



WALKER RESPONSIBILITIES DURING BUSHWALKS

People join bushwalking clubs for various reasons; exercise, camaraderie, flora and fauna interests, navigation challenges, just “going bush” etc. Bushwalking clubs are a way for these interests to be carried out in a safe and enjoyable manner with like-minded people.

One consequence of being in an organized group is that members must follow some basic rules so that group integrity is maintained (i.e. no one gets lost!) and that all members are able to enjoy the walk and the environment.

Responsibilities.

1. Walk Leader (WL)

Please follow the WL directions and advice at all times, and do not hesitate to let the WL know if you have any concerns about any aspects of the walk.

Note. For each walk there will be a WL who is an experienced walker with a detailed knowledge of the walk and walk conditions. Before the start of the walk the WL will give a brief description of the walk, potential hazards and any specific walk requirements.

2. Tail End Charlie (TEC)

Please follow TEC advice and do not hesitate to let the TEC know if you have any concerns about any aspects of the walk including adequacy of rest stops.

Note. Unless there are only a small number of walkers, there will be a nominated Tail End Charlie. This will be an experienced walker whose responsibility is to bring up the rear of the walk and keep track of members who may stop or slow down for any reason. On most walks the TEC will be in radio contact with the WL.

3. Leaving the group.

It is essential that walkers leaving the group (no matter how momentarily) notify someone.

The most common reason for leaving the group will be to visit the “green room” (Toilet). When the group is moving walkers must notify someone and leave their backpack on the side of the track where they leave. Whoever they notify is responsible to wait until their return or to inform the TEC who will then take on that responsibility.

If leaving the group to visit the green room at a rest stop, morning tea or lunch stop, advise another person. It is then that person’s responsibility to advise the WL if the group is moving off before the person has returned.

A walker leaving the walk for any other reason must contact the Walk Leader.



4. Group Awareness

Please remain aware of the other walkers around you. Notice where walkers in front of you are going and wait for any walkers behind you that appear to be having difficulties in keeping up and may be becoming isolated.

5. Track junctions.

If you arrive at any track junction and the walkers ahead are not in sight, do not proceed but wait for the TEC to catch up and advise which way to go.

Whilst you may be in sight of walkers ahead at junctions, please be mindful of walkers behind you that may not see the track taken and wait for them to catch up sufficiently.

Note. Most bush walks are undertaken on established tracks which often come to junctions/turn offs. To prevent anyone taking the wrong track the Walk Leader will usually, unless all walkers are in sight, stop and wait for walkers to regroup before continuing.

6. Off-Track walking.

When off-track walking, remain close to the walker in front and let the TEC know if you are having difficulties or if you have lost sight of the person in front.

Note. Some walks will have sections of off-track walking through the bush, usually to access some item of interest that does not have track access, or to change to a different track. This will usually be indicated on the Walk Calendar by a "Hard" grade. Off track walking will be much slower than track walking as the WL will be navigating by compass or GPS, and there is undergrowth, fallen trees and rocks to negotiate.

7. Walking speed.

Walkers should not walk at a faster pace than they are comfortable with.

Note. There is no need to keep up with faster walkers. There will be regular rest stops, drink stops, navigation stops and stops instigated by the WL to re-group, and the TEC will be bringing up the rear.



8. Walking ahead of the Walk Leader

For the safety of all bush walkers and to assist the Walk Leader in their role, it is essential that the walking group remain together. For this reason all walkers should remain behind the Walk Leader and ahead of the Tail End Charlie unless advised otherwise by the Walk Leader.

Approval to walk ahead of the Walk Leader may be given where the trail ahead is well marked and opportunities to take a wrong turn are limited. The Walk leader will advise where the forward group should stop and wait for the main group to catch up.

*Note. Walkers ahead of the Walk Leader **are taking navigation responsibility on themselves** and need to be aware of their surroundings, track signs, track junctions and potential hazards. They should also be aware of how far from the main group they are and stop if out of sight for a significant period or if there is any doubt at track junctions.*

9. Emergency Issues

Members should carry the completed Emergency Contact Card with them in their backpack on all walks and it should be kept up to date with any relevant medical issues. The blank card will be supplied when Club membership is approved. If you are not supplied with one please ask.

Members should carry an emergency whistle on all bushwalks.

Note. Emergency situations are relatively rare on bushwalks, however should the occasion arise where a member becomes unconscious or distressed and requires emergency evacuation then the members emergency contact would be advised and relevant medical issues would be passed on to medical responders. The Club has 2 Personal Locator Beacons and one will be carried on all bushwalks for use should the emergency occur out of mobile reception.

The emergency whistle is to attract attention in the situation where a member finds themselves separated from the walking group for some reason and is unsure how to locate the group again.