

SHIFT YOUR MINDS



# OUTDOORS.

*Bringing the outdoors into the mental health landscape.*





# INTRODUCTION

The Nature-based Health Alliance (NHA) of Queensland is proud to take a pioneering step toward redefining well-being through connection with the outdoors. Envisioned as the peak body for outdoor therapeutic and well-being practices, the NHA serves as a unified voice, championing the integration of outdoor therapies into Queensland's health and mental health frameworks. NHA was formed over several sector consultations as a result of the Outdoor Therapy and Mental Health summit, in Brisbane on 9 July 2024. Summit outcomes are documented here.

Rooted in the principles of harnessing nature's healing potential, our alliance works collaboratively with partners, practitioners, and policymakers to develop accessible, effective, and community-driven solutions. The NHA is proud to be supported by Outdoors Queensland, the state's peak body for outdoor activities and recreation. This partnership ensures that all initiatives, including the establishment of the NHA, are aligned with the highest standards of governance and advocacy for outdoor health initiatives.





# MISSION

Our mission is clear. Amidst the growing mental health challenges faced by Queenslanders, the NHA is committed to aligning outdoor therapies with the objectives of the Queensland Shifting Minds 2023-28 mental health plan.

With a foundation in evidence-based practice and the unique capacity to address a wide array of health needs, outdoor therapies offer cost-efficient, scalable, and community-focused interventions that work seamlessly alongside existing services.

Through the NHA, we aim to highlight and expand the potential of these interventions while fostering cross-sector collaboration and innovation. Together, we can reimagine health care by bringing activity in nature to the forefront of healing, and delivering solutions that resonate with Queensland's strong connection to the outdoors.



# OUTDOOR MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT



The summit was held on 9 July 2024, with 45 delegates from 14 government agencies, 6 universities, 6 NGOs, and with lived experience.

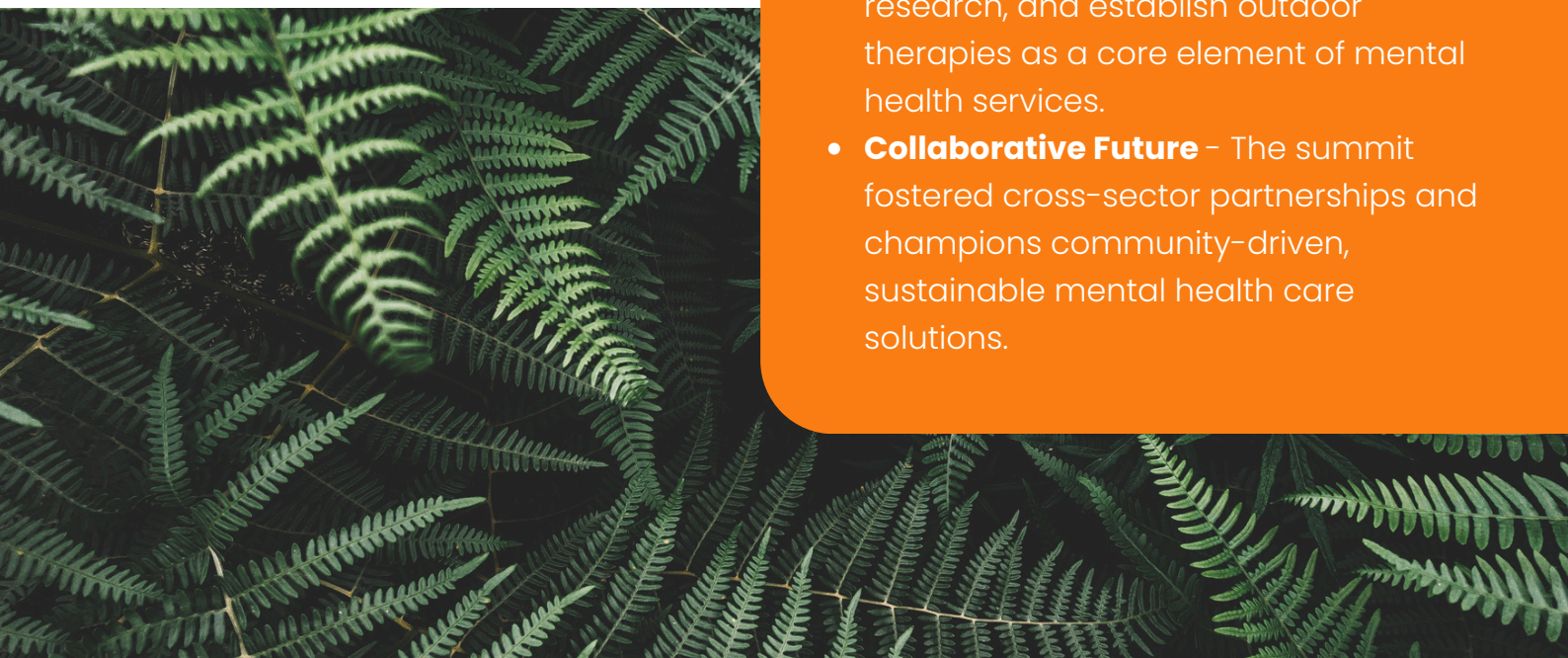
The Summit connected outdoor therapies with the Queensland Shifting Minds 2023-28 mental health plan, showing effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and adaptability to diverse community needs.

These innovative, stigma-reducing interventions address social determinants of health across demographics, yet remain underutilised due to limited support.

Fostering cross-sector collaboration, this event sought commitment to scaling sustainable, evidenced outdoor therapy services aligned with Qld's mental health priorities.

## AT A GLANCE

- **Strategic Alignment** - Outdoor therapies align seamlessly with the Queensland Shifting Minds 2023-28 mental health plan, offering innovative solutions for mental well-being.
- **Proven Benefits** - Outdoor therapies are effective, cost-efficient, scalable, and tailored to meet diverse community needs across Queensland.
- **Addressing Social Determinants of Health** - These therapies tackle social isolation, loneliness, and stigma while promoting community connections and well-being.
- **Inclusive and Adaptable** - Applicable across all demographics, including children, adults, First Nations communities, and individuals facing complex challenges.
- **Call for Action** - Government support is essential to expand access, enhance research, and establish outdoor therapies as a core element of mental health services.
- **Collaborative Future** - The summit fostered cross-sector partnerships and champions community-driven, sustainable mental health care solutions.



# SUMMIT THEMES



- **Relevance Across Demographics** –

Outdoor therapies cater to diverse groups, including children, adults, the elderly, indigenous populations, and individuals with complex needs, ensuring inclusive mental health solutions.

- **Consistent Operating Processes** –

These therapies adhere to trauma-informed and human rights-based approaches, fostering safe and respectful practices across all services.

- **Clarity and Specificity in Evidence** –

Research and outcomes must be clear, targeted, and aligned with Queensland's unique needs to support growth and sector credibility.

- **Representation of Diversity** – A unified

entity is vital to represent the wide-ranging practices of outdoor therapies and provide a single point of consultation for government and stakeholders.

- **Government Understanding** –

Educating government, users, and partners about the benefits of outdoor therapies ensures better integration into broader mental health strategies.

- **Support for a Peak Body** – A

dedicated government-backed peak body helps drive the growth and sustainability of the outdoor therapies sector.

- **Credible Research and Practice Standards** – Coordinated and

verified standards ensure reliability, making outdoor therapies more appealing to key sectors like health and education.

- **Governance and Risk Assurance** –

Providers comply with governance frameworks, reassuring sector partners of sustainable, low-risk solutions.

- **Strength-Based, Proactive**

**Solutions** – Outdoor therapies focus on empowering individuals and communities by promoting strengths, resilience, and proactive interventions.

- **Human Connection to Nature** –

Grounded in the belief that health and healing stem from feeling good with and about the natural environment, these therapies enhance well-being for all.



# ABOUT YOUTH FLOURISH OUTDOORS & OUTDOORS QUEENSLAND

## Youth Flourish Outdoors (YFO)

YFO programs focus on mental health and well-being for young people and families. They deliver nature-based interventions tailored to address complex trauma, anxiety, and social isolation while fostering family connections and resilience through shared outdoor experiences.

## Outdoors Queensland

Outdoors Queensland promotes outdoor activities as a core element of health and well-being in Queensland. It partners with governments, communities, and stakeholders to support outdoor activities of all types, including outdoor therapies. Outdoors Queensland assists organisations to develop inclusive programs, and supports the broader sector through training and resources.

## IMPACT

Both initiatives enhance community health by reducing stress, improving emotional resilience, and strengthening social ties through evidenced programs. Their collaborative approaches demonstrate the potential of nature-based therapies to drive meaningful public health improvements.





Event supported by the Queensland Government

