

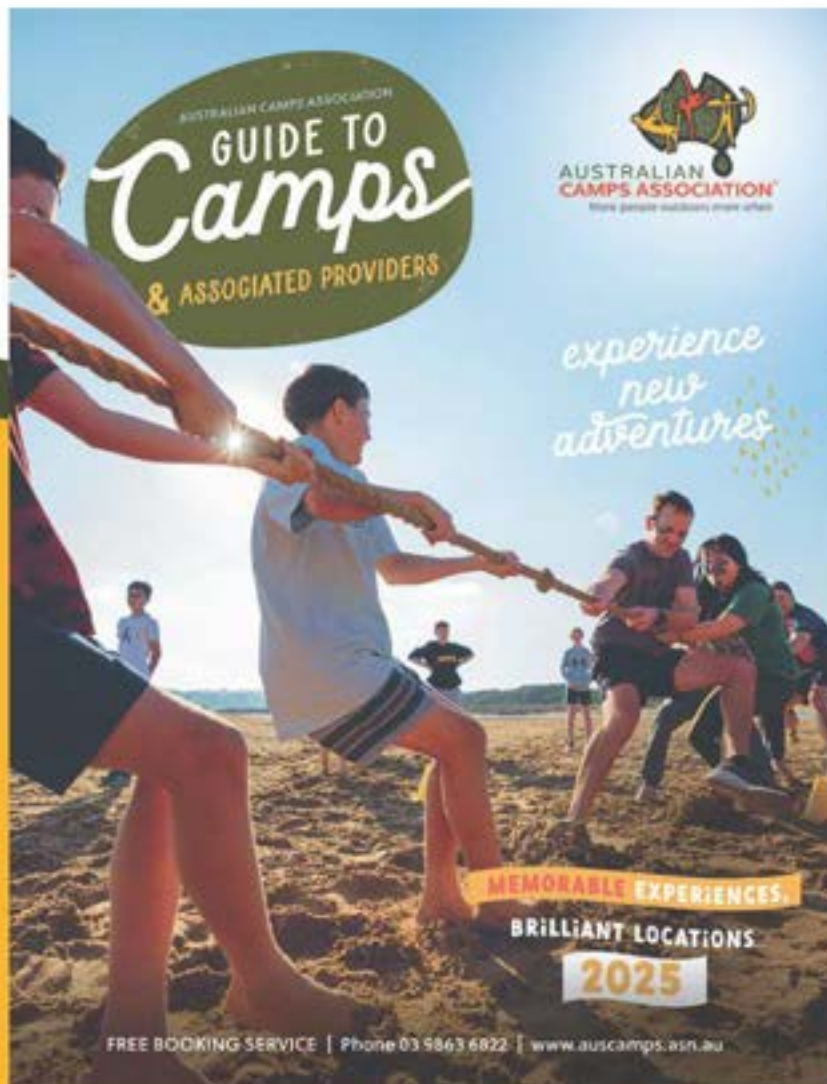


AUSTRALIAN  
CAMPS ASSOCIATION®

[auscamps.asn.au](http://auscamps.asn.au)

# ANNUAL REPORT

## — 2024 - 2025 —









# 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

“

Camps and Outdoor  
Adventure For All

”



## Mission

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

# ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024 - 2025

**380**

Enquiries received  
and distributed  
via our  
booking enquiry  
service.

**262**

Campers placed  
on a  
People Outdoors  
Camp.

**108**

Camps  
visited.

**26**

Ministerial  
Meetings with state  
governments and  
state tourism  
councils.

**24**

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

**11**

Member Events  
including online  
educational  
webinars, morning  
teas and more.

**7**

Seats on Standards  
committees/  
Advisory  
Committees.



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# CHAIR'S REPORT

At the heart of everything we do at the Australian Camps Association (ACA), is a shared belief in the power of camping to transform lives. This report captures a year in which that belief has driven us to achieve remarkable outcomes for our sector. I am honoured to share these achievements with you and to acknowledge the outstanding dedication of our members, staff, board, and partners who make this work possible.

This year, the ACA has made powerful strides in strengthening and elevating the camping sector across Australia. We have significantly expanded our reach, engaging with camp organisations nationwide. We are proud to report a growth in membership across Western Australia and Tasmania. This national footprint is a testament to our relevance and value, and it reaffirms our position as the peak body for camps and the outdoor sector. The overwhelmingly positive response from new and existing members demonstrates the growing trust and reliance placed on us by the sector, amplifying our influence and enabling us to champion the needs of camps with greater strength and impact than ever before.

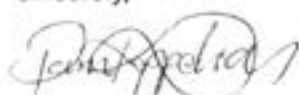
Throughout 2025, our advocacy work has taken on new depth and focus. We have strengthened our relationships with government departments, industry stakeholders, and community organisations to ensure camping remains front of mind as an essential part of Australian life. By amplifying the voices of our members and highlighting the social, educational, and wellbeing benefits of camping, we are seeing a shift in how the sector is valued and supported nationally. This progress gives us greater confidence to tackle the key issues ahead and continue shaping a strong future for camps.

We are into our second year of the expansion of the People Outdoors program into New South Wales and Queensland. The program's expansion is not just about growth in numbers - it represents lives changed and barriers removed for many who may have never had the chance to experience the outdoors in a supported and inclusive way. These achievements have only been possible through the collaborative efforts of our staff, member campsites and local partners, and they reinforce our vision of creating accessible outdoor opportunities for all Australians, wherever they live.

At the same time, we have confronted one of the sector's most pressing issues: Insurance. The lack of accessible and affordable insurance has placed immense pressure on camp operators nationwide, threatening the sustainability of vital programs and experiences. In 2025, the ACA has stepped up to this challenge, working tirelessly to find solutions. I am delighted to report that we are closer to securing an insurance option for our members - a breakthrough that provides certainty, security, and confidence for camps to continue delivering safe, quality experiences without compromise.

The ACA stands stronger than ever as we move forward into 2026. This past year has demonstrated what is possible when passionate people come together with a clear purpose. As Chair, I am proud to present this report, which highlights not only our achievements, but the groundwork laid for an even more impactful future for camping in Australia. Thank you to the Board, CEO - Peter McDougall, the staff, volunteers, members and stakeholders for your continued support and dedication to ACA and the sector.

Sincerely,



Pam Kappelides  
Chairperson  
Australian Camps Association

# 2024 - 2025 SNAPSHOTS





# CEO'S REPORT

I am pleased to provide my CEO Report for the 2024-2025 Financial Year. The last 12 months have certainly provided mixed results due to the ever-changing nature of the current economic climate.

The year as a whole has been a very successful one for many reasons that I will articulate in my report below. To achieve positive outcomes takes a lot of goodwill from all parties involved, and I am pleased to say that the people I work and collaborate with, share a collective view on the value and importance of the role of camps in the development of children and, in turn, their future contribution to society.

Our new three-year Strategic Plan was recently launched, and this will guide us to prioritise our focus on advocating for and supporting our members.

## Member Visits

ACA staff have visited 108 camps across all member states in the past financial year. As always, these visits are extremely beneficial for us and our Members to connect and stay connected with all areas of concern to you, our members. To visit this many sites takes a lot of planning and coordination from all parties, but the importance and benefits from visiting camps far outweighs the time and effort to make them happen.

The information gathered from the visits helps us to determine our key focus areas or matters to pursue with government or external stakeholders.

Our visits are always enjoyable, and I look forward to many more in the coming year.

## Advocacy

Our advocacy efforts continued on from last year with great momentum. I believe these efforts have contributed to raising the profile of ACA and our role in representing and supporting camps across the country.

When I started implementing our government strategy, I was surprised at the consistent response from Government Ministers and Staff about their lack of knowledge of ACA and the wider camp's sector. Thankfully, this is now changing for the better.

Access to Ministers vary from state to state, some are welcoming and embrace meeting with us and others are very elusive and almost impossible to get access to. This will not deter us, and we will continue to knock on their door until we finally get a face-to-face meeting.

Since we rolled out our Government Strategy, I have held 61 meetings with State Governments which includes 21 in the last 12 months. I look forward to maintaining this level of contact and communication as I strengthen the connection between ACA and Government.

## Accreditation

Our accreditation program continued to gather momentum with the review of the accreditation program criteria nearing completion. I anticipate that this will take effect from January 1, 2026. The changes will not compromise the integrity of the program, rather they will improve the efficiencies of the assessment process for new applications and for those renewing.

In addition to the criteria review, we have started working with the Sandhurst Catholic Education Department who are based in Bendigo and have 51 schools under their jurisdiction from surrounding areas. Our aim is to implement the accreditation program to replace their current model of conducting risk surveys by teachers prior to each camp taking place.

This model will be no different to the Victorian Education Department Schools Excursions Policy and will reduce the administration burden for schools and camps. Our aim is to role this out to other Catholic Dioceses and into other states. More information on this to come.

## ACA Programs

We have launched a number of initiatives throughout the past 12 months.

The **National Insurance Program Feasibility Study** has been launched and thanks you to the 54 camps who have volunteered to participate in this study. I will look forward with great anticipation on the findings. Hopefully, this pans out to evolve into a national program that provides great savings to all camps without compromising the level of cover within your policies.



Our first ever **National Census and Economic Impact Study** was launched, and I would like to acknowledge the support from the Victorian Government for funding this study. The data and information to come from this project will place ACA in a very strong position to strengthen our messaging and approach to promote camps to Government and the wider public audience. I anticipate that this project will be completed by Christmas.

Our collaboration with the legal team from the Victorian Education Department to develop consistent wording about **waivers / disclaimers** that meets the requirements for schools and camps to enable both parties to sign their **booking agreements** was a great outcome for all concerned. This is an example of the benefit of ACA working on behalf of our members to provide a solution to a current concern.

The **ACA - People Outdoors Program** provides camps for people living with disability. This year, participation numbers were considerably down, and this has had a significant impact on ACA's financial performance. We are revamping our marketing strategies to maximise our participation recruitment initiatives.

As I mentioned last year, The **ACA - Great Getaways Program** for over 55s had been struggling to grow its participation rates. Due to this and the financial constraints, the decision was made to discontinue this program. A big thank you to everyone who has been involved over the years, your efforts and contribution has been greatly appreciated.

### ACA Events

Our events continue to be a success, and this is due to the support of our members who not only turn up, but contribute to make each event a valuable opportunity for our community to get together and share the wealth of knowledge that you all have.

### ACA Finances

The financial performance was disappointing and although we had a strong focus on this area, some things were out of our control. We have shown excellent growth in our commercial programs but unfortunately the decline in the People Outdoors Program far outweighed our growth areas.

The changes in the NDIS system continues to challenge us and our campers funding models. We must pivot and adapt to these changes to ensure we remain ahead of the curve.

All other areas of the ACA financials performed in line with our budget but unfortunately this was not enough to post a profit for the year.

The next financial year will be equally tough, tight budgets have been set without compromising the high level of service that we provide to our members, partners and key stakeholders. We will continue to work hard to increase our financial opportunities and the financial sustainability of ACA for the future.

### ACA Staff

Like many good organisations, we have experienced a level of change within our staff. These changes have provided opportunities for others with new and fresh ideas to join ACA to assist us to continue to grow and evolve during these challenging times.

To the ACA team of Jess Hough, Louise Johnston, Olivia Digiglio, Gosia Barcikowska, Trudi Donelly, Dwight Hulme - a big thank you for your commitment and efforts for ACA over the past 12 months, and I look forward to working with you all into the future.

To the ACA Board led by ACA Chair, Pam Kappelides, thank you for your support 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.

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

Many challenges lay ahead of us for the next 12 months and we are well prepared to meet them with lots of energy and enthusiasm.

Many thanks,



Peter McDougall  
Chief Executive Officer

# MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Membership and Preferred Supplier Manager role continues to expand in response to the needs of our members and the evolving priorities of the organisation, with a focus on member engagement, camp development, Accreditation, and the growth of both commercial and strategic partnerships.

For the 2024-25 Financial Year, the Australian Camps Association (ACA) has continued grow our membership base seeing an increase in Camps and Activity Provider membership in each State (excluding the Norther Territory) as well as welcoming back members in Tasmania.

Current and ongoing projects include:

## **Accreditation**

The review of the Quality Tourism Framework – Camps & Adventure Activity Accreditation has made substantial progress. The QTF-C&AA Committee appointed Michelle Dall’ava (VTIC), Carl Stanforth (PGL), and myself, to review the content to ensure it remains current and meets the needs of all relevant parties. The review has now been completed, and the Australian Tourism Industry Council is implementing the recommended changes to the accreditation, scheduled for completion in early 2026.

Having attended QTF assessor training, I am now able to assist various state tourism organisations in conducting QTF-C&AA in-person assessments. This support helps reduce backlogs and ensures that venues in more remote areas are reached. I have completed several accreditation site visits for VTIC and, in collaboration with them, developed a hybrid site visit model that reduces the time required on-site without compromising quality.

The ACA has also worked with the Diocese of Sandhurst in Victoria and the South Australian Education Department as we explore replicating the Victorian Education Department’s requirement for compulsory accreditation of camp venues.

## **Camp Development**

### **Australian Standards**

I worked with Standards Australia to develop a new Australian Standard for Flying Foxes and Challenge Ropes Courses. Part 1: Design and Construction and Part 2: Safety and Operations are now complete, with the Standard scheduled for release in November 2025.

The new Standard addresses several key issues affecting the camps industry, including the requirement for Flying Foxes and Challenge Ropes Courses to be registered with SafeWork, as well as current concerns regarding the Crate Stacking activity.

The ACA assisted the Australian Standards Committee by facilitating load testing of crates, with the results included in the final Standard in response to regulator concerns. The ACA is also working with TeamSystems, an industrial manufacturer and importer, to ensure that crates meeting the new testing requirements will be readily available.

ACA was also invited to join the CS-088-00-55 Working Group, tasked with reviewing the Australian Standard AS/NZS 4220:202X – Bunk Beds and Other Elevated Beds. The Working Group aimed to have the draft completed by the end of 2024 and released for public comment in early 2025. This review is now complete, with the revised Standard scheduled for release in early 2026.

### **Outdoor Recreation and Leadership Qualification Review**

HumanAbility is leading a review of four Outdoor Recreation and Leadership qualifications within the Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package to ensure they reflect current industry needs, safety standards, and future workforce growth. The review covers over 190 units of competency linked to roles such as guides, instructors, and camp managers, and involves broad national consultation. The ACA is representing its members through participation on the Technical Committee guiding this review.



### **Australian Adventure Activity Standards**

The Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS) review, led by Dr David Marsden and overseen by the OCA Advisory Board, is updating the AAAS to reflect current industry, regulatory, and insurer needs, with completion expected by June 2026. It focuses on evidence-based updates, inclusivity, land access, and Indigenous heritage, with stakeholder input invited. The Australian Camps Association is representing its members in this review, ensuring their perspectives are included, and the updated standards aim to provide safer, clearer, and more inclusive guidance for operators and participants.

### **Partnerships**

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

#### **2024/25 FY Partners & Preferred Suppliers:**

- PFD Food Services
- Hypersonic Industries
- AB Phillips
- Aubin Environmental
- Island Energy
- ELGAS
- One Planet
- Harp Renewables
- Camps3D
- Microguard

#### **2024/25 FY New Partners & Suppliers:**

- Affinity Insurance Brokers
- Offtrack Pty. Ltd. (outdoor equipment)
- Choice Energy
- New Ventures Worldwide

The ACA would also like to acknowledge the partnerships that are not continuing into the 2024/25 FY with Island Energy. 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 Members through in-person meetings remains vital for fostering nationwide connections. These visits allow ACA staff to gain insights into each site, discuss current sector challenges, explore business development opportunities, and share updates on upcoming events and initiatives. In 2025, a total of 108 sites were visited. The ACA thanks our Members for their generous hospitality.

The year ahead promises new opportunities to engage, support, and innovate for the benefit of our Members and the sector.

*Dwight Hulme*

Dwight Hulme

*Membership & Preferred Suppliers Manager*

# MEMBER MORNING TEAS



AGH Camps  
NSW, August 2024



Forest Edge Recreation Camp  
WA, September 2024



The Ranch Adventure Park  
VIC, April 2025



PGL Kindilan,  
QLD, October 2024



Outward Bound - Camp Tharwa,  
ACT, April 2025



Girl Guides SA - Douglas Scrub Campsite,  
SA, June 2025



# EVENTS REPORT

The 2024-2025 Financial Year saw us host a mix of online and in-person Member Events;

## Member Morning Teas

- NSW at AGH Camps, West Sydney (August 2024)
- WA at Forest Edge Recreation Camp, Waroona (September 2024)
- QLD at PGL Kindilan, Redland Bay (October 2024)
- ACT at Outward Bound Australia - Camp Tharwa (March 2025)
- VIC at The Ranch Mornington Peninsula (April 2025)
- SA at Girl Guides SA - Douglas Scrub Campsite (June 2025)

The International Camp Directors Course that was scheduled for 2025 was re-scheduled to the 2025-2026 Financial Year.

In-person meetings remain a cornerstone of our member engagement, fostering stronger relationships, trust, and a deeper sense of belonging within the association. Face-to-face interactions create opportunities for authentic connection, collaboration, and recognition that virtual channels cannot fully replicate. These personal connections lead to higher satisfaction, stronger retention, and increased participation, while also reinforcing the ACA's credibility and commitment to our members. We look forward to connecting further with the ACA Community in 2025-2026.

## 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:

- Managing Type 1 Diabetes in the Camp Setting; Safeguarding Attendees' Health & Wellness (July 2024)
- Benefit-Risk Assessment in Sport and Recreation (August 2024)
- Booking Agreements, Waivers and Disclaimers (with ACA Update) (November 2024)
- Preparing your Site for Bushfire Season (November 2024)
- The Importance of Insurance for Outdoor Activities (April 2025)

# FINANCE REPORT

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for the Australian Camps Association (ACA) for the financial year ending 30 June 2025, a year marked by economic headwinds and strategic resilience.

The 2025 financial year unfolded against a backdrop of persistent macroeconomic challenges, including elevated interest rates, cost-of-living pressures, and rising operating costs across the sector. These conditions tested the adaptability of member organisations, and ACA remained steadfast in its commitment to supporting members through prudent financial management and continuity of services.

The ACA recorded total revenue of \$1.69 million, representing a 13.2 percent decrease from the prior year's \$1.94 million, primarily driven by external economic pressures. Despite this decline, the association successfully limited its operating deficit to \$121 thousand through proactive cost control and agility within the business model.

The ACA's financial position remains robust, with total equity of \$0.8 million at year end - well above recognised financial requirements. This resilience reflects disciplined financial oversight, including a \$58 thousand reduction in administration expenses year-on-year. The diversification of revenue sources and the implementation of innovative commercial models - including grants, preferred supplier arrangements, interest earnings from term deposits, and the delivery of high-quality member services - demonstrated ACA's financial agility and capacity to adapt in a constrained environment.

Throughout the year, targeted investments were made to strengthen the organisation's long-term sustainability. ACA continues to pursue strategic solutions that will deliver enduring value to members.

I would like to acknowledge the Finance Team's diligence, and the Board and Management's oversight, in upholding strong governance and accountability throughout the year. As we look ahead to FY2026, ACA remains focused on financial stability, enhancing member value, and positioning the organisation to seize growth opportunities as economic conditions improve. Our ongoing commitment to addressing sector-wide challenges, such as insurance affordability, underscores our dedication to long-term member support.

*Ricky Lu*

Ricky Lu  
ACA Board Member - Finance Director



TOWARDS A VISION SHARED



## Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd

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Australia

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### 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 2025 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 2025

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

# PEOPLE OUTDOORS REPORT

## People Outdoors Program

The Australian Camps Association's People Outdoors program continues to support individuals living with disability to experience the many benefits of camp. The 2024-2025 Financial Year saw 25 camps held with 262 campers placed on camp. We are proud to have many returning campers to our program.

Our expansion into New South Wales and Queensland is slow with challenges we continue to work through. As we move into the new financial year, our focus will be on trying to increase participation in our programs across the three states - Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

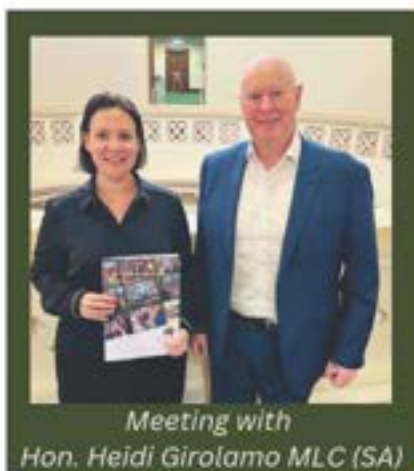
Many thanks to the Australian Camps Association Member sites that support our program. It's difficult to find venues that can accommodate our small numbers over the weekends and we appreciate those who have been able to be flexible with their minimum numbers. You assist us to get kids, teens and adults living with disability on camp. If you are an accredited site, have flexibility in your minimum numbers and have some weekend dates you need to fill in late 2026, please reach out to our team to discuss our needs.

Our dedicated team of disability support workers continue to ensure that our participants are supported whilst on camp, allowing them to participate in activities and achieve their goals as per their NDIS Plans.

We look forward to seeing many participants on our People Outdoors program in 2025-26.







# ACA DIRECTORY

## ACA Board - Current

- Pam Kappelides - Chair
- Helen Williams - Deputy Chair
- Rob Cummins
- Gemima Weiler
- Shawn Wilkey
- Luke Jansons
- Ricky Lu
- Emma Hollis

## ACA Staff - Current

- 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
- Sean Sturrock - People Outdoors Manager
- Olivia Digiglio - Assistant Camp Coordinator

## Partners and Preferred Suppliers

- PFD Food Services
- Hypersonic Industries
- AB Phillips
- Aubin Environmental
- ELGAS
- One Planet
- Harp Renewables
- Camps3D
- Microguard
- Affinity Insurance Brokers
- Offtrack Pty. Ltd.
- Choice Energy
- New Ventures Worldwide





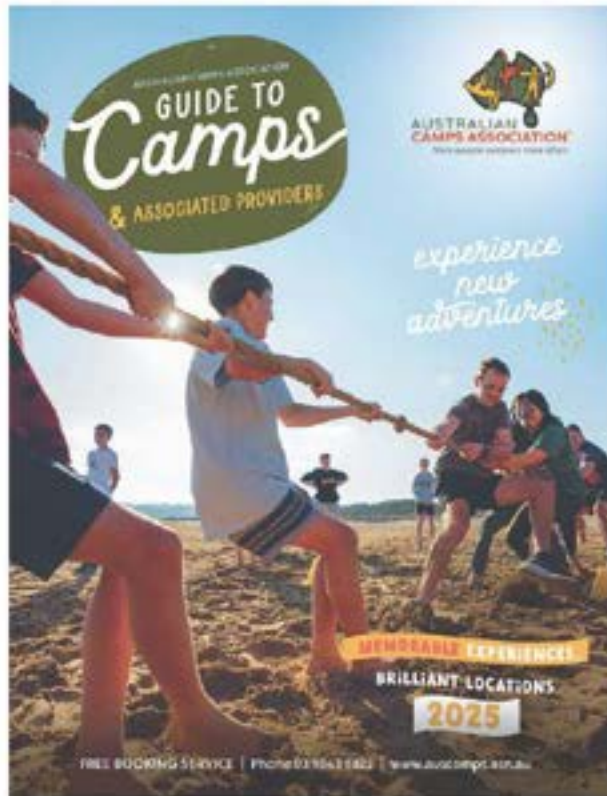


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Our programs:



Camps for  
individuals living  
with disability.