

ASPA 2009 AGM

Vice President Education Report

1. Introduction

The following report addresses activity in the education and training sector of the Australian Ski Patrol Association for the year November 2008 – November 2009.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of ASPA RTO CEO, Deanne McCrea, in furthering the educational goals of the organisation. Her attention to detail and professional approach to all aspects of her work have resulted in significant reforms to our practices. In addition, the work of the Education Team over the past year has been outstanding. Many of the changes to ASPA training have been enacted as a direct result of the dedication and hard work of this team. They are to be commended on their patience and willingness to work collaboratively on all projects this year. The Education Team consists of: Deanne McCrea, Rowan Peck, Rowena Christensen, AJ Simon, Liz Kolhoff, Kirsten Campbell, Margot Hurrell, Craig Larsson, Allan Terrence, Genevieve Whitehead with the Chairperson, Michelle Ware.

One key aim of the VP Education, RTO CEO and Education Team role over the past two years has been to standardise all AEC courses nationally, to ensure that courses all teach the same material, use the same resources and assess candidates in the same way. In addition, record keeping procedures have also needed significant review in order to create a comprehensive, current and user-friendly data base. To date, these goals have largely been achieved with continuous work being done to refine procedures and improve access for candidates and administrators. A focus on utilising web-based technology has been a feature of much of this work.

2. Advanced Emergency Care course

2.1 Review of assessment practices

Over the past 12 months, all AEC courses have progressively introduced the new assessment practices. The reason for these changes stems from both stakeholder feedback and the need to bring our assessment structures in line with best practice, high quality assessment. In summary, all AEC candidates now complete a pre-course mandatory assessment (primarily accessed online, but available in hard copy on request); two on-course quiz style assessments; an on-course applied first aid assessment covering a number of commonly occurring injuries and the equipment used to manage these; competency in AED, CRP, Oxygen, pain relief, unconscious casualty and bleeding; an end of course 25 question written assessment; and an end-of-course scenario-style triage assessment. This last assessment was trialed at the recent Snowy course held at Thredbo in October with highly positive candidate feedback.

The RTO CEO and Education Team have been instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition to these new practices by working closely together and training their instructors and assessors. Particular mention should be made of the work of AEC course directors and their willingness to embrace these innovations.

2.2 Web-based technology

By placing the AEC manual, Study guide and Flowchart booklets in the Resource Library pages of the ASPA website, candidates are now able to access these resources year round and be assured of finding the most current version of the manual. Hard copies of booklets and CDs of the manual are still made available to candidates at courses and paper copies of

the manual are available on request from course directors for a modest cost. It is the intention of the Education Team to build the online resources library so that sample assessments, lectures, demonstration videos and support materials are all current and easy to access.

It is also the intention of the Team to further develop the pre-course online multiple choice assessment so that it utilises the Moodle software package. This will enable candidates to receive immediate feedback on their responses and link them to relevant reference material where necessary. Deanne McCrea has done substantial work in this area to prepare resources and trial the process. In addition, she has work closely with relevant people to create a workable online course application procedure. The online course application process has experienced significant hurdles, but gradually has become more user friendly for candidates and course administrators. This process continues to be refined and members should benefit from easier access over the coming year.

2.3 Changes to course grading

As a result of stakeholder feedback, the Education Team has devised a draft set of grading criteria to enable ASPA to award their own grading in addition to the certification of competency through the Australian Quality Training Framework. All candidates are currently issued with a number of competencies at the end of the AEC course and this practice will continue. This ASPA grading is an internally assessed and managed process and provides candidates with the opportunity to receive Distinction, Credit or Competent gradings, depending on demonstrated proficiency and expertise. Once these criteria have been ratified by the Education Team, they will be available on the ASPA website. It is hoped that this new grading system will encourage candidates to strive for the highest possible standard in demonstrating their skills and provide them, where appropriate, with some additional feedback to employers.

2.4 Review of AEC manual

Prior to the April/May 2009 courses, the AEC manual was extensively reviewed by Rowan Peck and a team of medical professional and Education Team members. Although the timeframe proved difficult and the revision of the manual is an ongoing process, the manual now reflects current practices and content. In addition, new photographs were taken and when selecting images, the editorial team were careful to include significant archival photographs. This review was an enormous task. Rowan and his team are to be commended on their work.

2.5 Review of assessment materials

Members of the Education Team undertook to review various assessment materials so that they were in line with the latest version of the AEC manual. New banks of multiple choice questions were created, quiz questions devised and the end-of-course written assessment was completely redesigned. In addition, the end-of-course practical assessment has had significant changes to its format and assessment process.

3. RTO matters

Discussions were held with various stakeholders & interested parties with regard to licensing courses for delivery under the scope of ASPA. There is more work to do in this area but it is considered a potential future income source and worth pursuing.

The RTO CEO is currently in the process of preparing the required documentation for submission to our registering body VETAB for addition to our scope of a much needed CPR qualification.

There have been requests for the addition of on-hill sled and snowmobile certificates. A new oversnow transport unit is being developed to be included in the Public Safety training package and investigation is being undertaken to determine if it meets our needs or whether ASPA should develop their own qualification and submit it for registration/accreditation.

ASPA has also been approached with regard to an Avalanche Awareness course and further discussion is taking place on this subject.

4. Proposed changes to VP Education position

Due to the recognised increase in workload for the VP Education role, it has been proposed and agreed that the position's roles and responsibilities need to change. In brief, the proposal provides for a transition over time towards many of the "hands on" tasks previously being undertaken by the VP Education, being devolved to an Education Manager. This person's role would ideally include the RTO CEO position, ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to ASPA training. Whilst there is currently a funded position of RTO CEO, the change would necessitate remuneration commensurate with the increased workload and responsibility. Planning is underway for sourcing such funding and it will need to be enacted over time in stages.

5. Support for attaining Certificate IV in Training and Assessing

Suitably experienced ASPA members are able to apply for support to undertake training for this qualification. This process has proven successful with several people completing their training this year. It is hoped this initiative will continue to encourage more ASPA assistants and other to further their training skills

6. Conclusion

This year has seen many goals fully or partly achieved in the education area. There are plans to maintain the high standard of course delivery, resourcing and assessment into the next year and complete major project. The collaborative and collegial manner in which members of the Education Team have conducted themselves this year is a credit to them. As the Team in the main, consists of volunteer workers, I would like to acknowledge the high standard and professionalism of the work done by this dedicated group of people.