

Western Australian Speleological Group Inc.

By-Laws



1. ETHICS

- 1.1. Members shall comply with the Code of Ethics of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. (ASF).

2. VISITORS

- 2.1. Visitors shall comply with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Group.
- 2.2. To participate in activities other than the general meeting Visitors must be paid-up financial members of the group or of the ASF.
- 2.3. At the discretion of the Trip Leader a Visitor may be granted the privileges of a Full Member on the basis of prior caving experience with other organisations. It is the responsibility of the Trip Leader to verify that the Visitor has the appropriate abilities via suitable reference checks and practical observations.

3. MEMBERS

- 3.1. On payment of annual subscription, a Member receives:
 - A membership card of the Group.
 - Subscription to the Group's publication, *The Western Caver*, for one year.
 - Subscription to the ASF's publication, *Caves Australia*, for one year.
 - Voting rights at all types of general meetings of the Group.
 - Access to the equipment and expertise of the Group.
 - Membership of the Group's email list.
 - Access to the Group's Library.
 - Access to the members' only section of the Group's website.

4. FULL MEMBERS

- 4.1. A Full Member shall be a member of the Group who has achieved that amount of expertise deemed necessary by the Committee to be granted the additional privileges of a Full Member.
- 4.2. A Full Member may be granted access to locked caves as a participant on approved trips.
- 4.3. Any nomination for Full Member status must be published via the members' emailing list at least two weeks prior to consideration, with all members invited to comment to the committee concerning the member's suitability.

5. TRIP LEADERS

- 5.1. A Trip Leader shall be a Full Member of the Group who is appointed by the Committee, in consultation with current appointed Trip Leaders.
- 5.2. It is strongly preferred that all Trip Leaders are competent in the practice of single rope techniques and laddering, including basic rescue techniques. A person who can demonstrate this expected level of competency may be appointed as a **Trip Leader Vertical**.

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- 5.3. Notwithstanding the above, should the Committee consider it appropriate, a person who is otherwise suitable for appointment as a Trip Leader, but due to health or other considerations is unable to demonstrate the vertical competency described above, may be appointed as a **Trip Leader Horizontal**.
- 5.4. When considering a Full Member for potential appointment as a Trip Leader, the Committee shall take into consideration their skills in and competencies in areas including, but not limited to:
- Experience – partly from hours underground and partly from the range of localities caved.
 - Knowledge of the theory and practice of single rope techniques and laddering, including basic rescue techniques (Trip Leader Horizontal appointees are expected to have a basic understanding of vertical skills, sufficient to recognise the limits of their competence.).
 - Leadership skills – group management.
 - Responsibility and discipline.
 - Ability to efficiently plan and execute trips.
 - Holding a first aid certificate (HLTAID003 Provide First Aid or equivalent) issued within the previous three years.
 - Knowledge of the theory and practice of speleology.
 - Knowledge and practice of Minimal Impact Caving techniques.
 - Knowledge and practice of cave conservation techniques.
 - Knowledge and practice of all applicable Codes of Ethics and Practice.
 - Knowledge of and practice of track marking techniques.
 - Surface and underground map and compass reading skills as well as underground navigation.
 - An appreciation of their own skills and limitations, including the ability to plan trips appropriate to their, and participants', skill levels.
 - Any other factors which the Committee considers relevant.
- 5.5. A Trip Leader is encouraged to appoint a Full Member as a Sub Trip Leader for the duration of a trip.
- 5.6. Each underground trip shall be led by an authorised Trip Leader or appointed Sub Trip Leader.
- 5.7. Trip Leaders shall be responsible for acquainting themselves with the formalities and restrictions of entry to property and caves which they propose to visit.
- 5.8. Trip Leaders shall ensure that all Visitors are familiar with and agree to abide by the by-laws of the Group.
- 5.9. Trip Leaders shall be responsible for the discipline and well-being of their party.
- 5.10. Trip Leaders shall be responsible for the safe return of all group property used by their party.
- 5.11. Trip Leaders shall be responsible for the collection and handing over to the Treasurer of all property maintenance contributions.
- 5.12. A Trip leader shall decide the size and composition of their own party, within the requirements of any relevant permits.

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- 5.13. The Trip Leader shall inform the membership of proposed trips via one or more of the following means: announcement at the general meeting; email to the members' list; or by advising the Co-ordination Officer or Committee.
- 5.14. A Trip Leader is strongly encouraged to offer at least two open (to members) trips per year unless he/she can provide reasons to the Committee showing that circumstances make this impossible or that the Trip Leader has undertaken other activities which have contributed to club objectives.
- 5.15. All Trip Leaders' status shall be reviewed periodically by the Committee to ensure compliance with group by-laws. Review may include consideration of a Trip Leader's Vertical or Horizontal status.
- 5.16. Any proposed appointment of Trip Leader status by the Committee must be published via the members' emailing list at least two weeks prior to final consideration, with all members invited to comment to the Committee concerning the member's suitability.

6. TRIPS

- 6.1. A trip is an outing with the intention of speleological activities in the field.
- 6.2. Where practical, a trip should be carried out with the knowledge and consent of the Committee.
- 6.3. The recommended minimum number on a trip is three (3).
- 6.4. A limit on the number of participants may be imposed at the discretion of the Trip Leader or the Committee where either the nature of the area or the work makes such a limit desirable.
- 6.5. All persons under eighteen (18) years of age participating in trips shall be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- 6.6. Smoking in caves is forbidden.
- 6.7. Alcohol shall not be consumed until the caving activities for the day have been completed.
- 6.8. Firearms, explosives and other lethal weapons shall not be taken or used without prior agreement of the Trip Leader.
- 6.9. Members taking Visitors must notify the Trip Leader beforehand and they must take steps to brief their Visitors on the:
 - by-laws.
 - objectives of the trip.
 - camping and caving conditions expected.
- 6.10. The Group's name and property shall not be used without the prior sanction of Committee.
- 6.11. No explosives shall be kept in any inhabited dwelling during a trip.



- 6.12. It is the right and responsibility of the Trip Leader to assess the capabilities of proposed trip members and hence their suitability for particular caves to be visited. This assessment should be based on their previous experience, references or testimonials and the judgment of the Trip Leader. The Trip Leader should only take members to caves commensurate with their level of technical skill and caving ability.
- 6.13. All trips will apply the ASF Minimal Impact Caving Code.
- 6.14. Where a cave is covered by the Caves Access Committee (CAC) then Trip Leaders and members shall comply with CAC requirements regarding access permissions and any special requirements as directed by the CAC.

7. SAFETY

- 7.1. Each person participating in an underground trip shall be adequately equipped with headgear, footwear, clothing and sources of light, and any other specialized equipment deemed necessary by the Trip Leader or the individual.
- 7.2. It is the responsibility of all members to inform the Trip Leader of any health, fitness, medical or other conditions they have which might affect their ability to safely participate in the caving activities or which may affect any medical treatment provided to them in the event of an injury. This is to be provided prior to commencement of any caving activities on a trip.
- 7.3. At the request of the Trip Leader members shall fill out a WASG Medical/Indemnity Form prior to commencing caving activities on a trip. These shall be retained in a readily accessible location for the duration of the trip. Such forms shall be considered private and confidential and only accessed on a needs basis.

8. PROPERTY

- 8.1. Persons using Group property shall contribute to the maintenance of that property as scheduled by the Committee.
- 8.2. Persons using Group property shall return it promptly after the completion of a trip, ensuring that it is clean and in good repair.
- 8.3. At the discretion of the Committee, the borrower shall be responsible for the cost of the repair or replacement of any property damaged or lost.

9. SPECIMENS

- 9.1. Persons who wish to remove material, including speleothems, minerals, bones, biological specimens, guano, cave fittings, etc., must obtain written permission from the Committee as well as appropriate statutory permits and land manager permissions.
- 9.2. Materials should only be removed for research purposes.
- 9.3. Such material shall be offered to a recognized scientific institution as soon as practicable.

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10. DUTIES OF CONVENERS

- 10.1. Convenors of sub-committees shall report at the fulfilment of their objectives, at the request of the Committee and/or annually.
- 10.2. The Editor shall publish an annual journal in print or digital format for distribution to members and appropriate libraries. The price shall be scheduled by the Committee and included in the annual subscription. The Editor need not necessarily be on the Committee.
- 10.3. The Safety Officer shall conduct training in caving techniques and cave rescue practices. A contact list to facilitate the organization of rescues should be maintained.
- 10.4. The State Cave Recorder shall investigate and collate all information on speleological features in Western Australia. The State Cave Recorder shall be responsible for the naming of speleological features considering recommendations made by the discoverers and the ASF guidelines. A cave numbering system shall be maintained in accordance with ASF practice. The State Cave Recorder shall maintain and update cave area lists.
- 10.5. The Map Curator shall catalogue and store the originals of maps. Within any directives of the Committee the Map Curator shall make the maps available to all Full Members and Trip Leaders. Any member who believes their access to the map library has been unfairly restricted may appeal to the Committee. The Map Curator shall keep a log of who has used the library and a brief summary of what they have accessed.

11. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 11.1. Where a trip is organised under the auspices of the Group then the Group shall have the right to the use of such information or intellectual property as is created or gathered during the trip or developed from information obtained during the trip, irrespective of ultimate copyright ownership, provided such usage is consistent with the Group's objectives as outlined in the Constitution.
- 11.2. The Group or its members shall not use the information for financial gain without prior written permission of the legal owners of the copyright.
- 11.3. Information may include, but would not be limited to:
 - Survey and location data.
 - Water level readings.
 - Fauna population studies.
 - Cave maps.
 - Images including photography.
- 11.4. A trip conducted under the auspices of the Group would include, but not be limited to:
 - A trip advertised via the Group general meeting or email list.
 - A trip utilising Group equipment or funds.
 - A trip where the participants are of the understanding that the trip is a Group activity.
 - A trip where permissions or permits etc. have been obtained with the aid or nomination of Group affiliation.

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- 11.5. Where information or intellectual property of the Group is used, it shall be acknowledged as having been sourced from the Group with direct reference to the original creators of the information whenever practical.

12. DIGITAL MAP USAGE

- 12.1. All digital maps and all the information on them are the property of and copyright to the original authors and/or the Western Australian Speleological Group Incorporated.
- 12.2. They may only be used for purposes that foster the objectives of the WASG.
- 12.3. They may only be reproduced with details including the logo and website address, the author(s), dates, map keys and legends clearly legible.
- 12.4. If the reproduction or data are to be used in a publication, electronic or otherwise, then written permission must be obtained from the WASG. The author(s) and the WASG must be duly acknowledged, and year of initial publication clearly stated. Any indications that would allow precise location of karst features (within 1,000 metres) are to be removed. This may include grid coordinates, landmarks or descriptions that may allow general users to locate the feature.
- 12.5. No consent is given to publish any digital maps or data contained therein, in any form, in part or whole, for financial gain.

13. GROUP POLICIES

- 13.1. The Group may adopt policies that are developed by the WASG Committee, and approved by a two-thirds majority of a Group general meeting after circulation to the membership. Such policies may be similarly amended. These policies may apply to Group members or external bodies as specified within the policy statements. The policy documents listed below have been approved by the Group:

Nil.

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APPENDIX 1

The Logo of the Western Australian Speleological Group (Inc.) is the graphic image illustrated below.

