

Outdoor Leadership Competence in Academic Pathways: Or how can 4-year trained teachers of outdoor education demonstrate competence?

Dr Peter Martin

School of Outdoor Education and Environment, La Trobe University, Bendigo, VIC

Final draft of:

Martin, P. (2005). Outdoor Leadership Competence in Academic Pathways: Or how can 4-year trained teachers of outdoor education demonstrate competence? In 14th National Outdoor Conference Proceedings. Outdoor Council of Australia.

Abstract

Over the past decade the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) has sponsored a growth in vocational education, in part through development of Industry Training Packages. The Outdoor Recreation Industry has, as a label and concept, been created by this process. While the Outdoor Recreation Training Package has been used as an industry benchmark for leadership competence in outdoor activity leadership, longstanding outdoor degree level qualifications have been largely ignored by the advocates of competency-based training (CBT), and in turn, academic staff have largely ignored CBT.

How ought tertiary trained teachers respond to the imposition of CBT outdoor recreation standards developed for the Vocational sector? How might the Outdoor Council of Australia's Outdoor Leadership Register be better equipped to meet the needs of teachers and others who had qualifications in the outdoors long before the CBT based Training Packages came on the scene?

This paper will report on the development process conducted in Victoria that seeks to use alternate means of curriculum description and institutional accountability to determine levels of outdoor leadership competence. The paper will provide background and future pathways for recognising the importance of non-CBT pathways in outdoor education professional development.

Introduction

The training of outdoor leaders may well be the fastest growing sector of the outdoor industry in Australia. In the VET sector alone there are over 120 registered training providers in Australia who claim to be delivering outdoor recreation *qualifications* at some level (Retrieved May 2, 2005 from <http://www.ntis.gov.au>). These providers are a mix of TAFE colleges, schools, community organisations or enterprises¹. The majority of these providers have appeared on the scene in the last five years, since the accreditation of the Outdoor Recreation Training Package. This seems a remarkable growth and although there are no data available on how many students

actually complete these courses and how many then actually go on to work in the industry, over 120 providers represents a phenomenal growth rate in recent years. All these providers are working under the direction provided by the National Outdoor Recreation Training Package SRO 03.

As well as the proliferation of VET based programs; the university sector remains centrally involved in outdoor leadership education. In Victoria at present there are five universities offering programs in outdoor leadership education, although the nature and extent of these programs varies from one or two units to three and four year full-time specialist degrees at La Trobe Bendigo and Monash, Gippsland (VTAC, 2004). Victoria remains the largest provider of university programs in outdoor education and recreation, perhaps as a

¹ Kathy Mann has completed a recent in-depth analysis of these registered training providers and is delivering a paper on this topic at the conference.

consequence of outdoor education and recreation-based subjects being part of the formal school curriculum through to year 12.

Outdoor leadership training is of course not limited to the formal education institutions or registered training organisations. Some community based activity groups survive, despite the influx of the VET sector and its impact on the marketplace. It is interesting to also note that the proliferation of VET leadership training has killed off some long-standing and very well respected providers of outdoor leadership training. In Victoria, the Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Leadership Certificate (BMLC) commenced in 1969. By 2000 it had 700 graduates from its bushwalking leadership program, 200 from its ski tour leaders program and many hundreds more who had completed training but not continued through to graduate (BMTAB, 2000). The BMLC was a certificate built on the wisdom of the elders, on a peer reviewed process of apprenticeship and experience. I suspect the BMLC would have been the most common and well respected outdoor leadership training course in Victoria if not Australia. Unfortunately the BMLC is no longer, unwittingly a casualty perhaps of VET proliferation. I say, unwittingly, deliberately here, as the processes that led to the creation of the outdoor recreation training package were never meant to push courses like the BMLC out of the marketplace. They were never meant to dis-empower the practitioners on the ground, the cliff face or on rivers, but as we look back now at the last decade there is some evidence to suggest that this has happened.

In this paper I have two main topics to pursue. The first is to briefly review the historical development of outdoor leadership training since the early 90s – a time that signalled commencement of the Vocational Education and Training sector's involvement in outdoor leadership training. The second and principle theme, is to review the way in which the academic sector involved in outdoor leadership education now sits with the VET created and driven national outdoor leadership standards, and then propose a way in which university based outdoor programs may also enhance the credibility of the Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA) sponsored National Outdoor Leadership Registration Scheme (NOLS). Clearly this leaves out how outdoor leaders with years of experience, but no formal VET or university

qualification, access national registration, but that is another topic.

The historical development of outdoor leadership training since the early 90s

As an opening I also need to declare, if not a conflict of interest, at least a particular set of perspectives. As Head of the School of Outdoor Education and Environment at La Trobe, Bendigo I am centrally involved in delivering outdoor education programs in a university. I have been for 20 years. The Bendigo degree commenced in 1985, following on an associate diploma of outdoor education that itself commenced in 1975. Outdoor education at Bendigo is therefore the longest running specialist tertiary outdoor education program in Australia and responsible therefore for more qualified outdoor education specialists than any other program. By 2005 Bendigo has graduated over 1000 specialist outdoor educators from its three year degree courses and one year post graduate programs (sourced via student records La Trobe University, Bendigo).

The beginning of proliferation of outdoor leadership in the VET sector was initiated in 1991 through outdoor recreation, rather than education interests. At that time the Standing Committee on Sport and Recreation (SCORS) discussed outdoor recreation leadership development in Australia. Tasmania Sport and Recreation then supported a process of consultation with relevant community groups. These discussions culminated in a meeting at Port Sorell in July of 1992 (Sport and Recreation Tasmania, n.d.). The focus of the recommendations coming from that symposium was on collaboration between community providers of outdoor activity training to agree on core outdoor recreation activity competencies.

In October of 1993 the next national symposium was held in Adelaide, this time hosted by Recreation S.A. and with an expanded list of invitees (Recreation SA, 1993). The focus was again clearly upon development of activity based competence standards applicable to the recreation industry. It was at the Adelaide gathering that the National Outdoor Recreation Leadership Development (NORLD) scheme took flight. The NORLD project was based on a set of aims established at the Adelaide conference – coincidentally, NORLD was also to introduce the outdoor recreation field to a set of acronyms from which it has never recovered! In search of a way forward for NORLD, the

executive garnered support for the process from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). Historians will note that the NORLD process, perhaps serendipitously, took place in the early 90s, a time of significant reform in the vocational education and training sector (VET) of Australia (Marginson, 1993). NORLD was able to benefit from government funding connected with vocational education reform and consequently became inextricably linked with the vocational education and training system. It was with ANTA money that NORLD, then metamorphosed into the Outdoor Council of Australia (ORCA), drove nationwide consultations and workshops to realise the development of the Outdoor Recreation Training Package commencing in 1998 (Vandeppeer, 2005).

This potted history of what led to the funding and development of the Outdoor Recreation Training Package is important. It is important to recognise that the NORLD collective that formed early activity meetings chose a VET pathway for its money and political expedience. That the vocational education and training system had adopted a style of curriculum description called competency-based training (CBT) was simply part of the deal that came with the ANTA funding. There was little debate in those early meetings of the educational value of CBT, or the best way to communicate shared visions; while CBT may well have had its advocates, primarily it was a pathway into the ANTA coffers. Once locked into that way of thinking, NORLD and then ORCA needed to endorse a single style of describing competence – that of Competency-based Training with the standard breakdown of skills into units having specified elements, performance criteria, underpinning knowledge and range of variables. Advocates have always acknowledged there is little place for *judgement* in competency-based training and no allowance for *time spent* in achieving experience – CBT demands students are judged 'not yet competent' until the day they are deemed to be 'competent'. (Ironically, while CBT does not itself build in aspects of judgement, it certainly seeks that from its assessors).

In the brave new world of a CBT informed 1993, the focus was clearly upon outdoor recreation and has remained so for many people since then. However, there has always been an unsettled relationship with outdoor education – and it is something many have attempted to clarify over that decade (Kingsford, 1997;

Richards, 1998; ORCSA & OESA 1999; Martin, 1998, 2000; Mann, 2002). For the purposes of this historical review, it is worth revisiting a statement on outdoor education ratified at the 1993 meeting that moved to embrace a VET system for outdoor recreation leadership.

Outdoor Education and outdoor recreation have some commonalities, such as:

- operating in outdoor environments, and
- some outdoor skills practices.

Compared to outdoor recreation industry, outdoor education [profession] may:

- often have different intents,
- have different training requirements,
- frequently seeks different outcomes, and
- uses different methodologies.

Nevertheless, outdoor education in its many forms has an ongoing contribution to make to the NORLD process (Recreation SA, 1993, p.9).

The underlying reason why outdoor education at that time sought to provide some distance between itself and outdoor recreation and the NORLD outcomes, was precisely because not all those present at Adelaide agreed with the curriculum impositions of competency-based training. They sought to retain the notion of experienced based judgement as underpinning outdoor leadership capacity. This difference between outdoor education and outdoor recreation in the way in which student expertise is developed and recognised remains.

While many outdoor educators have made considerable contributions to the NORLD processes and the furthering of training provision for outdoor recreation, there are many who have chosen to not be part of that process because they have not seen CBT and outdoor recreation to be of immediate relevance to themselves. The largest population of professionals in this latter category would be the qualified teachers who hold a teaching degree and are currently teaching outdoor education in the government or non-government school systems.

In the 2001 national outdoor education summit conference a resolution was reached to form a closer alliance between the Australian Outdoor Education Council and the Outdoor Recreation

Council of Australia (AOEC, 2001). The resultant body was the Outdoor Council of Australia. The marriage was one that sought common ground and common understanding while preserving distinction and specialty – at least that was the goal.

When ORCA's contracted work to develop the Training Package was completed it determined that a national register of outdoor leaders (NORLS) would be a useful tool to assist land managers, the public and government in determining levels of qualifications. Kathy Kingsford as the principal architect and driving force behind that register has described that scheme. (Refer: Kathy Kingsford's presentation also at this Conference).

As a consequence of initial emphasis upon outdoor recreation, upon CBT and vocational training, the outdoor recreation industry built NORLS on the VET endorsed Outdoor Recreation Training Package. This package and its language have also been used as the reference point for the Adventure Activity Standards. However, the direct transfer and relevance of this language of vocational education is not well suited to the academic or university sector and this created challenges and tensions for the outdoor recreation industry and the outdoor education profession (Mann, 2002). To move towards resolving these tensions the OCA earlier this year moved to develop policy that guided the development of the national outdoor leadership register. After debate, the OCA passed the following motion.

That OCA accepts as policy multiple pathways for training and recognition of outdoor leadership.

While clear in its intent, recognition of multiple pathways becomes problematic when only one way of conceiving competence, that of CBT, is envisaged. The motion went on to elaborate.

At this time, the OCA accepts the National Outdoor Recreation Competency Standards SRO 03, or tertiary qualifications and/or alternate knowledge/skills criteria equivalent to the competency standards, be used for the national application of the standards and registration process of AAS and NOLRS.

What this effectively means is that the National Training Package is the current way of

describing outdoor leadership competence, or the benchmark, used by OCA. Tertiary qualifications *can* be used to enable graduates to be registered on the national outdoor leadership register, but only so long as they are understood, or equivalent to, the Training Package. This situation will remain until the tertiary sector comes up with a viable alternative. Regardless of what you think about the OCA and the usefulness or otherwise of the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme, it is here and operating.

NOLRS and academic pathways

I am aware that tertiary graduates experience some levels of frustration when working with managers and employers who have a fixation on national standards, competency certificates, or activity specific accreditation. In many ways this is fuelled by the OCA and some practitioners who in the promotion of NOLRS or community accreditation give profile to the sceptre of litigation or land management blacklisting (For example, Vandeppeer, 2005). In response, while I am clear that students from many tertiary courses are well grounded in designated outdoor activity competence, I am less clear on how such competence is communicated to potential employers or the graduates themselves. The challenge for tertiary institutions to more clearly articulate the readiness of their graduates for outdoor leadership and how such readiness may differ from a simple CBT schema is now compelling. The National Outdoor Leadership Register is an ideal avenue to establish a national benchmark for outdoor leadership ability. The OCA has accepted that the NOLRS must have multiple entry pathways. Significant efforts have been made to operationalise those pathways with the use of peer recognition workshops. (An interesting comment on peer recognition from a candidate's perspective can be found on http://www.qorf.org.au/01_cms/details.asp?k_id=253 Retrieved May 8, 2005.) However, unless the OCA can find clear and acceptable processes for the recognition of divergent leadership development pathways from academic institutions that are not simply CBT, or mapping to the training package in disguise, then the NOLRS is destined to falter. If the OCA can encourage such recognition, then the NOLRS is exactly the sort of truly national system that will enable the broader outdoor recreation industry and outdoor education profession to institute a move into professional registration that can legitimately seek

government endorsement and potentially government sponsorship.

The academic sector, outdoor leadership education and the VET driven national outdoor leadership standards

To understand why universities have not embraced competency-based training it is necessary to briefly consider the differences between vocational and academic education. Vocational education is responsive to the workplace. The content and direction of all VET curriculum are developed through analysis of *current* work practices. VET seeks to train students to do specific predetermined tasks. It makes sense in this context that the VET system has chosen *to assess what students can do* at the end of their training and to shape assessment criteria from existing workplace behaviour.

In contrast, or perhaps in a complementary way, the academic education system is not driven by vocational needs. While it is true that vocational courses are taught in universities, such as those for teaching, medicine or engineering, in each of these courses a more liberal educational ideology prevails. The Vice Chancellor of La Trobe University succinctly characterizes his institution's mission as "advancing knowledge" (Osborne, 2005, p.2). Universities are concerned as much with enabling students to learn how to make judgements and solve problems *into the future*, as they are about skilling them to complete specific predetermined tasks of today. The academic sector is responsive to scholarship and research rather than current vocational practice. Universities are charged with critiquing current practice and are expected to be the originators of new ways of responding to issues and problems. In the academic context it makes sense that assessment is a combination of *how students can think* and *what they have done*.

There are some tertiary providers who would disagree with me here; at least one new tertiary course developer suggests:

You will be aware that NOLRS is in "full" swing here. I actually don't have any problem using this [CBT system] as the basis for competency in courses I'm developing, why re-invent the wheel?

However, I would suggest, based on my 20 years in the higher education sector, that if university departments are actually delivering more TAFE like programs instead of a combination of practical and academic rigor, then it should not be too long before funding bodies recognise this and shift such courses to the less funded TAFE system.

An appreciation of the ideological differences between vocational education and academic education is pivotal to understanding how the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme can act to bind together a more powerful and respected professional and industrial body.

It is interesting to note however, that graduates of degree programs have for nearly 20 years been able to survive very well in the marketplace. For some, like those who enter the teaching profession, professional registration is already a government regulated pathway requiring specific educational prerequisites (VIT, Retrieved on May 8th from <http://www.vit.vic.edu.au>).

Towards an outdoor industry and profession

In early December 2004 members of the VOEA's tertiary advisory group met to discuss the issue of tertiary articulation with the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme. Since that time, I have co-ordinated the development of statements that describe the activity competence of those students who elect to gain their education through academic degree level courses.

The university sector offers degrees, graduate diplomas, masters and PhD awards. On the Australian Qualification Framework these are higher awards than the diplomas and certificates offered at TAFE. Understandably, those people involved in the delivery of outdoor related courses in universities accept the notion of a degree being a better qualification for outdoor education than is a certificate or diploma. In most instances university staff make mention of how a degree is a *professional* qualification that contains far more than just activity skills and knowledge. This is hardly surprising given that degrees are usually three years fulltime compared to a nominal six months for a certificate IV.

It is possible that universities see the proliferation of TAFE graduates in outdoor

recreation as a threat, or a flooding of the marketplace. However, several tertiary providers have commented that TAFE programs provide other avenues for students who cannot access the university sector. TAFE programs can also provide a pathway into university professional programs for some students. The main issues for this paper, are not with the courses and qualifications themselves, but with the style of assessment and reporting. Several university staff commented that they thought the CBT system was at face value, a poor way of assessing ascribing to “an assessment system that was substandard to producing quality graduates”. While all this remains contestable, that the majority of university providers of outdoor recreation and education have taken a stance in opposition to CBT begs the question as to how these providers can and do report the activity based competence of their graduates. In implementation of the OCA’s National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme some evidential statements must be provided.

The final purpose of this paper is to introduce a way of describing the activity specific outcomes achieved by graduates of university courses. These descriptions are by necessity holistic and

summative. Educationally they are the ideological opposite of CBT in that, true to the academic model, they seek to describe what students have done.

Conceptually such *professional ability* statements could exist for all outdoor activity areas included in university courses. There is however, a genuine concern expressed by some university staff that such statements in isolation disassemble the coherence of a degree program, so the statements need to refer to, and be read in conjunction with, the official university transcript for any individual student. The transcript is the quintessential certificate, it provides specific unit codes that can be legally linked to unit descriptions in a university handbook. Each unit will have a grade, developed against criteria, although those criteria are not normally in the public domain (being detailed in unit outlines passed on to students during their course of study).

As a way of describing what professional activity statements might look like, I have chosen to use the program at La Trobe Bendigo in which I am involved (La Trobe, 2004), as an example.

Institution	Course offered	Length	Outdoor component	Outdoor activities included as core	Activities included as electives
La Trobe, Bendigo	Bachelor of Arts (Outdoor Education)	3 yrs FT	At least 45 days of field work/year	Bushwalking, Flat water paddling	Climbing, White water Ski touring
La Trobe, Bendigo	Bachelor of Arts (Nature Tourism)	3 yrs FT	At least 30 days of field work/year	Bushwalking Flat water paddling Nature guiding	Climbing Ski touring

Sample Activity Specific Professional Ability Statement

Figure 1 is a sample of an activity statement developed for rock climbing. The fields in bold italics are those that are variable and describe particular aspects of a students learning that the VOA tertiary advisory group saw as important.

Commentary on the professional ability statement descriptors

The professional ability statements contain a number of variable fields or descriptors. Each of these fill a specific role in enabling the reader to

make their own judgements about the suitability and competence of the student to perform the task they are considering. In a CBT system the assessor makes a judgement about competence. Once a student is judged to be competent the contextual factors that may have enabled that judgement to be valid disappear. By contract, in the professional ability statement the contextual factors remain as an essential set of clarifiers that help delineate the ability of the student. A fit with any National leadership competency statement could be made on the basis of these contextual factors and ability statements.

[DATE OF STATEMENT]

The date is important to add recency/currency to any statement. A date of several years ago

may or may not be relevant to competence depending on the history of what students have done since that time.

[DATE OF STATEMENT]

[NAME OF INSTITUTION]

This statement is written in support of students who have completed a *three year Bachelor of Arts degree in Outdoor Education at La Trobe University* which includes several units where rock climbing skills were developed or/and used:

[NAME OF UNITS COMPLETED AS THEY APPEAR ON THE ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT]

- *OED11 - Field Experience A*
- *OED20R - Rock Environments*
- *OED30TR - Teaching in Rock Environments.*

[SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES MET]

At the conclusion of these units students are able to:

- *safely and competently lead and teach small groups of novices* in the basics of *top roped climbing and abseiling* on *accessible* crags; (such as Bushranger's bluff at Mt Arapiles or the Back Wall at Mt Stapylton)
- organize and conduct an *easy multi pitch climbing experience* for *one or two novices*; (such as on routes in the Organ Pipes at Mt Arapiles)
- match the *teaching format with the desired educational outcome* by using a range of teaching formats for small group climbing instruction;
- incorporate in their teaching *environmental interpretive knowledge* of cliff environments; and.
- base judgements on sound *underpinning* pedagogy, environmental knowledge, climbing knowledge, skills and safety management.

[QUALITATIVE STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING]

In meeting the exit standards of the above units students have, as a minimum, *logged 2000m of lead rock climbing* at a *variety of venues and rock types*, completed *24 days of direct instruction and teaching under supervision.*

[PARITY WITH COMMUNITY AWARD]

In developing these professional abilities students have, as a minimum, demonstrated the technical ability in excess of the requirements of the Australian Climbing Instructor Assoc. inc. (*ACIA*) *award of a Single Pitch Guide.*

[CONTEXT OF A DEGREE]

The rock climbing specific knowledge and skills described here were developed in the context of a three year full time course of study in outdoor education. Within the degree students completed units which included in-depth study of safety management planning, outdoor leadership, group management, environmental issues, ecological knowledge, education and underlying theory, teaching practices and professional experience.

Figure 1: Sample activity statement developed for rock climbing

[NAME OF INSTITUTION]

... *three year Bachelor of Arts degree in Outdoor Education at La Trobe University* ...

Each of the tertiary institutions involved in outdoor leadership education will have their own flavour and emphasis. Although the

statements ought be printed on institution letterhead, the up front acknowledgement of the institution is an important qualifier.

[NAME OF UNITS COMPLETED AS THEY WOULD APPEAR ON A TRANSCRIPT]

OED11 - Field Experience A

OED20R - Rock Environments

OED30TR - Teaching in Rock Environments

The main qualification offered by Universities is a degree. The transcript and testamur are the official documentation that signals completion of study. On the transcript specific units are listed and will have a grade. Readers of the activity statement need to be able to cross reference to the transcript and unit grades. (The unit grades would not be included here otherwise individual statements would be needed and would become more like references.)

[SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES MET]

At the conclusion of these units students are able to:

- **safely and competently lead and teach** ... a clear summative statement of what students can do ...**small groups of novices** ... delineates the client group ... **top roped climbing and abseiling** ... specifies the scope of the activity ... **accessible** crags... describes the context of remoteness. The examples add clarity. ... **easy multi pitch climbing experience for one or two novices** ... describes the activity scope and client group,
- ... **teaching format with the desired educational outcome** ... describes ability as a consequence of a degree program in education.
- ... **environmental interpretive knowledge** ... describes specific aspect of a program you wish to highlight. This may vary from institution to institution.
- ... **underpinning** environmental knowledge, climbing knowledge, skills, safety management and judgement ... This could be omitted but I suppose I am using a bit of CBT jargon speaking of underpinning knowledge.

The academic standard for describing learning is to refer to unit objectives. These objectives can be behavioural, describing what the student has done, or qualitative, describing what they

have learned. There is a mixture of these in the example provided but the emphasis is upon behavioural objectives. Each of the statements within the objectives clarifies the nature and scope of the students learning providing clear contextual limits to their competence as the unit undertaken would dictate.

[QUANTITATIVE STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING]

... **logged 2000m of lead rock climbing** at a **variety of venues and rock types**, completed **24 days of direct instruction and teaching under supervision**. The quantitative statements will vary between institution. Qualitative statements give a tangible summary of experience from a program. What aspects are quantified will differ between activities (see example 2 for bushwalking) but ought be consistent across institutions. Quantities are not in themselves definitive of competence, but they do provide a picture of a person's experience base.

[PARITY WITH COMMUNITY AWARD]

... **(ACIA) award of a Single Pitch Guide**. Where parity with a commonly accepted community award is obvious it could be stated. Universities need to identify which awards are suitable for parity statements. My guess is that they ought be the community awards with a history of use. The provider of community awards may not think such a statement is viable, but that is yet to be discussed.

[CONTEXT OF A DEGREE]

Each degree program will have emphasis on differing aspects that add a contextual flavour to learning and these could be noted here. The healthiest outcome for the outdoor profession in Australia would be the development of university programs with particular strengths and identities that are relatively distinctive. For example, La Trobe Bendigo has always had a strong environmental focus. Employers know that a Bendigo graduate has sound outdoor skills developed within a context of environmental knowledge and sustainability.

Conclusion

A National Outdoor Leadership Register is a list of those outdoor leaders judged to be competent to safely lead others – but judged by whom and to what process? The current register relies primarily upon the authority of the Training Package and the processes of validation and authenticity of Registered Training Organisations. In the end it is an

individual sitting on a rock face watching someone climb who makes a judgement based against criteria.

The alternate model of describing professional ability presented here rest on a similar set of processes – equally valid, or questionable. At the end of the day there is an assessor making judgements about competence. I believe the professional activity statements described here have the potential to be a pathway to national registration. The statements have authenticity in that they are endorsed by accredited universities. The content of the statements are also transparent and referenced to context. The capacity for the NORLS to accept the validity of statements will be a measure of the willingness of the OCA to stand behind its support for quality leadership education beyond that available in the vocational education and training sector. I would argue that only if the OCA can genuinely make this shift can the industry and profession move to seek government support for legislated accreditation.

References

- AOEC. (2001). ORCA, AOEC, Education, Accreditation? In 12th National Outdoor Education Conference: Our Sense of Place. Bendigo: AOEC.
- BMTAB. (2000). Bushwalking and Ski Touring Leadership. Melbourne: Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Training Advisory Board.
- Kingsford, K. (1997). Fact and Fiction: What the Outdoor Recreation Council of Australia is and is not. *Journeys*, 3, 1. pp. 6.
- La Trobe University (2004) *2004 Course Handbook: Undergraduate*. Bundoora: La Trobe University.
- Mann, K. (2002). Rethinking Professional Pathways for the Australia Outdoor Industry/Profession. *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education* 7 (1), 4-9.
- Marginson, S. (1993). *Education and Public Policy in Australia*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Martin, P. (1998). Education Ideology and Outdoor Education: Why ORCA and the AOEC exist. *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*, vol. 3, no.1, pp. 14-20.
- Martin, P. (2000). Outdoor recreation and outdoor education: Parts of a bigger whole. *Journeys*, 5, 1 pp. 3.
- ORCSA & OESA (1999). *Connections – State Outdoor Education conference*. Adelaide. October 22-24.
- Osborne, M. (2005). A Message from the Vice Chancellor. In *Graduation 2005*. Bendigo: Latrobe University.
- Recreation SA. (1993). *Proceedings of the Second NORLD Symposium: Adelaide: Recreation SA*.
- Richards, G. (1998). ORCA Who? ORCA What? *Journeys*, 3, 3 pp. 10.
- Sport and Recreation Tasmania. (no date). *National Outdoor Recreation Leadership Development Symposium Report: Port Sorell: Sport and Recreation Tasmania*.
- Vandeppeer, P. (2005). Where have the Adventure Activity Standards come from? Paper presented at a meeting of Recreation SA, April 2005.
- VTAC. (2004). *A Guide to University and TAFE Courses*. Melbourne: Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre.

Example 2, BUSHWALKING

5 May, 2005

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY, BENDIGO

This statement is written in support of students who have completed a three year Bachelor of Arts degree in Outdoor Education at La Trobe University that includes several units where bushwalking skills were developed or/and used:

[NAME OF UNITS COMPLETED AS THEY WOULD APPEAR ON A TRANSCRIPT]

- OED11AOL - Outdoor Living and Travelling Skills
- OED11WKN - Ways of Knowing Nature
- OED12NS - Naturalist Studies
- OED23FEC - Field Experience C
- OED31EO - Education in the Outdoors

Bushwalking is a core practical competence that must be developed to a high level by all students.

In addition, some students may choose to undertake the following two elective units. These units focus on the educational aspects of planning and implementing environmentally focused bushwalks.

- OED21BE - Bush Environments
- OED31TBE - Teaching in Bush Environments.

[SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES MET]

At the conclusion of the core units students are able to:

- safely and competently guide small groups of novices on overnight bushwalks in semi-remote areas of South-Eastern Australia;
- organize and conduct an extended overnight bushwalk in remote areas of South-Eastern Australia;
- match the teaching format with the desired educational outcome by using a range of teaching formats for small group bushwalks;
- incorporate in their teaching environmental interpretive knowledge of bush environments; and.
- Make sound judgements underpinned by pedagogy, environmental knowledge, bushwalking knowledge, skills and safety management.

[QUALITATIVE STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING]

In meeting the exit standards of the above core units students have, as a minimum, participated in 38 days of bushwalking in a variety of bush environments (including, but not limited to, the Grampians, the NSW and Vic. alps, and the Box-Ironbark forests of central Vic.). Those who have completed the additional two elective units will have undertaken a further 18 days of bushwalking and teaching under supervision.

[PARITY WITH COMMUNITY AWARD]

The bushwalking experience of graduates of the three year Bachelor of Arts (Outdoor Education) exceeds any existing community bushwalking award. This claim is supported by the depth of educational and leadership theory covered (in both directly related and supporting units), depth of experience, and the education level of leaders.

[CONTEXT OF A DEGREE]

The bushwalking specific knowledge and skills described here were developed in the context of a three year full time course of study in outdoor education. Within the degree students completed units which included in-depth study of safety management planning, outdoor leadership, group management, environmental issues, ecological knowledge, education and underlying theory, teaching practices and professional experience.