consensus.
2. Any *member* can initiate the process by suggesting a topic, then writing a *discussion paper* to explain the rationale. This person would normally be the *proponent* of the proposed policy.
3. This *discussion paper* would go by itself or with an *exposure draft* on the website as soon as possible. However, some discussion might be advisable amongst the *executive* before it was put up for discussion. For instance, the wording may need



to be checked and edited slightly for grammatical reasons or to indicate where some existing policy or initiative would be affected.

4. A *delegate* or *committee* member may be appointed as *convenor* to oversee the process. This would often be the BAI secretary, or the convenor of a subcommittee of BAI.
5. Comments about the *exposure draft* can be made by any *member*. These would normally be put on the website as they are received. It could perhaps be done directly by the person commenting.
6. Under normal circumstances, an *exposure draft* would stay on the website for 2 to 3 months, together with related comments. This period would allow full discussion at state and club level. In more urgent circumstances, a shorter period might be necessary.
7. The *convenor* should discuss the various comments with the *proponent*. If needed, the proponent will make a second *draft*, incorporating this feedback. Alternatively, the *convenor* may seek the assistance of others to prepare the second *draft*.
8. Once the second *draft* is complete, it should go up as a *draft policy*. Within a week of the *draft policy* going up, the delegates should be advised by email. A date will also be set for voting, allowing approximately a month for delegates to respond. A delegate may respond by *objecting*, *endorsing* or *requesting a vote*.
9. The *convenor* may request additional drafts until such time as he/she is satisfied that latest *draft* is complete, and no further matters remain unresolved.
10. The *convenor* may call such meetings, teleconferences or other forms of discussion as he or she feels necessary to resolve the matter.
11. If no *delegate* submits an *objection* by the voting date, the matter will be deemed to have been approved.
12. A *delegate* may request a *final draft* be voted on at the next meeting, or a special meeting convened for the purpose in accordance with the constitution and bylaws (typically a teleconference).



13. If anyone feels the process has been carried out unfairly, the matter may be referred to the executive, or a person other than the *convenor* nominated by the committee.



Definitions

Words appearing in *italics* in the above discussion are defined below:

Member

Person who is a member of any organization that is affiliated with BAI. This includes, state federations, club members, co-opted committee members.

Proponent

Person who prepares a discussion paper and/or proposes a draft policy

Convenor

Person who would normally be a delegate or committee member with the responsibility for the matter (4)

Discussion paper

Paper put up by a member (2)

Draft policy

Copy of proposed policy, together with any relevant documentation for discussion. May exist as exposure, second, third etc, or final draft (8, 9, 10)

Exposure draft

Copy of proposed policy, together with any relevant documentation for discussion (5)

Second (third ... etc) draft

All subsequent revisions of the exposure draft

Final draft

The draft which is the subject of a vote (11, 12)

Objection

An indication from a delegate by telephone, email or letter to the secretary and the convenor that they or their constituent members wish to have the current draft discussed in a meeting of BWA, thrown out or altered in some way. (11)

Delegate

As per constitution.

Executive

Comprises President, Secretary, Treasurer, and any other persons nominated by the council (13)

Other terms are as defined in the constitution, bylaws, statute or common law.