



4th April 2023

HumanAbility
Jobs and Skills Council

Email – humanability@ahha.asn.au

Dear Madam/Sir,

Workforce Planning Process – key issues

Outdoors Queensland is the peak body for the outdoor recreation sector in Queensland. We represent outdoor recreation organisations and individuals in Queensland, consisting of a range of outdoor industry stakeholders, including local governments, schools with outdoor education programs, small businesses and commercial operators, activity-focused peak bodies, clubs and community organisations.

The mission of Outdoors Queensland is that all people have opportunities to make connections with Queensland's outdoors. Our vision is that everyone can enjoy the health and well-being benefits of Queensland's outdoors.

Outdoors Queensland congratulates HumanAbility on being selected by the Department of Employment & Workplace Relations to provide advice and leadership in relation to the following industries:

- Early Childhood Education and Care,
- Health,
- Human Services (including Aged and Disability Services), and
- Sport and Recreation.

Outdoors Queensland looks forward to working with HumanAbility regarding the workforce needs of the recreation (and sport) industry. We are pleased to contribute to the initial workforce planning process conducted by HumanAbility, regarding the identification of key issues to be tackled regarding workforce and workforce development.

In response to the call from HumanAbility for industry stakeholders to provide input, Outdoors Queensland has consulted a range of our members, including education providers.

Burning bridges in the outdoor industry were identified as follows:

- Appropriate wages and remuneration, affecting attraction of workers and retention across the industry, and disincentivising ongoing training for the existing workforce. A stand-alone Modern Award for Outdoor Workers would greatly assist, since the current Modern Awards do not directly fit the work being delivered by outdoor workers.



- Career pathways throughout the outdoor industry need to be better identified and promoted, with opportunities for people to progress from volunteer roles, internships, part-time work, and full-time work. There needs to be more visibility given to program coordination, program manager and logistics roles as career opportunities, with appropriate training and workforce development focussed on those areas to keep people working within the outdoor industry. Workers in one part of the outdoor industry should also be aware of opportunities to move into other areas – for example from outdoor education to adventure tourism to adventure therapy to outdoor recreation etc.
- There needs to be more ways for qualified workers with Cert III or Cert IV in Outdoor Leadership to add additional skillsets so that they are qualified and competent to deliver a wider range of activities. Available workers with ropes course instruct, abseil and climb qualifications are difficult to find in Queensland outdoor industry, partly because some training organisations do not include units in these areas in their activity specialisations. The introduction of funded skillset level courses run regularly (say 3 monthly) in ropes courses, climbing, abseil, and canoe/kayak would help address this problem.

Key changes in direction for the outdoor industry include a larger focus on qualifications and training being driven by broader societal expectations, which is changing the way the outdoor industry operates. Students have expectations of education providers and workers have expectations of outdoor organisations. While some outdoor organisations regularly deliver above and beyond these expectations, delivery in these areas can come under pressure due to impacts from external factors.

An example is that some schools appear to be moving away from delivery of outdoor and environmental education activities because they are unable to employ appropriately trained staff in their location or find timely/cost-effective training for existing staff to continue their outdoor and environmental programs in accordance with the risk management controls that have been established for their schools, such as ratios of qualified leaders to students and currency of training for workers.

The overall sentiment from stakeholder responses is that the “new” Outdoor Leadership Package is an improvement on its predecessor package, with confidence that graduates are generally skilled and knowledgeable job-ready workers. However, there is a view that there is some disconnect between industry experts who develop/review training packages and the true education experience for students and educators – it was observed that the modern “classroom” is a very different environment compared to when many industry experts were students.

It is noted that funding for delivery of training is generally linked to student outcomes, which creates a high priority on observing and assessing students, and less time being allowed for students to learn, practice and enhance skills. This can lead to the situation where a student's first ever experience at a new skill is being assessed to deem them competent or not. The student may graduate with very limited real experience of a particular skill. It is suggested that perhaps the training package could mandate an allowance of a number of practice attempts to allow students to practice a new skill before being observed for an assessment outcome.



While each education provider can currently make their own decisions to adopt this process of allowing skills practice, it is not mandated in the training package, so the economic reality is that this is unlikely to occur widely and consistently.

It is suggested that the broad range of industries covered by HumanAbility could provide opportunities for cross-fertilisation from different education settings so that various education providers could be provided with wide ranging examples of good practice training methods and training package implementation and delivery to students.

Adventure therapy providers noted that there is quite a high level of inconsistency around standards of training and qualifications for workers engaged in adventure therapy work. This approach can lead to significant inconsistency in delivery of quality services to clients, which can directly affect the reputation of adventure therapy as a profession.

Detailed feedback was provided on specific sections of the Outdoor Leadership training package to make them more relevant to industry needs, including suggestions for improvement when that training package is next reviewed. For example:

- In Unit SISOCLM006 Establish belay for single pitch climbing on natural surfaces, there is a requirement for the candidate to be able to build an anchor for a top rope climb using removable artificial equipment (so-called “trad gear” like cams and nuts). This requirement is considered unnecessary at this level of qualification, especially where instructors may not be lead climbers with this quite specific skill set.
- In Unit SISOCLM005 Establish belays for single pitch climbing on artificial surfaces, there is a requirement for the candidate to be able to set up an automatic belay. Some centres do not use automatic belay systems and those that do have those systems already set up at height, and may not be interested in having those systems taken down and re-established by students to perform an assessment task.

Concern was expressed regarding any potential future reduction in the amount of field assessments specified in the Outdoor Leadership training package. It was suggested that if any changes were considered, more time engaged in practical activities in the field in different environments and different weather conditions should be considered for mandating in the delivery of qualifications.

Outdoors Queensland looks forward to ongoing involvement in this process, and trusts that the outcomes will be positive. We welcome discussion on any points raised in this submission.

Yours sincerely



Dom Courtney
Executive Officer

