

Area man found weak but well

An Abermain photographer was found well but weak from lack of food and exposure in a cave near Burnie, Tasmania.

Robert Bignell, of The Everglades Studio, was found late last night after he was reported overdue on a one-day walk in a national park in the Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair area.

Mr. Bignell was able to walk out after receiving food and aid, according to an Australian Associated Press Report. His sister, Mrs. Leslie Sweetman, believes this is the experienced bushwalker's first mishap.

Mrs. Sweetman, of Cessnock, said Mr. Bignell had walked in Tasmania's Dove Park area on previous

occasions and considered it one his favourite spots.

She said her brother does a considerable amount of bushwalking and to the best of her knowledge has never been in any trouble.

A National Parks and Wildlife ranger reported to police yesterday afternoon that Bignell, 36, was missing.

An AAP report this morning said Bignell had called at the ranger's duty office on Tuesday morning and detailed the route he intended to take.

Police said a search was mounted when Mr. Bignell's vehicle was found. North West police district search and rescue squad and North West State Emergency Services re-

gional officers launched the search.

Six police officers and a ranger made an initial sweep of low lying areas before dark but no trace was found.

A further search was made later in the night by the park's head ranger and an SES officer. Voice contact was made with Mr. Bignell at about 10.35 pm and searchers found him in a nearby cave, weak from lack of food and exposure, but otherwise unharmed.

The AAP report said police and rangers escorting Mr. Bignell were forced to stop when he became too weak to walk last night but Devonport police said today they expected the rescue party to reach the ranger's hut about midday.



■ A file picture of Mr. Bignell