



KOKODA YOUTH LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

RSL & SERVICES CLUBS ASSOCIATION

2026 CANDIDATE GUIDE



The Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge should be something every young Australian should aspire to do!

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What is the Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge

The Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge (KYLC) is a once-in-a-lifetime leadership experience that combines a physically demanding trek across the Kokoda Trail with practical, values-based leadership development.

Over 10 challenging days in Papua New Guinea, participants walk the original wartime trail, learn the history of the Kokoda campaign on location, and are immersed in daily leadership lessons drawn from real moments of courage, endurance, mateship and sacrifice.

This is not a classroom course or a leadership retreat.

It is a lived experience — one that pushes you physically, challenges you mentally, and asks you to step up as a leader within a team.

What Makes KYLC Different?

- Leadership lessons are learned under pressure, not in theory
- History is taught where it happened, not from a book
- Participants rotate through daily leadership roles
- Reflection and accountability are built into every day
- The experience continues after the trek, through community service and sharing your story

KYLC is designed for young people who are ready to challenge themselves, grow as leaders, and give back to their communities.



The Opportunity

Candidate Guide | Is This Challenge for You?

KYLC is open to young people aged 16–35 who demonstrate:

- Leadership potential
- Commitment to community
- Willingness to be challenged
- Respect for the legacy of Kokoda

You do not need to be a seasoned hiker — but you must be prepared to train.

What You'll Experience

- A 10-day guided trek across the Kokoda Trail
- Daily briefings at significant battle sites
- Leadership rotations within your trekking group
- End-of-day reflection and discussion
- Cultural engagement with local PNG communities

This experience is physically demanding, emotionally powerful, and deeply rewarding.

What You'll Gain

- Increased confidence and resilience
- Practical leadership experience
- Stronger teamwork and communication skills
- A deeper understanding of Australia's military history
- A renewed sense of purpose and responsibility

Many past trekkers describe KYLC as life-changing.

What's Involved

Your Commitment

KYLC is a privilege — and it comes with responsibility.

You will be expected to:

- Commit to 3+ months of physical preparation
- Carry your own pack during the trek
- Attend a compulsory pre-trek workshop
- Complete all medical and travel requirements
- Represent your sponsor and share your experience after the trek

This is not a holiday. It is a challenge — and that is exactly why it matters.

Costs & Sponsorship

The total value of the trek is approximately \$7,050.

Typically covered by sponsorship:

- Trek fees and permits
- Accommodation and meals
- Flights (Australia–PNG return)
- Travel insurance

Out-of-pocket costs (approx. \$3,000):

- Passport and vaccinations
- Trekking boots and gear
- Medical appointments
- Personal spending money

Costs should be discussed directly with your sponsor.

Key Dates (2026)

- Applications open: 2 February
- Applications close: 30 April
- Compulsory Information workshop: 17 May
- Trek dates: 28 September – 9 October

How to Apply

1. Complete the application form
2. Submit a 600-word personal statement
3. Attend an interview (if shortlisted)

If selected, you'll receive full preparation guidance and support.

If you're looking for something easy, this isn't it.

If you're ready to challenge yourself and grow as a leader — we encourage you to apply.

Parent & Guardian Information

The Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge (KYLC)

is a structured leadership development program for young people aged 16–35, delivered through a guided trek across the Kokoda Trail in Papua New Guinea.

For many participants, this is a formative experience that builds resilience, confidence, responsibility and leadership capability.

Safety & Supervision

Participant safety is a priority.

- The trek is operated by Adventure Kokoda, an experienced and highly regarded Kokoda trek operator for over 25 years
- Participants are supervised at all times by qualified trek leaders and local PNG guides
- Leaders are trained in first aid and carry emergency communication equipment
- Medical screening is required before departure
- A compulsory pre-trek workshop ensures all expectations and procedures are clearly understood

All leaders comply with Working With Children requirements where applicable.

Physical & Emotional Challenge

This is a physically demanding trek.

Participants will:

- Train for 3+ months prior to departure
- Carry their own pack
- Walk long distances in challenging terrain and weather

While demanding, the experience is carefully managed and supported. Many participants return with increased confidence, maturity and perspective.

Leadership & Learning Focus

KYLC is not just a trek.

Throughout the program, participants:

- Learn about the Kokoda campaign at significant historical sites
- Rotate through leadership roles within their group
- Take part in daily reflection and discussion
- Explore values such as courage, mateship, service and responsibility

The aim is to develop practical leadership skills that extend well beyond the trek.

Costs & Sponsorship

The total value of the program is approximately \$7,050.

Sponsorship typically covers:

- Trek fees, permits and logistics
- Hire gear (tent, backpack, sleeping bag, sleeping mat and trekking poles)
- Accommodation and meals (before and after trek)
- Flights (Australia–PNG return)
- Travel insurance

Families should allow for approximately \$3,000 in out-of-pocket costs, including passport, vaccinations, personal equipment and expenses.

Ongoing Expectations

After returning, participants may be asked to:

- Share their experience with their sponsoring club or community
- Attend commemorative or community events
- Act as ambassadors for the program

This reinforces the leadership and service focus of KYLC.

If you have questions, we encourage you to speak with the sponsoring club or contact the KYLC team directly.

Club & Youth Trek

MONDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER TO FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2026

Personal Details

First Name:

Middle Name:

Surname:

Address:

Address:

Suburb

State:

Postcode:

Home Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

Date of Birth:

Age as at Date of Trek:

Occupation:

Passport Number:

Nationality:

Passport Expiry Date:

Passport Place of Issue:

Height (in cm):

Weight (in Kg):

Sex (please tick one): Male Female

Shirt Size (please tick one): S M L XL XXL XXXL

Emergency Contact Details 1

First Name:

Middle Name:

Surname:

Address:

Address:

Suburb

State:

Postcode:

Home Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

Relationship:

Emergency Contact Details 2

First Name:

Middle Name:

Surname:

Address:

Address:

Suburb

State:

Postcode:

Home Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

Relationship:

KYLC 2026 Application for Selection

Occupation

Name of Employer:

Position:

Number of Years:

Education

School:

Current Year or Level of Education:

Cadet Service (Army / Navy / Air Force)

Unit:

Rank:

Years of Service:

Community Service

Name of Organisation:

Years of Service:

Referees

First Name:

Surname:

Title/Position:

Company:

Phone:

Email Address:

First Name:

Surname:

Title/Position:

Company:

Phone:

Email Address:



KYLC 2026 Application for Selection

Statement

Please answer the following question:

**Why would you like to be selected for the
RSL & Services Clubs Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge?**

Please attach a typewritten statement of approximately 600 words or fill out the section below