



HikeWest Annual Report 2022–23

Contents

About HikeWest	3
Our Vision	3
Our Mission	3
Our Values	3
President's Report	4
Executive Officer's Report	5
WA Hiking Expo 2023	6
A State Active Recreation Organisation	7
Club Support Program	8
Safety and Activity Risk Management	9
Advocacy	10
Strategic Plan	11
Auditor's Report	12
Financial Statement	13
Balance Sheet	14
The HikeWest Team	15
Our Members, Partners and Stakeholders	15



About HikeWest

HikeWest is a not-for-profit association committed to encouraging the community to participate in safe and responsible bushwalking and to providing services to bushwalking groups, independent hikers and the wider community.

HikeWest advocates in the interests of anyone who bushwalks, hikes or walks in nature in Western Australia. We actively work for the conservation and effective management of the natural environment that the hiking community enjoys. We also work to assist with the development and maintenance of walking tracks and trails where possible, to enhance their accessibility and value to all.

In 2023, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) recognised HikeWest as a State Active Recreation Organisation (SARO) and the pre-eminent representative organisation for hiking in Western Australia.

Our Vision

- To see more people hiking in Western Australia more often.

Our Mission

- To encourage and support more people to pursue health and happiness by hiking in nature.

Our Values

- We are open, ethical, professional and accountable in all that we do.
- We are inclusive and respectful of diversity.
- We respect and love our natural bushwalking environment.
- We are committed to HikeWest and take pride in the organisation.
- We actively embrace change.



President's Report

Over the past year HikeWest has maintained focus on encouraging and supporting more people to pursue health and happiness by hiking in nature. Walking in nature, bushwalking or hiking – whatever your preferred terminology – is increasingly recognised as one of the most popular and fastest growing recreational activities in WA and nationally. Alongside urban walking, it provides widely accessible opportunities for people of all ages and diversity to be active outdoors, and to stay healthy and connected, especially important for an ageing population.



The State Government's recognition of HikeWest in late 2022 as a State Active Recreation Organisation was a 'coming of age' moment for the organisation. Recognition as the pre-eminent representative organisation for hiking in WA has not only helped increase our visibility across the community but importantly it opened up access to new organisational funding. The latter has enabled HikeWest to apply more substantial resources to the interests of hiking in the state, consistent with the implementation of the WA Hiking Strategy 2020–30, released in 2020.

As a special milestone, in May 2023 the Board was delighted to welcome to HikeWest our newly appointed inaugural Executive Officer, Meelee Soorkia, who has 'hit the ground running' by working with the Board to revise the HikeWest Strategic Plan. The updated priorities are now being pursued.

As summarised in this Annual Report, among HikeWest's achievements over the past year were the delivery of another successful WA Hiking Expo in the Perth Hills, and a new Club Support Program initiative. We also updated and delivered Activity Risk Management Guidelines to our member clubs. HikeWest has also maintained its strong, proactive voice, advocating on issues of great relevance to the future of hiking in WA, especially in relation to the impacts of mining, recreational access to drinking water catchments, and the need for more trails in the forests of the Darling Range close to Perth.

We are now entering the most exciting phase in HikeWest's 30-year history, and that will be under new, very capable and enthusiastic leadership. My own six-year term as President (and also as Acting Executive Officer for much of that period) necessarily ends at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Thank you for the time and support all involved with HikeWest have given to myself and the organisation. I have enjoyed being able to share my passion for bushwalking while giving back to the community alongside fellow committed volunteer Board members, past and present. I look forward to continuing to contribute as a volunteer in years to come.

I encourage others in the hiking community and beyond to consider lending your voluntary support to such a worthwhile cause, helping to ensure HikeWest will continue to develop and grow strongly as an effective champion for hiking and bushwalking in WA. It's no surprise that volunteers are among the happiest and most fulfilled people in our community, lives lived with passion and commitment can be the most rewarding.

Dave Osborne

President – 2017 to 2023

Executive Officer's Report

I am delighted to have been appointed Executive Officer of HikeWest during such an exciting phase. Thank you to outgoing President and Acting Executive Officer Dave Osborne whose passion and commitment over his six-year tenure has enabled HikeWest to grow so significantly.



Having been a hiking enthusiast for many years, I understand the pleasures, joys and health benefits that walking in nature can offer. I have enjoyed walks across Australia and overseas, Western Australia, blessed with diverse landscapes, is a wonderful place to hike. More West Australians should be encouraged to make the most of our unique natural environments by hiking more often.

Ensuring that hiking – or walking in nature – is an inclusive and accessible activity for everyone is something that I am passionate about. It's imperative that people from all walks of life, regardless of their background or abilities, should feel welcome and empowered to participate in hiking as a recreational pursuit. This principle aligns closely with HikeWest's vision and values.

By supporting and encouraging more people to hike, we can make a difference in the health and happiness of many people's lives by helping them to enjoy the sense of achievement, increase in confidence, and improvement in physical and mental wellbeing that can come from hiking, while also fostering a connection with our natural environments.

Since joining HikeWest in May 2023, I have had the privilege of working closely with the HikeWest Board to chart a way forward that will enable us to achieve this through refreshed strategic priorities. Over the coming years, we are looking forward to collaborating with our stakeholders, member clubs, partners and volunteers to create a future in which hiking is enjoyed by even more Western Australians.

Meelee Soorkia

Executive Officer

WA Hiking Expo 2023

More than 1600 people attended the 2023 WA Hiking Expo in the picturesque surrounds of Beelu National Park in the Perth Hills. Marking the commencement of the hiking season, HikeWest's second Expo garnered excellent feedback from both visitors and exhibitors, playing an important role in encouraging hiking participation.

The Expo featured 35 exhibitors who shared information about hiking opportunities, bushwalking clubs, hiking tours, outdoor gear and trail food. For those new to hiking, 19 guided hikes led by HikeWest member clubs provided an introduction to the joys and benefits of bushwalking for people of all ages. The event also featured various family-friendly activities, including bush music performances, a climbing wall, wildlife encounters, and engaging kids' activities.

The Expo was made possible through funding from the State Government through DLGSC's Hiking Participation Grants Program.

Thank you also to our event sponsors Adventure Kokoda, Paddy Pallin, Tribe & Trail, and Western Walking Club.

HikeWest is grateful for the generous support of many dedicated volunteers who kindly donated their time to bring this community event to life, including: Curtin Volunteers, Rotary Club of Mundaring, Darlington Scout Group WA, Western Walking Club, Perth Bushwalkers Club, The West Australian Family Bushwalking Club, Bushwalkers of WA, and many individual volunteers. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who was involved in making the Expo a resounding success.



A State Active Recreation Organisation

HikeWest celebrated a significant milestone in August 2022 when it was formally recognised by the Western Australian State Government as a State Active Recreation Organisation (SARO) and the pre-eminent organisation for hiking in Western Australia. HikeWest was one of only two organisations to achieve this recognition during 2022 under the newly launched SARO framework.

The Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Hon David Templeman, acknowledged HikeWest's important work for the hiking sector and our contribution towards helping the government to achieve its vision of a vibrant, inclusive, and connected Western Australian community.

As well as elevating our profile, SARO recognition has opened up a number of benefits and opportunities for HikeWest, including eligibility to access financial support for the organisation through the Industry Investment Program (IIP) administered by DLGSC.

In December 2022, HikeWest received \$50,000 under the IIP for the 2022–23 financial year. Annual reviews will determine HikeWest's IIP funding for next two years and potentially beyond.

SARO recognition and IIP funding has been instrumental in supporting the growth of HikeWest, enabling us to hire our inaugural Executive Officer in May 2023 and to set a strategic course of action which will help us to encourage even more people to pursue health and happiness by hiking in nature.



Club Support Program

Seven bushwalking clubs received a total of approximately \$14,000 under HikeWest's inaugural Club Support Program, which provides financial support to help clubs to operate more efficiently, deliver safe hiking and bushwalking programs, attract and retain members, and offer skills development opportunities to build the pool of activity leaders and volunteers.

The successful clubs included Action Outdoors Association, Bunbury Bushwalking Club, Bushwalkers of Western Australia, Hiking Club of WA, Perth Bushwalkers Club, Western Australian Family Bushwalking Club, and Western Walking Club. The clubs received up to \$3000 to develop club promotional materials, purchase shared hiking and safety equipment, undertake technology upgrades and website enhancements, and support leader training programs.

The Club Support Program was made possible through the Industry Investment Program funding now available to HikeWest as a result of our SARO recognition by the State Government.



Safety and Activity Risk Management

Encouraging safe and responsible hiking is paramount for HikeWest. In 2022, we updated our Activity Risk Management guidelines to ensure they are consistent with the Australian Adventure Activity Standards as well the national guidelines of Bushwalking Australia.

The new guidelines are designed to assist member clubs to continue their activities safely and responsibly, and provide additional practical guidance, including leader recognition and activity approval processes.

Additionally, through Bushwalking Australia, HikeWest continues to facilitate relevant, annual insurance with a recognised, licensed insurer for our member bushwalking clubs. This helps to protect club executives, committees and their members.



Advocacy

HikeWest has consistently been at the forefront of advocating on issues that impact hiking in Western Australia, having made about twenty submissions on a wide range of relevant matters relevant to bushwalking over the last four years. The impact of our advocacy work has been strengthened by our increasing public profile and reach.

During the 2022–23 financial year, HikeWest continued to draw government and community attention to issues which have the potential to affect the future of hiking. One of our key concerns is the clear and increasing urgency for new WA State Government strategic planning and land management policies to address the existing and future needs of Perth’s growing population, taking into account the impacts of mining.

In May 2023 HikeWest made a submission to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) outlining our concerns regarding the serious shortcomings of the proposed WA Forest Management Plan 2024–33 (FMP). The FMP fails to recognise for planning purposes the importance of the Northern Jarrah Forest (NJF) including its proximity to the Perth metro region where 80 percent of WA’s population is located.

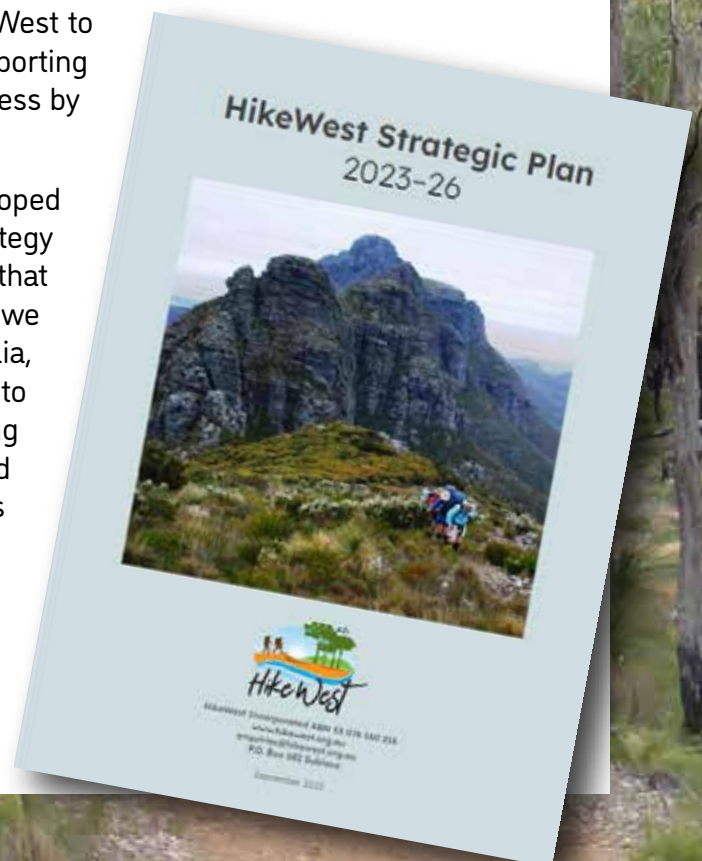
We anticipate that the FMP referral to the EPA, and other referrals in relation to bauxite mining programs, will be assessed by the EPA via formal Public Environmental Review processes, recognising the wide public concern over the devastating impacts mining is having on unprotected native forests and our drinking water catchments.



Strategic Plan

HikeWest's Board and Executive Officer, Meelee Soorkia, have been working together on revising our Strategic Plan. Due for release in the 2023–24 financial year, the revamped Strategic Plan sets out the context, challenges and opportunities HikeWest is facing over the next 3–5 years, and outlines a roadmap that will enable HikeWest to achieve a mission of encouraging and supporting more people to pursue health and happiness by hiking in nature.

The strategies in the Plan are being developed with the objectives of the WA Hiking Strategy 2020–30 in mind. These recognise that although hiking is a popular activity and we have many great trails in Western Australia, there is also much more we can do to increase hiking participation. By prioritising participation, access to trails, advocacy, and organisational sustainability, HikeWest is committed to fostering a thriving hiking community that values the natural environment and enjoys safe and responsible bushwalking.



Auditor's Report

To the members of Hikewest Inc.

Report on the financial report

I have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of the Hikewest Inc. which comprises the Balance Sheet at 30 June 2023 and a Profit and Loss Statement for the year ended 30 June 2023.

Committee's responsibility for the financial report

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation of the financial report, and has determined that the basis of preparation, is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Western Australia, Associations Incorporation Act 2015.

The committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's responsibility

The auditor's responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require compliance with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and to plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

The audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedure selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances but not for the purpose of expressing the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report. Audit evidence has been obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for the audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting the audit, the independence requirements of the Australian professional ethical pronouncements have been complied with.

Audit's opinion

In my opinion the financial report of Hikewest Inc. has been prepared in accordance with the Western Australian, Associations Incorporation Act 2015 including providing a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the year ended on that date.

16 October 2023.



Jayme Watson
Chartered Accountant
Member ID 580418

Financial Statement

Profit & Loss

	30 June 2023	30 June 2022
	\$	\$
Income		
Advertising Income	1,375	1,875
Affiliate/Individual Membership Fees	520	820
Bushwalking Australia Levy	1,246	1,167
Government Grant	50,000	20,000
Hiking Expo Walks & Stalls	5,317	0
Insurance receipts	11,438	8,918
Interest received	520	3
Levy from affiliated clubs	6,270	5,835
Raffle Income	1,806	0
Expo sponsorships	4,000	0
HikeWest sponsorships	2,215	2,500
Total Income	84,707	41,117
Expense		
Accounting subscriptions	242	165
Advertising costs	97	88
Bank Fees	2	0
Bushwalking Australia Levy	2,404	0
Domain Hosting & Website costs	1,043	873
Employee expenses	16,864	0
Grants paid out (Club Support Program)	14,166	0
Hiking Expo costs	28,041	1,430
Non-expo events expenses	353	0
PO Box Rental	153	139
Public Liability/Accident Insurance	11,797	9,009
Raffle Expenses	103	0
Staff Hiring costs	8,425	0
Storage (Expo items)	0	0
Subscriptions	0	0
Sundry Expenses	201	0
Travel costs	0	0
Workers compensation insurance	1,372	0
Total Expenses	85,260	11,705
Net Profit/Loss	-553	29,412

Balance Sheet

	30 June 2023	30 June 2022
	\$	\$
Assets		
Accounts Receivable	250	0
Bank		
Operating Account	3,981	46,490
Reserve Account	19,897	12,377
Term Deposit 12 months	20,000	0
Term Deposit 6 months	20,000	0
Total Assets	64,128	58,867
Liabilities		
PAYG Withholding	3,684	0
Provision for leave	2,130	0
Total Liabilities	5,814	0
Net Assets	58,313	58,867
Retained Earnings		
Prior year earnings	58,867	29,454
Current year earnings	-553	29,412
Transfer from (to) restricted reserve	0	-20,000
	58,313	38,867
Restricted Reserve - Hiking Expo	0	20,000
Total Equity	58,313	58,867

The HikeWest Team

Board

President / Chair	Dave Osborne
Vice-President	Neil Gibson
Secretary	Alan Hill, Kirsty Peddie, Sue-Ellen Smith
Treasurer	Amber Kaur
Director (elected)	Mark Pybus
Director (appointed)	Hecate Jay
Director (appointed)	Karen Tyson

Staff

Executive Officer	Meelee Soorkia
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Our Members, Partners and Stakeholders

HikeWest's members include eleven active bushwalking clubs with around 1100 individual club members, plus other affiliate member organisations and direct, individual members of HikeWest.

Member Clubs



Affiliated Organisations



Sponsors



Funding Partner



National Stakeholders



Graphic Design (pro bono)



