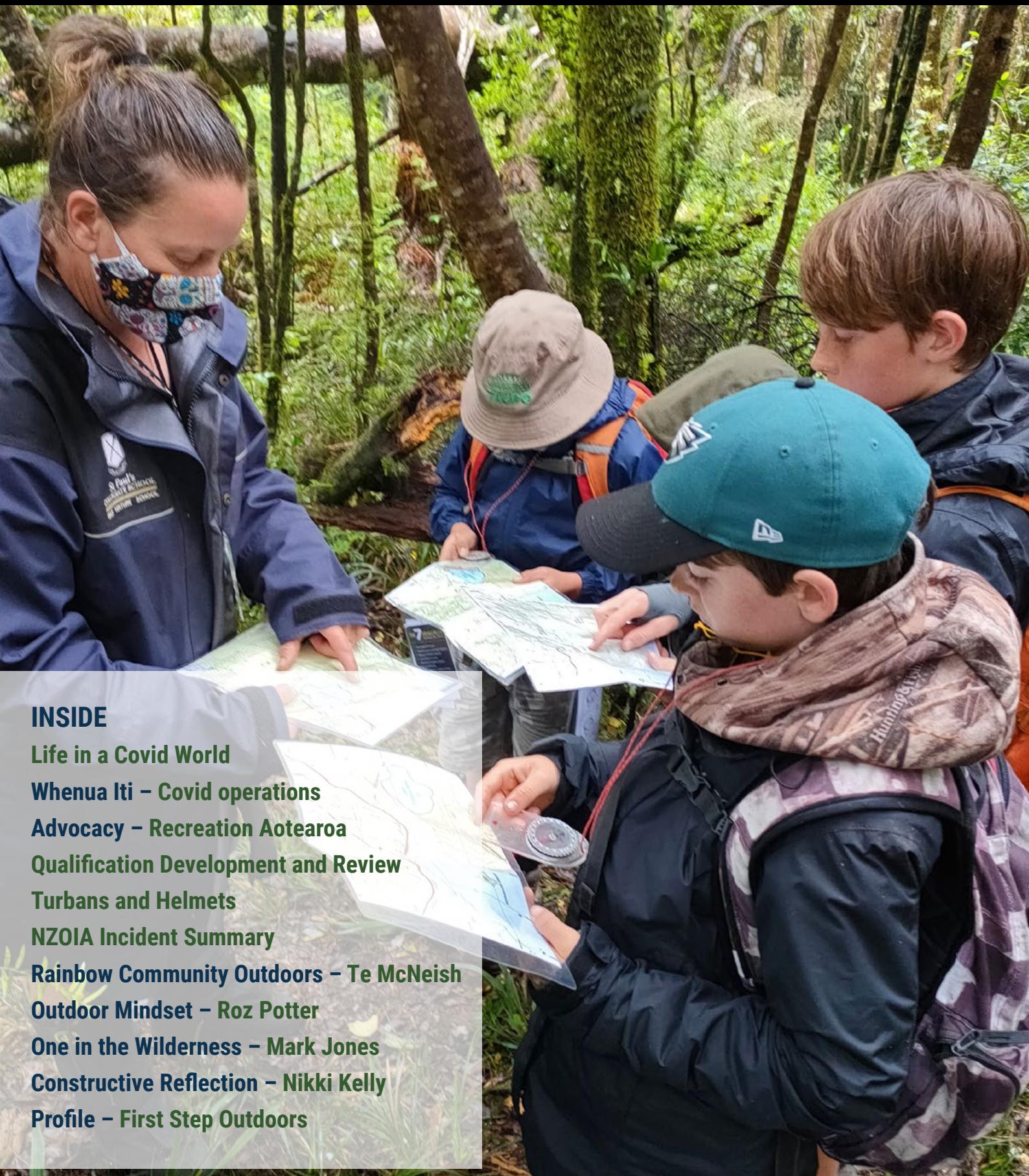




# QUARTERLY

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ZEALAND OUTDOOR INSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 90: MARCH 2022



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## Custom & Contract Courses

**NZOIA courses not being run at a suitable time or location?**  
**Want to get all your staff sorted when and where it suits you?**  
**Got a group of 3 or more people and a date / location in mind?**  
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Contact the Operations Manager to discuss your needs and we'll do our best to make it happen. Costs may vary from scheduled courses and minimum numbers of participants dependent on the course type will apply.  
**Email: [admin@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzoia.org.nz) Phone: 03 539 0509**

Cover photo: NZOIA Bush 1 Assessment, December 2021.  
Credit: Rachel Thompson

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## Are you getting your weekly NZOIA 4YA?

If you are not receiving weekly emails every Friday from NZOIA, then we either don't have your current email address, or your membership details need updating.

PLEASE check the email address in your membership account on our website, or contact the NZOIA office if you do not have a username and password.

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## Thoughts from the Board

Kia ora koutou,

The Board last met in December; our first (quasi) face to face meeting for the year with members spread between Nelson and Great Barrier Island.

While I'd love to say the hot topics of the meeting have changed, Covid continues to be a key talking point as we monitor and plan for the impacts of the virus on both the industry and NZOIA. While we've had a high level of support from NZOIA members for the steps and policies we've put in place to insure NZOIA assessments and workshops can continue to happen with as much confidence as possible, we also recognise this means a halt to plans for some.

The question has been asked, 'when will you review the NZOIA Covid-19 Risk Protection Policy?'

We're continuing to monitor changes to the Covid Protection Framework (CPF) and will adjust as the framework changes. To date there hasn't been a substantial change that would result in a change to NZOIA's policy. We can confirm that NZOIA assessments and workshops are considered 'events', and under the CPF at red and orange; "If My Vaccine Pass is not used, the following restrictions apply: Close-proximity businesses, events and gyms are not able to operate"

There may be more options at the green traffic light level, and we'll be watching to see how the framework evolves. However, with green a wee way off yet, we won't be crystal ball gazing and developing these plans yet.

Other topics of conversation in December included adjustments to the NZOIA Complaints Policy which has been under review, NZOIA's submission to the Adventurous Activity Review and ongoing changes in the tertiary education space.

Following the meeting, Board members discussed range of Te Ao Māori principles, considering ways we could better include these principles in NZOIA operation. Travis and Karlile will be seeking further input from NZOIA members in the near future.

After a busy end to the year, it was nice to spend some time over summer adventuring with fellow Board members. I was fortunate to sneak in a paddle down the Whanganui River with Karlile, a tramp with Jo, and even met Ben face to face for the first time after accidentally bumping into him in the McLeans Island carpark (figuratively speaking, no one crashed)! I hope you've also enjoyed the summer.

Noho ora mai

Gemma Parkin | NZOIA Board Chair

# NZOIA NATIONAL TRAINING SYMPOSIUM 2022

22 - 25 SEPTEMBER | HILLARY OUTDOORS TONGARIRO

- An opportunity to train, up-skill and revalidate your NZOIA qualifications
- Skilled and experienced facilitators and assessors
- A range of professional development workshops available – try something new!
- Meet other instructors, guides and teachers and connect with your industry
- Combines with NZOIA Annual Excellence Awards Dinner and AGM
- The call is out for guest speakers and professional development workshop facilitators – could this be you?
- Registration closes 1 August 2022

## STAY UP TO DATE!

[www.nzoia.org.nz/symposium2022](http://www.nzoia.org.nz/symposium2022)

Enquiries email: [symposium@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:symposium@nzoia.org.nz) | ph: 03 539 0509

[www.facebook.com/NZOIInstructors](http://www.facebook.com/NZOIInstructors)



EARLYBIRD RATES  
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NZOIA gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Sport New Zealand



# LIFE IN A COVID WORLD

Two years on and our vocabulary has increased to include words such as coronavirus, delta, omicron, Pfizer, pandemic, MIQ, community transmission, RATs and PPE to name but a few.

It has been an incredibly hard time for our outdoor sector with financial uncertainty, mandates, increased workloads, inability to operate, last minute cancellations and living in an ever-changing world. But we are a resilient lot, and many of the underlying values and foundations of instructing and guiding in the outdoors have enabled creativity, flexibility and change so we can still offer outdoor experiences to participants.

Covid-19 emergency funding secured through channels such as Sport NZ have without a doubt saved many an outdoor centre and organisation and we thank them, Recreation Aotearoa and many of our members who advocated for this over the past two years. Outdoor recreation and education are more relevant now than ever, as the strain and stress of a pandemic affects mental health.



So how do we live and operate in an ever-changing world where nothing seems certain? Collaboration, innovation and resilience has been key. Many hours can get sucked up in reading, understanding and implementing the measures needed under different levels and traffic lights, and you are not alone in thinking it has become a full-time job in your organisation!

We talked to some of our members and the organisations NZOIA works with to find out what has helped them to continue to

operate in an uncertain Covid environment and if there was any learning they would like to share with the sector:

## Outward Bound

- We RAT all students and all delivery staff twice per month. Students before they come on site, and then three days later.
- We isolate symptomatic people, and in most cases take them for a PCR test. These have all turned out to be colds, and the prevalence of cold symptoms has greatly diminished.
- The 'new normal' is quite strict protocols around such things as how close each group gets to another group, and staff meetings inside.
- In the early days of the pandemic, we changed to different disinfectants, which caused our onsite wastewater plan to go haywire. Now we use Biozyme products, which seem to work well.
- The vaccine mandate rolled out well, although we lost a very small number of staff.
- We are conservative with student numbers, to ensure we can isolate people if they become symptomatic. Through March and April this year we plan to quite significantly reduce the number of students on courses.
- On the whole student tolerance for close contact with others is higher than ours (i.e., they are more relaxed). However, some adult students have felt we could have been stricter with protocols.
- Managing contact between staff is challenging, especially when most staff live in the community onsite. We have chosen not to dictate how staff spend their time away from work. The onsite community is not one big group of 50, socialising occurs mostly in smaller subgroups. But some sort of spread is semi-inevitable, particularly in the accommodation that shares facilities.

*Simon Graney – Strategy and Innovation Director*

## Tihoi

- At Tihoi during lockdowns we had to move our academics online. Keeping lessons and meetings short and succinct means people weren't overloaded and sat in front of screens

too much. We shortened the day to allow people (students and staff) time to decompress away from their laptops.

- We used apps like Strava to set challenges for everyone to get involved in. This made sure that staff and students were still getting out and about, exercising and practising skills.
- When we got the boys back into the centre we had to adapt our programme because our usual activities like caving were no longer possible. We're fortunate to have highly skilled and passionate staff who really rose to the challenge and came up with creative ideas.
- Tihoi was able to form its own bubble and we had to sadly cancel the days when the parents come in. This connection was missed but the payoff was being able to continue with the programme.
- Plan but don't over plan. Deal with what's in front of you. Think about what might happen but don't waste your time constantly trying to predict. There is enough uncertainty and shifting landscapes with Covid. Creating plans upon plans which then don't come to fruition will actually increase your team's and students' stress levels. Take things one step at a time and it will help everyone feel more secure.
- Focus on the big picture, which may mean that you have to make some hard decisions. We had to drop canoeing from our regular programme and ask parents (who were desperate to see their boys) to stay away. But by focusing on what the students were coming away with because of these decisions, it made them easier to swallow...especially the canoeing for me!

*Peter Evans – Director*

## TOPEC

- We have a traffic light pandemic plan and operate within it. This plan has gone to all clients.
- We work one on one with each client to ensure their needs are met and are fielding even more enquiries from parents.
- We operate as a satellite campus for all Taranaki High Schools therefore work within their protocols.
- Currently we have separated the staff into two different "pods" so we are not all close contacts, if one group brings Covid into the centre we have other staff to work the next week. We use two different offices and duplicate systems. All staff still meet together every morning, usually spaced outside if weather is good or on zoom or standing at windows/doorways. The communication between pods has to be frequent and clear so we all know what is happening and relevant safety information is shared.
- We have separated the centre in two so there is no comingling of classrooms and toilets. We have a cleaning regime and staff are rostered on for morning and night.
- Students no longer cook, the school staff and our staff do it, with single serve in the kitchen and no buffet.
- Camping overnights on the Maunga has been taken out of the programme at this stage as it is very hard to provide enough tents for students to be spaced out, we do not have the resources. Instead, instructors stay one night at camp and run extra activities.
- TOPEC has supplied masks for all instructors which are the same as teacher requirements, with spares in vans and



offices for students who need to wear them inside. We try to run classroom-based lessons outside, once winter arrives this will become increasingly difficult.

- We have offered alternative options to all customers i.e., if staying overnight is too hard for them to get their heads around, we can do day groups and supply transport to and from school. At this stage, most people are wanting to stay overnight.
- The key thing has been talking to the customers and working with them so they feel comfortable with their decisions about their students while attending TOPEC.

*Grover Worsfold – Director*

## Adventure Specialties

- Having a safety system that aligns with the national Covid response and ensuring that our clients understand how we need/can operate in this Covid environment.
- Developing programmes that we can operate at schools or onsite, i.e., having options available that are not overnight and away from the school grounds.
- Having staff work from home where possible to limit any possible spread of illness/symptoms.
- Ensuring that groups are exclusive and not mixing with other groups (bubbles).
- Trying to have "fat in the system" with staffing to minimise programme disruption due to potential sickness and need to isolate.
- Getting together regularly with others in the industry to strategise, support, share information and advocate has been invaluable.
- What a great and supportive sector we have!

*Tim Wills – CEO*

## Hillary Outdoors

- Ensuring all staff are kept informed and have the correct protective clothing to keep staff safe.
- Lots of communication with our clients to make sure they know we are following safety protocols.
- Regular revision of the protocols, taking advice from the health sector and developing a close relationship with health personnel.
- Ensure we have a workable current plan that all staff are aware of if/when a Covid case arrives.
- Keeping informed about any changes made from Government and changes to legislation.
- Staying in touch with other major industry organisations so overall there is consistency.
- Reminding staff and clients of the basics, i.e., washing hands, social distancing, use of masks. People can become slack otherwise.
- Keeping a positive outlook on what we can do rather than what we cannot do. Look for solutions.

Andy Thompson – Centre Manager Great Barrier Island

## WORD (World Off-road Riding Department)

- One of our core values at WORD is 'embrace change' and the Covid environment has meant we were really able to put that into practice. We work with what we've got...so during lockdown when we couldn't run programmes we made a new website, created photo and video contests for young people to join in on, and developed a new programme to launch once out of lockdown.
- It really helped us to remember that young people are adaptable... they are far more willing to 'embrace change' than grown-ups. So, we aim to be open and honest with reasons why changes are made. We encourage young people's ideas and work through how we can make it happen. I love the phrase 'yes, and how can we make it happen?' It's a mindset...like we're detectives trying to figure out how to make things work.

Ashley Peters – Founder and CEO

## Ultimate Hikes

- We have had to re-size our business to walk over less days in order to meet the reduced demand. Our domestic market was only 20% of our business before Covid but we have been supported by a lot more Kiwis in the last two seasons which has been fantastic.
- We only employ fully vaccinated staff and all customers need to provide proof of vaccination in order to join a group.
- We have introduced measures between our groups and lodge staff to ensure they are only casual rather than close contacts. This would allow our walks to continue if a Covid positive case was identified who was on a walk.
- We developed a comprehensive response plan with Public Health South to deal with potential Covid cases or close contacts (we are dealing with close contact cases as I write).
- Don't wait to be told what you need to do – prepare a plan and get good health advice.
- Ensure good communication between all staff and customers, keep everyone updated and informed.
- Remember these are difficult times for many and empathy for staff and customers is essential.

Noel Saxon – General Manager

### Updated Covid-19 information relevant to the outdoor sector is regularly being updated by the following organisations:

Sport NZ: <https://sportnz.org.nz/covid-19-response/overview/>

Education Outdoors New Zealand (EONZ): <https://www.eonz.org.nz/eotc-learning-from-home/>

Recreation Aotearoa: <https://www.nzrecreation.org.nz/Site/conference/covid-19/>

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA): <https://www.tia.org.nz/news-and-updates/industry-news/covid-19/>

DOC: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/issues/covid-19/>

NZOIA: <https://www.nzoia.org.nz/news/covid-19>

## We want your story!

We are looking for contributions from you, the NZOIA members, for the NZOIA Quarterly. Do you have a story to tell? Do you know someone who has thoughts to share?

### Articles could be:

A personal adventure and how your experiences have impacted your instruction/guiding of others. / An incident, near miss or accident that others could learn from. / A personal profile – an interesting tale about how you got to be where you are now in the world of outdoor instructing. / An organisation that is doing innovative and interesting things – with its programme, philosophy, direction and instruction or guiding. / A reflection on any aspect of outdoor instruction/guiding that you think would be educational and beneficial for others to hear.

Contact the editor with your ideas and for guidelines: [editor@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:editor@nzoia.org.nz)



Photo: Johnny Johnson

# WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE?

## WHENUA ITI OUTDOORS SHARES THEIR POSITION ON HOW TO CONTINUE OFFERING EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Whenua Iti Outdoors is a close contact business, as are most providers of active recreation, play and outdoor education. In recent months, this has put us between a rock and a harder rock when knowing how to interpret and navigate the constantly changing Covid-19 regulations. As an organisation we fully support the Ministry of Health Covid Protection Framework and the need to minimise the impact of the pandemic. We currently require all staff, volunteers, parent helpers or visitors to the site who will be in close contact with students to be fully vaccinated. However, at the time of writing, we do not currently ask students, attending school programmes who are aged over 12 their vaccination status. The rationale for this is that schools are prohibited from requiring students to be vaccinated to access education. And, with 99% of the programmes we run at Whenua Iti Outdoors being 'school programmes', across both the primary and secondary sectors, we are a core part of this education. We are essentially an extension of the school campus and curriculum, providing an essential alternative to classroom education that allows students to learn and grow in an experiential learning setting.

The NZ Human Rights Commission core elements of the right to education are central to guiding our approach to programme delivery through the pandemic. These include:

- availability of different forms of secondary education
- access to higher education on non-discriminatory terms
- education directed to develop individuals to their fullest potential and to prepare them for responsible life in a free society, including development of respect for others and for human rights
- respect for academic freedom and institutional autonomy, including the freedom to express opinions about a workplace institution or system, fulfil functions without discrimination or fear of sanction, and participate in professional or representative academic bodies.

We have carefully reviewed the updated Sport NZ Covid-19 Protection Framework (CPF) to look for clarity around the

operating environment moving forwards, so that we can continue to operate under a Red setting. The restrictions on operations if Whenua Iti continues to not require vaccination certificates are significant but, with a creative approach and a few adaptations, we can continue programme delivery at 'Red' setting of the CPF.

The Department of Conservation's position is that only fully vaccinated visitors can stay at any DOC managed campsite or hut. This creates a significant further hurdle to successful programme delivery. In normal times, the vast majority of our programmes intentionally connect rangatahi and tamariki to the Conservation Estate and to DOC managed campsites and huts. To continue successful programme delivery in 2022, for the expected 1800 students over the age of 12 we will work alongside, we have had to change our plans and approach to intentionally avoid DOC managed facilities. Whilst this is achievable, the resulting loss of opportunity for experiential, nature connection and active recreation in the DOC estate is significant. And we are not alone in this dilemma. Many schools are faced with a similar problem.

In light of the effect of Covid-19 on youth mental health and wellbeing, with unprecedented acknowledgment of anxiety in youth, experiential education, outside the classroom, building confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging is needed now more than ever. In particular, students who are not vaccinated are at a greater risk of feeling isolated from their peer group if choices are made to only offer programmes to vaccinated students.

Schools across New Zealand have been forced to individually make a call on how they access EOTC in 2022 to provide certainty in their planning for the coming year, with some schools choosing to remove EOTC programmes from their curriculum altogether so as not to alienate unvaccinated students. The resulting cancellation of programmes and school bookings represents further significant challenge for the viability of organisations like Whenua Iti Outdoors. ►

The question remains, how can we ensure access to active recreation and outdoor education for all students within the current restrictions?

A possible solution is that education delivery services partnered with schools, off campus, to enrich local curricula could be exempt from requiring vaccination passes for school students. Similarly, students on core curriculum, school programmes could be exempt from providing the certificates to stay at DOC managed facilities. Whenua Iti have written to the Ministry of Education, Department of Conservation and Sport New Zealand to ask that the situation be considered.

### How can we still provide experiential, active recreation learning for our students? What opportunities are there?

Central to the strategic and business model of Whenua Iti is maintaining a flexible and nimble approach to our operations and our programming. This is critical in the current climate – we are going to need to be adaptive and creative in our thinking, and most importantly, keep talking with schools to work out how we can support their curricula. Each school is dealing with the problem differently, we need to be empathetic to their position, and work to provide opportunities that fit within their policies. This week (Feb 22) we are facilitating a school camp in the Nelson Lakes National Park and are both working closely with the school to meet their safety requirements whilst ensuring programmes avoid the need to stay at DOC managed facilities.

NCEA-assessed secondary programmes that bring students from different schools and different regions together present a different challenge. Following the Sport NZ guidelines for Sport and Active recreation under the CPF, we can continue to safely operate as long as groups do not exceed 25. However, for Term 1 at least, we have made the call to err on the side of caution and split programme intakes via region. This will see our teams delivering different intakes of each programme in the West Coast, Marlborough and Nelson Tasman regions. The increased costs of the resulting duplication of delivery are pronounced and we are hoping to return to the combined region delivery model early in Term 2.

Throughout the 'Covid-journey' the greatest challenge continues to be not knowing how any of this is going to play out when Covid finally arrives either in our customers or in our staff. We have split our staff, both the instructor team and office team, into different weekly 'bubbles' in order to minimise the risk of having multiple close contacts needing to self-isolate simultaneously. It is likely that the disruption created by the need to self-isolate at a moment's notice will prove to be extremely difficult to manage. As with many other businesses, the associated worries around financial implications of cancelled programmes are not conducive to a good night's sleep! Until we have more certainty, and clarity around how the pandemic may roll on, we continue to prepare for multiple eventualities. We are modelling how we can postpone (rather than cancel) programmes and ensure that we maintain a viable business when this storm has passed. Which it will. And when it does, we plan to get back out there and enjoy the sunshine!

*He iti hau mairangi e tū te pāhokahoka –  
After the storm, the rainbow appears*



Perhaps, like me, you thought that moving from the Alert Level system to the Covid Protection Framework (CPF) and its traffic lights, it would get easier to operate in the outdoors. But we very quickly identified a quirk of the framework that put some pretty severe and unworkable constraints on to Outdoor Education providers, specifically with regard to school camps.

Here at Recreation Aotearoa, we are a big fan of the school camp experience, as wide and as varied as that experience can be. In conversations with Ministers and public servants we describe school camps as the 'gateway drug' of outdoor recreation. For many New Zealanders they are their first and formative outdoor recreation experience, especially in the large population centres. The benefits of outdoor education are well documented and an easy sell. Aside from the obvious physical and mental health benefits, we point to the proven teamwork and culture building outcomes, as well as the increased connection between students and the improved resilience of individuals.

Unfortunately, when the CPF framework was announced prior to Christmas, it made it difficult for Outdoor Education providers to host schools, for reasons we outlined in a letter to the Minister in December:

*...Ministry of Education guidance states that when a school group goes off-site, they must comply with the CPF requirements of their destination. In this case, an outdoor education or swim education provider. Unless a provider wishes to operate within the limits of 25 (Red) or 50 (Orange) people, which are financially unviable, they require the use of vaccine certificates. Schools are not required to obtain vaccine certificates. In many cases students don't have them. Some students will be excluded from outdoor education or swim education for this reason. Even more problematically, where a school is unwilling or unable to leave those students without a vaccine certificate behind, the decision is made to forego outdoor education or the school camp for the whole cohort."*

Our letter went on to suggest a change to the guidance:

*"We suggest that MBIE makes a minor revision to its guidance to allow outdoor education operators, delivering curriculum-based outdoor education and maintain separation between schools and the public, to operate without vaccine certificates. This would align with guidance from the Ministry of Education and allow the numerous benefits of outdoor education and school camps to be re-activated in a time in which they have never been more important."*

Pleasingly, after returning to work in January (sunburnt and footsore), we noticed that Minister Hipkins had made it clear in a NZ Herald article that with regard to schools camps and trips "...where a venue is being used by the school exclusively it should be treated as an extension of school. There is no vaccination mandate for students to attend school.... We don't want anyone to miss out on those out-of-school experiences because they are so valuable."

This was further affirmed in a Ministry of Education bulletin that stated: *"With careful planning, education outside the classroom (EOTC) activities can go ahead at Red... EOTC providers will be able to offer curriculum-related activities/services to a registered school that does not require all children to be vaccinated... The provider will essentially be treated as a school premise while the EOTC activity is taking place."*

At the time of writing the Ministry of Education was waiting on the release of a Public Health Order before writing and releasing guidance for EOTC providers. By the time you read this, that guidance will almost certainly be in place.

Essentially this boils down to 'the kids bring the school rules with them', which is a positive and permissive change from the original CPF guidance. I hope that school camp providers can make use of this opportunity, but know it can be difficult to persuade anxious parents and hesitant school leaders.

#### Outdoor Education Support Fund

Recognising that many Outdoor Education providers would face significant financial hardship due to the lockdowns last year, Recreation Aotearoa successfully lobbied for a \$1.5m financial relief package. We received dozens of applications which, sadly, speak to the tough circumstances many providers find themselves in. On the other hand, it was pleasing to note several applicants withdraw after realising that, contrary to their initial forecasts, that they would not meet the criteria of significant financial hardship. In total, 24 outdoor education providers were awarded financial relief packages ranging from \$5k, right up to the maximum cap of \$150k. 'Congratulations' is the wrong word, but we are honoured to have facilitated this financial support. It is thoroughly deserved.

**Recreation Aotearoa**  
Te Whai Oranga



## New Bush Leader Overnight Endorsement

The much awaited and heavily debated Overnight Endorsement is ready to go!! For some time now, members have been enquiring about an overnight camping option for Leader qualifications. We're keeping it simple and logical by connecting it to the Bush Leader qualification as an endorsement.

The holder of the overnight endorsement can manage and instruct groups on overnight experiences, below the bushline. Participants may be sleeping in tents, flies, backcountry huts or rock shelters.

This can be done as a midday to midday overnight standalone assessment as found on the NZOIA calendar. Alternatively, you can integrate this into the Bush Leader Assessment and gain them both in one go! Endorsements and Leader Assessments can be completed through the Free Range Assessment model.

## New Canoe Guide and changes to Canoe Leader and Canoe 1

Radical changes to the suite of Canoe Qualifications to make them fit for purpose and guide inclusive have been made. We now have a Canoe Leader, Canoe Guide and Canoe 1. The guiding qualification sprung from a Hui held in Taumarunui for all guiding companies in the Central North Island. Canoe 1 now includes the teaching of river rescue skills.

Canoe Leader: Leads canoe activities on estuaries, river deltas, sheltered beaches, lakes, coastal inlets and swimming pools. Perfect for an afternoon session on a school camp.

Canoe Guide: Guides groups on multi-day trips up to class 2 white water. Perfect for guiding people on the Whanganui.

Canoe 1: Guide and instruct on multi-day canoe trips up to class 2 white water. Manage and teach canoe river rescue skills on class 2 white water. Perfect for running the Clarence (with a portage at the grade 3 rapids) running river rescue courses and training upcoming leader and guides.

At their next revalidation the sixteen people that hold Canoe 1 can choose to revalidate as a Canoe Guide or as an updated Canoe 1 holder. If they choose to revalidate as a Canoe 1 holder they will be expected to demonstrate teaching river rescue skills.

Penny Holland | NZOIA Operations Manager

## TURBANS AND HELMETS

Have you had a student with a turban and needed them to wear a helmet? If you haven't yet you probably will sometime soon. Here are some insights into what is potentially an awkward/dangerous situation and how to address this issue.

The Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004, clauses 7.12(8) and (9) allows for an adherent of the Sikh religion to be excused from wearing a motorcycle helmet, providing they will not be travelling at a speed exceeding 50kmph. This also applies to bike helmets.

### Possible exemption from wearing a bike helmet

You must wear a bike helmet if you're:

- riding a bike
- being carried as a passenger, or
- being towed in a trailer by a bike.

### Exception

However, you don't have to wear a bike helmet if you can prove you're a member of the Sikh religion, and you're only travelling at up to 50km/h.

### Exemption

You might be able to get an exemption due to:

- religious beliefs
- physical disability, or
- medical conditions or other such reasonable grounds.

Source: [Exemption from wearing a helmet / Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency: ntza.govt.nz](#)

I contacted Fiona McDonald from EONZ about this and they have had to address this reasonably often. She made the following points which could be some good practice guidelines for NZOIA and members:

- Have a clear policy around any exemptions to wearing helmets.
- Provide a letter to the participant/caregivers stating why helmets are worn on the particular activity(ies) and that there is an increased risk of serious head injuries and/or death associated with any decision not to wear a helmet.
- Then give the participant/caregiver the choice of themselves/the student:
  - (1) participating with helmet, (2) participating with turban, or (3) not participating in the activity.
- If they choose to participate with a turban, have a tick box with a statement like "I accept there is an increased risk of serious head injuries associated with this option" and their signature.

The overarching principle here is there are no surprises or assumptions for the caregivers while still allowing for inclusion in the activities.

Sash Nukada | NZOIA TSC convener

## NZOIA INCIDENT SUMMARY 2021

The TSC conduct an annual incident review at the end of every year, and we thought it would be a good idea to report a summary to the membership for any learning. In 2021 we had five incidents on NZOIA events;

1. A sprained ankle from a rock climbing lead fall.
2. A shoulder injury from a mountain bike fall.
3. A near miss where a lead climber dislodged a rock (between tennis and basketball size) and it just missed the belayer (who was in a good position and had a helmet on).
4. A wasp sting allergic reaction (no history, treated with topical and oral anti-histamines), occurred in November in South Island beech forest.
5. Permission to share incident was not obtained.

All seem to be a part of the normal managed risks we have in outdoor pursuits, and all incidents were minimised due to the safety management steps that were put in place (e.g. attentive belayer, helmets, appropriate first aid medication available). No days were lost in any of the above incidents (i.e. nobody had to withdraw from the course). Difficult to draw trends from these reports but some points to note;

- The first two incidents (an ankle sprain and shoulder injury) are part of the everyday risks that we accept as part of our activity, particularly the MTB fall. The only slight trend here

is they both occurred at the end of the day, a long day at that (personal skills day on assessment), so just a reminder for Assessors and instructors to consider possible fatigue at end of the day when thinking of progressions and activities at days end.

- The third incident, the near miss occurred at Albert Terrace (I was the belayer!), a well-used crag. So just a reminder that even at well-travelled crags, you can still rip out big chunks of rock (good ol' NZ rock! We don't call it weet-bix for nothing). A reminder for helmets on, watch belayer positioning, and keep people who don't need to be at the base of the crag away.
- In regards to the fourth incident, NZOIA does not schedule Bush events in the Nelson Lakes area or Craigieburns in Feb/March because of the increased risk of wasp stings. It is also common practice for instructors/guides to carry not only oral and topical anti-histamines, but also some form of adrenaline.

Overall not bad given we run a lot of events in various mediums and locations throughout in NZ.

Hope you've all been out and about enjoying this amazing summer weather! Be safe and stay sharp and frosty out there!

Sash Nukada | NZOIA TSC Convener | Hillary Outdoors Tertiary Programme Manager

# RAINBOW COMMUNITY

## IN THE OUTDOORS: IDEAS FOR LANGUAGE AND CHANGE

TE MCNEISH

Kia ora koutou. Ko Te tokou ingoa. Nō Rangiora ahau.

My name is Te, and I am privileged to put my fingers to the keyboard and give a wee bit of insight into my views around the queer, gender diverse, takatāpui, intersex (rainbow) community in the outdoors. I would like to acknowledge all my outdoor rainbow whānau who paved the way for me to be so comfortable with who I am, and all the allies who support us. I started working with young people in 2011 as a youth worker while studying at uni, I eventually moved into the outdoors to balance my two passions after I graduated in 2015 and worked as a part time youth worker and part time outdoor instructor. I am now an outdoor contractor and have goals to move back into social services with an outdoor focus.

When I asked my rainbow community friends for their opinion on what to write and suggest to the outdoor community, I got mixed answers...surprisingly.

### Pronouns

Some said, "Why does it matter how you identify as an instructor? Is it your client's business?" They considered it similar to other identifying features, like your relationship status or the region you live in.

I totally agree it should not be necessary to subscribe to labels, but pronouns are important and different. They are part of our intrinsic wellbeing—how we portray ourselves in social settings. Using the right pronouns can help ease anxieties in a foreign environment, which the outdoors is that for a lot of people.

In general, Kiwi culture just recognises two genders, male and female. This is sometimes called 'gender binary', for example bathrooms, clothing, schools based on sex. This is changing and most schools I have come across are accepting and open to discussions around this, however some are not.

How does your outdoor centre or workplace use gender binary language and facilities? How could you change that?

I have been called "sir" out of respect when disciplining students, "miss" out of laziness because they haven't remembered my name, and "miss" out of respect from students who would use that language culturally. I normally ask clients to call me either Te or Tegan and I forget to add my pronouns. I often hear students use binary pronouns to reference me to their classmates. Frankly, I do not mind if I haven't told them my pronouns. You don't know what you don't know, right?

But let's transfer that to a teenage, non-binary person, or a transitioning person. Some aren't as forthcoming about asking classmates, teachers and friends to use their correct pronouns because they are still trying to figure it out or simply questioning

how they identify. Why would they tell a stranger they don't know or trust? Misgendering young people can, over time really harm them on their journey to discovering their identity. I know it did for me.

"Do I fit in that category?" was a common question I asked myself when I was figuring it out myself. As a 25 year old, I had a lot of help and understanding when I finally felt comfortable telling others and encouraging other people to tell me theirs. Confession: sometimes I forgot to ask now, or I still don't feel comfortable asking because am I going to be faced with a look of, "Why is that important?" Or worse, (and this has happened), "Can you not tell my pronouns based on how I am presenting?"

Why not make it easier for others by using your pronouns, which creates a small opening space for those students to come up to you privately (or openly in front of their group) and tell you their pronouns or if they actually want to be referenced by a different name than what their school has on the records. Better yet, have the student's preferred pronoun on the medical forms they fill in so that you are aware of it.

However, I know that those forms are school-determined and some outdoor providers don't have a say in what questions are on that form. Also, parents fill them out without consulting their child, anyway. So how could we change this?

For some schools and workplaces, it isn't always appropriate to have a form or to ask teachers about their policies surrounding the rainbow community. Ask yourself how you can bridge that gap, even with a single-sex school, since those students aren't going to all identify as that gender.

Which brings me quickly to a common language faux pas. When you are with an all-girls or all-boys school, what language do you use to reference the whole group? Guys? Lads? Girls? What about team, crew, or friends? That's an easy language adaptation that includes non-binary students without making anyone feel uncomfortable.

Wow, that one was easy!

### Sleeping arrangements

Here's a wee example for you all to consider: a transitioning student comes on camp (female to male) and they are open about it. How would you approach this situation on a tramp to a hut? How would you respond to this on a three-day tramp where the group is tenting? Would the situation change in summer versus winter?

Here's my suggestion: start a discussion with the school and the students in the group, what are they comfortable with? Perhaps marae style under a bush fly? Or their own tent? I know

the solo option sounds harsh, but I was discussing this with a colleague who said, "How would you feel knowing that someone got pregnant on a camp?" It could happen even with the best precautions and it also depends on the stage of the student's transitioning.

### Policy changes and creating a policy

Does your workplace have policies surrounding the rainbow community and ways to support rainbow students and employees?

Do your employees go through training surrounding the rainbow community?

By having policies surrounding the rainbow community you are setting a great standard to show your clients and prospective employees you are an inclusive workplace. It also clarifies and puts employees on the same page to make rainbow people comfortable in your workplace.

To illustrate that point; I worked overseas in a Bible-based outdoor education centre, that had inferred policies surrounding the rainbow community. At the time I was a 23, not-out gay member of a church. I wanted to hangout and work in a remote area that offered cool opportunities. It just so happened that from the way the outdoor centre presented online and when talking to the manager, the religious aspect did not seem that important, and this centre offered the greatest opportunity along with financial help. I realised on arrival that it was a big part of the culture there. I had told them I would stay five months and felt that I needed to stay. Out of respect for their culture I did not at any point tell them about my queer identity, nor did I feel comfortable talking to anyone about it or my gay long-distance relationship.

I often wonder if all the people I worked there with truly knew who I was, would they have had, or formed different opinions of the rainbow community. That's one reason why I am out and unapologetically proud. You're welcome to put yourself in my position, and ask yourself: "What would you do?" Also, with this story can you imagine how it could have negatively impacted my identity and my mental health? Thankfully, those five months had a positive impact on my identity, and helped me process my beliefs surrounding the rainbow community and the church.

Something simple a workplace can do to be more open, non-judgemental and inclusive is to run rainbow training. If employees then understand the meaning of being rainbow inclusive, there are badges that can be offered to wear in the workplace. This badge says 'hey I am inclusive and a safe person to talk to' for anyone who identifies as LGBTQI+. It's important to point out that if you do not agree with the rainbow lifestyle, for whatever reason, religious or otherwise, it is not appropriate for you to wear the badge. Nor is it appropriate for your employer to ask you to.

There are several different types of badges, all with different meanings. In general, you'd wear a rainbow pride badge to signify that you belong to the rainbow community. A heterosexual cisgender human (straight) would wear an ally pride badge, if they were supportive and rainbow inclusive.

A common discussion and something I have internal conflict over is: Is the "gay agenda" being pushed too much on the cis/hetero community? Is using pronouns pushing the "gay agenda"? Short answer, "No." Long answer, also "No." Is giving your unsolicited



Rainbow progress pride badge



Rainbow ally badge

standpoint on how you don't want a trans woman in a female bathroom, pushing your agenda? Yes. (Just so you know this has happened to me in a conversation). Long answer? Maybe not, if you don't have an "all genders" bathroom on your campus, and you are bringing it up in a staff meeting. Maybe be a bit more tactful though.

I feel strongly that as more young people are questioning their identity, it is advantageous for all outdoor instructors to learn about the rainbow community and what it means. I believe that if you do not support the rainbow community, you are choosing to not support 5% (or probably more) of the young people you are working with. These young people are at greater risk of poor mental health because of bullying through discrimination and harassment. Chances are you know someone this has happened to. Education and awareness surrounding this is increasing and things are improving, but we have a way to go.

Lastly, I want to say that I am, like all other queer outdoor instructors, not the 'go to' for advice or guidance on LGBTQI+ ideas and issues. It can be super tiring constantly being that person and it's not our role to advise, it's our role to be a great inclusive instructor and educator. On occasion when people ask, I do try and be helpful, I think the best thing is to ask what they are happy with and go from there.

If you are serious about learning more about the LGBTQI+ community and want to become more familiar with the right language to use and get some idea about changes you could make to your policies and procedures, here are a few resources that could be helpful:

Rainbow Youth – resources, support, and advocacy for queer, gender diverse, takatāpui and intersex youth in Aotearoa.  
<https://ry.org.nz>

Inside Out – learning resources to increase people's understanding and support of sex, gender and sexuality diversity.  
<https://www.insideout.org.nz>

Rainbow Community Mental Health – collaboration of many organisations to help people who provide mental health support in Aotearoa  
<https://www.rainbowmentalhealth.com>

You can buy pride badges from prideshop  
[www.prideshop.co.nz](http://www.prideshop.co.nz)

I challenge you all to start a discussion around what you and your organisation can do to better support Aotearoa's queer, gender diverse, takatāpui, intersex, rainbow community, and go from there.

Ngā manaakitanga,

# OUTDOOR MINDSET: WHY I RISK TO BE FREE

ROZ POTTER



I grew up in the outdoors of Northland. As I was finding my way in the world; Scouts, mountain biking and getting into the outdoors gave me a positive focus. Before I was 21, I had bungee jumped, sky dived, learnt to dive, caught an 89kg marlin, learnt to fly a plane and sailed from Tauranga to Brisbane. Back in NZ, I worked as a chef and ended up in Christchurch. I was working very hard with no gains and started to question my purpose in life.

This led to some soul searching. I knew the outdoors was calling me, so I signed up to CPIT (now Ara) for the Certificate in Outdoor Education, class of 2004. By 2006 I'd gained two diplomas. I knew I was in the right place and it felt very satisfying to have found my crew, these people got me.

I worked for lots of companies around NZ and overseas and met people with diverse instructing styles. It made me question why I was in the outdoors and think about who I wanted to be. I liked the hard skills and I needed these to be safe, but it was the soft skills that gave me a sense of satisfaction. Pushing myself was great, but I needed it to be balanced with good company in a beautiful place, or having the time to watch the sun go down from the crag, or paddling an easy run and having a laugh. This flowed into my instructing and I learnt that making a positive difference in people's lives was important to me. As I worked and gained more experiences I got my NZOIA Rock 1, Flatwater Kayak, Canoe 1 and Bush 1.

I was working at OPC (now Hillary Outdoors) as an instructor when the Mangatepopo Accident happened on 15th April 2009. This shook my beliefs to the core and challenged me in many ways. Despite what happened, it also confirmed that I loved the outdoors and all that it offers. I am very grateful for the support that the outdoor industry gave OPC and its staff at this challenging time.

In October 2010, I moved to Christchurch and got a job as an instructor, and later as the Outdoors Manager at Living Springs. Then the February 2011 earthquake happened; this was another life changing experience as many of you know.

My main point of action from these experiences, was to start writing a book. Two other practical things that helped me process was spending time in the outdoors and creating my own personal values; I got a tattoo representing these. My book is called "To Risk to Be Free" and is about my life and the challenges I have had, what I learnt and how I have healed. If you would like to know more about this you can find me on fb; <https://www.facebook.com/To-Risk-to-Be-Free-with-Rosalind-Potter>

At the end of 2011, I was offered a job at Dilworth, starting the Rural Campus. I loved my job and the challenge of starting an outdoor school from scratch. I was just about to sit my Sea Kayak 1 when I found out I was pregnant. I took a year of maternity leave and then resigned because being a mum was important to me. This felt like I'd lost my career and I realised how much my identity was tied to my job, I was determined to stay in the industry.

My Bush 1 was up for revalidation, I tried multiple times to get onto a refresher but it didn't line up. I then realised that I was going to lose all my qualifications due to the new revalidation system. I had worked so hard to get these qualifications and it felt wrong to have to choose between being a full-time mum and losing my qualifications.

I then had my second child and any thoughts of keeping qualifications went out the window. I felt frustrated about this so started a fb group called Outdoor Educator Mums. We were amongst the first wave of mums to go through the new revalidation system; mums losing qualifications were an unforeseen implication of it, and it was also affecting those with injuries. I soon realised quite a few of the 90+ mums in the group were finding the system hard to navigate. Some had made it work and revalidated their qualifications but the more qualifications you had, the harder it was to keep on top of them all. I needed to be the voice, because if someone didn't stand up for all these amazing ladies, their knowledge would be lost from the industry.

As you know the NZOIA qualifications hold a lot of mana and are hard work to get. I started asking questions and trying to figure out how to make positive change. I was invited by NZOIA, to be part of the Revalidation Review group, who had also noticed the issues members were facing and were keen to ensure the system was fit for purpose. I said "yes, I would love to do that". One of the outcomes from the review was that your NZOIA qualification is with you for life. It felt so good to go back to the ladies in the group and say they wouldn't lose their qualifications if they were unable to revalidate; they would become unregistered instead. Revalidation was pushed out to four years instead of three and putting qualifications on hold was extended to six years. If they wished to re-register their qualification in the future, they had more time to do so and the option of attending a recognition of current competency assessment once back up to scratch. This was the positive result we were after.

We (my husband and kids) moved back to Christchurch and in 2019 and I crashed my car. I don't remember any of the crash and I am unsure if I got knocked out or something happened before I crashed. I got moderate concussion and whiplash and was very lucky to not do more damage.

In September that year I had my first witnessed absent seizure, then I had a few more and got referred to Neurology. I had multiple tests but they could not find anything substantial. I was diagnosed with epilepsy and was told I was not allowed to drive. My world was again turned upside down and it all felt like a big joke – really life; do I need to learn more?! Not driving would be a challenge and being a mum to two kids under six added another layer of complication. I had to admit I had a disability; this was way outside my comfort zone and very hard. But it did allow me to get funding to buy an electric cargo bike to transport me and the kids around that we named Ninja.



The outdoors now seemed impossible, after the diagnosis appointment I had a steep learning curve about epilepsy as all I knew was from my PHEC course and that didn't quite cut it! My comfort zone went from kayaking white water to fearing a bath, from climbing multi-pitch trad climbs to fearing the stairs in my house and from taking my kids into the outdoors to be scared to be home alone with them let alone getting them to school and crossing roads.

I was deeply grieving the loss of the outdoors and I felt alone again. I was determined to get back out there, occasionally I found friends to go with but there was still a big gap. I wrote myself an epilepsy management plan which gave me confidence to start growing my comfort zone. I got out mountain biking and tramping and camping with family and friends, this felt like a massive mountain that I had climbed in my head. I started working with a health coach, I changed some habits and my mind-set from "I have epilepsy for life" to "I can heal and get back into the outdoors."

I found a podcast which I loved listening to called "Seize your Adventure" by Fran Turauskis who lives in the UK. It gave me hope at the right time. This then led me to an American group called Outdoor Mindset, an outdoor focused community for people affected by neurological challenges. It was exactly what I was looking for. Their values line up with mine; the positive power of the outdoors and community, enhancing quality of life and inspiring people to live their best life.

I felt disappointed that I needed this in NZ! I joined the Outdoor Mindset Community and soon realised they were keen to become a worldwide organisation. I became a NZ Ambassador and I am very excited to be representing this group here. Now we need the most important thing and that is you! More NZ folks joining the OM Community makes our group stronger. He tangata, he tangata, he tangata, it is the people, it is the people, it is the people.

If you would like to join me on this adventure, sign up at <https://www.outdoormindset.org>, you'll then be linked to the NZ Facebook group. The first face to face meet up groups will start in Christchurch and I will also hold some meetings online. If you are based in another NZ location and want to join the group then get in touch. We're looking for more ambassadors for NZ so if you love a challenge, have a neurological diagnosis and are keen to impact others in a positive way then get in touch.

Email: [connect@outdoormindset.org](mailto:connect@outdoormindset.org)  
or [rozadventures@gmail.com](mailto:rozadventures@gmail.com)  
Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/OutdoorMindset>



# ONE IN THE WILDERNESS: FORTY DAYS ACROSS FIORDLAND

MARK JONES

I've always had a fascination with Fiordland. I grew up with the writings of Ray Tinsley and his evocative descriptions of Fiordland's wildness. He penned a heady blend of grandeur and ruggedness relating his many quests for wapiti and for moose. Lying between vast lakes and the Tasman Sea, Fiordland is smack bang in the middle of the 'Roaring Forties', a bush-clad reef upon which the westerlies dash themselves, notorious for rain, sandflies, and an absurd sense of scale. The moose eluded Tinsley, but he remained convinced, as many still are, of their existence in Fiordland, such is the vast untrddeness of the place.

The idea of walking from Te Waewae Bay on the south coast to the Milford Track had been a long-held desire. I figured it would take about 6 weeks, a big marble to fit into the jar, so it remained undone for the best part of a decade. When the window finally presented itself, I wondered if I'd left it too late. Were those training niggles just rust that needed knocking off, or was it decrepitude? At 40, or 50 you know the answer.

"Make it bigger than yourself" was a take-home from a talk I heard Dave Williams give after he returned from one of his Sea2Summit7 expeditions. With that in mind I decided to use my trip to raise money for and awareness about Mental Health in NZ. The latter was unneeded with Mike King's high profile media commentary about inadequate resourcing and the tidal wave of mental health cases NZ was facing. I set myself the target of raising 10K for the Mental Health Foundation and put my toe into the waters of social media. Terrifying is not the right word to describe that, but it is close. It was more a slow burning anguish. Having stated my start point, and an end point that I was far from certain I would reach, the potential for public humiliation was ratcheted up with each Like and Share.

Well, that is how I looked at it anyway. I shared my concerns with Sal, my ever-sympathetic wife. "Best not screw up then" was her sage advice. In a place where you're only one lazy step away from an end to it, 40 days is a long time, but I didn't forget the tip. She also offered me advice after one particularly demoralising training trip. I'd intended to hike for ten hours, but turned around after two with a sore hip. I said to Sal, "what am going to do? I can't back out now..." She replied, "well you'll just have to harden up won't you. Take drugs and you'll get through fine". So that was the plan, such as it was; commit fully and deal with any consequences later.

Starting from the South Coast provides a gradual introduction to Fiordland. Track to hut, to three-wire bridge, then off track and river travel, ultimately getting onto the Princess Range and easy travelling (easy being a relative term in Fiordland). Just to start was the important thing. Starting meant an escape from those imagined possibilities of trip ending scenarios, and the simpler world of reality. The potential is still there of course, but at least I could do something about it, rather than just loop disaster reels in my head. Which is how my mind tends to operate before a serious trip. I know that might not seem very positive, but it's a powerful motivator to prepare well.

I got my first real view of where I was going on about day three, a daunting array of peaks and ranges fading blue into the distance. It was as enticing as it was intimidating. The secret of course is to mainly concern yourself with the day you are in. Worrying about Day 30 is a waste of energy unless you get there. But on big trips you also need to keep the big picture in mind to manage resources. It begins with figuring out how much food you need to get from the start to the finish, an impossible calculation to mathematically formulate with any sense of accuracy. Actually,

there are only five variables when I think about it, but they are called variables for a reason. I decided that trying to fathom them using sport science, nutritional indices, contours on maps and historic weather data was a lost cause. I quickly succumbed to some rough calculations on the back of an envelope, threw in an eel line and figured it would all work out OK.

Mount Irene was never on my agenda to climb, but after spending a storm in Robin Saddle Hut beneath the summit and reading climbing accounts in the hut logbook, I was curious enough to make a detour. I opted to try "a weakness in the bluffs" as described by Henriette Beikirch. Her route description was as understated as her Fiordland 'highest traverse' had been. I found it a heady concoction of loose rock and exposure, but it saved me time on a big day planned. By this stage of the trip, I was somewhat inured to being exposed to falling, and the rules were simple – tried and true advice, borrowed from Edward Wympner: *"Do nothing in haste; look well to each step; and from the beginning, think what may be the end"*.

I was disappointed to find a transmission tower on the summit. I felt I'd earned the right to something less defiled in that remotest of places in the heart of Fiordland. But I couldn't complain, I was carrying high tech with me and had bought into satellite comms 100% for my supposed 'solo'. Using the EarthMate App I could pair my iPhone to an InReach Mini from TrackMeNZ enabling two-way text at will. I was only as alone as I wanted to be and was sending Sal blog-posts each evening to upload to Facebook. It all felt cutting edge; technology Marcus, Graham and I would have given our eye teeth for in our Adventure Philosophy days. It's a privilege to bring people along with you, so to speak, when you go to places few others have the opportunity to get to, even if in a virtual way, and I much enjoyed sharing the experience with family and whoever else was interested in following along.



visit a number of rock bivvies I'd read about in Tinsley's books. I have an enduring fascination with these. I think it's because they're built of the raw material of the land itself - the ultimate in sustainable design. Worsley Rock Biv was perhaps my favourite stay of the trip. Below the spacious bivvy otherworldly sounds emanated from a deep valley; stags roaring and bugling their challenge to one another. As I sat eating dinner, I watched one parry a clump of tussock with its antlers. It made quite a show of it, dancing this way and that and lunging at the clump. The tussock gallantly stood its ground. At one point the stag stared directly at me, perhaps seeing me move. I froze, spoon in mouth for a long minute. Then, satisfied I was just another rock in the landscape, the stag went back to the business at hand, seeing off that stubborn intruder!

Such encounters with nature were a daily intrigue, as was the everchanging terrain – one moment a heinous belt of scrub, the next a Tolkiennesque panorama. With both highs and lows my mantra was "this too shall pass". It was a reminder to revel in the sublime while it lasted and, in those times when I had to dig a little, to just accept those aspects of Fiordland as part of the whole.



Fiordland is uncompromising. None of my trips there have been cruisy, but they all make the favourites list - the sort of trips that drew more from me than I thought I would give, but gave back in equal measure. That's the equation. I don't get to do long journeys very often, it's a privilege to be able to contemplate them at all. But every now and then I feel compelled to punctuate my life with one, an exclamation mark perhaps. Journeys proclaim an escape from the conventional to embrace the other. An opportunity to visit the thin places and come back feeling changed, with something more to offer. You see, I still hold a romantic view of the wayfaring adventurer, journeying over the distant skyline just to experience what lies beyond, brushing shoulders with the timeless and walking between worlds for a spell. To feel diminished by the implacability of the elements and the restless land, but somehow brim-full too. An interloper in the orchestrated chaos of nature trying to feel whole with it. That's a work in progress. I reckon one more trip should do it.

In the end it was just rust and I didn't need the drugs, but I did need other assistance, beyond Sal's wise words. Many thanks to, TrackMe NZ, Southern Lakes Helicopters, Wairaurahiri Jet, Radix, Meridian Energy and everyone who contributed to the \$11,500+ raised for MHF.

It's difficult to condense a 40day experience into a video but I tried to do that here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9auUfk42N5o>

Mark Jones | Outdoors tutor at AUT / NZOIA Assessor: Sea Kayak, Bush, Rock

# INVESTIGATING THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSTRUCTIVE REFLECTION IN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EDUCATION

NIKKI KELLY



Photos supplied by Nikki Kelly

Adventure education uses adventure experience to facilitate students' learning about themselves and how they interact with others, often testing capabilities and changing any personal limiting views through achieving challenging tasks (Priest & Gass, 2017). A major part of the philosophy of adventure education is that learning must also be useful to students beyond the adventure education setting. A key aspect of this is constructive reflection. I undertook research late 2019 and early 2021 to better understand best practice amongst outdoor adventure educators developing constructive reflection capability in students. There is limited, if any, research about how adventure educators ensure that transfer of learning takes place from the epic adventures experienced in the outdoors, to the students' lives at home. However, it is a much-discussed topic among teaching staff. I set out to investigate strategies that maximise students' transfer of learning by interviewing outdoor education tutors within New Zealand.

The research was prompted by my own awareness of the need to strengthen constructive reflection through debriefing with students who I teach in my role as an adventure education tutor at Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology in Rotorua. As a good friend said, "you can be a technically skilled instructor, but not skilled in debriefs".

Let's wind it back and meet Nikki Kelly pre Toi Ohomai. I was a professional white-water kayaker, rafter extraordinaire, galivanting around the world living my dream. I had not heard of Dave Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle or the Johari Window. I only heard which river am I going to paddle next. I arrived at Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology in Rotorua with loads of experience in my field and was technically highly proficient, but I was by no means a skilled facilitator.

The research took place at six centres in New Zealand that offer adventure education programmes. The data collection involved three phases. Phase one comprised a student survey. Phase two consisted of interviews with ten adventure educators from the

the interviewees are facilitating their debriefs. In future research it would be interesting to further define and learn the skill of pre and post activity debriefing. Educators' facilitation skills can be advanced through personal development, but there seems to be a lack of accessible adventure specific training services in New Zealand, which is concerning.

When discussing what skills students are transferring to life off their course, personal development seemed to be a core take away. One educator suggested that "all adventure education programs are brilliant personal development, but to make the most of personal growth opportunities tutors must delve deeper and peel off the layers." This confirms what I had suspected, which is that the instructor/tutor must be proficient at facilitating constructive reflection if students are to make the most personal growth, over and above the technical proficiency of an outdoor activity, such as kayaking a rapid. However, there is another opinion worth considering which is that polytechnics are instructor courses, educating students to be better in a vocational trade, and personal development happens as a by-product. While students are mastering the specific technical skills of outdoor pursuits, they also learn those transferable soft skills that the industry/employer wants, so the activity is a vehicle towards soft skills. Worth noting is outdoor and adventure education tutors are passionate outdoors people who love the technical aspects of what they teach, a win-win for all stakeholders. One strategy that is essential for self-awareness is making sure students are clear about their values and goals. A common theme amongst all providers was how tutors made time to monitor student learning and goals with regular one-on-one check-ins. Although very time-consuming it was viewed as vital to student success.

In terms of transfer of learning, it is essential that all aspects of the students' learning prepare them to judge their own learning. Placing more responsibility on students not only increases the students' motivation levels, but it helps them develop a reliance on situational feedback rather than always relying on the instructor for guidance. Formative assessment means students are getting regular feedback and ways of moving forward from teachers, peers, and their own self-assessment. An important component of formative assessment is something called timeliness. Feedback needs to be provided 'within minutes' of completing a task in order to be the most effective. The ratio of tutor to students in outdoor settings is high for safety reasons, for example one tutor to six students. This enables feedback to be instantaneous, and students can make corrections straight away. This ratio is the key ingredient to the success of transfer of learning.

One educator believes learning needs to be voluntary, not motivated by assessment. He endeavours to create a culture of people wanting to be there rather than having to be there, teaching students' how to enjoy the outdoors, to have fun. His effort to create an enthusiastic outdoors person, means a key takeaway for his students is a 'state of flow' – living in the moment and totally immersed in what they are doing. I am particularly fascinated with the state of flow and its ability to permit people to be content, blissful and happy. For those students who can find enjoyment in outdoor activities, perhaps they are more likely to find flow in other areas of life as well.

The benefits of adventure programming are often misconstrued, and often only fully appreciated by the participants who experience the adventure. Little is known about how adventure



educators ensure there is transfer of learning beyond the adventure programme.

New Zealand polytechnics lead the way through constructive reflection and a variety of transfer techniques employed by the educators, coupled with clever course design. There is no doubt in my mind that students are taking much of what they learn into the rest of their lives. A special thanks goes to all those that helped with this research. I was blown away by the free sharing of best practice by all the educators and the inclusiveness of the students. It is a true testimony to the outdoor and adventure education whānau.

# Congratulations

to the following members who recently gained NZOIA Qualifications!

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Abseil Leader</b>                       | Alex Booker, Andrew Carley, Awatea Teaukura, Dayla Ward, Emily Bade, Emma Kelly, Georgia McLeod, Georgia Thomas, Jack Gibson, James Smith, Jamie Toomey, Jamie Hobbs, Joey Jones Vilela Da Silva, Kendall Shuker, Reegan Absolum, Tasmin Charteris-wright, Connor McLeay, Hannah Fleury, Isaac Bayldon, Julian van der Put, Sasha Bennett, Yasmin Wessels, Danelle Kelliher, Shepherd Joice, Griff Matthews, Pooja Dabhi, Cameron Boyle, Claire Graham, Shaun Robinson, James Bennett, Jake Harris, Georgia Wilson, Emma Barrott, Ciarne Ngatai-Morrison  |
| <b>Alpine 1</b>                            | Jock Barr   |
| <b>Alpine 2</b>                            | Asher March   |
| <b>Bush Leader</b>                         | Alecia Ireland, Alex Booker, Andrew Carley, Awatea Teaukura, Cole Beeman, Dayla Ward, Emily Bade, Emily Kelly, Erin Killion, George Hayhoe, Georgia McLeod, Georgia Thomas, Hazel Cumpstone, Jack Gibson, Jacob Hoyle, James Smith, Jamie Toomey, Jamie Hobbs, Joey Jones Vilela Da Silva, Kendall Shuker, Reegan Absolum, Sampson Mollan, Tasman Charteris-Wright, Xania Miller, Zack Stones, Connor McLeay, Hannah Fleury, Isaac Bayldon, Julian van der Put, Sacha Bennett, Yasmin Wessels, Jess Allan, Sarah Balchin, Marcello Balestreri, James Bennett, Reuben Dimock, Matt Francke, Sophie Glover, Ruth Grossi, Jake Harris, Ella Kohn-Taylor, Henry Mackenzie, Alexandria Mackie, Emma Marshall, Erin Marshall, Max McClimont, Jessy Moffatt, Jacob Moore, Rod Morrison, Aleisha Neary, Grace Paul, Zoe Price, Max Rennie, Brendan Richardson, Emma Russell, Briar Schacherer, Kiara Simmons, Matt Smith, Rachel Stiewig, Darcie Sutton, Blake Thomson, Rebecca Willis, Sam Willmer, Tia Winkler-Stringer, Mia Anderson, Shontelle Wallace, Hollie Walton, Georgia Wilson, Daunte Baird-Pradella, Charlotte Barrett, Shontae Bingle, Hayley Buckley, Samuel Burke, Willow Denovan-Stroud, Andrea Farrelly, Samuel Gee, Heawane Gold, Grace Herring, Jodie Jolley, James Parker, Ollie Ross, Karisa Webster, Jonelle Wiki Arapeta, Emma Barrott, Ciarne Ngatai-Morrison, Ella Kayrouz, Isabella Jackson, Shayne Avery, Maddy Moore, Patrick Seifert, Sven Lusted, Holly Doucette |
| <b>Bush 1</b>                              | Jason Dickens, Alastair Holley, Rowan Donaldson, Matthieu Vignes, William Sinclair, Alexandra Poetschke, Kristel Leijten, Tegan McNeish, Nino Pankusz, Scott Martin, Andrew Talbot, Nicole Davenport, Peter Mitchell, Robert McDonald, Hannah Duggan, Michelle Campbell, Mark Belcher, Andrew Furninger   |
| <b>Bush 2</b>                              | Sarah English   |
| <b>Canoe Leader</b>                        | Emma Barrott, Caleb Thompson  |
| <b>Canoe 1</b>                             | Dave Cassaidy, David Williams   |
| <b>Canyon Leader</b>                       | Danelle Kelliher, Shepherd Joice, Griff Matthews, Pooja Dabhi, Cameron Boyle, Claire Graham, Orinoco Bryden, Sarah Robinson, Shaun Robinson   |
| <b>Cave Leader</b>                         | Astrid Cotterill-Nagels, David Williams   |
| <b>Climbing Wall Supervisor</b>            | Waimate Events Centre – Matt Simonson, Peter Vendetti, Crispin Langston, Philip Walton, April Walton<br>Cashmere High Rock Wall – Craig Squire, Meg Gladding, Luke Huston   |
| <b>CWS – Monitor Lead Endorsement</b>      | Waimate Events Centre – Crispin Langston, Philip Walton, April Walton   |
| <b>Kayak Leader</b>                        | Alecia Ireland, Alex Booker, Andrew Carley, Georgia McLeod, Awatea Teaukura, Cole Beeman, Dayla Ward, Emily Bade, Erin Killion, Georgia Thomas, Hazel Cumpstone, Jacob Hoyle, James Toomey, Kendall Shuker, Sampson Mollan, Xania Miller, Zack Stones, George Hayhoe, Daniel Hale, Eliot McElvey, Faith Jones, Francois Lombard, Marama Winchcombe, Matthew Hanson, Mica Erdmann, Oliver Clements, Olivia Healey, Olivia Tsouprake, Affrikah Smart, Poppy Denovan-Stroud, Reuben Dimock, Sophie Glover, Ella John-Taylor, Henry Mackenzie, Matt Smith   |
| <b>Kayak 1 – Multisport Endorsement</b>    | Philip Palzer, Dan Cullen   |
| <b>Multisport Kayak</b>                    | Mike Johnston   |
| <b>Mountain Bike 1</b>                     | April Heath, Campbell Potter, Nicole Symons, Kristel Leijten, Angela Mote-Andrews, Wilfred Spearing, Sally Josenhans, Steve Garside   |
| <b>Mountain Bike 2</b>                     | Jamie Nicoll  |
| <b>Rock Leader</b>                         | Alex Booker, Andrew Carley, Awatea Teaukura, Dayla Ward, Emily Bade, Emma Kelly, Georgia McLeod, Georgia Thomas, Jack Gibson, James Smith, Jamie Toomey, Jamie Hobbs, Joey Jones Vilela Da Silva, Kendall Shuker, Reegan Absolum, Tasmin Charteris-wright, Daniel Hale, Eliot McElvey, Faith Jones, Francois Lombard, Marama Winchcombe, Matthew Hanson, Mica Erdmann, Oliver Clements, Olivia Healey, Olivia Tsouprake, Affrikah Smart, Poppy Denovan-Stroud, Danelle Kelliher, Shepherd Joice, Griff Matthews, Pooja Dabhi, Cameron Boyle, Claire Graham, Shaun Robinson, Marcello Balestreri, James Bennett, Emma Marshall, Erin Marshall, Rod Morrison, Brendan Richardson, Rachel Stiewig, Mia Anderson, Shontelle Wallace, Hollie Walton, Francis Natoli, Shayne Avery, Maddy Moore, Patrick Seifert, Sven Lusted, Holly Doucette   |
| <b>Rock 1</b>                              | David Lourie, Elliot O'Brien, Yasmin Smith, Peter Ross, Robbie Smith, Kim Hancox, Inger Roman, Arna Warrander, Jason Bond, Natasha Mealing  |
| <b>Rock 1 – Sport Climbing Endorsement</b> | Elliot O'Brien, Phil Johnston-Coates, Dave Ryan, Katherine Woolley  |
| <b>Sea Kayak Leader</b>                    | Alecia Ireland, Awatea Teaukura, Emily Bade, Hazel Cumpstone, Jacob Hoyle, Flynn Cleary-Morgan, Griff Matthews, Lea Kilgenstein, Cameron Boyle, Georgia Bird, Aaron Jones, Dani Ferens, Ciarne Ngatai-Morrison, Caleb Thompson, Shanan Miles, Rebecca Dryland, Simon Dixon, Stewart Barclay, Liam Couliden-Lavers   |
| <b>Sea Kayak 1</b>                         | Nathanael Sage, Mark Parfitt, Sarah Douglass, Oscar Hadley, Sally Josenhans   |
| <b>Sea Kayak 2</b>                         | Sam Russek  |

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| Course   | Course fee (NZOIA Members) *           |
|--|--|
| Refresher Courses                                | \$195 (\$100 1/2 day)                  |
| Training Courses                                 | \$415 (\$215 1/2 day)                  |
| <b>Assessment Courses</b>                        |  |
| <b>Leader Assessments:</b>                       | \$150 plus any Assessor fees and costs |
| Abseil Leader                                    |  |
| Bush Leader                                      |  |
| Canoe Leader                                     |  |
| Canyon Leader                                    |  |
| Cave Leader                                      |  |
| Kayak Leader                                     |  |
| Mountain Bike Leader                             |  |
| Rock Leader                                      |  |
| Sea Kayak Leader                                 |  |
| <b>Free Range Assessment:</b>                    |  |
| Artificial Whitewater                            |  |
| Climbing Wall Supervisor (CWS)                   |  |
| CWS: Monitor Lead Endorsement                    |  |
| <b>1 Day Assessments:</b>                        | \$295                                  |
| Sport Climbing Endorsement                       |  |
| Sea Kayak 1 Upgrade                              |  |
| Multisport Kayak Endorsement                     |  |
| <b>2 Day Assessments:</b>                        | \$560                                  |
| Kayak 2 Upgrade                                  |  |
| <b>Overnight Assessment (Midday to Midday)</b>   |  |
| Overnight Endorsement                            |  |
| <b>2 Day Assessments: (plus evening session)</b> | \$595                                  |
| Canoe Guide                                      |  |
| Cave 1   |  |
| Mountain Bike 1                                  |  |
| Rock 1   |  |
| Sport Climbing                                   |  |
| <b>3 Day Assessments:</b>                        | \$760                                  |
| Kayak 1 & 2                                      |  |
| Multisport Kayak                                 |  |
| Sea Kayak 1 & 2                                  |  |
| <b>3 Day Assessments: (plus evening session)</b> | \$795                                  |
| Alpine 1   |  |
| Bush 1 & 2                                       |  |
| Canoe 1  |  |
| Cave 2   |  |
| Canyon 1 & 2                                     |  |
| Mountain Bike 2                                  |  |
| Rock 2   |  |
| <b>4 Day Assessments: (plus evening session)</b> | \$980                                  |
| Alpine 2   |  |

The course calendars for Assessments, Training and Refresher workshops can be found at [www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz). Members are notified of updates to the calendar via the NZOIA 4YA – our weekly email.

#### Booking for an NZOIA Assessment, Training or Refresher Workshop

1. Go to [www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz)
2. Check out the Scope and Syllabus, if you are applying for an assessment then make sure you meet all the pre-requisites.
3. On the course calendar, find the event you want to apply for (you will need to be logged into your member profile) and select 'Apply'. Upload any prerequisites (i.e. your logbook, summary sheet, first aid certificate and any other required documentation to your application).
4. Applications close 6 weeks before the course date.
5. After the closing date we will confirm that the course will run.
6. If NZOIA cancels a course, you will receive a full refund/transfer of your fee.
7. If you withdraw before the closing date, you will receive a full refund of your fee. If you withdraw after the closing date of a course, the fee is non-refundable. It is transferable under exceptional circumstances (e.g. bereavement, medical reasons), medical certificates/other proof may be required. Contact [admin@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzoia.org.nz) for more details.

#### Further Information

Details of courses run by NZOIA, pre-requisites and online payment are all available at: [www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz)

#### Courses by special arrangement

It is possible to run assessments on other dates. You will need a minimum of 3 motivated candidates and the date of when you would like the course to be run. Go to the FAQ page on the website [www.nzoia.org.nz/faq#custom](http://www.nzoia.org.nz/faq#custom) for details on how to arrange a course.

#### Course Costs

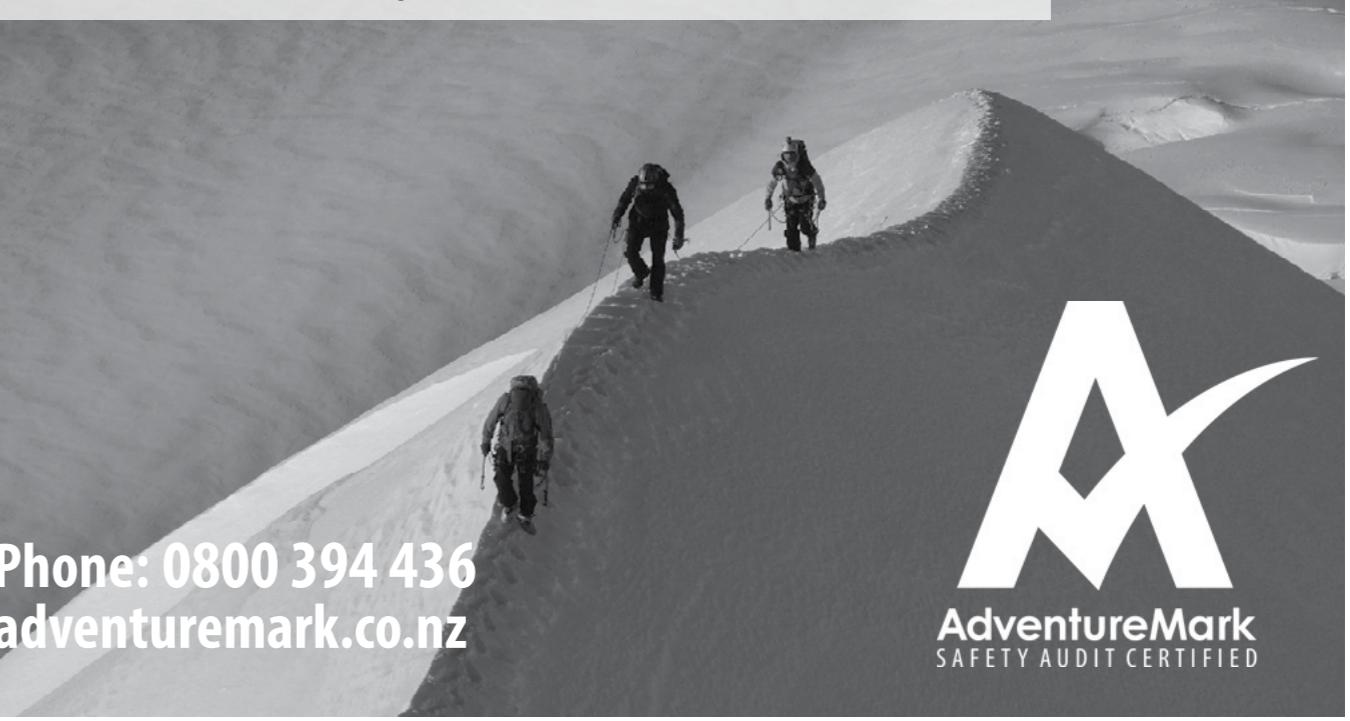
All courses run by NZOIA are discounted for members and heavily subsidised by external funding.

\*Course fees are for NZOIA Members only unless stated otherwise.

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# PROFILE: FIRST STEP OUTDOORS

"Are you sure you don't want to be a secretary?"

Immortal words once spoken to First Step Outdoors' Managing Director Kate Parr, when she told her school career advisor that she wanted to be an outdoor pursuits instructor.

It wasn't the easiest of career choices, being born and brought up in Greater London (Essex actually, but honestly, she has heard all the jokes). Not the place one instantly thinks of when you think of the great outdoors. But London in the 80's and 90's was full of exciting possibilities – indoor climbing walls made in old warehouses (imagine), sailing and kayaking centres based on the old London Docks (ever tried tacking a dinghy in a canal?).

After a career of instructing in the UK and managing adventure camps in France and Italy (plus a few winter seasons on the old white stuff) Kate met her husband and moved to NZ. Settling in Hamilton in 2006 where Kate was offered the job as Warden at the Pirongia Forest Park Lodge. The Lodge had a lot of potential to run adventure camps and Kate felt that she could utilise her existing outdoor skills, from this First Step Outdoors was born. 16 years on with two adventurous daughters, life on the Maunga is busy and exciting.

First Step Outdoors are the PCBU for the Pirongia Lodge and deliver programmes for the many schools, youth and adult groups that hold camps and retreats there. They also deliver activities at various venues around the Waikato; they are one of two operators who can access the amazing Karamu caves and have recently taken on the delivery of the high ropes programme at Lake Karapiro, Mighty River Domain.

Working around Covid has thrown many challenges, but First Step have tried to utilise that time in upskilling their contract instructors in gaining NZOIA and Skills Active qualifications.

Something that First Step pride themselves in, is being flexible and able to deliver programmes based on each individual group's needs. Sometimes this is a cost-based issue but often it is because groups have special requirements that demand a staff team who have specific skill sets.

About 14 years ago Kate was approached by Aliya Danzeisen – the IWCNZ (Islamic Women's Council NZ) National Coordinator and the Lead Coordinator of the WOWMA (Women's Organisation Waikato Muslim Association) project.

Aliya had approached a few outdoor centres in the Waikato to see if she could run a young Muslim women's adventure camp and was having difficulty in finding a venue (she was turned away a few times based on her religion alone). Kate said yes and from the beginnings of that camp the adventure programme for WOWMA was created.

Kate and Aliya work closely together, running camps and programmes that engage with young Muslim women, decreasing barriers that often have resulted in many of the girls not having the opportunity to join camps and activities.

The programme is also about working with the families of the girls, as many come from countries where it is not safe for a young woman to be in the outdoors. By working closely with the families Aliya and Kate have established a trusted environment in which the girls feel safe to be themselves and to try out new activities.

The programme focusses on sustainable leadership, giving the girls the confidence to lead within their community; whilst giving them the tools to contribute to leading in programmes in all aspects of their lives. Many of the 'original' girls are now working within government, are nurses, and social workers – and many continue to contribute to the programme and speak of the self-belief and confidence they gained whilst being on it.

Aliya says; "There aren't many things in this world that we can't do and where there are limitations we can often find ways to adapt or accommodate. We need to find and work with outdoor providers that are willing to make those accommodations".

Currently Kate and Aliya are working with Recreation Aotearoa and EONZ, writing the GPG for 'Guidance for decreasing barriers to Muslim participation in the outdoors'. The first consultation with a group of young women happened in February and the girls were very excited and passionate about sharing their views in how barriers to attending activities and camps could be removed.

Kate is proud of the work that First Step Outdoors do and is excited and privileged to be involved with the ever-developing IWCNZ and WOWMA activity programmes.

She says; "I'm sure I made the right choice in not becoming a secretary, I'm not sure how I would like to run a climbing session in a suit and white stilettos..."



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# PLANTING THE SEEDS OF ADVENTURE



**Photos supplied by First Step Outdoors**

Profiles of organisations are welcomed for the back page series "Planting the Seeds of Adventure". Contact [editor@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:editor@nzoia.org.nz)



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