



HALLS OUTDOOR EDUCATION

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INSPIRING CHANGE THROUGH OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

13 December 2019

To the attention of the Productivity Commission

Submission to the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development

Halls Outdoor Education is an educational service provider mainly to schools in Victoria. It also runs a private RTO (Outer Eastern Training Institute), running certificate III and IV courses in Outdoor Recreation (soon to be Outdoor Leadership).

As both a supplier of qualifications and a user of graduates we are in the unique position to see what industry needs for employees and the challenges faced by training institutions to produce a high-quality workforce.

As part of the Outdoor Providers and Camps committee (a collective of the largest outdoor education providers in Australia, and a sub committee of Outdoors Victoria) we have identified a major shortage in qualified staff across the country. In Victoria alone the committee has estimated a need of nearly 300 new staff to meet demands for 2020 in Victoria and an estimated graduation pool of just over 100 across Universities, TAFE's and RTO's in Victoria.

The largest of the outdoor education providers has stated they have gained 16% of their workforce from overseas due to the lack of available staff in Australia. Our company will keep its graduates and still must source a further 4 fulltime and 20 casual staff for 2020.

Other influences such as the misconception of what a career in outdoor education would be like has also inhibited the growth in enrollments into outdoor leadership / education courses. Career teachers have actively steered students away from outdoor education as a career choice citing the lack of job opportunities, which couldn't be further from the truth.

Outdoors Victoria (the peak organizational body for the outdoors in Victoria) commissioned an economic study of the outdoor education scene in Victoria and concluded that the gross economic impact to Victoria was in the order of \$7b annually, and that this occurred mostly in regional areas. Therefore, the impact of the outdoor education/outdoor activities scene has a huge positive benefit and in the regions that need it most

As a provider of training we have seen how price sensitive our students are. Our current model is all in traineeships, which 13 different employers have also taken up. The Outer Eastern Training Institute runs a certificate III which has a core of 24 Units and a series of 6 different skill set electives. It is here that we find price sensitivity. Our institute runs these electives at a financial loss just so that we can get enough participants to run the sets and it is these elective skill sets that employers gain added value from their employees.

We are keen to see a national funding model as the current Victorian system is difficult to administer and hard to track

We would like to see an increase in funding for the outdoor leadership courses to attract more candidates to the courses.

We would like to see the promotion of outdoor leadership as a quality long term career option for students

And for our RTO we would like to see the rate of change slow down. The constant change in compliance has seen us divert many hours from what we do best (teach in the outdoors) to ticking boxes just to prove compliance (compliance fatigue)

We would be more than happy to be further involved in the process and look forward to a better, clearer, cleaner training system.

Kind Regards

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