

School Review Report

2022 Cycle - Public section

| 1.1 School Context | |
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| Location and history | <p>The Outdoor School is a multicampus specific purpose co-educational outdoor residential school. The Bogong campus is located in the Alpine National Park in the village of Bogong, which is 386 kilometres northeast of Melbourne. The 15 Mile Creek campus is located in bushland in the Greta Valley, 40 kilometres from the regional centres of Wangaratta and Benalla and 255 kilometres northeast of Melbourne.</p> <p>In 2010 Bogong Outdoor Education Centre and the Fifteen Mile Creek Campus became Outdoor School. Before forming Outdoor School, Fifteen Mile Creek was a community educational asset for the Wangaratta and Benalla District from 1974 after the original school was closed. In 1968 The Victorian Education Department acquired the camp buildings and four houses from the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. After renovation, the Bogong facility opened in 1971.</p> |
| School facilities | <p>The Bogong Campus accommodates 72 students and the 15 Mile Creek Campus accommodates 56 students. Both campuses have single-sex dormitories, bathroom facilities, and fully equipped kitchens and break out facilities. The Bogong campus has a Discovery Centre, which provides students with applied and interactive learning related to sustainable living. The 15 Mile Creek campus has a multi-purpose area and undercover hard courts.</p> |
| Enrolments | <p>The Outdoor School does not have directly enrolled students. Students attend both campuses from five to 21 days and remain enrolled at their home schools.</p> |
| SFO and SFOE | <p>Not applicable.</p> |
| Staff profile | <p>The staffing profile of the Outdoor School consists of one Principal, two Campus Principals, two Leading Teachers, 15 teachers, 13 Education Support staff (ES) and four trainees.</p> |
| Curriculum | <p>The school provides educational programs for students from Year 3 to Year 12. The Year 3 to Year 10 programs are related to the Victorian Curriculum capabilities of personal, social, critical and creative thinking, outdoor experiences, intercultural, nature and future thinking. The senior school programs support Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Outdoor and Environmental Studies, VCE VET Cert II Outdoor Recreation and VCE – Vocational Major.</p> |
| Additional information | <p>The Bogong Campus was displaced due to a landslip at the time of the review. The school operated out of the Mt Beauty Secondary College and the local town hall.</p> |

1.2 School and Community Highlights

Highlight 1

Title: Teaching and Learning

FISO2.0 Core Element:
Teaching and Learning

The Panel observed classes, conducted staff focus groups and observed the documented curriculum and agreed that the school had enhanced consistency in teaching and learning approaches. The Panel found the following was evident in support of this highlight:

- Both Outdoor School campuses deliver learning capabilities through experiential learning. Students are offered learning activities such as bushwalking, abseiling, orienteering, rock climbing, skiing, canoeing and bike riding. Both campuses use their local alpine and bush environment to support their programs. Many of the activities are conducted in remote locations
- Planning on an agreed template enabled the school priorities to be implemented and for students to be provided with consistency and enabled regular routines
- Assessment practice had evolved to include rubrics that measured and responded to student learning needs
- A School Improvement Team representing both campuses was established
- The school was a feature of Doctoral research. The research has been published domestically and internationally. The study was the lead reference material used in DET's 2021 Outdoor education policy.

Highlight 2

Title: Australian First Nations practices and perspectives

FISO2.0 Core Element:
Engagement

The Panel heard through staff and student focus groups that the Outdoor Schools approach to enhancing Australian First Nations practices and perspectives throughout the school culture and learning programs was a highlight based on the following evidence:

- The school had developed a fully collaborated Reconciliation Action Plan, including endorsement from the local indigenous community. The school was invited to present the plan at the National Outdoor Education Conference in September 2022
- All staff completed professional learning enhancing cultural understanding
- Enhanced learning programs including Indigenous land practices and perspectives from Years 3 to 12, and the Cross-Curriculum Priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.

Highlight 3

Title: Positive Climate for Learning

**FISO2.0 Core Element:
Engagement**

The Panel found that a key school community highlight was the enhanced and positive climate for learning. The Panel observed a strong school culture supported by an advanced focus on building positive relationships, with the following evidence in support of this highlight:

- Staff who participated in the review outlined the school's collaborative culture as one of the most positive aspects of the school. This was supported by the introduction of Professional Learning Communities in 2022
- The Panel found that positive relationships were priorities and were enabled by a documented process that prioritised connections with home school staff, visiting teachers, school visits before programs and follow up on feedback.

Highlight 4

Title: Response to COVID-19

**FISO2.0 Core Element:
Leadership**

The Panel conducted staff and student focus groups and a survey of board members and found that although the COVID-19 response posed many challenges, many became opportunities and areas of growth for Outdoor School. This was evident in the following:

- Enhanced staff ICT skills grew in the conferencing area and online teaching and learning. This supported co-designed learning programs on a shared electronic platform that supported multi-user collaboration enabling further consistency across and within teams, programs and campuses
- The capability building of staff responding to students' wellbeing and health needs when returning to face to face teaching and learning.
- Staff referenced that they gained a further appreciation for the importance of a healthy workplace and now respond proactively to illness
- The peer support was referenced by many staff as a highlight supporting individual resilience in times of uncertainty. This was further evident for the Bogong team displaced due to a landslip.

1.3 Summary of Key Review Findings

Performance against the School Strategic Plan (SSP) goals and targets

SSP Goal 1:

The 2018–22 School Strategic Plan for Outdoor School set a goal to activate student voice and agency. The Panel found that this goal was partially met, following an analysis of the evidence of achievement against each target, with one target met and two targets not met.

SSP Goal 2:

The second goal was to develop all students social and emotional wellbeing. The Panel found that this goal was met following an analysis of evidence of achievement against each target, with both targets met.

SSP Goal 3:

The school set a third goal to strengthen student outcomes in literacy. The Panel found that this goal was partially met following an analysis of evidence of achievement against each target, with three targets met and two targets not met.

Findings against the Terms of Reference Focus Questions

Terms of Reference Focus Question 1: To what extent are data and assessment practices consistently used to inform responsive teaching and learning?

The Panel concluded that the school had implemented assessment practices including surveys and anecdotal feedback to review programs. The school had adjusted programs based on the feedback. How the school evaluated the programs over time, and measured whether the programs had the desired impact on student learning was less clearly defined.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 2: To what extent does the Outdoor School effectively promote positive wellbeing?

The Panel found that the school had robust and embedded approaches to developing positive relationships. Learning programs were designed to support the development of social and emotional capabilities and outdoor skills and knowledge. How the school explicitly supported, evaluated and monitored its impact on developing student capabilities necessary to thrive, contribute and respond positively to challenges and life opportunities was less clear.

1.4 Summary of Key Directions for the next School Strategic Plan

The Panel recommended the following key directions for the next School Strategic Plan:

- Teaching and learning frameworks
- Data informed inquiry cycles
- First Nations Perspectives
- Student resilience and wellbeing
- Inclusive practices
- Student agency.