



Annual Report of The Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Inc.
For the year ended 31st January 2012
Sixty-Fifth Annual Report

www.wtmc.org.nz

PO Box 5068 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145



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The Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club Committee takes pleasure in presenting its annual report on the activities of the club for the year 1 February 2011 to 31 January 2012.

The current committee

Sharron Came (President)
Kate Cushing (Vice President)
Steve Austin (Treasurer)
Mika Verheul (Secretary)
Amanda Wells (Chief Guide)
Richard Lardner (Assistant Chief Guide)
Gareth Morton (Transport Officer)
Helen Law (Membership Officer)
Megan Banks (Promotions Officer)
Donner Maher (Social Convenor)
Jenny Beaumont (Social Convenor)
Sue Walsh (Ruapehu Lodge Convenor)
Sarah Young (Newsletter Editor)

Off Committee Roles:

Pete Gent (Gear Custodian)
Tony Gazley (Journal Editor)
Mike Gilbert (Web Master)



President's comments

I came into this role without previous experience in club administration which is unusual in the history of the club. Fortunately I have had the benefit of my fellow committee member's experience, diligence and patience and the transition has been a smooth one.

Every single person on the committee has worked really hard individually and very effectively as a team to ensure the smooth operation of the club. I would like to thank everyone for their significant contributions. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with such a co-operative and constructive group. Between us we have a good mix of skills and competencies and it has been a great comfort to me to have people on hand to compensate for my weaknesses.

As well as looking after business as usual in 2011 we continued the tradition of asking the question how can we make the club run better? Some of our initiatives are discussed in this report. Some of the key ones such as the new lodge booking system have yet to be fully implemented. With most of the initiatives it is too early to tell yet whether they are working. If the measures are working I would expect to see:

- membership remaining steady or growing and more members staying with the club (less churn);
- increased trip participation;
- greater club night participation;
- greater usage of the lodge and vans; and
- plenty of volunteers stepping forward for the tasks that need to be done to keep the club running.

What were the five highlights of 2011?

1. Revamping the club newsletter and the website;
2. Signing off on the business case for an electronic lodge booking;
3. Getting good alignment across the promotions, social and publications aspects of the club business;
4. All aspects of trip delivery have operated smoothly – no mean feat given the complexity of the many tasks involved;
5. Seeing family trip activity flourish.

In terms of our financial position, we made a small loss this year but overall the balance sheet looks healthy. We have focused on keeping our operating costs down while continuing to deliver the same level of services. Little things, like getting publications electronically, have really helped in this respect and less paper is a better environmental outcome.



Club membership continues to decline but I am not unduly concerned about this trend. I consider membership engagement more important to the sustainability of the club. This year we have undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at improving engagement and there are more to come.

Finally, I would like to particularly thank Sue Walsh who is standing down from the committee after many years of service in various roles. I know that Sue will continue to take a close interest in the standing of the club and will be on hand to provide support and guidance when required and I am very grateful for this.

Thanks also to Megan Banks and Mika Verheul both of whom are standing down from the committee but will continue to make an important and much appreciated contribution to the club.

Sharron Came
President



Committee reports

Our finances

The WTMC balance sheet is healthy with cash reserves of \$174,372 and net fixed assets of \$107,136 as at 31 January 2012.

Club income less expenditure for the year was a deficit of \$6,884.

The deficit for the 12 months reflects less than anticipated utilisation of the club's two 12 seater vans. We are unsure of the precise reasons for this but it is possible that a combination of the impact of the Rugby World Cup, (both punters choosing to watch the games rather than tramp and the disruption the event caused to ferry timetables), plus the increasing popularity of running trips out of Christchurch to take advantage of discount air fares were contributing factors. Likewise the economic uncertainty that characterised 2011 may have caused punters to opt for cheaper North Island trips. The other unanticipated event was a long overdue receipt of a kayaking invoice for \$4,935 (see note 4, page 6 of the annual accounts for further detail).

It is encouraging to note an 8% increase in lodge revenue which resulted in a small surplus being recorded for the year. However, it is crucial that we put more effort into encouraging members and non-members to use the lodge so we can build up our reserves to help finance future expenditure on lodge maintenance.

I have been in the role of Treasurer for many years now and it would be great if another member with accountancy training could be persuaded to volunteer their services. The role is a rewarding one and vital to the smooth running of the club.

Finally, I would like to extend my warm thanks to Ed Juchnowicz for again auditing the WTMC accounts for us.

Steve Austin
Treasurer



Our trips

Having set up some new systems last year, this second year as chief guide has definitely been smoother. This is also thanks to Richard Lardner taking on the Assistant Chief Guide role and managing key parts of the trip schedule process during my busy times. We have continued to produce a full schedule of varied trips, and met our aim of having only one or two “leader-required” trips listed per schedule.

I'd like to also to say thank you to all our trip leaders, who perform the club's most important job. Without leaders, and trips, we don't exist, so thanks to those who take on this responsibility in the hills (and in the pre-trip organisation).

Chief Guide sub-committee

Steve Kohler has done a great job collecting statistics, and in producing the illuminating charts you see in this report. Kate Cushing continues the hard slog of keeping our emergency contacts system alive. This system has been activated several times in the past year when trips were delayed, and is invaluable in providing an efficient, consistent way of recording intentions. In tandem with our use of PLBs, this system means the club does everything possible in terms of emergency and contingency planning. Please make sure you fulfil its requirements, whether you are a leader or a punter. Pete Gent has kept the gear room running well; a vital but not particularly visible role. Please remember to treat club gear with the respect it deserves when you're out in the hills.

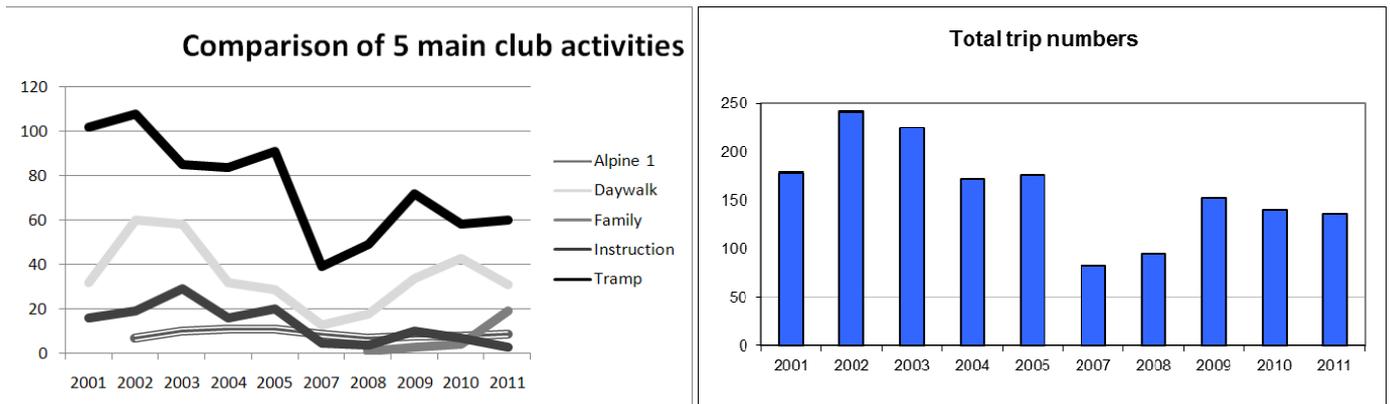
Instruction

The 2011/12 financial year has been a quiet one on the instruction front. We attempted twice to organise an outdoor first aid course, but failed to get the minimum numbers each time. A number of people will be coming up for recertification this year, so 2012 looks more likely. Similarly, a leadership instruction course failed to draw enough punters, though several new leaders have stepped up during this period. If you're interested in leading a trip, all you need to do is talk to me. We have plenty of material available to guide you through the process. Thanks to Sharron Came, Jenny Beaumont, Steve Austin and Mike Phethean, who ran a successful snowcraft course last year that attracted 13 punters. It is important that we keep offering instruction, as those participating in our courses, tend to go on to become active club members.



Trip statistics

Total trip numbers were down very slightly from 2010, though numbers of tramping trips were up slightly. Daywalks were significantly down. We had made extra effort to put daywalks on the draft schedules during 2011 but members were not keen to lead them: an interesting mismatch between non-member demand and member supply. However, another trend was an increase in non-member days on 2011, although there was a decrease in member days. Mike Gilbert's excellent work coordinating a programme of family trips has seen real growth in that area.



Amanda Wells
Chief Guide





Our Assets

Ruapehu Lodge

Lodge sub-committee

The last year has seen a lot of activity in this area although the majority has been ‘behind the scenes’ work. In the last year the Taranaki window has been double glazed, which has helped reduce heating expenses. The menus for the lodge have been updated with a slightly wider selection of food being made available. On-going minor maintenance has been carried out.

Thanks to Andrew Trembath for continuing to manage the ordering and delivery of Lodge food. Andrew’s role is made easier if members take the time to send through the food stock at the end of each weekend/week. A concerted effort on this side would ensure that food orders are targeted to what is needed. Kevin Griffiths has continued providing invaluable support in the maintenance role; – our appreciation of this work is huge. I’d like to extend my thanks also to the members of the sub-committee for their on-going enthusiasm, experience and knowledge – thank you!

Lodge promotion

Last year I mentioned promotion of the lodge will become important. This year we took part in a promotional weekend on the mountain with other clubs. While this was a good idea the event was not well promoted and the location of the participating clubs was too far removed from the target audience, (mountain users). Thanks to Ray Walker and Megan Banks for their enthusiastic participation in the weekend.

A number of members have encouraged greater use of the lodge amongst their friends – thank you for doing this. As you are aware we need to increase the usage of the lodge. Non-member usage has a higher dollar value attached to it; however, we would like to see members using the lodge more regularly. We need to consider and target both options to ensure we get the best possible use of the lodge; while ensuring that members aren’t disadvantaged. Mike Gilbert and Amelia White have done fantastic work on the lodge pages on our website, updating information and making it more user friendly – thank you for your efforts.





Lodge booking

In particular I want to acknowledge the work Brian Goodwin has done over the last few years as the Booking Officer. The job is not without challenges with ad hoc phone calls at odd times on a Friday night from punters who can't find the lodge or can't get in, to those of us who keep changing our minds about when we want to stay. Brian has carried out this role with great thoroughness and patience. Brian is standing down from Booking Officer and we are very pleased that Eric Evans has agreed to take over. This year the committee agreed to trial an electronic booking system for the Lodge and we aim to have this new booking system up and running in time for the 2012 winter season. We hope that the new system will cut down the amount of time the booking officer has to spend dealing with queries and make it easier for punters to book the lodge; thereby encouraging greater utilisation.

Lodge utilisation

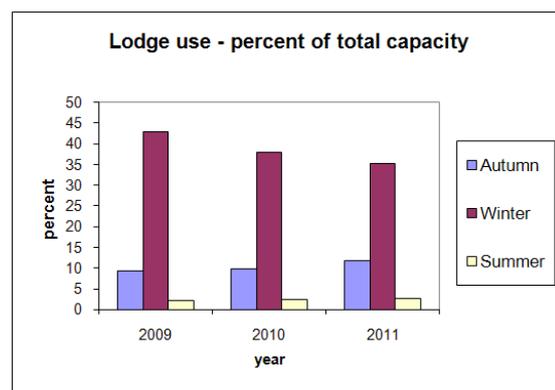
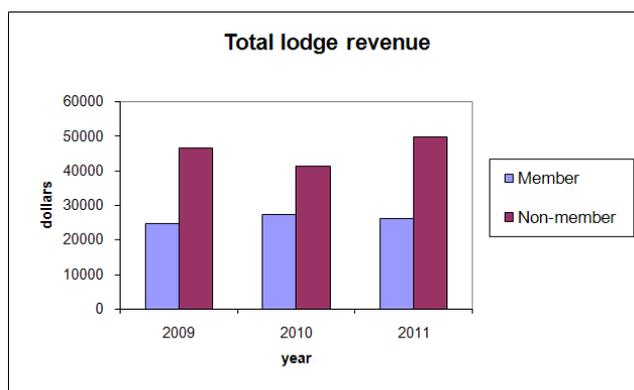
Compared to last year lodge utilisation has improved slightly during the winter/ski season but, there is still significant scope for improvement. The Lodge is hardly used at all during the summer months. This result is on the surface disappointing given the effort we have put into promoting the Lodge this year, but it can take time to get results so we will continue to monitor usage closely and think carefully about how to best target our efforts for the future. Revenue was up 8.2% on last year and expenditure was up 2.6% meaning we made a surplus of \$1,645. However, over the last five years we have on average experienced a deficit of around \$200. We need to do better in order to provide funds for future growth/investment in this important asset.

Lodge usage Autumn/Winter 2011

	Number of Members	Number of Non-Members	Possible Bed Nights	Used Bed Nights
Autumn	53	147	4928	478
Winter	318	310	4928	1661

Lodge usage Autumn/ Winter 2012

	Number of Members	Number of Non-Members	Possible Bed Nights	Used Bed Nights
Autumn	27	127	4928	396
Winter	318	238	4928	1783



**Sue Walsh,
Lodge Convenor**

Club Vans

Van drivers, maintenance and parking

The club continues to own two Ford Transit 12-seater minivans of which it is very proud and also fortunate to possess. There are approximately 55 vetted current club members who have volunteered to drive the vans. Consequently, finding van drivers has not been a problem this year although, we are always keen to encourage as many volunteers as possible. Steve Austin again led a Minivan Familiarisation session to this end. We encourage all van drivers to do the familiarisation session as not everything about running the vans is straightforward. It is important that drivers follow all the protocols such as recording mileage and know how to fill the vans with diesel. Also, we are always keen to hear from people who have time to clean the vans.

Neither van has suffered any major damage over the last 12 months. Running costs continue to increase. Fuel costs have increased with \$4,213 being spent on diesel up 14% from the previous year. A further \$8,859 was spent on van insurance, van licences, WOF's, RUC's and repairs/maintenance.

A new storage location had to be sourced after the Freightlines warehouse required more space for their business. Fortunately I was able to find a new home for the vans at the Interislander ferry terminal car park which is particularly handy for South Island trips and allows for a members car to be left in place of the van. The van storage fees are also slightly less than in previous years.

Van utilisation – the big challenge

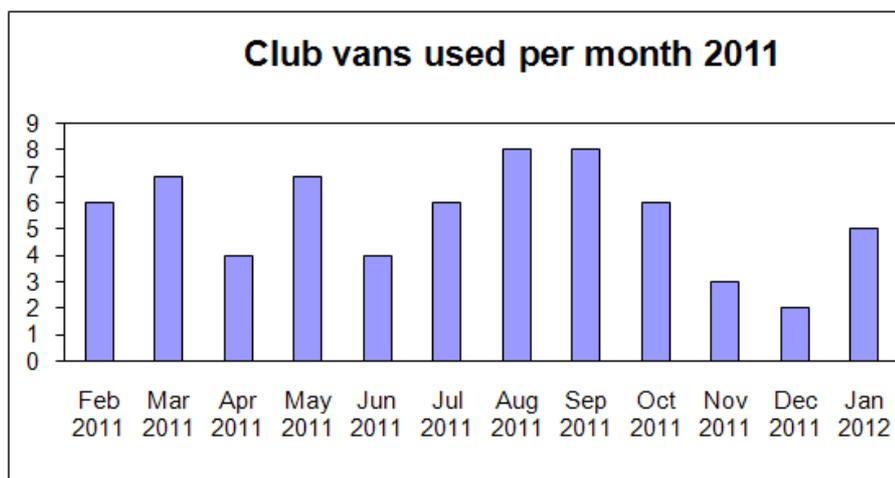
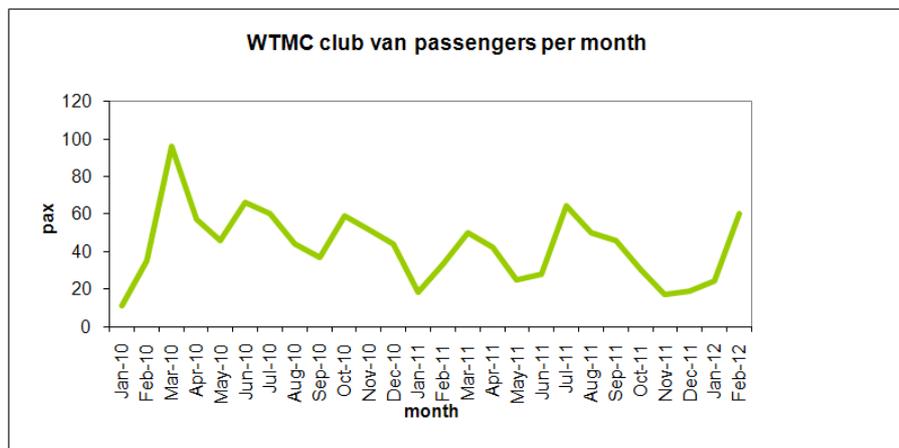
Over the last financial year it has become apparent that for many weekends only one van has been utilised, which is in line with the slight reduction in both club membership and the number of people going on overnight trips. Hopefully this trend will not continue into the new financial year as the vans are required to help the club generate income.

The combined mileage driven by both vans within the last 12 months is 28,000kms, which may sound like a lot but for two vehicles of this type it is not that much. The vans sit being unused most of the time and the Committee has looked at other ways to generate further income from the vans such as sub-hiring them to other groups.



However, this would increase the vehicle insurance charges we pay, dramatically increase the insurance excess payable on any claims and would be logistically difficult to organise and increase the workload of the Transport Officer. For these and other reasons Committee decided not to pursue this idea further.

Although the van utilisation could be improved it is still at an acceptable level for retaining both vans, and Committee is hopeful of an increase in club trip activity over the next couple of years. One small way of increasing usage is to allow people to pay a fare and get a lift in the vans to undertake private trips when the vans are being used for club trips. If this arrangement suits you contact the Transport Officer as appropriate. We will also be looking at using the vans for day trips.



Gareth Morton
Transport Officer

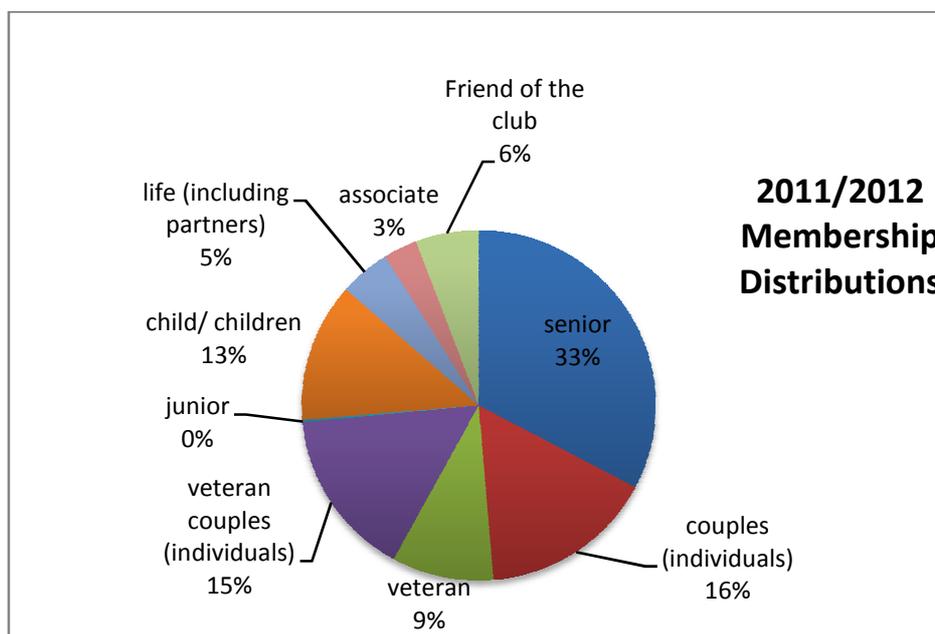


Our People

Membership

The club continues to have a solid membership base although we have experienced a slight decline of members in the past few years. Total membership for 2011 was 452.

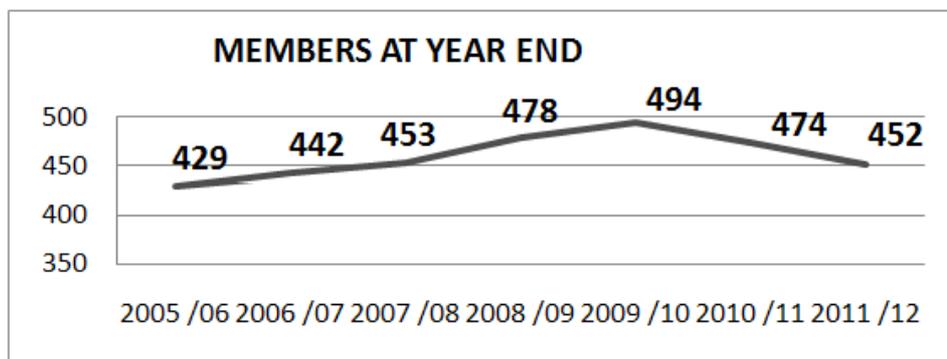
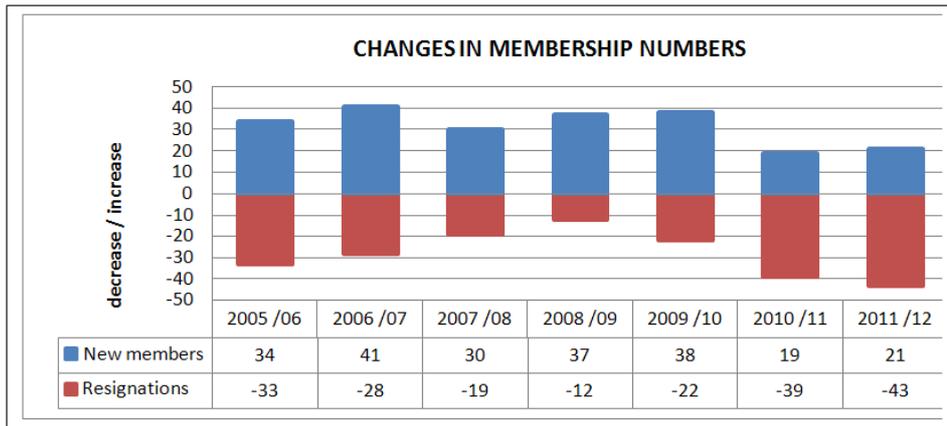
Our membership consists of: 148 senior members, 36 couples (72 individuals), 42 veterans, 35 veteran couples (70 individuals), 1 junior member, 58 child/ children members, 21 life members (including partners), 14 associate members and 26 friends of the club. The chart below shows the distribution of membership types.



Below is a summary of membership numbers over the last seven years.

Annual membership numbers have decreased annually, by 20 members, since our peak in 2009. The number of new members (21) we welcomed throughout the year failed to match the number of members who resigned (43). This trend of static or declining membership is common across tramping clubs both in Wellington and around New Zealand and is probably not surprising for WTMC considering we tend to have a significant portion of non-Kiwis as members.

WTMC Membership history	2011 /12	2010 /11	2009 /10	2008 /09	2007 /08	2006 /07	2005 /06
Members start of year	474	494	478	453	442	429	428
Plus new members	21	19	38	37	30	41	34
Less resignations, deletions	43	39	22	12	19	28	33
Members at year end	452	474	494	478	453	442	429



Member engagement is just as important as member numbers

This year we have simplified our categories of membership and our eligibility requirements. Our objective is to retain flexibility around prospective members being able to “try before they buy” membership while making the process of joining less onerous. We hope these changes will result in an increase in member engagement as well as member numbers. We consider it important that prospective members have an opportunity to learn how the club operates as well as sampling club activities prior to joining. We expect members to actively contribute to the smooth running of the club.





- Applications for Senior or Junior membership now requires only 2 overnight tramping trips with the club rather than 3 trips previously;
- Friends of the Club, where previously a senior member, can automatically re-apply as a Senior without having to complete 2 qualifying tramping trips.
- Associate (partner of a member) automatically becomes a couple member with his/ her partner after 10 years of Associate membership with the club;
- Family membership to be renamed as Child/ Children, that is for child/ children under the age of 18 years who has at least one parent or guardian who is a member.

Members are encouraged to keep the club's database up to date with any changes in contact details by emailing me at membership@wtmc.org.nz or by editing the members' page on the club website or by post to PO Box 5068, Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145

Helen Law
Membership Officer

Getting the word out

Promoting the club is done primarily through digital (our website) and print media (our publications) and by word of mouth (engaging with prospective members on trips and on club nights). The former are very important for attracting people to our club for a look; while it is face to face communication that ensures we convert interested people into members. The face to face stuff happens on trips and on Wednesday nights. We all have a part to play.

This year the committee has worked hard to integrate and better align our promotion, communications and social/Wednesday night activity to give members and prospective members a clear sense of who we are and what we have to offer. We believe that over time this will keep the club in good heart and our membership at sustainable levels.

Website re-launch

In a digital age, the club website is a crucial communication tool and it is vital that our site reflects the essence of our club. In 2010 we started work on re-designing the website to modernise it, with a focus on making it even more user-friendly. We want existing and prospective members to find out about us, what is happening and how we operate quickly and easily.

This work continued in 2011 when a formal website group was established to give the project greater priority. The new website was launched in March 2012: the website content has been updated and redrafted, a new structure and design sorted out and a new content management system implemented. We look forward to your feedback.



I would like to thank our Webmaster Mike Gilbert, along with Steve Kohler and Sarah Young for continuing to contribute their skills, experience, creativity and precious time to this important project.

Club publications

The club newsletter has been revised, making it clean and clear to read. The editor, Sarah Young, has been very active in promoting the newsletter and getting trip leaders to ask people to submit articles. These actions have led to a dramatic increase in article numbers in each newsletter. The newsletter is made available on the club website and in tramping shops, with copies made available every month for public to take away. Trip leaders are encouraged to email the link to new members to help connect them with the club.

In line with our commitment to cut down on the amount of paper waste we create and to save money on postage this year we have encouraged people to download trip schedules off the website with only a few copies available for collection on Wednesday nights. However, we have noticed that demand for the printed trip schedules is on the rise. This appears to be because the printed copies contain the phone numbers of trip leaders. In the future we will be considering whether to move to publishing trip leader contact details online as other clubs do.

It took us some time to find a journal editor this year but Tony Gazley agreed to do the job again. At the time of writing Tony was in the final stages of putting together the 2011 journal and we will be inviting you to come to the clubrooms and pick up your copy when it is ready. In the past it has been difficult to get sufficient articles for the journal but this year Tony has been overwhelmed with contributions. This is a great outcome, particularly as many of you have been writing stories for the newsletter as well.

Finally, Megan has overseen the production of some new posters for the club this year and we have brochures available in outdoor shops. We have also promoted trip participation in the WCC Outdoor Festival and references in a couple of articles in the Wilderness magazine. Club trips were also promoted in the Wilderness "5 Reasons to get out in..." monthly feature and our newsletters and trip schedules are available at Bivouac.





Delivering a warm welcome

A new initiative this year was the formation of the MAG team – the Membership Acquisition Group. The group consisted of a few keen members and a number of meetings were held to brainstorm ideas for club promotion and determine how and what could practically be done. The main outcome of the group was an updated noticeboard and a concerted effort to refresh the club culture of presenting a friendly, welcoming face to new people who attend Wednesday nights and trips for the first time. When trip leaders get notice of who the club contact person is for their trips they are reminded to promote the club to new people. Some work was also done by members of the MAG team on designing a general poster for the club.

Over the year there have been around 20 club members regularly helping on the door welcoming new comers; this is much the same as previous years. This gives members the chance to meet new people and talk to first timers about the club. It is a very important role and thanks goes to all the helpers. Ideally it would be best to have two or more people on the door however it proved difficult to consistently roster people for this. When it was busy, committee members and many others assisted with talking to new people and hopefully this will continue.

Club night entertainment

We are one of the few clubs that continues to offer weekly meetings for members. These Wednesday night meetings continue to be a hive of activity with both club members and non-members catching up after trips, planning future trips, or coming along to pick up and drop off gear or enjoy our weekly entertainment. We have several new faces at club nights each week which is great to see.

As ever, presentations this year have been excellent: high quality photos and entertaining presentation too. Club night entertainment this year included many slide shows on club tramps, alpine trips and cycle trips. We also had instructional river-crossing sessions, many talks on club members' private and/or overseas trips and a few visiting speakers too. As usual we had a photo competition which proved very popular with members. We'd like to take the opportunity to thank all of the many members and non-members who gave their time to tell us about their tramps and adventures. We really do appreciate it. If you would like to do a slideshow or have ideas for shows or other entertainment please contact us – it's your night!



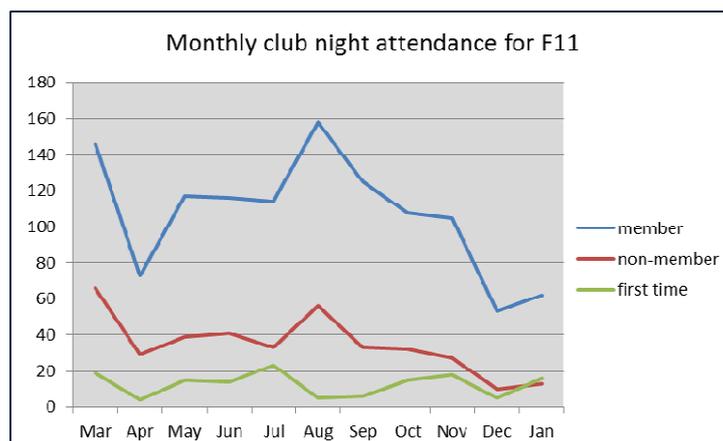


Running the club meetings is fun but it can be hard for the social convenors to be able to make each and every Wednesday night meeting and stay the entire evening. We are looking for volunteers to help open up the club rooms, welcome the crowd, make the tea and clear up in the kitchen. If you think you can help out occasionally please talk to one of the committee. We are looking at developing a roster for running the Wednesday nights. If we do not get sufficient support in this area we may need to have a more radical rethink about how to run our club meetings.

Clubnight participation

There was a slight decline in club night attendance. This year the average total of attendees at club night was 41. This was made up of the averages of 28 members, 9 non-members and 4 first timers. The comparison of figures from previous years show a decrease from the total of 48 for last year and a significant decrease from 62 and 63 for 2009 and 2010 respectively. The number of members attending this year is lower than the previous years but the number of non-members and first timers remains the same as previous years. The actual number of attendees is likely to be higher, however, as some slip through without signing the register. In this respect, the door charge was raised to \$2 to help cover hall hire as it was rarely being covered.

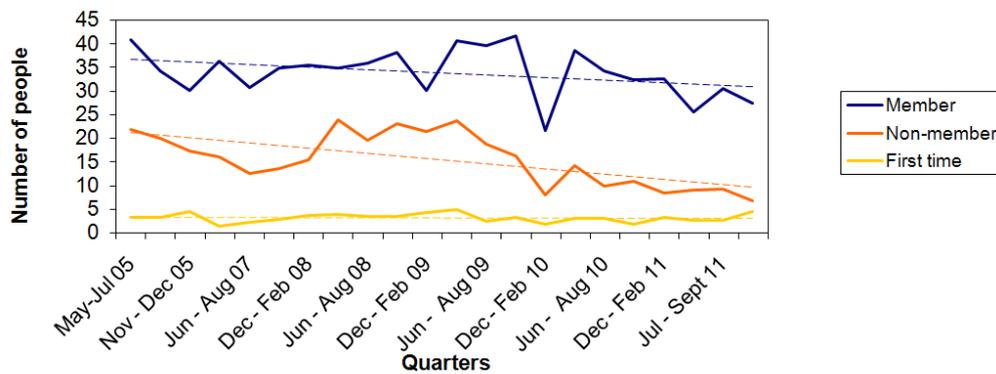
The highest number present on any club evening was 55 on March 2nd; this is compared to a high of 79 in 2010. The decline in numbers attending club night was an issue for some discussion over the year and lead to positive moves such as the MAG, a review of membership rules and reinforcement of the need to welcome new people.



The graph shows that the busiest time was in August and then again in March, the quietest time is over the holiday period of December and January which is to be expected.



Attendance at club meetings 2005-2012 *



*No data for 2006

The above graph shows the trend in member, non-member and first timer attendance over the last few years. Member and non-member attendance is declining over time while first time attendance has held steady. We know from Helen's graphs in the membership section of this report that the number of first timers who go on to join the club is insufficient to match those existing members who fail to re-join or resign during the year. If we want to increase club member numbers we need to get better at converting these first timers into members.

Megan Banks, Promotions Officer, Sarah Young, Newsletter Editor, Donna Maher and Jenny Beaumont, Social Convenors

