

Dear Leaders,

All Walks Guide for Leaders UPDATE 12 October 2021

Introduction

This is an update of the [COVID-19 SNW Guide for Leaders](#) which was circulated in July 2020. At that time we were emerging from lockdown and Ramblers were offering only Short Notice Walks [SNWs] because COVID restrictions meant we had not prepared a Winter Program. Then, in June 2021, we suspended all Ramblers walking due to the second COVID lockdown. This lockdown was lifted on 11 October and Ramblers is resuming both SNWs and Spring Program walks from 12 October. This update therefore relates to **both SNW and Spring Program walks**.

Staying up to date

COVID restrictions can change rapidly. The NSW Government plans to ease restrictions at each milestone on the *Roadmap to Recovery* - 70% full vaccination [covered here and starting 11 October], 80% full vaccination and 1 December 2021. For information about restrictions that will apply at each milestone please visit

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-10/roadmap-for-easing-covid19-restrictions.pdf>

You can stay abreast of current COVID-19 restrictions by visiting [COVID-19 | NSW Government](#).

WEA Ramblers Walk Protocols

We have been through one cycle of lockdown and resumption already in 2020. With that experience behind us, I am hopeful that the 12 October resumption will go smoothly. I am sure all walks participants will be very grateful to leaders who offer either SNW or Program walks. All Ramblers received their copy of the Spring Program in late August.

The general procedures and issues outlined below should assist leaders in managing all aspects of walks during this time. The revised **WEA Ramblers Walk Protocols – for 11 October 2021** is the principal guide for both leaders and participants, so it's obviously important for you to be very familiar with everything that's outlined in it, including the wording of the Walks Risk Waiver. It was sent to all Ramblers on 7 October and is available for download at: <http://wearamblers.org.au/leaders.htm>

Number of participants

Within the allowed limit set by the NSW Government, leaders continue to be in charge of determining the **maximum number of participants** that they feel comfortable with on their walks, reflecting both the type and location of each walk, space at rest stops, as well as their own preferences.

From 11 October the limit is **30 walkers** [participants plus leader] all of whom must be fully [also referred to as 'doubly'] vaccinated or have a medical exemption. The Government plans to increase this limit from 30 to **50** after 80% full vaccination.

Choice of walk route/area and Proof of home address

Residents of the Greater Sydney region including Blue Mountains, Wollongong, Central Coast and Shellharbour are permitted to move around within the region after the lifting of lockdown on 11 October. Travel between the Greater Sydney region and regional NSW is not yet permitted. Your walk should comply with these restrictions.

On the *Roadmap to Recovery* it is anticipated this restriction will be removed once the 80% milestone is achieved. This will need to be confirmed. We will keep you advised of changes as soon as practicable.

In the meantime, it is possible that Government regulations will need to change in response to changing rates of vaccination and levels of disease as the State recovers. New local 'stay at home' orders may be re-imposed in some areas to deal with a COVID outbreak.

As a result:

- You may find your planned walk is wholly or partly in a new lockdown area.
- Some walkers may be subject to travel restrictions which could exclude them from your walk.
- Some walkers may need to clarify with you the exact route of the walk to determine if they are excluded.

This may happen quickly. Please check with NSW Government COVID-19 regulations [COVID-19 | NSW Government](#) prior to your walk to confirm that the area of your walk complies. You may need to cancel it. In the event of new 'stay at home' orders, all walkers will need to show **proof of home address** to you as Leader at the start of the walk.

Walk set-up

- We continue to recommend that, where at all possible, the walks you offer be accessible both for those using public transport and participants who choose to drive.
- Circuit walks are preferable, but if that is not always feasible, it is recommended that public transport links between the start and finish points are as short as possible.
- If you feel you need a 'refresher' on some of your walks, or would like to explore new options along the way, consider doing some pre-walks with a small group of other Ramblers.
- As indicated above, the number of participants you feel would be appropriate for you to manage on a particular walk is your own choice, within the allowed limits.
- Even with a relatively small number of participants, it is recommended that a tail be put in place. This will assist in managing appropriate social distancing during the walk.
- It will be important to be aware that participants may not have been able to walk a great deal, or have had experience on a variety of track / path surfaces during the past few months, so some may take a little while to regain their full bushwalking skills.

Short Notice Walk information to include

- As usual, please provide general details of your walk's location, approximate distance, Grade level and any other details of the terrain that might assist potential participants in deciding if it's a good fit for them.
- Please don't provide the starting time for your walk in the Short Notice Walk details. It should be given only to people whose walk bookings you have accepted. (You may also prefer to provide the exact meeting point only to this group). This is intended to reduce the possibility of others just turning up unexpectedly for the walk, and then having to be turned away.
- Give clear information about your preferred contact details, including any general restrictions on timing of phone calls.

Spring Program Walk [11 October – 30 November 2021]

- If you have submitted a walk for the Spring Program please check that the route of your walk complies with NSW Government restrictions and is not affected by new 'stay at home' rules. [refer to '**Choice of walk route/area**' above].

Walks booking process-SNW and Spring Program Walks

- Members interested in a particular walk can contact the leader named in the Short Notice Walk e-mail or Spring Program they have received, using the leader's preferred contact details.

- If there are still places available for the walk when they contact you, and you both decide that it is a suitable walk for them to undertake (*with the proviso that, as leader, your opinion on this must take precedence*), you can let them know the starting time and meeting point for the walk.
- If new local 'stay at home' rules have been imposed you will both need to agree that their home address is not excluded.
- You will also need to request their basic contact information, both so that you can be in touch with them again if needed, and for the **No touch sign-on** process, to facilitate your completion of the usual Walks record. It's recommended that you fill in as much of this as possible before the walk, so that it can be completed more easily and discreetly.
- You may like to remind them that they must bring **proof of vaccination** and **proof of home address**.
- If all places available for the walk have already been filled (on a first come, first in basis), you can add people to a Reserve list, in case someone has to withdraw before the walk takes place (and has let you know about it in good time). Make sure you record contact details for the Reserve group.
- In attempting to increase the number of Ramblers who can access walking opportunities, we ask that you also use the Reserve list to offer first choice of booking for your next suitable walk, to those on your list.

Proof of Vaccination

- All participants must be **fully vaccinated** or have a **medical exemption** to satisfy NSW Government COVID-19 restrictions operating from 11 October. [Rules for fully vaccinated people in NSW | NSW Government](#)
- All participants must show **proof of vaccination** to you as Leader at the start of the walk.
- More information about proof of vaccination including medical exemption can be obtained from [Get proof of COVID-19 vaccination | NSW Government](#)
- Avoid handling proof of vaccination documents, devices, etc [consistent with 'no touch' sign-on process]

Under the *Roadmap to Recovery* it is anticipated most COVID restrictions will be removed from unvaccinated people in NSW from 1 December but this will need to be confirmed. We will keep you advised of changes as soon as practicable.

Other walk issues

- If you need to cancel your walk [SNW and Spring Program] please advise Mary Linnane, Short Notice Walks Co-ordinator, wearamblerssydney6@gmail.com
- During your circle time at the start of the walk, make sure you go through the routine of reading out the current Walks Risk Waiver to everyone and then tick off each person's individual verbal agreement to this on your sign-on sheet.
- Check that your First Aid kit includes an intact face mask and disposable gloves, in case any kind of physical assistance is required for a participant during your walk.

If there's anything you are unsure about, please be in touch with either Jeanie Lai, Walks Co-ordinator or me, and we will do our best to assist in any way we can. All feedback will be really welcome, both on the process itself and how walks are going. We can then look at making adjustments, as required. And of course as Government regulations change, we will keep you up-to-date on any implications they might have for Ramblers walks.

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