



Outdoor Council of Australia

**Submission from the
Outdoor Council of Australia Inc.**

to the

**Inquiry into women in sport and recreation
in Australia**

OCA Vision:

To develop and promote a professional community that provides quality outdoor experiences

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "K. Kingsford".

25th August 2006

1. What is the Outdoor Council of Australia?

The Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA) is an incorporated, not-for-profit association which acts as the peak body for the outdoor industry in Australia. Membership of OCA is primarily through state and territory peak industry bodies and national organisations. This membership structure enables a process where the states/territories can participate in the discussion of national issues and provide conduits for information to flow through the OCA network to industry members at the state and local level. OCA in its role as the peak body for the outdoors, represents all organisations and individuals that use outdoor adventure activities for the purpose of:

- Recreation
- Education
- Tourism
- Personal development
- Corporate development

Hence, OCA's membership and coverage (both through direct membership and through its state/territory peak body members) includes national activity associations, commercial outdoor enterprises, not-for-profit church and community based clubs and associations (eg, Scouts, Christian Camping International) and other organisations such as schools and universities which conduct outdoor education. Further, OCA represents the guides, instructors, volunteer leaders, outdoor education teachers and adventure therapists associated with all of these enterprises and organisations.

The objectives of the Outdoor Council of Australia cover the broad areas of:

- *Representation* - To represent the views and needs of members to the community, industries and all levels of government and to facilitate communication between outdoor educators, leaders and guides, and between these stakeholders and external interest groups
- *Advocacy* - To develop policies, strategies and actions on key issues affecting the outdoor community and to work with government to develop policies, strategies and actions that support and encourage Outdoor Recreation and Outdoor Education
- *Resource Management* - To promote a philosophy and practice of sustainable environmental living, conservation and positive attitudes towards the use of the natural environment and to encourage planning and management for ecologically sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Outdoor Education
- *Quality* - To encourage organisational development within the outdoor community to enhance the delivery of services that are appropriate, ecologically sustainable, equitable and of a high standard and to promote safe and quality outdoor experiences. In addition, to promote best practices in standards and quality of leadership and instruction through the support of quality education and training
- *Research* - To assist the advancement of research within the outdoor community in order to provide accurate information to all stakeholders that will promote best practice in outdoor leadership and enhance community awareness and understanding.

Table 1: Stakeholders that OCA seeks to represent in the outdoor industry

1. National Activity Associations

Australian National Four Wheel Drive Council	Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Inc
Bicycle Federation of Australia	Dual Sport Motor Rider's Association
Bicycle Motocross Australia Inc	Motorcycling Australia
Mountain Bike Australia	Orienteering Australia
Bushwalking Australia Inc	Australian Rogaining Association
Australian Speleological Federation	Sports Shooters Association of Australia
Australian Climbing Instructors Association	National Skateboarders Association of Australia
Challenge Ropes Course Network	Skate Australia
Sport Climbing Australia	Australian Professional Snowsport Instructors Inc
Australian National Sportfishing Association	Ski & Snowboard Australia
Australian Kite Flyers Society	Australian Canoeing
Australian Parachuting Federation	Australasian Jet Sports Boating Association (AJSBA)
Gliding Federation of Australia	Australian Rafting Federation
Hang Gliding Federation of Australia	Australian Water Ski and Wakeboard Federation
Association for Horsemanship Safety & Education	Australian Windsurfing
Australian Endurance Riders Association	Surf Schools Association of Australia
Australian Horse Industry Council	Surfing Australia
Australian Trail Horse Riders Assoc	Yachting Australia
Australian Quarter Horse Association	Australian Underwater Federation

2. National Church-related Organisations offering outdoor activities

Adventist Outdoors	Royal Rangers
Girls Brigade	Youth for Christ Australia
Boy's Brigade Australia	Scripture Union Australia
CEBS - The Anglican Boys Society	

3. National Community or Youth Organisations offering outdoor activities

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme	YMCA Australia
Australian Youth Affairs Coalition	Scouts Australia
Guides Australia	

4. National significant providers of outdoor activities or services

Outdoor Education Group	Army Adventurous Training Wing
Outward Bound Australia	Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI)
Wilderness Medical Institute	Scuba School International Pty Ltd
Professional Association of Climbing Instructors (PACI)	

5. National Retailers (example only)

Paddy Pallin	Mountain Designs
Kathmandu	Anaconda
Snowgum	

6. Miscellaneous

Service Skills Australia	Christian Camping International
Australian Council for Health, Physical Education, & Recreation Inc (ACHPER)	Parks and Leisure Australia
Australian Camps Association Inc	Bush Adventure Therapy Network (BATNet)

7. State outdoor recreation/education peak bodies

Outdoor Recreation Industry Council NSW (ORIC)	Outdoor Recreation Centre, Victoria
Tasmanian Outdoor Recreation Council (TasORC)	Outdoor Educator's Association of Qld (OEAQ)
Northern Territory Outdoor Recreation Council (NTORC)	Victorian Outdoor Education Association (VOEA)
Recreation SA (RecSA)	Outdoor Education Association of SA (OEASA)
Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF)	Tasmanian Outdoor Education Teacher's Association
Outdoors WA	

2. Some current issues within the outdoor industry

Through consultation with a variety of different stakeholders, the OCA has been able to clearly identify the issues impacting upon its membership and the broader outdoor industry. Some of these issues relevant to the *Senate Inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia* are detailed below:

- Lack of comprehensive data that accurately represents the *amount of participation in non-competitive outdoor activity* (both structured through clubs and community organisations and unstructured, independent participation), resulting in a lack of recognition of the specific social, economic and health *benefits of outdoor activity*;
- Due to a lack of data on participation rates in outdoor activities as well as suitable, comparative data on accidents/incidents associated with those activities, many *insurers* perceive most outdoor activities as “high risk” and continue to be either unwilling to take on the risk or do so at very high premiums;
- Inadequate research to clearly identify the environmental impact of each different activity results in restricted access based on non-scientific or illogical arguments. This is coupled with a lack of appreciation of and provision for a *‘hierarchy’ of settings* (from urban to remote) suited to different activities and different participant needs;
- Lack of understanding of the different outdoor activities and the different disciplines within each activity, resulting in *inadequate planning and poor provision* of trails and facilities to meet needs, particularly for ‘hard to locate’ activities such as downhill mountain biking and trail-bike riding;
- Whilst OCA and its state/territory and national members provide a structural framework for networking, there is an inherent desire by many involved in appreciation of the outdoors to choose not be part of organisations and clubs, thereby presenting a *communication* barrier to a large number of “end-users”;
- *Poor profile* and lack of understanding of some activities resulting in poor media coverage, no media coverage, an inability to attract participants and/or sponsorship;
- *Quality assurance* of outdoor activity leaders and organisations remains as a significant issue. Currently many outdoor adventure leaders hold no formal national *qualifications or certification*, whilst others hold state-based certification. Similarly, whilst a number of *accreditation* systems exist, some do not adequately address the specific requirements of businesses and organisations that provide outdoor adventure activities nor do they incorporate comprehensive independent field audits of operations and a careful analysis of risk management procedures. In addition, specified *minimum industry standards* for the conduct of activities exist in some instances (eg. the Victorian Adventure Activity Standards) however there is no national consistency in the requirements for outdoor activity providers (either commercial or volunteer) to meet these or similar requirements. Whilst the components of a quality assurance framework exist (consisting of leader registration linked to national competencies, minimum operating standards and an accreditation system), there are no nationally consistent requirements applied to the provision of outdoor adventure activities or to those who conduct them.
- The limitations exerted by a large volunteer membership are exacerbated by the *limited financial assistance* provided both at the state and national level to most of the state and national outdoor peak organisations. For example, no Federal Government agency recognises “outdoor recreation” and “outdoor education” within its core business and as a consequence OCA and numerous national activity organisations (eg, Bushwalking Australia) are ineligible for operational funding whilst counterpart organisations within the sporting community receive considerable financial support.

3. Women's participation in outdoor recreation activities

It is noted that the majority of submissions received by the Senate Inquiry relate to issues associated with women's participation in sport, although the OCA acknowledges specific work undertaken by researchers such as Dr Donna Little and Dr Jackie Kiewa in regard to women's participation in outdoor adventure activities. Fundamental to an understanding of health benefits, characteristics of women participating, constraints, effectiveness of programs, etc is accurate base line participation data. Detailed below are some issues highlighting the reasons for limited responses to the Inquiry specific to outdoor recreation participation by women. Also included are some recommendations.

3.1 Number of women actively participating

There are challenges in the collection, analysis and presentation of statistical data relating to outdoor recreation. Unfortunately neither the Australian Bureau of Statistics data (eg. the General Social Survey for 2001-2002 of *Participation in Sport and Physical Activities*) nor the Australian Sports Commission data (*Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport 2004*) provide sufficient differentiation of participation in competitive versus non-competitive activities (eg. 'cycling' includes competitive and recreational riding and riding of all types of bikes including BMX and mountain bikes). At the broadest level, the diverse yet often related nature of the pursuits undertaken and the ranges of motivations of the participants (eg. competitive, non-competitive, goal-focused) represent a particularly difficult sampling environment. Ideally, the data must be able to differentiate between different disciplines within an activity (eg. cycling for competitive purposes within facilities, versus recreational cycling on urban cycleways versus competitive and non-competitive down hill mountain biking; bushwalking on graded tracks in national parks versus road walking in urban areas).

Furthermore, it would be beneficial if there was greater consistency in definitions associated with the collection of outdoor recreation participation data. Greater consistency could be achieved with:

- an agreed definition of outdoor recreation activities (including disciplines within activities);
- consistent definitions of outdoor recreation "participation"; and
- a uniform definition of age classes (based on those used by the ABS).

Preferably, consistency should be achieved through a national approach for example, through the Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council (SRMC) and the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport Research Group. Nationally, lobbying should be undertaken to recommend the collection of data in varying sub categories of classifications used by the ABS to enable aggregation and disaggregation to specific outdoor recreation activity and discipline levels.

In addition to clarification of definitions, wherever possible, surveys developed to determine demand for a specific purpose or activity (eg. use of bikeways for commuting) should be expanded to provide data on recreational usage.

Future outdoor recreation participation and/or user surveys could be further enhanced through:

- differentiation of data from interstate and local residents as well as Australian and international tourists;
- more comprehensive investigation of usage preferences (eg. short walks, day walks, overnight walks);
- focused surveys of participants in outdoor recreation specific activities as well as random polls to obtain comprehensive data on participation and demand.

3.2 Participation versus ‘demand’

Another aspect of participation that should be considered particularly in regard to accessibility and constraints for women is ‘demand’. Warmbrunn¹ (1994) identified five types of ‘demand’:

Effective (existing, expressed, participation or consumption)	Indicates what currently exists, and is simply a measure of use for any particular resource in a set period.
Latent	Demand which exists, but for one reason or another has been constrained. This demand which is not effective but would be so if circumstances changes. This type of demand is usually constrained by the lack of facilities, opportunity, or other variables which affect participation.
Induced	Demand which has been stimulated by the provision of further facilities, converting a latent demand into an effective or expressed demand.
Diverted	Demand for a certain type of facility which is diverted from one source of supply to another by the provision of a new supply.
Substitute	The shift in participation to other forms of recreational activity because of the provision of facilities for different purposes.

Warmbrunn identified and cited a number of difficulties in obtaining true and relevant ‘demand’ information including:

- the difficulty in extrapolation from ‘participation’ (ie. consumption) data to requirement (demand) information;
- the inappropriate extrapolation of survey information collected at, or in association with, a recreation facility;
- the inadequate definition of terms, such as “bushwalking”, resulting in an inability to define the actual biophysical setting and recreational infrastructure that is used;
- an under-sampling of participants, both quantitative and temporal;
- the use of activity categories that are too broad for interpretation;
- responses and recreational behaviour influenced by a lack of knowledge of supply;

¹ Warmbrunn, A. (1994) *Planning for Trails. The nature of trails and their relationship to regional open space*. Unpublished thesis, School of Planning, Landscape Architecture and Surveying, Queensland University of Technology.

- a lack of dynamic analytical models that allow assessments to respond to different scenarios in relation to available opportunities and changing population characteristics; and
- the influence of external lifestyle and socio-economic forces.

These considerations further reinforce the inadequacy in general of current data available for participation in outdoor recreation activities, let alone that available for women's participation.

3.3 Accessibility for women

With the changes of population growth and settlement, coupled with the information on age based activity preferences, there are significant implications and challenges for the provision of recreation opportunities and infrastructure. The change in percentages of each age class with a predominantly 'ageing' population in some local government areas, coupled with the recreation preferences of those different age classes (and the possibility of new preference patterns emerging) as well as an increasing emphasis on a "fit and active lifestyle" suggests that considerable planning effort needs to be expended on the provision of recreation facilities to meet the changing demands of the future residents. Analysis of current data² shows that there will be increased demand for access to both urban and natural areas for walking and cycling with the ageing population, and the need for consideration of safety aspects associated with those activities, such as lighting, footpaths, etc. An emerging challenge is addressing the requirements of the aging society as well as the new recreational demands of the younger sections of society within the already limited area of publicly accessible land that is available for use, in a practical rather than theoretical way, by a wide range of recreational pursuits. In particular, the emerging needs of mountain bike riders should be addressed as a matter of priority with the rapidly increasing mountain bike sales and usage.

There are also challenges in providing the social and operational setting that will be required as issues of ageing, fuel costs and transport congestion change behaviour patterns. Group activities based on public or organised transport may increase, yet the present administrative restrictions on group activities (eg. in terms of size limitations on permits for National Parks) will act against these socially desirable trends.

3.4 Profile of outdoor recreation and support for its provision

Whilst there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that participation in non-competitive recreation greatly exceeds participation in structured competition, support at both a State and National level to encourage industry, peak and community associations to provide better services to support non-competitive active recreation is almost non-existent. A review of the organisations listed in Table 1, which provide support for much of the 'organised' outdoor recreation activity in Australia, would reveal that few receive any financial assistance to support them in this specific role. (Note: some organisations, such as Australian Canoeing and Yachting Australia, receive financial assistance because of their role in the provision of sporting activities at the elite level). As suggested by the partially complete data accessed

² Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (2006). *Review of Recreation Participation and Demand Studies for Trail-based Recreation Activities*.

by the OCA on membership of these organisations (Table 2), the role played by these organisations in the provision of recreation is potentially significant. In addition, the role played by women on the Management Committees within these organisations is also probably significant.

However, the capacity of these organisations to prepare and collate data and respond to Inquiries such as the *Inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia* is severely constrained because of the lack of financial assistance provided to them, resulting in primarily volunteer-run organisations. Compared with National Sport Organisations, few of these national activity associations would have employees. **Until both State and Federal Governments change their focus (and their allocation of funding) to a more equitable distribution across sport AND non-competitive active recreation, the capacity of this sector to provide both information and services will remain severely constrained.** As a consequence, their ability to respond to all issues, and in particular to the needs of women, will also remain constrained.

Table 2: Indicative “Organised” Outdoor Activity participation in Australia

i) Individual outdoor activity participants

Bicycle Federation of Australia	People who ride bicycles in Australia for recreation	Over 20,000
Bicycle Motocross Australia Inc	BMX racers throughout Australia	6,878
Mountain Bike Australia	Mountain Bikers	3,300
Australian Speleological Federation	Those interested in protecting cave & karst environments, cavers	850
Sport Climbing Australia	Competitors in competition climbing	550 individual Member; 30 Climbing Facilities
Australian National Sportfishing Association	Recreational fishing industry and the recreational angler	2500 - 3000 members; 200 clubs
Australian Parachuting Federation	Australian Sport Parachuters	26,487
Gliding Federation of Australia	Glider Pilots	2698
Hang Gliding Federation of Australia	Those who Paraglide, Hang Glide and Fly in Weightshift Microlights	2,700
Australian Endurance Riders Association	Long distance horse riders	2005
Australian Horse Industry Council	Persons involved with horses throughout Australia. Particularly health & welfare issues	150 Members representing app 20,000 participants
Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Inc	Riding and Harness Driving for People with Disabilities	5077
Dual Sport Motor Rider's Association	Trail bike riders, adventure bike riders & touring riders	2884
Motorcycling Australia	Governing body of motocycling sport in Australia	23000 (16,500 Competition Licence, 2,500 recreational riders, 4000 Officials)
Orienteering Australia	Orienteerers	7481
Skate Australia	Skaters involved in skating activities throughout Australia	1050
Ski & Snowboard Australia	Skiing and Snowboard competitors	1000 direct members, 30 clubs - 5500 indirect members
Australian Canoeing	Those involved in paddle sports throughout Australia	6100
Australian Windsurfing	Windsurfers	594
Yachting Australia	Yachtsmen & women	37,677 Silver Members 7,637 Youth Members

ii) Church and community organisations

Adventist Outdoors	7 th Day Adventists participating in outdoor activities	50,000
Boy's Brigade Australia	School age boys and young men	6000
CEBS - The Anglican Boys Society	Youths aged 6 - 18 years	9 Dioceses in The Anglican Church of Australia; 43 branches; approx. 400 youth and children
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme	Young People completing the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme	19,338
Girls Brigade	School age girls and young women	6300
Guides Australia	Young Girls 5 to 18 years	23,200
Royal Rangers	School age children & young adults	10,000
Scouts Australia	Scouts throughout Australia	51,100
YMCA Australia	Community development organisation. Deliver programs and services.	382 centres; 500,000 participants
Youth for Christ Australia	Young People	55,615

iii) Organisations representing outdoor activity facilities and/or providers

Australian Camps Association Inc	Residential camps and activity providers	297 Members
Christian Camping International	Denominational, Inter/Non-Denominational & private Christian camp operators.	700 members representing 220 camps
Scripture Union Australia	Outdoor activities and camps	200 camps per year

Awaiting data from:

Australian National Four Wheel Drive Council
Australian Trail Horse Riders Assoc
Australian Quarter Horse Association
Australian Kite Flyers Society
Australasian Jet Sports Boating Association (AJSBA)
Australian Rafting Federation
Australian Water Ski and Wakeboard Federation
Surf Schools Association of Australia
Surfing Australia
Bushwalking Australia Inc
Australian Rogaining Association
Sports Shooters Association of Australia