



WICEN (NSW) Incorporated

NavShield Report 2014

Over the weekend of 5th – 6th July 2014, WICEN NSW supported the *NSW Emergency Services Wilderness Navigation Shield*, better known as NavShield, for the 18th successive year.

NavShield is conducted by the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad and is Australia's premier wilderness navigation event. Participants include emergency services, defence force, bushwalking and rogaining groups. This year saw the event held in the scenic Yalwal area, near Danjerra Dam west of Nowra. NavShield has been conducted now for 26 years.

Prior to the event, some 15 operators took to the field to conduct a Radio Survey and Site Checks on the 31st May. This activity was an invaluable tool in the planning process and was assisted by on site participation by BWRS event planners.

For the July event, nineteen operators took to the field, and two operators provided a HF link from their home locations. The field operators included four members working at their first NavShield.

Along with BWRS, WICEN and Ambulance SCAT event management teams, some 400 event participants along with numerous support crews gathered at Base ready to "do their stuff". This is a fair sized population and larger than many country towns. WICEN's efforts complements those of BWRS, Police and Ambulance to provide a safe environment for all personnel involved, and providing a safe environment for members of the public traversing nearby roads and using nearby facilities by ensuring that NavShield does not affect normal activities.

WICEN provided the now standard functions of:

- VHF / UHF Commercial network for event management.
- Amateur VHF / UHF for WICEN administration and event message backhaul.
- Amateur HF for backup to the amateur VHF / UHF system.
- Operation of the BWRS HF Base Station.
- Amateur VHF APRS Tracking.
- Standby mobile communications deployable from Base and Radio Checkpoints.
- Field Command Centre operations.

In addition, new functions were deployed for the first time:

- Amateur HF Rear Link to Sydney
- Telephone PABX with eight extensions, at Base.
- Mobile Telephone Gateway, with standard telephone connection and WiFi data connection, at Base.

Staffing for the event composed of:

- **WICEN Event Commander** Mal Alexander VK2YVA
- **WICEN Deputy Commander** Jan Van Ekris VK2FEB
- **Base Operators** Allan Hirschel VK2KAM, Peter Heggie VK2GPH, Irene Bulmer VK2FIRN, Erin Alexander VK2FEJA, Irene Van Ekris, James Goh VK2GOH.
- **Base Technical Support** Steven Heimann VK2BOS, Nic McLean VK2KXN
- **Crossband / APRS Digi Site** Compton Allen VK2HRX, Benno Koch VK2DOC
- **Radio Checkpoint Alpha** John Vettters VK2JV, Craig Pattison VK2BTQ
- **Radio Checkpoint Bravo** Kevin Purves VK2KEV, Trevor Nightingale
- **Radio Checkpoint Charlie** Nick Perrott VK2FS, David Dickford VK2JDD, Andrew Wright VK2HCR
- **Sydney HF Stations** Steve Diekman VK2MCA, Danny Clark VK2WLS

Activities commenced on Friday afternoon, with members progressively arriving at their respective sites from around 1400 hours. All radio & telephone systems were installed and operational by 2200 hours.

Operations commenced in earnest at 0700 hours Saturday with the WICEN Commander presenting the radio component of the Bushranger (Marshals) Briefing. The Operations Room commenced radio checks with the Bushrangers (Commercial VHF Portables supplied by WICEN, and BWRS HF Portables) followed by radio checks with the WICEN remote stations. A laptop computer was deployed in the Operations Room showing APRS tracking of the roving Bushranger (Marshal) Teams.

Bushrangers reported in each hour via radio, and WICEN remote stations were called each half hour for radio checks. Amateur HF on 7 and 3.6 MHz operated to a set schedule. The mobile telephone gateway allowed incoming and outgoing external calls and was tested regularly. The gateway WiFi was put to use with emails being exchanged, and of course real time Facebook posts!

With the earlier safe return of all One Day Event teams, and roving Bushrangers settling down at their respective Radio Checkpoints, the WICEN networks went into “quiet” mode at 2130 hours.

A wake up call at 0730 hours Sunday saw WICEN and BWRS operations spring into life once more. Routine operations continued to around 1300 hours when a progressively staged reduction and shutdown commenced. Basic operations continued until around 1600 hours with the safe return of all roving Bushrangers. At the Bushranger de-brief, WICEN received positive feedback on our efforts.

The last of the equipment was packed away by around 1700 hours and WICEN members commenced a return to home. Over 1,000 “person” operational hours were expended over the 3 days of the deployment, and around 150 “person” operational hours for the radio survey. I’m not going to guess on the preparation hours though, some of us spent a number of days preparing briefing notes, radio & personal equipment. Our efforts, though, were much less than the months of planning, and then numerous site visits and checkpoint flag placing trips by BWRS members who once again conducted an excellent event. BWRS still have to go back and collect the flags!

Mal Alexander

WICEN Event Commander

9th July 2014

WICEN Support To NavShield

- 2014 Yalwal
- 2013 Dunns Swamp
- 2012 Colo Heights
- 2011 Mount Werong
- 2010 Dharug
- 2009 Euroka Clearing / Glenbrook
- 2008 Nerriga
- 2007 Wollombi
- 2006 Wanganderry / Mittagong
- 2005 Coolah Tops
- 2004 Goulburn River
- 2003 Baal Bane Gap / Pantoneys Crown
- 2002 Talleganda
- 2001 Arkstone
- 2000 Dunns Swamp / Kandos Weir
- 1999 Wingello
- 1998 Sassafras
- 1997 Devils Rock, Yengo National Park

Previous NavShields

- 1996 Blue Labyrinth
- 1995 Colo Heights
- 1994 Kanangra
- 1993 Newnes
- 1992 Hill Top
- 1991 Tallowa Dam
- 1990 Yalwal
- 1989 Nerriga

Snap shots from NavShield 2014

