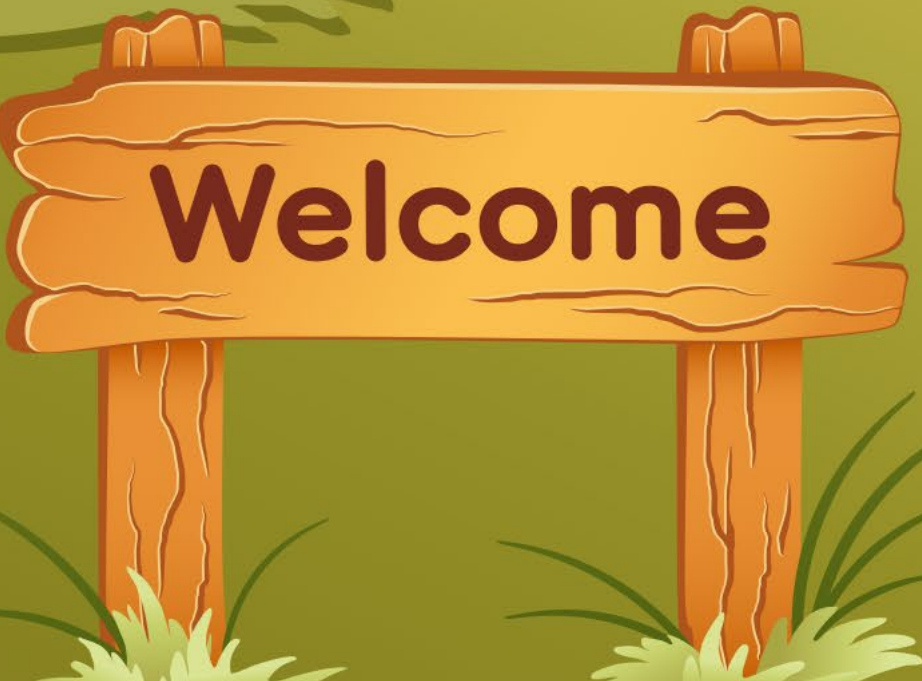




Start Here

FIRST Hike  
PROJECT







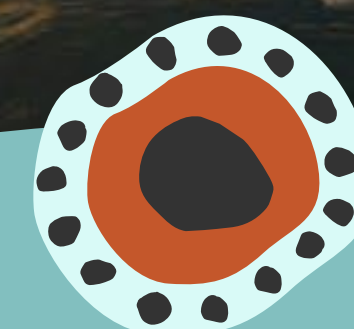


WELCOME  
CAMPSITE AREA 1

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We pay our respects to Traditional Owner Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge that the lands on which we walk, hike, camp and live have always been under the protection, custody and care of Aboriginal peoples. These same lands were never ceded, and no treaty was ever signed which means that we will forever be guests on these lands and must learn to treat it with the respect it deserves.

We strive to create and strengthen meaningful relationships with Aboriginal Australians, deepen our understanding of the traditional connection to land and culture, seek ways to hear and amplify the voices of Aboriginal Australians and take a position of listening and learning.



## TASK

*Find out who are the Traditional Owners of the land you are on at the moment and how to say an Acknowledgement of Country.*





WELCOME  
CAMPSITE AREA 1

WELCOME

Thank you for putting your hand up to help us show off the wonderful Australian bush to newly arrived youth from refugee and migrant backgrounds and make them feel more welcome here in the process. A welcome like this can be so easy for us yet so instrumental in making Australia feel more like home to people who have lost so much.

This may be an area you have had loads of experience in or it may be your first time working with the refugee community; either way we're glad you are with us and look forward to seeing how you can help us shape our future.







WELCOME  
CAMPSITE AREA 1

## ABOUT US

At First Hike Project we pride ourselves on the fact that we keep all of this as simple as possible.



All these things make First Hike Project an empathetic, inclusive and caring adventure charity, which makes it such a rewarding experience for both the volunteers and participants alike.

*We try to eliminate any obstacle that may prevent someone from attending one of our adventures*

- 1 We will cater for their dietary needs.
- 2 We will collect them from their home and drop them back there afterwards.
- 3 We will periodically contact them before the event to make sure the details have been understood.
- 4 We will be mindful of the fact that they may have experienced trauma in the not so distant past.
- 5 We are aware that we don't know the fitness level of our participants and design our events accordingly.





WELCOME  
CAMPSITE AREA 1

## OUR MISSION



First Hike Project aims to provide the access, knowledge and community for the safe and authentic exploration of the great outdoors in a welcoming, non-judgemental social environment.



We use the great Australian bush for our events, which range from day hikes in locations close to the cities, to overnight hikes in some of the most scenic national parks and wilderness areas.



Our events will always be 100% free for the participants as we supply all the hiking and camping gear needed as well as all food and drink plus transport costs.



We believe everyone who calls Australia home should feel welcome and valued and as such we aim to provide the access, knowledge and community for the safe and authentic exploration of the great outdoors in a welcoming, non-judgemental social environment.





WELCOME  
CAMPSITE AREA 1

## OUR VALUES

*With a focus on everyone's wellbeing,  
the values that hold First Hike Project together are...*



*Respect*



*Community*



*Inclusivity*



*Equality*



*Connection*

This is displayed in the way that we incorporate others' ideas of being in nature into our events. We are not here to show folk how to do something; we are here to watch and care for folk as they experience this wonderful resource of Australia's, sometimes for the first time!

We are here to show, as much as we are here to learn, we listen more than we talk, we respect other opinions and lived experience and we stand for an equal and inclusive Australia where all voices are heard. We respect everyone's right to show, express and live out their culture in an Australian context and as such no two hikes with us are ever the same.

This means that we know we are not right; it means that our opinions are not final, and it means that our way of doing things is not superior. As we grow, we incorporate all aspects of our participants' and guides' methodology into how we run our events and this spirit of inclusivity is where we find out strength. To say we are the sum of all our parts would come close to the truth and to make this a reality, we hold fast to our values.





WELCOME  
CAMPSITE AREA 1

# WHAT WE DO



Through our varied calendar of events, we introduce newly arrived youth from refugee and migrant backgrounds to the wonderful world of hiking and camping in Australia. We create safe spaces for them to experience the physical world around them whilst allowing space for them to mentally process this in context of their journey to Australia. We are encouraging and willing to meet them where they are; this is what creates the uniqueness of each of events.

There are many roles that need to be filled in order for each of our events to get off the ground. We need to access so many skills from our volunteer group, to list them all would be impossible. If you have a particular skill which you think may be useful, please let us know so we can best position you in our group.





Volunteering





## VOLUNTEERING CAMPSITE AREA 2

# RESPONSIBILITIES

Our first and foremost responsibility is to the participants on our events. We are there to serve and care for them first, before we take care of ourselves. Remembering that this may be the first time some of them have even seen a backpack, sleeping bag or tent, or been in an Australian bush setting, so on the odd occasion, this has led to the guides setting up their own tents in the dark.... but hey, that's no problem right!

Challenging what we 'know' to be correct is always a part of our events and comes from our desire to be inclusive and understanding. What we think we know about how to hike is always challenged by other cultures understanding of this environment and as long as we are being true to conservation standards and maintaining the areas for future visitors, we are happy to extend leeway in how we conduct ourselves in that environment. It's about creating a happy balance between educating and learning; we are both guide and participant in this respect, being one or the other at different times.



If that all sounds tricky, well it's probably because it is. To help get this right, please spend as much time as you can before the events getting to know the other volunteers, attending meetings and participating in the group discussions to acclimatise yourself with our ethos and culture. If you are ever in doubt as to what to do next, then reach out to your fellow volunteer community and the local coordination team who will be more than happy to help you out.





## CODE OF CONDUCT

First Hike Project Inc.'s (FHP) Code of Responsible Conduct describes our shared understanding of agreed responsible conduct and is underpinned by FHP's mission and values. This Code covers all staff, volunteers and fieldworkers when representing FHP. Further details on FHP processes and policies can be found in full on the FHP website. During the course of creating your personal profile on our Volunteer database you will be asked to sign your agreement to our Code of Conduct.

The Code has **5** main areas

### *Personal conduct*

- We shall not discriminate on any basis
- Be committed to keeping children safe from harm and abuse
- Strive to create a harmonious, safe and productive environment

### *Whistleblower policy*

- Whistleblower definition: an insider within an organisation, who reports misconduct, dishonest or illegal activity that has occurred within that organisation
- You have an obligation to report wrongful acts committed or suspected
- FHP will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of the reporter

### *Safeguarding children & young people policy*

- Zero tolerance of harm, abuse or exploitation of children / youth
- Taking of images to be done with respect and consent

### *Environmental sustainability policy*

- Minimize our impact on the environment and maximize the use of resources
- Educate and motivate each other to act in an environmentally responsible manner

### *Fundraising policy*

- Use only fundraising techniques we would be happy to be used on ourselves  
ie. nothing annoying!





# VOLUNTEERING

## CAMPSITE AREA 2

### AREAS

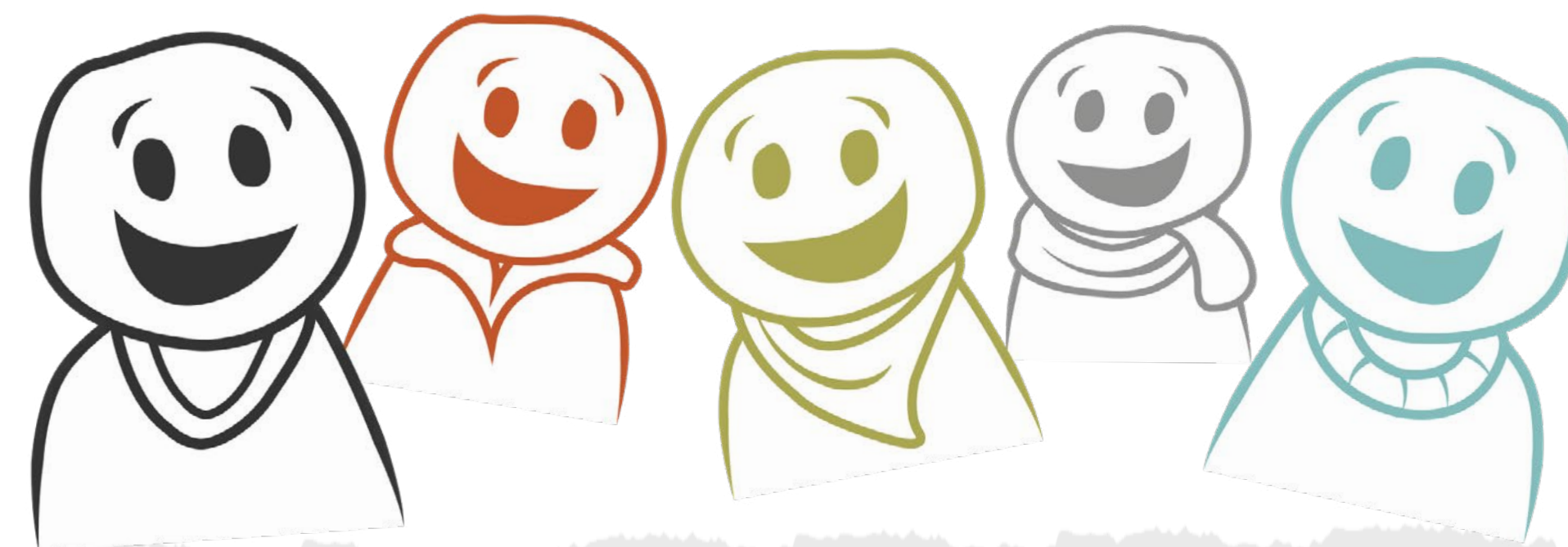
*Examples of areas our volunteers help out in are:*

We run school information sessions where we interactively show the prospective participants our gear, how to use it and try to explain our events as best as possible so they know what to expect..... this is generally a fun event using your interpretation skills.

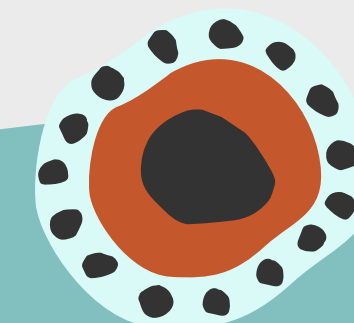
We raise our own funds for each hike which can take the form of sausage sizzles, movie nights, cake sales, organising sponsorships, sporting events, in fact just about any way of raising money is welcomed and supported by the groups.

We monitor, maintain and care for our own hiking gear; broken or lost gear needs replacing, and an active inventory is maintained so that we have the gear we need when the time comes.

On certain hikes we will have the capacity for a support vehicle team. They will be on hand for the duration of the event to assist with any emergencies and to keep the group safe... this may include the use of your 4x4 if you have one!



On top of these needs we have graphic designers, web developers, admin workers, hiking guides, volunteer coordinators among a multitude of other roles to be filled..... please make a habit of attending our volunteer meetings to see what's needed in your area.



### TASK

*Figure out an area you are best suited to volunteer and one where you would be stretched a bit and put your hand up for both... we need all hands on deck to make the magic happen!*





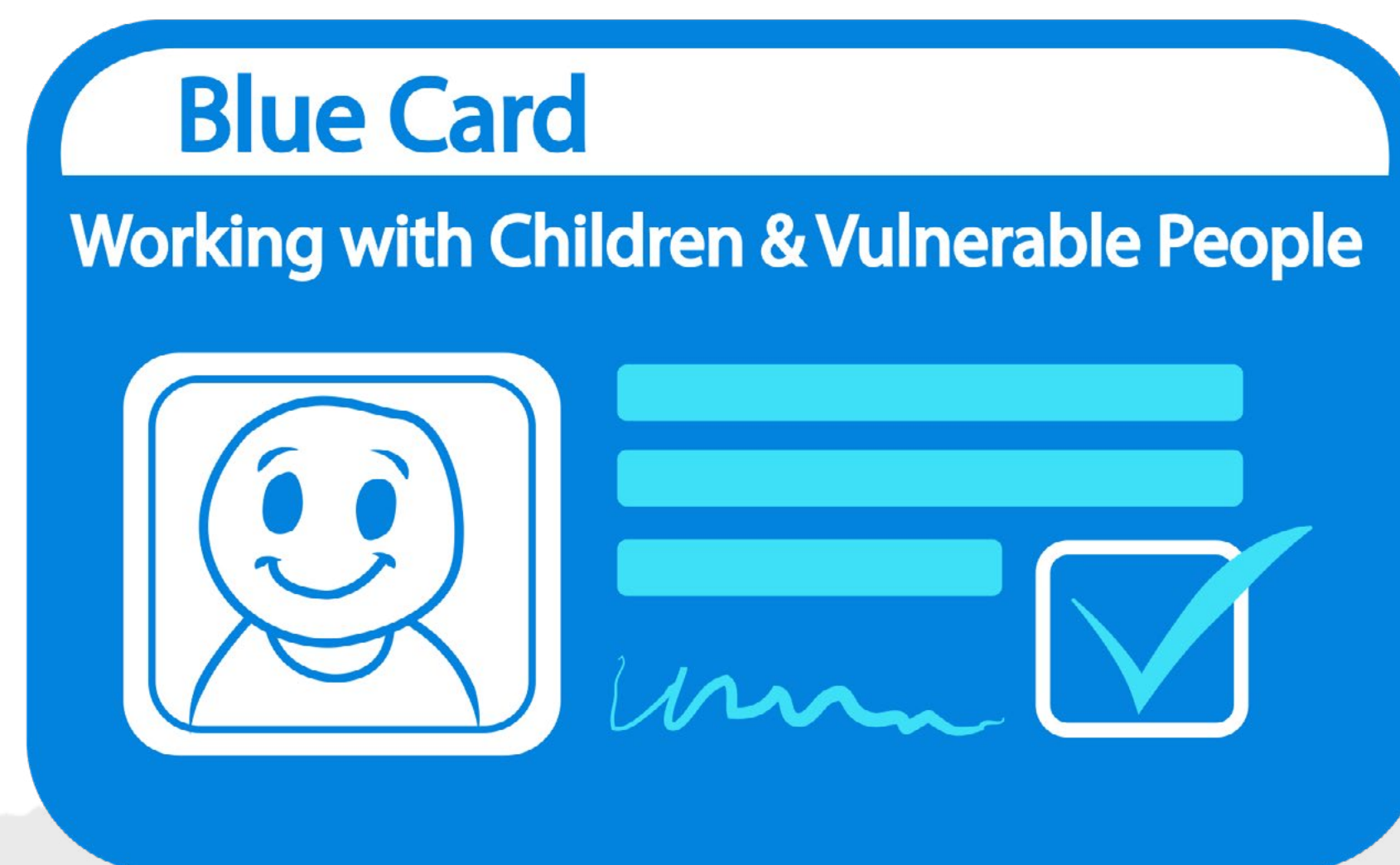
3

Health and  
Safety





## WORKING WITH CHILDREN CARDS



Caring for and providing a safe space for minors is a top priority of ours and as such each and every volunteer will need to obtain a Working with Children / Vulnerable People / Blue Card no matter the roles and responsibilities they are to carry out. During the course of creating your online volunteer profile with us you will be directed to the relevant authority in your state to apply for this card. Please note that no volunteer duties can commence until we have proof of this card so don't delay in applying for yours today!





## OUTDOOR TRAINING COURSES



### *Remote First Aid*

Being in remote locations, sometimes a distance from immediate medical help, we need to be able to treat any bumps, stings, scrapes, cuts, burns, etc. which may occur. We always have a minimum of one trained, qualified Remote Area First Aid volunteer on every hike, but we strive to train all of our volunteers in this arena. It is our belief that you can never have too many able-bodied medical helpers! Please check with your local coordinator if you need this training.



### *Bronze Medallion Water Safety*

What an added bonus to be able to plunge into a cool river, lake or handy body of water after a day hiking! In order to be able to offer this to our participants there has to be a trained Bronze Medallion holder on the guiding crew and as such we endeavour to train as many of our volunteers in this areas as possible... nothing worse than staring at a refreshing body of water and not being able to use it! Please check with your local coordinator if you need this training.





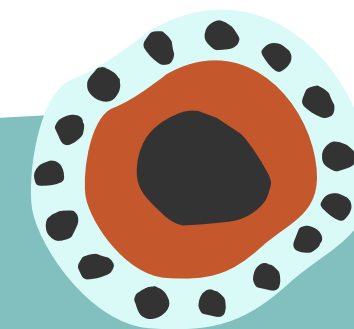
## RISK MANAGEMENT

As a hiking organization there are inherent risks involved in our activities and as such, we use a tried and tested method of risk mitigation. Our risk management tool is something which you will become familiar with before your first hike and we ask you to concentrate on the measures put in place that enable us to conduct these events for new Australians.

By highlighting where the known risks are and discussing this in a group environment, we aim to keep all our volunteers alert to any new risks that may arise due to weather, location, participants, transport and a number of other areas which we interact with during the course of our events e.g. guiding an event, going on school visits, fund-raising or doing gear maintenance.



Risk management is a group activity so when there is a new hazard, group discussion is the ideal way of finding a solution. The volunteer group is to work as a team in this environment to best care for those around us and ourselves.



### TASK

*Think of some specific risks on the hike and then cross-check to see if they are in our Risk Management form. If they're not, please have a chat with the crew and make sure they get added. This makes us better at what we do.*



## CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING

From time to time, First Hike Project Inc will arrange group cultural awareness training through reputable organisations and we strongly encourage everyone to attend these whether you are experienced in this arena or not.

Familiarising yourself with your own cultural bias is a great first step to accepting others as they come and fostering the level playing field we strive to create on our events.

We also encourage all volunteers to use resources such as the SBS Cultural Atlas to deepen their understanding of some of the cultures we encounter in the course of our events.







## PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVES

As we are all now totally aware, public health directives can and will disrupt the planning and processes of our events. The safety of all those who attend our events is paramount and as such we will follow the directives coming from the health departments (federal and state) closely. This at times, may mean cancelling an event, changing our transportation method, altering an event from a multi-day to a single day hike, etc. We will always adhere to safety regulations and if you feel our procedures are falling short of this at any time, please bring this to the attention of the hike leader or state coordinator as soon as possible.









# SCHOOL LIAISON



We always need energetic volunteers to go and perform a 'show and tell' type event to introduce the concept of hiking and our organisation to prospective participants. This covers TAFE's, schools, English Language classes, in fact anywhere where we make connections and recruit our participants from. In some instances, they may have never heard of the activity before and if we are attending this place for the first time, they would not have heard of us either.

These relationships are very important to us, and your local coordinators will assist you in making contact with the right person there and what to take along with you. As always, it is a very informal occasion where you can meet some of the hikers on the next event and they can ask as many questions as they need.... try to go in a group so there are many volunteers to field all their questions!





PRE-HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 4

# HIKE AND CAMPSITE SELECTION

As always, we never really know the fitness and skill level of those we are taking with us, so hike selection is a crucial element to everyone enjoying themselves out there. The group you are joining will already have a few routes and camps that they have used in the past which can always be re-done but feel free to suggest a few of your own at the next volunteer meeting.

There are a few criteria that need to be considered such as: can you get a support vehicle into the camp and trail easy enough, are there fees to be paid for entry to each, how far a drive / train ride is it to get to the trailhead, group size limits, etc. Your local group will have experience with all these elements, so the first point of call is always the coordinator running the meeting.







# PRE-HIKE CHECKLIST

There are many tasks and duties which need to be performed prior to heading out with a group of participants and we ask all volunteers to not only attend to items which they are good at, but also to chip in and help with things that just need to be done. Your local coordinators will put out a list of items to be done on the group chat for each hike and please put your name down for at least one of them.

Being completely volunteer-run means that we can only be as good as the resources we are given by our volunteer groups so help us to take out as many participants as possible in a season without burning any one person out!





# COMMUNICATIONS WITH HIKERS

The communication with prospective hikers starts at the school, TAFE or college we attend to do our recruitment. You will notice that the level of English comprehension is very varied in the group and it can go from very rudimentary to advanced depending on how long they have been in the country and what their background is. Please refer to the 'Tip for Communicating' for ideas on how to tackle this.



We also maintain communications with them from the time they submit their application to the morning of the hike so that they are aware of when it is, what to bring and how we will transport them to and from the event. We use this avenue of communication to check that we have the correct contact information for them. We like to have a minimum of two interactions with them (asking for short 'YES' replies at a minimum) so that they feel confident in the event and that we know they are aware of the essential information. Please try and keep texts short, concise and upbeat to help them settle into the idea of spending time with us.



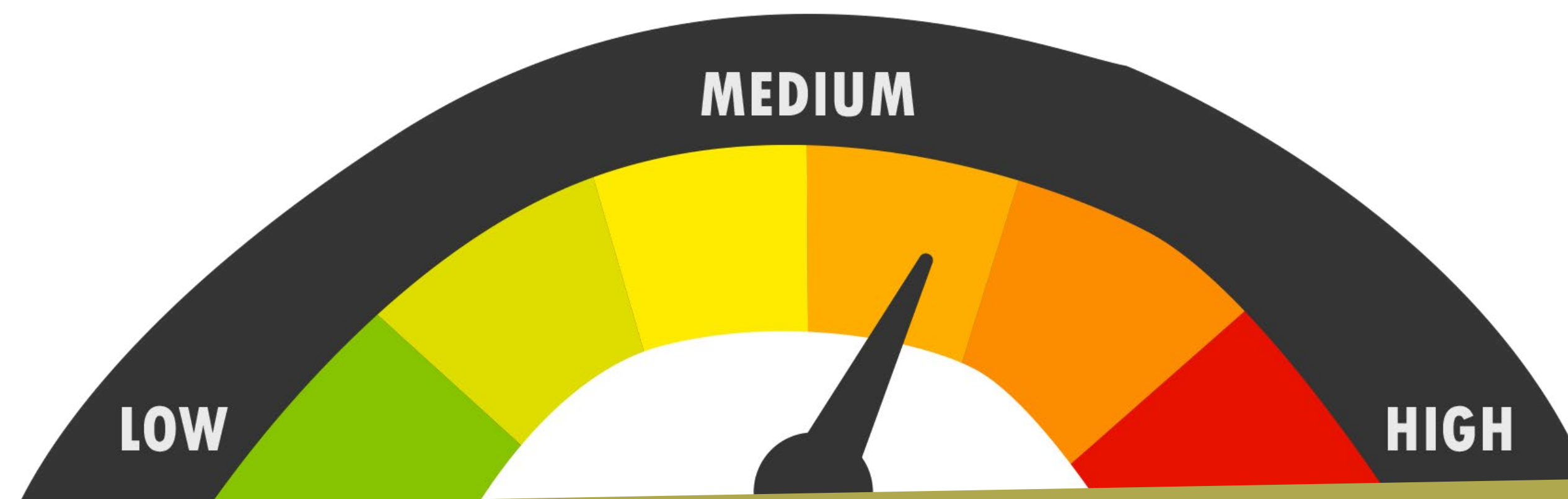




# RISK PLANNING

This is an area that we take great care in planning for. If we plan ahead then in the event of an emergency, we will be prepared and know what to do. As a group, before heading out on an event, please discuss the relevant risks and hazards associated with this area, time of year, particular group of participants, etc. and settle on what to add to the Risk Management plan.

Having a list of numbers for the local emergency response teams, hospitals, breakdown services, police, etc. will make it easier to navigate an emergency. Please discuss this in the group thread with the other volunteers or at the meeting prior to departure.





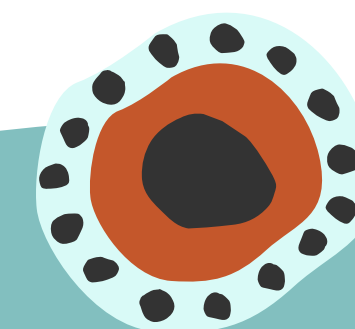


PRE-HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 4

# SUPPORT VEHICLE PLANNING



Not all hikes will have a dedicated support vehicle close by at all times. This will depend on the terrain and local access laws or permits among other things, but at the least, there will be a plan to have a vehicle within reach at all times in the case of an emergency. This could mean an escape plan or an access plan, but it should be pre-planned and stated in the Risk Management Plan. You never know when an ankle will roll, or a burn will happen so having a plan in place beforehand is imperative to a successful response.



## TASK

*Look back over the maps of the last hike you completed and try see how a support vehicle could best service this area in the case of an emergency.*



## GEAR PREP

Depending on the type of hike we are planning, the gear we bring will change. Obviously, an overnight hike takes more gear and planning than a day hike and the gear we take with us will be reflected accordingly. During the hike planning communications, this list will be worked out by all attending and the coordinators and then a volunteer put in charge of having this prepped and ready on the day.

We have enough gear on hand in each state to take a maximum of 15 participants on a full overnight hiking adventure. This includes such things as backpacks, tents, sleeping bags and mats, cookers, cutlery, torches, first aid kits, EPIRB's, etc. Make sure everything we need is in place and that everyone else knows where it is!











HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 5

# WELCOME / ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Respecting the Traditional Owners of the land we walk, hike and camp on is very important to us at First Hike Project Inc. and as such we put a lot of effort into creating relationships with the Elders in the area wherever possible. Having a Welcome to Country conducted at the beginning of an event not only gives our participants an amazing introduction to the longest living culture on earth, but it also helps us to pay our own respects and reparations.

Walking on country is a privilege and an honour and if we are to extend the hand of welcome to those newly arrived on these shores then we should also be asking for permission to do so from the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we hike. Maintaining these relationships is one of the important duties attached to each group and we expect all our volunteers to be active in this respect.

If you have any existing relationships with First Nations groups, please let your coordinator group know so that we can increase our ability to connect and respect.





HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 5

## HIKE LEADER

Each hike needs a dedicated hike leader, and this person will be in charge of the paperwork for all persons on the event, next of kin contact details, routes maps, first aid gear and emergency beacons. You will never be asked to be in this position on your first couple of hikes with us so please listen to all instructions from the hike leader and assist in any way you can.







# TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING

- Speak slowly but NOT ridiculously so. A constant observation is that Australians run all their words into one, making it really hard for learners to hear each word.
- If the hiker has very basic English, keep your questions simple and stick to what they will be used to initially e.g. Where are you from? How long have you been here? How old are you?
- If you ask a question, give the hiker time to reply. Remember they have to hear, work out what you said, convert your question into their language and then create and translate their reply. Not an easy process!
- Remember to use words to suit your listener. Many students won't feel confident to ask the meaning of a word, so think about the words you use if possible. Simple is better until you can grasp how advanced your students are.
- If they are seeking a word, and are trying out different words, it's appropriate to supply the correct word. Most are very keen to get the correct vocabulary so it's ok to suggest a better word or way of saying it. Keep this positive and casual.
- Unless a hiker asks you the correct sentence structure, stick to vocabulary rather than correcting grammar.
- When hiking and walking single file, remember your voice carries forward so if you're in front, the person behind will have trouble hearing you. They also will be unable to watch your lips, so make your words even clearer and maybe a bit louder.
- Relaxing in the evening is a great time to introduce a few new words or ideas. Remember words like 'Trangia, fleece, bush toilet, eucalypt, burner, stove, tent-peg, etc may be very foreign to them so make sure you are understood, check they know what you mean. Illustrate by holding something up or show them what you mean. Be very precise.





HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 5

# SAFETY AND FIRST AID GUIDE



Each event will also have a dedicated Safety Officer who is in charge of all things safety including Covid protocols, maintaining adherence to the Risk Management plan (although this is everyone's responsibility), local area requirements, etc. and as such, should be listened to at all times.

We try to have a minimum of two trained Remote Area First Aiders in each group and sometimes we can have 100% coverage in this area! We endeavour to have as many of our volunteers put through this course as possible so that we are prepared for all emergencies at all times. If you haven't yet got this qualification, please let your local coordinators know and we will try to find a time that suits to get you trained.





HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 5

## ACTIVITIES

Our events are intended to have plenty of time and space for the participants to soak up the wonder of the Aussie bush in a safe and relaxed environment. As such, we do not have a set itinerary of activities which we provide.

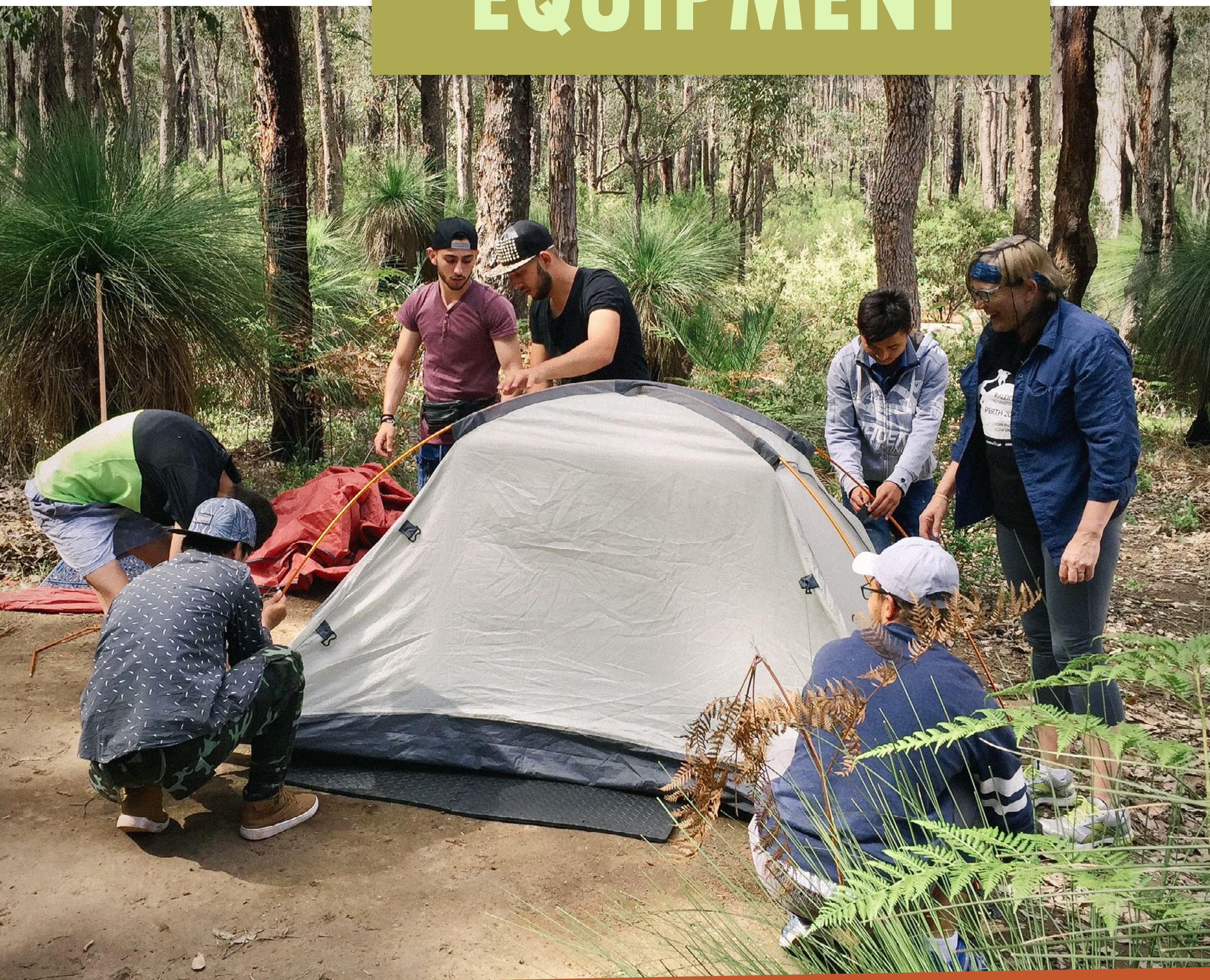
This does not exclude the opportunity for you to relate some specific knowledge you may have about the area, fauna, flora, history, etc. and we encourage you to find an appropriate time to do so. It may on the spur of the moment, it could be with the group or just one participant, it could be in a discussion around the camp fire at night... we want to leave enough space around our events for things to happen in a very relaxed and natural manner so feel free to try find an interested ear for whatever you have to share.

This is what makes each of our events so unique and we value your individual input.





# EQUIPMENT



When handing out the gear each participant will need for the event, please bear in mind that this could be the first time they have come across such items. Take the time to answer questions, assist with fitting backpacks correctly, explain head torches, demonstrate pack water covers and generally help them to feel comfortable in this unique situation.

On arriving at camp, or at lunch stops, conduct show-and-tell demonstrations on the gear you will be using at that time. Gather everyone around one tent and demonstrate pitching, inflate a mattress, unfurl a sleeping bag from it's stuff-sack, in fact try and impart as much information as is possible without overloading; it could be that there are a few sessions conducted throughout the course of the weekend.

Always remember to bear in mind that your words may not be understood but your actions may be where the information is being absorbed from. Divide up the volunteer guiding group and make sure each participant has understood how to go about setting up and using their gear for the event. This can be a time when many laughs are had so don't be shy in being silly to break the ice!





HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 5

# FOOD AND MENU PLANNING

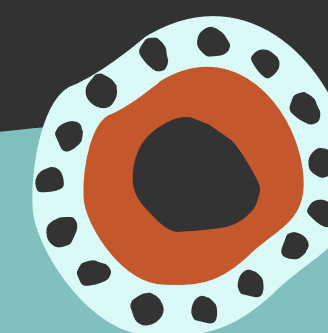


The ethos of First Hike Project Inc. is that we are all in this together as equals and this is reflected in the food that we eat. Once we have got all the registration forms in from the participants and we know which volunteers are going to be attending we can go about finding a suitable menu for everyone. This, at times, can mean we eat only vegetarian or that there is a side meat options or it can also be 100% halal. It is completely determined by those attending and finding a suitable menu that we can all share and eat together.

We understand that this can be very variable, so if you have a very specific or restrictive dietary need, please bring this up with the coordinators beforehand and this can also be accommodated for so that you can still join in the event.

There are many roles attached with the food and menu preparation such as planning, purchasing, prep and pack-down so please be prepared to lend a hand and help get this item across the line for all events.

It is very rewarding to see some of our typical Australian food being eaten for the first time by our participants.... not always 100% favourably either! It's all part of the experience though.



## TASK

*Try and find a halal marshmallow at your local supermarket. This will involve a fair bit of ingredient research!*



# PHOTOGRAPHY AND PRIVACY

Not all of our participants (and volunteers perhaps) are comfortable with having their picture taken and we ask you to be mindful of this. Our registration forms allow for each person to opt-in or opt-out of having their picture taken and perhaps displayed on our social media channels afterwards. Your hike leader or coordinators will go through the results of this prior to heading out on the event.

Sometimes we are only able to take scenery shots and we ask you to respect the wishes of our participants at all times in this regard. Some of them have been through very sensitive and traumatic experiences to get to Australia and an image taken and displayed at the wrong time and place can even put some people's lives at risk so even your own private social media accounts should not show any images of people who have requested privacy.

With those who have indicated their acceptance of taking images, we ask you to always respect the individual and ask for consent each time. We are there for their benefit first and foremost and as such, we need them to be safe and secure at all times.











POST-HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 6

## PACK-DOWN CREW

As we all know, after each hike there is a mountain of tasks that need to be done before it is finally over. Bags need to be emptied, sleeping bags need to be aired out, wet items need to be dried, cutlery and cookers need to be cleaned, etc, etc, etc.

We ask for a dedicated pack-down crew to be on hand after the event to do all these tasks and make sure that our gear is in good condition for the next time it's needed. This is a very important task as we cannot keep doing what we do if the gear we use isn't kept in good condition. It has taken us a long time to gather the gear we need to put on these events, and we endeavour to make it last for as long as possible. Your help in this area is most welcome.







POST-HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 6

## HIKER FEEDBACK AND DEBRIEF

We are in the process of creating post-hike feedback forms which will help us to be better at what we do and to create events that have maximum effect and enjoyment in the future. These will be handed out (or emailed through) to all participants and volunteers associated with each event and collated by our admin assistants and can either be anonymous or not depending on preference.

As volunteers your feedback is crucial to us as we want to continuously improve at how we plan, conduct and finish events. First Hike Project Inc welcomes feedback and as such we welcome negative and positive feedback equally, contact your local coordinators if there is anything you wish to impart outside of the regular feedback times.

The debrief can either be done in a formal environment or just done casually through the event communication channels and is connected to us gathering feedback about each event and being better at what we do. This may be a chance for the volunteers to be able to offer advice, suggestions and guidance to each other and will be done in a spirit of building the group. If there were any medical issues on the event or near misses this provides us with a means to relay any information back to the group.







POST-HIKE  
CAMPSITE AREA 6

# SHARING PHOTOS



All volunteers and participants will be given the opportunity to share any pictures or videos with the group after the event and this can be done on any of the common communication channels that have been used for the event. Everything shared is to be in accordance with the privacy information supplied prior and any pictures that mistakenly contravene this can be identified here.

This is also a fun opportunity to continue the chat between participants and volunteers and serves to strengthen that connection created. This is a voluntary activity, and no obligation is implied by the invitation to participate.



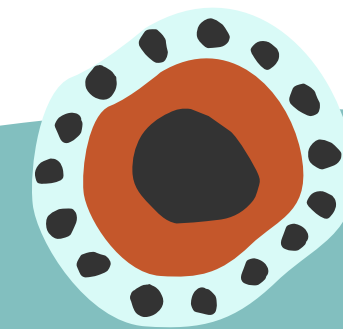
# FINAL WORDS

Once again, let us say a...

*great big thank you*

for taking the time to help us provide this service.

We hope you really enjoy your time with us and get to go deeper in your volunteer journey of learning and serving in community. This has been a magical ride for everyone involved thus far and we hope you stay with us for many years to come, providing a welcoming hand to those who need it the most.



## TASK

*Now, please complete the quiz questions attached to this induction and keep an eye on our volunteers Facebook page for news on meetings, events and activities in your area.*