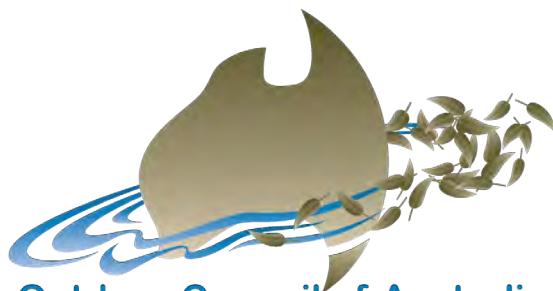




# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2017



**Outdoor Council of Australia**  
Representing the Outdoor Sector Nationally  
[www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au](http://www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au)



# ABOUT THE OUTDOOR COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

## MISSION

The Outdoor Council of Australia exists to lead the outdoor sector in Australia and support national and state organisations in outdoor recreation and outdoor education and other sector partners to ensure equitable access to safe, high quality and sustainable outdoor recreation and outdoor education.

## THE OUTDOOR COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA BELIEVES IN:

- the high value to the Australian community of outdoor recreation and outdoor education;
- the significance of equity of access to outdoor recreation and outdoor education;
- the importance of sustaining natural environments to achieving the goals of outdoor recreation and outdoor education

## KEY FOCUS AREAS:

### 1. REPRESENTATION AND COLLABORATION

- To represent the coordinated views and needs of the outdoor sector in relevant national forums.
- To collaborate with government to develop policies, strategies and actions that support and encourage outdoor recreation and outdoor education.
- To collaborate with other relevant national and state organisations and other sector partners to develop policies, strategies and actions that support and encourage outdoor recreation and outdoor education.

### 2. ADVOCACY

- To advocate for the views and needs of the outdoor sector to all levels of government and the wider community.
- To raise the awareness of government and the wider community of the value and benefits of outdoor recreation and outdoor education.

### 3. SAFETY, QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- To influence and develop policies, strategies and actions that support and encourage equitable access to safe, high quality and sustainable outdoor recreation and outdoor education.
- To influence and guide the planning and management of outdoor settings to satisfy community needs for equitable access to safe, high quality and sustainable outdoor recreation and outdoor education.
- To establish national networks, standards and policy for outdoor leadership.

### 4. RESEARCH

- To undertake and support research activities that will promote best practice in outdoor recreation and outdoor education and enhance government and wider community understanding of the benefits of outdoor recreation and outdoor education and how these are achieved.



## THE OCA PRESIDENTS REPORT

Entering into 2017 it was positive to see the release of the AusPlay data from the Australian Sports Commission. This data clearly showed the increasing popularity of outdoor recreation activities for all Australians with Bush walking ranking high within the top 10 Adult activities.

We are slowly seeing the emerging recognition that across a lifetime of activity that getting more people active outdoors can lead to positive health, social, community and economic benefits. The challenge is to gain public recognition of these facts and developing the structures and programs to grow the outdoor sector in a sustainable way.

Programs and advocacy work continued this year and I would like to acknowledge the ongoing secretariat support of Outdoors SA that has been essential in maintaining the website and social media presence. The team at QORF diligently continued to support the hard copy publishing of the Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education and the transition to an electronic format.

The board completed the work to revise the OCA constitution and we now have a set of four focal areas that will guide the organisation into the future. These are: Representation and collaboration, advocacy, safety, quality, sustainability and research. These areas will also provide the framework to review and revise the National Outdoor Strategy.

The board is to be commended for the many volunteer hours that have been devoted towards the development of the outdoor sector and the financial support for the projects that have been undertaken.

## REPRESENTATION AND COLLABORATION

The OCA has been a positive network in supporting collaboration and communication between state and national stakeholders. The relationships between members is such that we are able to pick up the phone and discuss issues that may be happening in one state and gain support and knowledge from another. This goodwill between stakeholders enables projects to start and continue to be supported. Our representation along with state partners was successful in seeing the commonwealth support the funding of SkillsIQ as a Skills Service Organisation. Further lobbying resulted in the approval of the business case for the review of the Outdoor Recreation training package. This has enabled SkillsIQ to commence the review of outdoor leader training and also to fulfil our request for broad Australia wide consultation. Many outdoor practitioners attended the consultation meetings held in different states and online and we are looking forward to more engagement when the draft materials are released. Thanks to Liz Horne and team for that ongoing work, we all want to see well supported training of outdoor leaders to ensure the delivery of safe quality outdoor adventure programs.

## ADVOCACY

At a national level there was increased interest from the Commonwealth via the Australian Sport Commission in planning for the future of sport and recreation. The Minister for Sport called for input into the development of a new National Sports Plan to support the commonwealth's investment of over \$375 million. We have advocated that a proactive approach is required to address health issues and conditions like obesity, sedentary behaviour and stress in Australia. Encouraging greater participation in physical activities outdoors is one strategy.

It has long been recognised that physical activity is essential to an individual's health. We are also increasingly becoming aware of the need for nature in our lives. Outdoor recreation has been shown to include the following health benefits:

- Increasing levels of physical activity, lower levels of mortality and chronic disease, improved self-esteem, and improved immune function
- Lowering the risk of poor mental health
- Outdoor walking has been associated with higher levels of enjoyment and intention for future walking, when compared to indoor walking
- Mood enhancement as self-esteem as well as motivation to maintain a regular routine of physical activity

The OCA made submissions to the National Sport Plan and the Children in Sport consultations. These outlined the value of the outdoor sector in promoting physical activity within natural outdoor settings. A growth in more people outdoors holds the most promise to developing and growing a healthy Australia. We look forward to the release of these plans.

## SAFETY, QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

It is essential to promote the development of safe, sustainable, quality programs and we have continued to maintain a number of key systems and research projects to support that work.







## THE UPLOADS PROJECT

The Understanding and Preventing Led Outdoor Accidents Data Systems (UPLOADS) Project has continued in working to provide a standardised approach to incident reporting and looking for injury causation. Throughout 2017 the research team continued to collect and analyse Led Outdoor Activities (LOA) within the National Incident Dataset and apply systems thinking to analyse incidents. This has resulted in the release of the annual UPLOADS National Incident Dataset Report: 1st June 2016 to 31st May 2017.

In total, 509 incidents were reported over the 12-month period including: 340 injury-related incidents; 145 illness-related incidents; 23 near miss incidents; and 19 incidents involving social or psychological outcomes. Participation data was collected and the average injury incidence rate for all activities was 2.2 per 1000 participants. This means that approximately two injury-related incidents were reported for every thousand people who participated in LOAs. The low injury-incidence rate has remained constant since the UPLOADS National Incident Dataset began collecting data in 2014. It is positive to once more show that with the right risk management and safety systems in place that hazards in the outdoors can be managed.

Feedback from the project has indicated the need for a simplified online tool to make data collection easier for organisations. The development has now commenced and we look forward to it being launched in 2018. Some of the design features of the new UPLOADS tool will include: Streamlined infield incident reporting via a smart device, industry benchmarking and multi-user access.

UPLOADS is an ongoing collaboration between the Outdoor Council of Australia and Australian outdoor education and recreation associations, providers and government departments, and researchers at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Monash University and Federation University Australia.



## INJURIES, ILLNESS, and NEAR MISS IN THE AUSTRALIAN LED OUTDOORS 1st June 2016 – 31st May 2017



**13** ORGANISATIONS FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA CONTRIBUTED DATA TO THE UPLOADS PROJECT

# 72%

OF INCIDENTS WERE RATED AS MINOR, AND ONLY REQUIRED LOCALISED CARE

# 509



**509** INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED: **340** INJURIES, **145** ILLNESSES, & **23** NEAR MISS INCIDENTS.



12.3



10.7



8.6



7.6

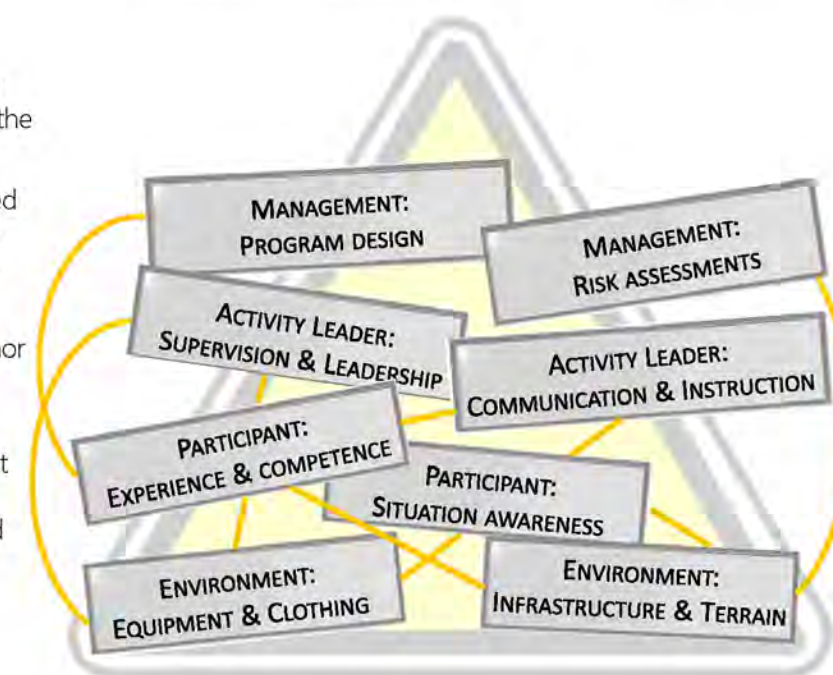


6.0

ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE HIGHEST INCIDENT RATES (PER 1000 PARTICIPANTS)

### LESSONS FROM UPLOADS

- The activities perceived to be the riskiest are actually shown to be the safest, and the same can be said of the inverse.
- Factors contributing to incidents in the led outdoors can be seen across the system, from the immediate environment to the governmental and regulatory levels.
- The contributing factors identified in minor incidents are strikingly similar to those identified in more serious incidents.
- By taking a systems approach to accident analysis in the led outdoors, these complexities can be empirically identified for the first time.





# AUSTRALIAN ADVENTURE ACTIVITY STANDARDS (AAAS) ARE UNDERWAY



The Australian AAS are the outdoor sectors best practice guidelines used to manage risk and safety across a wide range of outdoor adventure activities. They are designed to be used by skilled outdoor leaders who are responsible for participants in these activities. Currently, each state and territory maintains its own set of standards that we know results in unnecessary duplication, a lack of coordination among jurisdictions, and limits sharing of expertise and experiences about how to best manage safety and risk outdoors.

This year has seen the bringing together of many outdoors experts across the country to develop the standards, volunteering hundreds of hours towards improving safety in the outdoors. The OCA as a key member of the Steering Committee would like to acknowledge the contribution of all the members of the Technical Working Groups (TWG). This project would not be possible without the voluntary effort of so many activity experts and the hard work of the Outdoors Victoria Secretariat.

We would also like to thank all those that have contributed feedback during public consultation. It has been incredibly helpful to get that response which is being used to refine the Core and Activity standards.

The Core Standard, that contains common information that is relevant to all adventure activities, reached the draft stage and was released for public comment. Further work has been undertaken to pilot the Core with activity specific sectors of the outdoors community. The feedback honoured the incredible contribution of the TWG and made recommendations and comments about the presentation of information. It is being refined to identify the best way to keep all the valuable information while presenting it in an accessible and clear fashion.

Activity standards reached the consultation stage in a number of areas and public consultation was completed for:



**Mountain Biking & Cycle Touring** – finalising the content based on feedback received  
Camping – feedback considered and TWG revised document  
Bushwalking – feedback considered and TWG revised document.

Public consultation commenced for:



**Horse Trail Riding**  
**Abseil & Climbing**

Technical Working Groups being formed and will begin work in 2018 on:



**Canyoning**  
**Challenge courses**  
**Inland water paddle-craft**

It is anticipated that the Core Standard and all completed activity Australian AAS will be released together at the end of the project, rather than individually.

The Australian Adventure Activity Standards are about ensuring the safety of participants during adventure activities and will provide activity providers the choice of an accessible best practice framework for safe and responsible planning and delivery of outdoor adventure activities with dependent participants.

## RESEARCH

### JOEE

The OCA has continued to lead the way in supporting Australian research in Outdoor Education through the annual hard copy academic publishing of the Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education (JOEE). This has gone smoothly with a large amount of thanks owed to John Quay for his instrumental vision in taking the journal forwards along with Hubertien Wichers and the team at QORF in continually undertaking these logistics every year.

Over the past 2 years the OCA has sought the best way forward to ensure the sustainability of JOEE. It has been clear that a partnership with an international publisher was required along with the development of a business plan and greater understanding on the need for collaboration from all parts of the sector. The OCA JOEE Working Group collaborated between subscribers, universities, researchers, teachers and outdoor organisations to look at how the Journal could be best supported for the future. It is positive to announce that a deal was brokered with Springer and Outdoor Education Australia (OEA) to continue the publishing in a new online format in 2018. This will enable increasing the release of the JOEE to 3 time a year along with additional video content and the back catalogue to JOEE and AJOE research. The OCA will continue to support the work with the OEA. A special word of thanks to those that worked this through including Graeme, Andrew and Peter and much thanks to John Quay for his enduring vision as Editor over this time and into the future.

## OUTDOOR YOUTH PROGRAMS RESEARCH ALLIANCE

The Outdoor Youth Programs Research Alliance (OYPR) project has continued with a new study aimed at contributing to the evidence base that adventure programs have distinctive benefits for personal and social development of adolescents. A quasi-experimental, controlled crossover trial of a structured outdoor youth program was designed with secondary school students. The trial has now taken place over a period of 36 months and involved almost 400 young people. Design and delivery of four outdoor programs, with students from two participating schools taking part has been completed. Students have completed online surveys on 5 occasions: twice before camp, and three times after, including a 6-month follow-up period. The OYPR Research Team is currently analysing data and the expectation is that results will help inform policy and practice, and lead to more strategic investment in outdoor programs for learning, health promotion and positive youth development. More at <https://oypra.org.au>

These important projects have been made possible by the work the OCA does in finding funds and building collaborative relationships across the country. We thank all outdoors organisations and researchers for their work to develop the sector.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Peter who passed the baton along to Bec Fox

Both have served tirelessly in encouraging and nurturing the many initiatives that have benefited the outdoors sector.

All credit must be given to the OCA board **Andrew, Phil, Graeme, Bec, Dom and Martin** for their support and who freely volunteer their time and expertise in carrying forwards national initiatives.

So go on, get outside

Sincerely

Jamie Bennett,  
President, OCA





## OUTDOOR COUNCIL AUSTRALIA BOARD MEMBERS 2017:



**JAMIE BENNETT**  
President



**PHIL HARRISON**  
Vice President



**PETE GRIFFITHS**  
Treasurer



**GRAEME JAMES**  
Treasurer



**DOM COURTNEY**



**JOHN QUAY**  
JOEE editor



**ANDREW GOVAN**  
Secretary



**BEC FOX**

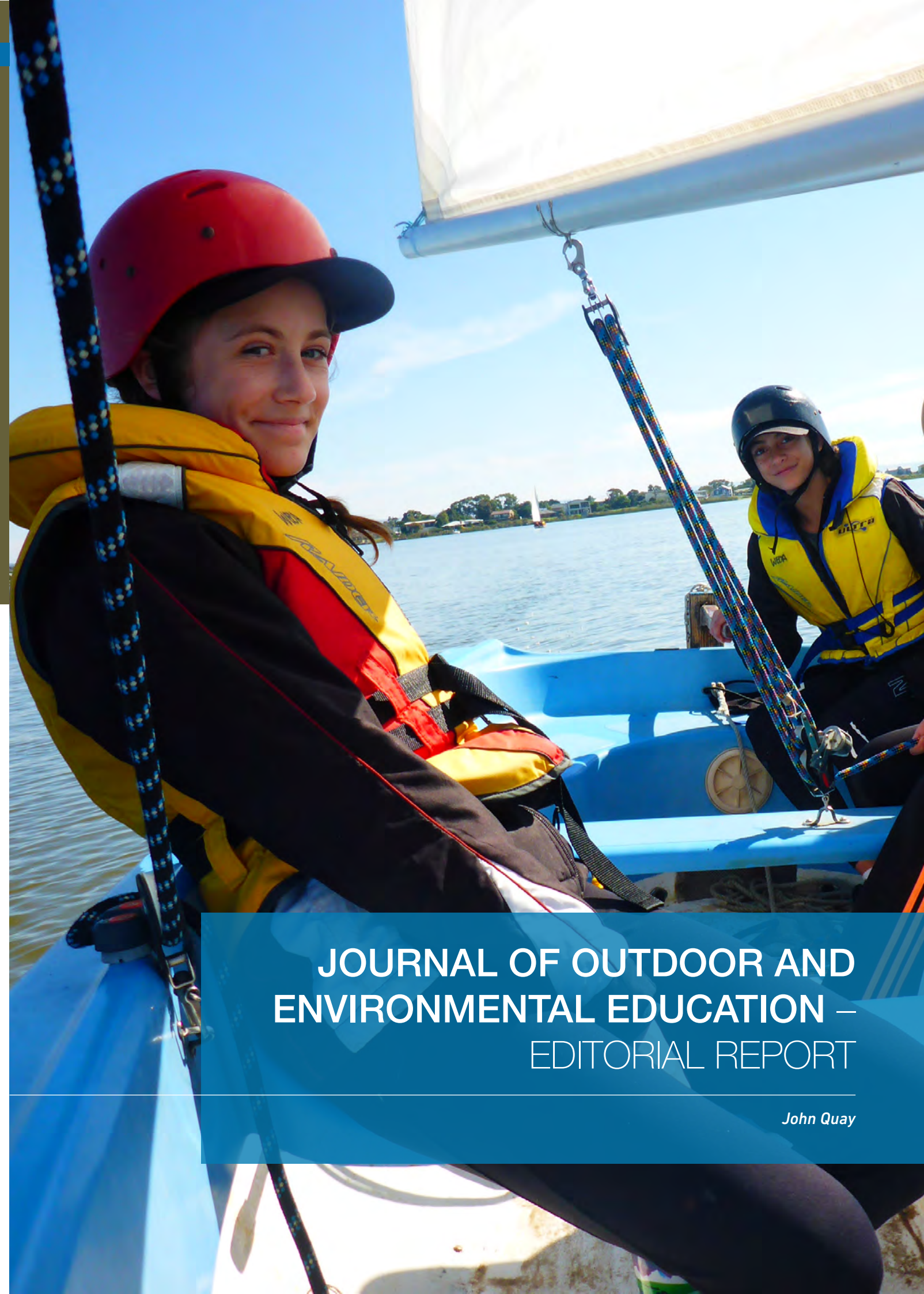


**MARTIN BURNEY**



## JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION – EDITORIAL REPORT

John Quay







## SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

The past 12-18 months have seen further significant changes occur in the way the Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education (JOEE) is managed.

The most significant of these has been the shift in oversight for JOEE from OCA to OEA. This shift and its ongoing success are supported collegially through ongoing collaboration between OCA and OEA.

Along with this shift has come a partnership arrangement with Springer publishers, which revolves around JOEE being primarily produced online. OEA has signed a ten year contract with Springer for 7000 Euro per annum to undertake the production of JOEE, which includes:

- construction and maintenance of a website for the journal: (<https://www.springer.com/education+&+language/journal/42322>),
- marketing of JOEE into university library consortia around the world,
- all copyediting, online processing and management of submissions via Editorial Manager software,
- uploading of all past issues of JOEE for digital access,
- access to the online journal for association members,
- access to advanced online publishing of articles,
- preparation of a submission to access Scopus Indexing,
- printing and distribution of paper copies for the editorial board and other key stakeholders,
- payment of royalties from JOEE downloads and subscriptions,
- a 500 Euro payment to support the Editor.

Following the strategic plan adopted for JOEE, four of the five aspects of this plan have now been achieved.

## 1 STEP ONE – JOURNAL NAME:

Step 1 in this process has been to change the journal name to the Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education (JOEE).

## 2 STEP TWO – EDITORIAL BOARD:

Step 2 has been a full reworking of the editorial board to clearly include national (Australia/NZ) and international contributors to the strategic functioning of the journal.

This was achieved and recent updates include: (1) the removal of Pam Firth as Managing Editor – as this work is now conducted by Springer; (2) the addition of Dr Beau Miles at Monash University as the JOEE Videos Editor – so that we have someone to oversee the development of video abstracts for each journal article; (3) the addition of Marg Cosgriff at The University of Waikato in New Zealand as an Associate Editor – so that we have a male and a female representative from NZ.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor: **Associate Professor John Quay** – University of Melbourne

Advisory Editor: **Dr Andrew Brookes** – La Trobe University

Reviews Editor: **Dr Glyn Thomas** – University of the Sunshine Coast

Videos Editor: **Dr Beau Miles** – Monash University

## ASSOCIATE EDITORS (AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND)

**Dr Mike Brown** – Auckland University of Technology

**Marg Cosgriff** – University of Waikato

**Dr Janet Dymant** – University of Tasmania

**Associate Professor Tonia Gray** – Western Sydney University

**Dr Marcus Morse** – La Trobe University

**Dr Alistair Stewart** – La Trobe University

**Dr Brian Wattchow** – Federation University

## REGIONAL EDITORS (INTERNATIONAL)

**Associate Professor Soren Andkjaer** – University of Southern Denmark

**Associate Professor Morten Asfeldt** – University of Alberta, Canada

**Dr Simon Beames** – The University of Edinburgh, UK

**Professor Pete Higgins** – The University of Edinburgh, UK

**Dr Susanna Ho** – Ministry of Education, Singapore

**Dr Mark Leather** – Plymouth Marjon University, UK

**Professor Denise Mitten** – Prescott College, USA

**Professor Kirsti Pedersen-Gurholt** – Norwegian School of Sport Sciences

**Associate Professor Tom Potter** – Lakehead University, Canada

**Associate Professor Jay Roberts** – Earlham College, USA

**Professor Takako Takano** – Waseda University, Japan

**Associate Professor Sue Waite** – Plymouth University, UK

## 3 STEP THREE– SUBSCRIPTION PATHWAYS

Step three has been to rework the pathways for subscription to JOEE by members of State outdoor education associations. This has been undertaken with state outdoor education associations in Australia and achieved via a connection between the OEA and Springer websites:

<https://outdooreducationaustralia.org.au/login-to-library/>

Outdoors New South Wales  
Outdoors Victoria  
Outdoor Educators' Association of Queensland  
Outdoor Education Tasmania  
Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia  
Outdoors Western Australia

Further work is going on regarding affiliations with OCA and Education Outdoors New Zealand.

## 4 STEP FOUR – PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIP

Step four has been to partner with an international publishing house: Springer. This has been achieved.

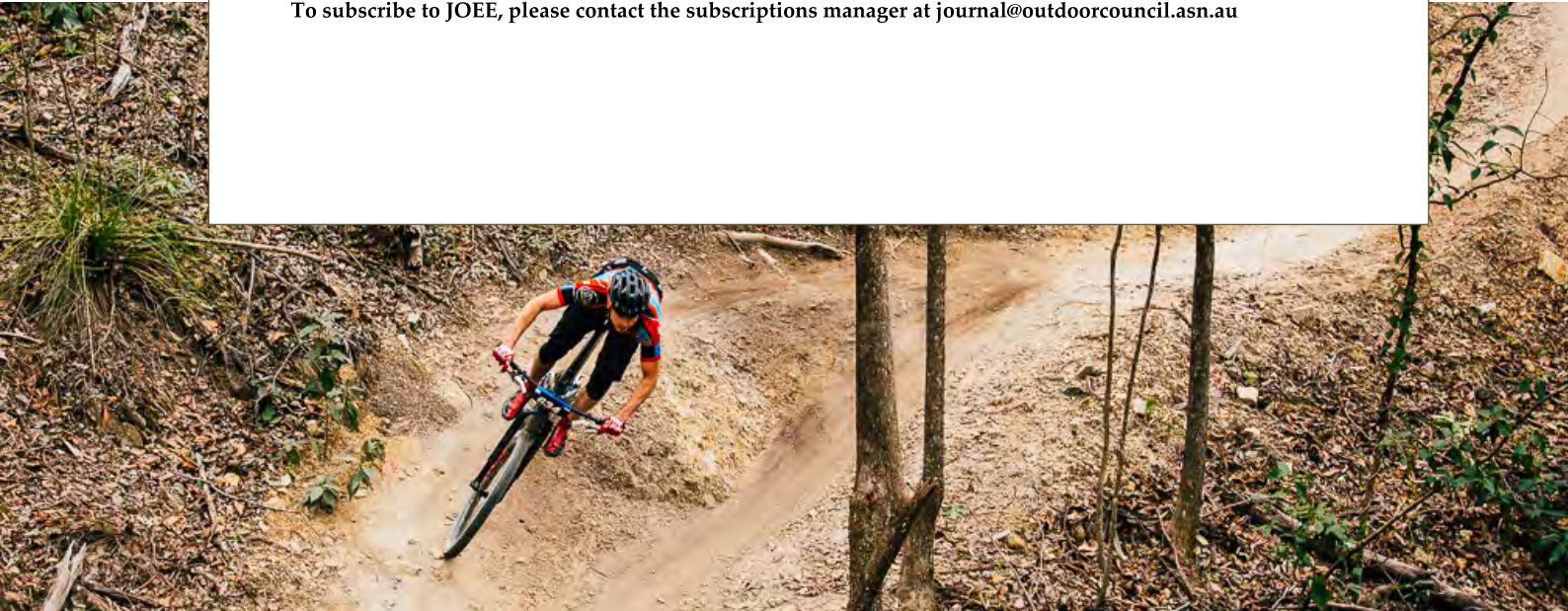
## 5 STEP FIVE – SCOPUS INDEXING

Step five is to secure recognition from Scopus and to work on other citation measures. This step is currently in train.

JOEE ISSUES 2017

Two issues of JOEE were produced in 2017 before the partnership with Springer took effect.

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# THE NATIONAL OUTDOOR LEADER REGISTRATION SCHEME (NOLRS) REPORT

## National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme

NOLRS was established in 2003 by the Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA) to provide a transparent, national benchmark of individual currency in outdoor activity leadership skills. NOLRS is a voluntary, national registration scheme for individuals who lead groups in outdoor adventure activities.

Strong demand for the scheme comes from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Queensland, and from the broader Outdoor Industry in Western Australia. It is anticipated that this demand will continue.

In addition, the draft Australian Adventure Activity Standards use NOLRS as an example of a leader registration schemes, one of the four identified recognition pathways for Leader competence. This may drive future expansion of the Scheme as organisations look at options for benchmarking Outdoor Leader knowledge, skills and experience.

The Christian Venues Australia (CVA), based in NSW, administer the Scheme on behalf of the OCA. Thanks to the CVA Staff for their work processing applications and issuing NOLRS Cards.

### CURRENT REGISTRANTS IN EACH STATE/TERRITORY (2018 DATA):



ACT – 0 (previous year 0)  
 NSW – 2 (previous year 1)  
 NT – 0 (previous year 0)  
 QLD – 110 (previous year 114)  
 SA – 0 (previous year 1)  
 TAS – 1 (previous year 1)  
 VIC – 1 (previous year 1)  
 WA – 113 (previous year 129)  
**Total - 227 (previous year 247)**

### TOP FIVE ACTIVITY REGISTRATIONS:

Abseiling Guide Single Pitch Natural Surfaces – 143 (previous year 217)  
 Climbing Guide Top Rope Natural Surfaces – 165 (previous year 157)  
 Abseiling Instructor Single Pitch Natural Surfaces – 118 (previous year 137)  
 Climbing Guide Top Rope Artificial Surfaces – 118 (previous year 118)  
 Bushwalking Instructor Controlled Environment – 124 (previous year 108)

### REGISTRATION MOVEMENT:

Re-registrations since 1st May 2017 – 45 (previous year 66)

New Registrations since 1st May 2017 – 23 (previous year 21)

Earlier this year the OCA Board approved an updated list of industry registrations that can be added to a NOLRS Card. Both Australian Canoeing (AC) and Australian Climbing Instructors Association (ACIA) registrations can be included on a NOLRS Card.

Note that these industry registrations are in addition to NOLRS registrations. A NOLRS Card containing only Industry registrations will not be issued. The only evidence required to add Industry registrations (ie AC and/or ACIA) is certified copy/ies of current registration certificate(s).

Recording of Industry registrations (ie AC and/or ACIA) on a NOLRS Card does not extend the registration period of the original registration. The Industry registration is only valid for the time specified on the original certificate issued by AC and/or ACIA.

### APPROVED INDUSTRY REGISTRATIONS FOR INCLUSION AS ADDITIONAL ITEMS ON A NOLRS CARD



#### AUSTRALIAN CANOEING (AC)

<http://canoe.org.au/>

- Flatwater Guide Canoe
- Flatwater Guide Kayak
- Flatwater Guide Sit-on-Top
- Flatwater Instructor Canoe
- Flatwater Instructor Kayak
- Flatwater Instructor SUP
- Whitewater Guide Canoe
- Whitewater Guide Kayak
- Whitewater Instructor Canoe
- Whitewater Instructor Kayak
- Advanced Whitewater Instructor Canoe
- Advanced Whitewater Instructor Kayak
- Coastal Guide (sit on tops)
- Enclosed Sea Guide
- Sea Guide
- Enclosed Sea Instructor
- Sea Instructor
- Advanced Sea Instructor

Phil Harrison  
 Chair, NOLRS sub-committee



#### AUSTRALIAN CLIMBING INSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION (ACIA)

<http://www.acia.com.au/index.htm>

- Top Rope/Abseil Guide
- Single Pitch Guide
- Multi Pitch Guide
- Climbing Instructor
- Instructor Trainer/Assessor







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