

Australian Camps Association

Annual Report

2022 - 2023

The national peak body for camps and associated providers.



AUSTRALIAN
CAMPS ASSOCIATION
auscamps.asn.au



*More People Outdoors
More Often*



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Camps Association acknowledges that wherever our Members are situated across Australia, Indigenous Australians are the Traditional Custodians of country. They have lived, walked and cared for the lands, waters, environment and wildlife for over 60,000 years.



About the Australian Camps Association

The national peak body for camps and associated providers

The Australian Camps Association (ACA) welcomes all people, no matter their gender identification, age, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation to our services. We are the 'go-to' hub for groups of all kinds and interests looking for advice or information about all types of camps (school camps, holiday camps, sporting camps, family camps, faith-based camps, seniors camps and camps for people living with disability).

We also operate People Outdoors, outdoor experiences for people living with disability (suitable for children, teens and adults with or without an NDIS plan), and the Great Getaways - fun, active, comfortable and social camps specifically designed for people over 55 years of age.





Chair Report

It is an honour to be providing this year's report on the Australian Camps Association's progress. In 2022-2023 we ensured that the Australian Camps Association (ACA) was future-focused by widening our advocacy networks and acted strongly as a leader in the Camps and Led Outdoor Activity sector. I remain proud of the ACA community's continued growth, flexibility and determination to remain relevant and engage in an ever-changing sector.

Some highlights from the ACA's engagements for this year have included:

Positive Start in 2022-2023 – This Victorian initiative has supported many ACA Member camps to provide eligible schools and school holiday camps to individual students across Victoria. Providers have provided lasting memories and experiences for many children and youth who may have otherwise missed out on the experience (for many, their first camp or holiday program). A valuable legacy of this initiative has been that ACA has established strong links with the Department of Education and other government departments in Victoria as a leader in the sector. This has also allowed for opportunities to work with other states on the back of the outcomes derived in Victoria. We look forward to updating our Members on any developments in the future.

People Outdoors – As many of you may know, our People Outdoors program has been providing camps and outdoor programs in Victoria for people living with disability for more than 30 years. One of the strategic directions of ACA was to look at expanding these programs in other states. We are pleased to say that we're working toward providing these programs in New South Wales and in Queensland in 2024. It's an exciting time for People Outdoors and well done to the staff and volunteers for continuing this amazing work and continuing to grow an amazing program.

Sector Engagement - ACA has strong and truly collaborative partnerships with many state peak bodies and is working alongside other sector bodies including the Christian Venues Association and Outdoor Council of Australia to ensure the sector has a voice. This year ACA has also expanded our relationships with Federal and State governments by joining Outdoor Advisory Committees and other regular governmental meetings. We also love hosting and meeting many of our Members at Morning Teas at various locations across Australia. This is one of my favourite events to meet and see camps in action.

ACA Conference - The ACA Conference this September in Adelaide, South Australia will provide expert insights on dealing with change, understanding human performance, implementing reconciliation action plans, developing new business streams and much, much more. The Conference will also provide networking and opportunities for members and sector colleagues to connect in-person. I look forward to welcoming you at the Conference.

Thank you to Peter McDougall (appointed in January 2023) for his steadfast leadership, strong advocacy and continued engagement with members, the sector and wider community. I would like to thank my fellow ACA Board members, staff and volunteers at ACA for their contributions and time over the last 12 months.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to all our ACA Members for your continued support and involvement in helping advance the sector and our great community. Through camp, we are teaching people to persevere, make connections with nature, try new things, make friends, remain active, and so much more. I feel privileged to be leading the ACA and our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Pam Kappelides'.

Pam Kappelides
Chair



CEO and Finance Report

Five months into my role as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Australian Camps Association (ACA), I am pleased to provide my first Annual Report.

Since beginning as CEO in late January, I have been welcomed warmly by everyone involved in the ACA. It has been great to meet many passionate people within the sector, who are all very committed to improving all areas of the industry.

I have been meeting with many stakeholders which include Member visits, government representatives, ACA Partners, and numerous external agencies. My first impression has been extremely positive, and I am looking forward to meeting with many more stakeholders into the future.

I am committed to get to all states and visit as many camp venues as possible and get to know you all in your own environment and to see your wonderful facilities. I believe it is more beneficial to meet in-person, to have a meaningful discussion about the challenges you face and how we can help and work with you into the future.

Positive Start

The Positive Start program has been very impressive, and the funding allocated by the Victorian Government to the outdoor sector is nothing short of incredible. In all my years working in sport, I have not seen funding to this magnitude and on behalf of ACA and our participating Members, I would like to thank the Victorian Government for their outstanding support.

Our Positive Start team led by Sanchi Kariyawasam, and ably supported by Stuart Cunningham, Trudi Donnelly, Chris Stavridis, Leonora Abrahams, Bec Fox and Maria Dunne have all been instrumental with the management of this program and I would like to thank them all for the great work they did to administer the program.

The program delivered 810 camps for 83K children to attend camps across the state. This equated to \$53m worth of funding rolled out to ACA Members in Victoria. The economic benefit and cash injection into the camps economy is unprecedented and for some camp operators, is the difference between surviving the impact of COVID or not.

Moving forward, I will be promoting the outcomes and benefits of the program to all other state governments.

Member Visits

I am planning to spend a lot of time visiting as many Members as possible. I want to get to know you all and understand fully the challenges and opportunities you face. These visits will ensure I am well informed when I advocate and meet with all levels of government, to make sure the sector is represented as best as we can. Collaboration rather than confrontation will be my approach and I firmly believe this will give us the best chance to achieve successful outcomes.

Between Dwight Hulme, our Membership Manager, and myself, we will visit Members in all states as often as we can. We both are looking forward to meeting you all soon.

Advocacy

I am currently in the process of establishing our government strategies and we will be writing to every relevant Government Minister in each state to organise a meeting and to begin the process of working closely with each state and federal government.

I will be working hard for the benefit of all our Members to ensure we have a voice on all matters relevant to the sector and to have a seat at the table when required to discuss these matters.

As I mentioned earlier, our camp visits will help us to implement an effective approach to meeting with all governments.

ACA Programs

There are many great programs, systems, platforms, and resources available to the sector. I firmly believe in a strong accreditation program, and we will be allocating the required resources to ramp up all areas of this program which in turn will benefit all Members. The Australian Tourism Industry Council is working closely with us to review and improve the program.

The People Outdoors program has been extremely successful in Victoria for many years and I will be looking at how when can build on this success and expand the program into other states. By expanding the program, it will give more ACA Members access to the benefits of hosting one of these camps as well as providing people with disabilities in other states an opportunity to participate in this great program.

The Great Getaways Program for over 55 year olds, will also be a focus for us to ensure this age demographic has opportunities to get involved in attending camps. This program provides the opportunity for participants to socially connect and to have fun attending great camp facilities.

Earlier this year we held a webinar on the status of insurance. We will be aiming to run more webinars covering many topics to provide support and up to date information on key areas to help all camps to run their business more effectively.

ACA Staff

I feel very blessed to have adopted such a great team of people to work with. Due to some staff movement, I have been able to modify parts of our structure to improve what we do and how we do it.

This year saw changes to the Membership and Preferred Supplier Manager role. Steve Hamilton moved on from this part-time role (3 days), having worked tirelessly at ACA for thirteen years. We thank him for his dedication and efforts during this time. In April, Dwight Hulme joined the team full-time (5 days). Increasing the role to full-time enables us to expand our services and support to Members, Partners and Preferred Suppliers.

To the rest of the team, Jess Hough, Louise Johnston, Sandra Murphy, Olivia Digiglio, Gosia Barcikowska, Nidheesh Sinha and Trudi Donnelly, a big thank you from me to you for everything you do for ACA, our Members and Campers. I look forward to working closely with you all into the future.

Thank you to the ACA Board for your support. To ACA Chair, Pam Kappelides, a special mention to you for your support and assistance during my first five months in the role.

Finally, to all our Members, Partners and Preferred suppliers, a big thank you to you all for your contribution and support of ACA, it is greatly appreciated and I look forward to working with you all in the future.

ACA Finances

I am pleased to report a successful financial report for the 2022 / 2023 Financial Year. ACA posted a surplus of \$409K, this was largely due to the Positive Start and People Outdoors Programs. I note the rebate scheme with our food partner PFD Foods performed better than expected, and I would like to thank all Members who supported ACA by purchasing through PFD Foods. I encourage you to continue to do so because this will help ACA to reinvest into supporting you, our Members.

I am forecasting a very tight 2023/2024 financial year and we will not have the luxury of the Positive Start Program. I have reviewed all areas of the ACA budget and adjusted where required to ensure we have a more strategic and targeted approach to our finances.

The ACA is in an extremely healthy financial position, and I look forward to building upon this and at the same time improving our level of support to our Members.

P. McDougall

Peter McDougall
CEO

Auditor's Declaration

TOWARDS A VISION SHARED



**Collins & Co
Audit Pty Ltd**

127 Paisley Street
Footscray VIC 3011
Australia

Phone (03) 9680 1000
Fax (03) 9680 8605

www.collinsco.com.au

**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION
TO THE DIRECTORS OF
AUSTRALIAN CAMPS ASSOCIATION
ABN 35 115 082 212**

I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, in relation to the audit for the financial year ended 30 June 2023 there have been:

- i. no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012 in relation to the audit; and
- ii. No contravention of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

**Frederik Rijk Ludolf Eksteen CA
ASIC Auditor Registration Number 421448**

**Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd
127 Paisley Street
FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011**

Dated this 30th day of August 2023



Membership Report

For the 2022 - 2023 Financial Year, the Australian Camps Association supported over 240 members across Australia.

The Membership and Preferred Supplier Manager role has developed significantly over the last 12 months, increasing from a part-time (three-day role) to a full-time (five-day role). This has allowed us to increase the time and resources that we are able to allocate to further support Members and sector development as a whole.

Current projects include:

- Strengthening our partnership with the Australian Tourism Industry. Setting up and conducting a review in to the Quality Tourism Framework - Camps & Adventure Activity accreditation.
- Working with Standards Australia to develop a new Australian Standard for Flying Foxes and Challenge Ropes Courses.
- Working to strengthen our non-commercial partnerships with other state and national bodies including the National Allergy Strategy and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia.

The ACA would like to thank our 2022/23 Partners and Preferred Suppliers for their ongoing support to the Association and our Members.

2022/23 FY ACA Partners & Preferred Suppliers:

- PFD Food Services,
- Hypersonic Industries,
- AB Phillips,
- ELGAS,
- One Planet,
- RHSports,
- Wilderness First Aid Australia,
- Aubin Environmental,
- Island Energy.

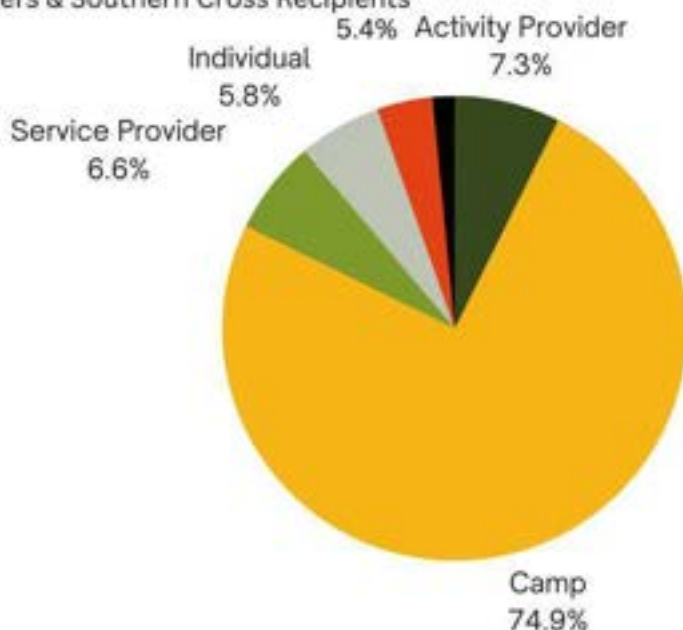


The ACA conducted visits with our Partners throughout the year, with the aim of strengthening and building on current relationships. All agreements are continuing into the next year.

Member Visits

Connecting with our Members in these face-to-face meetings continues to be an important way of connecting with our Members across the country. Member Visits provide the opportunity for ACA staff to learn about each site, allow for open discussion around current impacts to the sector, discuss business development opportunities and provide an avenue for ACA to inform Members of upcoming events and projects. More than 40 days this year were spent meeting with Members on-site and we thank our Members for opening their doors so willingly.

Life Members & Southern Cross Recipients



Member Events

The 2022-2023 Financial Year saw us host a mix of online and in-person Member Events, such as the International Camp Directors Course (ICDC), our inaugural Member Morning Tea in Queensland, a product evening at One Planet, online updates from Departments of Education in Victoria and New South Wales and a session on the Changes to the Victorian Child Safe Standards.



Looking toward the new financial year, our focus will be on increasing Membership through promoting greater awareness of the ACA and increasing our presence in the community, through member events and site visits. We plan to build stronger partnerships with our existing Partners and Preferred Suppliers and will explore new commercial partnerships to further assist Members in the daily operation of their business.

Kind Regards,

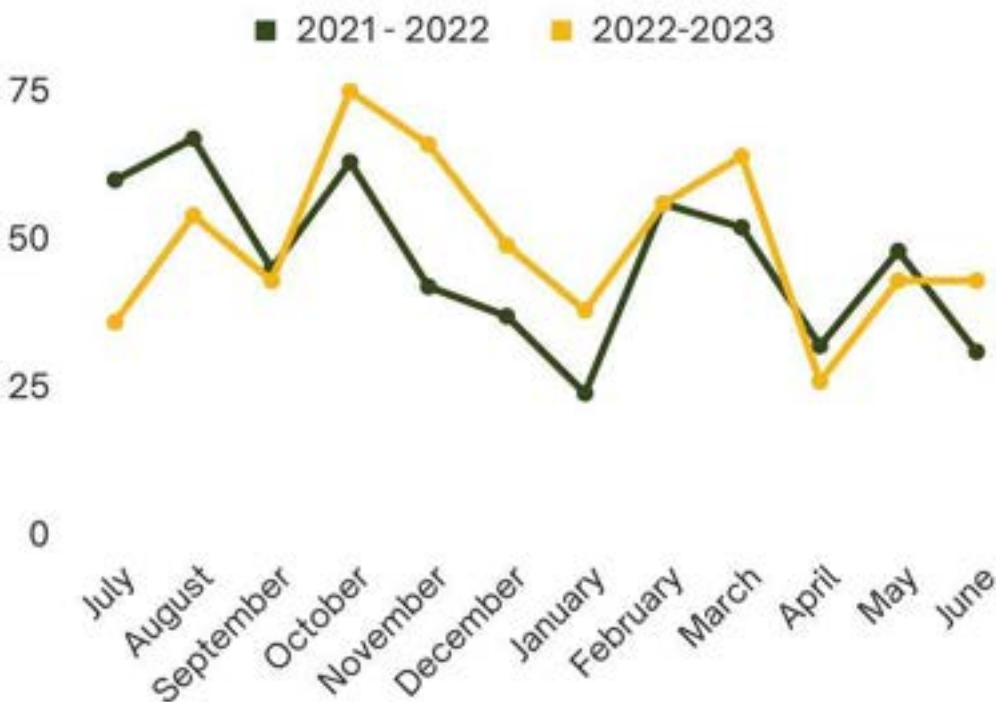
D. Hulme

Dwight Hulme

Manager of Memberships & Preferred Suppliers

Booking Enquiries

This chart shows an increase of enquiries through the ACA Booking Enquiry Service in comparison to the 2021-22 FY. School enquiries are slightly down on the previous year potentially due to Victorian schools participating in the Positive Start Program. Community enquiries remain higher than school enquiries for 2022-23. An increase on the 2021-2022 FY figures may reflect community groups interest in group gatherings after COVID restrictions and lockdowns of 2021-22.



593
Total enquiries via our Booking Enquiry Service for 2022/23 FY

181
School Enquiries via our Booking Enquiry Service for 2022/23 FY

412
Community Enquiries via our Booking Enquiry Service for 2022/23 FY



People Outdoors Report

2022-2023 has been a very busy year for the People Outdoors team. This year we have held 25 camps (eight camps departing from Ballarat) with 155 campers filling 355 places on camp. We have a large number of returning campers on each program.

Our Melbourne camp departure point was re-located, and we are delighted with our new camper and staff sign in location at Span Community House in Thornbury. This new location is situated on a very quiet street for safety when campers, their families and staff arrive for camp departures and returns. The Community Centre has plenty of off- street parking as well as car parks on-site for staff to safely park their cars while there are away on camp. We would like to thank both The Bridge, Thornbury, and Coburg Bowls Club for the use of their facilities for many years.

Our team have been running camps from both our Melbourne and Ballarat locations. This means that campers can attend from many different locations and get the opportunity to attend People Outdoors Camps no matter where in the state they are coming from.

Our ACA – People Outdoors disability camps are run with support of an amazing pool of casual Disability Support Workers (DSW). We have currently put a hold on recruiting for our Melbourne team in order to allocate enough camps for all our superb staff to get a rotation of shifts. This year we had approximately 40 DSWs on our roster. Over the past 12 months, we have had a massive number of casual staff join our team.

We have built up our camp leader team to seven this year so there is plenty of opportunity for our staff to grow in their own profession as leaders. Every one of them provide a different approach which in turn allows diversity, new experiences, and ideas for improvement on each camp. No camp is ever the same which is exactly what we want for our campers and staff.

We are very blessed and grateful of our team, for all the hard work and dedication they put into our programs. The team support our campers to ensure the best possible experience for all the campers each moment that they are on camp.

Thank you to the ACA Member Camps who have hosted our programs throughout the year. We have attended 10 different campsites this year. We appreciate the flexibility of camp management and their staff to our needs and requirements of our diverse campers. The campsites staff are always extremely supportive and helpful not only to the campers attending the camp but also to our office staff, camp leaders, disability support workers and volunteers. Everyone on camp always return home happy and content after getting to spend a wonderful time away in nature enjoying outdoor activities.

We are grateful for our volunteers and placement students who attend our camps. We have been overwhelmed with the amount of volunteer support that we have received this year. We to have had approximately one to three volunteers on each camp in total we have had 15 volunteers support what we do. Many of them return even after they have completed their student placement hours. Their kind-hearted attitude and support is appreciated; it takes a special type of person to offer their time and energy give back to the community.

There have been a few staffing changes this year. We said farewell to Melissa Puccio (People Outdoors Manager) and Athena Warren (Camp Coordinator). These individuals were very valuable team members and their knowledge and expertise have not been forgotten. We thank them both for their contributions to the team, ensuring that our campers had a great experience on camp. In April, we welcomed Nidheesh Sinha to our team, stepping into the Assistant Camp Coordinator role.

Our Assistant Camp Coordinators Olivia and Nidheesh work tirelessly each day to ensure that each camper, staff, and staff member have a flawless experience while on camp. From camper's intake meetings services agreements, invoices to making sure medications forms are collected and reviewed. They provide knowledge and experience every day to improving the service we offer for our campers and staff. Along with all the other roles required in camp coordinating. Nidheesh has also been involved in Coordination on the Great Getaway over 55's camps that has now become a part of the People Outdoor team.

Louise who works in our accounts department has always been a major contributor to the team. Louise has also been busy helping us navigate around all the price guide changes within the NDIS. Many thanks also to Jess and Dwight who often provide their assistance to the People Outdoors team.

I would finally like to acknowledge our new CEO Peter. He began with us in February and has been an incredible leader to us all. He has inspired and supported us all to push ourselves past our limitations. We are very grateful that he has come to ACA and we look forward to the additional opportunities he will bring the team in the future.

I have been every blessed and grateful to have such an amazing team of people to work with everyday. It is a joy to come into a vibrant community of people and get the opportunity to do such wonderful work to make others happy.

Sandra Murphy



Head of People Outdoors



355

Places on camp

155

Campers

25

Camp Programs

16

Weekend Camps

9

Holiday Camps

Positive Start

Positive Start in 2022 was a Victorian Government initiative to re-engage primary and secondary-aged students from government and low-fee non-government schools whose learning was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This was made available through schools directly, and holiday programs for eligible students. The ACA was selected by the Victorian Government to administer the Positive Start Camp program and support our providers through the process.

After a wonderful uptake of the program in 2022, the Victorian Government extended the program until 30 June 2023. The aim of the program was to get 81,200 students to experience camps and led outdoor programs. By the end of the program, targets were exceeded with ACA providers assisting a total of 83,513 students to experience camp. The total overall attendance of the program saw 107,243 students experience camp.

Positive Start provided \$84.3 million through the initiative for the delivery of free camps and experiences during 2022-23 targeting those students who wouldn't normally have the chance to attend. It is a monumental achievement having the program of this scale launched in the sector. The ACA Positive Start Team supported over 50 providers throughout the program. This initiative provides the ACA with the opportunity to continue to build awareness of the sector and the benefits of camp for individuals across the country.

OVER 83,513 STUDENTS

ACA MANAGED

\$53M

OF \$84.3M INVESTED

BY THE GOVERNMENT

THROUGH THE POSITIVE START INITIATIVE

It was fantastic!

I am writing to express my gratitude for being given the opportunity to visit Phillip Island as part of the **Positive Start Program**.

We are a small school in northern Victoria. After covid and the issues of lock downs, we are on a journey of recovery with our students, building on relationships, resilience, and gratitude. In September of 2022 we had the opportunity to take students to Phillip Island Camps on the **Positive Start Program**.

It was fantastic, the opportunities that were presented to the students was **awe inspiring**. We had the opportunity to surf, hike, visit the penguins including the Artic centre. On top of the educational activities the students also enjoyed excellent accommodation, a round of bowling and rock climbing.

If the Positive Start Program was unavailable, I don't believe that given our location and socio-economic demographic we would have had the fantastic experience.

- Mr. Maloney,
Nathalia Secondary College

Positive Start in 2022
Free camps for students

POSITIVE START 2022



Our Board



Pam Kappelides - Chair



Helen Williams - Deputy Chair



Rob Cummins



Shawn Wilkey



Gemima Weiler



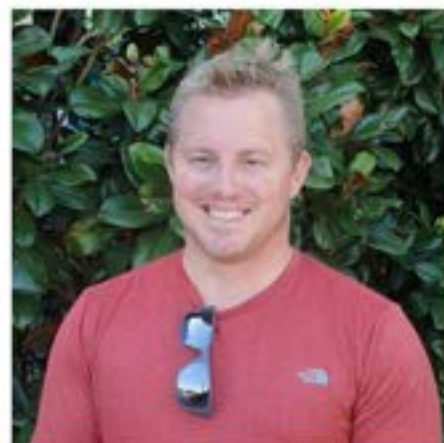
Luke Jansons



Suzie Leask



Daniel Whykes



Graham Sharpe

Our Staff



Peter McDougall
CEO



Louise Johnston
Accounts



Jessica Hough
Events & Communications



Dwight Hulme
Membership & Preferred Suppliers



Trudi Donnelly
Executive Assistant



Sandra Murphy
Head of People Outdoors



Olivia Digiglio
Assistant Camp Coordinator



Nidheesh Sinah
Assistant Camp Coordinator



Gosia Barcikowska
Special Projects Coordinator

Thank you to:

- All ACA Members.
- The ACA Board.
- The Victorian Government.
- ACA Partners and Suppliers.
 - PFD Food Services
 - Hypersonic Industries
 - AB Phillips
 - ELGAS
 - One Planet
 - RHSports
 - Wilderness First Aid Australia
 - Aubin Environmental
 - Island Energy
- The International Camping Fellowship.

Glossary

The ACA Board

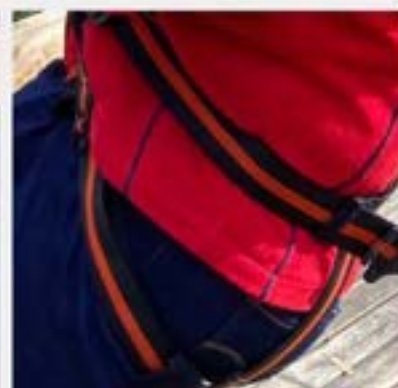
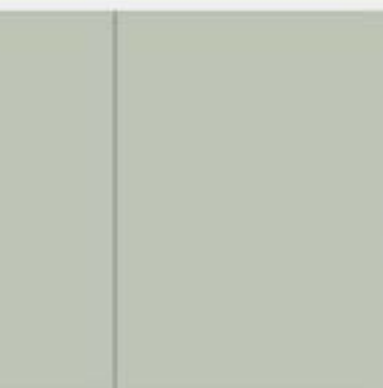
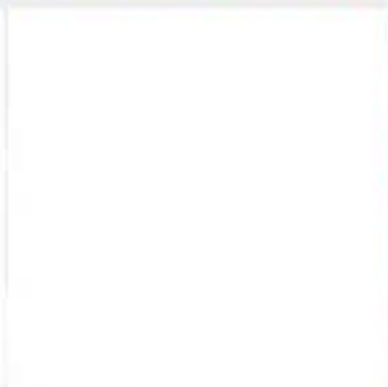
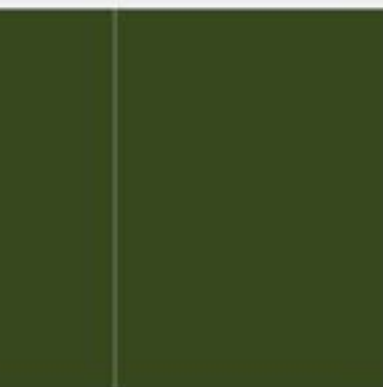
- Pam Kappelides - Chair
- Helen Williams - Deputy Chair
- Rob Cummins
- Shawn Wilkey
- Gemima Weiler
- Luke Jansons
- Suzie Leask
- Daniel Whykes
- Graham Sharpe

ACA Finance Sub-Committee

- Pam Kappelides
- Daniel Whykes
- Louise Johnston
- Peter McDougall

ACA Staff

- Peter McDougall - CEO
- Louise Johnston - Accounts
- Dwight Hulme - Membership & Preferred Suppliers
- Jessica Hough - Events & Communications
- Trudi Donnelly - Executive Assistant
- Gosia Barcikowska - Special Projects Coordinator
- Sandra Murphy - Head of People Outdoors
- Olivia Digiglio - Assistant Camp Coordinator - People Outdoors
- Nidheesh Sinha - Assistant Camp Coordinator - People Outdoors




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 03 9863 6822

 Corporate One,
84 Hotham St,
Preston VIC 3072

 www.auscamps.asn.au