



# BATEMANS BAY BUSHWALKERS INC.

PO Box 838 Batemans Bay NSW 2536

## PRINCIPLES AND RULES

This paper is not a definitive list of Bushwalking Principles and Rules and should not be used as such. It simply sets out to highlight some which, if followed by all members, will contribute to safer bushwalking and the successful running of the Club.

There are important matters, such as how to treat heatstroke and hypothermia, snakebite, swollen rivers, bushfires etc., which are not addressed in this paper. For detailed information on these and other aspects of bushwalking the following references should be studied:

- Paddy Pallin, *Bushwalking and Camping*: 12th Edition - Read all of this one! but especially pp 79 - 83 which deal with 'following a route' and 'becoming misplaced' ie. getting lost and what to do about it.
- Ron Doughton, *Bushwalking in the Budawang*s: Introduction pp 9 – 16.
- Charles Warner, *Bushwalking in Kosciusko National Park*: Ch 2 'Practicalities' Ch 4 'Hazards'.
- Geehi Bushwalking Club, *Snowy Mountains Walks*: pp xi.
- Canberra Bushwalking Club, *Bushwalking near Canberra*: Ch 4 'The Art of Bushwalking'.
- The Budawang Committee's publications *Pigeon House and Beyond* and *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond*: - both thoroughly recommended and almost compulsory for walking in this area.

Most of the above mentioned books are on sale at recognised suppliers of bushwalking gear and at good bookstores. Some of them are also available from our own library.

### MEMBERSHIP

There are two categories of membership:

1. Ordinary Members - over 18 years
2. Life Members.

Annual fees and Joining fees apply to Ordinary Members and Dependent Children (16 years or more).

The Committee may, at its discretion, require a prospective member to participate in one or more walks before his/her application for membership is considered.

Each member is required to complete a 'Membership Application/Renewal' form which seeks personal details including any medical condition, (or medication requirement) which is likely to affect that member's health in extreme conditions ie. being caught out in the bush without medication. Information contained in the 'Membership Application/Renewal' form will be updated at least annually, but in respect to a member's health, immediately if any change occurs.

If it is subsequently found that a member has not been completely honest in filling out this form his/her membership may be cancelled.

Children under the age of 16 years are not usually encouraged to walk with adults, however during school holidays or in special circumstances they may be included at the discretion of the 'Walk Leader' but only if correctly attired and accompanied and controlled by a Parent/Guardian.

Such children are catered for by occasional activities specifically for children which are advertised in the 'Walks Program'.

### ARRIVING FOR A WALK

Members should be at the carpark 15 minutes before the advertised time shown in the Walks Program in order to sign the Walks Register and to provide the Leader with sufficient time to explain details of the walk and arrange transport etc. Where there are two or more departure places indicated in the Program, members may take advantage of either.

At the beginning of the walk the Leader is to show walkers a map of the route to be followed.

## SHARING PETROL COSTS

The Walk Leader will indicate on the Walks Register an appropriate contribution to be made by members who have taken lifts in other members' cars.

## WHAT TO WEAR

Any comfortable but sturdy shirt and short/long pants, a hat with a good brim to protect against sun and rain, and most importantly strong comfortable boots which protect the ankles and give a good grip. Generally, the rougher the terrain the stronger the footwear required, but whether leather boots or jogger type, the rubber soles should have a deep tread. Socks should be wool or Explorer type (and some people prefer to wear two pairs for comfort).

## WHAT TO CARRY

Essential items to be carried by each walker in a sturdy, waterproofed pack (even on day walks) are:

- Water and windproof jacket with hood (or waterproof poncho)
- Woollen jumper (wool is light in weight and stays warm even when wet)
- Flask of water (well sealed)
- Matches (preferably waterproof) in a waterproof container
- Small torch with good batteries (in case you get caught out late or for signalling if lost)
- Individual members with medical conditions that could cause concern during a walk should ensure that their first aid kits contain their personal medication, including all relevant information in writing which will assist with their first aid
- Personal first aid kit - suggested items to be carried by *every member, on every walk*. Do not count on others for these items. In the event of injury/bite, etc. members have a responsibility to inform the first aider of any medical condition or medication that could impact on effectiveness of first aid.
  - Thermal blanket
  - 2.5 cm conforming bandage
  - 2.5 cm roll micropore tape
  - Splinter Probe
  - Flexible "Hyperfix" tape (*useful on pressure areas in boots to prevent blister, for securing dressings in areas constantly flexing or likely to be moist/wet, eg. perspiration on forehead*)
  - Insect repellent & sting relief spray/ointment
  - Pain relief tablets
  - Lip salve
  - Roll of duct tape (securing emergency splints etc)
  - Personal medication with instructions on use (in case you are unconscious!)
  - NB Remote areas/overnight hikes: Water treatment equipment/tablets and possible upgrade of First Aid requirements
  - Triangular bandage & safety pins
  - Dressings (10 cm non adherent & 7 x 5 cm adherent)
  - Tweezers
  - Rubber Gloves
  - Minimum 7.5cm crepe bandage
  - Tick Hook
  - Small Scissors
  - Antihistamine tablets
  - Eyepad
  - Notepad and texta/marker
  - Carry clean water for wound/eye irrigation
- Lunch of your choice, plus high-energy nibbles for snacks (eg. muesli bars, dried fruit, chocolate)
- Strong plastic bag to line your pack, as most packs are not waterproof
- Space blanket and whistle (in case you get separated and/or caught out overnight)
- Walk leaders must carry a Global Positioning System (GPS) and spare batteries for same (either personally owned or provided by the Club) and appropriate topographical map.
- Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) to be carried on remote and/or difficult exploratory walks, remote and/or difficult programmed walks, and all pack walks. The Club PLB is available from the Walks Organiser. It is the Club Secretary's duty to register the PLB with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority every 12 months after the AGM, and to keep the Club's contact details up to date on the Australian 406 MHz Distress Beacon Register.
- It is **COMPULSORY** for all participants on Club canoeing events to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).
- Waterproof overpants are handy (and light) but not essential.

If on a longer or exploratory walk, ie. not on forestry roads, the following items should also be included:

- Map and compass (and know how to use them - this applies particularly to the Leader)
- Take the waterproof overpants
- Wool cap and scarf (or balaclava), gloves
- Metal mug (in which water can be heated if necessary)
- Gaiters (optional) if walking in scratchy heath country and as a possible protection against snake bite.

For week-end and longer walks there is a lot more involved, including having a pack adequate to carry a sleeping bag and sleeping mat (Thermarest or closed cell foam), change of clothing, sufficient food, cooking utensils,

cooking fuel and stove and in many cases a tent - so liaison with the Walk Leader is essential. (Paddy Pallin's Bushwalking and Camping provides an excellent guide to what is required).

## WALKS

An indemnity sheet must be signed for every walk, camp and excursion (for insurance purposes).

Every walk other than 'exploratory' should be thoroughly reconnoitred by the Leader shortly before preparing a Walk Proposal Form and submitting it to the Walks Organiser for his/her approval. Leaders should check their walk again shortly before the event. Walks to be undertaken during camping excursions should, where possible, be submitted in the same manner so that they can be made available for perusal by prospective camp attendees. (This will allow them to confirm their interest with full knowledge of the walks proposed and to assess their ability to undertake such excursions). Before a hard or exploratory walk, the leader must advise a responsible person in the Club of the route to be taken, the expected time of return and advise that person of their safe return. In situations where this is not possible (eg. camps) the walk must be logged with a responsible civic body, and the route adhered to as closely as possible, or members of the group remain at the base with the relevant information. A map of the route of the intended walk is to be left on the dashboard of a vehicle at the start of a Club walk (advisable also for exploratory walks).

On Club walks, each person is responsible for his/her own safety and it is essential to be aware of your own limitations and stamina. In this regard, Walk Leaders are sometimes unable to complete the scheduled walk because walkers who have not taken seriously the description shown on the Program (eg. Medium, Hard, Exploratory) were not really up to the walk. This applies particularly to overnight or long extended day walks. If in doubt, walkers should personally check with the Leader who should make an honest assessment of the walker's ability and if thought necessary, advise against participating. Walk Leaders will counsel any walker he/she believes is undertaking walks beyond his/her current capability and advise the Walks Organiser.

Walk Leaders have the right to deny participation of any person in an activity which is considered beyond his/her current capability or for which he/she is inadequately prepared. If an intending walker has an illness or an injury (which may affect him/her and consequently the whole party during the walk) the Leader must be informed before the walk starts. The member's participation is then at the discretion of the Leader.

Parties should be guided by the directions of the Leader. This means the party stays together and the Leader limits its speed and/or activity to the capacity of the weakest member. Accidents may happen when people are pushing themselves (or being pushed) beyond their capacity. The normal rule is for walkers to stay behind the Leader, although this rule is not necessarily inflexible. Some leaders prefer to, at times, place a deputy in the lead and move along the party to see how the walkers are faring, and even bring up the rear. In all cases, a responsible person should be appointed to bring up the rear as 'tail-end Charlie'. However the leader's responsibility should be shared by all members of the party keeping an eye on the others, so that if any person is in difficulty, problems can be spotted quickly and the Leader advised.

Walkers are each responsible for the walker directly behind them and should advise those in front immediately if the 'tail' is lagging for any reason. The same rule applies to car convoys (both going to and returning from walks) where each driver is responsible to ensure that the car following is on the correct route. **This means in effect that you do not move from a deviation or turn until you are certain that the driver/walker following is aware of the road or track to be taken.**

If for any reason the planned route must be changed, the alternatives must be discussed with all of the participants, and their views taken into account through general discussion. In extreme cases this may result in a decision to split the party. Should this occur the Leader must ensure that each group has a minimum of four walkers and that each contains a competent leader. Each group should carry details of the route to be followed by the other group, shall report independently their safe return and alert officials to the 'split' and the route being followed by the remainder.

Accepted rules of procedure in mountainous and isolated areas must be adhered to, namely:

- Marked tracks offer the easiest route and backtracking may be safer than pressing on into unknown terrain
- Plans must be reconsidered in the event of deteriorating weather conditions
- Emergency equipment and first-aid packs are mandatory for all excursions in mountain regions.

Special care should be taken when walking in the mountains where the weather can change rapidly. Snowfalls are not unknown even in the Budawangs. Sudden drop in temperature, accompanied by wind and rain creates dangerous conditions. Warm clothing and wind and waterproof jackets are essential.

When walking in overgrown areas, walkers should keep a reasonable distance behind the person ahead to avoid being hit by branches springing back.

#### SIZE OF PARTIES

Ideally, on hard or exploratory walks, a party should not exceed say 10 - 12 persons. The excessively large size of parties on some of our Club walks is in the main the result of our not having enough Leaders. Members are therefore encouraged to make themselves proficient in the bush so that more Leaders may become available. Such proficiency however does not come easily; the ability to use map and compass, first-aid skills and a knowledge of bushcraft being some of the requirements. Training courses will be organised by the Club if sufficient interest is shown.

The generally accepted minimum size for a party is four, so that in case of injury to a member, two can go for help and the other can remain with the injured person. Therefore, in the interests of safety, the Club does not support members walking alone.

When we go into the bush, we are usually seeking peace and quiet. Undue noise deprives us of the sights and sounds we were probably expecting when going there. Smaller parties means less noise.

#### LIGHTING OF FIRES

Provided there is no danger of starting a bushfire, and where firewood is plentiful, lighting of fires for cooking and warmth is allowable. In places where firewood is scarce, cooking should be done on a portable stove. Wherever a fire is being lit, such a fire should be no bigger than necessary. (The old saying still applies: 'the bigger the fool the bigger the fire').

Commonsense rules apply:

1. The fire site should be chosen to provide minimal damage to the environment. ie. by using existing fire places.
2. Clear combustible material over a reasonable area around the fire.
3. The fire should always be thoroughly extinguished before leaving the campsite, or, if staying overnight, when you retire (except of course in an emergency).
4. Don't leave a fire unattended at any time and always have water ready to extinguish it if the need arises.
5. Fires should not be lit during periods of total fire bans, or during periods of high fire danger, ie. after a succession of hot days when ground litter is tinder dry and/or when hot winds are blowing. Smokers should be especially careful at all times in the bush and should remember that the lighting of cigarettes in the open in periods of total fire bans constitutes a breach of the law.
6. River stones, ie. stones from or near to river or creek beds, should not be used in making fire places. (Cracks in the stones contain moisture and they may explode when heated).

#### NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA

Bushwalkers should not pick flowers or remove vegetation (eg. plants or fungi) from the bush. The place in the bush of native flora and fauna should be respected and they should never be unduly disturbed. The unnecessary moving or removal of logs and rocks can disturb the habitat of smaller animals and plant life and should be avoided. Flora and fauna are part of the natural ecosystem and as such should be protected, especially by bushwalkers! It should also be remembered that many species of native flora and fauna are protected by law.

#### ALCOHOL

Generally alcohol and bushwalking do not go together. Therefore, the consumption of alcohol on Club walks is deemed inappropriate.

#### BUSHWALKING CODE

The bush will not stay beautiful unless walkers and others care for it. We should:

- Move camp often to avoid excessive damage to the site. This could also apply to the over-use of some of the caves in the Budawangs which are already showing signs of wear and tear. (see Pigeonhouse and Beyond, p. 45).
- Carry out all wrappers, containers and rubbish. Do not try to bury them. The old slogan of 'burn, bash and bury' is no longer an acceptable method of rubbish disposal in the bush. The maxim now is: 'If you carry it in, carry it out!'
- Select toilet areas well away from streams, huts, tracks etc. Dig a decent sized hole (at least 100 metres away from a creek, river, or hut) and fill it in afterwards. Don't just put a rock or a log over it.
- Do not wash dishes or self with soaps or detergents in streams, rivers or lakes. Use a container to take water from the creek etc. for such washing.
- Pets and firearms are not permitted in National Parks. Nor should they be taken on Club walks.
- Keep vehicles on formed roads. Don't drive them into the bush or onto tracks marked for walkers only.
- Remember always: '*Take nothing but your memories (or photos), Leave nothing but your footprints*'.

## UNPROGRAMMED EXPLORATORY WALKS (RECCES) AND CLUB INSURANCE

We have sought advice from Bushwalking Australia and our Insurance Brokers on whether Exploratory Walks/Recces/Scouting Trips/Pre-walks - or whatever you want to call them - are covered by the Club's insurance. This is what they say:

*"A club recently asked about scouting trips, where a leader goes out to research a walk, and whether the insurance policies covered this sort of activity.*

*The first thing to note is that a scouting trip should be officially recorded somehow to be regarded as a club activity. This may mean listing it in the club's walk program, adding it to a web calendar if the club has one, or maybe the club officially recording somewhere that the walk took place as a club activity. The latter could be just noting it in the minutes of a general or committee meeting.*

*The second thing is that for all club activities, the broker recommends that a waiver form be filled in and signed. This provides clear evidence that all participants were aware of the risks and took responsibility for themselves. It is especially important if there are visitors on the trip. David Morrison, Insurance Officer, Bushwalking Australia"*

Batemans Bay Bushwalkers Inc. therefore **STRONGLY RECOMMENDS** that if you wish to be covered by the Club's insurance on an Exploratory Walk, you send an email, or telephone the Walks Organiser or the Secretary advising the date, and area you are exploring. These details will be recorded in the minutes of the following Committee meeting. You must also download a copy of the Walk Proposal Form from our website and have all participants sign the waiver section before embarking on the Exploratory Walk. After completion of the walk, the signed waiver must be forwarded to the Officer you notified in the first instance.

Additionally, for your own safety and that of your mates,

- There must be at least 2 people undertaking the Exploratory Walk. **NEVER WALK ALONE.**
- Tell a friend or relative where you're going and what to do if you don't return (give them a copy of our document "*What to do if Something Goes Wrong*"). Let them know when you get back.
- Take a GPS with spare batteries and a topographic map on all Exploratory Walks. A mobile phone is also strongly recommended. Plus all the other gear that responsible bushwalkers carry.
- Take one of our PLBs if you are exploring areas where there is no vehicle access.

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