

# AUSTRALIAN CAMPS ASSOCIATION

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025

*Camps and Outdoor Adventure for All*



9 – 11  
September 2025



Rydges  
Geelong, VIC

### Program Snapshot:

Pre-Conference Camp Tours  
2-day Conferencing Program  
Networking | Evening Function



03 9863 6822



Beau  
Miles



Cheryl  
Hambly



Jodi  
Neary



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Major Conference  
Sponsor:




### PRE-CONFERENCE – Tuesday 9 September 2025 | Camp Tours

Time	Venue / Topic
9:15am – 3:45pm	<p>Pre-Booked Camp Tours depart</p> <p><b>Sponsored by:</b> <b>Venuelife</b> VENUE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM</p> <p><b>Regional Tour:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Angahook Holiday Camp</b> Angahook Holiday Camp can provide catered or self-catered facilities for schools, family groups, church and council youth groups, and government agencies. Opportunities exist to explore the local environment beaches and bush setting all year round. Situated along the Great Ocean Rd at Aireys Inlet.</li> <li><b>Baptist Camping Victoria – Camp Wilkin</b> Tucked away just off the Great Ocean Road, this idyllic camp will create the memories that bind your group for years. Located in Anglesea on the iconic Great Ocean Road, this 15 acre property is within an easy walk to magnificent beaches, the tranquil Anglesea River, peaceful bushwalks and shops. Accommodating for 188 in 42 cluster en-suited rooms.</li> <li><b>YMCA Camp Wyuna</b> - Step into adventure at Camp Wyuna, where every moment is infused with excitement and discovery! Nestled at the gateway to the charming coastal town of Queenscliff, our camp is a hidden gem waiting to be explored. Set on five acres of pure natural beauty, where the dunes mingle with the rhythmic crashing of waves from Port Phillip Bay, here at Camp Wyuna, you're not just a visitor - you're an explorer, ready to uncover the wonders of this incredible landscape.</li> </ol> <p><i>Tour will depart the Conference Venue - Rydges Geelong at 9:30am and will drop off at Rydges by approximately 3:45pm</i></p>

\*Program subject to change without notice.(030925)



DAY ONE – Wednesday 10 September		
TIME	DURATION	TOPIC
8:00am-9:15am	75 mins	Registration Opens
9:15am-9:30am	15mins	Pam Kappelides, Chair, Australian Camps Association
9:30am-10:30am	60 mins	<b>Beau Miles - Camp, the great Bubble</b> Loves, loathes, breakthroughs, firsts, lasts, highs, lows, repeat. In this presentation Beau will talk about 10 years of working at a summer camp, being in outdoor ed for 20+ years, and how stepping away from the field, and the bubble, has given great insight into all those years at, on, or wanting to be on camp.
10:30am-11:00am	30 mins	<b>MORNING TEA</b> Exhibitors Hall
11:00am-12:00pm	60 mins	<b>Cheryl Hamblly - Emergency management requirements for residential camps providers</b> This workshop is designed to equip residential camp providers with a clear understanding of their statutory obligations under Australian Standard 3745: Planning for Emergencies in Facilities. Participants will gain practical insights into emergency management, critical incident response, and business continuity best practices tailored specifically for the residential camp environment. Through an interactive session, managers and directors will be guided through a structured self-audit to assess their current level of emergency preparedness, identify critical gaps, and develop a targeted action agenda to strengthen their camp's resilience. The workshop will also explore the unique challenges faced by residential settings, including overnight supervision, remote locations, and managing large groups of participants during emergencies. This session is specifically designed for residential camp operators, directors, and senior managers seeking to enhance their compliance, capability, and confidence in managing emergencies while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all campers, staff, and visitors.
12:00pm-1:00pm	60 mins	<b>LUNCH</b> Nautica Bar & Kitchen at Rydges Geelong
1:00pm-1:45pm	45 mins	<b>Michael Down - Being OK with failure: The role of camps for the promotion of wellbeing and self-confidence in campers</b> Being a kid these days can be pretty tough. Parents are working more than ever (sometimes even on their phones at the dinner table), neighbourhoods are filled with fast cars and less spaces to play with friends in the street, standardised testing at school can be pretty scary, and social media makes navigating friendships and social interactions a lot harder than they should be. No wonder there is a growing number of parents concerned for the health and happiness of their kids, and an increasing number of child and adolescent depression, anxiety, and stress-related diagnoses. This has led to kids these days being labelled "Generation Overwhelmed". As outdoor practitioners, working with young people in the outdoors can be a challenge as we move through our programming. In a society that is more risk-averse than ever, and with the costs of insurance and compliance rising, balancing safe practice while allowing kids to explore risk and what feels safe is a double-edged sword, but so important for future health and wellbeing. This session will explore allowing "beautiful failures" to occur through the concept of risk-benefit for health and include an interactive guided discussion for audience members to share ideas, comment, and ask questions.
1:45pm-2:30pm	45 mins	<b>Jodi Neary - Life's Too Short to do Things the Way They've Always Been Done</b> Jodi shares her story of buying into a business in an industry she knew nothing about, including 45 horses that she equally knew nothing about. Needless-to-say, Jodi had a lot to learn; and quickly! Fast forward 9 years, she has taken the learnings from the most challenging of times, adapted and innovated to build a bigger and better business. Hear about Jodi's next big (HUGE) challenge - to build a \$100M world class action sports facility. Learn about how this came about, why, and when; and how she secured funding in a very competitive round of funding.
2:30pm-3:00pm	30 mins	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b> Exhibitors Hall
3:00pm-3:45pm	45 mins	<b>Peter McDougall - Leading Forward: ACA's Progress, Advocacy, and Vision for Camps in Australia</b> After 2.5years as CEO of the Australian Camps Association (ACA), Peter will provide an update on the challenges and opportunities that we all face and how ACA has been working to advocate, support and assist all ACA Members and all camps within Australia. Peter will cover topics such as Government Relations & Advocacy, National Insurance Program, Census, Accreditation, Stakeholder Engagement, ACA Strategic Plan, Resource Support plus other related topics.
3:45pm-4:15pm	30 mins	Updates and Close Day
4:15pm-5:30pm	75 mins	Free Time. Delegates make own way to Sailors' Rest for 5:30pm
		<b>CONFERENCE EVENING FUNCTION</b> Sailors' Rest, 3 Moorabool Street, Geelong
5:30pm-9:30pm	4 hours	 <b>HYPERSONIC INDUSTRIES</b> Sponsored by Hypersonic Industries Entertainment: Stefan

DAY TWO – Thursday 11 September		
TIME	DURATION	TOPIC
9:00am-9:15am	15 mins	Introduction and welcome
9:15am-9:45am	30 mins	<b>Scott Ko: <i>Beyond Leadership - Part 1 - Dismantling the myths of leadership</i></b> Consider this: According to the Australian HR Institute, 69% of leaders experience burnout, compared to 58% of team members. What's going on? With all this focus on the importance of better leadership, why does it feel harder than ever to be a leader? In Part 1 of Beyond Leadership, Scott will examine this paradox, dismantle several common myths of leadership, and challenge audiences to reframe how we think about leadership.
9:45am-10:15am	30 mins	<b>Dwight Hulme: <i>Strengthening Standards: Accreditation, Bunks, Ropes &amp; Operational Updates Across the Camps Sector</i></b> This session will update delegates on a number of matters around sector standards and projects.
10:15am-10:45am	30 mins	<b>MORNING TEA</b> Exhibitors Hall
10:45am-11:30am	45 mins	<b>Lizzy Pugh: <i>The Gift of Feedback: How Leaders Build Culture Through Honest Conversations</i></b> This workshop invites leaders to reflect on the power of feedback as a tool for building trust, improving performance and creating a culture of openness and growth within teams. Participants will engage in guided reflection, movement-based activities and peer dialogue designed to normalise feedback as a leadership practice.
11:30am-12:00pm	30 mins	<b>Wayne Street: <i>ACA's Inaugural Participation Census and Economic Impact: Insights</i></b> This session will discuss this year's work in collecting and analysing data on participation at Australian camps. Preliminary results will also be presented, revealing just how big a contribution camps make to local economies and how many people have a camps experience.
12:00pm-1:00pm	60 mins	<b>LUNCH</b> Nautica Bar & Kitchen at Rydges Geelong
1:00pm-2:00pm	60 mins	<b>Despina Karatzias: <i>CTRL+ALT+DELETE: Reset Your Mindset, Reclaim Your Message, and Rise Online (Even When You're Under-Resourced)</i></b> In a world demanding constant content, how do camps and outdoor providers stay visible without burning out? In this high-impact and actionable presentation, small business digital educator and tourism mentor Despina Karatzias unpacks the attention economy and the marketing pressure it places on already stretched camp and outdoor operators. Through CTRL+ALT+DELETE, Despina invites participants to hit reset, unpacking the digital conundrum, challenging conventional ideas of online success, and offering practical, sustainable marketing strategies that work even with limited time, tech, or team.
2:00pm-2:30pm	30 mins	<b>David Marsden - Australian Adventure Activity Standards Review Update</b> This session explores the upcoming 2025–26 AAAS Review and its implications for the camping sector—highlighting how the revised standards support risk management, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and cultural safety. <b>Dan Waters - Outdoor Recreation Qualification Review Update</b> The team from HumanAbility will present their latest work and findings as part of the Outdoor Recreation and Leadership Qualification review and explain how you can have your say.
2:30pm-3:00pm	30 mins	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b> Exhibitors Hall
3:00pm-3:45pm	45 mins	<b>Bryce Turner: <i>Training with Purpose: Linking Today's Upskilling to Future Business Strategy</i></b> In a rapidly evolving sector, the strength of any outdoor organisation lies in the capability of its people. This session explores how workforce upskilling and professionalisation can become powerful tools for aligning training with broader business strategy. Drawing on leadership experience across defence, education, and enterprise, Bryce Turner will share practical strategies to build a skilled, future-ready workforce. This session is designed for leaders, program managers, and training providers looking to align training with real-world business goals.
3:45pm-4:15pm	30 mins	<b>Scott Ko: <i>Beyond Leadership - Part 2 - Practical strategies for high-performing teams</i></b> In Part 2 of Beyond Leadership, Scott will introduce the critical shift from admiring leadership traits to cultivating the behaviours that translate into high-performing teams. Not only will he provide audiences with practical strategies and new frameworks for building a culture of agency and courage at every level, he will also show audiences how to incorporate all of the insights shared by speakers into our organisations and communities.
4:15pm-4:30pm	15 mins	<b>CONFERENCE CLOSE</b>