



20 December, 2010

The National Outdoor Leaders Registration Scheme (NOLRS): Current Status

Dear All

Members of the OCA Board recently attended the Outdoors WA Conference on Monday 13th December with a view to directly addressing concerns from the sector relating to the NOLRS. As we are very keen to collaborate with stakeholders, the Board took the opportunity to attend the conference in Western Australia in an effort to provide some clarity on the reasons for the current review of NOLRS and to assure people that the intention of the Board is not to drastically alter the NOLRS; rather to consider the rigour and system of the Scheme, and to identify ways to refine its administration. Unfortunately, due to some communication errors on our behalf, confusion as to the purpose and outcomes of the review has eventuated. We write to you again now, to provide further information.

As many of you are aware, the OCA Board initially moved to limit promotion of the NOLRS by removing information from the Outdoors WA and OCA web sites. This occurred when the Board became aware there was the possibility that some registrants may not have been assessed against the required competencies from the Outdoor Recreation Training Package – the benchmark of the NOLRS. It was not known how many registrants may have been affected and easy answers were not available. As a result the letter indicating 'restricted' registration was forwarded to all NOLRS registrants.

We understand that although we communicated this to the broad sector, not all registrant received this information and that the communication was not well constructed. As a result the Board's intentions were misinterpreted and/or sections of our communications were taken out of context. An example was that the term 'restricted' was **meant** to flag that the registrant could only operate at the registration level noted on their individual registration and not at higher levels. We attempted to have the status quo remain whilst investigating registration processes and compliance. In this instance the word 'restricted' was a poor choice and it was never the intent of the OCA to tell people that they were unable to function at the level at which they were currently operating. For that we apologise and understand that in the future we need to better communicate.

Having now undergone a level of review of current registrations, we are able to rescind the previous communication and let you know that the current status for NOLRS registrants (with the exception of 3 people), are immediately returned to their previous status with the 'restricted' descriptor totally annulled. The 3 people concerned have been directly contacted by Outdoors WA and a process to ensure their registration is being developed.

Further, we wish to advise that the Board of the OCA recognise that Partnered Assessment Providers (PAPs) may require some additional support and information as part of the NOLRS. The next step in achieving this will be the development of better administration and auditing processes so the PAPs can confidently deliver their assessment service to our industry sector.

Finally, we wish to thank you for your patience over the last few months. At all times, the OCA Board has been keen to enhance the NOLRS, not detract from its service. Our intention is to support NOLRS to be a national, effective registration scheme that provides outdoor leaders with the

opportunity to demonstrate not only their skills and knowledge, but the currency of their capacities. Please note, the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme is about registration. It is not a training scheme, nor a source of accreditation; from the perspective of the OCA, it is not compulsory and it does not provide a curriculum. Rather it is a mechanism to enable people in our sector to have their skills, qualifications and experience recognised through one scheme, allowing those who are interested to demonstrate their ongoing capacities to work in the field of outdoor recreation/ education.

In the next few months, the administration of the NOLRS will transfer from Outdoors WA to another administrator. Whilst this process is being determined, Outdoors WA has kindly volunteered to continue to process re-registrations; and new registrations will be dealt with by a panel of experts nationally. Submission of all registration documentation for now will continue through Outdoors WA. During this time, we will also be working to streamline some of the paperwork and documents for NOLRS, to hopefully make the system more user-friendly.

Again, thank you for your time and interest. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'DP', on a light blue background.

David Petherick

President of the OCA Board