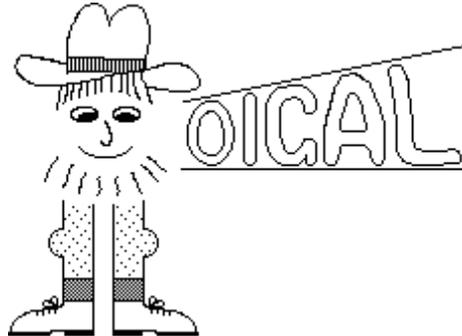


NEWCASTLE RAMBLERS BUSHWALKING CLUB INC



# *Bushwalking With The Ramblers*

Revised October 2015

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The Newcastle Ramblers Bushwalking Club, Inc is incorporated under the NSW Incorporated Associations Act. Membership applications and lots of other information are available at [www.newcastleramblers.org.au](http://www.newcastleramblers.org.au)

**Welcome:**

Firstly, a big welcome to the Newcastle Ramblers Bushwalking Club. We hope you will enjoy meeting new people, learning new skills, and being out in the wonderful natural places of our country.

Our Club seeks to promote bushwalking, camping and related recreational activities, increase the knowledge of members in the art of safe bushwalking, develop leadership skills, and foster an appreciation of our environmental and cultural heritage. While we are primarily a bushwalking Club, our members engage in a lot of other activities as befitting their interests and abilities. There are backpack walks, day walks, twilight walks and car camps as well as abseiling, canoeing and cycling. And it's not always in the bush, some trips are to big events or are extended trips to other countries.

We place a lot of emphasis on safety. All of our activities involve a combination of skills that are best learned by experience – and by being with experienced Leaders – and include planning and organisation, map reading, navigation, camping, bush cooking, being able to safely negotiate rough terrain or to travel safely in foreign places. Our experienced Leaders and members will help you learn the basics and encourage you to continue to learn and benefit from your experiences with the Club.

The Club is a voluntary organisation. If you decide to join the Ramblers we will welcome your active involvement so that others can benefit from the skills that you have undoubtedly gained over your own lifetime.

The Club has a library of maps, guides and books, and there is a limited amount of equipment available for loan, such as abseiling gear, some backpacks and Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs).

Our Club website [www.newcastleramblers.org.au](http://www.newcastleramblers.org.au) contains a lot of useful information for members. It has links to Club documents and forms, and the current program and draft programs, which enables you to view future activities up to a year in advance. There is access to past programs and newsletters and links to other websites which provide relevant information for bushwalkers.

**Risk Management:**

We take deliberate care to manage the risks of our activities. Over many years the Club has developed and documented a risk management plan to control and minimize those risks. The plan includes a walks grading system, skills training, training talks and some guidelines for leaders and members.

Upon joining the Club you will be required to sign a 'Risk Waiver Form' accepting responsibility for your own wellbeing and safety. You will also sign a risk acceptance statement prior to taking part in each activity.

Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult. They remain that person's responsibility during the activity, and a specific 'Risk Waiver Form' must also be signed.

The Club has personal accident and public liability insurance coverage through Bushwalking NSW (Inc), which covers financial members. Most of the Club's annual membership fee goes toward the cost of this insurance. Visitors and prospective members are also covered by the insurance policy for the first three walks. The conditions of the policies are available on request.

### **Walk Grading System:**

All walking trips have a grade of difficulty represented by three numbers: The **terrain**, the **distance** and the **altitude gain**. It will appear as something like **G3/12km/200m**.

The terrain is represented by a grade number:

- Grade 1 (G1)      On tracks or roads, mostly flat.
  - Grade 2 (G2)      Mostly on tracks, low gradient, relatively flat terrain.
  - Grade 3 (G3)      Mostly on tracks, some hilly sections/rougher terrain.
  - Grade 4 (G4)      Steeper, rougher terrain; may be off track.
  - Grade 5 (G5)      Mostly off track; difficult terrain.
  - Grade 6 (G6)      Strenuous off track walks.
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- The distance is the number of kilometres to be covered.
  - The altitude gain is meant to indicate how much 'uphill' there will be. This is the total of all the separate climbs in the walk.

### **Taking Responsibility:**

Please understand that with all activities you undertake with the Newcastle Ramblers you must take responsibility for yourself. Please read and understand the waiver/assumption of risk form that you will be asked to sign before each activity. Consult with the Leader if you have any doubts.

Leaders go to a lot of effort to plan and implement an activity for the group and your enjoyment. Please respect these efforts and comply with the Leader's requests. Leaders should not have to worry about individuals in the group not taking responsibility for themselves.

You should check the description and grading of the activity to confirm that it is within your capability. Other aspects of taking responsibility would include being on time, carrying your own First Aid kit, having suitable shoes/boots and clothing, carrying sufficient water and food, staying with the group by not lagging behind or racing ahead.

Our Leaders are volunteers and do so because they love walking – so please be patient and treat them kindly, and express your appreciation at the end of the activity.

### **Communications:**

The main forum for communications is the Club Meeting Nights held on the first and third Monday of each month (except public holidays and the first Monday in January) at the Uniting Church Hall, 24 Milson Street, Charlestown. Meetings commence at 7:30 pm with general business, followed by reports on past activities and information about forthcoming activities, a short training talk, and may include a guest speaker, member's photos, or equipment nights. Supper and a chat round off the evening.

**Club nights are important to find out about the wonderful places that the Ramblers go to, the adventure, the excitement and the sense of achievement at the end of a trip.**

### **Email:**

Email is an essential way for us to remain in touch between meetings and is the means by which the Club distributes the Program and Newsletter, and notifies members of new or changed activities in the Program. If you do not provide your email address you will miss out on being kept up to date on aspects of the Club's activities.

You are encouraged to make direct contact with any of the Club's committee members or nominated leaders for information, particularly if you may not be certain an activity is suitable for you.

The Club's email address is [newcastle.ramblers@gmail.com](mailto:newcastle.ramblers@gmail.com)

### **Before a Walk or Activity:**

Always let a Leader know in advance (preferable at least a week) that you wish to participate in an activity. You can do this by signing on to the Activity Planning Sheet at a Club meeting, or by contacting the nominated Leader directly by telephone. Always let the Leader know if you change your mind or you can't make it. This has implications for the planning of the activity and is also a courtesy thing. Also don't just turn up – you could be disappointed. The nominated time for the activity is the actual departure time so be punctual and ready to go or you could get left behind.

The Leader takes on the responsibility for organising and leading the activity.

Leaders have the right to refuse to take you on an activity if you don't have the right clothing, equipment, food and water. You may also be refused if the Leader feels your fitness or ability will not allow you to complete the activity safely or might unduly hold up the rest of the group. If you have any doubt please speak with the Leader beforehand.

If you suffer from a medical condition which could become an issue during an activity, please let the Leader know, discretely.

If you have to leave an activity early or before it ends make sure the Leader knows.

### **Contact Person:**

Sometimes groups can be delayed. For major walks or trips a Leader might decide to nominate a contact person to keep track of the activity and to check that the group returns safely at about the appointed time. The contact person will have details of the activity, the contingency plans, and who is on the activity. If you let someone know that you are out on a Club activity, tell them also who the contact person is (if known to you) and their contact details, or alternatively let them know that they can telephone any Club Committee member if they have any concerns.

A list of Committee members and contact telephone numbers are on the top of the Club Program, and are also on the Club's website.

### **Car Convoys and Shared Travel:**

Car convoys and shared travel are arranged to reduce the numbers of vehicles involved in activities. It also provides an opportunity for company and social interaction on the sometimes long drives to and from a walk. Drive at a sensible speed, with headlights on, keeping an eye on the car behind. Pause at turn offs to make sure all vehicles stay together. It is important to have a general idea where you are heading and to carry a mobile phone for contact with the Leader if you get separated.

At the end of the walk, before leaving make sure all vehicles have started and are able to move off. It is not good if your car won't start, everybody else has disappeared and you are left alone in the bush.

Petrol and other costs such as park entry fees, etc should be shared between the driver and passengers. There is no hard and fast rule for this but be fair and generous as the car owner is bearing the cost of providing the vehicle.

### **On the Walk:**

To keep a group together, the group will travel at the pace of the slowest walker.

Those up in front should keep the rest of the group in sight and pause if necessary to let the rest catch up and have a breather before moving on. **Always stop** at a turn off along a track to make sure every one knows which way to proceed.

With larger groups Leaders might appoint a Tail End Charlie to bring up the rear. If you need to stop (for a call of nature or to take a photograph) let the Leader or Tail End Charlie know.

If you are separated from the group — **Stop Where You Are** — as soon as you realise that you are misplaced and wait. Remember your group will come looking for you. Get your safety whistle out and give it three blasts (and repeat) – this is a signal for distress.

Please don't leave any litter about, carry it all out including fruit peelings. Bury toilet waste.

We are out to enjoy our natural surroundings so please leave behind or turn off the modern day intrusions - mobile phones and I-pods, etc. Others will want to enjoy the quiet and seclusion of the bushland, so please respect this.

Swim and wash downstream from where drinking water is collected, and please don't allow soap and detergents to enter a stream.

Please don't walk upon Aboriginal engravings or touch or mark cave paintings.

### **First Aid/Emergency Kit:**

Members should carry their own first aid kit/emergency kit on all activities – don't rely on others to provide first aid items for you. You are encouraged to obtain first aid qualifications for yourself, and the Club arranges regular opportunities for this to occur.

A first aid kit which is not too big and which would be able to provide for most eventualities in the bush is suggested below:

Emergency Blanket

1x 'Snake Bite' Compression Bandage and a Triangular Bandage

2x Sterile Dressings (10cmx10cm) and a 10cm Crepe Bandage

Scissors, tweezers and several Band Aids

Small roll of Sticking Plaster to treat blisters or fix things

Re-hydration tablets (eg 'Gastrolyte')

Panadol tablets

Water purifying tablets (eg 'Aquatabs')

Matches, in a waterproof container

Personal items that you may need.

A kit of this nature should weigh about 400-500gm. Stow it near the top of your pack – and hope that it will never be used!

An emergency contact medical information form has been developed. A copy is in the back of this booklet. You are encouraged to fill it in and have it in your kit should an emergency occur that involves you.

### Preparation for a Day Walk:

There are a number of basic items required for bushwalking, which will contribute to comfort and safety. For a day walk the following should be considered, with some walks requiring more items and others less. Again please discuss your needs with the Leader until you develop your own list.

- **A small day pack** of about 35 litres capacity is the most convenient for walking. Since few packs are completely waterproof, things that might be damaged if they get wet should always be protected in plastic bags inside the pack.
- Wear **sensible clothing** – old clothes and items you will not mind getting dirty or damaged. Shorts or long pants are good but don't wear denim jeans (they are terrible when wet). Put something warm in your pack in case it turns cold, or you are delayed into the night. Several thin layers are better than a single heavy garment. In very cold conditions gloves and a beanie may be necessary.
- **Raincoat** as rain is always a possibility, even on the finest of mornings. A raincoat is light and can be folded into a small bundle in your pack. Rainwear is also useful for keeping out the cold.
- **Footwear and gaiters.** Good, well fitting, footwear is important. Boots or shoes, must be sturdy enough to provide support and protection and comfortable to allow you to enjoy the walk. Don't try walking in new shoes until you are sure they won't cause you discomfort. Good socks are also essential – some people wear two pairs. Sock protectors or gaiters keep those annoying grass seeds from sticking to your socks or loose soil from getting into your boots. Gaiters give a measure of protection to your legs if you walk in shorts. Remember if you feel any discomfort to your feet when walking don't feel bad about asking the Leader to stop immediately while you sort the problem out. Don't let it deteriorate into something really painful.
- **Sun protection.** Sun exposure is a major risk while bushwalking. Sunscreen lotion or cream is essential, as is a broad brimmed hat, and wearing a long sleeved shirt.
- **Map and compass**, and don't forget your **camera** – you might just capture that award winning shot for the photo competition.

### Carry your own Personal and Emergency Supplies

A **whistle** is handy for attracting attention and a small **torch** in case it gets dark. Carry at least **1 litre of water** in a strong plastic or metal bottle for a day walk. You will need a lot more (up to 1 litre an hour) in very hot or strenuous conditions. You may like to have a **change of clothes** and towel in the car for the end of the walk.

**Food** of course is needed on the walk. We usually stop after about 2 hours of walking, say 10am, for morning tea such as a muesli bar, fruit, dried fruit; and then for lunch about 12.30pm, for example sandwiches, Vitaweats, fruit – even boil the billy. After a few walks you will develop your own ideas about what you need to take.

**Longer Walks and Backpacking:**

Overnight walks and longer walks require more planning and more equipment. When you are ready, do try an overnight walk – these are great experiences and really fun. Start talking to more experienced members who will just love to share their knowledge and help you get started or guide you through more challenging adventures.

**Additional Calendar Events:**

During each year the Club holds its Annual General Meeting in March, an auction of bushwalking gear in June, and an annual photo competition for the Garry Scully Memorial Trophy in November.

The Newcastle Ramblers support this Bushwalkers Code,  
Published by Bushwalking NSW Inc.

### **Bushwalking Code of Practice:**

Do not disturb our bushland. If you enjoy the pleasures of bushwalking and related self-reliant outdoor activities, you have a big responsibility to protect and preserve the natural landscape for the enjoyment of future generations. This guide will help you enjoy the bush without leaving your mark.

#### **Be self reliant:**

Enjoy the natural landscape as it is, on nature's terms. Carry with you the things you need for your comfort and safety.

For shelter, carry a lightweight tent or flysheet, or use a cave or rock overhang. Avoid huts except when weather conditions are really bad, but be prepared to share the hut.

Do not camp in an overhang with Indigenous rock art, as the art can be damaged by dust, smoke and fumes (See also 'Respect Indigenous Heritage')

#### **Tread softly:**

Keep walking parties small in number; four to six people is ideal.

Avoid popular areas in holiday periods when campsites are crowded.

Use existing tracks; don't create new ones. On zigzag paths, don't cut corners as this creates unsightly damage that leads to erosion.

In trackless country, spread your party out; don't walk in one another's footsteps. Avoid easily damaged places such as peat bogs, cushion moss, swamps and fragile rock formations. Wade through waterlogged sections of tracks; don't create a skein of new tracks around them. Except in really rough terrain, wear lightweight, soft-soled walking shoes or joggers rather than heavy boots.

Become proficient at bush navigation. If you need to build cairns, blaze trees, place tags, break off twigs, or tie knots in clumps of grass to mark your route, you are lacking in bush navigation skills. Placing signposts and permanent markers of any kind is the responsibility of the relevant land manager (such as the NPWS).

#### **Watch your safety:**

Know what to do in emergencies. Rescue operations often cause serious damage, so take care to avoid the need for rescue.

Be properly trained in First Aid so you know how to handle illness and injuries.

Carry clothing and equipment to suit the worst possible conditions you are likely to encounter.

Carry a mobile phone if you want to, but use it only for summoning aid in an emergency. Keep it switched off until needed.

**Pack it in, pack it out:**

Don't carry glass bottles and jars, cans, drink cartons lined with aluminium foil and excess packaging. If you can't resist carrying such things, don't leave them in the bush. Remember, if you can carry a full container in, you can easily carry the empty one out.

Remove all your rubbish including food scraps, paper, plastic, aluminium foil and empty containers. Don't burn or bury rubbish. Burning creates pollution and buried rubbish may be dug up and scattered by animals.

Digging also disturbs the soil, causing erosion and encouraging weeds.

Carry a plastic bag for your rubbish. If you find litter left by irresponsible people along the track or around a campsite, please remove it. Show that you care for the environment.

When walking in scrubby country, do not strap closed-cell sleep mats or items in plastic bags outside your pack. The bush will be littered with pieces of foam and plastic.

**Be hygienic:**

Ensure you are at least 50 metres from campsites, creeks and lakes, when going to the toilet. Wait until you get out of sensitive areas such as caves and canyons before defecating or urinating.

Bury all faeces and toilet paper at least 15cm deep. In snow, dig through the snow first, then dig a hole in the ground.

Carry out things that won't easily decompose, such as used tampons, sanitary pads and condoms.

Carry a lightweight plastic trowel or a large aluminium tent peg to make digging easier.

**Keep water pure:**

Wash cooking and eating utensils well back from the edge of lakes and creeks so waste water falls on soil where it will be absorbed.

Prevent soap, detergent or toothpaste from getting into natural water systems. Similarly, when washing cooking utensils, don't use detergent and don't let oils and food scraps get into creeks or lakes.

Always swim downstream from where you get your drinking water.

**Be VERY careful with fire:**

Have a fire only when you are absolutely certain you can light it with safety. A fuel stove is preferable for cooking and thermal clothing is better for warmth.

Always use a fuel stove in places where even a tiny fire may cause permanent damage. Places where fire lighting should be avoided include many rainforest and all alpine regions.

**Do not light fires:**

- In hot, summer conditions
- In dry windy weather
- In declared 'fuel stove only' areas
- When there is a declared fire ban.

***Always remember-***

Fire doesn't destroy aluminium foil, and plastics release toxic gases when burnt. So carry foil and plastics out in your pack with all your other rubbish, including food scraps. Don't use your campfire as a rubbish incinerator.

***If you light a campfire, follow these rules-***

In popular campsites, light your fire on a bare patch left by previous fires. Don't light it on fresh ground.

Light your fire on bare soil or sand, well away from stumps, logs, living plants and river stones (which may explode when heated).

Definitely **don't** build a ring of stones as a fireplace. This is unnecessary and unsightly. Dismantle stone rings wherever you find them.

Sweep away all leaves, grass and other flammable material for at least two metres around your fireplace. (Major bushfires have been caused by careless campers who didn't take this precaution.)

Burn only dead wood that's fallen to the ground. Don't break limbs from trees or shrubs.

Keep your fire small - remember, the bigger the fool, the bigger the fire.

***Before you leave-***

Douse your fire thoroughly with water, even if it appears to be already out. Don't try to smother a fire by covering it with soil or sand as the coals will continue to smoulder for days.

Only water kills a fire with total certainty.

Feel the ground under the coals. If it is too hot to touch, the fire is not out. Douse it some more.

Scatter the cold charcoal and ashes well clear of your campsite, then rake soil and leaves over the spot where your fire was. You should aim to remove all trace of it.

**Choose campsites carefully:**

Think twice about using a popular campsite to avoid overuse. If possible, vary your route slightly so you can find an alternative site in a less frequented area.

Find an open space to erect your tent so it is unnecessary to clear vegetation. In difficult overgrown areas, trample undergrowth flat rather than pull plants out of the ground. A trampled spot soon recovers.

Use a waterproof groundsheet or tent with a sewn-in floor and you won't have to worry about surface runoff in wet weather. Avoid the temptation to dig drains around your tent. This practice damages the environment and is not acceptable

If you have to remove branches or rocks to create a tent site, replace them before you leave.

Leave your campsite pristine. After a few days it should be impossible to see where you were camped.

**Protect plants and animals:**

Try not to disturb wildlife. Remember, you are the trespasser.

Give snakes a wide berth and leave them alone. They have more right to be there than you do.

Watch where you put your feet. Walk around delicate plants.

Don't feed birds and animals around campsites or they may become pests. Unnatural food can be harmful to many species.

**Respect Indigenous heritage:**

Many places have spiritual or cultural significance for our Indigenous communities. Treat such places with consideration and respect.

Obtain permission from traditional landowners or the relevant land manager to visit sensitive areas.

Leave Indigenous relics as you find them. Don't touch paintings or rock engravings.

**Be courteous to others:**

The sound of radios, CD players, mobile phones and similar devices is out of place in the natural environment. Leave the electronics at home. (See note under Safety concerning the acceptable use of mobile phones.)

Ensure your behaviour and activities don't disturb or offend others.

Camp as far away from other groups as conditions allow. Don't use another group's campfire without permission.

Leave gates and slip rails as you find them. When you open a gate, make sure the last person through knows it has to be closed.

Respect the rights of landholders and land managers. Don't enter private property without permission. In national parks, abide by plans of management and encourage others to do so too.

**When in camp:**

Do your share of getting firewood and water. When breaking camp, help to remove the remains of your fire (if you had one) and clean up the site.

Don't throw rubbish on a fire where people are cooking. In fact, don't throw rubbish on a fire at all; carry it out with you. (See section: Pack it in Pack it Out.)

Don't step over other people's uncovered food.

Offer what is required to help others in need. This could be your leader, who may be carrying group safety items, someone in the group who has injured themselves, or forgotten their billy, or another group who may not have communications to summon emergency medical aid.

Recognise that some individuals may need your help but will never ask for it. Volunteer it.

## **Club Guidelines:**

The Club's Management Committee has issued some guidelines on what members should do in certain circumstances. Some of these cover:

### **Leaders and Participants**

#### **Use of Contact Person**

#### **Use of Personal Locator Beacon**

#### **Participant Becomes Separated from the Group**

#### **Emergency Response**

The guidelines can also be accessed from the Club website.

### **Club Guideline — Leaders and Participants**

What is the role of the Leader and what are the responsibilities of Participants?

#### **Leaders:**

The Leader devises and plans the activity and proposes its grading for inclusion in the Club program.

The Leader in his or her discretion may limit the number of persons on an activity and may decline to accept a person as a participant.

The Leader will, before the activity commences, go through the Risk Assessment checklist with all the participants.

The Leader has the right to decline a person participation in an activity (or if it is a multi phase activity, in part of it) if the Leader

- Has concerns about the person's capacity to complete the activity safely, harmoniously and in a timely manner, or
- Is of the opinion that the person's involvement will compromise the group's capacity to complete the activity in a safe and timely manner.

#### **Participants:**

Anyone wishing to be a Participant in an activity must record their name on the Walks/Activity Sheet at a Club meeting or contact the Leader well in advance to record their wish to participate. If they subsequently decide that they cannot participate, they must notify the Leader promptly.

Participants must meet at the designated assembly place and be ready to depart on the activity at the time nominated by the Leader for departure.

Participants are responsible for ensuring that they understand the nature of the activity and its risks, have the necessary equipment, first aid kit and provisions and that on the day are physically fit for the grading of the activity. They must bring with them any medications, such as puffers, that they might need.

Participants must inform the Leader if they have any medical conditions, phobias, disabilities or impairments that could affect their capacity to participate or affect the Group's timely completion of the activity. This may be done by private communication with the Leader before the activity commences.

**General:**

Participants must follow the instructions of the Leader. They must not leave the activity prematurely without the Leader's knowledge and agreement.

The Leader and all participants are to be treated in a polite and courteous manner. Abuse, threats or harassment are not acceptable.

If a Participant fails to comply with a reasonable instruction from the Leader, is disruptive, abusive, threatening or offensive, or persistently and willfully acts in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the Club, upon report by the Leader, action may be taken by the Club Management Committee to counsel the person, censure the person, or initiate action under the discipline provisions of the Club Constitution.

**Club Guideline — Use of a Contact Person**

On some walks and activities a Leader may decide to nominate an experienced member as the 'home base' contact person. Members also have their own contact person. It is possible a group may take longer than expected to return due to weather conditions, injury, difficult terrain, or unforeseen circumstances.

If a group is in fact delayed **it is essential that it is noted missing.**

The reverse may also occur: it is possible that during a trip, the group, or an individual in the group, may need to be contacted because of an urgent personal emergency.

To deal with these contingencies there are two sorts of Contact Persons:

To deal with identified risks the Club has developed safeguards and designated the following contact persons:

- **Member's Emergency Contact Person** – This is usually a friend or relative and is the person(s) nominated by a member on the membership form when joining or renewing membership.
- **Leader's Trip Contact Person** – When nominated, this is usually an experienced Club member, not on the activity, who is informed of the group's participants, where they are going, their equipment and resources.

Documentation and records of activities which are referred to in guidelines may include:

- **Walks Intention Form** – This form is normally filled in at a Club meeting by participants intending to join a future activity. It contains information of the activity, meeting places and times, vehicle registration numbers and participants' contact phone number. The leader takes this form with them on the activity.
- **Sign On/Waiver Form** – Participants sign a waiver form for the activity immediately before the activity commences and after a risk assessment has been conducted by the leader, to confirm their acceptance of risks inherent in bushwalking and any specifically identified for that activity. [This form contains the emergency contact person and their telephone number. The leader takes this form with them on the activity.](#)
- **Risk Assessment and Incident Report Form** – This form provides a checklist for the Leader to conduct a risk review prior to an activity commencing. At the end of the activity the Leader is required to document any incident, injury or near miss which may have occurred during the activity.

**Leader:**

For any overnight, extended or remote activity where telephone communication is not available a Leader is required to nominate a **Trip Contact Person** who should have a good knowledge of the activity and appropriate contingency and overdue actions. In some remote situations this may be a government officer, such as a local National Parks officer, visitors centre, trail logbook or Police station. In the case of remote area walks the Trip Contact Person should be an experienced bushwalker, not just a non-bushwalking relative or friend.

- The nomination of a Trip Contact Person is optional for trips like twilight walks, bike rides etc where mobile phone reception is available.
- The Leader should notify the Trip Contact Person when the walk has been completed.
- In the case of trips where long driving is involved, the Leader should check that all participants have arrived home safely.
- For any overnight, extended or remote walking trip a Leader should email trip and Trip Contact Person details to the Committee email address [newcastle.ramblers@gmail.com](mailto:newcastle.ramblers@gmail.com) in order to provide the committee with information in addition to that contained on the Club activities program.
- The Leader should advise the name and contact details of the Trip Contact Person and other information to the PLB officer (if a PLB is carried) at least 24 hours before the trip.

**Participants:**

- Participants should leave details of the Trip Contact Person (if known) and Club Committee members as shown on the top of the Club activity program, with their Emergency Contact Person.
- Participants should make their Emergency Contact Person aware of Club guidelines in the event of a walking group becoming overdue, and that it is not uncommon for a Club activity to return later than that estimated by the Leader.
- Should an Emergency Contact Person become concerned about a participant on a Club activity, they should contact the Trip Contact Person (if known) or one of the Club Committee (refer to names on the top of the Club program) to discuss their concern and seek further advice.

**Leader's Trip Contact Person:**

- If it appears that a Group is overdue, attempt to contact the Leader or other members of the Group to check if they have returned, but omitted to report in. If that fails, contact one of the Club Officers, (refer to names on the top of the Club Program) to discuss and seek further advice.

<p><b>Club Guideline – Use of Personal Locator Beacon</b></p>
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**Appointed PLB Officer:**

The responsibilities of the PLB Officers include:

- Supervise the maintenance and use of the Club PLB's.
- Maintain/Update the Club's contact details with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).
- Enter activity details with AMSA when requested by an activity Leader.
- Respond in accordance with the Club's Emergency or Overdue Guidelines if AMSA or the Police make contact in the event that a Club or personal PLB is activated.

**Activity Leader:**

It is recommended that Leaders carry a Club or private PLB on all Club activities undertaken on extended/exploratory backpacks and in more remote locations where telephone communication will not be available, and that specific details of the activity are entered by the PLB Officer or Owner to the AMSA webpage. This information to AMSA to immediately confirm that activation is genuine and provides the rescue people a good idea of the situation.

**Private Owners of PLB's used on Club Activities:**

Private owners of PLB's should ensure that their PLB is registered. It is illegal to activate an unregistered PLB. PLB's purchased outside Australia CANNOT be registered with AMSA. When registering a PLB owners should include contact details for the Club PLB Officer or an emergency contact who is familiar with Club guidelines and able to inform the Club Committee of an emergency.

**Club Guideline – Participant Becomes Separated from the Group**

It has happened that a person on a walk has become separated from the group. If this was you, what should you do?

The responsibilities of the Leader and Participants are from before and during the walk or activity.

**Leader:**

Where groups are larger than 12 persons the Leader should nominate a deputy leader and/or 'Tail End Charlie' to bring up the rear of a party. The 'Tail End Charlie' should always be the last person in the group, or have the last person in sight at all times.

The Risk Assessment conducted prior to the activity commencing should state the need to stay together. The Sign-on Sheet should be filled in completely to include participants' mobile telephone numbers and the number plate details of those vehicles used in the activity or to get to the meeting point for the activity.

Do not allow the group to string out or have faster walkers in advance without your knowledge.

Give instructions for participants to wait at the next intersection or land mark.

The group should generally walk at the pace of the slowest walker, and pause frequently enough to allow slower walkers to catch up and have a rest if necessary.

Where there is a change in direction or alternate route, check that all participants are on the right track.

**Participants:**

Keep in sight of the person in front and behind. Do not proceed in advance of the Leader without the Leader's knowledge and do not proceed past any track intersection without first checking with the Leader. Wait for the group to catch up.

Do not allow yourself to get too far behind the group through photography or other activities. Tell the Leader or someone if you are going to get behind for toileting or any other reason.

Take note of people telling you that they are going to fall behind the group.

In addition to a first aid kit, participants are encouraged to carry a mobile telephone, pen and paper, and to make a note of the Leader's phone contact details.

Make sure your personal Contact Person is aware that there are Overdue Guidelines and knows how to contact Club Officers.

**If someone does become separated from the Group:**

**Leader:**

Return to the location where the participant was last seen. Attract attention by calling out, or by blowing your whistle (three times) and listen for a response. Look for signs from the missing person, e.g., paper notes, cairns, arrows or words on the ground.

In searching from that location there may be a number of options depending on the group, its size, experience and capability. You may decide to split the group, give explicit instructions and achieve a greater search coverage.

The duration of the search should be at least one hour. Consider leaving some of the group at the search location and send part of the group for help.

If the participant has not been located after an hour, it is possible that he or she has decided to find their own way out. On the other hand the participant may be injured and unable to respond to calls.

Consider lighting a fire to serve as a beacon for the lost walker.

Above all, have regard for the safety of the group. When all reasonable efforts have been made to find the missing person, the group should return to cars/transport, and initiate the Emergency Response Procedure.

**Participant:**

Return to the location where the group was last seen if that is possible, otherwise stay put in a safe location, and **stay calm**. Turn your mobile phone on. Otherwise, do not walk around, wait for the group to return and find you.

**Be aware that if you move on, you may be going in the wrong direction and move out of the initial search area, making it much longer and harder to locate you.** Attract attention by calling out or by blowing your whistle (three times) and listen for a response. Try using your mobile telephone to contact a member of the group.

If after a reasonable time, or by dusk, you have not been located, you may have to make yourself comfortable and prepare for a longer wait. You may have to light a fire and prepare to stay the night. You may even have to get some form of shelter or set up a camp if your wait is long, towards nightfall or in bad weather.

The next morning, if you have a map and compass and are confident you can find your own way out, leave prominent trail marks for searchers to follow (paper with a stone on it, cairns, arrows etc).

If you do find your own way out, make sure that you contact the Leader, or other Club officer or the local Police station as soon as possible and tell them you are safe

**Club Guideline – Emergency Response**

It is possible that during the course of a Club activity there could be a serious emergency. A member of the group could become separated from the group, fall seriously ill, suffer severe injury or die. A group may discover a deceased person or come across evidence of an illegal activity. These events could become the subject of a police investigation and media attention.

They could also be the subject of formal enquiry and litigation involving the Leader, other members of the group, and the Club.

**Leader (or alternate):**

Notify the Leader's Contact Person for the walk or activity. If unable to do this, and the matter is serious, the Leader should contact one of the other Club office bearers, or the Police. At the first available opportunity or progressively, document what has occurred.

Carry out any other responsibilities as advised by the contact person.

In the situation where a body is found or there is evidence of an illegal activity, do not disturb the site in any way and avoid any person at or near the site. Record details of the location, photograph the site, and report to the Police as soon as possible. Also brief the Club's President as soon as practicable.

**Club Emergency Contact (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer):**

Inform all available Club Committee members and discuss the circumstances. Access Club records and ascertain the personal contact details of any members involved.

Brief the member's personal contact person and arrange assistance and support as required. Depending on the circumstances the Police may be better able to carry this out.

Document details of the emergency and the actions that have been taken. Nominate a spokesperson for the emergency event, normally the Club President. Refer all media enquiries to that spokesperson.

Provide assistance to other members of the activity group. This may include counseling and debriefing.

If a member of the Club is involved, advise the Club insurance broker and Bushwalking NSW, and seek further advice.

**Club Members:**

Refer all media and other inquiries to the nominated Club spokesperson. Refrain from speculation and do not make media statements. Assist as requested by the Club Emergency Contact or Police

**Club Spokesperson:**

Be available to make a statement of facts only. Do not speculate about cause or liability. If the situation is being investigated and the details are unclear at the time, say so.

Offer to provide details when they become available. Take advice from the Police in these matters.

Do not lie or cover up. The true facts will eventually emerge through police inquiries or coronial inquest. This could take some time.

**Contact Information:**

The Club Officers are listed on the Club Program and on the website [www.newcastleramblers.org.au](http://www.newcastleramblers.org.au) and should be contacted in relation to this Guideline.

You may contact Newcastle Police 02 4929 0999 or 000 in the case of an emergency.

The Bushwalking NSW Inc. Wilderness Rescue Service may be able to provide advice and assist in any search efforts. Contact mobile for emergencies only 0427455897. For up to date contact details go to the website [www.bwrs.org.au](http://www.bwrs.org.au) .

**EMERGENCY CONTACT MEDICAL INFORMATION**

This form follows the risk management guidelines of Bushwalking Australia. It is suggested that you carry it in your first aid kit in a cliplock plastic envelope in case it is needed in an emergency. Review and update the details if there is a change in your health status.

**Your Details:**

Your Name: .....  
Home Address: .....  
.....Postcode: .....  
Telephone: Home: ..... Mobile: .....

**Medical Information:**

Have you any medical conditions? .....  
.....  
Are you taking any current medications? .....  
Do you have any allergies? .....  
Do you have current immunization against tetanus? Yes/No  
Medicare Number. ....  
Private Health Insurance Fund Name: .....  
Ambulance Subscriber: Yes/No

**Your Doctor:**

Name: .....  
Practice Address: .....  
Telephone: .....

**Your Emergency Contact:**

Contact's Name: .....  
Contact's Home Address: .....  
..... Postcode: .....  
Telephone: Home: ..... Mobile: .....  
Relationship to you: .....

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....