

# Timeline and Checklist

In preparing for your upcoming Earthwatch expedition, please ensure that you:

## Immediately

- Read this Expedition Briefing and all enclosed materials thoroughly.
- Book an appointment with a doctor; you will need him or her to sign the Health section of your Earthwatch Participation Form.
- Make sure you understand and agree to Earthwatch policies and participant responsibilities.

## At least 90 days prior to your expedition start date

Complete and return your volunteer forms. **Below are the specific forms required for this expedition:**

- Earthwatch Participation Form for Adults
- Travel Form
- Privacy Release Form (Australia residents only)

European volunteers can download forms on: [earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerforms](http://earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerforms)

US/North American volunteers can download forms at: [earthwatch.org/volunteerforms](http://earthwatch.org/volunteerforms)

Australian volunteers can download forms on: [earthwatch.org/australia/expeditions/volunteer\\_forms/](http://earthwatch.org/australia/expeditions/volunteer_forms/)

Japanese volunteers can download forms on: [earthwatch.jp/getinvolved/condition/formdownload-i.html](http://earthwatch.jp/getinvolved/condition/formdownload-i.html)

- Pay any outstanding balance on the minimum contribution for your expedition.
- Book travel arrangements (see the *Rendezvous* section for details).
- If you plan to purchase additional travel insurance, note that some policies require purchase when your expedition is booked (see the *Insurance* section for more information).
- If traveling internationally, make sure your passport is current and obtain a visa for your destination country, if necessary (see the *Passports and Visas* section for more details).
- Make sure you have all the necessary vaccinations for your project site (see the *Health Information* section).
- Purchase a guide book for your destination country.
- Bring your level of fitness up to the standards required (see the *Project Conditions* section).

## At least 60 days prior to your expedition start date

- Review the packing list to make sure you have all the clothing and any special equipment needed.
- Obtain any necessary prescription medications that will be needed for your travels **Note:** They must be accompanied by a doctor's note to enter Australia.

## Up to 30 days before you leave for the expedition

- Read any required reading or websites recommended by the Earthwatch scientist(s) for your expedition.
- Make sure you have enough personal funds for your expedition (see the *Travel Planning* section).
- Leave the Earthwatch emergency contact number with a friend or relative (see the *Emergency Contacts* section).
- Leave a copy of your passport, visas and airline tickets with a friend or relative.
- Confirm your travel arrangements.

**Note:** If you have signed up for an expedition within 90 days of the start date, you must return your fully completed volunteer forms as soon as possible.

# Conserving Koala Country

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# General Information

<b>Project title</b>	Conserving Koala Country	
<b>Earthwatch scientists:</b>	Dr Desley Whisson (Deakin University) Dr Alistair Melzer (Central Queensland University)	
<b>Research site</b>	Otway National Park, Victoria	
<b>Expedition length:</b>	10 days	<b>Minimum age of participation:</b> 18 years of age*
<b>Team size max:</b>	6 participants	

**\*Note:** It may be possible for 16- and 17-year-olds to participate on standard teams if accompanied by a parent or guardian. Contact Earthwatch for more information and see *Volunteers Under 18 Years of Age* in the *Passports and Visas* section for traveling advice for minors.

# Emergency Contacts

**Emergency contact number at Earthwatch headquarters in Australia:**

**+61 (3) 9625-0822**

Someone is always on call to assist you or respond to your message 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. After business hours, leave your message with our live answering service. State that you have an emergency communication and leave a clear message with the name of the field program, your name, location from which you are calling, and, if possible, a phone number where you can be reached. An Earthwatch staff person will be contacted and will respond to your call within one hour.

**Emergency medical and evacuation assistance provider:**

To contact International SOS in the event of an emergency, dial:

- For assistance **within the US:** ISOS Philadelphia, +1 (215) 942-8459
- For assistance **outside the US:** ISOS London, +44 (0) 208-762-8008
- For assistance **within Australia:** ISOS Australasia, +61 (0) 2-9372-2468

State that you are on an Earthwatch expedition. The following information must be provided:

1. The Insured Person's name
2. The Assured is **EARTHWATCH**, the Certificate No: **GP 0010214** and SOS reference **#14ACPA000075**
3. The telephone number and facsimile number where the Insured Person can be reached
4. The Insured Person's address abroad
5. The nature of the emergency



Dear Earthwatcher,

**Welcome to Earthwatch!** We greatly appreciate your decision to contribute to hands-on environmental science and conservation. As an Earthwatch volunteer, you have the opportunity to create positive change. Each year we connect thousands of people just like you with research projects—approximately 65 projects in more than 35 countries—where they can participate in the fieldwork necessary to understand and help an array of species, habitats and cultures. These projects focus on: **climate change, cultural heritage, ecosystem services and oceans.**

**We are committed to caring for the safety of all those involved in our activities anywhere in the world.** Although risk is an inherent part of the environments in which we work, through careful risk management and diligent planning we believe that all participants can have educational and inspirational Earthwatch experiences. We've been providing volunteer field experiences **for 40 years**, so you're in good hands.

**It is essential that you carefully read your Expedition Briefing and fully complete the volunteer forms so that you are prepared. Your Expedition Briefing includes important information** such as instructions for reaching the rendezvous point, what risks are present on the research project and how to avoid them, what to pack, what immunizations you need, how to physically prepare for your expedition, and more. It also explains the research being conducted on the project, why it's important, and what role you'll play as an Earthwatch volunteer.

**Well-prepared volunteers are better able to enjoy the unique and exciting experiences that an Earthwatch expedition offers** and will be more helpful to the scientists' important work. Open-mindedness, the ability to work on a team, and a desire to learn are all keys to a successful and enjoyable Earthwatch experience. We hope this expedition will inspire you to get more involved in conservation and sustainable development priorities—not just out in the field but also when you return home. We encourage you to share your experiences with others, and to transfer your skills and enthusiasm to environmental conservation efforts in your workplace, community and home.

If you have questions as you prepare for your expedition, contact your Earthwatch office. Thank you for your support, and enjoy your expedition!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Wilson", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

Ed Wilson  
President and CEO

# The Research

## Conserving Koala Country

### Research rationale and goals

The koala (*Phascolarctos Cinereus*) is an iconic Australian species that attracts considerable public attention.

The conservation status of the koala varies from secure in some areas to vulnerable or extinct in others. The species has suffered declines due primarily to habitat loss and fragmentation, and hunting following European settlement of Australia. In past years, disease, fire, road deaths and predation by dogs have contributed to the species' continuing decline in some regions.

Climate change is likely to have significant adverse effects on koala populations. Mortality rates will potentially increase as a result of koalas' low tolerance for prolonged hot weather and the potential for more extreme and frequent bushfires. Furthermore, koala food resources may decline due to climate-induced changes in the composition and structure of eucalypt communities, and the nutritional quality and moisture content of leaves. In areas of mainland Victoria and for some islands where koala densities are locally high, increased browsing pressure on preferred trees is an additional factor threatening populations.

An understanding of the response of koalas to environmental change is critical for conservation of their populations and habitats. In Victoria, in the Great Otway National Park and surrounding private land (known as the Otways), koalas are widespread and relatively abundant. The landscape comprises a mosaic of different habitat types that vary in koala food tree composition. Higher densities of koalas are observed in woodlands dominated by preferred food trees and, in some instances, concentrated browsing by koalas is causing a decline in tree condition and loss of preferred tree species. Consequently, habitat change is occurring at a rapid rate, providing a unique opportunity to gain an understanding of the response of koalas to a declining food supply and habitat quality and, thus, the potential impact of climate change on the species.

This research will:

- Contribute useful data to a longer term consideration of climate change/variability issues.
- Further our understanding of the ecology of koalas and their resilience to environmental change through comparing the ecology of this southern koala population with that of koalas in Queensland. The project builds on an Earthwatch-funded study of koalas on St Bees Island, Queensland.
- Contribute to the conservation of koalas and their habitat.
- Transfer knowledge and ecological understanding to the community through volunteer participation and environmental education.
- Make new knowledge available to the local, national and international community through lay and scientific peer reviewed publications, seminars and workshops.

### Project Objectives

1. To assess koala population density, sex structure and productivity for predominant forest types at a local scale in the Cape Otway study area, and temporal variation associated with habitat change;
2. To describe the characteristics of habitats used by koalas and their temporal variation due to climate effects and over-browsing;

3. To determine tree selection and use by koalas in different habitat types, home range and movements of koalas in the landscape, and the energetic costs to koalas of different resource availability;

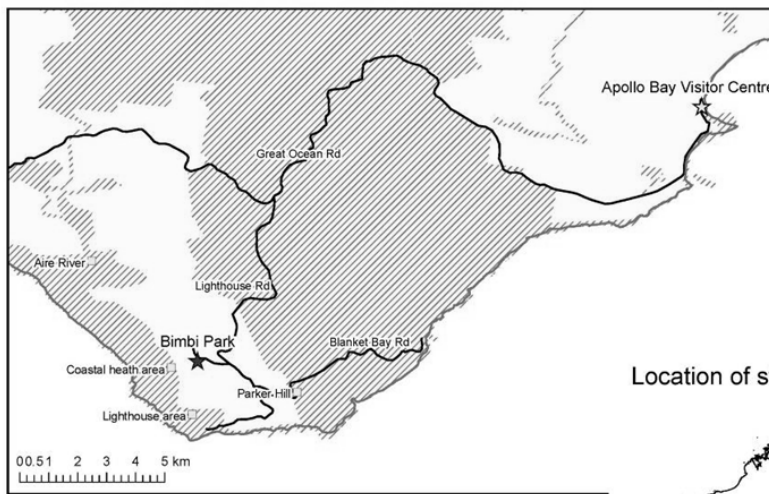
4. To identify flow-on impacts of over-browsing to bird and mammal communities in habitats impacted by koalas.

## Research Area

Cape Otway is situated at the southern tip of Victoria's western coast, where the Southern Ocean meets Bass Strait. Much of the district around Cape Otway is included in the Great Otway National Park, which features rainforest, waterfalls and streams, heathland and woodlands, and a spectacular rugged coastline.

The diversity of habitats in the region supports a rich fauna. Koalas occur at high densities, particularly in preferred manna gum tree habitats. Ring-tailed possums, swamp wallabies and grey kangaroos are common, and tiger quoll and yellow-bellied gliders are present but rarely seen. Other species of interest include the eastern pygmy possum, broad-toothed rat, and echidna.

Cape Otway Koala Research Area



Location of study site in Victoria, Australia



### Legend

- ★ Bimbi Park (Field Camp)
- ☆ Rendezvous point (Apollo Bay)
- Study sites
- Major roads
- ▨ Great Otway National Park
- Private land



Created by D. Whisson  
Deakin University  
4 February 2011  
GDA94

The area provides many opportunities for recreational activities: camping, hiking, kayaking and bird watching.

The Great Ocean Walk stretches 90 kilometres from the township of Apollo Bay to the Twelve Apostles, giant rock formations scattered along the coastline of the Port Campbell National Park. The Twelve Apostles were formed as winds and waves from the southern ocean crashed against them and gradually eroded the softer limestone, leaving open caves in the cliffs which then became arches and later collapsed. The rock stacks (only eight now remain) are as high as 45 metres and isolated from the shore. Today many of them are havens for sea bird nesting grounds. The Great Ocean Walk allows viewing of the many magnificent stretches of beach and bays and can be accessed from numerous points to allow for short or long walks. One of Cape Otway's most popular attractions is the Cape Otway Lightstation, which is the longest-operating lightstation in Australia.

# PROJECT STAFF

## Earthwatch scientists

**Dr Desley Whisson**, lecturer in wildlife and conservation biology, School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Deakin University. Desley first began working with koalas in 2004 when she was a wildlife officer with the South Australian government on Kangaroo Island, South Australia. She continued her research on koalas (with the help of students) in 2007 when she joined Deakin University. In addition to koalas, Desley is also fascinated by the alpine region and its wildlife, and has a number of research projects underway in Victoria's high country. Desley is originally from Brisbane, Queensland but has spent much of her working life overseas, conducting research on a diversity of wildlife species in Mexico and the USA. She moved back to Australia in 2004 to reconnect with her roots. Desley will join all teams in the field.

**Dr Alistair Melzer**, senior research fellow, Centre for Environmental Management, Central Queensland University and principal scientist for the Koala Research Centre. Alistair has been working with koalas since 1988 and is a terrestrial ecologist with interests in sustainable land management and the conservation of Australia's flora and fauna. His staff and students work on projects related to the koala, bridled nail-tail wallaby, and the hairy-nosed wombat, as well as on many landscape and ecosystem management programs. Dr. Melzer lives in the bush, east of Rockhampton in Central Queensland, with his wife and abundant wildlife (including possums, scrub turkeys, frogs and dingoes). Dr. Melzer will join the first team.



Dr Desley Whisson and Dr Alistair Melzer in the field. © Dr Desley Whisson

## Earthwatch Team Leader

An Earthwatch Australia team leader will be present on every team to assist with operational management, to provide logistical support and oversee the safety of the project and its participants.

### Staffing Schedule (Subject to Change)

Staff Member Present	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
Dr Desley Whisson	✓	✓	✓
Dr Alistair Melzer	✓		
EW Team Leader	✓	✓	✓

# Daily Life in the Field

## VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND ASSIGNMENTS

### Training

Topics that we will cover in informal discussions and on-site briefings include:

- Orientation and introduction to Earthwatch
- Overview and objectives of the project
- Introduction to Australian conservation issues and wildlife management

**There are no specific skills that are required by volunteers.**

In general, volunteers can expect to walk several kilometres per day, carrying their own pack containing personal items, water and food. Heavier equipment (e.g., climbing/catching kits) will only occasionally be carried into sites. The work will be carried out in various terrain, ranging from undulating, flat forested or heath areas to sandy or thickly vegetated (especially bracken) areas which can make walking difficult. In addition, if radio-collared koalas decide to move into neighbouring steep, wet forest areas, volunteers will be expected to follow them.

Volunteers will provide vital support in tasks that are labour intensive. Tasks include koala population monitoring, habitat surveys, radiotracking, camera surveys and direct observations. Volunteers will receive training on all research tasks before they are carried out, and project staff will always be there to assist or answer queries. The description of research tasks below outlines some of the specific training that will be provided to the volunteers at the start of assignments.

### Assignments

A summary of the research tasks are below:

#### ***Population Monitoring.***

This study component aims to describe koala population density, sex structure, and productivity for predominant forest types at a local scale in the Cape Otway study area, and temporal variation associated with habitat change. This information will be important in understanding the results of more focussed studies on koala tree use, movements, and energetics.

Volunteers will assist in a search for koalas, accompanying the researchers in a systematic traverse of the study area, locating koalas by sight and measuring the distance from the researcher to the koala. Data will be recorded on datasheets provided. Volunteers will be briefed on the importance of monitoring the koala population and reasons behind the timing and methods. They will be given training in basic bush-craft (especially safety and navigation), working in teams, and field technical skills.

#### ***Habitat Surveys.***

This study component aims to describe the characteristics of habitats used by koalas and their temporal variation due to climate effects and over-browsing.

Volunteers will be involved in habitat assessments and the placement and downloading of data from data loggers. Volunteers will receive training in eucalypt identification, habitat assessment techniques, the use of data loggers and the accurate collection and recording of data. They will work under the direct supervision of the Earthwatch scientists to ensure accuracy of the data collected.

**Radio Tracking.**

The objective of this assignment is to determine tree selection and use by koalas in different habitat types, and the energetic costs to koalas of different resource availability. This study will also provide information on home range and movements.

Volunteers will participate in the capture and handling of koalas. They will assist with the radio tracking of koalas, koala observations, tree measurements, habitat assessments and downloading data from the accelerometers. They also will participate in scat search and collection and preparation of scat samples for analysis.

Volunteers will be instructed on koala capture and handling techniques prior to catching. They will assist in the catch (flagging the koala down the tree), and be given hands-on training in restraining the koala for measurements and/or device fitting. All handling will be done under the close supervision of an experienced catcher/handler. Volunteers will also be trained in radiotracking and use of a GPS and once competent, will work in pairs to locate koalas as needed, and record the required data.

**Camera Surveys and Direct Observations.**

The impacts of canopy defoliation and tree species loss on other wildlife are not well understood. A current study by a Deakin honours student suggests that bird species composition and behaviours at individual trees change with declining condition of tree canopies. Further study is needed to determine if changes are occurring at a larger scale. This study will describe bird and mammal communities in habitats that vary in tree species composition and condition.

Volunteers will be involved in all aspects of this study. They will assist in deployment of cameras, downloading and viewing of images and will participate in spotlighting. Volunteers will be provided training in the use of remote cameras so that they can deploy and check cameras without direct supervision. Volunteers will also participate in bird surveys. Volunteers will be provided training in bird species identification so that they can undertake surveys with confidence. Depending on the skill level of volunteers, in some tasks the volunteers will provide back-up to the field officer rather than being the primary data collector.

The Earthwatch scientists will give the team a more detailed onsite project briefing when you arrive.

# TEAM ITINERARY AND DAILY SCHEDULE

Please be aware that weather and research needs can lead to changes in the daily schedule. Should this situation arise, your cooperation and understanding are appreciated.

## Day 1 (First Day)

Time of Day	Activity
1.00pm*	Meet at the rendezvous in Apollo Bay and drive to the research site at Bimbi Park (30 km; approx. 40 min. drive). <i>* The rendezvous time is scheduled conveniently for team members travelling to Apollo Bay on V/Line Coach</i>
Early Evening	Orientation of site and dinner

## Days 2 – 7\*

Time of Day	Activity
7.00am	Breakfast
8.00am	Morning research activity
12:00pm	Packed lunch in the field
1:00pm	Afternoon research activity
5.30pm	Return to base camp, clean & organize gear, recreational time
7.00pm	Dinner
8.00pm	Scientist presentation or night research activity

\*If night tracking and observations are planned, team members undertaking this task will have a varied schedule to allow them time to sleep.

## Day 7\* Non-Research Day

Time of Day	Activity
8:00am*	Breakfast
9:00am	Depart for the Cape Otway Light Station or other local attraction
1:00pm	Lunch at Port Campbell, sight of Twelve Apostles
4:00pm	Return journey back to Bimbi Park

\*Non-research day activity may change depending on weather and the agreed preference of the participants

## Days 8 – 9\*

Time of Day	Activity
7.00am	Breakfast
8.00am	Morning research activity

12:00pm	Packed lunch in the field
1:00pm	Afternoon research activity
5.30pm	Return to base camp, clean & organize gear, recreational time
7.00pm	Dinner
8.00pm	Scientist presentation or night research activity

\*If night tracking and observations are planned, team members undertaking this task will have a varied schedule to allow them time to sleep.

## Day 10 (Last Day)

Time of Day	Activity
7.00am	Breakfast. Pack & check-out.
8.30am	Depart for Apollo Bay (30 km; approx. 40 min. drive).
9.10am*	Arrive at the Information Centre in Apollo Bay <i>* The arrival time to Apollo Bay is scheduled conveniently for team members travelling back to Melbourne on 9.30am V/Line Coach.</i>

## Earthwatch Recreational Time Policy

Earthwatch will generally accompany participants from the rendezvous to the end of the expedition except for recreation time.

- For days when no research activities are scheduled, referred to as recreational days, Earthwatch scientists will offer either a planned team activity or a range of recreational activities that have been vetted and comply with Earthwatch standards. Participants will also have the option of remaining at camp or project accommodations to rest.
- Participants who are determined to pursue options other than those recommended by the project staff will be required to sign a release before doing so. If there is a period of time during a regular research day when no research activities are scheduled, adult participants may have the opportunity to leave the project site on their own; they will be asked to sign out of the project giving their intended destination. Not appearing for the next scheduled activity will trigger the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) regarding missing people. Earthwatch will assess the general risks of adult participants leaving the project site on their own at night after work hours but cannot guarantee participant safety or an awareness of all issues.
- In some cases, due to local conditions, it may be advisable to restrict adult participants to the project camp or accommodation after dark. This will be clearly communicated in the on-site safety briefing. However, if the local conditions are such that adult participants can go out at night under their own recognizance there will be a sign-out process through which participants should state their proposed destination and estimated return time. Participants will be given 24 hour contact information for project staff should assistance be needed. The sign-out is informational only and will not be used to enforce a curfew on adult participants. Adult participants should understand that unless contacted for help, Project staff will not start a search for a missing participant unless they fail to appear the following morning or for the next scheduled research activity.

## Additional Policies Relevant to the Conserving Koala Country Expedition

Australia Projects: Participants who have driven themselves to the project may not drive whilst on the project. This includes time that has been designated as non-research time. Participants who ignore this policy and do drive or ride in another participant's vehicle during the project will be doing so at their own risk and will not be covered under the Earthwatch insurance policy for the expedition.

# ACCOMMODATIONS

Volunteers will stay at Bimbi Park, which is a holiday park in the centre of the Great Ocean Road. The park is conveniently located within the study area. It is sheltered among tall manna gum trees, far away from the wearing noise of towns and traffic, and offers great opportunities for spotting wildlife such as koalas, possums, kangaroos, echidnas, approximately 70 species of birds and many more.

The Bimbi Park facilities offer tourist information, a shop with basic groceries, an outdoor theatre, coin-operated laundry, a pay phone, Internet access (fees apply), undercover BBQ areas, and a camp book exchange.

The Earthwatch teams are scheduled during off-peak times, which should mean that the camp is quieter. However, there will be other guests staying at the park that are not associated with the Earthwatch project, and so the team will need to respect other campers and keep noise to a minimum.



## Sleeping

Participants will be housed in one of Bimbi Park's deluxe cabins. Cabins sleep up to 6 people in 3 bedrooms. Each room will be twin share and single sex. Cabins are self-contained with a fully equipped kitchen and modern bathroom. Pillows and bed linen will be provided.

It may be possible to accommodate couples together upon request if enough notice is provided. Please note that this option is dependent on team numbers and availability of the accommodation at the time of the team and cannot be guaranteed.



## Bathrooms

Each deluxe cabin contains a bathroom with one toilet and shower, which will be shared by all participants. However, there is also a shower and toilet block close by which is open to all holiday park guests (small fees apply for use of communal showers).

## Electricity

Cabins are supplied with access to electricity. All rooms are equipped with working power sockets. The kitchen is equipped with a refrigerator, a gas stove and a sink connected to running water (potable/drinking water is provided from the tap near the office block). Most cabins are well insulated and double glazed and therefore air conditioning is not necessary. There are fans available during warm days and electric or gas heaters for use during cooler nights.

## Internet and Communications

Bimbi Park offers wireless Internet access if participants wish to bring their laptops or smart phones (a one-time \$5 charge applies for duration of stay). The use of the park's office computer is only possible in emergency and special cases.

Mobile phone reception is poor within the park but there is a public pay phone available. Mobile phone coverage is good outside of the holiday park and at the research sites, depending on which network you are connected with. Telstra Mobile tends to have the best coverage in Australia. Communication between teams of volunteers on-site will be via UHF radio.

For further information on the Bimbi Park, see [www.bimbipark.com.au](http://www.bimbipark.com.au).

# FOOD

Earthwatch will provide all food during your stay at the research site.

A menu will be planned and food purchased prior to each trip (the nearest supermarket is approximately 40 minutes away). The menu will take into account any special dietary needs of team members and be relatively flexible to account for individual tastes and dislikes.

Participants and staff will be responsible for making their own continental breakfasts in the morning.

Lunch will be had in the field, and participants and project staff will be expected to make their own sandwiches in the morning before departing. Fruit and snack foods (e.g., muesli bars) will be available during the day.

Dinner will be a cooked meal and all participants and staff will eat at Bimbi Park in the communal living area. Evening meals will be hearty and comprise meats, vegetables, pastas and desserts. BBQs will be planned but will be dependent on weather. Volunteers will be expected to participate in the preparation of meals according to a roster.

Housekeeping will be shared, with small teams assigned to duties each day. Tasks may include washing and drying dishes, sweeping the kitchen floor, wiping benches, cleaning the bathroom, packing away chairs and tables after meals etc. A roster with full tasks will be established on the first day of the project.

Fresh drinking water will always be available at the accommodation quarters. Tea, coffee and cordial will also be readily available at the accommodation.

Below are examples of the foods you might expect in the field. Please bear in mind that variety depends on availability. This list is intended to provide a general idea of food types, but it is very important that volunteers be flexible.

**Breakfast:** Cereals, toast and spreads, fresh fruit and yoghurt

**Lunch:** Sandwich meats, spreads and salads, cheese, fresh fruit, muesli bars

**Dinner:** Pasta, rice, meat, cooked vegetables, salads, sauces, etc.

**Snacks/Other:** Crackers, fruits, sweet biscuits, muesli bars

**Beverages:** Coffee, tea, milk, fruit juices / cordial, fresh water

## Special Dietary Requirements

Please alert Earthwatch to any special dietary requirements (e.g. diabetes, lactose intolerance, nut or other serious food allergies) as soon as possible, and note them in the space provided on your Volunteer Forms. Accommodating special diets is not guaranteed and can be very difficult due to availability of food, location of field sites, and other local conditions.

**Special note to vegans and strict vegetarians:** Please be aware that it is often difficult to accommodate strict vegetarians and vegans. It may be possible to get meatless meals but vegans and strict vegetarians may have a problem avoiding animal products altogether. If this poses a problem, then participation on this Earthwatch expedition should be seriously reconsidered.

# Travel Planning

**Note:** Earthwatch Institute's international emergency medical and evacuation assistance provider, International SOS, has a wealth of useful information available at their website, including visa, passport, currency, medical, etc. information for the country in which this project takes place. See [internationalsos.com](http://internationalsos.com) and enter Earthwatch's member identification number: 14ACPA000075. Under "Select Resource" choose "English Country Guide," and then select this project's country from the list.

You are encouraged to register your travel itinerary with your embassy. For information on embassies around the world, see [embassyworld.com](http://embassyworld.com)

- Citizens of Australia may register online at: [orao.dfat.gov.au](http://orao.dfat.gov.au).
- British citizens may register online at: [fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/staying-safe](http://fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/staying-safe).
- Citizens of the United States may register online at: [travelregistration.state.gov](http://travelregistration.state.gov).
- Citizens of other countries are encouraged to check with their appropriate embassy or consulate regarding registration.

## RENDEZVOUS

The rendezvous information for this project has been removed from this web version of the expedition briefing. It is only available in the printed version of the briefing. Please do not make any travel arrangements to join an expedition without having full and up-to-date rendezvous information from Earthwatch. Full rendezvous details, including places and times are available from Earthwatch upon request prior to registration for an expedition. Please use the "Contact Us" button on the top right-hand corner of the website to get in touch with an Earthwatch representative, who will be very happy to help you.

## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

### Visa Information

Citizens of the US, EU, Canada and Japan **do** need a tourist visa for entry. Citizens of other countries should check with their travel agent or a visa agency for specific visa and entry requirements. Travelers are advised to check visa regulations well in advance of traveling.

### Passport Information

Most volunteers traveling from outside the host country will require a passport valid for at least six months beyond the dates of travel.

## For Volunteers Requiring Visas ONLY: Essential Information

<b>Type of Visa</b>	You must get an ETA (Electronic Travel Authority) <b>TOURIST VISA</b> .
<b>Where to Get a Visa</b>	ETA Visas are easily obtained online or you can contact the nearest Australian <b>embassy or consulate</b> to find out how to apply for your visa.
<b>Required Information</b>	You may need to send your <b>passport</b> (valid for at least six months beyond your stay), a <b>Visa Application and Immigration Form, 2-4 passport-size photos plus payment</b> to the embassy or visa agency (if applicable). Please be sure that your passport is valid for at least six months beyond your stay.
<b>Contact Information</b>	You may be required to list the following contact information on your Visa Application and Immigration Form:  Richard Gilmore Earthwatch Australia 126 Bank Street South Melbourne VIC 3205
<b>Cost of a Visa</b>	Generally between US\$40-100, but varies from country to country and can potentially cost <b>up to US\$180</b> . A visa agency will charge an additional fee.

**Note:** The purpose of your visit is for vacation, holiday or travel. Foreign immigration officials do not always understand the concept of a “working vacation” or “volunteering.” Words such as “working,” “volunteering,” “research,” or “scientific expedition” can raise questions concerning the country’s foreign labor laws and/or prompt questions about official scientific research permits and credentials, etc., to which volunteers on their own will not be equipped to respond. All required research permits for the project are in place and have been approved by the proper authorities.

### Visa Agencies

In the United States	In Europe	In Australia
Trivisa* 290 5th Avenue, 4th Floor New York, NY 10001 Tel: (212) 613-2223 Fax: (212) 613-2287 Hours: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM EST Web: <a href="http://www.trivisa.com">www.trivisa.com</a> (*See the website for additional offices)	CIBT, Inc., UK 25 Wilton Road Lower Ground Floor Victoria SW1V 1LW Tel: 0844 736 0211 Fax: +44 (0) 207 828 5411 Calling from Europe outside UK: +44 (0)207 802 1000 Email: <a href="mailto:info@uk.cibt.com">info@uk.cibt.com</a> Web: <a href="http://uk.cibt.com">uk.cibt.com</a> (has alternate address for urgent requests)	Ask your travel agency if they can send your visa application on your behalf.

### Additional Passport and Visa Resources

- For Japanese citizens: [rainbowt.jp/travel/visa\\_top.html](http://rainbowt.jp/travel/visa_top.html)
- For Australian citizens: [passports.gov.au](http://passports.gov.au) and [dfat.gov.au/visas/index.html](http://dfat.gov.au/visas/index.html)
- For for US citizens: [passportvisasexpress.com](http://passportvisasexpress.com)
- Travel Document Systems: [traveldocs.com/index.htm](http://traveldocs.com/index.htm)

# INSURANCE

MedEvac assistance, advice and insurance are included in the contribution you pay to Earthwatch. It covers your travel medical risks, including medical expenses and emergency medical evacuation, while you are traveling, as well as trip cancellation and baggage and personal money insurance. It doesn't provide personal liability insurance. This coverage is valid in the country of your Earthwatch expedition and during travel to and from your expedition. Please see [earthwatch.org/europe/downloads/Insurance/post15Jan\\_FAQs.pdf](http://earthwatch.org/europe/downloads/Insurance/post15Jan_FAQs.pdf) for information about when coverage starts and ends, and answers to other frequently asked questions.

If you have additional vacation time before and/or after your Earthwatch expedition that forms part of your overall time away from your place of residence, this additional vacation time is not covered under this policy. If you are in any doubt as to whether your travel plans before and/or after your Earthwatch expedition constitute additional vacation time please contact Sutton Winson.

**This insurance policy is secondary to your existing health insurance policy (e.g. the NHS in the UK).**

## **If you signed up through Earthwatch UK/Europe, or Earthwatch Japan:**

Details of this insurance policy are included in your expedition briefing pack and can be found at [earthwatch.org/europe/insurance](http://earthwatch.org/europe/insurance). Please refer all queries regarding this policy to Sutton Winson in the UK at +44 (0) 1444 251 164 or on [earthwatch@swib.co.uk](mailto:earthwatch@swib.co.uk).

Information about additional insurance available to UK residents can be found at [earthwatch.org/europe/insurance](http://earthwatch.org/europe/insurance). Should you have any questions about whether you require additional coverage for your travel plans, please contact Sutton Winson. Earthwatch is not authorized by the FSA to give advice on any additional travel insurance you might require.

## **If you signed up through Earthwatch US:**

Details of the US insurance policy can be found at [earthwatch.org/insurance](http://earthwatch.org/insurance). Please refer any queries regarding this policy to Sutton Winson in the UK. From the US, dial 011 44 1444 251 164, or email [earthwatch@swib.co.uk](mailto:earthwatch@swib.co.uk). Please note the time difference between the US and the UK and call during UK business hours, which are from 08:45 to 17:00 GMT (from November to April) and GMT +1 (from April to November).

Information about additional insurance can be found at [earthwatch.org/insurance](http://earthwatch.org/insurance). Should you have any questions about whether you require additional coverage for your travel plans, please contact Sutton Winson. Earthwatch is not authorized by the FSA to give advice on any additional travel insurance you might require.

## **Emergency Medical and Evacuation Assistance (for all volunteers)**

Emergency medical and evacuation assistance is available for all Earthwatch participants from International SOS (ISOS), a twenty-four-hour, independently operated international emergency medical and evacuation service. Please see the contact information and card on the *General Information* page. Participants should carry the card with them on the expedition.

# ADDITIONAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

## Luggage

- *General considerations:* Do not bring more luggage than you can carry and handle on your own. If traveling by air and checking your luggage, you are advised to pack an extra set of field clothing and personal essentials in your carry-on bag in case your luggage is lost and/or takes several days to catch up with you. Many airlines have strict baggage policies. Please check with your airline(s) on baggage weight limits, liquid restrictions, fees for checked baggage, etc.
- *Weather Considerations:* Expect mild, sunny & rainy days and cool nights (average temperatures of 10-20°C). Bring some warmer clothes for the evenings, a raincoat, sunscreen, a sun hat and a water bottle
- *Essential Items:*
  - Pack long pants and shirts for fieldwork. This will protect you from the sun, insect bites and scratches from plants. Make sure you bring some waterproof gear as it can rain at any time of year.
  - You will need a pair of comfortable walking shoes/boots for research activities which are closed and provide adequate ankle support.
  - Bed linen and pillows are provided at the accommodation. However, you will need to bring your own towel(s).
- *Checking luggage:* Please note that if you will be taking an international flight that has one or more connections within the country of your destination, it will be necessary to collect any checked bags at the airport where you first arrive in the destination country. After proceeding through Customs, you will have to recheck your luggage before flying on to your final destination.

## Money Matters

- *Personal funds:* No funds are required for the expedition, however participants may wish to take some cash (AUD\$) with them to buy snacks and beverages before entering the park, or for purchase of small items at Bimbi Park. There will be a non-research day scheduled into the program, where participants will get to enjoy some of the scenic attractions the Great Ocean Road has to offer. If participants wish to participate in this day, they will require money for entrance fees (approx. \$15 - \$20 per adult), and possibly souvenirs. Also, you may want money if you wish to have more than a packed lunch on this day. Pub or café lunches in Australia cost approximately \$20AUD per person. For those travelling from overseas, airports and most major towns will offer banks and/or exchange bureaus during business hours, as well as ATM's for cash withdrawals (please check with your bank beforehand to see if yours cards are compatible with Australian ATM's). In most locations you can use EFTPOS or credit cards for large purchases but smaller purchases are paid for with cash.
- *Local currency:* Australian Dollars. See the International SOS website and [www.xe.com/ucc](http://www.xe.com/ucc) for currency information and exchange rates.
- *Airport fees and/or departure taxes:* All taxes are included in airfare.

## Your Destination

- *Language:* English

- *Electricity*: 240 volts, 50 Hz, three-pronged plug with flat blades (see image at right). For additional information, see [kropla.com/electric2.htm](http://kropla.com/electric2.htm).



- *Time zone*: UTC/GMT +10 hours. For time worldwide with GMT/UTC, see [worldtimeserver.com](http://worldtimeserver.com).
- *Telephone Dialing codes*: When calling Australia from another country, dial the country's international dialling code, followed by 61 and the number. When calling within Australia, omit the 61. When calling another country from Australia dial 0011, followed by the other country's country code and the number. **PLEASE NOTE**: you should check with your cell phone provider to obtain any carrier-specific dialling codes you may need; many providers have dialling procedures that may differ in whole or in part from these directions. For additional information, see [kropla.com/dialcode.htm](http://kropla.com/dialcode.htm).

## Country Information

- UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office: [fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/](http://fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/)
- Country information from around the world: [countryreports.org](http://countryreports.org)
- National Geographic Map Machine: [plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine](http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine)
- US State Department: [state.gov](http://state.gov)
- Online unit conversions: [onlineconversion.com](http://onlineconversion.com)
- Worldwide weather: [wunderground.com](http://wunderground.com) or [tutiempo.net/en](http://tutiempo.net/en)
- ATM locator: [visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/](http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/) or [mastercard.com/atmlocator/index.jsp](http://mastercard.com/atmlocator/index.jsp)

## RECOMMENDED READING

Below are additional recommended materials for those interested in further preparing for the expedition. Many can be purchased online through popular vendors. See the *Helpful Resources* section for suggested vendor websites.

**Book:** The Koala: natural history, conservation and management. Roger Martin, Katherine Handasyde (1999) UNSW Press, Sydney.

**Journal:** Melzer A., Carrick F., Menkhorst P., Lunney D. and St John B. (2000) Overview, critical assessment and conservation implications of koala distribution and abundance. *Conservation Biology* **14 (3)** 619-628.

**Article:** The National Koala Conservation Strategy 2009-2014:  
[environment.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/koala-strategy/pubs/koala-strategy.pdf](http://environment.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/koala-strategy/pubs/koala-strategy.pdf)

**Websites:** Bimbi Park: <http://www.bimbipark.com.au/index1.html>

Skybus: <http://www.skybus.com.au/>

Victoria Public Transport: <http://www.viclink.com.au/>

# HELPFUL RESOURCES

Please see Earthwatch's Volunteer Resources pages for additional information on:

- Travel agencies with whom Earthwatch volunteers can get preferential rates
- Recommended kit and clothing providers
- Recommended travel booksellers

Volunteers who sign up through our US office, visit: [earthwatch.org/volunteerresources](http://earthwatch.org/volunteerresources).

Volunteers who sign up through our UK office, visit: [earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerresources](http://earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerresources)

# Project Conditions

Please show this section to your doctor when he/she is completing the Health section of your Earthwatch Participation Form. Be sure to discuss inoculation requirements with your doctor well in advance of your departure date. See the Health Information section for inoculation information.

## To the Doctor:

Your patient has volunteered to join a field research team that has specific physical demands of which you and your patient should be aware. **We need your accurate evaluation of your patient's ability to meet the conditions detailed below in order to care for his/her health and safety and assess that he/she can participate fully and effectively.**

### General Conditions

**The weather is expected to vary within the limits below.**

Temperature at the research site during months of April, September and October should be mild with day-time maximum temperatures reaching from around 16°-18°C and night-time temperatures dropping to minimums of approximately 10°C. There is a good chance of rainfall at the site during spring (September/October) and autumn (April). Average temperatures and rainfall for the region are outlined in the table below.

#### April / September / October

<b>Humidity</b>	40%-70%
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<b>Max. Temp. Range</b>	16°-18°C
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<b>Min. Temp. Range</b>	9°-11°C
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<b>Rainfall</b>	66 – 88mm
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### Physical Demands

Participants must have a good level of fitness. Anyone with mobility, balance, or sight disabilities would have difficulty participating in the trip.

Volunteers will encounter numerous biting insects so anyone at risk of severe allergic reactions to insect bites, or having phobias related to insects should consider this carefully when deciding to join the project, and plan to bring any necessary medication.

Participants should expect to spend long days in the field (up to 7-8 hours). They will walk several kilometres per day, carrying their own pack containing personal items, water and food. Heavier equipment will only occasionally be carried into sites. The work will be carried out in various terrains: undulating, flat forested or heath areas, sandy or thickly vegetated, bracken areas and in steep, wet forest areas which can make walking difficult. Dexterity and good balance are essential.

Those volunteers who are unaccustomed to bush walking may find the first few days a bit tiring and should pace themselves accordingly. Volunteers could prepare themselves by exercising prior to the trip, with an emphasis on strengthening leg muscles and ankles, and improving their cardio-respiratory fitness.

Participants will be working outside for significant amounts of time and whilst the temperature should be generally mild, the Australian sun is unpredictable and can be extremely harmful even in mild conditions. Participants must be prepared to take adequate precautions against over-exposure to the sun.

Below are the expected demands of the project, but please keep in mind that conditions may change and the project could potentially be more or less strenuous than the chart indicates.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Workload/Intensity</b>
Sitting	Occasional activities involving sitting & bending.
Climbing	Occasional bush walking on steep, wet forest areas. At arrival, departure and transfers to project sites: climbing into and out of high-step 4WD vehicles requiring arm and leg strength. Only Earthwatch scientists or suitably-trained project staff will climb trees for koala capture. A site-hazard assessment will be undertaken prior to each climb. The climb will be cancelled if a bee hive is present, or if the tree is dead. Some sites may require climbing fences to track koalas.
Walking	Intense, up to 6-7 hours per day. The work will be carried out in various terrains: undulating, flat forested or heath areas, sandy or thickly vegetated, bracken areas and in steep, wet forest areas.
Carrying	Daily: carrying personal items, water and food. Heavier equipment will only occasionally be carried into sites.

## POTENTIAL HAZARDS

<b>Hazard Type</b>	<b>Associated Risks and Precautions</b>
Transportation	Vehicles will be driven on unsealed roads and on occasion will be taken off road in order to reach research sites. All vehicles are equipped with airbags, seatbelts, fire extinguisher, spare tires, first aid kit with Emergency Response Plan, mobile phone and UHF radios. Only experienced project staff will drive vehicles. Passengers and driver will be instructed to wear seatbelts at all times whilst the vehicle is in motion. Night driving will be limited, and not on main highways. Off-road driving will only be done by off-road equipped vehicles. Participants are not allowed to drive (including their own vehicles) whilst on an Earthwatch team.
Slips, trips and falls	The work will be carried out in various terrains, some of which can make walking difficult. Participants should bring/wear appropriate footwear whilst doing field work. Sturdy boots and gaiters are recommended. Participants will be instructed to be careful when walking through the bush & forest and to watch for low lying vegetation, burrows, and woody debris. Stairs are present at accommodation, participants should be cautious walking up and down stairs, especially at night.
Heat related illness & dehydration	Temperatures will generally be mild but long days in the sun may lead to dehydration and/or other illness. Participants are informed of the risks of working in the field before the project and should come prepared with appropriate clothing. Participants are instructed to wear sunscreen and hats at all times when working outdoors, and to bring/drink plenty of water. If participants start to feel unwell they should notify a project staff member immediately and rest in a shaded area, whilst cooling themselves with water.
Low level branches	Participants may collide with low-level branches whilst in the field, or branches may fall unexpectedly causing head or eye injury. Participants will be instructed during the safety briefing to watch out for low level branches and twigs, and to not walk through the bush with their heads down. If there are high wind conditions field work will be reconsidered in dense wooded areas. Safety glasses will be provided for use during koala capture.
Wildlife	Venomous snakes, spiders and scorpions are present at research sites. Participants are warned of the risks before the project and during the safety briefing on day one. Participants are instructed to wear long trousers and sturdy closed footwear, to watch where they step, to check their sleeping areas before going to bed, and to shake out shoes and clothing before wearing. If a snake is encountered, participants are instructed to move in the

	opposite direction and not try to kill or capture the snake. Only scientists who are fully qualified and trained will be allowed to handle poisonous snakes, scorpions and spiders. Safety equipment (hard hats, safety glasses) will be worn by volunteers assisting in catching koalas. Koalas are aggressive when captured and are capable of inflicting severe wounds. Scientists will demonstrate methods prior to volunteers handling koalas.
Insect bite	Sand flies, common bush ticks, stinging ants, mosquitoes, centipedes and wasps are present at research sites causing a risk of insect bites/stings to participants. Participants will be warned of the risks before the project and during the safety briefing on day one. Participants are instructed to wear long trousers and shirts in the field, and can apply insect repellent. Centipede bites can be quite painful and should be treated with first aid. Leeches may also be present in some areas but they can be easily removed, and most often prevented from attaching if wearing gaiters and/or strong insect repellent. Participants should be cautious where they walk, should check their sleeping areas before going to bed, and shake out shoes and clothing before wearing.
Gas cooking	Cooking is done by gas at the cabins. Volunteers will be involved in preparation of food, and should exercise caution when operating gas stoves. Suitable fire extinguishers are present and fire exits are marked. An electric kettle is present and should be used instead of the gas stove whenever possible.
Plants	Some plants found at research sites may cause allergic reactions or discomfort to participants. Participants are instructed to wear long trousers, and advised to wear long sleeves when working in the field. Participants are warned during the safety briefing of any irritable plants that they may encounter. Participants are instructed not to eat any plants, berries or mushrooms and to be careful of thorny or prickly vegetation.
Rain	If it rains for more than a day, research may stop because weather conditions will affect the safety of the roads. Participants are warned of this possibility prior to participation. Wet weather may also result in participants becoming wet and cold. If this occurs, the team will return to the field camp to change into dry clothes.

## HEALTH INFORMATION

See [www.internationalsos.com](http://www.internationalsos.com) for information on the current health conditions in Australia. At the homepage, enter Earthwatch's member identification number: 14ACPA000075. Under "Select Resource" choose "English Country Guide," and then select Australia from the list.

**Australian residents only: Please bring your Medicare card and (if applicable) your private health insurance and ambulance cover policy numbers.**

### Routine Immunizations

All volunteers should make sure to have the following up-to-date immunizations: DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus), polio, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and varicella (if you have not already had chicken pox). Please be sure your tetanus shot is current.

### Project Vaccinations

**Medical decisions are the responsibility of each volunteer and the following are recommendations only.** While Earthwatch can provide details regarding suggested inoculations, we are not a medical organization and decisions about which inoculations to receive should be made between you and your doctor. Health conditions around the world are constantly changing, so keep informed and consult your doctor, a local travel health clinic, the US Center for Disease Control ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)), the World Health Organization ([who.int](http://who.int)), and International SOS (see above) for the latest health information for travellers. Please consult your doctor for guidance on inoculations if you intend to travel to other parts of the country.

	Required for Entry	Recommended for Health Reasons
Yellow Fever	X - if traveling from countries or region where it is endemic, a Certificate of Vaccination is required.	
Hepatitis A		Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis A vaccination for all travelers and expatriates, regardless of destination.
Hepatitis B		Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travelers and expatriates, regardless of destination.

## MEDICAL CONDITIONS OF SPECIAL CONCERN

For your health and safety, please make sure to disclose any known medical conditions to Earthwatch staff. The research site is 40 minutes from the nearest hospital/doctor; therefore it is required that participants are fit and in good health and do not require immediate access to medical care.

Condition	Concerns and Precautions
Medical Complaints	Due to the remoteness of the area and the time it takes to evacuate, those who may require quick access to medical care due to any medical complaints should not take part on this project.
Allergies	Those with known allergies to dust, grasses, mammals, plants or insects should bring appropriate medications in order to participate on this project. Those with severe bee-sting allergies should bring an Epi-kit and carry it with them at all times.
Back or neck problems	Those with chronic or constant back or neck pain should be aware that some days will require short travels (<1 hour) in 4WD vehicles on unmade roads.
Knee or ankle problems	This project requires bending and lifting as well as participants to walk over uneven and steep terrain.
Physical limitations	Volunteers with physical limitations should be aware that the work involved generally requires a good level of fitness.

Any prescription medication brought into Australia needs to be accompanied with a letter from your doctor for Customs Inspection purposes. For further information the regulation of medications, please see: [tga.gov.au/consumer/index.htm](http://tga.gov.au/consumer/index.htm). Medical attention of high quality, will be sought should any serious ailments occur.

### Additional Health Information Resources

- Travel health website: [mdtravelhealth.com](http://mdtravelhealth.com)
- The Travel Doctor: [tmvc.com.au](http://tmvc.com.au)
- Australian Department of Health and Aging: [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au)
- Hospital for Tropical Diseases: [thehtd.org](http://thehtd.org)
- Travellers Healthline Advisory Service Tel: 020 7950 7799

## EMERGENCIES IN THE FIELD

The nearest medical care and pharmacy are available in Apollo Bay (30km from the site), or for after-hour emergencies at the hospital in Colac (91km from the site). A vehicle is always available for transport to the hospital and an ambulance can be called for major emergencies.

These towns will be not routinely visited during the project. Volunteers should ensure that they carry sufficient quantities of any prescribed medication, painkillers, etc. to last for the duration of the trip. A first-aid kit will be available on-site, and basic items may be available for purchase from the campground shop.

## Proximity to Medical Care:

Physician, nurse, or EMT on staff Staff certified in safety training	Project staff are not medical professionals Dr Desley Whisson is qualified in CPR and holds a senior first aid certificate. Dr Alistair Melzer has first aid training. All Earthwatch Team Leaders are qualified in CPR and hold a first aid certificate.
Nearest hospital and/or clinic	Apollo Bay Hospital: Otway Health 75 McLachlan Street, Apollo Bay VIC 3233 Australia ph. (+ 61 3) 5237 8500 fax. (+61 3) 5237 6172 <a href="http://www.otwayhealth.com.au">www.otwayhealth.com.au</a>
Distance	30km / 40 minutes

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Emergency Communications in the Field

Mobile phone reception at accommodation site is poor, but in other areas of the research site it is good depending on your network provider. The project staff will have mobile phones with them and will also use UHF radios to communicate. There is also a land line and a pay phone at Bimbi Park which can be used in an emergency if needed.

#### Emergency numbers:

Police: 000

Fire and ambulance: 000

Apollo Bay Hospital – Otway Health: (+61 3) 5237 8500

#### The Earthwatch Australia office can be contacted on the following numbers:

- During office hours: ph. (+61 3) 9682 6828
- After hours: ph. (+61 3) 9625 0822

After business hours, leave your message with the live answering service. State that you have an emergency communication and leave a clear message with the name of the expedition, your name, location from which you are calling, and if possible, a phone number where you can be reached. An Earthwatch staff person will be contacted and will respond to your call within one hour.

### Personal Communications

Please note: mobile phone reception at Bimbi Park Caravan Park is poor. There is a public pay phone available. Bimbi Park offers a wireless Internet access (a one-time \$5 charge applies for duration of stay). The use of the park's office computer is only possible in emergency or through prior arrangement with Earthwatch.

Participants will only be able to contact family and friends in case of emergency. If your family or friends need to get in contact with you we ask that they call the Earthwatch Australia office on the following numbers. The message will then be passed on to the team in the field.

- Earthwatch during office hours: ph. (+61 3) 9682 6828
- Earthwatch After hours: ph. (+61 3) 9625 0822

Bimbi Park has a land line telephone and fax as well as regular post, however the Earthwatch team will have limited access to these facilities as they are used by the park's management:

Bimbi Park- ph. (+61 3) 5237 9246

address: 90 Manna Gum Drive, Cape Otway VIC 3233 Australia

Family and friends of Earthwatch volunteers should be aware that personal communication with outsiders is not always possible while participating in an expedition. Earthwatch encourages volunteers to minimize outgoing calls; likewise, family and friends should restrict calls to urgent messages only. Measures have been taken to ensure that appropriate communication tools are available in cases of emergency.

All volunteers are asked to remember that Earthwatch expeditions offer a rare chance to escape from hearing ringing phones and others' phone conversations, and to regulate their cell-phone use with respect for fellow volunteers and staff accordingly.

## Contact Information

If necessary, volunteers can be reached via the contact information below. All details are for the accommodation, Brimbi Park.

**Address** 90 Manna Gum Drive  
Cape Otway  
Victoria 3233  
Australia

**Phone** 03 5237 9246

**Email** [info@bimbipark.com.au](mailto:info@bimbipark.com.au)

# Earthwatch Institute Policies & Participant Rights and Responsibilities

This document contains important information concerning Earthwatch Institute policies and participant rights and responsibilities for inclusion on an Earthwatch expedition. Please read this document thoroughly and sign the enclosed Liability Release form to indicate that you understand and accept the risks inherent to your expedition and the policies, rights, and responsibilities enumerated in this document. Participants will not be permitted to partake in an expedition until Earthwatch has received the signed release form.

## **Intellectual Property Rights**

It is permissible to share photos, videos, and stories of your expedition with family, friends, local media, and in a public forum. Sharing your new perspectives and experiences is welcomed and encouraged.

However, please recognize that all information, data, and images shared or gathered in the course of your expedition's field work become the intellectual property of the Earthwatch scientist (ES). Co-opting or plagiarism of data, images or information gathered during an expedition for use in a scientific thesis, masters or PhD work, or for profit or for the academic or business use of a third party without the permission of the ES is strictly prohibited. Please be aware that data gathered during the interviewing of local people becomes the intellectual property of the ES. Earthwatch scientists have the right to place additional restrictions on your ability to share data or certain research-related images.

Conversely, an Earthwatch scientist may give written permission to use data and images for academic or profitable activity. Please be sure to ask what is acceptable to the Earthwatch scientist.

Fellows or scholarship recipients are sometimes required to submit a written report reflecting what they have learned on a project, sometimes as a step toward developing a curriculum. Earthwatch scientists have the right but not obligation to review and edit materials involving information gathered on one of their expeditions.

## **Discrimination**

Earthwatch does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or any other reason prohibited by applicable law and respects participants' right to privacy. However, you must be aware that local laws in countries in which Earthwatch operates may not be anti-discriminatory and that the possibilities exist that local residents may not have an awareness of best practice regarding discrimination.

Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated on Earthwatch teams. Disruptive behavior, or verbal, physical or any other type of abuse or harassment will also not be tolerated. Violation of Earthwatch's non-discrimination policy is grounds for expulsion from the program without a refund.

## **Intimate relationships**

Earthwatch scientists, their staff, their colleagues, and their associates are prohibited from becoming romantically involved with participants during the entire duration of the period that the team is in the field. Romantic relationships that may otherwise seem permissible may eventually create an unpleasant or unproductive work environment and are therefore strongly discouraged for the duration of an Earthwatch project.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Please recognize that the relationship that exists between Earthwatch scientists and staff and participants is analogous to the student-teacher relationship. Therefore, please be aware of the following policies.

Sexual harassment of participants by the Earthwatch scientist or Earthwatch staff is prohibited. Likewise, sexual harassment of other participants, Earthwatch field staff, or local people by participants is also prohibited.

Sexual harassment infringes on an individual's right to an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtones of conduct either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment does not mean occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature.

Sexual harassment refers to conduct which is offensive, which harms morale, or which interferes with the effectiveness of Earthwatch expedition teams; such conduct is prohibited. Lewd or vulgar remarks, suggestive comments, displaying derogatory posters, cartoons or drawings, pressure for dates or sexual favors and unacceptable physical contact or exposure are examples of what can constitute harassment. No one should be touched in areas that otherwise would be covered by a bathing suit. It is important to realize that what may not be offensive to you, may be offensive to participants, the local population, and Earthwatch field staff.

Any individual who feels subjected to sexual harassment or has any knowledge of such behavior should report it at once to his or her PI or to Earthwatch staff members. All Earthwatch scientists and Field Team Leaders (FTLs) will notify Earthwatch immediately when an accusation of sexual harassment or abuse is made or witnessed.

All reports of sexual harassment will be handled with discretion and will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Any participant who is found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual harassment will be immediately removed from the expedition at his or her own expense. If a minor is immediately involved in allegations of sexual harassment, his or her parents will be contacted.

### **Drugs**

Laws on drug use in most countries are severe and may carry lengthy imprisonment or death penalties. I understand and accept that the manufacture, possession, use, purchase and/or sale of illegal drugs or other illegal substances while on an Earthwatch expedition is strictly prohibited. Prescription drugs may only be purchased and used by the individual indicated on the prescription in keeping with their intended use guidelines.

### **Alcohol**

Local statutes, customs, practices, ordinances, and regulations with regard to the use, possession, sale, or purchase of alcohol are applicable to all participants and project staff in Earthwatch expeditions. Participants and project staff on Earthwatch expeditions must comply with the law of the country in which a project is located regarding the minimum age required to consume alcohol. In addition, restriction on the use, possession, sale, or purchase of alcohol may be set by the Earthwatch scientist. Any restrictions on the consumption of alcohol should be clearly outlined by the project staff in the briefing to participants at the start of the project, and in the Expedition Briefing.

Consumption or possession of alcohol or smoking is not permitted on any Earthwatch Teen Team, regardless of local law.

Excessive consumption of alcohol by staff or participants is not acceptable on any Earthwatch project. Intoxication can jeopardize personal safety, in addition to the safety of the team. It can also cause delay, and hinder response in the event of a crisis or emergency situation.

Earthwatch staff and the Earthwatch scientist have the discretion to remove individuals from the project who consume alcohol in a time and manner that endanger the safety and/or productivity of the expedition.

### **Minors**

Earthwatch considers participants under eighteen (18) years of age to be minors. Minors are not permitted to participate on any of Earthwatch's standard teams unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian in which case the minimum age is sixteen (16). Minors on regular teams do not receive additional guidance or supervision from Earthwatch beyond what is offered to the adult participants. The number of minors on regular teams is limited to two (2) per team. Earthwatch has developed teams specifically for 16 and 17 year olds ("Teen Teams") as well as teams specifically for families ("Family Teams") with children as young as 10 years old. These teams focus on the same research activities and have the same expectations as our regular teams, but with more facilitation and support. Exceptions for some projects are made at the discretion of Earthwatch and the Earthwatch scientist. Due to a more in-depth screening process for certain programs that select candidates based on school year rather than age, there may be 18 year olds fielding on the same team as 16 and 17 year olds. Please be aware that some Earthwatch projects do not allow participation by minors in any circumstance.

### **Participants and Driving**

Participants are not allowed to drive project vehicles or aircraft during an expedition. In select circumstances, participants may be able to drive boats under the direct supervision by project staff. These circumstances are pre-determined by project staff in collaboration with Earthwatch. Participants must respect the restrictions for boat driving in place for each project.

If a project environment is such that participants can drive their own vehicles to the rendezvous, those who have driven themselves to the project may not drive their own vehicles to, from or for project activities, including the transport of project equipment after arriving at the site.

Participants who have driven themselves to the project may choose to utilize their own vehicle during recreational time, but project staff will brief them on the driving restrictions. All driving during recreational time is done at your own risk.

Please be advised that the only exception to the above driving restrictions is emergency situations.

Riding in other participants' vehicles is not covered under the participants' insurance policy for the expedition. Riding in another participant's vehicle is done at a participant's own risk.

### **In the Event of an Emergency**

In the event of emergencies, judgments must be made by Earthwatch field staff and participants. While Earthwatch makes an effort to ensure that qualified people make the most informed decisions possible, occasionally first aid may be administered and other immediate steps taken by expedition participants who are not licensed medical providers.

Each Earthwatch expedition has safety protocols and emergency procedures in place. Earthwatch encourages team members (the field staff and participants) to exercise their best judgment with regard to their own safety and the safety of other team members. Other participants may perform "Good Samaritan" actions, or actions taken to assist fellow participants during emergency situations in the field. However, Earthwatch does not encourage or expect you to jeopardize your own safety or that of others in attempting to rescue or assist your fellow team members.

### **Right of Refusal**

Earthwatch reserves the right to refuse an applicant's participation on Earthwatch projects at any time and to terminate any work being done by a participant and require the participant to vacate the project site if any of the Earthwatch Expedition Team in his or her absolute discretion considers it appropriate. In this event, the participant (and his/ her parent/ guardian, if appropriate) will be responsible for arranging and paying for any accommodation, travel or other arrangements which may be necessary following the termination of a participant's involvement in a project, for whatever reason and may not be eligible for a refund.

Earthwatch and the project staff may not refuse a participant for discriminatory reasons (race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, or any other reason prohibited by applicable law). However, participants may be denied in the interest of team compatibility. Earthwatch will make reasonable efforts to accommodate participants with disabilities and the organization endeavors to find appropriate expeditions for those participants that have physical limitations. Refusal of a participant is an unusual event and is generally due to either an applicant's failure to meet the essential eligibility requirements of a particular project, or in the interest of team compatibility. In the event that an applicant is refused participation for health reasons, Earthwatch will refund in full any deposit or payment made toward the expedition.

Earthwatch scientists have the right to refuse special requests, such as media visits (film, photography or print), special groups or teams (students, donors, etc.), if they conflict with Earthwatch scientist schedules, safety, research objectives or general performance of the team.

Any participant found in violation of any of the policies described in this document ("Earthwatch Institute Policies & Participant Rights and Responsibilities") is subject to removal from the team at their own expense. By signing the "Liability Release" form, participants are indicating that they have read and understand the policies in this document. Removal of a participant from a team is at the discretion of the Earthwatch scientist or Field Team Leader and Earthwatch staff. In addition, Earthwatch will support the right of the scientist to send participants away from a project once in the field should their behavior compromise the safety, research objectives or general performance of the team, or if the participant has violated a stated policy. In the event that a minor is dismissed from a project, Earthwatch will contact the participant's parents or legal guardian prior to their dismissal. Should a participant be removed from a team, he/she is responsible for any or all costs associated with departure from the team and will receive no refund of the share of costs of the expedition nor any expenses incurred in participation on the expedition.

(November 2010)

# Expedition Packing Checklist

## Required Items

- This Expedition Briefing
- Photocopies of your passport, flight itinerary and credit cards in case the originals are lost or stolen; the copies should be packed separately from the original documents
- Passport and/or visa (if necessary)
- Certification of vaccination (if necessary)
- Australian residents only:* Please bring your Medicare card and (if applicable) your private health insurance and ambulance cover policy numbers.

## ***Clothing/Footwear for Fieldwork***

- Be sure to bring your Earthwatch t-shirt and remember to wear it, as appropriate, throughout your expedition
- Comfortable hiking boots with sturdy ankle support
- Lightweight long sleeved shirts
- Heavy duty material long trousers or gaiters to wear over lightweight long trousers
- Hiking/walking socks
- Warm jumper/jacket for the evening as temperatures may drop
- Waterproof coat/raincoat
- Waterproof overpants
- Wide-brimmed bush hat

## ***Clothing/Footwear for Leisure***

- One set of clothing to keep clean for end of expedition
- Sandals for walking around holiday park
- Shorts and pants/jeans
- Tee-shirts and jumpers
- Beanie or wool hat and scarf for evenings

## ***Field Supplies***

- Small daypack/rucksack
- Lunch box
- Binoculars
- Drybag or plastic sealable bags (good for protecting equipment such as camera from dust, humidity, and water)
- Insect repellent
- Water bottle(s)
- Flashlight or Head Torch
- Sunscreen SPF30+
- Sunglasses
- Anti-bacterial Hand sanitizer

### **Personal Supplies**

- Personal toiletries (biodegradable soaps and shampoos are encouraged)
- Personal first aid kit (e.g. anti-diarrhea pills, antibiotics, antiseptic, itch-relief, pain reliever, bandages, blister covers, etc.) and personal medications (if you require prescription medications you must take enough for the duration of the team as the nearest pharmacy is 40 mins drive away)

### **Miscellaneous**

- Spending money
- Camera, film/memory card(s), extra camera battery (if you bring a digital camera, bring your interface cables and memory stick for downloading)

### **Optional Items**

- Earplugs
- Hardware for sharing digital photographs at the end of the expedition
- Travel guidebook
- Books, games, journal, art supplies, etc. for recreational/rest time and travel
- Fly net, or hat with cork toggles
- Gardening or leather gloves (for pushing through foliage)

**Note:** Required and Optional Items lists are accurate to the best of Earthwatch's knowledge at the time of publication.