

12 May 2022

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck
Minister for Sport
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
senator.colbeck@aph.gov.au



Dear Minister

Call to action on the needs of the Australian Outdoors Industry

We would like to bring to your attention the progressive movement of the Australian Outdoor Industry. In South Australia and across the country the sector, via the Outdoor Council of Australia, is calling for action.

Outdoors SA is the peak body for outdoor recreation and outdoor education in South Australia.

We are calling upon the government to recognise the contribution this industry makes to the economy, to the education of our youth, to communities across the country and to the health and wellbeing of Australians.

In South Australia alone our sector contributes over \$469 Million¹ annually to the local economy. Nationally at 1% of Australia's Gross Domestic Product our industry is worth over \$20 Billion². The diverse range of federal issues must be recognised and we call upon policy makers to work in partnership with industry for solutions. The sustainability of Australia's outdoor industry contributes directly to the health and wellbeing of our communities and in SA saves over \$76 Million each year in healthcare costs¹.

The Outdoor Council have laid out their concerns in an open letter to government which is attached.

National challenges that have been identified include:

Implementing the **Australian Adventure Activity Standard**³ – whilst state land managers see the value in this good-practice framework for safe and responsible planning and delivery of led outdoor adventure activities, there needs to be clear support at the federal level to facilitate regular reviews and updates.

Insurance – insurance provision for adventurous activities has been identified as being at crisis point by the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman. The Discretionary Mutual Fund as identified in 'The Show Must Go On'⁴ report must be progressed as a practical and durable solution to enable the amusement, leisure and recreation sector to remain operational in a hardened global insurance market.

Workforce attraction, acquisition, and retention of staff in the outdoors is at an all-time low as we emerge from COVID. Our small neighbour New Zealand has nearly as many graduates annually in Outdoor Leadership than we do in Australia. In 2019, our industry relied on up to 45% of its paid workforce coming from other countries as skilled temporary workers. We need to see a renewed commitment of support in the training of Australian workers and the promotion of outdoor careers.

¹ South Australia's nature-based outdoor economy. Marsden Jacobs 2018. www.outdoorssa.org.au

² Nationwide impacts of outdoor recreation. Marsden Jacobs 2018. www.skilsiq.com.au

³ <https://australianaas.org.au/>

⁴ https://www.asbfeo.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/DMF_Final-Report_Public.pdf

Outdoor industry training and qualifications are not widely available in Australia because registered training organisations (including TAFEs) and universities have wound back investment. Quality outdoor training is a qualification that is expensive to run, so opportunities to be educated in outdoor leadership are diminishing in most States. A renewed training investment is needed at state and national levels.

Collaboration with the Outdoors Industry as a key stakeholder when dealing with **Climate Change, First Nations Peoples** development, **NDIS** programs and the **National Curriculum**.

The **Outdoor Industry has outlined a 4 point plan**⁵ to engage in addressing these needs.

1. Capacity Support

Provide seed-funding to boost the Outdoor Council of Australia's capacity and unite the industry to address the federal areas of need that provide quantifiable results for the industry at state, territory and local community levels.

2. Education

Assist in building awareness of the need for Children (of all ages) to incorporate the Outdoors in their education to build skills and results that cannot be learnt in the classroom. In addition, this assists with the health and wellbeing of our children; physically and mentally.

3. Accreditation

Support the introduction and development of an adventure activity accreditation that can be built on existing accreditation frameworks that provides safety consistency, insurance capability, improved business practices and reduces the need to legislate the industry.

4. Support a Labour Agreement

Ensure the priority access to qualified staff for the industry and approve a labour agreement for the sector to attract and retain qualified leaders in the industry that will ensure the sustainability of our workforce.

We are urging the Federal government to act on what is important for the future of our communities, work in partnership with the Outdoor Council of Australia and state peaks like Outdoors SA in getting Australians active and in nature in the great outdoors!

I look forward to your response in discussing these issues further.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Govan

Chairperson

Outdoors SA

Attached: Open Letter from the Outdoor Council of Australia⁵.

⁵ Open Letter OCA. The Australian Outdoor Industry calls for National attention and action. 2022