



Thursday, 2 December 2010

To: NOLRS Stakeholders

OCA – NOLRS and issues:

In recent weeks there have been a range of discussions regarding the OCA Board's decision to review the NOLRS system and administration, and the NOLRS subsequent withdrawal from active promotion. Whilst healthy discussion is valuable to draw out the range of perspectives that exist around NOLRS, it is also important to locate that discussion in context and intent.

Bearing that in mind, the following information is designed to try and clarify some of the thinking behind the Board's decision and to explain the seeming lack of clarity and recognition that some NOLRS registrants and PAP's are experiencing.

To preface this, it is worthwhile pointing out that NOLRS is not closing down or being radically altered. Rather, the intention of the review is to examine the administration and paperwork requirements of NOLRS, see if we can streamline some processes, and assure all of us of the rigour and merit of the system. This may mean some changes, but it does not mean that the registration process is going to cease or that current registrations need to alter. While previously we have highlighted that all NOLRS registrations should be considered 'restricted' we hope to rectify that statement before the end of the year as more detailed information is provided to us that clarifies the registration decisions that have been made.

Further, we believe it is important to redirect some criticisms and assumptions that have been promoted. In particular we draw your attention to the fact that it has *always* been the intention of the OCA board to align the registration process with the National Training Package as this is a nationally reviewed system. A review of minutes from OCA Board meetings from 2007 onwards reaffirms this point.

More specifically regarding NOLRS version 2, the intent of the rewrite was to use the National Training Package as a benchmark to describe the necessary skills and knowledge and how these can best be verified as part of the registration process. One of the major reasons for the review was to rewrite the language in 'non VET' jargon, but the intention was never to move away from using the competencies as the benchmark.

Unfortunately, over time small, yet subtle changes to the language of the NOLRS documents led this intention to be diverted, resulting in some people believing NOLRS was a stand-alone system with independent 'skill sets' unrelated to the training package. Whilst this might be desirable for some, it is also problematic for management of a scheme which needs to have very clear parameters for registration in order to be nationally meaningful.

More expansively, it is also worth bearing in mind what the NOLRS is. Most completely the NOLRS is a National *Registration* Scheme, not an assessment or training scheme.

It is not the intention or the desire of the board of the Outdoor Council of Australia to create stress for registrants or PAP's, nor diminish the NOLRS. Indeed this should be a flagship of the sector. However, due to a lack of available information and assurance, combined with some expressed concerns regarding the viability and growth of the Scheme, action needed to be taken. This resulted in the Board believing it was necessary to respond to concerns regarding some registrations, resulting in the overarching decision to mark all Registrants "Restricted"

Please note: Restricted was the word chosen to "Flag" there may be issues with *some* people's registration depending upon the avenue by which their registration was obtained.

Whilst this action has created concern, the OCA Board acted to create some parameters on registration until such time as information on how people were registered was received. This led to a ruling for everyone. Once additional information is provided to the OCA Board, this avenue will be refined and a limited number of people may be 'restricted' until either they re-register, or can gap fill their skills appropriately.

From this situation however, there is a need to move forward and re-establish the NOLRS as a national system. To do this, the Board are acting to:

1. Determine a handover process from the current administrator Outdoors WA, to ensure accurate management of existing and forthcoming registrations;
2. Continue to seek further information on registrations, and listen to industry concerns;
3. Work with Outdoors WA to access all documentation relating to the NOLRS for review. Only once this is done can the OCA Board make realistic decisions on the registrants under the NOLRS;
4. Identify a new Administrator and administration process.

We seek your patience and understanding as the review and changes are made but appreciate your concerns. Hopefully we can resolve these and expand the scope of the NOLRS to be truly national.

Regards,

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

David Petherick
OCA President