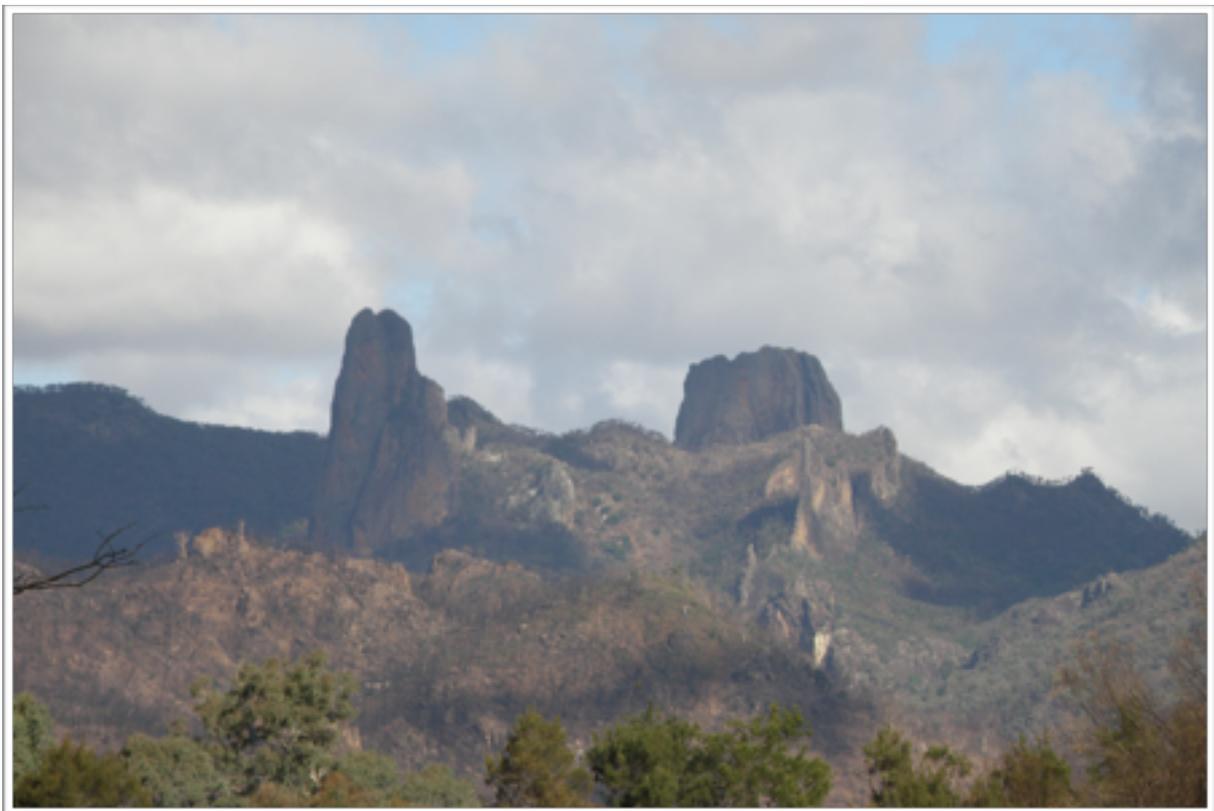


# Safe Walking in the Warrumbungle National Park



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Warrumbungle Environmental Education Centre 1998

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# MOUNTAIN WALKS

A detailed topographic map is available for loan from the Warrumbungles Environmental Education Centre for your walks in the National Park.

Topographic maps are available for purchase from the Warrumbungle National Park Visitor Information Centre.



## Introduction

The isolated nature of some of the walks in the Warrumbungle National Park makes it imperative that safety is considered as part of your planning. This booklet has been prepared to facilitate that process and provide you with the necessary information. It should be reviewed during the planning process and necessary information should be photocopied and provided to the teachers leading the excursion.

Carry a NextG ('Telstra' preferable) mobile phone or UHF radio. They work throughout most of the Warrumbungle National Park. Know the number of the phone you are carrying and contact numbers in the National Park area (these are listed below and some other relevant numbers are located at the back of this booklet). You also need to know the numbers of your own school.

## General Incident Procedure

Should an emergency occur remember to consider your own safety as well as that of the other students. Ensure that all students are kept together in a safe situation.

Use the following emergency Contact Numbers:

In the Warrumbungle National Park

- ★ NPWS Visitors Centre 02 – 6825 4364 9am-4pm
- ★ Warrumbungle Environmental Education Centre 02 – 6825 4302
- ★ Your Mobile:

Outside the Warrumbungle National Park

- ★ Emergencies 000
- ★ NPWS – in Coonabarabran 02 – 6842 1311
- ★ Police – Coonabarabran 02 – 6842 7299
- ★ Environmental Education Centre Principal (home) 02 – 6842 1740
- ★ Your school contact number(s)

## Walks

Walks should not be too arduous. Make regular rest stops and don't allow the fast walkers to move on until the slower walkers have had time to recover. Provide activities at these stops.

Staff to student ratio should be 1 teacher/adult to no more than 15 students. Each group should have at least 2 adults in the group in case of emergency.

There is no water along the walking tracks. Carry your own, about 2 litres/person/day, depending on the day. Check that each student actually has this water. If students have no water, dehydration sets in quickly and this can make them unreasonable and difficult to deal with.

## Appropriate Clothing

Clothing that provides protection from the sun is a must. In summer shirts should be lightweight, light-coloured and long sleeved. Long pants and covered shoes are essential. Broad brim hats are preferable to caps and sunscreen will be provided if you forget yours. In winter, layers of clothing are a good idea. Whilst the mornings and evenings can be cold, the days can be quite warm, especially when walking in the National Park.

## Accidents or Illness

Check also that those requiring medication are carrying their own. Always carry a spare asthma puffer. The teacher of each group should carry a First Aid Kit and at least one adult member of the group should have up-to-date C.P.R. training.

The Warrumbungle Environmental Education Centre can provide a First Aid Kit for you, or if you prefer to have your own it should, at least, include:

- Asthma puffer
- Epi-pen
- Bandages
- C.P.R. mask, eg: Resus-O-Mask
- Glucodin
- Saline Eyewash
- Snake bandage
- Triangular bandages
- Tweezers

Look after the casualty using the procedures described in 'Possible Problems Requiring First Aid'. Keep the rest of the group together.

Assess the situation. Do not attempt to move an injured person unless there is imminent danger.

If you are unable to make contact using a mobile phone or hand held radio, send a small, trustworthy party back to get help with precise information, preferably written, including where you are and the nature of the injury.

If you contact 000, you will be asked questions about your location and the nature of the accident, illness or injury. You should report that you are in the Warrumbungle National Park approximately 37km west of Coonabarabran. You need to give more specific instructions for emergency personnel to locate you within the National Park so try and give as much relevant information as possible. You will also be required to describe the terrain and weather conditions. Try and assist the 000 operator so he or she can determine how to get help to you most efficiently.

## Bushfire and Severe Weather



Always check at the Warrumbungle National Park Visitors Centre or the Environmental Education Centre for Bushfire or Severe Weather warnings.

If there is a bushfire warning in the Park, do not take school students into possible danger. In times of extreme fire danger, National Parks and Wildlife guidelines specify that school group activity may be confined to the Visitors Centre, camping areas and the Environmental Education Centre area.

If you spot a bushfire, report it either to National Parks and Wildlife Service or to the Police. The phone numbers are listed at the front of this booklet.

If you are caught in a bushfire, move rapidly but safely to an open area with a minimum fuel load such as bare rock. Move across, not up the slope, staying away from the head and uphill run of the fire. Do not try to run from the fire. Gather the group closely together, facing inwards to protect students from the radiating heat of flames. Move out over bare earth and burnt ground, where possible, once the danger has passed.

Severe weather events include gale force winds, heavy precipitation, intense electrical activity and tornadoes.

If caught out in such an event, keep the students together and move to an open area. Falling limbs are a greater danger than lightning strikes. Should there be lightning as well as winds, students should not stand together but spread out and crouch down with their arms around their legs and their feet together.

Report your safety to the National Parks and Wildlife Service or the Warrumbungle Environmental Education Centre as soon as possible after the event.

## Losing a Student

### A. PREVENTION

Do regular head counts at rest stops. Make doubly sure of numbers when loading a bus for a return trip.

Don't allow students to go racing ahead, there are sidetracks that can be misleading. Designate one responsible person to be at the head of the group and allow no-one ahead of that person. Do the same at the end of the line.

Stick to the tracks. Don't allow "short-cuts", they may be longer than expected.

Provide each student (or group of students) with a map. Make sure they know how to read it, where they are going and what to do in case they get lost.

### B. IF YOU DO LOSE A STUDENT

Don't panic! Check again.

If you are still on the walk, keep the rest of the group together in one place and delegate three people to retrace your route for a specified time to try and locate the lost student(s). That way, should the student be injured, one can stay with him or her while the other two return to report to the group and no-one is left alone.

If you still don't find the lost student, use the emergency contact numbers and move the rest of the students back to your base in an orderly manner.

### C. IF YOU BECOME LOST..

and we at the Environmental Education Centre know you're out there, stay where you are and we'll come and find you. If it is late afternoon, don't attempt to walk out. Assess your resources and make preparations to spend a safe but uncomfortable night. Birds as an Indicator of Biological Health

## Water

Water is the preferred drink while walking. As mentioned before, there is no water along the walking tracks so students will need to carry their own. Soft drinks and "Poppers" are high in sugar and low in quantity. Leave them back in camp.

Water provided in the National Park is stored in rainwater tanks. It is a scarce resource. Use only what is necessary for your needs.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service recommends that you boil water provided before drinking. The Warrumbungle Environmental Education Centre has a rainwater tank at the classroom. Your students may fill their drink bottles from this tank prior to their walk or other activity.

Don't leave the taps running. You may be wasting water that someone else will need. Don't drink water from unknown sources. Don't expect to be able to buy bottled water for your walks. Don't discard empty water containers along the tracks.

## Campfires

Despite first impressions, the wood supply is limited. No firewood is to be collected in the National Park as it is an important habitat and plays a role in nutrient recycling. Collecting it from roadsides outside the Park also depletes habitat. A number of local landowners will provide wood for you and can be contacted through the Environmental Education Centre or the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Open wood fires are permitted throughout the year except during fire bans. Fires may only be lit in authorized fireplaces and these are located in camping grounds in the Park. Light only enough fires for the task and do not leave fires burning unnecessarily after cooking is completed. Put out any fires and don't leave them to smoulder the next day. This is the cause of many bushfires.

Gas cooking conserves wood. Free barbeques are available at Canyon Picnic Area. A gas barbeque may be available on loan from the Environmental Education Centre.

The Bushfire Danger period extends from October 1 to March 31. **During this period there is often a total fire ban in place which means that no outdoor fires of any type are permitted.**

## Snakes

Snakes are about in the warmer months, however, if a responsible attitude is taken, no problems should arise. If you see a snake – RETREAT – and give the snake plenty of room to do the same.

When bushwalking, wear appropriate clothing, including shoes or boots and socks. Step carefully over logs and rocks and don't put your hands into hollow logs or other nooks and crannies. Snakes can be active on summer nights so use a torch in and around campsites.

Snakes are protected fauna and no attempt should be made to kill the snake. Never try to collect or handle snakes – that's the time you'll get bitten. You are the visitor in the snake's home.

If a snake does bite, do not wash the wound, do not apply a tourniquet, do not cut the wound. Apply a crepe pressure bandage or the specific snake bandage found in the

First Aid Kit. (This bandage has rectangles imprinted on the fabric. When the rectangles become squares then the correct amount of tension on the bandage is being applied.) Start bandaging at the bite site, then down the limb to the extremities and then back up the limb again. Splint or strap the limb to minimize movement. Do not allow the bitten person to walk. Contact the Emergency Services.

## Possible Problems Requiring First Aid

### **IN ALL CASES:**

Rest and reassure the patient

Act in the patient's best interest (inform, treat rationally)

Obtain consent

Do what you're trained to do

Use common sense

Keep in mind the welfare of the entire group

Document

Use clothing and equipment belonging to the patient FIRST (you'll never get your own back)

### **PHONE NUMBERS**

### **Coonabarabran**

Ambulance	000
Ambulance	13 12 33
Medical Centre	6842 3333
Medical Centre	6842 3366
Police	6842 7299

Rescue Squad will be contacted through other agencies, ie, Police

Environmental Education Centre	6825 4302
Warrumbungle National Park Visitor Centre	6825 4364
Emergency Home Number (EEC Principal)	6842 1740
Poisons Information Centre	13 11 26

### **Asthma**

#### **Symptoms:**

Casualty is usually distressed and suffers gasping wheezing breath that continues for some time.

#### **Treatment:**

Sit up and lean forward.

Give medication such as Ventolin.

Increase fluid intake.

## **Allergic Reactions or Anaphylactic Shock**

Eg, to insect bite, inhalation of pollen, or from food consumed such as nuts, etc

### **Symptoms:**

Itching and warmth of hands and feet, difficulty in breathing, rashes, hives, wheezing, swelling of lips, tongue, eyelids or hands.

Shock can set in - rapid, weak pulse, pale, cold, clammy skin.

### **Treatment:**

ORGANISE EVACUATION - the condition may worsen.

Sit casualty upright and loosen constrictive clothing.

Ensure adequate fresh air.

Apply cold packs to the throat.

Give EAR if breathing ceases.

If casualty has prescribed medication it is appropriate to assist the person to take it.

Departmental regulations discourage your administration of prescription/non-prescription medication.

(Antihistamines are part of the First Aid Kit if you need them.)

## **Snake Bites**

### **Symptoms:**

The wound may or may not be visible.

If there are no marks at all then venom probably has not been injected although you still need to treat the casualty in the following manner.

### **Treatment:**

Do not wash the bite site.

Use roller bandage starting over the bite, then down the limb to the extremities and back up past the bite site continuing up the limb.

Apply firmly, but not so tight as to cut off pulse.<sup>7</sup>

(DO NOT REMOVE THE BANDAGE ONCE IT HAS BEEN APPLIED).

Contact emergency services for transportation to hospital.

Marking the bandage with marker pen at the site of the bite can assist medical staff on arrival at hospital by being able to locate the bite without removing the bandage.

Keep the casualty and yourself calm. Reassure the casualty but don't allow him or her to talk, walk or move.

Immediate treatment may totally prevent the onset of symptoms until professional medical assistance is received at hospital.

Care of the patient is more important than catching the snake.

## **Red Back Spider Bite**

### **Symptoms:**

Intense pain at the site of the bite, spreading.  
Small hairs stand on end.

### **Treatment:**

Apply cold pack or compress over the bitten area but do not freeze or damage unprotected skin.  
Seek medical assistance.

## **Hyperthermia (heat)**

### **Symptoms:**

Hyperthermia can be recognised in three stages.  
Stages one and two can be recognised by:

1. CRAMPS
  2. EXHAUSTION
- Pale skin colour  
Sweating – usually profusely  
Skin temperature – normal or slightly elevated  
Oral temperature – normal or slightly elevated  
Nausea, weakness, dizziness, thirst, headache

### **Treatment:**

Place casualty in a cool, shady environment.  
Give casualty water in sips (electrolyte solution may be used)  
Activity should not resume until symptoms are completely gone.  
Observe casualty for recurrence of heat exhaustion.

Stage 3 hyperthermia can be recognised by the following symptoms:

3. STROKE – LIFE THREATENING
- Irrational, confused behaviour or combative behaviour  
Pale, damp, relatively cool skin OR  
Red, dry, hot skin  
Oral temperature > 41°C  
Weakness, irritability, dizziness, headache

### **Treatment:**

DECREASE BODY TEMPERATURE IMMEDIATELY.  
Remove or loosen tight clothing.  
Place casualty in cool, shady environment.  
Cool casualty with cool cloths or cool water applied to head, neck, armpits and groin.

Vigorous fanning will help cooling.  
If casualty is conscious, give water in sips.  
The casualty must be carried out and needs hospitalisation.

## **Hypothermia (Cold)**

Hypothermia can be defined as moderate or severe. Mild hypothermia can be recognised by:

### **Symptoms:**

Oral temperature down to 35°C  
Complains of cold  
Shivering  
Difficulty using hands  
Psychologically withdrawn and apathy

### **Treatment:**

If one person gets hypothermic, treat the whole group.  
End exposure – get casualty out of cold and wet, insulate from the ground.  
Replace wet clothing with dry, or add insulation to clothing.  
Place the casualty in a warm environment, the casualty should return to normal temperature with little other intervention.  
Offer warm liquids and food only if the casualty is fully conscious and able to swallow.

Moderate to Severe hypothermia can be recognised by:

### **Symptoms:**

Oral temperature below 35°C  
Lethargy, mental confusion, refusal to recognise problem  
Uncontrollable shivering, slurred speech, stumbling  
Leading to decreased pulse and respiration, cessation of shivering and physical collapse.

### **Treatment:**

Organise PROMPT evacuation.  
Treat as for mild hypothermia EXCEPT treat the casualty very gently and do not allow exercise or movement.  
If re-warming is to start, concentrate on head, neck, armpits and groin.  
Use warmed blanket, warm water, warm body.

## **Sprained Ankle**

REST - -Lie down (on insulated surface)

ICE - Highly unlikely this is available

COMPRESSION - Bandage ankle firmly

ELEVATION - - The leg possible resting on the other (bent) leg

### **You can:**

Wet and re-roll a roller bandage. Firmly apply the bandage to the ankle. Check that a pulse still occurs at the ankle. Wait 20 minutes then unwrap.

Then test the extent of the injury by:

- a). leaning your body weight against the foot (if the patient can't bear it, then the patient can't walk).
- b). rotating gently – there should only be pain on the side where the sprain is.

If the patient can walk, tape with sports bandage.

Then apply a dry roller bandage, pulling up on the injured side

The patient should then be able to put the foot back into the boot and walk out.

If the patient can't walk, carrying is preferable to using a stretcher.

The ankle needs to be splinted to below the knee.

Make sure that the splint is well padded, especially over the bony points.

Ensure that bandages are firm enough to prevent movement but not so tight as to interfere with circulation or cause pain.

Check bandages every 15 minutes for tightness, etc.