

NORTH WEST WALKING CLUB

Guide to Bushwalking for Prospective members



Revision 9

April 2023

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the North West Walking Club.

As a prospective member of the NWWC you are able to attend but not vote at Club meetings. A Prospective Membership application is predominately done through the NWWC website, where access to the website is not available; it can be done by filling out a hard copy of the Membership Form. Upon completion of your application for Prospective Membership and the payment of the fee, payable online, to the Treasurer at a meeting, or to the Coordinator of your first walk, you will be able to participate in all Club activities subject to the particular Walks Coordinator's approval (*coordinators need to assess new Prospective Members experience and ability to participate in the walk for the safety and enjoyment of all participants*). Your prospective membership is valid for 6 months, during this 6 month period you are expected to take the necessary steps to become a full member. If you are not able to complete these membership requirements and wish to extend your prospective membership you must contact the Membership Officer to discuss.

The Club usually meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 7.30 pm at Apex House, 3 Gollan St, Ulverstone but is subject to availability, meeting dates are included in the Program. Meetings include walks reports and Club general business. We often have guest speakers and media presentations. These meetings offer a great chance to extend your contact with club members and meet new friends.

Bushwalking can be a strenuous pastime. It is advisable to have a reasonable level of health and fitness before undertaking any walk.

OUTLINE OF THE CLUB

The North West Walking Club was formed in April 1960 with an initial membership of 20. It has now grown considerably. In addition to bushwalking, the Club organises activities which feature other outdoor pursuits. The activities are detailed in the Club Magazine and Walks Program as well as on our website.

The Club aims to follow the principle of Minimal Impact Bushwalking explained further on in this document.

The Club has maintained throughout its history a personal, friendly and social atmosphere through varied and regular social functions.

CONSTITUTION

Copies of Constitution and By-laws are available from the Secretary or from the Club website. (www.nwwc.org.au).

MEMBERSHIP

Full details of membership are in our Constitution (available on the website), but an outline of the two classes of membership are as follows-

- Senior Membership: Complete three day walks (or two day walks and one overnight walk) to the satisfaction of the relevant Coordinators and attend a Training Day session. Qualification to be completed preferably within a period of six months.

- Junior Membership: Requires the same criteria to be met as Senior Membership but has further participation requirements outlined under Club Requirements For Walks in this document.

PROCESS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Once you have completed your qualifying walks and attended the Training Day, your application for membership will be presented to the members at a meeting and then be approved by the club executive committee. Upon acceptance and payment of fees, you will become a member.

TRAINING SESSION FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

These are offered at intervals throughout the year (usually one per quarter).

CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary,
North West Walking Club Inc,
PO Box 107,
Ulverstone. Tas. 7315.

WALKS PROGRAM

This program is issued quarterly. A Copy can be downloaded from the website and limited copies are available at Club meetings,

CLUB MAGAZINE

The 'North West Walker' is published quarterly to keep members up to date on walks information and other activities of the Club. Qualified senior/junior member will receive the Walker as part of their membership; all members including Prospective Members will receive an emailed copy of the North West Walker magazine. The magazine is also available online.

ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER CLUBS

The NWWC is one of the founding members of the Federation of Tasmania Bushwalking Clubs (now Bushwalking Tasmania). We have delegates on the Friends of Cradle Valley.

LIBRARY

Copies of magazines, books and booklets of interest to walkers can be borrowed by club and prospective members at each General Meeting from the Librarian. Many copies have been donated or loaned to the Club by its members.

WALK GRADING:

NWWC walks are graded from 1 to 6, Grade 1 being the easiest. Prospective members may find their first walk quite hard, so easy walks are recommended as a start. Some walks may be “through walks” and as such all members must be fit enough to complete the distance. Generally, with higher grades the breaks become shorter and the walking speed increases. Please check with the coordinator about specific descriptions of conditions to be encountered on programmed walks. Please contact the trip Coordinator for walk requirements.

- Grade 1: Relatively easy terrain with mainly on track or beach walking.
- Grade 2: Relatively easy terrain with mainly on track walking at mid level altitude.
- Grade 3: Mid level altitude and may involve some time spent through trackless open bushland. Reasonable level of fitness required.
- Grade 4: Mountain track and may include scrub, steep uphill walking and / or rock hopping. Good level of fitness required.
- Grade 5: Similar to Grade 4 Mountain off track but with longer distances or steeper uphill walking, or other conditions adding to walking difficulty. Suitable for fit people with extensive walking experience
- Grade 6: Strenuous walking covering longer distances and /or very difficult terrain. Suitable only for very fit walkers with extensive experience.

PLEASE NOTE: *The NWWC Grading System does not take into account changing weather conditions.*

Walks may also be described as “exploratory”. These are walks in areas unfamiliar to the Coordinator, therefore difficulties and delays may be encountered. Exploratory walks are intended only for fit and experienced walkers.

You may apply to participate in any walk shown on the Walks Program. Do not be too ambitious or overestimate your ability. Select an easy graded walk at first and progress to harder walks later. The Coordinator may ask you for details regarding your level of fitness, gear and walking experience. They may or may not accept you as a participant depending on the numbers already booked for the walk, the nature of the walk, perception of your experience or other reasons. If you are not allowed to participate on a walk, don't be too disappointed, as the safety and well being of you and others in the party are of prime concern. Please contact the Membership Officer who can address any issues you may have.

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

Please ensure that relatives and friends are aware of the possibility that you may return home later than planned due to, an incident, bad weather, or unforeseen circumstances. If they have concerns about late returns, they should contact the Club Search & Rescue/Training Officer, or other Office Bearer as noted on the back of the hard copy of the Walks Program. If the Office Bearers are not available contact any Coordinator on the Walks Program or the Police. Prospective should download a copy of “NWWC Search and Rescue Contacts” document from the website under “Members Area” tab then General Member Documents. The purpose of this document is for it to be left with the person who will become concerned if you are late back from a walk.

CLUB REQUIREMENTS FOR WALKS

If interested in a club activity, register on the Walks Register, which is circulated during the Club Meeting before the walk, online, or contact the coordinator of the walk no later than the Wednesday evening prior to the walk. NOTE: If you register online or at the meeting, you still need to contact the Coordinator on the Wednesday prior to the walk to register, confirm or cancel. (If you are unable to contact the coordinator on the Wednesday you need to send a text or leave a message with your name and contact number included. You still need to keep trying to contact them prior to the walk).

The Coordinator will ensure that all participants, including prospective members are financial.

Those attending a walk should not depart from the party or in any way become separated without first advising the Coordinator of their intentions. Please advise the Coordinator of any significant problems you are experiencing before the safety and/or progress of the whole party is threatened (even by blisters). Don't suffer in silence.

In certain circumstances, visitors and children can participate in Club activities. The NWWC Adult Visitors and Responsible Persons Waiver must be completed along with the Coordinator's verbal acceptance. A Junior Member (including Prospective Junior Member) may attend a Day Walk if accompanied by a Responsible Person nominated by the Junior Member's Parent/Legal Guardian. This Responsible Person must be an adult who is a senior member of the NWWC and is willing to take full responsibility for the child's welfare and behavior during the trip.

TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENT

The club recommends car pooling wherever possible from nominated pick up points. It is expected that each member contributes to the travelling expenses of the driver (15 cents per kilometre).

MINIMAL IMPACT BUSHWALKING – BUSH ETHICS

What's nice and what's not.

The increased use of Tasmania's wild places, particularly National Parks, has put some of them in danger of being 'loved to death'. The Club has adopted the Minimal Impact Bushwalking ethic as being essential for preserving our wilderness.

Keep to established tracks and stay off alpine bogs, cushion plants and soft vegetation, where possible. (This confines any damage to existing tracks, giving sensitive alpine vegetation a fair go).

The group should spread out when off-track in some alpine areas to reduce damage.

Carry out all your rubbish including the often left-behind items like foil and plastic wrappings and citrus peel (which degrades extremely slowly). Toilet and washing duties should be done at least 50 meters from water courses.

“If you carried it in, you can carry it out”.

WHAT GEAR & EQUIPMENT TO TAKE ON A WALK

It isn't necessary to purchase all of your equipment at first as you won't need everything immediately. There is the possibility of sharing a cooker with others and maybe a tent (although most members have light weight, single-person tents), reducing weight as well as cost. Take some time to discover what type of walking you like, observe other walkers' gear on trips and consult experienced walkers. You'll find that gear is a favourite subject.

When purchasing gear, you will be confronted with a bewildering variety of shapes, models, designs and prices. Ask yourself “what am I going to use it for, exactly”? This will help you to get what you need.

Suggested check list:

General:

first aid kit	trowel	watch
water bottle	sleeping bag, liner, pillow	air bed
tent & ground sheet	space blanket	foam seat
large plastic rubbish bag	toilet gear	ear plugs
plastic foot bags	pack towel	camera
water container or bladder	pack & liner	map & compass
note book & pencil	fire lighter	pocket knife, whistle, string
torch & batteries	baby wipes	sunglasses
sun cream, repellent etc.	spare plastic bags	waterproof pack cover

Clothing:

boots	gaiters	sun shirt
thermal long johns	thermal tops	shorts / trousers
thermal jumper/jacket	sun hat & glasses	beanie / neck warmer / balaclava
thermal gloves (1 pr min.)	spare top & long johns	spare socks
good quality raincoat	waterproof pants	waterproof gloves
scrub pants and gloves		

Cooking gear:

Cooker & fuel/gas bottle	Mug	Bowl &/or plate & utensils
Matches in waterproof container		

Gear for Day Walks

- Day Pack - a light, sturdy nylon or canvas pack big enough to carry all your gear required for a day walk.
- Clothing - for staying warm, several layers of clothing are better than a single heavy garment. The air trapped between each layer adds to the insulation effect. It is also easier to control your temperature - donning an extra layer during a rest or removing a layer when climbing steeply.
- Sun shirt - a quick drying fabric shirt with long sleeves and a collar for protection from the sun on hot days. A woolen shirt or thermal for winter.
- Trousers - provide protection against scrub, snake bite and sunburn. Cotton jeans are cold and heavy and non-insulating when wet (they are definitely not suitable for any Tasmanian bushwalker).
- Shorts - for warm weather. Select quick drying shorts rather than cotton.
- Thermal tops/long-johns - body hugging and made of wool or synthetic fibres. These garments trap a layer of air next to the skin and retain their insulating properties when wet.
- Thermal jumper or jacket - a light but warm woollen jumper, polar fleece or similar jacket is your final layer of insulation.
- Rain jacket - perhaps the most important piece of gear. This is your defence against the wet, the wind and the cold. It must be waterproof (not just shower-proof), windproof, loose fitting almost to knees, long in the arms (reaching beyond the wrists) with storm cuffs to protect the face and a flap over the front zip. Another consideration is its breathability. A bright colour makes you easy to see in bad weather. Choose breathable waterproof fabrics. Tasmanian walkers spend a lot of time in their rain jackets, so get the best you can afford.
- Over-trousers - proofed nylon Gore-Tex or breathable waterproof pants are necessary for protection in the very worst conditions of strong wind, rain and scrub bashing. Ideally they should be loose fitting and wide enough to be put on without removing your boots (many have zips part way up the leg to facilitate this).
- Boots - these must be comfortable and able to withstand Tasmania's wet and muddy conditions. In the shop, try the boots on with the same number and type of socks that you will use on walks. *(It is important to ensure there is sufficient toe space, when going down steep hills your foot will push to the front. If shoes are sized and laced correctly the tongue area will prevent your foot sliding forward stopping the crushing and bruising of your toes. Two fingers down the back with your foot pushed hard forward could be a guide for length.)* Leather boots can be most broken in by pre-soaking them in water and wearing them until dry. Leather boots should be cleaned and waterproofed regularly. Sandshoes are not suitable for most walks as they provide inadequate support and protection.
- Socks - One or two pairs can be worn, depending on your preference and your boots. Wool/nylon blend and/or thermal are the warmest and hardest wearing material.
- Sun hat - for protection from the sun. Remember your ears and neck when selecting a suitable hat.
- Beanie/Neck Warmer/Balaclava - an essential item for staying warm since most heat is lost from the head and neck area.
- Gloves - thermal gloves are recommended and can be worn underneath mittens. Mittens are warmer than gloves and ideal in very cold conditions. A pair of waterproof over-mittens keeps your hands warmer and drier. Scrub gloves are handy on some trips.
- Gaiters - essential for protection of the lower legs and for keeping mud, water, snow and leeches out of your boots and provide added protection against scrub and snakes. The best closure is velcro/press studs. Avoid zips, as they tend not to work when filled with mud.
- Spare clothing - a complete change of clothes should be left in the car just in case wet weather is experienced on the walk. Remember to bring a plastic bag for muddy gaiters and boots.
- First aid kit - because bushwalkers are frequently many hours away from medical attention, every member should know how to administer first aid. You are expected to always carry a first aid kit and any personal medication you require. Commercial first aid kits are not

recommended as they are usually very expensive, bulky and include items not tailored to bushwalking.

- Emergency kit - a length of cord, leukoplast tape, whistle, mirror, knife, fire lighters, spare batteries, matches and cable ties.

Gear for Overnight Walks

This gear is required in addition to that for day walks.

- Spare clothing - keep this to a minimum (e.g. spare socks, thermal long-john and top). You will want to change out of wet socks and damp clothing after making camp. Keep the spare clothing (for changing into at day's end) dry by storing it in a waterproof bag. Common practice is to wear the same clothes for walking each day, regardless if they are wet and/or dirty.
- Stove - It is recommended to use fuel stoves and many areas, including National Parks, require the use of these stoves. Shellite is the most efficient fuel but such stoves are pressurised and more hazardous than methylated spirit stoves. LP gas canister type stoves are very convenient for overnight trips but can be inefficient in very cold conditions. It is recommended that stoves not be used inside tents. Consider what cooking utensils may be required for the food you are taking.
- Backpack - single compartment, internal frame packs made of good canvas or modern synthetics have proven most suitable for Tasmanian conditions. A hip belt is essential to spread the load between hips and shoulders. Get a pack big enough for all your gear. If too small you will have to tie gear on the outside and this is not recommended in the rough Tasmanian bush (if it's not in, it's not going). If too large you will tend to fill it with unnecessary gear. Again, see what other walkers are using before buying. To keep your pack dry consider a pack cover (a wet pack will be heavier).
- Pack liner - a tough plastic bag or special liner to keep your gear dry in addition to individual gear bags (e.g. for sleeping bag, clothes, and food).
- Large orange plastic bag - can be useful for signaling, keeping your gear dry at camp, emergency raincoat and emergency bivvy bag.
- Torch - a reliable lightweight torch with fresh batteries is essential. To prevent the batteries from going flat, reverse one battery when not in use.
- Sleeping bag - down is still the best filling. The range of bags is extensive and variations include hoods, box wall construction (allows a constant thickness of insulation without breaks) and zip (with draught tube covering) for temperature control. Tapered designs are most efficient. Be wary of temperature ratings, they are only a guide useful for comparing one bag against another. Synthetic bags such as Holo-fill and Fibre-fill retain their insulation properties when wet but are bulky and heavy. A warm bag is something to look forward to at the end of the day so buy the best you can afford. Use a lightweight liner to keep the bag clean and increase the warmth.
- Sleeping mat - a close cell foam pad or a self-inflating mattress to insulate you from the cold, damp ground is essential.
- Tent - an expensive item of equipment, the tent must be suitable for Tasmanian conditions, waterproof and able to withstand strong winds. A design that provides stability, large vestibule but compact base is desirable. Tents with mesh-only inner are not suitable for Tasmanian winters. A groundsheet will protect the floor of the tent.

NAVIGATION

Map and Compass

All of our walking areas are covered by Tasmaph in the scale 1:100,000 and many in 1:25,000 scale. Try to procure a map of each area in which you walk, as it is only by following each

walk closely on the map that proficiency in map reading is obtained. The Club organises map/compass/navigation exercises, but practice is the only real way to learn.

Most walkers carry their maps in a plastic bag to protect the map from the weather and sticky fingers. To protect a frequently used map more fully, it may be laminated or covered with a clear self-adhesive vinyl covering.

Every walker should carry a compass and know how to use it. For most purposes a simple orienteering type compass such as the 'Silva' is sufficient and relatively cheap.

Learn to follow your route on the map even though you may not be leading. You should know your approximate whereabouts, route and destination, thus avoiding being disorientated should you become separated from the party. Make an effort to observe significant landmarks and features such as ridges, rock outcrops and unusual trees. Look back frequently.

Note: If you become separated from the party, don't panic, STAY PUT and the others will find you.

GPS

GPS devices are quite common and many walkers use them but they are not a substitute for map and compass, due to their limitations (flat battery, no satellites). Please consider them as a secondary aid.

Emergency equipment

Consider carrying a whistle (for attention) and mirror (for signaling). A space blanket or bivvy bag can provide emergency shelter. Carry some spare food, torch (spare batteries), paper, pencil, a sharp knife, adhesive tape (body and equipment repairs) and some firelighters. Matches in a separate waterproof container should be carried (be careful as many of the strikers for waterproof matches are not waterproof). A lighter is a convenient alternative. Cable ties can be handy to secure items.

PACKING YOUR EQUIPMENT

All items should be packed inside the backpack to reduce the possibility of loss or damage. Usually the sleeping bag, wrapped in a tough plastic bag, goes at the bottom of the pack, as it will be the last item required. Then place dense heavy items i.e. tent, stove and fuel close to your back and lighter items i.e. spare clothing further away. This is to reduce the backward drag on your shoulders. Lunch and items frequently used i.e. camera, sun cream and your rain jacket can be placed in outside pockets or close to the top of the pack. Zip locked bags are useful but for crushable items (biscuits) use light weight plastic containers. Potentially messy foods like honey and butter need a little care and an extra bag around their container is recommended. Make sure your fuel container is leak-proof and well separated from your food.

Finally, weigh the filled pack. Remember the recommended maximum weight is one third of your own body weight. It should be much less than this for a weekend walk. The same things are taken for 2 or 10 days, only the food, fuel and some clothes (socks, jocks, and spare thermal top) will be extra. Pair with another walker and you can reduce the weight in your backpack by sharing the tent, groundsheet, stove, cooking utensils etc.

DRINKING WATER

The majority of flowing creeks contain good drinking water but exercise caution in grazing, mining and well used day walk areas. Cases of diarrhoea and vomiting have been increasing in high use wilderness areas, particularly near popular huts. Exposed faecal waste is thought to be the major cause of these outbreaks. In areas without toilets bury waste at least 50 metres from campsites and watercourses. In suspect areas it is advisable to boil drinking water for a full three minutes. Water filters in high use areas could be considered.

The effects of dehydration are unpleasant, so drink at the rate you are losing it. Consider using an electrolyte replacement. A narrow plastic (yabbi) tube can be used to suck up water from soaks if water is scarce. Do not swim or use soap in water holes used for drinking.

FOOD

Food for day walks

It is usually only necessary to carry lunch, snacks and some extra food in case the walk is delayed. Make sure that the snacks are accessible while walking for a quick boost of energy. If a hot drink is required, you will need to take a stove, fuel and matches or a vacuum flask.

Food for overnight and extended walks

Plan your complete menu before the trip. Meals should be light, nourishing and take little time and fuel to prepare (in foul weather, you may have to dine in a tent and may not be able to use a cooker). On extended trips, experienced bushwalkers weigh their food portions.

- Bulk and weight - recommended weight per day is between 700gm and one kilogram. To keep the weight to this limit, you will need to make extensive use of dehydrated foods.
- Food value - your food should be selected to provide you with maximum energy and sustainability.
- Convenience - usually the group will depart early in the morning so keep breakfast simple. Sometimes the lunch breaks can be short so don't plan to cook.
- Variety - food adds significantly to morale on a trip, so make sure that you choose food that is interesting and varied.
- Cost - prepared food packs are convenient but are more expensive. It is possible to prepare your own dehydrated meals. Another benefit of this is that your own preparations will generally taste better. Recipes are sometimes in the Walker and members can offer suggestions.
- Litter - all metal containers, foil-lined packs and plastics MUST BE CARRIED OUT.
- Emergencies - pack spare meals in case you are delayed.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT

Bushwalking equipment is expensive so care is needed to extend its life. Damp tents and sleeping bags should be dried out as soon as possible to prevent mildew. Sleeping bags should be aired whenever possible during the walk. It is recommended that sleeping bags and mats be stored loosely when at home.

Gear repairs should be dealt with as soon as possible before it becomes a major problem. Look after your gear and it will look after you.

Bushwalking gear is usually made from high tech material so it is advisable to follow the manufacturing recommendation for cleaning and care. Boots should be cleaned and water-proofed regularly. Cleaning boots also helps prevent the spread of soil born diseases.

Let someone know before you go
