

DEMOGRAPHICS LIVED EXPERIENCE CONFIDENCE PRIORITIES CHALLENGES
WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT NATCORR OUR RESPONSE METHOD

NATCORR SURVEY RESULTS 2026 · OCTOBER 2026

A PULSE CHECK OF THE AUSTRALIAN OUTDOOR SECTOR IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION

What 224 outdoor practitioners from across Australia told us about climate disruption, their confidence to respond, and what the sector needs next.

KEY FINDINGS

ABOUT THE DATA

FOREWORD

A WORD FROM NATCORR

The 2026 Outdoor Sector Survey gave us the opportunity to check in with the sector on its current pressure points, priorities and challenges in preparing for and responding to weather events. As we read through the results, they confirmed what we already understood: risk mitigation in the face of volatile weather events and a changing climate is both needed and urgent.

The work of NatCORR feels more relevant than ever. Over their summer, we have watched our northern hemisphere colleagues work through heatwaves, wildfires and poor air quality. People, places and processes have all been pushed to their limits, with programs cancelled, land and property lost, and a long road to recovery ahead.

Here at home, the coming summer is overshadowed by the prospect of an exceptionally strong El Niño, which will undoubtedly bring further challenges and disruptions to our sector.

We are grateful to every respondent who took the time and care to share their thoughts, challenges and priorities. Your answers help guide our work over the next three years.



Helene de Lagillardaie

Head of NatCORR



Dr Loren Miller

Executive Director, Outward Bound Australia

KEY FINDINGS

77%

of organisations had programs disrupted by weather events in the past 12 months – consistently across states, sectors and sizes.

SEE FIGURE 2.1

70%

of disrupted organisations named three or more contributing conditions. Intense rain, not heat, was cited most often.

SEE FIGURE 2.6

60%

feel confident about their access to climate and environmental information. Forecast reliability and interpretation are the main concerns.

SEE FIGURE 3.1

85.2

out of 100 – monitoring conditions is the sector's top priority, with risk management close behind. Remediation ranks last.

SEE FIGURE 4.1

32

of 101 written responses name funding and cost as the biggest barrier to adaptation, more than twice any other theme.

SEE FIGURE 5.1

+21

points in confidence among those who have attended a NatCORR workshop – the only engagement channel with a significant difference.

SEE FIGURE 7.5

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

Every chart carries an evidence note saying whether its differences are statistically significant or should be read as indicative.

ASSOCIATIONS, NOT CAUSES

Where two answers move together, that is an association. The survey cannot show that one causes the other.

SMALL GROUPS

Groups of fewer than five respondents are not shown.



01

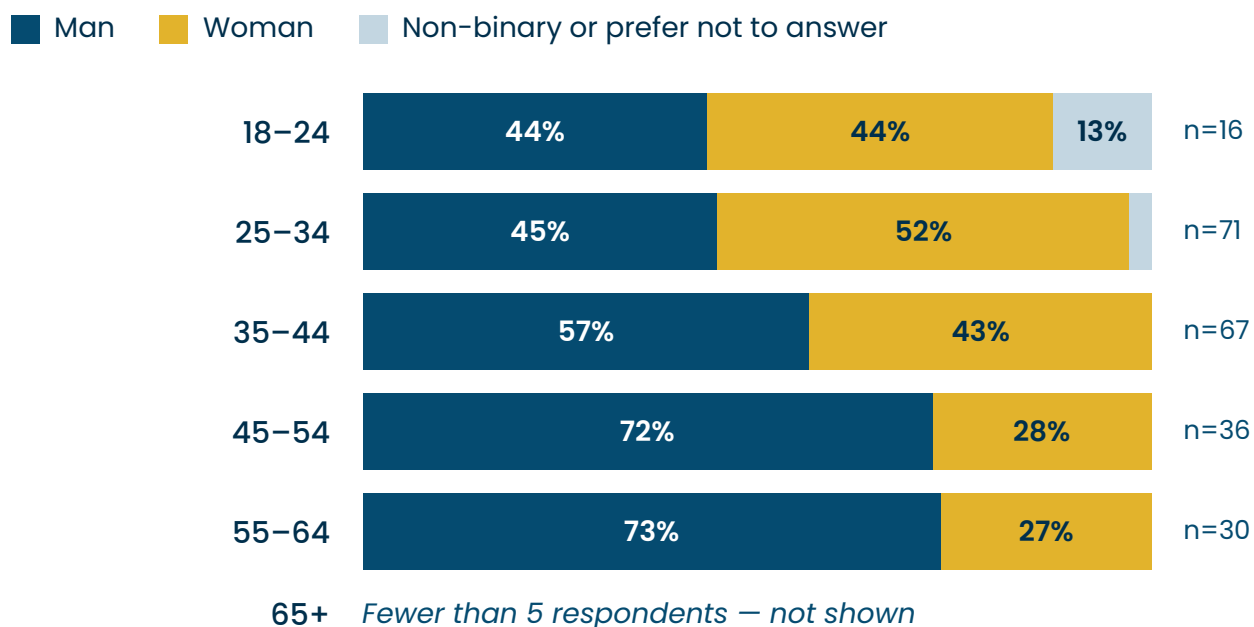
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Who answered, and how well they represent the sector.

FIGURE 1.1 · Q1 × Q2

The gender mix widens with age

Gender split of each age band



Women make up just over half of respondents aged 25–34, but only around a quarter of those aged 45 and over.

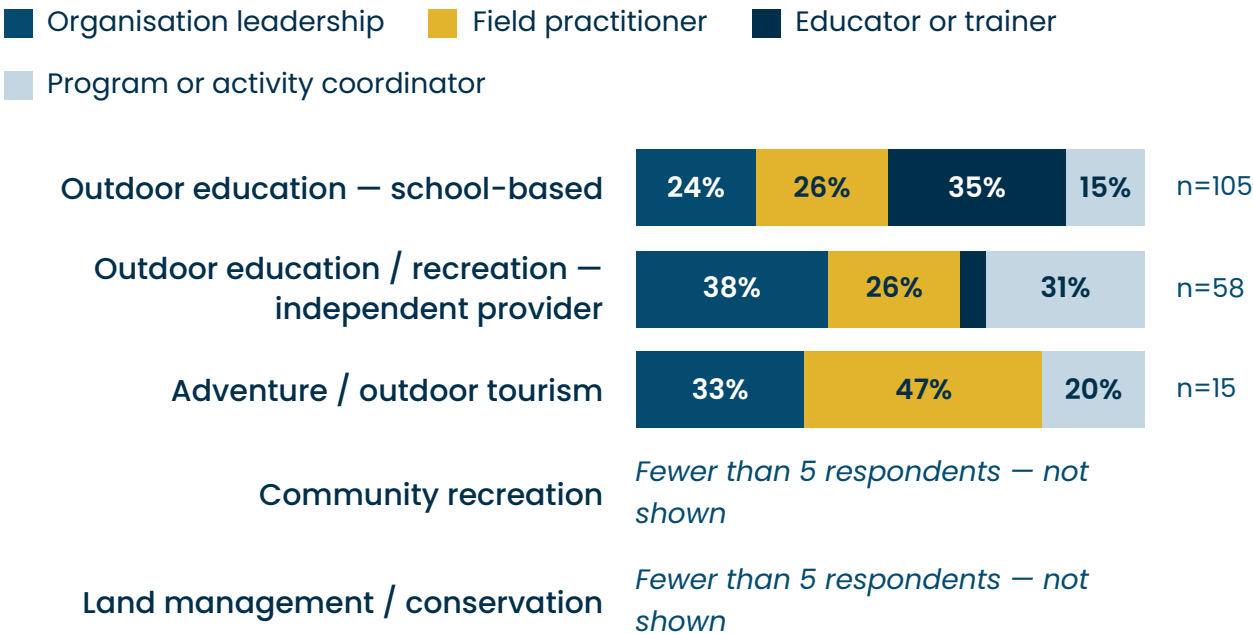
EVIDENCE **Statistically significant.** The balance of men and women differs across age bands (χ^2 test, $p = 0.04$). Tested on men and women only; the non-binary and prefer-not-to-answer group is too small to test.

n = 220 · bar length shows 100% of the respondents in each age band

FIGURE 1.2 · Q3 × Q4

The role mix varies by sector

Primary role of respondents in each sector



Educators and trainers are the largest group in school-based outdoor education; independent providers skew towards leadership and coordination roles.

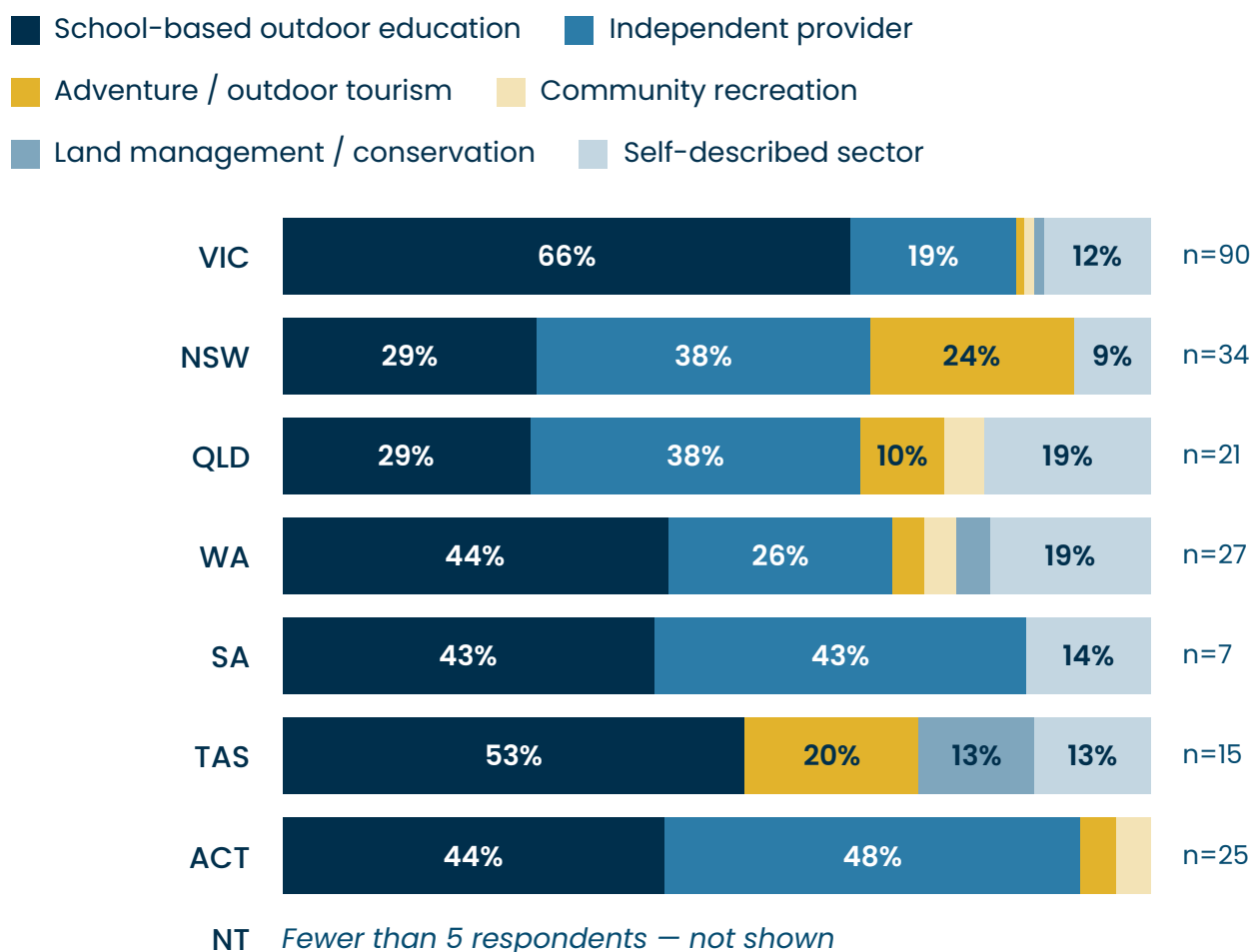
EVIDENCE **Statistically significant.** The role mix differs by sector (χ^2 test, $p < 0.001$). Several groups are small, so the test is approximate.

n = 178 · four main roles shown; peak body, researcher and self-described roles excluded · self-described sectors excluded

FIGURE 1.3 · Q4 × Q6

Each state has a different sector profile

Sector mix of respondents in each state and territory



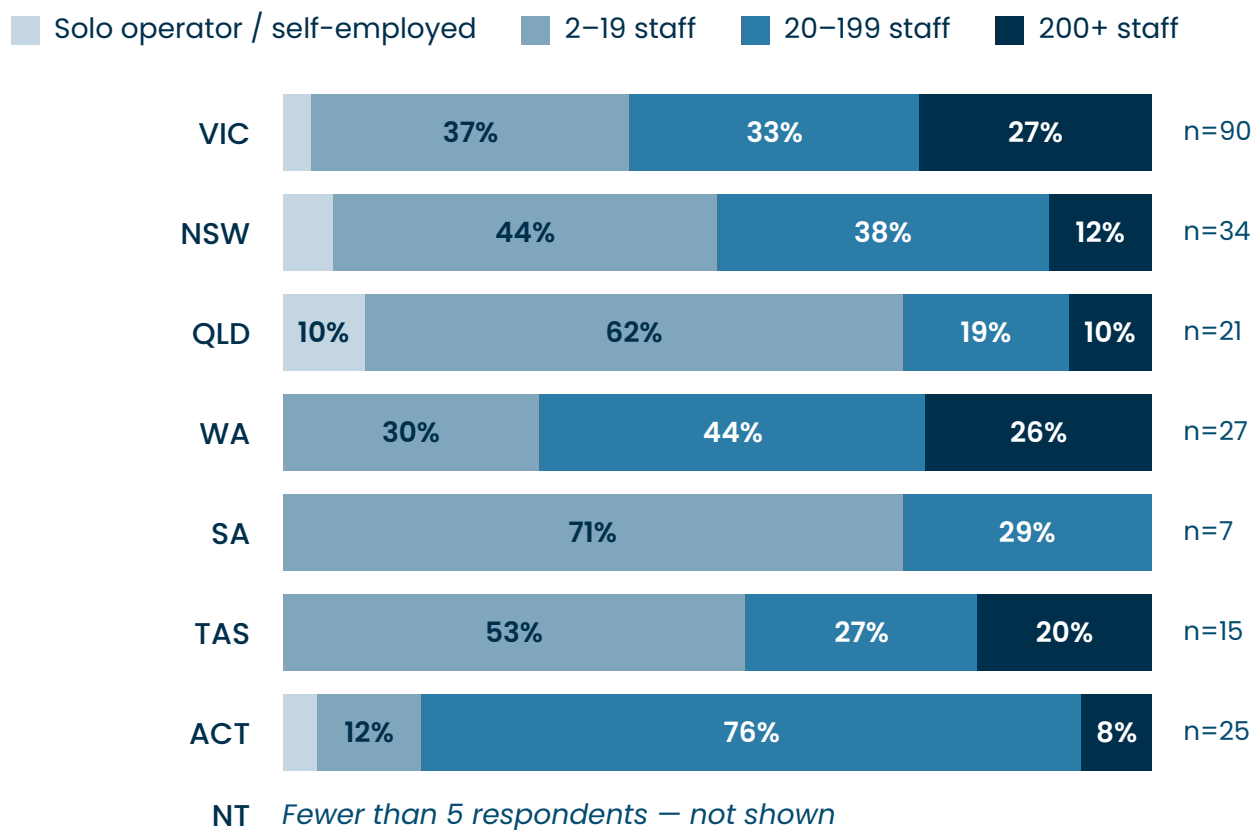
EVIDENCE **Statistically significant.** The sector mix differs by state (χ^2 test, $p < 0.001$). Several groups are small, so the test is approximate.

n = 219 · two respondents working outside Australia excluded

FIGURE 1.4 · Q5 × Q6

Organisation size by state

Size of the organisation each respondent works with most, by state and territory



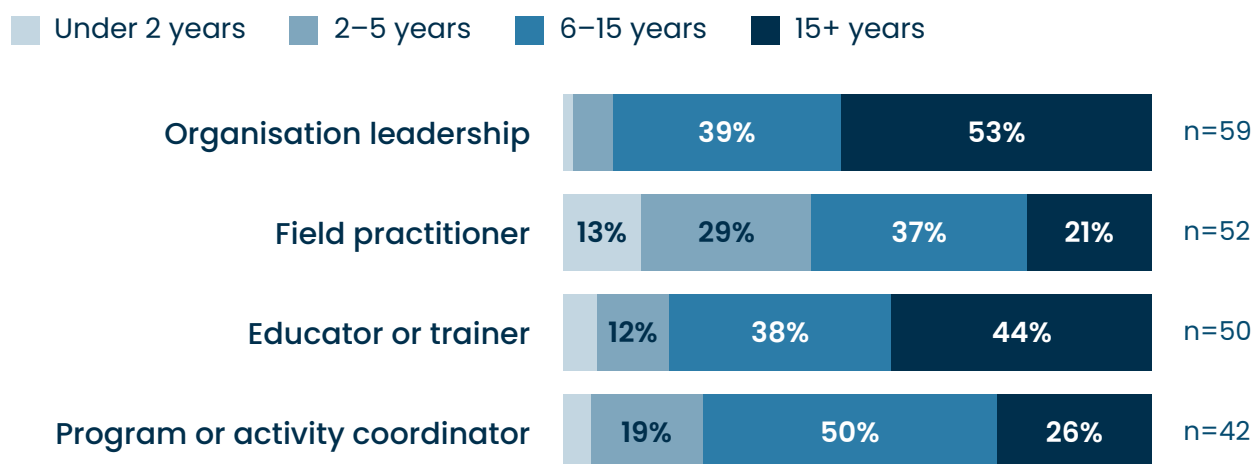
EVIDENCE **Statistically significant.** Organisation size differs by state (χ^2 test, $p = 0.006$). Several groups are small, so the test is approximate.

n = 219

FIGURE 1.5 · Q3 × Q7

Experience deepens with seniority

Years in the outdoor sector, by primary role



Over half of those in organisation leadership have more than 15 years in the sector; among field practitioners it is around one in five.

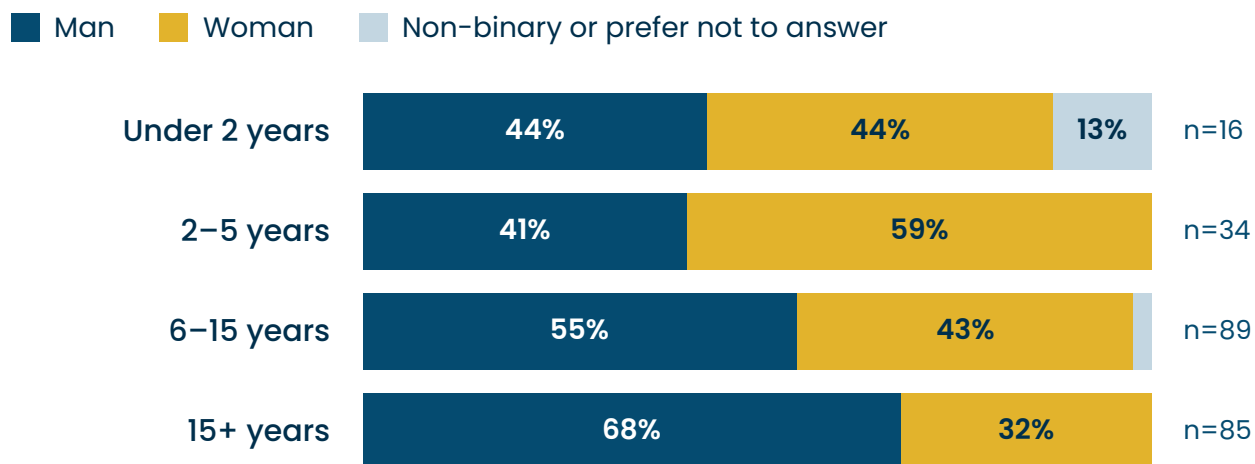
EVIDENCE **Statistically significant.** Experience differs by role (χ^2 test, $p = 0.002$). Several groups are small, so the test is approximate.

n = 203 · four main roles shown

FIGURE 1.6 · Q2 × Q7

Men outnumber women among the most experienced

Gender split of each experience band



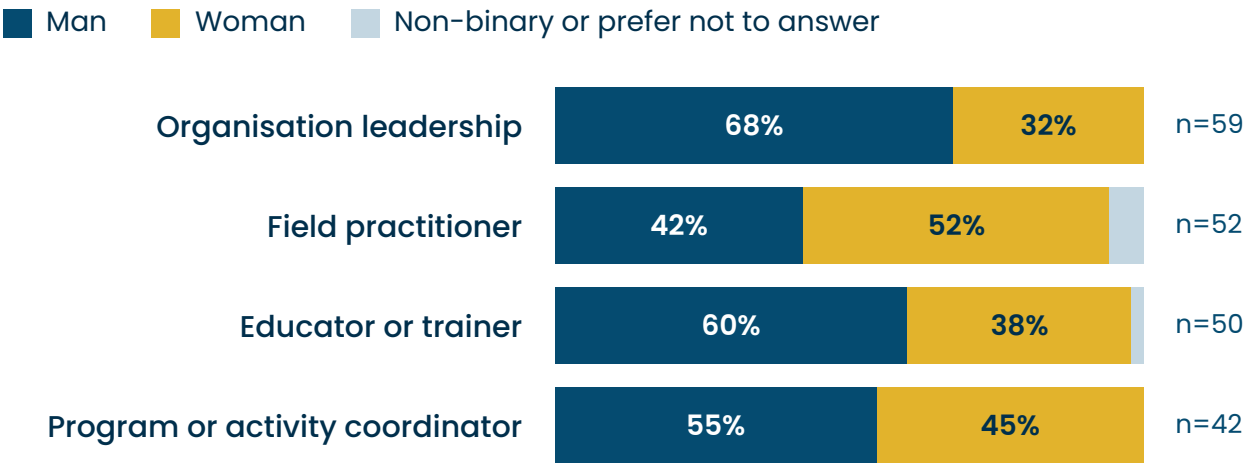
EVIDENCE **Statistically significant.** The balance of men and women differs by experience (χ^2 test, $p = 0.04$).

n = 224

FIGURE 1.7 · Q2 × Q3

Gender split across the main roles

Gender split of each primary role



Women are the majority only among field practitioners; leadership is around two-thirds men.

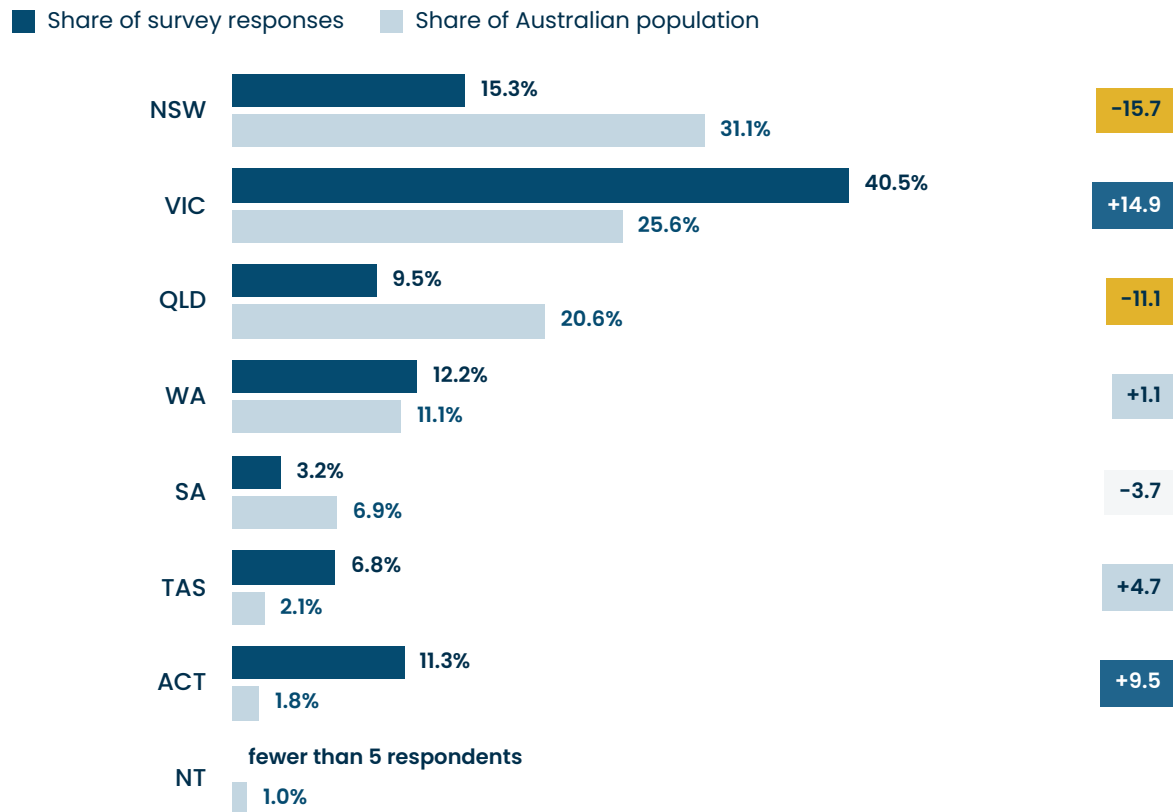
EVIDENCE **Not statistically significant** (χ^2 test, $p = 0.10$). The differences shown may be due to chance and should be read as indicative only. The pattern is suggestive but the survey is not large enough to confirm it.

n = 203 · four main roles shown

FIGURE 1.8 · Q6

Victoria and the ACT are over-represented; NSW and Queensland are not

Share of survey responses compared with share of the Australian population



Victoria supplies 40.5% of responses against 25.6% of the population, and the ACT 11.3% against 1.8%. NSW and Queensland are both under-represented by around half. State-level findings in this report lean towards Victorian experience. Population share is used here as an interim benchmark: future surveys are intended to be benchmarked against outdoor workforce figures, which better reflect where the sector actually works (see Chapter 8, section 01).

EVIDENCE Statistically significant. The distribution of responses differs from the population distribution (χ^2 goodness-of-fit test, $p < 0.001$). The outdoor workforce is not necessarily distributed like the general population, so population share is a reference point, not a target.

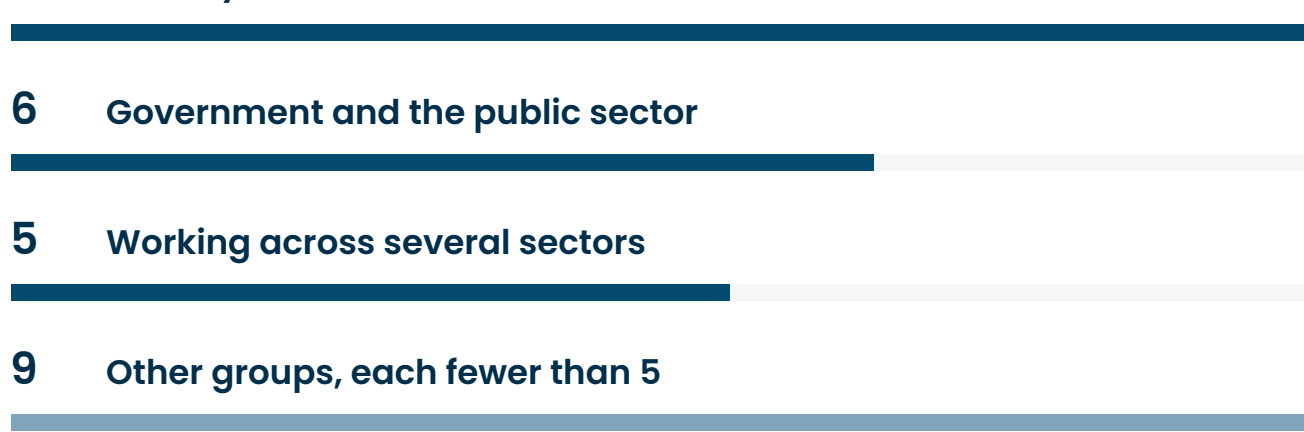
Response share of the 222 Australian-based respondents. Population share calculated from Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National, state and territory population*, population at 31 March 2026.

FIGURE 1.9 · Q4, OTHER

The self-described sectors

29 respondents described their own sector. Their answers, coded into groups

9 Tertiary and vocational education



6 Government and the public sector

5 Working across several sectors

9 Other groups, each fewer than 5

Youth, disability and wellbeing programs; camps and expeditions; cultural outdoor education and tourism; training and assessment delivery.

EVIDENCE Free-text responses were coded into themes with AI assistance, reviewed by the NatCORR team, and are paraphrased here. One response can carry several themes, so counts show how often a theme was raised — not how widely it is held across the sector. Groups with fewer than five respondents are combined to protect anonymity.

n = 29

WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT

- **Reach the groups we did not hear from.** We intend to review our survey channels and set state-based representation targets based on outdoor workforce data.
- **Redesign the survey.** We plan to add sector categories for tertiary and vocational education, government and cross-sector seasonal work, to branch questions for field practitioners and for managers and coordinators, and to add an optional question naming the organisation.
- **We aim to scope a workforce demographics project** to understand what drives professionalisation and retention in the outdoor sector — for example, why women's share falls with years of experience.

[READ OUR FULL RESPONSE IN CHAPTER 8 →](#)

02

OUR LIVED EXPERIENCE

What the past twelve months did to programs, and how organisations responded.

FIGURE 2.1 · Q10

Three in four organisations had programs disrupted by weather events

In the past 12 months, has your organisation changed, relocated, postponed or cancelled any programs or activities due to climate-related conditions?



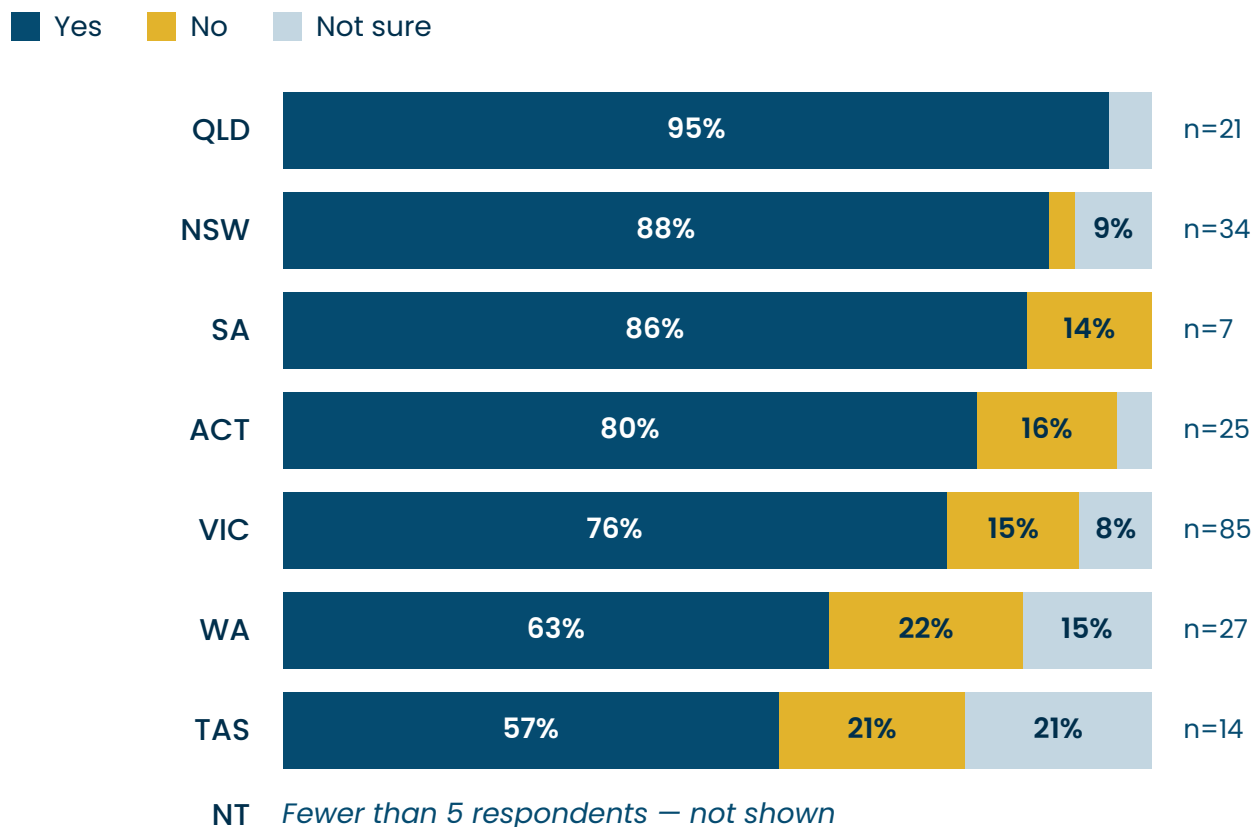
EVIDENCE A large, clear majority. With 218 responses the margin of error on the 77% figure is around ± 6 percentage points at 95% confidence.

n = 218 · six respondents did not answer · bar length is proportional to the number of responses

FIGURE 2.2 · Q10 × Q6

Disruption is felt in every state

Programs disrupted in the past 12 months, by where respondents do most of their work



Rates range from 57% in Tasmania to 95% in Queensland, but no state stands clearly apart once group size is taken into account. Disruption is a national experience.

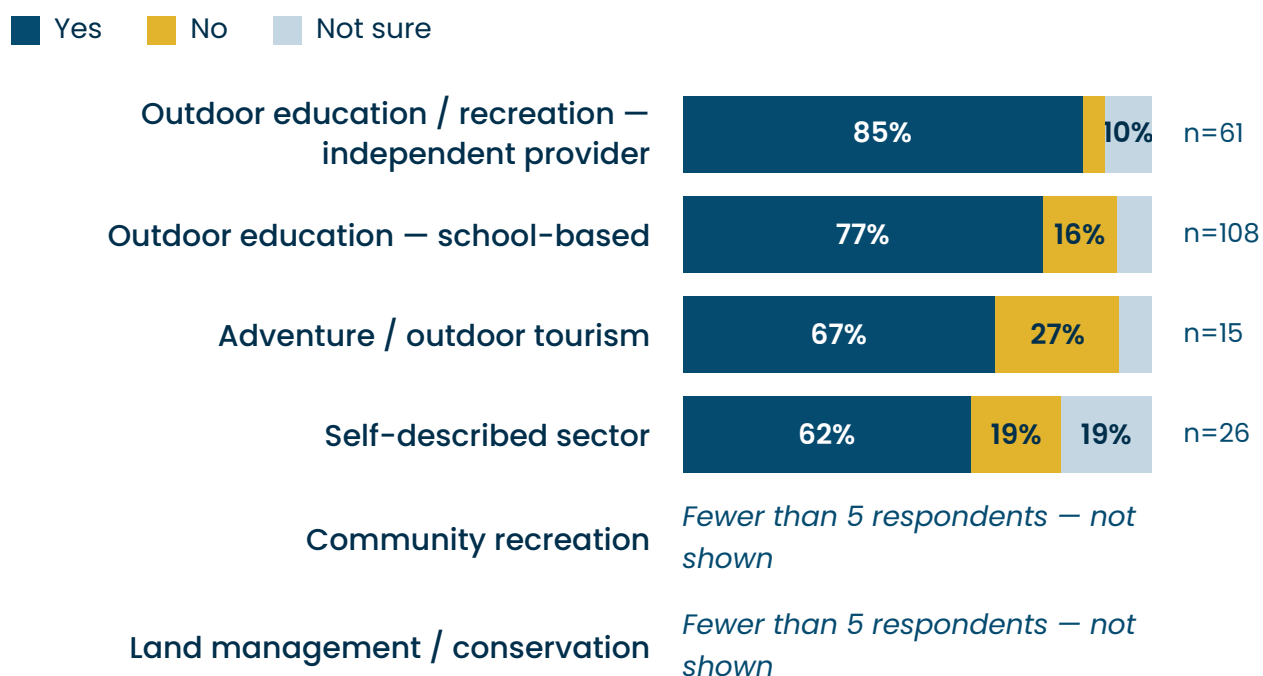
EVIDENCE **Not statistically significant** (χ^2 test, $p = 0.17$). The differences shown may be due to chance and should be read as indicative only. Several groups are small, so the test is approximate.

n = 213

FIGURE 2.3 · Q10 × Q4

Disruption is similar across sectors

Programs disrupted in the past 12 months, by sector



Independent providers report the highest rate (85%) and school-based providers 77%, but the difference is within what chance could produce.

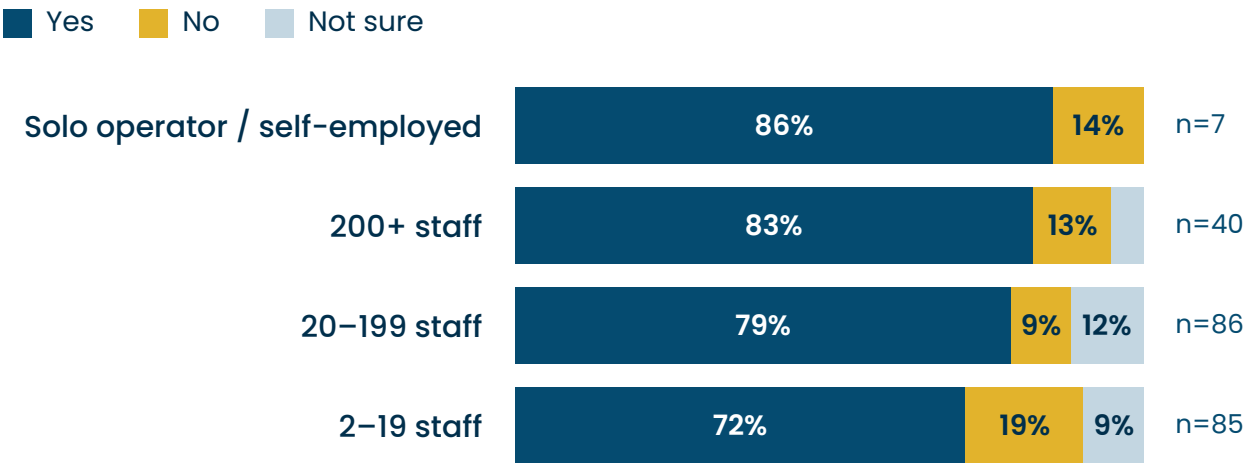
EVIDENCE **Not statistically significant** (χ^2 test, $p = 0.09$). The differences shown may be due to chance and should be read as indicative only. Several groups are small, so the test is approximate.

n = 210

FIGURE 2.4 · Q10 × Q5

Organisation size makes no measurable difference

Programs disrupted in the past 12 months, by organisation size



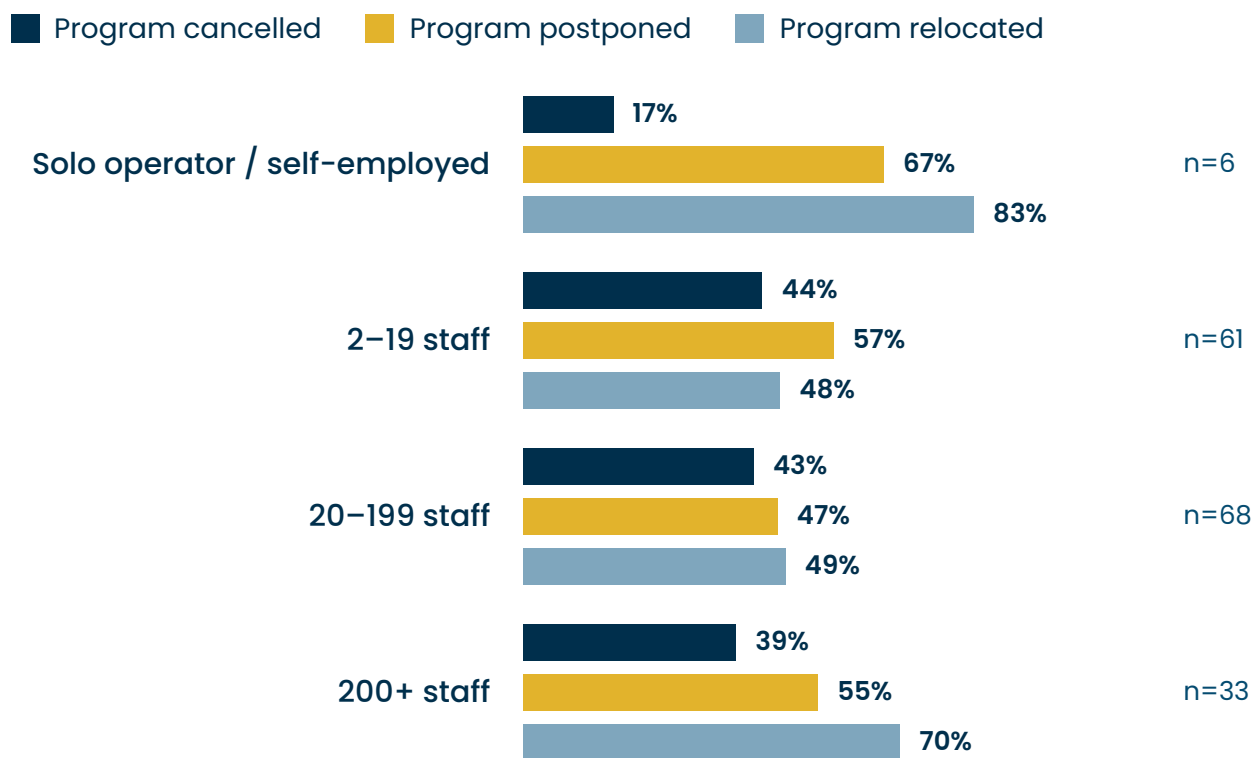
EVIDENCE **Not statistically significant** (χ^2 test, $p = 0.49$). The differences shown may be due to chance and should be read as indicative only. Several groups are small, so the test is approximate.

n = 218

FIGURE 2.5 · Q10 × Q12 × Q5

Larger organisations may relocate more often

How disrupted organisations responded, by organisation size · share at each size selecting each response



Organisations with 200 or more staff report relocating programs more often than smaller ones (70% against 48–49%), which would fit their greater access to alternative sites. The survey cannot confirm this.

EVIDENCE **No statistically significant differences** between groups on any column (χ^2 tests, all $p \geq 0.05$). Read the pattern as indicative only. Relocation comes closest ($p = 0.07$). Only six respondents are solo operators.

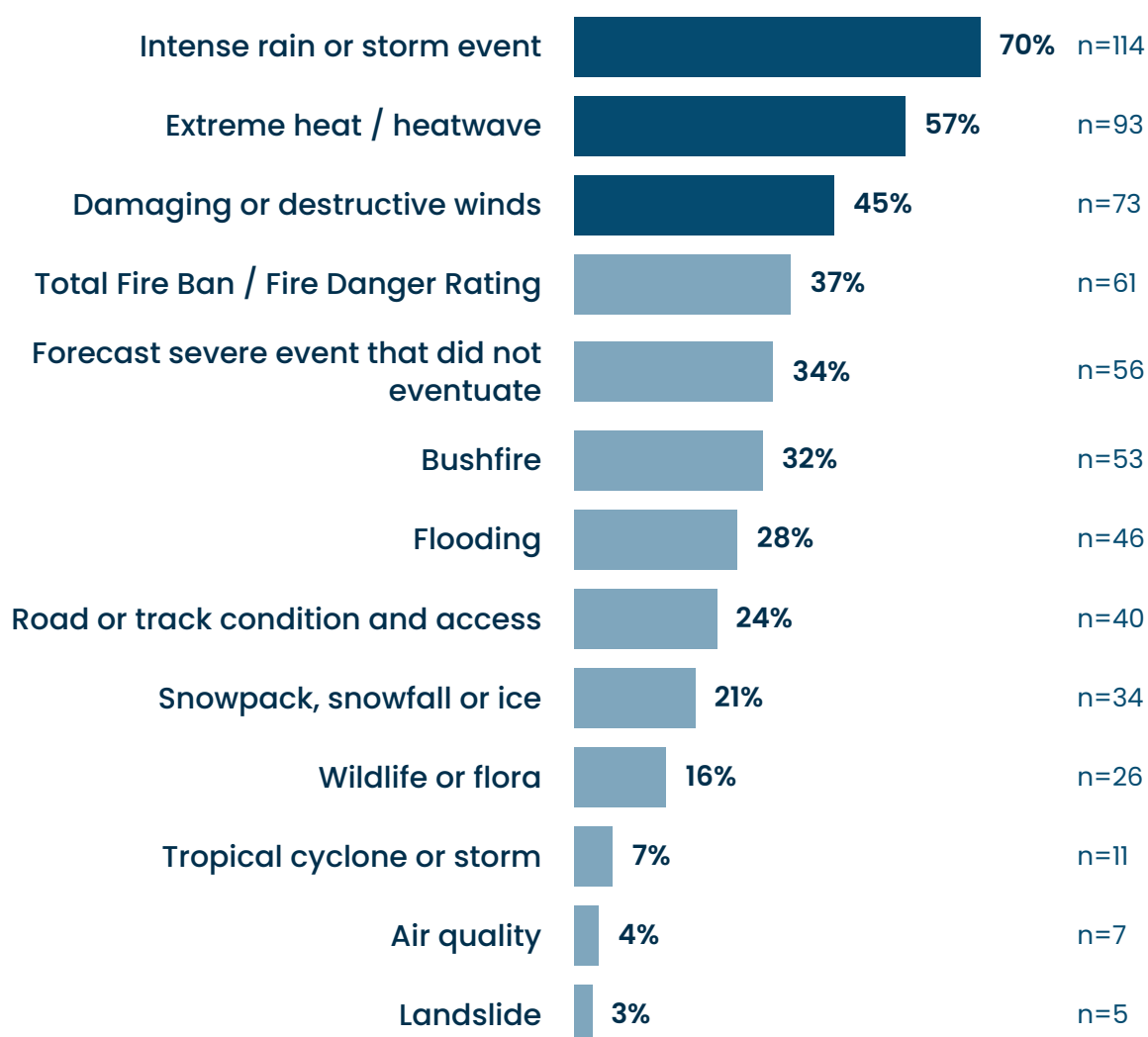
n = 168 disrupted organisations · multi-select, so bars do not sum to 100%

FIGURE 2.6 • Q11

Rain, not heat, drove the most disruption

Conditions that contributed to program changes, among the 164 disrupted organisations that named at least one

70% named three or more conditions — disruption is rarely traced to a single hazard



EVIDENCE Descriptive. Respondents could select several conditions, so shares do not sum to 100%.

n = 164

FIGURE 2.7 · Q11 × Q6

Each state faces a different mix of hazards

Share of disrupted respondents in each state who named each condition

■ Two highest in the row ■ Third ■ Remaining ■ Lowest in the row

A dark outline marks the single highest value in each row. The small figure under each value is the difference from the average row (percentage points).

	Intense rain or storm event	Extreme heat / heatwave	Damaging or destructive winds	Total Fire Ban / Fire Danger Rating	Forecast severe event that did not eventuate	Bushfire	Flooding	Road or track condition and access	Snowpack, snowfall or ice	Wildlife or flora	Tropical cyclone or storm
ALL DISRUPTED · N=164	70%	57%	45%	37%	34%	32%	28%	24%	21%	16%	7%
VIC n=63	56% -14	56% -1	51% +6	48% +10	38% +4	51% +18	16% -12	24% -1	22% +1	24% +8	2% -5
NSW n=29	90% +20	76% +19	48% +4	38% +1	38% +4	21% -12	41% +13	34% +10	14% -7	14% -2	7% +0
QLD n=20	80% +10	20% -37	20% -25	5% -32	25% -9	10% -22	50% +22	20% -4	5% -16	0% -16	25% +18
WA n=17	88% +19	53% -4	24% -21	18% -20	29% -5	18% -15	24% -5	12% -13	0% -21	6% -10	12% +5
SA n=5	60% -10	80% +23	60% +15	80% +43	40% +6	20% -12	60% +32	0% -24	0% -21	60% +44	0% -7
TAS n=8	63% -7	25% -32	50% +5	25% -12	38% +3	50% +18	25% -3	38% +13	50% +29	0% -16	0% -7
ACT n=20	65% -5	80% +23	55% +10	45% +8	20% -14	15% -17	20% -8	30% +6	50% +29	15% -1	5% -2
NT	Fewer than 5 respondents – not shown										

Heat and fire dominate in Victoria and the ACT; flooding and cyclones in Queensland; snow and ice in the ACT and Tasmania. The mix of hazards varies far more by state than the overall disruption rate does.

EVIDENCE **Statistically significant differences** between groups for: Intense rain or storm event ($p = 0.01$); Extreme heat / heatwave ($p < 0.001$); Total Fire Ban / Fire Danger Rating ($p = 0.003$); Bushfire ($p = 0.001$); Flooding ($p = 0.02$); Snowpack, snowfall or ice ($p < 0.001$); Wildlife or flora ($p = 0.01$); Tropical cyclone or storm ($p = 0.02$) (χ^2 tests). Differences in the other columns may be due to chance.

n = 164 · multi-select · SA and TAS counts are small

FIGURE 2.8 · Q11 × Q12

Fire relocates, flood postpones, forecasts cancel

How programs were changed, by the condition that caused the change · share of each condition group selecting each response

■ Two highest in the row ■ Third ■ Remaining ■ Lowest in the row

A dark outline marks the single highest value in each row. The small figure under each value is the difference from the average row (percentage points).

	Activities modified	Program relocated	Program postponed	Program cancelled	More planning or admin	Duration shortened	Increased operational costs
ALL DISRUPTED · N=168	78%	54%	53%	42%	40%	37%	31%
Intense rain or storm event n=114	86% +8	54% +1	62% +9	49% +7	49% +9	43% +6	34% +3
Extreme heat / wildfire n=93	91% +13	56% +2	68% +15	48% +7	49% +9	49% +13	37% +6
Dangerous or destructive winds n=73	89% +11	59% +5	60% +7	52% +10	55% +14	45% +8	41% +10
Total Fire Ban / Fire Danger Rating n=61	85% +7	69% +15	64% +11	51% +9	56% +15	48% +11	41% +10
Forecast severe event that did not materialise n=56	80% +2	57% +4	63% +10	57% +15	54% +13	45% +8	41% +10
Bushfire n=53	85% +7	74% +20	58% +6	53% +11	55% +14	38% +1	32% +1
Flooding n=46	85% +7	61% +7	74% +21	48% +6	52% +12	43% +7	41% +10
Road or track condition and access n=40	80% +2	68% +14	63% +10	43% +1	63% +22	30% -7	43% +12
Wetpack, snowfall or ice n=34	82% +4	68% +14	47% -6	47% +5	35% -5	24% -13	35% +4

Bushfire and fire bans lean towards relocation, flooding towards postponement, and forecasts of events that never arrived towards cancellation – the highest cancellation rate of any condition.

EVIDENCE Respondents could select several options on both questions, so the groups overlap and no significance test is possible. Read these as descriptive patterns: the differences from the average show where each group leans, not a proven effect.

n = 168 disrupted organisations

FIGURE 2.9 · Q12 × Q13

Safety and forecasts sit behind every decision

What drove each type of response · share of each response group naming each driver

■ Two highest in the row ■ Third ■ Remaining ■ Lowest in the row

A dark outline marks the single highest value in each row. The small figure under each value is the difference from the average row (percentage points).

		Safety concerns	Weather forecasts or alerts	Site closure by another party	Local agency or government advice	Client demand	Insurance requirements	Regulatory pressure	Incident during the program
ALL DISRUPTED · N=168		89%	74%	28%	26%	24%	8%	7%	6%
activities modified	n=131	93% +4	79% +5	32% +4	26% +0	26% +2	9% +1	8% +1	8% +2
program relocated	n=90	91% +2	80% +6	40% +12	26% 0	29% +5	11% +3	10% +3	8% +2
program postponed	n=89	94% +5	87% +12	37% +9	33% +7	24% 0	11% +3	11% +4	4% -1
program cancelled	n=70	87% -2	80% +6	37% +9	27% +2	27% +3	10% +2	10% +3	7% +1
More planning or admin	n=68	97% +8	88% +14	53% +25	43% +17	28% +4	12% +3	9% +2	9% +3
duration shortened	n=62	95% +6	85% +11	34% +6	29% +3	27% +4	18% +9	15% +7	6% +0
increased operational costs	n=52	94% +5	83% +8	48% +20	40% +15	29% +5	13% +5	12% +4	8% +2
additional staff required	n=26	96% +7	92% +18	54% +26	31% +5	35% +11	19% +11	15% +8	12% +6

Safety concerns and weather forecasts are cited by nearly everyone. The costlier responses — more planning and extra staff — lean towards third-party drivers such as site closures and agency advice.

EVIDENCE Respondents could select several options on both questions, so the groups overlap and no significance test is possible. Read these as descriptive patterns: the differences from the average show where each group leans, not a proven effect.

n = 168

FIGURE 2.10 · Q11 × Q13

Ground conditions bring other parties into the decision

What drove the response, by the condition that caused it

■ Two highest in the row ■ Third ■ Remaining ■ Lowest in the row

A dark outline marks the single highest value in each row. The small figure under each value is the difference from the average row (percentage points).

	Safety concerns	Weather forecasts or alerts	Site closure by another party	Local agency or government advice	Client demand	Insurance requirements	Regulatory pressure	Incident during the program
ALL DISRUPTED · N=168	89%	74%	28%	26%	24%	8%	7%	6%
Intense rain or storm event n=114	94% +5	77% +3	32% +4	26% +1	25% +1	11% +2	8% +1	8% +2
Extreme heat / wildfire n=93	95% +5	88% +14	31% +3	30% +5	25% +1	13% +5	12% +5	8% +2
Dangerous or destructive winds n=73	96% +7	88% +13	36% +8	34% +9	22% -2	11% +3	11% +4	7% +1
Total Fire Ban / Fire Danger Rating n=61	95% +6	85% +11	38% +10	30% +4	33% +9	11% +3	13% +6	10% +4
Forecast severe event that did not materialize n=56	91% +2	82% +8	36% +8	27% +1	29% +5	13% +4	9% +2	9% +3
Wildfire n=53	94% +5	83% +9	43% +15	36% +10	28% +4	9% +1	11% +4	8% +2
Logging n=46	96% +6	76% +2	46% +18	37% +11	22% -2	9% +0	9% +2	7% +1
Road or track condition and access n=40	95% +6	80% +6	48% +20	33% +7	23% -1	8% -1	0% -7	8% +2
Equipment, snowfall or ice n=34	82% -7	74% -1	26% -2	21% -5	29% +6	6% -2	6% -1	6% 0

Road and track access and flooding lean towards site closures by other parties; heat, rain and wind are more often decided internally on the forecast.

EVIDENCE Respondents could select several options on both questions, so the groups overlap and no significance test is possible. Read these as descriptive patterns: the differences from the average show where each group leans, not a proven effect.

n = 168

WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT

- **Map the sector's climate risk.** We intend to develop the inaugural climate risk assessment for the outdoor sector, based on the National Climate Risk Assessment framework, and to analyse each state's weather, climate and natural disaster data to understand which hazards each location is most exposed to.
- **Equip organisations for their local hazards.** We aim to develop state-based resources, templates and action plans that reflect local thresholds, and new Outdoor Risk Intelligence (ORI) modules such as UV and air quality.
- **Strengthen our partnerships.** We aim to grow the sector's mentorship and resilience network, and to work with the Bureau of Meteorology, National Parks and the emergency and disaster management sector through two-way communication.

READ OUR FULL RESPONSE IN CHAPTER 8 →

03

CONFIDENCE INDEX

How confident the sector is in its information, and in its ability to adapt.

FIGURE 3.1 · Q14

Six in ten feel confident about their access to information

Do you feel confident about your access to climate and environmental information to make operational decisions?

Yes — confident

60%

130 responses

Partially

35%

75 responses

Not confident

5%

11 responses

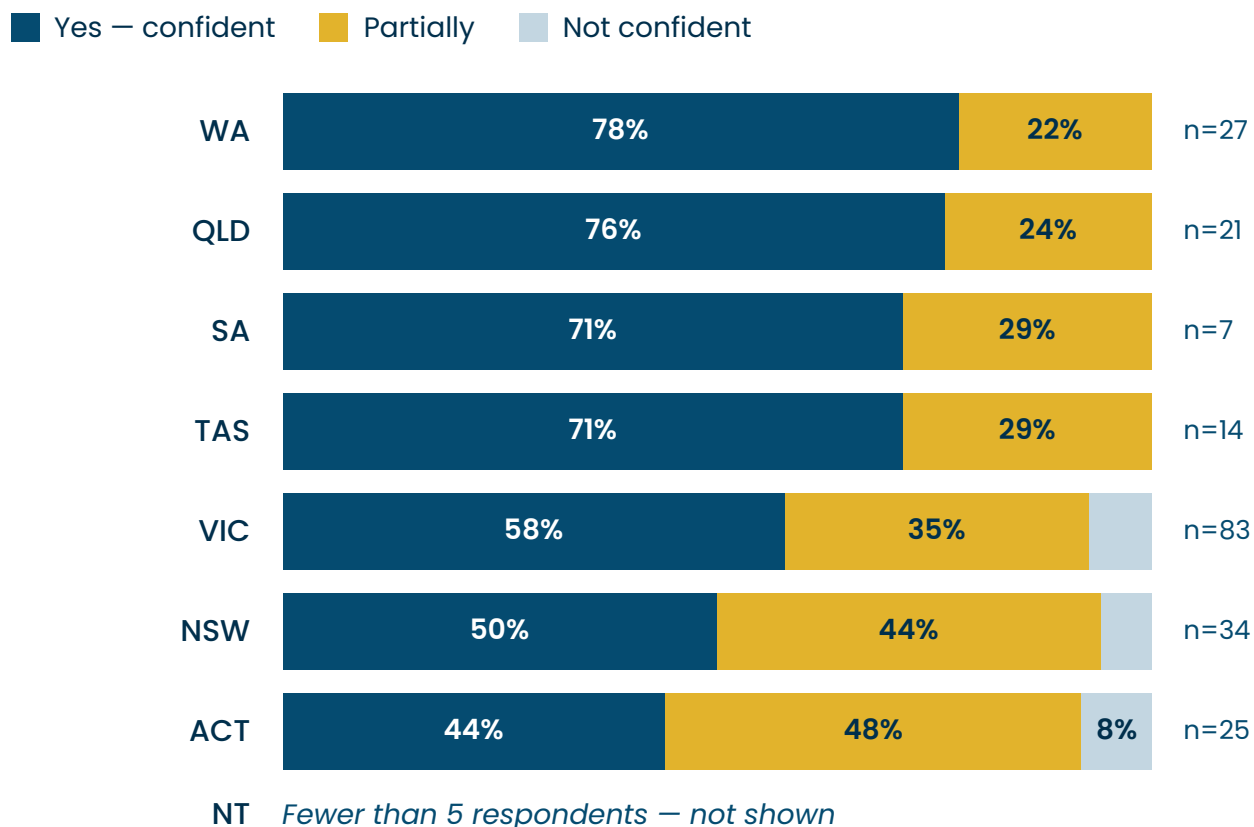
EVIDENCE Descriptive. Margin of error around ± 7 percentage points at 95% confidence.

n = 216

FIGURE 3.2 · Q14 × Q6

Confidence varies by state but is not statistically conclusive

Confidence in access to information, by state and territory



Western Australia and Queensland report the highest confidence and the ACT and NSW the lowest. The gap is wide on the chart but not large enough, at these group sizes, to rule out chance.

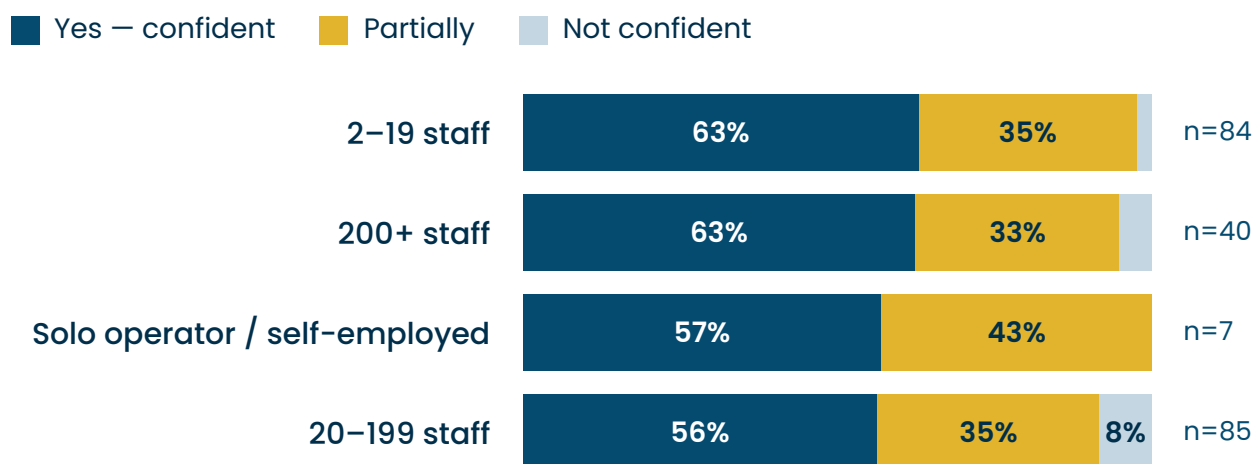
EVIDENCE **Not statistically significant** (χ^2 test, $p = 0.32$). The differences shown may be due to chance and should be read as indicative only. Several groups are small, so the test is approximate.

n = 211

FIGURE 3.3 · Q14 × Q5

Organisation size makes no difference to confidence

Confidence in access to information, by organisation size



Resourcing does not appear to buy confidence: every size band sits within a few points of the others.

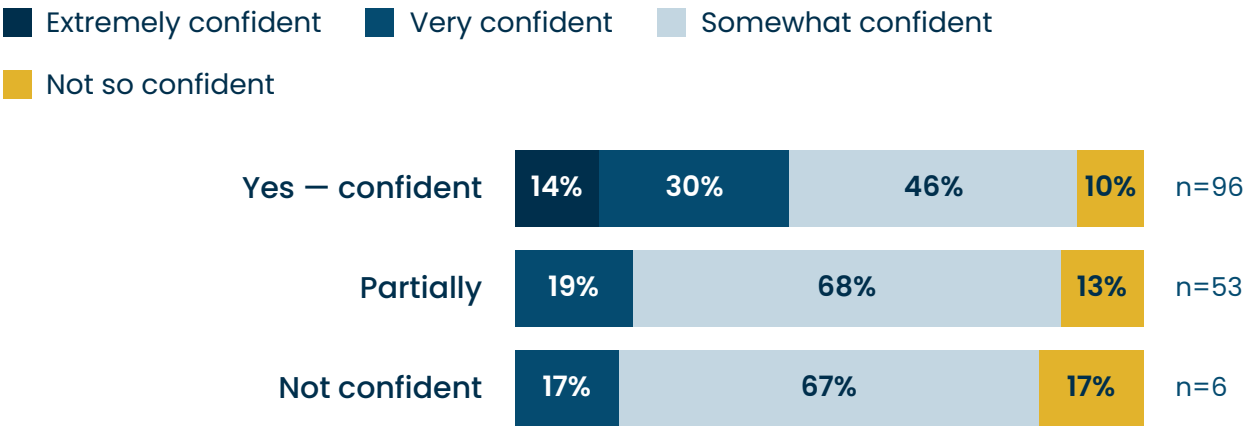
EVIDENCE **Not statistically significant** (χ^2 test, $p = 0.71$). The differences shown may be due to chance and should be read as indicative only. Several groups are small, so the test is approximate.

n = 216

FIGURE 3.4 · Q14 × Q16

Good information goes with confidence to adapt

Confidence that the organisation is prepared to adapt over the next three to five years, by confidence in access to information



44% of those confident in their information are very or extremely confident they can adapt, against 19% of those only partially confident.

EVIDENCE **Statistically significant.** Confidence in information and confidence to adapt are related (χ^2 test, $p = 0.04$). Several groups are small, so the test is approximate. This is an association: it does not show that one causes the other.

n = 155 · 69 respondents did not answer the preparedness question

FIGURE 3.5 · Q15

The challenge lies in the interpretation of forecast sources

Concerns about access to climate and environmental information · 34 written responses, coded into themes

12 Forecast accuracy and reliability

Forecasts for remote outdoor programs and activities can be vague, ambiguous or wrong, and decisions still have to be made based on this information.

8 One trusted source, beyond the forecast

A call for a single place that brings reputable sources together, and for data a forecast does not carry, such as lightning, heat stress, post-fire regrowth and historical records.

5 Interpreting and communicating it

Outdoor professionals, insurers, boards, organisational leaders and clients read the same data differently. The gap is capability, not access.

5 Planning beyond the season

Our changing climate is bringing seasonal variations, making it harder to schedule and design programs.

4 Localised and micro-climate data

Regional warnings do not describe the specific site.

3 Client and stakeholder risk perception

Region-wide fire ratings can drive cancellations at sites with no real risk.

EVIDENCE Free-text responses were coded into themes with AI assistance, reviewed by the NatCORR team, and are paraphrased here. One response can carry several themes, so counts show how often a theme was raised — not how widely it is held across the sector.

34 of 224 respondents wrote a response

WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT

- **Build confidence in using forecasts.** We aim to grow our subsidised workshops, training, webinars and digital resources, and further our understanding of what drives confidence — or its absence.
- **Improve access to reliable, interpreted information.** We intend to support access to reliable local forecasts with the Bureau of Meteorology, and to develop ORI modules that bring together the information the sector relies on most.
- **Help decisions travel.** We plan to develop communication templates and weather guidance for managers, stakeholders and people outside the outdoor profession.

READ OUR FULL RESPONSE IN CHAPTER 8 →

04

OUR PRIORITIES

What the sector says matters most, and how that has moved since 2023.

FIGURE 4.1 · Q17–Q23

Knowing and responding beats recovering

In regard to climate change risk mitigation, how important is the following to your organisation today? · average score out of 100

■ Top priorities ■ Mid priorities ■ Lowest priorities

		SCORED 80+	UNDER 50
Monitoring flood, fire and weather conditions for your location	85.2	71%	3%
Risk management, incident and emergency response	84.3	71%	1%
Evaluating and preparing for safe access in impacted areas	77.7	53%	6%
Hiring and retaining staff with the skills to respond	71.4	50%	17%
Access and investment in training for staff at every level	70.9	42%	16%
Insurance and financial planning for resilience	67.8	35%	15%
Remediation skills and practice	60.5	30%	28%

The two top priorities — monitoring conditions and risk management — are rated unimportant by almost no one. Remediation sits last and is the most divided: 28% score it under 50 while 15% score it 100.

EVIDENCE Descriptive. Each priority was scored independently on a 0–100 slider. Note that respondents who reached this question were older, more experienced and more senior than the full sample (see Figure 7.10).

n = 155

FIGURE 4.2 · 2023 COMPARED WITH 2026

In 2023 everything mattered equally. In 2026 the sector has chosen.

2023 priority ratings compared with 2026 importance scores, both out of 100



2023 ratings sat in a narrow band from 69 to 78. In 2026 they range from 60.5 to 85.2. Monitoring and risk management rose; remediation and insurance fell.

EVIDENCE **Not directly comparable.** The 2023 question asked what should be a priority for NatCORR; 2026 asks what is important to your organisation. A fall may mean organisations now expect to manage an area themselves. The 2023 sample size is not stated in the source, so no significance test is possible.

2026 n = 155 · staff hiring and training (2026) and ecosystem impacts (2023) have no counterpart in the other year

FIGURE 4.3 · Q17–Q23 × Q6

Location changes what matters

Average importance score for each priority, by state and territory

■ Two highest in the row ■ Third ■ Remaining ■ Lowest in the row

A dark outline marks the single highest value in each row. The small figure under each value is the difference from the average row (score points).

	Monitoring conditions	Risk management & response	Safe access	Hiring skilled staff	Staff training	Insurance & finance	Remediation skills
ALL RESPONDENTS · N=155	85.2	84.3	77.7	71.4	70.9	67.8	60.5
VIC n=51	83.8 -1.4	81.6 -2.7	79.7 +2.0	73.2 +1.9	75.5 +4.6	64.8 -3.0	68.7 +8.2
NSW n=26	90.0 +4.8	93.6 +9.3	89.5 +11.7	81.9 +10.5	75.6 +4.7	85.4 +17.6	67.3 +6.8
QLD n=17	81.5 -3.7	87.5 +3.2	67.2 -10.6	56.4 -15.0	64.6 -6.2	70.6 +2.8	48.2 -12.3
WA n=18	83.3 -1.9	81.3 -3.0	71.9 -5.8	68.0 -3.4	70.9 -0.0	66.8 -1.0	61.6 +1.1
SA n=5	91.8 +6.6	83.0 -1.3	78.8 +1.1	63.8 -7.6	63.8 -7.1	62.8 -5.0	50.8 -9.7
TAS n=12	80.5 -4.7	76.3 -8.0	77.0 -0.7	79.8 +8.4	62.6 -8.3	53.7 -14.2	49.8 -10.7
ACT n=24	88.0 +2.8	82.8 -1.5	71.4 -6.3	64.3 -7.0	64.9 -6.0	61.5 -6.3	49.8 -10.7
NT	Fewer than 5 respondents — not shown						

NSW rates every priority above average, and insurance and financial planning 17.6 points higher than the national score. Remediation splits the country: Victoria and NSW rate it around 68, while Queensland, the ACT and Tasmania sit near 50.

EVIDENCE **Statistically significant differences** between groups for: Risk management & response ($p = 0.01$); Safe access ($p = 0.006$); Hiring skilled staff ($p = 0.03$); Insurance & finance ($p = 0.001$); Remediation skills ($p = 0.02$) (Kruskal–Wallis tests). Differences in the other columns may be due to chance.

n = 155 · SA is five respondents

FIGURE 4.4 · Q17–Q23 × Q5

Organisation size barely registers

Average importance score for each priority, by organisation size

■ Two highest in the row ■ Third ■ Remaining ■ Lowest in the row

A dark outline marks the single highest value in each row. The small figure under each value is the difference from the average row (score points).

		Monitoring conditions	Risk management & response	Safe access	Hiring skilled staff	Staff training	Insurance & finance	Remediation skills
ALL RESPONDENTS · N=155		85.2	84.3	77.7	71.4	70.9	67.8	60.5
Solo operator / self-employed n=6		90.0 +4.8	92.5 +8.2	89.3 +11.6	82.7 +11.3	74.3 +3.4	67.3 -0.5	62.0 +1.5
2–19 staff n=55		85.5 +0.3	83.1 -1.2	76.2 -1.5	73.0 +1.6	70.6 -0.3	69.9 +2.0	62.1 +1.6
20–199 staff n=63		85.4 +0.2	86.2 +1.9	80.2 +2.4	70.3 -1.1	69.7 -1.2	68.4 +0.6	59.2 -1.3
200+ staff n=31		83.3 -1.9	81.0 -3.3	73.2 -4.5	68.6 -2.7	73.2 +2.3	63.1 -4.7	60.0 -0.5

EVIDENCE **No statistically significant differences** between groups on any column (Kruskal–Wallis tests, all $p \geq 0.05$). Read the pattern as indicative only.

n = 155

FIGURE 4.5 · Q24

Progress means capable people and usable systems

What would meaningful progress on your highest-ranked priority look like in three years? · 98 written responses, coded into themes

31 Staff trained, and kept

Ongoing training calendars, resources shared across organisations, and professional development designed for outdoor practitioners rather than classroom teachers.

25 Risk systems that work on the ground

Modernised procedures, mapped contingencies and documented plan-Bs, simplified enough that field staff actually use them.

18 Forecasting at the scale they work at

Localised, accurate and fast; several describe choosing a location, date and activity and being told the likelihood of disruption.

9 Retaining experienced staff and their place knowledge

6 Leadership, parents and clients understanding the risk

5 Embedding climate into planning and investment

3 Affordable insurance and financial resilience

Monitoring conditions scored highest of the seven priorities and training fifth — yet when describing progress, respondents talk about training and internal systems far more often than better data.

EVIDENCE Free-text responses were coded into themes with AI assistance, reviewed by the NatCORR team, and are paraphrased here. One response can carry several themes, so counts show how often a theme was raised — not how widely it is held across the sector.

98 of 224 respondents wrote a response

WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT

- **Resilience before recovery.** We aim to keep our focus on monitoring, preparation and response, with the Bureau of Meteorology and other expert partners.
- **From national to local.** We intend to move from broad national guidance to local, specific knowledge and practical tools, built into ORI.
- **Invest in people.** We aim to provide accessible, affordable training that builds expertise, career progression, professionalisation and retention.

[READ OUR FULL RESPONSE IN CHAPTER 8 →](#)



05

OUR CHALLENGES

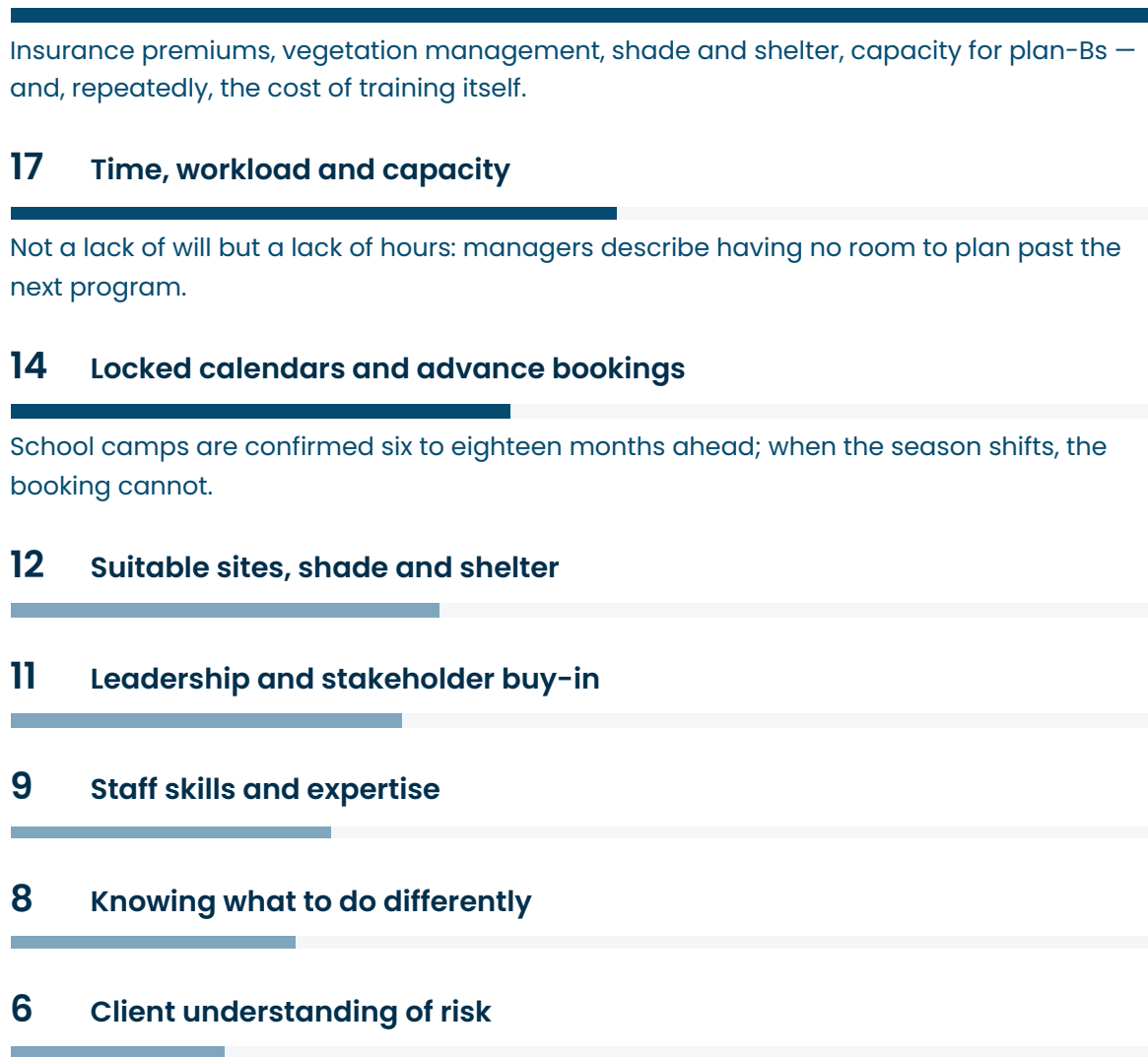
What stands between the sector and adaptation.

FIGURE 5.1 · Q25

Money, hours and a calendar that cannot move

What is the biggest barrier to climate adaptation for your organisation? · 101 written responses, coded into themes

32 Funding, cost and financial resources



Theme	Frequency
32	32
17	17
14	14
12	12
11	11
9	9
8	8
6	6

Insurance premiums, vegetation management, shade and shelter, capacity for plan-Bs — and, repeatedly, the cost of training itself.

17 Time, workload and capacity

Not a lack of will but a lack of hours: managers describe having no room to plan past the next program.

14 Locked calendars and advance bookings

School camps are confirmed six to eighteen months ahead; when the season shifts, the booking cannot.

12 Suitable sites, shade and shelter

11 Leadership and stakeholder buy-in

9 Staff skills and expertise

8 Knowing what to do differently

6 Client understanding of risk

Three themes account for most responses, and none of them is about weather.

EVIDENCE Free-text responses were coded into themes with AI assistance, reviewed by the NatCORR team, and are paraphrased here. One response can carry several themes, so counts show how often a theme was raised — not how widely it is held across the sector.

101 of 224 respondents wrote a response

FIGURE 5.2 · Q17–Q23 × Q25

The lowest priorities are among the biggest barriers

Money and training rank near the bottom of what organisations say matters, and near the top of what they say is stopping them

RANKED 6TH OF 7 IN IMPORTANCE

Insurance and financial planning

67.8 average score out of 100

AS A BARRIER

32 of 101 written responses name funding, cost or financial resources as the biggest barrier

RANKED 5TH OF 7 IN IMPORTANCE

Access and investment in staff training

70.9 average score out of 100

AS A BARRIER

20 name staff skills and training, or leadership not understanding the risk

EVIDENCE An interpretive comparison of a scored question with coded free text, not a statistical test. One reading is that organisations see finance and training as enablers rather than risk-mitigation priorities in themselves.

Priorities n = 155 · barriers n = 101

WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT

- **Build flexibility in from the start.** We aim to help bring land managers, clients and other stakeholders into planning, so programs can adapt instead of reacting to events.
- **Support every operator.** We intend to develop practical resources, tools and support accessible to all operators.
- **Sustainable when cancellation is the only option.** We aim to grow the sector's organisational, financial and insurance literacy.

[READ OUR FULL RESPONSE IN CHAPTER 8 →](#)

06

WHAT ELSE WE'VE HEARD

The open questions, in the sector's own words.

TWO THINGS WE HEARD ACROSS EVERY OPEN QUESTION

Communicating risk and contingencies to clients and staff is a challenge, and an area where support would be beneficial.

Communicating the value of outdoor programs to professionals outside outdoor education is difficult, especially within school structures.

FIGURE 6.1 · Q26

Information, together, and the skills to use it

How could the outdoor sector adapt more effectively? · 86 written responses, coded into themes

23 Better information, delivered usably

Real-time and longer-range forecasting, historical data, place-specific thresholds and a single source practitioners can act on in the field.

19 Collaboration and shared practice

Pooling what the sector learns, with land managers, Traditional Owners, researchers and emergency services.

18 Training and professional development

Foundational climate literacy and decision-making under pressure, with free or subsidised access.

14 Alternative sites and weather-proof infrastructure

13 Contingency planning as standard

12 Educating clients, schools and participants

9 Advocacy and a united voice

7 Redesigning programs around place and season

5 Government funding and policy support

EVIDENCE Free-text responses were coded into themes with AI assistance, reviewed by the NatCORR team, and are paraphrased here. One response can carry several themes, so counts show how often a theme was raised — not how widely it is held across the sector.

86 of 224 respondents wrote a response

FIGURE 6.2 · Q29

One tool, longer range, and something to show the boss

What digital tools or resources do you wish existed? · 69 written responses, coded into themes

24 One weather tool, not five

Respondents juggle several apps and want one sector-endorsed source combining forecast, lightning, flood, fire and traffic against their own stand-down thresholds.

13 Long-range and historical data

Seasonal outlooks for scheduling, and historical records to choose a location and date range in the first place.

11 Resources that translate for non-specialists

Templates, infographics and business-case guides aimed at principals, boards and clients.

9 Real-time closures, access and track conditions

8 Tools that work without phone reception

7 Short video and self-paced learning

5 Easier risk assessment and incident reporting

4 Shared data standards and seeing what peers are doing

3 More tools like ORI Heat, extended to other hazards

Almost no one asked for something entirely new. The request is for what exists to be consolidated and extended.

EVIDENCE Free-text responses were coded into themes with AI assistance, reviewed by the NatCORR team, and are paraphrased here. One response can carry several themes, so counts show how often a theme was raised — not how widely it is held across the sector.

69 of 224 respondents wrote a response

FIGURE 6.3 · Q30

Unprompted, they raised people and money

Is there anything else you would like NatCORR to know? · 26 substantive responses, coded into themes

8 Help decision-makers understand

School leadership, boards, clients, parents and government. The frustration is less the weather than having to justify weather decisions to people without an outdoor background.

5 Cost is closing programs now

Budget cuts, insurance and staff costs rising faster than rates.

5 More workshops, please

Requests for more NatCORR scenario workshops, professional development and mentoring, and positive feedback on existing workshops.

4 The outdoor sector is not one sector

Journey-based and site-based operators have different needs.

3 Multi-site, remote and casual-staff realities

3 Feedback on the survey itself, including its length

2 Concern for the sector's future

2 AI may absorb some of the administrative load

EVIDENCE Free-text responses were coded into themes with AI assistance, reviewed by the NatCORR team, and are paraphrased here. One response can carry several themes, so counts show how often a theme was raised — not how widely it is held across the sector. Those who wrote a closing comment were more likely to be field practitioners or program coordinators than the sample as a whole; the group is too small for firmer comparison.

35 responses of 224, 26 of them substantive

WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT

- **One place for the information the sector needs.** We intend to develop ORI modules that centralise and interpret it, and to extend the approach of ORI Heat to other hazards.
- **Tools to share information and decisions.** We plan to develop templates and resources for communicating decisions, contingencies, vulnerabilities and thresholds, including to non-outdoor professionals.
- **Take workshops to the sector.** We plan to run an annual national roadshow of NatCORR workshops over the next three years.

[READ OUR FULL RESPONSE IN CHAPTER 8 →](#)

07

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT OURSELVES

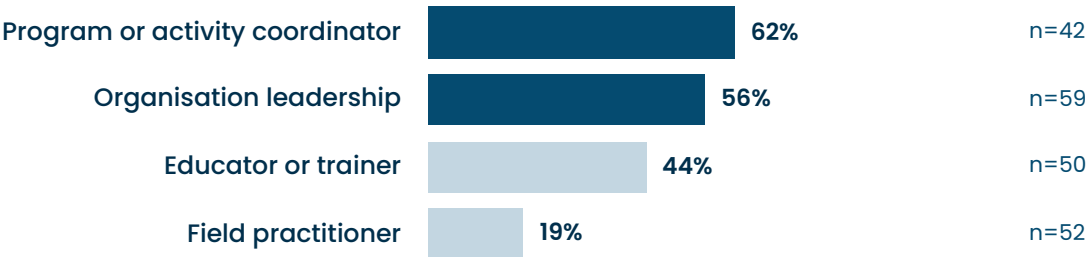
How NatCORR reaches the sector, how people prefer to learn, and who this survey missed.

FIGURE 7.1 · Q8

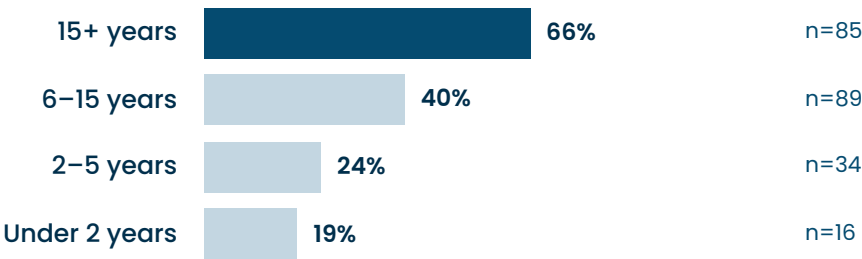
The field is where our reach is thinnest

Share of each group who had engaged with NatCORR before this survey · 46% overall

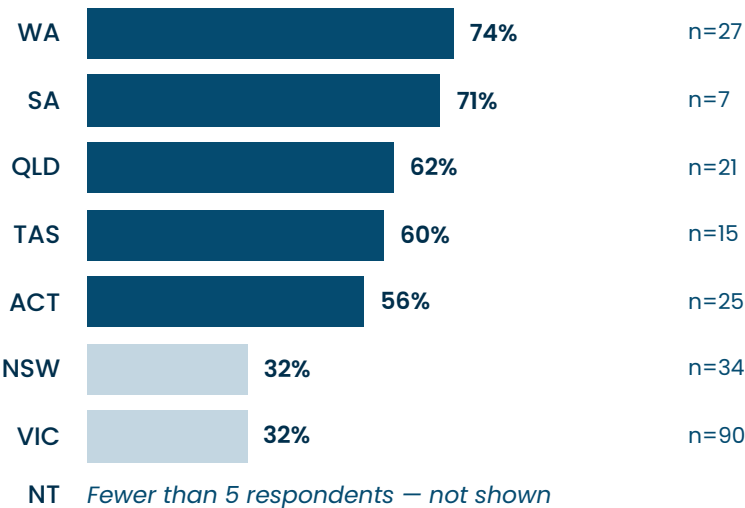
PRIMARY ROLE



YEARS IN THE SECTOR



LOCATION



EVIDENCE **Statistically significant** on all three dimensions: role ($p < 0.001$), experience ($p < 0.001$) and location ($p < 0.001$), χ^2 tests. Role and experience are themselves related (Figure 1.5), so these are not independent effects.

FIGURE 7.2 · Q9

Workshops are our front door

How the 103 previously engaged respondents had engaged with NatCORR



53% had engaged through three or more channels — our engagement is deep rather than broad

EVIDENCE Descriptive. Multi-select, so shares do not sum to 100%.

n = 103

FIGURE 7.3 · Q9 × Q3, Q7, Q6

Different channels reach different people

How previously engaged respondents had engaged, by role, experience and location

■ Two highest in the row ■ Third ■ Remaining □ Lowest in the row

A dark outline marks the single highest value in each row. The small figure under each value is the difference from the average row (percentage points).

	Workshops or professional development	Presentations and conferences	Previous surveys	Website, resources, newsletter	Webinars	NatCORR community events
ALL ENGAGED · N=103	69%	57%	51%	51%	47%	11%
PRIMARY ROLE						
isation ership n=33	73% +4	61% +3	64% +12	48% -3	42% -4	18% +8
Field titioner n=10	60% -9	30% -27	30% -21	60% +9	30% -17	0% -11
lucator or trainer n=22	77% +8	55% -3	45% -6	41% -11	55% +8	9% -2
ram or activity director n=26	65% -4	58% +0	46% -5	46% -5	50% +3	4% -7
YEARS IN THE SECTOR						
Under 2 years	Fewer than 5 respondents — not shown					
2–5 years n=8	38% -31	63% +5	25% -26	38% -14	38% -9	0% -11
6–15 years n=36	72% +3	64% +7	58% +7	50% -1	47% +1	14% +3
15+ years n=56	73% +4	52% -5	54% +2	55% +4	50% +3	11% +0
LOCATION						
VIC n=29	55% -14	76% +19	41% -10	45% -7	45% -2	3% -7
NSW n=11	55% -14	55% -3	64% +12	64% +12	64% +17	27% +17
QLD n=13	92% +23	62% +4	54% +2	62% +10	54% +7	8% -3
WA n=20	80% +11	35% -22	65% +14	50% -1	45% -2	5% -6
SA n=5	60% -9	60% +3	40% -11	80% +29	80% +33	20% +9
TAS n=9	78% +9	33% -24	56% +4	22% -29	11% -35	0% -11
ACT n=14	71% +2	64% +7	50% -1	64% +13	50% +3	29% +18
NT	Fewer than 5 respondents — not shown					

Victoria is the only state where presentations and conferences outrank workshops. Field practitioners are the only role for whom the website and newsletter tie for first.

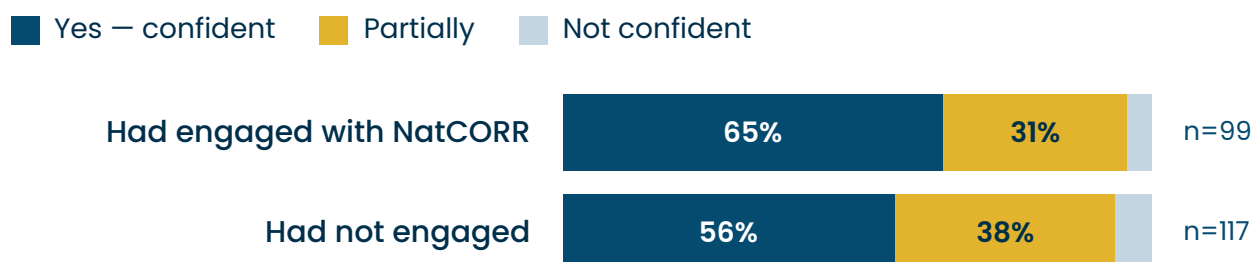
EVIDENCE No statistically significant differences between groups on any channel (χ^2 tests). With groups this small, these patterns are indicative only.

n = 103 previously engaged respondents · multi-select

FIGURE 7.4 · Q8 × Q14

Engagement and confidence: a small gap, and not proof

Confidence in access to climate and environmental information, by whether the respondent had engaged with NatCORR



Engaged respondents are 8 points more likely to feel confident. But engagement rises with experience, and so does confidence: among those with 15+ years, 69% of the engaged are confident against 72% of the unengaged. On preparedness to adapt (Q16), the two groups are almost identical (33% and 35% very or extremely confident).

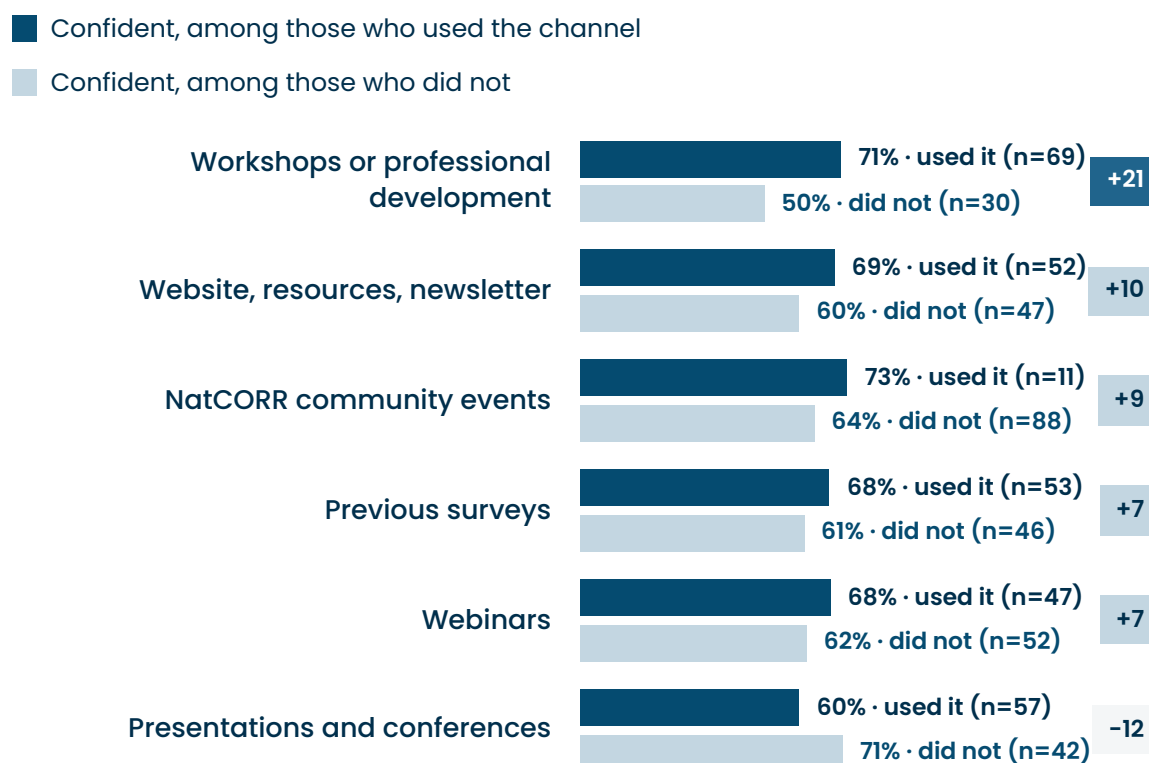
EVIDENCE **Not statistically significant** (χ^2 test, $p = 0.45$). The differences shown may be due to chance and should be read as indicative only. This is an association: it does not show that one causes the other.

n = 216

FIGURE 7.5 · Q9 × Q14

Only the workshop makes a measurable difference

Among the 99 previously engaged respondents who answered Q14: the share confident about their access to information, among those who used each channel and those who did not



71% of those who attended a workshop feel confident, against 50% of engaged respondents who had not. The gap persists (+14 points) among respondents with six or more years in the sector, so experience does not explain it. It matches what the sector asks for: in-person workshops are the most preferred training format (Figure 7.8).

EVIDENCE Workshops are the only channel with a **statistically significant** difference (χ^2 test, $p = 0.04$). No other channel's gap is significant, including the negative gap for presentations and conferences ($p = 0.23$). This is an association: it does not show that one causes the other. Those who choose to attend workshops may already differ from those who do not.

n = 99 · channels overlap

FIGURE 7.6 · Q8 × Q17–Q23

Engagement makes little difference to priorities

Average importance score out of 100, by whether the respondent had engaged with NatCORR



Engaged respondents rate staff training and hiring around six points higher, but monitoring conditions — the top priority — is identical in both groups.

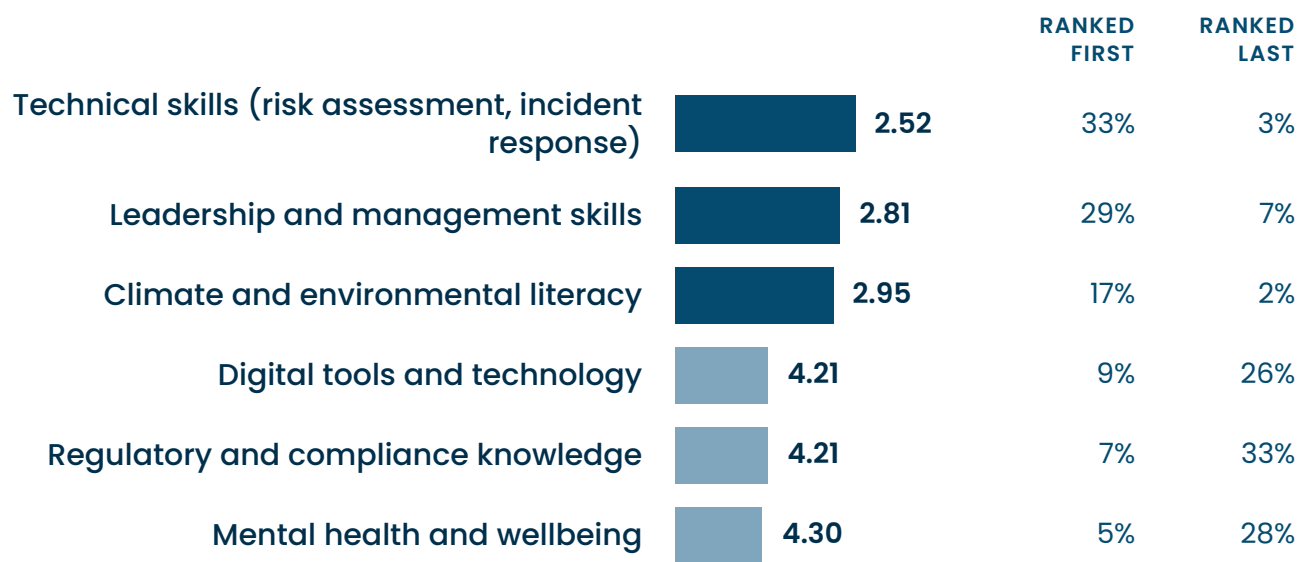
EVIDENCE **No statistically significant differences** on any priority (Mann–Whitney tests, all $p \geq 0.18$). Treat the workforce gap as a hypothesis worth testing, not a finding.

n = 155

FIGURE 7.7 · Q27 × Q17–Q23

Technical skills first; climate literacy for the most concerned

Which training the sector wants most · mean rank out of six, where a longer bar means more important



Only 17% put climate and environmental literacy first. Those who do score the seven mitigation priorities highest of any group (79.4 against an average of 73.7), suggesting the people most convinced of climate risk are the ones asking to learn more about it.

EVIDENCE The link between first-ranked training and overall priority score is **not statistically significant** (Kruskal–Wallis test, $p = 0.20$). Treat it as a pattern worth watching.

n = 151 · six training types ranked 1 to 6

FIGURE 7.8 · Q28 × Q7, Q1, Q3

Everyone wants the room; experience decides the rest

Preferred training formats, by experience, age and role · share of each group selecting each format

■ Two highest in the row ■ Third ■ Remaining ■ Lowest in the row

A dark outline marks the single highest value in each row. The small figure under each value is the difference from the average row (percentage points).

	In-person workshops	Short online modules	Mentoring or coaching	Written guides	Extended courses or micro-credentials	Live webinars	Video resources
ALL RESPONDENTS · N=150	68%	47%	30%	30%	29%	25%	21%
YEARS IN THE SECTOR							
Under 2 years n=8	50% -18	38% -9	25% -5	13% -17	50% +21	13% -12	25% +4
2–5 years n=22	64% -4	41% -6	36% +6	36% +6	45% +16	18% -6	27% +6
6–15 years n=57	74% +6	39% -8	37% +7	28% -2	39% +9	14% -11	21% 0
15+ years n=63	67% -1	57% +10	22% -8	32% +2	13% -17	38% +13	19% -2
AGE							
18–24 n=7	86% +18	14% -32	71% +41	0% -30	86% +56	0% -25	14% -7
25–34 n=49	80% +12	39% -8	37% +7	29% -1	41% +11	10% -14	20% -1
35–44 n=43	53% -15	51% +4	28% -2	37% +7	19% -11	28% +3	19% -3
45–54 n=27	67% -1	63% +16	11% -19	30% 0	26% -3	41% +16	26% +5
55–64 n=21	67% -1	43% -4	29% -1	29% -1	14% -15	38% +13	24% +2
65+	Fewer than 5 respondents — not shown						
PRIMARY ROLE							
Isolation ership n=43	56% -12	51% +4	26% -4	40% +10	23% -6	23% -1	28% +7
Field itioner n=35	86% +18	34% -12	43% +13	31% +1	46% +16	6% -19	20% -1
lucator or trainer n=31	74% +6	45% -2	10% -20	19% -11	29% 0	29% +4	13% -8
ram or ctivity ingtor n=28	54% -14	57% +10	39% +9	29% -1	29% -1	32% +7	21% +0

In-person workshops lead in every group. The clearest divide is experience: few of those with 15+ years want extended courses or credentials, while around half of those with under six years do. Field practitioners almost never choose webinars.

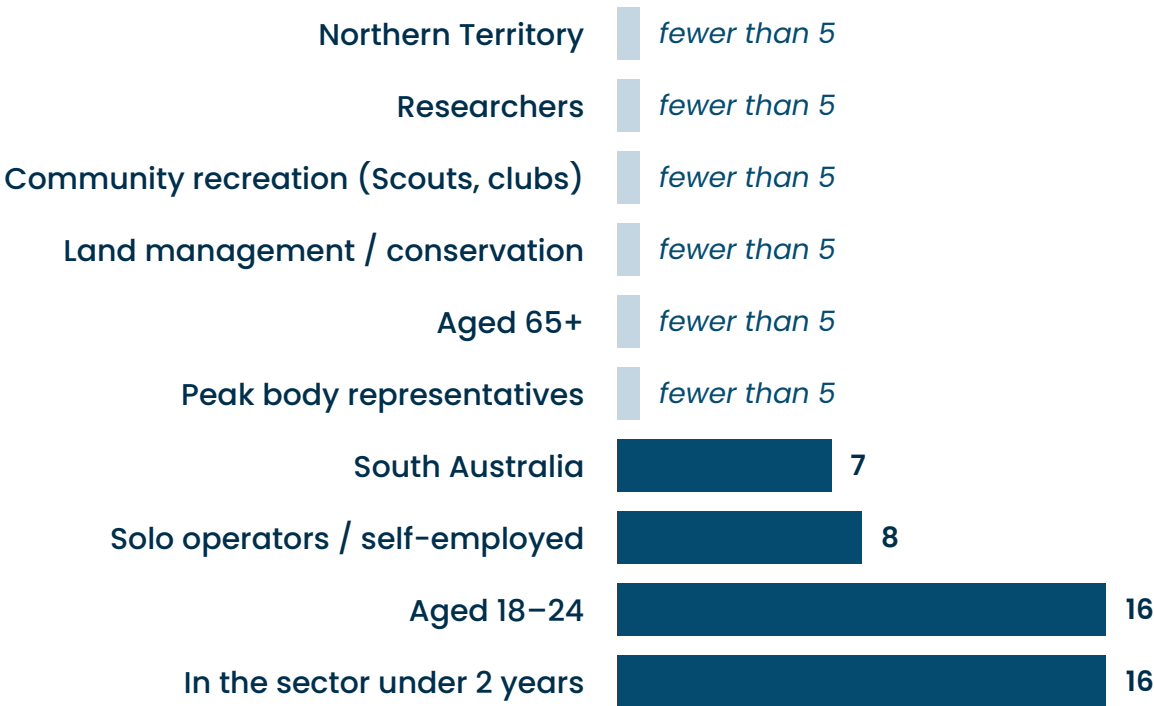
EVIDENCE **Years in the sector:** Extended courses or micro-credentials ($p = 0.002$); Live webinars ($p = 0.01$). **Age:** Mentoring or coaching ($p = 0.02$); Extended courses or micro-credentials ($p = 0.001$); Live webinars ($p = 0.008$). **Primary role:** In-person workshops ($p = 0.01$); Mentoring or coaching ($p = 0.01$); Live webinars ($p = 0.05$). (χ^2 tests.) Other differences may be due to chance.

n = 150 · up to three formats each, so rows do not sum to 100%

FIGURE 7.9 · COVERAGE

Who we did not hear from

Groups with the fewest responses · number of respondents, not a share



The volunteer-led, land-management and sole-trader parts of the sector are effectively absent from this survey, as are the youngest and newest practitioners.

EVIDENCE Descriptive. Counts under five are suppressed to protect anonymity.

Out of 224 responses

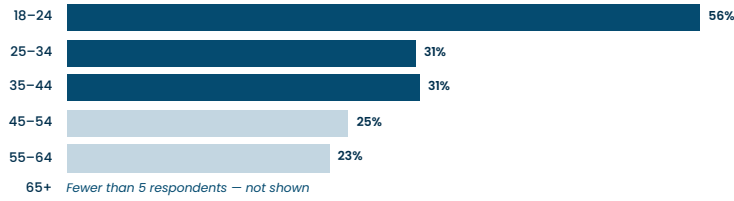
FIGURE 7.10 - ATTRITION

Who did not finish the survey

69 of 224 respondents (31%) answered the disruption and confidence questions but stopped before the priority block · share of each group who stopped

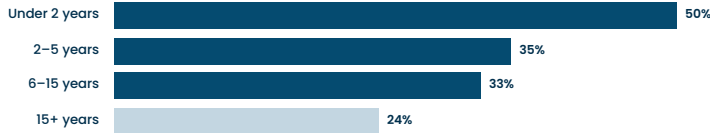
AGE

Not significant · p = 0.18



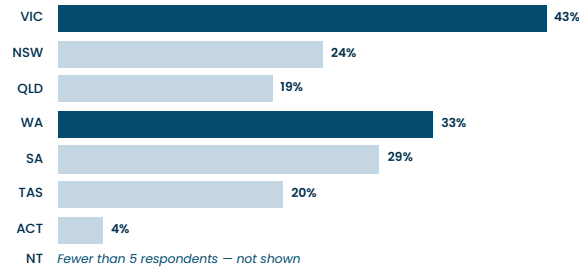
YEARS IN THE SECTOR

Not significant · p = 0.15



LOCATION

Significant · p = 0.005



PRIMARY ROLE

Not significant · p = 0.44



ORGANISATION SIZE

Not significant · p = 0.49



PRIOR NATCORR ENGAGEMENT

Not significant · p = 0.28



DISRUPTED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Not significant · p = 0.51



Location is the only dimension where dropout differs beyond chance: 43% of Victorian respondents stopped early, against 4% in the ACT. Younger and newer respondents also stopped more often, but not by enough to rule out chance. The likeliest cause is survey length — the priority block is seven sliders, and one respondent noted the survey took twice its advertised time.

EVIDENCE Everything from Q16 onward describes a sample slightly older and more experienced than the one that started, and less weighted towards Victoria. Read those chapters as the view of those who finished.

n = 224 · dropout defined as no answer to the Q17-Q23 priority block

WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT

- **Reach the field.** We aim to engage field practitioners and managers differently, so every role has a voice, and to incubate tools with partners before releasing them to the sector.
- **Be there when it matters most.** We aim to grow our webinars and community events, and to develop a digital engagement strategy so resources are easy to find when they are needed.
- **Measure our progress.** We intend to use this survey as a baseline and follow up on change through future surveys and feedback.

[READ OUR FULL RESPONSE IN CHAPTER 8 →](#)

08

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT THIS

What NatCORR intends to do in response to each chapter of this report.

SUMMARY

OUR ACTIONS AT A GLANCE

The 2026 Outdoor Sector Survey has sharpened our focus for the next three years, so that we deliver what matters most to the sector, and what is most pressing. Our core work falls into five areas.

1

Developing the Outdoor Risk Intelligence (ORI) platform

New modules and functions that bring together information from multiple sources and interpret it for outdoor decision-making – including decision thresholds modelled against local terrain, location and activity.

SEE SECTIONS [02](#), [03](#), [04](#), [06](#)

2

Delivering and evolving our training

Accessible, subsidised training, tailored to location, role and experience, so people have what they need at each stage of their outdoor career – delivered through workshops, an annual national roadshow, webinars and digital resources.

SEE SECTIONS [03](#), [04](#), [06](#), [07](#)

3

Growing our partnerships with subject matter experts

Including the Bureau of Meteorology, land managers, emergency and disaster management agencies and Traditional Owners, so the information the sector relies on stays accessible and specialised to its needs.

SEE SECTIONS [02](#), [03](#), [04](#), [05](#)

4

Building resilience at every level of outdoor organisations

From field staff to leadership and boards: organisational and financial resilience, the mentorship and resilience network, and tools for communicating decisions and contingencies with stakeholders.

SEE SECTIONS [02](#), [04](#), [05](#)

5

Capturing our progress regularly with the sector

Using this survey as our baseline, an ongoing open survey of weather disruptions, a shared library of real decisions, and feedback on our work, so we can measure what is changing and adjust.

SEE SECTIONS [01](#), [02](#), [07](#)

01 SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS [BACK TO CHAPTER 1](#)

This survey told us a great deal about the people who answered it and also highlighted the groups we did not hear from. To make the next survey a truer picture of the whole sector, we intend to act in three areas.

REACHING THE GROUPS WE DID NOT HEAR FROM

Review our survey channels

We intend to review how the survey is distributed — our own newsletter and social media, our partners and peak bodies, and direct outreach — to reach the states, sectors and roles this survey under-represented.

Set representation targets

We aim to set state-based response targets based on where the outdoor workforce is, rather than the general population — using ABS Census data for outdoor occupations, including 2026 Census results once released, and membership figures from our partner peak bodies. We intend to track responses against these targets while the survey is open so outreach can be adjusted in time.

REDESIGNING THE SURVEY

Reframe the sector categories

We plan to add categories for tertiary and vocational education, the government and public sector, and practitioners who work across several sectors because of the seasonality of their operations, so fewer answers fall into a self-described group.

Branch questions by role

Field practitioners and managers or coordinators experience disruption differently. We aim to develop survey branching so each group answers questions relevant to their role.

Add an optional organisation question

An optional open question naming the organisation would allow responses from the same organisation to be combined and compared, improving data aggregation and testing.

UNDERSTANDING THE OUTDOOR WORKFORCE

Scope a workforce demographics project

The survey shows patterns it cannot explain. A dedicated project on the sector's demographics and how they relate to each other would help us understand the factors behind these trends, and support workforce professionalisation and retention. Both professionalisation and retention were raised by respondents as needs for the sector as a whole, and are likely to be key drivers of success in climate adaptation and risk mitigation.

02 OUR LIVED EXPERIENCE BACK TO CHAPTER 2

Three in four organisations had programs disrupted by weather events in the past year, and most named several contributing conditions at once. Disruption was consistent across states, sectors and organisation sizes — but the mix of hazards behind it was not. Heat and fire dominate in some states, flooding and cyclones in others, and forecasts of events that never arrived led to more cancellations than any other condition. Our response starts with understanding that risk, then aims to give organisations the tools and partnerships to manage it where they operate.

IN FOCUS · CANCELLING ON A FORECAST THAT DOES NOT ARRIVE

57% of organisations that named a forecast severe weather event that did not eventuate cancelled a program — the highest cancellation rate of any condition, against 42% across all disrupted organisations.

One in three disrupted organisations (34%) named a forecast event that never arrived as a cause of disruption. That is a program lost, and participants, staff and income with it, to a risk that did not materialise. It is not a failure of caution: faced with an uncertain forecast and no clear threshold for action, cancelling is the defensible choice. The problem is the gap between the forecast and the decision.

We aim to help close that gap by supporting the sector's access to reliable forecasts, and to decision-making tools that turn a forecast into a clear, proportionate choice.

Our Outdoor Risk Intelligence (ORI) platform is central to this. ORI Heat already models heat stress for outdoor activities. We intend to extend that approach to model how different environmental conditions interact with local terrain, location and the type of outdoor activity being run — so the same forecast can produce different guidance for a river trip, a bushwalk or a campsite program, and for a gorge, a ridgeline or a coastal site. The aim is decision thresholds that reflect real exposure on the ground, rather than a regional forecast applied to every site alike: helping organisations proceed with confidence where the risk is manageable, adapt where it is not, and cancel only when they need to.

UNDERSTANDING THE RISK

Develop the inaugural climate risk assessment for the outdoor sector

We intend to develop and publish the first climate risk assessment for the outdoor sector, based on the framework of *Australia's National Climate Risk Assessment*, released by the Australian Climate Service in September 2025.

Analyse hazard exposure by location

This survey found no significant difference between states in *how often* programs were disrupted (Figure 2.2), but significant differences in *which hazards* caused the disruption — heat, fire bans, bushfire, flooding, snow, cyclones and wildlife all varied by state (Figure 2.7). We therefore intend to focus our next analysis on hazard exposure rather than disruption rates: comparing the hazards organisations report in each state with weather, climate and natural disaster data, to understand which locations face which hazards most, and how often.

TOOLS FOR LOCAL HAZARDS

Develop state-based resources, tools and action plans

We aim to develop resources, tools, templates and action plans that help organisations navigate the vulnerabilities and key hazards of their own state and location, recognising that the threshold at which a hazard becomes a risk varies from one state or location to another.

Grow the Outdoor Risk Intelligence (ORI) platform

We intend to develop further ORI modules to support the sector's specific forecasting needs and response mechanisms – for example, addressing UV and air quality.

LEARNING FROM REAL DISRUPTIONS AND DECISIONS

An ongoing open survey of sector disruptions to build a shared library of real decisions

We have developed an ongoing, open survey on the NatCORR website so organisations can report disruptions caused by weather events as they happen. Unlike an annual survey, it is designed to build a continuous record of where, when and why programs are disrupted across the sector. We intend to begin with case reviews at our workshops, with the potential to publish a report of selected case studies, and build towards a searchable digital library of case studies as the format is refined.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Grow the mentorship and resilience network

We aim to support the growth of the mentorship and resilience network across the outdoor sector, so organisations can learn from each other's experience of disruption.

Continue our partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology

We will continue working closely with the Bureau of Meteorology to affirm and secure the sector's access to information, tools and data.

Work with land managers and the emergency sector

We plan to continue and deepen our relationships with key stakeholders such as National Parks and the emergency and disaster management sector, working in synergy and building two-way communication.

03 CONFIDENCE INDEX BACK TO CHAPTER 3

Six in ten respondents feel confident about their access to climate and environmental information, with no measurable difference by state or organisation size. That confidence matters beyond the day-to-day: those confident in their information were more than twice as likely to feel very or extremely confident their organisation can adapt over the next three to five years (44% against 19%). Written responses point to three gaps – forecast reliability, too many sources without one trusted place, and interpreting and communicating information to people who do not work outdoors. Our response addresses each.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Grow the sector's confidence in accessing and understanding forecasts

We aim to expand our workshops, training, webinars and digital resources on accessing and interpreting forecasts, tailored to the conditions and hazards of each location. These are subsidised by Outward Bound Australia, our sponsors and the Australian Government through the Disaster Ready Fund, to ensure that cost is not a barrier to taking part.

Understand what drives confidence

The survey tells us how confident the sector is, but not why. We intend to investigate the drivers of confidence and its absence – including the currency of skills, competency, the number of information sources, working in isolation and level of experience – so our support targets the real causes. Where isolation is a factor, we aim to connect solo and remote practitioners with peers through the mentorship and resilience network (see section 02).

RELIABLE, INTERPRETED INFORMATION

Support access to reliable local forecasts

Building on our partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology (see section 02), we intend to support the sector's access to reliable local forecasts, as the foundation for confident adaptation.

Bring the sector's key information together in ORI

We plan to develop Outdoor Risk Intelligence (ORI) modules (see section 02) that gather the information the sector relies on most into one place, and interpret it for outdoor decision-making – so practitioners spend less time reconciling sources and more time acting on them.

COMMUNICATING DECISIONS

Develop communication templates and schedules

Respondents told us that explaining weather decisions to managers, clients and other stakeholders is one of their hardest tasks. We aim to develop and share communication templates and schedules the sector can adapt to its own programs.

Develop weather guidance for non-outdoor professionals

We intend to develop weather interpretation guidance and resources written for stakeholders, managers and others without an outdoor background, so decisions are understood and supported by the people who need to approve them.

04 OUR PRIORITIES [BACK TO CHAPTER 4](#)

The sector has been clear about what matters most: knowing what is coming and being ready to respond. Monitoring conditions (85.2 out of 100) and risk management and emergency response (84.3) are rated highly by almost everyone, and both have risen since 2023, while remediation now ranks last. What matters also changes with location – priorities differ significantly between states for five of the seven areas. Our response keeps our effort where the sector has placed it, and brings it closer to where people work.

RESILIENCE BEFORE RECOVERY

Continue to focus on building resilience

We aim to keep our focus on helping the sector predict, prepare for and respond to weather and climate events, rather than on recovery after the fact. That means continuing our partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology (see section 02) and other subject matter experts, the ongoing development of ORI, and our training and workshop program.

Continue remediation practice and build resilience at every level

Remediation ranks last overall, but it is the most divided priority – 28% of respondents score it under 50 while 15% score it 100. It remains part of our work: we intend to continue supporting remediation practice alongside our partners, and to build resilience at every level of an organisation, from field staff to leadership and boards.

LOCAL AND SPECIFIC

Move from national and broad to local and specific

Because priorities and hazards differ by location, national guidance only goes so far. We intend to focus on local knowledge and delivery – building on the perspectives and knowledge of Traditional Owners on Country and its seasons, and working with practitioners and partners in each state to produce guidance that reflects local conditions, hazards and thresholds (see section 02). We also recognise that journey-based and site-based operators have different needs, and aim to design our guidance and tools for both.

USABLE SYSTEMS AND TOOLS

Make ORI a system the sector can use every day

We aim to develop ORI as a practical, usable system, alongside templates and tools that fit into how organisations already plan and deliver programs – so monitoring conditions and managing risk become part of routine operations, not an extra task.

ORGANISATIONAL AND FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

Keep working on organisational and financial resilience

Insurance and financial planning scores in the lower half of the sector's priorities, yet when asked about barriers, respondents most often named resources and funding. Adapting to a changing climate depends on organisations having the financial capacity to absorb disruption and invest in preparation. We intend to continue working on organisational and financial resilience across the sector.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Accessible and affordable training and resources

Hiring and retaining skilled staff and training at every level sit in the middle of the sector's priorities, yet written responses repeatedly return to capacity and staff skills as barriers (see Chapter 5). We aim to provide accessible, affordable training and resources, tailored to location, role and experience, that build experience and expertise across the workforce, and support career progression, professionalisation and retention — recognising, as noted in section 01, that these are likely to be key drivers of success in climate adaptation and risk mitigation.

05 OUR CHALLENGES BACK TO CHAPTER 5

The barriers the sector named are not about the weather. Funding and cost, time and capacity, and calendars locked in months ahead account for most of the 101 written responses, followed by access to suitable sites, and buy-in from leadership, clients and other stakeholders. Many of these are set long before a forecast arrives – in bookings, permits, contracts and expectations. We intend to keep our focus on the planning stages and include the relevant stakeholders in the conversations, so that flexibility and resilience are built into programs rather than negotiated in the middle of an event, with particular attention to those who do not work in the outdoors.

ACCESS TO LAND AND SITES

Work with land managers on dynamic access and exit

We intend to work with land managers, including National Parks and other public land agencies, to develop systems that allow outdoor organisations to change plans quickly around natural disasters and severe weather – flexible permits and bookings, and agreed processes for moving to alternative sites or exiting safely (see section 02).

COMMUNICATING WITH NON-OUTDOOR PROFESSIONALS

Build flexibility into the system with every party involved

Many of the people who make or approve decisions about programs – schools, clients, parents, boards and insurers – do not have an outdoor background. We aim to develop resources that help outdoor organisations discuss and communicate contingencies, thresholds and alternatives with these stakeholders at the planning and booking stage, so that everyone understands in advance what will happen if conditions change. These build on the communication templates and guidance in section 03. Agreeing these processes in advance could also support shared decision-making between the organisation and its stakeholders, and provide a record of each decision and the rationale behind it. Many of the challenges in Chapter 5 point to the value of engaging clients and stakeholders from the very first conversation about the vulnerabilities of a program and the contingencies in place.

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODELS

Grow organisational, financial and insurance literacy

When cancellation is the only safe option, the organisation still has to survive it. Building on our focus on organisational and financial resilience (see section 04), we aim to grow the sector's organisational, financial and insurance literacy to support sustainable business models in a changing climate.

06 WHAT ELSE WE'VE HEARD [BACK TO CHAPTER 6](#)

The open questions confirmed, in the sector's own words, much of what the rest of the survey showed. Asked what tools they wish existed, respondents asked less for something new than for what exists to be consolidated and extended — one weather tool rather than five, longer-range and historical data, and resources that translate for non-specialists. Across every open question, two things recurred: communicating risk and contingencies to clients and staff, and explaining the value of outdoor programs to people outside the sector. Most of our response to this chapter is set out in earlier sections; this section draws it together and adds one new initiative.

ALREADY COVERED ELSEWHERE

Centralising and interpreting information through ORI

ORI modules that bring together and interpret the information the sector relies on most, and extend the approach of ORI Heat to other hazards (see sections 02 and 03). We aim to design all our tools to be accessible across a range of conditions, locations and devices.

Tools and templates for sharing information and decisions

Communication templates, weather guidance for non-outdoor professionals, and processes agreed with stakeholders at the planning stage covering decisions, contingencies, vulnerabilities and thresholds (see sections 03 and 05).

Respondents also asked for a united voice for the sector. Alongside these tools, we support the advocacy for the value of outdoor programs to schools, government, insurers and the wider community — part of the sector's current journey towards professionalisation.

Training

Subsidised training, webinars and digital resources, and tiered training by role and experience (see sections 03, 04 and 07).

TAKING WORKSHOPS TO THE SECTOR

An annual national roadshow

Respondents asked for more of our scenario workshops. Over the next three years we plan to run an annual roadshow of NatCORR workshops across the country, bringing training, scenario practice and peer connection to practitioners in their own region.

07 WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT OURSELVES [BACK TO CHAPTER 7](#)

This chapter turned the survey back on NatCORR. Fewer than one in five field practitioners, and fewer than one in five people new to the sector, had engaged with us before, against more than half of those in leadership and coordination roles. As preferred training formats differ by experience, our response is to reach further into the field, make sure every role is heard, and measure whether it is working.

EVERY ROLE HAS A VOICE

Differentiate how we engage field practitioners and managers

Field practitioners on one hand, and managers, coordinators and leaders on the other, experience climate risk differently and need different things from us. We aim to differentiate our engagement with each group — including through the survey branching set out in section 01 — so that every role has a voice, opinions can be weighted and compared fairly, and the tools we develop stay relevant to the practitioners who use them in the field.

Incubate tools and templates with partners

Before releasing new tools and templates to the whole sector, we intend to develop and test them with partner organisations and practitioners, so that what reaches the sector has already been shaped and proven by the people it is designed for.

TRAINING FOR EVERY ROLE AND STAGE

Develop tiered training

We plan to develop tiered training that differentiates by role, level of experience and location, so that everyone in the sector — from new field practitioners to senior leaders — can access training pitched at what they need.

ACCESSIBLE, REGULAR AND RESPONSIVE

Grow our webinars and community events

Webinars and community events are a growing part of how NatCORR delivers its work. They provide accessible, regular information, and a way to offer ad hoc support and response to the sector during peak events.

A digital strategy for engagement

We intend to develop a digital engagement strategy so that our resources and knowledge are easy to find and use when people need them most — including in the lead-up to and during severe weather.

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

Continuous improvement through surveys and feedback

This survey is our baseline. We will follow up by repeating its core questions in future surveys, alongside ongoing feedback from our workshops, webinars and tools, to monitor progress and adjust our work accordingly.

WATCH THIS SPACE

WHAT ELSE WE ARE WORKING ON

Alongside our response to this survey, these projects are in development or planned over the next three years.

Bushfire training for the outdoor sector

Training in bushfire behaviour, monitoring and reporting ground conditions, and safe egress for field staff.

Mapping the sector's digital tools

A review of the mapping, planning and other digital tools the sector uses, leading to a best-practice guide and a consolidated resource.

Satellite technology and communication devices

Best-practice guidance, training and communication protocols for satellite and emergency communication devices.

Micro-credentials

Developing micro-credentials so the sector's training is recognised and contributes to career progression and professionalisation.

Partnerships across Australia

Continuing our collaboration with Risk Resolve and the University of Sydney Heat and Health Research Centre, and expanding our partnerships with subject matter experts.

METHODOLOGY & LIMITATIONS

About the survey

The NatCORR Outdoor Sector Survey 2026 received 224 responses from outdoor practitioners across Australia. It was a self-selected survey rather than a random sample, so results describe the people who chose to respond. The survey ran for 54 consecutive days, from 15 July to 6 September 2026. It was distributed through NatCORR's communication channels (newsletter and social media) and through NatCORR's partners, including peak bodies.

Statistical tests

Differences between groups on categorical questions were tested with the χ^2 test of independence; differences in 0–100 scores with the Kruskal–Wallis test (Mann–Whitney for two groups); and the state profile against the population with a χ^2 goodness-of-fit test. Results are called statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Because many comparisons are made, a few significant results would be

During August 2026, individual outreach was also made to demographic groups that were under-represented among respondents.

Correlation and causation

This survey shows where answers move together, not why. Several of the characteristics examined — experience, seniority, age and engagement with NatCORR — are closely related to each other, and the survey cannot separate their effects. Associations in this report are worth acting on and testing further, but none should be read as proof of cause.

Who is included

Percentages for each question are of those who answered it. Figures by state exclude the two respondents working outside Australia. Figures by role show the four main roles; 21 peak body, researcher and self-described roles are excluded from those figures but included elsewhere.

Survey completion

69 respondents (31%) did not answer from Q16 onward. Figures that use Q16 or later questions are based on up to 155 respondents. Dropout differed significantly by state but not by age, experience, role, size, disruption or prior engagement with NatCORR (Figure 7.10).

Comparison with 2023

The 2023 survey asked what should be a priority for NatCORR; 2026 asks what is important to respondents' organisations. The two are shown together for context but are not directly comparable.

Rounding

Percentages in the report are rounded to whole numbers and may not sum to exactly 100.

Use of AI

This report was prepared with the assistance of the Claude AI model. Claude was used to process the survey data, run the statistical tests, code free-text responses into themes, produce the charts, and draft and review text for structure and legibility. The NatCORR team directed the analysis, checked the figures against the raw data, and reviewed, edited and approved all content, including every action in Chapter 8. Individual survey responses were shared with the AI only in anonymised form.

expected by chance alone; where respondents could choose several options and groups overlap, no test is applied and patterns are described only.

Climate risk framework

Australian Climate Service (2025), *Australia's National Climate Risk Assessment*, released 15 September 2025. The Australian Climate Service is a partnership between the Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Geoscience Australia. acs.gov.au

Written responses

Free-text answers were read in full and coded into themes with AI assistance, then reviewed by the NatCORR team. One response can carry several themes. Themes are paraphrased; no response is quoted, to protect respondent anonymity. Counts show how often a theme was raised, not how widely it is held.

Population data

Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National, state and territory population*, population at 31 March 2026 (released September 2026). Used as an interim benchmark for representation; future surveys are intended to use outdoor workforce figures.

Small groups

Any group with fewer than five respondents is not shown, to protect anonymity and because percentages on so few people are unreliable. Such groups are still counted in totals.

Question numbering

Question numbers (Q1–Q30) follow the order of the survey instrument.

Version

Version 1.0 · October 2026. Further analysis may be added as it is reviewed.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

A pulse check of the Australian outdoor sector in climate adaptation — NatCORR survey results 2026. Version 1.0, October 2026.

If you have any questions or comments, please email us at natcorr@outwardbound.org.au.

Help us collect information about disruption to the outdoor sector from weather events through our ongoing survey: [Impact of Weather Events on the Australian Outdoor Sector](#).

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This report was prepared on the land of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people in the ACT. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and play. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and the knowledge forever embedded in their custodianship and care for Country.

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