



## Safety guidelines and risk management for:

*Balnarring Beach Explorers marine education program –*

**Location:** Balnarring Beach rock platform. Buses will be parked at Balnarring beach rotunda where the program will start and finish (Mel Ref 193 10).

### The program educational content:

#### *Aims:*

1. Provided exceptional educational opportunities within an environmentally sensitive ecosystem.
2. Provide positive role models through the delivery of factual, exciting and memorable marine education experience.
3. Deliver content linked to school curriculum areas including, science and literacy.

#### *Outcomes:*

1. Inspiration, passion and stewardship for Victoria's unique marine ecosystem.
2. Understanding of specific marine habitats including abiotic and biotic relationships that occur within them.
3. A clear understanding of positive and negative impacts we can have on marine habitats and how we can ensure their future.

### Program brief

Balnarring Beach provides an opportunity to deliver quality marine education in the Western Port region. Western Port offers an area rich in biodiversity that is recognised the world over. Protection of this unique area is guided by such listings as RAMSAR (wetlands of international significance), UNESCO biosphere and Marine National Parks

Surrounded by these areas is Balnarring Beach. Looking across to Phillip Island and out to Bass Strait, Balnarring Beach provides a fantastic snap shot into the ecosystems that make up Western Port and Victoria's unique marine environment.


The track from the Balnarring Beach shop leads you through indigenous coastal vegetation and introduced weed species. Out on the beach students will focus on the rock platform, seagrass and seaweeds and coastal vegetation as they explore these environments in a truly hands on education experience.

### Safety Brief

All students will be given the same safety messages at the start of the program and these will be reiterated by group leaders throughout the session.

The main points include:

- 🕒 Stay with your leader at all times unless instructed otherwise.
- 👟 Wear covered shoes and be sunsmart. (it is up to the school to provide sunscreen)
- 👀 Only touch things when instructed by your leader.
- 👐 When exploring keep your hands where you can see them.

 Walk when on the rocks.

### **Manageable risks:**

**Bites and stings** – The main risk involved is from blue ring octopus. While they are living in the rock pool environment they are rarely encountered. Their habitat is dark places and thus students are strictly forbidden to place their hands where they cannot see what they are touching. Students will be regularly reminded.

**Slips, trips and falls** – Where the session is conducted on the beach or very sandy soil, the risk of injury from a fall is low. On the rocks however the risk is managed by leaders implementing a walking only policy. Leaders will teach with a style that does not ask participants to “come over quickly” but rather “slowly walk towards me”.

**Traffic control** – School staff will be responsible for the management of traffic at all times. DRI staff will support when instructed to do so by school s staff.

**Significant medical issues** - Schools staff will notify DRI of any medical issues which maybe relevant to a student’s/teachers participation in the activity prior to the day. School staff will be responsible for the participant’s management with the support of DRI staff in accordance with school policy.

**Inappropriate behaviour** – DRI staff in conjunction with school staff will be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of all participants. DRI staff upholds the right to stop the activity if inappropriate behaviour is posing a risk to the group, individual or staff. Behaviour of a racist, sexual, abusive or violent nature towards staff or students will not be tolerated.

**Drowning** – Students will not enter the water at any stage or under any circumstances during the program. If there is a perceived risk of this, students will be excluded from the activity. The Balnarring beach environment is very shallow with the risk of supervised downing very low. During high tide waves can crash onto the beach and become a risk however this will be assessed by DRI staff prior to each activity. If waves are perceived as a risk, DRI staff will move activities to a safe distance.

**Threats posed by members of the public** – In the event other groups/public are using the site every effort will be made to move to a nearby location. If members of the public or other groups impose, abuse or interrupt the session DRI staff will divert to another location and take action (call police) where necessary. A prior site assessment by DRI staff will locate any potential risk, alcohol, drug abuse, antisocial behaviour, dangerous animals (dogs, horses) etc to prevent any risk. School staff will facilitate toileting as per school policy. In the event risks are perceived to be unmanageable police maybe called.

**Fire** – In the event of a ‘Code Red’ fire warning for the region, the excursion will be cancelled.

### **Child Safety**

The staff at Dolphin Research Institute (DRI) provide a range of educational activities for primary and secondary school students. We are committed to providing a safe environment for all students during these activities. To ensure the safety of students attending our activities DRI maintains the following.

- DRI is committed to child safety.
- We support and respect all children, as well as their teachers and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety and participation of all children.
- Our Student Ambassador program is designed to provide a range of activities that promote participation and empowerment of the student ambassadors.
- The Education Director is responsible for ensuring that staff are suitably trained for all activities.
- The Education Director is responsible for establishing clear expectations and appropriate behaviour for all DRI staff when working with students.
- If DRI staff have any concerns about a student they will raise the matter with the class teacher.
- DRI staff brief students and teachers/volunteers about the possible dangers and hazards of the activity they are undertaking.
- DRI staff are always accompanied by teachers or adults from the school designated with the responsibility of looking after the students.
- DRI staff do not work alone with individual students.
- All DRI staff working with students have either a current VIT registration or a current Working with Children Check. Copies of these documents are held by DRI's Education Director.

**Risk assessment:**

The site will be assessed for risk on a program by program basis. Risk assessment will include the following elements:

Wave height

Weather conditions

Track conditions, proposed walk routes

Groups or individuals that may pose a risk (drug and alcohol abuse, antisocial behaviour,

**Emergency procedure.**

In the event of an emergency the school will coordinate any first aid or evacuation response with the support of Dolphin Research Institute program staff. It is the responsibility of the school to provide all medical equipment, documentation and staff training in accordance with school policy.

**Emergency details**

There is good emergency vehicle access to all locations during the program.

Mobile phone coverage is reliable at all program locations.

There is a doctor's surgery in Balnarring (5mins) drive from the program location.

Frankston Hospital is approximately 30mins drive from the program site.

**Covid Guidelines (subject to change)**

Current capacity limits for indoor gatherings and density limits/social distancing will be adhered to and as advised by the host school. Masks for anyone over 12 where applicable

Equipment will be cleaned between groups or hands will be sanitised before use where sharing equipment is unavoidable.

Names and contact details for attendees will be kept and when using an indoor venue, QR codes will be mandatory

