

ADVICE FOR PLANNING AND LEADING A BUSHWALK

PLANNING RESOURCES

- Your convenor has maps and records of past walks. Some of these can be regularly repeated by current members. Other walks may be available because they were led by members who have now retired.
- Local tourist offices usually have guides for a range of local walks and these are also available on-line.
- The websites of Parks Victoria www.parks.vic.gov.au and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) www.delwp.vic.gov.au have notes and maps of National and Regional Parks and State Forests.
- Maps are available on-line at www.land.vic.gov.au and <https://mapshare.vic.gov>
- Bendigo Regional Library has an extensive collection of bushwalking books
- Google Earth
- CFA's planned burns can be consulted to avoid areas to be burned and also areas which have been burned in recent years

RECONNAISSANCE

- If you are not familiar with an area or your familiarity with the walk is not recent, reconnaissance is a must. Take at least one person with you and your map and walk over the entire ground.
- Check features such as space for car parking, access tracks, toilets and locations for lunch
- If a car shuttle is needed, check access and parking.

NAVIGATION

- During the walk ensure you carry the map with you. Where on the map was that track junction you just passed? How far is it to the next feature you should see? Will you cross a creek first? Do the contours show hills or gullies on either side of you?
- You should carry a compass and use it to check that the track being walked is in the direction on your map. A mobile phone or iPad can also be used to check that you are walking in line with your map.
- Phone apps such as MapMyWalk can be used to track and map the entire walk, the distance of the walk and the time taken

GRADING YOUR WALK

Do this accurately enables people to self-assess whether they are fit enough to come on a walk. Walks should be graded **easy, medium or hard** using a combination of:

- distance
- surface (e.g., smooth, loose gravel, rocky uneven)
- topography (e.g., flat, undulating, hilly)
- where significant – ascent, descent (eg.300m ascent)

DURATION OF WALK

As a guide, excluding time for lunch) allow one hour for every:

- 4.0km on a smooth, flat track
- 3.0km on a rough undulating track

Add an extra hour for:

- 250m ascent
- 500m descent

SUMMER BUSHWALKS

Summer bushwalks are planned to mitigate the risks of bushwalking during hot weather including

- dehydration
- length of walk
- bushfire
- snake bite
- access to emergency services

LEADING THE BUSHWALKERS GROUP

- The minimum number for safety is four
- The leader is responsible for the whole group and if it is necessary for the group to split, a leader for each sub-group must be given detailed instructions.
- The leader should check that walkers have correct apparel and footwear and are carrying water and snacks.
- Check that convenors have the first-aid kits and walkie talkies.
- Leaders should regularly do a head count
- The leader should pause at track junctions and wait for other members of the group. This avoids wrong turns by those following. When walking off-track, the same rule applies and members should stay in sight of each other.
- Walkers should be instructed to stop at track junctions, walk on the **right-hand side** of the road where there is no footpath and cross major roads in small groups.
- The leader should announce regular breaks and give the tail-enders a chance to catch up. Have a “banana” break half way through the walk
- In the event of an accident/emergency, one person can stay with the injured person, whilst two go for help.

EMERGENCY

In case of a serious injury, it may be impractical to carry the injured person any distance. Use a mobile phone or a Personal Locator Beacon to call for assistance.

Note: For an emergency call on your mobile phone, first try 000 or if out of range, try 112 which will connect to any available service

If a Total Fire Ban of Code Red is declared or thunderstorms are forecast in the area of the proposed walk, then it will be cancelled or postponed. If you would still like to walk, then meet at the advertised meeting place and either the leader will have arranged an alternative or the members of the group can decide where to walk.

Authorisation:

This policy was adopted by Committee of Management of U3A Bendigo Incorporated, and minuted as such, on 4th October 2021.