

Reimagining Outward Bound - Tharwa

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY GRANT APPLICATION

Outward Bound Bushfire Recovery

Outward Bound Australia has submitted a Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grant application. This grant application is for \$810k to develop bushcraft workshops and program design for four new outdoor learning experiences with Outward Bound at Tharwa, ACT: bush cooking and outdoor dining; indigenous gardening; wool and indigenous rope making; and mountain bike maintenance and training.

Outward Bound has developed a new adaptive and resilient post bushfire and COVID strategy, 'Reimagining Outward Bound'.

Established in 1954, Outward Bound is the heart and heritage of outdoor adventure and experiential learning in Australia (see [video link](#)). Outward Bound was significantly impacted by the Black Summer Bushfires, with 3 of its 5 operational areas across Australia decimated by fires (ACT, Nth NSW, Vic Snowies). The ACT Orroral Valley fire threatened OB's National base at Tharwa and destroyed OB's major outdoor education program circuits throughout Namadgi National Park. The East Gippsland Buchan fire swept through OB's Snowy River Base, destroying all property except the large hill top operations shed, which served as a refuge for local farmers as they re-built. The bushfires caused programs cancellations, introduced additional risks from tree falls, erosion, flooding and volatile weather events, and added costs to scout new areas for safe camping and hiking. Since the bushfires, schools and communities have become more risk adverse to remote expedition outdoor learning programs.

Outward Bound has developed a new adaptive and resilient post bushfire and COVID strategy, '[Reimagining Outward Bound](#)'. Our aim is to diversify and grow our programs, reduce reliance on bushfire vulnerable National Parks and remote expeditions that are exposed to climate change impacts, and develop programs that aid recovery, aligned with community needs. We are keen to help get you ng people back out into the bush – at a time when it is needed more than ever.



1. Tharwa ACT Recovery

The *Reimagining OB* vision includes transforming OB's 12 hectare operations base at Tharwa (home to OB since 1974) to become a venue hosting innovative and inclusive outdoor experiential and environmental programs, where we have recently renovated and established cabin accommodation for up to 150 people. The Bushcraft Workshops are a priority element of the \$10m Tharwa Campus Masterplan developed by [Sally Draper Architects](#) and [TCL Landscape Architects](#). Our aim is for OB Tharwa to be a destination centre in itself, hosting visitors for outdoor and environmental learning and recreation experiences.

The Black Summer Bushfire Grant will transform four old sheds to house engaging recreational and learning activities, expanding Outward Bound's program offerings to attract more people to the site. Three sheds, originally outbuildings of the Cuppacumbalong estate, will be renovated and equipped to provide hands-on workshop areas. Outdoor program activities will include indigenous gardening, learning about 'bush tucker' and using hand-picked ingredients to experience bush cooking with woodfire baking and outdoor dining. An old stable will become a craft workshop – enabling people to experience the traditional artesian and indigenous craft of making yarn and rope, to then be used in bush camping. An old storage shed will be set up to house our fleet of mountain bikes, recently relocated from the bushfire decimated northern NSW base, establishing a bike maintenance learning area and a skills training track in the adjacent landscape, creating a new adventurous recreation activity.



1 - ACT Orroral Valleyfire, Tharwa

Our aim is for OB Tharwa to be a destination centre in itself, hosting visitors for outdoor and environmental learning and recreation experiences.

The grant will fund a Program Co-ordinator with experiential education, bushcraft and environmental expertise will be employed for 2 years to oversee program design and implementation. Pedagogical design support will be provided pro-bono from The University of Melbourne to create programs with leading practice in experiential learning, aligned with the social needs of the community, with indigenous engagement and local environmental expertise. It enables expansion in programs with schools, delivering growth to school 24 programs a year, extending the age range to include upper Primary through to Senior School.



2 - Sally Draper Architect Masterplan

It is projected to deliver 14 more programs per year with community and disadvantaged groups, including [Women of Courage Programs](#) for victims of domestic violence, and programs for refugees, in partnership with NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), and programs with [Indigenous Youth Leadership](#) that are supported by OB philanthropic funding. It will also support OB's development as an Open Awards Centre for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, with facilities & programs ideally suited to meet the Award's Residential Project requirements.



3 - Tharwa Shed and Design references

The project includes staff training, marketing to promote the program opportunities and a community event with OB Patrons The Governor General and Mrs Hurley invited to formally open the new facilities and programs. At the end of the project, program delivery will be integrated into OB's business as usual operations for ongoing delivery.



4 - Craft Workshop and Bike Maintenance facilities

This initiative will further enhance the 'Tharwa Arts Precinct' and enable opportunities for collaboration within the precinct – building the area's tourism infrastructure and reputation as a destination for bushcrafts and adventures in the outdoors and to learn about the region's indigenous and farming heritage. The project expects to attract an additional \$3.2m revenue per annum and create an additional 20- 25 jobs, if we meet our initial target of 60% (calendar/volume) capacity of the Tharwa site, with flow-on economic benefits to the ACT community.



5 - Rope Making

Letters of support for the grant application have been received from:

- VisitCanberra
- CareerTrackers
- ACT Parks and Conservation Service
- Duke of Edinburgh's International Awards - Australia
- Cuppacumbalong
- Guy Cross Farm
- Risk Resolve
- Trinity Christian College
- Neo Psychology
- University of Melbourne - Melbourne Graduate School

Project Budget Summary:

Infrastructure, facilities and equipment application: \$529,000

Recalibrate Program design and development application: \$281,000

Outward Bound Applicant and Partner project funding: \$127,500

Further Information

Further information about Outward Bound Black Summer Bushfire Grant application can be obtained through contacting:

Dr Loren Miller

Executive Director and Co-Chair

Outward Bound Australia

Email: loren.miller@outwardbound.org.au

Mobile: 0408 749 419

Outward Bound Australia pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, and pay respect to elders past, present and future

[The Heart and Heritage of Outdoor Education in Australia](#)

