# Caving 2010

**LOCATION: (Note map)**

The caving site is located at GPS position 55 H 0383021 & 5816242 [Map Datum WGS 84] or S 37°47.632’ E 145°40.282

The caving system at Britannia Creek is used for this activity. This site is a 40 minute drive from Nayook. From the front gate turn right on the Nayook Powelltown road, and then left on the Noojee – Yarra Junction Road. Take care at this intersection, it has poor visibility and carries heavy fast traffic. Drive along this road in a westerly direction, through Powelltown, Three Bridges and turn right at Tarrango Road just before the Gladysdale CFA shed. Travel this road for 3km until Bundaleer Road and turn right. 500m further turn onto Britannia Creek Road for 1.5km and park on the left near the cave system.

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Britannia Creek caving area is a small boulder choke on the Britannia Creek. There are a variety of entry points and passages available to choose from. It is not a very deep system and at a number points daylight can be seen and the system exited if there are problems with the group. It is an ideal place to take groups as a first caving experience, although there are a couple of tight passages they open out fairly quickly to larger caverns. Care needs to be taken when crawling through areas however there are no places that require ropes and safety systems.

**AIMS;**

1. Students become aware of their personal strengths and weaknesses in a challenging environment
2. Students to experience a unique environment in an easily managed caving system
3. Students to communicate and assist each other in completing moving through the cave system

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Students overcome their own fears and support their classmates whilst moving through the cave system
2. Students to gain an understanding of the teamwork and communication skills required in the caving environment
3. Students gain a basic understanding of the way the caves were formed and the wildlife that might exist in them

**AGE SUITABILITY:**

This activity is suitable for students of Year 7 and above. For younger students and Special School students consider increased staff ratios.

**STAFF/STUDENT RATIO:**

This session is conducted with one Nayook teaching staff member and one assistant. There are no DEECD guidelines for this activity. The AAS ratio is1:6 (AAS May 2009**)**

This activity is always staffed by one teacher and one trainee from Nayook. One or more visiting teachers/aides accompany some groups. Group size is usually 12 or less. In the event of a group of 13 students and no visiting staff, the low difficulty, multiple exits, robustness (no limestone features) and length of the cave are taken into account and the larger group size allowed.

**INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE:**

* The supervising teacher must be very familiar with the cave network as there are numerous passages leading off in different directions.
* The instructor needs to have a clear understanding of the safety protocols and emergency procedures for a potential incident.

**ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE:**

* The assistant/s needs to be able to competently assist the instructor in an emergency, take over if the instructor becomes incapacitated and needs to have a good understanding of the emergency procedures.

**PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE:**

* No previous experience is required however students need to be very well briefed on the activity.
* Students who are very overweight or suffer from claustrophobia may struggle with this activity.
* Participants need to responsibly follow safety procedures at all times.

**INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITY:**

* Brief assistants/visiting staff on their role and the safety procedures.
* Organize the bus (complete pre driving checks), first aid, cave rescue equipment for participants.
* Brief participants on required skills and safety procedures.
* Ensure all students have required personal and safety equipment (as per list)
* Ensure that staff have all safety equipment (as per the list)
* Monitor students carefully during the activity
* Ensure Director or nominated person has details of the trip, student names and ETA back at Nayook

**ASSISTANT/VISITING TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY:**

* Assist instructor with preparations as requested by instructor
* Monitor groups during the activity
* Take over if the instructor becomes incapacitated

**PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITY:**

* To follow instruction as outlined in the safety brief and lesson outline
* To be responsible for the safety equipment

**SAFETY, FIRST AID & ACTIVITY EQUIPMENT:**

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| First Aid Equipment | Safety Equipment | Activity Equipment |
| * First Aid kit - basic * Stretcher/spine board * Student medication * Student medical and contact details * Wilderness first aid kit * Leaders bum bags (spare torch, multi-tool, space blanket, basic first aid, note pad & pencil) | * Mobile Telephone * Cave rescue kit (7x karabiners, 2x rope, 2x slings, 2x sit harnesses, 3x figure eights, 1x caving ladder, battery powered lantern and spare batteries). * Spare torch and spare batteries | * Helmets * Head torches * Back up torches |

**PARTICIPANT CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Winter/Cold weather requirements | Summer/hot weather requirement |
| * Daypacks * Old suitable footwear (will get wet) * Old suitable clothing, preferably thermals, long sleeves and long legs (will get wet and muddy) * Water bottle * Snacks * Lunch * Total change of clothes (including footwear) * Plastic bag | * Daypacks * Old suitable footwear (may get wet) * Old suitable clothing (may get wet and muddy) * Water bottle * Snacks * Lunch * Total change of clothes (including footwear) * Plastic bag |

**SAFETY BRIEFING:**

* The group must at all times stay together.
* All messages passed from the staff at the front must be passed to the last person.
* If a small group or an individual student becomes separated from the main group, stop, don’t move away, call out and listen for a response.
* If someone in the group is injured or becomes separated from the group, immediately tell a staff member.
* Do not interfere with any wildlife.
* In the warmer months be aware of snakes

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

NB – Telstra Next G and Optus 3G Mobile telephones work in the carpark.

* Refer to Risk Management Plan at the end of this document
* If a student/s lost, go back to last known place. One staff member to remain with the group and maintain calm.
* If a person is injured, manage injury. If unable walk out, select a couple of confident students to remain with injured and staff member. Remaining students to move out with second staff member. Call for outside assistance.
* Contact the Director or the nominated emergency contact person (Note emergency call list in appendix).
* Call 000 (Police and/or ambulance as required)

**ACTIVITY NOTES:**

PRIOR TO SESSION:

Brief assistants/visiting staff as outlined in the “Assistant/visiting staff responsibilities”, “Safety Briefing” and “Emergency Procedures”

Organize equipment as per lists, check carefully head torches

BRIEFING TO STUDENTS

Topics to be covered: some topics should ideally be completed at Nayook prior to travelling to the site.

1. Explain what caving involves
2. Discuss the objectives and challenges of the session.
3. Discuss the safety issues (as outlined above under “Safety Briefing”).
4. Hand out equipment (as per list for students)
5. Explain procedures for moving through the caves as a group
6. Areas of interest that might be covered while in the caves: Biota (glow worms, cave crickets, fungi), rocks acting as a flint, rock type and mineralogy, and how the caves were formed.

**END OF SESSION:**

DEBRIEFING:

Topics that may be covered

1. Address the objectives and this can easily relate both to other activities on the program and experiences they may have later in life.
2. Discuss with students feelings before and after completing the caving activity
3. Discuss how effectively the group tackled the activity
4. May relate challenges involved to other aspects of school, life etc.

CLEANUP:

* Collect all helmets – may require a wipe down with a damp cloth if dirty
* Collect headlamps – check and clean (if necessary) before storing ready for next session
* Check and dry rescue kit if necessary
* Return all communication equipment to appropriate area
* Relay any appropriate information to; Group Instructor, Duty Officer and duty notice board &/or red alert, Responsibility area person.
* Ensure bus is left ready for next use; sweep out, report any faults and park in the appropriate place and lock.

**RISK MANAGEMENT:** Staff should review the risk management document prior to each session

Specific Risk – students getting stuck in ‘the chasm’.

At the point in the cave known as ‘the chasm’, students must step over a 2-3m drop, into a v-shaped crack rather than onto a solid rock. There is the potential for students to fall short and end up in the hole, or step to far and end up jammed in the crack.

Experience and experimentation has shown, that two people (does not necessarily have to be instructors, could use two strong students) can lift an adult out of ‘the chasm’ quite easily if positioned correctly. On one side of the chasm is a large, flat, gently sloping rock and a rescuer can sit on this rock, brace themselves with a foot on the wall opposite and get very good leverage on a person in the chasm. This rock can be accessed from in front of or behind the person in the chasm, or from a chamber behind the rock. Access is probably easies from this camber for a large adult.

It is also a good idea to have a third person (this should probably be the instructor as they will be in a good position to control the whole scene) next to the student in the chasm, who can wedge a knee in next to them as they are lifted to prevent them falling back down when the lifters stop to re-grip.

Caving Risk Assessment

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| Risk Assessment |

This page is used to be more specific about each of the hazards identified, to review the existing safety controls and to assess the risks they pose.

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| **Haz No** | | **Hazard** | **Hazard Details** | | **C** | **L** | | **RR** | **Planned Controls** | | |
| 1 | | Vehicles | Car Accident | | VH | H | | H | Driver must complete vehicle log and inspection checks  Ensure all passengers wear seatbelts.  Assisting staff must supervise students to avoid driver distraction.  Driver needs to take special care on the gravel roads | | |
| 2 | | Radiation | Exposure to the sun, melanoma, sunburn | | VH | M | | H | Participants should be advised to apply sunscreen before setting out in the morning and again in the middle of the day.  Ensure that all participants are wearing hats when not wearing helmets. | | |
| 3 | | Emergency Plans | Evacuation in case of bush fire, injury etc | | VH | M | | H | Check Weather Forecast for the week on the Bureau of Meteorology website ([www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)) or at the Rangers office.  Provide alternative program if the conditions warrant it.  On forecast severe weather days the current extreme weather alert will be enacted | | |
| 4 | | Heat / Cold Stress | Dehydration, hypothermia | | H | H | | H | Ensure that all participants have a warm woollen jumper  Ensure adequate hydration, full water bottles | | |
| 5 | | Sensitised Response | Bee sting, allergic reaction to food | | H | L | | M | Carry anti- histamine, Epipen if student has a known allergy  Identify students at risk and monitor closely | | |
| 6 | | Animal | Snake Bite | | H | L | | M | Instruct students on appropriate behaviour on sighting snake  Ensure students understand emergency procedures if a bite occurs  Instruct students on basic first aid if a bite occurs | | |
| 7 | | Area where slips, trips & falls occur | Ankle injuries, abrasions etc | | M | H | | M | Some tracks are narrow and pebbly. There are tree roots and other trip hazards.  Always walk with eyes to the ground and walk slowly in difficult terrain.  Good sturdy shoes are essential. Higher state of awareness required. Volleys acceptable. | | |
| 8 | | Medical | Medical Emergency | | H | H | | H | Ensure that all students have provided parent permission forms. Take medical forms for visiting staff members as well. | | |
| 9 | | Medical | Panic attack or claustrophobia attack | | M | M | | M | Brief students carefully on what to expect.  Organize alternative activity if a known condition  In the cave, reassure, move the student next to a staff member, if necessary exit the cave at the nearest known point | | |
| 10 | | People | Fall while entering cave entrance | | VH | L | | M | Monitor students at all times above the cave system  Locate entrance/s, explain entry procedure and supervise carefully. Provide a spotter below is deemed necessary. | | |
| 11 | | People | Student/s separated from group | | M | M | | M | Brief students on group management and lost procedures  All staff must have a clear understanding of group management system  Staff must monitor group carefully and stop at regular points to check numbers  All staff must be very familiar with cave system | | |
| 12 | | Mechanical | Head torch or hand torch fails resulting in injury or panic attack | | M | L | | M | Staff always carry spare torch and batteries  Torches are checked before leaving the centre and again before entering the cave | | |
| 13 | | People | Student hits head while moving through caves | | M | L | | M | Ensure that students always wear a correctly fitted helmet  Establish lines of communication to warn of hazards whilst moving through the cave. | | |
| 14 | | Trees | Falling Branches | | VH | L | | M | Staff to undertake regular checks of dangerous trees or limbs, report to the relevant person for action | | |
| 15 | | Environment | Severe thunderstorms and/or flash flooding | | H | L | | M | Check weather forecasts before departing for the caves  Staff must closely observe local weather conditions for possibility of severe weather  Monitor creeks on the drive in for possible signs of high water. | | |
| **\*** | **C** – consequences | | | **L** – Likelihood | | | **RR** – Risk Rank = **C x L** | | |  |  | |

**Actions to be taken as a result of assessment**

L = Low M =Medium H = High VH = Very High E = Extreme

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| **Risk Rank** | **Action** |
| Low | An incident or injury highly unlikely to occur |
| Medium | An accident or injury is possible staff need to supervise and be aware of safety and emergency procedures |
| High | Constant and careful supervision is required at all times.  Staff must be well trained for the activity and have a thorough knowledge of all safety and emergency procedures |
| Very High | Consider making changes to this activity as likelihood and consequences of an accident or injury are serious. |
| Extreme | The consequences and likelihood of accident or injury with this hazard/s ensure that this activity should not run in its present form |