

Kokoda trekkers on track

A team that has committed to trek Kokoda in October to raise funds to end family violence are on track to reach their goals.

The group of 27 is raising funds for Windermere Child and Family Services, which provides prevention and support services to families impacted by family violence in Melbourne's South-East.

Each individual team member has committed to raise \$3000 towards the cause.

"Pleasingly, we have a number of team members who have already exceeded their targets," said former Richmond star Matthew Richardson.

A Windermere ambassador, Richardson will be leading the team in Kokoda.

Sarah, a survivor of family violence, says she hopes the funds raised will enable Windermere to continue to provide support to others.

Windermere assisted Sarah to safely leave an abusive and controlling relationship.

"Words cannot measure the level of support I received from Windermere," she says.

"Initially I thought the numerous phone calls and interest in my whereabouts were just romantic gestures," Sarah said.

This quickly escalated into controlling behaviour and physical violence which left her with ongoing injuries and being too fearful to leave or seek help.

The abuse also caused Sarah to experience ongoing emotional trauma.

"I felt guilty and ashamed," she recalls. "I had a myriad of health problems and body pain. Over time I withdrew from the many interests I was involved in."

Gradually, Sarah planned for the right moment to safely leave. When she had an opportunity and taking only her handbag with her, she sought refuge with a family member.

When her partner pursued her, Sarah knew she needed urgent assistance to be safe and re-



Windermere ambassador, former Richmond champion Matthew Richardson, will head the expedition.

build her life. The same morning she contacted Windermere and was told to come straight in.

The Windermere counselling team assisted Sarah to safely leave her relationship and provided her with immediate emotional support and risk management strategies.

Sarah says she feels "incredibly grateful" to Windermere and was lucky to access the right services in her time of need.

"From the moment I arrived at Windermere, I met with two counsellors and they spent hours with me that first day," she said.

Sarah also attended Windermere's seven week Healthy Women, Healthy Relationships program. The support group is for women who have experienced family violence.

"It was exactly what I needed to identify and acknowledge what I had been through and the damage that it had done to me emotionally, mentally and physically," says Sarah.

"Family violence is a form of trauma," says



Members of the Windermere's Kokoda Trek to end family violence at a recent training run.

Windermere family health and wellbeing counsellor Fiona Link-Freeman.

"Often the women in the program have been focussed on survival rather than self care. We encourage them to reconnect with themselves and understand that they are not accountable for the actions of others," she says.

In 2017, Windermere provided counselling to 552 families and children experiencing trauma associated with sexual assault or family violence in Melbourne's South-East.

That equates to over 10 families every week.

"The Kokoda trip will raise money that Windermere will use to make a positive difference in the community and support families who are trying to rebuild their lives as a result of family violence," says Richo.

If you would like to support the fundraising efforts of the team in their 2018 Trek to End Family Violence please go to www.windermere.org.au/kokoda or call Windermere's fundraising office on 9705 3286.



Live your best life

Guest speaker: Melanie Gleeson, Founder of Endota Spa

Join us as we welcome Melanie Gleeson, Founder of Endota Spa and discover how she turned \$5000 on a credit card into a business turning over \$60 million!

Today, the words 'wellness', 'self-care' and 'spa' are a well-known and understood part of the cultural zeitgeist. But in 2000 when Melanie Gleeson quit her full-time job to launch Endota Spa, the average Australian didn't have any concept of the kind of business that she was wanting to build. A beauty business focused on inner health and beauty? Was that even possible? With a vision and passion that continues today, Melanie aims to help women be their best, so they can live their best life.

To further add to your experience, you will also have the pleasure of hearing from the gorgeous, Vicki Macdermid, Partner of our major sponsor for this event, Pitcher Partners. Vicki will share her thoughts, passion and insight into her success as a business woman within the region.

With some brilliant prizes on offer throughout the day, not to mention your chance to purchase some beautiful local products – and all while enjoying the company of some fabulous local business leaders. There's just one thing left to do – BOOK TODAY!



Date: Friday 10 August 2018
Time: 11.30 am – 2.30 pm
Venue: Cardinia Cultural Centre, Lakeside Boulevard, Pakenham
Cost: \$99 incl GST
 *CCBG discount applies

Bookings are essential.

This event is proudly supported by:

Major sponsor



Event sponsor



Media Partner



Radio Partner



For more information and to secure your place visit www.caseycardinia.com.au/businesslunch

