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Australian National Four Wheel Drive Council

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Code of Conduct - Camping

The Australian National Four Wheel Drive Council supports dispersed vehicle based camping. The pleasure of visiting areas of beauty is that they are natural and unspoilt. This is achieved by those who have been there before you having left nothing but footprints when they have departed. Every user has a responsibility to protect these areas of natural beauty to ensure that those who follow may also enjoy the same experience. Upon departure, leave the area as if no one had been there and in the same or better condition than found. Ensure that the area you are visiting is not so sensitive that your presence will leave a permanent impact.

CAMPING

- Dispersed camping is recommended so as not to compact the ground surface and inhibit vegetation growth or regrowth.
- Use huts where provided and available for public use or established campsites. Where either of these exists, do not create new campsites. Don't rely on using a hut, always carry your own tent/swag etc.
- Do not dig trenches or gutters around tents/swags.
- Do not locate your camp where dead or rotted trees may be above your campsite and keep clear of gum trees which may shed branches at any time.
- Do not camp in a creek bed or watercourse. Such a practice is extremely dangerous as flash flooding can, and does occur.
- Do not camp within 30m of or near any natural waterhole, creek or river in such a way that you may prevent native fauna and station stock from gaining access to water. Do not camp within 500m radius of a dam or constructed stock watering point.
- Do not camp within a 100m of any building unless specific permission has been granted.

CAMPFIRES

- Always check for fire restrictions in the area you intend to visit. Fire restrictions are imposed for a number of reasons other than fire danger and local authorities should be consulted. Remember, a Total Fire Ban is applicable to all types of fuel other than electricity, so be prepared.
- Do not create another fireplace where one already exists.
- If a fire pit needs to be dug, try to remove the topsoil as a sod and place to one side. When the fire has been extinguished and is not to be used again, replace the sod over the cold ashes.
- It is a requirement that the area surrounding any open fire be clear of vegetation for a radius of 4m. Spare firewood is to be kept a minimum of 3m from a fire.
- Do not use stones in the construction of a fireplace as they are prone to explode from the heat of the fire sending dangerous fragments in all directions.
- Use only dead fallen timber for fuel. Do not cut standing trees as these are a key part of the environment. Do not use 'treated' timber in a cooking fire. Alternative fuels recommended are Heat beads, shellite, gas and unleaded petrol used in appropriate cookers.

- Never leave a fire burning unattended.
- Remember, a campfire is not a bonfire and should not exceed one metre in diameter and 0.5m in height. Separate cooking fires may be permitted if fuel is in abundance but should be kept to as few as possible. Set a time at which combustible rubbish, food etc, may be reduced in the fire. Do not place plastic/foam/metal objects in a campfire.
- When decamping, ensure that the fire is completely extinguished as residual hot ashes/embers not only present a fire hazard but are likely to cause injury to animals. Dispose of cold ashes around plants as these will liberate nutrients in the soil.

WASHING

- Don't wash anything using soaps or detergents in streams and lakes.
- Wash points should not be located within 50m of any creek, stream, river or waterhole to prevent contamination of such waters. Care must also be taken to ensure that a wash point is not located over a watercourse that feeds into the water supply.
- When disposing of waste water spread it across the ground to enable natural filtration. Do not use waste water to feed the root systems of native flora as the residue contained within the water could be harmful.

RUBBISH

- Adopt the practice of "leave no trace" camping. Take out what you bring in and dispose of rubbish in designated rubbish bins or dumps. Carry suitable containers in which to store rubbish and re-use where possible.
- Avoid carrying high rubbish potential items such as bottles, cans and plastics, and remove unnecessary packaging prior to departure on trips.
- Do not burn or bury rubbish as it may be dug up and scattered by native animals.
- Do not burn plastics in fires as this leaves highly toxic residue. Nappies and sanitary napkins should not be disposed of in a campfire.

TOILETS

- Use properly constructed toilets where provided.
- Self made toilets should be not less than 100m distant from campsites and water courses/water holes. Individual toilet holes should be as deep as practicable to prevent excavation by fauna.
- Do not attempt to burn toilet paper in toilet holes. Bushfires have been started by this practice. Fill in hole with removed soil and compact as much as possible.
- Chemical toilets should be used in those areas where the ground surface prevents digging adequate toilet holes or the soil is of a type that is not suited to such a purpose. They should also be used in those areas which have a sensitive environment and ecology that are easily disrupted. Waste from chemical toilets should be disposed of at authorised sewerage points.

Environmentally sustainable vehicle based camping is a shared responsibility.

Produced by the ANFWDC in the interest of promoting responsible camping practices.

For advice and assistance in meeting the requirements of this National Recreational Four Wheel Drive Vehicle Policy contact the Public Relations Officer, ANFWDC PO Box 79, CANBERRA ACT 2601

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