

Funds for Youth to get Outdoors!

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Outdoor education and recreation have a tremendous and essential role in achieving and maintaining physical and mental health, yet many of population are still yet to access and experience the benefits. Announced today, Outdoors NSW & ACT are one of the successful applicants of the Australian Government and NSW Government Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund which will get more youth into active recreation.

The funding will go towards connecting with 1,900 youth across Greater Sydney and Northern NSW with a variety of active recreation opportunities through a structured program and then celebrating their achievements on completion of the 8-week program with 4-day camp.

“The skills built in active recreation and the outdoors cannot be replicated elsewhere and it is so important that these opportunities are delivered to all youth in our communities regardless of barriers, so they have the opportunity to build skills of social capacity, resilience and mental health management.” Lori Modde, CEO of Outdoors NSW & ACT comments.

As has been demonstrated time and time again, the value of camp-based holiday programs for children and youth impacted by catastrophic circumstances is visible in their social, mental and resilience capacity. The experiences, memories, and friends made by attending these programs seems difficult to measure however, parents, participants, and staff who deliver these camps will observe how powerful an impact these projects make across the entire community.

However, what is more measurable is the long-term health outcomes and a multitude of studies show time spent in nature is consistently linked to well-being objectives. A 2018 paper by Marsden Jacob & Associates estimated \$508 million was saved in lifetime healthcare costs by people participating in outdoor pursuits in NSW alone. The Outdoor Youth Programs Research Alliance (OYPRA) reported from their nine-year study, the sharp rise in the youth anxiety and mental health challenges can be improved through participating in outdoor programs.

The youth that will partake in this program will be in some of the disadvantaged areas of Northern NSW & Greater Sydney and also affected by the 2019/2020 bushfires. Based on the highly successful ‘Drought Break’ program run by the Office of Sport under the Auspices of Regional NSW in December of 2018 and January 2019, Outdoors NSW & ACT in collaboration with their active recreation partners applied for close to \$600,000 to implement this Youth Recreation Resilience Program.

Partners involved in the project will include members of Outdoors NSW & ACT, Department of Education, Office of Sport NSW and non-government organisations working with the communities in question.

This is a Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund project through the joint Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding

Arrangements.

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