

# Risk Assessment Statement for History Hill

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## **Introduction**

All sections of this risk assessment statement should be considered before the individual teachers formulate their opinion of our risk a factor to document and conclude their own policy.

There is a fine line between exposure to risk, experience and learning from experience. It is this experience environment that is not to be feared as something different but embraced for greater knowledge. An orthopedic surgeon once told us that the human foot was not built to walk on flat ground! However for some urban students it can be an education just to walk around the side of a hill using their limbs for their original purpose.

Malcolm and Daphne have collectively been involved in the education of school students on excursion for 50 years during the school excursion season. This experience enriched our ability to access and perform in our occupation successfully without any major incidents.

This policy and its contents do no apply to overnight excursions, as History Hill no longer accepts overnight excursion bookings.

This policy does not apply to gold panning or village history tours as these are contracted out. If requested (free of charge) a basic history tour supplement for self guided tours of Hill End by teachers can be supplied.

This policy applies to the activities on the land known as History Hill.

This policy is not formatted from any other source and we use our own scale of risk factor from low, medium to high (high being the most severe).

This policy uses risk factors that apply to (from our observations) the average student (non-medicated) in the normal conditions. If we were to look for the worst case scenario you wouldn't leave your house.

Example: - there is a chance you could be struck by lightning and killed as you step from the bus. Considering this we would have to put a risk factor of ten (high) into getting off the bus and I am sure if you searched hard enough you would find evidence to prove this is a possibility! However, we do not consider risk factors of this nature relevant.

This risk factor policy applies to students who have been briefed about the excursion to History Hill, accept the rules and procedures and who are under teacher supervision (refer Student Brief).

## **Aim of the Risk Factor Statement**

Our primary aim is Education, which is split into two categories.

1. Studying of Australian gold rushes involving activities described later which refer to the lifestyle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
2. Personal development which applies to socially acceptable behavior and learning how to act in a crowd situation.

Our secondary aim is to list and detail the process of events that occur at History Hill on excursion so a better understanding of accident possibility can be ascertained prior to an excursion. History Hill is not your normal public venue, unlike a motel, which has a set

standard for risk assessment. Therefore it will be necessary to take each activity, describe its function and procedure, stating the obvious risks involved to allow teachers to independently either upgrade or downgrade the risk factor as they use this blueprint to gauge their student reaction.

Example: - Country students react differently to city students.

It is impossible to classify all as the same.

### **Area Risks and geographical location.**

History Hill is located 2 kilometers from Hill End on the northern side of the Sofala/Bathurst Road. Educational Facility situated 500 metres from public road. Clearly sign posted.

Located approximately 75 kilometers from Bathurst Base Hospital (ph 02 6339 5311). Hill End has on most working days a resident nurse that travels out from Bathurst daily. Surgery phone number is 02 63378263.

Hill End has a Police Station, phone number 02 63378221. If unattended this automatically transfers to the Bathurst Police Station.

Our location involves unsealed roads classified as all weather.

Therefore allergies towards dust should be considered.

As we are located in the rural part involving an old goldfield rough ground terrain is common and a mixture of bugs and reptiles exist.

Since we started in 1980 no one involved in our organised tour activities has ever, even come close to being bitten by a snake but they are here. Snakes have occasionally shown up in the Hill End schoolyard. A couple of years ago a brown snake was inside the Hill End National Parks and Wildlife Service Visitor Centre. However, snakes are not a regular daily occurrence and mostly are out in the summer months. The two most common are red belly black and common brown.

To minimize this risk at History Hill we carry out regular vermin control programs which reduce the availability of reptile food source and therefore reduce the lure effect, Also clutter and natural reptile shelter vegetation has been reduced to discourage reptile presence.

Other normal bush insects including bees, wasp's mosquitoes and flies. However to our knowledge during our operation on tour no one has been stung or suffered as a result of insect encounter. Similar no spider bites have been reported. The most common spiders are red back, hunts man and white tail. Every couple of months (in our off season time) we use insect bombs to fumigate all buildings including the purpose built construction referred to as the mine.

### **Risk Factors to be considered when preparing excursion.**

We believe all our History Hill controlled activities for school students have a low risk factor and we state this from experience. All of the activities mentioned in this document over 25 years of operation involving Malcolm and Daphne has resulted in a nil student accident record. This in itself is proof that the risk factor based on present operation and experience is very low.

Student control and organisation by adults is very important. Students must be kept occupied at all times and that is the way we have designed our programs

Student control will vary and teachers need to access the individual behavior traits. The medication factor, which has emerged more so recently, is a definite problem to be addressed. It is not fair to other students to expose them to the possible domino danger effect of the unpredictable actions of some highly medicated students. From observation and general teacher comments we have found that some students act in a totally different manner outside their normal surroundings. This extra pressure on Teachers can unfairly stress the excursion and provide a distraction from the normal excursion pattern.

Above all, students need to listen, understand and comply with requests to minimize risks.

## **Student Brief**

Before the excursion students are to be briefed on the process of each activity and the conditions of entry.

- Conditions of entry.
- No cameras to be used inside main museum building.
- Noise levels are to be kept low as in a library. From experience we have found that there is a connection between high level noise, excitement and uncontrolled behavior.
- All rocks and sticks are to be left alone. Quartz rocks are for display only. There is to be no collecting of rocks on History Hill. No breaking of rocks or throwing of stones.
- Students are to walk not run.
- All students are to be under teacher supervision at all times. During lunch a teacher needs to be on lunch supervision duty.
- No antisocial behavior.
- Wheely bins are provided for rubbish and only wheely bins are to be used for rubbish.
- Railed barriers are not for sitting on (this also applies to adults), most are not load bearing.
- Students must (unless authorised by a teacher) not stray from the school group.
- Only teachers are to operate push button displays.
- Non compliance of these rules will result in the offending student or students being sent back to the bus.
- Weather. If you don't like it now, wait a minute. Have available hats and warm clothing. We teach by reality that doesn't mean you have to freeze. We do lack good heating in some buildings.
- Students do not have to go underground, but must have a teacher with them. If they decide to experience the ladder climb they do not get close to the person in front on the same ladder as they can make contact with the feet of the person in front. Upon exiting the mine they must move away from the exit to sit on logs provided until a teacher moves them onto the next activity.

## **Activities and program on History Hill.**

Upon arrival patrons are offered a comfort stop. The amenity block, which includes separated unisex disabled shower/toilet (this is usually used by teachers), is an environmentally friendly bio/cycle. There are three drinking water bubblers. Water is rainwater and tested every three months.

- Museum has bench seats for a ten minute (or so) lecture followed by a 15 minute video then closer examination of museum content until a teacher decides to lead the group to the stamper battery building. None of the displays are for students to use, play with or climb on. The idea of getting close is to get a better understanding of the artifact, not use it!
- Stamper Battery. Questions about museum lecture (10-15 minutes) on gold and stamper batteries. Operation of stamper batteries with low level noise. However hearing aids may be affected. Only if requested by teachers will the steam whistle (high level noise) be sounded.
- Underground mine. Finished in 1997, this purpose built construction is a replica that involves 135 metres walk-in and for those that wish a 7-ladder climb to the surface. Please note; only students who want to participate in any part of the underground experience do so. They do not have to climb ladders if they don't want to. This is also explained as part of the mine tour lecture, which is conducted in the stamper battery shed before the walk through the mine. To minimise the risk we spend as little time as possible underground. For those that climb the shaft or walk out of the mine they must collect to sit on logs adjacent to the shaft exit to wait for other students exiting. There are mains wired lights with two forms of back up alternative power. The mine has council development consent, department of Mineral Resources and Work Cover final inspection approval. Malcolm is a mine manager with 8 years underground experience. Daphne has three years underground experience and they are qualified in all areas of inspection and maintenance in regards the mine.
- Lunch (unless otherwise ordered) is a sausage sizzle and egg fry prepared on the day on a b.b.q. with two servings per student catered for. The first serving is with two slices of bread; the second is with one slice of bread. Tomato sauce and a cup of cordial are available. Poppas are not preferred, as they are not environmentally friendly. Especially the plastic straw covers, which contaminate the pond and native, landscape causing small animal health problems. If the weather is fine students are served in the dining room (finger food) and take it outside to the pond/aviary area to eat.
- Souvenir sales are normally done at lunchtime in the dinning room with students forming two lines passing a walled display of sales items to chose from before purchasing from the counter. Average price \$5. -
- Walkways are mostly covered and paved until the Stamper Battery. Normal wheel chair access from the Stamper Battery shed is not available. A formed bush track over about 70 metres connects the Stamper Battery shed to the Underground Mine entry.

## **Summary of risks.**

Main risk is tripping. Minimize by walking. Low level of risk in all areas except the walk to the Mine from the Stamper Battery and return from the Mine to the Museum entry along native land.

Underground Mine. Main risk is the possibility that students may (as yet none have) fall from ladders in mine. Ladders (7) are work cover standard and are all less than 3 metres in length with separated stages (platform) top and bottom. Also catching up to the person in front on the same ladder and being inadvertently kicked in the head. Risk level from past experience is low. This is an optional part of the tour involving the staging of adult's back and front. After periods of heavy rain the interior of the mine may be wet underfoot. Caution should be taken as the atmosphere of the mine is based on reality. Under ground temperature 9 to 16 degrees. Good ventilation. Walk in section is 135 metres very slightly uphill to assist drainage; slight trip factors mostly two people width if lead person needs to move along line. Risk factor low.

Lunch area (close to level) involves native vegetation fenced into about half a hectare inside which there is a bark hut bush construction picnic tables, aviary and fishpond. The fishpond is rounded triangular shape 12 metres by 5 metres with a maximum depth of 80 cm. A raised rock barrier defines the pond boundary and a cement path surrounds the pond. Also low level risk derived from previous experience.

Native animals including snakes. If encountered keep clear and do no attempt to handle. Risk assessment to date low.

Bus parking area. Separated from student work areas by building barriers and paved display entry. Parking area is angled just off level for drainage and sheeted with small river pebbles. In the past up to 9 coaches at a time have used this area without incident. Located 500 metres from the public road minimizing normal traffic interference. Students assemble in work area before alighting bus. Risk factor low.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is impossible to foresee and prevent all possible accidents. However we can assure that we are aware of the responsibility for care involving other people's children and place their well being as a priority. We do not knowingly put any student at risk of injury.

Excursions are a wonderful learning resource!