

Ben Cruachan Walking Club – Personal Locator Beacon

The Club has a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) available for Club walks. It is registered with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) as are names and contact details of 3 Club members as Emergency Contacts. The PLB, when activated from anywhere on the Earth's surface, issues a distress alert via satellite. The signal also provides a beacon for search aircraft. The alert is notified to Australia's Rescue Command Centre (RCC), which in turn will contact Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad (SAR). RCC or SAR will:

- Check the AMSA register for details of the Club's Emergency Contacts and whether trip details have been submitted on line;
- Phone the Club's Emergency Contacts to confirm that the PLB has not been activated in error;
- SAR will obtain trip details and information to assist them in their search;
- SAR will commence search and rescue operations.

When To Use The PLB

The PLB may be taken by Walk Leaders for Club activities scheduled on the Club's Walks Calendar, including reconnaissance associated with such scheduled activities. It may not be taken by individuals for private activities. (PLB can be hired or may be available from local police stations at no cost for personal use.)

Walk Leaders are encouraged to take the PLB when going into remote areas where there is no readily accessible mobile telephone reception.

The PLB should be activated only when life is endangered or medical evacuation is required and there is no other ready means of communications with rescue agencies.

Activation of the PLB under circumstances deemed by the rescue agencies to be frivolous may lead to a penalty being imposed for the misuse. If the PLB is activated accidentally, it should be switched off and the AMSA Rescue Coordination Centre notified immediately (Phone: 1800 641 792).

If You Decide To Take The Club's PLB, You Will Need To:

Contact the Club's Walks Coordinator to arrange pick up of the PLB and obtain the names and contact details of the Club's Emergency Contacts at the time.

Confirm with each Emergency Contact that they will be available at the time of your activity. If they will not be available contact the Walks Coordinator who will arrange an alternate contact.

The day before your activity commences, email your trip intentions / walk plan and Walk Attendance Sheet listing all party members and their personal emergency contact phone numbers to each Club Emergency Contact and the Walks Coordinator, thus informing them of your plans, who is in the party, and confirming that the trip is going ahead.

At the end of the activity:

- Immediately when you have phone service, send mobile phone message to the Emergency Contacts informing them of your safe return;
- Return the PLB to its custodian as soon as possible.

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Using The PLB

Instructions for activation of the PLB are printed on the back of the unit. (See illustration below.)

Do not test the PLB. Frequent testing shortens battery life. It is tested regularly by its custodian.

The PLB must be stowed in such a way that it is not subjected to knocks, immersion in water or exposure to continuous direct sunlight and that its safety seal is not damaged.

If activation is needed, the PLB should be placed in an upright position with a clear view of the sky, in a clear open area and as high as possible. It also provides a beacon for aircraft, so leave it in position and operating until rescued.

Make your position as visible as possible to search and rescue by land and air.

If life is no longer endangered or medical evacuation no longer required, the PLB should be switched off and the AMSA Rescue Coordination Centre notified immediately (Phone: 1800 641 792).

Emergency Contacts – What Do You Need To Do?

Responsibility for custody and maintenance of the PLB rests with the Walks Coordinator who may delegate custody of the unit to a more centrally located Club member if necessary.

As an Emergency Contact, you should:

- have a mobile phone and have it accessible and usable (fully charged) when notified that the PLB has been taken on an activity;
- keep the walk intentions and Walk Attendance Sheet of the party taking the PLB readily accessible during the activity so that you can assist SAR promptly if contacted.

If you will not be available to be an emergency contact, even for a short period of time such as:

- away on holidays,
- one of the party taking the PLB,

or if you have changed your contact details, please inform the Walks Coordinator as soon as possible so that the Club's Emergency Contact details registered with AMSA can be changed.

If you are contacted, it will be by Victoria Police Search and Rescue (SAR). If a search and rescue is to occur, your role will be to:

- Provide SAR with trip details and details of the make-up of the party eg. Numbers, equipment, experience,
- Act as the contact person for SAR
- Act as a liaison between SAR and the party's personal emergency contacts to obtain information for SAR as required.
- Contact the personal emergency contacts of each member of the party to inform them that the PLB has been activated, however, it is not known what has occurred or who is involved, and obtain any additional information required by SAR.
- Inform personal emergency contacts that they will be brought up to date once the nature of the rescue is known and the rescue is completed. You will need to judge this as the circumstances of the search and rescue evolve.

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PLB Operating instructions on back of unit.

