

Kempsey Macleay Valley U3A Inc Safety Information for Members

As stated in the Constitution the objective of KMVU3A is to provide stimulating programs for mature age people and deliver these programs through a voluntary, self-help community in which all members enjoy equal status.

Many U3A programs, particularly those involving physical activity or exercise, **come with risks**. However, an overwhelming majority of articles found on the web indicate that activity and exercise have benefits that far exceed the risks. **U3A activities operate at a moderate level of physical activity**. They are not training for the Olympics; are not a race or a workplace or a job but are aimed at being enjoyable for all. **Some activities have suggested ability levels**. *For example:* Meanders walkers need to be able to walk about 5 to 10km at a speed of about 3-4km/hour on rolling grades; kayakers need to be able to paddle for about 2 hours at a moderate rate. Participants should ask about ability requirements if in doubt before enrolling.

Possible risks range from falls, muscular sprains and strains to possible drowning or cardiac arrest. Outdoor activities have additional risks because of nature. Heat, cold, wind, rain, smoke, tides, insects, animals can quickly change conditions and interrupt a program. Groups could even become stranded. Participants must be prepared.

Being prepared varies depending on the course. For example: Kayakers MUST wear a safety vest; Meanders should wear comfortable shoes; Balance and Bones participants should wear comfortable clothing. Leaders will know the requirements for their courses and will advise participants.

Participants are responsible for clarifying the details of courses they enrol in and should only participate in courses/ activities that are appropriate for them and within their capacity.

Participants are fully responsible for the state of their health and should discuss their physical fitness with their doctor. Conditions such as the following require special consideration: heart conditions, chest pains, feeling faint or dizzy during physical activity, asthma attacks requiring medical attention, having diabetes with trouble controlling blood sugar levels and should be clarified with a doctor.

Participants know their body. Members should ensure they are capable of participating in the activity so as to not put themselves or others at risk. They should be advised that if part of an activity is beyond their capacity, they should stop and have a rest; if they need help, they should ask for it. For example, lifting a kayak on or off a car or trailer is more strenuous than the paddle and many need help. This task takes less than 1 minute, but without this help many couldn't participate.

During the sessions, Course Leaders will monitor group members to see they are correctly prepared, capable of the physical requirements and are coping with the situations and act accordingly. They will also manage risks and incidents when they occur and interrupt the program if necessary.

Safety equipment is provided depending on the class. **First Aid Kits** are provided for all classes and should be used as needed. Kayakers and Meanders are provided with a Personal Location Beacon to be used in grave or imminent danger situations. If there is coverage, mobile phones can be used to summon help eg an ambulance if needed.

If an incident occurs, the entire class should work as a team to assist those needing help. Also activate any location devices; cancel the program for the day if necessary; use a mobile phone to call for help etc.

Afterwards, the Course Leader should complete an Incident Report as soon as possible, providing detailed information such as the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How and photos if appropriate. Hopefully, Leaders will never have to complete this form.

Enjoy the programs and be prepared for an emergency if one arises.