



INTRODUCTION TO THE MELBOURNE BUSHWALKERS

www.melbournebushwalkers.org.au

Postal address Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc, GPO Box 1751 Melbourne 3001

WELCOME TO THE MELBOURNE BUSHWALKERS!

Our Club aims to:

1. Bring together those who enjoy bushwalking and related outdoor activities.
2. Encourage an appreciation of the wild life and natural beauty of this country and to assist in its preservation.
3. Organise walks and other outdoor activities.
4. Promote social activity amongst members.

We publish an **Activity Programme** 4 times a year (Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring) which includes a list of contacts for further information on each activity.

Our monthly newsletter, The NEWS, details future activities and social events as well as news of members' activities, reviews, articles of bushwalking interest, information from the Committee, etc.

Our Web site contains a wealth of information including our history, previews of future activities, reports on past activities, photographs, information on equipment and equipment hire, tips for new bushwalkers and copies of The NEWS and Activities Programs.

We meet every Wednesday between 7:00 and 9:00PM at:

The Drill Hall, 1st floor Lecture Theatre
Royal Historical Society Building
Corner William & A'Beckett Streets,
362 William Street
Melbourne (Melways 2F – B2).

Entry is from William Street.



Visitors are always welcome!

OUR ACTIVITIES

Sunday Day Walks: Are conducted nearly every Sunday throughout the year, with Easy to Medium graded walks. Transport is by bus or by car, refer to the Activity Program.

Saturday Day Walks: These are typically half day walks, use private transport, are usually in the Dandenong's, and usually on the last Saturday of the month. Standard is normally Easy or Easy/Medium.

Wednesday Day Walks: By private transport, on the second Wednesday of each month. Walks average 14 – 16km and are graded Easy or Easy/Medium.

Monday and Thursday Day Walks: Designed for those wanting shorter walks of around 10kms on the 3rd Monday and 1st Thursday of the month, and an even shorter social walk of 5km (a non-qualifying walk) with lunch on the 4th Thursday of the month. Easy walking, mostly on bush tracks.

Weekend and Extended Trips: These are run generally over weekends and holiday periods. Some involve pack carrying; others are base camps with tent or hostel/lodge accommodation. They are run regularly throughout the year. We also organise interstate and overseas walks.

Ski Touring (Nordic skiing): Day and extended trips whenever possible in winter, depending on snow cover.

Cycling trips: Usually once a month, either on Saturday, or a weekend base camp. On occasions a longer trip is organised.

Lilo and Canoe Trips: Day or multi day trips are run occasionally in summer (Lilo trips involve paddling down rivers on inflatable airbeds).

Training: Courses are provided in leadership, navigation and first aid.

Track Maintenance and Conservation Activities: A number of these activities are held throughout the year and all members are encouraged to participate.

Search and Rescue: The club has assisted the Victoria Police Force in search and rescue efforts since 1949 - experienced walkers are welcome

Social Functions: are held regularly throughout the year and include dinners, film nights, trip photo nights, bush dances, guest speakers, gear demonstrations, etc. We hold a regular **wine and cheese** evening on the 4th Wednesday of the month in the Clubrooms.

Private Trips: Often likeminded members will get together and organise trips to places all over the world.

TIPS FOR NEW BUSHWALKERS

CHOOSE YOUR WALKS

Easy and **Easy-Medium** walks are suitable for beginners. Please check with the leader if you are unsure. For **Medium** walks you should be reasonably fit and preferably have some recent walking experience. Unless you are already an experienced bushwalker, you should not attempt **Medium-Hard** and **Hard** walks at first.

Weekend **pack-carrying trips** are more difficult because of the weight of the pack, and you should try a few day trips first, unless you already have some previous experience.

Base camps, are a good way of learning camping techniques, cooking & food preparation, trying out tents & sleeping bags, AND seeing if you like camping before trying a pack-carry trip. Walks are usually **Easy** or **Easy-Medium**.

EQUIPMENT & WHAT TO TAKE

Day Walks:

The equipment you need is fairly basic and you will probably have most of it already.

Wear comfortable lightweight clothing, a sun hat, well cushioned socks and a pair of low cut walking shoes with cleated soles or quality walking boots. Footwear fit is critical and it could be worth talking to our Equipment You don't Officer before making a purchase. If you wear boots, make sure they are comfortable and well broken-in!

Carry a day pack (not a shoulder or carry bag as you will need your hands free) containing:

- **Lunch**, a morning and afternoon snack.
- **Full water bottle** - we recommend 2 litres per day, more in warmer weather. (You can't rely on finding water on the walk, and it may be unsafe to drink).
- An unlined **waterproof jacket or cape** (water resistant garments are not suitable), **waterproof over-trousers** (if your jacket is short).
- A wide brimmed **hat** is essential in summer.
- A **pullover** or **fleece jacket**, **beanie** and **gloves** in winter.
- **Matches** in a waterproof container and a **torch**, especially in winter.
- **Extra food** for snacks or emergencies.
- **Whistle**, **pencil** and **paper**.
- **Personal** and **first aid items**, including, sun screen, lip screen, toilet paper, identification, club green Health Card, some money etc. Note: The leader always carries a first aid kit.
- **Change of clothing**, especially in winter. This can be left in the bus or car. Also a change of shoes is required on bus and car trips.

Base Camps:

As well as Day equipment you may need a tent, sleeping bag, lilo or mat, cooking equipment and extra food. If the camp is near the cars then extra treats can be taken!

Pack-carrying trips:

Equipment for these trips is far more critical. It is all too easy to spend more than you need to on equipment you later regret. It is strongly recommended that you talk to our Equipment Officer and hire before you buy – email (equipment@melbournebushwalkers.org.au) or arrange to meet in the Clubroom.

Help can be provided in the form of demonstrations and advice on specific items of gear and where to buy them. You can have your name added to an email list alerting you to good buys. Also hire some of the latest lightweight gear from the club at very reasonable rates (a description of each item and its hire cost is on the web site).

Consult with the leader if you are in any doubt as to what gear may be required or desirable

NAVIGATION

Every party has an experienced leader. It is their job to navigate the route. Keep in mind however, that all leaders and whips are volunteers and therefore you cannot expect the same standards as from a commercially run bushwalking operation. If you are interested in map reading and navigation – and we encourage you to learn the basics – then the leader, whip and others will be happy to assist and explain as you go. The names of the map sheets applicable to the walk are usually listed in the walk previews in **The NEWS**. You don't need to buy the map unless you are interested.

The club also conducts navigation training and day trips at least once a year, where you can learn map reading and navigation, and test your ability in safety. Rogaining and Orienteering are other good ways to improve your skills.

An understanding of the country through which you are walking greatly enhances the value of bushwalking. There are usually knowledgeable people on the walks who know something of the geology, the native plants & wildflowers, the birds or the history of the area.

GUIDE TO WALK STANDARDS

WALK GRADINGS

If you are a first time walker we recommend that you start with an easy walk and discuss what's involved with the leader at the time of booking. If you feel you can tackle a harder walk be sure to discuss it with the leader beforehand.

Day Walks:

Bludge: A non-qualifying walk (see note on qualifying for membership on page 4). Usually involves a short walk in easy terrain, with long lunch and rest stops. Possible swimming, bird watching, and/or botanical study as well.

Easy: Walking mostly on tracks or in open country, with possibly some stretches of light scrub. Few hills and adequate rest stops. Distances may be up to 15km in flat open terrain, but will be shorter if scrub or significant hills are involved.

Easy-Medium: More consistent walking, mostly on tracks or in open country but with some significant hills, probably some stretches of light scrub. Possibility of some rock hopping. Distances up to 20 km, but may be much shorter, depending on the difficulty of the terrain. Reasonable lunch and rest stops.

Medium: Consistent walking on tracks or in open bushland, usually with patches of thicker scrub, several moderate climbs, and/or rock hopping. Distances up to about 20km, with reasonable rest stops. A good level of fitness and walking experience is required

Medium-Hard: Consistent off-track walking, with major climbs, including possibility of rock scrambling, and probably thick bush. Few rests. A very good level of fitness and walking experience is required.

Hard: Strenuous walking in difficult terrain, long distances and few rests. A high level of fitness and extensive bushwalking experience is required.

Pack Carrying Walks:

These involve carrying a full pack, with tent, sleeping bag, food & stove, clothing, etc. Consequently these overnight walks are more difficult due to the weight of the pack. In general the terrain will be similar to that for the graded equivalent day walks, but the distances each day will usually be a little less.

Base Camps:

The same grading as for day walks. The walks may be a little longer as we can start earlier from camp. Sometimes we run walk-in base camps. These involve a short walk of up to 5km to set up camp, then day walks from the campsite. They are an ideal way to start overnight walks.

Li-Lo Trips:

These can be Easy to Hard, depending on river height and conditions. A good level of fitness is required and ability to swim is essential.

NUMBERS ON WALKS

Sunday Bus Walks have two groups of around 15 to 25 participants each; Sunday Private Transport, Wednesday walks and Saturday walks – 10 to 25 walkers; Monday and Thursday walks – 8 to 14 walkers; and weekend pack-carry walks - 4 to 15 walkers. Base camps can have as many as 25 or more people attending

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please note that it is your responsibility to notify the leader of any medical conditions, fitness or other conditions (e.g. vertigo) that you have that they should be aware of. You should carry the clubs green Health Card at all times. Bring any medications you may need to take.

HAZARDS

We occasionally see snakes on our walks, but they are usually eager to get away from us - wearing gaiters is a good means of protection. Do NOT interfere with or attempt to kill a snake. Take insect repellent if you are concerned about mosquitoes, march flies, leeches (try salt as well) or other bites!

PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Club activities require individual responsibility from members and visitors as set out in our "Code of Conduct" and "Participants' Responsibilities on Club Activities". These documents are available on the Club Website and include treating people with respect and consideration, following the directions of leaders and whips, etc.

BUSHWALKING IS INHERENTLY RISKY, AND WALKERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN WELFARE AND SAFETY

HOW TO GET STARTED

HOW TO BOOK ON A WALK

Come into the Clubrooms on Wednesday Club nights. You can talk to the leaders about forthcoming walks, and book on a walk that suits you. It is **essential** to come in person to book on a walk if you are a visitor either one or two Wednesdays before your walk. Wednesday nights are quite informal, and visitors are always welcome. Members are on duty to greet you and provide information on the Club.

CANCELLING A SUNDAY WALK BOOKING

A credit may be given if you are unable to participate in a walk you have booked, provided

1. There is a satisfactory reason for cancelling which is acceptable to the Sunday Walks Secretary
2. The leader is advised **before** the walk of your inability to attend.

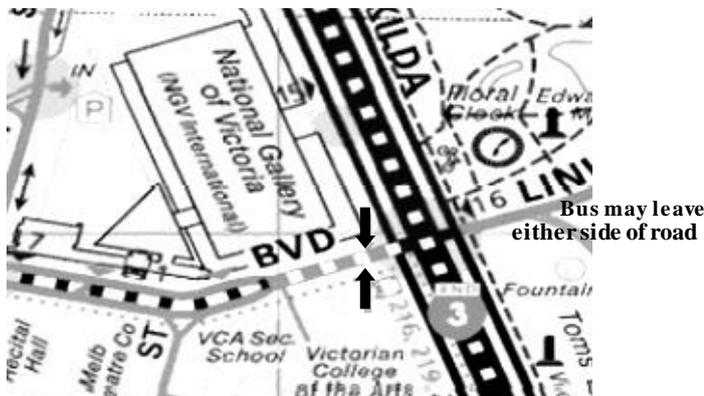
Credit notes and other refunds are normally provided where an activity is cancelled due to a Total Fire Ban or Extreme Heat – refer to the Club Policies under ‘Downloads’ on the Website for more information.

NB Leaders’ contact numbers are on the Activities Program.

Credit notes will be issued in the Club Rooms on Wednesdays.

TRANSPORT

For Sunday Walks we use a bus or private cars which leave from the bus stop in Southbank Boulevard near St Kilda Road (adjacent to the Art Gallery – Melways 2F – H8) at 8.45 am SHARP. Check with the leader when booking in case we have to leave earlier due to long travel times or if we need to use our alternative departure point near the Clubrooms due to an event near the Art Gallery.



Other walks are generally by private transport and the leader will organise car pooling.

EMERGENCY CONTACT SYSTEM

The Club has an Emergency Contact System that includes a Club Mobile for information on Trip Delays and additional support for our higher risk activities.

For all activities the leader will endeavour to advise of any significant delay on the mobile’s voice message bank.

Before setting out, walkers should advise people who may become concerned of the location of the trip, method of travel, expected time of return and the **Club Mobile Number 0447 489 661**.

Walkers should take their mobile on activities to directly notify anyone who may be concerned if they will be late.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE THE POLICE TO BE PHONED WITHOUT FIRST CHECKING THE CLUB MOBILE AND WAITING A REASONABLE TIME.

A delay of 1-2 hours on Day Activity and 3-4 hours for multi-day Activities is not generally a cause for concern or alarm. Pack Carries and Walk-In Base Camps are also supported by Club Emergency Contacts whose details are on the Club Mobile.

This information is printed on the back of the Quarterly Activity Program and is on the Clubs Website.

QUALIFYING FOR MEMBERSHIP

In order to qualify for membership, you must complete either three day walks or a mix of weekend and day walks within 12 months. This gives you a good chance to decide whether our Club suits you. You can get an application form from the club rooms, on the bus or from a leader. You must be proposed and seconded by two members who were on your qualifying walks (usually but not necessarily the leaders of these walks). All walks are qualifying walks unless otherwise indicated.

Temporary Members (Visitors) are covered by both personal accident and public liability insurance provided they complete and sign an ‘Acknowledgement of Risks’ Form. This must be done for each activity you undertake with our Club until you become a member.

After your third walk you should submit a completed Membership Application (which includes a standing Acknowledgement of Risk declaration), together with the prescribed membership fee, to the Membership Secretary.

MORE INFORMATION

There are numerous books and magazines on bushwalking, birds, wildflowers, trees, mammals, National Parks, etc available in the marketplace.

You may borrow books from our library in the Clubrooms or refer to our Website for further information including Information Sheets on a range of topics.