

# Caving

## *Standard Operating Procedure* Cataract Scout Park

Version 3

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### **Location**

The caves are located on Moore Road just before the turn off to the Giant Swing.

### **Aims of Caving**

- To implement 'challenge by choice' by:
  - enabling participants to expand their comfort zones, take initiatives and stretch their limits. (Necessary information and details are provided so that all participants can make their own informed decision whether to participate in the activity and to what point.)
  - respecting each individual's limits, strengths and weaknesses so that no participant is 'forced' to do anything outside their wishes.
  - encouraging others no matter their decision.
- To overcome the fear of narrow, dark spaces through determination and communication.

### **Pre-Activity Checks**

- Check weather forecast as below.
- Complete usage log - insert tally mark on the correct date. Check for any previous comments regarding equipment and, if any, ensure they have been addressed.
- Ensure all equipment is accounted for.
- Check all equipment before the activity begins to ensure that it is safe, clean and in working order.
- Ensure **liability forms** have been signed and participants are present during the Activity Briefing.

### **Weather conditions appropriate**

- A BOM Weather check should be done first thing in the morning.
- Activity cannot be conducted during storms, heavy rain, lightning or severe winds. It is at the discretion of the Program Coordinator whether the activity continues or not. In the case of a severe weather warning being issued for the area, the Program Coordinator must document justification of their decision.
- Specific consideration must be given to:
  - Water making climbing surfaces slippery.
  - General health and wellbeing of the group (it is extremely important to consider the effects of the weather on the participants, not only on the infrastructure and equipment).

### **Medical**

- Obtain briefing from Supervising Adult/Teacher on particular medical needs for each group.
- Instructor must carry a first-aid kit at all times, located in the kitchen of the office. NB: Instructor must have current first-aid qualifications.

### **Supervision**

- 1 Qualified Activity Instructor
- 1 Supervising Adult/Teacher

### **Equipment**

- 30 helmets (remain in cave house)\*
- Torches, provided by the participants
- Clothes and shoes which will become dirty, provided by the participants.

### **Activity Setup**

- Ensure that all helmets are in a plastic box and placed near the benches in front of the entrance to the caves.
- Ensure that all the cave doors are open.

### **Qualified Activity Instructor's Role**

- The Qualified Activity Instructor must be signed off on induction and competent in operating and running a caving session before taking responsibility for the session.
- They must ensure all essential briefings have been conducted before the activity commences (see 'Essential Briefing' below).
- They must enter the caves before participants, at least for the first time.
- They must always be checking for hazards as they move through the caves and take appropriate action if a hazard is found. These hazards may include, but are not limited to, snakes, *dangerous* spiders, excessive water and falling rocks.

*\*If an instructor uses their own personal gear, it must be in proper condition and maintained to the same equipment standards as Cataract Scout Park.*

## **Essential Briefing**

### **Supervising Adult /Teacher's Role**

- A Supervising Adult/Teacher works in conjunction with a Qualified Activity Instructor and does not assume responsibility for technical aspects of the activity.
- They are responsible for supervising participants waiting in the designated area and should be aware that they have a duty of care to all participants.
- They are expected to:
  - Be a role model and exemplar for the participants and follow all safety rules.
  - Supervise the participants during the activity where necessary.
  - Provide positive reinforcement and support for all levels of achievement.

## **Participant Briefing**

It is the responsibility of the Qualified Activity Instructor to ensure that all participants have fully understood the Essential Briefing before commencing the activity. It is the decision of the Instructors regarding whether or not a participant is safe and ready to take part in the activity.

### ***General***

- Introduce yourself and the activity to the participants.
- You may like to explain the following aspects of caving:
  - How caves are formed:
    - The most common type of cave formation consists of solutional caves which are formed by natural acids in groundwater dissolving soluble rock such as limestone (or sometimes chalk, dolomite, marble or gypsum). Rainwater collects carbon dioxide as it falls, and this water becomes acidic. The water then runs over soft rock, such as limestone or dolomite, and eats away at it which forms a cave over millions of years.
    - Erosion by water or wind can also create caves. E.g. sea caves and sandstone caves.
  - There are several different types of caves:
    - Volcanic, glacier, crevice, erosion, and solutional.
  - What might be found in caves:
    - Bats, snakes, spiders, bacteria, etc.
  - How these creatures survive and how they have adapted to their environment E.g. echolocation.
  - The difference between stalagmites and stalactites and how they are formed:
    - Stalactites are created by the continuous dripping of mineral rich water which little by little leaves mineral deposits on the cave ceiling as the minerals harden.
    - Stalagmites are created as the mineral rich water droplets fall to the cave floor, leaving mineral deposits that grow to become pillar-like formations.
    - Stalactites and stalagmites can eventually join from floor to ceiling but they grow very slowly, around an inch every 100 years.
  - The Beaconsfield miners and the fact that there is a section in these caves that is approximately the same sized space that they were trapped in:
    - On ANZAC day 2006 in the Beaconsfield gold mine, Tasmania, a mini earthquake caused two miners to become trapped, nearly one kilometer below the ground. The miners were found to be alive five days later and rescued two weeks after that on 9th May. They survived by drinking groundwater and eating one muesli bar between them.
- Explain the following to the participants:
  - The Cataract caves are formed in sandstone and are semi-artificial, having been partly bricked in to form a closed cave.
  - They are about 60 meters long and there is an exit halfway along and at the end.
  - If anyone is nervous before going into the caves, they should stay at the front of the group with the Instructor.

- The participants should limit noise and keep voices as quiet as possible because sound travels further in caves than above ground.
  - Each tight 'squeeze' will be followed by a large opening.
  - Once inside the caves, if anyone feels they are panicking, they should lie on their back, take deep breaths and observe how much space is actually around them.
  - Communication is very important, and all messages originating from the front of the group, or even only half way *must* be passed all the way back to the last participant (like a serious game of chinese whispers).
  - If someone does not have a torch they should ensure that they are next to someone who does have a torch and will share the light with them.
  - Helmets must remain on their heads at all times whilst in the caves.
  - If they are not participating in the activity or are finishing early, all participants must wait in the seating area until the end of the session
- You may like to mention, if appropriate to the group, that if time allows, they can play hide and seek in the caves or try going through it without torches.

### ***Helmet***

- Explain that all hats and hair clips etc. must be removed, and long hair tied in a low pony tail at the base of the neck.
- Explain 'happy turtle': if helmet is ever put down, it must be placed upright, and not on its 'shell', to avoid damage to the helmet.
- Hold a helmet up to the participants and show them how to identify the front by the brand name.
- Show them the rear adjustment dial and how to tighten/loosen the helmet by turning it.
- Do a 'shake test': shake your head around or hold your head upside down to show the helmet can stay on while the chin strap is not done up (the rear adjustment dial holds it on tight).
- Explain that there should be two fingers distance between their eyebrows and the lip of the helmet.
- Do the chin strap up and explain that, just like a bike helmet, participants should be able to run two fingers inside the strap from ear to ear to ensure that the helmet is neither too tight nor too loose and so the strap won't be able to pass over their chin.

### ***In The Caves***

- Start the group at the first cave door. The instructor must enter the caves first and remain with the group until it exits the cave.
- Once the entire group reaches the middle chamber, check whether any participant does not want to continue through the cave and if there are any, assist them to exit through the escape door.
- Depending on the group's capabilities, you may enter the 'Blackout Room' and explain in further detail the story of the Beaconsfield miners. You may then direct participants through the triangular opening and back into the middle chamber, ensuring that you warn them the large step down and how to navigate it.

- Once at the end of the caves, inform the participants that they may return through the caves to explore them further, if they wish, ensuring that they understand they must continue to observe all safety briefings and 'Do Not Enter' signs. You may like to suggest that they play hide and seek or explore without torches.

## Debriefing

As Activity Instructors we assist participants in understanding and realizing what they have achieved and how it can apply in everyday life. A debrief works best if the participants feel they can contribute most of the input and ideas themselves.

- Address 'aims' (see page one) and discuss the participants' successes and challenges.
- Discuss how well they managed their fear of narrow, dark spaces, their personal choices, and respect for other people's choices as to limits, strengths and weaknesses.
- What was their perception of the caves at the start ("where were you in your comfort zone")? What are their feelings towards them now ("has your comfort zone expanded")?
- Discuss the teamwork and trust elements of the activity and how it can apply in everyday life.

## Packing Up

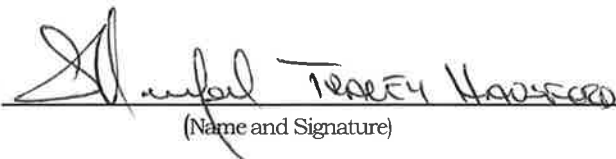
### *On site*

- Ask the participants to place all their helmets in the plastic box.
- Place the box of helmets in the cave house.
- If you have been running the last session of the day, lock the cave doors and cave house.

### *Final pack up at Equipment Shed*

- Any issues/problems with any equipment should be noted on the tally sheet and explained as soon as possible to the Program Coordinator.
- If necessary, an Incident, Accident and Near Miss Report Form must be filled out (*located in the green instructor's folder or in the office*). Any completed forms must be handed to the Program Coordinator at the earliest convenience.

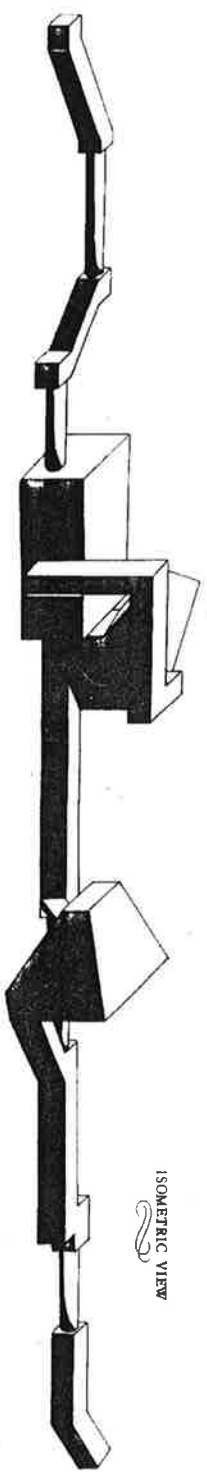
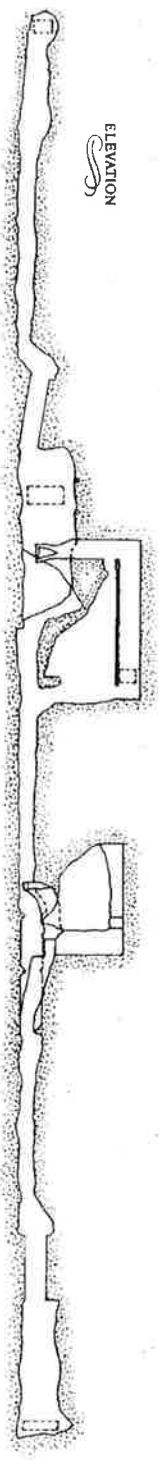
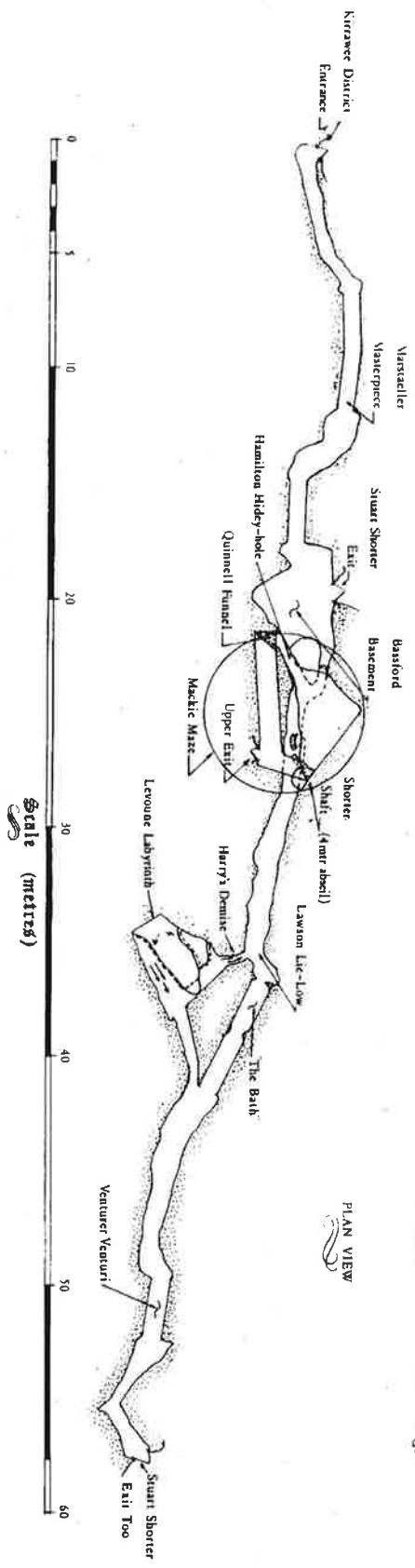
Approved by:

 TEREY HARRISON Date: 30/7/16

(Name and Signature)

# Cataract Cave. †

Magnetic North



CRC Grade XCA	Surveyed by: Members of Kirrawee District. Drawer: H. Jones.	Cataract Cave Cairn Point Park † Cairn Dam. N.S.W.	Kirrawee District Scouts, New South Wales, 2232 Australia.	CAT 01
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