

Outward Bound Australia response to
Inquiry into Current and Potential Ecotourism in the ACT region

Outward Bound Australia is an independent, not-for-profit outdoor education organisation that helps people to discover, develop and achieve their full potential.

Response to question a)

Outward Bound Australia deliver adventure based activities within and around the ACT region. The activities do not fall completely within the ecotourism bracket as the activities are part of our outdoor education curriculum. The main focus is experiential education using the outdoors.

Outward Bound Australia consists of four operational areas; the national base in Tharwa operates mostly in the Namadgi National park. Our courses consist of local schools, regional partnerships and public enrolments.

On we provide an experience to approx. 2000 participants annually.

Response to question b)

Outward Bound Australia is a values-driven organisation. Our core values include human potential, integrity, resilience, responsibility, compassion and service. Our objective include: **Environment – to develop appreciation for and awareness of the natural environment. To develop and awareness of minimal impact practices.**

We work very closely with Namadgi national park to ensure we operate in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way. Taking our advice from the ranger in charge, we try to minimise our impact. Regular meetings and inspections of camp and activity sites ensure we operate to standard. We try to harden pre approved campsites to minimise our overall impact.

Service is key part of the courses that we deliver. An example, in conjunction with Greening Australia we have planted over 1000 trees along the Murrumbidgee corridor. Some of our other projects included weeding and cleaning of public campsites in the national park. In recent months we have been working with Waterwise, testing waterways in and around Namadgi national park.

All of our participants develop an appreciation of the environment and ecosystems through their experience on our programs.

Response to question c)

Outward Bound Australia makes a positive contribution towards the regional economy both directly through the conduct and purchase of logistical support for programs and indirectly through leadership programs for emerging leaders to strengthen regional organisations and businesses.

Outward Bound Australia purchases its food from local fresh food and dry food suppliers for staff as well as for courses delivered to the amount of over \$150,000. For all other services (vehicles, consumables and equipment) we work with providers within the ACT. The total budget can be made available on request. We also contribute up \$13 000 in park fees per annum.

We have up to 100 staff that operate from our National Base in Tharwa and contribute towards the local economy.

Response to question d)

Currently Outward Bound Australia does not have a licence or accreditation to operate in the ACT. As a commercial operator we seek to comply with State or Territories' adventure activity standards and licensing system.

We have been advised to use the "use of public space" application form for all of our courses. The form talks to "Additional conditions" for events that are not normal. This creates a semi formal relationship with national parks to ensure we are operating to standard. Most of our guidelines have been taken from the park's "Plan of Management 2010". The only other official document we have with parks at the moment is a Memorandum of Understanding.

It would be great to have some sort of licence system for providers in the region; this will ensure security for their business as well as clear operating procedures in terms of activity standards and environmentally friendly practice.

In doing this Parks can ensure that impact to the park is predictable and minimised as much as possible. We are very supportive of ensuring good working relationships between providers and parks.