

How to Plan and Lead a Successful AOA Trip



A basic guide to trip leading for prospective, new and inexperienced AOA trip leaders

Introduction

This guide does not aim to cover every possible occurrence. The best advice to all members is to go on lots of trips and learn from observing other trip leaders, what works well and what does not. Remember, you are not responsible for the wellbeing of the participants. Each person attends your event on the understanding that you are not a professionally trained trip leader. If any difficulty does arise, you are expected to take what ever action a reasonable person with no special expertise in the area would take under the same circumstances.

If you plan your trip well, it is unlikely that you will experience any major problems and it is very likely that you will get lasting pleasure and satisfaction from introducing groups of like-minded people to activities and places that you enjoy.



Before you put your trip in the schedule



1. What kind of trip will it be?

- Most AOA trips involve walking, cycling or canoeing, but this is not essential. However, active outdoor trips are preferred.
- You are the Trip Leader, but you do not have to be the expert. You can plan a trip which uses the skills of a professional or volunteer who is an expert in their field.
- In recent years, trips have included archery, lawn bowls, ballooning, indoor climbing and gliding. The list on the back cover of the magazine offers a few suggestions for starters.

- The Trip Coordinators have a detailed file of activities that have been led by others in the past.

2. Will you run it alone or with someone else?

- Planning a trip with someone else can give you extra confidence.
- Make sure you are clear about who is responsible for what.
- Experienced AOA trip leaders are usually willing to act as mentors or to assist with trip planning.

3. What grade is it?

- Trip grades are shown in the *Action Insight* magazine.
- If you are unsure, discuss this with the Trip Coordinator for your activity.

4. How much will it cost?

The cost will include:

- actual costs to be incurred for fees, accommodation etc.
- AOA trip fee which is as follows:

Day trip: Members Free	Non-members \$5.00
Overnight trip: Committee and Trip Leader Members Non-members	Free \$5.00 per night, max. \$10.00 \$10.00 per night, max. \$20.00

If you are not sure of costs it is okay to write *To Be Advised*, but if possible, give some indication of likely cost. **NB. AOA has a group membership of YHA. Ask the Secretary for the membership card, if you are planning to stay at a Youth Hostel.** Group discounts can often be negotiated for other activities once you have an idea of numbers.

5. **How long before the event will people need to book?**
 - If the number of participants is important, make sure your Booking Deadline is sufficient.
6. **Do you or AOA have the relevant maps?** Check with the Maps Officer well before the event. (See page 2 of *Action Insight*)
7. **Do you need to book accommodation or seek permission to cross private land or use facilities?**
 - If you are booking accommodation, make sure that **either** the club will only be charged for the number of people who actually attend, **or** you only book for the number of participants that you are confident you will get.
 - If hiring a hall, equipment or facility, proof of public liability insurance may be necessary. A copy of the AOA public liability coverage can be obtained from the Secretary.
8. **Collect relevant phone numbers of specific contacts** (CALM ranger, accommodation, club reps, FESA, hospital etc.) depending on the type and location of your activity.
9. **Is the weather likely to be suitable at the time you have chosen?**
You can check predicted weather with www.bom.gov.au
10. **Are there risks involved?**
Think about potential risks. What degree of fitness and experience will participants need?
11. (Optional) **Start a list of expenses incurred in planning the trip.**
12. **If your trip is complex, prepare an information sheet which can be emailed or mailed to prospective participants.** This may include:
 - dates and times,
 - accommodation information,
 - transport information, and
 - what to take.



Two – six weeks before the trip

1. **If possible, do a “recce”**
Take 2 or 3 friends and travel over the route of your trip.

- If you plan to lead a group over a defined route, make quite sure you are very familiar with the route. Write down information about any tricky turns. Your first trip as Trip Leader is no time to get lost!!

Make a note of:

- time required to travel to the meeting point
- identifying features of the meeting point
- time taken for actual trip. Bear in mind that it will take longer on the day with a larger group of people.
- intersections, changes of direction and features that differ from the map
- potential stopping points (for morning tea, lunch etc.) Ideally, these should have room for all participants to sit down and a pleasant outlook.
- camp site, if required. Will there be water available? Can you light a fire?
- a possible site for refreshments afterwards, if desired.

Decide on the maximum number of participants you will take.

- This will depend on the type of trip, but it is very difficult to manage a group of more than about 20 on a single activity.
- If more than one person is taking bookings, liaise frequently so that you don't accept too many people.

2. What information will you give to potential participants?

Make sure you are clear about:

- Meeting point and time - which should be 15 minutes before you plan to leave the meeting point.
- Any aspects of the trip that may cause difficulty to less experienced participants e.g. Land trips - steep hills; cross country sections
Water trips - white water, strong currents or winds
- What participants should wear e.g. walking boots; layered clothing
- What participants should bring e.g. amount of water, warm &/or waterproof clothes; sunscreen; insect repellent; food, torch or bike lights; personal first aid kit

3. What questions will you ask potential participants?

Think about what you will need to ask people to ensure that they understand the type of trip you are planning and have the experience to complete it successfully.

4. Check that you have the Trip Leaders forms in your magazine.

If not, contact the Trip Coordinator for your activity.



5. Talk to potential participants about your trip and encourage them to come.

- Announce your trip at a monthly meeting close to the date. This enables people to see who you are and ask questions about the trip.
- Ensure that people who you know enjoy the type of trip you are planning are aware of your trip and the date(s) it is on.

6. If you do not have a mobile phone, try to ensure that one of the participants will bring one, and make a note of its number.



When people phone to book on your trip

- 1. Tell them about the trip.**
- 2. Ask them about their experience.**
 - If you do not feel confident about their ability, suggest that they try an easier trip first. If possible, refer them to a specific trip which will be run in the near future.
 - If they do not have their own equipment, remind them that the club has equipment for hire. Contact the Equipment Officer (See page 2 of the magazine.)
- 3. Record their name and contact phone number.**

It is usually most efficient to write these details straight on to the Trip Form,
- 4. Check that they have the correct information about:**
 - where to meet,
 - what to wear,
 - what to bring,
 - approximate duration of trip, and
 - possible social activity afterwards.
- 5. Ask them to let you know if they need to cancel.**

You may wish to give them your mobile phone number in case of a last minute cancellation.
- 6. Ask them about their travel arrangements.**

If possible, arrange for participants to car pool. Always check with participants before giving their phone number to others.
- 7. DO NOT TAKE BOOKINGS FOR “FRIENDS”.**

It is important that everyone contacts you directly so that no confusion arises.
- 8. AS TRIP LEADER, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE HOW MANY PEOPLE YOU WISH TO TAKE ON YOUR TRIP, AND WHETHER OR NOT TO EXCLUDE ANYONE.**

You may reject anyone attending your trip without providing a reason, although in the interests of harmonious relations it is preferable that you have reasonable grounds.
- 9. If nobody books on your trip, don't take it personally. There are many reasons why this may happen and it can happen to the most experienced leader.**

The positive aspect is that you have a trip planned and ready to go next time!



During the week before your trip

- 1. If desired, collect a club First Aid Kit from the appropriate Committee Member.**
 - This information can be found in *Action Insight*.
 - All participants should carry their own personal first aid kit. As trip leader, you may wish to carry a club first aid kit, especially on longer trips.

2. Check any possible last-minute changes.

Check latest and predicted weather with www.bom.gov.au, if your event is planned to be over several days or where your trip may be adversely affected by creek, river, altitude or ocean conditions.



3. If you are planning a wilderness trip, leave details of trip participants, intended route and estimated time of return with a trusted person.

- Ask that person to contact the Club President or another committee member, if you have not made contact by a specified time.
- The committee will liaise with that person in deciding what further action to take.



On the day

- 1. Make sure that you are at the meeting point at least 15 minutes before the meeting time.**
- 2. As people arrive, introduce yourself and check that they have the appropriate equipment.**
- 3. Ensure that everyone completes and signs the Trip Form, including Emergency Contact details.**
 - Ask them to read the waiver at the top of the form before signing.
 - Collect trip fees. You may prefer to delegate this task to another member.
- 4. Ask an experienced member to act as Tail End Charlie.**
 - This person should always be at the end of the group.
 - If possible, the Tail End Charlie should also have a copy of the map and directions.
- 5. When everyone has arrived, or at the official meeting time, gather everyone together.**
 - Welcome new members and visitors.
 - Ask everyone to introduce themselves.
 - Remind people of water, hat, sunscreen, food, clothing and equipment requirements.
 - Remind people that they have signed a waiver stating that they are a responsible adult.
 - Ask people to make sure they do not leave any rubbish behind.
 - Introduce the Tail End Charlie and remind people to let him/her know if they need to stop for any reason. Tell people if they do get lost, to wait where they are and someone will come looking for them.

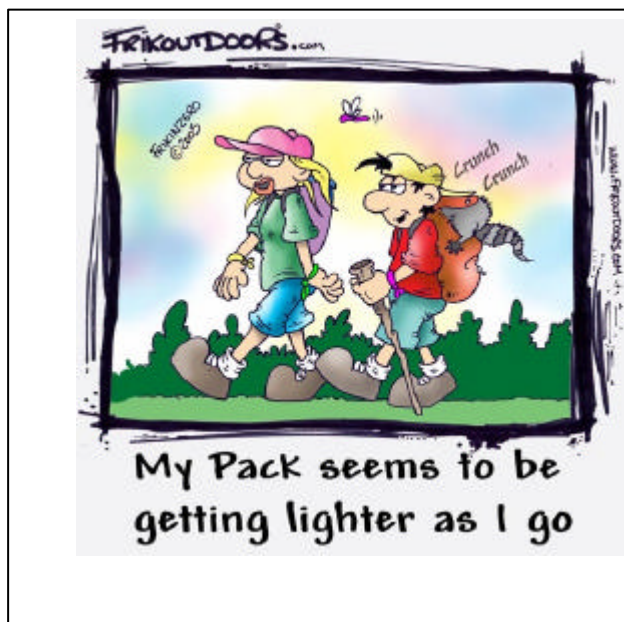
- If appropriate, ask participants to make a habit of checking that the person behind them is still in sight. If a big gap seems to be opening up, ask them to pass the word up to the leader, to stop and let everyone catch up.
- If someone has not arrived 15 minutes after the official meeting time, it is okay to leave without them.
- **Remember to count the number of participants**

6. Stop from time to time to allow everyone to catch up.

- The first stop should usually be within half an hour to allow people to adjust clothing and packs.
- **At every stop, count the number of participants to ensure you haven't lost anyone. Count them again before continuing, in case someone is behind a tree.**
- Give everyone a chance to rest before continuing. The slowest people will usually be those most in need of a rest.
- Adjust the pace if necessary. Discourage people from going on ahead, but if you cannot hold them back, make sure they know where to stop and wait for the main group.
- Try to keep an eye on newcomers to make sure they are keeping up and are not being left out though in AOA this is unlikely!
- Have longer breaks for morning tea and lunch.
- During a break you may like to invite someone to write a Trip Report for the magazine.

7. At the end:

- **Count the number of participants.**



- Thank everyone for taking part.
- Remind and thank the person who said they would write a Trip Report.
- Let everyone know that the trip is officially finished.
- If appropriate, advise everyone where you will be going for refreshments and invite them to join you if they wish.



If something goes wrong

e.g. Someone behaves inappropriately

- Quietly explain to them how their behaviour is inappropriate.
- If necessary, ask an experienced member to keep an eye on them.
- If sufficiently serious, report the behaviour to the AOA committee.

e.g. Someone gets lost

- Check where they were last seen.
- While the rest of the group waits, send two competent people back to look for the lost person.

e.g. Someone gets hurt

Do what is reasonable in the circumstances and what would be expected from an unskilled person. This could include:

- Ascertain whether anyone on the trip is medically trained or is trained in first aid.
- Ascertain whether anyone has a first aid kit.
- Apply first aid to the best of your ability or allow a medically trained person to apply first aid.
- If the person is able to continue, assist them as much as possible e.g. distribute their pack load among other participants
- If they are unable to continue,
 - ensure that they have adequate warm clothing and water.
 - have at least **two** people stay with them while you take the rest of the group back and seek help.

If you would like to be trained in First Aid, AOA will subsidise this training for you. For more information, speak to the Club President.



After the trip

1. Draw up a list of income and expenses.

- If this is substantial, it should be forwarded to the Treasurer with the Trip Form.
- Provide receipts for all payments to external parties.
- Provide an estimate of your costs (phone calls, petrol etc). Receipts are not necessary.

2. Ensure that the Trip Form, including financial details, is completed.

3. Complete the Activity Report.

4. Send or give the completed forms, together with any money collected, to the Treasurer.

5. If there have been any difficulties (e.g. inappropriate behaviour, somebody was hurt or somebody got lost but you found them!) advise the Club President, Trip Coordinator or another committee member as soon as possible after the end of the trip.



**I HAD LEGS BEFORE I
PUT THE BACKPACK ON**

**Now you know
it's not that
hard,
start planning
YOUR trip.**