Established in 1983, Odyssey Travel is a not-for-profit organisation specialising in educational travel programs.

Odyssey is made up of 27 member universities and colleges located throughout Australia, New Zealand & Asia.
Odyssey’s Mission Statement

To be the premier not-for-profit educational travel provider through which university groups, professional development delegations, special interest groups and mature adults can gain access to educational, high quality travel programs throughout Australia, New Zealand and the world.

To enhance travel experiences through learning.
Travel & Service Learning

By utilising travel and experiential education, the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to increase appreciation of cultural differences, environmental awareness and community issues can be realised.
Structured opportunities are created to evaluate the service experience, allowing participants to be constantly aware of the impact of their work.
Volunteer programs provide a unique and meaningful travel experience, often resulting in a more satisfying ‘grass-roots’ cultural and/or environmental experience.

Participants are able to challenge themselves, assisting with conservation, environmental issues, teaching, building and community development projects.
Experiential Education

- A community need must be addressed.
- Learning outcomes must be clearly identified.
- The development of the Service Learning project must involve the community in which the service and experiential learning will occur.
- The recipients must want/need what is proposed and agree to accept/use the resulting utility, item or skill.
- Use the skills of volunteers. (Eg. Australian and New Zealand university students could teach elementary English).
Service Learning Considerations

- There should be demonstrated and measurable learning outcomes at the conclusion of the program.
- Each program must involve learning, doing and interaction with a community or organisation.
- The program must be of measurable value to the organisation or community.
Service Learning Considerations Cont...

- Do the “Service Learners” possess the relevant skills, will and equipment/materials to perform the required tasks?
- Who will lead the learners/volunteers?
- What training is required for the leaders/service learners?
- How is the project evaluated?
- Who and what is evaluated? By whom?
- Have Quality Adult Educational/Learning Standards been applied to Service Learning Programs?
Logistical Considerations

- Cost and expenses for participants
- Transportation to site and return
- Security
- Cultural differences/briefing needs
- Food and special dietary needs
- Accommodation and bathroom facilities
- What are the desired educational learning outcomes as a consequence of service provision?
- Number of participants to be accommodated
- Are sponsors needed/available?
- How long should the program run?
- What is its life cycle?
- Can it be sustained?
Following are examples of Odyssey’s Service Learning projects:

- University Student Groups: Nurses
- USA Fulbright / Hayes Scholars
- Intergenerational - Lingnan University
- Environmental / Conservation
American Nurses visited Australia to learn about indigenous health and the provision of health services in remote areas.

The project combined the highlights of Sydney and Cairns with a visit to Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, staying 3 nights with an indigenous community.
Outback Medicine in Australia

The program included a visit to an indigenous health centre to learn about common health issues in the indigenous community.

Here they experienced traditional bush medicine and bush food and compared these remedies to modern-day medical practices.
The project activities also included providing hands-on assistance in rebuilding the local Women's Clinic. Duties included painting the interior of the clinic. Due to cultural issues, the male members of the group were not permitted inside the Women’s Clinic. Instead, their duties included general maintenance outside the clinic.
Another of the activities included assisting community members clean the local billabong.

The word "billabong" is Aboriginal and refers to a seasonal waterhole unique to Northern Australia.
US Fulbright Scholars Visit to Australia

Two 4 week programs were designed to ensure an understanding of Australia’s individuality and diversity by involvement in Indigenous Educational programs and examining environmental education. Both studies involved “hand-on” experiences and projects.

Included were lectures and field trips to: Sydney Harbour and Sydney Opera House; World Heritage Listed Blue Mountains; Red Centre with Uluru (Ayers Rock) and Alice Springs; World-Heritage Listed Kakadu National Park; and the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest.
This program was a stimulating and rewarding intergenerational experience which provided an overview of life in Australian cities and rural communities and the nature of the modern multicultural mix.

The seniors mentored the students, who in turn assisted with English translations and the whole experience of assisting one another led to a better understanding by each group of the other.
Yarrangobilly Caves are amongst the most richly decorated caves in Australia and have attracted thousands of visitors.

The environmental rehabilitation project involved the removal of exotic introduced tree species and cleaning of the caves.
This project, in association with the University of New England, involved surveying and mapping the extent and pattern of the lake and channels in the delta system of the Lower Narran River, in western NSW.

The Narran Delta is one of the biggest wild fowl sanctuaries in Australia.
Tagging Manta Rays

This research study combined photo-identification project of manta rays as part of a long-term population study together with an underwater tracking program. Sonic tags were fitted to three manta rays and their location constantly monitored over a period of 12 months.

Odyssey Research Assistants were given the opportunity to participate in the research program through behavioural observations of mantas.
This project, in conjunction with Charles Darwin University, involved patrolling the beach during the night to monitor nesting flat back turtles. The data recorded included tag numbers, length and nesting success.

During the day, Odyssey participants assisted with catching juvenile turtles using nets and by hand, tagging, measuring turtles, helping with specific studies on blood chemistry, diet analysis and movements (using tracking equipment).
In collaboration with the Karakalpak Academy of Sciences, the University of Sydney established a long-term archaeological program in Chorasmia to study the earliest city states.

Odyssey participants worked alongside professional archaeologists and learned first hand about the history of this remote and fascinating region.

Volunteers assisted in the excavation of two sites. They carried out tasks such as drawing, planning, cleaning features and recording finds.
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