



The ACT entices with a plethora of diverse outdoor adventures to experience

With the fires of 2019/2020 and COVID-19 delivering dramatic losses to the ACT tourism industry over the past 12-18 months, and international tourism still non-existent, local outdoor operators throughout the ACT have had it tough. However, [Outdoors NSW & ACT](#), the peak body supporting the outdoor recreation, education and adventure tourism, and Canberra Tourism, have joined forces to encourage the NSW community to explore the wonders of the nation's capital; to not only help revitalise the local economy, but also to take the time to reconnect, regroup and recharge in the great outdoors.

The diversity of outdoor experiences on offer in the ACT is what makes it the ideal destination for anyone who wishes to revel in fresh air and enjoy wide open spaces.

Lori Modde, CEO of Outdoors NSW & ACT, explained more than half of the ACT is a protected nature reserve.

"The native beauty on offer across the ACT is quite incredible. Whether you like to cycle or mountain bike, float along in a hot air balloon, go horse riding, jump in a boat, climb facades, paddle rivers, fish in lakes and camp or stay in some of the most significant and beautiful bushland in Australia, ACT's outdoor tourism operators need the support of our domestic neighbours now more than ever.

"We encourage families, couples, groups of friends and individuals to come and experience the gorges, waterfalls, lookouts, mountains, native animals and scenic flora. With international borders closed for the foreseeable future, come and explore what our capital has to offer," said Ms Modde.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a raft of negative physical and mental health impacts throughout society; with increased anxiety, depression, isolation, sedentary behaviour, harmful alcohol consumptions and Vitamin D insufficiency, to name a few; GPs, psychologists and physiotherapists have joined the call for people to take accountability for their wellbeing and simply get outdoors.



“As we head into the cooler months it’s especially important that we focus on getting active outdoors as much as possible. With 1 in 4 Australians deficient in Vitamin D, which is critical for healthy bones, teeth and muscles, the easiest way to boost your vitamin D is simply to be in the sun as your skin will manufacture its own vitamin D. Plus it helps to be more active, get fresh air and avoid pandemic risks being indoors if there are active outbreaks” said Dr Kevin Cheng, a GP and Founder of Osana.

Dr Kirsten Hunter, clinical psychologist also weighed in on the conversation, explaining how the restrictions to social gatherings, periods of lockdown, cancellation of school camps and generally less human contact has affected the mental wellbeing of kids.

“Our contact with the world-at-large over the past 12 months has predominantly been through a computer screen, especially for our kids. This is why leaving our concrete walls and being immersed in nature is more important than ever before. Exercise and engaging in the great outdoors is a key ingredient in honouring our body and mind; it’s our natural and very effective form of antidepressant. Just short periods immersed in nature can improve mood, boost creativity and drive productivity, while for families it can neutralise stress and improve family communication, leading to healthier, more balanced lives,” said Dr Hunter.

The ACT has a range of outdoor pursuits, suitable for all budgets, skill levels and ages; where visitors can reap the full range of mental and physical health benefits.

Sitting right in the heart of Canberra are the [Jerrabomberra Wetlands](#), a waterbird wonderland that hosts a diverse panorama of plant and animal life, including over 170 different bird species. With walking tracks, boardwalks and refurbished bird hides, visitors can enjoy their time completely immersed in nature admiring wildlife without interrupting their habitat or natural behaviours.

Alternatively, visitors can be one with nature with twilight and night time tours at [Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary](#). Getting up close and personal with species we thought lost to society, the whole family will love spotting Eastern Bettong's, Eastern



Quoll, some Bush Stone-curlews and maybe some New Holland Mice, you'll also get to learn about why their existence is so important to the woodland habitat.

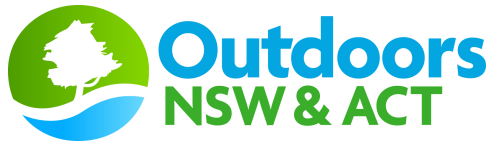
On a unique family property in the Canberra Region visitors will find [Burnlee Horse Riding](#), where getting back to nature on horseback is suitable for all levels of riding experience, including those who are absolute beginners. Explore the Australian bushland on horseback then take a short drive to the [Four Winds Vineyard](#) to enjoy a wine tasting and wood-fired pizza lunch, followed by an indulgent visit to the renowned [Robyn Rowe Chocolates](#) to guzzle down hot chocolates and brownies.

As one of the most untouched, raw and natural cities in the world there's no better way to appreciate all of the ACT's outdoor wonders than by bike. [Cycle Canberra](#) delivers bikes straight to your accommodation. Whether you want to loop through Lake Burley Griffin or choose your own adventure, bike riding gives you the freedom and luxury to do it your way, but with all the added benefits of exercise and enjoying the great outdoors!

If you prefer to be more 'city bound' visitors can try a bespoke walking tour with Marg Wade from [Canberra Secret Tours](#). From discovering local street art and artists, to learning about local history and witnessing some hidden treasures within the galleries only the 'locals' know about, these tours are your key to unlocking the heart and soul of Canberra.

"The ease of accessibility for NSW visitors to get to the ACT and experience all it has to offer makes it an attractive getaway for those wanting a change of scenery without having to travel too far.

"With Canberra only a 2 and a half hours drive from Sydney, and the call for all Australians to holiday locally this year, now's the best time to support ACT outdoor operators. It's been a tumultuous 12-18 months, it's time to start exploring the wonders in our own backyard, rather than dreaming of the more commercialised international destinations!



“With a number of airlines offering return flights to Canberra at reasonable prices, or maybe it’s time to bust out the Spotify ‘road trip playlist’ - now is definitely the time to get outdoors in the ACT!” concluded Ms Modde.

Find out more about the specials on offer across the ACT through Outdoors NSW & ACT [here](#).

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Interviews with Lori Modde, Dr Kevin Cheng and Dr Kirsten Hunter are available upon request. If you are interested in trying out any of the experiences listed, this can be arranged. Please contact Diana Abeleven at SLAM Solutions on diana@slam.solutions or 0409 580 254.

High res images can be [found here](#).





