

They're taking on Kokoda

A team of 27 have departed to complete the gruelling 96 kilometre Kokoda Trek, having each committed to raising \$3000 towards supporting Windermere's goal to end family violence.

The team departed for Port Moresby on Monday 22 October and is due to complete the track on 31 October. Windermere provides prevention, early intervention and support services for people experiencing family violence in Melbourne's south east.

If you would like to support the fundraising efforts of the team in their 2018 Trek to End Family Violence please go to www.windermere.org.au/kokoda or call Windermere's fundraising office on 9705 3286.

Each of the team members explain their motivation, expectations and fears...

Maree De George

Kokoda has always been a bucket list for me. I feel absolutely honoured to be given the opportunity to take on this challenge, representing an organisation I find so inspiring as Windermere and raising awareness and funds for a cause dear to my heart and also giving back to others.

I've been doing personal training/gym work - lots of 'leg days' argh... and hiking the two bays trail as much as possible. I also did the 1000 steps and Glasgow track a few times.

I'm looking forward to learning more about the Kokoda campaign, whilst experiencing everything the trek has to offer - camping, village life, the terrain, the whole journey!

It's been hard finding the time for long training sessions and balancing this with a young family. I am mostly worried about the muzzies and whether or not my family will notice I'm gone!

Funny/quirky fact? I can't wink!

Cameron McGlinchey

Cameron McGlinchey is the former drummer of the Australian band Rogue Traders. Cameron joined the team because he was inspired by the work of Windermere and wanted to do his bit to "make a difference".

David Greenstreet

I joined the trip because it is on my bucket list and a great cause to support. To prepare I've been doing hill walks and a boxing gym. I'm looking forward to no phones and some serenity. It's been challenging to find the time to walk with my own four children, as I've needed my time to walk as well. I'm worried about not being able to talk to my wife and children each night.

Funny/quirky fact: I was the NZ stone skimming champion in 2001.

Bradley Byrns

Brad decided to walk Kokoda together with friend David Greenstreet. "There is no doubt that we are doing this for great personal achievement but another reason is that as part of our trek we raise money for Windermere," says Brad.

Courtney Banks

Student Courtney joined the trip for the experience and because she was familiar with Windermere's impact on the community. She has previously volunteered to assist with Windermere's annual Merry Mission Christmas appeals and other events.

Courtney says:

I signed up to support Windermere and make a difference in the lives of those who are affected by family violence. To prepare I've been hiking through the Dandenong Ranges with an 8kg daypack and doing strength training at the gym.

I'm looking forward to finishing the trek and getting to experience another part of the world and learn more about Australia's history there. It's been challenging to prepare for the weather we will be experiencing, seeing as Melbourne is rarely hot and humid during winter. I'm also worried about the heat and spiders.

Funny/quirky fact? I can write with both hands.

Wayne Campbell

Wayne Campbell is a retired AFL footballer. He is "walking the track with my mates which will be a great experience" as well as to raise funds for Windermere's work to end family violence.

Paul Langdon

Paul wanted to trek Kokoda to support Windermere's efforts to end family violence and "do something extra to help someone who is struggling". As a former Windermere employee he has seen firsthand the positive impact Windermere can make.

Paul says:

My view of life and community changed a few years back when I left the corporate world and joined the community sector. I never had time to observe what was really going on before - I was too busy with work. Once I had the oppor-



The Windermere team about to jet off to Port Moresby for the bucket list trip of a lifetime to raise money and awareness in the battle against family violence.

tunity to witness the challenges of life for some, and how fortunate I was, I just had to do more to help. This was something I could do to help!

I'm excited about getting out of the office. The fundraising piece was a challenge at the start - now it's just a part of regular conversation. It's a fantastic cause and the passion starts to rise each time anyone shows interest in talking about Kokoda or walking, but most importantly Windermere and Family Violence. All I have to do is walk! How could I be worried about anything when I consider what victims of family violence have to worry about.

Funny/quirky fact: I signed on for the Trek in November and the then broke my ankle in January! That put a slight delay in training and preparation - but all good now (I hope).

Garry Connor

I wanted to be a part of something significant in Australian history (trek Kokoda) and support an incredibly significant cause, to end family violence. I've been preparing by walking around the Dandenong Ranges in Montrose at the Glasgow Track. I want to complete the trek and experience a piece of Australian history first hand. It's been a challenge to deal with the various aches and pains of such an increase in exercise over the past 12 months. I also worry about dealing with the potential illnesses caused by trekking through a tropical hot and humid jungle.

Funny/quirky fact: I sky dived for the first time and started playing basketball at age 55.

Kylie Kimberley

Kylie signed up to complete Kokoda with friends Nicole Membrey and Pamela Goode. When she heard about the trip Kylie was keen to join up because she was already familiar with the work of Windermere. Kylie, Nicole and Pam have been training intensively together in order to be ready for the trip.

Nicole Membrey

Nicole signed up to complete Kokoda along with friends Pam Goode and Kylie Kimberley. She wanted to complete the trip in order to support Windermere's work and to celebrate her birthday.

Nicole says:

I was sent an email by Windermere with an invitation and thought it would be a huge and rewarding achievement at 50. I've been doing lots of walking, gym and plenty of bonding with two wonderful friends. I'm excited about spending time with awesome friends, seeing the memorials along the track and coming home and being able to say "I've trekked Kokoda and raised some well needed funds for Windermere."

It's been challenging making arrangements for my family while I'm away and I am worried about being the last into camp every night.

Funny/quirky fact: The weight of my snacks was 3kg but I might need to reduce this a little!

Pamela Goode

I signed up to do Kokoda with two very good friends. The idea behind it was for Nicole's birthday but while I was still toying up the idea of committing to this epic journey, I found myself complaining about not having enough time in the day, we had recently been away on a holiday and at the time, I was out catching up with some girlfriends. It suddenly clicked that I was complaining about something completely unimportant when there are people out there suffering from family violence. I immediately called my mates and said I was in.

Kylie, Nicole and myself have been out tackling as many mountains as we can. Our kids go to the same school, so after drop off, we pile in to one car and hit the hills. I think it's going to be an amazing but challenging experience and I'm looking forward to doing it with my two friends.

It's been hard to manage my time, and to add in some decent training amongst an already busy life of family and work. I'm worried about how much I will miss my kids and my husband, and how they will get on back home.

But I know I have some amazing friends who will be helping out while I'm away.

Fun/Quirky Fact: I don't camp. Most of my friends and family are shocked that I'm even doing this. They're not so much worried about the trek, more worried about the camping. I'm terrified of bugs, don't sleep in tents, don't swim in rivers and lakes which are all the things I will need to do on this trek.

Rachel Hall

As a Family Support Worker for Windermere, Rachel has seen first-hand the long lasting and extensive impact of family violence. The mum of two has joined the Kokoda team to set a challenge for herself and at the same time do something positive towards ending family violence in our community.

Rachel says:

I signed up for Kokoda because working at Windermere, I know the good work that occurs here. I've always wanted to trek Kokoda so the stars aligned. I've been hiking every weekend with my husband and friends to prepare. I've never exercised before, so when I stated hiking I found the whole experience challenging. I am worried about the heat & being away from my family for so long.

Quirky fact: I embrace colours, so my team mates made me outrageous bling crocs for the trek!

Geoffrey Bainbridge

Geoff joins the Kokoda team with son Ned and brother.

Ned Bainbridge

Ned is the youngest member of the team. He is completing the trek with his dad, and uncle. It is also part of his Learning Journeys project for school.

Steve Muntz

Kokoda has been an ambition since I was a boy. I've been going to the gym and walking up and down the hills, stairs and mountain bike trails around Darwin, Adelaide River and beyond.

I'm excited about Seeing the amazing scenery and historical locations where our soldiers held up the Japanese advance. It's been challenging to find the time to get training in between work and family time. I'm most worried about being fit enough.

Simon Bennett

Local businessman Simon Bennett joined the Kokoda team because he wanted to challenge himself and at the same time make a positive contribution to the community.

Simon says:

I've wanted to trek Kokoda for many years. Once the opportunity presented itself I jumped at it. To do it with family and friends is a bonus. To prepare I've been completing long treks on steep terrain. This has included the 3 Capes Track in Tasmania. I've also done the Glasgow Track in Montrose. I want to be part of the solution to fix family violence problems and donating to Windermere's cause is a small part I can play to effect change.

Chris Geremia

I joined the trek to help raise money to assist those who are less fortunate. I also want to understand better the level of sacrifice and hardship that the 39th Battalion in particular went through to save our country. It will also be a physical and mental challenge. I've been walking up and down the Glasgow Track to prepare. The humidity, food and lack of coffee worries me. I'm already looking forward to a burger and a beer when I get back.

Funny/quirky fact: I have never been camping

Craig Arnold

For Craig the Kokoda Trek is a chance for him to re-connect with his grandfathers who both served in New Guinea. Only one of them returned safely. He also wants to support the work of Windermere, and has joined the team along with daughter Caroline.

Craig says:

Both my grandparents fought in New Guinea in World War II and one died there. It's also great to support Windermere. I've been doing Weekend hiking up our local mountain, Mt Cannibal. I'm looking forward to feeling the history when remembering the event of the war and the adverse conditions that were endured. It's been challenging finding time to hike and also learning more about the history.

Caroline Arnold

I signed up to do the Kokoda Trek as I have had a few friends do it themselves and it has always been something I have wanted to achieve for myself. When the opportunity arose to do the trek for such a great cause there was no way I was going to pass up this opportunity.

At least twice a week I have been doing a few laps of Mount Cannibal, a small mountain close to my home to build up endurance, as well as personal training sessions to help build up the strength in my legs. On top of this I have been doing some tougher hikes including the Glasgow Fire Trail up Mount Dandenong and this has given me insight into how my fitness has improved.

I am most looking forward to really getting out of my comfort zone and challenging myself as I don't do this very often. I am excited to see how I will cope with the trek and how I will feel after completing it.

I have always been into my fitness so for me the most challenging part was raising the funds for Windermere. My dad and I organised a trivia night in order to reach our target and this proved extremely difficult to organise as we struggled to find time to plan. After running the trivia night and everything going well, it was one of the most rewarding things I have ever achieved.

David Tocci

Dave joined the trip in order to make a difference and support Windermere's efforts to end family violence.

Matthew 'Richo' Richardson

Richo is a retired Richmond footballer and media personality. He has also been a Windermere Ambassador for many years.

Richo says:

I was asked by Windermere to do this as their ambassador. It was the push I needed as I had always thought about trekking Kokoda. To prepare I've been doing running and walking training every second day. I am excited about enjoying the mateship within the group. Prepping equipment and not over packing has been the most challenging part so far. I have a one year old daughter, so I am worried about not being able to call home each day.

Funny/quirky fact? I'm a neat freak

Tim Fleming

Tim is joining to trek Kokoda and make a difference.

Nathan Brown

Nathan Brown is a retired AFL footballer who has played for Richmond and the Western Bulldogs.

Nick Strachan

I decided to join Windermere on the Kokoda track because I love a challenge and the cause is very close to my heart, with my Dad being heavily involved with Windermere for a number of years. I think the work they do is amazing, and anything I can do to help (especially experience something truly rewarding) is a big tick for me.

To prepare I could have probably done more! Basically, I've been trying to get as many kilometres under my feet as possible. I've opted to carry my own pack so every walk I've done has been with a loaded pack on. I clocked up 23km in just over four hours, with just over a week to go.

The most challenging thing for me was getting used to the boots and pack on my training walks, but I feel pretty good and I'm not nervous about anything. For me, the thought of walking the same track as the Aussie soldiers did will be a real buzz and I'm really excited to take in the scenery.

Quirky fact: I recently took up yoga.

Adam Strachan

Trekking Kokoda has been a long time "bucket list" goal. This has been such a great opportunity to get it ticked off the list and get behind a fantastic cause at the same time!

To prepare I've been doing day treks, stair and hill training, all with a big bag. I'm excited about experiencing a completely different culture and seeing the beautiful countryside. I'm not looking forward to the heat and the bugs.

Funny/quirky fact: I have eight screws and a metal plate in my wrist from a pushbike stunt gone wrong. At least I wore a helmet!

Garrick Robinson

Garrick is joining to trek Kokoda and make a difference.