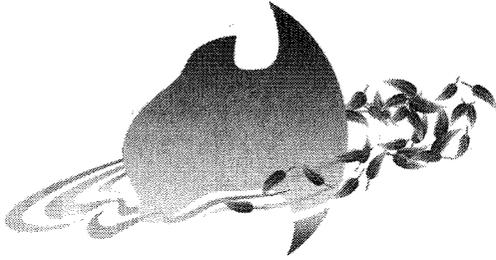


Submission No. 29
(Inq into Obesity)
/E 21/05/08



Outdoor Council of Australia

**Submission from the
Outdoor Council of Australia Inc.
to the
Inquiry into Obesity in Australia**

*OCA Vision:
To develop and promote a professional community that provides quality outdoor
experiences*

May 2008

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16th May 2008

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1. Executive Summary

There is considerable evidence-based research which recognises the ways in which outdoor recreation activities contribute to the following areas:

- Health (physical, social, psychological, quality of life);
- Personal and group development;
- Environmental awareness;
- Healthy families and communities, social capital; and
- Local and district economy.

The main benefits of outdoor recreation activities, as shown in the evidence-based literature, include interpersonal and intrapersonal skills developed through engaging in outdoor recreation activities in meaningful ways. Benefits are evident in the psycho-social, psychological, physical and spiritual domains, particularly with regards to developing self efficacy, intellectual flexibility, personal skills, and relationship building. Particularly relevant to this submission and the Standing Committee's Terms of Reference is the strong evidence of the contribution of outdoor recreation activities to personal health and wellbeing.

A proactive approach is required to address obesity in Australia. Encouraging greater participation in physically active activities is one strategy. Of all the types of time in an individual's day, leisure-time has the greatest scope for increasing the health promoting levels of physical activity. However, the benefits of participating in physical activities, in particular outdoor recreation activities, is dependent upon the provision of appropriate infrastructure and removal or minimisation of other constraints. Going hand in glove with this is the need to better understand motivations behind participation and the necessary facilitators, such as social support systems.

Increased participation in outdoor recreation activities has the potential to not only decrease obesity in Australia but also to improve mental health and well-being. However, a broader approach needs to be taken, with a focus not only on raising awareness but also of improving access to places and programs where physical activity can occur and building the social environments to address constraints. A holistic, cross Government, rather than a piece-meal approach, is required. A greater emphasis on supporting non competitive, unstructured physical activity is necessary as the data suggests that this is where the highest participation in physical activity is likely to occur.

2. What is the Outdoor Council of Australia?

The Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA) is an incorporated, not-for-profit association which acts as the peak body for the outdoor industry in Australia. Membership of OCA is primarily through state and territory peak industry bodies and national organisations. This membership structure enables a process where the states/territories can participate in the discussion of national issues and provide conduits for information to flow through the OCA network to industry members at the state and local level. OCA in its role as the peak body for the outdoors, represents all organisations and individuals that use outdoor recreation activities for the purpose of:

- Recreation
- Education
- Tourism
- Personal development
- Corporate development

Hence, OCA's membership and coverage (both through direct membership and through its state/territory peak body members) includes national activity associations, commercial outdoor enterprises, not-for-profit church and community based clubs and associations (eg, Scouts, Christian Camping International) and other organisations such as schools and universities which conduct outdoor education. Further, OCA represents the guides, instructors, volunteer leaders, outdoor education teachers and adventure therapists associated with all of these enterprises and organisations.

The objectives of the Outdoor Council of Australia cover the broad areas of:

- *Representation* - To represent the views and needs of members to the community, industries and all levels of government and to facilitate communication between outdoor educators, leaders and guides, and between these stakeholders and external interest groups
- *Advocacy* - To develop policies, strategies and actions on key issues affecting the outdoor community and to work with government to develop policies, strategies and actions that support and encourage Outdoor Recreation and Outdoor Education
- *Resource Management* - To promote a philosophy and practice of sustainable environmental living, conservation and positive attitudes towards the use of the natural environment and to encourage planning and management for ecologically sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Outdoor Education
- *Quality* - To encourage organisational development within the outdoor community to enhance the delivery of services that are appropriate, ecologically sustainable, equitable and of a high standard and to promote safe and quality outdoor experiences. In addition, to promote best practices in standards and quality of leadership and instruction through the support of quality education and training
- *Research* - To assist the advancement of research within the outdoor community in order to provide accurate information to all stakeholders that will promote best practice in outdoor leadership and enhance community awareness and understanding.

Table 1: Stakeholders that OCA seeks to represent in the outdoor industry

1. National Activity Associations

Australian National Four Wheel Drive Council	Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Inc
Bicycle Federation of Australia	Dual Sport Motor Rider's Association
Bicycle Motocross Australia Inc	Motorcycling Australia
Mountain Bike Australia	Orienteering Australia
Bushwalking Australia Inc	Australian Rogaining Association
Australian Speleological Federation	Sports Shooters Association of Australia
Australian Climbing Instructors Association	National Skateboarders Association of Australia
Challenge Ropes Course Network	Skate Australia
Sport Climbing Australia	Australian Professional Snowsport Instructors Inc
Australian National Sportfishing Association	Ski & Snowboard Australia
Australian Kite Flyers Society	Australian Canoeing
Australian Parachuting Federation	Australasian Jet Sports Boating Association (AJSBA)
Gliding Federation of Australia	Australian Rafting Federation
Hang Gliding Federation of Australia	Australian Water Ski and Wakeboard Federation
Association for Horsemanship Safety & Education	Australian Windsurfing
Australian Endurance Riders Association	Surf Schools Association of Australia
Australian Horse Industry Council	Surfing Australia
Australian Trail Horse Riders Assoc	Yachting Australia
Australian Quarter Horse Association	Australian Underwater Federation

2. National Church-related Organisations offering outdoor activities

Adventist Outdoors	Royal Rangers
Girls Brigade	Youth for Christ Australia
Boy's Brigade Australia	Scripture Union Australia
CEBS - The Anglican Boys Society	

3. National Community or Youth Organisations offering outdoor activities

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme	YMCA Australia
Australian Youth Affairs Coalition	Scouts Australia
Guides Australia	

4. National significant providers of outdoor activities or services

Outdoor Education Group	Army Adventurous Training Wing
Outward Bound Australia	Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI)
Wilderness Medical Institute	Scuba School International Pty Ltd
Professional Association of Climbing Instructors (PACI)	

5. National Retailers (example only)

Paddy Pallin	Mountain Designs
Kathmandu	Anaconda
Snowgum	

6. Miscellaneous

Service Skills Australia	Christian Camping International Australia
Australian Council for Health, Physical Education, & Recreation Inc (ACHPER)	Parks and Leisure Australia
Australian Camps Association Inc	Bush Adventure Therapy Network (BATNet)

7. State outdoor recreation/education peak bodies

Outdoor Recreation Industry Council NSW ORIC)	Outdoor Recreation Centre, Victoria
Tasmanian Outdoor Recreation Council (TasORC)	Outdoor Educator's Association of Qld (OEAQ)
Northern Territory Outdoor Recreation Council (NTORC)	Victorian Outdoor Education Association (VOEA)
Recreation SA (RecSA)	Outdoor Education Association of SA (OEASA)
Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF)	Tasmanian Outdoor Education Teacher's Association
Outdoors WA	

3. Some Current Issues within the Outdoor Industry

Through consultation with a variety of different stakeholders, the OCA has been able to clearly identify the issues impacting upon its membership and the broader outdoor industry. Some of these issues relevant to the *Inquiry into Obesity in Australia* are detailed below and addressed more comprehensively in later sections of this submission:

- Lack of comprehensive data that accurately represents the *amount of participation in non-competitive outdoor activity* (both structured through clubs and community organisations and unstructured, independent participation), resulting in a lack of recognition of the specific social, economic and health *benefits of outdoor activity*;
- Due to a lack of data on participation rates in outdoor activities as well as suitable, comparative data on accidents/incidents associated with those activities, many *insurers* perceive most outdoor activities as “high risk” and continue to be either unwilling to take on the risk or do so at very high premiums;
- Inadequate research to clearly identify the environmental impact of each different activity results in restricted access based on non-scientific or illogical arguments. This is coupled with a lack of appreciation of and provision for a *‘hierarchy’ of settings* (from urban to remote) suited to different activities and different participant needs;
- Lack of understanding of the different outdoor activities and the different disciplines within each activity, resulting in *inadequate planning and poor provision* of trails and facilities to meet needs, particularly for ‘hard to locate’ activities such as downhill mountain biking and trail-bike riding;
- Whilst OCA and its state/territory and national members provide a structural framework for networking, there is an inherent desire by many involved in appreciation of the outdoors to choose not be part of organisations and clubs, thereby presenting a *communication barrier* to a large number of “end-users”;
- *Poor profile* and lack of understanding of some activities resulting in poor media coverage, no media coverage, an inability to attract participants and/or sponsorship;
- The limitations exerted by a large volunteer membership are exacerbated by the *limited financial assistance* provided both at the state and national level to most of the state and national outdoor peak organisations. For example, no Federal Government agency recognises “outdoor recreation” and “outdoor education” within its core business and as a consequence, OCA and numerous national activity organisations (eg, Bushwalking Australia) are ineligible for operational funding whilst counterpart organisations within the sporting community receive considerable financial support.

4. Benefits of Outdoor Recreation Activities

The OCA and its members recognise the value of outdoor recreation activities and the associated benefits of participation. The industry is aware of its links (and benefits) to health, education, tourism, youth, community and personal development. Evidence-based research recognises the ways in which outdoor recreation activities contribute:

- Health (physical, social, psychological, quality of life);
- Personal and group development;
- Environmental awareness;
- Healthy families and communities, social capital; and
- Local and district economy.

Research into the benefits of outdoor recreation activities highlights the valuable contribution they make to personal health and wellbeing. As the empirical and anecdotal evidence in the outdoor recreation field begins to unfold, the proliferation of evidenced-based research grows exponentially. Outdoor recreation activities provide opportunities for the connection of individuals with nature (the natural environment), direct connection with other people (interpersonal), and importantly, with themselves (personal). The main benefits of outdoor recreation activities, as shown in the evidence-based literature, include interpersonal and intrapersonal skills developed through engaging in outdoor adventure activities in meaningful ways. Benefits are evident in the psycho-social, psychological, physical and spiritual domains, particularly with regards to developing self efficacy, intellectual flexibility, personal skills, and relationship building. The benefits that result from participating in outdoor recreation activities are facilitated through the provision of appropriate facilities and natural resources and well as the design of programs that are intentionally working towards particular objectives.

While participation in outdoor recreation activities is not the panacea for social and environmental ills, the growing body of research into the benefits of engagement in outdoor recreation activities (and into the programs and methods used) points towards multiple benefits for people, their connection with others and with nature. There have been a variety of models/frameworks used to analyse benefits of outdoor and adventure activities. These recent models as presented in Stiehl and Parker¹ have been summarised in Tables 2-5 over the page.

¹ Stiehl, J., & Parker, M. (2007). Individual outcomes of participating in adventure. In D. Prouty, J. Panicucci & R. Collinson (Eds.), *Adventure Education: Theory and applications* (pp. 63-76). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Table 2 Benefits of Outdoor Adventure (Darst & Armstrong, 1980)²

Dimension	Benefit
Personal	New experience – adds a kick to participants' lives, allows them to experience something
	High-risk experience – facing perceived danger may help participants overcome fears, gain self-confidence, and enhance their ability to cope
	Escape – offers release from the tensions and complexities of modern life
	Success – allows participants to achieve a highly personal sense of accomplishment
	Knowledge – participants learn more about themselves and the environment
	Physical fitness – physical activity can help burn calories and increase strength, stamina, and flexibility
Economic	Minimal financial investment – provides interesting and pleasant activities at a reasonable cost
Social-psychological	Socializing – provides a chance to meet others who have similar interests
	Unity – promotes cohesiveness and doing things together without the distractions of everyday life
	Cooperation and trust – promotes better relationships through cooperation, appreciation of others, compassion and respect
	Nature and outdoors – promotes aesthetics appreciation for nature and concern for vanishing wild places

Table 3 Benefits of Outdoor Adventure (Ewert, 1989)³

Dimension	Benefit
Psychological	Benefits on a personal (versus group) basis: Self concept (enhanced or strengthened view), self-efficacy (self-confidence), self-actualisation (well-being, improved self-expression, feelings of psychological health)
Sociological	Compassion, cooperation, respect for others, communication
Educational	Improved academic abilities, awareness of nature and the environment, problem solving, outdoor skills, values clarification
Physical	Strength, co-ordination, balance, cardiovascular endurance

Table 4 Goals and Benefits of Outdoor Adventure (Webb, 1999)⁴

Dimension	Benefit
Recreational	Enjoyment, relaxation, entertainment, excitement, catharsis, self-expression
Skill	Goal setting, decision making, problem solving, responsibility, physical development, nature awareness, communication, leadership
Character	Independence, interdependence, self-efficacy, willingness to take risks, tolerance, respect, trust, compassion

Table 5 Benefits of Camping (American Camp Association, 2005)⁵

Dimension	Benefit
Positive identity	To the participant: e.g. self-esteem, determination, dependability, ambition, independence
Social skills	Beyond the individual: group bonding, cooperation, conflict resolution, appreciation of differences, leadership, community, connected to others
Physical and thinking skills	Activity skills, psychomotor and technical skills; physiological benefits of physical activity Thinking skills: knowledge of safety measures, planning, problem solving, environmental awareness
Positive values and spirituality	Acquiring and strengthening virtue; selflessness, compassion, keeping commitments, fulfilling obligations, self-discipline, honesty ... Connection to earth, others and even a higher power

² Darst, P. W., & Armstrong, G. P. (1980). *Outdoor adventure activities for school and recreation programs*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.

³ Ewert, A. W. (1989). *Outdoor Adventure Pursuits: Foundations, models, and theories*. Scottsdale, AZ: publishing Horizons, Inc.

⁴ Webb, D. J. (1999). Recreational outdoor adventure programs. In J. C. Miles & S. Priest (Eds.), *Adventure programming*. State College, PA: Venture.

⁵ American Camp Association. (2005). *Directions: Youth Development Outcomes of the Camp Experience*. Martinsville: American Camp Association.

4.1 Health Benefits of Outdoor Recreation Activities

The second review of literature on public health and physical activity⁶ emphasises the epidemiological evidence that physical activity has a positive impact upon health in the areas of cardiovascular disease, cancer prevention, diabetes, and mental health. Particular activities that were noted included cycling and moderate to brisk walking. A review of research from 1999 was conducted to explore what interventions were effective in increasing physical activity. The most effective model appeared to be a community-wide, 'environmental and policy' approach that included:

- raising awareness;
- improving self-efficacy; and
- improving access to places and programs where physical activity could occur.

A multi pronged approach, rather than isolated attention on individual areas (eg. awareness raising, provision of places or infrastructure) is needed to improve participation in outdoor recreation activities to reduce obesity.

4.1.1 Relationship of leisure and health benefits

Of all the types of time in an individual's day, leisure-time has the greatest scope for increasing the health promoting levels of physical activity. Health promotion and health research literature often includes physical activity in the out-of-doors as beneficial for an individual's overall health and wellbeing, in particular for physical and mental health. Research in this area has found that better health is achieved when more varied physical activities are included, and when a broader social network is involved⁷ (Giles-Corti & Donovan, 2003). Giles-Corti and Donovan concluded that walking was a popular leisure activity (68.5% of participants walked for recreation) and that those who participate in a wider variety of physical activities are more likely to achieve the recommended levels of physical activity for optimal health than those who don't. The study provided empirical evidence to support the higher likelihood of achieving recommended levels of walking in those with a positive attitude towards being physically active, as well as in those who exercised with a number of significant others (the odds increasing with the number of significant others increasing), and those who lived in a physical environment conducive to walking. Vaughan et al⁸ assessed the physical activity behaviours of adults living in rural areas in the south-east of South Australia. Leisure-time physical activity was seen as having the greatest potential for improvements at a population level.

⁶ Bull, F. C., Bauman, A. E., Bellew, B., & Brown, W. (2004). *Getting Australia Active II: An update of evidence on physical activity for health*. Melbourne, Australia.: National Public Health Partnership

⁷ Giles-Corti, B., & Donovan, R. J. (2003). Relative influences of individual, social environmental, and physical environmental correlates of walking.(Author Abstract). *The American Journal of Public Health*, 93(9), 1583-1589

⁸ Vaughan, C., Kilkinen, A., Philpot, B., Brooks, J., Schoo, A., Laatikainen, T., et al. (2008). Physical activity behaviours of adults in the Greater Green Triangle region of rural Australia.(Author abstract)(Report)(Survey). *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 16(2), 92-99

4.1.2 Relationship of facilities/infrastructure and health benefits

The benefits of participating in physical activities, in particular outdoor activities, is dependent upon the provision of appropriate infrastructure. In the context of leisure planning, Aldous⁹ (2006) noted that there was a broadening appreciation of the connection humans have with nature and the very need to have 'green spaces' in urban areas 'that not only feeds and enhances our physical bodies but one that also soothes and replenishes the minds and spirits of people' (Aldous, 2006, p. 8). The theme of infrastructure provision is further developed by Crilley¹⁰ (2007) who sought to understand the important attributes of trails, from a users perspective, as indicated by 35 attendees at a parks and leisure conference. The top five trail attributes were:

- the trail should be safe;
- easily accessible;
- have adequate signage along the trail;
- well-maintained surface; and
- the trail should be appropriately managed.

Provision of social and physical environments conducive to participation in outdoor recreation activities is required if the incidence of obesity is to be reduced.

⁹ Aldous, D. (2006). The benefits of green space: greening our cities and surrounds. *Australasian Parks and Leisure, Summer*, 6-8

¹⁰ Crilley, G. (2007). Walking a shared path: what track and trail users and managers want to share. *Australasian Parks & Leisure*, 10(1), 9

5. Participation in Outdoor Recreation Activities

There are challenges in the collection, analysis and presentation of statistical data relating to outdoor recreation activities. Unfortunately neither the Australian Bureau of Statistics data (eg. the General Social Survey for 2001-2002 of *Participation in Sport and Physical Activities*) nor the Australian Sports Commission data (*Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey Annual Report* or ERASS) provide sufficient differentiation of participation in competitive versus non-competitive activities (eg. 'cycling' includes competitive and recreational riding and riding of all types of bikes including BMX and mountain bikes). At the broadest level, the diverse yet often related nature of the pursuits undertaken and the ranges of motivations of the participants (eg. competitive, non-competitive, goal-focused) represent a particularly difficult sampling environment. Ideally, the data should differentiate between different disciplines within an activity (eg. cycling for competitive purposes within facilities, versus recreational cycling on urban cycleways versus competitive and non-competitive down hill mountain biking; bushwalking on graded tracks in national parks versus road walking in urban areas).

Recent data suggests that participation in non competitive, unstructured outdoor recreation activities exceeds participation in major team sports. In the ERASS for 2006 the most popular activities overall were walking (6,001,700), aerobics/fitness (3,161,300), swimming (2,256,900) and cycling (1,682,800). Of all activities (by number of participants), bushwalking, with 774,000 participants, was ranked eighth, ahead of major team sports such as soccer/football (697,400), netball (593,900), rugby league (209,800), and rugby union (165,300).

Whilst data suggests that the population's preference for participation in physical activities is in non competitive, unstructured outdoor recreation activities, considerably more financial and human resources are allocated to promoting and developing competitive, structured activities. A significant 'rethink' needs to occur.

6. Constraints to Participation in Outdoor Recreation Activities

6.1 Facilitators and constraints to participation

If the health and other benefits of participation in outdoor recreation activities are as well known as detailed earlier in this submission, what is limiting participation? Understanding of the constraints provides solutions to encourage greater physical activity in the out-of doors.

Leisure research¹¹ provides some insight into the barriers people may face when seeking to participate in physical activity. The five broad categories of barriers or constraints commonly identified in leisure research are:

- * the costs of participating in leisure activities;
- * lack of time and/or the pressure of other commitments;
- * inadequate or inaccessible facilities;
- * isolation (including social isolation and geographical isolation); and
- * lack of skills and abilities

Conversely, research on facilitators of participation indicated that 'the participation of friends, encouragement from friends, and the sharing of successful physical activity experiences of others are related to participation in physical activity of females adolescents'¹². Also important in adolescent participation is the involvement and role modelling of parents with their children. Structural facilitators of activity include the availability and accessibility of facilities, built and natural, as well as the social and cultural environment and how that supports physical activity by all. Facilitators are more than motivations, they are the condition that exists, not the process by which that condition changes behaviour.

There is therefore a need for an integrated or holistic approach to participation, with strategies needing to address both facilitators and constraints.

¹¹ Hinch, T., Jackson, E. L., Hudson, S., & Walker, G. (2005). Leisure constraint theory and sport tourism. *Sport in Society*, 8(2), 142 -163

¹² Raymore, L. A. (2002). Facilitators to leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 34(1), 37-51

6.2 Participation versus 'demand'

Another aspect of participation that should be considered particularly in regard to accessibility and constraints is 'demand'. Warmbrunn¹³ (1994) identified five types of 'demand':

Effective (existing, expressed, participation or consumption)	Indicates what currently exists, and is simply a measure of use for any particular resource in a set period.
Latent	Demand which exists, but for one reason or another has been constrained. This demand which is not effective but would be so if circumstances changes. This type of demand is usually constrained by the lack of facilities, opportunity, or other variables which affect participation.
Induced	Demand which has been stimulated by the provision of further facilities, converting a latent demand into an effective or expressed demand.
Diverted	Demand for a certain type of facility which is diverted from one source of supply to another by the provision of a new supply.
Substitute	The shift in participation to other forms of recreational activity because of the provision of facilities for different purposes.

Warmbrunn identified and cited a number of difficulties in obtaining true and relevant 'demand' information including:

- the difficulty in extrapolation from 'participation' (ie. consumption) data to requirement (demand) information;
- the inappropriate extrapolation of survey information collected at, or in association with, a recreation facility;
- the inadequate definition of terms, such as "bushwalking", resulting in an inability to define the actual biophysical setting and recreational infrastructure that is used;
- an under-sampling of participants, both quantitative and temporal;
- the use of activity categories that are too broad for interpretation;
- responses and recreational behaviour influenced by a lack of knowledge of supply;
- a lack of dynamic analytical models that allow assessments to respond to different scenarios in relation to available opportunities and changing population characteristics; and
- the influence of external lifestyle and socio-economic forces.

There is therefore a need for more concise data on consumption, demand and preferences for outdoor recreation opportunities.

¹³ Warmbrunn, A. (1994) *Planning for Trails. The nature of trails and their relationship to regional open space*. Unpublished thesis, School of Planning, Landscape Architecture and Surveying, Queensland University of Technology.

6.3 Participation Data collection

Furthermore, it would be beneficial if there was greater consistency in definitions associated with the collection of outdoor recreation participation data. Greater consistency could be achieved with:

- an agreed definition of outdoor recreation (including disciplines within activities);
- consistent definitions of outdoor recreation “participation”; and
- a uniform definition of age classes (based on those used by the ABS).

Preferably, consistency should be achieved through a national approach for example, through the Sport and Recreation Ministers’ Council (SRMC) and the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport Research Group. Nationally, lobbying should be undertaken to recommend the collection of data in varying sub categories of classifications used by the ABS to enable aggregation and disaggregation to specific outdoor recreation activity and discipline levels.

In addition to clarification of definitions, wherever possible, surveys developed to determine demand for a specific purpose or activity (eg. use of bikeways for commuting) should be expanded to provide data on recreational usage.

Future outdoor adventure activity participation and/or user surveys could be further enhanced through:

- differentiation of data from interstate and local residents as well as Australian and international tourists;
- more comprehensive investigation of usage preferences (eg. short walks, day walks, overnight walks);
- focused surveys of participants in outdoor recreation specific activities as well as random polls to obtain comprehensive data on participation and demand.

6.4 Accessibility

With the changes of population growth and settlement, coupled with the information on age based activity preferences, there are significant implications and challenges for the provision of recreation opportunities and infrastructure. The change in percentages of each age class with a predominantly ‘ageing’ population in some local government areas, coupled with the adventure activity preferences of those different age classes (and the possibility of new preference patterns emerging) as well as an increasing emphasis on a “fit and active lifestyle” suggests that considerable planning effort needs to be expended on the provision of facilities to meet the changing demands of the future residents. Analysis of current data¹⁴ shows that there will be increased demand for access to both urban and natural areas for walking and cycling with the ageing population, and the need for consideration of safety aspects associated with those activities, such as lighting, footpaths, etc. An emerging challenge is addressing the requirements of the aging society as well as the new recreational demands of the younger sections of society within the already limited area of publicly accessible land that is available for use, in a practical rather than theoretical way, by a wide range of outdoor adventure pursuits. In particular, the emerging needs of mountain bike

¹⁴ Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (2006). *Review of Recreation Participation and Demand Studies for Trail-based Recreation Activities*. Qld Department of Infrastructure and Planning

riders should be addressed as a matter of priority with the rapidly increasing mountain bike sales and usage.

There are also challenges in providing the social and operational setting that will be required as issues of ageing, fuel costs and transport congestion change behaviour patterns. Group activities based on public or organised transport may increase, yet the present administrative restrictions on group activities (eg. in terms of size limitations on permits for National Parks) will act against these socially desirable trends.

There is a need for better planning of infrastructure needs associated with outdoor recreation participation, how those needs are changing, and how they will be met in the present and future.

6.5 Profile of the outdoor industry

Whilst there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that participation in non-competitive outdoor adventure, or outdoor recreation greatly exceeds participation in structured competition, support at both a State and National level to encourage industry, peak and community associations to provide better services to support non-competitive active recreation is almost non-existent. A review of the organisations listed in Table 1, which provide support for much of the 'organised' outdoor recreation activity in Australia, would reveal that few receive any financial assistance to support them in this specific role. (Note: some organisations, such as Australian Canoeing and Yachting Australia, receive financial assistance because of their role in the provision of sporting activities at the elite level). As suggested by the partially complete data accessed by the OCA on membership of these organisations (Table 6), the role played by these organisations in the provision of outdoor activity is potentially significant.

However, the capacity of these organisations to further promote their beneficial activities is severely constrained because of the lack of financial assistance provided to them, resulting in primarily volunteer-run organisations. Compared with National Sport Organisations, few of these national activity associations would have employees.

Until both State and Federal Governments change their focus (and their allocation of funding) to a more equitable distribution across sport AND non-competitive active recreation, the capacity of this sector to provide both information and services will remain severely constrained.

Table 6: Indicative “Organised” Outdoor Activity participation in Australia

i) Individual outdoor activity participants

Bicycle Federation of Australia	People who ride bicycles in Australia for recreation	Over 20,000
Bicycle Motocross Australia Inc	BMX racers throughout Australia	6,878
Mountain Bike Australia	Mountain Bikers	3,300
Australian Speleological Federation	Those interested in protecting cave & karst environments, cavers	850
Sport Climbing Australia	Competitors in competition climbing	550 individual Member; 30 Climbing Facilities
Australian National Sportfishing Association	Recreational fishing industry and the recreational angler	2500 - 3000 members; 200 clubs
Australian Parachuting Federation	Australian Sport Parachuters	26,487
Gliding Federation of Australia	Glider Pilots	2698
Hang Gliding Federation of Australia	Those who Paraglide, Hang Glide and Fly in Weightshift Microlights	2,700
Australian Endurance Riders Association	Long distance horse riders	2005
Australian Horse Industry Council	Persons involved with horses throughout Australia. Particularly health & welfare issues	150 Members representing app 20,000 participants
Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Inc	Riding and Harness Driving for People with Disabilities	5077
Dual Sport Motor Rider's Association	Trail bike riders, adventure bike riders & touring riders	2884
Motorcycling Australia	Governing body of motorcycling sport in Australia	23000 (16,500 Competition Licence, 2,500 recreational riders, 4000 Officials)
Orienteering Australia	Orienteers	7481
Skate Australia	Skaters involved in skating activities throughout Australia	1050
Ski & Snowboard Australia	Skiing and Snowboard competitors	1000 direct members, 30 clubs - 5500 indirect members
Australian Canoeing	Those involved in paddle sports throughout Australia	6100
Australian Windsurfing	Windsurfers	594
Yachting Australia	Yachtsmen & women	37,677 Silver Members 7,637 Youth Members

ii) Church and community organisations

Adventist Outdoors	7 th Day Adventists participating in outdoor activities	50,000
Boy's Brigade Australia	School age boys and young men	6000
CEBS - The Anglican Boys Society	Youths aged 6 - 18 years	9 Dioceses in The Anglican Church of Australia; 43 branches; approx. 400 youth and children
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme	Young People completing the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme	19,338
Girls Brigade	School age girls and young women	6300
Guides Australia	Young Girls 5 to 18 years	23,200
Royal Rangers	School age children & young adults	10,000
Scouts Australia	Scouts throughout Australia	51,100
YMCA Australia	Community development organisation. Deliver programs and services.	382 centres; 500,000 participants
Youth for Christ Australia	Young People	55,615

iii) Organisations representing outdoor activity facilities and/or providers

Australian Camps Association Inc	Residential camps and activity providers	297 Members
Christian Camping International	Denominational, Inter/Non-Denominational & private Christian camp operators.	700 members representing 220 camps
Scripture Union Australia	Outdoor activities and camps	200 camps per year

Awaiting data from:

Australian National Four Wheel Drive Council
Australian Trail Horse Riders Assoc
Australian Quarter Horse Association
Australian Kite Flyers Society
Australasian Jet Sports Boating Association (AJSBA)
Australian Rafting Federation
Australian Water Ski and Wakeboard Federation
Surf Schools Association of Australia
Surfing Australia
Bushwalking Australia Inc
Australian Rogaining Association
Sports Shooters Association of Australia

7. Conclusion

Increased participation in outdoor recreation activities has the potential to not only decrease obesity in Australia but also to improve mental health and well-being. However, a broader approach needs to be taken, with a focus not only on raising awareness but also of improving access to places and programs where physical activity can occur and building the social environments to address constraints. A holistic, cross Government, rather than a piece-meal approach, is required.

