



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by MS LAWDER

Ref: Ref: Outdoor Education

In relation to:

1. Why is the Education Directorate preventing outdoor education organisations from working with ACT public schools despite the low Covid-exposure risk?
2. Why can students in private schools and before and after school programs access these programs but public school students are prohibited?
3. Why haven't you responded to outdoor education advocacy groups that have contacted your office repeatedly about this issue?
4. When will you allow ACT public schools to access outdoor education programs like their NSW counterparts?

MS BERRY MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT Education Directorate has responded by following the Health Guidelines for Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care (including OSHC) that are in place at any given time. These guidelines have been applied to all ACT public schools and have stipulated a requirement for students to stay within class or year groups (cohorting).

In ACT public schools, external providers were not considered to be part of a cohort. From Week 7 Term 1 2022, outdoor education programs re-commenced for ACT public schools. The Education Directorate has made this decision in consultation with ACT Health. However, these programs may only proceed if the location is less than a four-hour drive from the ACT and is of a maximum duration of two nights.

2. See response to question 1.
3. The ACT Government and the Education Directorate have been engaging regularly with outdoor education advocacy groups.
4. See response to question 1.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:

Date: 11/05/22

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Ms Yvette Berry