

The Outback Queensland Education Experience Program

Guidelines

April 2025



Queensland
Government

Prepared by: Tourism Division,
Department of the Environment, Tourism
Science and Innovation.

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The department is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights, and our obligations under the Human Rights Act 2019.

*Cover artwork by Navada Currie,
Mununjali and Kabi Kabi woman at Gilimbaa.*

April 2025

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Overview

Established in 2011, the Outback Queensland Education Experience Program (the Program) provides a subsidy of up to \$130 per student directly to Queensland primary and secondary schools to offset travel costs for school camps held in Outback Queensland. The subsidy is allocated based on round-trip distance travelled and must be used to reduce costs for individual students.

Outback Queensland boundaries

Outback Queensland is defined as the local government areas of Flinders, Richmond, McKinlay, Cloncurry, Mount Isa, Barcaldine, Blackall-Tambo, Longreach, Winton, Barcoo, Boulia, Diamantina, Murweh, Paroo, Quilpie, Bulloo, Croydon, Etheridge, Burke and Carpentaria.



Objectives

The Program aims to generate increased interest from Queensland primary and secondary schools to visit the Outback Queensland region through the delivery of place-based learning activities which meet Australian and Queensland curriculum and support opportunities for students to learn from and give back to Outback communities by experiencing life on the land.

The Program is designed to:

- encourage teachers to take their students to Outback Queensland and integrate its rich history and heritage into school learning
- enable more students to experience Outback Queensland through participation in school excursions across the region
- facilitate more place-based learning activities in Outback Queensland that are tailored to support student learning in line with the Australian and Queensland curriculum
- support opportunities for students to learn from and give back to Outback communities by experiencing life on the land
- develop greater connections to the rich history and ancient landscapes of Outback Queensland and allow for more awareness and understanding of natural habitats and pressures facing the region
- provide opportunities for tourism operators in the Outback Queensland region to refresh and develop educational products and experiences
- stimulate new, sustainable market opportunities and subsequent tourism visitation into the Outback Queensland region, supporting economic growth, encouraging repeat visitation.

Timeframe

Queensland primary and secondary schools can apply for the subsidy for eligible school excursions to be completed by 5pm AEST 31 December 2025 or earlier if all available funding has been allocated.

Eligibility

Queensland schools

The Program is available upon application to all Queensland primary and secondary schools, including schools of distance education, where students are participating in an eligible curriculum-related experience as part of their excursion. Schools must apply on behalf of their enrolled students participating in the excursion. Subsidy payments will not be provided to an individual student or their family and can only be passed on as savings on the cost of the excursion.

Outback experiences

To claim the subsidy, a school's excursion must include at least one night's stay within the designated Outback Queensland local government areas.

Eligible outback education activities may include:

- Agricultural experiences (e.g. visiting cattle stations, sheep properties, or cropping enterprises)
- Environmental education activities (e.g. biodiversity programs, land and water management tours, sustainability workshops)
- Cultural experiences (e.g. guided Indigenous tours, storytelling sessions, bush tucker experiences, cultural sites)
- Natural history and geology experiences (e.g. visiting fossil and dinosaur discovery centres, exploring significant geological sites)
- Historical and heritage experiences (e.g. touring museums, heritage centres, and historic towns or landmarks)
- Arts and cultural programs (e.g. workshops or performances reflecting Outback life and culture)
- Rural and remote community engagement (e.g. meeting with locals, learning about remote lifestyles, services, and innovations)
- Industry and economic experiences (e.g. visiting renewable energy projects, mining operations, or regional development sites)

The subsidy cannot be claimed solely on expenditure for air travel, accommodation, fuel and meals.

Planning activities

Collaborative planning of curriculum activities is strongly encouraged. Teachers and adult supervisors involved in the activity should use the Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment ([CARA Planner \(DOC, 423KB\)](#)) during the planning phase of an experience. This planner provides support in identifying hazards, assessing the risks, determining an inherent risk level, deciding on control measures and documenting the risk assessment for the experience.

To assist schools to conduct and prepare risk assessments, [CARA guidelines](#) are available for a wide range of activities that may be part of delivering the curriculum in Prep to Year 12.

These guidelines are developed to align with policies, regulations and guidelines of Queensland and Australian Governments, and the standards and processes of peak bodies within Australia.

Commercial outback tourism operators

Queensland schools (or their travel intermediary) are responsible for the selection of a commercial outback tourism operator for inclusion in the itinerary which meets the school's educational, accessibility and safety requirements.

Commercial outback tourism operators must satisfy the following requirements:

- [Blue card](#) for all staff that will be engaging with students

-
- Have the appropriate permits to conduct a tourist program within the Outback Queensland boundaries
- Capacity to provide the risk assessment documentation and safety advice required by schools for the activities being undertaken
- Be recognised by Tourism and Events Queensland as offering a Best of Queensland experience.

Commercial outback tourism operators currently endorsed to participate in the program can continue to be part of the Program.

Other commercial operators are welcome to submit an Expression of Interest form at any time over the period of the Program to the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation at tourism@dtis.qld.gov.au confirming that they meet the above requirements. These operators will be listed on the Program website and schools will be required to demonstrate that their excursion itinerary includes one of the listed commercial outback operators.

Travel intermediaries


Eligible schools can engage a travel agent, edu-travel company, transport provider or booking agency to assist with the development of their school excursion itinerary.

Applications for the subsidy can only be submitted by the school undertaking the excursion and travel intermediaries are not permitted to apply on behalf of the school.

Application process

Applications open in April 2025 and schools can apply [here](#).

Queensland schools will need to submit their application at least four weeks prior to the planned departure date of their school excursion. All applications will be processed in order of receipt and schools are encouraged to submit applications as early as possible.



School decides on excursion itinerary which must include an eligible outback experience.

At least four weeks prior to planned travel, school submits an online application form together with a copy of the itinerary.

Application is assessed (please allow 10 business days) and school is advised of outcome and next steps.

If application is successful, 50% of the subsidy will be paid to the school upon receipt of tax invoice.

School excursion undertaken.

Post excursion

Within six weeks of conclusion of excursion, school completes a post-trip survey and acknowledges the program in the school newsletter (reference that subsidy was provided by Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation under the Outback Queensland Education Experience Program).

School is paid the balance of funding upon receipt of a tax invoice.

Subsidy payments and rates

Payments

Applications for the subsidy can only be submitted by Queensland schools and will not be accepted from individual students, parents, or travel intermediaries.

The subsidy will be paid directly to schools after their planned experience or itinerary has been assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria for funding. No subsidy payment will be made for any travel or Outback Queensland education activities that are undertaken prior to approval of a school's itinerary.

The subsidy is calculated on a per student basis. Accompanying teachers and adults are not included when calculating the subsidy. A student is only eligible for the subsidy once and the school is responsible for ensuring that each student for whom the funding is claimed has not, to the best of the school's knowledge, received the subsidy previously.

Fifty per cent of the subsidy will be paid upon approval of the school's application and the remaining 50 per cent will be paid upon receipt of the completed survey after the excursion.

Schools are to acknowledge the subsidy has been provided by the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation in a school newsletter upon return from the excursion.

Rates

The subsidy is not intended to cover all costs of the planned activities or itinerary. Funds are allocated to schools on a per student basis, at rates corresponding to the round-trip distance travelled from the school as per the subsidy table below:

Total distance travelled (round trip) - sliding scale	Subsidy value
500km to 999km	\$50
1,000km to 1,499km	\$75
1,500km to 1,999km	\$100
2,000km and over	\$130

As there is a limited amount of funding, schools are encouraged to apply as early as possible. Each application will be dealt with in order of receipt until funds are exhausted.

Good and Services Tax (GST)

The subsidy amounts referenced in this guideline are GST exclusive. Where a school is registered for GST:

- The subsidy received will consist of the agreed subsidy plus GST.
- The school will be required to provide a tax invoice that shows its Australian Business Number (ABN), the agreed subsidy, and the relevant GST amount.

Where a school is not registered for GST:

- The subsidy received will consist of the agreed subsidy and no GST.
- The school will be required to provide a tax invoice or receipt that shows its ABN and the agreed subsidy amount. As no GST has been received/paid this tax invoice/receipt will not include GST.

Cancellations

Commercial outback tourism operators reserve the right, at any time to cancel any activities. Activities can be cancelled or have scheduled changes (with or without notice) for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, bad weather conditions, and operational or technical disruptions.

Commercial outback tourism operators may place a school's booking on hold for another time, or reschedule the trip at the time of cancellation, or provide a full refund. However, it is the school's responsibility to review and adhere to the cancellation policy of the engaged operator.

Where the first payment of the subsidy has been made and travel has been undertaken, but the eligible outback related experience could not proceed due to, but not limited to, bad weather conditions, or operational disruptions, the second part of the subsidy is still payable. The payment will only be made where evidence (e.g. cancellation advice, refund documentation) is provided to demonstrate that the experience could not be undertaken at another suitable time during the excursion.

Where an entire itinerary has been cancelled (and not rescheduled) and the school has received the first payment of the subsidy, this amount will need to be refunded within five working days.

Privacy and indemnity

Privacy statement

The Queensland Government collects and collates information from the application form to evaluate applications for the Program. Only authorised departmental officers and approved subsidy assessors have access to this information for the purpose of assessing the application for funding. Applicants should note that broad details of successful applications, agreed outcomes, progress and the level of subsidy provided may be published by the Queensland Government. Some information may be used to promote the Program. Personal information regarding an applicant and other person's will not be disclosed to any other third party without their consent, unless authorised or required by law or for the purposes of the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. For audit purposes, the Queensland Government is required to retain the applications and other supplied support material. The provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* and *Information Privacy Act 2009* apply to documents in the possession of the Queensland Government.

Indemnity disclaimer

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (the Department) is not liable for any loss or damage, including personal injury, that may be sustained by a student or other person, while participating in the subsidised experience or in the Program. The Department makes no statement, representation or warranty as to the suitability or safety of any subsidised experience, or to the suitability or safety of any outback experience providers in connection with the Program. The Department expressly disclaims all liability, to the extent permitted by law, for any loss, damage or other consequence whatsoever, where direct or indirect, which may arise from the student's or other person's participation in the subsidised experience or from the Program.

The terms and conditions of your chosen commercial outback tourism operator or any other provider engaged during the excursion, including any cancellation policies and fees, apply to your booking. The Department is not party to your booking agreement with the commercial outback operator, or any other operator or provider engaged during the excursion and assumes no liability under the agreement.

Contact us

Email: QldEducationExperiences@thebusygroup.com.au

Website: www.qldeducationexperiences.org.au

Phone: 1300 175 614

Definitions

CARA	An acronym for Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment which set the minimum safety standards for a variety of common curriculum activities.
Curriculum activity	Any activity conducted with students to support the delivery of the Australian and Queensland curriculum from Prep to Year 12.
Excursion	A well-planned curriculum-related activity that is conducted outside of the school grounds that aims to maximise students' learning experiences.
Best of Queensland Experience	<p>Best of Queensland Experiences are those who exceed consumer expectations, bring the Queensland story to life and consistently deliver an exceptional customer experience.</p> <p>The Program is based on an independent set of criteria that incorporates online customer reviews, responds to consumer expectations and reflects industry best practice. Experiences are assessed annually.</p> <p>The Program is led by Tourism and Events Queensland and has been developed in partnership with the state's Regional Tourism Organisations, the Queensland Tourism Industry Council and the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation.</p>

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