



The Bush Club Inc

Doc 2020v1

Bush Club Policies for Walks

Prospective members on walks

Prospective members must contact the leader of any walk before attending it to obtain his or her permission.

The prospective should mention that they are a Prospective and provide information about their bushwalking experience, level of fitness etc to assess their ability to complete the walk.

There is no restriction on the grade or type of walk the prospective may attend.

A reasonable level of physical fitness is expected, but not necessarily to the level needed for the more difficult walks on the program.

The leader will determine and report to the prospective member and the committee as to whether the prospective member has completed the walk satisfactorily.

A prospective member must complete three qualifying walks in the twelve (12) months preceding application for full membership, irrespective of the number of any other walks done before that.

The three qualifying walks must be DIFFERENT walks and WITH THREE DIFFERENT LEADERS from our walks program. However, the prospective is welcome to attend any number of walks, qualifying or not.

The rule above applies only from the time the rule was published ie 12 June 2020. Qualifying M walks completed prior to the policy change will be admitted, regardless of whether they were with the same leader or not.

If an Application to become a Full Member of The Bush Club includes any Qualifying Walks completed before the Walks Program was suspended (on 25 March 2020) then all the Qualifying Walks being claimed must have taken place no longer than 14 months before the date of Application.

Can a prospective member lead a Bush Club walk?

No, a prospective member is not eligible to lead or co-lead a Bush Club walk.

Guests/visitors and under 18's on walks

Persons under 18 cannot be members of the Bush Club. Although children have on occasion come on walks as guests of members, the club is more suited to adult members.

The Bush Club does not prevent the attendance of those under 18 as guests, ie. attending at the invitation of and under the care and responsibility of a Bush Club member, with the prior approval of the leader.

Any guest can attend a walk only at the invitation of a member and accompanied by that member, who must contact the leader for approval prior to the start of the walk.

Guests cannot be part of an official Bush club walk unless the Guest Waiver form has been signed. This allows them to be regarded as temporary members. The guest waiver form is page 2 of the Walk Report Form. If there are more than three guests you'll need more forms.

A walker can only participate three times as a guest. After that, he/she must become a prospective member.

Membership Qualifying walks

Qualifying walks are intended to allow prospective members to assess

- whether the Club's activities are suitable for them, and
- from the Club's viewpoint that the incoming member is able to participate safely in its activities and is in sympathy with its objectives.

A Membership qualifying walk must:

- be nominated as such (M) by the walks leader in the program.
- have at least four members or prospective members of the Bush Club
- be at least of grade 3 standard.
- not substantially (in time, duration or distance) on roads, streets, fire trails, cultivated parkland, beaches, canoeing or swimming.

Leaders are encouraged to include some off-track in their qualifying walks. This enhances a walker's ability to handle difficulties in the bush.

Although a walk substantially using fire trails is generally outside the definition of qualifying walks, an exception is made for walks that require a high degree of walking stamina (eg Woodford to Glenbrook via the Oaks).

Changing the classification and grading of walks

A walk's qualifying status (M) and/or its grading (1-6) may be changed on the Walks Program prior to the day of the walk. They cannot however be changed on or after the day of the walk.

If fewer than 4 members or prospective members of the Bush Club participate in a walk that is advertised as a qualifying walk, then the activity cannot be an official Bush club walk, and the qualifying status cannot be applied and will be rescinded. The four may consist of full and/or prospective members, but not guests.

Official walk - what is this?

To be covered by insurance all bush walks conducted under the auspices of the Bush Club must be listed on the Bush Club Walks Program.

For any other unpublished change eg a change of route, a second leader, contact with the Walks Secretary or a committee member must be made prior to the walk commencing in order to ensure insurance coverage.

A minimum of four (4), including leader, is required for a Club walk. If there are fewer than four, including leader, a walk, if continued, is not an official Club activity and the Club's insurance arrangements do not apply.

However, a recce will still be covered by Bush Club insurance if there is a total of at least 2 Bush Club members and you notify the Walks Secretary by email prior to the walk.

Leader qualifications

You must be a full member, not a prospective member, at the time of the walk you lead.

Co-leaders & assistant leaders must also be full Bush Club Members.

The Bush Club has no other prerequisites or tests for leaders.

See <https://www.thebushclub.org.au/wp-content/uploads/pdf/leaders/Information%20for%20Potential%20Leaders.pdf> for more information.

Contact leader or not

It is Bush Club policy to provide walks which are easily accessible by public transport and for which members can 'just turn up' on the day.

If you are happy to do this, the "Meeting arrangements" will simply give a time and place to meet, usually, but not always, tying in with public transport. Some 'non-contact' walks might be by car only. You still need to include your name and contact details for enquiries.

Prospective Members must always contact the leader with your name and contact details.

However, even if the above is true, there may be occasions where you prefer to know who is coming eg

- you want to limit the number of people on the walk
- you need to ensure that all walkers will be able to do the walk comfortably
- you need to arrange car-pooling or car shuffles
- you'd just feel more comfortable knowing who's coming

In this case, put any relevant details in the 'Meeting' box, or just leave it blank.

Meeting arrangements for walks

Generally, if a time and meeting place are specified on the program then walkers, apart from prospectives or guests, do not have to contact the leader prior to the walk.

Leaders are not required to wait beyond the advertised time but should thoroughly check the advertised meeting place before leaving.

Taking bookings for walks

When a walk or trip is listed as Contact leader, leaders should not take bookings before the walk/trip is published for the whole club (not from the draft or leaders' program or by word-of-mouth). This gives new members in particular, who may not know the leader, an equal chance to get on some of the more popular walks/trips.

Walk cancellation and Leader substitutes

New policy March 2017

The leader must advise the cancellation of a walk via the online program. This can be done without waiting for the update email.

- The Leader has no responsibility to turn up at the start of a walk if a cancellation notice has been recorded with the online program, even for a non-contact walk.
- Walkers need to check for cancellations with the online program. The small number of members relying on hard copy need to check with leaders or other members to confirm that walks have not been cancelled.

Before the walk is cancelled, the leader should try to find a substitute (list available from the online program) or advertise for one in the Program updates email (contact bushclubsnw@gmail.com)

An alternative walk can also be offered if there is a substitute leader who is not familiar with the original walk.

Some of the more difficult walks cannot have leader substitutes. In such cases these walks should be listed as Contact Leader Walks and all members notified that the walk has been cancelled.

Joint walks

Joint walks can be listed on the program of the Bush Club only if they are held in conjunction with another club that:

- agrees to hold joint walks:
- is affiliated with Bushwalking NSW (formerly the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs), and
- holds appropriate insurances (check at <http://www.bushwalkingnsw.org.au/clubs/>)

If this is not the case, the activity cannot be listed as a Bush Club event.

Leader

There can only be one leader, and that leader must be a member of the respective clubs, and authorised by the clubs through listing of the joint walk on the walks program (or as a short notice walk).

Advertising a joint walk

The Bush Club will advertise joint walks as such, and with whom they are being held. It is important that members are aware of the arrangements that will apply, especially when there may be participants from other than The Bush Club.

Sign-on form

It is absolutely essential that prior to the commencement of the walk, everyone participating completes, as a minimum, the sign-on form for the club of which they are a member (or guest). The leader provides the form. Without it both the leader and the member may be vulnerable to claims, and not protected by relevant insurance arrangements. Completion of the form is absolutely essential to ensure the protection of all.

Participants need only sign one form, but if they are members of both clubs, they can sign both forms (and perhaps should be encouraged to do so if this can make it a qualifying walk for a prospective member).

Requirements and guidelines

If the joint walk is a joint walk with the Bush Club, then the requirements and guidelines of the Bush Club are to apply, as a minimum. If the requirements of the other club are more stringent in any respect, then they are to apply.

Joint walk as a Bush Club qualifying walk

A walk that proceeds with at least four members or prospective members of the Bush Club can be considered an official Bush Club activity and a qualifying walk. The Bush Club sign-on form needs to be signed by at least four members or prospective members of the Bush Club.

Implications if Bush Club requirements and guidelines are not followed

If club requirements and guidelines are not followed and there is an incident involving a claim, then there is a risk that the leader, another club member or the club itself may be held accountable. It is important that the requirements and guidelines are followed so that cover under the Bush Club's liability policy may protect all three.

Click [here](#) to download a pdf of our Joint Walks policies.

Recce/trial walks

If you wish to do a recce for a Bush Club walk, you will be covered by Bush Club insurance if you notify the Walks Secretary by email beforehand and have a total of at least two Bush Club members or prospective members on the walk. However, such walks cannot be qualifying walks.

Travelling by train to a walk

It is suggested that members travel to a walk in the **second last** carriage of a train to meet up with other members.

This is a change from our previous suggestion of the 2nd carriage because many stations with short platforms (SP4) require you to alight from the last four carriages.

Wondabyne is an exception to this and you have to alight from the back door of the last carriage, which is a quiet carriage. You can move from the 2nd last to the back as you near Wondabyne.

Overseas and commercial trips

Individual forms need to be signed by all participants on club non-commercial trips. For commercial trips, please contact the Insurance Officer who will explain the procedures.

Please ask the Insurance Officer if you are unsure whether a trip is a club trip or a commercial trip. See [forms list](#) for overseas forms.

Walks by commercial operators, here or overseas, will not be graded using club guidelines.

Walking in Closed areas

Any Bush Club programmed walk that is within, or passes through, a closed area, must be cancelled as a club walk. Such a walk cannot be advertised as a Bush Club walk and insurance arrangements will not apply.

The club respects the rights of the owners of private properties and it respects the decisions made by professional managers of public lands. This position is consistent with the values of the club and the Bushwalkers' Code of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs (of which we are a member club).

Walkers and leaders participating in Bush Club activities should not enter a park if it is closed and should not walk on tracks that are closed, nor should they enter land where access is permanently restricted, such as water catchment areas and Department of Defence and other Commonwealth lands.

Any fines and penalties incurred are the responsibility of the individual walker.

The cover provided by most insurance policies can be reduced or nullified by unlawful activities. The club has received advice from Confederation that if an act is illegal, any amount payable under the club's Public Liability policy would be substantially reduced, possibly to zero, and in relation to the club's Personal Accident policy, nothing would be payable.

Fire Bans and Park Closures:

Some parks are closed during fire bans and some aren't. Leaders need to check with NPWS re status of the specific park in question. If the tracks are not closed then it is up to the leader to make a final judgment call re walking when there is a total fire ban.

For walks in NSW National Parks, details of park and track closures can be found at <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/alert/state-alerts>

NPWS Fire and track closures (<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/alerts/alerts-list>)

Rural Fire Service - areas listed for upcoming hazard reduction burns (<http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/hr>)

Total fire ban information (pdf 170kb) [ie <http://www.bushclub.org.au/down/factfire.pdf>]

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