

Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge

Shoalhaven
Ex-Services
Group

Every year, the Group sends one of our young members of staff off to experience the Kokoda Trail in Papua New Guinea through the Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge. The leadership program aims to create greater awareness of the sacrifices of the diggers on the Kokoda campaign.

We're proud to announce Ben Barr has been nominated by the board to represent our Clubs this year. We caught up with him before he sets off.



So, Ben, How long have you been with us?

I've worked for the Clubs for about 10.5 years. Working my way up from glassy to bar, dabbled in VIP and now doing some cellar work. I enjoy working with people – both our staff and the regulars.

What made you apply for the Challenge?

I've seen others go through before me and I haven't really pushed myself until now. I'm close to Jimmy who was last years trekker and that's encouraged me. It's also about first-hand experience and the history of the Trail. I'd be stupid to let the opportunity pass me by.

Have they told you what to expect?

I'm expecting it to be hard! Ive heard differing accounts from the trekkers that have gone before me, I think it's going to be what you make it.

Have you done anything like it?

No, nothing! No big hikes. It's going to be challenging!

How have you been preparing?

I've been doing some hikes with weighted bags. Lots of stairs with weighted bags. Plus my usual training and playing with my soccer club – Illaroo.

What's the biggest challenge going to be?

I think acclimatising to the humidity. That'll be the biggest challenge I expect.

What do you hope to achieve?

I hope to complete it! Really feel a sense of accomplishment and I really want to learn more.

We wish him all the best and look forward to hearing about his experience on his return.