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ClubsNSW

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State MP Charlie Lynn to find more
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he takes to the stage at this year's
*ClubsNSW Annual Conference and
Trade Expo - "Beyond Survival."*

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Everyone wants a website today to
help drive their business towards
success...and most clubs achieve this
in some capacity. But are they
there for show or do they sit within
an overall marketing communication
strategy of your club? *Club Life* finds
out more about driving your club
website further.



Infront

The Club Industry Infront



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In *Infront* this month Anne Fitzgerald
highlights industry developments with
our corporate partners and member
seminars. Elsewhere, *Club Life* covers
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look at controlling employee conduct.
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needs to decide what it will do in the
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of the workplace are raised concerning
information that, if true, could pose a
real risk for your business. And while
employee misconduct outside work
seldom arises, don't think your club is
immune to it...because it's not.



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This month's *Club Policy* is jam
packed with lots on offer including a
comprehensive overview of the start of
a new era for NSW's liquor laws, which
commence this month; an opportunity
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Government from the ATM Industry
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removal of ATMs; an update on taxatori
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gaming statistics; the future of sporting
clubs' not-for-profit status; and, the very
latest on the *ClubsNSW Code of Practice*.

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With lots on offer, this month's *Club
News* focuses on the recent winners of
the *Awards for Excellence*, including
photo highlights from the gala event
and coverage of a number of award-
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into the club industry's latest challenge
- talent management, details of the
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Foundation Race Day and how your club
can become involved, and much more!

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This month *Club Life* highlights further
details on the Sydney 2009 World
Masters Games and how clubs can
get involved, as well as details for the
upcoming Kokoda Youth Challenge.
And, clubs have a unique opportunity
to make an incredible difference in
the lives of our youth through *Max
Potential*, an ideal program for clubs
looking to maximise their engagement
with local communities.

Kokoda's Club Youth Challenge

BY JEREMY BATH, CLUBSNSW MEDIA MANAGER

Eight young Australians will later this month discover that they have been selected to walk the Kokoda Trail as part of a leadership program administered by ClubsNSW and its state counterparts. The inaugural Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge will select eight people between the ages of 16 and 22 to walk the Kokoda Trail for 10 days commencing on 27 September 2008.

Walking the Trail has become synonymous with registered clubs in recent years, largely due to the efforts of some of our RSL clubs. For many young people, the trip has proved a turning point in their lives, an opportunity to discover and then develop leadership qualities previously unknown even to themselves. The physical and mental challenge of making their way along Kokoda's 96km arduous terrain is arguably one of the toughest activities many of the trekkers will ever face.

To be selected, the eight young Australians will first have to beat out several thousand other applicants who have applied to the Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge. The large number of applicants is both a testament

to the growing interest young people have in Kokoda as well as the outstanding support the program has received from the Australian media as well as State and Federal politicians.

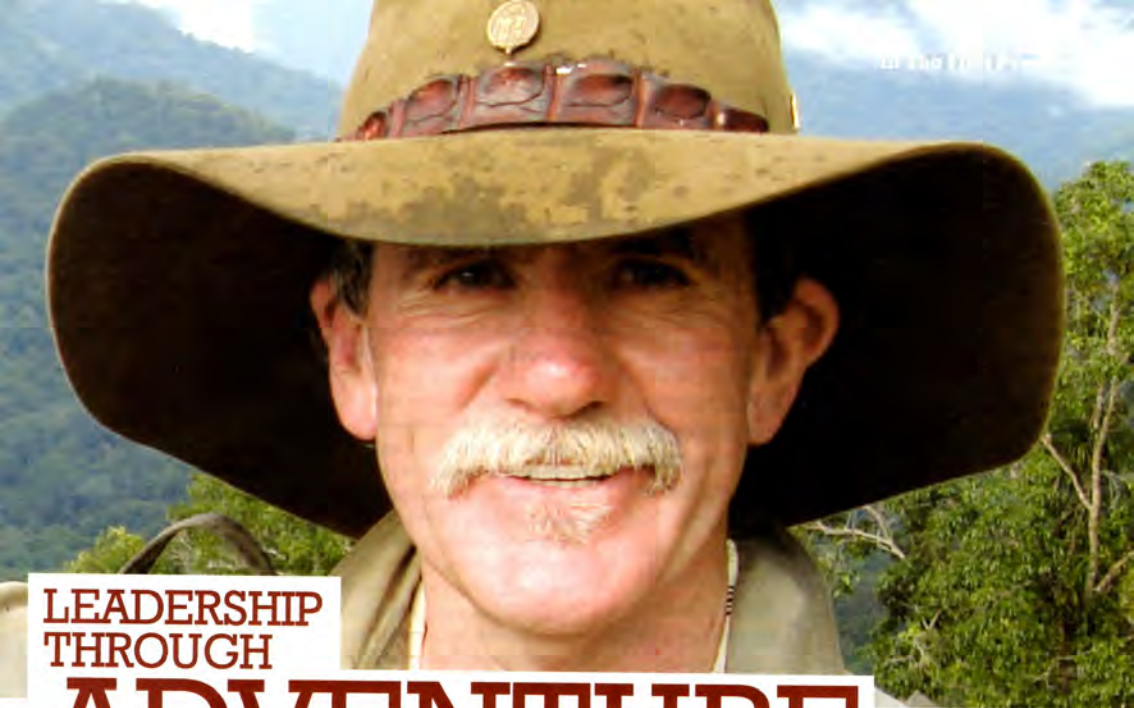
The thoughts of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, who himself walked the Kokoda Trail several years before his rise to leader of the country, are captured on the flyer promoting the initiative, "Kokoda is not a walk. It's certainly not a holiday. It's a pilgrimage." Indeed many of the young people who have walked the Trail courtesy of their local RSL in recent years have expressed similar sentiments upon their return from Papua New Guinea. Kokoda is not only the location of untold stories of Australian bravery, but also the final resting place for more than 2,000 Australian soldiers.

Participants in the Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge will take in all the battlefields of the Kokoda campaign such as the 'Golden Staircase' on Imita Ridge and 'Butcher's Ridge' on Brigade Hill, as well as abandoned wartime village areas bypassed by today's easier 'eco-tourist' track.



Participants in the Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge will also walk the Trail with a guide from Adventure Kokoda, a company established by former Australian Army Major Charlie Lynn, who further explains that, "Kokoda is a living leadership laboratory for young Australians. There is no other program that combines such a realistic physical challenge with a blend of historical, cultural and environmental learning experiences."

If your club is looking to learn more about the Kokoda program and in particular sending a young person from your local area to walk the Trail in 2009, simply contact Graeme Carroll at the RSL & Services Clubs Association on **02 9579 4555**. ■



LEADERSHIP THROUGH

ADVENTURE

Having served in the Australian Army for 21 years, with tours of duty in Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia as well as an Exchange Officer with the United States Military, Charlie Lynn is the founder of Adventure Kokoda and has led almost 50 expeditions across the Kokoda Trail. During this time he's established close relations with the Kioari and Orokaiva people who live along the Trail, and is committed to its legacy. His widespread experience and knowledge of leadership and survival makes for a sensational story, and *Club Life* caught up with Charlie Lynn to find more before he takes to the stage at this year's ClubsNSW Annual Conference.

INTERVIEW BY OLIVIER BJÖRKSÅTER-BLEYLOCK

Club Life: Before we talk about the Kokoda Trail and your upcoming appearance at the ClubsNSW Annual Conference, are you able to provide us with a brief background on yourself?

Charlie Lynn: I was conscripted into the army for National Service back in 1965, and the following year I volunteered for active service in Vietnam and transferred to the regular army. During that time I was selected for officer training and graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1968, going on to serve with the ANZUK Force in Singapore in 1971-73 and as an exchange instructor in airborne logistics with the United States Army in 1977-78. A few years later, I was selected for the Army Command and Staff College at Fort Queenscliff. After graduation I was assigned to the 1st Brigade at Holsworthy as the senior staff officer for Personnel and Logistics, and eventually left in 1986 after 21 years service with the rank of Major. After leaving the army, I organised a number of special events which included the annual Westfield Sydney to Melbourne Ultramarathon which Cliff Young made famous; an 18,000km Army Relay Marathon around Australia in support of the Australian Cancer Foundation; a 4,000km relay between Darwin, Cairns and Melbourne in support of Melbourne's bid for the 1996 Olympic Games; and, the first Great Australian Caravan Safari around Australia. I also conducted leadership and outback survival training with The Australian Rural Leadership Foundation and Adventure West in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, central Queensland and outback New South Wales. →

In 1991, I was asked to trek across the Kokoda Trail in Papua New Guinea with a view to organising an event to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the campaign. After becoming involved with this for many years, I eventually developed the Kokoda Adventure Leadership Program for young executives from CRA (now Rio Tinto) and the University of Western Sydney National Leadership Scholarship Program. And while next month will mark my 50th trek across Kokoda, I have previously led groups from the Sydney Swans AFL team, Youth Insearch, Camp Dare, the NSW Young Liberals and Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets programs as part of their personal development programs. But more recently I established *The Kokoda Trail Foundation* to develop a strategic plan for the Kokoda Trail to be proclaimed as a National Memorial Park and to provide health, educational and sporting assistance to the descendants of the 'fuzzy-wuzzy angels' who live along the trail.

CL: And you also have a political background as well?

CL: That's right. I was elected to the Legislative Council in the Parliament of New South Wales in 1995, representing the Liberal Party and have served as the Shadow Minister for Public Works and Services and Shadow Minister for Western Sydney. I was re-elected in 1999 and 2007 and currently serve as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition. In my time working on the Legislative Council, I've also had the opportunity to be involved and work with community groups and youth leadership programs, bringing together people who can identify and help those in need. Politics is a great opportunity to facilitate outcomes and bring people together.

Having served several posts in the army, I saw how other countries honour their battles fields. So, when I was first asked to trek the Kokoda Trail, there was nothing known about the Trail and its history nor a single monument or memorial which is very wrong.

CL: So, why has the Kokoda Trail become so important to you?

CL: Having served several posts in my 21 years in the army, I was able to see just how other countries honour their battles fields, which is very impressive. So, when I was first asked to trek the Kokoda Trail back in 1991 with a single guide, there was nothing really known about the Trail and its history nor a single monument or memorial which to me was very wrong. Upon returning from my first trek I did some research and found that the Kokoda Trail had in fact been totally ignored by successive Governments since the end of the war. It seems in this country that we don't honour our servicemen as well as we should after they leave the service, and we certainly don't honour our battlefields, particularly in the South West Pacific, in any way at all apart from the annual spruiking of ANZAC Day services.

At that time of my first trek it was the 50th anniversary of the Kokoda campaign, and I saw it as being a significant anniversary and so I set out to get some sponsorship for an anniversary trip up there. I wrote to the CEOs of the country's top 1,300 companies to encourage them to send a representative to commemorate the service of those who served up there and to salute those who returned as a way of bringing the spirit of Kokoda back into these corporations. It was highly relevant at the time because the country was going through a recession and a lot of people were complaining about the lack of national leadership, so I thought this would be a great opportunity to reignite leadership within these corporations. Well, I only got four acceptances out of 1,300, and what was worse was that many

of them either had no idea what I was talking about or thought I was talking about Kakadu National Park instead of Kokoda which only further reinforced my reasons for better recognition of it.

CL: But this isn't a problem only with the Kokoda campaign, is it?

CL: The neglect of all our campaigns is largely due to our education system – the study of our military history should really be a compulsory part of our education system from primary level upwards because we simply don't study Australian leadership enough in this country. In fact, there is still yet to be a PhD written on Australian leadership and the impact political decisions have had on our defence force in times of crisis.

CL: So, how were you able to piece together the story of Kokoda?

CL: Kokoda is a very unique story and one of the few areas of the world where you can actually walk in the footsteps of the brave and live the history of the campaign. For example, at that time Papua New Guinea was Australian-mandated territory and it's the only time in our history that we've been invaded and where we confronted the Japanese at Kokoda. We were overwhelmed by them, forced right back over the Owen Stanley Ranges to the last line of defence, and then rallied together in a last effort attempt just on the edge of Port Moresby and forced them back, re-entering Kokoda on 2 November, 1942 and raising the Australian flag on the 3 November 1942.

While the Gallipoli Campaign of World War I was Australia's first military test as a new nation, the Kokoda and subsequent New

Guinea Campaign was the first time that Australia's security had been threatened directly. Given that at the time, Papua was an Australian Protectorate as I mentioned earlier, Kokoda saw Australians fight and die repelling an invader on Australian soil, without the material presence or support of the United Kingdom. And the Kokoda Track campaign was hampered by the senior military commanders lacking knowledge of the Papuan environment, and who were really unaware of the appalling terrain and the extreme conditions in which the battles were fought. Orders given to the commanders on the ground were sometimes unrealistic given the conditions. In the end though, their strategy of fighting the enemy in Papua – widely criticised at the time – was proven sound.

More importantly, the Kokoda campaign also highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the individual soldiers and the lower level commanders who fought to defend our country and both the U.S. and Australian armies took steps to improve individual and unit training. Today, we can still learn important life lessons from the Kokoda Campaign, as it's a story that really has every example

Kokoda is really an Australian leadership laboratory, and it's waiting for all the stories to be told.

you want of what's good about Australia, while the questions of who we are and where we've come from can be found in the real story behind Kokoda – that is, the political betrayal of our troops; the corporate leadership of the brigade; the raw spirit and survival of troops during very difficult conditions; and, pure selflessness and self-sacrifice for one's country – Kokoda is really an Australian leadership laboratory, and it's waiting for all the stories to be told.

CL: Kokoda was also a pivotal moment in this country's history because of the direct threat the Japanese posed at the time, right?

CL: If Port Moresby had been captured in 1942, the Japanese would have secured the anchor for their plan to cut Australia off completely from American support. Much of northern Australia would have been brought within range of Japanese bombers operating from Port Moresby, and the course of the Pacific War would almost certainly have been greatly changed. The heroic Australian Diggers who repulsed a much larger and better

equipped Japanese army under conditions of extraordinary hardship on the bloody Kokoda Trail really do deserve to be called "the men who saved Australia," despite what latter-day historians are now suggesting that there was really never any need to have worried because the Japanese were not going to invade Australia.

CL: Having crossed Kokoda almost 50 times, and sharing it with a wide range of people from all walks of life, how does the Kokoda experience change those who are up for the challenge?

CL: I really am continually amazed at the impact the Kokoda Trail has on people. When we start most if not all the trekkers are all nursing a fear of self-doubt, and as we make the journey, they also start to learn the story behind Kokoda as well. Upon completing the 96-km 10-day journey, I can immediately see the impact it has had, bringing everything in their lives into proper perspective – it really is amazing to witness that. There is no other program anywhere in the world that will produce such a long lasting and profound result, and I will challenge anyone who wants



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to debate me on that. It starts off as a physical challenge, soon becoming a mental challenge, and ultimately a kind of spiritual experience for many who then make a commitment to themselves to make changes in their life.

CL: Is there anything that the Club Movement is doing to help strengthen future recognition of such campaigns?

CL: I think the best thing we have going with the RSL Movement is the Kokoda Youth Leadership Program because this successfully embraces the legacies of our military history and passes it on to future generations, while also instilling the virtues of strong leadership and a renewed vision of their own futures in our youth. And the program is designed with clubs because they have all the necessary links in their local communities, and because they're in touch with and engaging with the youth of their area – so clubs are positioned better than anyone else to know which youth could benefit the best from such a program.

By helping our youth by engaging them in the Kokoda Youth Leadership Program brings about benefits back to the community the club also serves. That is, we generally find that these youth come to understand and appreciate the sacrifices that have been made and want to make a difference within their own local community. Some outstanding results have been achieved in previous years.

CL: Can more clubs get involved with this kind of program?

CL: Yes. In fact, ClubsNSW's Media Manager Jeremy Bath is arranging a national club industry trek for more clubs to become involved later this year called the Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge. And if

I offer a very compelling story that will hopefully bring out the potential that exists within everybody – the potential that can be tapped into through good leadership. That's the most compelling part of what I will offer clubs – to know they have the potential to influence others through their leadership.

clubs were able to become more involved for years to come, that would be the greatest legacy that they could pass on to our future generations.

CL: Obviously the Kokoda Trail will feature as part of your keynote address at this year's ClubsNSW Annual Conference?

CL: When people make the journey to cross Kokoda, as I mentioned earlier for some people it has an immediate effect on their lives, while for others it may take up to a year or two to filter through their system before taking any positive action. Whatever the result of each individual experience, one thing you can be assured of with Kokoda is that it has a positive affect upon everybody that does it... guaranteed. So, the themes of the talks I give centre around the art of survival and how it's all about personal attitude, as well as the spirit of Kokoda and everything that can be drawn from that entire experience as I highlighted earlier. It's certainly not a lecture in anyway where they will walk away with a set of guiding principals or a bunch of theories that may or may not inspire them to take action. Instead, I offer a very compelling story that will hopefully bring out the potential that exists within everybody – the potential that can be tapped into through good leadership. Above it all, that's probably the most compelling part of what I will offer clubs – to know they have potential to influence others with good leadership.

CL: So, what's the future of Kokoda after recent news surrounding possible mining of part of the site?

CL: Truth be told, that whole issue concerning the proposed

copper and goldmining along the Kokoda Trail by the Koari landowners wasn't a bad thing in the end because it forced the Australian Government to take action. I had written a proposal to the Federal Government in 1994 recommending that they work with the Papua New Guinean Government to have it proclaimed as a National Memorial Park and have the battlesites along it recognised with what I call educational commemorative-type memorials so that young Australians that trek it can fully understand the land they're standing on. Then we can use this as a model to develop other National Memorial Parks on battlesites that have been largely ignored and bypassed in the South West Pacific over the years as well.

At that time I was probably widely regarded as a serial pest by the Government because it just didn't seem to register with anyone what I was trying to achieve. However, what was really interesting that came out of that experience is that I learned that Governments don't make things happen – people make things happen and Governments follow. So, I finally decided to do something about it myself and set up a foundation to raise money and develop a strategic plan. About \$200,000 was raised and a strategic plan was developed and I presented that to the Government 18 months ago.

So, while for 12 years the Government largely ignored what I was telling them, today, because of all the publicity we've generated from all the people who have done the trek, things are finally starting to take shape and the Government is now doing something about it. ■

The Strength and Sufferance of Kokoda

BY JEREMY BATH – CLUBNSW MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

For the nine young Australians who successfully applied for the *Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge*, they did so on the understanding they would be walking 96km over 10 days in late September early October 2008. Little did they know that they would eventually walk further than any Australian group has previously walked before, and that some would do so battling malaria, first degree burns, and even the occasional leach on their eye!

The intention of the *Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge* is to instil confidence and develop leadership attributes in young people. And so with that goal before him, trek leader Captain Simon Hart decided shortly after meeting the group, aged 16 to 22 years, would walk the entire 155 km Kokoda wartime trail.

Testament to the character of the troop, the change in plan was enthusiastically adopted and they immediately set about planning how they would trek an average of 19km per day through some of the most inhospitable jungle conditions known anywhere in the world. Adding to the challenge was several days' rain in the lead-up to the walk that turned streams into creeks and dry tracks into slippery rivers of mud.

Twenty-two year old Roseville resident and fourth-year medical student Kate Sullivan explained the group's willingness to take on the challenge of walking further than any group had ever walked before. "It was clear from our first night in Port Moresby that we shared a hope that completing the trek would actually require each of us to test our limits of endurance and self-belief," she said. "So, when

Simon said we would be walking the entire wartime Kokoda Track, we all considered it icing on the cake."

Macksville resident Tyler Bellamy said his initial keenness for the extra kilometres quickly faded and by the second day he was doubting himself. "To be honest, those first few days were horrible," he added. "Despite my training, I was really struggling with the humidity, the weight of my backpack, and the seemingly never-ending uphill climbs. I was lucky to have some great people around me that kept driving me forward as well as retelling plenty of stories that almost succeeded in distracting me from the task that still lay in front of us all."

While Tyler did complete the entire 155km from Kokoda to Owers Corner, medical tests would later reveal he did so despite having developed a serious case of malaria. Recovering at home several weeks later, Tyler revealed the experience had changed him forever. "I struggled so badly at first that I needed to find a better reason to keep walking than doing it just for myself," he further explained. "I lost two great uncles at Kokoda, and just a few days before leaving Australia I learnt that the man who built my family's home also passed away on the Track. His sister asked me to take a photograph of his grave at the Bomana War Cemetery, and the only way I was going to be able to do that was to make it to the very end."

While the struggles of Tyler's journey were unique, Parkes resident Mitchell Scott said the rest of the group conquered the track with similar thoughts of motivation. "You can't walk the Kokoda Track and not feel a sense of obligation to the soldiers

whose suffering was for the benefit of the entire nation," he told. "I think we all just knew that no matter how hard it was and how much pain we were in, we owed it to the 600 soldiers who died along the Track not to give up.

"After all, they didn't quit with bullets whizzing past them and with barely any food for weeks on end. I don't think I could have gone home and looked a Digger in the eyes if I had thrown in the towel."

This year was the first time all State Club Associations had funded the cost of sending at least one young person to Kokoda. Already plans are underway for next year when it's hoped an even larger group will walk "that bloody track" and return to take up a position as leaders in their local community. ■

