

Outdoor Recreation And Outdoor Education, Parts Of A Bigger Whole. Outdoor Recreation (ORCA) And Outdoor Education (AOEC).

*Peter Martin
President
Australian Outdoor Education Council Inc.*

Over past weeks the executive of both the Outdoor Recreation Council of Australia (ORCA) and the Australian Outdoor Education Council (AOEC) have met to consider future directions within the industry and profession. A meeting in Melbourne in late December enabled the executives to acknowledge the similar goals and constitutional intents of the two bodies. As a consequence the ORCA and the AOEC have agreed to develop a closer working relationship to assist the achievement of common goals, including:

- Improved clients' access to quality experiences in the outdoors
- More informed cultural and environmental responsibility
- Professional enhancement of the broader industry/field

ORCA and the AOEC believe that a close working relationship will provide enhanced opportunities for:]

- improved services to members and clients
- networking
- access to funding bodies
- political "clout"

ORCA and the AOEC are establishing a number of strategies to ensure that the desired working relationship is achieved. One of the central issues in developing co-operation is the shared belief that professionalisation of the field will ensure improved quality of experience for both clients and providers in the field.

ORCA and the AOEC recognise that professionalisation is founded upon a number of

significant 'pillars' (As discussed in the last edition of the *VOEA Journey's*).

- a motive of service beyond self interest (A distinctive contribution to make to society. An ultimate good.)
- development of a specialised body of knowledge.
- a code of ethics.
- recognised educational pathway(s) which describe how members are admitted to, or join the profession.
- public recognition via social standing and remuneration.

ORCA and the AOEC agree that the way forward lies with acknowledging existing points of connection and disconnection and then determining what is appropriately shared professionalisation pathways and what is specific to each family member. It is to that end that this initial co-operative agreement is directed.

One of the key initial issues to be tackled is that of accreditation and the production of industry awards. ORCA has already commenced this process but has not incorporated provision for non competency based learning pathways – such as those developed outside the VET sector. Resolution of this and other pivotal issues will be tackled in the coming months in a lead up to the AOEC Summit in January 2001. The Summit is envisaged as the point at which many of the issues that have dogged the field over past years will be finally laid to rest with workable realistic solutions. I look forward to the challenges and outcomes.

Peter Martin