

## Member Bulletin:

# DEECD Cancellation of camps week of 2-6 March- ACA, CVA & VOEA Advice

*Australian Camps Association – Industry Updates and News*

Date: 23 March 2009

Dear Member,

As you are probably aware a meeting was held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009 between the Australian Camps Association (ACA), Christian Venues Association (CVA), Victorian Outdoor Education Association (VOEA) and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to discuss the ramifications of recent cancellations of camps due to the bushfires in Victoria and to offer advice to the DEECD in relation to resolving these issues. Discussions focused in particular on cancellations at DEECD direction during the week 2-6 March, but we also discussed cancellations outside of this week.

We have now received the advice that has been sent to all Regional Offices for government schools by DEECD. They have been advised that:

**“Schools affected by the state-wide cancellation of camps for the days 2-6 of March arising from bushfire danger are to take the following steps.**

- 1. Liaise with camp operators to determine if the program can be rescheduled.**
- 2. If programs cannot be rescheduled, schools are to review their contractual arrangements with the camp operator.**
- 3. If schools are liable for expenses as part of the contract, they should pay any costs.**

**Schools that might have closed camps outside this period have been directed to talk to the central office.”**

You will notice that DEECD advice concerning March 2 through 6 has recommended rescheduling camps if at all possible. DEECD were informed that rescheduling is similar to cancellation as Bookings are time dependent. You will now have to make a business decision as to how you apply your Cancellation Policy, being aware that DEECD have indicated, in Points 2 & 3 above, that contractual arrangements should be met.

For those camps with formal contractual arrangements, for example a Booking Agreement, you are entitled to enforce those arrangements. We would, however, urge that in the interest of building long term relationships with your clients you seek a negotiated outcome that benefits both you and the school. If we can be of assistance in this process or you would like to discuss your options please do not hesitate to contact us.

It is my understanding that schools have been advised to contact their regional offices if they need further advice.

Schools that made cancellations outside the March 2-6 period have been instructed to contact Central Office (of DEECD). Your Association has not been able to determine what Central Office will be advising its Schools. In this light we recommend application of Contractual Arrangements, as they exist between your Centre and a School, if your Business Interruption Insurance does not cover the loss.

This advice is relevant to government schools. Independent or Catholic schools will make their own decisions in relation to cancellations but this advice may be provided to those schools in order to assist in the search for a reasonable outcome.

Your Association will be advising you in a separate mailing of recommended policies for your consideration so that a similar event in future has clearer outcomes (in terms of both cancellation policy and insurance) from the beginning.

**David Petherick**  
Executive Officer  
ACA

**Ken Pullen**  
Chief Executive Officer  
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**Tony Carden**  
Executive Officer