

CMCA Bush Camping Code

We are fortunate in Australia to have the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of the most wonderful country in the world by simply parking overnight or for a longer period. However, as responsible citizens, we must at all times accept responsibility to protect and preserve the national landscape for the enjoyment of future generations.

CMCA have formulated the following Bush Camping Code, which is the adopted policy of the Club for all members who park or camp in such environments. This code of best practice has been put together with information supplied by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) offices in all states and territories of Australia.

Please remember that different states have different regulations. Members are advised to check each governing body's requirements before entering any national park, recreation reserve, conservation park, nature reserve, rest area, local government area or private land.

Remember, being allowed to park your vehicle in any area is a privilege – it is not a right. Please always respect the rules and regulations that pertain to any area in which you stay.

Travelling

- If travelling with others, travel in small groups. This has less impact on the environment
- Avoid gravel roads in wet weather. They are easily damaged and costly to repair. Remember that they are also used by emergency vehicles
- Keep to designated roads and tracks. Off road driving destroys vegetation, leaving the soil bare and sensitive to erosion. Off road driving is illegal in national parks, reserves and many other areas
- Take note of all wildlife signs
- In areas with wildlife, drive safely
- Avoid driving at night in areas with wildlife as many species are most active at night
- Drive with particular care at dawn and dusk
- Allow animals to move off the roadway before proceeding
- Leave gates and slip rails as you find them
- Respect the rights of land owners. Don't enter private property without permission

Plan Ahead

- Take plenty of water. Allow 10 litres per person per day and carry reserves in case your stay is extended.
- Leave your pets at home if entering a national park. Check with local authorities for other areas. Pets scare some wildlife and may be a nuisance to other people.
- Nets, traps and firearms are not permitted in many parks and reserves.
- If you are travelling well away from main roads and civilisation, it is wise to notify someone (maybe the local police or NPWS office) where you intend to go and when you expect to return, and advise them when you do return.

Think Before Setting Up

- Camp only in designated camping areas.
- Where possible, camp at a well-used site, as you will do less damage to the environment. Sandy or hard stand sites are more appropriate than vegetated areas.
- Camp at least 100 metres from rivers, lakes and waterholes to allow wildlife and stock to drink.
- Don't cut or break trees or plants or pull them out. Tying washing lines to trees is a common cause of damage in national parks.
- Be considerate of other campers.
- Keep noise to a minimum. The sound of radios, cd players, mobile phones and generators are out of place in the natural environment.

Take Care of the Bush

- Leave nothing but footprints and tyre tracks – take nothing but photographs and happy memories.
- Protect water supplies. Soaps, detergents, toothpaste and sun screen pollute waterways and poison aquatic plants and animals.
- When washing cooking utensils, use a scourer or sand instead of detergent.
- Do not dispense grey or black water onto the ground. Take it out with you.
- If you are 'caught short' on a bushwalk and in an area without toilets, choose a site at least 100m away from any campsite and any watercourse. Bury waste at least 15cm (6 inches) deep, mixing the waste with soil to help decomposition. In snow, dig down into the soil, otherwise the waste will be exposed when the snow melts.
- 'Pack it in – Pack it out'. Carry all garbage out with you.
- Do not bury food scraps. They may be dug up and scattered by animals. Make sure you carry strong plastic bags to store your garbage in.
- Do not bury sanitary pads, tampons, condoms or disposable nappies.
- Unless in an extreme emergency, do not carry out any maintenance work on your vehicle whilst located in any park or rest area. This can leave traces of grease, oil and solvent on the ground which is damaging to the environment.

Camp Fires

- Use a fuel stove where possible.
- In popular campsites, light your fire on a bare patch left by previous fires. Don't light it on fresh ground.
- Light your fire on bare soil or sand, well away from stumps, logs, living plants and river stones (which may explode when heated).
- Definitely don't build a ring of stones as a fireplace. This is unnecessary and unsightly.
- Dismantle stone rings wherever you find them.
- Sweep away all leaves, grass and other flammable material for at least 3 metres around the site of the fire. Major bushfires have been caused by careless campers who didn't take this precaution.
- It is preferable not to collect dead wood that has fallen to the ground. Don't break limbs from trees or shrubs. In many areas it is an offence to remove any timber at all.
- Keep your fire small.
- Do not light fires:
 1. in hot, dry conditions,
 2. in dry windy weather,
 3. in declared 'fuel stove only' areas, or
 4. when there is a declared fire ban.

Always remember:

- Fire does not destroy aluminium foil and plastics, but releases toxic gases when burnt. Always carry foil and plastics out with your other garbage, including food scraps. Don't use your campfire as an incinerator.

Before you leave:

- Douse your fire thoroughly with water, even if it appears to be already out.
- Don't try to smother a fire by covering it with soil or sand as the coals will continue to smoulder for days. Only water kills a fire with certainty.
- Feel the ground under the coals. If it is too hot to touch, the fire is not out. Douse it with more water.
- Scatter the cold charcoal and ashes well clear of your campsite, then rake soil and leaves over the spot where your fire was. You should aim to remove all trace of it.

Protect Plants and Animals

- Try not to disturb wildlife. Remember, you are the trespasser.
- Give snakes a wide berth and leave them alone. They have more right to be there than you do and they, like all wildlife, are protected by law.
- Watch where you put your feet. Walk around plants, not over them.
- Don't feed birds and animals around campsites or they may become pests. Unnatural food can be harmful to many species and they may become dependent on human provided food.

Respect Indigenous Heritage

- Many places have spiritual or cultural significance for our indigenous communities. Treat such places with consideration and respect.
- Obtain permission from traditional landowners or the relevant land manager to visit sensitive areas.
- Leave indigenous relics as you find them. Don't touch middens, paintings or rock engravings.

There are many ways to enjoy the bush without impacting on it. Bird watching, bush walking on marked tracks, nature photography, drawing and painting are just a few.

Enjoy the natural landscape as it is, on nature's terms.

For more information please contact National Headquarters

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