



Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation

Youth Outdoor Recreation Queensland: Barriers and Activators

Summary of recommendations

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In 2019, the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation with the assistance of the University of Queensland, undertook a study into the participation, activators and barriers of young people's engagement in outdoor activity in Queensland.

The key purpose was to investigate how participation in outdoor recreation by young people could be increased.

739 Queenslanders aged 13 to 29 statewide participated in this survey.

This report is a summary of the recommendations from the original survey outcome report document by University of Queensland, with some key supporting quotes as written in the online survey by the respondents.

Original source:

Buning, R.J, Pegg, S. & Oren, O. (Dec 2019). *Youth Outdoor Recreation in Queensland: Barriers and Activators*. The University of Queensland Business School. Queensland, Australia.



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Generally, youth want to participate in outdoor recreation to have fun and be active with their friends, but they often lack the:

- equipment,
- the financial resources,
- time,
- partners,
- information, and
- confidence to do so.

Thus, outdoor recreation needs be made more accessible and inexpensive and marketed as such to all Queensland youth. And, any such programs or resources need to be directly promoted to youth in a welcoming, grassroots, and age appropriate manner.

"Cheaper or subsidies options for outdoor activities. More transport options to activities, it's really hard to go hiking in QLD without a car!"

"Government partnering with local clubs/groups with the equipment and knowledge to help young adults learn something new in a friendly environment. Most young people can't or don't want to fork out money for equipment to give something a go if they've not done it before, so a free or small fee 'come and try' day gives them a chance to see if they enjoy it."

"Make them feel more comfortable in their own skin, they don't have to be afraid to be seen. If you make mistakes its ok it means you will just get better. Make them feel more confident, tell them that they can do anything they put their mind to"



Encouraging and supporting youth to create friendships to participate in outdoor recreation with is paramount to improving participation, especially for those that feel excluded, lonely or lack a friendship group to participate with.

"Create welcoming social environments that encourage outdoor activities"

The youth surveyed acknowledge that both mental and physical health benefits are derived from outdoor recreation, as such these benefits should be included any such marketing and program messages.

"...the positive effects that going outdoors has on one's mental and physical health definitely helps young adults become engaged with the outdoors. Advertising these benefits on social media channels would be effective."

Study findings revealed that many respondents felt a lack of information about opportunities impeded many younger people from engaging in outdoor activities in the manner, or the level, they desired.

"Cleverly well placed advertisements for local outdoor activities on their social media..."



Greater effort by youth agencies to disseminate information regarding their services and programs is warranted, especially through the youth that are already using these services. Perhaps referral or mentorship programs would be helpful in this regard.

"Make scouts and other outdoor groups more well-known and popular"

"Don't make it feel like a church group activity"

"I think there should be more promotional awareness of what can be done outside. Maybe put an ad in school newsletters or on social media. Maybe have a free come and try a new activity day?"



Findings also suggested that a lack of knowledge about how and where individuals might go to access equipment was a barrier to higher levels of participation in outdoor recreation activities.

"Succinct app with a catalogue of equipment/facilities/trails. Information is often hard to find when planning to travel somewhere or undertake an activity. Not knowing what to expect may be a barrier. E.g. not knowing how long a trail goes or the grade/elevation for may mean not doing it for worrying about the unknown/limited fitness"

"More knowledge on what's out there, the options available. Most people don't seem to realise how accessible a lot of it is, even without a group or tour guide."

Technology based solutions appropriate for various age groups such as gamification, resource information, “one stop shop” resources, and smartphone applications maybe effective in improving outdoor recreation amongst Queensland youth.

“More apps on smart phones [that] encourage physical activities with some sort of reward system in place”

“Educate about the benefits of being outdoors and the dangers of being inside all day (from a mental, physical and psychological standpoint).

Possibly a monetary reward from the government - like 10c for 1000 steps etc (that would CERTAINLY get me active!)”



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