

BUSH HIKERS

ADVICE FOR PLANNING AND LEADING A BUSHWALK

PLANNING RESOURCES

- Your convenor has maps and records of past walks which can either be repeated, or provide ideas for new walks.
- 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 advisable. Take at least one person with you and a good map of the area.
- 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

- You should use your map to familiarise yourself with the country. Take note of land forms and notable features.
- It is really only possible to navigate successfully using a map if you use it in combination with an orienteering compass. This must be an orienteering type that has a moveable bezel mounted on a base plate. The leading brands are Silva and Suunto. If you are unfamiliar with the use of these compasses, you might find someone in the group who would be able to assist you.
- An alternative to or, better still, in addition to, a compass is one of the many phone navigational apps that are now available. Reception can be a problem in the bush, so programs that access satellites directly are a distinct advantage. OziExplorer is one.

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 and descent

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

- 4km on a smooth, flat track
- 3km 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 and terrain
- bushfire
- snake bite
- access to emergency services

LEADING A BUSH WALKING 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. 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 fix regular breaks at intervals of no more than one hour, and give the tail-enders a chance to catch up.
- In the event of an accident/emergency, one person should stay with the injured person, whilst at least 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 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, it will be cancelled or postponed. If you would still like to walk, 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 in the urban area.