

AWT Minimal Impact Walking Code

1. Tour groups are kept on formal tracks where they exist. Where there are no tracks all of the measures below are followed:
 - a. wet or soft ground is actively avoided
 - b. guides ensure that customers are spread out (environmental type dependent) so that no two walkers follow the same footsteps or in single file
 - c. "scrub-bashing" is avoided by taking the most appropriate detour
 - d. Where off-track walking is anticipated these protocols submitted to the relevant management authority for approval and/or modification
2. A "carry in - carry out" policy is in place for all litter and waste (including food scraps)
3. In situations where toilets are not available bury waste in a hole at least 15cm deep, and at least 100 meters away from water bodies or campsites
4. If camping or preparation of meals is involved, the minimal impact camping criteria (following) is adhered to. I.e.
 - Use an existing campsite rather than make a new one in the same area. Setting up camp will be easier and additional ground cover will not be damaged.
 - Leaders should limit the size of their party, especially in sensitive areas.
 - Never cut live trees for tent poles.
 - Minimise damage to flora and fauna by taking care in selecting how and where you camp
 - Strictly obey all regulations regarding campfires and fire bans.
 - Fires should not be lit in sensitive areas, or areas with a shortage of firewood. Stoves must be used in high-use areas (note: in some areas of Australia regulation prescribes "stove only" areas).
 - Use established fire sites wherever possible. By preference use a "pit" fire and bury ashes. Use only dead wood for campfire fuel and ensure sufficient cleared area is maintained around fires and stoves for the prevailing conditions.
 - Don't make fires near trunks of trees, on roots, on peaty soil, or where the fire could spread or be difficult to extinguish.
 - Keep a suitable fire suppressant handy to control the fire should it begin to spread.
 - Once fire remains are cold, bury them and spread leaf litter or soil over the fire site. Distribute unused firewood and minimise the visual impact.
 - Don't dispose of aluminium foil or cans by burning (note: some material may be lined with foil, leaving an unsightly and non-biodegradable mess). Don't dispose of other material unless the fire is very hot and you are sure that it will be reduced to ash. Avoid producing noxious smoke. When in doubt carry it out!

- Exercise great care with stoves. Do not allow excess pressure, which may cause safety valve ignition
5. Group size to be limited to a maximum of 15 and 10 in sensitive areas
 6. Tracks prone to erosion are actively avoided when conditions are unfavourable (e.g. during the wet season)
 7. To reduce weed and disease dispersal, guides must ensure that all have clean boots before entering areas of high conservation significance. i.e. apply phytophthora cinnamomi protocols
 8. Fuel stoves are used for any cooking or brewing up – where possible take thermos flasks with hot water for hot drinks on the trail
 9. Minimal impact walking codes are provided to all our customers in pre-tour information as well as displayed on our website
 10. The lighting of fires is actively discouraged, and the negative environmental impacts of fires are explained to customers (e.g. risk of wildfire, scarring of campsites, erosion and trampled vegetation around campfire sites and environmental damage through collection of firewood)
 11. Regular monitoring of the condition of walking trails and surrounding areas is carried out (e.g. through photographs, log books) and data and information provided to relevant management authorities
 12. Regular feedback is provided to the protected area manager on the condition of walking trails
 13. Regular maintenance of walking trails (e.g. removal of leaf litter from boardwalks) is carried out by the operator and staff and guests are encouraged to join in on conservation tasks such as track management, wildlife data collections, etc
 14. The practices of minimal impact walking are actively promoted to all customers
 15. Where track hardening has not been undertaken, tour routes are regularly rotated to minimise impacts at one site. GPS logs enable accurate monitoring of routes used on Australian Walking Tours walks
 16. Australian Walking Tours prepares and hands out minimal impact codes specific to each of its different walking locations