# Outdoor Education – considerations for supporting EAL/D learners

Outdoor Education is an excellent Stage 5 choice for EAL/D learners, including students from refugee backgrounds. An experiential approach is used to discover being active in the natural environment.

The focus of the course is on participation in a range of outdoor activities, providing students with opportunities to develop and apply their theoretical learning through experiences in different outdoor activities. Students will develop and apply their knowledge and skills to work together to be active and safe in a variety of outdoor environments. Because of the practical nature of the subject, this focus on outdoor activity will be particularly beneficial for students who are newly arrived from overseas, who are in the early phases of English language development, including those from refugee backgrounds.

Additionally, the focus on bushcraft, bushwalking, and the development of understanding a range of different perspectives including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, will provide an excellent avenue for newly-arrived students to learn more about Australia.

Outdoor Education could benefit the recovery goals of students who have experienced trauma, including those from refugee backgrounds. Students will have the opportunity to develop personal wellbeing and a sense of place and connection because of their greater understanding and appreciation of the local natural environment.

The practical nature of the career pathways listed means that EAL/D learners at the early stages of learning English, including those from a refugee background, may find the suggested career options accessible and achievable.

## Considerations

Teachers and schools may need to be aware of the possibility that participation in the following options may re-traumatise students who have been living in refugee camps or in outdoor environments because of their refugee experiences:

* Option 2: First aid in outdoor environments
* Option 3: Survival in outdoor environments.

However, students who have had these experiences may benefit from the opportunity to celebrate and share their knowledge and experiences relating to Option 1: Bushcraft and navigation in the outdoors.

With the possibility of limited swimming experience and potential non-swimmers (especially beach and river swimming) within the EAL/D and refugee student cohort, extra care should be taken with the following options:

* Option 10: Snorkelling, surfing, and beach activities
* Option 11: Kayaking, canoeing, sailing, and sailboarding.

Schools may support students with limited swimming experience by engaging with reputable agencies involved in water safety such as Surf Living NSW, who may have programs to support EAL/D learners.