



**Embargoed until 16 June 2008**

## **YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED TO WALK THE KOKODA TRACK**

The search is on for 8 young Australians to walk the Kokoda Track in September this year.

The Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge will pay for 8 people from across Australia and between the ages of 16 and 22, to fly to Papua New Guinea in late September. Once there, the group will spend 10 days trekking 96km through some of the most arduous terrain on earth.

The group will be commanded by a trek leader and several local guides who will ensure the group follow the original wartime trail.

Club peak bodies in each state and territory will fund the entire cost of the trip, believing the experience can bring about a deeper appreciation of both the suffering and heroics of the Australian soldiers who fought along the Kokoda Track.

More than 2,000 Australian soldiers died along the Track during 1942 and 1943, fighting for the first time in Australian military history without the assistance of Allied soldiers.

At the conclusion of the trek, the group will visit the Bomana War Cemetery. The cemetery contains 3,819 Commonwealth burials from WWII, 702 of them still unidentified.

President of ClubsNT Andrew Hay said the Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge is partly intended to identify and develop leadership skills in young people.

“Kokoda is arguably one of the toughest things a person can ever do. Most people who walk it are ready to quit within 24 hours and indeed even some high profile Australian athletes have refused to see it through to the end.

“The Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge has been specifically designed to bring out the best in our youth.

“Many young people who complete the Kokoda Track return to Australia markedly different people, with leadership skills that are transferable to their local community.

“Most community leaders ultimately end up working with clubs either through sport or charity. Clubs hope by funding young people to walk the Kokoda Track, that they can hasten their transition to that of community leaders,” Andrew Hay said.

Application forms for the Kokoda Youth Leadership Clubs Challenge are available from [www.clubsnt.com.au](http://www.clubsnt.com.au) or by email at [kokoda@clubsaustralia.com.au](mailto:kokoda@clubsaustralia.com.au).

Applications close 6<sup>th</sup> July. Applicants need to be available to walk the Kokoda Track between 27<sup>th</sup> September and 7<sup>th</sup> October.

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