



# QUARTERLY

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ZEALAND OUTDOOR INSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 66: APRIL 2014

## CONGRATULATIONS JAMES GEDDES: EMERGING INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR



### **INSIDE:**

**Profile: Tihoi Venture School**

**De-acceleration Trauma**

**Sea Kayak Qualifications**

**Sea Kayak Leader Awards:**  
A Company Perspective

**Matt Cant:** NZOIA Honorary  
Life Membership

**Adventure Meets the State:**  
Reflections on the Regulation of  
Adventure Activities

**Peak to Peak:**  
Lessons in Planning, Purpose,  
Group Dynamics and Decision  
Making

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### Are you getting your weekly NZOIA 4YA?

If you are not receiving weekly emails every Friday from NZOIA, then we either don't have your current email address, or your membership details need updating.

PLEASE check the email address in your membership account on our website, or contact the NZOIA office if you do not have a username and password.

## Congratulations to the following members who recently gained NZOIA Qualifications:

<b>Abseil Leader</b>	Melissa Harris, Joshua Bennison, Philip More, Erica Natai, Oliver O'Brien, Jack Synnott, Ari Kingan, Jake Willett, Leonard McGirr, Rebecca Reidie, Rhys Hillock, Ruru Kraal, Taylor Weston, Watson Green, William McIndoe, Rosey Joyce
<b>Bush Walking Leader</b>	Robert Noel, Richard Brown, Ashley Cuff, Clare Halsall, Joshua Bennison, Jared MacLachlan, Philip More, Alexandra Newton, Erica Ngatai, Oliver O'Brien, Jack Synnott, Ari Kingan, Jake Willett, Rebecca Reidie, Rhys Hillock, Ruru Kraal, Taylor Weston, Watson Green, Amy Dunis, Deni Latus, Jordan Hague, Matt Daniell, Keith Buckeridge, Bradley Sullivan, Matthew Muller, Alicia McCarthy, Hannah O'Connell, Lafetu Sipeli, Hannah Reese, Amy Rock, Rory Davidson, Michaela Wilson, Zak Ainsworth, Alex Westrupp, Kieran Thurlow,
<b>Bush 1</b>	Daniel Riggs, Jason Harvey, Andrew Kendrick, Kaleb Amos, Chris North, Zak Shaw, Wayne Putt, Benjamin Fenselau, Rob Hoult, Julian Malcolm, Jessica Marriott, Malaika Davies, Kieran Parsons, Paul Conner, Brian Cresswell, Nicole Wiedermann, Ernest Li, Karl Ridgen, Michael Liu, Marjory McTaggart, Andrew Dugan, William Impelmans, David Fenton,
<b>Canoe</b>	James Alker
<b>Kayak Leader</b>	Ryszard Balejko, Richard Brown, Jared MacLachlan, Philip More, Ari Kingan, Jake Willett, Rebecca Reidie, Taylor Weston, Watson Green, Amy Dunis, Deni Latus, Keith Buckeridge, Melissa Harris, Nicole Mulcahy
<b>Kayak 1</b>	Nikki Whitehead, Rata Lovell-Smith
<b>Rock Climbing Leader</b>	Ryszard Balejko, Robert Noel, Ashely Cuff, Clare Halsall, Joshua Bennison, Philip More, Erica Ngatai, Oliver O'Brien, Jack Synnott, Ari Kingan, Jake Willett, Leonard McGirr, Rebecca Reidie, Rhys Hillock, Ruru Kraal, Taylor Weston, Watson Green, Jordan Hague, Matt Daniell, Matthew Muller, Olivia Shanks, Ethan Church, Alastair Nelson, Alicia McCarthy, Hannah O'Connell, Diane Creamer, Lafetu Sipeli, Hannah Reese, Amy Rock, Jason Webb, Jared Irvine
<b>Rock 1 - Sport Climbing Endorsement</b>	Loz Ogle, Mark Johnston, Adrian Fastier, Andrea Woolley, Dave Cassaidy, Mel Rich, Tony Wright, Paul Conner, Dave Hazelwood
<b>Sea Kayak Leader</b>	Dale Burrows, Bronwyn Fehr, Liana Proctor, Leonard McGirr, Rory Davidson, Michaela Wilson, Jonathan Magson, Zak Ainsworth, Paul Hersey,
<b>Sea Kayak Guide</b>	Cathryn Butcher, Luke Middleton
<b>Sea Kayak 1,</b>	Gregory O'Donnell

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NZOIA gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the following organisations:



Member Organisation



## Chairperson's Report

Kia ora koutou

I write this update with great sadness for the family and close friends of NZOIA Board member Lyndsay Simpkin, who passed away on 1st April after a brief battle with cancer. Lyndsay contributed to NZOIA as a board member and an assessor, and was awarded the Tall Totara award in 1997. He established Adventure Specialities Trust, a charitable organisation working with a wide range of clients, in particular the disadvantaged in society. The Trust, now in its 30th year of operation has been a great supporter of NZOIA. A keen mountaineer and sea kayaker, Lyndsay lead by example, holding NZOIA Alpine 2, Bush 2, Kayak 1, Cave 1 and Sea kayak 1 awards. He will be truly missed by the outdoor community. As was put it so well in NZOIA 4Ya – "although a Tall Totara has fallen, the lives he has touched will and have grown into maturity. His legacy will live on".

In such a situation it's hard to follow on with discussion of the day-to day business of NZOIA, but your Board members, and Peter Cammell on the qualifications front, have been busy since the last Quarterly. The Board have had several conference calls since the AGM and Symposium, and a face-to-face meeting in Nelson in February. Topics covered have included appointment of an NZOIA General Manager, outdoor instructor qualifications, adventure activity auditing, insurance for NZOIA assessors and UIAA accreditation.

Following on from the discussion at the NZOIA Symposium & AGM, Pete Cammell convened an Outdoors Qualifications Workshop in late January with a range of people and organisations from the wider sector. That meeting recommended that alpine qualifications be taken up as the first area in the next stage of the TROQ (Targeted Review of Qualifications) process that Skills Active are running. Since then we have met with NZMGA and MSC, with Dave Ritchie, Penny Holland and Dave Moore representing NZOIA, and have reached general agreement on working together as the 2nd TROQ stage gets underway. We have nominated Dave Ritchie as an NZOIA representative for the Outdoor Recreation,

Snowsport and Dive Sector Reference Group, and will be looking for members to be involved as technical advisors in the various leader, guiding and instruction qualification areas. Exactly how this will place the NZOIA qualifications system in the future will become evident as the process develops.

Another topical area is that of Adventure Activity Auditing. Outdoors NZ announced last week that they are continuing the operation of OutdoorsMark. It seems that WorkSafe NZ are also exploring other auditing companies. None of the recent uncertainty in relation to OutdoorsMark changes the legal requirements for adventure activity operators to be registered by 1 November, so if this legislation applies to you, you need to have a safety plan and have made arrangements to be audited by this date. The Board is considering developing a draft/template sole operator safety plan, but it seems that WorkSafe NZ have this underway. If you have any thoughts whether there is generic work that NZOIA could do to help members in this area flick an email to board@nzodia.org.nz or contact the office.

A number of NZOIA assessors have raised the topic of insurance in recent months. We are now reviewing the insurance cover we offer for NZOIA assessors. The current policy covers assessors directly contracted to NZOIA, but not free range assessors, and is a bit grey where assessor payment are made to their employer rather than direct to the assessor.

And last but not least, the process for finding a new General Manager for NZOIA is underway, with a first round of short-list interviews being carried out by Board members Jo Parsons and Dave Ritchie as I write this.

I hope you have all had a great summer. After a few weeks back country skiing in Japan in January/February, my mountain bike has been out on some great autumn Nelson days more recently. Talking of which it is calling now.

Best wishes for some great autumn adventures.

Gillian Wratt, NZOIA Chairperson

## We want your story!

We are looking for contributions from you, the NZOIA members, for the NZOIA Quarterly. Do you have a story to tell? Do you know someone who has thoughts to share?

Articles could be:  
 A personal adventure and how your experiences have impacted your instruction of others. / An incident, near miss or accident that others could learn from. / A personal profile - an interesting tale about how you got to be where you are now in the world of outdoor instructing. / An organisation that is doing innovative and interesting things - with its programme, philosophy, direction and instruction. / A reflection on any aspect of outdoor instruction that you think would be educational and beneficial for others to hear. **Contact Jen Riley the editor with your ideas and for guidelines: editor@nzodia.org.nz**

Photo: Johnny Johnson





**MISSION STATEMENT**

In this unique and challenging environment, through the medium of community living, a quality academic programme and wide ranging outdoor pursuits

We aim to provide the best possible opportunities to promote the personal and social development of our students.

With the 2014 NZOIA Symposium being held at St Paul's Collegiate - Tihoi Venture School in September we would like to extend a warm welcome to all current and prospective members to the Central North Island. Whether you are tenting on our field, staying in the houses or just popping in for revalidation workshops, we are looking forward to seeing you all here. We would like to congratulate those who have been involved in the past two Symposiums held at OPC and Outward Bound. These have both been great events where has been extensive sharing of ideas from outdoor folk both young and old.

Tihoi Venture School was the dream of a former headmaster of St Paul's, Tony Hart and in 1978 the Board of Trustees decided to purchase the Western Bays timber mill village at Tihoi. The first intake of students arrived in January 1979. Initially conditions were difficult, with houses and other buildings in poor condition. Budgets were limited and the repairs done through improvisation. Thirty five years on the Venture School has been transformed into a modern outdoor facility, that still maintains the original traditional values.



From the outset Tihoi became a unique education facility, the then disused timber mill village became Tihoi Venture School. The mill houses became the students' homes and the mill clubrooms the dining hall. Classrooms, a main kitchen and an ablution facility were added. The site is perfect with excellent rock climbing and tramping on our doorstep, Lake Taupo, just 30kms away, is ideal for sailing and introductory kayaking and there are rivers and mountains within an hour's drive.

From 2000 to now, the Venture School continues to be redeveloped. The old houses were replaced with a new version built in the same position. Although modern, the new houses retain much of the austere nature of the old ones, students cook breakfast and dinner on wood burning stoves, houses have no refrigerators and contain only essential furniture. A new dining room and kitchen, new staff houses and utility storage buildings have been built.

Students are placed in house groups of eight. Any arising conflicts are valuable learning experiences and as the social and personal development of the students is the main aim of the Venture School, boys are given formal guidance in solving problems and rising to challenges. An important ethos has been created using the philosophy of less is more, a back to basics approach to life education where all students are treated as equals.

The Tihoi programme is seven days a week, with four and a half days of classroom education and centre living then two and a half days of outdoor skills and challenges. The academic days are taught to the same standards and curriculum as the main campus, St Paul's Collegiate in Hamilton. Students study core



subjects in English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Outdoor Education, Duke of Edinburgh, Cooking, Health and First Aid are also taught. The Academic Programme is based on an experiential learning style as students are given the opportunity to learn from the environment they live in. Modern technology for teaching is fully utilised. The programme also encompasses aspects of the Virtues Project, Global Perspectives towards Sustainability and NCEA level one assessment.

We believe in offering a wide variety of Outdoor Pursuits to ensure there is either challenge or success for each student in different areas. The Tihoi programme is very well resourced and includes: kayaking (flat and moving water), Canadian canoeing, abseiling, rock climbing, tramping, caving, sailing, mountaineering, survival, eight and forty four hour solos, sea kayaking and an extended journey style six day expedition. A large Challenge Rope Course was constructed in 2009 and has added further exciting challenges to the programme.

Tihoi Venture School was introduced to Outdoors Mark in 2004 through being a member of Outdoors New Zealand. The opportunity to be audited externally every three years was and continues to be one of the most valuable parts of our operation. It has confirmed that how we operate in the outdoors with students is on par with national standards. It was also confirmed that the equipment we use, the way it is stored and the operational policies and procedures we operate within are also conducted at a high level.

Tihoi has been recognised nationally on a number of occasions through Outdoors New Zealand. The centre won the Best Outdoor Facility for 2007, the Best Outdoor Programme in 2004. Also a number of young staff have won the NZOIA emerging instructor awards. These awards are a credit to the school and dedication to the hard work past and present staff have put into the programme.

The local area has plenty to offer for those coming to the Symposium and wishing to stay in the Great Lake District. A number of new mountain bike tracks have been formed around

the Western Shores of Lake Taupo along with the Pureora Timber Trail ride on the western side of the Forest Park. Rock Climbing at Kinloch, Kawakawa Bay and Whanganui Bay are all close by. For those interested in a day walk, climbing Mt Puerora is worth the view over the southern Waikato region.

We are excited to be given the opportunity to host this year's NZOIA Symposium.

For up to date photos and information visit: [www.stpauls.school.nz](http://www.stpauls.school.nz)

Chris Wynn & Cyn Smith, Directors, Tihoi Venture School



**Leave No Trace free online course**

Have you visited it yet?

This free online course explains the 7 principles of Leave No Trace. The course is for everyone – even the most seasoned outdoors people may find new ways of thinking about familiar concepts or ways to share them with others.

Expand your own understanding. Use it with students and clients. Prepare for upcoming NZOIA assessments. Search 'Leave No Trace' on the [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) website or go directly to:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/get-trained/online-courses/leave-no-trace-online-course/>

# DE-ACCELERATION TRAUMA

CHRIS WHITEHOUSE



It was the end of a long cold day and the start of a long frustrating recovery. After making the worst mistake of my life I found myself lying on the ground with a broken leg. I had been re-threading ropes on the high ropes course at The Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre when something went wrong. One minute happily working away in a place I'm very comfortable in, the next I'm unhappily in a lot of pain! Those with tape measures said that I had fallen 13 metres and those with x-ray machines said that I had broken my femur in two places, neither of which made me happy.

The next day I discovered that I had a lot less blood than before but was now the proud owner of a large steel pin, four screws and a multitude of drugs. Luckily my partner and a good friend were on hand when I woke up to poke fun at my drugged out, delirious state! Rotorua hospital really is a flash place, I can highly recommend staying there if you ever require medical attention.

Both the physio and I were keen to see if I could make it to the shower with the aid of a walking frame. I made it the whole five metres without too much drama but it soon became apparent that there was no longer enough blood to fill my body so when I was upright my head drained out causing me to faint momentarily. The look on peoples' faces was priceless! Back to bed and the safer horizontal position for me. It was a great lesson on blood pressure and how the lack of it can provide entertaining challenges!

I was only in hospital for a few days and once I could prove I could get around their obstacle course on crutches I was released into the wild! Luckily for me, my partner lives in the winterless north so I was quickly whisked away from the icy grip of the Central North Island. Because the rod was holding my leg together I was not allowed to put any weight on it and my next xray would be in 6 weeks, time to get good on crutches! Although they were a pain in the arse (until I realised I was using them wrong and then they were a pain in the hands!) they were much better than the alternative of being in traction for 3 months!

Over the last few months I have had a lot of time to think about all of those philosophies that us as outdoor educators live and work by. I've thought about all of those occasions that

I've told students to persevere through tough times and how now I have to tell that to myself. I guess it's quite ironic that after introducing so many people to the outdoors and almost dragging them kicking and screaming away from the comfort of taps, showers, flushing toilets and the squeaky cleanliness of general towny life, I find myself in a reversed role. In a harsh contrast I feel out of my comfort zone stuck at home with no dirty smelly adventures on the immediate horizon. Instead of managing the risk of something like the next upcoming rapid, I found myself dealing with the perils of transporting a dangerously hot cup tea from the kitchen to the lounge with a crutch in each hand!! Slippery floors, steps, showers, I now have a SOP for all of these things when using crutches!!

Considering the height I fell from I'm amazed that I got away with the injuries that I did. In fact, apart from the broken leg situation, pretty much everything else has been awesome! I was incredibly fortunate to have some good friends and emergency staff close to hand that seemed to make light work of my situation. I'm truly sorry to those people for having put them through such a terrible experience, I can still see the very concerned faces of those that I saw in my confused state. I'm thankful for so many things. The amazing emergency response system that we are blessed with, the high standard of skills of my work colleagues, helicopters, good friends, being fit and healthy, that my clients didn't see it happen and the fact that someone decided to put cushioning wood chips on the ground at the high ropes course!

Regret has crossed my mind but hasn't lingered for long, it is basically pointless to me. Instead I have thought about the things I can learn from such a thing. It's essentially the experiential learning process that I have encouraged others to use. I'm actually quite embarrassed about what I did but I want to take this opportunity to remind even the most on-to-it people that we should never forget the basics. Experience is amazing but it is not fool proof. If I had read this before my fall I probably would have thought "what a dumbass!!!"

I'm still not sure exactly what I didn't do but it is quite clear that I had a brain fart moment. The large knock to my head erased my memory of events leading up to my fall but from what I can make out, I either didn't thread the rope through my abseil device correctly or I didn't tie off the dead end of the

rope properly before unclipping my cowstails. Was I rushing, lazy or complacent because I was in an environment I didn't feel danger in? Either way it was stupid. Whether at the bottom of a very deep cave, atop a stormy mountain, paddling down a flooded river or happily working on a high ropes course, the principles are the same. Always check and double check your systems no matter how obvious it may seem. Distractions come in many forms, always keep an eye out for them. Unfortunately for me, I've proved my own theory that familiar territory can be the most dangerous place to be as that's where we can relax too much.

It hasn't made me afraid of heights, I'm just more aware of the affects of landing from them! I'm super keen to jump / kayak off waterfalls, abseil into caves, jump my mountain bike and generally do exciting / dumb stuff in the amazing outdoors! Let's get out there and go as hard as ever but with the respect that the environment deserves.



Five months on I am free from crutches and working again. I'm now at The Legendary Blackwater Rafting Company in Waitomo, guiding the amazing Ruakuri tour. I get to talk about caves all day and have the added bonus that walking is great rehab. The surgeons say that I'll make a complete recovery and will be up to full speed soon. For the moment though I'm doing mellow versions of tramping, caving, kayaking and mountain biking to help strengthen my leg and keep me sane!

Chris Whitehouse holds NZOIA Cave 1, Rock 1 and Kayak 1

## SEA KAYAK QUALIFICATIONS REVIEW UPDATE



The reviewed Sea Kayak Qualifications hit the website in August 2013 after a solid working over from the Technical Committee and wider reference group. There has been a significant change to the structure of the qualifications in an attempt to reduce barriers to candidates while maintaining industry needs and high standards.

Sea Kayak Leader seems to be filling a gap for new guides and providing them with a stepping stone for moving into higher level qualifications.

A unanimous decision was made by the Technical Committee to merge Sea Kayak Guide (SKOANZ) and Sea Kayak 1 (an instructional qualification). The result is a new three day assessment that assesses guiding and instructional skills. This qualification goes under the auspicious name of Sea Kayak 1 and includes the original SKOANZ content plus instructing. Having looked over the data from the previous 2 years assessments 85% of the candidates sitting Sea Kayak Guide had instructor training or other NZOIA instructor qualifications. As a bonus we have managed to keep this three day assessment at the same cost as running the two-day Sea Kayak Guide.

This qualification had hardly hit the press when NZOIA received requests to run it. Since August seven people have been put through this new syllabus and eight more are about to sit it.

The most significant change to the Sea Kayak 1 as it now exists is that it does not assess the instructing of rolling. This has been moved in to the new Sea Kayak 2 syllabus. People who gained their Sea Kayak 1 qualification prior to August 2013 can contact the Programme and Membership Manager at [admin@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzoia.org.nz) to have a new certificate printed which acknowledges that they have been assessed for rolling instruction.

For those people who hold a current Sea Kayak Guide qualification a one day upgrade assessment is on offer which if successfully completed will gain them the current Sea Kayak 1.

Sea Kayak 2 has a new focus on multi-day expeditions and is waiting in anticipation for its first candidates.

All these courses can be found on the NZOIA website calendar.

Penny Holland, NZOIA Programme and Membership Manager

# SEA KAYAK LEADER AWARDS: A COMPANY'S PERSPECTIVE



When we think about commercial sea kayaking it generally as a laidback, cruisey, fun, relatively safe experience. The track record for NZ sea kayaking show that it is one of the safest adventure activities you can do commercially. But as the number of visitors and the popularity for this sport grows every year, the likelihood of accidents and incidents occurring also grows.

When I first started working in the sea kayaking industry 12 years ago, for The Sea Kayak Company in the Abel Tasman, there was very little emphasis put on qualifications held by the guides, all you needed was a driver's licence and a first aid certificate. The only guiding qualification available was SKOANZ which took one to two years of experience to achieve, meaning that most guides in the industry were unqualified for their position.

At The Sea Kayak Company over the past few years, we have made a real push for all guides in the industry to be qualified from the outset of their guiding career. We were one of the main instigators in writing and pushing NZOIA to have a Sea Kayak Leader (SKL) qualification as there was not going to be one when they first came out. I went and sat my Sea Kayak One (SK1) straight away and was accepted as a NZOIA assessor which means that we as a company can put all our guides through the SKL in house every year so that all our guides are qualified for their position from the outset.

We as a company encourage all of our guides to not stay at this level but to carry on through the pathway NZOIA has created for sea kayak guides, with the new SK1 which includes the SKOANZ award and the new SK2. We give our guides incentives to carry on by financially helping them with the SK1 course and also offering increases in wages once they have completed the assessment. We also put our SK1 guides on our longer more challenging trips like our three and five day tours. We offer a Sea Kayak School for one and two day courses which

only our SK1 guides are to run as they have the experience and qualifications required to instruct and teach our clients, not just guide them.

Having guides with not only SKL but SK1 is a great asset to our company. We can advise and supply qualifications to all the schools and groups who require not only trained but qualified guides/instructors for their tours. We use this in our marketing material; we are finding more and more people travelling are wanting fully trained and qualified guides.

We strongly recommend that all companies get on board with this scheme of qualifications and that they encourage their guides to move through the pathway and not just sit on the bare minimum. We believe that with more structures and standards put in place for the industry, the sea kayaking industry's great track record for being a safe activity for visitors will continue.

[www.seakayaknz.co.nz](http://www.seakayaknz.co.nz)



Rohan Haskell, The Sea Kayak Company

## LEAD EXPEDITIONS OVERSEAS



World Challenge Asia-Pacific is currently recruiting Expedition Leaders for challenging one to four week student-led expeditions to one of over fifty 'developing world' destinations in South America, Asia and Africa.

For more information:

Visit: [www.worldchallenge.com.au](http://www.worldchallenge.com.au)

Email: [leaders@worldchallenge.com.au](mailto:leaders@worldchallenge.com.au)

Phone: 0800 456 134



This could be you!!

## NZOIA NATIONAL TRAINING SYMPOSIUM 2014

THURSDAY 24TH – SUNDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER TIHOI VENTURE SCHOOL

- Your opportunity to train, up-skill and revalidate any NZOIA qualifications
- Inspirational speakers and trainers
- Meet other instructors and connect with your industry
- Options for attendance – see registration form
- Combines with the NZOIA AGM
- The call is out for guest speakers and training workshop facilitators for the Symposium – could this be you?

STAY UP TO DATE!

Go to Symposium on the noticeboard at [www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz)

Enquiries email: [admin@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzoia.org.nz) | ph: 03 539 0509

[www.facebook.com/NZOIASymposium](http://www.facebook.com/NZOIASymposium)

REGISTRATION FORMS AND EARLYBIRD TICKETS AVAILABLE UNTIL 31 MAY 2014



St Paul's  
COLLEGIATE SCHOOL



# CONGRATULATIONS MATT CANT: RECIPIENT OF NZOIA HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP



I first encountered Matt as my flatmate at OPC Tongariro in 1999. I was a fresh young (ish) kayak instructor who was fairly clueless about the mountains, but for some reason had decided Alpine 1 was the best NZOIA qualification to begin with. Matt and I had numerous conversations about bollards, student management, Studebaker wraps, French crampon technique and

everything in between. I was blowing cash on new ropes and harnesses, and making up snowstakes from aluminium L-sections. Matt was very encouraging of me to spend my cash, and get into the mountains and use the stuff well. His was the only advice that always seemed to hit the mark with me, and without it I doubt I would have ever been successful. My transition from clueless to capable at managing students on simple alpine terrain can be directly attributed to Matt.

Our relationship progressed from there to slightly more indoor-based. My first experience of governance was on the NZOIA Executive Committee, as it was called then, and once again I was fairly clueless. Matt, sitting on the committee at the same time, provided an example of clear thinking and depth of experience that I could only hope to emulate. Within a fairly short time frame the committee had taken on new philosophies and projects that were pivotal in the rapid increase in membership and funding that NZOIA experienced in the first decade of the 2000s.

Matt moved into the Chief Executive role in 2006, so then became the Board's employee. Our roles were supposed to be reversed, but in fact the Board was still heavily reliant on Matt's judgement and expertise. My memories of the 4 or so years that I was on the NZOIA Board while Matt was CE can be divided into two. On one hand we had the positive feedback and outcomes from a great pool of assessors running excellent training and assessment, along with improvements to scopes, syllabi and processes. On the other hand we had the highly variable and sometimes tumultuous relationships with other sector leadership organisations. While there was positive collaboration and communication, at times Matt took a beating on NZOIA's behalf in meetings with those organisations. The Board tried to provide a foil for some of that tension (special thanks to Andy Thompson here), but Matt was the guy who bore the brunt of it. He was always able to shake it off and continue relatively unperturbed, on the outside at least.

Matt has provided more influence than any other individual on NZOIA over the past 10 years, during a period of growth in professionalism and capability. His commitment to the cause has been unquestionable, and his achievements many. It sounds like he has some new adventures waiting for him, and on behalf of myself and others that have worked with Matt, I wish him all the best for the future.

*Simon Graney, Centre Manager, OPC, Great Barrier Island*

## Interview with Matt Cant

By Jen Riley

Matt Cant, former CE of NZOIA was awarded Life Membership to the association at last year's annual Symposium at Outward Bound. I caught up with him at Lambretta's in Nelson, a favourite haunt of many coffee connoisseurs, to discuss the past, his perspective on his NZOIA years and what the future holds for him.

Matt started as a member of NZOIA in the mid 90s, later joined the Executive Committee (now called the Board) and became CE in 2006. Before working for NZOIA Matt was teaching technology and outdoor education at Nelson College for boys.

Matt came to NZ in 1987 for two reasons, he says that for a lot of people, when you change countries there is something pulling you and something pushing you away. Friends of his parents had emigrated to NZ at the time of the Suez crisis, Matt heard these friends describe opportunities in NZ they'd never dreamed of in the UK. His parents always wondered what life would have been like if they'd come too. For Matt, he didn't want to sit back and wonder 'what if', like his parents had.

The push away from Britain? He was teaching at a school in the southern Lakes District and often took kids kayaking in Silecroft on the Cumbria Coast. This time he, his co-instructor, the kids and the kayaks piled into a 15 seater ford transit and drove to the coast. This time there was concertina barbed wire and radiation signs; a result of Greenpeace testing the Irish Sea. The opportunities of NZ pulled and the radiation signs in the Irish Sea pushed, so he emigrated.

His greatest physical achievement to date, is traversing the southern Patagonian ice cap with one other person. He enjoys the sense of self reliance. "If you get into difficulty, you sort it out yourself rather than have the expectation that someone will come and help. I get lots of satisfaction from backing myself, and ultimately that's what you're doing in that sort of situation, there is no one coming to bail you out. I'm a bit old school; I believe you should plan and prepare well for your trip, be extremely careful in what you do... or stay and die. When John and I did that traverse, one sled was reinforced so one person could haul the other out if need be. I think it's a different story all together when you are instructing and responsible for other people."

Matt believes that NZOIA is in very strong position; it is respected and has a clear mandate from industry. When an employer employs someone with Bush One, Kayak One, Rock One, they know exactly what they're getting. Although the NZOIA qualification system was based on the UK system, it is unique in the world in that so many pursuits are governed by one organisation. In other countries a person would have to pay membership to four or five different national bodies.

Opportunities Matt sees for NZOIA include the completion of the UIAA accreditation, development of youth awards and the provision of technical experts within the adventure tourism regulations.

I am curious to know what Matt sees as his biggest achievements during his time as CE. He has four:

1. The success of the review of qualifications including redeveloped syllabi and leader awards, especially the way NZOIA responded to new activities (e.g. canyoning) and worked with industry groups (e.g. indoor walls).
2. The Symposium- thanks to funding and the huge amount of commitment NZOIA staff have put into it, the Symposium, now in its third year, has been a great success. In his speech at the Symposium dinner, Matt stated that the one thing that will ensure the safety of participants in the outdoors, more than any amount of regulations, is the coming together of outdoor professionals to share ideas.
3. Building an office with a professional staff. He uses the phrase 'of the industry, for the industry', and believes strongly that the office should be staffed with outdoor

professionals with a depth of understanding who can interact with individual members and employers on that basis.

4. Assessment centres within polytechnics and PTE's. Students can leave those programmes with a suite of leader level qualifications which adds value to what those education providers already do, and introduces young people to the association.

Our coffee mugs are empty. Time is pressing. We both have things to be getting on with. I ask Matt one more question: Where to from here for Matt Cant? He smiles, giggles and only speaks after some thought: "I feel like it's time for a change. I don't tend to do things by half measure, so I am making some significant changes in my life. The next adventure is going to live in Thailand, because that's where I want to live. I don't know what I'm going to do there yet but... I'm backing myself! And there is a risk involved in that, as many people have pointed out to me, but it's not as high a risk as crossing ice caps and mountaineering."

*Jen Riley, Editor, NZOIA Quarterly / Tutor, Adventure Tourism, NMIT*

## NZOIA Training & Assessment

ASSESSMENT FEES	
Assessment course	Course fee
Abseil Leader	\$290
Sea Kayak 1	
Sport Climbing Endorsement	
Bush Walking Leader	\$545 - \$595
Kayak Leader	
Rock Climbing Leader	
Sea Kayak Leader	
Canoe 1	
Cave 1	
Rock 1	\$730 - \$780
Sport Climbing Instructor	
Alpine 1	
Bush 1 & 2	
Canyon 1 & 2	
Cave 2	
Kayak 1 & 2	\$930
Rock 2	
Sea Kayak Guide	
Sea Kayak 2	
Alpine 2	

The course calendars for Training and Assessments can be found at [www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz). Members are notified of updates to the calendar via the NZOIA 4YA – our weekly email.

### Booking for an NZOIA Assessment, Training or Refresher Workshop

1. Go to [www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz)
2. Check out the Syllabus & Assessment Guide, if you are applying for an assessment then make sure you meet all the pre-requisites.
3. On the course calendar, find the event you want to apply for (you will need to be logged into your member profile) and select 'Apply'. Upload your logbook, summary sheet, first aid certificate and any other required documentation to your application. (NB: Non-members can attend Training Courses)
4. Applications close 6 weeks before the course date.
5. After the closing date we will confirm that the course will run.
6. If we cancel the course we will refund all fees.
7. If NZOIA cancels a course, you will receive a full refund/transfer of your fee. If you withdraw before the closing date, you will receive a full refund of your fee.
8. **If you withdraw after the closing date of a course, the fee is non-refundable. It is transferable under exceptional circumstances (e.g. bereavement, medical reasons), medical certificates/other proof may be required. Contact the Programme and Membership Manager for more details.**

TRAINING COURSES		
Course Duration	NZOIA members	Non - members
1 day courses	\$200	\$315
2 day courses	\$400	\$515

### Courses by special arrangement

It is possible to run assessments on other dates. You will need a minimum of 3 motivated candidates and the date of when you would like the course to be run. Go to the FAQ page on the website <http://www.nzoia.org.nz/faq> for details on how to arrange a course.

### Course Costs

All courses run by NZOIA are discounted for members.

### Further Information

Details of courses run by NZOIA, pre-requisites and online payment are all available on our website [www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz)

[www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz)

**NZOIA**  
Excellence in Outdoor Leadership



# EXERCISE-INDUCED MEDICAL ISSUES

The Peak Safety team are involved every year in the safety management of the Tarawera Ultra Marathon – a 60, 85 or 100km run through some beautiful, remote settings. This year there were about 900 athletes competing and incredibly, most of them entered the 100km event! The slowest of these competitors can be out there for over 16hrs putting their bodies under huge amounts of stress.

While this is a big ask for the athletes, the types of medical issues that can occur could be similar to a group climbing or tramping over many hours. The following article is based on the medical protocols developed for us by Dr Ben McHale, our medical director for the Ultra. It outlines some of the common issues, their causes and management.

## Exercise Associated Collapse

Sometimes when someone has been exercising for a long time, they can collapse when they stop moving. What many suspect is that the muscle contraction during exercise has kept the blood pressure high enough to supply adequate amounts of blood to the brain. When the exercise stops, the muscles around the blood vessels can significantly relax causing the blood pressure to drop and a small decrease of blood supply to the brain, resulting in collapse, a very similar mechanism to fainting on a hot day.

**Treatment** – Lie the patient down for 20-30 minutes and give fluids and food as needed. Remove excess clothing if they are warm.

## Exercise Associated Hyponatraemia (Low Sodium)

Lowering of sodium in the blood during exercise can have several causes. Excess water can over hydrate the person meaning their blood sodium levels become diluted. We lose sodium when we sweat so someone who has been sweating during exercise for a long time can also become hyponatraemic. Some drugs like anti-inflammatories can also contribute to this condition but excess water consumption is by far the greatest risk. The patient may be slightly bloated (swollen fingers), have headaches, nausea and vomiting. In severe cases they may have of a lowered level of consciousness, difficulty breathing (wheezing) and become unconscious. In its worst form this condition can be fatal and is a not uncommon cause of death at drug fuelled dance parties.

**Treatment** – It can be difficult to diagnose hyponatraemia but if a member of your group is unwell and you suspect this condition then the best thing to ask is how much and what kind of fluids have they been consuming. If it appears they have been drinking excessive amounts of water then cease oral rehydration and give them salty foods or salt tablets. If they become disoriented or their condition deteriorates then transport immediately to hospital.

## Heat Stroke

If a person's body temperature climbs to over 40.6 degrees this is a medical emergency. Causes are commonly exercising in hot conditions, wearing too many clothes and becoming dehydrated. Sign and symptoms may be abdominal and muscle cramps, dizziness, weakness, diarrhoea or vomiting which may be followed by a loss of consciousness.

Fortunately the treatment is simple. Bring their core body temperature down to below 38 degrees as quickly as possible. The best option for this is to submerge their body into cold water such as a stream or pool ensuring you protect their airway at all times.

## Hypoglycaemia (Low blood sugar)

This is most commonly caused by taking insulin however there is a small risk of exertion induced hypoglycaemia whereby exercise depletes the persons sugar stores. The patient may be sweating, shaking, have a high pulse rate and be aware of hunger (visualise certain foods). In more severe cases they may become weak, tired, confused or unconscious.

**Treatment** – if they are conscious give sweet drinks followed by oral carbohydrates. If unconscious then smear sweet gel (honey, chocolate etc) onto their gums until conscious enough to drink.

## Dehydration

Dehydration is one of the most common causes of illness in groups exercising in the outdoors in warm conditions. The most common symptom is not surprising – thirst. In cases of severe dehydration the person's eyes can appear sunken and their skin becomes saggy.

The first line treatment for anyone suspected of being dehydrated is oral rehydration – it's more effective than giving IV fluids.

If you are with someone who has been exercising for a few hours and looks unwell then consider the above conditions. If unsure then call for help as soon as possible and find out the recent history of the patient including any pre existing medical conditions.

Henry Worsp



# ADVENTURE MEETS THE STATE

## REFLECTIONS ON THE REGULATION OF ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

STU ALLAN

**'WORKSAFE IS DESTROYING THE SECTOR.'**

**'WHY ARE YOU FORCING THOSE DAMN REGULATIONS ON US?'**

**'I'M CLOSING MY BUSINESS DOWN.'**

## Pike River is more than mining

It's well understood that the Adventure Activities Regulations 2011 were born from a series of accidents, Emily Jordan's river boarding death in particular. Less well understood is the big picture of health and safety in New Zealand and recent influences on the government direction.

The Royal Commission that enquired into the 2010 Pike River mining disaster found fault with every party involved, including the health and safety regulator. It found practices *at odds with established practice*. Most of its recommendations focused on mining but it also recommended establishing a specialised regulator that wasn't distracted by other responsibilities such as administering labour law.

In 2013, an Independent Task Force reported on New Zealand's health and safety culture, finding a considerably higher accident rate than in the UK, Australia, Canada, and Norway, both in workplaces and outside workplaces, such as on our roads and in our homes. The task force called for *...an urgent, sustainable step-change in harm prevention activity...*

The government accepted the recommendations from both bodies and sharply increased the regulator's budget. It also accepted this key statement from the Commission: *Simply put, any organisation that has health and safety regulatory responsibilities needs to own them*. In other words, the government tasked the regulator with playing a stronger role in workplace safety.

The adventure activity sector is an early area of focus for that stronger role.

## What big brother decided

Emily Jordan's death raised questions around what participants in adventure activities could expect of operators in a developed country, some people expressing surprise and anguish that anyone could set up shop with no oversight from the state. Some people assumed that high-risk activities would be regulated and that, through paying for these activities, participants deserved some external assurance they would return to their backpackers' hostel that night.

The government grappled with how to provide that assurance, reviewing the sector both in New Zealand and internationally, considering mandatory qualifications, licensing, and auditing. It opted for auditing – the Adventure Activity Regulations 2011 require operators of certain activities to be listed on a public register. This is similar to the aviation and maritime sectors, which have been regulated for some time.

To become registered, operators must pass a safety audit by a recognised audit provider using a formal audit standard. That is the law.



Formal safety auditing had been functioning in New Zealand for well over a decade, both through voluntary engagement and through the Department of Conservation concession process. Safety auditors had formed an association (ROSA) and developed processes that consolidated as ONZ's OutdoorsMark programme. Although still immature, this programme was the model that pointed the way forward.

## I'm from the government...

I was privileged to work with some smart people during the past year or so on a project implementing the regulations, often hearing operators' concerns that the government was destroying the sector. ▶

Actually, the government made the regulations and WorkSafe is implementing them. WorkSafe, previously known over the years as OSH, DOL, and MBIE, is tasked with implementing the regulations, including a clear instruction to raise the safety bar.

WorkSafe is a crown agency charged by government with administering the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 and regulations made under that Act. It operates at arm's length but takes its broad direction from its paymaster, the government. I was struck by my colleagues' attitude to legislation – it's not good or bad, it just is.

That's part of our democratic process and, despite our cynicism, it's difficult to envisage a better way for the state to organise itself.

### Those damn Regulations

WorkSafe appointed an accreditation body to 'audit the auditors' (JAS-ANZ). It also recognised audit providers, developed an audit standard, and developed a certification scheme that regulates auditors around matters such as audit duration and auditor competence. The standard and the scheme evolved over 18 months, with help from advisory committees and public consultation. Considerable weight was placed on technical expertise as well as on an understanding of the auditing process, factors that relate back to the Pike River disaster, the requirement to raise the bar, and sector input.

Currently, OutdoorsMark is the sole audit provider option, but that should change in time. Although many operators were dismayed at the cost, so far commercial audit providers have been wary of competing with the OutdoorsMark brand and fee.

### Accident myths

Two refrains I heard from the sector were *Shit happens and Investigations benefit from 20/20 hindsight*, which deserve discussion in the context of auditing.

Andrew Brookes' research into Australian outdoor education fatalities found that shit didn't just happen – most accidents would have been avoided through better planning. Only one in a hundred of the accidents he reviewed seemed to be unavoidable.

And yes, investigations do have the benefit of hindsight. Safety planning brings the spotlight onto analysing scenarios before the event – foresight rather than hindsight. An external analysis of that planning can do no harm, and operators increasingly see it as an investment.

### What is a guideline?

Both the Task Force and sector review called for more guidance material, and WorkSafe has supported the Tourism Industry

Association (TIA) to develop the *SupportAdventure* website and to facilitate activity groups develop activity safety guidelines (ASGs).

These guidelines are focused on supporting operators, but they're also used by auditors, although they don't prescribe how an activity must be conducted. Rather, they represent good practice in the sector as defined by the activity group itself, good practice that operators may vary if they can demonstrate their practices are as least as good. The ASGs will be, I believe, one of the success stories of this project, their influence extending across the entire outdoor sector.

Some operators complain that auditing is inappropriate without an ASG for an activity. They have a point that there could well be more inconsistency among auditors when there is no ASG, but auditors must be conversant with sector good practice irrespective of whether that practice has been formalised.

### I'm closing my business down

Safety auditing will never be a panacea. It's simply an external view of a programme and an attempt to ensure that outliers operate to the same standards as the bulk of the sector who already follow good practice. It can't guarantee that it will, just as a car warrant of fitness can't guarantee safe travel. Responsibility for safety remains primarily with operators.

Some operators will reduce the activities they offer, some will merge, and others will close down. There will be losses – a cost of providing a degree of safety assurance for the public. But the sector won't be destroyed. Rather, I believe it'll come through this change fitter and healthier as key players take responsibility for its future.

About 10 years ago, the events sector had similar anxieties following the initial Le Race judgment after a bike-event fatality. Those anxieties proved unwarranted, although an appeal did reverse the judgment. There will be no reversing the Adventure Activities Regulations. Although the nature of safety auditing will continue to evolve, I believe the concept of external reviews of safety planning is a good one that is here to stay.

### Further information:

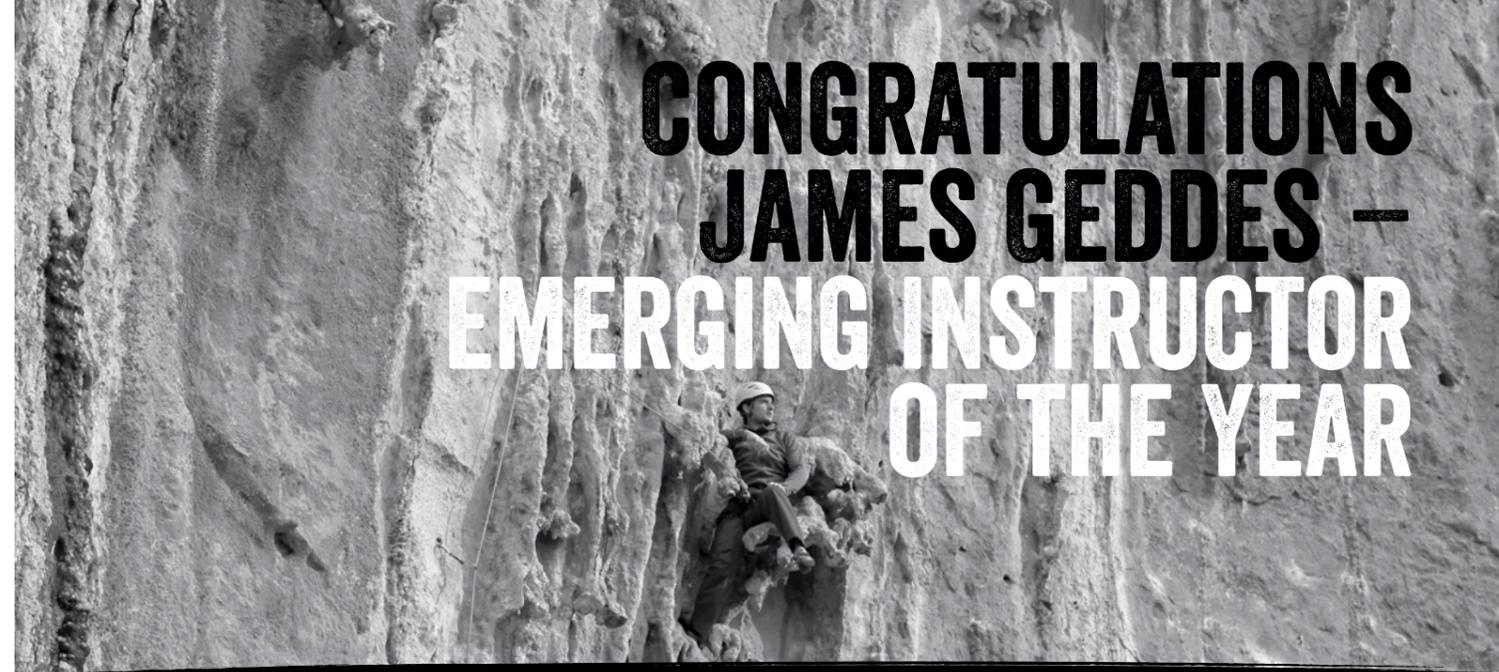
[www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/guidance-by-industry/adventure-activities](http://www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/guidance-by-industry/adventure-activities)

*Health and Safety in Employment (Adventure Activities) Regulations 2011: Guidance for operators*

*Guidance for Managing Drug and Alcohol-Related Risks in Adventure Activities*

[www.supportadventure.org.nz](http://www.supportadventure.org.nz)

*Stu Allan, outdoor consultant and OutdoorsMark auditor*



# CONGRATULATIONS JAMES GEDDES – EMERGING INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR

### Alistair Burns and John Rice, Deputy Head and Head of Dilworth Rural Campus nominated James for this award. This is what they had to say:

After his training James took on a position instructing in the inaugural staff team at Dilworth school's Rural Campus (DRC) starting in January 2012. This has been a uniquely challenging position, as the outdoor programme, and every part of running a year long residential school has been created from scratch.

James has helped create many of the stock trips that we run including the supporting paperwork and has taken a lead with the organization of logistics. He has spent a lot of time discussing and helping flesh out components of the Safety Management System and how it will actually work on the ground.

He has responsibility for the mentoring of 10 boys in his cabin. The time he spends with his cabin and his ability to gain and maintain rapport with them gives him authority to coach them through growth times, and to pull them into line when needed.

James has been instrumental in the up skilling of the large staff team, many who are new to working in the outdoors, and helping them work toward NZOIA Leader qualifications. His position recently changed to include more leadership and responsibility including facilitating staff meetings and ensuring that information is circulated and recorded.

On a personal note from myself; James has been an absolute rock to depend on during the beginning years of the DRC. His attention to detail and ability to recall all manner of facts and lists is a huge asset. I am particularly thankful for his ability to speak his mind honestly. He is an innovative thinker who is continually having new ideas to improve the programme and I appreciate the way he checks with leadership before starting. For example, James proposed the development of a large bouldering wall for the gymnasium, sought funding, created the policies, sourced the materials cheaply, and did the work in his own time.

He is an energetic, positive and fun guy to be around. Working at DRC has increased and refined James' passion to "continue using the outdoors as a vehicle for helping people from difficult backgrounds." He is thoroughly enjoying working with the

students at DRC and the reward of seeing them grow over the year. He has an eye toward working in either tertiary education, or secondary education in a residential setting. James is currently developing skills and experience that will help him be exceptional in either of these roles in the future.

*Alistair Burns, Deputy Head of Campus, Dilworth Rural Campus*

As one of three full time outdoor instructors employed at the DRC he has made a significant contribution to the overall development of the DRC outdoor programme working closely alongside the campus' Deputy Head and Head of Outdoors, Alastair Burns. What distinguishes James' work is his amazing passion for the programme, the quality of his work in all that he does and the very positive impact he is having on the 96 boys who live at the DRC each year through his delightful demeanour and willing attitude.

James is hard working, always focused on the highest standards of safety management and the overall student and staff experience. He is reflective in all that he does so that systems, protocols and overall programme directions are continuously monitored, refined and improved. Nothing is ever a bother for him and he can always be relied upon to get whatever task is in front of him done to the highest possible standard. As a staff team member, he is consistently humorous, never afraid to speak his mind and highly regarded by all his colleagues. Although not a qualified teacher, he is a natural educator with the ability to establish an easy rapport with the students, making him a very popular instructor/mentor. As a cabin supervisor his care for the students goes well beyond the expectations of the role to ensure his boys are coping well and emotionally and socially in a good space.

I could not endorse anyone more highly for this award than James Geddes. He is an outstanding young instructor, educator and human being.

*John Rice, Head of Dilworth Rural Campus*

## Advertise in the Quarterly

Avertisement	Format / Size	Cost
Half-page advertisement, black & white only	horizontal 186 mm wide x 132 mm high	\$115 + gst
Half-page advertisement, black & white only	vertical 90 mm wide x 273 mm high	\$115 + gst
Quarter-page advertisement, black & white only	vertical 90 mm wide x 132 mm high	\$80 + gst
Third-page advertisement, black & white only	horizontal 186 mm wide x 86 mm high	\$80 + gst

Advertisements should be in black & white PDF file format. No 'bleed' advertisements accepted. Colour files can be converted to black & white but tonal contrast may alter. Please enquire for affordable advertisement design rates. Send your advertisement to: The Editor, NZOIA, P.O. Box 1620, Nelson 7040 Email: [editor@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:editor@nzoia.org.nz)



### James - What was it like receiving the award?

It was a huge honour to be told that I would receive this award at the Outdoors NZ Summit dinner. Once there I was surprised at what wonderful things were happening out in the community – as I sat through half an hour of awards for parks and municipal swimming pools, only to be told I was in the wrong awards dinner and that Ajah was currently accepting the award on my behalf two doors down the hall. Lucky for me there's no conference centre navigation component to the Bush syllabus!!!

### Where are you now?

I am presently working at Dilworth, a school for boys who all have some sort of deficit in their lives, the most common reason being they come from a solo parent home. In 2011 they started a new Rural Campus called Te Haerenga (the journey) for Year 9 boys which runs along similar lines to Tihoi and Kahanui. The boys come down and live for a full school year on site south with 12 days on campus and 2 days off. It is a big challenge for them and it has been a huge challenge for us! We have worked hard over the last two and half years at getting all our programmes in place to make the most of the wonderful opportunities offered by this environment. My role is as an outdoor instructor leading trips in a variety of pursuits. When not preparing or running a trip I put on my "cabin coach" hat. All the boys live in cabins of up to 10 boys. I live next door to my crew and work with them in areas ranging from conflict resolution to how to do dishes and use the washing machine.

### How did you get to be where you are in your career?

I grew up in an environment where mum could lock the front door in the morning and let me back in for meals. As a family we have always enjoyed the outdoors (cooking on a hobo stove with my grandmother is one of my earliest memories) and as a result I've always had an interest, not only in being outdoors, but also in the skills, practical and psychological, which the outdoors offers. In Year 10 I went to the Sir Edmond Hillary OPC where I made some of my most lasting friendships and fell in love with the idea of outdoor instruction. My trip to Nepal in my first year at university did not help my marks but I returned with a heightened love of the outdoors and a passion for geology which I went on to study at Auckland University. After a stint as a geologist I felt the pull of the outdoors so in 2008 I went down to Aoraki Polytechnic in Timaru to do my training and rock became my passion.

I think a huge step for me, and a lot of other people, is getting that first job out of training. Two road blocks to are;

- the catch 22 that companies want you to have experience to give you a job and you need a job to get that experience and
- tertiary training courses do provide some of this experience working under supervision but at a much higher level than you will be able to work at for some time in the industry. This can breed frustration in young (potentially over confident) instructors starting out. In my case, it was Outdoor Education Group (OEG) in Victoria that took me in and knocked me down a few pegs but once my ego had absorbed the hit I learnt heaps over there.

Having worked for a couple of years I went back to Aoraki to do the third year of the course combining my learning from the industry with expert observations and feedback.



### What do you do like about what you do?

I like being at the coal face working with students and I really enjoy working with a group closely over a longer timeframe. At the moment I'm content doing what we do and improving the learning programme we deliver to our students.

### When you're not instructing what are you doing?

During the term time... sleeping... that's all there's time for! We have a woodwork room on site and I find restoring and making furniture a great way to actively relax. Other than that, it's a healthy dose of socializing and personal outdoor missions worked around an unhealthy addiction to rock climbing.

What are you passionate about?

As I said above: rock climbing. I haven't got the bug as bad as some but it's enough to make me rather boring at dinner parties. However, I think a genuine passion for and commitment to what you do always shines through in the way you instruct and students feed off that enthusiasm.

This being said I didn't become an instructor to create armies of climbers or Bear Grylls bushmen. I am passionate about using the outdoors as a vehicle to further students' education and to encourage positive relationships between them and our parks and other undeveloped wilderness areas. That may sound a bit sappy but I'm sure these sentiments are truths for many of us.

### What are your goals?

You know I'm a total hypocrite when it comes to goals, I preach about "SMART" goals and planning all the time but at any one time I don't have any real goals, I just make what seems to be an unrealistic commitment THEN I plan out a way to achieve it once I have very few other options... sorry that's a terrible answer, but true.

Long term I would like to teach at a higher skill level (hard and soft) so might try and venture into the tertiary game.

### Something inspirational...

*"Now I see the secret of making the best person: it is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth."*

Walt Whitman (Taped to my fridge as a boy.)

A great way to engage someone with learning or help them grow is to find an area of interest or achievement and help them embrace it. The strength of the outdoors is that it exposes people to so many experiences and opportunities that can start the ball rolling. I see it as our job to provide the right environments for that to occur.

James Geddes holds NZOIA Kayak Leader, Bush Two and Rock Two.

# PEAK TO PEAK

## LESSONS IN PLANNING, PURPOSE, GROUP DYNAMICS AND DECISION MAKING

CHRIS CLOONAN



The idea came to Sam while he was sitting on the slopes of Mt Ruapehu, resting from a hard day of snowboarding. Looking into the distance he could just make out the snowy white shark's fin to the west. He came to me a few days later and said "Matt, I've got an epic idea! An expedition where we summit Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Taranaki and traverse the distance between on our mountain bikes." To a couple of young up-start outdoor students the idea sounded awesome, and from there 'Peak to Peak' was born. It was mid-September 2013.

Neither of us had planned an expedition this big before so it was safe to say we really had no idea what we were getting ourselves into. Being in our second year studying outdoor education at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), however, we both had a fair amount of experience and enough testosterone-induced confidence to pull it off. Planning started almost immediately. We decided the trip would begin early January. We would start at National Park, summit Ngauruhoe, hike back to the Chateau where we would pick up our mountain bikes and ride through to the Bridge to Nowhere, raft down the Whanganui river to the Matemateaonga track, jump back on our bikes and ride through to Stratford, from where we would get back on our feet and summit Mt Taranaki. Easy! Or so we thought. By the time the route was decided we had already built up quite a team, most of whom were from our class at university. Anna and Jemima were in it from the start. Several others came and went until we ended up with our final "assault team" which included Jason, Brydhi, Dulkara, Sam and myself.

Gear was by far the most fun aspect to plan. We quickly decided that our older gear wouldn't cut it and found ourselves 'needing' newer, better, more suitable equipment. Truth be told, there was nothing really wrong with our old gear, we just enjoyed the excuse to spend money we didn't have on gear we didn't need. We did, however, end up with gear that was trustworthy, light, robust and more importantly... looked good.

The logistics were complex. We needed to consider how we would get our bikes down the Wanganui River, what we were going to eat and how we would get the food transported, not to mention how we would get down to National Park and back from Stratford to Auckland. Transport issues were solved due to the generosity of Bigfoot Adventures who loaned us their bike trailer and our kind mums who transported us there and back.

Sam, being a chef, was determined to make our own light-weight, healthy freeze dry food, which in the end turned out to be amazing. But it too, took a lot of planning, cooking, and careful measuring to get it right, as estimating individual appetites was virtually impossible. It was almost comical watching Sam at work, stirring massive quantities of ingredients in pots which were too big for his little kitchen. Like a sorcerer mixing up a potion, he worked his magic. Despite his best efforts, however, we still managed to muck up our proportions, resulting in some serious rationing over three of the days.

Individual preferences within the group generated constant discussions about cost, food, alternate routes and accommodation. This created an added dimension to the planning of the trip as we wanted everyone to have a say in the decision process. Perhaps the biggest issue which arose during the planning process was "when are we going to start?" After much debate, we all finally agreed on the 8th to the 18th January.

The first major learning curve came on the second day of the trip when we had just summited Ngauruhoe and Tongariro. We were making our way along the Whakapapa plateau towards Ruapehu, which we were looking forward to summiting the following day. The conversation turned to where we would be sleeping for the night. Half our group were keen to make for the camping grounds, purely for the basic camping facilities, however, others wanted to spend the night in the bush. The main argument was that they wanted this trip to be a challenging adventure where we were fully self-sufficient, experiencing nature and life without its luxuries. The other half of our group had never considered this and were expecting a challenge but an adventure of a more comfortable nature. As the discussion heated up it became clear that the main reason for this argument was due to the fact that the purpose of the trip was unclear and had never really been discussed. We slept on the plateau that night with tensions taking a while to subside. If I learnt anything from this it would be that the first thing that should be discussed in the planning process of any trip is the purpose of the trip. Next time I will be asking myself and my group members questions like: What do we want to get out of it? How do I want to go about completing this journey? What is this journey about? And probably most importantly, why are we doing this? ►

We had some hard decisions to make on Ruapehu the following day. I have often read about the importance of decision making for alpinists, and how good judgements can often be the critical factor between living and dying. Our Ruapehu attempt put us in such a position where some serious decisions needed to be made and where I needed to reflect on my lessons at AUT about risk taking and whether or not the risk is worth the reward. Some of those scary alpine stories helped my decision process too.

Even though it was early January there was still a considerable amount of snow remaining on the mountain; surprising as the winter months had not proved very generous to skiers and snowboarders. From the base, however, most of the climb looked achievable except for one small section of ridge line which was not quite visible from the angle we were facing. With only 100 metres to the Te Heuheu summit to go, we approached the previously un-see-able ridge line where we were confronted with a 15 metre narrow ridge of soft snow. On the north side of our obstacle was a steep precipice with only sharp jagged volcanic rocks to stop us from falling all the way to the bottom, and on the south west side of our ominous snowy ridge was a steep icy slope falling away into a cold, dark glacier. For some, the decision not to cross it was easy, but for me, not so much. I wanted to tick off all four summits, and as an aspiring mountaineer I wanted the challenge, the experience and the thrill it would give me to know I had climbed all four peaks.

Our decision process basically came down to five questions. Firstly, what is the purpose of this trip? It was to have an adventure and we were still going to have an adventure without Ruapehu. The second question; do we need to do it? For us, the original plan was only Ngauruhoe and Taranaki. Ruapehu and Tongariro were added to the trip later. So the answer was no, we didn't need to summit Ruapehu no matter how badly we wanted to. Thirdly, are we experienced enough? Jason had done the climb before, I had completed a basic alpine course and Dulkara had done some hiking through Tibet. However, the others, apart from skiing and snowboarding, didn't have much alpine experience. Therefore we decided, no, we were not experienced enough. The fourth question we asked ourselves was; do we have the right equipment? No we did not. I didn't really want to be on the news for being found dead at the bottom of a rocky outcrop for trying to cross a snowy ridge with nothing but runners and a walking pole. There already are plenty of those stories and I didn't want to contribute to the statistics. The last consideration was a question of time and weather conditions. The weather wasn't really threatening but time was starting to become an issue and we knew that we needed to make our descent within the next half hour.

We turned back. At the time I had a slightly bitter taste in my mouth, however, looking back now I know we did the right thing. I don't think we could have dealt with the situation any better. I now know that I am capable of making sound judgements in the field, which is a comforting thought.

Two days later... we were having fun and we were being challenged. Then we reached the Matemateaonga track, the crux of our trip and the most unknown aspect of our adventure. Looking over topo maps and gleaning information from the locals we had established that at least 70-80% of the track was ride-able. To us that sounded ok. We thought we could cope with carrying our bikes 20-30% of the track. However, it turned out to be much harder than we anticipated. As the jet boat slowly pulled into the bank where the Matemateaonga track



The team: Jason Harvey, Sam Cottrell-Davies, Me (Matt Cloonan), Dulkara Martig, Brydhi Stark, Anna Daley, Jemima Todd.

began, one look was enough to dampen anyone's spirits. The initial climb looked steep and sharp, something you would think only mountain goats would dare to undertake. It seemed to loom over us like a dark cloud. The steps were so steep and sharp that the bikes needed to be carried the whole way up to the hut. A gruelling 450m ascent, and yes, carried the whole way! If the wheels of our bikes touched the ground on that climb it was because we were resting as even wheeling them alongside of us was too difficult.

We arrived at the hut around 11 o'clock in the morning, absolutely shattered so decided to take the rest of the day off, recouping next to the warm fire. As we set off the next morning we were all hoping the track was going to get easier. It didn't. The track wasn't particularly steep but the terrain was narrow and covered in rugged roots and boulders with small streams impossible to traverse on a bike. It was clear also that DoC had not been through in a few months since most of the track was blocked off by fallen trees. We had to stop repetitively, removing debris and branches off the track, sometimes having to go around mammoth trees the size of two storied houses which had been ripped clear from the ground and were lying across the track. Over and over we mounted, dismounted, climbed, ducked and shoved our bikes through the multitude of obstacles. In the middle of all of this I nearly lost my mind. I was over it. I wanted to scream out every profanity known to man and just give up. The one thing that got me through it was the girls. They didn't say anything to me, they just soldiered on with no complaints. They were getting through not by brute strength or fitness but by mental toughness. It made me realise that undertaking a trip such as this requires mental strength as much as physical strength.

Several days later we had summited Taranaki and were heading home. The 11 days of our trip cemented everything I have learnt in my two years studying. AUT gave me the confidence and skill set to undertake this expedition. I know that I have come away from this trip a better leader in the outdoors, having gained experience in understanding group dynamics, the importance of purpose, planning and logistics, physical as well as mental toughness plus the importance of critical decision making. My experience has helped me grow as an instructor.

As for the next adventure? There's talk about cycling from Great Britain to New Zealand with a good mate from the UK...

Chris Cloonan, 3rd year AUT Outdoor Education Degree, holds NZOIA Rock Leader.



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Length 163cm (Short), 183cm (Medium)

Width 52cm

Thickness 7cm

Rolled Size 23 x 10cm (Short), 23 x 11cm (Medium)

Fill 700-fill, Nocar-treated goose down

Fill Weight 130g (Short), 170g (Medium)

Average Weight mat/packsack and mat combined:

500g/515g (Short), 565g/580g (Medium)

Warranty for all Exped UL products is 2 years

Relative Warmth (R Value) 5.9 (1.04m2.kelvins/watt)

Temperature Rating minus 24°C

\$279 RRP (Medium)



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# PLANTING THE SEEDS OF ADVENTURE



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Photo contributions are welcomed for the back page series 'Planting the Seeds of Adventure'. Please submit as files of no less than 700 KB in jpg format.

