



TEN EXPERT TIPS TO HELP YOU ORGANISE EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOL CAMPS

**YOUR GUIDE TO ORGANISING IMPACTFUL SCHOOL
CAMPS FOR YOUR STUDENTS AND STAFF.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the most distinctive memories of school life for many of us are our school camps. An exceptional school camp experience provides a space for young people to apply all they have learnt in the classroom in the real world.

School camp allows students to explore their own capabilities, strengthen emotional skills, develop confidence and actively participate in inclusive and fun activities outside the classroom. As such, school camp provides countless benefits to young people of all ages. School camp is a rite of passage for many young

Australians and when approached with careful consideration and thoughtful design, school camp can bring out the best in your students.

However, finding the right experience to suit the needs of your students, your curriculum outlines and your teachers takes dedication and planning. And with so much information at your fingertips, it's easy to become overwhelmed.

If you are new to organising school camps or if you want to check you are still a master of camp coordination, this is the guide for you.

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INTRODUCTION

While school camps can be an incredibly enriching and fun experience, they aren't always easy to plan. With evolving pedagogy, the ever-present need for fresh approaches and countless other considerations, even the most seasoned camp coordinator or educator needs a little support every now and then when deciding on the best possible school camp.

A robust plan of action and thorough preparation are vital in creating a valuable and enjoyable school camp experience your students will remember fondly. Our expert tips will set you up for success and remove the pressure of organising a stand-out school camp experience for your students and school staff.

With careful planning, and by partnering with a trusted school camp provider, you can incorporate dynamic ways of learning into your curriculum. Through an exceptional camp experience, your students can develop essential capabilities such as self-efficacy, resilience, collaboration and communication.

Whether you have inherited the task of organising a school camp or are simply exploring ways to improve on previous experiences, our expert tips in organising exceptional school camps will ensure your students are getting the most out of their school camp experience.

1

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?

Consider the aims and objectives you would like your school camp to fulfil.

CAMPS ARE IDEAL FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT; THEY CAN:

- ▲ Build confidence, resilience and leadership skills
- ▲ Ignite creativity and problem-solving
- ▲ Promote a sense of adventure
- ▲ Encourage teamwork and stimulate independence
- ▲ Teach environmental literacy

Your curriculum should be top of mind when planning a school camp; consider how your camp will support student learning and engagement. School camps should be designed to support your curriculum and teaching frameworks to deliver social, physical and psychological outcomes by bringing education to life.

▲ By focusing on the outcome, school camps can be so much more than fun. Your school camp provider will recommend the right program for your students and desired learning outcomes.

2

IMPACT. IMPACT. IMPACT.

While students take what they have learnt in the classroom with them to camp, they will also reflect on their learnings from camp once they return to school.

To ensure greater impact, consider how you will embed lessons learned at camp back into learning at school.

Perhaps you have opted for a school camp experience that focuses on Indigenous cultural education. How will you allow your students to explore what they have learnt during their time at camp?

▲ To enhance student engagement, prepare resources and lesson plans for your return to the classroom. Having just had a dynamic and experiential education experience, your students are likely to respond well to lessons that mirror this approach.

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VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF EDUCATION

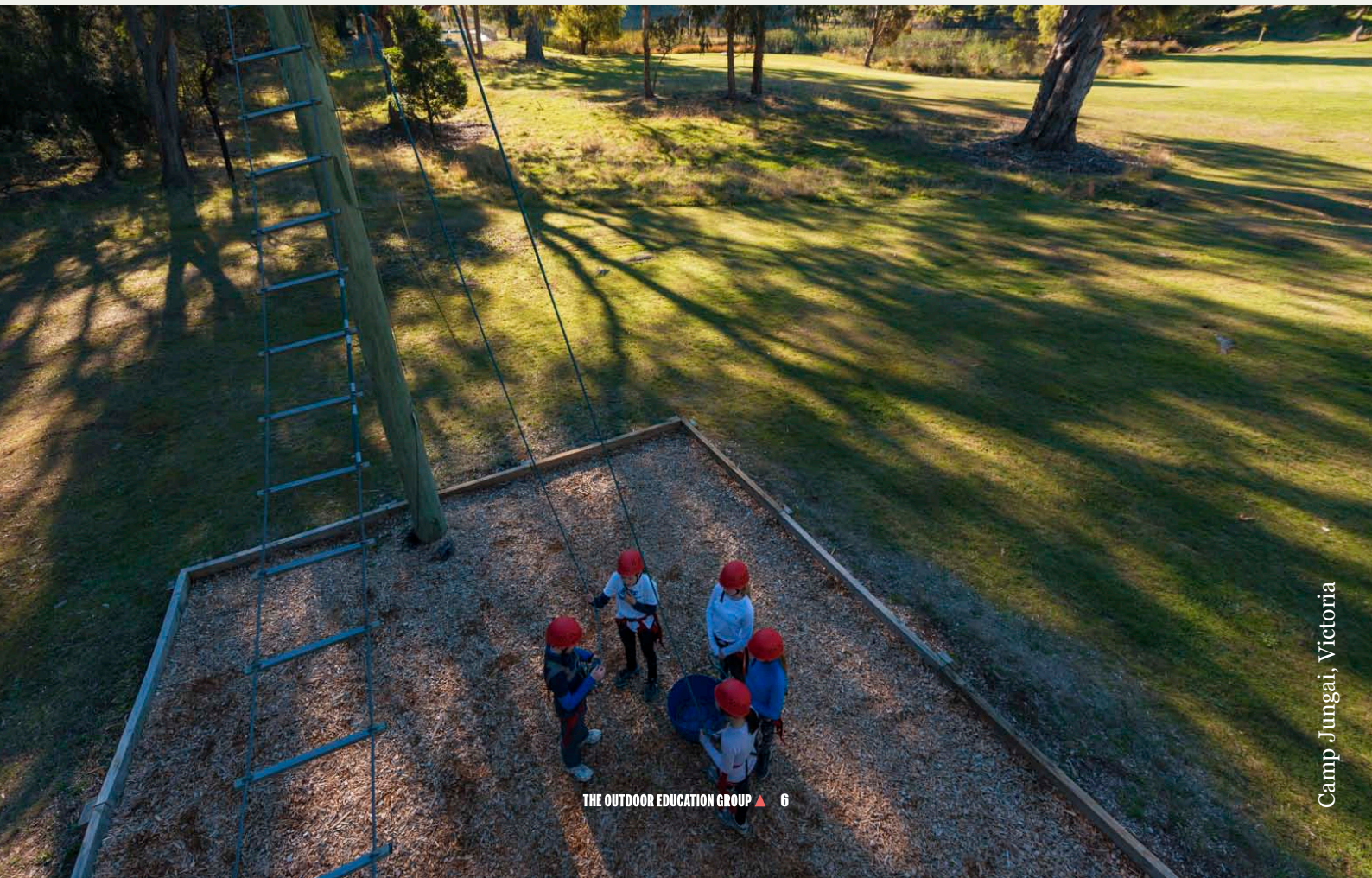
It can be tempting when you see a camp's range of educational adventures to pack your experience full of fun-filled activities for your students.

Remember to allow your students the time to enjoy the outdoors in a relaxed manner, enabling them to build on friendships and discover different forms of engagement in new surroundings.

It is also important to make space for reflection and discussion time. Because each learner is unique, programming should allow for peaks, valleys, turbulence, excitement, periods of calm, and periods

of activity. It is ideal for students and staff to move through a sequence of outcome-based activities, prefaced with a briefing and concluded with a debrief aimed toward self-reflection and the recognition of one's own capabilities.

▲ Consider how you will cater to all personality and learning types by including a varied selection of activities; teamwork and solo activities, fun on land, water, or the sky allow each individual to shine. When your provider shares the camp outline with you, check it for the elements of variety you have decided are important.





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LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Camp providers can plan, design and deliver school camp programs in partnership with your school. Consider a long-term educational strategy and the development of your students.

A school camp can certainly be a stand-alone experience. However, it can also be part of a sequential program. Sequential experiences introduce students to varying and age-appropriate adventures and

activities, enabling growth and development from one year to the next. Sequential programs can mean your students can return for yearly visits to the same sites and have a very different experience while building on their previous experiences.

▲ Request information about sequential programs from your provider and speak to your team about a continuing and long-term solution to student development.

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CONSIDER THE TEACHER EXPERIENCE

A teacher or teachers will accompany your cohort; they are a necessary part of the student's experience away from school.

But just because they are attending a school camp for students does not mean they should be forgotten. Teachers make a significant personal contribution of their time in going away to school camp and your provider should recognise this.

Dedicated suitable accommodation with private facilities should be provided. Some providers will offer 100% facilitated sessions, allowing the teacher's role to become supportive rather than active.

At other points of the program, it will be essential for teachers to be involved and hands-on because this is the best way to embed learning and take it back to school. Negotiating breaks between group leaders and teachers will help ensure everyone has their much-needed downtime and that little bit of opportunity for self-care and self-reflection.

▲ Don't forget, camps are often set in beautiful surroundings; this exposure to nature has restorative effects not only for your students but your teachers as well, giving them a break from their busy day-to-day.



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CONSIDER YOUR IDEAL CAMP

What type of experience will help you best achieve your objectives? If you've had previous experiences with a school camp provider, begin by making a list of the pros and cons of their services. If you've not had any prior experience, create a list of your must-haves. This step will best prepare you for your initial conversation with new providers.

Camp providers will often offer a variety of camp experiences, from single-day experiences, overnight stays to multi-day camps. An extended experience will allow your students to become more comfortable with their surroundings and fully engage in the experience. A single-day experience is an excellent way to introduce your students to all camp has to offer.

Accommodation is another consideration. Tented accommodation offers an immersive experience, while

hard-top cabins provide comfort and less preparation. Perhaps a mix of both suits your objectives, giving your students a varied and memorable experience.

Is your camp's location important, remembering it will determine the distance you must travel? Consider how you will travel to your destination and what time you will need to leave school for arrival at the camp.

Most providers will offer a fully catered experience. Your provider may even provide an opportunity for students to get involved in the food-making process. With produce grown on-site or sourced locally, consider giving your students the hands-on experience of preparing some of their own meals.

▲ **An experienced camp provider will work closely with you and your school to achieve your ideal camp.**

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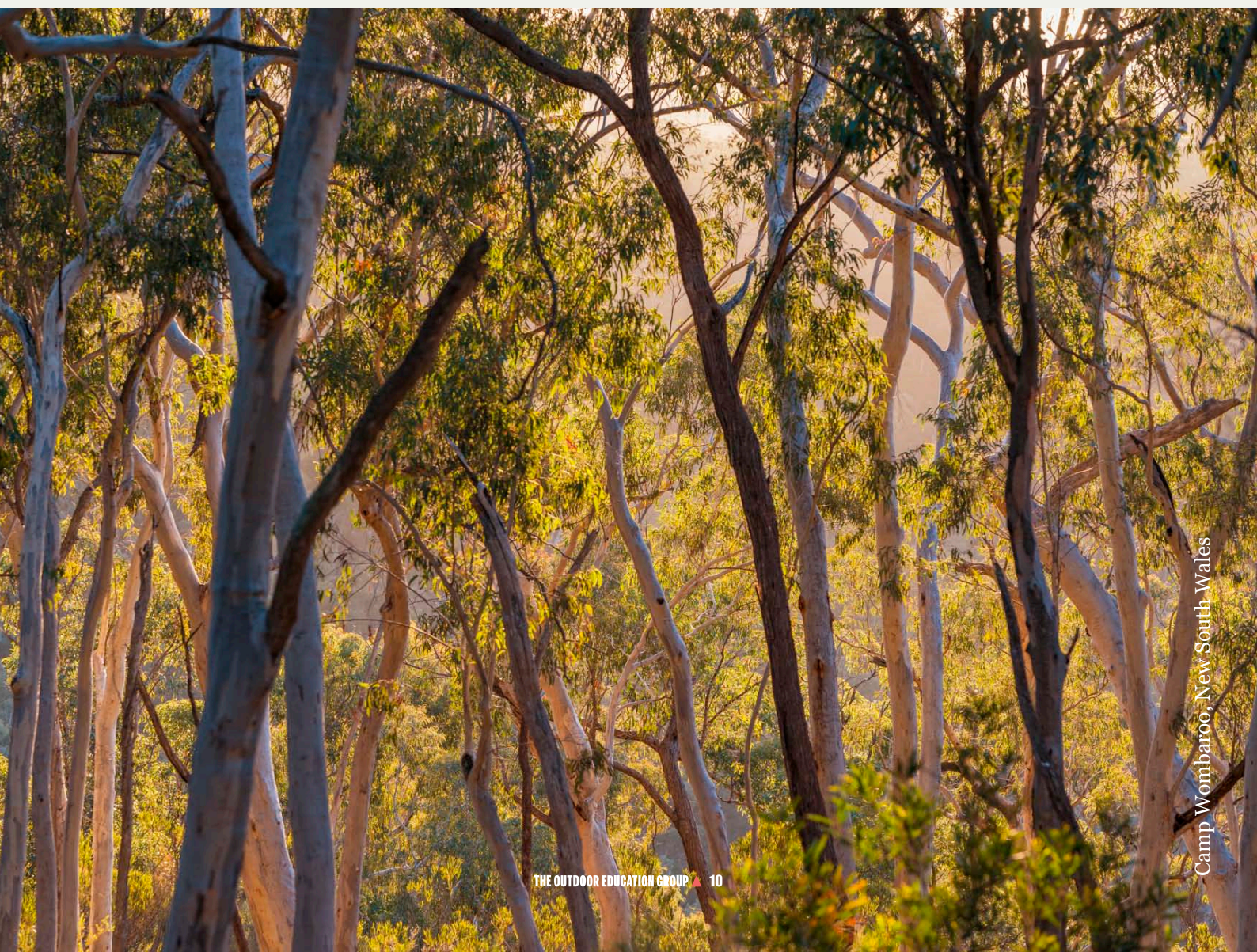
TAKE A TOUR

Consider booking a site tour. Many camp providers will even accommodate an on-site tour while another program is attending their camp to give you a better understanding of how your camp may run.

A tour will allow you to look over the accommodation, the dining facilities, the grounds and acquaint yourself with the site's activities. A tour also gives you the opportunity to meet some of the key staff.

It provides you with confidence in the knowledge you have selected a great venue that meets your needs, is safe and offers exciting opportunities for your students.

▲ If you aren't making the decision on your own, visiting the site with your team is an excellent opportunity to better inform your collective understanding.





Camp Fenniss, South Australia

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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

As chief liaison to your provider, it will be your responsibility to make sure your parent body, student body and other relevant school leaders are well prepared for the experience. A practised camp provider will be committed to ensuring you have all the right information for all parties involved.

Consider how you will disseminate relevant information to those who require it. Emails to parents are convenient as they can be comprehensive and used as a reference later. Remember to keep these lines of communication open, so parents know

where to go if they have questions. For extended programs, emails paired with parent briefings may be more effective in providing context. Briefings and emails are recommended internally; this will allow staff to familiarise themselves with the program and the organisation. Briefings with your student body are vital and provide a space for them to ask questions.

▲ This approach is designed to inform and alleviate concern in all parties and demystify the camp experience for students and your parent body.

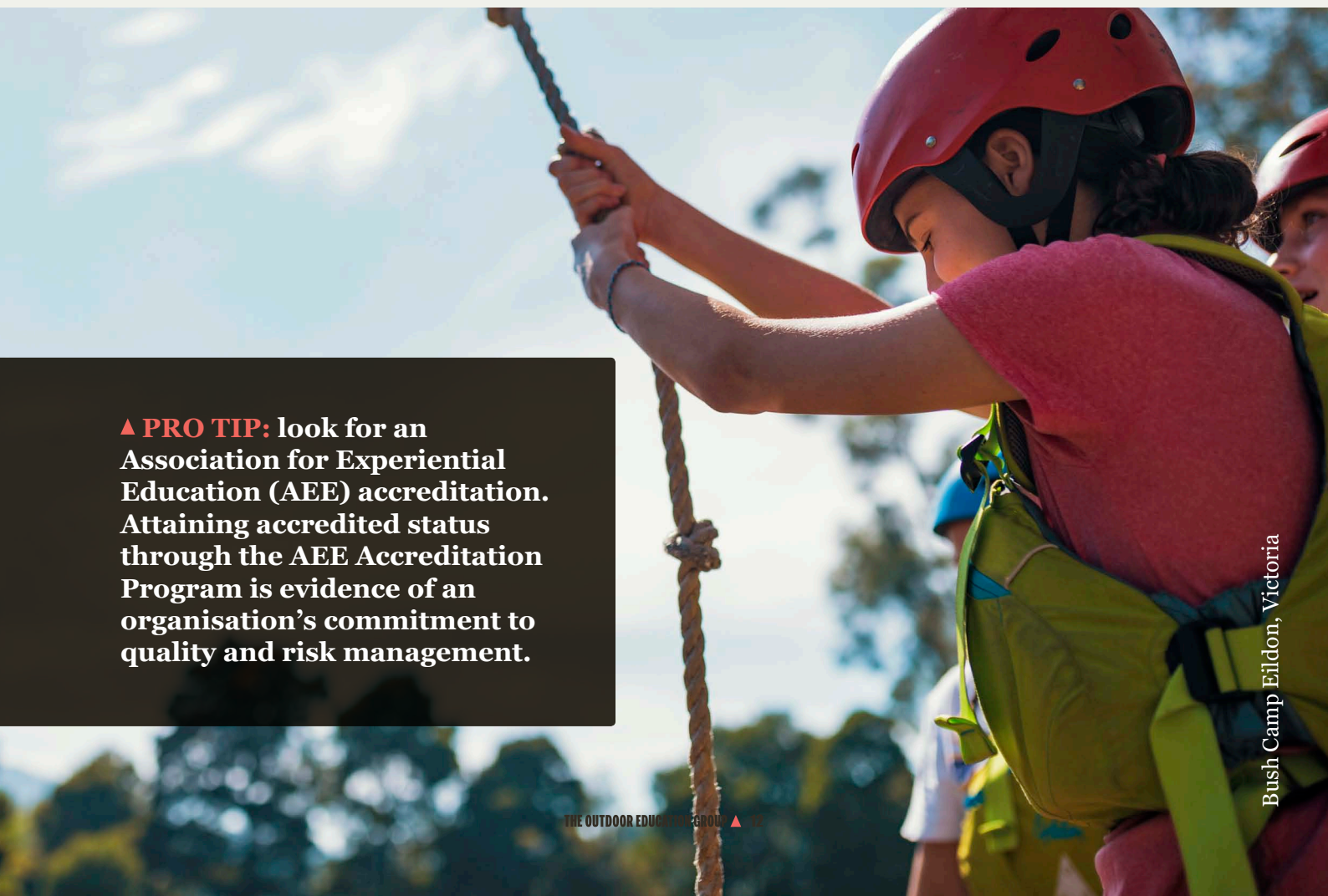
Your camp provider will work to ensure students are fully supported while on program. Student medical profiles should be collected for all clients and participants to ensure adequate support of participants on program and support informed consent in an instance requiring urgent medical attention.

Many camps will provide an on-site 24-hour contact person for your teachers and groups – they work to support the program’s staff and students. They monitor environmental conditions and liaise with the group twice a day. They provide support in the event of

medical needs and for those with pre-existing conditions or injuries needing medical attention – often transporting students along with a teacher to the local medical facility.

Camps should provide a Field Duty Manager who is on call 24-hours a day; this person monitors weather conditions, fire ratings and activities and provides support to all groups in the field at any given time. The Field Duty Manager coordinates any incident response needed and becomes the liaison with schools in more emergent situations – allowing staff on the ground to focus on those in their care.

▲ **PRO TIP:** look for an Association for Experiential Education (AEE) accreditation. Attaining accredited status through the AEE Accreditation Program is evidence of an organisation’s commitment to quality and risk management.





Bush Camp Margaret River, Western Australia

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PARTNER WITH THE EXPERTS

Partnering with an experienced provider means you will be supported every step of the way; they've developed programs and processes to make organising your school camp as easy as possible. Leave the finer details to the camp staff; they do this every day and can remove the burden of worrying about the ins and outs of your camp.

**THE
OUTDOOR
EDUCATION
GROUP** ▲

CONCLUSION

Organising a school camp can be a huge undertaking; no one knows this better than the experts who have supported more than 48,000 students in the field each year! That's why we have developed our ten expert tips to help you organise exceptional school camps.

Whether you are starting a school camp program at your school or wanting to enhance your current program, our expert

tips will ensure your students receive the impact and experience your school community needs without putting further time constraints on you.

By following these steps, no matter how big or small your group is and no matter their age, your school camp will be seamless, and you can rest easy knowing you've created a thoughtful and considered experience.

FIND THE RIGHT SCHOOL CAMP FOR YOU.



THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION GROUP

The Outdoor Education Group is a for-purpose organisation seeking to make learning outdoors accessible to all young Australians.

The Outdoor Education Group has been delivering outdoor education to Australian students for more than 36 years with camps in Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, and South Australia. We work with more than 48,000 students across the country each year to bring education outdoors and support them in becoming future-ready.

The Outdoor Education Group provide immersive and unforgettable camp experiences designed to introduce your students to new environments, new challenges, and new ways of thinking.



Camp Jungai, Victoria

YOUR CHECKLIST

We understand the strains and challenges involved in organising an outstanding school camp; that's why we've created a checklist for you to help you get started and make sure you and your school community get the most out of your camp experience.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> What do you want to achieve?
Map your aims and objectives. | <input type="checkbox"/> Consider your ideal camp
What does your ideal camp look like? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impact. Impact. Impact.
Allow your students to exercise what they have learnt. | <input type="checkbox"/> Take a tour
Request a tour of the site while another group is on program there. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Variety is the spice of education
Allow for varied activities and time for reflection. | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge is power
Consider how you will disseminate relevant information to all involved. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Look to the future
Consider an annual sequential program for greater student development. | <input type="checkbox"/> Take safety seriously
Ensure your provider has a focus on safety. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the teacher experience
Don't forget to provide a comfortable experience for your staff. | <input type="checkbox"/> Partner with the experts
Partner with a trusted provider who will support you every step of the way. |



Camp Marysville, Victoria

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1800 888 900**