Editorial

Glyn Thomas

This edition of the Australian Journal of Outdoor Education (AJOE) provides a diverse range of articles from a mix of local and international authors. In my first edition as the sole editor, getting everything together has been a challenge but my colleagues at La Trobe University have provided valuable support and encouragement. A quick analysis of the latest subscription data reveals that that roughly 90% of the 700 people that receive the journal do so as part of their membership of a state outdoor recreation or outdoor education body. Hence, the journal provides authors with a great opportunity to share their research with practitioners from all over Australia. Whilst there will continue to be scope for occasional papers with a pure research focus, the Outdoor Council of Australia is committed to producing a research-based journal that informs, inspires and challenges outdoor education and outdoor recreation practitioners across Australia.

This particular edition includes five peer-reviewed articles, two non-reviewed articles, and one book review. The peer-reviewed section includes two more articles from last years International Outdoor Education Research Conference and three new papers from a range of international and Australian authors. The first article in this edition, by Anita Pryor, Cathryn Carpenter and Mardie Townsend, describes the potential role that outdoor education and bush adventure therapy can play in the promotion of health and wellbeing for both the general population, and also for individuals with identified health vulnerabilities. They propose, amongst other things, that healthy interactions with nature, can contribute to a unique stream of socio-ecological interventions.

Simon Beames, from the University of Edinburgh, presents more findings from his PhD study with 14 British youth involved in a 10 week expedition to Ghana with Raleigh International. Using a theoretical framework based on symbolic interactionism, Simon describes some of the changes reported by the participants. He also suggests how outdoor education programs can help participants to construct meaning and identity.

In the third paper, Zabe MacEachren from Queen's University, Ontario, Canada, challenges some of the practices of visual artists, and some uses of technology, when they do not promote a sense of oneness with the land. She goes on to explain how craft-making

encourages environmental well-being and why it is fundamental to outdoor education practice. As the author of the fourth article, I need to thank Peter Martin for assisting with the review process of my revised conference paper from the International Outdoor Education Research conference in Bendigo last year. My article presents the findings of an ongoing action research project exploring ways to resolve the apparent tension between using adventure activities and helping participants to learn about particular places in outdoor environmental education.

The final peer-reviewed paper in this edition is another revised conference paper from Kazushi Maeda from Hokkaido University of Education in Japan. Kazushi describes how a community based outdoor education program in Japan, grounded in the principles of life-environmentalism, addressed regional environmental problems whilst attending to local cultures.

In the non-reviewed section of the journal, John Dowd offers a perspective on some of the limitations of organized, outdoor leadership training. Tracey Dickson and Zoe Herbert describe how a particular organisation, Outward Bound Australia, have managed the challenges of integrating outdoor leadership training in the workplace. Finally, Alison Lugg reviews a new book called "Outdoor and Experiential Learning: An Holistic and Creative Approach to Programme Design."

In conclusion, thanks to all the authors and reviewers for their co-operation with managing tight timelines for reviews and paper revisions. As many of you may be aware, the Outdoor Council of Australia is hosting the next biennial outdoor education and outdoor recreation national conference, from the July 3-6, 2005, at the Gold Coast, Queensland. Full details of the conference are located on pages 48-49 of this journal. In synopsis, there is a range of well-credentialed keynote speakers and workshops to inspire, encourage and stimulate. Hope to see some of you at the conference.

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