

Sustainability Code of Good Practice

Speleology (Caving)

As part of our commitment to advancing sustainable tourism, we encourage our tourism partners to improve their sustainability performance by providing them with the guidance below.

- ✓ Ensure applicable legal **permits & permission** to access the activity area are in place
- ✓ Ensure **insurance** is in place for participants and team
- ✓ Identify **health & safety** risks (including cave air quality), implement management systems, and provide appropriate safety equipment, including head torches / similar (not open flames)
- ✓ Ensure there are enough team members available in case of **emergency**
- ✓ Monitor activity area **conditions** (including weather) in advance & during the activity
- ✓ Be familiar with activity area, including sensitive cave features, and ensure that **navigation and communication** tools are in good working order
- ✓ Maximise local **economic benefits** through employment and purchasing
- ✓ Avoid single use & disposable items, pack out what you take in, pick up any **rubbish** found along the way
- ✓ Use **eco-friendly products**, e.g., cleaning products
- ✓ Be **waterwise** and take pro-active measures to use water sparingly
- ✓ Minimise **energy** used in the activity as part of a climate action strategy
- ✓ Consider **motion sensor** lighting to minimise light impacts when cave is not visited
- ✓ **Lights** should be lowest wattage, not shine on lampenflora, not be coloured, and not cause negative visual impacts
- ✓ Remove **algae / other biota** created by lighting
- ✓ Provide **information in advance** about your sustainability actions, activity accessibility, what to expect, and what to bring with
- ✓ **Screen participants** ahead of time to make sure that the activity is well suited to their fitness, level of ability, and experience
- ✓ Plan route for **least impact**, e.g., avoid steep ascents / descents, and waterways
- ✓ Select cave with least **sensitive environment** for visits (where multiple caves are available)
- ✓ Use **existing tracks** to access the cave entrance
- ✓ Ensure **access gates** do not impact negatively on wildlife
- ✓ Sensitive cave environments should have **temperature and airflow** controls in place at entrance
- ✓ Indicate pathways and restricted areas; ensure **markings and signage** do not disfigure the cave and may be removed with minimal impact
- ✓ **Anchoring bolts** deemed necessary should be installed in accordance with best practice to minimise impacts
- ✓ Manage **group size** to minimise impacts on people & the planet, and ensure safe guide : participant ratio
- ✓ Obtain written confirmation, e.g., via **indemnity**, that participants are aware of activity risks

Speleology (Caving) (continued...)

- ✓ **Brief participants** before the activity starts about do's and don'ts, safety, what to expect, applicable etiquette / conduct (especially related to protecting sensitive cave features), logistical considerations, hazards to be aware of, group pace and communication, not disturbing / removing flora and fauna, and rubbish collection and disposal
- ✓ Show **respect** for the land, waterways, wildlife, and other activity area users
- ✓ **Proceed slowly** through the cave
- ✓ **Share information** about local nature & culture, as well as social development / conservation projects that participants may want to support
- ✓ Repair and compensate for any **damage** caused to the activity area
- ✓ Participate in conserving activity area **integrity**; notify authorities of concerns and participate in rehabilitation projects

