

Introduction Talk

1. History and Organisation

- The club started in 1967 by a group of teenagers, some of whom still belong.
- The club is a non-profit organisation, incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act with a Constitution and By-Laws which are all on the website.
- We are a member of Bushwalking NSW Incorporated, which is the peak body for bushwalkers in NSW and the ACT. It represents the interests of over 12,000 bushwalkers from 70 bushwalking clubs throughout the state, and provides a united voice to local, state and federal government agencies and other bodies on issues affecting bushwalkers. Greg Chapman is our representative on Bushwalking NSW.
- All the committee members are on the website as well if you're interested.
- We have a members' only Facebook page for photos etc.
- We are all volunteers who do this because we love the bush and love seeing others enjoy it too and to bring like-minded people together. Leaders are also volunteers, so don't pick on them!

2. Insurance

- We have insurance through Bushwalking Australia which covers personal accidents and public liability. A fair part of our annual fees goes to pay this insurance.
- Make sure you tell the leader about an injury or fall in case it turns out being more serious than you think. Claims must be in within 3 months. Claims can cover ongoing physio etc.
- Ambulance insurance is very important, or you can be up for a lot of money if you need to be rescued. If you are a pensioner or have private insurance, you're good, but otherwise you can just take out ambulance insurance on its own.
- Sometimes overseas adventures are advertised but these aren't covered by our insurance.

3. Not just bushwalking

- As well as bushwalking, activities are quite varied depending on leaders but can include bike riding, kayaking, liloing, rogaining, abseiling, canyoning, multi-day walks, car camping, social events, and volunteer bush-care activities.
- We also offer skill development in leading walks, navigation, first aid and abseiling. Some things are subsidised.

4. Grading of activities

- Grading is always difficult, as easy for us may not be easy for you. Discuss this with the leader beforehand if you're not sure.

5. Library and equipment

- We have an excellent club library with adventure stories and books with walks ideas.
- We also have equipment which can be borrowed, especially if you want to try an overnight walk but don't want to spend money before you've tried it.

6. Booking on an activity

- Book in via the website and contact the leader if you don't hear anything.
- Leave details of the walk with someone at home - more important for harder and multi-day ones. There are club contact people who they can ring if you're very late.
- Don't plan something after the walk if you're unsure when you'll be back. Check with the leader before booking in if you need to be back at a certain time.
- Advise as soon as possible if you can't come, as there are often others on a waiting list.

7. What to wear and carry

- Layer! An Inner layer, an outer layer, a windproof layer, a waterproof layer is a good rule of thumb.
- If possible, wear wool, polypropylene, and polar fleece rather than cotton. It's lighter and doesn't stay wet after you sweat. Cotton outer layers, especially jeans, are a problem if they get wet.
- Shoes vs boots - knock yourselves out.
- Backpack. Sufficient size for your clothing layers, toilet trowel and paper, first aid kit, water, morning tea and lunch.
- You need at least 2 litres of water on an average day, more on a hot day.
- A small torch (with the batteries reversed), matches and a whistle are also handy.
- Gardening or riggers gloves, and a length of rope are good for off track.

8. Toileting

- Carry a toilet trowel and paper.
- Let someone know if you need to 'go bush'.
- Find a spot as far as practicable (at least 50m) away from any watercourse.
- Take your time! Dig a descent hole and cover your waste, including toilet paper, with soil first, then rocks and branches if necessary.
- Avoid going to the toilet in canyon environments. Be prepared to carry out your own waste, eg. Plastic bags.

9. Stay with the group

- Participants can be very unhelpful by charging on ahead or dawdling.
- Look after the person behind you! Point out obscure hazards such as wobbly rocks, hidden holes, etc. Let someone know if the person behind you is no longer behind!
- Cross obstacles in the same place together - the worst place to separate is at creeks or cliff lines.
- If you are in front, wait at the first intersection.
- Clearly communicate with the leader if you need to leave.
- If you find you have become separated from the group, stay put. Use a whistle with long blasts for SOS.

10. General risks

- Most accidents happen when people are talking and not paying attention.
- Risks include slippery and loose rocks, sticks and branches in the eyes [wear sunglasses], banged heads from overhead things you don't see because of hats.
- If you bang your head, yell "heads" to anyone following you.
- When scrambling up a slope, don't follow too closely to the person in front of you.
- If you dislodge a rock, yell "rock" to anyone following you.
- The leader should tell you about additional risks pertaining to his or her walk - eg creek crossing, heat or cold etc.

11. First aid kits

- First aid lists are on the website. Don't rely on others. We will use your kit if you require first aid.
- You should have basic stuff such as bandaids and some pain killers but also a snake bandage and triangular bandage. More is needed for harder, off-track walks.
- Consider if there'll be ticks, leeches, mozzies etc.
- Keep your "medical and emergency contact information form" in a ziplock bag in your first aid kit.
- If you are assisting someone with first aid, use the resources in THEIR first aid kit.

12. Etiquette

- Being late keeps everyone waiting. Aim to arrive about 10 minutes early.
- Don't bring extra people without contacting the leader beforehand. They **won't** be able to come!
- If you're not using your poles, carry them in one hand, points forward.
- Be nice to your leader and help them. They are not commercial tour guides!
- When you're car-pooling, contribute to fuel costs. A rough guide is \$5 per 1 hour in the car, shared among the passengers only. Drivers pay for vehicle wear and tear.
- Always carry some small notes [\$5s and \$10s] for fuel if you're car-pooling.
- Don't charge ahead or dawdle behind.
- Tell the leader if you can't keep up or are feeling unwell.
- Don't bring electronic entertainment, such as iPods or Mp3 players.
- Mobile Phones are for emergencies only! (or photos)

13. Respect the environment and other people

- Respect aboriginal sites
- Carry out all rubbish including apple cores and dirty tissues (handkerchiefs are more sustainable.)
- Don't feed the wildlife.

14. Questions