

POSSUM PULL

Goal – Purpose of the activity.	
Challenge courses are also known as challenge ropes courses. <i>Participants</i> are required to use dexterity, strength, balance and complex physical movements to successfully traverse the element or course of elements. Challenge courses are often used for experiential learning, personal challenge or team building purposes but also for entertainment. Challenge ropes courses are designed to present physical and mental challenges to individuals and groups. The Possum Pull involves participants being placed into a full body harness and positioned directly below the supporting cables. Team members are attached to the belay rope. When instructed, the belay team run away from the participant. The Participant is then hauled vertically into the air. Depending on the size of the participant and the size of the belay group, the vertical ascent can be very spectacular and fast. The belay team will lower the participant at the conclusion of their turn. Possum Pull is a "High Element" <i>and</i> is an element for which safety can no longer be achieved by spotting and requires a <i>belay system</i> using harnesses and specialist safety equipment or other established methods or systems.	
Participants	Leadership and Qualifications
Participants are those persons who undertake the activity, and who are not a leader or assistant leader for the activity. Dependent Participants are persons owed a duty of care by the activity provider who is reliant upon the activity leaders for supervision, guidance and instruction to support the person's participation. All participants are to be considered Dependent Participants for this activity.	Activity leaders should have or be able to demonstrate: • Core Good Practice Guide Leader General Competencies (Appendix M Core Good Practice Guide) • Specific competencies as outlined in the Challenge Course Good Practice Guide Appendix 9 Leaders may demonstrate their competency through any of the 4 recognised pathways: • Training Qualification and/or Training Course • Outdoor Sector and/or Organisation Accreditation Scheme • Leader Registration Schemes • Peer Recognition and Verification Process
Participant/Leader Ratios	
Ratio 1:20 + 1 School Staff Member (Assistant Leader) for school groups. Activity Leader is to provide Level 1 (Direct Supervision), Assistant Leader (school personnel) is to provide Level 2 Supervision.	
Operational Procedures	Location: Lake Cooby
Participants are to be briefed by the facilitator of the expectations of the group. Linking in with their values discussed at the start of camp. The group then is run through what to expect and do that session, depending on the weather and ability of the group. Pre-Activity The psychological preparation of students is as important as the physical preparation, especially for students who are anxious about the activity. Under no circumstances should students be pressured by staff or peers to participate beyond their readiness. A challenge by choice should be used for all participants. They should all be encouraged to fit a harness in preparation for the activity, or at least to be part of the belay team. A safety brief is given and a demonstration of how to wear a harness and helmet correctly and how to use the carabiners and ropes safety. • All participants must wear appropriate clothing and be sun smart with sunscreen, hat, etc. Everyone is to wear a harness (and a helmet when required) for the session and is not to take it off unless instructed by the facilitator or at the end of the session as directed. Before each student's participation in the Possum Pull, a qualified or appropriately experienced staff member will fit a full-body harness to the climbers. The Activity Leader must visually check to ensure that the harness has been fitted correctly and that the attachment has been checked. • The group is then attached to the ropes and are given a verbal example of what they would do prior to the climber beginning. The group is asked to do a SQUEEZE TEST. This means all participants are to squeeze their carabiner's. If the gate is locked /closed the participants are to put their thumbs up. If the carabiner gate is open, participants must close it prior to putting their thumbs up. Thumbs up indicated all participants are safely attached to the rope. Instructors may find it beneficial to walk up and down the group while conducting a SQUEEZE TEST in order to double check the gates are closed. Participants are then to wait for further instructions.	

- Once the facilitator is happy with the ability of the group they will begin the activity.
- No one is to hold onto the rope while donkey belaying - this can cause rope burn.

During Activity

- Possum is to stand either directly below the pulley or 10-15m from the bottom of the activity.
- The donkeys should move backwards in order to keep the rope tight.
- On the go instruction, belay team are to run away from the activity as fast as they possibly can.
- Climbers should either wait and then jump into the air or start running towards the bottom of the activity.
- Donkey team should stop running on Leaders instruction (when the knot in the rope has reached the top pulley).
- Once the first climber has reached the top, donkeys will be asked to pause in order to give the instructions on how to lower the climber down.
- Donkey team should then walk slowly back towards the activity to lower the Possum back to the ground.
- There should be good communication between belayers and climbers at all times.

Post Activity

All harnesses to be fully extended and placed into boxes for next session.

The facilitator will front load the participants before the debrief to think about how they may have improved on their values or maybe achieved a goal they set from them self or team before heading. They then will be challenged to apply those values/goals back at camp and home.

Weather

Effective planning requires access to up-to-date weather and fire information, which is generally available through newspapers, radio and television. The most up-to-date information is available on the website of the Bureau of Meteorology at www.bom.gov.au/qld . Or <http://www.eldersweather.com.au/qld/darling-downs/geham>

Equipment and Logistics

Equipment, whether hired, borrowed or owned by the school or students, must be in a safe condition and suitable for the activity

Belay Devices

Belaying devices must meet Australian standards. Devices must be in good working order.

Harnesses

Providers of artificial climbing and abseiling activities must refer to manufacturers and installers to establish appropriate operating parameters. These parameters must address the correct fitting and attachment of harnesses. The harness must also ensure the student or staff member will remain secure in the event of an inversion. Harnesses must be regularly checked and replaced, if necessary, with a recommended maximum life span of five years.

Helmets

Helmets which meet Australian standards must be worn by all students and staff using high elements and by those belaying or observing from below. Caps must not be worn under helmets.

Ropes

Ropes used on a challenge rope course must be used in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and meet Australian Standards.

Before the activity commences, an experienced staff member needs to inspect the ropes.

The ropes' history and maintenance needs to be logged and the ropes must be stored in a cool, dry place free from ultraviolet light, chemical or physical hazards.

Shoes

Participants must wear covered and firmly fitting shoes with a non-slip sole.

First aid kits

First aid kits appropriate to the location and level of training must be carried.

Rescue equipment

Rescue equipment specific to the ropes course must be accessible at all times..

Clothing

Clothing is the individual's primary protection against severe and variable weather conditions.

Clothing lists need to be appropriate for the activity, environment and season. Items which are recommended not to be taken or worn (such as jewellery or rings) should be identified.

Glasses or sunglasses should be secured and long hair tied back to avoid being caught in belay devices or other equipment. Loose jewellery must not be worn and rings should be taped if not removed. Items of jewellery or rings which students remove should be placed in a secure location so they do not get lost.

All objects should be removed from pockets before participating. Gloves may be appropriate on elements involving a dynamic belay. To protect against sunburn use broad-spectrum, water-resistant SPF 30+ sunscreen on all exposed parts of the body, applied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Students who own sunglasses should be encouraged to bring and wear them when required.

Identification

Staff and students must be easily identifiable.

Staff must determine the most suitable system/s of identification, based on the assessment of the environment, students' skills, the type of activities to be undertaken and the age and number of students.

Levels of Challenge and Possible Variations

Safety Considerations

Sun Safety

Sunburn is a risk for anyone who participates in outdoor activities, particularly in Queensland. Leaders should take reasonable steps to prevent or minimise the likelihood of staff and participants suffering excessive sun exposure.

Weather

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Ensure all safety equipment is fitted correctly.

Ensure clear instructions are given to participants.

Ensure the crates are moved away by the instructor. Do not let participants kick crates.

Course construction and security

The construction of challenge ropes courses is an expert field and should be undertaken by qualified individuals and/or organisations specialising in the planning and construction of ropes courses.

Contractors must provide written confirmation that the materials, equipment and installation meet current industry requirements.

Staff must ensure that challenge ropes course elements are not accessible when unsupervised.

Maintenance

The owner of the course must carry out regular formal maintenance inspections which are fully documented and endorsed by an independent industry expert. Operators must be able to provide written evidence that a maintenance check has been conducted. Before each activity, the instructor should carry out a visual inspection of the course to ensure there are no obvious impediments to normal operation.

For more details please see corresponding RA

Emergency Management Procedure

- A** Assess situation, call emergency services, assist those in danger
- E** Evacuate students, staff and visitors, if appropriate
- I** Inform School Camp Leader onsite and off site, Camp Cooby Directors or Camp Manager if not onsite
- O** Organise resources, advise parents
- U** Undertake recovery operations and return site to normal

Risk Assessment

Danger	Risk Description	Risk Level	Management Strategies	Residual Risk Assessment – after Management Strategies
Environment				
Sun Exposure	Sunburn Dehydration Heat Exhaustion/ Stroke	M	Participants advised on appropriate clothing and equipment. Clothing with sleeves must be worn. Participants carry minimum of 3L water. Refill stops. Particular pointers to apply sunscreen to backs of hands and inside thighs. (recommended minimum +30) Regular rest stops. Encourage peer reminders and monitoring. Review weather conditions prior to the activity. www.bom.gov.au/qld . Or http://www.eldersweather.com.au/qld/darling-downs/geham Briefs and debriefs as well as team planning should be conducted in the shade where available.	L
Winds	Falling branches Falling trees.	S	Monitor winds before activity commences and throughout session. Aggressive movement of trees nearby are an indication of thinking about strong management strategies or cancellation. No activity will take place during strong winds, or near dead trees, no pulling or swinging on trees. All dead trees & fallen branches will be monitored in area. All dead trees and branches deemed a risk will be removed from the area Review weather conditions prior to the activity. www.bom.gov.au/qld . Or http://www.eldersweather.com.au/qld/darling-downs/geham	L

			Assess participants' ability to cope with increasingly difficult wind conditions.	
Rain	Wet Equipment Hypothermia Slips and trips	S	Review weather conditions prior to the activity. www.bom.gov.au/qld . Or http://www.eldersweather.com.au/qld/darling-downs/geham Pre-briefing and equipment list outlines appropriate clothing and wet weather gear. Participants are shown how to waterproof equipment. Group condition is monitored closely during wet weather. Group to be briefed on safe practice in wet conditions using extra caution. Participants will wear firmly fitting, covered footwear with a non-slip sole. Participants will be instructed to be aware of the ground underfoot, & to avoid walking on damp/wet areas & to be aware of trees, branches & brambles, & not to run.	L
Danger	Risk Description	Risk Level	Management Strategies	Residual Risk Assessment – after Management Strategies
Bushfire	Burns Smoke Inhalation Death	H	Participants advised on appropriate clothing and equipment. Participants carry minimum of 3L water. Encourage peer reminders and monitoring. Aggressive heat waves are an indication of thinking about bush fire management strategies or cancellation. Fires may only be lit in specified areas. Fires should not be lit in windy conditions. Participants will be briefed on emergency procedures / assembly area at commencement of program Review weather conditions prior to the activity. www.bom.gov.au/qld . Or http://www.eldersweather.com.au/qld/darling-downs/geham	L
Uneven ground	Slips / falls / heavy landing	M	Appropriate path ways are chosen to avoid any difficulties. Participants will wear firmly fitting, covered footwear with a non-slip sole. Location of the possum pull requires participants to run when belaying – this should be done towards the uphill, grassed area and controlled by distance / makers Participants belaying must walk back to the start point of the belayers area to avoid dropping the climber. Close supervision and direction from the Camp Cooby staff is required here Ground markers should be placed to designate start and end zones for the belayers Soft fall / landing material should be placed in the landing zone of the possum pull	L

Possum Pull Activity Plan

Rubbish	Cut Feet Embedded Objects	S	Participants are expected to wear closed in shoes at all times.	L
Environmental Impact	Increasing dust Lower grass cover Site appearance	M	Participants are to be briefed on specific environmental factors that concern Cooby Dam. Regular usage of this element will result in increasing wearing of ground cover / grass and will require maintenance attention to Ensure that the designated landing areas are maintained with soft fall / landing material	L
Wildlife	Interaction with wildlife Potential injury to wildlife / humans	S	Participants are expected to wear closed in shoes at all times. Appropriate pathways are chosen to avoid potential wildlife Participants will be instructed to be aware of the ground underfoot, & to avoid walking through unmown areas (unless the activity requires it) & to be aware of trees, branches & brambles which may be home to various wildlife, Participants should not to run in uncleared areas Pathways are kept clear and mowed to ensure all wildlife can be seen and avoided. Participants will be instructed to give all wildlife a wide berth to avoid injury. Staff will inspect all activity areas prior to use to ensure no wildlife are in close proximity.	L
Danger	Risk Description	Risk Level	Management Strategies	Residual Risk Assessment – after Management Strategies
People				
Participant injury	A participant falls from height, resulting in injury	H	Pre-activity planning will consider whether the planned challenge ropes course session matches the maturity and abilities of the group. Each participant will have at least four belayers (donkey style) linked to a climbing rope via knots and carabiners Belayers and observers will be briefed on their responsibilities and closely supervised Location of the possum pull requires participants to run when belaying – this should be done towards the uphill, grassed area and controlled by distance / makers Possum must not be raised above the butterfly knot located above the climber (2 metres) to avoid entanglement / flipping over the anchor point. Participants belaying must walk back to the start point of the belayers area to avoid dropping the climber. Close supervision and direction from the Camp Cooby staff is required here Ground markers should be placed to designate start and end zones for the belayers Soft fall / landing material should be placed in the landing zone of the possum pull	L

Possum Pull Activity Plan

Poor Belay Technique	A participant holds the rope while belaying / climbing participant falls resulting in rope burn.	M	Pre-activity planning will consider whether the planned challenge ropes course session matches the maturity and abilities of the group. Belayers and observers will be briefed on their responsibilities and closely supervised. Participants involved in the belaying team must hold the rope whilst a climber is being pulled up and but not wrap the rope around their hand / arm at any point Climbers will be indicated to not hold the rope above / attached to their full body harness due to the potential of shoulder dislocation. Climbers can hold the front of their full body harness for support.	L
Inexperienced belayers	Poorly fitted harness, resulting in soft tissue or skeletal injury	S	Pre-activity planning will consider whether the planned challenge ropes course session matches the maturity and abilities of the group All participants will wear correctly fitted helmets and harnesses. These are to be checked at the start of the activity and throughout the activity (at each subsequent climb), especially when a harness is removed or adjusted.	L
Entrapment (equipment)	A participant or staff member catches their hair, clothing or jewelry in equipment, causing injury or distress.	H	Staff will advise participants that jewelry and rings must not be taken or worn and suggest appropriate clothing (both in the pre-activity briefing and before the day of the activity). Staff will ensure that hair, clothing and jewelry are appropriately managed to avoid injury or mishap Staff will have available on site a multitool / utility scissors to cut / remove entrapment in a rescue kit if necessary	L
Fear / psychological damage	Participant or staff distress / fear of heights	H	This is a challenge by choice activity, so staff must frame this for participants prior to activity commencing. The participant always has the option of being raised slower, stopping the height reached soon and coming down wherever their comfort zone has been reached / exceeded.	L
Inconsiderate Participants	Participants being inconsiderate of other participants resulting in soft tissue, skeletal or emotional injury / damage	M	Participants will be briefed on the risks associated with the activity. Inconsiderate participants will be removed from the activity. Staff will ensure safety procedures are met and will cease any ideas which may result in a participant's safety being jeopardized	L
Allergies	Environmental triggers (pollens, dust)	H	Check medical information for participants, be aware of possible triggers.	L
Danger	Risk Description	Risk Level	Management Strategies	Residual Risk Assessment – after Management Strategies

Equipment				
Faulty equipment	Faulty equipment could result in further damage to equipment and increase risk of incident,	H	Staff will inspect all ropes equipment before and after activity. All equipment use will be logged and visually checked prior to usage All equipment will be used and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Staff are responsible for setup and pack down of all equipment. Personal protective equipment checked for correct fitting & monitored throughout activity by the instructor	L
Incorrect use of equipment.	Failure to operate Possum Pull correctly by climber resulting in injury	M	Clear instruction provided to participants on possum pull techniques (standing start, running start, spin / Superman) Climbers instructed to start running as directed by staff to avoid dragging / abrasion injury.	L

Consequence					
Likelihood	Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
A (almost certain)	S	S	H	H	H
B (Likely)	M	S	S	H	H
C (Moderate)	L	M	S	H	H
D (unlikely)	L	L	M	S	H
E (rare)	L	L	M	S	S

Risk Level

H – High risk: e.g. likely or almost certain to occur, with at least moderate consequence – at least medical treatment required (See table below)

S – Significant risk

M – Moderate risk

L – Low risk

CONSEQUENCE RATING TABLE		
1	Insignificant	No injuries, No financial loss
2	Minor	First Aid treatment, Low financial loss
3	Moderate	Medical treatment required, Medium financial loss
4	Major	Extensive injuries, High financial loss
5	Catastrophic	Death, Major financial loss