

7 July 2021

Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
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To Whom It May Concern,

Submission to the Australian Curriculum Review Consultation

Outdoors Queensland is the peak body for the outdoor sectors in Queensland. We represent and advocate on behalf of outdoor organisations and individuals in Queensland.

The mission of Outdoors Queensland is to ensure that all people have opportunities to create connections with Queensland's outdoors. Our vision is to create a world where the outdoors is a vital part of every healthy life - a healthy world comes from a balanced life, incorporating outdoor activities for all people.

Outdoors Queensland appreciates the work that has been done by ACARA in the Australian Curriculum Review Consultation, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide input to this process.

We support the overall goal to improve the Australian Curriculum by refining, realigning and decluttering the content so it focusses on the essential skills students should learn and is clearer for teachers on what they need to teach. Presenting the curriculum in a more user-friendly format and making the curriculum clearer should be welcomed.

We acknowledge the three dimensions of Australian Curriculum - learning areas, general capabilities, and cross curriculum priorities. We understand the approach taken is that learning areas have primacy, and the general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities are considered best taught and learnt through the learning areas.

The primary focus for Outdoors Queensland in this process is the inclusion of outdoor activities and outdoor education within the Australian Curriculum, and establishing where outdoor activities and outdoor education fit.

Outdoor activities should be delivered to all Australian students of all ages as part of a comprehensive Health and Physical Education curriculum. Of the top ten organised physical activities with the highest levels of participation, outdoor activities account for five (recreational walking, athletics track and field including jogging and running, swimming, cycling, and bush walking) for Australian adults and two (swimming and athletics track and field including jogging and running) for Australian children (source – AusPlay 2020 survey, Australian Sports Commission).



The figures presented in the AusPlay data cover only “organised” participation in physical activities. The less organised, more organic types of participation, such as family activities and child-led activities, are not included in the AusPlay statistics. Participation in outdoor activity by the Australian population has been widely recognised as leading the way in keeping our communities healthy as the COVID-19 restrictions disrupted organised activities.

We note that “lifelong participation” is a core concept in Health and Physical Education. We submit that if the Australian Curriculum is truly focussed on the essential skills students should learn, then there should be a focus on students learning essential skills to enable them to undertake a lifetime of outdoor activities and be physically active and healthy.

In the Health and Physical Activity content descriptions for under the *Movement and physical activity* strand, specific references to “outdoor settings”, “outdoor activities” and “natural and built environments” in the original are proposed to be replaced with the more general “range of activities in different settings, including natural and outdoor settings”, “various physical activities”, “range of physical activity options”. While this allows more flexibility for teachers, it could potentially allow students to progress through the curriculum without learning the essential skills involved in outdoor activities. We submit that this should be reconsidered.

Outdoors Queensland strongly supports the inclusion of active play within the focus areas for Health and Physical Education. Active play is a key component of physical activity for children.

We are aware that Australian Tertiary Outdoor Educators Network (ATOEN) has recommended re-naming the “Challenge and adventure activities” focus area for Health and Physical Education to “Nature-based activities and journeys” to reflect a focus on human-powered physical activity in nature-based environments. Outdoors Queensland broadly supports this suggestion, however we suggest that this focus area should be broader than purely *human-powered* physical activity, by also encompassing horse-riding, wind-powered activities such as sailing and sailboarding, electrical-powered activities such as e-bikes and e-scooters, and fuel-powered activities such as riding off-road motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles – all of these activities involve levels of physical activity.

We suggest that further work is required on the listed activities that are currently provided under the “Challenge and adventure activities” focus area for Health and Physical Education. While there is some cross-over between outdoor sports and outdoor activities that could be included within Challenge and Adventure Activities, we would suggest that athletics (track and field), martial arts, cycling (BMX and track cycling) and swimming for performance (with a focus on technique) would be better included in “Games and sports”. The Challenge and Adventure Activities list could be amended to include athletics (cross-country), cycling (mountain biking, gravel biking and road cycling including e-bikes) and swimming (open-water), plus other adventure activities such as horse-riding, stand-up paddling, bouldering, slack-lining, snorkelling, SCUBA diving, sailing, sail-boarding, parkour, scootering, skateboarding, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding.

We note that some activities are included in the “Lifelong physical activities” focus area, however we submit that this list should be expanded substantially to cover more outdoor activities which can be done throughout the lifespan. In addition to swimming, bushwalking and recreational cycling, the following activities could be added – jogging and running, kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddling, bouldering, slack-lining, rock climbing, snorkelling,



SCUBA diving, sailing, parkour, scootering, skateboarding, off-road motorcycling, and all-terrain vehicle riding.

We note the inclusion of “Outdoor education” within the Health and Physical Education Consultation Curriculum. While we broadly support the description provided, we suggest the initial paragraph could be improved by the insertion of a second sentence as follows – “Outdoor education engages students in practical and active learning experiences in natural environments and outdoor settings typically beyond the school boundary. Outdoor education can also be conducted in natural environments within school boundaries....”

We suggest that the final sentence in the description of “Outdoor education” should include reference to the fact that outdoor learning can meet the cross-curriculum priorities of Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.

Outdoors Queensland supports the inclusion of the statement that elements of learning in outdoor education draw on content from across the Australian Curriculum, including Health and Physical Education, Geography and Science. However, outdoor learning should not be constrained to those subject areas, and should be included across as many subject areas as possible. That would assist more people to create connections with the outdoors and would ensure that students understand the potential for the outdoors to be part of their best lives.

Independent research has shown that outdoor education decreases anxiety, increases connection to schools, increases connection to peers, and increases students’ efficacy (source - www.oypra.org.au).

We welcome further discussion on any points raised in this submission, which are summarised in the table in Appendix A below. Outdoors Queensland understands that this submission may be published by ACARA as part of the community consultation process.

Please contact Executive Officer, Dom Courtney via eo@outdoorsqueensland.com.au with any queries regarding this submission.

Yours sincerely



Dom Courtney
Executive Officer



Appendix A – Submission Summary

Statement	Suggested Action
The figures presented in the ASC AusPlay data cover only “organised” participation in physical activities	Recognise that participation in outdoor activity (unorganised, incidental, social) by the Australian population is widely recognised as leading the way in keeping our communities healthy as the COVID-19 restrictions disrupted organised activities.
We note that “lifelong participation” is a core concept in Health and Physical Education.	Have a focus on students learning essential outdoor activity skills to enable them to undertake a lifetime of being physically active and healthy.
Proposal to replace Health and Physical Activity content descriptions for under the <i>Movement and physical activity</i> strand with the more general “range of activities in different settings, including natural and outdoor settings”, “various physical activities”, “range of physical activity options”.	We submit that this proposal should be reconsidered. While the proposed wording allows more flexibility for teachers, it could have the negative outcome of potentially allowing students to progress through the curriculum without learning essential skills involved in outdoor activities.
Inclusion of Active Play as a key component of physical activity for children.	Outdoors Queensland strongly supports the inclusion of active play within the focus areas for Health and Physical Education
Suggestion by the Australian Tertiary Outdoor Educators Network to re-naming the “Challenge and adventure activities” focus to “Nature-based activities and journeys” to reflect a focus on human-powered physical activity in nature-based environments	Outdoors Queensland broadly supports this suggestion, although suggests that the list of activities should not be restricted to human-powered activities. Outdoors Queensland suggests broadening the list of “Nature-based activities and journeys” (or Challenge and adventure activities”) to encompass more activities (e.g. e-bikes, e-scooters, off-road motorcycles, ATV’s, horse riding, sailing etc) all which involve levels of physical activity
The current list of activities under the “Challenge and adventure activities” focus area for Health and Physical Education.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suggest athletics (track and field), martial arts, cycling (BMX and track cycling) and swimming for performance (with a focus on technique) would be better included in “Games and sports”. 2. Suggest amending “Challenge and Adventure Activities” list to include athletics (cross-country), cycling (mountain biking, gravel biking and road cycling including e-bikes) and swimming (open-water), plus other adventure activities such as stand-up

	<p>paddling, bouldering, slack-lining, snorkelling, SCUBA diving, parkour, scootering, skateboarding, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, horse riding, kayaking, canoeing, surfing</p>
<p>The “Lifelong physical activities” focus area</p>	<p>Expand the Lifelong physical activities list to cover more outdoor activities which can be done throughout the lifespan.</p> <p>The following activities could be added – jogging, trail-running, hiking, trail-bike riding, kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddling, sailing, bouldering, slack-lining, rock climbing, snorkelling, SCUBA diving, sailing, water skiing, snow skiing, horse riding, scootering, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, camping</p>
<p>We note the inclusion of “Outdoor education” within the Health and Physical Education Consultation Curriculum.</p>	<p>Outdoors Queensland broadly supports the description of Outdoor education provided.</p> <p>Please consider including in the statement:</p> <p><i>“Outdoor education engages students in practical and active learning experiences in natural environments and outdoor settings typically beyond the school boundary. Outdoor education can also be conducted in natural environments within school boundaries.”</i></p> <p>Please reference in the description the fact that outdoor learning can meet the cross-curriculum priorities of Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.</p>