

# BUSHWALKING ETIQUETTE



## Before the Walk

Be sure to read the grading BEFORE booking on any activity.

Ensure you have the fitness, equipment and experience to undertake the activity you have chosen.

Nominate for the walk before the cut-off date, usually four days before the walk. If unable to attend the walk after nominating, let the Leader know as soon as possible.

Car-pooling is encouraged. The Leader will arrange drivers and transport for everyone if possible.

Arrive at the meeting place on time. If delayed let the Leader know by mobile phone if possible.

Take sufficient food and water for the walk. A minimum of one litre of water is recommended for a day walk, 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.

Make sure your Personal Emergency Information is in your pack.

Bring along a clean set of clothes to put on at the end of the walk. These can usually be left in the driver's car.

Bring a plastic bag to store your wet clothes or muddy boots at the end.

## At The Start Of The Walk

Advise the Leader if you are taking any medication or if you have any physical or other limitation that might affect your participation.

If a visitor, ensure you read and sign the Acknowledgement of Risks Form.

At the introductory circle, introduce yourself to everyone.

Ask the leader any questions if unfamiliar with any procedures such as "The Whip".

If a driver, check car is secured, lights off and keys safely put away.

## During The Walk

Follow the Leader's instructions. Remember, the leader is a volunteer but is responsible for the whole group. Everyone's co-operation makes the leader's job easier and the trip more enjoyable.

Be courteous, co-operative and helpful to other walkers in the group.

Be a team member, not a rugged individualist. Stay with the group, rather than race ahead or fall behind. The whip is to be the last in the group.

Should you be in front of the group you must stop and wait at any track junction.

Maintain a line of sight with the person in front and behind you. If the person behind is not visible, slow down or stop to allow the person behind to catch up. If necessary, advise the person in front that you are stopping or slowing down.

If experiencing any difficulty such as pace, blisters, shortage of water etc., advise the Leader immediately.

It is your responsibility to allow sufficient distance between yourself and the walker in front so that branches flicking back do not injure you.

Do not leave the track if on a track walk, or fall behind the person appointed "The Whip" for any reason without advising "The Whip".

If you do become separated from the group and you are uncertain of the way to go, stop and call out or use your whistle (three blasts) if no response to calling. Stay put and let the leader or nominee come back to find you.

Generally you should not leave the walk early unless pre-arranged, but if it is necessary you must accept a Leader's decision to send someone with you to accompany you out.

Do not throw any litter or rubbish in the bush - not even your apple core. Carry a plastic bag for your rubbish and take it out with you.



Leave the bush as clean or cleaner than you found it.

Leave what you find. The only souvenirs a bushwalker should come home with are photos, GPS co-ordinates and great memories! "Take only photographs, leave only footprints."



Respect private property - if you must cross private land ask permission. Leave gates as you found them - open or closed. Don't damage fences.

Walk quietly, speak in soft voices and turn your mobile phone to silent or even off. Enjoy the sound of the bush and let others do the same.

If taking a break, move off the track a little to allow others to pass by unobstructed.

Bushwalkers going downhill should stop and make way for walkers going uphill.

When you arrive at the main attraction of the bushwalk take your photos, go and stand in front of whatever it is. Walk through to the other side and get a reverse angle of the attraction. But afterwards move through and out of the way of following bushwalkers. They also want to get photos of only themselves in front of the attraction not numerous other people.

If you have to 'go' in the bush 'go' at least 100 meters from any water source and bury all waste at least 20 cms deep. When you need to go off the track make sure a trip member or the whip knows and leave your pack on the track where you go into the bush.

When walking, try to avoid walking around puddles - you are widening the track. Take a step over the puddle or just go through.

When bushwalking on a narrow track, single file is best. That way, walkers coming from the opposite direction aren't hindered.

If you see an oncoming walker approaching say "g'day" or "hello" it makes a world of a difference.



Let faster walkers walk through. It doesn't hurt to be considerate. Walk with space in between other groups, not right on their heels.

Don't forget when you reach the picnic or campgrounds the same rules still apply. Other bushwalkers don't want to hear you trying to loudly out talk each other; they want to enjoy Mother Nature while they are relaxing or eating.

Keep an eye out for anyone who needs assistance, even if it is just a rest.

## At The End Of The Walk

Ensure the Leader is aware you have made it to the end.

If a passenger, ask the driver what contribution is expected for the petrol and running costs.

Remember to thank the Leader.

If a driver, make sure all cars are started before you drive away.

## Taking Care of New Members

We like to think of ourselves as a friendly club where new members are made feel welcome. Part of this involves simply being friendly and open to answering questions and giving advice if people want to know more.

It also involves making sure that the group waits for new and less fit members and gives them a little recovery time before heading off again, especially at the top of hills, scrambling sections or other places they may have found challenging.

Try to remember how you felt as a new walker and how you liked to be supported on walks.

It doesn't take long for people to learn the ropes and become great walking companions.

