

**Great Divide Tours**



**Registered Training Organisation**

# Student Handbook

**For participants  
undertaking 4WD  
driver training through  
Great Divide Tours Pty Ltd  
RTO Number: 45586**



**VERSION 2.2 November 2023**

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## Introduction

Welcome to Great Divide Tours. We specialise in providing 4WD tag-along tours and 4WD driver training. Our trainers are all practising tour guides, and when they're not training, they are leading 4WD convoys to remote areas throughout Australia.

The owner and lead trainer of Great Divide Tours is Vic Widman. Over the years, Vic has personally led hundreds of tours around Australia, including 26 tours across the Simpson Desert. He has published several books and produced half a dozen DVDs on 4WD travel and driving skills. He also has a regular radio spot with Macquarie network, talking about 4WD topics.

Vic is the author of the main reference text used in our accredited training programs – *4WD Driving Skills* (2019 Edition), published by Landlinks Press. You will be given a copy of this book when you undertake your course. The pre-reading course notes you have already received in your learner's pack are selected excerpts from the book.

Great Divide Tours owns the Castle View Training Centre, set on 240 acres of bushland near Braidwood in NSW. This is where our registered training organisation (RTO) is based, and where all courses are delivered (unless we have organised with the client to provide on-site training at their own venue).

The Castle View Training Centre is a first-class 4WD training facility, with specialised tracks, obstacles, bog holes, log bridges, water crossings, stepped ascents and a skid pan, constructed to cater for all levels of driving skills, from beginner through to expert professional.

In addition to training, the centre is also used for 4WD conferences, exhibitions and trade shows. Overlander Magazine has used our centre for 12 years to conduct their 4WD of the Year trials and judging event. We have a commercial kitchen on-site, a dining room that seats up to 40 people, and a range of accommodation options, including a bunkhouse and fully serviced camping facilities.

This handbook explains your rights and responsibilities as a student, and the processes involved in being trained and assessed in our accredited training programs.

Please ask your trainer or one of our administration staff members if you have any questions about these matters. Contact details are on the next page. You can also go to our website for more information, and to see photos of the centre, at: [www.greatdividetours.com.au](http://www.greatdividetours.com.au).

## Business details

Great Divide Tours Pty Ltd is an incorporated company, owned and operated by Vic Widman and Julie Widman. Our ABN is: 11 092 849 780. Our RTO number is: 45586.

## Contact details

**Postal address**

PO Box 5020  
Elanora Heights NSW 2101

**Administration office**

Email: [info@greatdividetours.com.au](mailto:info@greatdividetours.com.au)

Phone: 02 9913 1395

Fax: 02 9913 1395

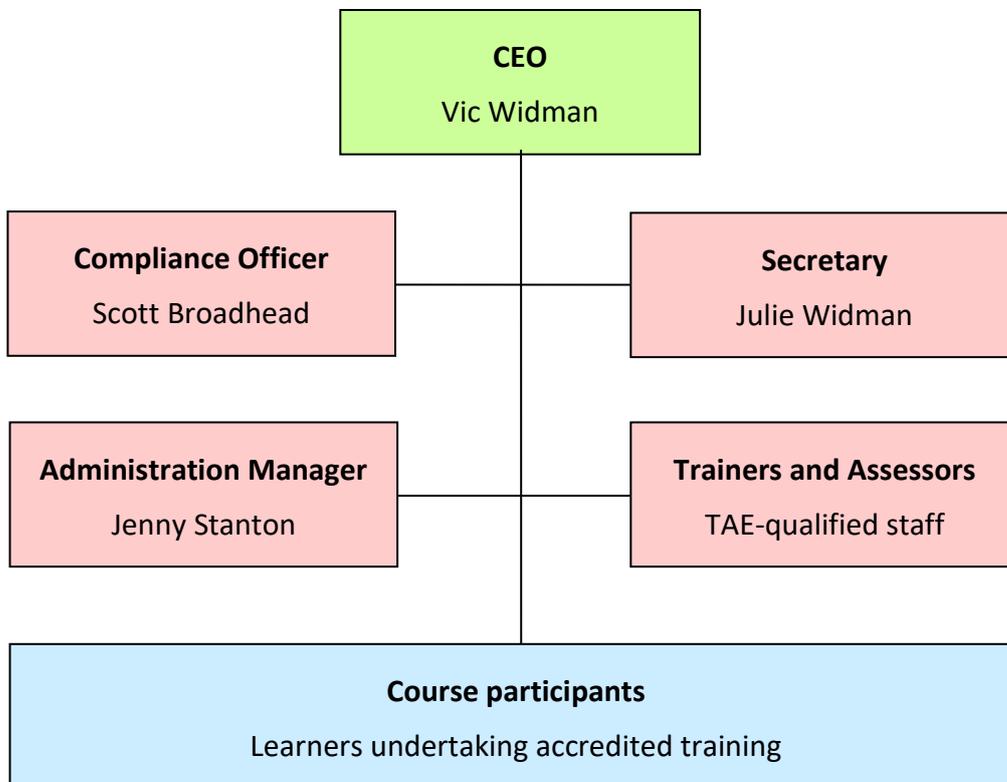
**Castle View Training Centre**

9792 Nerriga Road  
Durrans Durra, NSW

(For details on how to get there, see ‘Training Centre’ page)

Phone: 02 4842 1414

## Organisational structure



## Code of practice

Great Divide Tours is committed to maintaining its reputation as one of Australia’s leading specialist 4WD training providers through the delivery of innovative training programs tailored to the precise needs of clients. We ensure that all training and assessment activities are carried out in full compliance with the Standards and Regulations that govern our activities as an RTO.

In particular, we adhere to the following Acts, Regulations and Standards:

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *National VET Regulator Act 2011*
- *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 (Amendment 2019).*

### **Mission statement**

Great Divide Tours aims to equip 4WD drivers with the skills and knowledge needed to drive safely and competently in off-road and remote conditions, and successfully handle the challenges involved in dealing with unplanned events.

The company is committed to using ‘best practice’ standards in all of its training and assessment activities.

## Your training program

As part of your pre-enrolment information pack, you will also receive a Participant Information sheet, listing the details of the course and the competencies that will be covered. The information sheet also tells you how to prepare for the course and what will be involved. Please make sure you have **read the information sheet** carefully. You are welcome to contact us if you have any questions.

If you are undertaking the course as a work activity (that is, if you have been sent along by your employer), we will organise the training program and itinerary with your company. We may also make the necessary arrangements regarding meals, accommodation and services that will be provided. Check with your employer what has been arranged for you.

If you are enrolling as an individual, we will organise the course dates, accommodation arrangements, meals, 4WD hire (where required) and all other details directly with you. The price we quote on the booking form will be all inclusive.

## Physical and mental requirements

Off-road driving can be demanding, both mentally and physically, especially on rough terrain and in potentially hazardous situations. To undertake the practical components of this course, you will need to be physically capable of carrying out manual handling tasks at ground level and using a jack to change a wheel. You will also need to have the mental stamina to stay cool while driving under challenging conditions.

If you are unsure of your ability to successfully complete the activities involved, please phone us for further guidance before you attend the course.

## Unique Student Identifier

Before you fill in the enrolment form, you will need to have a unique student identifier (USI). If you do not already have one, please go to the USI website and create one, at: [www.usi.gov.au](http://www.usi.gov.au).

## Pre-reading

Once you enrol in the course, we will send you a **pre-reading pack** or **Background Notes** to get you started.

**Please read these notes** in preparation for the course and bring a copy to your training course. Note that all topics will be covered in full during the face-to-face training sessions, with plenty of time to discuss the concepts and ask questions, but it will be helpful if you have already developed some understanding of the principles involved in 4WD operation by reading the Background Notes.

## **Literacy**

Four-wheel driving is all about practical experience and learning by doing. However, our courses still require a certain amount of background reading and looking up of information in reference manuals. You will also be required to complete a written test and fill in various forms, such as a simple risk assessment and pre-start checklist.

All of our materials are ‘literacy assisted’, written in plain English, and contain extensive diagrams and photos. Your trainer will provide on-the-spot help if you have trouble with any of the literacy tasks.

If you believe you may need additional assistance with your language or literacy skills, please contact us for further advice. We have a specialist literacy consultant available who can discuss the details with you. All costs associated with this service will be at the students expense and the student will be notified of these costs prior to acceptance.

## **Assessment process**

The accredited training program you have enrolled in requires a formal assessment of your competency. The assessment process will be conducted during the face-to-face on-site training program. Assessment tasks include a written test, practical demonstration events and completion of a range of checklists.

In the early stages of the training program, your trainer will discuss the assessment processes with you, including the types of knowledge questions you’ll be asked and the practical demonstrations you will need to perform at the end of the course.

We generally find that participants are able to successfully complete all assessment tasks within this period of time – however, there is provision for you to receive an extension in time if you are assessed as ‘Not yet competent’ at the end of the on-site program. In instances where you require further practice in your skills before being re-assessed, we will discuss the options available to you at the conclusion of the course. If you have been sent by your employer, we will also discuss these options with your supervisor or manager.

Participants who are unhappy with the assessment judgements made by our qualified assessors are able to appeal against the decision. Please see the ‘Appeals and complaints’ page for more details.

Once you have successfully completed all evidence requirements, you will receive a statement of attainment listing the nationally recognised units of competency you have been accredited in.

There is no requirement to undertake a ‘work placement’ in order to successfully complete our courses. Although most of our participants are already engaged in 4WD activities as part of their job role, it is not mandatory to gain workplace experience before undertaking the final assessment of competency.

## **Access and equity policy**

Great Divide Tours recognises that course participants come from a wide range of backgrounds and may have individual needs when they enter a training program.

We are committed to identifying these needs where they exist and addressing them in the most appropriate way to give each person the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Great Divide Tours adheres to the following legislative requirements:

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Anti-discrimination Act 1977*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984.*

Where a special need is identified, we aim to provide extra assistance to the student, in consultation with them and their employer, in an effort to assist them in overcoming the barriers that may be holding them back.

## **Harassment and behaviour policy**

Great Divide Tours is committed to ensuring that everyone who comes to our courses, including trainers and participants, enjoy good working relationships with each other. An important factor in achieving a harmonious environment is keeping the atmosphere free from harassment and discriminatory behaviour and ensuring that everyone works together towards common goals.

### **Harassment and discriminatory behaviour**

Harassment is any behaviour which offends, humiliates or scares another person. Discriminatory behaviour is any behaviour which results in unfavourable treatment being given to someone purely because of an attribute they have that the perpetrator is prejudiced against; such as age, gender, ethnicity, or religion.

In some cases, the perpetrator may not be aware that their behaviour is upsetting or discriminatory. Therefore, the first response should be to discuss the matter with them and point out the effect their actions are having. If this informal approach is not sufficient, or if the offending action warrants a stronger response, the behaviour should then be reported to the CEO, where the matter will be considered at a formal level.

### **Disciplinary procedures**

Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated in training sessions. Not only can it disrupt other participants who want to learn, in some cases it can also be dangerous.

Where a student's behaviour is considered unacceptable, the trainer will remove them from the group and report them to their employer. The student will only be permitted to return to

the group after they have apologised and agreed not to engage in the behaviour again. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, they will be reported again to their employer and banned from further participation in the course.

Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- abusive language
- refusing to wear appropriate protective clothing or equipment
- leaving a training session without permission
- being under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs
- disobeying an instruction from the trainer
- fighting with another person, or provoking such behaviour
- playing practical jokes which may jeopardise the safety or wellbeing of others.

## **Fees and refunds policy**

The 'Fees and refunds policy' for the RTO division of Great Divide Tours is separate from the policy for the tour division. For the policy relating to 4WD tag-along tours, please see the details on the Great Divide Tours website.

All accredited training is delivered on a fee-for-service basis. No government subsidies or funding program are utilised.

## **Individual enrolments**

Individuals enrolling in an accredited training program must pay full fees prior to the commencement of the course. The amount payable will be listed in the information pack relating to that course. Learners are rarely personally charged up-front fees in excess of \$1,500.

Individuals who cancel their enrolment more than seven days before the scheduled commencement date of the course will be provided with a full refund or the opportunity to transfer to another training date. No refund will be payable after that time, unless Great Divide Tours decides at its own discretion to grant a refund or allow transfer to another date.

All fees include course notes and other training resources, as specified in the information pack relating to that course.

## **Corporate enrolments**

Corporate training programs are organised by negotiation with the participants employer. Fees payable, cancellation arrangements and refund policies are all negotiated directly with the employer and form part of the contract they enter into with Great Divide Tours. All fees are payable within 30 days of delivery of the training.

## Complaints and appeals policy

In the event that there is a complaint made about our RTO or one of our trainers, we are committed to treating it seriously and resolving it as quickly and fairly as possible.

If we believe that a complaint or appeal will take longer than 60 days to resolve, the complainant will be advised in writing on the reasons for the delay and will be regularly updated on the progress of the matter.

If you wish to make a complaint, please follow the process described below.

1. Report the matter in writing as soon as possible to Vic Widman (CEO). He will enter the matter into the Complaints Register.
2. Vic will interview each party involved in the matter.
3. After listening to all parties, Vic will make a decision on the best way to resolve the problem and notify all parties of the outcome in writing, including reasons for the decision made.
4. The decision and any follow-up action will be recorded in the Complaints Register.

If you are unhappy with the decision, you may appeal to an independent person mutually agreed upon between all parties. If any costs are involved in engaging an independent person, these will be discussed by all parties prior to the arrangement being made.

Any complaint found to be substantiated will be rectified promptly by Great Divide Tours.

If you wish to appeal against an assessment judgement made by one of our assessors, please forward an email immediately to [info@greatdividetours.com.au](mailto:info@greatdividetours.com.au) outlining the decision you wish to appeal and provide details to support your appeal. Vic Widman will contact both your assessor and yourself to gather further details and will determine the outcome of your appeal based on the information gathered from both parties and third parties where applicable. The outcome of your appeal will be notified in writing via email.

## Privacy policy

Great Divide Tours is committed to maintaining the privacy of students in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988*. This Act was amended by the *Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012*, which includes 13 Australian Privacy Principles.

Our policies for complying with these Principles are set out below.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 1 — open and transparent management of personal information**

As an RTO, we need to collect certain types of personal information and hold it on record. We are also required to disclose some of this information to particular government departments and agencies.

The types of information we collect and hold are specified by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). These requirements apply to all RTOs and are audited from time to time by ASQA.

We are also required to ask certain questions in our student enrolment forms and forward the details to the federal government and relevant state departments. This information is used by the departments for statistical purposes.

### **Disclosure of information**

Great Divide Tours only makes the above information available to authorised people within the company in which the training is being conducted, and the relevant government departments or agencies that require it.

We do not disclose any personal information to overseas recipients, marketing firms, or anyone else who is not authorised to receive it.

### **Privacy Complaints**

If you have a complaint about a privacy matter, you should follow the procedure set out below.

1. Raise the matter with Vic Widman (CEO) either verbally or in writing, stating the exact nature of the complaint, with as many details as possible.
2. Allow time for Vic to investigate the complaint, which may require several days if other parties need to be contacted.
3. Discuss solution options with Vic once the details have been investigated.
4. Receive a written report from Vic on the outcome.

If you still feel that the outcome is unsatisfactory, you should refer the matter to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 2 — anonymity and pseudonymity**

This Principle allows individuals under some circumstances to use a pseudonym or to not identify themselves when dealing with an organisation.

However, as an RTO, we are exempt from this Principle by other laws that relate directly to our activities as an RTO – in particular, the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* and the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 3 — collection of solicited personal information**

We only collect personal information that is necessary for us to carry out our activities as an RTO and provider of training resources.

We only collect sensitive information from individuals when it is required by law in our role as an RTO. We ensure that the collection methods used are fair and lawful.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 4 — dealing with unsolicited personal information**

If we receive personal information that we did not ask for and is not necessary to our function as an RTO, we will destroy that information.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 5 — notification of the collection of personal information**

All personal information that we gather is collected on forms or documents that identify us as the recipient of the information. These documents contain our name and contact details, so that individuals can contact us if they wish to discuss the reasons why we need to hold the information and the methods we use to manage it.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 6 — use or disclosure of personal information**

Once we have collected personal information for a particular purpose, we will not use it for any other purpose unless it is reasonable for us to do so in carrying out our activities as an RTO and provider of training resources, or we are required by Australian law to disclose it to another authorised party.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 7 — direct marketing**

We will not use or disclose personal information for the purposes of direct marketing unless the individual would reasonably have expected us to use it for that purpose. Individuals are provided with a simple means of opting out from future direct marketing approaches.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 8 — cross-border disclosure of personal information**

We do not disclose any personal information to overseas recipients.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 9 — adoption, use or disclosure of government related identifiers**

In our functions as an RTO, we are required to use the Unique Student Identifier (USI) to identify students. The USI is a form of ‘government related identifier’ and its use is governed by the federal government. We comply with all Department provisions and guidelines.

We do not use any other government related identifiers unless there is a legitimate reason for doing so – such as using an enrolling student’s driver’s licence as a form of identification in order to obtain a USI on their behalf.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 10 — quality of personal information**

We ensure that the personal information we collect is accurate, up-to-date and complete. This may mean that we need to phone an individual to check on the spelling of their name, clarify problems with their address or ask for missing items of information.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 11 — security of personal information**

Hard copy files relating to training, such as training records, assessment results, training plans and student enrolment forms, are kept in a filing cabinet at the Great Divide Tours head office. The only people who have access to these files are the CEO, Administration Manager, Compliance Manager and Training Manager.

Electronic records are kept on the Great Divide Tours office computers. The only people authorised to use these computers are the CEO, Secretary, Administration Manager, Compliance Manager and Training Manager.

All electronic records are backed up once per week. The back-up hard drive is stored offsite in a secure location.

We are required by ASQA to keep all completed student assessment items for at least six months from the time the student’s competence was assessed. During this period, these records are made available to authorised personnel from government agencies if they make that request.

After six months has elapsed, we are permitted by ASQA to destroy these files. This is done periodically by shredding the files in batches.

We are also required to maintain records of the students’ results for at least 30 years, with sufficient details to enable us to reproduce qualifications or statements of attainment if required. These records are kept electronically on the Great Divide Tours office computers and back-up hard drive.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 12 — access to personal information**

Students who request to see the information we hold in their personal file will be given access to it, unless one of the ‘exceptions to access’ apply under this Australian Privacy Principle. Exceptions include situations where giving access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals, or where the request is frivolous or vexatious.

Requests for access to information should be made to the CEO or the Administration Manager.

### **Australian Privacy Principle 13 — correction of personal information**

We will ensure that all information we hold about individuals is accurate, up to date, complete, relevant and not misleading. If we are advised that any information does not meet these standards, we will take steps to update it as soon as is reasonably practicable.

If an individual advises us that information we have provided about them to another party does not meet these standards, we will notify the third party and correct the information as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## **Student support services**

GDT offers the support services described below to students enrolled in its accredited training programs. The services are provided in the context of the following factors that characterise GDT's courses and students:

- the accredited training programs offered by Great Divide Tours will have a duration of one to two days maximum (plus pre-reading time)
- students are generally full-time employees who have been sent to the course by their employer, so the employer will already be making provision for other support services that may be needed to maintain the participant's well-being and productivity at work
- students are required to be able-bodied and mentally capable of coping with the demands of off-road 4WD operation, as set out in the Participant Information sheet – these attributes will have been confirmed by the drivers' licensing authority (at the time their licence is issued or renewed), and where relevant, by their employer.

## **Mentoring**

Students are advised at the commencement of the course to talk to their trainer if they are having difficulty with any of the concepts or practical skills being taught. However, if they require additional help due to a lack of confidence or some other issue that is impeding their progress, they are referred to Vic Widman.

Vic has been providing mentoring, encouragement and one-on-one tuition to 4WD operators for 30 years. During this time, he has developed a range of strategies to assist drivers in overcoming mental barriers or other obstacles that are holding them back from achieving their potential.

In instances where additional help is unable to be provided within the time constraints of the face-to-face course, Vic refers the matter back to the student's employer. In some cases, the employer asks GDT to provide additional training to address the student's needs.

## **Literacy**

The 4WD driver training provided by GDT has an emphasis on practical skills and does not require high levels of literacy or numeracy. The course notes have been written by Vic Widman in a plain-English style, using extensive graphics and photos. All theoretical concepts are also presented verbally by the trainers during the face-to-face training sessions, with class time provided for discussion and questions.

The written test and on-site documents have been designed by Vic Widman with the assistance of an external LLN consultant – David McElvenny. David is a qualified literacy consultant (BA, Grad Dip Ed [TESOL], M Ed – specialising in adult education and workplace literacy). All materials are ‘literacy assisted’, with images used to support the meaning presented in the text.

The trainers provide literacy support throughout the face-to-face training sessions by reading key passages of text out loud and explaining the details in a group discussion format. They are also on hand during the written text to answer queries about the meaning or focus of specific questions.

To date, no students have had trouble with the LLN levels required to undertake the accredited training programs delivered by GDT.

## **First aid**

All trainers employed by GDT are qualified in first aid and CPR. The trainers’ vehicles have first aid kits on board, and there is a suitably stocked first aid kit in the training room along with a defibrillator. The training centre also has accommodation facilities, which allows certain areas to be used as a sick bay if required.

All trainers are experienced remote-area tour guides, with hands-on experience in dealing with the types of on-site incidents and mishaps that might occur during a 4WD recovery operation or driving manoeuvre.

The township of Braidwood is 14 kilometres away, where normal medical services are available.