

# Mid-Week Congress Field Excursion

The mid-week excursion will be held on Wednesday 26 July. The main excursion venue is Jenolan Caves, with some alternate options for limited numbers. **Bookings for all the mid-week excursions open on 1 August 2016 and will remain open until 1 July 2017.**

## Jenolan Caves

This is Australia's most well-known show cave area. Geologically, they are the world's oldest, known and dated, open cave system and contain Silurian marine and Quaternary megafauna fossils. The cave network has over 40 kilometres of multi-level passage, more than 300 entrances and 11 show caves.

The caves are located in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and are about a three hour bus trip west of the congress venue at Penrith.

We will have buses departing the congress venue from 6.45 a.m. with activities commencing at Jenolan from 10.00 a.m.

There will be a range of activities and options available on the day and participants will be able to choose two key activities. Options will include:

- Show caves (Four different options including a music event in the Lucas Cave);
- Palaeokarst specialty tour with Associate Professor Armstrong Osborne;
- Arches, air-flow and microbial interactions specialty tour with Associate Professor Julia James.
- Caves House history walk;
- Bushwalk;
- History walk;
- Fossil tour;
- Possible special tour for children; and
- Art project for the Arts and Letters Group

Cost of the day will be \$105 which will include transport, all activities and a soup and sandwich lunch in the historic Caves House dining room.

Bus departures from Jenolan at 4.15 p.m. returning to Panthers at approximately 7.15 p.m.

## Australian Museum

This is Australia's oldest museum and it has an international reputation in the fields of natural history and anthropology. Transport will be via train from Penrith Station to Museum Station.

We will arrive at the Australian Museum by 9.50 a.m. in order to enjoy a coffee/tea before our program starts at 10.30 a.m.

Our program will include guided tours of the First Australians Galleries, the Australian Fauna Gallery and the Minerals Exhibition.

Our tour of the Mineralogy Gallery and collections will be led by Ross Pogson, the mineralogy collections manager. Ross conducts research on zeolite minerals and meteorites. However, his main work has been at Jenolan Caves, studying a range of uncommon cave minerals with joint researchers over the last 12 years. The results of these investigations are published in a range of Australian and overseas scientific journals and popular magazines. There is a limestone cave replica and a 4200 million-year-old piece of zircon from Western Australia.

Lunch will be at the museum's Rooftop Café, which has views across the Sydney city area.

Departure from the Museum will be at 4.00 p.m. to return to Penrith, those wanting more time in the city area can catch a return train at a later time.

The cost of the day will be \$30.00 and include museum entry and activities. Train tickets, lunch and refreshments will be at your own expense.

# Mid-Week Congress Field Excursion cont.

## **Blue Mountains bush walk**

The National Pass walk, accessed from Wentworth Falls, provides wonderful vistas of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The walk will be led by a local guide with an expert knowledge of the area.

Mini-bus departure from Panthers at 8.30 a.m.

The walk is seven kilometres, but we plan to take plenty of time for photographs, picnic lunch and enjoying the environment which includes a range of plant communities and some splendid waterfall views. If time permits after the walk, we will visit another scenic lookout point.

The cost is \$50.00 and includes a packed lunch (drink not included) and bus transport.

Numbers on this trip will be limited.

Return to Panthers at 4.30 p.m.

## **Blue Mountains dry canyon trip**

Departs Panthers 7.00 a.m.

Travel will be by mini-bus and/or private cars.

A (fairly) dry canyon trip in the Blue Mountains adjacent to Sydney.

Canyons occur in the Blue Mountains where creeks have cut through a sandstone plateau to make slots a few metres wide and up to 100 metres deep. Locals generally do canyon trips in the hot summer months and often enjoy a refreshing swim. However, as this trip is in winter, we will be doing canyons that may involve some wading in water, but no swimming.

This day will involve a through-trip that involves walking through bushland, climbing and descending steep hills and abseiling in the canyons. There will be no prusiking. You will get your feet wet, and possibly your legs too, but no swimming will be required.

**Skills required:** You must be confident in setting yourself up for abseils that involve tricky 'starts' and overhangs. You must be confident scrambling over rough ground and on slippery rocks and exposed ledges. You'll also need to be fit enough to move fairly quickly over rough ground and up-and-down steep hills without tracks.

You will need to bring: abseil equipment including descender, harness, cow's tails, helmet and gloves. A head-lamp in case of an after-dark finish. We'll provide ropes and rigging. No ascending equipment needed.

The canyons are located at approximately 1000 metres altitude. You will need warm clothing that stays warm when wet and spare warm clothes and shoes for the trip back to Panthers. A wetsuit will not be necessary.

Numbers limited.

Cost \$50.00 and includes a packed lunch and some snacks.

Return to Panthers at approximately 7.00 p.m.