

Expect Changes and Take Care

Bushwalking NSW Inc. urges all who engage in outdoor adventure, to remember that conditions in the environment in which we conduct our outdoor activities are always changing. We are familiar with changing weather patterns, but need to remember that the weather patterns themselves are changing with climate change. The changing climate is also changing the physical characteristics of the bush, creeks, rivers, beaches, etc.

The threat from bushfires may be greater than previously experienced. The ground and vegetation we encounter will vary according to drought, bushfire, time of year; what was clear and easy going on one walk may be overgrown and hard going at another time. River flow and heights are variable, and may change over short periods, especially in the upper catchments. The coast is in an erosion phase, so previously-used coastal paths may be absent.

For your own safety, when venturing into nature, please carefully observe and consider the environmental conditions at the time of your activity. You should **both be aware of any forecasts, and prepared to encounter unexpected changes.**

If conditions are unfamiliar, or weather events in the location have been unusual, or if the forecast is potentially problematic, consider the possible impacts of the unfamiliar conditions, and choose your safest options. It may be that you cancel your activity or change or restrict it in some way.

As a leader, you will need to be assured that all the members of the group you are leading are safe, competent and suitably equipped for the conditions you may encounter. You will need to be assured that the group has the relevant outdoor skills, supplies and equipment. As just one equipment example, assess whether you need to take a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB). If in doubt, do not go.

To help you with these challenges, now is a great time to brush up your bushwalking, adventuring and leadership skills. Here are two great resources.

- ***The Bushwalking Manual: Information and guidelines for safe and enjoyable bushwalking in Australia*** is published by Bushwalking Victoria, and provides one of the best guides to safe bushwalking in Australia. You can find it at: <https://bushwalkingmanual.org.au/>
- If you are new to bushwalking, and indeed if you need a refresher or have relative novices in your group, the National Parks Association of NSW ***Bushwalking 101*** web site is also of great help. You can find this at: <http://bushwalking101.org/>

To help you be prepared for outdoor conditions, there are many online resources providing weather and other environmental forecasting, and providing advice on access to outdoor tracks, etc. Examples include those listed below. Also look out any local forecasting and alert services.

- Weather, river heights, tides and swells: <http://www.bom.gov.au>
- Park closures and alerts:
 - <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/alerts/alerts-list>
 - <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/>
 - <https://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/visit>
- Fire:
 - Bushfires: <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fires-near-me>
 - Fire bans: <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fdr-and-tobans>

- Planned hazard reductions: <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/hazard-reductions>

Wishing you all the best in all your adventures.

Bushwalking NSW Inc

The peak body for bushwalkers in NSW & ACT

Keep exploring, be amazed!

<https://www.bushwalkingnsw.org.au>