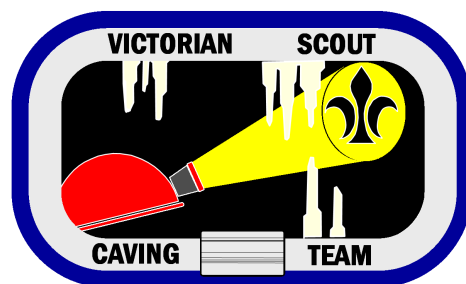




Initial participant information



Thankyou for your interest in our 2023 caving expedition for Rovers: Caving Moot. This document should help you to work out whether this activity is right for you. It will outline the activity that we are providing, your expectations as a participating Rover, and the things you will need to bring with you. While we have tried our best to make this document as accurate as possible, this early information is subject to change.

Caving is a really great team sport like nothing you've done before. It's exciting, adventurous, and spectacular underground. After the success of the Caving Moot in 2022 we are back again for Rovers, both new faces and those returning for further challenges. Caving Moot will provide Rovers with an opportunity to delve underground, navigate through caverns, and shine a light in places that few get to see.

I hope you get down and dirty with us next February.

Yours in Rovering,

Ian Barnard

State Leader – Caving

Victorian Scout Caving Team

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Program

The Caving Moot will be held at the Buchan Caves in eastern Victoria from Friday 17 February to Sunday 19 February 2023. Practical caving activities will be held at nearby caving sites in the greater Buchan limestone province.

Location

We will be staying at a private property owned by the caving community called 'Homeleigh', right in the township of Buchan. Homeleigh is an old hotel, and is set up for dorm-style accommodation with bunk beds and pillows, a full kitchen with fridges, as well as showers and flushing toilets.

Rovers are requested to arrive on Friday night. It is a long drive to Buchan for most people, and we'll be starting early on Saturday morning.

Difficulty level

This is a beginner's vertical caving activity for Rovers. We will split into several small teams who will each visit different caves. Because the caves are vertical in nature we will need to abseil into most of them and then ladder out again. You will need a moderate level of fitness to be able to climb out. We will first teach you how to safely do all these things in a controlled environment.

If you have previously been caving in the past (for example during Venturers) let us know and we'll see what we can do to provide some new challenges to your caving trip. Depending on who comes, we might be able to provide an intermediate difficulty caving stream for Rovers who have caved before (but no promises).

Program details

The Moot will begin on Saturday morning with some core training and safety skills in a cave environment, followed by a trip to another cave system in the afternoon. Saturday evening you can spend how you choose, whether that's having dinner at the pub or having a dip in the Buchan River. Sunday morning will be spent underground before the Moot concludes in the early afternoon. The program is weather dependent and subject to change.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Fri 17 Feb	-	-	Arrive at Homeleigh
Sat 18 Feb	Intro to vertical caving	Vertical caving (small groups)	Free time (swim, pub, chill)
Sun 19 Feb	Vertical caving (small groups)	Travel home	-

Free time

Saturday evening will be yours to spend as you wish. If it's hot you could go for a swim in the Buchan River or the thermally regulated pool at the Buchan Caves Reserve. You can go see the kangaroos at the Reserve and buy an ice cream. You can chill out on the verandah or in the lounge room at Homeleigh. You can head down to the pub. Or take a nap. It's a lovely spot.

Training and award scheme opportunities

The Caving Moot is primarily about fun and adventure underground. Rovers can just have a good time, try something different or build up new skills. Rovers can use it as the beginnings of an award scheme activity or towards a Scout caving qualification that can be pursued further as an Assistant with the Caving Team's general youth program. Sadly, we do not have the time to offer complete caving qualifications. If either of these are something you would like to explore just email us for details.

Logistics

Travel to and from Caving Moot is your responsibility. Buchan is about 330 km East of Melbourne, and so is a long drive for most Rovers (about 4–5 hours from Melbourne). We highly recommend you carpool. We are happy to try and connect Rovers prior to the event in order to work out travel arrangements, but we cannot organise it for you. Let us know if you really get stuck.

Getting there

Homeleigh is located at 15 Gelantipy Road, Buchan. From Melbourne, take the Monash Freeway/Princes Hwy (M1/A1) all the way to Bairnsdale. Bairnsdale will be the last available fuel stop on a Friday night.

From Bairnsdale continue on the Great Alpine Road (B500) to Bruthen. At Bruthen continue straight on the Bruthen-Nowa Nowa Rd (C620) towards Nowa Nowa for 22 km. Take the left hand turnoff towards Buchan on the Bruthen-Buchan Rd (C608). Once at Buchan continue through town. Once over the bridge across the Buchan River, you will be on the Gelantipy Road. Homeleigh is the first property on the left after Saleyard Rd, about 250 metres past the bridge.

Parking and vehicles

There is limited parking out the front of Homeleigh, so please try to limit the space you take up. There may be overflow parking out the back yard, but if there is no one awake to direct you when you arrive, you might have to find a spot on Saleyard Rd for the night. Trucks go up and down the Gelantipy Rd at all hours, so be careful where you park.

If you are likely to arrive after midnight, please call ahead so we can brief you on bedding/parking arrangements.

During the Moot, we want to use as few vehicles as possible to get to and from the caves. We will work out on Saturday morning which vehicles to take.

Accommodation

Homeleigh has dormitory style accommodation. There are many rooms, often with several beds in each room. You will likely have to share a room with other Rovers. We can try to set aside some ladies rooms or mens rooms if you'd prefer; please let us know if this is your preference. A Caving Team member will help allocate beds on arrival. If you are likely to arrive after midnight, please call ahead so we can brief you on bedding/parking arrangements. Rooms will have a mattress and pillow, but you will need to bring your own pillow case and a sleeping bag. Unfortunately we cannot offer a camping option.

Homeleigh has both mens and womens flushing toilets and unisex hot showers (with individual locking cubicles). There are electrical wall sockets for charging phones in most rooms, but you might want a double adapter to share the sockets with room-mates.

Alcohol and other drugs

All participants must be 18 years of age. The pub is within easy walking distance of Homeleigh, and for that reason nobody is to drive to or from the pub. There may be other guests at Homeleigh (including children) so some sensible consideration of others is required when drinking at the accommodation. Recycling bins are available, but aluminium cans are easier for us to dispose of.

All participants and caving team members must have a blood alcohol content of 0.00 when caving or driving. The Caving Guides have the discretion to refuse to take anyone caving who is unable to perform in an underground environment, as they may pose a danger to themselves or to others.

Illicit drugs are prohibited. Anyone found with drugs, other than prescribed medication, will be sent home at the discretion of the Leader in Charge.

Catering

Caving Moot is catered for, with the exception of Saturday dinner. We will supply two breakfasts and two lunches. Please ensure you notify us of any dietary requirements or preferences when registering for the event.

Saturday dinner is up to you to organise, because we will be too tired to cook after caving all day. The Caving Team will make a group booking for meals at the Buchan Caves Hotel, and it would be terrific if you would join us. Meals and prices are available on their Facebook page. The Buchan Burgers from the Buchan Valley Roadhouse are also very good. Or if you'd prefer, you can cook your own dinner at Homeleigh. There is a full kitchen including stoves, ovens, microwaves, and a BBQ for you to use if you wish, plus fridges to store any refrigerables prior to use.

Equipment

You will need to bring the following equipment to Buchan with you.

Bring for caving (remembering you'll be crawling around in a dirty, rocky cave):

- Cotton coveralls (to go over shorts and a t-shirt)
- Boots with good tread (old work boots or similar)
- Two sources of light with new and spare batteries, including one good quality head-torch (no wind-up torches)
- Gardening gloves (optional, recommended)
- Knee pads (optional)
- Camera (optional), in protective case/packet

Also bring:

- Clothing, including dry shoes and socks for the car ride back from the caves
- Bag to put muddy clothes and shoes in
- Drink bottle
- Rainjacket
- Towel
- Sleeping bag
- Pillow case
- Toiletries
- Hat/sunscreen
- Saturday night dinner (either bring money to purchase, or BYO to cook)
- Printed Operoo profile
- Bathers (optional)

Caving gear

You need to supply the clothing to protect your skin, as outlined above. It is not cold in the caves, and you will find it pleasant underground in cotton coveralls over shorts and shirt. If you can't get coveralls, long-sleeves are a must; you will not be permitted to cave in only shorts and/or shirt. A nice bright head-torch is a must to keep your hands free for climbing, and you will want a way to secure your secondary light source (for example, in a zipped pocket of your coveralls). Just be aware that anything you take into the cave may get damaged, particularly clothing.

The caving team will supply all specialist caving gear including helmets, descending devices, ropes, rigging equipment, and first aid kits. If you already have caving gear that you would like to bring and use, please contact the Assistant State Leader – Caving as soon as possible for some guidelines.

Eligibility and requirements

Caving Moot is open to all Rovers who meet the prerequisites listed below. All participants must:

- be aged between 18 and 25 years;
- have a reasonable level of fitness;
- be an active member of a Rover Crew.

Inherent requirements

Caving is a physical and inherently risky activity. It is a requirement that all adults attending Caving Moot be independently capable and willing to perform their assigned role both during caving activities and at the accommodation. Whilst caving, that role may be physically demanding and over an extended period of time. With the exception of overriding safety procedures, the Moot will take place largely outdoors regardless of the weather. As such, participants should be prepared with appropriate clothing and wet-weather gear for all conditions. Cave environments are by their nature often wet, muddy, dark, rocky, abrasive, sometimes warm and humid/dusty and other times cool and damp (but rarely cold in Victoria, unless you're already wet). They represent an environment with uneven surfaces, cliff edges, and potential pitfalls (literally), and as such hold inherent risk of injury that require safe practices and teamwork. Applicants unable to meet these requirements are invited to discuss their situation with the Assistant State Leader - Caving.

All adults are to abide by the drug and alcohol requirements listed above, and to accord with Victorian Rovers, Scouts Victoria, and Scouts Australia policies and procedures that govern their behaviour in their respective Scouting roles.

Medical obligations

You will need to bring a printed copy of your Operoo profile to the Moot, to hand in to the Leader in Charge at check-in. Should your medical condition or medication change from that Operoo profile, you will need to advise the Leader in Charge in writing on arrival.

It is highly recommended that Rovers participating in this activity hold an Ambulance Victoria membership, either directly or through private health insurance coverage.

Interstate Rovers

Rovers from outside Victoria are welcome to register. However, organising the interstate travel permissions with your own State Branch is your responsibility. Please be aware that a lead-time of 4–6 weeks for interstate travel for Scouting activities is common. With many Branches closing over the Christmas break, you may need to consider submitting documents in mid-November to have it all processed in time. The Scouts Victorian Branch is usually closed for most of January.

Costs and payments

The Caving Moot fee is \$135 for all Rovers. This covers accommodation, food, caving equipment hire, and caving team costs (mostly fuel). Payment is due upon application.

Inclusions

- Accommodation
- Food, except for Saturday dinner (see below)
- Use of personal equipment (harness, helmet, carabiners, abseil devices, etc.)
- Use of specialist group equipment (caving ladders, belay devices, ropes etc.)

Exclusions

- Transport to/from Buchan.
 - We can put Rovers in contact to try organise car pool.
- Saturday night dinner.
 - Either eat out at the Buchan Caves Hotel or BYO (full kitchen facilities available)
- Bedding linen (BYO pillow case and sleeping bag).

Application process

Applications and payment via TryBooking open on 1 December 2022.

Apply online: <https://www.trybooking.com/BXWRL>

Applications close at midnight on 5 February 2023. The Victorian Scout Caving Team reserves the right to refuse any application, which will result in a full refund.

Insufficient or oversubscribed applications

Caving Moot will be strictly limited to 20 Rovers. If all 20 places are filled, we may choose to take a waiting list. There will also be a minimum number of Rovers required for the activity to take place. Should we fail to reach the minimum viable number, the event will be cancelled. In such a case, full refunds will be issued.

Withdrawing your application

If after making an application you are unable to attend, you must advise the Assistant State Leader – Caving in writing as soon as possible.

- For withdrawals before 11 February 2023, a full refund will be issued (less booking fee).
- For withdrawals after 11 February 2023 no refund will be issued; except in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Assistant State Leader - Caving.

Failure to make a payment

Applications that are not paid on time, or without alternative arrangements approved by the Assistant State Leader – Caving, may be withdrawn. The vacant place may be offered to a Rover on the waiting list. Refunds will be considered as described above.

Further information

If you still have questions with regards to the application process, or any other enquiries, please contact Ulysses De Vincentis, Caving Guide, on usdev@iinet.net.au.

Let us know if you already have prior caving experience, if you have trouble organising transport, if you have dietary requirements, or if you want to investigate using caving for the award scheme/adventurous activities training.