

NEWS

Windermere's Friends journey to work in the community stop family violence

Windermere is an independent community service organisation, working across south eastern Melbourne and Gippsland, to help those who need it most.

With a history spanning 160 years, Windermere works to build a stronger, connected and supported community.

Support comes in many forms, with Windermere working together to find the best solutions for the varied and complex issues faced by children, families and individuals in our community.

With a focus on intervention and prevention, it aims to get in early to make a difference in the areas of:

- Family Wellbeing to create positive behavioural changes, respond to violence and/or neglect to enable people of all abilities to actively participate in their community;
- Development and Early Childhood Education, including support to individuals and children with disability and developmental delays and a range of childcare services;
- Assistance and support for victims of trauma, assault and/or violent crime; and
- Community Strengthening designed to respond quickly to relevant and emerging needs.

Services are primarily funded through two channels - government and by our generous community of donors.

Windermere believes that everyone is someone in the community - this is reflected in its approach with those they work with every day.

When Berwick mum Nicole Membrey opened an email last October, she didn't realise its contents would prompt her and two of her friends to walk hundreds of kilometres to end family violence.

The email was an invitation to raise funds to support Windermere Child and Family Services' efforts to end family violence by trekking Kokoda. As a result Nicole, together with friends Pam Goode and Kylie Kimberley decided to commit to completing the gruelling 96 kilometre jungle track this October.

"With a big birthday coming up this year, and being familiar with the work of Windermere, I decided this was something important that I wanted to do," says Nicole.

Pam and Kylie agreed to support Nicole and also commit to the trip.

"We are looking forward to being able to complete such a challenging experience with the support of each other," says Kylie.

As a result the trio has been training together with the aim of completing an equivalent of 50 kilometres a week in order to be fit enough to complete Kokoda. This usually includes one long weekly bush walk combined with shorter walks and trips to the gym.

In addition to committing to the training, the three acknowledge the trip poses a range of challenges.

"You do get some negative comments from people who don't think we are able to do it, and that just motivates us more," says Nicole.

The friends say that given the history of the trek they expect some aspects will be confronting.



Pam Goode, Kylie Kimberley and Nicole Membrey on a training walk to prepare for their trip to the Kokoda Track.

"We know we will hear wartime stories of what happened on the Kokoda Track, and also we've been hearing some of the stories about family violence that happens in our own communities, and that is and will be confronting," says Nicole.

"The major challenges for me will be sleeping in a tent and also being away from the kids and being out of contact with them while we are on the track," says Pam.

Windermere provides prevention, early intervention and support services for people

experiencing family violence in Melbourne's south east.

A team of 26 have committed to completing the Kokoda Trek with each raising \$3000 towards supporting Windermere's goal to end family violence.

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.