

**KOKODA**  
YOUTH FOUNDATION  
*Changing Lives*



**2024 ANNUAL REPORT**





# SPECIAL THANKS

TO ALL OF OUR DONORS, PARTICIPANTS, STAFF  
& VOLUNTEERS FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN 2024

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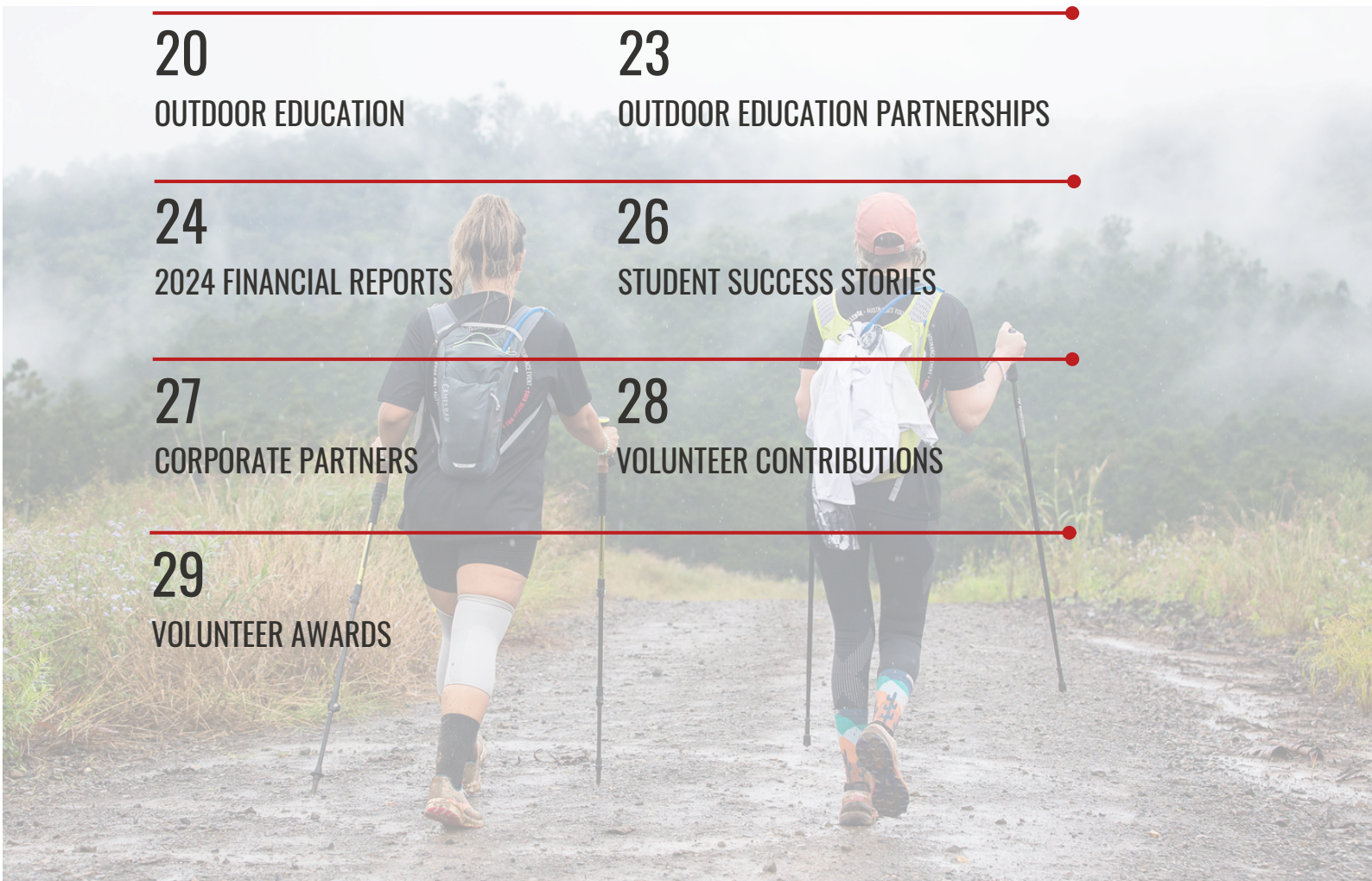
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# FROM OUR CHAIR



thank you

## OUR PEOPLE

2024 saw us farewell our long-standing CEO – Johlene Cooper. Johlene re-joined KYF five years ago at a time of turbulence. She successfully steered the Foundation through the COVID years and left us in a good space to move into our next phase. She left with the Board's grateful thanks, and we wish her well in her next adventure.

As is usually the case, a farewell was followed by a welcome as Angie Debnam took over the reign as CEO towards the end of the year. Angie joined KYF earlier in the year and so was in a great position to step into the CEO role in time for 2025 planning. Angie's brief and our strategic plan for the next five years is to grow the KYF and extend the reach of our programs. Angie is the perfect person to bring these plans to fruition.

Angie leads a committed, highly professional team of people who deliver the work of KYF with passion and dedication – with a commitment that goes far beyond our expectations. We do what we do because of the team on the ground, in the field and in the office.

## OUR PROGRAMS

I had the great privilege of joining the 2024 KCYP peak experience in September, travelling with the Kokoda Kids and leaders to Borneo to walk the Sandakan Memorial March.

The Sandakan story is a powerful one, and the opportunity for a new generation of young Australians to learn the story and explore parts of Malaysia significant to the Australian war story was an exceptional experience. The trip was not without its challenges, but challenging young people is what our programs are about.

Digital Detox Program continues to go from strength to strength, graduating 95 young people across 2024. Reflecting our policy of having our DDP follow our new events into new areas, we conducted our first program in Coffs Harbour, graduating 25 young people from the 8-day program.

On The Right Track saw four successful programs running across 2024, including our first program for home-schooled young people. This is a program with plenty of scope for growth and forms an important part of our future strategy.

We saw a number of our DDP and OTRT graduates applying for the 2025 KCYP. It is a great measure of the value our young people and their families see in our programs.



The Borneo trip was not without its challenges, but challenging young people is what our programs are about.



## OUR EVENTS

Four events delivered over the course of 6 months by a very small events team is a significant achievement by any measure. At a time when competition for trail event competitors is strong, we still managed to sell out our flagship Gold Coast event, and have strong numbers for our Sunshine Coast and Brisbane events. 2024 saw our final Lake Macquarie event; whilst not abandoning our New South Wales ambitions, for 2025 we're opting for a more central location.

All of our events continue to see strong support from schools across Queensland and Northern New South Wales, and are another way to extend the reach of the work we do for young people who are not able to participate directly in our programs.

## OUR OUTDOOR EDUCATION

With two great purpose-built properties owned by KYF, our Outdoor Education programs and "challenge by choice" philosophy are yet another opportunity to instil the KYF values in students. From our centre-based facility in Thornton, to our expedition-style at Maroon, we offer programs for students from Year 7 all the way through to their final years' school camp. 2024 saw 3,500 students pass through both camps, from 42 schools – a number of which have trusted us with their school camp experiences for many years.

## OUR FUTURE

KYF is heading into 2025 with a long term strategic goal to increase the reach of our programs beyond the Queensland borders, with a strong focus on supporting young people to achieve their best while staying true to our core values.

Very much in our sights is growing our successful OTRT program to reach more schools and therefore more young people across Queensland. With a key focus on keeping program participants engaged in their education, and designed to work alongside the selected schools to achieve that common goal of keeping young people at risk of disengaging with their education, in school and learning. Already proven successful across a smaller number of schools, we're ready now to expand and grow the program.

2025 also marks 20 years since we began – with one team of Kokoda Kids and one small Kokoda Challenge event on the Gold Coast. Twenty years of growth, challenge and dedication sees us now with three strong youth programs, two outdoor education venues and four major team endurance events, supported by our incredible staff, and an army of volunteers – many of whom have been on the journey with us for all of those 20 years.

*Lynley Mangin*  
Board Chair

# FROM OUR CEO



## our impact

2024 has been a year of significant growth, impact, and transformation for the Kokoda Youth Foundation (KYF). As I step into the role of CEO, I want to recognise and thank Johllene Cooper for her exceptional leadership throughout the year. Under Johllene's guidance, KYF has continued to expand its impact, strengthen its programs, and reinforce its role as a leader in youth development.

This year, KYF supported 166 young people through our core programs, empowering them to develop resilience, reconnect with their education, and build stronger relationships with their families and communities:

- DDP helped young people and their families take control of their digital habits, improving mental wellbeing and family relationships.
- OTRT provided a structured pathway for at-risk youth to regain confidence, resilience, and engagement in school and community life.
- KCYP challenged participants to push beyond their limits, fostering discipline, endurance, and a strong sense of purpose.

These programs are transforming young lives, equipping participants with the skills to face challenges, make positive choices, and build a stronger future.

### KEY WINS FROM 2024

#### Delivering Measurable Impact with Data-Backed Programs

This year, KYF implemented a new evaluation framework, ensuring we can track long-term impact and continuously refine our approach. This is a crucial step in securing multi-year funding and strengthening our case for government, corporate, and philanthropic partnerships.

#### Volunteers & Community Leadership Driving Change

KYF's work is powered by people, our volunteers continue to be the backbone of our programs. This year, we proudly celebrated Dr Barry Oliver, winner of the Ipswich Child Protection Award for Volunteer Contribution to Child Safety. His dedication reflects the commitment and impact of KYF's volunteer community, whose contributions create lasting change in the lives of young people.

#### Strengthening Partnerships & Securing New Support

Strong partnerships are essential to KYF's growth. In 2024, we deepened relationships with government agencies, schools, and corporate supporters. A special thank you to Anaconda and Tech One, whose generous contributions have ensured that more young people can access our life-changing programs.

#### Overcoming Challenges & Lessons Learned

Every year presents challenges and 2024 was no exception. KYF has always thrived by adapting, innovating, and pushing forward. This year, we took proactive steps to strengthen our foundation:

- **Staff Retention & Training:** We invested in structured training and engagement strategies for casual instructors, improving staff retention and program quality.
- **Program Adaptations:** Data from our new evaluation framework allowed us to refine program delivery, ensuring young people experience maximum impact.
- **Funding Uncertainty:** While demand for KYF programs continues to grow, sustainable funding remains a critical priority. This year, we laid the groundwork for diversifying income streams and securing multi-year commitments to strengthen KYF's financial future.



“Our recent challenges have made us stronger, more strategic and more focused on long-term sustainability.”



## the road ahead

### 2025 & Beyond

With the 20th Anniversary of the Kokoda Challenge in 2025, KYF stands at a pivotal moment. The coming year will be about scaling our impact, strengthening financial sustainability, and positioning KYF as a national leader in youth development.

#### KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2025

- **National Expansion:** The Sydney Kokoda Challenge is more than just an event—it's the next step in KYF's growth across NSW and beyond.
- **Securing Long-Term Funding:** I am committed to establishing multi-year funding agreements that will ensure KYF's sustainability and growth.
- **Amplifying Brand Awareness:** The 20th Anniversary of the Kokoda Challenge is an opportunity to elevate KYF's profile, increase engagement and drive direct giving campaigns.
- **Strengthening Evaluation & Evidence-Based Impact:** We will continue refining data collection and reporting, ensuring KYF remains at the forefront of best-practice youth development programs.

### Acknowledgements

None of KYF's achievements would be possible without the incredible people who power this organisation:

- **Our Staff & Volunteers:** Your dedication and passion ensure that every young person who walks through our programs leaves stronger and more resilient.
- **Funding Partners & Sponsors:** Anaconda, Tech One and our government and philanthropic partners, your support enables life-changing impact.
- **Our Community & Participants:** To the young people and families who place their trust in KYF—your resilience and transformation inspire everything we do.

### Looking Ahead: A Moment for Action

The 20th Anniversary of the Kokoda Challenge is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to amplify KYF's impact. This is our moment to scale our programs, secure long-term sustainability and reach more young people than ever before. To those looking to support real, measurable change, KYF is ready.

Let's make 2025 our biggest year yet!

*Angela Debnam*  
Chief Executive Officer

“2025 is not just another year—it's a defining moment for our future.”

# FROM OUR **FOUNDER**



## our mission

Our Foundation's original mission was, and always will be, to keep the spirit of the Kokoda Campaign alive as we instil the Kokoda values into our Youth Programs and operations.



### **COURAGE**

Empower participants to step outside their comfort zones and stand up for what is important.

### **ENDURANCE**

Encourage persistence and determination to stay the course and never give up.

### **MATESHIP**

Promote integrity, embrace diversity and foster a supportive environment where everyone has each other's back.

### **SACRIFICE**

Inspire a commitment to serving causes greater than oneself.

## **THE FUTURE:** TO BECOME AN ORGANISATION OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

I am confident that the work we began two decades ago, when the Kokoda Youth Foundation was founded, will continue for many decades to come. The legacy of our fallen soldiers in the 1942 Kokoda Campaign will never be in vain, as the enduring spirit of these veterans lives on in countless young Australians whose lives are being changed through the Foundation's programs.

We will continue funding our work through the Kokoda Challenge events, expanding our reach into New South Wales with our first Kokoda Challenge in Sydney in 2025, which will fund our inaugural Digital Detox Program in the region. We will run events in five States and Territories by 2027 as we continue to change lives and strive to become an organisation of national significance.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to every individual who has contributed to our mission and I look ahead with hope for even greater things to come!

*Doug Henderson*  
**Founder**



# OUR PROGRAMS EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE



## EMPOWERING YOUTH TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES

In 2024, the Kokoda Youth Foundation's youth programs supported 166 young people, helping them develop resilience, reconnect with education, strengthen relationships, and build self-belief. Through adventure-based learning, mentorship, and structured challenges, young people across our three core programs: Digital Detox Program (DDP), On the Right Track (OTRT) and the Kokoda Challenge Youth Program (KCYP) took significant steps towards positive change. Each program is carefully designed to tackle key risk factors such as digital addiction, school disengagement and social isolation, while reinforcing protective factors like resilience, confidence and community connection.

## THE POWER OF KYF PROGRAMS - WHAT COMES NEXT?

The life-changing impact of KYF programs is clear, young people leave feeling more resilient, more confident, and better prepared to take on life's challenges. But our work is far from done. KYF remains committed to building a future where all young Australians have the skills, support, and resilience to thrive.

### In 2025, we will:

- Expand our reach, delivering these programs to even more young people in need
- Continue refining our evaluation frameworks, ensuring our programs remain best-practice in youth development.
- Strengthen partnerships to ensure KYF remains at the forefront of early intervention and youth engagement.

“

**If I can do this, I can do anything.**

– OTRT PARTICIPANT

“

**Before the program, I didn't talk much. Now I feel more confident and believe in myself.**

– OTRT PARTICIPANT

“

**I didn't realise how much I was addicted to my screen. Now I want to spend more time outside.**

– DDP PARTICIPANT

“

**What I learned here will help me keep believing in myself—even after the program.**

–OTRT Participant

# IMPACT OF TEENAGE DISENGAGEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

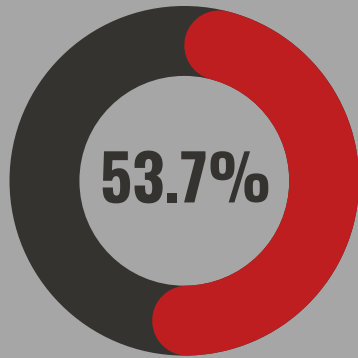
## ONE IN SEVEN

10 to 19 year olds experience a mental disorder



## TWICE AS LIKELY

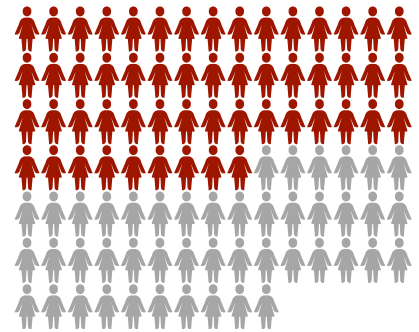
Adolescents who engage in over three hours of social media use daily are twice as likely to suffer from mental health issues, including depression and anxiety



53.7% of QLD GOV secondary students miss more than one month of school a year

# 54%

of female adolescents experience psychological distress as a result of social media use compared to 31% of males



# 24%

of early school leavers are disengaged from education, training and employment



# \$1.1 Million

Cost of one disengaged young person over their lifetime



## LOW EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Not completing secondary school is a key risk factor associated with lifetime disengagement. Young men are more likely to be disengaged than young women, and are spending more time out of work and study



## HISTORY OF DISENGAGEMENT

Young people with a history of disengagement are more at risk of lifetime disengagement. Disengaged young people are more likely to be lonely, and 3 times more likely to be the victims of physical violence.

## LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Coming from a low socio-economic backgrounds is a key risk factor for lifetime disengagement. Disengaged young adults are more likely to work in lower-skill occupations than their peers, and earn significantly lower wages later in life



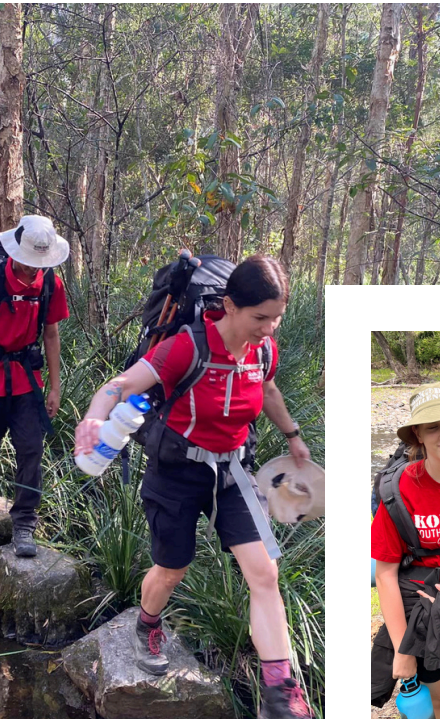
## FIRST NATION HERITAGE

People from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage are at greater risk of being disengaged.





# 2024 PHOTOS





# DIGITAL DETOX PROGRAM

## RECLAIMING WELLBEING IN A HYPER-CONNECTED WORLD

The Digital Detox Program (DDP) continues to be a life-changing intervention for young people and families struggling with digital overuse. In 2024, 95 participants completed the program, which combines outdoor adventure with education on healthy technology use. By combining experiential learning with structured parent support, DDP equips young people and their families with the skills to take control of their digital habits, improve mental wellbeing and strengthen family connections.



“It helped my child recognise they have an addiction. It also made me realise my own mistakes in managing screen time.

– PARENT OF DDP PARTICIPANT

## DDP RESULTS SHOW ITS SUCCESS



38% reduction in internet addiction (measured by PCIAT scores three months post-program).



74% improvement in emotional regulation, as measured by Heart Rate Variability (HRV).



100% of parents felt better equipped to manage their child's screen time.



76% of families reported stronger relationships and improved communication.



# ON THE RIGHT TRACK



## REBUILDING CONFIDENCE, ENGAGEMENT & RESILIENCE

For 46 young people at risk of disengagement, OTRT provided a structured pathway back to engagement through outdoor education, mentorship, and community connection. The program, delivered in partnership with schools and the Queensland Police Service, helped participants increase resilience, confidence, and self-regulation.

OTRT is proving to be an essential intervention for young people at risk of school disengagement and negative peer influences, offering them the tools, support and mindset to build a better future.

**“Mateship was huge. We had to rely on each other to get through the tough parts.”**

– OTRT PARTICIPANT

**“I used to get frustrated really easily, but now I know how to stay calm and work through things.”**

– OTRT PARTICIPANT

## OTRT RESULTS SHOW ITS SUCCESS



80% of OTRT participants reported increased resilience, with many citing the program's physical challenges such as the 48km hike as key moments of personal growth.



75% of participants reported improved confidence and self-esteem.



60% of participants and parents noted improved academic focus and school performance.



65% of participants became involved in community service, reinforcing positive social responsibility.



# KOKODA CHALLENGE YOUTH PROGRAM



## PUSHING LIMITS, BUILDING LEADERS

The Kokoda Challenge Youth Program (KCYP) is one of KYF's most challenging and rewarding experiences, designed to push young people beyond their physical, mental, and emotional limits. Over six months, participants trained for and participated in one of Australia's toughest endurance challenges, while also completing community service projects that reinforced civic responsibility and leadership.

KCYP participants trained for three months to prepare for the Kokoda Challenge. The program built self-discipline, accountability and resilience through structured challenges. Each participant contributed to their community through service work, reinforcing the values of courage, endurance, mateship, and sacrifice.

While not every participant completed the Challenge, all left the program stronger, more resilient and more determined than when they started.



KCYP is more than just an endurance event—it's a leadership journey that equips young people with the mindset to overcome obstacles in all areas of life.

“

It got tough, but I never actually thought to myself that I should give up. What kept me going was the support from the leaders and knowing that even though they were definitely struggling too, they were still holding themselves together and putting us first and they weren't going to give up either. The way the parents supported us definitely helped too. And the way Sam (our leader) encouraged us and told us that we had been doing great, and was honest with us when he said that the next bit was going to be hard (before the waterfall circuit) also made it easier to keep going.

– KCYP PARTICIPANT

“

What kept me going was the thought that giving up now would make me happy for a short amount of time but finishing it would feel better for the rest of my life.

– KCYP PARTICIPANT

# KOKODA CHALLENGE EVENTS



## TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

In preparation for the 2024 event season, the event team began executing their business building plan, ensuring all schools in the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane and Gold Coast areas received a call and an email inviting them to take part in this year's events. Additionally, each school was sent a principal's booklet in the post, outlining all that the Foundation has to offer, with its Youth Programs, Outdoor Education and of course the Kokoda Challenge Events. We also used the same approach for schools in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Sydney inviting them to take part in the Lake Macquarie event and the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie schools also received a hard copy of the principal pack.



We returned to Lake Macquarie and delivered a fantastic event, even though participant numbers didn't meet the event team's expectations. Although fundraising was lower than previous years due to the financial challenges many families are facing, we still managed to successfully deliver four incredible Kokoda Challenge events, and we are excited to be introducing Sydney to the event calendar.

I take great pride in working for the Kokoda Youth Foundation, and I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be part of such an impactful organisation. Organising The Kokoda Challenge events is deeply fulfilling, knowing that we're not only inspiring thousands to get up and get active but also raising crucial funds for the Foundation.

I'm proud of the dedication and hard work put in by the events team, the Kokoda staff, volunteers and the Board. It's clear that alone we can accomplish little, but together we can achieve so much.

This spirit of collaboration is reflected in our event team's mission statement: To achieve leadership in our chosen markets, by means of unmatched service, reputation and location. By upholding the Kokoda Youth Foundation's core values and delivering a positive outcome for competitors, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

*Andy Haynes*

**Event Manager**





# KOKODA CHALLENGE HIGHLIGHTS

- **7,470** participants across all events
- **885** school teams involved
- **Sunshine Coast**: nearly 1,000 participants
- **Brisbane**: sold out and raised the most funds
- **Gold Coast**: sold out for the 4th consecutive year

## SUNSHINE COAST

Two dads and their 10-year-old sons won the 18km 4-person team event (1:40:48) and we had one of the wettest events we have had.

## BRISBANE

We had the 2nd Light Horse Lockyer Troop lead out the participants at the start, school volunteer group (Bundamba State Secondary College helped with the bump in by bringing 25 kids). Brisbane sold out and most money raised ever for the Brisbane event (nearly \$470k).

## GOLD COAST

Sean Kendrick was a blind young man aiming to complete the 96km challenge, he got halfway through the challenge which was an incredible effort and unfortunately he rolled his ankle and was carried by his brother for some of the event, this embodies the true meaning of Courage, Endurance Mateship & Sacrifice (pictured right).

## LAKE MACQUARIE

Team Zone 61 came all the way from Western Australia and raised almost \$7,000 (making them the highest fundraisers for Lake Macquarie). The slowest 48km team came in at 12:48:46 which meant we were all wrapped up by 9pm resulting in the quickest event ever completed.



## 2024 FUNDS RAISED & EVENT PARTICIPATION

### Sunshine Coast

💰 \$176,667.11

👤 997

### Brisbane

💰 \$469,932.31

👤 2,781

### Gold Coast

💰 \$858,854.44

👤 3,392

### Lake Macquarie

💰 \$19,739.35

👤 300

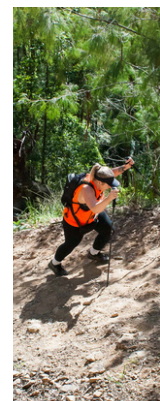
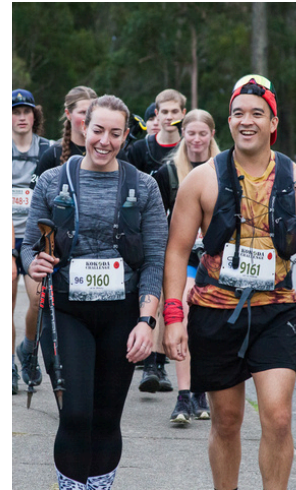
TOTAL FUNDS RAISED: \$1,525,193.21





# 2024 EVENTS

# KOKODA CHALLENGE





# KOKODA CHALLENGE FINACIALS & PLANS

## WHAT'S AHEAD FOR KOKODA EVENTS

Our aim for 2025 is to increase the Kokoda Challenge participant numbers and fundraising totals across all events. We are especially keen to increase 96km participation on the Gold Coast as we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Gold Coast event in 2025. The anniversary drawcard will assist with our marketing campaigns as all previous participants and volunteers since 2005 will receive an email inviting them to attend our anniversary celebrations and events.

**Sunshine Coast:** 10 May, 2025 - Kenilworth and the Imbil State Forest 1. The dates have been moved back at the request of the school principal, and this means registrations will remain open for a further 4 weeks which could assist us with our final participant numbers.

**Brisbane:** 7 June, 2025 - Brookfield and the D'Aguilar Forest. This event is very popular with the schools and our aim is to increase the open teams' registrations (revise the 18km).

**Gold Coast:** 19-20 July, 2025 - Gold Coast Hinterland and the Nerang National Forest. Move the 30km start to the Nerang Velodrome which will relieve the Logistical struggles of three starts in three different locations, we will also need to move the start line for the 96km event due to the Netball court developments, the event start will now be opposite D'Arcy Doyle Park (60m up the road).

**Sydney:** 20-21 September, 2025 - Heathcote and Royal National Park, Sutherland Shire, Sydney. This will give the Kokoda Challenge our second 96km event and gives a massive tick towards the Foundation's five-year strategic plan. This event has been capped at 2,000 participants for year one but as long as we deliver an amazing event, we hope Parks and Wildlife will allow us to expand on this number in the future.

**Lake Macquarie:** Discontinued for now.



## OTHER 2025 PLANS

- Continue Pinnacle Event = 30km Sunshine Coast, 48km Brisbane and 96km Gold Coast. Create a Pinnacle Event Cup in the name of Sam Templeton
- Create a Peak2Peak challenge incorporating both 96km events and create a Peak2Peak cup in the name of Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Honner
- Host a 20 Year Reunion Picnic at Little Clagiraba Reserve, Clagiraba for our community.
- Host a fundraising Gala Dinner at the Mercure Hotel to celebrate the 20th Anniversary.





# EMBODYING THE SPIRIT OF KOKODA

## LINDISFARNE ANGLICAN GRAMMAR'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE KOKODA CHALLENGE



Much like the stories etched in the trails of Kokoda, the Kokoda Challenge has become a cherished tradition at Lindisfarne. For many years, our students have competed in the 48km event, with some even testing their limits in the formidable 96km challenge. In 2018, we envisioned something greater—a program that would span four years of high school, culminating in a potential journey to Papua New Guinea. It was an ambitious dream, but we were determined to make it a reality.

There is so much to admire about the Kokoda Youth Foundation. From its mission to change lives through the Spirit of Kokoda to its unwavering commitment to supporting Australian youth, the Foundation's pillars of Courage, Mateship, Endurance, and Sacrifice resonate deeply with us. We knew we wanted our students to embody these values and carry the Kokoda spirit within them.

Year 7 seemed like the perfect starting point. With eager new students, a manageable distance of 15km (back then), and a unique opportunity for parents to be involved as team leaders—something rare once students enter high school—the event quickly became a resounding success. Students embraced the experience and the camaraderie of walking alongside their peers. A constant highlight was hearing them cheerfully call out greetings to the names on bibs as they passed by. For most, the event was a breeze, though some parents and staff found themselves with a newfound respect for fitness.

Building on this enthusiasm, we encouraged these students to take on the 30km event in Year 8, which they eagerly embraced at the Brisbane event. While participation numbers dipped slightly from Year 7, we were impressed by the number of students willing to push themselves further. We now place Year 8 students in the Gold Coast event, enticing them with the challenges that lie ahead in the 48km and 96km events.

The program has since grown organically, with solid foundations in place, including training, registration, and support crews. Today, students from Years 9 and 10 voluntarily step up to tackle the 48km challenge, and many go on to conquer the 96km event in Year 10 (age restrictions permitting), Year 11, and Year 12. Parents often remain deeply connected to the program, leading their child and their team members throughout the journey. These enduring connections, along with lifelong memories and experiences, are what keep us coming back year after year.

This year marks a momentous milestone for us, as nine students prepare to walk the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea. Their dedication to the program and the physical and mental challenges it presents made them eager participants when we decided to commit to this next step. These students have developed a deep appreciation for the Kokoda pillars and the sacrifices made during the battle. To honour this legacy, each student will adopt a soldier from the 6th, 21st, and 25th Brigades, as well as the Militia units—the 3rd, 39th, and 53rd Battalions—and carry their memory along the way. As they traverse the same paths where over 600 Australians lost their lives and more than 1,600 were wounded during the Battle of Kokoda, these students will reflect on the courage, endurance, and mateship that defined this pivotal moment in history.

A key factor in the successful growth of our program has been the dedication of our staff and students to the 10-week training regimen. While the program is demanding—with early Sunday morning starts and rigorous climbs—it has been met with enthusiasm and energy. The cold winter morning walks have fostered a newfound appreciation for the Gold Coast Hinterland, and the opportunity for our growing number of students to disconnect from technology and reconnect with nature is something we passionately support.

Our principal, Mr Stuart Marquardt, has been incredibly supportive of the program, personally participating in the 18km event. Many senior executive members also come out to witness the starts and finishes of the challenges. Students who complete the 48km event are awarded a Lindisfarne Half Colour, while those who conquer the 96km event are recognised with a Full Colour Award—another testament to our commitment to this extracurricular offering.

This incredible program is now firmly embedded in our school culture. This year, over 200 staff, parents, and students participated in various events, a testament to the collective commitment of our school community and the unwavering support from the Kokoda Youth Foundation.

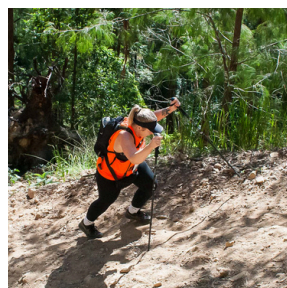
Let the journey continue and may the memories we create last a lifetime.

*Julie McDowell & Kelly Bedford*  
**Kokoda Challenge Coordinators**



# 2024 EVENTS

# KOKODA CHALLENGE





# OUTDOOR EDUCATION OUTCOMES

## 2024 CAMP ATTENDEES

The hard work the team have put in over the last two years has delivered some excellent results for our organisation, but more importantly for the schools and students who spent some time at one of our facilities. 2024 was a very successful year for the Outdoor Education department with the following outcomes:

- More than **3,500** students from **42** schools attended.
- We successfully completed **44** camp programs across Camp Kokoda and Kokoda Park



The industry often uses terms like “transformative experiences” and “life-changing” but at Kokoda we can honestly say these are genuine outcomes for students (and often teachers as well). Through immersive, nature-based learning, students develop critical life skills, including resilience, teamwork, leadership, and self-confidence in a beautiful wilderness environment. This wouldn’t be possible without our incredible instructors who deliver our programs in ways that ensure complete engagement by students. On a few occasions this past year, I heard students say how surprised they were at how much fun they had had on camp and how much they had learned. I attribute this directly to our instructors. Just getting a teenager to admit these things is a feat!

A huge thanks to all our instructors for an excellent year!



## FUN FACTS ABOUT KOKODA CAMPS

- In 2024, students spent an average of 84 hours on camp. Individually, they participated in 7 activities during that time, not including the hiking and campsite duties.
- By far, the most popular activity is the Giant Swing, and the least popular is the walk from base camp to Mt Bellamy campsite.
- The record time for that hike by a group in 2024 was 43 minutes and the slowest time was 3 hours!
- The average time at which all noise ceased after bedtime on night one was 22:30, on night two it was 21:00 and for those who stayed a third night it was even earlier.
- Students consumed almost 10,000 snags at the end of camp BBQ’s.





# OUTDOOR EDUCATION

## STUDENT TESTIMONIALS & PHOTOS



The best thing on the camp was going for the long hikes and finally getting to base to rest and eat food with my friends.

My favourite part about camp was lying under the stars and having good conversations while hiking and eating.



The camp experience helped me realise how independent I can be and I'm excited to apply that to my life at home and school.

The whole camp group was really enthusiastic and encouraging towards each other.





# OUTDOOR EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS



## ACKNOWLEDGING SCHOOL TEACHERS

We want to acknowledge the teachers who come on camp with their students. The teacher is such an important part of every student's life, and often is the difference between confidence and self-doubt. It is very encouraging to see the calibre of person teaching the next generation, and we acknowledge the important part they play in the success of our camps. By working closely with our instructors, teachers are extracting the best outcomes for students and enhancing the overall camp experience. So, a massive thank you to the incredible teachers who give their time to come on camp in an already very busy schedule.

## FACILITY UPGRADES

Both facilities have continued with their comprehensive refurbishments and have had great progress.

**Kokoda Park** had the first round of lantana clearing which has made a significant difference to the aesthetics and available space. Although expensive, this was a sound investment in operational efficiency and the value of the property. We also completed a renovation of the ablution blocks which has transformed the entire top area and helped improve this amazing location.

**Camp Kokoda** had a very busy year of refurbishment. We were fortunate to secure a dozer and completed a road improvement program which has improved logistic efficiency and safety. We also completed a rebuild of our High Ropes Course and continued to expand our range of activities. Working with our neighbours, we completed a controlled burn of most of the property which has significantly reduced the fuel load and improved safety.

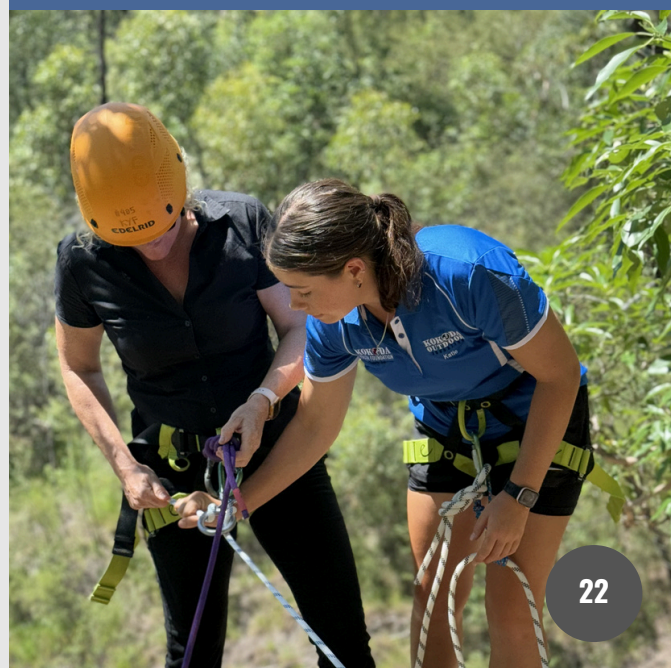
*Justin Greger*

Outdoor Education  
Operations Manager



## FUN FACTS ABOUT OUR INSTRUCTORS

- In 2024 our full-time instructors slept in a tent for 148 nights.
- They each hiked a total of more than 400km.
- They each conducted 324 activity briefs for 12 different activities.
- Between them, our MasterChef instructors and students cooked 3,700 Burrito Bowls – all students favourite on camp.
- Collectively, instructors, teachers and students hiked a combined distance of 40,950km in 2024 which is one full lap of the earth at the equator, plus 850 extra km





# OUTDOOR EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS



## PARTNERING WITH TRINITY

This past year, our partnership with Kokoda Youth Foundation continued to thrive as we facilitated unforgettable outdoor experiences for both our Year 8 and Year 9 students. The camps provided a dynamic environment for students to build resilience, develop leadership skills, strengthen their relationships with peers and learn to appreciate the beautiful outdoors.

The Year 8 camp is all about teamwork, leadership, and personal growth, offering students a chance to challenge themselves in a supportive outdoor setting. Through high-ropes courses, giant swings, problem-solving activities, and wilderness exploration, they build confidence and learn the power of collaboration. One of the most cherished aspects of the camp is the connections formed around the open fire, the opportunity to develop new skills and the sense of accomplishment felt by students after completing activities. While the Year 8 camp is an incredible experience on its own, it also lays the foundation for the following year's Year 9 Rite Journey camp.

The Year 9 camp is where students truly experience the strength of our school's partnership with the Kokoda Youth Foundation. Beginning in the rugged surroundings of Mt Barney National Park and culminating at Kokoda Base Camp, this journey challenges students both physically and mentally.

The highlight is reaching the final destination, where all students come together for a well-earned celebratory barbecue. This program is carefully designed to align with the Year 9 pastoral care curriculum, The Rite Journey, and features its most significant challenge—The Abyss. With the support of Kokoda staff, students undertake an overnight solo experience, constructing their own shelters and engaging in deep self-reflection. The sense of accomplishment and excitement they return with is truly invaluable.

The positive impact of these camps is evident not only in the personal achievements of our students but also in the lasting connections formed. The supportive and professional approach of the Kokoda team played a key role in creating a safe and enriching environment. Their expertise, encouragement, and well-structured programs allowed students to fully immerse themselves in the camp experience.

We are grateful for the continued collaboration with Kokoda and look forward to further opportunities to provide our students with meaningful outdoor education experiences that contribute to their personal and social development.

*Joel Cendamo*  
**Trinity Lutheran College Teacher**



Building on this year's success, we are excited about the future. The Kokoda Youth Foundation is growing and as part of that, the Outdoor Education Department will continue to extend our reach to more schools and community groups and develop our programs, ensuring we set new benchmarks in outdoor education.



# 2024 FINANCES

## STATEMENT OF PROFIT & LOSS

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Revenue</b>		
<b>Revenue from contracts with customers</b>		
Sale of goods	36,170	36,726
Provision of services- Camps and Events	2,187,540	1,781,243
Grants	469,245	866,209
Member subscriptions	157	170
Other revenue from contracts with customers	40,455	56,636
<b>Total Revenue from contracts with customers</b>	<b>2,733,567</b>	<b>2,740,984</b>
<b>Revenue from other sources</b>		
Donations	1,676,919	1,725,669
Other revenue from other sources	1,235	14,331
<b>Total Revenue from other sources</b>	<b>1,678,154</b>	<b>1,740,000</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>4,411,721</b>	<b>4,480,984</b>
<b>Finance Income</b>		
Interest income	14,880	24,644
Other income	-	294,147
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>4,426,601</b>	<b>4,799,775</b>
Depreciation and amortisation	(51,644)	(47,468)
Employee benefit expenses	(2,669,555)	(2,285,081)
Finance expenses	(6,103)	(6,242)
<b>Other Expenses</b>		
Other expenses	(418,429)	(429,587)
Administrative expenses	(491,054)	(499,648)
Sale of goods	30,571	(15,018)
Manufacturing	(1,126,802)	(1,049,735)
Occupancy costs	(43,652)	(35,334)
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>(2,049,366)</b>	<b>(2,029,322)</b>
<b>User defined expenses</b>		
Memorial expense	(148)	(131,033)
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>(4,776,816)</b>	<b>(4,499,146)</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) before income taxes</b>	<b>(350,215)</b>	<b>300,629</b>
Income tax	-	-
<b>Surplus/(deficit) from continuing operations</b>	<b>(350,215)</b>	<b>300,629</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>(350,215)</b>	<b>300,629</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax</b>		
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>(350,215)</b>	<b>300,629</b>



# 2024 FINANCES

## STATEMENT OF FINANICAL POSITION

As at 31 December 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	449,257	1,001,307
Trade and other receivables	15	29,235
Inventories	30,488	34,637
<b>Other assets</b>		
Prepayments	172,657	170,966
<b>Total current assets</b>	652,417	1,236,145
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Trade and other receivables	47,557	47,557
Property, plant and equipment	3,555,485	3,533,158
Right-of-use assets	119,326	288,225
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	3,722,368	3,868,940
<b>Total assets</b>	4,374,785	5,105,085
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	194,074	58,731
<b>Borrowings</b>		
Bank overdraft	375	-
Other borrowings	34,358	-
<b>Total Borrowings</b>	34,733	-
Employee benefits	137,148	115,235
<b>Contract Liabilities</b>		
<b>Grant monies received in advance</b>		
Unspent Grant monies cf	-	390,401
Grant Monies Received in Advance	32,200	-
<b>Total Grant monies received in advance</b>	32,200	390,401
<b>Other contract liabilities</b>		
Camp Deposits Held	167,000	209,120
Camp Deposits Held - CK	43,000	(9,000)
Camp Deposits Held - KP	13,000	-
<b>Total Other contract liabilities</b>	223,000	200,120
<b>Total Contract liabilities</b>	255,200	590,521
Lease liabilities	119,326	172,935
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	740,481	937,422
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Borrowings	165,711	233,564
Lease liabilities	-	115,290
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	165,711	348,854
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	906,192	1,286,276
<b>Net assets</b>	3,468,593	3,818,809
<b>Equity</b>		
<b>Retained earnings</b>		
Opening balance	3,818,808	3,518,179
Profit/(loss) for the year	(350,215)	300,629
<b>Total Retained earnings</b>	3,468,593	3,818,808
<b>Total equity</b>	3,468,593	3,818,808

# STUDENT SUCCESS



## SHELLBY

Shellby was a proud 2024 graduate of the On The Right Track program at Beaudesert State High School. Shellby was honoured with a Kokoda Spirit Award for her demonstration of the Kokoda values during her time in the program. Whether it was helping others, offering words of encouragement, or stepping up for her teammates, Shellby consistently embodied the spirit of Kokoda.



## SAMUEL

Samuel was a 2024 OTRT graduate at Rosewood State High School. He was honoured with the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels Award after showing incredible mateship and sacrifice during his time in the program. His selflessness reflected the spirit of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, who supported others during the Kokoda Campaign. Always lending a hand, offering words of encouragement, and being there for his teammates, Samuel consistently lifted those around him.



## HARRISON

Harrison was a shining star and graduate of our OTRT Homeschool program who received the 2024 Kokoda Spirit Award. From his first 4km hike to conquering Mt. Edwards, Harrison's journey was one of incredible determination and growth. There were moments of doubt, but he faced every challenge head-on with perseverance and courage. Harrison embraced the experience, supported his team with inclusivity and humour, and showed us the true meaning of mateship. He pushed beyond his comfort zone, led by example and consistently inspired those around him.



## FRANKIE

Frankie was a Kokoda Challenge Youth Program participant in the Brisbane team. She was a constant source of encouragement and support for her fellow Kokoda Kids. She showed true dedication to learning about the Kokoda and Sandakan diggers' stories. When things got tough, she was the first to lend a hand - or an ear - even when facing her own challenges.



## ADAM

Adam was a shining star who experienced a transformative journey with the Kokoda Youth Foundation. Adam joined the OTRT program at Rosewood State High School, which helped him overcome challenges and grow in confidence and resilience. After completing OTRT, Adam continued his journey in the Kokoda Challenge Youth Program. He is pictured with his dad, Andrew, after completing the 96km Kokoda Challenge. Adam graduated in January and said, "KCYP completely changed who I was and is the best thing I have ever done in my life!"





# CORPORATE PARTNERS



THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR MANY INCREDIBLE SPONSORS CONTINUES TO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE. WE CAN'T THANK THEM ENOUGH!

## MAJOR SPONSORS

### Anaconda

Anaconda has been proudly sponsoring the Kokoda Youth Foundation since 2006. As our official equipment partner, they generously provide all the necessary gear for our youth programs, from trekking pants for bush walks to sleeping bags for peak experiences. Anaconda also support our Kokoda Challenge events by offering discounts to participants for their hiking equipment. This longstanding partnership ensures our youth programs remain free of charge for all children.

**ANACONDA**

### Technology One

Technology One have been passionate and generous supporters of the Kokoda Youth Foundation for over five years. They provide \$20,000 each year toward our youth programs for at risk and disengaged youth, including our On The Right Track program. They also provide numerous volunteers for our Kokoda Challenge events to man checkpoints along the course, helping us make this event possible.

**technology1**

### The Signal Group

The Signal Group are our preferred supplier of merchandise and generously provide \$8,000 worth of event merchandise and branded apparel for our youth programs each year. Thanks to this ongoing partnership, we are able to reduce our costs and ensure more funding is used directly to run our youth programs.

The  
**Signal**  
Group

### The Spring Waterman

The Spring Waterman has been supporting the Kokoda Youth Foundation since 2006. Every year, they help keep our Kokoda Challenge athletes hydrated by supplying water for all events. This valuable sponsorship helps to reduce the cost of our events so that all funds raised can go directly back to supporting our youth programs and changing the lives of our participants.



### Kokoda Spirit

Kokoda Spirit has been a steadfast supporter of KYF, donating a trip to the PNG Kokoda Track for the top fundraising Kokoda Challenge team. They also guide our KCYP groups on the Sandakan Memorial March in Malaysia, providing invaluable expertise and support. Together, we honour the past, empower the present, and inspire the future by preserving the legacy of the Kokoda Track and its indomitable spirit.

**KOKODA  
SPIRIT**

### First Aid Accident & Emergency

First Aid Accident & Emergency has been a vital supporter of our Kokoda Challenge events since 2008 by coordinating essential First Aid services and completing risk assessments for these events. The organisation's Director, Scott Whimpey, is also a keen participant and four-time Challenge winner. Scott competed with the elite Nike Hammer team and achieved an impressive 11hr 19min for the 96km event.





# 2024 VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR ORGANISATION. WE COULD NOT MAKE SUCH A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT, WITHOUT THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT.



## 4,500

number of  
volunteer  
hours in 2024



## \$180,000

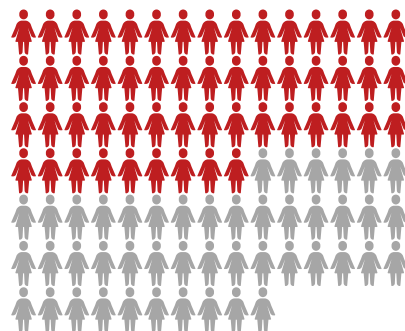
The financial value of our  
volunteers' time to our  
organisation in 2024

## Top 3 Reasons *Why?*

1. Personal satisfaction
2. Help others/ Community
3. Personal/ Family Involvement

## 54%

of our  
volunteers  
are female



## 750

number of people who  
volunteered in 2024



## DURATION OF TIME

Less than one year	10%
One to five years	35%
Six to nine years	12%
Ten years or more	43%





# VOLUNTEER AWARDS



## change makers

### NATHAN LITTLE - VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

For the second year in a row, Nathan went above and beyond as a KCYP Leader. Not only did he play a key role in designing and building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Canungra, but he also made the trip to Lake Macquarie to tackle the 48km Kokoda Challenge. After crossing the finish line, Nathan didn't stop there – he went back to support the sweep team, embodying true teamwork and dedication.



### ABBY

Abby was one of our incredible 2024 KCYP Brisbane Volunteer Leaders. Abby went above and beyond during the Borneo trip, spending a cold and uncomfortable night on Mt. Kinabalu to care for Kokoda Kids and a fellow leader experiencing altitude sickness. Her unwavering composure, compassion, and optimism shine through no matter the challenge. We're so grateful to have leaders like Abby who make a difference every step of the way.



### MEG

Meg is a long-serving KYF volunteer who consistently brings a beautiful balance of care and structured support to help our participants complete the Digital Detox Program (DDP). She always goes above and beyond as a volunteer Youth Leader.



*Thank you to every single volunteer for making a difference*







# KOKODA YOUTH FOUNDATION

*Changing Lives*

**EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE**

**COURAGE . ENDURANCE . MATESHIP . SACRIFICE**



[kokodayouthfoundation.com](http://kokodayouthfoundation.com)  
[kokodachallenge.com](http://kokodachallenge.com)