



QUARTERLY

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ZEALAND OUTDOOR INSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 67: AUGUST 2014



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Articles should be submitted in Word format. All photos must be supplied individually in jpg format and cannot be used if embedded in a Word document.

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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.

Congratulations
to the following members who recently gained NZOIA Qualifications:

Alpine 1	Zachary Johnston
Abseil Leader	Dave Fraser, Quentin Copland, Jared Irvine, Aaron McLeish, Mike Baker, Dan Cullen, Gareth Bradnam, Catriona Kearsley, Sam Lipscombe, Toshiko Knight, Alexandra Wootton, Oliver Grant, Selena Davern, Alexander Holmes, Louise Shepherd, Hamish Forrest, Caitlin Ryan
Bush Walking Leader	Cady Burns, Tanawut Nitayawan, Mollie Quinn, Melissa Harris
Bush 1	Nessa Goldman, Christopher Urwin, Paul Skerten, Anna Li, Kim Froggatt, Julien Stevens, Richard Dunn
Canoe	James Alker,
Cave 1	Anna Drabble, Chris Lacoste, Kevin Pasco
Climbing Wall Supervisor	<i>Fergs Kayaks Wellington</i> – Jordan Lafoani, John Scanlon, Zsairon Lauu Teruie <i>Lakewood Lodge</i> – Abby MacDonald, Hamish Owbridge <i>Vertigo Climbing Centre</i> – Aaron Dolman, Mike Fraser <i>CWS with Monitor Lead Climbing Endorsement</i> The Roxx Christchurch – Zuri George, Elsie Pennington, <i>Fergs Kayaks Wellington</i> – Dave Annear, Anna Muru Paenga, Rhys Marshall
Kayak 1	Simon Goodwin
Kayak 2	Sophia Mulder
Rock Climbing Leader	Mollie Quinn
Rock 1	Gareth Jones, Dene Price, Tyler Bichan, John Valentine, Ashley Whitehead, Sally Josenhans, Kieran Chandler, Ben Lees, Katherine Woolley, Andrew Stuart, Thomas Van den Berg, Calum Brash, Richard Chadwick, Ian Ambrose, James-Anthony Keswick
Rock 1 - Sport Climbing Endorsement	Stefan Austin, Alexandra Barclay, Mark Smith, Jessica Pedersen, Girish Shirodkar, Michael Coker, William McIndoe, Tim Bartholomew, Scotty Moore, Dave Goldsworthy, Russell Harland
Sea Kayak Leader	Justin Berger
Sea Kayak Guide	Erin Chapman
Sea Kayak 1	James McMillan, Sarah Sellar, Freya O'Donoghue, Leticia Little, Tylar Samson, Josh Sullivan, Ben Wood, Stefan Austin

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NZOIA gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the following organisations:



Member Organisation



Chairperson's Report

NZOIA future directions...

Key issues that are important to the future of NZOIA have been exercising your Board since the last Quarterly – how to create a financially and operationally viable structure, and where to take the work on aligning outdoor qualifications that has been on the horizon for some time, with the next stage of the NZQA TRoQ (Targeted Review of Qualifications) process for the outdoor sector now underway.

As outlined in NZOIA 4Ya, we have established an agreement with the New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) for their Chief Executive, Andrew Leslie, to provide executive support and a Wellington presence for NZOIA. Alongside this, Penny's and Natalie's roles have been expanded to encompass more of what were previously the Chief Executive responsibilities. Andrew will spend one day a month in the Nelson office and attend Board meetings. He will represent NZOIA in the various sector meetings (and over coffee) in Wellington. NZRA and Andrew already have strong connections with key organisations that are important to NZOIA such as SportNZ, Water Safety NZ and Skills Active. The Board see this as a cost effective way of supporting the NZOIA qualifications and assessment system, planning for the future and engaging with important stakeholders.

On the qualifications front, TRoQ Stage 2 begins – should NZOIA run for the hills!?! No, this is not an option – now is the hour and NZOIA needs to connect with this process.

Skills Active (SA) have submitted and received approval for development of a suite of qualifications in the outdoor sector. That was the work of stage 1 of the TRoQ. The outdoor sector represents about 10-20% of SA's total volume of training and they readily acknowledge that this is not their core area. Having said that, Skills Active are mandated by the government to provide an "in work" training pathway for this sector.

Let's think about how this can be of benefit to the sector and NZOIA. Currently, NZOIA operates an independent qualification system with no funding or recognition from the government qualification funding system, the TEC or NZQA.

NZOIA is a small organisation and derives the income to maintain a broad range of qualifications from membership and assessment fees. These alone are insufficient to fund the assessment and registration processes we hold so dear; we need to access additional funding. Currently this comes predominantly from Sport NZ, plus other sources such as Water Safety NZ and NZ Community Trust. NZOIA has been able to align its efforts to Sport NZ's stated strategic imperatives,

and NZOIA qualifications have been seen as an important component of safe outdoor recreation. Ongoing funding from these agencies will be dependent on their future priorities and applying for funding into contestable funding processes.

Since the presentation from Peter Cammell at the NZOIA AGM last year, there have been various discussions with other organisations in the outdoor sector and with Skills Active. The NZOIA Board is of the view that we need to engage with the next stage of the TroQ process. Board member Dave Ritchie is on the TroQ Reference Group, we have identified other NZOIA members to participate in appropriate Technical Advisory Groups, and have agreed to put the NZOIA syllabi on the table for the TAG processes.

The likely outcome we see for NZOIA, is benchmarking of NZOIA qualifications to those of SA. This would enable cross crediting of the NZOIA qualifications onto the NZQA framework. This potentially enables a flow of some funding that is currently unavailable for NZOIA qualifications, but still keeps the qualifications under NZOIA control. It will also signal to other funders that NZOIA is working with the government mandated sector training body.

NZOIA has been seen from "the outside" as a small organisation, in a small sector, that didn't want to "play" and was therefore reinforcing a fractured image for the outdoor industry.

By engaging with the government mandated funder (TEC via Skills Active) that picture changes to that of a small organisation, looking to maintain and enhance the quality of outdoor leadership and risk management in one of NZ's most high profile tourism and education sectors.

Currently Skills Active are pulling together a range of people that will create the qualifications for the new framework. NZOIA is expected, and is expecting, to play a significant role in this process.

The people who represent NZOIA in this process will be acutely aware that NZOIA's fundamental purpose is to set and maintain high standards of leadership and instruction in the outdoors. This purpose must remain front of mind during the process.

There will be an evening session at the Symposium on NZOIA strategic directions, so if you want to have a say in the future of your organisation and professional qualifications in the outdoors come along for a discussion over a beer.

Dave Ritchie and Gillian Wratt for the Board

Introducing Andrew Leslie...



This journey, and ensuring a clear pathway that is free of obstacles, is one of my particular passions.

My role with NZOIA will be focused on building on the organisation's strong reputation as a leading provider and influencer of qualifications for the outdoor sector. NZOIA makes an immense contribution to the outdoor experience of New Zealanders and it is important that it continues to build on this to ensure it is recognised as an active player in the delivery of recreation.

Increased recognition and the ability to keep an ear to the ground in Wellington will give NZOIA greater ability to advocate for the things that are important to its members.

I'm regularly involved in advocacy through my role as Chief Executive for the New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) and was previously involved in promoting everything New Zealand has to offer as i-SITE Manager for Tourism New Zealand. I have a long history in community recreation and events and have previously held roles with Hutt City Council and Manukau City Council.

My spare time is spent ferrying my three young girls - Cayle, 10, Annika, 8, and Billie, 5 - to rippa rugby games, swimming and hockey with my lovely wife Jacqui, who is a keen ocean swimmer.

I'm looking forward to putting this experience to good use working alongside the Board and NZOIA's team - Natalie and Penny - to ensure members continue to receive the highest levels of representation and support.

The New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) has enjoyed a productive relationship with NZOIA during my time as CEO and I am keen to develop this further through my dual role. There are strong synergies between the work of both organisations and significant opportunities exist to work together to achieve outcomes that will benefit the wider outdoor sport and recreation sector.

The coming months will present a welcome opportunity to meet more of you, both at the NZOIA Symposium in September and at other meetings and events around the country. In the meantime, I look forward to hitting the ground running.

Andrew Leslie, NZOIA Executive Support Services

It was with a lot of enthusiasm that I joined the NZOIA team last month. There are exciting things happening at the moment that will have significant implications for NZOIA in the future and I am looking forward to getting involved.

NZOIA is a well-regarded organisation, and one that fits perfectly with my own passion for the outdoors. While my recreations of choice are mountain biking and mountain running, I strongly believe that people should have the opportunity to foster their own individual love of outdoor sport and recreation, whatever their activity of choice might be.

For many people engagement with the outdoors begins at the city park, aquatic centre, or urban recreation reserve, and they later transition to more adventure-based activities in national parks and wilderness areas. Some of these people will move into instructing or guiding to share their knowledge and love of the outdoors with others.

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?

Whether it be training, assessment or revalidation we are happy to run a custom course for you.

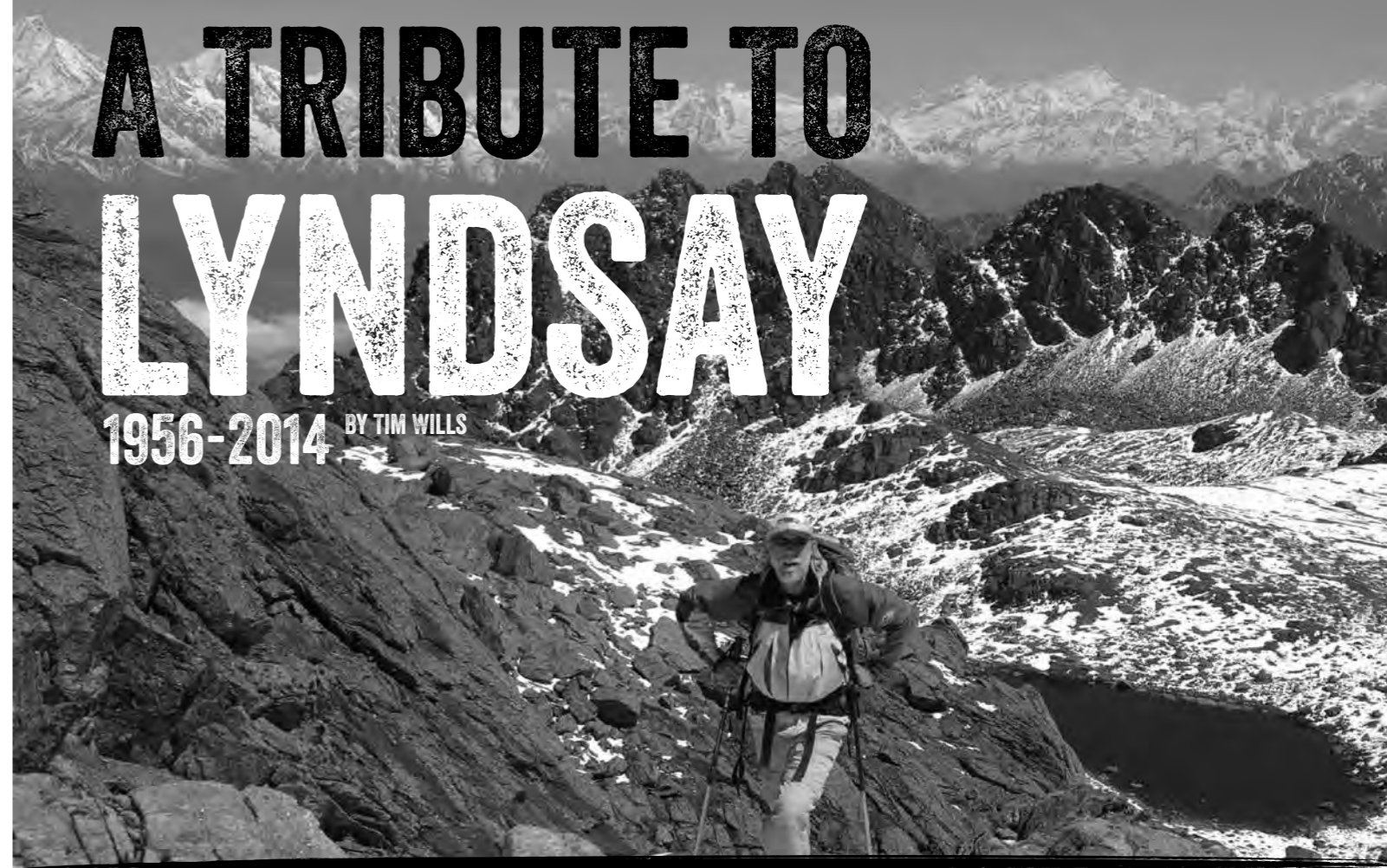
Contact the programme and membership manager to discuss your needs and we'll do our best to make it happen.

Costs may vary from scheduled courses and minimum numbers of participants dependent on the course type will apply.

Email: admin@nzoi.org.nz • Phone: 03 539 0509 • Visit: www.nzoi.org.nz/faq#custom

A TRIBUTE TO LYNDSAY

1956-2014 BY TIM WILLS



Lyndsay Simpkin died earlier this year after a short battle with cancer. Lyndsay was an influential person in the outdoor industry, his career as an outdoor professional spanning over 30 years. He first became interested in the outdoors while growing up as a farm boy in Whangarei and early on developed a passion for adventure. This included at the age of 16 buying a moped, leaving home in the school holidays and exploring the far north, probably listening to the Ray Columbus song that goes "She's a mod!" Living near the coast, Lyndsay learned to surf and was a typical long haired teenager of the 70s with his surf board in tow.

By the time he was in his early 20s he had moved to Auckland and started work as a youth worker which involved running "Campus Life" youth programmes for high school students and large fun events. Lyndsay was a talented musician and wasn't afraid to get on stage to perform and clown around in front of hundreds of teenagers. Through this time he was also taking people camping and discovered the power of adventure and how the outdoor environment can be used to bring significant and positive change to a person's life. With this experience and his strong Christian conviction, he decided to set up an adventure trust. The trust's main goal was to work with those struggling in society and to use the outdoor adventure environment as a means to bring some positive change into their lives.

This was the birth of Adventure Specialties Trust in 1984, operating from his home in Auckland. Back in those days you didn't need qualifications, just a can do attitude. However, Lyndsay did not want to be a cowboy so he headed off to the only place at that time offering some outdoor leadership skills spending time at OPC on a leadership course fine tuning his instructional and technical skills. He then returned to Auckland and continued to develop the work of Adventure Specialties

Trust, one of the first groups in NZ running multiday adventurous journey programmes with "at risk" youth. Being based in Auckland meant a lot of travel as he took groups to explore the Central North Island's numerous rivers, oceans, forested area, rock crags, summits and the underground worlds. As we know, Auckland is not the capital of adventure but in Lyndsay's mind, Auckland was an area of great need and great opportunity.

Lyndsay was a keen adventurer, a competent mountaineer, sea kayaker, white water kayaker, caver, climber and general explorer. He always had a trip in mind and had a vast knowledge of New Zealand. You could point to anywhere on a map of NZ and he could tell you a number of things you could do in that area. He could even give you a few contacts to boot. He had all this knowledge because he had been there at some stage in his life and Lyndsay had an amazing memory for detail. Some of his more significant adventure exploits included summiting over 30 peaks in the Southern Alps, sea kayak expeditions in Fiordland and climbing in the Himalayas and in Mongolia. Lyndsay also loved travel and has spent many months overseas exploring other people's places of paradise.

Although Lyndsay had no formal education past high school or even any hint of tertiary training he was incredibly intelligent, well read and had a gift in writing. This skill was often seen in newsletters that he produced and in his ability to provoke thought and discussion on a vast array of topics. Lyndsay always talked about writing a book but disappointingly we will now never see this happen. Snippets of his writings and words of wisdom do however live on in the archives of Adventure Specialties Trust and may one day be put to good use again. Lyndsay also used these skills for NZOIA as editor of the NZOIA Quarterly in the 90s, the Co-Convenor for the 3rd National Outdoor Education Conference and being a NZOIA board member for a number of terms. ►



Lyndsay has seen a number of budding instructors cross his path and many of you reading this may well have had the privilege of being assessed by him. Lyndsay assessed Alpine 1 and the flat water kayaking award for NZOIA over a 20 year period. Lyndsay held a number of level II awards however his strength in assessing came not only from his technical skills but from a huge depth of experience instructing. There are not many out there that have the same level of experience as Lyndsay did and even in his role as CEO of Adventure Specialties Trust he would still go into the field and instruct, teach and lead at this grass roots level. For Lyndsay, it was never about being the greatest technician but it was all about serving people and seeing change in their lives, this is what attracted him to the outdoors. A recent posting on Facebook demonstrates how typical this was as one past client comments; "25 years ago I met this kind man who took me into the bush for two weeks. The lessons I learnt stayed with me and changed my life from one that had a future of unemployment to one of education and career success".

Lyndsay will always be remembered for his heart to use the outdoor environment to bring change to people's lives. Many of you will be NZOIA members because you want to teach technical skills. Many of you are members because you understand the power of the great outdoors and how this can change lives. Lyndsay will be remembered for his ability to combine both and his legacy will live on in the lives he has touched and the examples he has set. It was written soon after he died that a "Tall Totara has fallen but the lives he has touched will and have grown into maturity". This was followed up by another comment that, "the tallest Totaras fall to the forest floor but in their return to the earth they provide the fuel for the new Totara and re-energise the forest". Lyndsay has been an inspiration to many, is greatly missed and the challenge for us now is to pick from where he left off. A Maori proverb sums up Lyndsay's heart well and says it all- He aha te mea nui? He tangata. He tangata. He tangata.



Lyndsay held the Alpine II, Bush II, Sea Kayak 1, Kayak 1, Cave 1 and Rock 1 NZOIA awards. He was also a senior Grade 5 raft guide and trip leader and awarded the Tall Totara award in 1996. Lyndsay is survived by his wife Glenda and their 2 boys. Adventure Specialties Trust continues with Lyndsay's vision still being the key focus of the Trust.

Tim Wills, CEO, Adventure Specialties Trust

NEW ALPINE 1 SYLLABUS IS FINALLY RELEASED

The new look Alpine 1 syllabus has been sitting patiently waiting to be released and is now loaded onto the website to be used in 2015. Key additions to the Alpine 1 syllabi are the demonstration of building a snow shelter suitable for overnight stay and the teaching of cramponing techniques on easy snow slopes.

What was the hold up? Finding or developing an Avalanche Risk Management Course that is suitable for the scope of the qualification. Ray Button has been a passionate contributor to many discussions over the years regarding the appropriate avalanche course as a pre-requisite for NZOIA Alpine 1; so what better person to put in the hot seat to Chair his way to a conclusion. See his article that follows for a history of the development of the revised Mountain Safety Council Backcountry Avalanche Risk Management Course.

The new avalanche course is a 4-5 day event focused on foot travel and includes ongoing assessment. A pre-course on-line learning tool with the support of a resource centre will also be part of the training and assessment. This assessment component was vital to the NZOIA Alpine 1 syllabus review as it allows us to focus on the hazard forecast, and choosing activities and route selections which minimise exposure to

avalanches. The candidate could however be expected to demonstrate anything contained within the MSC Backcountry Avalanche Risk Management Course.

It is envisioned that in future this course (or one similar) will sit within the NZQA National Certificate in Avalanche Risk Management and can be delivered in a variety of ways by approved providers.

NZOIA Alpine 1, 2015 candidates will be expected to hold the new pre-requisite. Initially MSC will be running one of these per year in the North and South Island. The first MSC Backcountry Avalanche Risk Management Course is available on the 18 - 21 September 2014 in the Central South Island and is run by a NZOIA Alpine 2 holder, ex-ski patroller and ski field manager Ben Corcoran. Register early to ensure you have time to complete the pre-course learning module. You can find this course on the NZOIA assessment and MSC calendar and should contact MSC directly if you want to attend this course.

Thanks to a huge list of people that gave up their time and knowledge to pull this altogether.

Penny Holland, NZOIA Operations Manager

NZOIA ALPINE 1 AVALANCHE PRE-REQUISITE INVESTIGATION REPORT

BY RAY BUTTON

Background

The avalanche training and qualifications in NZ have historically been biased to the needs of the ski industry and used as the only qualification standard for the outdoor industry. During the development of NZOIA's Alpine 1 in the late 1980's the Mountain Safety Council (MSC) Avalanche Awareness course was adopted as a pre-requisite. The next level up was MSC Avalanche 1 and didn't meet NZOIA's needs as it was deemed too ski industry focused.



In 2004 MSC started developing a 4 day Back Country Avalanche Course as the next level above the Awareness Course. Initially the concept was aimed at their MSC Alpine



Instructors as a standard and had an assessment component, but eventually evolved into a non-assessed recreational focused course.

In recent years there has been much debate within NZOIA and externally over whether the Avalanche Awareness Course is of a high enough standard for instructors leading groups into avalanche terrain. This has brought NZOIA's credibility into question given that this course is a weekend introduction for the general public and not seen as a professional award.

This all came to a head when Adventure Specialties failed to pass an OutdoorsMark audit because the NZOIA Alpine 1 held by their instructors was judged too low a standard for the terrain they were operating in. They were working within the award terrain guidelines and were naturally aggrieved that this national certificate didn't cover them. As a result an investigative committee was formed to explore options.

NZOIA Avalanche Technical Committee Members:

Ray Button (Chair), Tim Wills, Ben Corcoran, Pete Brailsford, Stu Allan, Penny Goddard, Aaron Halstead.

The inaugural meeting was held on May 3rd 2013 in Christchurch and Andrew Hobman (MSC Alpine and Avalanche Programme Manager) attended, updating us on the latest developments on the Back Country Avalanche Course revamp. All further deliberations were by email.

Findings

The latest research (Canada) put less focus on hazard evaluation and more on limiting exposure to avalanche terrain. The committee was in general agreement that this concept would meet the NZOIA Alpine 1 requirements.

Andrew Hobman has been very keen to support NZOIA and has kept us informed on the Back Country Avalanche Course revamp progress. NZQA will eventually develop the National Certificate in Avalanche Risk Management which is in fact a modified Back Country Course with assessment throughout. Back Country Avalanche Course participants will qualify for this certificate. ▶

Example of assessment topics: course participants will be assessed on their understanding of avalanche phenomena, identifying avalanche terrain, conditions and safe travel routes and practices, plus small party rescue and specifically their individual transceiver search skills.

MSC plan to run the new course in winter 2014 and envisage it continuing to be called the MSC Backcountry Avalanche Risk Management course.

Comment

This has been a very valuable process as communications with Andrew Hobman (Hobbie) have rebuilt some bridges and he has offered to programme specific dates to fit in with NZOIA schedules. If this recommendation is accepted then it is very timely that NZOIA has the opportunity to benefit from the big changes afoot.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that NZOIA adopts the MSC Back Country Avalanche Course as a prerequisite for Alpine 1.

As highlighted in the flow chart there are various pathways to gain this award which has ongoing assessments and will be part of a national framework that we can tap into.

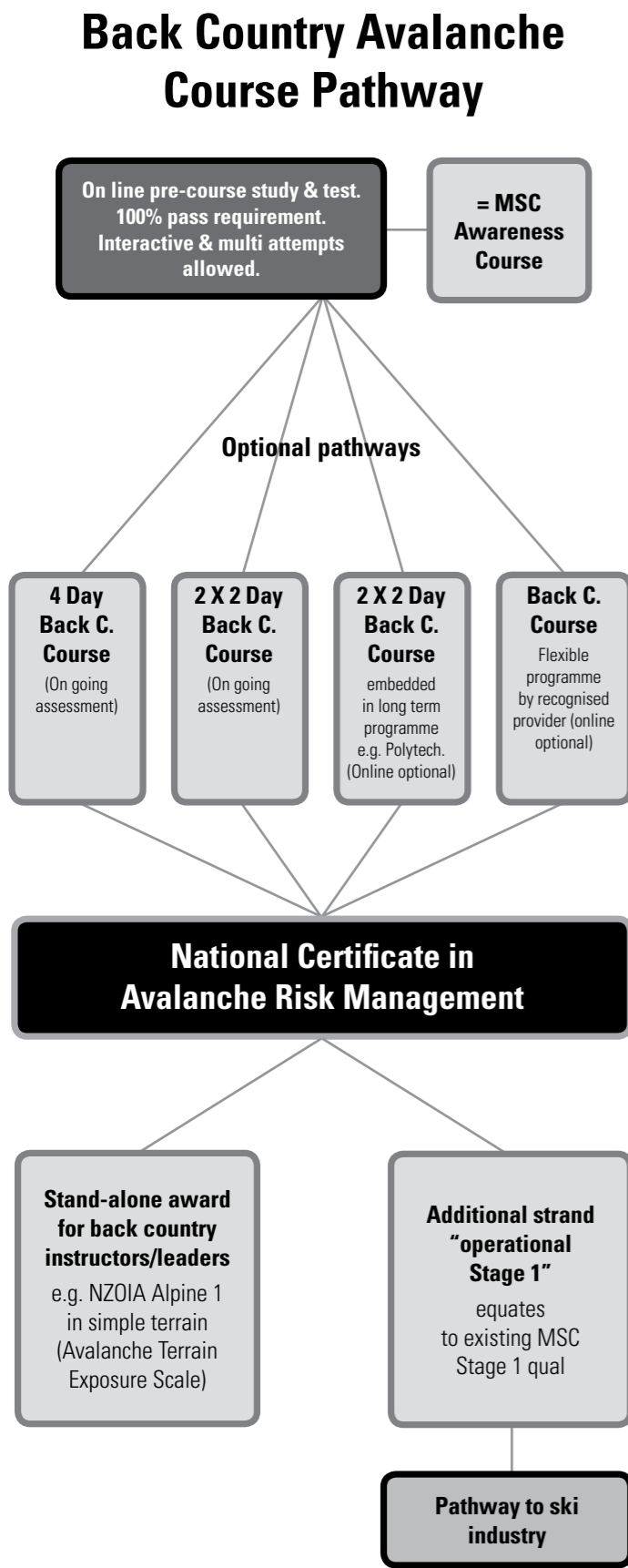


Photo: Chris Prudden



Photo: Mike Atkinson



Photo: Chris Prudden

Ray Button



BY JAMES ALKER

The Wilderness Canoe Trust started its own journey working with people at the start of 2014. The aim of the charity is to connect people to the great outdoors with real life adventures in the natural environment, helping to develop life skills during challenging experiences designed for success.

It has been a fantastic first phase of operating, canoeing around the coast and inlets at the top of the South Island. Open canoes are the ultimate craft for the wide variety of people we work with:

- School journeys and camps have young people learning to live simply and well in the wilderness, giving them a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence – priceless steps in their development toward adulthood.
- Respite care journeys for adults, often with their young children and even the family dog, have been great for giving people a quiet adventure in stressful lives.
- Accessible adventures for people with disabilities have been a great success. For wheel chair users, we have a variety of adaptive seating options including giant bean bags and the latest fully adjustable articulated seats from Creating Ability in North America. Special canoe outriggers increase stability when necessary.
- Challenging youth journeys have had young people appreciating a group of royal spoonbills feeding on the estuary shallows, an example of a connection which leads to future stewardship of the environment.

Canoe journeying is inextricably linked with bushcraft providing a truly holistic engaging experience. There is no need to contrive team building challenges because on every journey shared experience occurs, be it a sting ray darting under a boat or learning to light a fire for tea. Collecting shell fish on exposed sand banks then cooking them up on tin stoves that the group have made themselves really does warm the cockles of your heart.

Some of the journeys we have undertaken can be seen on our Facebook page 'canoe journeys' and on our website: www.canoejourneys.co.nz

We have developed a funding model with Wenonah Canoes who are the largest manufacturer of composite canoes in the world. Wenonah canoes are sold by the trust and all profits fund the charity's work, so when buying a canoe people are actually making a donation and attracting good karma!

Changing perceptions

Surprisingly there is a lack of open canoeing in New Zealand with its rich resource of water ways, lakes and coastline. Therefore, we also have the goals of increasing the profile of canoeing in New Zealand, promoting safety and making it easier for people to get into the sport.

Modern canoes are vastly different from many people's perceptions; they are lightweight, responsive, fast, a pleasure to paddle and transport and NOT the 40kg tanks of old. There is a wide range of designs available from white water play boats to fishing canoes to flat water sprint boats. Forget the wet bum, stiff legs and lack of storage of a sit on top and think about how much food you can possibly carry, all cooked in a cast iron pot on an open fire. Canoes do the hard work of carrying the gear for you, even for a multi week journey.

Enjoyment is the starting point when working with people experiencing an outdoor activity for the first time. The 'journey' philosophy with its widely known benefits, works wonderfully in canoes which are fun to paddle, tracking well on lakes or turning easily into river eddies.

Individuals naturally need to communicate with a partner when paddling tandem and the group as a whole, sharing the experience and overcoming obstacles. Keeping the group travelling together can be easier and conversation seems to flow more freely than in a long line of trampers. ▶



Stabilisation with outriggers

Part of the work in starting the charity has been explaining to people how stable canoes are and that accidental capsizes has only occurred when stepping out onto land too quickly at the end of the day!

At the top of the south we have a wide variety of environments suitable for canoeing, from hidden salt water lagoons, dunes, mud flats to rivers. From the Marlborough Sounds to the West Coast of Golden Bay, with the lakes and rivers between, we are spoilt for choice. We generally avoid the crowds and seldom see others while out enjoying wide open spaces with ocean horizon lines, or damp nikau palm lined banks of salt water creeks as we float up with the tide. One group of school teachers on a bonding activity day were amazed to discover whole areas in their local patch that they didn't know about, even after living there for most of their lives.

Safety and Buoyancy

Guess which canoe has buoyancy!



Most canoes float a little, even without additional buoyancy due to the material they are made of, for example Royalex Vinyl with its foam core between the sandwich layers, fibre glass with built in end tanks and of course wood. To make a canoe easier to empty if capsized and keep higher in the water to avoid rocks if floating upside down in a river, buoyancy is essential. On longer trips barrels are often used which when well secured offer fantastic water displacement and buoyancy in the centre of a canoe.

Making canoes buoyant has taken many forms and here in New Zealand the trusty car inner tube can often be found jammed or tied under a seat or yoke of a canoe. They are easy to source and are cheap. However they often deflate, they use up storage space, they block access for kneeling, can come loose and critically they often increase the risk of entrapment.

Old plastic canoes with central buoyancy tanks can start leaking when they age or become UV damaged, then water inside the tank creates weight and instability. Tanks are often advertised as being good for storing gear inside but from experience, once grit and dirt gets in, the seals become unreliable, lids disappear and ...water gets in.

We have developed a buoyancy block here in New Zealand. Durability is a key issue for outdoor centres and solid foam blocks are the solution. Covered with a hard wearing fabric they can be stood on and last for years. Canoe specific air bags are great if tied in well but durability is an issue. Hot days can cause the bags to expand and break, valves can be lost in transit as they flap about on trailers. The foam blocks do cost more initially but are easier to tie in and last longer, therefore are cheaper in the long term. Any profit from the sale of blocks will help fund the charity. If you are interested in these for your canoe or for your work place please get in touch via our website: www.canoejourneys.co.nz.



Solid foam buoyancy blocks



www.songofthepaddle.co.uk is an awesome resource on all things canoeing. Check out the forum on outfitting canoes for ideas on securing buoyancy and what could work for you.

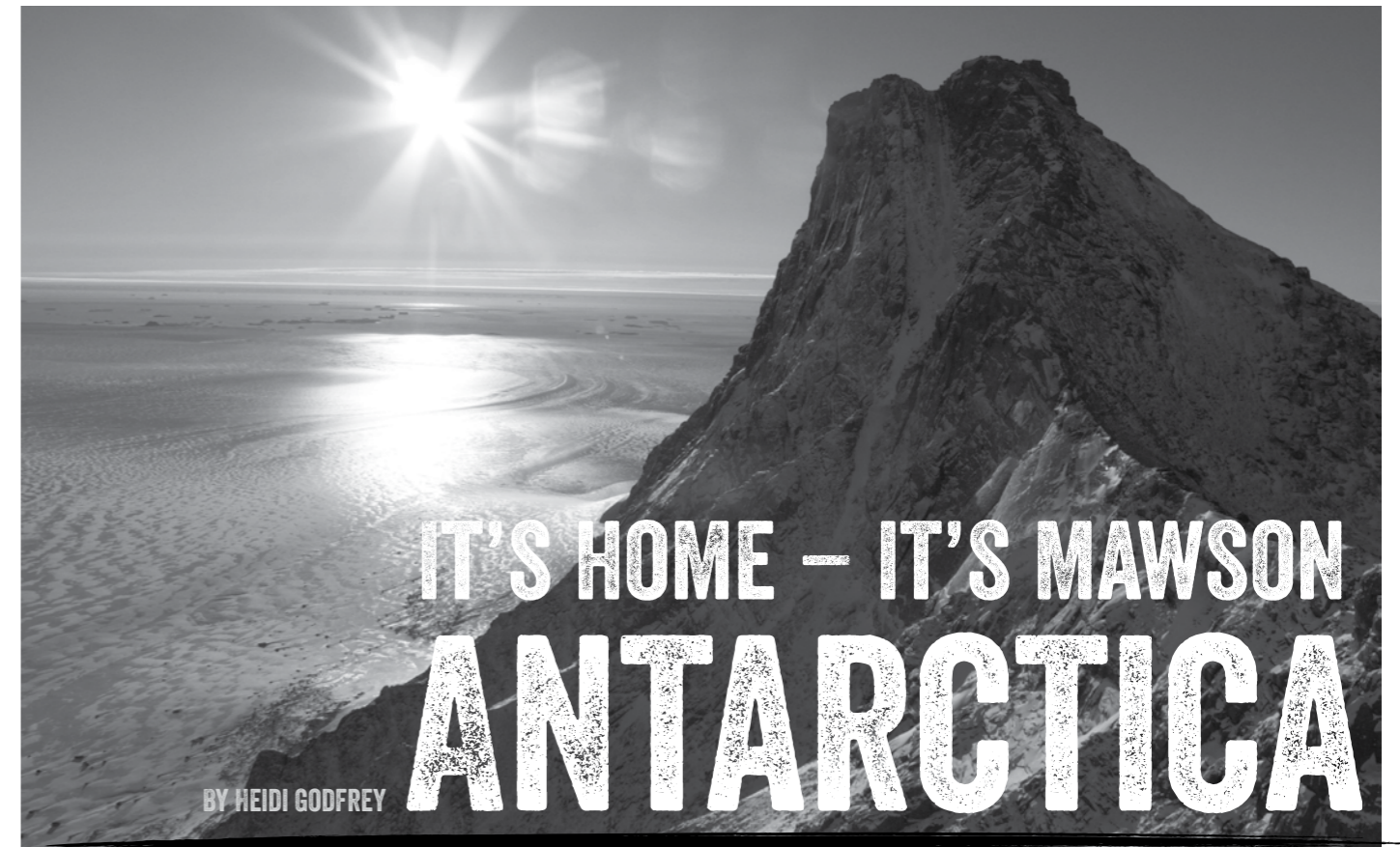
If you are out on a personal mission in a single canoe where capsizing in open water is a possibility, a long thin air bag fitted along one side of a canoe can be a life saver. When flipped back up from a capsize position in the direction of the airbag it rights with very minimal water inside which can then be bailed easily.

If you are interested to share open canoe ideas, journey locations or ask questions, we are starting to link up like minded people, so do get in touch if you are keen.

So after a great start, we're looking forward, working on partnerships and funding to be able to share canoe journeys with more people. We hope we have explained a little of what we do and shared some ideas that are useful for individuals or organisations. See you out there.

WILDERNESS
CANOEJOURNEYS

James Alker, Director, Wilderness Canoe Journeys



BY HEIDI GODFREY

I am sitting looking out my window as it's blowing 70 knots and is minus 23 degrees. While eating breakfast this morning I was told 'it's a snow day'. Hmm, is that like a closed day on the ski field? Kind of... we have a day off work as it's too windy with poor visibility to be moving around outside between buildings.

I accepted the job as winter field training officer at Mawson Station, Antarctica back in July 2013. This is the remotest and windiest of the Australian Antarctic bases, and we are stationed here for a year. Like many jobs in the outdoor industry, it is through word of mouth or a recommendation that doors are opened. Like most places around the world; Kiwis have a great reputation and are sought after.

I have been working in the outdoor industry for over 15 years now and how time flies! I did my outdoor education training back in 1999 at Otago Polytechnic – Wanaka campus (with the inspirational Ellen Sagmyr running the show).

This is my fifth opportunity to be in Antarctica. Many people ask me how they can get a job down 'on the ice'. My response is: be a jack of all trades, a great team member, a good leader, be experienced in your field of work and never burn a bridge. Holding NZOIA awards in many disciplines, and having current relevant experience has set me up well for this role in such a remote location.

My job started out with 10 days training in Hobart, Tasmania. All the field trainers going south for the upcoming summer/winter came together for 5 days on a SARINZ advanced rope rescue course run by Grant Prattley. This was a great opportunity to brush up on skills and also to meet my support crew (who are always only a phone call away). From Hobart it was back to finish my season as the ski patrol supervisor at Turoa Ski Field before packing my bags for 14 months away. I took my lovely Labrador Kaha for one last tramp, I took my niece out for her

first tramping / camping trip and I planted my veggie garden (any excuse to get my fingers in soil one last time).

After a further 6 weeks of training we set sail on what was supposed to be a 2 week voyage south. We ended up spending 2 months at sea due to thick ice and interrupted resupplies. Since finally arriving at Mawson Station on 26th March, it's been busy settling into our new home.

The field trainer role here does not come up every year, so I feel lucky to have a winter south and also be on a good income for it!! In the past I have spent time at Scott Base, both on station and working out in the remote field camps, so seeing another Antarctic station is a plus. Everyone here at the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) says "Mawson is Awesome". That I can agree with. Yes it's windy and cold, but hey so is NZ and I've gone back to Ruapehu season after season for 20 years to experience a bit of wind and weather!

So you may be keen to hear about how I spend my days / months / year...

As a field trainer and a member of a small remote community (population 16, 2 being female), my role is varied. The first 6 weeks is focussed on getting the expeditioners through their survival training, field travel training, sea ice induction and trip leader training. The weather makes it essential to be flexible with plans, just like NZ!

Another part of my role is being the emergency response team leader. This is a combined role covering fire and search and rescue (SAR). So I needed to be competent in teaching all aspects of SAR and be trained in fire fighting (we all went through an intensive 5 day fire training programme in Hobart). Fire is one of our biggest threats down here. Water is limited in terms of a fire fighting capacity so our main goal is preserve life. ►



Heidi putting up the 'Quad Bivvy' in 45 knot winds.

Realistically, if all personnel are accounted for in the muster, then there is no real urgency after that; we would quite literally watch it burn!

During both the training in Hobart and the sea voyage south, I took many opportunities to train our team up with the SARINZ industrial rope rescue systems. Our Mawson team is made up of people with a wide variety of skills but with limited personal or professional exposure to rope systems. I take my hat off to the Mawson team; they have grasped the concepts and knowledge of rope rescue that most teams on the continent don't acquire until about 2 months after settling in.

The terrain at Mawson ranges from sea ice to a vast icy plateau to mountains. These rocky peaks provide recreational

opportunities such as a day tramp with some good scrambling and a short pitch at the end. Peaks such as Mt Henderson, Fang Peak, Rumdoodle, Mt Ward and Mt Elliott are beginning to make it onto expeditioners' bucket lists. Another aspect of my job is to provide technical support for them to climb these mountains. Last weekend was my first outing to Mt Henderson; Aidan- an electrician and James- a doctor were keen to come. A 350m ascent got us to the top, the last 20m had an exciting wee steep exposed crack that required some elegant rock climbing (while wearing big Carhartt pants, oversized boots and jackets). On the summit is a tap and plug (must be in honour of the plumbers on station!). It was blowing 25-30 knots and was minus 28, bringing the wind-chill to a good minus 45 so we didn't hang out too long. The NZ flag was flown though and photos taken.

Our daylight hours are getting shorter, sunrise at 0940 and sunset at 1550. For the June / July period we are down to between one and three hours of twilight daily. Despite that, travel can still happen off station and we do head out and about.

I have just returned from being in the field for three days and am enjoying a few days off. How am I spending my day off? A sleep in after many alarms throughout the night due to high wind (our wind turbines don't seem to like that), a meeting with the leadership team on station, followed by a yoga session, lunch, then time in our hydroponic garden. I'll replant bok choy, move tomatoes around, plant a herb garden and reconfigure a few plants and piping. It's fantastic having a hydroponics shed; it's my chance to escape Antarctica for a few hours and be surrounded by something green and growing. The rest of the day is spent writing this article and a climbing session at our amazing indoor wall.

Working for the AAD, our NZOIA qualifications hold value. I have Bush 2, Cave 2, Rock 1 and Alpine 1, there are many parts of all of these awards being used down here. So I will keep up my registration and subs while I am away for the year and look forward to returning next year to sign up for the next available revalidation workshop. Enjoy your NZ winter and feel free to check out <http://www.antarctica.gov.au/living-and-working/stations/mawson> to see our webcam and what is happening here at Mawson.

Heidi Godfrey

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 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. / A reflection on any aspect of outdoor instruction that you think would be educational and beneficial for others to hear. **Contact Jen Riley the editor with your ideas and for guidelines: editor@nzoi.org.nz**

Photo: Johnny Johnson



Profile: Prajot Sabnis



I met Prajot when he was studying in Timaru. Since then I've asked him many times to share how someone who grew up so far removed from outdoor education, ended up doing what he's doing. He's always resisted, wondering why anyone would be interested. He finally agreed to being interviewed. This is his story. (Jen Riley - Editor)

What's been your career path to OPC?

I've been working at Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre since August last year. After Aoraki Polytech I spent some time at Peel Forest OPC then 18 months at Activity Hammer in Hammer Springs. I've got Rock 1 with Lead Climbing Endorsement and Bush 1. I'm going for Alpine 1 this year and Rock 2 soon after that.

Tell us about your childhood

I was born in 1984 (big birthday this year) in a little town called Moodbibri, in the same state as Goa -Karnataka. I spent lots of time with my Granny, we'd do lots of craft, drawing and origami. She taught me how to behave and how to respect people.

We lived in a housing complex, 4 apartment blocks joined together with a common area. All the kids would meet there. We played cricket all year round, football with it rained and when the football broke, we'd play rugby with the same ball.

We had no such thing as Outdoor Education at school. I did join an optional nature club where we spent a couple of days in the woods looking at trees and wildlife.

English was Mum and Dad's common language, so at home I spoke English with Mum and I spoke to Dad in Marathi (my native language). With my friends and with locals I speak Hindi. I was educated in English.

Are you religious? Your facial hair suggest you may be

Ha! My appearance is nothing to do with religion... Mum is Christian, Dad is Hindu. I grew up going to both churches and temples. I like bits of each. I've always wanted a big mountain beard and I grew up listening to rock and roll music... and big hair is good for rock and roll!

Why did you move to NZ?

My parents saw a better standard of living here and better opportunities in education for my sister and I. At the time I didn't want to come. I was nearly 18, quite happy where I was and had just finished high school. I had to do Year 13 again when I got to Auckland.

How did you end up studying Outdoor Education at polytech?

When I started university, I was planning to do a double arts degree in psychology and German. I tried rock climbing during Orientation, and was hooked! That Orientation trip to Wharepapa was my first time sleeping in a tent.

After three years I took a year off from study and got a job at Bivouac. A friend there told me about a mountaineering course in India in the Garhwal mountains near the Nepalese border. I was off; 30 days in the hills at altitude learning rope, rock and ice skills, sleeping in a tent with 12 others. It was great! Returning to the retail job, being inside felt really odd. Something had to change.

I was still buzzing from that mountaineering trip when I met Asher March and Owen Lee who were buzzing from their recent ascent of Mt Cook. Asher was studying Outdoor Education at Aoraki Polytech in Timaru. Both Owen and I changed our direction to South Canterbury.

Why do you think we don't not see many Indian people working in the Outdoor Industry?

Because it's not a traditionally accepted job. For example my Dad would have loved me to be a doctor or engineer. These are seen as 'respectable jobs', especially for newly immigrated people. Back in India we were encouraged to be doctors, engineers and at a push, chartered accountants. You only did something else if you didn't have the grades. There seems to be so many more career options here.

My parents still ask; when will you finish your degree. It was quite heart breaking for them when I left uni. However now they proudly ask me about my outdoor career.

I chose to break the norm because NZ is a place of so many opportunities where you can make a living doing what ever you like. I've chosen a path doing something I love.

Are there barriers to Indian students choosing to study Outdoor Education?

People from my kind of background are unlikely to do just one year of a course. I know in outdoor education courses it's common to leave after finishing the first certificate year rather than continuing on to the diploma. Indian students would only enroll if they planned to do the whole thing therefore ▶

may not enroll to begin with. Perhaps polytechs should advertise better that students do get a real qualification after EACH year.

My parents, grandfathers and aunts, really value degrees. There are not many degrees in Outdoor Education. I wonder if degree programmes have more ethnic enrollments.

What opportunities do you see in the outdoors for India and New Zealand?

When I was at polytech in Timaru, I had to write a business plan; I see potential to bring Indians here and to take New Zealanders there. India is doing economically better than it has in the past. 20 years ago outdoor stuff was only done by the military. Now people have more money and more time so I think there is scope for that market to be tapped into.

That business plan is the reason I haven't given up my Indian passport. I might just make it happen!

Why are you an outdoor instructor?

1. I've discovered this crazy cool thing that requires very little other than effort, and there are so many lessons to be learned from it.
2. I love working with young impressionable people who are learning things about themselves and how to behave in society.
3. I'm excited about teaching both technical skills and life skills.

**Profile:
Raj Kamal**



Raj is from Jind, 4 hours south of Delhi. He came to NZ as a chef 14 years ago. He opened and ran a very successful Indian restaurant in Motueka, then sold it 7 years later. He is now studying Adventure Tourism at Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology. I asked him to share his story, and to share some cultural insights. (Jen Riley - Editor)



What advice can you give new instructors?

Get your driving license early! I eventually got mine at the end of my third year and it was a nightmare. Get it sorted!

When you start out in industry, you need to be jack of all trades. I did kayaking in Year 2, and really struggled with it, but it has really helped to have that additional skill.

Remember to have your own adventures. I've met lots of instructors who work hard all week then don't have the energy or motivation to do their own things. If you are not enjoying it, I don't know how you can pass that passion on to your students. Your own adventures also help you empathize with your scared students- a reality check. And really... why wouldn't you want to have an adventure!!!

Why are you studying Adventure Tourism?

I have many Kiwi friends but I often felt stuck. I could only walk along a beach - they could swim, they could kayak, they could put up tents and be on boats.

I hid my lack of confidence with excuses, rather than admitting that I needed to or wanted to learn. It doesn't matter what you say to other people, you know what's going on inside you. So by enrolling in the Adventure Tourism Course at NMIT I was deciding to step way out of my comfort zone, to grow, to learn and to embrace Kiwi culture more.

Did you do Outdoor Education at school?

No, our school was a big building, with a lawn where 50 people could sit and have lunch. There was not enough room to run around. I was 15 when I first saw the sea... I ran straight into it with my clothes on! I'd seen swimming pools in hotels but had never been in one before coming to NZ.

Tell me about you and your family.

My dad was the only one in our whole clan who had finished school and the only one to go to university. He valued education. My brothers were sent to boarding school but they couldn't afford to send me too. I remember being so jealous.

My older brother joined the army. Dad was so proud, he gave a huge party, bigger than a wedding! My younger brother dropped out of boarding school but because of sports and contacts he got into one of India's best colleges where even the top students struggle to get in. He knows how to twist the system, he's good at living in India! Now he's working in film, yes, Bollywood.

My parents wanted me to be a doctor. I tried a couple of times to get into medical school then got accepted into the Institute of Hotel Management.

I'd been living happily and free in NZ for one year when my elder brother died fighting in Kashmir. That changed me and my life. It took my whole thinking process back 200 years. I stopped thinking about myself and thought only of my family and my responsibilities there. I went back to India and entered an arranged marriage.

I've been the first in my family for many things... I was the first to leave the country, I was the first to get a divorce. I was the first to start a business. I'm now the first to study at the age of nearly 40.

When did you move to NZ and why?

I was working as a chef in Delhi and was offered 5 times the amount of money in NZ for doing the same work. I was 26.

Tell me about running your own restaurant business.

After 3 years with that chain restaurant, a friend and I decided to go out on our own. We had three preferred locations - Ashburton was our first choice because of the large population and no Indian restaurants, Hanmer Springs was our second choice. We looked for 7 months and Motueka was the first place that a suitable venue became available.

I loved the success. On our first two nights it was chocka block packed. I made so many friends and loved interacting with the locals. I loved the learning-learning about managing staff, marketing, solving problems, running a business and NZ culture.

I learned to be patient. Before I left home I was short tempered, I was an ass. Like a donkey, I didn't know about anything. The success of the restaurant gave me confidence and the belief that I can achieve what I want. 7 years later I sold it because I was burning out.

What do you hope do with your Certificate (or Diploma) in Adventure Tourism?

I haven't decided yet, but I see myself running a business in the outdoor industry, with connections to India. The likely path is to learn the ins and outs of the industry by working in it for several years before starting my own business.

There is a big middle class in India who have money and are travelling more. I see potential to start something in India and bring Kiwis there, or attract Indians to NZ. Many tourists come to NZ and jump from city to city, Auckland to Wellington to Queenstown then home. They have no idea what they could do and I want to fill that gap.



What advice would you give an Indian student considering studying outdoor education?

You've probably come from places where people have struggled financially and you have got out to have a better life. You can have a great life working in the outdoors: you can do okay financially while doing something you're passionate about.

You'll learn swimming, river crossing, how to use a compass, how to light fires, what food to eat, what gear to bring... you can then go outdoors with your friends and not depend on the system. The skills you learn give you freedom!

This career path is fulfilling and it is rewarding-you get healthier and fitter. There is more to life than making lots of money.

What have been some highlights studying Adventure Tourism?

Every single thing we do, it's the first time for me. Everything you tutors pick up... carabinas, ropes, kayaks, compasses... everything is new.

It's been an eye opener into how study can be, I'm amazed tutors can be so relaxed, I was used to just being smacked at school.

Thank goodness I'm not with people all my age, you know how they can be so advising, so careful and so hesitant. I watch my classmates, who are none of those things and who give everything go, and think... I want to do that too!

When we finish anything, I feel I have achieved something and things seem prettier. I might not have been enjoying the tramping so much but getting to the top of a mountain, I feel a sense of 'wow!'.

And... I feel more comfortable when friends invite me to the beach - I can do so much more than just walk along the sand.

Advertise in the Quarterly

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Half-page advertisement, black & white only	horizontal 186 mm wide x 132 mm high	\$115 + gst
Half-page advertisement, black & white only	vertical 90 mm wide x 273 mm high	\$115 + gst
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Third-page advertisement, black & white only	horizontal 186 mm wide x 86 mm high	\$80 + gst

Advertisements should be in black & white PDF file format. No 'bleed' advertisements accepted. Colour files can be converted to black & white but tonal contrast may alter. Please enquire for affordable advertisement design rates. Send your advertisement to: The Editor, NZOIA, P.O.Box 1620, Nelson 7040 Email: editor@nzoi.org.nz

NZOIA Training & Assessment

ASSESSMENT FEES	
Assessment course	Course fee
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Sport Climbing Endorsement	
Bush Walking Leader	\$545 - \$595
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Rock Climbing Leader	
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Canoe 1	
Cave 1	
Rock 1	
Sport Climbing Instructor	\$730 - \$780
Alpine 1	
Bush 1 & 2	
Canyon 1 & 2	
Cave 2	
Kayak 1 & 2	
Rock 2	
Sea Kayak 1	\$930
Sea Kayak 2	
Alpine 2	

The course calendars for Training and Assessments can be found at www.nzoi.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.nzoi.org.nz
2. Check out the Syllabus & Assessment Guide, 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 your logbook, summary sheet, first aid certificate and any other required documentation to your application.
(NB: Non-members can attend Training Courses)
4. Applications close 6 weeks before the course date.
5. After the closing date we will confirm that the course will run.
6. If we cancel the course we will refund all fees.
7. If NZOIA cancels a course, you will receive a full refund/transfer of your fee.
If you withdraw before the closing date, you will receive a full refund of your fee.

8. 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 the Programme and Membership Manager for more details.

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1 day courses	\$200	\$315
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Details of courses run by NZOIA, pre-requisites and online payment are all available at: www.nzoi.org.nz

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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.nzoi.org.nz/faq#custom for details on how to arrange a course. **Course Costs:** all courses run by NZOIA are discounted for members.

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'Kachooong' (21) Mt Arapiles, Victoria, Australia.

SAVING OUTDOOR EDUCATION

AN OPINION ON OUTDOOR EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA BY JAKE CANDY

Today a student spends on average, less time outdoors than a maximum security prisoner. A prisoner spends two hours a day outside, any less is considered solitary confinement.

in order to look great in the rankings, or to show parents that their student is making progress... on paper. I have witnessed students from these so called 'Selective Schools' in the outdoors and my observations do not shine the schools (or the students) in such a bright light.

Now these may be some of the most academically smart young Australians, who will most likely score in the top percentile in their state for their ATAR exams, however when it comes to initiative, social skills and common sense these are some of the dumbest people I have ever come across. They ask obvious questions, the answers to which have already been explained. For example after stating that we all carry our own rubbish ourselves for the overnight hike, the question; "where does my rubbish go?" will be asked several times that day. The rubbish of a really cheeky student will end up underneath a rock showing a complete lack of environmental awareness. Their initiative when making personal and group decisions is very poor. For example: "It's cold - do you think I should put a jumper on?" Their social skills when interacting with a group of peers is generally awkward and indirect and their ability to speak up for themselves is sometimes non-existent.

Is this behaviour accepted in class as long as they get the academic grades? I believe this lack of personal development is due to schools focussing on academics rather than social and emotional learning, self-reliance and moral behaviour. It takes time to teach these things, and unfortunately they are not prioritized as you don't get marks for common sense. The fundamental question we need to ask is; will this young person be better prepared for life in today's world. I think not. I believe they need social awareness and self-confidence to build working relationships and the ability to work well in a team, more than they need academic smarts. ►

These days' young person's hours per year are divided thusly:

900 Hours at school

1200 Hours with family and friends

1800 Hours screen time

Why is Outdoor Education important?

I believe that Outdoor Education is important for the young people of Australia and New Zealand because of the personal development that can be achieved. When used in the right way it builds social and emotional learning, self-reliance, resilience, self-confidence and can reduce anxiety and other social and emotional issues that young Aussies and Kiwis deal with.

Outdoor Education can expand an individual's personal potential within a week, a day or even a few hours. When you think about it, what else is there that can give this profound development? However, Outdoor Education is not just a stand-alone experience which is forgotten about after the adventure has occurred. It is something that can be used by all teachers across the curriculum as a reference point for which to relate other subjects being taught. If the student and teacher have been out on the same camp for example, then they both have a reference point to tie learning to. Not to mention the class bonds that can be strengthened after such an experience. If self-confidence, social and emotional issues that a young student face are dealt with, then they are better prepared to take on the rest of their required academic tasks. It is proven that the more anxious or fearful someone is, the worse their working memory performs. Therefore the effects of Outdoor Education can not only benefit the individual in their personal life but also enhance their academic performance across the curriculum.

Outdoor Education develops the 'whole person' rather than the academic intelligence that is focused on in schools today. In my time as an outdoor educator I have worked with many schools that pride themselves on academic performance. In Australia, this focus on top marks has become even more prevalent with the introduction of NAPLAN standardised testing and the interschool ranking system of the My Schools website. In some schools, this has shifted the focus even further away from developing the 'whole person' to a focus on academics

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The Government

There is a shortage of outdoor instructors in Australia. This may be because in the past few years so many tertiary institutes have closed their outdoor recreation courses. My understanding is that the closures are thanks to a decrease in government funding due to the inaccurate notion that the outdoor industry is well staffed. Outdoor courses are either no longer running, or have been shortened leading to a compromise in the quality of instructors they put out.

For young Kiwi instructors, this means that the sky is the limit for employment after gaining their outdoor qualifications. An outdoor organisation that I have worked with in the sticks of the NSW bush constantly finds that around 60% of their field staff are Kiwis, and that's not just because the Aussie kids love their accents. Now I am not advocating a mass exodus of Kiwi instructors across the ditch... but there is plenty of work in Aus. I earn double per day working in the outdoors in Australia that I did in New Zealand, but that is another topic for another article.

Hospital patients who have a view of nature require less pain meds and recover quicker.

Students who study with a view of nature get better results on tests.

The Schools

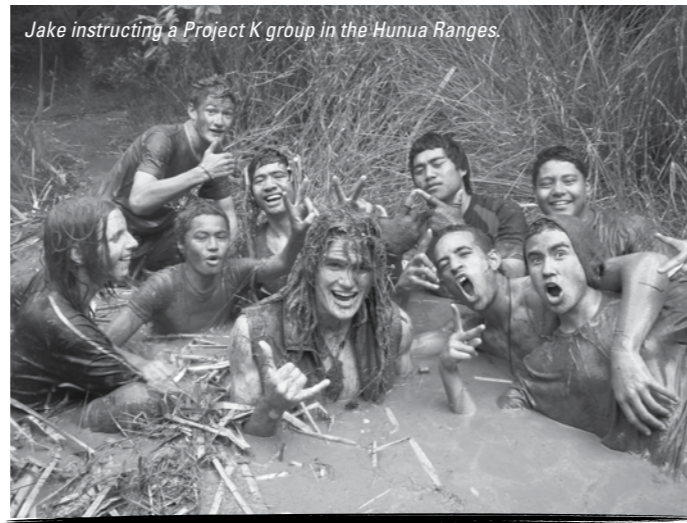
I believe a major reason why a school chooses to not include Outdoor Education as a part of its syllabus is a misunderstanding of what it is. Many people look blank until the word 'camp' is mentioned, "Oh so you run school camps, where you get to go kayaking and rock climbing and stuff." This concept of Outdoor Education being the experience of completing a few fun outdoor pursuits in a nice setting, is recreation not education.

Compare someone who puts 40 students down an abseil in a day to complete their quota, with someone who facilitates that abseil session so that students take away sound, personal life lessons and develop socially and emotionally. The latter is my definition of an Outdoor Educator.

A student cannot gain personal insight during a trip to a sausage factory styled camp. This quantity over quality approach is taken for efficiency, revenue and often because this is all that schools want. However why would you take a large group of students outdoors to simply have an experience when they could have the experience **and** learn a great deal too. There are three things that lead to the sausage factory outcome; the instructor, the company or the school.

Tertiary outdoor courses can produce two types of people; instructors who have the technical skills to safely manage people during outdoor experiences, and Outdoor Educators; who can also transform said outdoor experience into meaningful personal learning.

Some schools like the thought of Outdoor Education because it sounds good and looks great on a website. The experience that students receive differs from school to school. It seems that the three things schools value in an outdoor experience for young people are: that it is safe, that it doesn't cost much and that there is minimal time spent away from the classroom.



Outdoor Education teachers often battle with principals and school boards over time away, permission forms and safety management. Schools will shorten a camp from five days to three because of time away from school. Are those two extra days in the classroom really that essential compared to the lessons that could be learned outdoors? I love to see schools in Australia and NZ breaking the norm, I wish it were the majority!

Many subjects can be taught using the outdoors. We should change the perspective that taking kids out of the classroom should be avoided because it takes up time. If all lessons are taught inside then it is likely that a percentage of students will not be engaged as this does not suit all learning styles. Students deemed to have behavioural issues may not see the relevance in what they are learning. The outdoors can be an engaging and dynamic environment and for students who find school a boring waste of time, it could change their perspective to seeing school as an exciting place to be.

A twenty minute walk in the park is as effective for treating ADHD as drugs.

To conclude

What do we want our future generations to be like? My personal opinion on this that we want to create citizens who are aware of the environment and themselves. The Australian National Curriculum (2014) certainly states that this is what we are to produce through schooling, yet in the 2013 draft of the document, Outdoor Education did not even get a mention. It took lobbying from passionate practitioners who believe in the value of Outdoor Education, to gain its small but deserved position back in the National Curriculum.

What I'm saying here isn't new, it is a perspective formed through talks with outdoor educators, managers, instructors, coordinators, lecturers, teachers and gurus of outdoor wisdom. These are all people who fight for what they love and see it as an important part of young Australians and New Zealanders lives. Outdoor Education does change lives for the better.

References: Italicised quotes in black panels come from <http://www.natureplaywa.org.au/research>

*Jake Candy, Staff training and development coordinator,
Somerset Outdoor Learning Centre*

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