



Outdoor Sector Survey 2024

Outdoors
QUEENSLAND
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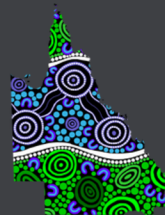
Executive Summary

During September and October 2024, Outdoors Queensland (OQ) conducted its Outdoor Sector Survey 2024, which was a brief (5 question) survey designed to elicit responses about perceptions of the quality of Queensland's outdoor spaces, outdoor organisations and outdoor workforce, plus a question about membership of OQ and an opportunity to provide comments.

Respondents had a relatively positive perception of each of Queensland's outdoor spaces, outdoor organisations and outdoor workforce, with the average response to all three questions being approximately 7.5 out of 10 (where 10 meant perfect).

No respondents used either of the two lowest available responses (where 1 meant terrible, and 2 was only one step up from terrible). Respondents were relatively evenly split between members and non-members of OQ (56% to 44% respectively).

The comments provided by respondents addressed a range of topics, including suggestions around OQ fees and services, workforce training, access to outdoor spaces, and improved government processes.



Outdoors Queensland acknowledges Traditional Custodians, and their Elders past, present and emerging.



Background

Outdoors Queensland is the industry peak body for outdoor activities in Queensland. Outdoors Queensland has approximately 150 financial members made up of individuals and organisations with interests in outdoor recreation, outdoor education, outdoor health, outdoor tourism and associated support services.

Between August 27 and 18th October 2024, Outdoors Queensland publicised its Outdoor Sector Survey 2024, seeking responses from members and non-members. The survey was promoted on the Outdoors Queensland website, through social media, and through e-bulletins sent to the Outdoors Queensland contact list.

The Outdoor Sector Survey 2024 was deliberately kept very brief, with a total of five (5) questions – the first three (3) questions focussed on perceptions of the quality of Queensland’s outdoor spaces, outdoor organisations and outdoor workforce, with a question about membership of Outdoors Queensland, and an opportunity for respondents to provide other comments/ideas.

The survey questions are included in Appendix A.

Summary of Responses

55 responses were received to the Outdoor Sector Survey 2024.

Approximately 56% (31 respondents) advised they were a financial member of Outdoors Queensland, with the remaining 44% (24 respondents) saying they were not a financial member.

Responses to the questions about perceptions of quality of Queensland's outdoor spaces, organisations and workforce (Questions 1, 2 and 3) were requested on a scale of 1 (terrible) to 10 (perfect). The responses provided to each of these questions varied widely from 3 (a couple of steps up from terrible) up to 10 (perfect), however the average response was 7.5 out of 10. The final question asked for comments or ideas about the outdoor sector in Queensland. Responses provided to this question are in Appendix B.

Q1 Qld outdoor spaces	Q2 Qld outdoor organisations	Q3 Qld outdoor workforce
All responses – average 7.5	All responses – average 7.5	All responses – average 7.5
OQ members – av. 7.6	OQ members – av. 7.5	OQ members – av. 7.5
Non-OQ members – av. 7.3	Non-OQ members – av. 7.5	Non-OQ members – av. 7.5
Responses ranged from 3 to 10	Ranges ranged from 3 to 10	Responses ranged from 3 to 10
2 responses from 1 to 3	1 response from 1 to 3	2 responses from 1 to 3
19 responses from 4 to 7	19 responses from 4 to 7	19 responses from 4 to 7
34 responses from 8 to 10	35 responses from 8 to 10	29 responses from 8 to 10
Median (all responses) - 8	Median (all responses) - 8	Median (all responses) - 8
Mode (all responses) - 8	Mode (all responses) - 8	Mode (all responses) - 8



Analysis

Averages of total responses to the first three questions were quite consistent across the board, whether looking at total responses, responses from OQ (Outdoors Queensland) members, or responses from non-OQ members, with averages ranging only between 7.3 and 7.6 out of 10.

Responses to questions 1, 2, and 3 were consistently and significantly clustered towards the higher (where 10 = Perfect) end of the scale, indicating that respondents have a relatively positive perception of each of Queensland's outdoor spaces, outdoor organisations and outdoor workforce.

No respondents to the survey used either of the two lowest available responses (where 1 meant terrible, and 2 was only one step up from terrible).

In general, each respondent's responses to the first three questions were quite consistent across those questions. For example, two people gave a response of 3 for Q1, and those two people gave responses of 3 or 4 for Q2 and Q3. Of the 34 people who answered Q1 within the range of 8 to 10, only two of those people scored Q2 or Q3 with a 6, and there was no score lower than 6 in any of their responses.

As stated in the Summary of Responses section, responses to Q4 showed that approximately 56% (31 respondents) were a financial member of Outdoors Queensland, and 44% (24 respondents) saying they were not a financial member.

The comments provided in response to Q5 have been reproduced in full in Appendix B, with limited editing to correct obvious typographical errors and to remove identifying information.

One respondent questioned what was meant by “quality” in the first three questions, noting that the quality of spaces vary for different reasons, and so does the quality of outdoor organisations. Comments were made about the outdoor sector generally, summarised as follows:

- Appreciation for the work done by everyone across Queensland’s outdoor industry
- Concerns about access to training and formal qualifications
- Concerns about job readiness of new entrants to the outdoor sector
- Concerns about increasing pressures on outdoor spaces, requiring better management of outdoor spaces, including possible consideration of increased access fees or limitations on numbers to ensure experiences are sustainable and positive
- Concerns about increasing need for access to outdoor activities
- Observation about tension between economic/social interests versus environmental responsibilities
- Improved State government cross-departmental communication and alignment, and better permit processes
- Nature play and forest school activity specific standards

Some comments were specific to OQ’s services, as follows:

- Thanks for the work done by OQ
- Query on whether OQ fees could be reduced for “really small” businesses
- Suggestion that OQ should host a conference
- Suggestion that OQ should provide information about grants

Outdoors Queensland will consider those comments when making decisions about our future offerings and when providing input and feedback on these topics.

Appendix A – Outdoor Sector Survey 2024



Outdoor Sector Survey 2024

Seeking your thoughts on a couple of important elements regarding the outdoors in Queensland. August 2024

Introduction

Thank you for choosing to take part in this outdoor sector survey. Please take a little time to consider each question - your thoughts and ideas are most appreciated. Estimated time to complete: **2-5 minutes**

1 How do you rate the quality of Queensland's outdoor spaces overall? *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 (terrible) to 10 (perfect)

2 How do you rate the quality of Queensland's outdoor organisations overall? *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 (terrible) to 10 (perfect)

3 How do you rate the quality of Queensland's outdoor workforce (volunteer and paid workers) in general? *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 (terrible) to 10 (perfect)

Since 1996, the peak body for Queensland's outdoor sector, [Outdoors Queensland](#), has been working to improve the quality of outdoor spaces, outdoor organisations and outdoor workers.

4 Are you or your organisation a financial member of Outdoors Queensland? *

- Yes
 No

5 Do you have any other comments or ideas you would like to share about the outdoor sector in Queensland?

MailingList *

- Yes, please. Add my name to the Outdoors Queensland eNewsletter mailing list
 No, thank you.

Thank you for choosing to take part in this survey.

Your feedback, thoughts and ideas will help inform the future direction of the outdoors in Queensland.

Please note all data collected will be confidential and remain anonymous when collated into a report.

Now, please click **Submit** below to finish.

Appendix B – Responses to “Q5 Any Other Ideas”

We need far more outdoor and natural spaces protected and accessible (appropriately) for outdoor recreation and for conservation. Across the state, as well as in SEQ. in high density areas such as West End, the green space per capita living in the area is far less than New York City... we need to do better than this.

Needs to be more interconnected with health and wellbeing services.

I believe we need far more access to training and increased workplace and volunteer space in outdoor recreation in QLD. The supply/demand is not balanced and since COVID many professionals and experienced facilitators have moved into other workplaces. This trend plus succession planning with older more experienced and trained professionals hitting retirement or leaving for management levels, is leaving a huge gap in the field. Can this be addressed through more training placements, free study/fees and quality soft skill training as well as hard skill and development to meet mental health and wellness needs. Also recognition of wilderness therapy as a practice in NDIS... All pertinent to our industry.

Offering of training grants if available

We live and work in one of the best places in the world, and in an industry that is needed more and more each year. I am still concerned hearing about operators/businesses that are operating without checking or asking for instructor qualifications and asking them to instruct with little or no in servicing at their site.

Activity standards specific to nature play and forest schools would be a great idea

Enhanced State Government cross-departmental communication and alignment required regarding National Park Commercial Activity Permits length/barriers and enabling businesses to play a formal role in environmental conservation and management, where there is limited QPWS capacity.

Recreational spaces in SEQ are under significant people pressure. Check out national parks around Gold Coast, Brisbane & Sunshine Coast on the weekends. More park estate must be reserved in SEQ as a priority. But the use of NP estate for stuff like trail running doesn't enthuse me. You will disagree. I'd like to go for a quiet bushwalk with my bushwalking mates & enjoy my surroundings without a conga line of look-at-me fitness freaks thundering past. There are suburban streets, council parks and state forests for those not much interested in checking out the botany, fauna, geology. But I guess, as an ancient track dog, I'm just badly out of touch.

It would be beneficial if there was a smaller membership fee for really small businesses. As we are affiliated with our Aus Sport Associations as coaches and instructors it's hard to keep paying membership fees for everything. Our sports include cycling, running, paddling, orienteering, rogaining and triathlon, so already 6 memberships.

Thanks for your service to the Qld (and national) outdoor sector. Already on your mailing list

I think all involved in the outdoor industry do a great job.
Training opportunities for Outdoor Leaders - difficult to find qualified staff.

More effort put into having new workers into the outdoor ed / rec sector exit their studies with more accredited qualifications, so they are ready to work. Look to sort out duke of Ed so that people wanting to help run duke of ed expeditions can have their nationally recognised qualifications accepted by Duke of ed to save people having to go through the process again. Understand if they don't have something formal and current, but surely if you are qualified with Paddle Aust to run sea kayaking (of example) why go through again!!!

My main question is - what does 'quality' mean in these questions? The quality of spaces vary - some are not accessible for extended periods of time because of no resourcing. Others are over used and therefore decaying; still others are fine off season but so busy, or exposed they are not conducive to visitations. One part of the state to another, one region and council to another have a big impact on the answers. I'd say the same about outdoor organisations. Some are not entirely safe in their service delivery, just currently lucky.

More activities and training. More Grant info. Outdoor QLD Conference ?

Qld's outdoor venues need the boost of legacy infrastructure like NSW has from prior international competition events

I believe that the commercial outdoor sector should contribute financially to the management costs of our reserves and national parks.

I find the workforce frustrating as many outdoor leaders appear to be lacking in good work ethic.

Over tourism, over recreation use, due to population growth in Queensland, places huge pressure on our very small 8.6% of protected areas...NPs, Nature Refuges, Conservation Parks. The tension between economic and social vested interests failing to appreciate their environmental responsibilities in this climate crisis, and the need to save our biodiversity and conservation assets from climate change driven extinctions, will only grow.

My observations of outdoor recreation spaces across Eastern Australia, SW Canada and NE US are that Queensland lags behind with providing useful infrastructure and adding value and amenity to our outdoor spaces. It is frustrating when places simply do not have basic facilities, or are closed for extended periods of time when infrastructure is damaged, or are not well maintained. Some of the Great Walk routes are in need of repair and general maintenance (eg. parts of the Conondale Great Walk). People seeking outdoor recreation might elect to visit and travel through the Great Walk routes as easy to read maps are available and this might indicate a high expectation of potential clients to attempt these routes. The result is that novice hikers may not gain the expected experience, and could potentially get into strife. Some of our National Park campsites are becoming very polluted due to a lack of facilities and education and enforcement of sanitation practices in remote areas. As our population increases and more people make positive choices to get outside and do good things, it will be essential to better manage our natural resources and provide reasonable accessibility, or limitations on numbers to ensure the experience of all visitors is sustainable and positive.

In WA they charge a fee for entering and using national parks with specified entry points. This money is then used to pay for maintenance of the parks and sustainable ways people can enjoy the parks such as walking trails/mountain bike riding. Qld should adopt something similar as a lot of the parks are unregulated and result in misuse / damage to the environment.



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