



### **Why are camps and outdoor education experiences so essential for school students?**

Australian educators believe that their number one challenge is supporting students with mental health conditions and more than 80% of them believe that the tension between supporting student wellbeing and teaching the curriculum is increasing<sup>1</sup>. With the nearly four million students enrolled in Australian schools projected to increase substantially in the next decade, these tensions can only increase if schools do not now actively work to reduce them.

Independent research<sup>2</sup> shows that camps and outdoor education programs play a key role in addressing these concerns. Camps have been shown to reduce anxiety, increase connection to school, increase connection to peers and increase efficacy, all strong markers of good mental health. Camps and outdoor education programs involve increased physical activity and connection with the natural world – also important in addressing wellbeing concerns.

Many employers have strong concerns about the inadequacy of school leavers' capabilities, including their lack of self-management, planning and organisational skills (45% of employers); and problem-solving, initiative and enterprise skills (41% of employers)<sup>3</sup>.

Camps and outdoor education programs focus on building interpersonal and intrapersonal skills such as independence, resilience, leadership, communication and respect for others. The development of these skills and characteristics address these employer concerns and will be ever more important in preparing students for future employment, as two-thirds of all jobs will be people-skill intensive by 2030<sup>4</sup>. The recent *Looking to the Future* report<sup>5</sup> identifies the development such skills as being an essential element of Australian education delivery in the years to come.

The Camps and Outdoor Education industry believes that universal access to led outdoor experiences in schools is key to producing happy, healthy and employable young people.

### References

<sup>1</sup> *Future of Education 2020*, McCrindle Research Pty Ltd

<sup>2</sup> Outdoor Youth Programs Research Alliance [www.oypra.org.au](http://www.oypra.org.au)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Industry Group (2018), *Skilling: A national imperative*.

<sup>4</sup> *Soft skills for business success*. Deloitte. (2017). Sydney, Australia: Access Economics.

<sup>5</sup> *Looking to the Future*, Report of the review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training, Education Council, June 2020