

WEA RAMBLERS

WALKING WITH RAMBLERS

A GUIDE FOR NEW MEMBERS

(This document has been redrafted to comply with the "Walker Guidelines" document of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc.)

Welcome to the Sydney WEA Ramblers Club. We are lucky to live in one of the most beautiful, varied and easily accessed walking environments in the world. You will see from the Walks Programme our volunteer leaders offer a wide choice of walks to suit both novice and experienced walkers. Options range from historical city walks, rambles around the many harbour and coastal tracks, to hard bushwalks in the National Parks – and pretty well everything in between! The following guidelines are important for both your enjoyment and your safety, so please read them carefully.

BEFORE THE WALK

- Once you are a member, you are welcome to join as many of the walks as you wish. However, it's very important that you ensure that you are fit enough for the degree of difficulty of the walk. The Walks Programme contains an explanation of the grading system we use as well as a brief description of each walk, so please read this information carefully before setting out. Note especially the grade assigned to your chosen walk, and any specific challenges the leader has identified. Consider how the weather might affect the walking conditions. If you are new to bushwalking, it's a good idea to select Grade 1 or 2 walks in the first instance, and then move on to more challenging ones as you gain confidence. For your first three walks with Ramblers, we ask that you contact the leader in advance, to discuss the walk's suitability. Plan your transport connections carefully so that you can be confident in arriving on time for the start of the walk. Leaders generally start their walks quite promptly and don't wait for late arrivals. Transport Infoline (ph:**131 500** or www.131500.com.au) is a very useful resource for finding out connections from your home to the starting or joining point. When using trains, the group usually travels in the second car from the front.
- Most Ramblers' walks use public transport to get to and from the walk. However, if car pooling is recommended, contribute to car costs if you are a passenger in another member's vehicle.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME?

- It is essential to carry sufficient water for the conditions of the walk, generally a minimum of one litre, or two litres or more in hotter conditions. Dehydration is a real risk, and inexperienced walkers often underestimate how much water they need, even in cooler conditions. Although you can sometimes refill your bottle along the way, this isn't always possible, so make sure you have enough water with you when you set off.
- Carry your food (packed lunch and snacks) with you for the walk. We usually stop for a short morning tea break, and then lunch somewhere along the track. Though there may be a café at the end of some of the walks, during the walk you will usually have to rely on what you have with you. You may want to take snacks for the bus or train trip home as well.
- Wear strong walking shoes or boots, and make sure that the soles have a good grip. Walking sandals may be OK for street walking, but not for bush tracks. Don't wear new shoes that have not been broken in on shorter walks.

- Use a backpack. This is essential as it allows freedom of hands.
- Other essential items of equipment include: first aid kit, sunscreen, hat, and appropriate clothing for the conditions of the walk, including a waterproof jacket or poncho if there is a chance of rain. If walking in hills or mountains, be aware conditions can change quite suddenly and temperatures drop by several degrees, so it's always advisable to take raingear and a spare warm layer, whatever the forecast.
- You might also like to carry a whistle, torch, maps and compass, though none of these items are regarded as essential, unless specifically advised. Some people find walking poles useful especially in slippery conditions and/or steep terrain. Many people now carry their mobile phone with them at all times. If so, please use your phone only if essential.
- Unless advised otherwise in the Walks Programme, or you have a query, there's no need to contact the leader in advance – just turn up at the meeting point at the allotted time.
- Remember to bring a sense of humour and adventure. Our leaders are all volunteers so please remember to be patient and kind.

DURING THE WALK

- Follow the leader's instructions. Remember your leader has your welfare at heart, but also has to keep in mind the enjoyment and safety of the group as a whole. Be courteous, co-operative and helpful to other walkers in the group.
- At the beginning of the walk the leader will give the group some more information about what to expect on the walk, and pass round a 'sign on' sheet. Everyone needs to sign this, giving an emergency contact number. Non-members should also sign the reverse of the sheet. Read the Risk Waiver and note any specific additional warnings which the leader has given. You are at all times responsible for your own safety when deciding to walk with the Club. Consider the conditions you are likely to be walking in, and exercise due care throughout.
- Keep behind the leader, and try to maintain a line of sight with people in front and behind whilst allowing sufficient distance between yourself and the walker in front so that you are not injured by branches flicking back.
- On bush tracks, or when there is a large group, the leader usually appoints an experienced walker to act as a 'tail' whose job it is to stay behind the last walker at the back of the group. Don't leave the track, or fall behind the person appointed 'tail' for any reason without advising him/her first.
- Don't allow yourself to become separated from the group. If experiencing any difficulty such as pace, blisters, shortage of water, advise the leader immediately or tell the person acting as 'tail' if the leader is too far ahead for you to catch up.
- Generally you should not leave the walk early, unless pre-arranged, but if it is necessary you must tell the leader and sign off on the sign on sheet. You must accept a leader's decision to send someone with you to accompany you out.
- Respect the Bush and follow the Confederation's Bushwalkers' Code.

AT THE END OF THE WALK

- Ensure the leader knows you have made it to the end.
- Remember to thank the leader.

VISITORS AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

You don't have to be a member to join one of our walks and visitors and prospective members are welcome. However, if you have not yet joined the Club (or you are a member who wishes to bring a visitor on the walk) you should contact the leader for permission **before** the walk. This is to confirm that the walk will be suitable for you/your visitor. Once you have completed three walks with us, you should have a good idea of whether or not the Club is for you, so we then ask you to become a member if you wish to continue walking with us.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY WALK!