

Hiking information.

Sorry for this big slab of information but, as there are a lot of new boys starting in Seniors it is important to let you know several things about our Expedition, and Environmentalist badge work. I thought I would put together some notes about our outdoor activities, and the great challenge we face this year.

As part of their badge work, there is a requirement for overnight camping. Initially there will be at least two hikes a year for the next 6 years if they are just starting in years 7. These range from overnight to three nights. Once they reach year 10, or Omega's there are some additional trips required.

This brings up the challenge. In the past, we have normally been able to provide transport for all the boys with minimal requirements for parents to assist. With the potential number of boys attending, this is not going to be possible so, as flagged in the Hike form, we will be requiring the assistance of parents to drive boys to the hike locations.

Some things to consider about this.

We will cover the cost of petrol for these trips.

If you want to provide transport, but do not want to participate in the hike itself, that is fine. Most of the hikes are in areas with lots of tourist sites, and various ranges of accommodation.

If you want to hike with us, we encourage you to do so. The more adults hiking, the better the overall safety. It gets you out and into the country, hopefully seeing places you have not seen before. It is a great encouragement for the boys seeing other people are interested in them. It is important to remember though, that the Officers, are the ones in charge of the hike. We are responsible for the boys, first and foremost.

You will need most likely to provide your own equipment. We do have some to lend to the boys such as Tents and backpacks, but not enough for everyone.

As I said earlier, the boys will be doing several hikes or overnight trips of some sort over the next 6 years. With that in mind, you may want to consider starting to purchase equipment now. A lot of this will be used for years to come. It is also not all required at once. Boots, and clothing will need to be replaced as boys grow, but sleeping bags, tents, and back packs, can last many years.

I should preface this next part, with a disclaimer. This is all written from my own experiences hiking, back country skiing, and snow camping. It is based on observations, and experiences.

Food.

This is a hard one, as everyone has different likes and dislikes. There are a lot of instant, quick, lightweight pre-packaged food out there. Some is good, some not so much. Food should be easy to prepare, easy to eat, and easy to clean up.

I try and use food that can be prepared and eaten in the packet, or by just adding water, if after a hot meal. Meals that need to be heated in a cooking pan, require cleaning up afterwards. Fresh fruit like apples and oranges travel well. Bananas can be packed safely and

are a great source of vitamins and minerals after a hard days hike, or a quick energy boost while hiking. Fresh vegetables like carrot, cucumber, tomatoes and lettuce make a great fresh addition to a meal as well.

For breakfast, there are a range of porridges and other cereals available. There are also breakfast and muesli bars.

Lunch can be biscuits, sandwiches, rolls, cheese, salami type meat. Something that is energy rich.

Tea can be salad and a can of chicken or tuna, a preprepared meal, bread rolls, pita and filling. There are a lot of meals that can be heated by boiling them in a pot, check out an Indian grocer to see the huge range. You can get pre-cooked rice that can be heated this way. Some noodle packs are not bad, but the cheap packets are basically empty carbs. They will fill you but not provide much in the way of protein. Adding a small tin of chicken or tuna, can make it tastier, and more beneficial.

While hiking, it is important to keep fuelling the body. Lollies will do this with a rush of sugar, but the body burns it to quickly, and you are left feeling worse. If you want to go for sweet things, dates are very good, as they take longer to digest the sugars. Proteins, and fats will provide a more sustained level of energy. This can be in energy bars, chocolates or trail mix, often called scroggin. Twiggy sticks, and cheese sticks also provide additional fuel, and don't forget bananas.

We will be taking the boys through some meal preparation before we go hiking. We will get them to cook their own food before they go as well.

Equipment required.

With that in mind, I have also prepared some notes on equipment.

With all this equipment, look for sales, and google, or other search engines, are your friend. Aldi have great products for hiking, and the various outdoor shops all carry a range of suitable equipment. Feel free to email to call me to talk about options.

Boots.

I would say the important items required are good quality comfortable hiking boots. I recommend at least a mid-ankle or full ankle boot, as they will keep the feet more stable than runners, on uneven terrain. This is valuable when they are carrying a pack as there is more load on the ankles. My advice with boots, in order of importance:

- 1 Buy the best fitting boot, not the most expensive boot. If the boot does not fit properly, it can stop the hike. Thankfully these days, there are a lot of inexpensive good boots out there. If blisters are to bad that it is bleeding, we cancel the hike for everyone. I have been that person.

2 Lightest boot. Every bit of weight saved, makes the hike easier. Weight on your feet, is more tiring than weight in your pack, as you must lift your feet with every step.

Waterproof/windproof jackets. Other clothing

Your outer layer is the difference between life and death. I know of very experienced hikes/climbers/skiers, that have been rescued, when on the verge of dying from hypothermia.

This outer shell is just that, it provides protection from water, but more importantly wind. It should not be insulated like a ski jacket, as that just adds weight and bulk. A plastic rainbird jacket is enough if you have good layers underneath to provide insulation.

There are now many waterproof jackets available at various price points. If you can get a breathable jacket that is better. Google waterproof jacket. Mountain Warehouse have some for under \$30.00

Waterproof pants. These can be plastic as the legs are going to sweat anyway. They should be able to be put on over the boots and a lot have zips on the ankles, and some even zip the whole length of the leg.p

Warm jackets. Here there are several options. Down is great and very warm, and pack small. It is useless when wet. Softshell jackets are not as warm, but are warm when wet, as they are semi windproof, they also take up more room, but are probably more versatile.

Thermals are important as a base layer. Cotton t-shirts and shorts have no insulation properties when wet. They drain heat from the body. Polypropylene thermals are widely available and not expensive.

Pants, I would suggest microfibre, as most are quick drying, and tough.

Good fitting **socks**, either merino, wool blend or other relatively warm socks. Make sure your boy is wearing these socks when trying on boots.

Lightweight full brim hat. A cap will not protect your ears, or neck. Places like Kmart have good hats for around \$10.00

Sleeping bags.

Down is best. Down is expensive. Down is lightest. Down packs smaller. Down takes more care. Down is not good when wet. You can get waterproof down bags. Waterproof down bags are even more expensive.

Sleeping bags are a hard one, particularly for young boys. Most are designed for adults and cost accordingly. This means the boys are carrying a lot of unused sleeping bag. This is added volume and weight. Some companies have youth bags, but there are not necessarily warm enough. OnePlanet have some outdoor education bags that aren't bad.

The thing with sleeping bags, is that they can be a good investment. I have just retired a down bag that I have used for 30 years. The down has moved around so much, there are empty patches.

There is an ISO standard for sleeping bags. Always get a bag that uses this. There are three measurements. **Comfort**, the temperature a female can comfortably sleep. **Limit**, the lower limit for a female, and the **Comfort** limit for a male. **Extreme**, you may survive at this temperature but that is about all you will be doing.

The packed size is important, because if the sleeping bag takes up all the room, you will not have space for food, clothing, and tent. I have several synthetic sleeping bags, several down sleeping bags, and a synthetic quilt. I have been hiking for many years so have purchased different bags for different activities. For a first sleeping bag, I would suggest getting as warm a bag as possible, as it is easier to cool off than to warm up. Shivering in your bag with all your clothes on, does not make you sleep well. Tiredness can lead to lethargy and hypothermia.

Sleeping Mats. For the younger lighter boys, a foam mat is normally all they need. Not the thin ones though. If you can feel a piece of Lego through it, it is too thin. These are good, because they are cheap, can go on the outside of the pack, and can double up as a cushion. Places like AliExpress and eBay will have some good priced inflatable mats.

Backpack/Rucksack

We have enough packs for the boys to borrow.

If you want to purchase though, there are things you should look for.

The size is the main one. That 80-litre pack may be a bargain, but it holds too much. Ideally it should be 60-75 litres.

The harness should have a lot of adjustment for the back height.

Having access at the bottom makes it easier to access, tent, sleeping bag and the like, but can be a point of failure, and water entry. Top opening backs are more waterproof, but you need to empty the pack to get the items at the bottom.

Lots of straps and attachment points look cool, but most will never be used, and they add useless weight. They also provide catch points for branches and rocks.

Tents

We can lend tents. All we ask is that they are treated well, and if taken home, left to dry and air before being returned.

Cooking and eating

We will have enough stoves for boys to share, but boys will need to bring bowls, plates, cups and cutlery.

Walking poles.

These may seem like a luxury or a gimmick, but provide stability, momentum, and braking. They allow for better balance, they make uphill easier, as they give your arms something to push up with, which takes load off the legs, and they relieve the strain on the legs going downhill. I lent one to Mr Richardson, and he has never hiked without them since.

I have attached some examples of various items I have spoken about. If you have any questions, please, please, please, speak to me for advice. lt200b@gmail.com 0479003979

Mountain Warehouse have this jacket ranging in price from \$27 - \$50, depending on the colour.

https://www.google.com/search?newwindow=1&rlz=1C1CHBF_en-GBAU898AU899&sxsrf=ALeKk03BMztVzGDBSFRJ5G7ADHGSxDF4RQ%3A1612872085209&ei=IXkiYMaSDOKC4t4Pn_eC0Ao&q=waterproof+jackets&oq=waterproof+jackets&gs_lcp=CgZwc3ktYWIQAzICCAAyAggAMgIIADICCAAyAggAMgIIADICCAAyAggAMgIIADIHCAAQFBCHAjoFCAAQkQI6BAGAEEM6CAgAELEDEIMBOgslLhCxAXDHARCjAjoOCC4QsQMogwEQxwEQowI6BAGjECc6BwgAELEDEEM6CwgAELEDEIMBEJECUOaeWFjdwFhglMpYaABwAngAgAH3AYgBqh6SAQYwLjcuMTKYAQcGAAQgQdnd3Mtd2I6wAEB&sclient=psy-ab&ved=0ahUKEwiGsdPd4NzuAhVigdgFHZ-7AKoQ4dUDCA0&uact=5



Kmart have a cook set available.

<https://www.kmart.com.au/product/ultra-jet-butane-hiking-stove/3121802>

<https://www.kmart.com.au/product/butane-canister-227g/3123312>



AliExpress have many options, this one is around the \$25.00 mark with free shipping. They have a large range to choose from.

https://www.aliexpress.com/item/32952111515.html?spm=a2g0o.productlist.0.0.718d2dfbgrHhHT&algo_pvid=9ee33ccb-3edf-407f-a73f-ef968c701bef&algo_expid=9ee33ccb-3edf-407f-a73f-ef968c701bef-9&btsid=0b0a556a16128693211878229e4054&ws_ab_test=searchweb0_0,searchweb201602_,searchweb201603_

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