



Somerset

Outdoor Learning Centre



Newsletter #35 Term 2 2014



Your outdoor experience starts here.....

Somerset Outdoor Learning Centre has been offering outdoor involvement to **school students** and **Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme participants** since 1980. As an industry leader with over **30 years of experience**, we offer a unique blend of learning experiences and outdoor facilities and activities delivered in a professionally managed outdoor education programme.

Somerset offers the **distinctive experience of tent camping**, we do not accommodate students in dormitories or cabins, as a Somerset programme is designed to present ample opportunity for **students to engage with their natural surroundings**. We provide a **fun and supportive** framework for students to **appreciate** the value of friendship and teamwork, to **develop** leadership abilities, to **extend** their physical and emotional capabilities, to **explore** the wonder of the out-of-doors, to **enhance** self-confidence and self-reliance and to **express** their spirit of adventure under the supervision of **skilled and qualified outdoor educators**.

Somerset owns over 600 acres of land in the picturesque Colo River Valley with expeditions extending into the adjacent Wollemi National Park.

Autumn Delights; Marshmallows & Damper around a glowing Fire, tasty Wood Fired Pizzas, an uplifting Bushwalk, an invigorating Paddle on the Colo River or just enjoying the outdoors with friends.

What's New At Somerset

Dads and Daughters

The Year 7 girls from Wenona were enjoying 3 days of fun activities, bushwalking, canoeing and scrummy food at camp - but the best was yet to come.... Their dads arrived to spend the last night and day with them! The girls were keen to show off their camping skills as 100 dads joined the groups for dinner and then chatted around the campfires with the tales from the week. After a night in a tent, the dads participated in morning activities and lunch with the girls. Although the weather didn't come to the party and it was a little rainy, there were smiling faces, dads giving everything a go and a wonderful bonding experience had by all.



Expedition Programming

With the acquisition of our new land we have been busy recceing and mapping out new routes for our Duke of Edinburgh and expedition programmes.

One of our Senior Group Leaders has spent 5 days hiking, negotiating the best routes, checking radio communications, measuring distances, marking maps, writing up procedures & safety management and then relaying the information to our other Leaders. We can't wait for the inaugural expedition with the first groups scheduled to utilise the walks on our Open Duke of Ed Journeys in July.



Support Services Coordinator

We welcome Nick as our newest staff member.

As Somerset continues to improve its programmes, activities and campsites we also expand our 'behind-the-scenes' support and infrastructure. Nick will be overseeing hospitality, food services, estate, maintenance, logistics, campsite servicing etc etc – a big task and vital to the smooth and safe running of our camps. Nick is the man for job - as he has worked at Somerset before as a Group Leader and on the logistics team - he knows outdoor education, how to drive a ute and how to clean a toilet.



For more pictures and articles please visit www.campsomerset.com.au

Somerset Group Leaders – ‘a cut above’

Somerset prides itself on the calibre of our Group Leaders. From early on at the recruiting stage to our ongoing mentoring and development we choose and foster a high standard of outdoor leaders. Our Group Leaders are tertiary trained in outdoor recreation and have competencies in hard skills such as bushwalking, canoeing, and roping, as well as the softer abilities of group management and student rapport.

All Group Leaders are qualified in remote area first aid and are verified according to the requirements under the new NSW Working with Children Check. Throughout the season at Somerset we implement training sessions, workshops and discussion groups to further advance skills. We aim to ensure that our Leaders are the best they can be!



National Parks Eco-Pass



Somerset holds a Parks Premium 10 Year Eco-pass Licence. Somerset privately owns over 600 acres, however, many of our programmes extend into the adjoining Wollemi National Park and at Somerset we recognise and promote the need for camp providers to carry any applicable licences and accreditations. Somerset was licenced as a commercial operator, for over 10 years, under the traditional scheme. In 2009 a new Eco-pass system was introduced and we were excited to be **one of the first and few** to be issued with a Premium Pass. The new Pass is more streamlined and regulated and recognises the **invaluable role that outdoor operators play** in the promotion and enjoyment of the bush and the importance of the sustainable and managed use of our National Parks.

Premium licence holders must meet a high set of requirements and must continually uphold and update these; a sound and extensive knowledge, skills and understanding of safety and environmental issues, a high standard of conduct in the Park, have the required level of public liability and maintain relevant outdoor industry accreditation.

Somerset advises NPWS of expeditions into the National Park and forwards an annual fee as well as quarterly trip payments.



2015 Camp Dates

Somerset has started to lock-in dates for 2015. Get in quick –don't miss out For 1–7 day camps or a Duke of Ed weekend we would love to have you here!

Interested in an outdoor experience for your students? –please contact Gen for more information



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Staff Profile

Gen



I have been our Schools Liaison since 2012 and I look after all camp correspondence from the start to the finish of the camp process.

I spend my days communicating with the school camp coordinator and teachers about activities, what to expect, organising Info Talks etc and have contact with parents regarding concerns about camp, gear questions, medical and dietary issues etc. I also take care of all future dates, calendar planning, bookings and post-camp follow-up.

For 6 years prior to taking on this position I was working in and coordinating Somerset Food Services. As the daughter of Somerset's founder I grew up in the family business, and after my schooling have been involved in all facets of Somerset life since 1997. I live onsite at camp and look forward to catching up with teachers and students when they visit.

