

2024 INFORMATION FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE BUSHWALKING GROUP

INTRODUCTION

All members are responsible for reading and understanding the member's walker's notes. Leaders exercise care in leading a walk but personal safety is the responsibility of the walker.

Emergency contact details are on walker's lanyard and also detailed in the First Aid Kit. Any 'incident' will be reported to the Bushwalking Group Convenor who may complete and submit an Incident Report to Castlemaine U3A.

The members of the 2024 convening group are:

Bryan F, Tricia B, Deb S, Heather M, Sue G. and Maurice R.



WALKING

Communication: Details of the walk will be sent a few days before the walk and members need to enrol for the walk. Last minute changes will be sent by text or explained at the meeting point. Also check the website for updates to the program.

Walks: Walks are held on the 2nd and 4th [and 5th] Wednesdays of each month. Walks continue through school holidays.

Grading: Walks are graded Easy, Easy/Medium and Medium, and the Australian Walking Track Grading System is also used (See explanatory notes and graphic below).

Meeting time: Normally 09:00 but 08:30 during Daylight Saving.

Meeting point: Gingell Street, opposite the Railway Hotel.

Duration: Prepare to be away from Castlemaine until 2:00pm unless the walk notes advise differently. **To ensure the safety of all walkers do not ask to leave the group during the walk. In the event of an emergency, the leader who has prepared the walk will take appropriate action.**

What to bring: Wear appropriate clothing and shoes/boots. Bring a Mobile phone; water; a snack (walks break halfway); money (coffee); personal First Aid requirements; sun screen; weatherproof gear if rain is forecast, etc. An emergency contact phone number. Personal safety is the responsibility of the walker. A comprehensive First Aid Kit is carried on each walk.



Extreme Heat: Walks will not be held on days of Total Fire Ban in the walk area. Walks may be cancelled if extreme weather conditions are forecast.

Car pooling: Most walks require car pooling and we appreciate your preparedness to do this.

Dogs/Children: Neither are permitted.

Walk Leaders: Walk leaders volunteer to identify, reconnoitre and lead walks. We encourage all members to lead a walk.

Walking speed: Our walks are timed using an average walking speed of approximately 3.5 kph. (i.e. an Easy 7 km walk, with a 20 min break, will take approx 2.5 hours. A harder Grade will increase the time). Walkers are expected to be able to walk at this pace and for this length of time for the following reasons: to have immediate access to the First Aid Kit and the Personal Locator Beacon (PLB); to estimate their return time to Castlemaine; to reduce walkers' frustration at the pace being too fast or too slow.

Emergency: All walkers must carry an emergency contact phone number. It is strongly recommended that members have Ambulance Victoria membership as health insurance companies may not cover bushwalking illnesses or injuries which can lead to significant out of pocket expenses. In the event of an emergency 000 will be called or the Personal Locator Beacon activated.



Administration: 30 maximum for each walk for safety. Members enrol for each walk in response to the email from convenor. Most likely less than 30 for each walk, but if >30, then the first 30 enrolling will walk. We will monitor participation to ensure equity in walk opportunities (ie if someone seems to be missing out we will provide increased opportunities for them).

Enrolling for walks: Read the emailed walk information which provides an accurate description of what the forthcoming walk will be like. **Members need to self-assess which walks suit their abilities. Please don't enrol for a walk without reading the description. Medium or Grade 4 walks can be testing in whole or in part. If unsure, start with an Easy walk.**






WALK GRADING DESCRIPTIONS

Easy – Walking mostly on tracks or in open country, with possibly some short stretches off track in light scrub. Few hills and adequate rest stops. Distance may be up to 7km.

Easy/Medium – More consistent walking, mostly on tracks or in open country but with some significant hills, possibly some stretches off track in light scrub. Distance up to 9km but may be shorter depending on terrain. Reasonable rest stops.

Medium – Consistent walking on tracks or off track in open bushland, some moderate to steep climbs and/or rocky, uneven terrain. Distance up to 12km with reasonable rest stops. A good level of fitness and walking experience required.

AUSTRALIAN WALKING TRACK GRADING SYSTEM

Grade 1 Easy (Disabled access)	Grade 2 Easy	Grade 3 Moderate	Grade 4 Moderate - Difficult	Grade 5 Difficult
				
No bushwalking experience required. Flat even surface with no steps or steep sections. Suitable for wheelchair users who have someone to assist them. Walks no greater than 5 km.	No bushwalking experience required. The track is a hardened or compacted surface and may have a gentle hill section or sections and occasional steps. Walks not greater than 10 km.	Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Some bushwalking experience recommended. Tracks may have short steep hill sections a rough surface and many steps. Walks up to 20 km.	Bushwalking experience recommended. Tracks may be long, rough and very steep. Directional signage may be limited.	Very experienced bushwalkers with specialised skills, including navigation and emergency first aid. Tracks are likely to be very rough, very steep and unmarked. Walks may be more than 20 km.