Australian Adventure Activity Standard

Key requirements for preparing and delivering adventure activities

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Pre-release version – official launch version due Sept 2019

Contents Overview

Version details

Version	Date	Details
1.0	14 Dec 2018	Pre-release version. Final guidance content.

Foreword

"Adventure is worthwhile" – Aristotle

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard and Good Practice Guides are designed to ensure effective, responsible, sustainable and safe delivery of adventure activities to dependant participants. They can help people across the outdoor sector to develop appropriately managed adventure activities which enhance individuals and our communities, while protecting the environment and culturally significant places. In doing this, these documents can help ensure that people will continue to enjoy the benefits of adventure activities well into the future.

Best wishes for all your adventures.

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard Steering Committee.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The **Australian Adventure Activity Standard (AAAS)** and associated **Good Practice Guides (GPG's)** provides essential information relating to the safe and responsible planning and delivery of adventure activities with dependent participants. The documents are designed as a voluntary good-practice framework for adventure activity providers and include guidance on matters of safety, compliance and service delivery as well as environmental and cultural protections.

Within the AAAS and GPG's, a **provider** refers to any organisation, business, community group, government agency, school or others who organise and lead adventure activities with **dependent participants**.

Dependent participants are those who are reliant on the activity leaders to support their participation in an adventure activity. The degree of dependence of participants may vary based on, for example, the participants age, maturity, competence or skill; and/or the challenges and circumstances of the activity and/or the environment. Each provider needs to determine if they are working with dependent participants.

The guidance for adventure activities is comprised of several documents:

Figure 1: Diagram of AAAS and GPG documents

The adventure activity documents are developed to present cumulatively more specific information. Providers, managers or those **responsible and accountable** for the design, planning and delivery of adventure activities *should* determine how they use the AAAS and GPG's based on an understanding of appropriate practices, individual circumstances, and need. Where applicable, it is recommended that providers periodically check the AAAS, and GPG's and draw on these in the development and review of their Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's).

Activity providers are encouraged to obtain independent professional and legal advice in relation to their obligations and duties in delivering adventure activities and should reference the relevant laws to the area in which they intend to undertake the adventure activity.

1.1 Guidance for using the Australian Adventure Activity Standard

This Standard and the Good Practice Guides identify essential considerations that help providers apply a systematic approach to the management, planning and delivery of adventure activities. They do this through a structured framework that outlines the importance of:

- Developing contextually relevant **risk management** processes and procedures
- Undertaking **planning** to design, prepare and support adventure activity delivery

- Identifying and understanding the **abilities and needs of participants** and the importance of timely **communications**
- Ensuring that **equipment** and **environments** are appropriate and fit for purpose, and
- Selecting **leaders** with appropriate skills and experience to lead the activity.
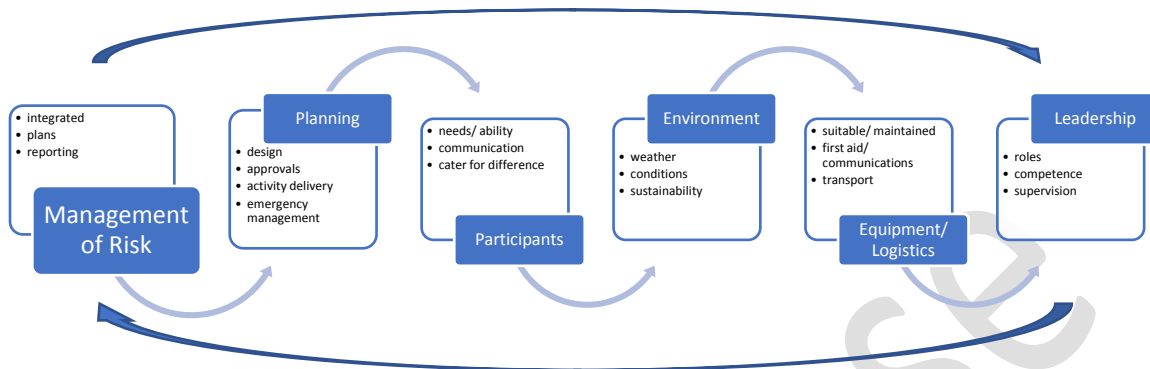

Figure 2: Example Components within AAAS Framework

While the components of the AAAS framework are discussed separately in the documents, they are all inter-related. Providers are encouraged to consider how they address each component of the framework, and how these work together in their own adventure activity management system/s.

2 Management of risk

2.1 Risk management

Risk is defined as the 'effect of uncertainty on objectives' and can result in positive and negative outcomes. The management of risk involves systematically:

- identifying the range of factors and influences that might impact on achieving objectives, and
- putting in place coordinated activities to direct and/or control these factors (adapted from AS/NZS ISO 31000: 2018| Risk Management Guidelines).

The **management of risk** and the development of safety systems *must* focus on *all stages* of the design, planning, preparation and delivery of adventure activities.

Risk management systems *must* be flexible, adaptive and responsive.

While the AAAS identify a range of potential risks, these may not be fully comprehensive. The management of risk may include addressing aspects not identified in the Standard. These could include, but not be limited to such things as additional site-specific hazards.

2.2 Risk management requirements

Risk management is a commitment and process that *must* be integrated into all aspects of the providers' governance, management and operations. This ensures risk management is embedded into the policies and practices of the provider and covers all the factors that contribute to risk, not just those occurring during the delivery of the adventure activity itself.

A **risk management plan** identifies hazards and assesses risks for an activity and specifies how these will be managed. Risk management plans *must* be documented for each activity.

The development and implementation of risk management involves several steps. These include:

- Specifying the context of the adventure activity/s
- Identifying people, equipment and environmental hazards
- Assessing who or what might be harmed, how and to what extent
- Determining the level of risk considered acceptable to the participants or client organisation and the activity provider
- Analysing the risks and selecting appropriate risk controls. This informs decisions on what risk management controls are required for the context and objectives
- Implementing the controls
- Having a communication structure to inform people of their relevant responsibilities
- Actively monitoring risks and the effectiveness of controls
- Modifying risk controls as and when necessary.

Effective risk management also includes ensuring compliance with all relevant laws and/or regulations that apply to the activity and the context. It *should* be noted these may change over time.

2.3 Incident reporting

There *must* be a process for reporting incidents and near misses. Some incidents will also need to be reported to relevant government authorities (e.g. Police, local Work Health and Safety, Insurers, Land/Water managers).

Information on incidents and near misses *should* be collected and assessed.

Providers *should* also periodically review other incidents related to adventure activities they conduct.

Incident and near miss information *should* be used to develop risk management strategies and to inform risk treatment, program design and delivery.

3 Planning

3.1 Planning

Whether preparing for one, or a series of activities, the management, design and delivery of adventure activities requires good planning. Planning allows providers to:

a) meet their own objectives (e.g. to comply with laws, provide enjoyable/ educative experiences, sustain financial viability); and
b) contribute to the objectives of their members, clients or partners (e.g. achieve personal goals, social interaction, leadership/ skill development).

There *must* be a process in place for the development and approval of activity plans that suit the context and purpose.

3.2 Activity plans

Activity plans help bring to life the purpose and objectives of the activity. They also inform decisions made before, during and after the activity.

Inclusions in the activity plan will vary but *should* include:

- Purpose: What is the purpose of the activity?
- Participants: Who are the participants and why is this activity relevant?
- Location/s: Are the location and conditions suitable for the activity?
- Risk: What are the risks involved and how will these be managed?
- Emergency Management: How to respond in case of an emergency?

- Logistics: What needs to be organised (e.g. permission, transport, equipment)?
- Leaders: Who will lead the activity and what competencies and currency do they need?
- Contingency: How to respond if things change?

3.3 Cultural, historical and environmental values

Consideration and respect for the **cultural, spiritual and historical** significance of sites, places and people *should* be factored into adventure providers' planning and delivery of services. Considerations *may* include:

- recognising and giving due regard to the feelings, wishes or rights of others
- seeking information and/or permission from native title holders, Traditional Owners and/or other land managers
- respecting and applying appropriate cultural values
- implementing environmental sustainability practices.

3.4 Emergency management planning

Actionable plans *must* be developed to support timely and effective response in case of an emergency.

Emergency management plans *must be*:

- specific and include documented emergency processes and procedures
- familiar to those who need to implement them
- shared with other appropriate people or agencies (e.g. land managers, a responsible non-participating person and/or participants)
- periodically reviewed, practised and updated.

3.5 Activity leader documentation

Activity leaders *must* have timely access to relevant documentation to assist them prepare for, and deliver, the activity.

4 Participants

4.1 Participants

The needs and abilities of participants *must* be considered at every stage of adventure activity design, management, planning and delivery.

Considerations relating to participants *should* include:

- taking reasonable steps to understand the abilities and needs of individual participants, group and/or client organisation
- using understanding of participants to design, plan and deliver an appropriate program
- effectively communicating timely information about the activity or program and its requirements
- implementing a process to obtain relevant details on pre-existing health or personal conditions, informed consent and acceptance of risk to participate before the activity begins
- meeting any legislative or legal compliance expectations relating to participant health and safety. Some examples: vulnerable person and child safety protection laws and regulations, privacy laws, anti-smoking/ drug laws, sex discrimination laws and regulations, allergy and anaphylaxis safety for minors' laws etc.

5 Environment

5.1 Environment

Providers have a responsibility to understand the environments in which they are operating. Further, they have a responsibility to implement practices that address principles of environmental sustainability.

To maximise safety, relevant environmental conditions and impacts *must* be considered in risk management and activity plans.

These conditions include:

- weather and emerging weather variations
- geography
- seasons
- sun safety
- local flora and/or fauna hazards or impacts
- severe weather and fire weather warnings
- bushfire and fire danger rating.

Providers *should* identify and monitor weather and environmental conditions that might trigger modification, evacuation or other relevant response.

6 Equipment and logistics

6.1 Equipment requirements

The equipment selected *must* be suitable for the purpose it will be used.

This includes ensuring all equipment:

- o meets any legislative or regulatory requirements
- o is appropriately serviced, stored and maintained
- o is appropriate in style, size, quality and quantity for the activity and client.

Communications, first aid and emergency response / rescue equipment *must* be:

- suitable for the context and the activity
- accessible, adequate and appropriate for the potential hazards and risks involved.

6.2 Logistics

At times it may be necessary to transport dependent participants for the activity.

Vehicles and drivers *must* comply with any transport laws and/or regulations.

7 Leadership

7.1 Leadership

Adventure activities *must* be led by competent people who have appropriate skills, knowledge and experience.

Providers *must* ensure activity leaders involved in activity delivery:

- conform with the providers' risk management systems
- have current, verified and documented skills, knowledge, experience
- only assume roles within their skills, knowledge, experience
- provide an appropriate level of supervision for the activity context
- are fit to fulfil their duties (e.g. managed for health, fatigue, medications)
- comply with appropriate activity-specific recommendations of activity leader to participant ratios.

8 Conduct of Activities

8.1 Conduct of activities

This Standard provides requirements and recommendations relating to the safe and responsible delivery of adventure activities with dependent participants. Further information, description and detail can be found in the **Core Good Practice Guide** and **Activity Specific Good Practice Guides**. It is recommended that providers refer to these for additional support.