



Outdoor News

Journal of the Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia
Volume 29 No 3, October 2011

From the Chairman

Mike Meredith

Greetings and welcome to the October edition of *Outdoor News*.

Thinking back to this time last year, I made comment having just returned from self reliant trips to the Riverland and Flinders on the quantities of rain and benefits to the environment that this would have. A year later and the Riverland is still experiencing very significant flows and high water levels. A year's worth of high flows has had miraculous effects on the river's ecosystem. Majestic ancient river red gums which last year looked as if they were on their last legs now shimmer with vibrant green foliage and countless groups of water fowl and other species bask beneath their beauty. Life it would seem has been restored to a dying system as seen by the casual observer. Australia, as anyone who has had the benefit of being around for a few years would know, is a land of drought and flooding rains but our ancient environment so used to these long standing extremes struggles with the interfering hand of man.

Just when we were so close to getting some long term multi-State plans and management for a sustainable future in place the 'good times' seem to have returned, removing the need for immediate management of a failing and neglected river system. Of course the problems are still there, thinly masked by the flooding waters waiting to surface again like the rising salt. How long will it take for those who make the decisions to realise that nothing has changed. We still need people with vision longer than the end of their term in office who have an understanding of how nature works and can facilitate best practice solutions and programs to ensure the sustainable use of our most valuable resources. Perhaps they all need to be

enrolled in an outdoor education course? We can only hope it won't take another drought, which is only a matter of time, to plunge the river system into yet another visible crisis caused by our ineptitude and lack of understanding for ecological systems that need far more of our attention to ensure wise custodianship for those who have been and the many who are yet to come.



With the National Conference just around the corner (January 2012) the usual question of what is and what value is Outdoor Education comes to mind. The national curriculum has also highlighted this issue and lack of a consistent national stance probably did not help our cause for its inclusion as a curriculum area or subject at this stage. To me, Outdoor Education needs a few components. One is that it is purposeful education that is the educational component is designed into the program, getting outdoors and assuming or hoping that some educational benefit will occur just does not cut. What you are designing the education for can be quite varied and will depend on the program aims but certainly could and should include learning about oneself, others and the place or environment that is used to facilitate the desired learning. I hope many of you will join me in the ACT during January to discuss this and many other important questions that allow us to gather and celebrate the commonality of what we do in the great outdoors to educate those in our care.

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From the Editor

Peter Carter

When I was in high school in the 1950s there was no outdoor education: I had my introduction to the outdoors through the YMCA, and became a camp leader and organiser. Many years later the SA College of Advanced Education (now UniSA) began courses training teachers and leaders. Other providers, such as Regency TAFE and Flinders University had their own offerings and schools were running camps and other programs. Outdoor Education was then truly on the map.

With the recent announcements from UniSA the future of OE in South Australia is in doubt. Where do we go next? Scott Polley has some background to the university's decisions, and ideas and suggestions for the future.

The past two OEASA conferences have been organised in partnership with Recreation SA. Who or what is Recreation SA, and why should we be interested? Ian Dewey explains, with details on insurance and the Get Out and Stay Out program.

I wrote elsewhere some years ago that some weather forecasts were little more than 'fine if it doesn't rain'. That's been changing in recent years as much more data, often from automated systems, is fed into the forecasting models to improve accuracy, particularly long term. On page 4 we have news of improved forecasts for regional areas and coastal waters. Forecasting can never be an exact science, but the improvements are welcome.

There has apparently been a feral pig sighting in the Chowilla area. Bad news, if true. A new website, part of the FeralScan project, has been set up to keep track of them: www.feralscan.org.au/feralpigscan.



The *Weekend Australian Magazine* recently had a small item on packrafting, backpacking small inflatable rafts into otherwise inaccessible rivers to paddle them. There's a website of an organisation, www.packrafting.org and manufacturers in Alaska: www.alpackraft.com. I was reminded of a bushwalk I led many years ago which included a water crossing. We carried a sheet of plastic and several spools of string. When we arrived at the water we built what amounted to a large bird's nest of sticks and twigs and covered the underside with the sheet. Someone paddled across using plastic plates as paddles, and from there on we ferried everyone across by hauling on strings. And yes, we carried the plastic out. Crude, but effective.

Last time I wrote briefly about Coast Radio Adelaide, the government's new network for safety at sea. The network went 'live' on 12 September, and so far has, thankfully, been quiet. I've had no calls in the time I've spent on the system, and I think the main traffic has been Telstra technicians checking the repeaters and network links.

The National Outdoor Conference is to be held in Canberra in January, and four pages of this issue are taken up with its promotion. It all sounds like an interesting and worthwhile event.



The Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia

Aims

- 1 To promote the development of Outdoor Education in South Australia
- 2 To represent Outdoor Educators on issues and matters concerning the use of the outdoors
- 3 To maintain the professional development of personnel working in the area of Outdoor Education
- 4 To maintain, support and develop the role of Outdoor Educators in South Australia
- 5 To promote the professional interchange of information between members and other related organisations through conferences, meetings, seminars and publications
- 6 To promote a philosophy of environmental awareness, preservation, conservation and positive attitudes towards the use of the outdoor environment
- 7 To act in an advisory capacity to community, government and non-government agencies

The Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia supports these national ethical guidelines for outdoor educators:

- The Outdoor Educator will fulfil his or her duty of care
- The Outdoor Educator will provide a supportive and appropriate learning environment
- The Outdoor Educator will develop his or her professionalism
- The Outdoor Educator will ensure his or her practice is culturally and environmentally sensitive

OEASA Committee 2011-2012

Chair: Mike Meredith

Treasurer: Phil Noble

Secretary: Nick Glover

Assistant Secretary: Belinda Buscumb

Editor and webmaster: Peter Carter

Committee: Belinda Buscumb, Mick Dennis,

David Edwards, Andrew Govan, Danielle Meuring,

Brad Newton, Scott Polley, Fiona Shone

From the Chairman

...continued

Outdoor Education week was run from 22–28 August. Judging from the map on the website there was again a good representation from SA. Students from our school certainly enjoyed sending the postcards to many varied people around the country to spread the word on what outdoor education is all about and what they had been learning. Whilst we as practitioners recognise its immense value not everyone does. This should be an annual event and I would encourage everyone to get involved again next year. The more people who learn and know about what we are achieving the better.

The Great Aussie Camp Out was held on Saturday 15 October and was intended to get people outside and involved in camping and outdoor activities. For those that got involved and camped out in the back yard, caravan park, national park, etc. I hope you had as enjoyable a time as I did. Once again this is an annual event so if you didn't get involved there is always next year.

The first of the Outdoor Seminar Series was conducted on Friday 9 September at the Education Development Centre Hindmarsh. It was great to hear Luke Adams (Paddy Pallins) talk about his ascent of Mt Kenya and Mt Kilimanjaro. It was enough to want to get the safari boots on and get going. It was a well patronised evening with fine food and drink and a great listen. Unfortunately the second of the series for this year has been postponed due to unavailability of the intended speaker. More information later on this event for next year.

The 17th National Outdoor Education Conference is being held at the University of Canberra in the ACT 16–18 January 2012. The theme for the conference is "The Next Step"... Explore innovations in technology, sustainability, adventuring, risk management, curriculum and pedagogy, and practice led research for the Outdoor Education profession.

If you are interested in attending the conference full details are available later in this edition or visit the website, <www.actoea.org.au/conference>, for details of the great professional learning opportunity.

Newsletter deadlines

We plan to produce four newsletters each year. The deadline for submitting articles, etc. for inclusion is the end of term, aiming to get the newsletters out early in the school term.

To this end dates for submission of articles are;

End term 4 Friday 16 December for February 2012 edition.

Your assistance in getting interesting submissions to the editor, Peter Carter, would be greatly appreciated.

OEASA is prepared to subsidise members who attend the conference. The committee has nominated funding to be allocated depending on numbers and personal situation. If you are interested in being considered for a subsidy please contact Phil Noble on 0418 854 474 or email pnable@pac.edu.au.

The last committee meeting for this year is on Friday 25 November at 6:00 pm at the EDCH. All members are welcome to attend for a social get together, review of the year that has been and planning for next year's activities. Please RSVP to Nick Glover if you are planning to attend: 0421 612 340 or nicks_mailbox@yahoo.com

At this stage some intended activities for next year include:

- The AGM and guest speaker in March
- A conference working with ACHPER in the first half of the year
- The presentation dinner in June
- A seminar/presentation working with Rec SA in the second half of the year.

If you have any ideas for other activities or joint ventures please let us know: your committee are always keen to get ideas on what would be of benefit to members.

It is as always a pleasure to be of service.



FORECAST IMPROVEMENTS FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

From the start of October 2011, new and improved forecasts will be introduced in South Australia. The 28 forecast locations will receive a 7 day summer-like title.

Day	Date	Time	Weather
Tue	29 Nov	10:00	Light rain
Wed	30 Nov	10:00	Light rain
Thu	01 Dec	10:00	Light rain
Fri	02 Dec	10:00	Light rain
Sat	03 Dec	10:00	Light rain
Sun	04 Dec	10:00	Light rain
Mon	05 Dec	10:00	Light rain

Other planned changes

- New and improved 7 day forecast are planned for another 30-35 locations
- Detailed 10 day forecasts are planned for these locations
- Changes of any major sea level amount will be provided for other major population centres in SA and for more data for Adelaide
- All locations in South Australia will be able to access a 7 day forecast using a graphical forecast viewer. To view an example please refer to www.bom.gov.au/forecast/7daygraphical/index.html

Improved forecasts: see page 4



Scott Polley

Courses

Eight SAREA candidates have commenced this year's program. Candidates are currently completing their seminars and will begin the assessment phase of their program late Oct/November. If you have experience opportunities for these folks, feel free to contact SAREA sarea@climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au.

Most of last year's intake completed the program within the specified 12 months of commencement. A few candidates needed extra time, which unfortunately means that TAFE charges them additional fees.

We also had a candidate from a similar program interstate seek RPL and complete any additional components to get the SAREA qualification. SAREA welcomes such candidates. In this case there were some discrepancies in the expectations of their original training institution and SAREA that made it difficult to complete all the components of the Top Rope Instructor award, even though it appeared on paper that the candidate had all but completed the units.

Changes

SAREA has made a number of changes to the program over the last 12 months to improve the quality of instruction and education of rock climbing instructors, as well reflect more modern standards.

1 Change of ratios

SAREA ratios for Top Rope Guide and Top Rope Instructor are now:

1:6 for one qualified instructor

1:10, with one qualified instructor and 1 competent assistant (see SAREA web site for standards <www.climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au/sarea.html>)

1: 14, with one qualified instructor and 2 competent assistants.

A reminder that the instructor on site is the person that determines who is competent to be an assistant, and they will use the guidelines as established. Those who wish to seek accreditation and/or recognition as an assistant are provided with an assessment tool that can be completed by **any SAREA instructor**. That is, it does not have to be signed off by an assessor in the field.

2 Top Rope Guide as first qualification

Due to the strengthening of the SAREA Top Rope Instructor qualification, it has become apparent that a logical first step prior to completing this award is the Top Rope Guide. This will allow candidates to receive feedback on their current level of instruction, allow them easier access to a qualification, and help improve their chances of gaining the Top Rope Instructor award first time.

3 Insurance

SAREA is pretty excited by the prospect of climbers and instructors being able to gain insurance at a very reason-

able rate through Recreation SA and the 'Get out and stay out' program. Hopefully this will support climbers and instruction to continue with their craft.

Finally, DENR have finished some remodelling work at the top of Boulder Bridge at Morialta. Looks great and is much more polished. Further works are planned at the top of Muesli Buttress and other locations.

You can help DENR by the following:

- 1 Removing any bone seed, rose, blackberry or olives that are growing. Either hand removal, or cutting and daubing with Roundup™ or similar within three seconds does not require specialist training. Follow directions on the pesticide bottle;
- 2 Providing feedback to DENR on the changes and making any suggestions;
- 3 Contacting them prior to taking a group to Morialta so that they can keep track of group use in the park, and can advise if there are already a number of groups in the park.

New forecasting system

Paul Lainio

From late October 2011 the Bureau of Meteorology will begin using a new forecasting system to provide upgraded services in South Australia. This will result in improved content, better formats and increase in the number forecast days for many locations. Further upgrades for South Australia will occur in autumn 2012 with the introduction of a map-based viewing system and additional location based forecasts.

The changes are detailed on the following websites where you can also access five explanatory brochures from the right hand side menu. There is also a feedback link so you can tell us what you think of the changes. (I would be pleased to send some printed brochures if requested.)

Important Web Links

South Australia's improving weather services (basic outline of changes) <www.bom.gov.au/NexGenFWS/index.shtml>

Frequently asked questions (great reference to better understand what is happening) <www.bom.gov.au/NexGenFWS/sa/faq.shtml>.

Action

I would appreciate if you could distribute this information so when the new system commences towards the end of October your members will better understand the changes and take advantage of the improvements.

We anticipate that the new forecasting system will commence from 26 October. Information will be made available to the media at the time of launch. We reserve the right to alter this date should significant weather or staffing issues intervene.

Paul Lainio is Senior Meteorologist, Media and Community Relations, Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology, 8366 2640, p.lainio@bom.gov.au

Underpinning a vibrant outdoor industry

Ian Dewey

It was a warm summer morning at a remote south coast beach. A group of sea kayakers were sitting out just behind a small surf break. A larger wave was coming through and one of the ladies decided to surf it. She paddled hard and managed to get onto the front face of the wave, then the bow dug in, the boat yawed and rolled over with the wave.

Somewhere in the process, she dislocated her shoulder. She doesn't even remember exactly when. But part way through being rolled around by the wave she noticed her left arm had become useless.

The group saw her in trouble and quickly came to her aid. She was rushed to the local hospital where the shoulder was "put back in place". Due to her age, fitness and the extent of the injury the doctor recommended further surgery to prevent what was now an "unstable" shoulder from dislocating again.

She was faced with a large surgery bill to be healthy again and no money or insurance to pay for it. She was left with a dilemma: live without surgery (but give up many of the activities she loved), sue the person who was leading the group on the day, sue the 'club' they belonged to...

The leader was uninsured and the club was neither formally associated nor insured. **There would be no winners no matter which way she went.**

Recreation SA (Get Out and Stay Out program)

Get Out and Stay Out includes a registration and insurance scheme to support and develop outdoor adventure activities. All of the components of a vibrant outdoor adventure sector exist in SA: unfortunately they don't always connect. Recreation SA started the Get Out and Stay Out program in 2010 to help bring all of the components together. We have now included an insurance scheme to support you in your activities.

The South Australian Adventure Activities Insurance Scheme

The program is underpinned with the following insurance policy that is offered in the following format:

- Any member receives a personal accident policy
- Leaders and trainers are covered by Public/Products Liability and Professional indemnity (and personal accident)
- Organisations are covered by an Associations Liability policy*

The details are:

Personal Accident/Injury

This is for any individual taking part in their registered outdoor adventure activities and includes; whilst doing the activity (either in a formal setting or as general 'training' for the activity), attending a social function related to the activity, travelling to and from an activity or training venue.

Public/Products Liability

This component is specific to leaders and covers the Insured's legal liability to pay by way of compensation to third parties in respect of Personal Injury and/or Property Damage happening during the Period of Insurance caused by an occurrence in connection with Outdoor Recreation Sports and providing advice in Risk Management, First Aid and other related outdoor activities.

The policy pays up to \$10,000,000 any one occurrence.

Professional Indemnity

This is the second component specific to leaders and covers the legal liability to compensate third parties (including legal expenses incurred) who have sustained financial loss due to a breach or alleged breach of professional duty on the part of the Insured or their employees.

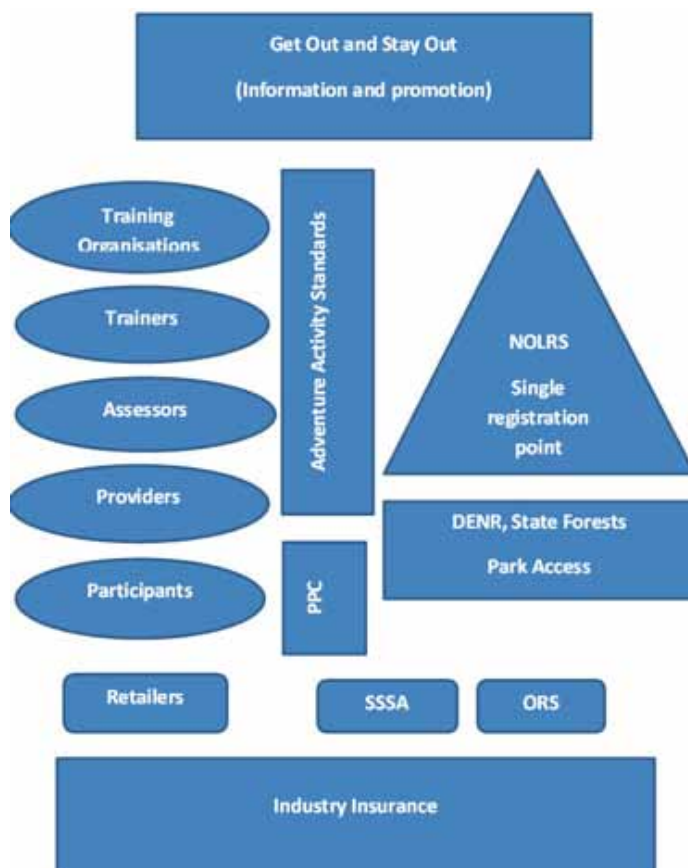
The policy pays up to \$2,000,000 for each and every claim.

Association Liability

This cover is for associations or clubs indemnifying them for loss arising from any claim(s) made against the directors or officers or organisation by reason of a wrongful act.

The policy pays up to \$2,000,000 for each and every claim.

Putting it all together



A vibrant (effective, efficient, growing, safe) outdoor adventure sector is made up of:

General participants who have access to the information equipment and facilities (waterway, rock face, bush, etc.) they need to enjoy the activity. Add personal accident insurance to provide extra peace of mind.

Leaders (Trainers, Instructors and Guides) who have consistent qualifications, sound codes of practice to support them and solid personal insurance.

Organisations (commercial, clubs and associations) which are efficient, associated or registered and insured.

Becoming part of Get Out and Stay Out

FAQs

I would like to simply register for the personal accident insurance?

Go to www.getoutandstayout.org.au, and click the Membership button.

I am a leader (instructor, guide, etc.); what qualifications are registered / qualify me for the insurance cover?

The scheme recognises qualifications as specified by the State Peak Body; Bushwalking Leadership SA, SA Rockclimbing Educators Association, Canoe SA, etc.

Where do I get qualified?

See the activity's Peak Body www.getoutandstayout.org.au/getting%20started.html then click on the relevant activity.

I am part of a club or organisation; can we be part of the scheme and get insurance?

Yes; go to www.getoutandstayout.org.au, and click the Insurance button.

I am part of an organisation; can I get help with getting registered?

Yes; go to www.getoutandstayout.org.au, and click the Help for organisations button

I am a member of Canoe SA, and through my Australian Canoeing qualifications, insured. Why should I be involved?

The scheme is **not** just an insurance scheme. Get Out and Stay Out brings together information, organisations and people from the full scope of the Outdoor Industry. It is also designed to point all people interested in being involved in canoeing and kayaking activities to Canoe SA and its training, activities and clubs. It is not an alternative to Canoe SA: Canoe SA is a key part of Get Out and Stay Out.

By being part of Get Out and Stay Out you connect with the wider adventure activity sector, it brings advertising and event opportunities as well as a single register for your qualifications to simplify application for permits and licenses.

Get Out and Stay Out is also a stepping point for people wanting to try activities but who are unsure if they want to get involved in a club yet.

Conclusion

Had our group of sea kayakers been part of the Get Out and Stay Out program the individual, the leader and the organisation would have been well insured and the outcome a far better picture.

Note; The Get Out and Stay Out Program is designed to support the member organisations of Recreation SA. At every point from participation to training we expect the individual to be a member of a club, or intend to become one once more familiar with the activity, the club a member of the state association and that association a member of Recreation SA.



Outdoor Education Instructor

Scotts Creek Outdoor Centre (near Morgan)

1.0 Term 1, 2012 Start

Contract with a view to permanent

Job and person specifications and the application form are available from the school or by accessing our website www.pac.edu.au

Applications, together with the names and contact details of three referees, should be addressed to Mr Kevin Tutt, Headmaster, and sent via email by Friday 11 November 2011 to:

Terry Learmonth

Director of Organisational Development

Prince Alfred College

careers@staff.pac.edu.au



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Tertiary Outdoor Education in South Australia. Where to now?

Scott Polley

Outdoor Leadership at Tertiary level has been part of the South Australian education landscape since the 1970s. The first official graduates of an Outdoor Leadership specialisation did so in 1978 as part of the Bachelor of Education in Physical Education at the University of South Australia. Since that time Outdoor Pursuits, Outdoor Recreation and Outdoor Education have been offered at that institution. In the 1980s, all operating at different sites, institutions in SA offered a Graduate Diploma in Outdoor Education; a specialist Outdoor Recreation pathway; and an Outdoor Pursuits pathway within the PE degree. All but a specialisation within the School of Health Science have since been closed down.

As of 2013 the Outdoor Education specialisation will no longer be offered at UniSA. Two foundational courses (there are eight courses per year) will remain. The courses are 'Introduction to Outdoor Leadership', as well as 'Wilderness and Adventure Education'.

So what are the implications for Outdoor Leadership in South Australia?

1 Preparation of Outdoor Leaders

In South Australia we have a number of excellent organisations that prepare outdoor leaders. These include government and not-for-profit agencies such as Regency TAFE, Canoe SA, Bushwalking Leadership SA, South Australian Rock-climbing Education Association, Yachting SA. There are also a number of private providers of accredited leadership training.

Although the numbers for Regency are capped, the other organisations can manage as many takers as come along and will no doubt continue to provide an excellent service to the community and professionals.

2 Preparation of pre-service teachers

UniSA, as with Flinders University, will continue to provide foundational courses in Outdoor Education, but will not provide a specialist pathway to meet the Department's guidelines to teach either middle school or Senior Outdoor Education.

Schools will have a grace period where graduates of the Outdoor Education specialisation are still available, but after that may need to think more creatively about how to find staff to teach these programs.

Pre-service teachers who would like to specialise in Outdoor Education might need to pursue one of the following options.

Undergraduate:

Option A: Undertake a self directed program of adventure activity leadership qualifications, and seek credit within their University program. Some schools are already offering traineeships to complete such qualifications and other units of competence to construct a Certificate III or IV in Outdoor Recreation. Bushwalking Leadership, Canoe SA, South Australian Rock-climbing Education Association, Yachting Australia, etc. already have such qualifications in place.

Option B: Whilst studying at a local University, undertake cross institutional studies in Outdoor Education at an interstate institution that offers Outdoor Education courses such as LaTrobe University Bendigo, Monash University, University of Ballarat, University of Wollongong, University of Tasmania or other.

Option C: Study an entire Bachelor Program at an interstate institution such as those listed.

Post Graduate:

Option D: Complete a one year full time or two years part time Graduate Diploma at LaTrobe University Bendigo.

Option E: Undertake a Certificate IV/Diploma in Outdoor Recreation at Regency TAFE or other institution.

3 Curriculum knowledge and development

There will be a reduction in the depth of knowledge of undergraduates in Outdoor Education specific curriculum knowledge and pedagogy. However, text books, Outdoor Education conferences on a state and national level, newsletters, the Australian Journal of Outdoor Education and workshops will continue to provide opportunities to provide professional development and to explore new ideas.

Universities will continue to offer opportunities to research aspects of Outdoor Education through generalist post graduate honours, masters and PhD programs.

Summary

The landscape for tertiary Outdoor Education in South Australia is about to change. Students who would like to undertake this area professionally will now have to work harder to find a way to undertake study, and may need to attend multiple institutions, travel interstate or be very self directed. This presents both challenges and opportunities for the Outdoor Leadership sector.

Advertisement

Prince Alfred College GAP Year

Taking a gap year but need something to fill it?

Scotts Creek Outdoor Centre is offering a gap year position for Semester 1 2012.

Interested students should download an information package and application form from the PAC website <www.pac.edu.au> or by emailing careers@staff.pac.edu.au.

The case for Tertiary Outdoor Education in South Australia

Scott Polley

In August 2010, a decision was made not to continue with the Outdoor Education specialisation pathway at the University of South Australia by the School of Education. This decision was arrived at when a review of the role and place of Health and Physical Education and Outdoor Education in the School of Health Science in 2007 resulted in a recommendation to move these two pathways to the School of Education. In 2010 the review recommendations for Health and Physical Education were enacted, but the School of Education chose not to accept any Outdoor Education courses. The School of Health Science has agreed to continue with foundational studies in OE, but not to teach a specialisation.

This is something of a change from the University being a provider of a well recognised Outdoor Education specialisation program for over 40 years, with interest nationally and internationally.

Whilst this paper is a minor case study of the situation at University of South Australia, it is not intended to cast any aspersions on any individuals at the institution or the institution itself. The University and the management team face a different climate, with few incentives for the University to take on the teaching of such a field.

Whilst the reasons for the decision have not been provided in writing, it is clear that the case for Outdoor Education at Tertiary level has either not been made adequately to tertiary administrators at University of South Australia, or the field is not strong enough to continue at Tertiary level. As an academic in this field, I would argue the former, and provide the following supporting rationale.

'It's not a learning area'

With the advent of National Curriculum, there has been a focus on ensuring that teachers are able to deliver programs from the eight nominated learning areas. Outdoor Education is not a learning area, but like Health, Community Studies, Home Economics and Nutrition is part of the Health and Physical Education Learning area. Geography, History, Economics, etc. are also not identified as learning areas, however they are subject areas in their own right and are embraced as a part of a broader learning area in the curriculum to Year 10 level. They exist as subjects in the senior years.

A strength and weakness of Outdoor Education is that it is both subject area as well as a methodology for teaching other curriculum areas. In this way, it can be cross-curricular and might easily be used as a tool to teach aspects of the National Curriculum, such as the identified cross curricular area of Sustainability.

The National Curriculum is only partially written, but it is unlikely that Outdoor Education will be recognised as a stand-alone subject. At the national Health and Physical Education ACARA workshop in April 2011 there were strong submissions by Outdoor Education Australia to include Outdoor Education within the national HPE cur-

riculum. The 'fall back' position was at least the inclusion of Outdoor Recreation in the Years 7–10 as part of the Health and Physical Education learning area. Hopefully the current writing team will heed this recommendation.

Outdoor Education (known at Stage 2 level as Outdoor and Environmental Studies) is a senior school (Year 11 and 12) subject, and will be unaffected by the new National Curriculum. In South Australia 1854 students completed studies in Outdoor Education in Stage 1 and 512 completing Stage 2 in 2009. The figures for 2010 and 2011 are similar. The advent of the 'New SACE' has not affected the overall numbers of students choosing these courses. These courses are taught by qualified teachers who have completed studies in Outdoor Education, mostly from University of South Australia but some from Flinders University. Most schools teaching the subject are government schools. (SACE 2009; SACE 2011)

The number of students undertaking OE studies at senior school exceeds those of any of the Arts, most other areas of HPE (except Physical Education and Home Economics), and many other courses in other learning areas. It is also offered as a middle school subject in some schools, usually at Year 10. In addition to specific studies of Outdoor Education, most of the state's private schools and a good number of the public schools include a compulsory middle school Outdoor Education experience. A number of schools include Extended Stay Outdoor Education Programs (ESOEP) that last from six days to a term. Further to this, Outdoor Recreation activities requiring expertise in outdoor leadership are included in approx. 90% of School Physical Education programs (Polley & Pickett 2003).

Outdoor Education is now a substantially subscribed senior school subject in most of Australia, with good support in Western Australia, Victoria and Northern Territory at both Year 11 and 12, and with sound subscription at Year 11 level in NSW and Tasmania.

'It's not academic'

The delivery of quality Outdoor Education requires complex understanding of people, the environment and technical aspects of journey. It requires a level of experience in leaders to be conducted in a safe manner, and high level critical analysis to plan and use evidence to review outcomes. In much the same way that Health professionals require a minimum level of clinical competence that can only be achieved through practice, Outdoor Education requires a minimum level of activity and leadership competence to be safe.

It is possible to conduct activities using lower order thinking, but to construct programs that deliver meaningful and contextual outcomes requires higher order thinking skills that are best developed in institutions that foster critical approaches to education.

As far as the body of knowledge is concerned, the many Outdoor Education graduates who become teachers are also likely to teach other areas such as tourism, geography and environmental science using the body of knowl-

The case for Tertiary Outdoor Education in South Australia

edge gained in the Outdoor Education specialisation. Teachers of Senior Outdoor Education who also teach other subjects at senior level will testify that the academic rigour is at least equivalent to most other subjects.

Somehow, anything that includes practical work is viewed as less academic by those in the University sector that cling to notions that academic rigour comes from the virtual world. Deep learning continues to be derived from well framed and constructed mind/body experiences that Outdoor Education can provide.

To date there have been three completions of Honours in Outdoor Education topics supervised by Outdoor Education staff at UniSA, with a fourth one currently being under way, demonstrating the potential for post-graduate outcomes. There have been other post graduate studies in Outdoor Education topics at other institutions in South Australia also.

The current staffing profile (staff member only having Masters by Research, not PhD) at UniSA is an issue for further research and supervision, but this is not an insurmountable problem. Other fields (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Medical Radiation) continue to have staff that do not have PhDs that are in transition to completing this award.

The research basis for Outdoor Education, Outdoor Recreation, Adventure Therapy and Nature-Based Tourism is sound and growing. In addition to an array of qualitative studies on the effectiveness of this field to achieve personal development, educational, therapeutic, economic and social justice outcomes, there are a number of significant meta-analyses that support further investigation these claims.

'The numbers are low'

Universities have not had any increase in recurrent funding for 15 years, with a dramatic increase in costs associated with running them. Along with a range of other strategies, one way to manage costs of teaching is by ensuring that there are sufficiently large classes to justify the resources put into the course. Ensuring sufficient numbers of students in an elective course is always going to be problematic, but achievable with good quality courses, good marketing, and having a range of student sources. The numbers in Outdoor Education foundational courses at UniSA have been 80–200 since 1997, with other courses having smaller numbers of 10–30. Larger numbers of students are possible, but of course there are challenges as with all increases in course size.

One challenge is to ensure students interested in the field are given the advice on how best to proceed with the study area. There are examples where students have not been allowed or 'strongly advised' against studies within the School and from other Schools at UniSA (personal communication, name withheld). Advice to students included being advised of the 'limited scope' of this field. This negative marketing combined with restrictive policies in limiting access to these courses may have stymied opportunities to grow further.

Outdoor Education has great potential for sufficient numbers of students to justify a substantial investment. Outdoor Education's cousin, Outdoor Recreation, continues to be attractive to those that seek adventure, time in the natural environment, quality social interactions and healthy physical activity. Outdoor Recreation is particularly popular with those visitors from afar that want to explore this country in a meaningful way.

Using Outdoor Recreation to provide an introductory access to Outdoor Education is not new at UniSA. At one stage at the University of South Australia ran short courses 'Introduction to Outdoor Recreation' that was taught during teaching breaks. Up to five courses ran per year, and were fully subscribed, and had a healthy cost vs income ratio. These courses were discontinued for unknown reasons.

'It is too expensive'

Outdoor Education can absorb an enormous amount of resources and staffing, as do other fields that have a high human interaction element.

However, it can also run within any boundaries that are placed on it. For example at UniSA, in 1996 and 1997 the program without any budget or additional staffing. It was subsequently funded following solid performances. The practice of funding according to performance ceased in 2003 at UniSA. Flinders University has found innovative ways to overcome expense and resource issues by entering into an arrangement with a school whereby students are provided experience to support their academic studies supported by the school.

At UniSA a number of blanket administrative practices that were not designed to be administered to Outdoor Education have resulted in a range of unnecessary expenses. Simple changes in practice and approaches to management have the potential to reduce costs significantly. In addition, it is possible to reduce costs through programming and sensible management of resources and facilities.

As stated previously, Outdoor Recreation can be used to support the delivery of Outdoor Education in the tertiary sector to help increase enrolments and income. Other income generating opportunities include safety and programming consultancies, corporate team building and research.

'It is dangerous and risky'

As stated previously, the program at UniSA has been running for 40 years. During that time there has been no major incidents. Even if there had, there is no evidence supporting that this field is any more dangerous than other field or industries. It may well be that that participation in Outdoor Education activities is safer than participation in Physical Education and Sport (Brackenreg 1997).

Outdoor Education teaches the safe management of risks, and teaches calculated risk taking behaviour with lower level consequences. This knowledge is needed more

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than ever by young people who are bombarded with virtual risk with virtual consequences, and have difficulty managing real risk and real consequences. The likely reduction in Outdoor Education offerings for schools with reduction in tertiary offerings may well contribute to increased harm from adolescent risk taking such as motor vehicle challenges, the most likely cause of death in young people.

In addition, Outdoor Education may well contribute to improved resilience and protective factors against youth suicide, the other main cause of death in young people.

The potential for mishap remains in Outdoor Education. Much as it remains for a nurse handing out drugs; a physiotherapist treating spinal injuries; an exercise physiologist prescribing exercise; a science teacher working in a laboratory; a design and technology teacher working on a lathe; a home economics teacher working in the kitchen; and a Physical Education teacher teaching activities such as gymnastics, archery, javelin, etc. The key factor for all areas is that there is knowledge and awareness of risk and a comprehensive risk management plan that guides the operation of the area.

'We teach Health Professionals, not Teachers'

Most large universities are divided into silos for operational purposes, and UniSA is no exception. As stated, Outdoor Education is currently taught in the School of Health Science, and has tried to transfer responsibility of the courses to Education. It is important to note that the support by the School of Health Science's current administration has been very good, with agreement to provide at least foundational studies in Outdoor Education even though the above view is expressed.

The idea that a Division of Health Science should not tread on the turf of the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences is not unique. The philosophical argument provided by the School of Health Science at UniSA that Outdoor Education is not educating health professionals might be explored further.

The school of Health Science argues that the Human Movement program, with a prescribed set of elective courses, provides the body of knowledge required for the Master of Teaching in Health and Physical Education to Year 12, Science to Year 9, Nutrition and some Home Economics. However the same argument does not appear to apply to Outdoor Leadership.

In addition, I would argue there is enough evidence to support the use of outdoor activities in exercise prescription for increased cardiovascular fitness, team building for sport performance, and improvement in well-being to justify this area within an Allied Health Professional program.

'There is limited demand for graduates'

This perception is inconsistent with my views after preparing people for professional roles for 15 years in South Australia, and having been a full time professional since 1991. All graduates have been able to obtain full employ-

ment or places in further study since 1996, with most obtaining employment through direct contact with UniSA staff, work experience, DECS and other employing agencies, websites (e.g. Cooe ads <www.cooeads.com.au>) or networking. Evidence of records of employment for Graduates in HPE suggest that the HPE/OE combination is valued and highly sought after. In 2011 the employment pattern for OE graduates continues to be strong, with many obtaining work without advertisements made public.

In addition to strong demand for graduates in South Australia, the University receives submissions by interstate private providers for students to work upon graduation with companies in all other states. Both Victorian and Queensland Outdoor Education organisations continue to hold workshops to address the 'chronic skills shortage' in this field.

The shortage of skilled professionals in South Australia is evidenced by submissions by local providers to work whilst studying and upon graduation in South Australia. Some provide financial support to undertake accreditation to encourage them to work for them prior to and following graduation. Further evidence is the difficulties experienced by DECS in filling Outdoor Education teaching positions in South Australia, with similar difficulties in Victoria.

Historical

At the University of South Australia staff teaching Outdoor Education or other Health and Physical Education who are associated with OE have not been asked to provide input to decisions about the role and place of this area prior to a decision being made. As stated previously, the program has been operating for 40 years, and until 2008 was on an upward trend of student numbers and higher academic outcomes. In the absence of clearly stated rationale for the decision to reduce course offerings, it is difficult to make informed comments.

Outdoor Education is an established field of tertiary study. In addition to the strong professional outcomes it is a field that holds great potential for further research in a broad range of fields.

I think the future of an Outdoor Education pathway could be extremely bright, with a number of opportunities in the current University Market. These include:

- Specialisations within other areas such as Tourism, Management, Sport and Recreation, Psychology, Parks and Wildlife Management and others
- Development of Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma for teachers and youth leaders
- Post graduate research in Outdoor Leadership with Health, Education, Recreation, Social Justice and others
- Development of a Bachelor of Health, Outdoor and Physical Education Degree. This combination has proven to be extremely popular in Victoria
- Development of student experience and engagement programs.

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The question for tertiary institutions and educators in my mind is not 'is there a case for Outdoor Education in tertiary institutions?', but 'what performance criteria do tertiary institutions need to be met to provide a specialisation in this field?'

Research

Tertiary administrators must meet the performance criteria established by the Federal Government, as well as carry out the direction of the University Board. I would be confident that with good planning and management that Outdoor Education can meet the challenges faced and meet these criteria, but must be given a chance to do so.

The elephant in the room is Research. Areas like Outdoor Education do not have a history of high level journal articles, attracting major research funds or major industry funds. These things are what University managers are judged upon, and so there is little incentive to attempt to address any of the teaching and learning issues.

Without any evidence to support this claim, it is my view that there is a disconnect between what the general public and professionals expect from Universities and what they are funded to do. The general public and the profession expect high standard job-ready professionals as a result of the years of study at a University. They expect high standard teaching and leadership. There is little incentive to deliver high standard teaching when the performance criteria mostly relate to research. Larger classes, less time teaching, less contact with staff, more on-line learning and simpler assessment tasks are occurring as Universities attempt to make teaching more efficient to free up staff time and resources for research.

Summary

Despite the continued growth in Outdoor Education in South Australia, and the increasing relevance to young people and others, there will be a reduction in Tertiary offerings in South Australia as of 2013.

Outdoor Education is not unique in having to rethink its place at tertiary level, as opportunities continue to shrink or be more complex and less accessible. This will

Paddling news

In assessments for Flatwater Guide, Coastal-SOT Guide and Sea Guide the multiday and overnight activities are now optional. The changes make it easier for organisations which run day trips only to qualify staff. Candidates who want VET Statements of Attainment and who want to run multiday and overnight activities must be assessed against those criteria.

The latest edition of the *Award Scheme Handbook* (dated 15 September 2011) and the corresponding Assessment Summary forms include the changes. Contact Peter Carter pcarter@acslink.net.au for copies.

The **2011 Canoe SA Team Paddle Challenge** was held 24–25 September, and was a great success. Next year's event will be 20–21 October.

likely make it even harder for groups with less access to educational resources and support to implement such programs.

Whilst challenges to held views about Outdoor Education might be made to administrators, they appear to remain the dominant perceptions of our field. Even if alternative views were held by administrators, politically Outdoor Education will likely continue to struggle to get support by tertiary institutions. In their defence, administrators are tackling a difficult funding and political environment, and a small field like Outdoor Education might well be seen as a distraction not needed.

All that can be done is to continue to make the case for an Outdoor Education specialisation to be offered in South Australia, and to continue to work towards addressing the issues highlighted in this paper. Hopefully an opportunity will be found in the future. If not, at least the profile of Outdoor Education will not be done any harm.

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- Polley, S and Pickett, 2003, 'The nature and scope of Outdoor Education in South Australia: A summary of key findings', *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*, 7(2)

For sea paddlers, the next series of Sea Skills and Leadership workshops begins on 6 November:

Sunday 6 November: Sea kayaking basics

Sat 3–Sun 4 December: Plan and participate in an overnight sea kayaking trip

Sunday 8 January 2012: Surf zone survival and navigating a crossing

Sat 11–Sun 12 February: Crossing to Kangaroo Island.

Next year's Sea Weekend will be Fri 16–Sun 18 March, avoiding the long weekend.

A Flatwater Lifeguard and Flatwater Skills course will be held 16, 17, 19, 20 January, with another in April.

For more details and registration contact Canoe SA: 8240 3294, canoesa1@canoesa.asn.au

Outdoor Educators' Association Of South Australia

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