

Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) Survey

Secondary Schools Report



Geography without field trips..... is like science without experiments'
Teacher

Cathye Haddock
Ministry of Education
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Front cover photo: Dannevirke High School

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) survey was to give a national picture of EOTC and evidence to inform policy and practice to improve the quality of EOTC programmes.

The survey was emailed to all primary and secondary principals in 2006. This report focuses on key results for secondary schools only. Twenty eight per cent of secondary schools (93) responded to the survey.

The key **conclusions** from this survey are that EOTC:

- is a key component of secondary school life for NZ students
- strongly supports learning outcomes in all essential learning areas
- is important in achieving four of the five key competencies in the *Draft NZ Curriculum* (2006)
- achieves other learning outcomes such as safety knowledge and skills, improved self confidence, and problem solving
- is an effective pedagogical tool
- programmes are self-reviewed by 80 per cent of schools, but less than ten per cent seek external feedback
- staff experience, training and qualifications have scope to grow.

The main **barriers** to effective EOTC are:

- students missing lessons in other subjects,
- teachers missing teaching time in other subjects, and
- curriculum pressures.

The main **enablers** of quality EOTC are:

- when the school's safety management systems are consistent with the EOTC guidelines,
- well trained and qualified providers (eg, outdoor instructors), and
- well trained and qualified school staff.

Key areas for further development

Ministry of Education:

- Identify pathways and support for teachers to gain experience, training and qualifications relevant to the EOTC activities they lead.
- Support schools to implement effective EOTC safety management systems that meet legislative and best practice requirements, reducing their risk of liability.
- Work with principal groups to identify exemplars of school organisation that minimise the tension between EOTC participation and disruption to timetabling.

Secondary schools:

- Support staff to gain relevant EOTC experience, training and qualifications.
- Arrange external feedback on their EOTC programme to ensure they keep up with current accepted practice.
- Ensure that safety management systems are consistent with the EOTC guidelines, so as to reduce likelihood of liability.

Introduction

Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) is a generic term used extensively in New Zealand schools to describe curriculum-based learning that extends beyond the four walls of the classroom. This ranges from a museum or marae visit to a sports trip, outdoor education camp or a rocky shore field trip. The term 'outdoor education' is widely used to refer to adventure education and outdoor pursuits.

The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with its EOTC Sector Reference Group, conducted the survey to provide:

- a national picture of EOTC, including the benefits, barriers and enablers of EOTC in New Zealand schools; and
- an evidence base to inform EOTC policy and practice and to determine the actions required to improve the quality of EOTC programmes in New Zealand schools.

The survey was emailed to all primary and secondary school principals in October 2006 by the New Zealand Principals' Federation and the Secondary Principals' Council (both EOTC Reference Group members).

The sample

A total of 93 secondary schools (approximately 28% of secondary schools in New Zealand) responded to the EOTC survey. A representative sampling method was not used for this survey. While the sample of secondary schools that responded had some similar characteristics to the national profile of New Zealand secondary schools, the sample did not closely match the national profile in regard to school type, size, decile and location.

Since the respondents self-selected to take part in the survey, there may be a bias towards schools that have a positive view of and belief in EOTC.

Results and discussion

Students

Students participate in EOTC at every year level

Figure 1 shows that students from all year levels participate in EOTC. However, this was not the case in every school surveyed. The highest average EOTC participation was in years 10 and 12, (95%), closely followed by years 13 (94%) and 9 (93%), with the lowest

participation in year 11 (84%). There was no significant difference in year level participation between deciles.

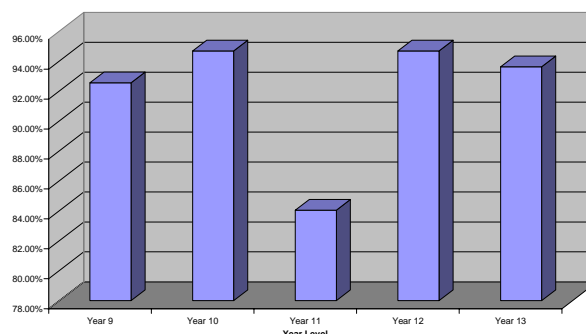


Figure 1 Year level participation in EOTC

EOTC Programmes

EOTC supports learning in the essential learning areas

While the survey showed that EOTC was used to support teaching and learning in all eight essential learning areas, not all schools used EOTC to support all learning areas.

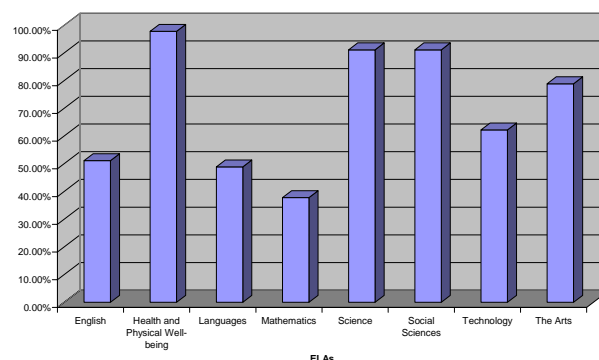


Figure 2 EOTC supports essential learning areas

- Over 90 per cent of schools used EOTC to support teaching and learning in Health and Physical Well-being, Science and Social Sciences.
- Approximately 80 per cent used EOTC to support the Arts.
- Over 60 per cent used EOTC to support teaching and learning in Technology.
- Approximately 50 per cent used EOTC to support English and the learning of Languages.
- Approximately 40 per cent used EOTC to support Mathematics.

EOTC supports the achievement of key competencies

The survey examined how important EOTC is for

students in achieving the five key competencies in the *Draft New Zealand Curriculum* (2006). Figure 3 shows that almost all schools (95 - 100%) felt that EOTC was important in achieving four of the five key competencies: managing self, relating to others, participating and contributing, and thinking. Fewer (66%) saw EOTC as important in achieving the key competency of using language, symbols and texts.

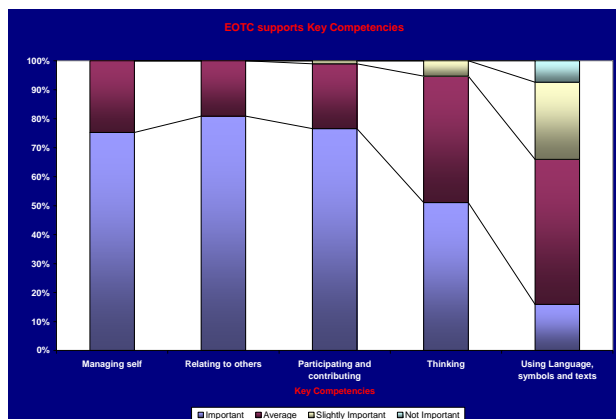


Figure 3 EOTC supports key competencies

EOTC achieves other learning outcomes

Figure 4 shows over 97 per cent of schools reported that EOTC is important in helping students achieve outcomes such as safety knowledge and skills, improved self confidence, and problem solving. Over 80 per cent reported that EOTC is important in helping students achieve subject knowledge and understandings and physical fitness. Over 60 per cent said EOTC helped students achieve cultural and ethnic understandings, and data gathering and analysis skills. These findings are consistent with Boyes' and Zink's (2005) findings.

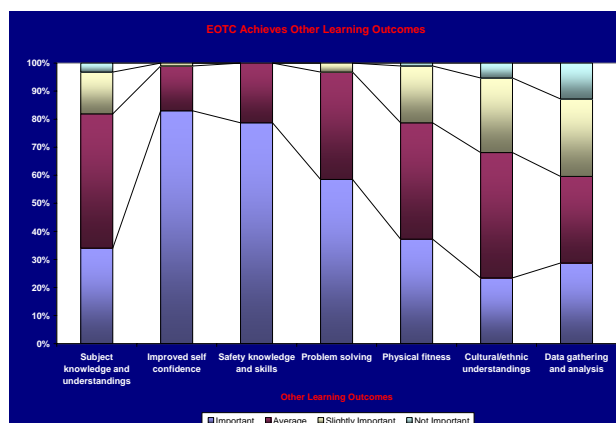


Figure 4 EOTC achieves other learning outcomes

What enables effective EOTC?

Respondents reported that many factors enable effective EOTC to occur in their

schools. Principals could choose multiple factors from the 13 options provided. Figure 5 shows the five main 'enablers' that emerged:

- school's safety management being consistent with the *Safety and EOTC* (2002) guidelines;
- well trained and qualified providers (eg, outdoor instructors);
- well trained and qualified school staff
- access to transportation; and
- the belief that EOTC was an effective means of teaching and learning.

Other frequently reported 'enablers' were: resourcing decisions in the school that supported EOTC; the value teachers place on EOTC for curriculum delivery and enrichment; and access to EOTC local venues and locations.

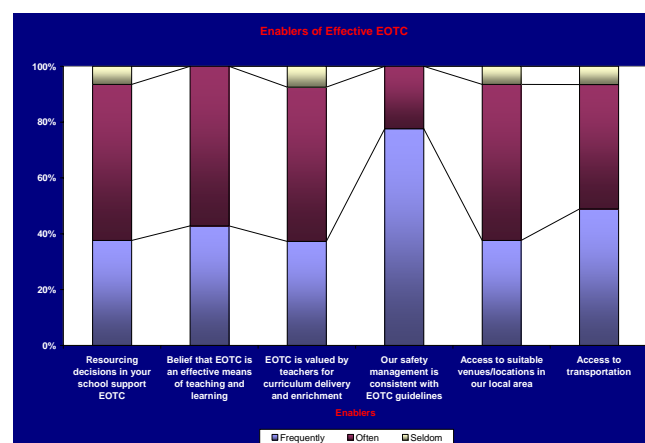


Figure 5 Enablers of effective EOTC

What are the barriers to quality EOTC?

Schools reported a range of barriers that get in the way of quality EOTC. Principals could choose multiple factors from the 14 options provided. Figure 6 shows the six factors that emerged as barriers to quality EOTC frequently or often. Students missing lessons in other subjects, teachers missing teaching time in other subjects and curriculum pressures are the three main barriers to quality EOTC occurring. These were identified by approximately 60 per cent of schools.

Given the structure of secondary schooling, with subject specialist teachers and timetabling of classes, it is not surprising that students and teachers missing lessons is seen as a significant barrier to quality EOTC occurring in many secondary schools. Curriculum pressures were one of the reasons the ministry embarked on the curriculum stock-take and subsequent curriculum review project (Ministry of Education 2002b).

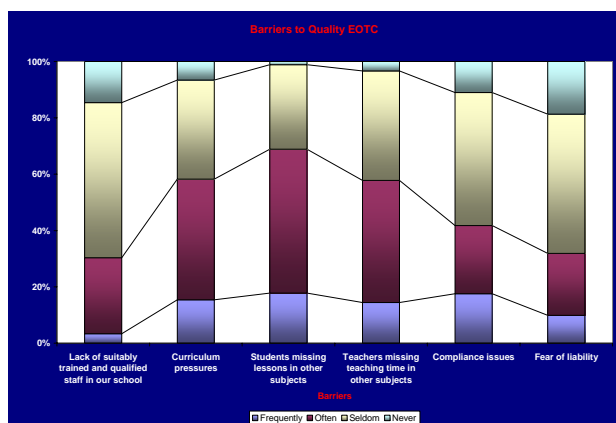


Figure 6 Barriers to quality EOTC

A further three barriers to quality EOTC were reported by over 30 per cent of schools: compliance issues, fear of liability and lack of suitably trained and qualified staff.

The Ministry recognises that schools work in a complex compliance environment. Reducing compliance by reducing the amount of administration principals have to do, will give them more time to be the professional education leader in the school. The ministry wants to move toward a system characterised increasingly by high trust and low compliance (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Schools' fear of liability escalates when there are media reports on outdoor recreation incidents. Even when an incident has not occurred in a school, media reporting can have a negative affect on schools' confidence to run EOTC activities (Haddock & Sword, 2004). To counter such effects, the Ministry of Education and sector groups could work with the media so they are aware of their impact on EOTC when they report incidents the way they do.

A lack of suitably trained and qualified staff is a risk to the safety of EOTC programmes. There is still work to be done in many schools to reduce this risk.

Further research is required to determine the extent to which these and other factors affect the quality of EOTC in schools.

Schools do review their EOTC programmes

The majority (80%) of schools surveyed self-review their EOTC programmes. However, only ten per cent are seeking external feedback from their peers in similar schools or from an independent auditor such as a member of the register of outdoor safety auditors (ROSA). A small number of schools engage in self and external reviews of their EOTC programmes.

Independent external feedback is a valuable way of keeping up with current, accepted practices in EOTC and fostering a culture of safety and quality in EOTC programmes. To keep costs down, schools can arrange a reciprocal peer review with a similar local school. Schools with extensive outdoor education programmes can consider attaining OutdoorsMark, the national outdoor safety quality assurance scheme designed specifically for organisations involved in outdoor education, recreation, and adventure programmes (Outdoors New Zealand, 2004).

Personnel

Who delivers EOTC?

Not surprisingly, Figure 7 shows that teachers teach and supervise most EOTC programmes in secondary schools. Contracted staff, such as qualified outdoor instructors, assist in the delivery of 84 per cent of programmes. In addition, support staff assist with 60 per cent and adult volunteers, such as parents and tertiary students, assist with 68 per cent of EOTC programmes. Senior students assist with 54 per cent of secondary schools' EOTC programmes.

Due to the nature of EOTC experiences and the increased possibility of risk, a greater number of leaders and/or supervisors is usually required than for in-classroom learning experiences. Having suitably experienced and qualified leaders and supervisors is particularly important for activities involving risk such as outdoor education activities. To help manage this need for extra leaders and supervisors, schools usually involve outdoor instructors, parents and whanau as extra support for EOTC activities. This can help build strong partnerships between home, schools and the community, a key component of personalising learning (Ministry of Education, 2007).

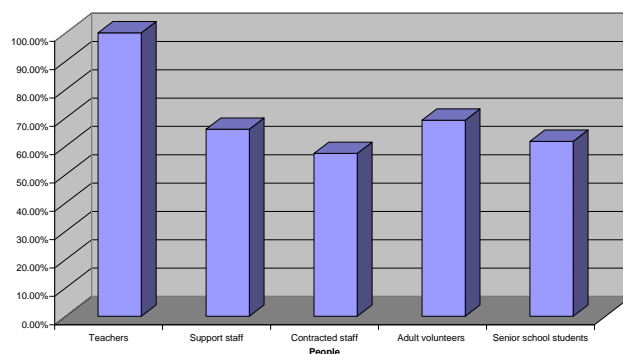


Figure 7 Team involved in EOTC

Staff expertise (experience, training and qualifications)

An important factor in EOTC safety and quality is having appropriate ratios of competent supervisors to students. Ensuring that supervisors are competent for the job is also key.

Competence includes experience, training and qualifications. Some competencies are relevant to all EOTC activities, for example, first aid and risk management skills. Other competencies such as ropes course training or bush skills are specific to certain activities. Teachers and other supervisors need competencies that are relevant to the specific EOTC activities they are responsible for leading or supporting.

Staff EOTC Experience

All schools surveyed reported that one or more of their staff had experience in a wide range of EOTC activities. Figure 8 shows that almost all schools reported that one or more staff had experience in first aid (93%) and risk management (90%). Figure 8 also shows that schools had one or more staff with experience in overnight camps (94%), science and biology field trips (90%), sport (89%), geography field trips (87%), visits to local venues such as parks, libraries, museums and zoos (82-86%), and environmental studies (71%).

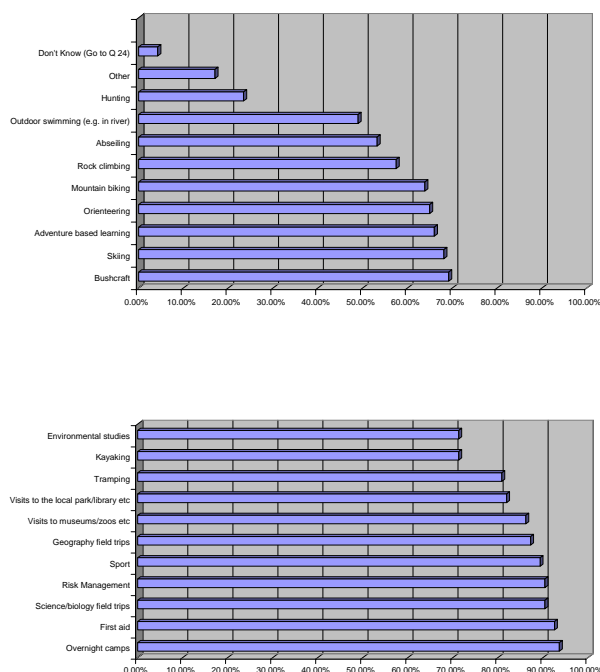


Figure 8 Staff experience

Many schools had one or more staff with experience in outdoor education activities such

as tramping (81%), kayaking (71%), bushcraft (69%), skiing (68%), adventure based learning (66%), orienteering (65%), mountain biking (64%), rock climbing (57%) and abseiling (53%).

Outdoor Training

Schools reported a range of outdoor training that one or more of their staff had completed or would like to do. Figure 9 shows that one or more staff had completed outdoor training in school camp organisation (88%), Safety and EOTC professional development (85%), risk management (79%), ropes course (74%), adventure based learning (70%), curriculum based EOTC (70%) or environmental sustainability (57%). Up to 45 per cent of schools reported one or more of their staff would like to do outdoor training, in particular: environmental sustainability (43%), adventure based learning (30%), curriculum-based EOTC (29%), ropes course (26%), risk management (20%), Safety and EOTC professional development (15%), and school camp organisation (12%).

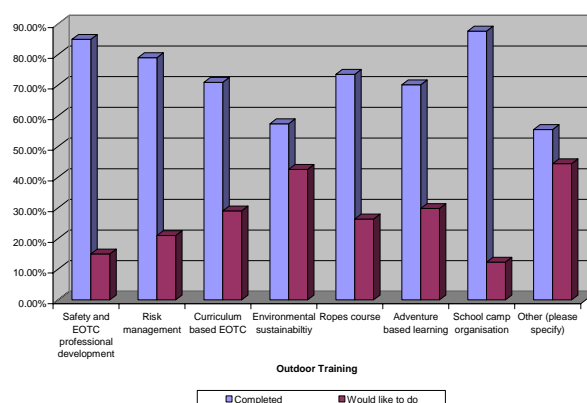


Figure 9 Outdoor training

Relevant Outdoor Qualifications

Schools reported a range of outdoor qualifications that one or more of their staff had completed or would like to have. Figure 10 shows that a first aid qualification was held by at least one staff member in over 90 per cent of schools. An outdoor first aid qualification was held by at least one staff member in 80% of schools.

Many schools reported that one or more of their staff had completed other outdoor qualifications such as the flat water kayak award (59%), Rock 1 (55%), Kayak 1 (53%), Bush 1 (45%), Sea Kayak 1 (43%), outdoor leader (36%), or the sport climbing award (30%).

Schools indicated that one or more of their staff would like to have the following

qualifications/awards which are offered by various providers: Sport climbing (70%); Outdoor Leader (64%); Sea Kayak 1 (57%); Bush 1 (55%); Kayak 1 (47%); Rock 1 (45%); or Flat Water Kayak (41%).

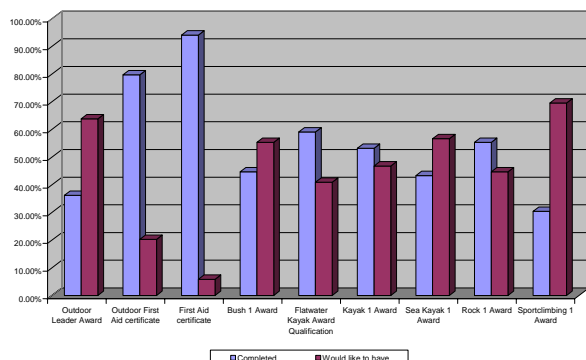


Figure 10 Outdoor qualifications

Conclusions

EOTC is very much a part of school life in New Zealand schools with large numbers of students participating in EOTC experiences throughout their secondary years (9-13).

EOTC strongly supports student learning in all eight essential learning areas (English, Health and Physical Well-being, Languages, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, Technology and The Arts). This survey affirms EOTC as a valuable learning and teaching tool across the curriculum. EOTC activities provide opportunities for integrated learning. For example, the underlying philosophy of one school's outdoor education programme:

is that the students are on a journey ... the physical journey of moving from campsite to campsite, and the journey from one activity to another.

The Year 10 students ... are involved in a range of activities over a week long camp, including tramping, mountain biking, climbing, abseiling, orienteering/navigation, river crossing, low and high ropes courses and tubing.

Each student is required to keep a journal over the course of the week and must also complete field exercises related to maths, science and social studies. The students are also responsible ... for their own cooking.

The journey had a great impact on students,

... the most important outcome of the camps is the ability of students to work together and to get

along.

... student evaluations consistently show students' views improve after the camps. "Back at school you see a marked improvement in their attitude to one another ... quite often kids that don't really feature in the classroom will shine outdoors and get a new appreciation from the other students".
(Tringham, 2006).

The schools surveyed felt EOTC was also important in achieving four of the five key competencies in the *Draft NZ Curriculum* (2006): managing self, relating to others, participating and contributing and thinking. The nature of EOTC experiences provides many opportunities for students to develop the key competencies in real-life situations. These key competencies cut across all essential learning areas and are important for life-long learning. Alton-Lee (2002) identified the need for students to:

... have sufficient and appropriate opportunities to support their learning...

Particularly strong impacts on students are evident in a range of out-of-school applications, authentic activities and outdoor education and adventure programmes.

... students need curriculum-appropriate opportunities to practice and apply their new learning. Opportunities for authentic applications through links to real-life contexts in or out-of-school can have significant and sustained impacts on student knowledge, attitudes, self-esteem, independence and confidence (pp 60-61).

The survey results confirm most of Alton-Lee's findings. Schools reported that EOTC was important in helping students achieve a wide range of learning outcomes. These findings contribute to the Minister of Education's priorities of effective teaching, foundations and knowledge, and healthy and confident kids.

The survey showed strong evidence of EOTC being used as an effective pedagogical tool. It also identified factors in the school environment that enable EOTC to be used as such a tool. It appears that EOTC is strongly supported and valued in the schools surveyed. It also appears that most of the schools are up-to-speed in their safety management practices and have ready access to EOTC venues in their local areas. However, these results also show that there are significant barriers to effective EOTC. Relevant EOTC experience, training and qualifications are lacking for teachers in some of the schools surveyed. There is work to be done to support teachers to gain relevant experience, training and

qualifications in the EOTC activities they are leading or supporting.

The inevitable timetable disruptions that occur when EOTC cuts across teaching periods is the main barrier to quality EOTC in the secondary schools surveyed. Schools manage these tensions in many ways. For example, some schools schedule EOTC activities for a year level or across the school into the same week to minimise disruption. Others build flexibility into their weekly timetables to enable sufficient time for EOTC in some subjects.

Other barriers to quality EOTC identified by the survey – curriculum pressures, compliance issues and fear of liability are the same as those previously identified by the Ministry of Education and sector groups as a general hindrance to effective school management (Haddock & Sword, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2002b).

A recent international review of literature on outdoor learning, that included New Zealand research (Rickinson *et al*, 2004), produced key messages for education policy and practice:

Policy makers need to consider ways to:

- *tackle barriers that stand in the way of provision of effective outdoor learning for all students*
- *support research, development and training so that good practice can be understood, disseminated and supported*

The review raises questions for policy makers, including:

- *to what extent are there policies in place that promote high quality outdoor education as an entitlement for all students at both primary and secondary schools?*
- *to what extent do curriculum and assessment policies fully support outdoor education?*
- *in what ways can the expertise and confidence of new and experienced teachers be improved through pre-service, in-service and leadership training?*

Staff expertise is paramount to safety and quality learning through EOTC. The survey has shown that while schools have staff with experience in a wide range of EOTC activities, they also have staff that would like to do training and gain qualifications in various outdoor activities relevant to their work. Strengthening staff training and qualifications in EOTC is likely to have a positive effect on the quality of EOTC and a school's confidence that it is meeting current, accepted practice and legal requirements. This may subsequently

reduce their fear of something going wrong during an EOTC activity and any subsequent liability.

Key areas for further development

Ministry of Education:

- Identify clear pathways for teachers to gain experience, training and qualifications relevant to the EOTC activities they lead in their schools.
- Provide support for teachers to gain experience, training and qualifications relevant to the EOTC activities they lead in their schools.
- Work with principal groups to identify exemplars of school organisation that minimise the tension between EOTC participation and disruption to timetabling.
- Move towards a relationship with schools that is increasingly characterised by high trust and low compliance.
- Provide professional leadership guidance to support schools to implement effective EOTC safety management systems that are consistent with the *Safety and EOTC* guidelines.
- Work with the media to establish a protocol for reporting on EOTC incidents.
- Conduct research on the quality of delivery of EOTC and how EOTC contributes to presence, engagement and achievement in NZ schools.
- Repeat the EOTC survey 3 yearly to monitor the national picture of EOTC and provide an evidence base to inform policy, practice and actions to improve the quality of EOTC programmes.

Secondary schools:

- Support your staff to gain experience, training and qualifications relevant to the EOTC activities they lead or support (for information about outdoor qualifications, see page 9, of this report, References: Outdoors NZ, 2007, *NZ Practical Outdoor Leader Qualifications*).
- Ensure your safety management systems are consistent with the *Safety and EOTC* guidelines and that they are reflected in your practices - to reduce the likelihood of liability.
- Arrange external feedback to check that your EOTC programme meets current accepted practices. Consider reciprocal peer review with a similar local school, or an independent audit, for example OutdoorsMark (for information about OutdoorsMark, see page 9 of this report, References: Outdoors NZ, 2004).

- Continue to manage timetables and curriculum pressures to enable quality teaching and learning through EOTC.
- Continue to encourage teachers to use EOTC to achieve learning across the eight essential learning areas, and the five draft key competencies.
- Continue to build support for EOTC in your school community through involving parents/whanau in EOTC programmes and identifying local community venues and resources to include in your EOTC programme.

Acknowledgements

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- The 60 principals, 8 deputy principals, 18 EOTC co-ordinators and 7 outdoor education heads of department who took the time to complete this survey. Your insights and knowledge have provided valuable data for schools and the Ministry of Education to better understand the current strengths, challenges and needs for providing quality EOTC programmes in New Zealand schools.
- The Ministry's EOTC Reference Group developed and distributed the survey and reviewed draft reports. Members include:
 - NZ Principals Federation, Pat Newman and Bill Sutton
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 - Education Outdoors NZ, Arthur Sutherland
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EOTC Snapshots

Dannevirke High School (Decile 4)



'A talk ... about ... tourism developments and the conflict for resources between power, farming and tourism concluded a very educational day.' **Teacher**

... the forest production manager took us ... to sites where we saw planting, releasing, pruning and trimming, saw-milling, and using a giant waratah logger that cut, trimmed and piled up trees into heaps. **Student**



... the silica terraces were neat. They had these amazing colours and mud pools. **Student**

We were ... on the edge of the Whangaehu River where the lahar from Ruapehu's crater lake surged down on Sunday. **Student**

The historical sites were visited, the museum tours completed and the requisite learning objectives met ... the memories and the experiences ... will stay with this group forever. Horizons ... have now been widened immeasurably for the future. **Teacher**



On the trip to ANZAC Cove, Chanuk Bair, Lone Pine Ridge and Hill 61 we found memorials and graves of men from the Dannevirke area who lost their lives at Gallipoli. It was an overwhelming feeling to be in the presence of the 87,000 or more who died there. **Student**

We've been there and experienced that, not just read about it! **Student**

Secondary students from seven schools in Canterbury and Marlborough have taken part in a successful education conservation project. The project involves ... leadership skills ... planning, decision making, risk management, hands-on conservation, critical thinking and reflection, data management and promotion, clearing tracks, monitoring snails, birds and wetas, tracking predators, and cleaning up historic sites. **Principal**

'My approach to student centred learning and experiential type learning has changed. It took me a while to get my head around that style of teaching, and I have seen other teachers come out who also have a traditional classroom-based teaching experience coming away quite enthused about a different way of teaching.' **Teacher**

'It was really great having responsibility most of the time, it was not just the teachers taking control. I think the system worked because everyone pulled their weight and was encouraged to lead.' **Student**