

2026 Aust AAS Review Feedback Session- 20260203_123147-Meeting Recording

3 February 2026, 02:31am

1h 2m 11s

● **Mark Squires** started transcription



Dom Courtney 0:03

We are ready to roll. So we'll get started. So without too much mucking around. So to start off with, I'd like to respectfully acknowledge traditional owners and custodians of the lands that we gather on across Queensland and across Australia. And we pay respect to elders past, present.



Dom Courtney 0:25

and emerging and acknowledge the important roles that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have played and continue to play in relation to the land, sky and waterways that we are so lucky to be able to use for outdoor activities across the country. So I'm on in Manjin in Brisbane.

which is the land of the Jagera and Turrbal peoples. And if you'd like to, please feel free to use the chat to just pop in what land you're joining us from, if you'd like to do that. We will use the chat as we go along today.

So yeah, feel free to do that. But also just like to acknowledge the significant work that various government departments and ministers do and have done regarding outdoor activities in Queensland particularly, including our friends at Sport and Rec at the department. And also Outdoors Queensland, we particularly acknowledge the funding that's provided by the Queensland Government to support outdoor activities across the state, including the funding that allows us to do what we do through the, it's called the Active Industry Base Fund grant. But also on this topic, the funding that the various government departments, governments have contributed for the review of the Australian Adventure Activity Standard, including the Queensland Government, but all the various state and territory governments who have contributed funding to that project. Without that, it would have been a much different kettle of fish. It may not have happened at all. So I do want to acknowledge that.

Dom.

As I said, welcome to another Outdoors Queensland Online Industry Forum. Mark Squires, our operations manager, is my co-host today. A big thanks to Mark and the rest of the Outdoors Queensland team for all the contributions that are made to the work we do. A big welcome to all members of Outdoors Queensland.

and also others who are joining us. As I've said, we're recording the session and we'll make that available for those who are unable to join us today. Please feel free to ask questions and make comments as we go along, particularly for today's session, which is all about your feedback. So yeah.



Dom Courtney 2:45

If anyone has any questions, you can just pop your hand up or yeah, feel free to just talk when there's a pause, which hopefully I won't jibber jabber too much. So there will be some pauses. So the agenda for today.

It's pretty simple. This forum is focused on the review of the Australian Adventure Activity Standard and Good Practise Guides. So we'll go through a little bit of background on the review of the Australian AAS. And I'm probably going to use some acronyms. I try to minimise it, but...

Every now and again, I might say AAAS, I might say Australian AAS. Hopefully you'll know what I'm talking about. If I do get into too much acronym, feel free to chip me about that because it's easy in this topic to use acronyms too much. So I'll try to do my best.

But I do want to say as well, and you can see some acronyms already on the screen there, including my last dot point, which, my goodness, OQAGM. Okay, I've already broken my golden rule. The key point of today is it's actually not about me trying to convince all of you

about my opinions on the review of the Australian Adventure Activity Standard and Good Practise Guides, this is an opportunity for you to inform.

Outdoors Queensland and myself about your opinions and your needs. So please speak up. This one isn't here for you to just listen and get an update from Mark and me. If you'd like to, you can pop comments in the chat, which Mark's going to keep an eye on, but also feel free to put your hand up and speak up.



Brendon Munge 4:31

Big.



Dom Courtney 4:34

Sorry.

Happy with that as the starting point? I'm saying some nods, cool, alright.

A bit of background. So the Outdoors Council of Australia, which gets abbreviated to OCA, is the holder of the Australian Adventure Activity Standard and Good Practise Guides. And that's a voluntary good practise framework for safe, responsible planning and delivery of lead outdoor activities with dependence.

participants. That's the wording on the label. So Outdoors Queensland is a member of OCA along with other state peak bodies and national outdoor organisations. And as I mentioned, Katie Brown, the CEO of Outdoors WA, is joining us. G'day, Katie.

Katie, Atlas WA are going to be offering a similar forum to this in a couple of weeks for the WA sector particularly. So which is great to see. So I just wanted to acknowledge Katie's here too to chime in as well as we go along. So this the AAS. there I go again, is released in 2019. So they're being reviewed to ensure they're current. And as I mentioned before, the Outdoors Council of Australia obtained funding commitments from various state and territory governments to conduct a review of the

and good practise guides, which is really wonderful that the government's funded it to make sure we could keep it up to date. The Outdoors Council of Australia then appointed Dr David Marsden as the project lead, and David is joining us today.

I just want to clarify this. So David's done a lot of work already. He's probably met with some of you on this call, had a lot of meetings with various stakeholders, including quite a few Outdoors Queensland members and Queensland government reps, and has also established panels of experts on various topics.

and activities related to the IAS. But this forum is actually in addition to and a little bit separate from the formal review process that David's been undertaking. So he's really just joining us as an observer today. It's not about quizzing David about any proposed changes and trying to get a scoop on



Brendon Munge 6:50

KeepIt.



Dom Courtney 7:03

What's going on, or you know, a sneak preview. Dave, you're welcome to chime in. Don't think I'm trying to put you off on the sidelines, but...

 **Brendon Munge** 7:08

Okay.

 **Dom Courtney** 7:13

Feel free to chime in, especially if I get something wrong, which we all know could happen. So very, very welcome to you chiming in. But as I say, it's not about Dave running this session. It's an Outdoors Queensland session, which Dave generously offered to join as an observer. So

 **THEOREAS - David Marsden** 7:19

Thanks, Dom.

 **Dom Courtney** 7:32

Yeah, that's the process on that. So, yeah, I just wanted to flag that for everyone as a bit of background.

Any questions before I move on?

And you'll see my head swivel around, I've got 3 screens going, so if I'm not looking at the screen, I am looking at you. So any questions, comments?

Keep charging.

Yep, okay. So the review, it's actually a big step forward in establishing rigorous, empirically supported and consultative frameworks for outdoor adventure activities across Australia. So the text on the AA on the

OCA's AAAS website basically says this has been initiated in response to evolving demands of regulatory bodies, insurers and our stakeholders, and the review aims to connect a wider group of stakeholders to ensure robust guidelines that meet evolving industry expectations.

So I think that's a short way, a long way of saying we want this thing to be as good as possible and we need your input on that. So the methodology that David's been running as part of the review process, it's actually a mixed method research approach, empirical research.

approach and stakeholder engagement, which David has been doing, as I said. It's all about ensuring the standards are defensible and valid and also practical and

applicable across the diverse contexts that outdoor activities occur in across Australia.

So there is a big focus on in the standard on, sorry, in the review on broadening the scope and structure to reflect those current expectations. And the review has four key, 4 focus areas, so safety and risk management, environmental responsibility, Indigenous Australian culture and heritage, and diversity, equity and inclusion. So those are the focus areas that sort of go over the top of the whole review process. So I just wanted to flag that for you. I should have said we're happy to make any of these slides available and the recording will be available too. So

Yeah, if you do want to review anything, but I haven't heard anyone ask any questions yet, but I'm going to keep checking. So yeah, if there's anything, please, please sing out.

So getting involved in the review, I've just got a screenshot there of the actual OCA webpage, which includes a form to sign up for updates and a link to the online engagement platform. So I've got the web address for that OCA.

Outdoors Council Australia webpage there at the bottom. The third step in there, how to get involved is attending events. So similar to this session, but particularly the events that David hosts, including a monthly update in the engagement platform. It is really valuable to attend those monthly events and the various other events. And Mark's just added

that link in the chat. Thank you, Mike. We'll also use feedback that we receive from a session like today, but also other feedback that we receive along the way to contribute to the process, but strongly encourage you to get involved and make make your voices heard throughout the process. So yeah, I just wanted to flag that as well.

Um...

So...

As part of registering for this forum, each of you will have filled in a very short, sharp survey about the Australian Adventure Activity Standard.

What we've just done a quick, and this is just an overall themes of the different questions, I've sort of brought them together into the presentation. So you're not going to see everyone's responses. It doesn't say who said what, but we'll get the responses. So question one was, do you or your organisation



Jodi Cottier 11:49

1.



Dom Courtney 12:00

Use and follow the existing Australian AAS/GPGs, and we've used an acronym.

The overwhelming answer was yes, which is not that surprising when

You probably wouldn't be as interested in this session if you didn't use it. So it was a yes on that one. The question 2 responses were a bit of a mixed bag. So the question was, do you think the existing IAS is appropriate for all sectors of our outdoor industry? And then we put the list there too, because we wanted to be specific about that.

This was the responses. Yes, yes and no, unsure, mostly, not really. Which is fair enough, because different people are coming out from different places. And this is sort of a bit of a sense cheque for us. And I sort of summarised all of that.

to yes, but could be better. So, which I guess is the point of doing a review. So thank you all for your feedback on those first couple of questions. And it brings us to question three.

which is what do you think needs to be changed in the Australian IIS? So the responses will appear as I click through, as you've just seen from the previous slide, and I'm using...

fancy transition stuff. So I could get this wrong. But if you want to add more detail or ask questions, now's a really good time to do this because this is really...

the key part of this session. So if you gave the feedback or...

If you agree with the feedback that you see appear, or if you really disagree with it for some reason, let's have a chat about it. So what do you think needs to be changed? The first comment, see, I've done two. First one was stronger guidance tools for implementation.

Comments, questions?

Anyone?

No, alright, next one.

Reflect current safety practises and advances in techniques and hardware, so...

This one is about updating the IAS and recognising that things have actually changed since it was released in 2019. We've had the small matter of a global pandemic in there. And there's been other things like, you know, different

technology emerging as well. So

Yep, that seems like a really good suggestion that we need to consider as part of this review. The next one was quite specific, which was that we should separate artificial slash indoor and natural surface roping activities, exhale, climb, challenge ropes.

So rather than having the rope activities combined in one GPG, the person who put that one was suggesting they should be separated, I guess, due to context. Does anyone want to comment on any of these? Please chime in. Thoughts? Do you think that's a good idea or a bad idea?

Now's a good time to...

 **Phil Harrison** 15:20

Yeah.

 **Dom Courtney** 15:22

Was that cough someone wanting to talk, Katie?

Go for it.

 **Katie Brown** 15:27

Yeah, thanks Dom. You know, the one that stands out is the second one with that current safety practises and advances in technique and hardware. It's such an interesting thing as soon as you, you know, publish something that there is always that thing of that it's already outdated.

So it would be great to, you know, to see how that can be kept current in line with things that improve techniques, improve safety, improve bringing in things from overseas versus, you know, the Australian.

 **Phil Harrison** 15:53

Yeah.

 **Katie Brown** 16:08

So I think it's such a powerful need. And what that needs to ensure is that the word current is applied all the time.

 **Phil Harrison** 16:22

Yeah.



Dom Courtney 16:23

Yeah, it's a good find. Thank you, Katie. Bill.



Phil Harrison 16:31

Yes, that piece there around the the roping.

disciplines. Certainly in my context with Education Queensland running abseiling, climbing, ropes courses. For the life of me, I cannot understand in particularly Education Queensland, someone's advised them that abseiling is apparently extreme. and you cannot reduce the risk. And so having the ability to sort of, and that's what we're doing this year for our processes is we'll separate out the roped activities and some of them are going to be medium and some of them are going to be high and some of them are going to be extreme because somebody thinks abseiling is more dangerous than rock climbing.

Yeah, so it's getting that clarity and maybe that might apply across other disciplines too, maybe in the water space as well. It might be contextualised to what the body of water is as opposed to its water and potentially to in extreme environments. So there might be

you know, walk around the park environments, which are treated differently in its risk management to extended expeditions. So getting more, I suppose, variation and recognising that variation.



Dom Courtney 17:56

Yeah. So Phil, just to follow up on that, do you think it would make a difference for how someone in Education Queensland's head office perceives the activities if they're not all lumped together in one GPG? If there was a separate one for axiling compared to rock climbing,



Phil Harrison 18:12

Really.



Dom Courtney 18:16

Do you think that would affect the risk rating they give it?



Phil Harrison 18:22

Again, it's a government department, Education Queensland, which is a lovely place to work and I really enjoy working here. But apart from some of the people who work in the state government department, environmental and outdoor centres, you would count on less than one hand the number of people who know anything about the outdoors.



Dom Courtney 18:46

Mm.



Phil Harrison 18:47

and their capacity to make risk assessments and risk judgments about what is acceptable or not. So there almost is a screaming need for a body that sort of says this is in and this is out and present that to government as opposed to wait for government to tell us what.

Is extreme or not?



Dom Courtney 19:07

Yeah, yeah. I was just thinking, because that comment was about separating them into separate good practise guards, but I'm not sure if that would address the issue. Yeah, and Davies just put a comment there in the chat about that they're in the same



Phil Harrison 19:14

Yeah.



Dom Courtney 19:25

They're in the same good practise guide with challenge rapes in another at the moment. But I don't know that that would actually get to that.



Phil Harrison 19:29

Yeah.

Okay.



Dom Courtney 19:36

actual problem that you flagged about the abseiling being treated differently to rock climbing because they're already treated, they're treated together, but challenge

rates are separate again. So yeah, I don't, I don't know. I'm not saying no, it shouldn't be done like that. I just was, I just wanted to question about that comment.

 **Phil Harrison** 19:53

Bye.

 **Dom Courtney** 19:54

Yvette.

Yeah. There was another one that I hadn't scrolled through to because you can see I've left a gap on your screen, which was guidance for diverse cultures and communities, which is one of the comments that has come through, which as I did say, the review is focusing on diversity and inclusion as well as part of the overarching.

review process, which is good to see from a point of view of updating it to what is the current state. Any other questions, comments?

I think Brandon was just scratching his head; he wasn't putting his hand up, so...

You're welcome to say anything, Bob, of course. It's like an auction. If you put your hand up, you might get called on.

All right, so that was broad topics, and then there was, this is question 3 continued. The remainder of the feedback that you people kindly provided, you'll probably guess because you provided it, it all focused on outdoor leader qualifications and how the AAS, the Australian Adventure Activity Standard, treats outdoor leader qualifications. And I just saw Dave smile.

'Cause I think he might have heard a thing or two about outdoor leader qualifications over the last.

Twelve months, though.

A bit more, yeah, so comments, yeah, so comments were to the tune, as you can see there, and I don't necessarily have to read them all out, but you know, don't put in things that change, which sort of went to Katie's point before about keeping it all current, but this was specifically about the units of competency, so I...

 **THEOREAS - David Marsden** 21:22

Yeah, 12 months.

 **Dom Courtney** 21:40

I grouped it up to this one. Acknowledged previous training, which was not, again, not just having units of competency that may be already out of date, and they are in right now because the training package is being reviewed right now, which we know. The too much slash too narrow focus on the vet quals and then better synergies between the standard and the outdoor leadership training package. So this is, I think, a topic that needs some discussion. I think virtually everyone put a comment on this one. So yeah, I guess one day.

Who'd like to start off on this one? If there's a particular comment, the current document, the existing document does actually say there are four different ways to look at currency as far as qualifications. The problem that I think has emerged is it then maps it to vet units. And I think by doing that, the whole industry has focused on the vet units. And there's even stories about, it's not just a story, they're true, they are true stories of people who graduate with a three or four year degree and then get asked to go and do

a vet qual before they can lead a group on kayaking or canoeing. Because the Australian Adventure Activity Standard says you need something to the equivalent of this vet qual. So the way that we can

Very easily shown, that is, you don't get the vet crawl unit.

And that wasn't necessarily the intention six years ago, but it seems to be what's happened in practice. And if you read the current document, it does say there are multiple ways to do this, but it does focus or emphasise the units under the VET system. So.

Comments.

Questions?

I see smiling.

BM

Brendon Munge 23:51

I'll make one comment before I open up to others. I think it's also hampered in Queensland by the Duke of Ed stuff being mapped directly to the Cert 4 or the package, and then that just exacerbates it. So that's a side and a side. But yeah, I guess we would be super

Interested, yes, it does state it there, but then the mapping directly relates to the vet qualifications and it makes it really difficult for university graduates to kind of get currency or evidence of their currency. We can write equivalency statements and even then they get pushed back against us. We probably don't, other states,

particularly Victoria, don't have the same because of the history of knowledge and knowledge of what degree means in those states and what the relevancy is. But yeah, it would certainly be better to be a broader spectrum of understanding of what currency is and what qualifications stand for.



Dom Courtney 24:43

Right, thanks, Brandon.
Donna Marie.



HUGHES, Donna-Maree 24:47

Well, I think I'm the punching bag for everybody here because I am from Duke of Ed, Queensland. So like, I don't mind at all. And this is why I started to join these sorts of things. But unfortunately, I only work part time in such an important role in Queensland government that they can't afford to find an extra 2 days for me to deliver something that is worthwhile, where there is some sort of unison



THEOREAS - David Marsden 24:51

Okay.



Dom Courtney 24:52

No, we're all friends here.



HUGHES, Donna-Maree 25:11

between yourselves, Duke of Ed, and then also too, because we are standalone in what we need for our adventurous journey supervisors. And this was based on before my time in this position and has been going on for quite some time. Beforehand, it was the National Outdoors Leaders Recreation Scheme.

That was all that our adventurous journey supervisors were assessed in, which some of you possibly know. And those sorts of things. There has been changes. And yes, all those things that you've listed there in the outdoor leader qualifications, that's what I have to go by currently, because that's what our policy says. But if you guys can come up with some sort of a plan where I don't have to put my volunteers through so much of a hassle, and that's respected by the Department of Education as well, I'm more than having open ears. I'm very, very happy for this to happen. And

I do agree about sort of, you know, I get the backlash. You don't understand how much backlash I get.

nearly every day from people who did their course in 2004 who say, you know, well, my quals are still there, but the vet's saying, no, you don't have this unit of competency. So I'm frustrated, they're frustrated, and I'm trying to get kids out on journeys with qualified and appropriate staff.



Dom Courtney 26:24

Mm.

Yeah.



HUGHES, Donna-Maree 26:31

Sorry, that's.



Dom Courtney 26:32

No, no, it's great. And thank you for joining. Thank you for joining today's session, because we do need to know that that is going on and it's not just.



HUGHES, Donna-Maree 26:34

Please feel free, feel free, free, because...

Yeah.



Dom Courtney 26:44

It's not just us saying, oh, this is a problem. It's a practical problem. As you say, it affects getting more kids out there and active in the outdoors. And that's the last thing we want to do.



HUGHES, Donna-Maree 26:48

It's a very practical problem.

And I know that many of you have already had experience with Duke of Ed previously. You know, whether you like it or not, it's here to stay. It's been around for 60 plus years. And I have a guidance centre where I'm monitored that I have to progress through. So please be nice to me. I'm here to help.



Dom Courtney 27:10

Right. And thank you for copying the brunt of some of those discussions that obviously aren't fun. So yeah, thank you for persevering with it. Because it is an important program, as you say, 60 years. And it's amazing how many people would have gone through the Duke Events system in Queensland and across Australia. And the world, I suppose, but yeah, thank you for what you do in that thing in making it happen, even when it is difficult.

Heidi.

KB **Katie Brown** 27:41

Yeah, I just want to, I suppose, without going in too deep, Donna Marie, I was the previous CEO of the Duke of Ed in WA. And I do know of the parameters and the scaffolding that in Queensland. And I think that this is a really important

HD **HUGHES, Donna-Maree** 27:48

Yes.

KB **Katie Brown** 28:02

point. And if you push it out further, this is all about removing barriers for people to be outdoors, experiencing outdoor adventures, et cetera, whether it is through the Duke of Ed or other type of things. And I think the importance of the review with the

PH **Phil Harrison** 28:14

Bye.

KB **Katie Brown** 28:22

AAAS and the good practise guides is to give confidence to government departments that when they encourage principals to make a decision to bring on a programme like the Duke of Ed or any other outdoor education programs, that the barriers are not there.

confident in the standards and that the applicability. And it's not seen as this huge thing in which they've got to go through, because then it's going to be too easier for them to say, we're not going to do it. And I know in WA, we had cases of principals making the decision.

that it was too hard for their young people to go to an outdoor camp. And so we just don't want that. So for us, I think the big motivation, and I know I'm preaching to the

choir, is that the, you know, GPGs, the standards are to ensure that the decision makers feel confident that they can tick the box to say yes, that instructors that they're bringing in can meet the requirements. And that's why I feel a decision is if they mention a vet course, apart from the equivalent of the event called, there's all other things that you can do. If they can latch on to one thing to make their decision easier, they're going to. So anyway, just...

 **HUGHES, Donna-Maree** 29:52

Katie, I do agree with that and what you just said, but that's the whole thing is we've got these in government already. And this is where my background and my knowledge comes into play in relation to, okay, we had that inquest in 2009 for the 2006 fatality. Queensland was the only one that jumped on.

in relation to making the quals harder to get. I have people who have children in New South Wales, they do Duke of Ed down there with their supposed experienced people. My friend was horrified that they went out with this person who's had experience, boats were not maintained, everything like that. I know it can happen if you've got a vet qual as well.

But this is what Duke of Eden are cautious about opening the paths up to. So if I can have this GPG in the backing that says, you know, it's up to the principal, our insurance is taken out of it. So

 **Dom Courtney** 30:50

Right. Okay. So just looking at in the comments, Brandon's just suggested maybe we create another catch up between Duke of Ed, Department of Education, which Duke of Ed is part of that, but yet part of the Department of Education, uni and TAFE providers to work on it. And as Brandon said, it does work in other states.

and we can make it work. So I think that would be a good thing to look at how we do that to support Donna Marie and what she's doing as well. So maybe that's a topic for another day and a big thumbs up there from Katie. So yeah, that might be a good option. Yeah, yeah. Great. Thank you.

 **HUGHES, Donna-Maree** 31:23

I'm a big thumbs up too. Double thumbs up.



Dom Courtney 31:28

All right, any other questions or comments on?

After related qualifications, I'm just trying to catch up with the comments, yeah?



THEOREAS - David Marsden 31:34

Keep it.



Phil Harrison 31:35

Thank you.



THEOREAS - David Marsden 31:37

Yeah, I've got a comment on that one. One Dom, I think I can provide some support, I guess. So the first thing I think is that there's a acknowledging that there's a variation between policy and standard operational procedures for organisations. And the focus in the AAAS piece is really around, and this is what



Dom Courtney 31:40

Did that?

Yeah.



THEOREAS - David Marsden 31:58


Most people, or in fact, I would say sort of 95% of people around the country have conveyed, is that within the current format of the way that the AAAS has been constructed, and it was a misintention, outside of the vocational education, space, it's really difficult to operationalise the other areas because they're being measured against a set of...

a set of standards that actually don't sit within their way of constructing. So to give you an example of that, effectively what happens is if somebody does a Paddle Australia qualification and then they want to go and teach in a school, it's really common for


the principal to turn around and say, well, you haven't done the certificate 4, therefore we need you to do the certificate 4. And that's quite common around the country. Also seen graduates from university degrees who also have the community qualifications.

on the way, are being told to go and do whole Cert 4s as well. So these are qualified teachers. They have the Australian canoeing qualification or the Australian climbing instructors qualification, and then they've been asked to go and do a Cert 4. So really the conversation is around what do we need to do?

 **Phil Harrison** 33:19
Yeah.

 **THEOREAS - David Marsden** 33:26
to rework that section of the AAAS to make it work. And that'd be really good to hear from folk here about whether you've got any thoughts in that space, because ultimately, we've all got to sort of go on that journey together, because it has to have

 **Phil Harrison** 33:40
Mm.

 **THEOREAS - David Marsden** 33:45
validity, the way that, you know, the primary point of AAAS is to ensure that we have safe participation in the outdoors in led activities. I think we can all agree on that. So any move we make, we have to feel confident about that as well.
Cool.

 **Dom Courtney** 34:05
Thanks, Doug.

I might just mention Brent's comment before I come to you, Dave Maskell, because in the in the Brent's just flagged, but he's had schools requesting staff qualification and they've said they've sent him in and they've got higher than what they wanted and then the school doesn't accept it because it didn't match. And that's a box ticking exercise without understanding.

the context, I guess. I don't know that the IAS can fix that problem, but I guess that's the challenge that we need to.

I guess present it to the audience so they can understand. Because particularly like I said earlier, we do use a lot of acronyms and there's, I don't know, three or four on that screen right now with vet quals instead of me writing it out. And we do that all the time. And maybe that's a part of the way we communicate with the schools, but

it's also them understanding

what they're actually asking us for. But yeah, it's a good point, Brent. So thank you for that, mate. Dave, Mascal, over to you, mate.

DM David Maskell 35:10

Thanks, Dom. I probably got probably 2 questions, probably directed at Dave. In the busy world, I missed the e-mail in October and the earlier one in September about joining the expert groups, which I had nominated for back in April.

You mentioned in your second e-mail that you were lacking numbers in those activity groups beyond the top three, and you had that as a graphic. I was wondering if you've been able to find more people. The second thing, having face-to-face makes sense, but not when it's a national, I guess, a national standard and we're based in Queensland and we move around a lot, as I do, as most people who know me know me.

The second thing is, I've been told by an employer recently that my 2012 Cert IV in diploma in outdoor recreation is no longer valid. So how does that work in regards to me being compliant as an instructor, and I am an instructor, against the AAS if They're mapped to vet quals, but my qualifications are no longer considered current.

TM THEOREAS - David Marsden 36:17

Okay, Dom, yeah, I'll field those if that's okay, Dom. All right, so the first one was around, I guess, how many people have engaged in the expert advisory pool. The numbers did come up from that second

PH Phil Harrison 36:17

The.

TM THEOREAS - David Marsden 36:36


assessment that went out in the areas of canyoning and caving and snorkelling, they remain low. And so I'll be working in that space to take that out to broader comment with those groups.


The actual, the way in which they were undertaken was by using a centralised forum that people could comment into without needing to be in the same space at the same time. So it allowed for people, it didn't matter where you were in the state or what time you could work or whatever, to be able to get in there and make

comment. And that was

That was that step from, I guess, in 2009, sort of 2016 to 2019, where we realised the complexity of getting it to work nationally. In terms of the second one, David, it's a great question. So I think if we go into the vocational education and training space, they would turn around and say, you need to update your units of competence because some of the knowledge and skill within that space, within those units has changed. But, and please, if anyone knows a variation on this, my understanding is that once you've attained the qualification, unless it's legislated, Your currency is kept through remaining current through your practise over the years. So again, it's a misinterpretation of what a qualification or let's say what knowledge and skill attainment is alongside maintaining currency.

 **Phil Harrison** 37:59
Yes.

 **THEOREAS - David Marsden** 38:17
when we see that happen. So it's the issue that we're facing across the AAAS is that the units of competence are being used verbatim, which is excluding the other areas being operational. So you've gone right to the core of it, David.
With that issue.

 **David Maskell** 38:39
Yeah, and it was an RTO and a position as a trainer within an RTO, where I mentioned who they are. But yeah, I was surprised by that because I always assumed I had my diploma, I've worked hard and I kept it for my life and I keep current by coming to industry forums and going to national conferences and within my own workplaces. And it'd be the same as having a
Yeah, a bachelor's, you wouldn't be expected to renew that every three years, especially not at the current hex rate, to stay current.

 **THEOREAS - David Marsden** 39:04
Yeah.

 **Dom Courtney** 39:06
And.

TM **THEOREAS - David Marsden** 39:08

I think one of the anomalies there, David, and I'll just, without going on about it too much, is that I'm fairly certain within the framework for vocational education, they say that the trainer needs to have the same qualification, I believe, at the time. And that is one of the, that is obviously one of the standouts.

 **Dom Courtney** 39:08

Yeah.

TM **THEOREAS - David Marsden** 39:26

So that happens in that space. Yeah. Thanks.

 **Dom Courtney** 39:30

Bill, do you want to add to that or have you got another question?

PH **Phil Harrison** 39:35

Well, probably I agree 100% around the qualifications that it's the qualification is, you know, realistically, unless it's legislated, is evergreen. And the evidence of that is logbooks or ways of recording what people have done. But I think that's too hard for people who don't understand the industry.

because they want a simple solution. At the risk of pulling off a band-aid, there was once upon a time, and I may have had something to do with it, was the National Outdoors Leader Registration Scheme, which was ultimately intended to be provider agnostic in the sense that, yes, it started off having a vet link, but then it morphed into recording Australian canoeing, everybody else's qualifications on a common card, regardless of where that training was done.

or what sector of the education system, be it higher education, be it vocational education, or be it organisational education. And maybe there, to make it easier for the person who doesn't understand the outdoors, to have some sort of measure that says you could have this or this or this,

depending on where you were trained, may make it easier to match or marry or have a broad way of showing that we're competent and current to do what we do.



Dom Courtney 41:13

Thanks, Phil. Have you still got your card with Knowles 001 on it?



Phil Harrison 41:19

Possibly I do, yes, but yes, that was that was there.



Dom Courtney 41:23

You can't use it anymore, Phil, sorry. It's 007 for Phil. Yeah, probably should have been. And you have images of Phil literally abseiling down a damn wall to save the day. He's probably done that. So, yeah, I think that the issue with Knowles, as we like



Brendon Munge 41:24

Sure.

But I mean, double at 7, I would have thought double at 7.



Phil Harrison 41:26

Yeah.



Dom Courtney 41:42

to call it, because again, we like acronyms, was it didn't actually really get used by the industry. So no one got ever, very few people were ever asked, are you registered under this scheme that was run by the Outdoors Council of Australia? So because of its, it fell into.



Phil Harrison 42:00

Yeah.

And Dom, and Dom, it got traction in WA and got traction in Queensland. They were the only two places that got traction.





Dom Courtney 42:01


This, yeah, sure, yep.

And, unfortunately, even though those two states are...

 **Phil Harrison** 42:10
At.

 **Dom Courtney** 42:13
large and very, very important, that we didn't have the population numbers to keep the system rolling and keep it up to date. Yeah, so I can't remember the year, but eventually the Outdoor Council didn't have the funding to keep that, the null system running financially. And when, particularly when the training package changed and needed to remap.

 **Phil Harrison** 42:19
That's right.
Yep, yep.
That's wrong.

 **Dom Courtney** 42:36
the whole thing. So that's why that's fallen down. And since it's fallen down, it seems that, or since it's been abolished, it seems there's been a realisation that an outdoor leader registration scheme is a good thing. Yeah, so.
It was the answer to the question people weren't asking, which a wise man once told me. Didn't you, Phil?
Anyway, moving right along. Thank you.
All right. Just trying to get this one. That's pretty much on question three. I'm just thinking of time. We've got about 15 minutes left. The final question we had on our little survey was the old, anything else you want to tell us? Again, feel free to ask detail, add details or ask questions on this.
Keep it.
Because Outdoors people are really nice human beings, quite a few of you said thank you. And someone actually said thank you. I know this is a huge piece of work. I don't think they're referring to us organising this survey, this forum today. I think they're talking about the review as a whole, but I'll take it, Mark. What do you reckon? We'll take it.
Yeah. But a lot of you actually said thank you, which is really nice, and thank you for that. Others said they were really curious to hear about, hear from other colleagues,

understand more about the topic, and it's a great learning opportunity. So that's sort of about the forum, and it shows the commitment to continuous improvement.

Another comment was that multiple language versions should be available, again, touching on the interest of making it more inclusive. And I guess with the options that we have with the internet, there are ways to translate, but there are risks that we lose meaning.

in translation, so we have to be careful with that. And then the last comment there was a comment that the IIS are strongest when they use decision making framework rather than a compliance checklist, which the conversation we've just had actually goes exactly to that point, which was a very good point that...

I wanted to share that was made there, so...

As Brent's comment was, you know, it shouldn't be a checklist to say, I know you must have this level. It's a minimum of that level to show good practice. And it's also or the equivalent of that level. So yeah, that one I thought was a really good point. Well made. Comment?



Phil Harrison 45:03

Yeah.



Dom Courtney 45:11

Yeah, cool. Any other comments, questions to share about the review as a whole?

Oh, okay.

I do want to get a couple more bits of information, more for you than anything, just last week.

The Outdoors Council of Australia approved a new framework which is actually going to guide how the Australian Adventure Activity Standard evolves in the future. So this is available on the website. We've put a news story up on our website there, the links at the bottom of the screen and Mark might pop that in the chat for us. But

What this framework does is it ensures that proposed additions to the standard and good practise guides are assessed strategically, not just as a reactive thing. So it asks questions up front, such as does the activity fall within the scope of the IAS?

Does it involve dependent participants, which is an important gate that everything under the AAS is intended to be about activities with dependent participants? Does it align with the principles of safety, environmental responsibility, inclusion and professionalism?

It's got clear criteria.

about that that need to be looked at. And then it also does flag in that process that not every proposal will automatically lead to a new good practise guide. So some activities might be better addressed through an annexure to an existing guide, a guidance note.

or an update to the core good practise guide. So I just want to flag that, that's actually been released, that new framework. So I think it's a big thank you to David Marsden for the work done on that framework in consultation with the various experts along the way. So that's an important piece of work that has just been released last week. So it's worth having a look at that.

Um...

This seems like a shameless plug, but ohh, Dave Maskell, yeah, go mate.

You're on mute, but I.

 **David Maskell** 47:27

I just have a probably just another question for David. As an outcome of the review and that initial question that was in the first in Dom first slide about how do you implement the AAS into your practice, your SOPs, your operational practises on the ground?

 **Dom Courtney** 47:31

Mm.

 **David Maskell** 47:47

Would there be a way to create a system? It's another system, of course, we all love systems in the outdoors. Another system where accreditation becomes part of this, where you could be XYZ camp and you want to be accredited as the good practise Outdoors framework. You want to have an endorsement with a logo that says that you've got

All the boxes checked, so your SOPs are compliant and are mapped to that system. I know that's a whole other undertaking and outside the scope of this discussion.

Would that actually create more uptake and more consistency across the sector and could potentially lead to less lack of

Miscommunication with the Department of Education, Duke of Ed providers, and

commercial operators.

Big question.



Dom Courtney 48:33

I'll take that one, David, if you like, because here's a slide I prepared earlier saying.



THEOREAS - David Marsden 48:36

Yeah, go for it, Dom.

Ha ha.



Dom Courtney 48:42

This here is the AAS compliance checker, which Outdoors Queensland has available right now. But what it is, is all it is, is we created the ability to put your standard operating procedures

in against the current, the existing IIS and give you a rating out of 10 and suggestions for possible improvements that you might want to make to your document to bring it up. This is made very simple. There's actually a video on our webpage that explains it if you want to cheque it out. That address is at the bottom there.

We, this is a, we had some money through a government grant, which was that previous screen, the Good Practise Outdoors Program, which we had. We developed this. It's a fairly sophisticated AI prompt. You could do this yourself if you could get it to work. It took a fair bit of work, and this is, we've actually tested it.

with quite a few different providers and we've refined it over time. But we're setting this as a fee for service that we're offering. If you want to put an activity through this system and see what you get back for your, so it'll compare say your bushwalking standard operating procedure or your

Manual, whatever you call it, to the...

standard, the core and the bushwalking good practise guide. We'll produce a report and with that rating and some suggestions for improvement. And at the moment, we'll charge you \$100 including GST for that. And it's only an AI assessment. We're not coming out to see how you actually put that into practise and we're very clear about that.

that it doesn't replace a human doing a formal audit, but it is a way of doing this. I'm not trying to sell this to you. I just wanted to let you know we are developing this

tool and we're particularly looking at ways to streamline it once the new updated standard and good practise guides are released.

So we are looking at that right now as an option and it'll be, it's a discount at the moment for Outdoors Queensland financial members. And we'll look at how we're going to do it right across the country as well. So I just, I did want to flag that one. So that's sort of what you're talking about, David. It's not accrediting the organisations, but it's.

giving you a report and here's a few things you could probably do better and even, you know, where you might want, what you might want to change in your procedures. So we've had a few organisations test it with us and they're really impressed with it. So I just want to flag that one. The previous one that I had on the screen,

The Good Practise Outdoors Program, we got, we had this grant funding through the Queensland Government's Active Women and Girls Funding Program, which I think a few members had funding through. What we did, we developed this product, which is about helping organisations implement the Australian AAS.

and make that process more user friendly. So using the grant fund, we offered this programme free of charge for female outdoor leaders last year. The grant funding's expired, but we're still offering this same programme on a fee for service basis. We're offering a couple of courses in March and also June.

And the course costs \$440, including GST, with a 50% discount for our wonderful OQ members. So anyone can do that course. It runs you a really amazing, familiar, I can't say that word, awareness of the AAS. And

what you should look for and it actually includes a use of that of the next one, the compliance checker. So just wanted to flag that one. Again, the compliance checker uses AI. We're not shying away from that. It's very open that we do that, but I just want to flag that. So

Yeah, it would be an interest. It's an interesting process for how you do that and improving your processes as well as part of it. So I just want to flag those two. I'm just conscious of time. Six minutes left.

The Outdoors Queensland AGM is coming up in March, so 18th of March.

Nominations will open soon for the Board. Members will be sent a notice of the meeting with all the dates.

If you're not a member, you can, we are going to have a forum before it at 5:00 and then you can still join the AGM, but you won't be able to vote. If you want to become

a member, if you're not one, you can join up as a member now and you get full voting rights at the AGM, which would be wonderful. But registration's available. For the forum and the AGM on our website.

Big important announcement, which Brandon's going to be happy I'm doing, NOEC 26, so the National Outdoor Education Conference is going to be in Cairns from the 28th of September to the 1st of October. We're really proud to be assisting OEAQ, the Outdoors Educators Association of Queensland.

with organising NOEC and I think it's going to be awesome. Really impressed by the amount of work that's already been done by the team. So tickets are available now with an early bird discount of about 15% available until the end of March.

Expressions of interest for presenters is also open right now.

And that's gonna close, scheduled to close next Monday by the 9th of Febvre.

The committee, and particularly the locals in Far North Queensland, including Phil and particularly Darren from Trinity Anglican School, which is where it's going to be held, have done a massive amount of work. It's partly over now to the outdoor community as a whole to actually buy tickets and submit proposals for your presentations.

The draught Programmes released. It starts off with a half day on the Monday, the 28th. It has the Welcome to Country, the key and a keynote, which will set the scene for the conference. The Tuesday is a full day of proceedings with another keynote and presentations. The Wednesday is going to be an activity day.

which given the Outdoors community in Cairns, it's quite amazing. They've got about 30 different options, including 10 options that you don't have to pay anything extra there, including your ticket price. Some of them you will have to pay extra for, such as reef trip camping, reef trip fishing, sorry, but then there's others that are PD things like a wilderness first aid qualification that you could get on that Wednesday from that sort of thing. I think it's a re-certification, but I might be wrong on that one. So it's pretty amazing. And then the Thursday is another full day of conference, including finishing with a dinner, which is included in your ticket price. So That's my spruik of why you should come to NOAC, because it's going to be awesome. And yeah, just wanted to do that one in there. Still got 3 minutes. Look at this. It's all coming together. Any questions or comments? Yes, I didn't think of that one. This one here, it's mostly relevant to clubs, but I did want to flag it that the Queensland government's released this sport

HQ, and I like to think the R in sports stands for recreation. OR stands for outdoor

recreation, I think. I don't know what the SP and the T stand for. So it's all resources for our industry. It covers off volunteer management, governance, financial management, strategic planning, disaster preparedness.

and healthier and safer sports and facilities, actually really good resources. So I wanted to flag that. I did think when it first came out that it was going to be about the sport of racing HQ Holdens, because my first car when I was a 17 year old was a 1974 HQ Holden.

 **Phil Harrison** 56:49
But.

 **Dom Courtney** 56:51

which was 1 1/2 tonnes of V8 power. But this has nothing to do with HQ Holden. So if you thought that, you'd be as wrong as I was. So yeah, that's Sport HQ. Last but not least, reminder about what you came for today, the AAS review.

Please register for updates and join that online engagement platform. It isn't too late. Attend events, but also make your views heard when the draught documents are released for public comment. So that's an important part that I actually didn't touch on earlier, but the documents are going to be released in the not too distant future. So, pop that in there, but get involved in this review process directly, as well as contributing through us into the process.

Our resources there.

 **Phil Harrison** 57:43
Yeah.

 **Dom Courtney** 57:43

Please, please follow us on social media if you don't already. Register to receive our bulletins. We sometimes send out some really interesting stuff and sometimes you just get videos of me jibber-jabbering. But I do my best. Also, I just wanted to flag you can submit events.

An event could be a training course or anything else for to list on our what's on section of our website and we'll promote your event throughout to our network through socials and e-bulletins.

 **Phil Harrison** 58:07

Thanks.

 **Dom Courtney** 58:15

And we've got an online store, so if you want to buy anything, cheque it out. We've got some good stuff on there, including some books that you won't get anywhere else. Have I covered everything, Mark?

 **Phil Harrison** 58:20

Yeah.

 **Dom Courtney** 58:26

With 0 minutes to spare. Righto, a massive thank you to everyone for coming, for contributing to today's session. Really want to, really do appreciate it all. Oh no, I think we've had a daylight saving issue. We've had someone join. I just wanted to say with the sign off there,
Please be kind to the planet, be kind to others, and, importantly, be kind to yourself.
Thank you all very much.

 **Mark Squires** 58:56

Thanks, folks.

 **Phil Harrison** 58:58

Thanks, Dom.

 **Dom Courtney** 59:00

Thanks, all.

Did you see if you Sean joined Mark? Are there you Sean? We've just finished.

 **Yushan Luo** 59:08

Yeah, thank you.

 **Mark Squires** 59:08

Yes, yes, she's right there.

 **Yushan Luo** 59:12

I know Dom, I was going back and forth because I was also doing a university assessment meeting at the same time. Will you be able to send out the link for us to go back and watch that?

 **Dom Courtney** 59:18

Ohh, okay, yeah, yeah.
Yes, yeah, so...

 **Mark Squires** 59:26

Well, we'll get that sorted out and hopefully have it ready to go in a day or so.

 **Yushan Luo** 59:31

Great. All good information, and yeah, thank you so much. Hey, Dom, I finally get to meet you, been emailing.

 **Dom Courtney** 59:31

Yep.
Yeah.
Yeah, it's great to mention it. I did see your video you did with with Dave Chitty, yeah, which was great. His tips and tricks, yeah.

 **Mark Squires** 59:39

Mm.

 **Yushan Luo** 59:40

Yes.
Davies.

 **Dom Courtney** 59:49

Oh, good.
Awesome, yeah, well...
Well, yeah, yeah.
Right.

 **Yushan Luo** 1:00:09

Yeah, so it's really good. And I got the website up and running and hopefully it's just something I'll try and keep doing and see how it goes.

 **Dom Courtney** 1:00:12

Excellent. Good.

If you want us to share it, we can promote it too. If you want us to put anything out there to our network, more than happy to do that. Like, it's part of what we do is promoting other people's resources. So if you want to send me through some links, please do. And when I say we, it'll probably really be Mark who

 **Mark Squires** 1:00:28

Absolutely.

 **Yushan Luo** 1:00:34

Yeah, I...

 **Dom Courtney** 1:00:39

makes it happen. So Mark's awesome. He does some really good work too. So yeah, if you want to send that through, just send it to my e-mail. But yeah, and I'll be in touch once we know a bit more about that Outdoorsia project that we were talking about too. So we've got that ticking along as well. So yeah.

 **Yushan Luo** 1:00:39

Mark, yeah.


Thanks, Mark.


Yeah, I really will be keen to help out with some translation there. And it's just because, you know, we think when we think about people who are going out at the moment, Indians love to go out, but they do understand English, a lot of them. Chinese, a lot of them don't. And they do love to go out. That's the issue. And


 **Dom Courtney** 1:01:01


Right.

Hmm.


 **Yushan Luo** 1:01:15
Not prepared, yeah.

 **Dom Courtney** 1:01:15
Yeah, and it's quite different conditions too, which we sorted sometimes.
Sometimes we carry on too much about it, but other times we just assume, oh, they'll be right, which I think that's a big risk in that space, that there's an assumed level of knowledge sometimes in Australia.

 **Yushan Luo** 1:01:33
Yes, yeah, true.


 **Dom Courtney** 1:01:34
Yeah, yeah. So yeah, definitely we'll be in touch on how we can work together on that one. So yeah, but yeah, if you want to just send us through some stuff for your website and your socials here, please do. That'd be great. Yeah.


 **Mark Squires** 1:01:41
Mm.


 **Yushan Luo** 1:01:41
Yeah.
Yeah, well, thanks so much. Thanks, Mark, as well. Not sure whether you understand what we probably don't feel to be in there already, but I'm working on that.


 **Mark Squires** 1:01:48
Neil.


 **Dom Courtney** 1:01:48
Yeah.


 **Mark Squires** 1:01:53
I've got a vague idea. I had a chat to Dom the other day about some of this stuff, so yep, send it through and we'll see what we can do with it.


 **Yushan Luo** 1:01:55
Okay, great, cool.

 **Dom Courtney** 1:01:56
Yeah, yeah, that.

 **Yushan Luo** 1:01:58
All right.

 **Yushan Luo** 1:02:00
Yeah, thank you so much. All right, you guys have a lovely afternoon. Yeah, see you around. Bye.

 **Dom Courtney** 1:02:00
Right, yeah, thanks.
Thank you. You too. Bye.

 **Mark Squires** 1:02:05
Yeah, likewise, you too. Okay, yeah, cheers, bye.

 **Dom Courtney** 1:02:10
Thanks, Mark.

🕒 **Mark Squires** stopped transcription