



QUARTERLY

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NZOIA Chief Executive Update

Time flies. We're already a quarter of the way through 2026 and rapidly moving through spring. The weather over the summer has in most parts of the country been very challenging at times, and this has put an added focus on the need for careful planning and robust safety processes in the outdoors. With large amounts of rain hitting the New Zealand outdoors in recent times it is encouraging to see the latest data from Water Safety NZ. New Zealand has just seen the lowest ten-year average of drownings ever recorded, which is great news. No doubt some of that success will be through the expertise of New Zealand's outdoor instructors. So, well done to everyone on that positive news.

Some other good news for NZOIA is that our membership numbers are continuing to grow and are at an all-time high. We know from our NZOIA membership survey data that this is due mostly to our existing members retaining their NZOIA membership and registration in higher numbers, which is great, and is a sign that NZOIA registration and membership is generally well valued within the sector. However, our survey data also shows that there are less new people coming forward to do their NZOIA qualifications and become new members. Is this a sign of a challenging financial climate? Or maybe other issues? We want to try to understand and work with that as best as possible.

Another question we are asking is around the current structure and labelling of NZOIA qualifications. Is there a need to adjust to make things clearer, simpler, and more efficient? This is something we are currently looking into and seeking feedback on. NZOIA currently has a three-tier qualification system with the three levels labelled as NZOIA Leader, NZOIA 1, and NZOIA 2. Candidates can enter at different points of that three-tier system, and sometimes there can be some repetition of material from one level to another. An outsider to the system may be confused as to whether NZOIA Leader or NZOIA 2 is the highest qualification level. Does the labelling system need to

be clearer for outsiders to understand? Also, does there need to be more clarity around entry points and entry processes, and some refinement of content across different levels? These are all points that are currently being looked at and considered. Feedback on all this from our members and from the sector is always much appreciated, and we've got processes underway for collecting input and feedback on these questions.

Also up for discussion at the moment is the vocational pathway for an outdoor instructor in New Zealand. We have seen recent significant changes by the government around how outdoor education is delivered in secondary schools, and there are also major changes continuing to develop in tertiary education. If our rangatahi are interested in a career with the outdoors or as an outdoor instructor, what does that potential vocational pathway look like moving forward? NZOIA and other outdoors organisations need to work collaboratively to help create clear career pathways as best as possible, and to help promote those pathways to our rangatahi so that they have good awareness of them. We need to do a great job of sewing that seed in the minds of our rangatahi that being an outdoor instructor can be a great career and show them the various pathways available for turning that into reality.

We know that the outdoors sector in New Zealand is growing significantly and requires an increasing workforce that is currently insufficient. Therefore we must all work collectively to help facilitate that pipeline of skilled and expert future outdoors workforce in the best way possible. In April NZOIA will head to Wellington to join Sport NZ, Education Outdoors NZ, and a number of other partners from the outdoors sector for a first meeting of a new 'Outdoors Vocational Pathway Working Group' to try to find the best solutions to these challenges and opportunities.

Peter Drew | NZOIA Chief Executive



FATHERHOOD

EMILY NEAL

Kia ora, my name is Emily and I graduated from Ara Institute of Canterbury in 2025 with a bachelor's degree in Outdoor Education and Sustainability. As part of this degree, I completed a year-long independent research project focused on a topic of personal interest: male participation in Adventure Recreation after becoming fathers.

Over the summer of 2024–25, I spent a significant amount of time in the whitewater kayaking scene in Murchison. I was surrounded by people who lived and breathed adventure, including a number of fathers who were still deeply involved in recreation. Watching how they balanced time on the river with family life sparked a question that stayed with me: how do men continue to engage in adventure recreation after having children?

When I returned to Christchurch for my final year of study, I noticed the same pattern again. Many of the tutors, mentors, and practitioners I looked up to in the outdoor sector were fathers, each engaging in adventure recreation in different ways. It made me curious about what had changed for them, what hadn't, and whether their experiences are similar to those we often hear around motherhood and recreation. I found myself in honest conversations with fathers about their experiences, conversations that don't always get the airtime they deserve. My aim became simple: to create a space where men could reflect openly on how fatherhood has influenced their relationship with adventure, identity, and responsibility.

Three strong themes emerged in conversations with fathers: a sense of loss, the weight of competing social expectations, and navigating family life alongside recreation. While each experience was unique, these shared themes offered insight into how fatherhood reshapes participation in adventure recreation.

One of the strongest themes was a sense of loss, longing, or being "in limbo" during the transition into fatherhood. Many fathers spoke about an identity shift. Adventure was still calling them, but having a child meant they could no longer head out as freely as they once had. For all of the fathers I spoke with, adventure recreation was not just something they did in their spare time, it was deeply embedded in who they were.

Stepping back from adventure, even temporarily, was challenging. Several fathers described a constant pull to be outside and recreating, despite new responsibilities at home. One participant described this feeling as:

"You get itchy, you want to do this. So, I still want to travel, and then you still want to do activities or want to climb the big mountains."

This tension placed fathers in a difficult position. They spoke about not wanting to abandon their responsibilities at home, while also feeling that their sense of self and dignity was closely tied to being able to recreate. Many described feeling caught between the desire to be present fathers and the ongoing pull of adventure spaces.

Over time, however, many fathers experienced a gradual reprioritisation. Adventure often slowed and became less dominant than it once had been. Several fathers spoke about finding fulfillment in fatherhood in ways they hadn't anticipated. One participant reflected on how his perspective shifted over time:

"I was quite surprised. I used to scroll Facebook and look at all these people having missions, and why aren't I having missions? And now I don't care. I'm doing something pretty rad."

For him, the experience and joy of raising a family surpassed the need to constantly be out recreating. Adventure was still important, but no longer the sole source of purpose or identity.

Another strong pattern that emerged was the weight of social expectations fathers felt after becoming parents. Fatherhood brought new responsibilities, but also external pressure that many had not anticipated. Fathers spoke about struggling to meet competing expectations, to continue performing at a high level in adventure recreation, particularly in professional spaces, while also being present, supportive, and engaged at home.

One father described feeling caught between expectations from his social and professional circles, and those of his whānau:

"So now there's a little bit of an internal battle with you. Your social group expects you to still be pushing hard, professionally you're expected to be operating at a certain level, but then from a whānau perspective, there's no point."

Maintaining previous levels of performance in adventure recreation requires time, training, and commitment, all of which come at a cost. Several fathers questioned the value of 'pushing hard' if it meant sacrificing time with family. This ongoing negotiation left many feeling stretched across multiple roles.



Karl with Nemah, Maani and Paige

Changing social expectations around fatherhood also reshaped daily life. Fathers spoke positively about more equitable roles within partnerships but acknowledged that this also meant taking on more responsibility at home. As one participant explained:

"You kind of get back from work, and then you kind of go to work, you know, looking after the kids and stuff like that, which is a good thing to do to try to ease your partner from that. But then I think it, in turn, means that there's less time for you to be able to do other things."

Parenting did not end at the end of the workday. Caring for children, supporting partners, and managing household responsibilities reduced the time and energy available for personal recreation. While these shifts were largely welcomed, they had real impacts on how, when, and how often fathers could engage in adventure activities.

Social expectations also surfaced in how fathers felt judged for the ways they chose to raise their children. Many of the fathers I spoke with had grown up in outdoor environments and wanted to share adventure and nature with their kids. However, this often led to questions from others around safety, risk, and



appropriateness. One father reflected on this experience:

"You say I'm doing this with my child, and they're like, 'Oh.' You're judged on whether that's appropriate or not, or the safety mechanisms, or the perceived risk."

These conversations required fathers to constantly assess not only physical risk, but also how their parenting choices were perceived by others.

Closely tied to this was the idea of what it means to be a 'good dad'. Several fathers spoke about how this perception had shifted over time, becoming increasingly linked to presence, care, and prioritising family, even when that meant sacrificing time in adventure spaces. Together, these reflections highlight how deeply social norms shape fatherhood experiences. Fatherhood was not just a personal transition, but something continually negotiated in relation to others.

The final pattern that emerged was how fathers navigate family life alongside recreation, particularly through ideas of fairness, fulfilment, and future-focused thinking. Fairness within partnerships was a strong consideration for all the fathers I spoke with. Many were conscious of wanting their partners to retain a sense of independence and identity as family responsibilities increased.

One father spoke about actively prioritising his partner's opportunities to recreate and socialise, aiming to keep her life as close as possible to what it was before having children:

"You are giving the opportunity where they need to have their (partner) life as close to what it was, making sure she can go kayaking, or running, or have her social time, there's a want to make that the priority.."

This often meant stepping back from his own recreation to ensure responsibilities were shared, rather than leaving his partner to manage solo parenting while he pursued adventure. Several fathers acknowledged that choosing fairness at home sometimes came at the expense of their own time outdoors but felt this was a necessary and worthwhile trade-off.

Alongside this, many fathers spoke about the unexpected joy and contentment they found in family life. One participant reflected on the satisfaction that came from raising a child and having a happy family, even as his involvement in high-risk or time-intensive adventure decreased: ►



“You are raising a child. You have a happy family. A surprising amount of contentment, without risking myself on big adventures or using lots of my time on them.”

For him, stepping back from big objectives and high exposure did not feel like a failure. Instead, it created space for connection, presence, and a different kind of fulfillment. Adventure was still important, but no longer the sole source of meaning.

Looking ahead, all participants spoke with optimism about the future. Fathers envisioned returning to adventure recreation alongside their children as they grow older, reframing adventure as something shared rather than individual. Some were already beginning to experience this shift, while others were more cautious, questioning whether early exposure was for their children’s benefit or their own. This hesitation reflected a desire to avoid forcing adventure onto their children, instead waiting for interest and readiness to come from the child themselves.

Despite different approaches, a shared hope connected all the fathers. They envisioned a future where adventure remained part of their lives, not as solo pursuits, but as opportunities to guide, support, and recreate alongside their children. In this way, adventure was not lost through fatherhood; it was reshaped into something relational, supportive, and grounded in family.

Through this research, I became increasingly aware of how deeply men are affected by the transition into parenthood, not only at home, but within the outdoor industry itself. Many of the fathers I spoke with were navigating identity shifts, internal pressure, and competing expectations, often without spaces to openly talk about what that experience was like.



What stood out most was not a lack of commitment to adventure or the industry, but a lack of recognition that fatherhood changes how that commitment is expressed. When these experiences remain unspoken, fathers can feel isolated or undervalued, particularly if they are no longer able to participate at the same intensity or frequency as before. Creating space for these conversations has the potential to strengthen the outdoor sector.

For the outdoor industry, this research highlights an opportunity to rethink how we support and retain experienced instructors and recreators. Normalising conversations around parenthood, creating peer connection, and valuing long-term engagement over short-term performance could keep skilled people involved in meaningful ways. This does not mean lowering standards; it means recognising that commitment can look different across life stages.

When fathers feel heard, respected, and supported, they are better positioned to contribute positively to their communities, workplaces, and families. Greater openness around these experiences can create stronger relationships, improve wellbeing, and contribute to a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient outdoor industry.

If you are interested in reading my full report, please email at emilyneal2005@gmail.com

Emily Neal

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to the following members who recently gained NZOIA Qualifications!

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Sea Kayak 1	Luke Shaw, Jonathan A Brown, Keiran Winitana, Michael Dickson

WEAVING WORLDS: AUTHENTIC INTEGRATION OF MĀTAURANGA MĀORI IN OUTDOOR EDUCATION

DAVID WILLIAMS, MASTER OF EDUCATION DISSERTATION, UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

*Kotahi te kākaho, ka whati, ki te kāpuia, e kore e whati.
When reeds stand alone, they are vulnerable, but when
bound together they are unbreakable.*

Kingi Tāwhiao

In response to a pressing call for equity and cultural integrity in education, this research critically examines the pivotal question of how Tangata Tiriti can authentically and appropriately weave mātauranga Māori into Outdoor Education. Te Kuru o te Marama Dewes (2022) explains Tangata Tiriti as an aspirational term which refers to someone who builds relationships with Māori, understands the historical formation of this nation and commits to the ongoing fight for Māori tino rangatiratanga (self-determination).

The purpose of this study was to gather and present the perspectives and experiences of esteemed Māori and non-Māori outdoor kaiako (teachers), and through a culturally responsive approach identify ways in which Tangata Tiriti (non-Māori treaty partners) can effectively partner under Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Outdoor Education. This study aimed to help non-Māori kaiako take action in their teaching practice to foster Treaty relationships in new and exciting directions (Rātima et al., 2022).

The research goal was for these educators to identify strategies and ideas that they believed would assist kaiako in authentically embedding mātauranga Māori into their teaching practice. The research was structured around the IBRLA framework (Initiation, Benefits, Representation, Legitimation, and Accountability), ensuring Māori voice, ethics, and values remained central throughout (Bishop, 1996). Reflexivity: *acknowledging my own positionality and biases* was a key tool in honouring this kaupapa.

Mātauranga Māori is defined as “the body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including the Māori world view and perspectives, Māori creativity and cultural practices” and te ao Māori refers to “the Māori world, it encompasses Māori knowledge, language, values, and beliefs, and provides the context within which Māori live and interact” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 4).

Findings

Tama tū, tama ora; tama noho, tama mate – Those who are active and live will prosper; those who sit and dwell become sick.

This whakataukī reflects the participants’ view that “we must push through the barriers and challenge the status quo to make a difference in education.”

1. Authenticity Over Tokenism

Authentic integration of mātauranga Māori requires moving beyond surface-level gestures and instead grounding teaching in whakapapa, identity, and genuine relational practice. Participants highlighted that tokenistic behaviours such as decorative use of kupu or values without deeper understanding, can unintentionally reinforce colonial dynamics and superficial engagement. They stressed that authenticity grows from honest self-positioning as Tangata Tiriti, ongoing learning, and seeking appropriate guidance when needed. This aligns with research describing *Pākehā paralysis*, where fear of “getting it wrong” leads to avoidance rather than meaningful action and adds weight to calls for culturally responsive practice grounded in relationship, responsibility, and reciprocity (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008: Gray, 2001).

2. Systemic and Curriculum Barriers

The participants identified significant structural barriers that constrain meaningful bicultural Outdoor Education practice. These included the dominance of Eurocentric perspectives in curriculum design, inconsistent representation of Māori voices in current educational reforms, and assessment standards that often lack cultural authenticity or were not written by Māori. These systemic limitations create tension for kaiako attempting to honour mātauranga Māori within a framework not built for it. The findings echo wider critiques that well-intentioned reforms can still reinforce Western norms unless educators actively resist these pressures through reflexive, decolonising practice (Smith, 2012). Participants also noted that safety systems grounded solely in Western approaches could be enriched through te ao Māori frameworks such as Atua Matua (Heke, 2016), offering a more relational model of risk and environment.

3. Tikanga, Relationships, and Reciprocal Learning (Ako)

Participants emphasised that tikanga provides the ethical and cultural foundation for embedding mātauranga Māori, guiding educators to act with manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and tauutuutu. Instead of relying on individual expertise, the findings reinforced that authenticity arises through collaborative mahi

tahi, co-design with Māori communities, and learning alongside ākonga rather than above them. Ako (reciprocal learning) was repeatedly described as a practical and relational strategy enabling Tangata Tiriti educators to teach with humility while empowering learners as knowledge holders. This approach aligns with established cultural competency frameworks such as **Tātaiako** and **Ngā Hau e Whā o Tāwhirimātea**, which emphasise ako and whanaungatanga as central to culturally responsive pedagogy (Education Council, 2011; Rātima et al., 2022).

4. Outdoor Education’s Unique Potential to Embed Mātauranga Māori

Participants identified Outdoor Education as uniquely positioned to integrate mātauranga Māori meaningfully because of its inherent relationship with te taiao. The outdoor environment naturally enables experiential learning, offering organic opportunities to engage with whakapapa, maramataka, atua, and culturally significant places. This finding supports broader literature advocating for a shift from activity-focused, Eurocentric pursuits toward a **place-responsive model** that honours local histories, ecologies, and cultural narratives (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Participants also reiterated that experiential learning fosters deeper wairua connection for all ākonga, and that what benefits Māori often strengthens learning for everyone. Outdoor Education, therefore, holds powerful potential to model best practice for embedding mātauranga Māori across the wider curriculum.

Finally, the findings highlighted the significance of undertaking an identity haerenga (journey) to establish Pākehā tūrangawaewae through hononga ki te whenua, which means we have connection to the land, through our deep appreciation of te taiao. Pedagogical strategies such as whanaungatanga, ako (reciprocal learning), and cultural responsiveness assist kaiako to explore the unique potential of Outdoor Education as the vehicle to drive mana ōrite (equity) for Māori in education.

Discussion

The research highlighted that learning from Indigenous knowledge without romanticising or appropriating requires recognising foundations in relationship, responsibility, and reciprocity. Participants expressed strong concerns against superficial gestures such as “Te Reo Māori signage or occasional cultural activities without a deeper understanding.”

One participant explained: “Let’s find the things we have in common. Let’s protect the things that are worthy of protection.” This reflects a collective responsibility to safeguard taonga and build culturally responsive outdoor learning environments.

The study argued that Outdoor Education can shift from a Eurocentric model to a place-responsive model under the partnership of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Tangata Tiriti educators must “strive to understand te ao Māori mātāpono and Te Reo” rather than simply adopt mandated curriculum requirements.

Conclusion

Outdoor Education in Aotearoa New Zealand is a multifaceted and diverse field, deeply rooted in the country’s unique cultural and environmental context (Irwin et al., 2014).

While significant curriculum challenges remain, the inherent connection between Outdoor Education and te taiao presents a unique and powerful opportunity to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi

and foster mana ōrite for Māori in education. By embracing tikanga, engaging in genuine co-design with Māori communities, Tangata Tiriti educators can contribute to a more culturally responsive, equitable, and place-responsive Outdoor Education model for all ākonga. This journey requires getting out of your comfort zone, showing humility, having an open mind, and harnessing a deep respect for te ao Māori as a vital platform for Outdoor Education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

***Kāhore taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini –
My strength is not that of one, but of many***

Dave Williams is a Tangata Tiriti educator, adventurer, and programme lead on the Bachelor of Sport Science at Wintec in Kirikiriroa. A passionate advocate for place-based learning and mental health, he has led health and outdoor programmes across Aotearoa. He is a current board member of EONZ and a Doctoral student investigating celebrating practical intelligence within academia.

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RECREATION AOTEAROA: ADVOCACY

It has been a busy period for advocacy at Recreation Aotearoa as we continue to represent the interests of the outdoor sector across several legislative and educational fronts. In this column, I want to update you on two significant issues: our recently completed submission on the Life Jackets for Children and Young Persons Bill and the ongoing consultation regarding the Years 0–10 national curriculum reform.

National Consistency for Water Safety

We have recently completed our Select Committee submission on the Life Jackets for Children and Young Persons Bill. This Member's Bill addresses New Zealand's high fatal drowning rate, which has consistently exceeded rates in Australia and Canada over the last decade.

While the Bill initially focused on mandating lifejacket use for those under 15 on vessels six metres or less, our submission – supported by an appearance before the Transport and Infrastructure Select Committee – urged the Government to go further. Statistics reveal that the majority of watercraft fatalities involve adults, specifically men over 40. Consequently, we advocated for a single, consistent national rule to replace the current patchwork of regional bylaws, which often cause confusion among water users. Our recommendation is to mandate the wearing of lifejackets for all people on all recreational craft whenever the vessel is underway. Analysis suggests this shift from “carrying” to “wearing” could save an average of 12 lives every year.

Shaping the Future Curriculum

While the lifejacket submission is now with the Select Committee, we are currently in the thick of preparing a comprehensive response to the Ministry of Education's Years 0–10 curriculum reform, and we need your perspectives. The Ministry has released draft content for public feedback, with the consultation period open until Friday 24 April 2026. <https://www.education.govt.nz/have-your-say/consultation-year-0-10-draft-curriculum-content/details>

For NZOIA members, the inclusion of Outdoor Education (OE) and Movement Skills (Swimming) as specific components within the draft is a significant development. We have long maintained that OE is the gateway to lifelong recreation in the outdoors, providing formative experiences that build resilience, teamwork, and a connection to te taiao. However, there are significant concerns regarding the broader Physical Education proposal.

We are particularly interested in your professional insights regarding:

- Outdoor Education: How the draft content supports (or hinders) the development of physical literacy and safety management skills.
- Movement Skills (Swimming): Ensuring the curriculum provides a robust framework for water safety.

The new curriculum for Years 0–8 is scheduled for implementation in Term 1, 2027, with Years 9–10 following the same timeline. We are already collaborating with organisations like Education Outdoors New Zealand (EONZ) and Water Safety NZ to ensure a unified voice, but the practical “on-the-ground” expertise of NZOIA instructors is vital to ensure these subjects remain academically rigorous and practically viable.

Please reach out with your thoughts as we refine our position to ensure the outdoors remains a central pillar of every New Zealand child's education.

You can also join us as registrations are now open for the National Outdoors Hui which will be held June 11th in Wellington at Ākau Tangi. This is a day for outdoors organisations to come together and discuss key issues. <https://recreationaotearoa.glueup.com/event/national-outdoors-hui-170722>

We will also be presenting Recreation Aotearoa Outdoors Awards at the Hui. These include three organisational awards and one individual award (the Supreme Award) that goes to someone who has made a significant contribution to the outdoors sector. Last year that was Hazel Nash who founded Whenua Iti.

- Tohu Whaiao Māori – Māori Outcomes Award
- Te Tohu Whakaaweawe Kaupapa – Outstanding Event /Programme Award
- Te Tohu Tiakina Taiao – Environmental Leadership Award
- Te Tohu Manu Kura – Supreme Award

Anyone can nominate for an award so if your organisation is doing a great job in any of the categories submit a nomination and get your teams mahi recognised!

<https://www.nzrecreation.org.nz/awards/outdoors-awards>



Sam Newton – Recreation Aotearoa Advocacy Manager
Jenny Jordan – Outdoor Recreation Programme Manager

KĀRERO O TE TAU

KARLLIE CLIFTON (NGĀPUHI, TE ATIWA)

Kia ora koutou

This year it appears that many of us are prioritising our hauora (wellbeing). For ourselves, the people we work with and for our communities, why not make this year the year you intentionally place wellbeing at the centre of your programmes, your planning, and your purpose.

Hauora reminds us that wellbeing is holistic. It's not just about physical fitness or getting to the summit. We can refer to Sir Mason Durie's wellbeing framework Te Whare Tapa Wha, which is modelled by the walls and roof of a whareniui. This includes **taha tinana, taha Hinengaro, taha whānau, and taha wairua** – the physical, mental and emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of health. And we cannot forget whenua and its importance as a part of this framework, serving as the foundation of the whareniui. In the outdoors, we are uniquely positioned to support hauora in ways that few other environments can.

We can see **taha tinana** in obvious ways: movement, fresh air, challenge, and skill development. But we also know that the benefits run deeper. Time in the bush, on the water, or in the mountains gives people space to breathe, reset, and step away from the noise and pressure of everyday life. For many, especially young people, outdoor experiences provide one of the few places where they can disconnect from constant digital stimulation and reconnect with themselves.

Taha Hinengaro is strengthened when people face manageable challenges. When someone realises they can paddle further than they thought, navigate a track, or push through discomfort, their confidence grows. These small wins build resilience – something we need now more than ever.

Equally important is **taha whānau**. Outdoor programmes create shared experiences that foster trust, communication, and genuine connection. Around a campfire or working together to set up shelter, barriers often drop away. People talk more honestly. They support each other. They learn what it means to be part of a team. These moments can be powerful for building belonging.

And then there is **taha wairua** – the sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves. Aotearoa's landscapes naturally invite reflection. Standing on a ridgeline, watching the tide move, or sitting quietly in the ngahere can create moments of perspective that are hard to replicate anywhere else. These

experiences can ground people, helping them find meaning, calm, and gratitude.

Beneath the four walls of Te Whare Tapa Whā, it is also important to acknowledge **whenua** as the foundation. In your work, this is especially significant. The land is not just the place where your programmes happen – it is an active part of the learning and wellbeing that takes place. Time spent in the ngahere, on the awa, or along the coastline can build a deeper sense of connection, belonging, and responsibility. As instructors, you have the privilege and responsibility of helping people develop respectful relationships with the whenua, encouraging kaitiakitanga and recognising these environments as taonga that support the hauora of present and future generations.

As outdoor instructors, you don't just deliver activities; you hold spaces where wellbeing can grow. However, it is essential to recognise that you cannot sustainably support the hauora of others if you are not attending to your own. Many of you spend long days in demanding environments, carrying responsibility for group safety, emotional support, and decision-making under pressure. Over time, that load can take a toll if you don't intentionally create space for rest, reflection, and connection for yourself.

Prioritising our own hauora might look like building in recovery time between programmes, debriefing with colleagues, staying connected to your own reasons for working in the outdoors, and making sure you still experience these places for your own enjoyment—not just as workplaces. When you feel grounded, supported, and well, you will show up with more patience, presence, and clarity for the people you lead.

The outdoors has always been a powerful teacher. Right now, it may also be one of the most important tools for supporting wellbeing across our communities. If we centre hauora in what we do this year –including our own –we're not just teaching outdoor skills; we're helping people, and ourselves, build resilience, connection, and a stronger sense of who we are and where we belong.

Ko au te whenua, ko te whenua ko au –
I am the land, and the land is me

Kia pai tō tau hauora

Karllie Clifton (Ngāpuhi, Te Atiawa ki Waipounamu)

Karakia – for Self-regulation (listen online: <https://www.thows.org.nz/karakia-self-regulation>)

Hā ki roto
Hā ki waho
Kia tau te mauri e kōkiri nei
I ngā piki me ngā heke
Ko te rangimarie tāku e rapu nei
Tihei mauri ora!

Breathe in
Breathe out
Settle the mauri that stirs inside of me
Through the ups and downs
It is peace that I seek
Behold, there is life

Whakatauki – Māori Proverb

He oranga ngākau, he pikinga waiora

Positive feelings in your heart will enhance your sense of wellbeing.

Useful Resources

Te Whare Tapa Wha with Sir Mason Durie
Te Whare Tapa Wha – Mental Health Foundation NZ
Whenua Iti – Wellbeing Activities & Resources

MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL UPDATE

NATHAN WATSON

Photo credit: Mike Forbes

Wildfires, cookers and campfires

We all love a campfire, right? What better way to spend an evening than with the bush TV crackling away, no ads, endless entertainment, and the smell of smoke in your clothes and hair for days afterwards. Maybe a perfectly burnt marshmallow, or three.

Campfires, gas cookers, and hut wood burners are necessities in our line of work, but as we all know, they come with some element of risk. However, with solid hazard identification and risk management principles, the likelihood of any real harm is significantly reduced.

Over the Christmas break, I was reminded of the importance of fire safety when a couple cooking next to us in a hut hadn't screwed their gas bottle and cooker together properly. With gas leaking out, it became an instant inferno and the out-of-control flames provided a very unexpected, sudden increase in heart rate! Rest assured, the fire was safely extinguished by quick-thinking fellow trampers.

It's fitting, but entirely unrelated to the above experience, that we've recently finished a refresh of our 'lighting fires' website content with input from DOC and Fire and Emergency NZ, see: <https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/learn/skills/lighting-fires>

For the first time, we've included details on what to do in the event of a wildfire. The recent wildfire that swept through 3,000 hectares of Tongariro National Park, causing the evacuation of trampers, is a good reminder of the increasing risk they present.

Have you ever faced a wildfire out in the bush? We'd love to hear your story if you have.

Track Grading Icons and Descriptions

Our research into the factors that cause or contribute to safety incidents has identified the importance of selecting a track that suits your abilities. But do our track grading icons make this important step easy enough for people to understand the skills and fitness required for a trip? For many years we've felt this is an area Aotearoa New Zealand can improve on, especially helping non-English speakers and those new to hiking or tramping. For those who don't know the system, the current track grading icons and descriptions are pretty hard to interpret, and they lack some of the basic principles of effective visual communication.

In collaboration with DOC, we've been supporting the redesign of NZ's national walking track icon system. The redesign will help make the icons and associated grades easier for outdoor adventurers to understand.

To support the redesign project, we used our Adventure Voice research community to test a range of proposed new icons, including different symbols, colours and descriptions.

An impressive 2,155 people – or 35% of the community – answered the survey. This is the highest number of responses for all surveys so far. A big thank you to NZOIA members who shared their views through the survey!

The survey findings have been shared with DOC and will help inform the outcomes of the upgrade. We look forward to sharing the new designs with you once they have been confirmed.

It's never too late to join Adventure Voice – visit www.adventurevoice.nz.

Plan My Walk is satellite-ready!

With the launch of One NZ satellite data-enabled apps, we're super excited to share that Plan My Walk is one of the first apps available for this new service.

One NZ customers with an eligible phone and plan can access Plan My Walk in areas without traditional mobile coverage anywhere in Aotearoa, with a clear line of sight to the sky. This means you can use the app to get the latest MetService weather forecasts, check for weather warnings or watches, track alerts and use the map for basic navigation, helping support safer trips.

For satellite capability on Plan My Walk to work:

- Check you have an eligible phone and One NZ plan.
- Install the latest phone software.
- Check you have the latest version of the Plan My Walk app.
- Enable satellite data. On iPhones go to Settings > Mobile > Mobile Data Options > Satellite. 'Satellite' should be on, as should 'Plan My Walk'. For Android phones, this is automatically enabled.

We recommend you test the satellite app service before using it on a trip. To do this, find a mobile phone black spot close to home.

When you're out and about:

- Make sure you can see the sky.
- Check you are connected to the One NZ SpaceX' network

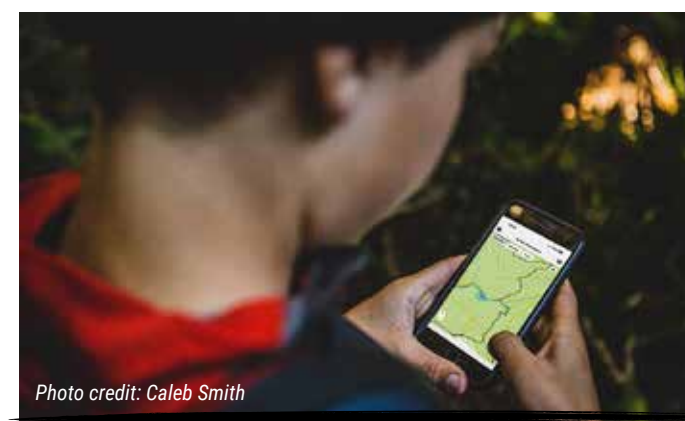


Photo credit: Caleb Smith

at the top of your phone screen – this confirms your satellite connection.

- Open the Plan My Walk app and use it normally.

Note, you can't use satellite mode when your phone is in flight mode.

While this advancement adds another layer of support in the backcountry, we continue to recommend taking a dedicated navigation aid (such as a downloaded digital or printed map, compass or GPS) and an emergency communication device (such as a personal locator beacon or inReach).



Nathan Watson | Operations Manager, NZ Mountain Safety Council



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“The test of a first-rate intelligence,” wrote F. Scott Fitzgerald, “is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time...”

If that’s true, then many Outward Bound students must be first-rate intelligences, judging by the consistent themes of feedback around “solo”.

Because in sixty-odd years of Outward Bound, one theme shows up again and again: solo is both the most disliked *and the most powerful part of the course*.

Cognitive dissonance in a tarp bivouac.

Wait, what is “solo”?

Outward Bound has been running in Anakiwa since 1962, and solo has been part of the experience from day one. We call it *wā tōtahi* now – time by oneself. Our students collectively spend around 100,000 hours a year sitting alone in the bush. At a guess, that’s roughly four million hours over the life of the organisation.

Courses are built around “schemes” – each scheme is a block of 1–3 days dedicated to one activity: sailing, tramping, high ropes, service, and so on. Solo is one of those schemes. It’s the only one where the main piece of equipment is... a 20-litre bucket. More on that later.

On a three-week adult course, solo usually means three nights and two full days on your own. You’re often walked out after dinner, in the dark, with just the glow of head-torches bobbing through the bush. On three-week youth courses and most one-week courses, it’s two nights and one full day.

Students are spread out in the bush, each with their own small dirt platform – sometimes with a view over Queen Charlotte Sound, sometimes beside a stream, always under the trees. For safety you’re within earshot, but not sight, of your watchmates. There’s an instructor nearby or a central rendezvous point with a phone and first aid. Someone swings past once or twice a day to check you’re eating your carrots and haven’t been adopted by a weka.

There are a few rules:

- No books
- No devices (they’ve been locked away since day one anyway)

- No knives, no fires, no sneaking off for a wander
- No disturbing anyone else’s solo

It usually comes late in the course, when bodies are tired from days of tramping, sailing, running and rowing – and minds are overloaded from living in tight communal quarters with a dozen strangers who snore like family.

Solo is a rest. And it’s also a reckoning.

“Most hated, most impactful”: a paradox that works

Research on Outward Bound solos found that participants deeply valued the unstructured time alone in nature – and that those were also the bits they found hardest. That matches what we hear: some students dread the idea of sitting with their own thoughts... and then say solo changed them more than any other activity.

We describe solo as a chance to build self-awareness, confidence, compassion, and stronger personal values. Having the time to sit with yourself is a great gift in a world where we move, with unbridled haste, from one transition to the next. Our mission at Outward Bound is to change lives through challenge and discovery, and the solo experience embodies just that.

The stories people tell afterwards back this up. Just last month one student wrote *“The solo was exactly what I needed to get my life in order and I can’t wait to implement the lessons I learned into my life when I get back home.”*

Another discovered something simpler but just as big: *“My highlight was when I was on my solo and realising that it’s okay to be by myself and feeling okay with myself.”*

For many, just getting through the nights is a huge achievement. *“My proudest moment was surviving the nights in my solo. I am very scared of the dark and never thought I would do something like that.”* People who find the physical side easy often say solo is the real test: *“I am a fit person so felt the physical challenge to be easy however the solo really challenged me mentally.”*

Students don’t just endure solo; they find ways to use it wisely. *“The 3-day solo was an incredible way to reflect on how I’m living versus how I want to be living.”* A self-described “active relaxer” put it this way: *“Stopping to take time to think hard about myself and my goals in life... with no one or nothing else to distract you, it is an experience to think about yourself and your own needs.”*

I will try to do more of this in the future.”

And then there’s the Outward Bound paradox in black and white: *“Solo definitely strengthened me as a person even though I strongly disliked it at the time.”*

And when it’s over, there’s a return to community with a different flavour. “A highlight for me was gift giving after the solo. After quite a heavy introspective time it was really nice to feel part of such a supportive watch whānau... The boat ride back after the solo where everyone was talking and just having a good time and that’s when I realised that everyone was now properly a collective.”

Most terrifying. Most boring. Most peaceful. Most important. Solo asks people to hold all those opposing ideas in their head at once and still function – exactly what Fitzgerald was talking about.

My own solo (and the Loo paper ode)

I did my Outward Bound course back in 1991 (ha! now you might guess just how distant I am from the youth of today). On my solo, once the initial drama of darkness and possums subsided, I wrote a 100-line “Ode to Outward Bound” on a couple of metres of toilet paper. It was a celebration of my watchmates – who they were, what they brought to the group, and how this odd collection of strangers had helped each other achieve things none of us thought we could.

That scroll of dunny paper became a comedy item at the final concert, but it also helped us make sense of what we’d been through together. That’s what a well-facilitated solo does: it turns down the volume of daily life just enough that you finally hear your own voice and realise it’s saying something worth listening to.



About that bucket

Of course, when alumni talk about solo, they don’t just talk about revelations. They talk about the bucket.

Because our pristine solo sites are frequently used, the last thing anyone wants is to dig up someone else’s decaying deposit while trying to commune with nature. So, each student goes out with a clean 20-litre bucket and a lid. The bucket comes back... not full, but definitely heavier.

From there, everything goes into a sustainable wastewater system that treats what needs treating and protects the bush and waterways of Queen Charlotte Sound. It’s deeply unromantic and absolutely essential – a lesson in environmental responsibility wrapped inside a much bigger lesson about being human, and part of nature.

Why solo matters now more than ever

There’s a reason solo has endured for six decades. Young New Zealanders are more digitally connected than any generation in history – and among the loneliest and most distressed. Screen time, social media pressure, academic stress and economic anxiety are combining into a youth mental-health crisis, with elevated rates of psychological distress and loneliness.

In that context, the idea of sitting alone under a tree for a couple of days, with no phone and nothing to do, sounds outrageous. It’s also exactly what many people need.

Solo is not just “time out”. It’s time in:

- Time in nature, which we know reduces stress and improves mood and focus.
- Time in your own head, long enough to notice what you actually think and feel.
- Time in your own life story – to look back at what’s brought you here and forward to what you want next.

Importantly, it doesn’t happen in isolation. It’s wrapped inside a powerful learning experience – a course full of challenge, teamwork and support – and held by skilful instructors who prepare people beforehand and help them unpack it afterwards. Students often go into solo exhausted or overloaded; they come out with new clarity about relationships, work, study, or the kind of person they want to be.

Letter-to-self exercises, journalling prompts, creative tasks like making a small gift for the watch – these simple tools become surprisingly potent when the only competing stimulus is the wind in the trees and the occasional tūī.

You don’t need to be part of an Outward Bound watch to go on solo

Here’s the thing: you don’t have to go to Outward Bound to experience some of what solo offers.

Any New Zealander can find a patch of bush, a beach, a riverbank, even a city park, and sit alone for an hour or two without their phone. You can ask yourself the same questions our students wrestle with on day two of solo:

- What am I proud of?
- What am I avoiding?
- What do I want more of, and what am I prepared to change to get it?

You can feel bored. You can hate it. You can love it. You can experience the peculiar, fertile discomfort of holding both ideas at once.

Let’s be honest: carving that time out of a busy life is hard. Work, school, kids, devices, exercise, social commitments, phone pings and the endless to-do list will always elbow it aside.

That’s where Outward Bound is pretty radical. When you sign up to a course, you’re not just taking on an adventure, you’re outsourcing your own self-discipline. We take your phone, hand you a bucket and a tarp for shelter, walk you into the bush and say: “We’ve made the time. It’s yours. Use it. Become the You that can do anything.”And judging by about four million hours of solo since 1962, most people do.

ENVIRONMENTAL HYPOTHERMIA

RECENT CASES IN AUSTRALIA AND LESSONS FOR NEW ZEALAND BACKCOUNTRY PRACTICE

KERRY WRATT

As we head into the shorter colder months and planning trips in the outdoors for our clients and students, it's a good time for a refresher on hypothermia.

Near the end of 2025, Australia's alpine and subalpine regions witnessed several tragic and near miss incidents involving environmental hypothermia. These events remind us that the combination of cold, wet and wind, if not managed assertively, can be lethal. With appropriate preparation, the right equipment, and good decision-making, hypothermic deaths are avoidable.

Recent Incidents

Mt Field, Tasmania

In October 2025, a bushwalker went missing while hiking the Tarn Shelf Circuit in Mt Field National Park in Tasmania. Conditions in the search area were harsh – waist deep snow, strong wind and rain. His body was found after an extended search.

Victorian Alps (Mt Bogong / Falls Creek area)

In early October, the bodies of two women were discovered near Cleve Cole Hut in the Victorian alpine region. Conditions at the time were described as blizzard-like with plummeting temperatures (to -2.8°C), strong winds ($\sim 83\text{ km/h}$), and fresh snow.

Cradle Mountain, Tasmania

A fatality was reported in Cradle Mountain National Park when a walker was said to have been "overwhelmed" by extreme weather. In a separate but recent incident in the same area, two bushwalkers activated an emergency beacon while suffering mild hypothermia due to weather. Rescue teams walked them out.

Lessons from these incidents

1. Predict weather changes

Access forecasts and develop local knowledge of weather patterns to plan your route and timing appropriately

2. Ensure adequate shelter and appropriate layering

It is important to have easy access to appropriate clothing layers and shelter to protect against wind and precipitation. Ensuring

a bothy bag and water/windproof layers are available without spilling the contents of your pack onto the ground is key!

3. Emergency communications

Access to and a good understanding of emergency communications is essential. The combination of a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) for immediate life or limb threatening situations and a satellite communicator (e.g. InReach, SPOT, Zoleo) to establish 2-way communications is our recommendation.

4. Know your gear, and how to use it

It is not enough to *have* a bothy bag or gear for a hypothermia wrap – practice deploying shelter, layering up under cold stress, and managing wet, windy, cold conditions.



5. Rescue challenges under extreme terrain and conditions

Remember that rescue, particularly in arduous conditions, will take time. Deep snow, low visibility, and strong winds limit helicopter access and land teams. Plan and prepare to be self-sufficient.

Clinical staging of accidental hypothermia: the Revised Swiss System

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Clinical findings ^a	"Alert" from AVPU	"Verbal" from AVPU	"Painful" or "Unconscious" from AVPU AND Vital signs present	"Unconscious" from AVPU AND No detectable vital signs ^b
Risk of cardiac arrest ^c	Low	Moderate	High	Hypothermic cardiac arrest

Fig 1. Clinical Staging of accident hypothermia. The Revised Swiss System. Recommendation of the International Commission for Mountain Emergency Medicine (ICAR MedCom). Musi, Martin E. et al. 2021.

6. Solo or small parties

Solo travel or minimal redundancy increases the risk; disorientation, fatigue, or incapacitation can leave individuals with fewer options.

7. Understand the signs of hypothermia and know how to manage it

Hypothermia can be insidious, especially in the context of leading a group in an alpine setting. Understand the early signs, employ effective buddy systems to ensure everyone is monitored and act assertively when signs of hypothermia begin to emerge.

Hypothermia – a quick recap

We lose heat through four mechanisms:

1. Conduction

Heat loss by direct contact with cold surfaces.
Example: Lying on cold ground.

2. Convection

Heat loss through moving air or water.
Example: Wind or cold-water carrying heat away from the body.

3. Radiation

Heat radiates from the body to colder surroundings.
Example: Body heat lost to cold night air.

4. Evaporation

Heat lost when sweat or water on the skin evaporates.
Example: Wet clothes or sweating in cold weather.

With a good knowledge of these mechanisms, we can employ systems to avoid and manage hypothermia.

Recognise the early signs of hypothermia, and continually monitor for these signs to intervene early:

- **Stumbles** – Poor coordination, clumsiness, unsteady walking
- **Mumbles** – Slurred speech, trouble forming words
- **Grumbles** – Irritability, confusion, unusual behaviour
- **Fumbles** – Poor motor control, dropping things, trouble with zippers or gear.

If these signs are not noted early and managed proactively the patient's level of consciousness may progressively decrease and in profound states their vital signs (e.g. pulse and respirations) will become very difficult to detect. Monitor these patients

closely using the AVPU system (Levels of responsiveness – Alert, Verbal, Pain, Unresponsive). See Fig 1.

Hypothermia puts the patient at risk of cardiac arrest. Unconscious hypothermic patients should remain horizontal, be handled gently and have their vital signs regularly monitored. If a pulse or breathing cannot be detected over an entire minute, start CPR. Because the primary cause of the cardiac arrest in this setting is likely to be hypothermia, focus should be on preventing further temperature loss and rewarming if possible.



Basic Hypothermia Management

Group management:

1. Stop

Recognise the situation and change your objective from moving to managing

2. Drop

Get out of the elements behind a rock / off the ridgeline / into vegetation

3. Pop

Deploy a bothy bag or pop up a tent, to provide immediate wind protection and trap body heat for the group.

Patient Management

- **Dry em up** – Once in a sheltered environment, replace wet clothing with dry.
- **Feed em up** – Give carbohydrates (e.g. sugary drink), only when patient is conscious enough to swallow, so the ►

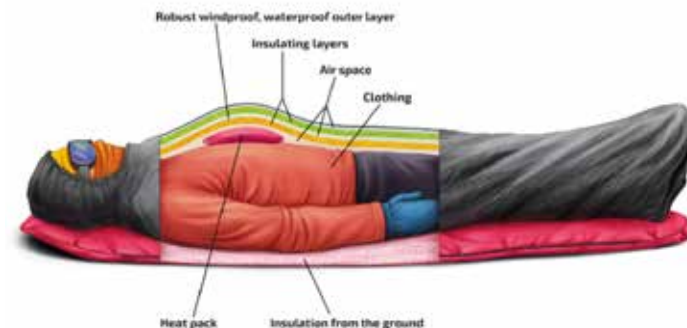


Fig 2. Hypothermia wrap. Retrieved from: Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2022 Jan 3;19(1):501. doi: 10.3390/ijerph19010501. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

body can begin rewarming itself through shivering. The temperature of the liquid is less important than the sugar content.

- **Lift em up** – Insulate from the ground. Prevent conduction heat loss with a foam mat, pack, dry clothing, or foliage
- **Warm em up** – Add warm water bottles to chest and thorax. Put hot water in a water bottle, inside a sock (to prevent skin burns) then place against the chest and armpits
- **Wrap em up** – Put the patient into a hypothermia wrap – sleeping bag + bivvy bag + tarp (see Figure 2). The wrap should cover the patient from head to foot with no gaps to allow air movement.



Kerryn Wratt | Managing Director RescueMED
/ Founding President Australasian Wilderness and Expedition Medicine Society

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Winter is a wonderful time to be out in the backcountry, adventuring, learning, and exploring. Watching the forecast, being prepared with the right clothing, equipment, skills and food, and choosing an appropriate route can prevent hypothermia from happening. It's important to have the first aid skills to recognise the early signs of hypothermia, knowing when to stop, drop and pop, as well as how to dry, feed, lift, warm, and wrap em up. Have fun out there this winter, look after yourself and each other!

Interested in developing wilderness medicine in New Zealand? Email Kerryn at president@awems.org.au to get involved in the society or touch base via www.rescuemed.nz to explore your future in wilderness medicine.

TE HAERENGA AT DILWORTH'S MANGATĀWHIRI CAMPUS: A JOURNEY OF CHALLENGE AND DISCOVERY

Dilworth School's Mangatāwhiri Campus is nestled in the valley between Puketutu, the Bombay Hills, and the Hunua Ranges. It is the home of Te Haerenga "The Journey" the name of our Learning in the Outdoors (LiTO) programme. It is a special place, where the richness of history and whenua is felt as soon as your feet touch the ground and your eyes rise to meet the vast hills that surround it.

The campus sits alongside the Mangatāwhiri River, which flows from its watershed near Kohukohunui, northeast of the campus, past Mangatāwhiri, and eventually joins the Waikato River before reaching the Tasman Sea at Port Waikato. This river is not only a significant landmark in Aotearoa's history, but also a living classroom. Here, ākonga learn what it means to be kaitiaki; stewards of the natural environment while developing a deep sense of connection to place. In many ways, the river reflects the journey our students undertake: beginning in one place, shaped by experiences along the way, and ultimately moving forward with greater strength and purpose.

The Campus itself has evolved alongside this philosophy. From 2012 to 2022, it operated as Dilworth's Rural Campus, delivering a year-long residential programme for Year 9 students. Boys lived onsite for the full academic year, engaging in academic study, faith development, personal growth, and outdoor pursuits. This programme served Dilworth well for a decade and laid the foundation for what would follow.

In 2021, Dilworth made the strategic decision to expand outdoor learning so that every boy from Years 7 to 13 would experience Te Haerenga throughout their schooling. With this shift, the Rural Campus became the Mangatāwhiri Campus, a name that more strongly reflects its location, its heritage, and its connection to the Mangatāwhiri River. Te Haerenga is now one of three core strands of the Dilworth curriculum, alongside Academic/Faith learning and Ako Puāwaitanga, our Flourishing and Wellbeing curriculum.

Ako Puāwaitanga focuses on developing personal and interpersonal capability, and the outdoor environment provides an ideal context for this growth. Concepts such as self-awareness, resilience, leadership, service, and connection are deliberately woven through each programme. Outdoor learning is not an add-on or a camp, it is a longitudinal, scaffolded curriculum area, and participation is an expected part of every student's journey.

The programme draws inspiration from the timeless framework of the Hero's Journey. Each student becomes the "hero," stepping into new environments and challenges, learning lessons through experience and ultimately returning with greater self-knowledge and confidence. A key milestone occurs in Year 10

where students complete their longest and most demanding programme known simply as "The Challenge." Through shared experiences of perceived adversity, supported by experienced instructors, students develop self-efficacy, trust, and strong group bonds. Our role as staff is not to transform students directly, but to create the conditions in which transformation can occur.

Te Haerenga is delivered progressively across Years 7 to 13, with each stage building on the last. In Year 7, students attend four two-day programmes, developing foundational skills such as bushcraft, climbing, high ropes, mountain biking, and water confidence. Three Year 8 programmes extend to three or four days, reinforcing and advancing these skills. By Year 9, students undertake a 12-day programme, where technical skills deepen and personal challenges increase. In Year 10, the experience reaches its peak, with students participating in a 23-day programme in class groups of no more than 24. These longer programmes allow for deeper learning, stronger relationships, and significant personal growth.

As students move into senior school and academic demands increase, the focus shifts towards leadership and consolidation. Year 11 students participate in caving and leadership experiences. Select Year 12 students engage in experiential leadership development programmes designed to prepare them for leadership roles within and beyond the school. And lastly, Year 13's conclude their journey with a final three-day experience after NCEA exams; an intentional opportunity to reflect, reconnect, and close the loop before stepping into life beyond Dilworth.

Across these years, students develop technical outdoor skills in tramping, camping, sea kayaking, climbing, abseiling, and mountain biking. They also participate in surf awareness programmes delivered in partnership with Surf Life Saving New Zealand, as well as whitewater rafting, river crossing, and pack floating experiences at Wero Whitewater Park. More importantly, however, they develop confidence, resilience, leadership, and a sense of belonging, qualities that extend far beyond the outdoor environment. The Mangatāwhiri Campus exists to walk alongside our young men as they undertake their Haerenga. The lessons learned here, about themselves, their peers, and the world around them will continue to shape them long after they leave the valley.

We look forward to welcoming NZOIA Symposium attendees to the Mangatāwhiri Campus in September and sharing this special place with you.

Ngā mihi.

Jamie Pennell | Head of Mangatāwhiri Campus

The Christian Outdoor Leader Conference is back!

FAMILIES WELCOME

After a number of years on hiatus, the Christian Outdoor Leader Conference is back!

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There are eight planets, eight bits in a byte, and—crucially—eight hot dogs in a pack. Yet there are only seven Leave No Trace (LNT) principles. That's always bothered me. Why? Because one of our most vital resources—water—barely rates a mention.

I've been teaching an unofficial eighth principle for years, and it's about time we made it official.

A brief background on Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace began in the mid-20th century as a response to ecological damage caused by recreational use of wild spaces in the United States. In 1994, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics formally established today's seven principles:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of others

The framework arrived in Aotearoa in the 1990s, replacing the largely forgotten Environmental Care Code, which did have water as one of its codes – #4; 'Keep streams and lakes clean'. Now embedded in outdoor education and recreation, LNT still carries the flavour of its American origins. Ask someone to list principle number six, and you'll likely get antlers on their head—what I call The Moose Syndrome. However, LNT is an important part of our outdoor education, and Leave No Trace New Zealand does exceptional work running educational courses and promoting vital conservation work in Aotearoa.

But there's something important missing.

Water – The Silent Absentee

You could debate endlessly which principal water conservation fits into. Truthfully, it fits into none of them properly. And yet, water is the foundation of all life. In Aotearoa, we're facing a full-blown freshwater crisis.

Recent reporting from Land, Air, Water Aotearoa (LAWA) revealed over 3500 rivers, lakes, and estuaries across Aotearoa are under pressure due to widespread faecal contamination and declining water quality—especially in areas of intensive land use.

Some positives from the report were:

- Freshwater clarity is improving
- Overfishing and seabed trawling have decreased
- Harmful air emissions have declined

But major concerns remain:

- Indigenous biodiversity is declining
- Water quality in heavily farmed areas is worsening
- Over 75% of dairy farm soils suffer serious compaction (LAWA, 2025)

Why We Need an Eighth Principle...

Some argue LNT focuses too much on preserving wilderness aesthetics rather than addressing deeper issues like consumerism or production impacts. While "Beyond Leave No Trace" (2009) attempted to expand the concept, it has not stuck—largely because it was too complex to remember. So let's make it simple...

*I propose an eighth Leave No Trace Principle: **Protect and care for waterways and oceans.***

Let's embed it in our teaching, our trips, our signage, our culture. Let Aotearoa lead the world in this evolution.

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NZOIA Assessments, Training and Refresher Workshops

Course	Course fee (NZOIA Members) *
Refresher Workshops	\$230 (\$125 1/2 day)
Training Courses	\$480 (\$255 1 day)
Assessments	
Leader Assessments: Abseil Leader Bush Leader Canoe Leader Canyon Leader Cave Leader Kayak Leader Mountain Bike Leader Rock Leader Sea Kayak Leader	These assessments are run under the Free Range Assessment Model \$150 plus any Assessor fees and expenses. Please contact an Assessor directly via our website to arrange an assessment and their fee. You are required to be a Registered Member to attend a Free Range Assessment (or be listed under a NZOIA Affiliated or NZOIA Climbing Wall Membership).
Other Assessments: Artificial Whitewater Climbing Wall Supervisor (CWS) CWS: Monitor Lead Endorsement Single Rope Technique Endorsement	
1 Day Assessments (land based 1:4 ratio) Single Rope Technique Endorsement Sport Climbing Endorsement	\$335
1 Day Assessments (water based 1:3 ratio) Canoe 1 Upgrade Sea Kayak – Instructor Endorsement Multisport Kayak Endorsement	\$350
Overnight Assessment (Midday to Midday) Overnight Endorsement	\$365
2 Day Assessments (land based 1:4 ratio plus evening session) Cave 1 Mountain Bike 1 Rock 1 Sport Climbing	\$655
2 Day Assessments (water based 1:3 ratio) Sea Kayak Guide	\$665
2 Day Assessments (water based 1:3 ratio plus evening session) Canoe Guide	\$705
3 Day Assessments (land based 1:4 ratio) Mountain Bike 2	\$855
3 Day Assessments (land based 1:4 ratio plus evening session) Bush 1 Canyon 1	\$870
3 Day Assessments (water based and NZOIA 2 1:3 ratio) Kayak 1 & 2 Multisport Kayak Sea Kayak 1 & 2	\$905
3 Day Assessments (water based and NZOIA 2 1:3 ratio plus evening session) Canoe 1 Bush 2 Cave 2 Canyon 2 Rock 2	\$925
4 Day Assessments (1:4 ratio plus evening session) Alpine 1	\$1095
5 Day Assessments (NZOIA 2 1:3 ratio plus evening session) Alpine 2	\$1430

The course calendars for Assessments, Pre-assessment Training and Refresher workshops can be found at www.nzoi.org.nz. Members are notified of updates to the calendar via the NZOIA 4YA – our weekly email.

Booking for a NZOIA Assessment, Pre-assessment Training or Refresher Workshop

1. Go to www.nzoi.org.nz
2. It is highly recommended you attend a pre-assessment training course prior to applying for an assessment
3. Check out the Scope and Syllabus, if you are applying for an assessment then make sure you meet all the pre-requisites.
4. On the course calendar, find the event you want to apply for (you will need to be logged into your member profile) and select 'Apply'. Upload any prerequisites (i.e. your logbook, summary sheet, first aid certificate and any other required documentation to your application).
5. Applications close 6 weeks before the course date.
6. After the closing date we will confirm that the course will run.
7. If NZOIA cancels a course, you will receive a full refund/transfer of your fee.
8. If you withdraw before the closing date, you will receive a full refund of your fee. If you withdraw after the closing date of a course, the fee is non-refundable. It is transferable under exceptional circumstances (e.g. bereavement, medical reasons), medical certificates/other proof may be required. Contact admin@nzoi.org.nz for more details.

Further Information

Details of courses run by NZOIA, pre-requisites and online payment are all available at: www.nzoi.org.nz

Courses by special arrangement

It is possible to run assessments on other dates. You will need to give us a minimum of 3 months' notice, a minimum of 3 motivated candidates and the date of when you would like the course to be run.

Go to the Custom Courses page on the website www.nzoi.org.nz/qualifications/courses/custom-courses for details on how to arrange a course.

Course Costs

All courses run by NZOIA are discounted for members and heavily subsidised by external funding.

*Course fees are for NZOIA Members only unless stated otherwise.

www.nzoi.org.nz

NZOIA
Excellence in Outdoor Leadership

We want your story!

We are looking for contributions from you, the NZOIA members, for the NZOIA Quarterly. Do you have a story to tell? Do you know someone who has thoughts to share?

Articles could be:

A personal adventure and how your experiences have impacted your instruction/guiding of others.
/ An incident, near miss or accident that others could learn from. / A personal profile – an interesting tale about how you got to be where you are now in the world of outdoor instructing.
/ An organisation that is doing innovative and interesting things – with its programme, philosophy, direction and instruction or guiding. / A reflection on any aspect of outdoor instruction/guiding that you think would be educational and beneficial for others to hear.

Contact the editor with your ideas and for guidelines: editor@nzoi.org.nz



Photo: Johnny Johnson

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Eat Yourself Fitter (25), Wye Creek
Photo: Guillaume Charton

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PLANTING THE SEEDS OF ADVENTURE



Photos supplied by Dilworth Mangatāwhiri Campus

Profiles of organisations are welcomed for the back page series "Planting the Seeds of Adventure". Contact editor@nzoi.org.nz