

# BEGINNERS INFORMATION

## EQUIPMENT

**NOTE:** Most of our walks are through scrub and over rough terrain.

It is advised that you spend little or no money until you decide if you enjoy Bushwalking. Discussions with experienced members will help you to determine the "pros and cons" of their style of boots, backpacks etc. Personal preferences vary considerably. Specialized equipment is expensive, therefore you should be sure you will continue bushwalking and know which items are best for your choice of walks or camps. Specialized bushwalking shops sell an extensive range of gear. Camping stores also have a good range of items but do not stock as much lightweight equipment. Equipment such as a PLB and/or a GPS are useful navigational and safety equipment but are not necessary for the beginner walking with a club.

### CLOTHING

A large number of Queensland bushwalkers walk in shorts during summer and winter. Even in cold weather, most people warm up soon after beginning the walk. If you prefer, long pants with zip off bottoms may be your choice. Jeans are generally not suitable for walking. If it rains, wet long pants are not as easy to dry as wet legs. In scratchy terrain, many wear long pants of light material, but you will also discover long gaiters offer good lower leg protection. You may need a jumper, tracksuit top and/or thermals, even in summer. Remember the weather can vary in a short space of time. When you stop walking, especially on an exposed mountainside, you soon feel cold. Boots are not essential to begin with provided the terrain is not rough. Joggers with reasonable tread will suffice, as well as a plastic raincoat and a cheap daypack from a bargain store. It is customary to bring a change of clothes and footwear to change into for the drive home. Include a plastic bag for dirty boots and clothes.

### SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT FOR WALKS

**Compulsory Items Are:** first aid kit, joggers or boots, torch, raincoat, water, whistle, pencil/pen & paper, & hat.

#### Day Walks

- Day pack
- 2 Litres+ water
- Sunscreen
- Thermal top &/or jumper
- Swimsuit & small towel if near water
- Map & compass
- Morning/afternoon teas & lunch
- Compass & map
- Gaiters
- Sunglasses
- Mobile phone
- Toilet paper and light trowel
- Rubbish bag

#### Throughwalks And Overnight Walks

- Usual day walking equipment
- Backpack
- Tent
- Groundsheet

- Parka
- Sleeping bag and/or inner sheet
- Small pillow/foam
- Warm clothes for nights
- Durable day clothing
- Socks
- Food - high energy
- Mat/air bed/self inflating mattress
- One change of clothes
- Water bottles
- Tent and/or tent fly, pegs
- Small piece of candle
- Billy, frying-pan and billy lifters
- Plastic bowl & plate, cutlery
- Cooking appliance and fuel
- Soap, toothpaste
- Contact officer details
- Water filter/chemical tablets to treat drinking water
- String and/or some duct tape

### **Base Camps**

- Usual overnight walks equipment
- Sleeping mat/air bed/foam/self inflating mattress
- Pillow- optional
- Warm bedding - sleeping bag and/or your duvet from home is good for winter
- Stove (small camping style or larger 2 burner family camping style)
- Billy or other cooking utensil
- Food and. Nibbles for evening social time
- Folding chair
- Esky – optional

### **First Aid Kit**

A small first-aid kit consisting of band-aids, paracetamol, wide elastic bandage or micropore tape, tweezers and anti-sting ointment will be sufficient for your first walk. This can be added to as you learn from others. A suggested list follows:

- 1 triangular bandage
- 2 non-adhesive dressings
- Scissors/small knife
- Needles
- Safety pins
- 50mm elastic crepe bandage, 75mm elastic crepe bandage
- Roll of plaster
- Gauze bandages 25mm, 50mm, 75mm
- Plastic bags, first aid notes
- Ointment for cuts
- Space blanket

Carry ID and any necessary personal medical instructions.

### **Food**

Remember the following when deciding on your menu:

- Take food that you personally like.
- Take more than you think you will need. Exercise builds appetites.
- Take food easily cooked. Best if it fits into one pot on one burner.
- Use food easily prepared and cooked. After walking all day you will want a meal with the least possible effort and fuss.
- Pre-cooking saves time and fuel.
- Fresh food usually keeps for two days.
- Dehydrated food saves weight only if you camp near water.
- Dehydrated food is essential on extended walks.
- Canned food is more suitable for base camps due to weight and litter.
- Milk can be fresh, long life or powdered.
- Plan each meal separately to ensure nothing is forgotten.

### **Breakfast**

- Rolled oats, muesli, cereal, with powdered milk or individual small cartons

- Breakfast bars, etc
- Fruit, fresh or dried
- Bread/rolls/chapattis with your favorite spread
- Breakfast bars
- Bacon(smoked) and eggs

### **Lunch**

- Bread, flat-breads
- Crisp bread, Ryvita, Vita wheat etc
- Butter/margarine (optional, often best spread before leaving home)
- Spreads, jams, honey, cheese, vegemite, etc
- Cold meats, salami, cheese, small tins tuna/salmon
- Salad items, tomato, avocado, cucumber, lettuce, etc

### **Dinner**

- Steak if frozen, is usually safe after one day
- Cans of fish with pasta or rice
- Noodle or pasta or rice packages
- Meals can be frozen, pre-cooked and frozen or, dehydrated
- Stir fried vegetables
- Snack pack fruits, fresh fruit (hard rather than squashy)

### **Extras**

- Tea/Coffee/Milo
- Milk/sugar
- Salt/pepper
- Sweet biscuits
- Chocolate/lollies
- Dried fruits
- Food bars
- Nuts
- Scroggin, mixture of dried fruits nuts sweets chocolate etc
- If you take in alcohol, do so with plastic containers (less weight to carry & safer)

### **PETS**

Leave them at home. Many of our walks are in national parks and they are not allowed in.

### **BUSHWALKERS' CODE**

#### **Prior To Walk**

- Ensure that you are fit enough for the degree of difficulty of the walk. If in doubt discuss with the leader well prior to the walk;
- Strengthen ankles at least a week before the bushwalk by walking over rough terrain;
- Arrive at starting point on time, ready to go;
- Carry sufficient water for conditions of walk, generally a minimum of two litres, or more in hotter conditions;
- Ensure you are suitably equipped including first aid kit, sunscreen, hat, food, rain gear, whistle, torch and appropriate clothing and footwear. A map and compass may also enhance your enjoyment of the walk;
- Ensure you complete and sign the Walk Sheet after reading the Acknowledgement of Risk and obligations, noting any risk warnings;

- Remember to bring a sense of humour and adventure. Our leaders are all volunteers so please remember to be patient and polite.

### **During The Walk**

- Follow the leader's instructions or the consensus of the group. Remember your leader has your welfare at heart. Be courteous, co-operative and helpful to other walkers in the group
- Look behind occasionally to familiarise yourself with the prominent features of area. Everything looks different when returning by the same route and it will help you work out your location;
- Generally you should not leave the walk early unless pre-arranged, but if it is necessary you must advise the leader, and, if requested, sign off on the activity sign on sheet. You must accept a leader's decision to send someone with you to accompany you out;
- Do not allow yourself to become separated from the group, but if you do, stop where you are, remain calm and use your whistle, or call out to attract attention. If experiencing any difficulty such as pace, blisters, shortage of water, injury, terrain, advise the leader immediately.
- Participants should try and maintain a line of sight with people in front and behind them;
- It is your responsibility to allow sufficient distance between yourself and the walker in front to avoid injuries by branches flicking back, or rolling rocks;
- Always remember, do not put others at risk and, you are responsible for your wellbeing and actions;
- Do not leave the track, if on a track, or fall behind the person appointed 'tail' for any reason without advising the 'tail'. Advise the tail if going on a toilet break;
- Inform the walk leader if you feel unwell or injure yourself.

### **At The End Of The Walk**

- Ensure the leader is aware you have made it to the end;
- Remember to thank the leader.
- Contribute to car costs if you are a passenger in another member's vehicle;

## **MINIMAL IMPACT BUSHWALKING**

Increasing numbers of bushwalkers visiting national parks, wilderness areas and other reserves are causing serious damage to the natural environment. Escapes from bushwalkers' campfires, expansion of campsites, trampling and cutting of vegetation, outbreaks of gastroenteritis and the rapid deterioration of walking tracks have all become more commonplace. Fortunately many walkers have adopted a new bushwalking ethic, **Minimal Impact Bushwalking**. Without it we run the very real danger of 'loving our natural areas to death'. By learning to 'walk softly', we can minimise the damage to the natural environment and reduce the need for track closures and restrictions on walker numbers.

## **On The Right Track**

In some areas, walking tracks are being upgraded to minimise the impact of increasing foot traffic; boardwalks are necessary in some places with large numbers of visitors. You can help minimise damage in the following ways:

- Stay on the track even if it's rough and muddy. Walking on the track edges and cutting corners on steep 'zigzag' track increases damage, erosion and visual scarring, as well as causing confusion about which is the right track.
- Spread out in open country where there are no tracks. Spreading out (rather than following in each other's footsteps) disperses impact. A plant stepped on only once has more chance of survival than if trampled by the whole party.
- Avoid sensitive vegetation. Sphagnum bogs, cushion plants and other sensitive vegetation are easily destroyed by trampling. Stay on rocks and hard ground wherever possible.
- Keep the wilderness wild. Cutting new tracks is illegal, and marking tracks with cairns, tape or other materials is unsightly and can confuse other walkers.
- Walk softly. Choose appropriate footwear for the terrain. Solid but lightweight walking boots are best. Sandshoes can be used on most tracks on the mainland in summer. Wear sandshoes around campsites.
- Choose a different route each time you visit a trackless area, and camp at different sites whenever possible.

## **Planning Your Trip:**

- Let someone know before you go bushwalking. Tell them about your party, your route, when you plan to return and the equipment the party is carrying. Remember to contact them when you get back.
- Keep your party small (4 - 8 people). Large parties have more environmental impact, affect the experience of others and are socially unwieldy.
- If possible avoid the peak times of the year (December to February) and the more popular areas. You will miss the crowds and spread the impact, giving the environment a chance to recover.
- Plan your route so that you can camp at recognised campsites. If possible do not create a new site.
- Carry clothing and equipment to suit the worst possible conditions you are likely to encounter. Minimise your impact by taking the following items:
  - fuel stove and fuel for cooking meals.
  - good quality tent (with sewn-in floor and poles).
  - hand trowel for burying toilet wastes.

## **Bushfires, Campfires And Billies**

- Bushfires starting from walkers' campfires cause extensive damage. Trees such as snow gums are killed by very hot fires, and replacement of mature trees may take hundreds of years. In Tasmania, native pines over 1000 years old have been killed by escapes from campfires and will never return.
- In many areas, firewood is often in short supply. Many small native animals live among fallen branches. In alpine areas where the growing season is short, such habitats are only replaced slowly.

- Please don't light a fire if you are in any doubt about the safety of lighting it. Fire restrictions apply in all national parks, forests and other reserves, and open fires and fuel stoves may not be used on days of Total Fire Ban. Do not light open fires during hot windy weather.
- Observe the fire lighting regulations. Regulations governing the lighting and use of fires vary from State to State. You should check local variations if you're planning to walk and use open fires.
- Keep the fire small (under one metre square). Don't put rocks around it - these just create another visual scar and could explode if moist inside.
- Use a safe existing fireplace rather than making a new one.
- Use only dead fallen wood. Dead standing trees are a home for wildlife and are a part of the scenery. Leave axes and machetes at home.
- Be absolutely sure the fire is out. Before you leave, feel the ground underneath the coals. If it is still warm, the fire is not out. Put it out with water, not soil.

### **Washing**

- Don't wash in streams and lakes. Detergents, tooth paste and soap (even biodegradable types) harm fish and water-life.
- Wash 50 metres away from streams and lakes and scatter the wash-water here so that it filters through the soil before returning to the stream. Use gritty sand and a scourer instead of soap to clean dishes.
- Don't throw food scraps into streams or lakes.

### **Pack It In, Pack It Out**

- Pack to minimise rubbish. Don't take potential rubbish such as bottles, cans and excess wrapping.
- Don't burn or bury rubbish. Rubbish is likely to be dug up and scattered by possums and other animals and may injure them. Digging disturbs the soil and encourages weeds and erosion.
- If you've carried it in, you can carry it out. Carry out all your rubbish, including those easy-to-forget items like silver paper, aluminum foil, plastic and orange peel which won't easily decompose.
- If you have the misfortune to come across other people's rubbish, do the bush a favour and pick that up too.
- Don't feed animals, especially around huts and campsites. Feeding causes unnaturally high and unbalanced animal populations dependent on walkers' food. Some animals become a nuisance and can develop diseases such as 'lumpy jaw' from eating refined foods.

### **Fuel Stove Only Areas**

- A number of places are designated as fuel stove only areas (no campfires allowed) to lessen the environmental damage associated with fires
- Other places at lower elevations and some coastal parks in various States are also fuel stove only areas. Fines are imposed on people who light fires. Before your visit, check with local land managers as to whether campfires are allowed.
- In many parts of the Tasmanian alpine area. the ground contains peat (decaying plant material) which if set alight can smoulder underground for

months. Because such underground fires are extremely difficult to put out, it is illegal to light fires on peat in Tasmania.

### **Huts**

- Don't rely on finding a hut. They are usually only for emergency or refuge use. Always carry a tent.
- Huts are for everyone. Respect the rights of people who are there first, but be prepared to make space for late-comers.
- Don't leave food scraps or store food in huts. It only clutters up the hut and encourages rats.
- Clean the hut, check that the fire is out, replace firewood and close the door securely when you leave.

### **'No-Trace' Camping**

- Look for low impact campsites. Sandy or hard surfaces are better than boggy or grassed areas. Camp at an existing campsite rather than a new one, and keep at least 30 metres away from watercourses and the track. Spend only one or two nights at each campsite.
- Use modern camping equipment. Use waterproof tents (with floors and tent poles) and foam sleeping mats to minimise damage to camping areas. Digging trenches around tents is damaging, and unnecessary if the tents are sited properly.
- Leave campsites better than you found them by removing rubbish and dismantling unnecessary or unsafe fireplaces.
- If you have to remove branches or rocks to create a tent site, replace them before you leave.
- Always carry a fuel stove when camping. If you carry warm clothing and a fuel stove, fires will not be needed for warmth or cooking. Compared with campfires, fuel stoves are faster, cleaner, a lot easier to use in wet weather and they don't scar the landscape.

### **WATCH YOUR SAFETY**

- Know what to do in emergencies. Rescue operations often cause serious damage, so take care to avoid the need for rescue.
- Carry a mobile phone if you want to, but use it only for summoning aid in an emergency. Keep it switched off until needed.
- Give snakes a wide berth and leave them alone. They have more right to be there than you do.
- Become proficient at bush navigation.
- Be properly trained in First Aid so you know how to handle illness and injuries.

### **HOW TO AVOID 'GASTRO'**

We think the increasing cases of gastroenteritis (diarrhea and vomiting) in some high-use areas are caused by exposed human faecal waste. Giardia, a protozoan parasite is also of concern. Giardia inhabits and reproduces in the small intestine, causing chronic diarrhea and an array of other nasties. Not only is it spread by humans, it can be spread by wild pigs, cattle, and other animals through faecal waste contaminating streams. Avoid 'gastro' and help

ensure that Giardia does not spread to new areas by observing these guidelines.

- Where there is a toilet, please use it.
- In areas without toilets, bury your faecal waste. Choose a spot at least 100 metres away from campsites and watercourses. Dig a hole 15 cm deep (take a hand trowel for this purpose). Bury all faecal waste and paper, mixing it with soil to help decomposition and discourage animals. Carry out sanitary pads, tampons and condoms.
- In snow, dig down into the soil. Burying human waste is only temporary until the snow melts!
- In high-use areas, river valleys without toilets and snow areas, you should consider carrying out human wastes to a suitable sewage system.
- Flies and small animals love faecal waste and food. Cover all food. Avoid putting it on hut tables, furniture and other places used by flies and animals.
- Boil water for at least five minutes before drinking in high-use areas or areas with low water flow.
- Always swim downstream from where you get your drinking water.

### **BE COURTEOUS TO OTHERS**

- Ensure your behaviour and activities don't disturb or offend others.
- The sound of radios, CD players, and similar devices is out of place in the natural environment. Leave the electronics at home.
- Do your share of getting firewood and water. When breaking camp, help to remove the remains of your fire (if you had one) and clean up the site.
- Camp as far away from other groups as conditions allow.
- Don't use another group's campfire without permission.
- Don't throw rubbish on a fire where people are cooking.
- Don't step over other people's uncovered food.
- Leave gates and slip rails as you find them. When you open a gate, make sure the last person through knows it has to be closed.
- Respect the rights of traditional owners, landholders and land managers.
- Obtain permission from land owners, traditional landowners or the relevant land manager to visit private property or sensitive areas.
- Respect sites of geological, cultural or scientific interest.
- Leave Indigenous relics as you find them. Don't touch paintings or rock engravings.
- In national parks, abide by plans of management and encourage others to do so too.
- Offer what is required to help others in need. This could be your leader, who may be carrying group safety items, someone in the group who has injured themselves, or forgotten their billy, or another group who may not have communications to summon emergency medical aid. Recognise that some individuals may need your help but will never ask for it. Volunteer it.
- When travelling as part of a group agree on a start time for the walk and be on time.

### **LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS - TAKE ONLY PHOTOS.**