



**MEDIA RELEASE** | For release Tuesday 15 February

## **Marshall government's bizarre outdoor education 'recommendation' throws businesses and schools into turmoil**

Yesterday marked the return to school for students across South Australia, yet these same young people are prevented from attending school camps and excursions due to a confounding SA Health recommendation.

Schools have cancelled or deferred camps and excursions in response to a confusing SA Health recommendation that is counter to its own advice to schools to preference outdoor learning.

Despite urgent and sustained appeals from outdoor sector peak body, [Outdoors SA](#), there is still no assurance on the return of outdoor education activities, compensation for the sector, or protection of schools from breach of long-standing commercial contracts.

Luke Duncan of Outdoors SA expressed his concerns, "The Department of Education did not consult with our sector and left schools to fend for themselves in interpreting a 'recommendation'. Because they have not issued a directive, schools have had no choice but to dishonour contracts and cancel services that have been booked and arranged for up to twelve months. It's a disaster. We keep getting told by ministers and departments to talk to someone else. Meanwhile our sector is losing millions of dollars every day."

Providers like Andrew Govan, CEO of Wilderness Escapes Outdoor Adventures, are frustrated and alarmed, "We have done everything the government has asked and still our camps are shut down. We have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue. This places immense stress upon us and our workers."

"It's also not fair on young people. Camps and excursions provide exciting and engaging outdoor learning opportunities and make space for friendships that last a lifetime. Thousands of students are missing out. It's just ridiculous!"

The Department of Education has claimed school camps are 'high risk', yet camps in Victoria and New South Wales are going ahead with no restrictions. Western Australia has just announced a package of supports for the same sector, with this \$3.5 million helping to keep businesses afloat and people employed.

"This approach contradicts what is happening in every other sector in South Australia," says Duncan, including the relaxation of restrictions for high-risk locations such as cafés, restaurants, pubs and clubs where QR codes and masks are required. Indoor gyms and swimming centres can operate, as well as other forms of nature-based tourism. Healthy camps and outdoor excursions are dismissed, without any offer of compensation for our outdoor sector's businesses or for the state's schools."

"We are also hearing from tourism peak body [TiCSA](#) that the government's position is hurting hundreds of businesses associated with outdoor education providers. It is also having a devastating impact on boarding schools. They can't even use the 'classroom contact' guidelines."

Outdoors SA and its members demand immediate action from Premier Marshall and his education and health ministers, John Gardiner and Stephen Wade. We need an immediate retraction of SA Health's 'recommendation', prompt resumption of school camps and excursions, compensation for lost income and support for schools to pay cancellation and postponement fees.

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*Outdoors SA is the peak body for outdoor adventure and recreational activities in South Australia. Our members employ thousands of people and contribute substantially to the state's \$865 million\* nature-based outdoors economy (\*based on 2016 figures).*

MEMBERS: [Venture Corporate Recharge](#) | [Wilderness Escape Outdoor Adventures](#) | [Westminster School](#) | [Bushwalking Leadership SA](#) | [Earth Adventure](#) | [Big Heart Adventures](#) | [Pure SA](#) | [Baptist Care SA](#) | [Beyond The Classroom](#) | [Canoe Adventures](#) | [Canoe the Riverland](#) | [Diving Australia](#) | [Enliven Outdoor Adventures](#) | [SA Skydiving](#) | [The Outdoor Education Consultants](#) | [Tracx](#) | [Tree Climb](#) | [Uniting Venues SA](#) | [Waitpinga Farm](#) | [Walk Local](#) | [Woodhouse Activity Centre](#)

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