

Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc. - Online Induction



The purpose of this induction is to ensure that new members are fully informed, prepared for, and therefore able to enjoy walking with our club. Please read carefully.

1. What to Expect:

- ❖ Most walks will take several hours. You can expect to be away for the whole day.
- ❖ Time given in our newsletter trip descriptions is walking time only and does not include travel times or breaks.
- ❖ There most likely will be no facilities on a walk.
- ❖ Walkers must carry all food, water and equipment necessary for the entire day.
- ❖ You may get hot, sweaty, dirty, wet, scratched and tired aching muscles. You may also be bitten by ticks, leeches and other assorted nasties.
- ❖ **However, you will also see and experience magnificent rainforest creeks and waterfalls, mountain vistas and a host of other wonders that only nature can provide, all in the company of a great social group of likeminded people. You may get to places that you otherwise would never see.**

2. Special Hazards:

- ❖ The bush is an uncontrolled environment with many potential hazards that a walker should learn to recognise, then act appropriately to minimise the risk.
- ❖ Everyone bears ultimate responsibility for their own safety and should also to look out for the safety of other members of the walking group.
- ❖ Some of the most common possible hazards are ticks, leeches, snakes, poisonous plants (e.g. moonlighter), tripping/falling (rough ground), bush flicking, dislodged rocks, heat and cold.
- ❖ Some hazards can be controlled by walking with care, not rushing and not following too closely behind the person in front. Others can be controlled by wearing appropriate clothing and footwear. You have a duty of care to point out any hazards you come across to other members of the group (i.e. pointing out moonlighter plants, loose/slippery rocks etc).

3. Walk Grading System:

- ❖ Our walks have been given a grading to assist in identifying which walks may be suitable for your particular level of experience or fitness. This is a three-stage grading system based on distance, terrain and fitness level required. The appropriate grade is shown along with other descriptive comments for the walk in the monthly newsletter.
- ❖ The grading code consists of a letter and two digits, i.e. M55 being 5-10km, rainforest or scrub, reasonable fitness required. The key to the coded grading system is included in every newsletter.
- ❖ If you haven't walked before or are unsure of your abilities, we suggest starting with a walk near the bottom end of the spectrum (i.e. S33) and working up to the harder grades as you get a feel for what is involved. If you have any doubt about suitability, please discuss it with the trip leader.

4. What to bring:

- ❖ As a minimum you should bring the following:
 - Backpack – 30-35 litre pack is a good size for day walks
 - Water (suggest 2-3 litres minimum)
 - Food: morning & afternoon smoko and lunch plus some extra in case the walk is delayed
 - Hat



- Warm Clothing (depending on time of year)
- Raincoat – it can also be used to sit on when the ground is damp
- First Aid Kit – at least 1 snake bandage, small wound dressings, paracetamol
- Whistle
- Small Torch - in case the walk is delayed and we are walking out in darkness
- ❖ Optional items which we also suggest that you bring are:
 - Sunscreen
 - Insect Repellent
 - Towel (quick drying is best) as many walks include opportunities for swimming
- ❖ Some walkers also like to bring along a walking pole which can be useful for balance when walking across uneven terrain.
- ❖ Walkers also need to bring a change of clothes in a separate bag that can be left with the cars. As your walking clothes will become wet or dirty during the day, your driver will appreciate your courtesy in keeping his or her car upholstery clean on the trip home.

5. What not to bring:

- ❖ Walkers should not bring offensive or dangerous items such as:
 - firearms
 - alcohol and/or illegal drugs
 - dogs
 - music playing devices

6. What to wear:

- ❖ What to wear is largely a personal choice, but walkers should be aware that we do walk in areas where lantana, wait-a-while and other hazards may cause your arms and legs to get quite scratched.
- ❖ Some prefer long sleeves and long trousers to minimise the likelihood of this; others wear shorts and short sleeved shirts to stay cooler in the summer months and just put up with the scratches. Sleeveless tops/shirts are not suitable for bushwalking.
- ❖ Gaiters are a good idea in some terrain to protect the lower legs.
- ❖ What is essential is a pair of good sturdy comfortable boots and a hat for sun protection.

7. Bushwalking protocol (Bushwalkers Code):

The bushwalkers code is a set of rules common to all bushwalking clubs designed to minimise our impact on the environment in which we walk. The code consists basically of the following points:

- ❖ Protect plants and animals
- ❖ Remove all rubbish (including food scraps)
- ❖ Keep waterways clean
- ❖ Take care with fire
- ❖ Camp carefully
- ❖ Keep to the track/trail
- ❖ Consider others

8. Outing Rules:

Our club has a set of by-laws called “Outing Rules” which are intended to ensure our walks progress smoothly and with minimal impact on the environment. The main rules are:

- ❖ Arrive at nominated departure area at least 15 minutes before advertised departure time.
- ❖ All litter must be carried out (including food scraps).
- ❖ Faecal matter should be buried 15cm deep, well away from tracks and at least 100m from any water course.



- ❖ Walkers must not separate from the main party.
- ❖ Observe walkers behind you and stop if they require assistance or are out of sight.
- ❖ Walkers must convey information regarding any hazards they identify to other members of the party. (i.e. loose/slippery rocks, dangerous plants etc)
- ❖ When there is possibility of accidentally dislodging loose material, walkers should ensure that there are no persons directly below them. Walkers should call loudly “ROCK” or “BELOW” if material is accidentally dislodged.
- ❖ Walkers must not collect bush products and should avoid damage to bush whilst walking.
- ❖ No music is to be played on any device.

9. Risk Management:

- ❖ Our activities do carry some risks including possibility of injury from:
 - Slipping or falling
 - Vegetation e.g. stinging plants
 - Poisonous animals
 - Exposure
- ❖ Our club has a risk management policy which is designed to identify these risks and put control measures and processes in place to mitigate any risk.
- ❖ If an incident involving injury or damage occurs, the trip leader should be notified immediately.
- ❖ The trip leader in conjunction with the persons involved must fill out an incident report form as soon as possible.
- ❖ Completed incident report forms are filed, investigated and reported at general meetings for discussion.
- ❖ This process is integral to the continual development of our risk management policy; as new hazards or problems are identified, we can adjust our processes and procedures to reduce the potential of the same thing happening again.

10. First Aid:

Walkers should become familiar with first aid treatments applicable to the type of injuries that may be encountered: e.g. snakebite, bleeding, heat exhaustion, broken limbs.

11. Medical Conditions/Special Needs:

- ❖ Walkers should advise the trip leader prior to departure of any medical conditions or special needs that may impact their safety or performance on that walk.
- ❖ The trip sign on sheet contains space for notifying such issues, however this is seen by all other walkers that day.
- ❖ If you wish to retain privacy you are still required to inform the trip leader but can do so verbally and in private.

12. Nominating for Walks:

- ❖ The walks program for the month is available in the newsletter.
- ❖ After selecting a walk that suits your level of experience, you will need to call **(not text)** the nominated trip leader to advise your intention of attending before 12 pm on the day before the walk is to take place.
- ❖ The usual departure place is 295 Alfred Street – a large car park on the corner of Alfred and Nelson Streets. This can vary, but any changes to the meeting place will be in the walk’s description in the newsletter.
- ❖ If you later decide not to attend a walk that you have previously nominated for, please advise the trip leader accordingly rather than just not show up.