

OPERATION FLINDERS
ONE STEP AT A TIME



THINKING OF

eagles

WINTER 2022



2022

The new year began with a sense of excitement for not only the official Exercise season, but the new opportunities the Foundation had ahead of it.

The year began with major works and activity at Yankaninna Station, home of Operation Flinders, with 7-week long work parties and the construction of one of the program's boldest moves - the High Ropes Course. Not only would this change the face of the program logic, but also stand as a nod to the transformation of Operation Flinders over the past 30 years.

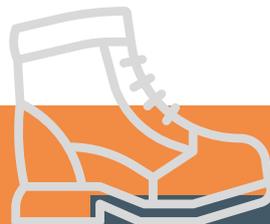
With the new activity underway, the momentum grew in preparation for an expanded program. In total, 5 Exercises are planned for 2022 with each providing room for 12 teams - a record breaking year in our history.

Our Volunteers

We are privileged to say that the Foundation now has over 300 active volunteers. Many are new to our community, and a small group have been with the Foundation for 30 years.

The Foundation is built on the hard work and dedication of our volunteers. From those who are on Exercise, to the individuals packing, fixing and building, Operation Flinders is proud of the hundreds of people who dedicate their time to the program.

We appreciate each of you and we thank you for your time, effort and passion.



300

Greetings from the Chair



2022 FACTS



20 teams of young people on Exercise One & Two combined

910 radio calls on Exercise Two



148 taskings completed on the station on Exercise Two

340 meals prepared on Exercise Two at base camp alone



The start of 2022 has already seen several changes in the Foundation but one thing that remains constant is that Pam's vision is alive and well.

The Foundation has added a new Board member, Pat Caruso. Pat is a proud Indigenous Australian, passionate footy fan and successful businessperson – owner of We Create Print Deliver. Pat strongly identifies with the work that we do as a Foundation and was humbled by our invitation to join the Board.

As we move into our fourth decade as a Foundation, we look towards the future and our ongoing efforts to transform the lives of young people. Our Strategic Plan for 2022–2027 was developed by the Board and presented at an open session shortly thereafter. We received important feedback from staff and volunteers during this process. Our plan evolved in response to those comments. The Strategic Plan now sets the course to achieve our Vision.

With the change in State and Federal Governments, there has been a renewed focus on sustainability and the environment. We share that passion. From our use of solar panels at Yankaninna Station to our Environmental Trips with the Next Step Program, Operation Flinders has always been conscious of the impact that we have on the precious land. We look forward to a continued relationship with Governments to ensure that our environment can be enjoyed for generations to come.

It was my pleasure to officially open our brand-new High Ropes Course at Yankaninna Station in May. The course will provide young people with a range of activities to develop their confidence and expand their comfort zones. As a Foundation, we are always looking for new ways to help young people achieve their goals. The course is a testament to the support of our amazing partners and volunteers. My thanks to both groups for this monumental achievement.

Our volunteers continue to embody the values and mission of Operation Flinders. From repairs and construction at both Edwardstown and Yankaninna Station, to guiding young people in the field, our volunteers are truly the heart of the foundation and I sincerely thank them all for their efforts.

Keep safe.

Peer Group Mentor Zoe



Kevin Scarce
Chair, Operation Flinders

SUCCESS IN THE FIELD

The Spirit of Pam Murray-White

What a tough, yet super amazing experience with Operation Flinders trekking through the harsh, rocky, rugged, and beautiful terrain of the northern Flinders Ranges.

From the time we arrived at Yankaninna Station, our team was both excited and nervous about the walk ahead of us. We knew the landscapes would be challenging and we also felt a bit jittery about the high ropes course we would encounter as part of the exercise.

Sarah and Mollie, our Team Leaders, were there to meet us as we drove in and very quickly, we had our backpacks and began walking. We were Tango 5, and our enthusiasm and energy was apparent right from the start of the walk. We were challenged every step of the way with the rough, rocky ground and long, arduous walks from dawn till dusk. We bonded so well as a team and encouraged each other along the journey. We reflected on what we were learning and experiencing each day around the fire at night. Sarah, our inspiring team leader, shared the wisdom of some motivational talks with us, as did Mollie, our assistant team leader. We all had barriers to push through, and along the journey, we developed a lot of resilience, perseverance and sheer grit to get through each day.

Climbing Mandarin Caps and watching the sunrise was a great highlight, as was summiting Mt Rose to see the sun light up the vastness of the ranges all around. We thought with gratitude of Pam Murray-White, as we had some contemplative moments at Moonbeam's Vision. We were also honoured to meet with some of the wonderful Foundation sponsors at the cairn memorial for Pam, where we gathered together to share some of our thoughts on our journey around Yankaninna.

Thank you to Operation Flinders, base camp volunteers, Sarah and Mollie our tenacious inspiring leaders, all the generous sponsors and especially to the vision and spirit of Pam Murray-White and all who have helped to keep that energy growing all these years.

Joanna Falkland - Support Staff
Exercise 1 - Mannum Community College



"Watching the sunrise was a great highlight, as was summiting Mt Rose to see the sun light up the vastness of the ranges all around".

Looking Back To See How Far We've Come

Daniel Ahrens, Team Leader



Looking back, it was a long day. We'd woken before dawn and given that we were a few days into the Exercise, most of us could now pack up our hootchies and rucksacks within half an hour. This meant that many of us were able to climb the small rocky outcrop near our Lions campsite to watch the sunrise. It was a perfectly calm morning and watching the sun hit the hills surrounding us was a beautiful and peaceful start to the day.

From there the day became more difficult. As we headed north, Mt Rose stood before us as an imposing figure. There seemed no easy way to ascend. An unplanned rest at the base to play some games was a welcome rest, but we couldn't stay there all day, so we shouldered our packs and raced up to the southern saddle. Another unplanned circumstance meant that one of the packs needed to be split and shared among the team, meaning an even harder climb for those of us with extra weight to carry. But the whole team reached the peak, and the view was certainly worth it. We thought that would be the peak of our day.

Spirits were high and we made good progress for the rest of the day, reaching our bush camp location by mid-afternoon. Realising we still had time in the day, I suggested to the team that we could do a packs off walk to Mandarin Caps, but not expecting an enthusiastic answer. To my surprise the team was keen, maybe because it meant we'd be able to complete the four main features at Yankaninna, or maybe because tomorrow promised to be a shorter walk and the thrill of abseil.

Some needed to be coaxed to start the walk to Mandarin Caps, but we all got there just in time for sunset, and it was spectacular. We remembered sunrise, and then saw Mt Rose, seemingly so far away. Could we really have been there earlier today? We wouldn't have believed it possible this morning, but here it was staring us in the face. Looking back, we could see how far we'd come, and there was a genuine sense of achievement, not just as individuals but as a team, one step at a time.



HIGH ROPES COURSE

Reaching New Heights At Yankaninna Station

In May, Operation Flinders Foundation launched our brand-new High Ropes Course at Yankaninna Station. The 12-meter high, 40-meter-long course will provide seven activities for the young people to develop their confidence. The course, which was built over several weeks by a Victorian design team ARCB, sits proudly in the far northern Flinders Ranges property. Over the coming years, it will prove a peak experience for participants.

On Tuesday 10 May, the Foundation welcomed Operation Flinders Chair, Hon. Kevin Scarce, AC, CSC RAN (Ret'd), to launch the course at the opening ceremony. A welcome to country was conducted by Kelvin Johnson of the Adnyamathanha people followed by a speech from past participants and now mentors of the program.

Operation Flinders Chair Kevin Scarce said, "With the assistance of over a dozen volunteers, borrowed equipment from neighbouring stations and essential funding from our partners, this now allows us to transform more lives of young people."

Following the ribbon cutting and safety demonstration, CEO David Wark and Peer Group Mentor Tilly were first to tackle the course.

The course is made up of seven activities including the "Leap of Faith" and the "Glider Possum", where participants are able to really test their nerves and expand their comfort zones.

Of the course, Operation Flinders CEO David Wark said, "This new activity on the station will provide an opportunity for young people to stretch their comfort zones and will enable us to expand our program to meet unmet needs."

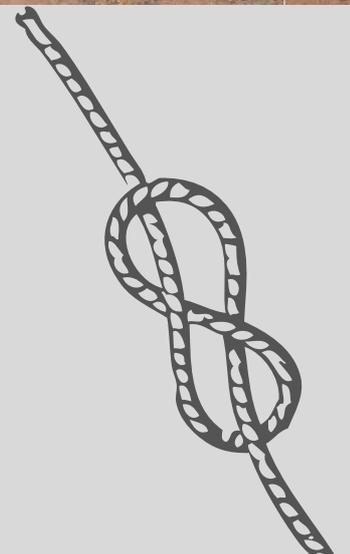
The High Ropes activity was funded by generous donors including Mary Mattie Foundation, James and Diana Ramsay Foundation, Seeley Foundation, the John T. Reid Charitable Trust and Mt Barker Rotary Club. The program will see over 550 young people this year alone use the course and will be part of the young peoples' 8-day, 100km trek across the property.



PGM Tilly with CEO David Wark



Guests & partners viewing the High Ropes Site



Greetings from the CEO



Participant from Sacred Heart College on Exercise 2

You plant the seeds from which extraordinary things can grow, but you rarely enjoy the shade, or admire the structure which makes the hours of time, your most precious asset, all the more admirable. There are no words to describe the gratitude I have for being a small part of an organisation where the most common phrase heard is "it's all for the kids".

On a daily basis I get to talk about Operation Flinders, so I have had many hours to reflect on what it is that makes it so special. And the longer I am in this role, the more it becomes apparent. The work we do speaks for itself - the regeneration for so many young people who have been damaged and seek someone to guide them. However, the clarity for every volunteer and every staff member is a privilege to witness. The story of President Kennedy visiting the NASA Space Centre in 1962 comes to mind. President Kennedy noticed a janitor carrying a broom. He interrupted his tour, walked over to the man and said: "Hi, I'm Jack Kennedy, what are you doing?" The janitor responded: "I'm helping put a man on the moon, Mr President."

Every person is aligned to the mission and we have a culture that would be the envy of nearly any organisation. So it is this alignment that is the Operation Flinders secret ingredient. Watching a Team Leader on Exercise One bounce from addressing her Tango, speaking with the visitors, calming a participant anxious at the number of people who had come into her space, back to the visitors - it was the work of a person with high octane energy but also absolute understanding of what we are trying to achieve in every facet of the organisation. The young people are the centre of our existence but the role of visitors, the commercial reality, is understood, accepted and embraced.

So thank you. It really is a privilege being here and while I carry the baton, I too want to do everything possible to make our results better for more and more young people. Let's do that together - one step at a time.

David Wark
CEO, Operation Flinders



Peer Group Mentor Tilly with Team Leader Ryan



Strategic Plan 2022-2027

At the start of the year, CEO David Wark invited all volunteers to attend a strategic plan preview after months of development and compiling from the Board and staff. This gave all individuals of the Foundation the opportunity to provide feedback and for the Foundation to adopt any points made into the final version of the strategy.

The strategic plan also included refreshed vision, mission and Foundation values.

The main strategic objectives included:

1. Financial - Maintain a diverse range of revenue streams that build sufficient reserves that enable full program delivery to be achieved for 12 months from the existing resource base.
2. Evaluation of Programs - Independently evaluate the evolving suite of youth development and wellbeing programs.
3. Employees and Volunteers - Develop a servant leadership oriented culture that supports our highly trained staff and volunteers.
4. Policies, processes, systems and procedures - Develop and sustain an appropriate governance framework



VISION

Leading the transformation of young people's lives

MISSION

Creating opportunities for young people facing challenges through adventure therapy programs that provide demanding experiences, personal development and pathways to wellbeing and life success.



VALUES

Inclusion

Innovation

Courage

Respect

Servant Leadership



STARTING THE YEAR

Exercise 1 Overview

The first Exercise of 2022 kicked off in the usual way – a buzz of activity, an air of excitement, and a strong sense of good things to come. Not without last-minute disruption, however, with COVID-19 rearing its head yet again and side-lining two Field Volunteers. Nothing like some last-minute shuffling!

Adding to the excitement was the fact that Exercise 1 saw the introduction of the Via Ferrata course at abseil and the official opening of the High Ropes Course. All feedback from the Exercise, from participants and adults alike, was that the High Ropes Course is an amazing experience – can't wait to get out there myself!

It is also great to see the property bouncing back thanks to the recent rains, with a huge increase in the number of animals sighted. Another highlight for teams was the discovery of many sizeable waterholes in the Frome. While the weather wasn't particularly conducive to swimming, there have been reported sightings of some brave individuals 'cooling off'.

I would like to acknowledge the Exercise Commander, Mick Shepherd for his fantastic leadership.

Brendan Raets
Team Leader - Operations



Step Out participant on Mt Rose



Team from Charles Campbell College



Volunteers picking up fire wood from Leigh Creek

Exercise Two Overview

Also known as the coldest Exercise of the year, Exercise Two started with clear skies and no wind. It was a very busy Exercise, with nine teams of young people, an event on the property and an anticipated media visit.

The majority of the teams from this Exercise came from the metro area, such as Adelaide High School, Mark Oliphant College, Hallett Cove High School and Woodville High School. There were the usual medical incidences in the field – bumps and bruises, sore ankles and several blisters, a relatively typical experience for our paramedics from First Care Medical.

Mid-way through the Exercise, 10 mountain bike riders ascended upon Yankaninna Station for a four-day event and tour around the property. This was followed by a two-day media visit as they captured stories from our young people, performed photoshoots and learnt about our program.

When all teams were settled in, our volunteers made several trips to Leigh Creek to collect the newly donated fire wood which should sustain our program for two-three years.

Even with nine teams on the property, there was a large amount of activity, regardless of numbers – just another day with Operation Flinders. The Exercise was managed by first0time Exercise Commander, Lisa Fauser who excelled in her role.



Bushcraft Weekend

Twenty young people, who are part of our Next Step Program, attended a bushcraft weekend as an essential part of their training and preparation to return to Yankaninna Station on an Exercise.

Training involved leadership development and identifying their strengths and areas of growth, field skills such as lighting fires, navigation, setting up hootchies (tarp they sleep under), setting up thunderboxes (portable toilets) & cooking over the open fire. Communicating on the radio and managing difficult situations in groups were also key areas of development for the weekend.

The Next Step Participants worked in small groups to overcome challenges throughout the weekend and completed a night navigation course, as well as a day hike carrying fully loaded packs.

We look forward to seeing them out in the field helping other youth on their walks.



Peer Group Mentors on Exercise 1

New Peer Group Mentors

Our first Exercise of the year saw six PGMs return to Yankaninna Station, with four entering their first PGM walk.

After completing their PGM training, interviewing for the position and negotiating their school workloads, Athena, Brodie, Tilly and Jess headed out to complete the walk again.

The Peer Group Mentor allows the participants to have someone to connect with who is their age and has experienced the struggles they are going through. They can be a helpful connection between the participants and leadership team, and the time and effort they put in is much appreciated. Well done to Athena, Brodie, Tilly and Jess for trailblazing this year. We have several new Mentors heading out across the 2022 season.

Next Step Participants at abseiling off The Bluff



Next Step Participants resting after a kayak through Encounter Bay



Victor Harbor Weekend

Our first Next Step activity of the year was the Victor Harbor Trip - a very popular activity on the calendar!

Over 40 young people travelled to 'Vic's Farm' for a weekend of camping, abseiling, mountain biking, mini-golf and a special fitness experience run by SAPOL staff.

An incredible weekend of making new friends and getting out of our comfort zones with some exciting outdoor adventures. It was amazing to see so many young people keen to continue their Operation Flinders journey.



Next Step Participants



Yankaninna Environmental Trip

The April school holidays were a busy time for our Next Steppers! A team of 20 headed up to the station to get their boots dirty.

Over 100 trees were planted and a large, 300-metre long dam was constructed by hand to help prevent and limit the effects of erosion on the environment - surrounding the base camp of the property. The week also focused on kindness and gratitude, with Next Steppers engaging in a secret kindness mission and identifying things they are grateful for.

The Next Steppers were also privileged to test out the new High Ropes Course and complete a sunrise hike up Mt Rose and Yudlamoorra. It was a week of hard work, personal growth and strong friendships formed.

Tabby Ryan
Youth Programs Manager



Jason, Thommo, Dave and Karmen at Moonbeam's Vision

The Foundation was privileged to host Karmen and Jason Conway who visited Yankaninna on the recently completed Exercise One. Karmen is the daughter of founder Pam Murray- White, while Jason is a former Team Leader in the Moolooloo days.

The evening dinner at base camp was particularly special, as CEO David Wark presented Karmen with the Premier's Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Volunteer Service, which was posthumously awarded to Pam.

Pam's legacy well and truly lives on after more than 30 years and we were delighted to share this with Karmen and Jason.

A Meaningful Return

It has taken a few days to let the emotions settle and process our weekend away.

When I asked Jason what he thought of the weekend he simply said, "outstanding!". A fair call, and more importantly to arouse such a response from him is a pretty good effort.

Every single pair of hands involved in the Foundation should be so proud of what they are doing and to say Pammie would be proud is an understatement. The calibre of people involved are the same types who she would trust and bring into the family fold.

Jason and I are keen to get involved again, our walls are knocked down. Tell us what roles you want us in, and we will be there.

Thank you for opening the door for us. Thank you for keeping the vision alive and true. Thank you for letting us get some Op. Flinders back under the skin.

Karmen & Jason Conway

Training

2022 has seen a continuation and expansion of the Professional Development we offer to our volunteers. We strive to deliver world-class training and development opportunities so that our volunteers are supported in their roles and our program continues to evolve and grow in-line with best practices.

In addition to the usual full-day professional development day held at the Hilton attended by over 60 volunteers, we have also been able to offer full-day sessions on Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity and a full-day on Trauma-Informed Approaches To Adventure Therapy; both of which were delivered by industry-leading experts.

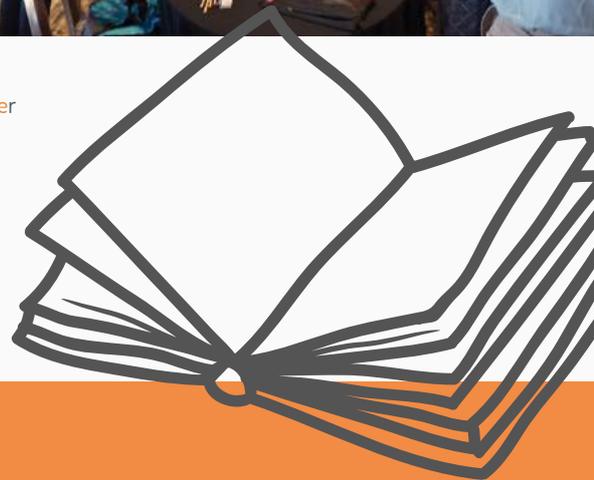
Training for 2022 included:

- Three-day Kayak skills training - 11 Participants
- Team Leader Training - An introduction to more advanced perspectives on adventure therapy, facilitation and safety management. Held over four evenings throughout February - 12 participants.
- Assistant Team Leader Training - 18 participants.
- Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity Training - 24 participants
- Professional Development Day - 60 participants
- Trauma-informed approach to Adventure Therapy - 40 participants



Volunteers training day at Hilton Adelaide

Nick Atkin
Training Manager



EVENTS 2021

The Rescue, Hosted by Dr Richard Harris

In February, Foundation volunteer, Dr Richard Harris, hosted a fundraising event which included a viewing of the National Geographic documentary, The Rescue.

The story covered his involvement in the Thai Cave rescue which catapulted 'Harry' to an international scale overnight as the world looked on in awe.

The event was attended by over 250 guests and raised over \$14,000 for the Foundation.



CEO David Wark at The Regal Theatre

ANZ Community Ball

Operation Flinders had the privilege of being the host charity for the 2022 ANZ Community Ball. The evening was attended by over 600 people, who enjoyed an evening of entertainment by jazz music icon, James Morrison and his Motown Band.

The evening was filled with live auctions, which included prizes donated by local South Australian businesses, a wine wall and a silent auction filled with sporting memorabilia.

The event was also a celebration of other deserving South Australian charities who benefitted from the funds raised on the evening. Thanks to the generosity of attendees at the Ball, a total of \$350,000 was raised, with \$66,000 being donated directly to Operation Flinders.

Operation Flinders thanks ANZ for their support and management of this successful event.



CEO David Wark





GIFTS IN WILLS

Gifts in Wills

Most reputable charities in South Australia rely on Gifts in Wills as a source of income and moving forward, Operation Flinders will be no exception.

We recently relaunched our Gifts in Wills program with a number of exciting initiatives:

- We now have a new look logo and brochure for Gifts in Wills
- An offer to complete a free legal Will online through our partner Willed. You can complete your free Will by visiting www.willed.com.au/operationflinders/
- For those who notify us that they have left a gift to Operation Flinders in their Will, they will be invited to join the 'Moonbeams Society'. Society members will be presented with an exclusive, hand-made pin to wear proudly, symbolising their support of the Foundation. Society members will also come together a couple of times a year to hear about what's happening around the organisation.

We will also be holding a number of information sessions throughout 2022, so stay tuned for details as they are made available.

The thought of our own death can be confronting, yet it is estimated that up to 50% of all Australians die without a legal Will in place. Your Will provides instruction as to how you would like your Estate distributed, ensuring your wishes are carried out after you are gone.

If you would like to receive a copy of our new brochure, you have any questions or would like to have a confidential discussion, please don't hesitate to contact Leigh Aitken.

engagement@operationflinders.org



Moonbeam Society

In honour of Pam Murray-White, founder of Operation Flinders, the Moonbeam Society has been formed.

This society is for those leaving a Gift in Wills to the Foundation. These individuals will be invited to annual morning teas, in order to stay connected to the recent events and future plans of the Foundation. They will also be presented with an eagle pin, a symbol of Pam Murray-White amongst the Foundation community.

This pin has been designed by Australian artist Dan Cox.



Our new Step Out Program

Friday 27 May, marked the final day for the first Step Out team this year. Eight was a special number for this group, as the 8 participants embarked on their 8-day walk, while engaging in their 8-week Step Out journey. The group met at the BankSA Adelaide branch for their formal graduation, where they were presented with their certificates for their achievements. The group completed their 100km walk in the Flinders Ranges on Exercise 1 as Tango 12, known fondly within the team as 'The Walking Sticks'. As a quiet team to begin with, the group evolved throughout their time in the program, with their personalities shining through brightest while up at Yankaninna Station. Despite their differences and the interpersonal challenges that all teams face while in the intimate proximity of an Operation Flinders team, the group were a happy bunch. On the drive back to Adelaide, they reminisced on their experiences and listened to their favourite songs through a Bluetooth speaker.

At the graduation, one of our volunteers who played a big part in supporting these boys through their experience in the weeks leading up to their Exercise, received positive feedback from families. They were all very thankful to the staff and program that's been put together, and they said they had already seen change and progress at home with relationships and attitudes. With a PGM who participated in the Individual Referral Program last year, it shows that the program is making a positive difference in the lives of young people, no longer bound by whether their school sends out a team or not!

Nic Hillbery
Case Worker



*Step Out
& Overcome*



VENTURE NORTH & VENTURE BEYOND



New Ventures

Operation Flinders Foundation's new 'fee for service' brands: 'Venture Beyond' - for schools, youth, and not-for-profit organisations; as well as 'Venture North -' for corporates, have now been operating for just over 12 months. Since July last year, we have provided a variety of high-quality programs on a weekly basis, totalling over 60 program days including multi-day camps of up to five days in duration. The revenue we generate from these services provides a vital funding boost to support our core programs and follow up services.

In this Venture update we showcase some of the activities and programs we have provided to our fee for service clients over the last 12 months.

Holiday Explorers

Approximately two-three times each month we collaborate with Holiday Explorers to provide nature-based outdoor experiences for people with intellectual disabilities and neuro-diverse backgrounds.

Programs include:

- A monthly 'Day in Nature' including a picnic, campfire, walk in nature, bush art were held in relaxing locations such as Kuitpo Forest, Aldinga Scrub, Botanic Park, Japanese Gardens and Mt Lofty Botanic Gardens
- Weekend Coastal Retreat at Clayton Bay
- Three-Day Quest including kayaking, bushwalk and treasure quest
- Four-Day Active Escape and Five-Day Ultimate Adventure including base camp activities, kayaking, camping at Olly Farm, bushwalking and abseiling.

Goodwood Saints Football Club

In February we designed and facilitated a multi-layered Leadership and Team-building day for 60 players from the Goodwood Saints Footy Club. The program held at Clayton Bay SOS Camp saw 10 teams completing a series of challenges including raft building, kayak orienteering, triathlon and challenge course.

School Programs

We have also provided a number of activity days and school camps for schools such as:

- Special Assistance School for Youth (SASY)
- Glenunga International High School
- Indie School Camp
- Endeavour College

Activities include:

- Camping, bushcraft and survival skills
- Navigation & orienteering
- Kayaking & raft building
- Forest & coastal bike rides
- Rock climbing & abseiling
- Bushwalking, bush art & craft
- Cultural & environmental awareness, and cooking
- Journaling, Tai Chi, mindfulness & reflection activities
- Recreational games and team challenges
- Wellbeing and relationship workshops

Legacy Youth Camps

Legacy provides support services for the families of men and women who have served in the Australian Defence Forces and may be challenged by bereavement, PTSD or illness.

So far we have run 4 camps for Legacy Youth Groups including teens and young adults 15-18yrs of age. Activities include bushwalks, bike rides, kayaking, survival challenges, obstacle course, building forts, cooking, art, life balance.



Players from Goodwood Saints Football Club at Clayton Bay

*Camps & Experiences
for Everyone*



Work on site

HIGH ROPES

Thanks to our Volunteers putting in some serious shovelling of concrete at Yankaninna the High Ropes is now erected and operational. Over 15 tons of concrete was mixed by hand in a small cement mixer.

STRATCO HOUSE

The ceiling and walls are now in and receiving a coat of paint. This house which was donated by Stratco will provide much needed accommodation at base for years to come.

YANKANINNA KITCHEN

New cupboards were installed by our Volunteers in the main kitchen, dining and gathering space at our base, better known as 'the mess'. We finally removed the old 1950's kitchen cupboards with modern and practical storage



CMV VISIT

Thanks to Jonathon Crawford at CMV, a crew of mechanics descended on Yankaninna. There were many projects carried out on our plant and vehicles – well done CMV.



Peer Group Mentor, Grace

Thank You

