

Qualworx article

Christian Camping working together on safety

Christian Camping New Zealand is drawing on the expertise within its organisation to adapt to the new safety legislation, so that more camps can keep delivering amazing experiences to Kiwi kids.

William Drury-Turnbull is centre manager of the Waipara Adventure Centre in Canterbury, a progressive camp that is constantly on the lookout for new, safe ways to help young people learn and grow in the outdoors.

A veteran outdoor recreation instructor, William drew on his own knowledge and experience to develop the camp's original Safety Management System (SMS). He refined the system over time, researching, looking at international examples and keeping an eye on trends and patterns. In 2014, Waipara successfully completed its first OutdoorsMark audit.

Then in 2017, Waipara updated its SMS to match the current Adventure Activities Regulations format. Every year, the camp reviews and updates the system, making sure to involve staff throughout the process.

The camps in the Christian Camping network are situated in some of the most stunning corners of New Zealand, William says. While 23 of the sites have worked hard to meet all requirements of an OutdoorsMark audit and have completed the process, several other sites have chosen to contract in services for outdoor activities.

For that reason, CCNZ has formed a central group including William and a few other CCNZ members with higher-level outdoor qualifications, which aims to help other camps get through the safety audit and compliance process, as staff change and the workforce needs regular refreshers on policies.

"We can do a pre-assessment of camps, sort of coaching them really, before they go for their OutdoorsMark. So we're preparing them, and helping them to not be fearful of the process."

William has helped other camps in writing their SMS, assisted with programme and activity development, and helped with risk management and assessment.

"I've got an open door policy for my peers within CCNZ, that says: If you want help, just ask and you'll get it. And if I don't know, there are a lot of others within the network who will!"

Skills Active has also agreed to give CCNZ's technical advisors, like William, some training on the audit process and standards, so they can better advise those going through the process.

William says he feels honoured to be part of a team that is supporting the organisation as a whole, and helping to shape its contribution to outdoor recreation in New Zealand. He adds that he loves coming to work every day and getting to be involved with young people and their development.

“I have worked with youth at risk for many years and saw people’s lives change hugely. So I learnt a long time ago the power of the outdoors.”