

MEDIA RELEASE

12th June 2020

KIDS NOT ALLOWED TO GO OUTDOORS

This makes no sense... pubs, clubs, gyms can now operate, schools are back to fulltime tuition, yet the safest environment is the outdoors and has no customers as the Department of Education say outdoor education is 'not safe yet'.

School camps are an integral part of the school curriculum and provide connection and access to open space to conduct activities, able to accommodate much more than the requirement of 1 person per 4 square metres. The facilities are legally allowed to operate right now in both NSW & ACT for up to groups 20 as of 13th June, but the Department of Education will not allow kids to return to camp activities in Term 3.

"This means the decimation of the Outdoor Education sector until 2021" says Lori Modde, CEO of Outdoors NSW & ACT.

"Schools need time to schedule in their camps and everyone knows how busy the end of year gets in school diaries, our kids are missing out on some key skill building opportunities and if schools are not told soon that they can start planning their return, the industry won't be educating kids until February 2021".

"This sector supports 77,000 jobs in NSW which were one of the first industries to cease operations following the COVID restrictions and follows the Bushfires which stopped our industry since November 2019".

Martin Burney, President of Outdoors NSW & ACT and Executive Director of National Operations at The Outdoor Education Group emphasised the need for schools to return so the sector can fully employ its staff, most of whom are stood down without any return date in sight, and recruit staff forced to be terminated due to mass cancellations of bookings. "Due to the nature of our sector, the majority of our staff are seasonal and casual which meant JobKeeper did not assist organisations in retaining them" Mr Burney elaborated.

"Additionally, if schools don't return to the outdoors, JobKeeper will cease before we can return to business and more jobs will be lost as a result and schools and students will lose a valuable educational pillar."

The Outdoor Education sector in New South Wales & ACT have lost in excess of \$150 million in term 1 and term 2. If the 500+ outdoor activity provider businesses are included that number is close to \$400 million.

"Although no one doubts that the closures were a necessary precaution at the time, we are very concerned that if schools don't receive swift advice from the Department they will continue to cancel camps and outdoor adventure activity excursions at the detriment of the industry, the kids and the regional economies in which these facilities are based" said Mrs Modde.



ENDS

ABOUT OUTDOORS NSW & ACT:

Established in 1984 as The Outdoor Professionals and later becoming the Outdoor Recreation Industry Council of NSW (ORIC) the organisation has long been recognised as the peak industry body representing the interests of outdoor practitioners and employers in NSW.

In 2016 the organisation was re-branded as **Outdoors NSW** to better reflect who we are today, who we represent and who we serve. In 2019, the organisation then assisted the ACT and later renamed Outdoors NSW & ACT to encompass the need of the sector across both state and territory.

Outdoors NSW & ACT is actively involved in “Advancing Outdoor Experiences”

- Through improving standards and quality
- Through greater collaboration
- Through innovation of outdoor experiences, and
- Through promoting outdoor experiences as a pursuit.

We are paving the way for more people to make a livelihood in the outdoors in NSW & ACT, through identifying hurdles and solutions, and upskilling and capacity building of the sector to raise its professional standing.

We encourage all people to get outdoors and into outdoor activity in a responsible manner for their health, wellbeing and skill development.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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<https://outdoorsnsw.org.au/membership/new-member-sign-up/>