



The Windermere trekkers gathered at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walk (1,000 Steps) in Ferntree Gully recently for a training session.

# Trek to end the violence

By Wendy Williamson

The official countdown has begun.

In October football great Matthew 'Richo' Richardson will lead a team of community members on one of the world's toughest jungle treks in a bid to raise funds to end family violence.

In tackling the mountainous Kokoda Track the group of 27 will be raising funds for Windermere Child and Family Services, for which Richo has proudly served as an ambassador for seven years.

Windermere Child and Family Services provides support and assistance to victims of family violence in Melbourne's south east. It is an organisation that also works with families to create positive changes to relationships and increase their wellbeing.

The team at Windermere work with members of the community like mum 'Carla' who are seeking to escape from family violence.

Carla was so badly beaten by her fiancé she was in a coma for over a month. Her physical injuries left her unable to work and consequently unable to provide for her son or repay her mortgage.

Windermere supported Carla to get back on her feet.

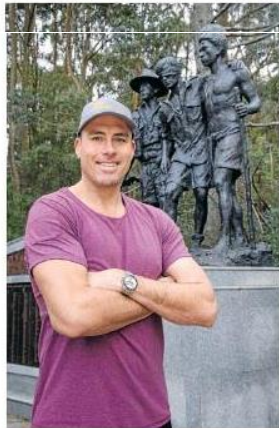
She and her son were safely housed and given financial support to meet the bills that come with everyday living. Her case workers also helped Carla with her victim impact statement and helped prepare her for court.

Richo is glad he can help Carla and others like her, though he acknowledges the 96 kilometre trek will be tough - physically and mentally.

"Some of our team members may already be physically very fit, others tell me they are not fit at all. By October, all of us will need to be Kokoda ready. This means being able to walk seven to ten hours per day in steep jungle terrain.

"Kokoda is tough, but with preparation to increase endurance and fitness it is definitely possible. As we get closer to departure the team will be preparing and training for the trip."

Richo said that as a new dad he was particularly glad to be part of Windermere's Trek to End Violence.



Trek leader and Windermere ambassador Matthew Richardson was very taken with the Kokoda memorial at the 1000 Steps.

"When I was told that the Australian police deal with a family violence report every two minutes, I realised it was an issue I couldn't ignore."

The trekkers are: Matthew Richardson, Craig Arnold, Caroline Arnold, Geoffrey Batnbridge, William Batnbridge, Ned Batnbridge, Courtney Banks, Simon Bennett, Nathan Brown, Bradley Byrns, Wayne Campbell, Garry Conner, Maree DeGeorge, Tim Fleming, Chris Geremia, Pamela Goode, David Greenstreet, Rachel Hall, Kyle Kimberley, Paul Langdon, Cameron McGlinchey, Nicole Membrey, Garrick Robinson, Daniel Shannon, Nick Strachan, Adam Strachan and David Tocci.

Anyone who wishes to support the fundraising efforts of the team in their 2018 Trek to End Family Violence is urged to go to [www.windermere.org.au/kokoda](http://www.windermere.org.au/kokoda) or call Windermere's fundraising office on 9705 3286.

[pakenham.starcommunity.com.au](http://pakenham.starcommunity.com.au)



Windermere works with families impacted by family violence and provides prevention, early intervention and support services.

**Make a difference today**

Support the team lead by AFL Legend Matthew 'Richo' Richardson as they trek Kokoda to help end family violence.



**DONATE NOW**  
[windermere.org.au/kokoda](http://windermere.org.au/kokoda)

Phone: 9705 3286

Email: [fundraising@windermere.org.au](mailto:fundraising@windermere.org.au)

#trektoendviolence