

*The following information is intended as a handout for trainees and participants before commencing the activity.*

## **INFORMATION FOR ABSEIL TRAINEES AND CANYONING PARTICIPANTS**

### **Context**

Canyoning involves descending rock clefts such as waterfalls and gaps in rocks created by water. It often requires abseiling, swimming, liloing as well as rock hopping and scrambling abilities. Walking into and out of the canyon can also involve scrambling over rocks and rock climbing.

### **Canyon participant requirements**

#### *Attributes of participants for canyoning*

- Suitable balance evident by experience with rock hopping in creeks.
- For vertical canyons, suitable abseil experience and skills.
- For any canyon with deep water (more than 1.7m), the ability to tread water and swim for at least 50 metres wearing clothing and shoes.
- Adequate fitness and agility to complete the trip. There is normally no going back after the first abseil requiring the group to commit to completing the trip.
- Leaders and co-leaders to be advised (in confidence) of any medical condition that may affect abseiling, rock hopping or swimming.
- Overnight bivies are rare in canyons, but they can happen. Recommend you have adequate mental and physical ability, as well as lightweight equipment to deal with such an event.

#### *Required equipment for Abseil training*

- A day pack with some snacks and water.
- A helmet. A bike helmet is adequate for training.
- Gloves. Any close-fitting protective gloves will do. Sailing gloves with just the tips of the forefinger and thumb exposed are ideal as they are designed for wet conditions, but leather riggers or close-fitting gardening gloves are OK. Avoid thick leather or welding type gloves, as these are clumsy.
- Footwear. Runners are fine for training. Dunlop Volleys are the preferred footwear for canyons if you can find the “good” ones. “Canyon” shoes with good grip on wet rock are also available at the outdoor shops (for example, Adidas, Bestard, FiveTen, Hydropro and La Sportiva). Many hiking boots and shoes are not acceptable as they have poor grip on slippery rock.
- Clothing. Suitable clothing that allows flexible movement should be worn. It should not be too loose that it gets caught in the abseil device. Long pants can protect against abrasion (particularly in learning to abseil when there is a high risk of bashing knees into the rock face).
- Watches and rings. Both these can represent a safety issue and should be removed during training.
- Long hair can get caught in the abseil device, so it must be tied back to be safe.
- The club has several sets of abseil harnesses, helmets and abseil devices that will be provided for training days.

### *Equipment for canyon trips*

For a canyon trip, you will need the equipment you bring for training (above), but also a whistle (which is accessible and secured, such as tied to your helmet or on your pack), prusik loops and carabiners.

Where the trip is in a 'wet' canyon such as in the Blue Mountains or Wollemi National Parks, the following equipment is recommended.

- A wet suit. (Note that as Bungonia canyons are more open with short swims in water that is warmer, a wet suit is normally not worn.)
- Some canyons with long swims require floatation such as a buoyant waterproof pack, hydration bladder, lilo or packraft.
- Dry bags, multiple sealed strong garbage bags, or "dead dog" bags to keep your gear dry inside your pack.

In addition to any abseil equipment, you should bring gear that you would take on a remote off track bushwalk such as food and water, personal first aid kit, wet weather jacket, a spare fleece and head torch.

Packs need to be made from tough material to handle the excessive abrasion often found in canyons.