



Outback Queensland Education Experience Program Guidelines

June 2026

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government

Prepared by: Tourism Division, Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

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Acknowledgement

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

The department is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights, and our obligations under the Human Rights Act 2019.

Cover Image: Eromanga Natural History Museum. Courtesy of Tourism and Events Queensland

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Overview

Outback Queensland is a vast and rugged region that showcases Australia's rich cultural heritage, unique landscapes, and fascinating geological history. It is celebrated as a quintessential Australian experience, offering an unparalleled connection to the country's heartland.

The Outback provides a unique place-based educational opportunity for students to step into a living classroom, where they can explore ancient fossils, learn about Indigenous culture, and discover the stories of pioneers who shaped the region's history, gaining a deeper understanding of Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

Established in 2011, the Outback Queensland Education Experience Program (the Program) provides a subsidy of up to \$150 per student directly to Queensland primary and secondary schools and registered home educators to offset travel costs for school camps held in Outback Queensland. The subsidy is allocated based on round-trip distance travelled and must be used to reduce costs for individual students.

Outback Queensland boundaries

Outback Queensland Education Experience Program boundaries include the local government areas of Flinders, Richmond, McKinlay, Cloncurry, Mount Isa, Balonne, Barcaldine, Blackall-Tambo, Longreach, Winton, Barcoo, Boulia, Diamantina, Maranoa, Murweh, Paroo, Quilpie, Bulloo, Croydon, Etheridge, Burke and Carpentaria.



Objectives

The Program aims to generate increased visitation from Queensland school-aged students to visit the Outback Queensland region through the delivery of place-based learning activities which align with the Australian and Queensland curriculum or an approved home education learning plan.

The Program supports *Destination 2045 – Delivering Queensland's Tourism Future*, the Queensland Government's bold plan for delivering Queensland's tourism future and positioning us as a global tourism leader.

The plan will enable our tourism industry, doubling the value of visitor expenditure to the state's economy to \$84 billion by 2045 and delivering lasting benefits to Queensland communities.

The Program is designed to:

- encourage teachers and registered home educators to take their students to Outback Queensland and integrate its rich history and heritage into school learning
- enable more students to experience Outback Queensland through participation in educational excursions across the region
- facilitate more place-based learning activities in Outback Queensland
- support opportunities for students to learn from and give back to Outback communities by experiencing life on the land
- develop greater connections to the rich history and ancient landscapes of Outback Queensland and allow for more awareness and understanding of natural habitats and pressures facing the region
- provide opportunities for tourism operators in the Outback Queensland region to refresh and develop educational products and experiences
- stimulate new, sustainable market opportunities and subsequent tourism visitation into the Outback Queensland region, supporting economic growth, encouraging repeat visitation.

Timeframe

Queensland primary and secondary schools and registered home educators can apply for the subsidy for eligible educational excursions. All applications and excursions must be completed by 5pm AEST 31 December 2029. Applications will close earlier if all available funding has been allocated.

Eligibility

Queensland schools and registered home educators

The Program is available upon application to all Queensland primary and secondary schools, including schools of distance education, and registered home educators, where students are participating in an eligible education-related experience as part of their excursion. Schools and registered home educators must apply on behalf of their enrolled students participating in the excursion. Subsidy payments will not be provided to

an individual student or their family, except by arrangement with registered home educators and can only be passed on as savings on the cost of the excursion.

Outback experiences

To claim the subsidy of up to \$150 per student, an excursion itinerary must include at least one education-related outback experience, facilitated through a commercial outback tourism operator and delivered within the Outback Queensland Education Experience Program boundaries.

Eligible outback education activities should align with Australian and Queensland curriculum or approved home education learning plan and may include:

- agricultural experiences (e.g. visiting cattle stations, sheep properties, or cropping enterprises)
- environmental education activities (e.g. biodiversity programs, land and water management tours, sustainability workshops)
- cultural experiences (e.g. guided Indigenous tours, storytelling sessions, bush tucker experiences, cultural sites)
- natural history and geology experiences (e.g. visiting fossil and dinosaur discovery centres, exploring significant geological sites)
- historical and heritage experiences (e.g. touring museums, heritage centres, and historic towns or landmarks)
- arts and cultural programs (e.g. workshops or performances reflecting Outback life and culture)
- rural and remote community engagement (e.g. meeting with locals, learning about remote lifestyles, services, and innovations)
- industry and economic experiences (e.g. visiting renewable energy projects, mining operations, or regional development sites).

The subsidy cannot be claimed solely on expenditure for air travel, accommodation, fuel and meals.

Planning curriculum activities – schools only

Collaborative planning of curriculum aligned activities is strongly encouraged. Teachers and adult supervisors involved in the activity should use the Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment ([CARA Planner \(DOC, 423KB\)](#)) during the planning phase of an experience. This planner provides support in identifying hazards, assessing the risks, determining an inherent risk level, deciding on control measures and documenting the risk assessment for the experience.

To assist schools to conduct and prepare risk assessments, [CARA guidelines](#) are available for a wide range of activities that may be part of delivering the curriculum in Prep to Year 12.

These guidelines are developed to align with policies, regulations and guidelines of Queensland and Australian Governments, and the standards and processes of peak bodies within Australia.

In addition, they are regularly reviewed and undergo a comprehensive consultation process with schools and regions.

Commercial outback tourism operators

Queensland schools and registered home educators (or their travel intermediary) are responsible for the selection of a commercial outback tourism operator for inclusion in the itinerary which meets the required educational, accessibility and safety requirements.

Commercial outback tourism operators must satisfy the following requirements:

- [Blue card](#) as required by the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)* for all staff that will be engaging with students
- capacity to facilitate an educational experience that aligns to Australian and Queensland School curriculum or approved home education learning plan
- have all required permits necessary to conduct the program
- hold and maintain all mandatory business insurance coverage relevant to the operation of the business
- capacity to provide the risk assessment documentation and safety advice required by schools or registered home educators for the activities being undertaken.

It is also highly desirable for commercial outback tourism operators to be recognised as a Best of Queensland Experience by Tourism and Events Queensland.

Travel intermediaries

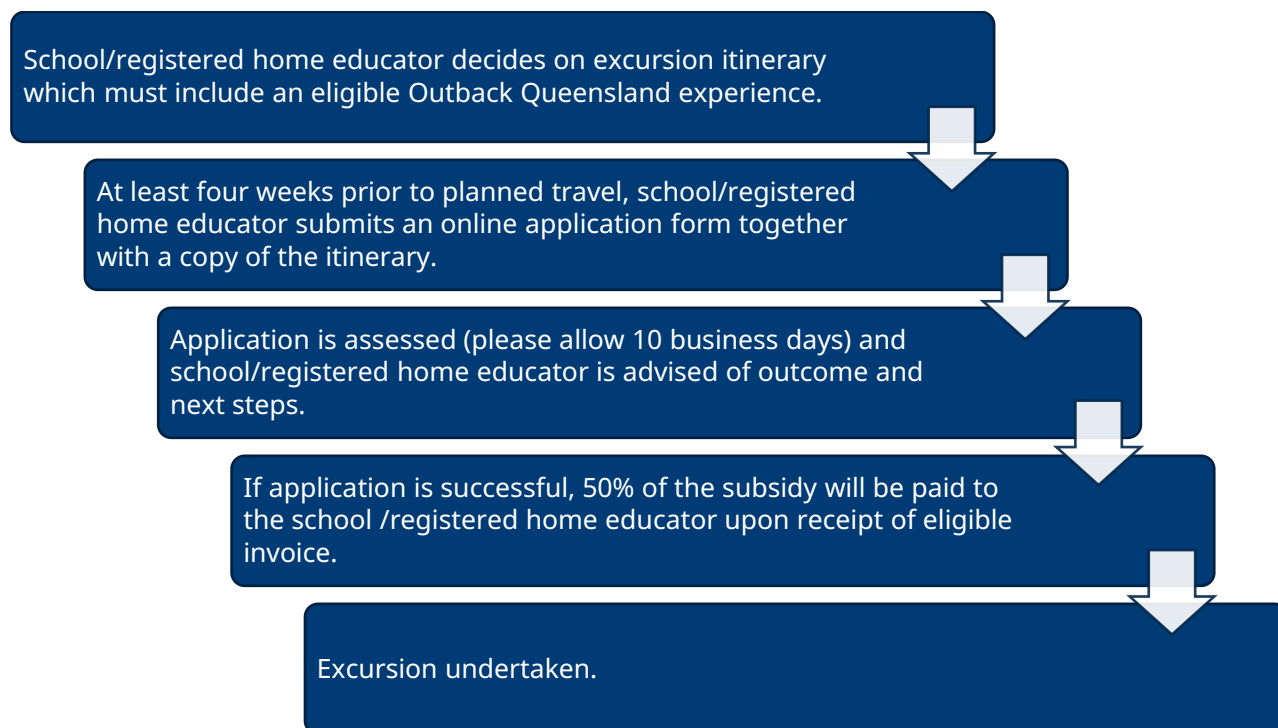
Eligible schools and registered home educators can engage a travel agent, edu-travel company, transport provider or booking agency to assist with the development of their excursion itinerary.

Applications for the subsidy can only be submitted by the school or registered home educator undertaking the excursion and travel intermediaries are not permitted to apply on their behalf.

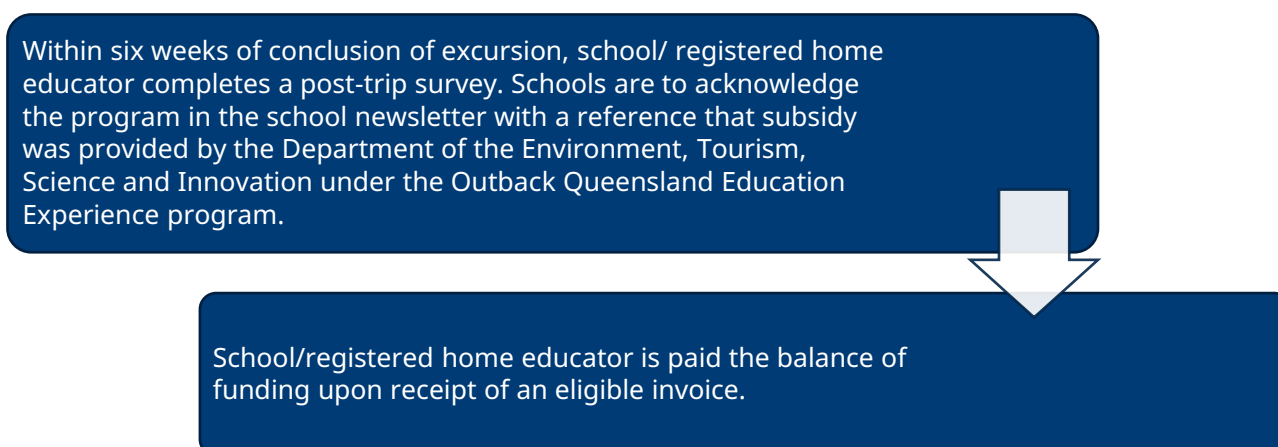
Application process

Applications are open and schools and registered home educators can apply by visiting [Queensland Education Experience Program](#).

Applicants will need to submit their application at least four weeks prior to the planned departure date of their excursion. All applications will be processed in order of receipt and schools and registered home educators are encouraged to submit an application as early as possible.



Post excursion



Subsidy and payment rates

Payments

Applications for the subsidy can only be submitted by Queensland schools and registered home educators and will not be accepted from individual students, parents, or travel intermediaries.

The subsidy will be paid directly to schools/registered home educators after their planned experience or itinerary has been assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria for funding. No subsidy payment will be made

for any travel or Outback Queensland education activities that are undertaken prior to approval of an itinerary.

The subsidy is calculated on a per student basis. Accompanying teachers, registered home educators and other adults are not included when calculating the subsidy. A student is only eligible for the subsidy once and the school or registered home educator is responsible for ensuring that each student for whom the funding is claimed has not, to the best of their knowledge, received the subsidy previously.

50 per cent of the subsidy will be paid upon approval of the application and the remaining 50 per cent will be paid upon receipt of the completed post-trip acquittal after the excursion.

Schools are to acknowledge the subsidy has been provided by the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation in a school newsletter upon return from the excursion (not applicable to registered home educators).

Rates

The subsidy is not intended to cover all costs of the planned activities or itinerary. Funds are allocated to schools/registered home educators on a per student basis, at rates corresponding to the round-trip distance travelled from the school or registered home educator's usual place of residence as per the subsidy table below:

Total distance travelled (round trip)	Subsidy value
500km to 999km	\$50
1,000km to 1,499km	\$75
1,500km to 1,999km	\$100
2,000km and over	\$150

As there is a limited amount of funding, schools and registered home educators are encouraged to apply as early as possible. Each application will be dealt with in order of receipt until funds are exhausted.

Where the school excursion itinerary includes both an Outback Queensland and Great Barrier Reef education experience, the school or registered home educator will be eligible to apply for subsidies under both programs (i.e. the Great Barrier Reef Education Experience Program and the Outback Queensland Education Experience Program).

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

The subsidy amounts referenced in this guideline are GST exclusive. Where a school is registered for GST:

- the subsidy received will consist of the agreed subsidy plus GST.
- the school will be required to provide a tax invoice that shows its Australian Business Number (ABN), the agreed subsidy, and the relevant GST amount.

Where a school or registered home educator is not registered for GST:

- the subsidy received will consist of the agreed subsidy and no GST.

- the school or registered home educator will be required to provide a tax invoice or receipt that shows its ABN (if applicable) and the agreed subsidy amount. As no GST has been received/paid this tax invoice/receipt will not include GST.

Cancellations

Commercial outback tourism operators reserve the right, at any time to cancel any booked activities. Activities can be cancelled or have scheduled changes (with or without notice) for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, bad weather conditions, and operational or technical disruptions.

Commercial outback tourism operators may place a booking on hold for another time, or reschedule the trip at the time of cancellation, or provide a full refund. However, it is the school or registered home educator's responsibility to review and adhere to the cancellation policy of the engaged operator.

Where the first payment of the subsidy has been made and travel has been undertaken, but the eligible outback related experience could not proceed due to, but not limited to, bad weather conditions, or operational disruptions, the second part of the subsidy is still payable. The payment will only be made where evidence (e.g. cancellation advice, refund documentation) is provided to demonstrate that the experience could not be undertaken at another suitable time during the excursion.

Where an entire itinerary has been cancelled (and not rescheduled) and the school or registered home educator has received the first payment of the subsidy, this amount will need to be refunded within five working days.

Privacy and Indemnity

Privacy statement

The Queensland Government and its appointed third-party Outback Queensland Education Experience Program delivery organisation collects and collates information from the application form to evaluate applications for the Program. Only authorised departmental officers and approved subsidy assessors have access to this information for the purpose of assessing the application for funding. Applicants should note that broad details of successful applications, agreed outcomes, progress and the level of subsidy provided may be published by the Queensland Government. Some information may be used to promote the Program. Personal information regarding an applicant and other persons will not be disclosed to any other third party without their consent, unless authorised or required by law or for the purposes of the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. For audit purposes, the Queensland Government is required to retain the applications and other supplied support material. The provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* and *Information Privacy Act 2009* apply to documents in the possession of the Queensland Government.

Indemnity disclaimer

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (the Department) is not liable for any loss or damage, including personal injury, that may be sustained by a student or other person, while participating in the subsidised experience or in the Program. The Department makes no statement, representation or warranty as to the suitability or safety of any subsidised experience, or to the suitability or safety of any outback experience providers in connection with the Program. The Department expressly disclaims all liability, to the extent permitted by law, for any loss, damage or other consequence whatsoever,

where direct or indirect, which may arise from the student's or other person's participation in the subsidised experience or from the Program.

The terms and conditions of your chosen commercial outback tourism operator or any other provider engaged during the excursion, including any cancellation policies and fees, apply to your booking. The Department is not party to your booking agreement with the commercial outback operator or any other operator or provider engaged during the excursion and assumes no liability under the agreement.

Contact us

Email: tourismsupporthub@detsi.qld.gov.au

Website: [Outback Queensland Education Experience Program](#)

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Definitions

CARA	An acronym for Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment which set the minimum safety standards for a variety of common curriculum activities.
Curriculum activity	Any activity conducted with students to support the delivery of the Australian and Queensland curriculum from Prep to Year 12.
Excursion	A well-planned education-related activity that is conducted outside of the school grounds or home educator's registered place of residence that aims to maximise students' learning experiences.
Registered home educator	A parent who has been granted registration to home educate their child from the Queensland Department of Education and have the legal responsibility to provide their child with a high-quality education guided by an approved home education learning plan.
Commercial outback tourism operator	A commercial tourism operator is a business, or organisation—whether operating for profit or as a not-for-profit—that provides tourism related services, products, or experiences to schools and/or registered home educators in return for payment in the eligible Outback Queensland local government areas. This includes operators, including local governments, that deliver accommodation, transport, guided tours, educational experiences (including agricultural, environmental, historical and/or natural history), attractions, arts and cultural experiences, museums, events, and other structured and professionally managed student educational activities.

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