Editorial

Robyn Zink

This issue of the *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education* explores three very different aspects of outdoor education. One of the things that binds the three articles together is that all focus on practice. The authors offer insights into how policies and social contexts affect practice, and give suggestions on how outdoor education practice can be strengthened.

Chris North and Chris Jansen explore their experience of implementing a five year sustainability strategic plan within the Outdoor and Environmental Education Curriculum Centre at the University of Canterbury in *Holding a sustainability bearing through cutty-grass and clearings*. In the midst of implementing their strategic plan the university went through a major re-structure which impacted on the programs they could offer and reduced the number of staff in their program. They describe this as feeling like a “mortal blow” at the time, but new opportunities did also emerge out of this restructure that they may have been slower to recognise had the restructure not occurred. This article offers insights into the complexity of holding a sustainability bearing in a tertiary education setting requiring the authors to remain alert to opportunities beyond their immediate program.

Michelle Wright and Tonia Gray examine how three women have managed to sustain long-term careers in outdoor education in *The hidden turmoil: Females achieving longevity in the outdoor learning profession*. The autobiographical approach the authors take provides nuanced descriptions of the motivations and challenges faced by the participants in building and sustaining a career in outdoor education. Burnout was experienced by all three at different points in their careers. The authors suggest that career longevity is more likely if an individual's personal philosophy aligns with organisational values, and therefore organisations should include staff in the process of developing those values.

In the third article in this issue, Tracey Dickson and Anne Terwiel look at supervision issues in *Supervising snowsport activities: A reflection upon legislation, policies, guidelines and practice*. They compare participation levels and injury rates in snowsports to a range of other sporting activities. Risk factors that contribute to injuries are identified. This is followed by detailed discussion of the legislation and policies that provide a framework which should influence practice of school-based snowsports programs. The authors then give some examples of practice. The first comes from data collected through a questionnaire

sent to teachers who manage on-snow programs. What emerged from this small study is that risk management strategies used by these teachers are multi-faceted involving a mix of skill development, peer-buddy systems, check in times, teacher supervision, area restrictions and communication strategies. The authors then provide a more detailed description of Jindbyne Central School where snowsports are an integral sporting activity. They too have a multi-faceted and integrated risk management system. As the authors note in this work, adequate supervision is much more than ensuring schools have appropriate ratios of teachers to students.

One of the books reviewed in this issue is on the subject of risk management. John Maxted reviews *Risk management in the outdoors: A whole-of-organisation approach* which is edited by Tracey Dickson and Tonia Gray. The second book review by Heidi Smith looks at *Controversial Issues in Adventure Programming* by Bruce Martin and Mark Wagstaff, which is an up-date on the 1999 book by Scott Wurdinger and Tom Potter, *Controversial Issues in Adventure Education: A Critical Examination*.

Once again a Master's thesis and a Ph.D thesis that examine outdoor education are profiled in this issue of AJOE.

I would like to thank the people that have contributed work to the *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education* and to those who have taken time to review articles. Without your on-going support it would not be possible to produce this journal.

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Editor