

Victorian Scout Caving Team

Explore the fascinating world of the underground!

What is the caving team?

VSCCT is an activity team in the Victorian Branch of Scouts Australia. Its sole purpose is to introduce the challenges and adventures of caving to **Scouts**, **Venturers**, **Rovers** and their **Leaders**.

When are trips run?

During the first or second weekend of each month, except March and June when the long weekends may be used. There are no trips in November, December or January unless by special arrangement. Rover trips are sometimes held mid month.

Where can we go?

Trips are available to several caving areas in Victoria. We are lucky because there is a great variety of caving environments in our state. You can go to:

- **Buchan** in far east Gippsland. The caves are in hard limestone.
- **Mount Eccles National Park** in the central west. The caves are in volcanic rock.
- **Bats Ridge** near Portland on the west coast. The caves are in soft limestone.

The caving team has already planned where it is going each month, so if you want to go to a particular area then your choice will be limited to certain months.



What about claustrophobia? (Fear of confined spaces)

Worrying about possible claustrophobia is a common pre-caving concern of many people. Some of the caves are bigger than your Scout Hall, so they shouldn't be a problem.

Very few people in fact are claustrophobic (do you worry about getting into a car or phone box?). You are never alone and there are so many interesting things to see and do in caves that no one thinks about being confined.

Can we take photographs?

Most definitely! Bring your camera with you, anything from a disposable camera to an expensive SLR unit. Bring a case or bag to protect the camera from mud, dust and bumping on rocks. You will take home some great caving photos!

Can the trips be used for awards and investitures?

Caving is a suitable activity for incorporating into the various Scout, Venturer and Rover award schemes, such as Queens Scout. Discuss this with us during the pre-trip talk.

Underground investitures are an unforgettable experience and we can help you with a suitable cave if your Troop / Unit / Crew wishes to do this - usually on the Saturday night.

How do we prepare for a trip?

After your Venturer Unit or Rover Crew has booked a trip, team members will come to your Scout Hall on a suitable meeting night and give an orientation talk on Caving and Caves. They will also demonstrate caving equipment and answer questions. These talks can also be arranged for Units / Crews who have not yet decided to actually go caving, and they may be attended by parents, a neighbouring Unit, Group, District Leaders or friends. Allow about 2 hours for an interesting evening in your programme.

The team does not do orientation talks for Scout Troops. The Troop Leader coordinates the Scout Caving Badge requirements and trip preparation.

Two nights of camping (Friday and Saturday) are involved on a weekend trip (or three nights for long weekends) to Buchan or Mount Eccles. A Scout Hall is used for accommodation in Portland. You need to bring your own camping gear and all food. Some personal gear is also a mandatory requirement for a caving trip.

Is caving dangerous?

Caving is a very controlled and safe activity with the caving team. The Leaders in the team are trained and have a complete knowledge of the caves we use. The caves are selected to suit your own level of experience and ability and all special safety equipment and skills are provided by the team. The team operates by widely recognised codes of behaviour, including the ASF Code of Ethics and Conservation, and the Minimal Impact Caving Code.



Personal gear for a caving trip:

1. **Overalls** or loose fitting old clothes with long sleeves. Full coveralls are ideal (available at Aussie Disposals). Don't forget a T-shirt and shorts to wear under the overalls.
2. **Boots** which provide ankle support and have a good grip are essential. Sneakers or runners are unsuitable as they may cause the caver to slip and injure themselves. Don't wear your good walking or hiking boots because they will become severely scuffed and soaked in mud in the caves.
3. A **primary light source**, such as a "dolphin" torch. Make sure the battery is new, as it will get from 6 to 10 hours of use. Also make sure that there is a spare bulb in the torch. A shoulder strap is useful as this will free up both hands for manoeuvring at some spots in the caves. Other types of torches are OK, such as 2 or 3 D-cells. An alternative is a Petzl Zoom or similar head mounted LED camping light.
4. A **secondary light source** in case your primary light source fails. Use a penlight (AA batteries) or other small torch with spare batteries and globe. This can be stored in a pocket or tied to a string around your neck. "Glo Sticks" are prohibited as they do not provide enough light for a cave.
5. An **emergency light source** for use if the other two light sources fail. A small ordinary candle and matches in a waterproof container in your pocket is ideal.

The team will supply everyone with a **caving helmet** for the weekend, and any other climbing gear required in the caves. The cave party leaders in the team are proficient in the use of climbing gear in a caving situation and will provide instruction for those who have not abseiled or climbed a wire ladder.



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Can I join the caving team?

Membership of the team is open to all members of the Scout Association. We have also obtained members from the Guide movement, who are then required to also be members of the Scout Association. Cave Party Leaders must be over 18, and have appropriate Scout leadership qualifications. Training in caving techniques and assessment of Caving Qualifications is given by Caving Team Instructors. We have quite a few youth members who give valuable assistance to the team and gain caving experience towards eventually becoming leaders.

How do we book a caving trip?

The current **Booking Officer** and contact details are always listed under Caving in the Scout Info Book. The Booking Officer for **Venturers and Rovers** in 2010 is **Jenny Watson**, phone after-hours on **(03) 9704 7750**. or contact via email address watsonj@spth.net.au or postal address **14 Glendale Cres, Berwick VIC 3806**. For **Scouts**, contact Booking Officer **Ian Barnard**, phone after-hours on **(03) 5367 5850** or via email address iebarnard@bigpond.com or postal address **47 Manning Blvd, Darley VIC 3340**.

How early do we need to book?

The bookings for 2010 opened in October 2009. Quite often all the trips for the year have all been booked out by March, so plan next years caving activity well in advance and book before Christmas. Occasionally we have cancellations, so you could put yourself on the team's "stand-by list".

What happened to LDCT (Lillydale District Caving Team)?

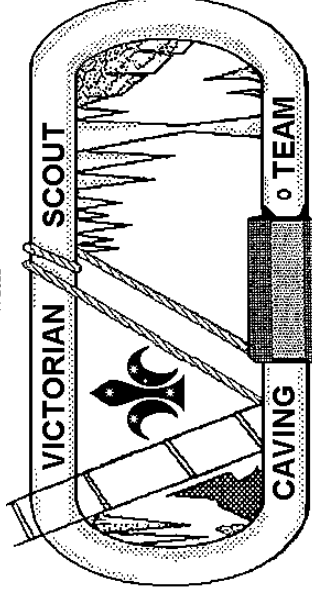
LDCT changed its name to VSCT (Victorian Scout Caving Team) in early 2002. The leaders and team members are the same friendly and eager caving people who you have known in LDCT!



COME ON IN.....

THE CAVING IS GREAT !

with



Caving for
Scouts, Venturers, Rovers
and Leaders

Home Page: <http://home-pacific.net.au/~gnb/ldct/>