



AUSTRALIAN
CAMPS ASSOCIATION®

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ANNUAL REPORT

— 2023 - 2024 —



ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN CAMPS ASSOCIATION



The national peak body for camps and associated providers

The Australian Camps Association (ACA) is the national peak body for camps and associated providers. We develop, support and promote the delivery of camp experiences that provide positive community, social and personal outcomes.

The 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.

We can help you to quickly and easily find the member camp venue or outdoor activity provider that best meets your needs via our free booking enquiry service. No matter your requirements, our members can provide a great camp or outdoor experience for you!

We also support our many member camps and outdoor activity providers across Australia by providing resources and professional development that increases their capacity and capability to deliver excellent programs to groups from all walks of life.

What is a camp? It can be the experience of 'going on camp' (which can take place wherever there is a suitable venue for the group, such as a tennis camp or a music camp), and it can also be the actual physical venue that hosts the group itself. Essentially, our member camps are comfortable and safe places for groups to gather, share experiences and enjoy time together.



VISION & MISSION

Vision

“

More people outdoors
more often

”

Mission



The Australian Camps Association develops, supports and promotes the delivery of camp experiences that provide positive community, social and personal outcomes.



ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023 - 2024

477

Enquiries received and distributed via our booking enquiry service.

288

Campers placed on a People Outdoors Camp.

122

Camps visited.

26

Ministerial Meetings with state governments and state tourism councils.

25

People Outdoors Camps held - including two interstate (QLD + NSW).

12

Member Events including online educational webinars, Morning Teas and more.

2

Seats on Standards committees.

1

National Conference hosted in South Australia.

1

International Camping Congress (ICC) attended in Spain.

CHAIR'S REPORT

It is with immense pleasure and a sense of profound pride that I present this report on behalf of the Australian Camps Association (ACA) for the past year. As we reflect on the progress and achievements of our organisation, it is crucial to acknowledge the unwavering commitment of our members, staff, partners and stakeholders who have played an integral role in advancing our mission.

Achievements and Progress

Over the past year, the ACA has made significant strides in promoting and supporting the camping sector across Australia. Through targeted outreach efforts by our CEO, Peter McDougall, and Membership Manager, Dwight Hulme, we have successfully broadened our engagement with camp organisations nationwide. The positive response from new and existing members alike underscores our commitment to supporting the camping community and highlights our growing influence and reach across the country. This achievement not only strengthens our organisation but also enhances our ability to advocate for and support the camping sector effectively.

We have also made notable progress in our advocacy efforts. The ACA has actively engaged with government bodies, industry stakeholders, and community organisations to raise awareness about the benefits of camping and the importance of maintaining high standards within the sector. Our advocacy work has resulted in increased understanding of all key state issues, which will be instrumental in driving further growth and development in the camping industry.

This year, we are proud to highlight the successful expansion of our People Outdoors program into New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland (QLD). By extending our reach to these key regions, we have significantly increased our impact and accessibility, offering our programs and resources to a broader audience. This expansion has been facilitated through strategic partnerships with member campsites, local organisations and tailored outreach efforts. The positive reception and engagement in both NSW and QLD underscore the growing recognition of the value of the People Outdoors program getting more people outdoors more often. This achievement not only amplifies our mission but also strengthens our presence and influence across the eastern states, paving the way for continued growth and success in the future.

Future Outlook

Looking ahead, the ACA is poised to build on our recent successes and address any challenges we face with renewed vigour. Our focus for the coming year will be on enhancing member engagement and support, expanding our membership programs, and strengthening our advocacy efforts. We are also committed to exploring innovative approaches to ensure that our camping experiences remain relevant and impactful in a rapidly changing world.

In conclusion, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, board members, and volunteers who have contributed to the success of the Australian Camps Association. Your passion, hard work, and dedication are the driving force behind our achievements, and I am confident that, together, we will continue to advance our mission and make a positive impact on the lives of countless individuals through the power of camping.

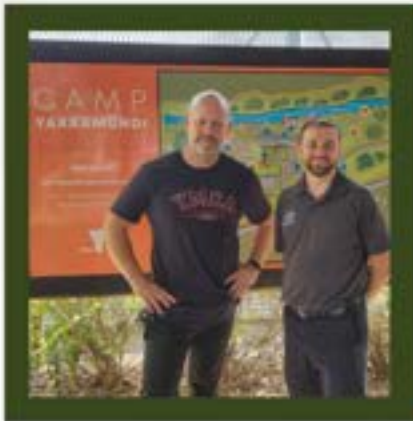
Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the Australian Camps Association.

Sincerely,



Pam Kappelides
Chairperson
Australian Camps Association

2023 - 2024 SNAPSHOTS



NSW Member Visit



VIC Member Visit



ACA - People Outdoors Camp



*International Camp
Directors Course (ICDC)*



*Member Morning Tea
South Australia*



*Member Morning Tea
Victoria*



ACA - People Outdoors Camp



International Camping Congress (ICC) - Spain





CEO'S REPORT

I am pleased to provide the CEO's Report for the 2023-2024 Financial Year. The last 12 months have certainly flown by and, as I reflect on the year whilst writing this report, a lot of ground has been covered.

I have met with many stakeholders which include Member visits, Government Representatives, ACA Partners, and numerous external agencies. These meetings have enhanced the profile and brand of the Camps Industry and, whilst we have made significant inroads, we still have more work to do to get our profile to the level it deserves.

Member Visits

Between myself and Dwight Hulme, we have visited 122 camps across all member states in the past financial year. These visits have been extremely beneficial for us and our Members. We will continue to make the effort to ensure all Members are visited at least once every three years.

Each visit has been very enjoyable, and it has been great to connect with so many passionate camp owners and operators across the country. I would like to thank everyone that we have met with so far - the hospitality shown to Dwight and I has been outstanding. We look forward to meeting many more of you in the future.

Over the next 12 months, we aim to have visited every member at least once, since we both started with ACA - I hope this reinforces our commitment to you, our members. These meetings have assisted me greatly in various ways, particularly for my meetings with Governments across the country.

The visits ensure that I am across all areas of concern for our Members, and my meetings with government are targeted and relevant to the portfolio with which I am meeting.

Advocacy

It has been a huge year of connecting with government at State and Federal level. We rolled out our Government Strategy during this period and I held 26 Ministerial meetings with State Governments and more with State Tourism Industry Councils. The objective of these meetings was to highlight the importance of camps, introduce ACA, explain our role, raise key issues targeted at the state I was meeting with, establish relationships with key Ministers and Advisors in each state, and to emphasise the value and contribution camps makes to the wider community. These initial meetings will place us in a strong position to follow up on any issues that arise in the future, as well as providing a platform for us to discuss opportunities to work together and gain access to funding which will benefit all Members.

The key take away from these meetings is that our profile within government has been low and this has been a great opportunity to raise and table challenges we all face. We have more work to do in this space, but we are on track to create greater connections and relationships with all key government Ministers and their Senior Advisors. With a State election in Queensland (QLD) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) this year, I have consciously made it a priority to meet with key Ministers from the opposition parties.

These meetings were well received and, pending the outcome of both elections, we are well placed to work with the successful party post their election.

This is only the beginning of many more meetings in the future. Organically these meetings will raise our profile and brand awareness to the key decision makers within government and will hopefully increase our traction for greater support and outcomes for all of our Members. In Victoria, there have been a few items on the agenda related to the operations of camps.



I have been working closely with the key staff within the Victorian Education Department and, as I write this report, I anticipate some positive news forthcoming, particularly on the subject of Booking Agreements for schools and camps.

I will be continuing to work 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 where required to discuss these matters nationally.

As mentioned earlier, our camp visits will continue to help us to implement an effective approach to these meetings with all governments.

Accreditation

I firmly believe in a strong accreditation program. The ACA Accreditation Committee is currently reviewing the Quality Tourism Accreditation criteria, and I anticipate this will be completed very soon. We are also in discussion with the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) to explore ways to improve the efficiency of the accreditation process, and to reduce the time involved for camps and the assessors (the State Tourism Councils) of each accreditation application or renewal.

I have met with the CEO's of all State Tourism Industry Councils where we have Members and there is a strong desire to work closer together to improve the Accreditation Program.

ACA Programs

The **ACA - People Outdoors Program** provides camps for people living with disability. This year, participation numbers were a little bit down for our Victorian programs. It is difficult to pinpoint a singular reason, but I suggest the changes to the NDIS funding has had a significant impact on the drop in participation. Marketing strategies will be increased with the aim to improve participation for the new financial year.

I am pleased to report that we held inaugural camps in New South Wales and Queensland. These camps have started off slowly, but we now have staff on the ground in each state to attend these programs and provide support to our campers. Targeted marketing strategies are in place in both states to increase our participation base.

Introducing a new program into a new market will take time, and whilst I am not expecting huge numbers to begin with, all indications to-date suggest we will increase our annual participation rates over the next financial year. It will be a slow burn, but gradual growth will continue into the years ahead.

The **ACA - Great Getaways Program** for over 55s struggled to grow its participation rates. We have given this program excellent support over the past 12 months without much success. The program will be under review over the next financial year.

ACA Events

There are many great programs, systems, platforms and resources available to our Members.

Our **National Conference** was held in Adelaide, South Australia and it was a great event for a number of reasons. Particularly, for me to meet a lot of Members for the first time and to get know and identify how we can provide greater support to them.

This year we increased the number of **educational webinars** conducted, this will be a key focus for us moving forward and we aim to hold a lot more in 2025. If you have any suggestions for webinar topics, please let us know so we can facilitate webinars that are targeted to meet your needs.



International Camping Congress (ICF) - Spain

I was fortunate to attend the ICF Conference in October 2023, as a presenter and attendee. I presented on the outcomes and benefits of the Positive Start Program to camps in Victoria. This conference provided a great opportunity for me to connect and establish strong relationships with key stakeholders within the ICF. I left this conference feeling that Australia is truly, highly regarded country in the Camps sector, and a valued member of the ICF.

ACA Finances

As I forecasted last year, it was a very tight financial year and to finish with a small loss (see financial report) was not a bad outcome, considering the level of uncertainty in many key areas.

I am constantly looking at all opportunities to generate additional revenue streams to maintain and grow our level of support to our Members. In time, I hope to be able to announce some new initiatives that will benefit our Members and ACA for many years to come.

ACA Staff

The high level of support to our Members is reflective of the passionate people we have working for ACA. We are very fortunate to have a great team committed to delivering the highest level of support to our Members, Partners, and other key stakeholders.

To the ACA team of Jess Hough, Louise Johnston, Sandra Murphy, Olivia Digiglio, Judith Lua, Gosia Barcikowska, Kayla Keisser, Trudi Donnelly and Dwight Hulme - a big thank you for everything you do for ACA, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all into the future.

To the ACA Board led by ACA Chair, Pam Kappelides, thank you for your commitment and contribution to ACA. As volunteers, good people are hard to find, and we are very fortunate to have a quality group of people sitting on our Board. Special thanks to Pam, whom I have worked closely with over the past year - we are fortunate to have a committed and passionate Chair leading our Board.

Finally, to all our Members, Partners, and Preferred Suppliers - a sincere appreciation to you all for your contributions and support of ACA, it is greatly appreciated, and I look forward to continued collaboration in the future.

The next 12 months promises to a very exciting time, and I look forward to working closely with everyone to improve all areas of the camps environment.

Peter McDougall
Chief Executive Officer

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Membership and Preferred Supplier Manager role continues to grow to meet the needs of our Members and the evolving need of the organisation. With a focus on Member engagement, camp development, Accreditation and the growth of both commercial and strategic Partnerships.

For the 2023-24 Financial Year, the Australian Camps Association has continued to support over 240 Members across Australia. While Membership numbers for 2023/2024 remained the same, we did have an increase in Members in Queensland & Western Australia.

Current and ongoing projects include:

Accreditation

The review of the Quality Tourism Framework - Camps & Adventure Activity accreditation as made substantial steps forward with the QTF-C&AA Committee appointing Michelle Dall'ava, (VTIC), Carl Stanforth (PGL) and myself to review the content of the C&AA to make sure that the content is current and meets the needs of all relevant parties. The review is progressing well, with the review to be completed in early 2025. Recommended changes will reported back to the Committee.

Having attended a QTF assessor training, I am able to assist various state tourism organisations to complete QTF-C&AA in person assessments. This will help clear backlogs and reach venues in more isolated parts of the country.

Flying Fox and Challenge Ropes Standards

I am working with Standards Australia to develop a new Australian Standard for Flying Foxes and Challenge Ropes Courses. With most of Part 1 (Design and Construction) now written, the focus now turns to the Part 2 (Safety and Operational). The Working Group expects both Standards to be finished and open for public consultation and comment in mid-2025. It is the aim of the working group that the new Standard addresses several issues affecting the Camps industry, including the requirement for Flying Foxes and Challenge Ropes Courses to be registered with SafeWork, as well as current issues regarding the Crate Stacking activity.

Bunk Bed Standards

The ACA was also asked to join the CS-088-00-55 Working Group, tasked with the review of Australian Standard, AS/NZS 4220:202X *Bunk Beds and Other Elevated Beds*. With the Working Group aiming to have the draft completed by the end of 2024, and out for public comment early in 2025.



The ACA would like to thank our 2024/25 Partners and Preferred Suppliers for their ongoing support to the Association and our Members.

2023/24 FY Partners & Preferred Suppliers:

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

2023/24 FY New Partners & Suppliers:

- Harp Renewables
- Camps3D
- Microguard

The ACA would also like to acknowledge the partnerships that are not continuing into the 2024/25 FY with RH Sports, Wilderness First Aid Australia & Wild Aid First Aid. We are thankful for the support of both the ACA and our Members and wish them well in the future.

The ACA also conducted in-person visits and online meetings with each of the Partners throughout the year, with the aim of growing and making the most of each relationship.

Member Visits

Engaging with our Members through in-person meetings remains a vital method for fostering connections nationwide. These Member Visits enable ACA staff to gain insights into each location, facilitate open conversations regarding current sector challenges, explore business development prospects, and offer a platform for ACA to update Members on forthcoming events and initiatives. This year, over 47 days were dedicated to on-site meetings with Members with a total of 122 sites visited. The ACA would like to thank our Members for their generous hospitality.

Member Events

The 2023-2024 Financial Year saw us host a mix of online and in-person Member Events;

- **International Camp Directors Course (ICDC)** held at Gold Coast Sports and Recreation Centre.
- **ACA National Conference**
- **Member Morning Teas** in:
 - NSW @ Vision Valley
 - VIC @ Baanya Biama
 - ACT @ Camp Cottermouth
 - VIC @ CYC Adanac
 - SA @ Camp Finniss

QLD and WA Morning teas scheduled in the first quarter 2024/25.

- **Online events and Webinars**

We have worked with state and national bodies to deliver informative webinars and other helpful reference documentation. Our online events included:

- *Camp Waste Water Treatment Requirements* with AUBIN Environmental.
- *Managing Food Allergies On Camp - Is it All About Allergens?* with the National Allergy Council and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia.
- *Insurance Update, Discussing Fair Work Compliance and Workers Compensation* with AB Phillips and HR Anywhere.
- *Character Across Cultures: Conceptions of character for Outdoor Educators* presented by Pete Allison (Pen State University).

I look forward to the year ahead.

Dwight Hulme
Membership & Preferred Suppliers Manager

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The 2023 National Conference, run over the 20th - 21st September, was a great success - thanks in large part to the energy and enthusiasm of the delegates who attended from around Australia.

Our aim for this year's event was to provide delegates with an inspiring and fresh program full of opportunities for both professional and personal development. Our presenters spoke on a wide range of topics, including an awe-inspiring performance around dealing with change. We learnt about brain chemistry to understand strategies to help enhance your team's performance, how to take your camp carbon neutral, and how to navigate the challenges in business. We supported camps and associated providers with Reconciliation Plans, understanding micro-credentials for the sector, facilitating experiences for students presenting with behaviors of concern, and it was fascinating to hear from Katrina Webb OAM and Paralympic Gold Medalist about the art of leading yourself for the greater good. Delegates found out why we should 'Think Big, Plan Big and Ask Big' and were asked to rethink 'challenge by choice'.

We are very grateful to our Sponsors and Trade Exhibitors for supporting this event; in particular PFD Food Services, our Major Sponsor and long-time supporter of the ACA, and our Conference Sponsors - Wilderness Escape Outdoor Adventures and venue360. We also thank all the trade exhibitors for their support of the event.

We would also like to thank the Australian Camps Association team who pulled the event together under the guidance of Jess Hough, our Communications and Events Manager.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the hospitality of the camps who hosted us during our post Conference camps Tour - Willow Creek Adventure Camp, Arbury Park Outdoor School and Woodhouse Activity Centre. Thanks for opening your sites up and showing Conference delegates around.

Our next conference will be held in 2025.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



FINANCE REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I present this report on the performance of the Australian Camps Association (ACA) for the financial year ending 2024.

For the 2024 financial year, the ACA reports a minor deficit of \$15,577. This is a positive outcome following the successful completion of the Positive Start program. During the period, the ACA initiated the expansion of the People Outdoors program into Queensland and New South Wales, marking a significant step in establishing a national presence and positioning the organisation for long-term financial sustainability.

The ACA has remained diligent and responsive in addressing financial risks, with revenue diversification strategies including securing grants, earning interest from term deposits, and enhancing the value of member services. These initiatives have helped to mitigate external financial pressures and maintain stability.

The Association continues to demonstrate a solid financial position, with total equity standing at \$965,787 comfortably meeting all recognised financial obligations. Despite significant investments in IT infrastructure and vehicle for the long-term future benefits, the ACA has maintained a neutral financial performance amidst a challenging economic environment characterised by high interest rates and inflationary pressures. The organisation remains committed to ensuring optimal value delivery to its members while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Ricky Lu
ACA Board Member - Finance Committee



Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd

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TOWARDS A VISION SHARED

**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 2024 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 6th day of August 2024

PEOPLE OUTDOORS REPORT

People Outdoors Program

The 2023-2024 Financial Year has been an extremely active year for the ACA - People Outdoors team. This year we have held 25 camps with 288 campers placed on camp. We have many returning campers on our camps.

The financial year began with the start of something very special, expanding our program interstate, to not just one, but two states. Many hours of preparation went into these program set-ups with the whole ACA team helping.

Peter and I visited four NSW and four QLD ACA Member Campsites in August 2023. We were warmly welcomed by each camp, who were excited about the concept of our interstate camps.

Once campsites chosen and dates set, the massive job of marketing began - I would like to say a big shout-out to Jess on all of her fantastic work and her many hours of support in this area. We also marketed our program interstate, travelling to an expo in each state. A lot of interest in our program was gained from these events and we networked with other services in the field. We hosted a number of online introductory presentations to showcase our program. I would like to say a huge thanks to the ACA - People Outdoors team for all their efforts.

Recruiting staff for these camps involved advertising roles, arranging interviews, onboarding of the new interstate staff team. I would like to thank Gosia who played an integral part.

Our very first interstate camp was held on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland in March 2024, followed by our first NSW camp at Camp Barramundi in June 2024. Both camps were well received by the campers. This is the beginning of something fantastic for the ACA - People Outdoors program and we are constantly working towards building our participant base in each state.

Alongside the interstate expansion, the ACA underwent our NDIS Re-registration Audit in January 2024. Every person on the team worked very hard on this audit and at the end of the two day audit we were successfully recommended for re-registration. I would like to particularly thank Judith for her dedication and work on this project.

Our camps continue in Victoria with a local team of Disability Support Workers working hard to make sure the ACA - People Outdoors program is more accessible, more fun and full of adventure than ever before.

We are proud of each of our staff and volunteers who work with the utmost professional manner whilst maintaining the care and support for everyone on our camps. In early 2024, we introduced a night worker for our Victorian camps. This has proven to be very beneficial to ensure our day staff are adequately rested overnight.



PEOPLE OUTDOORS REPORT

I would like to say an enormous thank-you to all of the ACA Member Campsites who have hosted the ACA - People Outdoors camps this year. We have been welcomed and supported by all campsite staff when it comes to accessibility and flexibly, catering for our small groups and dietary requirements. We are very grateful for all the support that we receive and continue to receive each camp.

This year we also were very lucky to have upgraded our old vehicles, with a 12-seater van and an SUV that makes travel to the campsites a lot smoother.

Our grant funding ceased for our regional camps in the Ballarat area and our Accessibility Manager, Simon Milligan, left the organisation in August 2023. Simon did fantastic work in the regional space to connect with new campers from the area - many of which still attend our camps. Our connections with organisations, campers and staff in Ballarat continue and still offer a departure location from our Ballarat area for each of our camps in Victoria.

In August 2023, we welcomed Judith Lua to our team, with Kayla Keisser joining us as Administration Officer role in April 2024 after Judith was stepped into to the Assistant Camp Coordinator role. Kayla has been an amazing addition to the team with her years of experience, not only in the camp industry in many different countries, but also in many other areas such a teaching, camp counselling and administration.

Our Assistant Camp Coordinators, Olivia Digiglio and Judith work tirelessly to ensure that each camper and staff member have a flawless experience whilst on camp.

They provide knowledge and experience to improve the service we offer our campers and staff. Judith has also been involved in coordination of the Great Getaways over 55's camps - now managed by the ACA - People Outdoor team.

Great Getaways

We hosted two Great Getaways camps last year; one in October and another one in February. In October 2023 we had Carol O Halloran from TV show "Over 50 So What" attend our camp with her camera-man, Brendan, to do four segments for her TV show. This was held at Lady Northcote Discovery Camp, and I would like to thank the team at the camp for their contribution and those campers who attend and were happy to be interviewed.

Thank you,

Sandra Murphy
Head of People Outdoors



THANK YOU

ACA Board

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

ACA Staff

- Peter McDougall
CEO
- Louise Johnston
Accounts Manager
- Dwight Hulme
Membership & Preferred Suppliers Manager
- Trudi Donnelly
Executive Assistant
- Jessica Hough
Events & Communications Manager
- Gosia Barcikowska
Project Coordinator
- Sandra Murphy
Head of People Outdoors
- Olivia Digiglio
Assistant Camp Coordinator
- Judith Lua
Assistant Camp Coordinator
- Kayla Keisser
Camps Administration Officer

Partners and Preferred Suppliers

- PFD Food Services
- Hypersonic Industries
- AB Phillips
- Aubin Environmental
- Island Energy
- One Planet
- Island Energy
- Harp Renewables
- Camps3D
- Microguard
- ELGAS
- RHSports
- Wilderness First Aid Australia
- Wild Aid First Aid



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Our programs:



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PEOPLE OUTDOORS
Adventure for all

*Camps for
individuals living
with disability.*



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Outdoor programs for people over 55

*Camps for
individuals
over 55.*