

Federation of Western Australian Bushwalkers (Inc)



DIEBACK POLICY

Preamble

1. Dieback is an exotic disease of our forests affecting over 900 species of native plants including banksias, blackboys, zamia palms, snottygobbles, emu bushes, sheoaks, hakeas, dryandras, heaths and jarrah. It is caused by the fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi* which lives in the soil and infects the roots of susceptible plants, resulting in reduced water uptake and death.

2. As the fungus thrives in warm, moist conditions the south coast is particularly at risk. Some of the more susceptible plants are rare, endangered or restricted in distribution. Dieback is not just a problem for native plants; it is also having a detrimental effect on nectar-eating creatures (e.g. honey possums and honeyeaters). It may take from 3 to 10 years before visible signs of the disease (e.g. dead leaves) develop.

Policy

3. Member clubs and associations of the Federation of WA Bushwalkers are to adopt the following practices when venturing into dieback affected areas:

- Keep to well-drained, well-formed roads and tracks where possible.
- Clean boots and tent pegs before and after all walks and making full use of dieback wash down points and raised boardwalks where available e.g., Fitzgerald River National Park.
- Take heed of signs alerting of the presence of dieback fungi.
- Leaders to contact the local Park Ranger for up-to-date local knowledge and redirect the walk to keep out of, or go around, dieback infected areas.
- Avoid wet and muddy areas at all times. Be prepared to change the route of the walk during or after warm, wet weather. If muddy areas cannot be avoided, remove the mud from your boots before moving onto dry or higher ground.
- Ensure that drivers of vehicles taken onto roads with restricted access due to the risk of dieback are in possession of a current vehicle access permit and that all restrictions that may be imposed are adhered to.