

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **The Outdoors WA Industry Training Initiative (“ITI”) spanned a duration from 1 June 2011 to 29 February 2012. The key deliverables of the ITI as stated in the MOU between Outdoors WA (“OWA”) and Bridging the Gap (“BTG”) on 1 June 2011 are:**
 - a. Develop project plan for outdoor recreation training and accreditation project.
 - b. Development of ITI training and accreditation framework.
 - c. Implementation of a pilot training initiative.

2. **The process for the implementation of the ITI is as follows:**
 - a. Scoping the project through consultations with OWA.
 - b. Review of relevant policies, standards, and documents in WA and the other states (e.g. NOLRS scheme, AASs, DEC Policies).
 - c. Outdoor Sector Consultation.
 - d. Convening of the Subject Matter Expert (SME) Panel.
 - e. Design and delivery of the pilot training, assessment and RPL workshops.
 - f. Collating/analysing the findings, crafting of the final report to include recommendations.

3. **Over the 7 month period, consultations with industry stakeholders took the form of:**
 - a. One-to-one consultation sessions with 24 industry professionals/leaders, outdoor practitioners/outdoor educators, including OWA board members.
 - b. One Consultation-Feedback session with practitioners in the Southwest Area held at the Margaret River Community which was attended by 5 industry stakeholders in the region which included Outward Bound Australia, a representative of the Department of Environment and Conservation and various schools and outdoor service providers.
 - c. One Consultation-Feedback session with practitioners in the Perth-Metro Area held at Mt Lawley which was attended by 21 Outdoor Practitioners/Outdoor Educators.
 - d. One Inter-Agency Meeting with 7 representatives from Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR), Department of Education (DET), Department of Environment & Conservation (DEC) & OWA.
 - e. Two meetings with the SME Panel to design and organise the January ITI 2012 Pilot Workshops.
 - f. A survey sent via email by OWA to members of the industry. Fifteen outdoor practitioners/outdoor educators (members and non-members of OWA) submitted their responses.
 - g. The consultants also attended the second meeting of the WA Resource Group for Outdoor Educators (WARGOE) to solicit comments on issues related to the ITI.
 - h. Three formal meetings with Mr. Jamie Bennett, Executive Officer of OWA, since he took on the appointment in November 2011. (A number of informal meetings with Mr. Bennett took place between 21-23 January 2012 as part of the ITI Workshop and were helpful in contributing to this paper.)

4. Findings from the consultations and surveys showed that industry stakeholders:

- a. Did not think that OWA had met their expectations. They expressed frustration, disappointment and anger at the lack of leadership, consultation and perceived misrepresentation on the part of OWA.
- b. Felt that OWA should facilitate much needed training and development opportunities as well as lobby and advocate with the respective agencies to improve the interests of the stakeholders.
- c. Overwhelmingly did not feel that the National Outdoor Leadership Registration Scheme (NOLRS) should be the sole criteria for recognising competency as stipulated in the OWA Adventure Activity Standards (with limited exceptions). While the NOLRS was a registration scheme, it was being administered as if it was a competency recognition scheme.
- d. Preferred a multiple-pathway approach to competency.

5. Three Pilot workshops were designed by the SME Panel and delivered on 21-23 January 2012 at the Woodman Point DSR Campsite. The workshops focused on three activity areas: Canoeing Guide/Instructor (Flatwater), Bushwalking Guide (Controlled Environment and Intermediate levels) and Climbing Instructor (Artificial Surface). DSR generously sponsored the campsite, facilities and accommodation. Fairbridge was appointed the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to deliver the program. Seventeen (17) Outdoor Leaders and Educators attended the training and assessment workshops. An additional two (2) will be going through a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process over the next four months. The workshops were supported by the DET. Following the success of the workshops, it is recommended that the ITI move to Phase 2 over the next 12-24 months to deliver similar training and assessment opportunities for an estimated 600 outdoor educators (teachers) in Western Australia. A proposed budget for Phase 2 is set out in the paper.

6. Key recommendations in the paper include:

- a. Amending the AASs to be guidelines rather than minimum industry standards.
- b. Seeking the Industry Standards Panel's (ISP's) review of the 16 AASs to establish a priority list. The AASs addressing the activities most regularly delivered in schools (e.g. Bushwalking, Canoeing, Climbing, Abseiling) should be implemented, supported, 'sold' to industry stakeholder and monitored for compliance (with a view to assisting as many stakeholders achieve compliance as possible). The other AASs (e.g. 4WD, Horse Riding) could be implemented at a later phase. This would focus the limited resources of OWA so as to be more effective.
- c. Establish a multiple pathway competency recognition scheme.
- d. Establishing an 'open source' system for assessment with OWA designing and making accessible training and assessment tools and framework that could be used by industry stakeholders.
- e. Highlighting the urgent need for the estimated 600 WA teachers involved in Outdoor Education to undergo training, assessment and RPL within the next 12-24 months.
- f. Highlighting the urgent need for the OWA to establish good relations with the tourism sector to seek buy in for the AAS and the multiple pathway frameworks.
- g. Highlighting the urgent need for OWA, DSR, DEC, DET and the Tourism sector in WA to work together to establish a simple, practical, efficient and effective system for skills recognition and activity standards that emphasises sound risk management.
- h. Highlighting the need to establish good relations and communication between OWA and all industry stakeholders.
- i. Highlighting the importance of securing sufficient resources for training and development in the

Outdoor Industry and need for agencies apart from DSR to contribute to this area. DET, DEC and Tourism in particular.

- j. Rolling out the Industry Training Initiative into Phase 2 within the next 12-24 months to train 600 outdoor educators. A budget of \$586,000 is estimated.
- k. A few RTOs be appointed to deliver Phase 2 of the ITI. Some of the RTOs that have indicated their interest to be a part of the ITI include: Fairbridge, YMCA, the Australian Centre for Advanced Studies and Wongutha CAPS.
- l. The establishment of a competency scheme for Outdoor Recreation graduates from Notre Dame University akin to the VOEА-University of Ballarat Certifications in Victoria.
- m. Considering an organisational accreditation scheme in addition to instructor skills recognition schemes.