

17 February 2015



VET Taskforce
Department of Industry
Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia
Canberra, ACT 2601
Australia
By Email vettaskforce@industry.gov.au

Dear VET Taskforce

Submission regarding the Review of Training Packages and Accredited Course – Discussion Paper

Outdoors WA is the peak body in Western Australia for the outdoor recreation sector incorporating outdoor recreation, outdoors education, camping, adventure tourism and adventure therapy.

Outdoors WA has been consistently proactive in the development and support of industry training packages for outdoor recreation and has worked in conjunction to implement training with Service Skills Australia (SSA) our national body the Outdoor Council of Australia and various state partners such as Future Now.

Outdoors WA has sought feedback from the WA outdoor recreation sector and presents a range of issues for consideration in the development of the future structure of national outdoor recreation training. The issues are matched to the discussion paper headings.

1. How well is the system meeting the needs of industry, employers and individual students?

- The flexibility of the system is workable and a positive aspect is the ability to pick and choose different outdoor recreation units to match workplaces.
- Support funding is often limited to first time workers with no existing qualifications. This severely limits a person seeking further development, so outdoor recreation is unable to attract funding support for more mature workers.
- Lack of recognition between VET and University sector, so little impetus for ongoing development. Matching between these should be a national initiative.
- There needs to be better alignment to industry and mandated requirements to deliver training within industry approved contexts. It would be preferable to have a specific industry engagement process mandated that each RTO must follow to maintain scope each year. There should be specified industry engagement at least on an annual basis.

Office: 7 Irvine St BAYSWATER 6053

p: 08 9468 0102

e: admin@outdoorswa.org

www.outdoorswa.org

Facebook: Outdoors WA Inc

Twitter: outdoorswa

Supported by



Department of
Sport and Recreation

- There should be industry experts to accompany RTO audits, to assist in determining the specific industry needs. A generic auditor is not sufficient to determine if the training or assessment is to appropriate industry standards.
- Within the outdoor recreation sector the Industry Skills Councils have provided vital support in environmental scans and training reviews. If they are removed then an equivalent level of government support will be required to maintain the integrity of the training of outdoor leaders and the safety of outdoor participants. A loss of support is likely have a negative impact on safety in the outdoors.

2. Do all competencies, skills and qualifications currently included in the national system need the same level of prescription and oversight?

- Assessment should be weighted to the risk. So all outdoor hard skills units i.e. bushwalking, rock climbing, paddling, must require actual hands on delivery of training and demonstrated assessment in real work conditions. Generic business units could be assessed more holistically i.e. via exam or simulation.
- Experience in the outdoors should be valued within the system. The training package should reflect an expectation that an increasing level of experience, leadership and judgment is developed as the qualification levels increase.
- The language within the units of competence and assessment documents should be made appropriate to a student's level by the RTO.

3. Are qualifications flexible enough to meet employer needs, given that they are developed against a national standard?

- More clarity is needed in industry defining the value of a Cert 3 and Cert 4 student and the employment this is matched to.
- This flexibility is often RTO dependent. The outdoor sector in WA has made this process work, by being educated and having a proactive peak body. This has not been the same in other states.
- There is still some areas of issue in importing units from other training packages, that cannot be delivered due to mismatched levels. The importing of units should not be encouraged, as it has weakened the need for delivery in the outdoor context, and undermines the overall development of industry specific experience.

4. Is the focus on training outcomes strong enough in the training system?

- There is not enough focus on the outcomes to be job ready, outcomes must be prescriptive to ensure real assessment in multiple environments and multiple times.

- There needs to be an increased assurance that any assessors are actually industry competent and qualified. This is an issue in the VET in school training when utilising teachers as assessors, that are not industry experienced.

Outdoors WA looks forward to ongoing engagement and consultation as the reforms progress and is quite happy to take further questions in regards to this submission.

Sincerely

Jamie Bennett
Executive Officer
Outdoors WA

Office: 7 Irvine St BAYSWATER 6053

p: 08 9468 0102

e: admin@outdoorswa.org

www.outdoorswa.org

Facebook: Outdoors WA Inc

Twitter: outdoorswa

Supported by



Department of
Sport and Recreation