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CLUB PROTOCOLS AND GUIDELINES

Essendon Bushwalking Club

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Preamble

This document constitutes the By-Laws for the Essendon Bushwalking Club Incorporated as provided for by Part 7 of the Rules of Association.

1. Membership

Membership is conditional upon:

- (a) Completing three Club program day walks or two Club program weekend walks, necessitating overnight camping or two Club program day walks and one Club program weekend walk within a 12 month period.
- (b) Approval by the Committee.
- (c) Payment of the prescribed membership fee within twenty-eight days. Only one reminder will be sent if payment is not received within the 28 day request for payment. If payment is not received after the second request the application is rejected. (*See Rules of Association, Part 3.*)

2. Life membership

See Rules of Association, Part 3 – Members, Disciplinary Procedures and Grievances, Rule 1. Full Member, Paragraph I.

3. Temporary members and non-financial members

All temporary and non-financial members will be charged a small fee for each walk they attend – including children below the age of 18 who are not Junior members of the Club.

Temporary members/visitors are expected to join the Club after the completion of the Club requirements relating to the completion of the three qualifying walks within a twelve-month period. (*See Rules of Association, Part 7 – General Matter, Rule 3. Visitors.*)

Note: To avoid visitors enjoying NQE events without the intention

of joining the Club, temporary members/visitors may only attend 1 NQE activity and 2 NQE walks graded E before applying for membership.

Upon completion of the three walks and submission of the Membership Form with fee to the Secretary a pending member may participate in Club activities without having to pay the visitors fee whilst the Committee is processing their application, however they still need to complete the “Acknowledgement of Risk” form until their membership is approved.

4. Non qualifying events (NQE)

Participating in an NQE is not part of the qualifying walks entry for membership into the Club.

Walks Graded Easy (E) – NQE

All walks of less than 10 km and graded E are defined as NQE for the purpose of entry to membership. Visitors may attend up to two NQE walks during the qualifying period for membership. They must pay the visitors fee and complete the “Acknowledgement of Risk Form” prior to the event.

Social NQE – e.g. Restaurant Nights/ Movie Nights/ Theatre

A financial member can bring a spouse, partner or friend along to a social NQE event. However, a visitor to the Club may attend a Social NQE event only once prior to joining the Club.

Activity NQE – e.g. Bike Ride, Canoeing, Skiing

A visitor to the Club may attend an Activity NQE only once during the qualifying period for membership. They must pay the visitors fee and complete the “Acknowledgement of Risk Form” prior to the event.

5. Travelling and travel costs

A car-pooling fee is charged to passengers attending walks in vehicles used on Club activities. The leader of the walk determines the cost to passengers as per current car-pooling fee. However, an individual driver may lower the fee if they wish. The fee may not be raised above designated fee.

Extra fees may be included if applicable for entry, parking or e-tag costs where applicable.

Organise efficient sharing of vehicles, for safety remember to break a long journey, particularly on the way home after a strenuous walk. When parking in a bush area for the start /finish of a walk, or when carrying out a car shuffle for non-circuit walks, no car driver or car should be left on their own at the finish. At least the two last cars/drivers should leave together in case of failure to start a car or similar problem.

6. Booking on a walk

Participants normally book their intention to do a walk by logging into the Club's website and registering online prior to the walk. If you do not have access to the internet, you may book by phoning the leader. It is a requirement that participants confirm with the leader that they will or will not be attending the walk at least three days prior to the departure date.

Note: All leaders have a duty of care to ensure the safety of all participants and may refuse to take any person on any activity if a leader considers that the person or the person's equipment is not fit or not suitable for the activity or emergency contact details have not been provided.

7. Health condition or disability

Participants have a duty of care to inform the leader in advance of any condition or disability that may affect their ability to participate safely in the activity. This discussion is confidential.

The Club strongly recommends ambulance membership to all walkers.

In the interest of the health and safety of all members, we require all members and visitors to be fully vaccinated against COVID19 (or hold a valid medical exemption) in order to participate in any Club activity.

The Committee endorses the right of leaders and Club officials to seek proof of vaccination in order to participate in any Club activity.

8. Departure points

Unless otherwise advised, all Saturday and Sunday activities leave at 8.00 a.m. from the car park opposite the Moonee Ponds Bowling Club in Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds (Melways Map 28 H6). For all other activities the leader will advise departure points.

9. Children

Children below the age of 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Responsible adults are responsible for the behaviour and safety of children in their care. Responsible adults must inform the leader in advance if they wish to bring children on certain activities. It is at the leader's discretion to accept or reject children on their walk. Children who are not Junior members of the Club, must pay a visitor's fee.

Visitors may not bring children.

Leaders who promote activities on the Club Program that are targeted at children, must have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC). Leaders are otherwise encouraged to have a current WWCC. The Club Committee will monitor Victorian Government requirements for WWCC.

10. Pets

Outside of the Melbourne metropolitan area members or visitors are not permitted to bring pets on any club activity. Exceptions apply to assistance animals.

11. Leaders

Only members with training and experience acceptable to the Committee can lead walks and submit walks to the Club program.

12. Grade definitions

The following definitions are a guide only and are referenced against the abilities of fit experienced walkers. A grade can be a combination of any individual factors listed.

Easy

Suitable for beginners. Mostly on formed tracks. Gentle, undulating terrain.

Medium

Suitable for fit and more experienced walkers. Some sustained climbs, some scrub bashing, some rock scrambling.

Hard

For fit, experienced walkers. Long steep climbs, heavy scrub bashing, hard rock scrambling.

Weather conditions on the day can also affect the walk grading.

13. Minimum number on a walk

Whilst small numbers are easier to manage a minimum of four walkers is recommended for safety. In an emergency requiring external assistance, one member can care for the injured person whilst two members walk out safely to raise the alarm.

14. Keeping the group together

With larger groups it is advisable that responsibility for keeping the group together is taken by both a leader and an appointed whip. The latter is a person who brings up the rear and keeps track of all the group to ensure no one is left behind. This is a particularly important role when the leader is occupied with navigation or the group has mixed physical abilities.

It is important to regroup at track junctions and maintain sight contact on untracked or poorly marked routes.

15. Separated

If your party becomes separated, a search should be undertaken in the immediate area where the missing persons were last seen or likely to have made a wrong decision. However, if they are not found within three to four hours it is unlikely that your party will have the resources to undertake a full-scale search and you will need to seek external assistance. If communication by phone is not possible a competent sub-group must be sent for the nearest help, with others remaining as visible as possible near the last point of contact.

The police are responsible for all search and rescue operations in Victoria and should be the first source of contact for assistance in an emergency.

To notify Police of an overdue party, call Emergency on 000.

16. Lost

Leaders should have navigation competency in the activity they are leading.

Have an experienced navigator in your party and take every opportunity to improve your own navigational skills. It is always handy to carry a map and compass and know how to use them. Pay attention to geographical features and general terrain and regularly identify your position on your map. When features on

the ground do not agree with those on the map, STOP and access the situation before a temporary disorientation becomes a major loss of position. Although a mobile phone is potentially useful to a lost party, it should not be regarded as security against becoming lost. Most mobile phones will not operate in many of the locations in Victoria popular with bushwalkers.

A GPS is a valuable back-up navigational tool but cannot replace proper navigational skills.

Action

Stop. Do not panic. Stay together and pool your knowledge and expertise. Identify your last confirmed position and estimate your present location. If possible, retrace your steps to where you were comfortable that you knew your position. Alternatively, if possible, proceed on a course which will bring you to a known feature in a reasonable time, such as a road, or stream.

Otherwise remain where you are and make phone contact with police if possible. Keep calm, warm and seek shelter whilst waiting for assistance. Be prepared to devise ways to attract the attention of searchers in the air or on the ground.

Listen for calls or whistles from ground search parties.

Remember that ground searchers are listening as well as looking so attract attention to your location using the recognised distress signal of three regularly spaced calls. The “three calls” can be made by whatever means possible such as shouts, whistle blasts or even banging a spoon on a billy. At night use three torch flashes.

17. Suggested day walk gear/clothing

Terrain

Always wear comfortable, well-treaded foot-wear. Preferably boots with ankle support when pack carrying or walking on rough ground. Gaiters give protection from grass seeds, stones, scrub, snow, snakes and leeches. Jeans must not be worn.

Rain

Carry a good water and windproof jacket, preferably thigh length, with integral hood, not padded and not a light nylon “spray jacket”.

Cold

Beanie, gloves, thermal underwear, woollen jumper, polar fleece.

Sun

Hat, light weight long-sleeved shirt, insect repellent, sunscreen, sunglasses. Extra water will need to be carried on hot days.

Back Pack

Comfortable, adequate size, waterproof or lined with a strong plastic bag to keep contents dry. Recommended contents include:

- Hat/sunglasses
- Insect repellent/sun screen
- Water bottles filled with water – durable
- Compass/map (optional for non-leader)
- Watch and mobile phone if available
- Whistle
- Pencil and paper
- Toilet paper
- Torch
- Food/energy snacks (suitable for the walk). It is preferable to keep food in a plastic container or zip-lock bags – avoid cling wrap or aluminum foil
- First aid kit – which should include items such as:
 - Triangular bandage, tweezers, pain relievers, blister kit, antiseptic, assorted band-aids, wound dressings, elastic/compression bandage etc., personal medication.

18. Overnight gear/clothing

Ideally your pack should weigh no more than 1/3 of your body weight. In addition to what you would bring on a day walk, the following items are required on an overnight walk.

- Tent preferably with fly, integral floor, insect proof
- Sleeping bag – Seal in plastic bag to ensure that it stays dry. Liner sheet recommended
- Sleeping mat – Closed cell foam or self-inflating mat
- Stove – Compact
- Fuel bottles – Leak proof and clearly labelled.
- Matches – Sealed in waterproof container or lighter.
- Water/extra water containers, water treatment tablets
- Mug, bowl/plate, utensils
- Pocket knife
- Trowel
- Mobile phone/portable charger
- Energy food
- Change of clothes
- Map and compass
- Personal locator beacon (PLB) for walks in remote areas
- Other personal items as necessary, etc.

Note: Always carry a little extra food in case of an emergency.

18 Natural disasters

18.1 Storm/Bushfire

Electrical Storm

Avoid high ground, isolated objects such as a tree in a clearing, overhanging cliffs or caves.

If possible, insulate yourself from the ground by sitting on your pack. Members of a party may sit together but should not be in contact.

Bushfire

If caught walking in the path of a bushfire:

- Walk quickly, preferably downhill, looking for possible shelter.
- Seek shelter from radiant heat which is the killer in a bushfire. Look for a stream or pool, a hollow in the ground such as an eroded gully or roadside drain, rocky outcrops or large log, a hut or building, a large cleared or recently burnt area.
- Cover any exposed skin with clothing, (preferably cotton or wool) earth or thick bark.
- Lie face down and breathe the cooler, less smoke-filled air close to the ground. Drink water regularly to avoid dehydration.
- Stay in your chosen shelter until the fire front has passed.
- As a last resort, you may be able to run through low flames onto burnt ground.

18.2 Flooded rivers, seas, tides

If a walk involves river crossings after heavy rain in catchment areas the leader must make every attempt to check status of rivers and bridges and plan an alternative route.

Leader must check if the safety of a coastal walk is affected by tide or local weather conditions.

19. Snake bite

Unprovoked, snakes rarely attack humans, therefore, do not disturb a snake in your pathway, simply alert the other members of your party to give it a wide berth. Take particular care in warm weather, long grass, hollow logs, near water or rocks in sunny positions.

In areas where snakes are prevalent it is wise to wear long trousers and/or gaiters.

Although snakes cannot hear they can detect vibration in the ground, so walk heavily to encourage them to instinctively flee from your path.

Victims usually know they have been bitten. Symptoms may appear 15 minutes to two hours after the bite and may be mild or severe, depending on the species and the bite.

If a member of the party is bitten:

- Immediately apply firm pressure over the bite site.
- Lay the victim down and keep them calm and at complete rest.
- Apply a broad firm bandage to the bitten area and around as much of the limb as possible, without removing clothing. Bandage as tightly as for a sprain and work up the limb to include the joint above the bite site.
- Immobilize the limb with a makeshift splint.
- Constantly observe the patient for shock and respiratory failure.
- Dispatch other members of the party with knowledge of your location to bring outside help and transport.

DO NOT apply an arterial tourniquet.

DO NOT cut or wash a bite – venom on bandages can be used to identify the snake, which is required to ensure the correct anti-venom is used.

20. Trip intentions (For leaders)

It is recommended that for day walks classified as Medium Hard (MH) and above and for all Pack Walks a clear record of your trip intentions is left with a responsible person. These must include a photocopy of a map marking your intended route.

Indicate the names of members in the party, vehicle registrations, the time you expect to be notifiably overdue. Also include the Emergency phone No. 000. **Remember to inform your contact of your safe return.** (This form is available from the Secretary).

21. Emergency contact/personal details

It is recommended that all Club members carry in their pack a card with their name, address, telephone number of a contact person for emergencies, details of any health problems, medication they may be on, health insurance and ambulance cover if relevant.

22. Rescue co-ordination centre (For an overdue party)

To notify authorities of an overdue party, call Emergency 000.

Have details of the group and the intentions at hand before calling. This number can also be used by leaders to initiate the rescue of an injured walker.

23. Fire season, extreme heat and total fire ban policies

23.1 Fire season policy

During the fire season (November - April)

- For activities in forest areas the leader should check with the Forest Fire Management Victoria /Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) website that the area is listed as safe to walk in before commencing the activity.
- All participants must take responsibility for their ability to walk in heat, wear appropriate clothing and carry adequate water.

For extended overnight walks during the fire season (November - April)

- Leaders should develop a contingency plan taking into account the possible impact of heat, total fire bans, fires, road and park closures and water availability.
- A lightweight radio is advisable to assist leaders in obtaining up to date weather and fire ban information needed to decide whether the contingency plan and/or an early exit should be implemented.

23.2 High temperature days.

On days where the temperature is forecast to exceed 35°C, walks will be cancelled. At the leader's discretion an alternative walk can proceed and the leader must notify all walkers registered for their walk of this intention.

23.3 Total fire ban days

Walks in the bush and remote areas must not proceed on days of Total Fire Ban. At the leader's discretion a walk in a lower risk area (e.g. an urban walk) may be substituted. The leader must notify all walkers registered for their walk of this intention.

24. Use of Personal Locator Beacon

EBWC has purchased a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) to provide an added level of safety for walks undertaken in remote areas. Its use is subject to the following conditions:

- Walks leaders have first priority for the use of the PLB. If it is not required by a leader then other members of the club may borrow it with the approval of the committee.
- Walks listed on the current walks program have priority; however, it may be borrowed for pre-walks when there is no conflict of timing.
- The borrower should familiarise themselves with its use and takes full responsibility for its activation. Instructions are available on the club web page.

- The trip intentions, party details and emergency contact for each use must be updated on the “Australian 406 Beacon register” website by the borrower before the walk is undertaken. At the end of each walk the details should be removed from the website.
- The PLB will be retained by the club equipment officer.

25. References

- Vic Walk “Walksafe” Booklet
- Essendon Bushwalking Club Incorporated “Rules of Association”