



Goanna Park National Adventure Camp - Darwin

Overview

Each year Variety NT holds the Goanna Park National Adventure Camp in Darwin. The camp site is 90km east from Darwin on the Arnhem Highway. The camp is run annually for 2 one week consecutive camps and has been in operation for 14 years. In 2016, Camp 1 runs from Saturday, 2nd July – Sat, 9 July 2016 and Camp 2 runs from Saturday, 9 July - Saturday, 16th July 2016.

The main mission of these camps is to offer 13-18 year old teenagers who have a mild to moderate special need or are disadvantaged (socially, economically, remote) with a camping experience in a secure environment. The aim is for them to develop friendships, increase self-esteem and independence while participating in a week of organised activities and opportunities without the everyday routine that a teenager experiences at home or within the confines of an education setting.

The Goanna Park camp site is on a large sprawling property that sits about 200 metres from the Arnhem Highway. On the site you will find a large main hall/kitchen and outside undercover area, ablutions (2 showers and 3 toilets per male/female bathrooms) and a disabled bathroom, 5 X rooms with bunk beds for the use of carers/volunteers, a medical centre, a large billabong/lake (yes there are crocs there), bush tracks, many rocky outcrops and lots of trees. All participants have 3 healthy and hearty meals per day plus morning and afternoon tea and snacks when requested. Campers and rostered night carers sleep in large screened tents under the stars.

An integral part of the camp is the attendance of the Junior Police Rangers who will buddy up with the campers as peer support and this action creates some incredible experiences for all the kids involved. As you can imagine, most teenagers have to listen to grownups telling them what to do most days whether it be at home, school or work and so to have kids their own age encourage them as friends works small miracles.

The camp is arranged by the Variety NT office in consultation with long term volunteers, members or previous staff who have run the camp since its inception. All the carers are volunteers either from the NT or will accompany campers from other States and will hold some qualification or experience.

Carer requirements

When sending a camper to the NT from your State, we request at least one carer to accompany every teenager. If the teen you are sending is regarded as having higher needs or if they will be travelling for more than 4-5 hours, we will need to reassess the carer : camper ratio so that we meet our duty of care requirements. If you are unable to source carers in your home State we may be able to recommend a qualified carer in your State to escort your selected camper/s.

Carers

Carers need to hold some qualification and experience in working with children with special needs. It is advisable that the carer knows as much about the child they will be caring for so that both parties are comfortable with spending the whole week together. The Carers responsibility will be for up to two children with the assistance of 1 Junior Carer and 1 Junior Police Ranger during the day. There will be an additional 2 carers assigned to the evening shift sleeping in tents near the campers.

Applications

Applications for campers and carers become available on 2 February 2016 and close 30 April 2016. The cost for each camper will be \$1100 for food, accommodation and activities with the carers fees absorbed into this amount. Each State will also pay the return airfare of each camper and carer.

Camper application forms can be accessed here:

<https://variety.smartygrants.com.au/goannaparkcamper2016>

Carer/Volunteer application forms can be accessed here:

<https://variety.smartygrants.com.au/goannapark2016carervolunteer>

Camper medical or behavioural information

It is vital for the camp nurse to know as much as possible about the child's medical or behavioural needs (if any) prior to them being accepted to attend the camp. As the nearest hospital is a 90 minute drive away and the nearest ambulance 40 minutes away (if available) we may not be able to accept children with high medical needs or conditions which may deteriorate rapidly. It is for this reason that a detailed doctor's letter must accompany application forms in regards to medical conditions and treatment before the child will be considered. As for children with behavioural issues we would also expect the family to request a letter from the child's therapist detailing any at risk behaviours that pose a risk to the safety of others and proven strategies to assist carers.

Flights for campers and carers

Camp 1 runs Saturday, 2nd July – Sat, 9 July 2016. Camp 2 runs Saturday, 9 July - Saturday, 16th July 2016. We aim to have all campers and carers at Goanna Park no later than 4.30 - 5pm on their first Saturday so that they are able to participate in a tour of the camp facilities and surrounding areas and to be present at the safety brief. It is optimal for the campers and carers to arrive in Darwin the evening before the camp begins if their flights are late in the evening and it will be necessary for that State to pay for accommodation which has been heavily subsidised for Variety NT. During the week we are all up by 7.00am and the days will be busy so if the campers and carers can arrive well slept they will enjoy their time at Goanna Park without lagging and becoming irritable by mid week.

Any questions? Please do not hesitate to get in touch! Kate – 08 8981 2544 or [grants @varietynt.org.au](mailto:grants@varietynt.org.au)