



Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc. Members' Handbook

CONTENTS	PAGE
1 Introduction	3
❖ About this Members Handbook	
❖ Typical Day Walk	
❖ Club Operation	
❖ Members' Benefits	
❖ Membership	
❖ Privacy	
❖ Bushwalker's Code	
2 Club Activities	4
❖ Members Responsibilities on Club Activities	
❖ Grading Scheme	
❖ Nominating for a Club Activity	
❖ Meeting Place	
❖ Cancellation	
❖ Incidents	
❖ Abseil Activities	
3 Safety	6
❖ You are Responsible for Safety	
❖ First Aid	
❖ Hazards	

4 Equipment and Clothing	8
❖ What to Take	
❖ You are Responsible	
❖ Always Take	
❖ Base Camp Equipment	
❖ Three Layer Clothing System	
5 History of our Club	11
6 Bushwalker's Code	11
❖ Protect Plants and Wildlife	
❖ Take Care with Stoves and Fires	
❖ Camp Carefully	
❖ Keep to the Tracks	
❖ Consider Others	
❖ Respect Our Cultural Heritage	
7 First Aid in the Bush	13
❖ Snakebite	
❖ Hypothermia	
❖ Heat Exhaustion	
❖ Heat Stroke	
❖ Stemming Loss of Blood	
❖ Shock and Internal Bleeding	
8 Bush Fire Safety and Survival	16
❖ Radiated Heat	
❖ Wind-Borne Heat	
❖ What to Do	
9 Lightning	18
❖ Before the Walk	
❖ During the Walk	
❖ When to Leave Exposed Locations and Seek Safer Shelter	
❖ What are Safe Locations?	
❖ What to do if Lightning Strikes Nearby	
❖ What to do if One of Your Party is Struck by Lightning	
10 EPIRB	19
❖ Why Use an EPIRB	
❖ When to Use an EPIRB	
❖ How to Use an EPIRB	
❖ How Emergency Services Will Respond to the EPIRB	

Appendix

❖ Always Remember	21
❖ Always Take	21
❖ Privacy Statement	22
❖ General Information	23
❖ Outing Rules for One Day Activities	24
❖ Duties of Trip Leaders	26
❖ Emergency Numbers	27

1 - Introducing Mackay Bushwalkers Club Inc.

About this Members Handbook

The main audience for this handbook is all members of the Mackay Bushwalkers' Club (MBC). You should read it thoroughly and then keep it for reference. You are expected to understand and comply with it.

The handbook explains the peculiarities of the MBC, its administrative procedures, culture, facilities and rules. You will know what to expect of the club, and what the club expects of you.

The handbook gives an introduction to bushwalking, so that first time walkers will have the basic knowledge required for their enjoyment and safety.

The appendices contain some more details on selected topics.

Suggestions for improvements of future editions are welcome and should be addressed to the Club's committee.

Typical Day Walk

Members select an activity from the newsletter, then nominate for it by contacting the leader before the activity. Participants meet at the designated place and time, 15 minutes prior to the nominated time. The car journey may take up to 2 hours each way. This is in addition to walking time. Car-pooling is used to reduce transport costs. You will be expected to contribute the nominated fuel amount for each trip.

The walk will take several hours, including breaks for morning tea and lunch, and visiting features of interest such as a lookout or waterfall. There can be considerable variation in length and steepness of a walk.

There are no facilities on the walk e.g. toilets or showers. Members must carry all food, water and equipment, including emergency equipment. Walkers accept that they may get: hot and sweaty, tired, aching muscles, dirty, some minor scratches, wet, blisters, tick bites and leech bites.

On return to the cars, members change into clean clothes and shoes for the trip home. Return time back to town is not guaranteed, so it is best not to make plans for that night.

The walking environment is uncontrolled by nature, so safety cannot be guaranteed by the club or the leader. Every member has a duty to protect their own safety, and the safety of others in the group.

The club organises a wide variety of activities, which may vary considerably from this description of a "typical walk". Some further information is available in the activities chapter of this handbook, and each activity is described in the club newsletter.

Club Operation

The club meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at The Mackay Family Care and Community Support Association Centre at 60 Wellington St, Mackay. (There is no meeting in December.) Meetings commence at 7.00pm. Leaders will present their walks to the meeting to be accepted. If they wish to lead a walk and cannot attend the meeting, they can contact the walks co-ordinator beforehand. General club business will also be discussed.

A club newsletter is added to the Club's Website at the end of each month except for December. It contains official notes, reports from the committee and descriptions of upcoming walks as well as reports on previous walks.

The club was formed in 1974 and is managed by a committee, which is elected at the annual general meeting in November of each year. The committee meets monthly, and all club members are welcome to attend.

The committee and members are governed by the constitution and by-laws. The committee has produced a set of by-laws which set out the day-to-day operation of the club. Further management documents are scheduled by the by-laws, and these include the privacy policy, the bushwalkers' code, the risk management policy, the

leaders guide, and the member's handbook. All of these documents are available for inspection from the committee members.

Members' Benefits

People: The primary benefit of being in the club is access to a group of people with similar interests to yourself.

Activities: The club organises a large number and variety of activities including bushwalking, abseiling, caving and camping. The club does not conduct rock climbing due to insurance restrictions.

Training: You can learn a lot about bushwalking by participating in activities with other members. Occasionally the club conducts training activities to improve member's skills in navigation, first aid and leadership. However, the club does not provide formal training, certification or qualifications.

Equipment: The club owns a collection of bushwalking equipment including first aid items, two-way radios and EPIRBs for use on club walks.

Discounts: As the club is a non-profit organisation and is operating on minimum fees, discounts cannot be offered.

Insurance: The club has public liability insurance, as well as limited personal accident cover. The insurance policy is available for inspection from our treasurer.

Membership

To become a member of MBC you are required to complete an online induction. This entails, carefully reading the induction notes and watching a five-minute video.

If you decide to join, sign the disclaimer, complete the application form and email it to the club, and pay the nominated membership fee.

Privacy

MBC recognises that the privacy and security of personal information is important to its members. MBC members respect the confidentiality and security of any member's personal information and are committed to protecting it at all times.

Bushwalker's Code

The Bushwalker's Code is a set of rules to minimise our impact on the environments in which we walk. Members should protect plants and animals, remove rubbish, keep streams and lakes clean, take care with fires, camp carefully, keep to the tracks where appropriate, consider others, and respect our cultural heritage.

2 - Club Activities

Members' Responsibilities on Club Activities

- To nominate for a walk, contact the leader before 12 pm on the day before the walk is to take place.
- Arrive 15 minutes before the commencement of an activity.
- Read, understand and comply with the members' handbook.
- Select activities that you are capable of completing safely.
- Give your details to the leader, via the sign on form or other method.
- Leaders must be made aware of any information that may impact on your safe completion of the activity.
- Ensure you are a financial member on the day of the activity.
- Take food, water, equipment, clothing and footwear appropriate for the activity.
- Remain with the party for the duration of the activity.
- Accept the instructions of the leader.
- Be responsible for your own safety and protect the safety of others in the group.

- Parents/Guardians must have direct supervision of their children at all times.

Grading Scheme

Each activity organised by the club will be assigned a grade by the leader. It indicates the type of activity, the type of terrain expected and the fitness required.

Members are responsible for ensuring they are capable of doing the walk for which they nominate. Members are encouraged to contact the walk leader and discuss fitness and skill levels if they are in any doubt.

Group safety and enjoyment can be jeopardised if an individual is unable to complete a walk, therefore walk leaders can refuse to take a member if they are unsure of their capabilities.

The club recommends that new members start with a low-grade walk (grade '1-5' terrain and grade '1-5' fitness) even if they walk frequently and consider themselves to be fit. They should then progress through the various grades until they are able to accurately gauge personal ability and performance in relation to the club walk gradings.

Distance: The first letter in the grade indicates the distance of the walk. For multi-day walks, this refers to the distance per day.

S short: less than 10 km

M medium: between 10 and 15 km

L long: between 15 and 20 km

X extra-long: more than 20 km

Terrain: The first number in the grade describes the difficulty of the terrain, and thus indicates the skill level required.

1. concrete or paved surface
2. well-formed gravel path
3. graded track, some steps
4. off track, easy going
5. loose or uneven surface
6. rock hopping
7. scrambling: you will need to use your hands
8. rock climbing skills required
9. ropes required

Fitness

In general, more difficult terrain requires greater fitness so we will often see the same number for terrain and fitness. They will differ if the leader plans to go particularly fast or slow, or if there is some other unusual feature.

1 – 3 Easy - suitable for beginners

4 – 7 Reasonable fitness required

8 – 10 Strenuous - fit walkers only

Type of Activity

AB Abseiling

BC Base camp: camping near the car, and walking from there.

CA Caving

DW Day walk: an activity that finishes the same day it starts.

NT Navigation Training

NW Night walk

TW Through walk: stay out for one or more nights, carrying your tent with you.

S&T Safety & training

SOC Social Activity

Nominating for a Club Activity

The programme of activities is available in our newsletter or the MBC Website.

To nominate for an activity, you must contact (call, don't text) the walk's leader NO LATER THAN 12 midday on the prior day. Nominating earlier is preferable.

The leader may reject any nomination if unsure about the suitability of the nominee. This may be due to reasons such as: Skills & Fitness, or at the discretion of the Trip Leader.

Meeting Place

The leader prescribes the place to meet for an activity. If you have special circumstances, you may be able to negotiate a different place to meet the group (for example, if you live closer to the destination than you do to the meeting place).

The regular meeting place is the car park on the corner of Alfred and Nelson Streets, opposite the Mackay Entertainment Centre. The street address is 295 Alfred St.

Cancellation

- If you are unable to attend an activity for which you have nominated, advise the leader as soon as possible. It is not acceptable to simply not show up on the day.
- If there is a cost involved for the activity, you may still be expected to pay it after you cancel. For example, National Parks camping fees are non-refundable and the leader must pay the fee at booking time, days or weeks before the activity. Take care to only nominate for activities that you are very unlikely to withdraw from.

Incidents If an incident occurs on a Club activity which involves injury or damage an incident report form should be completed by the trip leader and signed by persons involved as soon as possible. It should then be reported to the Safety/Training Officer. Incidents will be investigated to a satisfactory conclusion then be discussed by the committee to determine if it is appropriate to change any procedures and notify insurers. The report is filed and may be referred to at a later date.

Abseil Activities

Club activities may include abseiling, with a few differences to procedure:

- Leaders may lead activities with abseil components only if they are authorised by the committee, under the guidance of the abseil coordinator.
- Members may attend abseiling activities only if they are appropriately experienced and competent. A leader or instructor can refuse a nomination for an abseil activity if they consider your level of abseil experience could impose unacceptable risk on the group.
- Members must sign an abseil disclaimer before participating in an activity which includes abseiling.
- Members must wear helmets while abseiling.
- Training will be provided to members periodically.
- The club has an abseil co-ordinator, who will oversee all aspects of abseiling in the club including abseil training, and the authorisation of leaders for abseil trips.

3 - Safety

Bushwalking, like any other activity, carries a risk of injury. Members of MBC must act to reduce the risk to a reasonable level and then accept that reasonable level of risk.

You must consider safety when bushwalking.

- The bush is an uncontrolled environment. It has not been tamed by safety engineers, or by your leader.
- The hazards in the bush are different to the city hazards, so you must become familiar with them and how to deal with them.
- You have a duty of care so that everything reasonably practical is done to avoid activities that expose you, other members and the MBC to unreasonable risk of injury or loss.

You are Responsible for Safety

As a member of a group activity, your primary concern should be your personal safety and well-being, but you should also accept a reasonable degree of care for the safety and well-being of all other participants in the activity. You must avoid anything that exposes any person, including other participants in an activity, to unreasonable risk of injury or loss.

You should avoid doing anything that exposes the MBC to unreasonable risk of loss or liability.

The leader cannot predict all the hazards that will be encountered on an activity because the location and weather are uncontrolled and variable. The leader is not aware of your particular skills and limitations. The leader cannot be by your side from minute to minute, and cannot see what hazards you are facing.

Your responsibility begins in selecting an activity for which you have the necessary skills and understanding. The grading system will assist you, and if you have any doubts you should discuss it with the leader.

First Aid

First aid is beneficial in the bushwalking environment, because there may be some delay before reaching medical assistance. The MBC encourages members to attend a recognised first aid course. Every member must carry a personal first aid kit, which should include 2 snake bandages, while attending club activities.

Hazards

Members must be aware of the hazards peculiar to bushwalking, and how to deal with them. Below is a list of some hazards that are common to bushwalking activities in North Queensland, and some suggestions of how to minimise the associated risk. This is not an exhaustive list of hazards that members might encounter on MBC activities. Members must make their own risk assessment of each situation they find themselves in and choose the appropriate action in each case.

Animals - Ticks, leeches, ants, spiders, crocodiles, snakes, dingos, pigs, possums, rats, mosquitoes, scrub-itch, goannas etc. Do not feed animals, nor leave food scraps available to them.

Bush Fires - Bush fires can travel rapidly and leave no path for escape. Don't walk in areas closed due to fire danger. Stay with companions. Avoid radiant heat by seeking shelter in a creek, waterhole, boulder, cleared area, wheel rut, mud, or stump.

Cold - Exposure to cold can quickly lead to disability and serious complications. Understand the layering clothing system. Carry warm clothes, food and water. Plan routes with opportunity for shelter.

Dislodged Rocks - When walking on a steep slope, rocks might be dislodged, which could fall on other walkers below. Wait until other walkers are clear before following them up or down a steep slope. If a rock is dislodged, immediately call "Rock!" to warn other walkers. If you hear the call of "Rock!" move out of the way immediately.

Falling - Some terrain requires difficult steps or climbing manoeuvres. Some terrain may be slippery, select walks that you are capable of completing safely. If you come to a section where you are not confident, tell the other group members and request an alternative route. Use rope or climbing tape as a backup. Don't go near the edge.

Flicking Bushes - As you walk past a bush you may bend its branches and then let them flick back. Another walker close behind may be struck in the face. Don't walk too close behind another walker. Wear protective glasses. A good habit to get into is to lift the branch over your head and drop it behind you.

Lightning - You may be seriously injured by a direct lightning strike or by induced currents if you are near a lightning strike. Move to lower ground before the storm arrives. Shelter amongst the shorter trees in the middle

of the ridge. Sit on your pack with your feet close to your buttocks and your arms around your knees. Group members should stay a safe distance apart. Be aware that metallic walking poles could attract lightning strikes.

Lost - A group that is lost may not exit the bush at the time planned. This may result in an unexpected night out or covering rougher terrain than expected which exceeds the skill levels of the group. Learn to navigate. Carry and use a map and compass. Plan an emergency exit route before starting the walk. Carry a GPS and EPIRB. Carry additional food and water.

Plants - There are several plants in North Queensland that cause concern. Moonlighter (Gympie Gympie bush), stinging tree, stinging nettles, wait-a-while and grass tree (with their pointed leaves) are some of the worst. Learn to recognise the plants. (Most stinging plants have serrated leaves.) Don't touch them. Wear long trousers, gaiters, long sleeves, protective eye wear and gloves. Don't eat anything from the bush. If unaware, ask the leader or another experienced walker.

Rough Ground - The ground you walk on may have tree roots, rocks, sharp objects, logs, and other uneven surfaces. These can lead to ankle injuries or falls. Tread carefully. Exercise your ankles. Wear appropriate shoes.

Scratches - Minor cuts and scratches are common in bushwalking as you brush against rocks and vegetation. Wear long pants and long sleeves. Wear gaiters. Accept minor cuts and scratches.

Separation - If you are separated from your party, you may be without some shared equipment, such as a map. And time will be spent trying to re-group, which may result in a night out. Assign a "tail" walker. Tell someone before you leave the group at any time. Leave your pack with the group when you leave, so it will be noticed before they move on. Keep an eye on the walker in front and behind. Shout "Hey Bob" when the group is spread too far apart. If possible, maintain radio contact if the group is split up.

Slow Rescue - If you are injured in the bush, it will take more time to get treatment. The rescue can be delayed by lack of communication and difficult access. Most places that MBC walk do not have mobile phone coverage. Carry an EPIRB, two-way radio and mobile phone. Tell someone where you are going, when you plan to return and when to start the rescue. Carry additional food and water.

4 - Equipment and Clothing

What to Take

Each member attending an activity must take:

- all of the items on the "always take" list below
- additional items specified by the leader in the walk description
- any extra items you require for your safety and comfort.

You are Responsible

Each member is responsible for taking appropriate equipment for the activity. Club leaders are not responsible for listing what equipment is appropriate, because this will be different for each member. Club leaders do not check the contents of member's packs before walks. Club leaders are not presumed to know the contents of member's packs.

What gear is appropriate will depend on the type of walk, the grade and the destination. It will also depend on the skill, fitness and tastes of the individual member.

On some occasions, activities do not finish by the exact time. Day walks might finish after dark, or the party may be forced to stay overnight. You should carry the equipment necessary for your safety and comfort in this situation.

It is possible that the contents of your pack will get wet or crushed or dropped. You should select and pack equipment in a way that can handle some rough treatment.

Always Take This list of gear is a minimum requirement for all members on all activities. You should take this equipment, and any extra equipment that you require for comfort or safety, and any extra equipment specified

by the leader. The leader will assume that all members have all this equipment. Members must be capable of carrying all of their equipment for the duration of the activity.

Backpack Large enough, strong enough, comfortable enough to carry all your equipment for the activity.

Warm clothing You should carry at least one warm garment in your pack, in addition to whatever you are wearing at the start of the walk. This garment may be required when you stop for breaks. Most summer walks it may not be required but in winter you may require it.

Raincoat Your raincoat must be able to totally block the wind, and substantially reduce the amount of rain that enters your clothes. It should be able to go over your pack as well.

Food Bring enough food for the duration of the activity, and some spare food in case the activity is extended unexpectedly. Most walks will stop for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea (and a couple in between). It is important to eat some high-kilojoule food at these breaks. Hunger can contribute to hypothermia, fatigue and increase the risk of injury. **hat** A wide brim hat is required for sun protection, rain protection and warmth.

Water For a day's walk, you should bring enough water for the duration of the activity. It is best to have some extra in case the activity is extended unexpectedly. For your first walk, the club recommends you take 3 litres. Dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion, possible heat stroke, fatigue and the subsequent increased risk of injury.

Whistle Carry a whistle to assist if you are separated from the party. Carry your whistle where you can reach it quickly. Make three blasts, each, one second long with a one second pause between. Listen for a response. Repeat after 15 seconds.

Torch If the activity is extended unexpectedly, you may require a torch to safely return to your car. Make sure you have fresh batteries.

First aid kit You can purchase a first aid kit from camping stores, chemist, or first aid organisations. Or you can construct your own. It is best to keep it in a sturdy watertight container.

Change of clothes and shoes Members should take a change of clothes and shoes, in a separate bag. These will be left in the car and used at the completion of the activity. It is possible that clothes will become wet and dirty during the activity, and clean clothes are desirable for the car ride home.

What is prohibited during club activities

- Firearms, prohibited weapons
- Prohibited drugs
- Alcohol
- Offensive material
- Animals
- Radios or music playing devices

Base Camp Equipment.

When you have been camping a few times, you will get to know what you need and what you prefer. Here are some suggestions for first time campers.

- **Tent** For base camps your tent does not have to be especially lightweight – it goes in your car and not on your back, but will need to be waterproof.
- **Sleeping Mat** A thermarest, li-lo, foam, or air bed. This is to make your bed comfortable, and to stop the cold rising from beneath.
- **Warm Bedding** A sleeping bag and/or your doona from home. Don't forget your pillow. In winter bring warm clothing. The most common complaint from first time campers is "too cold in bed." Bring an extra blanket – you can always leave it by your feet if you don't need it.
- **Stove** A small camping style stove, or large 2 burner family camping style. You should not depend on a fire at club events.
- **Billy** A billy or saucepan or other cooking utensils.

- **Food** Saturday, breakfast, lunch suitable to go in daypack, evening meal. Sunday, breakfast and lunch. Nibbles for Saturday evening social time.
- **Usual Day Walking Gear** Base camps include some walks, so you will need everything that you normally have on a walk.
- **Folding Chair** There will be several hours of sitting around at a base camp.
- **Suggestions**
 - leave some water in the car with your change of clothes to drink on the way home.
 - large plastic peanut paste jars make sturdy watertight containers to protect equipment in your pack.
 - 2 litre plastic soft drink bottles are cheap and reliable water containers.

Three Layer Clothing System This section has been added for the bushwalkers who walk in colder parts of our world.

Bushwalkers need to be prepared for a wide range of weather conditions. They may be at high altitudes, be outdoors for a long time, including day and night, and have no shelter available. Also, bushwalkers are sometimes active and therefore warm, but sometimes they stop for meals, views, or first aid and can quickly feel the cold.

The three layer clothing system is a set of clothes that can protect you from cold. You should carry each of the three layers on each walk to be prepared for bad weather, or unexpected late return.

Thermals

The first layer is called thermal underwear or simply thermals. Its primary purpose is to remove moisture from your skin, since contact with even a thin film of water will cool you down very quickly.

- Thermals must be worn touching the skin. They will not perform if worn over other garments, such as cotton underwear. They will not perform if they are loose fitting.
- Thermals are made of polypropylene or wool. There are also some other synthetic materials with brand names that do a similar job.
- Thermals come in many shapes: vests, short sleeve top, long sleeve top, crop top, bra, long trousers, boxer shorts, briefs, socks, beanie, neck warmer, balaclava. They come in various weights or thicknesses.
- Your collection should start with a thick, long sleeve top, which you should carry every day, even in summer. You may not wear it very often, so keep it clean in a zip-lock bag and you won't need to wash it.
- Thermals are often used as pyjamas when through walking or base camping.

Fleecy

The second layer is called the "fleece." It is also known as the insulating layer, or polar fleece, or polartec. Its job is to insulate you from heat loss by trapping air. The fleece jacket is thick and fluffy. It can be made of wool, but most of them are synthetic. (Some are made from recycled milk bottles!)

The fleece layer is available in different thicknesses and different shapes. Your collection should start with a thick, long sleeve top. It would be quite rare for you to need it desperately on a summer walk, but you should carry it anyhow just in case. It is also comfortable to wear at lunch time, or to the coffee shop afterwards.

Raincoat

The third layer is called the shell, or the outer layer or the raincoat. Its job is to stop heat loss from wind, and it has a secondary function of reducing the rate at which you get wet in the rain. Shell garments come in several shapes: trousers, jackets, gloves, gauntlets. There is also an amazing variety of materials, including breathable membranes. Your collection should start with a long jacket that covers your shorts and includes a hood. You should carry this garment on every walk, even on fine days in summer.

Fourth Layer

The three layer clothing system is intended to protect you from the cold. But many walks around Queensland are done in warm weather, so you will want something else to wear as well. Look for garments that can withstand some scratchy bushes, are cool to wear, and will protect you from the sun. Quick drying nylon is a good choice,

as are trousers with legs that can zip on and off. When the weather gets cool, you can wear these clothes with your three layers. Remember to put the thermals next to your skin.

About Rain

If there is a brief shower on your walk, you may be able to use your raincoat to stay almost dry, and then you can dry out after the rain has gone. But if the rain persists for several hours or days, you will eventually get wet. It is therefore important to have clothing and equipment that performs satisfactorily when wet.

About Cotton

Cotton clothes (including flannelette and denim) will absorb water from rain and perspiration. As they get wet, they become very heavy and lose their insulation properties. They may be worn in fine weather, but they are not suitable as warm clothes. Most bushwalkers do not use cotton garments.

5 - History of our Club

Our club began when a group of six people (R. Irvine, R. Sherrin, B. Mayer, L. Pike Mesdames L. Howard and S. Wessel.) met on Wednesday, 20 November 1974 in response to an advertisement placed in the ***Daily Mercury*** by Bob Irvine.

The following Sunday the Club went on its first walk. This walk was Cut Creek.

Coral Morgan joined our club in 1975 and has been a member ever since. Her son Steve joined around the same time and continued to be a member until he passed away in July 2022. Another of our long serving club members was Maureen Thompson, who passed away in February 2026. Our third long serving member, Frances Eiteneuer, is still an active member of our club.

Over the years our Club has ranged in membership size, from six to over one hundred members. Our walks have increased from one walk a month to one walk a fortnight to walking every weekend.

In November 1994 we held a 20th birthday camp for the club and reenacted the first walk up Cut Creek.

6 - Bushwalkers' Code

Club members must observe 'minimum impact bushwalking' – a code of ethics and behaviour aimed at preserving the ecological and wilderness values of our environment.

Protect Plants and Wildlife

Australia's plants and wildlife are unique. They are national treasures that should be protected for future generations. Damaging or removing native plants not only destroys part of the environment, it is illegal in most parts of the country. Many areas are fragile and may take years to recover from damage. Wherever possible, find a way around vegetation, e.g. fragile plants moss beds, and coastal wetland plants etc.

Remove Rubbish

Rubbish is one of the biggest threats to our natural areas. It's no longer acceptable to burn or bury rubbish or leave it for others to remove. Litter is unpleasant and harmful to wildlife. Plan your bushwalking to cut down on potential rubbish. Repack food into bags or re-usable containers to avoid cans, plastic, and glass waste. Carry out what you carry in. If you come across other people's rubbish, do the area a favour, remove their rubbish as well.

Keep Waterways Clean

Toilet wastes and rubbish contamination have already polluted the water in our waterways. To lessen the risk of contamination and to protect water quality:

- Where there is a toilet, use it.
- In areas without toilet facilities bury your toilet waste. Choose a place at least 50 metres from tracks, campsites, popular areas and water sources. Dig a shallow hole 150mm deep and within the soils organic

layer, bury all toilet waste and paper. This will stop the waste contaminating water sources. Using a small trowel will make it easy to bury toilet waste.

- When using water for washing yourself or your utensils, take the water and wash well away from the water source. Drain used water into the soil so that it is filtered before re-entering the waterway.
- As soaps and detergents are harmful to water life and other users, these should also be drained into the soil.

Take Care with Stoves and Fires

Fire is one of the greatest threats to our natural environment. The devastating effects of fire are obvious. Fires use up wood, destroy insects and other animal life, and they can scar sites with blackened and charred fireplaces. Fallen wood, especially large branches and logs, is the source of food and shelter for many forest animals and plants. Take portable fuel stoves for cooking, they are fast, clean efficient, and reduce the risk of wildfire. Know how to operate your stove safely to protect yourself and the environment. Use stoves at least 2 metres from dry vegetation and tents, and guard against knocking over.

Carry out empty fuel cartridges. If you must use a fire:

- Be aware of fire bans and the higher fire risk during summer months. You may need a permit for your fire. Keep fires small and efficient. Use existing fireplaces if possible.
- Use only dead wood. Select wood from riverbeds or areas where wood is plentiful.
- Make sure the fire is completely out by dousing it with water and checking the ashes are cold. Dismantle the fire site and scatter unburnt firewood before leaving the area.
- Never leave fires unattended.

Camp Carefully

Practise “No Trace” camping:

- Use campsites where they are provided.
- Use modern equipment that doesn’t damage the environment and helps you be self-reliant. Never cut vegetation for tent poles and sleeping areas.
- Leave the area in as natural a state as possible. Do not dig trenches.
- Keep your camp site compact, do not clutter up an area and spoil the atmosphere for others.

Keep to the Track

Remember that smaller parties have less impact on the environment and other users.

- Stay on established tracks where possible, as this confines any damage.
- When there is no track, keep on hard and open ground where possible.
- Avoid creating tracks that cause water erosion.
- Do not take short cuts between sections of track.

Consider Others

- Get permission if you have to cross private leasehold land.
- Be courteous to landowners and do not help yourself to private facilities unless invited.
- Leave gates as you found them. When you open a gate, make sure the last person closes it.
- Move carefully around and away from livestock.
- Ensure your behaviour and activities don’t disturb or offend others.
- Comply with the regulations governing the control and protection of our National Parks and other nature reserves.

Respect Our Cultural Heritage

Many places in Australia have special spiritual or historical significance. Some places are sacred to Aborigines while others have important European values. Recognise the spiritual or historical significance of these places and treat them with respect. Obtain permission from traditional landowners or the relevant land manager prior to visiting sensitive areas.

7 - First Aid in the Bush

Acknowledgement: the information in this article has been obtained by reference to the Queensland Ambulance Service publication "First Aid – Responding to Emergencies" Reprinted November 2001.

Snakebite

- SEND FOR HELP (EPIRB, Ph 000, 112, 106TT)
- Keep the patient calm, still, preferably lying down
- Do not wash the bite site, the venom may be used for snake identification. Place plastic or non-absorbent material over the bite site using tape or small bandage to hold in place.
- Firmly bandage the whole limb, starting from the extremities (Toes or fingers). The bandage should be tight but still allow blood flow to occur. Tight enough so that two fingers cannot easily be inserted under the wrap,
- Immobilise the affected limb with a splint to reduce muscle movement. Help the victim to rest if possible and do not let the victim stand or walk. Bring transport to the victim, unless this will cause a delay of 2 hours or more
- Do not remove the bandage or splint.
- Most bites occur on a lower limb, usually around the ankle. For bites on the head or trunk, do not try to use the pressure immobilisation technique but help the victim to rest completely until medical assistance is obtained.
- Do not cut the bite or try to drain the venom, do not suck or wash the bite, and do not apply a tourniquet.
- Symptoms or signs of poisonous snakebite may appear quickly or over the course of many hours.

They include:

- Paired or single fang marks in the skin. (Possible redness, swelling of the local area)
- Nausea, vomiting
- Headache
- Altered conscious state
- Double vision or blurred vision
- Problems with speaking and / or swallowing
- Weakness in extremities and / or paralysis
- Respiratory distress or cardiac arrest
- Clotting defects

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition in which the body's warming mechanisms fail to maintain normal body temperature and the entire body cools to 35 degrees C or lower. The victim will die if not given adequate care.

The symptoms and signs of hypothermia are:

- Shivering (which may be absent in later stages).
- Slow, irregular pulse.
- Numbness.
- Glassy stare.
- Apathy and decreasing levels of consciousness.
- Abnormal co-ordination, trouble in walking.
- The initial response to hypothermia is:

CALL FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

1. Confirm the presence or absence of a pulse. If insulation or shelter is available, remove any wet clothes and dry the victim. If possible, use a space blanket.

2. If shelter is not available, wrap something dry over the victim's wet clothing to prevent exposure to cold wind that could chill the body at a rapid rate. Be extremely gentle in handling the person.
3. Warm the body gradually by wrapping the victim in blankets or putting on dry clothing and removing the victim to a warm environment. If available, apply a heat source to the armpits and groin. If no other heat source is available, use your own body as a source of heat.
4. If the victim is alert, give the victim warm liquids to drink.
5. Do not warm too quickly, for example by immersing the victim in warm water, or exposing them to a fire or heater.
6. Rapid warming of the body may cause the onset of dangerous heat related abnormal heart rhythms. Do not rub or massage the victim or give alcohol.
7. Call for medical assistance if possible.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion typically occurs after long periods of strenuous exercise in a hot environment. It is associated with insufficient replacement of fluid, electrolytes (salts) lost through sweating, which decreases the fluid volume. Symptoms are:

- normal or below normal skin temperature,
- cool, moist, pale skin, progressing to red skin,
- headache,
- nausea / vomiting,
- dizziness, weakness,
- exhaustion,
- sweating and rapid, weak pulse.

Heat exhaustion is normally treated by:

1. Placing victim in a cool area – Cool down as best you can.
2. Encouraging the victim to rest lying down with the legs slightly raised.
3. If fully conscious, give small drinks of cool water to drink. Add ½ teaspoon of salt to 500ml of water. If the victim is vomiting and unable to take any fluids, arrange for urgent medical treatment.
4. If the victim is unconscious, position them on their side, monitor and prepare for CPR if it becomes necessary.
5. If not assessed and treated properly, heat exhaustion could develop into heat stroke.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most severe heat emergency. It develops when the body systems are overwhelmed by heat and begin to stop functioning. Sweating stops because body fluids are low. When sweating stops, the body cannot cool itself effectively, and the body temperature rapidly rises. It soon reaches a level at which the brain and other vital organs, such as the heart and kidneys, begin to fail. If the body is not cooled, convulsions, unconsciousness and death will result.

The signs of heat stroke include:

- High body temperature (often as high as 40 degrees C)
- Red, hot and dry skin
- Strong bounding pulse
- Progressive deterioration in the conscious state.
- Rapid, shallow, noisy breathing.
- Full, bounding pulse.
- As consciousness deteriorates, the circulation system begins to fail and the pulse becomes weak and irregular, without prompt care, the heat stroke victim will die.

If heat stroke is suspected, follow these general care steps immediately:

- Seek urgent medical assistance

- Stop the person from continuing any activity (the victim may be beyond the point of making a rational decision).
- Remove the person from the hot environment into shade.
- Cool the body. Remove ALL unnecessary clothing
- Douse patient with cold water and cover with a wet sheet. Apply ice, if available, to groin, armpits and neck.
- Give cool, clear fluids if the victim is fully conscious. (Not too quickly).
- Minimise shock. (see following)

Stemming Loss of Blood.

To control external bleeding, first expose the wound and check there is no visible foreign body in the wound. Then follow these general steps:

- Place direct pressure on the wound with a sterile dressing pad or improvise with any clean cloth such as a towel or handkerchief. Using a pad or cloth will help keep the wound free from germs. Place a hand over the pad or cloth and apply firm pressure. If you do not have a pad or cloth available, ask the victim to apply firm hand pressure. As a last resort, use your own hand.
- Elevate the injured area above the level of the heart and let the victim rest in a comfortable position. 3. Apply a pressure bandage to hold the pad or cloth in place. You may do this with a folded triangular bandage placed over the wound and tied over the site for extra pressure, or with a roller bandage.
- If bleeding continues add more padding Do not remove the bandage and pad and reassess blood loss.
- Do not replace the pad, bandage over initial dressing.
- Observe the victim closely for signs of shock. (see following)
- Periodically check the circulation beyond the bandage to make sure it is not too tight. Look for cold, pale skin, toes or fingers that do not return to normal colour after compressing the nail, or if victim complains of numbness or tingling.

Shock and Internal Bleeding

Shock is a life-threatening condition. When someone is injured or becomes suddenly ill, normal body functions of circulation of oxygen rich blood may be interrupted. With more severe injuries or illness, the body may be unable to adjust. When the body is unable to meet its demands for oxygen because blood fails to circulate adequately, shock occurs. The common symptoms are:

- Restlessness or irritability
- Pale, cool, moist skin
- Rapid breathing
- Rapid and weak pulse
- Excessive thirst
- Nausea and / or vomiting
- Altered conscious state - unconsciousness
- As the victim's condition deteriorates, the symptoms and signs will become more pronounced.

The general care you give in any emergency will help reduce the effects of shock. Specific care for shock is:

1. Prevent further injuries.
2. Check airways, breathing and circulation and response if CPR procedures are known.
3. Control any external bleeding as soon as possible to minimise blood loss.
4. Call for medical assistance
5. Help the victim to rest comfortably. This is important because pain and fear can intensify the body's stress and accelerate the progression of shock.
6. Help the victim to maintain normal body temperature.
7. Reassure the victim.
8. Provide care for specific conditions that are present.

9. Continue checking airways, breathing and circulation and level of response.
10. Elevate the legs slightly to assist the return of blood to the vital organs, unless you suspect head, neck or back injuries, or possible broken bones in the hips or legs. If you suspect a heart attack or stroke, or if you are unsure of the victim's condition, do not raise the legs.
11. Do not give the victim anything to eat or drink, even though the person is likely to be thirsty. The victim's condition may be severe enough to require surgery, in which case it is important that the stomach be empty. Limit fluid intake in light of the likely timeframe for arrival of medical help.
12. Advise the victim not to smoke.
13. If the victim's condition deteriorates, unconsciousness may occur, and the victim must be positioned on the side and clear airways maintained.

In the event of any serious injury, such as long falls and heavy impact, suspect internal bleeding. Internal bleeding may result in severe blood loss and shock. Symptoms of internal bleeding include;

- Pain and tenderness around the area of impact or trauma, possibly with hardness, swelling and distension.
- Discolouration of the skin in the injured area.
- Anxiety or restlessness.
- Rapid, weak pulse.
- Rapid breathing.
- Skin that feels cool or moist or looks pale or bluish.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Excessive thirst.
- Deteriorating conscious state.
- Bleeding from body orifices.

If you suspect internal bleeding caused by serious injury, call for medical assistance immediately. There is little you can do to effectively control serious internal bleeding. Usually, the victim needs immediate surgery to correct the problem.

While waiting for help;

- Prevent further injury.
- Monitor the victim's airway, breathing and circulation, and prepare to administer CPR.
- Help the victim to rest in the most comfortable position.
- Maintain normal body temperature.
- Reassure the victim.
- Provide care for other specific conditions.

8 - Bush Fire Safety and Survival

This article is taken from a publication of The Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority Rural Fire Service.

Bushfires in Australia have claimed many lives – lives so tragically lost under circumstances that may have been easily avoided by a simple understanding of what to do in a bushfire. Most bushfire victims should have suffered no more than a few minor burns, nose and throat irritation and perhaps a slight headache. Instead, some die because they have either panicked or ignored taking a few basic safety precautions. A fear of fire is probably the most widely spread phobia of the human race. The unexplainable panic that arises when people are, or imagine they are, in danger of being trapped by fire has led to the abandonment of common sense. Panic, in most cases, has led to individual and multiple deaths when comparative safety was near at hand.

To avoid such tragedies, everyone who lives in, or visits the grassland bush lands that make up such a large percentage of our country should make themselves familiar with a few simple facts about the dangers of bush and grass fires. They should be aware of the rules of conduct that may greatly multiply their chances of survival.

Observe these three important rules when faced with a fire:

- always remain calm – don't panic

- always protect yourself from radiant heat
- keep low and / or stay in cleared areas

Radiated Heat

Persons trapped in a fire experience heat effects from various sources, and each contributes to the risk of injury or death. Means of minimising the effects of these individual sources of heat should be understood and applied if chances of survival are to be improved.

Radiated heat is the greatest killer. Only a small percentage of people who die in bushfires are, in fact, burnt to death. The majority collapse due to the effects of radiated heat before flames actually reach them.

The temperature at the face of a low-intensity fire will be around 1000 degrees, and the heat level rises sharply as fire intensity increases. In a grass fire, a person would be subjected to the extreme radiated heat for about 30 seconds, but in high intensity bushfires, the danger period would be 3-4 minutes, or longer.

Protection from radiated heat is the major factor in survival in bushfires. No means of avoiding radiated heat should even be rejected. At such times any idea of personal hygiene may have to be temporarily abandoned; rolling in the mud and slush of a pigsty may not be clean, but it is preferable to extensive skin grafts and perhaps fatal injuries from burns.

Wind-Borne Heat

The main convection current rises above a fire, but air is heated as the wind blows the fire forward and this hot air has the effect of preheating objects in advance of the fire. The feeling of heat or strong smell of smoke in the air is an immediate indication that the fire is near and time to take safety precautions before the real emergency occurs.

Body temperature will rise wherever there is a tendency to panic. Mental coolness (no panic) means physical coolness, and this is important. Vigorous activities also cause the body temperature to rise; therefore it is important to conserve energy by deliberately controlling your actions.

What To Do

Being trapped by a bush or grass fire generally occurs under one of three circumstances: on foot, in a vehicle, or in a house / building.

When fire threatens or appears to threaten, there is no cause or reason for panic. It is essential for the person to remain calm and assess the position and situation in a logical manner. Certain measures can be taken to improve your chances before fire arrives. If on foot, employ one of the safety measures listed:

- Stay with companions.
- Don't worry others by disappearing.
- Don't wander off alone.
- Never try to escape from an approaching fire by running uphill. Fire travels faster uphill. It is always better to move across the face of a hill out of the way of a fire.
- Don't panic as this drains your energy and affects your thinking.
- Run only when absolutely necessary and only if your chances of escape are clear.
- Seek shelter in a creek, waterhole, dam, in-ground earth tank, muddy area, or swamp at the side away from the fire. Wet or plaster the exposed parts of the body with mud to keep it moist.
- Do not climb into elevated tanks as this water heats rapidly and collapse can occur within a few minutes. (A person almost totally immersed in warm water 44C reaches a stage of collapse in approximately 3 minutes).
- If no water is available, take refuge behind a raised object (a rock, log, or tree stump) in a cleared area. A slight hollow in the ground is also sufficient in a bare area (e.g. wheel ruts).
- If there is no suitable safe location available, seek shelter in the barest area away from heavy quantities of fuel; cover exposed skin with dirt, or dust, or clothing, or any available protection; lie face downwards with boots towards the fire.

9 - Lightning

Acknowledgement: This summary is based on extracts from an article by Professor M Darveniza, January 1993.

Before the Walk

Consult the weather forecast for the region, and if a thunderstorm is expected, select a walk that can be completed before the onset of the storm.

During the Walk

Whenever possible, keep a lookout for the development of thunderstorm clouds in the region. Once thunder can be heard, keep estimating the distance to the lightning activity by counting the time interval between seeing the lightning flash and hearing the thunder. The time-to-thunder provides an estimate of the distance to the lightning activity, e.g.:

- 3 seconds - 1 km
- 15 seconds - 5 km
- 30 seconds - 10 km

If there is a good line of sight to the thunderstorm, reasonable estimates of distance can be made up to 10 km.

When to Leave Exposed Locations and Seek Safer Shelter

Data from lightning location systems show that the distance between successive lightning strikes from a single thunderstorm cell rarely exceeds about 4 km (time to-thunder 12 seconds). This suggests that you should get away from exposed situations whenever the time-to thunder is less than 15 seconds.

What are Safe Locations?

Safe places during thunderstorms are:

- inside a metal-skinned car or vehicle - keep completely inside and Do Not Touch doors, gears or steering wheel.
- inside a substantial building but keep away from outside windows - Do Not handle appliances connected to outside electrical conductors, i.e. do not use a telephone, a modem connected computer, a hand operated electrical appliance or touch a TV or radio set particularly if connected to an outside aerial.

If the above locations are not readily accessible find a hollow or a low-level location away from tall trees, and crouch low, keeping your shoes on and your feet together. If in a group, don't crowd together.

What to Do If the Thunderstorm is Above You and Lightning Strikes are Nearby

(That is, the Time-To-Thunder is Less than 5 Seconds) This might happen if you were not able to take the action suggested above, and this is quite possible if you are out on a walk involving distances of over 15 km. Now, all you can do is to minimise the risk of being struck by lightning. You should try to get away from the high ground if possible:

Walking Poles: Metallic poles will attract lightning, so consider abandoning the poles to collect at a later time. Deaths have occurred involving walkers who kept holding them.

- Leave the top of a mountain range or ridge if you are on a range or ridge.
- Get away from the top edges of a cliff or an escarpment - lookouts are usually at such locations, so get away from lookouts.
- Keep away from large trees; particularly those located near a cliff edge or an escarpment.

If you are in a forest, and so cannot avoid being near to trees:

- Choose to be near small trees rather than tall trees.
- Try and stay a distance of more than your height from the nearest tree trunk.
- If you are with a group of walkers, you should keep at least 5 metres apart.
- Do not walk in pairs or in closely packed groups when lightning strikes are all around you.
- If you have found a somewhat safer location (as above), it is better to stop walking, to stand in a crouched position keeping your feet together or sit with your feet tucked in close to your body. Wait until the thunderstorm cell has passed from your location (it should be safe to move again when the time-to-thunder exceeds 10 seconds).

What to do if One of Your Party is Struck by Lightning

It is most unlikely that a second lightning strike will occur immediately to the same spot. The total lightning discharge for a single strike only lasts a maximum of 1 to 2 seconds. So it is safe to touch an injured person immediately after the strike. You should begin first aid immediately.

1. If the patient doesn't respond – EPIRB, or Ph 000 or 112
2. If breathing absent or abnormal – COMMENCE CPR. Keep going until the patient recovers, medical help arrives or it becomes dangerous for you.
3. If a person needs to be sent for help, do so only when it is safe and the route does not include exposure to further danger.

10 - EPIRB

EPIRB stands for Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon. In cases of emergency, it transmits a radio signal which is detected by satellites and aircraft to alert authorities to your distress and guide a rescue to your position. The system was designed for aircraft and boats, but it is also appropriate for bushwalkers.

Why use an EPIRB?

The advantages of using an EPIRB over other forms of attracting a rescue are:

- You don't have to wait very long. The signal is detected quickly, and you may have paramedics with you in 60–90 minutes. In medical emergencies, speed of rescue can be important.
- It is very cost effective. An EPIRB rescue avoids the expensive "search" phase because the satellites and helicopters can home in on the beacon.

When to use an EPIRB

If a walker is unable to walk out, then a rescue is required. An EPIRB is usually the best way to attract a rescue. Walking groups should not hesitate to activate their EPIRB if an emergency arises. Here are some examples of situations where you can't walk out, you need to be rescued, and use of an EPIRB is appropriate:

- Sprained ankle. The amount of medical attention required may be minimal, but if the patient cannot walk, they must be evacuated. Note: If the patient can be assisted to an access area, the use of the EPIRB will not be necessary.
- Snake Bite. The patient requires urgent medical attention and should not walk.
- (Suspected) heart attack. The patient should not walk and requires urgent medical attention.
- Broken bones. Particularly if it affects the patient's ability to walk with assistance. The patient should not walk, requires medical attention
- Party is Lost. If you don't know where you are, then you can't walk out safely.
- One party member is lost. If you have lost a member of your party, you will need some help with the search and rescue.
- Flood-bound. If it is not safe to cross the river or walk out another way then call for a rescue. If you are reasonably sure that your party can walk out without assistance, then do so.

These situations would not warrant calling in a rescue:

- Car trouble. You can walk 20km to find a phone and call RACQ. This may make you late home but is not life-threatening.
- Blisters. Blisters can be uncomfortable, but not life-threatening.
- Late home. If you are late, but safe, there is no emergency.

How to use an EPIRB

- If medical attention is required, switch it on straight away. Don't wait for morning, don't wait for good weather, don't wait for the injury to heal or get worse. (If conditions are not good for a helicopter rescue, then emergency teams will be dispatched on foot, boat, or otherwise)
- If the situation is not particularly urgent, such as a party lost but sufficient food and shelter for the night, then it may be best to activate the beacon in daylight.
- Carry your EPIRB instructions with your EPIRB. Read them.

- Being on a ridge is better than in a gorge. If it is easy to do so, then move the beacon to a place where plenty of sky is visible.
- Use your space blanket to amplify the signal. Spread the blanket on the ground, and place the EPIRB on top, with antenna pointing up.
- The EPIRB signal will work through forest canopy, but the pilot may have difficulty seeing you, and difficulty winching. A clear spot is preferable if it is easy to find.
- Make some other signals. (Remember how hard it is to see through the trees when you look down from a lookout.) A smoky fire can be seen and maybe even smelt by the air crew. At night, a fire may show up on infra-red detectors. Use flashing lights, mirrors, etc. A bright red or yellow raincoat or ground sheet may be easier to see. If you can see the aircraft, move so you are not under the leaves, and wave your arms (and hat and torch) in a large sweeping motion.
- Leave the EPIRB on. Leave it on when you see the aircraft. Leave it on at night. Leave it on until the rescuer tells you to turn it off.
- If you have a mobile phone, you might get some coverage at the top of a nearby ridge. Phone 000 and state
 - EPIRB beacon activated
 - nature of emergency
 - your name
 - your location
 - Mackay Bushwalkers Club CONTACT OFFICER or PRESIDENT
- If the phone is locked, or out of service range, you could try calling 112 instead of 000. This number utilizes any available communication satellite rather than the phones service provider's service.

How emergency services will respond to the EPIRB

The signal is first detected by satellites, and the information is relayed to Canberra. The position given by the satellite is not very accurate, maybe 50km, but is often sufficiently accurate to know which helicopter to call. Commercial aircraft are also listening for the signal and will relay the information to Canberra.

The control centre may decide to wait for a second satellite pass. This gives confirmation that the signal is not an accident and better accuracy in the location. This may take another 15 minutes.

The appropriate resources are dispatched to respond to the beacon. In the case of North Queensland (Mackay area) bush, this will likely be the CQ Rescue helicopter from Mackay. It is possible that other resources will be used, such as fixed wing aircraft, police, or state emergency service members.

The helicopter may require 30 minutes before taking off to load the appropriate crew and equipment, and then 30 minutes to fly to the area. There could be a longer delay if the helicopter is already in use on another task. The helicopter pilot will be given the approximate position from Canberra and will use an on-board homing system to find the beacon. This will take up to 15 minutes. Sometimes the signal bounces off rock faces, causing a little confusion and delay. (You can help by providing other visual signals.)

It is unlikely that the helicopter will land in the bush. It is more likely that a paramedic or Rescue Crew Officer will be winched to the ground.

The paramedic will be able to select the appropriate next step, which may involve winching the injured person to the aircraft.

At night, the pilot may decide not to conduct the rescue from the aircraft but can still locate the beacon and co-ordinate a ground rescue.

Appendix

Always Remember

- ring the leader before a walk
- be at the meeting place 15 minutes before departure time
- stay with the group
- accept instructions from the leader
- act responsibly and safely
- thank the leader and driver

Always Take

- suitable footwear
- backpack
- raincoat
- warm clothes
- first aid kit
- hat and sunscreen
- water – at least 2 or 3 litres
- lunch – lots (enough for the day)
- morning tea and snacks
- torch, with fresh batteries
- whistle
- change of clothes and shoes for driving home
- money for carpooling
- spare shoelaces / string
- emergency blanket / space blanket



MACKAY BUSHWALKERS' CLUB INC. PRIVACY STATEMENT

Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc. (MBC) recognises that the privacy and security of personal information is important to our members. MBC members respect the confidentiality and security of any member's personal information and are committed to protecting it at all times.

Collection of members' personal information

MBC only collects such personal information as is necessary to manage membership of the Club and communicate with members about Club activities.

By completing a membership application form or by renewing your membership you consent to the use and disclosure of your personal information as outlined in this privacy statement.

Use and disclosure of your personal information

Your personal information provided on membership application and any subsequent changes will be disclosed to:

- MBC Committee members to manage your membership and communicate with you about Club activities.
- MBC Leaders, to verify whether you are a financial member and to manage the safety of participants.
- MBC Members appointed by the Committee to undertake specific tasks e.g. The maintenance of the Club Membership Data Base.
- Third parties who by their nature, carry a legal right, or have a relevant Duty of Care.

If you provide your email address, it may be disclosed to others in email headers when communicating about club matters.

Personal information that you provide for a specific activity, eg. when you enter your name and details on a Trip Outing Sheet is disclosed to the Leader of that activity. In managing that activity, the Leader may disclose that information to other Club members. Members not wishing to disclose personal information should contact the Leader to make other arrangements.

Access to your personal information

You may request access to the personal information that MBC holds about you by contacting the Club Secretary.

Revised 06.2026



Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc General Information

Have you ever tried bushwalking? It is a great way to unwind from the speed of modern life and to get good exercise at the same time. Bushwalking is fun and a great way to meet people. The desire to explore the natural world around us is the heritage from which our country developed. Bushwalking is the true spirit of Australia. The Mackay region is particularly well situated with many diverse areas for bushwalking, including the substantial wilderness areas of Eungella National Park.

THE CLUB: The Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc has been operating since 1974. The aim of the Club is to foster bushwalking as a recreational activity. Its organisation is very low key. A monthly general meeting is usually held at 7:00pm on the third Wednesday of each month at the downstairs room of the Mackay Family Care and Community Support Association Centre, 60 Wellington Street, Mackay. Interested persons are welcome at these meetings. The club produces a Monthly Newsletter which gives descriptions of future walks, indicating how hard they are and the type of country through which the walk will go.

DAY WALKS: Walkers are required to nominate for outings by contacting the Trip Leader NO later than 12 midday the day prior, unless otherwise stated. Nominating earlier is preferable. The most common activity of the Club is the Day Walk. We leave town in the morning, drive to the area of the walk, then spend much of the day walking. We carry our lunch and have it somewhere in the bush, walk back to the cars and normally return to town at about dark. Walks vary from dry mountains with no water to creeks where we have plenty of opportunities for swimming. Walks take in a wide variety of natural scenery. Day walks are almost always on Sundays and usually leave at 7:00am. (Times are given in the newsletter.) We meet at the Car Park on the corner of Nelson & Alfred Streets opposite Jubilee Park. To come on a day walk, turn up 15 MINUTES BEFORE DEPARTURE TIME at the car park. A trip leader is appointed for each activity.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: From time to time the Club organises camps and social activities. Camps are usually for a weekend and vary from camping at the cars to carrying all camping gear in a backpack and walking to a campsite. **To attend backpack camps, persons must be a Club member and have attended at least one day walk before the backpack camp.** The club also plans longer trips, usually one week, to more distant locations. The Club also has some abseiling activities. Fees for these other activities are additional to membership fees and will be detailed in trip descriptions.

HOW TO JOIN: To become a member, you will need to do an online induction. Our online induction is on our web page. It entails, carefully reading the induction notes and watching a five-minute video. After you have completed those two tasks you need to fill out the membership form and email it to our Club, mackaybushwalkingclub@gmail.com and deposit the membership fee into our bank account.

TRANSPORT: We take a practical number of vehicles for walks. Persons can either take their own car or go as a passenger in another car, depending on the availability of cars. Passengers are asked to contribute an amount for the car owner's costs. The recommended cost is 10 cents per kilometre for the trip length. (For example, a trip to Broken River is 90km each way, a total trip of 180km and the contribution amount would be \$18.00.)

TRIP LEADERS: Trip leaders are appointed for Club walks. It is the responsibility of the trip leader to write a description of the walk for the Club newsletter, to organise transport and to guide walkers to and from the destination of the walk. Leaders usually have a good knowledge of the area in which they are leading the walk. Sometimes walks are described as "exploratory". This means that the leader has not been there before and cannot guarantee the nature of the walk.

MEMBERSHIP FEES: There are two types of membership you can take to attend club activities. **Ordinary Membership** of the club incurs an annual membership fee and entitles you to attend any club activity within that membership period. Our membership period is from July 1 to June 30 each year. **Day Membership** incurs a day membership fee and entitles you to attend that day's walk only. (You cannot attend a camp as a day member) Day Membership can be taken out on two occasions only. After this you must become an ordinary member to be able to participate in club activities.

WHAT TO BRING AND WHAT TO WEAR: For a day walk you will need a small backpack. Long sleeves and trousers, a hat, sunscreen and sturdy shoes are recommended. You may also want to bring suitable attire for swimming where opportunities exist. **The following should be carried on every day walk:** small torch, at least two litres of water, food, sunscreen, hat, raincoat, insect repellent (cream Rid is very popular with walkers), small whistle, emergency kit (containing, first aid equipment). By all means bring a camera and/or binoculars but remember you will have to carry them all day.

PEOPLE: You will find us a friendly group of people. A wide variety of people from all ages walk with the Club, including cane farmers, doctors, retirees, housewives, unemployed, teachers, students, cleaners, technicians, etc. Some walks are suitable for younger children, but you should check with the trip leader beforehand.

All activity costs, including membership fees, must be paid prior to participating in any club activity.
FOR MORE INFORMATION RING THE CLUB CONTACT OFFICER.



Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc

By Laws and Outing Rules for Club Activities

1. **All persons intending to participate in an outing must contact the leader NO later than 12 midday the day prior, unless otherwise stated. Nominating earlier is preferable.**
2. Arrival at the assembly area for this outing **MUST** be at least 15 minutes before the advertised departure time, to allow for transport arrangements to be made. Persons intending to make their vehicles available for transport should have their vehicles fuelled and in a roadworthy condition. The decision as to which vehicles go on the outing is at the discretion of the trip leader.
3. All vehicles being used in an activity must leave the assembly area together and follow the trip leader's vehicle in convoy. Each driver should constantly check the vehicle behind and if it is not still following; stop and wait for it. All drivers must stop at turn off points to ensure that drivers of following vehicles are aware of the turn off.
4. Walkers must be suitably clothed and have appropriate footwear. Each walker must have their own pack and carry food and water for the day and, if required, any special medication. At least 2 litres of water per person is recommended. Every walker should also carry the following: small torch, sunscreen, raincoat, insect repellent, small whistle, emergency kit and first aid equipment. The trip leader at his/her absolute discretion may refuse any walker who is not adequately equipped the right to participate in an activity.
5. No offensive or dangerous items including firearms, dogs, alcohol, illegal drugs and music playing devices are to be taken on activities. The trip leader shall at his/her discretion determine whether an item is offensive or dangerous and may refuse any walker who insists on carrying such an item, the right to participate in an activity.
6. The Club endeavours to provide at least one First Aider at each activity. The MBC encourages members to undertake a Senior First Aid Training Course from a recognised provider.
7. All litter must be carried out including food scraps such as orange peels and apple cores and sanitary pads/tampons.
8. Faecal matter and toilet paper should be buried 15cm deep and well away from tracks and at least 100m away from any water course.
9. Walkers must not pollute any creek or stream with items such as soap, food scraps or human wastes.
10. Walkers must co-operate with the Trip Leader and heed any reasonable direction he/she may give.
11. Walkers must not separate from the main party, go ahead of the Trip Leader or negotiate terrain more difficult than that chosen by the Trip Leader without the Trip Leader's express permission.
12. Walkers must constantly observe the walker behind them and stop if that walker requires assistance or is out of sight, a call of wait-up is to be called to the leader in this event. Walkers in front would then also call for the leader to wait-up and so on right to the leader). In the event of any delay, a message should be relayed to the Trip Leader.
13. Walkers must convey along the line of the party, information regarding any hazards such as loose/slippery rocks, dangerous plants or animals.
14. Walkers must not engage in any activity that is offensive to or endangers other walkers or members of the public. In particular, walkers must not playfully or idly throw objects and must not unnecessarily dislodge loose material. When there is a possibility of accidentally dislodging loose material, walkers should ensure that there are no walkers or members of the public directly below them and should warn anyone that could be endangered by the falling of the loose material. Walkers should call in a loud and clear voice **BELOW or ROCK** whenever they dislodge loose material.

15. Walkers must adhere to fire restrictions, and the lighting of fires is discouraged. We operate on a total fire ban on day walks. Only on some multi day hikes a fire is lit. Extreme care must be taken when lighting an open fire. The fire must be extinguished fully before leaving unattended.
16. Walkers must not collect bush products whether alive or not and must avoid disturbing or damaging the bush through which they are walking.
17. Some of the risks of activities include injury from slipping or falling in uneven, slippery, loose or steep terrain, injury such as cuts, impalement and eye injuries from sticks, branches and other objects, injuries from “nasties” such as stinging plants, stinging insects, poisonous animals (such as snakes) and aggressive animals (such as wild pigs), exposure caused by wet and/or cold conditions and exhaustion and dehydration caused by hot conditions and the physical effort required. Activities are usually conducted in areas remote from medical assistance. Walkers participate in activities at their own risk and must not attempt activities or terrain which they consider too difficult or too risky for themselves.
18. All members should be familiar with the Members’ Handbook.

Revised 06.2026



Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc

Duties of Trip Leaders

**A trip leader is to be appointed for each outing.
The duties of the trip leader shall be to:**

1. Obtain necessary permits beforehand.
2. Know the area to be walked, preferably through a recent reconnoitre except where all persons taking part have been made aware of the walk's exploratory nature by previous notification.
3. Ensure that a suitable First Aid Kit is carried on the trip.
4. Arrive at the assembly area at least 15 minutes before the advertised starting time.
5. Inform new walkers of outing rules before setting out and ensure that all persons intending to take part in the outing have proper equipment and clothing so as not to endanger or inconvenience either themselves or other persons taking part.
6. The Trip Leader has the power to refuse any individual the right to participate on a particular outing where he/she considers the individual unsuited or physically unfit.
7. Choose from the vehicles available the most suitable for the trip. Allocate persons to particular vehicles and familiarise driver with route and procedure to be taken.
8. Determine the course of the walk and the time of halts and departures.
9. Convey along the line of walkers the type and whereabouts of dangerous species and hazards of terrain always considering the safety of the party before all else.
10. Select campsites, paying particular attention to the hazards of fire, flooding and dead limbs. Inspect campsites before departure with special attention to fires and litter.
11. Report relevant incidents in writing to the Safety Secretary and/or committee members as soon as possible after the incident occurs.
12. Ensure that members pay due respect to his/her authority and that they observe rules regarding safety, conservation and general behaviour. Any serious misconduct or breaking of Outing Rules will be reported at the next monthly general meeting.
13. Check the party from time to time to see that they are all present. Arrangements will be made for a reliable person to act as "tail" where considered necessary.
14. Ensure that the party does not separate except with very good reason. Should two or more persons leave the main party, one of their number, shall be appointed as responsible for their safety and conduct.
15. In the case of emergency, consult all experienced members of the party, and if they consider it necessary, hand over control to the person best qualified to act in the situation. In cases involving delay or injury, arrange to inform the Contact Officer giving details of the delay and/or injury, the action taken, and any particular help that is needed.
16. Furnish a report to the Publicity Officer and/or Newsletter Editor as soon as possible after the outing.
17. Only in special circumstances shall an outing be cancelled or venue altered, and then only after consulting with experienced members of the party.
18. Be familiar with the requirements of the club's risk management policy, members' handbook and the leader's duty of care.

Every member is a potential trip leader.

All are encouraged to reconnoitre new areas and report to the club any possibilities for new walk.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

'000' POLICE, FIRE, AMBULANCE

'112' Alternate EMERGENCY Access - Utilises all Comms Satellites

'106' EMERGENCY Access - for mobile users with hearing/speech impairment

131126 POISONS Information Centre

Club President: _____

Club Contact Officer: _____